

following the Arab-Israeli War of 1967). From 1986 to 1991, the editor in chief was Adam Kwaterko, and during the paper's last two months, Adam Rok functioned in this role.

*Folks-shtime* had various supplements over the years: *Illustrirte folks-shtime* (Illustrated Folks-shtime), *Folks-shtime far undzere kinder* (Folks-shtime for Our Children), and *Der fraynd fun yidishn historishn institut* (The Friend of the Institute of Jewish History) in Yiddish; and *Nasz Głos* (Our Voice) and *Głos Ludu* (Voice of the People) in Polish.

The Polish Yiddish biweekly *Dos yidische vort-Słowo Żydowskie* (The Yiddish Word) declared itself in January 1992 the successor to *Folks-shtime*. However, the importance of the Yiddish section (under the editorship of Kwaterko) was gradually reduced.

• Mordechai Altshuler, ed., *Yahadut Berit ha-Mo'atsot ba-aspaklaryah shel 'itonut Yidish be-Polin* (Jerusalem, 1975), in Hebrew and Yiddish, pp. 18–22, 33–38; Hersh Smolar, *Oyf der letster pozitsye mit der letster hofenung* (Tel Aviv, 1982), pp. 188–189, 215–219, 256–261, 399–400, and passim.

—BORIS KOTLERMAN

Translated from Russian by I. Michael Aronson

**FOLKS-TSAYTUNG**, Yiddish Social Democratic newspaper published from 25 November 1921 to 26 September 1939 and from February 1946 to January 1949 in Warsaw. *Folks-tsaytung* (People's Newspaper) was the central organ of the General Jewish Workers Union in Poland (the Bund) and the successor to the Bundist daily organ *Lebens-fragen* (Vital Questions). In 1923, it changed its name three times: to *Di naye tsayt* (The New Times), *Unzer tsayt* (Our Times), and finally *Unzer folks-tsaytung* (Our People's Newspaper). As of 17 January 1926, it was called *Folks-tsaytung* (People's Newspaper), and one day later it adopted the name *Naye folks-tsaytung* (New People's Newspaper). It was permanently in opposition to the authorities, was confiscated dozens of times, and was suspended on 5–11 October 1932. It began as a weekly, and from 1922 to 1939 was published daily. During its postwar revival it appeared only once every three to four weeks. It had four through eight pages and an approximate circulation of 10,000 in 1929; 18,000 in 1935; 14,000 in 1938; and 4,000 in its last year. It was the last Jewish newspaper in Warsaw at the beginning of the Nazi occupation.

S The formal editor-publishers changed frequently. In practice, the newspaper's L stances were determined by an editorial



Young man with *Folks-tsaytung*, Daugavpils, Latvia, ca. 1921. (YIVO)

board appointed by the Central Committee of the Bund. Among the writers who contributed to the newspaper were Dovid Eynhorn, Melech Ravitch, Józef Jaszuński, I. J. Singer, Yoysef Tunkel, Joseph Opato-shu, Itsik Manger, Yoshue Perle, Yekhi-el Yeshaye Trunk, and Yisroel Shtern, among others.

The newspaper maintained a reputation as a serious and solid publication that avoided frenzied headlines and carried on a struggle against base and tasteless writing. In addition to being a Bundist organ with an anti-Communist and anti-Zionist orientation, the paper devoted regular columns to science and technology, the home and family, and sports, and also produced a literary page.

In 1946 the newspaper was revived under the name *Folks-tsaytung* until the Bund liquidated itself and merged with the Polish United Workers Party. It covered, among other topics, the revival of Jewish life in Poland and the situation in Palestine. It also published the memoirs of Holocaust survivors and poetry and prose.

The newspaper's supplements were *Di naye yugnt* (The New Youth; April–August 1922), *Kleyne folks-tsaytung* (Little People's Newspaper; 1926–1929), and the daily “after-dinner” newspaper *2 baytog* (2:00 p.m.; April–September 1932).

• Daniel Blatman, *Lema'an herutenu ve-herutkhem: Ha-Bund be-Polin, 1939–1949* (Jerusalem, 1996); M. Fuks, “Materiały do bibliografii żydowskiej prasy robotniczej i socjalistycznej wydawanej w Polsce w latach 1918–

1939. II. Prasa Bundu,” *Biuletyn ŻIH* 106 (1978): 68–70, with English and Yiddish abstracts; Y. Sh. Herts, “*Folks-tsaytung*, 1918–1939,” in *Di yidische prese vos iz geven*, ed. Dovid Flinker, Mordechai Tsanin, and Sholem Rozenfeld, pp. 151–169 (Tel Aviv, 1975).

—BORIS KOTLERMAN

Translated from Russian by I. Michael Aronson

**FONDANE, BENJAMIN.** See Fundoianu, Beniamin.

**FOOD AND DRINK.** The distinctiveness of East European Jewish foodways arises from local understandings of ritual requirements, the historical legacy of early Western Ashkenazic traditions, a symbiotic relationship with local culinary practices, regional variations specific to Eastern Europe, and the central role of Jews in the food and beverage economy of the region.

#### Ritual Requirements and Customary Practices

A specifically Jewish food culture and economy were shaped by a wide range of ritual requirements, customary practices, and stringencies pertaining to kashrut (and vernacular understandings of what was kosher and what was *treyf*); dishes adapted to the prohibition on lighting a fire on the Sabbath and holy days; and observances associated with Passover and other festivals. Communal rules, concessions, and taxes governed the sale of kosher meat, yeast, matzo, and citrons, while stringencies of various kinds distinguished Jewish communities from one

another. The type of knife used for *shkhi-te* (ritual slaughter) was a major point of contention between Hasidim and their opponents. *Treybern* (Heb., *nikur*; porging) of the hindquarters of kosher animals was allowed in some areas, but not in others: the *treyberer* (*menaker*; porger) was a highly qualified specialist who removed certain large blood vessels, prohibited fats (*kheylev*), and the sciatic nerve. Those who were strict about *borer*, the prohibition on separating or winnowing on the Sabbath and holy days, preferred gefilte fish because it was not necessary to separate the flesh from the bones. Hasidim and others rejected *gebrokhts* (a stringency intended to prevent the creation of *khomets*, or leavened bread), any Passover dish that required the wetting of matzo. There also was disagreement about what counted as *kitniyot*.

*Kitniyot* refers to the various grains, legumes, and seeds that cannot be eaten on Passover, a prohibition that became increasingly stringent as more items were added to the category. An eighteenth-century Hasidic innovation, the eating of buckwheat dishes on Passover, was rejected by rabbinic opponents (and eventually by Hasidim themselves): Hasidim ground the buckwheat flour the week before Passover, to avoid mixing it with the wheat flour used to fulfill the commandment of eating matzo. According to a responsum from the period, it was

the custom of the Hasidim of Mezritsh “to bake buckwheat matzo and pound it to make *kneydlekh* (dumplings) and *khremzlekh* (fritters),” while Shelomoh Kluger, head of the rabbinical court of Brody, remembered Hasidim in his father-in-law’s home in Rava making a heavy loaf from buckwheat matzo they had baked before Passover: “On Passover they would grate the loaves and make dumplings” (Oberlander, 2004, p. 214). The *kitniyot* loaves were not consumed during the Seders.

With respect to vernacular understandings of kashrut, Jews in some parts of Eastern Europe considered tomatoes and some types of mushrooms *treyf* well into the twentieth century. Indeed, in some regions tomatoes were called *treyfene epl* (*treyf* apple), while *zydowska*, a Polish word meaning “Jewish,” referred to “the variety of mushroom said to be the only one that Jews would eat” (Herzog, 1965, p. 35). Because these foods are anomalous—tomatoes are technically a fruit (berry), but are treated as a vegetable, while mushrooms are a fungus—they defy conventional Jewish classification and create confusion regarding which blessing to recite before eating them. In addition, for centuries after their introduction to Europe, tomatoes were considered poisonous: not only did Jews in Eastern Europe associate them with fear and fainting, but also they rejected them be-

cause they were “bloody” or because, when cut in half, they displayed a pattern that resembled a cross.

### Festive Fare

The most distinctive aspects of East European Jewish cuisine and oldest dishes in the culinary repertoire, many of them described in medieval Jewish sources, are associated with holiday observance. Examples of these include *lokshn* (the Eastern Yiddish term for noodles in Poland as early as the sixteenth century; known earlier in Western Yiddish by variations on the word *frimzlekh*), *flodn* (sheets of egg pasta or other kind of dough layered with cheese or fruit and nuts and baked with oil or butter), *pashтет* (meat between two layers of egg pasta, baked with *shmalts*), *kreplekh* (*kreplach*; boiled or fried stuffed dumplings), *fankukhn* (pancakes), and *reshinke* (a festive cookie for weddings and circumcisions), as well as *tsholnt* (*cholent*; a mixture of beans and meat cooked in a special pot overnight, often in the radiant heat of the baker’s oven), and *kugl* (*kugel*, a savory or sweet pudding). Such slow foods could be consumed hot on the Sabbath and other holy days when lighting a fire was prohibited.

While everyday food might seem austere (and not only among the poor), based as it was for the most part on coarse rye bread, potatoes, herring, and soup, one out of every four days, on average, was a holiday (including Sabbath, New Moon, and annual holidays) requiring more festive fare: the basic components of a *sude* or festive meal included wine, challah, fish, and meat. In Brzeziny, Poland, where tailors and buttonhole makers ate well, Sabbath fare might include sweet liquor, ginger cake, chopped liver with onions, *tsholnt*, *raybekhts* (potato *kugl*), roasted mutton, sweet noodle *kugl*, compote of plums and apples, and tea. Following an afternoon nap, some men went off to the tavern, where they partook of roasted goose, peppered peas, and beer. The evening meal, *shaleshudes*, consisted of herring and *petsha* (jellied calves’ feet), known also as *galarete* or *fus*, and as *drelyes* in southern Russia, Galicia, and Romania, or a hearty winter dish such as beet borsht with marrow bones and potatoes. That night, after the close of the Sabbath or festival, people played cards, drank beer, and ate fried liver.

Shvues (Shavu’ot), a spring holiday, was associated with dairy foods, also considered a treat, as they were scarce in winter and relatively expensive for the poor. Holy days that required fasting (Day of

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Cholent pot. Eastern Europe, ca. eighteenth century. Copper: hammered, repoussé, chased, with Hebrew letters inscribed on the side. The Max Stern Collection, 1985.89. (Collection of Yeshiva University Museum, New York)



Atonement, Ninth of Av) were preceded by a special meal, whether festive or subject to restrictions, and were followed by particular ways of breaking the fast. Poor guests were invited into Jewish homes for Sabbath and holiday meals. Holiday essentials were provided to the very poor by individuals who collected food and money on their behalf, as well as by voluntary associations such as *moes-khitim*. During the period around World War I, Jews in Minsk cooked kosher food in a special vat in the barracks of the garrison where about 300 Jewish soldiers were stationed and organized a Passover Seder for them in the Jewish soup kitchen. They also provided kosher food and other support for Jewish prisoners, among whom were Jewish political prisoners.

Preparations for Passover were elaborate, beginning before Hanukkah with the rendering of goose fat, which was put aside and protected from *khomets*. Until World War I, especially in smaller communities, the baking of matzo was generally a communal task performed by mothers, daughters, and neighbors. As remembered in Rzeszów:

The bakery on our street closed down after Purim, and was kashered for the baking of matzos. Jewish women dressed in linen clothing kneaded the dough, and the baker placed it into the oven. This time, the water drawers were Jews (gentiles drew the water for the rest of the year). They brought the water in pails covered with white cloth from the well with two pumps that were adjacent to the synagogue. The baked matzos were placed in special baskets, covered, and brought to the homes with a covering of white cloth.

(Yaari Wald, 1967, p. 217)

To produce matzo flour and meal, Jews in Opatów took broken matzos to a man who had a small mill; in Volozhin and elsewhere Jews pounded matzo at home in a big conical wooden mortar (*stupe*), a hollowed-out log, with a pestle in the shape of a bat with spikes. A modern matzo factory opened in Drohichin, Belorussia, in the years before World War I, but it was not until after the war that machine-made matzos became widely accepted. *Geshmirte matses*, one of many matzo delicacies, is made by baking moistened matzos with a thick topping of pot cheese, sour cream, and raisins.

Beets were fermented to make *rosl*, a clear beet brine, for Passover borsht: the term *rosl* refers variously to soup, gravy,

or sour liquid (pickle juice, fermented beet brine) depending on the region. In Bolechów (now in Ukraine), Jewish women who fermented beets for Passover borsht wore unstarched aprons because of *khomets* in the starch, and used a special earthenware vessel for water drawn from a well. Raisin wine and mead were specially prepared for Passover: in Sasmaken, Courland, mead was made by boiling honey, hops, and water in a copper pot outdoors until the mixture was reduced to about one-third of its original volume; the liquid was poured into a wooden barrel with a narrow opening to release the gas and was left in a warm place to ferment for several weeks. The well-to-do bought bottled wine.

From the perspective of Jewish ritual law, bread is defined as a food made from one or more of the five species of grain (wheat, barley, rye, spelt, oats) mentioned in the Bible as growing in ancient Israel: it must contain more grain than liquid, which must be primarily water rather than oil or juice; and the dough must be baked rather than boiled or fried. For a meal to qualify as such, bread must be present. The most festive bread was challah (*khale*, known in Western Yiddish and in Austria and parts of Hungary as *barkhes* and elsewhere as *koyletsh*, *kitke*, and *shtritsl*, among other terms), which was made from white wheat flour, shaped in various ways, and decorated with dough forms: New Year's challahs might be decorated with a bird or ladder, to carry one's wishes aloft; in Motol, near Pinsk, the ladder symbolized "the ups and downs in the life of a person whose fate is judged," and the bird conveyed the idea of a messenger flying to the heavens to receive the verdict for the coming year (Heller, n.d.). In Lite (Lithuania), challahs were decorated with a hand, signifying the renewal of friendship, as it was customary to shake hands and ask forgiveness on the eve of Yom Kippur. Women in rural areas and small towns, especially before World War I, baked challahs in their own ovens. Others carried them to the baker, who baked them in his oven, especially in the summer when it was too hot to bake at home. On Thursdays in Gombin (Gąbin), Poland, when bakeries were busy with women and their older daughters who brought their Sabbath challahs and cakes to be baked, young Bundist men went there to recruit Jewish girls, who were otherwise closely watched by their families.

In some areas yeast was purchased from



Wine cup. Belorussia (?), ca. 1880. Silver. Inscribed with the name of its owner: Elkhane bar Yehuda' [sic]. (Gross Family Collection)

the local rabbi, who, unlike government-appointed rabbis, did not receive a salary but derived his income from fees for services (officiating at weddings) and concessions on yeast, which was essential for baking challah (most other breads were rye sourdoughs) and special yeast cakes for the Sabbath and holidays, as well as for *shmure* matzo (that is, "protected" matzo made by hand from grain that was under special supervision from the time it was harvested to ensure that no fermentation occurred, and made with the intention of using it to fulfill the commandment of eating matzo on the first night of Passover), and imported citrons (*esroygim*) for Sukes (Sukkot). After the holiday, citrons were made into marmalade. Wheat flour, which was more expensive than other kinds, was generally imported by Jews in the northern parts of Eastern Europe from Ukraine and was reserved for festive foods, guests, and special treats, such as bagels and small rolls, unless one could afford such luxuries more often. [See color plate 21.]

Given large families, there were also many life-cycle events: *sholem-zokher* on the Friday night following the birth of a boy, circumcision, and redemption of the firstborn, as well as weddings, with their steady round of festive meals, including an *oreme sude* or feast for the poor, and funerals and their associated mourners' meals, which might consist of a hard-boiled egg and bagel dipped in a little ash. Special foods were associated with these events. The *reshinke* (known by at least seven different names), a festive pastry

brought from Western Ashkenaz to Poland, is mentioned in a 1595 Kraków Jewish community statute in connection with weddings (it was also known as *khosn-broyt* [groom bread]) and in a private letter dated 1619 in Prague in connection with a circumcision celebration. In the periodical *Kol mevaser* (1866), Aleksander Zederbaum described an elaborate version of it, perhaps from his hometown of Zamość, complete with dough flowers and garlands. In Opatów during the interwar years, the *reshinke* was made from cookie dough: it was flat and circular—in other areas, it was a rectangle—and decorated with coils of dough to form a zigzag border, with the words *mazl-tov* in the middle. Almonds were placed at intervals along the border and colored sugar crystals (*matshek*) were sprinkled over the entire surface. Just as Zederbaum described, guests at the circumcision ate the edges of the *reshinke*, reserving the center with the words *mazl-tov* for the woman in childbed.

Various voluntary associations organized their own banquets, the most frequent and lavish of which were those of the burial society (*khevre kedishe*; Heb., *hevrah kadisha*): several articles in the 1771 minute book of that organization in Bacău, Romania, specify that communal feasts are to be held on Passover, Shavu'ot, Sukkot, and Simḥat Torah; indicate how much each member is expected to contribute; and require each new member to provide a feast.

A distinctive feature of Hasidic life was the *tish* (table), a communal gathering in the form of a ritual meal during which the rebbe holds court and his devotees come into intimate contact with him. One dish, the *kugl*, which was prepared in a wide variety of ways, assumed special importance and acquired kabbalistic meaning. During the early years of Hasidism, the *tish* was held on the occasion of the third meal, *shaleshudes*, on Saturday; during the nineteenth century, it was also held on Friday evening, as an extension of the Sabbath meal, as well as on holidays. Whereas in the late eighteenth century the *tish* was a banquet shared by the rebbe and his devotees alike, in the spirit of “serving God through earthly pleasures,” during the nineteenth century, as Hasidism became a mass movement and the number of Hasidim attending a *tish* increased, this meal took on a largely symbolic, mystical, and sacramental character such that the rebbe just tasted the food and distributed his leav-

ings (*shiraim*), which had been sanctified by his touch, to his devotees.

In the process, every aspect of the food set before the rebbe was imbued with meaning—the dishes themselves, their preparation, how the rebbe ate (with his hands or using a fork for the *kugl*, as a mark of its importance), and how he distributed the *shiraim*. Along these lines, Kalonimos Kalman Epstein wrote in 1842 that “the holiest fish of all is lox, since salmon has very large scales: a sign of its kashrut,” while Yehi'el of Komarno (1806–1874) recommended mixing onions with fish “so as to spice them with the divine presence,” because according to gematria, the numerical value of *betsalim* (onions) “is equivalent to *eheyeh elohim Adonai* [I will be the Lord your God].” Above all other foods at the *tish*, it is the *kugl* that continues to hold pride of place, consistent with the Hasidic principle of sacralizing the mundane and identifying the *kugl* as a quintessentially Jewish food; even before the Hasidic movement, Christians were banned by Polish Jesuits from “eating kugel and other such Jewish dishes” (Nadler, 2005, pp. 196, 203, 208).

Coffee, remembered for its wonderful aroma, assumed special significance among Purisover Hasidim in Mińsk Mazowiecki, who carefully protected the secret of its preparation. The Hasidim on one side of town, “drank tea with sugar cubes and talked politics,” while on the other side of town the Purisovers drank coffee and talked about Torah throughout the year and especially during Tikun Lel Shavu'ot, when the Hasidim sat and studied Torah all night. “All through that night a real cup of Purisover coffee was always available to those who were learning there” (Shedletski, 1977, p. 259). Drinking coffee to stay awake throughout a night of study goes back to the kabbalists in sixteenth-century Safed, where Yosef Karo and his brother-in-law, Shelomoh Alkabetz, introduced the custom.

#### Culinary Repertoire

The repertoire of delicacies made from flour, not only wheat but also rye, buckwheat, and mixtures that might also include millet and peas, was vast. Interviewed in 1954 by Beatrice and Uriel Weinreich, Dvosye Runin, who was born in Kozachok (near Bar, Podolia) around 1870, demonstrated the preparation of some 40 *teyg-maykholim*, dough dishes. The researchers classified Runin's repertoire on the basis of seven criteria: (1) type of flour (mostly wheat flour, but also

rye, buckwheat, and other grains); (2) type of dough (with and without yeast); (3) form (sheets of dough for everything from various kinds of noodles to *knishes* [baked stuffed dough], *kreplekh*, *blintses* [blintzes; stuffed crepes], and stuffed pastries such as *homen-tashn* [hamantaschen] for Purim, *rogelekh* [rugelach; horn pastries filled with nuts and jam], and strudel; and coils for various braided and spiral forms of bread and pastry); (4) cooking method (baked, boiled, fried); (5) stuffing (rice, potatoes, or buckwheat; apple, cherries, or plum preserves; crushed poppy seeds and honey; fresh white cheese such as pot cheese; sauerkraut; millet; cooked sweet plums); (6) additions (butter or sour cream; chicken fat); and (7) functions (dough dishes that go with other dishes such as *farfl* [toasted dough pellets] and dishes associated with specific holidays). In Borszczów (now in Ukraine), a Ba'al Shem Tov *tsimes* (*farfl* cooked in water and fried with onions) was eaten on Friday night.

Grains (millet, rye, barley, oats, buckwheat, and wheat), supplemented by cabbage and root vegetables, were the main staple food in Eastern Europe, whether as grits, gruel, soup, or bread, until the second half of the nineteenth century, when potatoes became widely accepted. Native to South America, the potato was brought to Europe by the Spanish in the sixteenth century; efforts during the latter half of the eighteenth century by Frederick the Great of Prussia and Catherine the Great of Russia to promote the cultivation and consumption of potatoes, valued for their short growing season and high yield, were staunchly resisted by all but the elite, the lower classes regarding them as strange and poisonous. After famines resulted from poor grain harvests in Russia during the first half of the nineteenth century, however, potatoes were quickly accepted. By the second half of the nineteenth century, they had become a staple food.

In Lite before World War I, Jews in small towns would plant enough potatoes to last the winter. If they did not have a small plot of their own, they would lease land owned by Christians to plant and harvest potatoes. The poorest Jews could not afford to put aside what they needed for the entire winter (about 35 poods of potatoes [1 pood, a Russian measure, is about 36 pounds]). A family of average means and six or seven persons, which was not considered excessively large, would put aside 75–100 poods (2,700–

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3,600 pounds). Some families ate potatoes three times a day: a boiled potato with herring, baked potato in its skin, potatoes with fried onions, *kreplekh* and *knishes* stuffed with potatoes, dumplings made from grated raw potato (*golkes*), potato pancakes (*latkes*) and puddings (*kugl*, *teygekhts*, *raybekhts*), boiled potatoes with fresh or sour milk, mock fish made from potatoes, and potato soups; even the water in which potatoes or noodles had been cooked (*polifke* in Opatów) had value and was used for soup stock. A specialty of Jews in Lite was *bonde*, a kind of potato bread: after being squeezed dry, grated raw potatoes were mixed with rye or buckwheat flour, placed on a green cabbage leaf or oak leaves, and baked. *Bondes* were eaten with sour soup instead of bread; children took small ones as a snack to heder; and a rich version was made by baking layers of *bonde* with sour cream and butter in a pan for several hours (Abramowicz, 1999, pp. 101–102).

Potatoes and other root vegetables (turnips, rutabagas, beets, black and white radishes, parsnips, and carrots, the latter of which were eaten on Rosh Hashanah because the Yiddish word *mem* means both “carrots” and “to multiply”) were stored in a cool dry cellar, along with apples. Onions and garlic were also put aside for winter, while almost everyone in rural regions in Lite before World War I preserved large quantities of cabbages and cucumbers with salt:

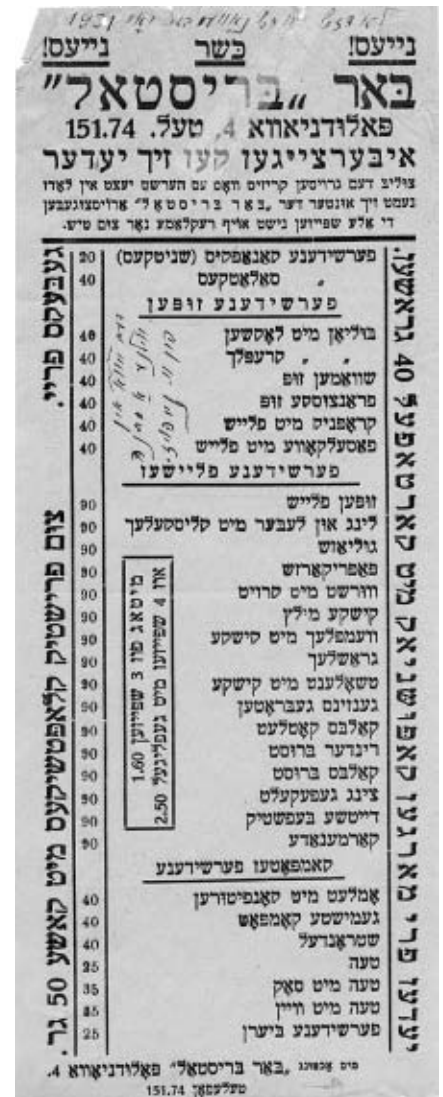
In Jewish homes, it was usually the custom for women to invite their friends and neighbors over to help shred the cabbage. This was done with knives. For a large family, several large barrels might be put up. The work was not easy, but there was fun while it was being done. There was singing, and the children were given the cabbage stems to eat. Experienced housewives would salt the shredded cabbage, sprinkle it with caraway seeds, and then they would “knead” the shredded mass. The cabbage would be put into the barrels in layers, which were beaten with a wooden mallet (the kind used in splitting wood) until the juice of the cabbage appeared. In between the layers of cabbage were placed apples, carrots, beets (for color), and cranberries. The work of “beating” the cabbage was done by men. The casks were left in the house for five or six days to begin the fermentation process. The barrels had to be pierced with a stick to release the foul smelling gas generated. Then the barrels were rolled down into

the cellar or pantry. Poor people had to keep their barrels in the vestibule. The cabbage had to last the entire winter. It was also eaten raw, especially with baked potato, or with bread when there was nothing else to serve with bread.

(Abramowicz, 1999, p. 101)

Cucumbers were placed in casks with salt, water, and dill, together with oak leaves, which kept them crisp; the casks were tightly sealed and rolled into the lake, not far from the shore, where they remained all winter and removed just before Passover. In various parts of Lite and elsewhere, Jews specialized in the cultivation of cucumbers, which require more time and attention than other vegetables; they exported them or sold them to the peasants. *Klayenborsh* (fermented bran), *zhur* (fermented rye, oats, buckwheat, or barley or some combination), and *kvas* (fermented grain or dark bread, whether made at home or purchased), were used as a base for tart soups. *Kvas* was also a beverage. Lactofermentation in salt pickling enhances the nutritional value of vegetables by preserving vitamin C, among other benefits, which was important during long winters without fresh green vegetables.

As remembered in Brzeziny, “After the harsh winter’s groats, and bread and garlic *borscht*, it was a delight to eat *schav* [sorrel] *borscht* with new potatoes, crumbled farmer’s cheese with green onions, and the early summer vegetables and fruit” (Rosenberg, 1961, p. 100). Wild foods gathered in forests and meadows included *lezhlkas* or *yengolkes*, a small hard pear that was placed inside a straw mattress to ripen, as well as sour sorrel, horseradish, and mushrooms. Fruit, including cherries and many kinds of berries, both wild and cultivated (green and pink gooseberries, red, white, and black currants, blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries), were consumed fresh, made into cold fruit soups, and preserved in the form of syrups and jams; beets and carrots were also made into a kind of marmalade. In Gombin, Jews active in the fruit trade—*sadovnikes*—dealt especially in apples, pears, and plums. They would lease orchards, live in a hut in the orchard to protect the fruit from thieves as it ripened and was being picked, dry the fruit, and pack it for export to large cities. Exotic fruit such as oranges, which were very precious, lemons, and carob, and other imported foods such as smoked sprats, peanuts (*erets-*



Yiddish menu for Bar Bristol, a kosher restaurant, Łódź, 1931. The menu is printed in Polish on the reverse and is divided into three headings: Soup, Meat, and Dessert. Featured breakfast items include “cabbage soup with potatoes” and “meatballs with kasha.” (YIVO)

*yisroel-niselekh*), dried fruit, mustard, and spices, could be purchased in the *kolonyal gesheft* (imported food store). In the Zabłudów communal record book (1646–1816), pepper, ginger, cinnamon, caraway seeds, saffron, cloves, honey, “string of sugar,” whiskey and anise (beverages), oil, and raisins are among the gifts presented by the Jewish community to the mayor, monks, and other functionaries on holidays.

Due to the warmer climate and relationships with the Ottoman Empire, the cuisines of Romania and Hungary, which are also wine regions, used a greater variety of cheese and vegetables, including not only eggplant but also peppers, pa-

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Goose market in Kraków. Alois Schönn, 1869. Engraving. (Moldovan Family Collection)

prika, and tomatoes, as well as rice and maize, which was introduced from Mesoamerica to Europe during the sixteenth century and supplanted millet as a staple food in Romania. *Mamelige*, cornmeal mush, is celebrated by Aaron Lebedeff, in his famous Yiddish song “Rumenye,” along with pastrami, *karnatsele* (spicy grilled beef sausage), *kastravet* (cucumber pickles), *patlezehele* (eggplant dish), *kashkaval* (hard sheep’s cheese), *brindze*, a sharp white sheep’s cheese, often served with *mamelige*, *kugl* for the Sabbath, and Romanian wine. The Jewish cuisine of Romania and the Balkans was also shaped by Sephardic Jews in the region.

In some areas, Jews played an important role in the herring business as both importers and exporters. Herring, which added zest to an otherwise starchy diet,

was an essential feature of daily fare, though even herring was something of a luxury for poor Jews, who had to make one herring feed an entire family. As remembered from Opatów:

A woman could make a whole banquet from a herring. When purchasing a herring, you always asked for a male. After washing the herring and opening it up, Mother would remove the milt or *milekh*, a long sack of semen. She would open the milt and scrape the semen away from the membrane, which she threw away. To the semen, the *zumekhts*, she added minced onion and a little vinegar and sugar to taste to make a sauce, a *zuze*—it was called a *kratsborsht*, or scratch borsht, because the milt had been scraped. Everyone got a little piece of herring, a small piece of

bread to dip in the *kratsborsht*, and maybe also a boiled potato. . . . A few boiled potatoes, bread, and a piece of the herring made an excellent meal for a poor family.

(Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2007, p. 7)

Jews farmed carp in millponds, leased fishing rights in lakes, and served as middlemen and dealers; the biggest demand for fish was for the Sabbath and holy days and for supplying the Christian meatless feast on Christmas Eve. The head of a herring or carp was a delicacy served to the head of the family, who would suck on each and every little bone. In central Poland, the main varieties of fish, in addition to carp and herring, were tench (*shlayen*), sunfish, perch, and pike (*hekht*). Poor people bought *kelbikes*, which were about five inches long, and chopped them up—scales, bones, and all—for gefilte fish. The best gefilte fish was made from pike and other freshwater fish. In Poland, one way to make gefilte fish was to slice a whole fish into steaks; remove the flesh from the spine and ribs, but leave them and the skin intact; and fill the space between the skin and bones, as well as the abdominal cavity, with a mixture of chopped fish, breadcrumbs, egg, onions, and a little salt, pepper, and sugar. The stuffed fish slices, having been poached in water with an onion and carrot, were served cold with their jellied stock. Those who did not want to go to the trouble of stuffing each fish steak, let alone a whole fish, just made balls; in Belorussia, the skin from the fish steak was wrapped around the fish ball, a gesture to the original meaning of *gefilte* (stuffed).

Meat (beef, veal, lamb, and mutton, chicken, duck, goose, turkey, and pigeons) was reserved for special occasions by Jews and Christians alike, except for those who were better off. In some areas the cattle trade was largely in Jewish hands; otherwise, the butcher would buy livestock from peasants in the market or in the villages. Jewish butchers made arrangements for Christians to buy the hindquarters of animals, except in areas where porging was accepted. The *shoykhet* (Heb., *shohet*; ritual slaughterer) might be entitled to keep the head of the animal and the innards, the cheapest parts of the animal. Meat was consumed fresh as well as preserved in brine and smoked, and almost everything except the unporged hindquarters and forbidden fat were used to make such dishes as a savory stew of

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sautéed with an onion; stuffed neck of fowl (*heldzl, megl*), intestine (*kishke*), and cow's stomach; boiled head of calf and sheep; fowl feet in soup; jellied calves' and cows' feet; as well as sweetbreads (pancreas and thymus gland), brains, testicles (*beytsim*), and udder.

#### Bread and Baked Goods

In Lite during the last decades of the nineteenth century, most Jewish families baked their own coarse black rye bread from whole grain, which was milled only once, and a sourdough starter known as *roshtshine*. This type of bread was an ideal staple food, as rye grows well in cold regions with poor soil and a short growing season; the natural yeast on rye kernels makes it an ideal medium for creating sourdough starter; the acid in sourdough starter makes rye dough, which contains very little gluten, rise better than does yeast; and sourdough rye (*razeve broyt*) also keeps well. Weighing from 15 to 25 pounds, these large loaves were baked for four to six hours. Jews whose domestic ovens were too small either baked their bread in the baker's oven or bought from him. Rye bread with tea, chicory, or soup was breakfast in many places.

Jewish bakers supplied both Jews and non-Jews with bread, bagels, and other baked goods. In Dusiat, Lithuania, Wolf Feldman's bakery was known not only for *razeve broyt*, but also for *shitnitse*, a mixed wheat and rye loaf, and *kornbroyt*. *Solene broyt*, a white bread considered a luxury,



A bagel seller with his wares, Biržai, Lithuania, 1938. (YIVO)

was baked at home. In Ivenets, Belorussia, *plovnik* or half-bread, as it was also known, was made from a mixture of finely and coarsely ground rye flour made from unhulled rye kernels. In Opatów, Yosl Tsalel Volfs Wakswaser was known for his flat little *shtopers*, made from gray wheat flour and sprinkled with a little sugar, as well as his cheesecake and juicy blueberry buns (*shtritslekh*). His bread was round, yeasty, and topped with a crisp red crust. Mamurek's bakery, which operated 24 hours a day, made sourdoughs such as

*gebatlt broyt* (about 55% rye flour) and *razeve broyt* (about 95% rye flour); yeast wheat breads such as *veytsn broyt*, a round loaf, also called *drozhdzhove broyt*, and savory rolls such as *mantove zeml*. *Platsek*, a flat bread, was made from dark wheat flour. *Koter-beker* ("Tomcat Baker") was known for a special *kiml* (caraway) bread.

Bagels were a Jewish specialty. They were sold in bakeries and market stalls, whether stacked on a stick or strung on a string, and by bagel vendors from flat baskets. Like the *obwarzanki* still sold on the streets of Kraków today, bagels in Opatów were made of two thin coils, which were twisted and the ends brought together to form a ring with a big hole. The baker placed the bagels on a stick, several at a time, and dropped them into boiling water. When they floated, he would lift them out with the stick, let them drain, and place them on a baker's peel. Before setting them directly on the floor of the oven, he would sprinkle them with poppy seeds and salt.

The bagel is mentioned in Kraków's Jewish community's statutes from 1610 as one of the gifts that may be given to a woman who has given birth, the midwife, and the girls and women who were present. Even earlier sources indicate that the father would send *pretsn*, or pretzels, which are historically related to the bagel, to everyone on the occasion of a circumcision. A relatively affordable treat, the East European bagel, which might also be baked at home, was small and portable: according to a Yiddish proverb, only by the third bagel would one feel full.

Workers in M. S. Mandla's Jewish bakery, Tarnów, Poland, 1902. (YIVO)



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Though generally made from white wheat flour, there were black bagels made from dark flour in Trishik, in the Kovno district. Bagels made with milk or eggs were known from at least the nineteenth century, and almond bagels were among the prepared foods exchanged on Purim.

While Jews in Eastern Europe did not generally grow grain themselves, they were involved in every aspect of its processing, including milling, baking, and distilling, and in its distribution, both locally and for export. Millers were allowed to keep the flour dust and chaff, which was used for feeding dairy cows, fowl, and fish in millponds where carp were farmed.

#### Beverages

More common than pure coffee, which was expensive, was roasted chicory, on its own or mixed with coffee; when chicory was in short supply, roasted barley mixed with molasses and roasted beet sugar might be used instead. For the Sabbath in Opatów, chicory coffee boiled in a pot was served with milk that had simmered all night in a stoneware bottle in the baker's oven; by morning it was a deep yellow-brown color, creamy, and as thick as condensed milk. Another hot beverage consumed in the morning was *bavarke* (hot water with milk). Fresh and sour milk was consumed in season, while skim milk was fed to animals. In rural Lite before World War I, "Nearly half of all the Jews had their own cows or goats, which provided milk for household use, but wealthier Jews and the very poor would occasionally buy milk from the dairymen." (Abramowicz, 1999, p. 50) Even in a city such as Brześć (Brisk) during the 1920s, a middle-class family might have its own cow as a way to ensure a steady supply of fresh milk.

In Nova-Aleksandrovsk (Ezereni), Lithuania, *kvas*, a sour beer made from crusts of black bread, was consumed as part of the Havdalah ceremony after the Sabbath; Hasidim in Novogrudok, Belorussia, bought "under-beer" for the same occasion. *Lakrits*, licorice root boiled in water, was served on the Sabbath and at weddings. Cold drinks were made by mixing the juice from a sweet *tsimes* (stewed vegetables, such as white beets or carrots, with fruit such as prunes) or compote (stewed fresh or dried fruit), with water, or by adding fruit syrup, especially raspberry, to carbonated water (soda), which was chilled with ice cut from frozen lakes and stored in straw. Berry syrups, which were preserved in flasks, were also con-

sumed when a person was ill. Syrups were supposed to be sweetened with beet sugar, although saccharine, which was illegal in interwar Poland so as to protect the sugar beet market, was also used. Beet *rosl* was also consumed as a beverage.

#### Hunger

The poor made do with less, used cheaper ingredients (organ meats, oil instead of butter or *shmalts*), and relied to a greater degree on a few staples (coarse rye bread, potatoes, and soup). During the interwar years, members of Miriam Isaacs's family in Sighet, now in Romania, were so poor that each person had to eat his or her entire meal from a single bowl: turned upside down, the foot of the bowl held the appetizer, a small piece of fish; turned right side up, the bowl held the main course, soup.

Yeshiva students were particularly vulnerable to hunger. The modern yeshiva in Volozhin, established in 1803, tried to provide room and board, as well as clothing and books, for those who could not afford to cover their own expenses; the goal was to spare students the humiliation of having to go from house to house for food, consistent with the effort to raise the status of Torah learning and the reputation of the yeshiva itself. A private institution, this and other such yeshivas were often short of money; as a result, poor students might have to sleep on benches or the floors of classrooms or go from home to home to find a place to sleep and eat. Chaim Aronson (1825–1888), who attended a yeshiva in Vilna, describes how twice a week two students would go around with a large sack to grocery stores, begging for grain, salt, and butter, which was made into gruel in a copper pot and served to all the students for breakfast; students had to buy or beg for their own bread. If they were not able to arrange for a family to provide their midday and evening meals (*esn teg*), students like Aronson went hungry for several days at a time.

From the late nineteenth century, especially in times of war, there were soup kitchens, which were open during meal times, and cheap tea houses, which were open all day and evening. These were organized by traditional voluntary associations, groups associated with the labor movement, and international relief organizations such as the B'nai B'rith, Alliance Israélite Universelle, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (the Joint). Soup kitchens for children were also located at schools. During the 1930s

in Poland, with boycotts on Jewish stores, the severe restriction on kosher slaughter, and the opening of Christian cooperatives, the economic situation for Jews worsened, although in towns such as Opatów, farmers were often more comfortable buying from familiar Jewish shopkeepers than from the pristine cooperatives, which they found intimidating. During the Holocaust, a network of soup kitchens for observant Jews was established in Sochaczew with the help of teachers, Aguda activists, the Writers Union, and the Joint; these soup kitchens also served as a cover for underground Orthodox schools.

#### Eating Out

Since the Commonwealth period, when Jews managed estates and were responsible for maximizing profits from cash crops, especially grain, they played a central role in brewing, distilling, and running taverns and inns. Their chief clientele were peasants who came to town on market day; Hasidim, who flocked by the hundreds and thousands to their rebbe on special occasions such as weddings and holidays; and traveling merchants and teamsters, who might be on the road for several days. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, there were some 10 inns (not counting village ones) in a stretch of about 80 versts from Jezno to Vilna, or approximately two inns per mile: inns were, in Abramowicz's words, like train stations. Inns and taverns were also important gathering places for those living in villages, both Christians and Jews. On the Sabbath or other holy day, a minyan might meet in a room at the inn or at the home of the innkeeper and enjoy herring, *tsimes*, and other festive fare at the end of the service (Abramowicz, 1999, pp. 59–71).

As remembered in Rzeszów, Poland, during the interwar years:

The Jews simply liked to sample a good glass of beer or mead on Friday evening or Shabes at their tavern. Given the opportunity, men would sit down and discuss politics or municipal affairs. The best known tavern with the best mead belonged to Yekhiel Tenenbaum whose wife Khana would serve her tasty kigels and cholent to the guests. Also very popular was Yankele's mead tavern. There were also wine taverns (Tuchfeld, Moses, Hirschhorn, and Freund) and Jewish restaurants that were all concentrated in the market place. But there were also Jewish taverns \_\_\_\_\_ S  
in other parts of the city. On Chmielowska, \_\_\_\_\_ R  
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not far from the train station, there was a tavern at the Vistula where the Rzeszów *maskilim* such as Wald, Glikzman, the Fetts and others would gather during the summer in the large garden.

(Rosenbaum, 1967, p. 480)

In Opatów during the interwar years, there was a *shvartse shenk*, illegal drinking place, in a private home; the town “mafia” used to gather for a drink and for roasted goose provided by the bootlegger’s wife. There was also a *budke*, a kiosk, where one could buy candy and ice cream, and a room in back, where boys would socialize and play cards, dominoes, chess, or checkers while snacking on pastries and candies. Other snacks, consumed at home and elsewhere, included roasted sunflower seeds and boiled chick peas and lima beans. During the early years of the twentieth century in Sadagora (now Ukraine), “The young people could do without all sorts of snacks, but not without pumpkin seeds,” which were obtained from orange pumpkins fed to pigs: “Shabbat at meals—for dessert—on the street—in the bars and everywhere where people came together, pumpkin seeds were snacked on and one could buy pumpkin seeds in every second store” (Rubinstein, 1958).

In Novogradok, Josif Leipuner owned the best restaurant in town, which boasted a wine list and Italian chef and catered to local landowners and public servants who came from Warsaw for conferences with its menu of Russian caviar, French foie gras, Dutch blue cheese, beef Stroganoff, red crabs and lobsters; “fish Jewish style” (in all likelihood a freshwater fish cooked in a sweet and sour sauce) was prepared at the special request of Count Mirski (Kamieniecki, 1963, p. 197). In Czernowitz, Jews ran the hotels, which housed the best restaurants, and cafes; during the 1930s in Dąbrowa, Poland, Lenczner’s Restaurant Tel-Aviv opened in a better part of town and attracted Zionist youth.

Whereas during the period circa 1900–1918 there were 26 Jewish restaurants and food shops in Saint Petersburg, recognizably Jewish food gradually disappeared from public view in the Soviet Union and postwar Communist Europe. Assimilation and antireligious state policy, as well as official and unofficial antisemitism, contributed to the transformation of what Jews ate and especially what

S they ate in public. Lazik, the eponymous  
R hero of Ilya Ehrenberg’s 1927 satirical  
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Workers behind the bar of a restaurant frequented mostly by members of the Bund, located in the heart of the Jewish neighborhood near the headquarters of many communal organizations, Warsaw, 1931. (YIVO)

novel *Burnaia zhizn' Lazika Roitshvanetsa* (The Stormy Life of Lazik Roitschwantz), declared that “the freedom of the revolution is to eat like a Russian”; he and others like him rejected traditional Jewish cuisine. To the extent that Jewish dishes continued to be prepared, they became an increasingly private matter, part of a hidden world, completely separated from both kashrut and their associated Jewish holidays; Jewish dishes such as gefilte fish became attached instead to birthdays and Soviet civic holidays. Despite prohibitions on the baking of matzo in 1959, 1960, and 1961 and the threat of imprisonment if caught, Soviet Jews went to extraordinary lengths to acquire matzo, but few had Seders in the traditional sense. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, several Jewish cookbooks in Russian, directed to Jews in Russia rather than to émigrés, have appeared; they are noteworthy for the absence of any personal memory of the traditional East European Jewish kitchen of mothers and grandmothers (Nakhimovsky, 2005, pp. 152, 158).

Since the fall of communism in Poland, an increasing number of restaurants, some of them kosher, offer Jewish cuisine to tourists as well as to local citizens. Restaurants providing an old-fashioned atmosphere and klezmer music are popular in Kazimierz-Kraków, particularly since

the filming of *Schindler's List* (1993) and with the success of the annual Kraków Jewish Cultural Festival: Ariel, a café, restaurant, and gallery, features goose neck stuffed with chicken liver, carp “Jewish style” with raisins and almonds, *kugl, tsholnt,* and desserts such as *kharoyeses* (Heb., *haroset*), a symbolic food required at the Passover Seder, and what is called “Passover cheese” (mascarpone cheese, raisins, and orange zest). Kosher and Jewish-style vodkas sport names such as Cymes (*tsimes*) and feature stereotypical images of Jews on their labels. Most recently, Centropa, a project of the Central Europe Center for Research and Documentation, has maintained a Jewish recipe archive that attracts contributions from “Jewish kitchens between the Baltic and the Black Sea.” Centropa also features news of such events as a recent annual Latvian Latke Contest; this contest is held during Hanukkah in the soup kitchen of the Jewish community center in Riga, which is supported by the Joint Distribution Committee, and marks a revival of Jewish life in the Latvian capital.

[See also Cookbooks; Geese; and Tavern-keeping.]

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—BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT

**FORD, ALEKSANDER** (1908–1980), motion picture director. Born Moyshe Lipshutz in Łódź, Ford went to Warsaw in the late 1920s to study art. He was an early member of the avant-garde cine-club START, making short films—one on the working-class neighborhood where he grew up, another a portrait of Warsaw street vendors—that anticipated Italian neorealism in their use of staged documentary.

In 1933, Ford went to Palestine, sending footage back to Poland where it was edited into newsreels and a short feature; Ford also made *Sabra* (also known as *Ḥalutsim*) a fictional narrative on the Jewish–Arab conflict that starred Hanna Rovina and other members of Habimah. The movie was released in Warsaw in both Polish and Hebrew versions. Ford's 1934 feature *Przebudzenie* (Awakening), based on a poem cycle by Julian Tuwim, is the story of three high school girls who assert their independence; it was heavily censored. The following year Ford's *Mir kumen on* (We're on Our Way), a Yiddish-language staged documentary on the Jewish Labor Bund's Medem Sanatorium for children, was banned altogether, although there were evidently a number of clandestine or private screenings.

Ford spent the war years in the Soviet Union, where he co-organized and headed the Kościuszko Division's film unit and the Film Studio of the Polish Army in Lublin; the latter's first project (as well as the first documentary of Nazi death camps) was Ford's *Majdanek*. In 1945, the Polish film industry was nationalized as Film Polski with Ford as its head. His *Ulica Graniczna* (Border Street), a Czech–Polish coproduction shot in 1946