

**Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, *The Carpathian Diaspora: The Jews of Subcarpathian Rus' and Mukachevo*. New York: East European Monographs, No. DCXXI. 480 pp.**

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The post-colonialist and post-communist era enables expression of (or about) nations, ethnicities, or groups that previously had no say about their relationships with their environment. Such is the case with Carpatho-Rusyn groups that presently constitute part of the Ukrainian Republic and in the past – of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Yeshayahu Jelinek, professor emeritus of Jewish history from the Ben Gurion University of the Negev at Beer Sheva, Israel, has devoted a number of studies to the inhabitants of the area, Jews and gentiles, Rusyn, Slovak, and other groups. In this study, Jelinek delineates the history of the Jews of Carpatho-Rus' and Munkács/Mukachevo in the century preceding World War II and the Holocaust. This work first appeared in Hebrew at the Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center at Tel Aviv University in 2003. This revised and expanded English edition - in addition to a new epilogue - by materials from Archives at Prague, is aided by the rigorous editing and detailed maps of Paul Robert Magocsi of Toronto University, himself a world-renowned expert on Ukrainian history and culture.

The book is largely divided into three periods: The Habsburg Monarchy Era, the Czechoslovak Republic Era, and the period of World War II and the Holocaust and a brief epilogue of the post-WWII period. The Jewish communities of Carpatho-Rus' were the product of frequent immigration waves from the East. This process started with the 1648-49 Chmielnicki Massacre in Ukraine, the Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, and the 1882 pogroms in Russia. This westward Jewish immigration was strengthened by the realization that living conditions in the region, by then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, were better than in Galicia and Bukovina. The general profile of the Carpatho-Rusyn Jewry during all these periods was a mixture of poverty and deep Hasidic Orthodox piety, with small percentages of Jews showing Zionist and communist awareness. The Hasidic dynasties of Munkács (Mukachevo), Szatmár, Vizsnic, and Sepinka dominated every aspect of life. Within this framework, Jelinek stresses the phenomenon of women's education and employment (as midwives, nannies, teachers, shopkeepers and business managers) as early as the Habsburg Era.

In the inter-war period, the region became the eastern part of the Czechoslovak Republic, and its Jewish population numbered about 113,000 souls. Yet, despite popular semi-professional histories published in Israel and elsewhere by former Jewish inhabitants of the region, life conditions did not improve in any significant ways during the so-called enlightened Czechoslovak rule. This era started with Jewish soldiers returning from service in the Austro-Hungarian army and from eastern locales, where they became acquainted with novel ideas and trends, such as socialism and Zionism (on this see Rachel Bernheim-Friedmann's memoir, *Earrings in the Cellar: Growing up in Ruined Worlds* (trans. Anthony Berris and Miriam Talisman, Jerusalem: Gefen, 2005).

The new regime feared the Hungarian and/or German minorities and tended to identify them with Jews, and vice-versa. Yet, it was not anti-Semitic by its tradition or mentality but rather, as Jelinek clarifies, the old administrative system looked down upon the region's Jews. The Jews on their part were more preoccupied with their inner struggles, mainly religious conflicts among different Hasidic courts. In this context, the furious figure of rabbi Haim-Elazar Shapiro the Munkácser rebbe emerges as central, but conflicts existed in Huszt and Beregszász/Berehove too. Munkács was also the site of relative success of Zionism, despite rabbi Shapiro's adamant opposition. Jelinek attributes this unexpected success to the process of urbanization, the distribution of formal education, and the popularization of political theory. The founding of the Hebrew schools (gymnasium) first in Munkács and then in Ungvár, in the 1920s was no doubt a landmark in the promotion of Zionist awareness and organization in the region.

The vibrant Jewish population of the region was largely decimated in the Holocaust. This era started with the re-ceding of Carpatho-Rus' to Hungary in March 1939. Although many Jews welcomed this change, as they missed the "old Hungarians", meaning the Monarchy, they soon realized that it was a change for the worst. These so-called eastern, relatively backward Jews were easily ear-marked for extermination years before the Nazi-German invasion into the Hungary in March 1944. There were several deportation and mass-massacre sites in the newly conquered eastern front areas of 1941, but Kaminiets-Podolsk(i) is remembered as the most notorious of them all. Just as infamous is the ghettoization process, following March 1944, in the region and later in all of Hungary. The few thousand survivors of the region rehabilitated their lives in Israel and the West, although some returned. Jelinek ends with an epilogue with the post 1944-45 period in the region; or rather, about the longing of former Carpatho-Rusyn Jews to their past communities, as seen through the eyes of an Israeli woman of the so-called second-generation of formerly Carpatho-Rusyn Holocaust survivors.

In the post WWII years the region became part of western Ukraine, and of the communist Soviet-Union. The region's Jews, which now numbered a few thousand, could partly preserve their religious and cultural identity, but not their Jewish educational institutions. A considerable number of them left the country/region in the emigration waves of the 1970s and of the 1990s leaving behind an impoverished and sad Jewry. In the recent decades this trend is somewhat moderated by the activity of the Lubavitch (*Chabad*) Hasidic sect, which has founded Jewish communities in all of Eastern Europe. (In the eyes of former Carpatho-Rusyn Jews, no doubt, in just the same way that Vilnius is referred to the "Jerusalem" of Lithuania, so to this day Munkács (and not Mukachevo) is remembered as the "Jerusalem" of the Carpathians.