



**G U V E R N U L R O M Â N I E I**  
**Institutul Național pentru Studierea Holocaustului**  
**din România “Elie Wiesel”**

București, Bd. Dacia, Nr. 89, Sector 2, Tel/Fax: +40-21-318.09.39  
CIF 18098352, <http://www.inshr-ew.ro> e-mail: [office@inshr-ew.ro](mailto:office@inshr-ew.ro)

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COUNTERING ONLINE ANTISEMITISM AND ANTIGYPSYISM  
- FIRST INTERMEDIARY REPORT -

During the months of January and February 2018 the team members identified the main categories of anti-Roma and anti-Jewish narratives spread on the websites of Romanian language. The documentation stage was completed in three steps:

1. Firstly, the research team used the database created during the implementation of the project *Monitoring and combating Antisemitism and Antigypsyism in social media*. This database was completed with two new categories of information: posts published in 2017 on Facebook accounts from the primary database and Facebook accounts unaccounted during the implementation of the project *Monitoring and combating Antisemitism and Antigypsyism in social media*. Summing up, the research team monitored and analyzed the messages posted on approximately 600 individual Facebook accounts as well as 50 nationalistic Facebook groups.
2. Secondly, the members of the research team monitored and analyzed 38 of the most popular nationalist websites, blogs, online newspapers and reviews. It is important to mention, that most of the time, links from this category of sources, trigger the antisemitic and anti-Roma messages further on developed on the Facebook.
3. Thirdly, in late February, the research team had an informal meeting with representatives of NGOs on combating antisemitism and antigypsyism that enabled them to better identify and confirm the anti-Jewish and anti-Roma messages most recurrent within the Romanian society.

The analysis revealed the existence of two main categories of messages with anti-Jewish and anti-Roma content: one that mainly has a narrative component (it answers the questions *How are the Jews/the Roma? Why do we need to fight against them?*) and a second one where the emphasis is put on instigation to violence, hatred and discrimination against the Jews and Roma (it answers the question *What needs to be done against the Jews/Roma?*). Both categories will be detailed below.

Regarding the analyzed anti-Jewish narratives, the research team identified eight distinct categories: religious, racist, conspiratorial, economic, antizionist, negationist, Judeo-bolshevism and licentious. For the anti-Roma narratives, seven distinct categories were discriminated: racist, crime-related, demographic, conspiratorial, negationist, socio-cultural and licentious. All categories are be detailed below.

Not less important, it needs to be mentioned that only the most recurrent anti-Jewish and anti-Roma messages or those that trigger consistent reactions by Facebook users were included in our list.

## I. ANTISEMITIC AND ANTI-ROMA NARRATIVES

### A. Categories of antisemitic narratives:

#### ➤ RELIGIOUS ANTISEMITISM

The antisemitic messages constructed on a religious dimension follow in their vast majority a Christian perspective (see models 1 to 5). However, the research team also identified an anti-Christian perspective (see model 6). Both dimensions are detailed in the lines below:

1. The Jews killed Jesus/ the Jews betrayed Jesus. Within this narrative, the discourse uses the classical accusation of deicide widely used throughout history against the Jews in Christian environments. Following a generalising approach, the users of this narrative are making any Jew living at any time in history equally guilty for the killing of Christ and consequently equally fit to bear the punishment.
2. The Talmud is a racist and xenophobic text. This narrative is constructed on three main ideas: 1. The Hebrew Bible is not recognized as the source scripture of Judaism; 2. The fragments from Talmud are misquoted and decontextualized in order to prove their xenophobic character; and 3. The Jews are labelled as a xenophobic and racist people so the identification of these traces in the Talmud only proves their inner nature.
3. The Jews are the people/the children of Satan/ Synagogue of Satan. The followers of this narrative discriminate between God's people and Satan's people with the Jews being placed in the enemy camp. Being Satan's people, becomes legitimate to fight against them and even hate them.
4. The Jews hate God. This narrative represents a corollary of the one above, they hate God because they are Satan's people and they hated God throughout history. Consequently they were never the chosen people.
5. Jews – Khazars – Kikes. This narrative works with three categories - Jews, Khazars and Kikes - aiming to demonstrate two related elements: 1. That each category has a different content; and 2. That the Jews living today are not the descendants of the biblical Hebrews. The Jews living today are, according to this narrative, the kikes. They are presented as descendants of the Khazars and not of the biblical Hebrews.
6. The Jews invented Christianity and Christianity equals communism ⇔ The Jews invented communism. The followers of this narrative recuperate the Jewish origins of Jesus and Paul making both, and thus the Jews, responsible for the Universalist creed proposed by Christianity. As the Universalist creed imposed by Christianity lays on the idea of equality among all people, for the followers of this narrative, Christianity equals communism so the Jews are made the inventors of communism.

#### ➤ RACIST ANTISEMITISM

The research team identified two main dimensions developed within this category: one that takes the form of classic racist discourse and a second that particularise the message by using Romanian authors to make their point.

1. The Jews are parasites. Developed on a classical racist dimension, this narrative identifies the Jew with the inner enemy, dangerous for the survival of the in-group and thus in need to be eliminated.

2. The Jews are worms. From a theoretic perspective, this sub-category belongs to the one already described above. However, there is a specificity of this narrative that made the research team to place it alone: this label is usually used in correlation with the anti-Jewish discourse developed in interwar Romania by Nicolae Păulescu, one of the main antisemites of the time.

➤ CONSPIRATORIAL ANTISEMITISM

The antisemitic messages gathered under this category follow the classical conspiracy theory approach making the Jews responsible for all kinds of facts with the sole goal to lead the world, to destroy the European culture, the Arab world or the Romanian nation.

1. The Jews invented ISIS in order to destroy the Arab world. Within this narrative the Western countries are only puppets in Jewish hands used to fight against the main enemy of the Jews, the Arab world.
2. The Jews are responsible for BREXIT. According to this narrative the Jews are interested to have a weak Europe so they determined the BREXIT in order to weaken the European Union and in this way to achieve their main purpose.
3. The Jews aim to Islamise Europe. Taking a different route from the one described above but starting from a similar presupposition – the Jewish desiderate for a weak Europe, the followers of this discursive model accuse the Jews for aiming to Islamise the continent.
4. The Jews aim to rule the world/ The Jews finance the Vatican in order to rule the world. According to this narrative, throughout history, the aim of the Jews was to control entire humanity and to have all nations under Jewish domination.
5. The Jews aim to make all nations disappear. This model functions as a corollary of the one described above; aiming for world dominance the Jews, are presented, as equally fighting for the disappearance of the world's nations.
6. The Jews rule Romania/ The Jews aim to create a state of Israel on the Romanian soil. This model is a local development of the fourth narrative described above. This time, the Jews are not aiming to dominate the entire world but only the Romanian nation. According to a narrative that occurs quite often on the social media, the Jews aim to steal the Romanian territory and construct a second Israeli state on it.
7. The Jews have provoked all wars/ the Second World War. This narrative seems to work as a corollary of the fourth model from above. Aiming to rule the world, the Jews use all tools, wars included, to attain their goal.  
Within the same sub-category, a more particularistic approach depicts the Jews as responsible for Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
8. The Jews infiltrates within Orthodoxy in order to ruin the “rightful faith.” According to the promoters of this narrative, the goal of the Jews is to destroy the Orthodox faith, considered the main characteristic of the Romanian people. As the Orthodox faith represents the core of the Romanian essentiality to destroy it equals the destruction of the Romanian nation.  
Within the same sub-category, a second approach depicts the Jews as the promoters of the LGBT agenda in order to destroy the Orthodox faith.
9. The Jews do atheist propaganda. The promoters of this narrative start from the same idea of the Jews aiming to destroy the Orthodox faith only this time their strategy is not infiltration but attacks from outside, in the form of atheism.

➤ ECONOMIC ANTISEMITISM

This narrative mainly circumscribes an old antisemitic theme that regards the Jews as owners of the world financial system and, consequently, as masters of the world. The last item on our list represents a relatively new development of the antisemitic discourse with an economic component (see model 6).

1. The Jews are the masters of the world/ of Romania. Defined as owning the financial system, the Jews are considered as masters of the world and/or Romania.
2. George Soroş rules Romania. This model particularise the one already described above. George Soroş is made a symbol of the Jewish domination and is considered to rule, from the shadow, the destiny of the Romanian people.
3. The Jews robbed Romania between 1944 and 1989. According to this narrative, the Jews are regarded as promoters of the communist regime in Romania and consequently as its main beneficiaries.
4. The Jews own the press, Hollywood, banks. What we have here is, again, a particularisation of the first model described above. The promoters of this narrative start from “the fact” of the Jewish leadership over the world, identifying the main tools used by the latter in order to achieve their goal: press, Hollywood, banks.
5. Jews do not like to work, they steal and lie. We are back to an anti-Jewish label specific to 19<sup>th</sup> century Romania, the Jews don’t like to work (meaning physical work) so they gain their money through lies and robbery.
6. The Jews were slave traders. Following this narrative, the main goal of the Jews throughout history was to attain economic gain. To pursue this goal they even participate and were beneficiaries of the slave trade.

➤ ANTIZIONIST/ ANTI-ISRAEL ANTISEMITISM

The main characteristic of this category relies in the definition of the Israeli state as an illegitimate structure that has no right to exist. The research team has identified two developments of the topic:

1. Israel is a criminal/terrorist/Nazi state. The promoters of this narrative use the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to prove the illegitimate character of the Israeli state and thus to advocate its disappearance.
2. The Zionist regime is expansionist. According to this narrative, the true goal of the Israeli state is world domination. Consequently they artificially create tensions between USA and Russia in order to weaken the two countries and to ease their way to world domination.

➤ NEGATIONIST ANTISEMITISM

The focus of this category is the Holocaust, its promoters making great efforts to demonstrate its non-existence. However, despite this general focus, several approaches could be discriminated within this generic category: some focus on the European case, while others emphasize the Romanian one; some focus on states’ responsibility, while others focus on the responsibilities of specific organizations of the time, etc.

1. The Holocaust is a lie. According to this narrative, there was no Holocaust either one is talking about the Romanian territory or of the generic European case.

2. The Holocaust is a business. This model functions as a corollary of the one described above. The Holocaust was invented by the Jews in order to gain money for those unjustly labelled as perpetrators.
3. The Holocaust was provoked by the Jews in order to be able to create the Israeli state/ The Holocaust was financed by the Jews, Hitler being only a puppet in their hands. According to this narrative, the Jews are not the victims of the Holocaust but its hidden masterminds and main beneficiaries. Hitler becomes, at his turn, a victim of the same Jews with no responsibility whatsoever for the extermination of six million people during the war.
4. Germany was manipulated by England and England was manipulated by the Jews. This narrative offers a slightly different scenario to the one described above: the Holocaust was again provoked by the Jews only that this time they did not use Hitler but England to achieve their goal.
5. Elie Wiesel was not a prisoner of Auschwitz. This narrative represents a particularistic approach to the negationist view already described on the first item of this category. The purpose of its promoters is to prove that there was no Holocaust and they misuse the iconic figure of Elie Wiesel to prove their point.
6. Romania did not deport its Jews to extermination camps ⇔ There was no Holocaust in Romania. What we have here is the classic approach of the Romanian negationism. The Holocaust is made synonymous with the deportations to the extermination camps. Consequently, as the Jews under the Romanian authority were not deported to the death camps, the promoters of this narrative mistakably conclude that in Romania there was no Holocaust.
7. Ion Antonescu saved the Jews. This narrative represents a corollary of the one explained above: as is Romania there was no Holocaust, Ion Antonescu, the leader of the Romanian state during the war, is transformed into an outstanding character that not only fought for the Romanian state but also saved its Jewish citizens from deportation to the death camps operated by Nazi Germany.
8. The Jews deported in Transnistria were killed by the Ukrainian and Russian locals. The aim of this narrative is, once more, to deny the responsibility of the Romanian authorities/institutions for the death of hundreds of thousands of Jews during the Holocaust. The approach is slightly different from the one already explained above but the result is quite the same: there were Jewish victims under Romanian authority but they did not die of Romanian hands, they were victims of Russian and Ukrainian inhabitants of Transnistria.
9. The Iron Guard was not a fascist movement. The promoters of this narrative aim to revive the Legionary Movement, the main fascist organization of interwar Romania. Their strategy is quite simple: they deny the fascist character of the Iron Guard wrongly using the argument that during the Nuremberg Trials the Legionary Movement was not incriminated as a fascist organization.

➤ **ANTISEMITISM RELATED TO JUDEO-BOLSHEVISM**

The focus of this narrative category relies on the identification of the roots of communism within a Jewish milieu, presenting it as structurally pertaining to the latter.

1. The Jews invented communism. Communism is presented as a Jewish ideology so the Jews are made guilty for all the problems brought by communism throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

2. The Jews brought communism to Romania. Taken a particularistic approach, this narrative focus on the Romanian case. The Jews are now made guilty for bringing communism to Romania and consequently for the disaster brought to the country by half of century of communism. Often a list of the Jewish leaders of the Romanian communist party is provided.

➤ LICENTIOUS ANTISEMITISM

This sub-category brings together brief insulting labels attributed to the Jews without circumscribing them to a specific narrative.

## **B. Categories of anti-Roma narratives:**

➤ RACIST ANTI-ROMA NARRATIVE

1. The Roma are racially inferior. According to this narrative, this inferiority belongs to their inner nature, it can't be overcome so, despite all efforts, they will continue to remain the same.
2. The Roma are parasites. This narrative functions as a corollary of the one from above only it has very powerful consequences: as they are seen as parasites, their elimination from the social body is presented as a necessity.
3. The Roma can't be educated. This narrative focus on a cultural definition of the alleged inferiority attributed to the Roma: the problem is not they are uneducated but the fact that they are impossible to educate.

➤ CRIME RELATED ANTI-ROMA DISCOURSE

According to this narrative, the Roma are presented as a dysfunctional item within the social body. Moreover, not only that they do not participate to the welfare of the Romanian society but they only exploit it:

1. All Roma steal, lie, don't like to work. Through a generalising strategy, all Roma are lumped within a single category labelled in an extremely negative manner.
2. All Roma are rich and made their wealth through illegal businesses.
3. They don't pay taxes.

➤ DEMOGRAPHIC ANTI-ROMA DISCOURSE

According to this narrative, the Roma represent a great danger for the survival of the Romanian state/ society/culture. This danger is represented on two directions: 1) from a statistical perspective; and 2) from a cultural perspective.

1. The Romanian state is in danger of being Romanized (*tiganizat*) through the high natality rate of the Roma population. This discourse relies heavily on the idea of the Roma having higher natality rates than the ethnic Romanians and the demographic danger behind this fact. The "solutions" found for solving the problem vary from the chemical sterilization of the Roma to public policies that would encourage Roma abortions.
2. The Romanian state is in danger of being Romanized (*tiganizat*) through the cultural loan of Roma values, music, tradition, etc. The Romanian culture, in other words the soul of the Romanian nation, is in danger of being utterly destroyed by the false models imposed at social level by the Roma minority.

➤ CONSPIRATORIAL ANTI-ROMA NARRATIVE

This narrative focuses on the idea that the Roma use the ethnonym Roma instead of gypsy in order to create confusion between them and the ethnic Romanians. Their final goal is the deconstruction of the Romanian society and the replacement of the Romanians on their own land.

➤ NEGATIONIST ANTI-ROMA NARRATIVE

Within this category, the research team discriminated between two categories of messages: one that focus on the Roma slavery on the Romanian territory while, the second denies any responsibility of the Romanian authorities for the Holocaust of the Roma. Both dimensions are detailed in the lines below:

1. The Romanians did not enslave the Roma population. They arrived in the Romanian territories as slave. Once more, the aim of this narrative is to deny any responsibility of the Romanians for the unjust acts of the past.
2. The Roma were not enslaved by the Romanians, they are slaves through their nature.
3. Germany is responsible for the deportation of the Roma. According to this narrative, there is no responsibility of the Romanian authorities, the compensation paid by the German authorities to those deported being used to further prove this point.
4. Ion Antonescu saved the Roma. The promoters of this narrative do not affirm that the Roma were not deported by Antonescu but, quite surprisingly, that through their deportation to Transnistria they were saved from the deportation to the death camps in Poland.
5. Only Roma law breakers were deported. Putting the problem in this manner, the promoters in this manner, the promoters of this narrative transform deportations in a legitimate action that aimed to clean the Romanian society of the time.
6. They speak about the Holocaust only in order to gain material compensations. According to this narrative, there is no historical truth behind the Holocaust but only the intention of Roma leaders to pursue material gains.

➤ SOCIO-CULTURAL ANTI-ROMA DISCOURSE

1. Roma = illiterate. The Roma are presented as an un-educated, uncivilized people, socially assisted by the state.
2. Roma = filthy.
3. The Roma embarrass us among the foreigners. According to this narrative, because of the falsely induced confusion between Roma and Romanian, all foreigners label the Roma immigrants from the West as Romanians and construct a negative image to the Romanian people.

➤ LICENTIOUS ANTI-ROMA DISCOURSE.

This sub-category brings together brief insulting labels attributed to the Roma without circumscribing them to a specific narrative.

## **II. DISCOURSES THAT INSTIGATE TO VIOLENCE, HATRED, DISCRIMINATION AGAINST JEWS AND ROMA**

Most of the antisemitic discourses do not offer a specific solution to “the Jewish problem”, only the generic call: “we need to fight against them” without detailing how to unfold this fight. When the authors become more specific, they talk about expulsion, violent acts or extermination.

The analysis of the anti-Roma messages revealed a very different situation, although the narratives are not as complex as in the case of the antisemitic messages, the “solutions” are much better individualized and detailed. The researched team have identified seven different strategies that should be used against the Roma:

- to sterilize them;
- to send them back to India;
- to send them to Europe as the West is fighting for Roma rights;
- to deport them;
- to kill them;
- to beat them;
- to remove their citizenship.

In the next stage of the project (1 March – 31 September 2018) the work of the research team will be dedicated to the construction of counter-narrative to each of the identified anti-Jewish and anti-Roma narrative.