

Presselandschaft in der Bukowina und den Nachbarregionen: Akteure – Inhalte – Ereignisse (1900-1945). Edited by MARKUS WINKLER. Pp. 251. Munich: IKGS Verlag. 2011. €19.50. Hardback. ISBN: 9783981169492.

One often hears that whereas English is full of ‘scenes’, German is full of ‘landscapes’, and that both terms are equally difficult to translate. The title of one of the recent publications of the Munich-based Institute for Culture and History of Southeastern Europe (IKGS) is a case in point. There is no obvious English equivalent for the ‘landscape’ that is the focus of the collection *Presselandschaft in der Bukowina und den Nachbarregionen* (literally: the press landscape in the Bukovina and neighbouring regions), which appeared in 2011. Indeed, the neologism ‘media landscape’ does not really work. Clearly the concept does refer to the rich and diverse cultural network in the sphere of media – specifically the written word – that characterized the Austrian, and then Romanian, region before World War II. Yet it is not only used to describe a feature of the region’s history, but also as something that can help to make sense of it analytically.

For this reason, though not this one alone, the carefully edited volume is a welcome addition to the existing literature on Bukovina. Proceeding from an international and interdisciplinary conference, which took place in 2008, *Presselandschaft* brings together contributions from a number of academics currently working on the region across Europe. While recent years have seen many of the contributors publish detailed studies of their own, this collection serves as a useful introduction to their respective interests. Despite different academic traditions, the contributions complement each other well and provide a dense overview of the resources, approaches, and methodologies available to historians with an interest in the region and its press in particular.

The first three sections, which focus on Bukovina, are organized thematically: public life, major players, and significant events. The fourth and final section deals with the ‘neighbouring regions’ – namely Transnistria and the Romanian Banat (though surprisingly not Galicia). The fact that both these contributions deal with the ethnic German press could be said to give the volume an unnecessary slant. Yet there is undoubtedly some use in this off-focus addendum, which broadens the perspective of the volume. It allows for comparison and permits insight into developments during World War II that would otherwise be left out. Indeed, the contributions follow a broadly chronological order: the first chapter by the editor Markus Winkler offers an overview of the German-language press until 1918 in lieu of introduction and the last chapter deals with the coverage of the war in Yugoslavia in a Nazified publication. The time period mentioned in the subtitle (1900-1945) is therefore largely covered.

The contributions provide new and detailed perspectives on a number of issues. The first chapter highlights the significance of the study’s subject by means of a substantial quantitative and qualitative analysis of the region’s German-language press. In the only English-language contribution, David Rechter demonstrates the applicability of the concept of ‘public sphere’ to historical analysis and the case of the Bukovina Jewry in particular. In what follows, literature, biography, and international developments are all interchangeably used to make sense of the

decisions and motivations of contributors and publishers. Recurrent themes such as the status of different languages (German, Ukrainian, Yiddish, and Romanian) and the political implications of their use are handled in a manner that complicates conventional understandings. The volume as a whole tackles and reflects Bukovina's exceptional cultural vigour, political verve, and linguistic vitality. Yet it also avoids the pitfalls of the region's notoriously nostalgic and mythologizing memorial literature. In fact, what arises from this assemblage of linguistically, politically, and stylistically diverse perspectives and source materials is an understanding of the interwar period as a dynamic and heterogeneous time, the onset of political radicalization in the 1930s constituting a stark contrast to the relatively peaceful preceding decade.

The collection demonstrates the wealth of information that can be gained from an analysis of the daily and weekly press of any given period. As Winkler has argued elsewhere, this kind of research provides unique access to the relationships between the members of a past 'imagined community of readers'. It is therefore a privileged means of explaining political and cultural movements, trends, and affiliations, and conceptualizing their complex interactions – something all the more exceptional when the place and its people have long since disappeared.

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