**A204C001\_221212LO\_CANON.mp3**

[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** Rolling a dee whenever you're ready.

[00:00:01] **Speaker 2** Sure. So instances of anti-Semitism are at a 50 year high in the U.S.. Why now?

[00:00:07] **Speaker 1** Well, I would say, first of all, I want to emphasize the point.

[00:00:10] **Speaker 3** That you just made, because some people don't understand or are not really aware of the rise. And I think it's important to emphasize that. So if we look at data that the Anti-Defamation League has collected, they do an annual audit of anti-Semitic incidents. If we look at FBI hate crimes data, we see a similar pattern. They're not tracking the same thing. Obviously, hate crimes are a narrower category, but we have seen a market rise in anti-Semitism from about 2014, 2015, around the time of the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict, and especially after 2016, after the 2016 U.S. presidential election. And those those increases in anti-Semitism have broken some records. The Anti-Defamation League has been collecting data on anti-Semitic incidents since the late 1970s. And so that is really reason for concern and reason for worry. I think one of the reasons that we're seeing this is the the environment of political division and political polarization. And I think that context is at least partly fueled or at least reinforced by anxiety about poorly understood processes of social change. Those processes include things like the COVID 19 pandemic, which appeared suddenly and resulted in really dramatic and very quick, far reaching changes in people's social lives. It includes longer term changes like the growing ethnic and racial diversity.

[00:01:43] **Speaker 1** In the United States, which.

[00:01:45] **Speaker 3** White supremacists are calling the great replacement.

[00:01:48] **Speaker 1** And it includes a really market.

[00:01:51] **Speaker 3** Drop in the percentage of Americans who self-identify as Christians. So 15 years ago, that was close to 80%. Now it's fewer than two and three Americans who self-identify as Christians. So those kinds of changes can be experienced as a as a threat to health, as a threat to livelihood, or as a threat to social status. And I would say that anti-Semitism provides a mythical explanation and a scapegoat for those kinds of changes. It's it is a function that anti-Semitism has served for a long time. And if you would ask me, why are Jews in particular blamed for these poorly understood processes of social change? I would say they're not the only group. Sometimes other groups are blamed as well, but there are very old and longstanding anti-Semitic motifs that make Jews very well suited to be cast in the role of scapegoats. Those motifs are Jewish foreignness or alien ness.

[00:02:54] **Speaker 1** Exclusive particularism.

[00:02:56] **Speaker 3** Jewish power and Jewish wickedness. So those have a long history. We should remember, for example, that in the Middle Ages, Jews were accused of poisoning wells. Jews were blamed for the plague. So those motifs, because they had been around for such a long time, because they still circulate in the culture at some level, make Jews really sort of well-suited for the role of scapegoats.

[00:03:17] **Speaker 2** Sure. And you mentioned political polarization. So how does Wisconsin's extremely divided political landscape perpetuate anti-Semitism in the state?

[00:03:26] **Speaker 3** Yeah, so so I think in two ways. So so in one way, because of its connection to this anxiety that I mentioned a moment ago. But I think there's another important way in which it's related to the rise in antisemitism. I think.

[00:03:41] **Speaker 1** Political.

[00:03:42] **Speaker 3** Public condemnations of antisemitism are extremely important because when they are broadly shared, when they are swift, when they are unequivocal, they reassure people that the taboo against antisemitism is unchanged and that the norm against public expressions of antisemitism remains firm. I think in a very divided, very polarized political environment, what you see is an increasing reluctance for people to call out antisemitism within their own political camp or on their side of the political division. So they will be happy to call it out when it appears on the opposite side. But when it appears on their side, there's a kind of defensive reaction. So just as an example, a few years ago, Representative Ilhan Omar, who is I think, widely recognized as one of the most progressive members of the U.S. Congress, made remarks that garnered the praise of the former Ku Klux Klan leader, David Duke. Very troubling, very problematic. But progressives, by and large, rallied to her side and insisted that the remarks had been misconstrued, that they were not anti-Semitic. And they said, you're looking in the wrong place. What about the rise of antisemitism in the far right? That's what you should be concerned about. Similarly, when we see those kinds of things, they're not wrong about that. When we see those expressions of antisemitism on the far right, people on the right will say It's you've misunderstood and you should be looking on the left. That's where things are really problematic. So when that happens, I would say there's a kind of creeping normalization of antisemitism when there's not this broadly shared, unequivocal condemnation. People begin to see that it's it's okay to express these things publicly. They're not going to be condemned for it. They're not going to be called out, at least not by the reference groups that they care about. And then it begins to become more common.

[00:05:41] **Speaker 2** And how is the anti-Semitism that we've seen in the U.S. in the past five years different from historical antisemitism?

[00:05:48] **Speaker 1** Yeah, in some ways it's not.

[00:05:52] **Speaker 3** I mean, in some.

[00:05:52] **Speaker 1** Ways it serves.

[00:05:53] **Speaker 3** The same function, I think, and it reassures people, I think, just by virtue of knowing whom to blame or who they think is to blame for the problems, people feel comforted and reassured. And as I said, it provides a kind of mythical explanation for things so people can can take comfort in that. I would say.

[00:06:19] **Speaker 1** One of the ways.

[00:06:20] **Speaker 3** In which it's different, at least from recent history, is that it has become more open and it has become more deadly. So we saw, for example, in 2018 the assault on the Tree of Life Synagogue. And this is the deadliest attack on American Jews in American history. So this is this is a change. We're really seeing something quite disturbing in terms of the level of violence that's being that's being expressed in recent years.

[00:06:49] **Speaker 2** And what do you make of the increase in anti-Semitic instances in high school and college aged people?

[00:06:55] **Speaker 3** Yeah, that's a good question. I would say two things about this.

[00:07:00] **Speaker 1** One thing is that young people, by and large.

[00:07:05] **Speaker 3** Don't have a very good knowledge of the long history of kind of murderous anti-Semitism that culminated in the Holocaust, but it didn't spring out of nothing. There's lots of things that are leading up to this, but they don't have a good knowledge of this.

[00:07:20] **Speaker 1** And even if they have a good knowledge of it, it's it is ancient.

[00:07:24] **Speaker 3** History for them, just by definition, because they're the youngest Americans.

[00:07:28] **Speaker 1** They're the ones.

[00:07:29] **Speaker 3** Who are furthest removed historically from these events. And so it's not palpable to them. I would say.

[00:07:39] **Speaker 1** Also that.

[00:07:41] **Speaker 3** There has been a decline.

[00:07:42] **Speaker 1** In anti-Semitism until.

[00:07:43] **Speaker 3** Recently in the United States, starting after the Second World War and especially after the 1960s. Antisemitism really did decline in the United States. That has changed in recent years. But for a long time it was on the decline for.

[00:07:55] **Speaker 1** Young people.

[00:07:56] **Speaker 3** Until recently. That's the reality that they knew. So as a result of both of these things, they tend not to see Jews as oppressed or marginalized. They tend to see Jews instead as successful whites. And that desensitizes them, I think, to anti-Semitism. And in extreme cases, it might even make them susceptible to Holocaust conversions. This is an anti-Semitic phenomenon in which Jews are cast in the role of the new Nazis and other groups are cast in the role. Then you choose. So an example of this on the University of Wisconsin Madison campus at the beginning of this academic year, there was graffiti chalked around campus accusing Jewish student groups of genocide and having blood on their hands. This is an example of this kind of Holocaust inversion. The other factor, I think, has to do with the normalization of antisemitism that I mentioned a moment ago.

[00:08:49] **Speaker 1** So young people.

[00:08:51] **Speaker 3** I think, are.

[00:08:52] **Speaker 1** Particularly.

[00:08:53] **Speaker 3** Susceptible.

[00:08:54] **Speaker 1** To the effects of this normalization.

[00:08:56] **Speaker 3** For a couple of reasons. Their political socialization is incipient. It hasn't really crystallized. It hasn't come together yet. So they're still in the process of.

[00:09:04] **Speaker 1** Being politically socialized.

[00:09:05] **Speaker 3** And they're being socialized in an environment where antisemitism is being increasingly normalized.

[00:09:11] **Speaker 1** They also have no counter reference.

[00:09:15] **Speaker 3** So they have very little experience of an.

[00:09:17] **Speaker 1** Earlier and different.

[00:09:18] **Speaker 3** Period in which the taboo against public expressions of antisemitism was still strong. So for for these reasons, I think the effects of this normalization are going to be stronger and more pronounced among young people.

[00:09:32] **Speaker 2** And do you think public education plays a role in this trend in young people?

[00:09:37] **Speaker 3** I think.

[00:09:37] **Speaker 1** Public education could play the role of.

[00:09:40] **Speaker 3** Mitigating what we're seeing. So I think it makes it all the more important that young people.

[00:09:45] **Speaker 1** Learn.

[00:09:45] **Speaker 3** About this long and murderous history of antisemitism. Again, a history that doesn't start with the Holocaust. The Holocaust is a kind of combination of this history in many ways. And I think the more that they learn about this, the more knowledge that they have about this, it might sensitize them to antisemitism. They begin to see things are more complicated than simply seeing Jews as a case of successful whites. But I think, or at least my hope is that the most potent educated force will simply be the rise in antisemitism itself. But as they see that on the rise, as they see it, take quite violent and even deadly forms in this country and elsewhere, that that will begin to sensitize them to antisemitism. They will begin to see that the Jews are not just successful whites, that Jews, too, can be victims.

[00:10:35] **Speaker 2** So you mentioned this incident on campus with the anti-Semitic chalking, and there's been other instances as well of increased anti-Zionism in Madison. So what is the relationship between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism?

[00:10:48] **Speaker 3** Yeah, that's a great question.

[00:10:51] **Speaker 1** I would have would to two extremes, which I think.

[00:10:54] **Speaker 3** Tend to simplify things. So on the one hand.

[00:10:58] **Speaker 1** You probably will find people.

[00:11:00] **Speaker 3** Who will say that an expression of anti-Zionism is by nature anti-Semitic. This would be one extreme. It's a kind of simplification. And on the other.

[00:11:07] **Speaker 1** Extreme, you have people who.

[00:11:08] **Speaker 3** Say that any time the language or the actions are framed as criticism of Israel, it cannot possibly be anti-Semitic. It's only criticism of Israel. I think that the truth is actually neither of these things. I think that anti-Zionism is analytically distinguishable from antisemitism. They're not the same thing. And it's possible to have anti-Zionism that's not antisemitic. But in practice, I think the two overlap quite a bit.

[00:11:37] **Speaker 1** And one reason for.

[00:11:38] **Speaker 3** That is that in anti-Zionist discourse, Zionists or Israel.

[00:11:45] **Speaker 1** Play roles.

[00:11:46] **Speaker 3** Or cast in roles analogous to how Jews are portrayed anti-Semitic discourse. So if Jews are portrayed in anti-Semitic discourse as powerful, as wicked, and so on, Zionists or Israel or cast in this role in anti-Zionist discourse.

[00:12:02] **Speaker 2** So lastly, what effect does public antisemitism from national celebrities have locally?

[00:12:09] **Speaker 1** I think, again, it's part of this normalization phenomenon.

[00:12:12] **Speaker 3** So particularly.

[00:12:13] **Speaker 1** Among young people.

[00:12:15] **Speaker 3** We know that they're influenced as we all are, by things in the media, particularly in social media. They're influenced by their peers. So when there is an entertainer or another public figure that they like, that they admire who comes out and says anti-Semitic things or who condones antisemitism or expresses sympathy for Hitler, any number of outrageous things. I think that has, again, the effect of normalizing these kinds of expressions if they're not very swiftly and very broadly denounced by others and denounced by reference groups that people care about. It has to be reference groups that are meaningful to them. It has to be people whose opinions they admire and respect.

[00:13:02] **Speaker 2** Okay, Ted Goldberg, thank you very much.

[00:13:04] **Speaker 3** Thank you so much.

[00:13:06] **Speaker 2** Was there anything else you wanted to add? Well, we're still rolling.

[00:13:10] **Speaker 3** I don't think so. I think that covered all the points that.

[00:13:12] **Speaker 1** I wanted to make sure I.

[00:13:14] **Speaker 3** Included. I actually sort of wrote them down this morning and I think. I think we got them all. Yeah. Thank you. Yeah.