Annual report on Antisemitism in Italy: 2021

Annual report curated by Osservatorio Antisemitism of the Foundation CDEC
More details, news and images are available at www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it

CD EC Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea

Osservatorio antisemitismo

Curated by: Betti Guetta (Head of Osservatorio Antisemitismo), Stefano Gatti, Murilo H. Cambruzzi

Director: Gadi Luzzatto Voghera, Director of Foundation Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation - CDEC

Table of Contents

1. 2021'S INCIDENTS. Antisemitic incidents recorded by the Antenna Antisemitismo: 1 January – December 2021.

In 2021, the Osservatorio Antisemitismo of the Foundation CDEC has received 400 incident reports. After a thorough analysis, **226** of them have been classified as antisemitic acts.

181 episodes took place on the internet, while **45** happened in the "real" world, including one episode of "extreme violence" and 5 "physical assaults". It has been years since the last time that **six** violent incidents were recorded in a single year.

Incidents recorded by the *Antenna Antisemitismo*

Month	N. Incidents
January	33
February	15
March	26
April	12
May	26
June	11
July	17
August	13
September	19
October	19
November	21
December	14
Total	**226**

For the full list of antisemitic incidents see the link below (in Italian):

https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/notizie/episodi-di-antisemitismo-in-italia/?anno=2021

---

1 The *Antenna Antisemitismo* (Antisemitism Hotline) is a project promoted by UCEI (Union of the Italian Jewish Communities) in collaboration with CDEC and OSCAD (*Osservatorio per la Sicurezza contro gli Atti Discrimatori - Observatory for Security against Discriminatory Incidents*).

Types of incidents recorded by the *Antenna Antisemitismo*

- **Extreme violence: 1**
- **Assault: 5**
- **Threats: 26**
- **Diffamation and insults: 178**
- **Graffiti: 12**
- **Vandalism: 3**
- **Antisemitism on mass media: 1**
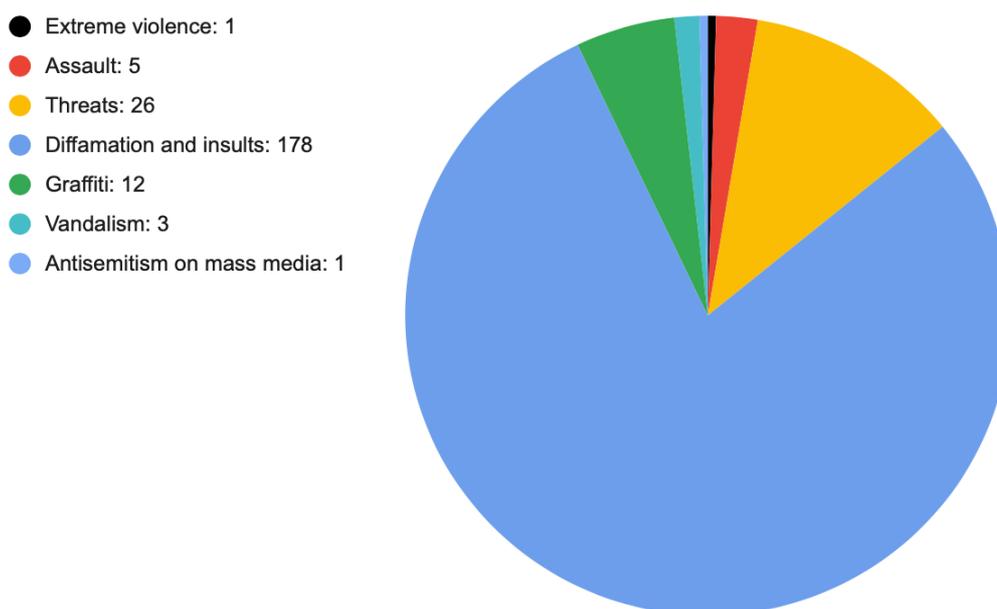
Social platform used to spread antisemitism

Platform	N. of incidents
Facebook	71
Twitter	26
YouTube	14
Zoom	8
Telegram	7
VKontakte	7
TikTok	4
WhatsApp	3
Instagram	2
Website	37
E-mail	1
Television	1
Total	**181**

Targets of antisemitic incidents

Generic

170 incidents targeted unspecified Jews and/or Jewish institutions, who are described based on antisemitic stereotypes: racist, rich, stingy, tending to domination and conspiracy, "Zionists".

56 incidents targeted Jewish persons and/or Jewish institutions, also demonized and stereotyped according to deep-rooted negative generalizations. In some cases, the victims are not Jewish but considered as such, for example, the Minister of Health, Roberto Speranza, who is "accused" of being an "Ashkenazi Jew" and/or a "*shabbes goy*" paid by the "Zionist lobby".

The main target of antisemitic attacks reported to the Antenna Antisemitismo in 2021 continues to be Senator for Life, **Liliana Segre**, confirmed both from incidents reported to the *Antenna Antisemitismo*, and from the daily monitoring of websites and social networks.

The attacks against Liliana Segre—ever since her appointment as Senator for Life in 2018—have become the norm and are mainly carried out on social media by means of insults (sometimes with the wishing of her passing), offensive photomontages aimed at attracting hatred towards the Senator, or the mocking of her experience at the Auschwitz extermination camp.

Classification of incidents by ideology

The 226 incidents recorded in 2021 by the *Antenna Antisemitism* fall into the following five classifications based on the *Handbook for the practical use of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism*.

8 Traditional anti-Judaism

65 Neo-Nazi / neo-fascist antisemitism, Holocaust denial and trivialization

56 Hatred of the state of Israel

53 Hatred of Jews as such

44 Antisemitic conspiracy theories

General overview of the incidents

The framework within which the episodes of antisemitism recorded in 2021—as well as in the three previous years—are framed is **conspirativism**, articulated in a series of anti-Jewish narratives: "Piano Kalergi", "The Great Reset", the power exerted by the "Zionist Lobby", the Zionist pandemic, etc.

The most widespread antisemitic libel is that linked to economic issues: obscure Jewish-Zionist lobbies—thanks to the sprawling power of the media, banks and international (*naturaliter*) "Zionist" organizations—rule the world.

Antisemites continue to depict Jews according to archaic and deep-rooted Judeophobic stereotypes, and often make use of demonizing myths: blood libel, ritual cannibalism, deicide, hatred of mankind, a tendency to usury and plotting, and poisoning.

Jews are frequently portrayed according to old dehumanizing depictions of Nazi origin and are defined based on negative stereotypes with no historical foundation.

Jewish journalist David Parenzo depicted as the antisemitic meme "Happy Merchant" on VKontakte.

All Jews are considered "Zionists", and Zionism is understood as a kind of metaphysical evil that possess them.

The first months of the year, particularly January, were characterized by Antisemitic incidents linked to the Day of Remembrance, the main ideology category was that of "neo-Nazi/neo-fascist antisemitism, denial and trivialization of the Shoah". A new and disturbing phenomenon of particular concern was that of Zoombombing (7 episodes recorded from January to April) against Jewish institutions during webinars dedicated to the Shoah.

In 2021, antisemitic discourse was mainly focused on the controversial topic of the coronavirus epidemic, often read through Judeophobic lenses. The Jewish-coronavirus polemic first emerged in the spring of 2020, but it was in November 2020, in coincidence with the second lockdown, that it has gradually assumed central importance in the antisemitic discourse.

Tweet: "Here is 'the science' that runs the world."

Starting from March 2021, when the vaccination campaign promoted by the government chaired by Mario Draghi began, the comparison "not vaccinated" = "Jews at the time of the Shoah" has become omnipresent. Conspiracy theorists on social median and no-vax demonstrators frequently used the yellow star containing the words "not vaccinated", shared the photomontage of the entrance to the Auschwitz extermination camp with the words "The vaccine makes you free", and accused Israel of being a "Nazi-vaccinist" State which wants to impose its apartheid policies on the unvaccinated globally.
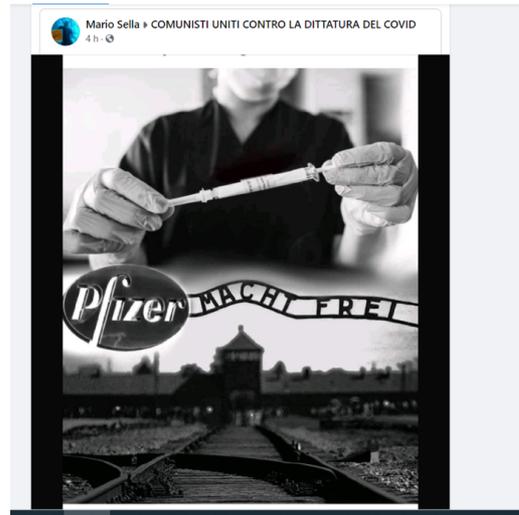
Facebook group: Communists against the Covid dictatorship. Image: "Pfizer sets you free".

Social media analysis: 2021

The Osservatorio Antisemitismo and other international institutions that study online hatred argue that the internet, and especially social media, are the primary means for the dissemination of hate speech[2] and antisemitic propaganda.[3][4][5]

Since the late 1990s, the Osservatorio has undertaken constant monitoring of the antisemitic cyberspace with a particular focus on social networks (Facebook, Twitter, VKontakte, YouTube, Telegram, TikTok, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.). Antisemitic content found by the Osservatorio is reported to social media platforms, and oftentimes the content is not removed. During 2021, about **5,500** online posts and discussions (including active monitoring and reporting to the Antenna) with antisemitic and/or borderline content were recorded.

2 HateAid, The Landecker Digital Justice Movement, "Boundless hate on the internet – Dramatic situation across Europe", HateAid (2021). Available at: https://hateaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/HateAid-Report-2021_EN.pdf
3 Camille Lhopitault, "Comparative report on the phenomena of online Antisemitism", Project Re-Act (2020). Available at: https://react.inach.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Re-Act-Comparative-report-on-the-phenomena-of-online-antisemitism.pdf
4 CST, APT, "Twitter: the extent and nature of antisemitism on Twitter in the UK", CST (2021). Available at: https://cst.org.uk/data/file/d/9/APT%20and%20CST%20Twitter%20Report%202021.1639094424.pdf
5 "FOA Report: Antisemitism on the social platform VKontakte", FOA (2021). Available at: https://foantisemitism.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/FOA-Report-Antisemitism-on-the-social-platform-VKontakte.pdf

2. PUBLISHING WITH ANTISEMITIC CONTENT

In 2021, the Osservatorio Antisemitismo has recorded the publishing of 90 books with antisemitic content (65 in 2020), of which 25 are classics and 65 are new.

Books with antisemitic content

— Classic — New

	2019	2020	2021
New	35	45	65
Classic	15	20	25
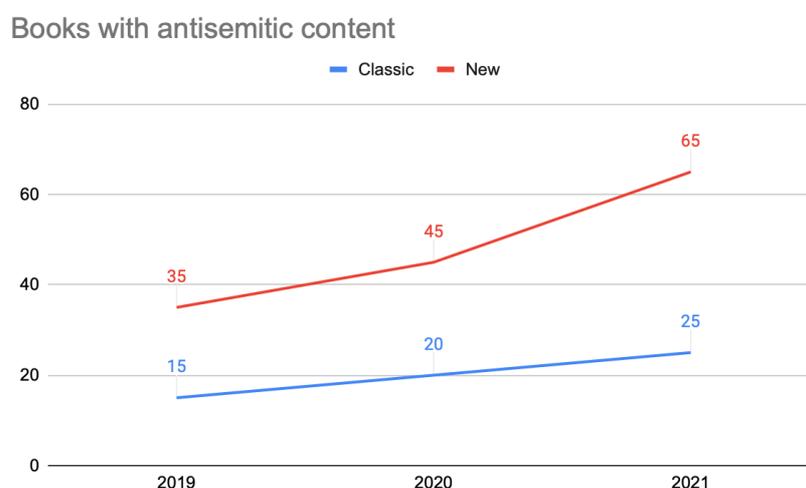
3. POLICIES ON COUNTERING ANTISEMITISM IN ITALY

Public institutions are committed to combating antisemitism through education, surveillance, and prevention. Politicians, institutional representatives, and public figures openly express their rejection of any act of antisemitism.

Law enforcement agencies show sensitivity and efficiency in the fight against antisemitism and protect Jewish institutions.[6]

The President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, as well as his predecessors, and all political leaders, speak out against antisemitism, even the Pope makes his voice heard against racism and antisemitism.[7]

On November 23, the Minister of Education Patrizio Bianchi presented the new "Guidelines for combating antisemitism in education",[8] a text that is accompanied by the translation into Italian of the teaching aids on the same subject published by OSCE. These new working tools, straightforward and well-conceived, signal the attention paid to these issues by the Ministry of Education. This is perhaps the first effective product of the Strategy for the fight against antisemitism developed in Europe and now also in Italy, thanks to the work carried out by the National Coordinator for the fight against antisemitism Milena Santerini.

On November 1st, the leaders of Serie A, the top professional division of the Italian men's soccer league, announced that they had adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.[9]

---

6   https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/approfondimenti/nuovo-rapporto-della-polizia-su-caratteristiche-e-normativa-di-contrasto-degli-hate-crimes/?hilite=%27oscad%27
7 https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/bratislava-papa-francesco-condanna-lantisemitismo/
8   https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/roma-illustrate-le-linee-guida-per-la-lotta-allantisemitismo-nella-scuola/
9 https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/la-serie-a-di-calcio-adotta-la-definizione-ihra-di-antisemitismo/

4. STUDIES CARRIED OUT BY THE OSSERVATORIO ANTISEMITISMO IN 2021

4.1 - QUALITATIVE SURVEY WITH OPINION-MAKERS (carried out between March and June of 2021)[10]

This qualitative research was conducted with the interviewing of 22 Italian opinion-makers—6 of them women and 16 men (scholars, journalists, psychoanalysts, sociologists, writers, etc.)—interviewed with "open-ended" questions, which allowed them to respond freely. The survey was carried out in the Spring of 2021 before the last Israeli-Palestinian conflict (May 7/21, 2021).

Some respondents were being confronted for the first time with the topic of antisemitism, a topic that was found to be "sensitive." The first thing we have noticed was a certain reluctance to talk/discuss about Jews for fear of saying something inaccurate or insensitive. In some cases, a certain hesitancy to respond emerged due to embarrassment and the fear of not being sufficiently informed; the "fear of being wrong", the fear of saying something politically incorrect; the concern of being considered antisemitic if one expresses opinions critical of the State of Israel. Respondents' answers reflect different points of view related to their background, ideological-cultural (or political) position, and degree of expertise on the topic. Some emphasize the multiplicity of factors at the origin of antisemitism, others focus on specific dimensions; some make a more psychological or anthropological assessment, others a historical or socio-economic one.

Some think that Italy, not having come to terms with its own racism (indeed wanting to build a collective image on the idea of openness and tolerance), tends to legitimate, justify, and diminish the seriousness of forms of antisemitism (racism in general), thus contributing to the legitimization of its spread.

In summary, antisemitism is represented as an:

- Ideology;
- Worldview;
- Form of prejudice;
- Expression of antipathy and envy towards Jews;
- Aversion/hostility towards Israel.

Often, however, the answers summarize more than one aspect, that is, that the aversion to Israel is preceded by anti-Jewish prejudice or that a certain vision of the world is connected to an anti-democratic ideology. For all of them, antisemitism, because of its endurance and its transversality in space and time, is a complex, ambiguous, changing but constant problem. For many of the interviewees, antisemitism is an old phenomenon, heterogeneous, persistent over time and places that can be displayed in different forms. Antisemitism can be seen as the disconnect

---

10   https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/ultima-indagine-dellosservatorio-antisemitismo-della-fondazione-centro-di-documentazione-ebraica-contemporanea-cdec-di-milano-curata-dalla-sociologa-betti-guetta/

between real Jews and their antisemitic imagery, which attributes alleged characteristics and agendas to Jews. An important characteristic of antisemitism is its emotional and contradictory dimension.

Although many agree that antisemitism is connected with other forms of intolerance, most respondents consider antisemitism to be a unique phenomenon. This is because:

- It has very ancient roots;
- It differs in that it is difficult to physically distinguish and thus identify Jews, which makes them an "invisible enemy;"
- The Jew is part of a "powerful" socioeconomic minority that can open up conspiracy scenarios and at the same time give vent to feelings of envy;
- Uses a moral register;
- It is a more subtle attitude than the racist one;
- Is present even in those who profess to be anti-racist.

Antisemitism is not a system of social prejudices like xenophobia, homophobia, or Islamophobia. It is not necessarily connected to racism, since leftist antisemites or the educated bourgeoisie of open society are tolerant of change, fight racist actions and ideologies, but at the same time express antisemitic attitudes. Antisemitism is not necessarily connected with anti-modernism and nationalist thinking.

According to those who have been interviewed, the economic crisis, uncertainties, the fragility of the systems of representation, and globalization as a threat to identity contribute to antisemitism. However, the main factors are:

- The permanence of prejudices and stereotypes historically rooted in society;
- The distrust of diversity, of the Other;
- The widespread conspiracy thinking;
- The perennial Arab-Israeli conflict.

The non-"recognizable" Jew can generate mistrust or fear, attitudes that derive from the way the modern West has imagined itself, opposing others who have constituted the Other from itself. For some, antisemitism today picks up and reworks modern narratives that make Jews a moral danger (while Africans constitute a biological/natural danger): they depict fear of an "internal enemy ready to plot behind our backs", to take advantage through deception and cunning. An enemy that constitutes a cohesive, greedy and selfish group that aims to control the vital points—especially economic and cultural—of 'our' society.

This mindset is related to the age-old need to identify an enemy to define oneself. By blaming 'the Jews', antisemites not only construct Judaism as a negative concept, but create a positive group identity for themselves as non-Jews. Professing antisemitism becomes a sign of a cultural/religious identity, of one's belonging to a specific cultural or religious field. In the process of constructing

antisemitic identity, individual antisemitic stereotypes and lies become transnational, transcultural, and transreligious.

Another issue concerns the perception of Jews as a distinct and separate group from society: this aspect can generate ambivalent feelings of exclusion and therefore hostility. Some emphasize the disturbance that the Jewish religion causes because it expresses itself through sectarian choices of distinction.

The scapegoat theory fits the current socio-economic and pandemic situation in which many citizens have found themselves dealing with problems, fears, and uncertainties. The feeling of impotence and insecurity requires scapegoats, "others" to blame for what happens; themes sometimes ridden and exploited by politics for electoral advantage.

If the concept of scapegoating is expressed mainly by interviewees with a psychoanalytic and philosophical background, the "Jewish power" conspiracy theory is cited more often by sociologists, politicians and journalists who point out that in times of economic crisis, Jews become the "Jewish lobby", attacked by virtue of their presumed economic power that manipulates and conspires against the rest of the world. Antisemitism harkens back to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a dredging up of ancient stereotypes about money, power, and Jewish treachery. The idea of "mysterious power" supported by the set of stereotypes and prejudices related to socioeconomic power surrounding the Jewish world fuel antisemitic positions.

Some interviewees think that antisemitism is also driven by aversion to Israel, that the politics of the Jewish state are exploited to reinforce antisemitic tendencies. The difficulty of understanding Israel seems to represent in the collective imagination the ghost of a Jew re-emerged after the Shoah. Many believe that the demonization of the State of Israel by both left and right-wing extremism increases antisemitism. Antisemitism has adapted to today's environment in the form of anti-Israelism. As a Jewish state, Israel is the most visible expression of contemporary Jewry and, therefore, the "natural" magnet for current antisemitism.

According to common opinion, contemporary antisemitism lurks and spread through conspiracy thinking, which has been strengthened by the economic crisis of the last decade and by the Covid-19 pandemic. In a situation like this, old themes of historical anti-Jewish propaganda tend return.

Today's antisemitism is intertwined with economic, socio-cultural, psychological, political, and religious variables, elements that are often combined:
- Social frustration/impoverishment/resentment;
- Informational and media disorientation, web;
- Ignorance;
- Aversion to Israel;
- Racism;

- Populism;
- Conspiracy thinking;
- Religious hatred.

Respondents from across age and professional spectrum agree with the idea of a strain of antisemitism connected to right-wing populism, some also think that there is one linked to the fringe of the extreme left related to Israel.

All interviewees emphasize the prominence and the danger of the web as a place for the dissemination of hatred and antisemitism, especially because algorithms feed people with content that reinforces their way of thinking, allowing for the normalization and the legitimization of antisemitic narratives. Finally, everything on the internet moves on a fast pace, which leaves little room for reflection: on the web everything is based on the stimulus-reaction-consensus principle. The lack of morals and reflection is what many of the interviewees believe to be the *primum movens* of antisemitic positions.

With the web, the space for the expression of antisemitism and the visibility of antisemitic sentiments has expanded tremendously; the perpetrators of major antisemitic attacks in 2019 have been active in spreading antisemitic propaganda online, through international networks of like-minded activists. "What happens on the Internet doesn't stay on the Internet," and those who spread hatred, whatever the ideology behind it, can have a direct impact on the lives of targeted groups. The ease with which content can now be produced and distributed online creates a complexity that transforms the relationship with "knowledge."

In particular, social media platforms:
- Are driven by algorithms that bring together like-minded people; are a mirror that reinforces one's beliefs;
- Have no moderator;
- They take users' positions to extremes;
- They amplify minority voices;
- They increase aggressiveness because of the speed of reactions;
- They render speech more violent because of the anonymity effect.

With respect to the role played in Italy by the government and political institutions in warning of the danger of the growth of antisemitism, the interviewees express contrasting opinions: there are those who maintain that Italian institutions have worked and are working well to confront antisemitism, while others maintain that the State' s contrast against antisemitism remains too weak.

To face antisemitism, it is necessary to:
- Promote the history of the Jewish people; balance the relationship between identity and memory: try to untie the efforts on contrasting antisemitism from the Holocaust and link it to the overall richness of Jewish history;

- Expand educational and training efforts; online new media education and digital literacy are also very important;
- Expand public debate on antisemitism and racism in general and strongly condemn all acts of intolerance and hatred;
- Fostering dialogue between cultures thereby enabling awareness of the Jewish world as a whole;
- Connect antisemitism with other forms and expressions of intolerance;
- Create alliances and opportunities to meet in the world of sports and soccer where episodes of antisemitism and/or Shoah trivialization are often encountered;
- Prosecute hate speech and hate acts;
- Respond and educate where antisemitism is strongest, i.e. on the web and social media.

In view of the passing of Shoah witnesses, many stress the importance of education and training "carried out in a continuous and serious way, so that antisemitic positions can no longer arise from ignorance or lack of knowledge."

However, some believe that it is now necessary to make a legislative effort to discourage hate speech, antisemitic discourse and actions through legal and criminal measures.

4.2 - NOI VS. (((LORO))): ANALISI DEL DISCORSO ANTISEMITA IN ITALIA

* Us vs. (((Them))): Analysis of antisemitic discourse in Italy

This study was carried out by CDEC Foundation's Osservatorio Antisemitismo in partnership with Osservatorio Mediavox of the Catholic University of Milan, commissioned by Italy's National Anti-Discrimination Office (UNAR).

The research analyzes 14 antisemitic profiles, including public figures, groups and websites, selected on the basis of the uniqueness and relevance of the themes used by them and their high impact. The time frame is from May 2020 to May 2021. The profiles were classified according to the main antisemitic ideology, although contaminations of other ideologies are present in them.[11] The five groupings were made based on the IHRA declaration: hatred of Jews as such; neo-Nazi antisemitism; traditional anti-Judaism; hatred of the state of Israel; and Jewish power. The latter is the one with the largest number of profiles analyzed (8), reflecting the increase in conspiracy discourse in the Italian society.

Most of the data was acquired from the social networks and websites of the profiles concerned. An analysis of rhetoric and speech was carried out and from the collected posts the main targets

---

11 David Lawrence, Dr. Limor Simhony-Philpott and Danny Stone MBE, "Antisemitism & Misogyny: Overlap and Interplay", Hope Not Hate (2021). Available at: https://hopenothate.org.uk/2021/09/26/antisemitism-misogyny-overlap-and-interplay/

were identified: Jews as such, or people/groups associated with Jews ("deep state", George Soros, etc.). The rhetoric and speech analysis proved to be very relevant, because it shows both the high frequency of antisemitic stereotypes employed by the analyzed profiles and a contamination with other forms of hatred.

The subjects of this study are characterized by the peculiarity of the themes covered by them (ufology in an antisemitic key, craniology, antivaccinism, demonization of minorities, for example), and are representative of the antisemitic discourse that has been discussed for years at the annual reports published by the Osservatorio Antisemitismo.[12] Some profiles have a high impact both online, given their large number of followers, views, etc., and offline, with the organization of conferences/lectures (often with a high number of attendees), the sale of thousands of books, etc. It is significant that some of these books are published by prestigious Italian publishing houses, a fact that could help legitimizing them and their worldview in front of the public. This confirms what the Center for Countering Digital Hate has been saying for years, "hate makes profit," both for the haters and for digital platforms, which are often uncooperative in removing hate content.

The profiles studied are noteworthy because they were able to create around themselves a dense network of collaborators and followers who spread their material, increasing their audience. Many seem to have in common a paranoid and conspiratorial view of the world, according to Uscinski, Klofstad & Atkinson, conspiracy theories offer an: "a proposed explanation of events that cites as a main causal factor a small group of persons (the conspirators) acting in secret for their own benefit, against the common good."[13] Conspiracy theories offer simple explanations to complex phenomena, target a scapegoat, and are based on a few simple concepts, obsessively repeated, sometimes with para-academic, journalistic language, others in a boorish and aggressive manner.

According to this view, often inspired by cinematic subcultures,[14] the world is controlled by a group of influential people (the elite, the Jews, the Ashkenazis, the Zionists, the Illuminati, New World Order, etc.) who plot against ordinary people. Many of the subjects of this study believe, or at least make their followers believe, that they have unraveled the "grand conspiracy," often accusing the mainstream media of being complicit or controlled by a mysterious "cabal."

Most of the news sites analyzed call themselves "counter-information media" or "alternative media", they fight against the so-called "single thought", which is imposed by the "globalist left" and the mainstream media. Governments, media, science, etc. —subjected to the strong powers of the "masters,"—have as their goal to destroy Western society through subversion ("crossbreeding of races," the false "gender ideology," etc.), according to them. The people thus have the right (or the

---

12 https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/approfondimenti_category/studi-dellosservatorio-antisemitismo/
13 Joseph Uscinski, Casey Klofstad, & Matthew Atkinson, "What Drives Conspiratorial Beliefs? The Role of Informational Cues and Predispositions" Political Research Quarterly, 69(1), 2, (2016).
14 Inspiration comes from conspiracy or dystopian films, such as the Matrix, 1984, They Live, etc, and from video games. According to some authors, Hollywood is partly to blame for the rise of a conspiracy and anti-system view among the public. https://mashable.com/article/qanon-conspiracy-movie-tv

duty) to doubt everything, because the world we live in allows nothing but "single thought." The growing popularity of this type of content can be linked to the fact that a significant proportion of Italians do not trust newspapers "at all" (10%) or just "a little" (38%).[15]

The sites and profiles analyzed believe that the democratic system is sick and controlled by the "deep state", not coincidentally, non-democratic systems and some authoritarian leaders, such as Vladimir Putin and Bashar al-Assad, are well seen because they have challenged the "system".

A further theme that emerges from the study is the high level of rejection of modernity and contempt for everything related to open and multicultural society: gender equality, sexual and cultural diversity, science, etc. There is a desire to return to an idealized past of a pure and traditional society, with a single religion (Catholicism) and a single "ethnic group" (Italian), which is contrasted with today's world (with all its diversity and complexity) seen in an apocalyptic key. Catholicism in its traditionalist form emerges as a justifying factor for many antisemitic, racist and homophobic discourses. The rejection of modernity is linked to new age movements, esoteric, pagan, Völkisch, connected to a mystical and "green" vision of the world, the overall desire to return to an idealized past. Modernity is shaped by Zionism, and the latter is described as an omnipotent and omnipresent, racist movement, inherently different from other ethnonationalist movements.

Old antisemitic stereotypes (Jewish power, usury, subversion, etc.) often emerge in the narratives of the haters in a "modernized" version, sometimes implied (elites, Soros, Rothschilds, etc.) or transferred to Israel, Israelis, Zionists, etc. Few hate Jews as a whole, hostility is directed "only" against "bad" Jews (Zionists, Kazakhs, progressives, liberals, etc.), not against "good" Jews (anti-Zionist Jews, conspiracy Jews, etc.).

Distortion and trivialization of Shoah, phenomena that have existed for decades, increased exponentially during the pandemic. The self-comparing of the so-called No-Vax activists to the Jews during the Nazism is an insult to the Memory of the victims of the Holocaust and to the collective memory of the Italian Republic, founded on anti-fascist principles.[16] The trivialization of the Shoah is a rhetorical argument used also in the Israeli-Palestinian context, where Israel or Israelis (or Zionists, or Jews) are compared to the Nazis: here the Shoah becomes a plot of the Zionists for the creation of Israel; Jews/Israelis (terms that are often used as synonyms) have learned nothing from the Shoah, indeed they would have learned very well from the Nazis and now they would use the same genocidal techniques on Palestinians; etc. This argument could be considered as antisemitic, according to IHRA's (International Holocaust Remembrance Association) working definition of antisemitism.

15 "Trust in the Media", IPSOS (2019). Available at: https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2019-06/global-advisor-trust-in-media-2019.pdf
16 Osservatorio Antisemitismo, "Sulla distorsione e banalizzazione della Shoah", CDEC (2021). Available at: https://www.cdec.it/sulla-distorsione-e-banalizzazione-della-shoah/

More significant than the analysis of individual profiles (many of which have never been previously examined in depth) is the analysis of the group as a whole, which allows for a holistic understanding of the phenomenon of hatred in Italy (antisemitism, racism, homophobia, misogyny, Islamophobia, anti-Romani sentiment, etc.), and highlighting the link between right-wing extremist ideologies and conspiracy thinking.

Finally, minorities, including Jews, are portrayed as a powerful and subversive group whose goal is to dominate the average Italian citizen. The Osservatorio Antisemitismo and other research institutes have been affirming for years that there is a growing contamination between antisemitism and other forms of hatred, especially those linked to extreme right-wing conspiracy theories (Great Replacement, Kalergi Plan, QAnon, etc): Jews would like to destroy the world through the homosexualization of humanity;[17] the weakening of masculinity;[18] the promotion of immigration of Africans and Muslims; the weakening of the white race, etc., in order to rebuild it on a "Zionist" basis.

Another nodal point is the globalization of hate and an increasing influence in Italy of extremist ideologies and conspiracy theories "imported" from other countries, such as QAnon and the theory of the Great Replacement.

---

17 Murilo Cambruzzi, "Omofobia, antisemitismo e ossessioni da complotto: dove nasce l'odio", JOIMag (2020). Disponibile su: https://www.joimag.it/omofobia-antisemitismo-e-ossessioni-da-complotto-dove-nasce-lodio/
18 Mark Townsend, "UK far right promoting sexual violence against women, report finds", The Guardian (2021). Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/26/uk-far-right-promoting-sexual-violence-against-women-report-finds. Mira Fox, "The antisemitic conspiracy behind the anti-porn movement", The Forward (2021). Available at: https://forward.com/culture/475848/the-antisemitic-conspiracy-behind-the-anti-porn-movement/

5. Antisemitism in Italy in 2021: methodological premise

The Osservatorio classifies an antisemitic incident as any malicious act aimed at Jewish people, organizations, or property, where there is evidence that the victim or victims were targeted because they are (or are believed to be) Jewish. In this regard, the Osservatorio has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism.

The Osservatorio Antisemitismo classifies as an antisemitic incident any intentional act directed against Jewish persons, organizations or property, in which there is evidence that the action has antisemitic motivations or content, or that the victim has been targeted because they are Jewish or believed to be Jewish. The Osservatorio has adopted the working definition of antisemitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance - IHRA.

The methodology for the recording and classifying of antisemitic incidents, and the categories within which the Osservatorio lists the incidents, are the result of a methodology developed based on the expertise of other international institutions such as the Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry of the University of Tel Aviv, the Community Security Trust of London and the Parliamentary Coordination for the fight against antisemitism, and decades of experience in this field.

The Osservatorio learns about incidents of antisemitism through the media and reports to the Antenna Antisemitismo. The actual number of episodes of antisemitism is higher than the number recorded, because the report or the visibility of the episodes varies depending on the nature of the incident; it is easier to get informed about the most serious ones while verbal or written insults are reported with less frequency.

Moreover, for many years it has become essential to monitor antisemitic content on the web, which are archived according to the above-mentioned methodology. Web monitoring allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of antisemitism and what kind of narrative/discourse is circulating online.

Only from the set of these indicators and the documentation collected can we try to interpret and describe the complexity of antisemitism in its many cultural, psychological, and ideological aspects.

6. Osservatorio Antisemitismo of the CDEC Foundation

The Osservatorio Antisemitismo is a department of the Foundation Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea - CDEC, founded in 1975, which monitors antisemitism on a daily basis, paying particular attention to the different characteristics of the phenomenon. The monitoring activity covers the entire Italian territory. In Italy, the Osservatorio offers a unique service and carries out studies and surveys of historical, sociological and journalistic nature.

The Osservatorio collects and records antisemitic incidents (physical or verbal aggression, graffiti, insults on the web, public speeches, etc.), analyses data on episodes of anti-Jewish hostility, carries out surveys on public opinion and conducts specialized studies. Particular attention is paid to the monitoring of antisemitism on the web given the complex phenomenon of antisemitism 2.0: the use of social networks to share the demonization of Israel, conspiracy theories, Holocaust denial, and the classic antisemitic libels with the intention of creating social acceptability of these topics.

The Osservatorio has one of the most comprehensive collections of antisemitic texts published since 1945. In addition, it holds an extensive collection of antisemitic magazines, photographs, audio and video recordings.

In 2006 the site www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it was launched and is updated daily with articles, news and research taken from the national and foreign press, websites and blogs. The site has about 300 daily hits, with peaks of 4 thousand. On the website one can find newspaper articles, studies, researches, reports, debates, public statements and scientific surveys.

The Osservatorio's main audience is public institutions, schools, educators and students, scholars, communicators and social facilitators and the broader public. Its goal is to increase awareness of anti-Jewish prejudice, to educate people to respect diversity and to support the actions of contrast of antisemitism.