

# Poland honors satirist who said Jews create anti-Semitism

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(JTA) — A Polish satirist who in 2016 made anti-Semitic jokes on television and later accused Jews of fomenting hatred against themselves was awarded his country’s highest distinction for artists.

Ryszard Makowski, 62, was awarded the Gloria Artis Medal for Merit to Culture on Thursday along with 20 others by Culture Minister Piotr Gliński in Warsaw, the wPolityce news website reported. Makowski won the bronze medal, the lowest of three categories in the distinction awarded annually to artists by the ministry.

“It is an expression of thanks by Poland for your creativity and for your commitment, for your talent – that is always augmented with work, perseverance, creative courage,” Gliński said in presenting the award.

In 2016, B’nai B’rith Poland protested Makowski’s performance on the public broadcaster TVP3 over a song with words saying that dishonest banking practices have been around for as long as “tsimmes and gescheft” – Yiddish words that mean a sweet carrot stew and business, respectively. The song also references the Rothschild Jewish family.

In March, Makowski wrote in wPolityce about the protest by Israel and Jewish organizations against a law that criminalized blaming the Polish nation for Nazi crimes. The law was amended last month.

“One may suspect that this ostentatious struggle of Jewish circles,” he wrote, “is aimed at sparking up anti-Semitic moods.”

The Polish association Never Again, which monitors hate crimes and speech in Poland, wrote in a statement that the honoring of Makowski is astounding as he is a “well-known author of songs and articles which are strongly rooted in anti-Semitic stereotypes and prejudices.”

Rafal Pankowski, a co-founder of the association, added that “given the fragility of the Polish-Jewish relations especially this year,” following the diplomatic crisis caused by the law, “I am truly surprised by the Minister’s decision. As a citizen of Poland, this medal is not awarded in my name!”

Anti-Semitism, Pankowski said, is something that his association refuses to see as “part of the Polish culture and heritage which deserves to be celebrated by the official representatives of the Polish state.”

<https://www.jta.org/2018/07/16/news-opinion/polish-satirist-said-jews-create-anti-semitism-receives-state-honor>