

Jan Slomka /

From Serfdom to Self-Government. Memoirs of a Polish
Village Mayor 1842-1927

trans from Polish by William John Rose

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- village of Dzikov, county of Tarnobrzeg
- education 2 winters, learned the three R's
- 6 The next winter I went to school in town where at that time the teacher was Mr. Karasinski. That ended my education, two winters in all. Not until later, when I became mayor, did I get much freedom in reading & still more in my writing - to keep the records: with the result that what I know serves all my needs. I can read, write, and do simple arithmetic - when necessary.
- 24 - new fashions intro in 1870
- the demands of these tastes & likings were met by v. Jewish shops in Tarnobrzeg, whose numbers grew as time went on.
- 25 - hair cut off at betrothal was either saved in a chest or sold to Jewish women for a small sum
- 26 - only salt & beverages were bought in v. shops, everything else was of their own growing
- 29 - the housewives in Dzikov learned to make coffee from v. cooks in town houses in T., & one taught another
- 37 - German colonists in Pawa, 4 leagues away
- 39 - vegetable gardens were unknown in their village; only one village grew them - were found only in the manor house & later in the towns
- 42 In time, when Jews began to settle in v. villages, provision was made that only Catholic villagers could share in v. pasture
- 44 pig bristles were eagerly bought by v. Jews or by v. cobbler for sewing boots & shoes - commanded a good price
- 46 < howl of lamentation, as loud as a church organ >
- Jews would begin from harvest time to buy up provisions from v. farmers; mostly paying them with vodka: and this [grain] they would sell during v. hunger-period at huge profit
- 47 - arranged to take a party of Jews to Dembica just to see v. train
- Peasants are sedentary ↔ Jews mobile
- the branch RR near him built in 1887
- 50 - huge fire burns down all of T in 1862, June 5
- destroyed Dominican Church & manor house of Jachowicz family

- peasants said "it was a heaven-sent punishment for blasphemy perpetrated by v. Jews, when they staged a mock representation of sufferings of our Lord"

53 Terms were always made in town on St Stephen's Day or at New Years for whole year (for hiring servants)

- 54 * - Jews would buy up old sheepskin coats from house to house in v. spring, patch them up & then sell them in v. market place in autumn ~ (also 65; be mended at home-bought for one guilder resold for 5-6)

55 < Barges loaded with grain called Berliners >

- 56 - raftsmen's life a life of debauchery

The raftsmen drinks & loses his pay

His young ones are crying by night & day

Yes, they weep, & the mother with them,

The footloose father has gone & left them

- Jews were most active in signing up these drivers

- peasants eager for the job would bribe them with gifts

58 - a few families lived from smuggling - linens, vodka

- 59 - the proprietors of this business were all Jews, mostly from T Berek's tavern located at the ~~river~~ ferry on v. river bank Berek in charge of smuggling vodka; Russian patrols would get drunk there

60 Jewish tradesmen hired teamsters to transfer goods from Tarnow

- 61 - Tailoring was mostly in the hands of the Jews. They made waistcoats of homespun linen, gals top-coats in v. old style, furs, i.e. sheepskins with cloth outside, & white top-coats in v. Cracow style from imported cloth

65 Siaja, the best tailor around; called Thief-Siaja & was watched carefully; for food he had baked potatoes, milk fresh from v. cow & bread - he was careful to eat only 'kosher' victuals. His sons followed him in the same trade.

Women's tailor - fur coats made to-order - on the premises

- they knew he kept kosher; he knew they mistrusted him

- 65-6 - ritual for buying the used sheepskin

Jew: What do you want for this house-trap?

Peasant: You've lots of time to delouse it!

- Jew, all the time shaking & beating it with a stick

66 - Catholic cobblers in T - major craft there

67 yearly Market Fair in Majdan

- harness-makers all Catholic - < author keeps emphasizing this >

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Memoirs of a Polish Village - Mayor (2)

- 69 wheelrights sold to farmers & to Jews (by contract)
- Jews would resell at a profit these peasant products either for cash or on installment plan
- 70 Cooperwares available every Monday at Maydan
- coopers generally preferred to sell their goods to Jews for cash on the spot without bargaining over each article than to sell directly to other peasants
- 72 - so too the potters who sold their goods wholesale before they were even burned
- author emphasizes in each case that the merchant was better off than the craftsmen
- 74 - buying of hides & selling of them to the tannery was in the hands of Jews & they too bought the finished products & sold it in their shops
- Trading & Traders 78-101 <XCXX> H6
- 104 There would scarcely be a Sunday or holiday without a dance being held in T.; & most famous blip in & taverns of Soula & of 582"12. The Jews furnished & music starting soon after dinner & sometimes keeping on till morning. Every dance was paid for separately...
- 105 here & few was well hurt. He would hinder serious differences & would chase out small boys if too many crowded in weddings 105-115
- 114 - for weddings & music was always furnished by peasant musicians, & only for Sunday gatherings in towns did & Jews do & playing
- 116 - tricks played on Jews who were thought to be cowardly
Jews indispensable for peasant entertainment
how a peasant fooled a greedy grain dealer
- 131 1st hospital built by Countess in 1864 → public hospital 1903
- 132 apothecary shop - only one
- Jewish barber blood-letter
- <Religious celebration 142-147>
- serfdom abolished 1848
- 162 - language of administration was German - all minutes & records kept in H lang
- in 1869 Polish made official in Galicia
- 167 - no peasants cottage in those days had a book or newspaper - not even a prayerbook

1864 T got its public school

- 171 - older peasants called themselves Masurians
- people knew only so much of - just as they themselves
had gone there or had heard of from their elders
- no sense of nationhood

Story of how the author got up enough guts to compete with
Janek P the lime merchant; Stankiewicz travels to Cracow &
contracts with... mother Jan 177 - 181

(lime kilns

- 210 - Resentment towards Jews
for not joining VP - don't
do active duty - don't
help in the war effort
- 212 - wealthy Jews 1st to flee
- 213 then rest panic
- 214 Jewish pop flees in face of
Russian advance
- 217 Russians ^{looting} pillage shops
- 219 Russians single out v Jews
for punishment
- 225 Author accuses Jews of informing
on a mayor of Gorzyce to
Austrians, says Jews - 17