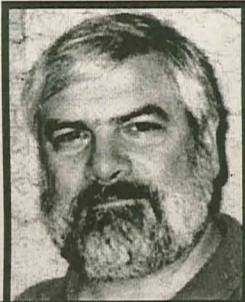


FROM THE
EDITOR'S DESK

MICHAEL A. SZYMANSKI

With a front page photo and a full article on page 3 we report this week on the naturalization ceremony hosted by Polish National Alliance Council 122 at their Hall in Hamtramck. My compliments to Hamtramck Mayor Karen Majewski for being able to greet the attendees in 31 different languages! This ceremony is symbolically so appropriate because of the wide diversity of cultures that peacefully co-exist in Hamtramck.

I think of the contrasting situation in the Middle East where open combat continues between Israel and Hezbollah on the Lebanese border and in Iraq where the continuing violence is a cross between "insurgency" and civil war. With almost instantaneous mass media coverage of the fighting, some people seem shocked and outraged at the civilian casualties. Terrible as the reality of war is, this is also, unfortunately, business as usual for large parts of the human race. Rather than living in an enlightened age where violence is a very limited last resort, we seem to be in the midst of an expanding wave of fighting. I applaud the U.S. stance that a cease fire in Lebanon must include conditions for a resolution of the underlying problems, but it seems that such a position might in fact preclude a cease fire until either Israel or Hezbollah is destroyed. On page 6 we report a possible shift toward acceptance of an international peacekeeping force, and I am pleased to see the leadership role taken by Poland in its participation at a meeting of NATO defense ministers. The problems to face are the need to create a "peace" to keep in the first place, and the need to back up the mission with a willingness to use force and shed blood to prevent renewed hostilities between the two opposing forces. It seems we need a solution to an insoluble problem. Either the fighting will continue, or the Middle East will have to become more like Hamtramck.

The power of media coverage surely puts a damper on any callousness toward civilian casualties, and as much as anyone might criticize media coverage and how it affects the war in Iraq or the fighting in Lebanon, or anywhere else, for that matter, the suppression of news coverage and free expression is a thing to be fought vigorously. That's why it bothers me to see the article on page 7 detailing a libel investigation, even against a left wing German newspaper, in response to its satire targeting Lech Kaczynski. At the same time, it is important to be aware of the harm that can be done by the fostering and perpetuation of stereotypes. On this page is a thoughtful commentary from Piast Institute President Dr. Thaddeus C. Radzilowski dealing with stereotypes of Poles and Polish Americans. There is a difference between satire and bigotry.

Defamation Response

BY THADDEUS RADZIŁOWSKI

Recently an old problem has re-appeared to plague Polish Americans. There have been repeated references to "Polish Death Camps" (most recently in the Boston Globe) to identify the camps that Nazi Germany built in Poland to carry out its genocidal policies. It does not take away anything from the terrible fate of the Jews who comprised 90% of the victims at Auschwitz to note that the camp is also for Polish Christians the symbol of their national martyrdom at German hands.

Last month the Polish government petitioned UNESCO to officially name the camp the Nazi German Concentration Camp at Auschwitz to end this defamation. This request was seconded by a majority of major Jewish organizations. In their support many of them underlined that the historical record clearly shows that Poles did not establish, maintain, operate, staff or support the camps. Last week the United Nations agreed to the change of name.

The same period saw the return of derogatory domestic images of Poles in a popular new film *The Break Up* whose male lead is a crude, boorish, insensitive and clueless young man dressed in "Polish Pride" T Shirts and in a Doonesbury cartoon that depicted a character named Justin Kaminski who receives a graduation award for excellence in "remedial studies". He is the first person to actually major in "remedial studies". Thus, we have in short period a national airing of negative Polish stereotypes: Poles as genocidal anti-Semites and Poles as a mentally and culturally challenged people. The latter stereotype was, sadly, the Nazi racist propaganda that justified the enslavement and

extermination of the Poles.

It is not necessary to list the contributions of Poles and Poland to world civilization which belie the stereotype. The record of Polish history marks it, as one noted Harvard Scholar (a non-Pole and holder of an endowed chair) characterized "one of a handful of world-class cultures." A look at Poland's history and heroes over the last thirty years should be proof enough.

When Polish Americans complain about these stereotypes and epithets they are told they have no sense of humor or are too sensitive, or that all ethnic groups were subjected to such "humor", etc. Our detractors usually claim to know better than we do what we should feel about these insults. Finally, we are always assured no harm was intended.

Motives are really of no interest here. Put simply, to be falsely accused of mass murder (whose real authors seemed to have been forgotten) or to be marked as a subhuman by virtue of culture or genes is painful. These stereotypes are not "good ethnic fun". They are as pernicious as those racist and anti-Semitic stereotypes that stigmatize African Americans or Jews.

A look at our own local history illustrates what makes the "Polack" image so painful. Poles in Detroit were from the outset subjected to intense prejudice and exclusion. Until well after World War II we, along with other ill-favored ethnic groups, were restricted from moving freely into certain suburbs. There was a paucity of Polish American women in sales positions in major department stores and a surplus among cleaning ladies. Well into the 1960's there were only a tiny handful of Polish American students at the University of Michigan, located less than forty miles from

hundreds of thousands of Polish Americans. Executive Suite studies in cities with large Polish American populations such as Detroit and Chicago in the 1970's and early 1980's showed that their representation was as low as that of African Americans among corporate directors and executives.

Such examples could be multiplied many-fold. Let me just summarize the perceptions of contemporaries. In the 1940's the Reverend Charles Hill, a prominent African American and civil rights leader, publicly assured Detroit's Polish American community that African Americans - unlike white Detroiters - "did not consider Poles uncouth, uncultured and fit only for manual labor." In 1964 in response to a famous survey about 60% of African Americans, who knew about prejudice and exclusion in Detroit, identified Polish Americans as next to themselves the people most likely to be excluded from private clubs, etc. An equal number of middle-class Protestant white Detroiters agreed.

Even if others have forgotten, it is these recent hurtful memories of discrimination and exclusion that surface for many in the Polish community when we hear those stereotypes and "jokes". We are grateful to our friends in the Jewish community as well as others who have joined us in the struggle against bigotry. If we are to achieve the pluralistic society we seek here in Detroit and across America, the anti-Polish stereotypes must not be excluded from the prejudices we must uproot from our heart and our culture.

Thaddeus C. Radzilowski, Ph.D. is president of the Piast Institute, a National Institute for Polish and Polish American Affairs in Hamtramck, MI and co-chair of the National Polish American-Jewish American Council in Washington, DC

Richard Kubinski
Art Competition

The Friends of Polish Art and Orchard Lake Schools are again sponsoring the annual Richard Kubinski Art Competition and Exhibit which will run October 1-28, 2006.

Artists of Polish birth descent or marriage and 18 years of age or older are eligible to take part in the competition. Artists winning first prize are not eligible to compete for the following three years, but may enter for display, exposure or sale.

The competition will be judged by a panel of independent judges not affiliated with the Friends of Polish Art or the Orchard Lake Schools. The first place winner will receive \$250.00; second - \$150.00; third - \$100.00. There will also be three honorable mention awards.

All works must be original in concept and execution; no kit work will be accepted. All work must be ready to hang or exhibit. Only works completed within past two years and never exhibited in previous Richard Kubinski competition will be accepted.

Entry form must accompany work. A maximum of three entries per artist will be accepted. Entry forms will be available at the Orchard Lake Galeria (3535 Indian Trail, on the campus of the Orchard Lake Schools) on the Art Intake Day, September 23 from 9 am to 2 pm.

Winners will be announced at the Reception on October 1 at the Galeria at 3:30 pm.

For more information call chairman Marian Owczarski (248-683-0345) or Co-Chair Leonard Zabawski (734-981-4365).

All the information & entry forms are available on the FPA web-site - www.friendsofpolishart.org.

ART
SALEGaleria
at Orchard Lake
SchoolsOpen Saturdays
and Sundays
from 1:00 to 5:00 pm
During the week
on request,
call 248-683-0345
for an appointment.THE POLISH WEEKLY
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Listy do redakcji prosimy przysyłać na adres: Tygodnik Polski, 11903 Joseph Campau Ave., Hamtramck, MI 48212.

St. Albertus Fest

Performances include Aug 19th 2006
Traditional Jazz
1pm-11pmcountry/rock
folk
acoustic
rock

\$10

All ages
All Liquor laws
apply
Rain or Shine
Food, Beer and
Refreshments
AvailablePlease come
and support
St. Albertus4231 St. Aubin at Canfield
between Mack & E. Warren
For More info call
1(313)657-4145

Proceeds from this event will be used for the preservation and restoration of the St. Albertus historic district est. 1872 This event is sponsored by the Polish American Historic Ite Association, a 501C-3 non-profit official caretakers of St. Albertus historic District