

The Holocaust Podcast
Episode 2
European Antisemitism (Part 1)

Jason Michael McCann

Let us consider the actual, worldly Jew – not the Sabbath Jew ... but the everyday Jew. Let us not look for the secret of the Jew in his religion, but let us look for the secret of his religion in the real Jew. What is the secular basis of Judaism? Practical need, self-interest. What is the worldly religion of the Jew? Huckstering. What is his worldly God? Money. Very well then! Emancipation from huckstering and money, consequently from practical, real Judaism, would be the self-emancipation of our time. An organisation of society which would abolish the preconditions for huckstering, and therefore the possibility of huckstering, would make the Jew impossible.

— Karl Marx, On The Jewish Question (1844)

Many on the political left — and I say this as a socialist — quite enjoy the *illusion* that antisemitism is a disease of the political right, and it is popularly assumed that Jewish people themselves cannot be antisemitic. But nothing could be further from the truth. Antisemitism — or ‘Jew hatred’ — is a deep-seated form of racism which permeates European and North American, Western, culture and society, and one that can be and often has been internalised and reproduced by Jews in the West. This quotation from Karl Marx illustrates this point very well. Antisemitism, like every racism and prejudice, is present right across the political spectrum and is to be found in every social class. Even today, 75 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, we encounter antisemitism *everywhere*.

Criticism of the State of Israel and the ideology of Zionism is most certainly not in itself antisemitic, but all too often this criticism provides cover for anti-Semites, antisemitic opinions, and comments (it’s important to make a distinction between anti-Semites and antisemitic opinion — not everyone who repeats an antisemitic opinion or trope is an ideological anti-Semite, ignorance too is a factor). We find coded forms of antisemitism in popular conspiracy theories and critiques of ‘the globalists,’ of ‘big business,’ of ‘international banking and finance,’ of so-called ‘Cultural Marxism.’ And we find more explicit antisemitism in attacks on ‘the Rothchilds’ and other Jewish people and groups believed to be manipulating the world. It is no great mystery that the word ‘cabal’ — meaning: a shady organisation of wealthy and/or influential people pulling the strings behind the scenes — is derived from the Hebrew word *Kabbalah*, a nod to something secret or hidden; as something ‘the Jews’ do.

Echoes of the virulent antisemitism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are still to be found today, and here we are not talking about the hateful rhetoric of neo-Nazis and their ilk, but in ordinary society — among ordinary, otherwise decent, people. Following a visit to Auschwitz a few years ago, I was showing the photographs I had taken to an older member of my own family who blindsided me with the remark: ‘*Well, if they don’t behave themselves, it could happen again!*’ In a Dublin secondary school where I used to work, the students — most of whom had never met a Jewish person — used the

word 'Jew' as a byword to describe other students and friends who didn't share or who were tight with their money and such like. And it was certainly no coincidence that antisemitic graffiti was spray painted over the unfinished shell of the new Irish Central Bank HQ in Dublin in early June 2013, in the aftermath of the Irish banking crisis.

J.K. Rowling, perhaps one of the most influential children's authors of the past two decades, has, by her insensitive and inflammatory and deeply offensive comments about transgender people and trans rights, mobilised a global online anti-transgender campaign — a hate campaign — in which antisemitism has become a central feature. Jennifer Bilek, one of the chief proponents of this hate campaign, has consistently pointed to a Jewish conspiracy behind this fictive 'transgender agenda.' Sharing a video by the Irish neo-Nazi Keith O'Brien (AKA Keith Woods) on her *Facebook* page, Bilek made the obnoxious comment:

I've often wondered why so many of the men involved in the transgender/transhumanist agenda are Jewish, and of course I have been accused more than once of promoting a Jewish conspiracy theory. I just report on who the men are, I don't single them out for being Jewish and I have never really speculated about why so many are.

Writing in *The Times of Israel* in June this year (2022), Colin Haskins was correct in his discussion of Bilek and the anti-transgender campaign to reintroduce his readers to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* — an early twentieth century forgery purporting to be the minutes of a group of influential Jews plotting the overthrow of the world's governments by controlling the global economy and by subverting public morals. We will say more about this document later. Haskins wrote:

A number of Jennifer Bilek's tweets suggest that she subscribes to antisemitic conspiracy theories. On more than one occasion, Bilek has tweeted praise for David Icke, a notorious Holocaust denier who has endorsed 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,' and who believes that reptilians (read: Jews) are trying to take over the world.

More concerning, of course, is the use Donald Trump made of antisemitic tropes throughout his presidential electoral campaigns and during his term in the White House. Regardless of the influence of J.K. Rowling and others like Graham Linehan, one of the creators of the popular *Fr Ted* comedy series — who are, in fairness, are only hanging around in the same ecosystem as extreme and far-right anti-Semites, are only cultural influencers. They can be ignored — *and are being ignored*. Linehan recently took to his *Substack* page to whine about how his finances had been reduced because of his personal crusade to protect women and girls from the evils of transgenderism. *Lang may his lum no reek*. But when we find anti-Semites and racists calling the shots in the Oval Office — well, people who are happy to be open about their antisemitism and racism (let's not fall into the trap of thinking these things are new in Washington) — then we are dealing with something quite different.

Darker shades of politics are spreading across the western liberal democracies. Alternative für Deutschland and the so-called Identitarian movement are making strides in Germany, Italy has elected a far-right party into a coalition government with the right-Conservatives, in England the right-wing

Conservative Party under Boris Johnson — described by Donald Trump as ‘Britain Trump’ — has raced headlong to the right to win back votes from UKIP and the Brexit Party; the fringes of which are attracting support from the fascist and Islamophobic EDL, the English Defence League, and the openly neo-Nazi British National Party. Western media has effectively censored any journalistic coverage of the overt Nazism in Ukraine in the face of a Russian military incursion, with NATO simply removing images of Ukrainian soldiers wearing SS insignia. Only in the past few weeks was President Volodymyr Zelenskyy pictured next to a member of his presidential guard unit wearing a Totenkopf patch — the SS death's head symbol used by the SS Einsatzgruppen and concentration camp guards during the Holocaust. The fears of a right-turn in European politics are no longer restricted to the bampot politics of Hungary and Viktor Orbán. Things are getting pretty dark, and right across the board the common thread is the same — *antisemitism*.

In the previous episode (Episode One: The Origins of Genocide), we looked at the origins of modern antisemitism in Christian anti-Judaism, and discussed how some of the ugliest ideas of Christianity informed European thinking over centuries and so nourished — through the development of the ideology of nationalism and the formation of the nation-state — secular antisemitism as a worldview that perceived the Jew as a necessary evil and as an outsider-insider who could never truly be a part of the nation. In this episode, still on the background of the Holocaust (European Antisemitism — Part 1, because, well, let's face it, we can't hope to capture what antisemitism is and what it does in a single podcast), we are going to examine some of the roots of modern European antisemitism. Naturally, this can never be an exhaustive explanation. Such a thing is probably impossible. What this episode aims for is a broad historical overview of the development of antisemitism and throughout the series we will return to this massive subject in order to explain particular elements as they arise in our conversation.

Written without a trace of religious prejudice, it allows you to peer into the mirror of cultural and historical facts. Do not blame the 'pessimist' if the mirror shows you to be slaves. I have two hopes for this book: first, that it will not be killed by the silence of the Jewish critics and that it will not be finished off by your well-known, self-satisfied clichés. Without a shred of irony, I publicly proclaim the world-historical triumph of Jewry, the news of a lost battle, the victory of the enemy without a single excuse for the stricken army. I should like to believe that such candour deserves something better than the zealous Jewish accents of the newspapers. It is no ostentatious prophecy but a deeply felt conviction when I say that no more than four generations shall pass before the Jews usurp absolutely every office of state, including the very highest. Yes, Jewry shall raise Germany to a world power and make it the New Palestine of Europe. It won't come about by violent revolution but by the voice of the people itself, as soon as German society has reached that highest level of social bankruptcy and perplexity toward which we are rushing headlong.

One might be forgiven for thinking this quote the work of a Nazi propagandist — perhaps even that of Joseph Goebbels himself. But these words were published in 1879, eighteens years before Goebbels was born, in a pamphlet written by Wilhelm Marr; the Magdeburg-born journalist attributed with first

coining the term 'antisemitism' and founding the German League of Antisemites — the *Antisemiten-Liga*. And there is so much to be said of this first and fully-formed articulation of modern secular Jew hatred. This is not, as far as Marr is concerned, a religious intolerance. While religion in the form of state religion — the state church — continues to have an important function in the romantic imagination of the nation, religious belief *qua* the particulars of creed and doctrine are no longer essential to the nation-state by the mid-nineteenth century. With the evaporation of the Westphalian idea of the religion of the king being the religion of the kingdom, religious difference; very much the mother's milk of Christian anti-Judaism, could no longer provide a rational basis for intolerance. Marr's Judeophobic polemic against the Jews was not a hostility towards Judaism as a religion, but a hostility towards the Jews as Jews — *as a race*.

Marr did not invent antisemitism. He merely gave it a name. Already we have seen how Marx arrived at similar conclusions; the distinction between them being that Marx identified 'the Jew' as a behaviour, a parasitic economic behaviour, that could be remedied, while the same Jew, to Marr, was an immutable racial category — as something genetic and unchangeable. Both the right and the left had removed 'the Jew' from faith, tradition, and religion. The Jew was now a problem to the two most powerful revolutionary forces in Europe — to Socialism and Nationalism — a problem that demanded a solution. It is important to stress that these new developing antisemitisms — plural — were not solely a German phenomenon. As we will see, racial antisemitism was a product of much wider western European scientific and philosophical trends (this is not to exclude eastern European antisemitisms, which have their own roots). As Capitalism progressed with the rapid industrialisation of the west and as the bourgeoisie pulled at the fabric of the old monarchies and empires of Europe, the competing forces of Socialism and Nationalism vied for the hearts and minds of the people of Europe; Socialists agitating for a revolution against the Capitalist class — often presented as the Jews — and Nationalists like Marr pushing for a revolution against a foreign race — the Jews. It is certainly no coincidence that Marr's Antisemitic League is formed in the context of the 1871 unification of Germany.

1848 — 'the Year of Revolutions' or 'the Springtime of Nations' — is the beginning of a wave of democratic and liberal — *bourgeois revolutions* — across the continent of Europe; the most widespread explosion of revolutionary fervour in European history. The anciens régimes of autocratic and monarchic multi-national and multi-ethnic empires are told in no uncertain terms that their teas are out — that their days are numbered — by masses of people inspired by the romantic ideas of nationhood and the demand for a nation state. National consciousness ascended the political stage and quickly proved itself a force to be reckoned with. But who was an Italian, a German, a Frenchman, a Pole, or a Russian? Two centuries on and we are still struggling to solve this conundrum:

When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.

Donald Trump didn't say anything new when he cast Hispanic and Latino Americans as dangerous outsiders to the nation — to the *white* American nation. He simply said the quiet part out loud. What

does it mean to be an American — a ‘real’ American? A real Briton, real Frenchman, or a real German? In the mid-nineteenth century, this was the first time Nationalists were forced to address this question in a serious way; this was the first time they had their own states to define and circumscribe — there would have to be insiders and outsiders, nationals and non-nationals.

Thanks in large part to the histories of European imperialism and colonialism, European nationalists had at their disposal a ready made racial criteria for defining the nation. Strange as it may sound to many listening now, race and racism were inventions of the European imperial projects; a technology devised essentially to justify the enslavement of Africans and the often brutal and inhumane subjugation of native peoples. European attitudes towards native populations or First Peoples as savages and black Africans as a lower subspecies of humanity found a quasi-scientific basis in Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution; natural selection and the notion of the survival of the fittest informed English philosophers searching for answers to the contradictions of imperialism. Herbert Spencer, probably the most influential and successful public intellectuals of the Victorian era, picked up Darwin’s ideas of nature and applied them to society. In his 1865 work, *The Principles of Biology*, he wrote:

This survival of the fittest which I have here sought to express in mechanical terms, is that which Mr. Darwin has called ‘natural selection,’ or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life.

Later, in the mid-twentieth century, the American historian Richard Hofstadter would put a name to this school of thought: *Social Darwinism*. By the middle of the nineteenth century, at the height of the British imperial power, a racial pseudoscience began to take shape which derived from the natural sciences sociological and philosophical conclusions which in essence constructed a taxonomy of man. As Carl Linaeus had done in his fetish for the *scientific* categorisation of flora and fauna, the architects of British and European imperialism set about the speculative classification of human beings into races — the species and subspecies of the human race. Naturally, the white Anglo-Saxon, as evidenced by his place at the apex of the imperial hierarchy at the time, was the most developed race — *of course*, and it would be the white man’s burden to study and so classify all the other races of men. Race has never stopped being an instrument of power, and so racialisation has always had more to do with power relations than with actual skin colour. Being white, therefore, has not always been about whiteness — and this explains why the Irish and the Scots, for example, as the races on Britain’s Gaelic fringe, have not always been included in England’s imperial understanding of white supremacy. Much the same experience of white-but-not-white-enough was experienced by both Irish and Italian immigrants in the United States. And in Europe and North America Jews would fall into this suspended racial class of not quite white.

The prevailing ideas of Social Darwinism and Racial Science work together throughout the late Victorian era and begin to shape social, domestic, and imperial policies across Europe and North America; shaping how the ruling establishments and thus the wider dominant societies think about the poor, colonised people, the enslaved, and the ethnic and racial other. Poverty, for example, is — as we see in the British workhouse regime — seen as a moral failing resulting from inferior breeding and bad

genes, and it is not long before scientists and intellectuals are thinking seriously about engineering better racial stock. In both the Highland Clearances in Scotland and in the Great Famine in Ireland — both under British rule — this want for a better ‘Teutonic stock’ — *qua* Anglo-Saxon stock — is made quite explicit by the British aristocracy. At about the same time, Alexander H. Stephens, Vice President of the Confederate States of America, during the American Civil War, stated in the starkest terms that the foundations of the Confederacy are laid:

... its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery — subordination to the superior race — is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth.

These sickening attitudes were established on what was then considered firm scientific and rational grounds — and it is in this new racial hierarchy Jews too have to be placed. Again, how Jews are situated in this schema and who calls the shots is a matter of power — the ruling class and its scientific and philosophical intelligentia would do that.

Traditional Christian anti-Judaism, as we discussed in the last episode, had poisoned Christian theology for the best part of two millennia, and from the thirteenth century, from the expulsion of the Jews from England, Jew hatred informed European Christian thinking on Jews to the Enlightenment — an age of so-called reason in which ‘the Jew’ was still demonised and othered as a corrupt and corrupting element within European society. Thus, as early modern secularism began to take root, Jew hatred spread from the religious to the philosophical and political spheres. As the Nation, envisaged and imagined in romantic and almost religious terms, grew in prominence Jews increasingly became the whipping boy for European national anxieties — and it is important to stress that this dynamic is not limited to German nationalism. Reflecting on this shortly after the liberation of Paris from Nazi occupation, Jean-Paul Sartre wrote in *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1946) that the idea of ‘the Jew’ was a requirement of the nationalist anti-Semite; that if the Jew did not exist, someone would have to invent him. In eastern Europe and in Russia, the Jews had been economically necessary as an intermediary between the nobility and the peasantry, and so became the ideal target of both the nobility and the peasantry as tensions mounted over the early modern period. As we progress through this series into the execution of the Holocaust in Poland and later in Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic, and western Russia we will discuss these trends in more depth. But, if you are interested in Jewish life in Russia and Poland and the evolution of antisemitism in eastern Europe, an excellent resource I can recommend is Antony Polonsky’s work *The Jews in Poland-Lithuania and Russia*.

It is in the Russosphere we see the first association of Jews with socialism and communism — a relationship of the Jews to a modern economic and political ideology that quickly spreads over the whole of Europe and to America. This is, of course, an association the far-right continues to make even to this day with the Jews; the idea of Judeo-Bolshevism. Owing to their particular constitution as an urban population and their connection to certain trades in a rapidly industrialising society, Jewish

workers found themselves both politically and economically drawn to Socialism. Revolutionary socialism and the overthrow of the imperial states was also seen by many Jews as a way of gaining better, more equitable access to the societies in which they were confined to the margins. This was, then, the great threat western industrialists like Henry Ford saw in 'the Jew.' Ford, the father of the modern industrialised assembly line, the Elon Musk of Bill Gates of his time, was a massively influential figure and a virulent anti-Semite. And we will return to this later in the series when we discuss the reasons why so many Jews in Germany and German occupied Europe could not escape.

You will by now be aware of a considerable amount of subject deferral to later episodes and this helps to explain why this episode is labelled 'part one' of European Antisemitism. The reason is quite simple: the sheer size and scope of this subject. This episode aims then to be a broad introduction to the subject, and so for the remainder of the episode we will focus our attention on how the scientific racism and the racial theories of the nineteenth century — infused with Christian anti-Judaism and traditional European Jew hatred — morphed into the racialised antisemitism the Nazis would exploit in the 1920s and 30s.

The transition from — let's call it — the theory to the practice of antisemitism in Germany is the Great War (1914-18) and its aftermath in the humiliating Versailles settlement and the difficulties of the Weimar Republic. But before we go there two very important events are worth mentioning — and again, we will say more about these in a later episode — and those are the publication of the now infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and the Dreyfus affair in France. Moving on from the crude religious themes of anti-Judaism and traditional European Jew hatred, *The Protocols*, probably produced by the Tsarist secret service to disrupt Russian socialist revolutionary circles in Paris, manufactured the idea of an international Jewish conspiracy. Pretending to be the minutes of a clandestine meeting of influential globalist Jews, *The Protocols* outlined how the Jews planned to seize power around the world by using their money and influence over international banking and finance and subverting Christian morals in literature, the theatre, and music, and such like. This vile lie went viral before virality was even a thing and was published everywhere — being translated into English, German, Italian, Spanish, and a number of other languages. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* depends on many of these lies to build a case against the international Jew.

The Dreyfus affair — a scandal that rocked French society from 1894 — was not a million miles from the ideas propagated in *The Protocols*, and came down to the accusation — *j'accuse* — that Alfred Dreyfus, a French military officer, had passed French security secrets to the Germans. This had very much the effect on France that the OJ Simpson trial would have in the United States; it divided opinion down racial and political lines. Dreyfus was a Jew, and so the desire to believe him a traitor — which he wasn't — linked right into the nationalist thinking on Jews; that they were not really part of the nation and could never be trusted. More on this later.

Let us turn now to Germany. After the defeat of the German Empire in 1918, with the crippling reparations for war guilt, the economic restrictions, and the humiliating loss of territory, all made worse by the Great Depression, the recalling of American loans, and hyper-inflation, the new Weimar Republic — again, more on Weimar in another episode — Germany was in just the wrong place at the

wrong time for a perfect storm. The Scottish-born Harvard historian Niall Ferguson identifies three preconditions for genocide: Imperial decline, economic volatility, and ethnic disintegration — and this is exactly where Germany found itself from 1919. By the end of the war, not only had the German Reich collapsed and the Kaiser gone off into exile in the Netherlands, but the Tsarist Russian Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire had gone too, and the British Empire was on a shoogly peg. New nation states — like Poland and Czechoslovakia — were lines on the map drawn around ethnic and linguistic groups pushing hard against one another. Almost a third of Polish citizens did not identify as Polish.

German nationalists and the far-right could not and would not accept the possibility of a German defeat. Such a thing was unimaginable to them. Germany was *Über alles*, it was simply unacceptable that its military could have been defeated by the French, the British, and their allies — and so the *Dolchstoßlegende* (*doll-stoass-legende*), the fabrication of the myth that Germany had been ‘stabbed in the back,’ gained traction. The socialists and the Jews — two elements of German society believed by the right to be treacherous — had undermined the German war effort and had ultimately succeeded in bringing about the defeat of the German Empire and humiliating the nation. As socialism was identified already with ‘the Jew,’ the attention of the right rapidly became fixated on *Die Judenfrage* — ‘the Jewish Problem.’

By 1933, the population of Germany was 65.3 million, and the narrative spun by the NSDAP — or the Nazi Party — was that the German people were the victims of the Jews. German victimhood was at the heart of National Socialist propaganda, that less than nine percent of the population — the majority of which were women, children, and the elderly — bullied and victimised the majority population. It was this claim to victimhood that formed the basis of the Nazi regime’s justification for victimising Jews; the kind of thinking that reasoned that if we did not do it to them, they would do it to us. It was absurd reasoning and could never have worked on the entire population. But it would work on some. ‘All propaganda should be popular,’ said Joseph Goebbels,

... and should adapt its intellectual level to the receptive ability of the least intellectual of those whom it is desired to address. Thus it must sink its mental elevation deeper in proportion to the numbers of the mass whom it has to grip. The receptive ability of the masses is very limited, and their understanding small. On the other hand, they have a great power of forgetting.

Yet, more would be required than a simple accusation of treason against the Jews — especially one so flimsy — if enough of the German people were going to be mobilised against the Jews or at least be passive while during their persecution. What the Nazis were aiming for was *Gleichschaltung* (*gly-shall-tung*), a kind of synchronisation or solidarity of the German volk — the so-called Aryan or racially pure Germans — against the Jews, and for this to be affected the Nazis had to dig deeper into popular, rational — and I use this term advisedly — fears of the people. And this is where the prior-existing racial sciences could be brought to bear on their minds. Where to the patriotic or nationalistic mind the emphasis could be put on *redemptive antisemitism*; the idea that the German volk and nation could be saved by casting the Jews out, to the rest more rational and scientific evidence had to be peddled. To this, the Nazis pushed a plethora of stereotypes — most of which played

on easily transmittable fears. As a rationally and scientifically verifiable inferior race, Jews could be presented as dangerous to every part of the national body of Germany; to the economy, to the health of the people, to the future of the gene pool, to women and children, and so on. In the economic sphere, the Jew was presented as a parasite getting rich from the exploitation of the labour of hard working and honest Germans. Jews could be nothing but parasites — even the political left had to concede this much. It was after all the sad definition Karl Marx had given to the true nature of Judaism. The science of the economy, which was important to all Germans in the interwar period, had a ready-made caricature of the Jew as a character who bled the economy and made ethnic Germans poorer — thus weakening Germany. It is important to bear in mind that this image of the Jew was not invented by the Nazis or even in Germany. This was the common currency of serious capitalist thought in The United States, in Britain, and across the European continent. The Jews were bad for the nation state because their religion, as Marx said, was self-interest. There could be no national solidarity and so no meaningful economic recovery while the Jews were busy eating away at the economy.

Prurience was also very important in this propaganda drive. As an inferior race, Jews were baser, more animalistic than more evolved Germans. Here the caricature of the Jew — with all the usual stereotypical features (corpulent, bespectacled, hooked-nosed, shabby-genteel, etc.) — was projected as using his wealth and devious means to beguile and seduce racially superior Aryan women and girls. The imagined threat to women and girls has always been a favourite trope of far-right nationalists. Women are the producers of the nation, they are the mothers of farmers and soldiers. Girlhood is therefore an ideal of ethnic purity and virginity. Womanhood and the patriarchal protection of women are central features of right-wing nationalism. This thinking has been a hallmark of anti-black racism in the United States, and has been so since slavery. The thought of a black man penetrating a pure white woman — especially rape — fuelled the Ku Klux Klan and American white supremacy through the 1920s and 30s, when the Klan was gaining mainstream respectability. The same was so for the Jew. He was a threat to women and girls. He was also a sexual deviant — another powerful and longlasting motif of right-wing propaganda. The Jew, was presented in Nazi propaganda as the fat stranger offering naïve German children candy in order to lure them to his lair. The Jew was a paedophile — and today we are seeing this reemerge in the right-wing rhetoric about Muslim immigrants and trans gender people — sexual deviants and paedophiles. It is interesting too to see the interconnection of transphobia and antisemitism today.

Rassenschande or Blutschande — another horror from the pseudoscientific thinking of wider European thinking; that Jewish blood (or any inferior blood), through intermarriage, brought racial shame because it polluted the white and pure genetic stock. Irrational as this hopefully sounds to the modern ear, this was trotted out with considerable scientific credentials in the 20s and 30s. On the other side of the Atlantic, Eugenics was big science and there were serious efforts in Washington to improve the nation with sterilisation and selective breeding. This was not a fringe medical-scientific Frankenstein science. Eugenics was mainstream. As non-Anglo-Saxons, Jews in America were considered less than ideal breeding stock for the betterment of society. Germany was not unique in advocating the false belief that Jews — as a racial group — were subpar, and from this the fear was invented and sold that Jews spread genetic abnormalities and disease. It was not much to manoeuvre

opinion from here to the perception that Jews, as subhumans and deviants, were inherently dirty and so spread contagious diseases — especially venereal diseases.

The great power of all of this was that one did not need to be a Nazi or an ideological racist to buy into it. These prejudices masquerading as science and reason were respectable opinions internationally. Influential people and people in power backed them — both in Germany and around the world. And when this racism was being spewed from the state and the highest academic, scientific, and medical authorities in the land, they took on the appearance of truth. They became valid opinions. And perhaps most frighteningly of all, much like today, these ideas were gaining ground and growing in acceptability in many influential circles before Hitler and the Nazis came to power. All the Nazis had to do was mobilise them in the cause of nationalism and economic recovery, and they had a creature at their service that would function to unite the country — or enough of the country — against a foreign and common enemy.

In future episodes we will return to some of the themes touched on in this broad introduction when and where they become necessary in our discussion of the Holocaust as it developed. *The Holocaust Podcast* is produced by and for *Standpoint Zero* dot com and you can support this project on Patreon at Patreon dot com forward slash Jeggit — and at Jeggit is me, Jason Michael McCann, on social media.

Thank you for listening to *The Holocaust Podcast*. Please subscribe on YouTube or wherever you get your podcasts — and feel free to like and share. And I hope you will tune in again to *The Holocaust Podcast*.