

Penetrating study reveals extent of anti-Semitism in Poland in wake of Holocaust law



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Israel Journal of Foreign Relations, a publication of the Israel Council on Foreign Relations, explores surge in radical nationalist discourse.

JERUSALEM - The Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs, a publication of the Israel Council on Foreign Relations which operates under the auspices of the World Jewish Congress, has released a penetrating study revealing the extent of the resurgence of anti-Semitic discourse in Poland in the wake of its controversial Holocaust Law.

Dr. Rafał Pankowski, a sociology professor at Warsaw's Collegium Civitas, explores the disturbing revival of anti-Semitism in that country, identifying dozens of examples of such expressions: "The surge of hostility to Jews and the Jewish State in the Polish media and politics in early 2018 took many observers by surprise. It was also a great shock because for many years, bilateral relations between Poland and Israel had been especially cordial and fruitful."

Responding to the article, ICFR President Dan Meridor said that he was "deeply concerned for future of democracy, which has recently come under attack in certain parts of the world. The findings of this research prove that anti-Semitism is not dead and is again rearing its head."

In his article, Pankowski wrote: "Unlike other post-Communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Poland had made significant progress in recognizing and researching the inconvenient truths about its own legacy of anti-Semitism. In the wake of the new legislation, however, that progress has been seriously hampered and the findings of these historians, and even their patriotism, has been called into question," writes Pankowski.

He notes that while in recent years anti-Jewish discourse was mainly confined to extreme quarters, of late it has found a prominent place in the mainstream media, especially in state-controlled news outlets. "The surge in radical nationalist discourse," warns Dr. Pankowski, "reflects a deeper crisis of liberal, democratic, and humanistic values—in Poland and elsewhere in post-Communist Europe, as well as in the wider world."

Archbishop Henryk Muszynski, archbishop emeritus of the Archdiocese of Gniezno, underscored the same trend this week in an interview with the Polish-language Catholic Guide magazine: "Old demons began to wake up: the trust of many thousands of people has been strained and the work of many decades has been tarnished," he said, adding: "Those who reject today Jews and Muslims, who judge these people, probably never met any Jew or Muslim. The blame for their aggression and fear is usually borne by their environment, in which radical opinions and propaganda dominate, served by some media," said Muszynski.

<http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/penetrating-study-reveals-extent-of-anti-semitism-in-poland-in-wake-of-holocaust-law-7-2-2018>