

THE PERSECUTION AND MASS MURDER OF LITHUANIAN JEWS DURING SUMMER AND FALL OF 1941: SOURCES AND ANALYSIS

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PREFACE: BACKGROUND TO INVASION

The persecution and killing of the Jews began within hours of the Nazi invasion of Lithuania. By the end of June, within a week of the outbreak of the war, Jews already constituted a conspicuously large number, if not the majority, of civilians killed during the initial phase of the German-Soviet conflict. Furthermore, with the exception of real and alleged Communists and Soviet collaborators, no other group endured such egregious public humiliation.

Of the many factors instrumental in fomenting the violence, the most important was the fact that the Nazis had decided to conduct Operation Barbarossa as a campaign of extermination (*Vernichtungskrieg*), a form of warfare fundamentally different from the military campaigns of the Western front.¹ Militarized special police units under the command of the Security Police and SD, the notorious *Einsatzgruppen*, were formed to conduct “cleansing” operations in the areas occupied by the German Army. Similar “action groups” had been utilized during the Nazis’ Polish campaign to carry out killings of Polish intelligentsia and conduct mass resettlement operations. In the spring of 1941, on the eve of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, four battalion-sized *Einsatzgruppen* were provided with special instructions for the liquidation of elements hostile to the Reich. The subsequent mass murders organized, encouraged and commanded by these special operations units far exceeded in scope the actions previously carried out in Poland.² The chief of the RSHA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*), Reinhard Heydrich,

¹ As one American scholar notes, “...Nazi plans for the war of destruction, when seen in the light of the past Nazi record in Poland, implied nothing less than the *genocide* of Soviet Jewry” [emphasis in original]. Christopher R. Browning, “From ‘Ethnic Cleansing’ to Genocide to the ‘Final Solution’,” in the author’s collection of essays, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 25.

² The standard scholarly work is Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges: Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1981), see esp. 19-31 on the origins of the EG and 32 ff. on the Polish campaign. A recent popular narrative of the action groups’ role in the Eastern campaign is Richard Rhodes, *Masters of Death: The SS-Einsatzgruppen and the Invention of the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002). The best recent overview of the activities of the

issued a secret directive which made it clear that the action groups were to concentrate their firepower on Communists and Jews in the service of the [Soviet] Party and Government, without specifically endorsing a program of total destruction. Purges of Communists and Jews by anti-Soviet locals were to be secretly encouraged without leaving any trace (*allerdings spurenlos*) of the German role.

A more thorough documented examination of the security police directives is provided below.

Geography planted Lithuania in the forefront of the Nazi invasion, exposing the country to its full impact, including the operations of the mobile killing units. Furthermore, the country's social, economic and political situation in 1941 provided, in retrospect, a suitable place for the conduct of the war of annihilation in general, and for Heydrich's plan to involve the local population in the Nazis' "cleansing" operations in particular. Lithuania's Jewish community was renowned throughout the world for its vigorous cultural and political life, but Soviet rule had considerably amplified already existing Jewish-Lithuanian tensions. There are numerous reports of political conflicts and social altercations, some of them violent.³ The geopolitical orientations of

Einsatzgruppen is Peter Klein (ed.), *Die Einsatzgruppen in der besetzten Sowjetunion 1941/42. Die Tätigkeits- und Lageberichte des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD* (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1997). New documents and insights into the Polish campaign are presented by Alexander B. Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland: Blitzkrieg, Ideology, and Atrocity* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003) and Michael Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten. Das Führungskorps des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2002), 419-485.

³ A typical incident in Trakai is reported in Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybės Archyvas (henceforth LCVA), F. 378, Ap. 10, b. 399, l. 621, Vilnius Security Police District Bulletin, No. 140, A. Mickevičius Report, 11 July 1940. Cf. LCVA, F. 378, Ap. 10, b. 225, l. 788, State Security Department Bulletin No. 217, 5 August 1940. There was a highly charged controversy over the attempt to transform the Kaunas Theological Seminary into a Jewish hospital, as in Vincentas Brizgys, *Katalikų bažnyčia Lietuvoje 1940-1944 metais* (Chicago: Draugas, 1977), 25-26 and Klemensas Jūra, *Monsinjoras* (Brooklyn, NY: Pranciškonų spaustuvė, 1979), 66; also cf. Vincas Krėvė, *Bolševikų invazija ir liaudies vyriausybė* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1992) 29-30. On public perceptions of Jewish power, see the report in Lietuvos Ypatingasis Archyvas (henceforth LYA), F. 1771, Ap. 1, b. 280, l. 153-154. On the anti-Semitic mood which resulted in a riot in Marijampolė in late June 1940 see Kazys Škirpa's memo of 1 July 1940, Hoover Institution, Turauskas Collection, CSUZ 75015-A, courtesy of Prof. Alfred E. Senn. Also see Jewish accounts, for example, Frieda Frome, *Some Dare to Dream: Frieda Frome's Escape from Lithuania* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 7, 10, and Harry Gordon, *The Shadow of Death: Holocaust in Lithuania* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky), 11-12 as well as the report of the American envoy to Kaunas, U. S. National Archives (henceforth - NARA), M1178, Roll 19, Norem to State, 17 July 1940, 860.00/464. An extensive recent overview of Jewish-Lithuanian relations during the first Soviet occupation is Alfonsas Eidintas, *žydai, lietuviai ir holokaustas* (Vilnius: Vaga, 2002), 125 ff. See also Liudas Truska, "Lietuvos valdžios įstaigų rusifikavimas 1940-1941 m.," *Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo institutas. Darbai*, 1 (1996), 3-28; cf. Nijolė Maslauskienė, "Lietuvos komunistų tautinė ir socialinė sudėtis 1939 m. pabaigoje - 1940 m. rugsėjo mėn.," *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, No. 1/5 (1999), 77-104, as well as her sequel, "Lietuvos komunistų sudėtis 1940 spalio-1941 birželio mėn.," in *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, No. 2/6 (1999), 20-46.

the two communities were diametrically opposed. Most Jews saw the Soviets as the lesser of two evils, while, for many Lithuanians, the only realistic hope for liberation from Stalin's tyranny lay in a Russo-German conflict. The political dynamics of the first year of Soviet rule encouraged a widespread anti-Semitic illusion that Lithuania was ruled by the Jews, while the specter of Judeo-Bolshevism was further cultivated by the anti-Jewish propaganda of the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF), the most important of the anti-Soviet resistance groups. Finally, the wrenching Stalinist occupation culminated in the sudden and traumatic deportations of nearly 18,000 Lithuanian citizens only days before the German attack. On the face of it, then, in view of the growing anti-Semitism and escalating political tensions, Lithuania appeared as a fertile source of potential collaborators for successful anti-Communist and anti-Jewish cleansing operations.⁴

Nazi influence on the developments in Lithuania was enhanced by the fact that certain elements of prewar Lithuania's security services and right-wing opposition to Smetona had actively sought German assistance. After annexation of the Klaipėda region in 1939, the many-year long collaboration between the German and Lithuanian security police grew even more intense, also characterising itself in anti-Polish tendencies. As far as in the first half of 1940, high-ranking Lithuanian Security Police officials were visiting Berlin. After the Soviet annexation, for instance, the Security Deputy Chief Bortkevičius and the Security Inspector Meškauskas fled for Berlin.⁵

In addition to all this, there were other connections linking the Lithuanian radical right with the German Security Police and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since around the beginning of 1938,

⁴ See Valentinas Brandišauskas, *Siekiai atkurti Lietuvos valstybingumą (1) 1940 06 - 1941 09* (Vilnius: Valstybinis leidybos centras, 1996); cf. Saulius Sužiedėlis, "Foreign Saviors, Native Disciples: Perspectives on Collaboration in Lithuania, 1940-1945," paper delivered at the Conference, "Focus: Reichskommissariat Ostland," Uppsalla University and Södertörn University College, 20 April 2002 (publication expected in 2003). On anti-Semitism before June 1941 see Vygantas Vareikis, "Holokausto prielaidos. Antisemitizmas Lietuvoje XIX a. - XX a. pirma pusė (iki 1940 06 15)," 19-24, in the report to the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania (henceforth -- ICECNSOR), 2001 and Liudas Truska, "Holokausto prielaidos. Antisemitizmo stiprėjimas Lietuvoje sovietinės okupacijos metais," also in a report to ICECNSOR, 2001.

⁵ The letter of Division 4 of Reich Security Administration (hereafter referred to as RSHA) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 20-12-1940 (Schreiben der Abt. VI des RSHA an das Auswärtige Amt (AA) v. 20.12.1941), Klimaitis' file, The Central Ludwigsburg Board of administrating institutions of FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) federal land justice on investigating Nazi crimes (Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Verfolgung von NS-Gewaltverbrechen in Ludwigsburg – ZStL), II 207 AR-Z 41/83, vol.2, pp. 284–285.

the so-called *Voldemarists* (the detached radical wing of the Nationalists party, named after its leader Augustinas Voldemaras) were attempting to get money and arms from Germany.⁶ Meanwhile the German side did not yet believe that they could play any important role in Lithuanian politics, thus only occasionally allocating few hundred Reich marks to them to maintain uninterrupted flow of information. The radically anti-Polish and anti-Semitic minded *Voldemarists* attached a lot of significance to the German and Lithuanian cooperation, and would campaign against all parties. Their ranks included several officers. The main minimum consensus was that related to anti-Semitic activities – they bragged about having executed themselves all the previous sallies against the Jews. When in June 1939, *Voldemarists* asked for a considerable sum of 100,000 Litas (= 41,000 Reich marks) “for, in the first instance, organising the pogroms of Jews”, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded that it was beside the purpose as the Lithuanian Government “since long ago had been successfully attempting to withdraw the Jews from Lithuanian economy”, and without that the Jews were not able to play any role in the public life of Lithuania. “Organising pogroms” should not impede the increasing emigration of Jews.⁷ The Head of the Reich Security Administration (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*; RSHA), Heydrich then also agreed that *Voldemarists* would be given some money, but no arms.

There is no easy way to determine to what extent German encouragement inspired local violence towards Jews or to what degree this was the result of politically and ethnically motivated spontaneous outbreaks. Certainly, both factors played their part. The first days of the German invasion, one of the most chaotic intervals in the nation’s twentieth-century history, present the most difficult, complex, and controversial aspect of the German occupation of Lithuania. The initial killings of Jews, as well as a considerable number of real and alleged Gentile Communists, occurred against an exceedingly turbulent and confused background. The mood of a

⁶ Cf. The report of the German Security Police of June 1939 on the movement of the *Voldemarists* in Lithuania; on 29th June 1939, Heydrich forwarded it to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (URM); the position of the URM (*Dörtenbach*) was dated 19th July 1939. “International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg” (IMT), vol. 31, pp. 385–391. See also: Rudis, Gediminas. “Jungtinis antisemitinės opozicijos sąjūdis 1938-1939 metais, Lietuvos istorijos metraštis 1996”. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 1997, pp. 185–215.

⁷ On 21st July 1939, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ribbentrop passed a decree to pay allowances of 2,000-3,000 RM each quarter. *Ibid.*, p. 385.

large part, if not the majority, of the ethnic Lithuanian populace induced many people to give the German invaders a friendly reception, an attitude that one of the chroniclers of the Vilnius ghetto, Gregory Shur, found easy to understand:

When the war broke out, this [Soviet] deportation created a lot of difficulty for the Red Army and also affected the behavior of the local inhabitants when the Germans arrived. Many locals considered the Germans their real or potential saviors from the inescapable deportations. Thus the occupiers found many new people who sympathized with them, and soon even found helpers who diligently carried out actions planned by them.⁸

The mass desertion of Lithuanian Red Army soldiers from the 29th Territorial Riflemen's Corps, some of who had attacked their Russian officers, created a reservoir of embittered men. A number of them ended up serving in auxiliary police formations. More than any other factor, the rapid advance of the German forces, as well as the initial refusal of Soviet security officials to allow refugees to cross into the USSR proper, sealed the avenue of escape for many refugees, especially the Jews. The situation was complicated by the rapid disintegration of Soviet authority and the outbreak of a partly organized, partly spontaneous, anti-Russian insurrection, as well as the proclamation, on 23 June 1941, of a Lithuanian Provisional Government (PG) in which the dominant role was reserved for the LAF. By 28 June virtually the entire territory of the Lithuanian SSR was behind the German lines. Meanwhile, the Wehrmacht announced that it claimed supreme authority through its military commandants.

The violence of the June days of rage was a many-sided beast. In contrast to the mass annihilation of Lithuania's Jews in the late summer and fall of 1941, the initial anti-Jewish attacks and pogroms were embedded in a broader canvass of death which, particularly in Lithuania and Ukraine, included Gentile unfortunates of various categories. In some instances, German troops gunned down ethnic Lithuanian civilians, including even some anti-Soviet partisans.⁹ For their part, the Red Army, NKVD and Communist activists massacred nearly a thousand people, most

8 Grigorijus Šuras, *Užrašai: Vilniaus geto kronika 1941-1944*. trans. Nijolė Kvaraciejūtė and Algimantas Antanavičius (Vilnius: ERA, 1997), 23. See also the recent account in Laimonas Noreika, "Mano 1941-1942 metai," in *Metai*, No. 5-6 (2001), 151-163.

9 Arūnas Bubnys, *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva* (Vilnius: LGGRT, 1998), 70; cf. Rimantas Zizas, "Ne žydų kilmės Lietuvos piliečių persekiojimas, civilių gyventojų žudynės (1941-1944)," Report to ICECNSOR, 2002-2003.

notably at Pravieniškės, Rainiai woods and Chervene in Belarus. In addition to rebel attacks on the Soviet army, the fighting among pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet irregulars caused casualties and led to vigilante killings of enemies. As local anti-Soviet partisans and officials replaced Soviet authority, thousands of real and alleged Communists and pro-Soviet sympathizers were detained.¹⁰ Personal scores were settled; there were acts of revenge, looting and rape.¹¹ A former deputy of the People's Diet, the Lithuanian Liudas Dovydenas was himself arrested and held with a large number of Jews. In a memoir which captures the atmosphere of the time, he recalled that when the German-Russian war broke out, "some were seized by a passion for revenge and a kind of rage .. even more painful was to see the participation of the youth..."¹²

Undoubtedly, the violence and settling of scores in the context of war and insurrection meant that many people, including a number of Jews, were targeted as Communists and thus perished for political rather than anti-Semitic reasons. Furthermore, during the first days of the Nazi invasion, scattered groups of Communist activists of various nationalities resisted the invaders with arms and attempted to assist the Soviet war effort by hunting down real and alleged anti-Soviet elements. Such clashes and altercations cannot properly be termed pogroms, war crimes or crimes against humanity, even if Jews were killed in the process. (More precise documentation on the categories of victims, mainly of victims of the Nazis and their collaborators, during the first days of the invasion is provided below.)

Nonetheless, there is ample evidence that Jews were singled out for especially harsh treatment. First, the rhetoric of the LAF, the various agencies of the insurrectionist authorities, and the Germans themselves unambiguously equated Bolshevism with Judaism, placing the onus for the crimes of the Stalinist regime against the Lithuanian people squarely at the feet of the country's largely conservative and religious Jewish community at large. While difficult to quantify, the surging anti-Semitism of the 1930s among significant segments of the population contributed to the dangerous anti-Jewish animus.

10 See the 29 July 1941 report by Šiauliai procurator Matas Krygeris in Bubnys, *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva*, 233-234.

11 For a selection of representative documents see Valentinas Brandišauskas, ed., *1941 m. birželio sukilimas: dokumentų rinkinys* (Vilnius: LGGRT, 2000). Cf. the brief account in Bubnys, *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva*, 33-47.

12 Liudas Dovydenas, *Mes valdysim pasaulį*, ii (New York: Romuva, 1970), 466.

The events of the summer and fall of 1941 in Lithuania must be situated within the context not only of contemporary Lithuanian realities and the outbreak of the war, but also within the development of Nazi policy towards the Jews. A number of important problems of terminology, method and sources must be addressed, which would assist us in understanding the early period of the Nazi invasion. Which German and Lithuanian units and institutions did take part in those crimes and what were their motives and aims? Who were those criminals? Were these spontaneous sallies against Jews by people, or those pogroms had been coordinated and planned by somebody's long arm from within the country? Why would Germans want to organise pogroms and fusillade the Jews? Why would there emerge no powers on either German or Lithuanian side able to countervail effectively against those clearly felonious massacres?

VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE DURING THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE NAZI-SOVIET WAR

From the analytical point, a distinction should be drawn between the systematic shooting of Jews and pogroms. The notion *pogrom* is perceived as collective violent sallies against the Jews just because they are Jewish. The anti-Semitic actions which infringe on people's health, life and property are also considered a pogrom, as is the public humiliation too. If purpose of pogrom subsists in the very shape of *violence* and pogrom is often the means of terror and intimidation, then the purpose of shooting as of systemised *violence* is to decimate life. In this case publicity is not necessary either. Yet the dividing line between pogroms **and** shootings, keeping in mind the shape of violence, has disappeared as demonstrated for instance by almost a week-long outrage in the 7th Kaunas Fort with many thousands of victims. Such application of the notion of *pogrom* reflects neither the extent of outrage against the Jews nor its duration (one or few days), nor does it reveal whether pogroms started spontaneously or if they were organised by some group, i.e. they were planned, arranged and implemented in a structured way. This simple conception of pogrom also does imply that pogrom meant not only very atrocious massacre with few or dozens of victims, but as well "smaller" collective sallies against the Jews.¹³

13 There is no precise definition of pogrom existing; there are only different attempts to describe it. Hilberg understood pogrom as a "short violent public outrage against the people of Jewish nationality". Hilberg, *Vernichtung*, p. 324.

Dov Levin has mentioned over 40 localities where according to him pogroms had been taking place yet before the arrival of Germans.¹⁴ If pogrom is understood in a sense as given here, this grading system is no doubt a proper one. We will give only one example: on 22nd June 1941, the commander of Kazlų Rūda partisans, Malakauskas made a record in the official journal: “No shootings. The damages of the Red Army are 71 persons killed. In addition, 4 Jews (the locals) have been killed.”¹⁵ If pogrom is understood as a spontaneous or organised sally of outrage when plenty of victims of Jewish nationality are killed during public massacre, first of all, the pogroms in Kaunas should be recalled. There did not occur extreme happenings like that anywhere else in Lithuania.

Different groups of victims

The first weeks of the war claimed victims from the different groups of Lithuanian people. Many civilians were killed during the bombings by Germans; they were also shot by the brittle German army. Outrage and death were a threat to plenty of refugees. Those who survived used to tell about the repeated harassment of Lithuanian rebels against Jewish refugees.¹⁶ The Germans would bomb the bigger Lithuanian streets which then were full of civilian refugees and units of the Red Army. It is already impossible to tell exactly what number of refugees and evacuees succeeded in fleeing Lithuania in the first days of war. Referring to the recently discovered documents of the Soviet government, by the end of 1941 more than 10 million people had been evacuated from the lands occupied by Germans; those included 42,500 people from Lithuania. Though, it has not yet been estimated, how many Jews they did account for.¹⁷ Dov Levin assumes that about 15,000 men and women of Jewish nationality managed to escape from Lithuania in time.¹⁸ In the estimation of Arad, 4,000 to 6,000 people successfully escaped.¹⁹

¹⁴ Levin. “Litvaks”, p. 218.

¹⁵ Cf. Lithuanian Central State Archives (hereafter referred to as LCVA), R-635-1-1, l. 25.

¹⁶ Cf. Garfunkel. “Kovno”, p. 29 ff; Garfunkel. “Vikhtikste Momentn”, p. 1679 ff; Gar. “Umkum”, p. 31 ff.

¹⁷ Cf. Altman. “Dokumenty”, p. 2. Arad. “Ghetto”, p. 215, sheltered 3,500 refugees and those hiding themselves from Vilnius town.

¹⁸ Levin. “Litvaks”, p. 199.

During her stay in Kaunas on 23 June 1941, Kutorgienė wrote:²⁰

The condition of Jews is shocking... The son of Jewish neighbours, a good fellow, having taken his backpack escaped from home. The father also wants to run away. He came to me and asked to help his family. He said that maybe the Germans would not kill women and children. [...] They started packing up something, but later the husband and the wife left just as they stood, the latter only with her handbag. The Jews were fleeing with bags, perambulators, trunks, bundles, and still empty-handed... with intimidated and pale faces.

It is already impossible to tell a more or less approximate number of victims. In 1942-1943, the Lithuanian underground press wrote that around 5,000 people of non-Jewish nationality had been killed by July 1941.²¹ Should this number prove out, it would be the biggest group of civil victims of the first week of war, men of Jewish nationality not yet included. The fact that it was indeed a relatively sizeable number of victims is evidenced in the documents of the end of July 1941, which noted that Lithuanians had not been killed without deliberation.²² The Minister of Justice informed the Provisional Government (PG) that people in some provinces were arrested and convicted without **fair trial**.²³ In a year, a bureaucratic problem emerged that the family members of the alleged Communists who had been shot did not receive any certificate about the death of a family member.²⁴

19 Arad. "Solution", p. 234.

20 Diary of Elena Kutorgienė-Buivydaite. LCVA, 1390-1-138. 1st part, p. 2 (record of 23 June 1941). A little different than in the draft, p. 622.

21 Cf. Eidintas. "Byla", p. 108 with reference to: Truska. "Atleisk". Ibid., p. 672.

22 Cf. The document of the Panevėžys province court (signed by Kazlauskas) to all the headquarters of self-defence, police chiefs, and district heads, dated 26 July 1941. LCVA, R 708-1-2, l. 8; The document of Šiauliai province court (signed by Krygeris) to the head of Tauragė district, dated 29 July 1941. LCVA, R 1476-1-3, l. 110 ff, published: "Masinės žudynės", vol. 1, p. 87 ff and the "Masinės žudynės", vol. 2, p. 187 ff; cf. MacQueen. "Context", p. 46; Eidintas. "Byla", p. 127 ff

23 Cf. Protocol No. 23, dated 22 July. Government, p. 105.

24 Cf. Letter of Čenkus to the Chief of Kaunas Security Police, dated 14th July 1942. LCVA, R 1399-1-8, l. 12; published: "Masinės žudynės", vol. 1, p. 102 ff 12. Cf. 3rd operative squad; the list of executions implemented in the territory of the EK3 until 1st December 1941 (4th edition of 5) (Einsatzkommando 3, Gesamtaufstellung der im Bereich des EK.3 bis zum 1.12.1941 durchgeführten Exekutionen), dated 2nd December 1941, BA, R 70 Sowjetunion/15, l. 88.

The German Security Police even stated in its reports that on average there were 600 Lithuanians crowded in each overfilled prison in every district city, thus in total over 13,000, while the basis for most of their arrests would be completely blurred.²⁵

There were even cases when entire villages were sentenced collectively. On 24 June, thus far unidentified Germans killed almost all 35 inhabitants of a small town Ablinga, located 20 km east from Gargždai town, and seven more people of a nearby settlement.²⁶ Men were locked in a barn; two soviet activists among them were killed immediately, way back on 23 June, while others together with their families were shot on 24 June. Names of 35 victims are known. Only Mrs. Martinkienė with a five-month injured child Joana Srebliuotė managed to survive. She dug herself and the child out of the pit after the Germans had left the slaughter spot. The place was burnt down completely.²⁷

Part of the outrage of the first days of the war included the crimes of the retreating Soviet regime. The Soviet militia and party killed about 1,100 people.²⁸ Most of them were prisoners, whom the retreating Soviets were unable to bring along. According to the evacuation orders of 22-23 June all 5,900 prisoners were to be evacuated from Lithuanian prisons. However, the German army was approaching very fast, making it nearly impossible to vacate all prisoners, thus KGB ordered to shoot the most dangerous of them.²⁹ Other prisoners were released, and about one fourth was brought along by the Soviets. Most victims included the political prisoners from the Pravieniškės camp near Kaunas, where at least 230 people died; 73 people were killed in Rainiai forest near Šiauliai.³⁰ From several to several tens of prisoners were fusilladed in many places of

25 Cf. 3rd operative squad, the list of executions carried out in the territory of the EK3 until 1-12-1941. (4th edition out of 5) (Einsatzkommando 3, Gesamtaufstellung der im Bereich des EK.3 bis zum 1.12.1941 durchgeführten Exekutionen), dated 2-12-1941), BA, R 70 Sowjetunion/15, l. 88.

26 Cf. "Gitlerovskaja okupacija", p. 87 ff; Rakūnas. "Kova", p. 19; Rukšėnas. "Politika", p. 134.

27 Only a brief overview of non-Jewish victims is presented here. A far more detailed account can be found in the aforementioned report by Rimantas Zizas (see fn. 9).

28 Cf. Anušauskas, Arvydas. "Naikinimas", pp. 110–133; also Anušauskas, Arvydas. "Sovietų vykdytos kariškių ir civilių gyventojų žudynės 1941 m. birželio 22 – 28 d." December 2003 report to ICECNSOR.

29 Cf. Kibelka. "Morde", p. 91.

30 About Rainiai, see the review of testimonies: Vaintraubas. "Garažas", pp. 28–30.

Lithuania. The perviously mentioned number of victims 1,100 also includes those Lithuanian prisoners who were shot during the evacuation, most in Chervene (Červenė) near Minsk.

Investigating the pogroms in Kaunas and other locations, and their context, a complicated methodical problem is faced: there are very few sources of that time remaining; therefore in most cases one must refer to the testimonies of the Jews who had survived, to the after-war stories, and to the evidence by Lithuanians or Germans given during their interrogations or trials, which often utterly contradict each other.

GERMAN PLANNING FOR THE 'FINAL SOLUTION'

The focus of this section is on the issues related to the preconditions of the pogroms and shootings of the first weeks of the war. Why would the Germans want to organise pogroms and shoot the Jews?

As it is known, the question whether the command of the operative groups of the Security Police (*Einsatzgruppen*) received an order to kill all Jews of the Soviet Union still before beginning of the war is very controversial. Sources provide indeed too little facts to clear up these issues, thus there is much space of interpretation left. This question was always an important part of scholarly history discussions on the Holocaust.

For a long time, many historians and lawyers have been of opinion that general orders to kill the Jews of the Soviet Union had been given yet before the attack of Germans.³¹ A significant effect on historiography was made by the Nuremberg trials organised by the Allies in the second half of the forties, and by the judgement of the case of the so-called Ulm's operative group passed on policemen in the second half of the fifties, accusing them for participating in mass massacre in the Lithuanian borderland in the summer of 1941.

However, starting from the seventies, there has been an increase in opinions that these, as considered, unequivocal orders do not reflect the complicated process which was taking place in

31 Cf. Arad. "Holocaust", pp. 1018, 1021, 1037; Levin. "Litvaks", pp. 217–219; Yahil. "Shoah", p. 356; Reitlinger. "Endlösung", p. 90; Hilberg. "Vernichtung", p. 303 ff; Krausnick. "Judenverfolgung", pp. 609–615, Ibid., "Hitler", p. 99; Jäckel. "Entschlußbildung", p. 16 ff

the Soviet-occupied territories.³² The researches of the late years have discovered that abounding witnesses by the German SS and police officers resulted from procedural-tactical motives; therefore they help to establish the historic conditions only to a very limited extent. Prevailing yet during the Nuremberg trials, the statement by the commander of the operative group D (EG D), Otto Ohlendorf that it was before the war that they had received a forthright order to kill Jews, was only a deliberate “defence line” chosen by Ohlendorf and his lawyers, expected to mitigate the fault of the accused as of the implementer of orders.³³ Even though the American Military Tribunal did accept the version of Ohlendorf’s group, it did not recognise the necessity to implement the orders. The same situation repeated itself also during the trial against the Ulm’s operative group in the fifties.³⁴

Next, we will present an approach to the latest researches related to the orders to kill the Jews of the Soviet Union, not those of Europe, and, too, will consider the situation in Lithuania in the summer of 1941. The Final Solution of the “Jewish Question” (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*), by means of mass massacre, was an intricate and uncoordinated process, not determined by one-time decisions of the national socialists command. In this case we have to analyse the integrated relation between the events in the occupied countries and in the centre of the Reich. In summer 1941, there were still important discussions on perspective of the territorial Final Solution taking place. Following this, there emerged a tendency in some places that mass annihilation of Jews should be forced on a regional scale, like, for instance, in the autumn of 1941 in Warthegau, i.e. in the occupied West Poland and in the General Government of Poland, where in the winter of 1941-1942, physical annihilation of Jews was started. They were systemically liquidated in death camps mostly. This annihilation was executed exactly in those countries occupied by the Soviet Union where by the end of 1941, about 800,000 Jews had been killed during mass killings (not including the East Galitia which belonged to the General Government).

³² Cf. Streim. “Eröffnung”; Longerich. “Massenmord”; Ibid., “Politik”, pp. 310–320; Ibid., pp. 94–112; Ogorreck. “Einsatzgruppen”, pp. 12–14; pp. 210–220; Browning. “Months”, pp. 8–38; Browning. “Judenmord”, p. 51 ff; Friedlander, S. “Antisemitismus”, pp. 18–60; Burrin. “Hitler”, pp. 106–153; Pohl, A. “Judenverfolgung”, p. 52 ff; Sandkühler. “Endlösung”, p. 111 ff.

³³ Cf. Streim. “Eröffnung”, p. 111; Wildt. “Generation”, pp. 555–557.

³⁴ Cf. Dieckmann. “Krieg”, pp. 292–298 with given documents of evidence.

Firstly, the multiplicity of the context of the war of Germany against the Soviet Union should be concisely shown. It has been too long that the anti-Semitic policy executed by the national socialist regime has been dissociated and isolated from this context.

Until 1940-1941, the anti-Semitic policy of the Third Reich had been far advanced and found itself at the collision of quite a few political spheres. It still aimed gradually to force the Jews out of the countries ruled by Germany. The idea about an “established territory”, a kind of a “death reservation” (*Sterbereservat*) was the basis of anti-Semitic policy.³⁵ The notion “Final Solution” at that time was related to most different utopian projects, looking for a territory where all Jews should be deported out of the sphere of German influence. As a matter of fact, in the spring and autumn of 1940, the Germans had to postpone their plans to turn the eastern part of the occupied Poland, close to Liublin and the island of Madagaskar into the place of isolation and impoverishment of Jews. The fact that those plans in a middle-term perspective were of a genocide nature was even more highlighted in the suggestions of the Hitler’s office of March 1941 to sterilise millions of Jews by force. This was how the still alive generation of Jewish work force was to be preserved, at the same time preventing its reproduction.³⁶

The methodical massacre of Jews had already been started as well: since July 1940, the so-called “action of euthanasia” was taking place, when the Jews with mental or physical disabilities were killed in the institutions of the disabled in Germany; then, since April 1941, there was launched “the action, 14 f 13”, when disabled or undesirable prisoners of concentration camps would be killed, resulting in a large number of killed prisoners of Jewish nationality.

Starting 1939, the aim was to force all Jews and most Poles out of the western German-annexed lands of Poland to the “General Government” to make enough space for the Germans who had moved from the southeastern and eastern Europe, and also from the Baltic countries, and who were to be settled there instead of the Poles and the Jews. These deportations, realized with difficulty and complication, were terminated in March 1941, for they became of trivial importance

³⁵ First cit.: thesis of Eichmann presented to Himmler on 4 December 1940 (Tischvorlage Eichmann für Himmler), in the publication: Heim/Aly. “Bevölkerungsstruktur”, p. 26 ff; Breitman. “Architekt”, p. 201. Second cit.: Pohl. “Holocaust”, p. 58.

³⁶ Cf. the preface in Witte and others (Eds.). “Dienstkalender”, p. 69 ff

to preparations for the war against the Soviet Union; too, they were stopped due to continuous protests by the German civil authorities of the General Government. Then the sight of the organisers of deportations was directed on the territory of the Soviet Union: the supposed target regions were the marches of Belarus, the Urals region, and the Soviet Gulag camps by the Arctic Sea. The ferocious “The General Plan East” (*Generalplan Ost*) developed in 1941 which aimed for ultimate ethnic reorganisation of the entire East Europe, deporting 31 million Slavs and establishing German settlements, had already been based on a condition that there would be no Jews of the Soviet Union left.

This policy of deportation and colonisation (*Vertreibungs- und Siedlungspolitik*) which intertwined the tendencies of anti-Semitism, anti-Slavism and Germanisation, since 1940-1941 also did refer to other spheres of politics which became of great importance during the war against the Soviet Union.

For military-strategic and economic reasons, it was a vital question for the National Socialist regime to win this war. On the one hand, without defeating the Soviet Union and the Red Army, it was impossible to continue the war against England, and enter the future war against the USA. On the other hand, the NS leadership believed it would use the recourses of the Soviet Union, first of all, the grain and the oil. The outcome of this seeming military-strategic necessity for a quick victory was an extremely precarious strategy *Blitzkrieg* (*Blitzkriegsstrategie*) which had to ensure a sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and of the Red Army. The *Blitzkrieg* strategy also involved the issues of logistic supply, while it was the main problem fighting in the vast open spaces of Russia. The supply issues were to be solved in the following way: the local villagers were to maintain the German army. Since the quantity of food products, as assumed, essential for the army would cause the decrease in the living standards of the local people, to be more precise, they would start starving or die of hunger, it was very important to strengthen the rear troops of the German army. Only strict control and terror could ensure quick and sufficient supply of food for the German army and protection from the locals, so that they would not eat it. These strategies of military logistics developed on the eve of the war were related to even greater invasive plans. The nutritional situation in the European territory occupied by Germany was deteriorating so quickly and severely, approaching the irreversible shortage of food that the senses of the NS leadership

recalled the nightmarish pictures of the World War I when the German Reich had faced overwhelming hunger problems. Consequently, there grew a threat that due to the lack of supply the “National Front” would fail. To solve these issues the NS leadership decided to execute the geopolitics of mass massacre, plundering the locals and reducing their food supplies (*Unterversorgung*). Not only the German army, but also the German Reich and other parts of Europe too were to be maintained at the expense of the Soviet Union territories. For the racist anti-Slavism of Germans, in the spring of 1941, there was an agreement made and then an order given, with the objective of the nutrition policy, to starve to death about 30 million Russians and Belarusians, and also to cut almost all biggest USSR cities from supply. The German leadership assumed that the starving areas may be isolated geographically first on the Russian territory (*großrussischer Raum*), surrounding the latter with support zones which would comprise the western and southern non-Russian lands of the Soviet Union, i.e. the Baltic countries pushed eastwards, and the remaining territories of Belarus and Ukraine.

These intentions amplified when the Germans faced the defence problem (*Sicherungsproblem*). There was an obvious shortage of the German defence personnel. While evaluating the personnel needs which were considered by the economical and political institutions as nominal to reach the military targets it turned out that in the spring of 1941, about 90 percent of positions were vacant. This threatened the four main components of the planned German military strategy: supply and transport, use of the crops of 1941 and implementation of starvation plans, prevention of the resistance, and the anticipated racist policy of displacement (*Umsiedlungspolitik*) in the occupied lands. Such shortage of personnel had to be made up by unconfined terror implemented by Wehrmacht defence units and SS forces. From the other side, here referring to Lithuanians, the German personnel ranks were to be joined by local helpers.

This discloses the multiplicity of German motives. Issues of military strategy, military industry and displacement were closely related with each other, actually determining the extremely fast war pace and complicated situation of the defence.

Because of the complex nature of its military strategy, the German occupational policy in Lithuania had a specific feature that the leadership of different institutions – Wehrmacht, SS, and the civil authorities where the NSDAP and other subdivisions prevailed – agreed among

themselves on main goals: to apply all measures in the name of an overnight victory, to forward the extreme invasive economic policy (*wirtschaftliche Raubpolitik*) and reduce to a minimum any kind of defence problems in the sphere of the German influence. As far as the world-view is concerned, these matters were based on the Utopia of “the establishment of German living space (*Lebensraum*) in the East” and of the establishment of a grand colonial empire in the East Europe, which would be the keystone in Germany’s goals to reign the world. The Germans understood it as a matter-of-course thing that there was no place to be left in this empire for the Jews as the main enemy of the Nazi Reich’s world-view.

However, though the essence was agreed about, there were many concrete questions left unresolved. Concerning the institutions, SS was far from being certain about how the Wehrmacht would act in reality. The relations between the SS and the civil authorities were not clear either. One also had questions about distribution among different political spheres linked by ambivalent and tense relationships. A deeper analysis of the German occupational policy shows that in the period 1941-1945 a lot depended on local situation, and there were given no specific orders to be implemented. Moreover, from the present point of view, the entire conception with its great components was only a reflection of an unbounded megalomania. It had no sense to take it seriously that the Soviet Union is shortly to collapse like a “clay colossus”. Just as it had no sense to expect that entire regions and all people would willingly surrender to the German-enforced conditions of insufficient supply and famine, or that they would resign to the enforced status of a colonised or even enslaved nation only to be able to serve the masters (*Herrenmenschen*) and the squatters of German extraction.

What was the influence of the German plans concerning the policy on the Jews of the Soviet Union? Mentioned were already the genocidal plans to displace the Jews to the open vast spaces of the Soviet Union – which was planned to be destroyed. One thing was clear, that the then generation of the Jews was to be the last. Its fate was to be doomed after the war. This did not mean yet that all the Jews of the Soviet Union were to be killed during the war.

Assessing the just reviewed intentions of the Germans it is seen that a more quick death was then planned for some people of Jewish nationality. On the one part, the famine plan prepared by the Germans since 1940-1941 meant that almost all inhabitants of the Western lands of the

Soviet Union were destined to death of hunger; though probably it did not include the Baltic states just to ensure that the German Wermacht and the entire Reich would receive food supply. Since the vast majority of the Jews lived in towns, this meant they were to die of hunger too. In June 1941, Himmler informed the SS leadership of such intention.³⁷ On the other part, the Soviet Jewish intelligentsia which due the racist German attitude was considered the social basis of bolshevism had to be shot immediately during the war. It was supposed that the Jews comprised the bigger part of the Soviet authority elite, thus their murder was supposed to anticipate the collapse of the Soviet state and bring success to an extremely precarious Blitzkrieg of Germany.

Since during the war with Poland in 1939-1940, the Wermacht, SS, and the civil authorities had serious problems in their intercommunications, before the war against the Soviet Union, such contentions were tried to be avoided beforehand making internal agreements on violations of military and international laws. In this context, the so-called criminal laws to be soon briefly analysed were to play their role: Order Regarding the Implementation of Justice (*Gerichtsbarkeitserlass*), Instructions for the Troops (*Richtlinien für die Truppe*), and Order Regarding Commissars (*Kommissarbefehl*). Massacre of the Soviet officials was to speed up the collapse of the Soviet Union and Red Army, and to prevent the resistance. Within the space where law held no power (*rechtsfreier Raum*), the German Wermacht, Police and SS units would have a free room to implement the terror policy in pursuing Germany's military goals.

The above-mentioned orders have been known since the Nuremberg trials, therefore they are only shortly summarised here. Following the orders of Hitler given in March 1941, the Head of the RSHA, Reinhard Heydrich and the Head of the German Public Policy (*Ordnungspolizei*), Kurt Daluege agreed with the Wermacht, and especially with the Quartermaster General, the Lieutenant General, Eduard Wagner from the chief army leadership on the spheres of activities in the countries ruled by the military leadership.³⁸ So, the result of these agreements among the SS, the Police, and the Wermacht were those co-called orders which enabled the leadership of the German

³⁷ Cf. Witte and others (Eds). "Dienstkalender", pp. 172–174 (record of 12-15 June 1941).

³⁸ Cf. Hitler 3-3-1941, Chief Wermacht Headquarters' (*Oberkommando der Wermacht*; OKW) War journal (*Kriegstagebuch*: KTB), vol. 1, p. 341; Remark of Heydrich (Vermerk Heydrich), dated 26-3-1941. Aly "Endlösung", p. 270; Hitler 30-3-1941, Halder KTB (KTB Halder), vol. 2, p. 336 ff

Reich to violate the existing norms of military and international laws (the Hague Convention of 1907 Concerning the Laws and Customs of Land War, the 1929 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, and 1929 Red Cross Convention on the Amelioration of the Conditions of the Wounded and Sick in the Armed Forces in the Field, and the Common Law).³⁹

The so-called order on implementation of justice passed by the Chief leadership of the Wehrmacht on 13 May 1941 abolished the capacity of the Military Tribunal to pass the sentence for “the criminal activities of enemy civil persons”, giving this right to a local officer. Hence, “collective violent measures” were to be taken against those regions the Wehrmacht would be attacked from. No prosecution could be then executed against the soldiers of the German Wehrmacht even if they had done a “war crime or transgression”. Consequently, the civilians of the Soviet Union became totally deprived of any legal protection.⁴⁰

The instructions of 19 May 1941 regarding army’s actions in Russia (which referred to the Soviet Union) ordered the soldiers to fight against all promoters of bolshevism. It meant: “to take cruel and decisive actions against the Bolshevik rabble-rousers, partisans, Jews and, eventually, suppress any active or passive resistance.”⁴¹

The order of the Chief Wehrmacht leadership regarding the commissars passed on 6 June 1941 was intended for the military authorities and directed against the ideological functioners of the Red Army who would not be recognised as soldiers. On a battlefield, the Wehrmacht had to kill them immediately, and in the back areas of the armies and the troops, it had to transfer them to the Security Police and SS operative groups (EG).⁴²

³⁹ Cf. a comprehensive list prepared following the international law with the texts of references in the new catalogue “Crimes of Wehrmacht” („Verbrechen der Wehrmacht“) published by the Hamburg Institute for Social Researches (Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung), Hamburg, 2002, pp. 16-36.

⁴⁰ Order Regarding Implementation of Justice in the territory of “Barbarossa” plan and regarding the special measures of troops (Erlaß über die Ausübung der Kriegsgerichtsbarkeit im Gebiet “Barbarossa” und über besondere Maßnahmen der Truppe), BA-MA, RW 4/v. 577, I. 72-74.

⁴¹ Instructions regarding the actions of the troops in Russia (Richtlinien für das Verhalten der Truppe in Russland) published on 19 May 1941, BA-MA, RW 4/v. 524, I. 13 ff

⁴² Instructions on the Treatment of Political Commissars (Richtlinien für die Behandlung politischer Kommissare), published on 6-6-1941, BA-MA, RW 4/v. 578, I. 42-44.

The use of the Himmler's SS and Police forces for the aims of military authorities was determined by several agreements made between the SS and the Wehrmacht in March – April of 1941. The most important of them were as follows: Chief Wehrmacht Headquarters' (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht; OKW) instructions of 13 March 1941, which, by Hitler's order, indicated that "Himmler was assigned special tasks referring to the final fight between the two oppositional political systems"; also an agreement between the Quartermaster General Wagner and the RSHA Head Heydrich made on 26 March 1941 (modified a little on 28 April 1941, after the release of the enactment regarding the troops (*Regelung des Heeres*)), referring to which the SS units could be used in the back areas of the army and troops. In this way, the operative groups (*Einsatzgruppen*) and operative squads (*Einsatzkommandos*) were given a right, "by assignment to take measures with regard to civil people."⁴³

The many-year long discussion mentioned before, about a precise content of orders given to the Himmler units and especially to the operative squads (EK) before their departure, all the time referred to few remaining documents. First, it was two letters Heydrich had sent to the operative groups (EG) just before the very beginning of war. After they had been considered on 17 June 1941, Heydrich sent written orders to the commanders of the operative groups (EG), on initiating first of all, the least noticeable pogroms of the Jewish population.⁴⁴

The self-cleaning attempts of the local anti-Communist and anti-Jewish minded inhabitants in the newly occupied countries cannot be interfered. On the contrary, they must be encouraged, of course, without a trace, and motivated, and if needed, directed to the right path, but in such a way, that the local "self-defence units" could not later refer to the orders or the proclaimed political goals. [...] At the beginning, it must be avoided to form standing

⁴³ Enactment regarding the use of the Security Police and SD in army units (*Regelung des Einsatzes der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD im Verbands des Heeres*), adopted on 28 April 1941, published: "Anatomie des SS-Staates", vol. 2, pp. 171-173. The Himmler units intended for executing mass murders in the Soviet Union had under their subordination: four operative Security Police units with about 3,000 soldiers, headquarters of SS Reichsführer command with two SS cavalry regiments and two motorised line brigades consisting of about 25,000 soldiers, and also public police *battalions* with about 12,000 servicemen.

⁴⁴ Operative orders No. 1 (cit.) and No. 2 to the commanders of the operative groups, dated 29 June 1941 and 2 July 1941, published by Klein, "Einsatzgruppen", pp. 318–321.

self-defence units controlled from the centre; instead it is advisable to encourage local pogroms organised by the people as noted before.⁴⁵

Thus, the German Security Police, five days before the beginning of the war, was resolute to organise pogroms, aside from the Soviet atrocities taking place with the retreat of the Red Army.

The note of Heydrich of 2 July 1941 addressed to the senior SS and Police officers of the occupied Soviet Union, apart from other things, describes a group of victims, just as did the order of 6 July 1941 regarding the Commissars, which had been agreed with the Wehrmacht; in a way, it was a parallel order to the Security Police. Though Heydrich clearly named “the Jews holding certain positions in the party and state” as the persons to be killed, yet as the Soviet state and party functioners they were anyway attributed to those people to be murdered immediately.⁴⁶ Though mentioned, the group of enemies remained undefined (“other radical elements and the like”), just like in the enactment of 13 May 1941 which abolished military dispensation of justice on the officers and with reference to which, almost every inhabitant was deprived of ones rights. Hence, the commanders of the operative groups (EG) and squads (EK) had in a sense their hands free to make a decision. There was no specific order, only a sole instruction which was equal to the authorization for killing.

This was how the group of victims was defined in a written form: to liquidate the political leadership of the Soviet Union, indispensable part of which according to the NS was the Jews, the core of the promoters of bolshevism.

These written orders of Heydrich to force the pogroms of Jews leaving no traces (29 June 1941) and to kill all the Jews who were holding state and party posts (2 July 1941) were undoubtedly also accompanied by oral orders or instructions, not recorded in written documents. It

45 Heydrich's telegram to the commanders of the operative groups (Fernschreiben Heydrichs an die Einsatzgruppenchefs), Operative order No. 1 (Einsatzbefehl Nr. 1), published by Longerich, “Ermordung”, p. 118 ff

46 The document of Heydrich to senior SS and Police commanders, a copy to the Operative Group A commander Stahlecker (Schreiben Heydrich an HSSPF, Nachrichtlich an Chef EG A, Stahlecker), dated 2 July 1941, BA, R 70 Sowjetunion 15, l. 6–10, published: Klein. “Einsatzgruppen”, pp. 323–328.

may have happened on 17 July 1941 when Heydrich had called the commanders of the operative groups and squads to Berlin.⁴⁷

The evidence that there did exist verbal orders are the notes of the operative group A (*Einsatzgruppe A*) Chief Franz Walter Stahlecker of 6 August 1941, which, taking into account the discussion on the draft project intended to the civil authorities, state that this project was closely related with “principle orders of a higher institution not stated in writing and addressed to the Security Police”.⁴⁸ The wording “higher institution” indicates that these were not orders of Hitler, otherwise it would have been stated “supreme institution” (as was in the famine plan); those were the orders of either Himmler, or Heydrich.

Most likely, these verbal orders concerned killing of the Jewish men of the age suitable for military service. Other Jewish men, women, and children had not yet been attributed to the first group of victims.⁴⁹ After visiting the Baltic states at the end of 1941, the information service officer (Ic) (*Nachrichtendienst (Ic)*) of the SS *Reichsführer*’s headquarters, May reported that the local Security Police were questioning “whether only shooting the male Jews, the problem of Jews could in fact be resolved.”⁵⁰

Considering the practice of shootings executed in the first weeks, it also brings to a conclusion that the Security Police were aiming to expand the group of victims. The killings of the Jewish men well overdid the written order of Heydrich of 2 July 1941 to kill “the Jews holding party and state offices”. As it had already been discussed with the Wehrmacht and with the future civil authorities it escalated no disagreements later. There would be disagreements only when, beyond the limits, there would be or had to be killed, the Jewish men who were still useful for economic reasons and were not considered a threat by the security police. For this reason, at the

⁴⁷ There are no comments of that time about this meeting, only the testimonies of the postwar period. Cf. Wildt. “Generation”, p. 557.

⁴⁸ Position of the Commander of Operative Group A stated on 6 August 1941. LVVA P 1026-1-3, l. 237-239; Cf. Ibid. Report about the events (Ger. *Ereignismeldung*; hereafter referred to as EM), dated 9 July 1941.

⁴⁹ The telegram of the Tilžė Gestapo to RSHA (Fernschreiben Staatspolizeistelle Tilsit an RSHA), dated 1 July 1941, ZStL, Sammlung UdSSR, Ordner 245 Ag, Nr. 254-257, l. 2-5.

⁵⁰ SS *Reichsführer*’s headquarters, report of the Ic officer’s work, 20 July 1941 – 27 July 1941; quoted cf. Krakowski. “Möglichkeiten”, p. 120.

end of June, there would be constant conflicts escalated among the Security Police, the Wermacht, and the civil authorities in Šiauliai.

Furthermore, there is one more evidencing document unnoticed for a long time about a lot of Jewish men killed. It is known that out of all the Soviet prisoners of war (POW), all the Jews would be the ones immediately killed – it was recorded in a written document as far as 28 June 1941.⁵¹ Christian Streit and Christian Gerlach, with reason, wrote about the annexes to the operative order of 17 July 1941, No. 8 regarding the use of the Security Police and SD units in the camps of the prisoners of war. This order was applied not only at the prisoners of war, but also at the civilians confined in the camps.⁵² The list of the people to be killed presented by Heydrich, aside from the persons listed on 2 July, included also the “Soviet Russian intelligents” and “all the Jews”.⁵³ Thus, this was a definite order to kill all the civil men of Jewish origin in the POWs’ camps; in some cities in Belarus, in general, all the men of the age suitable for military service would be confined. There were no more such huge camps in Lithuania as those near Minsk. From the very beginning, only the Jews would be imprisoned in the Kaunas’ Seventh Fort. Almost all of them were shot. According to the German Security Police, its mission was to ensure police protection of the occupied territory. With reference to the notion of an enemy, which in the second half of the thirties prevailed generally in all German Police, it was an obligation to fight against all state-and-nation-enemy elements.⁵⁴ It was primarily the Communists and the people of their surroundings who would be considered the state enemies in the occupied territories of the Soviet

⁵¹ Cf. Draft instructions regarding the units of the Security Police and SD heads to be dislocated in the camps of the captives, dated 28 June 1941. The Nuremberg document PS 078. It is considered that there were around 80 thousand Soviet Jews among the prisoners of war. It is most likely that not a single survived out of 61 thousand Polish soldiers of Jewish origin who had been taken prisoners by the Germans in 1939. Cf. Pohl. “Holocaust”, pp. 36 and 46.

⁵² Cf. Gerlach. “Morde”, pp. 503–505. About the prison of the civilians in Minsk. See, *ibid.*, pp. 506–514. Streit, Christian. “Ostkrieg, Antibolschewismus und ‘Endlösung’”. In the publication “Geschichte und Gesellschaft 17 (1991)”, pp. 242–255. It must be noted that the wording “all the Jews” in RSHA language does not mean all people of Jewish nationality, but only the Jewish men. If the order had referred to killing the Jewish women and children, it would have been stated clearly.

⁵³ RSHA instructions regarding the units of the Security Police and SD heads to be dislocated in the camps of prisoners of war and in the transient camps (Richtlinien des RSHA für die in die Stalags und Dulags abzustellenden Kommandos des Chefs der Sipo und des SD). Operative order No. 8, IMT XXVI, pp. 111-115, 502-PS; BA, R 58/1027, pp. 190-194.

⁵⁴ Interrogation of Hans Kraus (Vernehmung Hans Kraus) of 21 October 1959, ZStL II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 8, p. 211.

Union. National enemies were, first of all, the Jews. Following this approach, “in order to further the peace in the rear” it was by all means that any possible threat to the domination of the Germans was prevented.⁵⁵ The preliminary announcement of the EK3, which was presented at the beginning of 1942 with reference to the second report of Stahlecker, legalised escalation of the anti-Semitic policy, in terms of the Security Police: “It has turned out from the activities of these troops all over Lithuania that having liquidated few Jews it is impossible to make the areas behind front line stable.” [Underlined by the authors]⁵⁶

The idea of prevention was considered of great importance. One had to fight not only against the actually threatening danger, but also against the people who might have potentially belonged to enemies.⁵⁷

During the first weeks of the war, the victims of the massacres of the operative groups (*Einsatzgruppen, EG*) were in the first instance those Jews who by the estimation of the national socialists could be active participants in the resistance against the German occupation and were considered active Jewish Bolsheviks. They would also be equaled to active or potential enemies of the German regime, particularly to the Communists and Soviet functionaries.⁵⁸ However RSHA was willing to try to expand the mass killings of the Jews as much as possible, beyond the limits of agreements with the Wehrmacht and with the civil authorities. This reflected in relevant documents of the Operative Group A (EG A) and the 3rd Operative Squad (EK3). Searching the documents for the stated goals of the anti-Semitic policy executed by the Security Police, clear intentions to fully exterminate the Jews are obvious.

⁵⁵ Interrogation of Otto Dietrich (1b EK) (Vernehmung Otto Dietrich (SK 1b)) of 3 November 1959, Ehrlinger’s case (Ehrlinger-Verfahren), vol. 8, p. 275.

⁵⁶ Preliminary announcement about the general report of the EG A (Vorbericht zum zweiten Gesamtbericht der EG A), 1942-2-4, BA, R 90/146.

⁵⁷ Notion of an enemy, see also in Herbert’s “Best”, pp. 163-180, 237-245. It is clearly stated in the document of the Special Troops 4a of that time addressed to the commanders of the SD non local troops (*Außenkommandos*), dated 19 March 1943: “The tasks of the Security Police and SD is to establish enemies of the Reich and fight against them for the sake of security, and especially for the security of the army in the sphere of military operations. Active enemies must not only be exterminated, but one must also take preventive measures to liquidate such elements which, for their attitudes and past under favourable auspices may become active enemies. The Security Police are implementing this task with necessary rigour observing general regulations of the Führer.” IMT, vol. 31, PS 3012.

⁵⁸ Cf. Gerlach. “Ausweitung”, p. 26 ff

Nevertheless, this only was a notional goal (*Zielvorstellung*), but not a strict order to kill immediately all the Jews, and such conception of the goal allowed strategic possibility for differentiated actions. Considering these questions, one must recall that during the first weeks of the war a sudden victory against the Soviet Union was expected. It must be also stressed that these were not written orders. They had originated from RSHA, from the leadership of the Security Police (Heydrich and Himmler), and that this was not a self-authorized extension of authority by the local Security Police chiefs.

Therefore, speaking about the orders given at the beginning of the war, it is advisable not to refer to the general order of Hitler to kill, and clearly distinguish between the different institutions of the SS and the German Police, and those of the Wehrmacht and the civil authorities. The documents had recorded what they had agreed on among them, i.e. to kill the Bolsheviks of Jewish nationality. Furthermore, the Security Police aimed at developing the practice of mass killings as quickly as possible, and applied this practice. It succeeded in most territories. The Jews of the age suitable for military service were killed. After killing the head of the family, following the murders' logic, the remaining women and the children soon would become victims too. All the more, because there would be plenty of justifications which would serve to report those murders to the military and the civil authorities as "integral in war". Whether it were the shortage of food, or spread of contagious diseases, or reduced expenditures on guard personnel, or attempt to use the apartments for other purposes; Himmler, from the approach of the Security Police, himself stated the main reason: not a single "avenger" may stay alive.

To answer the questions of the section, once again we sum up what is most important in investigating the first weeks of the war; starting 17 June, the German Security Police had a task to initiate pogroms. They aimed at shooting as many of the Jewish men suitable for the military service as possible. The German Security Police wanted to employ the local people of non-German nationality for the purpose of their policy. The murderous intentions of the Security Police went beyond the limits of the agreements between the Wehrmacht and the future civil authorities. All German institutions collectively aimed for the same purpose – one part of the Jews to be forcefully relocated, and the other – exterminated. Yet all proceeded at another pace, perceiving the terms in another way too.

GERMAN PLANS FOR A LITHUANIAN ROLE IN THE INVASION OF THE USSR

There are few German sources giving information about the plans of the Germans to involve Lithuanians into Germany's war.⁵⁹ It was particularly the OKW department for the issues of minorities and sabotage of Abwehr (German Military Intelligence) and the RSHA 6th department for foreign affairs which tried using Lithuanians for the military purposes of Germany.⁶⁰ The OKW Lieutenant colonel dr. Kurt Gräbe and dr. Heinz Gräfe from Tilsit (*Tilžė*) Gestapo, which had merged with the RSHA 6th service, undertook to resume relations with the Lithuanian emigre and the local population, and to report this to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to the Wermacht leadership. January-March of 1941 when the German Commission on Immigrants Affairs (*Umsiedlungskommission*) was visiting Lithuania was the time intended for the espionage activities and for organising the revolt. The Immigrants' organisation under the leadership of the agent Richard Kossmann listed among its members, for instance, W. Vogel (social affairs) and Alfred Kinder (health security), who were in charge of Lithuanian agents.⁶¹

From the second half of 1940, and especially in the spring of 1941, Germans' preparation for the war from the side of OKW Abwehr division also included attempts "to initiate the revolt of the national minorities" in the Soviet Union.⁶² The Abwehr tried to control "unorganised resistance units" in the Baltic countries.⁶³ After the beginning of the war, the rebels, as anticipated, had to take over the prisons, bridges, factories, railway networks, police stations, and other strategic

⁵⁹ Unfortunately, the files of the Wermacht military intelligence (Abwerh) have been destroyed. Nevertheless, the cases of the North armies group do contain some information which reveals the plans of the Germans at least to some extent.

⁶⁰ For more details see Kangeris, "Kollaboration", p. 185.

⁶¹ About A. Kinder see the testimonies of Edmundas Drukteinis, 6 May 1941. "The Fifth Column", p. 71.

⁶² On 21 February 1941, the Admiral Wilhelm Canaris reported to the head of the General Headquarters, Franz Halder about "the organised measures targeted for Ukraine and the Baltic countries". KTB Halder, vol. 2, p. 287. Later, the head of the army's operative division, Adolf Heusinger informed Halder about "the plans of upheaval" (*Zersetzungsvorhaben*) in Ukraine and in the Baltic countries. Idib., p. 418 (17 May 1941).

⁶³ The record of 21 May 1941 by the 2nd Abwerh division Ic/liaison officer of the Headquarters of East Prussia II in the raport No. 449/41 about organising and training the national resistance units in the Baltic states under the supervision of the 2nd Abwerh division; "of supreme importance, strictly confidential" (Vortragsvermerk v. 21.5.1941 Abschnittsstab Ostpreussen, Ic/VO Abw. II Nr. 449/41 g. KTBos.Chefs Organisation und Ausbildung der völkischen Widerstandsruppen in den baltischen Randstaaten durch Abw. II), BA-MA, RH 19 III/722, p. 50 ff

points.⁶⁴ The OKW 2nd division (under the leadership of Lahousen and coordinated in the first instance by dr. Kurt Gräbe) had arranged this military support together with the Abwehr subdivision in Königsberg. However, it appeared that it was very complicated to liaise with the groups operating in Lithuania.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the German side was anxious that their orders “to the resistance units formed of the local people” to guard certain objects might facilitate the Soviet intelligence agents to forecast the military-strategic plans of Germany. Therefore, the respective commanders had to be only roughly told that they had to guard the objects on their territory.⁶⁶

In May 1941, the preparatory works seemed to be so forward that one “undoubtedly was to expect rebel actions” in the Baltic states. Only the time of the beginning of the revolt was questioned. Lithuanians were urging that the attack should be started the moment when the Germans would cross the borderline. The German Abwehr demanded that they should wait until the German troops approached.⁶⁷ However, fearing that soviet agents might penetrate into those units, after the attack of the Germans, the “national commands” had to be “peacefully” disarmed.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ The first ideas about this emerged as far as in August 1940. On 5 August 1940, in its own plan of the operation (*Operationsentwurf*), Marcks wrote how with the help of the 2nd Abwehr division one should try in Lithuania as well to prevent from destroying, but rather handing over to the Germans the unbroken railways and bridges. Cf. Überschr/Bezzyenskij. “Angriff”, p. 231.

⁶⁵ The case record, dated 9 May 1941 about the meeting in Königsberg Abwehr subdivision, 7 May 1941 (Aktenvermerk v. 9.5.1941 Besprechung bei Abwehrstelle Königsberg am 7.5.1941). BA, RH 19 III/722, lp 25 ff On the Lithuanian side, the ones supposed to liaise between the Wehrmacht and the Lithuanians, were the agents Brunius, Major Gecevičius, and Major Puodžius, the latter as a representative of the Lithuanian Activists' Front (LAF) was in charge of the relations with Lithuania.

⁶⁶ The case record, dated 18 May 1941 about the meeting in the 2nd Abwehr division of 15 May 1941 regarding the 800th regiment and the application of the resistance units. (Aktenvermerk v. 18.5.1941 über Besprechung am 15.5.1941 bei Abwehr II über Einsatz Regt. 800 und Widerstandsgruppen), BA-MA, RH III/722, p. 46 ff. 15 objects were shown to the soldiers of the Wehrmacht from the 800th regiment. The case record, dated 21 May 1941, about the meeting in the 2nd Abwehr division of 20 May 1941 about the operations of the 2nd Abwehr division on the territory of Russia. (Aktenvermerk v. 21.5. über Besprechung am 20.5.41 bei Abwehr II betr.: Tätigkeit der Abw. II auf russ. Gebiet), BA-MA, RH 19 III/722, p. 50 ff. On 25 February 1941, OKW received from Lithuanians the requested comprehensive review of the Lithuanian economy and production. Cf. notes of Škirpa in “Lithuania, Crime & Punishment”, H. 5 (Jan. 1995), p. 33.

⁶⁷ In its directions regarding the liberation of Lithuania, on 24 March 1941 LAF allowed the date when the Germans would cross the borderline. Cf. Budreckis. “Revolt”, p. 35.

⁶⁸ The case record, dated 21 May 1941, about the meeting in the 2nd Abwehr division of 20 May 1941 about the operations of the 2nd Abwehr division on the territory of Russia. (Aktenvermerk v. 21.5. über Besprechung am 20.5.41 bei Abwehr II betr.: Tätigkeit der Abw. II auf russ. Gebiet), BA-MA, RH 19 III/722, p. 50 ff

After the German army had come, their tasks would have been realised, though some rebels could be further used for assistance, translations and as the ones familiar with the territory.⁶⁹

The German military intelligence (Abwehr) followed its attitude that the commanders of the local units (“mostly former officers, intelligents or priests”) would get directions from the Lithuanian émigrés in Berlin, however they did not know anything specifically about the leadership structure in Lithuania itself, as information from Lithuania would reach Germany with difficulty. The Abwehr was under dissolution assuming that it had a complete control over the leadership of the Lithuanian underground movement, since Lithuanian Military attache “seemed to get the orders from the 2nd Abwehr division and forward them further.” According to it, the local Lithuanian commanders were not aware that “their supreme authorities were under the command of the German officers”; the German orders would be translated into Lithuanian and when through Finland or via the seaways through Riga or the Lithuanian border they would secretly reach the Baltic countries, they could be treated as solely “the orders of Lithuanian revolt leadership”. Even the Lithuanian chief commanders considered them the orders of the LAF commander Škirpa.⁷⁰ The German Security Police reports of July 1941 so far stated that the Lithuanian Activists’ Front “had been assigned by OKW” – the version disguising the Lithuanian initiative in establishing the LAF.⁷¹

The Abwehr was informed about two organisational headquarters operating in Lithuania, one in Kaunas, and another in Vilnius. In case NKVD disclosed one of them, the other headquarters would continue their work. LAF asserted to the Abwehr “there had been more or less

⁶⁹ Record in the report about the disarmament of the national activists groups, 13 June 1941 (Vortragsvermerk v. 13.6.1941 betr.: Entwaffnung völkischer Aktivistengruppen), BA-MA, RH 19 III/722, p. 81.

⁷⁰ The record of 21 May 1941 by the 2nd Abwehr division Ic/liaison officer of the Headquarters of East Prussia II in the report No. 449/41 about organising and training the national resistance units in the Baltic states under the supervision of the 2nd Abwehr division; “of supreme importance, strictly confidential” (Vortragsvermerk v. 21.5.1941 Abschnittsstab Ostpreussen, Ic/VO Abw. II Nr. 449/41 g. DYos.Chefs Organisation und Ausbildung der völkischen Widerstandsgruppen in den baltischen Randstaaten durch Abw. II), BA-MA, RH 19 III/722, p. 50 ff

⁷¹ Cf. Security Police and SD report on their activities and the situation, 31 July 1941. Published: Klein. “Einsatzgruppen”, p. 115.

big group of activists established in almost every locality (town or village) of Lithuania.”⁷² Their arms were very different, mostly these included handguns. The Germans had secretly brought to Lithuania 200 Belgian pistols, and Polish hand-grenades. In estimation of the Abwehr, it was “utterly reasonable” to expect that with the German army approaching, there will be launched a “decisive revolt” against the “current Russian oppressors”. LAF was anticipating that the rebels with armbands would “themselves start the partisan group war against the Russians.” Furthermore, certain objects were guarded, and “taking into account the temperament”, fighters would attempt to do “more possible damage to the enemy”. In this case, “single trespassings should be reconciled to”.⁷³ The fact, that from the beginning the Abwehr accepted that there would be “trespassing” (*Übergriffe*) reasonably implies that it approved atrocious sallies too.

By the beginning of the war, as much information about the Lithuanians as possible had to be subjected to the German military institutions. According to Škirpa, the supposed informers and the activists were the Lithuanian corps of the Red Army, the members of the Lithuanian Riflemen Union, the members of the “Geležinis vilkas”, Lithuanian state officials, some youth organisations, school and university students, some clergy of the Catholic Church, and the nationalists of other public organisations.⁷⁴ Through the four German border police Commissariats and military intelligence subdivisions, there was active liaison organised at the Lithuanian-German border, also facilitating the border crossing.

Right by the German-Lithuanian border, the Abwehr and the Gestapo had established the asylum camps for the Lithuanian refugees where they would intentionally look for and recruit agents. The Gleisgarben camp by Angerapp (*Lager Gleisgarben bei Angerapp*) was controlled by

⁷² Record in the report of 3 June 1941 about the functions of the liaison officer, the 2nd Abwehr division, the Headquarters in East Prussia (Vortragsvermerk v. 3.6.1941 betr.: Aufgabenbereich des VO, Abw. II bei Abw II Abschnittsstab Ostpreussen), BA-MA, RH 19 III/722, p. 74.

⁷³ Record in the report about the disarmament of the national activists groups, 13 June 1941 (Vortragsvermerk v. 13.6.1941 betr.: Entwaffnung völkischer Aktivistengruppen), BA-MA, RH 19 III/722, p. 81. The parole in setting the contacts between the German army and the Lithuanian activists was “Dünkirchen”. Cf. The special order of the Ic/18th Abwehr officer of the chief military command of 18 June 1941 on security and sabotage actions on the enemy territory. (Tagesbefehl v. 18.6.1941 des AOK 18 Ic/AO betr.: Schutz- und Sabotageaufgaben im Feindgebiet), BA-MA, RH 20-18/63, pp. 89-91. The relevant special order containing the information aimed for the Lithuanian underground, 21 June 1941, by the 4th tank unit. Cf. Škirpa. “Aufstand”, p. 287.

⁷⁴ Cf. Škirpa. “Aufstand”, p. 133 ff

the Memel (Klaipėda) border police Commissariat (GPK) in charge of which at first was Paul Schwarz from Lauksargiai (Laukszargen) border police station, and then Herbert Schmidtke (Memel GPK). In the autumn of 1940, there were few hundred of Lithuanians here, including 60-70 policemen.⁷⁵ In the spring of 1941, the German Abwehr trained 90 Lithuanian sabotage specialists from the camp inmates. In the camp of the air forces (*Luftwaffe*) on the Baltic Sea coast, there were two units trained. Each had 45 men camouflaged as adjusters who before the very beginning of the attack had to cross the “green-belt”. Some of these former officers and sergeants had arrived from the immigrants’ camps and had to sign that they would keep to the German military discipline.⁷⁶ They were partially supposed to support the local activists.

After the outbreak of the war, about 100 Lithuanians gathered in Klaipėda quarters. They were under the command of the future Chief of the Lithuanian Public Police (*Ordnungspolizei*), Vytautas Reivytiš who had been working for the German Abwehr since long ago.⁷⁷ During attacks, they used to move together the German troops, and in a few days many of them took over the main civil state and police posts. Some agents were making the lists, first recording the names of the persons sympathising to the Communist and Soviet regime. To some extent, they could refer to the

75 Cf. Interrogation of Herbert Schmidtke (Vernehmung Herbert Schmidtke), of 27 February 1956, *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 160 ff; interrogation of Pranas Lukys (Vernehmung Pranas Lukys) of 21st February 1957, *Ibid.*, vol. 10, pp. 2728-2731; interrogation of Antanas Švarplaitis (Vernehmung Antanas Švarplaitis) of 14 December 1940. “Penktoji Kolona” (The Fifth Column), p. 52; testimony of J. Ilčiukas (Aussage J. Ilčiukas) of 27 October 1940, “Penktoji Kolona” (The Fifth Column), pp. 55-59.

76 The record of 21 May 1941 by the 2nd Abwehr division Ic/liaison officer of the Headquarters of East Prussia in the report No. 449/41 about organising and training the national resistance units in the Baltic states under the supervision of the 2nd Abwehr division; “of supreme importance, strictly confidential” (Vortragsvermerk v. 21.5.1941 Abschnittsstab Ostpreussen, Ic/VO Abw. II Nr. 449/41 g. DYos.Chefs. betr.: Organisation und Ausbildung der völkischen Widerstandsgruppen in den baltischen Randstaaten durch Abw. II), BA-MA, RH 19 III/722, p. 50 ff See also: Record in the report of 3 June 1941 about the functions of the liaison officer, the 2nd Abwehr division, the Headquarters in East Prussia (Vortragsvermerk v. 3.6.1941 betr.: Aufgabenbereich des VO, Abw. II bei Abw II Abschnittsstab Ostpreussen), BA-MA, RH 19 III/722, p. 74. There do exist the testimonies about the two-week training courses for agents Königsberg, for instance, 20 persons, March 1941; the local SD is also related to, and most important is to organise an armed anti-Soviet revolt. Cf.: testimonies of Pranas Giedraitis (Aussagen Pranas Giedraitis) of 1 and 5 December 1944. “Penktoji Kolona” (The Fifth Column), pp. 96, 105-107.

77 Cf. Interrogation of Pranas Lukys (Vernehmung Pranas Lukys) of 21 February 1957, StA Ludwigsburg, EL 322, vol. 10, pp. 2728-2731; interrogation of V. Reivytiš (Vernehmung V. Reivytiš) of 9 January 1985, ZStL 207 AR 6/85, vol. 1, pp. 33-43.

lists compiled by the security organs which by 1940 had also attempted to make record of all communists.⁷⁸

VIOLENCE AND ANTI-JEWISH OUTBREAKS IN KAUNAS IN THE FIRST HOURS AND DAYS OF THE NAZI-SOVIET WAR: GERMAN INSTIGATION AND LITHUANIAN COOPERATION

Soon after the war had started, immediate sallies were begun against the Jews who though having understood from the bombings of the German air forces and radio news that the war had started and the Red Army had retreated, would usually not know how to behave. Some left the countryside for towns, others on the contrary would move to the countryside, depending on where they thought to be safer. They were not sure what could mean the retreat of the Red Army from Kaunas. Panic was increasingly spreading, as if “the earth underneath had been inflamed”.⁷⁹ When the Kaunas Military Commandant, Lieutenant Jurgis Bobelis ordered to make an announcement on the radio, that somebody from the Jewish houses had been shooting at the approaching Germans, and that a hundred of Jews would be killed for one German shot, the pogrom-pregnant atmosphere, was even more heated. Meanwhile, the inhabitants of Jewish nationality were even more frightened by such announcement.⁸⁰

In the first days of the war, the structure of the Lithuanian organisations was often changing. Along with the institutions of the Provisional Government and LAF, there were few more headquarters of partisans operating. It is true to state that in several days, the rebels started acting in an organised way. During the revolt, on 24 June, the Kaunas Military Commandant’s Office made a proclamation that all the Lithuanian police officers who had worked in police until the Soviet occupation, on 15 June 1940, had to return to their work posts, and the members of the

78 Cf. interrogations of G. Carsten (Vernehmungen G. Carsten) of 18 October 1956 and of 18 January 1957, StA Ludwigsburg, EL 322, vol. 9, pp. 2165 and 2182; interrogation of A. Conrad (Vernehmung A. Conrad), of 29 April 1960, Ibid., vol. 21, p. 5921; interrogation of W. Hersmann (Vernehmung W. Hersmann) of 10 January 1957, vol. 7, p. 1752; interrogation of H. J. Böhme (Vernehmung H. J. Böhme) of 8 December 1956, Ibid., vol. 7, p. 1572.

⁷⁹ Cf. descriptions of first hours and days of war: Gar. “Umkum”, pp. 33-39. Here, p. 33.

⁸⁰ Gar. “Umkum”, p. 34 f.

militarised Riflemen Union had to go to their localities. In the upcoming year, this order was obeyed by about 3,000 persons, i.e. by about 40 percent of the former policemen.⁸¹

The first sitting of the Lithuanian Provisional Government on 24 June 1941 made a decision to reform the former soviet structure and to assign to the restored Lithuanian Ministry of the Internal Affairs: the security police, city police (*Schutzpolizei*) and the prisons, since 15 July 1941, establishing adequate departments. Security sector comprised the security and the criminal police.

The operating units of partisans were systemically grouped and sent to 42 city stations, including the suburbs. Overall, 3,365 men were grouped.⁸² At the same time, the attempts were made to control application of arms, all the arms were to be immediately registered. With no certification for arms, on the night of the 26 June it was prohibited to appear in public with arms.⁸³ The order to replace different squads of “partisans” by the militarised and strictly organised units was promulgated on 28 June. Since 29 June, the Kaunas military Commandant’s Office started to form the National Work Security (TDA) battalion where only the former active soldiers would be accepted first of all.⁸⁴ The Lieutenant Andrius Butkūnas was in the command of the Battalion, his deputy was the Major Antanas Impulevičius. Establishment of such TDA battalions was planned as far as March 1941. The German Security Police also did use these companies for their purposes.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Order of Kaunas Military Commandant of 24 June 1941, No. 1. LCVA, R 1444-1-8, p. 7; Cf. Stankeras, p. 49.

⁸² The list of the partisan squads which had existed by then. LCVA, R 1444-1-9, p. 6 ff; Brandišauskas. “Siekiai”, p. 157t.

⁸³ Cf. Orders of Kaunas Military Commandant Bobelis of 24 June 1941 and 25 June 1941, Nos. 1 and 7 respectively. LCVA, R 1444-1-8, pp. 8 and 26.

⁸⁴ Order of Kaunas Military Commandant Bobelis of 28 June 1941, No. 9. LCVA, R 1444-1-8, p. 28; Notice of Kaunas Military Commandant Bobelis of 28 June 1941. LCVA, R 1444-1-8, p. 35; both published in the “Masinės žudynės” (*Mass Massacres*), vol. 1, p. 69 ff.

⁸⁵ Cf. SK1b report to EG A (Bericht des SK 1b an EG A), 1 July 1941, BA, R 70 Sowjetunion 15; EM 14, 6 July 1941, BA, R 58/214; the report of the 281st guard division activities (Tätigkeitsbericht Sich.Div. 281, Ic) for the period 1 July 1941–15 July 1941, National Archives Record Administration (hereafter referred to as NARA), T 315, Roll 1870, p. 22t. (“Under the supervision of the Germans, there were companies of uniformed soldiers formed in Kaunas intended to facilitate to police”)

On 28 June, the Provisional Government of Lithuania passed a regulation to pay salaries to the partisans, and relevant partisan commanders had to provide statements about the time served.⁸⁶ On 30 June, it was decided that the Kaunas Military Commandant's Office would allocate funds from their budget to support the TDA battalion.⁸⁷ However, the attempt to control all partisans' units altogether failed. In two weeks then it developed that the Burgomaster of Kaunas, Kazys Palčiauskas by all means had to inform people that only those persons represented the staff that would be wearing a white armband with a title TDA and the stamp of LAF headquarters.⁸⁸

The increasing groups of uniformed and civil Lithuanians with white armbands were walking the streets. They would spread all over the town; on the one hand, they were methodically arresting the Jews in their own homes, and on the other hand, without any order, on their own initiative, they stopped the individuals of Jewish nationality: men, women, and young people.⁸⁹ It gives a strong implication that the quickly reorganised security and criminal police also did participate in arresting people.⁹⁰

The arrested from all the stations were transferred to the central prison and to the 7th Fort which was a little to the north from the city centre. All of a sudden, there started the beatings, robberies, thefts, and rough public humiliation to take place, which became an everyday happening.⁹¹ According to many witnesses, an important role in this hunting for the Jews fell on the house owners since it depended partially on them whether to report to the plundering squads about the Jews residing in their houses. There were in fact some house owners and Lithuanian clerks too who would not report on the tenants or would evade the answer by telling that some

⁸⁶ "Masinės žudynės", vol. 1, p. 70.

⁸⁷ The minutes of 30 June 1941, No. 6. Government, p. 19ff.

⁸⁸ Cf. Stankeras. "Policija", p. 126, where the circular note of Palčiauskas of 8 July 1941 has been quoted.

⁸⁹ Entire families would be confined in prisons; for instance, a 50 year old Leiba Kaplan, his 32 year old wife Sara and three their children Mala, Frida and Benjamin, who were 4 to 13 years old; 42 years old Ida Friedmann, her 16 year old daughter Esther and her two and a half year old son Elijahu. Cf. Requests addressed to the German Security Police on 2 July 1941 regarding those arrests executed on 26 June 1941. LCVA, R 973-3-2, p. 1t.

⁹⁰ Under the supervision of the EK3 and under the command of Dainauskas, the Lithuanian police group of 40 men, formed most from the ex-prisoners, was joined by the elite personnel. Cf. the 1st general report of EG A, dated 15 October 1941, Special Moscow Archive, 500-4-93, pp. 14, 41-43.

⁹¹ A Lithuanian doctor, the communist, Kutorgienė in her diary had recorded many scenes of public violence and humiliation. Kutorgienė, "Dienoraštis", esp. p. 627 ff. Even though, on 24 June 1941, the Provisional Government announced an appeal to the riflemen and partisans requesting not to settle their personal affairs, but to forward the arrested to court, it nevertheless seemed that only few obeyed that. Cf. Stankeras. "Policija" (*The Police*), p. 143 ff.

concrete Jews had fled or had been arrested already. Mrs. Fanny Pitum called it a real “fortune” that “she had been in good relations with the house owner, who therefore did not let the partisans in”. She knew “that there were the cases when the Lithuanian house owners would even inform against the house tenants”.⁹² During the arrests of the Jews and plunder of their homes manslaughter happened as well. The flats of the Jews who had escaped were plundered.⁹³

In Jonavos street, near the bridge across the river Neris to Viliampolė, around 25 to 30 men were forced to dance, say Jewish prayers and sing Russian songs, perform “sports exercises”; then, eventually, the Lithuanians put them on the knees and shot. Among these men there was also Šmuel Matz, a journalist of the newspaper *Folksblat*.⁹⁴ Starting 25 June, any Jew who appeared in public was in danger.⁹⁵

Escalation of the situation due to the German Security Police activities

At the dawn of the 25 June, when the advancing troops (*Vorauskommando*) of the German Security Police entered Kaunas, the persecution of people increased noticeably and assumed such a character that it became the byword for the uncanny pogroms of Jews at the beginning of war.

In terms of pogroms, perhaps, the best-known atrocity of the first week of the Nazi-Soviet war, cited in numerous Holocaust histories, is the infamous massacre of Jewish men at the Lietūkis garage in Kaunas on 27 June 1941. The particular resonance created by the Lietūkis killings reflects the especially gruesome method of killing conducted in public view, rather than the scale

⁹² Cf. Interrogation of Fanny Pitum (Vernehmung Fanny Pitum) of 2 July 1959, the file of the EK3 (EK3 Verfahren), vol. 5, p. 1998.

⁹³ Cf. Gar. “Umkum”, p. 36 ff; Mishell. “Kaddish”, p. 18; Gordon. “Shadow”, p. 27; Kutorgienė. “Dienoraštis”, pp. 629-631; Faitelson. “Widerstand”, p. 26; Holzman, p. 16 ff; the letter of the survivor Rosa Simon (Schreiben der Überlebenden Rosa Simon), dated 10 December 1958, the file of the EK3 (EK3 Verfahren), vol. 1, p. 177 ff. On 24 June 1941, the Kaunas Military Commandant, Lieutenant Bobelis encouraged all house owners, hotel owners, and others to report on the fugitives, suspects, and those hiding away, if observed, 24 May 1941. LCVA, R 1444-1-8, l. 1 and l. 8.

⁹⁴ Cf. J. Gar, “Umkum”, p. 35 ff. This almost certainly refers to the same atrocity, recorded as having taken place on the second day of the war, described in the statement of E. Oshry in the Manuscript Section of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Bibliotekos Rankraščių skyrius, hereafter - MACB RS), 18 May 1945 (Kaunas), F. 159-25, pp. 18-19.

⁹⁵ Not only Gar in “Umkum”, but Garfunkel too, very convincingly described well-grounded fear increasing among the inhabitants of Jewish nationality in those first days. Garfunkel. “Kovno”, p. 28 ff.

of the atrocity. The number of victims is uncertain, but can be estimated at less than sixty persons.⁹⁶ Those killed included the soap factory worker, Jizchak Grin, musician Šlomo Goldätein, water supplier I. Kurliančikas, merchants B. Komašas and Ch. Cukermanas, students Pessach and Goldberg, and also Mošė Štrom.⁹⁷ This location was approximately 200 metres from the 16th Army leadership's headquarters – the Lithuanian Chamber of Trade – the yard too could be seen out of the window of the house.⁹⁸ Several eyewitnesses identify Germans as active participants in the humiliation and beating, but not the murder, of the Jews at the site while most accounts finger Lithuanian perpetrators. Some, but not all, of the differing narratives may supplement one another if we understand them as describing different German and Lithuanian stages of the atrocity.⁹⁹ The context of those killings has not yet been fully solved.¹⁰⁰

Looking at the photos one can recognise there about ten criminals – the Lithuanian soldiers, armed civilians with white armbands and with arms, as well as other civil persons, who possibly

⁹⁶ HaKehillot, Das Pinkas. "Lita", p. 543. Mentioned there are 52 victims killed during the massacre in the "Lietūkis" garage yard; Tory. "Surviving", p. 23, also 52 victims; Garfunkel in "Kovno", p. 31, mentions 60 victims as well as Gar in "Umkum", p. 38; the authors of the Soviet Union mentioned about 50 victims. Cf. "Masinės žudynės", vol. 2, p. 392.

⁹⁷ Faitelson, A. "Neje Zeitung (Jiddisch)", 31 December 1998, p. 4; the newspaper *Laikinoji sostinė*, 5 February 2000. The statement that the killings was a vengeance act inflicted on the soviet security officials of Jewish nationality who had perpetrated crimes against Lithuanians, was not proved by documents. Cf. article of A. Bendinskas in the *Gimtas kraštas* (1989) and response of Ch. Finkelštein, both republished in "Lithuania, Crime & Punishment", No. 5, January 1995, pp. 48-50. During the soviet period, too, when it was likely to refer to the victims as to the communists, yet only the victims of Jewish nationality would be mentioned. Cf. comprehensive description: Rukšėnas/Sinkevičius. "Litva", p. 98. Kutorgienė. "Dienoraštis", p. 634.

⁹⁸ Reports by Maurach (16th Army) and Bischoffshausen (North army group) (Berichte Maurach (16. Armee) und Bischoffshausen (H.Gr. Nord)), the file of the EK3 (EK3 Verfahren), vol. 1, p. 317; the minutes of the association "Europäische Publikation e.V." meeting of 12-13 October 1956. On 24-27 June, the main headquarters of the 16th Army were located at the Vilkaviškis customs; on 27 June-1 July, it was in the Kaunas Chamber of Trade; on 1-4 July – in one of Ukmergė schools; on 4-7 July – in Mezciems resort house near Daugpilis (Dünaburg). KTB of the Chief Army Leadership (KTB AOK 16, Ia.), 21 June 1941–31 July 1941, BA-MA, RH 20-16/45.

⁹⁹ See Tomasz Szarota, *U progu zagłady: zajęcia antyżydowskie i pogromy w okupowanej Europie: Warszawa, Paryż, Amsterdam, Antwerpia, Kowno* (Warsaw: Sic, 2000), 243 ff.; also cf. Eidintas, *Žydai, lietuviai ir holokaustas* (Vilnius: Vaga, 2002), pp. 170-180.

¹⁰⁰ The presumption for speculations is the record of the Secretary General of the Lithuanian Nationalist Party, Zenonas Blynas in his journal, of 18 July 1941: "I met up with Petras Kliorys. According to him, Dainauskas Jonas, a former security officer who had also worked as a security officer during Soviet times, presumably had been continuing some case against a Polish organization. However, he had also interrogated arrested Lithuanians in Vilnius. It seems that he arranged those beatings of the Jews out on the street towards the cemetery. They were filmed and photographed. What perfect material for the Germans." As quoted in Alfonsas Eidintas, *Žydai*, 173. Eidintas added that "the street towards the cemetery" in Kaunas is the same location as that of Lietūkis Garage.

had just been released from the prison¹⁰¹ - who beat their victims. The spectators included many German soldiers and Lithuanian civilians, also few women, meanwhile no children are seen in the picture. Bars, wooden sticks, and water pump hoses for washing the lorries – all was applied as tools for murder. Two photographs show the same man who had just killed his victim with a crow-bar, and with a triumphant expression on his face, started posing. Witnesses told that the Jews first had to clean away the horse muck, then they were forced to mop down the yard with water pump hoses.¹⁰² The yard was flooded with blood, and the Jews, eventually, had to clean it too. The bodies were buried in the old cemetery, laying them sidelong each other. This course of events is verified by the record in the diary of the Lithuanian Archbishop Skvireckas made on 28 June 1941. The doctor Matulionis and the priest Morkūnas, who had learnt from their friends about the horrifying crime in the garage yard, visited Skvireckas and told him about this, asking him to mediate with the Germans.¹⁰³

There are no existing documents which would confirm the statements of the German soldiers made after the war that the Lithuanian women would even lift their children so they could see the killings better. This statement is likely to be the attempts of the German soldiers to mark the entire Lithuanian nation as brutal anti-Semites, and, thereby, to make a more advantageous depiction that the killings executed by the Germans were far more ordered. However, many witnesses testified that the civil spectators would encourage the executors, and that somebody was even playing an accordion; some (Gunsilius) witnessed that they did play the national Lithuanian anthem.¹⁰⁴ (This report concerning the playing of the national anthem is contradicted by other

¹⁰¹ The member of the 1st police *battalion* (Schutzmannschaftsbatallion), Pranas Matiukas told he had heard that the victims in the garage had been killed in most atrocious way. Most killers had just been released from prison. Cf. interrogation of Pranas Matiukas, of 20 December 1961. KGB Archive, 47337/3, p. 1.

¹⁰² Testimony of Julius Vainalavičius for the KGB in Vilnius, 1 August 1959. Cf. Testimony of Leonardas Survila, 21 January 1961. Both introduced in: “Masinės žudynės”, 1 vol., p. 231 ff. Cf. Mishell. “Kaddish”, p. 25, describing the course of events after the version of the witness of Jewish nationality.

¹⁰³ Exerpts from a diary published in the publication “Masinės žudynės”, vol. 1, p. 51 ff. Cf. Eglinis, M. “Mirties fortuose”, p. 9. Now: Brandišauskas. “Sukilimas”, p. 272.

¹⁰⁴ Leonardas Survila’s testimonies, 21 January 1961: “Masinės žudynės”, 1 vol., p. 232. For the alleged statement on the enjoying mothers with their children, see the report of the Lieutenant Bischoffshausen, 19 April 1959 (Bericht v. 19.4.1959 von Oberst Bischoffshausen), Ehrlinger’s file (Verfahren gegen Ehrlinger), ZStL, II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 3a, l. 2291-2295, and the testimonies of the former photographer of the 16th army of headquarters of the German air forces, Wilhelm Gunsilius, 11 November 1958, Ehrlinger’s file, ZStL, II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 2, l. 785a-791. Cf. interrogation of Wilhelm Schwan who accompanied Gunsilius, of 26 April 1960, *Ibid.*, vol. 13, l. 100 ff. Many

witnesses.)¹⁰⁵ It seems there also were some Lithuanians who were shouting “Shame on Lithuania!” but were silenced.¹⁰⁶

It should be noted that the major difficulty in constructing a definitive account of the Lietūkis massacre is that, despite the photographic record and the oft-quoted German and Lithuanian eyewitness accounts, the problems remain in ascertaining the exact sequence of events as well as some of the well-publicized details.¹⁰⁷

The largest single massacre of the first week of the invasion was the pogrom in Vilijampolė (Slobodka), a predominantly Jewish section of Kaunas. At nights, starting Wednesday, 25 June, until Friday, 27 June, there were organised pogroms executed, when Lithuanian rebels armed with rifle arms and knives – quite a few students among them – broke into many houses and brutally killed more than a thousand people. Estimates of the victims range from 600 to several thousand.¹⁰⁸ It is likely that the highest estimates include persons murdered later in actions at the Seventh Fort. The infamous Klimaitis gang constituted the hard core of the local perpetrators who were encouraged by the commander of Einsatzgruppe A, SS Gen. Walter Franz Stahlecker, and

testimonies given by the members of the 562nd “company of the bakers” (*Bäckereikompanie*) stress that the majority of the spectators were the German soldiers. Cf. for instance, the interrogation of Karl Röder who had also made two photos, of 8 July 1959. Ehrlinger’s file, ZStL, II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 4, l. 2737-2743; interrogation of Fritz Lesch of 8 July 1959, *Ibid.*, l. 2747-2749; interrogation of Hubert Schmeink of 2 August 1960, *Ibid.*, vol. 12, l. 201-203; interrogation of Ewald Schreiner who did recognise in the photo himself and many other soldiers of the *Bäckereikompanie*, of 26 April 1960, *Ibid.*, vol. 13, l. 93 ff; interrogation of Heinrich Engels who also recognised six members of the *Bäckereikompanie*, of 12 April 1960, the file of EK3 (EK3 Verfahren), vol. 21, l. 6805-6809.
105 As stated during a public meeting concerning the massacre in June 2001 at Vytautas Magnus University (audiotape).

¹⁰⁶ Holzman, p. 25.

¹⁰⁷ For the widely accepted standard account of Lietūkis see Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen and Volker Riess, *The Good Old Days’: The Holocaust As Seen by Its Perpetrators and Bystanders*, trans. Deborah Burnstone (Old Saybrook, CT: Konecky & Konecky, 1991), 23-35. The statements of photographer Günsilius and Colonel Bischoffshausen are in contrast to other eyewitnesses as presented in B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, ed., *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje*, I (Vilnius: Mintis, 1965), 231; cf. Algirdas Mošinskas’ account in *Akiračiai*, No. 9 (1984), and the accounts in *Lietuvos rytas*, 19 June 1999, as well as the audio recording of the public forum sponsored by Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas in the same year.

¹⁰⁸ Participation of students was stressed by a number of witnesses. Cf. for instance, Gar. “Umkum”, p. 37. Stahlecker gave such number of victims of pogrom: on the first night – 1,500, on other nights – 2,300, total – 3,800. This number is too big, it also includes the victims shot in the 7th Fort. The first general report of EG A (Erster Gesamtbericht der EG A), IMG 37, p. 682 ff. HaKehillot, Pinkas. “Lita”, p. 543, mentions about 800 victims of pogroms; Garfunkel. “Kovno”, p. 31, gives 800 victims; Tory. “Surviving”, p. 23, has mentioned 700 victims at least; Grossman, Ehrenburg (Eds.). “Schwarzbuch”, p. 582, it speaks about 1,000 victims. Gar. “Umkum”, p. 38; it also gives about 1,000 victims. Budreckis. “Revolt”, p. 63, referring to the report of L. Shauss (L. Shauss' Bericht an die aao Komm. (Black book, p. 324 ff.)) indicates about 600 victims killed on the streets of Arbarski, Paverski, Vilyuski and Irogalski.

assisted by Germans who sealed off the Jewish neighborhood.¹⁰⁹ The next day, there were many body parts scattered, and mutilated bodies found. The houses had been set on fire; the people in them were burnt.¹¹⁰ On Friday, 27 June, some bodies of the killed were buried in the Jewish cemetery; others were buried in the mass cemetery on the riverbank.¹¹¹ Several aspects of this murderous assault on the Jews of Kaunas are significant, but most important, unlike anti-Communist rationale for the Lietūkis atrocity indicated in a number of primary sources, the Viliampolė massacre was an attack on Jews *as* Jews.

In Vilnius, the anti-Communist uprising also involved a number of attacks on Jews, including the kidnaping of men, but the number of victims of the first days of the war does not approach the scale of the Kaunas killings. We do not as yet have a complete list of the smaller-scale pogroms in the countryside, but we know that Jewish refugees were harassed and killed as they fled east.¹¹² Examples of attacks against Jews in the provinces during the first week of the war can be found in the appended report on the genocide of 1941 in the countryside (Dr. Arūnas Bubnys).¹¹³ In general, it can be stated that most of the victims of the Nazis and their collaborators during the first week of the war were killed either as the Germans swept through the country or immediately after the various security services had set up shop. Until buttressed by reliable accounts providing time, place and at least an approximate number of victims, claims of large-scale pogroms *before* the advent of the German forces must be treated with caution.

Objectives of the Germans in organising pogroms, preparedness of Lithuanians

How did it happen that pogroms were started? Who was responsible for them and what was the purpose? In order to answer those questions, the activities of the German Security Police in the first days of war should be retraced in most detail. Who and when did arrive to the town? What do

¹⁰⁹ Szarota, 235 ff. The low figure is given in the Oshry statement of May 1945 cited in fn. 11, l. 20.

¹¹⁰ The persons who have survived did not second that 60 houses, as given in the first general EG A report of 15 October 1945, were burnt down. (Erster Gesamtbericht der EG A), though those houses were indeed burnt down.

¹¹¹ Cf. Mishell. "Kaddish", p. 20 ff; Gar. "Umku", p. 38; Gordon. "Shadow", p. 37 ff; Oshry. "Annihilation", pp. 1-4, 13-15, describe the torment and death of plenty rabbis and Ješyva students in Slobodkė.

¹¹² A particularly harrowing murder is described by survivor Solly Ganor in Wolfgang Benz and Marion Neiss, comp., *Judenmord in Litauen: Studien und Dokumenten* (Berlin: Metropol, 1999), 8-9.

¹¹³ See Arūnas Bubnys, "Holokaustas Lietuvos provincijoje 1941 m.," Report to the ICECNSOR.

we know about the negotiations between the Germans and Lithuanians? What were the objectives of the German Security Police in that period?

Persecutions and killings intensified after Heydrich's Security Policemen had arrived to town; the pogrom in Vilijampolė was already the outcome of the Germans' "visit".¹¹⁴ On the night of 24 to 25 June, the front squad of the German Security Police marched into Kaunas.¹¹⁵ On 23 June, Stahlecker, according to his companions, Emil Finnberg and Hans Eichler, met the senior SS and Police Chief, the SS Lieutenant General (Ger. *Gruppenführer*, "Group Leader") Hans-Adolf Prützmann in Königsberg; then, on 24 June, he spoke to the SS Captain (*Hauptsturmführer*) Hans-Joachim Böhme from Tilsit Gestapo, and in the early morning of 25 June, he arrived to Kaunas.¹¹⁶ On 26 June, in Kaunas, Stahlecker met the Abwehr officer (Ic) of the 16h army to deliberate about the "front squad of the senior SS and Police Command units in the army's back areas",¹¹⁷ since he had not obeyed the agreement that the special squads (*Sonderkommandos*) could start acting only after the establishment of the army's rearward, but not in the battlefield.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ The survivors, the Rabbi Snieg and Karl Natkin, pointed out in their witnesses that persecutions intensified. Testimonies of the chief Rabbi Snieg (Aussage Ober-Rabbiner Snieg) of 3 June 1959, the file of EK3 (EK3 Verfahren), vol. 3, l. 1063; evidences of Karl Natkin (Aussage Karl Natkin) of 18 July 1959, *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 2149. Cf. Gar. "Umkum", p. 36, stressing that after the Germans had arrived, there was a significant increase in murders.

¹¹⁵ Retracing the past, in October 1941, Stahlecker made a statement that the **front units of the Wehrmacht** had arrived to Kaunas on 25 June 1941. The first general report of EG A (Erster Gesamtbericht der EG A), IMT vol. 37, p. 672. For precise time of Stahlecker's arrival to Kaunas see also the further footnote and Friedman, "Collaboration", p. 182 ff

¹¹⁶ Interrogation of Emil Finnberg (Vernehmung Emil Finnberg) in Hamburg on 11 May 1966 (RSHA file). Received from Andrejus A. ... p. 286. Cf. testimony of Emil Finnberg (Aussage Emil Finnberg) given on 23 November 1960, Ehrlinger's file (Ehrlinger Verfahren), vol. 11, p. 569. Interrogation of Horst Eichler (Vernehmung Horst Eichler) of 15-16 May 1959, the file of EK3 (EK3 Verfahren), vol. 10, l. 3893 and 3903. Cf. the interrogation of Horst Eichler (Vernehmung Horst Eichler) of 29 May 1984, Klimaitis' file (Klimaitis-Verfahren, vol. 1, p. 102. The letter of the Gestapo of Tilžė to RSHA IV A 1, dated 1 July 1941 (Schreiben der Stapo Tilsit v. 1.7.1941 an RSHA, IV A 1). Special Moscow Archive, 500-1-758; ZStL, UdSSR Ord. 245 Ag, Nos. 254-257.

¹¹⁷ The report of the Chief Military Command (*Armeeoberkommando*; AOK) 16 Ic/Abwehr officer's activities (Tätigkeitsbericht AOK 16, Ic/AO), 22 June 1940– 21 December 1941, BA-MA, RH 20-16/473, l. 8 (the record of 26 June 1941).

¹¹⁸ The first general report of the Operative group A until 15 October 1941 explained this haste as due to the unanticipated sudden attack of the Wehrmacht. Cf. excerpts from the IMT XXXVII, pp. 670-717, 180-L, here p. 671 ff. The entire document is stored in the Special Moscow Archive, 500-4-93. The first general report on the activities and conditions of the operative groups, 31 July 1941, justifies the presence of the special squads on the battlefield for that the Soviets could have destroyed material valuables. Cf. Klein. "Einsatzgruppen", p. 113. In a few days, during the attack against Riga, there were no more the like problems: Stahlecker with the "combat troops" stepped in the city"; "the cooperation with AOK was excellent. **There** does exist a possibility for a smooth disgorge into the front divisions." EM No. 12), dated 4 July 1941, BA, R 58/214, l. 67.

The front squad included the units of the headquarters of the Operative Group A, the personnel of the 1b special squad (SK) and of the 3rd operative squad (EK).¹¹⁹ It has been stated in accord, that the front SK1b squad under the leadership of the SS First Lieutenant (*Obersturmführer*) Ludwig Hüttig was in Kaunas on 25 June at the latest. Here they were looking for the lodging for the main EK1b part which arrived on 28 June. As well, the front squad had one of the first tasks assigned, to establish “what persons might be considered the instigators of disturbance, to frame the Russian [Soviet – auth. note] NKVD leaders and to make the list of the Jewish inhabitants.”¹²⁰ The main segment of the EK3 under the command of the deputy Jäger, SS Major (Ger. *Sturmbannführer*) Gustav Grauer, arrived to Kaunas only on 2 July, the EK1b not having yet departed.¹²¹ According to Grauer, Jäger and Hamann had arrived beforehand.¹²²

One of the key tasks of that period assigned to the German Security Police, as mentioned before, was to initiate anti-Semitic pogroms as unnoticed as possible. Having stated this intention during the meeting of 17 June 1941, on 29 June, Heydrich stated it once again, in writing, addressing it to the commanders of the operative groups (EG).¹²³

From March 1941, the Lithuanian rebellion leaders were trying in a similar way, too, by the propaganda means to organise sallies against the Jews to expatriate them out of the territory of the Lithuanian state, and on single occasions even threatened to kill them. The Lithuanian Jews were outlawed; consent was also given to persecute them.

119 The member of the EK3 SD service, SS officer Kurt Mederski, belonged to the front unit; he stated that “in the beginning, the Wehrmacht was reluctant to let us enter Kaunas, as we were supposed to have nothing to do on the battlefield.” Interrogation of Kurt Mederski (Vernehmung Kurt Mederski) of 1 March 1972, HStA Wiesbaden, Abt. 461.32438, vol. 58, l. 13.982.

¹²⁰ Cf. interrogation of Wilhelm Hellmann (Vernehmung Wilhelm Hellmann) of 3 February 1959, Ehrlinger’s file (Ehrlinger-Verfahren), ZStL, II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 2, l. 539 ff. Cf. interrogation of Paul Schulte (Vernehmung Paul Schulte) of 4 November 1959, Ehrlinger’s file, ZStL, II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 8, l. 302. As well as Ludwig Hüttig, so Paul Schulte, Hermann Reese, **SS Second Lieutenant (*Untersturmführer*)** Georg Schmidt, Wilhelm Hellmann belonged to the front units too. Cf. EM No. 8), 30 June 1941, BA, R 58/214.

¹²¹ The list of executions executed on the EK3 territory by 1 December 1941, BA, R 70 Sowjetunion 15, l. 81-89, here l. 81; annex 1b to the first general report of EG A. Special Moscow Archive, 500-4-93; EM No. 11, 1941 July 3, BA, R 58/214.

¹²² Cf. interrogation of Grauer’s (Vernehmung Grauer) of 13 June 1984, ZStL, II 207 AR-Z41/83, vol. 1, p. 124.

¹²³ Operative order No. 1 (Einsatzbefehl Nr. 1) to the commanders of the operative groups; published in: Longerich. “Ermordung”, p. 118 ff.

The German Security Police were showing an obvious interest in pogroms, and the Lithuanian side claimed, at least in terms of propaganda, to be well prepared to execute them in behalf of national-ethnic interests.

Negotiations between the German Security Police and Lithuanians in Kaunas

How the intentions in organising brutal pogroms against the Jews did succeed in practice? In October, the operative group (EG) A recalled how it had succeeded “despite great difficulties, in provoking the local anti-Semitic powers to organise pogroms [sic!] against the Jews.”¹²⁴ Another statement of the same report repeated that at the beginning it had been surprisingly complicated to start the pogroms against the Jews in Kaunas to a larger extent [sic!]. Nevertheless, after Klimaitis had been given the orders, the front squad of EG A yet managed to initiate the pogrom[sic!].¹²⁵

What were the “difficulties”, and who was that Klimaitis? One the one part, it was not easy for the German Security Police to distinguish between different rebel groups of Kaunas. The EG A and EK1b reports of the first days of war mention either four, or two groups operating in Kaunas, while, after the war, the EK1b commander, the SS Lieutenant Colonel (*Obersturmbannführer*), dr. Erich Ehrlinger spoke about three organisations of partisans.¹²⁶ On the other part, though Lithuanians were highly prepared to resort to violent measures which on some occasions would result even in the striving to kill, this however was less spread than the German Security Police had assumed. The initiative of pogroms succeeded only after the so-called group of Klimaitis had been discovered, though it did not play any role in further events, as they were solely single Lithuanian individualists.¹²⁷ During the sitting of the Lithuanian Provisional Government (PG) on

¹²⁴ The first general report of EG A (Erster Gesamtbericht der EG A), IMT 37, p. 672.

¹²⁵ The first general report of EG A, IMT 37, p. 682. The commander of EK1b, Ehrlinger too did witness that Stahlecker arrived to Kaunas right after the combat troops had shown up, and not having contacted the troops, he started organising the Lithuanian partisan units and, if needed, to incite them against each other.” Giving this evidence, Ehrlinger aimed at mitigating his guilt, however it coincides with other facts. Ehrlinger’s interrogation (Vernehmung Ehrlinger) of 12 May 1959, Ehrlinger’s file, vol. 4, l. 2491.

¹²⁶ Cf. The first general report of EG A, IMT 37, pp. 677-679. EM No. 12, 4 July 1941, BA, R 58/214. Ehrlinger’s interrogation (Vernehmung Ehrlinger) of 11 May 1959, ZStL II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 4, l. 2483.

¹²⁷ The information about Klimaitis is insufficient. His was most likely the officer of the Lithuanian army. (Interrogation of Algirdas Šaltys (Vernehmung Algirdas Šaltys) of 5-3-1986, ZStL, II 207 AR-Z 41/83, vol. 2, p. 269.) He was a journalist. In 1984, his sister testified that as far as in the thirties he was anti-Communist and anti-Semitic minded, and in 1942-1943, he boasted about having started the trade business. (Interrogation of Birutė Sofija Kuzmienė in Vilnius, 28-2-1984, Ibid., vol. 2, p. 193 ff). In 1985, Reivytytis witnessed he knew Klimaitis as a

27 June, the minister Landsbergis-Žemkalnis reported about the “extremely brutal” sallies against the Jews near the *Lietūkis* garage, and the ministers asked to record to the minutes that the Lithuanian partisans and single civilians should keep themselves out of “public executions of Jews”. These crimes must have been perpetrated by persons who “have nothing in common neither with the headquarters of [LAF] activists, or with the headquarters of partisans, nor with the Provisional Government (PG).” However, this does not refer to “all those measures which must be taken against the Jews for their communist activities and damage inflicted upon the German Wermacht”, stated the lead-in into this section of the minutes.¹²⁸

So far, unsuccessful have been the attempts to clear the details about what institutions Stahlecker had been negotiating with. The later commanders of those partisan units which had been involved in the mass killings in the town and were mentioned in the German sources, Algirdas Klimaitis and the doctor dr. Zigonys, as far as the data of currently known sources is concerned, could not belong to certain institutions. After the first night of pogroms in Vilijampolė, during the Cabinet’s sitting of 26 June 1941, the Prime Minister Ambrazevičius was complaining that “Klimaitis’ partisan unit is not cooperating with the Lithuanian Armed Forces’ headquarters. Meanwhile, the Lithuanian partisans are liaising with the LAF and the Provisional Government (PG). Totally guiltless persons are being arrested, or their flats are searched.”¹²⁹

What do we know about the negotiations between the Germans and Lithuanians in the first days of war? Unfortunately, we have the testimonies of witnesses only and cannot refer to any sources of that period. Yet, even in this case we do have some references. One of the Stahlecker’s companions testified that Stahlecker had held talks with some “Lithuanian headquarters”¹³⁰, the other companion also stated that it had been arranged beforehand so that Stahlecker would

Voldemarist (Vytautas Reivytiis’ interrogation (Vernehmung Vytautas Reivytiis) of 9-1-1985. ZStL, II 207 Ar 6/85, vol. 1, l. 36.) Klimaitis died in Hamburg, 29-8-1988.

¹²⁸ The minute No. 5, 27-6-1941, Government, p. 17 ff.

¹²⁹ The minute No. 4, 26-6-1941, VyriausEKė, p. 15.

¹³⁰ Testimonies of Emil Finnberg (Aussage Emil Finnberg) of 23 November 1960, ZStL II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 11, l. 569.

immediately affiliate with Lithuanians, while in fact he had negotiated with few rival groups.¹³¹ Later Stahlecker informed the EK1b commander Ehrlinger about the pro-German partisans.¹³²

More detailed reference about the negotiations was that given by the translator of German and Lithuanian, SS Second Lieutenant (*Untersturmführer*) Richard Schweizer, a longtime agent, and one of the key SD employees in the EK3. Two days in succession, Stahlecker held meetings with Lithuanian officers, including the air forces' officers, also [Bronius] Norkus. Stahlecker explained to the Lithuanian officers that assistance of the Lithuanian units was urgent "in order to reduce the number of the Jews, because they were enemies". Therefore, they should get in contact with the responsible commander residing in Kaunas, i.e. with Ehrlinger from EK1b, and should not act on their own. Stahlecker also asked Lithuanians where a Jewish ghetto could be established in Kaunas. He was suggested the Vilijampolė area.¹³³ Later Schweizer changed his testimonies stating that Stahlecker had explained to the Lithuanian officers that they "must, under the command of the Germans, to exterminate the communists of Jewish nationality."¹³⁴

Origins of Security Police participation: Jonas Ženauskas wrote in November 1941: "As of 27 June 1941 I began to organize the State Security Department. Until the current directors and supervisors arrived from Germany, Captain Kirkila, actually along with his force, and I liquidated remaining Communist Jews, and other Communist bootlickers."¹³⁵

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¹³¹ Horst Eichler's interrogation (Vernehmung Horst Eichler) of 29 May 1984, ZStL II 207 41/83, vol. 1, l. 102 ff.

¹³² Ehrlinger himself witnessed having met Stahlecker in Kaunas three times. Cf. Ehrlinger's interrogation (Vernehmung Ehrlinger) of 11 May 1959, ZStL II 207 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 4, l. 2485.

¹³³ Richard Schweizer's interrogation (Vernehmung Richard Schweizer) of 20 April 1960, HStA Wiesbaden, Abt. 461.32438, vol.18, l. 6217; Cf. Richard Schweizer's interrogations of 14 October 1960 and of 22 October 1960, Ibid., vol. 22, l. 6977 and 7049.

¹³⁴ Richard Schweizer's interrogation of 23 January 1962, Ibid., vol. 31, l. 8875. Alfonsas Eidintas has recently stated a proposition that yet on the night of 25 June 1941, for half an hour since three o'clock in the morning, in the security premises, where about 40 security personnel had already been present, Stahlecker and Schweizer were negotiating with the Provisional Lithuanian Security Police Chief, Jonas Dainauskas. Stahlecker was pressing to execute pogroms against the Jews and arrest them on 25-27 June. In 1992, Dainauskas stated that the security did not submit to the request, only separate individuals had been prepared for this. It is not unlikely that such talks did indeed take place. Yet, it remains unclear, what was exactly discussed, and what was the outcome of those talks, since here the reference is the later report (1992); it is necessary to refer to other sources too to develop all circumstances. Cf. Eidintas. "Byla", pp. 101-103.

¹³⁵ As quoted in Brandišauskas' "1941 m. sukilimas", p. 79.

Purposes of Pogroms

One might wonder what were the German purposes and interests behind the pogroms. So far the most popular interpretation of the pre-war German pogroms in terms of their interests is as follows: the pogroms substituted an introduction to the killings of Jews in the entire USSR. This was like the marking of the forthcoming crimes, which, it is very likely, was considered a kind of very important political and psychological prologue of a killing programme [compare Heydrich].¹³⁶ Hilberg gives several reasons for that. Firstly, “every killed Jew takes off the work load from the shoulders of the operative groups”. Secondly, participation of the locals in the pogroms involved “a possibility to withstand possible accusations and was a means of blackmailing the locals”.¹³⁷ Hilberg does not go into detail about possibly different interests of the Security Police and the Wehrmacht. One explanation for this could be that these arguments were not enough. We would certainly doubt that the authorities in Germany had predicted what was likely to happen in the future months. Is it possible they were still hoping that they could win the war in a few months and after that have plenty of time for implementing radical national politics?

It had to be undoubtedly clear to the German side too, that the number of victims even of vast pogroms was relatively small. Thus, the number of victims in public pogroms in Kaunas barely reached one thousand (including 800 in Viliampolė, 50-60 – in garages of *Lietūkis* and approximately 150 off the record) accounting for 16-17 percent of the target number - 6,000. In other words, other victims that make 83 per cent of the total number (6,000) were killed during the arrests and killings organised by the police or military forces.

In my opinion, the objective of pogroms was of a different kind. The Germans aimed to change the local situation and the position of the German staff in the governmental institutions. The German Security Police were aiming to deal with the determination of the locals in such a way that it would not turn into politically dangerous ambition. The locals were not to be allowed to manage their own independent state or to have a full time military force, therefore their mental energy had to be directed against allegedly opposing Jews. Therefore, the quote from the circular article of Heydrich of 29 June 1941 on ban for organising the centrally managed military forces

¹³⁶ Krausnick, *Hitlers Einsatzgruppen*, p. 145.

¹³⁷ Hilberg, *Vernichtung*, p. 324.

and permission “to promote local pogroms, organised by the local people, *instead of them*, as it was said earlier” [italicised by the author] should be interpreted in these particular terms.

Secondly, one of the priorities of the German police was to legalise its intentions for mass murder. Their aim was to portray the local non-German people as initiators of these crimes. Therefore, Stahlecker pointed out in his first general report, that EG A were “doing their best” to shoot a film and take pictures of the events in Kaunas and few days later in Riga in order to prove that “it were Lithuanians and Latvians who carried out the first spontaneous executions of the Jews and Communists”.¹³⁸ Apart from the goal “to clean the society (*Säuberungsziel*)“, it was “not less important” to prove to “the future generations” that a liberated nation went to extremes against its enemies, the Bolsheviks and the Jews “without any instruction from the German side”.¹³⁹ This was done to prepare historical material for the possible upcoming discussions on “the extreme measures”.

Thirdly, it was obvious from the very beginning that the Wermacht’s opinion on SS practice of killing was to become clear while preparing for brutal public pogroms. Was the Wermacht not going to withdraw itself from the agreement? Or was it going to be like during the discussions on agreements in Poland where arguments arose, however one had expected to avoid them? The reports of the operative group A mentioned the “German groups”, where an uproar started; these were the Wermacht’s deployed troops consisting of the Germans most of whom had witnessed the events happening. The literally text of the report is the following: “while implementing such extreme measures, which caused uproar in the German layers”, the Security Police were not going to stay in the foreground. The aim of this choice was to show to the “outside” that “the local people themselves took extreme measures and it was their natural release of reaction to the oppression of the Jews and terror by the Communists which had lasted for long decades”.¹⁴⁰

A similar interpretation could be applied to the two documents written by Heydrich to the heads and chiefs of the operative groups, SS and police. However, more complicated relations between the Wermacht and the Security Police should be taken into consideration as well. It was

¹³⁸ First general EG A report (Erster Gesamtbericht der EG A), 15 October 1941, IMT 37, p. 683

¹³⁹ First general EG A report, 15 October 1941, IMT 37, p. 682.

¹⁴⁰ First general EG A report, 15 October 1941, IMT 37, p. 672.

these people that Heydrich was talking to, thus, there was no reason for sending the documents as a reminder. Provided the people received guidelines by mouth, what was the purpose of putting the guidelines into a document once again? Moreover, these were obvious and secret orders for killing (*Mordaufträge*). In my opinion, these documents should be considered as the relevant documents (*Legitimationsschreiben*) of the head office of the Security Police. They were addressed to the regional SS chiefs and served as a prove to be given to the Wehrmacht's authorities.

There is a list of historical sources approach the German army's approach at the public killings. The war journals of the 16th army, 281st security division and of the navy talk about the pogroms.¹⁴¹ It was only on 29 June when the 16th army Quartermaster General recorded: "9) Lithuanian Freedom Movement's sallies against the Communists and the Jews have been stopped. The future executions will be implemented under the surveillance of the chief of the Kaunas local SS".¹⁴² The events took place during Ehrlinger's from SK1b service, when he was controlling substantial military forces in Kaunas.¹⁴³ Two days before that the Wehrmacht had meetings with Stahlecker, the Commander of Operative Group A (EG A). On 26 June, after the first night of the pogroms, the 16th army Ic officer had a conversation with Stahlecker. On 28 June, Stahlecker had another meeting with an Ia officer. The agenda of their meeting was as follows:

- "a. A composition of the new government, decisions adopted in Berlin;
- b. Taking over the security forces, Lithuanian auxiliary police (*Hilfspolizei*) uniforms;

¹⁴¹ AOK 16, Ia KTB, BA-MA, RH 20-16/45, l. 36. The chapter "Review of fights in Kaunas"; 281st security division KTB (KTB Sich.Div. 281), First state report, submitted to the head of the North Army rear sector (Erster Lagebericht an den Befehlshaber Hgeb. Nord), here: 7th branch activity report, 10 July 1941: "Hatred and rage against the Soviets was so apparent in Kaunas in the first days that the white armband self-security organisation members half publicly and during the same time were killing prominent communists, commissars, women and children, who had been accused of reporting on the Lithuanian intelligentsia GPU. Even though the military commandant's office got immediately involved, they had no means to ban night massacres of several thousands communists and Jews"; NARA T 315 Roll 1870, l. 507; (1 April-10 July 1941) headquarters of the 1st military air forces (Kuttigo headquarters) KTB Nr. 1 (KTB Nr. 1 des Nachschubverbindungsstabes der Luftwaffe bei Luftflottenkommando 1 (Stab Kuttig), 1 April 1941 – 10 July 1941, BA-MA, RL 7/15 (record of 28 June 1941): "4. Yesterday and today Kaunas witnessed terrible pogroms against the Jews. Yesterday "the partisans" shot dead 1,500 Jews; 70 Jewish partisans (*Heckenschützen*) were also killed. Tonight 1,000 Jews were killed. (The statistics are from the Military Commandant's office). 5. Today at a midday, all the citizens will be disarmed."

¹⁴² 16 AOK remark of the meeting minutes (Besprechungsnotiz AOK 16), recorded by the Chief Quartermaster 29 June 1941, BA-MA, RH 20-16/702.

¹⁴³ EM, 30 June 1941, BA, R 58/214.

c. Attempts not to execute pogroms in public places“.¹⁴⁴ The Ic officer of the rearward sector’s commander of the North army group also mentioned the meeting with Stahlecker on 28 June, when among other issues they discussed “dividing responsibilities and briefing the commander
“¹⁴⁵

At the beginning of July 1941, the Reich’s headquarters received another inquiry regarding the “Lithuanian volunteers’ sallies”, this time it came from a higher-ranking position - from the North army group. On 3 July 1941, Hitler’s Chief Adjutant, Colonel Schmundt visited the headquarters of the North army group. After some time (presumably, after a conversation) he told on the phone that “it is not the business of private soldiers to deal with these political issues. In this case, it is the issue of compulsory “consolidation of farming” which matters (*Flurbereinigung*).¹⁴⁶ The commander of the North army group recorded in his official journal that despite the fact that von Roques had some complaints about the mass killings of the Jews; he had no doubts that the Lithuanian squads were implementing them “under the order of the German Security Police.”¹⁴⁷

As we can see from the above sources, the Wermacht was aware of the events. Moreover, it seems they often discussed the happenings with the security police officers. The Wermacht would

144 16 AOK KTB (KTB AOK 16), Ic/officer’s of the Abwehr (AO) activity report (Tätigkeitsbericht Ic/AO), BA-MA, RH 20-16/473, l. 8 (26 June 1941) „Meeting with the SS Major General (*Brigadeführer*); the front squad of the units of the senior SS and the police chief, deployed at the army’s rearward sector “; 16 AOK KTB (KTB AOK 16, Ia) BA-MA, RH 20-16/45, l. 51 (28 June 1941).

145 The activity reports of the head of the North army rearward sector (Tätigkeitsberichte Befh.d.rückw.Hgeb.Nord, Ic und Ic/AO), 1941 June 16 – 1941 July 31, BA-MA, RH 22/253 (28 June 1941). On 22 June 1941, the Ic officer together with the Ic Abwehr officer had a meeting with a liaison, between the command and the security police, officer, Major (Ger. *Sturmabführer*, “Storm Unit Leader”) Wessel “to make a contact with the qualified war police and the security police”, and on 23 June – with a Lieutenant Colonel von Zamory who was instructed by the Ia officer of the SS and police chief, Prützmann on „Ic affairs“. Ibid. (22 June 1941).

146 The North army group’s KTB (KTB HGr. Nord), record of 3 July 1941, BA-MA, RH 19 III/767, l. 52. Krausnickas has already mentioned that the term “consolidation of farming” and Hitler’s Chief Adjutant’s responsibilities witness the talks that Schmundt had with Hitler. The phrasing reminds of Hitler’s motives connected with the order of March 1941 on the limitations of traditional military rights in an occupied territory, after the proclamation of the full scale discharge document (*Freibrief*) to Himmler’s SS troops, and also after Hitler’s saying about murderous diminishment of the Polish government (*Dezimierung*), dated autumn 1939. Cf. Krausnick, *Hitlers Einsatzgruppen*, p. 182.

147 Cf. Leeb’s journal (Tagebuch von Leeb), p. 288. Von Roques agreed with the objective “to deal with the Jewish question”, however he thought that it would be far more credible to “deal with it by sterilizing the Jewish men”. The evidence from the interrogation of 1947 shows that the Commander of the North army groups’ rearward sector, von Roques had a conversation about the pogroms even with Stahlecker, who naturally kept to the Wermacht’s story. “I asked Stahlecker about this. He claimed that the Lithuanians initiated the pogroms”. Cf. Leeb’s journal (Tagebuch von Leeb), p. 63, 146 remark, with a reference to von Roques’s speech after he took oath (*eidesstattliche Versicherung*) XII file (NOKW 2618, 22 October 1947).

oppose only to uncontrollable killings. Even though the military authorities together with the responsible local chief bore responsibility for the security of the local people, they assented to the killings. The German Security Police were executing the killings even on the battlefield, a few days later – in the army’s rearward sector, and, eventually, – at the rearward of the troops. The protests were not harsh; therefore, the security policy in fact did accomplish their goals. The subsequent Head of the Policy Department of the Ministry on the Eastern Affairs (*Ostministerium*), Otto Bräutigam together with Kleist visited the commanders of the North army group rearward on 11 July. After the meeting he recorded in his journal: “While we were silent about the pogroms, the Lithuanian Auxiliary Police (*Hilfspolizei*) carried out a number of killings of the Jews “. ¹⁴⁸ On 29 June 1941, a private Wehrmacht soldier recorded in his journal: “Our German soldiers were no more than silent viewers of what was happening. We have not received any order to stop the massacre. The prosecution took place from 24 June till 29 June. It was happening 24 hours a day. Later it eventually stopped“. ¹⁴⁹

All the institutions involved, the Security Police, the Wehrmacht and the liaison officers of the future civil authorities, took a stand that the issue of pogroms and first mass massacres was not controversial or worth debating. Recalling the past, Stahlecker reasonably pointed out in his reports that the pogroms progressing rather effectively. The chief Wehrmacht’s offices would be constantly informed about the happening, which they supported“. ¹⁵⁰

From the end of June, the place of the killings became less public; mostly they took place in the 7th Fort. In 1960, a Wehrmacht’s soldier noted, “It was officially declared that after the termination of killings in the streets of Kaunas, the events took place at the defence buildings

148 Bräutigam’s war journal (*Kriegstagebuch Bräutigam*), p. 134.

149 Remarks from the Major’s Baron von Griebenbeck journal, dated 1941 June 29, on the report of the Lieutenant dr. Wüsto (16 AOK 501st propaganda unit) (*Tagebuchnotizen von Major Frhr. v. Griebenbeck zum 29.6.41 auf Grund eines Berichtes des Leutnants. Dr. Wüst (Prop.Kp 501 bei AOK 16)*, quoted according to Krausnick, “Hitlers Einsatzgruppen”, p. 179.

150 The first general report of EG A (*Erster Gesamtbericht der EG A*), IMT, vol. 37, p. 683.

around Kaunas“.¹⁵¹ The patrolling officers of the 281st security division were trying to stop shootings at night.¹⁵²

The forth possible reason behind the German pogroms is that the German Security Police due to their anti-Semitic views considered the Jews living in the USSR rather dangerous. They were aware of the fact that a vast number of the population in most cities of the Baltic countries were of Jewish origin, whereas there was only tiny German Security Police force there. Thus, the main problem they encountered was how to re-establish the ghettos in order to have control over a much more significant number of the “dangerous” Jews. Presumably, the events in Kaunas took the shape as intended, the terrorist blackmail proved to be successful. The Jews who had survived the first wave of the killings, fearing the pogroms and the threats not to release the detained Jewish women and children, were ready to collaborate and help to confine them in the ghettos.

Furthermore, it was no less important for the Security Police to expand their ambit. Before the war, the Security Police were responsible for the executive activities, while the political power was in the hands of the prospective civil authorities. In such a situation the public mass killings were to serve for the benefit of the political police – showing that they alone were responsible for the whole issues of security *policy*, not only those of security *police*. The aim of German Security Police was to make an impression that they were the only possible institutional balance for the alledged chaos, and thus, the only possible source of power and order (*Ordnungsmacht*).

Eventually, the expectations of the political police had to be realised. They aimed to justify anti-Semitism, anti-Bolshevism and other goals connected with the genocide. The claim that it was the local people who carried out the mass killings of Jews was likely to support vast range anti-Semitic executions.¹⁵³

To summarise, some of the Security Police objectives were accomplished, and some were not. The Germans failed in diverting the Lithuanians’ objective to gain political independence into what the Nazis had needed. Lithuanians continued to strive for the Independence and independent

151 Wilhelm Schwan’s interrogation (Vernehmung Wilhelm Schwan) (aero photographs’ unit of the 16th army (Luftbildabteilung der 16. Armee)), 26 April 1960, ZStL II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 13, l. 101.

152 Cf. 281st security division KTB (KTB Sich.Div. 281), NARA, RG 242, T 315, Roll 1869, l. 263 (4 July 1941 record).

153 K. Friedman. “Collaboration”, p. 180, Stahlecker’s interest to point out the participation of the locals also marked.

central power. Another failed attempt was putting blame on the Lithuanians for brutal killings and massacre. The sources document the initiative of the Germans, and the participation of the Lithuanians. The test by the Security Police, which was an attempt to see the Wehrmacht's reaction, also failed. In this case it was not a serious standoff; therefore it did not involve any major problems. Separate individuals were the only exceptions. The Germans also fell through their hope to be in charge of the policy making in the occupied countries. Until the very end of the war, the Security Police had to coordinate its actions with the civil authorities, and had to confine themselves to the executive issues only.

THE 'PRELIMINARY STAGE': ORGANIZING THE MURDER OF 'DANGEROUS' JEWS

With the exception of the very first mass killings initiated by the Tilsit Gestapo and SD which were carried out in the specially designated border areas (see the section on Jurbarkas below),¹⁵⁴ the transition from pogrom-like attacks to a campaign of bureaucratically consolidated extermination had to wait for a military and political situation to stabilize. As noted above, German encouragement and incitement considerably expanded the scope and destructiveness of the very first massacres, during which the Nazis operated behind the scenes, a technique which was largely abandoned after the initial period of so-called native vengeance against Judeo-Bolshevism. Although the first large-scale attacks on Jews were undoubtedly demoralizing, they did not yet constitute a policy of genocide. Clearly, as far as the Nazis and their collaborators were concerned, chaos in the streets was no solution to the "Jewish question." As Stahlecker admitted in his oft-quoted report, the initial pogroms, once they ran their course, could not easily be restarted and, in

154 The numbers of victims according to the German security police report: Gargždai (201), Kretinga (214) and Palanga (111), as cited in the National Archives and Records Administration [henceforth - NARA], Ereignismeldung UdSSR [henceforth - EG], Nr. 14, 6 July 1941, 2, Microfilm Publ. T175. Considerably more information is contained in the record of the Fischer-Schweder investigation as published in Vol. 15 of Fritz Bauer et al., eds., *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen* (Amsterdam: University Press Amsterdam, 1968-1981); see Jürgen Matthaus, "Jenseits der Grenze. Die ersten Massenerschiessungen von Juden in Litauen (Juni-August 1941)," in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 44 (1996), 101 ff.; also Joachim Tauber, Garsden, 24. Juni 1941 (author's manuscript awaiting publication) and Konrad Kwiet, "Rehearsing for Murder: The Beginning of the Final Solution in Lithuania in June 1941," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 12/1 (Spring 1998), 3-7. See also, Christoph Dieckmann, "Der Krieg und die Ermordung der litauischen Juden," in Ulrich Herbert, comp., *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik 1939-1945* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1998, 292-329, and esp. 295-298.

any case, it was obvious that such actions were possible only during the first days after the occupation.¹⁵⁵

The Lithuanian Provisional Government (PG), proclaimed on 23 June 1941 at the outset of the anti-Soviet uprising, formally eschewed organized slaughter and disassociated itself from the rogue partisan elements even as it approved decrees segregating and collectively punishing the Jews.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, the leaders made no specific *public* reference to the massacres of Jews which were taking place in Kaunas, on the government's very doorstep, and it appears that only one member of the leadership, the PG's liaison with the Germans, historian Zenonas Ivinskis, suggested an official condemnation of the anti-Jewish violence.¹⁵⁷ More significant is the fact that, except for the reported private chastising of Klimaitis¹⁵⁸ and published appeals against lawlessness,¹⁵⁹ the Lithuanian authorities made no discernible attempt to interfere with or, at the very least, disassociate themselves from the German takeover of the hastily formed units composed of former anti-Soviet partisans and Red Army deserters. The Nazis' ability to coopt Lithuanian manpower for mass executions was to have incomparably more serious consequences for Lithuania's Jews than the killings of the first week of the war. The PG sanctioned the formation of the Staff of the Armed Forces, approved the formation of the so-called TDA-Battalion on 27 June 1941, and appointed Col. Jurgis Bobelis, who periodically reported to the cabinet, as the military commandant in Kaunas. Naturally, the PG was powerless to affect the Nazis' genocidal policy towards the Jews, but, at least initially, it had access to the public through the press and radio. Thus, the unavoidable conclusion is that the PG failed in its responsibility to at least attempt

155 Nuremberg Document 180-L [Einsatzgruppe A Gesamtbericht bis zum 15. Oktober 1941] in *Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal* [henceforth *IMT*], Vol. xxxvii (Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 1949), 683.

156 See the PG's protocols of 24-26 June 1941 in Arvydas Anušauskas, comp., *Lietuvos Laikinoji vyriausybė: posėdžių protokolai* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2001), 9-15.

157 As indicated in Liudas Truska's report to the ICECNSOR, "Antisemitizmo stiprėjimas Lietuvoje sovietinės okupacijos metais," 1.

158 Lithuanian post war literature denies any responsibility of the Lithuanian state institutions for Klimaitis' squad action. After the war Ambrazevičius stated that it was the Provisional Government with the help of the General Pundzevičius and Rėklaitis, that managed to convince Klimaitis to stop with the pogroms and service for Stahlecker. [Brazaitis, Alone, p. 88 ff, 137, 143]. Klimaitis stated that in case of disagreement Stahlecker threatened to kill, therefore the generals suggested to hide away from Stahlecker and to flee Kaunas [Cf. Bubnys, Vokiečių, p. 199, the story is told exactly the same way, with a reference to the statement by the LAF member Damušis.] This latter claim by Klimaitis is, to say the least, extremely unlikely.

159 □ *Laisvė*, 24 June 1941.

to clearly state its opposition to the anti-Jewish violence beyond urging avoidance of “public massacres” of Jews.¹⁶⁰

The calamitous new stage in the persecution and murder of Lithuania’s Jews was initiated as soon as the Germans had tightened their grip on the country. The TDA (*Tautinio darbo apsauga*) units, formally proclaimed on 28 June, were quickly drawn into the mass killings of the Jews. On 1 July 1941 SS Lt. Col. (*Obersturmbannführer*) Erich Ehrlinger reported that he had managed to create five Lithuanian companies of auxiliary police (*Hilfspolizeitruppe*), two of which had been put at the disposition of his Einsatzkommando 1b. According to Ehrlinger, one of the companies was already guarding prisoners and carrying out executions at Kaunas’s Seventh Fort, while the other was assigned “order police” tasks.¹⁶¹ The Berlin office of the Security Police and SD reported on 30 June 1941 that, while EK 1b set up shop in Kaunas, Lithuanian partisan groups had already shot several thousand Jews during the last three days.¹⁶² At this point, organized mass executions under a militarized command structure, rather than pogroms, became the tool of destruction. In Vilnius 321 Jews were killed by 8 July 1941, while mass shootings in Paneriai, which became the major killing ground, started on 11 July. Approximately 5,000 Jews were killed here by the end of July. The Germans took part in the mass killings not only as organizers and commanders, but as executioners as well. According to postwar court records, as the Nazi invasion force swept through northern Lithuania, German Police Battalion 65 engaged in mass killings of Jews in Kaunas and Šiauliai.¹⁶³

As indicated above, the victims of the first days of the Nazi invasion included not only Jews, but numerous real and alleged non-Jewish Communists. In this sense, the Einsatzgruppen were

160 This incriminating formulation is found in the protocol of the 27 June 1941 cabinet meeting in response to the news about the Lietūkis killings. The full text is as follows: Minister žemkalmis reported on the extremely cruel torture of the Jews in the Lietūkis garage in Kaunas. Decided: Notwithstanding all the measures which must be taken against the Jews because of their Communist activity and harm to the German Army, partisans and individuals should avoid public executions of Jews. It has been learned that these actions have been committed by people who have no connection with the [Lithuanian] Activists’ Staff, the Partisans’ Staff, nor the Lithuanian Provisional Government. [*Lietuvos Laikinoji vyriausybė*, 18.]

161 Ehrlinger Report to Berlin and Einsatzgruppe A, 1 July 1941, in Bundesarchiv (Koblenz), copy provided to author; NARA, EG, Nr. 14, 6 July 1941, 3-4.

162 NARA, Microfilm Publication T175, EG, Nr. 8, 30 June 1941, 2.

163 Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred E. Knopf, 1996), 191-192. Also see the reference to the activities of Police Battalion 65 in Kaunas below.

following Heydrich's instructions to encourage and direct the destruction of elements hostile to the Reich. Generally, the anti-Semitic discourse of the various Lithuanian police agencies and irregular units, as well as the voiced perceptions of much of the populace expressed in the press, still operated within the context of revenge, liberation and a struggle against Bolshevism, rather than within the rhetoric of genocide motivated by anti-Semitic ideology. In general, the method and scope of the massacres of the first six weeks differed significantly from the decisive assault on the Jews, the mortal blow, which fell with the greatest force during August, September and October of 1941. In other words, while the initial massacres constituted a bloody and, for Lithuania, unprecedented wave of violence, they fell short of a Final Solution.

In particular, the shootings at the Seventh Fort in Kaunas during the second week of the war were the most extensive mass killings of unarmed civilians in the country's modern history to date.¹⁶⁴ The majority of the victims of the initial stage of pogroms and killings who were killed before August of 1941, were Jewish men who perished in Kaunas's Seventh Fort.

ORGANIZED SHOOTINGS OF LATE JUNE AND EARLY JULY IN THE SEVENTH FORT

Killings in the 7th Fort¹⁶⁵ 1941 June 30 – 1941 July 5

At the beginning of the war, the Jewish men and women were periodically arrested. They were put either to the central prison, which was situated in Mickevičius street or to the 7th Fort, where they were tortured, and thousands of the Jewish men were killed. The former prisons provided too little space for the victims, therefore, the Germans put up "temporary concentration camps, which were proper for temporal settlement".¹⁶⁶

On 30 June, the Kaunas Commandant Jurgis Bobelis informed the meeting of the Provisional Cabinet of the Ministers about the establishment of "the Jewish concentration camp".

¹⁶⁴ Statistical summary is in the Jäger Report of 10 September 1941, in LYA and the Jäger report of 1 December 1941 located in a number of venues.

¹⁶⁵ There were 12 defence buildings in Kaunas. They were also called *Forts*. The forts served as military defense shield in 19 c. were surrounding the old town; they were later used as prisons. Most of them were turned into places of Jewish and Communist executions, prisons and camps in the years of German occupation.

¹⁶⁶ A EG first general report (Erster Gesamtbericht der EG A), 15 October 1941. Moscow Special Archives, 500-4-93, p. 20. Cf. Kaunas criminal police statement, no date given (the statement is however likely to be of the same days), on taking of 254 Jewish women from the prison to the 7th Fort. Printed: *Mass killings*, 1 vol., p. 254.

The government made a decision to appoint the Vice Minister of the Municipal Economy Švilpa and Kaunas Commandant Bobelis responsible for the maintenance of the concentration camp.¹⁶⁷

So far the only reference to the initiative to put up a concentration camp in Kaunas is in the report, which was submitted by the liaison officer A. Žemribas to the German Military Field Commander's office. In 1966, he claimed that on 29 June 1941 the Military Field Commander General von Pohl informed about the order which came from Berlin to confine the Lithuanian Jews in a separate camp. He states that after this event, Kaunas Commandant Bobelis and burgomaster Palčiauskas negotiated about the place of the camp.

From June 29 to June 30, the Jewish men and women were brought to a place that SK1b too called a "Jewish concentration camp". In the evening of June 30, the shootings started.¹⁶⁸ The EK3 was intending to establish two compartments in this "Jewish concentration camp". One of which was for the Jewish men, and the other – for the Jewish women and children. Presumably, the 7th Fort hosted approximately 1,500 Jews and the central prison – 1,869 Jews, 214 Lithuanians, 134 Russian, 1 Latvian and 16 Poles at the beginning of July. The Germans were planning to open another concentration camp in the 9th Fort. So far it was mainly the arrested women and children who were confined there. According to this data, at the beginning of June more than 3,200 people were arrested in Kaunas.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Meeting minutes Nr. 6, 30 June 1941 morning, Government, p. 19; the City's Commandant budget, which was submitted by Bobelis on 5 July 1941 to the Government, contained a line for the concentration camp and wardens to come into effect from 1 July (21 soldier, Major in charge). Minutes Nr. 11, 5 July 1941, Government, p. 45. In reality more soldiers were sent to the 7th Fort, for example, 49 people under 7 July 1941. Order No. 3 for TDA battalion's formation, LCVA, R 1444-1-1, l. 19.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Nemenčik, VII. Fort, p. 60; report of the 1b special squad to EG A and RSHA, 1 July 1941, BA, R 70, Sowjetunion 15; EM No. 14, 6 July 1941, BA, R 58/214; Breitman, Himmler's Police Auxiliaries, p. 35, 9 past. Lithuanians considered the 7th Fort "concentration camps" set up by the Lithuanian military commandant's office. Cf. the superscription of the Camp Commandant's note sent to the Kaunas Commandant on 10 August 1941 on liquidating of the camps, LCVA, R 1444-1-18, l. 126. On 11 July 1941, the camp Commandant's post was conceded to the chief of an appropriate security unit. Cf. TDA battalion's special order Nr. 11, 11 July 1941, LCVA, R 1444-2-1a, l. 17.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. EM No. 14, 6 July 1941, BA, R 58/214. The first report of the activities and status of the operative squads, 31 July 1941, which was more circulated than the reports on the happenings, provides an even more innocent phrasing: „two large Jewish settlement camps set up in the former defence building“ and „revision of the campers is continuously going on“. Printed: Klein, Einsatzgruppen, p. 115. In the opinion of 1b special squad, the prisons were terribly overcrowded, their security system was "incredibly difficult". EM No. 8, 30 June 1941, BA, R 58/214. Cf. 1b SK status report (Lagebericht des SK 1b), 1941-7-2 (RSHA duplicate, 7 July 1941). Moscow Special Archives, 500-1-758, l. 6-8. The prisoners will soon be killed.

At the beginning of July 1941 the people hunting become even more systematical. Urged by the Lithuanian partisans group of the Kaunas station, on 2 July, the Lithuanian Military Commandant issued an order to mark all the Jews and their houses and to arrest all Communists of Jewish, Polish and Lithuanian origin. In addition to this, the staff of all the shops had to be “cleaned”. The “rich” Jews were not allowed to sell their shops. The Jewish property was speedily registered and expropriated. It was intended that all the arms and the real estate had to be transferred to the hands of “true” Lithuanians. The partisans demanded to “destroy unmercifully everybody who were sucking the noble Lithuanian blood” or to persecute those who would protest.¹⁷⁰

In the 7th Fort

It was not only the Jews from Kaunas, but also the Jews from Kaunas region who were sent to the 7th Fort. Those who due to different reasons had not made it to the East were also put there.¹⁷¹

Men and young people had to lie down on the ground under the sky and to stay motionless. Women and smaller children were separated from the men and closed in the casemates (*Ger. Kazemats*). The further days turned into endless torturings of the arrested by the Lithuanian wardens. Even though it was extremely hot summer weather, the unfortunates were not allowed to have any water from a nearby well. If any of the arrested moved, often drunken wardens fired at the people at random. Sometimes, the wardens allowed some of the Jews to crawl to the well to have them shot while drinking. It was only on 3 July when the people who had been starving for 4 or 5 days got some bread. The bread came from one of the German supply division and was mouldy.¹⁷²

Once in a while, separate groups of the Jews were taken somewhere. The official pretext was to register the people who wore glasses, and it was claimed that doctors, lawyers and

¹⁷⁰ The letter by the activists of the railway resistance centre to Bobelis, 2 July 1941. It has mentioned the order of Bobelis of the same day. LCVA, R 1444-1-9, l. 79.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Leib Koniuchowsky's description, which was compiled in Feldafing in 1946, following the witnesses' stories, Yad Vashem Archives (hereafter referred to as YVA), O 71/163, p. 3 ff.

¹⁷² Cf. Nemenčik. “VII. Fort”, p. 67; Fritz Gernhardt's interrogation (*Vernehmung Fritz Gernhardt*) of 1 July 1959, ZStL II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 3a, l. 1997.

engineers were in great demand. However, the people never came back. They were shot on the other side of the bulwarks. The Lithuanians raped some 30-40 women and then killed them. Drunken Lithuanian wardens were behaving really terrible in the casemates.¹⁷³ Many of the survivors recall that even the Lithuanian basketball team who had won against the Wermacht's were given a kind of a prize; they came to the Fort to shoot a few tens of the Jews. However, there is no plausible data about this.¹⁷⁴ Some of the victims broke down and went mad. Only a few were lucky to bribe wardens to let them free. Some 70 men were left alive because formerly they had been Lithuanian military volunteers. The city Commandant Bobelis, who used to frequent the 7th Fort and was giving orders to the security wardens, ordered to set them free.¹⁷⁵

Jizhak Nemenčik, who described in every detail the events which took place in the 7th Fort, was lucky to romp through them. He hid in the casemates and heard constant shootings. "The night from Thursday to Friday and the whole Friday were awfully bloody. The shootings would not stop. New groups of people were taken behind the bulwarks". On Friday 4 July, the EK3 registered 416 men and 47 women shot dead.¹⁷⁶ Koniuchowsky told that on Friday 5 July one headquarters' Sergeant Major (*Stabsfeldwebel*) of Austrian origin managed to take 5 women and 4 men from the 7th Fort as labour force which he badly needed. He did this on request of his Jewish friend, in whose apartment he was staying and had become friends since.¹⁷⁷

The attempts of the German Helene Holzman, living in Kaunas, to free her husband Max Holzman, who was of the Jewish origin, failed. She tried to use her connections and to liberate her husband from the 7th Fort with the help of famous public figures. The German

173 Koniuchowsky heard the story from the women, who were imprisoned in the 7th Fort's positions. Cf. YVA, O 71/163, p. 4-23; Gar. "Umkum", p. 41; Interrogation of Heinrich Hippler, the supply division orderly (Sanit ter einer Nachschubeinheit), who did not lend assistance to a wounded woman; (Vernehmung Heinrich Hippler), 11 November 1959. Pictures of the 7th Fort victims were distributed in his division. ZStL II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 2, l. 793-803.

174 Cf. Nemen ik. "VII. Fort", p. 67; Gar. "Umkum", p. 42. Eidintas claims his grounded doubts, File, p. 164.

175 Cf. Gar. "Umkum", p. 41.

176 Nemen ik. "VII. Fort", p. 64. Cf. Ibid., p. 68 ff. The list of the rescued. Cf. list of the executions in the EK3 territory, 10 September 1941, BA, R 70 Sowjetunion 15, l. 77.

177 Koniuchowsky, YVA, O 71/163, pp. 24-53.

Security Police prevented her from meeting the general Raštikis, and his deputy did not take any measures to help her.¹⁷⁸

On the night of Sunday 6 July, all approximately 2,500 men, who had survived by then, were killed under the gunfire or hand-grenades, which were thrown from the bulwarks down. Only a small group of Jews who were not killed in casemats saw thousands of dead bodies on the ground on Sunday. Nemenčik surmised that approximately 7,000 people were killed in the 7th Fort.¹⁷⁹ Referring to the data Koniuchowsky had from the Kaunas' Jewish Council, in 1946, he stated that 8,000 men and 50 women of Jewish origin from the city and from the surroundings of Kaunas had been killed.¹⁸⁰ According to the statistics of the Jewish Council, dated 1942, the first wave of killings claimed approximately 6,000 victims. Bearing in mind, that approximately 1,000 Jews were killed during the Vilijampolė pogroms and 52-60 – in *Lietūkis* garage, it is likely that the number of 7th Fort victims is around 5,000.¹⁸¹ The number “6,000”, presumably also refers to the victims which were killed in local shootings.¹⁸²

German and Lithuanian Riflemen-Murderers

Both German and Lithuanian soldiers and policemen were shooting at the people in the 7th Fort. The German side included SK1b soldiers (SS Armament Squad (*Waffen-SS*) among them), lead by the SS Lieutenant Colonel (*Obersturmbannführer*) Ehrlinger, and the Gestapo Officer's, SS Second Lieutenant (*Untersturmführer*) Kurt Burkhardt's squad.¹⁸³

178 Cf. Holzman. “Kind”, pp. 19-26. Helene Holzman was half Jewish, christened evangelical, brought up in Germany, had lived in Kaunas since 1923, married Max Holzmann, a Jew, who as the soldier of the German occupational army had been settled in Kaunas in 1916–1918. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 345-363.

179 Nemenčik. “VII. Fort”, p. 70. EK3 wrote on the same day: Kaunas: “7th Fort (Jewish by rifles) 2514“. The list of the executions in the EK3 territory, 10 September 1941, BA, R 70 Sowjetunion 15, l. 77.

180 Koniuchowsky, YVA, O 71/163, p. 55.

181 Cf. statistics until December 1942: “Hidden History”, pp. 158-160.

182 Other places of killings mentioned in the testimonies by the officers of SK1b and 65th police battalion. Cf. article on the killers of the Jews.

183 Plenty of testimonies by SK1b members about that. Cf. interrogations of these persons: Theodor Feldmann, 4 December 1959, ZStL II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 8, l. 403; Hermann Zitzmann, 8 December 1959, *Ibid.*, vol. 8, l. 447; Hans Bässe, 21 January 1960, *Ibid.*, vol. 8, ab l. 497, minutes 11 p.; the same, 4 March 1960, vol. 11, pp. 219 and 223; Hans Meyer, 3 March 1960, *Ibid.*, vol. 11, l. 189-197; Robert Herbst, 24 February 1960, *Ibid.*, vol. 11, l. 229; Richard Schmidt, 29 November 1960, *Ibid.*, vol. 11, l. 533; on SS armed forces (*Waffen-SS*) see: also the interrogation of the *Waffen-SS* member, Werner Kruse of 31 August 1961, HStA Wiesbaden, Abt. 461.32438, vol. 30, l. 8529.

Riflemen were also sent from the 9th Police battalion's second unit which belonged to the EK3.¹⁸⁴ A number of companies from the TDA battalion, which was set up on 28 June, also took part in the killings. The battalion would post 49 soldiers in the 7th Fort and 18 soldiers in the central prison in Mickevičius street for the every guard shift. The people within the units were under rotation.¹⁸⁵ The first company was mainly participating in the killings of the people in the 7th Fort.¹⁸⁶

After the war Ignas Vėlavičius spoke about the Lithuanian prison authorities, that the shootings were mainly executed by the 3rd company under the leadership of the Lieutenant Juozas Barzda, the squad of which was also led Bronius Norkus, as well as by the 4th company led by the captain Viktoras Klimavičius.¹⁸⁷ The 3rd company's soldiers subordinate to Barzda and Norkus confessed that they had been shooting people in the 7th Fort.¹⁸⁸ Witnesses recognized the soldiers of the 5th company.¹⁸⁹ On 30 June, the colonel Bobelis conceded the 5th company to the disposition of SK1b.¹⁹⁰

People were killed not only in the 7th Fort, but in other places as well. Hundreds of victims (it is impossible to give the exact number) were shot dead in many places. SK1b troops admitted that they had killed hundreds of people by shooting to their heads in the fields close to Kaunas.¹⁹¹

184 Erich Schlegel's interrogation (Vernehmung Erich Schlegel) of 16 March 1959, Ibid., vol. 39, l. 10.271.

185 Cf. TDA battalion's order to the wardens in July – August 1941, summary: Stang, Kollaboration, pp. 134-140.

186 1st unit members confessed taking part in the killings: Cf. Jonas Baranauskas', who had collaborated with the Soviets until June 1941, interrogation in Vilnius, 28 August 1947: The first unit would kill the Jews in the 7th Fort almost everyday. The unit was actually occupied with nothing else but killings. "Mass killings", 1 vol., pp. 258-259; Stasys Nėnius' interrogation (Vernehmung Stasys Nėnius) in the USSR, 29 July 1947, translation into German.: HStA Wiesbaden, Abt. 461.32438, vol. 231, l. 14.807.

187 Vėlavičius' interrogation of 24 December 1946, KGB archives, file 6203. Arch. Nr. 38701/3, l. 93. On the appointment of Barzda, Norkus and Klimavičius, see. TDA battalion's order No. 2, 3 July 1941, LCVA, R 1444-1-1, l. 17. Karl Jäger and Richard Schweizer called Norkus the key actor in the killings. Cf. Richard Schweizer's interrogation (Vernehmung Richard Schweizer) of 14 October 1960, HStA Wiesbaden, Abt. 461.32438, vol. 22, l. 6979; Jäger's interrogation (Vernehmung Jäger) of 15 June 1959, Ibid., vol. 5, l. 1919.

188 Cf. "Kaltina nužudytieji", p. 41 ff (Jonas Palubinskas), p. 44 (Pranas Matiukas), p. 50 (Aleksas Raižys).

189 Nemenčikas recognized two Lithuanian policemen in the 7th Fort. One of them was the Sergeant Major (Feldwebel) Julius Tamulis, who, at the end of Jule 1941, was the commander of the TDA battalion's 5th company; the other was the city military Commandant Jurgis Bobelis; on Tamulis see also Nemenčik, "VII. Fort", pp. 64-70; on Bobelis Ibid., p. 69

190 Cf. City Commandant to Ehrlinger (Litauischer Stadtkommandant an Ehrlinger) on 30 June 1941, LCVA, R 1444-1-4, l. 18

191 Wilhelm Hellmann's interrogation (Vernehmung Wilhelm Hellmann) of 3 February 1959, ZStL II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 2, l. 553.

The 65th police battalion soldiers told how the 2nd company was shooting people in Kaunas.¹⁹²

Reaction of the Germans to the Killings in the 7th Fort

The killings executed in the 7th Fort were audible in the city too. On 3 July, the catholic clergyman of the nearby located war hospital of the Wermacht, together with his colleagues evangelicals went to see the 7th Fort, referring to it as to the place of executions. On 4 July, he wrote in the diary that “the shootings in the Fort last until late in the evening”, and on the night of 6 to 7 July, “fierce shootings of Jews” could be heard. The doctors of the war hospital asked him to look to it that the “persistent shootings would be terminated”. However, on 5 July, the Wermacht dean Wischert told the catholic clergyman that the Wermacht and its congregation (Ger. *Seelsorge*) knew “about the happenings”, but these were “the affairs of the Party Police”.¹⁹³

The killings in the 7th Fort of the 6th July caused big turmoil within the Wermacht and the German Security Police. The commander of the EK3, Karl Jäger stated after the war that Norkus without any direct order killed about 3,000 Jews in the 7th Fort. He, Jäger saw the killing scene, and, according to him, it seemed that Norkus’ soldiers had been shooting chaotically anywhere where they could hit.” He reprimanded to Norkus that “in the future he should discontinue such self-initiated shootings” and should contact the EK3.¹⁹⁴ Jäger himself seemed as if terribly enraged.¹⁹⁵

Wermacht units seemed to be “disturbed”. Therefore, Stahlecker returned to Kaunas to apologise the Wermacht saying that “nervous Lithuanians have just overdone”.¹⁹⁶ The Deputy of Jäger, Gustav Grauer testified that Stahlecker had been informed through the radio, and arrived

192 Wilhelm Solbach’s interrogation (Vernehmung Wilhelm Solbach) of 12 August 1964, HStA Wiesbaden, Abt. 461.32438, vol. 232, l. 200 ff; Paul Baur’s interrogation (Vernehmung Paul Baur) of 21 July 1965, Ibid., pages not numbered.

193 Exerpts from the journal of Georg Handrick (Tagebuchauszüge Georg Handrick), the file of EK3 (EK3 Verfahren), vol. 26, l. 7717a; the last three quotations from the testimonies of Georg Handrick (Aussage Georg Handrick) of 5 April 1961, Ibid., l. 7717.

194 Jäger’s interrogation (Vernehmung Jäger) of 15 June 1959, HStA Wiesbaden, Abt. 461.32438, vol. 5, l. 1919.

195 Peter Eisenbarth’s interrogation (Vernehmung Peter Eisenbarth) of 10 May 1960, Ibid., vol. 19, l. 6351.

196 Emil Finnberg’s testimony (Aussage Emil Finnberg) of 23 November 1960, ZStL II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 11, l. 571

from Riga to Kaunas where they discussed the “Jewish question”.¹⁹⁷ As mentioned above, at the end of June, after the pogroms in Viliampolė and killings in the *Lietūkis* garage, Stahlecker made an agreement with the 16th army that other “executions will be carried out only under the supervision of the SS commander residing in Kaunas.” Hereby, Stahlecker as an immediate superior of the latter, assumed responsibility for the “systematic” execution of the killings. In turn, Jäger immediately contacted the military Commandant’s office and ordered to bury the bodies quickly. Horst Schweinberger who from the 1st company of the 9th police battalion was later transferred to the EK3, later ordered 300 Soviet war prisoners to bury the bodies in bomb craters.¹⁹⁸ First of all, it was important for Jäger and his Deputy Grauer to escape the increased danger of epidemic as the result of “scorching heat”, what would become one more reason for the conflict with the Wehrmacht.¹⁹⁹ The First Commander of the EK3 criminal division, Johannes Schäfer stated that the shootings in the 7th Fort were executed in an “uncontrolled” manner, and the “threat of the epidemic, use of quicklime and the like would cause problems.” As it was needed for his work, he had taken a photograph of the bodies.²⁰⁰

In some five weeks, those mass graves near the 7th Fort became a problem. Inhabitants were complaining to the Chief of Kaunas Commandant’s Office Sanitarian Division about the unbearable stench.²⁰¹ On the second half of July, people were still prohibited from bathing in Nemunas and Neris – alleging that the water contained “poison from the corpses”.²⁰²

197 Gustav Grauer’s interrogation (Vernehmung Gustav Grauer) of 3-12-1960, Ibid., vol. 12, l. 597.

198 Horst Schweinberger’s interrogation (Vernehmung Horst Schweinberger) of 2 December 1960, HStA Wiesbaden, sk. 461.32438, vol. 23, l. 7.286. Cf. Horst Schweinberger’s interrogation of 23 February 1984, ZStL, II 207 AR-Z 41/83, vol. 1, l. 142 ff.

199 Cf. Gustav Grauer’s interrogation (Vernehmung Gustav Grauer) of January 1960 (the day is illegible), HStA Wiesbaden, Abt. 461.32438, vol. 15, l. 5710; Gustav Grauer’s interrogation (Vernehmung Gustav Grauer) of 13 June 1984, ZStL, II 207 AR-Z 41/83, vol. 1, l. 125 ff. During the both interrogations, Grauer spoke about that he had seen the Wehrmacht officers in the 7th Fort too.

200 Johannes Schäfer’s interrogation (Vernehmung Johannes Schäfer) of 30 July 1971, HStA Wiesbaden, sk. 461.32438, vol. 53, p. 12.980 ff. Interrogation of Johannes Schäfer of 3 September 1984, ZStL, II 207 AR-Z 41/83, vol. 2, p. 207.

201 Notice of the Sanitarian Division Chief to the Kaunas Commandant on 16 August 1941, LCVA, R 1444-1-4, p. 239 (translated from Lithuanian into German), published in: “Masinės žudynės”, vol. 1, p. 254.

202 KTB of Kaunas economic squad (KTB Wirtschaftskommando Kauen), BA-MA, RW 30/15 (record of 21 July 1941).

Organization of Hamann-Kommando and the TDA

The German Security Police was responsible for these massacres even if it had not been anticipating that the mass killings in 7th Fort would happen in this way. Many interrogations organised after the war leave no space for any doubts either, although the accused German soldiers of the 1b special squad (SK), and the EK3 could have easily shifted the blame for those massacres on Lithuanians.

In order to avoid any future conflicts with the Wehrmacht on such “utterly unorganised mass shootings”,²⁰³ the German Security Police made a decision to form special death squads (*Mordkommandos*) in the German units. In the language of the Police, it sounded as follows: due to those “happenings”, it came to the “necessity” to form from the Germans and Lithuanians the so-called “Hamann squad” in order to control the killings in the future.²⁰⁴

In turn, the Lithuanian authorities in Kaunas did attempt to discipline the soldiers of the TDA *battalions*. On 11 July 1941, the commander of the battalion, Lieutenant Butkūnas passed a strict order, threatening with the death punishment and prohibiting to arrest people and perform searches in private houses, without an order given by the Commander himself, Lithuanian Military Commandant or the Chief of the Lithuanian Security Police. The arrests executed without any grounds or licence and plunderings would no longer be tolerated. Only documents, and if necessary, the arms, may be taken from the arrested.²⁰⁵ However it turned out that a similar order had to be repeated in November 1941, especially for the Lithuanian police.²⁰⁶

Following these large-scale shootings at the Seventh Fort in early July, the killings in Kaunas abated. The ghettoization of the Jewish population was implemented. During the sitting of the Government of 7 July, Bobelis reported that Stahlecker had launched the ghettoisation of Kaunas’ Jews. According to Bobelis, Stahlecker informed that “mass extermination of the Jews” would not

203 Interrogation of Hans Kraus (Vernehmung Hans Kraus) of 21 October 1959, ZStL II 204 AR-Z 21/58, vol. 8, p. 219. This was how Kraus relayed the words of Hamman who he had been living in one room with.

204 As worded in the preliminary report of the EK3 about the second general report of the operative group, February 1942, BA, R 90/146.

205 Cf. the special order of the TDA battalion, No. 11 § 2 and § 3, 11 July 1941, LCVA, R 1444-2-1a, l. 17.

206 Cf. the letter of the Lithuanian security department Chief Šenkus to the Chief of the Lithuanian police department, Reivytiš, 17 November 1941, LCVA, R 691-1-20, l. 160.

be continued further. By the order of Germans, a Jewish ghetto was to be established in Vilijampolė, where all the Jews of Kaunas should move in within four weeks.²⁰⁷

Next day, on 8 July 1941, Stahlecker and Jäger were blackmailing five representatives of the Jewish community saying that the Lithuanian partisans would stop persecuting them and about 3,000 women and children would be released from the forts only if all the Jews would move to the ghetto until 15 August 1941.²⁰⁸ The Jews assumed that silent resignation to the plunder of their property, and isolation in the ghettos was the only real hope for a minimum protection.

On 10 July, the Military Commandant Bobelis and the Burgomaster Palčiauskas signed a decree No. 15 under which all the Jewish community people had to move to the Vilijampolė suburbs on the other side of the Neris river until 15 August, and starting from 12 July, they had to wear the yellow distinguishing badge. The attempts of the Jewish Resettlement Committee to find a more appropriate place for the intended ghetto and to make the period of ghettoisation a little more bearable were frustrated by the Lithuanian authorities of the city.²⁰⁹

LEADING TO A FINAL SOLUTION: THE IDENTIFICATION (CATEGORIZATION) OF THE VICTIMS

Raul Hilberg's stages in the annihilation of Europe's Jews serve as well as any other paradigm in understanding the bureaucratized process of destruction. As he pointed out, the decision for implementation, once taken, requires a systematic *identification*, *expropriation* and *concentration* of the victims, which must precede the final phase of physical *destruction*.²¹⁰ After Hitler's accession to power, the bureaucracy of the Reich had struggled mightily over many

²⁰⁷ Minutes No. 12, afternoon of 7 July 1941, the Government, p. 50 ff.

²⁰⁸ Garfunkel, pp. 37-39; Tory, pp. 9-12. Goldberg described in writing the meeting with Jäger and Stahlecker. Josef Goldberg, Bletlech fun Kovner Ältestenrat (bis nach der groiser Akzije), in: "Fun letste Churbn", H. 7, pp. 30-57, here p. 34.

²⁰⁹The decree No. 15 and the requests of the Jewish commission published in: Tory's, pp. 14-21. Cf. minutes of the municipality meeting of 25 July 1941 regarding the ghettoisation results, LCVA R 1444-1-6, l. 2-4; published in: "Masinės žudynės", 1 vol., pp. 234-237.

²¹⁰ See the description in Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: Harper, 1961), 31 ff. The journey through these stages of mass murder may take years, as it did in the Third Reich, or it can be accomplished with lightning speed, as in Rwanda. Then again, as in South Africa, a regime may decide not to embark on the final phase. In Lithuania's provinces the process proceeded with such speed that the sequence of expropriation and destruction occurred almost simultaneously.

months to answer the simple question of who is a Jew, a perplexing legal conundrum in a country of assimilated and largely secularized Jews, many of whom had intermarried with Gentiles.²¹¹ But the identification of Jews in Lithuania, where national communities had historically lived apart and where assimilation into the majority culture was the exception rather than the rule, presented none of the practical headaches suffered by the Nazi legal experts who had drafted the Nuremberg Laws of the 1930s. In Lithuania, the statutory definition of a Jew, the first such formulation in the state's history, was issued by the German military commandant during the second week of the war in an officiously titled "Announcement to an Occupied Land." In letter and spirit it corresponded to the laws enacted years earlier in the Reich:

211 See Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

1. ... A Jew is a person who has at least three grandparents who were pure-blooded Jews and, in addition,
2. One is considered a Jew whose two grandparents are pure-blooded Jews if
 - a. on 22 June 1941 he [sic] belonged to the Jewish faith [and];
 - b. at the moment of this announcement he was married to a Jew.
 - c. Jews and Jewesses are forbidden to greet persons of non-Jewish nationality.
 - d. Those who violate [this order] will be strictly punished by the local commandant.

The order went on to prohibit ritual kosher slaughter of animals, and, in the spirit of the Reich's Law for the Defense of German Blood and Honor, warned that local military commandants would punish by death anyone who infected a German through sexual relations.²¹²

Lithuanian officials generally followed the German directives, albeit with differing degrees of diligence and efficiency. In Vilnius, the police chief Antanas Iškauskas and the head of the Vilnius Committee, Stasys Žakevičius, posted notices around the town which stated that, according to the German Military Commandant's Order of 3 July 1941, "all Jews, regardless of age, are to wear, in a visible place on the chest and the back a sign of 10 cm. in width, a sample of which is posted in all the precincts..." A curfew between 6 PM and 6 AM was imposed, the measures to go into effect by 8 July.²¹³ Other officials were quick to adopt the spirit of the new racial order. The Alytus authorities announced that the region's citizens were to be divided into hierarchical grades: only Germans and Lithuanians would occupy the highest Aryan "first class" designation. On 12 and 14 July 1941 the local government of the same district issued detailed anti-Jewish regulations, including strict limitations on Jewish food rations, which were to be half that allowed for non-Jews, and a total ban on Jewish consumption of sugar and meats.²¹⁴ In Joniškis, the local activist authorities have left a detailed record of their administration, including the setting up of a Commission for Jewish Affairs, a body which ordered the Jews' partial expropriation and utilization for labor as well as restrictions on relations between local Gentiles

212 LCVA, R- 1436, Ap. 1, b. 7, l. 4. The ruling prohibiting dangerous sexual liaisons with Germans was posted in other areas of the occupied East.

213 "Škelbimas," copy in author's archive as taken from the LCVA.

214 As explained by Valentinas Brandišauskas, "Lietuvių ir Žydų santykiai 1940-1941 metais," in the *Darbai ir dienos*, No. 2 (11), pp. 55-57.

and Jews.²¹⁵ On 23 July 1941 the acting police chief in Ukmergė ordered the wearing of yellow stars, prohibited Jews from leaving their neighborhoods without permission and banned trade between Jews and villagers. Precinct chiefs everywhere were instructed to register Communists, Komsomol members, Jews, Pole, Russians and former Bolshevik office workers.²¹⁶

Thus, within weeks Lithuania's Jews had been effectively identified and segregated, their harm to the society clearly enunciated to the public. The concentration stage was next – the Jews would have to be corralled.

The Urban and Rural Ghettos

The survival of the ghetto inmates in the largest cities depended on economic factors rather than, as the Nazis cynically claimed, the need to protect the Jews from Lithuanian predators. Nonetheless, the Germans skillfully exploited the latter theme in the aforementioned case of Kaunas (see above). The segregation and concentration of the Jews in Lithuania's major cities was a cruel process; nonetheless, it guaranteed, for a time, the physical survival of thousands of who were lucky enough to escape the periodic culling of the populace in the three newly created ghettos (Vilnius, Kaunas, Šiauliai).²¹⁷ The ghettoization process, initiated between mid-August and early September, coincided with the decision to initiate the genocide of the Jews in the countryside and thus should be seen as an integral part of the history of their destruction.²¹⁸

Lithuania's urban Jewish population was placed under the rules outlined by the German military command. In the provinces, smaller temporary Jewish ghettos were established, for example, in Telšiai, Žagarė, Raseiniai, Skuodas, Jurbarkas, Kėdainiai and other towns. In fact, there were provisional ghettos and gathering points in each and every district. Sometimes these small ghettos existed but a few weeks, at times, for months (as in Telšiai). But as a rule, these “ghettos” were, in fact, temporary holding areas for Jews awaiting their death and were eliminated

215 See the documents in LCVA, R-739, ap. 1, b. 4.

216 LYA, F. 3377, Ap. 58, b. 715, l. 19.

217 The identification and ghettoization of the urban Jewish population should be handled as a separate sub-section within the history of the identification, expropriation and concentration of the Lithuanian Jews. The periodic culling of the so-called superfluous population and the final eradication of the ghettos in 1943 and 1944 have produced a rich historical literature in comparison to the genocide in the provinces.

218 See Arūnas Bubnys, “Holokaustas.”

during the operations organized by Einsatzkommando 3 (EK3) which gained momentum rapidly after mid-August 1941. Conditions in the short-term ghettos depended on the attitude of local officials and there are many reports of extreme cruelty and harsh circumstances: beatings and starvation were the norm. In some places, the initial treatment of local Jews was lax: for a time, in Lazdijai, people were confined to the barracks at night but were allowed into town during the day. Nevertheless, even here beatings, robberies and humiliation were frequent occurrences. There were periodic shootings of the segregated Jews in the provinces by local activists and police, usually supervised by German officers. The guards and local authorities looted Jewish property as a matter of course.²¹⁹ The creation of the provincial ghettos and work camps were a significant step in the destruction of Lithuania's Jews.

PREPARING THE FINAL SOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES: BEGINNINGS IN KAUNAS COMMISSARIAT (GEBIETSKOMMISSARIAT)

An important turning point in the Nazi policy regarding the "Jewish Question" was the arrival of the German civil administration in Lithuania on 26- 27 July 1941. The change is reflected in decrees issued from Kaunas, the country's de facto administrative center, affecting the town and its environs. The Kaunas Commissariat (*Gebietskommissariat*) with the territory of 12,000 sq.km. covered the districts of Kaunas, Kėdainiai, Marijampolė, Šakiai, Vilkaviškis and Lazdijai with approximately 700,000 population.²²⁰ At the beginning of August 1941, SA Senior Leader (*Oberführer*) Arnold Lentzen was appointed the Commissar (*Gebietskommissar*).²²¹

219 Arūnas Bubnys, "Mažieji Lietuvos žydų getai ir laikinos izoliavimo stovyklos 1941-1943 metais," *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis 1999* (Vilnius: LII leidykla, 2000), 151-180; concerning Lazdijai cf. the relation from *Yahadut Lite* in Josifas Levinsonas, comp., *Šoa (Holokaustas) Lietuvoje* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Gaono žydų muziejus, 2001), 82-85.

²²⁰ Message of the district Commissar General, No. 1. (Bekanntmachung Nr. 1 des GBK Lentzen) Undated, beginning of August 1941. Official journal of the Commissar General of Kaunas, No. 2, 1 November 1941, p. 15; in April 1942, the Alytus district was affiliated to the district too.

²²¹ Cf. Lentzen's file in the Federal Archive of Berline-Celendorf (BDC-Akte Lentzen); in March 1942, Lentzen was promoted to the SA Major General (*Brigadeführer*). Stankeras. "Policija", p. 241. In 1944, he was awarded with the War Cross for the merits. (Kriegsverdienstkreuz – KVK), Cf. BA, ZADH, ZA I. 12.108, file 3; after the war, he lived in Hamburg, died in Bremen in 1956.

The first announcements of the District Commissar General Lentzen released on 4 August 1941 were addressed to the Jewish population.²²² The plenty interdictions stated in them, immediately taking effect, were targeted to deprive the Jews of all their rights, to humiliate and stigmatise them; it was the first step to isolate them from the people of other nationalities. They were prohibited from walking on the pavements; they had to walk in single files on the right side of the road; they were banned from visiting public parks or from using public transportation. On the left breast side and on their backs they had to wear the “David’s star” of about 8 to 10 centimetre in diameter. They were prohibited from leaving their houses from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. People of non-Jewish nationality could not work or live with them. All unoccupied houses or flats had to be registered. The Jews were also banned from having their property at their disposition. Within five days, on 9 August 1941, Lentzen explained that even the German Jews, “half-Jews”, or those Jews holding the citizenship of the countries occupied by Germany, had to be “treated” just like the Lithuanian Jews.²²³

Directions promulgated on 4 August would be immediately forwarded to the districts of the Commissariats (*Gebietskommissariats*) for further implementation. On 6 August 1941, the Chief of Kaunas district (*Kreischef*) Bortkevičius passed an order to all chiefs (*Amtsbezirkschefs*) of the rural counties (*Amtsbezirks*) to make the records of and to take over the financial property and real estate of Jews, which had not been nationalised so far.²²⁴ Then the other day, on 7 August 1941, the Chief of the District sent a detailed instruction about ghettos to all the chiefs of the rural counties (*Amtsbezirkschefs*) and to the Police station officer (*Polizeipunktführer*).²²⁵ By 15 August, all the towns were supposed to have established a zone with a barbed wire around those territories where the Jews from the province had to be confined in. The Lithuanian partisans had to

²²² Cf. messages of the district Commissar, Lentzeno, Nos. 2 and 3 (Bekanntmachungen Nr. 2 und 3 des GBK Lentzen), 4-8-1941. Official journal of the Commissar General of Kaunas, No. 2, 1-11-1941, p. 15 ff.

²²³ Letter of Commissar General of Kaunas district to the lay judge of Kaunas district (Landrat), 9-8-1941, LCVA, R 1534-1-186, l. 1.

²²⁴ Letter of the head of the district, Bortkevičius to chiefs of rural administrative units, 6 August 1941. LCVA, R 1534-1-191, l. 39.

²²⁵ Letter of the Commissar General of Kaunas of 7 August 1941. LCVA, R 1534-1-186, l. 37; published in: “Masinės žudynės”, vol. 1, p. 290 ff.

ensure their protection. The Jews had to be isolated from any contacts with the outer world of the non-Jews. At attempts to leave the ghetto without permission, one would be shot without a warning. There had to be also established the stick-armed ghetto police of 5 to 15 persons, also Jewish committees (of 12 persons). The Jewish police and the Jewish committees were supposed to help with all internal ghetto issues. The Jews had to pay for all food products; they would get only reduced rations, without the right to get meat or dairy products, fat or eggs. Until the ghettos were established, special hours had to be fixed for the Jews to go for shopping. A list of workers of certain professions, aged 12 to 60, had to be made, so they could be employed. The beginning and the end of the ghetto instructions stated that the chiefs of the local rural counties (*Amtsbezirks*) and the chief officers of police stations had to cooperate closely and had to watch that the instructions were followed.

As noted above, plans had been drawn up for action against the Jews in Lithuania's provinces since late July. The ominous preparation for their roundup is reflected in the demographic information on Jewish communities collected by the local civil authorities and transmitted to higher officials at the request of the police authorities in Kaunas. For Alytus district we have the detailed responses of the various rural counties (*Amtsbezirks*) heads to their chief's telephone message (*telefonograma*) No. 9 of 4 August 1941. In contrast to the classification of Jews who were to be detained during arrests initiated only a few days later, which targeted adult men and Communist women, the provincial Jews were initially catalogued solely by age: youths (14-18), adults (19-50) and older citizens (50 and above). Thus, on 5 August the Merkinė rural county (*Amtsbezirk*) reported 128 men and women from 14 to 18 years, 392 between 19 and 50, and 160 Jews older than fifty. The towns of Birštonas and Druskininkai, as well as the Daugai, Miroslavas, Rudnia and other rural counties (*Amtsbezirks*) reported statistics on the same basis.²²⁶

LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE FINAL SOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES: THE 'REIVYTIS FILE'

In the summer and fall of 1941 the Lithuanian countryside became the first testing ground for the Nazi program which eventually aimed at the comprehensive physical destruction of

226 LCVA, R-1436, b. 32, p. 128 ff.

European Jewry: the actions of those months can be seen as a portent and precursor of the continental Final Solution (*Endlösung*), even before this fateful concept was envisioned and, as it were, formalized at Wannsee in January 1942. In Lithuania, the inauguration of this decisive phase in the history of the Holocaust has left behind an archival trail and thus can be determined with reasonable certainty.

The operational procedure which resulted in the concentration of the provincial Jews, the stage of the destruction process which immediately preceded their annihilation, is reflected in a file of the Lithuanian Central State Archive. This folder, R-683, Ap. 2, b. 2, is clearly part of a larger trove of documents, many of which can be assumed to have been lost. It contains directives from the central Kaunas office of the Lithuanian Police Department and the ensuing responses, in addition to fragmentary but informative records of over thirty rural and municipal precincts of the Lithuanian police in outlying areas of the Kaunas region and some districts in southwestern Lithuania. While incomplete, the records allow us to reconstruct the process of destruction as a whole. The very first document in the collection, essential to understanding the machinery of the genocide, contains a police circular of the Lithuanian police headquarters in Kaunas, which, in turn, transmitted an order from SS Lt. Joachim Hamann to the various precincts of Kaunas district and surrounding regions.²²⁷

In the stilted language of police officialdom, preparations for the eradication of a community are laid out:

Police Department
No. 3 sl.

Top secret
Kaunas, 16 August 1941

To the Kaunas District Police Chief

Upon receiving this circular, in the places pointed out in the remarks, immediately detain all men of Jewish nationality from 15 years of age and those women who had become notorious in their Bolshevik activity, or who even now distinguish themselves by the same activity or insolence. The detained persons are to be gathered at the main highways, and when accomplished, this is to be immediately reported by special and most urgent means of communication to the Police Department.

227 Dieckmann, 245.

In the report, the number of such types of Jews who have been detained and collected is to be precisely indicated.

It is necessary to ensure that the detainees are supplied with food and the appropriate security, for which the auxiliary police may be utilized.

This circular must be carried out within forty-eight hours from its receipt. The detained Jews must be guarded until they are taken and transported to the camp.

Note: to be carried out in the entire Kaunas District.

V. Reivytis
Director of the Police Department²²⁸

The Police Chief of Šakiai District duly noted and signed confirmation of the receipt on his copy of the circular: 16 August 1:35 PM.²²⁹ While the Police Department's Kaunas and Šakiai circulars are the only surviving ones in the Reivytis File, the extant correspondence indicates that these bureaucratic harbingers of death were issued to most, if not all, of Lithuania's district police chiefs in western Lithuania during the first half of August 1941. At least 95% of Lithuania's Jews were still alive as Secret Order No. 3 went out to police officials throughout the region.

The process of gathering the victims was highly centralized leaving little initiative to the district police chiefs, even less to the precinct heads. From Kaunas, the precinct heads were furnished with the names of the collection points whence the Jews were to be gathered. Instructions to the precincts, printed on half-page mimeographed sheets, ordered the rural police bosses to immediately carry out their instructions "without awaiting any specific order from their [local] police chief." The precinct lieutenants, "having gathered the Jews in the designated places, [were] to notify the Police Department," forwarding the data on the detainees directly to Kaunas outside normal channels (*ne komandos keliu*) as quickly as possible. While the constabulary hastened to carry out Reivytis' commands, the copies of the sensitive circular were not to be kept at the precincts but returned to the district police chiefs, an apparent effort to minimize an incriminating paper trail. Evidence suggests that the reports on the resulting actions, which were

228 LCVA, F. R-683, Ap. 2, b. 2 [henceforth cited as the Reivytis' File] , l. 1 Responses to Reivytis's circular indicate that it was received by other police chiefs before 16 August 1941. Only a few of the documents in the file have been published, most notably in the series of Soviet propaganda publications of the 1960s and 1970s.

229 Reivytis' File, l.48.

routed directly to the Police Department in Kaunas, were delivered by either telephone or special courier. The Jews from smaller rural precincts were to be gathered at collection points located at crossroads where the victims would be in easy reach of the death squads which were being assembled in Kaunas.²³⁰

The instruction forms to eighteen of the precincts which accompanied Reivyti's Secret Order No. 3 indicate that the concentration of the Jews in southwestern Lithuania and parts of the Kaunas region was to proceed as follows:

Figure 1²³¹

The Concentration of the Jews in Kaunas District and Other Locales in August 1941 as Planned in Secret Order No. 3

District / Precinct

Collection Point

Kaunas District ²³² (All Precincts, not including Kaunas Town)	<i>Jonava</i> <i>Vilkija</i> <i>Babtai</i> <i>Rumšiškės</i> <i>Zapyškis</i> <i>Garliava</i>
<u>Kėdainiai District</u> Kėdainiai Town Žeimiai ²³³ Josvainiai ²³⁴ Ariogala	<i>Kėdainiai</i>

²³⁰ Reivyti's File, l. 2-3.

²³¹ All statistics in Figures 1 and 2, and 3 are compiled from the Reivyti's File.

²³² The Kaunas precinct was specifically instructed to "collect all the Jews of Kaunas district to Vilkija, Babtai, Jonava, Rumšiškės, Zapyškis and Garliava." (LCVA, Reivyti's File, l. 6). The apparent reference here is to the smaller groupings of rural Jews of Kaunas district not resident in the other 17 precincts. In the extant correspondence they include locales such as Kruonis, Raudondvaris, etc.

²³³ The original instructions to the Žeimiai precinct were to send the Jewish detainees to Jonava.

²³⁴ The Josvainiai Jews were initially ordered to be transferred to Kėdainiai.

<u>Trakai District</u> Kaišiadorys Žiežmariai Žasliai	<i>Kaišiadorys</i>
<u>Alytus District</u> Birštonas Prienai Jieznas	<i>Prienai</i>
<u>Marijampolė District</u> Kazlų Rūdos Balbieriškis Šilavotas Sasnava Veiveriai	<i>Kazlų Rūdos</i> <i>Prienai</i> <i>Garliava</i>
<u>Šakiai District</u> Jankai Paežerėlis Lekėčiai	<i>Zapyškis</i>

The chain of command and mode of police communication of this unprecedented special action by the Police Department, the first stage of the Holocaust, was intended to ensure secrecy and speed. The decision for destruction, of course, was approved in Berlin, the overall plan supervised by Einsatzgruppe A. In Lithuania, the director, chief executive officer and accountant of the destruction was SS Col. (*Standartenführer*) Karl Jäger, the head of EK3, whose reports of 10 September and 1 December 1941 stand out as business journals of mass murder. But the mastermind of detail, the daily manager of murder, was a rather low-ranking Nazi henchman from Kiel, 28-year old SS First Lieutenant Joachim Hamann.

An orphan of Baltic German parentage, Hamann received a chemist's training, but, like many youths in depression-era Germany, had wandered about rootless and unemployed, until he found a home with the SA in 1931. He later joined the paratroops as a volunteer only to be thrown

into the brig and cashiered by the Wehrmacht for mistreating trainees. In 1938 Hamann joined the SS. Hamann served with the Wehrmacht as a paratroop during the Polish and French campaigns, then returned to Berlin in the service of the Security Police and SD. To further his career with the SS, he attended evening classes in juridical studies at Berlin University, courses organized by the SS as prerequisites for candidates to its higher ranks. Most of these trainees were delegated to the Einsatzgruppen and a number of them became leaders within the various Einsatzkommandos, including EK3. By April 1941 Hamann had been promoted to first lieutenant in the SS (*Obersturmführer*) and was eventually delegated to Section IV (Gestapo) of EK3. According to one of his bunk mates who testified after the war, the lieutenant's military and police training was supplemented by the appropriate world-view, personality, and enthusiasm for the task he was about to undertake: "Hamann gave me the impression of a fanatical persecutor of Jews who believed that he was fulfilling his duty for his people by these [anti-Jewish] measures."²³⁵

The lieutenant was a hands-on task master. Virtually no minutiae of the operation escaped his attention. On 16 August 1941, responding to Order No. 3, a cautious precinct lieutenant from Raudondvaris reported to Kaunas "that there were no Jews of the category indicated in the circular" in his jurisdiction, except four Jews under the authority of the Security Police, and four other Jews assigned to work for the "local German staff." The message was translated into German and forwarded to Hamann by Colonel Vytautas Reivytiš, the newly appointed head of the Police Department and the highest-ranking police officer of the native constabulary in German-occupied Lithuania.²³⁶ On 22 August 1941 the precinct head of Balbieriškis informed Reivytiš that:

²³⁵ As quoted in Knut Stang, *Kollaboration und Massenmord: Die litauische Hilfspolizei, das Rollkommando Hamann und die Ermordung der litauischen Juden* (Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 1996), p. 157; an overview of Hamann's career is in pp. 153 ff.

²³⁶ Reivytiš' File, l. 27

Sir, in answer to your message No. 3sl., I report that the Balbieriškis Police Precinct arrested and turned over to the Prienai Jewish ghetto 100 Jewish men and six Jewish women.

At the present time, in answer to your circular, there are only two Jewish men remaining in the town of Balbieriškis. They are medical doctor Bielockis and the chemist of the leather factory, Jankelis Ickovčius, without whom the factory cannot operate, and a replacement for him, at this time, cannot be found.²³⁷

²³⁷ Reivytis' File, p. 77.

Again the matter was turned over to Hamann for resolution. That Reivytiis reported frequently, if not daily, to the lieutenant-in-charge of the genocide is suggested by the colonel's entreaty to Hamann on 25 August 1941:

Supplementing my messages of 18, 19 and 20 August 1941, since in Prienai the number of arrested Jews has reached 493 persons, I request from you therefore an order to take away the detained Jews from their collection point as quickly as possible, because a contagious disease is raging among these Jews, as is the case in Kaišadorius [Kaišiadorys]. This presents a danger that the infectious disease will spread.²³⁸

²³⁸ Reivytiis' File, p. 82.

Forty-year old Vytautas Reivytiš should have, in fact, considered himself superior to Hamann in both rank and social status. The son of a respected local patriot from Mažeikiai who had once been imprisoned by the Tsarist police, Reivytiš had entered police service in 1925, completing advanced criminology studies in Kaunas and Berlin. He rose through the police bureaucracy, achieving a high rank in the railroad security service, as well as working as an inspector and lecturer at the advanced school of police studies in Kaunas. During the 1930s Reivytiš became an informer for the Abwehr, German military intelligence. An accomplished target shooter and judo expert who competed internationally with some success, a member of the country's Aero club and an aviation enthusiast, Reivytiš fit the Voldemarist self-image of a "man of action." Rather than await his fate at the hands of the Soviets, Reivytiš fled to Germany in 1940 where he worked for the Abwehr in Ebenrode. In July 1941 Reivytiš received "Category II" German citizenship . There is no way to know whether Colonel Reivytiš was galled by his humble subordination to a lowly German lieutenant, but there can be little doubt about his place in the chain of command which he held throughout the occupation, nor his subservience and loyalty to the Nazi cause during the war: he was decorated for his service in 1943 and as late as February 1944 applied for an "upgrade" of his German citizenship ranking.²³⁹ Thus, while the Holocaust was, above all, a German project, the servile Reivytiš and his policemen did a great deal to implement and assist the slaughter.

Under pressure to handle a highly sensitive operation with secrecy and speed, the special procedures for handling Special Order No. 3 caught the district police chiefs and their precinct lieutenants in an unfamiliar bureaucratic tangle. In a few cases, the local precinct heads ignored the requirements for special communications. But in other instances, Reivytiš circular found the job already done at the initiative of civilian officials: the Žeimiai precinct boss reported that "the Jews, who had lived in Žeimiai, had been sent to Kėdainiai on 14 August 1941 in accordance with the order of the Kėdainiai district chief."²⁴⁰ The Josvainiai precinct reported on the same day that,

²³⁹ A sanitized biographical profile is in *Lietuvių Enciklopedija* (Boston: Lithuanian Encyclopedia Press, 1961), vol. xxv, 92. More on Reivytiš' role during the German occupation is in Petras Stankeras, *Lietuvių policija 1941-1944 metais* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 1998).

²⁴⁰ Reivytiš' File, p. 20.

at the behest of the same district chief, “the Jews within the borders of the Josvainiai town and local district were transferred to the Ariogala ‘ghetto’ according [to his] Order No. 7... of 9 August.”²⁴¹ In another case, no action was taken since the problem had already been solved, as the Kruonis precinct boss reported in his secret dispatch of 17 August:

²⁴¹ Reivytiš' File, p. 30.

In response to the secret circular of 15 August, I report that all the Jews of Kruonis local county (*valsčius*) have been settled in the Darsūniškis church village (*bažnytkaimis*), which most recently ... is within the jurisdiction of the Pakuonis police precinct. In addition, there are no more men of Jewish nationality of fifteen years and older, neither are there any women who were notorious by their Communist activity. In all of Kruonis local district there remain about fifty old women of Jewish nationality and about thirty children below the age of fifteen.²⁴²

²⁴² Reivytiš' File, p.43.

The Reivytiš directive worked all too well and, for the most part, the implementation of the roundup proceeded promptly. Bureaucratic confusion seem to have been the exception, as in the town of Jiežnas, where on 16 August the precinct boss reported sending 63 Jewish men and 26 women to Prienai, an operation which apparently went awry. On 29 August Reivytiš sent a caustic scolding to the Alytus district police chief, Stasys Krosniūnas, regarding his subordinate who had still not reported in nearly two weeks after most police official had already dutifully announced their roundups: “...the Police Department is unclear on whether, in the town of Jiežnas, the Jews who are being hunted are still hiding, or are they hiding only when the police are looking for them?” Inquiring why the Jiežnas precinct head “is still not executing the Police Department’s Circular No. 3,” and why the Department “is not receiving news of what has been done with the Jews in Birštonas,” Reivytiš told Krosniūnas: “I suggest that you, sir, supervise the work of your precinct lieutenants more closely.”²⁴³ Krosniūnas responded on 30 August in a defensive text:

²⁴³ Reivytiš’ File, pp. 23, 84.

In carrying out the Police Department's secret message No. 3, I report that the Jews of Jieznas precinct had scattered and hidden when the arrests began upon the receipt of circular No. 3. Later some of them returned to the town, but since the precinct chief was unable to communicate with the security police of Prienai region, and the delimitation of [security police] regions isn't at all clear, and the circular had to be executed within two days, so the further arrests were made under the auspices of the Alytus region security police chief. All told 38 [Jews] were brought to Alytus by August 31. Some of the Jews have not yet returned to the town but are living, according to what we have ascertained, in the forests. The precinct chief has been ordered to round up the Jews from the forests as well by utilizing the auxiliary police.

In the Birštonas precinct there never have been, and are not currently, any of the kinds of Jews indicated in circular No. 3. In all, one old Jewish woman lives in the town, who will be transferred to Alytus in the next few days. Upon receipt of circular No. 3, the Birštonas precinct chief should have reported about its execution directly to the Department and later to me, but he reported it, as we discovered, only to me. I received his message only after three days, but I didn't report anything to the Department since, according to the circular, this should have already been done by the precinct chief.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ Reivyti's File, p. 85.

The detainees proved a logistical headache. On 17 August the Garliava precinct reported that 73 Jewish men and 46 women were being held in the town's synagogue. Three days later, the precinct chief wrote Reivytiš requesting that the Director "give an order what to do with the detained Jews from the town of Garliava, its environs and the other local districts." By the 28th he was desperate:

In supplementing my secret messages No. 1 of 17 and 20 August of this year, I ask you, Director, to give an order on what should be done with the Jews of Garliava [and environs]... who have been detained since 17 August and are being held in the Garliava town synagogue. Their feeding is difficult since the purchase of food products is being restricted and, furthermore, they do not have suitable accommodations.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵ Reivytiš' File, pp. 57, 76, 83.

History records that the Garliava police received their answer soon enough.

The police correspondence is of limited help in ascertaining how clearly the lower rung of police officials, for example, the precinct lieutenants, grasped the ultimate fate of the detainees after they read the Police Department's fateful circular. No doubt, there were some who believed that their job was simply to watch the Jews until their prisoners would be taken off their hands to an unnamed "camp." The Zapyškis chief indicated that he was awaiting "additional orders."²⁴⁶ The examples we have of pedantically drawn up lists of the detainees, detailing age, sex and, in some cases, dates of birth, are not the actions of officials expecting their victims' imminent destruction.

The bureaucratic language of the police officials was, for the most part, precise and laconic. In an Orwellian twist, many policemen remained loyal to the official discourse of both independent and Soviet Lithuania. While much of the correspondence simply refers to Jews, the majority speak of the "Jewish nationality" of the detainees. An even more jarringly incongruous expression, is the portrayal of the unfortunates as "citizens of Jewish nationality." Only two precinct heads utilized the language of overt ethnic prejudice, one reporting on 19 August that he had received "thirty-five Jewish broods (*Žydelkos*)" from a neighboring village. Interestingly, the source of this common pejorative described his office as "the Head of the Zapyškis precinct of the Lithuanian National Soc.[ialist] Police," a bizarre formulation found almost nowhere else in the archives of Lithuania's native constabulary during the German occupation. (Only two days previously, another officer, the acting head of the Zapyškis precinct, had described his charges as citizens of Jewish nationality.)²⁴⁷ Still another rural precinct boss referred to the "little Jews" (*Žydeliai*), a condescending, but hardly vicious, slang expression widespread among Lithuanian Gentiles.

Only a minority of the officials bothered to assert the Police Department's rationale in arresting Jewish women, that is, the allegation that they had been notorious in their "insolent

²⁴⁶ Reivyti's File, p. 44.

²⁴⁷ Reivyti's File, p. 69, cf. p.44.

Communist activities.” The head of the Paežerėliai precinct who presented to Reivytiis a list of 35 detained citizens, all women save one, noted that

All of the citizens of Jewish nationality listed here were detained on 17 August 1941 in the town of Kriūkai and in the local district (*valsčius*), within Šakiai District, and are being sent to the charge of the Zapyškis precinct police chief. All of the Jewish women have been notorious, and even now, when their husbands, brothers and children have been deported, they spread all manner of talk and even threats. They had all been notorious when the Communists ruled Lithuania.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ Reivytiis’ File, p. 54.

Self-delusion, the ability of human beings to deny to themselves the consequences of their actions, especially when they are not personally involved in the final and most gruesome criminal outcome, is well-known and collaborating officials seem particularly adept at applying this stratagem. Yet recognizing that not all the recipients of Secret Order No. 3 had murder in their hearts hardly lessens the complicity of the rural police bosses who gathered the “citizens of Jewish nationality.” Any ignorance or innocence of fact was fleeting; as the process unfolded, denial very quickly required purposeful evasion. Certainly, as August 1941 came to a close, even the thickest police head must have grasped that the Jews of the provinces were being corralled not for “deportations,” but to their death. The concentration of the Jews, as outlined in the Reivytiis file, provides us with a cross-section, an overview in miniature (Fig. 2), of the much-wider operation which effected the concentration and expropriation of Lithuania’s rural and small-town Jews, the bulk of the country’s historic Litvak community.

Figure 2
The Concentration of the Jews as Carried Out Under Secret Order No. 3
Reivytiis’ File: August 1941

<i>TO</i>				
<i>DISTRICT/Precinct</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Collection Point</i>
<i>KAUNAS</i>				
Panemunė	5	6	11	
Pakuonis	14	5	19	Garliava
Garliava	22	6	28	
Veiveriai ²⁴⁹	32	29	61	
Jonava	91	20	111	Jonava

²⁴⁹ Veiveriai is in Marijampolė district, but located on a highway to Kaunas.

Vilkija ²⁵⁰	280	138	400	
Čekiškės			20	Vilkija
Veliuona			14	
Seredžius	14	62	76	
Babtai	23	11	34	Babtai
Vendžiogala			30	
Rumšiškės			140	Rumšiškės
Krakės area	337	115	452	Krakės monastery
Petrašiūnai	33	21	54	Petrašiūnai
Zapyškis	24	5	29	Zapyškis
<i>KĖDAINIAI</i>				
Kėdainiai Town area	730	183	913	Kėdainiai Town
Žeimiai ²⁵¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Ariogala ²⁵²	280	10	290	Ariogala synagogue
<i>TRAKAI</i>				
Kaišiadorys	80	14	94	
Žiežmariai	193	89	282	Kaišiadorys
Žasliai	263	85	348	
<i>ALYTUS</i>				

²⁵⁰ The Vilkija precinct report of 18 August 1941 states that 280 Jewish men and 120 women were deported, another 18 women remain in the Vilkija synagogue. Jews collected from „Čekiškės, Veliuona, and Seredžius, a total of 129 Jews still held in the synagogue, are listed in the table (LCVA, Reivytiš' File, p. 62).

²⁵¹ The number of Žeimiai Jews delivered to Kėdainiai as yet undetermined.

²⁵² Includes undetermined number of Jews sent from Josvainiai who had been originally intended for Kėdainiai.

Jieznas	63	26	89	Alytus
Birštonas		1		
<i>MARIJAMPOLĖ</i>				
Prienai	N/A	N/A	289	
Balbieriškis	100	6	106	Prienai
Šilavotas	7	2	9	
Kazlų Rūdos	159		159	Kazlų Rūdos
Sasnavas	6		6	
<i>ŠAKIAI</i>				
Jankai	1	1	2	Zapyškis
Paežerėliai	1	35	36	
Lekėčiai	9		9	Vilkija

During their brief captivity, the detained Jewish men and the “active Jewish Communist women” were held under a variety of conditions. Smaller groups were concentrated in synagogues (Ariogala, Garliava), public buildings, such as schools and municipality offices, even monasteries (Krakės). Larger gatherings were herded into temporary camp sites and makeshift “ghettos,” or simply confined to vaguely described areas or “neighborhoods (*rajonai*).” In Kazlų Rūda, the precinct boss requested further instructions for the 25 older and frail Jews of the “Jewish camp,” whether “they should be kept in the camp or allowed to live at home.”²⁵³

The deportation of the men and active female Communists to the holding areas, ostensibly for work, but ultimately to their death, left behind the doleful remnants of the

²⁵³ Reivytiš' File, p. 33.

country's Litvak world: the "non-political" women and children, isolated in the provinces, and useless as labor. The Reivytiš File contains fragmentary hints of their fate in a corner of Šakiai District. The Gelgaudiškis precinct lieutenant reported a list of three families of "citizens of Jewish nationality deported on 3 September of this year": three mothers; two boys, four and eight; and five girls of whom the youngest, Ženė Kaplanaitė, was ten months old. At the same time, the remaining seventeen Jewish citizens of Plokščiai, all adult women except for the Budelskis sons, twelve and fifteen, were "handed over to the ferry at Gelgaudiškis and deported." The unfortunates of Plokščiai were joined by the Zaksas family of five: the matriarch Haja 75, her 45-year old daughter and her three grand-children, ages eleven through thirteen. The precinct which encompassed Šiaudinė, Sudargas and Kiduliai listed, as of 26 August 1941, 101 "citizens of Jewish nationality": 61 women, and 40 children, their ultimate destination not indicated, but impossible not to imagine.²⁵⁴

This south western corner of Lithuania provides us with one of the earliest records of the Final Solution in microcosm, outlined in the report of Vincas Karalius, the Šakiai district head and his police chief, who had been scolded by the Police Department about his mishandling of the Jieznas operation. The document ranks as one of the most cynical bureaucratic admissions of indigenous culpability in the mass murder of 1941:²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ Reivytiš' File, Reports of the Gelgaudiškis, Plokščiai and Paežerėliai precincts and the Šiaudinė, Kiduliai and Sudargas list, pp. 87-96.

²⁵⁵ Reivytiš' File, p. 86.

Secret-personal

Šakiai, 16 September 1941

V. R. V. [Vidaus Reikalų Vadyba]

Chief of Šakiai District

No. 3/sl.

To the Director of the Police Department

In presenting this correspondence, I report to you the Director, that from this day, in the district entrusted to me, there are no more Jews. They were taken care of by the local partisans and the auxiliary police: in Šakiai, 890 persons on 9/13/41; in K. Naumiestis, 650 persons on 9/16/41.

By the order of the Gebietskommissar, his own designated officials carried out searches of the persons and apartments of all the Šakiai and K. Naumiestis Jews with the assistance of the local police before their final disposition and carted away the money and other valuables which were discovered. The remaining real estate and movable property is assigned to the protection and care of the local government offices until further instructions from the [Gebiets]kommissar.

A list of the disposed Jews by name, if it should be ordered, I will present later.

The Gebietskommissar has been informed about this.

Attachments: 7 pages.

V. Karalius[signed]

Šakiai District Chief Police Chief

The Reivytytis File tells us the method, not the scale, of the concentration and expropriation of Lithuania's Jews, paving the way for their annihilation: less than a twentieth of Lithuania's Jewish community is reflected in the file's correspondence. It informs even less about the pain and desolation of the victims as they awaited their end, hidden behind the official verbiage and statistics. But it does provide insight into the details of the machinery which was set into motion during the very first bureaucratized stage of the Final Solution, a program of extermination which

in concept, execution and scale eclipsed both the communal violence of the first days and the lightning blows of the mass killings of July. Above all, the file presents the story of obedient men, rural policemen in the main, who carried out orders which were instrumental in initiating a project of mass death. Undoubtedly, the Lithuanian police officials whose signatures and curt reports grace the Reivytis File, played an important role in the genocide. The fact that no Lithuanian political or police institution could have prevented the mass murder of the Jews in no way mitigates their responsibility. While the Jewish community was doomed, more individuals could have been saved. In fact, even the most Nazified collaborators were to later admit their shame at the involvement of Lithuanians as butchers and henchmen: if the Germans insist on a *judenfrei* Baltic, some implied, let *them* do it,²⁵⁶ a cynical attitude of indifferent passivity which further incriminates those who actively assisted in the enterprise.

While useful in understanding the perpetrators' systematic approach to their task, no account of the police operations which corralled the victims of the summer and fall of 1941 can capture the horror, the sights and sounds of this unprecedented massacre which took place in Lithuania's cities, towns and villages during the summer and autumn of 1941. While we have a number of detailed accounts of the largest of these crimes, the mass killings in Kaunas in October 1941, less is known concerning the provinces. By examining two cases of Lithuania's Holocaust in smaller towns, we can better appreciate the human face of the genocide.

GENOCIDE IN JURBARKAS AND UTENA: CASE STUDIES OF TWO PROVINCIAL TOWNS

In further research of the persecution of Jews and the killings in a small town Jurbarkas near the border, and in a far remote Utena, we will also give a concise review of the prehistory of the events. Otherwise, it is impossible to establish what was the input to the crimes made by the Germans, and that by Lithuanians, and to understand the behaviour of the local Jews. Nevertheless, the attention gets focused on the question, whether Lithuanians had launched the pogroms against the Jews even before the arrival of the Germans, and how this developed into the killings of Jews.

²⁵⁶ There are a number of examples of such thinking, most notably expressed in the diary of Zenonas Blynas, the Secretary General of the Lithuanian Nationalist Party (*Lietuvių nacionalistų partija*), LYA, F. 3377, Ap. 55, b. 235.

Killings of Jews in Jurbarkas

The small town of Jurbarkas is located on the bank of the river Nemunas, in the southwest of Lithuania, near the Lithuanian-German border; it belongs to the Raseiniai district, and to Šiauliai region. In this town, the Jews had been living since the 16th century, and by the end of 1940, there were over 1,300 of them, while the total population accounted for 4,400 – thus, almost one third of the population were the Jews.²⁵⁷ The Jewish community of Jurbarkas was very active. In 1790, it erected a big and outstanding wooden synagogue.²⁵⁸ They fostered strong religious and worldly traditions, related to the activities in schools, sports associations, scout movement, political parties, and successful trade and manufactory businesses. Even after the World War I, after the establishment of the independent state of Lithuania, there would not exist any exceptional problems related to the coexistence of different ethnic groups.²⁵⁹ However, at the end of the twenties, some relevant difficulties started emerging. Due to nationalist motives, the Smetona's regime aimed at Lithuanianizing the economy. In 1931, 69 of all 73 shops in Jurbarkas were run by the Jews; there were also many Jewish tradesmen; all light industry enterprises, except for one, too, were owned by the Jews. During the nationalist policy implemented in the economy, bigger trade firms were forced to close down, their functions were adopted by the semi state cooperatives.²⁶⁰ The smaller shops owned by Jews also did appear in tough situation, which resulted in the increase of the already active Zionist movement.²⁶¹ One of the town parks was named Tel Aviv, and the Jewish school was named after the name of Theodor Herzl. The political orientation of the Jews in Jurbarkas may be seen from the distribution of the votes during the Seimas (the Parliament) election in the twenties: 62 percent of all Jews holding the suffrage voted for the Zionist parties, 26 percent – for democratic, and 12 percent – for religious parties. Zionism

²⁵⁷ By 26 December 1940, there had been 1,319 Jews registered in the town. Cf. as to the data of the summer of 1941 (undated). LCVA, R 1753-3-13, l. 28. Other numbers have been provided by Arūnas Bubnys in "Mažieji Lietuvos žydų getai", p. 166. For the history of the Jews of Jurbarkas until the German occupation, see: HaKehillot, Pinkas. "Lita (The Book of Communities. Lithuania)". Jerusalem, 1996, pp. 324-329.

²⁵⁸ Cf. the photos of the synagogue in Jurbarkas, its artistic interior and the Jewish cemeteries. Oshri, Ephraim. "Annihilation of Lithuanian Jewry". New York, 1995, p. 286; HaKehillot, Pinkas. "Lita" p. 325.

²⁵⁹ Cf. HaKehillot, Pinkas. "Lita", pp. 326-328.

²⁶⁰ Cf. HaZikaron, Sefer. "Jurburg (The Book of Recollections. Jurbarkas)". Jerusalem, 1991, pp. 55-67.

²⁶¹ Cf. HaZikaron, Sefer. "Jurburg", pp. 123-128 (Hislovitzs' family); pp. 129-144 (Petrikanskys' family); pp. 163-166 (Franks' family).

was apparently prevailing. In the thirties, there would occur periodical sallies against the Jewish middle class. For instance, a petrol station which was run by the Jews was set on fire; sometimes young Lithuanian nationalists would attack the Jews on the street. When in summer 1940, it turned out that the Soviet Union would annex Lithuania, the local Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) and Lithuanians set on fire the mill owned by Jews, and the fire from the mill sprung on some other Jewish houses.²⁶²

The first politically motivated, methodical, and hard attack experienced by the Jewish community was that in the autumn of 1940, after the Soviet Union had annexed Lithuania. All big enterprises and banks were nationalised, all cultural and political organisations were banned. Some Jews were assigned in new state and party offices. In the mid-June 1941, the Soviets deported no less than 60 persons from Jurbarkas, including quite a few Jewish families – 29 persons in total.²⁶³

In the early morning of 22 June 1941, the town was captured by the German Wehrmacht. There was hardly any time to escape. The local Commandant, Captain Baar ordered that all should obey orders of the Lithuanian Burgomaster who was subordinate to him. Sabotage and plunders would be subject to death penalty.²⁶⁴ The town Burgomaster was a Lithuanian Jurgis Gepneris. In the autumn of 1942, he Germanized his surname and became Höpfner. During the Soviet period, he had been in charge of public catering institutions (*öffentliche Küchen*) and supported the local communists, yet the Germans knew nothing about this.²⁶⁵

²⁶² Cf. HaZikaron, Sefer. “Jurburg”, pp. 167-170 (the story of Rachel Hess-Greenstein whose house was burnt down).

²⁶³ The message of the Burgomaster Gepner sent to the Germans misses the names of the Jewish families deported. Cf. the list [undated], LCVA, 1753-1-3, l. 212. Meanwhile, the previous message sent to the head of the district so far contained references to some deportations of Jews. Cf. the document of 21 August 1941. LCVA, 1753-3-13, l. 22. The most comprehensive list provided by now is that by Rūta Puišytė. Vilnius University, Thesis (1997) on Killings of the Jews in Jurbarkas, p. 23 ff (author’s copyright).

²⁶⁴ Cf. message of the local Commandant of 24 June 1941. LCVA, 1753-3-12. In July 1941, for a few weeks the military authorities had taken over the future 323rd police battalion, Commander of which was the Security Police Major Bernhard Griese. Cf. Griese’s inetrrogation (Vernehmung Griese) of 1 October 1959, Lechthaler’s file (Lechthaler-Verfahren), Kasel’s office of the prosecutor (Staatsanwaltschaft Kassel), 3a Ks 1/61 and 3 Js. 72/60, vol. 1, pp. 75-79. The security division had the 2nd police reserve *battalion* attached to it, incorporating it into the western part of the division, and supported by the 11th police reserve battalion. Cf. military structure of the 281st security division (Kriegsgliederung der Sich.Div. 281), 5 June 1941; KTB of the 281st security division Ic officer (Kriegstagebuch Sich.Div. 281, Ic). NARA, T 315, Roll 1870, l. 89; order, dated 14 July 1941; KTB of the 281st security division Ia officer. Ibid., Roll 1869, l. 753.

²⁶⁵ Cf. HaZikaron, Sefer. “Jurburg”, p. 388.

After the beginning of the war, the key executive power in Jurbarkas belonged to the Lithuanian rebels, the so-called partisans. They were comprised of the representatives of most different layers of society: teachers, school and university students, one owner of a kiosk, and a well-known nationalist. They acted under the leadership of a gymnasium teacher Ausiukaitis. The quickly reorganized Lithuanian police were under the command of a 32 year-old gymnasium teacher Mykolas Levickas. Simultaneously, he was also the Germans' translator, informer, and the agent, as well as 26 year-old policeman Mykolas Urbonas and few others.²⁶⁶ It was on 26 June that the Germans started controlling the distribution of the arms. Starting mid-July, the local partisans became a militarised organisation subordinate to the police.²⁶⁷

On 23 June, the Chief of closest German border police station in Smalininkai (Ger. *Schmalleningken*), SS Head Squad Leader (Ger. *Hauptscharführer*) and the secretary for criminal affairs, Gerhard Carsten went to Jurbarkas and had a meeting with the local Chief Officer, Levickas and with other ten Lithuanians at the place of Levickas' friend, the priest. A local committee was founded.²⁶⁸ Carsten ordered to make the list of local communists and Jews.²⁶⁹ He chose the Jewish cemetery as the place for massacres.

The SS Head Squad Leader (Ger. *Hauptscharführer*) Carsten was subordinate to the Tilsit (*Tilžė*) Gestapo. It also did control that German Security Police and the SD squad, which together with the Klaipėda town police (*Schutzpolizei*) department, on 24 June 1941, executed the first mass killings of Jews in the Soviet Union. By approbation of EG A Commander Stahlecker, they shot 201 Jews from Gargždai. Furthermore, Stahlecker had assigned the Chief of the Tilsit (*Tilžė*) Gestapo, Major (Ger. *Sturmbannführer*) Hans-Joachim Böhme to perform "all necessary

²⁶⁶ Cf. interrogation of the customs inspector, Georg Oselies (Vernehmung des Zollinspektors Georg Oselies) of 3 April 1957. Fischer-Schweder's file (Fischer-Schweder-Verfahren), vol. 11, l. 2821; Indictment against Fischer-Schweder (Anklageschrift gegen Fischer-Schweder) of 25 June 1957, Ibid., l. 3472 ff.

²⁶⁷ Cf. order of the lay judge general of Šiauliai (*Landrat*), No. 3, passed on 13 July 1941, R 1099-1-1, l. 33.

²⁶⁸ Cf. as well, the exhaustive interrogations of Gerhard Carsten (die ausführlichen Vernehmungen Gerhard Carsten), of 5 February 1957 – 12 February 1957. Fischer-Schweder's file (Fischer-Schweder-Verfahren), vol. 9, l. 2199-2240; exhaustive interrogation of the local customs inspector Georg Oselies (die ausführliche Vernehmung des dortigen Zollinspektors Georg Oselies) of 3 April 1957. Ibid., vol. 11, l. 2818-2827; Krumbach's interrogation (Vernehmung Krumbach) of 17 October 1958, ZStL, II 207 AR-Z 51/58, vol. 1, l. 111 ff, 127 ff, 130, 132; detailed description in the indictment, 12 August 1960. Krumbach and Gerke's file (Verfahren gegen Krumbach und Gerke), Ibid., vol. I, l. 62-64.

²⁶⁹ Cf. Hans-Joachim Böhme's interrogation (Vernehmung Hans-Joachim Böhme) of 18 December 1959, StA Ludwigsburg, EL 322, vol. 7, l. 1564.

operations” in the area of 25 kilometres long.²⁷⁰ On this basis, on 25 June 1941, there were 214 Jewish men and one woman murdered in Kretinga, and in two days, 111 Jewish men in Pallanga. After those first killings, an additional operative squad was formed, which meant joint operations of Wemarcht units, Klaipėda border police, and the Tilsit (*Tilžė*) Gestapo; the latter was under the leadership of Hans-Joachim Böhme, known for his thirst for fame.²⁷¹

On 4 July 1941, Heydrich officially deputed large powers to all operative squads to perform the “cleansing operations” in the Lithuanian borderline, though before it had been planned to include only the Special Squad 1b of Erich Ehrlinger, and later, the Operative Squad 3 (EK3) of Karl Jäger. In order to ensure the free movement of the operative groups and operative squads – as Heydrich had stated – and to facilitate their work, the state police (Gestapo) units “were authorised to perform cleansing operations [...] on the recently occupied territories which are across their borderlines.”²⁷²

By October 1941, they had killed more than 5,200 people in the Lithuanian borderline area.²⁷³ This figure covers the killings in Jurbarkas too.

On 3 July 1941, the squad of the Tilsit (*Tilžė*) German Gestapo Subdivision arrived here and shot about 250 Jewish men and 70 Lithuanians; as to the data of the German Security Police – 322 persons in total, of them 5 women.²⁷⁴ The German police arrested most victims recorded in the lists, and also plundered some valuable stuff. The Chief of Tilsit (*Tilžė*) Gestapo, SS *Major* (*Ger. Sturmbannführer*) Hans-Joachim Böhme ordered to arrest 60 more Jewish men and take

270 Telegram of the Tilžė Gestapo to RSHA (Fernschreiben Staatspolizeistelle Tilsit an RSHA) of 1 July 1941, ZStL, Sammlung UdSSR, Ordner 245 Ag, Nr. 254-257, l. 2-5.

271 Cf. Dieckmann. “Krieg”, pp. 292-298.

272 The message of as far as 27 June 1941: “The Tilsit Gestapo is organising the cleansing operation in the borderline of 25 kilometres length.” EM No. 6, 27 June 1941, BA, R 58/214, l. 6. Special order No. 6 by Heydrich to the commanders of operative groups (Einsatzbefehl Nr. 6 von Heydrich an die Chefs der Einsatzgruppen), 4 July 1941. Special Moscow Archive 500-5-3, l. 48; EM No. 11, 3 July 1941, BA, R 58/214, p. 7.

273 EM No. 26, 18-7-1941, BA, R 58/214. On the first killings in the borderline area see also: Kwiet. “Rehearsing for Murder”; Matthäus. “Jenseits der Grenze”; Longerich. “Politik”, pp. 326-331; Tauber. “Garsden”. The indictment published in: “Justiz und NS-Verbrechen”, vol. 15. Cf. IMT, vol. 37, p. 703.

274 Cf. EM No. 19, 11 July 1941. Bundesarchiv Berlin, (BA), R 58/214, l. 123.

them to the place of massacre. Among those, there were two agents of Carsten too. He released one of them, the Lithuanian Matulevičius, but not the Jewish Berlowitz.²⁷⁵

During the shootings, some Jews attacked their killers; yet, this was not mentioned in the reports to the Security Police in Berlin. For instance, Emil Max who had fled Klaipėda in 1939, the chevalier of the knight's cross of the WWI, he attacked the SS officers and injured one of them to the leg before he was hilled.²⁷⁶ SS Second Lieutenant (*Untersturmführer*) Wiechert who was in charge of the trench squad made some Jews beat each other before they were murdered.²⁷⁷ Two men were buried alive, and within the night they managed to dig themselves out of the pit. One of them, Antanas Leonavičius, testified against the killers after the war. Soon after, the Lithuanian partisans who were fighting against the Soviets killed him, as well as Povilas Striauka.²⁷⁸ Abel Vales managed to escape when the other victims were forced to dig pits.²⁷⁹

The Jewish victims killed on 3 July 1941 were the representatives of the local authorities.²⁸⁰ The lists were supposed to have recorded the names of these persons who were influential and educated. On the other hand, further searches of men in this locality imply that the German Security Police were intending to kill as many of them as possible. The Lithuanian victims included first of all those who really were working for the Soviet authority or were alleged as such.²⁸¹ Among the victims was one of Lithuania's best-known sculptors, Vincas Grybas.

²⁷⁵ Cf. Gerhard Carsten's interrogation (Vernehmung Gerhard Carsten) of 12 December 1956, StA Ludwigsburg, EL 322, vol. 6, l. 1537; interrogation of Alfred Krumbach from the Tilsit Gestapo, 2nd division (Vernehmung Alfred Krumbach aus Abt. II, Stapostelle Tilsit), dated 17 October 1958, ZStL, II 207 AR-Z 51/58, vol. 1, l. 102-104.

²⁷⁶ Cf. HaKehillot, Pinkas. "Lita", p. 328; Gerhard Carsten's interrogation (Vernehmung Gerhard Carsten) of 8-3-1957. StA Ludwigsburg, EL 322, vol. 9, l. 2297; interrogation of Alfred Krumbach from the Tilsit Gestapo, 2nd division (Vernehmung Alfred Krumbach aus Abt. II, Stapostelle Tilsit), dated 17 October 1958. ZStL, II 207 AR-Z 51/58, vol. 1, l. 105 ff.

²⁷⁷ Cf. Wilhelm Gerke's interrogation (Vernehmung Wilhelm Gerke) of 23 June 1958. StA Ludwigsburg, EL 322, vol. 21, l. 14; interrogation of Alfred Krumbach from the Tilsit Gestapo, 2nd division (Vernehmung Alfred Krumbach aus Abt. II, Stapostelle Tilsit), dated 17 October 1958. ZStL, II 207 AR-Z 51/58, vol. 1, l. 104, 109 ff; HaZikaron, Sefer. "Jurburg", p. 382.

²⁷⁸ Cf. Puišytė. "Ermordung", p. 19.

²⁷⁹ Cf. HaZikaron, Sefer. "Jurburg", pp. 419-428. In few months, Vales found shelter at some Lithuanian peasant's home, where he lived for two and a half years, hiding on the loft. The peasant would fee him, although before his neighbour, who had sheltered the Jews, was arrested and shot.

²⁸⁰ Cf. HaZikaron, Sefer. "Jurburg", pp. 389, 395, 404 ff.

²⁸¹ Names of 12 persons killed are given in: "Masinės žudynės", vol. 2, p. 208 ff. A wife of one of those who had been shot witnessed in court in 1947, *Ibid.*, p. 207 ff

To the contrary than during the earlier shootings, organised in the Lithuanian-German borderline by the Gestapo Tilsit Subdivision, in this case, the shootings were to be attended not by the police squad from the remote Klaipėda town, but by the police *battalion* from Tilsit because the local adjutant had informed the Tilsit SD about such interest.²⁸² However, the Tilsit police Chief Officer, Major Schulz objected this, thus the police units did not arrive. Therefore, this time the Security Police and Tilsit SD could not expect any help from the town policemen, and thus, had to shoot the people themselves assisted by the Lithuanian policemen and partisans. The valuable things robbed from the Jews served to cover food and drinks for the killers in Jurbarkas, in the same evening; then, later the German police used the money of the victims to pay for a week of vacations in the sea resort of Palanga.²⁸³ After these shootings in Raseiniai, the chief police officer asked to be discharged. On 7 July 1941, he was replaced by Povilas Mockevičius.²⁸⁴

The Secretary for Criminal Affairs, Carsten ordered the above mentioned policeman Urbonas to organise the protection of the Jews who still had been left alive: the relatives, the elderly people, and 50 more men with families who at first had been left alive as workforce. From the second day of the occupation the Jews were forced into works, supervised by the Jew Friedman, who was later killed too.²⁸⁵ The women were sewing and mending the German military uniforms.²⁸⁶

The Jews of Jurbarkas suffered a lot of brutal humiliations perpetrated by the Germans and Lithuanians.²⁸⁷ Like everywhere else, they were forced to wear the discriminating badge, were prohibited to walk on the pavements; only under certain conditions, they would be permitted to leave their homes. They also had to give away their radio sets. They were forced to destroy

²⁸² Cf. Werner Hersmann's interrogations (Vernehmungen Werner Hersmann) of 6 November 1956, 7 January 1957 and 19 January 1957, StA Ludwigsburg, EL 322, vol. 6, l. 1311-1317; 1728; 1774 ff; interrogations of the police chief adjutant of Tilsit town, Eugen Obremski (duplicate) (Vernehmung (Abschrift) des Adjutanten des Kommandeurs der Schutzpolizei in Tilsit, Eugen Obremski), Ibid., vol. 18, l. 4797. The town police Major, Bendzko was n command of the Tilžė police battalion, as it developed during the Helmut Macholl's interrogation (Vernehmung Helmut Macholl) on 12 December 1956. Ibid., vol. 6, l. 1472.

²⁸³ Cf. Interrogation of Wilhelm Gerke (Vernehmung Wilhelm Gerke) of 7 July 1958, StA Ludwigsburg, EL 322, vol. 21, pp. 61-63.

²⁸⁴ Cf. Bubnys. "Getai", p. 167.

²⁸⁵ Cf. Hazikaron, Sefer. "Jurburg", pp. 380 and 392.

²⁸⁶ Cf. Ibid., pp. 117-122 (Leipzigers' family).

²⁸⁷ Cf. Ibid., p. 404 ff; Oshri. "Annihilation", p. 287 ff

themselves the old wooden synagogue, and the small Jewish slaughterhouse, and then also to burn their scriptures and Toras; they were forced to dance and sing in front of the plaster busts and portraits of Stalin and Lenin, to swim in the Nemunas to “be baptised”.²⁸⁸ Germans were taking photos of such humiliations.

The Jews were constantly in shortage of food products. The Lithuanian government which following the order passed by the Germans at the end of June 1941 had to supply the civil inhabitants with food products, had significantly limited their sale to the Jews.²⁸⁹ The Jews could purchase only what would be left unsold in the evening. When at the end of July – beginning of August the German civil authorities were replaced by the military power, the Gebiet Commissariat (*Gebietskommissariat*) banned the Jews from shopping in the markets, alleging it as prevention from the “greater usury by the Jews, and procurement of goods and food products.”²⁹⁰ Only few shops would be open to them in the evening, from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. – in principle establishing the praxis which had existed so far. It was the military authorities which had fixed the minimum food ratio for Lithuanian Jews; two weeks before it passed an order that until 1 August 1941 there should be made the lists of persons who needed the supply of food products. The Jews would be recorded in a separate list. The head of Raseiniai district promulgated such order on 21 July.²⁹¹

The second killings of greater extent in Jurbarkas were perpetrated at the end of July – beginning of August; on 27 July, there were 45 elderly men together with the Jews from the nearby localities killed, and on 1 August – 105 elderly women.²⁹² By 21 August, there were still 684 Jews inhabiting in the town, of whom 64 Jews were in the forced labour. It is, however, impossible to develop what fate has befallen 200 Jews, who are missed comparing the numbers

²⁸⁸ Hazikaron, Sefer. “Jurburg”, pp 381, 388–390, cit. p. 388; Cf. Atamukas. “Juden”, p. 164.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Hazikaron, Sefer. “Jurburg”, p. 404.

²⁹⁰ Message of Šiauliai district Commissar, No. 4, 6 August 1941. Official Journal of the Commissar General, No. 2, 1941, p. 32.

²⁹¹ Letter of the head of Raseiniai district to all the burgomasters, dated 21 July 1941. LCVA, 1753-3-13, l. 4. Yet before, the military authorities had given an order to the whole district of Šiauliai to provide the lay judge general with the record books of food products. Cf. order of the lay judge general of Šiauliai, dated 8 July 1941. LCVA, R 1099-1-1, l. 15.

²⁹² Cf. Hazikaron, Sefer. “Jurburg”, p. 406. The dates and numbers of victims of those massacres as based on spoken testimonies. The documents of that time have not been found so far.

given in the documents.²⁹³ Some might have escaped, some might have hidden away; maybe there were some other killings too, which is hard to be established.

On 16 August, the Lithuanian government, encouraged by the Germans, adopted two more orders: all property owned by the Jews must be registered in the record, including that already expropriated by Lithuanians. Furthermore, the workforce, too, had to be recorded, indicating the professional skills.²⁹⁴ Three days before, on 13 August, the burgomasters of all Lithuanian towns and the district heads of Šiauliai region had a meeting with the Gebiet Commissar (*Gebietskommissar*) Hans Gewecke, who ordered them to establish ghettos in every town.²⁹⁵ After the war, the military Burgomaster Gepner witnessed that Gewecke had define the purpose of those small village ghettos – the Jews were to be isolated in them until they would be shot. The Jews of Jurbarkas were crowded in several houses in two streets; they would get to eat only some bread and cabbage. From Aleksas Grigalavičius²⁹⁶, who was working for the Raseiniai precinct EK3 stationed in Kaunas, the burgomaster Gepner learnt that he would not need to establish a regular ghetto, since the Jews would be killed soon anyway.²⁹⁷ There were meetings taking place between the responsible border police and the local Commandant's Office, the Chief Lieutenant Groschütz.²⁹⁸ Within three days, through 4 to 6 September, the Lithuanian police under the supervision of the Germans, murdered those Jews who were not needed for work – over 400 women and children; they were murdered under very brutal conditions, which were told after the war by some young women who had managed to escape the place of killings. By 12 September,

²⁹³ Cf. reply of the Burgomaster Gepner of 21 August 1941 to the letter of the Head of Raseiniai district, dated 16 August 1941. LCVA, 1753-3-13, l. 22. This file contains total five queries of the summer and autumn of 1941 about the composition of Jurbarkas people.

²⁹⁴ Cf. two letters of the lay judge general of Šiauliai, dated 16 August 1941. LCVA, R 1099-1-1, l. 134 ff.

²⁹⁵ The written order of the district Commissar regarding the ghettoisation, dated 14 August 1941, reached Jurbarkas on 27 August 1941. LCVA, 1753-3-4, l. 36-37R. In turn, the Lithuanian lay judge general sent letters to burgomasters as soon as 22 August 1941. Cf. *Ibid.*, l. 156.

²⁹⁶ On Aleksas Grigalavičius and his close relations with the SS Lieutenant Colonel (*Obersturmbannführer*) Joachim Hamann from EK3, see the duplicate of the record of Šiauliai district Commissariat in the file (*Abschrift eines Aktenvermerks des GBK Šiauliai*) (most likely prepared by the Commissar's political department Head Kurt Schrepfer), 9 September 1941, BA, R 90/146.

²⁹⁷ Cf. the testimonies of Gepner to the KGB, of 23 August 1945, publicised in: Puišytė. "Ermordung", p. 23 ff; Cf.

Bubnys. "Getai", p. 167, the ghettos were founded as far as in July. Cf. Dieckmann, Christoph. "Der Krieg", p. 321 ff

²⁹⁸ Interrogation of Carsten, the Chief of border police station of Smalininkai (*Vernehmung Carsten, Leiter GPP Schmallingken*) of 5 February 1957: Grigalavičius had obtained "important documents from the services of Kaunas police". StA Ludwigsburg, EL 322, vol. 9, l. 2217; Carsten's letter to Ulm's office of prosecutor (undated). *Ibid.*, l. 2265.

there were 272 Jews living so far; 73 of them were working.²⁹⁹ However, soon they were too killed by a small death squad from Kaunas, again with assistance of the local Lithuanian police. At the least 31 men were directly involved in shooting and torturing the Jews.³⁰⁰ By December 1941, there were only 2,900 inhabitants left out of more than 4,400. Approximately one third of population had been murdered.³⁰¹ The rest of the population enriched themselves at the Jewish assets: 245 pieces of land and 208 houses had been left without owners.³⁰² By the end of July, the Jewish property had already been portioned out to some state officials; for instance, their flats or cows; the furniture owned by Jews were sold out to other locals.³⁰³ Their shops were taken over by Lithuanians; many of them were given to Lithuanian policemen and activists. By the boundary of the vicinity, the sign “Jurbarkas is free of Jews” (*Georgenburg ist judenfrei*) was erected.³⁰⁴

²⁹⁹ Cf. stories of Leib Koniuchovskij recorded in a book: Hazikaron, Sefer. “Jurburg”, p. 392 ff; the story of Zvi Levith. *Ibid.*, p. 407 ff, first published in: Sudarski, Katzenelenbogen, Kisin (Eds.). “Lite”, book 1, pp. 1850–1854. The list of the executions perpetrated on the territory of EK3 compiled on 10 September 1941, lists 412 victims from Jurbarkas. The like is in the list made on 1 December 1941, however, it has an inaccurate record that by 6 September 1941, all the Jewish men, women, and their children had been killed there. BA, R 70 Sowjetunion 15, l. 80 ir l. 84. This is inconsistent with the piece of the list about the population of Jurbarkas given in Gepner’s letter sent on 12 September 1941 to the Head of Raseiniai district. LCVA, 1753-3-13, l. 58.

³⁰⁰ Puišytė. “Ermordung”. It mentions 31 persons who took part in the killings of the Jews in Jurbarkas, annex 3.

³⁰¹ Cf. reply of the Burgomaster Gepner of 24 December 1941 to the document of the Head of Raseiniai district of 14 December 1941. LCVA, 1753-3-13, l. 190. After the war, there were four mass cemeteries found in Jurbarkas and in its surroundings, where over 1,200 bodies had been buried: in the Jewish cemetery, in the village of Kalnėnai, in the forest of Bėrancynė, and in the forest of Šilainė, vol. 2, p. 400; statistical summary is provided by the *Gosudarstvennyj Archiv Russkaja Federacija* (hereafter GARF), 7021-94-427, l. 1 ff. An incomplete list with the names of victims is stored in the Jewish museum in Vilnius.

³⁰² Cf. the reply of the Burgomaster Gepner of 24 October 1941 to the letter of the Head of Raseiniai district, dated 9 October 1941. LCVA, 1753-3-13, l. 101; on 5 January 1942, the housing department of Jurbarkas obtained the list of houses which had before belonged to the Jews. Cf. LCVA, 1753-1-3, l. 3. Cf. the list of the nationalised and expropriated land property of Jews, with 107 names and addresses in it. *Ibid.*, l. 182 ff.

³⁰³ On the severance of the property, see LCVA, 1753-3-12. On 27 March 1942 and on 14 April 1942, the Burgomaster Gepner transferred to the special account J (Sonderkonto J) of the district Commissar, the “Reichskreditkasse” in the bank of Šiauliai, 2,908.82 Reich marks received by selling the Jews’ furniture. Cf. two Gepner’s letters to the Gebiet Commissar (*Gebietskommissar*) of Šiauliai, dated 1 April 1942 and 22 April 1942. LCVA, 1753-1-3, l. 260 and 279. On 14 October 1941. the Commissariat of Šiauliai district gave orders on relevant actions to the districts heads and burgomasters. (ZStL), Sammlung Verschiedenes, Ordner 109, l. 126.

³⁰⁴ Cf. the indictment against Fischer-Schweder (Anklageschrift gegen Fischer-Schweder), especially the one announced on 25 June 1957, l. 3472; StA Ludwigsburg, EL 322, l. 3472; interrogation of Julius Stanatas, employee of the Burgomaster Gepner (Vernehmung von Julius Stanat, Mitarbeiter von Bürgermeister Gepneris) of 9 June 1959. HStA Wiesbaden, Abt.461.32438, vol. 4, l. 1509.

There are known the names of 76 Jews who in different ways survived the occupational period.³⁰⁵ There were eight families in the surroundings of the town, which despite the threat of the death punishment to the entire family – as at the end of August 1941, the head of Raseiniai district had announced³⁰⁶ – would help the Jews.³⁰⁷

The happenings in Jurbarkas reveal that the initiative to execute the mass murders was that by the Germans, and that the killings took place in several stages. At first, methodically registered and killed were the state representatives of Jewish nationality, and as many Jewish men and other alleged supporters of the Soviet authority as possible. To be able to kill this group of people, the Germans requested the Lithuanian state officials and police officers, as well as the revolt committees to make relevant lists; the latter would usually undertake it willingly. Furthermore, the German Security Police forced registering as many Jews suitable for military service as possible, even if they no longer belonged to the authorities or were in no way related to the Soviet authorities. This purpose is proved by all further searches for Jewish men in Jurbarkas.

The next to be killed were the people who were useless as workforce. This accounted for one of the weakest groups: the elderly women and men; in other vicinities – often these, too, would include the orphans, and mental patients. Eventually, the workforce would be killed as well, if it was no longer needed for the military industry, or if it, according to the German occupants, was a threat to security. The involvement of the Lithuanian people in the persecutions and killing operations was of different character. The events in many other places developed in a similar way as in Jurbarkas. In preparations and executions of the killings, there would be vast cooperation enacted between different civil institutions and police services, both on German and on Lithuanian side. Many representatives of the Lithuanian regional and local authorities, as well as police, and civil persons, too, would share all tasks among them: to identify and determine upon the victims, to separate, and then isolate them, to plunder, and eventually, to kill. Though

³⁰⁵ About the members of 30 families who had survived and who had been killed, see: Ha-Zikaron, Sefer. “Jurburg”, pp. 186–221.

³⁰⁶ Cf. order of the Head of Raseiniai district, dated 29 August 1941. LCVA, 1753-3-4, l. 25.

³⁰⁷ Cf. Puišytė. “Ermordung”, pp. 25–28, refers to the research of the survivor, Chaim Jofė. Ibid., p. 25 gives the names of the Lithuanian families who had rendered help to the Jews; in two annexes, Puišytė gives the names of the Jews who survived. The farmer K. Blažys was shot in the spring of 1943, because he had been hiding M. Liubinaitė who managed in escaping the killings of 4-6 September 1941. The neighbour informed him on. Cf. Ibid., p. 26.

the initiative did not belong the Lithuanian side, it made use of the impunity possible due to the German anti-Semitic policy.

At the same time, there was some scope for individual actions too, both on German and Lithuanian side. The Chief of the Tilsit German police did not permit his units to take part in the massacres, even though his adjutant had been pressing on him strongly. The Chief officer of the Lithuanian police in Jurbarkas resigned from his office after the first shootings. Yet, more detailed circumstances are not available.

The Jews of Jurbarkas, had almost no time left for some kind of reaction, just as almost all the Jews of the province, due to the unanticipated brutal threat, sudden arrests, plunder and massacres. There was no space for collective arrangements; the Jews had been entrapped. They were deeply shocked by the extreme outbreak of the violence from Lithuanians, what was utterly unexpected to them. Some few Jews of Jurbarkas managed in escaping, some attempted to resist, yet, the majority saw the situation as desperate; there were possibilities neither to escape, nor to resist – the terror by the Germans and Lithuanians was excessive, and the environment – hostile beyond measure.

Within few hours, Jurbarkas fell into the hands of the Germans. All was enacted in a different way in Utena. The district and the town were captured only on the fifth day. What was the behaviour of the local Lithuanians, if they had not been controlled from the beginning by the German institution of the anti-Semitic nature?

Killings of the Jews in Utena district

The town of the district, Utena is located in the northeast of Lithuania, going on the main highway from Kaunas to Daugpilis (*Dünaburg*). Remote from the German-Lithuanian border, it is just a little more than ten kilometres from Latvia. There were approximately 115,000 people living in the district, of them, more than 10,000 lived in Utena, including 3 to 4 thousand Jews. As far as in the 19th century, the Jews accounted for 70-80 percent of the population of Utena, its settlements, and some other villages too. Due to bad economic situation of the tsarist Russia, as well to the political circumstances, many Jews were forced to leave, mostly for the South Africa, and the United States. Yet the most important turning point occurred during the World War I,

when most Jews left for Russia. Only two thirds of them returned, thus until the World War II constituting half of the population of such small towns as Molėtai and Anykščiai. The Jews were banned from purchasing any land, even during the agrarian reform after the establishment of an independent state of Lithuania. They were mostly involved in trades, crafts, and small businesses. In 1931, Jews owned 84 shops out of total 97, and 30 enterprises of light industry of the total 40; there were also 150 workshops run by the Jews in the town.³⁰⁸ Most people of other ethnicities in Utena were in farming, or worked in state and educational institutions. Most Jews were not prosperous. There were different Jewish schools, public, cultural and political organisations open.

In May 1941, the documents recorded the first units of partisans in the Utena district, mostly of anti-Semitic and anti-Bolshevik character. Yet, they received a large influx of members only during the first deportations on 13-14 June 1941 when most armed men escaped into the woods.³⁰⁹ Those men who until 1940 had mostly belonged to the Riflemen Union, heard on the radio that war had started; Kaunas was captured, and the Provisional Government proclaimed independence. The Lieutenant Antanas Patalauskas was in command of a group of 76 partisans. The Germans arrived to this location only after four days. By then continuous fights between the soviet units and anti-Soviet rebels were taking place. Both sides suffered losses. Dozens of people were arrested for their alleged sympathy with the Soviets. Meanwhile, in some localities, the rebels had taken over the authority before the arrival of the German Wehrmacht. Some places were burnt by the retreating Soviet Army and the NKVD units; other were burnt by the German bombs, including the Jewish neighbourhood of Utena. Young Lithuanians provided their assistance to the Germans as guides.³¹⁰ The rebels were guarding the main objects of the infrastructure, hunted the soldiers of the Red Army, partially with the purpose of taking away their arms. They released prisoners some of whom had belonged to the anti-Soviet underground and had been arrested before the beginning of the war. Most Lithuanians received the news about the war with the

³⁰⁸ Cf. Pinkas, "HaKehillot", p. 121 ff; about the life of the Jews of Utena in 1921–1936, see: Lown. "Memories".

³⁰⁹ First report, 7 August 1941, NARA, RG 226, M 1499, Roll 258, l. 17; message of the Lithuanian KGB Chief Gladkov, dated 21 June 1941; referring to Škirpa's "Aufstand", p. 269 ff.

³¹⁰ Cf. the story of Valerija Žemaitytė. Vanagas. "Nenusigrėžk", p. 101; Bubnys. "Lietuva", p. 43.

Lithuanian flags up, ringing the church bells and enjoying it immensely.³¹¹ In the notes sent to Kaunas, the partisans were referring to themselves as to the peasants-partisans, and to their activities as to the uprising of peasants against the Bolshevik authorities.³¹² By 27 June 1941, there were 484 men registered as partisans, who had the Germans' permit for carrying arms.³¹³ After some encouraging announcements on the radio, most officials and policemen moved back to their offices where they had been working until 1940. Starting 25 June, a *Voldemarist* and Gestapo agent, Malinauskas again became the chief police officer of Utena.³¹⁴ The first Burgomaster of Utena was Žukas, considered a supporter of Smetona.

In the first days of war, plenty of refugees arrived to the district from the territories more to the west of Lithuania. Lithuanian partisans arrested most of them. They were confined in savage conditions, for instance, in the synagogue of Anykščiai, guarded by Lithuanians; then they would usually be sent back to their hometowns.³¹⁵ The entire way leading from Kaunas to the northeast, passing Ukmergė and Utena, to Daugpilis, would be full of the retreating Red Army soldiers and refugees. On this stretch of the road, yet unspecified, but most likely a significant number of Jews was killed by the rebels.³¹⁶

On 26 June 1941, the 4th group of tanks of the 56th army corps started for Daugpilis passing Utena on the way.³¹⁷ Yet before, the attacks against the Jews had been launched in the entire district. The Lithuanian rebels would break in the Jews' houses, search and plunder them, also torturing the house owners – these were the first victims killed. On the very first day of the

³¹¹ Cf. the reports by the evacuated Soviet functionaries, of September 1942, on the first days of the war in Molėtai, Užpaliai and Daugaliai, published in: Brandišauskas. "1941 m.", pp. 319–325, 347 ff; the reports by the Lithuanian rebels, of June 1941, on Alanta, Molėtai and the Utena district. Ibid., pp. 156-162.

³¹² Cf. certificates to the partisans at the beginning of the war. LCVA, R 1652-1-1, l. 12.

³¹³ Cf. the lists of LCVA, R 1652-1-1, l. 1-6, published in: Brandišauskas. "1941 m.", pp. 163–174; order No. 1 of the Commandant of Utena town, Captain Benediktas Kaletka, of 26 June 1941. LCVA, R 1444-1-9, l. 56.

³¹⁴ Cf. message of the Lithuanian Security Police Chief Malinauskas of 16 March 1943. LCVA, R 1399-1-9, l. 179. Then Malinauskas was redeployed to Švenčionys, replacing him by Mikas Kazlauskas. On 24 September 1941, as the Security Chief appointed was Jonas Čėsna, who had been working with the officers Grikepelis and Karosas. The first Security Chief was Bronius [?]*sevičius*. Cf. his order regarding the persecution of communists of 13 July 1941. "Masinės žudynės", vol. 2, p. 310.

³¹⁵ Cf. Gelpernas. "Sinagogoje", pp. 86–88; V. Butėnas' testimonies of 7 June 1951. "Masinės žudynės", vol. 2, p. 310 ff; reference of the refugee from Jonava about Utena. Jerušalmi. "Pinkas Šavli", p. 335.

³¹⁶ Cf. Ganor. "Leben", pp. 39–51; Tory. "Holocaust", p. 6.

³¹⁷ Cf. Ia KTB of the 4th group of tanks (KTB Panzergruppe 4, Ia), BA-MA, RH 21-4/14.

war, a young Jewish woman was raped and then murdered.³¹⁸ The arrests have started, first of all, of the so-called Jewish intelligentsia, the Communists, the Komsomol and the alleged supporters of the Soviet regime.³¹⁹ Using the files of the deserted institutions, a list was made of the suspected persons with notes about them.³²⁰

Throughout July of 1941, the local Commandant's Offices which were often changing, would assign the teams of the 691st military gendarmerie division to assist the German military authorities in Utena.³²¹ After the arrival of the German occupants, the anti-Semitic policy was systemised. The Jews were forced into humiliating works. They would be ordered to search for mines; some would be blown.³²² Within the few days, all the Jewish houses were marked with a sign "the Jew" and thus could become the object of outrage by Lithuanians or by the Germans. The plunder of the Jewish property and violence perpetrated against them suddenly became unpunishable. The majority of Jewish men were confined in prisons. The three synagogues and the chapels were desecrated; the rabbis would refuse to burn the Toras. Then they would be tortured in public, and severely mutilated. The destroyed places of worship were turned into prisons where the Jews, the refugees, the Communists and the Komsomol youth would be locked.³²³

On the morning of 14 July 1941, the Lithuanian town authorities passed an order under which all the Jews had to leave the town by the noon, and if there were be any left, they would be shot. Within a few hours, the Jews had to be ready to go to the Šilinės forest which was beyond the bounds of the town; there they were registered and had to give away valuable things.

³¹⁸ Cf. reference of Domicelė Kunčiniėnė. Vanagas, p. 111; HaKehillot, Pinkas, p. 154.

³¹⁹ Cf. Vanagas. "Nenusigrėžk", p. 47; HaKehillot, Pinkas, p. 124.

³²⁰ Cf. Rukšėnas. "Politika", p. 137 with reference to LCVA, R 715-1-1, l. 129.

³²¹ 862 OK (OK 862) (7 July 1941 – 16 July 1941), II 349 OK (16 July 1941 – 20 July 1941); II 350 OK (from 20 July 1941). Cf. KTB of the 281st defence division's Ia officer (KTB Sich.Div. 281, Ia); orders, dated 16 July 1941 and 19 July 1941. NARA, RG 242, T 315, Roll 1869, l. 745 ff; activity reports of the 7th branch of the 281st defence division (Tätigkeitsbericht Sich.Div. 281, Abt. VII), 10 July 1941. NARA, RG 242, T 315, Roll 1870, l. 498. Hardly for a week (10-15 July), the office of the 281st defence division was located in Utena. Cf. KTB of the 281st defence division (KTB Sich.Div. 281), 4th activity report (Tätigkeitsbericht IVa), 25 March 1941 – 31 December 1941. NARA, RG 242, T 315, Roll 1869, l. 5.

³²² Cf. reference of the witness Tzodok Bleiman. Oshry. "Annihilation", p. 268.

³²³ Cf. order by the Security Chief of Utena on confinement of 30 men of Jewish nationality in the synanogue, dated 14 April 1941. LCVA, R 715-1-1, l. 2; 12 arrested, names of two Jews among them. Ibid., l. 19; Bubnys. "Getai", p. 176 ff.

The press and the radio announced that Utena was the first town of Lithuania which was „free of the Jews“ (*judenrein*).³²⁴

For more than two weeks, nearly 2,000 Jews were confined in the forest suffering the dirt, adverse weather conditions and the taunting of the Lithuanian guards. There was hardly anything to eat. The younger were forced to work for the whole days. Again, there was made a list of all men and women aged 17 to 55.³²⁵ During the two shooting operations of larger scale of the 31 July and 7 August 1941 in the Rašės forest which was three kilometres away, 718 Jewish men, 103 Jewish women and three other persons were killed.³²⁶ The German and Lithuanian police would kill the Jews in the presence of the local Lithuanian officials; two times there came from Kaunas, the so-called Hamann's "flying squad" (*Rollkommando Hamann*). Zadok Bleiman and Kalman Katz attacked the German riflemen. Katz was killed, while Bleiman succeeded in escaping. Later, he had a chance to speak about the mass killings.³²⁷ In two weeks, there was a ghetto established haphazardly in Utena where the Jews lived under miserable conditions.³²⁸

On 29 August 1941, in the Rašė forest, shot dead were those who managed to survive by then: the elderly men, women and children from Utena and its surroundings; from Utena and Molėtai alone – 582 men, 1,731 women and 1,469 children. This time, the local killers received help of the Lithuanian units from other locations, and, most likely, of several Germans, led by Hamann, from the Lithuanian Security Police leadership, and of the third squad of the Lithuanian auxiliary police battalion.³²⁹ The partisan unit under the leadership of Patalauskas were in different ways involved in the anti-Semitic policy. They would arrest the Jews, bring them to the forest of Šilinės, also acted in founding the ghetto in Utena; they appointed A. Jodėnas the

³²⁴ Oshry. "Annihilation", p. 268.

³²⁵ Musja Burštenaitė survived and on 16 March 1945 she reported to the soviet Commission 1944 about this forest "ghetto". GARF, 7021-94-433, l. 56-57R.

³²⁶ The list of executions so far perpetrated on the territory of EK3, made on 10 September 1941, BA, R 70 Sowjetunion 15, l. 78: 31 July: 235 men, 16 women, 1 Lithuanian communist, 1 killer-recidivist having enacted the plunderings (256); 7 August: 483 men, 87 women, 1 Lithuanian.

³²⁷ Oshry. "Annihilation", pp. 268-271, Pinkas HaKehillot, p. 124 ff.

³²⁸ Cf. Bubnys. "Getai", p. 177.

³²⁹ On 26-31 August, the 3rd squad of the 2nd Lithuanian police *battalion* from Kaunas was implementing the "mission", while the murders enacted in the district of Utena in August, recorded in the reports of the security police chief would be ascribed to Hamann's squad. Cf. the order of the auxiliary police *battalion*, No. 68, here referring to the copy from SWC, No. 59/60; during the killings in the neighbouring township Anykščiai, the "activists" from Šiauliai had to take part in it. Vanagas. "Nenusigrėžk", p. 47.

Commandant of the ghetto, and guarded the killing places. At the beginning of September it was dissolved.³³⁰

In 1944, the special commission of the Soviets found the bodies of approximately 9,000 victims in eight mass burial sites there.³³¹ The forest of Rašė has become the biggest spot of extermination of the Jews in the district of Utena.

In this location, a kilometre away from Anykščiai and Molėtai, on the same day, 29 August 1941, the Lithuanian units under the command of the Germans, again killed 1,500 and 700 victims respectively.

The mass massacres of Anykščiai when approximately 2,000 Jews had been killed, also started from arresting and plundering, which amplified after the arrival of the German Wehrmacht.³³² The local Jews and the refugees were confined in prisons, synagogues, and schools where they were victimized by the Lithuanian guards for two weeks. There were tens of victims, plenty cases of rape. The local priest aimed, though without a result, that the violence against the Jews would be terminated.³³³

After the non-local Jews were discharged, the rest, just like in Utena, had to move to the nearby forest and live there for entire weeks. At the end of July 1941, first men, and after a month, all the rest, were shot on the Liudiškės (Ger. *Hasenberg*) hill; before they had been shortly taken to the local improvised ghetto. When the rebels in Molėtai learnt about the beginning of the war, the arrests of young men, forced labour, and the plunders started immediately.³³⁴ The first weeks resulted in around 60 victims; the arrested would be taken to Utena where they were subjected to the fate of the local prisoners. In the second half of August, all the Jews of Molėtai were confined in the synagogue, and on 29 August 1941, they were shot nearby.³³⁵

³³⁰ Cf. Bubnys. "Getai", p. 177.

³³¹ The act of 15 November 1944. GARF, 7021-94-433, l. 1-2R. Testimonies of the witnesses about the Jews' journey to the killing spot. Ibid., l. 1R.

³³² Cf. Pinkas, "HaKehillot", pp. 151-155; reference of Leib Koniuchowski, closely consistent to the recollections of the survivor, Motl, pp. 150-241; GARF, 7021-94-433, l. 1R-2, about Molėtai too.

³³³ Cf. Bubnys. "Getai", p. 71.

³³⁴ Cf. Pinkas, "HaKehillot", pp. 374-377.

³³⁵ Cf. Bubnys. "Getai", pp. 74-77; Eidintas. "Byla", p. 140 ff.

There were also some straggled attempts to escape from the shooting places, however, only few succeeded. They did not manage to survive either in the contrary surroundings for a longer time either.³³⁶

The German institutions were in command of the killings: at first, the local Commandant's Office (OK) of the German Wermacht, and from the beginning of August 1941 – the civil authorities of Šiauliai Commissariat (*Gebietskommissariat*), in cooperation, and on occasions, in disagreement – with the joint Security Police EK2, EK3 and SD squads.³³⁷ On 10 September 1941, the district Commissar, Hans Gewecke was boasting to the Commissar General von Renteln that following his instructions “nearly all the districts have been cleansed off the Jews” and that “the Jewish question in Šiauliai Commissariat (*Gebietskommissariat*) was considered with necessary intensity and national socialist rigour.” Saying so he meant the districts of Rokiškis, Panevėžys, Kretinga, Raseiniai, Biržai, Mažeikiai, Telšiai, Tauragė, Utena and Zarasai.³³⁸

On 4 July 1941, the local media, then censored by the Germans, called to support the Germany's war and “to clean the homeland from the Bolsheviks, the Jews, and from other traitors of the Lithuanian nation.”³³⁹

The killings of Jews were completed in these districts at the end of August. Then, on 2 September 1941, the local Commandant's Office of Utena promulgated an order that within two weeks the former Lithuanian partisans should be disarmed; so this was enacted.³⁴⁰ Encouraged by the local German Commandant, the German Security Police requested the Head of the district, Pranas Grebliauskas and the Burgomaster Žukas to be discharged, the latter to be replaced by the partisan leader and Lithuanian army Lieutenant, Antanas Palauskas, requesting to dismiss the

³³⁶ Cf. farewell letter written by father and the son, the Natelovič, from the prison of Molėtai, to their relatives, on 21 December 1941. Igud Jozei Lita Archive, No. 3181. On 29 August 1941, they had managed to escape, but in December 1941, they were captured again, and then were in the row for death execution. They wrote they knew “how the world looked without Jews in it”. Cf. the arrest of the family which had escaped from Molėtai at the end of 1941, performed by the Utena security body on 31 January 1942. LCVA, R 715-1-2, l. 30-41.

³³⁷ For the role of the local commandant's office, see: Rukšėnas. “Politika”, p. 115; Zadok Bleiman, the witness of mass killings in Utena of 29 August 1941, pointed that the Burgomaster was standing as a specator near the mass grave. Oshry, p. 271.

³³⁸ The letter of the Šiauliai district Commissar to the Lithuanian Commissar General, 10 September 1941, BA, R 90/146.

³³⁹ *The liberated inhabitant of Panevėžys* of 4 July 1941, published in: “Masinės žudynės”, vol. 1, p. 51.

³⁴⁰ Zarasai Self-defence Chief's letter to all commanders of partisans, of 2 September 1941. LCVA, R 1106-2-18, l. 82. Then, there is the remark made by hand by Norkus on the implementation, 15 September 1941.

police officers too.³⁴¹ The reason for such request was to benefit from the Jewish property, which the Germans were willing to appropriate themselves. Nevertheless, at the end of 1943, Žukas became the head of Utena district.³⁴² The earlier head of the district, Pranas Grebliauskas was arrested on 14 August 1941, and accused for not giving over the Jewish property, and for the embezzlement of the Jewish things.³⁴³ The Lithuanian activists would most often plunder the Jewish flats during the searches.³⁴⁴

The criminal imagery in the district of Utena is very similar to that of Jurbarkas. Yet, here one had more time for larger scale and more brutal sallies against the Jews which turned into the murders, plunders, and humiliation. From the very first days, the arrests became a frequent occurrence. Within a few weeks, the Jews were deprived of all their property, being isolated and forced to live under miserable conditions; only few received some help from the Lithuanian friends. The police and rebels were led by radical nationalists who yet before the war had been in close contact the National Socialist Germany. The fact that the Burgomaster Žukas did not belong to the right radical side, but followed the Christian democratic and conservative concepts, did not have any influence to the course of persecution and massacre of Jews.

Nevertheless, the German initiative to kill off all the inhabitants of Jewish nationality is obvious; so evident, too, is the prevailing willingness of the Lithuanian government and police for collaboration, as well as the “hostile neutrality” characteristic to the non-Jews. The disapproval and rage against the Soviet occupation in this region manifested as far as in the spring of 1941. Then the first anti-Soviet underground groups were founded. The deportations of 13-14 June 1941 also did result in certain outcome – an influx of men in the forests ready for a revolt.

Referring back to the questions raised at the beginning, about the initiative of the persecution of Jews, the comparison of Jurbarkas and Utena shows that the persecutions and massacres in these towns, despite all the different circumstances, do not differ much. There was merely no time for the initiative of the Lithuanians in Jurbarkas, while there was enough of it in

341 Cf. Joachim Hamann’s document to the Security Police Chief, Karl Jäger, of 31 August 1941. LCVA, R 1399-1-9, l. 278; Jäger’s letter to the Commissar General, von Renteln, dated 3 September 1941. Ibid., R 1399-1-7, l. 89.

342 Cf. Bubnys. “Lietuva”, p. 396.

343 Cf. Bubnys. “Lietuva”, p. 396; EM (Ereignismeldung) No. 154, 12 January 1942, BA, R 58/220, l. 78.

344 Activity report of the 7th branch of the 281st defence division (Tätigkeitsbericht Sich.Div. 281, Abt. VII), prepared on 27 July 1941. NARA, RG 242, T 315, Roll 1870, l. 522.

Utena. Before the arrival of the Germans, there were several incidents of murders and rapes in Utena, though there does not exist any evidence about large-scale Lithuanian-led campaign of killing the local Jews. The German initiative and command were needed, still, the Germans could rely on great willingness of the respective representatives of the Lithuanian government and police to assist. The majority of Lithuanian population saw the Jews as collectively deprived of their human rights: right for the entity of body, right for the immunity of home and property, and eventually, right to be alive. Most of the Jewish population silently accepted the deaths of all their children, women and men. Thus, such reaction was enough that the German occupants and the resolute minority of the right radicals, and the rather anti-Semitic minded officers, though they did not belong to the radical right, would be given freedom to slaughter the whole Jewish communities. Almost in all cases, two groups of people would be directly present in the killings: first, the permanent death squads of the German and Lithuanian police, which had been formed in few weeks and would systematically go everywhere; second, the local public (order) police, and the partisans who would often be turned into auxiliary police. On most occasions, the power of control and that of supreme order here belonged not to the police, but to the political authority.

DOCUMENTING DESTRUCTION: THE JÄGER REPORTS AND THE MORTAL BLOW OF THE LATE SUMMER AND FALL OF 1941

The Reivytis File affords a partial, albeit insightful, glimpse into the workings of the concentration and expropriation of the Jews, while the cases of Jurbarkas and Utena provide us a detailed a vivid image of the genocidal process, including the final destruction. Karl Jäger's infamous account of the genocide, on the other hand, gives us an overall view of the annihilation of Lithuania's Jews. Unlike the little-known Lithuanian police file based on Order No. 3, the Jäger documents are among the most cited sources of the Final Solution. While the EK3 report to Berlin of 1 December 1941 is the best known, this was the colonel's second account of the genocide, his first filed on 10 September 1941, as the annihilation of the Jews in the provinces was in full sway.

In September Jäger reported that “partisans” had killed an estimated 4,000 Jews in pogroms, of whom nearly 800 had perished “during the time of EK1b,” that is, before EK3 took control in Kaunas. Since the massacres at the Lietūkis complex as well as the killings in Vilijampolė during the last week of June occurred during Ehrlinger’s watch, it seems likely that such was Jäger’s estimate of the victims of the Klimaitis gang and other rogue fighters. There is scant evidence of true pogroms (in the sense of spontaneous popular outbreaks against the Jews) after the atrocities perpetrated under EK1b; thus, it is difficult to assess the significance of the other 3,200 Jews reportedly killed on Jäger’s orders. Since no pogroms on the scale of the Vilijampolė massacres of 25-26 June are on record after the end of June it is very likely that the 3,200 figure includes the afore-mentioned killings in the Seventh Fort. Jäger reported that “after the takeover by the EK3,” 463 Jews (416 men and 47 women) were killed on 4 July 1941, and, two days later, another 2,514 Jews were executed by machine-gun fire (*durch Maschinengewehr*), clearly then, under conditions which cannot be described as pogroms. In his later (1 December) report, Jäger noted that the killings of 4 and 6 July were carried out by Lithuanian partisans “on my direction and orders.”³⁴⁵ Clearly, these latter refer to the Kaunas actions described above.

All told, the 10 September report lists executions according to locales throughout Lithuania, claiming a total of 76,355 deaths.³⁴⁶ In his better-known genocidal ledger of 1 December 1941 Jäger altered somewhat his characterization of the initial killings, noting that before the takeover of security police tasks by EK3, 4,000 Jews were liquidated exclusively by partisans through pogroms *and* executions [my emphasis].³⁴⁷ There is then some ambiguity concerning the conditions under which the massacres took place, and it is not entirely certain how Jäger’s numbers correlate with those reported by Stahlecker.

In any case, most of the killings carried out after the first week of July, that is, after the formation of Hamann’s Rollkommando, acquired a character quite different from that of the previous massacres. At the same time, the period between early July and mid-August was also distinct when compared to the initiation of the Final Solution in Lithuania, whose operational

345 Jäger, 1 December 1941 report.

346 LVOA, F. 3377, Ap. 55, b. 60. Photostat of an original reportedly held at the Central Soviet Army Archive in Moscow.

347 Jäger, 1 December 1941 Report.

origins are reflected in the Reivyitis File. Understanding the process of the annihilation of the vast majority of Lithuanian Jews (see Figure 3) begins with an overview of the most comprehensive accounting of the slaughter, Jäger's 1 December 1941 account. In addition to the reported deaths within Lithuania itself, the Security Police and SD command in Kaunas was also responsible for a number of actions on the borders of Lithuania, in Daugavpils (Latvia) and in western Belarus (Fig. 4).

Figure 3
*Jäger Report: Killings in Lithuania*³⁴⁸

<u>Command Responsibility</u>	<u>Reported Dates of Actions</u>	<u>Number (Category of Victims)</u>
EK1b/ Klimaitis and allied partisans, rogue elements	Before 2 July 1941	4,000 (Jews)
EK3	4 and 6 July 1941 (Fort VII)	2,977 (Jews)
EK3 Rollkommando	7 July 1941 - 31 July 1941	1,260 (Jews) 157 (Communists) 2 (Lithuanians) 1 (Pole) 3 (criminals) 1,423 (Total)
	1 August - 14 August 1941	4,756 (Jews) ³⁴⁹ 28 (Communists) Lithuanians (2) criminals (1) 4,787 (Total)

⁵⁹ Based on 1 December 1941 report by Jäger and corrected for minor calculation errors made at the Kaunas SD office, including the error on p. 3 of the report where the subtotal of 47, 814 should read 48, 014.

⁶⁰ A calculation error in the original on the 13 August 1941 action in Alytus (listed 719, should be 718).

EK3 Rollkommando/ Teilkommando	15 August - 31 August 1941 ³⁵⁰	32,909 (Jews) 544 (mental patients) 432 (Russians) 82 (Communists) 4 (Russian POW's) 1 (partisan) 2 (Poles) 33,974 (Total)
EK3 Rollkommando/ Teilkommando	1 September - 15 September ³⁵¹ 1941	28,707 (Jews) 109 (mental patients) 43 (Gentile villagers) 1 (German) 1 (Russian) 28,861 (Total)
EK3 Rollkommando	16 September - 30 September 1941	11,671 (Jews) 4 (Communists) 11,675 (Total)
	1 October - 15 October 1941	10,752 (Jews) 10,752 (Total)
EK3/Kaunas SP and SD/Rauca	16 October - 31 October 1941	18,027 (Jews) 18,027 (Total)
EK3 Rollkommando	1 November - 15 November 1941	2,991 (Jews) 2,991 (Total)

⁶¹ Includes a small number of killings in Raseiniai and Rokiškis which occurred before mid-August 1941, as well as actions by the Teilkommando between 12 August 1941 and 1 September 1941. Also, the calculation for the 19 August 1941 action in Ukmergė contains an error of 2 (should be 643, not 645), and the action at Joniškis is undercounted by 200 (should be 355, not 555). Also includes an undetermined number of killings in Alytus and its environs of 13 August 1941.

⁶² Includes an undetermined number of actions undertaken as of 28 August 1941.

	16 November - 30 November 1941	4,934 (German and Austrian Jews) 252 (Lithuanian Jews) 15 (terrorists) 9 (POW's) 9 (Poles) 1 (German) 5,220 (Total)
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In addition to the reported deaths within Lithuania itself, the Security Police and SD command in Kaunas was also responsible for a number of actions on the borders of Lithuania, in Daugavpils (Latvia) and in western Belarus.

Figure 4

Jäger Report: EK3 Killings in Latvia and Belarus

<u>Command Responsibility (Locale)</u>	<u>Reported Dates of Actions</u>	<u>Number (Category of Victims)</u>
EK3 Teilkommando (Daugavpils)	13 July - 21 August 1941	9,012 (Jews) 573 (Communists) 9,585 (Total)
EK3 Rollkommando (Daugavpils)	22 August 1941	5 (Communists) 5 (Latvians) 5 (Gypsies) 3 (Poles) 2 (Jews) 1 (Russian) 21 (Total)
EK3 Teilkommando (Minsk and environs)	23 September - 17 October 1941	3,031 (Jews) 19 (Communists) 3,050 (Total)

The Jäger Report of 1 December 1941 claimed that the Nazis and their collaborators had massacred 118,302 Lithuanian Jews, that is, Jewish inhabitants within what are now the borders of the Republic of Lithuania. This would be the number of *reported* deaths minus the killings reported in Latvia and Belarus, and not including the massacre of foreign citizens brought to Kaunas, as well as shootings of other categories of victims, primarily Communists and mental patients, as well as smaller numbers of Gypsies (Sinti and Roma), criminal elements and Soviet POW's. The strategic responsibility for the operation rested with the headquarters of Einsatzgruppe A, while the tactical details were worked out by its various subunits, especially the EK3 office in Kaunas, with the cooperation of the Lithuanian Police Department and local civilian agencies. The Nazi leaders of the operation successfully employed native manpower for the concentration, expropriation and extermination stages of the Final Solution in Lithuania.

The extraordinary measure of meticulous organization which characterized the killing operations of the late summer and fall of 1941 can also be seen in the systematic geographic pattern of the genocide.³⁵² Sorting the killings recorded in Jäger's reports on executions in the province of Lithuania according to separate German administrative units, it is clear that this process, apart from gradual increase in the number of victims, does also include some clear regional peculiarity, especially starting 28th July 1941.

Until 26th August 1941, most of the killings of Jews in Lithuanian provinces had been enacted in the Šiauliai Commissariat (*Gebietskommissariat*) (exceptions: shootings in Alytus, where 951 persons were killed, and in Jonava, with 552 victims). According to the data of the Lithuanian Security Police authorities, this campaign of killings in the Šiauliai Commissariat (*Gebietskommissariat*) resulted in 23,879 victims in four weeks. Through 26th August to 4th September 1941, second peculiarity of mass killings can be observed in Kaunas Commissariat (*Gebietskommissariat*), where 5,251 people were killed in a week. Starting 9th September until 9th October 1941, large scale massacres were executed in the district of Alytus of the Vilnius Commissariat (*Gebietskommissariat*) – 18,710 Jews were shot here. Meanwhile, the mass

352 In his December 1941 report Jäger had emphasized that the shootings were primarily a question of "organization" ("Die Durchführung solcher Aktionen ist in erster Linie eine Organisationsfrage...").

shootings in the Šiauliai Commissariat (*Gebietskommissariat*) proceeded resulting in another 12,377 victims. Consequently, the number of victims there reached up to 36,216.

Thus, obvious succession may be observed: Šiauliai AK (from 28th July 1941), Kaunas AK (26th August-4th September 1941) and Vilnius AK (9th September-9th October 1941). The turning point was the 26th-27th July 1941, when the civil authorities started acting.

Beginning with the last week of July 1941, the civil authorities, too, were responsible for the killings of Jews; under their governance 95 percent of all the Jews of Lithuania were killed; responsibility falls on the Security Police, as well.

The regional peculiarity in the province of Lithuania, in our assumption, can be explained referring to that at first, the Security Police units had been assigned to Kaunas and Vilnius towns, where they acted during the confinement of major Jewish communities in the ghettos. Only after the ghettos had been founded – in Kaunas on 15th August 1941, and in Vilnius on 6th September 1941 – they became more active in the surroundings. The Jewish community of Šiauliai town, with about 4 to 5 thousand members, was not so big; ghettoisation there was implemented during 22nd August-1st September 1941, when thousands of Jews were already being killed there each day.

While the Jäger reports, as well as the other documentation produced by the Einsatzgruppe, provide the basis for any general overview of the Nazi killing operations of the summer of 1941, they cannot, of course, afford a comprehensive history of the genocide in Lithuania. Leaving aside the vexing philosophical question of whether a true “understanding” of violence on such a massive scale can ever be attained, there remain a series of more mundane problems which the official documentation does not address and which, in fact, may be incapable of a satisfactory explanation.

First, there is the question of the numbers. The few arithmetical errors in the EK3 calculations are insignificant. More important is the question of whether the figures presented for the first days of the war are inclusive for Lithuania as a whole. The Jäger account covers only the regions explicitly under the jurisdiction of EK3, omitting mention of the actions in the western border areas (Gargždai, Kretinga) and several other venues of the genocide, including parts of the Šiauliai region, nor do they include some of the murders in Vilnius, for instance, the infamous

“Yom Kippur Action.” Furthermore, there are questions concerning some of the dates of actions in the second half of 1941.

The characterization of the victims needs some explanation as well. There is no way to be sure, especially in the case of actions reported in Vilnius, whether the listed victims were citizens of Lithuania or among the thousands of 1939 refugees from Poland; thus the term “Lithuanian Jews” may or may not be accurate in describing the statistical universe of the Jewish victims. It seems highly probable from the overall evidence that the “Communists” are usually Gentiles, ethnic Lithuanians in the main, sometimes designated by ethnicity, sometimes not.

More important, the documentation, especially Jäger’s second report, must be utilized with some care regarding the specific identity of the killers. In general, the creation of the 8-10 man armed German squad as the commanding core of Hamann’s Rollkommando, which was filled out by adding Lithuanian personnel drawn from the newly formed TDA units, seems to be in agreement with the known facts from other sources. There seems little reason to doubt the 1:8 German-Lithuanian ratio in the killing operations claimed by Jäger, which reflects the general makeup of the Rollkommando. Clearly, the majority of the shooters were Lithuanians. But this ratio tells us little about the personnel involved in the various individual actions of the summer and fall of 1941, particularly the larger-scale killings. The *Grossaktion* in Kaunas of 28-29 October 1941 was not primarily a Rollkommando operation, employing as it did large numbers of Lithuanian police battalion personnel, thus differing substantially from actions in the smaller towns. The number of local “partisans” coopted into Hamann’s killing operations also varied according to locale. The mass murders in which the Germans constituted a significant striking force, for example, the case of German Police Battalion 65 and Einsatzkommando 2 in the Šiauliai region, are not representative of the German-Lithuanian ratio estimated by Jäger.

Despite their limitations, the Jäger reports, the *UdSSR Ereignismeldungen*, the Stalecker documents, the Reivytis File and other such primary material constitute the most important sources for ascertaining the general progression of the slaughter in Lithuania. At the core of the program of mass extermination of Lithuanian Jewry was an intensive “cleansing” (*Säuberung*) of the provincial Jewish population which reached a frenetic burst of murderous activity between mid-August and mid-September 1941. To employ the language of the Lithuanian police officials

who carried out the round up, of the approximately 120,000 “citizens of Jewish nationality” of the Republic of Lithuania who are listed as having perished in the German accounts during the summer and fall of 1941, more than half were killed during this four-week period (Fig. 5).

Figure 5

1941 Time-Line: The Destruction of Lithuania’s Jews According to Jäger

	July	Aug 1-14	Aug 15-31	Sep 1-15	Sep 16-30	Oct 1-15	Oct 16-31	Nove 1-15	Nov 16-30
4,000	4,237	4,756	32,909	28,707	11,671	10,752	18,027	2,991	252

Most of Lithuania’s Jews who had not succeeded in escaping the country were still alive on 5 August 1941 when the Provisional Government formally announced its own dissolution. By the time Jäger sat down to complete his renowned report on 1 December, at least three-fourths of Lithuania’s Jews were dead. The killing operations of the summer and fall of 1941 took a decisive turn in the middle of August: a selective series of killings intended to bolster the ideological war against Bolshevism was transformed into a policy of genocide, a Final Solution on a country-wide scale. The culmination of the campaign on 29 October 1941 stands out as a brutal record. On that day nearly 10,000 Lithuanian Jews were slaughtered at the Ninth Fort in Kaunas by the Nazis and their collaborators.³⁵³ Never had so many been killed on Lithuanian soil in so short a time.

In as much as the genocide of 1941 constitutes the bloodiest page in the history of modern Lithuania, it must take center stage in any discussion or analysis not only of the German occupation of 1941-1944, but of the entire period of foreign occupations and misfortunes initiated by the Second World War. Nothing in the national past could have prepared the Lithuanian people for these disasters, especially the extent of the violence, which had no historic parallels or precedents either in the quantitative or qualitative sense. The scale of the killings make this clear

³⁵³ A factual account which preserves the horror of the atrocity is in Avraham Tory, *Surviving the Holocaust: The Kovno Ghetto Diary* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 43-60.

enough, but the change was also evident in the very language employed by the murderers. By autumn, the breakdown of the victims by political, criminal and ethnic categories was largely abandoned: now, most of the victims had simply committed the ultimate crime – they were born Jews.³⁵⁴

OVERVIEW: THE AGENCIES AND STAGES OF THE GENOCIDE

The killing operations of the summer and autumn of 1941 were directed primarily by the staff of EK3 from Kaunas. The limited manpower of the SD and SP was supplemented by the cooperation and assistance of German and Lithuanian agencies which helped expedite the definition (or marking), expropriation, concentration and, finally, the extermination of the victims. Of the German agencies which provided the German Security Police and SD with logistical support and personnel in the destruction process, one must list:

- 1) The Wehrmacht, principally the *Feldkommendaturen* and the Security Divisions;
- 2) German Police Battalions, primarily the 11th and 65th;
- 3) Other police agencies, both civilian and military (for example the Criminal Police and *Feldgendarmarie*);
- 4) The German Civilian Administration (*Ziwilverwaltung*).

The German policy-making organs of the Holocaust also employed a number of Lithuanian paramilitary, police and administrative organizations in the extermination of the Jews:

- 1) Elements of irregular forces which arose spontaneously or were quickly organized upon news of the Nazi invasion, such as the notorious Klimaitis unit and a number of other partisans;
- 2) Units of the TDA, later termed the Self-Defense Battalions, often known in the literature as the *Schutzmannschaften*;
- 3) The Police Department in Kaunas and much of the local constabulary reestablished after the Soviet retreat;
- 4) Agents and officers of the Lithuanian Security Police;

354 A recent well-documented and comprehensive overview of the events of the summer and fall of 1941 is the introduction to Alfonsas Eidintas, *Lietuvos Žydų Žudynių byla: dokumentų ir straipsnių rinkinys* (Vilnius: Vaga, 2001), 83-279. For an excellent brief overview c. Joachim Tauber, "'Juden, Eure Geschichte auf litauischen Boden is zu Ende!' Litauen und der Holocaust im Jahr 1941," in *Osteuropa*, 9/10 (2002), 1346-1360.

5) Significant elements of the Lithuanian civilian administration, both transitional organs of the first weeks of the occupation as well as the later permanent institutions.

The role of the highest Lithuanian civilian authority between late June and early August 1941, the Lithuanian Provisional Government (PG) and its cohort, the Vilnius Citizens' Committee, played a controversial, if less direct role, in the process of destruction. The PG's ambiguous position emanated from the paradoxical political morass in which it found itself: the regime, such as it was, claimed sovereignty, but never effectively exercised power. However, the anti-Semitic attitudes of the LAF and PG are well-known. The hour of liberation was greeted by the LAF with the charge that Jews and Bolshevism are one and the same.³⁵⁵ There are even more strident passages in *Naujoji Lietuva* (published in Vilnius) and the provincial newspapers. The most comprehensive expression of the PG's official anti-Semitism was the draft of the Statutes on the Situation of the Jews (*Žydų padėties nuostatai*) of 1 August 1941.³⁵⁶ But the cabinet, even as it approved decrees segregating and expropriating the Jews, shied away from endorsing organized slaughter. The men of the PG were clearly discomfited, even shocked, by the excesses around them.³⁵⁷ They recorded, albeit not publicly, their disassociation from Klimaitis and other rogue partisan elements, and issued public reprimands against lawlessness and vigilante justice.³⁵⁸ As noted above, only one member of the leadership, the PG's liaison with the Germans, historian Zenonas Ivinskis, is reported to have suggested a specific and public condemnation of the violence against the Jews.³⁵⁹

There is no doubt that Lithuanian collaborators played an important role in the genocide. Whether that assistance was indispensable is another question.³⁶⁰ Naturally, while the genocide

355 *Į laisvę*, 24 June 1941.

356 Arvydas Anušauskas, comp., *Lietuvos Laikinoji vyriausybė: posėdžių protokolai* (Vilnius: LGGRT, 2001), 135-137.

357 See fn. 24.

358 See *Lietuvos Laikinoji vyriausybė*, 9-18; *Į laisvę*, June 24, 1941. There is also the claim that two Lithuanian generals had privately rebuked Klimaitis, in Algirdas Martin Budreckis, *The Lithuanian National Revolt of 1941* (Boston: Lithuanian Encyclopedia Press, 1968), 63.

359 See fn. 21; cf. Liudas Truska, *Ir atleisk mums mūsų tėvų bei senelių nuodėmes: apie holokaustą Lietuvoje 1941 m.*, in Alfonsas Eidintas, comp. *Lietuvos Žydų žudynių byla*, 671.

360 The experience of German Police Battalion 101 in Poland suggests that the Nazis were quite capable of destroying large numbers of human beings without significant cooperation from local authorities. See Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991).

required a substantial administrative infrastructure, several of the subunits of the organizational categories listed above played a disproportionate role in mass executions. These include the Klimaitis gang during the first days of the war, as well as the *Rollkommando* and the infamous *Ypatingas Būrys* in Vilnius during a later period. At the same time, a considerably larger number of Lithuanian auxiliaries took part in sporadic actions and served in secondary roles — guarding detainees, securing the perimeters of killing operations and hunting for Jews in hiding.

In addition to Soviet POW's and other transient elements of the Soviet population,³⁶¹ the genocide perpetrated by the Nazis and their collaborators in Lithuania resulted in the death of nearly a quarter million of the country's inhabitants, the vast majority, Jews. This destruction process can be divided into several more or less clearly discernible stages according to intent, scale and method.

- 1) The pogroms and initial actions aimed at Jewish men and alleged Communists between late June and early July of 1941;
- 2) Selective killing operations from early July to mid-August;
- 3) The implementation of the Final Solution in the provinces and larger towns from mid-August to late November 1941, accompanied by the ghettoization of surviving urban Jews;
- 4) The periodic selections and culling of the ghettos during 1942-1944.³⁶²

These stages of the Holocaust in Lithuania, while useful guidelines in understanding the general chronology, progression and changing nature of the genocide as it evolved during the Nazi occupation, do not fully convey the complexity and often chaotic nature of the events in question. The official documents cannot fully capture the terror of the victims who knew they were about to die, nor can they shed light on the darkness in the hearts of those who were about to kill them. They do, however, provide insight into that which is indispensable in transforming

361 For the deaths of Soviet POW's and Soviet evacuees see Christoph Dieckmann, Alytus 1941-1944: Massenmorde in einer Kleinstadt. Ein Fallbeispiel deutscher Besatzungspolitik in Litauen, in *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2/8 (2001), 89-102.

362 The basic scheme is outlined in Yitzhak Arad, "The 'Final Solution' in Lithuania in the Light of German Documentation," in *Yad Vashem Studies*, 11 (1976), 234-272.

massacres into a Final Solution — the often dispassionate but invariably bureaucratic workings of genocidal policy.

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Abbreviations

AO	Abwehroffizier (Abwehr officer)
AOK	Armeeoberkommando (Chief Military Leadership)
BA	Bundesarchiv Berlin (Federal Archive of Berlin)
BA-MA	Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Freiburg/Breisgau (Federal and War Archive of Freiburg/Breisgau)
EG	Einsatzgruppe (Operative group)
EK	Einsatzkommando (Operative squad)
EM	Ereignismeldung (Notification about the events)
GARF	Gosudarstvennyj Archiv Russkoj Federaciji (State Archives of the Russian Federation)
HStA	Hauptstaatsarchiv (Main State Archive)
Ia	Officer of the General Headquarters (no smaller unit than division), Chief of the operative department

Ic	Officer of the General Headquarters (no smaller unit than division), Officer of the Information service (enemy's position), security issues
IMG	Internationaler Militärgerichtshof (International Military Tribunal)
KTB	Kriegstagebuch (War Journal)
LCVA Lithuania)	Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybinis Archyvas (Central State Archive of Lithuania)
NARA	National Archives Record Administration
OK	Ortskommandantur (Local Commandant's Office)
OKW (liet. OKW)	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (Chief Wehrmacht Command)
RSHA	Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Supreme Reich Security Administration)
SK	Sonderkommando (Special squad)
SWC-Jerusalem	Simon-Wiesenthal-Center Jerusalem
VO	Verbindungsoffizier (Liaison officer)
YVA	Yad Vashem Archives
ZStL	Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung von NS-Verbrechen in Ludwigsburg (Central Ludwigsburg's Board of GRF Administrative Institutions of Federal Land Justice on Researching the Crimes of Nazis)