

SPLC Defames Marek Chodakiewicz

By: *Christopher Roach* - 15 Dec 2009

My close friend, Marek Chodakiewicz, is a serious historian of World War II, the Holocaust, and the Nazi and Soviet occupations of his native land. He is an intelligent, balanced, and honest scholar, who does not indulge in nationalist myth-making, is willing to slay sacred cows, and is not devoid of appreciation for the moral complexity that faced the Jewish and Polish people under foreign occupiers. The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)—a supposed civil rights organization run by the morally challenged Morris Dees—has decided to attack him, as they have attacked so many others, for deviating from leftist orthodoxy in a ruthless campaign of censorship:

Many of Chodakiewicz's controversial writings about Jews predate his appointment to the museum board. In a 2003 book, After the Holocaust: Polish Jewish Relations in the Wake of World War II, he argued that postwar violence directed at Jews in Poland was seldom due to anti-Semitism. Instead, he cited other factors: Poles' resistance to Jewish communists; self-defense against Jews who wanted to murder Poles who had collaborated with the Nazis; and thwarting efforts by Jews to reclaim property seized by the Nazis and later taken by Poles.

Chodakiewicz also maintained in the book that 400 to 700 Jews were murdered in Poland after the war; other estimates place the toll at 1,500 or higher. And he argued that Jewish communists killed more Poles after the war than vice versa. In an article about Chodakiewicz's book for a newspaper in Israel, Laurence Weinbaum, a historian, one-time Fulbright scholar and executive director of the Jerusalem-based World Jewish Congress Research Institute and the Israel Council of Foreign Relations, wrote that Chodakiewicz and "like-minded historians ... are hard at work explaining why the murdered — not the murderers — are guilty." Chodakiewicz, Weinbaum added, is a historian with "twisted views."

I have read the book. The scholarship is impeccable. It has hundreds of footnotes per chapter. It cites sources in Russian, English, Polish, Ukrainian, and even Hebrew. It literally researches and reports on each and every reported violent death in Poland from 1944-1947.

The Holocaust was a great crime not only against Jews, but also against Ukrainians, Poles, Czechs, Belarussians, and others. If the essence of the crime was mass murder of innocent civilians for ideological and racist reasons—which I think it was—then the mass murder of Polish Christians, often by Russian or Jewish communists in post-war Poland, is also a crime worth studying in a rigorous way. Such scholarship does not detract from or minimize the Holocaust against the Jewish people. Context is everything in history, including context necessary to understand the magnitude of the Nazi mass murder of Jews. But an event shorn of all context is not historical but mythological or religious: beyond discussion, beyond comparison, beyond understanding, beyond reason. This is not healthy. This is not history.

The real history of World War II has been eclipsed by a fairly recent focus in popular culture almost exclusively upon the Holocaust. This focus has come about through the exclusion of understanding of other Nazi crimes, Japanese crimes, Soviet crimes, and most other aspects of the war. The popular history of the Holocaust has been especially distorted to render the perpetrators beyond human and their victims beyond reproach, even when some of those same victims (or would-be victims) were also victimizers in the uniforms of the NKVD in Poland from 1944-1947. In the post-war milieu of Poland and Eastern Europe, no doubt there were many crimes perpetrated, whether by anti-Semitic Polish nationalists, ordinary bandits, rape-addicted Red Army soldiers, or overly zealous Jewish "Avengers." But this layered story, where the evil Europeans of the Holocaust were now victims is inconvenient, and it has been suppressed.

There is no excuse for mass murder of innocents. This should not be controversial. But to discuss these others victims is considered suspect, whether those innocents were Poles killed by German Nazis, Poles killed by Jews, Ukrainians killed by Poles, Poles killed by Ukrainians, Germans killed by Russians, or any of the other permutations of ideological mass murder that marked the middle of the 20th Century. It is a narrow ideological goal that takes one especially effective species of such mass murder—the Nazi mass murder of the Jews—to exclude, ignore, and downplay other instances of civilian genocide, not least that of the long-suffering Poles, who endured a situation

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Count your blessings, starting NOW...

By: *Justyna Ball*

<http://justyna-polishdelight.blogspot.com>

"A well-adjusted woman is one who not only knows what she wants for Christmas, but even knows what she's going to exchange it for." Whoever said it, meant "birthday" not "Christmas," but you get the point.

Each year Betty C. went shopping for gifts the day after Christmas, so the next year you could count on an ice bucket or crystal reindeer or door decoration that she bought for a very reasonable price or if you were one of her really close friends, you would receive her famous coconut balls which she kept in the fridge for the entire year! Once she gave me a kitchen towel that was part of a set of three that I GAVE HER a year before. I wonder who received the other two. (Well, I have to say, she had good taste!)

Annie W. had a system of recycling Christmas cards where she cut off the back page with the personal greetings and wrote her own on the back cover. I do recycle gifts when I know for sure that people will actually use them. It would be such waste if I keep a Snow Baby knowing that Denise has a whole collection and most likely would love to add some more.

I do not care for Snow Babies, I do not care for collections. I never buy sets, I buy dishes by piece. When I see one that I like. That way if you break one you won't cry over it. A month later you don't even remember you had it! Unless you took a picture of it...No crying over broken wine glasses either, mine don't match.

We were tasting eggnog with brandy and to get the right dose, Jacek pulled out our mismatched vodka glasses. Some we remembered, like the one with palm tree that says Key West. Two others somehow did not remind us of anything. One had a metal skull and bones (!) another just a logo. I took a closer look, it said "Tufts University," looks like our son while in college started his own collection...

With age, I require less stuff and I collect less compared to others. The excitement of the holidays comes down to having my loved ones around me and all four of us by the kitchen table (for that special occasion called Wigilijny) breaking the wafer, wishing each other health and happiness. (I'm up for the challenge of cooking the entire Christmas supper on two burners, again!)

Karolina is already here and Francis is flying over from Warsaw. Soon our

version of a Charlie Brown tree" will glitter in the corner, and the only reason to turn on the TV will be to watch "It's a Wonderful Life" for the nth time...By now, the kids have tried every dish on the table, never making a fuss over the herring or beets, as did happen with some American friends who asked to be invited for a traditional Polish Wigilia. As a result of their children being Polish food intolerant, their mother got up and served them ... peanut butter sandwiches. The children's father, a grown man, couldn't look at the barszcz as it reminded him of...blood. I bet he thought that the mushroom uszka floating in the soup were... eyeballs.

The annual promise of starting preparations earlier next year never gets beyond a ...promise.

While my leftover turkey still occupied the top shelf in my fridge, some already had their (Christmas) trees decorated and presents neatly piled up.

I only purchased one item so far, a stocking with my son girlfriend's name on it. Last year it was a same looking stocking with a different name. So I asked Fran if she is really coming over since I do not know anybody else by the name Elcin to give the stocking to...

Radio stations play (Christmas) music non-stop now and the retailers already have their merchandise put out in a big way. As always, facing the challenge of how to sell Christmas related stuff, without calling it "Christmas." "Festive greetings" and "holiday wishes" dominate an assortment of cards, and the aroma of "holiday cookies" and "holiday spirit" fills the air. I can't find any reference to that daring holiday in the entire Crate&Barrel "Christmas" catalog. On sale are "holiday cookie cutters" and "holiday towels" with the latter decorated with reindeer and trees and can't be used for Kwanza as that would have gazelle and baobab embroidered instead.

On December 6th, the 17th annual "White Christmas in West Brookfield" proved to be a sensation picking up more followers each year. What a daring idea someone had... The event was inaugurated by the Christmas concert at the Elementary School.

The snow did not last, it had melted already before the crowds arrived...

Our daughter, who missed "all things New England" finally returned from the Californian Lalaland and joined us for a walk around town, peering into peoples' homes opened for the occasion. The scent of ginger and cinnamon filled every shop that specialized in primitive art. Private homes as well as businesses lured with hot cider convincing visitors that this is the most wonderful season indeed!

The set-up of the Nativity Scene on the Band Stand reminded us of the reason...

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Calendar of Events

20, Sun., Polish Club of Laguna Woods - Traditional Christmas celebration Clubhouse 7
Info: Irena (949)206-9122.

Jan. 3, Sun., Oplatek Luncheon and Polonia Awards presentations sponsored by the Polish American Congress - Quiet Canon Restaurant in the Montebello Country Club - 901 Via San Clemente - Montebello, 90640 - South of the Pomona Freeway at Garfield exit Polonia Awards will be presented to: Jadwiga Narebska, Kazimierz Cybulski Józef Ład-owicz - Posthumously - \$ 35.00 per person Information and Reservations: (626) 282-4686 (310) 245-3157.

10 Sun, 1:0 pm - "Kolędowanie" (Caroling) by "Polanie" Dance Ensemble, Pope John Paul Polish Center - 3999 Rose Drive in Yorba Linda - Program, Dinner and a repertoire of the most beautiful Polish Carols will delight all who will attend.

Tickets: \$20 - adults, \$10 - children under 10.

10 Sun, After the noon mass - Oplatek Luncheon Our Lady of he Bright Mount Church Hall. - 3424 W. Adams Blvd. - Los Angeles. - . Special guest from Poland, Ms. Antonina Grzelak - singing traditional Christmas Carols. \$25.00 per person. Reservations (323) 734-5249.

SYLWESTER - New Year's Eve Dances

Our Lady of he Bright Mount - 3424 W. Adams Blvd. - Los Angeles - (626) 282-5298

Pope John Paul Polish Center - 3999 Rose Drive - Yorba Linda - (949) 495-6622

Please send information for the calendar to Bish Petryka - e-mail: zbyskoopet@aol.com ★

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