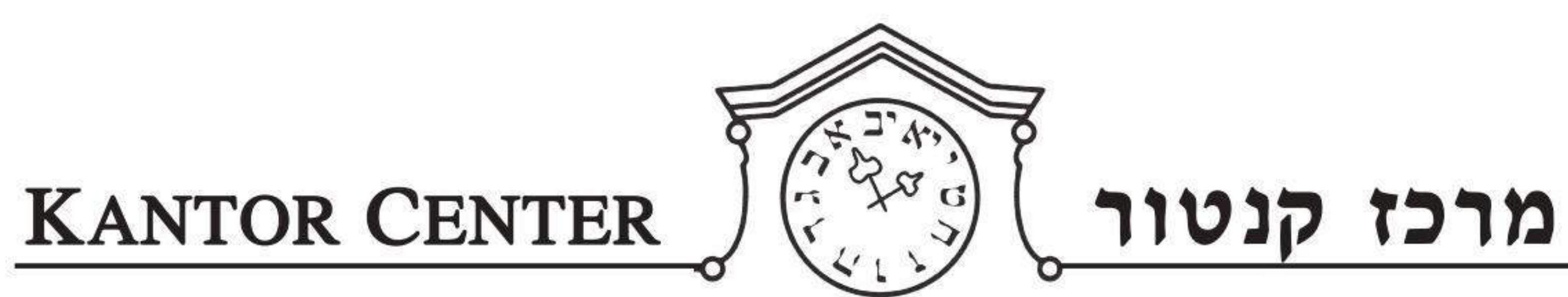




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UNIVERSITY תל אביב

The Lester and Sally Entin
Faculty of Humanities



For the Study of Contemporary European Jewry | לחקר יהדות אירופה בימינו

Moshe Kantor Database for the Study of
Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism

Antisemitism Worldwide
- 2018 -

General Analysis

The Program for the Study of Jews in Arab Lands

The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of
Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism



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Moldova / Natalia Sineaeva-Pankowska

Vandalism of Jewish Property and Antisemitism in the Media/Internet

Moldova is a country with a relatively low number of hate crimes registered by its authorities compared to other European countries. The most frequently reported types of antisemitism in 2018 were vandalism of Jewish property, including Jewish cemeteries. For example, on 29 October, unknown perpetrators drew a swastika on one of the grave stones at the Jewish cemetery in Chisinau, the Moldovan capital. As an important measure to prevent and deal with such cases, the Jewish Community of Moldova signed a cooperation agreement (memorandum) in June with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the World Jewish Congress. It is expected that such cooperation will improve the mechanism of identifying and reporting antisemitic incidents.

Social media sites (personal blogs, newspapers' forums) have become a space for disseminating antisemitic comments, including amongst certain Moldovan politicians and public figures. The comments mostly support the traditional stereotypes of Jews dominating the world, and have appeared as a result of the political situation in the country, namely forthcoming elections and competition amongst candidates.

In August, the Jewish Community made a statement against antisemitism and hate speech in the media, and sent a complaint to the Equality Council (Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality) with a request to deal with particular cases of antisemitic statements made by public individuals. In October, the Jewish cemetery in Chisinau, the capital of Moldova, was desecrated.

Holocaust Commemoration

In recent years, with strong international encouragement and support, Moldova has begun to deal with various aspects of Holocaust history and its commemoration on a national level. Within the National Plan on the implementation of the Declaration of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on the acceptance of the final report of the Elie Wiesel Commission, in January, the first Holocaust Information Center-Museum in the State Bureau for Interethnic Relations was inaugurated in Chisinau. The commission was established to perform a pertinent analysis of the curriculum and school textbooks regarding the study of the Second World War and to develop curricular content on Holocaust study within the educational unit "Second World War Crimes."

However, the official recognition of the Romanian Holocaust and the process of its commemoration on a national level was accompanied by numerous examples of Holocaust distortion and banalisation. This can be explained by a low level of knowledge of Holocaust history, but it can also be argued that identity complexity challenges the process of Holocaust commemoration.

Aside from nationalist politicians and Holocaust distorters, in September, surprisingly, Maia Sandu, one of the leaders of the opposition party in Moldova (elected to the Parliament in 2019), known for her progressive and pro-democratic views, stated in an interview to one of the TV channels that Ion

Antonescu was a person who “did both good and bad things.” Her answer reflects the general attitude of Moldovan society towards Antonescu (both the electorate and politicians) which mostly results from a lack of knowledge about the Holocaust in Moldova. The Jewish Community of Moldova issued a statement condemning this position on Antonescu.

The topic of the Holocaust currently is often in the media, but at the same time the level of knowledge about the Holocaust remains low. There are more examples of Holocaust banalisation, such as comparing the Holocaust with different disasters, crimes or other social problems. A comparison of abortions with the Holocaust during the conservative World Family Congress in Chisinau in September 2018 (influenced by the Orthodox Church) with the participation of the Moldovan president, is a characteristic example of this.

Moldova demands a more comprehensive approach to Holocaust history, not limited to official public commemoration and statements to appease the international community. One of the subjects which had been discussed repeatedly in the media is the renaming of one of the central streets which crosses the Kishinev ghetto site – Octavian Goga Street. Octavian Goga was an extreme-right and fascist politician who served briefly as prime minister of Romania, and introduced antisemitic legislation in Romania in 1938. The issue appears in the media from year to year, but has not been tackled by the authorities.

Countering Antisemitism in Moldova

There have also been attempts to counter antisemitism in Moldova. In April, The Jewish Community of Moldova and the KEDEM Jewish Cultural Centre, in cooperation with the ‘NEVER AGAIN’ Association, launched and conducted a broad awareness raising campaign about the infamous Kishinev pogrom of April 19-20, 1903, which became a turning point in Jewish history and the history of antisemitism. The campaign included media publications and a poster exhibition displayed in a public space in the central square of Chisinau (Kishinev).

In conclusion, it should be said that Moldova needs a more comprehensive programme to deal with antisemitism and Holocaust distortion, which includes raising awareness and educational work, to solve the problem of the lack of awareness of the population on the subject of antisemitism and Holocaust distortion.