

Unmasking Hate: Rafal Ziemkiewicz's Dangerous Spread of Antisemitism and Conspiracy Narratives

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Rafal Ziemkiewicz is a prominent Polish far-right populist figure, known for his extreme and controversial views. Initially a science fiction author, Ziemkiewicz transitioned to journalism and became a vocal advocate for antisemitic rhetoric. Ziemkiewicz has a prolific social media presence, with over 200k subscribers on YouTube, where he regularly spreads hate speech, including Holocaust distortion and attacks on marginalised groups.

In a recent video, Ziemkiewicz controversially promoted *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, 'the most notorious and widely distributed antisemitic publication of modern times.' The Protocols are a fabricated document that falsely claims to reveal a secret Jewish conspiracy to control the world. Despite being repeatedly debunked, the book's lies about Jews continue to circulate, particularly on the internet.

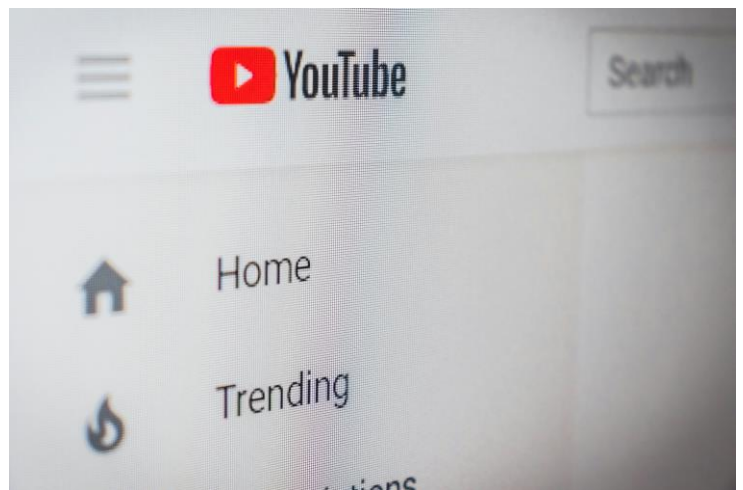
Background on The Protocols of the Elders of Zion

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion is a 'fraudulent document attributed to the secret police of Tsarist Russia, first disseminated in the early 20th century and still circulated today, that serves as a pretext and rationale for antisemitism'. The fabricated document claims to record secret meetings of Jewish leaders discussing a supposed plot to dominate the world. Some of the antisemitic accusations in the Protocols include baseless claims that Jewish people aim to control global governments, finance, and the media. It also accuses Jews of orchestrating revolutionary movements, such as socialism and communism, to gain control over nations, and of manipulating economies for personal gain. By promoting these false and dangerous stereotypes, the Protocols has fuelled antisemitic hatred for over a century, despite its clear status as a forgery.

Ziemkiewicz's Antisemitism and Far-Right Views

Ziemkiewicz has a long history of antisemitic remarks on social media. He has distorted the Holocaust, calling it a "myth," and has made statements that blame Jewish people for aspects of their own persecution during World War II. For instance, he claims that "it was not the Poles who put these Jews into the wagons, caught them, escorted them from the ghetto, but other Jews, the Jewish police, on the basis of lists prepared by Jewish Judenrat." His comments are particularly harmful because it distorts history by suggesting Jewish complicity

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in the Holocaust, which excuses the Nazi perpetrators and shifts blame onto Jewish victims. While some Jewish councils (Judenrat) were forced to cooperate with the Nazis under extreme pressure, they had little control over the situation, and many acted in desperate attempts to protect their communities. Ziemkiewicz's framing, however, perpetuates harmful stereotypes that portray the Jewish community as deceitful, which have been used to justify discrimination and violence for centuries.

In another example of inflammatory rhetoric, Ziemkiewicz commented, "I mean, the coronavirus is a Jew? Goebbels wouldn't have figured it out," invoking Nazi-era propaganda that compared Jews to diseases or threats to public health.

The coronavirus pandemic, among other factors, provided fertile ground for the spread of conspiracy narratives and religious hatred. Alongside anti-Muslim hate, numerous antisemitic conspiracy theories also gained traction. Predominantly propagated by far-right groups, "some of these fabrications have [had] gone further, claiming that Jews have created it to assert global control." Blaming global events such as the coronavirus pandemic on Jews and resorting to age-old antisemitic tropes is deeply harmful.

Ziemkiewicz's promotion of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* further aligns with his far-right views. In a YouTube video, he claims *The Protocols* "is not a stupid book, it shows how to gain power and manipulate people," By claiming it is not a "stupid book" Ziemkiewicz seems to be suggesting that *The Protocols* offers valuable insights into gaining power and manipulating others and therefore legitimises the harmful conspiracy theories in *The Protocols*, which have long been used to fuel antisemitism. Although he is not denying that *The Protocols* was forgery, he nevertheless considers it valuable. Such statements and views reinforce the dangerous stereotype that Jews are working behind the scenes to control global events, perpetuating hatred, and discrimination. By promoting these false ideas, Ziemkiewicz helps normalise and spread antisemitic beliefs, encouraging more people to believe in conspiracies build on baseless scapegoating that have historically led to violence against Jewish communities.

The Role of Social Media

Social media platforms like YouTube have a significant responsibility for the content they host and disseminate. By allowing Ziemkiewicz's videos to be published and shared, YouTube creates a platform that can facilitate the spread of antisemitism and hate speech. YouTube must enforce its community standards effectively and remove such harmful content, which fuels discrimination and hate.

The Response from Critics and International Organisations

The "NEVER AGAIN" Association, GTTO partner in Poland, has a long history with Ziemkiewicz with many opinions from leading international experts on antisemitism about his hateful outputs and rhetoric. Throughout the years, Polish public television figures particularly Rafał Ziemkiewicz spread hate and attacks against Prof. Rafał Pankowski, co-founder of the "NEVER AGAIN" Association, an anti-racism group. Over several broadcasts from 2019 to 2020, Pankowski faced repeated verbal smears, false attributions, and ridicule on state-owned TVP Info and other platforms. The attacks targeted his academic work, advocacy against racism and antisemitism, and recognition by international human rights organisations, often framing his criticism of Polish nationalism as anti-Polish. These

broadcasts amplified hate speech against Pankowski, leading to online threats and defamatory comments as well as raising concerns about media ethics, public accountability, and the trivialisation of antisemitism and hate speech in Poland.

Furthermore, Ziemkiewicz's views have led to international backlash, including being detained and denied entry to the UK in 2021, with authorities citing his views as incompatible with British values.

International organisations and institutions worldwide have highlighted Ziemkiewicz's publications as spreading antisemitism and containing antisemitic tropes. Indeed, his book 'The non-rebellious card' was examined by The Berlin International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (BICSA) and based on their analysis, they came to concluded that the publication indeed contained 'nasty and typical antisemitic tropes'.

Alongside this, the Chief Executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust has noted that in no publication is there clearer evidence of 'Holocaust denial, distortion, revisionism, and hatred of Jews', noting that such writings hold no place on Polish bookshelves. These are only some of the examples of various incidents and responses from international organisations and individuals condemning Ziemkiewicz's work for spreading antisemitism.

Conclusion

Rafal Ziemkiewicz's promotion of antisemitic rhetoric, including his endorsement of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, distorts history and perpetuates dangerous conspiracy theories. These harmful views not only undermine historical truths but also foster an environment of hatred and discrimination, particularly against Jewish communities. It is crucial to challenge and counteract such rhetoric, both online and offline, to prevent the spread of harmful stereotypes that have fuelled violence for generations.

Educating ourselves and others about the dangers of antisemitism, and taking a stand against hate speech, is vital in fostering a more inclusive and respectful society. For more resources on understanding and combating antisemitism, visit our *Get the Trolls Out!* page.

"Unmasking Hate: Rafal Ziemkiewicz's Dangerous Spread of Antisemitism and Conspiracy Narratives". GetTheTrollsOut.org, 25.11.2024.

<https://getthetrollsout.org/articles/unmasking-hate-rafal-ziemkiewicz-s-dangerous-spread-of-antisemitism-and-conspiracy-narratives>