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“A Microhistory of the Hungarian Deportations in 1941 to Kamianets-Podilskyi: Lili Jacob and Her Village of Bilky”

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Abstract: In this article I describe the conditions for Jews and non-Jews living in Subcarpathia, especially in the village of Bilky, between the date when Hungary moved back into the region in 1939 and the deportation of Hungarian Jews to Kamianets-Podilskyi in 1941. My focus here is on Lili Jacob’s request for her birth certificate in 1939, on the comments that she and other Bilky survivors made concerning what happened in 1941, as well as on historical presentations by former residents of Bilky who were there or were personally affected by what happened in 1941. I describe conditions on a microhistorical level in the community of Bilky, and by doing this I hope to better portray how local people experienced what happened to them and their neighbors.

Keywords: Subcarpathia; Bilky; Holocaust; deportations

On November 28, 1939, Lili Jacob (a resident of the village of Bilky in Subcarpathia) requested a copy of her birth certificate from the local notary. She paid 2 pengő for the document.¹ In June 1940, her father, Marton Jacob, requested his birth certificate. There is no evidence that in the late 1930s or early 1940s Lili’s mother or her five brothers purchased copies of their respective documents, only Lili and her father did.²

These requests took place after the Hungarians had annexed all of Subcarpathia to Hungary, including Lili’s home village of Bilky. The territory had been part of Hungary prior to 1918, but at the end of the First World War it was given to the new

1 In this article I have chosen to use the term Subcarpathia to refer to a region that has been called Podkarpatská Rus’ (Subcarpathian Rus’), Kárpátalja, and Zakarpattia (Transcarpathia). I have also chosen to refer to the local Slavic-speaking population by their historical name Rusyns, recognizing that today they are called Ukrainians. I am using the spelling Bilky, instead of the Hungarian spelling Bilke.

2 Transcarpathian State Archives, Berehovo, Fond 142, 2/1.

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state of Czechoslovakia which treated it as a separate region known as Podkarpatská Rus'. At the time of the First Vienna Award in November 1938, part of Podkarpatská Rus' was annexed to Hungary and the other part remained within Czechoslovakia. Bilky initially stayed in Podkarpatská Rus' (still within rump Czechoslovakia), which on March 1939 was declared Carpatho-Ukraine – an independent state that only lasted for one day, until the Hungarians marched in and took over all of Subcarpathia.

I am interested in these requests for birth certificates at this time as examples of how everyday Jews navigated their lives and understood their lives in the years prior to the deportations of Hungarian Jews to Kamianets-Podilskyi in 1941. Of course, people needed copies of their birth certificates for various reasons, but the new atmosphere concerning citizenship put new pressure on people, especially Jews, to obtain proof of residency, proof of their birth place, and proof of how long the family had lived in that state. We may not know the exact reason for Lili and Marton's requests, yet we can conjecture possible motives and thereby reflect on how Jews in a village in Subcarpathia experienced the new atmosphere and conditions concerning belonging.

This investigation is a form of microhistory (also similar to work considered cultural history and biography.³) Such an approach usually examines the way one or a few people understood what happened to them at a given time – usually non-famous, unknown people who left us few or even no sources. Microhistory in this sense can give voice to people who are often forgotten by history. The objective here is to portray “the fundamental experiences and mentalités of ordinary people,” as Jill Lepore describes the work of microhistorians.⁴

My examples are the Jews of the village of Bilky in the region of Subcarpathia – a territory known as Transcarpathia today and as other designators at different times. These snapshots of a time and place in the life of Jews and non-Jews in the region of Subcarpathia is part of a much larger project of mine that examines the life of Lili Jacob (the Holocaust survivor who discovered the Auschwitz Album in 1945), the Auschwitz Album itself (a collection of around 200 photographs), and Lili's home village of Bilky (today in the Transcarpathian region of Ukraine). The larger project begins in the late nineteenth century and covers much of the twentieth century. In this article, I concentrate on the period prior to 1941 (when the deportations to Kamianets-Podilskyi took place) and on the experiences of Lili, her neighbors, her village, and the region that is today Transcarpathia.

³ See “American Historical Review Roundtable: Historians and Biography,” *American Historical Review* 114, no. 3 (June 2009): 573–661.

⁴ Jill Lepore, “Historians who love too much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography,” *The Journal of American History* 88/1 (June 2001): 131.

My goal here is not to identify the perpetrators or to determine what was the main cause of the deportations and the murder of Hungarian Jews. Rather the goal, as already stated, is to contemplate how people at the time experienced the world they lived in and the world around them. Yet before I continue with my microstudy, I want to point out that in general the topic of the deportation of Hungarian Jews in the summer of 1941 has not received a great deal of scholarship. Nevertheless, it is not an ignored topic.⁵ Scholars have frequently investigated who was involved, both as perpetrators and as victims with the aim of documenting what happened and to name who was responsible. Within a six-week period in the summer of 1941, thousands (around 35,000) of “alien” Jews (most of them from Subcarpathia, as well as from other recently annexed territories in southern Slovakia and northern Romania) were deported to Körösmező (Jasinia) in Subcarpathia. From there around 22,000 were sent to Kamianets-Podilskyi in Galicia, which was under German control. Initially they were placed in ghettos, and then about a month later in August, the majority of them, along with local Jews from Kamianets-Podilskyi, were murdered in the first mass-scale killing of Jews during the Second World War, which reached five digits.⁶

There has been serious research as to who was responsible, specifically for the decision to deport the Jews as well as the actions in Kamianets-Podilskyi.⁷ Many scholars argue that the responsibility for the deportations rests with the National Central Alien Control Authority (Külföldieket Ellenőrző Országos Központi Hatóság, or KEOKH) in Hungary, but others also emphasize the role that the Regent’s Commissioner for Subcarpathia, Miklós Kozma, played in the decision-making process.⁸ Randolph Braham identified already in the 1970s that it was “units of the SS, their Ukrainian hirelings, and a Hungarian sappers’ platoon” who were responsible

5 See for example Tamás Stark, *Hosszú út az első magyarországi deportáláshoz* (Budapest: Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, 2024). George Eisen, *A Summer of Mass Murder: 1941 Rehearsal for the Hungarian Holocaust* (Purdue University Press, 2022).

6 George Eisen and Tamás Stark, “The 1941 Galician Deportation and the Kamenets-Podolsk Massacre: A Prologue to the Hungarian Holocaust,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 27 (Fall 2013): 208. Randolph L. Braham, *The Hungarian Labor Service System* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 1977), 29. See also Richard Breitman, *Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 63–65.

7 See for example, Ádám Gellért and János Gellért, “Az 1941. évi körösmezői deportálások: A kitoloncolásokat jóváhagyó minisztertanácsi döntés háttere,” *Betekintő* (2012/2) [https://www.betekinto.hu/hu/2012_2_gellert_gellert].

8 Eisen and Stark, “1941,” 217–219. See also Kinga Frojimovics, *I have been a Stranger in a Strange Land: The Hungarian State and Jewish Refugees in Hungary, 1933–1945* (Yad Vashem: The International Institute for Holocaust Research, 2007) and Mária Ormos, *Egy magyar médiavezér: Kozma Miklós. Pokoljárás a médiában és a politikában, 1919–1941* (Budapest, PolgART, 2000).

for the killing,⁹ even though many Hungarian scholars for a long time pointed to Einsatzgruppe C Units.¹⁰ In the early 2000s, László Karsai was able to identify specific members of Police Battalion 320 as some of the perpetrators,¹¹ and Kinga Frojimovich later wrote that Police Battalion 320 was part of Einsatzgruppe C.¹² The question as to who was responsible is ongoing. More recently George Eisen and Tamás Stark argued that the “Stabskompanie” (staff company) of Obergruppenführer Friedrich Jeckeln, Higher SS and Police Leader (Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer) of the region, aided by Order Police Battalion 320 as well as Ukrainian auxiliaries were involved. Eisen and Stark also pointed out that it appears likely that Hungarian military units stationed in the area participated in the killing, but they add that this has not been fully documented.¹³

The microhistorical (or cultural historical) approach turns away from more traditional methodologies concerning narrating the past – traditional methodologies that emphasize obvious and not so obvious cause and effect connections as well as long lines of development, which thereby usually focus on larger questions.¹⁴ Instead, cultural history and microhistory encourages one to search for meanings – meanings of ideas, symbols, and narratives – that gave shape to a world that existed and was experienced by the people who lived it. This approach can also result at times in the discovery of a variety of meanings as well as sometimes in an absence of meaning.¹⁵

1 Microhistory

The focus of my research is how Lili Jacob, her family, and her neighbors experienced and understood what was happening around them. As pointed out earlier, my goal is not to explain why something happened at the macro-level, but how

9 Randolph L. Braham, “The Kamenets Podolsk and Délvidék Massacres: Prelude to the Holocaust in Hungary,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 9 (1973): 141.

10 Ádám Gellért and János Gellért, “Egy tömeggyilkosság anatómiája – Kamenec-Podolszkij, 1941. Augusztus,” *Betekintő* (2015/4): 15.

11 László Karsai, *Holokauszt* (Budapest: Pannonica Kiadó, 2001), 232 and 315. See also László Karsai, “1941. augusztus 27–28,” *Élet és Irodalom* 37 (2009): no page numbers.

12 Frojimovics, *I have been a Stronger*, 129.

13 Eisen and Stark, “1941,” 213–214.

14 Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 178–185. See also Dan Stone, “Holocaust Historiography and Cultural History,” *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust* 23:1 (2009): 60.

15 Dan Stone, “Holocaust Historiography and Cultural History,” in *The Holocaust and Historical Methodology*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012): 44–60.

everyday people experienced the wider as well as the local events and changes. However, it is often the case that we have few documents and memories regarding the years prior to 1941 at the local level, yet this does not make the inquiry impossible. In many ways it makes the inquiry more important.

In her testimony to the Shoah foundation in 1996, Lili Jacob does not mention what happened to her or to her family in 1941, and the interviewer did not think of asking about this first deportation of Hungarian Jews. It seems that the only time Lili shared any memories of 1941 was during an earlier interview in 1973, and even then she does not say very much (I will return to this interview later in the article). It seems obvious that in 1941, Lili (who was 15 years old at the time) did not know what was going to happen to some of her Jewish neighbors as well as the thousands of Hungarian Jews deported first to Körömező and then to Kamianets-Podilskiyi. She may not have even known that so many Jews were being sent to Poland and to their deaths. She only learned about what happened after the war. Yet the conditions surrounding those deportations and the general atmosphere at the time was experienced by everyone, including Lili and her family.

What the Jews and non-Jews, including Lili, might have known was that the atmosphere of change (which to many may have seemed chaotic) had intensified and continued to target Jews as enemies. Discrimination against Jews had grown stronger in all aspects of public life. These conditions forced Lili and others to think about who they were and how they fit into or did not fit into the world around them. The deportations were part of an atmosphere that altered the way Jews thought about themselves and about their environment. The deportations were about removing Jews, physically and mentally, from Hungary, specifically in this case from Subcarpathia. A variety of developments spread the idea of a “world without Jews.”¹⁶ Jews, such as Lili and her family, experienced this as violence against Jews as well as a redefinition of what it meant to belong. In the following examples I will describe how a sense of belonging changed for Lili and other Jews concerning the question of citizenship (the main justification used for the deportations); concerning the role that Jews were allowed to play in local economic life; and concerning what religion meant for those trying to understand this situation.

In order to think about how people in a place like Bilky experienced the 1941 deportations, we can also turn to other testimonies and descriptions. There are few documents in the archives that are able to share with us how Lili and other Jews understood what was happening. That is why I find the requests for birth certificates so important. Nevertheless, people did talk about and write about their recollections

16 For a book-length examination of this in Germany see Alon Confino, *A World Without Jews: The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

after 1945, even if there are few references in the available sources concerning the atmosphere and events of 1941 in Bilky. In this article I will refer to the handful that do exist.

2 Subcarpathia

Many aspects of life were changing by 1941 in the region of Subcarpathia, for Jews and non-Jews alike. Some of the changes were associated with the technological, physical, and cognitive transitions introduced by modernity. Here I will describe some of this context, providing examples that will eventually affect the issue of citizenship (and belonging), since that will be the reason given for the deportations.

The historian Livia Rothkirchen emphasizes in her 1977 article that the region experienced a high level of chaos starting with the Munich crisis in late 1938 and the subsequent territorial changes.¹⁷ The Munich Agreement between the British, French, Germans, and Italians provided for the annexation of the Sudetenland (the western part of Czechoslovakia) to Nazi Germany, and shortly thereafter (in early November 1938) the First Vienna Award was issued. This Award gave parts of southern Slovakia and part of Subcarpathia to the state of Hungary. The remaining territory of Subcarpathia became an autonomous region in the rump state of Czechoslovakia.

Lili Jacob, her family, and the residents of Bilky were in the region that remained in Czechoslovakia in late 1938. The new regional government of this territory moved after November 1938 from Uzhhorod, which now found itself under Hungarian control, to the town of Khust, which is not far from Bilky. On March 15, 1939, the government in Khust declared the region independent from Czechoslovakia with the name Carpatho-Ukraine, yet it only existed for one day before the Hungarian troops arrived.¹⁸ As pointed out earlier, the shifting center of power as well as the borders changes since 1938 have been identified by the historian Livia Rothkirchen as actions that compounded the problems for local residents.¹⁹ I agree with this assessment, and I would add that the most disruptive period for many people prior to the deportations was between the First Vienna Award in November 1938 and the spring of 1939, when the Hungarians returned. This was a chaotic and even violent time for many local residents – a time that deserves a lot more scholarship.

17 Livia Rothkirchen, "Deep-Rooted yet Alien: Some Aspects of the History of the Jews in Subcarpathian Ruthenia," *Yad Vashem Studies* 12 (1977): 153.

18 Michael Winch, *Republic for a Day* (London, 1939)

19 Rothkirchen, "Deep-Rooted," 153.

The border alterations greatly affected other aspects of life in Subcarpathia, including religious identity. The region had always been multi-religious, with Orthodox Christians, Greek Catholic Christians, Roman Catholics, Calvinists, and Jews, mainly Orthodox Jews. Frequently, religious affiliation was aligned with national identity as well. Roman Catholic believers as well as Calvinists were most often Magyar speakers. The Rusyns were either followers of Eastern Orthodoxy or the Greek Catholic Church. During the post-First World War era, some among the Rusyn population left the Greek Catholic Church and joined the already present Eastern Orthodox Church.

Prior to 1918, during the Hungarian period, many of the Greek Catholic priests (Rusyns) aligned themselves with the Hungarian Kingdom and were sometimes reluctant to accept Czechoslovak rule after 1918. The Czechoslovak state tried not to show preference for either the Orthodox Christians or the Greek Catholics, but there was a movement among many congregations during the 1920s toward Eastern Orthodoxy. Bilky was one of the centers of this shift, with large numbers of Christians leaving the Greek Catholic Church and joining the Orthodox one.²⁰ The Calvinist Church in Bilky does not seem to have been affected by this. It is unclear how such a move would have affected the Jewish population, but they (including Lili and her family) would have witnessed the religious tension and religious conversion taking place around them.

Jews, who made up approximately 13% of the population of Subcarpathia overall (in 1930),²¹ and about 17% in Bilky, were also divided in different ways. There were few Neolog Jews (reform) in Subcarpathia in general. The only two Neolog synagogues were in Uzhhorod and Mukachevo. Frequently the Jewish inhabitants are classified as Orthodox (as I did above), but there were different kinds of Orthodox, as well as different Hasidic dynasties existing in the region. I often find the best description of Subcarpathian Jewry at this time the one provided by Aryeh Sole: there were assimilationists, Orthodox, ordinary Jews, and nationalist (Zionist) Jews.²² During the Czechoslovak times, there was great tension between different Jewish groups, especially between the Hasidim and Mitnagdim.²³ Contemporary portrayals of the tension between Orthodox (even ordinary Jews) and the burgeoning

20 Iurii Danylets, "The Specific Features of Development of the Orthodox Movement in Subcarpathian Rus in the Second Half of the 1920s (Based on the Example of Bilky and Velyki Luchky Villages)," *Історія* 44:1, (2021): 33–42. In Ukrainian.

21 Robert Paul Magocsi, *With Their Backs to the Mountains: A History of Carpathian Rus' and Carpatho-Rusyns* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2015), 253.

22 Aryeh Sole, "Subcarpathian Ruthenia, 1918–1938," in *The Jews of Czechoslovakia: Historical Studies and Surveys*, vol. I (Philadelphia and New York: The Jewish Publication Society of America – Society for the History of Czechoslovak Jews, 1968), 149.

23 Rothkirchen, "Deep-Rooted," 152.

nationalist (Zionist) groups can be found in the fiction of Ivan Olbracht. For example, in his novel *The Sorrowful Eyes of Hannah Karajich*, one learns of an Orthodox family that chant the prayer for the dead when their daughter chooses to leave with a Zionist man.²⁴

Relations between Jews and Rusyns – the two largest groups in many villages and towns – were usually cordial. Historians such as Paul Robert Magocsi emphasize that there was a certain sense of equality and mutual respect between Jews and Rusyns.²⁵ There had been no pogroms and no organized or spontaneous acts of violence against Jews in Subcarpathia, as there had been in many other places in Eastern Europe. This unique situation could have been because of the similar socioeconomic position of both Jews and Rusyns. Both groups were very poor and both were usually very pious. They lived similar lifestyles, which, according to scholars, explains why there was little animosity between them.²⁶

Relations with Hungarians is a little more difficult to summarize. It is true that Hungarians outnumbered Jews in some places, mainly in the plains near the Hungarian border, but not in the mountains. The urban Jews frequently aligned themselves, especially prior to 1918, with the Hungarian state, as they did in many other places in the Hungarian Kingdom. As mentioned earlier, Greek Catholic priests (Rusyns) frequently supported Hungary. In a village such as Bilky, Hungarians (Magyar speakers) made up 2.54 % of the inhabitants in 1921, and they lived close together and not among the Rusyns or Jews.²⁷

After 1938 (or 1939 for the former territory of Carpatho-Ukraine), relations with the Hungarian state changed dramatically, as Hungary took over the region again. It is unclear how radically the relations with Hungarian neighbors changed in a place like Bilky. One of my interview partners in Bilky (a Hungarian, born in 1933) insisted that relations between Hungarians and Jews were good during his childhood, before the war. He remembered that his father had Jewish friends, and he himself played with Jewish children. Relations, however, between Jews and the Hungarian authorities were usually not good.

As soon as Hungary annexed the entirety of Subcarpathia in 1939, the life of Jews in the region changed. Yeshayahu Jelinek – in one of the few book-length studies

24 Ivan Olbracht, *The Sorrowful Eyes Of Hannah Karajich* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), reprint: 187.

25 Magocsi, *With their Backs to the Mountains*, 258. See also Alexander Baran, “Jewish-Ukrainian Relations in Transcarpathia,” in Peter J. Potichnyj and Howard Aster (Eds.), *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, Second Edition (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1990): 159–172.

26 Magocsi, *With their Backs to the Mountains*, 258.

27 *Kárpátalja településeinek nemzetiségi (anyanyelvi) adatai 1880–1941* (Budapest: központi statisztikai hivatal, 1996), 148.

of Jews in Subcarpathia – points out that antisemitism increased at this time. Hungarian-controlled Subcarpathia followed the example of the rest of Hungary where antisemitism had been encouraged during the interwar years. Antisemitic acts and policies increased.²⁸ Hungary's first anti-Jewish law had already gone into effect in 1938 in Hungary, and its provisions applied immediately to annexed territories.²⁹ The first Jews in Subcarpathia to suffer under Hungarian laws were the Jewish owners of small businesses that required government licenses, specifically for selling tobacco, alcohol, or gunpowder. Their licenses were revoked and the businesses were transferred to non-Jews. As time went, on other licenses were also targeted and eventually taken away from Jews.³⁰

As life changed because of the anti-Jewish law, the Hungarian government passed the second anti-Jewish law, which took effect on May 4, 1939, and now also applied to Subcarpathia, since Hungary had defeated and annexed the region that had become Carpatho-Ukraine. There were further restrictions. The 1939 law also defined in a complicated manner who was a Jew. Jewish economic freedom was basically eliminated. They were removed from most occupations. They could not buy and sell real estate, and they were forced to sell or lease the land that they owned. The second law also limited the political and civil rights of Jews, and this complicated Jews' ability to possess and acquire citizenship in Hungary. Because of this law, many Jews were made homeless and stateless.³¹ There was also a third anti-Jewish law (August 2, 1941), which, following the language of the Nuremberg Decrees, set out to define a Jew as a member of a racial category and not a religious one.

These various changes, as well as many more modifications to life in general, greatly affected the lives of people living in Subcarpathia, both Jews and non-Jews. Many of the changes were influenced by the acceptance of racial ideas and exclusionary policies that became more acceptable as Nazi Germany gained more strength and influence across Europe. Some of these changes could also be seen as consequences of the shift toward modernity in the twentieth century, as well as the conditions created by the border changes.

By 1939, Lili Jacob was 13 years old, and she and her generation were becoming adults within this new atmosphere. They faced multiple questions. Who are you? Who are your neighbors? The issue of belonging was in flux, and individuals in Bilky

28 Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, *The Carpathian Diaspora* (New York: East European Monographs, 2007), 243.

29 This is a complicated topic. Jelinek points out that there were discussions whether annexed lands should receive separate legislation. It is also not entirely clear how local officials interpreted when to apply existing laws, such as this first anti-Jewish law, to Subcarpathia. Jelinek, *The Carpathian Diaspora*, 257–258.

30 Jelinek, *The Carpathian Diaspora*, 234.

31 Jelinek, *The Carpathian Diaspora*, 256–257.

and elsewhere were confronted with new, renewed, as well as old questions concerning belonging in the late 1930s. These groupings or blocks were more numerous and the lines between them more clearly delineated. Most people had to choose a clear religious and national position. All of this eventually influenced the question concerning a person's relationship with the state, specifically regarding citizenship.

I want to make clear that the 1941 deportations could be explained by Hungary's desire to remove Jews living in Hungary who were not citizens, but the deportations could also be explained by a variety of other causes. The question of citizenship is the foremost explanation for deporting Jews in 1941, but one could also point to increased antisemitism, for example, as the cause of the deportations. The cause could be the Hungarian regime's desire to show gratitude to the Nazis for various border changes in favor of Hungary since 1938 – an argument that is difficult to prove. One could also argue that the increased antisemitism and expulsion of Jews was part of Hungary's new state-building agenda.³² As with any historical event, there were probably multiple causes, yet here I am mainly addressing the issue of citizenship, or at least the way this question was understood and interpreted by everyday Jews, such as Lili Jacob and her family.

3 Citizenship

The question of citizenship was the main reason given for the deportations, and, if it was not the driving force, the new ideas concerning citizenship clearly affected the life of both Jews and non-Jews. Of course, citizenship was not new in 1941 or even in 1939, but it would now be used to justify the removal of "alien" Jews from Hungary, resulting in one of the largest massacres of Jews up to that point in the war. We are back to the question of who belongs and who does not. In this case, who is a member of the state. The question of citizenship had already been present in the ideas and actions of many states since the time of Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Even within the region that was to become Subcarpathia this issue has a long, complicated, and varied trajectory.

In his study of the modern state, James C. Scott argues that the concept of a "uniform, homogeneous citizenship" was a "revolutionary simplification of the modern era."³³ Modernity encouraged or required a form of homogenization whereby the majority were accepted and those who were different were excluded

³² Raz Segal, *Genocide in the Carpathians: War, Social Breakdown, and Mass Violence, 1914–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020).

³³ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 32.

(or at times forced or encouraged to change who they were – to assimilate, for example). One could argue that the revolutionary concept of citizenship benefited Jewish populations by often making them equal members of the state in which they lived,³⁴ but by the twentieth century Jews often found themselves as minorities in someone else's nation-state, albeit with some form of citizenship. In twentieth-century Europe, the increased homogenization of populations and spread of democracy at times resulted in an increase in antisemitism.³⁵

This process seems straightforward, but it was complicated, and the concept of citizenship could be (and was) used to exclude and remove people. In Subcarpathia, the issue of citizenship was not a new topic in 1941. An earlier Hungarian law made citizenship dependent on a person's ability to prove that their family had lived in Hungary since at least 1871. Prior to 1918 in the Hungarian Kingdom as well as afterward in the new state of Czechoslovakia, this created difficulties for many inhabitants of Subcarpathia, including many Jews. Scholars have pointed out that the issue of citizenship and domicile was a source of constant trouble throughout the entire Czechoslovak period.³⁶ Czechoslovakia attempted to settle the citizenship question in 1926 with the *Lex Dérer* that stipulated that all persons who had settled before 1906 in any part of Czechoslovakia that had previously been part of Hungary had the right to claim Czechoslovak citizenship, but local officials often interpreted the rules in their own way.³⁷ The 1930 Czechoslovak census asked whether a person was a permanent resident or a temporary resident. The Czechoslovak state collected documents and demarcated who belonged and who did not.³⁸ Many individuals found even the 1926 law discriminatory, especially against Jews, and in 1938, a new law was adopted that recognized individuals as citizens if they had already lived in what became Czechoslovakia on August 1, 1914.³⁹ To be honest, descriptions of what the antisemitic laws forbade and allowed as well as how this was interpreted on the ground remains confusing.

One of the biggest problems was that there did not exist any reliable sources to document when people had first settled in the area, and to complicate the issue, most officials, especially Czech officials, found it difficult to record Jewish names correctly.⁴⁰ It was also not uncommon for local individuals to falsify records. One anecdote concerning Lili's village of Bilky that finds its way into many descriptions

34 See Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, eds., *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

35 Mark Mazower, *The Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 59.

36 Rothkirchen, "Deep-Rooted," 152.

37 Sole, "Subcarpathian Ruthenia," 138. Rothkirchen, "Deep-Rooted," 152–153.

38 See Transcarpathian State Archives, Berehovo, 188/3/70 and 188/3/73.

39 Jelinek, *The Carpathian Diaspora*, 201.

40 Sole, "Subcarpathian Ruthenia," 138.

of Subcarpathia is the 1909 scandal when the local Bilky rabbi was caught manipulating the records of local boys in order to keep them out of the military.⁴¹ The Bilke Yizkor book provides more detail about the same scandal: the Bilky rabbi sometimes changed the birth date of Jewish boys, sometimes making them older, sometimes younger, in order to defer or avoid conscription. Other times, boys were registered as girls in order to avoid the draft.⁴² To make matters worse, when news of what the Bilky rabbi was doing reached the authorities, the rabbi and his helpers burned all the documents and fled the country, thereby destroying sources that could have helped Jews in later decades.

4 Birth Certificates

One obvious document concerning Lili and her father's actions in the years prior to 1941 is the Bilky notary's ledger of document requests. As mentioned earlier, Lili asked for her birth certificate on November 28, 1939, and seven months later, on June 28, 1940, her father asked for his birth certificate. This seems to have been a common request at that time. On November 28, 1939, when Lili asked for her birth certificate, five other people requested their certificates on that same day. On June 28, 1940, there were four requests.

Not all of the requests were from Jews. Rusyns were also collecting their birth certificates. On November 29, 1939, one day after Lili's request, for example, all three requests were from Rusyns. Since there is no comment in the ledger as to the reasons for the requests, we do not know the exact motive as to why any of them wanted these documents. It is also not noted as to why some individuals, including Lili, but not her father, requested two birth certificates. There were occasions when individuals asked for three copies. We do know that all of them paid the same price, 2 pengő, except one Ukrainian who was not charged because of "the poor laws" (probably some kind of financial hardship support). We can with great certainty assume that Lili, her father, and other Jews were collecting these documents in order to prove that they belonged to Bilky, to Subcarpathia, and especially to Hungary.

These are perhaps the only documents that exist that tie Lili and her family to the new atmosphere concerning citizenship as well as to reactions to the changing times – issues that would lead to the 1941 deportations. It was clearly important to Lili and her father (and to other local residents) to have a copy of their birth certificates. Some kind of proof had been and would continue to be necessary to demonstrate that

⁴¹ Jelinek, *The Carpathian Diaspora*, 99.

⁴² *The Bilker Memorial Book*, ed. Moshe Avital (New York, 1998), 723.

they lived in and had lived in that region since at least the First World War, or even earlier.

Seeing the connection between Marton Jacob's (Lili's father) request and the obvious worries about citizenship in Hungary is pretty evident. In the changing conditions with new rules and restrictions, he needed to prove where he was born in order to protect himself and his family. The reason why Lili, who was only 13 years old in 1939, needed a copy of her birth certificate is perhaps not as obvious. If her father had proof of belonging to Bilky and thus to Hungary, Lili probably did not need additional documentation. As mentioned earlier, there is no record that her mother or her brothers requested birth certificates.

The reason for Lili's request may have been more complicated, but also telling for the times. Her request may be related to questions concerning citizenship, but more than likely it was related to plans to travel within Hungary, which was also complicated or forbidden according to new laws. An additional quandry is that she requested the birth certificate in 1939, but only traveled to Budapest in 1941. There is no evidence that she traveled to Budapest earlier than that.

Like others from Subcarpathia, Lili and her friend Esther Böhm decided in 1941 to go to Budapest to earn money for their families. Lili's father had lost his license to be a horse trader, and he struggled to provide for his wife and children. Lili does admit in a later interview that her father opposed the idea of her going to Budapest, but he agreed in the spring of 1941 to let her go. There really was no other option at that point.

In her testimony to the Shoah Foundation in 1996, Lili describes traveling to Budapest and finding work in an orphanage (mainly for children of Slovak and Czech Jews).⁴³ She does not mention the need to prove her citizenship or to use her birth certificate. She does point out that when she arrived in Budapest, she went to the Jewish community in order to get permission to work. Perhaps she needed official papers. There were probably other times when she needed to demonstrate who she was. She stayed in the orphanage for 13 months, and then returned to Bilky, two weeks before the Jews of Bilky (including all her family members as well as herself) were rounded up, taken to the ghetto in Beregszász, and then sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

5 Lili Jacob

If we return to those years between 1939 and 1941 – the years that led up to the 1941 deportations – I have not been able to find additional documents from Lili, her family

43 University of Southern California, Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archives. Lili Jacob.

members, or even her friends specifically concerning how they reacted to what was happening at that time. In her Shoah Foundation testimony mentioned earlier, Lili provided no information about 1941. She did not volunteer information, and the person asking the questions did not ask. In a 1973 interview that she gave to a Miami journalist (who wrote an article about her in the Miami Herald's *Tropic Magazine*), Lili briefly talked about what she remembered concerning 1941.⁴⁴

In the 1973 interview, Lili recalls that because some Jews could not prove their identity, the authorities concluded that they were from Poland and needed to be returned there. Lili and her family were spared, since, as she recalls, her father (Marton Jacob) was able to prove that his family had been born in Hungary. Lili made it clear in the interview that she had known the 25 families. They were her neighbors.⁴⁵ Yet, at the time and even during the war, Lili did not know what happened to those who were sent away in 1941. It was only after the war that her husband (Max Zelmanovic, also from Bilky) told her that the deportees (approximately 22,000), many from the area around Bilky (from Subcarpathia), were forced to dig ditches and then were shot and buried in them. Her husband knew what happened because he had been in that area (near Kamianets-Podilskyi), probably as a member of the Hungarian forced labor service (for Jews). It is known that Jewish forced labor personnel as well as Hungarian soldiers were eyewitnesses to the murders at Kamianets-Podilskyi.⁴⁶ It is unclear, based on Lili's 1973 interview, whether she knew anymore details of these first deportations from Hungary. The Miami journalist did not ask for any additional specifics.

6 Bilky Residents

Lili was young in 1941, only 15 years old, so more than likely she knew less than her parents or other older individuals. Lili, however, does describe herself in her interviews as being very curious and very active, so she probably was aware of many things. She also admits that her father tried to protect her from some of the events that were happening at the time. We might also assume that there was a certain gender-dynamic in her family, and her father did not want his oldest and only daughter to worry about what was taking place around them.

There are, however, other testimonies of individuals from Bilky, and some of them recall additional information about the atmosphere and actions leading up to

⁴⁴ Esther Kramer Private Collection.

⁴⁵ Twenty-five is the number that she remembers, which is not the number that other Bilky residents recall.

⁴⁶ Eisen and Stark, *1941*, 214.

and including the 1941 deportations. Perhaps the most detailed testimony that describes 1941 in Bilky is the testimony by Miksa Mechlowitz – a testimony also collected by the Shoah Foundation. Mechlowitz recalls (or later learned) that 18 families were taken from Bilky and a total of 18,000 Jews from Subcarpathia.

Mechlowitz (born in 1928, two years after Lili) was interviewed in 1995. He recalls being directly affected by what happened in 1941, mainly because one of his close friends and his friend's family were sent away. Mechlowitz admits that at the time they did not know where the families were being taken, but they later found out that they were sent to Poland. He recalls standing outside when the “non-Citizen” Jews were being collected. Everyone was crying. According to Mechlowitz, those who were not being deported said to themselves: *Thank god it is not us*.

Mechlowitz also remembered that on the day the Jews were collected in 1941, he was at *cheder* (a religious school for Jewish boys). They (Mechlowitz does not identify who “they” are, but probably Hungarian gendarmes) came in when the boys and the rabbi (the teacher) were sitting around a table and they took the rabbi who was teaching the children. “He was taken away from where he was sitting there in *cheder*; he was taken out.”⁴⁷

Mechlowitz admits that at the time no one really knew what was going to happen. They thought the Jews being taken were going to be sent to Poland and that they would return once the war was over. It was only after the war that he, like Lili, found out what actually happened to his neighbors who were deported in 1941. He does not recall any of them returning after 1941 or after the war.

Irene Buchman (née Rachel Berkowicz) also gave testimony to the Shoah Foundation in 1995.⁴⁸ Irene was born in Bilky in 1926, the same year as Lili. There is no evidence that they knew each other, but they probably did, since both of them attended the Czech school in Bilky, which most – but not all – Jewish children attended. Buchman had clear memories of what happened in 1941.

She recalled that in 1941 they had to show proof of Hungarian citizenship, which her family did not have. Her father's family had lived in the region for generations, but no one had legal papers, not even birth certificates, supposedly. She remembered that people had heard that Jews who had come from Poland (non-citizens) were going to be sent to back to Poland, or to Ukraine, or to Russia. She admits to not being very well informed, but nevertheless they were frightened.

In her testimony she describes the day when they had to pack up the house and leave, because they (again, probably Hungarian gendarmes) were going door to door to check who had citizenship papers. Because she and her family did not have any documents, they hid for a few days and then went back to their house. She

47 University of Southern California, Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archives. Miksa Melchowicz.

48 University of Southern California, Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archives. Irene Buchman.

remembered that her brother went to Budapest, perhaps to get papers, but during her 1995 interview she did not recall exactly what happened with him.

Lewis Friedman, born Leopold Friedman in 1926 in Bilky, also describes what took place in 1941 during his Shoah Foundation testimony in 1996.⁴⁹ Once the Hungarians returned, things got worse. Antisemitism increased. In 1941, they took people who were from Poland and sent them back. Friedman recalls that Hungarians collected them, but in his retelling of the story it was the Germans who gave the orders. He admits, like many others including Lili, that he did not know what was happening. No one really knew what was happening. Friedman does not recall his parents talking about anything related to this. In his testimony, he provides little concrete information, but the lack of information demonstrates how little people knew at the time and how decades later they tried to explain what took place.

7 Local Scholarship

One of the longer and more detailed explanations of what happened in Bilky in 1941 comes from a survivor who decades after the Holocaust wrote a master's thesis on the history of his hometown of Bilky. His goal was to record memories (his own and those of others), share rare photographs, and provide a summary of the creation, history, and destruction of his Jewish community. Isidor Reisman's family had lived in Bilky for two centuries, and his family members were influential individuals in the village. Reisman survived the war in Hungarian forced labor battalions.⁵⁰

In his summary of Bilky's history – from his own memory and from his research with other former Bilky residents – Reisman repeats Livia Rothkirchen's conclusion that by the late 1930s things had changed and chaos was spreading. Reisman also points to 1940 as a "turning point" – a change for the worse for the Jewish communities in Subcarpathia. Then, in 1941 the first expulsion of Hungarian Jews took place. Reisman records that in the summer of 1941 the Hungarian authorities decided to deport all Jewish families who could not provide written proof of "citizenship," specifically if they could not prove that their families had paid taxes since 1850. This immediately affected around 20,000 Jews in Subcarpathia, who were told that they were being resettled in Poland and in Ukraine.

Lili remembered the number of families being 25. Miksa Melchowitz remembered 18 families. Reisman writes that approximately 40 families from Bilky (around 280 men, women, and children) were rounded up and sent away. It is not clear who

⁴⁹ University of Southern California, Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archives. Lewis Friedman.

⁵⁰ Isidor Reisman, *Bilke remembered: testimony of the Bilker remnant: a Holocaust documentary* (Cleveland: self published, 1995).

is correct regarding this number. Reisman also collected evidence that some of the decisions in Bilky were decided on the whim of jealous Hungarian neighbors, who wanted to possess the property or business of the Jewish family that found itself on the deportation list. One example of this was Reb Leib and Baila Mermelstein and their children, who were on the list because of a neighbor. This same example took an unexpected turn, however, when Father Choma, the priest of Bilky's Greek Catholic Church, intervened and convinced the authorities to release the Mermelstein family. He argued that the Mermelsteins were loyal to the Hungarian language and culture. There were other families who were rounded up but eventually sent home and not deported in the end because there was not enough space on the small train. Bilky was served at that time by a narrow track train with wagons smaller than regular trains.

Reisman also records that all families to be deported were to assemble in the courtyard of the large synagogue on the Main Street on Friday evening (Sabbath eve) of Tisha B'Av (August 2, 1941). Tisha B'Av is a fasting day that commemorates the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Among the Bilky Jews who were collected in the large synagogue courtyard was the family of Rabbi Meshilam Friedman (the *melamed* – the teacher), who was the rabbi that Miksa Melchowitz also mentioned, just not by name. Reisman, like Melchowitz, attended Friedman's *cheder*. Reisman recalls Rabbi Friedman's wife, Feige Friedman, coming to the Reisman house, which was next to the synagogue, to get water while they were waiting to be deported. Reisman's mother tried to comfort her. While those to be deported were waiting, many villagers came to the synagogue to reassure their friends and neighbors that things would be okay and to wish them a speedy return to Bilky.

Reisman provides examples of Bilky Jews who escaped the 1941 deportations – actions that Reisman refers to as “passive resistance.” Sheva Davidovich escaped to Ilnitze, 5 km from Bilky, where she stayed for several days until the deportations were over. Reb Abraham Kirchner's wife fled to relatives in the village of Zodanovitz to avoid deportation. Heina Rosenberg from a village near Bilky disguised herself in a Hungarian soldier's uniform and went to Galicia to look for her sister. Reszi Josovic went to Budapest and registered herself with the name of a non-Jewish Bilky girl. Reisman visited her more than once in Budapest during the war. She survived. Two daughters of Reb Maier Kohan also went to Budapest, got false papers, and avoided deportation in 1941 and later in 1944 as well. Reisman mentions two women who escaped at the last moment: Yocheved Kalech and her daughter Etel. On the morning of the deportations, they bought train tickets and left at 4 a.m. on a train to Budapest before “non-citizen” Jews were collected in Bilky. They initially survived, but Yocheved suffered a stroke and died in the winter of 1944. Etel survived the war. Reisman does not mention Irene Buchman.

There were also deportees from 1941 who found their way back home. Reisman provides very little information about this, only to say that some walked only at night

for weeks to return to Bilky. Upon return, some of them were reported to the authorities by their neighbors and then executed. Others who tried to get home were caught and sent back to Poland. Reisman notes an event when hostile peasants killed some 1941 deportees who had made it across the Hungarian border and were almost home.⁵¹

Confirming what many of the former residents of Bilky (such as Lili) said, Reisman points out that information about deportees from 1941 was sketchy and scant. Hungarian Jews in the forced labor battalions sometimes received letters to bring back to relatives. Sometimes Jews hired Rusyn peasants to find deported families and family members, hoping that they were still alive in a ghetto somewhere. There were cases when a family in Hungary was able to get members of their family back from Poland thanks to bribery and other dangerous undertakings.

One of the more daring stories of Bilky Jews associated with the 1941 deportations concerns the members of Rabbi Friedman's family that Isidor Reisman and Miksa Melchowitz mentioned. From the sources so far, we know that the family was deported. The son, Moshe Friedman, however survived the war, and adds more details to the life of this Bilky family, which he admits had only lived in Bilky since the First World War.

Moshe Friedman was not in Bilky when the 1941 deportations took place. He had already been taken to a forced labor battalion in the Hungarian military. He was first in Kosice in Slovakia, but later in Jasinya (Körösmező), near the Polish border. While in Jasinya, Friedman found out that his family – his parents, his wife and child, his brothers and sisters (and their families) – had all been deported from Hungary and were in a town just across the border in Poland. He never mentions which town. It could have been Kamianets-Podilskyi, but it is not entirely clear. Friedman decided that he had to try to rescue his wife and child. He first worked to develop good relations with the chief officer of his company of Jewish conscripts. He also got to know the local mayor, who had a child the same age as Friedman's child (one and a half years old). Friedman describes the mayor as a kind man who urged non-Jews to share warm blankets and food with the deportees. Friedman and the mayor worked out a plan whereby the mayor would go to the ghetto where Friedman's wife and child were, convince them to go with him (as his own wife and child), and then tell the authorities that he was taking them to the nearby hospital.

This worked, and once out of the ghetto, the mayor handed Friedman's wife and child off to two female Polish peasants, who hid the boy in their clothing while the wife pretended to work alongside the peasant women. These two women then hid the wife and child in a wagon of cut grass and smuggled them into a stable where eight other Jews were already hiding. While in hiding, the peasant women brought warm

⁵¹ Reisman, *Bilke*, 49.

milk every day for the mothers and children in the stable. At this point Friedman was uncertain how to proceed, since he did not want to send his wife and child back to Bilky for fear of someone reporting them.

Then things became worse. Friedman was informed by the chief officer of his labor battalion that the German authorities were aware of the mayor's activities and the hidden Jews, and they were going to pick up the Jews in the morning. Friedman, along with his friend Fuchs (no first name), stole two rifles from the commando, and they went to warn the mayor. They were all terrified. Friedman, Fuchs, and probably the mayor (this detail is unclear) took all the hidden Jews and pretended to "escort" them to their commandant. They convinced a German battalion that was what they were doing, and they luckily got the Jews to a different stable and were able to keep them hidden.

Friedman then needed another plan, since his unit was being relocated to Slovakia. He and others acquired enough whisky in order to get the local soldiers very drunk, and with the soldiers distracted, Friedman and others were able to get the Jews to Mukachevo, not that far from Bilky. After this, Friedman was far from his wife and child. He eventually escaped his labor battalion and fled to Vienna where he hid until the end of the war. His wife and child did not survive. The Bilky Yizkor book records that from Meshulam (Reisman spelled his name Meshilam) and Feige Friedman's family, only one daughter survived, Rivka, and three sons, Eisik, Moshe, and Avraham Pinchas. The youngest son became a rabbi. All other family members died after the 1941 deportations.⁵²

Another former Bilky resident, Moshe Avital, took on the obligation to write a history of the Jewish community and the village of Bilky. Avital, born Moshe Doft in 1928, survived multiple concentration camps, and after the war went on to receive a Ph.D. in Hebrew literature at Yeshiva University. His book (a kind of memoir) focuses on his family as well as those whom he knew. He was also one of the main authors of the two-volume Bilky Yizkor Books.⁵³

Avital's family – actually the Doft family – who represented influential individuals in the community, such as the cantor and the *shochet* (the ritual slaughterer) – had no proof of citizenship in Hungary. His father had actually been born in Poland and only came to Subcarpathia with his family in 1885. When the region became part of Czechoslovakia, they did not try to collect documents about their birth place, so in 1941, they had no proof of citizenship. In order to avoid what was coming, Avital's mother and her 11 children, all of whom were born in Bilky, changed their last name to the mother's maiden name – Lipschitz. Her husband, Avital's father, went into hiding. At Kamianets-Podilskiy, the brother of Avital's

52 *Bilker Memorial Book*, 799.

53 Moshe Avital, *Not to Forget, Impossible to Forgive* (Mazo Publishers, 2004). *Bilker Memorial Book*.

father, Yitzchak Doft, and most of his family were murdered. Two of Yitzchak's boys escaped during the massacre and survived.⁵⁴

8 Conclusions

The methodology used in this article follows the pattern of cultural history and microhistory which aims to describe the lives of one or a few individual people as well as how these individuals (often ordinary people) understood and experienced their own world. Before I add concluding remarks regarding how Lili, her family, and her neighbors lived through the years leading up to the 1941 deportations, I want to make an additional comment about how historians have tried to explain what happened. At the beginning of this article, I pointed out that explanations typically try to discover those individuals and groups who were responsible. Here I want to comment on a slightly different goal of scholars.

Historians, specifically of interwar Hungary, but not only, are often divided concerning how to explain the history of antisemitism. Some see continuity in the development of antisemitism over a long period that culminated during the Second World War in the murder of Europe's Jews. This kind of explanation is common in portrayals of both Hungarian antisemitism, in particular, and European antisemitism, in general. Others see what happened in the first half of the 1940s as a rupture – a break with either earlier forms of antisemitism or even a break from good relations between Jews and gentiles.⁵⁵ An argument that emphasizes a rupture – a sudden break – has also been used to explain violence in the Balkans.⁵⁶

Most scholarly works on relations between Jews and non-Jews in Subcarpathia in the twentieth century emphasize a rupture.⁵⁷ They point to some kind of radical change in the early 1940s – sudden violence. It is true that many survivor testimonies back up this portrayal; they describe good relations until a particular moment, which is often described as being in the spring of 1944.⁵⁸ I would like to add here that there

54 Avital, *Not to Forget*, 48 and 94.

55 For a longer discussion about how to explain Hungarian antisemitism, see Ferenc Laczó, "The Radicalization of Hungarian anti-Semitism until 1941: On Indigenous Roots and Transnational Embeddedness," in *Right-Wing Politics and the Rise of Antisemitism in Europe 1935–1941*, eds. Frank Bajohr, Dieter Pohl (Wallstein Verlag, 2019), 39–60.

56 Max Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force: Identity, Nationalism, and Memory in a Balkan Community* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016).

57 Magocsi, *With their Backs to the Mountains*. Segal, *Genocide*.

58 For the sudden change in Bilky, see Randolph L. Braham, ed., *The Geographical Encyclopedia of the Holocaust in Hungary* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013), v. 1, 170.

are also testimonies from former residents of Subcarpathia who describe intense antisemitism during their whole lives – clear continuity – not a rupture.⁵⁹

My intention in mentioning this disagreement regarding how to explain Hungarian (as well as European) antisemitism is to suggest that this dichotomy can also apply to Subcarpathia. Some survivors, similar to most scholars, believe that something changed in their world that led to an increase in antisemitism, the 1941 deportations, as well as the 1944 deportations. The above description of how Lili and others experienced the time leading up to 1941 may not give us a conclusive answer whether antisemitism in the region built up over time or whether it appeared suddenly, but their experiences do encourage us to see the sense of chaos that existed during those years – a sense of chaos concerning many aspects of life that included threats and actions against their lives. The majority of the Subcarpathian Jews were killed during the first half of the 1940s.

New borders, competing religions and religious divisions, as well as new requirements for belonging (especially regarding citizenship) changed the lives of everyone in Subcarpathia between 1939 and 1941. The lives of Jews became more and more difficult, leading to the deportation of thousands of Jews to Kőrösmező and then to Kamianets-Podilskyi in the late summer of 1941 (and later the 1944 deportations to Auschwitz-Birkenau). How Bilky Jews experienced this time and the actual deportations is the subject of this article. As described at the beginning, my interest is in the lives of Lili Jacob, her family, as well as her Jewish and non-Jewish neighbors in these tumultuous times. We have few sources from ordinary people, but we can listen to testimonies and other explanations from former Bilky residents that do exist and piece together the sources that are available. In the end, we are left with a series of images (of snapshots) of a world that created great hardship for Jews in the lead up to the 1941 deportations and violence against them in 1941 and later.

59 A good example is the testimony of Lewis Friedman, mentioned in this article.