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## ***Polish Soccer Fans Set Fire to 'Jewish' Effigies, Unfurl Antisemitic Banner Calling for Burning of Jews***

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by *Lea Speyer*

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A group of Polish soccer hooligans put on a horrifying display of antisemitism last Friday, setting fire to “Jewish” effigies and parading a banner calling for the burning of Jews, Polish news website *Gazeta Wyborcza* reported.

According to the report, some 50 supporters of the Widzew Łódź soccer team had gathered outside a local train station to rally against rival team ŁKS Łódź.

The ruffians unfurled an antisemitic banner, which stated, “19.08, today the Jews were named. Let them burn, motherf\*\*\*ers.” The message was intended as a direct insult to the ŁKS Łódź team, which was founded in 1908 and is often derided as Jewish by fans of other soccer clubs.

Photos from the demonstration show effigies appearing to be dressed as Orthodox Jews being strung from rope and set on fire.

A representative of the local anti-racism group Never Again said that the demonstrators were acting without fear, and with the sense that there would be no repercussions for their actions. Police are reportedly investigating the incident.

Jonny Daniels, head of the Holocaust research group From the Depths who works closely with the Polish government, called for authorities to take strong measures against the Widzew Łódź fans.

“This is a shameful example of xenophobia, racism and antisemitism in sports, where it truly has no place,” he told *The Algemeiner*. “We are calling on the Polish government to take strong measures to ensure that such repulsive acts are met with a strong hand and the full force of the law. Poland is a modern, open country and hooligans such as these belong in jail, not watching soccer matches.”

Antisemitic and racist behavior is not uncommon among Polish soccer clubs.

In 2013, ŁKS Łódź fans invited visitors to an indoor tournament to play a game in which they could throw objects at “Jews,” models dressed in Widzew Łódź uniforms. A sign next to the game informed players that for a meager price they would be given “three throws at the Jews.”

In 2014, in a match between Lech Poznan and Widzew Łódź, fans of Poznan chanted, “Move on, Jews! Your home is at Auschwitz! Off to the gas!” Following an investigation, a Polish prosecutor declined to take action against the Poznan fans, saying the antisemitic chants were not directed specifically at Jews, rather the opposing team.

<https://www.algemeiner.com/2016/08/26/polish-soccer-fans-set-fire-to-jewish-effigies-unfurl-antisemitic-banner-calling-for-burning-of-jews-in-rally-against-rival-team/>