

 SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 10:05 AM

Polish Government Honors Far Right Writer Who Defamed Jews as 'Leeches,' Called Holocaust a 'Myth'

by *Ben Cohen* 

Polish far right columnist Rafal Ziemkiewicz at the 2023 Awards ceremony staged by the Polish Ministry of Culture. Photo: Screenshot

A Polish writer who vilified Jews as “leeches” and argued that Zionism has “acquired a peculiar cruelty” has been honored by the Polish government.

Rafal Ziemkiewicz — a columnist for the far right weekly *Do Rzeczy* and television host who began his career as a writer of science fiction — received an award last week from Poland’s Minister of Culture, Piotr Gliński.

Ziemkiewicz, who was one of several recipients in the ministry’s 2023 Culture and National Heritage Awards, was honored with a special award named for Tomasz Merta, a

Polish historian and former culture minister who was killed in the April 2010 plane crash near the Russian city of Smolensk that claimed the lives of 96 people, including the then Polish President, Lech Kaczyński.

An official statement from the Ministry of Culture announcing the awards described Ziemkiewicz as a “publicist, journalist, and author of fantasy literature,” pointing out that he made his debut as a writer with a short story that was published in 1982.

Over the last decade, Ziemkiewicz has established himself as one of the most vocal antisemites in Poland. In a video posted to his YouTube channel in 2021, Ziemkiewicz asserted that the Jewish victims of the July 10, 1941 pogrom in the Polish town of Jedwabne had essentially deserved their fate.

“These Jews have historically been the exploiters, the leeches,” he ranted. “There has been no bigger enemy of the Polish peasant than the Jewish middleman who screwed him for cash in every possible way. In times of foreign occupations, they were also German spies. The emancipation of the Polish people required getting rid of those exploiters.”

In his most recent book, Ziemkiewicz claimed that “Zionism under the influence of the Holocaust, or rather the myth of the Holocaust that they created, acquired a peculiar cruelty.” Demeaning young Israelis who serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) as “killing machines,” Ziemkiewicz also attacked what he called “Jewish aggressiveness,” saying that the “ideology of the Holocaust” could be summarized as “Jews, Jews über alles” — a reference to the Nazi anthem.

“Ziemkiewicz uses the term ‘Zionists’ as invective directed against Jews in general, without any connection with the actual meaning of the word,” the “Never Again” Association — a leading Polish anti-racist NGO — observed.

In Oct. 2021, Ziemkiewicz was [refused entry into the United Kingdom](#) after the British government deemed that his views “are at odds with British values and likely to cause offense.” In an interview with an ultranationalist website following his expulsion from Britain, Ziemkiewicz complained about having been detained alongside people he described as coming from outside of Europe.

“I was arrested with other men, most of whom I could not communicate with in any European language,” he said. “They came from Africa, some middle- and far-eastern countries.”

Several experts on antisemitism have highlighted Ziemkiewicz’s hostile attitude towards Jews, urging that his influence be limited.

“Antisemitism did not end at the liberation of the camps,” Karen Pollock — the CEO of the London-based Holocaust Educational Trust — noted in a statement. “Almost nowhere is this clearer than the writings of Rafal Ziemkiewicz. Holocaust denial, distortion, revisionism, and hatred of Jews has no place in the virtual bookshelves of Poland. Nowhere is it acceptable to claim ‘the myth of the Holocaust’ or that ‘Jews are working on a new Holocaust for themselves, at least on a new wave of pogroms.’”

Separately, Gunter Jikeli — a professor at Indiana University, Bloomington’s Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism — stated in a review of Ziemkiewicz’s last book that “these pages leave no doubt about the antisemitic worldview of the author and the antisemitic propaganda of this book.”

Jikeli said that Ziemkiewicz “draws a picture of a conspiracy orchestrated by ‘a strong Jewish lobby in the US,’ ‘Zionists,’ and Jews in general who have set out to defame, insult, attack, and extort money from the Polish nation. These are classic antisemitic conspiracy theories.”