

**INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE  
CRIMES OF THE NAZI AND SOVIET OCCUPATION  
REGIMES IN LITHUANIA**

**The Nazi Occupation in 1941 – 1944. The Holocaust and other Nazi Crimes.  
The Persecution of Non – Jews.**

**Murders of Prisoners of War**

**CONCLUSSIONS**

*(Approved on 22 March 2001)*

1. After the genocide of the Jewish population, the extermination of prisoners of war was the second large – scale crime committed during the war period of 1941 – 1944 on the territory of Lithuania.
2. According to our data, at least 170 000 Soviet POW's were killed on the present – day territory of Lithuania. Overall responsibility for their deaths rests with the political and military leadership of the III German Reich. The treatment of Soviet POW by Nazis was different from their treatment of Western captives. Due to the unbearable living – conditions in camps under the German occupation army forces (Wehrmacht) in close collaboration with the German Security police (Gestapo), the masses of Soviet POW's died out from hunger and disease in Lithuania. Soviet POW's of certain categories were shot immediately after they were taken captive.
3. The underlying cause of these atrocities was that German political and military leadership did not abide by universal human values and the provisions of international laws (the Hague Convention of 1907 and of the Geneva Convention of 1929 relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, also ratified by Germany). The extermination of the Soviet POW's was justified and encouraged by racist ideology as one of the components of the politics of annihilation.
4. The local Lithuanian administration could not have any real influence over the fate of the Soviet POW's and was not responsible for it. However, some Lithuanian police units were employed in convoying the Soviet Prisoners of War and guarding the Soviet POW camps.
5. The attitude of local population towards POW's has gradually changed during the war, - at first, there were feelings of hostility towards the retreating Red Army soldiers who were viewed as enemy force, later there were instances of help and support, as reflected in nazi decrees warning the population against helping the Soviet Prisoners of war and threatening with severe punishment.

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