

## DID A POLISH FAR RIGHT ACTIVIST HELP DONALD TRUMP WRITE HIS SPEECH IN WARSAW?

BY TOM PORTER ON 7/06/2017

*Updated* | A Polish historian accused of anti-Semitism reportedly helped draft President Donald Trump's speech in Warsaw and travelled to Poland as part of the presidential delegation.

In a landmark speech on his vision of the future of Europe Thursday, on the first leg of his European trip, Trump praised Poland, whose government shares his hardline anti-immigration stance: "The fundamental question of our time is whether the West has the will to survive," he said, and argued that the country helped to defend Western freedoms.

But questions have been raised about Trump's alleged decision to consult a Polish historian and far-right activist about the speech, which was delivered at the monument to the 1944 Warsaw uprising against the Nazis. Polish Jewish leaders have criticized Trump for being the first U.S. president in decades to visit Warsaw and not to make a visit to the monument of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising by Jews, reported Haaretz.

On June 3, Polish state television reported that historian Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, who teaches at the Washington D.C. Institute of World Politics, had been consulted on the speech by the White House. Chodakiewicz has bragged to Polish media that he would be travelling to Poland on board Air Force One.

According to the U.K. based Hope not Hate anti-racism charity, Chodakiewicz is a frequent commentator on right-wing Polish media and has expressed anti-Semitic views.

The historian's claim of involvement in the speech "raised eyebrows because of Chodakiewicz's long record of far right links. He is mostly known as a denier of Polish responsibility for acts of antisemitism, including the infamous Jedwabne pogrom of 1941," wrote Rafal Pankowski, director of the Polish Never Again anti-racism network.

"He has repeatedly claimed Jews themselves were chiefly responsible for the hostility of their Polish neighbours. Accusations of Jewish involvement with Communism have been present in many of Chodakiewicz's writings."

Chodakiewicz has referred to former U.S. presidential candidate Bernie Sanders as a "Jewish Bolshevik," and defended a Breitbart News writer who attacked Washington Post columnist Anne Applebaum as a "Polish, Jewish, American elitist," according to Hope Not Hate.

In June 2014, he appeared at a rally of the far-right Ruch Narodowy party, where he proclaimed "We want a Catholic Poland, not a Bolshevik one, not multicultural or gay!"

In 2010, he finished a five-year term on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Council, after being appointed to the position by President George W. Bush. Controversy erupted the previous year over his claim in several publications that Polish nationalists who murdered Jews returning to the country after World War II were not primarily motivated by anti-Semitism.

Jan T. Gross, a Princeton University history professor and expert on anti-Jewish pogroms, has remarked of Chodakiewicz in an interview with the Southern Poverty Law Center: "The guy is an ideologist of the radical right, (...) I don't have any doubts that he's anti-Semitic."

Chodakiewicz has described allegations that he is an anti-Semite as "baseless."

Trump has recently been criticized by the Anti-Defamation League for reposting a video created by a Reddit user who in the past posted anti-Semitic graphics. Maryland Senator Ben Cardin, who serves as the ranking Democrat member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on Thursday urged Trump to appoint a special envoy to combat and monitor anti-Semitism, amid a rise in anti-Semitic hate crimes in the U.S.

Chodakiewicz and the White House have not responded to requests for comment.

*This article was amended on July 6 to reflect that it was a Breitbart News writer that referred to Washington Post columnist Anne Applebaum as a "Polish, Jewish, American elitist" and not Chodakiewicz himself. Chodakiewicz is accused of defending those comments.*

<http://www.newsweek.com/poland-trump-anti-semitism-632702>