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Drahiv

48°14' 23°33'

Ruthenian: Drahova
 Hungarian: Kövesliget
 [Russian: Dragova]

Translated by **Moshe A. Davis**

Village in the area of Chust, approximately 20 kilometers northeast of Chust.
 Most residents Ruthenians, with a small minority of Hungarians.

Population

Year	Jews	Total
1768	16	-
1830	130	1203
1880	328	-
1910	-	3936
1921	-	3978
1930	725	4983
1941	-	6742

The First Jews

Jews first lived in Drahiv in the first third of the 18th century. The first mention of Jews in this village is found in the Jewish census of 1735, where there are listed two families. The name of the head of the first family was Michael, who had a wife and three children, employed a Jewish servant, and who had in his possession a horse, three cows, and four wagons. He was under the protection of the local magnate Samuel Horvat. The head of the second Jewish family was named Dovid. He was married but without

children. His possessions consisted of only a horse, a cow, and a calf.

In the next census, in the year 1746, there were 17 Jews listed in Drahiv, as follows: 6 men, 6 women, and 5 children. The names of the Jews were not recorded.

In the following Jewish census, in 1768, only the given names of the heads of the Jewish families are listed. In this census we find that the Jewish population decreased slightly. In that year, the total Jewish population consisted of 16 individuals, as follows: Wolva (that is, Wolf), the head of a family of four, paying the sum of 12 florins per year rent; Yaakov, whose family consisted of 5 individuals, paying 8 florins per year; a Jew with the unusual name Dapkab (certainly a corruption, likely the work of an ignorant Hungarian clerk - perhaps his real name was Jakob?), who was married but without children, paying 12 florins per year; the Jew Marko (his Hebrew name was probably Mordechai), paying 6 florins per year and whose family numbered 3 individuals; and the young Jew Itzko, also married without children, paying 8 florins per year. Certainly these 16 Jews were not able to bring together a minyan for prayer and the other religious functions which require a minyan, as only five of them were men. The majority consisted of women and small children, most of whom were below the age of mitzvahs.

We do not know if those Jews who lived in Drahiv in 1768 took root in the village and from them sprouted the community of Drahiv in the following generation, or whether the village only served for them as a waystation towards destinations deeper into Hungary. From the composition of these five families, it appears clear that that they were all young, at the beginning of their path in the new country to which they arrived from Galicia not long before.

62 years later, in 1830, Drahiv was already well-populated by Jews, in comparison to other neighboring villages. There can be no question that in the first third of the 19th century that there was already established in Drahiv a proper Jewish community with all of the institutions necessary for its proper functioning and development; that is, the triple foundation of a synagogue in which to pray and learn, a mikvah, and (to distinguish between the living and those who already have passed on) a Jewish cemetery.

This growth of the Jewish community of Drahiv is found recorded in a manuscript in the Hungarian National Archives in Budapest which lists the names of 18 heads of Jewish households from Drahiv, totalling 99 individual family members. A photocopy of this manuscript exists in the University of Tel Aviv (Muller Collection). The names listed are as follows (the numbers in parentheses is the number of individuals in each family):

Isaac Hofman (8, including a Jewish servant);
Barko Shimonovits (7);
Yanko Leibovits (10);
Mendel Zelikovits (3);
Moshko Hershkovits (6);
Sruli (=Yisroel) Wolfowitz (4);

Marko Shimonovits (10);
Folk Leibovits (4);
Yecheskel Davidovits (3);
Tzala (=Betzalel?) Davidovits (7);
Marko Sheyovits (9);
Chayim Sheyovits (3);
Pinchas Chaimovits (4);
Moshko Leibovits (4);
Hillel Leibovits (6);
Shlomo Gedaliyovits (6);
Itzko Hershkovits (3);
Shimon Itzkovits (2).

The largest extended families in Drahiv at that time were Leibovits, with four separate families totalling 24 individuals; two Shimonovits families with 17 individuals; two Sheyovits families consisting of 12 individuals; two Davidovits families with 10 individuals; and two Hershkovits families numbering 9 individuals. Amongst the families carrying unique surnames, some were blessed with numerous children, such as the family of Isaac Hofman, who was apparently a man of means, as he was able also to hire a Jewish servant.

The Community and Its Institutions

All of the names listed above reach us from non-Jewish sources; that is, sources originating from the Austro-Hungarian government, who did not record the details of the Jewish population out of love for the Jews. Rather, all of these records were recorded with a single, solitary purpose - to squeeze from the Jews taxes and levies of various kinds - income taxes, head taxes, rental fees, protection taxes, and others.

It goes without saying that in all of these lists and documents, there is not the slightest hint as to the qualities and virtues, both spiritual and physical, of those listed. We - their children and descendants - aren't so much interested in the exact amount of taxes that Moshko or Tzala or Marko paid; rather, as we are interested in discovering some hint to their spiritual essentially Jewish qualities and of their personalities. For example, what was the lifestyle of that Jew whose neighbors called him "Tzala"? What did "Tzala", for instance, do upon arising in the morning? Was he only capable of reciting some tehillim (and perhaps mangling the poetry of the Hebrew in the process)? Was he capable of learning a chapter of Mishna or maybe a page of Gemara? Perhaps - who knows? - he involved himself in the study of the hidden, mystical aspects of the Torah, to delve into the holy Zohar and the writings of the holy Arizal? Did he zealously learn from the growing library of the still-young Chasidic movement, many of which's great works had by this time already been published? We are curious - to which of the holy "Tzadikim" did he perhaps travel to visit from Drahiv? Was he a follower of the Tzadik of Kosov (author of "Ahavas Shalom" and son of the author of "Toras Chaim"), or perhaps his soul was attracted to the Tzadik of Zidichev (author of "Ateres Tzvi")? These Tzadikim lived in the period in which the 1830

census was taken. To our disappointment, we have no answers to these and other such questions.

Regarding the details of the internal functioning of the Jewish community, we unfortunately lack basic information, as we were unable to interview even a single survivor of [pre-war] Drahiv. All of our information, therefore, comes from external sources. It is almost certain that by 1830 there was already a shochet in Drahiv. If so, surely by that time the other basic institutions of a Jewish community were also already established. Without such basic institutions as a synagogue, a mikveh, and perhaps a cemetery, it would be impossible to live a normative religious Jewish lifestyle. The names of two shochetim are known to us: In the 1880s there was a shochet named Reb Shlomo Moshe. Other than his given name, nothing (not even his family surname) is known. His name is found in the subscription list for the book “Imrei Shoham”(Kalameh 5640). Later, another shochet in the community was a Reb Yaakov Shmeryl Yerushalmi. He was undoubtably a Rabbinical scholar and an authority on halachic questions, as we have two responsa written to him from the author of “Arugas HaBosem”, the Rabbi of Chust, within whose sphere of influence the town of Drahiv existed. On the date Wednesday, Parashas Lech-Lecha [8 Cheshvan] 5654 [18 Oct 1893] he wrote a responsa “to the outstanding Rabbi, teacher who fears heaven, the Rabbi Yaakov Shmeryl Yerushalmi, may his light shine, Shochet and Bodek of the village of Drahiv: regarding the question of finding red spots upon inspection of the lungs...”(Arugas HaBosem, section Yorah Deah, responsa 47), and again on the date of Thursday, Parashas Trumah [29 Shevat] 5656 [29 Feb 1896] “regarding the question of during the act of slaughtering, when the shochet felt an unusual...”(Arugas HaBosem, section Yorah Deah, [responsa 14]).

Together with the shochet Reb Shlomo Moshe, there are other members of the community who are also listed in the subscription list to the above-mentioned book “Imrei Shoham”. Unfortunately, they are listed only by their names as they would be called to a public Torah reading, i.e., their personal given name followed by the name of the name of their father, without a family surname. Even so, we think it worthwhile to copy their names here, for perhaps their descendants will be able to identify them:

Reb Yitzhak Shmuel the son of Eidy
Reb Asher Entsel the son of Nathan
Reb Avraham Yitzhak the son of Dovid
Reb Moshe the son of Yitzhak Shmuel
Reb Shlomo Kalman the son of Yitzhak Shmuel
Reb Mordechai the son of Chaim Yaakov Yitzhak
Reb Yehuda Tzvi the son of Yaakov
Reb Yisroel the son of Moshe Yosef
Reb Meir the son of Yitzhak

In addition, there exists a later subscription list (to the book “Beis Asher” of Rabbi Asher Zelig Greensweig, the Rabbi of the village of Dolha, published in Munkatz in 5697 [1936]) which also lists the names of residents of Drahiv. This list contains nine names including family surnames. Apparently, these names are of some of the more influential members of the community of Drahiv in the 1930s:

Reb Chaim Moshe Chaimovits
HaBachur Nisan Yaakov Chaimovits
Reb Yitzhak Isaac Moskovits
Reb Chaim Zev Yankovits
Reb Yosef Engel
Reb Yehuda Yosovits
Reb Meir Chaimovits
Reb Shlomo Berkovits
Reb Zisha Berkovits

As was mentioned, the village of Drahiv was throughout the years within the sphere of influence of the Rabbinical leaders of the nearby city of Chust. We can assume that the Rabbinical leaders of Chust through the generations and historical periods would periodically visit the village, minimally once every few years, in order to spiritually strengthen its inhabitants. Only a few short years before the Holocaust, the community chose for itself a Rabbi, the young scholar Rabbi Naftali Hertzka Greensweig, the son of Shalom Greensweig and grandson of Rabbi Asher Zelig (the Rabbi of Dolha), author of the previously mentioned book "Beis Asher". Rabbi Naftali Hertzka learned from and received most of his Rabbinical training from his grandfather, the Rav of Dolha (see the Dolha article for more details), who continued to advise and direct his grandson in the practical responsibilities of Rabbinical leadership even after his being chosen for the position in Drahiv. The young Rabbi of Drahiv was martyred in the Holocaust.

In one of the testimonies recorded in Yad VaShem, it is mentioned that in Drahiv there were approximately 140 Jewish households, including about 40 merchants, storekeepers, and wood dealers. Most of these were quite well established. Of the remaining 100 or so families, most made their living from working the land, as craftsmen, or as unskilled laborers. Most of the Jewish families of the village lived comfortably. The truly wealthy, however, were only scattered individuals. A portion of the younger population of the village became involved in the Zionist movement, in particular from the beginning of the 1930s. The two largest of these groups were Beitar and Hechalutz. From among their members volunteered for training, and some made aliyah to the land of Israel.

The Holocaust

With the entrance of the Hungarians into Drahiv [in March 1939] began the period of the worst conditions for the Jews in the village. In the testimonies of the holocaust survivors of Drahiv in the Yad VaShem archives, the names of three individuals in particular stand out in being blamed for the worst oppression and troublemaking against the Jews: (1) The Hungarian teacher Tutin, who in reality was a Nazi agent, investigated and shadowed every move of the Jews of the village in order to denounce the Jews to the Gendarmes at every opportunity. For instance, if a Jew was to ritually slaughter an animal without having first obtained official permission, or was to bring merchandise from Budapest in order to sell to the village inhabitants, he would immediately report this information to the Gendarmes. (2) The tailor Martin Dada, also an ethnic Hungarian, would slander the Jewish tailors of the village as a handy means of destroying competitors. If a Jewish tailor was to buy some raw material on the black market,

his slander would result in the confiscation by the Gendarmes of the Jew's sewing machines, raw materials, and even the partially-completed garments that he was working on. (3) The notary and town clerk Bela Rishka would demand bribes and protection money while at the same time instigating the non-Jewish inhabitants against the very same people from whom he was extorting payments.

The majority of the Jews of Drahiv already met their fate in the wake of the deportations [to Poland] that took place in the summer of 1941. According to one of the testimonies, at that juncture approximately 90 of the 140 Jewish families of Drahiv were deported. Another testimony states that all of the Jews of the village were ordered to gather next to the town hall in order to be expelled, but that not all of the Jews obeyed. Many hid in the surrounding forest. Most of those who did so escaped this deportation. Of the approximately 90 families deported to Poland, only a few solitary individuals, all of them young men or women, managed to return to Hungary. Among those who hid in the forest, there were also many who were caught and deported to Poland, even though in the meantime the general decree of expulsion had been rescinded. Apparently these secondary expulsions were acts of revenge by the Gendarmes against the Jews who had dared to disobey the original expulsion order. This is clear from the detailed testimony of Asher Jacobovits, a summary of which is here transcribed in something similar to his original style:

“...In 1941 all of the Jews were assembled next to the town hall and were from there loaded into trucks which took them to the train station at Bistina. From there they were transported in freight-cars to Iasin and from there to the Polish border. At the time of the “action”, Jacobovits, his wife and his sister-in-law hid together in the forest. After the expulsion they returned to the village, where he found his sister who had also hidden herself in the forest. For a few days they lived in their house in the village, but when their Ruthenian neighbors reported them to the police station, the Gendarmes immediately came and arrested them. They were put under police surveillance, forbidden to leave the village, and ordered to report to the police station three times daily. This went on for six weeks, during which time Jacobovits became friendly with one of the Gendarmes, who in exchange for bribes, agreed to provide him with information. From him he learned that they were soon also to be expelled to Poland. He again fled to the forest where he was able to hide for a few weeks, after which he returned in secret to his house in Drahiv. He was accosted by two Gendarmes, and was taken by foot through the villages of Kalicheva and Sinovar to the Polish border, together with other Jewish deportees. At the border, the Gendarmes showed them the direction into Poland and warned them that if they returned, that they would be shot on sight (In the meantime the group of refugees consisted of four men, a woman, and four children). On the way they met a Ruthenian who worked in the forest. The Ruthenian agreed to lead them back to Drahiv by a roundabout route through the woods, in exchange for a gold wristwatch, some Hungarian money, a ring, and a shaving machine. However, in the dead of the night he disappeared, leaving them alone, hungry and cold in the depths of the thick forest. (It was already November 1941.) As they wandered in the forest, they found a hut which was stocked with potatoes. Being extremely hungry, they cooked some potatoes and slept that night in the hut. In the morning, an elderly Ruthenian peasant-woman found them in the hut. She was extremely frightened to find Jews there. She was offered money that they would be allowed to remain there in the hut for a few days, but the peasant-woman refused to take the money, saying that as it was, she would have to hide the fact that they had been there at all, for if the Jews were discovered, she also would be killed for hiding Jews. She then abruptly left. Fearing that the peasant-woman would turn them in to the Gendarmes, the Jews left the hut and followed narrow forest

paths through the deep forest, finally reaching the town of Sinovar, where Gendarmes captured them. They were told that the deportations to Poland had been stopped, and were put in an empty Jewish house. In the morning they would be freed, the Gendarmes assured them. When the morning came, Gendarmes came and beat them, then forced them on foot to Poliana-Sinovar, where they were handed over to Hungarian troops. Two Hungarian soldiers forced them to march through the woods to the Polish border. At the border they said, "We don't want to have to deal with you any more; if we see you again, we will kill you without mercy." They showed them the border markers and ordered them to cross over. The Jews crossed the border and continued until they reached a small Polish village. Entering an empty house, they rested and cooked for themselves some warm cereal from some flour that they were carrying in their shoulder bags. Continuing further into Poland, they passed through several small villages, none of whose inhabitants would even allow them to enter a courtyard, let alone a house. They continued walking until they reached the city of Dolina, where Jacobovits ran into a brother-in-law (apparently also having been expelled to Poland). In Dolina they found thousands of Jewish refugees, among whom they settled and even found work. However, there was great danger in Dolina. S.S. men would patrol the streets in a black car and grab Jews off of the street, forcing them into the car and driving away with them. The kidnapped Jews were never heard from again. Jacobovits thus left, continuing on to the city of Bulichov, where he could not find a single household which would open its door to him. Desperate, he forced his way into a house and stayed there until morning. The next day he found a group of Jews from Munkacz who had in their possession gold and other valuables. These Jews had come to an agreement with two Poles (one a trapper, the other an engineer) who had agreed to lead them back to the Hungarian border. The Munkacz Jews agreed to let Jacobovits join them. Together they reached the border of Hungary. Slipping between the patrols guarding the border, they reached a small Hungarian village in which lived a relative of one of the members of the group. Jacobovits remained in this village, in the house of a Ruthenian peasant, where he slept buried in the hay in the loft of the cattle-shed. Rumors surfaced in the village that there were Jews in the vicinity who had returned from Poland, which soon reached the ears of the local Gendarmes. The Jews hid in the local mikveh. The next morning dozens of Hungarian troops appeared and began a systematic search of the village. The Jews managed to escape to the forest, and the next day were able to travel by car to Munkacz. From Munkacz, Jacobovits continued to Chust, and from Chust returned to Drahiv. He returned to his own house and hid in the attic in the roof. Soon word was out in the village that he had returned, and the Gendarmes began searching for him. Luckily, Jacobovits saw the Gendarmes approaching his house through a crack in the roof. He escaped through the garden together with his wife. From there they walked to Chust..."

In 1944, the year of the general annihilation of Hungarian Jewry, Drahiv was already comparatively empty of Jews. The majority had been killed in the wake of the deportations of 1941 to Kaminitz-Podolsk and other locations in Poland. Most of those who escaped from the early deportations did not return to Drahiv. In 1944 there remained only about 35-40 Jewish families, totalling about 180-200 individuals. They were sent to the Sikernica ghetto, and from there to Aushwitz.

After the war ended, scattered Jewish survivors returned to Drahiv, but their numbers dwindled as the postwar communist government consolidated its control over the area. In the late 1940s there were attempts made to restore Jewish community life to the village. The synagogue, which the Nazis had soiled and desecrated, was cleaned and purified, and the survivors organized there a minyan, especially

for Shabbos and festivals. The Soviet rulers, however, made the development of a normative Jewish community impossible. In 1950, the communists seized the synagogue, and officially confiscated it to be used as a grain-storage depot. We were able to interview a Jew who lived in Drahiv from 1950 until 1971 (when he was able to make aliya to Israel). According to his testimony, during the course of the twenty years that he lived in Drahiv, there were many changes in the political atmosphere of the village, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. There were periods of near-persecution, during which the Soviet rulers pursued and attempted to extinguish any hint of Jewish religious and community life, not even allowing communal prayer services. There were other periods where the rulers turned their heads and even allowed quiet Shabbos observance and communal prayer services on Shabbos and festivals, and most importantly, during the Days of Awe [from Rosh HaShana through Yom Kippur]. Even during the most difficult periods, almost without exception the Jewish inhabitants of Drahiv (including members of the local Communist Party and local Party officials) risked their careers and even their lives in performing Bris Milah on their sons, despite an atmosphere of fear and oppression, and even overt warnings and imprisonment.

The Jewish community of Drahiv during the postwar period reached a maximum of about 40 families. With the beginning of aliyah from the USSR to Israel, most of the Jews left for Israel. At the time of this writing [1985] there remains in Drahiv approximately ten Jewish families.

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Interview with a new immigrant to Israel from Drahiv.

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Magyar-Zsido Okleveltar, Budapest, vol VII (1963) pp 308, 748; vol XVI (1967) p 104.

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Translated and edited by Moshe A Davis. This translation is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother Chaya Chaimovits (in America, Helen Hayfer), who was born in the village of Drahiv (Kovesliget, Drahova), and to the members of her family (family surnames Chaimovits and Zelminovics) who were murdered by the accursed Nazis and their accomplices. Hashem Yenakam Damam!

In this translation, I have endeavored to maximize ease of readability and the

grammatical flow of the material, while keeping true to the spirit and the content of the information contained therein. To this end, in many places I have taken the liberty of rearranging the sentence and/or paragraph structure from that of the original Hebrew in order to improve the clarity and natural flow of ideas in English. Also, in many places I have slightly expanded the material, in order to clarify ideas or to define concepts which may not be familiar to readers who lack background in traditional Jewish customs and who are unfamiliar with Jewish Law. My own additions I have set apart by enclosing them in square brackets [].

Please note that many of the original sources used by the authors of Sefer Marmaros were written in languages other than Hebrew, which is the language of the text of Sefer Marmaros itself. Those original sources were not available to the translator, and thus most of the surnames and/or place names as transliterated here may in fact have been spelled somewhat differently in the original source.

List of Jewish surnames mentioned in this article:

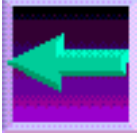
Berkovits
Chaimovits
Davidovits
Engel
Gedalyovits
Greensweig
HersHKovits
Hofman
Itzkovits
Jacobovits
Leibovits
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