

Justyna Ball from 2

being in prison gives you the right to health care, while being lawful yet poor does not.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, most of the new independent countries rewrote their constitutions, each making sure that it included a bill of rights to health care.

It is true that Europeans pay higher taxes than we do, but they get a lot more in exchange. I will give you an example. Their doctors don't make as much as ours, but they don't have to pay school loans. They go to college for free or pay very little. A European pays taxes, his child goes to college, and everybody chips in—even those who are childless. Not fair? An American will say, "Why do I have to pay for the school of somebody else's child. It's their problem! Well, but you go to see a doctor, don't you?"

You may call it socialism, I call it common sense. As long as our insurance companies make a profit, the healthcare system in the US is nothing but a market and the only ones that benefit are insurance companies. Another difference is that Europeans believe in preventative healthcare. Imagine doctors getting paid for keeping their patients healthy? They actually "invest" in keeping people healthy. They figured it out that THIS is what costs less in the end rather than allowing people to ruin their health and then try to fix it.

My daughter's friend discovered that she had breast cancer and decided to have a double mastectomy at 26, which is a rather tough decision. As a social worker she has weak insurance so now the entire community is collecting money to help her pay her medical bills. This month, we chipped in for two injured people to help with paying medical bills. That girl and a boy who is in a coma after a three-wheeler accident. As I discovered, fund raising is a big part of American life. Sure they help, but people are still left with a large chunk of the bill.

If we are so rich, why do we have to organize collecting efforts while other less rich countries provide for their citizens?

My other observation is that the US's way of "expending" life expectancy seems to be stuffing nursing homes with 100 year olds, who from morning until the end of the day, have no clue who they are or what shoe to put on what foot, or remember to dress up at all, but officially, statistically they are still alive. Others may be brutal, but their "conscious life" may be longer because their government pays for preventative healthcare. The only area where the US always leads is spending.

Henrietta Lacks was born in 1920 in Virginia, to a poor tobacco farming family and 31 years later, she was diagnosed with cervical cancer and soon after that, died leaving behind her five young children and a grieving husband whom she knew since she was 4. But what's interesting is not her life (although tobacco farming and life in a small town has its charm and great movie potential), but what happened to her after she died, and I do not mean it in some gruesome way.

The doctors told her about the cancer, but did not mention that her cells would be used for research, frozen and grown many times, just like cells taken from other poor families then. Except the cells of others kept dying in the lab, and hers had the ability to live forever, even to this day "they reproduced an entire generation every twenty-four hours, and they never stopped." The length of her cells all together from one end to the other end would be 350 million feet which means they could wrap around our planet three times, not bad for a woman who when alive, was only 5 feet tall. Their weight would be more than a hundred Empire State Buildings, which is over 50 million metric tons. Henrietta's cells marked as HeLa, were reproduced many times, sold to med labs around the world (obviously

without her permission) and if that were not enough, even sent to the moon (to see how they behave in zero gravity). They were fundamental for developing the polio vaccine, worked on to do research on many viruses, leukemia, influenza, hemophilia, Parkinson's disease, sexually transmitted diseases, appendicitis, human longevity, even mosquito mating, negative cellular effects of working in sewers and atom bomb effects. They helped with in-vitro fertilization, cloning, and of course, cancer. Her cells launched multi-million-dollar-industry-selling human biological material. Oh and of course, they contributed to the fact that scientists received the Nobel Prize and helped many become rich.

That's why Americans should be proud of their accomplishments in medical fields on every level. But there is still an ugly side. In her daughter's own words: "When I go to see the doctor for my check-ups, I always say my mother was HeLa. They get all excited and tell me stuff about how her cells helped make my blood pressure medicines and anti-depression pills and how all this important stuff in science happened because of her. But they don't ever explain more than jus sayin, Yeah, your mother was on the moon, she been in nuclear bombs and made that polio vaccine. I really don't know how she did all that, but I guess I'm glad she did, cause that means she is helping lots of people. I think she would like that. But I always have thought it was strange, if our mother cells done so much for medicine, how come her family can't afford to see no doctors? Don't make no sense!" She is so damn right!

One of the global leaders of health care economics said, "Every nation's health care system reflects that nation's basic moral values. Once a nation decides that it has a moral obligation to provide health care for everybody, then it can build a system to meet that obligation." When we are sick we are equal. For decades, the U.S. believed that the most important national goal was a country's prosperity. We created the system where the rich received the best treatment and the poor had none or limited access, so no wonder why in the U.S. people die from treatable diseases.

It was greed that shifted our jobs elsewhere and it was this same greed that knocked us off the pedestal in many fields already, and we have nobody else to blame but ourselves.

(For more on the Henrietta story; "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" by Rebecca Skloot.) □

Polish National character from 6

their meager savings to aid the Polish cause.'

Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834), French nobleman who aided the American Revolution, in addresses to France's parliament in support of Poland's November Insurrection.

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'The most humane of all nations has been deprived of its humanity. A superb, hospitable nation, whose boundless generosity came from the heart, has been plundered and stripped and must wander the world and beg for a crust of bread (...) That chivalrous nation that had shed so much blood against the Tartar and Turk to defend us all could find no-one to stand up in its defense in its final hour.'

Jules Michelet (1798-1874), outstanding French historian and friend of Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz. □

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'Whatever the Frenchman thinks up, the Pole will fall in love with.'

Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), Poland's greatest romantic poet.

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ACPC in Philadelphia from 5

Poland's roles during WWII. All 4,000 registered conference participants received a brochure "For Your Freedom and Ours", which ACPC reproduced with permission from the Polish Combatants of Canada. For the very first time ACPC presented a program at a Natl. Conference for the Social Studies before a live audience "WWII Perspectives on Fear" – a presentation selected by the Conference Committee from among 900 other applicants. The presentation, which was developed over months of research by Ms. Meg Huebeck of the Univ. of VA Center for Politics and ACPC Co-Chair Henrietta Nowakowski, will be published in the Natl. Conference for the Social Studies' official journal. This invaluable program, richly supported by the Polonia, continues to grow and make a positive impact in classrooms across the country, thereby promoting better understanding of Poland and her people. Barbara Lemecha enthusiastically reported that because of the splendid array of books and materials offered at our booths, on Poland's role during WWII and the lecture by Meg Huebeck, many of the teachers at the conference came to our booths full of questions and keen interest in our exhibits on WWII. As a result, Ms. Lemecha exclaimed that this was probably our very best and most successful presentation at an Annual National Conference for the Social Studies. Thanks were extended to Pres. Debbie Majka and Donna Chmara, Past Pres. of the Polish Arts Club of Trenton for their volunteer work in helping to man the booths. The Council extended its heartfelt gratitude to Co-Chairs Barbara Lemecha and Henrietta Nowakowski for their devotion to the yearlong preparations for the project.

Membership Chair Anna-Mae Maglaty reported that the Council now welcomes a new Supporting Organization, the **Polish Falcons of America**. Since our Fall 2009 board meeting we also gained 39 new individual members that included 19 Pułaski Scholarship applicants.

ACPC Business Manager Judi Tompkins who handles the distribution of the Council's quarterly *Polish Heritage*, informed the Board that the U.S. Post Office current delivery process results in significant delays for receipt of such materials – from over a week up to 26 days for our most recent mailing. She suggested that we place the most urgent, time constrained material on the Internet (ACPC Yahoo address), and advise members to check the ACPC website regularly for the latest information on events and happenings.

The ACPC 2010 Convention is scheduled for July 14-17 in Rapid City, South Dakota. Co-Chairs Debbie Majka and Richard Wiermański selected the Convention theme "Carving a Dream" to recognize the accomplishments of the Korczak Ziolkowski family in creating the Crazy Horse Monument. A lot of exciting tours are scheduled – Crazy Horse Monument, Mt. Rushmore, Deadwood City, and Bear Country USA. Reservations must be made by May 28, 2010. Members and guests are welcome. For further information please visit www.polishcultureacpc.org or call Debbie Majka (215) 627-1391 or Mr. Wiermański (410) 798-7512. Hope to see you there – help us honor a very distinguished Polish American sculptor who conceived and initiated the Crazy Horse Monument, and his family, who is determined to complete this magnificent work of art. □

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Strybel - Katyń wound from 4

was to have said: "Concealing the truth about Katyń became a cornerstone of the PRL (Stalin's puppet state officially known as "the Polish People's Republic"–RS). People paid a high price for remembering the truth about Katyń (...) And Katyń has become a painful wound in Polish history, poisoning relations between Poles and Russians. Let us make sure it can finally heal. We are already on that path. We, Poles, appreciate Russia's actions in recent years. We should go further along that path bringing our two nations closer."

Little could President Kaczyński know it would take a national tragedy of unprecedented scope for Moscow to significantly revise its stand on the atrocity. Medvedev actually echoed Kaczyński's views, when he called Katyń "an example of the falsification of history." And added: "We, Russians, have done that. (...) If we turn a blind eye to the crimes, they may happen again in the future. These crimes have no expiry date and those who committed them should be punished, no matter how old they are."

Although the change in tactics had been forced upon the Kremlin by circumstances, it may nonetheless help improve two-way relations. However, it would seem a bit naive to believe that Russia has changed its long-term strategy of restoring the prestige, pride and confidence of the big-power status it first achieved under Stalin during and after World War Two.

Above all, Moscow will probably continue to do reject all attempts to equate Katyń with a war or political crime, let alone genocide. The Kremlin fears that not only the descendants of Katyń victims might start demanding damages before international tribunals, but they could well be joined by the families of millions of Ukrainians starved to death in Stalin's artificially induced 1930s famines. And ethnic Russians themselves might stand up and demand justice, since the majority of those killed or sent to labor camps in Stalin's purges had been their relatives. □

ACPC - Pulaski Award from 6

experiences in economics with applied work in a business setting. This involved serving as a consultant at Monitor Group, working in Warsaw, Paris, Madrid and London. Additionally, she was employed as an analyst at the Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria in Madrid and with Merrill Lynch in NY.

The Pułaski Scholarship Committee was very impressed with Ms. Janowski's remarkable academic record that boasts a cumulative grade point average of 3.9 at Caltech and that she still finds time to serve the community and to play leadership roles in promoting Polish culture. A letter of recommendation persuaded the Committee that in selecting her for the Pułaski Scholarship, the American Council for Polish Culture will be recognizing "...a young leader who always acts on her commitment to Polish causes...and sharing her knowledge and skills with others in the Polish-American community". Her goal is to become a professor in the economics department of a top U.S. university or business school. The Committee has little doubt that she will achieve her aims. Her thesis advisor is also confident that her completed Ph.D. projects at the intersection of economics and neuroscience will have a tremendous impact in both fields and be published in top science journals. □

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