

Protesting “Polish Death Camp”

The Polish and Jewish community leaders joined together to protest the use of the term “Polish Death Camps” in the program of the Jewish Film Festival in New York. The protest letter from the National Polish American-Jewish American Council (NPAJAC) was signed by the Co-Chairs of the Council Dr. Thaddeus Radzilowski of the Piast Institute and Mr. Martin Breslar, esq. of New York City. In response to the letter, the Jewish film festival has apologized and has agreed to change its advertising and print a correction to its program.

Dr. Radzilowski and Mr. Breslar on behalf of the NPAJAC

also joined the Polish American Congress, The Polish Consulate General in New York and the Holocaust Studies Committee of the Kosciuszko Foundation in the protesting the use of the term “Polish Death Camp” to refer to Sobibor in an obituary in the New York Times on January 12, 2006.

The Radzilowski-Breslar letter was written to Byron Calame, the Times public editor. It and the other protests had an immediate effect. According to Mr. Frank Milewski of the Polish American Congress, the Times Senior Editor Bill Borders “plans to distribute a note to the staff explaining the phrase is historically inaccurate and also offensive to many readers.”

Dr. Radzilowski states that these successful attempts to

counter anti-Polish stereotypes point out graphically the need for sophisticated, well focused efforts in coalition with strong allies. Dr. Radzilowski who has studied and written extensively on how ideas change public opinion and who originated a curriculum for analyzing and countering propaganda while in the military explains “that Polonia needs a well developed, positive and sophisticated plan and a systematic and on-going approach to countering negative stereotypes.” He says that this is something we should teach our young people. The Piast Institute is considering the development of a workshop on this topic.

For further information contact Virginia Skrzyaniarz at (313)664-0321 or e-mail director@piastinstitute.org.