

- Morning, everyone. Over to you, Trude.

- Well, good afternoon from a very dark, wet, dismal London. But having said that, I think Wendy's word should cheer us all up. We are a community, we are a family, and wherever you are in the world, if you're feeling, you know, I know we're all feeling a bit isolated and antsy, let's just stick this out. There's a vaccine coming and just be very, very positive because, well, we've got to be. We've got no other choices. And of course, today, I'm going back to Poland. And on your screens, I believe you have a map of the Pale of Settlement. My device isn't doing so beautifully.

So I'm completely trusting Judi because she does all the slides for me, and you should see a map of the Pale of Settlement. Now, the point about the Pale, and I've explained this before, those of you who say you come from Lithuania or Poland or Russia, don't forget that this whole area of land was the heartland of the Jewish world. You're going back to the 13th, 14th century, and right up until the 17th, 18th centuries, it really was the Ashkenazi heartland. It was the home of the great yeshiva. It was the home of Jewish culture. It was really the centre. But as I've said too many times, we are dependent on the outside world. When the outside world acts, we react. And then you have the weakening of the Polish crown.

And you just have to see from that map of the Pale, which is from Martin Gilbert's brilliant history Atlas, what happens when you are in a vulnerable country surrounded by adversist neighbours. And you see the Russian bear to the East, you see the Hapsburg Empire, and you see Prussia, and Poland is completely swallowed up. And it's in the First World War that everything changes. When the Soviet Empire, when the czarist empire collapses with the Soviet Revolution, and we've spent a lot of time looking at this, you have war. The Soviets hold most of Russia. Lithuania, and I'm coming onto that later, was actually conquered by the Germans in the First World War, and they do a deal with the Lithuanians in 1918 and allow them to set up their own assembly.

Poland, under Pilsudski, becomes independent. There's wars with the Soviets, there's wars between the Lithuanians and the Soviets, and also wars between the Poles and the Lithuanians, and of course, in the Ukraine, with those armies that we've already talked about. Now, this is very important. Those of you who come from Lithuania, and I know some of your families came out as late as the 1930s, Vilnius becomes part of Poland. Now, this is very, very important. Vilnius, which was the historic capital of Lithuania, is now under Polish rule. So that great city that was once really the heartland of the great yeshiva, it was the home of the Vilna Gaon, it is now under Polish rule, and the capital of Lithuania is now Kovno.

And we'll talk about that later. Can we see the next map of Poland, please, Jude? Thank you very much. And there you see the map I showed you last week, which gives you a notion of the great cities of Poland. Don't forget, over 3 million Jews are now living in Poland, and we're going

to find out there's another 175,000 in the new, tiny kingdom of Lithuania. Now, 80% have their native language as Yiddish. Only 8% say Hebrew is their mother tongue, 12% Poland. Poland. How can I really get over to the flavour of Poland? I mentioned last time that Warsaw had 40 different Jewish newspapers. I was doing some research.

Would you believe that in the kingdom of Poland, there were a 1,700 different kinds of newspapers and magazines, be they Yiddish, be they Hebrew, and a few in Polish, and every aspect of Jewish life was there. And I'm going to give you a taste of it by looking at some of the... Because Jewish life, every aspect, political... What were the major political parties within the Jewish world? The Sejm, when the Polish Parliament was created and Polish independence was ratified, there are Jewish representatives at the Sejm, also other minorities, and they formed what's called the Minorities Bloc. Now, there was, within the Jewish representatives in the Sejm, and at one time there was many as 60, the majority were Zionists or Bundists or Agudat Yisrael.

They're either going... And Agudat Yisrael, the Orthodox, they very much believed in the power of the state, that notion, when you live in a country, you live by the rules. But for the young, are they going to acculturate into Poland? Are they Zionists or are they Bundists? And of course, not only have you had the ravages of the First World War, you've also got terrible depression. The economic depression that hits Europe and the whole of Eastern Europe is pretty ghastly. And I already talked about the antisemitism. There were many antisemitic outbreaks, and there are riots against the Jews, because when things are bad, nationalism goes to the fore. But before we get on to the dark side, can we please have a look at some of... I want to give you a flavour of Jewish life. And the first picture you should see... What is the first one, Judi? Is it Jewish boxers from Krakow?

Slides are displayed.

- [Judi] You get two images. It's the Jewish boxers, and on the other side is the-

- Yes, yes, I can see it. And the other, you see a young, a very strong Zionist group, Hashomer Hatzair, the left-wing Zionist. Every aspect of Zionism is represented in Poland. And that boxing group in Krakow, they're part of the Maccabiah. So just look at those strong, young people. I can just see the edges of the pictures, Jude. Can we go on? You have to describe, I'm afraid. I think what I've got is a poster, poster from the cause that-

- Yes, it's a poster.

- It's looking at the safeguarding the health of children. TOZ was one of the largest Jewish charities in Poland. I should mention that the Polish state, between 1919 and 1926, adopts very chauvinist antisemitism. It's called statism. And as a result, there is a move to push the Jews out of the economy of Poland. The most important Jewish relief organisation was, in fact, the Joint. TOZ was a welfare organisation for the young, and you can see how Bundist, how socialist it is.

But I just want to have a word about the Joint because it's an extraordinary organisation. It was founded... It's the American Joint Distribution Committee, and it was the first Jewish organisation to disperse large-scale Jewish funding for international relief. And after the devastation of World War I, they poured an incredible amount of money into Poland and Lithuania. It actually had been founded in 1914 for Jews living in Palestine under Turkish rule. More about that at another time. And it was established with a donation from a prominent American banker of German origin called Jacob Schiff.

Jacob Schiff was a fascinating man, and more about him later. He was a banker. He was a businessman. He was a philanthropist. He made his money as a banker, and also, he expanded the US railways. He also sided with the Japanese. He gave a fortune to the Japanese war effort, mainly because of the... If you remember the Japanese-Russian War of 1904, 1906, because of the antisemitism of the Russians, Schiff actually financed the Japanese. It's a fascinating story for another time. He was a senior partner at Kuhn, Loeb & Co. He was the foremost American Jewish leader for 40 years. And his interests were incredibly wide-ranging.

He was the director of the National City Bank of New York, the Equitable Life Assurance Company, Wells Fargo, Union Pacific Railroad, and he also helped establish the Hebrew Union College and Jewish Theological Seminary, and he gave a huge amount to the New York Public Library. On his 70th birthday, he actually distributed \$700,000. So the important thing to know is that these American philanthropists, or the Joint, is very, very important in Eastern Europe because what the Polish government does gradually is to erode...

Look, you've got to understand the Jews were intelligentsia of Poland, even in the cities, and consequently, there was a move, as nationalism develops in Poland, there is a move to do what? The move is to replace the Jews with Poles. And let me just give you some figures. In 1919, there were 2,800 shoemaking establishments in Warsaw. By 1926, over 2,000 of them had closed. Now, let me go on with the pictures because I'm trying to give you a flavour of Jewish life. Could you give us the next group, please? It should be a picture of the strongman. That is Zishe Breitbart. He was the legendary strongman, not just of Poland, but he was a bit like Harry Houdini. He went on tours of America, he went on tours of Britain, and he was very much the man of muscle, the Jewish man of muscle.

Now, next to him, 'cause I also wanted to show you the beginnings of acculturation in the city, I'm showing you modern Jews here, you have Jewish filmmakers. That's Leo Gerbert and his crew when they're making a Yiddish film, "the Red Jester." But you can see they're modern. And can we see the next film, please? The next slide. Thank you. And that is Paula Varter in the very famous, probably the most famous, of all the Yiddish films of the period, "The Dybbuk." It's an extraordinary film that's had incredible impact on the whole genre of horror films. And you know, a lot of these actors, they finished up in America in the Yiddish theatre, Yiddish cinema, and finally in the in American theatre, characters like David Opatoshu. And the next one, it's Jewish jazz. Here, you have the Henryk Gold Orchestra.

He was the most popular jazz man in Warsaw. He wrote the two most popular songs of the interwar period, the "Tango Milonga" and "It's the Last Sunday." So I wanted you to give you a picture of a certain amount of acculturation. And could we now see the next slide, which I believe should be... I apologise. In the middle, I've just got a picture of me and nothing else. You should have a group of Polish Jewish writers. This is the Skamander group. They're going to be very, very important. You've got Mendl Elkin. You've got Peretz. Y

ou've got Uri Greenburg. You've got Peretz Markish, Ravitch, Israel Joshua Singer, of course, later on, the famous Singer brothers writing in Yiddish, but in America. And this is their motto: "We are the young, a happy, boisterous gang. We are treading an unknown path through deeply melancholy days through nights of fear per aspera ad astra." So I wanted to give you a flavour of certain aspects of modernity in Poland against what, the bulk of the population, particularly outside of the capital cities, outside of Warsaw, outside of Krakow, outside of Lodz, they are far more traditional. There were... Wait for it.

There were 1,400 Jewish schools in Poland, and the majority of them, of course, were religious schools. So the smaller the village, the smaller the town, the settler, it is the old traditional way of life, about 50% Hasidic, 50% traditional Orthodox. Reform never made it into Poland. So you have a vibrant life. And as I said, there are still the major elements within the Polish Parliament. The Bund was very important, the Jewish labour organisation, fighting appalling problems for the Jewish working classes, against the peasants, the peasants, the countryside. The harvests were appalling. You have more peasants coming to the countryside.

And one of the Polish senators actually said, "When the group come to self-rule, the aborigines must step aside." So you have quite a high level of antisemitism. But I think as you've seen from the young pioneers, the young socialists, they were fighting back, but against a backdrop of increased antisemitism. And where does it come from? It comes mainly from the church and also from nationalism. And ironically, it wasn't difficult for Polish nationalists to actually say... This is Grabski, the Polish Prime Minister. "The Jews have separate national aims. That's the problem. The Jews have separate national aims."

And although there was no ban on Jews obtaining government jobs, it was very, very difficult for Jews to get, just as it had been in Germany in the 19th century. Once you've got chauvinist nationalism at work, and at the end of the First World War, after that appalling calamity, you've got to see it from country to country to country. Now, this is from a Polish historian, Hitch, and he said, "The desire to economically marginalise the Jewish population in the Second Polish Republic was part of the national modernization of the Polish state, intended to mobilise in equal measure farmers, self-employed, middle class, and also the civil servants." Now, when Poland declared statehood... Can we see the next picture? It should be a picture of Roman Dmowski. Oh. What is that? Sorry. Judi, you have to read it for me. I've got no...

- [Judi] This is your last image, Trudy, with a gentleman standing in the middle of a crowd.

- Oh, that's... Sorry. That is a Bundist rally in 1926. Henrik Greenstein, yes. I beg your pardon. I'm working without seeing images. Thank you, Judi. Can we now see a picture of Dmowski? Now, the prime minister of Poland was a man called Wladyslaw Grabski. He had been the leader of the antisemitic National Party, the Endecja, and he was also Minister of Finance and Agriculture twice, and he had imposed anti-Jewish taxes. The prime minister, the first prime minister, was a man called Roman Dmowski. He came from a poor background. His father had been a construction worker. He was a bright student.

He studied at Warsaw University. He was always very anti-socialist. He'd been imprisoned by the Russians for organising student demonstrations. He became a writer. And in 1893, he created the National League. And as far as he was concerned, only one Polish nationality is possible. All his ideas excluded Jews from his projected Polish state. He believed, quote, "in healthy national egoism." The state must be all powerful. And thinking that the Russians would lose the war, he's become a very important figure. He's a very, very charismatic character. He campaigns for Polish independence in the capitals of the Western allies. He's very, he's very effective in Paris. He's an intellectual. He goes to Cambridge, and they award him an honorary doctorate. And in August, 1917, in Paris, he creates the Polish National Committee.

Their aim is to rebuild the state. He has a very bad relationship with President Wilson. His antisemitism grated on Wilson. He actually gave a speech at a dinner organised by G.K. Chesterton, and this is what he said at this speech, and it was reported in the press: "My religion came from Jesus Christ who was murdered by the Jews." He refused to allow any Jew onto the Polish National Committee. And Lewis Namier, another fascinating character who's going to come into the story more and more, he was the Foreign Office expert on Poland. He was an Eastern European Jew, a brilliant man. He was a professor at Oxford, and his specialty was the 18th- and 19th-century English aristocracy.

And he had a very interesting student, a man called Isaiah Berlin, more about him later on as well. And basically, Lewis Namier said that this man is a chauvinist. And because Lewis Namier had such influence on the British government, it led him to believe, Dmowski to believe, that in fact there was a Jewish conspiracy. So you have Dmowski in Paris, but there's another man in Poland who is going to be, in many ways, far more influential, and that is, of course, Pilsudski. Now, can we see a picture of Pilsudski, please, Judi? Now, that's Jozef Pilsudski. He was to be the head of state. He had come from the Polish aristocracy, and at the time of his birth, of course, his village was in the Russian Empire.

He went to a Russian gymnasium in Vilnius. You see the thread of all these characters. They're born under the last oppressive years of the czarist regime, they witnessed World War I, and these characters are Polish nationalists. Just as we are going to see it in Lithuania, it's the awakening of the fires of nationalism. He was a very bright man. He studied medicine at Kharkov, and he became involved in the Russian revolutionary movement. Just as young Jews were saying, "the world is suffering," he said, "we've got to get rid of the czar." He was actually

suspended, and he was thrown out, he was arrested, and he finished up in Siberia for a while. And after that, he earns his living tutoring children.

He learns about half a dozen languages. He's a very bright man. 1892, he returns from exile, and at this stage, joined the Polish Socialist Party. Initially, he was a socialist, and he was also the editor of an underground newspaper. Anyway, he lives this life before the war. He runs from place to place, trying to, under the eyes of the czars, in Lodz, he is there. He goes from city to city. He marries in Lodz. But what he's doing, he's setting up underground presses. He is writing articles. He is, if you like, the big hero, along with Dmowski, of Polish nationalism. Now, at the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, he actually travelled to Tokyo to see if the Russians would help the Poles in their uprising.

You've got to remember, and I think it's important when you're talking about Poland today, because, of course, there are so many strange things going on in Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine, many of you are sending me articles, at the moment when we are going through such a dark time, people become very, very nationalist. Never forget that the Poles and the Ukraine, the Poles and the Lithuanians, see themselves as having had once a great history. And as far as the Poles were concerned, they were oppressed by the czars. They had a small period of freedom till 1939, then they're going to be oppressed by the Nazis and then by the Soviets. That's how they see the world.

But they have this incredible Polish nationalism that goes back to a time from really the 1200s onwards until the 17th, 18th centuries when Poland was a formidable country. Remember the union of Poland and Lithuania, the annexation of the crown of the Ukraine? It was a very important country. Anyway, he anticipates a European war, and he needs to organise, he realises he has the need to organise the nucleus of a future Polish army because if there's war and the Russians lose, let's go for it. So in Krakow, which is under the auspices at this time of the Hapsburgs, he organises a military school, and in 1906, with 800 strong paramilitaries, they actually, in the revolution, the revolution of 1905, 1906, which I've referred to many times, in Krakow, he actually kills, his organisation murders or kills 336 Russian officials. And he now said, "In 1914, when war breaks out, only the sword now carries any weight in the balance for the destiny of the nation."

And meeting in Paris in 1914, he declared that the whole point of a future war for the Poles was to regain independence. "Russia must be beaten, and then what must happen is we have our independent state." Now, Roman Dmowski believed... They also quarrelled over which side they wanted. Now, Roman Dmowski wanted a strong nationalist state. Pilsudski was a romantic intellectual. He wanted to go back to the time when Poland was great. And when was Poland great? The federal monarchy of Poland. You know, Poland in the 15th, 16th, 17th centuries, if you look at the different nationalities that were there, there were Germans, there were all sorts of, and, of course, the Jews, and it was far more of a federation.

They encouraged immigration into Poland to help develop the state. That was far more

Pilsudski's notion, whereas Dmowski is a fanatical Polish nationalist, wanting to exclude everyone else. Not Pilsudski. He actually wanted Jews to be included within the Polish state. Anyway, it was on the 5th of November that the central powers after the war, they proclaim the independence of Poland, and he agrees to serve in a regency created by the central powers. Okay. So, but then what happens?

The Allies actually send him back on a private train to Warsaw. The collapsing German army hope that he will be pro them, but he's not. And he's appointed the commander-in-chief of the Polish forces, and of course, the first thing he has to do is to beat the Russians. So it's Pilsudski's army, the Polish army fighting now for an independent Poland, fighting Trotsky's Red Army. And he manages it. Trotsky, by the way, and I'm going to be talking about him on Wednesday, Trotsky believed he could have taken Poland, because Trotsky believed in international revolution, and he never forgave Stalin for not sending him reinforcements. But basically, after this series of wars, the Polish-Lithuanian war, the Polish-Ukrainian war, the Polish-Soviet War, you know what Winston Churchill said? "The war of giants has ended. The war of pygmies has begun."

So he is president under Dmowski. He sees Grabski. He sees Dmowski. And in 1926, the way the country is going, you've had the terrible economic depression, you've had an incredible amount of antisemitism and unrest, Pilsudski seizes the state. It's an authoritarian coup. and he is going to be in charge of the state until 1935. And this is important, because until his death, the Jews referred to him as Grandfather Pilsudski. He is, if you like, in charge of the state. He is not an anti-Semite, but he's an authoritarian. The Minorities Bloc can prosper in the Sejm, but this is against the backdrop of increasing problems from the church and also increasing problems from the students. And of course, what is going on with the Zionists?

And the Zionist organisation is becoming stronger and stronger in both Poland and Lithuania. You have Zionists from the left and from the right trying to encourage Jews to work with them, to persuade as many as possible to leave for Palestine. The tragedy of this, and in fact, 400,000 do get out between 1921 and 1933, but the tragedy of it was that, the problem that they were facing was that the British and Palestine were gradually going to close the doors, but the Zionist organisations, many of the great Zionist leaders came from Palestine to talk to the Poles.

Jabotinsky spent an incredible amount of time in Poland, and he, of course, created Betar in Poland because the left were mainly funnelled through the Kibbutz movement, and some of his supporters said, "Come on, we want to go, too, but why don't you create your movement?" And he created Betar, which is a double name. On one level, it's an acronym about Yosef Trumpeldor, his great friend, and it's also Betar, the last stand of the zealots. So Betar is created, and there are all sorts of military camps that are going to be carried on in Poland. And ironically, particularly after the death of Pilsudski, when you have a much more authoritarian regime, after Pilsudski's death, you have Smigly-Rydz, who is the marshal, and he's much more authoritarian, much more antisemitic, and it's at this stage that the Polish government actually cooperate with the Zionists and saying, yes, this will solve the Jewish problem.

We don't want Jews in Poland. Let's solve the Jewish question by sending them to Palestine. So you have an incredible irony here. And then this is where you get to the old canard that comes up so often in discourse with... You know that line I've said, the great line of the Chief Rabbi Sacks, "First they hated our religion, then they hated our race, then they hated our nation." The most appalling canard that they throw against the Jews and Israel is that the Zionists cooperated with the Nazis and with fascist regimes.

What you have here is a coincidence of aims. The Zionists want to save Jews. The Poles won't come out. So after Pilsudski's death, in particular, you have a lot of cooperation between the Zionists and the Polish government. They even go to have a look at the island of Madagascar to see if it could happen. Because you've got to remember, as the thirties were, after the Wall Street crash, after the death of Pilsudski, even though you've got this incredibly vibrant Jewish life, you also have the most appalling poverty, and there are characters in the wings who are looking at the situation and saying it has got to end.

And if you look at the student life, I mean, the ghetto, in the ghetto benches in the universities, I mean, from the beginning, Polish nationalist students demanded that universities should be protected from what they called judification. The Jagiellonian University, which is one of the great universities of Europe. He said, you must... This is the expression they used, "dejudify it," both intellectually and in terms of students. And the students, in April, 1923, they actually attacked the home of one of the most important physicists in the world, a man called Vladislav Natansen. He was actually unharmed. He was the head of Theoretical Physics at Krakow University. He was a great hero of intellectuals.

He was the Polish version of Einstein. Just as students bow at Einstein in Germany, when he was lecturing, they were doing exactly the same thing at the Jagiellonian University. In '23, the Polish government, this is under Grabski and Dmowski, they dropped laws sort of regulating the admission to university based on ethnicity, and as a response, it meant that not that many Jews could go to university anymore, because you've got to remember, outside the cities, Poland is a peasant society, so a huge number of Jewish students in the medical faculties. Ironically, I have friends who, it saved their lives, because of the numerous classes they managed to get out. Some came to LSC. Some came to London.

Some came to Oxford Cambridge. Some made it to America. They couldn't study at the Polish universities. The University of Lublin became a Catholic university. Jews were not allowed to matriculate. Lublin, a very important Jewish city. The great yeshiva was finally complete. The last great yeshiva in Poland was completed there in 1932. Now, after Pilsudski's death, the intimidation really increases. And one or two quotes. This is, "Today, we are no longer guided by reason and concern for the general welfare, but by bestial hostility and racist prejudice." This is a fantastic Polish hero, a man called Jan Nieczyslaw Baudouin de Courtenay, and he was horrified by the upswing in antisemitism.

And he said, "We have to go back to what we should be." And then you have some of the right-wing professors saying, "We have to deJudaize Polish science." And de Courtenay says, "This is thought to be patriotism. It is not just repulsive, it's foolish and corruptive." And he actually advised the Zionists to actually get out. He said, look, it's not going to get any better for you. And this is what he said. He said, though, "We want to dream. My dream is that those born Catholic and those born Jewish must accept that they live on the same soil within the borders of the same state." Okay. And of course, I mentioned last time when I talked about some Culver, the Catholic antisemitism in Poland, in the bishopric of Keilce.

Well, that's going to come into the picture post-war. In their weekly magazine: "Hitler is Poland's enemy, but in the struggle against the moral corrosion caused by the Jews, we had to admit that he is right." This is the Sunday paper. This is just after Hitler came to power. This is the Sunday paper of the bishopric of Krakow. They're quoting again, "25 professors, all of them Jews, have been stripped of their academic chairs in Germany. And that won't be the last. Only now do we realise how Jewified German academia is, and it's known that we in Poland are suffering far worse." Now, the National Party's German expert and the Berlin correspondent for the Warsaw Ghetto, for the Warsaw Gazette, I beg your pardon, agreed that the German-Jewish conflict, quote-unquote, "was an international private matter for the Reich."

So basically you have the right-wing newspapers talking about Jewish domination. The reality was the majority of Jews were dirt poor. In 1938, there was a week of Polization of industry, and it began with a mass at the great Krakow Cathedral. So this is what Jabotinsky wrote in 1938. Again, he was often in Poland. The British didn't allow him back into the mandate. "The Jewish nation entire and complete is heading for an encounter with an unprecedented worldwide catastrophe. There are countries where antisemitism and the expulsion of Jews has become an official part of a state order. There are countries where it's done unofficially, sometimes to the accompaniment of street violence, sometimes even in a polite way.

There are countries where none of these concrete effects exist, but where, among the masses in society, the same public moods that lead to these very consequences, and in the countries of the first and second characters are clearly and rapidly developing." So basically, you have a situation where it's really getting worse. And in Vilna, which is now in Poland, the great city of Vilna turns into a marginal city. Economic competition meant that the Polish trades, meant that more and more Jews are impoverished. In 1933, the branch of the Polish National Democratic Party opened in Vilna. "Jews are the enemies of the small citizens. Again, send them to Palestine." Violent clashes with Jewish students at the University of Vilna.

The point about young Jewish students, though, they were becoming far more militant. The Bund, the Zionists, they are actually prepared now to take the Poles on. And it's a complete turnaround from the notion, the stereotype of the Jew, which I'll be talking about much later on. So what we have, then, in Poland is we have the gradual, I suppose, disintegration of what was once an incredibly great civilization. And of course, we'll come back to Poland again in a lot of detail when we look at the invasion, the Nazi invasion of Poland. And don't forget that when the

Nazis invade Poland from the west, the Russians invade Poland from the east. Think of the notion of the whole dream of communism. Stalin. Obviously, there are many communists who did not believe that he was a proper, that Stalin was a proper communist. He was a Russian nationalist, but what did he really want? He wanted the old czarist empire.

And of course, what he did was is he's going to do a deal with the Germans. And this is such an important event. But let's talk a little bit about Lithuanian Jewry. Now, if you think about original Lithuanian Jewry, all these states are now divided up. So you have some of them now living in Poland, some of them living in Belarus, which becomes communist, and therefore, we have six years of destroyed Jewish life. Others of them are living in the Ukraine, which is either under Poland or under communism. So I'm now concerned with the Jews who are living in Lithuania, and I know that it encompasses some of your families.

There was a great exodus of Lithuanian Jews between 1935 and 1936, and many of them actually went to South Africa, which is interesting. So it's fascinating. I don't know how many of your families I'm talking about, but I'm sure it's quite a few of you. So once the regime has consolidated, as I said, Jewry has been divided, and in Belarus and in the Ukraine, of course, they are cut off from Jewish life. And it was in Vilnius. Now, can we see a look at some of the characters I want to talk... Can we see the map, please, Judi, of... You've got a picture of Pilsudski, I think, and I hope we have a map of independent Lithuania. Have we? Yes, that is a map of independent Lithuania. And now that Vilnius is gone, of course, what is the capital? It's Kaunas. Today, Vilnius, of course, is back in Lithuania.

It's one of the problems of Eastern Europe. Anyway, September 18th of 23rd, 1917. First of all, the first thing that happens, in the First World War, the Germans capture Lithuania, and it's a pretty benign occupation in the First World War. There are many Baltic Germans living there and after, and the Germans actually allow the Lithuanians to set up their own state. And the Vilnius congress elects a national council, and on February the 16th, 1918, proclaims Lithuania independent. The Germans maintain their occupation until, of course, the end of the war. And according to the 1923 census, the Jewish population was about 150,000 people, which is 7.5%. It was the largest national minority.

And this is important. It's about a third of the total population of the larger towns, 30% of the small-town population, but a very small percentage of the village inhabitants. Now, in Kovno, the capital, there were 25,000 Jews, about 30% of the population. So the statistics of 1937. There were 157,000 Jews, 75,000 men, 82,000 women. They are the ones who declare their nationality of Jewish, which also gives you an indication of the strength of Jewish consciousness amongst the Jews of Lithuania. and really assimilation. When does assimilation really occur? I showed you some pictures of some modern people when I looked at Poland, but think about the modern Zionists and think about the Bundists.

They are allying with Jewish causes. The poets are playing with the game of Polish-Jewish acculturation, but Lithuania is more of a primitive place, and the more peasant the society, the

less likely there is ever be going to be acculturation. The Jews mainly spoke Yiddish amongst themselves. A number of the professional intelligentsia actually spoke Russian. Some Jews could speak Lithuanian, but it never became their regular spoken language. You've got to remember, what is Lithuanian national identity? And characters like the ones I'm going to talk about in a minute, like Augustinas.

Can we see his picture? Voldemaras. I think we should see his picture if you can, Judi, if you don't mind. Now, he had been very involved in trying to pull together an independent important, Lithuanian nationality. You see, with Jews, we don't have to go very far to think about our history and our culture. When you're dealing with Lithuania, Ukraine, not to such an extent Poland, you really have to go back into history to find out what we mean by Lithuanian independence. What do we mean by Lithuanian culture? And the way they did it was through language. And I've already mentioned that very, very few Jews actually spoke Lithuanian. Now, so they declare their independence, and it's going to be ratified by the League of Nations.

They adhere to the minorities policies that I've already talked about. The first thing they did was to elect a king, a man called Mindaugas. He was born in Monaco. He was to be the titular monarch, but he never took the throne. And the prime minister is Voldemaras. And he later continues as Minister of Foreign Affairs until 1920. He is the representative of the new Lithuanian state at Versailles. Versailles must have been absolutely fascinating. Think about it. The Habsburg Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, the German Empire, they all have to be dismembered. Everyone with minority rights is there. And I suppose, in many ways, the most interesting delegation was the Jewish delegation. What on earth are Jewish minority rights? Do we fit into the countries in which we live in the West?

Are we a nationality? And this is underlying, I think, everything I'm talking about. What does it mean to be a Jew? Even when I showed you the pictures of those young Jews in Poland, are they really assimilated or are they modernising Jewish culture? The Zionists, the Bundists, the physically fit in the Maccabiah Games. What are we talking about here? And of course, most of them, their dream was either to create independent socialism in Poland, but the other dream was Zionism. So it's not really the same. It's not assimilation. When you're dealing with the poets, many of them flirted with Polish culture, but then the majority of them, in the end... Well, Mark has got a very interesting story in Russia, but many of them, of course, were murdered by the Nazis.

Anyway, he spent time, this particular guy, he's in power for a while, and his president is a man called Smetona. He's going to become more and more disillusioned with Smetona, who is a moderate. And he actually goes back to academia. Now, let's have a look at Antanas Smetona. He was born in 1874. He died in 1944. He is the first president of Lithuania and another interesting guy. He has to seize power to save the state in 1926. He was an ideologist of nationalism. Now, he comes from a family of farmers, and he had a long fight to make it. He goes to a gymnasium and he studies law. He was an interesting man.

He did try to have stability in Lithuania. In fact, the antisemitism in Lithuania was not at the same level that it was in Poland. Was it because the peasants were not yet... What's the word I'm looking for? Whereas you got to work, you had a group of working class in the cities of Poland, it was very difficult in Poland because you're dealing with a peasant class very much under the spell of the church, but it's a very passive population. I mean, when Smetona had, before he took power in 1898, he had produced a Lithuanian grammar book and then a more comprehensive one in 1901.

He's really trying to create Lithuanian nationalism, and it's actually tragic because there's no chance. What happens is, of course, that as during the terms of the pact, for a short time, you have Lithuanian independence, and then the Russians move in. The Russians move in in the summer of 1940, and this is where everything goes wrong in Lithuania because the notion of Russia in a country that has tried so hard to be independent, Soviet Russia, Jews are communists, and even though the Soviet regime treated Jews just as it treated everyone else, there were a disproportionate number of Jews in positions of power within the communist organisations.

So you had a year, and then Hitler breaks the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, wheels into Lithuania, and all hell breaks out for the Jewish community. In that one year, so much damage was done that when you actually look at some of the worst of the monsters within the shoah, I'm afraid you're going to find them amongst the Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, and Ukrainian population. There are even documents after the killings begin, the killing process, where the Germans send back notes to high command complaining that the Lithuanians are overzealous.

So it's going to come to a terrible end in Lithuania. 95% of Lithuanian Jewry are going to die in the shoah. So what I've tried to do is to give you a sort of background. Look. We can't predict the future. You can see characters like Jabotinsky who did seem to see it, but they weren't necessarily right. History is not determined. I don't believe that. I do not believe because A and B, C will happen. But nevertheless, what I've tried to give you is a picture, and I'm afraid I've done it without a picture. And I'm going to have a real problem now, Judi, because I won't be able to see the questions. Judi?

- [Judi] Hi, Trudy. I'm just having a look.

- Could you just... I'm terribly sorry. Could you read the questions, because something has gone horribly wrong with my video. I've still got me in the middle saying, "Waiting." So if you could read the questions, I will try and answer them.

- [Judi] All right. I'm just going to have a quick look through them, Trudy.

- Sorry about this. And Judi, thank you for holding it together.

Q&A and Comments:

- [Judi] Don't worry. It's a pleasure. Oh.

Q: From Denise, "Approximately what percentage of Jews lived in the shuttles in comparison to the number of Jews that lived in the main cities?"

- Are you talking about Poland or Lithuania?

- Well, hopefully, Denise will pick that up and respond.

A: Basically, look, in cities like Warsaw, a third of the population was Jewish. In Lodz, something like 25% was Jewish. In Krakow, 25% was Jewish. Jews... But in some of the... Jews, you've got to go back to the religious communities of Eastern Europe. In a village, if you've got a Jewish village, it's going to be at least 50% Jewish because of everything you need. I kid you not. I mentioned this last time, but the Kihilot was still running the Jewish community with help from the Joint. So it's an interesting picture. In a peasant society, there are still Jews working.

They are, if you like, the middlemen for the peasantry, but more and more of them are coming to the cities. It's an interesting mixture. If you look at towns like Bialystok, that was something like a third Jewish. Look, Jews made up 10% of the population of Poland, remember? So it's the largest Jewish community in Europe, and Warsaw was the largest city. New York had just overtaken it as the premier Jewish city in the world. I mean, I told you there were 14 newspapers. When we think about our paltry, our paltry things in London, it really gives you a notion of... And what I've tried to do, and I'm hoping to digitalize some films, so you see the footage eventually, but I'm trying to give you the picture of an incredibly vibrant civilization because that was what it was.

And personally, I think attempts to try and create it again are rather strange. It's over. But that doesn't mean the Jews are over. We just go on in a different shape. We are the chameleons of history. Having suffered that most appalling tragedy, I'm not for a minute negating that ghastly tragedy, but we are a people who know how to survive. And look how we've reconstituted in different centres. Never forget, in 1939, there were 9 million Jews in Europe. Look, I've mentioned something like 25,000 Jews got out to South Africa, '36, '37. Look what happened with South Africa. What a vibrant community that became. Think of American Jewry, Canadian Jewry. I mean, a lot of you are sitting around, and I'm sure you had family who came from this part of the world that I'm talking about. Thanks, Jude.

Q: [Judi] What was the majority religion in Lithuania?

A: Christian. Catholic.

Q: [Judi] Isn't it a fact that antisemitism is rampant in Poland today? That's from Monica.

A: Look. It's a big question, Monica. And whenever there's a chauvinist... Look, when certain factors come together, when there's economic, social, and political unrest, and chauvinist nationalism, antisemitism always comes on the rise. Okay? I think that is true of any country in which Jews live in the West. I personally believe the problem is that the image of the Jew, the stereotype of the Jew, is so deep in European culture, it can't even be expunged. And the irony... You see, Polish nationalists, and it's ironic in Poland because there are, well, it depends whose numbers you want to take. The Polish Jewish community counts itself at about 30,000. It's a fascinating community. At the end of the war, look, at the end of the war under communism, who was Jewish? But there were about 30,000 who stayed behind. Of the survivors, over 100,000 of them got out in 1945. I'll be dealing with this in a lot of depth. There was terrible antisemitism in Poland postwar.

But after communism collapsed, all these Jews came out of the woodwork. There were lots of babies given away that even a man called Konstanty Gebert, he had to set up a hotline in Warsaw for people who on their parents' deathbed, find out they're not their parents at all and that they were given away as babies. And I'm not talking about a few cases. I'm talking about hundreds. Can you just imagine? You've been brought up as a Polish Catholic, you've married, you have children, and on the deathbed of your mother or father, all of a sudden, "By the way, I was given you." Poland is one of the most complicated... Poland and Lithuania. I have more time for Poland, actually, I must admit. That's my prejudice. But I think Poland has... It's such a complicated picture. Yes, antisemitism is on the rise in Poland. Chauvinist nationalism is on the rise. But on the other hand, they're terribly proud of Israel. Our Jews who created the state, our strong, muscular Jews. It's mad.

So many people who know Poland inside out, and I was very fortunate that so many of them taught me, they said, "Never take anything for granted when you are Eastern Europe. There's always a layer. Nothing is ever what it seems." So yes, there's a huge upswing of antisemitism all over Eastern Europe. Yeah. It's funny, though, 'cause I mentioned to you also that Poland, which is one of the great museums of the Jewish world, is in Poland, and they've done it beautifully. It's complicated.

- There are a number of other questions, which I think you might want to answer.

- Oh, yes, please. Thank you, Judi.

Q: [Judi] Were Lithuanian Jews allowed to immigrate to South Africa in the late 1930s? This is a question from Michael. He said "My understanding is that South Africa shut the doors to Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe in 1930."

A: What I want... Some did get in. Now, I've got to do a lot more research on this because this is not my area, but I'm finding out some very interesting things. I know that there was quite a lot of immigration in. Now, I've also found out from a girlfriend of mine, Helen Frye, who's spoken on our programme. She's doing some work on Kendrick, who was the passport officer in Vienna,

and he gave out thousands of passports illegally. He did a deal, evidently, with the Rhodesian high commissioner. I want to find out more about this, and I'm going to consult a couple of experts, because I think this is a... And what I've just told you about Helen, she hasn't been able to get back into the foreign office records to check because of COVID. But this is something she's... She's researching Kendrick, and so she wants to do more on this, so maybe I'll have different information for you. We keep on discovering things.

Q: [Judi] How many Jews died in Poland? That was from Anonymous.

A: About 200,000 survived, and there were three and a quarter million. When I say "about," because if your whole village is wiped out, there's nobody to record it.

Q: [Judi] From Carol, were there more Jews in position of power in Lithuania and not many in Poland?

A: Well, positions of power. There were Jewish academics, there were Jews in the Parliament in Poland, and there were Jews in the Parliament in Lithuania. But is that power? You know, this is a very, very interesting concept, power. I've come to believe, and it's only my real belief, that Jewish power... I mean, one of the things that's always thrown against Jews is we have too much power. We have too much influence. I personally believe that real power rests in a sovereign state and in an army because all the power, the so-called power the Jews had in before the war, what did it come to? So be careful of that word, Carol. I mean, it's something one has to think about very, very deeply. Of course, there are Jews who have an incredible amount of influence. Look at Jacob Schiff, what he achieved. But power to save somebody else?

Q: [Judi] Here's one from Jackie Simon. Why didn't the Jews speak Lithuanian? Is this why the Lithuanian hated them so much and helped the Germans to kill so many?

- What was the... What? I didn't hear the first-

- [Judi] Why didn't the Jews speak Lithuanian?

- Why didn't they-

- [Judi] Is this why the Lithuanians hated them so much?

A: Very interesting question. You could make the case that Lithuanian is almost a created identity. When Lithuania and Poland was joined together in 1569, the Lithuanian nobility became Polonized. You know, Smetona, who I talked to you about, his father was a serf on the estates of the Radziwills. I mean, they were great Lithuanian landowners, and they would've spoken Polish or French. So the Jews always speak the majority language. It's a very interesting question. In Prague, what language did the majority of Jews speak?

What did Kafka write in? He wrote in German, not in Czech. Think about Hungary. Jews tend to go to what they see as high culture, and linguistics is important. No, not many Jews spoke Lithuanian. No, they didn't. It was the language of the peasants. They would've needed it if they were dealing, they were mainly the grain dealers, so they'd need it for that. But they turn to high culture, always. That's the Jew in the modern world. It's interesting, language. You can tell so much. Even politically, the Zionists spoke Hebrew, the Bundists spoke Yiddish, and the assimilationists and the international revolutionaries spoke the language of the country.

Q: [Judi] One from Maurice Black. "When you count the number of Jews murdered in Lithuania during World War II, are the Vilna Jews included in this number or was Vilna considered part of Poland?"

A: That is an incredibly interesting question. I will give you an answer to that when I've consulted my book. I don't want to give you a wrong answer. I'm not sure.

Q: [Judi] We have "Trudy, do you know anything of Jonava, which is northeast of Kovno, 80% Jewish, in 1897?"

- I need to have it spelled.

- [Judi] J-O-N-A-V-A.

A: Jonava. Look, I need to look at my maps. If you've got these questions, can you hold them? And can we think of a way, Judi? I suppose they could email me, couldn't they? They could email. But not too many of them because we've got to think of a way of sorting this out. What you really need is to look at big maps of the areas. Unfortunately, I've got them, but they can't come on screen. You need very detailed maps to work out. So I'd have to look at the area before I can give you a proper answer. There are some very good Jewish genealogists, you know, in London, in New York, that if you're really interested in going back to your roots, get in touch with the Jewish Genealogy Society. There's a lot of people now in Lithuania, in Poland, who do this kind of research for people. You find out all sorts of interesting things.

Q: [Judi] What was the name of the Polish intellectual who opposed antisemitism?

A: Oh, that particular teacher. Let me go back to my... I'll put that on screen on my, on tomorrow, 'cause my notes are all over the floor.

Q: [Judi] Why did so many Jews from Lithuania come to South Africa?

A: That, well, it's an... Most of them who came to South Africa came, most of the Jews who got out, got out of the czarist empire when Lithuania was part of the czarist empire. The Union-Castle Line stopped off in Lithuanian ports, and I think it's as practical as that. And then,

of course, when some family members are there or some members of your chevra, you follow on. I believe that 80% of South African Jewry are Lithuanian, but the big immigrations weren't in the period I'm talking about. They were between 1881 and 1914, when, if you remember, over two and a quarter million Jews left Eastern Europe.

The biggest destination, America. Then Canada, South... Britain next with a quarter of a million. And then Canada, South Africa, South America, and Palestine. But that's different. The aliyot to Palestine are ideological, I think the other aliyot, if you want to call them that, were Jews doing what most of us want: find security for our families, our parents, where we can earn a living, because the poverty in Eastern Europe... You see, we talk about Jews in power, but the fact that the American Joint was having to stop people starving... There were soup kitchens. There was terrible poverty.

Q: [Judi] What happened to Dmowski under Pilsudski?

A: Pilsudski died in 1930... Nothing. Dmowski just became an academic. Nothing happened to him. Pilsudski died in his bed in 1935. There was an incredible funeral cortege of Pilsudski, 100,000 people. He was buried in the Wawel Castle in Krakow. I've got footage of it, and one of these days, we will sort it. But please don't nag Judi over it. It's down to me, and I've got to get digitalized.

- Hi. I'm going to jump in and just say thank you for another outstanding presentation. We have Remi Paris, who's talking about innovation technology, in 55 minutes. So I do want to give Judi a break.

- Yes, of course.

- Before the next lecture. So on that note, I'm sorry, everybody.