

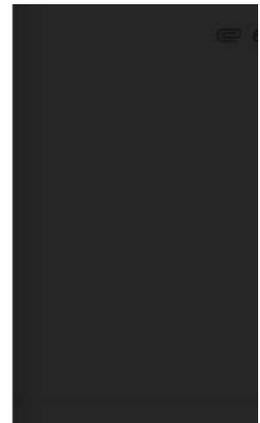
Polish Online Gift Shop Removes ‘Burn a Big Jew’ Candle Following Protest From Anti-Racist Association

by Ben Cohen
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the **algemeiner**

An online gift shop in Poland on Monday abruptly removed from sale a wax candle version of the so-called “lucky Jew” figurines — antisemitic caricatures of orthodox Jews grasping coins — that are found in homes across the country.

The offending item was spotlighted by the Warsaw-based NEVER AGAIN Association, a research and advocacy group that combats antisemitism and racism. Shocked that the online Lyson store, which specializes in products made



from beeswax, was offering, as the group described it, a “Jew-shaped candle so you can literally burn a Jew who is stereotypically holding a coin,” they demanded its immediate removal.

“The idea of burning a figure of a stereotypical Jew in a country where millions of Holocaust victims were burnt by the German Nazis is particularly disturbing,” Rafal Pankowski, NEVER AGAIN’S executive director, told The Algemeiner in an email on Monday.

“In the case of these candles, we can talk about the commercialization of dehumanization,” Pankowski said.

The web page showcasing the product was taken down early on Monday. It originally showed a photograph of the candle, with its wick placed in the center of the Jewish figure’s streimel, or hat, billing the product as a “Big Jew Candle.”

The phenomenon of “lucky Jew” figurines in Polish homes, normally made out of wood, has soared in popularity over the last 20 years. At one point, the figurines could even be purchased in the Polish parliament’s official gift shop, until protests from Jewish groups in 2017 stopped their continued sale. More recently, in Dec. 2019, the German-

owned retail giant OBI removed similar products from 58 of its stores around Poland, including paintings of Jews wearing traditional religious items as they sat and carefully counted out their coins.

While the figurines are commonly defended in Poland as harmless totems designed to bring about financial good fortune, Jewish groups and historians counter that they conjure up the dangerous stereotype of Jews as avaricious moneylenders that triggered pogroms and other anti-Jewish atrocities over the centuries.

Abraham Foxman — a survivor of the Holocaust in Poland and the national director emeritus of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) — said that the appearance of the candle figurine underlined once again the need for Polish educators to explain the danger of antisemitic stereotypes.

“Poland is full of images of the Jew in statues, sculptures, paintings celebrating the age old antisemitic canard about Jews and money,” Foxman told *The Algemeiner*. “I even wrote a book about this stereotype, which led to the deaths of many Jews because of the belief that all Jews are rich. It killed Jews in Poland during the Holocaust and after the Holocaust. So it is no surprise that it found its way into ‘burning’ the moneyed Jew.”

Foxman observed that as “Poland is a democracy, it is difficult to ban the sale of such hideous items.” He had, therefore, “for years appealed to the education institutions of Poland to educate against this dangerous stereotype.”

“Maybe now,” Foxman added.

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