

# Booklet on combating hate speech

Jewish minority

Project implemented by



**Hate speech:  
Why and how it  
occurs, and who  
are its victims?**

The most common definition of the notion tells us that we find hate speech in the statements that spread, incite, promote or justify the hatred of a group of people based on race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, etc.



## Why is it successful?

Because it intertwines two fundamental characteristics of humanity: our profoundly social character and the narrative nature of our cognitive universe.

As humans, we have the ability to invent stories, share them with our peers and make them believable. In the stories we share, we can easily recognize the heroes and the villains, and the means and features typical for both of these categories. Hate speech is, before all else, **a storytelling device**, and thus follows the same pattern: it builds a story in which the villain is clearly identified, his or her evil intentions are disclosed, one or multiple heroes are assigned to solve the problem, listing the solutions which need to be implemented for a happy ending.

Joining in on the same story is a form of cooperation, and cooperation is the fundamental condition of our deeply social nature. In other words, hate speech is a **narrative device** that survives through **interaction**.

## Which groups are vulnerable to hate speech?

The classic answer to this question would be anyone who is DIFFERENT. It is a correct answer, but we must take an additional step to understand how the labelling process works and where its major flaw stems from.

DIFFERENT only makes sense when juxtaposed with THE SAME. But what is DIFFERENT in some ways can be THE SAME in others. This is the first major error made by hate speech promoters in their perception of reality: building an immutable boundary between DIFFERENT and THE SAME, between Us and Them. The second error derives from the strong denial of multiple identities. In reality, an item can belong to several categories, depending on the logic which said categorization is based on.



The example below can help us understand this process. We start with a simple question: In how many ways can we group the terms: pig, corn, cat?  
We'll see how many answers there can be:

### 1st CATEGORIZATION

<i>Animals we don't eat</i>	<i>Plants</i>	<i>Animals we can eat</i>
Cat	Corn	Pig

### 2nd CATEGORIZATION

<i>Domestic animals</i>	<i>Plants</i>
Cat Pig	Corn

### 3rd CATEGORIZATION

<i>Inedible items</i>	<i>Edible items</i>
Cat	Corn Pig

### 4th CATEGORIZATION

<i>Three letter words</i>	<i>Four letter words</i>
Cat Corn	Pig

### 5th CATEGORIZATION

*Words which contain a vowel*  
Cat, Corn, Pig



## What does this exercise tell us?

The logic of classification has nothing to do with the terms; it is exclusively generated by the **criteria deemed relevant by the speaker**. Ethnic, racial, religious and gender related criteria are social constructs, which function as immutable boundaries simply because they are accepted as such in a social context.

If we alter the criteria based on which we set the boundary between DIFFERENT and THE SAME, other categories used to perceive the world will be generated. If we deem as the only relevant criteria being based on ethnicity, an individual can only be a Jewish/ Roma/etc person. But in reality, a Jewish/ Roma/ etc. person is simultaneously:

➤ An engineer/ doctor/ truck driver/  
engine mechanic etc.

➤ Passionate about football/ astronomy/  
Fortnite etc.

➤ A parent/ teenager/  
grandparent etc.

➤ Fan of Messi/ Dua Lipa/  
Van Gogh etc.

We can meet a type of DIFFERENT in all of these roles, but have the opportunity to discover that we are in fact, in many ways, THE SAME.

However, hate speech narratives won't feature members of the targeted group as parents, fans of Real Madrid, or Minecraft enthusiasts, in fact they'll only portray them as being representatives of a single category, in equal measures deeply DIFFERENT and harmful.





HATE

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Rationalising hate speech

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To support their point of view, authors of hate speech messaging use an exhaustive set of storytelling devices:

1

Showcasing statements as facts. Statements are presented as historic truths, even though no objective proof is provided. (I\_1)

2

Taking things out of context. When external sources are cited, historic references are used as proof without taking into account the context at the time, all the actors involved or the causes of a certain event. (I\_2)

3

Omission: the so-called technique of half-truths is based on carefully cutting out parts of the truth in order to play the argument in one's favour. Thus, the elements that would contradict their narrative are left out. (I\_3)





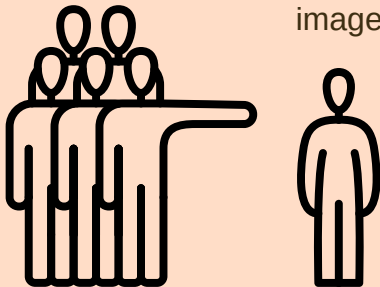
4

Externalising responsibility: the technique of scapegoating allows one to blame an entire group for all the problems their community is facing. (I\_4)

5

Invalidating the diversity specific to any group of people through stereotyping. The logic of hate speech suggests that belonging to a certain group (ethnic, religious, etc.) generates a behaviour pattern that is uniform and invariable. According to this rhetoric of hate, the targeted group contains no sub-categories: they all share the same ideas, same wishes, same goals, same methods, all of which are ascribed to an evil master plan. (I\_5)

Prejudices and stereotypes employ an illegitimate form of generalisation which supports the existence of fixed group identity. Practically, the individual ceases to exist and is replaced by a static image, automatically associated with everyone belonging to the group.



6

Using the rhetoric of duty. The extremely negative image associated with the targeted group and the call to fight are formulated in terms of a duty to protect one's nation, land, family and peers against the threat embodied by the targeted group. (I\_6)

7

Self-victimisation. The danger is real, and WE are the victims. This circles back to the rhetoric of duty, since the danger posed by the targeted group can only be annihilated if we take action. (I\_7)

8

Formulating a valid identity marker: real men/ patriots/ men of faith fight against enemies of their group. This type of heroism rhetoric offers both a meaning that exceeds the individual (by definition, a positive one) and a feeling of belonging. (I\_8)





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## Deconstructing myths

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If we had the curiosity, patience, and time, we could easily deconstruct hate speech narratives. Below you'll find two examples of antagonising narratives, built after samples found on social media[1].

**Myth:** The Talmud requires/ encourages the murder of non-Jewish people — this is a theme heavily promoted on social media by those who support the idea of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy[2].



The method used by those who promote this narrative consists in using certain **quotes from the Talmud to construct the thesis of a xenophobic and racist Jewish population.** This algorithm has three steps:

1. The Talmud is the Jewish people's holy book;
2. The Talmud is a racist and xenophobic text;
3. Jewish people are racist and xenophobic and they wish for the destruction of humanity.

**Fact:**

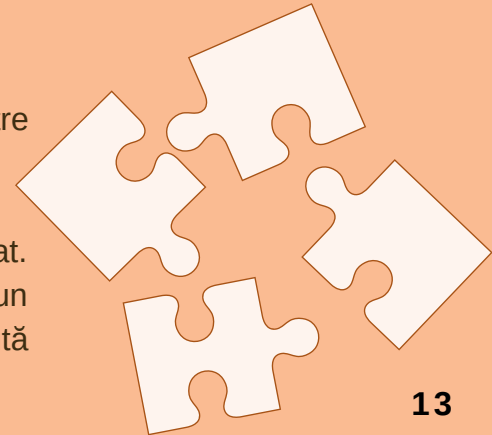
Any logical reasoning stands only as long as the statements it is built on are true. Which doesn't function in our case.

1. Indeed the **Talmud** is a central text of Judaism, but it is **only an interpretation of the Biblical texts (I\_2)**.
2. **The quotes** used to prove the Talmud's racist and xenophobic character are faulty for **three different reasons: incomplete citing, inaccurate translation and/or de-contextualization (I\_3)**.
3. It is **absurd** to state that **all those who are part of a community are identical** and take up in an undifferentiated manner the tradition they belong to. (I\_5).

The argument stems from the following quote:

Mechilta, Beshalach 2 (Exod 14:5-7): “Chiar și cel mai bun dintre ne-evrei trebuie ucis.” Îl regăsim și în Talmud, Soferim 15:10.

Așa cum spuneam, citatul este incomplet și decontextualizat. Textul din Talmud (Soferim 15:10) este preluat din Mechilta, un text rabinic important din secolul II d.Ch., în care se discută episodul trecerii Mării Roșii narat în Exod 14:5-7.





This is what the Exodus text says:



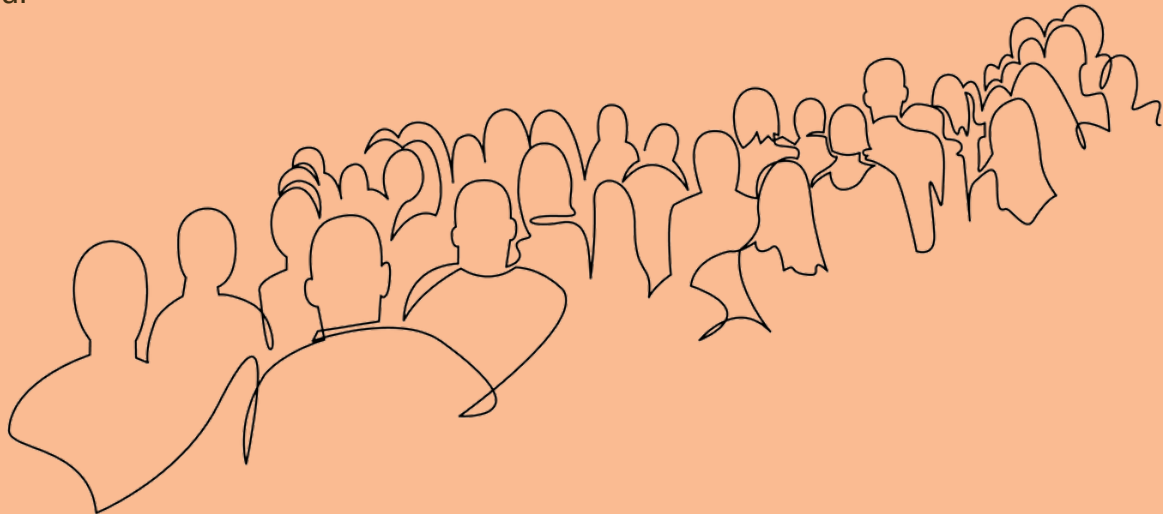
*When the king of Egypt was told that the [Jewish] people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them and said, “What have we done? We have let the Israelites go and have lost their services!” So he had his chariot made ready and took his army with him. He took six hundred of the best chariots, along with all the other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them.*



On the basis of this Biblical fragment, Rabbis ask themselves the following question: who owned the animals chained to these chariots? The text also mentions that the Egyptians' animals were killed during the Fifth Plague of Egypt (Exodus 9:17), and the Jewish people took their animals with them when they left Egypt (Exodus 10:26). The only possible explanation, according to Rabbis, is that the animals used by the Pharaoh to chase the Jewish people who escaped belonged to the God-fearing Egyptians, whose animals were able to survive the Fifth Plague through the faith of their owners. Rabbis also state that since the animals wouldn't let themselves be steered by strangers, the chariots must have been driven by the God-fearing Egyptians whose animals were appropriated by the Pharaoh.

So then Rabbis ask themselves, what is considered correct behaviour during wartime, whilst the opposing army may also contain well-intentioned people? Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai's statement answers this question: "Even the good amongst the Gentiles must be killed".

In other words, during war the enemy's morality is irrelevant. There is nothing Jewish about this conclusion, and it is definitely not an instigation to genocide, but rather the manifestation of one of the unfortunate realities of human history: in all wars, people are killed.



**Myth:** The Khazar theme. Supporters of the Khazar theory claim that modern day Jewish people, specifically Ashkenazi Jews, aren't descendants of biblical Jews but of a Turkic population, which occupied vast regions of Southwest Asia throughout the 3rd to 9th century[3]. Why is this hypothesis used by promoters of anti-Semitic speech? Either as a way to delegitimize Israel's right to exist as a state (A), or to argue against Jesus belonging to the Judaic faith (B).



**Delegitimizing Israel's right to exist as a state:** According to the reasoning of Khazar theory supporters, modern day Jews are not descendants of Biblical Jews, which means they have no right to inherit the territory of Israel ↔ Israel is an illegitimate state.



**Contesting the belonging of Jesus to the Judaic faith:** If modern day Jews are actually Khazars, the teachings of Jesus have nothing to do with Jewish traditions.

**How is this theory invalidated by modern science?**

## Fact - Historical arguments:

There is **no archaeological proof** of Jewish presence in the Khazar Kingdom.

The presence of Jews in Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Belarus) has only been documented since the 14th century, but there already was **a significant Jewish presence** in Western Europe in the 10th century. ↔ The wave of migration worked the opposite way, from west to east.



## Fact - Linguistic arguments:

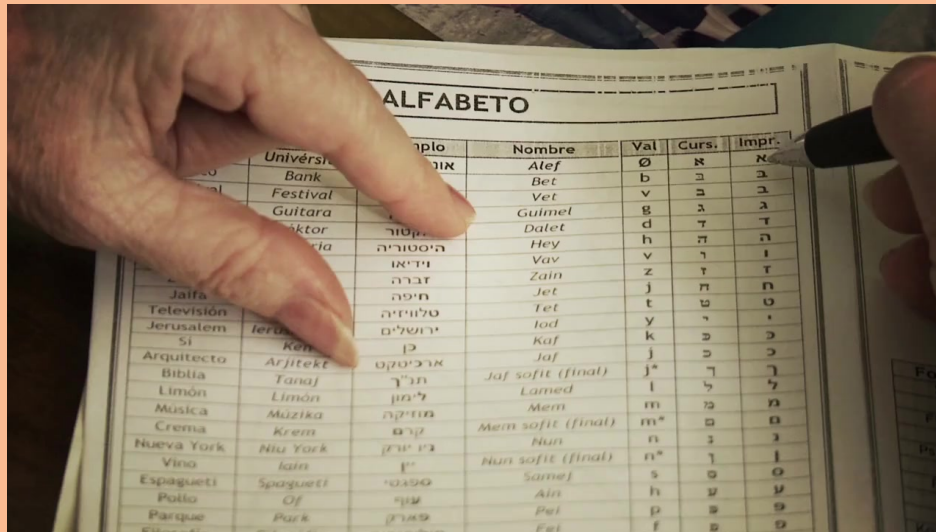
The language used by Ashkenazi Jews is called Yiddish. What influences does it have? The grammatical structure is mainly German. The alphabet is Hebrew (specifically, the one used by Biblical Jews), and the vocabulary is a mix of terms from Hebrew, German, and Slavic languages. Most importantly, Yiddish, the language spoken by Ashkenazi Jews, **has no Turkic influences**.



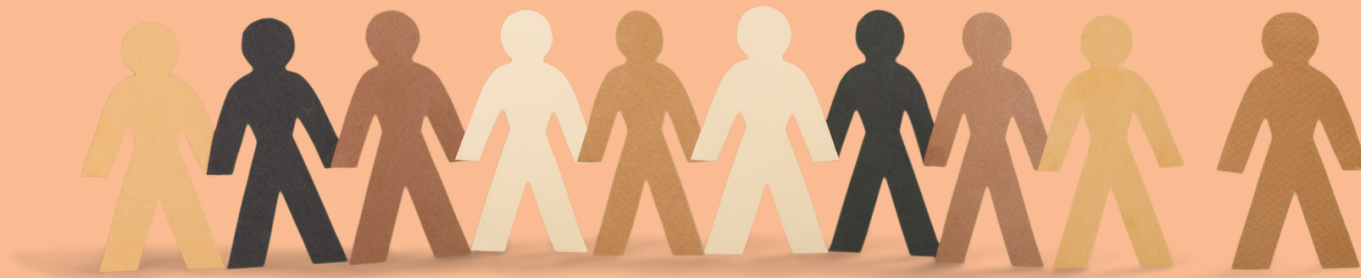


## Fact - Eponymous arguments:

Amongst the names and surnames used by Ashkenazi Jews there are no names of Turkic origin. Most originate from the Bible, or from local onomastics.



ALFABETO					
Univ.	Ejemplo	Nombre	Val	Curs.	Impr.
Univ.	אוניברסיטה	Alef	א	א	א
Bank	בנק	Bet	ב	ב	ב
Festival	פסטיבל	Vet	ו	ו	ו
Guitara	גיטרה	Guimel	ג	ג	ג
Aktor	אקטור	Dalet	ד	ד	ד
Oratoria	היסטוריה	Hey	ה	ה	ה
	וידיאו	Vav	ו	ו	ו
	זכרון	Zain	ז	ז	ז
Jalifa	ח'פה	Jet	ח	ח	ח
Televisión	טלוויזיה	Tet	ט	ט	ט
Jerusalem	ירושלים	Iod	י	י	י
Si	כן	Kaf	כ	כ	כ
Arquitecta	ארכיטקט	Jaf	כ	כ	כ
Biblia	תנ"ך	Jaf sofit (final)	j*	ך	ך
Limón	לימון	Lamed	ל	ל	ל
Musica	מוזיקה	Mem	מ	מ	מ
Crema	קרים	Mem sofit (final)	m*	ם	ם
Nueva York	ניו יורק	Hun	נ	נ	נ
Vino	ויין	Hun sofit (final)	n*	ן	ן
Espagueti	ספאגטי	Samej	ס	ס	ס
Potillo	פוזי	Aln	ע	ע	ע
Parque	פארק	Pei	פ	פ	פ
Filmedit	פילמדי	Fel	פ	פ	פ



Why is hate speech dangerous?

Firstly, because it offers a profoundly negative way of labelling different groups of people. Secondly, and most importantly, because it suggests frameworks of perceiving reality and keys to understanding certain events. From this perspective, stereotyping works as a set of lenses through which events and social actors who participate in them are perceived. In this fictional narrative, the Them vs Us dynamic is mandatorily seen in antagonistic terms, and the possibility of cooperating becomes inexistent.

## Footnotes:

[1] Between 2016 and 2018, INSHR-EW has implemented two projects for monitoring and indexing antisemitic and anti-roma messaging promoted in the Romanian speaking online sphere. Find the full set of 39 counter-narratives built by the team on [www.faraura.ro](http://www.faraura.ro).

[2] Read more on Faraura.ro, *Talmudul - text rasist, xenofob*, translated title: The Talmud, a racist and xenophobic text

[3] Read more on Faraura.ro, *(JIDANI=KAZARI) ≠ EVREI*

## Surces:

- The Fără Ură platform, [faraura.ro](http://faraura.ro)
- European Commission, *How to recognize conspiracy theories*, [ec.europa.eu](http://ec.europa.eu)
- Assimakopoulos Stavros, Baider H. Fabienne, Millar Sharon, *Online Hate Speech in the European Union. A Discourse Analytical Perspective*, 2017, Cham: Springer
- Perry Marvin, Schweitzer M. Frederick, *Antisemitism. Myth and Hate from Antiquity to the Present*, 2011, New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Moon Richard, *Putting Faith in Hate. When Religion is the Source or Target of Hate Speech*, 2018, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Waldron Jeremy, *The Harm in Hate Speech*, 2012, Cambridge: Harvard University Press





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Additional resources

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## Online resources:

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), *Words into Action to Address Intolerance*, [osce.org](http://osce.org)

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Teaching Materials on Antisemitism and Racism*, [ushmm.org](http://ushmm.org)

Anti-Defamation League, *Empowering Young People in the Aftermath of Hate*, [adl.org](http://adl.org)

Anti-Defamation League, *Resources for Educators, Parents & Families*, [adl.org](http://adl.org)

Council of Europe, *Publications/education*, [coe.int](http://coe.int)

UNESCO, *Countering online hate speech*, 2015, [en.unesco.org](http://en.unesco.org)







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This material was produced with the financial support of the Active Citizens Fund Romania, programme funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Grants 2014-2021. The content does not necessarily reflect the official position of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021; for more information visit [www.eeagrants.org](http://www.eeagrants.org).

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