

## Letters to the Editor from The Times of Trenton

Friday, June 11, 2010

### World War II Invaders Turned Poland Into Hell

#### SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

I wish to point out some vital information that was missing from Sharon Schlegel's column "On their honor, they honor the Holocaust" (Feb. 27). When it states that, "It's hard to imagine Abe [Chapnick] in the history-stained, striped uniform he wore at Buchenwald," the columnist does not point out that Buchenwald was a concentration camp established by the German government near Weimar, Germany. The only country she mentions in the article is Poland.

The column further states, "With a detailed description of his childhood environs first in the peaceful if anti-Semitic Lodz, Poland, and then in a small town nearby where the family fled, Chapnick told how Poland turned into hell for its 3 million Jews." Ms. Schlegel does not state that this hell was caused by the German and Soviet occupations of Poland and that these two invaders persecuted the Jewish citizens of Poland. By withholding this information, she gives the impression that it was the Polish government that had turned Poland into hell for its Jewish population. In fact, the German and Soviet invasions turned Poland into hell for all of its residents, especially the 3 million Jewish citizens and the 3 million Polish Christians who were killed at the hands of the Nazis.

In addition, Ms. Schlegel describes the city of Lodz as anti-Semitic. By labeling an entire city anti-Semitic, she slanders the people who were not anti-Semitic, some of whom risked their lives and the lives of their families to shelter Jews who were targeted for extermination by the Germans. (In like manner, I do not accept anyone labeling the U.S. a racist country. As an American, I object to being labeled by such a reprehensible broad stroke.)

The columnist does not directly state that Poland was the aggressor that wished to eliminate human beings such as Mr. Chapnick. But that is the impression her column gives, especially to the younger generation, which did not live through that hell and is woefully ignorant of history. In omitting key facts about who were the aggressors, the column trivializes the suffering of the Polish people.

I read Ms. Schlegel's work and have had the honor of her writing about my service in the Peace Corps. I do not think her omissions were deliberate, but they demonstrate that even an educated journalist of her caliber is unaware of the facts regarding Poland's occupation during World War II.

Donna Chmara, of Hamilton, is past president of the Polish Arts Club of Trenton.

Donna Chmara,

Hamilton