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Traditional Jewish Attitudes Toward Poles: The Black Legend and the Search for Haman[1]

by Mark Paul

"If there is a people in the world, which has shown us its despicable cruelty, all of its wild rage ... it is the Polish people. ... If the Poles become masters of the land, our fate will be bad and bitter."[2]
(1916) Yitshak D. Berkovitch,
son-in-law of Yiddish author Sholem Aleichem

"... a Jew from Poland is not and never was simply Polish. ... it was clear to Jews and Poles alike that they were two very different peoples who happened to share the same piece of territory. They could be neighbors and business partners, but they were seldom friends and almost never relatives or social or legal equals."[3]
Adam Kirsch, American poet and critic

"Countless accounts and folktales by eastern European Jews illustrated peasants as dim-witted people, whose Ignorance could only compete with their ruthlessness."[4]
Professor Gil Ribak, Associate Professor of Judaic Studies,
University of Arizona

Herschel Greenbaum tells Ben that he, Ben, may be may be
"stupider than a Polish person and they are THE stupidest."
Herschel later refers to Mary, Jesus' mother,
as a prostitute who made up the story of the
Immaculate Conception to cover for her whoring:
"I don't think I'm saying anything controversial when I say everybody know Jesus Christ mother was prostitute. And she invent story of Christianity to cover up the fact that she prostitute. So if you believe in Jesus, you stupid idiot."
"An American Pickle," a 2020 American film[5]

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1 Haman is the Biblical arch-villain. In Rabbinical tradition, Haman is considered to be an archetype of evil and persecutor of the Jews.

2 Gil Ribak, "Between Germany and Russia: The Images of Poles and the Ensuing Cultural Trajectories among Yiddish and Hebrew Writers between 1863 and World War I," *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies,* vol. 28 (2016): 225–248, at p. 238–39.

3 Adam Kirsch, "A Cruel and Elusive Family History," *Tablet,* January 2, 2018. Historically, Polish peasants were in a lower category that Jews both legally and socially.

4 Gil Ribak, "Drunkards Lying on the Floor: Jewish Contempt for Non-Jewish Lower Classes," *AJS Perspectives: The Magazine of the Association for Jewish Studies* (Spring 2020): 46–47.

5 This remarkably candid snapshot of traditional Jewish attitudes toward Poles and traditional Jewish religious beliefs about Christianity was directed by Brandon Trost and written by Simon Rich, based on his 2013 short story "Sell Out." The dialogue about Poles was reported in a matter-of-fact manner in a film review published in *Tablet* Magazine (August 10, 2020). The dialogue about Mary, Jesus' mother, was ignored by film critics. This phenomenon is also ignored by Jewish ethno-nationalist historians who fancy themselves as "experts" on Polish-Jewish relations.

"So-called 'Polack jokes', based on negative stereotypes and meant to mock Poles, Polish culture or habits, had become part of the American lexicon, and in some ways could be seen as a kind of twisted revenge on the assumed anti-Semitism of the Polish people."[6]
Holli Levitsky, Director of Jewish Studies
at Loyola Marymount University

Yoav Shamir on March of the Living students
shown in his 2009 documentary film "Defamation":
They were just your average, middle-class Israeli pupils. For many of them it was their first time abroad but they were being worked up so much before this trip. Eventually it's almost funny: two of the girls talk to three elderly Polish gentlemen on a bench and presume [falsely] what they say is antisemitic. When you're 16 years old you're influenced very easily. We went to a pizza place which they didn't realise was self-service, and when nobody took their order they got very upset. They thought: "They're doing it because we're Jewish, they're antisemites."[7]

The ethno-nationalist spin for this state of affairs:
"It's all the hateful Poles' fault!"
"Their animus, which carries Polish nationalism into such an aggressively xenophobic articulation, springs primarily from a deep pool of ethnic-cum-religious hatred, which is indigenous to Poland and and has historically been aimed at Jews."[8]
Jan T. Gross, American sociologist

"...the sort of primitive anti-Polish sentiments that too often characterize those whom I shall call 'professional Jews'."[9]
French-Jewish historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet

"...it is possible for Jewish people to be racist, just as it is possible for people of other faiths to be." [10]
John Bercow, former Speaker of U.K. House of Commons

"Positive contents about Judaism in the cultural and religious memories of the world should be emphasized and/or added both off- and online."[11]
Conference organized by the European Jewish Congress (2018)

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[6] Hilene S. Flanzbaum, ed., *The Holocaust Across Borders: Trauma, Atrocity, and Representation in Literarure and Culture* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books, 2021), 56.

[7] Imogen Carter, "Who's Hating Whom" (Interview with Yoav Shamir), *The Guardian,* January 10, 2010.

[8] Jan T. Gross, "Poles Cry for 'Pure Blood' Again," *The New York Times,* November 16, 2017.

[9] Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Jews: History, Memory, and the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 182.

[10] Rachel Cooke, "John Bercow: 'I may be pompous and an irritant. But I am completely authentic'," *The Guardian,* November 10, 2019.

[11] From the Executive Summary of *An End to Antisemitism! A Catalogue of Policies to Combat Antisemitism* (European Jewish Congress, 2018), based on the contributions of participants to the international conference "An End to Antisemitism!", Vienna, February 2018, organized by the European Jewish Congress, New York University, Tel Aviv University and the University of Vienna; authored by Armin Lange, Ariel Muzicant, Dina Porat, Lawrence H. Schiffman, and Mark Weitzman. An agenda that emphasizes positive—rather than balanced—content necessarily entails suppression of prejudicial information about one's own community and highlighting negative information about the "other." Dina Porat, one of the authors of this book, is chief historian at the Yad Vashem institute in Jerusalem.

Mutual prejudices and stereotypes have been harboured by both Poles and Jews in regard to one another for long centuries. Few scholars in the West, however, have recognized that Jews, no less than Poles, adopted parallel, reciprocal views about the other community.[12] A much overworked theme in studies of Polish-Jewish relations is that of the "Other," with its exclusive focus on Polish attitudes toward Jews. Nowadays, condemnation is often expressed at the very notion that Poles were seen as the "Other" by the

[12] A belated recognition by a Jewish American scholar pays lip service to this fact, but he does not explain how it impacted day-to-day relations between these two groups. In fact, the tenor of the memoir to which he wrote the introduction represents the very antithesis of this recognition.

> At the same time, the views which the two groups held of each other were marked by deeply entrenched prejudices. The peasants and the Gentile populations of these smaller towns despised the Jews for their lack of connection to the land, and distrusted them as cunning and trustworthy trading partners, although their business skills were sometimes admired. The attitude of the Jews toward their Christian neighbours was equally contemptuous. This contempt was mitigated by a feeling of pity resulting from their awareness that the peasants were even poorer than they were themselves.
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> The religious divide reinforced the wide gap between the two groups. The peasants saw the Jews as adherents of a religion which was not only false but deicidal, and found Jewish religious practices bizarre and incomprehensible. To the Jews, Christianity was both idolatrous and hypocritical, since in their eyes it combines a call to "turn the other cheek" with encouragement of violent anti-Semitism.

See Antony Polonsky, "Introduction," in Rubin Katz, *Gone to Pitchipoï: A Boy's Desperate Fight for Survival in Wartime* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), xvi. Two examples of the author's numerous false and thoroughly discredited claims follow: General Komorowski, the head of the Home Army at the time, "ordered" his men in 1943 "to kill Jews sheltering in the forests"; the Irgun, which perpetrated the infamous 1948 Deir Yassin massacre, "didn't target civilians." Ibid., 194, 303. Polonsky expressed no qualms about such blatant fabrications in his introduction.

Jews.[13] Poles are condemned for not embracing Poland's Jews as Poles and for not including Jews within

[13] This focus is rather surprising given what well-regarded Jewish writers have said about the Jews themselves. Maurice Samuel (1895–1972), widely celebrated in Jewish circles in his time, referred to the Jews as "the most clannish of peoples." He stressed the vast divide that separates the Jews from the Gentiles and emphasized that the difference between them is primal and irreconcilable. Furthermore, Jewish ways and Gentile ways are offensive to each other. Samuel went on to say: "We Jews, we, the destroyers, will remain the destroyers forever. *Nothing* that you do will meet our needs and demands. We will forever destroy because we need a world of our own, a God-world, which is not in your nature to build." See Maurice Samuel, *You Gentiles* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1924), 9, 12, 21, 23, 23, 92, 110, 155. Although Samuel states that neither side is superior to the other, at other times, Samuel makes it clear that, if his analysis of Jewish thinking is accurate, the Jews do in fact consider themselves above the *goyim*, as shown in the following paragraphs. In common with many other authors, Samuel exalts the Jewish belief in social justice (p. 34), but also goes a step further. He suggests that the embrace of social justice is genuine in Jews, but something that is forced in gentiles (pp. 151–53). The theme of the brutish *goy*, as contrasted with the ethically superior Jew, comes up in Samuel's characterization of the Jew. When the *goy* is bad, he is relatively innocent, because he is doing something that is consistent with his base instincts. When the Jew is bad, he is doing something contrary to his higher nature, and this makes the bad Jew *really* bad. Thus, Samuel writes, "The vulgar type of gentile is not repellent: There is in him an animal grossness which shocks and braces, but does not horrify: He carries it off by virtue of a natural brutality and brutishness which provides a mitigating consistency to his character. But the lowest type of Jew is extraordinarily revolting. There is in him a suggestion of deliquescent putrefaction. The Jew corrupts into vulgarity—he has not a gift for it." (Pp. 181–82.) Samuel stresses the anti-military mindset of the Jews (pp. 51, 50). Moreover, he sees no real distinction between Jewish cosmopolitanism and Jewish particularism, as neither causes the Jew to lose his innate identity (pp. 122, 150, 152). Thus, in effect, Samuel questions the Jews' ability to assimilate into another society, something that non-Jewish nationalists also held. Based on the foregoing, Jan Peckis draws the following implications for Polish-Jewish relations:

> To the extent that Maurice Samuel's characterization of the Jewish mindset is accurate, it adds stark clarity to much of the Jewish aloofness and hostility to Poles and Poland, and the resulting Polish anti-Semitism that it had provoked.
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> Samuel's analysis of Jewish cosmopolitanism sheds unmentioned light on the Jewish coolness to Polish efforts to regain independence during the time that Poland was under foreign rule after the Partitions (1795–1918). Since, to a Jew, all gentiles are quite alike, it really did not matter to the local Jew (except in matters of self-interest) whether Poland was ruled by Poles, or by Prussians, Russians, Austrians, or any other nationality. To the international Jew, it mattered still less whether or not there was a Polish state.
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> The logic was elementary. Why should a Jew die in an insurrection, or devote his life to an independentist effort that, if successful, would merely replace one gentile rule with another gentile rule? Why participate in, much less celebrate, acts of military and patriotic heroism when these are foreign to Jewish thinking in the first place?
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> The Jewish attitude towards the military helps explain other things. For instance, for much of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Jews were commonly seen, if not exactly as cowards, as not particularly compatible with military service.
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> During the 1930's, Endeks complained that even assimilated Jewish writers in Poland write in an insensitive or derogatory way about things which were noble and heroic in Poland's past. [More recently, we have seen attacks, by Jewish writers, on the onetime idea of Poland as the "Jesus Christ of Nations."] Samuel's insights into Jewish anti-militarism and anti-heroism make this very clear.
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> Nowadays, the Endeks are excoriated for believing that an unbridgeable chasm existed between the Jewish soul and the Polish soul, and that mass assimilation and conversion of Poland's Jews, were it to take place, would not (usually) transform Jews into Poles. As is true of some of their counterparts today, some National Democrats and traditionalist Catholics expressed concern over the "infiltration" of Polish society and the Catholic Church by Polish-acting Jews. Clearly, this attitude was nothing more than a mirror image of the attitudes of many Jewish thinkers, including Maurice Samuel, "Repudiation of the Jewish religion or even of Jewish racial affiliation does not alter the Jew. Some of us Jews may delude ourselves as some of you gentiles do." (P. 137.)

the Poles' "sphere of moral obligations."[14] However, there were many times in the past that Poland's Jews had overtly excluded themselves from the Polish nation, and the modern "Jews as nationality" concept

[14] The jump—itself often unwarranted—from viewing "others" simply as "enemies" is frequently found in scholarship dealing with the Poles' attitudes toward Jews, but not the converse, even though theoretically that approach should be equally valid for all inter-group relations. See, for example, Katherine R. Jolluck, "Gender and Antisemitism in Wartime Soviet Exile," in Robert Blobaum, ed., *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 210–32, where Jolluck suggests that any unfavourable description of Jewish conduct by Poles is imbued with antisemitism, and even attributes to Polish anti-Semitism (sic) the frequently encountered critical statements about Poles made by Jews. It goes without saying—though this is scarcely noticed by those who dwell on conditions in Poland—that similar attitudes prevailed in Western Europe and North America as well. A Dutch rescuer from Amsterdam, a Lutheran, recalled that Catholic and Lutheran children generally played apart, that there was animosity between Catholics and Protestants (his grandmother "detested" Catholics), that Calvinists (even schoolteachers) belittled Lutherans, and that Lutherans harboured resentments toward Calvinists. He also had ill feelings toward Jews and Gypsies. See Pearl M. Oliner, *Saving the Forsaken: Religious Culture and the Rescue of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 104. A Jewish survivor who settled in Canada after the Second World War recalled: "It was also there in rural Ontario, that I came face to face with the dislike, or to be more precise, the hatred that existed between Protestants and Catholics, and how deep rooted it was. [The Protestant population was of British stock and the Catholics were usually Irish. *Ed.*] Yet they were neighbors who came together at harvest time to help one another, or to cut wood for winter. How polite and superficial they were to one another at that time. Yet when they were alone with us, they expressed their innermost feelings towards one another with no inhibition. Bluestein and I could not understand why those two Christian groups could hate each other so much, and we were wondering how much more each of these groups must hate us Jews." See Moishe Kantorowitz, *My Mother's Bequest: From Shershev to Auschwitz to Newfoundland* (2004), 576, Internet: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cpsa/shereshov/my_mothers_bequest.pdf>; <http://cpsa.info/shereshov/my_mothers_bequest.pdf>.

only enhanced and formalized this self-exclusion.[15] In times of crisis, both internal and external pressures only exacerbated these divisions.[16]

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[15] In fact, there are compelling reasons to believe that Jews traditionally regarded themselves as a distinct nationality, and not as members of the nations among whom they lived. According to Rabbi Sherwin Wine,

> Since their beginnings the Jews had functioned as a nation. Even when their government became a theocracy and religious conformity was enforced, they still saw themselves primarily as a nation. Even when they became a world people in the Diaspora, they saw themselves as a nation. In the Middle Ages the Jews were never regarded as members of the nations among whom they lived. They saw themselves and were viewed by others as aliens.
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> When Eastern European Jews arrived in North America, the Reformers were appalled by the image they projected. It was not only their poverty and immigrant crudeness that bothered them. It was a fact that they were a distinct nationality, with a language and culture all their own. Russian Jews did not think that they were Russian. They saw themselves as ethnically Jewish. Yiddish, not Russian, was their mother tongue.

See Yaakov Malkin, *Secular Judaism: Faith, Values and Sprituality* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004), vii, viii.

[16] With its short-lived interwar independence, Poland was already divided along ethnic lines before the outbreak of the Second World War. Once the war started, there was a complete breakdown of Poland's society into its constituent elements, with many ethnic groups seeking to be united with members of their groups who lived outside Poland's interwar borders. These various ethnicities pursued their own national agendas in isolation from each other, often riven by mutual hostilities. The ethnic disintegration was particularly pronounced in the Soviet occupation zone. Moreover, both the German and Soviet occupiers saw, and treated, Poland's multi-ethnic society as a miscellany of peoples, each of which was invited to collaborate individually. See Jochen Böhler and Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, "Collaboration and Resistance in Wartime Poland (1939–1945): A Case for Differentiated Occupation Studies," *Journal of Modern European History,* vol. 16 (2018), no. 2: 225–46. Thus, there was no mutual universe of obligation shared by these various ethnic groups, including Jews. Poland, with its short-lived interwar independence, was already divided along ethnic lines before the outbreak of the Second World War. Once the war started, there was a complete breakdown of Poland's society into its constituent elements, with many ethnic groups seeking to be united with members of their groups who lived outside Poland's interwar boundaries. These various ethnicities pursued their own national agendas in isolation from each other, often riven by mutual hostilities. The ethnic disintegration was particularly pronounced in the Soviet occupation zone. Moreover, both the German and Soviet occupiers saw, and treated, Poland's multi-ethnic society as a miscellany of peoples, each of which was invited to collaborate individually. See Jochen Böhler and Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, "Collaboration and Resistance in Wartime Poland (1939–1945): A Case for Differentiated Occupation Studies," *Journal of Modern European History,* vol. 16 (2018), no. 2: 225–46. Thus, there was no mutual universe of obligation shared by these various ethnic groups, including Jews.

Discussion of Jewish attitudes toward Poles has generally been eschewed in the literature on Polish-Jewish relations. Such a one-sided focus is seriously skewed.[17] On an objective level, there is no reason to assign all the blame to one side for a state of affairs that was mirrored in both communities. Moreover, it provides little understanding of the dynamics of inter-ethnic relations in the context of the dramatic social,

[17] Israeli historian Ariel Toaff has noted this same tendency in other areas of relations between Jews and non-Jews:

> Any additional example of the two-dimensional "flattening" of Jewish history, viewed exclusively as the history of religious or political "anti-Semitism" at all times, must necessarily be regretted. When "one-way" questions presuppose "one-way" answers; when the stereotype of "anti-Semitism" hovers menacingly over any objective approach to the difficult problem of historical research in relation to Jews, any research ends up by losing a large part of its value.

See Ariel Toaff, *Blood Passover: The Jews of Europe and Ritual Murder* (lulu.com, 2014), 10. (Internet: <http://bloodpassover.com>) Ruth Langer, Professor of Jewish Studies in the Theology Department at Boston College and Associate Director of its Center for Christian-Jewish Learning, had this to say in her book, *Cursing the Christians?: A History of the* Birkat HaMinim (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), at p. 12:

> For Jews engaged in dialogue, it has been much easier to identify the problems within Christianity than to turn that scrutiny back on our own heritage. Jews, after all, were very much the victims, not just of the Holocaust, but also of centuries of Christian anti-Jewish venom and oppression. Consequently, traditions developed among those studying in the *Wissenschaftlich* mode to obscure embarrassing elements of the tradition rather than to confront them. True dialogue, though, requires partnership, mutuality, and adjustment of attitudes on both sides. … Thus, full Jewish participation in reconciliation with Christians requires that Jews similarly examine and take responsibility for their own traditions, especially where, as in the case of liturgy, these traditions affect daily life and are not simply dusty books on the shelf.

In her book, Ruth Langer offers an in-depth study of the *birkat haminim*, a Jewish prayer that, in its earliest form, cursed Christians, apostates to Christianity, sectarians, and enemies of Israel. See more on this topic see Yaakov Y. Teppler, *Birkat haMinim: Jews and Christians in Conflict in the Ancient World* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007). In this study, Teppler cites, and thereby implicitly endorses, the conclusions of Robert Travers Herford and his *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1903).

political and economic upheavals that befell Poland.[18] This was especially true in interwar Poland, a multi-ethnic country that had reemerged after World War I after more than a century of foreign, colonial-like rule and where Poles were themselves in a minority in many towns and districts. Conflict between competing groups (nationalisms) was inevitable. The situation was further compounded by the traumatic experiences of the Second World War and how they have been handed down.

Stereotypes directed at the "Other" often came to the forefront, and balance and moderation are discarded in formulating opinions. Beniamin Horowitz, a Holocaust survivor, recalls:

> In relations between particular groups of people, and even entire nations, there reigns an all-powerful principle of collective responsibility. That is why no one said that in Białystok, Równe or Łuck some Jewish Communists behaved with hostility toward Poles, but rather they generalized: "The attitude of the Jews was unfriendly." Besides, this was the mutual rule in Jewish circles. I often heard similar generalized opinions about Poles that were equally inaccurate and equally unfair.[19]

The truth of the matter is that all ethnic and religious groups have traditionally viewed members of other groups as outsiders—as being outside their "universe of obligation," to use a much hackneyed phrase—and treated them with suspicion, if not hostility. Jews were as much imbued with negative stereotypes

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[18] An important scholarly study that eschews the conventional approach to the issue of anti-Semitism and shows that modern anti-Semitism is fundamentally rooted in real conflict between ethnic groups is Albert S. Lindemann's *Esau's Tears: Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). In his review of this book (Internet: <http://www.kevinmacdonald.net/lindemannreview.htm>), scholar Kevin MacDonald writes:

> Lindemann's thesis is that modern European anti-Semitism is linked to the "rise of the Jews," that is, to the very substantial increase in the cultural, political, and economic power of Jews beginning in the nineteenth century. That thesis is controversial because it identifies real conflicts of interest between groups as central to anti-Semitism. Although Lindemann is well aware that anti-Semites often exaggerate Jewish behavior, and occasionally even invent it, his book challenges the still common view that anti-Semitic attitudes are nothing more than the fundamentally irrational residues of Christian religious ideology or the psychological projections of inadequate personalities.
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> Nor does Lindemann shrink from discussing the biological moment of Judaism, that is, the concern with preventing intermarriage, the concern with purity of blood, the low status of converts, and the lack of interest in proselytism. Judaism is "only uncertainly a community of belief," a comment indicating Lindemann's belief that Judaism is much more an ethnic group than a religion—a position that I think is unavoidable. Lindemann labels these practices "protoracism" and suggests that they "contributed in vague, often contradictory ways to modern racism, especially to its concern with racial exclusiveness and purity" (p. 74). Indeed, besides their traditional practices, which bespeak a primitive racialism among Jews, Jews were also in the forefront of racialist thinking in the nineteenth century. Benjamin Disraeli "may have been, both as a writer and even more as a personal symbol, the most influential propagator of the concept of race in the nineteenth century, particularly publicizing the Jews' alleged taste for power, their sense of superiority, their mysteriousness, their clandestine international connections, and their arrogant pride in being a pure race" (p. 77). Racialist thinking was typical of the nineteenth century generally. Among Jews racialist thinking can be found throughout the Jewish intellectual spectrum; it was common among Zionists and typified several prominent Jewish intellectuals, such as Heinrich Graetz and Moses Hess. Thus, while there was some fantasy involved in anti-Semitic beliefs about Jews, the nineteenth-century anti-Semitic idea that Jews regarded themselves as a superior race was also based on real Jewish behavior and attitudes.

[19] Account of Beniamin Horowitz (Władysław Pawlak), *Przesiedleńcy w zaświaty,* Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), Record group 302, number 121.

about Poles as Poles were about Jews.[20] "Otherness" was in fact a mainstay of traditional Judaism, no less than of Christian society, and the separateness of the Jews was accentuated by the claim that they were

[20] Some of the bases for those stereotypes—religious, social, cultural, and Polish hostility, both real and alleged—are canvassed in Marcin Urynowicz's study "*Wokół stacji gdzie przejeżdża pociąg mieszkają dzicy ludzie* – Pamięć o Polsce i Polakach w żydowskojęzycznych reportażach pierwszych lat powojennych: Przyczynek do badań," in Adam Sitarek, Michał Trębacz, and Ewa Wiatr, eds., *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego; Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Oddział w Łodzi, 2012), 441–52, here at 445, 448–50.

God's "Chosen People."[21] Polish "messianism"—a short-lived 19th century phenomenon portraying Poland as the Christ of Nations, with few adherents today—pales in comparison, but continues to be

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[21] Rabbi Mordechai Menahem Kaplan, the Founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, rejected the usual exculpatory reasoning behind Jewish Chosenness, that is, it simply implies that Jews have more obligations to God. (The following commentary is based on a review by Jan Peczkis.) Rabbi Kaplan comments, "No one can question the fact that the belief of being divinely elect has long been associated in the Jewish mind with consecration and responsibility. However, we cannot ignore the other implications of this belief, especially those which are often sharply stressed, such as in the *Alenu* and the *Havdalah* prayers. In the latter, the invidiousness of the distinction between Israel and the nations is emphasized by being compared with the distinction between light and darkness. It is that invidiousness which is highly objectionable, and should be eliminated from our religion." See Mordechai M. Kaplan, *The Future of the American Jew* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 218. The author elaborates that, "Is it not more in keeping with spiritual religion, when we recite the 'Alenu' to thank God for having given us 'the Torah of truth and planted eternal life in us', than for not having made us 'like the nations of other lands?'" Ibid., 227–28. Jews commonly frame Jewish Chosenness as the Jewish duty, or privilege, of transmitting ethical insights (or ethical monotheism) to the gentiles. Kaplan dismisses this as a form of what nowadays is called benevolent prejudice. It is reminiscent of the 19th century concept of imperialism as something good, in that white people were the "bearers of civilization" to nonwhites (the white man's burden). Ibid., 221. Unfortunately, Kaplan skirts around the most controversial aspects of Jewish Chosenness. These include Jewish messianism (how Jews are fated to rule over the *goyim*), and the Talmud (notably its dual morality of Jews and non-Jews), about which there is more later. Kaplan points out that the centuries-old concept of Jewish Chosenness, based on the Torah (and Talmud), had increasingly been replaced, in 19th-century Germany, by a new-fangled racial concept of Jewish Chosenness. He writes, "Unable to accept literally the traditional version of the doctrine of the chosen people, the religious wing of the early *Maskilim*, the first *Reformers* and the middle group who designated themselves as the *Historical School* reinterpreted that doctrine to mean one or all of the following propositions, which are set forth in Kaufmann Kohler's *Jewish Theology*, as justifying the claim of the Jews to being a chosen people:

1. Jews possess hereditary traits which qualify them to be superior to the rest of the world in the realm of the religious and the ethical.
2. Their ancestors were the first to achieve those religious and ethical conceptions and ideals which will, in the end, become the common possession of mankind and help them to achieve salvation.
3. Jews possess the truest form of the religious and ethical ideals of mankind.
4. Jews are entrusted with the task of communicating those ideals to the rest of the world."

Ibid., 215. Kaplan condemns biologically-based Jewish elitism, which may be considered a form of Jewish racism, with the following scathing words directed against the four propositions quoted above, "What is wrong with the reinterpretations? First, the proposition that Jews possess unusual hereditary traits which entitle them to be God's elect is based on a series of unproved generalizations concerning certain qualities as being characteristic only of Jews, and on biological assumptions concerning heredity, which are entirely unwarranted. It is one thing for the ancient sage to express his love for his people by describing them as unique in the possession of the traits of chastity, benevolence, and compassion. But it is quite another for a modern person seriously to assert that, because Jewish life has manifested these traits, Jews alone are inherently qualified to grasp and promulgate the truth of religion. We expect a greater regard for objective fact than is evidenced by such sweeping statements about hereditary Jewish traits. If Jews were to adopt the foregoing reinterpretation of the doctrine of election, they would, by implication, assent to the most pernicious theory of racial heredity yet advanced to justify racial inequality and the right of a master race to dominate the rest of mankind." Ibid., 215–16. In the 19th and 20th century, local Jews decided whether they thought that the surrounding gentile culture was "good enough" for their emulation and assimilation. Although Kaplan does not put it in those terms, he makes it obvious that such was indeed the case, "Emerging into the broad stream of European culture, the Jews sought to adapt their own culture to that of the world around them. In Germany, this led to complete assimilation and to the modernization of the Jewish religious traditions. In Eastern Europe, where the surrounding culture was on a low plane, the *Haskalah* developed a strong nationalist trend [Yiddishism, or Diaspora nationalism: p. 25], with the renaissance of Hebrew literature as the distinguishing feature. There, too, the process of emancipation, expected or partly achieved, together with enlightenment led, in many instances, to complete assimilation." Ibid., 553–54. However, Kaplan does not tell the reader that, unlike in Germany, only a single-digit percentage of Poland's Jews ever became assimilated prior to the Second World War. On the anti-Christian character of the *Aleinu (Alenu)* see Ruth Langer's article in Debra Reed Blank, ed., *The Experience of Jewish Liturgy: Studies Dedicated to Menahem Schmelzer* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011).

Rabbi Mordechai M. Kaplan also tackled the issue of Jewish Chosenness in his seminal study *Judaism as a Civilization: Toward a Reconstruction of Jewish-American Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1934). (The following observations are based on a review by Jan Peczkis.)

Jews as Chosen: Are Jews Better?

raised as boogeyman by commentators on modern-day Poland.[22] Those same commentators never tackle the topic of Jewish "Chosenness," which has many prominent adherents today and is often voiced in extreme terms.[23]

Jewish self-segregation and anti-assimilationist tendencies existed, over the centuries, largely because of Jewish religious strictures.[24] The notion of chosenness went hand in hand with a deeply held sense of superiority. In the case of Poland, this attitude was especially noticeable with respect to peasant society. Nahum Goldmann, a leading Zionist and the founder and longtime president of the World Jewish Congress, does not skirt around these fundamental issues:

> The Jews are the most separatist people in the world. Their belief in the notion of the chosen people is the basis of their entire religion. All down the centuries the Jews have intensified their separation from the non-Jewish world; they have rejected, and still do reject mixed marriages; they have put up one wall after another to protect their existence as a people apart, and have built their ghettos with their own hands, from the *shtetl* of Eastern Europe to the *mellah* of Morocco.
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> Moreover, it is worthwhile … to stress that the ghetto is historically a Jewish invention. It is wrong to say that the *goyim* forced the Jews to separate themselves from other societies. When the Christians defined the ghetto limited, Jews lived there already.
>
> Lastly, while it is true that the Jewish people has always believed in its own superiority (expressed in the classic formulation, 'the chosen people'), …[25]
>
> In the little township of Visznevo [Wiszniewo] we lived in a rural setting, and most of my grandfather's patients were peasants. Every Jew felt ten or a hundred times the superior of these lowly tillers of the soil: he was cultured, learned Hebrew, knew the Bible, studied the Talmud—in other words he knew that he stood head and shoulders above these illiterates.[26]

The Jewish community was the repository of longstanding religious-based biases against Christians that instilled far greater affinity and solidarity with co-religionists from other regions and even other lands than

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[22] For example, writing in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (November 5, 2019), Felix Ackermann raised this charge in relation to an exhibition in Berlin's Pilecki Institute about Witold Pilecki, the Auschwitz volunteer. Rolf Brockschmidt, an editor of *Tagesspiegel*, praised the exhibition for its objectivity (January 22, 2020).

[23] For example, Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, a prominent Chasidic Jewish leader, stated (in 1990) that, "Criticizing or speaking unfavourably about any portion of the Jewish people is like making such statements against G-d Himself. It is like one who strikes G-d in the eye. An attack against any Jews, heaven forbid, is an attack against Him." See Joseph Telushkin, *Rebbe: The Life and Teachings of Menachem M. Schneerson, the Most Influential Rabbi in Modern History* (New York: HarperCollins, 2014), 554. Although not mentioned in the book, the allusion is to Sanhedrin 58b in the Babylonian Talmud. According to Sanhedrin 58b, hitting a Jew is tantamount to an attack on the Divine presence. For Rabbi Schneerson, this also extends to verbal criticisms of Jews, even those made by other Jews, who are then labeled as "self-hating."

[24] Robert Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life in Medieval Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 196.

[25] Nahum Goldmann, *The Jewish Paradox* (New York: New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978), 8, 66.

[26] Goldmann, *The Jewish Paradox*, 13.

with their Christian neighbours.[27] In this regard, attacks directed against Poland and the Poles are to some degree a substitute for attacks on Christian society in general, and the Catholic Chuch in particular. Broad-based attacks on the Catholic Church, such as those launched incessantly by historian Daniel Goldhagen, tend to get a more vigorous rebuttal and manage to alienate many people. On the other hand, attacks on Poland and the Poles are—as this study shows—politically acceptable, even in their crudest form. In addition to religious fundamentalism, the rise of Jewish nationalism played an increasingly prominent role in Polish-Jewish relations since the latter part of the 19th century. The broad Jewish masses underwent a process of national radicalization, which added fire to the fierce rivalry between competing nationalist movements, including the Jewish one.[28] The last thing that the Jewish masses living in Poland wanted was to become Poles, that is, to be absorbed into the dominant culture.

The subject of Polish-Jewish relations is almost always presented in terms of the Jewish victim and the intolerant Pole. Much of that writing is highly moralistic and hypocritical. The notion that Polish, Christian-based anti-Semitism was the key factor that set the tone for relations between Poles and Jews must be dismissed as an unfounded generalization—one that purposely omits other important components from the picture. It presents Jews as objects of perceptions, and not as agents that affect how they are perceived and how they are treated. Informed observers reject that approach. As Dr. Berthold Zarwyn remarked:

> It appears to me that two main factors led to anti-Semitism in Poland. The monopolization of commerce by Jews forced into this area by exclusive regulations, and the lack of cultural interaction based mostly on religious ignorance. The attitudes of Catholic clergy on the one-side and of Orthodox Jewry on the other did not stimulate a normal understanding and intermingling.[29]

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[27] Jewish-Canadian historian Irving Abella wrote emphatically about the Jewish community in Canada: "We've identified as an ethnic group different from our places of origin. Jews who come from Poland will describe themselves not as Polish but as Jewish." See Joe Friesen, "How One Census Question Halved Canada's Jewish Population," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), December 30, 2017. Another striking example of this phenomenon was the successful campaign mounted by Jewish organizations in the United States after the Second World War to have President Truman recognize Jewish DPs as a distinct national group entited to separate Jewish camps; Truman's designation of Palestine as the main destination of the Jewish DPs; and his appeal to the British to allow entry of 100,000 Jewish DPs into Palestine. "All helped the Zionist claim that Jewish DPs were part of a single and distinct people, the Jewish nation, for whom Zionism sought a state in Palestine." See Arieh J. Kochavi, "Pressure Groups versus the American and British Administrations during and after World War II," in Norman J.W. Goda, ed., *Jewish Histories of the Holocaust: New Transnational Approaches* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2014), 260–61. While presenting a united front vis-à-sis non-Jews, this is not to say that Jews, among themselves, are a cohesive entity. On the contrary, even in Poland, there was considerable rivalry and bad faith among various factions, especially the so-called Litvaks caused concern for native Jews. (There is more on this later.) See Edward Gigilewicz, "Litwacy," in *Encyklopedia "Białych plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2005), vol. 19, 262–64.

[28] Semion Goldin, "Liberalizm, nacjonalizm, i 'kwestia żydowska' w Imperium Rosyjskim (koniec XIX—początek XX wieku)," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów,* no. 2 (2016): 253–77, at p. 277.

[29] Cited in Zwaryn's Afterword in Jakob Weiss, *The Lemberg Mosaic: The Memoirs of Two Who Survived the Destruction of Jewish Galicia* (New York: Alderbrook Press, 2010), 373.

In Poland, Jews lived in closed, tightly knit, isolated communities largely of their own making.[30] Orthodox Rabbi Avigdor Miller attributed the unwillingness of Poland's Jews to assimilate to economic self-interest, along with a somewhat condescending attitude towards Poles. The rabbi comments:

> When the Jews in Spain began to use that wealthy land as a means of mingling with the Arabs and Spaniards, G-d's plan caused them to be expelled to lands of lesser culture, such as Turkey and Poland, with whom our people had no incentive to assimilate. Among these nations, G-d permitted the Jews to live in relative peace for centuries; for there was no danger that they would imitate the ways of the poor and backward populace. But those of our people who dwelt among the Germans, French, and English were tempted to mingle with them; for their higher living standards created a lure. You see how our nation adopted the German language, but not Polish or Turkish.[31]

The perpetuation of Jewish "Otherness" worked to undermine any commonality with the non-Jewish population. The consequence was the existence of parallel societies that did not share any common aspirations and had little to do with each other. As one rabbi and writer noted,

> Despite a continuous history of nearly ten centuries, the Jews were isolated from their fellow-citizens by religion, by culture, by language, even by dress. The Polish Jew had his own educational system, his own communal organization, his own youth movements, his press, theater, his party politics.[32]

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[30] This phenomenon still persists. The *Toronto Star* reported in June 2005, that the Jewish enclave around Bathurst Street and Steeles Avenue ran as high as 70 percent, making it the most "segregated" neighbourhood in Toronto, even though Jews—unlike many other groups—are not recent immigrants to the city. See Prithi Yelaja and Nicholas Keung "A Little Piece of the Punjab: Immigrants recreate home in suburbs," *Toronto Star,* June 25, 2005. One can imagine how much more intense the desire for separation was in a traditional Jewish environment like Poland's.

[31] Avigdor Miller, *Rejoice o Youth! An Integrated Jewish Ideology* (New York: n.p., 1962), 276–77. Historian John Doyle Klier broaches the topic of assimilation in his study, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1885–1881* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). The resistance of many Jews to acculturation and assimilation is usually framed in terms of the consideration that doing so would cause an unacceptable loss of essential Judaic elements (e.g, p. 103), or that a strongly Christian majoritarian atmosphere made it difficult for Jews to "fit" into gentile society. In addition, Jews must maintain their particularism as an antidote to anti-Semitism and the lack of Jewish legal equality with gentiles (e.g, p. 106). However, Jewish attitudes have also been animated by the notion that the goyim are unworthy of Jewish assimilation—that is, unless the local Jews decide that their self-interest indicates otherwise, or that the nation in which they live is, or becomes, "good enough"—in Jewish opinion—to merit the Jews' assimilation. Jewish Germanophilia also became a factor. The foregoing lines of thinking are exemplified by an article in the Jewish newspaper Sion, which rejected linguistic acculturation (let alone assimilation). Klier comments, "Sion offered its own list of reasons why the Empire's Jews were slow to speak Russian, none of them very flattering to Russians. On a daily basis, Yiddish served the Jews as the language of a separate caste of tradesmen within the wider society. Where economic necessity required the Jews to acquire another language, such as Ukrainian, they easily did so. Russian culture offered nothing that Jews saw as worthy of imitation, in contrast to German culture. There was even a 'German Party' of Jews in Russia, seeking to introduce their fellows to the cultural riches of Germany." Ibid., 106. In what is perhaps an ironic reversal of the minority conforming to the majority, the article in Sion specified the economic and cultural terms that could make Russia worthy of Jewish acculturation and assimilation. Klier writes, "Russian participation in the commercial life of the Empire must grow sufficiently to force knowledge of Russian out of economic necessity. The institutional network of Russian culture must expand sufficiently to justify and expedite its adoption by Jews." Ibid., 107. Interestingly, the same attitudes later surfaced during the resurrection of the Polish state in 1918. Some of Poland's Jews openly stated that Poles were not morally or culturally worthy of the Jews' assimilation.

[32] Harry M. Rabinowicz, *The Legacy of Polish Jewry: A History of Polish Jews in the Inter-War Years 1919–1939* (London: Yoseloff, 1965), 148. Rabinowicz goes on to state: "Not only were there invisible walls between Jew and Pole, but there were even barriers between Jew and Jew. On the one side were the ultra-Orthodox Chassidim; on the other side were the Bundists who substituted Das Kapital of Karl Marx for the Torah of Moses."

Unlike the Christian Armenian and Muslim Tatar minorities, who did not shy away from cultural polonization and gained acceptance by Polish society despite religious differences, Jews guarded their communal life closely and wanted as few dealings with the outside world as possible, except those necessary to sustain their economic livelihood. Originally, the basis for separation was dictated by the tenets of the Jewish religion. The rise of a full-fledged, Jewish ethno-nationalism in the late 19th and early part of the 20th century fostered the expression of a distinctive ethnic and national identity,[33] in opposition to that of the Poles. Unlike in Germany, Jewish assimilationists were viewed as "traitors."[34] The Yiddishist

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[33] The rise of Jewish nationalism and Zionism in the 19th century was a phenomenon that was parallel to and inspired by European models, especially the German one, and thus borrowed some of its racist teachings. Zionism and diaspora Jewish nationalism incorporated a high level of political self-awareness and thus resembled other nationalist movements in East Central Europe. See Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (New York: Verso, 2009). As Joshua Shanes's study of the Austrian-ruled province of Galicia—*Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012)—shows, although lacking in territorial ambitions because the Jewish population was dispersed, modern Jewish nationalism shared features in common with other nationalisms. It manifested itself primarily in the nascent but growing Zionist movement, which promoted exclusivist Jewish ethno-nationalism (Jewishness was seen as an innate and immutable characteristic, and religious symbolism and the "glorious" past of ancient Israel were appropriated for its nationalist propaganda—pp. 13, 63, 89–90, 92, 128–29, 138–41, 229, 233, 286); bitterly opposed assimilationist politicians and Orthodox Jews who sought cooperation with the dominant Poles (even though the former merely intended the modernization of Jews and their integration into non-Jewish societies as Jews, and the latter eschewed both modernization and integration—pp. 10, 65, 109, 150, 251, 260–61); was permeated with a high degree of chauvinism and even displayed open hatred towards its opponents and other national groups (its inflammatory nationalist rhetoric unfairly denigrated Jewish assimilationists and Orthodox Jews and led to their increasing marginalization and "illegitimacy" in the political spectrum and society, looked down on other national groups as "inferior," and railed against Poles and Polonization, because of its perception of an irreconcilable conflict between Polish and Jewish interests—pp. 51, 60–61, 64, 80, 81, 128, 137, 144–45, 150, 216–17, 223, 227, 243–45, 250–53, 257, 264); and did not shy away from political violence to combat its opponents (pp. 236–37, 271–72, 279). Shanes makes it abundantly clear that Jewish nationalism was not simply "constructed," but rather derived from Jewish ethnicity embedded in Jewish religious tradition. Jewish nationalism was an integral development among Galician Jews, and not so much of a defence against the alleged anti-Semitism of others' nationalisms (pp. 49, 50). Its ultimate goal was "to organize Jews politically as Jews" (p. 11). Cooperation was shunned in favour of confrontation. Jewish nationalists tended to be self-declared enemies of the Polish cause. They had no loyalty to Poland, and even those Galician Jews considering themselves Polish did not usually identify with Polish national aspirations. (On the other hand, Galician Zionists, as almost all Habsburg Jews, openly declared their loyalty to Austria, even though Austria did not recognize Jews as a national or ethnic group and denied them linguistic rights. In January 1914, Galician Zionists even issued a resolution calling Jews to arms against Czarist Russia—p. 282.) By 1914, most Jews in Galicia had come to accept an ethno-nationalist definition of their community and demanded political rights. As Shanes notes,

> Galician Jews constituted a distinct ethnic group in the region: linguistically, religiously, economically and socially. Moreover, Judaism itself provided the linguistic and cultural building blocks with which Jewish nationalists could construct a modern nationalist consciousness: a collective understanding of Jewish peoplehood, reinforced by liturgy and ritual, a shared historical connection to a specific territory, and a unique common language. (P. 286).

Similar developments had occurred in Russian-occupied Poland. Even the socialist Bund (General Jewish Workers' Party), at its 1901 congress, adopted a full-fledged national programme, declaring that Jews should be recognized as a nation and receive "national-cultural autonomy." When nationalisms share a common territory and have disparate political agendas, conflict is inevitable. The situation was, therefore, diametrically opposed to Western European countries, where integration and assimilation were the norm and Jews did not think of asserting their own political agenda. Notwithstanding these glaring differences, Western historians do not address Jewish ethno-religious nationalism as a factor in Polish-Jewish relations, and focus exclusively on Polish nationalism as the sole cause of Polish-Jewish antagonism. Although hostile to competing nationalisms, as were all nationalisms at the time, Polish nationalism lacked the sophistication and racist edge of the German model or the perseverance of Jewish nationalism, as evidenced in the State of Israel and the Jewish diaspora.

[34] Jesse Kauffman, *Elusive Alliance: The German Occupation of Poland in World War I* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Universty Press,2015), 135–36.

secular movement in the 19th century, which elevated Jews to a separate, formal nationality, fostered an aggressive and politicized Jewish particularism and self-imposed apartheid. For example, the Yiddishist Folkspartei was of the position that a Jew could only join another national group, such as the Poles or Russians, by resigning from the Jewish community.[35]

It was inevitable that the religious, cultural and socio-economic differences between the Polish and Jewish communities would give rise to divergent political aspirations and agenda. Jewish politicization at the start of the twentieth century compounded this problem, underscroring that Jewishness was a key element of identity. Nationalist ideas even penetrated the Jewish socialist movement, symptomatic of the growing divisions between the Polish and Jewish workers' movemeny. For example, Feliks Perl (1871–1927) sharply criticized the Bund for its politically separatist ambitions (in addition to all the pre-existing religious and cultural separatist tendencies) that went squarely against Polish national interests. Historian Joshua Zimmerman comments,

> Perl's main critique, however, was that the Bund excluded Polish independence from its party platform. … More importantly, the Bund's vision of a democratic federal republic was undemocratic in character, Perl argued, for under the Bund's plan, the nationalities of the western provinces and the Kingdom of Poland would be coerced into a federation ruled from Moscow. … In an effort to formulate a theoretical justification for its refusal to support Polish independence, Perl continued, the Bund had resorted to intellectual "acrobatics" and "prevarications". How did the Bund arrive at such a position? Perl's answer is revealing: "It derives from the Bund's original sin—it's *all-Russian* position. In the country in which it is active—in Lithuania and Poland—the Bund has separated itself from the local population, neither shares its aspirations nor understands its interests, and does not sympathize with the exceptional predicament in which these subjugated people find themselves." By linking the Jewish labour movement in Poland-Lithuania to Russia, "the Bund plays a false and harmful political role".[36]

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[35] David E. Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), 69.

[36] Joshua D. Zimmerman, "Feliks Perl on the Jewish Question," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, 1815–1918,* vol. 27: *Jews in the Kingdom of Poland* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2015), 328.

Most Jews in the Eastern Borderlands and the German-held parts of Poland were firmly opposed to the prospect of Polish rule after World War I.[37] At the same time, the mainstream Jewish organizations, especially the Zionist ones, waged a political war against Poland in the international forum to achieve a far-reaching form of national autonomy. (The socialist Bund was more moderate and willing to settle for

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[37] As Poland was in the process of being resurrected, a majority of local Jews supported the total dis-affiliation with Poland. In Prussian Poland, where pro-German sentiments were nearly universal, many Jews opted for German citizenship and those Jews that remained in Poland often sent their children to German schools and considered themselves to be German patriots. See, for example, Jerzy Topolski and Krzysztof Modelski, eds., *Żydzi w Wielkopolsce na przestrzeni dziejów,* 2nd edition (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1999), 191; Roman Wapiński, ed., *U progu niepodległości 1918–1989* (Ostaszewo Gdańskie: Stepan design, 1999), 174; Czesław Łuczak, "Żydowska Rada Ludowa w Poznaniu (1918–1921)," in Marian Mroczka, ed., *Polska i Polacy: Studia z dziejów polskiej myśli i kultury politycznej XIX i XX wieku* (Gdańsk: Uniwersytet Gdański, 2001), 191–99. See also Zvi Helmut Steinitz's memoir *As a Boy Through the Hell of the Holocaust: From Poznań, through Warsaw, the Kraków ghetto, Płaszów, Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Berlin-Haselhorst, Sachsenhausen, to Schwerin and over Lübeck, Neustadt, Bergen-Belsen, and Antwerp to Eretz Israel, 1927–1946* (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre, 2009), 15, 17, 58. Although born in Polish Poznań in 1927, Steinitz considered Germany to be his fatherland. (His contempt for Poland continued even after the horrors of the Second World War: "It is probably no coincidence that the Holocaust took place in Poland. … Within a matter of days, Poland was occupied almost without a fight … It was no great surprise to me that the Nazis had built their extermination machine in Poland, as they knew that many Polish people had a negative attitude towards Jews." Ibid., 67, 77, 264.) Moreover, the pro-German sentiments of Jews in Upper Silesia were not dampened by German demonstrations in 1920 and 1923 that "escalated into pogrom-like attacks on Jewish property." See Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World: Twentieth-Century Conflict and the Descent of the West* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 197. Oscar Janowsky comments, "The Jews of Posen [Poznań] had become thoroughly German in sentiment, but the defeat of Germany, the uncertainty as to the ultimate disposition of that Polish region, and fear that the Jews might suffer in the struggle between Germans and Poles led to a demand that the Jews be recognized as a third nationality in the region. … with the support of a majority of Jews of the contested territory, it appealed to the Peace Conference to assure the Jews of Posen the rights of a national minority." See Oscar I. Janowsky, *The Jews and Minority Rights (1898–1919)* (New York: Columbia Uinversity Press, 1933), 279. Jews in Galicia overwhelmingly supported the Austrians throughout the First World War, even as Polish attitudes towards Austria became more hostile, thus leading to worsening of Polish-Jewish relations. The Russian Jewish writer S.Y. Ansky noted: "The Galician Jews, however, stuck to their pro-Austrian orientation, flaunting it in the most delicate circumstances, with no concern for horrible consequences." Jewish merchants were widely blamed for hoarding goods and profiteering which, in increasingly impoverished conditions, led to riots in a number of cities. See Michał Galas and Antony Polonsky, "Introduction," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 23: *Jews in Kraków* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2011): 18–21. (This phenomenon, however, was not something that was exclusive to Polish-Gentile relations. When Jews became the victims of profiteering by other Jews, they too were known to retaliate with boycotts and violence against fellow Jews. See David Assaf, ed., *Journey to a Nineteenth-Century Shtetl: The Memoirs of Yekhezkel Kotik* [Detroit: Wayne State University Press, published in cooperation with The Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, 2002], 138. This memoir, originally published in 1913, describes conditions in Kamieniec Litewski, a shtetl near Brześć (Brest).) Henry Morgenthau, the U.S. envoy sent to monitor conditions in Poland in 1919, reported on conditions in Eastern Poland as follows: "Now, of course, the Jews in that part of the country were a little to blame, and the reason is this: We found that … they do not want to remain with Poland, and they make no secret of it. They are pro-Russian. They believe that Lithuania should be returned to Russia or what they want is … to have a separate Canton arranged where Jewish and Hebrew would be spoken; where they would elect their man to Parliament, who could speak in their own language and have entirely self government." See Przemysław Różański, "Wilno, 19–31 kwietnia 1919 roku," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów,* no. 1 (2006): 13–34. The opposition to Polish rule in Białystok was quite vociferous, whereas in Lwów, Drohobycz and Borysław it was more muted. See Katarzyna Sztop-Rutkowska, "Konflikty polsko-żydowskie jako element kształtowania się ładu polityczno-społecznego w Białymstoku w latach 1919–1920 w świetle lokalnej prasy," *Studia Judaica*, vol. 5, no. 2(10) (2002) and vol. 6, no. 1(11) (2003): 131–50, especially 136–37 (virtually all Jewish organizations in Białystok were opposed to Polish rule); Vladimir Melamed, *Evrei vo Lvove (XIII–pervaia polovina XX veka): Sobytiia, obshchestvo, liudi* (Lviv: Sovmestnoe Ukrainsko-Amerikanskoe Predpriiatie TE, 1994), 134 (support for the Ukrainian cause by Zionists in Lwów); Iakov Honigsman, *600 let i dva goda: Istoriia evreev Drogobycha i Borislava* (Lviv: Bnei-Brit "Leopolis" and Lvovskoe ob-vo evreiskoi kultury im. Sholom-Aleikhema, 1997), 27–28 (support for the Ukrainian cause by Zionists, Poalei Zion and the Bund in Drohobycz and Borysław). Arthur L. Goodhart, who came to Poland in the summer of 1920 as counsel to a fact-finding mission sent by the president of the United States, was told by leading Jewish citizens of Białystok that the Jews hoped that a plebiscite would be held, in which case the majority would vote in favour of belonging to Lithuania (even though there were no Lithuanians in this predominantly Polish region). See Arthur L. Goodhart, *Poland and the Minority Races* (New York: Brentano's, 1920), 45, 60. (When the Red Army conquered Białystok in 1920, only Russian and Yiddish were recognized as official languages and those

"cultural autonomy".) They considered Poland to be a multinational state where national minorities could pursue their own national agendas. Most Poles, on the other hand, viewed Poland foremost as a national homeland of the Poles, just like Jews view Israel as national homeland of the Jews.[38]

The widespread disdain for the Polish state again came to the fore in September 1939, when, in every town populated by Jews—according to both Polish and Jewish testimonies—throngs of Jews welcomed the Red Army that invaded Eastern Poland. This attitude is also evidenced in Holocaust testimonies that express sarcasm, if not gloating, at Poland's defeat in September 1939 at the hands of Nazi Germany. Numerous testimonies relish in reporting falsely that the Polish army collapsed in one week or even days.[39] Illegitimate comparisons by some Holocaust historians belittle the Polish army's defence of Poland in September 1939 (the campaign lasted 36 days, with the last major battle of Kock ending October 6), claiming that it was shorter than the revolt in the Warsaw ghetto in April 1943 (concerted fighting on a very small scale lasted about a week). Some (many?) Holocaust survivors admit to hating Poles more than the Germans!

> All this moral waffling, I'll be honest, runs counter to how I was raised, to the tenet I received if not explicitly (but often explicitly) then by osmosis: the Poles were (are) our enemies. The Poles who saved Jews were the exception but your average Pole was—at best—perfectly content to see Jewish neighbors carted off to the ovens. If you want to split hairs you might say the Poles were not the killers (but still sometimes the killers) but the abettors of the killers. My father tells me that my grandparents hated the Poles more than the Germans. That they routinely referred to the country as a country of filth and murder, to its citizens as brutes and scum. … This was a received truth among my relatives.[40]

The resistance of many Polish Jews to assimilation is often blamed on the uncongenial Catholic-majoritarian atmosphere in Poland ("Polish Jews had nothing to assimilate to."). The real reason was the desire of vast majority of Jews to maintain an extreme distinctness, particularism, and cultural separatism. By and large they adamantly rejected the prospect of the pluralism offered by secular Western nations. In his review of Joshua Karlip's book *The Tragedy of a Generation*,[41] Jan Peczkis notes:

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[38] The Rightist Zionists went even further: the Jews would tolerate the presence of Arabs, but they would never be equals. In the view of Vladimir Jabotinsky and many others similarly minded (then and now), "they [Arabs] could never be part of the Israeli nation.They could not become one with the dominant force that would determine the nature of the country. … to maintain the distinction between members of the Hebrew nation, who ruled the country (and determined its character), and the Arabs, whom the Hebrews denied any access to real centers of power." This followed from Jabotinsky's tacit definition of nationalism: "'Every distinctive race aspires to become a nation, to create a separate society, in which everything must be in this race's image—everything must accommodate the tastes, habits, and unique attributes of this specific race. … A national culture cannot be limited to music or books as many argue.'" See Eran Kaplan, *The Jewish Radical Right: Revisionist Zionism and Its Ideological Legacy* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 2005), 49–50.

[39] For example, "It was the year 1939. Germany attacked Poland. The Polish Army, 'The Shining Light' collapsed like a tower of cards." See *The Rawa-Ruska Memorial Book* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2017), 522.

[40] Menachem Kaiser, *Plunder: A Memoir of Family Property and Nazi Treasure* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2021), 78–79.

[41] Joshua M. Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013).

Jewish counter-assimilation, and maintenance of Jewish particularism and separatism, are usually blamed on the persistence of anti-Semitism, the denial of equality and full acceptance to Jews, and to a strongly Christian-majoritarian atmosphere. According to this kind of thinking, assimilation can only proceed in a pluralistic, western-style secular state, with its unambiguous separation of church and state and its equality of all citizens.

Ironic to this line of reasoning (or exculpation), the Jewish separatists actually *feared* the very equality offered by western-style democracies—precisely because it would lead to assimilation! What the Jewish separatists wanted was special national rights for Jews. Thus, Karlip comments, "Following their expressions of euphoria, Diaspora nationalists and Yiddishists began to articulate their vision of the future of a liberated Russian Jewry. Like all other Jewish nationalists, [Elias] Tcherikower warned that civic emancipation in the absence of national rights would lead to West European-style assimilation. He reminded his readers that Russian Jewry had won negative freedom—namely, the freedom from oppression—but had yet to win its positive freedom, which meant national rights and the creation of national institutions." (P. 135.)

To the Yiddishists, Jewish emancipation and assimilation were inherently unacceptable because they were gutting the very essence of being Jewish, "In this article, he [Zelig Hirsh Kalmanovitch] argued that assimilation resulted from the historical process of modernity itself. In the Middle Ages, he argued, Jewish individuals had lived as members of the Jewish community. Capitalism, however, had granted these individuals the opportunity to seek their fortunes in non-Jewish society." (P. 199.) In addition, "Emancipation had led to a selfish individualism that condemned all experiments at secular Jewish identity to failure." (P. 178.)

Other Yiddishists went further. They believed in a form of Jewish essentialism that made Jews unassimilable in the first place, "More viscerally, [Yisroel] Efroikin argued that Jewish national distinctiveness rendered assimilation futile. At times, Efroikin's integral nationalist conception of Jewish identity drifted into a racialist conception of Jewish distinctiveness. Invoking the historian Cecil Roth, Efroikin described how Marranos in Spain and Portugal retained a separate identity even five hundred years after their conversions." (P. 257.)

Nahum Sokolow, a member of a Jewish delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, made this obvious. Oscar Janowsky writes, "Sokolow also maintained that 85% of the Jews of Poland knew no Polish, but spoke Hebrew or Yiddish. They possessed a communal life with flourishing educational, social and charitable institutions. Mere emancipation of the western type would destroy, in his view, this communal life."[42] Relatively few Jews were interested in assimilation. According to a 1917 Prussian study, only 3–5% of Poland's Jews were Assimilationists. By contrast, 40% were petit bourgeois nationalists (encompassing Folkists and all Zionists); 8% were Bundists and supporters of Poale Zion, and nearly 50% were Agudists.[43]

This trend continued in the interwar period. The Zionist daily, *Nasz Przegląd,* which was published in Polish, viewed Jews as a separate nation and Poles as the "Other," and staunchly opposed the assimilation

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[42] Kalman Weiser, *Jewish People, Yiddish Nation: Noah Prylucki and the Folkists in Poland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Pres, 2011), 312.

[43] Janowsky, *The Jews and Minority Rights (1898–1919),* 300.

of Jews into Polish society.[44] Ludwik Hirszfeld, an assimilated Jew and convert to Catholicism, was also of the view that the Jewish community was a separate nation by choice:

> … where there is patriotism there is a nation. It would be contrary to the concept of justice and freedom to forbid a certain community to consider itself a nation. … Western Jews did not want to be a nation and were not. Eastern Jews wanted to be and were. The masses regarded themselves as a nation with a separate destiny and separate properties.
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> The Peace Treaty of Versailles recognized Jews as a national minority, gave them special rights to establish their own schools, and put this national minority in the care of the League of Nations. This was a mistake. The minority rights guarded by international institutions did not help the Jews at all. On the contrary, they deepened the chasm between the Jews and the Poles …At the same time, enjoying the rights of a minority, the Jews opened schools where subjects were taught in Yiddish or Hebrew and where the children did not learn to speak proper Polish. It would not have occurred to a Jew in America or France to send his children to such schools.[45]

In a review of *In Those Nightmarish Days: The Ghetto Reportage of Peretz Opoczynski and Josef Zelkowicz,*[46] Jan Peczkis notes:

> In his description of the authors, editor [Samuel] Kassow comments, "Before the war, Opoczynski and Zelkowicz were journalists who knew the people they were writing for: the fractious, argumentative, opinionated Polish Jews who read the morning Yiddish newspapers … Modern secular Jews loved to hear gossip about Hasidic rebbes; Hasidim avidly read exposes of crafty criminals. Yiddish-speaking Jews devoured biting satires of Polish-speaking Jews (*shmendrikes*) [i.e., nobodies] and their shallow pretensions." (p. viii). For an exposition of the contempt of Peretz Opoczynski towards Polish-speaking Jews—as *shmendrikes*—see p. 42 and p. 93.
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> Acculturated and assimilated Polish Jews were "too Jewish" for many Poles and "not Jewish enough" for many Jews. Editor Kassow alludes to the fact (as noted by Endeks) that Polish-speaking Jews remained Jews first and "Poles" second, while anti-assimilationist Jews warned that even outward Polonization meant a

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[44] Anna Landau-Czajka, "Polacy w oczach 'Naszego Przeglądu'," *Kwartalnik Historii Zydów*, no. 4 (2011): 491–506.

[45] Ludwik Hirszfeld, *Ludwik Hirszfeld: The Story of One Life* (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2010), 325–27. Concurrent with the Treaty of Versailles of June 28, 1919, Minority Treaties were imposed first on Poland and then on other states in Eastern Europe. These treaties set out rights for national minorities that the Western Powers did not adhere to themselves. They also subjected those states to potential outside interventions by the League of Nations, thus effectively having to renounce part of their sovereignty. The imposition of the Minority Treaties met with opposition in Poland and criticism on the part of perceptive commentators at the time. See, for example, E.J. Dillon, *The Inside Story of the Peace Conference* (New York and London: Harper, 1920), 499. As has been noted by foreign observers, "Poland had to assume obligations respecting Germans and her territories, but Germany was required to make no similar undertaking respecting Poles, and none of the Principal Allied Powers made any treaties whatever covering the treatment of their minorities." See H.H. Fisher, *America and the New Poland* (New York: MacMillan, 1928), 159. Historian Nicholas Bethell, who believes that reports about Poland's mistreatment of minorities were exaggerated, remarked: "Poland had none of the security and stability which leads a country to take a tolerant, enlightened attitude towards its national minorities." See Nicholas Bethell, *The War Hitler Won: The Fall of Poland, September 1939* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1973), 307, 343.

[46] Samuel D. Kassow, ed., *In Those Nightmarish Days: The Ghetto Reportage of Peretz Opoczynski and Josef Zelkowicz* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015).

suicidal loss of essential Jewishness, "While the Polish-language Jewish press showed great sympathy for Zionism, supported the new Hebrew literature in Palestine, and extensively reviewed Yiddish literature and theater, the Yiddish-language sector stubbornly refused to return the favor. … The Yiddish writer Yehoshue Perle called them, "*mentshn on a morgn,*" people without a future …" (p. xi). Furthermore, "Opoczynski, more outspoken, … made no secret of his contempt and even hatred of Polish-speaking Jews." (p. xii).

Peretz Opoczynski of the Warsaw ghetto wrote of a situation where Jewish mail carriers were not acting as uprightly as Christian mail carriers. This prompted the following quoted remark of some angry Jews, "You're worse than the *goyim*." (p. 48).

It is often claimed that Jews were loyal citizens of Poland because they did not have a political agenda that conflicted with that of their home state. However, Yiddishist-oriented Jews were against an undoing of the Partitions of Poland, and resurrection of the Polish state, because this would geographically divide the Jews and thus dilute their political power. A new Polish state could also cause the diminution or loss of centuries-old Jewish economic privileges. Finally, Slavic culture was unworthy of the Jews. As Joshua Karlip writes,

> As this last shred of hope gave way to sober reality, [Yisroel] Efroikin also mourned the breakup of Russia into independent successor states as spelling the death of a unified Russian Jewry. From the late eighteenth century until World War I, Lithuanian, Polish, and Ukrainian Jews had comprised a united Russian Jewry that experienced modernization together through such movements and processes as Haskalah, Zionism, and the rise of Yiddish culture. Now, however, Russian Jews would face the future as minorities in emerging nation-states. … Although the successor states might guarantee personal emancipation and national autonomy, he argued, the small size of these fragmented Jewish communities would preclude autonomy's implementation. The peasant nationalities that would lead most of these successor states, moreover, would force the Jews from their traditional economic role in commerce and industry. Echoing the Yiddishist call for a synthesis between Jewish and European cultures, Efroikin feared that the low cultural level of these peasant nationalities would negatively affect the development of secular Yiddish culture.[47]

Objective outside observers saw the potential for conflict inherent in Jewish attitudes, and they did not lay all the blame on the Polish side, as is increasingly the case with the more recent historical treatment of Polish-Jewish relations.[48] John Howard Adeney, who had much first-hand experience in this area, noted the sense of elitism that characterized the attitude of the Jews to their surroundings.

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[47] Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation,* 146.

[48] See, for example, Antony Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia,* vol. 2: *1881 to* 1914 (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010), who, while acknowledging Jewish demands for autonomy and the existence of Jewish nationalism (e.g., pp. 111, 138–39), does not attribute any particular significance to these phenomena, and attributes the deterioration of Polish-Jewish relations exclusively on Polish nationalism. In earlier years, however, some Jewish historians were more even-handed in assigning blame for the state of affairs: "Having just concluded a bloody struggle for national independence, the Poles could not have been expected to be pleased with the presence on their soil of three million mostly unacculturated Jews, many of whom had been sympathetic to Poland's enemies. … Objective reasons for disliking the Jews, who were so numerous, so influential, and so clearly non-Polish, were not lacking, and the chauvinistic atmosphere that pervaded the country made things worse." See Ezra Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 12.

> The Jew, living among Christians who make much display of images and eikons [icons], is firmly convinced that they, too, are idolaters, and therefore on a par with the Canaanites of old, while he as a pure monotheist stands on an infinitely higher plane. And Talmudic teaching has accentuated this point of view. Hence he consciously or unconsciously despises the non-Jews, and cultivates a real pride in himself and a contempt for all that is non-Jewish. This line of conduct naturally irritates the non-Jew.[49]

Instead of repeating the standard Judeocentric narrative that blames the failure of assimilation, and the need for Zionism, on Polish anti-Semitism, the British journalist Robert Wilton has a much more sophisticated understanding of Jewish-Polish relations.

> In Poland they [Jews] enjoyed a large measure of freedom. All business was in their hands. They acted as agents of the great landlords. The urban population was—and remains—mostly Jewish. But Poles and Jews lived peacefully enough together. … Thirty years ago [i.e., about the time of Jan Jeleński's *Rola*] the Poles began to go into business themselves. Competition arose. The landlords started agricultural associations to shake off the Jewish monopoly. A rift betokened itself, and has been growing ever since—effectually discrediting Assimilationist theories, largely based upon the earlier and one-sided adjustment of Polish and Jewish interests.[50]

The American Harold Henry Fisher recognized the alienating nature of Jewish separatism in Poland: "This Jewish nationalist formula was supported by the Zionists, and the right and left Jewish Socialists. The orthodox Jews advocated merely emancipation and equality of rights. The conflict, therefore, was not with 'Poles of the Jewish faith,' but with 'Polish citizens of the Jewish nation.'" Despite the later (1925) efforts of Stanisław Grabski (Minister of Religious Beliefs and Public Education), Count Aleksander Skrzyński (Poland's Prime Minister in 1925–1926), and several Jewish members of the Sejm (Polish Parliament), the problem persisted: "These measures did not, of course, put an end to anti-Semitism in Poland or to hostility to the Polish state among certain Jewish groups, but it was a step in the right direction, a hopeful indication of a less intransigent spirit in Polish-Jewish relations."[51]

As noted, the Jews wanted to live as a separate nation within a nation, among their own kind, with their own language, schools and institutions, and even their own communal government. Contacts with Poles (Christians) would be kept to a minimum, mainly on the economic plane. However, in addition to an exclusivist community for Jews, whose institutions were to be funded by the state, Jews wanted to have it both ways: they also demanded full access to the institutions of the majority as a vehicle for their own social advancement. While such an imbalanced separateness or autonomy was pressed by Jews and other minorities, those Poles who held similar aspirations for themselves were branded as anti-Semites and xenophobes. Just as rabbis favoured denominational schools for Jews, some Catholic clergy advocated for the establishment of denominational schools for Catholics. (Denominational schools exist in many

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[49] J.H. Adeney, *The Jews of Eastern Europe* (Londonn: Central Board of Missions and Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; New York: Macmillan, 1921), 42–43.

[50] Robert Wilton, *Russia's Agony* (New York: Longman's, Green and Company; London: E. Arnold, 1918), 56–57.

[51] H.H. Fisher, *America and the New Poland* (New York: MacMillan, 1928), 159, 331.

countries including Canada.) The Jewish community had to settle for the right to establish separate schools (some were state funded, but most Jewish schools were private), and maintained a broad range of community institutions. Many private Jewish schools, however, did receive municipal subsidies, as did Jewish social and cultural institutions,[52] a fact that is generally ignored in Jewish historiography.

Jews enjoyed an unhampered cultural, social and religious life that flourished in interwar period.[53] They also participated in the country's political life through a host of political parties that won representation both locally and nationally. Nonetheless, separateness was fostered by Jewish community leaders and remained the preferred lifestyle for most Jews. Assimilation into Polish society automatically put one outside the mainstream of the Jewish community and even led to ostracism. Assimilation on the Western model was vigorously rejected by most Jews, who saw themselves as a distinct nation.[54] Tellingly, during the 1931 census, the Jewish community leaders urged Jews to identify their mother tongue as Hebrew or Yiddish, rather than Polish.[55] When a committee named after Berek Joselewicz promoting Polish-Jewish dialogue was started in Wilno in 1928, it was boycotted by the Jewish community leaders on the grounds

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[52] For example, the municipality of Zamość allocated substantial funding for Jewish schools, an old age home, social organizations, and summer colonies for Jewish children. See Mordechai V. Bernstein, ed., *The Zamosc Memorial Book: A Memorial Book of a Center of Jewish Life Destroyed by the Nazis* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2004), 283. Jewish schools and socio-cultural organizations received subsidies from the municipality of Mińsk Mazowiecki. See Janusz Kuligowski, "Zarządy miejskie Mińska Mazowieckiego i Siedlec w pierwszych miesiącach okupacji niemieckiej, *Rocznik Mińsko-Mazowiecki,* vol. 5 (1999): 56–64, here at 57. The same was true in many other localities, such as Wilno (and nearby towns) and Białystok. See Jarosław Wołkonowski, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Wilnie i na Wileńszczyźnie 1919–1939* (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2004), 133–43, 186–97, 209–12, 216–17, 219, 222–23, 227, 263, 275–76, 280, 285, 288; Katarzyna Sztop-Rutkowska, *Próba dialogu: Polacy i Żydzi w międzywojennym Białymstoku* (Kraków: Nosmos, 2008), 182–83, 233, 244. Subsidies for Jewish schools and social organizations were also provided in Warsaw, Łódź, Poznań (an Endek stronghold), and many other cities and towns. See, for example, Hanna Kozińska-Witt, "W stolicy 'strefy nieosiedlenia': Poznańska prasa o stosunku samorządu miasta Poznania do Żydów w latach 1918–1939," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów,* no. 2 (2012): 162–90, at p. 185.

[53] Although Jewish authors like to portray Poles as devoutly and even fanatically Catholic, they ignore that Jews were likely more religious than Poles. The city of Warsaw, with a Catholic majority, had only some 70 churches in the interwar period, whereas Jews had more than 50 synagogues and 400 prayer houses. See Maria Barbasiewicz, *Warszawa: Perła północy* (Warsaw: PWN, 2014), 125.

[54] Writing in 1894, a French Jewish author describes this phenomenon in the following terms: While Talmudism ("the nationalist ethics of the Talmud") and Jews-as-nationality reigns among the Jews of such places as Russia and Poland, "This intolerant aversion toward the stranger has disappeared among the Western Jews," who opted for assimilation. See Bernard Lazare, *Antisemitism: Its History and Causes* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 136.

[55] Sean Martin, *Jewish Life in Cracow, 1918–1939* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004), 14, 50, 84; Wierzbieniec, *Żydzi w województwie lwowskim w okresie międzywojennym,* 41–42.

that it could lead to assimilation.[56] Shedding traditional Jewish dress in a shtetl was enough to warrant condemnation in the synagogue.[57] This sense of Jewish separateness, coupled with the Poles' objectively justifiable belief that the Jews—unlike others who had settled among the Poles (like the Armenians)—were by and large an inassimilable group, constituted the most serious impediment to Polish-Jewish co-existence.

The separateness of the Jews was clearly discernible at every turn. According to one Jewish researcher,

> In Poland, … there was little question: Jews were Jews. With some exception, Jews neither considered themselves nor were they regarded by others as Polish or Polish Jews. As is well known, Jews in Poland were allowed to have their own laws and institutions. They were a nation unto themselves and they maintained their nationhood in Poland. From the time of their arrival and through the centuries, they sought to protect their way of life. They were not merely a separate religion but a tightly-knit community, leading life largely separate from Poles. They had their own customs, culture, dress, schools, courts, community government, and language (in the 1930 census almost 80 percent declared Yiddish as their mother tongue). Menachem Begin's father refused to learn Polish. In a word, the vast majority of Jews were unintegrated socially and culturally in the fabric of the larger society. They shared little or no national sentiment or common allegiance with the Poles. They and the Poles were almost strangers. They avoided association with the vast majority of the population, the Polish peasantry, not wanting to live like, or with, them.[58]

According to historian Regina Renz,

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[56] Joanna Januszewska-Jurkiewicz, *Stosunki narodowościowe na Wileńszczyźnie w latach 1920–1939,* 2nd edition (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2011), 550. Another organization started up in interwar Wilno which promoted biculturalism was also denounced by Jewish community leaders, especially Zionists. Ibid., 550–51. The actions of Berek Joselowicz, who participated in the 1794 Kościuszko Uprising, are usually celebrated in terms of Polish patriotism. Derek J. Penslar throws some cold water on this narrative. First of all, he considers the regiment of Jewish volunteer cavalry a legend, and suggests that it may have been a part of the urban militia defending Warsaw from the Russians, and not an independent regiment. More important, Penslar raises sensitive issues that include opportunism and ephemeral loyalties:

> Berek was not so much a Polish patriot as an adventurer and activist who sought to enhance his own personal honor as well as that of the Jews under his command. Although Berek is most famous for his service for Poland, in 1796 he proposed to the Habsburg emperor the raising of a corps of six thousand to eight thousand Jews who would be divided into cavalry and infantry units to fight against the French.

See Derek J. Penslar, *Jews and the Military: A History (*Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013), 56–57.

[57] Aleksandra Namysło, ed., *"Kto w takich czasach Żydów przechowuje?...": Polacy niosący pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie okupacji niemieckiej* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2009), 254 (Chaim Berman in Kozienice).

[58] Ralph Slovenko, "On Polish-Jewish Relations," *The Journal of Psychiatry & Law*, vol. 15 (Winter 1987): 597–687, as quoted in Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski, *Jews in Poland: A Documentary History: The Rise of Jews as a Nation from Congressus Judaicus in Poland to the Knesset in Israel* (New York: Hippocrene, 1993; Revised edition–1998), 157. Slovenko goes on to state some rather self-evident truths that are often overlooked by those who tend to view Polish-Jewish relations as some exceptional form of ethnic or religious interaction: "The phenomenon is surely not unique. Birds of a feather flock together. That people group with those similar to themselves is one of the most well-established replicable findings in the psychology and biology of human behavior. People of whatever race or religion have always tried to insulate and remove themselves from what is perceived as different behavior, whatever its origins." George Orwell in his famous "Notes on Nationalism," writes that characteristic for the nationalism of the victim is a reluctance to acknowledge in just measure the sufferings of other peoples, and an inability to admit that the victim can also victimize.

Many small country towns … could be described as shtetls—localities dominated by a Jewish community, organized according to their own rules in their own unique manner. The Jews constituted an integral part of the material and spiritual landscape of small towns.

Poles and Jews living in the same town formed two separate environments. Rose Price recollects: ‘I was born in a small Polish town. In our district, everyone knew everyone else: grandparents, aunts, friends, neighbours, merchants, and craftsmen. The strangers were the non-Jews—the Poles.’ That there was such

fundamental closeness and such great psychological alienation is astounding.[59] Both the Polish and Jewish side harboured grievances and prejudices, although these had different sources and disparate natures. The model of bilateral contacts accepted by both sides was one of peaceful isolation, of a life devoid of conflict, but also of closer friendship. The Jews were an ethnic community with a marked consciousness of their cultural distinctiveness, which had been strengthened through the centuries by their common history, and

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[59] In fact, there was nothing unusual in such co-existence either at that time or today. In Canada, there was an enormous divide between French Canadians and the dominant English-speaking society until the 1960s. A similar situation prevailed in Northern Ireland, between the dominant Protestants and the Catholics, throughout the 20th century, and many Protestants and Catholics continue to live in segregated communities to this day, afraid of attacks from the other side. In many Western countries, where racist policies were part of their very fabric, there was state-enforced segregation and, in some cases, genocidal policies were implemented. In the United States, Blacks and native Indians were segregated from Whites, as were native Indians in Canada and the aboriginal peoples in Australia and New Zealand. New Zealand, like the United States, has a shameful, but little known, history of bloodily forcing its Maori population off their lands. The story of genocidal policies of the Spaniards and British Americans toward the native Indian population continues to emerge and shock.

While not discounting the importance of slavery in shaping attitudes about African-Americans, in his study *The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), Robert G. Parkinson argues that the early American republic saw the rise of open calls for a "white man's government" and the formalized policy of Indian Removal. He goes back to 1775, when the American Revolution turned into the Revolutionary War, to locate the origins of racial exclusion in the society that would become the United States It was during these days, Parkinson says, that patriot leaders made a fateful choice. They embarked upon a specific and concerted plan to place Blacks and Native Americans—no matter what their condition, whether they believed in the patriots' ideals or not—firmly outside the boundaries of America's experiment with democratic republicanism. As one author compellingly argues,

> The genocide of Native Americans was nowhere more methodically savage than in California. Nowhere was there such an explicit intention to "exterminate"—the word is used over and over again in state records—the inhabitants of a land supposedly "discovered." Meanwhile, a brutal slave market for Indians flourished in California just as slavery was about to be abolished in the South.
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> If subjugation and effective enslavement were state policy, so was destruction. Heizer quoted soldiers and militiamen reporting to their superiors on a litany of killings, usually of unarmed Indian civilians. Captain Nathaniel Lyon described the massacre of up to 150 Pomo Indians, mainly women and children, at Clear Lake in March 1850 as "a perfect slaughter pen." In 1859 citizens of Marysville were "hired to hunt [Indians]" and "recompensed by receiving so much for each scalp…. The money has been made up by subscription." On May 9, 1861, the Shasta Herald reported that "a meeting of citizens was held…and measures taken to raise a fund to be disbursed in payment of Indian scalps for which a bounty was offered."
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> [James J.] Rawls detailed how "a common feature of the trade was the seizure of Indian girls and women who were held by their captors as sexual partners." The Marysville Appeal in December 1851 noted that "while kidnapped Indian children were seized as servants, the young women were made to serve both the 'purposes of labor and of lust.'"

See Ed Vulliamy, "Reclaiming Native Identity in California," *The New York Review of Books,* June 22, 2023. The sysrematic and state-sponsored slaughter of native Americans heightened during the California Gold Rush. In his study *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846–1873* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2016), UCLA historian Benjamin Madley argues extensively that genocide is the only appropriate term for what happened to native peoples in north-central California between 1846 and 1873. For over a quarter-century, the region became a quilt of many killing fields. Of the estimated 80 percent decline in the California Indian population during these years, around 40 percent has been attributed to outright "extermination killings" alone. Many of the atrocities were committed not only by US soldiers and their auxiliaries but also by motley companies of militiamen that murdered young and old, male and female indiscriminately.

Conditions in Canada were no better. Along with the United States of America, it was among the most racist countries in the world. Edward Cornwallis, the governor of Nova Scotia, ordered all Mi'kmaq people to be scalped and killed in 1752 amid the natives' raids on the British settlement in Halifax. Historians have recently argued that Canada pursued a deliberate policy of starving the Plains people in the latter half of the 19th century. John A. Macdonald, the first prime minister of Canada, backed a policy of withholding food aid from Indigenous communities "until the Indians are on the verge of starvation." He also opposed Chinese immigration and voting rights on the grounds that they threatened Canada's "Aryan" character. See James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina, Saskatchewan: University of Regina Press, 2013). The Canadian government either abandoned or attempted to assimilate its aboriginal population through coercive measures

> which manifested itself in the cult of tradition and religious ties. Apart from tradition and religion, other important factors binding the Jewish community were the Yiddish language, clothing, customs, and communal institutions.[60]

Noah Prylucki (1882–1941), a leading Jewish cultural and political figure and proponent of Yiddishism, actively promoted complete and permanent national polarization: "We are not Russians, we are not Germans, we are also not Poles. We were, we are, and we will remain Jews…"[61] The vast majority of Poland's Jews agreed, and lived their lives accordingly. Israeli statesman Shimon Peres, born in Wiszniew (in what is now Belarus) in 1923 to a wealthy timber merchant, recalled that the town where he grew up, was "totally Jewish, and we were living neither in Poland nor in Russia. We were living in Israel from the day I was born, even before emigrating" to Palestine in 1932.[62] In an article entitled, "Jews and Poles Lived Together for 800 Years But Were Not Integrated," published in the New York newspaper *Forverts* (September 17, 1944), Yiddish author and Nobel laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer wrote under the pen-name Icchok Warszawski:

> Rarely did a Jew think it was necessary to learn Polish; rarely was a Jew interested in Polish history or Polish politics. … Even in the last few years it was still a rare occurrence that a Jew would speak Polish well. Out of three million Jews living in Poland, two-and-a-half million were not able to write a simple letter in Polish and they spoke [Polish] very poorly. There are hundreds of thousands of Jews in Poland to whom Polish was as unfamiliar as Turkish. The undersigned was connected with Poland for generations, but his father did not know more than two words in Polish. And it never even occurred to him that there was something amiss in that.

Bashevis Singer again returned to this theme in the March 20, 1964 issue of *Forverts*: "My mouth could not get accustomed to the soft consonants of that [Polish] language. My forefathers have lived for centuries in Poland but in reality I was a foreigner, with separate language, ideas and religion. I sensed the

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[60] Regina Renz, "Small Towns in Inter-War Poland," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 17: *The Shtetl: Myth and Reality* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Litman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004), 143–51, at 148.

[61] As cited in Weiser, *Jewish People, Yiddish Nation,* 313. For an incisive review of this book by Jan Peczkis see <https://www.jewsandpolesdatabase.org/2019/11/04/like-jews-like-endeks-yiddishist-prylucki-weiser/>. As that reviewer points out,

> Nowadays, Poles in general, and National Democrats (Endeks) in particular, are often berated for not having been "inclusive", for engaging in "ethnonationalism" instead of "civic nationalism", for regarding Jews as perpetual foreigners, for not embracing Jews as fellow Poles, and for saying that Jews and Poles are two mutually-exclusive nations. Ironic to all this, Poland's Jews had long thought of themselves in exactly this same way, as this book makes so graphically clear, yet Jews are never faulted for that. The reader may be surprised, as I was, in another way. It turns out that many "anti-Semitic" themes were once held by respectable Jews themselves, as author Kalman (Keith) Weiser clearly shows. Yet–surprise–only Poles are now blamed for once having held them.

[62] Peter Bakogeorge, "Israeli statesman brokered Oslo peace pact," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), September 29, 2016.

oddness of this situation and often considered moving to Palestine."[63] Singer recalls wanting to learn Polish as a boy growing up in Warsaw, but his father scoffed at the notion. Tellingly, Jews also believed that even well-intentioned Gentiles cannot understand the Jewish spirit.[64]

Compared to Singer, who espoused rather moderate views, many Jews advanced extremist views. They underscored their alienation by reacting strongly against the supposed spirit of submissiveness that Jews had shown while in the Diaspora. In his novel *Mikan U-Mikan* ("From Here and From Here"), published in 1911, Yosef Haim Brenner wrote:

> For hundreds of years those foul creatures [the Poles] have been spitting in our faces and we wiped away their spittle and sat down to write books of Talmudic interpretation and dispute, nonsense, revolting things … we waited for the Messiah, gave money to our murderers and fled from one place to another …Wherever we went we were slaughtered and we fouled the air with our spilled blood.[65]

Non-Jews also perceived this problem, though from a rather different perspective. Hendrik Willem van Loon, a Dutch-American correspondent for the Associated Press during the Russian Revolution of 1905, commented that most of the Jews "were never polonized: they hardly ever used the Polish language and did not feel to be a Pole." Thus, the Poles "found themselves in company with 5,500,000 [an inflated figure—*M.P.*] strangers who live with them and on them and who have no intention to act in unison with them." More than anything else, van Loon saw the Jewish attitude of "I belong to the chosen people and I am a different creature from you" as the source of feelings of animosity toward the Jews in Poland.[66] Alfred Döblin, a German novelist who visited Poland in 1924, was immediately struck by the essential difference between Poland's Jews and the Jews of Weimar Germany. He writes,

> Three hundred fifty thousand Jews live in Warsaw, half as many as in all Germany. A small number of them are strewn across the city, the bulk reside together in the northwestern sector. They are a nation. People who only know Western Europe fail to realize this. The Jews have their own costumes, their own language, religion, manners and mores, their ancient national feeling and national consciousness.[67]

William John Rose, an authority on Poland who taught at several North American universities, observed on his visits to Poland before and after the First World War, that many Jews were hostile to even learning

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[63] Cited in Chone Shmeruk, "Isaac Bashevis Singer and Bruno Schultz," *The Polish Review,* vol. 36, no. 2 (1991): 161–67.

[64] Brian Horowitz, *Empire Jews: Jewish Nationalism and Acculturation in 19th- and Early 20th-Century Russia* (Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica Publishers, 2009), 6. Polish nationalist writers are attacked for thinking that even assimilated Jews cannot understand the Polish spirit. Russian writers felt the same way about assimilated Russian Jews, as did German writers of the Weimar Germany about assimilated German Jews.

[65] Cited in Roni Stauber, *The Holocaust in Israeli Public Debate in the 1950s: Ideology and Memory* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 3.

[66] Cornelis A. van Minnen, *Van Loon: Popular Historian, Journalist, and FDR Confidant* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 31.

[67] Alfred Döblin, *Journey to Poland* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 50.

Polish—even after the rebirth of the Polish state itself. Rose describes his experiences with a Polish Jew who experienced enmity from fellow Jews for not sharing their veiled (and politicized) anti-Polish and anti-Christian sentiments:

> Then my guide took me to see what everyone regarded as a model piece of work for abandoned children, the Jewish orphanage on Leszno Street [in Warsaw], managed by a Mr. Hosenpud. This remarkable man had been a teacher for years, and was president of the Jewish Teacher's Association. A believer, he took the view that Jewry is a religion and not a nation, and had many enemies among his own people, who were opposed to having orphan lads taught Polish, or brought up to play games, or introduced to the school curriculum that is regarded the world over as the road to intelligent citizenship.[68]

Having a firsthand knowledge of Poles and Jews, Rose, in contradistinction to most modern thinking, found Jews the ones primarily responsible for the negative aspects of Polish-Jewish relations. Citing several sources published by Rose, Daniel Stone comments:

> [Rose] recognized that Jews were subject to discrimination but considered actual anti-Semitism uncommon and of recent date, deriving from economic competition. The real problem was not Polish attitudes but the refusal of Jews to assimilate. He strenuously opposed Zionism insofar as it led to a resurgence of Jewish nationalism in Eastern Europe. The best solution would be emigration, preferably to established countries where Jews would not be too 'arrogant' to assimilate. Rose applauded those Jews who considered themselves Polish nationals whether they maintained their Hebrew faith or converted … [such as] historian Szymon Aszkenazy, a practising Jew … Nonetheless, assimilation could not offer a solution to the mass of Jews.[69]

The extent of conversion of Jews to Christianity in Polish lands has become a topic of increased research in recent years.[70]

As recognized by European Jews themselves, Zionism was not conducive, and indeed was at odds with, patriotism to their host country:

> It made me think about who I was, though: was I a Dutchman first, or a Jew? The distinction between a Jewish Dutchman and a Dutch Jew is important: the first is totally assimilated, whereas the second puts the stress on his Jewishness, which is the internationally linking thing between us all. As a Zionist I beling to the second category, and I felt that the first line of defence for the Jewish race was the foundation of the State of Israel.[71]

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[68] Daniel Stone, ed., *The Polish Memoirs of William John Rose* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 100.

[69] Stone, *The Polish Memoirs of William John Rose,* xxiii.

[70] See, for example, Justyna Kutrzeba, "Żydowscy konwertyci w Krakowie przełomu XIX i XX wieku," *Krzysztofory: Zeszyty Naukowe Muzeum Historycznego Miasta Krakowa,* no. 35 (2017): 203–14. In the period 1871–1911, more than 500 conversions were recorded in the city of Kraków.

[71] Elie Cohen as cited in Anton Gill, *The Journey Back From Hell: Conversations with Concentration Camp Survivors* (London: Grafton Books, 1988), 371–72.

Assimilationist tendencies caused one to step back from one's community and look at it through from a different perspective. Apolinary Hartglas (1883–1953), who was born, and grew up, in Biała Podlaska, experienced difficulty in completely fitting into either the Jewish world or the Polish world.[72] The language spoken at home was Polish, except when his parents wanted to hide something from the children. Then they spoke Yiddish. The family ate *treyf* food, and did not observe the Sabbath. They only attended synagogue on Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah. The young Apolinary disliked the traditional dress of non-assimilated Jews, and frowned on Jewish funerals, owing to the paid grievers and their loud wailing. He found Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic funerals much more dignified. As a young boy, Hartglas, owing to his dislike for Jews even though he was one, used to run the local Jewish children off the town square. He indicates that the Polish children neither encouraged him in this conduct, nor took part in it. Hartglas writes that he experienced countless acts of benevolence from Poles, and never personally suffered from Polish anti-Semitism. While in *gymnasium* (high school), he was once insulted by a Russian and once by a Pole. These incidents were resolved with fisticuffs, with Poles and Russians sometimes supporting him. After graduating from the University of Warsaw, he practiced law in Siedlce. Hartglas stated that he loved both the Polish and the Jewish nations. He also shared the Jews' grief and anger at the wrongs that Jews faced from Poles, even though he himself did not experience them. At the same time, he felt many of the same grievances that many Poles—including even the "best" Poles—had against Jews. Interestingly, Hartglas's worst experiences were from fellow Jews. For instance, while a lawyer, he was exploited by Jews. Large numbers of Jewish clients would come to him, saying that they were destitute and in need of his services for free, even though they later turned out to be well-off. Hartglas said that his Jewishness was not a religion but a nationality, in the same way that Poles are a nationality. What is more, Hartglas plainly stated that he did not consider himself a Pole. In addition, he considered himself a Zionist. Zionism, by definition, was a form of loyalty to another state, and not only, or not at all, to Poland. During some May 3 ceremonies in 1916, there was a speech given by a prominent Jewish speaker. The speech called for Jews to be granted full rights alongside Poles, while also fully retaining their rights to their own language and their own cultural separatism. Based on this, one might reasonably think that this Jewish speaker was part of the Yiddishist (folkist, or Bundist) variety. But no. It was Hartglas—the assimilated Polish Jew. (The foregoing confirms Endek accusations that Poland's Jews wanted it both ways—to be Poles and not to be Poles. Is it any wonder that Endeks commonly doubted if assimilation would transform Jews into Poles?) Of course, there were also assimilated Polish Jews who considered themselves Polish by nationality. However, it is unclear how common they were, and how many of them were unambiguously Poles first and Jews second. Interestingly, Hartglas's attitudes towards the Jewish national movement were not exactly flattering. Referring to the time around 1914, Hartlas stated that the idealistic assimilationist impulse was dead, that the Jewish national movement had by now grown immensely, and that—outside of Zionism—it had, in his words, "acquired distasteful, chauvinistic tones." In the interwar period, Hartglas sat in the Polish Parliament (Seym), where he was co-creator of the Bloc of National Minorities, a coalition of parties representing ethnic minorities. Between 1938 and

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[72] Apolinary Hartglas, *Na pograniczu dwóch światów* (Warszawa: Rytm, 1996), 18, 19, 30, 31, 35, 40, 46–47, 51, 54, 55, 107, 152, 174, 190–92. The summary in the text is from a review by Jan Peczkis.

1939, he was a member of the Warsaw city council. He was allowed to leave German-occupied Poland in December 1939, and thus escaped the eventual Holocaust. He went to Palestine, where he spent the last several years of his life.

Parallel to the orthodox stream of Judaism, there emerged in the 19th century a strong secular movement that eschewed Jewish religious tradition. Chaim Zhitlovsky, an influential Yiddishist thinker who wrote from 1897 to 1914, followed the atheist line that dismissed religion as something discredited by modern science, philosophy, and morality. Isaac Leib Peretz stripped the Bible of divine revelation, and redefined it as a repository of Jewish literature. Still another leading Yiddishist thinker, Esther Frumkin, writing in 1910, scoffed at Jewish religious practices, and expressed a desire for holidays to celebrate what she called the proletarian struggle.[73] The following commentary about the views of Chaim Zhitlovsky, one of the leading ideologues of the secular Yiddishist movement, provides more insight on the pitfalls of integration:

> Since Enlightenment universalism was the secular product of Western Christian culture. Jews must overcome their instinctive hatred of Christianity if they wish to join the modern world. The paradoxical path to Jewish secularization led through the Christian religion, not by conversion but by renouncing the Jewish

[73] Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture,* 101, 102, 103. Although Fishman attempts to soften the secularism of the Yiddishist movement, he finally admits to its militant atheist essence: "Discussion of God as creator, master of the universe, or providential force was beyond the pale of acceptable discourse. Consequently, prayer and religious ritual were likewise anathema. … While much of the religious tradition could be recast in national terms, the aversion to religion per se remained nearly total. … the Judaism of secular Yiddishists, even of the national-romantic variety, was a Judaism without religion and a Judaism without God." Ibid., 112–3.

religion's teaching of contempt. Yet, by reclaiming Jesus as one of their own, the Jews might argue that their culture was a key source for Western civilization.[74]

The degree of alienation of the Jewish community, which was largely self-imposed, cannot be overemphasized. For Orthodox Jews, their Jewishness constituted an absolute and insurmountable

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[74] David Biale, *Not in the Heavens: The Tradition of Jewish Secular Thought* (Princeton, New Jersey and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 136. Biale remarks, "That Jews throughout the world today are disproportionately more secular than their Gentile neighbors in all of the ways articulated in this book is one piece of evidence of the ongoing nature of this legacy." (P. 181.) In addition: "The majority of Jews in the world today are, in some sense, secular. They either doubt the existence of God or consider the question superfluous." (P. 192). This process of self-atheization was well underway in the 1930s. As reviewer Jan Peczkis asks pointedly, "Were he alive today, would Polish Cardinal August Hlond feel vindicated for his much-maligned 1936 'Jews are freethinkers' statement?" In 1936, Cardinal Hlond made a much-condemned statement about "Jews as freethinkers, vanguards of Bolshevism, and a threat to morals," etc., which he did not apply indiscriminately to Jews. This occurred after much of Poland's Jewish population had undergone self-atheization to varying degrees. In fact, the self-atheization of Poland's Jews, which had begun in tsarist Russia decades earlier (for example, through the Yiddishist movement) was by now well advanced. Many Jewish authors have written about this, and religious Jews condemned the large-scale Jewish departure from religion even more severely than the Catholic Poles. All this occurs even today—in Israel. The haredim (ultra-Orthodox Jews) condemn the mores of secular Israeli Jews in very much the same ways that Catholic Poles did their secular Jewish counterparts in the 1930's.

The growing secularization and atheization of Jews in the late 19th and early 20th century was of deep concern for Jews themselves as a real, significant and highly relevant development. Cardinal Hlond's understanding and appreciation of this phenomenon did not differ fundamentally from that of Jewish religious leaders at the time.

> Ever more Jews, especially younger ones, were abandoning old customs, traditional dress, and lifestyle. Jewish society rapidly embraced modernity, including secularism, and Hasidism began to lose its followers. … For a great many people, this meant abandoning Hasidism and embracing political movements such as Bundism, territorialism, Zionism, anarchism, and even Bolshevism.
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> Many Orthodox Jews, including Hasidism, were swept away by the revolutionary atmosphere, abandoned religion, and joined the Bolsheviks. Some even enlisted in the secret police [Cheka, then NKVD] … Others joined the Yevsektsiya, the Jewish "section" of the Communist Party that served as a tool of cultural and political control of the Jewish "street." … The presence of former Hasidim in the ranks of the Yevsektsiya would prove useful in identifying which institutions should be attacked.
>
> Yet the primary challenge for Orthodox Jewry and Hasidim in Poland was the abandonment of religion, especially by the young, who embraced secular movements such as Zionism and socialism in unprecedented numbers. Accelerated secularization affected not only ordinary Hasidic families but also the houses of tsadikkim.

See David Biale, David Assaf, Benjamin Brown, Uriel Gellman, Samuel Heilman, Moshe Rosman, Gadi Sagiv, and Marcin Wodziński, *Hasidism: A New History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018), 588, 590, 597. See also Malkin, *Secular Judaism,* 29. Malkin also draws a link between the secularization and atheization movement among Jews and its impact on the development of revolutionary movements like Communism: "The most important contribution of [secularized Jewish] messianism to Jewish culture was the development of a faith in a better future, an ideal world, which became a driving force for new social and revolutionary movements in which Jews played major roles." Ibid., 120. (Malkin, however, does not explain how Jewish involvement in a movement based on systematic violence and scapegoating fits in with the professed humanitarianism and ethics of Judaism.) Although author Joshua Karlip does not mention Cardinal Hlond, he makes it easy for the reader to see where Hlond was coming from. Leading Yiddishist thinker Elias Tcherikower effectively corroborated Hlond, writing the following in 1939, in the context of an anti-assimilationist mindset: "The tragedy of our generation does not consist of afflictions that have befallen our lot, but rather in that the generation has lost the old beliefs and has despaired of the new. Through and through individualistic, skeptical, and rationalistic, our generation is devoured by assimilation—right or left—and has lost its past strength." See Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation,* 13. Furthermore, according to Tcherikower, the abandonment of religion by the Jewish masses had become so pervasive and so irreversible that there could be no return to Jewish religion as the foundation of Jewish self-identity. This was even in the face of the growing disillusionment with the Yiddish language and Jews-as-nationality as modern forms of Jewish self-identity." Ibid., 207. After World War II, Yisroel Efroikin adopted a friendlier attitude to religion, and came to believe that, "The Jewish rejection of God had led not only to national disintegration but also to moral degradation." Ibid. 311. In fact, Efroikin went even further. Nowadays, the Nazi-collaborating conduct of the Judenrats and Jewish ghetto police are usually framed solely in terms of powerless, desperate Jews trying to save their own lives. In contrast, "Efroikin

obstacle to meaningful relations with the outside world. As sociologist Alina Cała argues, Orthodox Jews manifested no emotional relationship to Polishness or Polish culture, and thus "were virtually precluded from experiencing a sense of Polish nationality or cultural identity."[75] Marian Milsztajn, who was born in Lublin in 1919, wrote:

> Where we lived … I didn't hear one word of Polish. I didn't know such a language existed. To the extent it existed, I knew it was the language of the goys. Poland? I had no idea. I first encountered the Polish language when I was seven, when I entered my first class on the second floor of Talmud-Tora. The language of instruction was Jewish (Yiddish). … We wrote in Jewish, learned some history in Jewish, mathematics, and the Polish language. During the first week of studies, when the teacher spoke in Polish we did not understand a word. And we began to shout: "speak our language, speak our language." We made such a commotion that the shames arrived. And the shames turned to us: "Children, you must learn Polish because we are in Poland." …
>
> In the small towns the Jewish youth did not know Polish at all, but Jewish or Hebrew. … The youth did not know Polish, and if they did, they knew it like I did—poorly.[76]

A "goy" ("goyim" in plural), it should be noted, is a term used to refer to a non-Jew, and is often used is a pejorative way. The situation was much the same in many large cities such as Białystok:

> Only a small percentage of Jewish kids attended Polish schools, and therefore most had virtually no non-Jewish friends and didn't speak the language of the state in which they resided. In the home of Yehiel Sedler, Yiddish was spoken, and Polish was a "foreign language" (OHD-110(15)). Chana Birk attended a Jewish school where Polish was taught only several hours a week, "like English in Israeli high schools" (OHD-110(8)). Zvi Yovin spoke only Yiddish and Hebrew at home, and his Polish was very weak (OHD-110(11)). In many educated families the situation was not different. Tuvia Cytron was a doctor, from one of the most prominent Jewish families in the city. He knew German much better than he knew Polish even though he lived most of his life in the Polish state (OHD-110(6)). In the family of Abraham P. Russian was prioritized over Polish (HVT-2942). Overall, very few Jews in the city, and mainly only those from middle and upper class families, spoke proper Polish.[77]

Isaac Deutscher, a native of Chrzanów, offers the following observations:

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[75] Cited in Alina Cała, "The Social Consciousness of Young Jews in Interwar Poland," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 8: *Jews in Independent Poland, 1918–1939* (London and Washington: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1994), 50.

[76] Cited in Ewa Kurek, *Poza granicą solidarności: Stosunki polsko-żydowskie 1939–1945* (Kielce: Wyższa Szkoła Umiejętności, 2006), 86; translated as *Polish-Jewish Relations 1939–1945: Beyond the Limits of Solidarity* (New York: iUniverse, 2012).

[77] Evgeny Finkel, *Victims' Politics: Jewish Behavior During the Holocaust,* Doctoral Dissertation, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2012, 275.

> In Poland Jews lived in virtual ghettos even before 1940. Polish nationalism, anti-Semitism, and Catholic clericalism on the one hand, and Jewish separatism, orthodoxy, and Zionism on the other, worked against a lasting and fruitful symbiosis.[78]

Deutscher shared the "Endek" view that, owing largely to their large population and strong sense of separatism, Polish Jews would never assimilate:

> It was in the Eastern European ghettoes that the ancient current of Jewish life ran strongest and that Jews dreamt the dreams of Zion most intensely. … The processes by which before the rise of Nazism French, British, Italian, and German Jews were being 'assimilated' never went far in Russia and Poland. The Jews there lived in large and compact masses; they had their own homogenous way of life; and the adsorptive powers of the Slavonic cultures were anyhow too weak to draw them in and assimilate them. Eastern Europe was therefore the land of Jewry *par excellence* (not for nothing was Vilna [Wilno] called 'the Jerusalem of Lithuania').[79]

By the beginning of the twentieth century, most Jews regarded themselves as members of an ethnic or national group, and were so regarded by the surrounding population. This made much more difficult an accommodation between Jews and the reborn Polish state, since what they were now demanding were national rights. Many Jews were in fact opposed to Polish rule and some even the notion of Polish nationhood. The vast majority of Jews would only settle for living in Poland under one condition: full autonomy, which meant separation from the "Other"—their Polish neighbours, except in narrow areas where it was not in their economic interest to do so. As historians point out,

> Zionists, who dominated the joint committee of East European Jewish delegations at the [Paris] Peace Conference and enjoyed the support of the American Jewish Congress, demanded that Poland … recognize their Jewish residents as members of a distinct nation, with the right to collective representation at both state and international levels. This would entail the creation of a separate Jewish parliament in Poland, alongside a state parliament representing all the country's inhabitants, and it would mean the creation of a Jewish seat at the League of Nations.
>
> In demanding formal, corporate, political/diplomatic status for a territorially dispersed nation, as distinct from a state, the Zionists were challenging traditional notions about the indivisibility of state sovereignty …[80]

It is of profound significance that the memorial books of the Jewish communities destroyed by the Germans during the Second World War are written in Yiddish and (less often) in Hebrew, and although

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[78] Isaac Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 54.

[79] Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays,* 96.

[80] Aviel Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires: Central Europe, Russia and the Middle East, 1914–1923* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 165. See also Peter D. Stachura, "National Identity and the Ethnic Minorities in Early Inter-War Poland," in Peter D. Stachura, ed., *Poland Between the Wars, 1918–1939* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press, 1998), 67–70, 74–77.

some of them contain English sections virtually none have any Polish-language content. According to French-Jewish historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet, the Jews of Poland could not properly be regarded as Poles of Jewish faith, as they represented a civilization and culture unto themselves.[81] The ultimate goal for many, if not most Jews, in interwar Poland was to one day live in a national Jewish state in Palestine, governed by Jews, where Jews would live in conformity with their Jewish religious and cultural

[81] Cited in Kurek, *Poza granicą solidarności,* 34–35; Kurek, *Polish-Jewish Relations 1939–1945,* 55–56.

traditions.[82] This dream was especially strong among residents of the hundreds of traditional shtetls (small

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[82] Typical of sentiments in Jewish memoirs is the following: "We dreamed of living in Palestine, equal members of society in our own Jewish state." See Shalom Yoran, *The Defiant: A True Story* ((New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 120. There was little place in such a state for non-Jews. The following excerpts from a memorial book from a typical shtetl in Eastern Poland, where most Jews were said to be "middle class" and better off economically than their Christian neighbours, are instructive:

> The tradition of mutual assistance between peoples existed for many years. … The Torah commandment: "And your brother shall live among you," became a prime concept for the Rokitno Jews. … They showed their love for their fellow Jews and their wish to help each other.
>
> "Hashomer Hatzair" [a leftist-leaning political organization] in Rokitno was built on pure nationalism and Zionism. … On Polish Independence [sic, Constitution] Day, May 3rd, we were forced to participate in a parade in order to show loyalty to the government.
>
> When construction was completed, most of the Jewish students transferred from public schools to the Hebrew school. More than 90% of the children of the town and its surroundings were educated in the Tarbut School. It is important to point out the great dedication of the parents who willingly gave up the free public school whose building was spacious and well equipped. … Except for geography, Polish history and language—compulsory subjects taught in Polish, the language of instruction was Hebrew.
>
> There were about 300 children in the Hebrew school in Rokitno in 1927–28, i.e., almost all the children in town. It seems to me that no Jewish children attended the Polish school, or at least very few did.
>
> The members of the [Hebrew-speaking] association kept their vow and spoke Hebrew at home and outside, in spite of the Poles. When they entered a Polish store [the author must mean a government office, because Jews rarely, if ever, patronized Polish stores—*M.P.*] they used sign language or winking and pointing to show the shopkeeper what they wanted.
>
> There was hardly a Jewish child in Rokitno who did not know Hebrew. … Parents denied themselves food to give their children a Jewish education, so they would grow up knowledgeable and comfortable with their background. … the children were educated with Jewish values and Hebrew language. When they made Aliyah, they seemed and felt like native-born.
>
> From time to time a wall newspaper was published in the school. … The richest section was the one with news of Eretz Israel. This was our purpose in life. There were always enthusiastic students standing near that section.
>
> The JNF [Jewish National Fund] served as a cornerstone for the nationalistic education—the value of the land [in Palestine] to the people. The notion: "The land will not be sold for eternity" was well received by the students. Every new purchase of land was received enthusiastically and donations were increased. There was a JNF corner in every classroom and the blue box was the center of the corner and of the life of the class. Every happy event was celebrated with a donation.
>
> Although the Jews of Rokitno had dealings with non-Jews, they did not follow their customs. There was a division between them when it came to matters of faith and opinion. The locals fed calves for alien work and bowed to emptiness while we [Jews] thanked and blessed our G-d for his creation.

See E. Leoni, ed., *Rokitno–Wolyn and Surroundings: Memorial Book and Testimony,* posted on the Internet at: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rokitnoye/Rokitnoye.html>; translation of E. Leoni, ed., *Rokitno (Volin) ve-ha-sevivah: Sefer edut ve-zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Rokitno in Israel, 1967) 45, 65–66, 87–112, 167. Joseph Schupack describes similar conditions in Radzyń Podlaski, where Jewish religious-based nationalism thrived:

> My small existence, like that of my friends, centered around my parents' home, the Hebrew school and the Zionist youth organization, Hashomer-Hazair. There, on the fertile ground of the Diaspora, we were nourished with love for Eretz-Israel. It was unnecessary to teach Zionism; we were born in Zionism and grew up with it. The Polish national holidays of May 3 and November 11 were only pro forma holidays for us; our holidays

towns) strewn throughout Poland, where many Jews did not even know what the Polish flag looked like.[83] For many, committed Zionists as well as others, the Jewish national state was to be a purely Jewish one.[84]

The historic separateness of the Polish and Jewish communities, even on a day-to-day level, remained pronounced right up to the Second World War. As late as 1940, the famed doctor Janusz Korczak pointed out, "A certain nationalist told me: 'A Jew, a sincere patriot, is at best a 'Warszawer' or 'Cracower', but not a Pole.'"[85] For many Jews, especially the younger ones, the atmosphere of the traditional shtetl was stifling, if not repressive. True, some inroads had been made in "assimilating" the Jewish population, but that was a rather recent trend and, for the most part, largely superficial. It was more akin to acculturation than to the concept of assimilation. (Assimilation was something that was taken for granted and expected of Jews who settled in the West.) To outside observers the reality of Jewish communal life in Poland was a rather rude awakening.

Arthur L. Goodhart, who came to Poland in the summer of 1920 as counsel to a mission sent by the president of the United States to investigate conditions in Poland, described typical Jewish schools in Warsaw connected with synagogues. These schools were steeped in Jewish history tradition and paid virtually no attention to the non-Jewish community around them:

> We then went to the senior class, where the children were thirteen or fourteen years old. These children had just been studying Jewish history, and one of them enthusiastically repeated to me the names of the different kings of Judah. As this was the oldest class, I thought I would ask them some questions. Of the thirty-five children … Nearly all of them knew that New York was in America. None of them knew who Kosciuszko [Kościuszko] was, and one particularly bright boy was the only one in the class who had ever heard of [King John] Sobieski. He thought that Sobieski was a Polish nobleman who had fought against the Russians. I then asked them some questions about languages. Only one boy could talk Polish, although four or five could understand it. … All the classes in this school were conducted in Yiddish, although the main emphasis was put on teaching the children Hebrew. …
>
> We visited three or four other Talmud schools during the day. One of the best had some maps on the wall. When I examined them I found that they were detailed charts of Palestine. The children in this class were able to draw excellent plans of the country on the blackboard, filling in the names of all the cities and most of the villages. I asked one of the boys whether he could draw a similar map of Poland, and he said "No." …

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[83] Norman Salsitz describes how, in the interwar years, when buildings were obligated to display the flag on national holidays, he made the rounds in his small town of Kolbuszowa to bring to the attention of Jews that they had sewed together the flags incorrectly: "Many people sewed the red segment on top of the white; but that unfortunately was the Czech flag … In the Polish flag the white area was above the red." See Norman Salsitz, as told to Richard Skolnik, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland: Remembering Kolbuszowa* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 64–65, 70–71, 126.

[84] Candid Jewish authors do not hide this fact. For example, Isaac Deutscher acknowledges that "From the outset Zionism worked towards the creation of a purely Jewish state and was glad to rid the country of its Arab inhabitants." See Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays,* 137. In July 2018, Israel's Knesset passed a law (Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People) that officially defines Israel as a Jewish nation-state and "the national home of the Jewish people." Israel has thus been turned into a purely Jewish state in which minorities are at best tolerated on the sidelines.

[85] Janusz Korczak, *The Ghetto Years, 1939–1940* (Tel Aviv: Ghetto Fighters' House and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1983), 128.

> After having visited these schools, we had an interview with the head of the Talmud Torahs. He was opposed to the idea that the Polish Government should inspect these schools and force them to teach [even some] Polish to the children. … The purpose of his schools was to give the pupils the traditional Jewish education.[86]

Many Jews had more affinity for distant, mythical America than for Poland, or even Palestine, despite overwhelming evidence that Jews who immigrated there soon shed everything that made their lives distinctive in Poland.

> Citizens of Kolbuszowa, still we were in love with America. Nothing could change that; nothing ever did. To us American could do no wrong. …
>
> What could happen to people there was common knowledge. The religion of their fathers, the faith of our ancestors, once in America it no longer was the same. Incident after incident reaffirmed this lamentable fact; so did many popular stories. Just look at those who had returned from America to visit us. Beards trimmed or shaved off, *payes* removed, long coats gone. What kind of Jews were these?
>
> It was so. I remember when my brother came for a visit. Saturday arrived, the sacred Sabbath, but he continued to smoke his cigarettes. … Then he had someone go over to the local Polish store and buy pork sausages. What happened to kosher in America? Excuses—all you heard were excuses. It was too hard. It no longer made sense.[87]

Almost overnight, centuries-old traditions were abandoned by most Jews who immigrated to America from the tradition-laden shtetls of Poland. But within Poland itself there was little tolerance for the idea of assimilation. As Goodhart points out, the so-called Polish-speaking assimilators—"Jews who believe that Judaism is only a question of religion"—were shunned and even despised by the vast majority of Poland's Jews: "Most of the prominent Jews in Poland are not leaders of their people as is the case in other countries."[88] In view of such credible observations (of which there a plethora), unilateral charges that Poles regarded Jews as "Others" and rejected the efforts of Jews to be "accepted" into Polish society are entirely misfocused. An American Methodist missionary who resided in Warsaw in the interwar period drew a similar picture:

> Reared in a small American town, I had never thought, before coming to Poland, of Jews as being different, except in religion, from others in the community. In Poland, where they formed nearly 10 per cent of the population, I found them a separate people with a culture of their own. Their religion, language, customs, and garb were all a part of a tradition guarded with jealous pride and handed down unchanged through

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[86] Arthur L. Goodhart, *Poland and the Minority Races* (New York: Brentano's, 1920), 170–72.

[87] Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland,* 201–202.

[88] Ibid., 25. Goodhart also saw an anti-Polish play in a Jewish theatre in Warsaw, to which the "audience was most enthusiastic. … The audience consisted chiefly of young people, all of whom were dressed in the modern European style. " According to Goodhart, "In this play a young Jewish widow marries a Pole, who is anxious to get her money. She changes her religion, but in spite of this her drunken husband abuses and ridicules her. Finally, she leaves her home in despair, while her cousin, who has remained true to her faith, marries a young Jew and lives happily ever after." Ibid., 134.

> generations. Except for doctors, lawyers, and others in the professional class, the Polish Jew saw to it that no one mistook him for anything but a Jew.[89]

Raymond Leslie Buell, an American writer, educator and President of the Foreign Policy Association, made the following observations:

> The ordinary Jew speaks Yiddish … and is influenced by a particularly formidable type of orthodoxy, or *rabbinism*, of the *Tsadika* or *Wunderrabi* variety. While some Jews contend that the government obstructs assimilation, there is little doubt that the most powerful factor which keeps the Jew separate from the Pole is the type of orthodoxy which dominates a large part of the Jewish population. The American visitor unaccustomed to the Polish tradition wonders why more interracial disputes have not occurred when, on visiting a typical village, he sees the Orthodox Jew, wearing his skullcap, black boots, long double-breasted coat, curls and beard, mingling with the Poles proper. The government may think it is in its interest to support the Orthodox Jews against their more assimilated brethren, but the foreign observer is nevertheless struck by the readiness of the ordinary Poles to accept the assimilated or baptized Jew as an equal. In government departments, in the army, in the banks, and in newspapers, one finds the baptized Jews occupying important positions. This class, which in Nazi Germany is subject to bitter persecution, has been freely accepted in Poland. With the growth of nationalist spirit among both Jews and Poles, the trend toward assimilation seems to have been arrested. It remains true, however, that the Polish attitude towards the Jew is governed by racial considerations to a lesser degree than the attitude of other peoples.[90]

According to that author, the most significant factor that set Poles and Jews apart was grounded in economics, and certainly not race, though religion also played a role.[91] As W. D. Rubinstein has argued compellingly,

> the demonstrable over-representation of Jews in the economic elites of many continental European countries was itself a potent force for creating and engendering antisemitism, arguably the most important single force which persisted over the generations. … the fate of other 'entrepreneurial minorities' was, often, similar to that of the Jews in continental Europe. …
>
> Over-representation in the economic elite of a visible ethnic minority of the degree found in Poland or Hungary was certain to cause trouble regardless of the identity of the group …[92]

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[89] Hania and Gaither Warfield, *Call Us to Witness: A Polish Chronicle* (New York and Chicago: Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1945), 49–50.

[90] Raymond Leslie Buell, *Poland: Key to Europe*, Second revised edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1939), 308–9.

[91] Authors sympathetic to Poles have underscored the fact that economics has long divided Polish Jews and gentiles. C.M.A. Phillips wrote in 1923: "The first trade of the Jew in Poland was the slave trade. Money lending and the subleasing of State revenues next developed …. then tavern-keeping and the liquor traffic, which became in time almost exclusively a Jewish business; finally, a general trading and brokerage in all commodities … Money-lending, in the days when such business knew no regulations and the profits were unlimited, naturally led to extortion and usury; and out of it all grew inevitably that bitter feeling which such trade always engenders between lender and borrower—in this case between Jew and Pole." See C.M.A. Phillips, *The New Poland* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1923), 288.

[92] W. D. Rubinstein, "Jews in the Economic Elites of Western Nations and Antisemitism," *The Jewish Journal of Sociology,* vol. 42, nos. 1 and 2 (2000): 5–35, especially at pp. 8–9, 18–19.

It was no accident that, with the advent of the Great Depression, which hit Poland harder than any other European country, conditions would take a turn for the worse.[93] The overall economic situation of the Jews in Poland, however, belies the claim of economic "oppression" that is often levelled in popular literature. According to a study by British economist Joseph Marcus—undoubtedly the most extensive analysis of the economic history of interwar Polish Jewry, the Jewish share of the country's wealth increased both absolutely and relative to the non-Jewish share in the interwar period. While representing less than ten percent of Poland's population, Jews held 22.4 percent of the national wealth in 1929 and 21.4 percent in 1938. The average Jews was clearly better off than the average non-Jew. In terms of per capita income, in 1929 the income per caput was 830 złoty for Jews, and 585 złoty for non-Jews, i.e., forty percent higher. Although very many Jews lived in poverty (as did non-Jews), Marcus argues that "the Jews in Poland were poor because they lived in a poor, under-developed country. Discrimination added only marginally to their poverty. … That Jewish poverty was mainly the result of accumulated discrimination against them is a myth and it is time to expose it as such."[94] Jews also made considerable inroads into agricultural landholding during the interwar period. The collapse of traditional Polish estates is demonstrated by the fact that by 1939, 14 out of 24 estates in the county of Dąbrowa Tarnowska belonged to Jews, and only 10 to Poles.[95] Clearly, the economic condition of Jews was not in peril, as some would have it.

The traditional role of the Jews as "middlemen" is one that is not fully appreciated in the scholarship on Polish-Jewish relations. Ethnic minorities that dominate middleman occupations, such as traders and financiers, often become targets of persecution and ethnic violence. Examples abound across the globe and throughout history: Chinese in Southeast Asia (the Philippines, Indonesia), Tamils in Sri Lanka (Ceylon), Indians in Uganda, Igbos in Nigeria, Lebanese in Sierra Leone, Muslims in India, Greeks and

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[93] Real output in Poland fell by more than 20%, thus exceeding Austria and Germany's drop. The rate of decrease in most other countries was substantially smaller. See Ferguson, *The War of the World,* 234. According to another source, between 1928 and 1932 the wage index fell by 61 percent and industrial output declined by 40 percent. See Alexander V. Prusin, *The Lands Between: Conflict in the East European Borderlands, 1870–1992* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 114.

[94] Joseph Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919–1939* (New York: Mouton, 1983), 42 (Table 6), 231, 253–56. The argument that Jews generally avoided land ownership, and agriculture, because they were forbidden to do so is baseless. They did so by choice. In medieval Poland, there had been no restrictions on Jews owning land, and the prohibitions against land ownership, in other nations, were no more decisive than those, for example, directed against Jewish involvement in coin minting, in which the Jews nevertheless engaged. See Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 41, 273.

This "black legend" has been perpetuated throughout, gaining popularity during World War I and its aftermath. The image of Jews as poverty-stricken and persecuted was reinforced by publications such as Roman Vishniac's photographic *A Vanished World,* a collection of photographs taken between 1935 and 1938 in Poland and other Eastern European countries. It turns out, however, that Vishniac had been sent by the Joint Distribution Committee "on a very specific assignment: to document not the fullness of Eastern European life buts its most needy, vulnerable corners for a fund-raising project. … The most extensive falsification … is in the captions, the bulk of which Vishniac wrote after the war. Many include incredibly vivid captions—too vivid—as well as dramatic narratives that either could not have happened or could not have happened the way Vishniac presented them." See Alana Newhouse, "A Closer Reading of Roman Vishniac," *The New York Times Magazine,* April 4, 2010.

[95] Ludwik Ręgorowicz, "Obraz Dąbrowy Tarnowskiej i powiatu dąbrowskiego od końca XIX w. do wybuchu II wojny światowej," in *Rocznik Tarnowski 1999/2000* (Tarnów, 2000), 130.

Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Middlemen exhibit a distinctive cultural profile which includes strong group ties, resistance to forming bonds with those who are not members of the group, and dress, language and religion that differs from the majority's population. Middleman minorities are often regarded as economic exploiters who do not commit to solidarity with the peoples they exploit. From time to time these sentiments explode in violent outbursts, often in response to an incident that provokes outrage among the host society.[96]

As outside observers who lived in Poland point out, the relationship between the oft-exploiting Jewish usurer and the oft-exploited Polish debtor—using modern parlance, a form of co-dependency—was not a healthy one:

> He generally manages to succeed, for the Polish peasant is easy prey. Having very little ready money … readily pays interest in kind without reflecting how much dearer it really costs him. And borrow he must from time to time. … When a misfortune comes, and the cow dies or falls sick, the Jew is at hand, and so it

[96] For a discussion of this topic which draws on studies by Edna Bonacich—"Theory of the Middleman Minorities," *American Sociological Review,* vol. 38, no. 5 (October 1973): 583–94—and Amy Chua—*World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), see Danusha V. Goska, *Bieganski: The Brute Polak Stereotype, Its Role in Polish-Jewish Relations and American Popular Culture* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2010), 178–92. Yuri Slezkine also noted that the difficulties experienced by Jews, as traders and middlemen, were or are paralleled by those of other nationalities that fill the same niche all over the world. For instance, the pre-World War II European-Jewish conflicts revolving around Jewish economic dominance were similar to those between Chinese and native Malayans. See Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University, 2004), 37.

> goes on till the peasant is perpetually in his debt and power. He and his wife have no idea of the market value of their dairy and farm produce, for the Jews rule the market and keep their secrets to themselves.[97]

As Edna Bonacich has also noted, in relation to other countries that faced this problem, "The efficient organization of the middleman economy makes it virtually impossible for the native population to

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[97] Beatrice C. Baskerville, *The Polish Jew, His Social and Economic Value* (New York: MacMillan, 1906), 36–37. The British author's understanding of Jews is quite different from that of Westerners, and she points out, in the Preface, that her conclusions are supported by eight years' residence in Russian-ruled central Poland, at the turn of the century. She asks, "Can he [the Westerner] imagine the capital of Poland, the most civilized city in Russia, the link between Europe and Asia, where every third man is a Jew, where the trade and commerce are in the hands of the Jews and where Jewish organizations have openly declared their intention of converting the Imperial army to the tenets of Socialism and of gaining the greatest amount of political influence...?" Baskerville also points out that for the most part Poles and Jews lived in amity, notwithstanding the anti-Semitic undercurrent, which was normally dormant and otherwise lacking in aim and energy—completely unlike Russian anti-Semitism. (Pp. 57, 127, 144, 150.) The Catholic clergy opposed pogroms and the blood libel (pp. 141, 146).

As for blame, Baskerville faults with both sides: "But to the mere observer it appears that there has been a good deal to forgive on both sides; and today, at any rate, the Jews are as anti-Polish as the Poles are anti-Semitic. They do not want to assimilate, they do not want to blend their interests with the interests of the rest of the community. They are striving to assert their national individuality, to live their own lives and attain their own ends, all three of which are as far removed from the Sclavonic [Slavonic] ideals as the twilight from dawn, as night from day." (Pp. 150–1.) She adds, "Thanks to political and social conditions, and partly also to Talmudism, the Jews in Poland have preserved their exclusiveness." (P. 107.) Jewish self-imposed separateness was also re-affirmed by modern Jewish thinking. Baskerville comments: "Amongst the Poles themselves, Sionism [Zionism] with its separatism, with its anti-communal and anti-cultural tenets, has only served to increase anti-Semitism. To the Polish nature, easy-going though it be, there is something particularly obnoxious in the contemplation of the better part of a million Jews, whose forefathers found a refuge in the country at a period when the Semite was chivied and chased from all parts of Europe, who have lived upon that country for centuries, some of which have even amassed fortunes, assuming an attitude of hostile exclusiveness towards the very people of whom they owe so much, flaunting the cult of the jargon [Yiddish], the halat and the Talmud before their eyes, and eagerly looking forward to the time when they will have amassed a sufficient quantity of Polish gold to bear them over the seas and establish them in Palestine." Jews also had active prejudices against Poles. Baskerville notes: "(the) learned Jew holds a high place in the ghetto. Nobody hates the goya [goy] like he, and he would rather suffer hunger than learn to speak Polish." (P. 26.) As for Jewish children in the cheder (school), taught by a melamed (teacher): "All they are taught of the Gentile and his culture is to hate both." (P. 87.) Ironic to the later much-maligned Polish boycotts of Jews, Baskerville faulted the Poles for not forming guilds, or taking other measures, to protect their economic interests from the Jews (p. 138). Although the Dmowski-led retaliatory boycotts of Jews after the 1912 Duma election were still years in the future, Baskerville alludes to one of the reasons for the newly-politicized Judaism constituting an affront to Polish national aspirations: "…the Jew, who has been economically dangerous to Polish interests for centuries, has now become a political peril, because, having nothing to gain by keeping quiet and a possible gain in revolt, he has prompted and is guiding the present revolutionary movement. This conviction prompted the Poles to act with unexpected energy during the election for the Duma." The Bund, though anti-Zionist, promoted Jewish particularism (p. 158) and grew increasingly anti-Polish (p. 186). The Jewish Bund and SD (Social Democrats) often turned against even Polish socialists (p. 164). Bund-led strikes ended up hurting Poles more than the Russian authorities: They closed factories, drove commerce overseas, and lowered the standard of Polish produce (p. 165). Armed Bund gangs killed policemen in broad daylight (p. 21). Bund-led violence, both of a revolutionary as well as bandit nature, was supported by numerous firearms, and was well organized (pp. 173–201). Poles were often the victims.

Roman Dmowski's 1912 anti-Jewish boycott is nowadays presented without proper context. Although boycotts became a common tool employed in many countries to defend or further political and economic interests, and are generally judged by their efficacy, the Polish boycott is tainted as "evil" because it happened to be directed against Jews. In Prussian Poland, Poles employed this strategy to further their economic interests in the face of state-sponsored favouritism of German interests. Since the Jewish minority identified entirely with the German overlords, the push among Poles to favour budding Polish business enterprises also impacted them to some degree. Did this render the boycott a display of anti-Semitism? C.M.A. Phillips, author of the *The New Poland*, by contrast, understands the crucial nature of Polish representation in the Duma [Russian parliament]: "But then had come the Russo-Japanese war and the establishment of the Duma, with Poles sharing in the newly-won constitutional privileges of the Empire. These privileges, extremely limited though they were, had revived the political impulse of the Pole." (p. 52) "But Russia still feared the subject State. Within two years, practically all the blood-bought concessions of 1905 had been repudiated. Poland's Duma delegation of thirty-four was reduced to twelve …" (p. 101). Continuing this theme, Phillips elaborates on the overt Jewish separatism as follows: "The newcomers, especially those from Lithuania and Russia, the 'Litwaki' [Litvaks], brought with them as counteractants against assimilation not only a rigorist Talmudism … but they added the embittering factor of political Judaism, which they immediately backed up

compete in the open market; hence, discriminatory government measures … have been widely introduced."[98] Arguing, in the case of Poland, that religious prejudice (Christian anti-Semitism) or (Polish) nationalism *per se* is the driving force behind these reactions simply misses the mark.[99] As Israeli historian Emanuel Melzer has noted, the anti-Jewish excesses and pogroms that occurred in Poland in the years 1935–37, "Usually … resulted from the killing of a Pole by a Jew."[100] (This is to be contrasted with the situation in present-day Germany, for example, where many "foreigners" are being killed for purely racial

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[98] Edna Bonacich, "Theory of the Middleman Minorities," *American Sociological Review,* vol. 38, no. 5 (October 1973): 583–94, at 590.

[99] That fact was recognized by non-Polish historians and knowledgeable observers in the past but is now considered politically incorrect among recent historians and writers, who profess to have "deeper insights" into this topic. An example of the "old-fashioned" school is A. Bruce Boswell, a research fellow in Polish at the University of Liverpool, who wrote on the pioneering work of the priest and social activist Piotr Wawrzyniak, who lived in Prussian-occupied Poland in the latter half of the 19th century. Rev. Wawrzyniak's goal was to enable Poles "… to compete with the German element and to emancipate itself from the strangling grip of German capital and the Jewish money-lender." (P. 172.) The Poles got educated, learned various trades, formed agricultural circles, co-operative societies, credit associations, banks, etc. The turnaround from Polish poverty was dramatic: "His [Wawrzyniak's] work made possible the growth of a Polish middle class of merchants and artisans; and soon the towns were repeopled by Poles who could compete with the Germans in every branch of trade and industry. One result of this movement was the elimination of the Jew as middleman, factor and usurer. Without pogrom or boycott the Jewish population was steadily reduced in numbers and influence, until the Jewish element was either assimilated by the Germans or Poles, or forced to emigrate." (P. 177.) All of this was facilitated by the fact that, unlike the other backward regions of foreign-ruled Poland, Prussian-ruled Poland had a well-developed infrastructure. (P. 170.) The boycotts of Jews, in Russian-ruled Poland, had been partly real, and partly an indirect outcome of the changing economic players. But, as Bowell points out, "… the deepest cause of Jewish hatred for the Poles lies in the recent growth of a Polish middle class, and the attempt to eliminate the Jewish usurer from the village." (P. 39.) Boswell adds: "But it must be remembered that Jewish economic solidarity has constituted an informal boycott of Polish traders for hundreds of years, so that this measure is looked on by the Poles as a policy of self-defence." (P. 191.) The circumstances behind the formal boycotting of Jews, started by Roman Dmowski in retaliation for the Jews' support for candidates who did not support the Polish national platform in the 1912 Duma (Russian Parliamentary) election, is described by Boswell thus: "This Jewish nationalism is called Sionism [Zionism], but has little in common with the Western Jewish scheme for the revival of a State in Palestine. In its extreme form, it is a plan to create a joint State, Judaea-Polonia [Judeopolonia], where Poles and Jews shall have equal rights. In the main, it is a movement for the use of Yiddish in the administration and the schools, on an equality with Polish. … The rise of Jewish nationalism has thus led to a great political antagonism between the two races." (P. 190.) See A. Bruce Boswell, *Poland and the Poles* (London: Methuen, 1919). For a pro-Jewish version see Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia,* vol. 2, 75, 107–11. Paul Super (1880–1949), who was a member and activist of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) and organizer and General Director of the Polish Y.M.C.A. (1922 to 1949), was in a unique position to assess Polish "nationalism," on a daily basis, as it looked on the ground. Super commented: "I have spent a quarter of a century among Poles and probably know more Poles than any living foreigner. Except among a small but politically active element of the student population of Poland, I have never encountered that which is evil in nationalism, and there is a good, a splendid, side … Such nationalism as Poland had, looked inward, to the building of a worthy nation; it does not look outward in envy of some other nation's lands; it never took the form we Americans call spread-eagle boasting; it made no silly assertions of superiority over all other nations." See Paul Super, *Twenty-Five Years With the Poles* ([New York]: Paul Super Memorial Fund, 1951), 115.

[100] Emanuel Melzer, "Anti-Semitism in the Last Years of the Second Polish Republic," in Yisrael Gutman, Ezra Mendelsohn, Jehuda Reinharz, and Chone Shmeruk, *The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars* (Hanover, New Hampshire and London: University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press, 1989), 129. See the discussion of this topic later on.

reasons.[101]) A recent study on anti-Jewish pogroms between 1800 and 1927 in the Pale of Settlement rejects the scapegoating hypothesis, according to which Jews were blamed for all misfortunes of the majority, as the driving force behind the pogroms. Rather they were the result of economic and political factors, and usually occurred in places where Jews dominated middleman occupations:

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[101] It has been reported that more than 130 people were killed in racist violence in Germany between 1990 and 2010. There have been numerous firebomb attacks in Germany on "foreigners" in recent years. Attacks on residences for asylum seekers and foreign workers occurred in Hoyerswerda and Rostock in 1991 and 1992 respectively. Two homes of Turkish families were set on fire with Molotov cocktails in Mölln in November 1992, with a woman and two young girls dying in the flames and nine other people injured. Two women and three young girls died in an arson attack on a home occupied by two Turkish families in Solingen in May 1993, and another 14 people were injured. (Four German men, one as young as 16, were convicted and sentenced to prison terms of 10 to 15 years.) Ten people died and another 38 were injured in an arson attack on a residence for asylum seekers in Lübeck in January 1996 (no Germans were charged for this crime). A homemade cluster-bomb detonated on the platform of a railway station in Düsseldorf in July 2000, injuring ten immigrants from the Soviet Union, most of them Jewish (no charges were ever brought). A nail bomb detonated in a Turkish area of Cologne known as "Little Istanbul" in June 2004, injuring 22 people, four seriously—all but one of the injured were of Turkish descent (no charges were ever brought). In 2006, a Black German citizen of Ethiopian descent was beaten into a coma by two unknown assailants who called him "nigger" in an unprovoked attack. In August 2007, a mob consisting of about 50 German youth attacked eight Indian street vendors, chasing them through the town of Mügeln. The Indians were beaten and all of them sustained injuries. The German youths were encouraged by spectators to continue their assault and the attack was accompanied by police brutality on the victims. It took 70 police to quell the violence. In February 2008, neo-Nazi graffiti was found scrawled on the entrance to a Turkish cultural centre at a building in Ludwigshafen, Germany, where nine Turks, including five children, were killed in a fire believed to be set by arsonists. See "Investigators Visit German Fire Site," *The New York Times,* February 7, 2008. Between 2000 and 2006 nine immigrant shop and snack stand owners, eight Turks and one Greek, were murdered by Germans described as right-wing extremists. Most of the victims were shot in the head. See John Rosenthal, "An East German Problem? Racist Violence in Germany," *World Politics Review,* August 30, 2007; Melissa Eddy, "German Murders by Neo-Nazis 'a disgrace'," *Toronto Star,* November 15, 2011. This disturbing trend appears to be on the rise. In 2014 there were about 150 attacks on refugee shelters, with three residences in Vorra set on fire in December of that year. There is no sign of abatement. There were 150 arson or other attacks that damaged or destroyed refugee shelters in the first six month of 2015. The German media reported, in October 2015, that several refugees have been injured in dozens of arson attacks on German asylum shelter in the preceding few months. By December 2015, there had been 68 recorded arson attacks on refugee shelters and over 800 racist incidents. A scathing 2016 Amnesty International Report*, Living in Insecurity: How Germany is Failing Victims of Racist Violence*, detailed how 16 times as many crimes were reported against asylum shelters in 2015 (1,031) as in 2013 (63). More generally, racist violent crimes against racial, ethnic and religious minorities increased by 87% from 693 crimes in 2013 to 1,295 crimes in 2015. The also report lambasted Germany's law enforcement agencies for their "long-standing and well-documented shortcomings" in responding to racist violence, and in particular noted the failure of the authorities to investigate, prosecute and sentence racist crimes effectively. See Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/06/germany-failing-to-tackle-rise-in-hate-crime/>. Sweden has experienced similar attacks on immigrants. In the first ten months of 2015 alone, there were 20 arson attacks on refugee shelters. (There is more on conditions in Sweden in a subsequent footnote.)

Conditions in interwar Poland, where perhaps some 20 Jews died as a result of anti-Jewish violence, should also be compared with conditions in Israel. In the 1950s, a group known as the Covenant of the Zealots torched cars that were driven on the Sabbath and firebombed non-kosher butchers and restaurants. The group's aim was to impose Jewish law and make Israel a Halakhic state. Between 1979 and 1983 a group known as the Jewish Underground attempted to assassinate a number of West Bank mayors by planting bombs in their cars. Bassam Shakaa, mayor of Nablus, lost both his legs as a result. Members of the group also carried out a "revenge" attack on an Islamic college in 1983, killing three students and wounding 33, when they tossed grenades into a classroom. In 1994, Baruch Goldstein, an Israeli settler in Hebron, killed 29 Muslims at prayer in the Tomb of the Patriarchs, a site holy to Muslims, Jews and Christians, still a cause for celebration for his followers. A year and a half later, Yigal Amir, a fan of Dr. Goldstein, assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin after a peace rally in Tel Aviv. A Palestinian toddler was killed on July 31, 2015 when Jewish extremists (settlers) set fire to the family's home near Nablus; his parents and four-year-old brother remain in critical condition in Israeli hospitals with massive, life-threatening burns. One should not think that any state or racial profile is immune from staging such killings. Anti-foreigner violence in South Africa targets primarily Blacks from other parts of Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Burundi), but also Pakistanis. In 2008, about 60 people were killed and 50,000 displaced from their homes. Flare-ups and killings on a smaller scale continued into 2015. Anti-immigrant riots in Johannesburg ans Pretoria in September 2019 took the lives of at least ten people as Black mobs plundered the townships, burning and looting shops owned by foreigners and beating shop owners. Scores of foreign truck drivers have also been killed in 2019.

> anti-Jewish pogroms—mob violence against the Jewish minority—broke out when economic shocks coincided with political turmoil. When this happened, pogroms primarily occurred in places where Jews dominated middleman occupations, i.e., moneylending and grain trading. … the evidence is consistent with the politico-economic mechanism, in which Jewish middlemen served as providers of insurance against economic shocks to peasants and urban grain buyers in a relationship based on repeated interactions. When economic shocks occurred in times of political stability, rolling over or forgiving debts was an equilibrium outcome because both sides valued their future relationship. In contrast, during political turmoil, debtors could not commit to paying in the future, and consequently, moneylenders and grain traders had to demand immediate (re)payment. This led to ethnic violence, in which the break in the relationship between the majority and Jewish middlemen was the igniting factor.[102]

Comparisons are sometimes made, especially in the writings of American Jews, between the position of Jews in Poland and that of Blacks in the United States. This analogy is simply devoid of legitimacy and misleading. Blacks came to the Americas by force, were slaves with no rights, could not emancipate themselves, performed menial labour, were mostly poor, and were at the very bottom of society. (Jews too were involved in this enterprise, both as traders and owners of Black slaves.) Jews came to Poland voluntarily and could leave at any time, served as traders, were largely exempt from the menial labour of the Polish masses, and—as middlemen situated between the tiny nobility and the peasant majority, enjoyed more rights and privileges than most Poles. The Jews' long-term advantaged position no doubt facilitated their becoming a literate class, and of many Jews becoming wealthy. Finally, discriminatory laws and policies against Blacks served primarily to keep them inferior, whereas those directed against Jews were primarily to reduce their advantages.

Rather, it was the Polish peasantry that occupied the position of Blacks, at least up to the end of the 19th century. In pre-partition Poland, the Jews occupied a position between the landowners and the peasants that perpetuated inequities against the latter class. The primary exploitative device was the so-called *propinacja,* a liquor production and sale monopoly enjoyed by landowners on their estates and private towns. Landowners had a monopoly over profits from alcohol consumed by peasants who were their serfs. The peasants had to buy a given quota of alcohol from the landowner, thus spending their money in the business of the landowner. *Propinacja* became one of the main causes of alcoholism among the peasants. The landholdings were usually managed by Jewish leaseholders (arendars). As Jan Peczkis points out in his review of Hillel Levin's book *Economic Origins of Anti-Semitism: Poland and Jews in the Early Modern Period,*[103]

> Poland's Jews did not simply transmit the policies of the Polish landowners to the peasants. These Jews had considerable autonomy, and assumed considerable powers of their own. To begin with, the Polish owners were often absent (p. 10) or only remotely involved with their estates (p. 62). Jews became leaseholders, or

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[102] Irena Grosfeld, Syhun Orcan Sakalli, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya, "Middleman Minorities and Ethnic Violence: Anti-Jewish Pogroms in the Russian Empire," *The Review of Economic Studies,* vol. 87, no. 1 (January 2020): 289–342.

[103] Hillel Levine, *Economic Origins of Anti-Semitism: Poland and Jews in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven, Connecticut and London: Yale University Press, 1991).

arendars. They often managed the estates. In fact, they sometimes managed entire villages, and oversaw the economic development of forests, mines, mints, breweries, etc., using serf labor (p. 62). Clearly, the Jews were less middlemen, and more an economic class.

Author Levine leaves many questions unanswered. How was the exploitation of Polish peasants apportioned by Polish landlord and "middleman" Jew? To what extent were the landlords actively driving the liquor enterprises, and to what extent were they taking their "cut" of the already-functioning Jewish-run alcohol trade?

One quoted Russian official, Kachovsky, who visited an area after the First Partition, contended that the Jews were the ones primarily responsible for the exploitation of the peasants (pp. 172–173). A quoted visitor, Stephens, reported observing a Jewish innkeeper wrangling with, and extorting money from, intoxicated peasants (p. 143).

The scale of the Jewish liquor enterprise was staggering. Around 1750, about 85% of Polish Jews were in some way associated with the liquor trade (p. 9). Moreover, the very sustenance of many Polish Jews was dependent upon the *propinacja* (taproom) (p. 12). It is obvious that the Jews, most of all, had a vested interest in its perpetuation.

Levine suggests that the Jewish role in the dysfunctional late feudal Polish society only postponed its end (pp. 237–238). However, the "cultural inertia" actually worked in several ways. Consider the "laziness" of the landowners. To what extent was it an outcome of the fact that the Jews had assumed such dominance in estate affairs? In Poland, unlike many western European nations, the Jews did not identify with Polish society (p. 236). Why should they, in view of their huge size and economic power in Poland? Now consider the complaints, repeatedly stated by Levine, that Polish society suffered from decentralization and backwardness, and that the landowners were, for a long time, disinterested in modernization. Why should they, in view of the fact that most of the benefits would accrue to the Jewish economic class?

Author Levine suggests that anti-Semitism developed as Poles, more and more, unfairly blamed the Jews for the *propinacja*. However, Levine acknowledges that Jewish prejudices also existed against Poles, and that the Jewish tavern-owner or liquor-dealer could use them to rationalize his role in the degradation of the Polish peasant. He comments, "The drink was both the effect and the cause of that broken resistance and degradation. The Jew, as the primary representative of this system, as the monetizer of unmarketable grain, could avert facing his contribution to the plight of the serf—a 'Goy', he might mutter in self-righteousness, 'drunken sloth is the essence of the Gentile.'" (P. 10.)

Despite oft-repeated claims (and supposed exculpation) that Jews became tavern keepers under compulsion, without regard to the deleterious impact that this system had on the welfare of the peasants, the evidence is not that persuasive. Some of that comes from the research of Jewish-American historian Glenn Dynner, who concludes that Jews stuck with tavern keeping largely because of economic self-interest: "But many Jews could not evidently see why they should renounce a lucrative industry like liquor and enter less lucrative ones like agriculture and army service …"[104] Dynner realizes that Jewish

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104 Glenn Dynner, *Yankel's Tavern: Jews, Liquor, and Life in the Kingdom of Poland* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 174. During episodes of the banning of Jewish tavern ownership, many Jews surreptitiously resorted to unlicenced taverns, Christian-front taverns, and home "taverns." Hasidic tzaddik Menahem Mendel of 18th-century Vitebsk claimed that the forcible removal of Jewish tavernkeepers was not disastrous, as these Jews simply found new occupations. Ibid., 52–53. However, the economy could not speedily absorb them, especially in large numbers.

profiteering sometimes occurred[105] but provides no indications as to how widespread it was. He portrays Jewish tavernkeepers as self-policed, while tacitly admitting that they could take considerable liberties with peasants:

> Most Jewish tavernkeepers were also probably careful not to push things too far. Perhaps few felt bound by their lease contracts' pro forma moral stipulations, according to which they promised never to cheat customers. And perhaps few were deterred by the risk of fines and prison sentences for serving liquor that was less than the regulation 45 percent alcohol. But each was constrained by the knowledge that there was a limit to what the peasant was willing to endure in terms of watered-down vodka, usurious loans, cooked books, and so on.[106]

Unfortunately, Dynner does not develop the latter theme. If there is to be any apportionment of blame for the *propinacja*, Dynner, in spite of his qualifications, apportions it evenly, "Jewish tavernkeepers may not have been the architects of this ghastly enterprise nor even its main beneficiaries, but they were fully complicit."[107] As for the charge that Polish peasants physically abused Jewish tavern operators, Glenn Dynner is dismissive of this claim:

> The memoirists who report on the local situation in everyday Poland-Lithuania will talk about how the Jewish tavern keeper was willing to be insulted and abused and even beaten, because in the end he would get revenge by extracting maximum profit from the peasant by encouraging him to drink beyond what he can afford. This is a very hostile observation. If that happened all the time, I think the situation would have been too unstable.
>
> One thing I discovered about all the abuse and insults was that it might have originated in *halacha*, in Jewish law. In order to keep a tavern profitable, you had to keep it open on the Sabbath and festivals. The rabbis developed elaborate legal fictions to say if a Christian comes and demands a drink, using the threat of violence, even if it's the Sabbath, you have to serve him. And what ends up happening is a bit of a farce. On Saturday, the peasant had to come in and threaten violence to the Jewish tavern keeper in order to receive his drink. So what you have are Christians helping Jews circumvent their own laws.[108]

In his lectures ("Jews, Liquor, and Life in Eastern Europe"), Dynner promotes a different focus:

> In Eastern Europe much of the economy was based on vodka. The nobles who owned most of the region's distilleries and taverns preferred to lease them to Jews, whom they believed to be more sober than the rest of the population. The Jewish-run tavern became the center of leisure, hospitality, business, and even religious festivities, while Jewish tavernkeepers became integral to both local economies and local social life, presiding over Christian celebrations and dispensing advice, medical remedies and loans. Nevertheless, as

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[105] Dynner, *Yankel's Tavern,* 46.

[106] Dynner, *Yankel's Tavern,* 28.

[107] Dynner, *Yankel's Tavern,* 26.

[108] Josh Tapper, "Q&A: Glenn Dynner on Yankel's Tavern: Jews. Liquor, and Life in the Kingdom of Poland," *Moment*, Internet: <http://www.momentmag.com/qa-glenn-dynner-yankels-tavern-jews-liquor-life-kingdom-poland/>.

> peasant drunkenness reached epidemic proportions, reformers and government officials sought to drive Jews out of the liquor trade. Historians have assumed that this spelled the end of the Polish Jewish liquor trade and the noble-Jewish symbiosis. Yet new archival discoveries demonstrate that nobles tended to simply install Christians as "fronts" for their taverns and retain their Jewish lessees. The result—a vast underground Jewish liquor trade—reflects an impressive level of local co-existence that contrasts with the more familiar story of anti-Semitism and violence.

What is buried in this narrative is the equally important fact that this alliance, in which Jewish middlemen played an integral and voluntary role, was exploitative and highly oppressive and, justifiably, did provoke resentment on the part of peasants.

Another rarely mentioned aspect of Jewish life in pre-partition Poland is the involvement of Jews in criminality, a phenomenon that further undermines the notion that Jews were simply pawns and victims of oppressive anti-Semitism, but never actors themselves. In fact, court records from the 16th and 17th centuries indicate that Jews were involved most often in felonies like bootlegging, fencing (trading in stolen goods), thefts, and forgery of coins and promissory notes. In the 18th century, organized criminal gangs, often comprising Jewish tavern keepers and sometimes including women, came to the fore. Jewish criminal gangs operated independently, and sometimes in cahoots with Christians, robbing manors and even churches. Almost the entire trade in stolen goods was in Jewish hands.[109] Jewish criminal gangs also flourished in the 19th century.[110]

Booker Washington, a prominent Black American leader and a representative of the last generation of Blacks born in slavery, made a tour of Europe in 1910 during which he had an opportunity to observe the condition of European labourers and peasants. He used those observations to illuminate the situation of African Americans, especially in the South. This was a witness who, more than Whites or Jews, had first hand experience and *knew* of what he wrote. While in Poland Washington saw peasants living in "weather-worn and decrepit" huts shared with cows, pigs, geese, and chickens. Every exchange of cash seemed to be in the hands of Jews:

> wherever in Poland money changes hands a Jew is always there to take charge of it. In fact, it seemed to me that the Jew in Poland was almost like the money he handled, a sort of medium of exchange.

He noted that his Jewish guide "looked down upon and despised" the Polish peasants among whom he traded. He referred to them as "ignorant and dirty creatures." He observed that, unlike Jewish immigrants who came to America,

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[109] Maria Cieśla, "Żydowscy przestępcy w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej," in Andrzej Karpiński, ed., *Społeczeństwo staropolskie,* Seria nowa (New Series), vol. II: *Społeczeństwo a przestępczość* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2009), 239–57; Przemysław Zarubin, *Żydzi w aglomeracji Krakowa w czasach stanisławowskich: Przemiany prawne, gospodarcze i społeczne* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2012).

[110] Adam Kopciowski, "Początki żydowskiej przestępczości zorganizowanej na ziemiach polskich w XIX w.: Przypadek lubelskiej Kolejki," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów,* no. 4 (2022): 939–61.

> Instead of seeking to make themselves look like the rest of the people among whom they live, they seem to be making every effort to preserve and emphasize the characters in which they are different from the people about them.

Washington concluded that

> there was much the same life that I had known and lived among the Negro farmers in Alabama. … I am convinced that any one who studies the movements and progress of the Negroes in America will find much that is interesting by way of comparison in the present situation of the Polish people and that of the American Negroes.[111]

Booker Washington's portrayal is consistent with the memoir of Joseph Margoshes,[112] a Jewish merchant who describes conditions for Jews in the area from Tarnów to Rzeszów, in what was then Western Galicia, in the latter two decades of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century. Jews were economically and politically often more powerful than most of the Polish population. Anti-Jewish persecution and acts were unknown, and Jews and non-Jews lived peacefully together. Wealthy Jews enjoyed excellent relations with Polish lords and wealthy landowners. Usury was a source of considerable Jewish affluence. The liquor trade (*propinacja*) also proved lucrative for the local Jews. Co-existence between the Catholic clergy and the Jewish population was also peaceful. Relations between Jews and Polish farmers were friendly and they would help each other out in the same way as Christian neighbours. The peasants lived under the dominance of estate-holders, both Poles and Jews. Peasants would tip their hats to Jewish estate-holders when they were driving on the road and when they entered their homes. If a peasant struck or even just insulted a Jew, the courts would punish the peasant by placing him in jail for at least two days. However, the relationship between the Polish peasants who worked on the estate and their Jewish employers was not always quite so amicable. The living conditions of the peasants were horrendous and they could experience physical abuse without much recourse. If an estate-owner lost his temper with some of the workers, he would sometimes beat them. All the workers could do in such case was to refuse to work. Jews also verbalized pejorative and racist generalizations about impoverished Polish peasants, whom they regarded as thieves and lowlife: "Every peasant is by nature a thief"; "One should not provoke a gentile too much, he is like a malicious worm." Many Jews did not know how to speak Polish, nor did they display any interest in learning the language. The Austrian authorities exploited Jewish Germanophilia by "Germanizing" Galician Jewry in order to tear it away from Polish influence.

The wall separating the lifestyle of shtetl Jews and Polish peasants was absolute and insurmountable. The following describes what daily life looked like at the time in the shtetl of Korczyna near Krosno:

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[111] Booker T. Washington, with the collaboration of Robert E. Park, *The Man Farthest Down: A Record of Observation and Study in Europe* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1912; New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1984), 252, 257, 267–69, 291–94.

[112] Joseph Margoshes, *A World Apart: A Memoir of Jewish Life in Nineteenth Century Galicia* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2008). The disparaging remarks about Polish peasants are found at pp. 126 and 129.

A hundred years ago, a Hassidic Jew (and who was not a Hassidic Jew in Korczyn in those days) wore a beard and peyot, a long black overcoat (capote) to the ankles with side pockets. No split in the back which would indicate modern dress. A black velvet hat and a black velvet kippah or yarmulka under the hat but not completely covered by the hat. (People could see that he was wearing a kippah under the hat). A loose belt or a gartel would tie the coat around his waist. The belt would always be carried even during prayers. Saturday and holidays, all married men wore a streimel (fur hat). Even the coachmen took his horses to drink on Shabbat in his streimel. A newlywed carried his streimel for the entire first week after the marriage. Everybody wore boots, or shoes without laces that were considered modern.

Women wore very long dresses and had to pick up the dress if it rained or in order not to sweep the dust. All married women had their heads shaved and wore a kerchief. On Saturday, they wore silk kerchiefs. Under the kerchief, there were special combs to give the kerchief some shape. Well to do women carried on Sabbath or holidays above the head kerchief, headbands that contained pearls or diamonds. No married women wore her own hair. This was considered an outrage and bordered on lewdness. Even sheitels or wigs were not worn in Korczyn [Korczyna].

Many women maintained the family while the husband studied in the beth hamidrash. Frequently the tasks in the family were divided, the mother provided the income, prepared the food, kept the house and worried about all the needs of the present while the father studied and worried about the heavenly future for the family. Her sole concern was that after she passes from this world she should be next to her saintly husband. These men were called in Korczyn after the name of their wife, for example: Hersh Miriam's, that is Hersh the husband of Miriam, or Itsche Blimele's, that is Itsche the husband of Blime. Wives that remained at home or took care of the house were refereed to as Malka Zalman Leibs, that is Malka the wife of Zalman Leib, or Feige Hersh Yankel's, that is Feige the wife of Hersh Yankel, or Haitsche Israel Itsche's.

Who can describe a Sabbath in Korczyn [Korczyna] in those days. An entire town rests, absolute standstill. All stores closed all traffic at a standstill. The town is wrapped around in a blanket of silence, a majestic silence of sorts that reign in the city. Jews go to the mikve (ritual bath) before their prayers.. Jews review the parshat hashavua (section of the torah reading for the Sabbath), or hum the talmudic tunes or sing the songs of Sabbath meal. All these tones float from the open windows to the market area. The restful Sabbath afternoon sleep gave everybody the feeling of a restful day. Mordchai Schiff from Jerusalem states that a Sabbath in Korczyn can't be compared to one in Bnei Brak of today.

Friendships never existed between the two groups. Jews never met Christians. They existed in different worlds that did not relate to each other culturally or socially. Everything separated these two groups: religion, culture, language and clothing. The Jew in the small town dressed completely different from the non-Jew. He also lived differently and talked differently that is Yiddish. The Jew and the Christian met only when they needed to sell or to buy something. Jewish and non-Jewish children did not mingle. Jewish children did not attend regular public school in those days. Most of the non-Jewish families lived several kilometers from the city with the exception of two poor Christian families. The majority of the Christian population at the time consisted of peasants, hardly a literate person amongst them. The only people that could read were the priest, the teacher of the public school, the doctor and the pharmacist and they all came from different areas of Poland. The local farming population did not believe in educating their children. The peasants as a group were not ant-Semitic, although some hated Jews due to their religious beliefs that the Jews killed their Lord. On occasion a Polish youngster would scream at the sight of a Jew that all Jews should go to Palestine or that Jews are like Russians. But in general Jews lived in peace with their Christian

neighbors. There are no records to the effect that a Korczyner Jew was ever physically attacked for being Jewish by the Christian neighbors.[113]

The reality of shtetl life was far removed from the one-sided picture perpetuated in popular literature. In fact, Jews—like others—were involved in violent crime throughout Europe. According to recent studies on the 1700s by Professor Shmuel Feiner of Bar-Ilan University:

> On the night of June 11, 1771, nine burglars armed with knives and guns broke into the farm of the Widow Hutchins in the village of Chelsea near London. At the Old Bailey court, she would testify that she heard the dog barking and called for her maidservants to see what was wrong.
>
> "In a short space of time I heard a noise; I ran to see what was the matter; I found my maid Mary Hodgkin, with her cap off and some men using her extremely ill. … I believe the doctor, that they call Levi Weil, was one … the other's name is Highham Lazarus; my fright was exceedingly great. … One of them said cut her throat; another said, you Bish, if you don't hold your tongue I will cut your throat." They took her purse and watch, killed one of the servants and fled.
>
> What did this robbery, described in a new study by Prof. Shmuel Feiner of Bar-Ilan University, have to do with Jewish history? All the burglars were Jews – and they were part of "a growing wave of Jewish crime," Feiner says.
>
> The following day they sold the stolen goods to another Jew, who like many Jews of that time made his living buying and selling pilfered goods. The government offered a reward for information leading to the capture of the robbers, and the Jewish communities, both Ashkenazi and Sephardi, also offered rewards. They hoped to capture the criminals who brought such shame upon the community, and in the end another Jew turned them in.
>
> At the trial it emerged that the leaders of the gang were the brothers Asher and Levi Weil. They and two others were condemned to death by hanging. The four men prayed at the foot of the gallows.
>
> In 1763, a gang of Jewish robbers attacked a flour mill in a village in Poland, killed seven people and set the place on fire. In the Netherlands, a Jewish family – Jacob Moises and his wife, son and daughters – was described as a leading gang. In Belgium, Dina Jacob belonged to a crime family, and in testimony in 1797 she pointed the finger at dozens of members of "the Jewish gang" that broke into isolated farms and homes.
>
> In Germany, too, Jews made both positive and negative headlines. In 1758, a book based on court documents explored the whole phenomenon: Jewish thieves and murderers, as well as the robber gangs.
> The list includes about 300 Jewish criminals who operated in mid-18th-century Germany. Most of them were family men, some of them as old as 70, and each with his own specialty.[114]

How did Jews and Christians interact in Poland? In a study based on historical records from the first half of the 19th century, historian Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern writes:

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[113] *Korczyna: Sefer zikaron* (New York: Committee of the Korczyna Memorial Book, 1967), 48–49, 51, 59–60, translated as *Korczyna Memorial Book* (of a Jewish Town Whose People Were Destroyed by the Germans in World War II), Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Korczyna/Korczyna.html#TOC>.

[114] Ofer Aderet, "When Jews Werr Burglars and Slave Traders," *Haaretz,* February 22, 2022, reviewing Shmuel Feiner's book (in Hebrew) *A New Age: Jews in Eighteenth-Century Europe, 1750–1800* (Zalman Shazar Center, 2021).

> Jews and Christians routinely exchanged insulting remarks about each other's religions. Verbal and other forms of violence were endemic among ordinary shtetl Jews as among gentiles. The shtetl was profoundly politically incorrect. More important, this kind of behavior was a positive affirmation of one's identity—through deprecating the identity of the other. …
>
> The shtetl in its splendor did not have a monopoly on violence. Slavs and Jews alike conceived of violence as an acceptable means of communication. Abuse—physical, rhetorical, and verbal—was a daily occurrence. Violence was one of the indispensable languages of the shtetl, an environment in which outbursts of brutality were as normal as Sunday bazaars.[115]

Adam Teller shares this view and expands on its implications:

> Thus it was that in the shtetls, as elsewhere in Poland-Lithuania, the Jews were the victims of violence, both verbal and physical, on the part of their neighbors. However, a close examination of the sources reveals that the Jews were able to give as good as they got, and often did so. Violence in the shtetls and towns of Poland was by no means one-sided. The court records indicate many cases of Jews attacking townspeople, peasants on their way to market, and even nobles and priests who tried to interfere in their daily lives. This violence, which was endemic to Polish society in this period, should therefore be understood not so much as signifying the Jews' weakness in the face of non-Jewish society, or their excessive self-confidence in light of noble protection, but rather as a sign that the Jews were well integrated into urban society and acted, *mutatis mutandis*, just like their neighbors.[116]

Relying on quoted newspaper extracts, sociologists William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki summarize what essentially is the co-dependency of Polish peasants and Jews at the local level.

> The Jewish shopkeeper in a peasant village is usually also a liquor-dealer without license, a banker lending money at usury, often also a receiver of stolen goods and (near the border) a contrabandist. The peasant needs and fears him, but at the same time despises him always and hates him often. The activity of these country shopkeepers is the source of whatever anti-Semitism there is in the peasant masses. We have seen in the documents the methods by which the shopkeeper teaches the peasant boy smoking, drinking, and finally stealing; the connection established in youth lasts sometimes into maturity, and almost every gang of peasant thieves or robbers centers around some Jewish receiver's place, where the spoils are brought and new campaigns planned. Gangs composed exclusively of Jews are frequent in towns, rare in the countryside; usually Jews manage only the commercial side of the questions, leaving robbing or transporting of contraband to peasants.[117]

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[115] Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Golden Age Shtetl: A New History of Jewish Life in East Europe* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 151–52.

[116] Adam Teller, "The Shtetl as an Arena for Polish-Jewish Integration in the Eighteenth Century," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 17 (2014): 25–40, at 37–38.

[117] William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (New York: Dover Publications, reprinted 1958), vol. 2, 1200–1201.

Any attempt by Poles to move out of their economic rung and venture into endeavours that were regarded as traditional Jewish economic "turf," and thus considered off-limits for Gentiles,[118] was met with hostility, communal resistance and even violence. Historian Keely Stauter-Halsted, who traces these developments, points out that after peasant emancipation in the mid-19th century, the traditional Jewish middleman position, between landlord and peasant, began to decline, and Polish-Jewish relations began to sour, culminating in the notion, nowadays, that Poles are born anti-Semites. The emancipated peasantry increasingly needed credit. In the then-absence of credit institutions, this made him dependent upon the Jewish tavern owner, who also doubled as a usurer. Although Austrian law forbade usurious interest rates,

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[118] In the latter part of the 19th century, when members of the Catholic clergy undertook a battle against the widespread alcoholism and poverty that afflicted the peasants, they ran into hostility on the part of some landowners and Jewish innkeepers who owned or operated pubs in the villages and benefitted materially from the misfortune of the peasants. The pastoral and community activities of Rev. Bronisław Markiewicz, the founder of the Michaelite Fathers, were particularly effective in bettering the lot of the peasants:

> It was late fall 1875 when he [Rev. Markiewicz] found himself with a few belongings in the Parish of Gać [near Kańczuga], to devote himself to the care of souls. He approached his duties enthusiastically. First of all he had to get to know his parishioners. To achieve this he visited each house and each family and he came to the conclusion that the cause and the root of all evil in this area was alcoholism, which was deeply rooted from generation to generation, and was fostered silently by those whose duty it was to fight this evil. These people were the landowners of the surrounding villages.
>
> Fr. Markiewicz fought with love and determination against this evil and pointed out the extent of this evil to save his parishioners from this sin. It did not take long until the pubs became very empty. To keep the farmers busy with something new he invited them to participate in conversation about new achievement in agriculture. He showed them new methods how to cultivate the land; he advised them to later the system of seeding and to start orchard farming.
>
> It was his intention to stimulate "Self-help" for farmers. The Savings Bank was founded, which in time became the Savings and Borrowing Bank. This way the pastor helped to achieve a certain prosperity in his Parish. The youth were close to his heart in a special way and he wanted to protect them from alcoholism, he opened a meeting room in the rectory which was equipped with different games, especially chess. He did this with the conviction that decent recreation would be the best way to more noble interests.
>
> Unfortunately, it was not granted to him to remain too long in this Parish. When the Countess Wanda Ostrowska who was a patroness of the Parish Błażowa, she heard about Fr. Markiewicz's successful work in Gaś, and she suggested to the Bishop's Office in Przemyśl to entrust him with the new parish which was under her custody. The Countess suffered seeing constantly spreading immorality among people.
>
> At the request of the Countess it was decided to move Fr. Markiewicz in 1877 to the new parish. As in the previous Parish, Father began his work teaching his parishioners moderation. Also a foundation of the small hospital made people's lives easier. Local people had been operating the weaving mill a long time. Father improved their life condition in this area as well. Father Markiewicz worked at this parish until 1882.
>
> The village Miejsce—which later thanks to Fr. Markiewicz's effort received the nickname "Piastowe" was at that time a small Parish with no more than 800 souls, and was situated … no more than 6 kilometres from the city of Krosno. …
>
> Fr. Markiewicz, with his concern for souls, began to work in this new place. … In Miejsce Piastowe he started catechetical classes each Sunday for all parishioners before high mass and again in the afternoon. This program turned out very successful. Each Sunday the number of participants was larger, which resulted in larger number of people receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.
>
> Next was the campaign against alcoholism, which deeply plagued the populace. In a few months he was able to inscribe 60 parishioners into the book of abstinence. Something should be said about the battle with the innkeepers. There were two pubs in the parish, and two others were as the saying went, "owned privately".
>
> Both innkeepers left the village, one in 1893 and the other later on. The "private" pubs died natural deaths. That is how one of Father's students reported it: already in his first year as a pastor you would not see a drunkard in the village. As the destructive force of alcoholism decreases, the prosperity of the people increased, together with their moral and cultural standards. The parishioners have found themselves: these were the fruits of the enthusiastic effort of their new pastor.

See Johannes Drozd, *Father Bronislaw Markiewicz and His Work: Founder of the Michaelites, Guardian of the Orphans and Educator* (London, Ontario: n.p., n.d.), 3–4, 6–7.

they sometimes were as high as 250%, computed weekly. Furthermore, as Polish peasants themselves became entrepreneurs, they, for the first time, came into direct competition with the Jews. In time, peasants organized a network of Polish-owned shops to break the Jewish monopoly on rural trade.[119] In addition, Stauter-Halsted points out that, "Beginning in the 1870's, Christian peasants sought to organize their own credit institutions and village stores in order to undercut the interest rates and prices Jewish merchants demanded."[120] Polish-Jewish rivalry not only continued, but expanded into new venues,

> Village innkeepers were also almost always without exception Jewish, since gentry landowners had sold their concessions for alcohol trade only to nonserfs before emancipation. In the absence of formal credit facilities, peasants were frequently forced to turn to village Jews for emergency loans, especially to meet their new tax burdens. Because of their position within the money economy, Galician villagers viewed rural Jews, whether in the capacity as bartenders, moneylenders, or managers of general stores, as responsible for much of their economic misery. To complete the picture of economic control, Jewish families in the 1870's began competing with small farmers to buy up estate land from impoverished gentry. By 1889, some 10 percent of agricultural land was owned by Jews.[121]

Pointedly, Polish-Jewish antagonism was not as one-sided as nowadays portrayed. Stauter-Halsted comments,

> Peasant resentment of rural Jews heightened still further after the latter began to retaliate against the loss of business. Jewish merchants attacked parish priests for their role in founding Christian stores. The Jewish shop owner in the town of Kalwarya reportedly offered to donate 60 *zlotys* [złoty] year to a cloister of the priest's choosing if the clergyman would convince circle members to close their store, and offered the circle itself 100 *zlotys* to cease its operations. In most cases, peasant entrepreneurs persevered. Occasionally, however, as in the parish of Dąbrowa in 1884, the Jews triumphed and circle activities ceased altogether in response to the "great agitation" Jewish businessmen organized.[122]

Many additional examples can be cited. Stanisław Thugutt, a minister in the interwar Polish government, was threatened by Jewish merchants after he opened a food cooperative in Ćmielów near Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski in 1903. After the threats proved futile, he was falsely charged with assaulting a Jew, a charge that was thrown out by the court. Nonetheless, the constant harassment exerted by the Jewish community resulted in Thugutt's departure from the town.[123] When a cooperative produce store was opened in Brańsk in 1913 on the initiative of the local Christian intelligentsia, local Jews physically

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[119] Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848–1914* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 41, 50, 116, 133.

[120] Ibid., 41.

[121] Ibid., 134.

[122] Ibid., 139.

[123] Michał Kurkiewicz and Monika Plutecka, "Rosyjskie pogromy w Białymstoku i Siedlcach w 1906 roku," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 11 (November 2010): 22. See also Stanisław Thugutt, *Autobiografia* (Warsaw: Ludowa Współdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1984), 68–69.

attacked one of its founders. In addition, the Jewish merchants who wanted to force the store to close, so as to maintain their monopoly on local commerce, jointly lowered their prices.[124] When a Polish company attempted to open a provision shop in Tarnobrzeg, they ran into a formidable obstacle. All the buildings in the centre of the town were owned by Jews who were adamantly opposed to the idea and would not rent or sell to Poles. When one Jew finally sold to the Poles, the Jews

> made things very bad for the Jew who sold it, and offered to double the amount paid down in order to recover the place. It all came to naught. That evening the deed was signed after the seller left town. His family was the object of persecution, their windows were broken and for weeks they were not admitted to the synagogue.[125]

The opening of a Polish business in Tarnobrzeg in 1899, resented by Jewish merchants, turned out to be a very positive development for consumers:

> The 'Bazaar' was a godsend to the county, for it set all prices. Up to that time traders asked what they would, and since they had everything in their hands there was nothing for it but to pay. From now on they had to keep in line with 'Bazaar' prices. So, too, up till then the Jews made fun of Christians, as I have often heard with my own ears. … For a time the others waged a price war with the new firm, trying to ruin it; but they soon gave that up, and things became quiet.[126]

An extract from a 1903 issue of the newspaper, *Gazeta Świąteczna*, is also instructive. It describes the efforts of a priest to get the Polish peasantry, at Skomlin in Prussian-ruled Poland, to alleviate their misery by uniting their scattered landholdings:

> Persuaded by the priest, the majority of the farmers had signed their names; but after leaving the office some stirred up the others against it. The local shopkeepers, Jews, contributed to this a great deal because they were afraid that in a unified village they would be unable to get a dwelling and that their trade would be ruined.[127]

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[124] "Confessions of Zbigniew Romaniuk," interviewed by Wojciech A. Wierzewski, in *The Story of Two Shtetls, Brańsk and Ejszyszki: An Overview of Polish-Jewish Relations in Northeastern Poland during World War II* (Toronto and Chicago: The Polish Educational Foundation in North America, 1998), Part One, 22; Zbigniew Romaniuk, *The Jewish Community of Brańsk, 1795–1914,* The American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies, Internet: <http://www.aapjstudies.org/103>.

[125] Jan Slomka, *From Serfdom to Self-Government: Memoirs of a Polish Village Mayor, 1842–1927* (London: Minerva Publishing Co., 1941), 199. Słomka, onetime mayor of the village of Dzików near Tarnobrzeg, provides very interesting insights into the relationship between Jews and peasants during this period: how Jews became money-lenders to the peasants, whom they had previously shunned, and took advantage of them and acquired numerous farms from indebted peasants until laws were passed against usury (pp. 84–87); how the gradual entry of Poles into the local trade *raised* the level of commerce in the interwar period (p. 265).

[126] Slomka, *From Serfdom to Self-Government,* 200.

[127] Thomas and Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America,* vol. 2, 1180.

At that time economic solidarity was completely foreign to Polish peasants, as it was to townspeople. It was something that had to be learned from others, including the Jews. Meanwhile Jews were eager to expand into areas traditionally occupied by Poles, like farming, and started to buy up large agricultural holdings in Galicia.[128]

Unlike Polish attitudes toward Jews, about which there is an extensive and growing literature, the issue of Jewish attitudes toward Poles is a much neglected topic.[129] In fact, the issue is largely shunned as if it provides no clues for understanding the long history of interaction between Poles and Jews. Historically, Polish-Jewish relations were multifaceted and developed in an entirely different setting than those which prevailed in the rest of Europe. Jews had been expelled from most of Europe over the centuries, starting in England (where the traditional blood libel charges originated) and followed by Spain, or butchered in large-scale massacres like those in Norwich, Strasbourg, Prague and Lisbon. When they started to trickle back to Western Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, unlike in Poland, Jews sought cultural, linguistic and political assimilation. In Poland, Jews wanted autonomy and as little interaction with the Christian population as possible. By and large, Jews went out of their way not to assimilate and, with the growth of Jewish nationalism in the late 19th century, they shunned political solidarity with the Poles in favour of their own national agenda which was often expressed in neutrality, at best, or by siding with Poland's political foes. Jewish historiography tries to explain this conflict away by "Polish anti-Semitism." If exclusionary attitudes can be the source of friction between Hasidic and non-Hasidic Jews in Israel, then there were all the more objective reasons for tensions to exist between Christians and Jews in Poland. However, in the case of Poland, it is commonplace to shist all the blame for this state of affair exclusively, or primarily at best, onto the Poles and any attempt to examine Jewish conduct is summarily dismissed as a display of anti-Semitism.

As Eva Hoffman points out, there were mutual parallels in how the two groups—Jews and Poles—traditionally viewed each other and interacted:

> throughout much of Poland's history, Jews were a highly visible and socially significant presence—a constituency that had to be reckoned with and one that could even pose challenges to the Poles themselves. In

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[128] It is interesting to note that the Maskilim ("enlightened Jews"), in late 18th-century Austrian-ruled Poland as well as in Russia, shared the Poles' abhorrence towards the vocational choices of most Jews, a theme that is usually considered the property of anti-Semites:

> Other *Maskilim* petitioned civil authorities to prohibit Jewish innkeeping, leasing of land, moneylending, and other debauched occupations, hoping instead to train Jews for more productive work in agriculture or crafts. Another prominent *Maskil*, Zalkand Hourwitz, suggested that the use of Yiddish and Hebrew be banned in business contracts, even between Jews, so that all transactions be transparent to all, Jew and gentile alike. Yiddish, in particular, took a beating, and was denounced regularly in the pages of *Haskalah* journals.
>
> [Leon] Bramson was an advocate of the so-called "productivization of the Jews," according to which the "Jewish problem" could be solved if Jews were to engage in productive occupations, such as manufacturing, crafts, and agriculture (as opposed to trade). The notion was of course popular among Russian *maskilim,* whom Bramson admired.

See, respectively, Efron, *Real Jews,* 20; Horowitz, *Empire Jews,* 122.

[129] Two insightful articles on this topic which depart from the prevalent stereotypical conclusions appeared in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 8 (1994): Szyja Bronsztejn, "Polish-Jewish Relations as Reflected in Memoirs of the Interwar Period," pp. 66–88, and Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, "*Shtetl* Communities: Another Image," pp. 89–113.

this respect, the nature of the Polish-Jewish relationship is exceptional. In contrast with Western European countries, where Jews were usually a tiny minority (below 2 percent of the population in modern Germany) and where, therefore, they were a mostly imaginary Other, in Poland, the Jewish community comprised a genuine ethnic minority, with its own rights, problems, and powers. We have become skilled nowadays in analyzing the imagery of Otherness, that unconscious stratum of preconceptions, fantasies, and projections we bring to our perceptions of strangers. Such subliminal assumptions and archetypes can and do have a very real impact on how we see and treat each other. But in the intergroup relations that were as extended in time and as complex as those between Poles and Jews, the material realities of economic competition and practical loyalties, of policy and political alignments, also played a vital role.[130]

What of Jewish attitudes toward the Poles? We tend to forget that minority groups are not powerless in the perceptions; that they, too, exercise judgment and gauge the character of others; and that, much as they may be the targets of prejudice, they are not themselves immune to it. That the Jews had their views of the people among whom they lived we cannot doubt, but their ordinary opinions, ideas, and preconceptions are largely inaccessible to us, since almost no secular Jewish literature is extant from the early period. We do know, however, that Jews had their exclusionary and monopolistic prescriptions, prohibiting rights of residence to outsiders in their quarters, and strictly guarding certain business practices and "secrets" from non-Jews. … We can take it for granted, moreover, that fierce religious disapproval traveled both ways. Just as Jews were infidel in Christian eyes, so Jews were convinced that Christians were wrong, deluded, and blasphemous. And from both sides of the divide, the conviction of the other's wrongness created essential, and increasingly rigid, spiritual barriers. As the Jewish communities in Poland became more settled and began to establish stronger religious institutions, Polish Jews became more rigorously observant. They began to shun intimate contact with Christians, if only on account of the dietary laws.

The Poles, then, were the Jews' radical Other, just as much as the other way round.[131]

Jewish separatism was also an active choice, and it also had its consequences. It meant that Jewish individuals and communities cultivated their own alienness, and that although they were willing to engage in contractual relations with the Poles, they did not wish to enter into a shared world with them.[132]

Although much has been written about "Polish anti-Semitism," there is very little about the other side of this two-way relationship. Most commentators simply deny its existence or downplay it to the point of insignificance. For some scholars, like Joanna Michlic, who adhere to the Manichean view of the malevolent Pole and the perpetually-innocent Jew, "anti-Polish stereotyping" by Jews is essentially a *reactive* and insignificant postwar phenomenon that has little or nothing to do with actual Jewish attributes. In her estimation, it is hardly worthy of mention:

this stereotyping basically constitutes a reaction to the negative experience of Jews in modern Poland. This reaction takes on the form of biased and unjustified expressions and overgeneralizations. However, such

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[130] Eva Hoffman, *Shtetl: The Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 8–9.

[131] Ibid., 44–45.

[132] Ibid., 63.

> stereotyping does not constitute an important and irreducible element of Jewish national identity and nationalism …[133]

Recently, historian Theodore Weeks made short shrift of such arguments:

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[133] Joanna Beata Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 15. Michlic's study is written from a distinctly one-sided, Jewish nationalist perspective, yet she has nothing to say about the phenomenon of Jewish nationalism istelf. Driven by her ideological agenda, the author pushes stereotypes of Poles to the extreme, frequently descends to the level of partisan polemics, and uses facts in highly selective manner. While excelling at stereotyping Poles, she eschews any hint of a critical approach toward the behaviour of Jews. Only Poles are infected with "ethno-nationalism," never Jews. Her biases are all too pronounced, and those whose views do not conform to hers) are summarily dismissed as "anti-Semites" or "ethno-nationalists." This is a rather transparent ploy not to have to deal with problematic or even devastating facts or arguments. Michlic is also quick to level harsh criticism on accomplished non-Polish historians such as Brian Porter and Gunnar Paulsson, who express more measured and moderate views on Polish-Jewish relations than her often extremist positions. Ibid., 283, 299, 329–30. (See Paulsson's response to the charges Michlic leveled at his book *Secret City,* in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies,* vol. 20, no. 2 (2006): 372–74. Porter's views are by no means complimentary of Polish "nationalism" and his book *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), was subjected to criticism by John Radzilowski in *Kosmas: Czechoslovak and Central European Journal,* vol. 15, no. 1 (Fall 2001): 97–99, and by Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, "Nacjonalizm wyobrażony," *Arcana,* no. 6 (2004): 167–86.) Various historical errors mar her study *Poland's Threatening Other*. It is not true that the National Democrats introduced "anti-Jewish images and stereotypes" in Poland in the 1880s (p. 1), since the party was not in existence at that time. It is also not true that Eugeniusz Jagiełło was the only non-anti-Semitic candidate in the election to the Fourth Duma in 1912, as no one seriously accused the main Polish candidate, Jan Kucharzewski, of anti-Semitism (p. 64). Michlic is unaware of important developments in historical research such as the ethnic make-up of the leadership of Stalinist security office (p. 204). Compare with Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, ed., *Aparat bezpieczeństwa w Polsce: Kadra kierownicza,* vol. 1: *1944–1956* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2005]. Michlic is also not above manipulating facts and making baseless charges with her characteristic rancour and self-aggrandizement. Indeed, blatant misrepresentations abound in Michlic's scholarship, which, in this respect, is reminiscent of Yaffa Eliach's. For example, she misrepresented the findings of the Jedwabne investigation in the January 2008 issue of *History* and claimed, bizarrely, in a conference paper presented in Jerusalem in March 2009, that Poles see themselves as the *only* victims of the Second World War. The case against Germany, where currents leading up to Nazism had deep roots in German thinking, is incomparably stronger, but historians shy away from that thesis today. See W.W. Coole and M.F. Potter, eds., *Thus Spake Germany* (London: Routledge, 1941), which cites hundreds of prominent Germans who elaborated many conceptions which became part of National Socialism, such as the racial theory, the lust for world hegemony, the *Herrenvolk* thesis, the fight against Anglo-Saxon influences, the desire to create an essentially German religion, the ethic of ruthlessness and cruelty, the right of the superior German race to *Lebensraum* ("living space"), the principle of exterminating the native populations of conquered territories and colonizing them with Germans.

A much more balanced study, which largely avoids the extremist premises advanced by Michlic and the relentless pursuit of anti-Semitism as the sole explanation for Polish behaviour, is Theodore R. Weeks' *From Assimilation to Antisemitism: The "Jewish Question" in Poland, 1850–1914* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006). However, it too is flawed in viewing Jews solely as "passive participants" rather than "actors," in country where they were a major presence on the urban landscape and formed a powerful force on the economic plane. Orthodox Jews, including the Jewish masses, were simply inassimilable, and the assimilationists, a relatively small number, were ostracized by their community. Weeks does not appear to appreciate the critical role of this major stumbling block to Polish-Jewish co-existence. Weeks also fails to come to terms with the real reason why Poles did not embrace his favoured solution of cultural and national autonomy for Jews, also put forward as a "Polish-Jewish condominium." Not only was there no model for such autonomy (no European country granted Jews that status at the time, and none does today), but more importantly, the Poles considered Poland to be a national state for the Poles, just as Jews today consider Israel a homeland for the Jews and utterly reject the notion of a "Jewish-Palestinian condominium." (In fact, the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel describes the country as a Jewish state and established Judaism as the dominant religion. Israel has enacted more than fifty laws that provide for preferential treatment of Jews. If any largely Christian country were to treat Christians preferentially over Jews in this way, there would be an international outcry led by Jews. As in most cases, the "double standard" that Jewish nationalists love to decry works in their favour.) Among other shortcomings, Weeks does not draw meaningful comparisons with the situation of Jews in neighbouring countries such as the Czech lands, and fails to reconcile his premise that Polish society as a whole adopted stridently anti-Semitic views by the beginning of the twentieth century with the fact that the anti-Jewish boycott of 1912 was generally ignored by the peasantry, and indeed the majority of Poles. Ibid., 166, 169. While mentioning incidents such as the harassment of Jews "suspected" of supporting the Russians during the 1863 insurrection, he neglects to mention that Romuald Traugutt, the leader of the rebellion, was

> Indeed, one cannot understand the development of relations between Poles and Jews in this period (i.e., turn of the 19th century and into the 20th century) without some consideration of the popular religious prejudices that both Jews and Poles harboured vis-à-vis their neighbours. On a popular level, Jews tended to see their Christian neighbours as crude, unpredictable, violent, and following a religion that was fundamentally pagan, worshipping idols (images of saints). Poles, on the other hand, despised Jews as moneylenders and Christ-killers, while also fearing Jews as crafty, sly, and possibly even demonic … While the Catholic clergy did not advocate violence against Jews, the Church generally urged believers to have nothing to do with Jews. [One might add that the Jewish religion and rabbis instilled a similar attiude with regard to Christians. *M.P.*] In short, religious beliefs emphasized and strengthened the maintenance of a large distance between Jews and Christian Poles.[134]

Moreover, Michlic's approach is ahistorical because it overlooks the historical context in which Polish-Jewish relations developed. Furthermore, it is hypocritical because it subjects Poles and Jews to two different moral standards. Michlic takes Poles to rask for holding views similar (regarding Jews) to those held by Jews (regarding Poles), and offers not one word of criticism regarding Jews. The situation is further compounded when Poland is compared to European countries which had no significant Jewish population or separatist minorities, but not to those (numerous) countries which experienced (and experience) serious ethnic strife between rival ethnic or religious groups who happen not to be Jewish.

There is little, if anything, that is novel about anti-Semitic views voiced by some Poles about Jews. (It is a separate question to what extent these views were shared by Polish society as a whole. The notion that anti-Semitism was a universal phenomenon among Poles is symptomatic of Jewish projection rather than reflection of reality.) Poles inherited traditional Christian beliefs and prejudices regarding Jews from the Catholic Church, and some of the modern doctrines were brought from Western Europe (primarily France and Germany), where they developed. There is no evidence Poles invented anything original in this regard. As Theodore Weeks notes:

> The Poles certainly had no monopoly on antisemitism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In fact, both "scholarly" and popular expressions of anti-Jewish sentiment were much more pronounced in Germany and France in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. … It is also clear that much of the rhetoric of Polish antisemites … was appropriated from German and French sources.
>
> … no prominent Polish writer or scholar of the prewar [i.e. pre-World War One] period chose to publicly denounce the Jews as a threat to the Polish nation. Indeed before 1905 it was a rare Polish intellectual who made a carrer of denouncing the Jews. Instead, in that period prominent writers such as Bolesław Prus and Aleksander Świętochowski mercilessly mocked and reviled antisemites as hacks, careerists, and benighted fools.[135]

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[134] Theodore R. Weeks, "Jews in the Kingdom of Poland, 1861–1914: Changes and Continuities," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, 1815–1918,* vol. 27: *Jews in the Kingdom of Poland,* 306.

[135] Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism,* 175–76.

But the Poles were also saddled with a formidable problem—unknown in most of Europe—of having to cope, on a practical level and a day-to-day basis, with large numbers of Jews living in their midst as a separate community. Most of these Jews came to Poland because they were expelled from or fled persecution in other parts of Europe. Continually during Polish history, relations between Poles and Jews were exacerbated by the interference of outsiders: German settlers in the Middle Ages, the Cossack uprisings,[136] the Swedish invasion in the 17th century, the dogmatic pressures of the Vatican, the autocratic rule of Czarist Russia, the Nazi Germany invasion, and the Stalinist occupation, to name the most significant examples.

Few people, even among Poles, are aware of the nature of the earliest contacts between Jews and Poles. Jews first came to Poland in the 10th century as traders in—among other commodities, but primarily—Christian slaves, which certainly did not augur well for mutual relations.[137] According to Polish historian Hanna Zaremska,

> Jewish traders appeared in southern Poland—probably not later than in the mid-10th century—because the network of slave trade routes encompassed the country, where conditions enabling organisation of this type

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[136] The 17th century Khmelnitsky (Chmielnicki) revolt is commonly presented in Ukrainian-Jewish dialogue as a case of the Polish nobility and Jesuits oppressing the Cossacks, with Jews, as pawns of the nobility, merely transmitting the orders of the Polish overlords, and then becoming the innocent victims of Cossack anger over the Polish policies. This portrayal of Jews as passive victims of anti-Semitic exploitation is at odds with the active role they played in the scheme of things. While not denying the acts of the Polish nobles (who, in the Ukraine, were generally polonized Ruthenians and often absentee landowners—see Andrzej Nowak, *Dzieje Polski,* vol. 5: *1772–1632—Imperium Rzeczypospolitej* [Kraków: Biały Kruk, 2021], 237–41), the German Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891) makes it clear that the Jews played a major role in inciting hatred against themselves and the Poles, and that they did so freely. Far from being mere order-fulfillers of the Polish nobility, the Jews had considerable autonomy, and even advised the Poles on how to more effectively exploit the Cossacks. Moreover, there were features of the Talmudism and messianism of the time that facilitated Jewish exploitative conduct. Finally, Khmelnitsky had been personally wronged by the Jews, and acted on his grudge. See Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews,* volume 5: *From the Chmielnicki Persecution of the Jews in Poland (1648 C.E.) to the Period of Emancipation in Central Europe (c. 1870 C.E.)* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974), 6 ff. On the demonization of Ukrainian peasants in this context see Israel Shahak, *Jewish History, Jewish Religion: The Weight of Three Thousand Years* (London and Boulder, Colorado: Pluto Press, 1994), 63, 73 ("the Jews were … the *immediate exploiters of the peasantry* … here an enslaved peasant is transformed into a racist monster, if Jews profited from his state of slavery and exploitation").

[137] Borrowing from the arguments of Jewish ethno-nationalist like Joanna Michlic and the moralizing of post-modern historians of Polish-Jewish relations, the first contact between Polish peasants and Jews was in the latter's capacity as people wanting to enslave Poles. As new Christians, Polish peasants knew nothing of Jews and had no innate predisposition towards them. On the other hand, the "bad" Jews were simply out for profit at the expense of others, whereas the "good" Jews who believed the teachings of their religion also came with hatred in their hearts toward Christians. The role of the relatively small Polish ruling class in the slave trade cannot salvage the reputation of the Jewish slave traders, just as the Western European slave trade of Blacks cannot be pinned on the Africans who facilitated that enterprise and the free Blacks who also owned Black slaves in the United States. Most of the slaves were caught and sold by Black chiefs or middlemen as slavery was a well-established practice in Africa, long before the arrival of Western European slave traders. According to Carter G. Woodson's study, in 1830, 3,776 free Blacks owned 12,907 Black slaves, a tiny number of the 2,000,000 slaves owned in the entire United States. (In turns out that, in addition to capturing and enslaving people from other Indigenous tribes, North American Indigenous also owned Black slaves. Two Native American tribes in Oklahoma, who purchased enslaved Blacks as labourers in the 18th and 19th centuries, continue to deny citizenship to descendants of Blacks who were enslaved by them before the Civil War. See Chris Cameron and Mark Walker, "Tribes Are Pressed to Confront Bias Against Descendants of Enslaced People," *The New York Times,* May 30, 2021.) In both cases, the only institution that spoke out against this evil practice and sided with the downtrodden was the Catholic Church. Such was the stage that the Jews themselves set for Polish-Jewish relations.

> of trade emerged. The tde's development resulted from a favourable configuration of demand (first and foremost in the countries of the Muslm Middle East) and supply.[138]

According to *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe,*

> The first information about Jewish merchants in Eastern Europe dates from about the tenth century. In this period, Jews took part in the slave trade between Central Asia, Khazaria, Byzantium, and Western Europe (in particular the Iberian Peninsula). Important stopping points on the trade routes included Prague, Kraków, and Kiev, towns in which Jewish colonies developed. During the twelfth century, Jews were excluded from this trade, due in part to church opposition to their dealing in Christian slaves.[139]

In actual fact, the slave trade eventually disappeared, hence the "exclusion" of Jews from this lucrative trade.

In the early medieval ages, the international slave trade was monopolized by Iberian Jews known as Radhanites (Radanites), who transferred slaves (Slavs) from Central Europe through Western Europe

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[138] Hanna Zaremska, "Jews and Their Attitude Towards Christians in Medieval Poland," *Acta Poloniae Historica,* vol. 101 (January 2010), 125–161, here at 143. The author goes on to state: "The trade could not have developed without the consent of local political authority. In fact, it was the representatives of local authorities—if not the duke himself—who provided slaves, in their majority prisoners of war." POLIN The Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw devotes a panel to the slave trade in its core exhibit on the early Jewish presence in Poland. Additional literature on this topic published in Polish or Poland includes Tadeusz Lewicki, "Osadnictwo słowiańskie i niewolnicy słowiańscy w krajach muzułmańskich według średniowiecznych pisarzy arabskich, *Przegląd Historyczny*, vol. 43, nos. 3–4 (1952): 473–91; Tadeusz Lewicki, "Handel niewolnikami słowiańskich w krajach arabskich," in *Słownik Starożytności Słowiańskich: Encyklopedyczny zarys kultury Słowian od czasów najdawniejszych*, vol. 2 (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1964), 190–92; Iza Bieżuńska-Malowist and Marian Małowist, *Niewolnictwo* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1987), 267–77; Zofia Borzymińska, *Studia z dziejów Żydów w Polsce* (Warsaw: DiG, 1995), 14–26; Ahmed Nazmi, *Commercial Relations between Arabs and Slaves (9th-11th Centuries)* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog, 1998), 114–83; Hanna Zaremska, "Aspekty porównawcze w badaniach nad historią Żydów w średniowiecznej Polsce," *Rocznik Mazowiecki,* vol. 13 (2001): 177–91, here at 178; Robert Szuchta, *1000 lat historii polskich Żydów: Podróż przez wieki* (Warsaw: POLIN Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich, 2015), 17–19.

[139] Adam Teller, "Trade," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe,* Internet: <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Trade>.

centres such as Mainz, Verdun and Lyons, where they were often castrated, to Islamic buyers in Muslim Spain and North Africa.[140] According to a Polish historian:

> In the early Middle Ages the Jews kept a high profile in various branches of long-distance and overseas trade, in which slaves were, for at least three hundred years, the chief commodity. … The accounts of

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[140] Pogonowski, *Jews in Poland,* 257–66; M.M. Postan and Edward Miller, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe,* vol. 2: *Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages,* Second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 416–18, 485–87; Roman Jakobson, *Selected Writings,* vol. 6: *Early Slavic Paths and Crossroads*, Part 2: *Medieval Slavic Studies* (Berlin, New York, and Amsterdam: Mouton, 1985), 864; Timothy Reuter, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History,* vol. 3: *c.900–c.1024* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 69–70; "Rhadanite Merchants," in Robert E. Bjork, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); H.H. Ben-Sasson, "Diaspora Configuration and Jewish Occupation Patterns at the Beginning of the Middle Ages," in H.H. Ben-Sasson, ed., *A History of the Jewish People* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976), 394–98, Plate 31 (Gniezno cathedral door depicting the ransom of Christians slaves from Jewish traders); Joseph Adler, "The Origins of Polish Jewry," *Midstream*, October 1994, 26–28; Livia Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: Facing the Holocaust* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), 8. See also "Radhanite", Wikipedia, Internet: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radhanite>; "Slavery in Medieval Europe," Wikipedia, Internet: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery_in_medieval_Europe>. (Unfortunately, Wikipedia entries tend to be manipulated by interest groups and compromising information about Jews is often removed.) See also the remarkable eyewitness accounts in Ibn Fadlân, *Ibn Fadlân and the Land of Darkness: Arab Travellers in the Far North* (London: Penguin Books, 2012).

The Radhnites (Radanites) were one of three groups that dominated the white slave trade at the time. They were the ones who controlled the western overland route from the Slav territories to Muslim Spain via Germany and France. The northern route, via the Baltic, was run by Viking traders. The various eastern routes, via the Dnieper, the Don, and the Volga, were run by either Viking or Khazar traders. All three trading groups worked with each other, particularly the Radhanites and the Khazars (who converted to Judaism).

Jews also played a significant role in the Tatar slave trade in Slavs in the Crimean Khanate, which began in the late Middle Ages and continued well into the eighteenth century. The slave raids into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Southern Russia are believed to have resulted in the capture of several hundred thousand people. According to historian Mikhail Kizilov,

> Trade in slaves and captives was one of the most important (if not the most important) sources of income of the Crimean Khanate in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. …
>
> The sources testify that [the] Jewish population played a highly significant role in the trade in slaves and captives of the Crimean Khanate in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. The ways, in which the Jews were engaged in this business, were varied and diversified—from mediators in trade and money-lenders to commandants of the Jewish fortress of Çu-fut Qal'eh, from wealthy slave-owners to misfortunate victims of the Tatar predatory raids. Moreover, the Jews played [an] important role in international trade and were sometimes appointed influential state officials of the Crimean Khanate.

See Mikhail Kizilov, " Slaves, Money Lenders, and Prisoner Guards: The Jews and the Trade in Slaves and Captives in the Crimean Khanate," *Journal of Jewish Studies,* vol. 58, no. 2 (Autumn 2007): 189–210. An Israeli scholar points out, that slaveholding—particularly of females of Slavic origin—in Jewish households in the urban centres of the Ottoman Empire was widespread from the 16th to the 19th centuries, and Jews were involved in the slave trade as dealers. Female slaves were forced to cohabit with Jewish men, serving as their concubines and bearing them legitimate children who were raised as Jews. Marriages entered into with manumitted slaves who converted to Judaism were also common. Since Ottoman Jews did not possess or trade in Jewish slaves (except to ransom Jewish captives), there is a significant religious dimension to the holding of Christians as slaves. See Yaron Ben-Naeh, "Blond, Tall, With Honey-Colored Eyes: Jewish Ownership of Slaves in the Ottoman Empire," *Jewish History,* vol. 20, nos. 3–4 (December 2006): 316–32. Descendants of Maranos in like circumstances are actively targeted by Jews to this day to return to the Jewish fold. Would the same be tolerated for descendants of Christian slaves?

Jews also played a prominent role in the slave trade in the Americas. Marc Lee Raphael (editor of *American Jewish History,* the Journal of the American Jewish Historical Society at Brandeis University), in *Jews and Judaism in the United States: A Documentary History* (New York: Behrman House, 1983), at p. 14, comments on the slave trade in Brazil, by far the major destination of Africans, where as many as 9 out of 10 Africans actually went, and elsewhere:

> Jews also took an active part in the Dutch colonial slave trade; indeed, the bylaws of the Recife and Mauricia congregations (1648) included an imposta (Jewish tax) of five soldos for each Negro slave a Brazilian Jew purchased from the West Indies Company. Slave auctions were postponed if they fell on a Jewish holiday. In Curaçao in the seventeenth century, as well as in the British colonies of Barbados and Jamaica in the eighteenth century, Jewish merchants played a major role in the slave trade. In fact, in all the American

> travellers (Ibn Kordabheh, Ibrahim ibn Yacub), passages in the works of other Arab and Jewish authors (Ibn Haukal, Ibrahim al Quarawi, Yehuda ben Meir ha-Kohen), documents issued by ecclesiastical and secular authorities, charters of municipal privileges and customs tariffs build up a massive body of evidence corroborating the involvement of the Jews in the slave trade. Their "goods" came mostly from the Slav nations; their trade routes led to and crossed in Eastern and Central Europe. Slaves of Slav origin would be taken westwards across the Frankish lands to Arab Spain and from there to other countries in the Mediterranean. The main centres of the slave trade were Prague (from the 10th century onwards); Magdeburg, Merseburg, Mainz and Koblenz in Germany; Verdun in northern France and a number of towns in southern France. In spite of the vociferous debates that the slave trade provoked in both secular and church circles, the Jews were undismayed and went on with their business.[141]

The slave trade was strongly opposed by the Catholic Church, which prohibited the export of Christian slaves to non-Christian lands.[142] Gallus Anonymous, in his 12th century chronicle, mentions that Judyta, the Bohemian wife of Polish Duke Władysław I Herman from 1080 to 1086, ransomed slaves from Jewish merchants in Prague.[143] So many Slavs were enslaved for so many centuries that the very name "slave" derived from their name, not only in English and other European languages. As historian H.H. Ben-Sasson notes, Jews referred to the Slavic languages as the "language of Canaan" based on the Bible verse, "Cursed is Canaan: A slave of slaves shall he be" (Genesis 9:25; see page 397).[144]

Jewish settlers did not begin to arrive in Poland in large numbers until the 13th century. In 1264 Boleslaus the Pious (Bolesław Pobożny), the Duke of Greater Poland (Wielkopolska) issued a General Charter of Jewish Liberties, known as the Statute of Kalisz, which granted Jews unprecedented legal rights in Europe, including a prohibition of attacks against Jews and their property or accusing Jews of using Christian blood for ritual purposes (a common charge leveled against Jews in Western Europe). It was forbidden to vandalize synagogues or Jewish cemeteries, under threat of punishment. Jurisdiction over Jewish matters was given over to Jewish courts. In cases involving the property or person of a Jew, the testimony of a Christian had to be supported by that of a Jew. The position of Jews in society and their influence as a group clearly outranked those of the Christian peasantry (serfs), who formed the vast majority of the population.

Dr. Raphael discusses the central role of the Jews in the New World commerce and the African slave trade at pp. 23–25.

[141] Zofia Kowalska, "Handel niewolnikami prowadzony przez Żydów w IX-XI wieku w Europie," in Danuta Quirini-Popławskiej, ed., *Niewolnictwo i niewolnicy w Europie od starożytności po czasy nowożytne* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1998), 81–92 (English language abstract cited).

[142] Opposition to the slave trade resulted in the banishment in 995 of Adalbert (Vojtěch in Czech, Wojciech in Polish), the bishop of Prague, who condemned the practice in his treatise "Infelix Aurum." Adalbert fled to Poland where he continued to ransom Christians sold into slavery. In this context, it is irrelevant that some Christians abetted this activity, because Jews were not enslaved, but only "the others." Put bluntly, Jews traded in Christian slaves; Christians did not trade in Jewish slaves. Suffice it to say that if Poles had been responsible for enslaving Jews in the past, that fact would be forever have been held against the Poles and would doubtless figure prominently in the history of Polish-Jewish relations to this day. It should be noted that both the Old Testament and the Talmud sanctioned the possession of non-Jewish slaves: "As for your male and female slaves whom you may have—you may acquire male and female slaves from the pagan nations that are around you." (Leviticus 25:44.)

[143] Szuchta, *1000 lat historii polskich Żydów,* 19.

[144] Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People,* 395.

Unlike other countries in which they settled and unlike the waves of German migrants who came to Poland, Jews who migrated to Poland from the 13th century onward clung tenaciously to a German dialect rather than learning the language of their country of refuge. According to Jewish-American historian Robert Chazan,

> In this regard, we must note the fascinating phenomenon of the emergence of Yiddish as the Jewish language of Polish Jewry. We have noted throughout this study Jewish adoption of the local vernaculars as the language of everyday communication. … What is clear, however, is that the importation of German into Poland by immigrating Jews represents a new development. In Poland, the migrating Jews did not adopt the language of their new environment. Rather, they held fast to the language and culture with which they had arrived. This linguistic tenaciousness seems to have been rooted in two factors. The first was the overall Germanic migration into Poland, which made the urban areas—within which the Jewish migrants first settled—heavily German in language and culture. Secondly, the Jewish migrants into Poland—unlike their predecessors in eleventh- and twelfth-century northern France and Germany—seem to have viewed their new environment as distinctly backward and to have clung to their prior language as a sign of cultural superiority.[145]

The chasm separating Jews from Polish peasantry, or the common people, was acutely felt well into the 20th century. The situation of Jews in Poland bore no resemblance to the harsh and inhumane conditions that Black slaves and their descendants, who were brought from Africa by the tens of thousands by the Dutch, British, Portuguese, Spanish, and French, endured on the way to and in the European colonies in the Americas. Rather, the Jews in Poland occupied a place between the nobility and the peasant serfs and exerted considerable power over the latter. They collected taxes for the nobility and managed their estates. They were known as *pachciarz,* or "commercial agent." The Jew, on behalf of the nobleman, controlled the life of the village. Having lost legal protection in 1518, when the king ceased to consider their complaints against the nobles, the peasants remained virtually at the mercy of the nobles, who decided on the levies to be imposed upon them in the form of services and the use of monopolies and held jurisdiction over them. The nobles, with the Jews as their agents, often misused their privileges to exploit the peasants subject to their whims. As stewards of the estates belonging to the Polish magnates, Jews had the power of inflicting capital punishment on the Polish serfs. Poland in the 16th and 17th centuries has often been described as "heaven for the Jews, paradise for the nobles, hell for the serfs."[146] The result was inevitable: strong resentment.

The reaction of the Jews caught up in this vicious cycle was to "dehumanize" the Christian peasants, and to view themselves as superior. As Jonathan Krasner points out,

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[145] Robert Chazan, *The Jews of Medieval Western Christendom, 1000–1500* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 205–6.

[146] Pogonowski, *Jews in Poland,* 159; Bernard D. Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland: A Social and Economic History of the Jewish Community in Poland from 1100 to 1800* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 9–10.

> The dehumanization of the peasants was also 'an instrument for sustaining a social and political order in which the Other is a victim'. In central and eastern Europe, particularly in Poland and Ukraine, the Jews were frequently cast in an exploitative role in relation to the peasants. Although they were often acting as agents of the aristocracy, whether as estate managers, tax-collectors, or merchant capitalists, the face of the victimizer was Jewish. Peasant outbursts directed at Jews [and also magnates—*M.P.*] in the form of pogroms were more often than not fomented by perceived Jewish exploitation. The Jew could not escape awareness of his position, but rather than question the social and political order, he unconsciously justified that position by labelling the lower classes as subhuman, as animals. The occasional violence on the part of the peasants only served to reinforce this image.[147]

This attitude was also evident in the Jewish literature of the period, in which peasants were depicted with stereotypical disdain. According to Israel Bartal,

> At the bottom of the ladder were the peasants, who constituted an absolute majority in the surroundings where Jews lived. Peasants dwelled in villages, at the edges of towns, and in rural suburbs of cities. A considerable number of the non-Jews who provided domestic services to the Jews were peasants. (Especially important was the *shabes goy,* who did things for Jews that they were forbidden to do on the Sabbath). From Jews, peasants bought supplies in the city and purchased products that they did not make themselves, and they sold agricultural produce to Jews. Peasants also drank vodka that Jewish innkeepers sold them in taverns owned by Polish noblemen. The tavern (Yid., *shenk;* Pol., *szenk*), which was the ordinary place of encounter between the Jew and the peasant, occupied a central place in the folklore of the peoples of Eastern Europe. …
>
> The peasants in the Russian Empire were serfs on the estates of the nobility until 1861; they were regarded as property that could be bought and sold. Their collective name in the languages of the Jews was *goyim,* a word that could have extremely negative connotations of stupidity and ignorance, coarseness, sexual promiscuity, drunkenness, and violence. Their languages were called *goyish,* and in Jewish literature—which is full of passages, transliterated into Hebrew, in the vernaculars of the peasants—there is no distinction between one language and another. Moreover, until the beginning of the twentieth century, there is no clear differentiation in the literature between one ethnic group and another. …
>
> The figure of the peasant did not serve the authors of the Haskalah as a positive model (although some Haskalah writers speak of the need to improve the difficult conditions of peasants' lives, which were attributed to political and social injustices). For this reason, it is difficult to find depictions of individual peasants in the literature. Rather, they are depicted stereotypically, as part of a mass, with common

[147] Jonathan Krasner, "Constructing Collective Memory: The Re-envisioning of Eastern Europe as Seen Through American Jewish Textbooks," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 19: *Polish-Jewish Relations in North America* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007), 229–55, here at 241.

> identifying features: similar facial features, identical items of dress, and the personality characteristics (violence, coarseness, ignorance, drunkenness) alluded to above.[148]

But it was not just Polish peasants who were demeaned. This deep-seated prejudice—which is often covered up—extended to virtually all Poles. In her work *Żydzi polscy (1947–1950),*[149] Irena Hurwic-Nowakowska, a sociologist of Jewish origin, included a section on Jewish prejudices against Gentiles that was—tellingly—omitted from the Israeli edition of the book. The censored content contained the following discussion:

> the feeble "*goy's* head (mind)" and the "Jewish head" (mind), which is supposedly far cleverer than the Polish one; "*goyish* luck" (fool's luck), which goes against the run of things, is undeserved by the Poles and unexpected for Jews; "*goyish* blood," meaning an explosive nature ("a Pole in a fit of rage can even kill a loved one"), or the opposite, "Jewish heart," meaning goodness and kindness; and, lastly, "as drunk as a *goy*."[150]

This phenomenon is not simply a historical relic. Orthodox Rabbi Avigdor Miller, writing in 1962, unambiguously believes that, notwithstanding the gentile righteousness that comes from obeying the Noahide Laws, the goyim are inferior ethically to Jews. This owes not only to God's special blessings to the Jews, and the sanctification that comes from having and obeying the Torah, but also as something that is innate to Jews. He comments,

> Y [Youth]. So you say that, both by heredity and by the Torah influence, Jews are far superior to the nations of the world in qualities of character. S [Sage]. There is no doubt about that, as one can plainly see even by superficial observation. But you do not realize how vast is the difference between Israel and the nations.[151]

Compared to the lot of the peasant, Jews enjoyed prerogatives which were by and large respected, and had recourse to higher authorities when faced with occasional attempts to violate their rights. For example,

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[148] Israel Bartal, "Relations between Jews and Non-Jews: Literary Perspectives," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe,* Internet: <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Relations_between_Jews_and_Non-Jews/Literary_Perspectives>. The racist stereotypes inherent in these espoused views can be gauged by more honest Jewish publications that acknowledge widespread consumption of alcohol by Jews as well, and resultant drunkenness and violent behaviour. See, for example, Menashe Unger, *A Fire Burns in Kotsk: A Tale of Hasidism in the Kingdom of Poland* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2015), 13–15, 42–44, 100–5, 126, 133–34, 142, 149, 178–79, 186–87, 190, 229. At pp. 27–28, Unger relates the following about Rev Dovid Lelever (1746–1814): "And once at the festive Sabbath table he said: 'One cannot find fault in a Jew. Whenever we see a bad person who's a Jew, that's just the Gentile part of him, but in the part that's a Jew there can't possibly be any bad.'"

[149] Irena Hurwic-Nowakowska, *Żydzi polscy (1947–1950): Analiza więzi społecznej ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Filozofii i Socjologii PAN, 1996).

[150] Feliks Tych and Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska, eds., *Jewish Presence in Absence: The Aftermath of the Holocaust in Poland, 1944–2010* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, The Internatiional Institute for Holocaust Research; Diana Zborowski Center for the Study of the Aftermath of the Shoah, 2014), 1015.

[151] Miller, *Rejoice o Youth!,* 136.

the Jews of Pinsk [Pińsk] enjoyed freedom to trade, lend money, lease customs rights and estates, and maintain the [Christian] serfs attached to them. They also seem to have been permitted to engage freely in crafts. Their privilege rights assured them of a significant degree of security for their lives and property. In a case of murder or injury, Jews insisted on compensation and punishment of the perpetrator. Usually, with the help of the administrative authorities and the courts, they prevailed. …

Pinsk Jews sued for large amounts of money in cases of bodily injury where the defendant was a nobleman. When a Jew was the attacker such cases were fairly frequent), he would also be summoned to court in the same manner as a nobleman, and on the basis of the same law. … Lawlessness and violence were prevalent generally, in the Christian community too; the primary victims were peasants subject to the nobility. The fact is that sometimes Pinsk Jews were accused of attacking Christians. …

The sources also show that sometimes Jews who were sued by Christians were given preferential treatment by the judicial authorities. … It can be assumed that bribery played a crucial role in such instances. …

In 1646, David Jakubowicz, one of the most important of the Pinsk arrendators, appealed a verdict reached by a nobility court in Pinsk. David, together with his nobleman lord, Lukasz [Łukasz] Olkowski, had been accused of killing a peasant who worked in Olkowski's distilleries. The nobleman was fined sixty-four kopy for damages, but the Jew claimed that according to the Jews' privilege the nobility court was not competent to judge him. The judges (who included the podstarosta) accepted this argument, and his case was referred to the podstarosta's court sitting in its capacity as the sad [sąd] zamkowy, which was empowered to judge Jews. …

As arrendators, they dealt with the nobility and clergy who gladly leased their latifundia to Jews. They also, in line with the economic realities of the period, profited by the feudal labor and tax obligations of peasant serfs bound to leased properties. …

In this period, the peasant serf of the Pinsk region did not display any particular hostility toward the Jews. … They were indifferent as to the question of who would exploit them. … The only recorded cases of serfs acting against Jewish arrendators in particular involve incitement by their nobleman master who fell out with the arrendator, or instances where the Jew committed some egregious injustice that clearly went against custom or law.[152]

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[152] Mordechai Nadav, *The Jews of Pinsk, 1506 to 1880* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2008), 76–79, 85.

(Bribery of state officials, which is mentioned in the above account, is a phenomenon that requires further exploration.[153]) However, when a Jew was attacked or robbed by a serf, the situation was radically different and the serf could expect no mere fine or mercy.

> On the night of September 6 and 7, [1648], while they were camped in a field near the village of Osowiec, they were attacked by a gang of local [Orthodox] men posing as Cossacks, who broke open four of the trunks in the wagons and stole cash, silver utensils, and valuables. …
>
> The kopa investigation, done with summary severity, succeeded in identifying the guilty parties. They turned out to be four serfs of the nobleman Buchowiecki, the owner of Osowiec, who were interrogated by the kopa. … the case was brought for judgment before the nobleman Buchowiecki, the lord of the accused serfs.
>
> Buchowiecki gave up his claims to the escaped serfs, thereby giving the aggrieved Jews the right to catch them and bring them to trial. Buchowiecki sentenced to death the two serfs who had been captured and imprisoned. Since the Jew did not have an executioner on hand, the prisoners remained in jail in the Jews' custody and were later brought to Pinsk.[154]

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[153] See, for example, Jan Peczkis' review of Michael Goldberg, *Why Should Jews Survive? Looking Past the Holocaust Toward a Jewish Future* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

> At various places and times, Jews had been accused of gaining special favors from gentile leaders, often through underhanded means, as well as cheating on taxes. Rabbi Michael Goldberg sheds light on this. In fact, he comes down hard on Jews for their long habit of bribing leading *goys*, and doing so for personal gain, and he rejects the canned exculpatory statements for this kind of conduct.
> Thus, Goldberg comments, "But as committed the rabbis were to maintaining the integrity of Jewish courts, they were to just that degree oblivious to Jews' corrupting the judicial character of non-Jewish legal systems … We might be tempted to try to justify such behavior by invoking the famous rabbinic maxim that "saving a life takes precedence over everything." Try—but not succeed. Many of the reported incidents of bribery have nothing at all to do with preserving life but with preserving cash, for example, by offering a "gift" to a Gentile official in return for a lower tax rate." (p. 104).
> Author Goldberg points out that bribery and tax evasion both run afoul of basic halachic principles, which include the avoidance of taking advantage of someone's "blind spot", and the obligation to establish just courts—among gentiles (as per the Noachide laws) as well as Jews. Most of all, they flout the obligations of *dina d'malchuta dina*, wherein, with few exceptions, "the law of the land is the law", especially in tax matters, where tax evasion is tantamount to theft. Even so, Goldberg continues, "So intellectually agile at creating legal fictions and at otherwise reinterpreting other practices they found theologically or ethically problematic, the rabbis in this area remained silent." (p. 104).
> Taking this further, Goldberg rejects the counter-argument that the rabbinical inaction was excused by the fact that Jews were a minority group living in a hostile gentile world. (p. 104). Instead, he essentially faults the rabbis for hypocrisy, even though he does not use that word. He quips, "Sadly, the rabbis, for whom the Exodus vision shaped practice in Jewish courts, became blind to that vision as it applied to Jews' practices toward non-Jewish officials. The contradiction between the world-embracing story the rabbis espoused and the practices they countenanced vis-à-vis the wider, non-Jewish world weakened the credibility of their claim to serve the God of the world as members of that people who are to make manifest his character to the world. To hold on to both that formative story and those deformed practices is to hold on to a contradiction." (p. 105).
> [However, rather than rabbinical hypocrisy per se, one could think of Talmudic-style dual morality. There is one moral standard governing Jewish conduct towards fellow Jews, and another one for Jewish conduct towards the *goyim*.]
> On page 118, Rabbi Michael Goldberg cites the following Talmudic sources on Jews bribing non-Jews: *Shabbat* 116a-g, *Yevamot* 63b, and *Avozdah Zarah* 71 a. For "saving a life", see *Yoma* 85a-b; for bribing a gentile official in order to obtain a lower tax rate, see *Avodah Zarah* 71a; and for cheating on taxes being tantamount to theft (at least insofar as Jews cheat other Jews), see *Nedarim* 28a, *Gittin* 10b, *Baba Kama* 113a, and *Baba Batra* 54b, 55a.

[154] Nadav, *The Jews of Pinsk, 1506 to 1880,* 142–43.

Social interaction between Christians and Jews was, until the modern period, minimal and superficial. For most Poles and Jews, it simply did not exist. Almost all dealings were on the economic level, and mostly in the marketplace. The non-Jews

> were seen by the Jews primarily instrumentally, as the source of *parnose* (livelihood) through everyday economic exchange. However, as with the peasants, their everyday interaction, purely functional as it was, together with their differences in appearance, language, and customs, reinforced rather than diminished the sense of 'otherness' felt by the Jews towards their economic partners. Underlying this sense among the Jews of the otherness of the peasants were feelings of scorn and suspicion. But if similar feelings among the peasants towards the Jews were prompted by their perception of the latter as endowed with characteristics beyond their grasp, the Jewish perceptions of peasants were the reverse: they represented the uncivilized and uncultured. The term *goy,* referring generally to non-Jews, was actually used to denote 'peasant' in the everyday Yiddish idiom across the Polish territories. It denoted people and things that were backward, ignorant, driven by unrestrained animal instincts and physical aggression—everything that a Jew did not want to and should not be. This value-laden distinction was inculcated in Jewish children from infancy, and their sense of superiority emerged even more forcefully from Jewish religious convictions. Because of their cult of icons, statues, and other 'graven images', the Jews held Christians to be idolatrous, especially the rituals observed by the peasantry.[155]

> Here [i.e., in the town's marketplace] the peasants of the neighboring villages came to sell their products, buy urban products from the Jews, and use the services of the Jewish artisans. In the course of centuries this contact was seldom of lasting duration or of profound value. The relationship usually remained on the level of mutual distrust. To the Jew, the non-Jew was the symbol of raw instinct, of physical power and primitive reflexes. To the peasant, the Jew represented slyness, brains, and, most of all, religious heresy.[156]

Other descriptions of the marketplace highlight the potential for antagonism—one that extended in both directions:

> The marketplace was the quintessential meeting place for Jews and non-Jews, and it was an environment where the Jews felt confident and at home. Like markets around the world, it was also a centre for disagreements, insults and fights. Jewish stall-holders felt no compunction against trading insults with Christian competitors, importuning potential buyers, manhandling troublesome customers or boxing the ears of the street urchins who filled the marketplace. Tavern-keepers, whose livelihood depended on catering to human weakness, had even less respect for many of their customers, especially those who asked for credit or

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[155] Ewa Morawska, "Polish-Jewish Relations in America, 1880–1940: Old Elements, New Configurations," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 19 (2007): 75. Morawska goes on to argue that the negative attitude towards peasants was "accompanied by pity for their wretched conditions." This is an unwarranted generalization for which she presents no persuasive evidence. While this sentiment is sometimes mentioned in Jewish memoirs, it was that of some individuals and could not be said to be widely held or representative of Jewish attitudes.

[156] Abraham Shulman, *The Old Country* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), 15.

became drunk and disorderly. Such patrons were unceremoniously shown the door. In short, the meek and mild Jew, cringing before the Gentiles, is very much a fictional creation.[157]

[157] John D. Klier, "Christians and Jews and the 'Dialogue of Violence' in Late Imperial Russia," in Anna Sapir Abulafia, ed., *Religious Violence Between Christians and Jews: Medieval Roots, Modern Perspectives* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Publishers, 2002), 163.

In fact, although many Jews do not admit it, religion also had an enormous impact on how Jews perceived non-Jews. In his study *Exclusiveness and Tolerance,*[158] Jacob Katz acknowledges that both Jews and Christians had stereotypical views of each other (p. xiv), and Jewish views of Christianity were just as unflattering as the reverse. Katz comments: "The biblical name of Edom was, in Talmudic times, applied

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[158] Jabob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (London: Oxford University Press; New York: Behrman House, 1961). In recent centuries, according to Katz, some Jewish thinkers did genuinely reject the Christians-are-idolaters premise—in part because Christians believed in *creatio ex nihilo* (pp. 163–66, 191). Put in broader context, Jewish goodwill towards Gentiles, according to Katz (pp. 58, 101–2), was motivated in part by expediency (e.g., avoid giving all Jews a bad name), and in part by genuine adherence to moral principles. Commensurate with both tendencies, the Talmud teaches loving-kindness to all human beings, helping the poor and sick, etc. (pp. 59–60). But what of the Talmudic verses that allow Jews to cheat gentiles, etc.? (p. 107). Katz replies: "The disputants claimed that all disparaging references to Gentiles in Talmudic sources applied only to those 'seven nations' which are mentioned in the Bible as the aboriginal inhabitants of the Land of Israel, and remnants of which survived as late as Talmudic times. But this statement is no more than an ad hoc device used in the course of controversy. There is no indication in the Talmud or in the later halakhic sources that such a view was ever held, or even proposed, by any individual halakhist. In fact, evidence to the contrary exists." (p. 110.) Another important, path-breaking study is Israel Jacob Yuval's *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antquity and the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). In his review of that book, Jan Peczkis writes:

> Yuval does not see Christianity as a daughter religion of Judaism. Instead, he sees both Christianity and Talmudic Judaism as daughter religions of Biblical Judaism—the latter of which ended with the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. Thus, Christianity and Mishnaic Judaism were sister religions that formed against a common backdrop of subjugation and destruction. …
>
> Nowadays, we commonly hear that Judaism had no inherent hostility to Christianity, and reacted belatedly against it only in response to persecution by Christians. The truth is rather different. We learn from Yuval that, notwithstanding the rarity of obvious Jewish polemical literature against Christianity in the first eight centuries of their coexistence, the Jewish polemics was more subtle. In addition, the hostility between the two religions began long before Christians had acquired the political power to be in a position to persecute Jews. In fact, in pagan Rome, Christians were persecuted while Jews had the legal status of *religio licita*.
>
> Yuval summarizes the situation as follows, "The basic premise of this book is that the polemics between Judaism and Christianity during the first centuries of the Common Era, in all their varieties and nuances, played a substantial role in the mutual formation of the two religions. Here I am referring not only to an explicit and declared polemic, but to a broad panorama of expressions that include, particularly from the Jewish side, allusions, ambiguities, denials, refutations, and at times also internalization and quiet agreement." (p. xvii). For example, the Midrashic literature opposes Christian teachings not by direct rebuttal, but by presenting alternative stories that negate the Christian versions. … Christians understood the Roman destruction of the Temple as an act of divine vengeance for the Crucifixion of Christ. Jews saw the guilt of pagan Rome in the destruction of the Temple, which they juxtaposed Rome with Edom. (p. 32). Later, Christian Rome became Edom—the continuation of pagan Rome. (p. 274).
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> Yuval confirms the sometimes-denied fact that the Talmud refers derisively to Jesus Christ. He comments, "Indeed, in several places the identification of Balaam with Jesus is clearly called for (e. g, in B. Sanhedrin 106b), while other sources clearly speak of two distinct figures (as in B. Gittin 57a—in the uncensored version the reading there is "Jesus" rather than "the sinners of Israel", as in the Vilna edition). (p. 293). The author also confirms that the sentence of boiling in feces (B. Gittin 57a) applies to Jesus Christ, and that Jews interpreted it as such, going far back into history. (pp. 196–197).
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> Some commentators have gone as far as suggesting that Christianity is inherently intolerant of Jews and Judaism (perhaps even in a proto-Nazi exterminatory sense), because the very existence of Judaism is a negation of the raison d'etre of Christianity. However, Yuval notes that this goes both ways, "To be a 'Jew' meant, in the most profound sense, to adopt a religious identity that competed with Christianity, and vice versa. Or, to adopt the formulation of the late Jacob Katz, the veracity of one religion depended on the negation of the other." (p. 25).
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> The author describes in considerable detail the imprecations against gentiles, directed to God and spoken by Jews, in the face of persecution by Christians, notably during and after the First Crusade. They called upon God to kill indiscriminately and ruthlessly. (p. 120). Yuval points out that these Jewish attitudes went far beyond the pain and anger of persecution, and became more or less a mainstay of Jewish thinking. He comments, "Two arguments may be adduced to refute the explanation of Goldschmidt and Freimann, who tended to see these curses as a direct response to the distress and suffering of Ashkenazic Jewry. The first is that this is a standard ritual transplanted into the landscape of Ashkenazic prayer. Even if the texts were created against the backdrop of great disaster, there is a far-reaching significance to their repetition year after

to Rome. In medieval poetry, however, it is synonymous with Christianity." (P. 16.) Throughout history, Jews had tended to see Christians as idolaters (e.g., pp. 27, 53, 100). Following Talmudic law, this would have forbidden Jews from having business dealings with Christians. Consequently, "Practical considerations required the dissociation of Christianity from idolatry, and this was rationalized by means of halakhic casuistry. But this rationalization cannot be assumed to imply that, from a theological point of view, Christianity was no longer regarded as a 'pagan' religion." (P. 162; see also p. 108.). The 16th-century seminal Jewish thinker Maharal (Rabbi Judah Loeb of Prague) thought that: "However, his criticism [of Jews] did not affect his basic conception that Jews were, essentially, of a superior religious and moral caliber to others. Their inadequacies were incidental only, and attributable to the trials of the Exile; at a different level, Jewish deficiencies had a direct relationship to the Jews' superior spiritual nature." (P. 141.) Until the 11th century, and sometimes later, Jews could own slaves (p. 41). As for usury, both Christians and Jews employed a double standard. Christianity forbade usury among Christians, but regarded Jewish conduct as outside its jurisdiction. For its part, Judaism forbade Jew-on-Jew usury, but allowed Jew-on-gentile usury (p. 57). Since time immemorial, Jews had preferred to live among their own kind. Compulsory ghettoization came much later. Katz comments: "But contrary to what might be expected, the institution of the closed Jewish quarter was not in itself resented by Jews. It was accepted as a provision appropriate to a group of their status, and as corresponding to their social and religious needs; moreover, it provided a measure of security. Jews were content to be recognized as a socio-religious unit, distinct from the general population." (Pp. 132–33.)

According to other Jewish scholars,

> As Gershon Hundert has put it, 'the norms of both the Church and the Synagogue were strongly segregationist in intent, and … each faith taught that the other was spiritually and morally inferior'. The preacher and moralist Tsevi Hirsh Koidonover (d. 1712), in his *Kav hayashar*, argued strongly against any contact with the society of non-Jews, which he saw as 'full of idolatry, violence, and drunkenness'. Christians, lacking divinely taught ethics, were in the process of sliding steadily into chaos. A Jew could best save his soul by avoiding all contact with them. Historically, Ashkenazi Jewry's categorization of Christians as idol worshippers had indeed created numerous legal barriers to Christian-Jewish interaction, at least from the Jewish perspective.[159]

> Jews did express in prayers strong negative views of Christianity, and of Jesus and Mary, sometimes even calls for vengeance. Although passages offensive to Christianity were later removed [by censors] from Jewish prayers, an early sixteenth-century collection of penitential prayers published in Cracow still

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[159] Antony Polonsky, "Introduction," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 15 (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2002), 52. In his study *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century: A Genealogy of Modernity* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2004), Gershon David Hundert argues that the Jewish community held a basic and unassailable feeling of superiority over the non-Jewish world, 234–35. Hundert also dispells the notion that 18th century Poland was a period of social and economic deterioration for the Jews, as well as of serious decline in Polish-Jewish relations. Historian David Frick argues that separation for the good of the community "was the goal of authorities on both sides, and structural parity in the two societies helped both to maintain that separation and to police necessary breaches of it." See David Frick, "Jews in Public Places: Further Chapters in the Jewish-Christian Encounter in Seventeenth Century Vilna," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 22 (2010): 215–48, here at 242. See also Edward Fram, *Ideals Face Reality: Jewish Law and Life in Poland, 1550–1655* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1997), 28.

contained a few references to Christianity as a religion of the "hung-one," an expression to denote the crucified Jesus, and references to "menstruating women." According to medieval Jewish counternarrative of the Gospels, Jesus was born of a menstruating woman, in Jewish tradition a powerful and insulting denotation of impurity. Such prayers played on the contrast between Christian impurity and defilement and the ritual purity of the Jews. Christians were portrayed as the impure uncircumcised.[160]

Laws separating Jews from non-Jews (or "Israelites" from "non-Israelites") appear in the Torah, or the Pentateuch. In the early postbiblical Jewish literature, the Mishnah—and especially the section *'Avodah Zarah*—delineated the boundaries and served as a foundation for subsequent rabbinic laws on contacts between Jews and non-Jews. … in the rabbinic law or halakhah, prohibitions appear against Jews celebrating non-Jewish holidays and attending non-Jewish weddings. There are laws attempting to limit friendly interaction between these two groups and to restrict the use of each other's bathhouses and doctors. …

Jewish dietary laws of *kashrut* also would have limited contacts, at least to Jewish homes … But Jewish law was often about restricting actual socializing rather than simply about the observance of *kashrut.* …

… the Mishanic prohibitions that forbid Jews to leave their animals with gentiles, because of the gentiles' alleged inclinations to bestiality, and that disallow Jews from being alone with gentiles because they are suspected of easy bloodshed. These prohibitions present non-Jews as dangerous, as licentious sexual predators or as killers. …

Indeed, the Jewish leaders desired that Jews dress distinctly in order to prevent any possibility of intimacy …

… the *Shulḥan 'Aruk,* in Yoreh Deʿah 154.2, prohibited a Jewish woman from helping a gentile woman in childbirth unless she was known to the birthing woman and the help was performed for payment. … it was also prohibited to teach gentiles crafts. This prohibition comes from the Mishnah, and as the text states it was intended to prevent a Jewish woman from helping to bring an idolater into the world … The *Shulḥan 'Aruk*, on the other hand, established professional boundaries between Jewish and Christian women, discouraging contacts based on friendship. To avoid such intimacy and friendship, rabbinic authorities made a payment part of the relationship.[161]

The mutual anxieties and mutually promoted attitudes of animosity added a level of distrust and suspicion of the Other and, therefore, a sense of vulnerability that such intimate contacts might bring. …

Because socializing and eating together could lead to simple friendships, then to emotional closeness, and eventually also to sexual relations, neither Jewish nor Church authorities wanted to encourage the crossing of boundaries. Both clearly saw contacts between Jews and Christians more as opportunities for corruption within their communities and as threats to religious loyalty among their co-religionists than as opportunities to gain converts.[162]

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[160] Magda Teter, *Jews and Heretics in Catholic Poland: A Beleaguered Church in the Post-Reform Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 118.

[161] Ibid., 71–73.

[162] Ibid., 75.

Much has been said about how Christians viewed Jews as the "wrong" religion, whose members might contaminate the faithful and whose only merit was their potential for conversion. However, strong anti-Christian sentiments also permeated Judaism and traditional Jewish society. Salo Baron points out that Jews thought exactly the same of Christians, as exemplified by the teachings of the famed rabbi Moses Maimonides.

> On account of their Trinitarian doctrine the Christians are legally in the category of heathens with whom one must not have any dealings on Sunday or, in Palestine, even during the preceding three days. Evidently, living in a Muslim environment, Maimuni could only indulge in the luxury of prohibiting commercial intercourse with the Christian minority during one to four days a week. On the other hand, in view of their qualified approval of the Jewish Scripture, they may be given instruction in its Jewish interpretation, in the hope that they may realize their error and join the ranks for full-fledged Jews.[163]

Based on a study of Hasidic sources, Jewish scholar Moshe Rosman provides the following historical perspective on this topic:

> Based on their respective theologies, Jews and Christians shared an assessment of Jews' fundamental otherness within dominant Christian society. … Rabbinic laws and communal ordinances attempted to restrict contact with non-Jews, and Jewish folklore often assigned a demonic role to its gentile characters.
>
> But in their otherness, Jews maintained a positive evaluation of themselves and their way of life, entertaining feelings of Jewish solidarity and rejection of, and even superiority to, the hegemonic culture.[164]

> Alongside the belief in the non-Jews' demonic nature and the fear and mistrust of Gentile society, some of these tales hint at a very different evaluation of the theological-moral standing of the non-Jews. According to Jacob Katz, given the religious rivalry between Judaism and Christianity, the members of each group adopted a double standard of morality towards each other. There was no religious rationale for treating outsiders according to ethical norms. Jews frowned on mistreating or cheating non-Jews not on moral grounds but from enlightened self-interest: such behaviour would bring Jews into disrepute and result in sanctions or even violence being brought to bear against them.[165]

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[163] Salo Baron, *History and Jewish Historians* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1964), 142.

[164] Moshe Rosman, "Poland before 1795," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), vol. 2, 1388.

[165] M. J. Rosman, "A Minority Views the Majority: Jewish Attitudes Towards the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth and Interaction with Poles," in *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies,* vol. 4 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell for the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, 1989), 37. An example of a double standard of morality is found in the writings of David ben Samuel Halevi, a 17th century rabbi, who pondered the question of whether one should rescue non-Jews or apostates from danger to prevent their death. The rabbi concluded that active killing was not permissible, even if walking away without helping was. Faced with that same question, an anonymous Polish Catholic priest's answer was: "Without any exception whether he is a good man or a bad man, a Jew or a pagan, faithful or an infidel, Catholic or heretic, servant, lord, or a serf, relative or kinsman, rich or poor, he is our neighbour and therefore must be loved, albeit not equally." See Magda Teter, "'There should be no love between us and them': Social Life and the Bounds of Jewish and Canon Law in Early Modern Poland," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 22: *Social and Cultural Boundaries in Pre-Modern Poland* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010), 250.

Raphael Mahler writes in a similar candid vein about the theological prejudices the Jewish people inherently held against Christians (non-Jews).

> The views of the Hasidim … were a direct outgrowth and development of the Weltanschauung of the Kabbalah. The Jewish people were not simply the chosen, but were the only people of God; "Israel and the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one." According to the Midrash, the whole world was created only for the sake of the Jews … Consequently, their feelings of social involvement did not reach beyond their own people.
>
> The positive expression of this attitude was the principle of the unconditional solidarity of the Jews and the idea of *ahavat yisrael* (love of the Jewish people), [which became a main theme] in the stories and legends of the prominent Hasidic rebbes in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, a negative attitude toward Gentiles, which took the form of contempt, was also an unavoidable consequence of this position. As Mendel of Rymanów put it, "A Gentile does not have a heart, although he has an organ that resembles the heart." Simon of Jarosław asserted that the Gentiles will be held responsible not for their evil decrees—these were actually divinely inspired and had been prophesied in order to "cleanse [the Jews] of their sins"—but for their "vengefulness and revelry in the distress of the Jews." The symbol for the Gentile in the Hasid's consciousness was the brutal landowner or the enslaved and boorish peasant.[166]

Mahler also mentions that the Rabbi of Izbica taught that Jews are innately good, even when they do evil deeds, simply because they are Jews. Gentiles are innately bad, even if they do good deeds.

> These principles also apply to the Rabbi of Izbica's teaching with regard to the Jews and the gentile nations … Just as God chose individuals from among the Jews in accordance with His will, bestowing the light of His Torah upon them in greater abundance than upon others, … so did He select the Jews to be His chosen people. … But all these differences among the gentile nations with regard to each other are as nothing when compared with the abyss which exists between them and the Jews. Even "the good qualities and the beneficent knowledge" of gentile nations, which are reflected in their wealth and possessions, are there in exile, since idol worshippers do "the reverse of God's will"; but when the Jews have one of these qualities, then God's will is fulfilled through it, for the Jews are the "instrument by which God's will is implemented." … So beloved are the Jews in the eyes of God that even if they do deeds like those done by the Gentiles, they are good precisely because they are the deeds of Jews. Even the wicked among the Jews have goodnesss at the root of their lives, for it is only their acts which are not good, and those can be amended through penitence. However, the root of the gentiles is bad and their acts are evil, even though they seem good "in their outer guise," as in the outer shell of Amalek, who "stretches forth his cloven hoof, as if to say, I am a clean animal." The quality of the Jewish people is that of Aaron, kind and peaceful, whereas the quality of Edom is one of murder, as it is written (Gen. 27:40): "And by the sword shalt thou live." It is true that it is stated (in Mal. 1:12): "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?—but this resemblance is merely external, for "God is aware that they are not equal." Also, 'it seems that Esau and Jacob hated each other in the same

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166 Raphael Mahler, *Hasidism and the Jewish Enlightenment: Their Confrontation in Galicia and Poland in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985), 16–17.

way; but Esau's hatred of Jacob is a deep-rooted hostility, since he hates him in his very essence," whereas Jacob dislikes Esau for "the evil of his nature, because he is irate and cruel."[167]

Thus Christians were inherently evil and, what is more, beyond salvation. At least in Christian theology Jews (and infidels) could redeem themselves by accepting Christ. Apparently, this was not so in Judaism. Encumbered with such baggage, how could good relations with Christians possibly flourish? In a social order that mandated or encouraged separation (unlike those that mandated assimilation), how could Poles be seen—and judged—other than through the prism of their alleged innate anti-Semitism? Zvi Gitelman believes that tradition-minded Jews were more inured to anti-Semitism because they reckoned goys as Esau—always an enemy of Jacob.[168] This distinction between Jews and non-Jews was reinforced on a daily basis. Religious Jews would say in their morning prayer, "Blessed are You, Eternal our God, who has not made me a gentile."[169] (Christians prayed the *Our Father* without any such differentiation: "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.")

Even though anti-goyism was an integral part of the Jewish religion, occasionally some Jews made efforts to repudiate the image of the "threatening," and even "demonic," "Other." With reference to the *Shivehei ha-Besht* (hagiographic stories of the Ba'al Shem Tov, first published in 1814: p. 17), in a recent scholarly study on Hasidism, the authors comment:

> The "theoretical" Gentile was monolithic, threatening character and, in the Kabbalistic tradition that formed much of Polish Jewish culture, even demonic. However, real Gentiles came from a variety of social categories and were encountered in numerous contexts. … The Jewish establishment in Poland believed that the safest policy was to limit Jewish-Gentile intercourse to the instrumentally necessary minimum …
>
> Stories in *Shivehei ha-Besht* attest to significant encounters between early Hasidim and Gentiles. The same collection also suggests that *some* wanted to moderate the demonic image that Jewish folklore and Kabbalah assigned to Gentiles, mandating instead relations based on ethical considerations. This would seem to be the implication of a few tales that assert that cheating Gentiles is a sin before God.[170] (Ephasis added.)

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[167] Ibid., 307.

[168] Zvi Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to the Present* (New York: YIVO Institute, 2001), 17.

[169] According to the Boston College Center for Christian-Jewish Learning (Internet: <https://www.bc.edu/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/sourcebook/shelo_asani_goy.htm>):

> Tosefta Berakhot 6:18 teaches in the name of Rabbi Yehuda ben Ilai (mid-2nd c. CE) that every (Jewish) man is obligated to recite three blessings daily. These express gratitude for one's station in life through the negative statements: thank God that I am not a gentile, a woman, or a slave (or in earlier formulations, a boor). This language echoes Greek prayers preserved first by Plato. Especially because this text also appears as a legal dictum in the Babylonian Talmud, Menahot 43b, these blessings, which modern scholars call the "blessings of identity," gradually became part of the preliminary prayers to the daily morning service. They are found in the earliest preserved Jewish prayer books, from the end of the first millennium, but not yet universally as public prayers.

[170] Biale, *Hasidism,* 31.

An important sociological study of the shtetl by Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life is With People: The Culture of the Shtetl,*[171] takes note of various themes that can be confirmed, and developed, when looking at conditions in various localities: reciprocity of de-legitimization, Jewish elitism, and the impact of Jewish religion.

> Each group will use animal terms in speaking of the other, implying that it is subhuman. If a Jew dies, a peasant will use the word for animal death in reporting the event, and a Jew will do the same for a peasant. The peasant will say that a Pole *umiera* and a Jew *zdechl* [*zdechl*]. The Jew will say that a Jew *shtarbt* and a peasant *peygert*. A peasant "eats" and a Jew "gobbles" when a peasant is talking, and when a Jew speaks the usage is reversed. The peasant will say, "That's not a man, it's a Jew." And the Jew will say, "That's not a man, it's a goy." (P. 157.)

> The *amorets*, the ignorant man, is less adequate a Jew than the woman, for he has been commanded to have much learning and in fact has little or none. The non-Jew, by his original rejection of the Covenant, placed himself outside the hierarchy, like a star that exists beyond the solar system, and therefore he has no status with regard to learning. (P. 80.)

> Among Jews he [the Jewish child] he expects to find an emphasis on intellect, a sense of moderation, cherishing of spiritual values, cultivation of rational, goal-directed activities, a "beautiful" family life. Among Gentiles he looks for the opposite of each item: emphasis on the body, excess, blind instinct, sexual license, and ruthless force. The first list is ticketed in his mind as Jewish, the second as goyish. (P. 152.)

> For the shtetl, the opposition is not so much between secular and nonsecular, as between Jewish and non-Jewish. (P. 116.)

> The majority group [non-Jews] is as much part of the design as the minority. They live without benefit of divine Truth and Law which, according to the legend, they themselves rejected. They remain, therefore, the victims of their own blind impulses and their own excesses. No more can be expected of them for they live in the dark. This is why a "good" Gentile deserves more credit than a good Jew, and a bad Jew is infinitely more reprehensible than a bad Gentile. (P. 154.)

> Ordinarily, any member of the shtetl would try to avoid even passing a church, and if it is unavoidable he will mutter a protective formula as he hurries by. Yet for all this, many Jews have been saved during pogroms by humane priests who gathered them into the churchyard for safety. (P. 158.)

Such a squewed belief-system made some Jews, including rabbis, uncomfortable, but these qualms had no real impact on the dissemination of traditional teachings. Rabbi Menahem Nahum Friedman (1879-1933), who was born in Moldava (Romania), wrote *Perush Man*, which featured a heated discussion between Friedman and a modern Jew. The setting of this discussion was a train that was travelling from Ancona to Rome. In the opinion of historian David Assaf, the discussion between Rabbi Friedman and the modern Jew was a projection of the Rabbi's own troubling questions.

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[171] Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life Is With People: The Culture of the Shtetl* (New York: Schoken, 1952).

> In response, his interlocutor posed a further question: how is it possible to explain the unethical attitude toward non-Jews evidenced in Talmudic sources and Halakha? In reply, Friedman quoted a plethora of citations indicating the low moral level and barbarism of non-Jews during the Talmudic period, also noting that the sages treated decent non-Jews and non-Jewish scholars with respect, and moreover demanded fair treatment for them.
>
> The conversation between the two unfolds over several pages, with the traveler posing thorny questions and the young rabbi providing apologetic answers. Friedman's companion complained of the sages' and the halakhists' overt racism toward non-Jews, which contradicted his interlocutor's claim regarding their intense humanity and morality. Behold, he noted, an animal can be saved from drowning, as the prevention of cruelty to animals is a pentateuchal command, but Maimonides rules that a non-Jew drowning in a river is not to be rescued: "Is that love for humanity? Can such laws be considered ethical?" Menahem Nahum replied that this ruling was directed at ancient idolaters, who were baser than, and inferior to, animals. Because these bestial humans not only treated Jews with extreme cruelty but also saw their lives as forfeit, any ethical being would therefore agree with the principle of "if a man comes to kill you, rise early and kill him first" (BT [Babylonian Talmud] *Berakhot* 58a) applies to them. But regarding non-Jews who are not suspected of spilling blood, the rabbis displayed a high moral attitude and required that they be treated equitably, like all Jews.[172]

In terms of day-to-day interaction between Jews and Poles, Rosa Lehmann notes in a regional study:

> We have seen that the Jews strongly marked themselves off from the Poles. The distinction between Jews (*yidn*) and non-Jews (*goyim*) reflected the Jewish fear of Gentile intrusion, as well as the Jewish disdain for the Gentile world. In communal and personal matters Jews kept strictly to Jews. Any involvement with Poles beyond what was strictly necessary (like work or commerce) was regarded as improper, since this would blur the community boundary and endanger the traditional Jewish way of life.[173]

Thus negative stereotypes coexisted with positive ones, and were not the exclusive provenance of either group. For instance, Poles had their folk tales about Jews using the blood of kidnapped Christian children, and Jews had their Hasidic teachings about such things as the Jews being God's only people, and Gentiles having no hearts. Polish peasants at times thought of the exploitive usurious Jew, and at other times the benevolent usurious Jew.[174] However, even when Jewish usury was benign, the lot of the poverty-stricken Polish peasant could only breed resentment: "This (like any other) form of involuntary dependence typically gave rise to feelings of hostility and frustration."[175] Jewish literature in the late 1800s and early 1900s were full of stereotypical portrayals of Polish society: Polish nobles became the symbols of the

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[172] David Assaf, *Untold Tales of the Hasidim: Crisis and Discontent in the History of Hasidism* (Lebanon, New Hampshire: Brandeis University Press, 2010), 185.

[173] Rosa Lehmann, *Symbiosis and Ambivalence: Poles and Jews in a Small Galician Town* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 124.

[174] Lehmann, *Symbiosis and Ambivalence,* 71–72.

[175] Lehmann, *Symbiosis and Ambivalence,* 84.

corruption and licentiousness of the non-Jewish world and Polish peasants were shown as primitive and prone to violence, and the treatment of Christianity was the for the most part negative.[176] Talmud-inspired perceptions of Christians could take on extreme forms. As historian Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern writes,

> [Jews] mistrusted the gentiles, *goyim*, and would spit on the ground when passing by a church. They also spat on the floor of synagogue while reciting the line in the everyday concluding prayer *Aleynu* about those "who pray to the emptiness and void and bow down to the god that does not save." Although censors had long crossed this line out and had forbidden Jews to reprint it in prayer books, it nonetheless remained in the oral culture …
>
> *Rik*, Hebrew for "void," also was associated with Hebrew for "spit" (*rok*), while "god who does not save" could also mean "God is not Jesus." Jews spat on the floor when they mentioned those who bow down to the void and emphasized that Jesus was not God. Jewish enlightened thinkers complained that Jews spat in the synagogue during prayers and that it was deplorable—but they cautiously avoided a detailed description.
>
> [Jews] sometimes challeng[ed] their Christian neighbors with outright mockery of Christianity. … Thus, for example, in Lithuania, several Jews spent Hanukah putting on an amateur performance with a Jew performing as Jesus on stage. … in Belorussia, several Jews got exuberantly drunk on Purim, dug out a wooden effigy of Jesus from a road chapel, and carried it on their shoulders around the shtetl, singing and mocking a church procession. Elsewhere Jews went out on Christian holidays, particularly to the church processions, and engaged in clashes with Christians.
>
> In the early nineteenth century, we hardly find victimized Jews hiding themselves in their attics from the chastising sword and missionary word of the Christian Church. The contrary was closer to the truth: the shtetl at its height was afraid of nothing.
>
> Jews stole from the churches, although those involved in sacrilegious offenses were ordinary Jews, not Jewish clergy. … The Makhnovka Jews …, accused of stealing church property, also demonstrate that some Jews engaged in Christian sacrosanct activities: if offenses against the religious "other" was the norm, so were offenses against religious property.
>
> The adventures of several Jews in Polonnoe top many other examples of Jewish defiance. All involved agreed that sometime around the late 1840s, eight Polonnoe Jewish merchants celebrated Sukkot (Tabernacle). This group included some wealthy people … These Jews, who grew up seeing Catholic and Christian Orthodox churches dominating the shtetl skyline, manifested what a Jewish scholar called "the transgressive craving for the cross."
>
> They also found an interesting way to rejoice in their Judaism by making fun of Christain symbolism. They gathered in the tavern of Pinhas Gurvits and indulged themselves in abundant and festive libations. … The guests and the host moved from wine to vodka, and then began what the witnesses considered blatantly sacrilegeous behavior, "making fun of the Holy Miracles of the Christian church."
>
> First they undressed Beirish Stoliar to his underpants, put him in the corner of the room, and made him stretch both hands to his sides, as if he were being crucified. Then they slapped his cheeks, as a Jewish teacher would do to a bad student in the *heder*. They accompanied this ritual with some crude statements, although the participating Jews later failed to reproduce what they had said. The Gurvits donned a gown as if he were a priest, brought in a Jewish boy, and started pretending to baptize the boy—all in front of Beirish

[176] Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia,* vol. 2, 166–67.

> Stoliar as Christ. Once the "conversion" was over, the show continued with a mock Christian wedding, the same boy now playing the groom. … when the mock Jesus stretched out his hands, one of the Jews said in Russian, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost"—and spat on the floor.[177]

Jewish anthropologist Samuel Heilman notes that the Hasidic literalist movement, founded in the 18th century, became the dominant Jewish world-view in Eastern Europe. "In several generations," he observes, the Hasidic movement "absorbed huge numbers—perhaps a majority—of the region's Jews."[178] However, the longevity of Hasidic teachings can be seen in contemporary Israel. Heilman's book about the Hasids in Israel shows that the Hasidic movement's profoundly separatist and ethnocentric world-view is still reflected by 11- and 12-year olds in the Hasidic school system. Showing a school class a map of Israel, Heilman recounts,

> I asked each boy if he could tell me what lay to the east, the south, the north, and the west [of Israel], each time pointing my pencil to the area in case they did not know the bearings of the compass. Again, no one knew … Next I asked each boy to tell me the names of the surrounding countries, without necessarily specifying where they were in relation to Israel. In response, one boy began to list cities in Israel … Perhaps the most revealing answer came from one youngster who, in reply to the question of what bordered on Israel, confidently answered that Israel was surrounded by *chutz la'aretz*. *Chutz la'aretz* is the Hebrew expression that most Israelis use to refer to the rest of the world. Literally, it means "outside of the Land (of Israel)," abroad. In this boy's mind the world was neatly divided. Just as there were goyim and Jews, so similarly there was Israel and *chutz la'aretz* … It struck me that in the world they inhabited, the information I had asked them was simply not important. They had a different map of the world … The large territories were not Russia, Germany, or Poland. They were named after cities of importance to the hasidim of Zvil: Apta [Opsatów], Lublin, Mezerich, Berdichev, Chernobyl. Cities had become countries.[179]

Historian Bernard Weinryb makes the point that the negative images Jews held of Christians were based on ideas "about the superiority of [their own] community, the chosenness of the Jews in comparison with the idolatry (paganism) of the others." In ancient times, Jews were required to keep their distance from idol-worshippers. During the Middle Ages, rabbis insisted that those laws be applied to Christian practices even though they recognized differences between the idol-worshippers of ancient Greece and Rome and the Christians of medieval Europe.[180] Judaism created a series of anti-Christian rites and narratives. According to Ivan Marcus, Jews "often did this through rituals or narratives that denied and even mocked the competing stronger ideology of Christianity in medieval Europe."

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[177] Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Golden Age Shtetl,* 165, 166, 167–69.

[178] Samuel C. Heilman, *Defenders of the Faith: Inside Ultra-Orthodox Jewry* (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), 21.

[179] Ibid., 233.

[180] Bernard Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland: A Social and Economic History of the Jewish Community in Poland from 1100 to 1800* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1972), as quoted in Facing History and Ourselves, *The Jews of Poland* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Facing History and Ourselves Foundation, 1998), 40.

> By weaving tougher elements from earlier Jewish traditions, Jews developed a ceremony in the late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century Germany and northern France that in many ways parodied and subverted aspects of Christian rituals and symbols. … Eating special cakes baked with foods that symbolize Torah (flour, honey, milk, and oil), and shelled hard-boiled effs on which words of Torah were written served as a Jewish antidote to the increasingly more prominent central Christian rite of the Eucharist [eucharist in original] that bound Christians to one another and to the living sacrificed Christ.[181]

Significantly, 18th century Polish scholarship was well aware of at least some of the offensive Jewish beliefs and practices, as well as the writings of the Talmud which were replete with disgusting and spiteful

[181] Ivan G. Marcus, "Honey Cakes and Torah: A Jewish Boy Learns His Letters," in Lawrence Fine, ed., *Judaism in Practice: From the Middle Ages through the Early Modern Period* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 116–17.

references to Jesus, Christians (non-Jews), and Christian beliefs.[182] German Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz elaborates on the central, and destructive, role that the Talmud played in Jewish society in the Commonwealth of Poland:

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[182] Judith Kalik, "Polish Attitudes towards Jewish Spirituality in the Eighteenth Century," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 15 (2002): 80–81. On the portrayal of Jesus and Christian beliefs in the Jerusalem Talmud and Babylonian Talmud, see Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 10–13. According to rabbinical teachings:

> Jesus was not born from a virgin, as his followers claimed, but out of wedlock, the son of a whore and her lover; therefore, he could not be the Messiah of Davidic descent, let alone the son of God.
>
> … sexual transgressions are involved because the Christian cult was characterized as enticing its members into secret licentious and orgiastic rites.
>
> … details the halakhic procedure of Jesus' trial and execution: Jesus was not crucified but, according to Jewish law, stoned to death and then, as the ultimate postmortem punishment reserved for the worst criminals, hanged on a tree. … The reason for his execution was because he was convicted of sorcery and of enticing Israel into idolatry.
>
> The most bizarre of all the Jesus stories is the one that tells how Jesus shares his place in the Netherworld with Titus and Balaam, the notorious archenemies of the Jewish people. … Jesus' fate consists of sitting forever in boiling excrement. … the story conveys an ironic message: not only did Jesus *not* rise from the dead, he is punished in hell forever; accordingly, his followers … are nothing but a bunch of fools, misled by a cunning deceiver.

Dan Jaffé, a faculty member of Jewish Studies at Bar-Olan University in Israel, presents extensive proof that the claim that Jesus was the son of a prostitute is well grounded in Talmudic tradition. See Dan Jaffé, "The Virgin Birth of Jesus in the Talmudic Context: A Philological and Historical Analysis," *Laval théologique et philosophique,* vol. 68, no. 3 (2012): 577–92. Schäfer's highly regarded study authoritatively discredits the claim that anti-Christian passages in the Talmud are merely inventions of anti-Semites, a notion that is increasingly commonplace in modern scholarship. For example, Magda Teter writes: "Following medieval anti-Jewish rhetoric again, many Catholic writers in Poland claimed that Jewish hostility toward Christians had its roots in the Jewish religion and in the Talmud. Polish clerics repeated old claims that in their rituals and prayers, Jews cursed and blasphemed against Christianity." See Teter, *Jews and Heretics in Catholic Poland,* 117, 119. It is only later—buried in an endnote—that Teter notes: "These claims were not entirely unsubstantiated. Jewish prayers did indeed contain some anti-Christian statements." Ibid., 210, n.140. However, she does not retract from her position regarding the Talmud. Teter's study is intended to be an expose of religious bigotry and the author admits to some of the biases she personally had to overcome: "… led me to expect to find in the archives abundant material filled with anti-Jewish sentiments and tales filled with hate. I expected to find countless sermons that disseminated these sentiments. But when I confronted the sources … I had to reassess my ideas. I did not find large quantities of anti-Jewish works … Jews were not even mentioned in the vast majority of the works I examined. … The Jews were one of the multiple concerns of the Church. … I expected to find Jews as a central focus of the Church's thought and actions." Ibid., xv. (For a rather critical review of Magda Teter's subsequent study, *Sinners on Trial: Jews and Sacrilege after the Reformation* [Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2011], see *Scripta Judaica Cravoviensis,* vol. 10 (2012): 143–45.) Rabbinic Judaism also played a large role in concealing the historical significance of Hanukkah, which in actual fact marked the revolt against and massacre of Hellenized Jews by armed Hasmonean priests and their followers, by turning it into a putative celebration of light. The miracle-of-the-oil celebration of Hanukkah was later invented by the rabbis to cover up a blood-soaked struggle that pitted Jews against Jews. See James Ponet, "Jew versus Jew: Hannukah's miracle-of-the-oil myth covers up the reality of an ancient, blood-soaked civil war." *National Post,* December 18, 2009.

Another scholarly work by a Jew that explores the notion of Jewish supremacy and traditional Jewish antagonism toward non-Jews is Sacha Stern's *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings* (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1994). Apologists claim that Jewish teachings about Christians, unlike Christian teachings about Jews, had no real impact on the behaviour of Jews toward Christians. This is demonstrably not the case. Elliott Horowitz's book *Reckless Rites: Purim and the Legacy of Jewish Violence* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), shows that Jews harboured as much religiously-motivated animosity against Christians as Christians did against Jews. Horowitz discusses Jewish violence against Christians throughout the ages, and how information about it has been suppressed in Jewish historiography. A case in point is the massacre of between 40,000 and 90,000 Christians, for the most part by Jews, during the Sassanian Persian conquest of Jerusalem in 614. (The magnitude of this slaughter far surpasses the Cossack massacre of Jews in 17th century Poland, which scholars, e.g. Shaul Stamfer, now estimate to be in the range

> The study of the Talmud was a greater necessity in Poland than in the rest of Europe. The rabbis, as has been already said, had jurisdiction of their own, and decided according to Talmudical and Rabbinical laws. The great number of Jews in Poland, and their fondness for litigation, gave occasion to intricate law cases.
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> A love of twisting, distorting, ingenious quibbling, and a foregone antipathy to what did not lie within their field of vision, constituted the character of the Polish Jews. Pride in their knowledge of the Talmud and a spirit of dogmatism attached even to the best rabbis, and undermined their moral sense. The Polish Jews of course were extraordinarily pious, but even their piety rested on sophistry and boastfulness. Each wished to surpass the other in knowledge of what the Code prescribed for one case or another. Thus religion sank, not merely, as among Jews of other countries, to a mechanical, unintelligent ceremonial, but to the subtle art of interpretation. To know better was everything to them; but to act according to acknowledged principles of religious purity, and to exemplify them in a moral life, occurred to but few. Integrity and right-mindedness they had lost as completely as simplicity and the sense of truth. The vulgar acquired the quibbling method of the schools, and employed it to outwit the less cunning. They found pleasure and a sort of triumphant delight in deception and cheating. Against members of their own race cunning could not well be employed, because they were sharp-witted; but the non-Jewish world in which they came into contact experienced to its disadvantage the superiority of the Talmudical spirit of the Polish Jews.[183]

For God's "Chosen People" the "rival" Polish messianistic movement which developed in the 19th century proved to be particularly unpalatable and met with scorn. Unlike the situation in countries where Jews formed a tiny presence, given their large numbers in Poland they felt little or no compunction to rein in their negative feelings toward the surrounding population.

Stephen Bloom's book about an ultra-Orthodox Jewish enclave (the Chabad Lubavitchers, a prominent Hasidic movement founded in Lithuania) in Postville, Iowa, in the 1980s, sheds some light on what relations must have been like between many Jews and Poles in Eastern Europe before the rise of the Nazis. Hasidic Jews who moved to the Iowa town practiced self-imposed apartheid. They used only their own schools. They did such things as demanding exclusive use of the town swimming pool for part of the day. They refused to participate in an ecumenical service at a neutral locality. They ignored greetings from neighbours, they did not want to touch Gentiles, they resisted eye contact with them as they walked down the street. They had no knowledge or interest in Gentile life around them. They appeared "obnoxious and imperial" to local people, they cheated local merchants, and they used oil in their candelabras because oil, which doesn't mix with other liquids, symbolizes Jewish separateness from all non-Jews. "Wherever we go," one Chabad leader (Lazar) said, "we don't adapt to the place or the people. It's always been like that and always will be like that. It's the place and the people who have to adapt to US." Continuing his interview, Bloom remarked: "Lazar's comment underscored the Hasidim's contempt for non-Jews, which wasn't limited to the Postville gentiles, but to all Christians … Lazar's gentile-bashing reminded me of the Yiddish aphorism *Er shmekt nit un er shtinkt nit* ('He doesn't smell and he doesn't stink'), used derisively to describe non-Jews, who are viewed as inconsequential and unimportant." Such attitudes were not limited to the unassimilated. Bloom, a much-assimilated largely non-observant American Jew, recounts

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[183] Graetz, *History of the Jews,* volume 5: *From the Chmielnicki Persecution of the Jews in Poland (1648 C.E.) to the Period of Emancipation in Central Europe (c. 1870 C.E.),* 4, 5–6.

what his parents said: "A common expression used by Jews to describe a slow, dense person was—and still is—'He's got a *goyischer kop*', which literally means 'He's got a gentile head' but figuratively means 'slow-witted'." "Postville people, by and large, were tolerant," says Bloom, "… [but the Hasidic Jews] were downright rude. They seemed to go out of their way to be obnoxious, especially when it came to business dealings … At first, the locals welcomed the Jews, but even the simplest offer—a handshake, an invitation to afternoon tea—was spurned. The locals quickly discovered that the Jews wouldn't even look at them. They refused to acknowledge even the presence of anyone not Jewish." The Postville residents, for their part, grew increasingly tired of being told to be tolerant. A Jewish boy was run off the road, causing injuries that required stitches. Derogatory remarks about the Jews grew more and more common. Bloom grew concerned that the Gentiles were hardening their attitudes: "The problem, as I saw it, was that although the locals might have been right about the atrocious behavior of some of the Postville Jews, not a few of the locals began using this behavior to generalize about all Jews … All Jews were greedy, all Jews bargained, all Jews reneged on their agreements." In the end, the Postville locals voted to rezone the area in hopes that it would drive the Lubavitchers out. Bloom, who had visited the Postville area many times to be sure of his conclusions, sided with the locals.[184]

One can find the same theme of *mutual* religious-based animosity in some memoirs from the interwar period. Leon Berkowicz, the son of a successful timber merchant from Baranowicze, writes:

> The deep intolerance and hatred was caused by the poverty and ignorance which prevailed for centuries, and to no less a degree by the clergymen of all three denominations [i.e., Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Jewish] who spent more time emphasising the superiority of their own creed and the certainty of preferential treatment by the Almighty than they did in teaching the Ten Commandments or the love and compassion of Jesus Christ.[185]

Many religious practices and traditions associated with Judaism seemed strange to Christians, just as Christian rituals did to Jews. A Jewish girl from Koszyce recalled, "Often, a parade of our Polish neighbors took place in the town. One time, I remember we laughed at the people walking with flower petals in their hands, throwing petals along the way, in honour of one of the saints."[186] Some Jews themselves seemed to be uncomfortable with some of their own customs:

> The practices surrounding Tisha Ba'av were much more to my liking. … this holiday was a mournful one indeed. Commemorating as itdid the destruction of the first and second temples in Jerusalem … Jews generally observed Tisha Ba'av by denying themselves anything that gave pleasure, by debasing themselves, sitting, for example, not on chairs but on special low boxes, placing ashes in their hair, and not eating or drinking for twenty-four hours. Throughout the entire day my father wore torn clothes specially set aside for this time. Understand this and try to explain why it was that children were allowed to do what they did.

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[184] Stephen G. Bloom, *Postville: A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America* (New York: Harcourt, 2000), passim.

[185] Leon Berk, *Destined to Live: Memoirs of a Doctor with the Russian Partisans* (Melbourne: Paragon Press, 1992).

[186] Dina Drori and Erez Grinboim, *Dina, Surviving Undercover: From the Darkness of the Holocaust to the Light of the Future* (Lexington, Kentucky: CreateSpace, 2018), chapter 1. Dina's father, the town's rabbi, scolded his daughter for mocking the religious customs of others.

At this time of year [summer] a certain kind of prickly thistle grew abundantly in our region, which we proceeded to collect. In short order these thistles were being used as missiles within the synagogue, children taking aim at the long beards of the congregants and then throwing them. When accurately thrown they became entangled in the beards and were very hard to remove. Here were men absorbed in mournful prayer forced to be on the alert for annoying thistles aimed at them! Women were considered to be off limits, but not young girls. It was also "permitted" to sneak up on a girl and rub a thistle into her hair. Once in, it was not easily removed; at times girls were forced to cut off parts of their hair. …

You would think such disruption would tax the limits of everyone's patience, but there was more. On Tisha Ba'av in the synagogue, children threw bricks! In the midst of solemn prayers, bricks were sent skidding along the floor! Naturally when things got out of hand people complained bitterly, but never did anyone insist that such doings ought not to be tolerated. It was accepted; it was tradition.

The year-round pieces [of dishes and utensils] remained in our house, but they no longer belonged to us. As was the custom, they were temporarily "sold," together with the *chumetz* food [i.e, food forbidden during Passover], to a non-Jew, a handshake usually confirming the transaction. With the *chumetz* dishes, utensils, and food no longer ours, the laws of Passover were thus upheld.

So much did matzohs symbolize Passover that we used them as gifts for Polish friends, who considered them treats—ironically enough, given the ancient Christian charge that Jews baked their matzohs with blood from Christian children. I was the one selected by my father to deliver these gift matzohs, usually two or three packed together. It was customary for Jewish children to bring matzohs for their favorite teachers in public school.

All this might have been all right if the town's dentist had not been a woman. That in itself was sufficient to keep all the orthodox Jews away from her door.[187]

We used to buy meat at the kosher butcher, of course, in the Jewish store—there was no doubt about that. But it happened sometimes that we'd buy something live, like for Rosh Hashanah. We had to have a sacrificial hen. We would say a prayer and spin the hen above the head. And then we'd take the hen to the butcher, and there was this shochet that would kill it. And I really hated it when they were spinning that hen over the head. Because it was flailing her wings and I was afraid it would do something to me.[188]

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[187] Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland,* 65, 163, 164, 177.

[188] Testimony of Gizela Fudem, December 2004, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/gizela-fudem>.

Nonetheless, there, as in most places, day-to-day relations between Christians and Jews remained proper and entirely civil.[189] Acts of kindness were also not uncommon. A famous incident occurred in Wilno in April 1931, when an 18-year-old Polish youth drowned after jumping into the Wilejka River in an unsuccessful attempt to save a four-year-old Jewish boy from drowning. The Polish authorities

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[189] Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum, from Złoczów, recalls: "I entered *gimnazjum* in 1920, graduating in 1927 … The teachers were Poles, except for a single Ukrainian, and a Jew … grading remained fair and Jewish students were treated equally with Poles. Zloczow [Złoczów] was represented in the Sejm by its mayor, an attorney, Dr. Moszynski [Moszyński]. A liberal who associated with all, he forged good relations between Poles and Jews and between Poles and Ukrainians. … When we were in *gimnazjum*, my future wife and I associated mostly with gentiles. I played tennis and volleyball and was one of two or three Jews who exercised at the Polish sports association Sokol [Sokół], which ordinarily did not admit Jews." See Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum, *Zloczow Memoir* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1986), 37, 46, 54. The notion that Jews in interwar Poland were incessantly terrorized or harassed by their Polish neighbours has little basis in fact. As one historian who studied Polish-Jewish relations points out, "Recent studies on the issue of coexistence between Jews and Poles conclude that, while it is true that Jews and Poles periodically found themselves in confrontation, most of the time they lived in co-operative symbiosis." See Rosa Lehmann, "Jewish Patrons and Polish Clients: Patronage in a Small Galician Town," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 17 (2004): 153–69, at 168. There are many reports attesting to generally correct day-to-day relations between Poles and Jews, particularly in small towns and the countryside, where relations were generally amicable.

Rachela Walshaw (née Schlufman) describes a rather typical small town in central Poland by the name of "Wonchok," probably Wąchock, near Starachowice, (Polish names are typically misspelled in Holocaust literature, especially in memoirs), where Polish-Jewish co-existence was proper, but reserved: "The community was clearly divided between Poles and Jews. There were about 500 Polish families and only about one hundred Jewish ones, but we all lived and worked in relative peace. There were no ghettos then. Jews could live anywhere in town, but generally chose to live together … among their own kind … Though I went to school with Christians, my knowledge of the private workings of the Christian world was limited. The Catholic priests who ran our school were strict but fair and excused us from participating in their prayers. On the whole, my gentile classmates were a decent lot with whom we remained distant but friendly. We were not invited to their homes; nor were they invited to ours." See Rachela and Sam Walshaw, *From Out of the Firestorm: A Memoir of the Holocaust* (New York: Shapolsky Publishers, 1991), 7–8. Barbara Krakowski (now Stimler), the daughter of a small textile shop owner in Aleksandrów Kujawski, relates: "I attended a nursery and private school supervised by Christian nuns, where I was the only Jewish child. I had a large circle of friends, and am still in touch with the few of them who attended my school." See Wendy Whitworth, ed., *Survival: Holocaust Survivors Tell Their Story* (Lound Hall, Bothamsall, Retford, Nottinghamshire: Quill Press in association with The Aegis Institute, 2003), 363. Esther Raab (née Terner), who grew up in Chełm, was enrolled in an all-girls private Catholic school which several Jewish girls attended. "Although the Jewish girls in the school were by far the minority, they got along very well with their Catholic friends. They felt very comfortable at the school and were treated fairly by the students and staff. In all her years there, Esther never experienced any anti-Semitic incidents at the Catholic school. Twice a week, when the Catholic girls received religious instruction, all the Jewish students assembled in a different classroom. The school had hired a Jewish teacher, and during those periods, they studied Jewish history." See Shaindy Perl, *Tell the World: The Story of the Sobibor Revolt* (Lakewood, New Jersey: Israel Bookshop, 2004), 24. A Jew from Sierpc stated that the Jews lived in peace with their Polish neighbours. When a motion came before the town council in 1929 to change the market day to a Saturday, five Polish councillors voted with the five Jewish councillors to defeat it. See Leon Gongoła, "O prawach i ludziach," *Polska* (Warsaw), no. 7 (1971): 170–72. A Jew from the village of Czerwony Bór near Łomża recalled: "we Jews always got along well with the local villagers." He also recalls open displays of solidarity on the part of Christian acquaintances. See Rivka and Israel Teyer, eds., *The Red Forest: As Narrated by Izhak Shumowitz* (Raanana, Israel: Docostory, 2005?), 45, 74. A Jew from Przytoczno, a small village near Lubartów, in Lublin province, does not recall any ethnic-based conflicts between Jews and non-Jews. In elementary school he was not treated any worse in terms of grades and discipline than Polish students, and he remembers warmly many of his teachers and the parish priest as well as the local bishop, all of whom treated Jews with respect. See Michał Rudawski, *Mój obcy kraj?* (Warsaw: TU, 1996), 31–32, 42–43. A Jew from Stróża, a village near Kraśnik (about 50 kilometres from Lublin), recalls: "It must be stressed again that notwithstanding occasional misunderstandings, we lived in peace, often in friendship, with our Polish neighbors. Despite the fact that we were only four Jewish families in Stroza, we never knew of any bitter quarrels." See Sam Edelstein, *Tzadikim in Sodom (Righteous Gentiles): Memoir of a Survivor of World War II* (Toronto: North American Press Limited, 1990), 19. In nearby Izbica, a small town whose population was almost exclusively Jewish, the 3,600 Jewish residents lived in relative harmony with the town's 200 Christians and those from the surrounding countryside: "We lived peacefully with our Catholic neighbors. True, once in a while anti-Semitic slogans like 'Jews to Palestine' and 'Don't buy from Jews' appeared in the post office, but no one took them seriously. Catholic and Jewish schoolchildren kept mainly to themselves. About half of the students were Jewish and half Catholic, for though the town was over 95 percent Jewish, the children from all the outlying villages attended the town's elementary school. Inside the classroom there was no visible antagonism." See Thomas Toivi Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor: A Story of*

commemorated this heroic deed by erecting a monument to the Pole, who became a source of pride—not shame—for the Polish community. The Jewish representatives on the municipal council chose not to support the erection of the monument.[190]

At the Polish state-run high school that Leon Berkowicz attended in Baranowicze,

> nobody was handicapped because of his origin or his religion. The Jewish boys excelled academically, but if they were usually first in maths and science they were nearly always last in sports. Physical education was a low priority in Jewish upbringing. Somehow, I was an exception and … the sports-master always gave me top marks. … I was very proud when the captain from the 78th Polish infantry regiment asked me to join their soccer team and play for them in Wilno … I had two Christian friends at school … Our relationship was based on mutual respect and understanding. On a few occasions I went to their homes and they came to mine; I had the impression that the parents of both sides raised their eyebrows.[191]

Among more traditional Jews, however, interaction was carefully guarded and openness to non-Jews was rare to the "Other," as was the case in Kolbuszowa, except for those few Jewish professionals who broke out of the confines of the accepted social norms.

> In this small town of ours we lived together while we remained separate and apart. Practical necessities brought us into daily contact, but these encounters were specific and brief and rarely produced mutual understanding or respect. We needed each other, often complemented each other, and so there was reason for tolerance; but there was not much incentive for eliminating the barriers that separated us.
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> Poles dominated the government and administration of Kulbuszowa; Jews operated nearly all of the businesses. The Jews lived largely in and around the marketplace, the Poles in an area known as New Town. Most Poles were devout Catholics, and we Jews followed in the path of orthodox Judaism. … In look, in dress, in behavior, there was usually no mistaking the Pole and the Jew. Then, too, Poles all spoke Polish, Jews mostly Yiddish. …
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> Acquaintances among Poles and Jews were common, indeed nearly inevitable in a town the size of Kolbuszowa; but close friendships were practically nonexistent. Poles married Poles, and Jewish boys sought out Jewish girls. The one or two exceptions proved the point. Though my father had many Polish acquaintances from business, never were any invited to my sisters' weddings. Practically every Jew in town came, but not any Poles, nor was he ever invited to their celebrations. Organizations like the Scouts, the fire department, and the Kolbuszowa soccer team were exclusively Polish. [Later, as we shall see, the author contradicts himself on this point.—*M.P.*]. No Jew in town had ever set foot in the Catholic church of Kolbuszowa; Catholic priests would not look at Jews, much less talk to them. [Later the author contradicts himself on this point—*M.P.*: "It was my father, for example, who supplied Catholic churches in our area with candles and other items used in various church ceremonies." In another book the same author writes: "Most Jews had absolutely no contact with the Catholic Church. Whenever they saw a priest coming down the street, they would cross over to the other side to avoid him. The Church was deeply mistrusted and was looked upon as the spawning ground of anti-Semitism. How many plots against Jews, we wondered, were

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[190] Wołkonowski, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Wilnie i na Wileńszczyźnie 1919–1939,* 198–200.

[191] Berk, *Destined to Live,* 3–4.

> hatched in the dark halls of the old stone church buildings on the edge of town?"[192]] … Only on the rarest occasions had a Pole been to the Jewish synagogue. Catholics celebrated their holidays throughout the year and Jews theirs, neither group much concerned with what the other was about.
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> On each side the separateness was seen as desirable. A coming together, a mixing—no one saw any need for it, any point to it. Best to let things stay the way they were. "We could be spoiled"—that's what Jews said would happen if we mixed with Poles. It could be threatening, could challenge the way it had always been. … Some Jews, not many, did attempt to move in the other direction. These were the modern men, professionals mostly, who wore their Judaism casually, if at all, and sought out friendships among the Poles. Dr. Leon Anderman was a notable exception …
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> Anderman and a few other men mingled almost exclusively with Poles, were invited to their social gatherings, seemed to move among them with ease. …
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> There were certain times when Poles and Jews came together in Kolbuszowa. When disaster hit, whether fire or flood, the relief committees were organized, both Poles and Jews did what they could to aid in the recovery. Jews … participated in the celebration of Polish national holidays; a portion of the festivities took place in the synagogue, where the rabbi offered remarks on the occasion before an audience that included local Polish dignitaries. Always in the municipal government a Pole served as mayor and a Jew as deputy mayor. The municipal council was equally divided between the two. On the Kolbuszowa all-star soccer team were two Jews (from the town Gymnasium) …[193]

In September 1939, the Germans ordered that the Polish troops who fell in the battle for Kolbuszowa be buried together in a mass common grave in the Catholic cemetery. This incensed the Jewish community:

> The fact that Jewish soldiers had been so interred was deeply offensive to many of us. When Berish Bilfeld and Leib Lampel told the Germans of our distress, the authorities agreed that we could, if we wished, remove the Jewish dead to our cemetery. For two weeks that is precisely what we did, checking *every body* for identification (ID cards often indicated which soldiers were Jewish, as did circumcision). Altogether we reburied about fifty Jewish soldiers in the Jewish cemetery outside of town.[194]

A Jewish woman from Radom recalled the superstitious attitude Jews harboured toward Catholic priests:

> Growing up, I knew to stay away from the Poles … If we saw Polish people walking down the street, we always crossed to the other side. If we ever saw a priest—I don't know why we did this—we would always hold on to a shirt or button coat. There was somehow supposed to be protection in that small gesture. No priest ever accosted me or anyone I knew, but I knew I was supposed to be wary of priests, to stay away, to clutch a button.[195]

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[192] Norman Salsitz and Amalie Petranker Salsitz, *Against All Odds: A Tale of Two Survivors* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1990), 249–50.

[193] Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland,* 241–45.

[194] Ibid., 260.

[195] Millie Werber and Eve Keller, *Two Rings: A Story of Love and War* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2012), 23.

Rabbi Byron L. Sherwin of Spertus College of Judaica in Chicago expressed the following thoughts on the complex topic of Polish-Jewish relations:

> Similarly, it does not seem to occur to some Jews that manifestations of Polish anti-Semitism might be reactions to Jewish clanishness and parochialism. As a character in Isaac Bashevis Singer's novel *The Manor* puts it: 'How can anyone move into someone else's home, live there in total isolation, and expect not to suffer by it? When you despise your host's god as a tin image, shun his wine as forbidden, condemn his daughter as unclean, aren't you asking to be treated as an unwelcome outsider? It's as simple as that.'[196]

On a recent trip to Poland, Rabbi Sherwin describes the reception he received in a Warsaw synagogue where he was accompanied by his host, a Polish Catholic priest:

> A young Orthodox Jew from New York interrupts my prayers, points to the priest, and admonishes me for bringing an 'idol worshipper' into the synagogue. The service ends abruptly. I introduce myself to the rabbi. A Gerer Hasid from Israel, he was born in Poland. His tenure had begun only the year before. … The rabbi says to me in Hebrew, 'After everything that has happened to us here, you see how they still hate us. They are afraid that we might return.'[197]

The historical complexities of Polish-Jewish relations, however, escape many Western observers and scholars, who claim that all the Jews ever wanted was to be accepted into Polish Christian society, but were cruelly rejected by them. Therefore, the argument goes, the Jews felt rebuffed and only responded in kind. (Such statements abound even though no inclusive society existed even for the majority of Christian Poles, i.e., the peasants, until well into the twentieth century.) Sociologist Naomi Rosh White is an exponent of this facile but patently false school of thought:

> The absence of Polish-Jewish contact was principally the result of a refusal by Poles to accept Jews into their circles. … Despite the desire of Jews to become integrated into Polish society, Jews were excluded from non-Jewish friendship groups and from participation in Polish political and bureaucratic life.[198]

However, the testimonies recorded in White's study contradict this simplistic portrayal, as most of the Jews she interviewed expressed strongly defined tendencies of separateness.[199] Among some German

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[196] Byron L. Sherwin, *Sparks Amidst the Ashes: The Spiritual Legacy of Polish Jewry* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 131. See Isaac Bashevis Singer, *The Manor and the Estate* (Madison, Wisconsin: Terrace Books/The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 37.

[197] Ibid., 18. This is not a new phenomenon. Ralph Slovenko, who was active in Polish-Jewish dialogue in the 1980s, reported: "When I would make a trip to Poland, my Jewish friends in the United States would say, 'Why do you go to that anti-Semitic country? That is the land of the Holocaust.' Little or nothing would be said when I would go to Germany, Austria or the Ukraine, though anti-Semitism in … Poland pales in comparison to that in those places. … In comparison to the talk about Polish anti-Semitism, no one talks about German, Austrian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, or Latvian anti-Semitism. … Though I am a Jew, I have a Ukrainian name and I believe that it has made me privy to attitudes, when at times I would raise the discussion about Jewry, that I would not otherwise have heard." See Pogonowski, *Jews in Poland,* 162.

[198] Naomi Rosh White, *From Darkness to Light: Surviving the Holocaust* (Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1988), 67.

[199] Ibid., 80–81.

Jews, Polish Jews were known for their intensely nationalistic disposition. Walter Tausk, for example, deplored the "super Zionists" among them who he believed gave Jews a bad name.[200]

Robert Michael, a professor of European history at the University of Massachusetts, who fancies himself as being on the cutting edge of exposing Catholic anti-Semitism, claims that Jews developed anti-Christian attitudes only out of desperation. "Some powerless Jews," he writes, "*responded* to anti-Semitism by stereotyping Gentile Poles as 'dangerous, demonic, and devilish'; most Jews felt ambivalent toward Poles." On the other hand, Michael alleges that Poles are responsible for all the failings in Polish-Jewish relations and goes so far as assuring us, without citing any proof, that: "*Many* Poles, including those well-educated, continue to insist that Jews caused World War II."[201] Can such "scholarship" be taken seriously? Seemingly, and incredibly, yes.

Influenced by such views such as those expressed by Naomi Rosh White, Robert Michael and many others of that ilk, non-Jewish historians have also endorsed this skewed picture of Jewish-Christian relations. For example, Eugene Davidson writes: "the Christian populations … were likely to avoid contact with Jews except for practical purposes like trade."[202] There is no inkling on his part that there may have been a bit more to the story, and that Jews may have displayed similar attitudes toward Christian Poles. Many commentators adamantly deny the possibility that there ever was any independent animus on the Jewish side. For example, Mark Raphael Baker, a lecturer in modern Jewish history at the University of Melbourne, writes:

> *Goyim* was the generic term for Gentile used by my father and others of his generation. It was not used with hatred, but in a matter of fact way to describe the world out there, beyond his Polish shtetl, outside the confines of his closely-knit network of survivor-friendship. His Jewish world was a shell which protected him.[203]

After laying *all* of the blame for the mutual antagonism on Christians, Jewish-American author Anne Roiphe concedes grudgingly, albeit for a rather specious reason: "It is true that Jews in the privacy of their houses have for centuries taken revenge on the anti-Semitism of their neighbors by portraying them as dumb. Jews have long thought of Poles as less intelligent."[204] That reality is reflected in the realistic fiction of Isaac Bashevis Singer, who "in story after story … makes it clear that Jews historically regarded

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[200] Walter Tausk, *Breslauer Tagebuch, 1933–1940* (Frankfurt am Main: Röderberg Verlag. 1977), entry for May 15, 1936.

[201] Robert Michael, *A History of Catholic Antisemitism: The Dark Side of the Church* (New York and Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008), 160, 249.

[202] Introduction to Lichter, *In the Eye of the Storm,* 9.

[203] Mark Raphael Baker, *The Fiftieth Gate: A Journey Through Memory* (Sydney: Flamingo/HarperCollins, 1997), 39.

[204] Anne Roiphe, *A Season for Healing: Reflections on the Holocaust* (New York: Summit Books, 1988), 117.

themselves as superior to their Slavic neighbors."[205] Unfortunately, that legacy was transposed to North America where it also poisoned Polish-Jewish relations.[206]

Other historians, who had had first-hand experience, are more cautious in their assessment. Zvi Gitelman, for example, writes:

> Perhaps there was antecedent Jewish distrust of Poles or contempt for them, but Polish hostility bred a Jewish reaction of distrust and reciprocated hostility … But there may have been other sources of Jewish negative attitudes toward Poles. Jews may have regarded Poles (and most other east European peoples) as culturally inferior. … Religious Jews held that Poles believed in a false and pernicious doctrine.[207]

Paradoxically, anti-assimilationist attitudes were promoted in Poland by Jews who had settled in the United States and Western Europe, even though they would never have advocated the same stance there. Lucy Dawidowicz, who paid an extended visit to Wilno before the war, where most Jews spoke Yiddish and knew little, if any, Polish, wrote: "Not knowing Polish, I didn't get to meet many of those Polish-speaking university-educated Jews. That didn't bother me, for I had somehow come to believe that they weren't my kind of people and didn't live in my kind of world. … The other Polish speakers whom I met, yet barely knew, I labeled as 'assimilated,' even 'assimilationist,' that is, advocates of assimilation. Those were a Yiddishist's pejorative words, darkly intimating that to speak Polish instead of Yiddish was a public act of betrayal, an abandonment of one's people."[208] In was enough not to look Jewish or to be dressed in non-traditional garb to be labelled a *shaygets* (or *sheygets*) or a *shikse,* a pejorative Yiddish term for a

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[205] Thomas S. Gladsky, *Princes, Peasants, and Other Polish Selves: Ethnicity in American Literature* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 207. Surprisingly, the stereotype of the "stupid" Pole even surfaced when Poles put their lives at risk to shelter Jews during the war. As could be expected, living in close quarters could lead to occasional to flare-ups between the charges and rescuers. Teresa Prekerowa, who was active in the Żegota organization, recalls: "It was often that Jews told Poles, 'We are more intelligent than you,' and it made the Poles crazy. It was a very difficult situation." See Lawrence N. Powell, *Troubled Memory: Anne Levy, The Holocaust, and David Duke's Louisiana* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 261.

[206] Thomas Gladsky presents an excellent survey of the mean-spirited and often crude stereotypes of Poles that permeate many of the works of fiction of well-known and popular Jewish-American authors such as Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, and Leon Uris. Such books doubtless have had a huge impact on how Polish-Jewish relations are perceived in North America. See Gladsky, *Princes, Peasants, and Other Polish Selves,* 163–220. There exists no parallel phenomenon in Polish literature.

[207] Zvi Gitelman, "Collective Memory and Contemporary Polish-Jewish Relations," in Joshua D. Zimmerman, ed., *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 274–75. Gitelman also states: "Of course, the stereotype of Polish antisemitism—which like *all* stereotypes has truth in it except that it becomes overgeneralized and attributed to each Polish person—itself breeds resentments against Jews." Ibid., 285. Gitleman thus concedes that Polish stereotypes concerning Jews are not without foundation in fact.

[208] Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *From That Place and Time: A Memoir, 1938–1947* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989), 107.

Christian male or female, even if one was Jewish.[209] Christians were commonly referred to in derogatory terms as *shkotsim* (or *shkotzim*), and this term was also applied to assismilated Jews.[210]

Albert Marrin, former head of the history department at Yeshiva University in New York City, writes candidly about how Jews traditionally viewed Poles, in a manner seldom encountered in the writings of academics who deal with Polish-Jewish relations.

> Many traditional Jews held stereotypical views of the Poles—that is, opinions that were overly simplified and prejudiced. Thus, on the basis of limited experience, traditional Jews might make unfair, negative generalizations about Poles as a group. The Yiddish word *goy* (plural, *goyim*), for example, meant more than "a gentile person." It implied ignorance, coarseness, and sinfulness. "What do they know, these goyim?" a Hasid asked. "A goy knows nothing, a goy does not think, the only thing he knows how to do is beat up Jews." A young male goy, called a *sheygetz*, was allegedly a brute who thought with his fists. This mythical Pole guzzled vodka until he became so *shiker* (drunk) that he lost his senses. A Yiddish folk song put it this way: *"Shiker iz a goy—Shiker iz er—trinken miz er—vayl er iz a goy"* ("A goy is a dunkard—but drink he must—because he is a goy"). Similarly, the term *shikse* meant more than "a young gentile woman"; it also implied immodesty and sexual "looseness."
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> Apart from the belief in one God, traditional Jews saw nothing in common between their religion and Christianity. To them, Christianity mimicked paganism, worshipping "idols"—statues and paintings of God, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and the saints. In their view, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, and the Resurrection were mere "superstitions."
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> Traditional Jews showed their disdain in various ways. For example, at many rural crossroads in Poland, travelers would see a crucifix—a cross with the figure of the crucified Christ on it—signifying divine protection. Jews refused to look at this "graven image." Author Elie Wiesel, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, was born in Romania, but his attitudes mirrored those of Polish Jews. "[Christian] rituals," Wiesel recalled, "had no interest for me; quite the contrary, I turned away from them. Whenever I met a priest … I would avert my gaze and think of something else. Rather than walk in front of a church with its pointed and threatening belfry, I would cross the street. … Christians were more present in my imagination than in my life. What did a Christian do when he was alone? What were his dreams made of? How did he use his time when he was not plotting against me?"
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> For many traditional Jews, marrying a Christian amounted to a betrayal of everything Jewish. The scandal stained the entire family in its own eyes and in the eyes of the community. Traditional Jews disowned the offending daughter or son. Parents tore their clothes in shame and despair, as if mourning the death of a family member. When, for instance, the daughter of a rabbi converted to Catholicism and married a Polish policeman, her parents could not contain their grief. "[They] followed the carriage, crying and screaming and beating their heads to a bloody pulp on the sides of the wagon pleading with their

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[209] Testimony of Alina Fiszgrund (from Łódź), 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/alina-fiszgrund>; Testimony of Salomea Gemrot (from a village near Rzeszów), February 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/salomea-gemrot>. One can also find demeaning references in Yiddish proverbs such as "*Az men iz a sheygets, git men op far a shuster*"—if one is like a gentile boy (i.e. unlearned), make him a shoemaker's apprentice. See Robert A. Rothstein, "The Folkloristic Shoe: Shoes and Shoemakers in Yiddish Language and Folklore," in Edna Nahshon, *Jews and Shoes* (Oxford: Berg, 2008), 109–10.

[210] Poles are still frequently refered to as *shkotsim* in Jewish community memortial (yizkor) books. See, for example, Efraim Talmi et al., *Memorial Book of Sierpc, Poland* (New York: JewishGen, 2014), 80–81, 205, 393 (referring to assimilated Jews) 454, 473.

daughter. … After this shameful tragedy, the [bride's] … three sisters never married, neither did their cousins in the nearby town. Nobody would marry them."

Such behavior troubled Isaac Bashevis Singer. A character in his novel *The Manor* asks: "How can anyone move into someone else's home, live there in total isolation, and expect not to suffer by it? When you despise your host's god as a tin image, shun his wine as forbidden, condemn his daughter as unclean, aren't you asking to be treated as an unwelcome outsider? [It's] as simple as that."[211]

How all this impacted on the day-to-day life of many Jews in Poland, right up to the Second World War, is illustrated by the following candid testimonies. Nechah Hoffman-Shein recalls her childhood formation in the village of Serafińce near Horodenka, in Eastern Galicia:

At home they tried to implant within us elevated feelings. They emphasized morning and evening that we were different—better, more elevated than the *goyim.* What was theirs was non-kosher, disgusting, and despised. … And in the house meanwhile they would tell me, "Don't play with the *shiksas,* the non-Jewish girls, with their colored eggs, and don't taste their giant Easter bread, and don't go into their homes which are absolutely non-kosher." … However, [my mother] added, "When we go by the statue of Jesus, we need to spit three times and say, 'It is an abhorrence,' but make sure that the goyim don't see you…"[212]

A Jew from Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski recalled:

Another place I dreaded was the forbidding Catholic Church of Archangel Michael, which occupied the highest point in town, with its tall spire dominating the skyline. It was a large church, the only one in Ostrowiec, and when the bells pealed, they could be heard all over town. As there was no way of avoiding the church to get to the other side of town without taking a long detour, I would race past it as quickly as I could, as did all the Jewish boys.[213]

Some went even further and fantasized about the destruction of churches:

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[211] Albert Marrin, *A Light in the Darkness: Janusz Korczak, His Orphans, and the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019), 41–44.

[212] Nechah Hoffman-Shein, "Jews and Non-Jews in Serafinitz," in Sh. Meltzer, ed., *Sefer Horodenka* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Horodenka and Vicinity in Israel and the U.S.A., 1963), 265ff., translated into English as *The Book of Horodenka* and posted on the Internet at: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/gorodenka/gorodenka.html>.

[213] Katz, *Gone to Pitchipoï,* 39. Characteristic of many Jewish memoirs, this one too is full of primitive assertions that are lacking in substance. The author alleges that the Polish government devised a plan, the so-called Madagascar Plan, in order to "expel" the Jewish population but was prevented from carrying through with it only because the war broke out; this, in turn, inspired the Nazis to resurrect the plan to expel all the Jews under their control. Ibid., 30, 53. In fact, plans like this to resettle European Jews had been contemplated by the Germans, British and Zionists much earlier. With the cooperation of the French, the Polish government commissioned a task force in 1936 to examine the possibility of encouraging the emigration of Jews to Madagascar. The head of the commission, however, felt the island could accommodate 5,000 to 7,000 families, but Jewish members of the group estimated that only 500 or even fewer families could be accommodated. The plan was, therefore, effectively abandoned. More recently, the British government considered trying to end the sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland in 1972 by expelling hundreds of thousands of Roman Catholics to the Irish Republic. The top-secret contingency plan was rejected out of concern it would provoke outrage, especially abroad. See "Britain Considered Deporting Catholics: Top Secret Plan for N. Ireland Rejected in 1972," AP, *Toronto Star,* January 2, 2003.

> There was a widespread legend in town that the church and the fence were sinking at the rate of the size of one pea every day. Of course, we did not doubt, heaven forbid, the truth of this legend. But we, the children, still wanted visible proof of this wonder and miracle. *We also wanted to see the downfall of the Gentiles, and the sinking of their "contamination."* But we couldn't prove the sinking of the church, because we weren't allowed to enter the grounds and, because of its height, it was impossible to discern a change in height of one pea a day. But the sinking of the fence could be determined: we measured it with respect to our own heights, and made various marks. But to our disappointment, we could not prove the point, and we were not satisfied that we had actually seen with our own eyes and felt with our own hands this great miracle, and extracted pleasure from the sinking of the "contamination."[214] (Emphasis added.)

The custom of spitting when a crucifix or church came into view was transported by Jews to North America, as recalled by Moshe Rozdzial:

> my clearest memory of anything that relates to churches was the way my grandmother would spit three times, you know, tu! tu! tu!, like in Fiddler on the Roof, to ward off evil spirits, every time she would walk past a church steeple. … I remember walking down the street with my hand in hers, feeling that tug and knowing, almost instinctively that if I look up I'd see a cross atop a roof, as she reflexively crossed the street to avoid walking directly in front of the church. Muttering, Nevelah! Nevelah!
>
> Do you know what that means? The impurity of the dead. Any dead thing. Any dead thing, that by Jewish law, could not be touched in any way, so as not to be defiled by spiritual purity. That's what Bubbe thought of the crucifix and ultimately, the church … She'd spit three times, more if she was in a dark mood, and walk out of her way to avoid the site. The dead Jew on the cross was a Nevelah to her, a presence that has always defiled her life, Jewish life. A symbol of death and human corruptness, to my people. I know it's not politically correct to say these things to you. We Jews are always watching our tongues, when it comes to Christianity.[215]

As we shall see, the Jewish tradition of spitting at Christian symbols, and even at Christians, is alive and well in contemporary Israel.

Leon Weliczker Wells, adviser to the Holocaust Library in New York, who hails from Eastern Galicia, recorded:

> Our small town, Stojanow [Stojanów], had about a thousand Jews and an equal number of Poles and Ukrainians. … We looked down on the small farmer, whom we called *Cham,* which was an old traditional way of saying *Am Haaretz* (people of the earth), which to us meant simpletons. …
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> We lived in a self-imposed ghetto without walls. The Jewish religion fostered our living together in groups which separated us from non-Jews. … All of these [religious] restrictions caused the Jews to live in ghetto-like societies so that they could maintain their Jewish way of life. … We had virtually no contact with the outside world, surely not social contact, as our interests and responsibilities were completely different from the *goish's.* … We young Jewish boys did not take part in any sports as this was considered *goish.* … We

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[214] Talmi, *Memorial Book of Sierpc, Poland,* 321–22.

[215] Moshe Rozdzial, "The Crucifix," *Brother: Newsletter of the National Organization For Men Against Sexism,* Winter 1999, posted on the Internet at: <http://www.nomas.org/files/brother/1999_v18.winter.pdf>.

Jews even tried to avoid passing a church, and if that was impossible, we muttered an appropriate curse as we hurried by. …

We Jews felt superior to all others, as we were the "chosen people," chosen by God Himself. We even repeated it in our prayers at least three times a day, morning, afternoon, and evening … The farmers, who, even considering their low living standards, couldn't support an entire family, sent their daughters to town to become servants in the Jewish households. I never knew a Jewish girl to be a servant in a Polish household, but the reverse was the norm. The gentile maid was referred to in negative terms as the "shiksa" (Hebrew for "a vermin like a cockroach"). [In Polish, the term had the added etymological connotation of "urine-dripping" girl.—*M.P.*] There was a repertoire of jokes about these girls. For example, there was the joke about how Jewish mothers made sure that the servants were "clean," because their sons' first sexual experience was usually with this girl.[216] …

We were strangers to the neighboring gentiles because of our religion, language, behavior, dress, and daily values. Poland was the only country where a nation lived within a nation. … In Poland the Jew dressed completely different from others, had beards and *peyes* (side curls), spoke a different language (Yiddish), went to separate religious schools, and sometimes even to different public schools … Since every meal on Sabbath and holidays started with the blessing of the wine, there was no possibility of a pious Jew sharing a festive meal with a gentile because the wine, once opened, became nonkosher if a gentile merely looked at it. The laws of kashruth prevented a Jew from eating at a gentile's nonkosher table. Thus, there was very little social intercourse between Jews and non-Jews. We never spoke Polish at home, only Yiddish. Polish was negatively called *goish.* When we spoke Polish we had a Yiddish accent. The newspapers and books in our homes were in Yiddish. … We lived in a strictly self-imposed ghetto, and it suited our requirements and wishes. … Our parents not only praised that time [i.e., Austrian rule] as being better for the Jews, but spoke with pride about the superiority of German culture and its people compared to the Polish culture. This attitude was very badly received by the Polish people. … The belief that German culture was superior continued even to the time when Germany occupied Poland in 1939, and in its eastern part in 1941. I remember when the Jews spoke among themselves about the future under the Nazi regime: "Under the Germans it couldn't be so bad as the press wants us to believe because they are the leading civilized nation."[217]

Farming was an occupation that Jews in Poland generally eschewed and held in low esteem. Some Jewish historians maintain that this was because of restrictions imposed on this occupation. However, Jews were offered a farming colony in Bolechów near Stanisławów in the late 1700's, which they refused owing to their lack of interest in farming. (Instead, the colony was given to German colonists.)[218] The pro-

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[216] There are also credible Polish reports of Polish servant girls being taken advantage of and sexually abused. See John J. Hartman and Jacek Krochmal, eds., *I Remember Every Day…: The Fates of the Jews of Przemyśl during World War II* (Przemyśl: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk w Przemyślu; Ann Arbor, Michigan: Remembrance & Reconciliation Inc., 2002), 196.

[217] Leon Weliczker Wells, *Shattered Faith: A Holocaust Legacy* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 1–10.

[218] Zbigniew Hauser, *Ilustrowany przewodnik po zabytkach Galicji Wschodniej* (Warsaw: Burchard Edition, 2004), 270.

German sentiments mentioned by Weliczker Wells should not be underestimated.[219] Nor should the bonds of religious and ethnic loyalty and solidarity among Jews. Wolf Mendelsohn (Willy Melson), the son of an industrialist from Stanisławów, shares Weliczker Wells's views:

> But I wouldn't say the Jews were completely innocent. They didn't behave like guests, they behaved like a separate nation, with another language, another dress, another culture—completely different. And, really, they looked down on the Poles. If they admired anybody, it was the Germans. And the Poles understood this.[220]

Professor Yacov Talmon, who hails from the Russian partition of Poland, acknowledged:

> … many important factors infused in the Jews a spirit of contempt and hatred towards the Poles. In contrast to the organizational activity and capacity of the Germans, the Jews saw the Poles as failures. The rivals most difficult to Jews, in the economic and professional fields were the Poles, and we must not underrate the closeness of Yiddish to the German language as well. I still remember that during my childhood the name "goy" sounded to me as referring to Catholic Poles and not to Germans; though I did realize that the latter were obviously not Jews, I felt that the Germans in the vicinity were not simply Gentiles.
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> It would be shocking to think of it to-day, but the pre-Hitlerite relations between Jews and Germans in our vicinity were friendly. … In the twenties, Jews and Germans stood together on election lists. Out of those Germans rose such who, during the German invasion, helped in the acts of repression and extermination as experts, who had the experience and knew the secrets.
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> It is not surprising, then, that in the mixed loyalties of the time Jewish unity grew stronger and deeper, and consciousness in this direction burned like a flame. … the actual motherland was not a temporal one, but a heavenly one, a vision and a dream—to the religious it was the coming of the Messiah, to the Zionists it was a Jewish country, to the Communists and their friends it was a world revolution. And the real constitution according to which they lived was the Shulhan Aruch, code of laws, and the established set of virtues, or the theories of Marx, and the rules of Zionism and the building up of a Jewish country.[221]

Awe for German culture persisted among many Jews, and not just the older generations, in the early period of the German occupation. Adam Adams, who was a schoolboy in Lublin in 1939, recalled:

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[219] For a similar testimony from Przemyśl see the account of Fred Wahl in Hartman and Krochmal, eds., *I Remember Every Day…*, 59: "Jewish people in Przemyśl adored German democracy. They wished they could send their kids to Berlin to be educated, to Vienna to be educated. If you spoke German on the streets they called it *hoch* German (high German) and you were considered to be very intelligent. It is sad because they thought the Germans were the nicest people on earth, the most intelligent." As Israeli scholars point out, Jewish philo-Germanism blossomed in the 19th century and continued to grow in the 20th century: "This situation, which endured until the rise of Nazism, made the Jews of eastern Europe strong German sympathizers and contributed to the rise of modern Polish anti-Semitism. Contrary to what Goldhagen has propagated, Jews of eastern Europe, even during World War I, regarded the Germans and the German occupying army as philo-Semitic. They had good reasons for holding this view." See Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel,* New edition (London and Ann Arbor, Michigan: Pluto Press, 2004), 167.

[220] Robert Melson, *False Papers: Deception and Survival in the Holocaust* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 32.

[221] Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer Ripin: A Memorial to the Jewish Community of Ripin [Rypin]* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Ripin in Israel and in the Diaspora, 1962), 9–10.

> A German officer was allocated to our house. He was dressed like a god in a beautiful uniform; he was a highly educated man from Vienna. I remember him playing our piano, always beautifully dressed in a fantastic uniform, and I would look at him and admire him.[222]

Ironically, German Jews generally felt contempt for *Ostjuden.*[223]

Most of the so-called Russian Jews were really Jews that had been inherited by the tsarist Russian Empire after the partitions of Poland in the late 18th century. Under Russian rule, the Jews were increasingly alienated from the Polish population. Many Jews in the 1840s and 1850s saw an opportunity for social advancement in the Russian education and little room for social mobility within Polish culture.[224] Nonetheless, many non-Polish speaking Jews moved westward for economic reasons, flooding the so-called Congress Kingdom. Between 1816 and 1913, the number of Jews grew by 822 percent, while the number of inhabitants increased by only 381 percent. Thus, the proportion of Jews almost doubled, from 7.8 to 14.9 percent. Denunciation of fellow Jews to the tsarist authorities has a long and unsavoury history. Historian Allan Nadler portrays the conflict between the Hasidim and the Mitnagdim as one that sometimes turned bitter. The Gaon of Wilno led the struggle of the Mitnagdim against the Hasidim.

> The *Mitnagdim* not only polemicized against Hasidic doctrine; they waged an uncompromising war against its practitioners, placing them under the rabbinic ban of excommunication and, when possible, denouncing their *zaddikim* (Hasidic religious leaders; lit. righteous men) as subversives to the tsarist authorities.[225]

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[222] Lyn Smith, ed. *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust* (London: Ebury Press/Random House, 2005), 71.

[223] Bryan Mark Rigg, *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers: The Untold Story of Nazi Racial Laws and Men of Jewish Descent in the German Military* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2002), Chapter 1. According to one Jew, "The German Jews, likewise, bore a strong dislike for the eastern Jew, the Hasid. Some blamed the Hasidim for the dismal fate they had suffered, having been rejected as rightful citizens of their beloved Germany." See William Samelson, "Piotrków Trybunalski: My Ancestral Home," in Eric J. Sterling, ed. *Life in the Ghettos During the Holocaust* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 8. Avraham Burg, who was born in 1955 in Germany, as the son of Jews from Poland, comments, "We are *Ostjuden*, Eastern Jews, I admit meekly. We came to Germany from a town in East Galicia that was once part of Austria, then of Poland, then of Ukraine. When I was a child, I was sure that *Ostjude* meant leper, an inferior creature that lived in the sewer. Adults pronounced the word "*Ostjude*" with contempt; it means the person is a cunning, primitive exploiter, an untrustworthy boor." See Avraham Burg, *The Holocaust Is Over; We Must Rise From Its Ashes* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan/St. Martin's Press, 2008), 29.

[224] Horowitz, *Empire Jews,* 15.

[225] Allan Nadler, "The Scholarly Life of the Goan of Vilna," in Fine, *Judaism in Practice,* 513. In the mid-19th century, the factional conflict between Bratslav Hasidism, and other forms of Hasidism, repeatedly became violent. Jewish violence against Bratslav Hasidim continued into the early 20th century. See Assaf, *Untold Tales of the Hasidim,* 120–53.

There are many substantiated accounts attesting to the widespread reliance of the Russian authorities on Jewish informers, especially during the November 1830 and January 1863 insurrections.[226] Romuald Traugutt, the leader of the 1863 rebellion, was in fact betrayed by a Jew.[227] Many reports of alleged support on the part of Jews entail nothing more than supplying smuggled arms to Polish insurgents at high prices, that is, purely business transactions.[228] This state of affairs is not surprising. Jewish attitudes toward Poland (and Russia) were governed primarily by self-interest, not state loyalties. "Many Jews in the 1840s and 1850s saw an opportunity for social advancement in the Russian educational system and little room for social mobility within Polish culture."[229] They had thus excluded themselves from Polishness, and had often done so long before the rise of Polish nationalism toward the end of the 19th century.

The role of the so-called Litvaks (*Litwak* in Polish), Russian-speaking Jews who flooded into the ethnically Polish part of the Russian Empire in the latter part of the 19th century, in exacerbating Polish-

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[226] Archival figures from the Polish revolutionary regime show that, during the 1830 uprising, 83 out of 288 accused spies were Jews. Even though most accused spies were Poles, 83/288 amounts to 28.9%, which, if valid, means that Jews were three times more common among spies than among the general population. The evidence of Jewish espionage on behalf of the Russian authorities during the 1863 uprising is more abundant than that for 1830. See, for example, Dynner, *Yankel's Tavern,* 111, 122ff. On conditions in Brańsk, where local Jews informed on Poles to the Russian secret agent Szlomo Karetka and to the Russian police, see Zbigniew Romaniuk, *The Jewish Community of Brańsk, 1795–1914,* The American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies, Internet: <http://www.aapjstudies.org/103>. See also Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Golden Age Shtetl,* 47–48, which describes the Jews' new-found loyalty towards the Russian state in the early 19th century and the activities of voluntary informers, for example, shtetl Jews informing on Polish gentry hiding French transports. There were also many Jews who informed on fellow Jews who dominated transborder smuggling at the time. Ibid., 71, 79–80.

Even in Warsaw, Jewish support for the Polish patriotic manifestations that culminated in the January 1863 uprising was atypical, and the Jewish population as a whole "displayed no great enthusiasm for rapprochement or merger with the Poles." See Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1885–1881,* 147. The disloyalty of most erstwhile Polish Jews was not just an opinion held by Poles. M. Morgulis, a Russian Jewish intellectual, reckoned the Jews to have been loyal to Russia during the insurrection. Ibid., 191. Russian "hangman" Muraviev, while wreaking ghastly reprisals against Poles, considered Jewish conduct to have been ambiguous enough, during the insurrection, for the Jews to escape massive repression. Ibid., 160. In *Den*, an Odessa-based Jewish newspaper, "In article after article *Den* asserted that the Jews had steadfastly resisted Polonization. Jews recognized the ultimate futility of Polish aspirations and also displayed a basic loyalty to the Russian state. If the Jews acted in this way when they received no tangible reward, what would be their response if the government adopted a positive program of emancipation to win over the Jews?" Ibid., 354. For a time, Jews were allowed by the tsarist authorities to acquire Polish land, Klier comments: "Thus, the decree of 26 April 1862, which gave the Jews in the Southwestern and Western Regions the right to purchase gentry land, assumed that the Jews were allies of the Russian cause in the Ukraine." Ibid., 185.

[227] Stefan Kieniewicz, *Warszwa w powstaniu styczniowym* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1983). Traugutt was hanged on August 5, 1864, without betraying any one during his interrogation by Russian authorities. He was betrayed by Artur Goldman, who was not a paid informer but had been himself arrested and interrogated.

[228] Historian Derek Penslar examines the motives of Dov Ber Meisels, the chief rabbi of Kraków, a prosperous banker and supporter of the Poles' January 1863 insurrection. The author notes that Meisels was, in his words, a "reactionary antinationalist," and proposes that Meisels' support for the Polish cause owed to his long-standing close associations with the Polish nobility. See Penslar, *Jews and the Military,* 58. However, was the fact that Meisels was a banker imply that he had a financial stake in a Polish victory in the 1863 Uprising? While rejecting the premise of international bankers working in collusion, Penslar is candid about the fact that, "Revulsion against hateful stereotypes should not blind us to the sizable presence of Jews in finance and business who made money from war. … It is a fact, not an antisemitic fantasy, that Jews played vital roles in coordinating the allocation of raw materials during the First World War, not only in Germany but also in the United States." Ibid., 145, 150.

[229] Brian Horowitz, "A Jewish Russifier in Despair: Lev Levanda's Polish Question," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 17 (2014): 279–98, at 281.

Jewish relations has been remarked on by many authors. Poles were concerned, in particular, about the depolonization of the country's historic capital. Historian François Guesnet comments:

> The settlement of a considerable number of Russian-Jewish businesspeople and tradesmen in the Polish capital in the 1890s enlarged a pre-existing visible sub-community of Russian Jews who had kept close ties with the Empire, and were familiar with the Russian language and administration. Culturally, they were unreceptive to the Hasidic movement, indifferent to the Polish cause, and rather unsympathetic to those local Jews who would consider Polonization a viable cultural trajectory.[230]

Moreover, although Polish socialists tried to cooperate with the Jewish Social Democrats in Warsaw, Jewish socialists from Wilno came to Warsaw in the mid-1890s to persuade them to break off their connection with the Polish Socialist Party. Bundist propaganda accused Polish socialists of not being real revolutionaries fighting for socialism, instead referring to them as nationalists. The Marxist Bund cooperated with a small socialist faction that opposed the rebuilding of an independent Polish state. At their 1910 conference, the Bund leadership endorsed a program opposing Polish statehood and backed a federal Russia as the desired future. The Bund chose not to participate in Poland's first parliamentary election in 1919 and opposed the war with Soviet Russia.[231] Its priorities and loyalties at the time lay clearly elsewhere, as historian Anna Geifman points out:

> The Bund's sphere of influence was the Pale, in or near the Jewish settlements. In places like Gomel', Bobruisk, Vil'na, and other centers of Jewish life, the Bundists were active perpetrators of terrorist violence, although they had a hard time competing with the daily terrorist feats carried out under the black banner of anarchism. On the other hand, the Bund's combat activities in Odessa were more successful than those of the SR's [Social Revolutionaries], their chief local rivals for revolutionary glory. Like other rank-and-file SD's [Social Democrats], the Bundists knew next to nothing about Marxism and cared as little about party ideology; nor did they see its prohibition of terror as an obstacle to their campaign.[232]

> Time and again, Russian extremists set off explosions in churches and threw bombs into synagogues. Jewish anarchists made a sport of taking over these houses of worship just before Sabbath—to insult the congregation. Maximalists [of the extreme wing of the Socialist Revolutionaries], as well as members of the Jewish "Bund," also offended their predominantly religious communities by occupying and using temples as strategic sites for gun battles and bombings. For their part, many Jewish families observed the traditional week of mourning (*shivah*) when a son or daughter joined the radicals. "Wish the ministers … would hang all these rotten guys, who only know how to throw bombs," ranted a devout Jew. Frightened by the aggressive outbursts, the rabbis and elders of the *shtetl* sometimes called for the Cossacks.

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[230] François Guesnet, "From Community to Metropolis: The Jews of Warsaw, 1550–1880," in Dynner and Guesnet, *Warsaw: The Jewish Metropolis,* 134.

[231] Piotr Wróbel, "Failed Integration: Jews and the Beginning of the Communist Movement in Poland," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 12 (2012): 187–222, here at 194–95, 197, 210.

[232] Anna Geifman, *Death Orders: The Vanguard of Modern Terrorism in Revolutionary Russia* (Santa Barbara, California; Denver, Colorado; Oxford: Praeger, 2010), 64.

> If the Jews solicited protection from their traditional enemies, the proverbially anti-Semitic Cossacks, the extremists' abuse of co-religionists must have been critical indeed. Yet informed as the public was about the pogroms and other instances of mob violence against the Pale Jews, it was largely unaware of the tragic irony of the more complex situation involving the radicals. The Jewish anarchists would take over a synagogue, forcing the shtetl elders to appeal to the authorities for help. A shootout between the revolutionaries and the Cossacks would follow, and the next day, liberal newspapers would publish angry articles, condemning the "storming of the house of worship"—allegedly yet another atrocious violation of fundamental human rights on the part of the official anti-Semites.[233]

This growing antagonism is one of the thorny matters raised by Julian Unszlicht, a Pole of Jewish background, in his controversial book *O pogromy ludu polskiego: Rola socjal-litwacwa w niedawnej rewolucji* [On the Pogroms against the Polish People: The Role of the Social-Litvakdom in the Recent Revolution], published in Kraków in 1912. Reviewer Jan Peczkis summarizes some of Unszlicht's arguments as follows:

> Litvak (Litwak) publications (for specific citations, see, for example, pp. 127–129) made very derogatory remarks about Poland. Moreover, Unszlicht cited statements from the respected assimilationist Jewish periodical *Izraelita*, which echo Litvak positions, in stating that Polish culture is "a stinking pond", "a corpse", "a bankrupt cheater's playing card" (p. 5). … The "Polish corpse" innuendo was a common feature of Jewish publications (e.g, pp. 19, 38, 58, 121, 127–128).
>
> Far from being marginal, the Litvaks and their avant-garde, the Socialist-Litvaks (in contradistinction with Polish socialists), were the representatives of Polish Jewry under tsarist Russian rule (pp. 6, 370). Jewish nationalists, whether of the Zionist or Bundist variety (notably the latter: p. 361), actually harmed Jews by keeping them in medieval-like isolation, and in aggressive separatism from, if not enmity against, Polishness. The foregoing was the conclusion of not only the Endeks, but also of Polish socialists, as shown in their publication (which equally condemned the Litvaks and the Endeks: pp. 183–184).
>
> The most dangerously anti-Polish organizations, controlled by the Litvaks or Jewish nationalists, also included the Marxist so-called Social Democrats (SDKPiL; hereafter SD) (pp. 8, 13), often acting in unison (p. 295). What's more, SD positions often enjoyed the support of larger Jewish parties, such as the Bund (pp. 58, 361, 284, 368).
>
> The cancer ran deeper. Sometimes, apparent advocates of Polish independence, such as the monthly *Krytyka* run by the Jew W. Feldman in Kraków, turned out to be allies of the SD and enemies of Polish independence (pp. 27–28).
>
> The Litvaks were agents of Russification, of turning the remaining Jews against Poles, and of trying to turn Poles against their national interests by defamation (pp. 12–13). Thus, the Polish Eagle was vilified as a symbol of the unchecked power and oppressiveness of the Polish nobility (p. 127). Polish heroism at the Battle of Grunwald was merely an escapade of one set of kings, nobles, and clergy fighting against another set, with the Pope switching sides to be on the side of the victor (p. 130). The National Democrats (Endeks) were bourgeoisie reactionaries stifling class-consciousness by turning Polish workers against German and Russian workers, and trying to bring back the pre-Partition Poland of privileged and non-privileged (pp. 130–131).

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[233] Geifman, *Death Orders,* 47.

As for the Wilno-area Litvaks, they were not only hostile to Poland, but remained so long after the reborn Poland had become a reality in 1918. Kalman Weiser writes:

> Much of Vilna's [Wilno's] Jewish intelligentsia came to embrace a demonstratively pro-Yiddish stance during World War I and continued to do so throughout the interwar period, even if, as elsewhere in the former tsarist empire, its members continued to speak Russian in private. This strategy was conditioned by a combination of factors: their lack of identification with Polish culture and the Polish nationalist cause (despite Vilna's eventual re-incorporation into independent Poland), their distinctive Jewish nationalist aspirations, and their desire to maintain a relatively neutral positioning the conflict between Poles, Lithuanians, Belarusians, and Russians over control of the city and its environs.[234]

In fact, they mostly supported the Lithuanian cause, despite the fact that the 1916 German census made it clear that both the city of Wilno and the surrounding area had a Polish majority, and Lithuanians formed only a few percent of the city's population. Jews who fled to Poland from Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution mirrored the arrival of the Litvaks in the 19th century. Paradoxically, like their predecessors, they were overtly pro-Russian culturally and manifested a negative attitude toward Polish statehood.[235] Polish Jews often called derogatory terms such as *Litvak Khazir* ("Lithuanian pig") and *Litvak Tseylem Kop* ("Lithuanian cross head").[236]

Thus inter-ethnic antagonism and conflict had firm roots in tradition and reality, and cannot simply be attributed to Polish chauvinism and xenophobia. Theodore S. Hamerow, who grew up in Warsaw and Otwock, states that

> Many Jews regarded the Poles with the same resentment which many Poles displayed toward the Jews. This resentment was partly rooted in religious exclusiveness or intolerance. Pious believers in each community regarded members of the other as infidels, as enemies of the true faith who deserved scorn and reprobation. The refusal of those stubborn believers to recognize divine truth had led to their spiritual decline and moral corruption. Devout Poles often regarded the Jews as devious, cunning, and unprincipled, while devout Jews reciprocated by characterizing the Poles as ignorant, coarse, and dissolute. Hateful stereotypes on each side poisoned relations between them. Forced to live side by side, often dependent on each other economically, they managed as a rule to maintain at least minimal civility in dealing with one another. But inwardly they often shared a profound mutual hostility.
>
> Their antagonism was reflected in language even more clearly than in behavior. The Polish word "zyd" [*żyd*], meaning a Jew, did not simply define a religious identity or affiliation. It also carried

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[234] Kalman Weise, "The Capital of 'Yiddishland'?" in Dynner and Guesnet, *Warsaw: The Jewish Metropolis,* 134.

[235] Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, *Województwo Wołyńskie 1921–1939: Elementy przemian cywilizacyjnych, społecznych i politycznych* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, Polska Akademia Nauk, 1988), 182.

[236] Nathaniel Deutsch, *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2011), 151. Hostility toward Polish independence was not confined to the Wilno area, but was widespread in the Białystok and Grodno areas. For example, in November 1918, a Jew named Jasmin in Brańsk informed on Poles from the local Polish Military Organization to the German authorities. See Zbigniew Romaniuk, *The Jewish Community of Brańsk, 1795–1914,* The American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies, Internet: <http://www.aapjstudies.org/103.

connotations of cringing sycophancy and sly dishonesty. Ethnic prejudice could be found just as easily in Yiddish, the everyday language of the Jewish masses. The word "goy," for example, meant more than a gentile. It carried overtones of ignorance, dissipation, and mindless pugnacity. To describe a Pole who did not conform to this stereotype, some modifying adjective would generally be added. That is, so-and-so was a "decent goy" or an "educated goy" or a "tolerant goy" or sometimes simply a "Christian," a term which had no serious pejorative overtones.

Similarly, "shikse" had implications extending beyond its literal meaning of a young woman who was not Jewish. It carried a suggestion of immodesty or coarseness, even promiscuity. Thus the term was often applied to Jewish girls who failed to display sufficient diffidence or reserve, who seemed too bold or assertive or mischievous. By the same token, "shegetz" meant more than simply a boy who happened to be gentile. It also had connotations of rudeness, belligerence, and dissipation, so that a young Jew who was insufficiently pious or modest could be described as a "shegetz" as well. Polish-Jewish hostility was thus as common in daily speech as in popular conduct. [In fact, the Hebrew word *shegetz* or *sheketz* which was commonly used to refer to a Christian boy means "abomination."—*M.P.*]

It could even be found in popular humor, in the jokes and stories which circulated among the Jewish as well as the Polish masses. Those directed against the Jews generally made fun of their greed, servility, and cunning. Those making fun of the Poles focused on their obtuseness or dissoluteness or combativeness. Sometimes the humor was relatively harmless, but more often it revealed a deep underlying antipathy. I remember some of the pupils in my school singing a bitter parody of the opening lines of the Polish national anthem: instead of "Poland is not yet lost,/As long as we live," a derisive "Poland is not yet lost,/But it soon will be." …

And besides, isolation and ghettoization were more than symptoms of oppression; they were also a source of faith, a reinforcement of religious identity. Jews and Poles were so different, so far apart, that the only contacts between them should remain impersonal, confined to economic transactions and governmental affairs. Segregation was not only unavoidable but desirable.[237]

The author goes on to add, "This was the view of only a minority, however, a large and influential minority, but a minority nevertheless." In fact, the reality was that this was a cultural norm, though in direct dealings with Poles these attitudes were not displayed openly and were often tempered. Nonetheless, rabbinical writings are peppered liberally with these derogatory terms.[238]

Ben-Zion Gold, a yeshiva student from Radom, writes:

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[237] Theodore S. Hamerow, *Remembering a Vanished World: A Jewish Childhood in Interwar Poland* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 135–37. As Hamerow indicates, Jews often viewed Poles as morally lax and accused Polish girls and women of promiscuity. The following account from Działoszyce, a small town near Kraków, paints a realistic picture of conditions in a typical, traditional shtetl (the author was born in 1927): "Young men in their 20s would pay me, too, but for a different service. They were too embarrassed to buy their own condoms, so for two groszy per visit, I would do the purchasing for them. I learned all about the different types and brands. … I once counted several unmarried pregnant girls in our modest and very religious town." See Joseph E. Tenenbaum, *Legacy and Redemption: A Life Renewed* (Washington, D.C.: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and The Holocaust Survivors' Memoirs Project, 2005), 79, 81.

[238] See, for example, Rabbi Shimon Huberband, *Kiddush Hashem: Jewish Religious and Cultural Life in Poland During the Holocaust* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House, and Yeshiva University Press, 1987), xxxii, xxxvi. Quoting the Hatam Sofer, Rabbi Huberband averred: "If a Jew is slain by a Gentile for any reason whatever, even if only in the course of being robbed—he is a martyr." See Meir Grubsztein, ed., *Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Conference on the Manifestations of Jewish Resistance, Jerusalem, April 7–11, 1968* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1971), 471.

> Relations between Poles and religious Jews were burdened by prejudices on both sides. Just as our self-image was shaped by our religious tradition, so was our view of Poles. We were the descendants of Jacob, who, according to tradition, studied Torah and lived by its commandments. Poles, on the other hand, were the descendants of Esau, with all of the vile characteristics that our tradition ascribed to him: a depraved being, a murderer, a rapist, and an inveterate enemy of Jacob. This image of Esau, which developed two thousand years ago in reaction to the oppressive domination of the Romans, was transferred onto Christians …
>
> Traditional Jews responded with contempt for both the people and their religion. We viewed Catholicism as idolatry. Poles were stereotyped as lechers and drunkards, given to brawling and wife-beating. I remember a popular Yiddish folk song about Jacob, the Jews, who rises in the morning and goes to the Beit HaMidrash to study and pray, and Esau, a Pole, who goes to the tavern. The refrain exclaims: "Oy! Shiker is a goy, a goy is drunk! And he must drink because he is a goy." …
>
> Religious Jews looked on assimilationists with a mixture of pity and contempt. We felt that they lost their self-respect as Jews and were still treated by Poles with contempt. We used to say, "Pol Zydem I pol Polakiem jest calym lajdakiem" [Pół Żydem i pół Polakiem jest całym łajdakiem] ("Half a Jew and half a Pole is a whole scoundrel").[239]

Both Poles and Jews recognized the fact that Poles frequently had problems with alcoholism. For Poles, this was a clearly verbalized matter of consternation and shame.[240] For Jews, on the other hand, it often became a matter of Jewish elitism. Historian Glenn Dynner repeats the following oft-quoted Yiddish ditty, *Shiker iz der Goy* (The gentile [goy] is drunk):

> The goy goes to the tavern/ He drinks a glass of wine/ Oh, the goy is drunk, drunk is he/ Drink he must, because a goy is he/ The Jew goes to the study house/ He looks at a book/ Oy, the Jew is sober, sober is he/ Learn he must, because a Jew is he.[241]

Dynner then provides an impressive body of evidence that shows that, although they did not do so as much as Polish peasants, Jews did drink frequently.[242] For instance, the religious-inspired drinking of the Hasids was not just an allegation of their adversaries (the Maskilim), but a fact supported by Hasidic sources themselves.[243] Pointedly, Jewish drinking was less overt, "In fact, Polish Jews—particularly Hasidim—indulged in liquor, and sometimes excessively. Their tendency to do so under regulated

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[239] Ben-Zion Gold, *The Life of Jews in Poland before the Holocaust* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 76, 79, 80. Gold goes on to state: "However, it would be grossly unfair to give the impression that all Polish people wanted to harm Jews. I knew Poles who defended Jews, who did business and worked with them." Ibid., 80–81.

[240] Dynner, *Yankel's Tavern,* 32–33.

[241] Dynner, *Yankel's Tavern,* 45.

[242] Dynner, *Yankel's Tavern,* 31ff.

[243] Dynner, *Yankel's Tavern,* 38ff.

religious auspices and within Jewish spaces meant that their drinking was less free and visible to outsiders."[244]

The portrayal of Poles, which applied not only to peasants but also extended to the entire Polish society, sometimes took on very extreme forms. Coupled with the stereotype of the mythical Endek (a member or supporter of the National Democratic party), a mindset steeped in the abhorrence of Esau (Jews commonly referred to Christendom as the realm of "Esau") concocted the following allegorical account of Polish atavism—parading as fact. An anonymous Jewish boy, a hunchback, is lured to a gathering of Poles by his neighbour, a Polish officer—"a confirmed anti-Semite, and one of the leaders of the Endeks"—and subjected to string of relentless humiliations and physical abuse, culminating in a mock crucifixion of this hapless victim. The account, which is reminiscent of Jewish folklore, reveals more about the would-be victims than their cruel—but fictitious—tormentors.

> One day the officer approached me and invited me to a musical evening he was holding at home. He said he had invited several couples, friends of his who were music lovers and who wanted to meet me, having heard that I had a good understanding of music and also knew a lot about literature. … This was the first time I was to be in enlightened Christian society and I was afraid I might fail. …
>
> Now I started to take in the whole parlor … Suddenly the doors of all four rooms opened, and dozens of couples burst out gleefully. Very quickly, with refined, elegant movements, they came to the tables and took their places, without honoring me with even the slightest glance. … I felt lost and miserable. I got up, wanting only to leave this place.
>
> At that moment a young man who held a soda siphon in his hand approached me and suggested I have a drink. I refused politely. In response, he started spraying me with soda from the siphon, first on my face and then on my clothes. A roar of laughter, wicked and malicious laughter, burst out all around. And the entire company, some forty in all, men and women, charged upon me and surrounded me in a narrow circle, screaming savagely, "Dance a bit, *morda zydowska* [*morda żydowska*] (Jewish dog's-face), we've heard you're a good dancer!"
>
> Suddenly Jadwiga's husband came up to me, caught me up in his strong arms, lifted me, and stood me on the large table. With a quick sweep of the hand he knocked my hat off my head, at the same time delivering a hard punch to my forehead. At that moment I understood it all. It was clear to me that I'd been tricked, that a trap had been set for me. In all this uproar a verse from *Koheleth* (9:12) came to me: "As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falls upon them suddenly." … I did not have time to think any more than that. Two strong gentiles grabbed my arm, lowered me from the table, and started throwing me to each other as if I were a ball for them to play with. I struggled to evade them, fighting with all my feeble strength, stubbornly and fiercely. I wanted to escape from this parlor which had become a den of beasts and a torture chamber for me. But they didn't let me slip out of their hands, and there was no way I could free myself.
>
> Finally they got sick of it, or grew tired, and left me. Bu then Jadwiga's husband picked me up again and stood me up on the table, wounded and bleeding. The whole crowd was delighted to see how I stood there, and they chortled and laughed in glee. Several of these "distinguished" guests picked up bottles of wine and cried jeeringly at me, "Dear Jew, drink a bit! This is *kosher* wine, you're allowed to drink it." I tried once more to break free and flee. But the hands, Esau's hands, held me firmly, binding me as in iron cables, and I

[244] Dynner, *Yankel's Tavern,* 45.

was powerless and helpless. I stood there not knowing what to do, beaten, bruised, and shamed, facing this bloodthirsty entertainment-seeking crowd of some forty men and women who were considered "noble" and "enlightened." They were "fighting" me, a miserable broken Jews, and they saw themselves as heroes. They rushed upon me, forced my mouth open, and started pouring streams of wine into it. I choked and spluttered until I fainted and fell. They hastily poured water over me to bring me back to consciousness, so they could on tormenting me. When they saw that I had regained consciousness and had opened my eyes and was breathing heavily the air suffused with cigarette smoke and alcohol fumes, they burst out laughing wildly again.

At that moment a thought occurred to me: Look at their "intelligence," their "nobility," their "enlightenment" … No educational framework can cover up their base and primitive urges which find their release in tormenting someone weaker than themselves. Their religion, "the religion of love and mercy," has not planted these virtues in their hearts. On the contrary, all they desire is atavistic and uncompromising revenge on the Jew, the representative of their "mother-religion," Judaism. …

Now they started stripping off my clothes until I stood there completely naked. I gathered up the remnants of my strength and yelled at them, "For all your torturing and tormenting me, God may take revenge on you!" But on hearing this they all burst out shouting wildly. "Dirty little Jew!" You killed our Savior! You killed Jesus! You're responsible for the crimes of your brothers, all the Jew bastards! You have to pay for the blood of Jesus which your Jewish brothers viciously shed!"

I called on the last remnants of my strength … I shouted into their faces: "Yes, I'm proud that I'm a Jew! And you all, you should be ashamed that a weak little Jew like me had the strength to kill your Savior!"

There was a sudden silence in the parlor. They seemed shocked, both by the things I had shouted at them and by the very fact that I still had the strength and the daring to open my mouth against them. But they quickly recovered, and as if driven by some blind force, they fell upon me, almost all of them, and started flinging some kind of sticky paste, which they had prepared in advance, over my naked body. With this paste they smeared and plastered my entire body, covering it all except for one exposed part—my hump. On this they painted, so I felt, two lines—a cross. When they had completed this job, they burst into a great cry or laugh of triumph, unaware all the while of how by doing this they were desecrating their own faith, the religion of love and mercy, and even the cross itself, symbol of their faith. Drunk with triumph, they pulled me to the mirror and made me stand there to see how I looked.

Then the "ladies" continued the work. They took me to the wall and "crucified" me, tying my raised hands to hooks in the wall, from which they had taken down the pictures of Schubert and Wagner which had been hanging there. And while I hung there crucified on the wall, my toes barely touching the floor, many of the guests, almost all of them, came up to me, one by one, and hit me on the head or in the face, and spat at me, and some even "contributed" a kick or two.

During all the time they performed these "acts of Christian grace" upon me, the phonograph kept playing soft. Pleasant "background music" which served as an accompaniment to the "refined" activities of this "noble company."

Their tormenting me concluded when one of the company picked me up and carried me along the corridor to the door and threw me out onto the landing, naked and bleeding. After me he threw out my wet and torn clothes. Completely exhausted, I crawled to the door opposite and fell, almost dead, into the entrance of our apartment.

I don't know how long I lay there, half conscious, until I got a little strength back. I was bruised and wounded in many places, and it was not easy for me to wash myself and clean off the sticky Christian paste.

All this time, I didn't stop crying. What I felt at this time is quite impossible to convey in words, and I will not try.

After a long while, when I had managed to calm down a bit and could think about everything that had happened to me at that "party," I started to understand that I had only now discovered the true nature of these "noble, cultured, and educated" people. A few minutes before, they had been a fine group of handsome young people, merry and healthy, lacking nothing, enjoying themselves at a cultured social party—and then, all at once, they had turned into vicious beasts, wild animals, reveling in tormenting a weak, wretched, and deformed human being. And most of all I thought of the part played in this metamorphosis by anti-Semitism, the old, ancient hatred of Jews.[245]

This rich tradition shows no sign of abatement. The pathology of anti-polonism runs deep and continues to infect "artistic" pursuits. In a spiteful parody of a 2002 "Passion play" titled "Rebbe," Artists For Israel International have, contrary to the documented historical record,[246] recast Polish priests as the instigators of the death of a rabbi—a Jesus figure—in the Warsaw ghetto.

At this point the invasion of Poland by the Nazis begins and a series of short scenes with ominous and sad music depict the occupation of the city and the sealing off of the Jewish Quarter which now becomes the Warsaw Ghetto. Now the Nazis lock the Jewish Quarter and force the Czerniakow character to come to them and cut a deal to get the key, which he does by appointing Yehudah as the head of the Jewish police who will co-operate with the Polish police and the German occupation authorities.

The last maamar (Chassidic version of Last Supper Yn 13-17 OJBC) of Rebbe (who is now wearing a Star of David armband, as are the rest of Rebbe's talmidim) comes as a reply to Shimon the Zealot. Shimon the Zealot speaks in the upper room to all the Rebbe's talmidim disciples) in an impassioned manner about the boxcars leading to a death camp and the need for underground resistance fighters. When the other Shimon (Kefa or Peter) vows his part in protecting the Rebbe (Yn 13:37 OJBC), Rebbe goes to the window and looks out. With a revelatory flutter-cut Rebbe sees the tarnegol (rooster) in the wooden crate cage in the back of the passing truck, and Rebbe announces prophetically the coming betrayal. Yehudah, wearing his Chassidic garb, departs into the Warsaw night.

In the next scene Shimon Kefa and Rebbe pass the security point where Yehudah is able to flag them through, checking their passes, which are "work permits" allowing them to leave the Jewish Ghetto. Yehudah gives Rebbe a kiss on the cheek. The Polish police at the checkpoint see this and look at each other knowingly. Shimon Kefa accompanies Rebbe to a Cathedral and waits outside while Rebbe goes up to the door to knock.

Inside the Cathedral, a Catholic S.S. officer is leaving the confessional booth where he has been confessing to Father Kayafenski. Father Nikodimski follows him out and ushers Rebbe into the vestibule of the Roman Catholic church to have a meeting with Father Kayafenski. Since it is Pesach season, Father Nikodimski hopes that the senior priest will use his ecumenical influence with a Catholic S.S. officer to have the food rations increased for the Jewish people in the Ghetto. Father Nikodimski leaves Rebbe alone in the vestibule with Father Kayafenski.

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[245] Iyov Ha-Giben (pseud.), *Willow Weep For Me* (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1991), 162–71.

[246] See Mark Paul, *Wartime Rescue of Jews by the Polish Catholic Clergy,* Internet: <http://www.kpk-toronto.org/obrona-dobrego-imienia/>.

In this scene between Rebbe and Father Kayafenski, Rebbe is invited to enter the sanctuary, but he refuses because of the tzelamim (idols, images, any physical object or statue worshiped as deity). The scene that unfolds is similar in some respects to the Grand Inquisitor scene in the Brothers Karamazov. Finally, Father Kayafenski becomes angry and exits the vestibule, going outside through the front door. Rebbe begins to tear down the tzelamim, using a tall white metal candelabrum to shatter the images including that of a San Gennaro statue with the money fastened all over it). Then the Catholic S.S. Officer and Father Kayafenski burst into the sanctuary with other soldiers and police and Rebbe is bound and taken out of the Catholic church.

On the steps outside a Nazi soldier seizes Shimon Kefa, shouting, "You were with him!" Shimon Kefa curses Rebbe, and just then a truck goes by with a tarnegol (rooster) in the wooden crate cage in the back of the passing truck. Then Kefa stares at Rebbe in shock and remorse.

At the railroad terminal, in front of several empty boxcars, the Nazi soldiers cut Rebbe's payos with their bayonets and beat him up, shouting, "You killed our G-d, we kill you." They force Rebbe to put on a striped Holocaust death camp prison uniform, then take him to the top of a gallows, then pierce his wrists and feet with their bayonets and put him on a gallows with two other Jews in stripped Holocaust death camp prison uniforms where they leave him hanging in the middle. As a shot of Warsaw reveals the horrific evil going on throughout the city, the body of Rebbe is tossed in the boxcar with the other two Jews. We see the boxcar slowly going into the dusk of the approaching night toward the death camps.

Then, in their death camp uniforms, the talmidim (minus Yehudah as in Yn chp 21 OJBC) awaken in a boat near the shore in Lake Galilee to find themselves amazingly no longer in the Polish ghetto but now in modern Eretz Yisroel (previewed in the wedding vision earlier). The talmidim have a sense of the presence of the Moshiach. As they see Rebbe in his kaftan with his Star of David armband, standing on the seashore, they follow his instructions and throw out their net. The fish we saw at the beginning are seen again, symbolizing the world-wide fishing expedition (fishing for lost unredeemed men) of Moshiach's Kehillah. For the camera pulls up from the fish in the giant net in an aerial shot which becomes a satellite shot of Israel and then a space station shot of the whole world as the music swells.[247]

Is it little wonder then that a Jewish prisoner of Auschwitz, Adam "Krawecki," a former student steeped in Jewish philosophy who joined the murderous State Security Office after liberation and became the chief interrogator in the notorious Gliwice prison, claimed to have had the following conversation—steeped in folkloric myth—with an elderly Catholic bishop in Auschwitz, even though no such bishop was imprisoned in that camp:

"Why do the gentiles hate the Jews?" Adam asked.

"It's this way," the bishop said. "A lion is lying in the woods, glutted and gorged, and a deer comes along. The lion isn't hungry, and the deer isn't going to harm him. But still the lion pounces on it."

"But why?"

"The lion has a bestial instinct, you see, an instinct that tells it to kill that deer. The same with the gentile against the Jew. The Jew isn't going to harm him, but the gentile still calls him a *Schweinhund Jude*. He has this instinct against the Jew."

"But where does the instinct come from?"

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[247] Internet: <https://afii.org/rebbe.txt>.

"Maybe," the bishop continued, "the gentile receives it when he receives his mother's milk. He hears from the day he's born that if you don't eat, the Jew will get you, that if you don't sleep, the Jew will get you. Maybe that."[248]

Poles were also portrayed as the embodiment of Satan—the fountain of evil and sin—in Jewish folklore. A "disgusting *shikse*" temptress could spell the downfall of righteous Jews:

R' Shmuel Yaakov, that handsome Jew, and Shofar Blower in the synagogue, began to practice on the shofar about two days before Rosh Hashana. In the midst of such a practice session, he noted that Satan was standing near him. …

Therefore, R' Shmuel Yaakov made a special effort to exert himself to assure that his face looked happy and satisfied. He stretched out his hand to Satan, and asked:—How are you, R' Satan?—Oy, R' Shmuel Yaakov, I don't feel good!—Surely, you must have overworked yourself, R' Satan, because nowadays it is difficult to cause a Jew to commit a sin: it's no small wonder, after all, it is before the Day of Judgement, and Jews are afraid.

Hearing the words from R' Shmuel Yaakov, Satan burst into laughter, and his laughter was heard in all worlds:—*Ay*, R' Shmuel Yaakov, I thought that you were really a clever Jew, because everyone in the *shtetl* holds you to be so. What do you thing, R' Shmuel Yaakov, that today is like former, when I had to work so hard before I was able to bring a Jew to commit a sin?

You certainly recall that Friday, before dawn, when they caught R' Shmuel Asher, the *Shokhet,* in the baths with the *shikse,* Zuzgeh, the bath-heater. Do you recall how easy it was for me to seduce that Jew, who observed each and every mitzvah as if it were the eye in his head, and who fled from every sin as if from fire, to bring him together with the *shikse* Zuzgeh? *Ay, ay,* how much effort I put into this particular matter! Night after night, I would come to him with Zuzgeh, and Zugzeh would take off all her clothes until she was stark naked, and I would say to him:—R' Shmuel Asher, just take a peek at Zuzgeh's feet, how beautiful they are, and how red they are! Blood literally spurts out of them. However, R' Shmuel Asher had shut his eyes, and thereafter shouted out: What does Satan, may his his name be erased, want from me! However, on the third night, he half opened his eyes, and took a look at Zuzgeh's red feet. A little at a time, he could not tear his eyes away from her feet.

When I saw that I had him along a path, I went further:—R' Shmuel Asher, take a look at Zuzgeh's breasts. *Ach,* how beautiful and graciously they stick out from her breast cage. And the same process occurred. … An so, the entire matter went, up till last Thursday evening, at which time, R' Shmuel Asher the *Shokhet* not only didn't close his eyes, to keep him from looking at Zuzgeh's naked body, but rather clamored into her body with both of his hands, to the extent that I permitted myself to make a joke with him …

When it was about two hours before dawn on Friday, I said to him:—R' Shmuel Asher, let Zuzgeh go; she has to heat up the bath, in order to warm up the *mikva* for the Jewish women, in honor of the Sabbath. However, R' Shmuel Asher was no longer the master of his own will. A terrifying passion had taken control of him, and he would not release Zuzgeh from his hands. … My advice is as follows: let Zuzgeh go now to attend to her work. In an hour or so, she will be done, so get yourself dressed, and go to her in the baths, and

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[248] John Sack, *An Eye for an Eye* (New York: Basic Books/HarperCollins, 1993), 28. Although the State Security office was responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of persons (Christians of various nationalities), there is no evidence that any of the murdered victims were Jews. Adam Krawecki's account is reminiscent of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's 1989 statement that Poles "suck in anti-Semitism with their mother's milk."

put a coin in her hand. I assure you, that she will completely surrender herself to you, and you will be able to still your passion. And R' Shmuel did just that …

However, don't think that this sin came so easily to R' Shmuel Asher. That is why I am Satan, in order to do evil as much as it is possible for me to do. …

On the floor, on which the *kapote* of R' Shmuel Asher was spread out, close to the oven, which was full of burning wood, lay R' Shmuel Asher, sunken into Zuzgeh's half-naked body. The long feathery fringes of his *tallit-katan* were wound around Zuzgeh's body. …

As R' Shmuel Asher, on that Friday before dawn, after this occurrence, ran in the streets of the little *shtetl,* pale and frightened, I, Satan, stood in his way, and said to him:—Hey, you fine Jew, was it all worth it for that disgusting *shikse*? *Tfui* on you, for having lost both worlds![249]

Confirmation of these sentiments, usually in a much more tempered form, can be found in many Jewish memoirs. Traditionally, Jews avoided contacts with Christian Poles, except those that were absolutely necessary for their survival such as trade and commerce. Stanisław Likiernik, who came from a highly assimilated family, points out that "Jews tended to live apart, not so much because of the attitude of Poles but mainly because of their own wish not to mix with gentiles, to be among their own kind."[250] Anna Lanota, a psychologist who hails from Łódź, made the following observations: "The [Jewish] community [in which I lived] had a somewhat unfavourable attitude toward other nations—maybe even contemptuous. There prevailed the feeling that we were the chosen people. In school there was that same atmosphere that Jews were the chosen people. We did not pay attention to what others might be saying about us."[251]

David Krelenbaum, from Parczew, believed that the Jewish community leaders deliberately attempted to isolate Jews from Poles in order to prevent Jews from assimilating.[252] Poles were often regarded as a nuisance, someone to be avoided except for doing business. In the words of a resident of Wierbnik, "We had a beautiful life … except for having Poles around, which was very unpleasant."[253] Many Jews, especially those from Orthodox backgrounds, shunned the company of Poles all together and projected their antipathy toward Christians onto the Poles. A Jewish woman from a Bundist family in Łódź recalled:

While most of the families living in our building were Jewish, there was also one Polish family who lived on our floor. We never talked to them or to their children. I think we were afraid of them. We knew that Poles did not like Jews, and so we stayed away from them.[254]

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[249] Pinchas Bibel, "Satan Was Left Unemployed…", in Dov Shuval, ed., *The Szczebrzeszyn Memorial Book* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2005), 45–47.

[250] Stanisław Likiernik, *By Devil's Luck: A Tale of Resistance in Wartime Warsaw* (Edinburgh and London: Mainstream, 2001), 21.

[251] Barbara Engelking, *Na łące popiołów: Ocaleni z Holocaustu* (Warsaw: Cyklady, 1993), 126.

[252] Testimony of David Krelenbaum, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Interview code 37873.

[253] As cited in Christopher S. Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor* Camp (New York and London: Norton, 2010), 21.

[254] Henia Reinhartz, *Bits and Pieces* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2007), 7.

Dov Freiberg, a young Jewish teenager from Łódź, recalled the admonition he received from his older brother when the family vacationed at a cottage in the countryside:

> I made friends with the farmer's family, especially with one of the sons, who was my age. … My brother Motel would get angry and would tell me not to play with non-Jews and warn me never to eat any of their food, not even a piece of dry bread, because it was not kosher. In the farmer's house, I was often invited to eat with the family or to taste something that the farmer's wife had baked. But I always refused, and one day the farmer explained to everyone that "Jews were not allowed to eat with Poles."[255]

Kopel Kolpanitzky, from the town of Łachwa in Polesia recalls:

> My friends and I met every day at school, at the club or movement, and sometimes at each other's home, but we stayed away from the non-Jewish kids, and did not become friends with the Byelorussian children. The [few] Jewish children who studied at the Polish school, however, became friends with non-Jewish students as well.[256]

Poles were often ridiculed and dehumanized in Jewish society. Halina Birenbaum states: "The Poles were 'goys'… who were regarded as pagans, we criticized or ridiculed their tastes, customs, beliefs … We were not taught mutual sympathy for them. They were different, foreign to us, and we to them, often our open or hidden enemies." When Birenbaum, who lived in Warsaw, visited her grandparents in a small town she was warned not to venture near a church, because that was forbidden by the Jewish religion. "I was eight years old then," she recalled, "and I was taught to fear 'goys' and their distinct character. How then was I to look for or anticipate salvation on the 'Aryan' side when we were sentenced to annihilation?" Eta Cjat Wrobel recalled that when she took her closest friend, a Catholic Pole, to a Jewish dance, "word got out that there was a *shikseleh* (a gentile girl) in the crowd. The boys decided to play a trick on whoever she was, and decided it was me. … When the dance was over, I let them have it in Yiddish. I said, 'That's not a nice way to treat a young lady, Jewish or not.'"[257] Polish children could also become the butt of nasty rhyming ditties, like the one Jewish children sang in front a Polish girl in the Warsaw suburb of Praga: "*Raz dwa trzy, katolicy psy, Żydzi monarchy, katolicy parchy.*" ("One, two, three, Catholics are dogs, Jews are monarchs, Catholics are scabs.")[258] Moreover, Poles were the subject of countless mocking jokes told over and over with relish.

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[255] Dov Freiberg, *To Survive Sobibor* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2007), 6–7.

[256] Kopel Kolpanitzky, *Sentenced to Life: The Story of a Survivor of the Lahwah Ghetto* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 18.

Halina Birenbaum, "W przyjaźni można sobie wiele wyznać," *Więź* (Warsaw), October 1999, 142.

[257] Eta Wrobel with Jeanette Friedman, *My Life My Way: The Extraordinary Memoir of A Jewish Partisan in WWII Poland* (New Milford, New Jersey: The Wordsmithy; and New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 2006), 43.

[258] Aleksander Pruszyński, "Ost Front," *Goniec* (Mississauga), April 15–20, 2011.

> Father always included one of his many jokes, which illustrate the immense lore of Yiddish humor but also often poke fun at the Poles among whom Jews lived in uneasy relationships. The following was of Father's favorites, "A Jew and a Pole were riding on a train. The Pole asked the Jew, 'Tell me, how come you Jews are so smart?' The Jew answered: 'That is because we eat a lot of herring' 'Really?' came the reply. 'Would it also work for me?' 'Sure.' said the Jew, 'I happen to have some with me and can sell it to you for thirty zlotys.' 'Great,' answered the Pole. He took thirty zlotys, got his herring, and ate it. Some time went by, and suddenly the Pole said, 'Say, how come you charged me thirty zlotys for a piece of herring when I can get it on the market place for ten?' 'You see,' answered the Jew, 'It is already working.'"[259]

Traditional values permeated the Jewish community, which was generally hostile towards non-Jews. Christian Poles were regarded as "generally an ignorant lot, especially the peasants," states Michel Mielnicki, who hails from Wasilków. Mielnicki displays obvious difficulty, even in retrospect many decades later, in rising above the hostility toward Christians that permeated the community. "But I didn't spit on the ground at the sight of a Roman Catholic nun, as some Jews did," he makes a point of stating. "And I didn't think to condemn all Christians for worshipping a false messiah and his mother."[260]

William Samelson, from Piotrków Trybunalski, let it be known that he considered most Poles to be uncouth and unclean, when he remarked: "some Polish (Christian) males from more enlightened homes had also been circumcised."[261] Julia Wald recalls turning down an invitation to a Polish wedding, feigning illness: "what could I do there, the only Jewess among a bunch of Catholics and such oafs as well?"[262] Abraham Rotfarb describes how his views of Poles developed in the Jewish district of Warsaw where he had spent his childhood:

> There are more Jews than *goyim.* Because the janitor, the housemaid, the workman, and other people performing 'menial tasks' were *goyim,* I ranked them very low. What do they know, these *goyim?* A *goy* knows nothing, a *goy* does not think, the only thing he knows how to do is beat up Jews. And despite the fact that I considered Christian peasants to be soulless savages, I was still mortally afraid of them. My world was divided into Jews and *goyim.*[263]

Haskell Nordon, from a provincial town in central Poland, recalled:

> I came to believe that non-Jews were all pagans, worshippers of idols, statues and paintings in their churches —was it any wonder, then, that they behaved barbarically? They weren't really responsible before God for

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[259] Felicia Lederberger-Bialecki-Grabe, "The Old Woman," Holocaust & Learning Center, St. Louis, Missouri, Internet: <https://hmlc.org/2013/08/08/the-old-woman/>.

[260] John Munro, *Bialystok to Birkenau: The Holocaust Journey of Michel Mielnicki* (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, and Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 2000), 59, 67.

[261] William Samelson, "Piotrków Trybunalski: My Ancestral Home," in Sterling, ed., *Life in the Ghettos During the Holocaust,* 11.

[262] Cited in Alina Cała, "The Social Consciousness of Young Jews in Interwar Poland," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 8 (1994): 45.

[263] Cited in Alina Cała, "The Social Consciousness of Young Jews in Interwar Poland," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 8 (1994): 45.

> their impulsive lives of drunkenness and violence that could sometimes end in murder. I concluded that Christians must be inherently inferior—how else could they believe in a God who has a Father and Mother, when surely there was only one God, the God who revealed Himself to Abraham one star-studded night in the desert, many thousands of years ago?[264]

Samuel Honig, who attended a Jewish high school in Kraków, recalled a question that a fellow student wrote on the blackboard for discussion period which was typical of the mindset of even educated Jews: "Why do we claim that the Jewish religion is the true religion and why is Judaism superior to Christianity?"[265] Traditional teachings like these translated into full-fledged bigotry when these youngsters grew up. Regrettably, they are still voiced in Israel today. Eli Ben Dahan, an Orthodox rabbi and then Deputy Religious Services Minister, stated in an interview published in *Maariv*, a leading Hebrew-language daily newspaper, in December 2013, that "a Jew always has a much higher soul than a non-Jew."[266] In a similar vein, Barbara Engelking, the director of Polish Center for Holocaust Research, wrote condescendingly:

> Death … for Poles was merely a biological event, something quite natural – one death was just like any other. But for Jews it was a tragedy, a dramatic experience, metaphysics, a meeting with the highest. It is difficult to imagine how they experienced this death.[267]

Purim has been traditionally associated with anti-Christian practices.[268] The hanging and burning of an effigy of Haman, the Biblical arch-villain considered to be an archetype of evil and persecutor of the Jews, is a well-known ritual that is still practiced in some places. (In the Biblical story of Mordecai and Esther,

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[264] Haskell Nordon, *The Education of a Polish Jew: A Physician's War Memoirs* (New York: D. Grossman Press, 1982), 40.

[265] Samuel Honig, *Reunions: Echoes of the Holocaust, Pre-War and Post-War Stories* (Windsor, Ontario: Benchmark Publishing & Design Inc., 2000), 51.

[266] "The Gospel According to Eli Ben Dahan," Editorial, *Haaretz,* December 30, 2013. In fact, this notion is an integral part of Jewish religious beliefs. According to Yechiel Michael Barilan, a professor of medical education at the Sackler School of Medicine at Tel Aviv University:

> Jewish theology has considered all humans as created in the image of God, but only the Israelites are the Chosen People. Kabbalah has taught that *Jews are also blessed with a unique kind of soul*, but rarely has the universality of *Imago Dei* ever been touched. However, some kabbalist and hasidic sources refer to *Imago Dei* as a special trait of Jews. In a limited sense, this idea has also found its way into *Halakhah*. (Emphasis added.)

See Yechiel Michael Barilan, *Jewish Bioethics: Rabbinic Law and Theology in Their Social and Historical Contexts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 113.

[267] "Kropka nad i," TVN24, February 9, 2011: "Ta śmierć żydowska wynikała z całkowitej niemożności porozumienia. Dla Polaków to była po prostu kwestia biologiczna, naturalna – śmierć jak śmierć, a dla Żydów to była tragedia, to było dramatyczne doświadczenie, to była metafizyka, to było spotkanie z najwyższym, czy nie wiem, w jaki sposób oni przeżywali tą śmierć."

[268] Citing Israeli scholars such as Yisrael Bartal and Rami Rosen, an authoritative source on this topic states: "Rosen included in his long article many well-documented cases of massacres of Christians and mock repetitions of the crucifixion of Jesus on Purim, most of which occurred either in the late ancient period or in the Middle Ages." See Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel,* 116.

Haman was hanged on the gallows that he had planned for Mordecai). Chaim Zhitlovsky and other cultural critics like him rejected Purim as a chauvinistic celebration of Jewish vengeance.[269] In the popular plays staged during the festival of Purim, the arch-villain Haman would often assume the persona of a Catholic priest. This centuries-old tradition was described by historian Elliott Horowitz:

> For centuries it had been customary among the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe to vent their hostility toward the symbols of their powerful adversaries primarily through the dramatic depiction of Haman on the stage. The classic depiction of the Jews' archenemy in the often raucous *Purimspiels* of the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries featured an ecclesiastical cross worn prominently on his garments. It was also referred to explicitly in the dramatic text itself as an explanation for Mordecai's refusal to bow before the king's new prime minister. …
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> In the Jewish communities of Poland and Ukraine it was common, in the early eighteenth century, to hire a Christian to play the role of Haman in the annual *Purimspiel.* … Yet even at the end of the nineteenth century, according to Jewish memoirists, it was still common for Haman to be played by a young or poor Christian, preferably Yiddish-speaking.
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> As we have seen Haman was associated with Christianity and its adherents for a number of reasons. Not only was his form of death remarkably similar to that of Jesus, but he is repeatedly referred to in the book of Esther as an "Agagite," linking him genealogically with the Amalekites and ultimately with Esau, the grandfather of Amalek through his first-born son, Eliphaz. And "Esau" together with "Edom" became, in the early middle ages, the standard Hebrew term for Christendom.
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> … These poems, still recited today, served for centuries as "backstage discourse," allowing the Jews who recited them to conflate in their minds the dramatic downfall of Haman, Amalek, and Christianity—without arousing the ire of their oppressors.[270]

In Poland, these customs lingered into the 20th century. Shtetls were known to stage mock representations of the passion of Christ.[271] Priests were burned in effigy. A Christian was customarily hired for the role of Haman, and was spat on and beaten by Jewish revellers.[272] At a costume ball in Zamość, three young men came dressed respectively as a jester, the devil and a Cardinal. To the amusement of the guests, the "jester" and "devil" took turns spitting at a crucifix held by the Cardinal.[273] Like other Christians, Poles adopted the traditional Jewish practice of hanging or burning an effigy of Haman during Purim, which usually preceded Easter, substituting Judas for Haman.[274] The effigy made of straw was beaten, hanged,

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[269] Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture,* 109.

[270] Horowitz, *Reckless Rites,* 86–87.

[271] Jan Slomka, *From Serfdom to Self-Government* (London: Minerva, 1941), 50.

[272] Alina Cala, *The Image of the Jew in Polish Folk Culture* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1995), 81, 113; Kurek, *Poza granicą solidarności,* 83, 93; Kurek, *Polish-Jewish Relations 1939–1945*, 130–39, 151–61.

[273] These events, which took place on April 5, 1924, happened to be observed by two police officers and a military gendarme, and consequently, the culprits were charged and convicted under the criminal laws for profaning the Crucifix. Since the Jewish community had tolerated these anti-Catholic antics, the local Endeks reacted by urging a boycott of Jewish shops. It is doubtful, however, that this boycott was respected or sustained for any period. See "Koszerna balanga," *Nowa Myśl Polska,* December 5, 2004.

[274] Ewa Banasiewicz-Ossowska, *Między dwoma światami: Żydzi w polskiej kulturze ludowej* (Wrocław: Atut, 2007).

and burned or downed towards the end of Holy Week, a custom that continues to be practiced in many countries around the world.[275]

As Elliott Horowtiz demonstrates, there is a long history of violence among Jews against the cross, which for centuries was commonly referred to as an "abomination."[276] Even in contemporary Israel, there are frequent attacks upon Christian religious processions and clergymen, especially in Jerusalem.[277] (It is a little known fact that the effigy of a pope is still burned in England, where as many as 50,000 Protestants gather on Bonfire Night in Lewes to observe the festivities.[278]) Yet Jewish manufacturers did a booming business in Poland producing Christian religious objects and Jewish merchants, often pretending to be Poles, were very active in their sale, especially in Częstochowa, the home of the famous Black Madonna and Jasna Góra monastery.[279] Polish objections to this practice, which falls under the rubric of what is now known as cultural misappropriation, must be understood in light of the fact that Jewish policies allowed only Jews to prepare Jewish religious articles (prayer shawls, mezuzahs, tefellin).[280]

In Ejszyszki, "Jews never set foot in the Yourzdiki [Juryzdyka] church, even out of curiosity, because 'they said if you went in a church you were forty days in *herem* [ban or excommunication].'"[281] Yet Jews recalled that Christians came into the main *shul* [synagogue] on *Kol Nidre* evening at the start of Yom Kippur to marvel at the musical skill of the *chazzan* [cantor] and his choir. "They were giving respect for

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[275] While such events do not cause alarm when they occur regularly with fanfare in the Czech Republic, Spain, Greece, Austria and manys other countries around the world (see "Burning of Judas," Wikipedia, Internet: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burning_of_Judas>), an isolated occurrence in Pruchnik, Poland in April 2019 was reported sensationally by numerous international media outlets and *singled out* for condemnation by the World Jewish Congress, which mentioned no other country (Internet: <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/world-jewish-congress-condemns-antisemitic-effigy-burning-4-0-2019>). The Czech tradition of drowning and burning an effigy of Judas (*vodění Jidáše*) is still practiced in a number of villages in the Pardubice region. The Czech mint even issued a gold coin in 2015 to commemorate this folk custom, which has been recognized by UNESCO as part of that nation's cultural heritage. (See <https://ceskamincovna.cz/zlata-mince-ceske-tradice-unesco---vodeni-jidase-proof-456-8730-d> (Czech Mint); <http://www.unesco-mediain.cz/1-unesco-15/> (UNESCO).) Applying double standards of this kind in the case of Israel is considered to be "antisemtism" according to working definition of anti-Semitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance ("Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation"), which has been adopted by the USA, Canada, and several other countries. Apparently, in the case of Poland, a different standard acceptable by the mainstream media.

[276] Horowitz, *Reckless Rites,* 11, passim, especially chapter 6. Horowitz concludes his survey of Jewish attacks on sacred Christian objects by Jews as follows: "we are in a better position to take Christian reports of Jewish cross-desecration seriously rather than dismissing them as anti-Semitic inventions. There is also no paucity of references to such conduct in Jewish sources …" Ibid., 156.

[277] Horowitz, *Reckless Rites,* 10.

[278] Sandro Contenta, "Fiery ritual ignites passions: English town clings to ancient practice of burning effigy of pope in its blazing celebration of Bonfire Night," *Toronto Star,* November 4, 2006.

[279] Mark S. Smith, *Treblinka Survivor: The Life and Death of Hershl Sperling* (Gloucestershire, United Kingdom: The History Press, 2010), 59.

[280] Ronald Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism: Poland 1933–1939* (Chur, Switzerland: Published for the Vidal Sassoon International Centre for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA), The Hebrew University of Jerusalem by Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994), 238–39.

[281] Ellen Livingston, *Tradition and Modernism in the Shtetl: Aisheshuk, 1919–1939: An Oral History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 74.

this night," one resident said.[282] Decades later, a Jewish woman insisted that her family's Polish maid poisoned and killed her baby sister, "although common sense simply does not corroborate the details of her story." When asked for a possible motive for such an act, the woman replied, "Nu? A *shikse!*"[283]

Abraham Lipkunsky, who grew up in the village of Dowgieliszki, a small settlement near Raduń inhabited for the most part by Jewish farmers, recalled a "deep-rooted custom" from his childhood:

> At every crossroad and before every village there were crosses protected by little sloping roofs, with icons of Jesus or the Madonna hanging beneath them. For some reason, we children were under the impression that Jews were forbidden even to glance at a cross, but our childish curiosity got the better of us and I would quickly and guiltily snatch a glance at the cross while repeating the short prayer 'thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it, for it is a cursed thing' (Deuteronomy 7: 26), spitting in the direction of the alleged cursed thing, but seeing to it that no one should see me doing so. Heaven forbid! Like the spitting after the saying of the prayer: 'It is our duty to praise the Lord, since he hath not made us like the nations of different countries, nor placed us like the families of the earth.'[284]

The following account is that of Haya Kreslansky from Dereczyn, in Polesia:

> Saturday afternoons, we would take a walk in the fields, passing by the Catholic Church, its crucifix and image of the Christ, from which we would avert our eyes, and asking one another: "Have we passed by yet?!" And while a Jewish child was forbidden to gaze at the image of Jesus, one was tempted to steal a glance in passing …[285]

When Krystyna Budnicka (then Hena Kuczer), who was born in Warsaw in 1932, was sent to the Christian caretaker of the tenement house where she lived to pick up a key, she was warned by her mother not to look around because a cross might be hanging on the walls and it was forbidden to look at it. "I remember the feeling of guilt, of sin: I wanted to see what it was that I wasn't allowed to look at."[286] Haim Grzybower recalled his mother's concern about the route he took to school in Warsaw because she did not want him to pass by a Catholic church and see the cross in its front courtyard: "it was taboo for Jews to look at the cross. It was taboo for Jews to even mention Jesus."[287]

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[282] Ibid., 97. A Jewish woman from Wołożyn recalled: "The goyim would often come to the rabbi for a blessing. They would bring a chicken, a few zlotes [złoty] to heal and the rabbi would offer them a prayer." See Cheyna Rogovin Chertow, "Growing Up in White Russia: My Memories of Belakoritz and Wolozyn (Poland/White Russia) 1912–1931," *Belarus (SIG) Newsletter,* no. 2 (February 1999).

[283] Ellen Livingston, *Tradition and Modernism in the Shtetl,* 96.

[284] Aviel, *A Village Named Dowgalishok,* 19.

[285] Haya Kreslansky, "This is How We Lived in Our Town," in *Dereczin* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2000), 158.

[286] Testimony of Krystyna Budnicka, August 2003, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/krystyna-budnicka>.

[287] Henry G. Gribou, *Hunted in Warsaw: A Memoir of Resistance and Survival in the Holocaust* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland, 2012), 34–35.

Rivka Barlev from the small town of Kosów Lacki, said to have been eighty-five percent Jewish, regarded the very existence of a Catholic church in her town as an intolerable abomination:

> A Gothic church stood at the end of the street. It looked like a stranger there and was for us children a scary place to run around. … The church, the statue, the bell-ringing every Sunday morning, was a reminder that no matter how many Jews lived in this town, and no matter how many centuries they had lived here, Kosow was Polish and Catholic and the Jews were outsiders. For the young people the church was the turning point when taking a walk on the main street."[288]

The Jewish merchants in that town were united in their contempt for Polish peasants, whom they ridiculed among themselves as unclean animals:

> Aria Dovid, Velvel Holder's son, used to cry the news of the great event that was soon to occur: Jozef's [Józef's] Fair. He would do this on a Friday market-day, standing on the bed of a peasant's wagon, calling out in a healthy bass voice: "*Chodźcie panowie jarmark w Kosowie!*"—"Come, ladies and gentlemen, to the fair in Kosow!" And the grain merchants, who could tell just by touching the thick homespun burlap sack what sort of kernels it contained, would mumble under their breath: "*koniami, kurami, jajami, świniami*"—"horses, chickens, eggs, pigs"—by that last word meaning the P… [Polacks] themselves.[289]

Dr. Itzchak Schwartzbart, a resident of Chrzanów, recalled: "Christians—*tsabanes* [i.e., fools] as they were called—lived on that street. For us children, that fact alone was a source of terror."[290] Miles (Shmoil) Lerman stated that, when he was growing up in Tomaszów Lubelski, "We always felt that we are Jewish. … first of all, we kind of felt that we are intellectually superior."[291] Samuel Oliner, a Jewish scholar, recalled his childhood days in a village in southern Poland:

> Since I was illiterate at seven, my education was not off to a very good start. 'Shmulek will grow up to be a stupid *goy*!' lamented my grandmother. …
>
> My father put down his pencil and glanced at me. '… The Poles are not the chosen people of God.' …
>
> One day I rode with Mendel to get farm supplies in Dukla. On the way home he whipped up the horse as we passed the gypsy camp. The frown on his face showed exactly how he felt …
>
> The presence of a gentile defiled the home of a Jew, and no good was certain to come of it. … some Jews regarded the Poles with contempt and caution, but we had still been on good terms."[292]

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[288] *Kosow Lacki* (San Francisco: Holocaust Center of Northern California, 1992), 19.

[289] Ibid., 49.

[290] Mordechai Bochner, ed., *Sefer Chrzanow: Lebn un umkum fun a yidish shtetl* (Roslyn Harbor, New York: Solomon Gross, 1989), 1ff., translated (by Jonathan Boyarin) as *Chrzanow: The Life and Destruction of a Jewish Shtetl,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Chrazanow/Chrzanow.html>.

[291] Interview with Miles Lerman, July 17, 2001, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

[292] Samuel P. Oliner, *Restless Memories: Recollections of the Holocaust Years* (Berkeley, California: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1986), 29, 44, 46, 54, 81.

As we can see from the above account, Gypsies too were not immune from negative stereotypical attitudes on the part of Jews. Jews folk tales taught that Gypsies kidnap Jewish children, a form of blood libel (ritual murder).[293] Michel Mielnicki from Wasilków recalled his parents' stern warning to behave: "If you do that, the Gypsies will kidnap you, keep you in chains, and make you perform like a monkey in public!"[294] A Jew from a Carpathian village acknowledges: "We even had a few Gypsies who moved in and out of our area but never actually settled down. As children we heard stories that the Gypsies kidnapped children, so were a little afraid of them."[295] Leon Weliczker Wells recalls the stories he heard growing up in a Hasidic environment in the Lwów area: "We were also told about the gypsies who steal children and raise them as their slaves. And the fact that gypsies used to set up their tents each summer on the outskirts of our town lent credibility to these tales."[296] Roman Frister from Bielsko recalled:

> Generally, Gypsies were treated with suspicion and disdain. My parents would never have permitted me to talk to them under ordinary circumstances. Bielsko's mothers warned their children that a Gypsy woman could cast a spell on their souls; its fathers watched their wallets when Gypsies were nearby, it being common knowledge that they were born pickpockets. … Decent folk kept away from them."[297]

Run-ins with Gypsies were not unheard of, as the following account from Skoczów near Cieszyn shows.

> A band of gypsies invaded the inn and refused to leave for several days. Papa's regular business dropped off because customers refused to mingle with such rough company. The gypsies ignored Papa's reasonable efforts that they depart the premises. At last, his patience came to an end. Papa appeared on the stairway wielding his World War I military saber. He leapt upon a table, shouting in anger, "Get out! Get out! All of you! Get off my property at once!"
>
> The gypsy rogues were thoroughly intimidated by the ferocity of Papa's command, and obeyed.[298]

A Jewish inmate of the Ravensbrück concentration camp painted a uniformly black portrait of the Gypsy prisoners:

> They stuck us in a *Block* with gypsies who ganged up against us. We had to take punishment for their misdemeanours, and they'd steal anything we put down, or took all.[299]

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[293] Zborowski and Herzog, *Life Is With People,* 91.

[294] Munro, *Bialystok to Birkenau,* 40.

[295] Alex Gross, *Yankele: A Holocaust Survivor's Bittersweet Memoir* (Lanham, New York, and Oxford: University Press of America, 2001), 3.

[296] Leon Weliczker Wells, *The Janowska Road* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 15.

[297] Roman Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 277–78.

[298] Edith S. Weigand, Edith Weigand, *Out of the Fury: The Incredible Odysssey of Eliezer Urbach* (Denver: Zhera Publications, 1987), 17–18.

[299] Gill, *The Journey Back From Hell,* 139.

Dora Kacnelson, who lived in Białystok before the war, said: "There are tolerant Jews, like my father for instance, but there are also fanatical ones, holding on tight to old traditions. … The orthodox Jews considered Christians to be beneath them."[300] Occasionally, some rabbis also spread their criticism fairly:

> Later, he [Rabbi Yehude Leyb] frequently spoke with his adult son about worldly injustice: "When I would return home years later from the big city […], many times, my father would point out the injustice prevailing in the world, not only on the part of Christians towards Jews, but also among Christians themselves, among Jews themselves and on the part of Jews toward Christians."[301]

But the day-to-day reality was usually quite different. A Jewish girl who grew up in Nowogródek admits candidly that *all* Poles were considered to be anti-Semites: "since he was a Pole, he must be anti-semitic deep down." Moreover, her friendship with a Pole was "resented" by her Jewish friends: "I was presented with an ultimatum: either I must drop Eddie or they would drop me."[302] A girl from a middle class assimilationist family from Piotrków Trybunalski, a city in central Poland, recalls:

> And what did I know about the other, non-Jewish world? In my home we spoke about goys with a certain irony and aversion which found its strongest expression in my grandmother's saying 'Meine shlekhte khulims of ale goims kieps,' which roughly means 'May my worse dreams fall on their heads.' But I do not recall any conflict except for one incident when someone threw a stone into the prayer house on the Feast of Tabernacles during prayers.
>
> Generally, the tenants in our home opened their windows to hear these prayers. My grandfather had a beautiful voice and apparently I wasn't the only one who enjoyed listening to him. I was warned about hooligans who attacked Jewish children on their way from school, but I do not recall ever having encountered something like that. …
>
> I don't think that I ever asked myself before the war whether I was Polish or Jewish. I was Jewish, and that was obvious. My Polishness was accidental since some of my ancestors had settled here, but could just as well have settled elsewhere. … My father spoke Polish poorly, but my mother spoke it impeccably. My parents spoke Yiddish between themselves but spoke to [the children] in Polish. Neither I nor Ala knew Yiddish. My means of expression was therefore the Polish language, but it didn't mean anything special to me. …
>
> Polish literature had no appeal for me nor did it have any impact on my state of mind… I do not recall ever being moved by the partitions of Poland or the country's loss of independence. That was not part of my history. I knew only too well that none of my ancestors had taken part in any Polish uprising. …
>
> In my family—and I'm thinking here above all about my grandparents, goys were spoken of with a certain disdain. They were the ones who didn't know that Christ was not the Messiah. Moreover, just like the pagans, they prayed to pictures. … the boundary between our world and their strange world was laden with

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[300] Wiesław Magiera, "Żydówka za karmelitankami," *Głos Polski* (Toronto), October 9, 1993.

[301] Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikov, *A Citizen of Yiddishland: Dovid Sfard and the Jewish Communist Milieu in Poland* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2020), 35.

[302] Sulia Wolozhinski Rubin, *Against the Tide: The Story of an Unknown Partisan* (Jerusalem: Posner & Sons, 1980), 47, 49.

> an entire system of taboos. I knew that the worst, the most unimaginable sin was to convert. It was not permissible even to assume a kneeling position, even through inadvertence.[303]

According to Lucien Steinberg, "The non-Jews were not wholly responsible for [the] inevitable barrier [between them], even though they might greet any friendly advance with reserve. The Jews themselves distrusted those of their own kind who tried to strike up a relationship with 'the others,' and there was always that underlying fear of losing substance."[304] A Jew from the city of Konin remarked in retrospect: "You need to look at it both ways. The Jews never mixed with their neighbours. The community tried to separate itself. … I think the Jews could have mixed more with their neighbours and still kept their identity." Another testimony from Konin states: "Jewish parents discouraged their children from forming friendships with Polish children. 'My father would not let me bring *shikses* [a derogatory term for female Christians] into the house,' one woman remembers, 'and he would not let me go to their homes in case I ate *treyf* [non-kosher food].' Socializing between unmarried Jews and Christians of the opposite sex was taboo. … Thus Jewish apartheid … persisted not solely as a result of Christian prejudice but through choice."[305]

A Jewish girl from Koszyce near Kraków, the daughter of the town's rabbi, recalled, "my sister and I became integrated with the local community, in spite of my parents' disapproval, and especially in spite of my father's disapproval." Yet, the father himself had struck up a friendship with the local priest and the family got along well with their Christian neighbours.[306]

A Jewish woman from a village in Volhynia recalled:

> At one point the teacher called on my father and asked him to send my brother Yitshak to an art school in a larger town. … The teacher even said that in such a case the government would provide a stipend, and that he would even request it. However, he could not persuade my father. One, he could not imagine his child so far away from him. Two, who knows, maybe he would fall in, God forbid, among Christians, and be so confused as to forget his Jewish roots?[307]

A Jewess from a village near Kołomyja recalled:

> At times I would slip out of the house quietly and hurry to the meadow, to play with the shepherds. This was a constant source of worry for my grandparents. Grandpa often said: "What will she grow up into among

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[303] Account of Irena Kisielewska née Englard in Marian Turski, ed., *Losy żydowskie: Świadectwo żywych,* vol. 1 (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Żydów Kombatantów i Poszkodowanych w II Wojnie Światowej, 1996), 8–10.

[304] Lucien Steinberg, *The Jews Against Hitler: Not as a Lamb* (London: Gordon and Cremonesi, 1978), 168.

[305] Theo Richmond, *Konin: A Quest* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), 58–59, 161.

[306] Drori and Grinboim, *Dina, Surviving Undercover*.

[307] Account of Rochl Leichter in Berl Kagan, ed., *Luboml: The Memorial Book of a Vanquished Shtetl* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House, 1997), 135. We also learn that this woman's sister became a popular seamstress: "All our Christian neighbors began to bring in orders for dresses, blouses, and children's items."

these Hutzul [highlander] children—a *shikseh,* nothing else." And he would shake his head sadly as he said it. I did not understand what he was talking about; I couldn't see how I was different from them.[308]

A Jewish woman, who lived in a tenement house in Mińsk Mazowiecki, has similar recollections:

"Our neighbors were the Izbrechts, a Polish family … The youngest girl was named Józka, and I played with her all the time despite the fact that my grandmother beat me good so that I would not play with her. My grandmother did not allow me to play with Józka Izbrecht because she was Polish and she feared that if I went to her home I would eat something with pork in it. So my grandmother beat me, but I still played with Józka."[309]

A girl from Skała, in southeastern Poland, recalls:

We knew little about the gentiles; they lived their lives and we lived our lives. … Business was the main contact between us. … One of my fellow pupils was the grandson of the manager of the count's estate … As children, this boy and I played hide-and-seek in the estate's huge and beautiful park … His family would invite me at Christmas to see the tree … But typical of our relationship with the gentiles, we never invited them to our home for Chanukah.[310]

Sally Grubman recalled her childhood in the large industrial city of Łódź:

It was one of those integrated areas where Jews clung together and had nothing to do with the gentiles. We never visited our gentile neighbors and they didn't visit us. The children didn't play together. I remember once there was some Easter celebration and the girl next door wanted to show me the beautiful table. She sneaked me in for a moment when no one was looking—just to look—and then I left.[311]

Joseph Kutrzeba, then Arie Fajwiszys, the son a music composer and conductor from Łódź, recalled bitterly during his wartime odyssey:

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[308] Donia Rosen, *The Forest, My Friend* (New York and Tel Aviv: Bergen Belsen Memorial Press, 1971), 6–7.

[309] Testimony of Irit R. in Ewa Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine: How Polish Nuns Saved Hundreds of Jewish Children in German-Occupied Poland, 1939–1945* (New York: Hippocrene, 1997), 191.

[310] Fanya Gottesfeld Heller, *Strange and Unexpected Love: A Teenage Girl's Holocaust Memoirs* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav, 1993), 20, 31–32. Another account from Warsaw shows that relations with non-Jewish neighbours were usually, though not always, on friendly terms: "In our building we had many different neighbors. A friendly physician, who was always ready to help, a hostile lawyer whose little daughter was calling me names, and a very devoted neighbor who invited us for Christmas dinner, and in return my mother would send her Matzo for Passover." See Olga Sher with Margrit Rosenberg Stenge, *Olga's Story* (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 2002). Adam Neuman, who grew up in Płock, recalled, "I never felt different from my Catholic friends, and, in fact, I always had an open invitation to their homes at holiday time." See Adam Neuman-Nowicki, *Struggle for Life During the Nazi Occupation of Poland* (Lewiston, New York; Queenston, Ontario; Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 4.

[311] Sylvia Rothchild, ed., *Voices from the Holocaust* (New York: Nal Books/New American Library, 1981), 74.

> Why, oh, why didn't my parents know a single Polish family they could turn to in times like these? It was always "Jewish this, and Jewish that," and "we want you to associate only with nice Jewish boys we approve of" and "we don't want you to have anything to do with the *goyim*." Damn them, it's their own fault. How can you live in a country surrounded by Poles, *their* country, and all but isolate yourself from them? Why, the only Poles I ever knew were our maid, Vala, and the few actors from the theater who came to my father for music lessons. Serves them right. Now we could use a few Polish friends. Once I brought home a Polish friend, and I was told not to invite him again …[312]

Kuba Goldberg's experiences were somewhat similar. He studied at the Ignacy Skorupski high school, where almost half of all students were Jewish. "There was no anti-Semitism in our school. There were friendly relations among Polish and Jewish students. These friendships, however, stopped at the school entrance. They never invited each other to their homes."[313]

Szaja Chaskiel from Wieluń recalled his parents' disapproval of his playing with Polish schoolmates.[314] Martin Zaidenstadt, from Jedwabne, recalled his father's disapproval of his playing soccer with the Polish boys in town. On one occasion he was whacked thrice with a thick leather strap for the "misdeed" of playing soccer with the *shaigitzi* and missing temple.[315] For Orthodox Jews playing was simply not allowed, especially with Christian children. The following account is from Kulbuszowa:

> Mostly Polish boys rode bicycles. That doesn't mean that I was not interested. I was, and actually learned to ride one. Unfortunately, someone saw me and promptly reported the incident to my religious school teacher. For that earned yet another suspension from Talmud Torah. When the war came, prohibitions eased and many things changed. I rode about on my own bicycle—unpunished![316]

These memoirs are consistent with Polish recollections. Władysław Bartoszewski, one of the founding members of the wartime Council for Aid to Jews (Żegota), recalls that, when he was growing up in a tenement-house in a primarily Jewish area of prewar Warsaw, the mothers of the Jewish children often scolded their children for playing with "that stupid, Polish *goy.*"[317] Stefania Podgórska, who rescued thirteen Jews in Przemyśl, recalled that in the small village she grew up in, "sometimes the mother of the Jewish children would say to them, 'Don't play with the *goyim.*"[318] A Pole from Międzyrzec Podlaski

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[312] Joseph S. Kutrzeba, *The Contract: A Life for a Life* (New York: iUniverse, 2009), 56–57.

[313] Shimon Redlich, *Life in Transit: Jews in Postwar Lodz, 1945–1950* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2010), 103.

[314] Testimony of Szaja Chaskiel, reference no. 0419, Melbourne Holocaust Museum.

[315] Timothy W. Ryback, *The Last Survivor: In Search of Martin Zaidenstadt* (New York: Pantheon Books/Random House, 1999), 185.

[316] Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland,* 137.

[317] "Bartoszewski i Wishner—Twarzą w twarz: Dialog polsko-żydowski," *Dziennik Związkowy* (Chicago), December 6–8, 1996.

[318] Her testimony is posted online at: <http://motlc.wiesenthal.com/text/x00/xr0040.html>.

recalled the admonition a Jewish child received from his mother: "If you won't eat, a *goyka* will take you away."[319]

As some Jews admit, even culturally assimilated Jews from the educated classes—generally, professionals—who spoke only Polish generally considered themselves to be Jews, not Poles, and shunned personal contacts with Poles:

> People usually think that Jews didn't socialize with Poles because of anti-Semitism, because of the Poles' reluctance. That's a great over-simplification. … However, anti-Semitism alone cannot account for the barrier between Poles and Jews in those years. Had my parents wanted to establish social ties with the Poles, it would have involved a great deal of effort on their part to bridge the cultural gap. …
>
> Above all, they [i.e., the interlocutor's parents] were not Poles. Even my mother would not have called herself a Pole. A Polish Jew, yes, but not a Pole, despite the fact that she spoke and read only Polish and that she knew Polish literature so well. These paradoxes were typical not only of my mother, but my parents' circle—the liberal, assimilated Jewish intelligentsia—as a whole. It was an entire community, a community of neither Poles nor Jews, but of assimilated Jews! … Jewish lawyers, doctors, professors, mathematicians. They were secular, educated, spoke only in Polish, and kept together.[320]

Even Jews who had Polish acquaintances tended to view the latter as strangers: "Although we had known many Catholics quite well and had lived with the Nowickis [their tenants] for almost a year, they were always seen as strangers, goyim, the people on the other side of the fence."[321] To be sure, a similar phenomenon existed among some Poles.[322] Jews who emigrated from Poland to the United States often transplanted these attitudes with them, as one Jewish American from Chicago recalled: "Our home and that of our relatives and friends were typical of Americanized 'shtetl homes,' where no non-Jew ever tread. We children were not allowed to play with 'goyim' (non-Jews), and our lives were as circumscribed in this respect as they had been in Poland."[323]

Writing in prewar Poland's foremost literary weekly *Wiadomości Literackie* (no. 35, 1924), Antoni Słonimski, a leading Polish poet of Jewish origin, summed it up in the following words: "I know very few Jews who are not convinced of the superiority of the Jewish race. For that reason this nation … does not

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[319] Cited in Józef Geresz, *Międzyrzec Podlaski: Dzieje miasta i okolic* (Międzyrzec Podlaski: InterGraf, 2001).

[320] Joanna Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams: A Story of Certain Loneliness* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2004), 8, 11.

[321] Yehuda Nir, *The Lost Childhood: A Memoir* (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1989), 44.

[322] A Jewish girl who grew up in a small village near Kraków where there were only five Jewish families, all of them merchants who appeared to have led comfortable and peaceful lives and were "very close" to one another, nonetheless "felt"—though she was not actually told as much—that the villagers looked upon them "as different because of our religion, and their inability to handle our differences set the Jewish inhabitants apart. Their fear of us was so pronounced that any attempts to come close, in any shape or form, always failed. I was keenly aware of this situation but could not understand it, nor could I accept it emotionally." Since the writer was just a young girl at the time and her assessment goes far beyond her own personal experiences, it is doubtless much embellished by her impressions and by hearsay for which she does not set out a factual basis for the reader to judge. Typically, she is silent about Jewish views of Poles. See Renée Fodor Schwarz, *Renée* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1991), 31.

[323] Anthony Netboy, *A Boy's Life in the Chicago Ghetto* ([Chicago:] n.p., 1980), 44.

neglect even the smallest of reproaches. … Those Jews who complain about the lack of tolerance of others are the least tolerant …" Societal pressures were especially strong in small towns and villages where Jewish religious leaders endorsed isolation and breaches of traditional norms were treated mercilessly. The rabbi—if he was Orthodox and certainly if he was Hasidic—maintained no contact with Christians. The rabbi of Płock, Yona Mordechai Zlotnik, publicly urged that Jews and Christians be educated separately: Jewish religious education was possible only in schools established exclusively for Jewish children.[324]

Most Jews seemed to favour this state of affairs, especially in smaller communities, certainly well into the 1920s. Polish schools were never welcome or fully accepted. In Ostryna, north of Grodno,

> When Polish rule was established, a law of compulsory education came into effect. School age children were registered. The language of instruction was Polish. A great outcry arose in the village: 'Our children are being led to apostasy!' The Zionist circles rose to action. One Saturday night … they convened a general meeting. … On the spot, they chose a committee to organize and activate that night to establish a Jewish school that would be recognized by the Polish authorities. … The children were taught mathematics in their mother tongue Yiddish while all the rest of the subjects were taught in Hebrew.[325]

In Naliboki, "Like all old-fashioned Jews, Solomon Rubizhewski wanted some of his sons to become rabbis and didn't want them to attend Polish schools."[326] In Drohiczyn on the Bug, "It was against the family's tradition to have a child attend a gentile school, and [my mother] would not even hear of it."[327] In Szydłowiec, "Most of the [Jewish] students in the Polish schools were girls. The Jewish parents did not want their children to spend 4–5 hours a day in a Christian [i.e., public] school, so they would engage a private turor [sic, tutor] to come to their homes and teach the general subjects."[328]

Many young Jews—not only from Orthodox but also Zionist backgrounds—were adamant in their support of total segregation from Christians and creeping polonization. A Jewish girl from Kołomyja participated in a boycott of girlfriends who had chosen to attend a Polish instead of a Jewish high school: "We considered them as delinquents and renegades and we did not speak to them or have anything to do with them." A girl from Kowel, in Volhynia, describes how she, together with her whole class, put pressure on her girlfriend to break off relations with her Christian friends ("shkuts") and to stop using the Polish language.

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[324] Eliyahu Eisenberg, ed., *Plotzk (Płock): A History of an Ancient Jewish Community in Poland* (Tel Aviv: World Committee for the Plotzk Memorial Book and Plotzker Association in Israel, 1967), 37; English translation posted online at <www.zchor.org/plock/yizkor.pdf>.

[325] L. Losh, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kehilot Shtutshin, Vasilishki, Ostrina, Novi Dvor, and Rozanka* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Shtutshin, Vasilishki, Ostrina, Novi Dvor, and Rozanka, 1966), 41.

[326] Rubin, *Against the Tide,* 122.

[327] Account of Ahuvah Linchevsky (Ramat Gan), "My Childhood Memories," in David Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer Drohiczyn* (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1969), 5ff. (English section).

[328] Account of Isaac Milstein in Berl Kagan, ed., *Szydlowiec Memorial Book* (New York: Shidlowtzer Benevolent Association in New York, 1989), 61.

> Nojma left primary school and had many friends. It was quite common for her to exchange a few words or to cross the street with a *goy.* This used to antagonize the whole class and later the whole grammar school. Her friends, including myself, used to defend her and we tried hard to persuade her that she should stop doing this. And finally we managed it. It was Nojma who introduced the tradition of speaking Polish into our class. I did not like that at all, because I hated all *goyim* …

They eventually succeeded in persuading their friend "how terrible her crime was."[329]

Self-imposed alienation was pervasive among Jewish youth, albeit not universal. A student named Esther from a Hasidic family commented,

> Naturally, I cherished the Beys Yaakov school more than ever. I didn't consider the public school to be "ours," even though we were taught by Jewish men and women. Since they didn't observe the Sabbath and always spoke Polish, as far as I was concerned they were "unfortunate people."

When Esther did acquire some interest in Polish matters, she was quickly corrected, "Father stopped eating his dinner and declared that under no circumstances was I to read any Polish books."[330]

Ludwik Stockel felt that Poland's Jews were unassimilable, and that Jews would give up too much that is essentially Jewish even if they could feasibly assimilate. He said, "Assimilation cannot be the solution to the problem, since there are certain essential differences in the way that we and the Catholics live, which make assimilation impossible. In this case, it would be a diminution of one's own worth."[331]

Traditional Jewish schools were not known for their tolerance of others. In heders or cheders (Jewish religious schools), rabbis traditionally referred to gentiles using derogatory terms.[332] Haim Grzybower, who attended a Hebrew school in Warsaw in the 1930s, recalled:

> It was good that I got away from the rabbi's lessons, for I was starting to resent some Jewish teachings—that only a Jew is good and goys are no good. And this wasn't just what we were taught by the rabbi; it was all around us. If you lie to a non-Jew, it was said, it's not really a lie. And if a Jew kills a goy, it's not as big a sin as if you kill a Jew.
>
> "How could this be?" I asked my mother in confusion. "Isn't one person just as good as another?"
>
> "It's in the Talmud," she would reply, with a dull finality that indicated there was nothing more to be said.

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[329] Cited in Alina Cała, "The Social Consciousness of Young Jews in Interwar Poland," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 8 (1994): 53.

[330] Jeffrey Shandler, ed., *Awakening Lives: Autobiographies of Jewish Youth in Poland before the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 322, 323.

[331] Shandler, *Awakening Lives,* 172.

[332] The rebbe in the cheder in Kortelisy, Volhynia, used the word *shkotsim,* a derogatory term for non-Jews. See Laizer Blitt, *No Strength to Forget: Survival in the Ukraine, 1941–1944* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 9.

> There was more: I heard it said that if you were considering marrying a non-Jew, a shikse, you first had to shave her head and pull her nails out. Then, the theory went, she would be so ugly that you wouldn't want to marry her. …
>
> When the Sabbath came, Jews weren't supposed to do any "work," even turning on a light. So a Jewish family would get a neighborhood child to do this—a "shabbos goy"—and give the kid a few pennies to turn on the lights or the gas stove.
>
> On Saturdays at our house, once the Sabbath goy had turned the stove on, it simply stayed on till sundown, when my mother could turn it off.
>
> "Damn it, I thought, "I could do that if they'd pay me. It didn't make any sense. I wondered which was the worse sin: breaking the Sabbath by turning on a light, or paying someone to do something your religion considers a sin.[333]

Zosia Goldberg, who grew up in a culturally assimilated family in Warsaw, recalled the reception she and her sister experienced when they started to attend a Jewish school:

> So father … put us in a private school, a *gymnasium* that was owned by Jews where the teachers and the students were all Jews. But since I was accustomed to eating ham with matzos and learning from the kids how to say "Jesus, Maria" and so on, the Jewish children were soon calling me a *goy.*
>
> That was no good either. So my father turned to another school where the children were all Jewish and the teachers were mixed, some Gentiles and some Jews, and this school was much better.[334]

In large cities, even among Jewish children who attended Polish-language state schools, interaction outside the classroom was generally minimal. Marian Małowist, a teacher in interwar Warsaw, recalled a survey that he a Christian teacher conducted among their students. Jewish and Polish students were each asked what Poles or Jews they know, etc. It turned out that the only Pole the Jewish students knew was caretaker of the building in which they lived. It was not better among the Polish students.[335] Regrettably, measures taken to overcome barriers often proved to entrench them. As one Jew from Otwock recalls,

> There were other incidents as well, like the annual athletic contests between pupils from the Jewish school and those from the nearby Polish school, contests by which some well-meaning but overoptimistic educators hoped to encourage closer contact between the two. The result was usually the reverse; the competition merely aggravated their mutual dislike and hostility. The young spectators would gather on opposite sides of the running track, the Jews in one group, the Poles in another, each cheering the runners from its own school, each jeering at those from the other. What had intended to foster greater understanding only revealed their underlying mistrust and resentment.
>
> Worse still, the athletic contests sometimes led to displays of hostility more graphic even than cheers and jeers. There were also epithets and insults and occasional blows. I remember how at one of those competitions a little Polish boy made the mistake of standing on the Jewish side of the track. Trying to

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[333] Gribou, *Hunted in Warsaw,* 30–31.

[334] Zosia Goldberg, as told to Hilton Obenzinger, *Running Through Fire: How I Survived the Holocaust* (San Francisco: Mercury House, 2004), 4.

[335] *Res Publica,* no. 7 (1988): 43–52.

encourage the runners from his school, he urged them loudly to show those 'mangy Jews' who the real athletes were. That had unfortunate consequences for him. On the other side of the racecourse his remark would have gone unnoticed … But on this side it brought swift reprisal. An older girl who had overheard his exhortation, outraged, berated him angrily, underscoring her disapproval with a sharp blow to the back of his head. The little fellow seemed startled; he was not even aware that he had said anything improper. … He lowered his head, tears came to his eyes, and sobbing softly he crossed over to the opposite side. There he undoubtedly found a more sympathetic audience.[336]

Tolerance and enlightenment were not hallmarks of traditional Jewish schools, as a Jewish village boy learned when he started to attend heder in a synagogue in the nearby town of Dębica near Tarnów:

Within the sanctuary itself, though, I felt ill at ease. The city boys were mainly Chassidic, their long *payes*—sidelocks—just one visible expression of their faith. I had been raised to observe the Jewish holidays, including the Sabbath as a day of rest; I kept kosher, and I was, after all, studying for my bar mitzvah—but I

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[336] Theodore S. Hamerow, *Remembering a Vanished World: A Jewish Childhood in Interwar Poland* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 129. It is a well-documented fact that popular sporting events like soccer matches are often a venue for hooliganism and crass or even racist behaviour throughout the world. The Amsterdam soccer team Ajax falsely gained a reputation for being a "Jewish" team in the 1960s; although its own fans adopted this identity as a point of pride, it soon became a source of derision for, and anti-Semitic displays by, fans of opposing teams. To provoke Ajax supporters, rival fans would give the Nazi salute, chant "Hamas, Hamas!", shout "Jews to the gas!" or simply hiss to simulate the sound of gas escaping. See Craig S. Smith, "A Dutch Soccer Riddle: Jewish Regalia Without Jews," *The New York Times,* March 28, 2005. Anti-Semitic incidents occur frequently at soccer matches throughout Europe. Casual racism is frequent in Italian soccer and hateful chants among extreme fans are the norm. Rome's Lazio soccer team and its fans have a history of anti-Semitism. In one infamous instance, they cheered wildly as players hailed them with Mussolini's fascist salute; in another, they displayed an enormous banner with the words "Auschwitz Is Your Homeland: the Ovens Are Your Homes" during a 2001 game against AS Roma. More recently, Lazio fans left stickers in a stadium with the image of Anne Frank wearing the colours of a crosstown rival to mock that team's supporters. See Jason Horowitz, "Revulsion in Italian Soccer Over Anti-Semitic Taunts," *The New York Times,* October 26, 2017. *The Jerusalem Post* reported that, at a World Cup game on September 5, 2016, Italian fans gave the Nazi salute and booed the Israeli national anthem, with several others being seen taunting religious Jewish fans and spitting at them. British soccer fans also have a sordid track record of their own both inside and outside of their country. Chelsea fans chant "Yid" at the rival Tottenham team, which has traditionally drawn a large fan base from the London Jewish community and whose fans call themselves the "Yid Army." Not only do Chelsea fans hurl the Y-word, there has also been hissing, mimicking Nazi gas chambers. In December 2018 Chelsea fans engaged in anti-Semitic chants during a Europa League game in Hungary against Vidi. See Rob Harris, Associated Press, "Chelsea Tackles Anti-Semitism, 'Stupid Fans'," *National Post* (Toronto), February 28, 2019.

Conditions in Israel are no better and Jewish fans are equally belligerent. Credible reports regarding the racism of Beitar Jerusalem, a bastion of Israel's political right-wing, abound. A group of their supporters known as "La Familia" has long beeen openly hostile and violent toward Israel's Arab minority, who are subjected to racist chanting like "death to Arabs." See Ori Lewis, "Fans of Jerusalem Beitar Soccer Team Fed Up With Racism, Form New Club," *The Jerusalem Post,* February 22, 2018. The activities of Beitar Jerusalem Football Club supporters in Charleroi, Belgium, on July 16, 2015, were described as follows: "Beitar supporters, including members of the French Jewish Defence League, began their visit by rampaging in the streets of Charleroi, picking fights with fans of the local team. … The JDL, founded by the late extremist rabbi Meir Kahane, whose movement and political party, Kach, are banned in Israel and several other countries, claims affiliation to the militaristic Beitar movement to which Mr. Kahane belonged as a youth. The fans arrived at the stadium and hung their Kach flags alongside Israel's national flags. Charleroi fans chided them by giving them the Nazi straight-arm salute, which drove Beitar supporters crazy. Dozens of flares and fireworks were thrown on the field, delaying the game. Later, the Charleroi goalkeeper was hit in the head with some object thrown from the Beitar crowd. Despite all that, Beitar players came over to their fans at the end of the game and applauded them. … This is a team that *never* has had an Arab on its squad, even though Israel's population is 20 per cent Arab … Two years ago, Beitar signed two skilled Chechens—Muslims—to play for the team, and fans became incensed, burning down part of the club's practice facility. The Chechens were traded to another team." See Patrick Martin, "Love, Hatred, Religion and Politics Fuel Fans of Beitar Jerusalem FC," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), July 25, 2015.

did not wear sidelocks like most of the other boys, did not dress in the traditionalist black caftan and felt hat, did not practice my religion with anything near their fervor.

"Are you a goy?" they often taunted me, using a Yiddish term for "gentile." "You dress like a goy!"

"I don't have to look different to be Jewish," I would reply, which left me open for the retort, "But you do look different. Different from us, and *we're* Jewish."

There would never be a meeting of the minds, it seemed, between us so-called assimilated Jews and the Chassidim.

By the time Friday afternoon came around, I could not wait to get back home.[337]

A Jewish boy from Działoszyce recalled:

Father, an ultraorthodox Gerer Hasid, did not want his sons going to public school. … Nobody taught us math, science, or Polish in *heder.* In fact, the rebbe often did not even know Polish.[338]

Leopold Infeld, a renowned physicist, recalled his own oppressive experience:

When I was five years old, I was sent to heder. The class was small, the benches hard and painfully uncomfortable. We sat so close to each other that you could not move your arms. In a sing-song chorus, we repeatedly intoned the sounds of the Hebrew alphabet … Repeated, repeated, repeated, mechanically, till the letters in the book created the right nervous responses and the right sounds extricated themselves from our childish mouths.

The windows were shut tightly throughout the whole of the winter, to save fuel. The air was heavy and foul, the smell of sweat mixing with that of onion and potatoes boiling in the kitchen next door. Our teacher has a rod in his hand and is clothed in a long, and torn silk coat, worn by the religious Jews of Krakow [Kraków]. Each of us boys is five years old. The teacher listens to our choral incantations. His trained ear picks up the false note. Slowly, with rod lifted, he approaches a place from which I could be reached. I am scared and try to sing loud and well. I am saved. The rod hits my neighbour. Our monotonous chorus, under the teacher's conducting rod, sounds louder and better now. The boy who was hit wipes his tears with his dirty fingers, and the teacher looks for a new victim. … Each morning and each afternoon, we breathe the same rotten air and repeat and repeat, until we learn to read the words in the holy language in which Our Lord speaks with the angels. We read words we do not understand; we read them slowly, stumble, and make mistakes. Later the mistakes are fewer; and at last we read fluently. The first stage of our education is over.[339]

A Jewish girl from an assimilated family in Grudziądz recalled the cold reception she received when she started to study the Jewish religion: "So, starting in fourth grade, I attend the afternoon classes of Jewish religion at the Wydzialowa [Wydziałowa] School—where the Jewish pupils look at me suspiciously as if I did not belong. … And I wonder if I belong with these stuck-up Jewish kids who give me a cold shoulder

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[337] Larry Stillman, *A Match Made in Hell: The Jewish Boy and the Polish Outlaw Who Defied the Nazis. From the Testimony of Morris Goldner* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 16–17.

[338] Tenenbaum, *Legacy and Redemption,* 31.

[339] Leoplod Infeld, *Szkice z przeszłości* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1964), 8–9.

because I missed a year of Jewish religion."[340] Haim Grzybower, a Jewish schoolboy from Warsaw who dared to say a Christian prayer, soon faced the wrath of his Jewish peers:

> Every morning at school, when the Christian boys crossed themselves and said the Lord's Prayer, I found myself wondering what would happen if I prayed along with them. Would I get stoned? Would my hand fall off? Would I drop dead?
>
> One day I got up my courage and, right out loud, said the Lord's Prayer and crossed myself with the rest of them. The Christian boys paid no attention, though a couple of them gave me puzzled looks over their shoulders, but when it was over the Jewish boys—there were only a few girls, and they had separate classes—cornered me and yelled, "You're not supposed to do that; you know it's against our religion. We're going to tell your mother."
>
> I didn't say anything, and I certainly didn't think they'd really tell her, but when I left school that day all the Jewish boys cornered me. "What kind of Jew are you?" they asked. "What's wrong with you?" When I didn't answer—what could I say?—they started punching me and kicking me, not letting up until I was bruised and lying on the ground in tears. After that they all disappeared together. I did not see where they went, but when I made my way slowly home and was standing across the street from our apartment house, I saw them all trooping out, with righteous little smirks on their faces, so I knew they had told my mother.
>
> My hands were trembling when I opened the apartment door. I had to be in for a beating this time. But my mother just glanced over at me, then went back to her sewing. She never said a word to me about it —not one word. I've never understood that.[341]

Maintaining close contacts with Christians was also a basis for social sanctions. A popular Yiddish play, *Der Dorfs Jung,* railed out against the evils of marrying a Christian and warned of the fires of hell that such a vile deed invited.[342] For many Jews intimate relationships with Christians were anathema. In Baranowicze, Sara Bytenski, the daughter of a pious Jew was spotted one afternoon behind some trees kissing her Christian boyfriend. A group of teenaged Jewish boys spontaneously rallied to her "defence":

> When the man turned his head, our horror turned to outrage. He was a 'goy'—a Gentile! For us, it was not only sin, it was mortal sin—a Jewish soul was in danger of being lost! We looked at each other, wild-eyed. She had to be saved—it was our sacred duty! There were plenty of stones lying around; collecting pocketfuls of them we stormed forward, valiant saviours, hurling our weapons of destruction at the infamous desecrators … A few months later we all had a second shock. The poor girl had had no success in convincing her family that her lover was willing to convert to our faith in order to marry her, so she ran away with him. The shame of it was too much for her father, a poor but well-respected tailor. He declared a whole year of mourning, closed his shop and sat, all day long on the floor, wearing a torn black garment

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[340] Irene Shapiro, *Revisiting the Shadows: Memoirs from War-torn Poland to the Statue of Liberty* (Elk River, Minnesota: DeForest Press, 2004), 41.

[341] Gribou, *Hunted in Warsaw,* 37.

[342] Daniel Kac, *Koncert grany żywym* (Warsaw: Tu, 1998), 66–67.

> praying loudly and begging the Almighty for forgiveness for the daughter, now dead to him, who had brought such shame and humiliation on her parents and her people alike.[343]

Another account states: "How many tears of sorrow and anguish he had brought upon his parents by her visits to his house. … His parents were furious and enraged when they saw them together. They never tired of reminding him that it was high time he be at *heder* and not mooning about with a non-Jewish girl. Misha was not insensitive to their pain and tried to avoid Lucia as best he could."[344] Yet another states: "Morris, then sixteen, had committed an unpardonable sin. He was observed by several Jews holding hands with a *shiksa* in a little park behind the church in Łęczna, where his family lived. On Saturday the rabbi reported the shameful event to the congregation, and Jankel, Morris's father, was so humiliated that he slapped the youthful offender in front of everyone. That night Morris took whatever money he could find in the house and ran away from home."[345] This attitude was pervasive is small towns populated by Jews. Leon Lepold recalled the "nationalistic, chauvinistic" upbringing he received in his native town of Tłumacz, in eastern Galicia. "You could not go out on the street with a gentile girl… The whole city would know about it… You would be thrown out from the shul… It would be the biggest shmanda [shame], the biggest embarrassment for the family." While "Gentile people went to the Jewish doctor and the Jewish people went to the Jewish doctor, … the Jewish people didn't go to the gentile doctor."[346]

But such attitudes were also common in large centres, even among the educated classes. When a Jewish teenager from Warsaw went out with a Polish Catholic student, a friend of her brother's, a Jewish couple who passed them on the street exclaimed that it was shameful for a Jew to go out with a *goy*.[347] A Jew from a well-to-do Orthodox family from Warsaw faced universal ostracism on the part of his family, friends and community for courting a Polish Christian girl from his own neighbourhood. Some of his acquaintances were very frank about the consequences: "'How can you walk down the street with her?' he asked. 'You'll be ostracized, beaten, ridiculed. Your own people are going to hate you … What's going to happen when your father finds out? You may give him a heart attack.'" To escape the harassment, they frequented one of the better Polish restaurants: "I didn't have to worry about being heckled for dating a

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[343] Berk, *Destined to Live,* 64–65.

[344] Isaac Aron, *Fallen Leaves: Stories of the Holocaust and the Partisans* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1981), 118.

[345] Henry Orenstein, *I Shall Live: Surviving Against All Odds, 1939–1945* (New York: Beaufort, 1987), 25. As Orenstein notes, "the Jews had always lived almost totally separate from the gentile population … Many Jews did not speak Polish at all, or at best only broken Polish. At home, they spoke Yiddish, and their customs and culture were different, too, as was their appearance: most of them wore beards and long earlocks, yarmulkes on their heads, and black caftans. Their religion was the key to their existence, and precluded any assimilation. … The Polish peasants were poor, and opportunities for Jews were limited. … These conditions and many restrictions caused a few of the Jews to resort to questionable business practices. … Most Poles viewed the Jews with suspicion; to them they were a strange people, a foreign body thrust into the middle of Polish society. They couldn't understand why Jews held to their traditions and religious beliefs with such fanatic dedication, and they resented them for it. … The relationship between Jews and Poles had become a vicious cycle. Each had good reason to mistrust the other, but it was the Jews who bore the brunt of the abuse because they were the minority." Ibid., 4–6.

[346] Interview with Leon Lepold, June 30, 1983, The Generation After Oral History Project, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University Libraries, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

[347] André Caussat, *Gutka: Du ghetto de Varsovie à la liberté retrouvée* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999), 22.

Polish girl. No one paid any attention to us." Eventually, he "started calling for her at her apartment, and her parents didn't seem to mind."[348]

Jews who married Gentiles, even if they did not convert, were regarded as renegades by the Jewish community and were usually disowned by their families.[349] The Talmud contains a strict ban on intermarriage and Jews who embraced Christianity were treated with particular aversion. Those who intermarried were completely ostracized by the community, and their family members suffered too. Apostates were considered by all to be dead.[350]

In the town of Wilczyn, near Inowrocław,

> A Jewish neighbor—one of seven brothers—joined the Polish army, and while in the service, met and married a Christian girl. It was a sin for a Jew to marry a Gentile and a really grave sin for this family. His father was a pious Jew and stood out in town with his long beard, wearing a fur hat known as a *shtreimel.* Married Haredi men grew beards and wore such hats on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. This man became

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[348] Maurice Shainberg, *Breaking From the KGB: Warsaw Ghetto Fighter…Intelligence Officer…Defector to the West* (New York: Shapolsky, 1986), 33–40.

[349] Munro, *Bialystok to Birkenau,* 54 (Wasilków near Białystok); Jakub Gutenbaum and Agnieszka Latała, eds., *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak,* vol. 2 (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 319 (Włocławek). The Polish family in the latter case did not disown their son for marrying a Jewish woman, even though she did not convert and their child was not baptized. For other examples of religious Jewish families cutting off relations with their daughters who married Poles, see Ruta Pragier, *Żydzi czy Polacy* (Warsaw: Rytm, 1992), 124; Testimony of Jankiel Kulawiec, 2004, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/jankiel-kulawiec> (Łosice).

[350] Livingston, *Tradition and Modernism in the Shtetl,* 68. The attitude toward illegitimate offspring was equally unenlightened. When a child was born to a Jewish maid in Kolbuszowa, "The town's younsters never tired of taunting the man's other children with the name of the illegitimate child. See Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland,* 190. Edwin Langberg of Drohobycz described the situation in his own household as follows: "my 75 year-old maternal grandmother Sara Nacht was frail and permanently bedridden. She relied on her nurse Blima for all of her physical needs. Our housekeeper Sophie helped in trading for food and took care of meals. The status of Sophie and Blima was an anachronism, an indirect result of the orthodox interpretation of the Hebrew Old Testament relating to 'mamzers,' those born of an illegitimate union. The *Torah* states: *'No mamzer shall be admitted into the congregation of the Lord; none of his descendants, even in the tenth generation, shall be admitted into the congregation of the Lord'* (23:3). The circumstances of their births tragically precluded Blima and Sophie from any chance of a Jewish marriage and family, or membership in the Jewish congregation in pre-war Poland when Jewish life was to a large extent ruled by Orthodox Judaism. Female mamzers frequently entered into service with Jewish families, usually at a young age. There was no binding agreement but after a year or two, both parties considered the position lifelong. Sophie took care of the children in my uncle Elias' family, and after my mother's death, became our housekeeper. Blima took care of my arthritic grandmother for years." See Edwin Langberg with Julia M. Langberg, *Sara's Blessing* (Lumberton, New Jersey: Emethas Publishers, 2003), 16–17. This phenomenon probably accounts for the fact that a number of Jewish children were taken in by Catholic orphanages in the interwar period.

The traditional charges levelled against the Catholic Church in Poland, in particular its convents, regarding the alleged abduction and forcible conversion of Jews have been discredited by research carried out by Jewish historians. Several hundred young Jewish women sought refuge at the Felician Sisters' convent in Kraków in the latter part of the 19th century and first two decades of the 20th century, and many of them converted. At the time, Jewish and other publications reported that these Jewish women were allegedly abducted and kept gainst their will. See ChaeRan Freeze, "When Chava Left Home: Gender, Conversion, and the Jewish Family in Tsarist Russia," and Rachel Manekin, "The Lost Generation: Education and Female Conversion in *Fin-de-Siècle* Kraków," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 18 (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2005), 153–219; Rachel Manekin, *The Rebellion of the Daughters: Jewish Women Runaways in Habsburg Austria* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2020). For statistics on conversions in Lwów voivodship in the 1930s see Wacław Wierzbieniec, *Żydzi w województwie lwowskim w okresie międzywojennym: Zagadnienia demograficzne i społeczne* (Rzeszów: Uniwersytet Rzeszowski, 2003), 33–40.

> very bitter over his son's marriage and was shamed by other Jews. It put a huge blot on his family for the rest of his life.[351]

In Sławatycze, southeast of Biała Podlaska, in the late 1920s the daughter of a rabbi fell in love with a Polish policeman. She converted to Catholicism in order to marry him:

> On the Sunday of her *shmad* [conversion], Catholics … paraded down the main street … carrying icons … and singing hymns. … The young girl sat erect, and with a defiant smirk waved from her carriage to the townspeople. Her poor parents followed the carriage, crying and screaming and beating their heads to a bloody pulp on the sides of the wagon pleading with their daughter not to go through with this woeful deed. … After this shameful tragedy, the girl's family secluded themselves and never went out of the house. Her three sisters never married, neither did their cousins in the nearby town. No one would marry them.[352]

The apostate Tzipora, was universally regarded as "the blot on our Sochaczew—she who embarrassed and mocked not only her pious father but also the entire Jewish city."[353] The mother of a girl who ran off with her Polish tutor and married him in a church service, "burdened by shame, overwhelmed by grief threw herself into one of the town wells and fell to her death. Soon afterward the family disappeared from Kolbuszowa."[354] When a Jewish girl fell in love with a Polish officer,

> she had to choose between never seeing her parents again or breaking off with her beloved. The entire Jewish community of Chodecz was in an uproar about it. In the end, the young woman drowned herself in a well and was buried outside the cemetery.[355]

In the town of Ejszyszki near Wilno, "the Jewish community lost no opportunity to express its revulsion toward [Goldke]," who had converted to Catholicism to marry a Catholic man. When Meir Hilke converted to Catholicism in 1921 to marry a Catholic woman, "Not a single Jew was to be found on the streets … and all the doors and windows were shut against the terrible sight."[356] Another Jew from Ejszyszki described the nature of some of the doubtless milder harassment endured by Goldke, who had

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[351] Abraham W. Landau, *Branded on My Arm and on My Soul: A Holocaust Memoir* (New Bedford, Massachusetts: Spinner Publications with The Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford, 2011), 25.

[352] Memoir of Henry L. Gitelman cited in Zvi Gitelman, *Jewish Identities in Postcommunist Russua and Ukraine: An Uncertain Ethnicity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 272.

[353] Machla Lewin-Botler, "The Last Ones of a Family," in A. Sh. Sztejn (Shtayn) and Gavriel Wejszman (Vaysman), eds., *Pinkas Sokhatshev* (Jerusalem: Former Residents of Sochaczew in Israel, 1962), 533ff.; translasted as *Memorial Book of Sochaczew,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sochaczew/sochaczew.html>.

[354] Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland,* 190.

[355] Roman Halter, *Roman's Journey* (London: Portobello, 2007), 265.

[356] Eliach, *There Once Was a World,* 399.

married a Polish farmer. Whenever she ventured into town, local Jews taunted her in the streets with calls of "Goldke, the convert! Goldke, the convert!"[357] According to another account,

> Little children pointed their fingers at her and yelled, "There goes Goldke the *Mishumaidisteh!*" when she attended church on Sundays. No one had any tolerance, much less sympathy, for her actions.[358]

A Jewish woman who married a Pole in Naliboki, and secretly converted to Catholicism so as not to incur the wrath of the local Jewish population, received an ominous gift from her own mother (who lived in Lwów): a cake containing broken pieces of glass.[359] Another Jewish woman from the Wilno area who converted when she married a Pole "had done the most abominable deed that a Jewish child could do to her God-fearing parents." It was her father's duty according to Jewish law to "repudiate" her:

> Now it was his duty to mourn her as if she were dead. He sat shivah for seven days and cried. Later he attempted to put her out of his mind, as if she had never existed.[360]

One memoir describes the reaction when the daughter of a rabbi fell in love with a Polish policeman in a small town near Lublin and insisted on marrying him after converting to Catholicism:

> Her poor parents followed the carriage, crying and screaming and beating their heads to a bloody pulp on the sides of the wagon with their daughter not to go through with this woeful deed. … After this shameful tragedy, the girl's family secluded themselves and never went out of the house. Her three sisters never married, neither did their cousins in the nearby town. *No one would marry them*.[361]

When Dobka Sztrum of Uniszowa near Ryglice married a Pole and converted to Catholicism before the war, the couple was forced to leave the village because of the harassment they experienced from local Jews. When she returned to the village during the war, she was denounced by a Jew; pregnant, she was executed by the Germans in front of her home.[362] While she was going to church, Jews in Gąbin threw stones at a Jewish girl who had converted in order to marry a Pole.[363]

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[357] Leon Kahn (as told to Marjorie Morris), *No Time To Mourn: A True Story of a Jewish Partisan Fighter* (Vancouver: Laurelton Press, 1978), 81.

[358] Livingston, *Tradition and Modernism in the Shtetl,* 68.

[359] Account of Maria Chilicka, dated February 6, 2005 (in the author's possession).

[360] Samuel Bak, *Painted in Words: A Memoir* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; Boston: Pucker Art Publications, 2001), 243.

[361] Henry Gitelman, *I Am Drenched in the Dew of My Childhood: A Memoir* (No publisher, 1997), 21, as quoted in Zvi Gitelman, "Collective Memory and Contemporary Polish-Jewish Relations," in Zimmerman, ed., *Contested Memories,* 275.

[362] Adam Kazimierz Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu* (Gliwice: n.p.; 2002)*,* vol. 2, 329.

[363] Maurizio Cinquegrani, *Journey to Poland: Documentary Landscapes of the Holocaust* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), based on Minna Packer's 2002 documentary film *Back to Gombin*.

When a young Jewish woman converted to Catholicism in the village of Jaśliska near Krosno, the Jews nearly rioted. The situation became so precarious that she was escorted by a policeman on her way to the church. According to this woman, "Jews threw stones. … After this celebration, my father came and pleaded with me to go home. … But I was already baptised … Later Jews asked my father why he had not brought an axe or a knife with him and cut my head off … Because it is a horrible thing for Jews when one of them gets baptised." Jews did not leave her in peace. "They tried to stop her from entering the church and they wanted to 'kill her and stone her to death'. … After her baptism, [she] sold her second-hand sewing machine and escaped [from the village], because 'I knew that the Jews would never leave me in peace.'" The initiative to convert had been entirely this woman's who had shown a fascination with Catholicism since childhood: "It often happened that the priest would show her the door, because Jewish children were not allowed to participate in religious lessons. It also happened that her father would beat her and lift her up by the hair, because he did not like his daughter to attend Catholic services."[364]

A similar situation is recorded in the small nearby town of Stoczek when a young Jewish woman, the daughter of a businessman, married a Polish peasant from a nearby village.

> When one changed his faith in Stoczek, it signified to all that he had abandoned the Jewish community and went over to the hostile Poles. … Despite the period of mourning, the community insisted that they did not recognise the act of conversion because a Jew could never be anything but a Jew. It was inconceivable in Stoczek that a Jew could come to believe in another faith. The Jew who went through conversion was, therefore, considered a *shmadnik,* an apostate and traitor, a low and spiteful character, but he never became a Gentile in the eyes of the community.

When this Jewish woman arrived to be married in church, "almost all Jews, young and old, gathered around the town hall where she was staying and shouted insults at her."[365]

An account by a Jew from a professional, largely Polish-speaking milieu in Kraków acknowledges: "Intermarriage had become more common in Poland during the 1930s, but it was still regarded as a tragedy by most orthodox parents. Some disowned their children, while others sat *shivah* for them as though they had died, observing seven days of mourning with slippers on their feet and ashes on their head."[366] A Jew from Łódź recalled:

> I had been aware of a close relative of my father's who had become a Christian, had married a Pole and was working as a senior clerk in the council offices of Lodz [Łódź]. The sorrow and shame felt by the family was so great that no one in the family dared to mention the convert's name. So-much-so, that everyone tried to forget that she ever existed—her parents actually went through the traditional seven-day mourning period

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[364] Lehmann, *Symbiosis and Ambivalence,* 116–18. When this woman was seized by the Germans during the occupation together with other Jews and taken to the ghetto in Rzeszów, Jews in the ghetto tried to persuade a tipsy Ukrainian soldier to shoot her: "The Jews told him: 'She is a convert! She has to be killed and shot!' They said so in my presence. They didn't care at all! But the Ukrainian soldier told the Jews that he had not received an order to shoot her. He beat her instead in order to 'silence' the Jewish mob." Ibid., 119.

[365] Lehmann, *Symbiosis and Ambivalence,* 126–27.

[366] Diane Armstrong, *Mosaic: A Chronicle of Five Generations* (Milsons Point, New South Wales: Random House, 1998), 129.

> for her, broke all contact with her and felt so ashamed and disgraced that they isolated themselves from society.[367]

The daughter of a prominent industrialist in Borysław recalled that when her great-grandmother's daughter married a Christian, she was "considered an outsider in the family. It was not until the war started, when the family wanted to find her to ask her if she could hide my sick grandfather, that I discovered this family secret. No one knew her married name, so the attempt to locate her did not succeed."[368] When the parents of a young Jewish woman from Warsaw forbade her to marry a Pole, she tried to commit suicide by throwing herself under a streetcar. Although she lost a leg as a result, the Pole, named Staniław Sawicki, married her. When she was forced to move into the Warsaw ghetto with their child, he visited them and brought them food. He also helped other Jews.[369]

The Second World War did not alter the situation for many. When a Jewish prisoner-of-war whose life had been rescued by a Polish nurse returned to his home in Warsaw in October 1939 to introduce his new Polish girlfriend to his father, Rabbi Moses Korngold, the reaction was one of shock.

> "My son has brought a Christian girl home," he thought, reflecting deeply. "A Polish girl, Is he going to marry her? That must never happen. Never! Never!" …
>
> "You have brought a Christian into my house. What a disgrace!" his father scolded him. "You are killing me, Never shall I give my consent while I live."
>
> He would not allow Leon to say a word, but covered his face with his hands, and walking back and forth in his despair, he continued, "Doesn't your conscience bother you? Have you no sympathy for your old father?" …
>
> Moses Korngold interrupted him brusquely, shouting at him, 'You are a lost soul! Get out of my house!'"[370]

In German-occupied Lwów, a Jew who had been given shelter by his Polish girlfriend kept the relationship a secret from his parents for fear of being disowned: "Irka was David's Gentile girlfriend. Giza had told me she thought David and Irka were secretly married, and I quite understood why David would keep the news from his family. He was even more under his Mother's thumb than Karol, and I am sure she would rather have seen him dead than married to a non-Jewish girl."[371] Yet, although Janina Papliński had converted to Judaism when she married her Jewish husband before the war, her parents sheltered her and her Jewish sons during the war. After Janina was caught by the Germans when she was outside the family home, her parents and sister continued to hide the boys with different people in the surrounding villages. After the war, the boys were reunited with their father, who had been mobilized by

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[367] Freiberg, *To Survive Sobibor,* Chapter 1.

[368] Helene C. Kaplan, *I Never Left Janowska…* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1989), 3.

[369] Testimony of Chana Perewoska, Yad Vashem Archives, file O.3/2223.

[370] Roman Grunspan, *The Uprising of the Death Box of Warsaw* (New York: Vantage Press, 1978), 12.

[371] Marian Pretzel, *Portrait of a Young Forger: Marian Pretzel's Memoirs of His Adventures and Survival in Wartime Europe* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989), 89–90.

the Red Army during the war. They moved to Israel severing contact with the Catholic family who had saved them.[372]

Two Jewish siblings who spent the German occupation moving from home to home in the countryside near Kańczuga were apprehensive about the relationships they struck up with their Polish peers. Faiga Rosenbluth wrote: "Much as it hurt me to tear myself away from Stasiek and this comfortable place, it was time to move on. Besides, I knew I could never marry a goy. My parents would die a second death, if such a thing were possible." Her brother Luzer recalled his own dilemma: "All that night, I lay awake thinking about Andzia. I was trying to figure out whether it was all right to marry a shiksa if there were no other Jews left in the world. It seemed fair to me, but I wasn't so sure what our rabbi would say."[373]

The media reported a rather dramatic example of this phenomenon in present-day Israel when an anti-Arab protest occurred over a wedding between an Israeli Arab and a Jew. The bride's father said of his son-in-law: "My problem with him is that he is an Arab." Demonstrators shouted "Death to the Arabs" and sang a song with a line, "May your village burn down." The two anti-Arab groups involved in the protests, Lehava and Yad L'Achim, oppose assimilation of Arabs and Jews.[374]

Nor is it surprising that assimilationists were generally frowned on by Jewish society. Incidents of Orthodox Jews attacking converts, for example, in Tarnów, were recorded as early as the 1870s. A Jewish woman who married a Polish judge experienced much unpleasantness in interwar Tartaków near Sokal: "Jewish boys would throw stones, people would shout insults or spit after her." Eventually, the couple had to leave the shtetl.[375] The creation of ghettos under the German occupation intensified markedly the precarious conditions for converts, assimilated Jews, and even Polish-speaking Jewish children living in

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[372] Israel Gutman, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005),* volume II (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), 569–70.

[373] Fay Walker and Leo Rosen (with Caren S. Neile), *Hidden: A Sister and Brother in Nazi Poland* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 193, 194.

[374] Haroon Siddiqui, "Anti-Arab Hate Grows in Israel with Rise of the Right," *Toronto Star*, August 21, 2014.

[375] Irena Powell, *The Daughter Who Sold Her Mother: A Biographical Memoir* (AuthorHouse UK, 2016).

traditional Jewish society.[376] For some Jewish leaders, like Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski, head of the Łódź ghetto council, the walled and fenced ghettos created by the Germans were not without their

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[376] Assimilationists and converts were generally loathed in the ghettos. In his chronicle of the Warsaw ghetto Emanuel Ringelblum notes that Jewish nationalists were delighted that the Jews were finally separated from the Poles, albeit in ghettos, seeing in this the beginnings of a separate Jewish state on Polish territory. Hatred towards Polish Christians grew in the ghetto because it was believed that they were responsible for the economic restrictions that befell the Jews. Moreover, many Jews embarked on a battle against the use of the Polish language in the ghetto, especially in Jewish agencies and education, and were opposed to Jewish converts occupying positions of authority. See Emanuel Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego: Wrzesień 1939–styczeń 1943* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1983)*,* 118, 214–15, 531ff. Some Jewish nationalists simply did not permit the use of the Polish language in their homes. See Antoni Marianowicz, *Życie surowo wzbronione* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1995), 46; Antoni Marianowicz, *Life Strictly Forbidden* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004). That author also attests to the fact that converts were generally detested (p. 47), and to the pro-German attitudes of some Jews in the ghetto (pp. 66–67, 190). A Jewish memoir describes how children who did not speak Yiddish, which was a German-based language, were ostracized by Yiddish-speaking children in the Warsaw ghetto: they were disparaged as "Poles" and "converts" and were even pelted with rocks. See Małgorzata-Maria Acher, *Niewłaściwa twarz: Wspomnienia ocalałej z warszawskiego getta* (Częstochowa: Święty Paweł, 2001), 48. A Jewish woman who turned to a bearded Jew in Polish, since she did not speak Yiddish, recalled his hostile reaction: "I think he understood me, but he got very angry that I did not speak Yiddish, so he spat at me, *"Du solst starben zwischem goyim!"* I did not understand exactly what he said, so I went back to my apartment and repeated it to my mother. "What does *'Du solst starben zwischem goyim'* mean?" She said, "Who cursed you like this?" She explained to me that he had said, "May you die amongst the *goyim*!" He said this because if you do not speak Yiddish, you were an outcast." See Goldberg, *Running Through Fire,* 39.

According to one source, there were fewer than 1,600 Christian converts in the Warsaw ghetto; according to other sorces, there may have been as many as 2,000 or even 5,000. See, respectively, Yisrael Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939–1943: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 59; Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City* (New Haven, Connecticut, and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 652; Peter F. Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto: An Epitaph for the Unremembered* (Notre Dame Indiana: Notre Dame University, 2005), 66–68. As many accounts confirm, the general sentiment toward Jewish converts to Christianity living inside the ghetto was one of hostility and derision. Malicious jokes about converts circulated within the ghetto. See Lusia Przybyszewicz, *All That Was* ([Broovdale, New South Wales]: n.p., 2001), Chapter 13. Rabbi Chaim Aron Kaplan expressed tremendous rancor toward Jewish converts, attributing to them the vilest of motives and rejoicing at their misfortune: "I shall, however, have revenge on our 'converts.' I will laugh aloud at the sight of their tragedy. … Conversion brought them but small deliverance. … This is the first time in my life that a feeling of vengeance has given me pleasure." See Abraham I. Katsh, ed., *Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan* (New York: Macmillan; and London: Collier-Macmillan, 1965), 78–79, 250 (Kaplan suggests that Jewish informers may have been behind their betrayal to the Germans). Traditionally, Jews viewed converts as particularly virulent "enemies of Israel." See Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto,* 101. Even Jewish atheists openly declared their disdain toward converts. See Grace Caporino and Dianne Isaacs, "Testimonies from the 'Aryan' Side: 'Jewish Catholics' in the Warsaw Ghetto," in John K. Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell, eds., *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2001), vol. 1, 194. As many accounts confirm, the general sentiment toward Jewish converts to Christianity living inside the ghetto was one of hostility and loathing. The Orthodox members of the Jewish council attempted to deny Christian Jews the rights and help given to Jews in the ghetto. See Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto,* 70. They were detested for everything: their betrayal of Judaism, their use of the Polish language, their education and social and economic status, their alleged air of superiority and anti-Semitism, and even the assistance they received from Caritas, a Catholic relief organization. Soon malicious, but false, stories spread that they had taken over the senior positions in the ghetto administration and controlled the Jewish police force. See Havi Ben-Sasson, "Christians in the Ghetto: All Saints' Church, Birth of the Holy Virgin Mary Church, and the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto," in *Yad Vashem Studies,* vol. 31 (2003): 153–73. This was so even though, according to one prominent researcher, many if not most of the converts were opportunistic and continued to consider themselves Jews, few of them sustained any connection with their new religion, and "virtually all continued to donate to Jewish religious charities." See Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919–1939,* 78. See also Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto,* 93; Marian Małowist, "Assimilationists and Neophytes at the Time of War-Operations and in the Closed Jewish Ghetto," in Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S." ["Oneg Shabbath"]* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), 619–34. (The memoir of Halina Gorcewicz, whose father ostensibly converted to Catholicism when he married her mother, illustrates that even Jews who had fully assimilated linguistically and culturally maintained a strong tribal-like attachment to fellow Jews—perhaps an embodiment of the lingering notion of the oneness of "the

blessings.[377] Jacob Gens, the German-appointed leader of the Wilno ghetto, boasted in a speech delivered on January 15, 1943: "For the first time in the history of Vilna [Wilno] we have achieved a purely Jewish school system."[378] (The Germans allowed schools to be reopened—at least for a time—in many ghettos, including Warsaw, Łódź, Lublin, and Białystok, where the language of instruction was Yiddish or Hebrew.[379]) In many ghettos, especially smaller ones in Eastern Poland, speaking Polish was frowned upon.[380] Jewish children who spoke Polish in the ghettos were harassed, ostracized and even beaten by Jewish children.[381] Curiously, even in the ranks of the Communist Party of Poland Jewish nationalism came to the forefront among the remnants of that disbanded party who found themselves in France in the late 1930s. The Jewish members, who were better connected and had more financial resources than their Polish colleagues, scorned the latter and even harassed Jews who spoke only the Polish language.[382]

Day-to-day relations between Christians and Poles in the interwar period are often portrayed in grim colours and violence directed against Jews has been written about extensively. Contrary to the dire picture presented by authors such as Celia Heller, the evidence does not support that extreme view, since on a personal level day-to-day relations were usually proper. Heller undermines her doom-and-gloom portrayal of Polish Jewry when she discusses Jews organizing defences against violent attacks by Polish hoodlums and extreme nationalists in the 1930s.[383] Small groups of Jewish men, usually armed with such meager things as clubs and perhaps a few firearms, were often successful in preventing or beating off such attacks.

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[377] Marta Markowska, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Dzień po dniu Zagłady* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, Dom Spotkań z Historią, and Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2008), 121.

[378] Quoted in Ruzhka Korczak (Reizl Korchak), *Levahot be-efer,* 3rd edition (Merhavia: Moreshet Sifriat Poalim, 1965), 345.

[379] While Polish language schools in Łódź were closed down in December 1939, Jewish schools in the ghetto continued to function until the fall of 1941. See Adam Sitarek, "Trzy miasta: Dzień powszedni w Litzmannsadt—wybrane problemy," in Tomasz Chinciński, ed., *Przemoc i dzień powszedni w okupowanej Polsce* (Gdańsk: Muzeum II Wojny Światowej; Oskar, 2011), 471–74. The languages of instruction at the two schools in the Białystok ghetto were exclusively Yiddish and Hebrew. See Maciej Siekierski and Feliks Tych, eds., *Widziałem anioła śmierci: Losy deportowanych Żydów polskich w ZSRR w latach II wojny światowej: Świadectwa zebrane przez Ministerstwo Informacji i Dokumentacji Rządu Polskiego na Uchodźstwie w latach 1942–1943* (Warsaw: Rosner i Wspólnicy and Żydowski Instytut Historyczny; Stanford: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 2006), 338.

[380] Already in the inauguratory issue of the Wilno Jewish newspaper *Vilner Togblat,* dated December 27, 1939, the editorial decried: "we are decidedly opposed to the fact that Jews of Wilno, or Warsaw, or anywhere else, speak in Polish on the streets of Wilno, in cafes or in homes." At the time, Poles constituted a majority of the city's population. See Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert, ed. *Polacy–Żydzi, Polen–Juden, Poles–Jews, 1939–1945: Wybór Źródeł, Quellenauswahl, Selection of Documents* (Warsaw: Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa, Instytut Dziedzictwa Narodowego, and Rytm, 2001), 364. A Jew from Rafałówka, near Sarny, in Volhynia, recalled: "The Goldbiter family arrived in the town of Old Rafalovka during the Soviet rule from the town of Czartorysk and settled there. The family members spoke Polish to each other, a matter that was not acceptable to us." See Avraham Appleboim, "On the Road from Rafalovka to Sopachiv," in *Memorial Book for the Towns of Old Rafalowka, New Rafalowka, Olizarka, Zoludzk and Vicinity,* Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rafalovka/Rafalovka.html>, translation of Pinhas and Malkah Hagin, eds., *Sefer zikaron le-'ayarot Rafalowka ha-yeshenah, Rafalowka he-hadashah, Olizarka, Zoludzk veha-sevivah* (Tel Aviv, 1996), 30–47, at p. 34.

[381] See, for example, Acher, *Niewłaściwa twarz,* 48 (Warsaw); Gustaw Kerszman, *Jak ginąć, to razem* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2003), 52 (Białystok).

[382] Piotr Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza: Droga do władzy 1941–1944* (Warsaw: Fronda, 2003), 45–46.

[383] Celia S. Heller, *On the Edge of Destruction: Jews of Poland between the Two World Wars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 286–91.

Were the attacks anything other than unorganized, uncommon, and small-scale, how could such defences possibly enjoy success?

As historian Szyja Bronsztejn points out, not all of the conflicts and quarrels between Jews and non-Jews were as a result of national differences or anti-Semitic motives.[384] In particular, it would be unfair to characterize all, or even most, altercations between Polish and Jewish school boys as anti-Semitic assaults.

> '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.' … 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.'[385]

> I looked up and saw Tadek Kadril, one of the few Christian friends I had made. In our early years we had thrown rocks at each other, a custom often indulged in by the Jewish and Christian boys of Radom. But later, when we grew older and entered school, we became good friends.[386]

The following accounts make it clear that ordinary Poles were not the feared, anti-Semitic ruffians that they are often portrayed to be and that many of the incidents were merely the kind of bullying that is commonplace among children everywhere. Jews youngsters could also initiate such incidents and could hold their own, and suffered no consequences on that account.

> Two or three meters separated Grandmother's yard from that of Mr. Zychlinski. Close to the fence grew a big nut tree whose large branches overhung Grandmother's yard. My brother Leon and his friends threw stones into the branches trying to knock down the nuts, then the children picked up the nuts from both sides of the fence. One day a stone fell on Mr. Zychlinski's son's head, injuring him. When Mr. Zychlinski complained to my father, Father shook it off saying, "Why does your son walk where stones are being thrown?" Citizen Lajbus Fryde announced, "Your son is fighting with *shkootzim*!" Father's answer was, "Do you want the *shkootzim* to beat up my son?"[387]

> I was also fiercely protective of my sister. She knew that in spite of my size, I could be tough and dauntless. Once when I overheard a bully at school taunt Gita with cries of "Christ killer," I went after the boy and knocked him down. After I threw the first punch, the boy on the ground cried, "Stop! I take it back!"

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[384] Szyja Bronsztejn, "Polish-Jewish Relations as Reflected in Memoirs of the Interwar Period," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 8 (1994): 84.

[385] Cited in Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, "*Shtetl* Communities: Another Image," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 8 (1994): 101.

[386] Tuviah Friedman, *Nazi Hunter* (Haifa: Institute for the Documentation of Nazi War Crimes, 1961), 81.

[387] Alexander Szurek, *The Shattered Dream* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 1989), 31.

> Reluctantly, I backed off, warning him that I would meet any further comments of that nature with a far stronger response.[388]

> Sometimes when my friends and I swam in the river we were attacked by gentile boys who threw stones and called us "dirty Jews." We always fought back and after we had beaten them, they would run off to the surrounding fields.[389]

This was also reminiscent of the state of affairs prior to World War II. The first prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, born in 1886, recalled his childhood among non-Jewish children in Płońsk, a small town northwest of Warsaw, as follows: "Somebody would perhaps throw a stone, or start an argument, and very often it was the Jews who started first. We used to get the upper hand."[390] In his memoir, he elaborates on Polish-Jewish relations in his hometown and on interaction between rival gangs.

> I personally never suffered anti-Semitic persecution. Plonsk [Płońsk] was remarkably free of it, or at least the Jews felt well protected in the cocoon of their community life. Nevertheless, and I think this very significant, it was Plonsk that sent the highest proportion of Jews to Eretz Israel from any town in Poland of comparable size. We emigrated not for negative reasons of escape but for the positive purpose of rebuilding a homeland, a place where we wouldn't be perpetual strangers and that through our toil would become irrevocably our own. …
>
> The number of Jews and Poles in the city were roughly equal, about five thousand each. The Jews, however, formed a compact, centralized group occupying the innermost districts while the Poles were more scattered, living in outlying areas and shading off into the peasantry. Consequently, when a gang of Jewish boys met a Polish gang the latter would almost inevitably represent a single suburb and thus be poorer in fighting potential than the Jews who even if their numbers were initially fewer could quickly call on reinforcements from the entire quarter. Far from being afraid of them, they were rather afraid of us. In general, however, relations were amicable, though distant.[391]

For Ben-Gurion, Zionism was thus not an escape from persecution or perceived perpetual gentile unfairness to Jews: It was an affirmative end in itself. In common with most Jews living on foreign-ruled Polish soil, his parents gave their loyalties according to expediency. Ben-Gurion recounts that, "I was born and brought up in a Zionist home and soaked up the Hebrew language and a love of Zion as an infant. … I remember that as a boy I wanted nothing of Polish nationalism. I thought it irrelevant to Jewish freedom; and at elementary school in Plonsk I decided to learn Russian and not Polish. One could choose either."[392]

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[388] Stillman, *A Match Made in Hell,* 7.

[389] Kutz, *If, By Miracle,* 11.

[390] Dan Kurzman, *Ben-Gurion: Prophet of Fire* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 50.

[391] David Ben-Gurion and Thomas R. Bransten, ed., *Memoirs: David Ben-Gurion* (New York: World Publishing, 1970), 36–37.

[392] David Ben Gurion and Moshe Pearlman, *Ben Gurion Looks Back in Talks with Moshe Pearlman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), 19.

Ben-Gurion did not hail from a Litvak family. His roots were in ethnic Polish territories. Yet, ironically, he had no problem with Russian even though tsarist Russia was, in his words, "irrelevant to Jewish freedom."

A Jew from Lachowicze, near Pińsk, recalled how, in the first decade of the 1900's, local Jews would respond with physical violence to Belorussian peasants' "anti-Semitic"—mostly verbal—outbursts, and how Jewish revolutionaries would stir up the peasants to vandalize state property. More frequently, however, Jewish political agitators were at each others' throats and even had to escape *communal* violence by fleeing to America.

> Only once a year, at *Simchas Torah* time [Festival of the "Rejoicing in the Law"], when the non-Jewish ruffians from the surrounding villages began to assemble for [military] conscription and found the "new recruits" from other nearby districts in Reb Itshe Cohen's guest-house, did a minor scandal break out from time to time, when the sorry, drunken louts became unruly and began to show some wild anti-Semitism. But they were soon silenced with the help of local Jewish fellows—butchers, carters, grooms, with Chaim-Azri'el at their head. Some used to drive straight into the frenzied roughs and mete out murderous blows with whatever came to hand.
>
> It seems that no prominent Jew lives on Death Road, except for Reb Shachne Buchbinder who deals, as it happens, in dry bones and old rags. … Yet how excited all the beggars become when a fire breaks out in the *shtetl* or the peasants get drunk and rough up the Jews a bit hard. Then, people in Death Road let themselves go wild with axes, mattocks, pokers—and show that they are (very much alive and) very far from death!
>
> The [Police] Commissioner also lives here with his twelve agents who were specially sent (to Lechovich [Lachowicze]) from the high authorities of the Empire. They have to guard against any shop being broken into again, God forbid, after the "Monopol" [state liquor store] was once burglarized on a Sunday market day with the unexpected arrival of peasants who were incited by the *shtetl's* Jewish revolutionaries, with Feivele Rivkin and the red-headed barber, Avromele, at their head.
>
> And there is Sander *der Ainbinder* [the Bookbinder's] house. With him worked Yankele Shmuel, the Weiner's lad. He is a leader of the local Bund Party [a socialist, Yiddishist, anti-Zionist organization]. An energetic fellow. After spending a short time in the city of Minsk and being very taken there with revolutionary fervour, he came back to the *shtetl* and got straight down to work—– organizing the Bund among the locals. By and large, he agitated among the common Jews who had very little comprehension of the "fine print" in the revolutionary booklets but understood very well how to take shots at the "*bourgeois*" kids—the "little Zionists". Yankele had his mouth screwed on all right. He railed thunder and lighting [literally "fire and water"] and especially [harangued] about the "class war", until one of his party friends [was killed in a brawl.]
>
> In the course of a violent brawl with his rival, Shmuel-Shaiye Busel, from the Socialist Zionists' Party, Yankele the "trouble-maker" came to the aid of his comrade, Gedalyo the *Melamed's* son. (The fight broke out when someone had wanted to eject Rochel Kapel, a party comrade of Shmuel-Shaiye Busel, who sold pastry.) Then (Gedalyo the *Melamed's* son) drove a dagger into Shmuel-Shaiye's side, causing the death of his stabbed "enemy". The incident had a depressing effect on the entire *shtetl.* In great grief, the

> whole *shtetl* accompanied the victim on his last journey and the murderer [Gedalyo the *Melamed's* son] swiftly left town in great trepidation. Also his *"rebbe"* [spiritual mentor], Yankele, did not stay around long and, since it only took one good blast of cold air [to blow him away], he fled to far-off America.[393]

The foregoing and following examples correct the distortions of Celia Heller's book, *On the Edge of Destruction*, where she misrepresented Poland's Jews as living in constant fear of Polish street violence, and of being largely defenceless against it when it did occur. A Pole from Krasnystaw recalled that when he and his friends were playing ball and it happened to land in the courtyard of a Jew, the Jew punctured the ball and shouted at the Polish boys.[394] Norman Salsitz's depiction of his Jewish boyhood in Kolbuszowa, a small town in southern Poland, is equally instructive. As he notes, "We were no community of angels; no one group had a monopoly on mischief."[395] Less-than-innocent pranks and hooligan antics on the part of Jewish youth were frequent occurrences. Their behaviour does not demonstrate a fear of Poles, and had these acts been perpetrated by Polish youth they would doubtless be labeled as "anti-Semitic." Jews engaged in similar conduct toward fellow Jews. A Jew from Naliboki recalls how he and a friend glued the rabbi's beard to the desk in the cheder when he fell asleep.[396] Other examples include:

> Some of the things we did I certainly can't account for, but the fact remains that they were tolerated, sometimes even encouraged. A week before the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur came Selichot, an entire night given over to prayer before the arrival of these days of awe. What we children did on this night, however, was something quite different: we stole fruit off the trees and out of the orchards of the townspeople and peasants. Why we did it no one seemed to know. The Poles, of course, knew of this practice and tried their best to protect their property. Dogs were set upon us, and if Poles caught up with us we could expect a beating. But year after year it was the same all over again. Instead of actually taking fruit, too often we just managed to break off the tree limbs and ruin what was on them. …
>
> Boys were boys and some manner of mischief was to be expected. Most of it was relatively harmless. An opportunity developed each time a wagon driver sped through town. There was one peasant in particular, the proud owner of a pair of uncastrated horses … who was our favourite target. On those occasions when he sped by us we'd go running after him, loudly shouting "Mister! Mister!" Finally catching his attention, we caused him to rein in his horses, assuming that we had something important to tell him. After great effort he finally came to a stop and turned to us for our vital information. "We wanted to let you know," we said, "that your wheels are turning." We laughed heartily, thinking how great a joke it was. Rarely was the peasant amused.

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[393] Avrom Lev, "A Walk Through My Devastated Shtetl," in J. Rubin, ed., *Lachowicze: Sefer Zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Residents of Lachowicze, 1948–1949, 1965), 259–310, translated as *Yizkor Book of Lechowitz/ Memorial Book of Lachowicze,* Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/lyakhovichi/Lyakhovichi.html>.

[394] Piotr Kardela, "Krasnostawcy Żydzi," *Przegląd Polski* (New York), June 16, 2000.

[395] Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland,* 245.

[396] Testimony of George (Boris Rubin), Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Interview code 5800.

> In the summer peasants also stood [in the town market area] selling wild strawberries, blackberries, and raspberries that they brought along in heavy, thick baskets. … Some berries never were sold but instead were filched by youthful raiders, myself included. My friends and I missed few chances to sneak up to the baskets and run off with a handful of berries. Why did we do it? The berries we enjoyed, of course, but there can be no denying the thrill that stealing the berries brought us, especially when peasants gave chase for a short distance in a vain effort to retrieve what was rightfully theirs. … Snatching berries didn't bother me as much as the large number we crushed when we made our grab.[397]

Young Polish pranksters and ruffians, and sometimes harmless Poles minding their own business or even Jews thought to be Christians, could also expect rough treatment from Jews. Polish children on their way to school in Wielkie Oczy encountered a group of Jews who were upset over a slogan that had been painted on the fence of a Jewish baker: "Jews to Palestine." When one of the children read it aloud the Jews quickly encircled and started to beat the terrified Polish children.[398] A Jewish boy who lived in Warsaw's Jewish district recalled, "I remember once I was going home from school and on Komitetowa Street. I got beaten up by a bunch of some Jewish boys, they thought I was a goy. I came back home all in tears."[399] In Lwów, a small group of Polish high school students was ganged up on and assaulted by a much larger group of Jewish youth.[400] When a group of Polish ruffians tried to force some Jewish teenage boys off a park bench in Płock, a group of young Jewish men from the Maccabee Sports Club were alerted. "Carrying wooden clubs (designed for exercising), they came over to the park and confronted the gang. The Maccabees beat up these thugs, some of whom were taken to the hospital and the rest to court."[401]

When a group of young men drafted into the army organized a "bachelor party" in Tomaszów Lubleski, and got drunk and started beating up Jews, "We … didn't take to kindly to it, so we organized … defense. And when they started beating up Jews, … they got their portion, and they stopped it."[402] Another account mentions the exploits of Eliakim, a brawny Jew from Wołkowysk whose occupation was hauling wood:

> the gentile draftees used to cheer themselves with a "little" vodka, and from time to time, they would come into town and fall upon the stalls of the Jewish merchants in the marketplace, and at times like these Eliakim

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[397] Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland,* 64–65, 70–71, 126.

[398] Mieczysław Dobrzański, *Gehenna Polaków na Rzeszowszczyźnie w latach 1939–1948* (Wrocław: Nortom, 2002), 93.

[399] Testimony of Izaak Wacek Kornblum, 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://centropa.org/biography/izaak-wacek-kornblum>.

[400] Zdzisław Zakrzewski, "Na Politechnice Lwowskiej," *Glaukopis: Pismo społeczno-historyczne,* no. 5–6 (2006): 112–13.

[401] Neuman-Nowicki, *Struggle for Life During the Nazi Occupation of Poland,* 6–7.

[402] Interview with Miles Lerman, July 17, 2001, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

> would show them the brawn of his arm, and he would inspire the Jews with his display of courage, returning the fight to its perpetrators, and these unruly [drunken soldiers] would be scattered all over.[403]

When, in Siedlce in 1928, a Polish famer apprehended a Jewish youth who stole some lilacs from his cart on the way to the market, a large throng of Jews attacked the farmer in order to free the thief. When three Polish policemen intervened, they were pummelled with stones. Some other Poles were also assaulted in the disturbance which, in this case, was caused by the Jews.[404]

Throughout Europe, in the interwar period sporting events often became the scene of ethnic rivalry.[405] (They remain so today in countries like Scotland, England and Italy.[406]) When "Betar" won the 1938 regional soccer championship against "Junak," the Polish team in Drohobycz, according to a Jewish source:

> The spectators pulled out knives after the match. There were wounded on both sides because we had our own scum too. Such as Fischel, who was built like the wrestler Zbyszko Cyganiewicz and loved to beat anti-Semites.[407]

Matches involving only Jewish teams sometimes also degenerated into raucous, uncivil events.[408]

Ethnic rivalries did not only impact Poles and Jews, but also other national groups. Kopel Koplanitzky recalls the following incident that occurred in Łachwa, Polesia:

> In the summer of 1938 … It was a Sunday … Suddenly, there was an explosive sound of shattering glass. Immediately after that, we heard a voice call out in the street: 'Jews to Palestine.' Moshe looked out the

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[403] Yerachmiel Moorstein, ed., *Zelva Memorial Book* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 1992), 101.

[404] Edward Kopówka, *Żydzi w Siedlcach 1850–1945* (Siedlce: Stowarzyszenie Tutajteraz, 2009), 93.

[405] Sports was often one more realm in which anti-Jewish sentiment found visceral expression. Non-Jewish teams at times refused to play against Jewish sports teams; when Jewish sports teams played in general arenas, players were called "Jewish pigs" and other such names, and shouts of "Death to the Jews" were commonplace. Jews sometimes responded in kind, and Jewish fans joined in the fighting at times. See Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni, eds., *Emancipation through Muscle: Jews and Sports in Europe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

[406] Rivalry between the Rangers and Celtic football clubs in Glasgow (the former being a bastion of hardcore anti-Catholic and anti-Irish bigotry, the latter considered a Catholic team) led to eight deaths and hundreds of assaults between 1996 and 2003 alone. See Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization* (New York: HarperCoollins, 2004), 36–37. In Busto Arsizio, AC Milan players walked off the field on January 3, 2013, because of racist chants directed at several Milan Black players. In England, there have been several arrests among fans for racist outbursts at Premier League matches, and Liverpool striker Luis Suarez and Chelsea captain John Terry served bans for racially abusing opponents. In October 2012, Serbian fans directed monkey chants at Black England players in a European under-21 match that ended in a brawl between players and coaches from both teams. In December 2012, fans of Russian champion Zenit St. Petersburg issued a petition calling for non-white and gay players to be excluded from the team. See "AC Milan Exhibition Ends After Racist Chants," The Associated Press, *The Telegraph,* January 3, 2013.

[407] Account of Dr. Leopold Lustig in Henryk Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories: True Tales from the Holocaust and Life After* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 16.

[408] Aleksandra Namysło, "Kim jestem—Polakiem, Niemcem, Żydem? Stosunki żydowsko-żydowskie na dawnym Górnym Śląsku," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 11 (November 2010): 55.

window and saw one of Lahwah's Pravoslav [Orthodox] residents, drunk as a skunk, breaking windows of Jewish homes and spewing hatred …

Moshe was brave. He ran to the cabinet, grabbed a two-kilogram weight and, half naked, went into the street. He smashed the head of the Gentile, whose name was Goza, with the weight. Goza's friends dragged him home, drenched in blood. This was an unusual incident, but it cooled our relations with the local Byelorussian population.[409]

Tuvia Bielski, a volatile man who was prone to violence, recalls his experiences in his village of Stankiewicze near Wsielub and in the army:

"We grew up among the [Belorussian] peasants, we knew them. We knew how to fight. …" [In a confrontation with a neighbour in a dispute over some land:] "When he came closer I reached for my scythe and with it hit his. He lost his balance, landing on his back. When he was on the ground, I began to hit him with my hands. Four farmhands came to look. They stood there amused, laughing at the man's misfortune.

"That day I gave him such a beating that we did not see him for two weeks."

When a Polish soldier whom Tuvia suspected of being slightly retarded called him a dirty Jew, he grabbed the man by the collar and ordered him to stop. The Pole continued … and Tuvia reached for a knife. He hit the man over the face with the handle of the knife and let him go only after the soldier, whose face was covered with blood, became silent.

Several soldiers witnessed the scene. … This incident was followed by several hearings before different superior officers. Each time Tuvia defended himself saying that as a Polish citizen he could not tolerate anti-Semitic abuse. … the case was dismissed.[410]

[Retold, this story goes as follows:] When he asked a cook if he could have a schmeer of chicken fat for his bread, the man responded: "Get out of here, you scabby Jew." Without a moment's thought, Tuvia grabbed the man with his right hand and pummeled him with his left. He shoved him against a table and grabbed a large knife—which, despite his anger, he refrained from using. Instead, he picked up a chair and smashed it across the cook's face. …

The incident was subject to a thorough investigation. Tuvia described [with exaggeration] his pride in serving in the army and defending his country. The cook's insult was directed not only at him, he said deftly, but at the Polish Army itself. "I am prepared to protect the honor of my uniform." No action was taken.[411]

Ben Shedletzky from a small near Warsaw recalled a similar experience:

When a fellow Polish soldier said, "Jew, clean my rifle," Shedletzky hit him with his own rifle, breaking his collar bone and sending him to hospital for 12 days.

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[409] Kolpanitzky, *Sentenced to Life,* 24.

[410] Nechama Tec, *Defiance: The Bielski Partisans* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 8–9.

[411] Peter Duffy, *The Bielski Brothers: The True Story of Three Men Who Defied the Nazis, Saved 1,200 Jews, and Built a Village in the Forest* (New York: HaperCollins, 2003), 15–16.

"I didn't know a Jew could hit that hard," the soldier later told a military hearing which cleared Shedletzky of charges.

The Polish soldier became Shedletzky's best friend and later helped save his life.[412]

Yosel Epelbaum recalls the following confrontation with a tax collector in the family meat store in Biała Podlaska:

> Most of all we dreaded the tax collector. … Failure to pay [taxes] resulted in the confiscation of your entire stock of goods. A taxman once came into our store and brazenly hauled off a huge slab of beef. This triggered an explosion of rage in Simcha [Yosel's brother], who walked up behind him, hit him on the side of the head with the brass knuckles he often carried, and knocked him out cold. That particular tax collector never bothered us again, and Simcha was never identified as the one who assaulted him.[413]

Some other examples:

> In Jaroslaw [Jarosław] where his unit was stationed, he [Zygmunt Krygier] was attacked by some hooligans, who wanted to beat him up. … They called him a Jew and he says, 'Kiss his ass before another one comes.' They chased him to some alley … he was strong and he really hurt those hooligans. There were three of them and he was put on trial for inflicting serious injury. … He [Father] hired an attorney, one of the most famous ones, and he got him out of this mess.[414]

> The well-known Polish hooligan of the shtetl [in Szczebrzeszyn], Szustak, appears, in the company of the Polish corporal, and both attempt to get into exchanging blows with the Jewish young people.
>
> Moshke Millstein is standing at Shlomo's booth on the sidewalk. The two big shots get close to him. He remains standing fearlessly. …
>
> The corporal is angered by the 'Chutzpah of the *Zyd [Żyd]'* and begins to hit. Moshke immediately gives each of them a blow from the right and the left, as it needs to be … a group of 'the guys' detain Szustak, preventing him from fleeing, and he is given his just deserts … Szustak is not seen in the street for a while.[415]

A boy was sent to a store in Ryglice on Saturday to purchase tobacco for his father. The Jewish proprietor was outraged, grabbed the boy by the neck, gave him a swift kick and told him to go. Apparently, such a violent reaction did not disturb his Sabbath.[416] Such accounts should not be taken for granted. When a 15-year-old Korean-Canadian high school student retaliated and punched a white student in the nose, after the

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[412] Ben Rose, "Discarded rifle kept family alive during war," *The Canadian Jewish News,* August 24, 1995. One wonders if a Black American could ever expect to see such leniency in the military in interwar America.

[413] Pell and Rosenbaum, *Taking Risks,* 30–31. One wonders if a Black American could ever expect to see such leniency from an official in interwar America.

[414] Testimony of Salomea Germot, 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/salomea-gemrot>.

[415] Yankl Lapp, "Heroism (Episodes)," in Shuval, *The Szczebrzeszyn Memorial Book,* 29.

[416] Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu,* vol. 1, 225.

latter called him "a fucking Chinese," refused to apologize when confronted, and first punched the Korean-Canadian in the mouth, the only one charged by the police was the Korean student, who was also suspended from school. Other students also hurled racial slurs at the Korean student. The rural area in question, a mostly white community north of Toronto, is known for a spate of incidents—given the name "nipper tipping" by locals—where Asian fishermen were assaulted and harassed.[417]

Jews were quite capable of picking fights and defending themselves when confronted, as the following accounts from Kosów Lacki and Częstochowa, respectively, demonstrate:

> The driver who took me to the railroad station the day I left was part of a group of Jewish toughs in our little town who didn't know fear. They loved a fight with *goyim* and sometimes even among themselves. (Their filthy language alone could kill.) These drivers prided themselves on their muscles, rudeness and standing up to anybody.[418]

> They [Endeks] attacked the Jews, and they didn't let themselves. … When a Jewish team played a non-Jewish team, a radical team, they always came a fight broke out. So the Jews always won the fight. Because they have tough guys, good boxers, good fighters, they always could, they beat up any attack.[419]

This was part of a long history of Jews standing up to Poles who engaged in harmful activities that often were not motivated by anti-Semitism. The punishment, if any, meted out for physical violence against Poles was often lax.

> Notwithstanding the arbitrary and insulting treatment they often received, the Jews hardly conducted themselves like "meek lambs." [Historian Emanuel] Ringelblum described many earthy, tough characters who gave back as good as they got. In one case a drunken peasant, Kaspar Szarek, walked into a Jewish tavern in the small village of Szczanko and wrecked the place. Even worse, he pulled the precious cholent, a traditional Sabbath-day dish, out of the oven and hurled it to the floor. The Jewish tavern keeper, quite upset, beat the peasant to death. Luckily for the Jew, his offer to make monetary restitution to the peasant's family spared him legal punishment from a Polish court. In another case, a tough Jewish woman by the name of Szlomowa, who lived in Ujazdów, a village that later became part of Warsaw, suspected that one Kasper Mazurkiewicz had stolen her black cow. She hired a gang of Jewish toughs to bring Mazurkiewicz to her house, where they tied him to a wheel, beat him, and paraded him around the village. The Polish court, Reingelblum noted, did not impose a particularly harsh punishment: Szlomowa got two weeks imprisonment.[420]

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[417] Joe Friesen, "Black Belt Teen Strikes Back at Bully, and Rallies Community Around Racism," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), April 30, 2009; Joe Friesen, "Hate-crime Investigator Digs Deeper Into bullying Brawl," *The Globe and Mail,* May 1, 2009.

[418] Account of Rivka Barlev in *Kosow Lacki,* 14.

[419] Account of Leo Scher, Loiusiana Holocaust Survivors, The Southern Institute for Education and Research, posted at <http://www.tulane.edu/~so-inst/scher.html>.

[420] Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2018), 73–74.

Yet despite all these tensions, according to official Polish sources, some 8,400 Jews who had emigrated from Poland to Palestine chose to return to Poland in 1926–1938.[421] Quite a few Jews who left for America also returned. In the small town of Kolbuszowa, there were ten such Jewish families—a clear indication that many Jews did not believe that life was unbearable for them in interwar Poland.[422]

It should be noted that when there were signs of impending violence in towns, local authorities and police generally took steps to prevent it.[423] When violence erupted the police contained it, often resorting to shooting at the demonstrators, and the culprits were prosecuted and punished.[424] On a number of occasions suspected Polish instigators and participants were mistreated by the police and even killed.[425] When brawls broke out between Poles and Jews at universities, initiated for the most part by Polish

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[421] *Mały rocznik statystyczny 1939* (Warsaw: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1939), 52. Some of the returnees (*Yordim*) alleged that Jews in Palestine treat the Jewish arrivals as bad as Poles treat Jews in Poland. See Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland,* 260. For an example of a prosperous businessman returning to Poland see Edelstein, *Tazdzikim in Sodom (Righteous Gentiles),* 26–27.

[422] Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland,* 220. For an example of a Jewish girl born to Polish Jews in New Jersey who returned to Tarnów, Poland with her family, see "Spett family," in Emily Taitz, ed., *Holocaust Survivors: Biographical Dictionary* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2007), vol. 2, 476.

[423] See, for example, Yehoshya Zilber, "The Revisionist Part," in M. Bakalczuk-Felin, ed., *Commemoration Book Chelm,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/chelm/chelm.html>; translation of *Yisker-bukh Chelm* (Johannesburg: Former Residents of Chelm, 1954), 213–14 (the local Polish authorities in Chełm alerted the police commander, who sent out patrols to ensure that rumoured violence did not erupt).

[424] Many examples of police interventions, arrests, and criminal trials in Lwów are noted in Grzegorz Mazur, *Życie polityczne polskiego Lwowa 1918–1939* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2007), 219–74. For examples of interventions by the Polish authorities in the Wilno, Lublin and Łódź areas see, respectively, Januszewska-Jurkiewicz, *Stosunki narodowościowe na Wileńszczyźnie w latach 1920–1939,* 559, and Zbigniew Zaporowski, "Miaszteczko i sztetl: Polacy i Żydzi w województwie lubelskim w przededniu II wojny światowej," and Michał Trębacz, "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w województwie łódzkim (1938–1939)," in Sitarek, Trębacz, and Wiatr, *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji,* 25–26, 45–46. See also the following: "Glowno", in *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin,* vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), 81–84, translated as *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol1_00081.html> (six instigators of riots were put on trial and jailed for 4 to 8 months); "Opatow", in *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin,* vol. 7 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), 58–64, translated as *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol7_00058.html> (rioters who attacked stores and stalls of Jews in Opatów were arrested, brought to trial, and sentenced); "Radzyn," in *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin,* vol. 7, 543–47, translated as *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol7_00543.html>; "Sosnowiec," in *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin,* vol. 7, 327–38, translated as *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol7_00327.html>. Notwithstanding this overwhelming evidence, some Jewish historians claim the Polish authorities were complicit in these disturbances and that the administration largely remained inactive. See, for example, Prusin, *The Lands Between,* 118–19.

[425] Polish rioters were shot by the police in Odrzywół on November 20, 1935, when 12 Poles were killed and some 20 were wounded, and in Radziłów on March 23, 1933, when two Poles were killed and two died of their wounds in the hospital. For a description of the police pacification in Wyszyn near Chodzież, see Rafał Sierchuła and Piotr Szewczyński, "Sprawa zabójstwa Wawrzyńca Sielskiego w Wyszynie: Policyjna pacyfikacja Stronnictwa Narodowego w powiecie konińskim w lutym 1936 r. w świetle dokumentów prokratury," *Glaukopis* (Warsaw), vol. 29 (2013): 284–318.

nationalist students, the school authorities did not hesitate to take disciplinary action against all those involved in such activities.[426]

Conditions in interwar Poland can be contrasted with how Israeli authorities deal with violence by Jews against Palestinians, especially in the West Bank, where Israel has undertaken perhaps the largest (per

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[426] See, for example, Eliasz Bialski, *Patrząc prosto w oczy* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2002), 24. Bialski recalls the friendly attitude of his professors at the Main School of Agriculture (Główna Szkoła Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego) in Warsaw. Ibid., 41. The constant brawls that disrupted lectures resulted in universities instituting separate seating for Poles and Jews over the opposition of some of the professors. Bronisława Witz-Margulies, a Jewish student at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów, recalled the opposition on the part of her Polish professors, all of whom she held in high esteem, to the so-called ghetto benches (separate seating for Jews, introduced at some universities in 1937). See Bronisława Witz-Margulies, "Jan Kazimierz University 1936–1939: A Memoir," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 14 (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001): 223–36.

According to Jewish sources, Jewish students comprised 24.6 percent of the entire Polish university population in the 1921–22 academic year, and 20 percent in 1928–29. In 1932–33 their number fell to 18.7 percent, and in 1935–36, to 13.3 percent. By 1936–37 they comprised 11.8 percent of all students, and in 1937–38 only 10 percent (which was slightly higher than their overall share of the country's population). These figures do not include the many Poles of Jewish origin among the intelligentsia who had converted to Catholicism. See Raphael Mahler, "Jews in Public Service and the Liberal Professions in Poland, 1918–39," *Jewish Social Studies,* vol. 6, no. 4 (October 1944), 341. According to official Polish sources, in 1934–35 Jews accounted for 18 percent of all high school students, 16.2 percent of vocational school students, and 14.8 percent of higher school (university, etc.) students. Jews comprised 23.7 percent of students enrolled at the University of Warsaw, 25.8 percent at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, 29.7 percent at the Stefan Batory University in Wilno, and 31.8 percent at the John Casimir University in Lwów. See *Mały rocznik statystyczny 1937* (Warsaw: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1937), 312. According to a more detailed count of post-secondary institutions. there were 34,266 students enroled in the 1921/22 academic year, and 48,018 in 1937/1938. In 1921/1922, there were 8426 Jewish students, i.e., 24,6% of the total enrolment. Two years later, their numbers peaked at 9,579 osób. In 1925/26, there were 7,768 Jewish students; in 1926/27, 8198; in 1927/28, 8,258; in 1930/31, 8,923 osoby. From 1934/1935, their numbers diminished as follows: 6,398 in 1934/35; 6,199 in 1935/1936; 5674 in 1936/37; 4790 in 1937/38. Their share of the total enrolment dropped to 12.3% in 1937/38.

Even with the admission restrictions imposed in the mid–1930's, which gradually brought their numbers more in line with their share of the population, Jews continued to be overrepresented at Polish universities. For example, at the Stefan Batory University in Wilno, in the 1938–39 academic year, 417 of the 3,110 students enrolled were Jewish, or about 13½ percent of the student body (other minorities accounted for 432 students, or almost 14 percent), whereas in 1926–27 Jews constituted 25.6% of the student population, and in 1928–29 30.4%, with a heavy concentration in medicine and law. (See Piotr Łossowski, ed., *Likwidacja Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego przez władze litewskie w grudniu 1939 roku* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Interlibro, 1991), 74; Januszewska-Jurkiewicz, *Stosunki narodowościowe na Wileńszczyźnie w latach 1920–1939,* 553–54. For detailed statistics for the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, see Mariusz Kulczykowski, *Żydzi–studenci Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej (1919–1939)* (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2004). It should also be noted that enrolment levels at Polish universities were very low by European and North American standards, e.g., the university in Wilno, the only university in northeastern Poland, had only 3,110 students in the 1938–39 academic year. Jewish nationalists were already complaining about alleged discriminatory admission practices at that university when the proportion of Jews reached 30% of the student body in the 1920's. It is apparent, therefore, that no amount of accommodations would have pleased Jewish nationalists, nor, given the relatively small student cohort, could Polish universities have accommodated large numbers of Jews. The same held true for state-run high schools. Of the 21,915 graduates in the 1936–1937 school year, 4,132 were Jews. This number represented almost 19% of all high school graduates, which is double the Jewish proportion of the overall population. See Marek Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Żydzi w zaborze sowieckim: Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na ziemiach północno-wschodnich II RP pod okupacją sowiecką (1939–1941)* (Warsaw: Fronda, 2001), 17. The marked overrepresentation of Jews and underrepresentation of Poles can also be construed in terms of systemic discrimination theories. In recent years, proportional representation of "visible minorities" in institutions of higher learning and the professions has been adopted as a fair method of "dividing the pie" in Western democracies. For example, the Law Society of Ontario's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiative calls for "increase[d] representation of racialized licensees in the professions, in proportion to the representation in the Ontario population**,** in all legal workplaces and at all levels of seniority." (Internet: <https://lso.ca/about-lso/initiatives/edi/frequently-asked-questions#what-is-the-goal-of-this-initiative--6>.) The underpinning for this objective is that these institutions and professions should reflect the actual make-up of the population, and that overrepresentation of "non-racialized" people (i.e., whites) in inherently a bad thing. However, the discussion of this topic was almost universally hostile towards Poland and, barring a few exceptions, showed little understanding of social conditions.

British intellectual Rafael F. Scharf, who attended the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, writes: "It is true that there was the so-called *numerus clausus* in the Faculty of Medicine, meaning that only a restricted number of Jewish

capita) colonization of conquered territory in history. Since seizing the West Bank and east Jerusalem in the 1967 war, Israel has built a far-flung network of settlements that house nearly 700,000 Jewish settlers in 2020. This massive colonization effort shows no sign of abatement.[427] According to a June 2017 *Haaretz* editorial,

> The impotence of the State of Israel in the face of the Jewish lawbreakers in the territories has been revealed once again. An investigation by Haaretz found that since April [2017] at least nine incidents were documented in which settlers threw stones, and harmed Palestinians, soldiers, and left-wing activists in other ways. Although the incidents were documented or took place in the presence of soldiers, very few suspects were detained, and even those who were detained were quickly released. Needless to say, none of the lawbreakers was prosecuted (Yotam Berger, Haaretz, June 25).
>
> The fact that the Israel Defense Forces and the police turn a blind eye to the crimes of settlers is nothing new. It's as old as the occupation. Many Palestinians have for years refrained from filing complaints with the police because the outcome is a foregone conclusion. The IDF for its part boasts of the fact that it sends in forces to separate the sides during clashes between settlers and Palestinians, but apparently this intervention, even when it takes place, does not result in prevention or deterrence, and in some cases it is characterized by indifference and even contempt for the task the soldiers were summoned to carry out.
>
> Even more serious, there is documentation of cases in which soldiers are witnesses to violent incidents and do nothing to prevent the attacks, or at least to try to separate the two sides. This happens despite their having the authority to detain the attackers.
>
> Such a disgraceful attitude provides backing for the failures of the police in the territories. … In other words, the job of the police is to find, question and prosecute the suspects. But repeatedly it turns out that the police quickly close hundreds of files with unreasonable explanations of "lack of public interest" or "lack of evidence." At least in some of the cases it's clear the police do so without any acceptable explanation.
>
> There is no lack of evidence of the anti-Palestinian activities of Jewish lawbreakers who are residents of the settlements. These include videos, still photos and testimony of Palestinians, investigators from human rights organizations, and IDF soldiers who were present at the scene of the incident. But despite all that, the police fail. They don't prevent crimes, don't find suspects, and certainly don't question and prosecute them.[428]

This state of affairs not only persists, but is getting worse.

> *November 10, 2021*: Twenty Israeli settlers, armed with guns and clubs, their faces masked, descend upon the hamlet of Halat al-Dab' in the South Hebron hills. They attack the Palestinians who live there, smash windows, cars, and whatever else they find. Six Palestinians are wounded, at least one from gunshots. There are Israeli soldiers nearby who make no attempt to interfere and who leave the area while the pogrom is going on. I use the word deliberately. What happened that day in Halat al-Dab' is not different in kind from

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[427] Joseph Kraus, "Israel Paves Way For Settlements' Growth With Highways, Tunnels and Overpasses," *The Globe and Mail,* December 8, 2020.

[428] "Protecting Violent Settlers," *Haaretz,* June 26, 2017.

the pogrom in Nikolayev, in Ukraine, in the early years of the twentieth century, when my grandmother's brother was killed by Cossacks.

September 28, 2021, Simchat Torah, the end of the Sukkot holiday: Dozens of masked settlers storm the tiny Palestinian encampment of Mufagara, also in the South Hebron hills, wreaking havoc. Basil al-Adraa, an activist from the nearby village of at-Tuwani, reported that the settlers went from house to house, and broke windows, smashed cars with knives and hammers. A large stone they threw hit a 3-year-old boy, Mohammed, in the head, who is now in the hospital. The soldiers supported them with tear gas. The residents fled. I can't forget how the villagers left their houses, terrified, the children screaming, the women crying, while the settlers entered their living rooms, like they were possessed with violence and wrath.

September 17, 2021: A convoy of activists from the Israeli-Palestinian NGO Combatants for Peace and other organizations is bringing a water tanker to a village near at-Tuwani, which has no access to running water. The army violently attacks the convoy with tear gas and stun grenades. Six activists and a journalist are wounded; one of the activists is thrown to the rocky ground by the senior officer in command and has to undergo surgery on his eye. Seven Palestinians are arrested.

No one should think that these events—a random selection—are aberrations or exceptions to the rule. They are now the norm in the occupied Palestinian territories. Settler violence, backed up by Israeli soldiers, happens every day. Government ministers and high-ranking officers, including the army chief of staff, Lieutenant General Aviv Kochavi, make bland statements condemning the violence but do nothing to stop it. Some of them actively support it. The goal, by no means a secret, is to expel Palestinians from their homes and lands and, eventually, to annex as much of the West Bank as possible to Israel.

…

Without the compliance of the vast majority of Israelis, state-sponsored terror on the West Bank could not continue to run wild.[429]

CNN published a scathing report about what has been labeled a pogrom, when Israeli settlers besieged and set fire to the Palestinian town of Huwara, in the occupied West Bank, on February 26, 2023, leaving at least one Palestinian man dead and hundreds of others inhured. Some Israeli Knesset members incited the violence and the Israeli army (Israel Defence Forces) stood by idly while the violence unfolded. In the aftermath, Israel's finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, said that "Huwara needs to be erased." According to the report, "As of mid-May this year, the United Nations has reported 421 settler-related incidents in the occupied territory, leading to the deaths of eight Palestinians—nearly triple last year—as well as injuring hundreds and causing property damage. In the same period, Israeli forces have killed more than 100 Palestinians in the West Bank."[430] Israeli rights group Yesh Din found that 93% of

[429] David Shulman, "Lost Illusions: Sylvain Cypel's Transformation from Liberal Zionist to Ferocious Critic of Israel," *The New York Review of Books,* February 10, 2022.

[430] Gianluca Mezzofiore, Celine Alkhaldi, Abeer Salman and Nima Elbagir, CNN, "Israel's military called the settler attack on this Palestinian town a 'pogrom': Video shows soldiers did little to stop it," CNN, June 15, 2023, Internet: <https://www.cnn.com/2023/06/15/middleeast/huwara-west-bank-settler-attack-cmd-intl/index.html>.

investigations into settler attacks in the West Bank between 2005 and 2022 were closed without indictment.[431]

The 1920s and 1930s witnessed a marked increase of violence on the part of radicalized elements of society. This was true for many European countries. By far, the largest, most violent and most deadly demonstrations and confrontations were those organized by the socialists and communists.[432] Ukrainian nationalists embarked on a campaign of outright terrorism against the Polish State, Polish officials and Polish property. They were also known to attack Jews.[433] The Jews were no exception to these disturbing developments. Violent confrontations were by no means the prerogative of criminal elements, such as the bloody fighting between rival underworld gangs of Litvaks and "locals" in Warsaw and Łódź or the fighting that pitted Jewish criminal elements against Jewish workers in Lublin.[434]

Street brawls and altercations involving various political, social, linguistic, and even religious factions, disrupting each other's meetings, and ransacking their opponent's premises, shops and even synagogues—

[431] Rannen Sawafta, "EU diplomat demand accountability ater Israeli settler rampage in West Bank," Reuters, March 3, 2023. The founder and director of Palestnian Media Watch, Itamar Marcus, hiself a settler, has called on the Israeli government to expel the EU diplomat as an alleged "anti-Semite" and "strong terror motivator." See Itamar Marcus, "Israel must expel the EU's antisemitic diplomat," *The Jerusalem Post,* June 17, 2022.

[432] Mazur, *Życie polityczne polskiego Lwowa 1918–1939,* 408 (Lwów, 1936); Tomasz Marszałkowski, *Zamieszki, ekscesy i demonstracje w Krakowie 1918–1939* (Kraków: Arcana, 2006) (Kraków, 1923 and 1936).

[433] Mazur, *Życie polityczne polskiego Lwowa 1918–1939,* 61 (attacks on Jews), 114–39.

[434] Josef Sztamfater, "Walki robotników w Lublinie w latach 1915–1920," in Adam Kopciowski, ed., *Księga pamięci żydowskiego Lublina* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2011), 206–7; translation of *Dos bukh fun Lublin* (Paris: Former Residents of Lublin in Paris, Paris, 1952).

all these were constant features of everyday Jewish communal life, in both cities and shtetls.[435] A bitter 1921 campaign against the appointment of a non-orthodox rabbi to the Warsaw rabbinate resulted in protests by the Agudah in synagogues, study houses and streets, culminating in a mass demonstration of 15–20,000 Hasidim in front of the Gmina (community) building.

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[435] Examples of politically and religiously based turmoil, assaults and even murders are plentiful. See Leonard Rowe, "Jewish Self-Defense: A Response to Violence," and Moyshe Kligsberg, "Di yidishe yugnt-bavegung in Poyln tsvishn beyde velt-milkhomes (a sotsyologishe shtudye)," in Joshua A. Fishman, ed., *Studies on Polish Jewry, 1919–1939* (New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 1974), 111–16, 201–3; Celia S. Heller, *On the Edge of Destruction: Jews of Poland Between the Two World* Wars (New York: Schocken Books, 1980), 255–57. It is noteworthy that frequently the Polish police was called on by the Jews themselves to intervene, thus belying the claim that Jews distrusted the Polish police and that the latter were unresponsive to violence directed at Jews. The Bund Youth Tsukunft periodical, *Yungt-veker,* printed reports on an attempt by Communist youth to break up a meeting of the Tsukunft, on Communist attempts to infiltrate and disrupt local branches of the Tsukunft, and on the physical intimidation of an individual who attempted to leave the Communist youth organization in order to join the Tsukunft. See Jack Jacobs, *Bundist Counterculture in Interwar Poland* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 13. There were frequent political altercations in Kraków. At a Zionist meeting in 1920 invaded by Bundists, the Bundist Sacher Glasman stabbed the Zionist Szlomo Kornegold and killed him. On November 16, 1930, the day of elections to the Seym (Polish Parliament), Zionists beat up Berisch Weinberg and his son, Orthodox Jews, because they had supported the pro-government party (*Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem*). Fans of competing Jewish soccer teams were also involved in brawls. See Marszałkowski, *Zamieszki, ekscesy i demonstracje w Krakowie 1918–1939*. In Trzebinia near Chranów, fights broke out between rival factions in the local synagogue in September 1925, necessitating the intervention of the police. See Trzebinia, Virtual Shetel, Internet: <http://www.sztetl.org.pl/en/article/trzebinia/5,history/>. In Brańsk, according to Jewish reports, "'there was no Saturday or holiday that passed without a fight.' Party meetings were disrupted by the acolytes of all the other parties, and resulted in 'bloody fights' that spilled into the streets." See Hoffman, *Shtetl,* 180–81. In Ejszyszki, the "library was the 'bone of contention' and constant battleground of the two camps: the Hebrews and the Yiddishists. Meetings for the election of the library management often ended in blows. Torn shirts and bloody noses were a frequent result of this language battle." See Livingston, *Tradition and Modernism in the Shtetl*, 66. See also Yaffa Eliach, *There Once Was a World: A Nine-Hundred-Year Chronicle of the Shtetl of Eishyshok* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998), 509 (Ejszyszki). In a village near Raduń, "when one of the Zionist parties sent a lecturer to speak on their behalf. Then there was fervent excitement among the younger generation, and not infrequently such a gathering would end in a free-for-all and the meeting would break up in a scramble." See Aviel, *A Village Named Dowgalishok,* 11. An "ugly incident" occurred in Kolbuszowa "on Simchat Torah, the joyous holiday on which congregants paraded around bearing the sacred Torahs. With the rabbi dancing about, carrying one of the Torahs, a follower of the *dayan* [an assistant and rival to the rabbi] ran up and attempted to snatch it from him. A battle then ensued between the two sides. The fight ended quickly; but the matter was taken to court, where the *dayan's* supporter was convicted for 'disturbing religious services' and received a five-year prison term. Other heated legal issues between the two sides dragged on year after year." See Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland,* 156–57. In Kraśnik, where the Jews were "overwhelmingly" very religious, traditionalists "fought energetically against the liberationist movement [i.e., secular leftist Jews]. There were organized groups of the Orthodox who, on every Friday evening, would break into the apartments where the Jewish youth congregated to check whether anyone was in violation of the Sabbath." See Beniamin Zylberberg, "Żydzi w Kraśniku i … z Kraśnika," *Kalendarz Żydowski 1993–1994: Almanach 5754* (Warsaw: Związek Religijny Wyznania Mojżeszowego w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 1993), 35. In Pińczów, the Chasidim of Pinczow were vehemently opposed to any human (as contrasted to divine) initiative to reestablish the Jews in their homeland. … on a particular Saturday, some Chasidim hired thugs to intimidate the Zionists, threatening that if they did not stop preaching [to people move to Palestine], 'we will knife you.'" See Yehudi Lindeman, ed., *Shards of Memory: Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2007), 130. In Powursk, Volhynia, "There were two synagogues in town … Both establishments had their own followers and sometimes fights would break out between the two Hasidic camps about how the community should be run." See Alexander Agas, "Povursk: The Town's Jews," in Merin, *Memorial Book,* 417. For accounts from other localities see Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955: Współistnienie—Zagłada—komunizm* (Warsaw: Fronda, 2000), 91–96 (various localities); J. Ben-Meir (Treshansky), *Sefer yizkor Goniadz* (Tel Aviv: The Committee of Goniondz Association in the USA and in Israel, 1960), translated as *Our Hometown Goniondz,* Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/goniadz/goniadz.html>, 475–76 (a gang that "held the gentiles around adjacent towns in fear"), 545–46 (a notorious bandit gang "composed primarily of Jewish young men … terrorized both Jews and Christians in all the region"); Benyamin Shapir-Shisko (Karkoor), "Culture Wars in Volozhin," in E. Leoni, ed., *Wolozin: The Book of the City and of the Etz Hayyim Yeshiva,* posted on the Internet at <www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/volozhin/volozhin.html>; translation of *Wolozyn: Sefer shel ha-ir ve-shel yeshivat "Ets Hayim"* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Wolozin in Israel and the USA, 1970), 440ff. (Wołożyn); David Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer-yizkor Ostrow-Lubelski—Yisker bukh Ostrow-Lubelski* (Israel: Association of Former Residents of Ostrow-Lubelski in Israel, 1987), in particular, the account of Mechi (Mischa) Eckhaus posted on the Internet at

> Two years later, another angry crowd, whipped up by Agudah activists under the leadership of the influential Ger Hasidic scholar-rabbi-political leader Menachem Zemba, stormed the Gmina building, smashed furniture, and defaced portraits to protest the community's council's plans to build a dormitory for Warsaw Jewish university students—"a house of debauchery"—on community land claimed by the Orthodox for religious uses.[436]

In 1928, a Jewish underground Communist organization disrupted the participation of Jewish students in honour of the tenth anniversary celebrations of Polish statehood in Warsaw, barring the exits of a Jewish girls' school and lecturing the young girls about Piłsudski's "fascism" and Poland's "anti-Soviet" stance.[437] In Łódź, "On the day of Lenin's death in January, the anniversary of the three 'Ls,' a red flag appeared on the telegraph wires, and Jewish youth broke the glass windows in Jewish-owned shops on Piotrkowska Street."[438]

The radicalization of the political landscape in the 1930s was a cause for concern, as "nationalism loomed ever larger as a decisive political determinant of Jewish destiny and hence an unavoidable horizon of Jewish political life."[439] The explosive growth of the He-halutz pioneer movement and, at the other end of the political spectrum of Zionism, the dramatic growth in popular support for right-wing Revisionist Zionism, the former's bitter opponent, gave rise to increased friction and violence in the Jewish community.[440] Historian Hillel Halkin provides example of the bitter conflict between the different factions of Zionism in the early 1930's:

> Groups of demonstrators interrupted and heckled both men. Violent brawls were frequent. In Warsaw, Ben-Gurion was attacked with Revisionist stink bombs and bricks; in Brisk [Brześć], Jabotinsky was stoned by a Labor Zionist mob. The level of invective was fierce. Jabotinsky called the Zionist Left "lackeys of Moscow." Ben Gurion referred to him as "Vladimir Hitler," an epithet given resonance by the brown-shirted squadrons of Betarniks who accompanied him everywhere. (It was actually pure coincidence that both Betar and the Nazis wore brown for their marching colors, which had been chosen for the Betar uniform long before Hitler's rise.) Nor did it help that Achimeir and *Hazit Ha'am*, in which Jabotinsky frequently

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[436] Kenneth B. Moss, "Negotiating Jewish Nationalism in Interwar Warsaw," in Dynner and Guesnet, *Warsaw: The Jewish Metropolis,* 411–12.

[437] Kenneth B. Moss, "Negotiating Jewish Nationalism in Interwar Warsaw," in Dynner and Guesnet, *Warsaw: The Jewish Metropolis,* 419.

[438] Julius Margolin, *Journey into the Land of the Zeks and Back: A Memoir of the Gulag* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 3.

[439] Kenneth B. Moss, "Negotiating Jewish Nationalism in Interwar Warsaw," in Dynner and Guesnet, *Warsaw: The Jewish Metropolis,* 429.

[440] By the early 1930s He-halutz had tens of thousands of members, and by 1935, the Revisionists could claim some 450,000 supporters and some 40,000 in its Betar youth organization. See Kenneth B. Moss, "Negotiating Jewish Nationalism in Interwar Warsaw," in Dynner and Guesnet, *Warsaw: The Jewish Metropolis,* 426–27. The Betar movement was supported by the Polish authorities. According to an account from Werenowo (Woronów), near Wilno, the local Betar group was provided with weapons and military training by the Polish army and participated in Polish national (patriotic) parades. See H. Rabin, ed., *Voronova; sefer zikaron le-kedoshei Voronova she-nispu be-shoat ha-natsim* (Israel, Voronova Societies in Israel and the United States, 1971), 207–9, translated as Voronovo: Memorial Book to the Martyrs of Voronovo, Internet: < https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/voronovo/Voronovo.html>.

published, praised the Nazis for their anti-Bolshevism and cult of the leader while condemning only their anti-Semitism. Jabotinsky was irate over this.[441]

Such violence could take on lethal forms, such as the knifing to death of Dawid Siedlarz in Radzyń Podlaski by Jewish communists.[442] Violence on a purely personal level was also not uncommon.[443] Jews who flaunted their secularism could find themselves roughed up by religious Jews. The Warsaw Yiddish daily *Haynt* reported, the day after Yom Kippur, 1927, that when a group of Freethinkers, some with lit cigarettes, came out onto a street in the Jewish quarter, "On account of this provocation, a serious battle occurred between the 'demonstrators' and the religious passers-by. Water was dumped from a window on Karmelicka Street onto the heads of the Freethinkers."[444] Religious Jews were attacked by Zionists. On October 12, 1933, 40 Zionists stormed the synagogue in Mielec, where 150 Orthodox Jews were praying. They threw stones, smashed windows, and basically demolished the interior of the edifice. The brawl spread onto the adjoining streets, where windows of homes were broken including the rabbi's.[445] Such intercommunal violence also occurred in London, England, and probably elsewhere.[446]

As historian Samuel Kassow has observed, violence was part and parcel of ordinary shtetl life:

> Contrary to popular perceptions, the *shtetl* saw its share of violence and chicanery. Chaim Grade's account in *Tsemakh Atlas* of a local *balebos's* hiring thugs to destroy a library accords with real-life accounts of violence during *kehillah* elections, disputes over new rabbis and funerals, and arguments over taxes.

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[441] Hillel Halkin, *Jabotinsky: A Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 181.

[442] Arkadiusz Kołodziejczak, "Morderstwo Dawida Siedlarza: Karta z dziejów Komunistycznej Partii Polskiej w Radzyniu Podlaski," *Radzyński Rocznik Humanistyczny,* vol. 3 (2005): 97–105; Dariusz Magier, "Komuniści w powiecie radzyńskim w latach 1918–1944," *Radzyński Rocznik Humanistyczny,* vol. 6 (2008): 188–89. When local Jewish communists learned that Dawid Siedlarz had become a police informer, he was knifed to death in May 1930 after two earlier failed attempts to kill him. More than a dozen Jews were implicated in his murder.

[443] One memoirist recalled the reaction of her father when he learned about the verbal "advances" of his teenaged daughter's male acquaintance: "When my father heard of this incident, he beat the boy till he was black and blue." See Miriam Brysk, *Amidst the Shadows of Trees* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Yellow Star Press, 2007), 35. An example from Chmielnik is the animosity toward a Jew called "Pitro," who was disliked by other Jews. His antagonists would pay young Polish boys money to call him "Duński Kozalc" and then laugh at him. See Maciągowski and Krawczyk, *The Story of Jewish Chmielnik,* 192.

[444] Mireille Silcoff, "(Moder) Day of Atonement," *National Post* (Toronto), September 18, 2010.

[445] Andrzej Krempa, *Zagłada Żydów mieleckich,* Second revised edition (Mielec: Muzeum Regionalne w Mielcu, 2013), 41. The local police intervened and arrests were made, among them Süssel Schmidt, a member of the town council, who was not elected to the Jewish community council. Some Jewish Communists also took part in the mêlée.

[446] William J. Fishman, who describes the emergence of Jewish radicalism among the Jewish immigrants in the East End of London in the late 19th century, writes, "Violence erupted spasmodically as Jewish establishment interests attempted to subvert radical groups. In 1904, gangs of thugs (*schlogers*) were hired to break up Anarchist and Social Democrat meetings." On Yom Kippur, bands of Jewish radicals would surround synagogues and mock the Jewish religion, as by openly eating *treyf* food. The consequences of such provocations are not hard to deduce. Fishman comments, "J. L. Fine was a regular observer of the tragi-comedy of young politicals who, flaunting their contempt for tradition, marched in column to the Spitalfields Great Synagogue (*Machzikei Ha Dath*) in Brick Lane, smoking or brandishing ham sandwiches as gestures of defiance and rejection of their creed. The service over, angry worshippers, sometimes in full regalia, swept out and attacked the scoffers with any weapon they could seize, while the local people gazed dumbfounded at the antics of the crazy foreigners. … In 1904, the annual affair provoked a full-scale riot in Spitalfields." See William J. Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals, 1875–1914* (London: Duckworth, 1974; Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2004), 259.

Grudges and grievances often interrupted Sabbath prayers and even led to fights in the synagogue. Incidents such as that which occurred in Mińsk Mazowiecki in the 1930's, when the local butchers assaulted a respected Zionist delegate to the *kehillah* after he raised the meat tax to pay for the local Tarbut school, were not uncommon. Bribery to fix elections of new rabbis was rampant, and the disgruntled party often brought in its own candidate, thus leading to serious conflicts that split families and friends.

… An incident in Głębokie on Yom Kippur in 1932 was not atypical. In that case, a conflict arose in the Starosielsker *minyan* over who would lead the *musaf* (additional) prayers. When Rabbi Menakhem-Mendl Kuperstock began to intone "Hineni he-ani," a fist fight broke out. His opponents, still draped in prayer shawls, ran to adjoining synagogues to rally reinforcements. A mass brawl ensued, and as Polish police arrived *en masse* to quell the fighting, the leader of the pro-Kuperstock faction was seen escaping through a window. Twenty-five Jews, including many of the prominent community leaders, faced a public trial, which ended in suspended sentences. The editor of the local [Jewish] newspaper had pleaded with the opposing parties to settle their differences before the trial began. For a time it seemed that he had succeeded, but as soon as the court session started, charges and countercharges—in a broken Polish that caused waves of laughter from the spectators—began flying back and forth. In Mińsk Mazowiecki, a sharp battle over the rabbi's position went all the way to the Polish Najwyższy Trybunał Administracyjny (Supreme Administrative Tribunal).[447]

Another key source that reflected the changing society of the shtetl was the weekly newspaper. Such publications contain valuable contemporary accounts that serve as a counterpoint to the nostalgic accounts that were published in many of the post-war memorial books (*yizker bikher*). For example, the memorial book of Glebokie [Głębokie] made no mention of grinding poverty. Indeed, it said that most Jews lived well … But the weekly shtetl newspaper painted a far bleaker picture and ran detailed accounts of riots by desperately poor Jews who demanded more help from the Jewish community. The memorial book depicted an image of a Jewish community that lived in peace and harmony. But in an editorial from October of 1931, the shtetl newspaper bemoaned the fact that on *Shabes Shuva* (the Sabbath between Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur) fights had broken out in three different synagogues. "Gentiles like to fight in taverns," the newspaper complained. "We prefer to fight in the synagogue." On Yom Kippur of 1932 a fight broke out over who would lead a service in the synagogue [and] resulted in a mass brawl that spilled into the street. On this, too, the memorial book was completely silent.

… Elections [to the *kehilles*, the local Jewish community councils] were often intense and hard fought and exposed political rifts in the community. Political parties, coalitions of Hasidim and prayer houses, and personal cliques all contested these elections, which were sometimes marked by violence, especially when the Orthodox *Agudat Yisroel* used Polish law to overturn Bundist and Zionist victories. In the shtetl of

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[447] Samuel D. Kassow, "Community and Identity in the Interwar Shtetl," in Gutman, et al., *The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars,* 204–205. Kassow goes on to point out: "Quite often these conflicts went to the Polish courts, a point suggesting a higher degree of Jewish-Gentile contact than one would assume from reading the memorial books." Jews often prevailed over Christians in proceedings in Polish courts, both civil and criminal, which were by and large impartial. See, for example, Wrobel, *My Life My Way,* 42; Leah Shlechter-Shapiro, "I Was a Wtniess to a False Accusation," in *Dereczin,* 189–90; Asher Tarmon, ed., *Memorial Book: The Jewish Communities of Manyevitz, Horodok, Lishnivka, Troyanuvka, Povursk, and Kolki (Wolyn Region)* (Tel-Aviv: Organization of Survivors of Manyevitz, Horodok, Lishnivka, Troyanuvka, Povursk, Kolki and Surroundings Living in Israel and Overseas, 2004), 121.

> Sokolow [Sokołów], after the *Aguda* used Article 20 to cancel a *Poalei Tsiyon* (Labor Zionist victory), the *Poalei Tsiyon* invaded the *kehila* building and smashed the furniture.[448]

Descriptions of shtetl violence can be found in many sources. Even a dispute over an *aliyah,* that is, being called up for a portion of Torah reading during prayer services—considered an honour—could spark fighting.

> Life in the *shtetls* centered around the market square and the synagogue, which was a place not only for prayer but for socializing as well. In Ozeryany [Jezierzany], 'Sabbath battles' often broke out on Saturday mornings between the carpenters and the stablemen, most often because of a quarrel over who would get an *aliyah* to the Torah. These were frequently fistfights, which ended only at nightfall, and were confined to the synagogue itself so as not to turn into a spectacle for the local non-Jews.[449]

In an eye-opening study, YIVO researcher Eddy Portnoy notes that the Yiddish papers of the 1920s and 1930s "are full of reports of furious Jew-on-Jew violence, attacks that took place between all kinds of Jews."[450] An article in *Haynt* (October 3, 1927) is titled "A Bloody Battle Between Jews (That lasted 21 hours)." It occurred on Krochmalna Street in Warsaw. Hundreds of Jews were involved in the riot, which began over one woman starting "rumors" about another.[451] There was a growing nonobservance of Sabbath by many Jews, and this prompted the activities of the Shomrey Shabbos ("Guardians of the Shabbos, or perhaps more accurately, as Portnoy suggests, "the Sabbath Enforcers"). Portnoy writes, "Infractions were often met with threats of boycott, public reprimand, and even violence."[452] In 1935, the three leaders of the anti-Shabbos group in the Praga suburb of Warsaw were all found to have died under mysterious circumstances (one with his throat slashed). However, it was not only the religious Jews that initiated Sabbath-related violence. Portnoy informs us that, "The Free Thinkers, as they were known, had

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[448] Samuel Kassow, "The Shtetl in Interwar Poland," in Steven T. Katz, ed., *The Shtetl: New Evaluations* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2007), 128, 130. That memorial (yizkor) books are an uneven and often unreliable source of information has been recognized by historians. Daniel Kupfert Heller cites *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry: Essays on the History and Meanings of Yizker Volumes* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland, 2011), edited by Rosemary Horowitz, to draw the following conclusion:

> Historians need to exercise great caution when using memorial anthologies (*yizker bikher*) published by Holocaust survivors to commemorate Jewish communities in towns and cities across Poland. Many of them were published decades after the historical events they describe. The accounts of the past provided by yizker bikher contributors frequently bear the imprint of the trauma of the Holocaust, nostalgia for a "vanished world," as well as the authors' political and religious commitments.

See Daniel Kupfert Heller, *Jabotinsky's Children: Polish Jews and the Rise of Right-Wing Zionism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017), 286 n.109. Historians Roni Kochavi-Nehab and Rivka Parciak have also commented on the tendentiousness and untrutworthiness of yizkor books (subjectivity, embellishments, vagueness, ignoring or covering up negative matters, etc.). See Horowitz, *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry,* 155, 222.

[449] Nalewajko-Kulikov, *A Citizen of Yiddishland,* 34.

[450] Eddy Portnoy, *Bad Rabbi: And Other Strange but True Stories from the Yiddish Press* (Stanford, Calofornoa: Stanford University Press, 2017), 219.

[451] Portnoy, *Bad Rabbi,* 227.

[452] Portnoy, *Bad Rabbi,* 176.

bureaus all over Poland, clubhouses for nonbelievers where lectures and meetings were held … Willing to fight at the drop of a hat, the Free Thinkers and the Shabbos enforcers often came to fisticuffs, or worse; in 1935 the enforcers tried to bomb a Free Thinker office on Warsaw's Krulevska [Królewska] Street."[453]

Profanation of Yom Kippur was not organized by Christians, but by the Jews themselves. Portnoy notes that, "Yom Kippur fisticuffs, it should be known, were not unique to New York City. Warsaw, with its large Jewish population, was also a flashpoint for Jew-on-Jew Day of Atonement fury."[454] The following statements provide the background to this movement, which cannot be considered as marginal:

> Yom Kippur dances, organized initially by anarchists in the mid-1880s, started in London and migrated to New York and Montreal. Smaller nosh fests and public demonstrations were also celebrated by Jewish antinomians in other locales. Unorthodox Jews in interwar Poland could pull hundreds of locals into small venues on Yom Kipper in shtetls such as Kalish [Kalisz] and Chelm [Chełm]. In larger cities, for example, Warsaw and Lodz [Łódź], they could sell out 5,000-seat circuses. …
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> Advertised in the Yiddish press, Yom Kippur balls, lectures, and nosh fests were decidedly communal events created by and for an alternative community…Some people partook to spite a god they did not believe in. Others participated to antagonize their parents, and still others to harass the religious establishment. In fact, harassment may have been the biggest draw.
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> In addition, holding an antireligious Yom Kippur event was often a way to get free publicity.[455]

Atheist Jews also affronted religious Jews directly, and in an in-your-face manner. Portnoy cites a 1927 article in *Haynt,* "'And if the meeting itself went without incident, they [atheists] went out into the Jewish streets the morning of Yom Kippur and hawked old issues of the magazine *The Free Thinker* while people were on their way to shul. On account of this, a number of fights occurred between religious Jews and the 'holly rollers' who sold the magazines.'"[456] Although the hatred exhibited by the atheists was palpable, some years events passed peacefully: "In September 1925, for example, *Moment* reported that an antireligious mass meeting held in a theater during the evening of Yom Kippur in Warsaw, during which speakers fulminated furiously against religion in general and against Yom Kippur specifically, ended without any violence whatsoever."[457]

According to historian Jolanta Żyndul, between 14 and 17 Jews, out of a population of more than three million, lost their lives in disturbances in the years 1935–1937. Loss of Polish lives was greater, often occasioned by the police who intervened to quell the riots.[458] (A prominent Jewish-Canadian journalist sees things quite differently, referring to the following "facts": "Between 1935 and 1937, … *hundreds* [of

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[453] Portnoy, *Bad Rabbi,* 180.

[454] Portnoy, *Bad Rabbi,* 86.

[455] Portnoy, *Bad Rabbi,* 83–84.

[456] Portnoy, *Bad Rabbi,* 87–88.

[457] Portnoy, *Bad Rabbi,* 88.

[458] Joanna Żyndul, *Zajścia antyżydowskie w Polsce w latach 1935–1937* (Warsaw: Fundacja im. K. Kelles-Krauza, 1994).

Jews] were killed by their countrymen. And the Polish government largely looked the other way—or worse."[459]) As Israeli historian Emanuel Melzer noted, the anti-Jewish excesses "[u]sually … resulted

[459] Marsha Lederman, *Kiss the Red Stairs: The Holocaust, Once Removed* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2022), 143.

from the killing of a Pole by a Jew."[460]

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[460] Emanuel Melzer, "Anti-Semitism in the Last Years of the Second Polish Republic," in Gutman, et al., *The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars,* 129. According to historian Emanuel Melzer: "The anti-Jewish excesses and pogroms in the years 1935–37 had their specific characteristics and dynamics. Usually they resulted from the killing of a Pole by a Jew, either as an act of self-defence or [more often] as a criminal act of an individual committed out of personal revenge. For this killing the entire local Jewish community was held collectively responsible. The pogroms of Grodno (1935), Przytyk (1936), Mińsk Mazowiecki (1936), Brześć nad Bugiem (1937), and Częstochowa (1937) all followed this pattern." See Emanuel Melzer, *No Way Out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935–1939* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1997), 53. The murder of the Pole that led to the retaliation killing of a Jewish couple in Przytyk in March 1936 was not an act of self-defence: he was shot in the back. It was the Jews, and not the Poles, that had escalated the heretofore-limited conflict by introducing firearms and shooting indiscriminately at Poles. Up to that time, the dispute had been limited to mutual insults, fisticuffs, and reciprocal overturning of booths. In May 1936, without any provocation, a group of Jews attacked and started to beat some young, unarmed Poles who passed by them on a street in Kielce. One of the Jewish assailants stabbed Stanisław Łagowski, a 17-year-old student, in the back, seriously injuring him. In retaliation, some Poles accosted Jews in the area of the crime. The police quickly intervened to restore order, and arrested thirty Jews suspected of involvement in the attack on the Poles as well asother involved in altercations. A number of Jewish stores were demolished in Mińsk Mazowiecki in June 1936 after Jan Bujak, a Wachtmeister of the local 7th Uhlan Regiment was shot by Judka Lejb Chaskielewicz, a Jewish resident. The stabbing of a policeman by a Jew in Brześć was an unprovoked attack; the Jewish leaders failed to take immediate steps to distance the community by condemning the aggression against a state official. The shooting of a Polish labourer by a Jewish restaurateur on September 17, 1937 led to disturbances in Bielsko-Biała where windows of Jewish shops and homes were broken. (See Żyndul, *Zajścia antyżydowskie w Polsce w latach 1935–1937,* 48, with an erroneous date of November.) Melzer fails to make it clear that the number of Polish rioters was relatively small (only a tiny fraction of the large numbers of people involved in race riots that have periodically engulfed the United States in the 20th century: the riots often lasted for days or weeks, wreaked massive destruction on cities and resulted in hundreds of deaths and widescale looting, e.g., 53 in the Los Angeles riots of April 1992 alone, and more than 2,000 personal injuries); that the police arrested hundreds of rioters, both Poles and less frequently Jews, who were brought to trial speedily, and if found guilty, punished by prison sentences; that Poles were often assaulted by Jews during these altercations, as was the case in Przytyk, Brześć, and Cieszanów (1924). See Ravid, *The Cieszanow Memorial Book,* 21. Such factors do not lend support to the notion of a high degree of mass popular fury directed at Jews collectively. Moreover, reports about such incidents were often grossly exaggerated as when, for example, the Jewish press in Warsaw turned an altercation at a football game in Lublin in October 1931, into a pogrom in which more than 30 Jews were allegedly wounded, some seriously. The *Lubliner Tuglat* was astounded by these revelations and rebuked the Warsaw press. See Maurycjusz, "'Kibole' minionej epoki," *Nowa Myśl Polska,* December 5, 2004. For more about violence by Christians directed at Jews, its background, Jewish retaliation, and the reaction of the authorities including the frequent use of police reinforcements, preventative detention and punishment of perpetrators, see: Żyndul, *Zajścia antyżydowskie w Polsce w latach 1935–1937;* Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955,* 78–91; Gontarczyk, *Pogrom?,* especially 32–44; Wojciech Śleszyński, *Zajścia antyżydowskie w Brześciu nad Bugiem 13 V 1937 r.* (Białystok: Archiwum Państwowe w Białymstoku, Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne–Oddział w Białymstoku, 2004)—for a critique of Śleszyński's book, see Piotr Cichoracki's review in *Dzieje Najnowsze,* vol. 37, no. 3 (2005): 214–18, and also Piotr Cichoracki, *Polesie nieidylliczne: Zaburzenia porządku publicznego w województwie poleskim w latach trzydziestych XX w.* (Łomianki: LTW, 2007), 198–253; Szymon Rudnicki, "Dokument kontrwywiadu o pogromie brzeskim 13 maja 1937 roku," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, no. 2 (2009): 221–34; Bechta, *Narodowo radykalni,* chapter 4; "Confessions of Zbigniew Romaniuk," in *The Story of Two Shtetls, Brańsk and Ejszyszki,* Part Two, 24–25; Hoffman, *Shtetl,* 196–99; Machcewicz and Persak, eds., *Wokół Jedwabnego,* vol. 1, 112–13; Mariusz Bechta, *Pogrom czy odwet?: Akcja zbrojna Zrzeszenia "Wolność i Niezawiłość" w Parczewie 5 lutego 1946 r.* (forthcoming), Chapter 1 (an armed groups of Jew attempted to storm the local headquarters of the National Democratic Party and beat up its leader). After the Przytyk riots in March 1936, the Jewish community smuggled out of the country most of the twenty members of the so-called self-defence group, thus demonstrating that the Jews considered themselves to be above the law. See Antony Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia,* vol. 3: *1914 to 2008* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), 146. Anti-Jewish disturbances also occurred in areas where the population was primarily non-Polish. In 1937, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) carried out 830 violent actions against Polish citizens, most of them in Eastern Galicia. Of these, 540 were classified as anti-Polish, 242 as anti-Jewish, 67 as anti-Ukrainian, and 17 as anti-Communist. In 1936, several Jewish homes were burned down in Kostopol county, Volhynia. See Timothy Snyder, "The Life and Death of Western Volhynian Jewry, 1921–1945," in Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower, eds., *The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), 77–113, here at 83–84.

In a number of cases, Jews initiated violence against Poles.[461] The following examples from the interwar period are from Radom: Majloch Zynenberg and some other young Jewish communists shot the police detective Zygmunt Blachner, one of several policemen on whom they had passed death sentences. The investigation was stonewalled because of a lack of cooperation on the part of Jewish eyewitnesses. After a Jewish team lost a soccer match with a Polish team on June 6, 1931, a riot broke out in Radom. Two Jewish fans attacked a Polish student, Marian Mantorski, in the street, and seriously injured him. The Pole succumbed to his injuries a few days later. In October 1935, a group of Jews beat up Wincenty Sienkiewicz, a nationalist activist. Polish nationalists retaliated and attacked some Jews.[462] In Brześć Kujawski, in the summer of 1932, three Jews beat up two Polish boys who came to buy bread on a Jewish holiday, and one of the boys lost an eye. A similar occurrence took place in the fall of 1932, when two Jews attacked two Polish brothers, breaking the leg of one of them. Jews were also known to hurl slurs like "Polish pigs" at Poles.[463] (One often comes across Poles being referred to as "pigs" in Jewish writings, even in memorial books.[464]) In Marcinkańce, a small town north of Grodno, three local Jews lynched a Pole who flicked his whip to chase some Jewish youth off the back of his carriage.[465] In Łosice, on July 4, 1937, Josek Rubinsztejn struck Franciszek Sałabun, a Christian, on his head with a rock. In retaliation, some Polish youth broke windows of Jewish homes.[466] In Włocławek, a young Jew shot two Poles on August 24, 1939, allegedly in defence of two rabbis.[467] There were many more incidents like these.

By way of comparison, violent assaults against minorities, immigrants and foreigners became a daily occurrence in the 1990s in many European countries, epecially in Germany and the Czech Republic, but also in France, England and elsewhere. At least 40 Roma, out of a population of 150,000–250,000, were killed in the Czech Republic in racially motivated attacks. The situation in North America, and indeed

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[461] One newspaper, *Sprawa Katolicka,* reported the following incidents in a span of several weeks in 1935: an assault on athletes in Równe; an assault on a Catholic newspaper distributor; an assault on a painter in Radom; an assault on a 73-year-old woman in Lwów. See Dariusz Libionka, "Duchowieństwo diecezji łomżyńskiej wobec antysemityzmu i zagłady Żydów," in Machcewicz and Persak, eds., *Wokół Jedwabnego,* vol. 1, 111.

[462] Sebastian Piątkowski, *Dni życia, dni śmierci: Ludność żydowska w Radomiu w latach 1918–1950* (Warsaw: Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych, 2006), 90–100, 145–47.

[463] Tomasz Kawski, *Kujawsko-dobrzyńscy Żydzi w latach 1918–1950* (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2006), 230–31.

[464] *Kosow Lacki* (San Francisco: Holocaust Center of Northern California, 1992), 49; David Ravid (Shmukler), ed., *The Cieszanow Memorial Book* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2006), 40. Another account in the latter book refers to General Władysław Sikorski as having a "filthy Polish heart." Ibid., 112.

[465] Piotr Gontarczyk, *Pogrom?: Zajścia polsko-żydowskie w Przytyku 9 marca 1936 r. Mity, fakty, dokumenty* (Biała Podlaska: Rekonwista, and Pruszków: Rachocki i S-ka, 2000), 34.

[466] Zofia Chyra-Rolicz, Renata Tarasiuk, Edward Kopówka, eds., *Żydzi na Podlasiu* (Siedlce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Podlaskiej, 2010), 313.

[467] Kawski, *Kujawsko-dobrzyńscy Żydzi w latach 1918–1950,* 237.

throughout the world, is equally bleak.[468] The Los Angeles race riots of April and May of 1992 (after the acquittal of four White police officers who had killed Rodney King on March 31, 1991), resulted in 53 deaths, several thousand injuries, more than 7,000 fires, damage to 3,100 businesses, and nearly one

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[468] In the 1990s (decade), at least 40 Roma were killed in the Czech Republic in racially motivated attacks. See Gwynne Dyer, "Europe's Gypsies Consider Their Future," *The Toronto Star,* August 6, 2000. Romas continue to be persecuted, attacked and killed, and their homes are fire-bombed in the Czech Republic and Hungary. Anti-Roma riots broke out in northern Bohemia in September 2011, and again on August 24, 2013, eight Czech cities experienced riots. Characteristically, what is branded as a "pogrom" in Eastern Europe (except in the case of the Czech Republic) becomes merely a "riot" if it occurs in Western countries. In this regard, the 2001 attacks on East Indians in Oldham, England, where dozens were injured, are no exception. See, for example, the following media reports: "Race Riot Casts Pall over U.K. Vote," *The National Post* (Toronto), May 28, 2001; "Right-wing Groups Blamed for British Riots," *The National Post,* May 29, 2001. One of the most notorious race riots in England, Totenham's 1985 Broadwater Farm riot, which was sparked by the death of a local resident after an encounter with the police, led to the savage killing of a police officer (who was hacked to death) and the wounding of nearly 60 others when 500 mainly Black youths rampaged through the streets, assaulting police and setting fires. A Metropolitan Police (Scotland Yard) inquiry in 1999 into the death of Black British teenager concluded that the force was "institutionally racist." On August 6, 2011, several hundred youths rained missiles and bottles on officers near Tottenham police station after a protest over the fatal shooting of a Black man by armed officers. Twenty-six officers were injured in the skirmish as rioters smashed windows, looted and set buildings alight, and torched three police cars. See Raphael G. Satter, "London's Dramatic Riot Echoes Deadly Unrest of 1985," *Toronto Star,* August 7, 2011; "Violence in London Erupts in Wake of Riots," *Reuters,* August 7, 2011. Following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, a series of attacks on Muslims was unleashed in distant Western Europe. Within eight days of the killing of Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh on November 2, 2004, arsonists attacked nine mosques and four Islamic schools were bombed, vandalized, or set on fire in Holland, in places like Eindhoven, Uden, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Breda, and Huizen near Amsterdam. Dozens of violent attacks on Muslims were reported. See Michael McClintock, *Everyday Fears: A Survey of Violent Hate Crimes in Europe and North America* (New York: Human Rights First, 2005), 1; Sandro Contenta, "Fear replaces tolerance as racism sweeps Holland," *Toronto Star,* November 27, 2004. Within days of the London commuter bombings by Muslim extremists in July 2005, more than 100 revenge attacks—including the beating death of a Pakistani immigrant—were reported across Britain. See Caroline Mallan, "'He was just another kid,'" *Toronto Star,* July 14, 2005. A number of Jews, including schoolchildren, were also assaulted in the United Kingdom during this period. See McClintock, *Everyday Fears,* 3. Gypsies and Africans have fared badly throughout Western Europe in recent years. When a mentally disturbed immigrant was accused of stabbing a Spanish woman in El Ejido, a small town in Andalucia, Spain, in February 2000, two days and two nights of looting and burning of houses, shops and mosques belonging ensued. The violence against Moroccan and Algerian immigrants, accompanied by racist slogans, reportedly met with the passivity or connivance of most inhabitants of the town, the police and the municipal government. According to a BBC report of February 8, 2000, "Riot police in Spain have again clashed with hundreds of protesters on the third consecutive day of violence directed against immigrants from North Africa. The local immigrant community has asked the authorities for protection after rioting left their property ransacked and their cars overturned. Clouds of smoke wafted over the south-eastern Spanish region of Almeria as a plastic recycling factory, set alight by anti-immigrant protestors, burnt to the ground. … Spanish state radio reported that more than 30 people were injured and seven others arrested as police prevented protesters marching on El Ejido." The Ponticelli Romani camp in Naples was burned to the ground in May 2008, causing the approximately 800 residents to flee, while Italians stood by and cheered; four Molotov cocktails were thrown into Romani camps in Milan and Novara that same month; in June, a settlement of around 100 Romanian Roma in Catania, Sicily, was attacked and burned to the ground. Other incidents that year included racist attacks by vigilantes, assaults by law enforcement officials, and forced evictions. See Claude Cahn and Elspeth Guild, *Recent Migration of Roma in Europe,* OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, December 10, 2008, 61–62. After Black African migrant workers were shot at and beaten with metal rods in Rosarno, Italy, in early January 2009, they rampaged through the town destroying everything in their path and attacked residents and police officers. See Adriana Sapone and Ariel David, "African migrant workers continue rampage in Italy," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), January 9, 2009. Filmmaker Fayesque Townsend-Rahman reported, "Living in Italy in the eighties, xenophobia was (and arguable still is) a cultural norm. It was clear as day, with all the kids hanging out under fascist graffiti made by organized groups of violent football fans, the ultras." The situation was not much better in England in the nineties. Asians were customarily called "Pakis" in the posh boarding school he attended. See Fayesque Townsend-Rahman, "Discussing Racism with My Children Has Become Much More complicated," *The Globe and Mail,* July 18, 2020. Polish immigrants have been the victims of scores of racially motivated assaults, house burnings, and even killings on the streets of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Ireland in recent years. Two Polish immigrants were murdered in Ireland in February 2008, with screwdrivers driven through their skulls; three Polish immigrants were murdered in Northern Ireland in July 2009. A Pole barely escaped lynching at the hands of a mob armed with bats in Accrington, Lancashire, in May 2009; a Pole

billion in financial losses, by the time the police, army, marines and 10,000 National Guard troops restored order. Similar riots occurred in San Francisco, Las Vegas, and as far east as Atlanta.

It is also worth noting that the infamous pre-World War I pogroms in Russian Poland—Białystok and Siedlce in 1906, which took the lives of some 130 Jews—were not the work of the local Polish population, who did not participate in them, but of the Russian authorities who employed the military and goons to strike at the violent Jewish revolutionary movement in those cities. As historian Artur Markowski points out, in the 100-year period between 1815 and 1914, in the lands known as the Kingdom of Poland, no more than a handful of Jews perished as a result of the rare occasions of anti-Jewish rioting.[469] Clearly, conditions in Poland were rather mild even at that time.

If Jews believed themselves to be threatened, they could also resort to mass violence even though, objectively, there was no real threat. The 1906 New York City school riot, sparked by an unfounded rumor, is a case in point.

> On June 27, 1906, thousands of immigrant parents of students in Lower East Side Manhattan schools rioted after the rumor spread that school authorities were slitting children's throats. …
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> In late June, in preparation for the summer school vacation, New York schools were providing children otherwise lacking in preventive care with mandatory inoculations. Additionally, according to the account of the riots published the following day in the New York Tribune, "Miss A.E. Simpson, principal of Public School 100 … found that many of the children were suffering from adenoids," enlargements of tissue that can block the rear of the throat and can be removed by minor surgery. Simpson, reported the paper, sent a note to parents of children with adenoids, saying that if they could not arrange for the surgery themselves, doctors from the board of health would take care of it.
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> Apparently, not all parents received the school announcement, or understood its content. Portnoy explains that, when their children arrived home with blood in their mouths after undergoing the procedure and were asked what had happened, they said that doctors had taken razors to their throats. …

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[469] During the 19th century partitions of Poland most lands inhabited by Poles came (eventually) under Russian rule. The Jews were confined by and large to the Pale of Settlement, most of which was ethnically Ukrainian or Belorussian, except for the lands west of the Bug and around the city of Wilno (Vilna in Russian). As Jewish scholars point out, "Until 1881 in Russia, the number of riots by Jews against other Jews probably exceeded the number of pogroms by non-Jews against Jews." See Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel,* 132. The pogroms that occurred in the latter part of the 19th century and early 20th century for the most part bypassed the ethnically Polish lands. The deadly pogroms that did occur there were perpetrated by the Russian authorities, for example, in Białystok in June 1906 and Siedlce in September 1906. Only one Jew was killed as a result of anti-Jewish rioting that occurred in Warsaw in 1881, which was precipitated by a stampede that took 28 Polish lives. See Kopówka, *Żydzi w Siedlcach 1850–1945,* 41–50 (Siedlce); Michał Kurkiewicz and Monika Plutecka, "Rosyjskie pogromy w Białymstoku i Siedlcach w 1906 roku," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 11 (November 2010): 20–24; Artur Markowski, "Pogromy, zajścia, ekscesy: Zbiorowe akty przemocy przeciw Żydom w Białymstoku pierwszych dekad XX wieku," *Studia Judaica,* 27 (2011): 23–44; Artur Markowski, "Anti-Jewish Pogroms in the Kingdom of Poland" in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, 1815–1918,* vol. 27: *Jews in the Kingdom of Poland, 1815–1918* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2015), 219–55, here at 230–33. Given the infrequency of such occurrences (eight "pogroms" in the Kingdom of Poland, some of them small, involving a small number of ethnic Poles over the span of 100 years, and usually precipitated by local grievances), Artur Markowski's conclusion that "pogrom attitudes" permeated Polish society is an unwarranted generalization similar to stereotypes that form the basis of twentieth century (and even current-day) charges of "Black crime" in the United States or Canada. (Unfortunately, Makowski frequently resorts to sweeping generalizations based on stereotypes.) Pogrom paranoia swept the Jewish community at the beginning of the twentieth century. All sorts of myths and rumours about the Chrsitians' anti-Jewish activities arose such as speculation about attempts to achieve the extermination of Jews, for example, Christians were accused of handing out poisoned sweets and sugar to Jewish children. This psychosis bred Jewish aggression causing them sometimes to attack Christians without cause.

> In the words of the Tribune: "Excitable, ignorant Jews, fearing Russian massacres here, knowing nothing of American sanitary ideas and the supervision exercised over school children by the Health Board, outdid all previous resistance to vaccination. They stoned the schoolhouses, smashing windows and door panes, and, except for the timely intervention of the police reserves from several precincts, would without doubt have done serious injury to the frightened women teachers."
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> The New York Times also reported on the riots "among the Hebrew population on the East Side," adding the tidbit that "cheap practitioners," apparently from the neighborhood, "started the tale of a contemplated massacre" out of irritation that uptown physicians were being brought in to do the procedures, thus denying them the income.[470]

Breaking out of the traditional constraints of Jewish society was particularly difficult in small shtetls. Jewish communal life was closely controlled by the local umbrella community organization which hired rabbis, cantors and ritual killers of animals. One of the contoversies of the interwar period had to do with ritual slaughter (*Shechita*), a practice that had been banned in a number of European countries, and the

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[470] David B. Green, "1906: N.Y. Jews Riot over Rumor of School Pogrom," *Haaretz,* June 27, 2014. Se also Gil Ribak, "'They Are Slitting the Throats of Jewish Children': The 1906 New York School Riot and Contending Images of Gentiles," *American Jewish History,* vol. 94 (September 2008): 175–96, which also describes riots in 1904 and notes (at p. 185): "certain general stereotypes of non-Jews, especially peasants, were still common among eastern European Jews by the late nineteenth century. "Goyim" were frequently portrayed as inherently coarse, drunk, prone to violence, illiterate, and sexually promiscuous."

near monopoly on meat production enjoyed by the Jewish community.[471] Since ritual slaughter was a major source of income—generating around one half of the Jewish community's income—funds and

[471] The vast majority of Poland's meat production (a much higher proportion than in other European countries) was prepared according to the dictates of Jewish ritual slaughter (*shechita* or *shehitah*), which greatly raised the price of beef. This near-monopoly had a detrimental impact on the Christian population. Since butchers refused to buy whole animals directly from farmers, but took only the forequarters or the hindquarters (Jews consumed only the forequarters), farmers suffered losses, as they had to sell animals to wholesalers at a lower price. Moreover, Christians could not find employment in slaughterhouses and with wholesalers because a Christian was not able to slaughter animals according to *shehitah*. Within the Jewish community, the higher costs associated with this practice was felt most heavily by impoverished Jews.

Legislation was enacted by the Polish Parliament in 1936 to limit ritual slaughter of animals proportionate to the Jewish share of the country's population. While the law, which came into force on January 1, 1937, was recognizably enacted to reduce the Jewish dominance of the meat industry, it did not abolish kosher slaugher, contrary to what is often alleged. See Gershon C. Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition: Agudat Yisrael in Poland, 1916–1939* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Magnes Press, 1996), 278; Przemysław Różański, "The Attitude of American Jews and American Diplomacy towards the Bill Banning Sheḥitah in Poland in the Second Half of the 1930s," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 24: *Jews and Their Neighbours in Eastern Europe Since 1750* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), 341–61; Eva Plach, "Ritual Slaughter and Animal Welfare in Interwar Poland," *East European Jewish Affairs,* vol. 45, no. 1 (2015): 1–25, here at 17. An official government publication from Wilno, *Wileński Dziennik Wojewódzki,* dated dated October 7, 1938, illustrates how quotas were assigned: http://pbc.biaman.pl/Content/9269/PDF/Syg.%20Wile%C5%84ski%20Dziennik%20Wojew%C3%B3dzki%201938%20%20nr%2013%20%20%207%20%20%20pa%C5%BAdziernika%20.pdf. Notwithstanding the scholarly literature to the contrary and abundant hard evidence of this nature, historians like Anika Walke claim that by the mid-1930s, the Polish government had "prohibited the ritual slaughter required to maintain the Jewish dietary law." See the introduction to Kutz, *If, By Miracle,* xv, and such claims are still widely repeated. Nonetheless, this measure sparked boisterous accusations of anti-Semitism even though, at that time, the practice of ritual slaughter had been banned (as inhumane) *entirely* in Switzerland (1893), Norway (1929), the Soviet Union (1931), Germany (1933), Sweden (1937), Hungary (1938), and Italy (1938). It should also be noted that ritual slaughter is presently not permitted in the European Union except for religious purposes. (Animals have to be stunned before slaughter for humanitarian reasons.)

In Poland, there were also important economic considerations at play that, historically, greatly benefitted the Jewish community. The meat processing industry was largely in Jewish hands and as many as 90% of cattle were killed ritually. Ritual slaughter was an important source of revenue—perhaps as high as 50% of their income—of Jewish communities, who licenced those who carried it out and charged a tax for every slaughtered animal. In effect, Christian consumers bore the bulk of the tax on kosher meat and were thus subsidizing Jewish community institutions. The restriction of the practice of ritual slaughter alleviated the unnecessary financial burden that fell on the largely impoverished Christian population for a practice that was not dictated by their religion. Had the situation been reversed, and Jews were subsidizing Christian community institutions, it would undoubtedly have been branded as anti-Semitic. Emanuel Melzer correctly points out that the new *shechita* law reduced, but did not eliminate, the practice. However, the author states that the new law deprived tens of thousands of Jews of their livelihood, and that it caused such a drop in revenue available to the Jewish communities that they had to institute a new tax among Jews to make up for the loss. See Melzer, *No Way Out,* 86, 194–95. This telling fact validates the premise that the Jewish system of ritual slaughter, was, in part, economically superfluous, and that the *shechita* system did in fact impose a hidden tax upon Poles.

While the charges extracted from North American food producers for kosher certification are equally exorbitant and are borne for the most part by Christians, while enriching the coffers of the Jewish religious establishment, they are spread over a much larger consumer base. The rabbinate's kosher certification monopoly in Israel has also come under fore for being corrupt, damaging to businesses, and expensive for consumers. Rachel Azaria, a member of the Knesset, estimated that the kashrut monopoly costs the public almost $160 million per year. See Menachem Rephun, "Israeli Lawmakers Debate 'Corrupt' Kosher Industry," January 18, 2017, Internet: <http://jpupdates.com/2017/01/18/israeli-lawmakers-debate-corrupt-kosher-industry/>.

incentives were allocated in the community budgets to combat the unauthorized slaughter of animals.[472]

Pressure to conform to social norms was all-pervasive. Shtetl life was far more regimented that Polish communal life in the countryside.

> Every shtetl had to have its own Sabbath *klapper*, a sort of "town crier," for want of a better term. The *klapper's* duty was to hurry from door to door in the Jewish neighbourhood on Friday before sunset and *klap*, or tap, several times with a wooden mallet on the doors and shutters of Jewish shops to remind the shopkeepers of the imminent start of the Sabbath and summon them for evening prayers. The *klapper* would rap harder on the shutters of shops whose keepers were prone to be lax with their time-keeping, urging them to conclude their business. The latter were tempted to take advantage of the last-minute trade prior to the onset of the Sabbath at sundown, when all manual work must cease, when trading and the handling of money is not permitted.[473]

Getting around these Sabbath restrictions required ruses or stealth. An account from Iwaniska near Opatów states:

> All the Jewish stores closed on Shabbos and Jewish holidays. But in some cases you could still get something even when the store was not open. You walked in through the back door and picked up something without paying for it. So money did not change hands. Right after the holiday you paid the bill.[474]

Those in the community who did not conform to the strict decrees usually could not count on understanding, as there was no tradition of tolerance in the ghetto. This often gave rise to conflict, retaliation, and even altercations for non-observant Jews. The following examples are illustrative:

> There was some religiously based excitement, but it happened among the Jews themselves. Once a group of young Jews from the city of Zamość arrived unexpectedly in Izbica on the Sabbath—without caps and on bicycles. This was too much for Izbica; they were chased out under a hail of stones by their Orthodox brethren.[475]

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[472] Sławomir Mańko, "Żydzi międzyrzeccy w okresie Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej w świetle dokumentów Archiwum Państwowego w Lublinie," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów,* no. 2 (2006): 73–78. As pointed out in a study on the town of Chmielnik, the Jewish community derived the vast majority of its income from slaughter charges and ritual butchers were, along with rabbis, the best paid employees in the community. See Marek Maciągowski and Piotr Krawczyk, *The Story of Jewish Chmielnik* (Kielce: XYZ and Town and Municipality Office in Chmielnik, 2007), 92. In Kleczew, "Between 1919 and 1936, customer payments for ritual slaughter brought in 48%–64% of the kehilla's total income; in most years, depending on the season, the two sources [ritual slaughter and membership dues] together accounted for 80%–100% of the revenue." See Głowacka-Penczyńska, Kawski, and Mędykowski, *The First to Be Destroyed*, 117. Those Jews who sought to subvert the impact of the kosher tax, often for economic reasons, were subjected to community-sanctioned harassment. Jankiel Kulawiec from Łosice recalled that someone informed on his father to the rabbi because he purchased non-kosher meat, which cost a third of what kosher meat cost. See the testimony of Jankiel Kulawiec, 2004, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/jankiel-kulawiec>.

[473] Katz, *Gone to Pitchipoï,* 6–7.

[474] Yechiel Eisenberg (as told to Norton Taichman), "My Life in Poland (1922–1949)," The Ivansk Project e-Newsletter, Issue Number 16, January–February 2006, 8.

[475] Thomas Toivi Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor: A Story of Survival* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 10.

> We had this favorite holiday place called Kamiensk [Kamieńsk], near Radomsko, where we regularly spent the summer holidays. And one Friday I was cycling from there to Radomsko … I'm passing the synagogue and I see small boys starting to throw stones at me, that I'm offending their feelings. And I didn't realize, didn't know it was forbidden to cycle on Friday night.[476]

> Rabbi Feiwel Singer, of Ostrow-Mazowiecki [Ostrów Mazowiecki] … was arrested on the evening of Yom Kippur, with five leading members of his congregation, for inciting his congregation against a Jewish hairdresser in the town, who keeps his shop open on Saturdays. As a result of his agitation, a group of Jews proceeded to the shop on Saturday after the reading of the Law in the synagogue and smashed the windows and mirrors. On the intervention of the Union of Rabbis in Poland, the Chief State Attorney has ordered the rabbi's release.[477]

> I was born in 1930 in a small town called Narol, a typical Galician town in eastern Poland. The nearest large city was Tomaszow-Lubelski [Tomaszów Lubelski]. The majority of the population was Jewish, and the few Poles who lived there spoke Yiddish. …
>
> My father was different from the other Jews in town in that he was not religious, only traditional. He agreed that I stop attending heder, and because of that decision, he had a lot of quarrels with the local Jews. The quarrels became worse as time went by. I remember that once, they even denounced us to the Polish authorities, who came to search our home.[478]

When youths from the Jewish soccer team in Szczebrzeszyn secretly went by wagon to a neighbouring town to play a match with a Christian team on the afternoon of the Sabbath, an incensed crowd gathered when they returned. The fathers took their sons home and gave them a severe thrashing for violating the Sabbath.[479]

As we have seen, Poles could also find themselves on the receiving end of Jewish violence. Jews were often far more at risk from fellow Jews than from the Christian population. Incidents of communal

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[476] Testimony of Apolonia Starzec, June 2006, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/apolonia-starzec>.

[477] "Polish Rabbi Arrested for Inciting Congregation Against Sabbath Desecrating Barber," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency,* January 6, 1932.

[478] Testimony of Avraham Hartman in Denise Nevo and Mira Berger, eds., *We Remember: Testimonies of Twenty-four Members of the Kibbutz Megiddo who Survived the Holocaust* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1994), 220.

[479] Aharon Schrift, "The Match," in Shuval, *The Szczebrzeszyn Memorial Book,* 25–27. The author recalled: "My father rolled me over, and he flayed me on my behind with his belt until I became black and blue. I could not sit for days. My yelling could be heard out in the middle of the street."

violence, which were all too frequent, were, however, seldom reported to the local authorities.[480] Nor were many other crimes recorded in the criminal registers.[481] It would be wrong, therefore, to attribute to Poles a particular propensity for violence. The generation born after the First World War was highly politicized and Jewish political life became particularly volatile. Various Jewish political organizations, as well as the heavily Jewish communist movement, had their own paramilitary structures, or militias, consisting of hundreds of *shturmers* ("storm troopers").[482] If the need arose, they could mobilize several thousand armed supporters, including members of trade unions and the criminal underworld which, according to

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[480] Leibush Glomb, from the village of Grabowiec near Zamość, writes that the Jews "enjoyed not only some sort of religious and spiritual autonomy, but could also carry on their business amongst themselves without interference of secular authorities. When they had quarrels, they went to their Rabbi." See Sh. Kanc, ed., *Memorial Book Grabowitz* (Tel Aviv: Grabowiec Society in Israel, 1975), 12–13 (English section). For examples of chicaneries see Szczepański, *Społeczność żydowska Mazowsza w XIX–XX wieku,* 317. Another example: "Frysztak received a reputation as a fanatical place in the area. The community followed the extreme precepts of orthodox Jewry and did not tolerate the slightest deviation. There was not even a breath of Zionism in the shtetl. Several young yeshiva students tried to open a non-religious library in the hamlet and borrowed some books from nearby Strzyzow [Strzyżów]. The religious opponents took matters in their hands and set the place on fire. Following serious discussions within the community to prevent the matter from reaching the courts, the culprits admitted their deeds and promised to pay damages to the library in Strzyzow." See "Frysztak," in *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin,* vol. 3 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1984), 295–98, translated as *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol3_00295.html>.

[481] The son of a well-to-do fur merchant in Radom recalls: "After a burglary, we, like other such victims, would go to a certain tavern in town notorious for its underworld clientele. We would wait until we were approached by one of the regulars who asked us what kind of merchandise we were seeking. … We then told him what was missing and he would invariably tell us to come back the following day. When we did, we would have a 'discussion' with the thieves' 'representatives' and negotiate a price in exchange for the return of the mechandise. … Going to the police was a 'breach of faith,' and the thieves could no longer negotiate with us." See Jack Werber with William B. Helmreich, *Saving Children: Diary of a Buchenwald Survivor and Rescuer* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 8–10.

[482] Leonard Rowe, "Jewish Self-Defense: A Response to Violence," in Fishman, *Studies on Polish Jewry, 1919–1939,* 105–49. Rowe argues that the formation of Jewish militias was largely in response to Polish anti-Semitic violence and that they engaged only in "self-defence" or "preventive" actions. Rowe extols their virtues to the heavens: "Their moral values and mode of living were expected to be impeccable, and these expectations were usually met. Indeed, there was insistence on complete honesty, integrity, and ethical purity." However, the examples he cites, as well as those gathered here, clearly indicate that the various Jewish militias had their own independent *raison d'être* and were more often battling each other (and the communists), than Polish groups. This was especially so in small towns were Polish-organized confrontations with Jews were rather rare. Rowe makes the following revealing comment about a Jewish self-defence group: "The Ordener-grupe leaped into action when the picketing of Jewish stores became too flagrant." Ibid., 119. Jewish sources also confirm that members of the Jewish underworld were also conscripted to repel attacks by "anti-Semites." See Bernard Goldsein, *The Stars Bear Witness* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1950), 15; Honig, *Reunions,* 49.

Israeli historian Mordechai Zalkin, who has researched this topic extensively, was dominated by Jews.[483] (It is not surprising, therefore, that words of Jewish origin describing various types of criminal activities

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[483] According to in-depth studies by historian Mordechai Zalkin of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, until the Second World War, the underworld in Warsaw, Wilno and other large Polish cities was largely in the hands of Jewish syndicates: "Jews could be found at almost all levels of underworld activity, from the individual thief to gangs that numbered more than 100 members. The large organizations operated in the cities, which they divided into sectors among themselves. Each organization had a charter, a clear hierarchy and internal courts, and its work was divided according to different areas, such as theft, protection money, prostitution, pickpocketing and murder. The art of crime was treated seriously, as it was a major source of livelihood for many people." See Kobi Ben-Simhon, "World of our (god)fathers," *Haaretz,* October 21, 2004. See also Adam Kopciowski, "Gangi przedwojennego Lublina: Żyd myślał, Polak szedł na brudną robotę," *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Lublin edition), March 25, 2015.

Every city and town, big and small, had a thriving Jewish underground. Involvement of Jews in criminal gangs has a rich history already from the 19th century. A notorious and violent gang of horse thieves operating out of Zambrów in the 1870–80s, which co8unted perhaps 90 members including some Poles, stole horses far away from the town, brought them to Zambrów, where they were quartered in the stables of large Jewish-owned taverns, and then taken across the border to Germany. Among their many crimes were other kinds of robberies, assaults, and even murders. When the gang was finally broken up by the police and brought to trial in Łomża in 1887, among the accused were 33 Jews from Zambrów, of whom 23 were found guilty, including prominent and respected tavern owners. See Yom-Tov Levinsky, "The Zambrow Gangsters," in Yom-Tov Levinsky, ed., *The Zambrow Memorial Book: In Memory of a Martyred Community That Was Exterminated* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2010), 19–20, Internet: <http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/z/zyb-01.htm>. Moving on to the 20th century, David Ben-Gurion (Grün), who was jailed in Warsaw in 1905, recalled: "That was the first time that I ever came into contact with the dregs of society. I was shaken to the core at the language and behavior. I never had the slightest notion that such people ever existed. … The thing that shook me most was that these criminals were Jews." See Dan Kurzman, *Ben-Gurion: Prophet of Fire* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 67. For a vivid description of Jewish crime in pre-World War I Warsaw, see Scott Ury, *Barricades and Banners: The Revolution of 1905 and the Transformation of Warsaw Jewry* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012), 76–81. Even money collected for a charitable fund for victims of the Białystok pogrom of 1906 were misappropriated. Ibid., 79. The historian Isaiah Trunk describes Łódź's Bałuty district as the home of the "Łódź Jewish underworld." It was especially known as a haven for pickpockets, with the so-called chief of the pickpockets being one of the chief gangsters. See Isaiah Trunk, *Łódź Ghetto: A History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006), 350, passim. As the Krynki memorial book shows, the Jewish underworld was also active outside large cities and towns: (1) "There were in Krynik [sic] two brothers who were the leaders of all the thieves in the area: They were called the 'Akhim' and all the merchants, villagers, landholders, dairy farmers and tenant farmers had to absolutely deal with the 'Akhim' and reward them." (2) "Krynki, like other towns, had its share of dark people, the inferiors of the Jewish community, operators and thieves who would steal anything from a hinge to a horse. The thieves were grouped in gangs, each with its 'rabbi' and they never betrayed each other and never took over each other's 'living.' One of the famous ones was Henoch Hillke's. Once he arrived in Zelwe [Zelwa] for a fair and made good 'business,' filling his pockets with the merchandise. In the end people looked around and knew that a Krinker was there at the fair. They immediately chased after him with a couple of good horses and Henoch was brought back to Zelve to the rabbi. They would not give a Jew over into gentile hands, unless they were absolutely certain that he was the thief. The rabbi ordered a hearing. So he was brought to the synagogue so that he could swear on a Torah scroll. Henoch went up to Holy Ark, opened the curtains and in a loud voice screamed: 'Torah! Torah! Defend your honor! People want a hearing for *Reb* Henoch son of Hillke —he is accused of being a thief!' The people heard it all and they were very frightened and *Reb* Henoch son of Hillel was set free. From then on the name 'Krinker Thief' meant smart." That source also mentions a Jewish police informer named Yankl Kopel, who "would get money from everyone he could and if people did not cough up he would inform on them saying this one is a Communist." When the Polish government found out about his antics, he was arrested but managed to escape and hide. See D. [Dov] Rabin, ed., *Memorial Book of Krynki,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Krynki/Krynki.html>, translation of *Pinkas Krynki* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Krynki in Israel and the Diaspora, 1970), 193, 210. That source also mentions Yosel Lieder, a "meat tax" holder who "was worse than the auditors." He also owned a distillery and "stole the excise taxes, as much as he wanted, and nobody could do anything about it." Ibid., 195. In Kowel, "A yeshivah graduate headed one such group in Kovel's underworld; Zajdel was his name. He was a very romantic figure; he had great success with women. I remember him as a smart, well-educated man. Whenever there was a major robbery, the victims would turn to him rather than to the police, and after he was paid a considerable fee, the lost property would materialize. … And there was another one, Sieroszewski." See the testimony of Michal Friedman, 2004, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/michal-friedman>. Jewish criminal gangs of horse thieves operated in the countryside and, as mentioned elsewhere, Jews often perpetrated insurance scams, torching their own insured property or that of other Jews to collect

are rather frequent in the Polish language, thus attesting to the prominent role played by Jews in the criminal underworld.[484])

The Bund had an impressive militia, as did its youth organization, whose uniformed *Tsukunft-shturem* was modeled after the Austrian *Schutzbund.* Its largest and most violent clashes were with the Communists, not Polish nationalists. Bernard Goldstein, who organized and headed the Bundist militia in Warsaw, escaped an attempt on his life in 1929 after the Communists passed a death sentence on him. Goldstein recalled:

> the militia often found it necessary to resist Communist terror. In their campaign to split the labor movement and to destroy the Socialists, the Communists stopped at nothing. They used intimidation freely. They would often send groups armed with revolvers to break up workers' meetings. Once they even attempted to disperse a national convention of the Jewish Transport Workers' Union with gunfire. They did not shrink from a shooting attack of the famous Medem Sanatorium for Children in Myedzeshyn [Miedzeszyn], near Warsaw. The attacks were carried out by toughs who received from the Communists an ideological justification for their own predilection for violence.
>
> The Bundist militia was angry and strong enough to give the Communist attackers a lesson which would have driven from their minds any desire to continue their disruptive activity.[485]

Retaliations against radical Polish movements are also noted. After some explosives damaged the Bund headquarters in Warsaw,

> Bernard [Goldstein] organized a group of Bundists and Polish Socialists who went to the Falanga headquarters on Bratska [Bracka] Street in the heart of the Polish district and smashed it to bits. Everyone found there was soundly beaten.[486]

In a penetrating review of Bernard Goldstein's memoir *Twenty Years with the Jewish Labor Bund,*[487] Jan Peczkis described a number of little-known aspects of the Bund's policies and activities.

> Goldstein features much interesting information. For instance, the Bund demanded equal rights for Jews as well as special national rights (including Yiddish language and Yiddish culture) for Jews. (pp. 76, 273–274). Obviously, these anti-assimilationists wanted to have their cake and eat it too: To be part of Poland and not part of Poland at the same time. …

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[484] Among the many words borrowed from Yiddish are: *machlojka* ("swindle"), *melina* (thieves' "den" or "hang-out"), *sitwa* ("gang"), *szaber* (noun) and *szabrować* (verb) ("loot"), *szacher* ("swindle, cheat"), *szwindel* ("swindle"). See Kazimierz Ożóg, "Ślady kultury żydowskiej w języku polskim: Język polski odbija życie codzienne i kulturę Żydów polskich," *Kwartalnik Edukacyjny,* no. 60 (2010): 3–11, Internet: <https://ke.pcen.pl/images/stories/ke/Kwartalnik60.pdf>.

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[485] Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness,* 10–11.

[486] Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness,* 13. Curiously, Goldstein avoided punishment for organizing violent activities, even though he was arrested once. Ibid., 16.

[487] Bernard Goldstein, *Twenty Years with the Jewish Labor Bund: A Memoir of Interwar Poland* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Perdue university press, 2016), originally published in Yiddish in 1960 by Unser Tsait in New York.

The anti-Semitic violence, conducted by some militant Polish nationalists (e. g, the ONR: Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny), has been greatly hyped in Jewish publications (the best-known of which is probably Celia S. Heller: *On the Edge of Destruction*. See my review). In contrast, the much-greater largely-Jewish Communist violence against Jews has largely disappeared down an Orwellian memory hole. [It does not fit the standard left-wing-academic narrative of the Communists as noble, reformist-driven idealists, and it does not fit the standard Judeocentric narrative of the Jews as solely victims and—what's more—victims of the big, bad Polish Catholics.]

Archival evidence proves that by far the greatest amount of violence, in pre-WWII Poland, came from the Communists (of whom Jews were a large fraction), and not from the ONR (oenerowcy).

…

This work is a startling exception to the tendency of Jewish authors to ignore Jew-on-Jew violence. Author Goldstein details the Communist violence, against Jews, in too many pages to mention. However, it is particularly worth noting the many times that Communist violence became lethal, especially with the use of firearms. (e. g, pp. 171–173, 189–191, 197–199, 202, 227, 283, 313, 319–321, 343, 346).

During WWII, the Soviets murdered the main Bundist leaders, Henryk Ehrlich and Viktor [Wiktor] Alter. [Ironically, we commonly hear the exculpation, by neo-Stalinist authors such as Jan T. Gross, for Jewish support of Communism in 1939–1941 and 1944–on, as caused by "murderous Polish anti-Semitism". Lo and behold, many Jews had no problems supporting Communism in spite of the much-greater-murderousness of the Communists against Jews.]

The Bund could dish out violence as well as receive it. In fact, by the late 1930's, in Warsaw alone, the Bund had a 2,000-man militia. (p. 278). During times of violence, when Bundist members were arrested, other Bundists tried to bribe the freedom of their arrested comrades from the Polish police. (p. 385).

From the beginning, there were differences between leftists on the future of the Jews. For instance, the SDKPil (and part of its Communist successor) and PPS-Lewica (PPS-left) favored Jewish assimilation (p. 343), while the Bund was always anti-assimilationist and separatist. Many otherwise-Comsymp Jews felt that the Soviet Communist movement (especially the Bolsheviks) were insufficiently deferential to Jewish-specific demands. …

The remainder of the Bund—the vast majority—continued an at-worst distant admiration of the Communists. They spoke of the Bolshevik revolution as an "example of the politics the Socialist parties should adapt in all countries" and as something "immensely significant … (and moreover) it was possible to have a revolutionary-Socialist oriented International, without its splitting politics, with Socialists and Communists working together." (pp. 41–42).

In 1920, the "21 Conditions", most of them stipulated by Lenin, specified the means by which Socialist parties could join the Comintern (Communist Third International). (p. 61). By then, Medem's "rightist" group, evidently never significant to begin with, was essentially gone. The centrist faction of the Bund accepted 16 of the 21 points, and the larger leftist majority of the Bund was ready to accept 19.5 of the 21 points. The mere 1.5-point difference was all that prevented the Bund from joining the Comintern (p. 57): *That* is how close mainstream Bundism was to Communism! Even then, part of the Bund, the Kombund, split-off from the Bund and joined the Communists, contributing to the rancorous ongoing Communist attempt to bring the Bund into total submission to Communism. (pp. 57–58).

By way of introduction, the student of Polish-Jewish relations is probably familiar with Polish Cardinal August Hlond's much-quoted and much-maligned 1936 statement on "Jews as freethinkers". While Goldstein does not talk about religion, he does shed some indirect light on the Bund as a factor in the growing atheization of Poland's Jews.

Let us consider Bundist provocations against religion. Although Goldstein describes the Bund merely as "secular", it soon becomes obvious that it shared much of the militant atheism of the Communists. In what can be nothing less than a calculated insult to religious Jews, the BUND started to print its daily newspaper, the *Folkstsaytung*, on the Sabbath (Saturday). Moreover, young Bundists, the *Tsukunfistn*, deliberately went out into religious Jewish neighborhoods, and loudly awoke the sleeping religious Jews on the Sabbath morning, while hawking the newspaper. When some of the understandably-offended Sabbath practitioners reacted with violence against the young Bundists, the Bund whined about "Hasidic terror" and (what else?) the "right of free speech", and sent its militia to defend the young Bundist provocateurs. (pp. 149–151). Goldstein makes heroes out of them.

Whatever the professed differences between Communists and Bundists, actions speak louder than words. They show the Bund's true colors.

The Bund joined with the Communists in defaming the Polish nation. It repeated the stock Communist propaganda about Poland the aggressor in the 1920 Polish-Bolshevik War, and Poland as a (what else?) imperialistic nation. (pp. 47–54). It also mouthed the canard that equated Bereza Kartuska with the Nazi concentration camps. (p. 299).

In Poland, Bundists had no problem marching in May Day parades, right alongside openly-Communist units. (p. 31). Moreover, this was no temporary fad: It persisted into the 1930's. (p. 255). Bundist organizations, such as the Kultur-Lige (Culture League), welcomed Communist members. (p. 209). In addition, the Bundist and Communist labor movements continued to overlap: The Bund did not require its members to leave Communist-controlled labor unions. (p. 202).

Perhaps most galling of all, Bundist and other Jewish lawyers sided with the Communists. Bernard Goldstein comments, "It was a principle among the Socialist lawyers that, despite the anti-Socialist assaults, invective, and murderousness on the part of the Communists, they should nevertheless be defended in court. The Socialist lawyers, and even some liberal ones, used to do this pro bono or for a minimal honorarium." (p. 228). Clearly, then, by this very act alone, the Bundists were allied with the Communists in the attempted subversion of the Polish state.

The Zionist Revisionist student movement, by far the largest Jewish student movement in interwar Poland, and especially its militant wing Betar, a Fascist-leaning paramilitary organization that counted more than 40,000 members in 1934, carried out verbal and physical attacks on the fairly small Jewish assimilationist student movement because of its promotion of Polishness, contacts with Christian Poles and loyalty to the Polish State.[488] Zionist student "corporations," like others, were also quite adept at organizing "counterattacks" against Polish students:

Armed with heavy canes, the *Betaria* members under the command of the burly manager of the Student House would make forays into the vicinity of the University [of Warsaw] and partake in defense brawls. One of the counterattacks remained in my memory for a long time. … Someone in the fraternity thought of a strategy that would teach a lesson to the more aggressive hooligans. Members of the *Betaria* armed with heavy canes waited at the gate of the University and soon engaged a group of students from the anti-Semitic *Endek* organization. At a certain moment the *Betaria* fighters seemed to lose their nerve and started retreating, but at the same time jeering the hooligans who pursued them with a renewed vigor. The retreating

[488] Daniel Pater, "Żydowski Akademicki Ruch Korporacyjny w Polsce w latach 1898–1939," *Dzieje Najnowsze,* no. 3 (2002): 12–16.

> forces managed to lure their pursuers toward a Jewish neighborhood where there was a concentration of tough Jewish teamsters who were used to handling heavy loads. The teamsters who had been alerted to the stratagem waited in the gates of houses and suddenly the situation took a different turn. The retreating *Betaria* boys turned around and with the added force of teamsters faced the pursuers, who only now perceived the trap. The beating the *Endeks* received made them more cautious, and from then on they confined their actions nearer to their own territory.[489]

The level of mutual hatred among these various factions ran high. As one Jew from Warsaw recalled,

> You should have been here, in the Jewish district, before the war on May 1: on Gęsia Street, on Franciszkańska Street … Hashomer Hatzair walked separately, the left and right wings of Poalei Zion walked separately, Hehalutz walked separately. Hashomer carried their slogan: "Down with the Revisionists and Fascists." Bund walked with their banner: "Down with Hashomer Hatzair—Fascists," "Down with Beitar—Fascists," "Down with Hehalutz—Fascists." That's the way it was.[490]

Even Jewish high schools were not immune from poltically motivated strife, as a student of Tuszia Gymansium in Wilno recalled: "Within the gymnasium there were intensive social, political and cultural activity and most of the students were members of youth movements. The discussions were very vociferous, and sometimes developed into open fights." The annual elections for the student council was accompanied by virulent and "sometimes violent" debates.[491]

It is not surprising therefore to learn that Jewish community leaders, despite pressures by the community to keep such matters out of the hands of the state, often sought the intervention of the Polish authorities when they sensed a serious internal threat to their communal life. The rabbi of Szydłów wrote to the *starosta* (county supervisor or district administrative officer):

> On behalf of the complaining parents of the entire Jewish community, I would be greatly obliged if you would kindly put an end to the impudence of the young, and not allow them to enter the Hehaluts [Pioneer]

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[489] Nordon, *The Education of a Polish Jew,* 85. For additional examples of "preventive actions," see Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy, 1918–1955,* 82–86.

[490] Testimony of Józef Grynblatt cited in Anka Grupińska with Bartek Choroszewski, "O obrazie powstania w getcie, Żydowskim Związku Wojskowym i książce Mariana Apfelbauma," *Tygodnik Powszechny,* June 29, 2003. A Jew who lived in Kaunas described the situation there prior to the war: "The competing fund-raising drives of the various Zionist factions were reaching their peak. … A great controversy developed. Should the funds be used to acquire more land in Palestine … or should they be used for the financing of illegal immigration … At school, the controversy took the form of fist fights resulting from the students grabbing and breaking the collection boxes, while the adults gave their support to various political groups whose conflicting aims and views were disseminated through vituperative articles published in Jewish newspapers. The heated arguments and the violent enmities that ensued often created rifts or even break-ups of family and friendships. … When my father discovered that I had become a member of the Betar, he beat me severely, after chasing me around the dinner table, and called me 'dirty dog, Nazi!' It was quite common in those days for Jews to call their political opponents Nazis, just as it is today in Israel when 'the Likud accuses Labor of using Stuermer-style Nazi propaganda in its Histadrut [Workers' Union] election campaign'." See David Ben-Dor, *The Darkest Chapter* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996), 27–29.

[491] Testimony of Baruch Borka Szub, Internet: <http://sztetl.org.pl>.

> organization, which is undesirable for the Szydłów settlement, as it leads to the corruption of the youth, which is prohibited by our religion.[492]

Orthodox Jews complained to the authorities in Chmielnik about the fact that Communists had infiltrated a slate of Jewish candidates for the municipal elections.[493] However, secular influences, including Communust ones, had made deep inroads within the Jewish community in the interwar period. These new ideas did not necessarily represent a repudiation of Judaism, rather they were regarded by many as a secularized mutation of conventional Jewish thinking.

> While studying the teachings of Marx and Engels, Lassale and Medem, the Jewish poor in the shtetl saw how smoothly the new teachings fitted into the words of the ancient prophets. … Many of the young Bundists from the crowded, poor streets of the shtetl, educated on the Talmud, didn't actually have such a long way to go. Later, when the Bund became a powerful party with its own candidates for the Polish parliament and municipal bodies, thousands of religious Jews gave their votes to those "godless socialists." They were not frightened of the sharp slogans, for they sounded familiar. They had heard them from the prophets.[494]

In business dealings too Jews favoured their own and discriminated against Poles by promoting preferential hiring for Jews (rabbis were known to exhort Jewish employers to dismiss Poles and hire Jews in their place), by boycotting Polish businesses, and by resorting to various unfair practices such as undercutting prices below cost, intimidation, coercion, refusing to lease commercial premises to Poles, cutting off supplies, and other "sharp" business practices.[495] In a study on Jewish tavern keeping in the late 1700s through the mid- and late-1800s, historian Glenn Dynner writes:

> Contrary to Werner Sombart's claim that Jews were the first to be committed to the "spirit of capitalism" and the principles of free trade, monopolistic practices and ethnic protectionism were as yet unquestioned in

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[492] Regina Renz, "Small Towns in Inter-War Poland," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 17 (2004): 151. Also Maciągowski and Krawczyk, *The Story of Jewish Chmielnik,* 102.

[493] Maciągowski and Krawczyk, *The Story of Jewish Chmielnik,* 102.

[494] Shulman, *The Old Country,* 25–26.

[495] Swindling consumers was a longstanding and fairly common practice. A Russian officer filed the following report from mid-19th century Brańsk: "kasha [buckwheat] made from wheat … is a significant branch of industry held by burghers. The color of kasha id gray-yellow-green. Jews fake the kasha, add egg yolks to the forged product, and sell it for more than the natural kasha." See Zbigniew Romaniuk, *The Jewish Community of Brańsk, 1795–1914,* The American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies, Internet: <http://www.aapjstudies.org/103. For more recent example, see Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955,* 91–92 (Częstochowa); Gontarczyk, *Pogrom?,* 31–32; Bechta, *Narodowo radykalni,* 179; Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto,* 94 (Jewish assimilationists decried the lack of commercial ethics on the part of Jewish merchants). Since Jewish merchants in Parczew effectively prevented Christians from operating stands in the local market, the town's authorities constructed a commercial centre in the town square. See Bechta, *Pogrom czy odwet?,* Chapter 1. A Jewish woman who did not have a Jewish appearance had to provide assurances that she was Jewish before she was hired as a bakery manager. See Wrobel, *My Life My Way,* 40–41. Another memoir describes Jewish economic life in the town of Kłobuck, near Częstochowa, as follows: "A number of Jews also made a living by smuggling goods to and from Germany across the border, particularly tobacco, saccharin and silk. One Jewish entrepreneur was known for shooing his geese into the air just before the German frontier and gathering them up on the other side, where he could sell them for twice the amount without having to pay toll charges at the border." See Smith, *Treblinka Survivor,* 40.

Polish Jewish society. Age-old communal ordinances forbade Jews to compete with and outbid fellow Jews (with limited success, as we shall see), while other ordinances attempted to protect the Jewish community from external competition "lest money fall into non-Jewish hands." …

The same ethnic protectionism increasingly prevailed in the liquor trade. … While resorting to a curse [against would-be Polish competitors] may seem extreme, the increase in non-Jewish competitiveness was perceived as an act of aggression against the Jewish community, suggesting an economic aspect to the emerging traditionalism.[496]

[496] Dynner, *Yankel's Tavern,* 146–47.

Thus the slogan pushed by Polish nationalists, "Buy from Poles,"[497] had an ingrained and longstanding

[497] The slogan "*Swój do swego*" ("Each to his own") was launched by the National Democrats after the 1912 election to the Russian Duma in retaliation for Jewish support for a social democrat (of Polish origin) who won in Warsaw, and sat as Russian deputy, over the National Democratic candidate who would have represented the Polish Circle and Polish interests, thus leaving the ancient Polish capital without a Polish voice in the Duma. As Theodore Weeks points out, the short-lived boycott it ushered in did not gain broad support and economically, was not particularly successful. See Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism,* 166, 169. In the small town of Szczebrzeszyn, the leading political instigator of boycotts openly patronized Jewish shops. Picketing was sporadic and the relatively few Polish-owned shops acquired their goods from Jewish wholesalers. See Zygmunt Klukowski, *Zamojszczyzna,* vol. 1: *1918–1943* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, 2007), 46, 53. The notion that Jews were being squeezed out of the economic life of Poland has no basis in fact. In Kielce, for example, their strength in commerce increased from 45.5% in 1919 to 61.4% in 1938–1939. See Leszek Bukowski, Andrzej Jankowski, and Jan Żaryn, eds., *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego,* vol. 2 (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), 13. The slogan was again popularized by Polish nationalists during the economic crisis in the 1930s. This was not, however, a novel or indigenously Polish movement. Boycotts developed as a tool to defend or further political or economic interests, and continue to be used as such. Yedida Kanfer traces the boycott to its origins in 19th century Ireland. English land agent Charles Boycott became the subject of "the boycott" by Irish tenant farmers in their struggle for fair rent prices. There was nothing remarkable in the boycott even in foreign-ruled Poland at the time. Poles boycotted the Prussians' heavy-handed agricultural policies, as in 1901. Soon thereafter, Jews in the Łódź area boycotted German goods. See Yedida Kanfer, "'Each for His Own': Economic Nationalism in Łódź, 1864–1914," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, 1815–1918,* vol. 27: *Jews in the Kingdom of Poland, 1815–1918* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2015), 156, 172, 173–74. Historian Livia Rothkirchen writes about currency of the boycott in the latter part of the 19th century in the Czech lands where anti-Jewish unrest continually broke out in Prague and other parts of Bohemia and in Moravia, even though Jews formed a little more than one percent of the population: "With the upsurge of nationalism the growing political pressure soon focused on economy and business: in 1892 a countryside campaign was launched against German and Jewish merchants under the slogan of "each to his own" (*Svůj k svému*); rioting and looting occurred in towns and villages such as Kladno and Kutná Hora. … Further disturbances occurred in the wake of the 1897 Badeni language ordinances … [The anti-Jewish disturbances were also directed against poor Jews in their traditional district of Josefov in Prague, and the Austrian government was forced to impose a state of emergency in order to restore peace and order.] … Two years later … new disturbances instigated by Czech nationalists directed against Germans and Jews broke out in many localities both in Bohemia and Moravia. … The turmoil in 1897 and subsequently in 1899 generated a popular outpouring of anti-Semitism." See Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia,* 17. A ritual murder trial was held after Czech nationalist circles fingered a Jewish journeyman-shoemaker in the death of a Christian girl. The Jew was condemned to death in two trials in 1889 and 1900. In total, there were twelve such trials in the Austro-Hungarian Empire between 1867 and 1914. See Heiko Haumann, *A History of East European Jews* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2002), 200–1. Accusations of ritual murder surfaced again in September 1930 in Subcarpathian Ruthenia, the easternmost part of Czechoslovakia, in September 1930 when two Jews were accused of using the blood of Christians for ritual purposes. Because of pressure from Jewish organizations and adverse international reaction, the prosecution was stopped, as it was in a few other cases of this kind that emerged in Ruthenia later. See Marie Crhová, "Jewish Politics in Central Europe: The Case of the Jewish Party in Interwar Czechoslovakia," *Jewish Studies at the Central European University: Yearbook,* vol. 2 (1999–2001): 271–301. Although laced with anti-Semitism, Czech nationalism, which could be as belligerent and nasty as any, had primarily an anti-German focus. See Nancy M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007). As under Austrian rule before World War I, Germans and Czechs took turns vandalizing each others' schools in the new Czechoslovakia. Ibid., 161. When riots broke out in Prague in November 1920, following reports that a Czech school had been forcible closed down, both Germans and Jews were attacked. See Ferguson, *The War of the World,* 173. By the early 1930s, Sudeten Germans were boycotting Jewish shops. See Ferguson, *The War of the World,* 172. A boycott of Jewish businesses also caught on in Ireland, even though the Jewish population was microscopic, and targets were hard to come by. In Limerick, number of Jews increased from 35, to 90 and then to 130 in 1888, 1892, and 1896 respectively. Easter Sunday of 1884 saw the first of what were to be a series of sporadic violent anti-Semitic attacks and protests. The wife of Lieb Siev and his child were injured by stones and her house damaged by an angry crowd. In 1892 two families were beaten and a stoning took place on 24 November 1896. In 1904, an economic boycott was waged against the small Jewish community for over two years. It was accompanied by a number of assaults, stone throwing and intimidation, which caused many Jews to leave the city. Anti-Jewish riots also broke out in Cork in 1894. See Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998). In the

counterpart in the way Jews had managed their business affairs for centuries,[498] as well as in ongoing communal propaganda. According to a non-Polish author, "About 1907 they [Jews] began a boycotting policy against Poles, forbidding their countrymen, for instance, to consult Polish doctors, and in 1909 when the Poles proclaimed a boycott of German products in Poland, the boycott failed because the Jews lent their support to German commerce."[499] In June 1912, the populist Yiddish-language newspaper in Łódź, *Lodzher togblat,* renewed calls of previous years for exclusively "Jewish factories."[500] An appeal issued by a Jewish Farmers' Cooperative (probably in the early 1920s) reads: "It is also necessary to point out that by buying our dairy products marketed under the name of khema ['butter' in Hebrew] you are supporting the productive Jewish farmers and are performing a national duty by helping the Jewish farmers to keep their land."[501] Other minorities, such as the Ukrainians, also set up ethnic-based cooperatives and conducted economic boycotts that entailed setting up blocking the entrances of Jewish shops, smashing windows, and plundering property.[502] It is not surprising, therefore, that Poles did likewise, given their weak position in commerce, trade and industry. Vladimir Jabotinsky came to understand Polish-Jewish antagonism as the product of economic rivalry in an overcrowded povery-stricken nation.[503] As he points out, the Polish cooperative phenomenon "has little to do with any conscious will to harm the Jews qua Jews, but is rather inherent in the very nature of the development. It would oust the rural shopkeeper as surely as if he were an American or a China-man; but he happens to be Jew, who has nowhere to go."[504] Jabotinsky does not view the economic rivalry of the interwar period solely in racist terms either: "there was no other way out: 'it's either my son or the Jew's son, for there is

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[498] Jewish historian Jacob Katz, who rejects Werner Sombart's contention that Jews were long committed to the principles of free trade, writes, "… many communal ordinances were intended to protect the economic interests of Jewish society from external competition, and this consideration provided a convincing argument, or at least a rationalization, for maintaining monopolies among members of Jewish society: Unrestrained competition was ultimately to the benefit of the non-Jews upon whom the Jews depended for their livelihood. In order 'not to lose Jewish money', it was necessary for Jews to limit competition among themselves." According to Katz, the foregoing principle was based on the Talmudic phrase, "The Torah cares for the money of the Jews" (YOMA, folio 39a). See Katz, *Tradition and Crisis,* 50, 278.

[499] E. F. Benson, *The White Eagle of Poland* (New York: George H. Doran, 1919), 76.

[500] Yedida Kanfer, "'Each for his Own': Economic Nationalism in Łódź, 1864–1914," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 27: *Jews in the Kingdom of Poland, 1815–1918* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2015), 176.

[501] Fishman, *Studies on Polish Jewry, 1919–1939,* 284.

[502] Maksym Hon, "Konflikt ukraińsko-żydowski na ziemiach zachodnioukraińskich w latach 1935–1939," in Krzysztof Jasiewicz, ed., *Świat niepożegnany: Żydzi na dawnych ziemiach wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej w XVIII–XX wieku* (Warsaw and London: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Rytm, and Polonia Aid Foundation Trust, 2004), 245–47; Maksym Hon, *Iz kryvdoiu na samoti: Ukrainsko–ievreiski vzaiemyny na zakhidnoukrainskykh zemliakh u skladi Polshchi (1935–1939)* (Rivne: Volynski oberehy, 2005), 71, 77–79, 103; Mazur, *Życie polityczne polskiego Lwowa 1918–1939,* 60; Lucyna Kulińska, *Działalność terrorystyczna i sabatażowa nacjonalistycznych organizacji ukraińskich w Polsce w latach 1922–1939* (Kraków: Fundacja Centrum Dokumentacji Czynu Niepodległościowego and Księgarnia Akademicka, 2009), 294–98, 527, 567, 581–82; Zięba, *OUN, UPA i zagłada Żydów,* xxxviii–xxxix.

[503] Heller, *Jabotinsky's Children,* 227.

[504] Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The Jewish War Front* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1940; Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975), 59–60.

only one loaf.'" Jabotinsky adds, "Apart from the hooligan element, there was little actual hatred of Jews in Polish society."[505]

Needless to add, there was no pervasive boycott of Jewish businesses by Poles as otherwise most Jewish businesses would have folded. Conditions on the ground cast matters in a rather different light than that pushed in Jewish nationalist literature. Most Poles shopped at Jewish stores and most farmers traded with Jews, and in many localities the boycott had no impact on Jewish businesses.[506] As survivors from Wierzbnik noted, "since virtually all the stores were owned by Jews, Poles had nowhere else to shop and the economic impact was thus mitigated."[507] The boycott promoted by the National Democrats was even boycotted by those who organized rallies in support of it. The following example is not atypical:

> To generate support for the peasant leaders' policies huge rallies were organized in the marketplace of Kolbuszowa … What provided at least some small comfort to us was the fact that the leaders used my father's store as their headquarters on days when rallies were scheduled. Also they continued to purchase boycotted goods from my father for distribution to the peasants, making certain that these transactions were kept secret.[508]

Moreover, Polish farmers and workers were known to attack those who stood in front of Jewish shops and did not want to let Poles go in.[509]

One should, therefore, not be surprised by the failure of Poles to gain significant economic ground. As Jan Peczkis put it,

> The economic playing field, between Poles and Jews, was very, very far from level. Jewish economic privilege, having lasted so many centuries, had become so entrenched, so variegated,

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[505] Jabotinsky, *The Jewish War Front,* 74.

[506] Poles made practically no inroads as shopkeepers in the town of Pilzno during the interwar period. See Józef Szczeklik, "Żydzi w Pilźnie i ich zagłada," in *Rocznik Tarnowski,* 1995/1996, 223–40, here at 238. Official statistics show that Jews continued to dominate overwhelmingly in all branches of retail and wholesale commerce in Lwów in 1938, with non-Jews making no significant inroads. See Andrij Bezsmertnyi, "Handel lwowski w okresie międzywojennym," *Dzieje najnowsze,* vol. 47, no. 2 (2015): 3–19. See also the reports authored by Jews on conditions in Turobin near Krasnystaw and Wiskitki near Żyrardów: Aleksandra Bańkowska, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawskiego,* vol. 6: *Generalne Gubernatorstwo: Relacje i dokumenty* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, 2012), 147, 599.

[507] Browning, *Remembering Survival,* 21–22.

[508] Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland,* 244. For information about the ineffectiveness of the boycott in Mińsk Mazowiecki, see Samuel Kassow, "The Shtetl in Interwar Poland," in Katz, ed., *The Shtetl,* 137–38. Many Jewish accounts confirm that the growing Christian competition had little impact on Jewish merchants, for example: "two stores were opened in Jaslo [Jasło] by Catholics from near Poznań, but they were not very successful. When university students, back from their vacations, promoted the popular slogan "*Swoj [Swój] do swego*" (Support your own), which advocated the boycott of Jewish businesses, this also failed to have any effect." See Jakub Herzig, "Jasło: The Birth and Death of a Jewish Community in Poland from Its Beginnings to the Holocaust," Internet: <http://home.earthlink.net/~jackherzig/jaslo/>.

[509] See, for example, the testimony of Henryk Umow, July 2004, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/photo/henryk-umow>, where two such incidents are reported in Łosice.

so versatile, and so sophisticated, that it was almost impossible for Poles to even put a dent into it. Poles could hardly ever compete successfully with Jews, and to start businesses.

Historian Rosa Lehmann traces the Poles' economic efforts, with their very modest successes, in Jaśliska near Krosno in Galicia, beginning with some business initiatives, and half-hearted boycotts of Jews, in the 1890s, and then proceeding through the 1930s. She writes,

> The limited involvement of Poles in the local and regional market, apart from the activities of the rural co-operative, which from 1918 were heavily protected by the Roman Catholic Church and the Polish national authorities, can be traced to the lack of a Polish trade network to realize an efficient supply and distribution of merchandise and information. One major advantage of the Jewish merchant was that he had access to such contacts and information, and that, as a rule, he knew his customers. The extent and importance of the local Jewish networks is clear from the accounts of Jewish informants. First, through marriage bonds Jews were able to activate a family network that reached far beyond the confines of the local community. Jewish informants gave examples of how, in setting up one business or another, within or outside Jaśliska, mostly relatives were consulted or involved in some other way. Secondly, generations of experience in trade laid the foundation for numerous contacts in the professions and with the main trading centers; hence, for example, the large number of Jewish companies that specialized in exploitation of local forests and that were run by local Jews with expert contacts outside the region, in Kraków, and even outside the country, in Slovakia.
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> It should be noted that during the inter-war years Poles also entered the sector of moneylending. Mortgage deeds in the real-estate registers show that debtors and creditors were Poles as well as Jews. However, in contrast to Poles, who often were indebted to Jews (with debts sometimes exceeding 200 złotys), the Jews themselves were rarely indebted to Poles as richer relatives or co-religionists were quick to help them out.[510]

One often encounters bald claims like the following in Jewish memorial books as well as many Jewish memoirs: "The [Polish] Government levied heavy taxes upon the Jews and decreed harsh laws against them."[511] "I later discovered that *podatki* were in fact punitive tax demands, levied arbitrarily by the tax authorities against Jewish concerns."[512] There is no truth to the claim that the Polish authorities enacted anti-Jewish laws, imposed harsh, arbitrary or punitive taxes on Jewish businesses, or waged an economic

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[510] Rosa Lehmann, "Jewish Patrons and Polish Clients: Patronage in a Small Galician Town," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 17 (2004): 153–69, at 159, 160.

[511] Menachem Katz, ed., *Brzezany Memorial Book* (Haifa: Association of Former Brzezany Residents in Israel, 1978), 20 (English section).

[512] Katz, *Gone to Pitchpoï,* 30–31.

war on the Jews. (The latter is something that the British have historically excelled at in relation to

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A widely reported statement made in January 1938 by interwar Poland's last prime minister, Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski, a Calvinist by religion, that voiced approval of economic competition between Poles and Jews in the private sphere, provided it did not entail violence ("Walka ekonomiczna—owszem, ale krzywdy żadnej"), was hardly a state-sanctioned policy to boycott Jewish businesses as the latter benefitted often from government contracts. A sweeping charge frequently encountered in Jewish memoirs is that Jews were discriminated against in business and greatly overburdened with taxes in interwar Poland, to the point of bankruptcy or even near starvation. One memoir by an educated Jew even claims that "hardly anyone paid taxes except for Jews." See Jehoschua Gertner and Danek Gertner, *Home is No More: The Destruction of the Jews of Kosow and Zabie* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2000), 57. Based on such anecdotal sources, Western historians claim, baselessly, that the Polish state "imposed special taxes on Jews and Jewish businesses." See Anika Walke, Introduction to Kutz, *If, By Miracle,* xv. (Although Jewish political parties operated freely in interwar Poland and were represented at all levels of elected offices, Anika Walke also claims that Jewish political parties "were driven underground; many activists were arrested and imprisoned." See Kutz, *If, By Miracle,* xvi.) Other historians claim that Poland imposed discriminatory tax measures against the Jews and that "one in three Polish Jews had been beggared by punitive [sic] taxation." See Bideleux and Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe,* 482; Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century,* 174–76. A better informed Jewish historian makes a more modest charge: "taxation policies resulted in a disproportionate tax burden falling on small and medium-sized enterprises, where Jews were concentrated; in consequence, Jews paid between 35 and 40 percent of all direct taxes to the state." See Jaff Schatz, "Jews and the Communist Movement in Interwar Poland," in Frankel and Diner, *Dark Times, Dire Decisions,* 15. Needless to say, there was no differential tax rate based on criteria such as nationality or religion. The taxation system was heavily weighted towards the towns, where an overwhelming majority of Jews lived. See Simon Segal, *The New Poland and the Jews* (New York: Lee Furman, 1938), 141. Although there was inequality among the farm and non-farm sectors (the tax measures implemented by Finance Minister Władysław Grabski in 1924–1925 fell overwhelmingly on the shoulders of urban taxpayers), as Joseph Marcus points out, they were not "anti-Semitically motivated, as regrettably most Jews believed." See the discussion in Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919–1939,* 220–23. In Western Poland, most such enterprises were non-Jewish, and many of them were owned by Germans. A recent scholarly study of conditions in the small town of Jaśliska near Krosno is more nuanced and instructive. The author points out that it was the disparity in the Polish and Jewish occupations that affected the contributions to land and income tax paid by both groups, with Jews contributing a disproportionate share of the income tax, and Poles a disproportionate share of the land-tax. The Jewish share of municipal taxes reflected their preponderance (or Poles' absence) in the local cash economy of the small town. Until the electoral reforms, this also meant considerable overepresentation on the town's political scene: "Since the Jews paid the highest taxes, they obtained six of the twelve seats, in spite of their proportionally low numbers [about 26 percent]. The situation changed in 1923 when the number of seats was reduced by one-half. The political status of the Jews, however, remained unimpaired and the people took full account of their opinions." The author demonstrates that even in the 1930s, the period of economic boycotts, the Poles' involvement in local trade remained limited. Anti-Jewish propaganda had little effect on the activities and interactions of the Poles and Jews at the community level. On the whole, relations remained proper and many Jewish testimonies refer to them as favourable. As one Jew commented, "One hardly noticed anti-Semitism amongst the people. The relationships between Jews and non-Jews were rather good and the trading contacts were based on mutual trust. … We did not experience anything like anti-Jewish harassment. The good relationship between Jews and non-Jews gave rise to a steady material prosperity among the Jews." See Lehmann, *Symbiosis and Ambivalence,* 48–49, 75, 82, 185–87. Moreover, the Sunday closure laws, which existed in many Western countries at the time, were not widely enforced in Poland. Jewish shops would open for Polish shoppers after mass, and a lookout was posted for the constable. Should he appear, the shops would be hurriedly closed or the constable (sometimes bribed) would look the other way. See, for example, Chaim Yitchok Wolgelernter, *The Unfinished Diary: A Chronicle of Tears* (Lakewood, New Jersey: Israel Bookshop Publications, 2015), 35; Testimony of Henryk Umow, July 2004, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/photo/henryk-umow>; *Dereczin,* 156. Compare this with the violence that Orthodox Jews often visit on Sabbath "violators" in Israel.

The overall financial situation of the Jews in Poland belies the claim of "oppression" that is often levelled in popular literature. According to a study by a British economist, undoubtedly the most extensive analysis of the economic history of interwar Polish Jewry, the Jews, who represented 10 percent of Poland's population, controlled 20 percent of the nation's wealth. The Jewish share of the country's wealth increased both absolutely and relative to the non-Jewish share in the period 1929–1939. Although very many Jews lived in poverty (as did non-Jews), Marcus argues that the "Jews in Poland were poor because they lived in a poor, undeveloped country. Discrimination added only marginally to their poverty." See Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919–1939,* 231, *passim*. The reality of those times is reflected in candid memoirs such as the following. A Jew from Stołpce near the Polish-

"colonials," and Americans in relation to their Native and Black populations.[513]) Indeed, many Jewish

[513] The following are but a few examples: "In the 1750s the British provoked the rulers of Bengal into war, defeating them conclusively in 1757. In the aftermath of their victory in Bengal, they plundered the state treasury of some £5 million and gained control of 10,000 Bengali weavers. By 1765, John Company was the civil administration of Bengal. It promptly increased the tax burden on peasants and artisans, which led to serious famines in 1770 and 1783. … Prior to the British military takeover, India had been producing cloth that was cheaper and better than English textiles … To meet this challenge, the British government prohibited the British East India Company from importing calicoes into England. To take advantage of the import restriction, English factories began producing copies of popular Indian textiles for sale both in England and abroad. In addition, India was required to admit English manufacturers free of tariffs. These actions effectively destroyed what had been a thriving Indian textile industry." Since Western European nations were producing little that the Chinese wanted or needed, but Chinese products, notably tea, were high in demand, the British capitalized on the opium market in China. By 1773, the British East India Company had a monopoly over opium sales and smuggling opium into China, where it was illegal. "Smuggling opium into China was hugely profitable for British merchants, as well as for the Americans and the French. When the Chinese government tried to halt the trade in 1839 by seizing opium held by British merchants in warehouses in Canton, the British government intervened militarily and forced the Chinese government to stop enforcing its own opium laws. An analogy today might be the government of Colombia sending troops to the United States or Canada to force acceptance of Colombian cocaine shipments. Moreover, the British demanded and received additional trading rights into China, further opening a market, not only for opium but for textiles as well. The British-led opium trade from India to china had three results. First, it reversed the flow of money between China and the rest of the world: during the first decade of the 19th century, China was still enjoying a yearly trade surplus of 26 million silver dollars; by the third decade, 34 million silver dollars per year were leaving China to pay for opium. Second, estimates are that by the end of the 19th century, one out of every ten Chinese was addicted to opium. Finally, textile exports from England to India and China increased from 6 percent of total British exports in 1815, to 22 percent in 1840, 31 percent in 1850, and more than 50 percent after 1873." See Richard H. Robbins, Maggie Cummings, Karen McGarry, and Sherrie N. Larkin, *Cultural Anthropology: A Problem-Based Approach,* Second Canadian Edition (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2014), 55–56.At home, the English could be equally as violent. The anti-Catholic Gordon riots of 1780 claimed the lives of at least several hundred people in London. The Americans (mostly WASPs) did not lag behind. The production of cotton using slave labour fuelled the Industrial Revolution in the United States. Another means to accomplish American economic and political goals was the forced removal of the Cherokee (and other North American nations) from fertile lands in North Carolina and Georgia to a reservation in Oklahoma—the so-called Georgia Compact of 1802 instituted by President Thomas Jefferson. "Andrew Jackson made Indian removal one of the cornerstones of his presidential campaign in 1828, signed the final order, and the army was sent in to forcibly move the population as land speculators flooded onto what had been prosperous Cherokee farms and plantations. Thousands of additional acres of what had been Indian land were taken over or converted to cotton production by white farmers using black slaves. In this way, white farmers using Native American land and African labour to produce cotton for the British and American textile industries created much of the future wealth of the young country. The political economy of cotton production, slavery, and land alienation during this period of history laid the groundwork for ongoing systemic racism in North America." Ibid., 56–58. The 1985 Academy Award-winning documentary *Broken Rainbow* discusses the history of injustice towards the Native American people. The film described The Long Walk of the Navajo, which was the 1864 deportation and attempted ethnic cleansing of the Navajo people by the U.S. government. 8,000 Navajos were forced to walk more than 300 miles at gunpoint from their ancestral homelands in northeastern Arizona and northwestern New Mexico to an internment camp in Bosque Redondo, which was a desolate tract on the Pecos River in eastern New Mexico. Many died along the way. From 1863 to 1868, the U.S. Military persecuted and imprisoned 9,500 Navajo (the Diné) and 500 Mescalero Apache (the N'de). Living under armed guards, in holes in the ground, with extremely scarce rations, more than 3,500 Navajo and Mescalero Apache men, women, and children died while in the concentration camp. Native American and Blacks were not the only ones to be subjected to sweeping racist decrees. On December 17, 1862, General Ulysses S. Grant issued and signed General Order No. 11 to evict Jews from the vast war zone under his command—known as the "Department of the Tennessee," but actually stretching from northern Mississippi to Cairo, Illinois, and from the Mississippi River to the Tennessee River. Although only a tiny handful of cotton traders were Jewish, anti-Semitism flourished, as Grant wrongfully blamed the Jews for the "raging black market in Southern cotton." His edict was subsequently described as "the most sweeping anti-Jewish regulation in all American history." It read as follows: "The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department and also department orders, are hereby expelled from the department within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order. Post commanders will see that all of this class of people be furnished passes and required to leave, and any one returning after such notification will be arrested and held in confinement until an opportunity occurs of sending them out as

firms received lucrative government contracts,[514] contrary to the claim of Western historians who allege "a government-backed boycott of all Jewish business establishments."[515] A resident of the border town of Łunin, in Polesia, where there was a large military base, recalled: "Jewish craftspeople, tradespeople and storekeepers made their income catering to the Polish officers and their families."[516] A Jew whose parents owned a grocery near a military base in Chełm states that "the entire clientele was mostly military families." He added, "All of my friends … were Poles. There were few Jews where we lived."[517] In Bolesławiec, a small town near the German border: "My father's business was cap making. … A lot of the caps were made to order as part of uniforms for fraternal organizations, the military, police and firemen."[518]

On the other hand, Jewish businessmen would band together to thwart new Polish businesses from springing up. Jewish glaziers in Łódź and suburban Dobra banned together to drive the newcomer Polish glaziers out of business.[519] Pressure was exerted by the Jewish community in Dubno, Volhynia, on a Jewish proprietor to renege on the lease of his business premises to a Polish milk co-operative which wanted to operate their own store. It was explained to him that business was the exclusive domain of the Jews, and that the community did not welcome Christian intruders in this near monopoly on local trade.[520] A Christian shopkeeper recalled asking a Jewish wholesaler from whom she acquired merchandise for a rebate on the goods he supplied to her: the Jewish merchant replied categorically that he gave rebates only to Jews.[521] It must be noted, however, that even among Jewish businessmen, cutthroat practices were used

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[514] The following are but a few examples: Teyer, *The Red Forest,* 24 (a successful Jewish bakery in Czerwony Bór near Łomża supplied a nearby army camp); Rubin, *Against the Tide,* 19 (a dentist in Nowogródek engaged by the Polish army); Kolpanitzky, *Sentenced to Life,* 6 (a meat supplier to the the Polish border police in Sienkiewicze, Polesia); Testimony of Yaakov Kaplan, Internet: <http://www.sztetl.org.pl> (the author's father, Berko Shevachovich, who owned a butcher shop in Lida, was a food supplier to the 77th Infantry Regiment of the Polish army); Barbara Ruth Bluman, *I Have My Mother's Eyes: A Holocaust Memoir Across Generations* (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press and Vancouver Holocaust Education Society, 2009), 11, 22 (one of the Hoffenberg brothers in Warsaw, who supplied fur coats to Polish railroad employees, scoffed at the suggestion of leaving Poland: "Why would I leave Warsaw?" It's the new Jerusalem!"); Testimony of William Weiss, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Interview code 10957 (Weiss's father owned a store in Lwów that furnished supplies for the Polish army); Testimony of Isadore Farbstein, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Interview code 13378 (the family business in Parczew prospered because of orders from the Polish army).

[515] Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 482; R.J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 174–76.

[516] Schulman, *A Partisan's Memoir,* 26. The author recalled that Polish military officer, a friend of the family, gave her mother 500 złoty, a small fotune in those days, so that she could pay for her daughter's wedding.

[517] Testimony of Bencjon Drutin in Marzena Baum-Gruszowska and Dominika Majuk, eds., *Swiatła w ciemności: Sprawiedliwi wśród narodów świata: Relacje historii mówionej w działaniach edukacyjnych* (Lublin: Ośrodek "Brama Grodzka–Teatr NN," 2009), 56.

[518] Brandsdorfer, *The Bleeding Sky,* Chapter 2.

[519] Piotr Kosobudzki, *Przez druty, kraty i kajdany: Wspomnienia partyzanta NSZ* (Wrocław: Nortom, 1997), 20–21.

[520] Janina Stobniak-Smogorzewska, "Osadnicy wojskowi a ludność żydowska na Kresach Wschodnich 1920–1940," in Jasiewicz, *Świat niepożegnany,* 563.

[521] Antoni Zambrowski, "Niczym rozmowa głuchych," *Antysocjalistyczne Mazowsze,* June 9, 2005, posted at <http://mazowsze.k-raj.com.pl/111834969449210.shtml>.

frequently. Thugs were hired to block the entrance to competitors' shops and shops of competitors' were demolished. Fishmongers got together to form a cartel to illegally raise the price of herring, and paid "damages" to producers who closed down their smokehouses.[522]

Many established business practices followed by Jews were foreign to or disrespectful of Poles, or had a prejudicial impact on them, and this further complicated interaction.[523] Peasants in particular were considered to be easy prey for sharp trade practices.

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[522] These stories from Warsaw were carried in newspaper reports from 1936: "Nielojalna konkurencja żydowskich kupców," "Pobił ciężko przeciwnika na sali sądowej" (one the accused brought a piece of steel into the courtroom and physically attacked the owner of the store they had demolished and seriously injured him), "Żydowski 'kartel śledziowy'."

[523] Samuel Iwry, who hails from Białystok, described the following bizarre scenario: "My father had a small business, perhaps two dozen people worked for him … My connection with this business was (and this is very difficult to understand) when we had to pay out every week his workers. There was a need to go to the bank and write out a check, and bring it back to him. … The reason that I had to do it was that according to Jewish law, a certain Hebrew inscription from the Talmud was necessary to provide on every I.O.U. or transaction like this to the bank, since it is biblically forbidden to take interest [usury] or deal with userers. The rabbis had learned how to go around it, because in their time commerce was already developed and you wouldn't do it any other way. So I had to write out the amendment to this law. The amendment says 'I thereby make the lender or the borrower a partner in my business, for this sum," let's say for 550 zloty. This way, the usury was removed." See Samuel Iwry, *To Wear the Dust of War: From Bialystok to Shanghai to the Promised Land—An Oral History*, edited by L. J. H. Kelley (New York and Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 6. In *Maus,* Art Spiegelman describes how his father, Vladek, stayed as an unregistered guest at a resort hotel so that the owner, his uncle, could avoid paying taxes. An example of deceitful practices that could lead to trouble in the marketplace can be found in Hanna Krall, *Shielding the Flame: An Intimate Conversation with Dr. Marek Edelman, the Last Surviving Leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986), 11: Jewish fishmongers in Warsaw would paint the gills of stale fish red to make them appear fresh. Some Jews thought that such shady business dealings led to an increase in anti-Semitism. See Stella Zylbersztajn, *A gdyby to było Wasze dziecko?* (Łosice: Łosickie Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju Equus, 2005), 17. According to Rabbi David Kahane, "More than once a Jewish innkeeper would get a peasant drunk and then swindle him and even steal his property. Nor were the weights and measures used by Jewish storekeepers always accurate." See David Kahane, *Lwow Ghetto Diary* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), 11. Tellingly, one Jew blames his father's lack of success in business on his being "too honest to get rich in business." See Severin Gabriel, *In the Ruins of Warsaw Streets* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2005), 62. Getting a *mitzvah* (bargain) was valued highly, and unsophisticated farmers were often taken advantage of. Norman Salsitz describes how Jewish traders descended on Polish farmers bringing their produce animals and produce to market: "The mad dash began as soon as a wagon came into view, everyone running toward it, hoping to get on and lay claim to the fattest geese. This was no simple task, since it involved leaping aboard a moving wagon, then simultaneously holding on and thrusting one's hand into the cages to size up the birds. … Quite a few people had by now climbed onto the wagon and were standing on the poles that ran along the sides; others were still attempting to. People's poking around the cages naturally agitates the geese, which begin to screech hysterically. Meanwhile the peasant drive has become quite furious and begins urging his horses on, both to escape those still in pursuit and to shake the grip of the people clinging both to the wagon and the geese. A torrent of curses accomplishes little, so he turns his whip on the unwanted riders, who stubbornly hold their ground. A rising chorus of pounding hooves, abusive shouts, and cackling geese greets onlookers as the wagon careens into town with its original cargo and its recently acquired and remarkably persistent passengers, sometimes as many as five or six. Once in the marketplace the wagon comes to a stop, and the situation gradually returns to normal." Jewish vendors also cursed and fought among themselves in the market; Jewish buyers ganged up on farmers by entering into agreements not to compete and bid up prices. See Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland,* 119–20, 123, 128. Other examples of "sharp" business practices employed by Jews who traded with peasants are described in Pell and Rosenbaum, *Taking Risks,* 11–13. Market place disputes between Jews and Poles thus had little, if anything, to do with "endemic Polish anti-Semitism," a much overused notion in this and many other contexts of Polish-Jewish relations. One sometimes encounters the charge that Poles did not repay debts owed to Jewish shopkeepers and money-lenders. The frequency of this phenomenon is not known, nor can we gauge to what extent Polish peasants were treated fairly in their dealings with Jewish traders and shopkeepers. Jewish testimonies confirm that loans made to fellow Jews were not always repaid either, as the following account from Działoszyce shows: "Father loaned money without interest to people in town. These amounts were 10 zloty [złoty], 20 zloty, 30 zloty, and more. Father had a long list of perhaps 50 people who owed him money at any given time. … Often, very little of the money loaned was repaid." See Tenenbaum, *Legacy and Redemption,* 69–70.

> There were also several horse traders in Działoszyce. … At the end of the summer, when the harvest was over, the farmers tried to dispose of their aging horses rather than having to feed them all winter long, knowing they would not be able to do much work in the spring. The horse traders bought these aging horses, too. More than once it happened that they bought back a horse that they had sold the farmer a few months earlier, its teeth having been sharpened, and its coat groomed to make the animal appear younger. These horses, everyone agreed, were not suitable for work, and would be killed off before long. The unfortunate animals, frail and limp, were led to a valley near Działoszyce, where they were killed and then skinned. As it turns out, the dealers made a handsome profit on their carcasses.[524]

The exploitative nature of Jewish-Polish commercial relations is illustrated by the following account concerning Rabbi Moshe Mendel Walden, an author and bookseller in Kielce:

> It once happened that a Polish priest entered his store. He wanted to purchase a Hebrew bible from him. At first Mosze Mendel was frightened: "what did a priest want with his shop?" he said to himself, and his heart pounded in his chest as in the "Gazlan". He was probably there as part of a plot. However, it became clear immediately clear that the "heathen" had come to do business, and harbored no bad thoughts. The word "biblia" which came from the priest's mouth frequently calmed him and the fear left him entirely.
>
> Via a small window that connected to the kitchen, he called his wife Sara. She wiped her dirty hands on her apron and appeared before the priest. The women usually know the national language more than the men do. In the market, they come into contact with the peasant women who bring their produce to the city and the Jewish women learn their language from them.
>
> She understood the priest's desire without any delays. In a pile of old books that were heaped out of order in a corner of the shop, she found the "biblia" and handed it to the priest. In answer to the priest's question the woman mentioned a round sum: a silver ruble. The priest did not bargain, paid the ruble, took the book and went on his way voicing a parting to the couple who stood astounded in the shop.
>
> It had never happened that a buyer had given them the entire price that they asked of him; a price—by nature went continually down until it reached a level from which it was not possible to lower it any further. And who was the innocent who would pay the full price?
>
> From that time, Mosze Mendel understood a principle in life. He had always been troubled by a serious question: "why do the Jews choose to dwell among the gentiles? Why don't they pack up their things and move to the land of Israel, the land that has only Jews?" Now he found the answer: a Jew cannot make a living except from "Goyim".
>
> From then on, whenever a Jew entered his shop to buy a prayer book for daily or holiday use or such things and took a long time to bargain, Reb' Mosze Mendel would say: "Oy Va'voi for me and my wares if my customers were only Jews; happily there are gentiles among my customers as well; priests come to my shop! Say what you will, but I will tell you, you can't make a living from Jews, bounty and income come from the heathens!"[525]

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[524] Arje Rolnicki, "Small Businesses in Our Town," in Bussgang and Bussgang, *Działoszycze Memorial Book,* 93.

[525] Pinchas Cytron (Zitron), ed., *Sefer Kielce: Toldot Kehilat Kielce. Miyom Hivsuduh V'ad Churbanah* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Kielce in Israel, 1957), 226–27; translated as *Book of Kielce: History of the Community of Kielce. From Its Founding Until Its Destruction*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/kielce/kielce.html#TOC>.

Historian Richard Lukas notes that, as they had done for centuries, Jews did business with each other and distrusted Jews who developed relationships with Polish Gentiles.[526] A Jew from Kraków recollected:

> "It is true that the Poles did have the government on their side, which sometimes made things difficult for us. On the other hand, we had tradition on our side. In the big cities Jews tended to have significant trading advantages for the simple reason that they had been at it longer. …
>
> "It is also true that though my father was assimilated, all the executives in his factory and ninety percent of his workers were Jewish. I remember once my mother, who was something of an intellectual, challenging him about this, telling him that he was being discriminatory. He said he felt easier working with Jews and that was all there was to it."[527]

A well-to-do resident of Stołpce, in northeastern Poland, recalled:

> My father's loyalty to the Jewish community carried over into the way he ran his business. The managers of my father's factories were always Jews. The workers were drawn from the local Polish population. … In every one of the factories, there was a little provisions store that sold the basics … Shopping at this factory store saved them a trip into town, but the prices were high. My father made a considerable profit from these stores. So he was making money on anything and everything. And he paid very little in official taxes. If you had connections with the right Polish officials—and bribed them heavily enough—you were basically taken care of.[528]

When Christians and Jews did try to break down the barriers that separated them, the outcome was not always a happy one, as Józef Lewandowski relates. Around 1934, his father, an upholsterer in Konin, went into partnership with a Polish upholsterer, his friend Mr. Bogusławski:

> "… the worthy gentlemen failed to take account of social considerations. Father became unacceptable to the Orthodox Jews, Bogulawski non-kosher to some of his Catholic customers. Both went beyond the limits imposed by unwritten but harshly binding statutes. Rich folk such as landowners and industrialists could join forces, but not the poor masses. After a few years they split up."[529]

Such isolation generally enjoyed the support of Jewish society, as is evident in its press and the attitudes of its communal organizations and rabbis. When a Jewish shopkeeper in Ejszyszki hired a Pole to transport his goods by truck, thus bypassing the more inefficient and costly Jewish wagon drivers, an open "revolt" broke out against this "traitor" which gained the support of the rabbi.

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[526] Richard C. Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles Under German Occupation, 1939–1944,* Second revised edition (New York: Hippocrene, 1997), 124.

[527] Cited in Stewart Steven, *The Poles* (London: Collins/Harvill, 1982), 313–14.

[528] Jack Sutin and Rochelle Sutin, *Jack and Rochelle: A Holocaust Story of Love and Resistance* (Saint Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 1995), 7.

[529] Richmond, *Konin,* 162.

> So what was the revolt? They couldn't force him! On *shabbes,* everybody came to synagogue. They used to block the *aron kodesh* [the "Holy Ark" where the Torah scrolls are kept in the synagogue—*M.P.*] and they wouldn't let you take out the Torah to read the Torah. And right away they came up on the *bimbah* [pulpit] and said: "We are not going to let you read the Torah because this, this, this and this. We have a family to support! I worked for him three, four, five, ten years. I have four, five kids to support. All of a sudden he hires a *goy?* That's not right!"
>
> So then the rabbi was mixed up in it, and he'd talk to them, you know: "That's not right, you shouldn't do it, he has a point" … And that was the problem solved.[530]

On the economic front, a network of free loan societies (*gmiles khesed kases*) sprang up all over Poland, developed by the Joint Distribution Committee and supported by Jewish communities in America. Interest-free loans were made available to "just about anyone who needed money to get through a particularly difficult time. Hundreds of loans … were made at one time or another to tailors, cobblers, carpenters, butchers, peddlers, farmers, labourers, and especially storekeepers."[531] As long as they weren't non-Jews, that is, Poles.[532] In the assessment of one historian, these free loan societies, which were to be found in practically every Jewish settlement in Poland, "had an impact far out of proportion to the small loans they were able to give."[533] They more than compensated for any any ill-effects suffered by Polish boycotts. But there was more. The Jewish Economic Committee in the province of Lublin urged Jewish bankers not to extend credit to Polish businesses, Jewish property owners to refuse to lease premises to Christian merchants, and Jewish employers to hire Jews first and foremost and to lay off Polish workers.[534] Jewish sources rail about state-owned banks extending credit preferentially to enterprises owned by Poles in the interwar period, although the extent to which that was done is unclear. (Prior to Poland's rebirth in 1918, Jews dominated banking activity, both in terms of institutions and granting private loans. Afterwards, the situation started changing slowly. Eventually large banks were nationalized, and institutions in private hands were taken over largely by foreign capital. However, nearly all Jewish organizations deposited their money in the Jewish-owned Dom Bankowy D. M. Szereszowski.[535]) The purpose for that was to increase the Poles' presence in an economic sphere in which they were greatly

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[530] Livingston, *Tradition and Modernism in the Shtetl,* 52–53.

[531] Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland,* 207.

[532] As pointed out by Meir Tamari, professor of economy at the Bar Ilan University in Tel Aviv, Judaism permitted usury only in relation to non-Jews. It could be circumvented through the use of non-Jewish intermediaries. See Meir Tamari, *With All Your Possessions: Jewish Ethics and Economic Life* (New York: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1987), 179–80, 188–89.

[533] Samuel Kassow, "The Shtetl in Interwar Poland," Katz, ed., *The Shtetl,* 132–33.

[534] Waldemar Kozyra, *Urząd Wojewódzki w Lublinie w latach 1919–1939* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 1999), 193–94. For additional examples see: Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955,* 91–92 (Częstochowa); Gontarczyk, *Pogrom?,* 31–32; Bechta, *Narodowo radykalni,* 179. Large Jewish-owned factories which operated on a six-day work week sometimes did not hire Jews because of their unavailability for work on Saturday. Occasionally, Jewish factory owners were also reluctant to hire Jewish workers because of their reputation for pro-communist agitation. See Jakub Bukowski, *Opowieść o życiu* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2002), 15.

[535] Lech Kurkliński, "Impact of the Jews and Polish-Jewish Relations on the Development of the Banking Sector in Poland," *Management Studies,* vol. 3, no. 3–4 (April 2015): 90–97, at 95–96.

underepresented because of lack of access to capital and entrepreneurial know-how. It is precisely for those reasons that, in September 2020, the Canadian government created a $93-million aid package for Black-owned businesses and entrepreneurs ("Black entrepreneurship program").

Another widespread phenomenon among Jews was avoiding military service (draft evasion or dodging).[536] According to one Jewish testimony, "The poor Jews were in the army, because they were not able to pay their way out. Wealthier Jews were always bribing."[537] Mark Verstandig describes another strategy: self-imposed starvation.

> Jews had a negative attitude to military service in the Polish army … To get out of military service, many 21-year-olds underwent a regime of self-inflicted torture. For months they hardly slept or ate, so that when they stood before the commission they were "skin and bone". The morning before the call-up they drank several capfuls of freshly roasted coffee, specially brewed at four to five times the normal strength, so that when they appeared before the doctor their hearts were pounding as if they had been running a marathon. With their emaciated appearance, their abnormal heartbeat gave them a chance of being excused from military service, especially if an intermediary had previously slipped the doctor one or two hundred US dollars. … Conscription indicated that the family had insufficient means to pay for exemption. In our circles it also attracted general censure because the army was regarded as a rough, corrupting environment.[538]

Avoiding military draft by leaving the country was another widespread practice. Aharon Leib Shteinman fled to Switzerland from Kamieniec, a small town near Brześć, with two other yeshiva students when they reached draft age.[539]

This phenomenon has a long history. Nahum Goldmann describes a subterfuge used by Jews to avoid serving in the Tsarist Russian army. He noted that the authorities were "exempting only sons from military service, and in Jewish communities it was the rabbi who kept the birth register. So when a father had three sons they were each entered under a different name; in my family my grandfather was called Leibmann, my father Goldmann, and my uncle Szalkowitz!"[540] Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Kook, a leading rabbi of England's Eastern European Orthodox community during World War I, was also involved in such shenanigans even though there was no evidence of glaring anti-Semitism in the British army.

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[536] For a study on Jewish military evaders and deserters in the Lublin province, see Mateusz Rodak, "Żydowska przestępczość kryminalna w wojsku polskim w województwie lubelskim w latach 1918–1939," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów,* no. 3 (2012): 360–79. See also Remigiusz Kasprzycki, *Bez sławy i chwały: Dyscyplina w Wojsku Polskim w czasie wojny polsko-sowieckiej 1919–1921* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, 2021), 70–71 (vairous scams to avoid military services are documented).

[537] Testimony of Oscar Haber, Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, University of Southern California, Interview code 19788.

[538] Mark Verstandig, *I Rest My Case* (Melbourne: Saga Press, 1995), 9–11.

[539] Joseph Berger, "Aharon Leib Steinman, Ultra-Orthodox Leader in Israel, Dies at 104," *The New York Times,* December 13, 2017.

[540] Goldmann, *The Jewish Paradox*, 13.

> After signing one rabbinic ordination after another to save young men from conscription, he was called for questioning by Scotland Yard; police investigators had noticed that many of his "rabbis" were in fact not religiously observant. He was let off with a stern warning but kept on, unimpressed by invocations of the moral significance of the British war effort.[541]

The Brańsk memorial book is said to contain "many stories about the leaders of the Jewish community and how they managed to 'dodge being recruited into the army.'"[542] Numerous memoirs refer to the widespread practice of efforts to avoid military service in interwar Poland:

> In 1937 I was called up. Many Jews dodged service at that time, but I went. It was what my father wanted, too. He said I would learn to fight, and that could prove useful later on in Palestine.[543]

> To understand this properly, it should be pointed out that, before the war, Jews had an unwilling relationship with weapons. They all made efforts not to be drafted—they paid bribes, underwent special diets, in order to dodge military service.[544]

> The three-month period leading up to the mobilization of our town's young men into the Polish army was called the "period of torment" in local slang. … And you realized [the young Jewish men] were determined to go from 150 pounds down to 100 in order to escape serving in the Polish army. … release from conscription was not necessarily won by those who had tormented themselves, but by the young men whose parents had paid off the official conscription committee's doctor.[545]

> When it came to enlisting in the Polish army, however, it was a different matter. Some of the eligible youth would starve and exhaust themselves in an effort to lose weight and escape recruitment.[546]

> Every spring, the Polish government would dispatch two commissions to our town [Opatów]: one commission was a military veterinarian who inspected horses for remounts; the other selected eligible young conscripts. …
>
> A small number of men would go to great lengths to avoid enlisting in the army. There were certain people in the town who specialized in disabling people so that they wouldn't be accepted by the draft board. One man's specialty was giving people a hernia; another man would chop off your index finger, the one used for pulling the trigger. Some people had their eardrum perforated. Others drank tea made from tobacco, because

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[541] Yehudah Mirsky, *Rav Kook: Mystic in a Time of Revolution* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2014), 140–41.

[542] Horowitz, *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry,* 57.

[543] Testimony of Mieczyław Weinryb, December 2003–January 2004, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/mieczyslaw-weinryb>.

[544] Jacob Shepetinski, *Jacob's Ladder* (London: Minerva Press, 1996), 50.

[545] Berl Kagan, ed., *Luboml: The Memorial Book of a Vanished Shtetl* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House, 1997), 166–67.

[546] Account of Arieh Henkin, "Dokshitz [Dokszyce] Memories," Internet: <http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/dokshitz/Dok_Arieh.html>.

nicotine made the heart race or beat irregularly. … Of course, with such disabilities you were not accepted into the army.

Some of the young men chose to torture themselves to lose a lot of weight so they would look emaciated. They deprived themselves of sleep and food and caroused at night. They loved to play pranks when everyone else was sleeping. They turned the signs upside down or changed them around …[547]

This was the year [i.e., 1937] I was to be called to serve in the Polish army, a situation which created problems for my father. First of all, he had become dependent upon me, and second of all, being a smart man, my father predicted the oncoming war. He decided to do everything in his power to see that I avoid serving time in the army. He went to a special complex to lose weight and arrived at the stage in which he was unable to do any physical work. Then he went for a government medical examination which decided that he could not support his children. I thus became the only provider for our family. I realized later what a personal sacrifice my father had to make to accomplish the task of keeping me out of the army.[548]

… when Art was called up for his army service. He stopped eating regular food and consumed almost nothing but pumpkin seeds. To lose weight, he jogged for miles every day and stopped sleeping at night, so that in addition to looking emaciated, he would look anemic. Art did whatever he could to get a rejection. Before Art went to Pinczow [Pińczów], my father went to the Gerer Rebbe to pray that Art would not be accepted. … Luckily for Art, he was rejected.[549]

While some Jews joined the Polish Army, most did their best to avoid it. … Many who faced the draft … sought all kinds of devices to avoid military service. Some found ways to lose weight, others put sand in their eyes. I also had no interest in serving in the Polish Army. Already somewhat overweight, I asked our doctor for advice. He suggested increasing my daily intake of food and recommended a certain diet. In addition, I went to a vacation resort known for helping people gain weight and it worked. When the army doctors examined me I was excused and told to come back in a year. When I returned, I had gained even more weight, so I was placed in the category known as "to be drafted only in case of war."[550]

My brother Meilech was 10 years older than me. …He was very tall and worked with my father trading horses. He became a good businessman as well as a good horseman. I was still a youngster when he was drafted into the Polish calvary and I think he was supposed to be in the army for 2 years. But "Jewish people did not like to go to the Polish army", so he looked for ways to get out of it. He went for advice to the rabbi and to a doctor (I don't remember who the doctor was). The doctor told Meilech to go into the army and be a good soldier and then come back in four weeks. Four weeks later the doctor showed Meilech how to injure his knee in such a way to make him unfit to be a soldier. Meilech's knee became inflamed and swollen. He

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[547] Mayer Kirshenblatt and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press; Berkeley: John L. Magnes Museum, 2007), 316–17.

[548] Michael Goldberg, *Memories of a Generation* (United Stated Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, typescript, April 1998), 15.

[549] Tenenbaum, *Legacy and Redemption*, 49.

[550] Werber, *Saving Children,* 20.

> reported to his superiors; they discharged him and told him to go home. I don't remember how Meilech wounded himself but that is how he got out of being in the army.[551]

There were many more such cases.[552] Some Jews even maimed themselves to avoid being drafted.[553] The practice of attempting to bribe officials sitting on draft boards became widespread.[554] Moshe Weisbrot, a well-to-do resident of Lublin, "devoted his time to getting Jewish boys out of the army. He bribed the Draft Board, ordered to disable the young man in some way, and collected fees."[555] Jacob Avigdor, a medical doctor and chief rabbi of Drohobycz, prided himself on his accomplishments in helping young Jews avoid their military service or—as he put it—"ransoming of captives." The rabbi's son recalled:

> Being a chaplain with the rank of Major in the Polish Army, my father had many acquaintances among the Polish officers. …
>
> I remember yeshiva students and Rabbis' sons coming to Drohobycz for pre-conscription medical examinations. As the time approached, they would fast and resort to all sorts of devices to lose weight in order to be rejected as physically unfit. By using his connections, my father, of blessed memory, helped hundreds of young men to get out.[556]

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[551] Yechiel Eisenberg (as told to Norton Taichman), "My Life in Poland (1922–1949)," The Ivansk Project e-Newsletter, Issue Number 16, January–February 2006, 4.

[552] See, for example, the testimony of Lejba Solowiejczyk, 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/leon-solowiejczyk> (resorting to starvation in Dzisna).

[553] Confirmation of this practice can be found in the following sources: Thomas and Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America,* vol. 1, 543–44 (a Jewish barber in Goworowo, who doubled as a physician who performed abortions, also performed artificial crippling so that the recipient could avoid travel or military service); M.N. Yarut, "Lizhensk—Russia—Lizhensk", in H. Rabin, ed., *Lizhensk: Sefer zikaron le-kedoshei Lizhensk she-nispu be-shoat ha-natsim* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Lezajsk in Israel, 1970), 96ff., translated as *Memorial Book of the Martyrs of Lezajsk Who Perished in the Holocaust,* Internet: <http://www2.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Lazajsk/Lezajsk.html>; Jehoschua Gertner and Danek Gertner, *Home Is No More: The Destruction of the Jews of Kosow and Zabie* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2000), 26; Tenenbaum, *Legacy and Redemption,* 107 (the author's father had difficulty walking: "Before the war, Father had intentionally injured his leg to avoid being drafted into the Polish army. Religious people often inflicted such wounds to avoid serving in an army without *Shabes* and dietary laws"); Morris Sorid, *One More Miracle: The Memoirs of Morris* Sorid ([United States]: Jonathan Sorid, 2007), 236 (a young Jew went to an ear doctor and asked to be made deaf in one year, others "tried to lose so much weight that they would be rejected … for being too weak to perform duties"); Testimony of Henryk Prajs, 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/henryk-prajs> (the author's father had cut off his finger to avoid being drafted into the Russian army; the author, like most Jews, was treated fairly in the Polish army: "I was assigned to a non-commissioned officer school, as I had completed seven years of school. … I ranked high in the [NCOs] school, because I was able. … I was promoted to corporal. I was doing well in the army, I can't say I was favored but they treated me fair, no complaints."). Starvation was a much more common practice but was not always successful. After a 19-year-old Jew in Działoszyce got a draft notice in mid-1939, he wrote to his brother in Canada to express his disappointment with the fact that, despite losing ten kilos, he was accepted into the Polish army anyway. See Wolgelernter, *The Unfinished Diary,* 59.

[554] Szczepański, *Społeczność żydowska Mazowsza w XIX–XX wieku,* 238; Sol and Toby Rubenstein, "Our Family: Lapy, Poland," The Museum of Family History, Internet: <http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/sfoah-lapy-rubinstein.htm> (a medical officer was bribed to obtain an early discharge).

[555] Shiye Goldberg (Shie Chehever), *The Undefeated* (Tel Aviv: H. Leivick Publishing House, 1985), 67.

[556] Avigdor, *From Prison to Pulpit,* 260.

The leadership of the Łomża yeshivot opened the Petach Tikvah, a school in Mandatory Palestine, as early as 1926, which enabled the Jewish men sent there to dodge the Polish draft.[557] Ironically, as the Polish media reported in 1938, a scam came to light, involving the bribing of Polish officials, in which scores of Jews falsely claimed to be war invalids, thereby securing handsome compensation payments and pensions from the state.[558]

Tellingly, those who shirked their civic responsibility thought nothing of turning to the Polish authorities in their hour of need. The author Ruth Prawer Jhabvala recalled how her father had left Poland after World War I to avoid being "conscripted by the Polish army, in which no Jew wanted to serve. They were the worst anti-Semitic country in the world. Worse than Germany at that time." (While many Jews propagated such views and even led an international campaign against Poland, they overlooked the fact that during the civil war raging in Russia at that time at least 100,000 Jews were killed by various Ukrainian, Russian and Belorussian factions, both nationalist and Bolshevik, including the Red Army.) That author then went on to remark, without realizing the incongruity of her statement, that when her father was arrested by the Germans in the early 1930s, he was able to secure his release through the intervention of the Polish authorities, as a citizen of Poland.[559]

It turns out, however, that most of those who actually served in the Polish army did not encounter real abuse. Moshe Yudewitz, who became a corporal during his military service and assigned to head a unit of 12 soldiers, reported that "Generally speaking, I did not encounter any anti-Semitism." Once, he quarrelled with a junior Polish soldier who called him "You Jew pig," and shouted back, "You Polish pig!" Yudewitz then reported the incident to his commander.

> The soldier was called into the office to give his version. He did not deny any part of my version. He was chastised by the captain for not only insulting a Jew, but a Polish patriot, a devoted soldier of the Polish

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[557] Gary S. Schiff, *In Search of Polin: Chasing Jewish Ghosts in Today's Poland* (New York, Washington, D.C.: Peter Lang, 2012), 170. The same phenomenon is evident in modern-day Israel where avoidance of military service is by no means limited to the Haredim. By some estimates, as many as a quarter to a third of secular Jews manage to avoid military service on various grounds, though values as low as 1.5% are also quoted. Furthermore, there is no way of knowing how many secular eighteen-year-olds go abroad, or fake physical and psychological disabilities, to avoid military service. Noah Efron elaborates on the overall situation:

> This trend both reflects and contributes to the fact that service in the IDF [Israel Defence Forces] is no longer viewed by many Israelis as the sole measure of good citizenship. This fact is especially evident in the reserves. Several years ago, the police uncovered a "factory" for medical exemptions from military service, based on the army's central hospital, Tel ha-Shomer (Sheba Medical Center). For a fee running from hundreds to thousands of dollars (depending, among other things, on the length and permanence of the exemption), military doctors signed forms releasing reservists from service. The list included some of Israel's wealthiest and most successful men …

See Efron, *Real Jews,* 71, 84, 85.

[558] "Jak lwowska Esterka fabrykowała legię żydowskich 'inwalidów wojennych', którzy nigdy w wojsku nie służyli," *Goniec Częstochowski,* March 9, 1938; Katarzyna TS, " Jak Rózia i Tadeusz fabrykowali żydowskich obrońców Rzeczypospolitej," August 21, 2018, Internet: <https://wprawo.pl/2018/08/21/katarzyna-ts-jak-rozia-i-tadeusz-fabrykowali-zydowskich-obroncow-rzeczpospolitej/>.

[559] Interview with Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Writers and Company with Eleanor Wachtel, CBC Radio, May 27, 2012.

> defense forces, and a corporal who carried on his uniform the hard-earned distinction of an eagle. … The soldier was confined to the barracks every weekend for two months.[560]

One must bear in mind that during the Second World War, Blacks as well as Asian Americans such as Chinese, Koreans and Filipinos (mostly American born) served in segregated units of the American army, and were sent to Europe to fight the racist regime of Nazi Germany.[561] The Polish army was not segregated along ethnic or religious grounds, much to the displeasure of Jewish nationalists.

Many young Jews simply left Poland, often illegally, rather than serve in the army.[562] It is surprising to learn how effective these efforts at avoiding the draft were. Although there may well have been demographic factors at play as well accounting for part of the shortfall, according to information gathered by official sources, in 1930 Jews accounted for a mere 3.2% of all military conscripts, whereas their share of the population stood at almost ten percent. In the latter part of the decade their participation in the

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[560] Sorid, *One More Miracle,* 239, 244.

[561] According to the 2020 PBS documentary *Asian Americans*, Chinese and Korean Americans tried not to share in the public abuse directed against Japanese Americans, who were being interned in camps at the time, by displaying signs or badges proclaiming their non-Japanese background.

[562] See, for example, Bernard Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1950), 1, where Leonard Shatzkin writes: "My father left Poland at the end of the First World War to avoid military service against the young revolutionary regime in Russia." Shatzkin's father was a socialist, not a communist, but harboured pro-Soviet sympathies. Another example: Two of Miriam Brysk's uncles left for America when they were both barely twenty to avoid serving in the Polish army. See Brysk, *Amidst the Shadows of Trees,* 23.

military increased to 5.95% in 1936, 6.54% in 1937, and 6.07% in 1938.[563] Avoiding the draft continued in the immediate postwar years, as a number of Polish Jews have confirmed.[564]

As for the motives, a Jew who, by his own admission, had not felt anti-Semitism in his native Wilno and was conscripted in early 1939 stated vehemently: "First, I didn't 'join' the Polish Army. Why join the Polish Army? I hated Polaks and wouldn't join. I was drafted. I was twenty-one and physically okay so they drafted me into the Polish Army."[565] Another Jew from Wilno, then a Marxist in decline but after the war a writer and researcher for the BBC and Reuters (specializing in, and educating Westerners about, Eastern European affairs!), was even more vocal about his abhorrence of the prospect of serving in the Polish army, invoking multiple layers of prejudice and all the venom he could muster to support his "enlightened" views:

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[563] Tadeusz Antoni Kowalski, *Mniejszości narodowe w siłach zbrojnych Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej Polski (1918–1939)* (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 1997), 120. Thus official statistics show that the Jewish component was in all certainty substantially less than the usual claim found in Jewish sources that Jews accounted for ten percent of the armed forces and military losses in the September 1939 campaign. Military historian Waldemar Rezmer estimates that the actual percentage was likely closer to five. According to his count, 46,645 to 49,100 Jews served in the Polish army during the September 1939 campaign, of whom 3,437 perished. See Zbigniew Karpus and Waldemar Rezmer, eds., *Mniejszości narodowe i wyznaniowe w siłach zbrojnych Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1939* (Toruń: Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, 2001), 110. Over and above obtaining medical dispensations under false pretences, the rate of reporting for service when called was significantly lower for Jews (in 1933 it was 94.48%) than for Slavs (the corresponding figure for Poles, Ukrainians, and Belorussians was 98.56%, 98.76% and 98.5% respectively). See Kowalski, *Mniejszości narodowe w siłach zbrojnych Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej Polski (1918–1939),* 110. Jews were known to flee to Palestine and the Soviet Union to avoid service in the Polish army. Ibid., 112. To be fair, in the face of war, the Jewish community, for a variety of reasons including social pressures, did not shirk its responsibility and contributed to the National Loan for the defence of Poland (the equivalent of U.S. war bonds). See Szczepański, *Społeczność żydowska Mazowsza w XIX–XX wieku,* 389–90. In some communities like Puławy, it was said to have been even more generous than the Poles. See Tomasz Kowalik, "Żydowskie partie i organizacje społeczne w Puławach okresu międzywojennego," in Filip Jaroszyński, ed., *Historia i kultura Żydów Janowca nad Wisłą, Kazimierza Dolnego i Puław: Fenomenon kulturowy miasteczka—sztetl. Materiały z sesji naukowej "V Janowieckie Spotkania Historyczne", Janowiec nad Wisłą 29 czerwca 2003* (Janowiec nad Wisłą: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Janowca nad Wisłą, 2003), 145

[564] See, for example: Testimony of Benjamin Fisk, Part 31, November 8, 1982, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan at Dearborn, Internet: <http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/fiskb>; Anna Bikont, "Ja, Szmul Wasersztajn, ostrzegam," *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Warsaw), July 13–14, 2002; Leon Trachtenberg, interview 03/6588, June 13, 1992 (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives); Ruth Minsky Sender, *To Life* (New York: Alladin/Simon & Schuster, 2000), 53; Edi Weinstein, *Quenched Steel: The Story of an Escape from Treblinka* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2002), 146; Pell and Rosenbaum, *Taking Risks,* 110, 112 (three Jews avoided the draft with the assistance of a Soviet Jewish official in Równe). Another postwar phenomenon was the ostentatious display by Polish Jewish survivors in Germany of any connection to Poland, although Jews from Hungary, for example, where local collaborators played a pivotal role in their deportation, did not demonstrate such an attitude. According to Irene Shapiro, who lived in Soviet-occupied Poland in 1939–41, "Our Hungarian neighbors are now wearing little Hungarian flags in their lapels, and the Czech girls are wearing their colors, basically to help identify them to their countrymen. The Polish-Jewish girls, however, decide against wearing the red and white flag of our anti-Semitic fatherland. I decide to place a little red flag in my lapel. After all, the Soviet Union was my latest homeland, my parents had Soviet passports, and I have considered myself a 'lefty' to this day. … There is an agreement between the Polish students that when we need to specify our nationality, we will all claim that we are 'stateless.' There is an ongoing dispute between the Polish and Jewish tables about our obstinate refusal to claim the country of our centuries-old Polish-Jewish heritage." See Shapiro, *Revisiting the Shadows*, 267, 296. Jacob Olejski, a Jewish activist in camp for displaced persons in Germany, delivered a speech in August 1945 in which he stated: "No, we are not Poles, even though we were born in Poland … We are Jews!" See Ruth Gay, *Safe Among the Germans: Liberated Jews After World War II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 76.

[565] Account of Shep Zitler, Louisiana Holocaust Survivors, The Southern Institute for Education and Research, posted online at <http://www.tulane.edu/~so-inst/shep.html>.

> … even if Poland were to fight against Germany, I had no wish to join her army and serve under anti-Semitic, sword-rattling officers and arrogant, semiliterate NCOs. …
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> Intellectually, of course, I had realized before that clerical, anti-Semitic, and semifascist Poles could never see Hitler's war in the same light as a Western liberal or a communist would see it. [In this context it is worth recalling that Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union were staunch allies in 1939–41. *M.P.*]…
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> They [the Poles] hated the Germans for their brutalities, of course, but they hated the like people who, having been used to practicing brutalities against others, never dreamed that they might become the victims of similar treatment themselves.
>
> They admire Hitler. He would lose the war, of course, because he did not have the Poles on his side, but he was an elemental force destined to clear Poland of the Jews and Europe of the rotten democracies [i.e., the very ones the Poles had supplied the Enigma machines and codes to in the summer of 1939] and the Communists, both under Jewish influence. …
>
> I was intent on severing all bonds with the country of my birth; I could not admit for one moment the possibility of fighting in the war alongside Poles, who logically should have been in the same camp as the Nazis.[566]

Service in the military, which was mandatory, cannot—and should not—be equated with identification with the Polish nation.[567] The contemptuous attitude of many Jews toward Polish statehood was even manifested on the eve of the German invasion in September 1939, and after the defeat of the Polish army by the Germans. A Jew from Lwów recalled the defeatist, mocking atmosphere in his affluent home (his father was one of the country's major manufacturers of kilims):

> That summer everyone was talking politics, but it was beyond me to comprehend the nature of the news. The names of our own Polish leaders were somewhat familiar … I had seen the streets full of patriotic slogans. One of them, "Strong, United, and Ready," we joked about at home: "Strong to retreat, united to cheat, and ready to give up."[568]

Yosel Epelbaum (Joseph Pell), a native of Biała Podlaska, recalled the alienation of the Jewish community and the mood in his family on the eve of the war:

> Overriding everything was the fact that we never actually felt Polish … It was as if we were part of another nation—the Jewish people—that fate had set down in this godforsaken place. Of course we

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[566] Reuben Ainsztein, *In Lands Not My Own: A Wartime Journey* (New York: Random House, 2002), 17, 115–16, 155. Not surprisingly, Ainsztein is the author of the most vicious sustained attack on the Polish underground, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe,* which is relied on widely by Western historians to assess wartime Polish-Jewish relations.

[567] Even for assimilated French Jews, loyalty to the state was not the same as unreserved identification with the nation. See Penslar, *Jews and the Military,* 120. As Pendlar notes, modern Jewish identities have frequently blended national attachments to a homeland with a transnationalist, pan-Jewish sensibility. Ibid., 121. Thus, there was something to the notions of Jewish internationalism and dual loyalties, which makes it easier to understand why the Endeks doubted if Polish Jews, even if assimilated and professing a loyalty to Poland, were either fully or permanently identified with the Polish nation.

[568] Yehuda Nir, *The Lost Childhood: A Memoir* (San Diego, New York, and London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1989), 3.

> interacted with Poles. We needed them and they needed us for business. But we never truly mixed, certainly not socially. As a youth in Biała Podlaska, I would never think of entering a church or even the home of a Catholic. …
>
> Although my two older brothers were of draft age, for some reason they were never inducted. I don't know if they would have served. By this time no one in my family felt any loyalty to Poland or placed any trust in the judgment of its leaders.[569]

The following is the reaction of a Jew who served in the September campaign and returned to his hometown in Volhynia:

> He spoke scornfully of the Polish cavalry on horseback, fighting the might of the German tanks … There was no sympathy for the Poles who were massacred, but grave concern for the millions of Jews who fell into German hands.[570]

Other extreme manifestations of anti-Christian bigotry were recorded by Dr. Abraham Sterzer from Eastern Galicia: "I received the traditional Jewish education in a 'heder' (religious school). Our rabbi insisted that we Jewish children spit on the ground and utter curses while passing near a cross, or whenever we encountered a Christian priest or religious procession. Our shopkeepers used to say that 'it is a Mitzveh (blessed deed) to cheat a Goy (gentile).'"[571] A Jew from Chmielnik conceded that, from a purely practical point of view, it was much more likely for Jews to cheat Poles than vice versa:

> Well, it was mostly Jews who cheated Poles, because Jews were typical traders and when they dealt with peasants they were not always honest. It was Jews who were merchants, not Poles. A Jew would never do shopping in a Polish shop, mostly because they were not allowed to buy food in other than Jewish shops. So some Jews cheated.[572]

As mentioned, Christian symbols were detested and to be derided, even publicly. The sight of Jews spitting when passing a roadside cross or deliberately avoiding a church was common in prewar Poland. A Jew recalled the stern admonition he received as a boy in Częstochowa: "My grandfather admonished me to stay away from the church, promising harsh heavenly punishment in the event I didn't heed his warning."[573] Leopold Infeld, born in Kraków, recollected that "He was warned that he would go blind if

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[569] Pell and Rosenbaum, *Taking Risks,* 29, 33–34.

[570] Blitt, *No Strength to Forget,* 25.

[571] Abraham Sterzer, "We Fought For Ukraine!" *The Ukrainian Quarterly,* vol. 20, no. 1 (1964): 38.

[572] Majer Mały quoted in Maciągowski and Krawczyk, *The Story of Jewish,* 231–32. A Jewish boy warned a Polish school chum not to eat chocolate from a particular Jewish manufacturer who put soap into his products. Ibid., 181. A Pole who started a transportation business in the village of Śladków, in competition with Jews, found his property burned one night. Ibid., 184.

[573] Benjamin Bender, *Glimpses Through Holocaust and Liberation* (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 1995), 7.

he gazed at Christian holy images."[574] Christian processions evoked fright among Jewish children: "we ran away as though from a fire."[575] A young Jewish boy growing up in Busk recalled: "We Jewish children also had a superstition that, if a priest or nun passed by while our mouths were open, our teeth would fall out."[576]

The Brzozów Memorial Book records the following testimony:

> The oldsters of the former generation had a long account with the Church and always tried to bypass it when in the neighbourhood, turning their heads away so as not to see it. … so, too, in the matter of the Church, we saw just how right they had been. The very name of the Church aroused not only the fears buried in the sub-conscious and associations … it also stood for all the evils of the present … It was not love of man that emanated from it but hatred. Ignorant priests, hoodlums in vestments, used its 'sacred pulpits' to preach sermons that incited brutish masses. Possessed by a fathomless hatred of the Jews they could not rest until their dream of a Juden-rein Poland was so monstrously realized before their very eyes. … The Church—that was the source of this evil, the fountain-head that nourished it all.

However, in that same volume we learn that, when there were plans to invite "the notorious anti-Semite and German collaborator, Father Chechak [Stanisław Trzeciak], whose name alone struck fear into the hearts of the Jews, to come and lecture in the town," a Jewish delegation approached Rev. Bielawski, the local pastor, to intervene. "Though this priest was no great lover of Israel, belonging to the anti-semitic [nationalist] party, he was basically a decent man and promised the emissaries that he would not let

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[574] Richmond, *Konin,* 105.

[575] Richmond, *Konin,* 161.

[576] Thomas T. Hecht, *Life Death Memories* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Leopolis Press, 2002), 67.

Chechak appear. Bielawsky kept his word and when the hooligans brought their 'star', he refused to let them use the 'Sokol' hall—the only hall in the town."[577]

A Jew from Volhynia recalled, "Although the Jews of Rokitno had dealings with non-Jews, they did not follow their customs. There was a division between them when it came to matters of faith and opinion. The locals fed calves for alien work and bowed to emptiness while we [Jews] thanked and blessed our G-d for his creation."[578] In a similar vein, a Jew from Chełm recalled what it was like growing up among Christians and what he was taught about them in his yeshiva:

> Our relations with the non-Jewish population were never very good … There were the Polish-speaking Gentiles who were Roman Catholics, some more pious than others. We were most afraid of them. We considered them idol worshipers. My parents were proud to point out to me that they taught their children to consider the images on their walls as gods. There was not a home without at least three images: one of Jesus, with His heart showing; one of the *matka boska,* the "mother of God"; and one of Joseph, the husband of Mary. The priest would come to the village at times and bring the "transubstantiated" wafer, which they

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[577] Avraham Levite, ed., *A Memorial to the Brzozow Community* (Tel Aviv: The Survivors of Brzozow, 1984), 32, 64, 95–96. Rev. Stanisław Trzeciak, reputedly interwar Poland's worst anti-Semite, was no Nazi collaborator. For an account of his positive attitude toward sheltering Jews during the German occupation see Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewin, eds., *Righteous Among Nations: How Poles Helped the Jews, 1939–1945* (London: Earslcout Publications, 1969), 360–62. According to historian Szymon Datner, Rev. Trzeciak rescued at least one Jewish child. See Andrzej Żbikowski, ed., *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945: Studia i materiały* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej—Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2006), 389, 418. According to a statement submitted to Yad Vashem by Tanchum Kupferblum (alias Stanisław Kornacki) of Sandomierz, later a resident of Montreal, Rev. Trzeciak sheltered two Jews from Kraków who survived the war. See <http://www.savingjews.org/righteous/cv.htm> (Cieslakowski, Jan). Jewish theatres in interwar Warsaw performed spoofs or satires about Poles, and one even focused on Rev. Trzeciak's alleged ignorance and stupidity. According to Ruth R. Wise, *No Joke: Making Jewish Humor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 145:

> A popular routine brought onstage the anti-Semitic priest Stanislaw Tzeciak [sic], whose agitation had often led to violence against Jews. Passing himself of as a scholar of the Talmud, Tzeciak had accused Jews of using their religion to dominate others—for example, by inventing the practice of ritual slaughter of animals as a means of controlling the meat industry. The stage priest spouts what the audience recognizes as absurd interpretations of the Talmud. As he walks offstage, he boasts of his Jewish brains—"What does the Talmud call it? Oh yes, *tukhes*." He points to his head while alluding to his rear end.
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> A riskier skit was "The Last Jew in Poland," which played out the consequences of anti-Semitic ethnic cleansing. An earlier dystopian novel by Hugo Bettauer, *The City without Jews*, had envisioned Vienna stripped of the creative tenth of its population. Similarly, in the Dzigan-Schumacher version, a *judenrein* Poland produces a stalled economy and decimated culture, thereby triggering a frantic attempt to reverse the process. The Jew who has been the slowest to join the exodus of his people finds himself besieged by citizens begging him to stay. He is feted at a banquet with gefilte fish, cholent, and Jewish entertainment, and given a medal, which he promptly pins to his backside next to his Polish Cross of Merit. This "insult to the Polish nation" almost got the comedians arrested. Since the Polish censors sometimes closed offensive acts after the first performance, ticket sales were brisk for the duo's opening nights.

In Shmuel Yosef Agnon's novel *In the Heart of Seas*, Hananiah, the heroine, recounts how Satan, in the guise of a Polish gentleman, tricked her into entering his carriage, as once he had tricked a Jew into violating the Day of Atonement. Agnon was no longer persuaded that Polish Jews should accommodate themselves to their Polish surroundings. See Wise, *No Joke,* 188.

[578] Haim Shteinman, "The Jews of Rokitno," in E. [Eliezer] Leoni, ed., *Rokitno–Wolyn and Surroundings: Memorial Book and Testimony,* posted on the Internet at: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rokitnoye/Rokitnoye.html>; translation of E. Leoni, ed., *Rokitno (Volin) ve-ha-sevivah: Sefer edut ve-zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Rokitno in Israel, 1967), 167. A Yom Kippur ritual involving corporal punishment was described as follows (at p. 179): "An unforgettable event etched in my memory was the ceremony of the punishment by lashing—forty less one. This was an ancient custom for those who repent. I watched with great interest as my father took off his shoes, lay down on a straw mattress and received his lashes willingly and with love."

believed became the flesh and blood of the Messiah. But at that time the priest's coming only hardened our hearts. We knew we worshiped the only true God, and not priests and images. …

In these early years I had few contacts of any sort with Christianity. At about this time I learned the stories of Jesus from the Jewish point of view. They are given in the infamous book of legends composed in the Middle Ages and entitled *Toledot Yeshu (The History of Jesus)*. Some of the material is already embodied in the Talmud: that Jesus was born an illegitimate child and He forced Mary His mother to admit it; how He learned sorcery in Egypt; how He made Himself fly up into the sky by sewing the ineffable name of Jehovah into the skin of his leg, but a famous rabbi did the same and brought Jesus down! …[579]

Thus in the yeshiva, the Talmud reigned supreme. The Old Testament Bible could be used only for reference and there were no secular studies whatsoever.

I had no contacts with Christianity at all. On the way to school we passed a Roman Catholic church and a Russian Orthodox church, and we spat, pronouncing the words found in Deuteronomy 7:26, "… thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing." I said it halfheartedly because of my previous favorable contact with Christianity and because some questions were beginning to creep into my mind. Why should we say such horrible words? The people looked pious. They came from surrounding villages to worship, and they never bothered us.

As I continued studying the Talmud, I came to a passage that told of a cruel punishment for that Sinner of Israel, meaning Jesus. For one sin of deriding the rabbis, He was punished forever and ever with cruelty as to be "judged in boiling excrement." I did not like this story at all. Did it really mean what it said? Could I possibly be in full agreement with this? Did not I also have doubts about the rabbis' claims that their teachings were given to Moses on Mount Sinai? What then would *my* punishment be? It was many years before I dared to proclaim these doubts openly.[580]

As noted earlier, the hateful teachings of the Talmud about Christ were reinforced through other strongly held prejudices and beliefs. Christians had always been regarded as "idol worshipers." As far back as 1582, Rabbi Solomon ben Judah Leybush bemoaned that Jews in Chełm had to live among "non-Jews, our wicked neighbors and our enemies," while "in other holy communities 'it [Israel] is a nation that dwells alone' (Num. 23.9) and no foreigner mixes among them 9cf. Job 15.19)"[581] The view held by many Catholics everywhere that Jews were Christ-killers was reciprocated by Jews: "As a matter of fact, there are probably a few not-well-educated Jews even today who believe that Jesus deserved to be crucified

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[579] This nefarious volume appears to have been a staple in yeshivas throughout Poland. A 19th century memoir from Kamieniec Litewski in Polesia also records its availability. See Assaf, *Journey to a Nineteenth-Century Shtetl,* 323.

[580] Rachmiel Frydland, *When Being Jewish Was a Crime* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1978), 17, 51, 54–55. The authenticity of the *Toledot Yeshu* ("The Life Story of Jesus") is beyond question among serious scholars. It was written by Jews, most likely in the 8th century, as an internal Jewish response to the Gospels and Jesus, and is unambiguously anti-Christian. The the anti-Christian motifs within it go back at least to the time of the Babylonian Talmud—to a time and place (Sassanid and later Islamic Iraq), where Christians were in no position to persecute Jews, thus refuting the exculpatory argument that Jewish polemics against Christianity only developed when Christians were persecuting Jews. Some of the Talmudic themes in *Toledot Yeshu* include: Bavli Shabbat 104b—Jesus, the sorcerer, the son of Miriam (a hairdresser and adulterous woman), and Jesus the illegitimate Son of Pandera (Ben Pandera); Bavli Sanhedrin 43a—the death of Jesus Christ, vicariously by stoning, at the hands of the Jews; Bavli Gittin 56b-57a —Jesus is forced to spend eternity in hell in boiling excrement. See Peter Schäfer, Michael Meerson, and Yaacov Deutsch, eds., *Toledot Yeshu ("The Life Story of Jesus") Revisited: A Princeton Conference* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

[581] Fram, *Ideals Face Reality,* 23.

because he falsely claimed to be the Messiah."[582] Not surprisingly, the Polish name for Christmas, *Boże Narodzenie,* literally Divine Birth, was transformed into *beyz geboyrenish,* which means wicked birthing, and study of the Torah was prohibited on Christmas Eve. The tradition of not studying the Torah on Christmas Eve, which was widely practiced in Eastern Europe, was based on the notion that by doing so one made Jesus' divine punishment—crawing through excrement—worse.[583]

Unfortunately, this cannot simply be relegated to history as contempt for non-Jews continues to be instilled in students by Jewish educators today. Writing in 2019 about her experiences at Jewish schools in the United States, Molly Meisels states:

> "Inanimate objects → plants → animals → humans → – that is the ladder of enlightenment," said my high school teacher to a classroom full of impressionable young girls. She spent her Bible lesson defining the superiority of the Jewish people. We were described as the pinnacle of humanity, and no other people matched our supposed virtuosity. My classmates absorbed the racial pyramid and assumed it to be the truth. Why wouldn't they? Our teacher was a well-respected woman with decades of experience in Jewish education. No one believed she would lie to us about anything so monumental.
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> Consequently, whenever non-Jews arose in conversation, my classmates depicted them as sub-human. They were terrified of non-Jews and their "inferior" qualities. To them, us Jews have genes laced with gold. Since we were taught that Jews are the Chosen People, most assumed that we trump all others in morality, ethics, and logic. That 45-minute-long class had a cataclysmic impact on the value systems of Jewish

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[582] Arnold M. Rose and Caroline B. Rose, eds., *Minority Problems: A Texbook of Readings on Intergroup Relations* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 378.

[583] Jeffrey A. Shandler, "Christmas," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe,* vol. 1, 330; Talmi, *Memorial Book of Sierpc, Poland,* 406. The Yiddish name for Christmas is *Nittel*. According to the Sierpc yizkor book, "*Nittel* is the 25th of December, the date of the birth of Jesus. (The origin of the word is the Latin *natale* meaning birth.) The prohibition of studies is to prevent mentioning to his credit 'that man' who studied Torah. Because of this prohibition, Hasidim and others would play cards on that evening. Yeshiva students and *beit midrash* students would play games with scraps of paper." Ibid., 454. Reading the Torah could be of benefit to Jesus Christ, who, according to Jewish belief, was burning in hell in hot excrement (Gittin 57a). This blasphemy goes further: "This night is called "*Bozche Narodziny*" [sic, *Boże Narodzenie*] (the birth of God) in Polish. In Yiddish, we called it "*Baiz Gvoiren*" (the birth of bad). Probably called so in Yiddish because of the play of words *Bozche—Baiz*." Ibid., 454. As explained in Marc Shapiro's article "Torah Study on Christmas Eve," *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, vol. 8, no. 2 (July 1999): 319–53, the Jewish custom of refraining from Torah study on Christmas Eve goes back at least a few centuries, even though it was shrouded in oral tradition in order to try to hide it from the Christians. Many, though not all Jews, observed this custom, both Hasidim and non-Hasidim, including well-known Talmudists. Shapiro rejects the common explanation for not studying the Torah on Christmas Eve, as merely a stay-indoors policy of self-protection from possible violence from Christians on this night. After all, the prohibition also applied to studying the Torah in private at home. The motive, based in part on Sanhedrin 90b, is described by Shapiro, "It is possible that one may study something which Jesus himself studied. This in turn would be of assistance to his soul, which remains in hell." Shapiro also clarifies other Jewish teachings about Jesus Christ. For his crime of apostasy (teaching laws to the Jews that were not in the Torah), Jesus is confined to a pool of sewage in hell for eternity. Shapiro writes, "The notion that Jesus is condemned to crawl through the latrines on Christmas eve is quite significant, as will soon be seen. The closest parallel is found in *Toledot Yeshu* … presumably, a passage in *Gittin* 57a is relevant in this regard and may even be the origin of the notion that Jesus must crawl through the latrines. According to this passage, it has been decreed in heaven that Jesus is punished with boiling hot excrement." Shapiro puts all this in broader context as he states that, "Of course, even without a clear halakhic prohibition, Jews were accustomed to use derogatory expressions in speaking of elements of the Christian religion." He also notes that the dog was used as an image, of bad things in store for the Jews at Christmas-time, owing to the popular Kabbalistic identification of Jesus with a dog. Despite Nittel's clear derivation from Latin, medieval Jews commonly believed that the word was derived from the Hebrew world *nitleh*, meaning "hanged one," which was a common name for Jesus among Jews at the time due to his association with crucifixion. Parents would tell their children "See that the hanged one does not pull you in," meaning into the toilet. Jews were also known to consume a lot of garlic on that day, out of the belief that this will ward off the feared Jesus.

children, who eventually turned into Jewish adults—the next generation of Orthodox Jewry. This one incident did not stand alone. It was a pattern which subsisted in my school, as it did in all the other schools of my community. This narrative is highly indicative of the prevalent problems within Jewish education which are propagated by Jewish educators worldwide.

I spent my childhood hearing radical comments about Jewish superiority, male domination, and archaic homophobia. At the time, I naively believed that these bigoted beliefs were exclusive to my community. My community is an extreme of Orthodoxy, abiding by traditional practices which were status quo in pre-World War II Europe. The bigotry there is appalling, yet not scandalous. This is all they know, as the insular nature of the community leaves little room for tolerance. However, I was shocked to be met with the same intolerances at Yeshiva University—a community of open-minded Jews with ties to secular society. I expected them to know better. I was concerned by what I witnessed, embarking on a journey of exploration to discover the roots of this toxic bigotry. After much investigation, I have found that the issue of antagonistic prejudice seems to be present in all Jewish communities, and it begins in the Jewish education system. Whether one grows up Chasidic, Sephardic, Modern Orthodox, or Yeshivish, they will be inoculated with bias in the guise of Orthodox Judaism. No Orthodox group can assert innocence, as all are equally guilty.[584]

Jews also displayed a myriad of superstitions and peculiarities in their day-to-day lives that undoubtedly struck their Christian neighbours as strange and bewildering. As Jewish scholar Raphael Mahler points out,

In contrast to the religious and rationalistic Christian sects which opposed superstitions as adamantly as they did secular science, the Hasidic movement was permeated by superstitions of all kinds. The Hasidim believed as much in magical remedies, amulets, exorcisms, demonic possession (dybbuks), ghosts, devils, and teasing, mischievous genies as they did in the almost unlimited heavenly power of the zaddik.[585]

A Jew from Działoszyce described some of these superstitions as follows:

Dzialoszyce [Działoszyce] was a *shtetl* and, as such, its inhabitants often had a folk view of the universe. Many people wore red *bintl* (ribbons or strings) to ward off the evil eye. My own mother was superstitious. I remember an occasion when Chawzie Lazniaz visited our store. … When Chawzie left, my mother started feeling nauseous and opined, "It could only be the evil eye."

The folk culture of the *shtetl* sometimes extended to medicine as well. Leibish Seniawski, nicknamed the *felsher* (folk healer), worked as a family practitioner. … Another folk remedy was a little harder for us children to take. If any of us had croup or got a really bad cough, we were taken to Uncle Aron Yasny's stable. Urine was collected from his mare and my parents made us drink it. This was supposed to cure us. …

The logic of the *shtetl* sometimes approached the logic of Chelm, a topsy-turvy *shtetl* where twisted reasoning was a purported commonplace and, as such, the subject of humorous folktales. I recall one incident involving the same Lazniaz family. … Itchele was pleased to find a pair of rubber galoshes that fit

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[584] Molly Meisels, "Breeding Bigorty: The Failures of Our Jewish Education System," *The Yeshiva University Observer,* March 31, 2019, Internet: <https://yuobserver.org/2019/03/breeding-bigotry-failures-jewish-education-system/>.

[585] Mahler, *Hasidism and the Jewish Enlightenment,* 16.

his diminutive foot. On the way out of the store after having made the purchase, [his wife] Chawzie noticed in the window display a large pair of size 11 galoshes marked for sale at two zloty [złoty]. Chawzie commented, "Look, Itchele, the price for the larger galoshes is the same as for the ones you bought. For the same money, take the larger ones!" … Itchele, as usual, was defenseless in the face of his wife's overbearing "logic."

… When I was about six years old, Chane Delesete died. … I followed the funeral procession on its way to the cemetery. On the corner of Dziekanowice Street, between the marketplace and the cemetery, a woman came out of her house, wailing, whenever a funeral passed by. People carrying and following Chane's coffin cried too, but as they neared the cemetery, this woman—who was a professional crier—started an earnest rendition of her act. She was given a few groszy as she kept on crying, bringing the others to tears. She repeatedly proclaimed, "Such a nice person, and to die so young." Afterward, I overheard her asking, "Who died? What did he die of?"[586]

A memoir from Łuków provides additional examples:

During the week between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, live chickens, carp, pike, and whitefish would appear in the big yard in front of the building—the chickens in their cages and the fish in their tubs. …

About two days before the most serious day of the year, *Tateh* [i.e., dad] would call us downstairs. With a prayer book in his hand, he would take a chicken or a fish and make us repeat his words as he swung them over our heads three times. "This is my chicken (or fish), this is my *kaporah,* my scapegoat; this chicken (or fish) will go to its death instead of me, and I will live a long life." Today, many people just give charity instead of swinging the *kaporah* around their heads, but the truth is, it makes a deep impression on a child when they learn that they could have died, instead of the chicken or fish, for "their sins." …

During the Days of Awe, things were very quiet and thoughtful. We didn't go to *Tashlich,* the tossing of the sins upon the waters, but we always made sure we were in *shul* in time for the blowing of the *shofar,* the ram's horn.

On *Erev* Yom Kippur (eve of Yom Kippur) … Before we left the house, dressed in our finest outfits, all brand new, except for our shoes—we had to wear slippers because you aren't permitted to wear leather shoes on the holiest day of the year …

Yon Kippur was also, except for Simchat Torah, the only Jewish holiday where women would come to *shul* at night. …

The next day was spent fasting, and the women's section of the *shul* would smell like bad breath and the spirits of ammonia the women had prepared in case they swooned from hunger. When the service finished at night, the men would blow the *shofar* and then go out into the street and bless the moon, a concluding part of the services.[587]

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[586] Tenenbaum, *Legacy and Redemption,* 9–10.

[587] Wrobel, *My Life My Way,* 30–31. Superstitions could take on less dramatic forms. One Jew recalled that a Hasidic rabbi gave his mother a *kameha*, a coin he had blessed, telling her that her son should carry it always so that no harm would come to him. See William Tannenzapf and Renate Krakauer, *Memories from the Abyss/But I Hads a Happy Childhood* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2009), 6.

Jewish attitudes and superstitions reflected ancient religious traditions, and they were tenacious. They could be as objectionable for Christians as any Christian-held beliefs or biases were for Jews.[588] Jews sometimes adopted fantastic beliefs about the malevolence of Poles—such as the totally unfounded notion, which surfaced in the 19th century, that the Poles were out to exterminate the Jews of Warsaw, and would hand out poisoned candy to Jewish children.[589] The remnants of this attitude are still evident in Israel today, where both Christian churches and mosques are frequently vandalized. In the late summer of 1989, vandals damaged the remains of a 13th century Carmelite convent in northern Israel following threats from Jewish religious extemists directed at nuns carrying out an archaeological dig.[590] During Holy Week of 1990, a large contingent of Jewish settlers, bankrolled by the Israeli government and egged on by rabbis and prominent Jewish leaders, illegally occupied St. John Hostel in the Christian Quarter of Old Jerusalem. When the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Dioderos I went to the site to protest, he was teargassed and mistreated by Israeli soldiers. "I went to protest peacefully," the shaken patriarch said. "I was hit by a teargas can, knocked to the ground, my religious medallion was smashed and my robes were torn. This, in the holiest week of the year."[591] Such sentiments resurfaced again during Pope John Paul II's visit to Israel in the year 2000, when anti-Christian graffiti were widespread and even a cursing ceremony, known as the *pulsa de nura* curse, was performed.[592]

Christian sites are frequently desecrated in Israel. These incidents receive little or not attention in the mainstream North American media. In 2009, a Franciscan church near the Cenacle on Mount Zion, regarded by tradition as the site of Christ's Last Supper, was defaced with a spray-painted Star of David and slogans such as "Christians Out!" and "We Killed Jesus!" According to reports, the vandals also urinated on the door and left a trail of urine leading to the church.[593] The year 2012 saw no less than seven attacks on Christian sites in Israel. In February, vandals hit the Narkis Street Baptist Church and the Valley of the Cross Monastery, both in Jerusalem; the Monastery of Notre-Dame de Sept Douleurs in Latrun, 25 kilometres west of Jerusalem, fell prey in September; next targeted was the Convent of St. Joseph on Mount Zion in early October. And finally the year 2012 went out with a bang, with three attacks in December—the Church of Our Lady in Kafr Bir'im in the early part of the month, the Valley of the Cross Monastery on December 12 (the monastery's second desecration of the year), followed by the Church of Our Lady again on December 27.

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[588] For a discussion of Jewish communal zealotry and comments of contemporary fundamentalist rabbis on Jewish superiority over Gentiles, see Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 57ff., 129–34, 143–47.

[589] Artur Markowski, "Anti-Jewish Pogroms in the Kingdom of Poland," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, 1815–1918,* vol. 27: *Jews in the Kingdom of Poland,* 243.

[590] "Carmelite convent in Israel vandalized," *Toronto Star*, September 27, 1989.

[591] Gordon Barthos, "Tensions mar Holy Week celebrations in Israel," *Toronto Star,* April 14, 1990; Gordon Barthos, "Jewish settlement bankrolled by government," *Toronto Star,* April 23, 1990.

[592] "Cursing of Pope lands journalist under five-day house arrest," *The National Post* (Toronto), March 26, 2000.

[593] John L. Allen Jr., "Playing Politics With the Global War on Christians," *National Catholic Reporter,* September 7, 2012.

In February 2012, anti-Christian graffiti was found sprayed on the walls of a Greek Orthodox monastery in Jerusalem's Valley of the Cross, and a Baptist Church in central Jerusalem. In both incidents, the graffiti included phrases such as "Jesus is dead," "Death to Christians," "Mary is a prostitute," and "price tag."[594] The tires of churchgoers' vehicles were slashed. In the early morning hours of September 4, 2012, the door of the Cistercian (Trappist) monastery in Latroun, near Jerusalem, was burned and anti-Christian graffiti was sprayed on the walls. Graffiti sprayed on the monastery walls included the words "Migron" and "Jesus is a monkey." The arson and graffiti are suspected to be a "price tag" attack, following the recent evacuation of Migron, a settlement outpost in the West Bank. In a statement released later in the day and signed, among others, by the Latin Patriarch for Jerusalem Fouad Twal and Gerogio Lingua, Apostolic Nuncio for Jordan, and former Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah, the Catholic Church severely condemned the attack, saying it was the results of an Israeli tendency to scapegoat Christians. "The Christian community awoke this morning … to discover with horror that once again it is the target of forces of hatred within Israeli society," the missive said, adding "what happened in Latrun is only another in a long series of attacks against Christians and their places of worship." Further on, the statement asked: "What is going on in Israeli society today that permits Christians to be scapegoat and targeted by these acts of violence?," questioning why the unknown assialtants chose to "vent" their anger over the dismantling of West Bank outposts "against Christians and Christian places of worship?" "What kind of 'teaching of contempt' for Christians is being communicated in their schools and in their homes? And why are the culprits not found and brought to justice?" the statement asked, urging Israeli "authorities to act to put an end to this senseless violence and to ensure a 'teaching of respect' in schools for all those who call this land home."[595]

In December 2012, vandals spray-painted "Jesus is a monkey" on the wall of the 19th-century Latrun Monastery west of Jerusalem and torched the structure's front door. The year 2013 has seen a number of additional desecrations of Christian sites. On May 31, 2013, the words "Christians are apes" were written in Hebrew on the wall of the Dormition Abbey on Mount Zion in Jerusalem and church property was destroyed. "Christians are apes" and "Christians are slaves" was spray-painted on two cars parked outside the abbey. On August 20, 2013, a Molotov cocktail was thrown at the Beit Jimal monastery near the city of Beit Shemesh, west of Jerusalem. The graffiti sprayed in Hebrew on the monastery walls included the words "Revenge" and "Goyim perish."[596] On April 1, 2014, vandals scrawled hate graffiti on a Catholic monastery near Beit Shemesh in central Israel and slashed the tires of nearby cars weeks before Pope

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[594] The term "price tag" refers to attacks, usually arson and graffiti, carried out by Jewish extremists to target non-Jews—including homes, churches and mosques. During the attacks, the word "price tag" has often been spray-painted on the vandalized structures. Part of the reason for the frequency of these assaults, and the impunity of the perperators, came out with the arrest, in March 2015, of an Israeli soldier who passed information regarding future Israeli defence forces operations to "price tag" hate criminals, helping them evade authorities and continue their attacks. Exceptionally, this soldier was sentenced to 45 months in prison for leaking classified information to Jewish extremists in the West Bank. See Lee Gancman and Judah Ari Gross, "Soldier who 'spied' for Jewish extremists gets 45 months," *The Times of Israel,* January 5, 2015.

[595] Oz Rosenberg, "Christian Monastery Near Jerusalem Vandalized, Door Set On Fire," *Haaretz*, September 4, 2012; Nir Hasson, "Catholic Church condemns 'price-tag' attack on monastery, urges Israel to change 'culture of contempt'," *Haaretz*, September 4, 2012.

[596] Ben Hartman, "Molotov Cocktail Thrown at Monastery Outside Beit Shemesh," *Jerusalem Post*, August 21, 2013.

Francis visits the Holy land. Slogans against Mideast peace talks with the Palestinians as well as graffiti disparaging Jesus and Mary were found on the outer walls of the Deir Rafat monastery close to Jerusalem.[597] (That monastery and its cemetery were vandalized again in October 2018, being the fourth time in five years.[598]) Another spate of hate crimes occurred in early May 2014. Anti-Christian graffiti was found on a wall adjacent to a Romanian Orthodox church on Hahoma Hashlishit Street in Jerusalem. The graffiti read "Price tag, King David is for the Jews, Jesus is garbage." (That church building had been attacked in October 2012 in a similar fashion.) In addition, "Death to Arabs" graffiti was spotted on the door of a home and on an electrical box in the Old City of Jerusalem. In another hate crime attack, "Death to Arabs and Christians and all those who hate Israel" was daubed in Hebrew on an outer column of the Office of the Assembly of Bishops at the Notre Dame Centre in East Jerusalem.[599]

The assaults on Christian churches came to the attention of world media when, on June 17, 2015, arsonists targeted the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes at Tabgha (Tiberias), on the Sea of Galilee, causing serious damage to the church structure, roof, reception room, and the nuns' office. As has become customary, anti-Christian graffiti, in Hebrew, was spray painted on a wall—a passage from a Jewish prayer, which religious Jews recite three times daily, that "False idols be smashed." The same church had been attacked in April 2014 by Jewish youth who pelted worshippers with stones, destroyed a cross and threw benches into the lake. Since the beginning of 2015, a Greek Orthodox monastery in East Jerusalem and a church in the village of Jab'a were torched. According to a February 2015 report, the management of the Cooperative Village, Ahihud, established on the ruins of the displaced Palestinian village of al-Barweh in Acre, desecrated the Islamic and Christian cemetery of the village. The cemetery's ground was covered with soil in a preparatory step to turn it into a cattle barn on the remains of dead Muslims and Christians. It turns out that since 2011, 17 Christian and Muslim places of worship have been torched in Israel with nobody indicted in any of the cases. Yeshiva students are suspected of being behind many of the attacks. It would be unthinkable that in a Western country attacks on 17 synagogues would occur in such a short time and, if they did, that the culprits would not have been found. The Israeli authorities have singularly failed to deal with this concerted aggression against holy Christian sites over the last few years.[600] A June 21, 2015 editorial in *Haaretz* ("Till When Will Israel Let Its Churches and Mosques Be Burnt?") made this very point clear, without mincing words:

> The government of Israel, rightfully, wouldn't have ignored the torching of synagogues, the destruction of tombstones in Jewish cemeteries or assaults against Jews in other countries if governments were lax in investigating such crimes. Now, it must show determination to uproot such hate crimes from areas under its

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[597] Associated Press, "Catholic Monastery Vandalized In Israel Ahead of Pope Francis Visit," April 1, 2014.

[598] Nir Hasson, "Headstones Smashed in Christian Cemetery Near Jerusalem in Suspected Hate Crime," *Haaretz,* October 17, 2018.

[599] Nir Hasson, "Jerusalem Church Defaced in Latest Hate Crime Attack," *Haaretz,* May 9, 2014; Ilan Ben Zion, "Church Defaced in Jerusalem in Suspected 'Price Tag' Hate Attack," *Times of Israel,* May 9, 2014.

[600] Noa Shpigel and Barak Ravid, "Arson suspected at Church of loaves and Fishes in Northern Israel," *Haaretz*, June 18, 2015; Ariel Schalit, The Associated Press, "Church near Sea of Galilee Damaged in Possible Extremist Jewish Arson Attack," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), June 18, 2015.

jurisdiction, defining perpetrators as terrorists who endanger Israel's security, no less than those who send car bombs into city centers.

Yet the the vandalizing and torching of Christian sites continues to this day. Vandals shattered stained-glass windows and destroyed a statue of Mary in St. Stephen Church in the Beit Jamal Salesian monastery, 25 miles west of Jerusalem, in September 2017. On June 8, 2019, Armenian Apostolic Orthodox seminarians in Jerusalem's Old City were targeted by three young Jewish extremists who spat on them, saying "Death to the Christians" and "We will wipe you out of this country." On December 4, 2020, an Israeli Jew set fire to the Church of All Nations, also known as the Church or Basilica of the Agony, on the Mount of Olives in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Christians believe Jesus prayed before he was crucified.[601] According to a U.S. State Department report on religious freedom around the world published in 2021, Christian clergy and pilgrims continued to report instances of ultra-Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem harassing or spitting at them.

Like clockwork, Jewish "extremists" struck again on January 1, 2023—the latest in a string of attacks against Christians and their property in and around the Old City in Jerusalem. More than 30 graves at the historic Protestant Cemetery on Mount Zion were desecrated. Crosses were broken and headstones toppled and smashed. Security camera footage shows two young men carrying out the attack. They were wearing kippahs, or skullcaps, and knotted fringes known as tzitzit on their clothes, indicating they are religious Jews. The same cemetery was vandalised in a similar way nine years ago.

"We have noticed that hatred speech and hatred crimes are on the rise," Anglican Archbishop Hosam Naoum said.

Standing next to the vandalised grave of the second Anglican bishop of Jerusalem, Samuel Gobat, he said there had been a recent increase in spitting at Christians and attacks on their holy sites.

"This is only an indication that we are not in a place where people can tolerate each other or accept each other," Archbishop Naoum added.

"We see more exclusion, more segregation and that is what really grieves us in this city of Jerusalem."

…

The Anglican Church said the targeting of the crosses clearly suggests "these criminal acts were motivated by religious bigotry and hatred against Christians".[602]

The diocese cautioned that the desecration of the cemetery should be seen as an ominous warning about "hatred against Christians."

"Many stone crosses were the targets of the vandals, clearly indicating that these criminal acts were motivated by religious bigotry," it said, urging authorities to redouble efforts to find the perpetrators.[603]

The cemetery has been vandalized a number of times in the past, and in recent years Christian clergy in the area have suffered from abuse on the part of religious and Haredi Jews. Recently, two Givati infantry

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[601] "Gethsemane Church Targeted in Arson Attack," *The Catholic Telegraph,* December 5, 2020.

[602] "Anglican Church and UK Condemn Desecration of Jerusalem," BBC News, January 4, 2023.

[603] "Christian Graves Desecrated in Historic Jerusalem Cemetery," AP, January 4, 2023.

brigade soldiers were questioned on suspicions they spit at a procession of Armenian priests in the Old City of Jerusalem.

…

"We are worried," said a member of the Protestant community who asked not to be identified by name. "This comes after priests were spat at. There was a case of an attack in the Old City; as a community we are very worried. Our feeling is that they are trying to minimize these incidents, and it does not receive political attention," he said.[604]

Christian leaders in the Holy Land have repeatedly warned that their communities are under threat of being driven from the region by extremist Israeli radical groups. Their concerns were dismissed by Israeli authorities as baseless.[605] On December 16, 2022, on the eve of the latest assault, the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land (ACOHL), voiced their concerns over the "gradual deterioration of the general social and political" situation in the Holy Land, also pointing to "divisive statements" made by some political leaders against "the Arab or otherwise non-Jewish community" which, they said, "are contrary to the spirit of peaceful and constructive coexistence among the various communities that make up our society." Anti-Christian abuses are spiralling out of control, and very little is being done to contain them. According to the *The Times of Israel* of April 17, 2023:

A series of videos showing ultra-Orthodox youths spitting at Christians in Jerusalem's Old City is making the rounds through Israeli social media, calling attention to a phenomenon Christian clergy have been speaking out against for years with little result.

The clips, aired Sunday on Channel 12, show groups of young men in the Old City, dressed in suits and black hats, some wearing or carrying prayer shawls. In one video, as six boys and young men walk by two Catholic nuns at the Church of the Flagellation on Via Dolorosa, one turns and spits in the direction of the nuns.

In another, a lone young man spits as pilgrims walk up the Via Dolorosa carrying a wooden cross.

A third clip shows three ultra-Orthodox youths walking by a church in the Muslim quarter. One of the men, smoking a cigarette, spits at the door of the church. An Arab man filming them asks in Hebrew if they're ashamed of their actions, and they respond proudly that they are not at all.

Israel's official spokespeople and social media accounts go out of their way to emphasize Israel's freedom of worship and to portray the Jewish state as the only safe home for Christians in a hostile Middle East.

The picture of safe coexistence painted by Israeli officials is starkly at odds with the experiences Jerusalem's Christian leaders themselves describe. While they readily acknowledge that there is no organized or governmental effort against them, Christian clergy in the Old City tell of a deteriorating atmosphere of harassment, apathy from authorities, and a growing fear that incidents of spitting and vandalism could turn into violence against their persons.

Catholic clergy in the Old City told the Times of Israel that spitting was a daily occurrence, and that police fail to respond adequately.

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[604] "Jerusalem Chrsitian Cemetery on Mount Zion Vandalized," *Haaretz,* Januaey 3, 2023.

[605] "Israeli Extremists Threaten Christian Presence in Jerusalem, Church Leader Says," Reuters (*Haaretz*), January 9, 2022.

They are also alarmed by a rise in more brazen attacks in recent months, including vandalism of cemeteries and key shrines in Jerusalem and the Galilee.

The Franciscans in the Old City are so worried that they have been locking the doors to their San Salvatore compound in the Old City at night ever since the desecration of a Jesus statue in the Church of the Flagellation in February by a mentally ill Jewish-American tourist. They have never taken such a measure in the past, said Father Alberto Pari, secretary of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land.

"We view with severity all kinds of violence," said the police in a statement earlier this month, "and will continue to act against acts of violence in general, and specifically violence in holy places, with a heavy hand without compromise on the goal of bringing offenders to justice."

Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Fleur Hassan-Nahoum has led the attempts to get a handle on the situation on the municipal level.

"We have become increasingly more aware of the situation," Hassan-Nahoum told The Times of Israel. "In my hat as both tourism and international relations head, I have been gathering all the different stakeholders to talk about solutions."

The Times of Israel viewed the minutes from a meeting Hassan-Nahoum chaired in December, in which city councilmembers, police, and representatives from Old City organizations sought to address the attacks.

Tammy Lavi of the Jerusalem Intercultural Center told the forum that at least 50% of the Friday Armenian processions are interrupted by spitting, cursing, or people intentionally walking through the ceremony.

The attendees placed much of the blame on the "Zilbermans," members of a 300-family-strong Lithuanian ultra-Orthodox community in the Old City that distinguishes itself from other Haredi communities with their unique approach to Torah study that includes right-wing Zionist ideas.

In the municipality meeting, right-wing city councilor Yehonatan Yosef agreed to go with deputy mayor and activist Aryeh King to speak with the Zilberman rabbis about stopping their students from harassing Christian tourists and ceremonies, apparently with little success.[606]

This deplorable state of afairs appears to be completely out of control. In May 2023,

Thousands of Israeli nationalists, some of them chanting racist slogans, have paraded through Jerusalem's Old City in an annual celebratory day for Israelis that became one of humiliation for Palestinians living under occupation.

The marchers, mostly male Orthodox teens and young men, were celebrating Israel's capture of East Jerusalem in 1967. The crowd waved blue and white Israeli flags and chanted slogans such as "Death to Arabs" and "We will burn your village".

Authorities barred Palestinians from going through most of the gates into the Old City.

One group of marchers threw rocks and bottles at members of the press covering the event, wounding three journalists, including a Palestinian reporter for Haaretz, who was struck in the neck, the paper's website reported.

Police said they had arrested two people and described the attack as an "isolated incident".

Ibrahim Hamad, 28, a Palestinian freelance journalist who was covering events at Damascus Gate, said the attack was unprovoked. "We were standing here as journalists and there were also some women wearing hijabs near us. Groups of extremist Zionists started throwing glass bottles and sticks," he said.

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[606] Lazar Berman, "Old City Spitting Videos Underscore Troubling Reality for Christian Clergy," *The Times of Israel,* April 17, 2023.

"I believe they were trying to stop us from showing what they are doing."

Palestinian community leader Fakhri Abu Diab was outside al-Aqsa mosque giving a telephone interview with Israel's Ynet news when four police officers approached him. One grabbed his phone and throw it on the ground, breaking it, he said. He was then forced out of the mosque compound, held at a street corner for an hour and a half, and told not to return to the Old City.

"This is the Israeli police. We are facing apartheid," he said.

Ynet news editor Nir Cohen criticised the police behaviour. "In the middle of an interview, a policeman arrives and throws his phone away just for the sake of it, with no apparent reason." A police spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment.

Israel illegally annexed East Jerusalem after the 1967 war and considers it part of its "eternal undivided capital". Palestinians view East Jerusalem as their future capital.

The flag march reflects a far-right ideology embraced by key government ministers, including the anti-Arab extremist minister of national security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, who joined the marchers.

Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, called the event "a splendid day on which to celebrate our return to our eternal capital".

But Abu Diab called Jerusalem Day "a bad day, the day they occupied us. It's a catastrophe for us."[607]

There is no end in sight to this relentless torrent of abuse despite the protests of Christian churches and organizations:

World Council of Churches (WCC) Rev Prof Dr Jerry Pillay expressed concern over a violent protest by rightwing Jewish activists against an Evangelical Christian event in Jerusalem on 28 May [2023]. The protestors—who included a prominent far-right rabbi, the chairman of the Ateret Cohanim organization, and a deputy mayor of Jerusalem—are reported to have chanted insults, spat on participants, and smashed windows at the Davidson Center near the Western Wall in Jerusalem where the event was taking place.[608]

In June 2023, an Israeli reporter who went undercover as a priest experienced firsthand what Christian clergy encounter on a day-to-day basis in Jerusalem.

An Israeli journalist was derided and spat at, including by a child and a soldier, as he spent a day dressed as a priest in Jerusalem to investigate spiraling hate crimes against Christians in the city.

Donning a brown priest's robe, Channel 13's Yossi Eli was spat at just five minutes after setting out with a Franciscan clergyman, Father Alberto.

A bit later a man mocked them in Hebrew, saying, "Forgive me father for I have sinned." Then an 8-year-old spat at them, as did a soldier when a group of troops passed by later.

This is not the first time that soldiers have been caught committing hate crimes against Christians in Jerusalem. In November, troops from the Givati infantry brigade spat at the Armenian archbishop during a procession. They were later disciplined by the army.

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[607] Ben Lynfield and Quique Kierszenbaum, "Israeli Nationalists Chant Racist Slogans on March Through Jerusalem," *The Guardian,* May 18, 2023.

[608] "WCC Concerned Over Attack on Christians," Independent Catholic News, May 31, 2023.

> Channel 13's report comes as attacks against Christians in Jerusalem – spanning from vandalism of grave sites to physical assaults – have been spiking, with the police reluctant to track down perpetrators.[609]

Most recently a Polish convent and pilgrims' hostel (Polish House) in Jerusalem has been targeted, a story that the mainstream international media ignored.

> In recent months, the Polish Elżbietanek Convent [Congregation of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth] in Jerusalem has been subjected to repeated attacks by Orthodox Jews, creating a distressing situation for Christians living in the city. Sister Róża, the Superior of the Polish House, who has been serving in the Holy Land for 28 years, shared the challenging circumstances faced by the community. She revealed that spitting, insults, and blasphemy against the name of Jesus have become a daily occurrence.
>
> Not only are insults hurled at the nuns when they step outside the convent, but also trash is thrown onto the premises from neighboring properties. Water-filled bags are aimed at the residents of the Polish establishment and visiting pilgrims. Stones, glass bottles, and spoiled food products are also thrown at the Polish Elżbietanek Convent by its neighbors.
>
> As emphasized by Sister Róża, the violence has escalated in recent weeks. During the night of June 16th, an unidentified man hurled a large rock at the property's entrance. A similar incident occurred the following night, and a few days later, a group of young Jews turned the Polish convent into a target for stone-throwing.
>
> After a few days of relative calm, the fateful last weekend arrived. In the night between Thursday and Friday [July 13–14, 2023], and again on subsequent nights, intruders breached the convent's courtyard and vandalized various items, including the robust anti-burglary doors.[610]

By and large Israeli police ignore such "incidents" and the Israeli authorities have tolerated this state of affairs for decades. Culprits are rarely apprehended or punished. The following response is characteristic of the seriousness with which the authorities take such matters.

> When asked about the reactions of the local police, Sister Róża spreads her arms and admits that cooperation is not easy. In June, when she went to the police, she was informed that she would have to wait about 4 hours and was asked if she really wanted to file a report. The patrol did not arrive until several days later, but no inspection of the damage was made, and the local district officer showed no interest in the case, despite the fact that Sister Róża provided him with a video recording of the attack.[611]

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609 "Israeli Reporter Goes Undercover as Priest—and Gets Spat At," *Haaretz,* June 26, 2023.

610 Wojciech Zylm, "Polish Convent in Jerusalem Under Attack by Orthodox Jews: Christian Community Faces Escalating Violence," BNN, July 19, 2023, Internet: <https://bnn.network/breaking-news/accidents/polish-convent-in-jerusalem-under-attack-by-orthodox-jews-christian-community-faces-escalating-violence/>. See also

611 "Żydzi atakują klasztor polskich elżbietanek w Jerozolimie," July 19, 2023, Internet: <https://wpolityce.pl/swiat/655156-zydzi-atakuja-klasztor-plucie-wyzwiska-obrazanie>. As has been noted, "These types of acts are usually committed by young people, and it happens on the Sabbath when they become radicalized. It is true that Jewish law prohibits any work or activity during this period of the week, but it turns out that attacking a Polish Catholic outpost in the Holy Land does not conflict with the Sabbath." See Henryk Zieliński, "W Izraelu dochodzi do sytuacji, w której chrześcijanin atatkują nawet umundurowani żołnierze," July 17, 2023, Internet: <https://wpolityce.pl/swiat/654976-ks-zielinski-chrzescijan-w-izraelu-atakuja-tez-zolnierze>.

Ethnic tensions erupt frequently over some small incident, and then spiral out of control. After an Arab citizen drove through a predominantly Jewish neighbourhood in Acre during Yom Kippur, on October 8, 2008, five days of violence between Jews and Arabs ensued.

> The troubles started on Wednesday as Jewish residents, who make up two-thirds of this mainly low-income city of 46,000, began the fast of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, when all traffic in Israel's Jewish population centers comes to a standstill.
>
> Late that night an Arab resident, Tawfiq Jamal, drove with his son into a predominately Jewish neighborhood, known as the eastern district, to pick up his daughter from her fiancé's apartment.
>
> After leaving the car, the Jamals, perceived by Jewish residents as deliberately breaking the sanctity of the fast, were chased by a stone-throwing mob.
>
> They escaped, though the son received light wounds to his face. But a rumor spread through Acre's Old City, where many of the town's Arab residents live, that Tawfiq Jamal had been killed. According to witnesses from both sides, hundreds of masked Arab youths set out to take revenge. …
>
> Scores of cars were vandalized, and the windows of Jewish-owned stores were smashed.
>
> Over the next few nights, Jewish residents set fire to at least three Arab-owned houses in the neighborhood and damaged several more, despite a heavy police presence. Most Arab residents had left to stay with relatives.
>
> "At the end of the fast the whole neighborhood came out," Tawfiq Taisir, 27, said outside his home, the yard filled with glass from the upper-floor windows that had been shattered by stones. Mr. Taisir, an Arab, said his family had lived as part of a tiny minority among Jews in the eastern district for 30 years.
>
> The home of an Arab family three doors down from him was gutted on Saturday night.[612]

The rape of a young woman in May 2012 by three Sudanese or Eritrean men sparked widespread riots against black African immigrants.

> Some 1,000 protesters rallied in Tel Aviv's Hatikva neighborhood on Wednesday and called for the ousting of African asylum seekers from Israel.
>
> Demonstrators attacked African passersby while others lit garbage cans on fire and smashed car windows.
>
> Another group of demonstrators stopped a shuttle taxi and searched for migrant workers among the passengers, while banging on the windows.
>
> The crowd cried "The people want the Sudanese deported" and "Infiltrators get out of our home."
>
> Following the protest, hundreds of people assembled in the main street of the Hatikvah neighborhood. Several protesters smashed the windows of a grocery store that served the migrant workers community, broke the windows of a barber shop and looted it.
>
> Police arrested 17 people during the protest, with some of them detained while beating Sudanese migrants.[613]

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[612] Isabel Kershner, "Israeli City Divided by Sectarian Violence," *The New York Times,* October 12, 2008.

[613] Ilan Lior and Tomer Zarchin, "Demonstrators Attack African Migrants in South Tel Aviv," *Haaretz,* May 24, 2012.

The primary targets of Israeli Jews, however, especially the fanatical settlers in the West Bank, are Palestinian civilians. United Nations figures show that the annual rate of Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians almost quadrupled between 2006 and 2013, rising to 399 in 2013. Israeli security forces have largely failed to stem the so-called "price tag" campaign in which thugs cut down trees, deface mosques and beat Palestinian farmers.[614] (According to another report, since 2008, there have been 15 cases of intentional arson attacks on homes and mosques in the West Bank and the police and Shin Bet security service have not solved even one of them.) Emboldened by the tolerance of the Israeli government and society for their acts of extremism, before the Friday services on December 11, 2009, Israeli settlers vandalized a mosque in the West Bank village of Yasuf, torching furniture and spraying Nazi slogans in Hebrew on the premises.[615] On October 3, 2011, Jews torched a mosque in the Israeli Bedouin village of Tuba-Zangariya and desecrated its interior by spray-painting in Hebrew, "Mohammed is a pig." (It should be noted that Israeli's Bedouin male population serve in Israel's military.) Villagers blamed rabbis from the nearby Jewish town of Safed for inciting the violence. Safed's chief rabbi, Shmuel Eliyahu, lauched an anti-Arab campaign prohibiting Jews in the area from selling or renting apartments or rooms to Arabs. Several hundred Arab Israeli students attending college in Safed were his primary targets. Rabbi Eliyahu's scandalous response was to be expected:

> Asked Monday on Israel Radio if he would condemn the attack on the Tuba-Zangariya mosque, Rabbi Eliyahu said there was no evidence that Jews had carried out the attack.
>
> "It makes more sense, based on the facts, that this was a feud and not done by Jews," he said. "I've never seen a Jew vandalize a mosque."
>
> Although such apparent acts of vengeance have recently occurred in the West Bank, a similar attack targeted another mosque in the northern Israeli village of Ibtin last year. Jewish extremists are suspected in all of the incidents.[616]

There has also been a proliferation of attacks on Christian and Muslim cemeteries in Jaffa and other localities. The Assembly of Catholic Bishops in the Holy Land issued a condemnation in a press release on October 9, 2011: "We witnessed in the last days frequent violations, burning and desecration of holy places, and things are not limited anymore to a certain area, but were extended to Galilee and Jaffa." Afterwards, conditions only escalated. Many mosques have also been set on fire in recent years and racist graffiti sprayed on the walls. In early December, 2011 there was an attempt to burn the mosque in the Palestnian village of Burkina. An 80-year-old, now disused, mosque in central Jerusalem was defaced and set afire on December 13, 2011. Graffiti spray painted on the historical site included inscriptions such as

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[614] Karin Laub and Mohammed Daraghmeh, "UN says pace of Israeli settler attacks up 4-fold," Associated Press, January 15, 2014. See also Amira Hass, "Israeli Security Forces Stand By While Settlers Harass Palestinian Shepherds, Witnesses Say," *Haaretz*, March 3, 2013; Gili Cohen, "Settlers Attack Palestinians' House While Israeli Troops Look On," Haaretz, January 9, 2014.

[615] Chaim Levinson, Haaretz Service and The Associated Press, "Abbas Slams 'Brutal' Settlers for Attack on West Bank Mosque," *Haaretz*, December 11, 2009.

[616] Patrick Martin, "Mosque Attack Outrages Israeli Leaders," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), October 4, 2011. Israeli Prime Minister' Benjamin Netanyahu's "outrage" must, in view of his abominable track record, be treated with a great deal of skepticism.

"Muhammad is Dead," "Muhammad is a Pig," and "Price Tag," the latter referring to violent acts by settlers and their supporters against Palestinians.[617] This was followed by the assault on a new mosque in the West Bank town Burqua on December 15, 2011. Unknown persons painted slogans on the wall of the women's section, doused the carpet with gasoline, set fire to the building and fled just before the imam arrived to call people to morning prayers. The handiwork was signed "Mitzpe Yitzhar," the name of an "illegal" Jewish outpost built on privately owned Palestnian land a few kilometres to the north.[618] In June 2012, racist graffiti was found in Jewish-Arab town of Neve Shalom. The tires of 14 cars parked along the town's main road were slashed, and slogans such as "death to Arabs," "revenge," and "Ulpana outpost," were found sprayed on the vehicles. On September 5, 2012, a young Arab man was attacked by Jewish youths in Jerusalem and his leg was broken.[619] Some 40 cars had their tires slashed and anti-Arab graffiti was sprayed on walls in the Arab town of Jish (Gush Halav in Hebrew) in northern Israel on April 3, 2014. (The town has a population of 3,000 Christians and Muslims.) Among the graffiti was "Only goys [non-Jews] will be driven out of our land."[620]

As the following article from December 12, 2012 shows, desecration of Christian churches and cemeteries occur with alarming frequency and are met with exemplary restraint by Christians, amid widespread Israeli tolerance for such profanations.

> A monastery and an Armenian cemetery in Jerusalem were vandalized overnight Tuesday, as Israeli police said Jewish extremists were most likely responsible for the hate crimes.
>
> Reports of settlers storming into the al-Aqsa mosque the same night could not be confirmed independently by *Al-Akhbar*.
>
> Israeli police spokesman Mickey Rosenfeld told Ma'an that hateful graffiti was sprayed on the walls of the Monastery of the Cross and three neighboring vehicles were also damaged.
>
> Police are investigating the incident, he added.
>
> Anti-Christian graffiti such as "Jesus is a son of a bitch," and Israeli nationalist slogans were found on the church and nearby vehicles, Israeli media reported. Graffiti reading "price tag" were also sprayed on the monastery.
>
> One car had "Happy Hanukkah, triumph for the Maccabees" written on it, Ynet said, referring to the ongoing Jewish holiday which coincides with the Christmas period.
>
> The "price tag" slogan is used by some Israeli extremists who vandalize or destroy Palestinian land or property. The attacks have included multiple arson attacks on cars, mosques and olive trees.
>
> Perpetrators are rarely caught.
>
> A priest from the monastery said he forgives whoever committed the attack, which is the seventh of its kind.
>
> "It saddens me deeply," Father Claudio said. "I believe in Jesus and some don't, it's their problem. We believe in peace and I forgive whoever did this the first time and this time."

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[617] Oz Rosenberg and Nir Hasson, "Jerusalem mosque set alight in suspected 'price tag' attack," *Haaretz*, December 14, 2011.

[618] Patrick Martin, "Jewish Extremists Burn New West Bank Mosque," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), December 16, 2011.

[619] Oz Rosenberg, "East Jerusalem man beaten in another suspected hate crime," *Haaretz*, September 6, 2012.

[620] Eli Ashkenazi, "Vandals slash tires of 40 cars in hate crime in northern Israel," *Haaretz*, April 3, 2014.

Police spokeswoman Luba Samri said graffiti insulting to Jesus Christ was also "sprayed on the gates of the entrance of the Armenian cemetery."

The *Midle East Monitor* reported that dozens of Jewish extremists stormed into the al-Aqsa mosque courtyard on Tuesday night to perform "Talmudic rituals" and write on the walls.

Such takeovers of mosques occur frequently, often with the approval and tacit protection of the Israeli military.

Price-tag attacks by Jewish extremists against religious sites are commonplace in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

In October [2012], "price-tag" and anti-Christian slogans were sprayed on the gate of the Monastery of Saint Francis, just outside of the Old City.

In early September [2012], suspected Jewish extremists torched the wooden door of a Jerusalem monastery and in February [2012] extremists wrote "Death to Christianity" on two Jerusalem churches.

Last December [2011], an ancient mosque in Jerusalem was torched and sprayed with the Star of David, "price tag," "Muhammad is a pig" and "A good Arab is a dead Arab" in Hebrew.[621]

The activities of yeshiva students (the equivalent of seminarians), who have a long history of harassing the Catholic clergy in Israel, came to the attention of the media in October 2004, when a yeshiva student spat at a 17th century cross being carried by the Armenian archbishop during a procession near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City. The student from an elite Orthodox yeshiva explained that he was raised to see Christianity as idol worship, which is forbidden by the Torah. At subsequent government-sponsored meetings it came to light that the problem was widespread and such incidents were generally not reported to the police. According to reports from 2010, Christians who are easily recognizable, like Father Goosan Aljanian, Chief Dragoman of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, encounter outright hate on a daily basis. "Almost every time he walks through the narrow alleys of the Old City of Jerusalem in his cowl, ultra-orthodox youths spit and curse him."[622] Vandalization of Christian churches (spray-painting, dumping garbage on church property) and desecration of Christian cemeteries are frequent occurrences in Israel, yet reports of such incidents rarely find their way into the mainstream Western media. Spitting at Christians, especially members of the clergy, is endemic. Significantly, there are an increased number of incidents such as this during the Purim holiday, when some Christians lock themselves indoors to avoid assaults. Most of the instigators were reportedly yeshiva students who view the Christian religion with disdain. A former adviser to the mayor of Jerusalem on Christian affairs, Shmuel Evyatar, commented that "in practice, rabbis of yeshivas ignore or even encourage" such activities.[623] The conduct of yeshiva students should not be surprising, given what their rabbis are teaching them. When Israeli politicians considered returning some of the Occupied Territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip hundreds of rabbis denounced this move. "We speak on behalf of the Jewish people—past,

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[621] "Jerusalem religious cites targets of Jewish extremist hate circles," *Al-Akhbar English,* December 12, 2012, Internet: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/14347>.

[622] Gil Yaron, "Christian Immigrants Living in Israel a Growing Flock," *Toronto Star,* December 26, 2010.

[623] Amiram Barkat, "Christians in Jerusalem want Jews to stop spitting on them," *Haaretz,* October 12, 2004; "Israel's Christians Spitting Mad," *The Telegraph,* October 13, 2004; Amiram Barkat, "Jerusalem yeshiva student apologizes to Armenian archbishop for spitting," *Haaretz,* October 18, 2004.

present and future. It is forbidden to give the land away," Shalom Gold told a conference called by the Rabbis' Union for the People and Land of Israel.[624] Two rabbis from a yeshiva in the West Bank that prepares young Israelis for military service asserted that Arabs are genetically inferior and endorsed Hitler's ideology and Jewish supremacy.

> Two rabbis at a pre-military religious academy in a West Bank settlement were recorded making derogatory and racist comments about Arabs, defending Adolf Hitler's worldview, and openly promoting Jewish supremacy.
>
> In a series of undated recordings published by Channel 13 news on Monday, Rabbi Eliezer Kashtiel, the head of the Bnei David academy in Eli, can be heard calling for the enslavement of the "stupid and violent" non-Jews due to their genetic inferiority.
>
> "The gentiles will want to be our slaves. Being a slave to a Jew is the best. They're glad to be slaves, they want to be slaves," he told a class in one of the video clips. "Instead of just walking the streets and being stupid and violent and harming each other, once they're slaves, their lives can begin to take shape."
>
> "All around us, we are surrounded by peoples with genetic problems. Ask a simple Arab 'where do you want to be?' He wants to be under the occupation. Why? Because they have genetic problems, they don't know how to run a country, they don't know how to do anything. Look at them."
>
> In the lecture, Kashtiel goes on to embrace racism against non-Jews.
>
> "Yes, we're racists. We believe in racism… There are races in the world and peoples have genetic traits, and that requires us to try to help them," he said. "The Jews are a more successful race."
>
> In another clip from the Bnei David Yeshiva published by Channel 13, Rabbi Giora Redler can be heard praising Hilter's ideology during a lesson about the Holocaust.
>
> "Let's just start with whether Hitler was right or not," he told students. "He was the most correct person there ever was, and was correct in every word he said… he was just on the wrong side."
>
> Redler goes on to say that pluralism is the "real" genocide being perpetrated against the Jewish people, not Nazi Germany's Final Solution.
>
> "The real Holocaust was not when they murdered the Jews, that's not it. All these excuses — that it was ideological or systematic — are nonsense," he said. "Humanism, and the secular culture of 'We believe in man,' that's the Holocaust."[625]

A Palestinian Christian who moved into a predominantly Jewish suburb of Jerusalem built on land unilaterally annexed by Israel (in contravention of international law) described his reception by a local rabbi who knocked on his door offering to teach Torah: "I pointed to the picture over my door and explained I was Christian. He reacted with horror, telling me to get away from him, like I was dirty."[626] Not surprisingly, ordinary Jews also endorse similar view. Devout Jewish settlers in outposts like Sa'Nur

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[624] "Land giveaway 'forbidden': Rabbis oppose handover of captured territory," *Toronto Star,* June 24, 2003.

[625] Tamar Pileggi, "Embracing Racism, Rabbis at Pre-Army Yeshiva Laud Hitler, Urge Enslaving Arabs," *The Times of Israel,* April 30, 2019.

[626] Patrick Martin, "Arab families in Jerusalem moving on up," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), March 4, 2009.

in the northern reaches of the West Bank posted a Hebrew sign at the front gate that reads: "No Arabs, no dogs."[627]

Public burnings of New Testaments are also fairly frequent, but generally go unreported by the media. On December 25, 2001, *The Jerusalem Times* reported that a New Testament was publicly burned at a school in Beit Shemesh (30 km from Jerusalem) with the approval of the principal, a rabbi.[628] In May 2008, hundreds of Yeshiva students in Or Yehuda collected and burned hundreds of New Testaments near a synagogue, spurred by the city's deputy mayor. (The New Testaments had been distributed to Ethiopian Jews by Messianic Jews.) Two months earlier, the son of a Messianic Jew was seriously wounded by a parcel bomb left outside his home in Ariel. Earlier in the year, Haredim demonstrated outside Messianic Jewish gatherings in Beersheba and Arad, and there were instances of violence. The previous year, in 2007, arsonists burst into a Jerusalem church used by Messianic Jews and set the building on fire, raising suspicions that Jewish extremists were behind the attack. No one claimed responsibility, but the same church was burned down 25 years ago by ultra-Orthodox Jewish extremists.[629] Messianic Jews have experienced a long history of discrimination and harassment in Israel.[630] Sometimes the objects of intolerance and derision are fellow Jews who are not Messianic. Jerusalem introduced special buses for the Haredi, an ultra-conservative branch of Judaism that requires strict separation between men and women. Women who refuse to travel in the back of the bus face harrassment and even violence. The Haredi have also taken to patrolling parts of the city and engage in activities such as spraying people with

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[627] "'Stalingrad of Samaria,'" *Toronto Star,* June 19, 2005.

[628] "Kronika religijna: Biblia na stosie," *Więź* (Warsaw), February 2002, 123.

[629] The Associated Press, "Orthodox Jewish Youths Burn New Testaments in Or Yehuda," *Haaretz,* May 20, 2008; Amir Mizroch, "Or Yehuda Deputy Mayor: I'm Sorry About Burning New Testaments," *The Jerusalem Post,* May 20, 2008. According to the Israeli newspaper *Maariv* hundreds of students took part in the burning. See also Aron Heller, "Israel arrests suspect in attacks on Arabs, leftist Jews," *Toronto Star,* November 1, 2009, which reported that an ultra-Orthodox Jewish West Bank settler was behind the killing of two Arabs, the wounding of an Arab, the targeting of a peace activist, and an attack on Messianic Jews over a period of 12 years; he is not suspected of being responsible for the shooting attack against a gay youth centre in Tel Aviv in August 2009, in whcich two people were killed. Regarding the Haredim, Noah Efron has noted:

> The image of the Haredim in Israel's popular culture bears a striking resemblance to European anti-Semitic stereotypes of the Jews, which have maintained currency over the past two centuries. It is well known that many Enlightenment intellectuals—and, no less, several generations of European literati that followed—disliked Jews, feared them, and distrusted them. Scholars disagree about where to squeeze this "Enlightened" anti-Semitism into a typology of Jew hating. Because post-Enlightenment intellectuals were by and large enchanted by reason and ostensibly guided by it, their brand of anti-Semitism rarely rested explicitly on a foundation of rank fabrication or fantasy (Jews killing for blood…). And because their own ties to the Church were often attenuated, their dislike of Jews rarely had a dogmatic foundation (Jews killed Christ). The new "Enlightened" Jew hatred was, in keeping with its Enlightenment image, more a "science" of anti-Semitism. … Voltaire, perhaps the archetype of the "Enlightened" anti-Semite … Post-Enlightenment literature is filled with statements that echo Voltaire.

See Efron, *Real Jews,* 255–56.

[630] See the experiences of Eliezer Urbach described in Weigand, *Out of the Fury,* 189–97. Jewish Christians were ostracized, fired from their jobs, evicted from their apartments, beaten and harassed by the Orthodox religious community. Ultra-Orthodox rabbinical students laid siege to the home of one missionary, and when they managed to escape, his family was mobbed. Anonymous threatening letters were received by people who associated with Jewish Christians. Many simply practiced their faith underground to be safe and to protect their families. Urbach witnessed a Bible store burned and destroyed. Mission school windows were broken out.

bleach because their clothes are not considered modest enough and threatening and even setting fire to stores whose clothing displays are considered too racy.[631] Israeli Jews have been responsible for anti-Semitic incidents in Israel,[632] and Jews have been caught engaging in anti-Semitic incidents in the United

[631] Carolynne Wheeler, "Women Taking a Stand to Sit Up Front: Canadian Joins Group Bringing Segregation on Buses to Court in Israel," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), February 3, 2007. See also Ruth Marcus, "The Ultra-Orthodox Tighten Their Grip in Israel," *Washington Post,* August 7, 2012, who reports that even observant, Orthodox, modestly dressed Jewish women continue to be harassed by the Haredi, often finding themselves abused verbally—being called *shikseh*, the deragoratory term for a Gentile woman, or *prutzah*, whore, spat upon or pelted by stones.

[632] Reuters, "Israel jails 8 Jewish neo-Nazis," *Toronto Star,* November 23, 2008. The teenagers, aged 16 to 19, were sentenced to between one and seven years in prison for a "skocking and horrifying" year-long spree of attacks that targeted foreign worlers, ultra-Orthodox Jews and homeless men. They teenagers, one of whom was the grandson of Holocaust survivors, also painted swastikas in a synagogue and planned a birthday party for Hilter.

States, France, Poland, Canada, and elsewhere.[633] In July 2012, Michael Ben Ari, a member of the Israeli Parliament, tore up a copy of the New Testament and threw it in the trash, saying: "This abominable book … and all it represents belongs in the garbage can of history."[634] In April 2017, Shnuer Odze, an Orthodox rabbi in Manchester, England, removed a New Testament in Hebrew that someone had placed in his synagogue, set fire to it on the street and then posted the pictures on social media.[635]

Virtually every robed member of the Christian clergy in Jerusalem has been spat at, often multiple times, by Jews. This practice, which is steeped in age-old tradition and is considered a sign of piety, has gone on

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[633] Anti-Semitic acts have also been carried out rather frequently by Jews themselves. Apart from bolstering claims of allegedly increasing levels of anti-Semitism, this may also have to do with the siege mentality promoted by some Jewish constituencies. For example, two Jewish students, allegedly victimized by anti-Semites, were actually caught in the act of painting swastikas at George Washington University in November 2007. Pierre B. and his wife, who have ties to Jewish activist groups, made several reports to the Paris police in 2014 alleging that swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans were painted on their building. In February 2015, they were caught spray painting "Juif" on twenty cars. An investigation revealed that they were actually responsible for the prior reported incidents. A Jewish man from Schenectady, New York was charged with spray-painting swastikas on his own house after he reported the incident to police as a hate crime in February 2017. See Loulla-Mae Eleftheriou-Smith, "Jewish man accused of spray-painting swastikas on own home," *The Independent,* March 22, 2017. A 19-year-old Jewish man living in Israel was responsible for the vast majority of the more than 100 bomb threats made in early 2017 against Jewish community centres and schools in the United States, and also for some in Australia and New Zealand. See "Jewish Center Bomb Threat Suspect Is Arrested in Israel," *The New York Times,* March 23, 2017. The Jewish proprietors of a café in Winnipeg made a series of false reports to police, from December 2018 through April 2019, of assaults and vandalization including spray-painted anti-Semitic graffiti, the last allegedly occurring the night before Passover. See Steve Lamber, "Winnipeg Café Owners Staged Anti-Semitic Attack, Police Say," *The Globe and Mail,* April 24, 2019. On December 15, 2019, a Jewish man reported he was stabbed in an anti-Semitic attack while leaving a synagogue in West Bloomfield, Michigan. The police investigation established the entire incident was a hoax: the man deliberately stabbed himself, and then alleged it was the work of anti-Semites. See "Man's Apple Watch Proves He Lied about Anti-Semitic Stabbing in West Bloomfield", Fox 2 News (Detroit), January 3, 2010, Internet: <https://www.fox5ny.com/news/mans-apple-watch-proves-he-lied-about-anti-semitic-stabbing-in-west-bloomfield>. In December 2020, a Jewish man was charged with desecrating four Brooklyn synagogues and burglarizing one of them. John Annese, "Hate Crimes Charges for Jewish Man Accused of Graffiti, Burglary Spree at Brooklyn Synagogues," *Daily News* (New York), December 31, 2020. For other examples, see <http://www.fakehatecrimes.org/>. Even though these crimes were not perpetrated because of hatred towards fellow Jews, but rather because of radical Jewish nationalist hatred toward non-Jews, some Jewish spokespersons have nonetheless labeled them as "anti-Semitic."

Another battle front for Israeli and Jewish nationalists is the Internet. An investigation by the "Common Dreams" website exposed a Jewish troll posting virulently anti-Semitic comments at various internet forums, allegedly "to gauge how pervasive anti-Semitism" is online. More than a thousand of damaging comments were written over a period of two years with a deceptive purpose by a Jewish Harvard graduate in his thirties who was irritated by the website's discussion of issues involving Israel. See Lance Tapley, "The Double Identity of an 'Anti-Semitic' Commenter: Smearing a Progressive Website to Support Israel," Common Dreams, August 20, 2014, Internet: <https://www.commondreams.org/hambaconeggs>. This is just the tip of an iceberg. Israeli public diplomacy, known as Hasbara, supports a well-financed international public-relations campaign with the help of a world-wide network of activists such as the Coalition of Hasbara Volunteers (CoHaV), with programs like Hasbara Fellowships (https://hasbarafellowships.org/), aimed at seizing control of the narrative regarding Israel and the Jews. Wikipedia, in particular, has been targeted for disseminating propaganda and sanitizing articles on Israel and Jewish-related topics. The Israel Group, one of many well-financed Jewish lobby and advocacy groups, announced a "battle" against Wikipedia begining January 2020 (https://theisraelgroup.org/wikipedias-war-against-israel/?fbclid=IwAR29hHXmL2aTiEnNyX-MW3lHk-sT-9xuRPyjY25RRdjrwyPdZPMPgOURwxo).

Jews are not the only ones reporting fake hate crimes. Wildred Reilly, an African-American professor of political science at Kentucky State University, has documented hundreds of examples from recent years. Reilly has pointed to the growing politicization of hate crimes promoted by individuals and entities with a vested interest in exaggerating racial tensions in the United states (from civil-rights organizations like Southern Poverty Law to corporate diversity officers to professors of race and gender studies) and seized upon by politicians and activists looking to feed a sacrosanct belief among liberals that discrimination and oppression are the main drivers of inequality. See Wilfred Reilly, *Hate Crime Hoax: How the Left Is Selling a Fake Race War* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2019).

[634] Tzvika Brot, "MK Ben Ari Rips Up New Testament," *Israel Jewish Scene,* July 18, 2012.

[635] Glen Owen, "Ukip Candidate Standing Against Andy Burnham in Mayoral Election Is a Boble-burning Orthodox Jewish Rabbi," *Daily Mail,* April 16, 2017.

openly for decades and has been tolerated by the authorities and the Jewish population at large. As Israel Shahak explains,

> Dishonoring Christian religious symbols is an old religious duty in Judaism. Spitting on the cross, an especially on the Crucifix, and spitting when a Jew passes a church, have been obligatory from around AD 200 for pious Jews. In the past, when the danger of anti-Semitic hostility was a real one, the pious Jews were commanded by their rabbis either to spit so that the reason for doing so would be unknown, or to spit onto their chests, not actually on the cross or openly before the church. The increasing strength of the Jewish state has caused these customs to become more open again but there should be no mistake: *The spitting on the cross for converts from Christianity to Judaism*, organized in Kibbutz Sa'ad and financed by the Israeli government is an act of traditional Jewish piety. It does not seize to be barbaric, horrifying and wicked because of this! On the contrary, it is *worse I* because it is so traditional, and much more dangerous as well, just as the renewed anti-Semitism of the Nazis was dangerous, because in part, it played on the traditional anti-Semitic past.

These deeds are carried out primarily by yeshiva students and fundamentalists, with the approval or even encouragement of rabbis, but young children and elderly Jews have also been implicated. (Dishonest publicists have attempted to portray the culprits as "ultra-Orthodox thugs," but in fact it is rather ordinary yeshiva students and other Jews who take part in them, and claim—contrary to all evidence—that these activities have received widespread condemnation among Jews.[636]) The February 16, 2009 issue of *Haaretz* reported on this disturbing phenomenon:

> A few weeks ago, a senior Greek Orthodox clergyman in Israel attended a meeting at a government office in Jerusalem's Givat Shaul quarter. When he returned to his car, an elderly man wearing a skullcap came and knocked on the window. When the clergyman let the window down, the passerby spat in his face.
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> The clergyman preferred not to lodge a complaint with the police and told an acquaintance that he was used to being spat at by Jews. Many Jerusalem clergy have been subjected to abuse of this kind. For the most part, they ignore it but sometimes they cannot.
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> On Sunday, a fracas developed when a yeshiva student spat at the cross being carried by the Armenian Archbishop during a procession near the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City. The archbishop's 17th-century cross was broken during the brawl and he slapped the yeshiva student.
>
> Both were questioned by police and the yeshiva student will be brought to trial. …
>
> But the Armenians are far from satisfied by the police action and say this sort of thing has been going on for years. Archbishop Nourhan Manougian says he expects the education minister to say something.
>
> "When there is an attack against Jews anywhere in the world, the Israeli government is incensed, so why when our religion and pride are hurt, don't they take harsher measures?" he asks.
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> According to Daniel Rossing, former adviser to the Religious Affairs Ministry on Christian affairs and director of a Jerusalem center for Christian-Jewish dialogue, there has been an increase in the number of such incidents recently, "as part of a general atmosphere of lack of tolerance in the country."

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[636] Dow Marmur, "A Stand Against Intolerance," *Toronto Star,* January 7, 2013: "Christian priests have been spat upon in Jerisalem and elsewhere by ultra-Orthodox thugs who, in the guise of love of the land and love of God, commit crimes that have scandalized Jews everywhere."

Rossing says there are certain common characteristics from the point of view of time and location to the incidents. He points to the fact that there are more incidents in areas where Jews and Christians mingle, such as the Jewish and Armenian quarters of the Old City and the Jaffa Gate.

There are an increased number at certain times of year, such as during the Purim holiday. "I know Christians who lock themselves indoors during the entire Purim holiday," he says.

Former adviser to the mayor on Christian affairs, Shmuel Evyatar, describes the situation as "a huge disgrace." He says most of the instigators are yeshiva students studying in the Old City who view the Christian religion with disdain.

"I'm sure the phenomenon would end as soon as rabbis and well-known educators denounce it. In practice, rabbis of yeshivas ignore or even encourage it," he says.

Evyatar says he himself was spat at while walking with a Serbian bishop in the Jewish quarter, near his home. "A group of yeshiva students spat at us and their teacher just stood by and watched."

Jerusalem municipal officials said they are aware of the problem but it has to be dealt with by the police.[637]

The reported harassment includes curses directed at clergy and nuns, anti-Christian graffiti painted on the walls of churches and holy places, and throwing of stones. As the following reports shows, despite the presence of surveillance cameras, not much had changed:

Father Samuel Aghoyan, a senior Armenian Orthodox cleric in Jerusalem's Old City, says he's been spat at by young haredi and national Orthodox Jews "about 15 to 20 times" in the past decade. The last time it happened, he said, was earlier this month. "I was walking back from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and I saw this boy in a yarmulke and ritual fringes coming back from the Western Wall, and he spat at me two or three times."

Wearing a dark-blue robe, sitting in St. James's Church, the main Armenian church in the Old City, Aghoyan said, "Every single priest in this church has been spat on. It happens day and night."

Father Athanasius, a Texas-born Franciscan monk who heads the Christian Information Center inside the Jaffa Gate, said he's been spat at by haredi and national Orthodox Jews "about 15 times in the last six months" – not only in the Old City, but also on Rehov Agron near the Franciscan friary. "One time a bunch of kids spat at me, another time a little girl spat at me," said the brown-robed monk near the Jaffa Gate.

"All 15 monks at our friary have been spat at," he said. "Every [Christian cleric in the Old City] who's been here for awhile, who dresses in robes in public, has a story to tell about being spat at. The more you get around, the more it happens."

A nun in her 60s who's lived in an east Jerusalem convent for decades says she was spat at for the first time by a haredi man on Rehov Agron about 25 years ago. "As I was walking past, he spat on the ground right next to my shoes and he gave me a look of contempt," said the black-robed nun, sitting inside the convent. "It took me a moment, but then I understood."

Since then, the nun, who didn't want to be identified, recalls being spat at three different times by young national Orthodox Jews on Jaffa Road, three different times by haredi youth near Mea She'arim and once by a young Jewish woman from her second-story window in the Old City's Jewish Quarter.

But the spitting incidents weren't the worst, she said – the worst was the time she was walking down Jaffa Road and a group of middle-aged haredi men coming her way pointed wordlessly to the curb, motioning her to move off the sidewalk to let them pass, which she did.

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[637] Amiram Barkat, "Christians in Jerusalem Want Jews To Stop Spitting On Them," *Haaretz*, February 16, 2009.

"That made me terribly sad," said the nun, speaking in ulpan-trained Hebrew. …

News stories about young Jewish bigots in the Old City spitting on Christian clergy – who make conspicuous targets in their long dark robes and crucifix symbols around their necks – surface in the media every few years or so. It's natural, then, to conclude that such incidents are rare, but in fact they are habitual. Anti-Christian Orthodox Jews, overwhelmingly boys and young men, have been spitting with regularity on priests and nuns in the Old City for about 20 years, and the problem is only getting worse.

"My impression is that Christian clergymen are being spat at in the Old City virtually every day. This has been constantly increasing over the last decade," said Daniel Rossing. An observant, kippa-wearing Jew, Rossing heads the Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations and was liaison to Israel's Christian communities for the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the '70s and '80s.

For Christian clergy in the Old City, being spat at by Jewish fanatics "is a part of life," said the American Jewish Committee's Rabbi David Rosen, Israel's most prominent Jewish interfaith activist.

"I hate to say it, but we've grown accustomed to this. Jewish religious fanatics spitting at Christian priests and nuns has become a tradition," said Roman Catholic Father Massimo Pazzini, sitting inside the Church of the Flagellation on the Via Dolorosa.

These are the very opposite of isolated incidents. Father Athanasius of the Christian Information Center called them a "phenomenon." George Hintlian, the unofficial spokesman for the local Armenian community and former secretary of the Armenian Patriarchate, said it was "like a campaign."

Christians in Israel are a small, weak community known for "turning the other cheek," so these Jewish xenophobes feel free to spit on them; they don't spit on Muslims in the Old City because they're afraid to, the clerics noted.

The only Israeli authority who has shown any serious concern over this matter, the one high official whom Christian and Jewish interfaith activists credit for stepping into the fray, is Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger.

On November 11, Metzger addressed a letter to the "rabbis of the Jewish Quarter," writing that he had "heard a grave rumor about yeshiva students offending heaven … [by] spitting on Christian clergy who walk about the Old City of Jerusalem." Such attackers, he added, are almost tantamount to *rodfim*, or persecutors, which is one of the worst class of offenders in Jewish law. They violate the injunction to follow the "pathways of peace," Metzger wrote, and are liable to provoke anti-Semitism overseas. "I thus issue the fervent call to root out this evil affliction from our midst, and the sooner the better," wrote the chief rabbi.

Metzger published the letter in response to an appeal from Armenian Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, an appeal that came in the wake of a September 5 incident in the Old City in which a haredi man spat on a group of Armenian seminarians who, in turn, beat him up.

This is not the first time Metzger has spoken out against the spitting – he did so five years ago after the most infamous incident on record, when Manougian himself was spat on by an Old City yeshiva student during an Armenian Orthodox procession. In response, the archbishop slapped the student's face, and then the student tore the porcelain ceremonial crucifix off Manougian's neck and threw it to the ground, breaking it.

Then interior minister Avraham Poraz called the assault on the archbishop "repulsive" and called for a police crackdown on anti-Christian attacks in the Old City. Police reportedly punished the student by banning him from the Old City for 75 days.

Seated in his study in the Armenian Quarter, Manougian, 61, said that while he personally has not been assaulted since that time, the spitting attacks on other Armenian clergy have escalated.

"The latest thing is for them to spit when they pass [St. James's] monastery. I've seen it myself a couple of times," he said. "Then there's the boy from the Jewish Quarter who spits at the Armenian women when he sees them wearing their crosses, then he runs away. And during one of our processions from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre this year, a fellow in a yarmulke and fringes began deliberately cutting through our lines, over and over. The police caught him and he started yelling, 'I'm free to walk wherever I want!' That's what these settler types are always saying: 'This is our country and we can do whatever we want!'"

Where are the police in all this? If they happen to be on the scene, such as at the recent procession Manougian described, they will chase the hooligans – but even if they catch them, they only tell them off and let them go, according to several Christian clergymen.

"The police tell us to catch them and bring them in, but then they tell us not to use violence, so how are we supposed to catch them?" asked Aghoyan, a very fit-looking 68-year-old. "Once a boy came up to me and spat in my face, and I punched him and knocked him down, and an Armenian seminarian and I brought him to the police station [next to the Armenian Quarter]. They released him in a couple of hours. I've made many, complaints to the police, I'm tired of it. Nothing ever gets done."

Said Rosen, "The police say, 'Show us the evidence.' They want the Christians to photograph the people spitting at them so they can make arrests, but this is very unrealistic – by the time you get the camera out, the attack is over and there's nothing to photograph."

Victims of these attacks say that in the great majority of cases the assailants do not spit in their faces or on their clothes, but on the ground at their feet. "When we complain about this, the police tell us, 'But they're not spitting on you, just near you,'" said Manougian.

Sitting inside the Church of the Flagellation on the Via Dolorosa, Pazzini recalled: "Early this year there were about 100 Orthodox Jewish boys who came past the church singing and dancing. The police were with them – I don't know what the occasion was, maybe it was a holiday, maybe it had to do with the elections. There was a group of Franciscan monks standing in front of the church, and a few of the Jewish boys went up to the monks, spat on them, then went back into the crowd. I went up to a policeman and he told me, 'Sorry about that, but look, they're just kids.'"

Jerusalem police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby refused to provide an official comment on the situation on behalf of the Old City police station. "We don't give interviews on relations between Jews and Christians in the Old City," he said. "We're not sociologists, we're policemen."

The Jerusalem municipality likewise refused to be interviewed. "We have not received any complaints about this matter and we do not deal with things of this nature," said assistant city spokesman Yossi Gottesman. …

Rosen recalls that in 1994, after Israel and the Vatican opened diplomatic relations, he organized an international Jewish-Christian conference in Jerusalem, "and the city's chief rabbi called me in and said, 'How can you do this? Don't you know it's forbidden for us? How can you encourage these people to meet with us?' "He told me that when he sees a Christian clergyman, he crosses the street and recites, 'You shall totally abhor and totally disdain …' This is a biblical verse that refers to idolatry." Rosen noted that the Jerusalem chief rabbi of the time, like the more insular Orthodox Jews in general, considered Christians to be idolators.

The people doing the spitting, according to all the Christian victims and Jewish interfaith activists interviewed, are invariably national Orthodox or haredi Jews; in every attack described by Christian clerics, the assailant was wearing a kippa.

The great majority of the attackers were teenage boys and men in their 20s. However, the supposition was that they came not only from the Old City yeshivot but also from outside. Hintlian and Aghoyan noted that

the spitting attacks tended to spike on Fridays and Saturdays, when masses of Orthodox Jews stream to the Western Wall. …

Only a tiny proportion of the spitting incidents are reported to police. "When somebody spits at our feet, or at the door to the monastery, we don't even pay attention to it anymore, we take it for granted," said Aghoyan. We have no suspect or evidence to give the police, nor any reason to think the police care, he said.

Pazzini, the vice dean of the seminary at the Church of the Flagellation, said the dean of the seminary had his face spat upon, but he rejected Pazzini's urgings to file a police complaint. "He told me, 'There's no point, this is the way things are around here,'" Pazzini said.

Even outrageous incidents, one after another, go unreported to the police and unknown to the public. About a month ago, when a senior Greek Orthodox bishop was driving into the Jaffa Gate, a young Jewish man motioned him to roll down his window, and when he did, the young man spat in the bishop's face, said Hintlian.

Father Athanasius says that about a year ago, he witnessed the archbishop of Milan, which is one of the world's largest Roman Catholic dioceses, get spat at in the Old City. "The archbishop was with another Italian bishop and a group of pilgrims, and a class of about a dozen adolescent boys in crocheted kippot and sidecurls came by with their teacher. They stopped in front of the archbishop and his guests, the boys began spitting at the ground next to their feet, and then they just kept walking like this was normal," said Father Athanasius. "I saw this with my own eyes."

Rosen, Rossing and Hintlian say the most frustrating thing is that there's no longer anyone in authority who's ready to try to solve this problem, and the reason is that the Christian community in Israel is too small and powerless to rate high-level attention anymore.

"In the old days there were ministers and a mayor in Jerusalem who took the Christian minority seriously, but now virtually everyone dealing with them is a third-tier official, and while these individuals may have wonderful intentions, they have no authority," said Rosen. As far as the current cabinet ministers go, he said the phenomenon of Orthodox Jews spitting on Christian clergy "is at most distressing to some of them, while there are other ministers whose attitude toward non-Jews in general is downright deplorable."

Among Christian victims and Jewish interfaith activists alike, the consensus is that two steps are needed to stop the spitting attacks.

One, of course, would be much stronger law enforcement by police. The other would be an educational effort against this "campaign," this "phenomenon," this "tradition" – although it may be that there's nothing to teach – that a person, even an adolescent, either knows it's wrong to spit on priests and nuns or he doesn't.

"We can't tell the Jews in this country what to do – they have to see this as an offense," said Father Athanasius. "There's only a small part of the population that's doing it, but the Jewish establishment has to bring them under control." [638]

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[638] Larry Derfner, "Mouths Filled With Hatred," *The Jerusalem Post Magazine,* November 26, 2009.

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These are the very opposite of isolated incidents. Father Athanasius of the Christian Information Center called them a "phenomenon." George Hintlian, the unofficial spokesman for the local Armenian community and former secretary of the Armenian Patriarchate, said it was "like a campaign."

Christians in Israel are a small, weak community known for "turning the other cheek," so these Jewish xenophobes feel free to spit on them; they don't spit on Muslims in the Old City because they're afraid to, the clerics noted. …

Seated in his study in the Armenian Quarter, Manougian, 61, said that while he personally has not been assaulted since that time, the spitting attacks on other Armenian clergy have escalated.

"The latest thing is for them to spit when they pass [St. James's] monastery. I've seen it myself a couple of times," he said. "Then there's the boy from the Jewish Quarter who spits at the Armenian women when he sees them wearing their crosses, then he runs away. And during one of our processions from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre this year, a fellow in a yarmulke and fringes began deliberately cutting through our lines, over and over. The police caught him and he started yelling, 'I'm free to walk wherever I want!' That's what these settler types are always saying: 'This is our country and we can do whatever we want!'"

Where are the police in all this? If they happen to be on the scene, such as at the recent procession Manougian described, they will chase the hooligans—but even if they catch them, they only tell them off and let them go, according to several Christian clergymen. …

Sitting inside the Church of the Flagellation on the Via Dolorosa, Pazzini recalled: "Early this year there were about 100 Orthodox Jewish boys who came past the church singing and dancing. The police were with them—I don't know what the occasion was, maybe it was a holiday, maybe it had to do with the elections. There was a group of Franciscan monks standing in front of thechurch, and a few of the Jewish boys went up to the monks, spat on them, then went back into the crowd. I went up to a policeman and he told me, 'Sorry about that, but look, they're just kids.'" …

Yisca Harani, a veteran Jewish interfaith activist who lectures on Christianity to Israeli tour guides at Touro College, likewise says the change for the worse came about 20 years ago. She blames the spitting attacks on the view of Christianity that's propagated at haredi and national Orthodox yeshivot.

"I move around the Old City a lot," she said, "I come in contact with these people, and what they learn in these fundamentalist yeshivot is that the goy is the enemy, a hater of Israel. All they learn about Christianity is the Holocaust, pogroms, anti-Semitism."

Rosen recalls that in 1994, after Israel and the Vatican opened diplomatic relations, he organized an international Jewish-Christian conference in Jerusalem, "and the city's chief rabbi called me in and said, 'How can you do this? Don't you know it's forbidden for us? How can you encourage these people to meet with us?'

"He told me that when he sees a Christian clergyman, he crosses the street and recites, 'You shall totally abhor and totally disdain…' This is a biblical verse that refers to idolatry." Rosen noted that the Jerusalem chief rabbi of the time, like the more insular Orthodox Jews in general, considered Christians to be idolators.

The people doing the spitting, according to all the Christian victims and Jewish interfaith activists interviewed, are invariably national Orthodox or haredi Jews; in every attack described by Christian clerics, the assailant was wearing a kippa.[639]

When this practice was exposed in the liberal Israeli media, the reaction of Ashkenazi chief rabbi Yona Metzger was not grounded so much in moral outrage as in a concern over adverse publicity and possible repercussions for Jews outside of Israel. Had rabbis been exposed to a fraction of such abuse in any Christian country, it would have made headline news and resulted in diplomatic interventions led by the United States of America. In this case, however, the information has been hushed up. *Haaretz* returned to subject again in November 2011 when it reported:

Ultra-Orthodox young men curse and spit at Christian clergymen in the streets of Jerusalem's Old City as a matter of routine. In most cases the clergymen ignore the attacks, but sometimes they strike back. Last week the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court quashed the indictment against an Armenian priesthood student who had punched the man who spat at him.

Johannes Martarsian was walking in the Old City in May 2008 when a young ultra-Orthodox Jew spat at him. Maratersian punched the spitter in the face, making him bleed, and was charged for assault. But Judge Dov Pollock, who unexpectedly annulled the indictment, wrote in his verdict that "putting the defendant on trial for a single blow at a man who spat at his face, after suffering the degradation of being spat on for years while walking around in his church robes is a fundamental contravention of the principles of justice and decency."

"Needless to say, spitting toward the defendant when he was wearing the robe is a criminal offense," the judge said.

When Narek Garabedian came to Israel to study in the Armenian Seminary in Jerusalem half a year ago, he did not expect the insults, curses and spitting he would be subjected to daily by ultra-Orthodox Jews in the streets of the Old City.

"When I see an ultra-Orthodox man coming toward me in the street, I always ask myself if he will spit at me," says Narek, a Canadian Armenian, this week. About a month ago, on his way to buy groceries in the Old City, two ultra-Orthodox men spat at him. The spittle did not fall at his feet but on his person. Narek, a former football player, decided this time not to turn the other cheek.

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[639] "Christians in Jerusalem Want Jews To Stop Spitting On Them," *The European Union Times,* December 14, 2009.

"I was very angry. I pushed them both to the wall and asked, 'why are you doing this?' They were frightened and said 'we're sorry, we're sorry,' so I let them go. But it isn't always like that. Sometimes the spitter attacks you back," he says.

Other clergymen in the Armenian Church in Jerusalem say they are all victims of harassment, from the senior cardinals to the priesthood students. Mostly they ignore these incidents. When they do complain, the police don't usually find the perpetrators.

Martarsian left Israel about a year ago. He was sent back home by the church, as were two other Armenian priesthood students who were charged after attacking an ultra-Orthodox man who spat at them.

The Greek Patriarchy's clergymen have been cursed and spat on by ultra-Orthodox men in the street for many years. "They walk past me and spit," says Father Gabriel Bador, 78, a senior priest in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate. "Mostly I ignore it, but it's difficult. Sometimes I stop and ask the spitter 'why are you doing this? What have I done to you?' Once I even shouted at a few of them who spat at my feet together. They ran away," he says.

"It happens a lot," says Archbishop Aristarchos, the chief secretary of the patriarchate. "You walk down the street and suddenly they spit at you for no reason. I admit sometimes it makes me furious, but we have been taught to restrain ourselves, so I do so."

Father Goosan Aljanian, Chief Dragoman of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, says it is often difficult for temperamental young priesthood students to swallow the offense.

About a month ago two students marching to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre beat up an ultra-Orthodox man who spat at them. They were sent away from the Old City for two weeks.

"I tell my students that if they are spat at, to go to the police rather than strike back," says Goosan. "But these are young kids who sometimes lose their cool."

A few weeks ago four ultra-Orthodox men spat at clergymen in the funeral procession of Father Alberto of the Armenian Church. "They came in a pack, out of nowhere," said Father Goosan. "I know there are fanatical Haredi groups that don't represent the general public but it's still enraging. It all begins with education. It's the responsibility of these men's yeshiva heads to teach them not to behave this way," he says.

Father Goosan and other Patriarchy members are trying to walk as little as possible in the Old City streets. "Once we walked from the [Armenian] church to the Jaffa Gate and on that short section four different people spat at us," he says.[640]

A video of an Israeli medic caught spitting repeatedly on icons of Jesus and Mary in an apartment building occupied by Arab Christians during the Covid-19 pandemic in November 2020, brought an unexpected reaction on the part of the ambulance service that employed him. (The worker was, reportedly, fired in this case perhaps because the flagrant act was captured on film and disseminated on the Internet.) When asked why he spat at the icons, which are revered and kissed by the Christian residents as they leave their homes, the medic, a young religious Jew, responded that he had done it because "our Torah considers this idolatry which one is obligated to push away."[641] In November 2022, soldiers from the Israel Defence

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[640] Oz Rosenberg, "Ultra-Orthodox spitting attacks on Old City clergymen becoming daily," *Haaretz,* November 14, 2011.

[641] "Coronavisus: Israeli Medic Fired for Spitting on Jesus Portraits," BBC News, November 16, 2020, Internet: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-54958353>.

Forces' Givati Brigade were seen spitting toward the Armenian Archbishop and other pilgrims during a religious procession in the Old City of Jerusalem.[642]

Assaults have moved from exclusively non-Jewish targets to those that promote peaceful co-existence with Arabs. On November 29, 2014, an Arab-Jewish bilingual school in Jerusalem was attacked and badly damaged in an arson attack. Walls were spray painted with "Death to Arabs."[643] Popular culture also exhibits anti-Chritian tendencies. In February 2009, an Israeli TV show, hosted by well-known comedian Lior Schlein, depicted the Virgin Mary as a pregnant teenager and Jesus as too fat to walk on water. In response to international protests and those of the incensed Chritian population of that country, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was forced to apologize during a cabinet meeting for the comic skit "Like a Virgin": "I wish to take this opportunity to express reservations regarding some things which were said on a certain television show. I don't want the Israeli government to turn into a place for critiquing TV shows but if similar things had been said about the Jewish faith in another country then there would certainly be an outcry by the Jewish communities."[644] Conditions for Christian children in nationalistic Jewish schools border on the intolerable. As one one typical Christian immigrant from the former Soviet Union described, "Already now, my grandson comes home from kindergarten and tells us everything he has learned about the Jewish holidays. When we take him to church, we tell him not to tell anyone, so he will not be stigmatized by the other children."[645] No Jew living in a Christian-based democratic country would tolerate such treatment. This is by no means a recent trend.

Polish Catholics rescuers of Jews who settled in Israel also experienced mistreatment by Israeli Jews. The Christian spouses of Jews who immigrated to Israel in the 1950s and 1960s—mostly Polish women who had saved the lives of their Jewish husbands—were perceived to constitute a threat to Jewish national identity. They often encountered discrimination and abusive treatment.[646] Shoshana Raczyński, who married her Polish rescuer, Stefan Raczyński, recalled: "One day a few religious Jews were throwing

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[642] TOI Staff, "Givati Soldiers Accused of Spitting at Armenian Archbishop in Jerusalem Procession," *The Times of Israel,* November 28, 2022.

[643] Three men, who, according to the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency), belong to the Jewish extremist group Lehava, were charged with the attack.

[644] Jack Khoury, "Galilee Christians, Clergy Protest Ch. 10 Sketch on Mary," *Haaretz*, February 23, 2009; Barak Ravid, "PM 'Sorry' For Offensive Skit," *Haaretz,* February 24, 2009.

[645] Gil Yaron, "Christian Immigrants Living in Israel a Growing Flock," *Toronto Star,* December 26, 2010.

[646] Ofer Aderet, "The Polish Women Who Saved Jews in WWII, Only to be Called 'Russian Prostitutes' in Israel," *Haaretz,* August 30, 2020. For an account of a Polish woman attesting to such mistreatment experienced by her as well as by her children in the 1950s see Daniel Boćkowski, Ewa Rogalewska, and Joanna Sadowska, *Kres świata białostockich Żydów* (Białystok: Muzeum Wojska w Białymstoku; Galeria Śledzińskich w Białymstoku, 2013), 85.

stones at our house, screaming 'Go away, goy.'" When their son went to the army and wanted to be a pilot, he was told, "Your father is a Polish Catholic; you won't be a pilot."[647]

The antipathy towards Muslims runs even deeper because of the political strife with the Palestnians that has mired the State of Israel since its inception. Responding to the question, "How should Jews treat their Arab neighbours?" in the May–June 2009 issue of *Moment* magazine, Manis Friedman, the Lubavitch rabbi from St. Paul Minnesota, wrote:

> I don't believe in western morality, i.e. don't kill civilians or children, don't destroy holy sites, don't fight during holiday seasons, don't bomb cemeteries, don't shoot until they shoot first because it is immoral. The only way to fight a moral war is the Jewish way: Destroy their holy sites. Kill men, women and children (and cattle).

Friedman, who is the dean of the internationally renowned Bais Chana Women's Institute in West St. Paul, argued that "the first Israeli prime minister who declares that he will follow the Old Testament will finally bring peace to the Middle East." The Israeli military has been flooded with pamphlets authored by various nationalist rabbis and approved by senior officers inciting hatred toward Palestinians and, more recently, accusing the Pope and the cardinals of the Vatican of helping to organize tours of Auschwitz for Hezbollah members to teach them how to wipe out Jews.[648] Jewish settlers have also been compiling lists of Jewish businesses that employ Arabs with the intention of lauching a nation-wide boycott of "traitors" who allow "enemies" to earn money. Another group launched a campaign to issue "kashrut certificates" to businesses that do not employ Arabs.[649]

A shocking revelation was news of the publication, in November 2009, of a compendium of religious commentary that reads like a rabbinic instruction manual outlining acceptable scenarios for killing non-Jews. According to an article by Daniel Estrin entitled "Rabbinic Text or Call to Terror?" in the January 29, 2010 issue of the New York *Forward*:

> "The prohibition 'Thou Shalt Not Murder'" applies only "to a Jew who kills a Jew," write Rabbis Yitzhak Shapira and Yosef Elitzur of the West Bank settlement of Yitzhar. Non-Jews are "uncompassionate by nature" and attacks on them "curb their evil inclination," while babies and children of Israel's enemies may be killed since "it is clear that they will grow to harm us."

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647 Stefan Raczyński, whom Yad Vashem recognized as a Righteous Gentile for saving his future wife, Shoshana Dezent, and a number of other Jews, moved to Israel with his wife in 1960. Shoshana recalled how he was mistreated there: "Stefan has changed a great deal since we came to Israel. They injured him; he felt humiliated and he became cynical. When our son went to the army he wanted to be a pilot. They told him, 'Your father is a Polish Catholic, you won't be a pilot.' One day a few religious Jews were throwing stones at our house screaming, 'Go away, goy,'" See Rescuers Bios, "Shtetl," PBS Frontline, Internet: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shtetl/righteous/stephan.html>.

648 Amos Harel, "IDF Rabbinate Publication During Gaza War: We Will Show No Mercy on the Cruel," *Haaretz,* January 26, 2009; Amos Harel, "IDF Censures Officer for Distributing Incendiary Religious Pamphlets to Troops," *Haaretz,* January 28, 2009; Ofri Ilani, "Vatican Teaching Hezbollah How to Kill Jews, Says Pamphlet for IDF Troops," *Haaretz,* July 19, 2009.

649 Os Rozenberg, "Right-Wing Group Mapping Jerusalem Businesses That Employ Arabs," *Haaretz,* November 21, 2011.

"The King's Torah (*Torat Hamelech*), Part One: Laws of Life and Death between Israel and the Nations," a 230-page compendium of Halacha, or Jewish religious law, published by the Od Yosef Chai yeshiva in Yitzhar, garnered a front-page exposé in the Israeli tabloid Ma'ariv, which called it the stuff of "Jewish terror."

…

Yet, both [Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yona] Metzger and his Sephardic counterpart, Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar, have declined to comment on the book, which debuted in November, while other prominent rabbis have endorsed it—among them, the son of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, Sephardic Jewry's preeminent leader. Also, despite the precedent set by previous Israeli attorneys general in the last decade and a half to file criminal charges against settler rabbis who publish commentaries supporting violence against non-Jews, Attorney General Menachem Mazuz has so far remained mum about "The King's Torah."

…

In 2006-2007, the Israeli Ministry of Education gave about a quarter of a million dollars to the yeshiva, and in 2007-2008 the yeshiva received about $28,000 from the American nonprofit Central Fund of Israel.

…

But the book's wide dissemination and the enthusiastic endorsements of prominent rabbis have spotlighted what might have otherwise remained an isolated commentary.

At the entrance to Moriah, a large Jewish bookstore steps from the Western Wall, copies of "The King's Torah" were displayed with children's books and other halachic commentaries. The store manager, who identified himself only as Motti, said the tome has sold "excellently."

Other stores carrying the book include Robinson Books, a well-known, mostly secular bookshop in a hip Tel Aviv shopping district; Pomeranz Bookseller, a major Jewish book emporium near the Ben Yehuda mall in downtown Jerusalem; and Felhendler, a Judaica store on the main artery of secular Rehovot, home of the Weizmann Institute.

…

Prominent religious figures wrote letters of endorsement that preface the book. Rabbi Yaakov Yosef, son of former Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, blessed the authors and wrote that many "disciples of Torah are unfamiliar with these laws." The elder Yosef has not commented on his son's statement.

Dov Lior, chief rabbi of Kiryat Arba and a respected figure among many mainstream religious Zionists, noted that the book is "very relevant especially in this time."

…

Previously, Israel has arrested settler rabbis who publish commentaries supporting the killing of non-Jews. In addition to Ginsburgh, the Od Yosef Chai yeshiva head, in 1994, the government jailed Rabbi Ido Elba of Hebron for writing a 26-page article proclaiming it a "mitzva to kill every non-Jew from the nation that is fighting the Jew, even women and children."

"The atmosphere has changed," said Yair Sheleg, senior researcher at the Israel Democracy Institute, who specializes in issues of religion and state. Previous governments took a tougher stance against such publications, he said, but "paradoxically, because the tension between the general settler population and the Israeli judicial system…is high now, the attorney general is careful not to heighten the tension."

Rabbi Morcechai Eliyahu, the Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel from 1983 to 1993, proclaimed on 2008 that "the life of one yeshiva boy is worth more than the lives of 1,000 Arabs."[650] In their book *The King's Torah*, Rabbi Yitzhak Shapira, head of the Od Yosef Hai Yeshiva in the West Bank settlement of Yitzhar, and Rabbi Yosef Elizur-Hershkowitz describe how it is possible to kill non-Jews according to halakha (Jewish religious law). They say it is permissible to kill young children if it is foreseeable that they will grow up to be mortal enemies of the Jews, or to put pressure on an enemy leader. The book gained the exlplicit and implicit endorsement of hundreds of rabbis.

> According to Shapira, it is permissible to kill a non-Jew who threatens Israel even if the person is classified as a Righteous Gentile. His book says that any gentile who supports war against Israel can also be killed.
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> Killing the children of a leader in order to pressure him, the rabbi continues, is also permissible. In general, according to the book, it is okay to kill children if they "stand in the way—children are often doing this." "They stand in the way of rescue in their presence and they are doing this without wanting to," he writes. "Nonetheless, killing them is allowed because their presence supports murder. There is justification in harming infants if it is clear that they will grow up to harm us. Under such circumstances the blow can be directed at them and not only by targeting adults."[651]

> Dov Lior, the chief rabbi of Hebron and Kiryat Arba and the head of the Rabbinical Committee of the Council of Jewish Communities, and Rabbi Ya'acov Yosef, son of Shas spiritual leader Ovadia Yosef, provided endorsements for the book, and refused requests by the police's National Serious and International Crimes Unit to arrive for questioning at the unit's Lod Headquarters earlier this month.
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> Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburg, head of the Od Yosef Chai yeshiva who wrote a three-page endorsement for the book, used his police questioning to say that the book's conclusions are not practical Halacha, but rather in the realm of hypotheses and principles of Halacha.
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> Hundreds of primarily national-religious rabbis took part in a convention "in honor of the Torah and its independence" on Wednesday, following Lior and Yosef's summoning by police.
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> Without endorsing the content of the book, the participants maintained that police should not get involved in matters pertaining to halachic discourse.
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> Senior figures such as Ramat Gan Chief Rabbi Ya'acov Ariel and Rabbi Haim Druckman, head of the Ohr Etzion Yeshiva, were also present at the event.[652]

Later that year, Rabbi Yitzhak Shapira invoked the Torah to encourage Israeli soldiers to use Palestnians as human shields ("Leading Rabbi Encourages IDF Soldiers to Use Palestnian Human Shields," *Haaretz,* October 20, 2010).

> A leading rabbi in the West Bank settlement of Yitzhar has encouraged Israel Defense Forces soldiers to make use of the outlawed "neighbor procedure" while operating in Palestinian areas.

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650 Kobi Nahshoni, "Rabbi Eliyahu: Life of One Yeshiva Boy Worth More Than 1,000 Arabs," *Ynet News,* April 3, 2008.

651 Chaim Levinson, "Police Release Rabbi Arrested for Inciting to Kill Non-Jews," *Haaretz*, July 27, 2010.

652 Yaakov Lappin, "Yitzhar Rabbi Freed After Arrest for Incitement," *The Jerusalem Post,* August 20, 2010.

"Anything you do to keep the war tough is permissible, and obligatory according to the torah," Rabbi Yitzhak Shapira, headmaster of the Od Yosef Chai Yeshiva, wrote in fliers distributed to his students.

"According to true Jewish values, your lives come before those of the enemy, whether he is a soldier or a civilian under protection. Therefore, you are forbidden from endangering your own life for the sake of the enemy, not even for a civilian," Shapira declared. …

The rabbi's decree came less than a month after the southern command military court convicted two IDF soldiers of using human shields during Operation Cast Lead, Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip, in the winter of 2008-2009.

The soldiers were convicted of offenses including inappropriate behavior and overstepping authority for ordering an 11-year-old Palestinian to search bags suspected to have been booby trapped.

The conviction is the first such conviction for soldiers who made use of human shields during an operation, an act strictly prohibited in IDF protocols.

In August 2010, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the spiritual leader of Israel's leading ultra-Orthodox party, renewed his venom against the "evil" Palestinians and said that they should all "perish."[653] His teachings in a Saturday sermon in an Israeli synagogue on October 16, 2010 represent an extension of his beliefs. They were not pulled out of thin air—Rabbi Yosef is an accomplished scholar of the Torah—but rather are part of a longstanding tradition that is not generally revealed to outsiders. The *Jerusalem Post* reported:

The sole purpose of non-Jews is to serve Jews, according to Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the head of Shas's Council of Torah Sages and a senior Sephardi adjudicator.

"Goyim were born only to serve us. Without that, they have no place in the world – only to serve the People of Israel," he said in his weekly Saturday night sermon on the laws regarding the actions non-Jews are permitted to perform on Shabbat.

According to Yosef, the lives of non-Jews in Israel are safeguarded by divinity, to prevent losses to Jews.

"In Israel, death has no dominion over them... With gentiles, it will be like any person – they need to die, but [God] will give them longevity. Why? Imagine that one's donkey would die, they'd lose their money. This is his servant... That's why he gets a long life, to work well for this Jew," Yosef said.

"Why are gentiles needed? They will work, they will plow, they will reap. We will sit like an effendi [lord or master] and eat. That is why gentiles were created," he added.[654]

It must be borne in mind that Rabbi Ovadia Yosef was no marginal religious figure. His funeral in October 2013 attracted at least than 800,000 mourners, the largest funeral in Israel's history.[655] What he preached clearly resonates with a very large portion of Israeli society.

The same message was reinforced when, in December 2010, more than 300 rabbis and religious figures, many of them state-employed, signed a public statement calling on Jews not to rent or sell properties to

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653 Natasha Mozgovaya, "U.S.: Rabbi's 'Offensive' Remarks Harm Peace Efforts," *Haaretz,* August 30, 2010.

654 Jonah Mandel, "Yosef: Gentiles Exist Only to Serve Jews," *The Jerusalem Post,* October 18, 2010.

655 Daniel K. Eisenbud, "At Least 800,000 Fill Streets for Largest Funeral in Israel's History," *The Jerusalem Post,* October 7, 2013.

non-Jews—a move particularly aimed against Arabs—and calling on the community to ostracize those who do so. The document warned:

> "It is forbidden in the Torah to sell a house or a field in the land of Israel to a foreigner."
>
> "After someone sells or rents just one flat, the value of all the neighbouring flats drops … He who sells or rents [to non-Jews] causes his neighbours a big loss and his sin is great. Anyone who sells [property to a non-Jew] must be cut off!"

The manifesto quotes extensively from Jewish writings, including the Bible. It cites Exodus 23:33, which reads: "Do not let them live in your land or they will cause you to sin against me, because the worship of their gods will certainly be a snare to you."[656] The immediate problem started several months earlier:

> Usama Ghanaiem was at home with a group of friends when the mob attacked.
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> It was a Friday night in late October, and about 30 young ultra-Orthodox Jewish men walking home from synagogue began throwing rocks at the apartment building where several Arab students rent accommodation in the northern city of Safed.
>
> One of the attackers eve fired a gun; another left a message "Death to Arabs" scrawled on the front door.
>
> …
>
> Mr. Ghanaiem and his friends, all college students from a number of Arab communities in Israel, have found themselves caught up in a nationwide campaign against Israel's 1.2 million Arab citizens. It began with an edict issued by Shmuel Eliahu, chief rabbi of Safed, that prohibits Jews in the city from renting or selling property to gentiles, by which he really means Arabs. Close to 300 rabbis across the country now have signed onto Rabbi Eliahu's original statement or onto similar statements.[657]

On the heels of the rabbis' letter urging Jews not to sell or rent properties to non-Jews came a letter published by a group of wives of 29 Haredi rabbis calling on Jewish women not to date Arabs, work with them or perform national service in the same places where Arabs work:

> The letter was organized by the organization Lehava, which claims to "save daughters of Israel" from what it calls assimilation. Lehava also took part in the recent demonstrations against selling or renting homes to non-Jews.
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> The group operates a shelter for women who leave their Arab partners and educate the public on what it calls the dangers that arise from contact between Jews and Arabs. The organization also called for the boycott of the Gush Etzion branch of the supermarket Rami Levi, where Arab and Jewish workers are on shift side-by-side.
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> In the last few weeks, Bentzi Gopstein of Kiryat Arba, the director of Lehava, convinced the wives of important rabbis in the religious Zionist movement to sign on to the letter. Among the signatories were

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656 Marius Schattner, Agence France-Presse, "Homes Not For Sale to Non-Jews: Israeli Rabbis," *National Post* (Toronto), December 10, 2010; Chaim Levinson, "Top Rabbis Move To Forbid Renting Homes to Arabs, Say 'Racism Originated in the Torah'," *Haaretz,* December 7, 2010.

657 Patrick Martin, "Israel Rabbi's Edit Targets Arabs," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), December 12, 2010.

> Netzhiya Yosef, wife of Rabbi Yaakov Yosef, Esther Lior, wife of Rabbi Dov Lior, Shulamit Melamed of Beit Alon and Starna Druckman of Kiryat Motzkin.[658]

At a women's health conference held in December 2010 at the Puah Institute in Jerusalem, Rabbi Dov Lior, a senior authority on Jewish law in the religious Zionism movement, asserted that a Jewish woman should never get pregnant using sperm donated by a non-Jewish man because a baby born through such an insemination will have the "negative genetic traits that characterize non-Jews" such as cruelty and barbarism.

> "Sefer HaChinuch (a book of Jewish law) states that the character traits of the father pass on to the son," he said in the lecture. "If the father in not Jewish, what character traits could he have? Traits of cruelty, of barbarism! These are not traits that characterize the people of Israel."
>
> Lior added identified Jews as merciful, shy and charitable – qualities that he claimed could be inherited. "A person born to Jewish parents, even if they weren't raised on the Torah – there are things that are passed on (to him) in the blood, it's genetic," he explained. "If the father is a gentile, then the child is deprived of these things.
>
> "I even read in books that sometimes the crime, the difficult traits, the bitterness – a child that comes from these traits, it's no surprise that he won't have the qualities that characterize the people of Israel," he added.[659]

Pronouncing on the laws of the Sabbath, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the spiritual leader of Shas and former Sephardi chief rabbi, ruled that the laws are different regarding Jews and gentiles in terms of violating the Sabbath to save a life. He instructed that the Torah does not permit the desecration of the Sabbath to save the life of a gentile.[660] Avraham Burg, a former Speaker of the Knesset, parts ways with those who would have us believe that the opinions of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef and Yitzhak Ginzburg are marginal, or only those of extremists. Avraham Burg states, "Deep inside, many thousands of our fellow Jews believe in Jewish supremacy, in the 'Jewish Genius,' over the rest of humanity."[661] Ironic to the frequent complaints about anti-Semitic graffiti in Poland, Burg fingers a comparable situation in Israel. He remarks, "Walls are covered with racist graffiti calling for 'Death to the Arabs' and saying 'No Arabs, no terror,' and the police and other authorities do not even bother to erase the shameful slurs. In the ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods of Jerusalem, one can see more swastikas than on all the desecrated Jewish graves in the world."[662]

Hasidic Jews have been responsible for quite a bit of violence directed at fellow Jews and non-Jews, in Israel and abroad. Shops in Jerusalem have been repeatedly vandalized for selling Zionist literature or

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[658] Chaim Levinson, "Rabbis' Wives Urge Israeli Woman: Stay Away from Arab Men," *Haaretz,* December 28, 2010.

[659] Kobi Nahshoni, "Gentile Sperm Leads to Barbaric Offspring," *Israel Jewish Scene,* January 12, 2011, Internet: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4006385,00.html>.

[660] Asher Zeiger, "Don't Violate Shabbat to save non-Jewish life, Shas Rabbi Says," *The Times of Israel,* May 17, 2012.

[661] Burg, *The Holocaust Is Over; We Must Rise From Its Ashes,* 182.

[662] Burg, *The Holocaust Is Over; We Must Rise From Its Ashes,* 50.

"immodest" clothing. The most savage beating of a rabbi in Poland in recent years was in fact perpetrated by Hasids who attacked Moishe Arye Friedman, an anti-Zionist rabbi from Vienna, on March 11, 2007, while attending commemorations for an 18th century Hasidic rabbi buried in Leżajsk.[663] Hundreds of Hasidic pilgrims visiting the grave of Rabbi Nahman of Breslov in Uman, Ukraine, have been repeatedly involved in violent clashes with the police and locals and were responsible for the the stabbing of a non-Jew.[664] These thugs are emboldened by the reluctance of the Western media to report such incidents and the support they receive from Jewish circles who rally to defend them against "anti-Semites."

When a story broke in a Swedish newspaper in August 2009 that the Israeli army may have secretly removed organs from Palestnian youths killed in clashes, the reaction was predictable and typical: blanket denials, demands by the government of Israel for official Swedish condemnation of the article, and accusations of blood libel and anti-Semitism. (Israel's foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman railed, "It's a shame that the Swedish Foreign Ministry fails to intervene in a case of blood libels against Jews. This is reminiscent of Sweden's stand during World War II, when [it] had failed to intervene as well." He was seconded by finance minister Yuval Stenitz, who said, "This is an anti-Semitic blood libel against the Jewish people and the Jewish state.") The reluctance of the Swedish government to interfere with the freedom of its country's press even led to Israel imposing sanctions against Sweden. After an American academic released an interview conducted in the year 2000 with the then-head of Israel's Abu Kabir forensic institute admitting to the harvesting of skin, corneas, heart valves and bones from the bodies of Palestinians and foreign workers, without permission from relatives, and possibly from Israeli soldiers as well, the Israeli military reluctantly confirmed the practice took place. The organs were used in Israeli hospitals for transplants and human tissues were sent to a special military skin bank for the benefit of injured Israeli soldiers. Doctors would mask the removal of corneas from bodies by gluing the eyelids shut. Allegedly the practice had stopped a number of years ago, but no one was ever charged or

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663 "Israeli admits beating rabbi for attending Holocaust conference in Iran," *International Herald Tribune (Europe),* March 14, 2007. Rabbi Friedman was kicked and punched repeatedly by Orthodox Jews, including some rabbis, before being saved by the intervention of local policemen. Piotr Kadlcik, who heads the Association of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland, justified the assault of an anti-Zionist "extremist," gratuitously claiming that Poles would have reacted far worse in an analagous situation. See Piotr Zychowicz, "Rabin pobity w Leżajsku," *Rzeczpospolita,* March 14, 2007. An American historian has recently recalled the 1848 killing—by an Orthodox Jew—of the Reform rabbi of Lwów and his infant daughter by asenic poisoning, against the backdrop of tensions boiling over between Orthodox and Reform Jews in that city. This scholar noted that the *Encyclopedia Judaica* "deliberately and rather shockingly obfuscates the facts." See Michael Stanislawski, *A Murder in Lemberg: Politics, Religion, and Violence in Modern Jewish History* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007).

664 Piotr Zychowicz, "Chuligani z pejsami na Ukrainie," *Rzeczpospolita,* September 14, 2010; Herb Keinon, "Foreign Ministry Sorry for Uman Rosh Hashana Violence," *The Jerusakem Post,* September 17, 2010.

sanctioned. The Israeli government never distanced itself from its baseless attacks against the Swedish reporter, newspaper or authorities.[665]

In November 2014, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet passed a bill enshrininig Israel as the national state of the Jewish people only, even though about a quarter of the country's citizenry is non-Jewish. Netanyahu's pre-election pledge to never allow a Palestinian state and to expand Jewish settlements in the West Bank, coupled with his anti-Palestinian rhetoric, gave him a stunning victory in the March 17, 2015 elections. A Zionist Union MP, Sheli Yachimovich, responded aptly to Mr Netanyahu's comments on her own Facebook page: "No Western leader would dare utter such a racist comment." If any Western politician were to act in this manner, they would be soundly and universally denounced, and their electorate lambasted. Unfortunately, the double standard of which many Jews complain usually works to their advantage. Writing in the *New York Review of Books* in March 2015,[666] David Shulman, Professor of Humanistic Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and an activist in Ta'ayush, Arab-Jewish Partnership, stated ominously:

> Benjamin Netanyahu has won again. He will have no difficulty putting together a solid right-wing coalition. But the naked numbers may be deceptive. What really counts is the fact that the Israeli electorate is still dominated by hypernationalist, in some cases proto-fascist, figures. It is in no way inclined to make peace. It has given a clear mandate for policies that preclude any possibility of moving toward a settlement with the Palestinians and that will further deepen Israel's colonial venture in the Palestinian territories, probably irreversibly. …
>
> First, the notion that there will someday be two states in historic Palestine has been savagely undermined. We have Netanyahu's word for it. If he has his way—and why shouldn't he?—Palestinians are destined for the foreseeable future to remain subject to a regime of state terror, including the remorseless loss of their lands and homes and, in many cases, their very lives; they will continue to be, as they are now, disenfranchised, without even minimal legal recourse, hemmed into small discontinuous enclaves, and deprived of elementary human rights.
>
> Take a mild, almost innocuous example, entirely typical of life in the territories. Last weekend I was in the south Hebron hills with Palestinian shepherds at a place called Zanuta, whose historic grazing grounds have been taken over, in large part, by a settlement inhabited by a single Jewish family. Soldiers turned up with the standard order, signed by the brigade commander, declaring the area a Closed Military Zone; the order is

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[665] Assaf Uni and Barak Ravid, "Israel Denounces Sweden's Silence on IDF Organ Harvest Article," *Haaretz,* August 23, 2009; "Israel Hits Back over Swedish Organ Harvesting Article," CNN, August 23, 2009; "Israel Admits Removing Organs," *Toronto Star,* December 21, 2009; Marcin Szymaniak, "Izrael miał tajny bank skóry," *Rzeczpospolita,* December 21, 2009. This story came on the heals of the shocking news of the uncovering of a crime syndicate in New Jersey, which included several rabbis who were charged with human kidney sales and money laundering from Brooklyn to Israel. One of the rabbis tried to sell a kidney to an FBI agent for $150,000. See Reuters, "U.S. Rabbis Suspected of Brokering Sale of Human Kidneys," *Haaretz,* July 23, 2009; "US Corruption Probe Nets Dozens: More than 40 people, including politicians, officials and several rabbis have been arrested in a major FBI operation in the US," Internet: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8165607.stm> (according to U.S. officials, investigations originally focused on a network that allegedly laundered tens of millions of dollars through charities controlled by rabbis in New Jersey and neighbouring New York); Shlomo Shamir, "New York Rabbi confesses to money laundering," *Haaretz,* March 29, 2011; Piotr Zychowicz, "Rabin, który stał na czele mafii," *Rzeczpospolita,* April 1, 2011. The story again hit the media when *The New York Times* reported on an international organ-trafficking network with Israeli connections (Dan Bilefsky, "Seven Charged in Kosovo Organ-Trafficking Ring," *The New York Times,* November 15, 2010).

[666] David Shulman, "Israel: The Stark Truth," *The New York Review of Books,* March 21, 2015 (preliminary version).

illegal, according to a Supreme Court ruling, but the writ of the court hardly impinges on reality on the ground in south Hebron. Within minutes, three of the shepherds and an Israeli activist were arrested.

The people of Zanuta live with such arbitrary decrees on a daily basis, as they live under the constant threat of violent assault by Israeli settlers, acting with impunity. In short, these Palestinian villagers are slated for dispossession and expulsion. We are doing what we can to stop the process, but it isn't easy. The situation in the northern West Bank is considerably worse.

Secondly, we may see the emergence in the West Bank of a situation like that in Gaza, with Hamas or other extremist organizations assuming power. It seems ridiculous to have to write this, but in case anyone has any doubt: there is no way a privileged collective can sit forever on top of a disenfranchised, systematically victimized minority of millions. We can expect mass violent protests of one sort or another (maybe, with luck, some large-scale nonviolent protest as well). Sooner or later, the territories will probably explode, and the Palestinian Authority may be washed away. At that point Netanyahu will complain loudly that you can never trust the Arabs. …

Fourthly, and most important, the moral fiber of the country will continue to unravel. Already for years the public space has been contaminated by ugly, violent voices coming from the heart of the right-wing establishment. As Zvi Barel has cogently written in *Haaretz*, "Netanyahu has succeeded in overturning the principle that the state exists for the sake of its citizens and putting in its place the Fascist belief that the citizens exist for the state."

In accordance with that belief, there will be more hypernationalist, antidemocratic legislation, more deliberate and consistent attempts to undermine the authority of the courts, more rampant racism, more thugs in high office, more acts of cruelty inflicted on innocents, more attacks on moderates perceived as enemies of the state, more paranoid indoctrination in the schools, more hate propaganda and self-righteous whining by official spokesmen, more discrimination against the Israeli-Arab population, more wanton destruction of the villages of Israeli Bedouins, more war-mongering, and quite possibly more needless war.

There are no signs of improvement since those words were written. In fact, things are getting worse all the time in a country where Jewish hyper-nationalism thrives with the tacit support of the United States and other countries. Professor Shulman reported in December 2016, as follows:

According to the Oslo accords, the division of the West Bank into three different zones was intended as a preliminary stage leading eventually to the end of the Israeli occupation and to achieving Palestinian statehood. The policy of the present Israeli government appears to be aimed at eventually annexing to Israel the whole of Area C, which constitutes over half the territory of the West Bank; this goal has been explicitly and repeatedly stated by the minister of education, Naftali Bennett, head of the ultra-nationalist Jewish Home party and a major force in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition. As a result, we are now witnessing in the Jordan Valley an accelerated process of what must, I fear, be called ethnic cleansing. It's not a term I use lightly. …

What happened next is emblematic of how the occupation works throughout the West Bank. On November 17, the Ayyub Bedouins, their homes and sheep pens now destroyed for the second time, decided to set up a protest tent not far from the new outpost. The fate of a Palestinian tent, old or new, is unlike the fate of an illegal Israeli outpost. Within a few hours soldiers arrived and quickly went through their standard repertoire —tear gas, stun grenades, rubber bullets, and pepper spray (from my own experience, I can tell you that the pepper spray is the worst if it gets you in the eyes). Interestingly, all eyewitness accounts agree that among

the soldiers, the women recruits were by far the most savage. The tear gas and stun grenades were aimed directly at the activists, a potentially lethal practice officially banned by the army. Six Palestinians were hospitalized, and two Israeli activists were arrested, one of them seriously beaten by the police while in custody.

Not to put too fine a point on it: Israeli settlers have free license to steal more and more land, and the rightful owners of these lands are brutally driven away. The process is set out in precise detail in a recent report by B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights organization, dealing with the West Bank as a whole. Noting that Israeli policies have been particular devastating to the semi-nomadic communities in Area C, the authors observe:

> As years of monitoring by B'Tselem and other organizations has shown, Israeli security forces regularly allow settlers to assault Palestinians and damage their property. In fact, soldiers sometimes safeguard the settlers in such situations, providing them support and at times even taking part in the assault. All this is compounded by an ineffectual law enforcement system that takes no action against the offenders and does not achieve justice for the victims. According to figures collected by Israeli human rights organization Yesh Din, some 85 percent of all investigations into incidents of harm caused to Palestinians (physical assault, arson, damage to property, vandalizing trees, and taking over land) are closed due to flaws in police procedure. There is only a 1.9 percent chance of a police complaint filed by a Palestinian leading to the conviction of an Israeli citizen.
>
> …

A bill now before the Knesset, supported by all the right-wing parties and already past its first vote (out of three), aims to legalize the many dozens of so-called illegal outposts scattered all over the West Bank as well as thousands of housing units built in Israeli settlements that sit on privately-owned Palestinian land. The bill is a transparent attempt to enable what can only be called large-scale governmental theft.[667]

Although Israel ushered in a new coalation government in June 2021, the prospects for tolerance do not run high. The government declined to prevent a Jewish nationalist march in Israeli-occupied East Jerusalem, with a predictable outcome.

> Several thousand flag-waving Israeli ultra-nationalists marched though occupied East Jerusalem on Tuesday evening, handing new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett his first diplomatic and security challenge and testing the fragile ceasefire reached a month ago between Israel and Hamas. …
>
> The Israeli marchers on Tuesday stopped first at Damascus Gate but were blocked from using it to enter the Old City's Muslim Quarter. The noisy gathering saw the nationalists, mostly young men, dancing while they chanted "Death to the Arabs" and "May your house burn," another anti-Arab chant. A couple of far-right members of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, made their way through the crowd in a show of support.
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> …
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> Israeli media reported that about 2,000 heavily armed police officers were used to clear and secure the area.[668]

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[667] David Shulman, "Palestine: The End of the Bedouins?" *The New York Review of Books,* December 7, 2016.

[668] Eric Reguly, "Nationalists march through Jerusalem in test for new government," *The Globe and Mail,* June 15, 2021.

Suffice it to say that had an anti-Jewish occurrence of this nature been allowed in any other democratic country, with Parliamentarians engaging in open supportive conduct, there would be internal repercussions and international condemnation. Nothing of the kind happened here. Once again the mainstream media treatment was muted, indicative of a double standard in reporting such events.

This ugly scenario was repeated again the following year (on May 29, 2022).

> Thousands of Israeli nationalists, some of them chanting "Death to Arabs," paraded through the heart of the main Palestinian thoroughfare in Jerusalem's Old City on Sunday, in a show of force that risked setting off a new wave of violence in the tense city.
>
> The crowds, who were overwhelmingly young Orthodox Jewish men, were celebrating Jerusalem Day — an Israeli holiday that marks the capture of the Old City in the 1967 Mideast war. Palestinians see the event, which passes through the heart of the Muslim Quarter, as a provocation. …
>
> As the march got underway, groups of Orthodox Jewish groups gathered outside Damascus Gate, waving flags, singing religious and nationalistic songs, and shouting "the Jewish nation lives" before entering the Muslim Quarter. One large group chanted "Death to Arabs," and "Let your village burn down" before descending into the Old City.[669]

The systematic indocrination of Israeli students is something that cannot be found, and would not be tolerated, in any other democratic country. It has a very long history. Moshe Menuhin recalled the following from his own experience in Palestine before immigrating to the United States in 1913 and the typical anti-Christian upbringing imparted to young Jews.

> I know whereof I speak, because I was reared in the Hebrew Gymnasia Herzlia. I was one of the first graduates of this unique school of "Jewish" nationalism. And it took me a long time to rid myself of all the hate-filled, asphyxiating xenophobia toward Gentiles, including, of course, the Arabs of Palestine, that was implanted in our young hearts.
>
> The time has come for the Jews to discard the absurd and wild prejudices of the East European ghettos against the Gentile world. Take that inveterate and pathetic prejudice against *goyim*—a sort of neuroticism stemming from a twisted superiority complex acquired during the long tortured and hedged-in ghetto life —"*a goy bleibt a goy*" (A Gentile always remains a Gentile). It has many connotations and applications. "What can you expect of a *goy*? He has no *saychel* (wisdom, sense). He has no heart. He has no Torah (Old Testament). He is dumb." Therefore, "*a goy bleibt a goy*"; once a *goy*, always a *goy*.
>
> As I write these lines, I recall my long-forgotten childhood days, or rather nights, when my *heder* and *yeshiva* (elementary and higher Talmudic Hebrew schools) in Jerusalem called a complete halt to the study of the Torah and Talmud one night every winter. It must have been the birthday of Joshua of Nazareth.

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[669] Associated Press, "'Death to Arabs' Chanted in Jerusalem March," *Politico,* May 29, 2012.

The *Rebbeh* (not "rabbi")—the teacher—used to indulge in slighting traditional stories about the *Acher* ("Strange One," "Other One"), or *Yoshkeh Pandreh*, as we kids were made to call the *Acher*, Jesus.[670]

The following leaves no doubt that Israel continues to be hotbead of nationalism.

Students who want to take part in delegations going abroad are obliged to take an online government course which some parents and teachers say has a "blatant political agenda." The course consists of film clips in which several speakers address the students and coach them about the messages they should express overseas.

Arab students are also required to take the course.

"The messages are simple and repetitive," a mother of an 11th grade student from the central region says. "All the Arabs hate us, in fact almost the entire world hates us."

In June 2016 the Education Ministry sent detailed instructions to schools about preparing delegations for trips abroad. "Students and youth in delegations overseas represent Israel and its society and serve as its ambassadors," it said. "The students will represent Israel using the main messages taught in the course," the directive says, noting the goal is "cultivating Israeli pride and a sense of calling among those going abroad."

The directive is directed at 9th through 12th grade students slated to take part in delegations abroad, whether to conferences or international contests in mathematics, science and technology. It is also meant for delegations participating in programs for relations with Jewish communities in the world, twin cities and youth exchange and others. The courses do not apply to delegations to Poland.

Education Ministry sources said the project could include 220,000 students annually.

The course, which is part of a more comprehensive compulsory training session of 30 hours, consists of 11 study units, each made up of a film clip lasting several minutes. Advancing from one stage of the course to the next is conditional on passing a short test of four to five questions. At the end of each film clip the students must answer a multiple choice test. If they fail or abstain they will be disqualified from going on the trip.

The first speaker in the online course is Education Minister Naftali Bennett. He stresses entrepreneurship and innovation. ("Israel is a power of doing good to billions of people worldwide.") He says the Arabs vote and are elected to the Knesset, noting "only in Israel is there such democracy. Emphasize this, because sometimes [they] throw out a word like apartheid. What apartheid?"

He ignores the fact that the term refers mainly to the rights of Palestinians beyond the Green Line.

"The Arab states don't want the tiny Jewish democracy to survive," says Bennett. "Those guys sitting in London or the United States must be told that we're the free world's forward outpost in the global campaign against radical Islam."

Asked what the most important part of advocacy for Israel is, Bennett says, "People think the content counts. I dispute that. It's not the content but the smile, the politeness, the listening."

But at the end of the unit, when the students are asked, "According to Bennett, what's the most important thing in advocacy?"—the smile and politeness are not an option. The correct answer, taken from another part of the clip, is "framing, the way in which we frame the story."

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[670] Moshe Menuhin, *The Decadence of Judaism in Our Time* (New York: Exposition Press, 1965), 50, 246, 269.

In the chapter "Israel in the Middle East," Dr. Uri Resnik, legal adviser for deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotevely, says "… Israel's story in this region doesn't begin in the 20th century but in the ancient era, in the time of the Bible and the patriarchs, about 4,000 years ago."

The Bible also plays a central role in the unit dedicated to anti-Semitism. Gideon Bachar, the Foreign Ministry's director of the campaign against anti-Semitism, tells the students "anti-Semitism definitely exists from the dawn of Christianity some 2,000 years ago, but it existed before that too. Some claim Haman's desire to destroy all the Jews—think about it—is also a sort of anti-Semitism. Other cite Pharaoh's hatred of the nation of Israel, that nation of slaves—as a kind of anti-Semitism."

Pushing the 'radical left-radical Islam' connection

Bachar says the main roots of modern anti-Semitism are "Muslim anti-Semitism, radical right and extreme left." The link he makes between "radical left organizations in Europe" and "radical Islam" is one of the main points in a lecture about BDS by Tali Gorodos from the Reut Institute.

In another unit, "Israel in the international media," Foreign Ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nachshon says, "They poison children with hatred for Israel and for Jews. … They suckle this poison from age zero." Later Nachshon speaks of the so-called lone-wolf intifada, on the background of a mixture of Israeli security footage from stabbing sites, Hamas broadcasts and ISIS executions. Some of these clips and pictures appear again in other parts of the course.

Apart from the emphasis on Arab-Muslim hatred (including the purported Iranian threat), the lecturers tell the students to stress Israel's "creative energy" and developments and inventions in high-tech, medicine agriculture and other fields.

One of the test questions, "What challenges are you dealing with in Israel?" has four answer options—the Iranian threat, delegitimization, terror organizations from West, East, North and South, and all of the above. The correct answer is all of the above.

Another question is "Against whom is anti-Semitism directed?" and the right answer is: only toward Israel.

"The messages say everyone hates us already from the era of the Bible, which is also the only legitimization for Israel mentioned in the course," an 11th grade student's mother says.

"The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is presented with no context—no explanation is given for the Arab hatred and there's no distinction between Israel and the West Bank," she says.

Another parent says, "We're used to the rightist worldview reflected in civics and history. … Now we have to agree to a blatantly political agenda so that the child can go to a science competition."

A teacher accompanying delegations abroad says, "It's hard to imagine what Arab students and parents feel. The Arabs appear in almost only negative contexts. There's no reflection of coexistence. Bennett's message in his clip is—the Arabs must be grateful for the right to vote and should keep quiet."

An Education Ministry official said, "Many of the lessons play on students' fears and prejudices and intensify them."

Ministry spokesman Amos Shavit didn't answer questions about the course, saying, "It was built with a view to the variety of populations in Israel, intending to train the students for going abroad. The claim that the course reflects a political view is groundless."[671]

It is not surprising, therefore, that groups like Lehava can operate openly in Israel, and that their leader, Rabbi Benzi Opstein, who called for the burning of Christian churches and expulsion of Christians, can

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[671] Or Kashti, "Israeli Students Undergo Right-wing Indocrination Before Going on School Trips Abroad," *Haaretz,* March 17, 2017.

make such comments with impunity. If a Christian clergyman were to make such comments about Jews not only would it cause an international uproar, but it would in all likelihood result in criminal sanctions. (It appears that Rabbi Opstein was charged with anti-Arab incitement in 2019.)

Israeli Extremist Group Leader Calls for Torching of Churches

Lehava's Benzi Gopstein tells yeshiva panel that the Rambam's ruling for destruction of idol worship is still valid.

The leader of the extremist anti-assimilation group Lehava allegedly called for churches to be torched, at a panel held this week for yeshiva students. Benzi Gopstein said he is prepared to spend 50 years in jail for doing so, according to a report by the Haredi website Kikar Shabbat. …

The panel was debating whether Jews are commanded to eliminate idol worship, as the Rambam (Maimonides) states. After Gopstein responded affirmatively, Klein [Rabbi Moshe Klein, the rabbi of the Hadassah Medical Centers] hastened to interject, "It is a mitzvah according to the Rambam, but in our times the answer is no."

The issue generated an argument on the panel, with Gopstein defending his position that churches should be burned. In response to a question by Rabinovich as to whether he "is in favor of burning churches in the Land of Israel," Gopstein answered, "Did the Rambam rule to destroy [idol worship] or not? Idol worship must be destroyed. It's simply yes – what's the question?"

Rabinovich pressed the issue, saying, "Benzi, I must say I'm really shocked by what you're saying here. You are essentially saying we must go out and burn down churches. You're saying something insane here."

Gopstein replied, "What's the question? Do you doubt it?"

When Klein warned him the panel was being filmed, and that if the recording should get to the police he would be arrested, Gopstein replied, "That's the last thing that concerns me. If this is truth, I'm prepared to sit in jail 50 years for it."

As the panel discussion unfolded, Rabinovich tweeted a message on his Twitter account: "I'm shocked to the core. I'm sitting at a panel right now with Benzi Gopstein, who says outright it's a mitzvah to burn churches, and he is prepared to sit in jail 50 years for this." Some of the yeshiva students who saw his tweet called him a "moser" (informer). …

"For many months, we have waited for a decision by the attorney general regarding complaints against Gopstein for incitement to racism," said Rabbi Gilad Kariv, director of the Reform Movement. "If even these remarks don't lead to a quick decision to prosecute him, we can publicly declare that Israeli law allows incitement to racism and violence. What else has to happen for the State of Israel to seriously fight those who have decided to ignite the fire of hatred and fanaticism?"[672]

Jewish Extremists' Leader: Christians Are 'Blood Sucking Vampires' Who Should Be Expelled From Israel

Benzi Gopstein, head of Lehava, calls to ban Christmas in the Holy Land: 'Let us remove the vampires before they once again drink our blood.'

Benzi Gopstein, leader of the extremist anti-assimilationist group Lehava, has called for the prevention of Christmas celebrations in Israel and the expulsion of Christians whom he compared to "vampires."

"Christmas has no place in the Holy Land," Gopstein wrote in an article posted a few days ago on the Haredi website Kooker.

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[672] Chaim Levinson, "Israeli Extremist Group Leader Calls for Torcging of Churches," *Haaretz*, August 6, 2015.

Gopstein wrote in the article that he is disturbed by "the fall of the line of defense of the Jewish people against our deadly enemy for hundreds of years—the Christian Church."

He said the Church had used "the maximum tools at its disposal to destroy the Jewish people," and that today "the Church has been defeated roundly when the Jewish people has one of the strongest armies in the world and they have no chance any longer of destroying our body."

However, Gopstein said, the Church has not given up. "A last hope remains to those vampires and blood suckers – the mission. If Jews cannot be killed, they can still be converted." …

Gopstein said that the "fear that every Jew felt, the disgust that we described above at Christianity – disgust that was the only thing that saved us from the dark days in Europe – has disappeared with the 'good life' of the democratic age…and the missionary is on the prowl for prey."

Gopstein ends his article by writing: "I call on everyone to raise a cry and fight this corrupt phenomenon in the best tradition of Judaism, before we all, including those who observe the commandments among us, become a community of sycophants."

"Christmas has no place in the Holy Land," he wrote, adding "Let us remove the vampires before they once again drink our blood." …

The center's letter to the prosecution and the police joins a number of complaints against Gopstein that are still waiting to be dealt with. He is still being investigated for statements made in 2012 which became public when he was arrested together with other activists in December 2014, after Lehava members torched the bilingual school in Jerusalem. The findings were turned over to the prosecution in May. However, indictments have not been served, and according to a report earlier this week on Channel 10, it seems the case is going to be closed.[673]

In a sermon delivered on March 26, 2016, Israel's Sephardic Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef stated: "According to Jewish law, gentiles should not live in the Land of Israel. If a gentile does not agree to take on the seven Noahide Laws, we should send him to Saudi Arabia. When the true and complete redemption arrives, that is what we will do." According to *The Times of Israel* ("Chief rabbi: Non-Jews shouldn't be allowed to live in Israel," March 28, 2016),

The only reason non-Jews were still allowed to live in the Jewish state was the fact that the Messiah had yet to arrive, he said. "If our hand were firm, if we had the power to rule, that's what we should do. But the thing is, our hand is not firm, and we are waiting for the Messiah," he added.

Yosef added that gentiles who do agree to take on the Noahide Laws — a basic moral code that includes prohibitions on denying the existence of God, blasphemy, murder, illicit sexual relations, theft, and eating from a live animal, as well as a requirement to instate a legal system — will be allowed to remain in the land and fulfill roles reserved for gentiles in the service of Jews.

Controversies that have erupted in the United States rarely get any mainstream media attention. Rabbi Saadya Grama, a graduate of the Beth Medrash Govoha yeshiva in Lakewood, New Jersey, published a book, arguing that gentiles are "completely evil" and Jews constitute a separate, genetically superior species. The book included endorsements from several of the top rabbis of the yeshiva, to which the U.S.

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673 Sharon Pulver, "Israel Extremists' Leader: Christians Are 'Blood-Sucking Vampires' Who Should Be Expelled from Israel," *Haaretz*, December 22, 2015.

Congress allocated $500,000. Surprisingly, even after the book was exposed, Agudath Israel of America, a leading ultra-Orthodox organization, refused to condemn the book and others came to its defence.[674] Some of the statements contained in this book (under the Hebrew title of *Romemut Yisrael Ufarashat Hagalut*) and its endorsements included the following:

> Gamma has written "on the subjects of the Exile, the Election of Israel and her exaltation above and superiority to all of the other nations, all in accordance with the viewpoint of the Torah, based on the solid instruction he has received from his teachers."
>
> "The difference between the people of Israel and the nations of the world is an essential one. The Jew by his source and in his very essence is entirely good. The *goy*, by his source and in his very essence is completely evil. This is not simply a matter of religious distinction, but rather of two completely different species."

It is an indisputable fact that Jewish persecution of Christians predated any such activities perpetrated by Christians against the Jews. According to Rodney Stark,

> An immense amount has been written about the Roman persecutions [of Christians], but it is difficult to find more than a few lines here and there about the Jewish persecutions of the early church, whether in Palestine or in the Diaspora. Of the few studies written on this matter, some dismiss the claims that Jews persecuted Christians as fantasies and falsehoods. … Others indict the *claims* about Jewish persecutions of the early Christians as further proof of Christian anti-Semitism. Still others quibble that these conflicts were "intra-Jewish" and therefore cannot be identified as Jewish mistreatment of Christians. But most writers simply ignore the entire matter. That may be *politique*, but it is irresponsible.

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[674] Steven I. Weiss, "Congress to Aid Lakewood Yeshiva," *Forward,* December 19, 2003; Allan Nadler, "Charedi Rabbis Rush to Disavow Anti-Gentile Book," *Forward,* December 19, 2003; Steven I. Weiss, "Ultra-Orthodox Officials Go To Bat for Anti-Gentile Book," *Forward,* January 16, 2004. Since Orthodox Jews dominate Lakewood's school board, although most schoolchildren attend private religious school, the township provides free, gender-segregated busing, which helps account for about half of a $12 million budget deficit. Having taken over Lakewood and essentially turned it into a segregated community, Orthodox Jews are now aggressively pushing into neighbouring Toms River, using blockbusting tactics to get non-Jewish homeowners to sell. See Elise Young, "Orthodox Jews Set Sights on N.J. Town and Angry Residents Resist," Bloomberg, March 14, 2016.

> These very early persecutions not only happened; they probably were a far more dangerous threat to the survival of the faith than were those by the Romans, given how very few Christians there were when these events occurred.[675]

Israel Shahak, an Israeli human rights activist, explored the origins of Jewish-Christian animosity in a broader context in his seminal study, *Jewish History, Jewish Religion: The Weight of Three Thousand Years,* where he wrote:

> Judaism is imbued with a very deep hatred towards Christianity [manifested most prominently in the Talmud and Talmudic literature], combined with ignorance about it. This attitude was clearly aggravated by the Christian persecutions of the Jews, but is largely independent of them. In fact, it dates from the time when Christianity was still weak and persecuted (not least by the Jews), and it was shared by Jews who had never been persecuted by Christians or who were even helped by them."[676]

Thus Jewish attitudes towards Christians predated the arrival of the first Jews in Poland (as mentioned, one of their earliest activities was trading in Christian slaves) and predated the attitudes *vis-à-vis* the Jews which Poles acquired by virtue of their Christian indoctrination. In the aforementioned book, Shahak described various traditional manifestations of Jewish attitudes toward non-Jews:

> Let us begin with the text of some common prayers. In one of the first sections of the daily morning prayer, every devout Jew blesses God for not making him a Gentile. … In the most important section of the weekday prayer—the 'eighteen blessings'—there is a special curse, originally directed against Christians, Jewish converts to Christianity and other Jewish heretics: 'And may the apostates have no hope, and all the Christians perish instantly'. This formula dates from the end of the 1st century, when Christianity was still a small persecuted sect. …
>
> Apart from the fixed daily prayers, a devout Jew must utter special short blessings on various occasions … Some of these occasional prayers serve to inculcate hatred and scorn for all Gentiles. … [such as] the rule according to which a pious Jew must utter curse when passing near a Gentile cemetery … while seeing a

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[675] Rodney Stark, *The Triumph of Christianity: How the Jesus Movement Became the World's Largest Religion* (New York: HarperOne/HarperCollins, 2011), 62–63 and ff., 78. See also Robert Wilde, *The Treatment of the Jews in the Greek Christian Writers of the First Three Centuries* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1949). The Jews called the Christians *minim*, and found them worse than the pagans, as the latter never had the truth to begin with, while the former did have it, but had abandoned it. Ibid., 144–45. In fact, Jews used terms such as *m'shumadim*, *nosrim,* and *minim,* as part of the Jewish curses offered in synagogues during prayer. Ibid., 119. On first-century persecution of Christians by Jews see Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism,* Revised and updated edition (New York and Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2004), where the author writes at pp. 30–31:

> Hellenic Jewish converts to the Church were driven from Jerusalem. Stephen was killed, as were the two Jameses, James the Less by the action of the Sadducean high priest. Peter was forced out of Palestine by the persecution of Herod Agrippa I, and Paul endured flagellations, imprisonments, complaints by Jews to Roman authorities, and threats of death at Jewish hands. Barnabas' death (c. 60 C.E.) at the hands of Jews in Cyprus is unanimously reported by the early hagiographers.
>
> Nero's persecution of the Church in the mid-first century was probably instigated by Jewish delations. … The likely informers were Poppaea, Nero's wife, a Jewish demi-proselyte, and her entourage.

Some second and third century examples are noted by Flannery at p. 36.

[676] Shahak, *Jewish History, Jewish Religion,* 97.

> large Gentile population he must utter a curse. Nor are buildings exempt: the Talmud lays down that a Jew who passes near an inhabited non-Jewish dwelling he must ask God to destroy it … Under the conditions of classical Judaism, however, [this rule] became impracticable and was therefore confined to churches and places of worship of other religions (except Islam). In this connection, the rule was further embroidered by custom: it became customary to spit (usually three times) upon seeing a church or crucifix, as an embellishment to the obligatory formula of regret. Sometimes insulting biblical verses were also added.[677]

Jewish animosity toward Christianity ran deep and was enduring. Moreover, some of its manifestations were undoubtedly palpable to the Poles. The cross was particularly loathed as an evil omen. A Jew from Nowy Sącz recalled how mischievous Jewish children from cheders (religious schools) would beset pious, elderly Jews, show them two crossed fingers, and taunt them by calling out, "a tsailim" (Hebrew for "crucifix"). The enraged, elderly Jews would respond with dire warnings, the traditional spitting, chasing, and even rock throwing.[678] In a similar vein, Roman Polański recalls how, during the German occupation, he and other children chased after and taunted a Hasidic boy (there were few Hasidic families in the Kraków ghetto), pulling his *peyes* (side curls) and calling him names. One of the Jewish rascals even inquired how holy water is made because he wanted to "baptize" the Hasidic boy.[679] A Jew who attended a Jewish high school in Lublin recalled the mocking and jostling a new Hasidic student had to endure from his fellow students. That student eventually discarded his traditional garb and mannerisms in order to fit in.[680] When the author Jerzy Kosiński (Lewinkopf) pretended to be a Catholic Pole during the German occupation of Sandomierz, his Jewish playmates were baffled:

> Hearing this astonishing falsehood, the other children naturally mocked him, calling him "Josek." … Taunted as "Josek," he struck back at the smaller and weaker children of the Lewinkopfs' fellow Jewish tenants. He whacked one younger boy and spat on little Rebeka Blusztajn, calling her "a dirty Jew."[681]

Contempt for the way that Orthodox Jews dressed could also be felt by some (many?) Jews. A Jewish ghetto policeman from Lwów comments, "The long robes of the Orthodox, ridiculed and held in contempt even by some Jews, seemed to provide the most appropriate and beautiful frame for carrying the Jews' souls."[682]

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[677] Shahak, *Jewish Religion, Jewish History*, 92–93.

[678] Albin (Tobiasz) Kac, *Nowy Sącz: Miasto mojej młodości* (Kraków: Khoker-Dapas, 1997), 59–60.

[679] Grażyna Lubińska, a conversation with Roman Polański, "Getto: Łatwo wyjść, ale jak przeżyć?" *Gazeta Wyborcza,* March 15–16, 2003.

[680] Marek Urban, *Polska… Polska…* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny IN-B, 1998), 52.

[681] James Park Sloan, *Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography* (New York: Dutton/Penguin, 1996), 20. The author goes on to describe how Jerzy Kosiński and his Jewish playmate, Stefan Salamonowicz, put the child of a Polish Catholic family into a carriage and pushed her down one of the steep Sandomierz hills. The child, a mere toddler, could easily have been seriously injured, even killed. Ibid., 24. On another occasion, when Kosiński and his Jewish friend were playing "horses and coachmen" with two Polish Catholic boys, taking turns in the roles of beast and master with whip, the Jewish friend's grandfather insisted that the Jewish boys not play the part of beasts. Ibid., 23.

[682] Ben Z. Redner, *A Jewish Policeman in Lwów: An Early Account, 1941–1943* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2015), 113.

There were, of course, Jews who tried to shake off this legacy. One witness recalls his father telling him and his siblings "to respect Gentiles, especially good Christians. [He] did not want us to refer to them in the derisive word 'goy', but that it should rather be 'Krist' for a man and 'Kristen' for a woman."[683] As the following account illustrates, good relations depended on an attitude of openness of *both* sides.

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683 (Rabbi) Abraham D. Feffer, *My Shtetl Drobin: A Saga of a Survivor* (Toronto: n.p., 1990), 13. Jewish accounts mention rabbis who were well respected by Jews and Christians alike: "As it turned out, the father had been the rebbe in the Galician shtetl where the *Kapo* [who was a Polish prisoner in Auschwitz] had lived. He had been greatly respected by the entire population, even by the Christians. He had been called 'the Holy Father,' and many Poles had gone to him when they needed advice. … The *Kapo* had recognized him and his son in Block 16, the death block … and brought them directly over to his *Kommando.* … The *Kapo* supplied the rebbe and his son with food so that they would not have to eat the blood sausage and the nonkosher soup from the pot." See Konrad Charmatz, *Nightmares: Memoirs of the Years of Horror under Nazi Rule in Europe, 1939–1945* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 101–102. One can also find many favourable references to the Catholic clergy in Jewish memoirs and accounts. The Zionist daily *Nasz Przegląd* published a number of such accounts in the interwar period, mentioning priests who came to the assistance of poor and unemployed Jews (e.g., Rev. Rzeźnicki, Rev. Krygier), or who spoke out against anti-Jewish excesses. See Anna Landau-Czajka, "Polacy w oczach 'Naszego Przeglądu'," *Kwartalnik Historii Zydów*, no. 4 (2011): 491–506, here at p. 498. Landau-Czajka also notes, in that article, that interwar memoirs of Jewish students contain many favourable references to priest catechists. Rev. Jan Skarbek, the pastor of the Catholic parish in Oświęcim, was friendly towards the local Jewish community and became friends with Rabbi Eliyahu Bombach, the Chief Rabbi of Oświęcim. In 1934, as a member if the city council, Rev. Skarbek received the title of Honorary Citizen of Oświęcim by a unanimous vote of both Christian and Jewish members of the council. See *Oshpitzin: The Town Known as Auschwitz*, Internet: <http://oshpitzin.pl/priest-jan-skarbek-square/>, and Artur Szyndler, "A Rabbi Comes to a Priest," *Oś—Oświęcim, People, History, Culture,* no. 35 (November 2011), 6–7; Teresa Herzig, later Lena Allen-Shore, recalled three Polish priests who taught or visited her high school for girls in the town of Jasło: Rev. Józef Gayda, Rev. Eweryst Dębicki, and Rev. Jan Pasek. All of them, as well as the lay teachers, treated her with the utmost courtesy and respect. She describes the atmosphere in the school as "friendly." See Lena Allen-Shore, *Building Bridges: Pope John Paul II and the Horizon of Life* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2004), 114–15. In the small town of Jeżów near Brzeziny, at the time of the fire in 1931, the priest and a good number of Poles hastened to save Jewish children and property from the flames. See "Jeżów," in *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin,* vol. 1, 133, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol1_00133.html>. See also the following testimonies: J. Ben-Meir (Treshansky), *Sefer yizkor Goniadz* (Tel Aviv: The Committee of Goniondz Association in the USA and in Israel, 1960), 475–76, translated as *Our Hometown Goniondz,* Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/goniadz/goniadz.html> (a priest in Goniądz); Shimon Kanc, ed., *Svinzian Region: Memorial Book of 23 Jewish Communities*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/svencionys/svencionys.html>, translation of *Sefer zikaron le-esrim ve-shalosh kehilot she-nehrevu be-ezor Svintsian* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Sventzian in Israel and the U.S., 1965), column 1159 (Rev. Piotr Pruński of Połusze); I.M. Lask, ed., *The Kalish Book* (Tel Aviv: Societies of Former Residents of Kalish and the Vicinity in Israel and U.S.A., 1968), 88–89 (on two occasions the priest in Błaszki calmed agitated crowds of Poles); David Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer Drohiczyn* (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1969), 5ff. (English section) (a priest in Drohiczyn); Helen Silving, "Six Million Martyrs," in Damian S. Wandycz, ed., *Studies in Polish Civilization: Selected Papers Presented at the First Congress at the Polish Institute of Arts & Sciences in America, November 25, 26, 27, 1966 in New York* (New York: Institute on East Central Europe, Columbia University; and The Polish Institute of Arts & Sciences in America, 1970), 391 (Rev. Wontorek, a priest in a *gymnasium* in a small town); Shlomo Bachrach, ed., *Sefer zikaron kehilat Proshnits* (Tel Aviv: Proshnitz Landsmanshaft in Israel, 1974), translated as *Memorial Book to the Community of Przasnysz*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/przasnysz/przasnysz.html> (Yitzhak Perzhentsavsky, the last rabbi of Przasnysz, was a good friend of Rev. Józef Piekut, the local pastor, and they were known to take long walks together); Haskell Nordon, *The Education of a Polish Jew: A Physician's War Memoirs* (New York: D. Grossman Press, 1982), 90–91 (a priest who taught religion in a provincial high school in central Poland; although 90 percent of the students were Polish Catholics, the author states at pp. 65 and 76: "I sensed no enmity from most of my classmates, and I don't remember any slurs or anti-Semitic insults directed at me by them." When a Jewish student was expelled it was for theft of another Jewish student's books, and he was reported by the author. "The only other mildly political rumbling that I recall disturbing the relatively apolitical tranquility of our gymnasium was thanks to a Ukrainian boy named Bohun, the son of a government official transferred to our town from a far-off, heavily Ukrainian district of Galicia. Young Bohun was an ardent and outspoken Ukrainian nationalist."); Eugeniusz Fąfara, *Gehenna ludności żydowskiej* (Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1983), 335 (Rev. Stanisław Mateuszczyk of Nowa Słupia); Bruno Shatyn, *A Private War: Surviving in Poland on False Papers, 1941–1945* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1985), xx–xxi, 62–64 (Rev. Szypuła, a religious instructor at a high school in Jarosław); Samuil Manski, *With God's Help* (Madison, Wisconsin: Charles F. Manski, 1990), 26 (the rector of the Piarist high school in Lida); Oral history interview with Abraham Kolski, March 29, 1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. (the pastor in Izbica Kujawska—the author notes that there "wasn't so much anti-Semitism" in his town); Rachela and Sam Walshaw, *From out of the Firestorm:*

> Mila grew up in a happy home in Zaleszczyki, Poland, a beautiful and prosperous summer resort town near the Romanian border. … The family was well-to-do and traditionally Jewish. Her father, Zigmund, was an industrialist who owned several flourmills and some property, while Mila's mother, Fanny, chaired a Jewish organization that helped the poor and the sick. The family spoke Polish at home … they had a kosher cook who prepared their Shabbat dinners and a large seder meal at Passover. Mila remembers that Zigmund went to synagogue every week.
>
> Zaleszczyki's population was evenly divided between Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians. Mila, who considered herself assimilated, attended the Polish *gymnasium* where she had both Jewish and non-Jewish friends. Her childhood and adolescence were marked by good relations with non-Jews … Not only did the family have a number of non-Jewish friends and neighbors, they also participated in Christian Polish culture, attending Christmas dinners at the homes of Christian family friends who, in turn, were invited to the family's *Purim* celebrations. One year, on All Saints' Day, Mila's family had gone to the Christian cemetery to see the graves lit up by candles, honoring the dead.[684]

> At home, our Jewish cook and Catholic maid were both loved and respected by us, the children. Our Polish friends invited us to their Christmas dinners. Mrs. Nedilenko used to send us a plate of Christmas goodies, and my mother reciprocated with an equally elaborate plate of sweets on Purim. In our home, I don't ever recall hearing a derogatory remark about other people's religion or customs. Overall, we were quite at ease in the homes of our Polish friends and did not feel out of place among them. It would be difficult to overestimate how this ease in our relationships and familiarity with Polish life helped to ensure our survival later on, when we had to pass for Catholics and live under assumed Polish names.[685]

> When the Russians liberated Lvov [Lwów] in July 1944, Mila. Lola, and Jasia decided to return to their home in Zaleszczyki. … Mila stayed in Zaleszczyki for a few months, and recalls that she was received warmly and treated well by her neighbors. Some of them gave her food and furniture.[686]

As could be expected, there was also an infusion of racist stereotyping on the part of the Jews which accentuated, beyond all proportion, certain negative qualities found in Polish society. Historian Celia Heller states: "It was considered repulsive and un-Jewish for a man to get drunk. Of anyone who did, it was said, 'He drinks like a gentile.'"[687] British-Jewish intellectual Rafael F. Scharf recalls a popular Jewish folk song from his youth, spent in Kraków, that "ran something like this: *Shiker is a goy—Shiker is er—trinken miz er—weil er is a goy* (A goy is a drunkard—but drink he must—because he is a goy.)"[688] Many Poles would have undoubtedly been aware of the way they were viewed by Jews, as Yiddish was

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[684] Lindeman, *Shards of Memory,* 8.

[685] Sandberg-Mesner, *Light from the Shadows,* 30.

[686] Lindeman, *Shards of Memory,* 11.

[687] Heller, *On the Edge of Destruction,* 150.

[688] Scharf, *Poland, What Have I To Do with Thee…,* 197. For further confirmation see Herman Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939–1944* (New Haven and London: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and Yale University Press, 2002), 119 n.35.

comprehendable to people who knew German and some Poles even learned Yiddish. Scharf also underscores the sense of self-imposed separateness and isolation that, on the whole, historically divided the Polish and Jewish communities:

> … many Jews, if they spoke Polish at all, spoke with a funny accent. …
>
> Even in a small place like Cracow, where Kazimierz, the Jewish quarter, existed cheek by jowl with the non-Jewish, the lives of those neighbouring communities were, in many important senses, separate. It was possible for a Jew to grow up in a family circle, study, or prepare for a trade yet not cross the border dividing the Polish and Jewish communities. A great many Jews, in the district of Nalewki in Warsaw, in the hundreds of "shtetlach", besides a sporadic contact with a supplier or a client lived thus—not together, but next to each other, on parallel lines, in a natural, contented isolation. During my whole life in Cracow, till my departure before the war, I was never inside a truly Polish home, whose smell, caught in passing, was somehow different, strange. I did not miss it, considered this division natural. I also do not remember whether in our home, always full of people, guests, visitors, passers-by, friends of my parents, my brother's and mine, there ever was a non-Jew, except for one neighbour and the caretaker who would come to collect his tips, and, of course, the maid who inhabited the kitchen.[689]

Traditional values were also passed down to younger generations through Jewish schools. In the cheder in Drohiczyn, as Rabbi Shalom-Shahne Poley (Polakewich) recalled, "At the beginning of the school year, Reb Nachshon would divide his students into two groups: the bright ones and the slow ones. Sitting himself at the head of the table, he placed on one side, the bright pupils, and on the opposite side, the 'thick heads.' … Usually this test [on Thursday] took the form of oral recitation. First the more intelligent would be called on to recite their lessons. After this group finished, our master would turn to the other half of the class and sighingly would remark: 'Now we shall have to turn to the *goyish* section.' (The term *goyish,* meaning Gentiles', also means the ignorant and slow learners.)"[690] Isaac Bashevis Singer also went on record to criticize the cheders, Jewish religious schools, for instilling in young Jews the notion that Poles were inferior and deserving of contempt.[691] A scholarly Jew who made his living as a teacher of the Talmud in Szczebrzeszyn would bang on the table and shout at the top of his lungs: "Rambam said as follows, and R'Pappa said thus, and what do you have to say, you *goy gammur*?" In Hebrew, the phrase meant "complete gentile," the implication being that the target of the question was totally bereft of any knowledge having to do with the question.[692]

In short, there are many accounts attesting to the fact that Jews displayed a broad range of attitudes and emotions concerning the Poles, as undoubtedly Poles did toward the Jews, and, because of their traditional upbringing, often these were very negative. As historian Richard Lukas correctly points out, "Life in Jewish communities had a self-perpetuating quality that made Jews dependent on traditional norms.

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[689] Ibid., 195, 205.

[690] D. Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer Drohiczyn* (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1969), 15ff.

[691] Antoni Arkuszewski, "Co nie jest antysemityzmem," *Słowo–Dziennik Katolicki,* August 9, 1995.

[692] Yehuda Kellner, "Pernalities with Heart," in Dov Shuval, ed., *The Szczebrzeszyn Memorial Book* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacon Solomon Berger, 2005), 202–3.

Inevitably Polish Christians were outsiders, whom Jews often regarded suspiciously, if not contemptuously."[693] To this he adds: "The more that is said about Polish anti-Semitism, the less understanding we have about the subject. Conversely, we hear or read virtually nothing about Jewish antipathies toward the Poles, a topic that needs to be explored to bring much-needed balance into the discussion of Polish-Jewish relations."[694]

Lukas expanded on these remarks in an important polemic with Jewish historian David Engel about the wartime era which has not lost any of its currency:

> It is quite clear that no amount of evidence suggesting that Jewish nationalism was a major factor in explaining Polish-Jewish tensions…will be accepted by Engel [here we can readily substitute a litany of names of Jewish historians—*M.P.*] because of his obvious preference for a monocausal explanation—namely, Polish anti-Semitism. Throughout his polemic, Engel clearly reveals his acceptance of the conventional stereotype about the Poles, which obviously does not allow for other factors in understanding Polish-Jewish wartime relations. It is very troubling that Engel and others like him are unwilling to analyze Jewish conduct before and during the war in the same critical terms in which they discuss the conduct of Poles. It is even more disturbing to me how such a one-sided interpretation could attain the degree of academic respectability it obviously has. If historians in any other field of study offered a monocausal explanation of a complex historical situation, they would be laughed out of the profession. David Engel's sad and desperate display confirms the criticism about the state of historiography on Polish-Jewish relations that I voiced in my book [*The Forgotten Holocaust*]:
>
> Unfortunately, it is disquieting to read most writings on the Holocaust, because the subject of Polish-Jewish relations is treated so polemically. Preoccupied with the overwhelming tragedy of the Jews, Jewish historians, who are the major writers on the subject, rarely if ever attempt to qualify their condemnations of the Poles and their defense of the Jews. The result is tendentious writing that is often more reminiscent of propaganda than history.[695]

An entirely different, and one-sided, portrayal of Polish-Jewish relations is relentlessly disseminated by Jews in the West, especially in relation to the Second World War. The image of Poles in Jewish writings in North America and Western Europe is almost uniformly negative. According to historian Max Dimont, "Poland's action was the most shameful. Without a protest she handed over 2,800,000 of her 3,300,000 Jews to the Germans."[696] (The Poles, of course did not "hand over" the Jews to the Germans. The Germans put almost all of Poland's Jews in ghettos, which were run on a day-to-day basis by Jewish councils and policed by the Jews themselves.) Historian Nora Levin writes: "The Nazis were well aware that Jews in Poland lived precariously in the midst of widespread popular anti-Semitism. Their laboratory

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[693] Richard C. Lukas, "A Response," *Slavic Review*, Fall/Winter 1987: 584.

[694] Richard C. Lukas, *Out of the Inferno: Poles Remember the Holocaust* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1989), 9. See also his other books: *The Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles Under German Occupation, 1939–1944,* Second revised edition (New York: Hippocrene, 1997), 124–25, 144; and *Did the Children Cry?: Hitler's War Against Jewish and Polish Children, 1939–1945* (New York: Hippocrene, 1994), 152–53.

[695] Richard C. Lukas, "A Response," *Slavic Review*, Fall/Winter 1987: 589–90.

[696] Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History* (New York: New American Library, 1962), 387.

of Jewish destruction could not have succeeded anywhere in Europe as successfully as in Poland. Here began the experiments in ghettoization; here were established hundreds of forced labor camps; and here were established all of the extermination camps."[697]

Historian Helen Fine states: "Among populations with a strong anti-Semitic tradition or movement, there was little need for distancing. Extermination camps' odors wafted into the Polish countryside, yet guards could be recruited and killers enlisted. … Jewish victimization can be adequately accounted for only be [sic] relating it to the success of prewar anti-Semitism."[698] (Poles, it should be noted, were the first victims of Auschwitz and many other Nazi camps and did *not* serve as guards in these camps; the Holocaust was implemented as thoroughly in Holland and Norway as it was in Poland.) Historian Howard L. Adelson states: "It was not by chance that the inhuman Nazi murderers chose Poland as the charnel house for European Jewry. With forethought they recognized that within Poland the neighbors of the Jews would assist in the slaughter. … The local peasantry displayed an atavistic savagery that is unequalled in the annals of human history. Jews died while their neighbors exulted in their suffering."[699] Historian John Weiss postulates that "it seems likely that without the alliance with the West and the murderous policies of the Nazis toward the Poles, a majority [sic] of Poles would have been willing participants and not simply indifferent bystanders during the Holocaust."[700] Rachel Feldhay Brenner, Professor of Jewish Studies at the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, advocates that the Poles' mere witnessing the horror of the Holocaust implied complicity with the perpetrator and speaks of the Poles' "communal acquiescence" with German genocidal policy toward the Jews, as if the Poles were in any position to protest the mass murder of Jews or of the millions of Christian Poles, Roma and Soviet prisoners of war carried out on their conquered soil.[701]

Popular writing echoes these same sentiments. Elie Wiesel has long been on record for holding Poles co-responsible for the Nazi death camps. "As for the Poles," Wiesel wrote in 1968, "it was not by accident that the worst concentration camps were set up in Poland, worse than anywhere else."[702] Elsewhere, this Nobel Peace Prize laureate wrote:

> You may at times, be seized by rage. We had so many enemies! … the Poles betrayed them. True, here and there a "good" citizen was found whose cooperation could be bought [sic] with Jewish money. But how many good-hearted, upright Poles were to be found at the time in Poland? Very few. And where were the

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[697] Nora Levin, *The Holocaust: The Destruction of European Jewry, 1933–1945* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968; reissued by Schoken Books, New York, 1973), 165.

[698] Helen Fine, *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust* (New York: Macmillan, 1979), 90–91.

[699] Howard L. Adelson, professor of history at the City University of New York, Introduction to Samuel Gruber, as told to Gertrude Hirschler, *I Chose Life* (New York: Shengold, 1978), 6.

[700] John Weiss, *The Politics of Hate: Anti-Semitism, History, and the Holocaust in Modern Europe* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003), 192.

[701] Rachel Feldhay Brenner, *Polish Literature and the Holocaust: Eyewitness Testimonies, 1942–1947* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2019).

[702] Elie Wiesel, *Legends of Our Time* (New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 163.

> idealists, the universalists, the humanists when the ghetto needed them? Like all of Warsaw they were silent as the ghetto burned. Worse still: Warsaw's persecution and murder of Jews increased once there was no longer a ghetto … Who most earns our outraged anger—the murderers, their accomplices, the *szmalcownicy* —the blackmailers or the common citizenry pleased in their hearts that Poland will be rid of her Jews."[703]

Wiesel even extended his contempt for Poles onto Pope John Paul by hurling totally baseless charges against him.

> Jewish feeling toward Pope John Paul II may have been summed up by Elie Wiesel… Writing in the New York Post, Wiesel accused the Pope of wanting to "dejudaize the Holocaust" with his "strange and offensive behavior whenever he is confronted by the crudest event in recorded history." … "It is now clear: this Pope has a problem with Jews, just as Jews have a problem with him. His understanding for living Jews is as limited as his compassion for dead Jews," wrote Wiesel, an Auschwitz survivor. … Wiesel accused John Paul of wanting people to believe Christians suffered as much as Jews in Hitler's concentration camps.[704]

Other Jewish community leaders have frequently joined in this anti-Polish rhetoric. When, in 2006, the Polish government requested UNESCO to change the official name of the "Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp" to "Former German Nazi Concentration Camp Auschwitz-Birkenau," Maram Stern, Deputy Secretary General of the World Jewish Congress, protested, claiming that "they wanted to redefine history by changing the name." He added by way of "explanation":

> Although the camp had been built and run by Nazi Germany, everybody in the area had known about its existence and workers were recruited from the Polish population in the neighboring village. The government in Warsaw wants the history of Auschwitz, which is listed as a UNESCO world heritage site, to be separated from Polish history and make it clear that Poland had no involvement in the death camp.[705]

Equally offensive, if not worse, is the statement by Joël Mergui, the president of the Israelite Central Consistory of France, made during a television broadcast ("Le Grand Décryptage") on January 6, 2016:

> I would now like to remind you, as representative of the Consistory and the Jewish community, that the Jews went through history experiencing all sorts of hatred, all sorts of massacres. And, in the name of Judaism, the Jewish community never rose up to destroy Spain, which had expelled the, or to destroy Poland, which has gassed them.

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[703] Introduction to Vladka Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall: Memoirs from the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979), 3–4.

[704] "Wiesel assails Pontiff for 'offensive behavior,'" JTA, *The Canadian Jewish News,* Toronto, July 7, 1988. For a more general appraisal about Wiesel, see Rick Salutin, "Elie Wiesel Was the Beacon Who Lost His Way," *Toronto Star*, July 15, 2016.

[705] Internet: <http://en.auschwitz.org/m/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=104&Itemid=8>. In May 2013 Maram Stern was promoted to Associate Executive Vice-President of the World Jewish Congress.

> Maintenant, je voudrais rappeler, je représente le Consistoire et la communauté Juive, rappeler que les Juifs ont traversé l'histoire en subissant toute sorte de haine, toutes sortes de massacres, et qu'au nom du Judaïsme, jamais la communauté Juive ne s'est levée ni pour détruire l'Espagne qui les avait expulsés ni pour détruire la Pologne qui les avait gazés.

Madeleine Levy, who is active in Holocaust education in Canada, proclaimed at a Police Services Board meeting in Hamilton in December 2016, that it was the Poles who actually killed Jews at Auschwitz.[706] While not aimed at destroying Poland in a physical sense, these words, which are on par with ugly forms of Holocaust denial, are clearly calculated to castigate Poland and the Poles in a moral sense. It is important to note that they were not spoken not by some fringe element of Jewish society, but by its educated representative mainstream. These are not isolated cases: they occur with alarming frequency in the public domain and bear the hallmark of a broad-based political agenda.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (who was rescued by his Polish Catholic nanny), is one of the worst offenders. Typical of his many anti-Polish outbursts is the following, where he compared the incomparable: conditions in occupied Poland to Denmark.

> While other European governments under German domination … Poland … betrayed or abandoned their Jewish populations … Where I was born, in Poland, Jews were not so lucky. Fifty years ago, the Polish government failed to halt the methodical liquidation of its Jewish population.[707]

Of course, it is trite knowledge that no vestiges of a Polish government or autonomy existed under German rule and that it was Poland's government-in-exile that brought the news of the Holocaust to a disbelieving world. Unfortunately, the Anti-Defamation League has an unsavoury and shameful history of maligning Poland. Its director, Jonathan Greenblatt, told CNN that the United Nations established International Holocaust Remembrance Day not only because of Holocaust denial but also because so

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[706] Samantha Craggs, CBC News, Hamilton, "Important Issues Are Hidden from the Public, Hamilton Police Board Member Says," February 2, 2017, Internet: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/juchniewicz-letter-to-murray-1.3964065>. Madeleine Levy serves on the board of directors of Facing History and Ourselves Canada. Previously, she was on the Advisory Committee of B'nai Brith's National Task Force on Holocaust Research, Remembrance and Education, which received a grant of almost one million dollars from the Canadian government in 2009.

[707] Abraham Foxman, "Reflections," in Carol Rittner and Leo Goldberger, eds., *Rescue of the Danish Jewry: A Primer* (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1993).

many countries, among them allegedly Poland, specifically refuse to acknowledge Hitler's attempt to exterminate Jews.[708]

One would think that every historian would know this and the fact that the Germans did not rely on the Poles to carry out the "Final Solution" in Poland and did not man their camps with Poles. But apparently Jewish-American historians like Max Dimont (cited above) and others do not. Norman Cantor, for example, writes:

> The complicity of the … Poles … was very great, and indisputable. Without their help the Germans would logistically not have been able to annihilate as many as six million Jews … The same indictment pertains to the Catholic Church in Poland, which was thoroughly inhibited by its centuries-long hostility to the Jews from doing anything significant to oppose the Nazi death camps. Polish Catholics worked in the concentration camps and for the death squads by the thousands. The Church hierarchy never advised them not to accept such employment. Poland was turned into the most savage killing field in modern history while the Church hierarchy looked on quietly.[709]

The teachings of these historians and "moral" authorities are not lost on the younger generations of Jews, both in Europe and North America. Indeed, this cult of hatred permeates much of Jewish-American society. Jerome Ostrov, a member of the American Jewish Committee, expressed views about Poland and the Poles typical of many North American Jews:

> I had spent a lifetime developing negative views of Poland. My prejudices were very clear, well defined and unequivocal—probably, identical to most of you who are reading this article. As I saw it, Poland was the monster nation of World War II, perhaps, even more so than Germany. Why? Poland was where the extermination camps were located. Poland once proudly boasted the largest population in Jewish Europe and its loss still remains unbearable in the Jewish psyche. Finally, Poland had a history of pogroms and of segregating its Jews, and, as I saw it, the Nazi atrocities perpetrated on Polish soil would have been impossible without Polish complicity.
>
> Strangely, my contempt for Poland even exceeded the harsh place in my mind reserved for Germany.[710]

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[708] Jake Tapper, CNN, "White House: No Mention of Jews on Holocaust Remembrance Day Because Others Were Killed Too," January 30, 2017. The article was "corrected" on February 2, 2017 to omit the reference to Poland as an "offending" country, but it is apparent that this was done only under pressure (Internet: <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/white-house-holocaust-memorial-day/>):

> Editor's note February 2, 2017: This article has been updated to correct an erroneous statement by ADL director Jonathan Greenblatt about Poland's recognition of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. The ADL has retracted that comment and apologized. "I made a mistake by including Poland as one of the countries which does not always recognize the Jewish people as the intended target of the Nazi genocide," Greenblatt said in a letter to the Polish ambassador. "I regret this mistake, and want to assure you that it was not intended as an affront to your government or the people of Poland."

[709] Norman F. Cantor, *The Sacred Chain: The History of the Jews* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 345, 347.

[710] Jerome Ostrov's article, "After a Trip to Poland," is posted at <http://polish-jewish-heritage.org/eng/06-02_Jerome_Ostrov-After_a_trip_to_Poland.html>.

Film director Steven Spielberg, who had a typical Jewish upbringing, stated in an interview published in the December 12, 1993 issue of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*:

> As a Jew growing up, I learned this in Hebrew School, in Saturday School. It was always in my mind that the Jews were both the chosen people and the persecuted people. The Poles had been persecuting the Jews long before Hitler came into power, centuries before. The Jews had to build ghettos around themselves to protect themselves from the Polish population, so that they would have their own Jewishness, their own culture.[711]

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[711] Doubtless Spielberg's impressions were coloured by his own experiences as a Jewish child growing up in affluent upper middle-class America where open anti-Semitism was the norm at that time (see Bernard Weinraub, "For Spielberg, an Anniversary Full of Urgency," *The New York Times,* March 9, 2004):

> "Anti-Semitism affected me deeply; it made me feel I wasn't safe outside my own door." … Discussing the taunts and ugly incidents of his childhood, Mr. Spielberg, 57, said: "It happened in affluent neighborhoods in Arizona and California, where I was one of the few Jewish students. I didn't experience it in more lower-middle-class environments in New Jersey and Ohio."
>
> Once, in a silent study hall of 100 students, several of them pitched pennies around his desk to taunt him, Mr. Spielberg said quietly. "I have vivid memories of that," he said. The hallways, too, could be an ordeal: "A lot of kids coughed the word 'Jew' in their hands as they walked by me between classes."

Anti-Semitism was also a feature of "WASP" (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) upper-middle-class Canadian society well into the 1950s. According to Michael Valpy, a prominent journalist who grew up in an affluent neighbourhood in Vancouver (see his article, "Painful Memories of a Childhood Immersed in Anti-Semitism," *The Globe and Mail,* March 26, 2005),

> I began unearthing from my memory the portrait of myself as a teenager and the gang of boys I hung out with. Our jokes about lampshades and melting our Jewish classmates into bars of soap, and screaming "Jew!" (or "Ki-Ki-Ki-Kike") down the hallways of Point Grey and Magee High School. …
>
> Here is what Michael Levy, Harold Groberman and Joel Wener talked about … the golf clubs like Shaughnessy that barred their fathers, the private schools like Crofton House and St. George's that they and their sisters and cousins could not attend, the restrictive covenants prohibiting property sales to Jews, the slurs, the hostility, the sports games.
>
> The high-school games got dirty, says Joel Wener. "But it wasn't just that. You'd start hearing 'Jew-boy,' then the punches would fly. …" …
>
> My gang, behind Harold's back, said terrible things about him we thought hilarious. Because he was a Jew. … Our fathers were professional men; they were business executives. …
>
> On Oct. 29 [1943], the minutes of a Queen's University senate meeting report: "Jewish students in arts … are admitted only on an academic standing of 75 per cent or over. Other students are admitted on a standing of 60 per cent or over." "This regulation," the minutes go on, "is widely known and seems to operate without any friction." …
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> In November, 1948, … Maclean's [magazine] publishes Pierre Berton's devastating investigative exposé of anti-Semitism in Canada, detailing what occurs when people with Jewish names and non-Jewish names [i.e., British-sounding names] apply for the same jobs, try to make reservations at the same vacation resorts, ask to join the same clubs, and even try to sign up for postwar vocational training at the same government-operated schools."

Similar (or even worse) attitudes prevailed in relation to Catholics and people of Southern and Eastern European origin, not to mention native Indians, Blacks, and Asians. Reassuringly, in North America, such prejudice is attributed to "snobbery" rather than the dislike of "the other." Moreover, the notion that Jews were forced into ghettos in Poland and that this happened against their will has been amply discredited. What contemporary commentators neglect to take into account is that in even North America many Jews, especially Orthodox ones, choose to live in close-knit communities of their own (sometimes walled ones, as in California) and tend not to interact with non-Jews. In Toronto, for example, Jews comprise as much as 70 per cent of the residents of certain areas, making them the most "segregated" neighbourhoods in the city. As one rabbi explains, living in such enclaves with limited interaction with the outside world lessens the pressure on children to assimiliate. See Prithi Yelaja and Nicholas Keung, "A little piece of the Punjab," *Toronto Star,* June 25, 2005.

On October 6, 2009, Stephen John Fry, a well-known British actor, author, and television presenter of Jewish origin, said on the British TV Channel, Channel 4: "There's been a history, let's face it, in Poland of a right-wing Catholicism which has been deeply disturbing for those of us who know a little history and remember which side of the border Auschwitz was on and know the stories, and know much of the anti-Semitic, and homophobic and nationalistic elements in countries like Poland." He seemed to think that the death camps were rooted in Polish "right-wing Catholicism," rather than a creation of Nazi Germany built, initially, to terrorize the Polish population in general.

More recently, in a 2012 rant, radio talk show host and columnist Debbie Schlussel voiced an even more extreme version of widely held and entrenched views:

> Barack Obama has done enough legitimately bad things that we don't need to manufacture phony outrage over things he does that really aren't so bad. Such is the case with the feigned shock and fake moralizing over his comments, yesterday, about German Nazi death camps in Poland being a Polish death camp. Here's a tip for Poland and ignoramuses in the lumpenconservatariat who now engage in revisionist history: Poles murdered millions of Jews, they maintained several death camps, and they wiped out … hundreds of thousands of other Jewish families. This wasn't just the Nazis. It was tens of thousands of eager Poles and more. Obama made no gaffe here. Poland's willing executioners took their significant place among Hitler's willing executioners.
>
> There is a reason why Poland was so easily occupied by the Germans. Yeah, I know–they were "just taking orders." Just taking orders when they helped round up Jews and helped man gas chambers. As if Nazis from Germany did this alone! Polish police all too happily worked with the SS to round up Jews. Polish police all too easily took their place in helping run and operate the death camps. Facts are stubborn things. …
>
> Someone needs to remind Mr. Tusk that his people were the ones doing the hurting and the turning over to the Nazis and the mass murder of at least half of the six million Jews killed in the Holocaust, some of them from my family. You are "hurt" by calling Nazi death camps, "Polish"???? Um, where were they? Who helped operate them and round up and turn in the camps' Jewish occupants, soon to be turned into ash and fumes?[712]

Commenting on this state of affairs, Erica Lehrer states:

> Jews today do not cast the same kind of aspersions on France (whose Vichy regime officially collaborated with the Nazis), Lithuania (where local institutions and populations participated zealously in murdering Jews), or even Germany itself, the architect of the destruction.
>
> If Poland became uniquely relevant for Jews as a symbol of evil in the late- and post-Communist eras, it is because the beliefs that many Jews hold about Poland "serve as supporting pillars of a collective consciousness, identity, and purpose."

Lehrer realizes that Jewish anti-Polonism is very resistant to change,

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[712] Debbie Schlussel, "Poles Were Complicit in the Holocaust: Outrage Over Obama 'Gaff' Is Fraudulent, Ignorant," May 30, 2012, posted at <http://www.debbieschlussel.com/tag/jan-karski/>. By this rant Debbie Schlussel effectively discredited herself as an authority on any topic.

> There is a seemingly infinite Jewish capacity for bad news about Poland, for projects both popular and scholarly imply that—important as they may be—slide seamlessly into this predetermined structure of feeling. The configuration of much Jewish memory culture has seemed unable to assimilate any other news.[713]

David Samuels, the literary editor of *Tablet Magazine* and a contributing editor at *Harper's Magazine* and a longtime contributor to *The Atlantic* and *The New Yorker,* aptly summed it up as follows:

> There is a pervasive sense here, in America, and in the Jewish community in particular, that the Poles were murderers, and that the whole of the Jewish experience in Poland can more or less be reduced to Treblinka and Auschwitz and the Miłosz poem about the merry-go-round outside the Warsaw ghetto. We do not have to waste time thinking about Poland, because it was a country inhabited by these morally idiotic people who were complicit in the worst crime in human history.[714]

This image has been created, in no small measure, by many Jewish Holocaust survivors. In the words of *New Republic* editor in chief Leon Wieseltier: "Once American Jews decided to make the Holocaust a part of their civic religion, survivors became the American Jewish equivalent of saints and relics."[715] According to one researcher, whose findings are consistent with those of others, "Those who lived through the conflagration were even more hostile, on the whole, toward Poles [than Germans], often comparing them unfavorably to Germans."[716] As one honest observer noted, "You cannot grow up Jewish in America and not imbibe hostility toward Poles. It is a cliché for a survivor to claim, *The Poles were worse than the Germans,* an assertion full of bitterness."[717] That bizarre (and rather diabolical) prism is matched by the equally prevalent notion that Poles are anti-Semitic by nature, or as a former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir put it, Poles "suck in anti-Semitism with their mother's milk." That sentiment is widespread among diaspora Jews. Adam Michnik reported a conversation with the leader of the Jewish community in Australia who assured him that every Pole had sucked anti-Semitism with their mother's milk.[718] Dr. Jack Felman, a descendant of Jewish survivors in Australia stated candidly:

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[713] Erica T. Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013), 3, 4.

[714] David Samuels, "The Conscience of Poland: A Q&A with Adam Michnik," *Tablet Magazine,* December 18, 2014.

[715] William B. Helmreich, *Against All Odds: Holocaust Survivors and the Successful Lives They Made in America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 192.

[716] Helmreich, *Against All Odds,* 252. The author points out that this sentiment is not, however, unanimous, especially among those who were saved by Poles. He cites Leon Lepold, a survivor, who stated: "Speaking from experience, if not for the Poles, none of us would have survived in southeastern Poland. A lot of Polish people were murdered, hung, shot, and had their homes burned because they were hiding Jewish people." Ibid., 253.

[717] Glenn Kurtz, *Three Minutes in Poland: Discovering a Lost World in a 1938 Family Film* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), 190.

[718] David Samuels, "The Conscience of Poland: A Q&A with Adam Michnik," *Tablet Magazine,* December 18, 2014.

> An intense hatred of Poles and Germans was more than evident in our home. When my wife and I visited Poland in 1975 I can still vividly remember the intense hatred I felt for the 8 days I had to endure in this country. … As a doctor, I have had to counsel a number of these people who were traumatized after going back to Poland. In my own case, my parents shuddered at the prospect of hoing back, even when I told them that my wife and I were going to visit Poland.[719]

Milder versions of that same phenomenon can even be found in journals that are otherwise above reproach in striving for objectivity. A case in point is Shelley Salamensky's *New York Review of Books* blog article "Poland's Jews: Under a New Roof" (December 6, 2014), which goes out of its way to portray Poles as primitive, anti-modern, and xenophobic bigots. The article smears all Poles on the basis of rather flimsy grounds. If Salamensky took the same approach to racist comments made by powerful American Jews that she does to those made by some "backward" Poles, she could build quite a case against the former. Some well-publicized recent examples include the racist insinuations about President Obama made by Hollywood bigwigs Amy Pascal and Scott Rudin, both of whom are identified as Jewish in their Wikipedia entries, and the racist remarks made by Bruce Levenson, controlling owner of the Atlanta Hawks, and Donald Sterling, the former owner of the Los Angeles Clippers. These people are no less representative of the Jewish community (and in some ways, more so) than the small group of middle-aged Poles Salamensky conversed with in a café in Sanok.

The sad reality of Polish-Jewish relations in North America is that all-too-many members of the Jewish community continue to attack Poles, in public forums, at every turn, while alleged Polish "hostility" toward Jews is by and large simply a reaction to those relentless attacks. A recent survey of Jewish history textbooks used to educate young Jews in North America confirms that the stereotype of the crude Polish peasant was a staple of that genre: Jewish textbooks relentlessly portrayed the Poles in a negative light and depicted Polish history in lurid colours. Christian peasants—that much maligned "Other"—were "dehumanized," often described as bestial, employing epithets like "refuse," "pestilence," "wild animals," "ruthless," "bloody," and "cruel savage." After the Second World War the situation was compounded as frequent charges of collaboration and collusion in the Holocaust became commonplace. From the outset Poles were conspicuously omitted from any specific accounts of "righteous Gentiles" who saved Jews during the war, even though they represented the largest group of rescuers.[720] Many, but certainly not all, Holocaust memoirs are replete with anti-Polish stereotypes, dispelling the notion that suffering ennobles or makes people shed their bigotry, even when relating to inmates of the most notorious German concentration camp.

> In some Holocaust memoir Polish … peasants are described with contempt; this contempt jibes with the attitudes in Polak jokes; expressions of contempt like it have been found for centuries in Jewish writing. German Nazis, on the other hand, are described as 'civilized' or 'elegant'. Fania Fénelon's *Playing for Time*

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[719] Jack Felman, "Growing Up As a Child of Holocaust Survivors," Internet: <http://www.dosinc.org.au/stories5.html>.

[720] Jonathan Krasner, "Constructing Collective Memory: The Re-envisioning of Eastern Europe as Seen Through American Jewish Textbooks," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 19 (2007): 229–55.

(1977) is a case in point. Fénelon was a French Jew who was imprisoned in Auschwitz and was allowed to survive because she played music for the Nazis in the camp orchestra. Her contempt for the stereotypical, Bieganski-style Poles she describes is evident throughout her memoir. Poles are 'ineffectual', 'brick faced', 'monstrous', and 'servile'. One is a 'female mountain'; others are 'bitches', 'pests', and 'a real cow'. When Polish remain 'frozen at attention' in the presence of a German Nazi, Fénelon reported that 'it was an agreeable experience to see them locked in that respectful pose'. A Polish woman 'has piercing little black eyes like two glinting gems of anthracite set in a block of lard; she was shapeless and gelatinous'; this woman does not *speak* Polish, rather, 'she shrieked something in Polish'. A Polish woman 'was big and fat and as strong as a man—a monster! One would have been hard put to find any human traits in her at all.' Poles are possessed of a 'particularly disturbing' 'bestiality'; they are 'monsters', 'pigs'. …

In stark contrast to Fénelon's descriptions of her peasant Polish fellow inmates are her descriptions of German Nazis. One is 'very beautiful, tall, slender, and impeccable in her uniform … the SS walked ahead with long, flowing strides; she must have waltzed divinely'. On another occasion, 'there was a holiday bustle; the SS were looking particularly dapper, whips tucked under their arms, boots gleaming'. Another elegant Nazi was none other than the most notorious sadist and war criminal of the twentieth century, Josef Mengele. He was 'handsome. Goodness, he was handsome. … Under the gaze of this man one felt oneself become a woman again. …' Fénelon expressed an urge for revenge against her fellow Polish inmates that she never expressed against German Nazis. 'If I ever get out of here, I'll kill a Polish woman. And I'll see to it that all the rest die; that shall be my aim in life', she recorded herself as vowing.

In another Holocaust memoir, *An Uncommon Friendship: From Opposite Sides of the Holocaust,* Bernat Rosner reported that, as a child, he sang folk ditties that characterized east European peasants as low-class, violent drunks. In another portion of his book Rosner offered his [flattering] description of his encounter with Adolf Eichmann …

> German Nazis also associated themselves, and their anti-Semitism, with elegance and power, and east Europeans and peasants, and any anti-Semitism they might express, with an animal brutality and criminality.[721]

Needless to add, many committed Nazis were more charitable in their description of Poles than Jews of Fénelon's ilk.

Hollywood, where Jewish and pro-Communist influences were strong and often intertwined, also played a detrimental role in casting Poland—unlike other wartime Allies—uniformly in a negative light in

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[721] Danusha V. Goska, "The Necessity of 'Bieganski': A Shamed and Horrified World Seeks a Scapegoat," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 19 (2007): 205–28, here at 219–21. See also Danusha V. Goska, *Bieganski: The Brute Polak Stereotype, Its Role in Polish-Jewish Relations and American Popular Culture* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2010). (Surprisingly, Goska views Jan Gross's problematic book *Neighbors* in a positive light, without realizing that the outpouring of bigoted and ugly demagoguery that it generated, some of which she cites, was not only inspired by the book but also calculated by the author to do exactly that. Gross never complained about his book being misread by its American reviewers, nor did he distance himself from their anti-Polish diatribes.) Fénelon's descriptions of Poles contrast with those of many other Jewish inmates of Auschwitz. Halina Nelken, a Jewish woman from Kraków, writes of the solidarity of Polish and Jewish prisoners in the Płaszów concentration camps, the assistance shown by Polish inmates of Auschwitz, the camp's first inmates, to later transports of prisoners, including Jews. These anonymous benefactors, who may well not have been the "norm," were known by the name of "*kochany*" ("darling"). While they did not have much to offer—perhaps some scraps of food or clothing—their attitude had a great impact on the new arrivals. Nelken relates similar displays of solidarity she was shown by Polish women inmates at Ravensbrück. See Halina Nelken, *And Yet, I Am Here!* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 232, 248, 272. Sigmund Gerson and Eddie Gastfriend, young Jews imprisoned in Auschwitz, speak of the "loving" attitude of Father Maximilian Kolbe and all the Polish priests toward the Jews in the camp. Eddie Gastfriend said: "There were many priests in Auschwitz. They wore no collars, but you knew they were priests by their manner and their attitude, especially toward Jews. They were so gentle, so loving." See Patricia Treece, *A Man for Others: Maximilian Kolbe, Saint of Auschwitz* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982; reissued by Our Sunday Visitor, Hutington, Indiana, 1982), 138, 152–53. Ada Omieljanczuk, a Jewish woman, attributes her survival to Polish fellow prisoners of Auschwitz who shared their food parcels with her. See Tadeusz Andrzejewski, "Wileńscy strażnicy oświęcimskiej pamięci," *Tygodnik Wileńszczyzny* (Vilnius), February 3–9, 2005. Jerzy Radwanek, a member of the Polish underground in Auschwitz, used his position as camp electrician to provide widespread assistance to Jewish prisoners, and came to be known by them as the "Jewish uncle" of Auschwitz. See the profile of Jerzy Radwanek under "Poland" in the web site of The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, Internet: <http://www.jfr.org>. Another inmate mentions a Polish kapo in Auschwitz who agreed to Jewish inmates holding a service and guarded the entrance to the barracks to watch out for the SS. See Judy Weissenberg Cohen, "'The Kol Nidre I always remember,'" *The Canadian Jewish News,* September 24, 1998. Yet another prisoner remembers with gratitude how her Polish "block trusty" tried to protect Jewish prisoners from being sent to the ovens. See the account of Anna (Chana) Kovitzka, posted at <http://voices.iit.edu/frames.asp?path=Interviews/&page=kovit&ext_t.html>. Assistance by Polish inmates at Auschwitz has been documented by Yad Vashem: Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust,* volumes 4 and 5: *Poland* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), Part 1, 256 (Stanisława Sierzputowska); Part 2, 638 (Jerzy Pozimski), 658 (Jerzy Radwanek). Other accounts that mention kind deeds by Polish kapos and block elders in Auschwitz can be found in Donald L. Niewyk ed., *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 15, 205, 210; and Konrad Charmatz, *Nightmares: Memoirs of the Years of Horror under Nazi Rule in Europe, 1939–1945* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 101–102.

numerous movies produced in the 1930s and 1940s (described in the Appendix).[722] This tradition of contempt reemerged in the 1970s when the Holocaust began to be featured in Hollywood films such as *QB VII, Holocaust (1978),* in which Polish soldiers take part in executions of Jews and the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, *The Winds of War, Sophie's Choice,* in which a fictitious Fascist professor, Zbigniew Biegański, at Kraków's Jagiellonian University is credited with writing a pamphlet advocating the extermination of the Jews that allegedly inspired the Final Solution, *Schindler's List, Uprising,* and others.[723] The cumulative portrayal that emerges from these films has been aptly described as follows:

> The Polish army collapsed after a few days of insignificant resistance in 1939. Thereafter the Germans occupied Poland and treated the Jews very harshly. How they treated the Poles is unknown, but many Poles actively aided the Germans. Conveniently for the Nazis, the Poles had enacted legislation removing any legal protections for the Jewish population and herded them into ghettos during the interwar period, this providing the preparatory work for the Holocaust. Indeed, the Poles had elaborate plans to exterminate the Jews before 1939. The Polish underground, like Poles in general, did nothing to aid Jews because it was blinded by anti-Semitic prejudice. The Polish church was utterly without sympathy for the Jews and its behavior was the epitome of hypocrisy. Poles eager to betray the Jews to the Nazis were everywhere. The Germans feared the Jewish efforts at resistance would shame the passive Poles into activity. Survival in Warsaw under occupation was a miraculous accident and did not reflect any Polish efforts. Whereas there

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[722] M.B.B. Biskupski, *Hollywood's War with Poland, 1939–1945* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2010). While contemptuous of Poland and Poles, in order to continue doing business in Germany after Hitler's ascent to power, all of the Hollywood studios, all but one of which were headed by Jews, agreed not to make films that attacked the Nazis or condemned Germany's persecution of Jews. The arrangement remained in place through the 1930s, as Hollywood studios met regularly with the German consul in Los Angeles and changed or cancelled movies according to his wishes. The studios acceded to the gradual Aryanization of their Jewish work force in Germany, then to Nazi censorship of their films when they screened in the Third Reich. This involved banning movies by directors such as Ernst Lubitsch, films starring Marlene Dietrich, and excising credits of actors or directors who were Jewish or considered politically objectionable, as well as cutting scenes that Nazi censors found offensive. See Ben Urwand, *The Collaboration: Hollywood's Pact with Hitler* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013). The contrast of Hollywood's behaviours towards Nazi Germany and Occupied Poland, in the 1930s and 1940s respectively, simply has to be read so as to be believed.

[723] For examples of anti-Polish publications see Jerzy Robert Nowak, *Antypolonizm: Zdzieranie masek,* 2 volumes (Warsaw: Maron, 2002).

occasionally were decent Germans, all Poles, from the primitive peasantry to the most sophisticated intellectuals, were wicked.[724]

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[724] Mieczysław B. Biskupski, "Poland and the Poles in the Cinematic Portrayal of the Holocaust," in Robert Cherry and Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, eds., *Rethinking Poles and Jews: Troubled Past, Brighter Future* (Landham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 27–42, here at 34–35. Although Jews wield tremendous influence in American film, media and politics (e.g., the powerful lobby group American Israel Public Affairs Committee; Benjamin Netanyahu's invitation to address the U.S. Congress on March 3, 2015, etc.)—out of all proportion to their numbers—and this influence is often used to advance their causes to the detriment of others (such as Palestinians and Poles), in highly manipulative polls designed to gauge their level of "anti-Semitism" (though, in reality, they are much better at measuring "political correctness"), Americans, Poles and others are asked whether Jews have too much influence, and those who answer "yes" are perversely branded as anti-Semites, even though the existence of that enormous and hugely disproportionate influence is an undeniable fact. In effect, an acknowledgement of that undeniable influence is crudely reduced to expressing a belief that Jews "control" Hollywood, the media, or even the world—a straw man that can be easily attacked. The value of polls like the Anti-Defamation League's survey on global anti-Semitism was seriously called into question by Rabbi Jay Michaelson, who turned out to be an "anti-Semite" based on his honest, and reasonable, responses to the survey questions. See Jay Michaelson, "I Am 1 Billionth 'Anti-Semite'," *Forward,* May 20, 2014. Joel Stein, who takes a different approach, pointed out ("Who Runs Hollywood? C'mon," *Los Angeles Times,* December 19, 2008):

> I have never been so upset by a poll in my life. Only 22% of Americans now believe "the movie and television industries are pretty much run by Jews," down from nearly 50% in 1964. The Anti-Defamation League, which released the poll results last month, sees in these numbers a victory against stereotyping. Actually, it just shows how dumb America has gotten. Jews totally run Hollywood.
>
> How deeply Jewish is Hollywood? When the studio chiefs took out a full-page ad in the Los Angeles Times a few weeks ago to demand that the Screen Actors Guild settle its contract, the open letter was signed by: News Corp. President Peter Chernin (Jewish), Paramount Pictures Chairman Brad Grey (Jewish), Walt Disney Co. Chief Executive Robert Iger (Jewish), Sony Pictures Chairman Michael Lynton (surprise, Dutch Jew), Warner Bros. Chairman Barry Meyer (Jewish), CBS Corp. Chief Executive Leslie Moonves (so Jewish his great uncle was the first prime minister of Israel), MGM Chairman Harry Sloan (Jewish) and NBC Universal Chief Executive Jeff Zucker (mega-Jewish). If either of the Weinstein brothers had signed, this group would have not only the power to shut down all film production but to form a minyan with enough Fiji water on hand to fill a mikvah.
>
> The person they were yelling at in that ad was SAG President Alan Rosenberg (take a guess). The scathing rebuttal to the ad was written by entertainment super-agent Ari Emanuel (Jew with Israeli parents) on the Huffington Post, which is owned by Arianna Huffington (not Jewish and has never worked in Hollywood.)
>
> The Jews are so dominant, I had to scour the trades to come up with six Gentiles in high positions at entertainment companies. When I called them to talk about their incredible advancement, five of them refused to talk to me, apparently out of fear of insulting Jews. The sixth, AMC President Charlie Collier, turned out to be Jewish.
>
> As a proud Jew, I want America to know about our accomplishment. Yes, we control Hollywood.

Avraham Burg, a former Speaker of the Knesset, stated candidly, "Jews hold stunningly powerful positions and clout in the United States. The combination of the American state's power and the Jewish power in the areas of legislation, administration, media, law, business, culture, and entertainment have made the Jews a defining factor of contemporary America. Because Israel is inseparable from the identity of American Jews, Israel is inseparable from the American experience." See Burg, *The Holocaust Is Over; We Must Rise From Its Ashes,* 194. In his article "Jews DO Control the Media" published in *Times of Israel* on July 1, 2012, Elad Nehorai acknowledges what is plainly obvious, namely, that Jews do exert enormous influence, and that such disproportionate influence can legitimately be a source of resentment. Rabbi Michael Lerner, editor of the liberal Jewish magazine *Tikkun,* recently pointed out that "various universities denied tenure to professors who had made statements critical of Israel," something that would be unthinkable for those making critical statements about Poles. See Michael Lerner, "Mourning the Parisian 'Humorists' Yet Challenging the Hypocrisy of Western Media," January 9, 2015, *Huffington Post*. Peter Beinart acknowledges: "As a force in American journalism, we certainly have. Jews edit The New York Review of Books, The New Yorker, The Weekly Standard, The Atlantic, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, Vox, Buzzfeed, Politico, and the opinion pages of The New York Times and Washington Post." See Peter Beinart, "How The New Republic Stopped Being a Jewish Magazine," *Haaretz,* December 10, 2014. According to another report, "Jews are hugely important—even decisive—in their political giving. The Jewish two per cent—which is overwhelmingly liberal—accounts for about two-thirds of all donations received by the Democratic Party. … The importance of Jewish money

What is remarkable is that the deepest anti-Polish biases are held and disseminated by Jewish academics, especially non-historians, but also those in Holocaust-related fields.[725] Journalists of Jewish origin, who are both numerous and influential, generally disseminate this same negative picture of Poles in the North American media. Michael Coren, a Canadian journalist and broadcaster, repeats matter-of-factly what has become a staple of Jewish folklore (even though there is no basis in fact for this claim), in the February 21, 2004 issue of the Toronto *Sun*:

> Easter was always a dangerous time for my great grandparents. Drunk on cheap vodka and on the tales of Christ's suffering, local mobs would raid Jewish villages in Poland … and kill as many Jews as they could.

A similar message was reinforced by Anna Morgan, a Jewish columnist for the *Toronto Sar,* who conveyed her pride about the lesson and family "wisdom" she handed down from her father to her 11-year-old daughter: "My father used to quip that Jewish children in his hometown couldn't celebrate the same holidays as their non-Jewish neighbours. They were too busy hiding in cellars."[726]

It is telling that non-Jewish, mainstream "liberal" media repeatedly lends a forum to such blatant displays of bigotry and hatred. Writing in the *Times* of London in July 2008*,* columnist Giles Coren, referring to Poles as "Polacks," claimed that they "used to amuse themselves at Easter by locking Jews in the synagogue and setting fire to it." He also urged Polish immigrants to "clear off" if they felt "that England is not the land of milk and honey it appeared to be."[727] When Polish readers protested this abuse,

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[725] See the following empirical surveys by Robert Cherry: "Contentious History: A Survey on Perceptions of Polish-Jewish Relations during the Holocaust," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 19 (2007): 338; "Measuring Anti-Polish Biases Among Holocaust Teachers," in Cherry and Orla-Bukowska, *Rethinking Poles and Jews,* 69–79. Robert Cherry concludes, in the latter study, that: "The evidence presented strongly suggests that complaints in the Polish American community about the anti-Polish stereotypes found among non-Polish faculty who teach Holocaust-related courses are well-founded; not surprisingly, these stereotypes are strongest among non-historians. … Jewish faculty teach Holocaust courses throughout the country, courses that enroll tens of thousands of students annually. They organize conferences and influence museum presentations of historical events. … By contrast, Polish academicians do not have a significant forum to promote their views to the general public." Ibid., 76–77.

[726] Anna Morgan, "Jewish kids embracing Halloween," *Toronto Star,* October 28, 2007.

[727] Giles Coren, "Two Waves of Immigration, Poles Apart," *Times* (London), July 26, 2008.

Coren's response, as told to *The Jewish Chronicle,* was: "Fuck the Poles."[728] Writing in broken English reminiscent of comedian Sacha Baron Cohen's Kazakhstani character Borat (who uses Polish dialogue in a film that demeans Kazakhs directly, Poles indirectly, and Eastern Europeans in general as primitive, anti-Semitic louts),[729] in an article published in the *Times* in February 2013, Coren stated: "In Poland man who not like Jews simple throw them down well with pitchfork still alive, drink vodka, big laugh ha ha, then is fill in concrete and dance on grave."[730] The reaction of decent Britons—so different from the sensibilities that apparently prevail among the *Times'* editors—was to call the article "an affront to the many good, hard-working and honest people in the Polish community who today call the UK home, but also to the countless Britons who call Poles their friends."[731]

The same hateful attitude is evident among Israelis. Jerome Ostrov, mentioned earlier, has stated that "Israelis, as true of myself, viewed Poland as evil incarnate, even more so than Germany."[732] Confirming that impression, Israeli historian Moshe Zimmerman, writing in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, remarked with bewilderment that young Israelis are increasingly blaming Poles for the Holocaust:

> The most common term for Poland you hear from travellers from the 'Holy Land' is 'accursed, impure land,' because it's 'the biggest Jewish cemetery in the world' and where the concentration camps are located. This

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[728] Candice Krieger, "Coren Launches His Own Assault on Poland," *The Jewish Chronicle,* August 14, 2008. *The Economist* assailed Giles Coren and the *Times* in the following words ("Unacceptable Prejudice: Don't Be Beastly to the Poles," August 14, 2008):

> It is a fair bet that no British newspaper would print a column that referred to chinks, coons, dagos, kikes, niggers, spics, wogs, wops or yids. Indeed, a writer who tried using these words would probably find himself looking for a new job before the day was out. Yet Giles Coren, a leading light of the *Times*, last month referred to "Polack[s]" in a piece about his great-uncle's funeral, and seems entirely unrepentant about it. … Mr Coren seems truly to dislike Poles … For many people, ethnic prejudices are unshiftable. Sometimes they are harmless (Scots who will applaud any country that beats England in a sporting contest). Sometimes they are loathsome or even lethal. The real issue is why the *Times*, a respectable mainstream newspaper, permitted the slur to be published; and why, once it had been printed, nobody felt the need to apologise. The answer is that anti-Polish prejudice is still socially acceptable, in a way that anti-Jewish prejudice, say, is not. That is partly a legacy of Soviet propaganda, which liked to portray all east European countries as benighted reactionary hotbeds that had been civilised by proletarian internationalism. It is partly a knee-jerk reaction of people who dislike the Roman Catholic Church, and particularly the last pope (described contemptuously by a leading British scientist as "an elderly Pole", as if that disqualified him from having an opinion). It is mostly because being rude about Poles carries no risk.

[729] The character Borat, who sings the song "Threw the Jew Down the Well," also repeatedly sings two Polish phrases: "I speak and read in English" (*Czytam i mówię po angielsku*) and "Could you speak slowly please?" (*Proszę mówić wolniej*)—something that undercores the anti-Polish bigotry of the script's author, Sacha Baron Cohen, who is of Jewish origin. See also Edward Lucas, "The Borat Films Are Hilarious—For Some: Mocking eastern Europeans' supposedly primitive behaviour is the last refuge of respectable racism," *The Times* (London), October 26, 2020. Sacha Baron Cohen revived the Borat character at the prestigious Kennedy Center Honors held on December 4, 2022, much to the delight of President Joe Biden, the Washington elites, and entertainment celebrities—the "crème de la crème" of American society. Cohen had the notorious Kazakh bigot actually speaking broken Polish. Moreover, taking cheap shots at a country (Kazakhstan) in a public forum is, in actuality, the antithesis of anti-bigotry.

[730] Giles Coren, "Today I Am Make First Column in Polski," *The Times* (London)*,* February 2, 2013.

[731] "Reactions to Giles Coren's Column," *The Times,* February 5, 2013.

[732] Jerome Ostrov, After a Trip to Poland," Internet: <http://polish-jewish-heritage.org/eng/06-02_Jerome_Ostrov-After_a_trip_to_Poland.html>.

> relationship to the Polish territory leads to an over-simplified attitude to 'the' Pole, and to a lack of distinction between past and present. Now we hear that the Polish army capitulated without a fight, while the Jews fought back against the Nazis. What else should an Israeli soldier imagine, if there's no mention of the Polish Uprising of autumn 1944 in the short history of Warsaw that's been prepared for his benefit?[733]

The same message is even heard in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., an institution supposedly dedicated to promoting tolerance and understanding:

> Our tour guide, a truly lovely elderly Jewish woman, whisked us by the displays showing the execution of Poles and Polish priests at the hands of the German Nazis, while slowing down by the other 'regular' displays long enough to tell us that Poles were just as murderous of Jews as the Germans, and that the Nazis were Christian. I was numb.
>
> At the end of our two hour tour through history, we gathered in a conference room to discuss what we had seen. A bright, young law student, not an undergraduate student mind you, but an advanced law student, raised his hand and said, "Okay, we know that Poles welcomed Hitler with open arms when he crossed into their country…".[734]

Unfortunately, among the most harmful purveyors of malicious anti-Polish biases and stereotypes in recent years have been Israeli statesmen and rabbis. Former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, interviewed on Dutch television in 1979, proclaimed:

> What concerns the Jews, the Poles were collaborating with the Germans. Of the thirty-five million of Poles [actually, there were only about 24 million ethnic Poles at that time—*M.P.*], only at most one hundred people have been helping Jews. Between ten and twenty thousand Polish priests did not save even one Jewish life. All these death camps were (therefore) established on Polish soil.

Exceptionally, Stewart Stevens, himself a British Jew, described this outburst as "a disgraceful statement in which Begin disgraced himself and dishonored his own people."[735] The Western media—which is ever so vigilant about any alleged Polish anti-Semitism—remain characteristically silent about such ethnic and religious slurs and few Jews share Stewart's indignation or take those who make such statements to task.

Similar sentiments were echoed by another (former) Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, who stated that Poles "suck in anti-Semitism with their mothers' milk." Shamir's statement, made during the height of

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[733] Moshe Zimmerman, "Land der Täter und Verräter: Junge Israelis identifizieren Polen mit den Nazi-Verbrechen," *Süddeutsche Zeitung,* April 3, 2007. Zimmeman recorded the following comments by an Israeli student who joined a March of the Living trip to Poland: "Poles were the main culprits, and the Germans only supplied the wagons."

[734] Irek Kusmierczyk, "A Polish-Canadian Calls For Healing Between Poles and Jews," August 10, 2009, Internet: <http://mondoweiss.net/2009/08/a-polish-american-calls-for-healing-between-poles-and-jews.html>.

[735] Stewart Stevens, *The Poles* (London: Collins/Harvill, 1982), 317.

the controversy over the Carmelite convent in Auschwitz in August 1989,[736] unlike Begin's earlier remark, *did* receive almost immediate critical reaction from some embarrassed Jewish circles.[737] However, Shamir's outburst also struck a responsive chord, particularly popular in North America. Jewish-American journalist Joe Bobker, for example, writes:

> The Polish remnants of survivors whether they are in Sydney or in New York or in South America or in Israel are unanimous in their instinctive feelings toward Poles and Poland. … They agree with Shamir's statement that each Pole imbibes Jew hatred with his mother's milk. … They come from the School of Thought that says each Pole is an anti-Semite until proven otherwise."[738]

In a similar vein, using as a pretext the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, a camp built originally for Poles (about half of the 150,000 Poles interned there perished), German Jewish spokesman Michel Friedman unleashed a vehement attack on Poles: "I have to wonder if the Christians in Auschwitz were the murderers or the victims."[739] Yoram Sheftel, one of Israel's most prominent lawyers,

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[736] The controversy surrounding the Carmelite convent near the Auschwitz concentration camp and later developments were blown out of proportion and tendentiously reported by the Western media. According to a former member of the International Council of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum,

> According to the museum administration, there was a lot of misunderstanding about the convent. The theatre, located in a separate building, was not part of the camp itself, being located outside the brick prison walls. The building could not be accessed from within the camp, nor was it visible unless one knew exactly where it was. Some people claimed the convent was located next to the gas chambers and crematoria; however, it was located outside the camp itself and on the opposite end. …
>
> Over the years, there were various protests by Jewish leaders regarding the location of the convent and a large papal cross that the convent had erected. … The convent was eventually relocated in 1993 … now, only the one papal cross remains.
>
> In the following years, problems arose when a report was published that … a shopping centre, restaurant and hotel [was to be built] across from the main gate to Auschwitz I. Images of a huge, American-type shopping centre and boisterous parties in the hotel and restaurant were imagined. Some thought a nightclub and dance hall would be included. People claimed that the sanctity of the area just outside the camp would be permanently destroyed. Heated discussions in the Western media took place [in reality, these were one-sided reports full of false accusations] and things were blown out of proportion. On my next visit O went to the sites and found that the "shopping centre" was a small food store that had replaced a rundown market, and the restaurant was a coffee shop frequented by the bus drivers who sat for hours in the front parking lot of the museum waiting for their passengers. The museum administration welcomed the additions and changes. I did not visit the new hotel but could not imagine it being worse than the only other hotel at the railway station.

See Nate Leipciger, *The Weight of Freedom* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2015), 245–46.

[737] A belated retraction of sorts came from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. During his state visit to Poland to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, Rabin stated: "I do not like to comment on statements made in Israel from abroad, but I would have preferred that this statement had not been made." See "Gore Congratulates Poland on Its Democracy," *The New York Times,* April 21, 1993. Rabin was also reported to have said later at Auschwitz: "In the first place—and it is always necessary to remember this—Auschwitz was a German death camp, built by German criminals on Polish soil. Whoever cannot make a distinction between these two things and links the camp at Auschwitz with Poland, commits a cardinal error." When a delegation of the Polish Seym (Parliament), headed by its Marshall Józef Oleksy, visited Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Institute on December 7, 1994, Avner Shalev, the director of the Institute, stated: "We do not accuse Poles in any way of taking part in the Holocaust of the Jews. We do not concur with the views which are sometimes expressed that Poles were responsible for the death camps that were built on Polish soil. That does not mean that there weren't individuals and small groups who collaborated with the Germans." See "Oleksy: Polacy nie byli winni," *Gazeta* (Toronto), December 8, 1994.

[738] "Bobker Replies: More On 'The Polish Question,'" *B'nai B'rith Messenger* (Los Angeles), June 7, 1991.

[739] "War of words heats up over Auschwitz ceremonies," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), January 24, 1995.

lashed out at Poles and Catholic teaching in an all-too-typical tone in his memoir of the Demjanjuk trial: "It was not for nothing that the Nazis built their death camps in Poland. They did it because there is no other nation so riddled with anti-Semitism as the Poles. Only your church's hatred of the Jews can compete with the people's."[740]

This matter exploded again in January 2018, when the Polish government undertook legislative steps to address the widespread use of terms like "Polish death camps" and "Polish concentration camps" in the Western and Israeli media. In many cases, especially when those descriptions are used by Jewish authors, they simply reflect the underlying Jewish mainstream nationalist narrative voiced by Yair Lapid, a prominent Israeli politician (chairman of the Yesh Atid Party) and former journalist, who ranked first on *Jerusalem Post's* May 2013 list of the "Most influential Jews in the World." Although Lapid's family has no connection to Poland (they hail from Yugoslavia and Romania, formerly Hungary), he claimed that Nazi Germany built the death camps in Poland knowing that the Poles would be complicit in carrying out the mass murder of Jews, and that the Poles murdered his grandmother. Lapid stated repeatedly and intransigently:[741]

> "No Polish law will change history, Poland was complicit in the Holocaust. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were murdered on its soil without them having met any German officer."
>
> "I utterly condemn the new Polish law … hundreds of thousands of Jews were murdered without ever meeting a German soldier. There were Polish death camps and no law can ever change that."
>
> "I am a son of a Holocaust survivor. My grandmother was murdered in Poland by Germans and Poles."

Since Lapid's two grandmothers actually lived through the Holocaust (one in Palestine, the other in Budapest), he later had to "clarify" that it was his father's grandmother who was killed, and explained—in terms many Jews, unfortunately, fully endorse—why Poles were responsible for her death:[742]

> My father's grandmother, Hermione, was arrested by the Germans in Serbia. She was sent to Auschwitz, where she was murdered in the gas chambers. Why did she make that long journey to her death? Why were most of the camps set up in Poland? The Germans knew that at least some of the local population would cooperate.
>
> The new law that the Polish government is trying to pass denies all this. So that we'll know that "fake news" has reached Poland, they spun the law with a false headline. "There is no such thing," they said, "as Polish extermination camps. The camps were German." It's an absurd statement. No one ever says the death camps were built by the Poles. The Germans built them. But they built them on Polish land, with Polish help, in the face of Polish silence.

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[740] Yoram Sheftel, *The Demjanjuk Affair: The Rise and Fall of a Show-Trial* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1994), 290.

[741] TOI Staff and AP, "Lapid: Poland Was Complicit in the Holocaust, New Bill 'Can't Change History'," *The Times of Israel,* January 27, 2018.

[742] Yair Lapid, "The Truth about Poland and the Holocaust," Blogs, *The Times of Israel,* January 29, 2018.

> Three million Polish Jews were murdered (and another three million Jews from other countries). The Germans managed the extermination and bear ultimate responsibility but they could not have done it alone**.**
>
> We have not forgotten and not forgiven. … We will not accept the re-writing of history. We will not accept the attempt to avoid responsibility.

Lapid found a kindred spirit in Jack Rosen, the President of the American Jewish Congress, who assured that,

> without the complicity, whether direct or indirect, of ordinary Poles, the Nazi extermination of three million Polish Jews would not have been possible. The term "Polish death camps" may not be technically correct, but the vast majority of Nazi death camps in Europe were built on Polish soil.[743]

Just when one might have thought that a measure of restraint was in order, on his trip to Poland to accompany March of the Living in April 2018, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin inflamed relations with Poland again with his obscene remarks that tried to shift the blame for the death camps and the Holocaust itself onto Poland and the Poles: "The country of Poland allowed the implementation of the horrific genocidal ideology of Hitler. … Not for nothing we describe the death camps as the camps of Nazis and their helpers … we cannot deny the fact that Poland and Poles lent a hand to the annihilation" of Jews.[744]

Commenting on this state of affairs, Seth Frantzman, who addressed this issue in a balanced article in the *Jerusalem Post*,[745] demonstrated great perception and courage when he stated:

> Over the last few days there has been an extreme outpouring of hatred in Israel and on social media against Poland over a law about the Holocaust; what's strange is that the comments aren't against the law, just hatred and blame for Poland and Poles. And what's even more strange is the constant claim that the death camps were built in Poland are somehow the fault of Poland rather than the German Nazi occupying regime. It's all the more surprising because in other countries in the 1940s there were active collaborationist governments such as Vichy in France or Ustache [Ustashe] in Croatia. Yet anger and hatred is reserved for Poland, not just about the law; but deep antipathy. Is this because of bad education about the Shoah? Or is it about something deeper, anger that has sat quietly and is bursting forth with the law as a symbol of a larger issue? I find it difficult to believe if there was a similar law in Croatia or Hungary or elsewhere that there would be the same level of anger.

Such observations, however, have had no effect on dampening a deep-seated inclination to vilify Poland and the Poles. Reporting from Warsaw on February 13, 2019, Andrea Mitchell, NBC News Chief Foreign

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[743] Jack Rosen, "I Take Poland's Holocaust Revisionism Personally," *Haaretz,* February 25, 2018.

[744] Ofer Aderet, "Israeli President to Polish Counterpart: We Cannot Deny That Poland and Poles Participated in the Holocaust," *Haaretz,* April 12, 2018; "Poles Helped in Nazi Extermination, Rivlin Tells Polish Counterpart," *The Times of Israel,* April 12, 2018.

[745] Seth J. Frantzman, "Setting History Straight: Poland Resisted Nazis," *Jerusalem Post,* January 29, 2018.

Affairs Correspondent, stated that the Warsaw ghetto uprising was directed "against the Polish and Nazi regime." Yes, in that order, with the non-existent Polish regime taking precedence over the acknowledged architects of the Holocaust who are not accurately identified: Nazi Germany. Yet another example of U.S. mainstream media endorsing the Jewish nationalist narrative and revisionist Holocaust history. (Poles who are accused of "misspeaking" on Polish-Jewish relations are routinely denounced as "nationalists" and/or "anti-Semites" by Jewish leaders, politicians, historians and organizations, as well as by the mainstream Western media.)

Unfortunately, there is no end in sight to this barrage of vilification (hate speech) that is especially welcomed in the United States, a country that fancies itself as the moral compass (and preacher and self-appointed monitor) of the world. Writing in *The New Yorker* on March 26, 2021 ("The Historians Under Attack for Exploring Poland's Role in the Holocaust"), Masha Gessen bashed Poland for not admitting that it perpetrated the Holocaust: "the Polish government's ongoing effort to exonerate Poland—both ethnic Poles and the Polish state—of the deaths of three million Jews in Poland during the Nazi occupation." On May 24, 2021, Democratic Congressman Steve Cohen equated Nazi Germany and Poland on CNN, with singular conviction of his own profound understanding of history and the Holocaust: "It's sad to see that Members of Congress have gotten to this low level that they don't understand history, they don't understand the Holocaust. You know, it was not just Nazi Germany. It was Poland where some of this more severe, serious concentration camps were Auschwitz and Birkenau."[746] So, once again, Poland, allegedly, "hosted" the largest Nazi concentration camps.

Rabbinical pronouncements vilifying Poles are legion, and harken back to those voiced already at the beginning of the German occupation. In his diary Chaim Kaplan, a rabbi, educator and author from Warsaw, who had opposed Polish acculturation, wrote on September 1, 1939:

> This war will indeed bring destruction upon human civilization. But this is a civilization which merits annihilation and destruction. … now the Poles themselves will receive our revenge through the hands of our cruel enemy. …
>
> My brain is full of the chatterings of the radio from both sides. The German broadcast in the Polish language prates propaganda. Each side accuses the other of every abominable act in the world. Each side considers itself to be righteous and the other murderous, destructive, and bent on plunder. This time, as an exception to the general rule, both speak the truth. Verily it is so—both sides are murderers, destroyers, and plunderers, ready to commit any abomination in the world.[747]

Rabbi Chaim Kaplan's outrageous charge that prewar Poland was essentially no better than Nazi Germany can also be found in other publications. For example, the Rawa Ruska memorial book informs us that

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[746] The CNN transcript is available at http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/2105/24/acd.01.html. Characteristically, Congressman Cohen was one of 57 members of the House of Representatives who, on April 25, 2018, released a condemnation of alleged "Holocaust distortion" in Poland.

[747] Abraham I. Katsh, ed., *Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan* (New York: Macmillan; and London: Collier-Macmillan, 1965), 19–21. Kaplan peppered his wartime diary with anti-Christian remarks directed at Poles. Ibid., 47, 133.

> the economic destruction of Rawa Jewry, which began a few years after the occupation of Eastern Galicia by the Polish Army, by the ruinous political politics of the Endekist finance minister St. Grabski, the Chairman of the 'National-Democratic' Party, who, on his flag, etched as his goal the objective of exterminating the Jews, precisely the same thing that later on would be expressed by National Socialism.[748]

Views similar to Rabbi Chaim Kaplan's appear to have been fairly common among Jewish religious leaders at the time. Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira, a prominent Hasidic leader, explained the Jewish suffering he witnessed in the Warsaw ghetto thus: "The Jewish people have often had to endure calamities whose sole purpose was the destruction of wicked Gentiles. At such times, Jews are imperiled through no fault of their own."[749] The enormous suffering endured by Polish Christians are not worthy of note. In the adaptation of a Dvar Torah on Arutz 7, Yisrael Yisrael Meir Lau, the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel from 1993 to 2003, wrote:

> … a great many Poles cooperated with the Nazis in the annihilation … of the Jewish people. The six largest extermination camps were located on Polish territory. They knew that with the loss of the Jews they would suffer dearly. But it did not deter them …[750]

Interestingly, in November 2008, the Israeli government appointed Rabbi Lau Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council. Not to be outdone, Rabbi Sholom Klass used the editorial page of *The Jewish Press,* one of the largest circulation Jewish newspapers in the United States, to remind his readers: "three million Polish Jews died under the hands of the Nazis with the active or silent help of many Poles, including Catholic priests."[751]

In a tone reminiscent of Rabbi Lau, Rabbi Ely Rosenzweig, spiritual leader of a prominent synagogue in Stamford, Connecticut, commenting on the experiences of a Christian Pole who survived over three years in Auschwitz, stated:

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[748] Y. Meiseles (Y. Kessel), "Two Documents," in *The Rawa-Ruska Memorial Book,* 220.

[749] Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira, *Sacred Fire: Torah from the Years of Fury 1939–1942* (Northvale, New Jersey and Jerusalem: Jason Aronson, 2000), 294.

[750] Published in the *The Jewish Press* (Brooklyn), August 13, 1993. Rabbi Lau also explained why Poland—"the land of the death camps"—and the Poles are a "cursed" nation: "There are people who are suitable for a particular country and not for another, and there are lands than can absorb one type of people and not another. A case in point is the Land of Israel. … It is suitable for the Jewish People. … This proves there is a bond between the people and the land – to each land its nation. … The land flourishes only when we dwell here." Adapted from a Dvar Torah on Arutz 7, cited in *The Jewish Press*, Brooklyn, December 22, 1995.

[751] Rabbi Sholom Klass, "Polish Anti-Semitism Raises Its Ugly Head Again," *The Jewish Press* (Brooklyn), June 30, 1995.

there is no doubt, and all authentic records of history support this, that anti-Semitism was rife in Poland in World War II, and it explains … why so many death camps and crematoria were established in the heartland of Poland.[752]

Such views are widespread and show no signs of abating. Rabbi Zev Friedman, dean of Rambam Mesivta for Boys (Lawrence, New York) and Shalhevet High School for Girls (North Woodmere, New York) wrote unabashedly:

Many [Jews] believe that the major killing camps were specifically located in Poland—because it was fertile ground for antisemitism, and it was thought that the murder of Jews would be readily accepted there.[753]

On February 20, 2018, in the *Washington Times* ("Why Poland's New Holocaust Law Is a Mockery"), Rabbi Menachem Levine, from an Orthodox synagogue in San Jose, California, railed relentlessly and uncontrollably against Poland and the Poles:

Yad Vashem makes it clear that it was Poles who made the Nazi Holocaust in Poland possible. Without the cooperation of the local citizenry, sometimes passively observing and many times enthusiastically supportive, a program of mass murder would have been impossible. … [Yad Vashem says no such thing.[754] *M.P.*]

Nearly all of the death camps in occupied Europe were built in Poland. There were no crematoria or gas chambers in occupied France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Norway, Denmark, Czechoslovakia or any other nation invaded by Nazi troops. Auschwitz, Birkenau, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka and others were built in Poland. Why?

The answer is that the Nazis knew that Poland had been anti-Semitic for centuries and the Germans were convinced that the Poles would not protest against death camps for Jews on their soil. As history shows, they were correct. [Again, Yad Vashem says no such thing, and in fact debunks this crock. *M.P.*]

Even before the German invasion in 1939, hostility toward Jews was a mainstay of the Polish regime and the Polish Catholic Church. In the 1930s, the national boycott of Jewish businesses and *advocacy for their confiscation* [another baseless claim—*M.P.*] was promoted by the Endecja party in Poland, which introduced the term "Christian shop." … The Poles certainly did not need the Germans to teach them to hate Jews.

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[752] Dan Mangan, "Hell on earth: 'You never believe it, you can survive,'" *The Advocate* (Stamford, Connecticut), April 10, 1995.

[753] Zev Friedman, "Why Would Any Jews Spend Money in Poland?" *The Algemeiner,* February 25, 2018.

[754] Israel Gutman, chief historian at Yad Vashem and editor-in-chief of *The Encylopedia of the Holocaust,* stated in no uncertain terms:

I should like to make two things clear here. First, all accusations against the Poles that they were responsible for what is referred to as the 'Final Solution' are not even worth mentioning. Secondly, there is no validity at all in the contention that … Polish attitudes were the reason for the siting of the death camps in Poland.

Poland was a completely occupied country. There was a difference in the kind of 'occupation' countries underwent in Europe. Each country experienced a different occupation and almost all had a certain amount of autonomy, limited and defined in various ways. This autonomy did not exist in Poland. No one asked the Poles how one should treat the Jews

See *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies* (Oxford: Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies), vol. 2 (1987), 341.

> Knowing the Polish anti-Semitic viewpoints, the German commanders recruited Polish police to guard the ghettos and Polish railway workers to deport Jews to the killing centers. [There was no such recruitment.[755] *M.P.*]
>
> Poland … both allowed and assisted in the Holocaust.

Similar sentiments have also found a welcome home in contemporary Jewish mythology, as exemplified by novelist Yair Weinstock's *Holiday Tales for the Soul*:

> The Poles would ferret Jews out of their hiding places and hand them over to the Nazi S.S., beaming with pleasure when the Jews were carted off to the death camps. The words "*yemach shemam*" ("may their names be erased!") were frequently on Meyer's lips—referring as much to the Poles as the Nazis themselves.
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> "There is no forgiveness," he would declare. "The Poles are the lowest and most despicable race on the face of the earth. …"[756]

Some Orthodox rabbis have even called on Jews not only to hate Poles, but also to do harm to them. Rabbi Mordechai Friedman, President of the American Board of Rabbis (Vaad HaRabbonim), used his public access television show on New York's Long Island to let loose with an angry and hysterical tirade against Pope John Paul II and the Polish people. Calling the Pontiff a "dumb Polack, a "stinking old cocker," and a "vicious anti-Semite," Rabbi Friedman then went on to call for an anti-Polish boycott. "Don't hire anti-Semitic Polacks. Not as maids … cleaning ladies … in construction companies," he urged. He also appealed to Jewish doctors, dentists, lawyer and accountants, "Don't heal or service these anti-Semitic fiends. They're destined to go to hell."[757]

On May 5, 2016, Holocaust Memorial Day, Rabbi Zev Friedman, the dean of Rambam Mesivta High School on Long Island, organized a rally of some 200 students in front of the Polish consulate in New York City in support of Jan Gross to protest what they termed "attempts to deny Polish war crimes during the Holocaust." The group's flyer alleged Poles were complicit in the murder of three million Jews. Rabbi Friedman's pep talk made his position more explicit. All the major concentration camps, he railed, were built in Poland. Incited by his remarks, the students chanted repeatedly: "Your land is drenched in blood, your land is drenched in blood, your land is drenched in blood." Rabbi Friedman then proclaimed that the camps were built in close proximity to Polish towns, that the Poles let this happen, and that the Nazis built their camps in Poland because it was fertile ground. The students again burst out in a chant, saying over and over: "You let it happen, you let it happen, you let it happen." Rabbi Friedman then added that the average person (Pole) on the street perpetrated crimes against Jews and handed over Jews. He recalled, with approval, the words of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir who claimed that Poles sucked in anti-

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[755] The prewar Polish police was ordered to report for duty by the German invaders or face imprisonment. Polish railroad workers were also required to report for duty. Their job was to run trains for all passengers. There was no recruitment campaign for railroad workers to deport Jews to death camps. In large cities like Warsaw, Łódź, Kraków, and many others, Jews were rounded up for deportation by the Jewish police.

[756] Yair Weinstock, *Holiday Tales for the Soul* (Brooklyn, New York: Mesorah Publications, 2002), 127.

[757] Frank Milewski, "N.Y. Rabbi Says John Paul II Is a 'Dumb Polack'," Polish American Congress Anti-Bogotry Committee, March 2000.

Semitism with their mothers' milk.[758] Israeli Foreign Minister Yisrael Katz renewed that scandalous remark in a public statement in February 2019, so it is clearly indicative of widespread, albeit not universal, appeal among Israelis and Jews.

The March of the Living, which brings Jewish students from around the world to visit Nazi German death camps located in Poland, but not to Germany, demonstrates two competing tendencies among Jews.

[758] Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "Jewish high schoolers picket Polish consulate in NY to protest 'Holocaust whitewash'," May 5, 2016. Fortunately, Rabbi Friedman's fanaticism met with a response from the Jewish side. Jonny Daniels, the British-Israeli founder of From the Depths, an organization that honors Holocaust rescuers, challenged the protesters, saying he "cannot agree with inflammatory speech filled with falsehoods against the Polish government, which is reminiscent of the way Israel is singled out for criticism in some circles."

One is to turn the trips into an exercise in hostile chauvinism directed against Poles.[759] The other is to decry the trips because they expose Jews to evil Poles. The former is the dominant approach—the one that is endorsed by organized World Jewry and the State of Israel who organize the trips in which tens of thousands of students take part. The March of the Living received an incisive expose by Professor Jackie

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[759] It is informative to trace the reactions of Jewish students who take part in the March of the Living and how it has evolved, or rather, for the most part, failed to evolve, over the years. Writing in *Tikkun* ("The Future of Auschwitz," November/December 1992), Professor James E. Young, a member of the International Auschwitz Council, described the painful experiences of a Polish camp guide who related how she had been verbally abused by angry Jewish youth groups visiting at Auschwitz. "We tried to explain to [the guide]," writes Young, "that for many of the Jewish visitors, the nearest objects of rage and frustration were too often their guides, the surrounding Polish population, and the country itself." The same was true for visits to other camps. When a group of rowdy Jewish students arrived at Majdanek (often misspelled as Maidanek), one of them scaled the chimney of a crematorium and hung an Israeli flag on it, laughing at the museum staff who asked him to take the flag down. When a female Israeli student set fire to a carpet in her hotel room, her teacher was quick to justify the student's behaviour to the alarmed hotel staff: "That person [i.e., staff member] shouldn't be angry. Before they burned us, and now we're just burning a few of their things." See Henryk Pająk, *Żydowskie oblężenie Oświęcimia* (Lublin: Retro, 1999), 206.

There is abundant evidence, however, that there is nothing spontaneous about this misdirected rage. Reporting on young marchers from Florida, a 1990 *Jerusalem Post* article noted the dichotomy the participants were deliberately encouraged to see between their stay in Poland and Israel. Leaving Poland for Israel was for one girl like going "from Hell to Heaven, from despair to joy." "Everything in Poland was Hell," said a male participant. "We couldn't find anything good there." See Greer Fay Cashman, "The March of the Living," *Jerusalem Post,* May 15, 1990. Professor Young alluded to part of the real problem when he wrote, "We also resolved to improve the preparation of Jewish groups to make sure they knew enough of the Polish narrative to distinguish between Nazi killers and Polish victims." ("The Future of Auschwitz," *Tikkun,* November/December 1992.) Around that time (1992), Rabbi Byron L. Sherwin, of Spertus College of Judaica in Chicago, made the following pointed observations in an interview published in the Warsaw Catholic monthly *Więź* ("Dialog to wysiłek tłumaczenia symboli," no. 7 [1992]: 8–9):

> Americans always need an enemy, something or someone with whom they can be at odds. American Jews have a typically American mentality in that regard. We need to find anti-Semites … Poland is that natural enemy because of longstanding stereotypes which I already mentioned. Israelis have a similar point of view, but for completely different reasons—essentially because of their Zionist ideology. The foundation of that ideology is the belief that the life of a Jew outside Israel is intolerable. For them the fate of the Jews in Poland and the Holocaust are proof of the validity of Zionist ideology that in the diaspora, outside Israel, there are only two roads open for Jews: death or assimilation. Jews from Israel who think along those lines thus have a stake in fostering a negative image of Poland. A year ago at a symposium at the Academy of Catholic Theology [in Warsaw] on the theology of the Holocaust, I referred to a statement by a woman from Yad Vashem who led a tour of Israeli teenagers to Poland. She told them that they travelled there for three reasons: one, to see where and how Jews perished; two, to understand why the State of Israel is a necessity; and three, to see how Poles participated in the murder of Jews.

More recently, Rabbi Sherwin again spelled out the implications of this approach: "The students were hearing a chronicle that one could hear in Israel or in America, a chronicle that makes any rapprochement between Jews and Poles impossible, that obfuscates the spiritual achievements of Polish Jewry." See Byron L. Sherwin, *Sparks Amidst the Ashes: The Spiritual Legacy of Polish Jewry* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 82. The following passage from Tom Segev's *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), illustrates the same phenomenon in practice, even on those rare occasions when some haphazard corrective measures were attempted:

> I had visited Yaakov Barmor, at his home. "Jew hatred is as natural in Poland as blue is to the sky," the former diplomat told me; he had said something similar to his son's students. Shalmi Barmor knew all there was to know about Polish anti-Semitism. He tried to explain its background to his students. He did it the hard way, presenting his students with copies of a recent *Haaretz* article by Shabtai Teveth, Ben Gurion's autobiographer … "The Polish nation," Teveth wrote, "is the victor in the end, and it has despoiled Jewish property and inherited its suffering and its Holocaust; it has made them into a commercial venture." The students read the article and agreed. Many of them clearly identified the Holocaust with Poland. … Shalmi tried to explain to the students that the Poles were not guilty of the murder of the Jews. Indeed, the Poles had been defeated in the war—they had traded the Nazi conquest for a Soviet occupation. Anti-Semitism in Poland should not be ignored, Barmor told his students, but he emphasized that the Poles considered the mass murder of the Jews as part of their Polish national tragedy. The students argued with him. "Someone, after all, has to be guilty of the Holocaust," one of them said. "We have to hate someone, and we've already made up

Feldman of Ben Gurion University, in an article titled "Marking the Boundaries of the Enclave: Defining the Israeli Collective Through the Poland 'Experience'."[760] Feldman argues that the trips to Poland, which have become a "central rite" in Israel's "civil religion," are used by the organizers to erect and maintain the wall an enclave society requires and desires to erect between themselves and the outside world, a

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[760] Feldman's article appeared in *Israel Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2: 84–114 (2002). See also Jackie Feldman, *Above the Death Pits, Beneath the Flag: Youth Voyages to Poland and the Performance of Israeli National Identity* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008). As reviewer Jan Peczkis points out:

> To begin with, the perceptive reader will see, in this book, the usual tendency of diffusing responsibility for the Holocaust away from where it belongs—the Germans. For instance, during a prayer at the site of the ruins of the Birkenau crematoria, the leader asks how long Jews will be a prey and victim of the gentiles. (p. xiv). This paints with a very broad brush. With the exception of Haman's Persians, Hitler's Germans were the only gentiles to ever attempt to exterminate the Jews. In like manner, Auschwitz is commonly called a ZIVILIZATIONSBRUCH—a breach of civilization. (p. 1). Was it really a breach of human civilization, or was it a breach of German civilization?
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> There is also a displacing of responsibility for the Holocaust away from where it belongs—the Germans—and unto the Poles. Feldman (p. 88; see also p. 115) repeats the rather silly contention that this happens (and seems to excuse it) because "the Germans are not visibly present", and so Poles can serve as stand-ins for the bystanders and even executioners. Ironic to this absurd and insulting scapegoating of the Poles, it is the Jewish side frequently complaining about scapegoats! The dying Jews, smoking chimneys, etc., are also not "visibly present", and have not been for seven decades, yet this does not prevent the visitors from focusing on them by one iota.
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> The displacement of Jewish hostility from Germans unto Poles also occurs in various subtle contexts. Feldman (p. 78) even presents a table that makes it obvious. For the visiting Israelis, the inside of the bus or hotel represent an "inside space" of warmth, Jewishness, security, joy, life, and "us". The "outside space", Poland, represents the exact opposite: coldness, the Holocaust, danger, tension and sorrow, death, and "them".
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> The "Polish-Jewish dialogue" aspect of the Israeli visits should not be overblown. Feldman notes that, "The meetings with Polish youths (when they do take place) and the presence of Polish guides are structured so that they have little impact. The stories of Polish victims of the Holocaust, as well as the dilemmas encountered by Polish bystanders, are also rarely heard. Even righteous gentiles are encountered as stage figures elevated from oblivion by the State of Israel's recognition and honor, and not as an 'other' to be heard." (p. 242). Poles serving as guides have been discouraged under various pretexts. (p. 66). Except for a brief time, meetings between Israeli and Polish youth have been minimized—on alleged security grounds. (p. 61). Polish guides at Auschwitz-Birkenau have also been either removed or encouraged to be silent. (pp. 136–137).
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> Israeli security guards envelope the visiting Israelis. In part, this policy is consistent with visits even within Israel. (p. 93). However, Feldman admits that it also exists in order to reinforce anti-Polish feeling, "The security arrangements enable the students to imagine that they have returned to the scene of the crime, in order to reenact the Polish (gentile)-Jewish situation of the Holocaust. This time, however, thanks to the State of Israel, they are the victors. Beyond its functional role, the highly visible presence of Israeli security forces is an important element in the symbolic world of the voyage." (p. 71). Once again, the German perpetrators have all but disappeared.
>
> Poles must be thrilled to find themselves in the company of de-Germanized German mass murderers (Nazis) and archetypical murderous ancient pagans (Amalekites). Feldman quips, "In Poland, the [Israeli] flags are directed, not against a current foe, but against a past enemy—the Nazis, the Poles, or Amalek." (p. 264). …
>
> The agenda behind the Israeli youth visits to Poland is unmistakable. Feldman says, "Among the most important messages of the voyage are that Poland is a Jewish cemetery and a hostile anti-Semitic country, and that the continuation of Diaspora Jewish life is in Israel." (p. 177).
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> Some Poles think of the Israeli visits as a provocation. Feldman, using roundabout language, acknowledges that this is not only true, but is intentionally so. She cites a Ministry handbook that affirms that the visits are SUPPOSED to confront the Poles with their "role in the tragedy of the Jewish people". (p. 73). She adds that, "The prominent display of Israeli symbols and the performance of mass processions through territory perceived as hostile not only affirms common belonging, but announces Jewish-Israeli claims to the legacy and remnants of the Shoah to the Polish 'other'." (p. 73).
>
> Poles are a stand-in not only for the German mass murderers. The Poles are also enlisted as a kind of substitute for Islamic extremists, as pointed out by Feldman, "The insular nature of the voyage and the encounters (real or imagined) with Polish anti-Semitism are extended to the Arab-Israeli dispute." (pp. 274–275).
>
> In this book, there is but one brief mention as "other crimes of the Nazis" (p. 60) by an Israeli critic of the

world they never cease to revile. Each aspect of the trip is manipulated by the organizers to increase the Jews' "wall of virtue". Outside the wall is the world of Poles they never cease to revile. Israeli youth visiting Poland equate Poland with uncleanness and unclean body excretions and the violation of body orifices. Outside of their "bubble" of contact with fellow Jews, the world around them, that is, Poland, is "a place of hostile, strange surroundings, wandering, and the inevitable end." In the handbook for participants, youth are told, "We remind the Poles of this dark chapter in our history and theirs … the Poles are forced to confront their past anew, and their role in the tragedy of the Jewish people." Feldman quotes British anthropologist Mary Douglas, "To vilify the outsider is a way of justifying" the enclave's disdain for the outsider. "The lines between 'us' and 'them' reflect widely held Israeli positions (e.g., that Poles are anti-Semites)." Any event that suggests otherwise—that suggests that maybe, just maybe, some Poles are *not* anti-Semites, is "neutralized through scheduling and rhetorical devices." Traditional Jewish religious beliefs are carefully employed to cement the desired goal and message:

- Guides encourage visitors "not to give the Poles a penny more than necessary." On one occasion, visitors admitted to shoplifting in Poland. Their Orthodox group leader "dismissed it as a sin that results from a good deed (averah haba'ah b'mitzvah)—in other words, depriving Poles of income."
- Polish students "are considered the enemy". Rabbi Moshe Zvi Neriah wrote that "it is a sacred obligation to remember the deeds of the Polish people who are imbued with a venomous hatred towards all Jews … these are the very people who helped carry out mass murder, and whose children also slaughtered many … Remember our murdered and remember our murderers."
- Feldman cites a commentator who notes the de-emphasizing of universal standards of morality by "many rabbinical leaders." Hostility to Poles is justified by the Talmudic proverb, "Esau hates Jacob." Poles are Esau; Jews are Jacob. Since, in this formulation, all Poles hate all Jews, it is appropriate for Jews to hate Poles in return. In Genesis, Esau is the rough, outdoorsy, impetuous, less favored brother. Jacob is the patriarch who takes the name "Israel." Assigning Poles the Esau identity has a long tradition.
- Feldman comments on how even the presence of a "righteous Gentile," that is a Pole who saved Jews, is handled in such a manner as to reinforce the "us vs. them" paradigm. Audiences are encouraged to conclude that "righteous Gentiles" are not like other Poles, are, rather, completely unconnected to their Polish milieu. In fact Feldman says, through the use of a poem, Poland is equated with Sodom. The atypical Pole who helped Jews did so because he is the one righteous man in Sodom.
- Jews who lived in Poland before the Holocaust are depicted as Orthodox, rather than assimilated to Polish culture (which some were). This emphasizes the "us vs. them" paradigm. Pre-war Polish Jews are "alien in the Kingdom of Amalek." Amalek, of course, is the condemned nation against whom Old Testament Jews conducted a genocidal war. One can see that the Bible is used to define Poland as utterly cursed and other: as Esau, as Sodom, as Amalek.

Alexandria Fanjoy, in her scholarly study, offers the following insights based on interviews with student participants:

> Part of the difficulty with the educational program is that many participants have a tendency to 'inherit' memory and myth about the trip from previous participants, but certainly the March's creation of a 'Poland' that exists entirely as a Jewish construct reinforces those pre-trip attitudes. Once in Poland, the conflict between experiential and formal education that the trip tries to negotiate itself through and the prioritization of emotional understandings over intellectual ones regarding the history, particularly in terms of the way in which the Israeli guides present the narrative of the war, encourages students within the construction of the Holocaust as an event that happened almost exclusively to the Jewish community with passive or active Polish participation and leadership—a situation not aided by the selection of chaperones who often have little to no academic grounding in the history. The common use of 'embodiment' within the trip encourages students to "enter history" on the side of those caught in the tightening Nazi noose, shifting the Holocaust from a static historical event to one that is ongoing and requiring active response. In the absence of Nazis, local Poles surrounding the students become placeholders for the perpetrators and bystanders as a counterpoint to the students' embodied 'victim', and the landscape of Poland itself often becomes threatening, seen exclusively within Second World War terms. In being encouraged to "enter history"—particularly within the immersive experience of the—many come to view Poland and the Polish people as historically responsible for what befell the Jewish people—a hatred, many feel, that continues to this day. And the educators do not disabuse them of this notion. Just the opposite. The highly emotional, identity-building pedagogy on the trip feeds into the various types of 'modeled' forms of Jewishness that are presented to students as options throughout the trip …[761]

Commenting on these student trips to Poland, Erica Lehrer writes:

> Embellished versions of ahistorical claims circulate among tour participants, implying, for example, that Polish anti-Semitism was the reason Hitler built the extermination camps in Poland (rather than because the largest concentration of Jews was in Poland).
>
> Poles are blamed for living today in proximity to Nazi-era atrocity sites, cast as front-row witnesses to Jewish extermination—even if such nearby apartment blocks were postwar constructions.
>
> Poles are offended by Jewish hostility and condescension.
>
> Mission trips have been criticized by Jewish academics, politicians, and public intellectuals—particularly in Israel—for their manipulation of the Holocaust to ideological ends, the radicalization of participants, and the priority by organizers of profit motives over moral reflection.[762]

The dark side of the March of the Living was exposed in Yishai Sarid's novel *The Memory Monster*. The Israeli author speaks through the voice of an unnamed narrator who is a Holocaust historian. The narrator leads Israeli teenagers on Holocaust-related trips to Poland. The current state of mind of Israelis vividly

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[761] Alexandria Fanjoy, "Learning in the 'Land of Ashes:' 'Poland' through the Windows of a Bus on the Toronto March of the Living," Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, 2018.

[762] Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited,* 69, 70, 74, 77.

comes through in Sarid's novel. Even if the material is technically fictional, it speaks volumes about the current Jewish attitudes towards to Poles. The narrator describes the way that visiting Israeli teenagers conceptualize the German-made Holocaust.

> They didn't hate the Germans, the kids in my groups; not at all, not even close. The murderers barely registered in the narrative they created for themselves. They sang sad songs, wrapped themselves in flags, and said prayers for the ascent of the souls of the victims, as if their death had been a divine decree, but never pointed an accusing finger at the perpetrators. *They hated the Polish much more*. When we walked around the streets in cities and villages, whenever we met the local population, they would mutter words of hatred at them, about the pogroms they had committed, their collaboration, their anti-Semitism.[763] (Emphasis added.)

As noted earlier, the minority approach is to decry the concept of the March of the Living itself because it exposes Jews to the evil that is Poland and the Poles. Writing in *The Canadian Jewish News*, Reuven Bulka, a prominent Ottawa rabbi and reluctant March of the Living student chaperon, asked rhetorically: "… how can one go to Poland, to the country so steeped in anti-Semitism that it eagerly cooperated with the Nazis in the cold-blooded murder of the Jews?"[764] It didn't dawn on Rabbi Bulka that Poland ceased to exist during the German occupation. Similar charges were renewed by Rabbi Andrew Baker, the American Jewish Committee's Director of International Jewish Affairs, in the *New York Post* on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, who rebuked Poles for pretending to be "victims with no role" in the extermination of the Jews.[765]

More recently such views have been voiced by prominent Zionist rabbis in Israel railing against educational school trips to the Nazi death camps in Poland. According to a report in YNetNews.com of February 23, 2009 regarding Rabbi Shlomo Aviner,

> Answering a reader's question on the subject in the religious "Ma'ayaney Hayeshua" journal, Aviner stated that trips to Poland were "not good" due to the halachic ban on leaving Eretz Israel, and because they "provide livelihood to murderers." …
>
> Aviner also said that the trips have not been proven to have an "educational value." …
>
> Another argument against visiting the camps, according to the rabbi, was the fact that the Polish people "collaborated with the Nazis" and were now making a living off of these visits. …
>
> According to Aviner, it was not accidental that the Nazis chose to erect the extermination camps in Poland. "They knew that the people would do nothing. One person was enough to blow up the railroad tracks. Why wasn't this done? Because they all said, 'good,' smiled and waited for what needed to be done to be done by the Nazis."[766]

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[763] Yishai Sarid, *The Memory Monster* (New York: Restless Books, 2020), 32.

[764] Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka, "Poles Apart," *The Canadian Jewish News* (Toronto), May 11, 1995.

[765] Rabbi Andrew Baker, "Poland's Progress," *New York Post,* January 26, 2005.

[766] Kobi Nahshoni, "Rabbi Aviner: Visiting Nazi Death Camps Forbidden," February 23, 2009, Internet: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3675990,00.html>.

Rabbi Aviner does not turn his mind to the question—if, as he says, one person is all it would taken to blow up the railroad tracks—why did not one of Poland's three-and-a half million Jews run the risk of performing that deed. Why couldn't a group of Jews have undertaken that task as early as 1941, before the Holocaust got underway, when Auschwitz still contained primarily Polish Catholic prisoners? Nonetheless, he reiterated and expanded on his views after the March of the Living trip in April 2009:

> We also should not provide financial gains to the extremely wicked Polish, … who allowed the establishment of concentration camps in their territory.
>
> They knew that the Germans were annihilating Jews and they looked upon this with joy. They were of one heart with the Nazis; it was therefore not by happenstance that the concentration camps were established precisely there. The Polish fulfilled the verse [from the Book of Kings]: 'Will you murder and also inherit.' We do not want to give them money.[767]

According to a report in YNetNews.com of April 21, 2009, prominent Zionist-religious figure Rabbi Zalman Melamed was in agreement with Rabbi Aviner, stating that Poland is an "impure country riddled with anti-Semitism" and that Jews should refrain from visiting Poland. Interestingly, Rabbi Boaz Pash of Kraków did not condemn these outbursts as such, but was only concerned about how they might "strengthen anti-Semitic trends" in Poland, where they are met with "high sensitivity" and "put us in a very difficult spot."[768]

Such views and remarks have a long and, seemingly, undying tradition. Rabbi Bernard Rekas of St. Paul, Minnesota, in his capacity as member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, in 1981 urged the following unsavoury connection: "One might also philosophically reflect as to why it was that the Germans selected Poland as the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death complex."[769] Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, vice-president of the World Jewish Congress, wrote in a similar vein in his article, "I Can't Go to Warsaw," published in *The New York Times* on April 9, 1983. Rabbi Zev K. Nelson wrote in the Boston *Jewish Advocate* on November 4, 1982: "The Poles were ready and willing to join the Nazis in the annihilation of three million Jews in their land." The *Jerusalem Post* reported the following statement made by Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, head of the Ateret Yerushalayim Yeshiva and rabbi of Beit El, on June 30, 2008: "The Polish people are anti-Semites. That is why the Nazis chose them as collaborators."[770] Rabbi Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg indicates that he was a prisoner at Pawiak, in Nazi German-occupied Poland, where, according to his amazing statement, "all the prisoners were Jews, command of the prison was

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[767] Nathan Jeffay, "Religious Zionists Challenge March of the Living's Value," *Forward,* May 8, 2009.

[768] Kobi Nahshoni, "Rabbi Melamed Urges Students Not to Visit Poland," April 21, 2009, Internet: <http://www.ynetnews.com/Ext/Comp/ArticleLayout/CdaArticlePrintPreview/1,2506,L-3704136,00.html>.

[769] Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1995), 117.

[770] Matthew Wagner, "Poland Gets 1st Orthodox Rabbis Since WWII," *Jerusalem Post,* June 30, 2008.

given to Polish killers."[771] As every knowledgeable person knows, the notorious Pawiak prison held mostly Polish Christian prisoners, and they usually died horrible deaths there—at the hands of the Germans. What would compel a highly educated person to spread such malicious information? Even anti-Zionist Orthodox rabbis, such as Reb Moshe Shonfeld, have been very outspoken on these matters:

> The Jews in Poland had an expression: if a Pole meets me on the wayside and doesn't kill me, it is only from laziness. … The Poles … were all fanatical Catholics, and all had unsatiable [sic] appetites for Jewish blood. Those cruel pythons, the Polish clergy, instigated—*after* the fall of the Nazis—pogroms of those Jews who'd miraculously survived.[772]

Rabbi Isaac Suna, an educator at the Yeshiva University High School in New York City, who survived several German slave labour and concentration camps, summed up his feelings thus: "I feel greater animosity toward Poles than to the German people." In a similar vein, one survivor concluded her account, in which she presented many instances of Poles' help, by saying "Now you see why we hate the Polacks." There was no word about hating the Germans.[773] Historian Shimon Redlich describes his experiences in this regard:

> The Wanderers were among the luckiest Jewish families in town. Both parents and the girls survived the war. They were hidden successively by several Polish families. After the war, the Wanderers emigrated to America. I sent the Wanderer sisters information about the Regulas, one of the Polish families in whose house on the outskirts of Brzeżany they had hid after the Judenrein roundup. I hoped that they would start the procedure of granting them the Righteous Gentiles award, but nothing came of it. …
>
> When I called Rena, the older one, and asked whether a young Polish historian, a colleague of mine who was doing research in New York, could interview her for my project on Brzeżany, her reaction was curt and clear: "I hate all Polacks." … Rena advised me not to present the Poles in too favorable a way "for the sake of our martyrs."[774]

That legacy was passed down to the next generation. Erin Einhorn, an American whose mother was rescued by Poles, admits candidly:

> Now, headed for Poland, I could no longer escape the fact that I was moving to a country I had been taught to hate. … I'd only ever heard one thing about Poles: that they hated me, that they hated all Jews, that they

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[771] Esther Farbstein, *The Forgotten Memoirs: Moving Personal Accounts from Rabbis Who Survived the Holocaust* (Brooklyn, New Yor: Shaar Press), 458. Rabbi Weinberg was in Pawiak for all of two weeks; afterwards, as a Soviet citizen, he was interned with Soviet prisoners-of-war.

[772] Reb Moshe Shonfeld, *The Holocaust Victims Accuse: Documents and Testimony on Jewish War Criminals,* Part 1 Brooklyn, New York: Naturei Karta of U.S.A., 1977), 13, 16.

Joseph J. Preil, ed., *Holocaust Testimonies: European Survivors and American Liberators in New Jersey* (New Brunnswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 128.

[773] Hoffman, *Shtetl,* 245.

[774] Shimon Redlich, *Together and Apart in Brzezany: Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, 1918–1945* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 22.

always had, that they'd collaborated with the Nazis, aided in our demise, and that by 1945 they'd rejoiced in having what they had always wanted: a country free of Jews.

… people like my grandparents, the survivor generation, emerged from the war with a blazing hatred for the Poles … And they passed that hatred on to their children. It was why, I suspected, Art Spiegelman, the son of a survivor from Sosnowiec, the town next to the one where my mother was born, drew the Poles as pigs in his holocaust comic book, *Maus,* and the Germans as comparatively pleasant cats.[775] The implication from our parents and grandparents was that the Germans, while evil and calculating in the war, were basically intelligent people who were swept catastrophically into nationalistic frenzy, while the Poles were anti-Semitic pigs. There was a reason—I had been told many times with a wink—that the Germans located the death camps in Poland, that the German people never would have stood for such horror on their own land. Poles, I was told, had welcomed the camps. They'd embraced the chance to see Jews die around them. Even my mother, who was saved by a Polish family, told me the family only did it for the money.

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[775] Art Spiegelman's highly popular Holocaust comic books *Maus* and *Maus* II depict Poles as bad-tempered, unfeeling pigs who go around saluting in Nazi fashion and greeting each other with "Heil Hitler." Contrary to all evidence, the kapo function is Auschwitz is assigned exclusively to Polish pigs, who excel in cruelty and especially in tormeting Jews. Not surprisingly, GradeSaver, a popular online student study guide provider, states: "A 'kapo' is a *Polish* supervisor at a concentration camp." See Internet: <http://www.gradesaver.com/maus/study-guide/character-list/>. Although touted as an educational tool, the style of *Maus* is reminiscent of the Nazi propaganda rag *Der Stürmer:* Poles are invariably brutal bigots, blackmailers and murderers. The use of pigs as symbols of Poles is a lesson that cannot be lost upon the youngest of readers, the very word "pig" being universally used as a term of derision. For Jews, a pig is unclean animal. According to the Chabad-Lubavitch Media Center (Internet: <http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2376474/jewish/Pigs-Judaism.htm>), "There is probably no animal as disgusting to Jewish sensitivities as the pig. It's not just because it may not be eaten: there are plenty of other animals that aren't kosher either, but none of them arouse as much disgust as the pig. Colloquially, the pig is the ultimate symbol of loathing; when you say that someone 'acted like a *chazir* [pig],' it suggests that he or she did something unusually abominable." An Israeli court found a Jewish woman guilty of racism for putting up posters depicting Islam's Prophet Mohammad as a pig. Pork-eating immigrants from Russia have also been the focus of volatile demonstrations in Israel. After one such demonstration, David Benziri, a leading Sephardi rabbi and brother of an Israeli cabinet minister, said: "There is nothing so anti-Jewish as pig." At these rallies Christian Russian immigrants are called the "abomination of Satan," accused of "flooding the land with pork, prostitution, impurity and filth," and there are calls for their segregation by Orthodox Jews. See Alan Philps, "Pork-eating Gentiles stir outrage in Israel," *National Post* [Toronto], November 24, 1999. It is most unlikely that this point would have been lost on Art Spiegelman when he chose to portray Poles as pigs. In the biographical introduction to the excerpt from *Maus* that appears in the *Norton Anthology of American Literature,* editors Jerome Klinkowitz and Patricia B. Wallace comment that Spiegelman's representation of Poles as pigs is "a dietary contrast with Jews, but also a *calculated insult*" (7th edition, Volume E, p. 3091). A similar point was made by Harvey Pekar, who describes himself as a Jew with a background similar to Spiegelman's: "When he [Spiegelman] shows them [Poles] doing something admirable and still portrays them as pigs, he's sending a mixed message." See *The Comics Journal*, no. 113, December 1986. In *MetaMaus: A Look Inside a Modern Classic, Maus* (New York: Pantheon, 2011), Spiegelman divulged his actual reasons for portraying Poles as pigs: It is to bash Poles. With reference to his father's attitude towards Poles, he quips, "So my metaphor [mice to be killed outright, and pigs to be exploited and eaten] was somehow able to hold that particular vantage point while still somehow acknowledging my father's dubious opinion of Poles as a group." (P. 122.) He adds that, "'And considering the bad relations between Poles and Jews for the last hundred years in Poland, it seemed right to use a non-Kosher animal.'" (P. 125.) For an in-depth discussion of the treatment of Poles in *Maus* see "The Problems wirh Spiegelman's Maus: Why *Maus* Should Not Be Taught in High Schools or Elementary Schools," Internet: <http://www.kpk-toronto.org/2014/docs/maus_2014_why_it_should_not_be_taught.pdf> and the companion Q&A, "Poles as Pigs in Spiegelman's *Maus*: Distorting Holocaust History," Internet: <http://www.kpk-toronto.org/2014/docs/maus_2014_questions_and_answers.pdf>.

Elie Wiesel and Alan M. Dershowitz are other prominent exponents of a style of writing about Poles that must surely be placed in that broad category of what French-Jewish historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet refers to as "the sort of primitive anti-Polish sentiments that too often characterize those whom I shall call 'professional Jews'." See Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Jews: History, Memory, and the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 182. As Columbia University historian István Deák has noted, "No issue in Holocaust literature is more burdened by misunderstanding, mendacity, and sheer racial prejudice than that of Polish-Jewish relations during World War II." See István Deák, "Memories of Hell," *The New York Review of Books,* June 26, 1997.

> The reasonable part of me didn't believe this. People don't risk their lives for money alone, and such horrible, sweeping statements couldn't possibly apply to an entire population without benefit of nuance or exception. But these perceptions were there, coloring my expectations. …
>
> I think I knew that 75 percent of Dutch Jews had been murdered. But when I thought about the Netherlands, I'd thought about other, more pleasant things—windmills, tulips, open fields. I'd never thought to hate the Dutch for what they did to Anne Frank. And yet I'd always blamed the Poles for Auschwitz.[776]

On arriving in North America, survivors from Poland were expected to conform to certain preconceived stereotypes about Poles in their accounts of their wartime experiences. As one candid survivor describes,

> They expected from me accounts of a certain kind. What horrible things the Germans had done, how mean the Poles were toward the Jews, how beautiful Jewish culture was, and what a shame that all that was destroyed by the vile Germans and horrible Poles.
>
> I didn't want to adopt that tone; I rebelled against it inwardly. Earlier, it would not have occurred to me to defend the Poles, but now when I saw that the American Jews wanted me to join in creating a stereotype, to prove American-Jewish superiority on cue, I refused to do it. So I said: "There were all kinds of Poles. Some are like this, others like that. It's difficult to generalize." They were very disappointed.[777]

It is not surprising, therefore, that a scholarly survey of Jewish Holocaust survivors indicates that Poles have been particularly tarred and that Polish Jews have a particular, but not exclusive, penchant for anti-Polish and anti-Catholic sentiments. Among Polish Jews the perception that anti-Semitism in the surrounding society was a "very important" factor in the execution of the Holocaust was shared by many more respondents than was the case among non-Polish Jews, even though the role of many other nations, such as the French, the Dutch, the Norwegians, not to mention the Balts, the Ukrainians, and the Romanians, in implementing the Holocaust has been demonstrably proven. Similarly, among Polish Jews, the perception that non-Jews "cooperated and supported" the Nazi extermination of the Jewish people was much more characteristic (frequent) than among their non-Polish counterparts. (Characteristically, almost all of the survivors identified the Catholic Church as the religious denomination most hostile to Jews, even though the Catholic clergy provided far more assistance to the Jews than did the Protestant clergy, and the largest share of survivor respondents—34 percent—appeared to agree with the John Cornwell assessment —that Pope Pius XII was personally anti-Semitic and not really opposed to Nazi policies toward Jews.) When asked to give reasons why assistance may not have been given to Jews by non-Jews during the Holocaust, most Polish survivors attributed it to anti-Semitism, even though Poland was the only country

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[776] Erin Einhorn, *The Pages In Between: A Holocaust Legacy of Two Families, One Home* New York: Touchstone/ Simon & Schuster, 2008), 48–49, 53. Einhorn first visted Poland in 1990, at age seventeen, as part of the March of the Living organized for Jewish high school students. The students visited Nazi concentration camps, but their hatred was directed at and reserved for the Poles. She recalls he own reaction: "I wasn't shocked by the ovens or piles of hair, which I'd expected. It was the houses. Out there in the field. Houses that looked as though they'd seen what there was to see. Damn Poles! I cursed them. They'd rather stew in the stench of death than to do something to stop it." Ibid., 50. When Einhorn produced a radio piece, in September 2002, on her new-found perspective to the resentment that lingered between Jews and Poles, her relatives were dismayed by her portrayal of Poland, as were many Jewish listners. Ibid., 263.

[777] Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams,* 117–18.

where the Germans routinely and systematically executed anyone suspected of providing any form of assistance to Jews. Among non-Polish survivors, that opinion was much less common, with a larger balance of more benign motives attributed to Gentiles such as "indifference," "fear of the Nazis," and "lack of information."[778]

Most alarmingly, and irrationally, Polish Jews appear to assign more blame to the Poles than the Germans, as illustrated by their ranking Poles as the most anti-Semitic of nations in the context of the Holocaust, ahead of the Germans and (often dramatically ahead of) various other nationalities who played a significant role in the annihilation of the Jewish population: Ukrainians, Austrians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Croatians, Dutch, and Norwegians. In fact, Polish Jews were almost twice as likely to attribute anti-Semitic attitudes to Poles as to Germans. Among Jewish respondents from Poland, 72 percent characterized prevalent public opinion in that country as cooperative with and supportive of the Nazi Final Solution policy; 25 percent viewed prevalent Polish opinion as passively accepting of the Final Solution.[779]

This is not a new phenomenon. Associating Poland with pogroms has become *de rigueur* in most Jewish circles. Salo Baron is one of those historians who frowns upon what may be called the cult of Jews-as-victims that existed even before the Nazi era. It got to point that pogroms have become dogmas. Referring to himself, he writes:

> Time and time again he has also had the perhaps tragic-comic experience of finding the Jewish public sort of enamored with the tales of ancient and modern persecutions. Denying, for example, that any large-scale pogroms had taken place in the territories of ethnographic Poland before 1936 evoked an instantaneous storm of protests not against the alleged perpetrators of such massacres, but against himself for venturing to deny them. Quite evidently, this lachrymose view of Jewish history has served as an eminent means of social control from the days of the ancient rabbis, and its repudiation might help further to weaken the authority of Jewish communal leadership.[780]

Not surprisingly, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, a historian and former chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, used the occasion of the imminent historic visit of the Pope John Paul II to Israel to assail the Pontiff in a speech to an international gathering of Jewish World War II military veterans by dragging up the traditional bogeyman of the wicked Catholic Pole. He urged Israelis not to celebrate the Pope's visit "until he clarifies what he was doing as a priest in Poland during the Second World War, when the Jewish community there was massacred."[781]

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[778] Alexander J. Groth, *Holocaust Voices: An Attitudinal Survey of Survivors* (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books/ Prometheus Books, 2003), 35–36, 154, 157.

[779] Groth, *Holocaust Voices,* 158–59, 164. The author, Alexander J. Groth, himself a survivor from Poland, also succumbs to the most primitive biases about Polish conduct during the war and the Poles' alleged support for the Final Solution. Ibid., 162–63. Yet, Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, the author of the famous appeal "The Protest" issued during the mass deportations from the Warsaw ghetto in summer of 1942, has been accused of anti-Semitism for taking note of the fact that many Jews "hate us more than they hate the Germans, and … make us responsible for their misfortune."

[780] Baron, *History and Jewish Historians,* 88.

[781] "Pope begins pilgrimage in Egypt," *National Post* (Toronto), February 25, 2000.

Little wonder that Jerzy Kosinki's autobiographical hoax, *The Painted Bird,* which presented Poles as cruel and primitive, was embraced wholeheartedly by Jewish-American elites and educators as fact,[782] and Jan T. Gross's pseudo-scholarly book *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz. An Essay in Historical Interpretation,* was greeted with superlative accolades in leading North American newspapers by Jewish-American "authorities" with no expertise in the subject matter who spared no opportunity to hurl derisive comments at the Poles.[783]

With statements like these being made incessantly in the face of little, if any, peer criticism, and given the near universal lack of introspection within the Jewish community about their own attitudes toward Poles, the prospect for the future is not encouraging. Is it little wonder that Ann Landers (née Esther "Eppie" Lederer), the world's most widely syndicated advice columnist, who often stressed her Jewish roots, called the Pope a "Polack" in a 1995 interview? Or that the November 14, 2007 episode of the Steven Levitan, Fox TV sitcom "Back to You" contained a "joke" accusing Poles of collaborating with the Nazis: "Bowling is in your Polish blood, like kielbasa, and collaborating with the Nazis." Could anyone imagine that a senator from Pennsylvania, Arlen Specter, would use a Republican State Committee luncheon, at the influential Commonwealth Club in New York, on December 12, 2008, as an opportunity to spew offensive Polish jokes? This list of offenders, which includes prominent members of the Jewish community but rarely members of other communities, can be multiplied. Given how frequently, and casually, such remarks are made there is every indication that we are dealing with a deeply imbedded pathology—one that is, unfortunately, widespread and tolerated. As a result, the spill-over into popular behaviour is almost inevitable. When Israeli spectators derided Polish tennis players Agnieszka and Urszula Radwańska, calling them "Catholics sluts," during the Fed Cup competition in Israel on February 8, 2013, the Israeli and international media remained silent about this outrageous behaviour and at least one report (Agence-France Presse) spinned this incident into the bald claim that "sections of the Israeli crowd made noisy allegations about anti-Semitism in Poland."[784] As Jewish-American sociologist explains, the real culprit here is not alleged Polish anti-Semitism but Jewish elitism:

> These points about Jewish eliteness become quite apparent if we take the example of the Poles and the current rash of Polish jokes that has infested the nation. The Polish joke is based upon the fact that the Pole is inferior, is at the bottom of the heap, and belongs to a group that is the very antithesis of an elite group. From this perspective, the Pole who has attained elite status is conflicted about his identity. Even if he accepts his

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[782] Even after two in-depth exposés of the utterly fictitous basis of Jerzy Kosinski's novel by investigative journalist Joanna Siedlecka, *Czarny ptasior* (Gdańsk: Marabut; Warsaw: CIS, 1994), translated as *The Ugly Black Bird* ([Washington, D.C.:] Leopolis Press, 2018) and James Park Sloan, *Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography* (New York: Dutton/ Penguin, 1996), the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum continued to endorse *The Painted Bird* as an "autobiographical" novel about "the wartime wanderings of a young boy through peasant villages in Poland … The graphic descriptions of the brutality and inhumanity facing the boy at every turn paint a picture of [the Poles'] absolute human depravity." See U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Fifty Years Ago: Revolt Amid the Darkness—1993 Days of Remembrance* (Washington, D.C., 1993).

[783] See, for example, Elie Wiesel, "The Killing After the Killing," *Washington Post,* June 25, 2006, and Thane Rosenbaum, "A Lethal Homecoming," *Los Angeles Times,* June 25, 2006.

[784] "Izraelczycy zaatakowali siostry Radwańskie: Poleciały wyzwiska?", *Dziennik.pl*, February 12, 2013; "Ojciec sióstr Radwańskich potwierdza, że w Izraelu wyzywano jego córki," *Dziennik.pl*, February 25, 2013; "Tennis: Radwanska Still Seethes Over Israel Fed Cup Row," Agence France-Presse, February 13, 2013.

> identity as a Pole, he suffers under the burden of being an exception. He has achieved elite status despite the inferiority of this group. Jews experience something quite different—namely, the feeling that one may have achieved eliteness precisely because of one's Jewishness.[785] (pp. 32-33).

Fortunately, from time to time, we hear the voices of righteous Jews, among them rabbis, who go out of their way to remember not only the bad deeds, but also the good deeds, though often small, that would otherwise be forgotten. Rabbi Abraham Feffer, who grew up in a household that shunned traditional Jewish views of their Christian neighbours, recollects his experiences (the correlation between the former and latter is both significant and remarkable):

> Yet many fortunate survivors from my own shtetl, remember well and with great fondness and admiration the help of the brave Christian farmers who lived in nearby villages where we worked on cold winter days. (In Poland, hiding a Jew, or feeding him was punishable by death, usually hanging). We remember how these men and women, at great peril, opened their poor "chatkis" [a *chatka* is a peasant cottage] to share with us warm soup, bread and potatoes.[786]

And another moving example from a person of humble origin:

> We must remined [sic] all those people, not Jews, who gave their hand to save many of our town when they escaped from the Nazi murderers. … The villagers who disperse pieces of bread and turnip on the ways, for the caravans of hungry people, who went under the watching of the S.S. The villagers who gave their shoes to barefooted and weak. How can we forget the villagers who refused to give food [to] the watchers of the women-caravans who were transported from work-camp.[787]

The efforts of those Jews who are prepared to look critically at the manner in which Polish-Jewish relations are usually presented are worth noting. Writing in *The Globe and Mail*, Steve Paiken made the following important points:

> And many Jews around the world blame the Poles nearly as much as the Germans for the Holocaust. They say it wasn't coincidental that the majority of the death camps were on Polish soil—that anti-Semitism in Poland made Hitler's Final Solution in Poland achievable. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir once summed up that view by saying that Poles drink anti-Semitism with their mother's milk. … The signs of change are even prompting some to challenge the long-held view that Poles were just about as guilty as the Germans for the Holocaust. That view is "ingrained," says Nathan Leipciger, chairman of the Canadian Jewish Congress

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[785] Marshall Sklare, *Observing America's Jews* (Hanover: University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press, 1993), 32–33.

[786] Feffer, *My Shtetl Drobin,* 22.

[787] Z. Tzurnamal, ed., *Lask: Sefer zikaron* [Memorial Book of Łask] (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Residents of Lask in Israel, 1968), 124–25.

> Holocaust Remembrance Committee, and a survivor of Auschwitz. "How can you say that? I was in camps where 90 per cent of the inmates were Poles. … Most of this [anti-Polish] feeling is just based on myth."[788]

A contemporary rabbi who has been outspoken in espousing fairness for the treatment of Poles is David Lincoln, a senior rabbi of Park Avenue Synagogue in New York. His inspiring article "Poland As Victim, Not Victimizer," which appeared in the *New York Jewish Week* (June 17, 2005), applauded long overdue changes to the March of the Living youth trips to Poland.

The candid admissions of some Jews rescued by Poles are particularly illuminating. When pressed on this point, some Jews have stated that they are not sure that they would risk their own lives to save Poles, and are quite certain that they would not endanger their children.[789] Yet this is the standard by which

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[788] Steve Paiken, "Poland Striving to Shake Off an Anti-Semitic Past", *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), May 29, 1992. Elsewhere, Nathan Leipciger pointed out that the Holocaust evoked little, if any, interest among Canadians after the war: "Few people were interested in our past. Most Canadians had heard about what happened to the Jews during the war but knew no details and were not interested in learning. On rare occasion when we opened up just a bit, our stories were met with disbelief." See Nate Leipciger, *The Wroght of Freedom* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2015), 190.

[789] See, for example, Irene Tomaszewski and Tecia Werbowski, *Zegota: The Rescue of Jews in Wartime Poland* (Montreal: Price-Patterson, 1994), 159, and the second revised edition: *Żegota: The Council for Aid to Jews in Occupied Poland, 1942–1945* (Montreal: Price-Patterson, 1999), 147; Hoffman, *Shtetl,* 247; Piotr Szczepański (Zbigniew Romaniuk), "Pogromy, mordy i pogromiki," *Kurier Poranny,* April 12, 1996 (edition AB).

Poles, and only Poles—several thousand of whom lost their lives helping Jews,[790] are judged. Historian Szymon Datner recorded the following statement by a Jewish woman whom he values highly for her honesty and courage: "I am not at all sure that I would give a bowl of food to a Pole if it could mean death for me and my daughter."[791] Janka Altman, a survivor of the Janowska concentration camp in Lwów who was sheltered, among other places, in an orphanage in Poronin near Zakopane, together with other Jewish children, wrote in 1978:

> Today with the perspective of time, I am full of admiration for the courage and dedication … of all those Poles who in those times, day in, day out, put their lives on the line. I do not know if we Jews, in the face of the tragedy of another nation, would be equally capable of this kind of sacrifice.[792]

Hanna Wehr, who survived in Warsaw with the help of Poles, wrote:

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[790] In total, several thousand Christian Poles—men, women and children, entire families and even whole communities—were tortured to death, summarily executed, or burned alive for rendering assistance to Jews. Hundreds of cases of Poles being put to death for helping Jews have been documented though the list is still far from complete (the author is aware of scores of additional cases). See the following publications on this topic: Philip Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1978), 184–85; Wacław Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity: Christian and Jewish Response to the Holocaust,* Part One (Washington, D.C.: St. Maximilian Kolbe Foundation, 1987), Part One; Wacław Bielawski, *Zbrodnie na Polakach dokonane przez hitlerowców za pomoc udzielaną Żydom* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce–Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 1987); The Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation–The Institute of National Memory and The Polish Society For the Righteous Among Nations, *Those Who Helped: Polish Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust,* Part One (Warsaw, 1993), Part Two (Warsaw, 1996), and Part Three (Warsaw, 1997). A portion of the last of these publications is reproduced in Appendix B in Richard C. Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles Under German Occupation, 1939–1944,* Second revised edition (New York: Hippocrene, 1997), and an extensive list of Polish victims also appears in Tadeusz Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust: Ethnic Strife, Collaboration with Occupying Forces and Genocide in the Second Republic, 1918–1947* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland, 1998), 119–23. Some Holocaust historians who deprecate Polish rescue efforts, such as Lucy S. Dawidowicz, have attempted to argue that essentially there was no difference in the penalty that the Poles and Western Europeans such as the Dutch faced for helping Jews. See Lucy C. Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981), 166. However, the sources on which Dawidowicz relies belie this claim. Raul Hilberg clarifies the situation that prevailed in Holland as follows: "If caught, they did not have to fear an automatic death penalty. Thousands were arrested for hiding Jews or Jewish belongings, but it was German policy to detain such people only for a relatively short time in a camp within the country, and in serious cases to confiscate their property." See Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945* (New York: Aaron Asher Books/Harper Collins, 1992), 210–11. Although the death penalty was also found on the books in other jurisdictions such as Norway and the Czech Protectorate, there too it was rarely used. See Nechama Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 215–16; Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity,* Part One, 111–18, 284–86, 294, 295. Such laxity was virtually unheard of in occupied Poland, where the death penalty was meted out with utmost rigour. Several Norwegian resistance fighters were executed for helping Jews to escape to Sweden, and a number of others imprisoned. See Mordecai Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous: Gentile Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (Hoboken, New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House; New York: The Jewish Foundation for Christian Rescuers, 1993), 366. Several dozen individuals in the Czech Protectorate were charged by Nazi special courts and sentenced to death. See Livia Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: Facing the Holocaust* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), 218–27, 303–304. Rescuers were also put to death in other occupied countries such as Lithuania. See Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), 326–27.

[791] Małgorzata Niezabitowska, *Remnants: The Last Jews of Poland* (New York: Friendly Press, 1986), 249.

[792] Marek Arczyński and Wiesław Balcerak, *Kryptonim "Żegota": Z dziejów pomocy Żydom w Polsce 1939–1945,* 2nd revised and expanded edition (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1983), 264.

> Everyone who states the view that helping Jews was during those times a reality, a duty and nothing more should think long and hard how he himself would behave in that situation. I admit that that I am not sure that I could summon up enough courage in the conditions of raging Nazi terror.[793]

A Polish Jew who often asked this question of Jewish survivors recalled: "The answer was always the same and it is mine too. I do not know if I would have endangered my life to save a Christian."[794] These replies should not come as a surprise. Heroes are few and far between and no people should be condemned for not producing them in great abundance. Moreover, as Eva Hoffman succinctly points out, "Before the war, most Poles *and Jews* did not include each other within the sphere of mutual and natural obligations."[795]

But we should be equally mindful of an intense current going the other way. One of its outspoken representatives, Mark Smith, an American journalist based in Scotland, after visiting Treblinka, a Nazi death camp in which the *Germans* murdered some 800,000 Jews, wrote:

> It was difficult to fight the rising hatred I suddenly felt for these peasants. My sense of justice wanted to reject such feelings, because it dishonoured those Poles who found ways to resist the Nazi tyranny and assist the persecuted—but the courageous were too few, and Poland's guilt is that of a nation that could have saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, in spite of the Germans, but did not.[796]

The notion that Poles could have easily saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of Jews is simply baseless—one that is rejected by reasonable historians like Yisrael Gutman, who lived through those times. With views like Mark Smith's and many others like him—which show a shocking ignorance of the reality of the German occupation as well as contempt for Poles and the value of *Polish* lives—appearing incessantly in mainstream North American, Western European and Israeli media, hope for mutual understanding is rather elusive. Another point to bear in mind is that the frequent dissemination of such views not only desensitizes audiences but is also contagious. Paul Gottfried, a respected professor of humanities at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania, has offered the following valuable insight about this growing phenomenon in the so-called "liberal" media:

> Allow me to conclude this gloomy account of ethnic hostility by noting two other features of recent anti-Polish outbursts. First, not all of those who propagate these truncated histories are Polish Jews, and the publishers and editors of those Canadian newspapers that have put out the worst slanders have identifiably WASP names. Why such people would take sides in an unseemly war between the first and second most victimized groups of the Nazi era may seem at first blush a bit baffling, but the explanation may be that like most WASPs of my acquaintance, these particular journalists have a desperate desire to be p.c. [politically

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[793] Hanna Wehr, *Ze wspomnień* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2001).

[794] Cited in Marc Hillel, *Le massacre des survivants: En Pologne après l'holocauste (1945–1947)* (Paris: Plon, 1985), 99.

[795] Hoffman, *Shtetl,* 247.

[796] Mark Smith, "Escape from Treblinka," *The Herald* (Scotland), May 31, 2010.

> correct]. Confessing to anti-Semitic crimes that one has not committed has become a litmus test of who is or is not a right-thinking *goy*, and for a *bien-pensant* WASP, the most convenient way to perform this penance is to call attention to insensitive ethnic Catholics. That way two birds are killed at the same time, engaging in liberal self-flagellation and sticking it to a group whom WASPs have always disliked far more than Jews. Thus publishers and reviewers, not all of them Jewish, praised the veracity of Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird*, a pseudo-autobiography by a bogus holocaust survivor, which first caused a stir in the 1960's. The vivid accounts of Polish peasant atrocities against Jews hiding from the Germans were here invented out of whole cloth. The real Kosinski and his family had been *protected* by Polish Catholic neighbors … and had supported the Soviets when they occupied their town in 1944. Last Easter the *Toronto Star* demonstrated my thesis of WASP atonement by warning Christians not to be too pleased about the Resurrection of their Savior. "The message of the Resurrection," explained the editorial, had led to massacres of Jews in the past, as had been the case in Catholic Poland. The best documented refutations of these charges against the Poles that I have seen did not get published in the *Star*'s letter section. They might have interfered with the p.c. penance being performed at the expense of those despised by liberal Protestants.[797]

This anti-Polish bias is firmly entrenched in the "liberal" North American mainstream media, who time and time again implicate Poland and the Poles in Nazi Germany's vilest deeds. On the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, leftist journalist Doug Saunders shifted the blame for Auschwitz (and the Holocaust) onto the Poles by implying that knowledge of the existence of this camp incriminated local Polish residents as collaborators in the Final Solution. This despite the fact that tens of thousands of Christian Poles were also murdered at Auschwitz.

> For other nations, the anniversary has entailed moral gymnastics. In Poland, where the Auschwitz camp near Krakow [Kraków] will be the site of a major international commemoration on Thursday, the government press agency has been aggressively encouraging international reporters to tell the stories of the handful [sic] of Poles who attempted to rescue victims from the camps.
>
> But the far larger number of Poles who knew about the camps or acquiesced or engaged in overt anti-Semitism at the time, have received not a mention from the country's leaders.[798]

Left-wing constituencies in Western Europe exhibit an obscene resurgence of antipathy toward Poland, often peppered with anti-Catholic rhetoric. Pilar Rahola, a Catalan member of the Spanish extreme Left and self-styled human rights activist, wrote in *El País*, a leading Spanish daily, on March 17, 2007: "Without any doubt, Poland is the key to the wickedness that culminated in the extermination of two thirds of the Jewish population of Europe." This is typical rhetoric from the Left. On November 25, 2020, Inmaculada Martínez, an author, popular speaker and advisor to Spain's Socialist government, tweeted: "Oh Poland. You allowed the Nazis put Jewish people in ghettos and construct and run extermination camps."

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[797] Paul Gottfried, "Polonophobia," *Chronicles,* January 1997, 12–14.

[798] Doug Saunders, "'Will the world ever learn'," *The Globe and Mail,* January 25, 2005.

APPENDIX

Hollywood's Ribbentrop-Molotov Legacy

The following lecture by Mieczysław Biskupski, based on his book *Hollywood's War with Poland, 1939–1945* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), was delivered at the First to Fight Conference held in Washington, D.C. in November 2019 (Internet: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-72mNYA6IU).

In the 1930s, the Hollywood film studios got cozy with Nazi Germany and agreed to censor its films for financial reasons.[799] Hollywood's much more destructive empowerment of the Soviet Union during the Second World War, which targeted Poland, was done purely for ideological reasons. The contrast of Hollywood's behaviours towards Nazi Germany and and the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and Occupied Poland, on the other, could not be more striking. In recent years, Hollywood has been exposed as a notorious hotspot for empowering and protecting sexual predators.

Hollywood's War with Poland, 1939–1945
Mieczysław B. Biskupski

During the Second World War, Hollywood created an image of Poland and of the Poles which was in fundamental contradiction to reality. This is of grave importance because the American public's understanding of the war was influenced significantly by Hollywood. Much of what the public knew of Poland's position in the war they knew as a result of the films they saw. This raises two basic questions. What Poland was Hollywood selling, and what explains their actions?

We must begin with an unfortunate background. The Americans really did not care about the east of Europe and really never had. This would explain generally the neglect of Polish issues in films. But it does not explain the content of these films. A few particulars.

Norway – which played a rather minor role in the war, created a collaborationist regime with the Nazis and sent volunteers to the SS – was featured in many films. Five alone appeared in a few months of 1942. In all of these films, the Norwegians were portrayed very sympathetically, indeed heroically. Why?

Italy, a German ally in the war, was never portrayed negatively. When Italians are indeed portrayed, they're either comic characters or pathetic victims of fascism. "Casablanca" would give us the first example, and Humphrey Bogart's film "Sahara" would give us the second.

France, home of a collaborationist Vichy Regime and a combatant against Americans in North Africa, was always portrayed sympathetically. The existence of a large and devoted underground was extolled. France was, bizarrely, lionized.

Czechoslovakia, which did nothing to resist German occupation and never created a serious underground movement – "the failure of a national resistance," said the Czech historian Vojtěch Mastný – was repeatedly and sympathetically depicted in American film. The most famous

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[799] In order to continue doing business in Germany after Hitler's ascent to power, all of the Hollywood studios—all but one of which were headed by Jews—agreed not to make films that attacked the Nazis or condemned Germany's persecution of Jews. The arrangement remained in place through the 1930s, as Hollywood studios met regularly with the German consul in Los Angeles and changed or cancelled movies according to his wishes. The studios acceded to the gradual Aryanization of their Jewish work force in Germany, then to Nazi censorship of their films when they screened in the Third Reich. This involved banning movies by directors such as Ernst Lubitsch, films starring Marlene Dietrich, and excising credits of actors or directors who were Jewish or considered politically objectionable, as well as cutting scenes that Nazi censors found offensive. See Ben Urwand, *The Collaboration: Hollywood's Pact with Hitler* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013).

example is the presentation of the leader of the European resistance movement in “Casablanca” as a Czech.

We should also note that in the same famous film, a Gestapo officer lists centers of anti-German resistance in Europe. But he never mentions Poland. The size and significance of the Polish underground simply drew his attention not at all. The clear implication of the films is that there was *no* resistance movement in Poland.

But Poland was “the first to fight,” the home of the largest underground resistance – which, of course, we know – the creator of a large army which fought with distinction in many battles. Need we mention Monte Cassino or the Battle of Britain, and so on and so forth? The locus of the Holocaust, the site of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943, the incomparable Warsaw Rising of 1944 – why did this get so little attention by Hollywood? Very little and very prejudicial. Indeed, most of those themes aren’t portrayed at all.

Only three films were set in Poland during all of World War II. Let us consider each for a moment.

First and largest was the 1942 film, which many of you have probably seen, entitled, “To Be or Not to Be?” Set in occupied Warsaw, beyond compare the most positive depiction of the Poles in the entire war.

But several things are troubling. Most strikingly, it’s a comedy. Should a film set in a suffering country be a comedy? Can you imagine a comedy about the Holocaust? Were there any Hollywood comedies about Russians or French or Czechs or Norwegians or others suffering under German occupation? Did the American filmgoer understand the plight of Poland by watching a slapstick interaction of Gestapo agents?

In the film, the Polish resistance movement is portrayed to be an *English* creation, and Poles report to British, not Polish, leaders. Neither here nor in any other American film is the very existence of a Polish government in exile mentioned, and they do not control their own underground.

In a celebrated bit of dialog, a Gestapo officer jokes that, “an inept Polish actor does to Shakespeare what we are doing to Poland.” And then he bursts into laughter.

It was not funny. *Time Magazine* thought it was hilarious. It was disgusting. But according to film critics, the Poles show – quote, (unintelligible) obstinacy and idiocy. Their emotional patriotism is ridiculed. They are perhaps charming, but really, quite silly. A country not to be taken seriously.

Therefore, ignoring Poland is perfectly reasonable.

Far more troubling is the 1944 film “In Our Time,” set also in 1939 Poland. Let us synthesize the complex film. Pre-1939 Poland was run by careless aristocrats who treated all with contempt. In the original screenplay, Polish landowners were flogging peasants. Warsaw is pro-German in 1939. High-ranking members of the Polish government are allies of the Nazis. They steadfastly refuse to modernize the army. They flee the country when their efforts at collaboration with the Germans apparently failed. The Polish army, composed largely of ridiculous cavalry, is defeated, apparently, in a single day.

The film’s major character is a Polish landowner. He is completely incompetent, and only with the arrival of his British wife does he know how to run anything at all. She, incidentally, lectures the Poles on British courage in opposing Hitler, while the Poles, apparently by comparison, did not. An odd version of appeasement to be sure – a term that is magically used to describe the Poles, and not the English.

She also tells her husband that Poland should be concerned about the Polish corridor, whereas the foolish Poles apparently have dismissed the issue.

All farmers are benighted peasants who have never seen a tractor, and they pray in terror when they actually do see one. Polish shopkeepers are crooks, and blather patriotic nonsense, making proud moments in the national past appear nothing more than ridiculous.

At the end, all becomes clear. Poland was a worthless, incompetent and reactionary state, run by fossils. Only a radically new government could save them.

Since this film was released as Soviet forces moved into Poland – as a screenwriter, Howard Koch was known for his communist sympathies – it was pretty obvious what this fine, new Poland was going to be.

The Bureau of Motion Pictures, President Roosevelt's agency to analyze films, was delighted by the film's political message and praised it highly. All major American newspapers celebrated the film.

No Allied government in World War II was portrayed in a manner something like this. It's literally political slander. Ah, it was simply an outrage, and the Polish government was badly hurt by it.

The rarely noted late-war film entitled "None Shall Escape" is probably the first American film to actually mention the Holocaust. The Polish underground is depicted by a single character, and he is insane. This compared to the large, coordinated and effective underground in France, or Czechoslovakia, which Hollywood repeatedly referred to.

These are only three films, but I'd like to talk about a few scraps, if I might.

The Polish role in the Battle of Britain is reduced to nothing in "International Squadron." But countries who contributed no pilots at all are noted. Poles who appear in original screen drafts are regularly edited out, or their names are changed so they no longer appear Polish.

"Desperate Journey" of 1942 originally referred to the Polish underground, but the issue was edited out before the film was shot.

The 1942 "The Conspirators" features several positive Polish characters, but the final script removes *all*, save one, who is portrayed as mentally unbalanced.

A heroic Pole is made a Czech in a famous movie, "Lifeboat." Although in the original story, he was a Polish hero, now he's a slightly demented Czech, and represents the Czech position in the war and not the Polish.

In "Airforce," the failed and much troubled crewmate is a Pole.

In "Action in the North Atlantic," the only sailor who wishes to leave the service and not continue in the service in the United States is a Pole … and in case you couldn't guess that … his name is Pulaski.

The film "Destination Tokyo" has a Polish airman, but he is changed into an Irishman by Albert Maltz at the last minute. Mr. Maltz, the screenwriter, was a member of the Communist Party.

Such manipulative editing is appallingly demonstrated in the much-praised "Story of GI Joe" – and I'd like to draw particular attention to this. This film is set at the Battle of Monte Cassino. The Poles, who as we know, won the battle, are completely omitted. Credit is given to the Americans, who in reality were twice defeated by the Germans at the Battle of Monte Cassino.

Victory at Monte Cassino saw the raising of a *Polish* flag, and the playing of a *Polish* bugle call. In the film, it was the American flag which was raised. All three of the film's screenwriters, by the way, were members of the Communist Party.

In “The Edge of Darkness” of 1943, the underground is all Norwegian. But there is a Pole, who is nothing more than a prostitute, and she lives with a Gestapo agent, where she engages in rather disgusting sexual practices. To portray one of your allies as a pro-German tramp is simply outrageous.

The celebrated “Why We Fight” series, prepared for propaganda purposes by the American government, repeats the usual nonsense. The Polish air force was destroyed on the ground. The Poles relied foolishly on cavalry. The Polish population contained many traitors.

Uh, the Russian invasion of September 17, 1939, was not really an invasion at all. In fact, the Russians did nothing wrong. They were trying to protect Poland against the Germans. Which makes them allies, really, of the Poles, rather than enemies.

When the Battle of Britain is explained, the Poles are omitted from the Battle of Britain.

A planned contribution would discuss the military contributions of Mexico and Brazil to the Second World War, among others.

No efforts by the Poles were to be included.

The Russian government is endlessly praised.

And this series was enormously important, and shown to workers in munitions factories and members of the armed services.

In broader analysis, the Poles were referred to as Polaks, are portrayed as cowards, madmen, Polish refugees, are presented as cheats and liars. Major moments in the war, like the risings in Warsaw in 1943 and 1944, are *never mentioned*.

In fine, Hollywood told the American audience very little about Poland and the Poles. But what they did say was usually insulting, degrading and ridiculing. They either edited them out of the war or portrayed them as reactionary and ridiculous. No other Ally received such treatment.

When the Polish government in exile, including the legendary Jan Karski, pleaded with Hollywood to make a film about the Holocaust, they refused.

The fact that biographies of Chopin and Madame Curie were issued at roughly the same time is indeed a curiosity.

Inevitably, we must ask why Hollywood adopted such a negative attitude towards an ally, and seemingly went to some effort to edit them out of a serious role in the war. What were their motives?

First, and by far the most important, was the issue of Soviet Russia. By the time the Americans entered the conflict, Moscow had already become a significant actor in the war against Germany. The Roosevelt administration, and much of the American population, realized that victory over such a formidable foe would be very difficult should the Americans become involved with Russia. Indeed, as some have argued, it was impossible for the Americans ever to beat the Russians, so therefore, you couldn’t say anything nasty about them. The greater the Soviet role, the smaller would be the cost to the Americans. Hence, the Soviets must be provided all means of support imaginable. Not just money and materiel, but support for their geostrategic ambitions, as was referred to earlier today.

Whereas we may wonder whether the Roosevelt administration calculated the cost of such accommodation, our answer must begin with brutal honesty.

Soviet demands, ever more clear, were at the expense of the countries of Eastern Europe, particularly Poland.

Hence, the propaganda agency of the Roosevelt administration, which was Hollywood, had to turn out many films heroizing the Russians and ignoring, or deprecating, the sacrifices of others.

In fine, to discuss Poland, to raise “the Polish Question,” inevitably requires some attention to Russia’s behavior towards their western neighbor. Hence, to say *anything* about Poland raises awkward questions and casts Soviet Russia, inevitably, in a bad light.

To avoid this, two possibilities are available: ignore Poland, and thus prevent it from becoming an important subject; or portray the Poles and the Polish Second Republic in a negative light.

Hollywood acted consciously to create a mythic presentation of the war which would be useful in influencing American public opinion. Czechs and Norwegians, for example, could be lauded with praise. But the Poles could not. The Russians had to be endlessly portrayed as great heroes, without flaws.

Closely related is the extraordinary collaboration between Hollywood and the Roosevelt administration. Washington made its wishes very clear to the studios – and one studio, Warner Brothers, for instance, told the Roosevelt administration that they regarded themselves as an agency of the American government. With the exception of MGM, all the major studios were directed by members of the Democratic Party, who were hostile to the Republicans and supportive of the Roosevelt administration. And Roosevelt wanted a heroic Russia.

All the studios found this rather simple. Poland had *never* been of interest in Hollywood, and it never was. In 1939, many Hollywood screenwriters were politically far to the left, and hence well inclined to the Soviets. By contrast, Poland’s international image was one of traditionalism, religious belief, and convinced opposition to communism. All these features were repellent to the Hollywood community.

A controversial and difficult-to-quantify aspect was whether the strong Jewish presence in Hollywood was a factor. My view is it’s much exaggerated. The emergence of the American film industry included many prominent Jews of Eastern European origin. They arrived in the United States, as had the Poles, at a time when Jewish-Polish relations were in a dreadful decline in Europe, beset by intolerant racism, leaning to resentment if not actually hatred. Hence, it is only reasonable to conclude the Jews in Hollywood, recently arrived from Eastern Europe, would have little reason to paint a positive picture of Poland.

Thus, there are many reasons why Hollywood would be well positioned to present an unfair, indeed perfidious, image of Poland.

But what resources were available to the Poles to counter this effort? Very few indeed. The Polish community in the United States was quite poor, and it had little influence in the larger society. The Polish government in exile had very little capacity to influence the American public opinion in a manner hostile to a Roosevelt-Hollywood coalition.

Simply put, the Poles were doomed to watch the suffering and gallantry of their own country being ignored and defamed … and could do very little about it.

“When Washington Burned”

National Post (Toronto)
April 4, 2018 (print edition)
http://nationalpost.com/opinion/fifty-years-ago-today-mlk-was-killed-and-before-my-eyes-washington-burned

by Raymond Heard

Fifty years ago today, MLK was killed. And before my eyes, Washington burned. I witnessed unprecedented looting, rioting and arson that destroyed about 1,000 buildings. Thirteen people died, eight of them in fires.

Fifty years ago today, on Thursday, April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn. As Washington correspondent for the Montreal Star and London Observer, I hurriedly booked flights to Memphis to cover the aftermath. Just before I was to leave by taxi for National Airport however, I got a call from a contact, an African-American named Charles Hightower, director of the progressive anti-apartheid lobby, The American Committee on Africa.

“Do not go to Memphis!” Charles said. “Stay here! This city is going to blow!”
I took Hightower’s advice and stayed in my office in Washington, in the National Press Building on 14th Street, while most other White House correspondents flew to Memphis. When they returned from Memphis, they saw pillars of smoke and fire billowing over the city as they landed. Washington had blown.

During those three days, I witnessed unprecedented looting, rioting and arson that destroyed about 1,000 buildings, including a major department store. For nearly two weeks, the capital of the United States was occupied, under the orders of lame-duck president Lyndon Johnson, by 13,600 federal and National Guard troops who put up pillboxes at the gates of the White House.

Friday the 5th began slowly. Tens of thousands of mainly white civil servants drove in from outer Washington suburbs and the Virginia and Maryland suburbs to work downtown unaware of the fact, which the media had willfully downplayed, that some arson and rioting had occurred overnight. By 10 a.m. the alarms of fire engines and police cars, and smoke rising from burning buildings in the mainly black inner city, alerted the denizens of the government buildings to the fact that they were in danger. They responded by running to their cars and in a mass panic, driving out of the downtown area even if it meant using the wrong side of major roads and the interstate highways to reach safety in suburbia.

This panicked exodus actually became a major contributor to the spread of the violence. Due to the epic traffic jams caused by the fleeing civil servants, U.S. Army units stationed in Virginia and even North Carolina were unable to enter Washington until late that afternoon.

Until the troops arrived, I witnessed what I later quipped was an equal-opportunity riot. Many young whites mingled with blacks in, among other things, burning to the ground a department store two blocks from the White House by pouring gasoline over the furniture and torching it with cigarette lighters.

At the centre of the black inner city, 14th Street and U Street, we witnessed the black power leader, Stokely Carmichael, addressing a swelling crowd with these words: “Do not act like a bunch of (idiots) by burning down your own houses. Torch Whitey’s property over there in Georgetown!” He was obeyed.

Around 1 p.m., I went to the top of the National Press Building and counted 90 fires burning, many of them adjacent to the Capitol Buildings. I said to a colleague, “What we are seeing here is The Fire Next Time,” a reference to the prescient 1963 book by African-American activist

James Baldwin. The title referenced an African-American spiritual song, where God warns Noah that He would not punish man with a flood again. “The fire next time,” God said.

Nobody seemed to be afraid of getting killed or hurt, so I proceeded up 14th Street again to U Street to hear more speeches. Some of these extolled the virtues of Robert Kennedy, “our blue-eyed soul-brother.” His assassination would follow three months later in America’s year of living dangerously, a year of unmet expectations that ended with the triumph of Richard Nixon, a decidedly less charismatic politician.

It was around 4:30 p.m. when federal troops managed to get to the inner city. President Johnson, to his everlasting credit, had instructed the troops not to shoot to kill, but to use tear gas and mass arrests to quell racial violence. A military officer, using a bullhorn, told the crowd to disperse and warned that tear gas would be used if he was disobeyed. The crowd, perhaps 10,000 strong, ignored him. So the troops opened fire with gas canisters. One canister, which I have kept, burst beneath my legs, inflicting a small flesh wound on my thigh. The crowd dispersed, pursued by troops and police officers.

I ran south down 14th Street, buildings blazing around us. Making it back to the Press Building seemed unlikely given the chaos, so I gave a friendly old black woman $20 to let me stay in her basement until things quieted down. From her basement, I phoned updates to Montreal radio and TV stations.

I finally made it home to Reston, Va., exhausted, late on Sunday, after days in the burning city. My daughter, Josephine, asked “Who tear-gassed you today, Dad?” She recalled that I had come home from the 1967 Detroit and Newark race riots in a similar condition.

But Washington itself had gotten off comparatively lightly. During the long, hot summer of ’67, in the Detroit and Newark disturbances, the body counts were 43 and 26, respectively. Thirteen people died in the Washington riots, eight of them in fires. It was heartbreaking, but I had expected it to be much worse. President Johnson deployed well-trained troops and police officers, many themselves African-Americans, to use tear gas, instead of bullets. Most people got home alive. One hates to think what the death toll would have been if Nixon had been in command in the spring of 1968.