



POLISH LEAGUE AGAINST DEFAMATION
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Mr. Jack Bernard
Guest Editor
The Red & Black

Dear Mr. Bernard,

In your article entitled “Thoughts on Confederate monuments in Georgia”, published on The Red & Black website, you have used mendacious expressions such as “Polish concentration camps” and “Polish collaborators”. In addition, you have also untruthfully accused the Poles as being responsible for the Holocaust and its atrocities. We would like to point out that the expressions you have used constitute examples of hate speech and anti-Polish sentiments intended to attribute to the Poles responsibility for the crimes they did not commit and to misrepresent the history.

In your article, which deals with historical matters, the reference to Poland is taken completely out of context. In two short sentences you bandy about three obvious slanders, which can be regarded as examples of hate speech against Poland and the Polish people.

Let us remind you the following:

1. The concentration camps established during World War II on the territory of the occupied Poland were not Polish. They were German Nazi concentration camps, with Auschwitz Birkenau being the largest site. As you might know, concentration camps were established by the German Third Reich, and the camp in Auschwitz was a place where initially mainly Poles, and then also Jews, were exterminated. It is especially for this reason that making Poles responsible for the horrors of concentration camps is extremely offensive and highly unfair not only to the Polish people but also to the victims and their families. Haven't you heard about the ordeals that not only mass-murdered Jews but also Poles had to go through in the camps ran by the degenerate

German Nazis? Haven't you heard about the thousands of men, women, and children subjected to inhuman treatment, tortured in quasi-medical experiments, exploited for forced labor in inhuman conditions; about children murdered by phenol injections made directly into their hearts, or the Catholic priests exterminated on a massive scale?

Let us remind you that these were Polish patriots, such as Jan Karski and Witold Pilecki, who informed the U.S. and other governments about the extent of the German crimes in the occupied Poland. Unfortunately, their reports and pleadings for saving the Jews from the Holocaust did not meet with understanding among the Allies, including the USA. No action was taken even to bomb the railroad tracks used by the Germans to transport Jews from all over Europe to the camps. The American attitude toward the Jewish question at the time can be clearly seen in the story of the liner *St. Louis* with over 900 Jewish refugees from Germany on board. They were allowed by Hitler to leave the Third Reich but were denied entry into the United States. For most of those people, return to Europe meant death in German extermination camps. You might wish to watch "Voyage of the Damned," a 1976 film about those events.

2. "Polish collaborators" is an expression that could hardly be further from the truth. Contrary to many European countries, such as France, the Netherlands, and Norway, no collaborationist government was formed in Poland during WWII. Between 1939 and 1945, Polish resistance had to face an incomparably more brutal German occupation than did Western Europe. At that time, the Polish nation as a whole showed clearly anti-German sentiments and was far from supporting the occupier. It should be reminded that there was also another occupier on the territory of pre-War eastern Poland, namely the Soviets. In contrast to the French, Belgian, Norwegian, and Ukrainian SS divisions, in Poland there were no collaborationist military formations. Using the term "collaborators" is exceptionally unjust when referring to the people who actively fought against the German occupier, e.g., during the Warsaw Uprising, and developed the Europe's largest resistance movement (Armia Krajowa, the Home Army). Comparing the attitudes of demoralized individuals (which in Poland was often the result of the savage occupation) to the attitudes characteristic of the country and nation as a whole (as was largely the case, e.g., in France) and describing both cases with the term "collaborators" is deeply unfair.
3. It is also untrue that it is now illegal in Poland to say that any Pole had anything whatsoever to do with the Holocaust. The amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance (the IPN Act), to which you must be referring, clearly stipulates otherwise. It prohibits any action intended to make the Polish nation jointly responsible for the Holocaust. Such responsibility rests solely on the German people and this has recently been explicitly acknowledged by many prominent German politicians, including Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Given the above explanations and the fact that the sentences you have used are not indispensable in a text about monuments in Georgia, we demand that you remove the offending sentences from your text. An experienced member of the public administration such as yourself should be accurate in the use of language and rely on well-informed sources.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. Your text contains slander disseminated by the media, which misrepresent the amendment of the IPN Act. Is this only an example of ignorance or rather of an intentional effort on the part of some groups of people who seek to falsify history to blame Poland—the first and principal victim of WWII—for German crimes?

Let us again make this clear that there were no “Polish concentration camps” or “Polish Collaborators”. We expect you to remove the sentences speaking falsely about Poland and in this way spreading the hate speech.

Polish League Against Defamation