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Antisemitic works on display at Warsaw Historical Book Fair

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The annual Historical Book Fair in Warsaw is supported by the office of the Polish President Andrzej Duda.

Blatantly antisemitic books painting Jews as ritual murderers, usurers, and conspiratorial Freemasons were displayed at the 30th annual Historical Book Fair held in Warsaw, Poland, in late November.

The fair—meant to foster an environment where all feel safe to remember the ups and downs of history—featured works that many have said falsely antagonized and threatened Jewish people.

Books from the organization 3DOM—a far-right Polish imprint—were featured at the book fair, an event officially backed by the office of Polish President Andrzej Duda. Proudly boasting of its lack of “political correctness,” 3DOM’s website displays over 80 blatantly antisemitic works, according to research from the “Never Again” Association, an NGO that monitors and reports on racist and antisemitic incidents in Poland.



Why are the books being criticized?

Several of 3DOM’s bestselling books purvey antisemitic bias, including Dr. Mira Modelska-Creech’s *Lichwa* (Usury in English) and Father Mateusz Jeż’s *Tajemnice Żydowskie* (Jewish Secrets in English).

Modelska-Creech conjures anecdotes of her grandmother suffering from Jewish usury, which she claims helped the Jews dominate their Polish ancestors, a baseless

accusation that catalyzed the Holocaust. Not only does the book opine that Jewish usury was prevalent then, but it also warns that it is on the rise in current times, warning Poles to tread carefully around Jews.

Mateusz Jeż does not merely warn readers of Jews; he accuses them of outright murder. “If anyone sees a heretic (one who rejects the Torah) has fallen into a pit, and there is a ladder in the pit, let him quickly pull it out and say that he must get his son down from the roof, and then, that he will bring it, or something like that,” he erroneously quotes the Talmud. Mateusz Jeż removes context to smoothly interpret the Talmud as instructing Jews to murder all Christians. However, he fails to mention Maimonides and the Chazon Ish—two of Judaism’s most respected commentators—who explain the Talmud as referring to only first-generation non-Torah-believers in a time where God’s providence is obvious to the entirety of the world.

“One could multiply many examples concerning: usury, relations with other nations, military service, Jewish teaching of religion, ritual murders, marriages, commerce, demoralization, rabbis,” Mateusz Jeż continues. “However, I will not give examples of these revealed secrets here, so as not to spoil the reader’s pleasure of reading (although it is a dubious pleasure after all!).”

How has the Jewish community responded?

“It is difficult to understand how it is possible that antisemitic publications appear during an event organized by such important institutions,” wrote the American Jewish Committee (AJC) of Central Europe in response to the book fair.

In an interview with a local news outlet, Rafal Pankowski, the executive director of “Never Again,” expanded on the AJC’s grievances against 3DOM’s presence at the fair.

“Not only is [3DOM’s] activity unpunished, but it is also exhibited at prestigious fairs,” Pankowski said. “I think this should be a problem for the office of the President of the Republic of Poland since his authority was used to promote the fair.”

<https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-723934>