Jeremy: Hello and welcome to Proles of the Round Table where we sit down, have a few drinks, and talk Marxist history. Check out our website at Prolespod.com where you can find access to all those, and a whole communist ebook library, along with a few recipes. If you want to extra support us, check out our Patreon where you can give your hard earned wages to a bunch of authoritarian statists in exchange for bonus episodes, clothes, and content. Find out more at patreon.com/ProlesPod. We wanted to thank this episode's primary sponsor who enabled us to buy this fancy round table. Big thanks to our sponsor, AIPAC.

Ethan: Thanks, guys.

Jeremy: Yeah. So today with us we have Talia. So what are you drinking today, Talia?

Talia: I am drinking Earthbound Red which is by Earthbound Brewery in St. Louis. It's owned by a socialist, he is a comrade. And it is a red ale.

Jeremy: That's awesome.

Ethan: Nice. Friends of the show, Earthbound Brewing. Nice.

Jeremy: So I guess who else is at the table?

Justin: This is Justin and tonight I am drinking Shit Talking Sour IPA from Station 26 and New Image Brewing.

Ethan: And then I'm Ethan. I'm drinking a Sapporo from Canada.

Jeremy: I'm Jeremy and I'm drinking Renegade's Mexican style lager which is...fine.

Alekx: This is Alekx, I'm drinking some Colorado Crash Ale from Durango.

Jeremy: And so you want to give us sort of a breakdown of what you're going to be talking about today?

Talia: I'm going to be talking about Jews in the Soviet Union, specifically, the supposed anti-semitism that occurred in the Soviet Union. And then it's briefly talking about the relationship between the Soviet Union and the State of Israel. And so I know as a Marxist-Leninist Jew, I have a lot of pressure on me from the larger Jewish community about talking about this topic, because they have been using this as a boogeyman of sorts to encourage immigration to Israel. And it's been used a lot since the 40s, basically, since World War Two ended. That Stalin was a huge antisemite, and that Jews should not be
supporting communism or the Soviet Union. But I'm used to it. I am an outspoken anti-Zionist Jew, so the larger Jewish community hates me anyway. So here I am.

**Jeremy**: Talia: braver than US Marines.

**Ethan**: Thank you for your service. (Laughter)

**Alekx**: Thank you. Giving you the red salute.

**Jeremy**: So I guess where do you want to begin?

**Talia**: 500 BCE. (Laughter)

**Ethan**: It's like a whole other art episode, like (mockingly) “Oh we’re gonna start thousands and thousands of years ago.”

**Justin**: Here we go again. (Laughter)

**Talia**: Judaism predates Christianity and Islam and it started around 500 BCE in the Middle East. And what set it apart from the other tribes in the area was that it's monotheistic, which means they only believed in one god, other tribes believed in multiple gods, which is polytheistic. So other tribes are like, “We don't trust these people. Why do they only believe in one god? They're not getting tattoos. They're not mutilating their bodies, I don't understand who these people are.” So they were seen as outsiders, not to be trusted. So it was that way for years and years and years. And back then, there were four major holidays... we just celebrated Shavuot last night actually, which is the spring holiday of sorts. So during this, Jews from all around would come to the temple and bring animals to sacrifice to the high priests. And that's how Judaism was up until 70 CE, when the Christian Romans destroyed the Second Temple and the only thing that’s remaining of that is the Western Wall, which is in Jerusalem still. And it's been fought over big time. It’s super complicated.

**Ethan**: Well, that's why we're here. That's why we're here to do an episode on it.

**Jeremy**: We're going to solve all these problems tonight. (Laughter)

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**Talia**: So after the Second Temple was destroyed, basically the diaspora was born. Jews fled from the Middle East, some went to North Africa and other parts of the Middle East, Europe and Spain, and they had to learn how to survive without this temple, without this one place they all went to. And this is where rabbis start becoming the leader of the Jewish communities wherever they're at. So the Jews that went to Eastern Europe, they had the language of Yiddish which is a derivative of German, and they're called Ashkenazi, and that's who will primarily be talking about because they were in Russia. Sephardi, they went to Spain and their language is Ladino, which is a derivative of Spanish. And then the Mizrahi are the Middle Eastern and North African Jews and they used Arabic but use the Al alphabet, which is the Hebrew alphabet. So, over time, Christianity has mainly been leading the charge of anti-semitism, they've placed economic restrictions on Jews by making them money lenders and tax collectors which ties into the whole stereotypical Jew who’s money hungry and all that, so that's really the Christians’ fault.
Jeremy: Yeah, that was a huge thing and it was all across Europe, but specifically in the UK, they, it wasn't the UK at that time, England. They weren't allowed to sell things, like be merchants, which is why they became money lenders and tax collectors.

Ethan: Yeah, they weren't allowed to loan out money, Christians weren't.

Jeremy: Christians weren't, yeah, that's exactly the other side of it, is that Christians were not allowed to loan with interest because that was usury. So Jewish people, that fell to the Jewish people, but on the other side, they also were not allowed to sell property, to sell goods at markets.

Ethan: Participate in the market, absolutely. Fuckin' bullshit.

Talia: They got screwed, Jews have got screwed for a long time.

Justin: Since 500 BCE. (Laughter)

Talia: Yeah. And they were also banned from owning land. Yeah, so in the 1400s, the Jews were kicked out of Spain due to blood purity laws and part of this, I read this really good book called *Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean*. (Laughter) And it just talks about these Jews who fled Spain and became pirates and went to Costa Rica, Puerto Rico and places like that, and it's a good book.

Ethan: We'll have a link in the episode description. (Laughter)

Talia: They were also blamed for the black plague. This is a pretty horrible part in Jewish history. So when the black plague happened, we all know that it's the Christians' fault for killing all the cats who were killing... the rats were the ones who had the black plague but Christians are stupid and think it's the cats. (Laughter). I'm a cat person so this really pisses me off.

Alekx: Yes. (Laughter)

Ethan: Christians have a real bad track record of everything. (Laughter)

Alekx: Of most things.


Talia: So, these Christians were saying that Jews poisoned the water wells, but they were less affected, the Jews were less affected by the black plague because they were put into ghettos so it wasn't spread around them and in Judaism, you're always supposed to wash your hands: after you go to the bathroom, before you eat, after you've handled a dead body, you're always supposed to wash your hands.

Ethan: Well, and at this...

Justin: I mean, to be fair, I always wash my hands after I'd handle a dead body also, so... (Laughter)

Ethan: So I dunno why that's so radical. But like we talked about in the art episode, at this point in Europe, people were just shitting in the streets.
Justin: Europe was a dirty-ass place.

Ethan: Yeah, well, they were just disgusting. So yeah, the fact that Jewish people were being radical by, you know, practicing basic hygiene...

Aleks: Crazy, wild. (Laughter)

Talia: Cause cleanliness is a pretty fucking big deal in Judaism. And so, over 300 pogroms took place and pogroms means a massacre. So over 300 of those took place and over 100 Jewish communities were completely exterminated.

Ethan: Over what period, in the 14th century?

Talia: Yeah, during the black plague. Okay, so basically, there's always been pogroms going on after the Black Plague and trying to destroy Judaism, trying to make them convert. And they've always been the minority and they've always been the scapegoats for economic problems and placed into the ghettos and just trying to eliminate them from society. So that's my overview. Really fun history of the Jews.

Ethan: Not... yeah, not great.

Talia: So now we get, we're going to go into Jews in Tsarist Russia, which is pretty terrible.

Ethan: Also not great. (Laughter)

Talia: So anti-semitism was brought forward by the national bourgeoisie in Tsarist Russia. So many of the Jews spoke just Yiddish, and they weren't allowed to learn Russian. And you know, Russian is the primary language so they're completely eliminated from getting any jobs in Russian society. They were barred from having a successful life. And I really want to talk about Trotsky right now (Laughter)

Jeremy: Justin laser eyes (Laughter)

Talia: So, the thing about Yiddish is really important and Trotsky refused to learn Yiddish because he thought it was beneath him.

Proles: Wooooaaaah (groans)

Talia: His dad was a freakin' kulak! And then he complained about not getting along with the other Jews around him because he couldn't understand what they were saying. It's like, “Fuck you, dude!” So that's my whole spiel about Trotsky not wanting to learn Yiddish.

Ethan: That's it. Thanks for listening. (Laughter)

Talia: So then the pale of settlement was set up, which is where Tsar Alexander the First isolated the Jews from the rest of society, he banned them from living in rural Russia because he didn't want them to be farmers. And then education was really restricted for Jews through the use of quotas because an educated Jewish population, as we will see, results in revolution. (Airhorn noise) And then pogroms were a tool used by the Tsar to keep the Jews in check. Between October 18 and October 29, 1905,
pogroms occurred in 690 towns, settlements, and villages and tens of thousands of Jews were killed or maimed and this is all done by the Tsar and his government.

Jeremy: As an aside, I think the last book that Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote was a history of Tsarist Russia. And he was basically like, “Actually the policy against the Jews was a good thing.” Not, not a joke. He was a raging anti-semite.

Ethan: Yeah, Solzhenitsyn was... he's trash for a number of reasons. But that's a huge one, just a fucking horrific anti-semite.

Jeremy: Not surprising, an anti-Soviet anti-semite, they go together.

Ethan: And that's why when you see all of these, I mean, there was a thing that was going around Twitter recently, it was someone talking about how sad it was that the royal family got murdered and all this stuff. And I mean, it specifically... it happens a lot in Orthodox Christianity but you see it in Catholics too, just this... I mean, in the Orthodox Church, the Tsar and his family have been canonized, literally canonized and there's this, yeah, exactly, and there's this whole thing about like, “Well listen, it wasn't actually that bad. He educated his people and all this stuff.” And one, that's not true. And two, it's completely ignoring this horrific history of, yeah, I mean, specifically against Jewish people, but also all these other ethnic minorities. So basically fuck the Tsar.

Talia: So his chief prosecutor... prosecutors stated, “The government's policy is this, we must pursue a policy that will make one third of the Jews embrace Christianity, will lead to the extinction of another third of the Jewish population, and will compell the last third to emigrate.” So they wanted all the Jews just out and a lot of them left because they're like, “Fuck this, I don't want to get killed because of who I am.” And I found this quote from this Jewish neighbor of Leo Tolstoy, who wrote “Tolstoy was indignant at the Jewish pogroms. The Russian people were not to blame for the pogroms and the Jews knew that.” So the people were in support of the Jews. It was just the government that was a piece of shit. So around this time in the late 1800s, there was Theodore Herzl who put forward this new thought of Zionism and going to Israel to create a Jewish state.

Ethan: We could do a whole episode on that.

Talia: Yeah, well, I think Proles of the Minyan are gonna be doing something.

Ethan: You guys are... we'll leave that to you, and then we'll promote you. Mercilessly.

Talia: So in response to this bullshit idea of Zionism, the Jewish Bund was formed in 1897. And it was a group of Jews who were committed to ‘Doikayt’, which is the Yiddish word for ‘here-ness’. So their thing was, there’s a new movement called the Neo-Bundists, which I’m sort of a part of, and I sort of support is that what matters is that we’re here, wherever we are, it's a Jewish community, we don't need to be stealing other people's land to have our own Jewish space. And they also put forward, you have to uphold Yiddish and you have to uphold Jewish diaspora culture. And I’m just focusing on Yiddish because this is Ashkenazi Jews, the Sephardi Jews and the Mizrahi Jews also have movements like this as well. And the Bund completely rejected Hebrew, which wasn't really a language, an official language, a secular language until the late 1800s. And what's really gross is that now when you convert or when you go to temple, you're not taught about the Bund. You're told that Yiddish is an old language, it's something your grandparents speak, it doesn't matter. But it’s the complete opposite,
they're trying to erase this radical Jewish movement. So there's a song that the Bund wrote that I really frickin love. And it's called “Oh You Foolish Little Zionists”, I'll just read a little of it. “Oh you foolish little Zionists with your utopian mentality, you better go down to the factory and learn the workers reality. You want to take us to Jerusalem so we can die as a nation, we'd rather stay in the diaspora and fight for our liberation.”

**Aleks**: Fuck yes!

**Ethan**: Outro music? (Laughter)

**Talia**: It is kick-ass and it's in Yiddish, it's so good. I freakin' love it. And in Yiddish, it was so powerful. And I think that's why, it's the language of the working class Jew. And I think that's why so many Zionists are scared of it, because it hearkens back to a really radical time in Jewish history. So from there, I'm going to talk a little about the Jews during the Revolution and the Civil War. This is when things start to get a little spicy. Okay, so in 1914, Lenin wrote that no nationality in Russia is as oppressed and persecuted as the Jews. And then during the revolution, there was an overabundance of Jews involved, many in leadership positions. Immediately the educational quotas were lifted, ghettos were abolished, because Lenin is the coolest. And then in July of 1918, the government called for the destruction of the anti-semitic movement at its roots by forbidding pogromists and persons inciting to pogrom. The government actively fought against anti-semitism during the Civil War through the press, including publishing over 100 books and brochures opposing anti-semitism. And then there's the White Army.

**Jeremy**: Very good people. Some fine people. (Laughter)

**Talia**: Fucking assholes. So, America sided with the White Army. They had one pogrom that ended up killing 60,000 Jews.

**Ethan**: Jesus Christ.

**Talia**: And altogether 180,000 Jews were killed and 300,000 Jewish children were orphaned. The White Army also carried forth that conspiracy of Judeo-Bolshevism and *The Protocols of Zion*, which Henry Ford had in every single one of his shops. And *The Protocols of Zion* is something where... it was a made-up book that put forward that Jews were controlling the world that there is some huge global conspiracy, that Jews were going to take over. And this is also the reason why a lot of these pogroms existed, and partly the basis of the Nazis, why they came to power. And we even see that sometimes referenced today and especially, you have to be careful when you talk about Israel because sometimes when people talk about Israel they start to quote *Protocols of Zion* and it’s like, “Uhhh, don't do that.” It's completely false so...

**Ethan**: When people are doing that it's, that's the narrative of like, “Oh, Israel has all this influence and they're controlling a lot of the Western countries,” and that sort of thing, right?

**Talia**: And it's really America controls Israel, and Israel will do its bidding. And it gets super hard to talk about without sounding horrible, but you just have to be... it's a very fine line you tread when talking about Israel and when talking about Jews. But it is anti-semitic to think all Jews are Zionist. Just want to put that out there. So *The Protocols of Zion* also claimed that the October Revolution was a Jewish plot. So, in 1920, Winston Churchill gave a speech about Zionism versus Bolshevism, which pushed for Jews
to be Zionist and not Bolsheviks. Big surprise. This is his quote, if you needed to have any more reason that Churchill is a piece of shit.

Jeremy: I don't, but please go on. (Laughter)

Talia: “This movement among the Jews is not new, from the days of Spartacus to those of Karl Marx and down to Trotsky, Béla Kun, Rosa Luxemburg, and Emma Goldman. This worldwide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilization and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, of envious malevolence, and impossible equality has been steadily growing. It played as a modern writer has so ably shown a definitely recognizable part in the tragedy of the French Revolution. It has been the main spring of every subversive movement during the 19th century. And now it leads this band of extraordinary personalities from the underworld of the great cities of Europe and America, have gripped the Russian people by the hair of their heads and have become practically the undisputed masters of that enormous Empire.”

Ethan: Wow, Churchill, buddy...holy shit.

Jeremy: I mean, I knew he was a piece of shit, but, yeah, the fact that he thinks that the French Revolution was a Jewish conspiracy...I read somewhere that... I think I read somewhere that someone else, not Churchill, but they believed that the French Revolution was a Jewish conspiracy. It’s just, it's wild to me.

Ethan: Well, one more thing for the bottom of the long list of why Churchill’s trash.

Talia: Ugh, God I hate him. So that's a brief overview of all the shit that was happening to Jews during the Civil War. And we’re gonna move towards Lenin, his time.

Ethan: Friend of the show. (Laughter)

Talia: So Lenin demanded the end of hatred towards the Jews and he recorded his speech on anti-semitism so everyone could hear it, even those who were illiterate. It was really important to him that everyone knew that anti-semitism was not okay. And it was Soviet policy that Jews needed to get into productive labor, because at this point they were basically beggars, because they had no skills, they were barred from education up until this point, and they wanted them to be farmers. So in the 1920s, Lenin set up secular schools to teach Yiddish, but many parents decided they wanted their children to learn Russian instead. It was a weird time, they wanted to modernize, they wanted to learn Russian to fit in with the rest of the society. But a lot of the parents were like “Eh, no.” Some kids didn't want to learn Yiddish either because they just wanted to fit in, or they wanted to integrate into Soviet society and rejected their parents' traditional ways. The Soviet Union really pushed forward sponsored communist inspired Jewish culture, during Passover in the 1920s they created a Red Haggadah, and the Haggadah is the book that you read during Passover. And I have a copy of it, and it is lit.

Jeremy: That’s awesome.

Alelx: Sounds amazing.

Ethan: That’s fuckin' cool.
Talia: It talks about how awesome communism is, and it focuses on the idea of here-ness, at the end of Passover, you're supposed to say, “Next year in Jerusalem,” they take that out. It's just... I highly recommend it. I'll put it in my bibliography, but it's cool.

Ethan: That's sweet. Yeah. That's dope as fuck.

Talia: Yeah, I really want to put together a Red Passover, next year. Hopefully read the Red Haggadah.

Ethan: Hell yeah.

Talia: In 1919 the Jewish State Theatre was established. They put on a lot of Yiddish plays.

Justin: Ethan just got laser eyes. (Laughter)

Ethan: No, that, I didn't get... I'll talk about it in part two of the art episode but they were doing some amazing, amazing stuff from the 20s and 30s. (Laughter)

Talia: Is it? (Laughter) I'm an art history major, so...

Ethan: Talia, you're breaking up. (Laughter)

Talia: Oh, good one. (Laughter) On August 29, 1924, Lenin establishes a COMSET, which is the primary goal of COMSET was to help impoverished and persecuted Jewish population of the former pale of settlement to adopt agricultural labor. Itss other goals were getting financial assistance from the Jewish diaspora and providing the Soviet Jews an alternative to Zionism. So Lenin set up the way towards Birobidzhan which I'll talk about a little later. So then Lenin dies.

Ethan: So he did that in 1924? Yeah, I was gonna say, probably died like a month later, right? (Laughter)

Talia: It's super sad.

Jeremy: Why were you laughing then? (Laughter)

Ethan: You laugh to keep from crying. He was too good for this world.

Aleks: His head got too big, remember? (Groans)

Jeremy: Oh, wow. God damn it. People who didn't see the Stalin movie thing...

Justin: Bonus episode.

Jeremy: Yeah, that's it, they aren't gonna get the joke.

Talia: So then Lenin dies, Stalin takes over. Thank God, he's the best. So for my research for this part, this is the meat of everything for me, is combating these myths about Stalin. So to talk about the supposed Soviet anti-semitism and to understand these accusations, it was... these accusations started immediately after World War Two ended as a way to discredit the Soviet Union and Stalin. But with my
research, I tried to read as many Jewish writers from that time period to get what they were saying, and they were debunking all this shit. So I'm going to be relying on their writings.

**Justin**: Hell yeah.

**Ethan**: Well, but didn’t they have to say that or else they’d get purged? (Laughter)

**Justin**: Ethan has been purged from this podcast. (Laughter)

**Ethan**: Who? (Laughter)

**Talia**: Okay, so there’s a lot of talk of Zionism and going to Palestine. It kept on growing and the Bund was like, “No, we can’t go to Palestine, that’s not our land. What are you doing? We need to stay here.” So the Soviet Union decided to give the Jews virgin territory so they didn’t have to go to Palestine. Stalin established Birobidzhan on March 28, 1928. It was located in Siberia, its climate was a lot like Minnesota’s, where there’s pretty cold winters but they were dry, summers were sort of muggy, there were mosquitoes. The settlers arrived, no preexisting population was displaced like Palestine, and it was open to not only Jews, but anybody. And it still exists to this day and their flag is awesome. It is white and it has a rainbow in the middle. It is so cool. And Yiddish is still taught in Birobidzhan. So, the Soviet Union was the first to set up, in the world, a Jewish Autonomous Region. Before Israel, before anything, the Soviet Union was the first and it was Stalin that set that up.

**Alekx**: Sounds very oppressive.

**Ethan**: (Mockingly) Well, it’s because he was trying to get rid of all of them from the rest of the Soviet Union. (Laughter)

**Talia**: So, but unfortunately, a lot of Jews decided not to go and they stayed in Ukraine and Crimea instead, but with Birobidzhan it helped to move the Jewish population from... basically they were in the Lumpen, and then they moved up to be farmers and industrial workers and they had all these skills that they could make a better life for themselves. The Soviet Union decided that it would be necessary to furnish the Jews with a large territory where both agricultural occupations and a wide variety of industrial enterprises as well as a well-rounded culture could be established. And Birobidzhan’s natural resources were awesome. They had 10 million acres of forests, rivers full of fish, 2000 species of flowers for honey production, huge deposits of coal, iron, gold, graphite, magnesium, and a shit ton of marble that was used in the Moscow subway system. So in the first 10 years, 30,000 Jews moved to Birobidzhan. By their own accord; they weren’t forced to go there.

**Ethan**: Big if true. (Laughter)

**Talia**: So I’m going to read this little quote from ICOR, which was a Jewish-Russian organization that wrote about Birobidzhan in 1938. And I’m just going to read the last paragraph because I thought it was spicy. “On August 29, 1936, the Soviet government took the opportunity to make public a special statement that the Jewish workers in Birobidzhan had earned the government’s complete confidence, and that greater effort would be exerted to develop the Jewish autonomous territory with all possible speed. It ought to be mentioned at this point that saboteurs who have greatly hindered various projects in the Soviets’ program of development have not overlooked by Birobidzhan either. Here too there have been Trotskyist criminals who have done a great deal of damage but did not succeed in
wrecking the marvelous building of the Jewish autonomous territory, the foundation of which was laid on March 28, 1928.”

Proles: Yeahhhhh.

Justin: And Trotsky died less than two years later, so. (Laughter)

Talia: So Stalin supported Yiddish programs. There was a huge-ass publishing of Yiddish books and newspapers that were encouraged by the state. There had been no pogroms or charges of pogroms since Soviet control in 1920. And in January 12, 1931, in a speech to the American Jewish News Agency, Stalin described anti-Semitism as a form of cannibalism. During the Great Purge, however, from 1936 to 1938, many cultural institutions including many Yiddish ones were temporarily closed but they were revived after World War Two. On November 6, 1941 Stalin said, “In point of fact, the Hitler regime is a copy of that reactionary regime, which existed in Russia under Tsardom. It is well known that the Hitlerites suppress the rights of the workers, the rights of the intellectuals, and the rights of nations as readily as the Tsarist regime suppressed them. And that they organize medieval Jewish pogroms as readily as the Tsarist regime organized them.” So Stalin’s really cool with Jews, so I just don't understand why people call him an anti-semite.

Alekx: Anti-Stalin paradigm.

Ethan: You know why, you know why.

Talia: It drives me bananas!

Justin: I mean, have you seen the HBO movie on Stalin? (Laughter)

Alekx: Fact.

Talia: I'm not going to really talk about the Holocaust because it's a whole other topic, and it gets... there’s the whole Holocaust industry that is probably gonna be a whole episode, for Proles of the Minyan. It's just...

Justin: What is Proles of the Minyan?

Jeremy: Yeah, do you want to talk about that briefly just cause...

Talia: Proles of the Minyan is a group of us ML Jews that came together because of the discord. And so we don't really have a voice whatsoever and we feel like if we do this podcast that we can actually give a Marxist-Leninist perspective on, like, the Holocaust industry and how bullshit it is and...

Ethan: And what is a minyan?

Talia: A minyan is a group of 10 Jews, so we're not quite there yet. (Laughter)

Ethan: We'll get there, we'll get there.
Talia: I am hoping it works out well. We just have figured out our theme song, which is a Yiddish song from World War Two praising Comrade Stalin. (Proles cheer) It’s pretty great. So yeah, I'm not going to talk about the Holocaust because it’s depressing as fuck, and the stories that need to be told are never told, like about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Jews defending themselves, it's always a passive Jew waiting for their goy savior, and I'm just, I don't want to talk about it. (Laughter)

Ethan: Fair enough. Fair enough.

Jeremy: Spice.

Talia: Also, the Soviet Union saved a shit ton of Jews, so. And there were 313 Jewish generals in World War Two that were fighting for the Soviet Union. And hundreds and thousands of Jews were evacuated to the USSR and moved east. So the Soviet Union was the only country that opened its borders for Jews. America didn’t, nobody did. And it's fucking bullshit.

Jeremy: There was that boat that came across; I forget what it was called.

Talia: The St. Louis.

Jeremy: Yes, yeah. And the US was like, “Hell no, turn around and go back to Europe.”

Talia: And then most of those people died in concentration camps.

Alekx: Yeah, fuck.

Ethan: Death to America.

Alekx: Yeah I was gonna say, it's time for the ASMR of the day. (Laughter)

Proles: (Whispering) Death to America.

Talia: The playwright Arthur Miller said “If it had not been for the Soviet Army, there would have been no Jews on Earth at all.”

Ethan: Arthur Miller: Dope. (Laughter)

Talia: I really liked him. And that's why Marilyn Monroe became a Jew, was because of him.

Jeremy: Damn.

Ethan: Marilyn Monroe was... fucking... she was a Red.

Talia: So I have this other pamphlet published by Jewish Life called “Soviet Anti-Semitism: The Big Lie,” and it says, “On the basis of these data, which I believe to be conservative, Russia has saved over 10 times as many Jews from Nazi extermination as all the rest of the world put together. Let that also sink into your minds, my fellow Jews.” And that was from a speech that was given by members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, which will come up later. So I've seen and heard Holocaust survivors talk and one of them said, that really stuck with me was, “I know who saved me from those camps, and
it wasn’t the Americans. Don’t believe what America says, it was the Soviets that saved me, and I will always be grateful for them.”

**Aleks:** Fuck yes.

**Talia:** Yeah, I bawled my eyes out after she said that, cause it’s never talked about! Just, so gross. So after World War Two, many Jews unfortunately became Zionist partly out of fear, partly out of “Where the fuck are we supposed to go?” They convinced a lot of people to leave and go to Palestine. And there was a lot of resentment in the USSR because they had just lost 20 million people, and they needed to rebuild, and then all these people are just leaving and they’re like, “Well, we’re a community, you should probably be here and help us.” But so it goes. In 1948, Stalin spoke about “rootless cosmopolitanism.” So I spent two hours trying to find this speech that all these... a lot of Jewish orgs bring this up, the word ‘cosmopolitanism’ as a another form of anti-semitism, like a dog whistle, and I could not find exactly where it would be construed as an anti-Semitic thing. But a lot of Jews say cosmopolitanism was in reference to Zionism but it could also be understood as anti-socialist nationalism and pro-imperialism. But I don’t think it was anti-semitic. The Soviet Union was just trying to combat anti-socialist nationalism. So this is the closest thing I could find of Stalin speaking about cosmopolitanism. “Recently, a dangerous tendency seems to be seen in some of the literary works emanating under the pernicious influence of the West and brought about by the subversive activities of the foreign intelligence. Frequently in the pages of Soviet literary journals works are found where the Soviet people, builders of communism are shown in pathetic and ludicrous forms. The positive Soviet hero is derided and inferior before all things foreign, and cosmopolitanism that we all fought against from the time of Lenin and characteristic of the political leftovers is many times applauded. In the theater, it seems that Soviet plays are pushed aside by plays from foreign bourgeois authors, the same thing is starting to happen starting to happen in Soviet films.” So, many Jewish organizations referred to this speech as anti-semitic and that out of it came forward the two events that I’ll talk about: the Night of the Murdered Poets and the Doctors’ Plot. And I just... I don’t see the connection, but I think it’s really reaching to say that he was being anti-semitic in that speech. So I’ll talk about Night of the Murdered Poets. It’s not really one night, and they weren't all poets. (Laughter) So, a lot of the people that were part of this were part of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee that was approved by Stalin in August 1941. There were a lot of prominent Jewish actors and poets that held high positions in this community, including the actor Solomon Mikhoels, and poet Itzik Feffer. They did a Western tour to drum up support for the Soviet Union during World War Two. And in 1944, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee wrote a letter to Stalin about how they wanted to set up an independent Jewish state in Crimea, but Birobidzhan already existed at this point. So the head of the JAFC, Solomon Mikhoels, died in January 1948 in a supposed car accident, but people have accused Stalin of having him assassinated. But according to Grover Furr, the only document that says that he had him assassinated was proven a forgery. And I believe Grover Furr, because he is dope.

**Jeremy:** Same.

**Talia:** So 13 Soviet Jews that were a part of the JAFC were arrested along with 24 to 26 people who were also arrested. So there are only 13 Jews out of 26. This isn’t talked about when they talk about Night of the Murdered Poets, is that “Oh it was all Jews.” Well, it wasn’t, if it’s going to be an anti-semitic act, it’s going to be all Jews or nothing. So it really doesn't support their anti-semitic claim. And between 1948 and 1949, they were arrested for being counter revolutionaries. And according to this book called *The Jews of the Soviet Union*, which I was really hesitant about picking up because it's written by an Israeli, and it's really harsh on Stalin, but they're the ones who say, it was 24-26 people,
not all of them were Jews. And they also say that the cosmopolitanism thing isn't really anti-Semitic at all. I'll have it in my bibliography. So their charges were “armed insurrection with the aim of severing the Crimean region from the Soviet Union and establishing their Jewish bourgeois and Zionist republic, which would serve as a base for American imperialism.” A plan which had been put forward by the Americans in 1943, during the visit of Solomon Mikhoels and Feffer to the USA and which has to have been implemented with the aid of Jewish organizations such as the Joint, the Bund and Zionist organizations, espionage on behalf of foreign states, bourgeois nationalist activity and anti-Soviet propaganda, and organizational activity forbidden by law.

**Justin:** Is this the same thing that Molotov... his wife was arrested?

**Jeremy:** Yeah, she supported the establishment of a separate Jewish ethno-state in Crimea. But I don't think she was saying severed from the Soviet Union. But yeah, she was arrested, charged, and kept in prison for some, until Stalin died.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Ethan:** Did they let her out afterwards?

**Jeremy:** Yeah, and the first question she asked was, “How is Comrade Stalin?” Literally, she was like...

**Justin:** They told her that he was dead and she cried.

**Jeremy:** She broke down in tears.

**Talia:** That's how I feel. So they were all tried and convicted for that. And there's proof that they were trying to do that. Especially there was a letter to Stalin that they sent in 1944 saying, “Hey, we want to set up our own Jewish state.”

**Ethan:** We have a Jewish state at home!

**Talia:** Just go east. They were tried, convicted and executed on August 12, 1952. So, when they give it a name like “Night of the Murdered Poets”, you think they're going undercover in the dark of night and killing all these Jews. And no, they had a trial, they were convicted, and they were rightly executed. (Laughter) So, if this was an anti-semitic act, a hell of a lot more Jews would have been arrested. They were not arrested for being Jewish, but they were arrested for being anti-communist, and a good test to see if something's anti-semitic or not, is if all Jews are targeted or only some Jews are targeted. And in 1948, a lot of Jews were awarded with Stalin Prizes for the arts, so it wasn't really just all Jews, all Jewish artists...

**Ethan:** Including friend of the show Sergei Eisenstein. So with Mikhoels, wasn't he... he got run over by a car, didn't he?

**Talia:** Yeah, yeah he did.

**Ethan:** I mean, wait. So I've got his Wikipedia article, listen to this.

**Jeremy:** Comrade Wikipedia. (Laughter)
Ethan: Listen to this. “In 1948 Mikhoels was murdered on the orders of Stalin and his body was run over to create the impression of a traffic accident. Citation needed.” Is literally what it says there. (Laughter)

Jeremy: Amazing.

Ethan: Yeah, that's the last sentence of the first part. And it's like, “Murdered on the orders of Stalin, his body was run over to make it look like it was a traffic accident.” And there's no citation for that.

Justin: The anti-Stalin paradigm dictates that we have to take it at face value. (Airhorn noise)

Jeremy: Somehow not removed... somehow not removed from Wikipedia even though, you know, no citation.

Talia: But Grover Furr debunks all that shit in I think Khrushchev Lied, and Blood Lies?

Justin: Yeah. His very creative title. (Laughter)


Aleks: Khrushchev lied.


Talia: He's not coming back on the show.

Ethan: I don't think he listens to the show, besides his episode.

Aleks: Fair enough. (Laughter)

Talia: OK, the next event that's supposedly the height of Stalin's anti-semitism happened in January 1953, and that's the Doctors' Plot. So Trotskyists really like to bring up this and you can be like, “Fuck you.”

Justin: We usually do, that's our default setting. (Raucous Laughter)

Talia: So, there is a claim that a group of doctors who were mostly Jewish, again they weren't all Jewish, some were Jewish, were plotting to kill high-ranking Soviet leaders, including Stalin. So Khrushchev tried to portray Stalin as the mastermind of this, or pushing forward this anti-semitic plot. Even though Stalin was made aware of the supposed plot in 1948, an investigation took place, Stalin thought it was wack. Stalin called Pravda on February 27 or 28th to cease publication of articles involving the Doctors' Plot. Grover Furr says that it was probably Beria, is that how you say it? Beria?

Jeremy: Beria. Literally, Justin looked it up on one of the episodes and like he played the audio file and it's Beria.

Ethan: We can say it however the fuck it comes out. Beria.
Talia: This one doctor wrote a letter in 1948 saying they were concerned about Zhdanov’s treatment for his illness, but they didn't mention any Jewish doctors at all. At no time did this doctor have any connection with the Doctors’ Plot but then Khrushchev just basically makes up shit.

Ethan: (Mockingly) Khrushchev lied. (Laughter)

Talia: So it was Beria who stopped the Doctors’ Plot frame ups, who freed the doctors, and arrested those who were responsible. So all of that was bullshit, Stalin thought it was bullshit, if he thought it was really important he probably would have dealt with it back in 1948 when he was first made aware of it. And so...

Justin: And it was, I believe 13 doctors, is that correct?

Talia: Yeah. And they weren't all...

Justin: Yeah, and they weren't all Jewish, and on top of that, which is something that we talked about on the... that shitty Stalin, what’s the other shitty Stalin movie we reviewed?

Jeremy: Oh, The Death of Stalin.

Ethan: Oh, on Left Media?

Justin: Which is no longer on the internet now.

Ethan: Oh shit, is it not?

Justin: Yeah, it doesn’t exist anymore.

Talia: I saw that opening weekend. (Laughter)

Jeremy: What happened to our episode?

Justin: No, like the podcast in general.

Jeremy: Yeah I know, that’s what I’m saying.

Ethan: So your episode’s gone?

Justin: Correct. Yeah.

Jeremy: Sad!

Ethan: The CIA got to it. Damn.

Justin: But anyway, it's something that we address there, because in the... the narrative in the movie and in a lot of other narratives, is that Stalin... you know, Stalin executed these 13 doctors and then when he was dying, no one was there to save him because he had killed all the doctors. (Talia groans)
But there were something like 500 doctors in Moscow and the outlying regions. (Laughter) So the idea that 13 doctors is going to dramatically...

**Jeremy:** And there were like 16,000 people in medical school or some nonsense like that at the time.

**Talia:** This shit just drives you crazy, doesn't it? (Laughs)

**Ethan:** In the Stalin movie that we watched last week where he's like, “You need a prescription,” he was like (Russian Accent) "No prescription."

**Jeremy:** Did he go to Mexico? Is that how Ramón Mercader was recruited? (Laughter) Eyyy. For people listening outside the United States or Mexico, you don't have to have a prescription to get drugs from a pharmacy in Mexico. That was the context for that stupid joke I just told.

**Ethan:** I laughed but I didn't understand it, so thank you for explaining. (Laughter)

**Talia:** Thank God for him. (Laughs)

**Ethan:** Stalin?

**Jeremy:** Ramón Mercader? (Laughter) Uncritical support for Ramón Mercader.

**Talia:** Yeah. Doctors’ Plot was not anti-semitic, Stalin thought it was stupid, end of story. So there’s some weird stuff that the American Jewish Committee was trying to put forward after World War Two, trying to make the Soviet Union appear as anti-semitic as possible. This stuff is just crazy, nothing changes. So they claim that the Soviet Union allowed an anti-semitic political cartoon to be published in 1949. And specifically, Newsweek put forward that this cartoon, which is of a man who's traveling with a suitcase, everyone knows in Russia that was a character of... an amalgamation of known intellectuals who preach cosmopolitanism, there are names on the suitcase that he's holding that included Jean-Paul Sartre, and only one name on the suitcase is Jewish. In Newsweek, however, they claimed that the suitcase had the word ‘Zhyd’, which is a Russian anti-semitic slur. But Newsweek had doctored the image and left off the entire name, which is André Gide, a French writer, and his last name transliterated into Russian would be ‘Zhyd’. A couple weeks later, the New York Times, who also published this article, issued a correction but they buried it, like four paragraphs deep.

**Justin:** That always happens, always happens.

**Jeremy:** Anytime there's a story about the DPRK where they're like, you know, “Oh, so and so was executed by an anti-aircraft gun.” Oh, he's... several months later, he's still alive. The one in which he's executed by anti-aircraft gun is promoted to shit, shared widely, everybody sees it, and then the correction comes out and nobody looks at it.

**Ethan:** Well, yeah. And then yeah, famously pro-Jewish publications like Newsweek and the New York Times. I mean, there's all kinds of horseshit, the United States is legendarily, has just been promoting anti-semitic shit for... literally since we started. And so it's ridiculous to have any sort of moral high ground for that.
Talia: Yeah, it's bullshit. And I am including these in my bibliography, but I've read a lot of these articles put forward by leftist Jewish orgs, who say that all of this anti-semitic smear campaign is a way of pushing forward anti-communism because communism was so ingrained in the Jewish tradition that they didn't want Jews to feel a connection to the Soviet Union. They wanted them to go to Israel.

Justin: Which is really interesting considering how anti-semitism was used as a deterrent from the Soviet Union in the early 1900s, the whole Judeo-Bolshevik thing. And then, you know, come 35 years later, and it's used as a way to talk Jews out of going to the Soviets Union.

Jeremy: It’s Schrodinger’s Soviet Union, it’s both a Jewish conspiracy and anti-Semitic at the same time.

Talia: Yeah, and what really drives me crazy is when I looked up rootless cosmopolitanism on Wikipedia, they included this cartoon as an example of anti-semitism and I'm like, it's been debunked!

Justin: By the source that printed it.

Jeremy: So has the Holodomor, but people keep pushing that agenda. (Laughter)

Talia: It’s just like, ugh. So from this point forward after World War Two, a lot of what they say is anti-Semitic is just really anti-Zionist. So the American Jewish Committee was leading the charge on this. American Jewish Committee was run by the wealthiest and most conservative American Jews. The President was head of Amoco and as I said before, they wanted to disassociate Jews from communism, basically by inventing anti-semitism in the USSR. So, oh, I want to just talk a little bit, I have this quote from Albert Einstein. So he was part of the American Committee for Birobidzhan, he was super supportive of it. He wasn't a fan of Zionism. But he said that “We must not forget that in those years of atrocious persecution of the Jewish people, Soviet Russia has been the only great nation who has saved hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives. The enterprise has settled 30,000 Jewish war orphans in Birobidzhan and secured for them in this way a satisfying and happy future. It’s new proof for the humane attitude of Russia towards our Jewish people.” So Albert Einstein was really supportive of Russia, Soviet Russia and Birobidzhan, and...

Ethan: Comrade Einstein.

Talia: Yeah! He’s the shit.

Justin: There's also something that we have to bear in mind, I guess, from America, is that the two biggest anti-Soviets in history, that had the largest impact on the, you know, global view of communism outside of the USSR was when Trotsky came to Mexico and started shit-talking the Soviet Union. It was extremely destructive to all of the Communist movements in the West in general, but especially in the United States. And I imagine, I mean, I don’t... you know, I'm not speaking from any point of expertise, but I can imagine if you're a Jewish communist, and this Jewish communist comes out of the Soviet Union is like, “Actually Stalin's bad and he's an anti-semite and he hates everybody.” Then of course, you're going to trust them because they're a communist, you respected them because they were the leader of the Red Army, all this kind of shit, and so the destructive impact of Trotsky cannot be overstated, because it was so bad. I mean, people lost their lives as a result of the doxxing of communists by other communists because of Trotskyism.
Ethan: Yeah, I mean it's sort of a meme here on the show to make fun of Trotsky, but it has its roots in actual... he did terrible fucking things. He was genuinely bad for the global communist movement.

Justin: He also advocated eugenics.

Ethan: Well, that too. Yeah.

Talia: Yeah. So I found out that Trotsky was trying to put forth the myth that Stalin's anti-Trotskyism was actually anti-semitism. Asshole. (Laughs)

Jeremy: My all-time favorite Facebook post that I've ever seen in my life was “Stalin's most heinous crime was not killing Trotsky sooner.” (Laughter)

Justin: Hands down. Exile was not enough.

Jeremy: I mean, literally if he'd been executed in like ‘27, none of this would have happened. Like we probably wouldn't have fucking Khrushchev and therefore no Gorbachev.

Talia: Stalin would still be alive. (Raucous Laughter)

Alekx: Preserved.

Jeremy: He’d be Mecha-Stalin.

Ethan: He’s 200 years old. Yeah, exactly.

Justin: It was the Doctors’ Plot that killed Stalin anyway.

Jeremy: Spicy take.

Ethan: Yikes.

Talia: So then, Stalin dies. You gotta pour one out.

Ethan: Sad. I cry every time.

Jeremy: (Singing) When the day is long, and the night, the night is yours alone... (Laughter)

Justin: (Singing) Hang on. (Laughter)

Ethan: Stop

Alekx: Please stop.

Talia: So Khrushchev came out with the stupid secret speech that painted Stalin as an anti-semite. But also, many books in the USSR that were published were attacking Zionism, but they weren't anti-semitic because a lot of them were written by Jews. (Airhorn noise) Another accusation of anti-semitism was, people said that the USSR was banning the production of matzo which is super
important during Passover because we're not supposed to eat any leavened bread, we're only supposed to eat matzo, but in reality, the Soviet Union was like “Government shouldn't be producing matzo, the individuals can produce it, but we're trying to keep a separation of religion and state.” But matzo could still be produced, it's just the government wasn't gonna produce it.

Ethan: Wasn’t making it for them.

Jeremy: What was the Soviet policy on gefilte fish?

Talia: Did you say what's the policy of gefilte filter? (Laughs)

Ethan: The Soviet policy.

Jeremy: Yeah, what’s the Soviet policy on gefilte fish.

Talia: It’s delicious. (Raucous laughter)

Ethan: Official Soviet stance.

Jeremy: That was the official, I believe Stalin said that in the speech, he was like, “Gefilte fish? Delicious. Mwah.”

Aleks: Chef’s kiss.

Ethan: That’s what I heard.

Talia: Another supposed anti-semitic thing was a special passport. So everyone in the USSR carried an ID called an internal passport and then one aspect of this passport is stating your nationality. But if you were Jewish, you could either put you were Jewish or the republic that you were living in. But America has claimed that this was anti-semitic, that you could put down that you were Jewish.

Justin: Isn’t it really the opposite of anti-semitic because isn’t it giving...

Jeremy: It was voluntary.

Justin: Isn’t it giving them the opportunity to claim like, “You know what, I'm not Soviet, I’m Jewish.” Basically.

Talia: Yeah. (Laughs)

Ethan: I just, I actually just saw this take on Twitter someone was talking about like, “Oh, my parents were... my parents, or my grandparents or something were Soviets and I have their passport and look, it says they're Jewish. They were marked in their passports as being ‘other’, as ‘other’, they weren't just Soviet, they were Jewish.” And then there were some other people who were like, “You dipshit. Everybody had their ethnicity in there.” Yeah, so.

Talia: This stuff is frustrating. So I'm going to talk a little bit about Jews and Israel, Soviet Jews and Israel. So Stalin was the first one to recognize the State of Israel, and he supplied weapons to them.
And when Stalin died, so many Soviet Jews in Israel wept for him, and they publicly demonstrated their love for him, they had parades in honor of him. He was a big fucking deal. So the people who left the USSR for either Israel or America did so because private business was prohibited and that was about 40% of the Jews who left the USSR. 90% of Soviet Jews said “Fuck that, we’re not going anywhere.” Zionism was alien to most Soviet Jews. It wasn’t typical to be that nationally narrow-minded and they weren’t okay with being that isolated. They didn’t want to go to a different country. They wanted to be around other Soviets.

In 1966, a rabbi visited the Soviet Union for basically propaganda purposes. He had his mind made up, he knew what he was going to say. And he stated that “Soviet Jews are intimidated and there are organized efforts being made to eradicate the Jewish religion.” Except when the rabbi was there meeting with other Jews who were also reporters and supportive of Soviet Union, he never mentioned the fear, the intimidation that he saw to them. And he was with 22 other American rabbis. And they went to multiple Jewish services in multiple synagogues in the Soviet Union. So that was all bullshit.

After the Six Day War in 1967, there was a concerted effort by Israel to get more Soviet Jews to immigrate to Israel. And it was fought against by the Soviet government; the government pushed forward an anti-Zionist campaign. So after the Six Day War that was between, I think, Egypt and Syria, the Soviet Union was on the side of not Israel.

Jeremy: Same. (Laughter)

Talia: So their campaign included: that most Jewish orgs are capitalist in nature and work against the interest of the worker. Israel is anti-communist. Zionism and Israel are enemies of socialism. Israel is an ethno state. Israel’s ruling class pushes for expansionism and harsh military policies, especially on the Palestinians. And Zionism practiced by the Israeli state is paralleled by the treatment of Jews by German fascists. (Proles exclaim) So you can see why there’s been a huge campaign to say that the Soviet Union, that Stalin was anti-semitic because they were like, “Zionism is pretty bullshit and we shouldn’t be displacing people off of their land when we have a whole Jewish autonomous region for you that we had set up for you if you wanted to go there.”

Jeremy: And it’s if you want to go there. It’s like the passport thing, if you want to go there and if not, if you want to, because that’s I think one of those things that gets left out of the conversation of marginalized communities, but sometimes you can't homogenize groups and say “They want this. This is what they want.” And so if you give people the opportunity to do a thing, but you also say “You're welcome to be a part of us, we welcome you with open arms.” That's a much preferable way of dealing with it then either saying, “You must assimilate,” or “You must be separate.” You know what I mean?

Talia: Mmhmm. So yeah, Israel is pretty bullshit. And after doing all this research, I'm like, yeah, it's basically just all these fucking Zionist orgs smearing Stalin and the Soviet Union. And it's what they do to Ilhan Omar, who speaks out against it. It's just, it continues, they do it to anti-Zionist Jews. That's why Israel uses Canary Mission, which is that website that includes anti-Zionist Jews’ names on it so Israel won't let them in. And the Jewish Federation works with Canary Mission to enforce these lists, these blacklists. And what sucks is in Judaism, there's a great tradition of debate and talking about things and working things out. And the one thing we're not allowed to talk about is Israel. We're not supposed to be anti-Zionist. If you are anti-Zionist, you're just basically blacklisted. So that's my spiel.

Jeremy: It was good. It was really good.
Justin: That’s a good-ass spiel. (Laughter)

Jeremy: Okay, so something we haven’t done in a while is a bonus segment because our episodes have been long as shit lately. So we are going to be doing Seeing Red, where we pick up the weapons-grade bad opinions that the dark caverns of the internet have to offer. And we read them to our comrades in an attempt to evoke the purest form of proletarian rage.

Talia: You’ll get it from me. (Laughter)

Jeremy: So with that, Ethan, what do you got for us?

Ethan: Alright, so I didn’t know we were gonna be doing this, so I was just kind of scrambling to find something. But I think I found something that should be... that sounds interesting. So this is from Tablet Magazine.

Talia: (Sarcastically) Great. (Laughs)

Ethan: Uh oh. I'm not super familiar with them. So...

Talia: Fuck them!

Ethan: Okay, well, good.

Alekx: Off to a good start.

Talia: I’m already angry. (Raucous laughter)

Ethan: Then it’s working, the segment’s working. Okay, so this is “A Soviet-Jewish Front in the War on Christmas,” by Daniel Genis. (Laughter) The subtitle, the subtitle: “Russian Jews used Christmas trees as weapons to fight back against the Kremlin’s war on religion.”

Justin: What the fuck is happening?

Talia: They’re not Hannukkah bushes? (Laughter)

Ethan: Okay, hold on. “As our living memory of the Cold War recedes, fewer and fewer people will know that putting up a tree was once a blow struck against the Communist Party.”

Jeremy: Come the fuck on.

Ethan: “The dissident Jewish refuseniks of the 1960s and 70s (laughter) had a noble reason to put up Christmas trees: they were fighting against totalitarian oppression. (groans) Celebrating Christmas was an act of resistance to the Soviet attacks on religious faith and rewriting of history. The Kremlin waged a war on Christmas, and with Hanukkah forbidden and largely unknown to the Soviet Union’s secular Jews...”

Jeremy: Come on!
Talia: Wrong. (Laughter)

Ethan: “Christmas was the next best thing in their arsenal to fight back.”

Alekx: Never heard of it, never heard of it.

Jeremy: Hanukkah was forbidden, Talia.

Talia: It wasn’t. (Laughter)

Jeremy: It was! That’s what this article says right here!

Talia: It’s only a big holiday because it runs around the same time as Christmas, so that’s why it’s been blown up, but it’s really a minor holiday in the scheme of it.

Ethan: Oh God, I gotta keep reading this, you’re all gonna die.

Jeremy: Wait, do you... do you really think that someone would just go on the internet and lie? Like, do you think?

Ethan: Hold on, hold on.

Talia: The capitalist nature of America makes Hanukkah a big deal because it’s eight days of presents instead of just one day of presents. (Airhorn noise)

Ethan: “The Soviet war on Christmas was waged with midnight mass arrests, censored Season’s Greetings, and sanctioned Santas.”

Jeremy: “Midnight mass arrests.” That is, I’m gonna give it to them, because that’s a really good... “Midnight Mass arrests” is like... (mimes chef’s kiss)

Alekx: My new band name.

Ethan: That’s a good one.

Justin: Sanctioned Santas is also...

Alekx: Sanctioned Santas. (Laughs) Such a nice alliteration.

Jeremy: No no no, but Midnight Mass is a thing. Midnight mass is a Catholic thing.

Ethan: Hold on, let me keep going, I am not... I am not very far in this article, you all gotta listen.


Ethan: No, it’s good, I’m not disagreeing. “Much of what the 1917 revolution targeted for disposal turned out to be necessary. Marx got a lot wrong and the millions who starved to death in the 20th century were the collateral damage of his errors.”
Jeremy: Millions.

Ethan: “Moscow had to rejigger its rules to secure the allegiance of a people literally dying from communism. Lenin’s monstrous successor even reinstated Russian nationalism, once banished in favor of “globalist socialism” (groans) when it was necessary to resist the German invasion of 1941. Of the many societal changes imposed on the people by revolutionaries, the official state-sanctioned atheism was one of the least popular.”

Talia: I like that they said globalist. (Laughter) You didn’t say it right either.

Jeremy and Justin: (Mimicking Alex Jones) GLOBALISTS! THE GLOBALISTS! YOU GOTTA FIGHT THE GLOBALISTS!

Ethan: Okay. “Cold War Jews resisted totalitarian atheism with Christmas trees, putting them up earlier than New Year’s in an act of defiance.”

Talia: What the fuck?

Ethan: “Each year my family cut a tree down in the woods and brought it home on the tram.”

Jeremy: Secretly.

Ethan: “they decorated it on the tram,” secretly.

Jeremy: They had to hide it like inside their dresses and pants, just like, down a pant leg they had a tree. (Raucous laughter)

Ethan: “They decorated it with handmade ornaments made of egg shells, candy wrapper foils and humanoid chestnuts with matchstick limbs.” (Raucous laughter)

Jeremy: Humanoid chestnuts?

Ethan: “My grandfather, despite his shtetl roots, read the story of Christ’s birth from the Gospel on Christmas Eve.”

Jeremy: Why?

Talia: They aren’t Jews! (Laughter)

Justin: Yeah, aren’t they Jewish, why are they reading...?

Ethan: “The neighbors in the shared apartment clucked in disapproval ...” (Raucous laughter)

Jeremy: That’s the real oppression, is the clucking of disapproval. (Raucous laughter)

Ethan: No, “They clucked in disapproval fearing the KGB’s wrath, but no one snitched.” (Laughter)
Jeremy: So clucking of disapproval is actually an expression of fear of the KGB. They actually would have supported Jewish people celebrating the birth of Christ, if they were not afraid of the KGB.

Alekx: They would have done a hat tip to it. (Laughs)

Ethan: “Forbidding one to have a relationship with God while insisting that the Communist Party and ‘Father Winter’ were good enough pleased no one. Of all the countries behind the Iron Curtain, Russia had the particular problem of a large Jewish population supported by Israel and the United States.”

Jeremy: Hang on...

Ethan: Wait, let me finish this paragraph. “Harassing the Jews less than 30 years after the Holocaust was difficult to do, as it gave the West excellent propaganda. Jewish dissidents like Joseph Brodsky were put into insane asylums rather than camps or graves. Brezhnev’s solution was to let the Jews leave, which proved quite beneficial for the nation that received the Jewish refuseniks. My family of five went with the equivalent of $90 dollars each,” so there’s a dollar sign 90 dollars each.

Alekx: What?

Jeremy: Whatever that means. (Laughter)

Ethan: “…The summation of a lifetime of work, and were happy to do so. Hasidic Jews helped my family when we received American asylum in 1977…The number of Russian Orthodox priests executed or sentence to die in Arctic labor camps for conducting a Christmas mass will never be known more precisely than ‘way too many.’”

Jeremy: That’s not why they were exiled.

Ethan: “Rabbis and imams were treated no better. Even passively hearing the Shma or the Muezzin or a mass was enough to put you away.”

Jeremy: No it wasn’t! No it was not!

Ethan: “Soviet Muslims quietly fasted on Ramadan, Christians did so during Lent, and we knew what a Seder looked like even if we didn’t have the texts of habit have a Haggadah to recite. The shabby trees of our past were our way of saying that Father Winter didn’t pass muster. My grandfather read the Christian gospel because he claimed his human right to have a relationship with God. Just because it was the wrong religion didn’t mean it was wrong. The intention was there, whether it was expressed in the candles of a menorah…”

Jeremy: That’s esoteric as fuck.

Ethan: “…or the ones perilously perched on a tree didn’t matter to us or the KGB. They burned bright like the divine spark in each of us and even Brezhnev couldn’t blow them out.”

Jeremy: Well, mostly cause Brezhnev, he couldn't breathe in deep enough to...yeah. (Laughter)

Alekx: Yikes.
Ethan: Too many cigarettes.

Jeremy: Too many cigarettes.

Talia: There's another Tablet article about Harry Potter being Holocaust literature. (Laughter)

Alekx: What? What is this Tablet?

Jeremy: Where's Taylor?

Ethan: Wherever he is, he was just like... (inhales sharply)

Alekx: Yeah, he felt a cold chill.

Jeremy: His Harry Potter sense is tingling.

Ethan: At the bottom they have “More in” and it's... there's other tags, that's the tags for this article and there's “More in: Christmas, Soviet Jewry, and Soviet Union.”

Talia: I don’t know any Jews who would get a fucking Christmas tree and read from the Bible. What the fuck is that? Ugh, Tablet is such trash. I don't believe any of that. If you’re reading about the birth of Jesus, you’re not Jewish. Come on!

Jeremy: They got Christmas trees that were banned, that they somehow brought home on a tram.

Alekx: Yeah. They snuck em in. (Laughter)

Talia: (Laughing) The humanoid chestnuts.

Justin: Okay, the KGB agents weren't on the tram.

Jeremy: Alright, so after that disastrous and terrifying...

Ethan: You wanted... you asked for this.

Talia: Don't read The Tablet!

Jeremy: Sorry. Don't read The Tablet is apparently...

Ethan: This was another article I wasn't gonna... that we're not going to read but there was... I was looking under the Soviet Union tag and they had “Why do American Jews idealize Soviet communism?”

Talia: Because it's the shit! (Laughs)

Ethan: The subtitle was “Perpetuating the romance of the Bolshevik regime, whose good initiations cannot mask the horrors imposed in its name.” (Groans, laughter)
Jeremy: Oh God. Anyway, so I wanted to thank Talia so much for coming on tonight.

Talia: Thank you for having me.

Ethan: Of course, absolutely.

Jeremy: Absolutely, and thank everyone for listening. There'll be some suggested reading that Talia will provide to us in the show notes. So our sponsors are all of our excellent fans on Patreon. On as always, we have way too many to read each time now.

Ethan: And there’s a lot this time, because we haven’t done it in a while.

Jeremy: So many. But since the last time we recorded these are the new ones. (Jeremy reads names of new Proles patrons) All of these people are inspiring and revolutionary and they make it so much easier for us to make this podcast and have it sound pretty good. So some of our patrons actually started their own podcast as they read through *Capital* together, so you can search for Proles of the Book Club.

Ethan: Talia’s on some of those.

Talia: I’m on one. (Laughs)

Jeremy: So yeah, honorary guest of the show is on Proles of the Book Club. If you’re interested in listening, and then again Proles of the Minyan will be launching soon.

Justin: We'll put it up on the main feed.

Jeremy: Yeah, we’re gonna I mean, we're going to share all of these, when the book club things because we gotta.

Ethan: Hell yeah. We gotta boost these things, these voices are important.

Jeremy: We wanted to thank Ransom Notes for our intro music, you can check him out on SoundCloud. Please don't forget to rate and review, visit ProlesPod.com, like us on facebook.com/ProlesPod and follow us on Twitter @ProlesPod. If you have any feedback, topic ideas, or suggestions, feel free to send us an email at ProlesPod@gmail.com or in the comment box on our website. Thank you for tuning in.

Proles: (Singing) Solidarity Forever.

(Outro Music Plays - "Oy, Ir Narishe Tsionistn" (Oh You Foolish Little Zionists))