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- **Pope Pius XII: A Good Man or a Good Company Man?** *by* **"Zellick Ivansker"**

  The controversy concerning whether Pius XII deserves to be canonized is heating up. Did he do enough to try to save Europe's Jews from the Nazis? We are far from obtaining a complete answer because many of the relevant documents pertaining to his papacy have been destroyed or remain closed to public scrutiny within the Vatican Archives. Meanwhile, there are arguments on both sides. In the current e-Newsletter "Zellick Ivansker" concludes that Pius XII was not a saintly man; at best he was an able administrator. But as vicar of Christ and leader of his world-wide church Pius XII knew about but cared little to ameliorate the desperate plight of Europe's Jews. *Readers' comments and opinions on this issue are welcome.*

- **Shtetl Communities: Another Image** *by* **Annamaria Orla-Bukowska**

  Our ancestors' lives in Ivansk are often painted in bleak tones. We've been told that earning enough to live on was never easy, and that the situation was aggravated by tensions between the town's Gentile and Jewish inhabitants. Abundant evidence indicates that the local economy was in steep decline during the interwar years. But it is hard to believe that the community was one in which Poles and Jews were always at each other's throats. They had lived together for hundreds of years and depended on each other for their livelihood. Surely, strong and meaningful relationships developed between many of them. This is verified in several testimonies from Ivanskers and Iwaniskers that have been published in the e-Newsletter.

  In her research Annamaria Orla-Bukowska examines the everyday culture of the Polish shtetl. While most of her material is derived from testimonies and scholarly works of Poles and Jews who lived in Austrian Galicia, there is no reason to think that the situation she describes was significantly different in Ivansk. Dr. Orla-Bukowska concludes her study as follows:

  Most literature in this field focuses on one of the two cultures and tends to treat the Jewish community as an island; but 'What Jews wanted in particular was, not isolation from the Christians, but insulation from Christianity.' Separatist thinking perpetuates the myth that Jews and Christians in a shtetl community lived side by side but absolutely unconnected; it encourages the stereotypical view that ethnic groups live more in conflict than in peace. A skewed image is formed which ignores the reality that ethnic groups, living in a traditional culture and occupying shared territory, will find a place in each other's world and together create their own. It may be that by calling attention to the differences scholars overemphasize the lines that divide at the expense of those that connect……While it is true that they will periodically find themselves in confrontation, most of the time they will live in co-operative symbiosis.

Pope Pius XII: A Good Man or a Good Company Man?

by **"Zellick Ivansker"** [1]**, Canada**

I wrote this piece as a reaction to a review of ***"The Myth of Hitler's Pope: How Pope Pius XII Rescued Jews from the Nazis", by Rabbi David G. Dalin*** (Regnery Publishing, Inc. Washington, D.C., 2005). The review was written by Hal G. P. Colebatch and appeared in *Quadrant Online*, Volume 52, No.4, April 2008. I believe that both Dalin and Colebatch overlooked critical evidence that needs to be considered in any appraisal of the pontiff's actions during and after WWII.

Rabbi Dalin's book seems to me to be part of a directed campaign that's all about white-washing Pope Pius XII so that the Catholic Church can hoist him up to sainthood. The matter of Pius' and the Catholic Church's inaction in the face of the Nazi extra-curricular massacres of millions of "undesirables" is only part of the problem with the proposed elevation of Pius XII to sainthood. There is excellent evidence that the Pope and the Church were closely involved in rescuing hundreds of Nazi murderers and high officials from arrest and prosecution after the defeat of Germany.

This covered-up matter is part of the dangerous mythology about World War II that we believe and live by. Like the mythology that the West was always anti-Nazi, when British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was part of Lady Astor's pro-Nazi "Cliveden Set". That relationship throws Munich into a whole new light. During the Phony War, it was not at all clear how the sides would shake out, whether Britain and France would join Germany against the U.S.S.R. Or the myth that the West won the war, when it was clearly the Soviets who broke the back of the Nazi war machine and pushed the Wehrmacht back into Central Europe.

That the record of Pius XII before and during WW II is highly equivocal is itself extremely suspicious. The evidence, below, shows that Pius was very closely associated with Vatican officials who were directly involved with the Nazis and the Croatian Ustashe. Both the ADSS (Actes et Documents de Saint Siege relatifs à la seconde guerre mondiale) of 1965-1981 and the ICJHC (International Catholic-Jewish Historical Commission) of 1999, investigating the Pope's role with the fascists, were denied access to necessary documents in the Vatican Archives. And now, that this obscure historian-rabbi from a tiny Catholic university in Florida gets all of the necessary dope (presumably from the Vatican Archives) to write this book of complete absolution, just strains my credulity to the limit. How bizarre to roust up some rabbi, a supposedly neutral fellow employed by the avowedly Catholic "Ave Maria University", to write a book defending Pope Pius XII against accusations that he was in league with the Nazis. Bizarre!!!

I recall a documentary from around 1975, in which a very close personal associate and attendant of Pius XII testified overhearing Pius in his daily prayer retreats saying the most scurrilous and nasty prayers against the Jews. There is thoroughly documented evidence that Papal emissaries all over Eastern and Western Europe brought the Pope harrowing reports of Nazi death camps and massacres, but the Pope never disseminated, even privately through other emissaries, this information to the Allied authorities and through the Catholic churches in the west. The Pope could have played a key and secret role in mobilizing forces against the Nazis, but he never did anything.

[1] "**Zellick Ivansker**" is the *nom de guerre* of one of our members. He relentlessly pursues individuals or institutions whose ideas are erroneous or not based in fact. In addition, "Zellick Ivansker" takes aim at anyone who's politically correct. "Zellick Ivansker" is fearless.

It is well known that Robert Leiber (a Jesuit priest from Germany) served as advisor to Eugenio Pacelli while Papal Nuncio in Munich and Berlin, 1924-29. He continued as advisor when Pacelli became Cardinal Secretary of State and while Pacelli was Pope, 1939 to 1958. Leiber helped Bishop Alois Hudal (rector of the Pontifico Instituto Teutonico Santa Maria dell'Anima, Rome) to set up an escape route from post-war Europe, a ratline, for fascists and Nazis. He saw this operation as a holy crusade. After the war, Leiber was involved in staunchly and successfully defending Pius XII against accusations of involvement with the Nazis and in maintaining that Pius knew very little about the Nazi massacres of Jews, left-wingers and Roma. Leiber invented the cover story about Pius wanting to maintain Vatican neutrality and independence so that the Vatican could act as peace-maker. During the war, however, Pius surrounded himself with German advisors (probably from his time in Germany). His advisor Robert Leiber was in the confidence of the German ambassador to the Vatican, Ernst von Weiszsacker (later tried at Nuremburg). Leiber's buddy, Bishop Alois Hudal, provided the fleeing Nazis with money and with false identity documents supplied by the Commissione Pontifico d'Assistenza. The Nazis were able to use these forged papers to secure D.P. (displaced person) passports from the Red Cross. Leiber destroyed all of his personal papers before his death in Rome in 1967. It would not surprise me at all if Leiber also destroyed papers destined for and/or within the Vatican Archives.

In December 1944, the Vatican Secretariat of State appointed Bishop Hudal to minister to German-speaking prisoners in Italy. Hudal used this position to get wanted Nazi war criminals out of Europe, among them Franz Stangl (C.O. of Treblinka), Gustav Wagner (C.O. of Sobibor), Alois Brunner (C.O.of Dracy camp, near Paris and in charge of Slovakian deportations), and even Adolf Eichmann, Klaus Barbie, Dr. Josef Mengele and others.

The claim that the Vatican and some Catholic institutions in Rome protected a few hundred Jews, probably only in 1944 when the Germans started rounding up Italian Jews, is not supported by testimony from those saved, and the numbers are not proven. In fact, it was largely Mussolini who, for a long time, kept the Germans from rounding up Italian Jews. There is no documentation supporting Leiber's claim that Pius ordered church properties to open their doors to Jews. More likely is that certain Catholic institutions acted independently to hide Jews, particularly under the future Pope John XXIII. In my view, the majority of Catholic clergy and laymen who assisted Jews during the Holocaust did so because of their own personal sense of humanity and certainly not because of the example set by Pius XII. In addition, it is documented that American Jews gave money to the Pope through the Jewish National Fund for the Vatican to help European Jews get away to Brazil. What happened was that the Vatican attempted to spend that money to get only baptized Jews out to Brazil. Somehow, the project failed, but it is clear that the Pope was concerned only with saving his own faithful.

I can't see any value in Albert Einstein's statement in 1940 praising the Catholic Church's role in protecting Jews, because he could not have known what was actually going on and what would go on after the war. The Church was anti-Nazi before WWII, because of Nazi persecution of Catholics, but later the Church valued defeated Nazis as highly dependable anti-communists.

There was also an influential network of Croatian priests led by Father Krunoslav Draganovich, headquartered in the San Girolamo degli Illirici Seminary College in Rome, aimed at aiding Ustashe fascists, mostly hiding in Austria, to hide in Rome and escape to South America through Genoa. Father Draganovich was appointed apostolic visitator to the Croatian prisoners, and reported directly to Monsignor Giovanni Battista Montini of the Vatican Secretariat of State (later Pope Paul VI). A U.S. State Department report of 1946 listed nine war criminals supported and protected by the Church in Rome. Vatican officials assiduously protected the San Girolamo sanctuary, denied access to British military police and, in 1947, CIC Special Agent Robert Clayton reported 10 Ustashe cabinet members living in San Girolamo (guarded by armed youths) or in the

Vatican itself and travelling back and forth in chauffeured cars with Corpo Diplomatico plates. By about 1947, U.S. Army Intelligence became involved, helping to spirit out Nazi scientists "and other resources", with Juan Peron's assistance in the interests of anti-communism. The ratline to Peron's Argentina was set up by Bishop Antonio Caggiano of Rosario and Bishop Augustin Barrere on their trip to Rome in January 1946, when Caggiano was anointed Cardinal. The largest ratline, ODESSA, organized by escaped Nazis, brought escapees to Bishop Hudal's Catholic ratlines in Rome.

There is good evidence that Pius XII directed Vatican officials, such as Monsignor Giovanni Battista Montini (later Pope Paul VI) of the Vatican Secretariat of State, to whom Father Draganovich reported. William Gowen, former U.S. Army intelligence agent, has testified that Montini blocked his investigation of the Draganovich ratline. Gowen found out that the Draganovich ratline helped Ustashe to launder stolen gold, silver and art treasures with the help of the Vatican Bank, and Montini was involved in smuggling out Ustashe leader Ante Pavelic and others. The Vatican Secretariat of State (Monsignor Montini?) actually asked the U.K. and U.S. governments to release Croatian Nazi POWs from British internment camps in Italy.

In reaction, after Tito arrested Archbishop Stepanic, chief chaplain of the Nazi forces in Yugoslavia, who blessed the Nazi-Ustashe troops and sent all the Jews and 60,000 Croatian Orthodox Christians to the death camps, Pius XII elevated Stepanic to Cardinal**!** After arrest, Stepanic did not deny his Nazi affiliations, speeches and documents, saying that he had done it all in the best interests of the Church and for Croatia, to save the country from communism.

Montini and Pacelli/Pius XII were smart and controlling enough to keep their traceable records relatively clean, and Leiber probably helped to filter material out of the record. But it is a fact that there were nests of active Nazi/Ustashe agents directly under their direct supervision, so they both must certainly have known what was going on.

Again, that the record of Pius XII before and during WW II is highly equivocal is itself extremely suspicious. ***Pope Pius XII may have been a good company man, but he was not a good man.***

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Shtetl Communities: Another Image

by **Annamaria Orla-Bukowska**

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INTRODUCTION*

If 20 per cent of all Jews - the second largest Jewish community in the world at that time - lived in Poland during the interwar years, then the history and heritage of a plurality of Jews in the world today stem from that territory and time. Yet, as Jerzy Tomaszewski recently pointed out (1) the history of Jews in Poland in the twentieth century has received much less attention than the earlier period. For obvious reasons, most studies concerned with the present century focus on the Second World War and less on the events preceding it. The interwar years cover a very short time-span, but it was an extremely important and crucial period. Poland was being pieced together and re-created as one nation, and, although the effects of the rule of the three governments which had partitioned Poland did persist to some extent, the history of the country's Jewish population was now being shaped by a sovereign Polish state.

Writings about the interwar years deal primarily with history and statistics in a way which presents a monochromatic picture derived from facts, documents, and censuses. This image needs to be filled in by means of firsthand anthropological and cultural research. In her foreword to *Life is with People* Margaret Mead noted how such work captures 'the essence of a culture just as it was changing forever into something new and strange'. During her travels in Israel, Agata Tuszynska noticed that: 'In coincidentally met company in Haifa, Tel Aviv, or Jerusalem will always be found someone from Lublin, Bialystok, or Warsaw: the grandson of the rabbi from Przysucha or a relative of the innkeeper from Lubartow; a son of a friend from Nowotki Street or the daughter of the tailor from the Bilgoraj market square'. (3) In order to understand the 'new and strange' modern Jewish culture, the context of its predecessor needs to be borne in mind.

Another tendency in existing literature is to centre on Jews in large municipalities. This focus probably stems from a mistaken impression that most Jews, stereotypically considered urban, lived in sizeable cities. The rising importance of socialist and nationalist movements in the 1920s and 1930s must be acknowledged, assimilation was indeed increasing, and by 1931 a quarter of Poland's Jews lived in the five major urban centres of Warsaw, Lódź, Vilna, Kraków, and Lwów. (4) But in 1921 the majority of Jews in Poland still lived in the smallest towns, where, if modern movements were taking hold, it was a very slow process. Ten years later most of the city dwellers had arrived but recently; their roots were planted in the shtetl.

[* *Editor:* The author uses several Yiddish and Polish words/phrases in her study. You may not be familiar with their meaning, but in most instances this will not interfere with your appreciation of the author's intent. Many of these words can be searched and translated in *Google* or *Bing.*
Thanks to Margaret Daniel, Laurie Naiman and Louise Taichman for proof reading the material.]

Jews lived everywhere in Poland between the two world wars (the country was about 50,000 sq. km larger than at present). They lived in the lowlands and in the mountains, scattered in smaller and larger groups in most towns and villages, especially along well-worn trade routes. For example, they constituted 5 per cent of the population of the mountainous region of Polish Oravia. (5) In the late nineteenth century, about 40 per cent of Galician Jews lived in rural areas. (6) Of Poland's 630 towns in 1931, 76 per cent had a population of under 10,000. In the interwar years about 40 per cent of all Polish Jews continued to live in villages or townlets, and Jews from towns of a population less than 20,000 comprised 62 per cent of all urban Jews. (7)

Memoirs *(Pinkas hakehillot*) have been published in which Jews write of shtetl life, but they show only one view. As fundamental a work as *Life is with People* also focuses on the Jewish profile. For their part, sociologists in Poland have written about images and stereotypes of Jews, or descriptions of Jewish life from a Polish Catholic view. Historians have also transgressed:

> *Meanwhile the most recent history of Poland and the history of Jews are generally treated separately. Polish historians analyze the history of the Polish state or nationality, usually making no mention of the fate of national minorities, at most considering the relations between them and Poles. . . Jewish historians outside Poland are most often interested solely in the history of Jews, disregarding the fact that they lived in a particular country, coexisting with other nationalities. They often limit themselves to an analysis of the relations between Jewish society and other citizens.* (8)

Even in fiction, Polish Christian authors tended to portray no more than one or two token Jewish characters, while Polish Jewish writers often completely overlooked the Gentile population among which their characters would have lived. Works that recall the life of Polish Catholics and Jews together in communities are practically non-existent. Some Jewish biographical and autobiographical material does mention contact with the Gentile population. Extremely rare are accounts by Polish Catholics of coexistence with Jews; histories of Polish towns often make only passing mention of Jews, who frequently constituted a majority of the population.

Because of the Holocaust, it is impossible today to write an equally balanced account of Catholics and Jews from the same community. More important from a sociological point of view is the fact that, though it is still feasible to interview Polish Catholics who have never left their birthplace, recollections by Jews from a particular shtetl must be coloured by their experiences outside it and by the fact that nearly all live in large Western cities. It is possible, however, to attempt a reconstruction of shtetl community life by synthesizing what has been written and said by Polish Catholics and Polish Jews. Below I attempt to sketch shtetl life from such observations and descriptions, focusing above all on the interactions between and coexistence of Jews and Gentiles. Without in any way diminishing the importance of such historically and emotionally intense experiences as pogroms and the Holocaust, this essay, in the interests of achieving an accurate, rounded picture, will concentrate on everyday culture and life from an anthropological perspective.

The following account is based on memoirs written by shtetl Jews, scholarly works which deal with Gentile or Jewish life (or both) in such communities, and interviews conducted by myself and other students of the Jagiellonian University. Quotations and anecdotes given below with no specific source are from the 27 interviews recorded in 1991 by the present author in the community of Frysztak, and several hundred interviews completed between 1988 and 1990 for Project Galicia, which encompassed nearly all of the towns and cities of considerable Jewish population lying within the area of Austrian Galicia which is still part of present-day Poland.

SHTETL COMMUNITIES

Structure and Organization

Whereas the phenomenon of two or more traditional cultures occupying the same territory and divided along ethnic, religious, and class lines occurs everywhere in the world, the shtetl community was of a singular character. Though it was an anachronism in the twentieth century, it took the force of the Holocaust to wipe it out. Its inhabitants were predominantly traditional, Hasidic Jews living among and with traditional Catholics, primarily peasants. The local community was the centre of their cosmos:

> *Despite the multiple impacts from without, until the late nineteenth century a very large proportion of the shtetl population grew up in ignorance of the world beyond . . . The whole world was commonly assumed to be just one shtetl after another. . . 'the whole world consisted of Slonim, Warsaw and a few towns in between. . . As far as we were concerned people lived only in Slonim and in a few places around there. We had heard of Moscow, but it was just a name. People didn't live there.' Space and time . . . were fluid, vague concepts, always less real than people and God.* (9)

The term 'town' in this context should not call to mind the usual image. Most Polish towns had been founded in the Middle Ages, never expanded much beyond their original limits, and never experienced significant population growth. Very often, even now, a few small farms can be found within town borders, and at least a rooster, goat, or cow might be kept in the yard. 'In a small shtetl the Jews and the peasants may be close neighbors. In a large one, most of the Jews live in the center and the peasants on the outskirts, near their fields. The other inhabitants are the animals who share the streets, the yards, and on occasion the houses.' (10) A town meant a settlement with a charter, a mayor and town council, a square where the weekly market-day and a certain number of annual fairs were held. It was the nucleus of a community which included the nearest villages, which were part of the parish, whose Jews attended synagogue on the more important holidays, and which belonged to the administrative unit governed by the town. Notwithstanding the fact that, after the economic depression of the early 1930s, many Polish towns lost their charter and were officially reduced to village status, they continued to fulfill the main functions they had performed before.

The town had a square, sometimes only a widened, irregular area in the centre, sometimes a well-planned quadrangle accessed by streets at each corner. Here were usually located the post office, bank, and town hall, possibly a small hotel for traveling Jews, a cultural centre, and a holding cell. The town possessed a restaurant, bakeries, a blacksmith, tailor, cobbler, butcher, and a doctor and lawyer. In larger towns there might be a carpenter, metalworker, tanner, hat-maker, and jeweler. There were very often dim roads leading to and through a shtetl. If there was a railway nearby, it was a key mode of transportation, though it too could be cut off in severe winter. The better houses on the market square might be brick and stucco, sometimes two stories high, with the ground floor serving as a store and the upper one forming the living quarters; some might have plumbing.

Though nearly every village had a schoolhouse with the minimum number of class-grades mandated by law (four, later increased to six), in town there was a school offering higher classes. In larger towns there might be a high school at which pupils from outlying areas boarded. But few children attended the higher classes: school took time away from study of the Talmud for Jewish boys, it took away labour from the farm, and meant a long walk each way for peasant children. Usually only the most determined from among the rural population continued their education in town.

Religious education was also obligatory, and solutions to this issue were various. In some schools religion was the last class of the day and Jewish children were sent home early, or else a Jewish teacher might be hired, or the pupils would be sent out to play, which in winter meant sitting in the back of the classroom. Another problem was posed by classes held on Saturdays. Where big cities might provide special Sabbath schools with lessons on Sunday, in shtetls and villages there was no such accommodation. Occasionally Jewish children were expected to attend but excused from writing; more often they were entirely exempt from attendance on Saturday. Some teachers used that day for a review or summary of the previous week's work, others introduced new material but did not question Jewish children on it until they had a chance to catch up. A shtetl could also have ten or more *cheders.* As the *melamed* was usually poor, one room in his home functioned as the living-room, kitchen, bedroom, and study room. All Jewish boys attended *cheder* on five and a half days each week, except for holidays.

Usually in diagonally opposite corners of the market square there stood the two most significant structures, whose silhouettes dominated the centre: the church and the synagogue. Within close range of each were the cemeteries. But it was also customary to find, in the quarter dominated by the synagogue, a *mikvah,* the *kahal* building, a *beit-midrash* (study house), and often a small hospital or clinic, an orphanage, or a home for the poor. It is important to note that during most of the interwar period *shtetl kehillot* were dominated by wealthy members of the community who were ardently Orthodox Chassidim. In the late 1920s this orientation was being questioned by Zionist and socialist movements, which were repelled for a time by rules which denied voting privileges to persons who were not religious. As Tadeusz Olszanski noted, Zionist ideas 'must have barely reached - and only a few - elitist centres like Drohobycz, Nowy Sącz, or Zakopane; they did not get as far as Kolomyj or Stryj, let alone the villages' (11). Joachim Schoenfeld confirmed this: 'The Zionist organization in our shtetl, however, was anemic and dormant due to the opposition of the Chassidim. They represented the majority and held the upper hand.' (12)

A majority of the Jewish population in Poland made their living in trade, but this principally meant peddled trade rather than retail. Necessity - and tradition, for it was a privilege granted by kings - made market-day the key to the rather primitive economic structures which predominated in Poland. What made a shtetl a shtetl was its market-place and its market-day. This was its pulse, a meeting-ground, the centre of action, a place relatively empty for six days of the week but transformed on the seventh. Jewish merchants were so important that no town held its market-day on Saturday. High peasant wagons arrived with horses, cows, chickens, fruit and vegetables, grain, dairy products, eggs, and flax. Jewish stalls were set up in their area with furs, hats, jackets, trousers, shoes, boots, and coloured linen. The open market-place was divided into sections by commodity, and each section had its characteristic odour. The peddler, tailor, cobbler, and blacksmith also traveled to any town within reach:

> *Costerrnongers were out through the week every day attending a market in a different shtetl . . . [They] had their own, or hired, horse-drawn wagons on which they loaded their merchandise for sale, with stalls ready to be put up. Others left for the market with empty containers and boxes to be filled up with merchandise bought at the market from the peasants . . .*
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> *In the afternoon the merchandise bought during the day was packed and brought home to the shtetl, where it was sold to the wholesalers or exporters . . . On the other hand, the ones who were not buying but were selling merchandise at the markets replenished their stock at the wholesalers and loaded their wagons for the next trip. After a few hours' sleep, and upon rising in the early morning, they left for another shtetl where on that day the market was held. (13)*

Winter snow and cold did not keep people away. A resident of a town with a population of 1,800 describes Thursdays:

At four a.m. already. . . Here in town, setting up stalls, the arrival of the Jews from Kolaczyce. The arrival of Jews from Niebylec, from Krosno. And each had his stalls. All sorts of goods . . . The carter waited there somewhere below Frysztak . . . The fair ending, everyone loaded things on to wagons and rode back . . . It usually ended at about one or two in the afternoon. . . But during the fair there was publicizing. Publicizing. Jews yelled what goods they had. Praised their wares . . . And if he said, let's say, 20 zloty for the merchandise, he sold it for 5 . . . The whole marketplace . . . was crammed with stalls. On both sides . . . Here everyone traded. . . Over there was a cattle market. And there was trade in horses, cattle . . . horse trading was the biggest. After the fair ended, the peasants took off for the inn. After the fair ended, everything was merry, returning home with a song.

Although the majority of local residents were self-employed, earnings were quite modest. Shtetl communities often exhibited an almost feudal division of social roles, where the Polish nobility owned land and filled government positions, Jews were traders and merchants, and Polish peasants produced agricultural goods; such an economy did not allow for a high income. One Catholic villager observed that 'Only a few individuals were rich; the majority led a very humble life at a low level.' Frequent small purchases had to be made because few could afford more than 4 oz of salt or a quarter litre of kerosene for lighting. A Jewish villager commented that potato pancakes, a favourite, were made dry because oil was too expensive and used only at Pesach and Hanukkah. (14) The local intelligentsia and wealthy rarely included more than 1-5 per cent of the population.

But there could not be a town without its villages. During this period peasants were self-sufficient to a great extent, but there was always a need to go to town: on market-day to sell and then buy, on holy days for services, and for weddings and funerals. Because there was no public transport, most villagers walked to town:

It was six kilometres. I had to be in town once if not twice each week, because I went to church every Sunday. By foot one walked for an hour. Sometimes in the summer one went through the fields. But in winter that was impossible because of the heaps of snow; the path was not clear, so one walked along the road.

If town residents were generally poor, the entire village lived in poverty. Water was always taken from the well and most people went barefoot.

While towns often had a Jewish majority with few Catholics, the villages had a Christian majority with few Jews; yet nearly every rural settlement included at least one or two Jewish families. The local inn or mill (flour or timber) would be owned by a Jew, likewise often a nearby quarry, forest, or small factory. Yet: 'It would, however, be a misconception to disregard Jewish farmers. There was among them a small group of landowners, certainly and above all in Galicia, where there was even a bilingual (Polish/Yiddish) agricultural periodical.' (15) 'Above all, there were in Poland Jews working their own, not large, farms - the same kind of peasants as their neighbours . . .' (16) Toby Knobel Fluek, for instance, was born and grew up in a rural village in eastern Poland. Her family had been there for generations; ten of the 250 families in the village were Jewish. Her father was 'a born farmer, and knew little else'. He worked with his hired help in the fields, cutting, tying, and threshing wheat with primitive tools. (17) A Gentile farmer recalls: 'There were five Jewish families in Cieszyna. Right there by the bend, at the crossing, there was a Jew. His name was Lejzor. He ran an inn . . . it was called *At Lejzor's* . . . Another had the mill, that was Faust . . . But he had probably three morgs [16,800 sq. metres] of land. So he had a horse, and worked, and farmed.' Ilex Beller describes how 'The peasant Jews lived in cottages scattered around the countryside. They were innkeepers, blacksmiths, farmers and millers,' and Abraham the dairyman, who delivered milk and kosher butter to the very religious Jews, owned a rundown cottage, two cows, a goat, several chickens, and a lean horse. (18) A woman now living in Israel recounts: 'I remember

my grandfather, but he was atypical, because he worked the land. I remember the goat which overturned the Seder table because my brother and I let her in as the prophet Elijah.' (19)

With no synagogue or cheder in such a village, services for the Sabbath and holidays were held in one of the homes, and one person in the village fulfilled all ritual functions or went to the nearest shtetl for a shochet or rabbi. (20) 'For Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we had a *Baal T'fila (leader in prayer)* come from Podkamien to conduct the services in our house. (21) *But* there was a stigma attached to being a *dorfisher,* a villager. In *Life is with People* a typical *proste* Jew is characterized as being loud, coarse, quick-tempered, strong and broad, and dressed like a peasant. (22) Certainly, even on the Sabbath some work had to be done on the farm. A neighbour of some Jewish farmers reports: 'He gave the horse its feed, chased the cow into the field, milked it. Because it was written, even in the Old Testament … They asked Christ, "If an ox falls into a well, should one wait until Sunday to pull it out, because it is not allowed on Saturday?"

Interaction and Coexistence

'I went to his place, he came to mine. We lived near each other just past the main road ... My neighbour was a Jew. I traveled there with the Grinbaums with eggs, and traded in eggs, leather, and butter. I traveled with them, rode through the villages with them. A lot of Jews went to school with me.' So recounted a Roman Catholic from Dubiecko, describing his everyday contact with Jews in that shtetl. When questioned about how those relationships were shaped overall, he replied, 'it depends. There were those who hung around and associated with Poles, and there were those who only traded with them. In general it was average.'

The buying and selling of various products was the occasion of the most frequent contact between Jews and non-Jews. In the shtetl itself these transactions took place in the market-place or in the shops located in nearly every Jewish house on the square. The streets were lined with small 'general stores crammed with a medley of merchandise calculated to appeal to the taste and needs of the peasant customer. (23) In one place one could buy groceries, shoe-leather, fabric, cigarettes, wine, spices, raisins, and string. And the most important customer was the first one of the week, who often appeared on Saturday evening: 'They didn't hide from me. Like when I went on Saturday right after the holy day, when the first star shone. . . when I went to him, to that friend, he wouldn't let me go, so that I would buy, because it was luck for the whole week until the next Saturday.' Joachim Schoenfeld notes that the first coin earned had to be spat upon for good luck: 'It was a good *potshontek* [poczatek - beginning].' (24)

The types of products and services that Jews and Gentiles bought from each other were diverse. A Catholic woman fondly remembered how 'the bread in the Jewish stores was better than in the Catholic ones.' A Jewish village girl recalled that 'Mother also baked for the other villagers to get a little extra income. For Easter, the peasants used to order large braided white breads called *Paska.* For the intellectuals - the priest, the engineer - Mother baked round sponge cakes.' (25) Again, 'Mother baked the wedding cakes for the Gentiles . . . the large cake was necessary, because the peasants invited everybody from the village to their weddings.' (26) Shoemakers might be either Catholic or Jewish. Those who sewed for a living might have clients from any religious background: 'She made the clothes for the intelligentsia and the wealthier people . . . Surcie made some blouses for the peasants too, and they in return worked for us in the fields.' (27) 'My mother often made the black velvet vests. She would trace a design on the fabric and use bright-colored threads for the embroidery.' (28) A Catholic woman from Kolbuszowa describes a family with which she was associated on several levels:

> *And there was Josef Syskind; he had children, among whom one was my school friend, a very nice girl, Anka, and the second was a blonde . . . sweet Rose . . . She brought me beautiful books . . . And when I embroidered for them . . . when I brought them a set, a tablecloth and six napkins, Salcia*

said to her husband, 'Listen, she said 6 zloty for it, isn't she going to have too little?' And Josef says, 'Salci, however much you give her, it will always be too little, because she has left her eyes there. She had to sew a lot in order to embroider it like that'.

This same woman sewed for other Jewish women in town. Also, as a seamstress who continually needed to buy material, buttons, and trim, she found that she could always enter into an arrangement with the shopkeepers: 'When, for instance, I needed various trimmings for dresses, I went over to, for instance, Mrs. Rajckow or Grabszyc.'

It is well known that Jews allowed purchases on credit and often loaned money outright. But the reverse also happened: 'There was a Jew here, Wagszal. I know that somehow he was friends with my father, that Wagszal. So father always lent Wagszal money.' A peasant who built tile stoves for heating and cooking made one for a poor Jewish man in his village; three months later the client offered him a watch and 5 zloty, which was accepted. But most recall how one could always buy on credit, at no added interest, from the Jews. The Catholic tile-stove maker noted one incident in particular when he bought roof tiles on credit in August for a large sum of money; in November 'I sold the heifer . . . and straight from the cattle market I went to return the money . . . He did not count any interest at all. If you took merchandise from him, the percentage was counted already in the goods. He produced more and gave more. It was better than in a bank now.'

Since more people lived in the villages than in the town itself, and villagers rarely made the trip more than twice weekly, 'Most of the tradesmen in the shtetl were peddlers. Long before daybreak they would be on the road . . . The peasants would give the Jewish peddlers a warm welcome. They were old acquaintances and often had been in school together. In addition to bringing merchandise the people needed, the peddlers also brought news of the big city.' (29) 'His wife's grandfather was a wandering peddler. He sold haberdashery among the villages in the Lublin area: suspenders, buttons, handkerchiefs, thread. All his life he walked and traded with the Poles.' (30) Toby Knobel's uncle made a living buying eggs from peasants which he then sold to city merchants: 'All day he walked along the dirt roads, at times ankle-deep in mud . . .' (31) But in spite of spending most of the day away from home, these peddlers kept kosher; they would take their own pot, drink only hot water or tea, and eat dairy produce. 'Usually the peasants would serve you a meal. The food wasn't too good and we could only eat dairy there. They used wooden dishes and cutlery and we would sit around their long table together with them.' (32) Many Catholic peasants recollect the peddlers, tailors, and especially the Jewish women who came almost daily with their pails to milk the cows and take kosher milk back to town.

Keeping kosher meant selling what was *tref.* This worked to the distinct advantage of both parties as one sold what he could not eat, while the other bought what he liked at a lower price. 'The rabbi examined chickens and roosters and everything for them. Everything. When he observed that it was *tref,* they didn't eat it. More than once I bought a chicken, rooster, or some goose from them. They brought it to mama. More than once mama bought it . . . They sold it cheaper.' Polish Catholics were also well aware that the hindquarters of a calf could be had at a good price.

The inn on the road, often at a crossing, was also a place of contact between Jews and Gentiles as it was the social centre for Gentiles and a place where traveling Jews could get kosher food. Such an inn could be found in practically every village: 'In Frysztak itself there was no inn. But there was one here in that building . . . Then there was one in Glinik, in the village - there was a roadside inn. There was one in Kobyle, an inn by the road. And possibly in Twierdza there were a few inns.' When the clamour of the market was over, the restaurant on the square did not gain many patrons: 'At any rate, peasants didn't go to Aksman's there to get drunk. They only went to Jewish restaurants . . . They felt more at home there. Because a Jew knew how to talk differently.' According to one Jewish account, innkeepers, living out of town among the peasants, were not

envied by other Jews. (33) However, the prayer houses in Podwilk and Zubrzyca Górna were situated in the nearby inn. Further, 'The Oravians very warmly recall the Jewish innkeepers, from whom they could always obtain a loan or credit.' (34)

Undoubtedly, the closest alliances, true friendships, were formed among schoolchildren. 'The relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish students in our school was a friendly one. Jews and non-Jews visited each other's homes and very often did their homework together.' (35) Particularly on Monday, after their absence on Saturday, the Jewish children would borrow notes and ask what material had been covered. Or, as someone who attended the one-room schoolhouse for Cieszyna and Stępina recalls: 'Next to him [a Jewish boy]? There sat Poles. And it often happened that one of those Poles didn't know the answer; then he would prompt them. Yes, or he let them peek.' As a child, a retired schoolteacher had gone to school with Jewish children and noted: 'There were few Jews, but Jewish girls were very amiable girlfriends. We liked each other a lot, those Jewish girls and I.' That same teacher later had a training period in a shtetl and related how, though she already had a contract at another school, 'an old Jew came to my aunt and asked, "My lady, perhaps this lady could also stay here another year and continue teaching . . . She treated all the children the same and we would like her to continue teaching here." '

After school was over for the day Jewish and Catholic children did homework and played together. One woman's brother had a Jewish friend: 'He went to that one Jewish family. He went there regularly and borrowed books for himself.' Another woman from town reminisced about her best friend, who, although from an Orthodox family, visited the Catholic girl often: 'She came to my house, where we did our Polish homework . . . I had a lot of girlfriends, but that one - she lived closest to me and she would come. We always left school together and then later did our homework . . . Every day, every day. I went to her place there, she to mine.' A peasant from the village recalled: 'Jankiel, that was my best friend . . . Well, and there was Solomon as well. If he came over, we played together.' In Drohobycz a student of Bruno Schulz's relates: 'My best friends were Poles, the majority of them in any case. I played ball with them, played with them, went to school with them.' (36) The same man who once romped with Jankiel and Solomon recollects:

> *Come Sunday they came to us as friends. . . and we played together, normally and sportingly . . . Mostly outdoors. . . we made a hoop from a piece of wood, and let it go on the road. Four stood here on the road, four there, and we took some sticks. We let the hoop go to see which side was able to push it past, just like the matches they play today . . . It was a kind of game, that's how we played.*

A Catholic woman spoke of her friend:

> *Her name was Hajka Szmit . . . We knew each other from the last years of school . . . For the fifth, sixth, and seventh elementary grades I went to the school in Frysztak. Well, there I became friends with her and I liked her a lot . . . She came to my home, and [I to hers] when no one was home, because they were kosher Jews. A few times at least I was at her home for fish on Saturday . . . inviting a goy on Saturday for fish was a great honour.*

Of course, boys will be boys: 'We played together … in school and sometimes near the house too. And as it is between youths, fights resulted. That's how we played near here.' Later the same man related how the Catholic boys would elbow a Jewish boy between them in school. When asked if the Jewish youth fought back, he replied: 'Of course! He was no coward! It was normal. Normal youths. Normal like everyone else.' Except for the *sheyneh,* most Jewish boys did find time to play and they fought, even though that was un-Jewish. There were fights between the *proste* and *balebatish,* and sometimes between Jews and *goyim:* 'It would all start with insulting songs and would be returned with insulting songs. Then the fighting began until their parents stopped it.' (37)

Learning a trade and being apprentices to a craftsman often involved close daily contact between Jews and non-Jews. Knobel's sister had two apprentices, a Jewish girl and a Gentile girl, who came to the house five times a week for a year. (38) A woman from Frysztak remembered:

> *My sister, she went to a Jew. . . She knew Hebrew, they spoke Yiddish. And that Jew, from whom she learnt how to sew, he would say 'Janka, in front of you I can't say anything you wouldn't know ' . . . And she had a girlfriend, a Jewish girl who came from Cieszyna, from that village. . . The two of them went to him. He liked her, he liked my sister.*

The Jew was so close to his Gentile apprentice that he entrusted the money in the workshop to her.

The Jews who traveled to a different town each weekday for market hired peasant drivers with wagons to transport them and their goods. Many of these Gentile men recollected how departures took place so early in the morning that the Jews recited their morning prayers on the wagon *en route.* But there were' also cases of Jewish animals being hired:

> *Here there was a Jew who had a horse. When it was necessary to go somewhere, or for some other reason, for instance to pick up the priest, he gave his horse. The driver was Catholic, but the horse was Jewish, and with a Jewish buggy . . . They preferred Jewish because Jewish gave good luck . . . Later my sister became sick, and they had to take her from here to Niewodna . . . and then that Jew - Schtekel was his name - that Jew gave his horses and drove them himself.*

In Radymno a man noted that Cabmen were Jews. They had a horse, and drove people to the station, to or from the train.'

The employment of a *shabbes goy* is well known, although sometimes such a servant lived with the Jewish family for the entire week. The Roskieses portray the peasant woman who worked for many years in a Jewish home. 'Each morning she would recite the *Moyde ani* prayer with the children. . . and make sure that they kept all the rules and regulations of Jewish law.' (39) When asked if her Jewish friend had a Gentile servant, a Catholic woman replied, 'Everywhere probably - everywhere Jews had servants.' More important was the intermingling that occurred in this sphere:

> *On the other hand, Jewish children acquire from the shtetl servants a large part of their impressions about the non-Jewish world. These impressions are available not only to the children of the rich, for women of modest circumstances who work in a store or at the market often have the help of a peasant girl in the house ... Sometimes the servant will take them to the home of her parents, making sure that nobody gives them forbidden food. Sometimes she even takes them to church.*(40)

One Jewish woman recalled how 'Our neighbour Katerina and her children helped us with many chores. Katerina used to sift the wheat in the barn. Her son often shredded it. And her daughter, Jewka, used to run errands for us on the Sabbath when we could not do any work ... Mother gave Katerina some money and stitched over her hand-sewn linen shirts.' (41) Sometimes such help was more casual. A man who, as a boy, came through town on Saturday mornings on his way to school describes such a situation:

> *There was a store. The Weiners lived there, and ran that store. My parents were their clients from time to time. So it happened that when on Saturday I walked to school, Mr Weiner or Mrs Weiner . . . would ask me to come: 'Józek, come light the fire there.' So I went - gladly because it wasn't any real work. I lit it and looked to see if it had lit, and Mrs Weiner, for doing that for her, gave me buns called szabasówki . . . a sort of sweet bun. It was very tasty, elegant.*

This interviewee further pointed out that to be chosen for such a task was considered an honour.

Jews who lived in villages very often employed landless peasants or youths to work their fields. 'Wasyl, our neighbor, worked in the fields for us, cutting the oats and hay with a scythe. Since some fields were about two kilometers away, Wasyl used his horse and buggy to get the wheat and hay to our barn. ' (42) In areas where there was both an estate owned by a Catholic lord and a large Jewish holding, some peasants noted that the pay was better at the latter. Many Jewish farmers worked side by side with their help. Others teamed up with a Gentile farmer in order to make the work easier. A farmer from Cieszyna stated:

> *That Lejzor who had the inn and store - he had a fabric store . . . he was a richer Jew. But as for him standing out, to show that he was richer, that he didn't need anybody - no. He just hitched together with Woś. They also had some land, so one came and both of them worked in the field, ploughed, sowed. Their farming together was normal. The farming over, later both of them rode home together . . . This one gave one horse, that one the other. So they turned out the manure, ploughed, then later sowed.*

Although there were five Jewish farmers in the village, each of them always teamed up with a Gentile.

Both religious communities included numerous craftsmen of all types, among whom skill was more important than faith. Franciszek Grela was a highly regarded tile-stove maker, particularly known for building a 'Sabbath oven' in which to keep Saturday's food warm and slowly cooking. Once, a very wealthy Jew who owned the forests surrounding the village sent a driver to fetch Grela when, after a period of disuse, the smoke was failing to go up the chimney. After assessing the situation, the craftsman asked for some straw and lit a flame big enough to clear away the cobwebs. The Jew asked what he owed:

> *And I say, 'For that I can take nothing. I only ask that you take me home by horse.'*
> *'Oh no. I will give you some Sabbath vodka to drink.'*
> *Nice vodka it was, the raw liquor with syrup. And in a liqueur glass like a finger. Well, he poured some for me, so I drank.*
> *'This is Sabbath vodka, we always drink one like this on the Sabbath.'*
> *The liqueur glass had a sort of long stem, crystal.*

It was generally the case in Galician towns that, where Jews comprised a large percentage of the town population, they held positions on the local town council. Although the mayor would be a Roman Catholic, the deputy mayor was a Jew. Sometimes - for example, on the death of the mayor - his deputy would succeed and fill the position until the end of the term. The daughter of a Catholic town-council member recalled one such case:

> *I remember that when that mayor died they wanted to make my father the mayor. I remember as if it was today how the Jews came on Saturday, still dressed - because, you know, they went to synagogue in those fur-trimmed hats. They all implored my father. . . so, so solemnly dressed, if I may say so. Well, they asked my father to become the mayor, but my father refused because he felt that it might - how can I put it? - well, that he would have to offend someone or something, take someone's place.*

Joachim Schoenfeld spoke of the Polish mayor in his town: 'Anyway, he was no anti-Semite, knew everyone in the shtetl, spoke Yiddish fluently, and even dispensed medicines to poor Jews at no charge. He was the pharmacist in the city.' (43) Rymanow Jews also 'took part in the political life, and were often members of the town council and various types of delegations appointed by the town.' (44) Villages also had their political leaders, who often included prominent Jews in their number. In any case, meetings held to decide matters of importance to the village were attended by all members of the community.

More than anything, Jews and Catholics were neighbours and treated each other as such. Sometimes they even lived under the same roof:

> *There were Jews and Catholics living in that house . . . Of course. How did that look? . . . there was a wooden house in which there was a hall. They traded in cattle. In one room there were Catholics. Going further down the hall, in the next room there were Jews. And through this corridor one went also to the barn. Yes, because they bought up cattle, so they led the animal in and at once put it in the barn. And later at the markets they led them out and traded them . . . The Catholic family was the Pietrzyckis. In the second - the last name I don't remember - in the second lived, let me see, Abram. Abram. And right under that same roof, except with a separate entrance, there lived a Jew by the name of Chava. They lived very much in unity, those who lived there.*

Sometimes, though, Jews and Catholics lived more separate lives:

> *Jews don't use the bridge very often. It leads only to the village, and who but a peddler has any reason to spend time with the peasants? Except when it's shabbes . . . what better opportunity is there to make a dash for the village? Some of the peasants are friends from way back and let us climb the trees. They know that we'll pay them later on in the week.* (45)

A woman whose family was one of two non-Jewish ones on the market-place remembers how her 'Mother conversed with them; they came over, sat on the porch.' 'We used to hear all sorts of stories, but we were good friends with all our Gentile neighbors.' (46) A literate Jew might help an illiterate peasant with reading, or with writing a letter to family in America; friends of the miller would be presented with the best flour just before the Easter or Christmas holidays. 'During the winter evenings, Mother would invite our neighbors, the peasant women, to a feather-plucking party. They sat around the table telling jokes and stories, having a good time while the work was done. ' (47)

> *Yes. They were normal neighbours like Christians. When there were holidays the Jews here, after all, when they had their holiday pastries or matzah, or something like that, they always brought them to us. They brought us those matzot. They also had their special baked goods. It was called laykakh cake. It was like sponge cake, only better . . . That they brought to us.*

Jews also recall these exchanges: 'On Pesach the Jewish students gave their non-Jewish colleagues some matzo and received from them *pisanki* [decorated eggs]. At Christmas time the non-Jewish students treated their Jewish colleagues to *kutyiah* (a traditional meal) made from boiled wheat with honey, nuts, and poppy seeds.' (48) Ilex Beller tells of how Purim pastries such as *homantashen* were carried from one family to another and to the village officials. (49) One interviewee remembered a different treat: 'But most of all they liked liver baked in ashes - in the oven it was hot, she sifted even more ashes, put the liver in, baked it, then washed off the ashes. It was delicious! I ate it myself at Mrs. Birnbaum's.'

Because of kosher laws, edibles were generally offered by Jews to Gentiles. A Catholic woman whose Jewish friend often visited could only suggest tea or water, and never tried to proffer food because it was *tref*. Not to offer food to a guest was impolite, not to eat what was offered was also an insult, but in a Gentile home one could eat only *parve* food and only from uncontaminated vessels. The farmer whose Jewish neighbours always teamed up with the Christian horses, noticed that when two Catholics worked together they ate at one of their homes, but a Jew would always want to eat at his own home: 'Well, because it would be what was called *tref.* That was their religion, which did not allow him to eat at a Pole's.'

The status of neighbour also carried some responsibility of care in time of need. 'We took care of each other very much. I remember when my mother was sick, all the Jewesses swore, all of them, to save my mother . . . I was a little girl, but I remember it like today, the group of Jewesses, how

they saved my mother.' The respondent from Radymno stated: 'When they lived next door, then when there was something bad, let's say that someone had died, the Jews sympathized. My mother died, or someone at home, or else someone had some bad luck - and they sympathized. It even happened at times that they came with some material help.' A woman who lived on a small farm just within the city limits tells of how, while her mother and sister were in church and she was alone, their cow began to calf. She went across the road to the home of a Jew who traded in livestock.

> *In fact I had no other choice. I ran to him here because he traded in cows. Ran to those who were there. I just told them, 'Come, because my cow is calving and there is no one at home, neither mother nor father.' They were praying then. You see, they gathered like that, in a home - on whatever day … I can't say anything against them because about five or six came running. And they calved it! Of course! . . . You couldn't see the cow for the Jews gathered around it.*

Small towns and villages, with their wooden buildings, were often susceptible to fires, and then everyone was expected to come and help put out the flames. 'In the memory of the residents of Oravia remains the active participation by the Jews in the extinguishing of the church fire in Podwilk, and their financial participation in its rebuilding.' (50) And when a fire broke out at a Jewish farmer's home,

> *All the families went to help to Jankiel's father's when the old house was burning . . . And people flocked there to save everything - they drenched it, and saved it . . . I too was there when it was burning, to carry things out . . . People flew in, they saved everything. Nothing there was burnt, nothing inside the house. Only they laughed about how he knew that there was going to be a fire because the down comforter was tied up in a sheet.*

'That was a wedding. Who didn't come? Even the peasants from all around the shtetl. It lasted 3 weeks.' (51) 'And they, for instance, at Faust's, the brother of Faust's wife – Neche - he went everywhere with those boys. Everywhere to Catholic weddings. And when his sister got married, the boys were there at the wedding to see what it was like.' As a rule, not everyone was formally invited, but many watched the wedding, which took place outdoors, and then gathered outside the house, where the bride's father would come out with trays of food to treat everyone; in town, the family of the bride might come the next day with cakes. The woman whose sister was apprenticed with a Jew recalled:

> *When it was her wedding the town was full of Jews from the top of the hill to the bottom . . . She even sent her invitations for the wedding. Whenever one of the Jewish girls here got married, we got invitations. Mother went and she went. . . I saw the reception, of course. She was dressed in white and sat in a corner. And she had laykakh. And there was vodka, and she hosted . . . They had very beautiful weddings . . . And then together we went to the home of the young couple. And such a lot of people; there was a crowd because they always took their vows on the main road . . . There were many Polish people there at that wedding.*

Funerals in the shtetl*,* however, were never attended by members of the other group. Catholics noticed that women and some of the male Jews stayed away from the cemetery. When a neighbour died, the custom was to stand reverently outside the home when the body was carried out.

There were few secrets in the shtetl. Control was inseparable from a strong feeling that individuals were collectively responsible for one another. Schoenfeld described how this worked when an influx of *maskilic* Jews threatened the status quo in his shtetl. These non-Hasidic Jews went to the Christian butcher to buy food, including pork, on fasting-days.

Some time later the butcher asked a [local] Jew to tell him on what day of the year it was that Jews were allowed to eat pork. And so the secret of these trefniakes . . . became known and an uproar ensued in the shtetl. The parnassim (the board of the Jewish community organization) supplied the Polish authorities with a list of the unwanted immigrants, insisting that all the revolutionaries be ordered out of the shtetl. (52)

Notice should be taken of the fact that the Jewish authority appealed to the Polish authorities for assistance in this matter. As for the Catholics, Oravian innkeepers utilized this method: 'During the time of the mass, the inns were closed and all the guests chased off to church.' (53) The servant, often fluent in Yiddish, could become more a stickler for religious observance than some of the household, and will see to it that the boys do not eat before praying, sharply remind any child who is careless about wearing his cap . . . and take pride in keeping the . . . pots rigidly separate.' (54) Further, where there was no *mikvah* nearby, a few women would have a peasant drive them, and if one of the women did not turn up, the driver would ask why not. (55) On the other hand, relationships within certain trades and, later, the influence of reformed Judaism, led to more, albeit still rare, ties between Jews and non-Jews in the form of activities such as card-playing or discrete visits to a non-Jewish friend where a Jew could drink vodka and eat sausage. Joachim Schoenfeld tells of how

Usually a group of 5 or 6 students mounted their bicycles in the late afternoon on Saturdays and went for the 45 minute ride [to Czernowitz to see a play]. However, in order to hide the fact that they were riding their bicycles before the Sabbath was over, the bicycles were taken on Friday to the house of a non-Jewish colleague, who lived outside the city on the way to Czernowitz. (56)

It might be expected that in the area of religious observance any intermingling would be absolutely precluded, but Catholics and Jews went to each other's place of worship, bathed in the same *mikvah,* and shared the same holiday treats. Furthermore, Jewish funds were often lent for the building of a new church; while in Śniatyn the synagogue was built and decorated by Jewish and Gentile craftsmen. (57) In Polish Oravia, 'The priest going from house to house for Christmas visits did not actually go into the Jewish homes, but in front of each one he found some sort of gift for himself.' (58) There were three Jewish farming families in the Łemko village of Zyndranowa:

I remember quite well how older boys went from house to house on Christmas Day caroling. Please try to imagine how much those people grew accustomed to our Łemkos, since they were angry if the boys did not come to them. They wanted the boys to visit them on the occasion of our holidays, to come into their homes so that they could rejoice together with us and show respect for our holidays . . . on our holidays they never went out into their fields. There was mutual observance.(59)

It should be noted that shops would be closed and work would be halted on any major Christian holiday such as Christmas or Easter. Further, on Corpus Christi, or when the bishop came to town, the Jews and their rabbi would participate in the procession. All the same, on any normal Sunday stores would be open, to the gratification of the peasants for whom this was one of two weekly trips into town.

National holidays, such as 11 November (Independence Day) or 3 May (Constitution Day), tended to take on a somewhat Christian character. Thus, Jews would take part in the celebration but would stand aside when the procession stopped by the church or a cross in town. However, on those days the Jewish community would also hold special services in the synagogue. A woman whose father was a town councilor recounted how her father and other representatives were invited to and attended these services.

In the shtetl the most important holiday was the Sabbath, and Catholics could not help noticing the extraordinariness of this day. '*Słońce nisko, szabas blisko '* -'Sun low, Sabbath near' - they would

say. As nearly everything the non-Jews might need was purchased at Jewish stores, any last-minute shopping had to be done before the synagogue assistant began knocking on the doors and shutters, giving the signal to close up. If a peasant was driving Jews home from market in another town, he was well aware that their journey had to end before sunset. If a Gentile girl was engaged for the Sabbath, she knew that her working day was about to begin. On Friday night the streets would be filled with Jewish men and boys heading for synagogue; on Saturday, after morning services there was walking and visiting: 'The walk was, I remember, on Saturday. It was still their Jewish holy day. And they walked here, all the way to the cemetery and back. It was impossible to get across. It was that crowded.' With the rise of the third star on Saturday, the shops reopened for business and everything returned to normal.

Although their liturgical calendars differed vastly, Gentiles living with Jews knew their holidays very well, and what they might need for them. 'The peasants knew that Sukkot was coming and brought to the market-place lots of reeds and cornstalks for sale'; they also knew to bring the willow-twigs for the morning prayer of Hoshanah Rabbah. (60) Sukkot, however, also gave birth to many folk sayings: 'Because precisely when there were the *kuczki* [booths in which Jews were supposed to live for the period of the holiday], there was rainfall. People said, "Oh, *kuczki* are coming. Time to finish up the work, because there'll be non-stop rain."' A Jewish observer affirmed, 'It is so common to eat these meals in a downpour.' (61) It was common to 'sell' goods to a non-Jew for a token sum, and then buy them back for the same price after Passover. (62) But Pesach was also well known as the season at which wheat had to be specially handled. One Polish farmer described in great detail the entire process, from the purchase of the grain, to the treatment of the mill where it was ground, to the procedures taken with the oven where the *matzah* was baked. It was not insignificant for such farmers that Jews paid double the going rate for the wheat.

Catholics and Jews alike, particularly as children or youths, were inquisitive and interested in each other's religious practices. The seamstress from Kolbuszowa, on seeing Jews standing by the river [on the Jewish New Year], asked her Jewish friend what they were doing and was told that it was a form of confession, that bad deeds were being thrown into the water. The same woman expressed how she felt about Jewish prayers: 'I was very fond of listening to those prayers. I don't know if you can call it singing or a kind of searching, a kind of lamentation.' Conversely, a Jewish man from Drohobycz remembered that 'I often even went to church. I didn't pray, but only went to look, just as they would come to the synagogue. They helped us too - for instance, with lighting the fire on Saturday.' (63) A woman from Rymanow was very curious about the synagogue interior, just as her girlfriends were about the church, and so one Rosh Hashanah she was invited to the gallery, where she looked through the windows with the rest of the women. (64) Another Catholic woman recollected how one Jewish child wanted to stay on for religious instruction in school because she liked the priest. More than one Catholic took an express interest in the appearance of the rabbi presenting the Torah when the bishop came to town.

There was even contact between peasants and the local rabbi. Respecting his authority and aware of the tradition of settling legal matters with the rabbi, 'Even a judge would sometimes ask two quarreling Jews, "Why don't you go to the rabbi?" Often a Gentile would suggest to a Jew with whom he had a dispute that they submit the dispute to the rabbi for a decision.' (65) A man in Radymno spoke thus of the rabbi: 'He was a very pious person, because if the rabbi said something, it was sacred. Because when a Catholic sometimes went to complain to the rabbi about some Jew, and [the Jew] was wrong, then he said "I will take away your seat in the synagogue. You will not have a seat." That's how I recall it.' Sometimes Christians approached the rabbi simply for counsel:

> *The prosteh yiden [lowest socio-economic class of Jews] and the peasants considered my grandfather a holy man, in fact they used to call him Holy Rabbi . . . and the Gentiles always came to*

> *him for advice, they never went to court. He was a very wonderful person and the peasants were extremely loyal to him. Once in a big storm he . . . went to shul . . . to say evening prayers. When he didn't come back . . . my grandmother went to the peasant and asked him to look for my grandfather. It didn't take five minutes and in the big storm the whole town of Gentiles was out looking for the Holy Rabbi. They found him in shul studying with some men.* (66)

A more striking form of contact was intermarriage or a change of faith, which was considered a catastrophe by the Jewish family. Non-Jewish youths, however, often flirted with Jewish girls, who were considered particularly beautiful, and at least one Catholic man spoke of a neighbouring Jewish girl who disclosed that she would prefer a Polish boy from the village. Though more permanent unions were unacceptable, some did occur. Perhaps because Jewish women enjoyed more freedom and, therefore, had more contact with non-Jews, most such marriages involved a Jewish bride who changed her faith and married a Catholic. Apart from mourning as if the girl had died, reactions by the family could be extreme. A woman from Kolbuszowa told of one Jewess who drowned herself in the well in the market square because her daughter was engaged to marry the Gentile lawyer in town.

Also, the business of selling livestock sometimes resulted in a Catholic witnessing ritual slaughter by the *shochet* or a Jew seeing a butcher at work; reactions from either side were nearly always negative. Contact also occurred in the military, but seldom. The armed forces in Poland were primarily Catholic, and wealthier Jews very often paid bribes to get their sons out of mandatory service, since keeping kosher in the garrison often meant a starvation diet. Those Jews who were drafted were often extremely unhappy, and one Polish man recalled saving a Jewish soldier who wanted *to* drown himself rather than continue serving.

Language is always considered a factor defining ethnicity, and can exert an isolating influence. However, German was the official language of the Prussian and Austro-Hungarian partitions, so that most Poles who attended school before the end of the First World War had at least a rudimentary knowledge of that language and could therefore understand some Yiddish; they certainly noticed the similarities between the languages. Ilex Beller observed that the Jews in Grodzisko Dolne spoke German when under Galician rule, but 'They also spoke enough Polish to communicate with the peasants who lived in the surrounding countryside ... Even the few Catholics in the village spoke Yiddish.' (67) This is confirmed by a shtetl observer cited in the Roskies' book: 'especially in the *shtetlech,* there were a good many Gentiles who spoke Yiddish well and used Yiddish even among themselves. There were even some who knew so much about Jewish matters that if not for their Gentile appearance, they would be mistaken for Jews. (68) In Kolbuszowa a Catholic woman was still able to recite various songs in Yiddish. Another woman revealed: 'They spoke in Yiddish, so I learnt to speak Yiddish with them . . . I spoke like a Jewish girl with them, to that degree . . . I knew it perfectly.' The reaction of some of the shopkeepers was telling: 'I know that when I came in and they [the shopkeepers] had some secret, not to be spoken in front of the little girl, [they would say] "Moydele nol vida."' More than one respondent recited Yiddish words and demonstrated knowledge of the Hebrew alphabet, which some had been able to read and write. As for Jews speaking Polish, non-Jews assessed their ability as very good; at times they indicated that older ones spoke it worse or that women knew the Gentile language best. Schoenfeld counters that opinion: 'Most of the Jews with the exception of the younger generation and, of course, the intelligentsia, spoke only Yiddish.' (69) But a woman in Israel notes that her grandmother 'was very elegant and intelligent, but she played with peasant children' and therefore used their dialect and terminology. (70)

Language was not the only element that Christians and Jews appropriated from one another. There were common superstitions such as giving salt and bread to assure luck, touching a button when meeting a chimney-sweep, and not shaking hands over a threshold. (71) There was a

Yiddish saying: 'A peasant proverb is like a quote from the Torah.' (72) Mutual respect for magic powers meant that a peasant woman might be called in to deal with a case of the evil eye, just as peasants often consulted the rabbi. '[In] many places even the Orthodox employ a peasant woman if they need, and can afford, the luxury of a wet-nurse. Undoubtedly this practice has contributed to the mingling of Jewish and non-Jewish superstitions and magic practices, so that it is often difficult to tell which group has borrowed from the other.' (73) Folk motifs in art were also transferred: 'In decorating her home she will draw chiefly from peasant art. Any household embroideries are apt to be copied from peasant themes.' (74) Even the Jewish calendar was not immune: 'Urbanized though its people are in occupation and in habits, they share with their agricultural neighbors the feeling that the year begins with the springtime rebirth of nature . . . To us in the shtetl, Pesach was considered the beginning of the year. People were hired from Pesach to Pesach, new clothes were bought, and so forth.' (75)

CONCLUSION

'In the shtetl everyone was busy with his own way of making parnusse (living) and didn't, wouldn't, or rather couldn't care less if there existed a world beyond the marketplace or the store.' (76) This was a cosmos, and the most significant people were those who lived in it; the most meaningful interpersonal relationships were among its inhabitants. It is true that the primary tie between Jews and non-Jews was economic, but there were more personal friendships. The closest such attachments undoubtedly occurred among school children and women. A connection was also easier between *proste* or rural Jews and Catholics; assuredly, the different lifestyle of village Jews facilitated more bonding there. But contact was daily and everywhere, and even where the market-place was the basis of cultural intermingling, it epitomized Interdependence, reciprocity, and a working equilibrium. (77)

In all cases, the essence was two halves forming a symbiotic whole. 'Experience is seldom perceived as unmixed, for the shtetl is not given to absolute and categorical contrasts-things are seldom all black or all white. (78) life was seen as a complex of contrasts which were complementary, not conflicting. (79) 'Moreover, while each group harbors a stereotype of the other, each sees the other as an essential partner in the life of the community. One is the man of action, the other the man of thought. (80) Thus does *Life is with People* define the relationship between the *sheyne* and *proste* Jew. The same can be said of that between the shtetl Jew and the peasant Gentile. 'The cultures did affect each other; the Gentile servant learned to keep kosher just as the Jewish boys read of the valor and prowess of Polish real and fictional heroes.' (81)

Most literature in this field focuses on one of the two cultures and tends to treat the Jewish community as an island; but 'What Jews wanted in particular was, not isolation from the Christians, but insulation from Christianity.' (82) Separatist thinking perpetuates the myth that Jews and Christians in a shtetl community lived side by side but absolutely unconnected; it encourages the stereotypical view that ethnic groups live more in conflict than in peace. A skewed image is formed which ignores the reality that ethnic groups, living in a traditional culture and occupying shared territory, will find a place in each other's world and together create their own. It may be that by calling attention to the differences scholars overemphasize the lines that divide at the expense of those that connect. A peasant farmer recognized the latter kind:

> *And when he was leaving he said 'With God.' 'With God' and he left . . . and if he said 'With God', that means that he recognizes God, and after all we all believe in one God. Whether it was a Jew, or a Pole or a Catholic, everyone in one God. Only that there are different faiths, rituals, but God is the same.*

While it is true that they will periodically find themselves in confrontation, most of the time they will live in co-operative symbiosis.

Yet contemporary researchers very often split apart those mutual dependencies, and, as a result deny themselves the possibility of understanding the course of historical processes. (83) That which was becomes lost in memory, and then, lost from memory, passes into fiction. There is a great need for more research into and emphasis on the intercultural contact between Polish Catholics and Polish Jews. While sources are still available, social anthropologists and ethnographers should paint a portrait of that Poland which includes all its shapes and colours. As the Jewish writer Grigori Kanowicz discerned: 'those little towns are our second Old Testament. All of us came from there, Polish writers too - Schulz, Stryjkowski. For many it is an exotic landscape.' (84)

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