

Director of Warsaw Jewish Museum Calls on Polish Catholic University to Take Action Against ‘Blood Libel’ Priest

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The director of the widely-celebrated, multi-million dollar museum of Jewish life in Warsaw has denounced Poland’s leading Catholic university for failing to discipline a professor who claimed that Polish Jews had historically engaged in ritual murder — one of the deadliest antisemitic falsehoods to have persisted over the centuries.

In an open letter this week to the rector of the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL), Zygmunt Stepiński — director of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews — charged that Fr. Tadeusz Guz, an ordained Catholic priest who teaches in the university’s philosophy department, had engaged in hateful rhetoric reminiscent of “Nazi or Stalinist propaganda” as well as the notorious antisemitic forgery, “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.”

During a May 26, 2018 public lecture in Warsaw, Guz falsely alleged that Jews in Poland had engaged in the slaughter of Christian children — the “blood libel” — for ritual purposes.

“We know, dear people, that the facts of ritual murder cannot be erased from history,” Guz told his audience. “Why? Because we, the Polish state, in our archives, in the surviving documents, have had over the centuries — when Jews lived together with our Polish nation — we have legally valid sentences for ritual murders.”

After a complaint was filed by the Polish Council of Christians and Jews, both the Archdiocese of Lublin and the academic authorities at KUL distanced themselves from Guz, but notably refrained from taking further measures against him. “The lecture activities of Fr. Guz outside the university are undertaken and carried out by him on his own responsibility, and the theses he proclaimed are not the position of his superiors,” a joint statement from the two institutions proclaimed at the time.

Last month, the KUL’s staff disciplinary committee vindicated Guz once more. In an astonishing statement that effectively endorsed Guz’s claim that there had been “legally valid” prosecutions of Polish Jews for ritual murder, the committee concluded that he had given “his lectures based on the source material, with professional care, and presented his own interpretation of historical facts.”

“Fr. Tadeusz Guz has not committed any act that would breach the duties of an academic teacher or the dignity of the academic teacher profession,” the committee statement continued. “In his lectures outside the campus, he did not offend anyone and did not insult anyone, and thus he did not dishonor his profession.”

In his letter to KUL this week, Stępiński declared: “Let me remind you that in the not-too-distant past, similar statements led directly to social unrest and bloodshed. I must protest publicly and call on the university authorities to take a clear position on this matter.”

Earlier this week, a prominent anti-racist association in Poland urged the European Commission of the EU’s coordinator for combating antisemitism to review European funding of KUL, which currently receives annual support of nearly \$25 million.

“Surely, sponsoring an institution which is a nest of virulent antisemitism should be seen as contrary to basic European and human values,” Rafal Pankowski — director of the ‘NEVER AGAIN’ Association — stated in a letter to Katharina Von Schnurbein, the European Commission Coordinator on Combatting Antisemitism.

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