

## The Context of Mass Destruction: Agents and Prerequisites of the Holocaust in Lithuania<sup>1</sup>

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More than 200,000 of the 210,000 to 220,000 Jews who were resident on what was Lithuanian territory as of October 1939 did not live to see the end of the Second World War.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the majority did not survive the bloody interval of July–November 1941.<sup>3</sup> The aim of this paper is to establish a basis for understanding aspects of the Holocaust which were specific to Lithuania, chief among which is that the bulk of the physical organization of and preparation for murder, as well as the actual killing, was carried out by indigenous auxiliaries of the Nazi occupation regime. This is a crucial and inescapable fact: regardless that *Einsatzkommando 3* of the Nazi Security Police (*Sipo*) and SD (*Sicherheitsdienst* or Security Service, the intelligence arm of the Nazi Party) must be seen as the prime organizing force in these killings, the majority of the murders was actually performed by Lithuanians.<sup>4</sup>

This paper encompasses three themes which are central to our understanding of how the Lithuanian Holocaust happened: (1) the nature of Lithuanian nationalism and its setting; (2) the political context of the late interwar and early war years (i.e. spring 1938–June 1941); and (3) the notion of the complete disruption, perhaps more accurately atomization, of Lithuanian society in the period in question. Although this atomization requires additional research, it appears to have provided a prime element of the setting for mass murder. Antisemitism in Lithuania, especially the violent forms it took during the Holocaust, derived impetus from all three of these elements.<sup>5</sup>

Lithuanian nationalism was a nineteenth-century phenomenon, similar to Slovak, Ukrainian, Irish, and Macedonian examples in that it strove for the re-creation, if not invention, of a national identity based upon linguistic community, ultimately realized in the form of a state. The leaders of the nationalist movement in its academic stage were representatives of the strongest faction of a native Lithuanian intelligentsia, the Roman Catholic priesthood. One of the issues which resurrectionist nationalist movements such as that in Lithuania had to confront was why their people had, over the centuries, been swallowed up by others, and in the process nearly been erad-

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icated as a cultural presence. In order to explain past decline in this context, one also had to identify contemporary obstacles to the achievement of national fulfillment. Typically, the justifications for national decline are more palatable when construed as the actions of hostile external forces, rather than the result of internal flaws and weaknesses.

The state known as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania embarked on a dual path of internal strengthening and external expansion under Grand Duke Gediminas (d. 1341), achieving its territorial apogee later in the fourteenth century, when it extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea. In 1385 Lithuania, personified by Gediminas' grandson Jogaila (Polish: Jagiello), entered into a dynastic union with the Poles. Under the unrelenting pressure of Russian westward expansion, the separate Polish Kingdom and Grand Duchy were gradually pushed closer together by political and military necessity until, in 1569, they merged into a Commonwealth, the *Rzeczpospolita*. This amalgamation was, according to a Lithuanian historian, "disastrous to the Lithuanian people and state: the union opened wide the doors for the influence of western Polish culture and the anarchy that accompanied it."<sup>6</sup> After a brief flowering under the Polish King Stefan Batory, the *Rzeczpospolita* entered into a period of almost uninterrupted decline, and in 1795 disappeared from the map altogether in the Third Partition of Poland. The Poles maintained their identity and cohesiveness to a surprising extent during the period of foreign rule, but Lithuanian identity, in particular that of the Lithuanian aristocracy, was virtually wiped out.

In the Lithuanian context social cohesiveness was a prerequisite for nationhood. In analyzing their existing situation in the late nineteenth century, Lithuanian nationalists employed a pyramidal model of a hierarchically-ordered society, with the elite (nobility, government, and military class) forming the top layer, the bourgeoisie the middle layer, and the peasants and working class the broad bottom layer. In the case of Lithuania, the nationalists saw a people comprising only the peasant component on the bottom of the social pyramid. The other layers were composed almost wholly of non-Lithuanians, save for the relatively tiny Catholic intelligentsia. Because of particular circumstances in their history, Lithuanian nationalists identified the Poles as the chief culprit in Lithuania's decline, and thus the main barrier to the reestablishment of national wholeness. These identifications became bound up in what may be termed the "notion of stolen destiny." The Lithuanians believed that their history had been subverted, if not stolen, by the Poles and the Polonized "renegades." They thus blamed the decline of Lithuania from the greatness of the Grand Duchy to an alleged illiterate peasant *Volk* on the Poles. Polonization and the linkage of Lithuania's fate to the Polish pursuit of revolutionary goals had ended, in short, in the near-eradication of Lithuania during the repressions and Russification that followed the abortive nineteenth-century Polish-led uprisings. Lithuanian nationalists came to regard the smothering power of Polish culture in its historical perspective as the engine which had denationalized the local elite and caused it to identify with a nation other

than that from which it had originated. The continuing danger of Polonization was regarded as perhaps the greatest threat to the reemergence and flourishing of the Lithuanian nation. Finally, the "notion of stolen destiny" truly seized the popular imagination in 1920, when Poland took over the city of Vilnius/Wilno, the claimed capital of the reborn Lithuanian state.

### Lithuanian Antisemitism

Unlike other nationalist movements such as the Polish National Democrats, Lithuanian nationalism did not initially target the Jews as a perceived barrier to national fulfillment. This role was preempted by the Polish specter. However, the spread of Lithuanian self-consciousness and the establishment of a state in 1918 inaugurated a process of Jewish exclusion.

First, there was the linguistic factor, which was the most visible marker of Lithuanian identity. A small percentage of urban Jews, typically middle class and associated with the free professions and commerce, spoke Lithuanian. The majority of Lithuanian Jews spoke Yiddish, and if they spoke a second language, it tended to be Polish or Russian. Some poorer Jews, such as market traders who dealt directly with peasants, spoke enough Lithuanian to suffice for commercial transactions. But in general there were few bonds connecting Lithuania's Jews to the linguistic community that defined the nation.<sup>7</sup>

A second factor which worked to create separate Lithuanian and Jewish spheres derived from territorial identification. The Jews of Lithuania were an unlikely constituency for the Lithuanian national movement, not because they failed to identify with the mythologized heroics of their Lithuanian past, but simply because the recreated 1918 Lithuanian state only partially overlapped with the Jewish historical concept of "Lita" (a swath of territory that included a large chunk of Latvia, northeast Poland, and western Byelorussia, more or less corresponding to the northern half of the Tsarist Pale). Allegiance to the political/territorial Lithuanian state, based as it was on the Lithuanian language, seemed to many Jews to be an absurd proposition—especially when contrasted with the competing movements of Zionism and socialism, which seemed of much greater relevance to most Jews.<sup>8</sup>

This perceived lack of identity between the Jewish and Lithuanian national interests created tensions which, rooted in preexistent strains of antisemitism and nourished by new influences, gradually swelled throughout the interwar period. Traditional forms of primitive antisemitism such as clerical antisemitism (identification of Jews as "Christ-killers") and peasant-society antisemitism, based on the negative assessment of the traditional Jewish niche in the peasant economy (livestock and grain traders, petty merchants, tavern-keepers) were already well-entrenched in Lithuania. Overt economic antisemitism emerged as a powerful force in the 1930s with the rise of two state-sponsored movements. The cooperative movement, which was intended to make the exchange of goods between city and country more efficient, instead un-



determined the economic existence of an entire class of Jewish grain merchants, livestock traders, and market vendors.<sup>9</sup> The Lithuanianization of larger-scale business was initiated by the "Verslas" (Business) group, which in pursuit of its proclaimed intentions to strengthen Lithuanian control of manufacturing, distribution, and export trade used cheap state credits that were unavailable to Jewish competitors. The Lithuanian character of both the cooperatives and larger business organizations is reflected by the fact that the cooperative and the shop floor often served as the lowest organizational unit of the nationalist Home Defense Force, the *Šauliu Sajunga*.<sup>10</sup>

### **Lithuanian Political Culture: Interwar, Early Wartime**

Antisemitic trends intensified after Antanas Smetona's 1926 coup d'état. Because the rise in antisemitism under successive authoritarian governments was not expressed in specific measures or policies, surviving Lithuanian Jews of the prewar generation often speak nostalgically about the Smetona days, even though the coup began the process of isolating and marginalizing the Jewish community. In the political sphere, the first major blow for the Jews was the elimination of their only government portfolio, the Ministry of Jewish Affairs. Jews who since independence in 1918 had been underrepresented in the Lithuanian government (especially in contrast to their relatively strong representation in the free professions, the natural cadre of government service), now found their small share of political representation further eroded. Though Lithuania at this time did not feature widespread public antisemitic agitation or street violence, the process of alienating the Jews was as profound as the visibly belligerent one in neighboring Poland. Once again, the incompatibility of the Jewish population within the perceived model of the Lithuanian nation-state was the predominant theme.

#### **Prerequisites**

In addition to this trend towards Jewish and Lithuanian segregation, other factors of political development merit consideration. First was the fact that the maturation of Lithuanian civil society, understood from the modern social-science perspective as the self-regulating society operating on shared norms, moral standards, and restraints, was severely retarded by the failure of parliamentary democracy. Although Lithuanian authoritarianism was relatively benign, indispensable public skills such as the ability to conduct reasoned political discourse were stunted.<sup>11</sup> After the 1926 coup, political discourse was largely limited to the struggles between the authoritarian Right represented by the government, and the extreme Right of the opposition Voldemarist "Iron Wolf" movement. After 1934 censorship and the ban on all political parties except Smetona's completely strangled public political life. Henceforth, political participation was, for a large share of the population, limited to the celebration of the cult of personality centered on President Smetona.<sup>12</sup>

Irredentism, one of the dominant trends in Lithuanian popular culture in the

interwar period, compounded the effects of the circumscription of political life. As noted above, during the Polish-Bolshevik war the Poles robbed Lithuania of a key to its national identity when they seized the historic capital of Vilnius. That in demographic terms Vilnius was the least Lithuanian of Lithuanian cities, almost evenly divided between Poles and Jews with ethnic Lithuanians constituting a mere fraction of the total population, was immaterial. The Lithuanians simply believed that their historical claim to the city had precedence, and that the justice of this claim was unassailable. In the tumultuous period 1918–20 the city changed hands between the new Lithuanian state, Bolshevik Russia, and Poland, with the Poles eventually winning control in the aftermath of their victory over the Red Army. The Lithuanians regarded the seizure of Vilnius as an act of pure piracy, for only two days earlier the Poles and Lithuanians had signed an agreement fixing the demarcation line between the two states to the south and west of Vilnius. The Polish general Lucjan Zeligowski, on secret orders from Pilsudski, staged a phony mutiny against his official orders and fell upon the lightly defended city on October 9, 1920.<sup>13</sup> In 1922, after only two years of existence as the sham Republic of Central Lithuania, the Vilnius territory was formally incorporated into Poland. The loss of Vilnius was a stunning blow, and the unrelenting irredentist demand for its return one of the most dominant elements of Lithuanian political and social life in the interwar period. The irredentist campaign tainted Lithuanian society with currents of hatred and revenge directed against the Poles. In fact, the largest social organization in interwar Lithuania was the League for the Liberation of Vilnius (*Vilniaus Vadavimo Sajunga*, or VVS), which trumpeted the irredentist line in its magazine "Our Vilnius" (*Mūsų Vilnius*).

The sting of the loss of Vilnius was partially diminished by the 1923 seizure and annexation of Memel/Klaipėda, though this gain was offset by the added insecurity borne of the resulting German irredentism. There does not, however, seem to have been much consideration of the moral or practical implications (*vis-à-vis* Germany) of seizing Klaipėda using much the same methods the Poles had applied in Vilnius.

#### Crisis: 1938–1941

Between 1938 and 1941 Lithuania suffered a series of blows which led to political eradication and social atomization. In March 1938 the Poles presented a "peace or war" ultimatum which forced Lithuania to recognize Polish sovereignty over Vilnius, thereby revealing the government-directed irredentist movement to be an empty husk. For the time being, this important marker of state identity was debased, and the VVS was liquidated. Second, in March 1939 Germany forced the retrocession of Memel/Klaipėda, adding to the profound sense of national demoralization. The legitimacy of the interwar state was undermined and the system of civil belief badly damaged. There was nothing in, or related to, either of these events which could be blamed on the Jews.

When the war erupted in September 1939, Lithuania remained neutral. Igno-

rant of her predetermined fate under the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the country was seduced by the Soviets' irresistible offer in October 1939 to return Vilnius to Lithuania.<sup>14</sup> According to the treaty that formalized this transfer, the Soviets obtained the right to station Red Army and Air Force troops (approximately 25,000) in Lithuania. The result, within 8 months, was the imposition of Soviet rule, an event which, again, could not in any way be linked to the Jews. In the streets of Vilnius, Poles mocked: "*Vilnius jusu, Lietuva rusu*" (Vilnius is yours, but Lithuania is Russia's).<sup>15</sup> At the moment Soviet forces took control of the country, President Smetona fled abroad. In this single act, he demolished the cult of personality and destroyed one of the last true links between state and society.

#### Sovietization: Lithuanians and Jews

Lithuania was incorporated into the Soviet Union between June and August 1940. At the time, many in the country, as elsewhere, believed the alliance between Germany and the Soviet Union to be a solid one. They expected the Soviet-German territorial division of Europe to be permanent, particularly after the German campaign in western Europe and the delineation of the Soviet-German spheres of interest in southeastern Europe. In numerous Lithuanian towns Jews greeted the entrance of Soviet forces warmly, along with not a few Lithuanians. With the overturning of the status quo, they were thankful that at least the new occupiers were not the Germans.<sup>16</sup>

Sovietization unleashed two opposing currents in Lithuanian society. Some Lithuanians, mobilized by Soviet repression and the belief that the Nazi-Soviet division of Europe was only a temporary lull destined to end with a German victory over communism, began to organize a resistance movement. Likewise, those who believed the Soviet-German arrangement to be fixed sought accommodation. While both movements attracted substantial shares of the population, Sovietization in practice brought the displacement, destruction, replacement, or recasting of virtually every social, educational, political, state, and religious organization in Lithuania. The dissolution of the Lithuanian state apparatus meant dismissal, arrest, or exile for a number of senior political and police officials, but the lower and middle echelons remained essentially intact.<sup>17</sup>

Jews were not spared from Soviet repression. The NKVD targeted Jewish leftists of the non-Bolshevik groups, as well as the Jewish bourgeoisie, along with specific Lithuanian groups, as "enemies of the people."<sup>18</sup> Sovietization also led to a crushing demoralization, characterized by widespread social disorientation. The demolition of the old structures meant that much of Lithuanian society was quickly atomized and traditional social bonds broken. Further, the separate and specifically Jewish religious, social, and educational institutions were dissolved, and Jews were forced into a historically new mode of existence in the shape of forced integration into the larger society. While most of the Lithuanian institutions remained similar to those which previously existed, the Jews were confronted with a completely new social reality.



Among some Jews and a substantial section of Lithuanian society, there was a visible shift to the left. This shift resulted in part from official sponsorship by the new regime, as well as from the reemergence of left-wing groupings which had been harshly repressed under the Smetona government. Some may have instinctively embraced what the discredited Smetona government had decreed anathema. As indicated above, the search for a place in the new society also played an important role. For Jew and Lithuanian alike, the Soviet state provided alternative organizations of mass engagement, such as the Communist Youth League (Komsomol) and trade unions. For those resentful of the real or imagined injustices of the pre-war days, the NKVD and "Workers' and Peasants' Militia" (police) offered empowerment through service or denunciation.

The question arises as to whether Jews were overrepresented in the structures of the new Soviet Lithuanian regime—whether it was, as some charged, a "Jewish Government."<sup>19</sup> This is difficult to answer, above all since Lithuanian Jewry did not respond to the Soviet takeover in a uniform fashion. If the question is limited to an examination of numbers in such large and visible socio-political organizations as the Komsomol, then the answer is yes, with Jews comprising some fifteen per cent of the party membership versus 7.5 per cent in the population as a whole (which is partly due to the fact that the Komsomol was strongest in urban areas, where Jews were most concentrated).<sup>20</sup> Four hundred and twelve Jews, or 16.5 percent of total party membership, were full members of the Lithuanian Communist Party.<sup>21</sup> But the Komsomol was an organization of little power, and the native core of the LCP was very much a junior partner to the imported cadres of the Communist Party.

The positions of power show a different pattern. Of the fifteen members of the LSSR Council of Ministers, two were Jews (15 percent). Of the seventy-nine members of the People's Seimas (Parliament), four were Jews. Of the membership of city and district (*raion*) CP secretariats, 77 percent were Lithuanians, nineteen per cent Russians and four percent Jews. Of the 279 senior employees of the apparatus of repression (NKVD), 148 were Russians, 111 Lithuanians and twenty "other," including Jews and a variety of nationalities drawn from other republics of the USSR.<sup>22</sup>

Resistance to Soviet rule coalesced around the underground organization known as the Lithuanian Activists' Front (*Lietuviu Aktyvistu Frontas*, LAF). The LAF consisted of an underground organization within Lithuania and an emigré headquarters in Berlin, with communications between the German base and cells in Lithuania made by covert courier across the German-Soviet border.<sup>23</sup> The membership of the LAF has been presented as monolithic, including a significant element of the anti-Smetonist, pro-fascist, pre-war Voldemarist "Iron Wolf" movement. But while the Iron Wolf types may have been "with" the LAF by necessity, they were not "of" it politically, and conflict between these factions erupted immediately after the German invasion.

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statement of the LAF, contained express and extreme antisemitic language, in addition to the call for insurrection against the Soviets at the time of the anticipated German invasion:

For the ideological maturation of the Lithuanian nation it is essential that anti-communist and anti-Jewish action be strengthened. Above all the thought must be spread that German-Russian armed conflict is a certainty, that the Red Russian army will be quickly ousted from Lithuania and that Lithuania will once again become a free and independent state. It is very important that this opportunity be used to get rid of the Jews as well. We must create an atmosphere that is so stifling for the Jews that not a single Jew will think that he will have even the most minimal rights or possibility of life in the new Lithuania. Our goal is to drive out the Jews along with the Red Russians. The more of them that leave at this time, the easier it will be to get rid of the rest later. The hospitality extended to the Jews by Vytautas the Great is hereby revoked for all time because of their repeated betrayals of the Lithuanian nation to its oppressors.<sup>24</sup>

One issue that calls out for further research concerns the breadth and depth to which such texts were disseminated, as well as the spread of other, even more violently antisemitic appeals in Lithuania before, during, and after the German invasion. This would enable us to estimate how much of the Lithuanian population had been exposed to this propaganda.<sup>25</sup>

### **German Invasion**

In the week preceding the German invasion, the NKVD struck. On the night of June 14, 1941, some 35,000 persons were arrested and deported to the depths of the Soviet Union. While scholars debate the ethnic composition of the arrestees, we may estimate that a little more than one-half were ethnic Lithuanians, with the remainder composed of approximately equal numbers of Jews and Poles.<sup>26</sup> To call the deportations a traumatic watershed is an understatement; yet to regard as accurate the popular understanding of this terrorist act as a somehow exclusively Lithuanian tragedy is a misrepresentation. Though individual Jews serving as NKVD agents or informers were involved in the denunciation and arrest of some of the deportees, the fact remains that the NKVD was hardly an organization with a massive Jewish presence, or one which could in any way be associated with a Jewish agenda. If the NKVD had any identifiable ethnic profile, it was Russian and Lithuanian.

Nonetheless, from the moment German forces rolled across the frontier the Jews were blamed for the deportations and for virtually every other evil which had befallen the Lithuanians. Indeed, an entire mythos of Jewish culpability arose, consonant with, if not a direct continuation of, the pre-invasion propaganda of the LAF. The question of the influence of this propaganda diminished in the post-invasion period, as the open media, specifically the Kaunas newspaper *I Laisve* (Towards Freedom) commenced a spirited antisemitic crusade, burning the identity of the Jew with



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Lithuanians greet German troops upon their arrival in Kaunas, June 24, 1941 (Beth Hatefutsoth Photo Archive, Tel Aviv, Zvi Kadushin Collection)

communism into popular consciousness: "Jewry and Bolshevism are one, parts of an indivisible entity."<sup>27</sup>

From a later perspective, it appears as if a good part of the antisemitic outburst was diversionary, designed to hide the guilt incurred by the collaboration of a large part of the Lithuanian population with the Soviets. This antisemitism is directly linked to the inauguration and manipulation of the subsequent bloody campaign of "self-cleansing" unleashed by the agents of *Einsatzgruppe A*, the special deployment group of Nazi Security Police and SD responsible for the implementation of racial policy in the Baltic states. The nature and mechanisms of the linkages between the LAF (and groups affiliated with it) and the Nazi Security Police and SD are difficult to specify due to the lack of documents. But the call to conduct the campaign of "self-cleansing," to redeem sins of collaboration with the Bolsheviks with the blood of Jews, precisely reflected Heydrich's orders to the *Einsatzgruppen* to instigate indigenous "self-cleansing measures." In this case, the outcome was the Kaunas pogroms, when in the space of five days and nights (June 23–27) almost two percent of the total number of victims of the Lithuanian Holocaust, some 3,800, were killed.<sup>28</sup> In this context we must reconceive "self-cleansing action" as a kind of post-Bolshevik social purge, or more literally bloodbath, rather than a simple slogan masking an antisemitic campaign. Heydrich's order could have served by itself as a means to mobilize the

populations of the newly-occupied countries in mass actions against the Jews, but the Lithuanian context suggests that "self-cleansing" meant a broad social purge of collaborators as well as Jews.

Mass violence against Jews in the first days of Operation Barbarossa was not unique to Kaunas—approximately the same number were slaughtered in Iasi, Romania at roughly the same time.<sup>29</sup> But whereas the Iasi killings had the appearance of an unruly and random action, with marauding soldiers killing Jews in their homes or wherever they encountered them, there was a different element to the Kaunas pogroms. Some of the Jewish victims were slaughtered publicly in scenes of unspeakable brutality, but the majority were dealt with in a more methodical fashion—rounded up, robbed, and shot in prepared pits in a manner that presaged the days to come.

These open pogroms, however, were relatively short-lived. Heydrich insisted that they were possible and desirable only during the first days of operations. In Kaunas, to the estimated number of Jews slain in the June 25–28 outbreaks (3,800) can be added only a few hundred to several thousand more who were murdered in the outlying villages.

These early killings may be classified according to the underlying motivations of the perpetrators. Some outbreaks can be attributed to focused, ideological antisemitism. Other killings were motivated by the urge to settle personal accounts; in fact, the actions of this group also produced a significant number of non-Jewish victims (see below). Finally, there was the phenomenon of killing Jews over property rather than politics, a motive which underscores the notion of social demoralization outlined above.<sup>30</sup> This phenomenon of killing for greed can be largely attributed to the demoralized social margins, particularly those living in the villages. Greed entered also in the later phase of organized, deliberate killing as a means for the Germans to exert control over their Lithuanian collaborators. For example, a Pole who lived near the village of Paneriai where the Jews of Vilnius were killed regularly, witnessed the behavior of the Lithuanian murder squad, the *Ypatingas Burys* (Special Detachment), and kept a diary of his observations. Having observed the regular trafficking in the looted possessions of the dead Jews in which the killers indulged, he wrote that:

To the Germans, 300 Jews means 300 enemies of humanity. To the Lithuanians it means 300 pairs of pants, 300 pairs of boots.<sup>31</sup>

In parts of Lithuania, the quest for bloody vengeance was not limited to the Jews, but extended also to Lithuanians. This was particularly evident in north-central Lithuania, where hundreds of non-Jewish communists, some of them Russian but many Lithuanian, were executed in the period July–September 1941.<sup>32</sup> This phenomenon of intra-Lithuanian violence was so widespread that special directives were distributed to Lithuanian police posts cautioning that no one was to be imprisoned or shot without a proper investigation.<sup>33</sup> Instead, the killing was shifted out of the hands

of the LAF and the "partisans," as the irregular insurrectionaries in Kaunas and elsewhere were known, and into the hands of the Lithuanian military and police under German control.

It must also be understood that the LAF partisans were hardly a centralized organization with a disciplined chain of command. In Kaunas in late June 1941, there were over 3,360 registered partisans. The size of their units ranged from a single man stationed at a post office to several groups of 250 men.<sup>34</sup> In his report on events in the Baltic states through October 15, 1941, SS General Stahlecker of *Einsatzgruppe A* stated that these men were in fact adherents of four larger groupings.<sup>35</sup> There was not only a lack of unity in command, but also a pronounced diversity in the ideological makeup of the units.

Stahlecker singled out the partisan leader "Klimatis" with regard to the Kaunas pogroms, attributing to him leadership of the actions that claimed 3,800 Jewish lives in late June 1941.<sup>36</sup> Although many men built upon their service as partisans to advance their careers in occupied Lithuania (indeed, possession of a certificate of partisan service seems to have been a prerequisite for a number of state and military positions), the leaders themselves disappeared from view. After the bloody June 1941, Klimaitis (actual spelling) does not figure into either the history of the occupation or the Holocaust in Lithuania to any discernible extent.<sup>37</sup>

### Revenge of the Iron Wolf

Events in Kaunas in the summer of 1941 suggest a fascist coup within the Lithuanian military—a coup that was paralleled in the police structures. This coup provided many of the men for later killing operations.

During the first days of the German occupation of Kaunas, the work of reorganizing proper military units was undertaken by officers identified with the Smetona regime.<sup>38</sup> Quickly, however, a clique of officers associated with the Iron Wolf, which had been sharply repressed since the failed Voldemaras coup of 1934, began to assert power. On the night of July 23–24, 1941, they ousted the Smetonists, including the Provisional Government's Minister of Internal Affairs, Colonel Jonas Šlepetys. A mere captain, Pranas Kviecinskas, replaced Colonel Kazys Bobelis as Commandant of Kaunas.<sup>39</sup> The Iron Wolf controlled the only political party acceptable to the Germans, the Lithuanian Nationalist Party, until it, too, was finally banned.

Officers whose right-wing credentials were attested to by their brother officers of the Iron Wolf consolidated positions of command in the newly formed Lithuanian police battalions.<sup>40</sup> These battalions (the Germans refused to allow anything larger since it might be seen as a Lithuanian Army, which they feared would be mistaken as a concession on the question of sovereignty that they were unwilling to countenance) consisted of volunteers, and soon came to be known by the German term *Schutzmannschaft* (Protective Detachments). By late 1941, fifteen of them, ranging in strength from 200 to almost 500 men, had been formed, with another five battalions



added by August 1942. While some of these were deployed primarily for the security of rail lines and other installations within Lithuania and on the occupied territories of Russia and Ukraine, others have been tied to the mass killing of Jews and reprisals against non-Jewish civilian populations in Lithuania and Belarus.<sup>41</sup>

These volunteers formed another category of aid. Some had their formal service long behind them, while others had only begun their service after June 1940 in the 29th Lithuanian Territorial Rifle Corps of the Red Army.<sup>42</sup> The main concentrations of these paramilitary police formations were in Vilnius and Kaunas, with smaller formations in the provincial towns. In Kaunas, units from these battalions were immediately deployed to guard a temporary concentration camp for Jews, as well as to conduct mass shootings there.<sup>43</sup> A report produced by the German Municipal Police (*Schutzpolizei*) in Vilnius at the end of October 1941 noted that the Vilnius-based battalions, in addition to training, guard duty, and other functions, were also employed in "the daily-occurring special operations (Jews)."<sup>44</sup>

The Iron Wolf men used the sponsorship of the Nazis as a lever against the Smetonists. The Iron Wolf's willingness to translate antisemitic ideology into action served these men in the struggle against their rivals. Smetonist officers may have acquiesced in the barbarities against the Jews, but they simply did not seize upon the antisemitic campaign with the purposefulness and commitment of the Iron Wolf.

### **Iron Wolf II: The Police**

One of the first acts of the provisional Lithuanian authorities was to urge all members of the police and internal security apparatus employed prior to Sovietization to return to their posts. Immediately, a right-wing purge commenced in the police as well. The first occupation-period head of the Security Police (*Saugumo Policija* or *Saugumas*) was arrested and held in a Kaunas jail for four months, and three groups of *Saugumas* men were purged. The Iron Wolf pursued those who had taken particularly active roles in Smetona's repression of the participants in their abortive 1934 coup; the Germans insisted that *Saugumas* men who had been active in combatting German organizations in Memel prior to its retrocession also be eliminated from service. Likewise, *Saugumas* men who had switched to service in the NKVD were purged. Smetonist officials in other branches of the police or administration were also removed and replaced.

A number of Lithuanian police officials who had fled to Germany in 1940 returned to Lithuania to take up senior positions. In at least a few cases they had acquired direct experience of German Security Police practices and methods. One well-known example is that of Pranas Lukys, the wartime chief of the *Saugumas* in Kretinga, who had spent the better part of a year working for the German Security Police in occupied Lublin. Lukys was tried and sentenced to a lengthy prison term at Ulm in 1957.<sup>45</sup> Aleksandras Lileikis, who had been a senior *Saugumas* official in Vil-

nus between October 1939 and June 1940, returned from Germany to take command of the *Saugumas* for Vilnius province in August 1941.<sup>46</sup>

The *Saugumas* functioned with relative autonomy in the campaign against the Jews and Communists. From the beginning, it was empowered by its German supervisors to settle matters within its jurisdiction by all means up to and including extrajudicial capital punishment. For example, in a document dated July 5, 1941, a troop commander inquired as to what he was to do with nine captured Jews and their families suspected of communist affiliations. Stasys Cenkus, commander of the *Saugumas* for all of Lithuania (who returned from Germany with the invasion force) wrote his succinct instructions in the margins of the document: "Liquidate them at the first opportunity."<sup>47</sup>

The uniformed city and rural police, or *Schutzmannschaft-Einzeldienst*, also played a direct role in killing Jews, participating in roundups, arrests, ghettoizations, and killing actions. The rich documentation of the Vilnius City Police contains hundreds of references to Jews who were arrested by the uniformed police and then turned over to the *Saugumas* or sometimes directly to the execution squad.<sup>48</sup>

### Pattern of Destruction

From the documents of the Holocaust in Lithuania, we can discern three major phases in the destruction process. The period from late June through mid-August 1941 is the phase of terrorization; from mid-July through late August, concentration; and from late August through December 1941, mass extermination. This periodization is convenient but not very neat—there is a good deal of overlap among these periods, depending upon the time and place. Nonetheless, I believe it to be a useful device for understanding the pattern of destruction.

The campaign of terrorization began with the pogroms of late June, which were quickly supplanted by the organized murder of selected elements of the Jewish population. In the example of Kaunas introduced above, 3,770 persons, all but six of them Jews, were shot at two of the old tsarist-era forts in and around the city from July 4 through August 9. The majority were Jewish men, including many representatives of the intelligentsia and others regarded as the most Jewish and the most capable of fomenting and leading a resistance movement. Only 136 of these 3,770 people were women. It seems clear that the terrorization campaign had two aims: to intimidate the remaining Jews, and to rehearse the fledgling Lithuanian auxiliaries in the tactics and practice of mass murder.<sup>49</sup> The same pattern can be observed in Vilnius, where the lists of Jews to be shot in the first half of July 1941 include very few women.<sup>50</sup>

In the countryside, the terrorization campaign was quickly followed by the actions of local uniformed police who, newly reorganized, were called upon to concentrate the Jewish population of the outlying towns and villages, and to maintain it for eventual destruction. Orders exist—some have even been published—which demonstrate the role of the police in rounding up Jews and cordoning them off in provisional

ghettos established in the rural centers (only Vilnius, Kaunas, and Šiauliai were to feature "permanent" ghettos).

In the concentration phase, the permanent ghettos were established in the period from August 15 to September 6. Numerous survivor accounts detail the false promises that German officials made to the Jews that ghettoization would assure their safety, and that they would be protected from further acts of terror.<sup>51</sup> During the ghettoization process, a system of segregation was implemented: skilled workers necessary for the German war effort received special labor permits which distinguished them and their families from the rest of the Jewish population. In both Kaunas and Vilnius, the skilled workers lived in separate sections of the ghetto from the unskilled.

The ghettos were guarded by either Schutzmannschaft battalions or the local police. Another important security measure was provided by the *Saugumas*, which was responsible for hunting Jews living outside the ghettos on forged papers or hidden in the homes of Gentiles. The *Saugumas* also sought to uncover Jews trying to escape in the countryside. Meanwhile, the uniformed city police carefully guarded against attempts by Jews to buy or barter for food when working outside the ghetto.<sup>52</sup>

While Jews were being concentrated and ghettoized in the three main Lithuanian cities, the countryside was rendered "*Judenrein*." The police completed the concentration of rural Jews and notified their respective headquarters, often listing the number of Jewish men, women, and children held in any given locality and noting that their concentration posed the "threat of outbreaks of contagious disease." Thereupon, in rotation, a squad consisting of a handful of SS men (no more than eight or ten) and up to 200 Lithuanian soldiers would descend upon the town in question and carry out the liquidations.<sup>53</sup> In the Vilnius area, the *Ypatingas Burys*, the permanent killing squad directed by the German SD, traveled by bus with its two SD supervisors around Vilnius province. The rural sections of the province were thus rendered *Judenrein* by October 9, 1941.<sup>54</sup>

In the cities with permanent ghettos, the killing of the economically "unnecessary" was accomplished in a massive wave that peaked in September–November 1941. The separate unskilled worker ghettos (which also housed the aged and other non-economic categories) were wiped out first, followed by portions of the populations initially spared. The ever-diminishing numbers of labor passes issued to Jews constituted their own indirect record of the extermination process.

### Conclusion

The participation of Lithuanians in the slaughter of Lithuanian Jewry (as well as in the mass murder of Jews in Byelorussia, Poland, and Ukraine) presents historic and moral problems which still resonate. By demonstrating that the killings were carried out by a small portion of Lithuanian society, this paper makes two main arguments about the Holocaust in Lithuania. First, socially marginal individuals, unrestrained in their violence as the result of their demoralization and disorientation, can under the



right conditions turn to lethal action. Second, a Lithuanian fascist clique was able to multiply its influence through its hold on key positions in the military and police structures, thereby giving it a monopoly on the "means of violence" within the German-imposed limits. This Lithuanian group became the main tool in the destruction of Lithuanian Jewry.

### Notes

1. This paper was first delivered as an oral presentation at the Research Institute of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in September 1995. I am indebted to those present for their comments, criticisms, and questions, some of which I am still unable to answer. The views and opinions contained in this paper are solely my own and do not in any way represent the official policy, positions, or sentiments of the Office of Special Investigations of the U.S. Department of Justice. All of the documents from the Lithuanian Central State Archives (hereafter LCSA) have been made public by their presentation in evidence in the course of legal proceedings conducted by the Office of Special Investigations.

2. The prewar Jewish population of Lithuania was approximately 150,000 (figures from: *Einsatzgruppe A: Gesamtbericht bis zum 15. Oktober 1941* (the so-called first Stahlecker Report, Nuremberg Document L—180, National Archives and Records Administration Record Group 238, Appendix 13) to which must be added the approximately 80,000 Jews of Vilnius (city and district) who accrued to Lithuania after the cession of that territory by the USSR in October 1939. Some 10,000 Jews succeeded in fleeing Lithuania for the Soviet interior at the outbreak of the German-Soviet war.

3. In his *Gesamtaufstellung der im Bereich des EK 3 bis zum 1. Dez. 1941 durchgeführten Exekutionen* (Comprehensive Listing of Executions Conducted in the Jurisdiction of *Einsatzkommando 3* by 1 December 1941), SS Colonel Jäger estimated the number killed at 137,346. However, more than 12,600 of these were killed outside of Lithuania (at Daugavpils, Latvia and in Belarus) and more than 1,400 of those shot in Lithuania were not Jews, but Poles, Lithuanians, and Russians killed for alleged communist activity. Significantly, Jäger did not include an estimate of the number of Jews killed in the parts of northwestern Lithuania which had been under the temporary administration of *Einsatzkommando 2* until October 1941. On the basis of individual accounts made by the survivors from the cities and *shtetls*, an estimate of at least some 30,000 victims is close to the mark. Jäger is also inaccurate in citing the execution figures for the areas in his jurisdiction. He omitted, for example, any citation of Jews killed at the time of the enclosure of the Vilnius ghettos (September 6, 1941). Jäger is also inaccurate in terms of the number of Jews left alive as of December 1941 (39,500 divided among the ghettos of Vilnius, Kaunas and Šiauliai), for he had no knowledge of the thousands of Jewish "illegals" concealed within and without the ghettos who had evaded the registrations and selections. The original of the Jäger Report is held at the Special Archive for Preservation of Historical Documents of the Russian Federation, Moscow, Collection 500, series 1, folder 25.

4. I must emphasize that although I freely use the term "Lithuanians" in referring to the killers, I do not intend for this usage to be extended to the entire Lithuanian nation, of whom the killers formed but a minute fraction. As in other countries where people aided the Nazis in the destruction of the Jews, so also in Lithuania did numerous courageous individuals offer solace and haven to Jews at the risk of their own lives.

5. Valuable work in the area of placing Lithuanian antisemitism in context and in assessing its sources and motives is being done by the Lithuanian academic Dr. Leonidas Donskis of the University of Klajpeda. An article summarizing some of his recent work, under the title: "Antisemitismus in Litauen. Tradition und Wiederaufleben nach der Unabhängigkeit," was scheduled to appear in the *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* (Center for the Study of Antisemitism, Technical University of Berlin) in the 1997 volume of this occasional series.
6. See Juozas Jakštas, *The Rise of the Lithuanian Nation* in Albertas Gerutis, ed. *Lithuania: 700 Years* (New York, 1969), p. 81.
7. In the interwar period the spread of the Lithuanian language among Lithuanian Jews accelerated rapidly, particularly among the young who attended school with Lithuanian either as the primary language of instruction or as a required course. Many Jewish males also acquired Lithuanian during their national service in the Lithuanian Army.
8. Among Lithuanian Jews there was a small minority of nationally assimilated/aculturated Jews who were fervent Lithuanian patriots. A main organizational exponent was the *Sajunga Žydu-Savanoriu Kovotoju už Lietuvos Laisvės* (The Union of Jewish Volunteer Fighters for Lithuanian Freedom), composed of Jewish veterans of the multiple armed struggles against the Poles and Bolsheviks and of the Klajpeda annexation.
9. Among the best-known of the cooperatives were "Lietukis" ("Lithuanian Farm"), which dealt in bulk produce and grains. "Maistas," which handled the processing, packaging, sale, and export of meat and meat products, and "Pienocentras," the dairy products cooperative. There was also a cooperative for consumer goods which operated a network of stores under the name "Ruta," which supplanted the Jewish shopkeepers. The central garage of Lietukis in Kaunas was the scene of a particularly gruesome set of killings at the time of the pogroms in the first days of the German occupation.
10. The extensive records of the *Šauliu Sajunga* at the LCSA (Collection 561) contain numerous membership lists which show that the fit between the subunits of this organization and the 'new' economic forms was very close indeed.
11. Although civil society was weakly developed, the degree of social penetration by the government was high, expressed in such organizations as the *Šauliu Sajunga*, and the *Vilniaus Vadavimo Sajunga* (League for the Liberation of Vilnius, the largest of all social organizations in interwar Lithuania). The first of these was dedicated to the defense of the state as personified by President Smetona, and thus to the elevation of his person; the second to the irredentism which was the core of Lithuanian policy towards Poland.
12. There was hardly a town in Lithuania which did not feature one or more public institutions named after the leader, usually accompanied by the title "First President of Lithuania."
13. October 9 was celebrated as a day of national mourning in Lithuania throughout the interwar period. In an example of the persistence of the sting of perceived historical injustice, the Lithuanian government demanded that Poland issue an official apology for Żeligowski's crime in the "Declaration of Friendship and Good Neighborly Relations" which the two governments began negotiating in 1992. The Polish Government, not perceiving itself to bear any lingering responsibility for Żeligowski's actions, refused.

14. There is room for debate on this point. Certainly a number of Lithuanians regarded the offer of the restitution of Vilnius as an emolument designed to sweeten the inevitable accommodation with the Soviets—with little doubt as to which party would dictate the further terms.

15. In employing this slogan—often the only Lithuanian phrase they knew—the Poles seemed to be cruelly mimicking the Jews who had taunted them a few months before with the couplet “you wanted a Poland without Jews, now you have Jews without Poland.”

16. Jewish refugees from occupied Poland had brought with them tales of the anti-Jewish measures introduced by the Germans. It is fair to estimate that at least a portion of the Lithuanian Jews had some prior knowledge of the meaning of a German occupation, and that the greeting offered the Soviets was an informed embrace of the lesser of two evils.

17. A number of senior police officials, including the head of the Lithuanian Security Police in Vilnius after August 1941, Aleksandras Lileikis, escaped to Germany. Records indicate that some of these officials were prepared for new roles in German-occupied Lithuania in the months preceding June 1941. Pranas Lukys, for example, served as an official of the German *Sicherheitspolizei* at Lublin in occupied Poland before his return to Lithuania. Trial proceedings against Bernhard Fischer-Schweder, et. al., *Oberste Landgericht Stuttgart*, file reference Js 1/56. This file is also held at the *Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen* at Ludwigsburg. Key materials from this trial have been published in Volume XV of the series *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen: Sammlung deutscher Strafurteile wegen nationalsozialistischen Tötungsverbrechen*, Adelheid Rüter-Ehleman and C. F. Rüter, eds. (Amsterdam, 1971).

18. Of the 370 commercial enterprises and retail shops nationalized in Vilnius in the period July–October 1940, 265 had been owned by Jews. See, Henri Minczeles, *Vilna, Wilno, Vilnius: La Jerusalem de Lituanie* (Paris, 1993), p. 379.

19. This was the term employed by U.S. Embassy/Moscow staffer John Mazionis, who traveled to Lithuania in March 1941. His March 22, 1941 report (see *Journal of Baltic Studies* XXXVI: 2, 1995, pp. 151–58) is a compendium of oft-repeated but factually unsupported canards, viz. “[the Jews] have the confidence of the Reds and have been placed in key positions. All the shops in Kaunas have Jewish commissars. [This] has created a strong anti-semitic feeling in the whole country.” This presentation should be accorded as much weight as his subsequent ludicrous allegation that the Communist Party organization in Vilnius “is run by Poles, with the cooperation of the White Russians and Jews. Their purpose is to keep the Lithuanians out . . . the Vilna Communist Center has enrolled among its members many former Polish officials who have now been given employment in Government offices.” Even a superficial familiarity with the conditions then prevailing in Vilnius reveals this set of assertions to be devoid of any basis in fact.

20. In some parts of Lithuania for which Komsomol records are preserved, the predominantly Lithuanian character of Komsomol membership is amply demonstrated. The membership lists of the Komsomol in the north-central town of Joniškis (captured by the local Activists Front) reveal a very heavy proportion of Lithuanian members versus Jews. See LCSA, Collection R 739, series 1, folder 4, pp. 5–6. The fragmentary records of the Rokiškis Komsomol “Apkom” (District Committee) also underscore the allegation that the Komsomol was not a Jewish monopoly: while protocols of the Apkom meeting of December 14, 1940 reveal that during that sitting the requests of eighteen Jews and ten Lithuanian Christians for issuance of “Kombiliet” (full membership cards) were considered, on the previous day all thirteen applicants had been



Lithuanian. Interesting also are the reasons for rejection of applicants for membership. Some of the Lithuanian candidates were disqualified by past membership in the nationalist *Šaulių Sąjunga*. Jews were rejected because of "petty-bourgeois social origins" or for having relatives abroad. See records of the Panevėžys Province Lithuanian Security Police, LCSA, Collection R 650, series 1, folder 12, pp. 245–321.

21. See Stepas Atamukas, *Žydai Lietuvoje (The Jews in Lithuania)* [Vilnius, 1990], p. 78. This means that 83.5 percent of the members of the LCP were non-Jews, and the statistic, when reversed in this way, tends to be more sobering in its impact when the overall question of collaboration with the Soviet regime is posed.

22. Figures cited by Simonas Alperavičius at a conference on Jewish-Lithuanian relations in Vilnius in September 1995, with his remarks cited in the article "Vilniuje—Diskusijos Apie Lietuvius ir žydus" (In Vilnius—Discussions on Lithuanians and Jews), *Draugas* (Chicago) 14 September 1995.

23. For a discussion of the history of the LAF, see Algirdas Budreckis, *The Lithuanian National Revolt of 1941* (Boston: Lithuanian Encyclopedia Press, 1968), pp. 24–51.

24. *Lietuvai Išlaisvinti Nurodymai* (Directives for Lithuania's Liberation), issued March 24, 1941 by the LAF. Copies of this are to be found in the Turauskas Collection at the Hoover Institution for the Study of War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University, and also in collection R 739 (files of the Joniškis Activists' Staff) at the Lithuanian Central State Archives. An excellent commentary on the antisemitic message of the LAF and some of its meanings and consequences is presented in the series of articles "1941 Metu Sukilimo Baltosios Demės" (Blank Spots in the [History of the] 1941 Uprising) which appeared in the American-Lithuanian publication *Akiričiai* (Horizons), nos. 9 and 10, 1991, and no. 1, 1992. The articles are transcribed conversations with the American historian Saulius Sužiedelis, in which he discusses his archival research and conclusions. Sužiedelis notes that post-war emigré publications on Lithuanian wartime history (such as LAF leader Kazys Škirpa's book), which have included documentary texts, have printed them in bowdlerized form, with the antisemitic content excised.

25. Collection R 739 of the Lithuanian Central State Archives consists of the records of the Joniškis Activists' Staff (Joniškis was a small town of some 5,000 in north-central Lithuania, near Šiauliai). These fragmentary records detail the enactment of antisemitic measures by the Activists on the local scale. Groundbreaking work on the LAF done in Lithuania, which reflects the adoption both of western historiographical methods and a great degree of intellectual fortitude, has been done by Valentinas Brandišauskas, whose published dissertation, *Siekiai Atkurti Lietuvos Valstybingumą, 1940. 06–1941. 09* (Attempts to Re-found the Lithuanian State, June 1940–September 1941) (Vilnius, 1996) contains a separate section on the linkage between the Activists' Front and organized antisemitic acts. Brandišauskas suggests that German oversight of publications, including the leaflets of the LAF printed before June 22, 1941 as well as the newspapers which appeared after the invasion in Lithuania, was in large measure responsible for the harshly antisemitic message of the first days and weeks of the war. However, actions of Lithuanian officials, as described in the records they themselves kept, show that they consistently autonomously employed the terminology of antisemitic racial ideology.

26. Mass terror was applied relatively late in Lithuania and the other Baltic states in comparison to Poland. On the concerted campaign of repression in the Polish territories annexed by

the Soviet Union after 1939, the reader is referred to Jan T. Gross, *Revolution From Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 187–224. Gross points out that there were three major waves of deportations from former Polish eastern territories before the fourth and final wave in mid-June 1941. Gross cites the figure of 1,050,000 to as many as 1,500,000 citizens of the prewar Polish state deported to the east, with 300,000 from the area including Vilnius. His analysis of the ethnic composition is as follows (p. 199): 52 percent Poles, 30 percent Jews, and 18 percent Ukrainians and Belorussians. In the Lithuanian example (which Gross does not include in his study), the probability exists that the bulk of the deportees from eastern Lithuania were Poles and Jews, with Lithuanians taken in substantial numbers from the pre-October 1939 area of the Lithuanian state.

27. *I Laisve*, 24 June 1941, cited in "1941 Metu Sukilimo Baltosios Demes," part III.

28. See, "Einsatzgruppe A: Gesamtbericht bis zum 15. Oktober 1941," op. cit. Heydrich's instruction (Telegram to the *Einsatzgruppen* commanders, 29 June 1941, Bundesarchiv Koblenz, collection SU 70), given days before the launch of "Barbarossa" and repeated in written form a few days after, reads:

The self-cleansing measures efforts of anticommunist and antijewish circles in the territories to be occupied are not to be obstructed. Instead, they are to be set in motion, to be intensified when necessary and to be kept in the right path. However, the local "self-defense circles" must not later be able to point to [German] instructions or political guarantees.

29. See Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York, 1985), vol. II, pp. 766–67.

30. Numerous survivor accounts held at Yad Vashem and at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, among other repositories, support the hypothesis that personal revenge and loot were central factors in many of the killings, particularly in the chaotic first days and weeks after June 22, 1941.

31. Diary of Kazimierz Sakowicz, from: Trial record of Józef Miakisz a/k/a Juozas Mikašius, et al., Provincial Court for Vojevodship of Warsaw, 1972 (records maintained by the Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation, Warsaw). Miakisz was a former member of the *Ypatingas Burys* who lived in Poland until his detection and capture in 1971. In 1976 another former member of this notorious unit, Witold Gilwinski a/k/a Vytautas Galvanauskas, at the time employed as principal trombonist in Warsaw's Great Theater orchestra, was also exposed and arrested. In the protocols of his interrogations he revealed how he routinely dressed his wife and himself with items taken from Jews he had helped liquidate at the Paneriai pits.

32. *Jäger Report*, op. cit. This key document can be found in Raul Hilberg, ed., *Documents of Destruction* (Chicago, 1971). An important deficiency of this document is that it does not list the killings performed in the areas under the control of *Einsatzkommando 2* (northwest Lithuania until October 1941), under the aegis of the Tilsit Gestapo (the so-called "border strip" actions in southern and southwest Lithuania), or in the Vilnius-area by EK 7b and EK 9 in the period up to August 1941, when EK 3 consolidated its control of the entire country from its Kaunas headquarters. Therefore an accurate count of the number of killed in the period of post-invasion terror can not be derived from documents like *Jäger*.

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33. Circular Letter to all Local Defense Staffs, Police Chiefs, and Precinct Chiefs, dated Panevezys, 26 July 1941. LCSA, Collection R 708, series 1, folder 2, page 8. The letter warns that Lithuanians were being shot on flimsy accusations of "bolshevik activity" or as "spies" and "communists." It is noteworthy that these same labels were simultaneously and equally baselessly being applied to individual Jews. Another form of this caution circulated in Taurage district noted that "not even a single Lithuanian should be destroyed without serious reason," even those who voluntarily served in various Bolshevik institutions. The problem of revenge murder of Lithuanians was particularly difficult in the countryside because of the "lack of moderate intellectuals" to calm the vengeful peasants. (LCSA, Collection R 1476, series 1, folder 3, pp. 110–11: Instruction from Šiauliai Province Court to the Taurage District Chief, 29 July 1941).
34. Table of partisan detachments in the city of Kaunas, LCSA, Collection R 1444 (Kaunas Military Headquarters), series 1, folder 9, p. 6, reproduced in Brandišauskas, *op. cit.*, pp. 157–58. Brandišauskas notes that many of the partisan units had communications neither with the LAF staff, nor with any other chain of command (Brandišauskas, *op. cit.*, pp. 66–67).
35. *Einsatzgruppe A: Gesamtbericht bis zum 15. Oktober 1941*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23.
37. Algirdas Klimaitis was eventually discovered living in Hamburg, Germany in the 1980s. A used car dealer with a record of petty criminal offenses, he died before the German authorities could complete their investigation.
38. The first Military Commander of Kaunas was Kazys Bobelis, who before the war had been national commander of the *Šauliu Sajunga*, the Lithuanian national guard which was inextricably linked to President Smetona and the Smetonist system.
39. This and other aspects of the Iron Wolf putsch are discussed in Budreckis, *Lithuanian National Revolt*, *op. cit.*, pp. 121–22. The putsch should be regarded as the true end of the Provisional Government. It should be noted here as well that Col. Bobelis did not seem to differ much from his successor when it came to deploying men of his command to anti-Jewish actions, and that participation in these was not one of the fault lines between the Smetonists and the Iron Wolf.
40. In fact, some of the correspondence on officer appointments in the files of the Kaunas Military Headquarters (*Kauno Karo Komendantura*) preserved at the Lithuanian Central State Archives (collection R 1444) bears the emblem of the short-lived Lithuanian Nationalist Party—a swastika overlaid with the crest of Gedyminas. For example, "Recommendation of Captain Pranas Šopaga as Deputy Commander of the 2nd Auxiliary Police Service Battalion," 6 August 1941. LCSA, Collection R 1444, series 1, folder 5, p. 176.
41. Battalions which can be shown to have been involved in the persecution of Jews and others include the Kaunas-based 1st (later 13th), 2nd (later 12th), and 3rd (later 11th) battalions, and the Vilnius-based 1st, 3rd, and 15th battalions. Men of the Vilnius 2nd battalion served as concentration camp guards at Majdanek from November 1941 until replaced by the men of the Kaunas-recruited 252nd battalion in November of 1942. The U.S. Department of Justice has conducted successful denaturalization and deportation actions against a number of former members of the Kaunas 2nd battalion, which has been tied to the killing of more than 17,000



Jews and Red Army POWs in and around Minsk in the period October–November 1941, as well as against members of the 3rd and 252nd battalions.

42. The demoralization of the men of the Lithuanian 29th Territorial Rifle Corps during the Soviet period was noted by observers of the Polish underground, who commented that their main occupation was “bearing banners during staged political demonstrations.” See “Special Report on the Lithuanian Question,” sent by General Stefan Rowecki of the *Armia Krajowa* to the Polish Government in Exile in London, May 1942, reprinted in *Armia Krajowa w Dokumentach* (London, 1970), vol. II., pp. 56–58.

43. *Ereignismeldung UdSSR* (Report of Events in the USSR) no. 14, 6 July 1941. The report gives the total number of Jews being held in the camp (one of the tsarist-era forts which ringed Kaunas) as 1,500, with another 1,800 held at the notorious Hard Labor Prison. NARA, RG 242, Microform collection T 175 (records of the Reichsführer SS), roll 233, from frame 2721366.

44. Report of Vilnius *Schutzpolizei* Commander Major Stötzel to the SS and Police Garrison Commander, 24 October 1941. LCSA, Collection R 658, series 1, folder 1, pp. 15–18.

45. See, “Proceedings Against Bernd Fischer-Schweder,” *op. cit.*

46. Lileikis was ordered denaturalized by the U.S. Federal Court for the District of Massachusetts in May 1996. In June of that year he voluntarily returned to his native Lithuania. The outlines of his role in the murder and persecution of the Jews of Vilnius are given in the published decision *U.S. v. Lileikis*, 929 F. Supp. 31 (D. Mass., 1996).

47. Report from Raudondvaris Self-defense Force Commander to the Commander of the Defense Battalion, 5 July 1941. LCSA, Collection R 972, series 1, folder 360, p. 1.

48. Among the documents submitted to the court in *U.S. v. Lileikis* were selected “Reports of Events” compiled both by individual Vilnius police precincts as well as by the city police command. For example, the Report of Events for November 19–20, 1941 shows that the Vilnius city police uncovered a hiding place, a “maline,” and arrested the fifty-four Jews found in it; they were turned over directly to the Lukiškes prison, at the disposition of the Saugumas, pending investigation and almost certain execution. LCSA, Collection R 689 (Vilnius City Police Headquarters), series 1, file 23, p. 19. Most of these daily event reports featured a separate statistical reporting category entitled “Jews hiding or escaped.”

49. The unleashing of the terror also permitted the demoralized segments of the population to vent their frustrations and indulge their passions. Many of them, judging from some of the postwar investigative materials held at the archive of the former KGB in Vilnius, returned to their previous occupations once the bloodthirst was slaked.

50. On July 11, 1941, 346 Jews, all men who had been arrested in Vilnius on charges of collaboration with the Bolsheviks, were taken from Lukiškes Prison to Paneriai and shot. At the time, the operative euphemism for murder of this type was to take someone “for labor.” The Lithuanian officers who received these Jews to escort them to Paneriai signed the receipts with the words “I received the Jews-prisoners for work (to be shot).” LCSA, Collection R 730 (Records of Lukiškes Prison), Series 2, folder 36, pp. 76–80.

51. See the account of the July 7, 1941 meeting between Col. Jäger and Leib Garfunkel, Jacob Goldberg, and other Jewish representatives, presented in Avraham Tory, *Surviving the Holocaust: The Kovno Ghetto Diary* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 9–10.

52. The Saugumas' responsibility for investigations involving Jews is demonstrated by surviving Vilnius city police records. These records, daily event reports, show that most Jews arrested by the uniformed police were turned over to the Saugumas, which then investigated each case, interrogated the arrested Jews, and, eventually, decided their fate. See LCSA, Collection R 689 (Records of Vilnius City Police HQ), series 1, folder 23, reports of events filed on arrests, October–November 1941. Jews arrested for blatant offenses, like those caught outside the ghetto minus the obligatory star of David or apprehended at the markets attempting to buy food, were turned over to Lukiškes Prison directly, at the disposition of the *Ypatingas Burys* killing squad, without the involvement of the Saugumas. The Saugumas handled all cases which required elucidation, such as those involving Jews caught with forged papers, Jews hiding with the assistance of non-Jews, Jewish children being cared for by non-Jews, etc., in which an investigative follow-up was required.

53. See LCSA, Collection R 683 (Records of the Commander of the German *Ordnungspolizei* in Lithuania), series 2, folder 2 for correspondence on this between Col. Reivytis, the commander of Lithuanian uniformed police, the police chiefs of Šakiai, Prienai, Garliava, Jonava, and other towns in the Kaunas region, and SS Lieutenant Hamann, the commander of the *Rollkommando* of eight to ten Sipo/SD men and up to 200 Lithuanian auxiliaries. Upon notification that concentration of the Jews had been completed in a given locality, Hamann's squad would be dispatched to the spot and, with the necessary assistance of the local police, carry out the liquidation. On some occasions Hamann's group would conduct *Aktionen* in several close-by towns in a row before returning to Kaunas. Some of these documents are available in English translation in the Soviet-Lithuanian publication *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius, 1970).

54. See, "Proceedings Against Martin Weiß and August Hering," *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, op. cit., vol. VI (Amsterdam, 1971).