

# Polish state-funded nationalist media outlet promotes antisemitic book

Daniel Tilles

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A nationalist media group that receives state funding has promoted an antisemitic book that describes Jews as a “parasitic tribe”. The government has previously faced criticism over the funding given to the outlet, which is published by the group behind Warsaw’s annual Independence March.

The book in question is called *Poznaj Żyda*, meaning “Meet the Jew”. Its cover features a common antisemitic caricature of a Jew in a variety of guises, suggesting that Jews are behind communism, the LGBT movement, the media, and various protest groups in Poland.

Despite the modern cover, it is a reprint of a 1912 book by conservative writer Teodor Jeske-Choiński. Its first chapter begins by describing Jews as a “parasitic tribe [that] has nested on our skin, sucks our sweat, our blood, for six centuries”.

The latest version has been published by Magna Polonia, a far-right media group. One of its leading figures, Przemysław Holocher, was recently invited to discuss the book in an interview on the YouTube by nationalist outlet Media Narodowe.



The thumbnail image for Media Narodowe's YouTube video about the book *Poznaj Żyda*.

Media Narodowe is published by the Independence March Association, which organises the annual nationalist march in Warsaw on Independence Day. It was last year awarded a grant of 1.3 million zloty (€280,000) from the new "Patriotic Fund" set up by the government and overseen by the culture ministry.

Media Narodowe itself also received a grant from the National Freedom Institute, a body set up by the government in 2017 to support civil society, worth 198,000 zloty over 2021 and 2022.

After news emerged that state grants were being awarded to far-right groups, a group of more than 160 public figures protested to the culture minister, Piotr Gliński, calling on him to "stop financing fascism".

Asked by the *Rzeczpospolita* daily about Media Narodowe promoting an antisemitic book, the culture ministry issued a statement saying that all applications for grants from the Patriotic Fund are assessed by experts according to the relevant criteria.

It noted that those experts can only make assessments based on the content of the applications. The Institute for Legacy of Polish National Thought, which distributes the grants and is overseen by the ministry, told the newspaper that *Poznaj Żyda* is a publicly available work.

Anna Tatar from the Never Again Association, an anti-racism NGO, however, says that republishing a historical text word for word without commentary does nothing more than promote its message. This is "simply an antisemitic publication", she told *Rzeczpospolita*.

The newspaper points out that this is not the first time Media Narodowe has featured such content. Last month, one of its guests outlined “a pro-Russian conspiracy theory, according to which Ukraine was to be settled by Jews”, reports the newspaper.

Other videos currently on its YouTube channel feature titles such as “This Jew is still harming Poland”, “The desfruction of Polish academia by Jews” and “[President] Duda will give Poland back to Jews?!”

In its video on *Poznaj Żyda*, the title said that it was “a book on the psychology of the Jewish people”. The interviewer described the cover as having “a lovely colour scheme” and said that the work was “a serious book”. He also called on viewers to support the publisher. Holocher denied that the book is antisemitic.

The editor-in-chief of Media Narodowe is Tomasz Kalinowski, who is also vice president of the Independence March Association, told *Rzeczpospolita* that the caricatures of Jews on the cover are a “well-known meme” and that people should take it “with a grain of salt”.

Previously, while spokesman for National Radical Camp (ONR), a far-right group, Kalinowski’s Facebook page featured Belgian Nazi collaborator Léon Degrelle. He later, however, renounced his earlier admiration for Degrelle.

The head of the Independence March is Robert Bąkiewicz, a former leader of the ONR, a group that was involved in anti-Jewish violence in 1930s Poland and today seeks an “ethnically homogeneous” Poland. The Supreme Court recently ruled that ONR could be called “fascist”.

Critics of the current national-conservative government have accused it of cultivating such nationalist groups. The government, however, says that it rejects antisemitism and only supports patriotic activities.

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