

Polish Jews Express Support for Antisemitism Campaigner Targeted by Far Right

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The Jewish community in Warsaw on Wednesday declared its support for a vocal watchdog that fights antisemitism and racism in Poland following a series of attacks on its work in recent weeks by far-right political figures.

The Never Again Association has been targeted for its objection to a new book by Rafal Ziemkiewicz — an ultranationalist TV pundit and journalist — that describes the Nazi Holocaust as a “myth” while opining that “Jews are working to earn themselves a new Holocaust or, at least, a new wave of pogroms.”

In a statement expressing support for the group, the managing board of the Jewish Religious Community in Warsaw noted that the “initiatives undertaken by the Never Again Association are particularly valuable to us.”

“Their aim is to eliminate from the social and public space publications, opinions and attitudes of an antisemitic nature,” the statement added.

Ziemkiewicz and his supporters have portrayed the Never Again Association as the local agent of an international Jewish conspiracy, with the author claiming this week that “the Jews can ban any book — this is the daily reality in which we live.”

A large number of the attacks on the group have centered on its executive director, Rafal Pankowski, who stands accused of pushing an “anti-Polish” message.

Speaking on Poland’s state-owned TVP Info channel on May 15, Ziemkiewicz assailed Pankowski as “extraordinarily stupid, rude and anti-Polish.”

His co-presenter, Krzysztof Feusette, then encouraged viewers to choose expletives to direct at Pankowski, asking, “How could we refer to Mr. Pankowski with one word, bearing in mind that children are watching?”

Postings on social media over the last month have accused Pankowski of being “sick with hatred of Poles” and of “shitting slander on the Polish nation.”

One far-right figure — infamous for a previous statement that “Jews are not humans, they are animals!” — accused Pankowski of being a “murderer of Poles.”

As well as exposing the antisemitism in Ziemkiewicz’s latest book, the Never Again Association has infuriated the Polish far right for countering the racist rhetoric around the coronavirus pandemic.

Its recent report — “The Virus of Hate” — cited dozens of cases of crude attacks on Chinese, Jewish and black people, as well as the LGBT+ community, for allegedly spreading the disease.

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