

Trudy Gold Visionaries of Different Dreams Marx, Disraeli, and Jewish Identity

– Now, Marx and Disraeli and the search for Jewish identity. I've always been fascinated by putting hugely important figures together, particularly if they come from the same century and their lives have certain similarities, but the paths they take are incredibly different. For this, I owe most of the research, of course, to the late great Isaiah Berlin. In his book, "Against the Current", he compares Marx and Disraeli. I know some of you'll be asking, what are the best biographies on Marx and Disraeli? And honestly, it's almost impossible, there just are so many, too many. But if you only have time to read one, and it's not really a biography, it's getting inside their character, then I would actually turn to Isaiah Berlin "Against the Current". And actually, when we begin the Baltics in September, I'm going to be talking about Isaiah Berlin, because, of course, he was born in Riga. So, "Visionaries of Different Dreams: Marx, Disraeli, and the search for Jewish identity." Shall we have a look at Benjamin first? Benjamin Disraeli was born in 1804, he died in 1881. He was a huge figure, and if you think about it, this boy who was born into a middle-class family of Jewish origins, in fact, he was circumcised in the room which is now the headquarters of the Board of Deputies in Bloomsbury. His grandfather was a bonnet maker from Livorno but had been a member of the London Stock Exchange, one of the founders actually. His father, Isaac, there was enough family money that he was able to devote himself to literature. His most important work was called "Curiosities of English Literature". He was married to another Sephardi woman and they lived a very English middle-class life. The grandfather had his home in Stanford Hill and he bought an estate in Edmonton, but he didn't like it too much. Those of you who know the geography of London will find this very amusing. Now, the point about Benjamin Disraeli, and all you have to do is look at his face, he looked so very, very Jewish. How was it that this middle-class boy, the son of Sephardi Jews, manages to become Prime Minister of England at the height of Empire? Punch later said that was the sphinx without a riddle. And the other point I want to spend time on tonight, how did his Jewishness impact on him? Because the key to Disraeli, he once wrote, because not only did he become Prime Minister of England, in his day, he was England's most popular novelist. He was a man of over-weening ambition, he wanted to control the world around him, he also was a man of huge talent, and he believed that he was a child of destiny. Now, can we quickly look at Karl Marx's face while I just give you the bare bones of him? And then I'm turning back to Disraeli. Now, Karl Marx, he was born in 1818 and died in 1883. They both are going to die in London. Marx is buried in Highgate Cemetery, and I should say rather, in England, and Disraeli is buried in the churchyard of his private home in Hughenden, in Beaconsfield.

Now, Karl Marx was the grandson of rabbis on both sides. He was born

in the Rhineland and he was one of seven children. He was the second son, but his eldest brother died. Very close to his father, as was Disraeli, they both had very close relationships with their fathers. They had very bad relationships with their mothers. Karl was converted when he was eight-years-old. What happened was this, he belonged... The Marx family, and they are rabbis on both sides, his mother, Jenny von West- His mother was Henriette Pressburg, her family go all the way back to the 15th century, huge number of rabbis. So, it's a rabbinic family. How was it that Karl was converted when he was eight-years-old? Well, it ought to do with one of the great problems of Jewish history. The outside world acts, and all the Jews can do is react. What happens is that Marx was born in the Rhineland and that was that area conquered by Napoleon, and then Napoleon takes it back, then Napoleon is defeated, and the princes take back many of the rights that Napoleon had given, because they want to hold back modernity, they want to hold back revolution. So, Karl Marx's father was... He had been born Hirschel, he'd become Heinrich, he'd become a lawyer. He was a deist, he was not a very religious man, he was a gentle kind of character, and he'd become a successful lawyer. And he decided that in order to avoid having to go back to all the old restrictions that his Jewish birth would impose on him, to convert. So, when Karl Marx is eight-years-old, the family convert, except the mother. This is fascinating. The daughter of rabbis does not convert for another year, and it would be absolutely fascinating to know what went on in the family. Karl Marx had a very swarthy skin and he was called the Moor. And we know he was probably bullied at school and he's going to have a very, very complicated relationship with his Jewishness. Can we turn back to Disraeli, if you don't mind, Judy?

Now, Benjamin Disraeli was a very, very different kind of figure. He was the second child and the eldest son of the Disraeli family. You can see from his looks that he looks very, very Semitic. He had two younger brothers, blonde and blue-eyed, and both of them went to English public schools. He went to a little local school and we know that he played in "Merchant of Venice." There was another Jewish boy called Maurice Sakwie, he played Shylock and Benjamin played Tubal. When Benjamin was 12-years-old, his father was also a very mild man and more and more interested in the enlightenment and deism. He mixed- He evidently had a very, very pleasant personality. He mixed in enlightenment circles in England and as I've already mentioned, in literary circles. What happens is that there is a quarrel of Bevis Marks Synagogue. He is made a warden, he refuses to take it on, he's fined 40 shillings, and he decides to leave Bevis Marks. He himself never leaves Judaism. He becomes a member of the Reform Synagogue, which was created in 1840. What happens though, with the advice of his neighbour, Sheridan, he decides to convert his children because he believes it will give them a greater entrée into English society. So, young Benjamin is converted when he's 12-years-old. So, both Marx and Disraeli, who are going to have such an incredible impact on the world, are both converted by their parents for expedience.

Now, Disraeli leaves school at 16. He is apprenticed to a lawyer, a man called Mr. Maples. By this time, he is very much involved in the literature of romanticism. Disraeli once said, "I'm on the side of the angels." He never really wanted the rational side of life. He loved fantasy, he loved the make believe of the world. And he's apprenticed by his father to a lawyer, and evidently, he went dressed in velvet with a copy of Spencer's "Faerie Queene" under his arm. And the solicitor who was a friend of his father's, wrote a note to Mr. Disraeli saying, "Your son is much too clever for the law." What happens to Disraeli is he tries many things, he has a flutter on the stock exchange, he loses his money. He's dreadful at business, which is quite amusing as he later becomes Chancellor of the Exchequer. He decides he wants to write. He is an incredible womaniser. In fact, much of his early career is through the offices of older women who propel him up the ladder. He develops an incredible repartee, he's wanted by society hostesses. His first book, "Vivian Grey", is the story of a young aristocrat. When it is found out that it's written by, quote unquote, "The bumptious Jew boy," he has a decline and he has a breakdown that lasts for a couple of years. He's very close to his sister, Sarah, and he goes on a grand tour with her fiancé. And when he comes back, he's looking for something to do, and having tried all sorts of other things, he finally decides he's going to go into parliament, perhaps because if you are a member of parliament, you could not possibly be sent to debtor's prison, and he was always in debt. By this time, he has rooms, he tries to- He has rooms in London, he tries to get into all the London clubs, nobody wants him, he's still "The bumptious Jew boy."

Now, what then happens is, through various women, he pulls himself up the society ladder until he's sharing a mistress with Lord Lyndhurst, who is in government. Lord Lyndhurst finally pushes him into the Tory party. He had stood unsuccessfully as an independent, and finally, he stands and he gets into parliament with the first of the elections on the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837. He is incredibly ambitious. By this time, his books are doing well, he's done another tour, and what Disraeli does is to create a fantasy around himself. Now, what happens to the young Marx? The young Marx goes off to university, he goes to three universities, to Bonn, Berlin, to the University of Jena. He wants to study philosophy, his father wants him to study law. Shall we have a look at Marx's face as I'm speaking, Judy? Yeah, his father wants him to study law. He actually is in trouble over a dual, he joins a drinking club. He then, in Berlin, falls on- I beg pardon, in Bonn, he falls under the spell of Hegelianism and he becomes a young Hegelian. They're both outsiders, they both look at the world around them, and Marx becomes very interested also, in the new socialism that is coming out of France in particular. And gradually, he realises that the society he lives in is a society that has to be changed. It's unjust. Now, how much has that got to do with the fact that it was a society that was not accepting of him? Benjamin took a

completely different tack. Benjamin, going to all these society parties, he falls madly in love with the English aristocracy. He believed in aristocracy, in blood, and in his place in the world.

Now, I'm going to show you a couple of quotes on them. Can we see the first quote, please? This is from Francis Wheen in his brilliant biography of Karl Marx. "A Prussian emigre who became a middle class gentleman, an angry agitator who spent much of his adult life in the scholarly silence of the reading room of the British Museum. A gregarious host who fell out with almost all his friends. A devoted family man who impregnated his housemaid, and a deeply earnest philosopher who loved drinks, cigars, and jokes." Now, can we see Isaiah Berlin on Benjamin Disraeli? "A somewhat fantastic figure, an ambitious opportunist, a social political adventurer, flamboyant, overdressed, the epitome of dandyism and artificiality with his fancy waistcoats, his epigrams, his malice, his flattery, and his dazzling social and political gifts, admired but distrusted and by some, feared and loathed. He was a pied piper leading a bemused collection of Dukes, Earls, solid country gentleman and burley farmers. One of the oddest and most fantastic phenomenon of the entire 19th century." So, Disraeli is now in parliament through the good of... And the reason he gets in is Lord Lyndhurst finds him a running-mate in Maidstone. This is really before parliamentary seats were properly reformed, you'd have the Reform Act of 1832. Politicians were not paid in those days. And a man called Wyndham Lewis was looking for a running-mate, and through the good offices of Lord Lyndhurst, he's taken on by Wyndham Lewis. Wyndham Lewis has a wife, a Mary Anne, who's called a bit of a rattle, which means she's a real gossip. He's taken on and that's how he enters parliament. Wyndham Lewis now dies, and the story of Mary Anne and Disraeli is absolutely fascinating, because Disraeli and- Isaiah Berlin says it far more beautifully than I ever could. He was a fantasist. Not only was he a fantastic figure, he was a fantasist. This man who's been an incredible womaniser, he now decides he's going to marry Mary Anne. She is- By this time, he is 34, she is 46, too old to give him children. And I think those of you who are interested in psychology, I don't think Disraeli wanted children. He was the kind of character, there will only be room for him. When he was on his grand tour with his sister's fiancé, the fiancé died and he had to break the news to his sister, and the letter he wrote back was quite extraordinary. He mourns with her and says, "Now you'll have nothing to do but to devote yourself to me." And Sarah was incredibly attached to him, his sister. So Mary Anne, he courts her thinking that she's incredibly wealthy, but in fact, the estate was entailed. And he writes the most peculiar letter because she's also flirting around with other men. And he decides this woman 12 years older than him, who was a bit of a gossip, nevertheless, he makes her his fairy queen. He marries her despite the fact that he realises she's not very rich. And even though historians have been over this with a tooth comb, once he marries, she does become his woman. And when she was dying, she actually said to him, she actually said that there's only one

Disraeli, and he said to her, "Madam, you've always been more of a mistress to me than a wife." And I'm sure in a way, that's an incredible compliment that any man could pay his wife. So, he marries her, and as far as we know, he was completely faithful, although there are those who believe that he was probably bisexual, but that's another story and I'm not going down that road today. Anyway, he's in parliament, he's incredibly ambitious. He's opening speech, people mock him. He makes a speech, it's flowery, he's wearing velvet waistcoats, his hair is very exotic and ringletted, and he's shouted down. And as he sits down he says, "The day will come when you will hear me." And what he does is he really develops his parliamentary technique, and in his spare time, he writes books, he writes many, many books. And as I said, particularly by the time he's a serious politician, if we can ever call Disraeli serious, he is one of the most popular novelists in England. And in fact, his last novel, when he just stepped down as Prime Minister in 1880, it was sold to the Americans with an advance of 10,000 pounds, which was unheard of in those days. So anyway, Disraeli by 1837, is in parliament. He wants office. Peel is head of the Tory party, and did it matter to Disraeli whether he was a weak oratory? Probably, at this stage, not. The point about Disraeli, and I think this is terribly important, yes, he was an ambitious opportunist, although I would argue that every politician is an ambitious opportunist, but nevertheless, in the end, England is going to seduce him. He tries for office, Peel turns him down.

But, what has happened in parliament? In England itself, the wind of reform is sweeping through England, and there was a party in parliament made up of the younger sons of the aristocracy. They called themselves Young England. They were very much against the ugly countries, they were up against ugly industrialization, they wanted to go to a more romantic England, and Disraeli becomes their champion. As he becomes more and more of a great parliamentarian, they realised just how good this man is, and also his wit, his malice, his epigrams, he was funny, and women adored him, and so did many men. And so, gradually, he becomes the leader of Young England, and he's actually prepared to bring the Tory Party down because Peel doesn't give him office. He also develops a very good relationship with Queen Victoria. When Albert dies, he writes the most extraordinary condolence letter in which he says there were only two people in the world who understood the Balkans, and now one of them was dead. But it was the kind of letter that made the Queen like him, and they develop a relationship, particularly as he becomes more important as a novelist. And she'd once written a little book of verse, and when she addressed him, she would say, "We authors," he would say to her, "We authors man." And later on, when he developed gout, she allowed him to sit in her presence. He sometimes— She was his fairy queen, and yet he could mock her as well. He once said, "On the subject of royalty and flattery, I lay it on with a trowel." He also said of the Queen, "Whenever I want to know what the middle-classes think, I ask the Queen." He does develop one or two friends amongst the aristocracy,

the Bentinck family, and they help him buy a stately home at Hughenden. And those of you who live in England, and I know it's quite near where Judy Ferrera lives, it is interesting to visit. And some of you might believe he sold out for a massive pottage, but that's another story. Now, turning back to Karl Marx, Karl Marx graduates through German universities. He becomes a doc- He has his doctorate, he studies philosophy, he studies politics. More and more, he is turning to a new direction. Germany... Germany, in 1848, is the year of revolutions, but in the year where 52 revolutions are going to break out throughout Europe. And by this time, Marx is a well and truly designed revolutionary and also someone who wants to completely smash the system. He saw it as very, very unjust, he turned to revolutionary thought, he becomes very much a- He becomes a journalist. He's on the edge, he's a brilliant man, he's got a brilliant brain, not a very pleasant personality. He marries. He marries a woman called Jenny von Westphalen, who was the daughter of his next door neighbour. And evidently, because he was born Jewish, the family, although Marx Sr. was very close to Barron Von Westphalen, they were against the marriage, but they did marry and they're going to have seven children, three girls are going to survive to adulthood. In the end, Marx has to go on the move because of his revolutionary activities, and in 1848, he goes... From the 1840s onwards, he's a nomad. He's in Paris, he's in Belgium. In Paris, he becomes quite close to Heinrich Heine who is actually a distant cousin of his. In fact, the two men have- Both Disraeli and Marx have an admiration of Heine in common. I think that's the only admiration in common they really did have. And he has to pull Jenny with him and they go from country to country, and finally in 1848, after the revolutions all fail... In England, the most you had was a chartist demonstration. Disraeli later said, "Because of the fog, the English are not disposed to revolution." So, what happens is Marx arrives in England in 1848 with Jenny. By this time, he's very close to a man called Friedrich Engels who was working in Manchester, his father was a wealthy industrialist. And Engels was also a socialist and together, they're going to write "The Communist Manifesto", which of course, later on, is going to set the world on fire. When they come to London, they first live in Soho, in the home of a Jewish lace-maker. So, what I want to do now, Judy, if you don't mind, can we have a look at the city where Marx came from? There you have Trier in the Rhineland, a very picturesque city, but, of course, now under a very authoritarian regime. And let's have a look at London. Can we have a look at London? Yeah, there you see London. London, by 1840, was the first country in the modern world to reach a million people. It's a teeming, dazzling city, and in 1848, of course, Disraeli is in parliament. And not only that, Disraeli is now becoming the spokesperson of a party of aristocrats, young aristocrats who want to change everything, but within the party.

But now, I want to really turn to the main thrust of what I'm discussing. How do they feel about being Jewish? Look, they're both

outsiders. Disraeli is going to take one line and Marx is going to take another. What Disraeli is going to do, remember he loves the English aristocracy, he has this love affair with them, he loves the way they live, their manners. Disraeli, although later on, when he's Prime Minister, there's going to be more social reform in his short period of office, than the whole of Gladstone's period. Nevertheless, he believed that the ruling class, in a paternalistic way, should look after those less able to look after themselves. He was not an egalitarian, he believed in race and blood. Now, when you look at Benjamin Disraeli, he's a Jew. You can't get away from it. So, what he did was he used his Jewishness as a weapon and he creates this fantasy that he, Benjamin Disraeli, was created from the greatest race that ever walked the world. In fact, we know, as I've mentioned already, that his grandfather was a bonnet maker from Livorno, who made a lot of money. Now, there are historians like Cecil Roth and Lord Blake who have looked at Disraeli's claims that he came from the greatest group that ever came from Spain, the real aristocrats of the Jewish world. In one of his books, "Contarini Fleming", this is a phrase he uses, and he must have been bullied at school, as I'm sure Marx was, and he writes this, "Who are these people who set themselves above him? A troop of Norman knights whose fathers were wreckers and Baltic pirates. Was this mixed population of Saxons and Normans of purer blood than he? Oh no, he was descended in a direct line from one of the oldest races in the world who had developed a high civilization at a time when the inhabitants of England were going half naked, eating acorns in the woods." One of his books is about Alroy, who was a messianic claimant. And even when he wrote a biography of the Bentinck family who had helped him out financially, he wrote about the Jews. He's absolutely obsessed with it.

In his book, "Coningsby", "Coningsby", and I really- He's got quite a turgid style, but some of his books are still worth reading. "Coningsby" will get you inside Disraeli because the real hero of "Coningsby" is super Jew called Sidonia. Sidonia is a mixture of Benjamin Disraeli, Moses Montefiore, who was a close friend of his, as was the Rothchild family, both father and son. And Sidonia, he's meant to be the richest, cleverest, most powerful man in the world. He's sophisticated, he knows 18 languages, and he rules the world, and he is the man that Disraeli creates as his hero. And out of his mouth comes this phrase, "All is race. There is no other truth." You see, Disraeli once said when people asked about his religiosity, because when he bought Hughenden, of course, he is the squire. So, those of you who travel to Hughenden will see the churchyard where he's buried, and he would've given the address in the church. What was he religiously? There are so many stories about that. He once said, "I'm the blank page between the Old and the New Testament." Something else he wrote, "I'm not disposed for a moment to admit that my pedigree is not as good as, or even superior to the Cavendishes." In the elections of 1847, when somebody pushed a pig's head in his face, remember even though he's converted, he's seen as a Jew. He says this, "Fancy

calling a fellow an adventurer when his ancestors were probably on intimate terms with the Queen of Shiba." And this is his bio of Lord George Bentinck. He has this huge discourse on Jews, which is totally irrelevant. He says this, "The toiling multitude rests every seventh day by virtue of a Jewish law. They're perpetually reading, for their example, the records of Jewish history and singing the odes and elegies of Jewish poems. And they daily acknowledge on their knees, that the only medium of communication between the Creator and themselves is the Jewish race. Yet they treat that race as the vilest of generations." In 1848, the time of the 52 revolutions, he had this to say, "Jews do become revolutionaries as in 1848, because of the wounds inflicted by ungrateful Christendom." And another thing he wrote, "Only a great race could have survived the trials which they have endured." In all of his throwaway lines, his arrogance, he said, "When I want to read a novel, I write one." So, he uses his Jewishness as a weapon. How sincere was he? Well, the struggle for Jewish emancipation began in 1828, it was the liberalism that was sweeping England. Catholics were emancipated. Never forget that the Catholics were the real *bête noire* of English society. I remember an Irish Catholic friend, I used to do workshops with him, and he often talked about Guy Fawkes night, when on November 5th every year they burnt a guy, the effigy of Guy Fawkes who attempted to blow up the House of Parliament in the reign of James I. He becomes a Catholic martyr. So, the Catholics were very much, if you like, the scapegoats. And another point to make, when Disraeli is creating this amazing career, by the time he dies, there are only 60,000 Jews in England. And the English experience the second time around, the first time around was pretty terrible, the Jews were expelled in 1290. And in theory, England was Jew-free until 1656, when Sephardi merchants came back because they were very useful, but that's a long story that I've told at other times. And when the website is up, you'll be able to look at them, and there are many books on it. So, Disraeli is in England at a time when liberalism is beginning to think in terms of emancipation.

Well, what about the Jews? And beginning in 1828, culminating in 1858, Jews are finally admitted to parliament. The debate rages long and hard, the bishops were violently against it, and in the main, it was the wigs, the liberals, who supported it, the Tories were against it. Disraeli crossed the floor against his own party on the issue of Jewish emancipation. And Bentinck went with him because Bentinck said, "No fellow should stand alone." And in a debate, Disraeli actually said, "How can you not emancipate a Jew when half the world worships him and the other half his mother?" Again, this kind of twisting of the phrases. It was no doubt that people like Gladstone, Gladstone, the dower, brilliant Scott, the very religious man who spent much of his time saving prostitutes and whipping himself. And you can imagine what Disraeli's humour and wit did to Gladstone. Gladstone believed Disraeli was the devil. And there were many in parliament who did think that because he was a spell binder, how did he bind these characters to him, or these young aristocrats? Was it the sheer pull

force of his brilliance, his personality? As I said, people either loved him or they hated him, but was he a ruthless opportunist? No, as far as the Jews are concerned. And remember, he's very, very close to the Rothschilds and to Montefiore. Now, what about Karl Marx? Karl Marx comes to England when Disraeli is already in parliament. Karl Marx, he's going to have a very, very difficult life financially. He was a bit of a snob. His wife's visiting card, Jenny Marx nee Baroness von Westphalen, and they were always dependent on help from friends like Engels and also from an uncle of Karl Marx's. His mother who was of Dutch origin, her sister married a man called Phillips. Later on, out of that family came the Phillips Empire. And he was always in touch with him for money. And he moved from house to house. Finally, he was left a legacy and they finished up in what is now Kentish Town. And the Marx family spent a lot of time on Hampstead Heath. Engels came to visit. LaSalle, who was a fascinating... Another German Jew who didn't convert, who created communism in Germany, and he would visit. Gradually, Karl Marx becomes the centre of young revolutionaries. He writes for the newspapers, for the New York Herald Tribune, he writes for British papers, he becomes more and more the leader of revolutionary papers. And not only that, in 1848, he writes the book that changes the world.

Can we go on with the slides please, Judy? There you have a picture of Heinrich Heine. Heinrich Heine, fascinating character. I think the one character that I came across that they both admired. Heinrich Heine, also a Jew who was in many ways, Germany's greatest lyric poet. And it was Heinrich Heine who converted in 1824. Why? Because he wanted a professorship, and when he converted, he never got the professorship, but he said, "Baptism is the passport to European civilization." And he lived most of his life in Paris, where he died in 1856. He is a character that when we turn to France, we're certainly going to spend a bit of time on Heinrich Heine. But can we go on and look at those little books? There you have Marx and Engels with his family. Marx, that is with his three surviving daughters, Eleanor, Jenny, and Laura. They're all going to become socialist workers. Eleanor, by the way, is going to reaffirm her Jewishness and become very involved in women's movements amongst the Jewish poor of the East End. Don't forget that Marx dies in 1883, Disraeli in 1881, this is just the beginning of the huge exodus of Jews from Eastern Europe. And Marx's daughter, Eleanor, who by the way, was a close friend of Israel Zangwill, is going to become involved, and she learned Yiddish so she could help the... Could help the families in the East End. Now, what is fascinating, they're all going to end tragically, they all made bad marriages. Eleanor didn't make a marriage, she had a love affair with Edward Aveling, and when he left her to marry a young actress, she committed suicide. There's lots of murk around these rather tragic characters. And here, you see Marx and Engels with the three girls. And now, let's have a look at Disraeli and Mary Anne. Now remember, Disraeli has married a woman of 46 when he was 34. That's, of course, a picture of him when he is much older. It's interesting, because he was mocked

when he first went into parliament with all his fancy waistcoats. And it was actually Bentinck who said, "Dress soberly, become a different kind of man." And from then on, he was always an extremist. He entered parliament always wearing black, and a black coat. And there you see him, in his traditional garb. And that I think, is a rather doctored picture of Mary Anne, and you can see that picture on display at Hughenden. One of the benefits of visiting Hughenden is that there are many pictures of the characters who were involved in Disraeli's life. And I'm going to digress and tell you a funny story about Hughenden. The late great actor, Anthony Sher, once played Disraeli in the film, "Mrs. Brown". And he decided to get into character, so he and his husband, Greg Doran, went down to Hughenden. He wanted to soak himself in it. And he banged on the door, because Hughenden is only open in the afternoons. And the chatelaine opened it and he said, "My name's Anthony Sher, and I'd like to look around the house because I'm playing Disraeli." And she said, "And I'm the chairman of the Richard III Society," and slammed the door in his face. She later let him in, because of course, Anthony Sher, one of his most famous roles was playing Richard III as the villain of Shakespeare. So, it's worth a visit, but as I said, I do find that it's rather a... Disraeli could have been different, I think, in many ways. He so was in love with English aristocracy. Now, let's talk about Marx and his Jewishness. But first, let's see those two little books that changed the world. Here you have it, "The Communist Manifesto." "Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains." And of course, the atheism of communism. "Religion is the opiate that is used by the ruling classes to keep the people down." This is the outsider who wants to smash everything. You see the difference between the two, Marx, the brilliant outsider with his rather dark nature, Disraeli the fantasist. But, Disraeli's fantasy, he manages to bring the whole of England in. He wants to win, he wants to take over society. Now, Marx has a very, very different attitude to his Jewishness. Not only that, Marx was a rationalist. He loathed the romantic side of life, in the true sense of the word. He was a man of facts and logic, and of course... Can we see the next book he wrote? "Das Kapital". He spent most of his time in the reading room of the British Museum. This is his book of political, historic, and economic theory that became so important. You know, when he died, only 13 people attended his funeral. Having said that, these are the books that changed the world. And when I first started teaching in the eighties... So, if you think about it, over half the people in the world lived under communism. And this was his idea, his dream.

Now, we know that Marx experienced antisemitism. We also know that he was actually subjected to antisemitic jibes by fellow socialists. You see, the point is, define Jew for me. Both Disraeli and Marx are converted, but this is the century of race. Remember what Israeli said, "All is race, there is no other truth." Blood, race. You cannot convert out of your race. This is a letter that Marx wrote to Ruge, who was one of his colleagues. "The President of the Israelites in

Cologne has come to me for help in a matter of the petition from the Jews to the deity. I will do it for them, repugnant as the Israelite faith is to me." And in one of his letters, the only time he doesn't, in his letters, when he refers to his Jewishness in a non-negative way, is actually in a letter to his Uncle Phillips, who he's trying to get money from. And he refers to Disraeli as a man coming from our common stock. Of course, they never met. Disraeli, by the time Marx is in England and established, Disraeli is Prime Minister of England. However, Marx is stateless after 1845. He does apply for English citizenship when Disraeli is Prime Minister, and it's refused because he was not loyal to his own king. And this is a... He writes a pamphlet on the Jewish question in 1844. Many writers believe that Marx suffered from Jewish self-hatred. This is what he wrote. "Secular morality of the Jew is egoism. The secular religion is huckstering. The secular god of the Jew is money. The real god of the Jew is the Bill of Exchange." He called the Paris Bourse, the Paris Stock Exchange, the Stock Exchange Synagogue. He talked about the dirty Jewish manifestation. In 1856, this is an article from the New York Times, "Every tyrant is backed by a Jew," but think about the New York Tribune, "And every Pope, by a Jesuit." Now, I'm going to use words that today, would seem totally offensive, but this is what Marx wrote... LeSalle, who was this very popular German-Jewish revolutionary, and yet he was friends with Bismarck. He was very helpful to Marx. Marx referred to him in letters to Engels as "The Jewish nigger." He complains of his Jewish wine. He also refers to him as "Baron Izzy". When Jenny von Westphalen died, his son-in-law, Lafargue, who is a French-Jewish socialist, in the obituary of Jenny von Westphalen, she writes of Marx's fight to marry because he was of Jewish stock. Marx was so furious, he broke off all contact.

Now, Simon Dubnow, now the great Jewish historian, he believed that, in a way, it was the hatred of the Renegade that he had left his Jewishness behind and he had deserted the camp, but it didn't prevent him from attacking the other Jews. For example, a man called Joseph Moses Levy, who was the proprietor of the Daily Telegraph, he called himself Lawson. He concealed his origins, and Marx mocked him for that. Marx hated his Jewish origins, whereas Disraeli revelled in his. Disraeli described his grandmother, Sarah Shiprut, in this way... She evidently was a very unpleasant woman and this is what he wrote about her. Did she suffer from Jewish self-hatred? "She had imbibed the dislike for her race that the vain or act to adopt when they finally are born to public contempt." So, you see what Disraeli has done? Marx has completely repudiated his Jewishness and he turns violently against the Jewish people. And one of the problems is later on, and I've already presented to you on antisemitism on the Left. Unfortunately, Marx's equation of the Jews with capitalism is going to have a seed that goes all the way through. And whereas Disraeli who realised he couldn't escape from his Jewishness, he wears it like his, if you like, an ermine coat. And of course, Disraeli progresses extraordinarily in the party. He finally, with his brilliant oratory,

his very acute political brain, he finally, when the party is in opposition, he becomes leader of the party in the House of Commons, because Lord Darby is in the Lords. And finally, in 1868, for nine months, he becomes Prime Minister. By this time, he's not too well and Queen Victoria, who absolutely adores him, she hates Gladstone, they are the two rivals that are going to dominate parliamentary debate for 40 years, she said- When Disraeli fell from office and she had to put up with Gladstone, she said, "He addresses me like I'm a public meeting." And if I may make a political comment, what I find absolutely sad at the moment, when you look at British politics, I'd like to imagine that some of the greats, whether you love them or hate them, they were great. Can you imagine what they would be thinking today, if they could look at the various candidates? This is not a political broadcast, I'm just making a comment on how today... I'm looking at very complex people, I know, but they did have a spark of greatness and they both wanted to change the world in many ways, for the good.

So, going back to Disraeli, he's finally Prime Minister in 1874. By this time, Mary Anne has died. He gave a great speech in 1872. He was also much loved by the English working classes. He gave a great speech at the Manchester Free Trade Hall, and they were on their feet screaming for empire. You see, Disraeli loved the notion of the British Empire. He loved the splendour of India. And in fact, he did something unforgivable at a dinner party at Balmoral, whilst the Queen was sitting, he stood to his feet and he said, "I am toasting the Empress of India." It was Disraeli who of course, bought the Suez Canal for England. He wanted to create an empire that stretched from Egypt to the jewel in the crown. And it was typical Disraeli, because by this time, he's in the House of Lords, because he's just not well enough to deal with the cut and thrust of the House of Commons. Disraeli was made Lord Beaconsfield. In fact, whilst Mary Anne was alive, the Queen had wanted to ennoble him and he'd asked her to ennoble Mary Anne, so she became Viscountess Beaconsfield before he becomes Lord Beaconsfield. And after he worked- And, you know, interesting, even after she died, of course, he lived for a while in a hotel, he lived for a while with the Rothchilds, and they come into the story of the Suez Canal. The Khedive Egypt was bankrupt, the shares were on the market, Britain wanted it, France wanted it, Russia wanted it. Disraeli loathed Russia. Was it because of their treatment of the Jews? That's an interesting question, not time for it now. But anyway, the shares are on the market, Disraeli has incredible intelligence, and he has to buy them overnight. Parliament isn't sitting, so he has to borrow 4 million pounds. He sends his secretary, Matthew Corry, to see Lionel Rothchild. Lionel evidently is peeling a grape when Corry is ushered in, and the story is that, according to Corry, "My master wishes to borrow 4 million pounds." "What for?" says Rothchild. "What is your security?" "The British Empire," says Corry. "You shall have it tomorrow." And he buys the shares without going to parliament. Parliament was in an uproar. You know, the high handedness

of Disraeli, and yet the people were on the street screaming for empire.

His last important role was at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, which I've referred to at another time. It was to try and keep the peace of Europe. Bismarck, the brilliant Chancellor of Germany who had a very close relationship with Disraeli. Evidently, on Bismarck's desk was a picture of Kaiser Wilhelm I, his wife, and Benjamin Disraeli. Benjamin Disraeli had met Bismarck when Bismarck was a Prussian working for the Prussian government. And he'd come to London and he told everyone his plans, and Disraeli took him seriously. He said, "That is the man." And in 1878, Bismarck is Chancellor of a united Germany that he has created through war, and he and Disraeli are going to try and solve the peace of Europe. It had started with a skirmish in the Balkans, the Turks had committed atrocities, Gladstone had come out of retirement screaming at the evil Turks, the evil Muslims, against the Christians. Disraeli had another idea. Disraeli and the Queen realised that you had to go for the balance of power. And he goes off to Berlin, he's not well, he has with him his doctor, his secretary, and basically, he holds his nerve. He and Bismarck... Look, it would take an hour to explain the Congress of Berlin and we will be doing it at another time, or rather, William will be doing it. And what happens in Berlin, he and Bismarck keep the peace of Europe. And not only that, Disraeli is awarded the Island of Cyprus for the British Government. And later, those of you who are interested in the mandate, that is where so many Jews were interned when they tried to run the gauntlet to Palestine. Now, when Disraeli got back to the station, he got off the train and he said this, "I bring you back peace, but peace with honour." That phrase was later, of course, completely, to me, completely made paltry by Neville Chamberlain. But anyway, his first visit was to the home of Moses Montefiore. We don't know what was said, but it had been Montefiore who was fighting for the rights of Romanian Jews. Disraeli refuses to ratify Romanian independence until they emancipate the Jews. And ironically, that was the year that Wilhelm Marr writes his terrible pamphlet on antisemitism. And he says, "The Semite Disraeli holds in his vest pocket the key to war and peace in the Orient." But Disraeli was— He loved foreign policy, he loved empire. But don't forget, when he was Prime Minister, he issued all these kind of reforms for the poor. He said, "England is two nations, the rich and the poor." And he also said, and people should remember this at their peril, "When the cottages are restive, the stately homes should tremble." Anyway, he's out of office in 1880. He's still writing books, he's still a romantic, he courts two elderly ladies, Lady Chesterfield and Lady Bradford. And when he's dying on his deathbed, Disraeli doesn't want Queen Victoria to come and see him. She demands, but he won't let her. He says, "She'll only want me to send a message to Albert." And he dies and is buried in Hughenden, and as many historians have said, he had the funeral he would've wanted. Half the Cabinet, most of the great lords of the land. If he'd been blackboard by all the clubs when he was a boy, by the time he was

Prime Minister, he could have entered them all. He probably had to pinch himself. And if you ever go to the graveyard in Hughenden, you will see that Disraeli is buried next to Mary Anne, but there's a grave next door of Mrs. Brydges Williams. Now, who was she? She was a Sephardi Jewess who'd married an English Colonel, and she loved his novels, and she'd written him and said, "If you become my friend, I'll leave you a fortune and I want to be buried next to you." And it happened, and that's one of the reasons characters like Gladstone couldn't cope with him. So, Disraeli dies without children, is buried in Hughenden churchyard, whereas Karl Marx is buried in Highgate Cemetery where only 13 people attended his funeral. And the question I leave you on, who was the one who may have the most influence on the world? These two angry, alienated Jews. One took his anger and created this cloak of mystery and became many people's favourite Tory Prime Minister. He's just eclipsed by Winston Churchill. And of course, Karl Marx becomes, if you like, the prophet of the 20th century. So, I'm going to leave it there and let's... Oh, sorry. Should we just have a look at the graves? I think we should. There you see Karl Marx's grave, it was recently desecrated with swastikas. What a strange world we live in. The man who hated Jews. And there you have Disraeli's grave in the churchyard at Hughenden. Well, thank you all very much, and should we have a look at the questions?

Q & A and Comments

Yes. Myrna Ross, Karl Marx by Shlomo Aviner. Yes. Yes, Heather Rock, "Is a wonderful British four-part series called Disraeli with Ian McShane." Yes, if you can get hold of it.

This is Rose, "I have a real problem with the conversions. If everyone converted, there would be no Jews. Hitler took everyone, even Edith Stein. My family have their origins to Toledo and the Inquisition and the Shoah, but we remain Jewish. Am I being too harsh?" Rose, you are totally entitled to your own opinion. I'm not making a valued judgement. Neither Marx nor Disraeli themselves converted, they were converted by two fathers who wanted their children to have an easy passage in the world. Don't forget, if Disraeli had remained Jewish, he could never have entered Parliament until 1858. So, it's complicated, it depends entirely on your own viewpoint. And I would say, it's a matter of your own beliefs.

Carol has said, "I have a big problem with conversion. In the pity of it all, I'm not religious, but Judaism is so much more than a religion." Yes, of course, Carol. You've got to understand that when the Jews are finally emancipated in the 19th century, so many of them fell in love with the outside world, and they saw the rise of racial hatred. Not just racial hatred, but the notion of race. And you are back to the old cannar, what does it mean to be a Jew? I've often said to you, if you are religious, in a way, your identity is easy. It's

for people who aren't religious. But still, is it culture? And and of course, today, we have Zionism and we have the State of Israel. For the Zionists, it's national.

Stephen, "Are you being too harsh? Whether they're origins and whether converted or not, they will have been considered Jewish as this lecture shows. Such converts acted like Jews and were considered by the world, Jews. The problem, as you should realise, concerns the fact that conversion for advancements seems to work in respect of social advancement." That's a complicated story, isn't it, Stephen? And I think that deserves a really serious, thoughtful answer.

Tim, "It seems like an unusual coincidence that both their fathers wanted them to become lawyers and that they were involved in politics." Look, there are articles and books that suggest, particularly those who came from Talmudic families, that there's not much of a stretch from study of the Talmud to study of law. I'm just throwing that into the mix.

Q: "How is Disraeli considered as a novelist?"

A: Today, Mitzi, I don't think he's considered a great, but nevertheless, I think he's worth reading because of the interest. He had a huge social conscience in his novels, if you read "Sybil". That's where he says England is two nations, the rich and the poor. I think the point about Disraeli and Marx, they were both outsiders, whatever way you look at it, and outsiders are always the greatest voyeurs.

Oh, lovely compliment from Jennifer. Thank you.

Q: And this is from Mr. Saphton. "Do you know if anti-Smites considered Disraeli Jewish?"

A: I think Marx is considered Jewish by anti-Semites. Quite the difference." Yes, of course, anti-Semites considered Disraeli Jewish. They think he's one of the elders of Zion. But look, don't look for logic in race theory and don't- You see, this is one of the problems. Belief systems are not rational always, are they? Are they ever rational?

This is from Karen. "I just saw 'Iolanthe' by Gilbert and Solomon and can't help wondering if they based Strephon on Disraeli. Strephon was half human, half fairy and he married a woman much older than himself. He became a member of parliament." I don't know the answer to that, Karen, but I bet you, because it's lockdown, that someone listening will be able to give us the answer.

Tim, "As far as I know, Disraeli and Marx would never, ever have met. They mixed in very, very different circles." Remember, Disraeli wanted

the English aristocracy. Ironically, the league of the just that Marx was involved in in England, of course, the majority of them were middle-class German Jews with only a few Englishman.

This is from Jillian. "I visited Hughenden Manor a few weeks ago. Fascinating to see the desk where Disraeli wrote, all the letters he wrote to his many women friends, and the gifts from Queen Victoria. Lovely cream tea too." Yes, it is worth going to Hughenden. I feel rather ambiguous about it myself. But then, I wonder if he sold out, as I said, for the massive pottage. Thank you, Judy.

Q: "Were Marx's children bullied for being of Jewish descent on one side? Do you think Disraeli married an older woman and didn't have children so they wouldn't be bullied?"

A: I don't know about Marx's children, but I do know, I would suggest that Disraeli married Mary- I think Disraeli didn't want children, but that's my... I'm not a psychologist, but everything, I've read so many books on him, I just think he probably... He was Disraeli, he was the one. They were both egomaniacs, weren't they? Both Marx and Disraeli. I mean, don't forget that Marx gave Jenny von Westphalen a terrible time. She went from poor home to poor home quite often. She was struggling. She was the daughter of an aristocrat. He probably had an affair with her servant, produced a son, and Engels, loyal old Engels, took the paternity on.

This is from Neville. "As I notified you previously, I own a jug featuring a picture of Disraeli and quoting from 'Coningsby', 'What we want is to establish great principles to secure the happiness of the people.' The jug was given to me by George Thomas, Viscount Tonypandy, who much admired the Jewish people and came with me twice to Jerusalem." That's very interesting, Neville.

Shelly, "If all Jews took the path of Marx and Disraeli's father and converted, there wouldn't be an issue of Jewish identity in a couple of generations." You know, we all worry about the shrinkage of the Jewish population. We are 5,000 years old. I really... Look, I take Simon Dugnow's line on this. I think we are the eternal people and yes, there are conversions, there are sliding and tragic, tragic massacres, but we always go on. We always go on. "Remember, Gladstone was English," yes, "but I believe his family originally were from Scotland."

Q: "What did Disraeli's mother think about her husband converting their children?"

A: Disraeli's mother wanted, she couldn't be bothered to keep kosher. Disraeli didn't have a good relationship with his mother, nor did Marx. It was the fathers, their amiable fathers, they were close to.

This is from Mrs. Helle. "Interesting dialectic or perhaps admixture between assimilating and identifying with the aggressor and rejecting the Gentiles around." This is psychology. Lovely. "Identifying as a Jew, and in the case of Marx, dismantling the oppressive social order. The struggle always pertains to how much assimilation is just enough to thrive and maintain a Jewish self. This also describes the Israeli diasporic dialect. Never again versus Obsequiousness." That is very, very clever.

Can you do me a favour, Judy? Can you send me that? Because I want to think about it. That is very, very clever. "How much assimilation is just enough to thrive and maintain a Jewish self? This also describes the Israeli diasporic dialectic. Never Again versus Obsequiousness." Aye. The story of the Jews. The story of the Jews in the Christian and Muslim world, I should say. Yes, of course, Adrian. Adrian says, "Disraeli was admired by Bismarck at the Congress of..." It was the Congress of Berlin. "And of course, what..." It was Berlin, not Vienna, 1878. And what he said, "Der alte Jude, das ist der Mann", "The old Jew, that is the man." When you think about it, the Chancellor of Germany is describing the Prime Minister of England as the Old Jew.

Adele, "Is there anything on Disraeli's grave that shows he was originally Jewish?" No, but I'm going to tell you something personal. I went there with my daughters and they decided to say the caddish over him. There was no one there, it was a very nasty afternoon, and we went there and my daughters decided to say the Caddish. Well... Please don't attack me for it.

Q: What book would I recommend on Marx?

A: Oh my goodness. The Francis Wheen is pretty good. It's so difficult. Isaiah Berlin wrote a book on Marx. That's an interesting story. He was the third author to be approached. His book on Marx is good. And he told Louise Namia, Louise Namia was a Polish Jew who never wrote about Jewish history. He said, "There's no such thing as Jewish history. There's Jewish martyrology." He actually wrote about the 18th century English aristocracy. And he said to Berlin, "Why are you doing this?" And Isaiah Berlin, he said, you know, "I'm doing it because I want to."

And Namia said, "Marx was a half-crazed Jew and took an idea and did it to death just despite the Gentiles." Oh, and by the way, as I said, when I look at the Baltics, I'm going to look at Isiah Berlin as a child of Riga, because he really does deserve his own lecture.

Yes, Martin. "Marx's colleague worked on what became "The Communist Manifesto" inspired by the poverty saw in Manchester. The library's 100 yards from the office of Chaim Weizmann, where he met Belfour just years before the Belfour Declaration." Thank you for that, Martin.

Isn't it wonderful?

This is David. "The Jewish approach to conversion is that Jews always retain their essential Jewishness after conversion. That's what I was taught." David, it depends how many generations. There are families in England who have disappeared. I have members of my family... Or, one side of the family's been here since 1640- They got to England in 1743, and some of them have completely disappeared into Englishness. It can happen. "Disraeli was a Zionist." Hmm... A debate on that. No real evidence. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could... Look, there are writers in this, why don't you put Disraeli, Marx, and Herzl... Although, Marx- Of course, Herzl's born in 1860 and dies in 1904, but you could put the three of them in a room because for a while, Marx... Don't forget that for a while, Herzl was an assimilationist. You could put the three of them in a room and let them discuss all the Jewish issues. That would make a very good play.

Thank you very much, Susan. We'll see you tomorrow.

Anyway, I think that's it, Judy. And can I just, before I leave you, next week, I am again talking about the image of the Jewish woman on screen, and I was talking about stereotypes, and I got a lot of comments, and let me explain. These lectures that we're trying to do in August, in the main, it's to have fun. Of course, stereotyping is a strange idea. What I wanted us to do was to smile a little and laugh a little. So, those of you who want to hear the next lecture, please wear with it your senses of humour. There will be some serious discussion, because I'm going to be looking at films like "Marjorie Morningstar", and the "Borscht Belt", but in the main, I want you to smile a little. So, in this kind of times, we need to. So, God bless everyone, and I think that's it, Judy.