

Przystawa - Dove from 6

Landfields lying fallow the General picked for himself this particular land of Helski! And, of course, at Helski's cost because together with the Militia was the bailiff who seized and later auctioned off the farm machinery, including the modern tractor that awakened jealousy in his neighbours. In order that it would be clear to all that the communist authorities did not need either the meat or the corn which Helski could produce, and further, to ensure that Helski would never have the chance to undertake his destructive political activities.

How does a peasant respond to this assault? - He simply takes his plough and ploughs up the fields sown by force with barley. How does the General react to this haughty peasant? - He throws him in prison and his son in the army. "Zegnajcie pola i chaty, skazany chłop poszedł w soładaty" (Farewell to the fields and home, the condemned peasant's son was drafted to the army!) - Robert Helski, son of Stanisław Helski, wrote on the side wall of his home. Later, (secret agents sent by units of the General under cover of dark tried unsuccessfully to paint over this epigraph!).

In prison, Helski beaten with truncheons by the prison guards lost his teeth and his health. After time spent in the prison hospital, he was later interned. Finally, the absurd criminal case was hushed up. The Supreme Court deliberated three times and honoured Helski with the "pardon-grace" of a Jaruzelski amnesty in order to eliminate any possibility of his seeking any compensation for reparations in the civil courts!

To the end of 1987, this "unforgiving" peasant fought with the communist "judicial" administration of General Jaruzelski demanding that the decision of the official regional administration be declared illegal. Unfortunately, as was stated publicly at the final hearing before the Supreme Highest Administrative Court, "the keys from Moscow haven't yet arrived". An overworked regiment of prosecutors and judges (about 40 judges presided over the Helski case!) became entangled in order to devise the appropriate written formula that would sanction the obviously illegal seizure of private land. Stanisław Helski appealed to the Ombudsman for Civil Rights and later, to the Sejm (Parliament) of the communist State the PRL: he demanded that Wojciech Jaruzelski be tried before the Constitutional Tribunal! - The General, kind magnanimous, FORGIVES! He is only waiting for Helski and his family walking through their empty fields and looking at the ruins of their farm to finally recognize Jaruzelski's MAGNANIMITY!

It should be known that in this same bookstore, Peasant and General for the first time stood eye-to-eye. The General, as on the ill-fated Tuesday, was signing his book and giving out autographs. Stanisław Helski came to the table. "And where is the book?" - asked a smiling

General with his hand extended, ready to sign his autograph. "I can't afford to buy a book! You sir, ruined me" came the less than parliamentary answer. The kind magnanimous General treated this answer as a joke, "Ahh, that's not a problem, here is a present for you" already having signed a book. "Your signature is not any good to me now. I needed it in 1982. Today I have brought something with my signature for you to read!". Helski handed the surprised stunned General his petition to the Sejm, dated 1986, which demanded that General Jaruzelski be placed not before "the court of history" but before the Constitutional Tribunal.

The General could not find the time to reply to the accusations of a peasant whom he ruined and destroyed, forcing him and his family into almost total abject poverty. What would happen if Jaruzelski suddenly began to reply to the accusations and claims of all those Poles who hold him responsible for their terrible fate? Would he then have time for "evenings with the author promotion of his books" and playing the role of a "European"? - It is far easier and more practical to FORGIVE everyone and occupy himself with a false history before whose judgment he freely places himself.

Stanisław Helski does not trust the future verdicts of the history on General Jaruzelski. Only when he had already exhausted ALL POSSIBLE LEGAL MEANS did he in this dramatic way protest against this demonstration of CYNICISM and CONTEMPT for millions of Poles by a man upon whose conscience and hands is the blood of many citizens, persons, and the ruin and poverty of thousands of others. The stone from Kobyla Głowa was TO REMIND the General, to make him aware that not all Poles have forgotten everything, have not forgotten all what that which Wojciech Jaruzelski does not write in his books about.

PSS. Neither Stanisław Helski, nor his children, ever received any compensation for his loss of health, imprisonment, confiscation of property and ruin of his farm. He died in July 2004 and was/is buried in a village cemetery in Kobyla Głowa, some 70 kms South of Wrocław in Western Poland. □

Strybel - Haiti from 8

Cazales, said to have been named after a Polish settler called Zalewski.

The result has been what is probably the world's strangest "Polonian" community, if one can call it that. Although they speak no Polish and know next to nothing about Poland, they consider themselves "blanc" (white), "Polonais" (Polish) or "noir Polonais" (black Poles) and are extremely proud of that distinction. The names of some of the original Polish settlers - Kowal, Rzepa, Osika, Ptak, Wilczek and Broda - can still be discerned in forms greatly distorted by the local Creole French dialect.

Despite generations of intermarriage with Afro-Haitians, they are lighter complected than their remaining compatriots and still display traces of European facial features. An image of Poland's Black Madonna, Our Lady of Częstochowa, has become an important icon of their voodoo cult. And an urban legend circulating among this downtrodden, impoverished people of one of the world's poorest countries is that some days Poles will come from across the sea and save them from their misery. □

Ask Strybel from 10

family in Poland, she may want to look up her long-lost relations in addition to the sightseeing. Szczęśliwej podróży! - Bon voyage!

Q: My mother passed away several years ago and long with her went all here family recipes. Sorry to say, she never wrote them down and I never learned them. I was wondering if you knew of one of the soup recipes she made which was called in English "Hambone Soup". The main ingredients were a hambone, prunes, elbow macaroni, water and vinegar. I would also like to know of a good a to z Polish/Czech recipe book.

MARTIN VEROSTEK,
mverostek@hughes.net

A: The hambone soup you mentioned sounds a lot like the pork & prune soup found on page 195 of my cookbook, "Polish Heritage Cookery". The only difference is that it calls for fresh pork bones rather than a smoked hambone. But it must be remembered that the cookery of once very poor East-Central Europe was a make-do cuisine that used whatever ingredients were available. The above-mentioned book is said to be the largest and most comprehensive Polish cookbook ever published in English and contains many dishes enjoyed by the Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Lithuanians and Ukrainians. I understand it is now also available in an online edition.

Q: Several years ago when I first ordered mushroom bouillon cubes, I received a recipe for the most amazing mushroom soup along with my order. I made it several times, and want to make it again, but I've lost the recipe. I remember that it called for potatoes cooked with the mushrooms and bouillon, and then blended with sour cream. Do you happen to have a copy in your archives?

TERRY GLOWACKI, lglow@mac.com

A: Try this. Wash well, pat dry and dice 12 oz fresh Portobello mushrooms and sauté in 2 T butter along with a finely chopped onion, stirring frequently until nicely browned (10-12 min). Transfer to soup pot containing 5-6 c water, add 2 peeled, diced potatoes, 1 mushroom bouillon cube and 1 bay leaf and cook on med heat until potatoes are tender but not falling apart. Remove from heat. Fork-blend 3/4 c sour cream with a heaped T flour until smooth then add about a c of the hot soup, 1 T at a time, stirring constantly. Stir sour-cream mixture into pot and simmer gently without boiling

several min. Add 1 T vinegar, salt & pepper to taste and garnish with chopped fresh dill and/or parsley.

Q: I am making szarlotka and was wondering how much the Polish measurement of a "glass" is in American measurements?

ROBIN WAJLER, rlwajler@suscom-maine.net

A: The "szklanka" (250 mililiters) or glass found in many Polish recipes is perhaps a level teaspoon larger than the standard 8 oz US measuring cup. The difference is so small, however, that you can ignore it in most recipes and assume that 1 glass = 1 cup. Good luck with your szarlotka (apple cake)

Q: Do you know anything about a Polish music group called Mystic? They have put out an interesting kolędy album.

RAY BITTNER, ray@polartcenter.com, Hamtramck, MI

A: Mystic is a little-known Polish rock group set up in 1999 by the Cugowski brothers, Piotr and Wojciech. Two unrelated musicians are included in the group. Their Kolędy album has been described as being in the chant-pop style, meaning they have given a pop-music twist to traditional Gregorian Chant.

Q: I have a copy of your article from the "Polish Suburban News" from 1998 in which you say that there is a big demand for English language books in Poland. Would you let me know if this is still the case? The article says that books may be sent to the Copernicus Society, ul. Koszykowa 3/28, 00-564 Warsaw.

STELLA BRZOZOWY-HEYL,
svbh@yahoo.com

A: Mr Jerzy Bystrowski of the Copernicus Society has informed me that the Society still forwards donated English-language books to needy Polish schools. However, unlike the situation in 1998, when English reading matter was still in short supply, now it is far more widely available and young people are using the Internet more and more anyway. Any books you wish to donate should be in good shape and fairly current. Recent reference works and illustrated books are good, so is fiction, and the classics are always appreciated. But old magazines, instruction manuals and outdated school textbooks would probably not be of much use.

Q: I have a question about your cookbook Polish Heritage Cookery. What are the portions of each recipe again? I know I read it somewhere in the book, but I don't have enough time to look for it now. I mean, I did look for it but couldn't locate it. Does each recipe produce four portions?

EVE JANOWSKI, Eve5J@aol.com

A: Many but not all the recipes are for four portions. Polish Heritage Cookery was written from the heart by my wife Majka and me in the late 1980s in order to help share Poland's culinary tradition with the American Polonia. Majka was a home-spun food hobbyist and fantastic cook with a degree in linguistics and I was a food-loving journalist, but neither of us was a professional cookbook author at the time. As a hint, if a soup recipe calls for 6 -7 c water, then it usually makes 4-5 servings. It all depends how large the servings are. □

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