

- What I've chosen to do before I get into Victorian England is actually look at the Jews and the seduction of England, because you will recall that those of you who read the introduction to this talk, I actually quoted Max Nordau. When he opened the first Zionist Congress, He said, "There's only one country in the world free from the taint of antisemitism, and that country is England." And certainly what is absolutely true is that Anglo Jewry in the 19th century and in the 20th century thought that England was something special. It wasn't always true. In the first settlement, the Jews came to England in 1066 with the Normans. They were actually invited in by William the Conqueror to be his money lenders. He created the feudal system, and England led the way in horror. England was the first country to have a blood libel against the Jews during the English Civil War. It was the first English Civil War. It was the first country to actually expel the Jews and also the first country to initiate the wearing of the Jew badge.

But the point I'm going to make, the first important point is that Jews were not in England at a time when England undergoes its great changes. When you look at continental Europe, when you look at the Jews in the Habsburg Empire or the Jews in Germany, they're absolutely at the sharp edge of modernity. England had its industrial revolution way before anyone else, over a hundred years before anyone else. That's what gave the British Empire its edge. They had a religious reformation. Henry VIII, of course, breaks away from the Catholic Church, not because any profound belief, but because he wanted an heir. And his wife, Catherine of Aragon, the daughter of Isabella and Ferdinand of Aragon, the ones who had expelled the Jews, the very zealous Catholics, she hadn't given him a son. In those days, it was believed that men had nothing to do with the determination of sex, it was the woman's idea. So it was the woman's gene. They didn't even know that word. So consequently, it had to be Catherine's fault, so he wanted a divorce, forget the romance. And he had an insecure succession to the throne. His father had usurped the throne from Richard III. So consequently, the Tudors needed a secure heir and his mistress was pregnant, Anne Boleyn. So in order to marry her, he had to get a divorce. But there was no way the Pope would give a divorce to the son-in-law of Ferdinand and Isabella, particularly because Catherine's nephew, Charles V, was now the most important man in the Catholic world and Holy Roman emperor. So in the end it was said to Henry, divorce the church. That's what he did.

It's going to take from 1521 to 1688 for the British to really sort out the position of religion. And what emerges in 1688 is no Catholic can ever rule in England. And you can make the case if every society needs a scapegoat then the British had their scapegoat with the Catholics. So the Jews are not in England at the time of parliamentary change, at the time of religious change, and at the time of industrial change. When they come back, they come back in very, very small numbers. And I'm going to explain how there was already a small community living here. To give you a note, by the middle of the 1600s, there were about five and a half million people living in England. In 1657, there were 160 Jews. By 1684, 450 Jews. By the 1730s, only 6,000. by 1800, under 26,000. So important to remember when they came to this country, they were very, very small in number and something else. They first came back in the Puritan Commonwealth and they came back to an England that was becoming very important in trade. What was it Napoleon said? "The English are a nation of shopkeepers." Well, what the English certainly were, and if you think of Elizabethan England, they were just as well a nation of pirates. But they wanted overseas trades, the beginning of the overseas empire and who was well placed to help in the creation of that empire? And it's a bunch of Sephardi Jews.

Can we see the first slide, please? Now, this man, Antonio Fernandez Carvajal, he was the leader of a small group of conversos. I'm sure you all remember that in 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella expelled the Jews from Spain. It was a tragic expulsion. Some went first to Portugal but in 1497 when the daughter, another daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, married the King of Portugal, written into the marriage contract was the edict of expulsion, so the Jews were expelled also from Portugal. Hundreds of thousands of Jews had stayed behind. Oh, ironically, 10,000 went to Rome, where Alexander Borgia, who might have been himself of converso origin, the Pope, welcomed them in for a price. But a large number went into the Ottoman Empire. In fact, the Sultan had a fleet waiting to pick them up. And he wrote to Ferdinand, he couldn't understand how they would expel one of their most profitable parts, one of their most profitable subjects. So anyway, hundreds of thousands of Jews had converted to Christianity to maintain their positions in Spain. They were known as conversos, or the more pejorative word was marrano.

Things are happening in Europe. In 1521, I've already mentioned Britain breaks away from the Catholic church. But in 1519, don't forget that Martin Luther, the first important Protestant reformer, nails "Ninety-five Theses" to the church door at Wittenberg proclaiming abuses in the Catholic church. Within 50 years, Europe is split asunder by the wars of religion and something else. Spain had become the most powerful country in the world. It was from Spain, of course, it was for the Spanish monarchs that Christopher Columbus sailed to find the sea route to India and of course, bumped into the Americas. It's the age of discovery. And what was important about the age of discovery? The shipping fleets were bringing back the goods from the new world, but also, more and more journeys to India. So what you have is a fascinating situation. You have a situation where countries are competing for trade. And these conversos, many of them would flee from Spain or Portugal where they'd been living secretly as Jews and emerge in more hospitable places. Holland had emerged as a more hospitable place because Holland, which was once part of the Spanish empire, had become Protestant and after a terrible war, had broken away from Spain. And of course the Dutch had become one of the most important seagoing nations in the world. They created a vast empire and they actually quite welcomed conversos who came to Holland and allowed them to practise their religion openly.

So, in England you had a small group of Portuguese merchants. The leader of the group was a man called Antonio Fernandez Carvajal. Unfortunately we have no picture of him, but we do have a gravestone. He'd fled Portugal for the Canary Islands and trading interests actually bring him to London where he settled. Can we see the next slide, if you don't mind, Judi? Yeah. He acquired property in the Canaries. He made many commercial connections, which in the end led him to settle in London. So this is why his family fled the Auto de fe, that's where he was born in Portugal, the act of faith where your body is tortured so that you regain your Catholic soul. So in the end, the commercial connections, he had a large merchant fleet. It allowed him to settle in London, and he settled in Leadenhall Street. And those of you who know England, London. Can we see the next slide, please? This is Leadenhall Street.

And can we see the next slide? By 1600, it's also the headquarters of the East India Company. There's going to be a West India Company and an East India Company. They're going to be incredibly important trading corporations. Just as you have the Dutch East India Company and the Dutch West India Company, so you have the same with the British. Now in 1649, he is a Portuguese, remember, he settled in London and he's one of the five people who received a contract from the British government for corn. He owned many ships. He traded both in the East and West Indies. He traded in Brazil and in the Levant. And what did he trade on? Remember England is a nation of shopkeepers. He traded in gunpowder, hides, pictures, cochineal, corn and silver and evidently, he brought to England something like a 100,000 pounds worth of silver per year. Now at first, he used to attend Mass at the Spanish

Ambassador's Chapel. He was informed against for not going to church very often. But the House of Lords, on the petition of several leading merchants, quashed the proceeding. And we're going to see that one of the reasons the Jews are going to find England a very hospitable place, is that England, the merchants in England, many of them are going to see the Jews not necessarily as rivals, but as helpmates. So in 1650, when war broke out with Portugal, his ships were exempt. And in 1655, he is granted, he and his family become British subjects. Now, in fact, the following year, his property in the Canaries was liable to seizure because he was a British subject.

And Cromwell, this is the time of the interregnum. You have a Puritan government, made arrangements for his goods to be transported in English ship under Dutch colours. He was very friendly with a man called Menasseh Ben Israel and he is going to be one of the three people who's led to the foundation of the first Jewish burial ground. He was also very useful to Oliver Cromwell in obtaining information about what was going on in Holland, because the man who wanted his throne back was of course Charles II and many of these Jewish merchants, those of you who know of the Rothschilds and the pigeon post, many of these Jewish merchants, they had agents in all the ports, quite often Jews, or secret Jews. And they were incredibly useful to rulers because they were very good at securing information. Now, this is the 4th of February, 1657. This is a diarist called Burton. "Though the Jews, those able and general intelligencers whose intercourse with the continent Cromwell had before turned to profitable account. He has now conciliated by a seasonable benefaction to their principal agent, Carvajal, resident of England." When he died, he died of gallstones, unfortunately. But Samuel Pepys went to his funeral. He was a very wealthy, very important man. Now what we are now going to see, but he's here, he's not openly Jewish. And now we're going to see that Menasseh Ben Israel who himself, his father had had to leave the Inquisition, he by this time is a rabbi in Amsterdam. Amsterdam, of course, was one of the great centres of enlightenment. And those of you who love Rembrandt will know that he lived in the Jewish quarter, he painted "The Jewish Bride", he actually painted Menasseh Ben Israel.

Jews had far more freedom in Holland than anywhere else in Europe because they were pragmatically useful. And what you're going to see in Holland, you had a group of very wealthy merchants. Then of course, particularly after 1648 and the Khmelnytsky Massacre in Poland, you're going to see a much poorer group. But it's the wealthy ones that are useful to the state. And it's at this stage that Menasseh Ben Israel is actually going to petition Oliver Cromwell. Do you have a picture of Oliver Cromwell? To allow the Jews back into England. Here's Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector. Now, this is the White Hall Conference of 1655. This is Major John Whalley, and this is what he had to say about Jewish readmission to England. Remember, Jews had been expelled in 1290. There was no Jewish presence officially in England until the period I'm talking about. And this is major John Whalley, one of the Puritan parliament. "It seems to me that there are both politique and divine reasons which strongly made for their readmission into cohabitation and civil commerce with us. Doubtlessly, they will bring much wealth into the Commonwealth and where we both pray for their conversion and believe it shall be, I do not know why we deny the means." So what you're getting is it's a two-pronged sword.

These people, these wealthy merchants, we're not talking about the poor Jews of Eastern Europe. They're not going to come over in any number until 1881. Important to remember, up until 1881, the Jewish population is not going to reach more than 60,000 in the whole of Britain and that's important. And in the main, the first group that come, the Sephardi, are going to be very useful to England and they're going to slip easily into English society. There were some London merchants who were worried that if a whole group of Dutch merchants come to England, they'd be worried by the competition. They

are reassured by a letter from the Dutch ambassador assuring that the Dutch Jews wouldn't come to England, only those escaping The Inquisition.

And already back in 1651, an English chief Justice Oliver St. John had arrived in Holland for trade talks and he'd met Menasseh Ben Israel. Menasseh Ben Israel was one of those incredibly interesting characters who dart out at us from the pages of history. He, as I said, his father was a converso. His father's family had been tortured by the Inquisition. He'd been betrayed to the Inquisition. With his second wife, he had two children. They fled finally to Holland where his children were given the names Ephraim and Menasseh the two sons, of course, of Joseph. And they had to acquire a Jewish education. But he's an incredibly bright man. He becomes very learned. He also marries well and not only that, should we go back to the picture of Menasseh, if you don't mind, Judi? And not only that, he becomes a printer. Amsterdam was the centre of the Jewish print industry because think about it; conversos, secret Jews, How on Earth do you keep your Judaism alive? Judaism is a religion of knowledge. He was also interested in what we call millenarian thought. There was a belief because 1648, the appalling Khmelnytsky Massacres, and there is a belief in Judaism that at a period of appalling horror, a messiah or a messianic age will arise that will save the Jews. So there was this sort of Messianism after the Khmelnytsky Massacres, Messianism was in the air. And it was also in the air for the Christian community because 1666, that's the sign, 666, the sign of Revelation. Believe it or not, they believed in 1666 the Christian Messiah would come again and the Jews were dreaming either of a Messiah or a Messianic age.

So Menasseh Ben Israel had been told by a Jewish adventurer who'd come back from South America that he'd found the lost tribes of Israel. So he's also quite an ascetic type. So what does he petition? He petitions to allow the Jews back, and he sends his petition. And I'm just going to read you a little bit because it's a very pragmatic petition. "How profitable the nation of the Jews are." And he basically addresses it to Cromwell. He's already written a book called "The Hope of Israel", which he has dedicated to the Puritan parliament. He has high hopes that the Puritans will allow the Jews in. "Three things, if it please your highness, That makes a strange nation well beloved amongst the natives of the land where they dwell. Fidelity they hold towards their princes, the nobleness and purity of their blood. So you will find all these things in the Jewish nation. Profit is a powerful motive." And he goes on to say, "It is a thing confirmed that merchandising is, as it were, the proper profession of the nation of the Jews." Basically, the Jews have been taken out of their own country, they're not allowed to own land. So he says, "Besides seeing it is no wisdom for them to endeavour the gaining of lands and other immovable goods and so imprison their possessions, where their persons are subject to so many casualties and banishments, they're forced to use merchanting. Until that time, the nation shall return to their own country." So therefore, Jews, if Jews are treated well by a country, they will increase the wealth of that country. It's observed that wherever they go, they're presently, the traffic begins to flourish. Trade. He points to Livorno, which was a city created by the Medici. He talks about the east. He goes through the litany of all the countries which have been good to the Jews and how everything has turned out well.

Now the point is it was debated in Parliament, but there is a problem. Why? Because we don't know what happened. Because the papers of that day's records were all torn out. We don't know the decision that was made. However, in fact, it was good because after Cromwell dies, he's succeeded by his son. But then of course, The Restoration. Charles II comes back and basically anyone, anything that had been put forward in Cromwell's reign was overturned by Charles. So it's good it wasn't there. It's a bit of a mystery. Cecil Roth has written about it a lot, it's very interesting. But we do know, and I've already mentioned that Carvajal was one of the characters, the conversos petitioned for a synagogue

and a lease was signed on Creechurch Lane. There's no formal agreement, so no conditions are laid down. So consequently, Jews now begin a new era in their history and it's really quite an extraordinary history. And the people who come in, I'm going to give you a flavour, Duarte Enrique Alvarez, Daniel Cohen Henriquez. He was formerly the Chief Tax collector in the Canary Islands. Dominic and George Francia, wine merchants in Malaga. They're also Spanish and East India merchants and ship owners. Now, when Charles II is restored, can we see the next slide please, Judi? Here, you should go on there. That's Menasseh Ben Israel's petition.

Can we go on, please? Those of you who have managed to purchase "The Jew in the Modern World", you will find all these important documents in it and it's very, very interesting. Here you see King Charles, known as the Merry Monarch, restored to the crown of England. And can we see the next picture, please? That is his wife, Catherine of Braganza. Now, when he arrives back, he marries Catherine of Braganza and she comes to London accompanied by Duarte da Silva as procurator and he is responsible for paying her dowry to other experienced Lisbon merchants, Fernand Mendez da Costa, Gomez Rodriguez, also accompany to avoid The Inquisition. So Catherine of Braganza coming from Portugal meant that in her train, a lot of wealthy Jewish merchants or converso merchants, remember, practising as Catholics, come over. Duarte had made his fortune in the Brazil sugar trade. He'd been born in Lisbon. He was a banker, he was a tax farmer. He traded in both Brazil and in India. He imported diamonds from Goa. This is going to become absolutely central to the city of London. He had agents in Hamburg, in Roux, Antwerp, Amsterdam. He was the merchant who held the greatest, he had the greatest credit in the city. In 1648, he was actually arrested when he went back to Portugal. He was arrested by the Inquisition. He was actually saved by the intervention of Charles II. Now, Mendes da Costa, another important character, was born in northern Portugal. He arrives in London with substantial capital. He traded in pepper. Very, very important.

You've got to think about the development of modern cooking as well, or the development of clothing. Look, this means, have you any idea how difficult it had been to import the jewels of the east, the silks, mainly over land? But now far more trading ships. the sextons had been invented. So consequently, look at the beautiful clothes she's wearing. I want you to think about food, clothing, the expansion of diet. Now obviously, this only affects the majority, the wealthy. History at this stage in the main is just about the wealthy. We don't know enough about the conditions of the poor. But you are living in a country where Charles II did still believe he had the divine right to rule. But what is happening is you have these useful people who can now come into England and practise their religion. Now, Mendes da Costa, the Lisbon Inquisition had arrested his wife in 1664 and she was tragically burnt at the stake. What happens? He manages to flee with his children. They all revert to Judaism and they then have a Jewish burial. The Creechurch synagogue burns down and they then petitioned for Bevis Marks which is very much on the lines of the synagogue, the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam. By 1670, 40% of the East India companies, excuse me, trading diamonds was controlled by Jewish merchants. And the company's agents in Madras were Gomez Rodriguez and Alvaro da Costa in London. And you also ought to know that many of these families were intermarried with each other.

Now, the restoration. Many Jews were worried that they thought there might be anti-Jewish moves amongst the merchants. But as early as the first year of his reign, Charles received a petition from city circles to expel the usurpers. There was a smear campaign. It's not difficult to whip up smear campaigns against the Jews, but believe it or not, this one, talk about false flag, that they were going to buy St. Paul's cathedral and turn it into a synagogue. And they also asked they pay punitive taxes. But Charles was interested in maintaining an active Jewish commercial presence. So he doesn't even bother to answer them. And he also knew that the support of the Amsterdam community had been very

supportive of the Stuarts. And so in 1664, the Privy Council, "So long as they demean themselves peaceably and quietly with due obedience to his majesty's laws and without scandal to his government." And also, you see, there's not going to be an edict of emancipation in England. That's another thing that makes England different. Does it make it better? Does it make it worse? We'll talk about that later.

For example, in 1667, the court of the King's bench, Jews might give evidence in court swearing on the Hebrew Bible. And in 1677, the court moved from London to Middlesex so as not to sit on a Shabbat because they needed a Jewish witness. 1672, a declaration of indulgence attempt to extend religious liberty to Protestant nonconformists also provided Jews protection, but perhaps only accidentally. But the point is they are very much an afterthought. So under the Stuarts, what can we say? The 1680s were prosperous in England, the demand for silver plate increased, Goldsmith Hall, the invention of brilliant cut diamonds made gemstones even more popular. And by 1690, the London polishing industry had expanded. This is the epitaph of Isaac Alvarez Nunez. "He far gained knowledge of mysterious gems sparkling in European diadems." Now, so what then happens is of course, Charles is childless. His brother James comes to the throne but James is a Catholic. Oy, oy, oy, oy, oy. So consequently William of Orange, Protestant marriage to the Protestant sister of James II and Charles II, his Protestant daughter, I beg your pardon, comes to England, the Glorious Revolution.

Shall we see the next slide, please? Thanks, Jude. There you have James II. His reign only lasted three years. His son is called the Young pretender, Charles Stuart. Those of you who love English history, do you see how the Jews slot in? One of the problems of teaching Jewish history is we have to give you enough flavour, although I know many of you know this well, of the outside world too. So, these are prosperous years and then in 1688, you have the Glorious Revolution and along with the Glorious Revolution, William and Mary, and along with the Glorious Revolution, you are going to see a whole group of Jews who are going to come in, who are going to be very useful again to the crown. Can we see the next one, please? Francisco Lopes Suasso. Very much the sort of we talked about. Being expelled from the Iberian peninsula. He's set by the late 16th century. His family were in Amsterdam, they were a rich, old Sephardi family And they, once in Amsterdam, they go back to being Jewish. He was the oldest son of another prominent banker, and he was probably the richest person of his day. Now, he is incredibly useful to the crown. He, for example, a notable instance is the House of Suasso actually loaned William of Orange in 1688 the money to support his invasion to England. The stories told that William asked Suasso what he wanted as collateral And he said, "If thou art felicitous, I know they will return them to me. Art thou infelicitous, I agree to having lost them." It might be apocryphal, but the point is it also gives you a notion of the self-confidence of the Sephardi.

Now, his first wife died and then he marries a da Costa and they had 10 children. And this is really the beginnings of what we later know as the Sephardi cousinhood, which is going to be added to by the Ashkenazi cousinhood, right up until the 1930s. The cousinhood more or less ruled Anglo Jewry. It's a fascinating community, Anglo Jewry. In many ways, it was very much shown today. Wendy already mentioned that we went to this memorial service for Lord Young. And it was done with great British style. As I said, there were two prime ministers there. One Prime Minister spoke. He had been Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. He'd had a huge political life. But he was also very much, he was president of , he was involved with Jewish care. He was involved with young enterprise. He was a man who believed you could walk both worlds, the world of the Jew and the world of the English. And it's an interesting question, can you really? But at this stage, you are only dealing with a very small number of wealthy Sephardi who are going to be important to England. And let's have a look at the next one. And this is Sir Solomon de Medina. Now he also came in the train of William III to England as

an army contractor. And he goes back to Amsterdam where he has his banking business. And he's not, he was a merchant banker, remember?

This is a quote, he was called the Jew Medina and during the war of the Spanish Succession, he accompanied John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, who is the ancestor of the great Winston Churchill and furnished provisions for his troops. Many of these wealthy merchants, and this is true throughout the whole of the Jewish world, in the Habsburg Empire, they were usually the suppliers of the army with food, with horses, with wages because they had contacts from country-to-country. And of course it also leads to the association of the notion of the Jews with money. Because never forget, the bulk of world Jewry is poor. But I'm talking now about those who are mixing in the upper echelons of society. And in fact, he is the man that is the first Jew to be knighted. And he was actually the largest contributor to Bevis Marks synagogue.

Now, I'm going to read an account. This is a very interesting book of "The Jews of Georgian England". "On Saturday the 18th of November, William III" I'm quoting "Dined with Mr. Medina, a rich Jew at Richmond" This is the first occasion that we know that a king dined at the home of a Jew. Now Richmond, those of you who know the geography of London will know the synagogue Bevis Marks is in the city. What is also true is that these wealthy Sephardi and their wives and daughters are becoming more and more lax in their worship. Samuel Pepys wrote of Bevis Marks Synagogue. He actually passed by. It was at, was it Purim? It might not be. I'll think about it in a minute. And he thought it was a terrible din. But the point is the minutes of Bevis Marks were in Portuguese right up until 1816. And what is also true is the wardens complain that women just chatter and they take up two seats in the pews with their wide skirts and that they hardly ever attend synagogue. The fact that he had a country house in Richmond, a lot of these wealthy Sephardi are going to build their houses along the River. Kew, Richmond, Mortlake, Isleworth. So consequently, what does that show us? It shows us that they're becoming less religious.

So can we go on, please? This is Sampson Gideon. Sampson Gideon was another one of those wealthy Jews who came to this country and also was very, very involved in finance. Now, also self-confidence. In 1760 at the accession, because of course, gradually we move into the period of Georgian England and the numbers are not getting very, very large. In 1749, Benjamin Mendes da Costa bought the lease and ground to expand Bevis Marks. Plus the Ashkenazi who were coming to England built the Great Synagogue. So there's one for the Ashkenazi and one for the Sephardi. If any Ashkenazi wanted to pray in Bevis Marks, they had to sit in the pews at the back. We also know that the number of couples who remarried at Bevis Marks increased rapidly. Remarriages amounted to half the total number of marriages. Now, why remarriages? Because these are people who had married in churches or cathedrals. When they come to England, they can now marry as Jews.

And this is from Manuel Vianna who fled Portugal after his wife tragically was burnt at the stake. "I resolved to move to the cold climate, a mild government of Great Britain, where my industry and the help of God, I acquired fortunes sufficient to trade to several parts and amongst the rest of Portugal, as well as for the sale there as to be consigned on my account to they", to Brazil. And often they were partnering with the British merchants. There's a certain amount of hostility, but it's nothing like the experience anywhere else. They also, we know that the house of Mendes Salvador, Mendes da Costa, Nunez, they all are becoming very important. And also in the East India Company. An Ashkenazi called Joseph Solomons dominated the group, the Mocatta family. And in fact, Mocatta obtained the status of permanent broker to the East India Company. He was a broker in metals, traded with Iberia and the Spanish and in fact the Spanish Portuguese colonies because they have converso brethren. So the

conversos, many of them are trading with these people who have now emerged as Jews and they are going to seek to come over.

Now, this is another quote from an Englishman, "The Dutch Jews", they're calling them Dutch now, "Are particularly useful in the bullion trade. They export the surplus treasure here with ease and small profits for themselves." So at the other point is that because the Jews are becoming so important in trade, after 1720, Henry supplied the East India Company and the West India Company with the dates of Jewish holidays and prepared a calendar for them. And Jews from Amsterdam would come to all the sales, particularly of Indian cloth in London. So they're taking them seriously. They found a Jewish hospital, Beth Haim. Three physicians are bought over, they have their own rabbi. And so they are basically developing a community. Another thing, one of the most important doctors was a man called Antonio Ribeiro Sanches. He actually converted and became the doctor to Catherine the Great of Russia. But he did write extensively on the tragic condition of his co-religionists. But also, something else. 1744, during the War of Spanish Succession.

This is during the reign of George II because after William and Mary have no children, the throne passes to Queen Anne, who despite having 16 pregnancies, she had one child survived till he was about 10, but she died childless, tragic figure. And the throne passed to the Hanoverians. George I who never spoke English, George II. Now, during the reign of George II, you have the War of the Spanish Succession. Maria Tereza, who of course is the Habsburg Empress, she decided to expel the Jews from Prague. And the Jews appealed for assistance. And the warden of the Great Synagogue, that's the Ashkenazi synagogue, was a man called Aaron Franks, who with his cousin Moses Hart petitioned George II. And evidently, they were allowed to give him a letter. He showed great sympathy. And he said, "It is not right that the innocent suffer with the guilty." And the British Ambassador, Sir Thomas Robinson made representatives to the Austrian government. Ultimately, the appeals were successful.

So you have a fascinating situation where Jewish merchants in London feel that they have the self-confidence to, as it were, even petition the crown. So they can give evidence in court, there are no ghettos in London. Of course, they are restricted from many things. They cannot become members of parliament. But then very few people could. You had to have property qualification. Catholics were barred, et cetera. But they are becoming more and more important in the city. And something else has to be said. Along with the acceptance and we know that some of the daughters had huge dowries. We know some of them now begin to intermarry into the English aristocracy. So basically, they are an acculturating community. And as conversos, they were very well used to mixing in non-Jewish society. So this small community that comes to this country through the Hanoverian times. And can we go on with the? He used to have Samuel Pepys, who writes quite a bit about the Jews, about Bevis Marks. He is a great diarist. He's interested in them. And it's interesting, they lived through the plague, they lived through the Great Fire of London. They're not seen as the agents of it, as they have been in the Black Death. So the level there, yes, there is a certain amount of hostility, of course there is, but far more acceptance than they're getting anywhere else in Europe, except from in Holland.

Now, let's go on, please. Here you see a wonderful drawing of Bevis Marks Synagogue. As I said, it was very much based on the Sephardi synagogue in Amsterdam. Can we go on, please? Here you see the Great Synagogue of London. That was in 1772. This is the Ashkenazi Synagogue. The Sephardi very much looked down on the Ashkenazi until I suppose the Rothchilds. The Rothchilds managed to marry into the Sephardi. I suppose the most influential Jew of the 19th century who lived from 1784 to 1885, was Sir Moses Montefiore and he became brother-in-law to Nathan Rothschild. Maybe you could



always make an exception for the Rothchilds. And also for some other very interesting characters coming into England.

And can we see the next photo, please? This is Benjamin Disraeli, the grandfather of the man who became prime minister of England at the height of empire. He was a bonnet maker from Livorno and on Thursday, I'm going to tell his story and that of his son, Isaac. Because Benjamin Disraeli did not just arrive on Planet London to take over the Conservative Party. And what I'm going to be looking at, because his story is so well-known, I think it'll be fascinating for us to explore the roots of his grandfather and his father. So his grandfather, the straw bonnet maker from Livorno, comes to England, becomes a member of the London Stock Exchange, makes a fortune. He makes so much of a fortune that his son never has to work. So, shall we have a look at Isaac Disraeli? He has the wonderful task of being able to follow his own desires and he becomes quite an important writer. But amongst his works, he wrote something called "The Genius of Judaism" in 1833. So that's what I intend to do on Thursday. And then next week, we're going to look at the Jewish emancipation process, which will get us into the Victorian era, et cetera.

Q&A and Comments

So, I think we will take questions now. Let's have a look. Big welcome back.

Tony says, "I found the Christopher Hitchens University lecture and his heavy in emphasis on Jews really worth a watch."

Jennifer. Welcome back, Wendy. on

Rose said, "I think it's a cheat to criticise this course, especially when it costs".

Brianne, Arlene. "Carvajal".

Thank you, Arlene. I do suffer from dyspraxia you know. I have terrible trouble pronouncing.

This is Monty Golden. "On February the 12th, 1993, the Guardian newspaper published an article by David Selbourne called 'Sacred Power of the Eternal Subversive' in which he urges Jews to accept their universal identity and stop trying to be English."

It's fascinating, isn't it? Look, if you look at these so-called institutions of Anglo Jewry, when the Board of Deputies were set up, and I'm sorry I didn't finish that. In 1760, a group of deputatos from the Sephardi community sent a deputy, a deputation, to welcome George III to the throne. The Ashkenazi said, "Include us." And that's how the board of deputies was founded. But very much on a par with, it was to emulate the English crown. When the United Synagogue was set up, it was set up with a chief rabbi to emulate the Archbishop of Canterbury and the bishops. Rabbis were reverends. They wore canonicals. And I remember when I was a child, when I went to synagogue, the wardens always wore top hats. Be English, Monty, be English. It's interesting. "When did the great division happen?" Look, England was the country that issued the Balfour Declaration. Don't forget that the major critics of it were Anglo Jews, but we spent a lot of time on that.

Yes, yes, Nicholas, the Jews, traders and bankers. Hence merchant bankers, yes. It was Simchat Torah. Thank you, I love it.

Yes. Oh, this is from Tony. "De Medina lived in Richmond upon Thames and had a shore built there, which is now a Waitrose. But what or who was in Mortlake, please?" I will find that out for you. I will. I haven't got the notes on it. I'll find.

This is from Judith. "My ancestors came over with William of Orange in 1688. Also ancestor came to England in 1780s. He was a cigar maker." Yes, they were very big in cigar and later cigarette making. Very much a Jewish profession. And the import of course of tobacco.

"If Holland was so welcoming to conversos and they could live openly as Jews, why did they want to move to England?", asks Shelly.

Quite simple; opportunities. England was emerging. The Dutch were a great trading nation, but England was emerging as a great trading nation as well. Think of the opportunities that were opening up in the British Empire. And also, if you think about the Dutch East India Company, the West India Company, those of you who are South African, think about Cape Town. Cape Town begins with a stockade, which was for the Dutch and English companies. That's how they expanded. And quite often, it was Jews or secret Jews coming out as Jews who manned these posts, trading posts. Also in India, Jewish community in India. That's what gave the Jews the edge in the age of mercantilism. They lived from country-to-country and they could converse with each other. They understood each other. Now be careful because I really don't want you to go away thinking all Jews famously. They didn't. But what I do have to focus on is that small group who did, because they're the ones who came back and they're the ones who were very, very welcome. And what we're going to see, of course in the 19th century, you're going to see quite a lot of Jews flee from the reign of Maria Tereza. You're also going to begin to see Jews coming from Eastern Europe, but small in number. They were dirt poor, they created rag fair. They were portrayed in English literature, sometimes negatively, sometimes positively. But it's not until after the pogroms of 1881, 60,000 in 1881, nearly 300,000 by 1914. And the British are going to introduce an Aliens Act and that's about Jews. What I'm asking you to do is to weigh up England for me. I don't know which way to jump. I mean, today when I went to David Young's memorial, I was seduced, I admit it but then I was set back and I will think about 1945 to 1948. It's a complicated story. But then, what was it Elias Canetti said? "There were no people more difficult to understand than the Jews."

"So there are only the rich Jews in England?" No, Paula, the community that are wanted are wealthy, but they are beginning to employ bookkeepers, agents. They have a rabbi, they have doctors. They're going to set up charitable institutions. So people who work for them come over and then gradually, poorer ones come in. By the time you get to the 1780s, 1790s, there are Jews fleeing into England. You also have some Jews coming in from Morocco. They set up stalls. It's fascinating. But the ones who first come in who emerge, that these are the new Christians who emerge as Jews, they are useful and that's why they come. There was actually also Sampson Gideon, who was a prize fighter, but his dates were 1699 to 1672. He actually, he was an interesting fellow because he came from a very poor background, but he became an important boxer.

Thank you, Rita. Thank you.

"Where are all of these amazing families today?" No, there are some of them still. And don't forget Simon Sebag Montefiore. The Montefiore's are still around, although one of them became a bishop. There are, the Mocattas are still around, the da Costas are still around, some of them. But many of them did intermarry into the English aristocracy. You know, if you read the London Gazette, some of

their dowries were mouthwatering. I think one of the de Costas had a dowry of 100,000 pounds. I'm talking about in the time of Jane Austin.

"When were Jews permitted to attend university?"

Very important point, Harvey. You know what stopped Jews? There was only Oxford in Cambridge in England and to graduate you had to swear on the King James' Bible. So it also stopped other people, dissenters, free thinkers. What happened was a group of free thinkers came together with a Jew called Goldsmid And they created University College London. the Godless, what was it called? "The Godless Institution in Gower Street". It was only after 1871 that the oath was removed. In fact, one of the Rothchilds went to Cambridge but didn't graduate. Was only after 1871. You see England, it's a long, slow process. When can Jews go to the bar? When can Jews become members of parliament? It's not going to be like anywhere else. Long, slow process. And through the city of London, the city of London actually elected Jews as alderman, as sheriffs. They were prepared to go unrepresented in parliament until the oath was changed. And there's a fascinating story of Disraeli. Disraeli was a bit milky on Jewish emancipation. But there's a wonderful story. In the end, he decided to support it and he makes this speech in Parliament when he says, "How can you not emancipate the Jews when half the world worships a Jew and the other half his mother?"

And Sandra tells us, "Jeremy Bentham still sits in his chair." Yes, in the Godless institution in Gower Street.

"I believe Aberdeen was the first UK to graduate a Jew". Yes. The Scottish universities are very different, Carol.

Roberta, "I would agree with David Selbourne. There is a much stronger identity as historically it would seem that the definition of English in English implies Christianity."

Let me say this, "I agree with David Selbourne. That is a much stronger identity as historically, it would seem the definition of English implies Christianity."

Can I think about that? I've got to take that one in. But what kind of Christianity? England, remember was, yes, you had the Church of England, but you also had lots of other sets like the Methodists, the Baptists, low church, high church, Anglican, Catholic. England was seen as C of E, yes. And religion was important in Britain, I would suggest right up until the Second World War. When does it begin to shake?

These are all important questions. And you see, the problem with Jewish history is it has to fit in, doesn't it?

Thank you, David.

Aviva is saying, "The title of your talk today is inappropriate and verges on antisemitism." 'Seduction of the British by Jews' is an antisemitic trope." Unfortunately, Aviva, I was educated in English public school and I am being ironic, okay? So I certainly did not intend any antisemitic tropes whatsoever. I'm playing the double bind, which the English are brilliant at. Everyone's getting cross with Aviva, but come on, we are a free and open platform. Even if I don't agree with you, I defend your right to say what you want, within the bounds, what are the bounds of free speech these days? It's an interesting one, isn't it? Freedom of speech.

"There was an influx of Dutch Jews in 1860 as a consequence of a row in the synagogue." Well, that's a complicated story and I'm going to be talking more about that later on. Thank you.

"Modern British Jewry" by Geoffrey Alderman is a very important book."

Thank you, Barbara.

And this is from Sandra, is that Sandra Myers? Hope so. "If anyone has the time, a visit to Bevis Mark Cemetery behind Queen Mary Hospital is absolutely fascinating. Think it's an East Ham. The tombstone inscriptions are in Hebrew and Portuguese and all flat stones."

Yeah. And those of you who have never been to Bevis Marks, it is extraordinary. I've been to the weddings there and the bride comes in with a candle. It's quite special. Thank you. I think that's it.

Hello? Judi?

- [Judi] Hi, Trudy. Sorry. Wendy, would you like to come online?

- Wendy?

- [Wendy] Hi. Yeah, yeah, no, I'm listening. I'm just curious about what was just being said now about you making anti-Semitic remarks.

- Do you think "The Seduction of England"? I called this title "The Seduction of England". Do you think that's an anti-Semitic remark?

- No, I'm just curious. Who said that? Who made that comment?

- Somebody called Aviva.

- [Wendy] So, Aviva, why don't we give Aviva the opportunity of why-

- Aviva, go on.

- [Wendy] Of defending her possession. Judi, are you able to open up, Judi?

- [Judi] I will try. I don't think I can actually give her an option to speak, Wendy.

- [Wendy] Okay. So, Aviva. I tell you what, we've got Thursday. Why don't we give Aviva, why don't you write something to Trudy and we'll debate it? Because I love the idea that we have freedom of speech and we no longer have freedom of speech, but on this platform, there is. The opportunity-

- We do.

- Maybe Aviva could actually write it down why she thinks it's antisemitic.

- Yeah, exactly. I'm curious to know, because I very much agree with you, especially, you know, it's just today and that memorial service and thinking just, you know, having lived in different countries and being part of different Jewish communities and seeing the different cultures and how Jews have integrated what we've adopted and adapted to. Adopted and adapted, actually, as well. So I'm happy to take that forward.

- I think it's fascinating and of course your experience in South Africa was so different from our experience in England. South Africa, Britain, England, America, New York.

- Yeah.

- Different, you know? Swaziland where I grew up really, you know, British protectorate.

- You see, if I was being ironic, I'd say you really are a ruthless cosmopolitan, which they always accuse us of.

- Yeah, exactly. People ask me, where am my happiest? "Where's home?" I say, "My shoes". Where am I happiest? Everywhere.

- Yeah.

- And funny enough, I saw Dennis Davis today when he was with his wife and his daughter and we were just talking about and she was saying how yeah, you know, the young people in England, everybody's so transitory and so temporary. And we grew up in South Africa knowing that we were never going to stay there because of for whatever reason. So, same old. Anyway, to be continued and thank you.

- Okay, thank you, Wendy.

- And thank you to everybody for your comments, you know? It's great that people don't always agree. That sparks discussion and it makes it much more interesting. So, thank you.

- All right. God bless. Take care.

- Bye-bye.

- Bye Wendy, darling. God bless.

- Bye.