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**PERSECUTION OF NON-JEWISH CITIZENS OF LITHUANIA,
MURDER OF CIVILIAN POPULATION**

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Introduction

The period of World War II and Lithuania's occupation by Nazi Germany in 1941-1944 has been scarcely researched and objectively assessed by historians. More than fifty years of the Soviet occupation left major gaps in the research of history and a number of suppressed, unsettled important issues in the knowledge of the past: archival sources were not accessible to researchers, research into certain topics was simply prohibited, historical research was to a great extent ideologised and politicised. Judgements about the past, deep-rooted myths and stereotypes created in the historiography of the Soviet period affect the public conscience (including that of historians) up to now.

The most painful heritage of the war and Nazi occupation regime in Lithuania is, first and foremost, the tragedy of the Jewish citizens of Lithuania, the atrocious historical phenomenon difficult to perceive by common sense, i.e. the Holocaust and its consequences: slaughtering of approximately 200 thousand of Lithuanian Jews. Step by step, though with difficulty, Lithuania is attempting to trace the history of the Holocaust and to comprehend the tragedy of the past.

The historical heritage of the war and the Nazi occupation embraces more than the Holocaust and its consequences; it also includes the repressive operations against other nationalities of Lithuania, their killing and loss. Though incomparable in their scope and consequences to the Holocaust, these ways of repression, too, call for in-depth research into the complex and contradictory historical processes, phenomena, circumstances and facts that underpinned these historical acts. As distinct from the history of the Holocaust in Lithuania, issues and problems related to the repression against non-Jewish nationals of Lithuania attract almost no international (foreign) attention of historians and up to the present, remain an "unconquered past".

The purpose of the present research was to analyse the repressive policies pursued by the German occupational regime with respect to non-Jewish population of Lithuania and to overview their consequences. It goes without saying that the division of the Lithuanian population into Jews and other people (non-Jews) can be only conditional, formal, made to facilitate the historical research, to identify historical developments in the period of the Nazi occupation and their main consistent patterns. The division has to take into account that Jews were the only people who were recklessly murdered just because they were Jews; therefore, deaths of thousands of Jewish citizens of Lithuania must not be forgotten when discussing a comparatively small number of murdered

non-Jewish people. With the above-mentioned situation of historiography in mind, the author of this research, first of all, aimed at providing a generic overview of the opinions prevailing among Soviet historians, researchers of the Lithuanian émigré community and independent Lithuania about the consequences of the Nazi occupation as well as at defining the tendencies in the development of historiography problems. Based on the material stored in the archives of Lithuania, the work attempts to reveal the causes, procedure and processes of repressive actions perpetrated by Nazi occupiers and their collaborators, to present relevant factography data, to distinguish categories of repressive operations and their victims as well as to give approximate figures reflecting the total scope of the repression, etc.

The choice of the research topic was determined by the Research Work Outline approved by the Commission. Since deportations of Lithuanian non-Jewish population for forced labour to Germany, their incarceration in concentration camps, repression of their cultural life and other topics have already been researched or will be researched in future, the present work does not address them. Certainly, the choice of the research topic was also influenced by the availability of sources and data as well as, naturally, by the subjective attitude of the author towards the period of the Nazi occupation in Lithuania. A point should also be made that the subject of the research was only the so-called direct consequences of the war and Nazi occupational policies in terms of civilian losses, with a focus on the victims of the repressive policies. In addition to the direct losses, there were also indirect consequences (side effects) of the war and the occupation, for example, fallen birth rate, increased death rate, suffering of the people of Lithuania, various other losses and social and demographic processes. The scope of the present research does not extend to any of these aspects.

Overview of Historiography

Soviet historiography. The first "collective historiographer" to examine massacres and other crimes committed by the Nazis and collaborators in the USSR was the Special State Commission. It was formed and operated under agreements made at the Moscow conference of Anti-Hitler Coalition member states (in October, 1943) and elsewhere on the culpability and punishment of the Nazi German leadership for crimes committed in occupied territories, and it undertook political and practical tasks for establishing what the effects of the war and the Nazi occupation were. The USSR Special State Commission for ascertaining and investigating the crimes of the German fascist invaders and their

collaborators (further to be called Special Commission) began working in early November of 1942. Territorial units (Soviet republics and oblasts) of the commission were formed in liberated territories of the USSR. The Lithuanian SSR Special Commission was formed on August 13, 1944 (its chairman was Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee chairman Antanas Sniečkus and its deputy chairman was chairman of the LSSR Soviet of People's Commissars Mečislovas Gedvilas), its members were J. Bartašiūnas, J. Jurginis (later a well-known historian and academic), and its secretary general was A. Čiplys. USSR Special Commission representative V. Zurabov worked directly with the Lithuanian SSR commission.

Later, city commissions subordinate to the oblasts and republics were formed, with from 5 to 7 members each and working groups (of from 12 to 15 people) attached to them. Rural districts had district commission with from 3 to 5 people.

Special commissions were formed by resolution of the Lithuanian SSR Special Commission: 1) to investigate the sites of massacres; 2) to establish the extent of material damages caused to residents.

In total 16,210 people worked in 3,242 institutions and public and co-operative organisations formed by the commission. The total number of people involved in the work of the Lithuanian Special Commission was 24,256¹.

The special commissions and their auxiliary groups investigated crimes committed, collected testimony of witnesses, compiled lists of people killed, exhumed mass graves and performed other tasks. The data and primary sources collected are an important source of information on the history of the Nazi German occupation period (although little investigated by historians).

But the work of the Special Commission was extraordinarily hurried by the Soviet political leadership. The Lithuanian Communist Party (b) Central Committee Bureau, after considering the work of the city and district commissions at the end of October, 1944, noted that the material collected and reports made by the Special Commission were far from complete, superficial and failed to reflect "the true nature" of crimes committed by the German occupiers. Until then certain Lithuanian cities (Šiauliai, Panevėžys) still hadn't had their mass grave sites or the sending of their civilians to "German slavery" investigated. Drawing up lists of those murdered, tortured in prison and concentration camps, sent to Germany and killed during the war and investigations of massacres of Soviet prisoners of war had to be

¹ Writing by Chairman A. Sniečkus and Secretary A. Čiplys of the Special Commission of the Republic of Lithuania to the USSR Special State Commission Chairman N. Shvernik on July 25, 1945, Special Lithuanian Archive (*Lietuvos Ypatingasis archyvas*, further abbreviated as LYA), doc. f. 16895, inv. 2, file 197, p. 1. 1–15.

performed as quickly as possible. All these and other tasks were supposed to be finished by November 15, 1944.²

It's unlikely that such a vast task, to establish the crimes of the Nazi occupiers and their collaborators and especially mass-murders (including Holocaust victims), could have been finished in such a short time.

It's possible to conclude that the Special Commission and in general the Soviet political leadership was completely indifferent to the need for precise and objective data. The International War Crimes Tribunal set up in August, 1945 and operating at Nuremberg in 1945 and 1946 was forced to accept information from the USSR Special State Commission without proof (as indisputable evidence).³ The amount of reparations from Germany, which had surrendered unconditionally, depended on the losses caused by the German occupiers. (This led to an immoderate, unfounded inflation of human and material losses, total figures.)

On December 20, 1944 Pravda published the USSR Special State Commission's report on the Hitlerite invaders' crimes in the Lithuanian SSR. The report stated that according to far from complete data, 165,000 POWs were murdered and more than 300,000 civilians were shot, burnt to death and killed in Lithuanian territory.⁴

The USSR Special Commission's report provided only tentative data (although they can be considered the most accurate of all the data published by the commission). Reports on material losses only began to be compiled in December of 1944. In May of 1945 the Lithuanian SSR Special Commission stopped receiving all primary documents (data) from city and rural district commissions.⁵

According to a July 25, 1945 finding by the Lithuanian republican Special Commission, made with total data available, 436,535 "peaceful residents" and 229,738 prisoners of war were killed in the Lithuanian SSR, and 36,540 people were driven into slavery (transported for labour -R.Z.).⁶

The Special Commission's 1945 documents contain another figure: German occupiers and collaborators killed and tortured 623,000 people, among them 426,000 "peaceful residents" and 197,000 Soviet POWs, and sent another 38,000 people as slave labour to Germany⁷.

² LYA, doc. f. 1771, inv. 1771, file 64, p. 1, p. 76.

³ *Нюрнбергский процесс, т. 7, Москва, 1961, с. 616.* (Nurnberg Process, vol. 7, Moscow, 1961, p. 616)

⁴ Pravda, December 20, 1944, p. 2: the report was published as a separate publication, see Report by the Special State Commission for ascertaining and investigating the crimes of the German fascist invaders and their collaborators in the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, Vilnius, 1945, p. 6. The report was republished in Vilnius in 1957.

⁵ Lithuanian Republican Commission ... p. 9.

LSSR Soviet of People's Commissars chairman (deputy chairman of the Special Commission) M. Gedvilas in a speech given to the anniversary session of the LSSR Supreme Soviet on July 21, 1945, presented different data yet again: Hitlerites shot to death 364,188 people; hung 23; tortured in camps, prisons and Gestapo cellars 60,344 and killed another 1,235 people during military operations in Lithuania. According to M. Gedvilas' figures, more than 425,000 people were killed in total in Lithuania.⁸

At the start of 1946 the Baltic Military District military tribunal meeting in Riga convicted the most notorious Nazi war criminals who had operated in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. In the tribunal's findings and sentencing it was noted that "German invaders annihilated about 700,000 peaceful Soviet citizens and prisoners of war, and sent 36,000 Soviet citizens into slavery in Germany" from the Lithuanian SSR.⁹

Again, the number of those killed in Lithuania during the Nazi German occupation was further increased by the Riga military tribunal. The figure of 700,000 killed used to illustrate the crimes committed by Nazi occupiers and collaborators became established in Soviet historiography and began to be used universally.

Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee first secretary A. Sniečkus in a speech opening the 9th Fort Museum in Kaunas in 1959 tried to justify and explain this figure, saying the data released by the Special State Commission at the close of 1944 were not complete, since not all of the territory of Lithuania had been liberated by that time, and after liberation of the entire country, "many new German fascist crimes" had been revealed.¹⁰

In 1965 (probably for the first time) A. Sniečkus "differentiated" this figure somewhat and explained that the Hitlerite invaders had killed more than 500,000 civilians and around 200,000 POWs.¹¹

⁶ Special Commission of the Republic of Lithuania Chairman A. Sniečkus' victims of German fascist crimes, LYA, doc. f. 16895, inv. 2, file 197, p. 1, 26, 27; Mass Murder in Lithuania (1941-1944): a collection of documents, doc. 1, Vilnius 1965, p. 142. These summary data in the collection are incorrectly dated from 1944.

⁷ Note by A. Sniečkus, Chairman of the Commission of the Republic of Lithuania, LYA, doc. f. 16895, inv. 2, file 197, p. 1, p. 19.

⁸ *Tarybų Lietuva* (Soviet Lithuania), July 24, 1945.

⁹ *Kaltinamoji išvada ir nuosprendis byloje dėl vokiškųjų fašistinių grobikų piktadarybių Latvijos, Lietuvos ir Estijos TSR teritorijoje* (The Indictment and Verdict in the case on German fascist invader crimes in the territory of the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian SSRS), Vilnius, 1946, p. 5; *Hitlerininkų piktadarybės Pabaltijyje* (Crimes of the Hitlerites in the Baltics), Vilnius, 1957, p. 7.

¹⁰ *Tiesa* (Lithuanian Pravda), May 31, 1959. By the end of 1944 the Red Army had only failed to occupy Klaipėda and environs. The larger part of Žemaitija was "liberated" in October, 1944. It's partly true that the Special Commission had less time to do its work in this part of Lithuania.

¹¹ Antanas Sniečkus, *Su Lenino vėliava: straipsniai, kalbos ir pranešimai* (With Lenin's Flag: articles, speeches and reports), Vol. 1 (1927–1969), Vilnius, 1977, p. 271.

This "summary" figure became de rigueur for all Soviet authors. It was used in virtually all "prestigious," academic and scientific works.

A publication of the Central Statistics Office under the Lithuanian SSR Council of Ministers on data from the 1959 general Soviet census claimed that "during the period of the Great War of the Motherland and the fascist occupation, around 850,000 people died or left the Lithuanian SSR" (this number included 150,000 residents of the Klaipėda district who fled to Germany).¹²

The academic History of the Lithuanian SSR, published in 1975, stated that "Hitlerites and collaborators murdered and tortured about 700,000 people -- citizens of the Soviet Union and other European states, including Soviet prisoners of war -- in Soviet Lithuania."¹³

The Russian-language edition of the History of the Lithuanian SSR published in 1978 provides a figure on the number of people transported to Lithuania from elsewhere and killed. It claimed that "about 100,000 citizens transported from other republics of the USSR and occupied European states" were murdered. Thus the number of local Lithuanian residents killed is much reduced. It stated that just over 370,000 Lithuanian residents were killed.¹⁴

The best work from the scientific perspective of all works from the Soviet period on the Nazi German occupation of Lithuania, the German occupiers' policy of repression carried out against residents, the murder of residents and Lithuania's colonisation and Germanisation was K. Rukšėnas' "Policy of the Hitlerites in Lithuania, 1941-1944."¹⁵ The author used a lot of new and important archival material and shed light on losses experienced by Lithuanian residents. But in summarising the processes of exterminating Lithuanian residents, he based his findings on the official historiography line, that in total 700,000 people were killed in Lithuania and that the Nazi administration in Lithuania had carried out a policy of mass terror and extermination of the population.¹⁶

In truth, there were some exceptions in surveying the murder of civilians and other Nazi crimes. It's interesting to note that the Special State Commission's report republished in 1957 didn't provide "revised" (inflated) data on the death of 700,000 people in Lithuania. It indicates more than

¹² 1959 All-Union Census Data, Lithuanian SSR cities and regions, Vilnius, 1962, p. 4, 8.

¹³ *Lietuvos TSR istorija, t. IV (1940-1958 metai)* (History of the Lithuanian SSR, vol. IV (1940-1958), Vilnius, 1975, p. 110.

¹⁴ *История Литовской ССР (с древнейших времен до наших дней)* (History of the Lithuanian SSR Russian-language edition), Vilnius, 1978, p. 456.

¹⁵ See the manuscripts section of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences Library, doc. f. 26-1475; K. A. Rukšėnas, *Hitlerininkų politika Lietuvoje 1941-1944 m.* (Hitlerite Policy in Lithuania, 1941-1944, written in Russian), Vilnius, 1971. – 20 pages. The author published a monograph “*I vergovę*” (Into Slavery) based on this dissertation, Vilnius, 1967, – 152 pages.

300,000 civilian and 165,000 prisoners of war killed.¹⁷ The same figures are presented in the History of the Lithuanian SSR published in 1958.¹⁸

J. Jurginis wrote the first post-war academic article on the history of mass terror by the German occupiers in Eastern Lithuania. The article's most important ideas were: Germans carried out mass terror, its main cause was the Soviet resistance movement going on in various spheres by various means, and whose main force was Soviet partisans; not able to destroy armed partisans, the Nazis killed unarmed civilians instead and used the most brutal mass terror measures. The author sheds light on the massacres of civilians in the region around Švenčionys in spring of 1942, a "vast destruction operation demanding the lives of several thousand people" in Eastern Lithuania in fall of 1943, the burning of Pirčiupiai village in spring of 1944 and others. The article presents real and realistic mass terror acts carried out by the Germans in Eastern Lithuania, although they are used as a basis for making too broad and politicised conclusions and generalisations, which later became standards in Soviet historiography: the occupiers in Lithuania used the most brutal terror measures, shot hundreds of unarmed residents to death without trial or charges, burned entire villages and sent their residents as slave labour to Germany, took hostages and shot them and burned people alive with their farmsteads.¹⁹

J. Bulavas' 1969 monograph "The German Fascist Occupational Governance of Lithuania" (this is another important Soviet historiographic work in general) also mentioned the totals on the number of people killed presented by the Special Commission and M. Gedvilas in 1945 (300,000; 364,000 and 436,000) and described them as "rather different" figures, "arrived at, it seems, through different methods of calculation."²⁰

Therefore, based on Soviet sources and historiography data on the mass destruction of Lithuanian residents during the Nazi German occupation, the conclusion would be that in Lithuania overall 300,000 to 500,000 people -- including the Jews, victims of the Holocaust -- were killed. Taking into consideration that Soviet, Western European and Israeli historiography indicate not less than

¹⁶ See *Tarybų Lietuva Didžiąjame tėvynės kare* (Soviet Lithuania in the Great War of the Motherland, a collection of articles), Vilnius, 1975, p. 50 and others.

¹⁷ *Ypatingosios valstybinės komisijos... pranešimas*, p.6.

¹⁸ *Lietuvos TSR istorija*, Vilnius, 1958, p. 420.

¹⁹ J. Jurginis, *Hitlerinių okupantų masinio teroro priemonės Vilniaus krašte. Lietuvos istorijos instituto darbai, t. 1* (Mass Terror measures of the Hitlerite Occupiers in the Vilnius Region in "Works of the Lithuanian History Institute," vol. 1), Vilnius, 1951, p. 230–241.

²⁰ J. Bulavas, *Vokiškųjų fašistų okupacinis Lietuvos valdymas (1941–1944)*, Vilnius, 1969, p. 200.

200,000 Lithuanian Jews were murdered, the conclusion would be that non-Jewish losses of residents came to 100,000 or 300,000 people, respectively.²¹

It seems it's not necessary to prove and explain that for Soviet historiography the general data on losses of Lithuanian residents during the Nazi German occupation from the Special State Commission', or more precisely, as dictated by Soviet politicians and ideologues "from above," were thoroughly politicised, tendentious, don't stand up to any academic criticism and are absurdly inflated. On the other hand, many Soviet authors, brought up in the Soviet milieu and under the influence of Soviet historiography, didn't feel any discomfort over these unrealistic figures on the fascist German occupational period; these figures served, as it were, noble purposes and unmasked German fascism and Lithuanian bourgeoisie nationalism.

In recognising these figures as real and well-founded, one must deny an especially brutal Nazi German national racial policy regarding the Jews, and deny that the genocide of the Jews carried out by the Nazis (the Holocaust) was an exceptional historical expression. (This was also the motivation, at least partially, in calling the Jewish genocide the massacre of "peaceful Soviet citizens.")

Pragmatic material (largest possible reparations from Germany, in unconditional surrender, for restituting losses that country caused) and also political propaganda goals were sought through the absurdly inflated figures, real and imaginary historical facts and the heaping of victims of Nazi repressive policy from different historical circumstances into one group. Supposed Nazi and "Lithuanian bourgeoisie nationalist" crimes were used as cover (and compensated) for crimes committed by the Soviets themselves, e.g. large losses of the Lithuanian population which appeared as a result of mass deportations after the war, the mass murder of political opponents and other repressions.

Facts and figures on the crimes committed during the German occupation, horrifying crimes and, first and foremost, the murder of hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians, were a means for Soviet ideology and propaganda to convince the Lithuanian nation of the horrible fate which had awaited it in the course of history and from whose danger the Red Army had rescued it. In November of 1942 the Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee in Moscow had released a proclamation which stated Hitler had already deported more than 250,000 men and women from Lithuania and had murdered more than 100,000 men. Soviet propaganda documents stated that the Baltic states "believe and know" that only Soviet government would guarantee their national sovereignty, freedom, restoration

²¹ A. Bubnys, *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva (1941-1944)*. Vilnius, 1998, p. 309–310.

of independence and "unforeseen" economic and cultural development.²² The Soviet system, "the fraternal family of Soviet nations," was meant to appear to the Lithuanian nation as an unavoidable historical necessity and a blessing from on high.

The study of history was supposed to accomplish these unchanged propaganda goals during the Soviet period, and it was given the role of handmaiden to policy and propaganda.

Historiography in the Exile Community. Soviet authors wrote about population losses and the entire Nazi German occupational period within the Soviet ideological context, and Soviet ideology (its executors) dictated the perspectives, stances and assessments held and made by historians and other investigators. In the free and democratic West a different situation prevailed, and there were opportunities to present a variety of facts and interpretation and to look for answers to complex historical problems.

Even so, as authors in the exile community revealed Nazi repressions of the Lithuanian population, there was a marked tendency to inflate the significance of their results, to create an unrealistic picture and to manipulate the picture using unrealistic figures. In the foreword to the book published in 1950 of memoirs by Stuthoff concentration camp inmate A. Gervydas (whose real name was Antanas Kučinskas), A. Vaičiulaitis makes confirmation that 29,500 Lithuanians suffered in Nazi German camps and 6,225 died there. The majority of Lithuanians, 2,480, died at Flossenberg, with another 1,100 at Stuthoff, he claims.²³ These figures aren't supported by any sources and appear too large.

Reports on Lithuanian population losses often appeared in the large Lithuanian exile press. Dr. J. B. [Dr. J. Budreckis it seems - R.Z.] published an article in the February 13, 1963 issue of *Dirva* called "The Destruction of the Baltic Nations in the Statistical Aspect." The author based his work on the calculations of Lithuanian population losses made by economist Albertas Tarulis²⁴ published in his article "A Heavy Population Loss in Lithuania" in the *Journal of Central European Affairs* (1962, No. 4, pages 452-464). According to Tarulis' information, Lithuania lost almost 1 million of its population, or one-third of the "entire nation," from 1939 to 1959: Germans murdered around 136,000 Jews, while German punishment squads and concentration camps killed 14,000 to 16,000 Lithuanians. It appears the author included Lithuanian residents of other nationalities (except for Jews) and not just ethnic Lithuanians in this figure, because he comes to the conclusion that German occupiers killed 152,000 residents in total in Lithuania (136,000 Jews and 16,000 Lithuanians).

²² LYA, doc. f. 17635, inv. 1, file 311, p. 1, 36, 74, 180–181.

²³ A. Gervydas, *Už spygliuotų vielų* ("Behind the Barbed Wire), Chicago, 1950, p.7.

²⁴ *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, vol 30, Boston, 1964, p. 396–397.

It should be pointed out right away that economist Tarulis' calculations of Lithuanian population losses during the Nazi German occupation are among the more realistic, in conformity with the historical reality in the Lithuanian exile (foreign) and more generally in all the historiography.

The late 1950s and early 1960s saw a flurry of writings appear in the Soviet press on the mass murder of "Soviet people" in Lithuania and the participation of the "Lithuanian bourgeoisie nationalists" in those massacres, and the press raised the issue of criminal prosecution and accountability (at the time court proceedings against members of the 12th and 13th Lithuanian Self-Defence (police) battalions were under way). In reply to the Soviet propaganda, the Lithuanian exile press published what amounted to essentially the same kind of propaganda reports. Among those deserving mention are the bulletins released by ELTA, the Lithuanian Telegram Agency re-established in Germany in 1945. The bulletins were sent to the press, to radiotelephones, public figures, politicians and diplomats and provided information on Lithuanian events and the situation in occupied Lithuania.²⁵

Several essential (principal) positions and tendencies are notable in the ELTA bulletins: any larger participation by Lithuanian residents in mass murders is denied and the crimes committed by Soviet occupiers are given prominence. Lithuanians are described as "a peaceful nation," never displaying hatred of other nations over the course of history. Massacres in Lithuania began with the arrival of Soviet power. The Nazi occupiers who replaced the Soviet occupiers carried on the mass-murders, and the Nazi occupiers are "Stalin's Hitlerite accomplices." As the Lithuanian nation suffered through the period of Soviet terror in 1940 and 1941, "one or another" Lithuanian may have appeared, afflicted by the sufferings of the Bolshevik period, having lost his parents or loved ones, having lost the will to resist and drawn into the massacres. It's stressed that the Soviet and Nazi massacres occurred in Lithuania under conditions of foreign oppression (occupation) and that the Lithuanian nation was deprived of its rights. Therefore the "executors of Soviet dictatorship" who had "smeared themselves in the blood of a multitude of the murdered and tortured Lithuanian people" couldn't assume the role of judge (with the above-mentioned court proceedings clearly in mind). Only the free Lithuanian nation could judge the massacres of the Lithuanian population which took place on Lithuanian lands during the years of occupation, they claimed.²⁶

ELTA bulletins claimed the Hitlerites (the Nazi occupational government) killed 300,000 residents in Lithuania. That figure was constant, whereas the number of Lithuanian residents killed and

²⁵ Elta, *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, vol. 5, Boston, 1955, p. 489–490.

²⁶ *Jie negali imtis teisėjo vaidmens*, *ELTA informacijos: Laida "B"* (They can't take the role of judge in ELTA informational bulletin, program B), April, 1961, (Library of the Lithuanian History Institute).

deported by the Soviet occupiers fluctuated somewhat: it was stated that in 1940 and 1941 up until the beginning of the war the Soviets deported more than 34,000 people from Lithuania and shot 1,200, while from 1944 to 1959 they killed and deported from 400,000 to 420,000 people.

It was reported that both occupiers using physically destructive means in violation of various international laws and in violation of the most basic understanding of humanity, and killed in total 740,000 innocent Lithuanian residents. Lithuania allegedly lost 857,000 people in total as a result of the Soviet occupation. Taken together with the population losses during the Nazi occupation (300,000), Lithuanian population losses totalled to 1,157,000 people.²⁷

It's interesting to note that the number of victims of the Nazi occupation among the Lithuanian population indicated by political activists and their propaganda organisations in the Lithuanian exile community -- 300,000 dead -- agrees, it seems not coincidentally, with the summary figure from initial counts by the Soviet Special Commission. From the point of view of the Lithuanian state and Lithuanian history, the Soviet and Nazi occupiers and their criminal policies differed in no way, crimes by both occupiers are considered to be a single common crime. In this particular case, from the political point of view, no reason was perceived for rejecting, denying or criticising the myth created by Soviet propaganda on the large losses sustained by the Lithuanian population. Data of Soviet origin on Nazi crimes in Lithuania, "supplemented" by even more impressive numbers (and also, with the others, far from true) on Soviet crimes were used by boosters of Lithuanian independence to demonstrate to the Western world how Lithuania had suffered as the victim of two totalitarian states and the remarkable facts surrounding the suffering of the Lithuanian nation. All the more so, because after the war no state released objective numbers of human losses. On the other hand, it seems it wasn't politically convenient for Lithuanian exile representatives to reveal the real extent, relatively minor (except for Holocaust victims), of Lithuanian dead and the other realities of the Nazi occupational period, which could witness to expressions of complicity, collaboration and other matters unseemly to Western eyes.

The political significance of population losses, victims and blood spilt was always important. One of the most notable Lithuanian exile public figures, Juozas Brazaitis (acting prime minister in the Provisional Lithuanian Government of 1941) in his book *Vienu Vieni* wrote about the political significance of the victims of the June 1941 uprising as "a stand for independence against the Soviet occupation witnessed to in the blood of the Lithuanian nation." This argument of political

significance was later much used in the Lithuanian diplomatic and informational effort to undermine Soviet claims that the Lithuanian nation joined the Soviet Union of its own free will. Unrealistically large figures describing losses among those involved in the uprising (upwards of 2,000 people) were used in the effort. This is, he alleges, a larger figure than human losses experienced in the 1918-1921 battles for Lithuanian independence.²⁸

J. Brazaitis' book *Vienų Vieni* is one of the most interesting and significant books written by Lithuanians in exile on the Nazi occupation of Lithuania. Its author writes generally on the extermination of the Lithuanian population during the German and Soviet occupations and compares the political objectives, methods and tactics of both occupying powers. Based on Jewish sources, he claims that more than 71,000 Jews were murdered in Lithuania (this is an inaccurate, greatly reduced figure). Although not on the scale of the Jews, innocent Gypsies, Poles and Lithuanians were also murdered as victims of discrimination or repression, except "somewhat more mildly," he claims. Gypsies were completely exterminated in places, although there had been so few that their disappearance was little noticed, he alleges.

From among the various aspects of the Germans' repression policies in Lithuania the author justifiably singles out repressions for failing to meet agricultural delivery requirements for inclusion in a separate category: several hundred farmers in the Suvalkija region of Lithuania, including women, were deported to German concentration camps in 1942 and "nobody ever heard from them again." A series of farmers were shot as public examples for failing to meet the agricultural demands placed on them. Vilnius district commissar [H.] Wulf was especially notorious for meting out shootings. In 1943 in this district farmers in lots of 3-5 from a small rural district were to be shot. The shootings were public, on market days or other holidays, "from the back to the base of the skull." They used to leave the victims of the execution in place on display for several hours.²⁹ J. Brazaitis' book has more specific facts on German repressions, although some are doubtful and the author also fails to provide total data figures on the massacres.

Adolfas Damušis' special study "*Lietuvos gyventojų aukos ir nuostoliai Antrojo pasaulinio karo ir pokario (1940-1959) metais*" ("Victims and Losses among the Lithuanian Population during the Second World War and Post-War Years (1940-1959)") (Kaunas, 1991) is dedicated to revealing

²⁷ ELTA Informational bulletins in March and June, 1964; J. Audėnas, *Genocidas Lietuvoje* (Genocide in Lithuania), ELTA information: Western Europe, June, 1965, program B, p. 2.

²⁸ J. Brazaitis, *Vienų vieni: fotografuotinis leidimas* (All Alone: photographic edition), Vilnius, 1990, p. 69–71.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.133, 147, 151.

Lithuanian victims and population losses over the 1940-1959 period. The author says in his study that he attempted "as accurately and objectively as possible to ascertain Lithuanian population losses during World War II and in the post-war years." Damuđis claims the number of Lithuanian people killed is so large that some authors have sought to reduce it for various reasons.³⁰

According to the author's calculations, during both periods of Soviet occupation [1940-1941 and 1944-1959 - R.Z.] about 592,330 Lithuanian residents fell into the occupiers' "millstones of destruction."³¹ Data on the victims of Nazi terror are presented in two tables: "Holocaust Victims in Lithuania" (according to the author's figures, they totalled to 165,021)³²; and "Approximate Calculation of Victims of Nazi Terror."

In the last table, A. Damuđis indicates the following categories of and figures for Lithuanian residents who perished:

"Labourers, deserting from worksites in Germany, imprisoned in concentration camps and dying there - 1,700 ;

"Farmers, boycotting agricultural requisitions, shot or dead at concentration camps - 11,000 ;

"Deserters from military transports, auxiliary or guard units, shot to death or dying in concentration camps - 13,000;

"Various sporadic executions - 4,000;

"Total dead during the years of German occupation (1941-1944) - 45,000."³³

Although the total number of dead Lithuanian residents during the Nazi German occupation period supplied by A. Damuđis compared to the figures from the Soviet Special Commissions and ELTA informational bulletins is a big step forward toward historical truth, overall the total and its component parts (elements) raise serious doubts, and, taking into consideration the actual situation during the Nazi occupation of Lithuania, would appear unrealistic and inflated, except perhaps for the "victims of various sporadic executions" indicated. The author doesn't base his figures on any arguments or historical sources, and combines civilian victims with military losses (Lithuanian military formations) in a single group. The latter, incidentally, are truly impressive: "13,000 people who deserted were shot or died in concentration camps." Figures on deserters from labour in Germany killed, those

³⁰ A.Damuđis, *Lietuvos gyventojų aukos ir nuostoliai Antrojo pasaulinio karo ir pokario (1940-1959) metais* (Victims and Losses among the Lithuanian Population during the Second World War and Post-War Years (1940-1959)), Kaunas, 1991, p. 4.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., p. 29.

³³ Ibid., p. 28.

imprisoned at concentration camps and dying there, farmers shot for boycotting Nazi farm product quotas and others are comparatively more realistic.

On the other hand, it can be pointed out that A. Damušis didn't include all the categories of Lithuanian people killed in his calculations.

A. Damušis (and J. Brazaitis in part also) as a historian denies the ideals of the anti-Nazi resistance activities and its historical merit. Both historians belong to the influential Catholic political resistance current, which most consistently adhered to a strategy of passive resistance to the Nazis, and they hold to the primary position that the Lithuanian nation's number one enemy was the USSR and Germany only second. Their theoretically based and practised tactic of resistance activity can be described in broad terms as manoeuvre, co-operation on tactical considerations, entering into compromise with the Germans, avoiding actions which might provoke the Germans and cause casualties, attempting to protect Lithuanian youth, conserving the nation's vital powers and so on. These goals were essentially attained.

It's difficult to believe the total figures supplied by A. Damušis of victims of the Nazi occupation, which must be called large and equalling the scale of losses of members and victims of the post-war anti-Soviet armed resistance, despite the fact that he, as a former member of VLIK (The Senior Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania - an anti-Soviet pro-Lithuanian independence organisation in exile and operating underground in Lithuania), was well-informed on the situation in Lithuania during the years of German occupation.

A. Damušis' calculations of Lithuanian victims (population losses) differ a great deal from the data supplied by another Lithuanian exile author, Pranas Zundė, in K. Pakštas' article "Area and Population of the Lithuanian Nation" in the Lithuanian Encyclopaedia.

P. Zundė distinguishes the following categories of Lithuanian population losses during the Nazi occupation and their characteristic numbers:

Deported as slave labour to Germany and never returning, 1942-1944,	9,800 ;	
Murdered by the Nazis in 1942-1945 (mostly Jews)	170,000.	Other
losses during war time, 1942-1945 (dead soldiers, including those mobilised into the Red Army, dead from aerial bombardment, etc.)	25,000;	
Refugees from the Soviet Union to the West, 1944	60,000.	Fleeing
or evacuated from Klaipėda region to Germany, 1944	105,000.	

The Lithuanian Encyclopaedia makes this interesting conclusion in the same article: "It needs to be taken into consideration that during two years of war and German occupation (1942-1943) the average annual natural Lithuanian population growth increased by as much as 12 per thousand. That demonstrates that the last war didn't reduce the Lithuanian nation: she was destroyed by the new genocidal Russian measures of slave camps and terror driving out residents."³⁴

P. Zundė's categories of Lithuanian population losses are not differentiated more precisely or defined: those deported for forced labour and not returning didn't necessarily represent the dead, and the category "other military losses," including soldiers who perished in the German and Soviet armies and others, doesn't say very much more of a specific nature.

Statistical data in the Lithuanian Encyclopaedia are not, it seems, accurate, and its statements and summary conclusions are also characteristically politically tendentious, but from them one can make the fundamental conclusion: the number of dead (murdered) Lithuanian residents (except for Jews) was very small (slight).

Romualdas J. Misiūnas and Rein Taagepera's book ³⁵ provides interesting data of a general nature on Lithuanian population losses during the Nazi German occupation, and the book can be generally judged as one of the most exhaustive studies comparing the histories of the Baltic states.

It's true that the authors don't discuss the problem of massacres of Lithuanian residents in the text of the book itself, don't provide general figures and don't analyse such figures (except for the Holocaust and its victims). The authors guess (estimate) that 170,000 Jews were murdered in Lithuania.³⁶

R. J. Misiūnas and R. Taagepera provide the following tables as appendices to their book: 1) "Changes in population 1939-1945: approximate calculations" and 2) "Deaths during the war and occupation (1940-1945): approximate calculations."³⁷ Some general conclusions can be drawn from them regarding civilian population losses in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania during the Nazi German occupation.

³⁴ *Lietuvių enciklopedija* (Lithuanian Encyclopedia), tome 15: *Lietuva* ("Lithuania"): second printing, Vilnius, 1990, p. 448, 447.

³⁵ Romualdas J. Misiūnas, Reinas Taagepera, "*Baltijos valstybės: priklausomybės metai 1940–1980*," Vilnius, 1992. Translated from Romuald J. Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, "The Baltic States: Years of Dependence 1940-1980," University of California Press Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1983.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 298–300.

The authors stress acutely that the figures in the tables are very approximate and are presented only to give the reader some idea of the kinds and scale of changes in the population, and to encourage investigators (in the East and West) to come up with more accurate data. (These notes by the authors illustrate well the historiographic state of the problem).

In the first table "Changes in population 1939-1945: approximate calculations" the following figures reflect the number of victims in Lithuania during the Nazi occupation:

Nazi executions and deportations 1941-1945 [together with executions performed by "local stooges," including the murder of 180,000 Lithuanian Jews] 200,000³⁸.

Thus, besides Jews, losses of other Lithuanian residents killed in "executions and deportations" comprised about 20,000 people. According to the approximate figures supplied by the authors, Lithuania lost 15 percent of its population from 1939 to 1945 (Latvia lost 30 percent, Estonia 25 percent).³⁹

In the table "Deaths during the war and occupation (1940-1945)" on losses of people during the Nazi German occupation in Lithuania the authors supply the following figures:

Nazi executions 1941-1945	140,000
Number of dead in German deportations 1942-1945	50,000
Number of civilian dead among those fleeing to the West	5,000
Bombardment and other war victims	15,000 ⁴⁰ .

Thus, according to the approximate figures supplied by the authors, 10,000 to 20,000 non-Jewish Lithuanian residents became victims of Nazi executions in Lithuania. This is a sufficiently realistic and credible number, although it's not given finer detail by breaking it down into separate categories of victims. These figures clearly conflict with the summary figures supplied by A. Damušis. It's true that the figure representing bombardment and other war victims would seem rather inflated, especially compared to Latvia (10,000) and Estonia (5,000). It would seem Lithuanian residents had to suffer less from military actions than Latvian or Estonian residents.

Discussing the historiography of the Lithuanian exile community, historian Thomas Remeikis' (author of the monograph "Opposition to soviet rule in Lithuania 1945-1980," Chicago, 1980) 1985 article in the Lithuanian exile monthly *Akiračiai* can be mentioned as well. It raises the question and dimensions of the June, 1941 political massacres in Lithuania, after the USSR-German war began. The author calls June of 1941 "the terrible June": the terrors in Lithuania didn't end on June 15 and 16, 1941, i.e. with the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, mass deportations, and the later massacre in the Rainiai

³⁸ Ibid., p. 298-299.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 299.

Forest as the Red Army was pulling out of Lithuania. The Nazi terror replaced the Soviet one: pogroms, witch-hunts for Soviet collaborators and suspected collaborators and vigilante executions, the running wild of Nazi special units and the annihilation of the population all began. The second half of June, 1941, was not just the beginning of the Jewish tragedy, but a continuation of the Lithuanian nation's tragedy, and was even more horrible for its "long-term implications." The author believes "Lithuania lost up to 850,000 people [that's a figure from Soviet historiography - R.Z.] during World War II" and claims it was the highest percentage of war victims anywhere in Europe. Proportionally even Russia lost less of its population.⁴¹

National Rebirth and Independent Lithuanian Historiography. Not a lot has been written on the theme of Nazi repressions and the massacre of non-Jewish Lithuanian residents. The attention of Lithuanian historians falls first on the Stalin regime's mass destruction of Lithuanian residents, mass deportations and so on. This situation in Lithuanian historiography can be considered both symptomatic and a shortcoming in the study of history.

Perhaps the first to touch upon the "blind spots" in Lithuania's wartime and post-war demographics, the problem of population losses, was L. Truska. He showed that about 200,000 Lithuanian Jews were killed during the years of the fascist occupation, while he gave the starting figure for the number of those killed from other ethnic backgrounds at 50,000 people, and later as "several tens of thousands."⁴²

L. Truska's figure entered "the international arena" and was used in the History of the Baltic States. That work's authors state 50,000 Lithuanians were killed during the Nazi occupation (and 18,000 Latvians as well as 5,000 Estonians).⁴³

Historian A. Bubnys has taken the greatest interest in problems associated with Nazi repressions and massacres of Lithuanian residents (population losses). In his monograph and other works, using both archival and published sources and other authors, especially K. Rukšėnas' studies, A. Bubnys reveals broadly the destruction of Lithuanian residents, including non-Jews, and presents a lot of different historiography data and loss statistics. Even so, A. Bubnys doesn't express a clear opinion on

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 300.

⁴¹ T. Remeikis, Birželinė *Lietuva, in Akiračiai: atviro žodžio mėnraštis* (Lithuania in June" in *Akiračiai: a monthly of the public word*), No. 7, July, 1985, p.1,15.

⁴² L. Truska, "Baltos dėmės" *karo bei pokario metų Lietuvos demografijoje, Naujas požiūris į Lietuvos istoriją* [a collection of articles] (Blind Spots in the Demography of War-time and Post-War Lithuania, a New Take on Lithuanian History), Kaunas, 1989, p. 204; L. Truska, *Lietuva 1938–1953 metais* (Lithuania from 1938 to 1953), Kaunas, 1995, p. 125.

how many non-Jewish Lithuanian residents were killed during the Nazi occupation. The author bases his work on the figure from the Soviet Special Commission of 100,000 killed and murdered non-Jewish Lithuanian residents, and claims that this figure can be considered the base figure for specific investigations of losses of the populations of different Lithuanian nationalities (Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Belarussian and others). In concluding, various data are presented, and the author considers the number of dead and murdered Lithuanian residents presented by A. Damušis -- 45,000 -- to be "closest to the truth." A. Bubnys revises this figure and adapts it to conditions of Lithuanian historical realities, at the same time making it somewhat more comprehensible by breaking this number down into about 15,000 Poles, 10,000-20,000 Lithuanians and the remaining 5,000-10,000 as people of other nationalities (Russians, Belarussians).⁴⁴

Thus, the data summarising the dimensions of the mass-murder of (non-Jewish) Lithuanian residents in historiography are very different and conflicting, and large disagreements among historians are readily apparent. The estimates of Soviet historiography and some Lithuanian exile authors (100,000-200,000 victims) have to be rejected as overblown, politicised and ideologised, without a real foundation. In general there is a tendency in the historiography to present a much too exaggerated and academically unsubstantiated picture of population and other losses during the German occupation.

The author of this document believes the real number expressing the amount of Lithuania's non-Jewish population lost is several thousand murdered. The most rational and productive course of action would be to consider this figure as the jumping-off point for more detailed investigations of Lithuanian population losses.

Lithuanian Residents – Victims of the German-Soviet Hostilities in 1941

First, we need to discuss the losses of and victims among Lithuanian residents that were determined by the Nazi-Soviet hostilities on the territory of Lithuania. Lithuanian citizens, irrespective of their nationality, gender or

⁴³ Z. Kiaupa, A. Maesalu, A. Pjur, G. Straube, *Baltijos šalių istorija* (History of the Baltic States), Vinius, 2000, p. 177.

⁴⁴ A. Bubnys, *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva (1941–1944)* (German-Occupied Lithuania (1941-1944)), Vilnius, 1998, p. 312; A. Bubnys, *Lietuvos gyventojų naikinimas nacių okupacijos metais (1941–1944)*, (Destruction of the Lithuanian Population during the Nazi Occupation (1941-1944)), *Lietuvos žmonių genocidas nacių ir sovietų okupacijose* (The Genocide of the Lithuanian People in the Nazi and Soviet Occupations, conference material, June 12, 1993), Vilnius – Kaunas, 1944, p.26; A. Bubnys, *Nacių genocido aukos Lietuvoje* (Victims of the Nazi Genocide in Lithuania), in *Lietuvos naikinimas ir tautos kova (1940 - 1998)* (The Destruction of Lithuania and the Struggle of the Nation (1940-1998)), compiled by Izidorius Ignatavičius. Vilnius, 1999, p. 79–80; A. Bubnys, *Nacistų okupacinio režimo politika Lietuvoje 1941–1944 m.* (Policy of the Nazi Occupational Regime in Lithuania 1941-1944), J. P. Kedys, *Terorizuojama ir naikinama Lietuva 1938 –1991* (Terrorized and Destroyed Lithuania 1938-1991), Klaipėda, 1994, p.192.

views, perished as innocent victims of the German aggression against the Soviet Union in the armed confrontation between the two imperialist powers and their armies that waged war against each other.

Lithuania, situated in the neighbourhood of Germany, became the arena of the war from the first moments of the German aggression in the morning of 22 June 1941. A huge mass of the German army – the entire group of Northern armies and part of the Centre armies, a total of over 40 divisions and approximately 700,000 soldiers – invaded Lithuania.

The German invaders were met by a very weak resistance of the Red Army. The German divisions that attacked in the direction of Riga and Mintauja through Samogitia, reached Latvia already on the second day of the war. The divisions that attacked in the direction of Vilnius-Minsk reached Alytus and Merkinė (Southeastern Lithuania) already on the first day of the war. The German breakthrough in the direction of Kaunas and Daugavpils was a little slower.

Kaunas and Raseiniai were taken on 23 June, Vilnius, Kaišiadorys, Trakai and Ukmergė were seized on 24 June, Telšiai, Kelmė, Kėdainiai, Radviliškis, Molėtai and Zarasai were occupied on 25 June, and Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Kupiškis and Pasvalys were taken on 26 June. On 27 June, that is in less than a week, the Germans had taken the entire territory of Lithuania⁴⁵.

The success of the attack by the German Wehrmacht was determined by many different circumstances. The Soviet Union was not ready for the war and the German army was superior in all aspects. The new western border between Germany and the Soviet Union, which emerged after the latter occupied Lithuania, was not secured or prepared for defence; the Germans bombed the Soviet aviation in the aerodromes; the Red Army failed to form a solid defence front in Lithuania, retreating hastily and disjointedly, uncontrolled by its command and offering resistance in separate locations only.

On the very eve of the outbreak of the war, the Red Army units deployed at the frontier had been ordered not to fire at the Germans even if they invaded the Soviet territory and not to respond to the provocation by the Germans. The order to mount a strong counterattack against the Germans with an aim of smashing their major forces and shifting the military action to the territory of Germany was issued only in the evening of 22 June⁴⁶.

Such nature of the military action in Lithuania and its short duration determined the relatively low number of victims among the residents of Lithuania and minor material losses. Moreover, Soviet military mobilization was not conducted and voluntary or forced evacuation and resistance was not organised due to lack of time. All this influenced the potential victims among and the material losses of the people of Lithuania.

The course of the military action, its nature and aftermath was reflected in the official press of Nazi occupation times. It said: “ The frontier saw no long battle..., the “invincible” columns of the Red Army ran incoherently, trying to blow up the bridges where possible [...]”. More fierce combat took place near Marijampolė and Alytus, in the area of Kaunas and elsewhere.

⁴⁵ Petronis, P. *Kova už Lietuvos TSR išvadavimą Didžiajame Tėvynės kare* (Fight for the Liberation of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania in the Great Patriotic War). Vilnius, Žinija, 1984, p. 18-34

⁴⁶ Geller, K., Nekrich, A. *Utopia In Power*. Moscow, 2000, p. 368-370.

The following Lithuanian cities and towns suffered most from the German artillery and air-raids: Alytus, Marijampolė, Vilkaviškis, Tauragė, Kretinga, Raseiniai, Kelmė and others. Generally, the largest damage was inflicted on the counties of Alytus, Raseiniai and Tauragė⁴⁷.

However, the majority of Lithuanian towns and villages suffered minor damage or remained entirely intact. The press said that Kaunas suffered very little damage: the city “was not bombed at all”, “only the aerodrome and the major warehouses of military equipment and oil-fuel reservoirs” were bombed, civilians “suffered very little damage” and the normal pace of life of the city was hardly disrupted by the hostilities at all.

Similar news was reported about Vilnius: “Vilnius suffered little damage in the war. Although statistical data suggests that approximately 300 houses were destroyed in the war, the general picture of the city reveals no traces of war”. According to the data of early July 1941, 2 civilian Lithuanians were killed in Vilnius during bombing raids⁴⁸.

Official press reports presented partial data that politicised the number of civilian victims and the damage inflicted on the residents. According to the daily *Naujoji Lietuva*, published in Vilnius, “there was no time to count the casualties among Bolsheviks, since they were not worth it⁴⁹. Victims among the Jewish population must not have been counted either.

However, there is generally no data confirming the heavy casualties among the Lithuanian population during air strikes (bombing) and other military action that some authors referred to. The Soviet propagandist historical research literature also indirectly suggests the lack of data: it contains hardly any facts. Soviet-time publications tell about an allegedly horrific German air strike against a pioneer summer camp in Palanga and numerous victims among children: the shell hit a room in the camp, which accommodated 80 children, killing all of them. Also, the Nazi soldiers were said to have allegedly fired at running people in Palanga. After each air raid, “the number of blood stains on the sand increased”, etc.⁵⁰

The reporting on the events in Palanga resembles the Soviet propagandist myths about the Nazi occupation of Lithuania. Palanga had no military objects; a pioneer summer camp could hardly have been a target for the Nazi military occupation. Some witnesses of these events have claimed that no one was killed in the Palanga camp on the morning of 22 June⁵¹.

Civilian casualties were greater in those areas where the units of the June 1941 uprising were formed at the outbreak of the war and offered more active resistance. (And the participants of the uprising, at least the unarmed and unorganised ones, can be considered civilians). When expelling Bolsheviks from the environs of Kazlų Rūda

⁴⁷ *Karas ritasi per Lietuvą: lietuviai džiaugsmingai sutinka žygiuojančius vokiečių karius* (War raging across Lithuania: Lithuanians joyfully meet the marching German soldiers), *Į laisvę: Kauno dienraštis*, 20 June 1941; *Sudege miestai ir miesteliai* (Burnt towns and villages), 20 June 1942, p. 8. *Į laisvę*, 19 May 1941.

⁴⁸ *Šiuo metu Kaune* (Kaunas Today), *Naujoji Lietuva*, 2 July 1941; *Žuvusieji civiliai lietuviai* (Victims Among Civilian Lithuanians), *Naujoji Lietuva*, 2 July 1941; *Ūkininko patarėjas*, 28 June 1941; *Gyvenimas Vilniuje tvarkosi* (Life Normalises in Vilnius), *Ūkininko patarėjas*, 24 October 1941.

⁴⁹ Gustaitis, A., *Pirmieji kritusieji Lietuvos laisvės priešaušryje* (The first victims at the dawn of Lithuania's freedom), 1 July 1941.

⁵⁰ Rukšėnas, K., Sinkevičius, V., *Lithuania under Hitlerian Executioners: Hitlerian Occupation of Lithuania* (Article Collection), Vilnius, 1966, p.86.

⁵¹ *Visa tiesa apie Palangos stovyklą dar nepasakyta* (The truth about Palanga camp not told yet), *Lietuvos Rytas*, 7 July 1995.

(Marijampolė County), sixty partisans and “ordinary people” were killed. During a firefight in Klovainiai (Šiauliai County) on 23 June, three partisans and 3 civilians perished⁵².

Research literature (historiography) provides various data on the number of uprising participants (partisans) killed. Škirpa claimed that the total number of LAF fighters killed was over 4,000 men⁵³. Historian Brandišauskas notes that a total of 600 freedom fighters were killed in the entire Lithuania, and presents reasons and grounds to call the number suggested by Škirpa obviously “too large”⁵⁴. In Kaunas, the centre of the uprising, as few as 110 killed partisans were registered by 27 June 1941⁵⁵.

The intensity and fierceness of military action as well as the statistics of victims among soldiers on both sides can serve as a rough indicator for the estimation of victims (casualties) among the people of Lithuania during the hostilities. K. Škirpa referred to the Nazi documents, claiming that the German Wehrmacht lost 218 officers and 3,144 soldiers, a total of 3,362 people, during its march through Lithuania⁵⁶. L. Truska notes that the Nazi army lost up to 3,000 soldiers during the occupation of Lithuania⁵⁷.

Taking into consideration the non-intensive and short-lived nature of the hostilities, these numbers might seem exaggerated (inflated). Russian historiography (press) contains data suggesting that the German army lost from 10 July 1941 slightly over 20,000 people in the entire German-Soviet Union front from the Baltic to the Black Sea⁵⁸. In this case, the number of German soldiers killed in Lithuania that the above mentioned authors suggested would really be overestimated.

The author of the present research conducted a more elaborate analysis of archive sources about the victims among the residents of the Tauragė County at the outbreak of the war. On the eve of the war, the Red Army soldiers were building fortifications in this district on the Lithuanian-German frontier; after the hostilities started, two Red Army rifle divisions fought the Germans. The Red Army attempted a counter-attack on 23 June, and a large-scale tank combat took place on a 60-kilometer stretch of territory between Kaltinėnai and Raseiniai. Thus, the Tauragė County had become the arena for the most intense and fierce battle between the German and Soviet armies in Lithuania.

As regards victims among the civilians of Tauragė County, the Nazi occupation authorities ordered in the spring of 1941 to collect data on “persons killed or seriously wounded (having lost not less than 30 per cent of their working capacity) by the Nazi weapons”. The heads of Tauragė Rural Districts presented to the occupation

⁵² *Naujoji Lietuva*, 16 July 1941; *Tėvynė (Šiauliai)*, 20 October 1941.

⁵³ Škirpa, K. *Sukilimas Lietuvos suverenumui atstatyti: dokumentinė apžvalga* (Uprising for Restoring the Statehood of Lithuania: Documentary Survey), Washington, 1973, p. 297.

⁵⁴ Brandišauskas, V., *Siekiai atkurti Lietuvos valstybingumą* (Efforts to Restore Independent Lithuania (June 1940-September 1941)), Vilnius, 1996, p.85.

⁵⁵ *Kritę partizanai* (Partisans Killed), *Į laisvę*, 1 July 1941.

⁵⁶ Škirpa, K., Uprising... p. 297. The author drew a conclusion that over 600 Lithuanian freedom fighters were killed, evaluating respectively the role of the participants of the June 1941 uprising “in defeating the forces of the Russian Red Army” in Lithuania, *ibid*, p. 297-298.

⁵⁷ Truska, L. *Lietuva 1938–1953 metais* (Lithuania in 1938-1953), p.100

⁵⁸ Krasikov, V. They Died in Defence of Our City. *Saint Petersburg's Peak Hours: Daily Review*, Saint Petersburg, 12-18 September 2001, p. 4.

authorities information on 78 persons killed and 27 seriously wounded⁵⁹. These figures should be quite accurate since the Germans paid minor compensations to the families of the victims and the wounded.

People in Tauragė County died mainly from bullets or from artillery shell splinters, however, the Germans also executed some. These included people who were hiding from the hostilities in shelters and cellars, people whom the Germans took for Red Army soldiers, also those reported (suspected of) as having fired at the Germans, taken away and executed by the Germans (also probably on political grounds). People tortured to death by the Russians were also included into the lists of victims. Therefore, not all the residents of Tauragė County registered in the lists were the casualties of immediate military action and the number of casualties can be considered low.

The casualties in the other frontier counties of Lithuania that suffered more from the war (Vilkaviškis, Marijampolė, Alytus) and the rest of the counties that were the scene for more intensive military action (Raseiniai, Šiauliai and other counties) might have been similar. In Merkinė (Alytus County), 8-10 people were killed as a result of military action, and in Kazlų Rūda (Marijampolė County) approximately 20 persons died⁶⁰, etc.

Thus, a general conclusion can be drawn that the number of Lithuanian residents who were killed in 1941 as a result of military action, air strikes, and artillery attacks, etc. was not large. The theoretical evaluation by some of the above-mentioned authors, amounting to thousands of such victims among civilians, is not grounded. Archive sources provide no data on such number of casualties and the Soviet propagandist literature had no such information either. Research on regional (area and district) history, published abundantly in independent Lithuania over the past years, again mentions only occasional and minor casualties.

During the years of the German occupation, lists of people killed by the retreating Red Army and local Communists were compiled, which included a total of 1,027 victims of Soviet terror in 21 counties of Lithuania (Eišiškės and Vilnius counties and Vilnius city excluding).

The majority of these were innocent and meaningless victims of the vengeance of the retreating Red Army. Motifs for killing were mainly banal: “shot while riding a bicycle”, “shot as an unreasonable Lithuanian”, “shot as disloyal to the Soviet system”, “shot for hoisting the flag”, “shot as former member of the Home Guard”, “shot for possessing binoculars”, “shot for hoisting a white flag near his house”, “shot for supporting the partisans”, “shot for service in the police of independent Lithuania”, “shot in a quarrel with Communists over a confiscated bicycle”, “shot for looking at the running Red Army soldiers from a bush”, etc.⁶¹.

Thus, the tactics and nature of the military activities and repressive structures of the two imperialist states – the Nazi Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union – during the hostilities in Lithuania were generally similar. The two powers acted as an aggressive alien force in a foreign occupied country, whose action can be evaluated as common crime against the people of Lithuania.

The People of Lithuania as Victims of “Pay-back” (Revenge) Operations by the German Occupants

⁵⁹ LCVA, doc. f. R– 1476, inv. 1, file 16, p. 16–17, 19, 69, 71–72, 74–75, 78, 83, 89, 93.

⁶⁰ *1941 m. birželio sukilimas: dokumentų rinkinys* (The Uprising of June 1941: document collection), p.105.

⁶¹ Brandišauskas, V. *Siekiai atkurti Lietuvos valstybingumą (1940 06– 1941 09)* (Efforts to Restore the Statehood of Lithuania (June 1940-September 1941)), Vilnius, 1996, p. 82.

The majority of Lithuanian residents who suffered the Soviet occupation of 1940 welcomed the invading Nazi army as “liberators” from the Soviet subjugation, meeting them with flowers and, according to the Lithuanian customs, with “bread and salt”, demonstrating their gratitude and offering truly or formally sincere compliments. This undoubtedly influenced the conduct of the Germans and their favourable psychology regarding Lithuanians.

After the invasion of the Nazi army, the Commander-In-Chief of the Nazi army issued a proclamation to “Lithuanians”, which announced the establishment of military rule. The proclamation declared a general friendly (loyal) approach towards Lithuanians. The Nazi soldiers were presented as “friends and liberators from the Soviet subjugation”, bringing “freedom” and restoring “human living conditions”. However, the proclamation strictly demanded to yield weapons, and report on Soviet officers and soldiers as well as Bolsheviks commissars in hiding. Those who hide Soviet soldiers, their weapons, ammunition or other possessions of the Red Army and the Soviets, or those who appropriate such possessions, offer resistance or attempt to contact the enemy, were threatened execution⁶².

Having entered Lithuania, the Nazi soldiers at times acted not as “liberators” but rather as merciless and brutal occupants. Less than in a week of military action, they perpetrated cruel massive acts of violence against the innocent civilians, which was absolutely not in line with the overall euphoria, not to mention the hope for the restoration of statehood and other political expectations of the Lithuanian nation which later proved to be unjustified.

When occupying Lithuania, the German troops treated it as part of the Soviet Union territory, thus, despite the friendly political statements, they were supposed to act as on the territory of the enemy. Any hostile action by civilians against the army, its representatives or auxiliary personnel had to be followed by the harshest punishment on the spot, even by annihilating the assailant. In those areas where the German army was treacherously attacked and the circumstances prevented the Germans from identifying individual culprits, the commander of the battalion or a senior officer had the right to immediately implement coercive measures⁶³.

Several collective punitive actions perpetrated by the Nazi in Lithuania were reported.

On 23 June 1941, the Germans burned the village of Ablinga (Kretinga County, 4 kilometres north of Endriejavas) and killed 42 inhabitants of this village and neighbouring village of Žvaginiai.

The motives and reasons behind the extermination of Ablinga Village are not entirely clear. Out of several versions, the following is the most realistic. In the spring of 1941, the 295th engineering battalion of the Red Army was deployed in the village, which was building fortifications till the very outbreak of the war. After the war started, the village of Ablinga appeared to be located in the area of attack of the German 291st infantry division's 505th regiment, which attacked in the direction of Liepaja. The Red Army soldiers withdrew from the village

⁶² Proclamation by the Commander-In-Chief of the German army “Lithuanians!”, *Ūkininko patarėjas*, 28 June 1941.

⁶³ Mass Killings in Lithuania, part 1., p. 30.

already on 22 June, after an artillery attack, while the Germans entered the village at the noon of the same day. On 23 June, several Red Army soldiers who remained in the village opened fire on the regiment of German cyclists who had stopped by in Ablinga, killing two German soldiers. After a while, the German punitive squad started a punitive revenge action in the village.

When the Germans started arresting the people of Ablinga, the inhabitants of the village at first feared nothing bad. Some of them, especially women and children, were released, and some of the women were unwilling to leave their men, hoping that the rest of the arrested would be released as well.

However, the arrested residents of Ablinga were taken to the valley of Dirsteika stream and executed in three different sites. A total of 42 persons were shot: 33 residents of Ablinga (20 men, mainly young, 13 women and girls), 6 inhabitants of Žvaginiai (men) and 3 persons who were visiting Ablinga (2 men and 1 woman).

Having executed the people, the German punitive squad set the village on fire and burned it down. Over 20 residents of Ablinga survived⁶⁴.

Massive Alytus. After the front striking divisions of the Nazi army entered the South-eastern Lithuanian city, chief of Home Guard regiment, Lieutenant B. Meškėlis, and his men (partisans) came to report to the Germanskillings, apparently even more violent and on a larger scale, were also perpetrated in. The regiment were wearing bands on their sleeves, as the Germans had requested. However, the Germans took the riflemen of Alytus for enemies, disarmed them, took to the bank of the Nemunas River and executed them (a total of 42 men)⁶⁵. (It was later admitted that the partisans of Alytus were executed by mistake).

This was not the end of the killings in Alytus. On 23 June, a group of Red Army soldiers, hiding in Marđakas mill, shot dead two Nazi patrols. In revenge, the Germans persecuted and shot men in several sites of the city. Even though different authors and sources give extremely controversial information about the killings in Alytus, the very fact of massive killings raises no doubts. Among the executed were 2 Catholic priests, several police officers, etc. One of the witnesses of the killings, Jonas Borevičius (born in 1914, reserve lieutenant of the Lithuanian army, chief of the regiment of TDA Alytus company, later was employed at the Office of Alytus County Governor, served in the Lithuanian engineering battalions, organised by the Germans in 1943 and sent to the Leningrad region, where he

⁶⁴ Rimgaila, V. *Dar kartą apie Ablingos tragediją* (Once Again about the Ablinga Tragedy), *Politika*, 1990, No. 15,19; Riauka, D. *Kodėl sudeginta Ablinga* (Why Ablinga Was Burned), *Politika*, 1991, No. 3, p. 14, etc.

⁶⁵ Gražiūnas, A. *Lietuva dviejų okupacijų replėse 1940–1944* (Lithuania in the Claws of Two Occupations in 1940–1944), Vilnius, 1996, p. 92.

deserted to the Soviet partisans) wrote in his statement of evidence after the war that the Germans executed approximately 150 residents of Alytus and claimed he saw himself the bodies of 19 victims⁶⁶.

A similar number of the executed inhabitants of Alytus, around 170 persons, is indicated in memoirs written by A. Vilimas in 1948⁶⁷. The Soviet press presented even a larger number of the executed – around 250-300 people⁶⁸.

The press of Lithuanian émigrés and the independent Lithuania gives figures similar to those published in the Soviet period or even larger. “By St. John’s Day [24 June – R. Z.], 296 residents of Alytus had perished in the war, and the Gestapo were still taking other men for execution”⁶⁹. An émigré author A. Gražiūnas wrote about “the execution of 300 civilians in Alytus”⁷⁰.

Soviet historians K. Rukšėnas and V. Sinkevičius did not present such large figures when writing about the killings in Alytus; according to them, “entire families” were executed⁷¹.

J. Abraitis wrote about “a sly Red Army” soldier who opened fire at a German infantry company and several innocent victims, among one wearing a uniform, a Lithuanian police officer on duty⁷².

Rumours about the killings in Alytus had even reached during the war period the partisans of the Soviet Belarus: a famous German officer was allegedly shot at the outbreak of the war in Alytus; the Germans in revenge “executed an entire residential quarter”⁷³. The killings might have also been indirectly reported in the official press during the period of Nazi occupation: the *Naujoji Lietuva*, published in Vilnius, wrote about “fierce battle” in Alytus, where streets were “covered with the bodies of the killed”⁷⁴.

During the Soviet period, the killings in Alytus did not receive any broader coverage; the circumstances of the killings were not investigated, and the very fact of mass murder was not used for the purposes of propaganda (unlike the extermination of Ablinga or Pirčiupiai villages). The

⁶⁶ LYA, doc. f., inv. 1, file 99, p. 3-4

⁶⁷ Ibid, doc. f. 3377, inv. 3377, file 1237, p. 55

⁶⁸ Soviet Lithuania, 17 July 1979; LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 55, file 11, p. 8-9;

⁶⁹ Launikonis, R. *Apie Emilijaną Cimermaną, prieš 60 metų išgelbėjusį trylika alytiškių* (About Emilijanas Cimermanas who 60 years ago saved thirteen residents of Alytus), *Lietuvos aidas*, 10 July 2001 (Cimermanas was a German resident of Alytus who saved people from execution).

⁷⁰ Gražiūnas, A. *Lietuva dviejų okupacijų replėse* (Lithuania in the Claws of Two Occupations), p. 93.

⁷¹ Rukšėnas, K., Sinkevičius, V. *Lithuania under Hitlerian Executioners...* p.89-90.

⁷² Abraitis, J. *Gedimino pulko likimas (atsiminimai)*, (The Fate of the Gediminas Regiment (Memoirs)), Vilnius, 1994, p. 87.

⁷³ LYA, doc. f. 1, inv. 1, file 29, p. 58.

⁷⁴ *Naujoji Lietuva*, 13 August 1941.

reason behind this must have been the fact that the victims of the Nazi crimes in Alytus were participants of the June 1941 uprising, Lithuanian police officers, priests, former members of the patriotic Home Guard Union and other “bourgeois nationalists”, that is “public enemies” (rather than ordinary “working people”).

Mass murders were also perpetrated in the village of Švendūna (Raseiniai County, Nemaikščiai rural district). On 23 June 1941, retreating Red Army troops killed and wounded several Germans near Švendūna village (Raseiniai County, between Nemaikščiai and Eržvilkas). In revenge, the Germans drove women and children out of the village and assembled all the men of Švendūna in one place. Eleven men were selected for execution, while the village was burnt down⁷⁵.

The killings of people (mainly civilians) in Ablinga, Alytus and Švendūna were “retaliation” (revenge) acts, crimes perpetrated by the German occupant military structures against the inhabitants of Lithuania. All of them were provoked by the Red Army individual attacks against the Nazi troops; these were ambush attacks under unclear circumstances. (The Germans did not revenge for losses in the battle field).

Research literature and archive sources present more data about different collective punishments executed by the Germans. For instance, émigré author A. Gražiūnas wrote about the villages of Kirceliškės and Verstaminai (Lazdijai County), burnt down by the Germans on 24 June, and the execution of the men of the villages⁷⁶. Some of these men were armed participants of the uprising, and the Germans took them for armed enemies, which provoked the mass murder in these villages. Other cases like this were reported.

Another aspect of the issue of terror against the German army and “retaliation” actions by the occupants can be discussed. The Germans used true or alleged attacks against them and the cases of firing at the Nazi army as a pretext for perpetrating the murders of Jews and Communists. (It should be noted that speculations and incorrect data are possible in this case).

⁷⁵ *Švendūnos tragedija: Nemaikščių vidurinės mokyklos kraštotyros darbas, vadovas A. Girčys*; (The Tragedy of Švendūna: Research in Regional Studies, Nemaikščiai Secondary School, Academic Adviser Girčys; Rukšėnas, K., Sinkevičius, V. Lithuania under Hitlerian Executioners, p. 88.

⁷⁶ Gražiūnas, A. *Lietuva dviejų okupacijų replėse* (Lithuania in the Claws of Two Occupations), p. 91-92.

Some authors claim that a considerable number of German soldiers were killed in Kaunas in the first days of the war, and these soldiers were allegedly killed by the Jews. The Germans allegedly brutally punished the Jews, shooting 150 Jewish men, women and children, caught on the streets, for an officer killed. Similar executions took place in other locations as well⁷⁷.

The German occupants announced in 1941 that fire was delivered at the former Chambers of NKVD from the Church of St. Jacob in Vilnius in the evening of 12 July. On this pretext, 300 “Jewish-Bolshevik activists” were executed in Vilnius⁷⁸. Remeikis wrote that the Germans executed 60 people, among them 15 Lithuanians, in a residential quarter in Vilnius because a Jew had allegedly fired at the Germans⁷⁹.

At the outbreak of the war, the Gestapo of Tilžė and the German police officers of Klaipėda started perpetrating mass murders in a 25-kilometer frontier line; in order to justify the killings, orders were issued to spread a rumour that civilians in Gargždai had allegedly resisted the German army⁸⁰.

The German units implemented “retaliation” actions after coming under fire not in all locations and not in all cases. After the town of Seirijai was occupied, the locals informed the Germans that a Jewish Communist J. Garbarskis had allegedly fired at the German soldiers. The Germans took Garbarskis and executed him together with his father, who tried to save his son and several other Jews⁸¹.

As regards the “retaliation” actions by the Germans, it should be noted that the German troops moving across Lithuania and the security police forces assigned to them took part in the killings of Lithuanian Jews, Communists and Soviet officials.

Fortunately, the German “retaliation” actions were not numerous during the brief period of the military action in Lithuania. On the other hand, while retreating from Lithuania, the Red Army and the Communist Party and Soviet activists committed similar or even more violent acts of terror. On 24-25 June 1941, they brutally tortured and executed in Rainiai (near Telšiai) 76 political prisoners; on 26 June, about 400 people imprisoned at the Pravieniškės

⁷⁷ Eidintas, A. *1946 metų dokumentas VLIK'ui apie lietuvių-žydų santykius* (Document of the year 1946 on the Lithuanian-Jewish relations addressed to VLIK), *Kultūros barai*, 2000, No. 8–9, p. 93.

⁷⁸ LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 58, file 512, p. 7.

⁷⁹ Remeikis, T. *Birželinė Lietuva* (Lithuania in June), *Akiračiai*, 1985, No. 7, p. 15.

⁸⁰ Bubnys, A. *Holokaustas Lietuvos provincijoje 1941* (The Holocaust in the Province of Lithuania in 1941(draft), p. 53.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 16.

labour camp were killed⁸²; in Panevėžys, 19 workers of the sugar plant and 3 surgeons and a nurse were murdered⁸³; people were also massacred in Pažaislis (near Kaunas), Juodupė (Rokiškis County) and in other locations⁸⁴.

Crimes committed by the retreating Red Army and the Soviet repressive structures were more grave and violent; in a way, these crimes “neutralised”, transcended and minimised the horror of analogous actions by the occupants; this had a significant psychological impact on the mentality and behaviour of the Lithuanian people during the period of Nazi occupation and the political development. Émigré priest F. Jucevičius wrote: “We have to admit that we fully became aware of who are the Red Russians only during the deportations, and the massacre in the forests of Pravieniškės and Rainiai and in Červenė finally opened our eyes”⁸⁵.

Massacre of Communists, Members of the Komsomol, Soviet Officials and Party and Soviet Activists of 1940-1941

Although the German army and its rear security units committed atrocities against the inhabitants of Lithuania when invading the country, these acts of terror were isolated local cases that by no means equalled the outbreak of terror throughout Lithuania against the officials of the Communist Party, the Soviet authorities and Soviet activists. The activists of the Communist Party and the Soviet authorities were a particular social category that emerged in 1940-1941, when the Soviet Union occupied the state of Lithuania; these people anchored in the country the occupant Soviet authorities and unconditionally implemented the Communist Party policy.

The developments during the Soviet period of 1940-1941 resulted in numerous changes in Lithuania. The Lithuanian nation experienced the long-lasting German expansion eastwards, the “Drang nach Osten” policy, which its implementers based on the “historical mission” of the Germans in the East, on their need for “living space”, etc. the threat to the vital interests of the Lithuanian nation became especially real after Hitler and his supporters came to power in Germany. In 1939, they tore the Klaipėda region away from Lithuania, which was a painful experience for all sectors of Lithuanian society. The plans of aggression of the Germans as well as their racism and colonialist goals, alongside with other factors, created a generally unfavourable political and psychological climate for the coming of the Nazi army and triggered an unfavourable reaction of the Lithuanian society as well created conditions for resistance.

Paradoxically, the situation developed in reality in an absolutely different way: many (except for the Jewish population) awaited the war and the coming of the Germans as salvation and the Germans were received as liberators. This happened because the Nazi army entered Lithuania not as a free and independent state (which was the case with

⁸² *Žemaičių kankiniai: Rainių miškelio tragedija* (The Martyrs of Samogitia: The Tragedy of Rainiai Forest) 24-25 June 1941, Vilnius 1991, p. 1–68; The Massacre in Pravieniškės, LCVA, doc. f. R–978, inv. 2, file 40, p. 45–49; Lazauskaitė, R. *Raudoni uogienojai Pravieniškėse* (Blood-logged Berry Fields in Pravieniškės), *Tiesa*, 1988, 11 November.

⁸³ Bielskytė, V., *Tragedija prie Nevėžio* (Tragedy at Nevėžis), *Tiesa*, 29 October 1998.

⁸⁴ Umbrasas, S. *Pažaislio tragedija* (The Tragedy of Pažaislis), *Komjaunimo tiesa*, 9 June 1989; Gavėnavičienė, J. *Pažaislio miško tragedija* (The Tragedy of Pažaislis Forest), *Vakarinės naujienos*, 20 July 1989; Jurgelis, J. *Juodupė, Komjaunimo tiesa*, 7 February 1989.

⁸⁵ Jucevičius, F. *Tarp mirties ir mito*, (Between Death and Myth), *Aidai*: monthly cultural journal, 1967, No. 4(199), p. 145.

the other Western European countries occupied by the Nazi Germany) but as a state (region) occupied and annexed in 1940 by a neighbouring aggressor (Soviet Union) and incorporated into the Soviet Union.

Not a single case of spontaneous opposition to the invading Germans is known (recorded) that would not be connected to the Soviet resistance.

Another significant (additional or explanatory) circumstance of this paradoxical phenomenon is related to the nature of the Soviet occupation and the process of sovietisation: the Soviets totally and forcefully destroyed the statehood of Lithuania over a short period of time; they committed violent repressions (mass deportations of the people, massacre of the political elite, etc.), implemented a social and economic Soviet policy (land reform, nationalisation, etc.), and eliminated private property; the major share of the population came under a heavy burden of taxes and charges; the Lithuanian culture was sovietised, restrictions were imposed on the Church and the congregation, russification started, etc. (The total destructive impact of the sovietisation in 1940-1941 on all areas of life in Lithuania was not exceeded during the years of Nazi occupation).

It should be noted that the Soviet reality of 1940-1941 also disappointed even that share of the public that was more or less indifferent towards the collapse of the authoritarian rule of Antanas Smetona and which had faith in the “humanistic” ideas of socialism and the prospect of a more democratic and socially just society.

Moreover, this severely injured the patriotic feelings of the people, humiliated national dignity and aroused the feelings of fear and hatred (as well as a desire for revenge) among the public.

Different sources and authors as well as the witnesses of the events testify to this.

On the eve of the German invasion, the people of the Baltic countries were extremely shocked by the Soviet deportations: “This must have been purpose of it”. However, the deportations had a different effect, contrary to the one expected. The people were frightened but the deportations also stirred up hatred towards the regime, especially among the people who would have probably remained neutral under other circumstances⁸⁶.

Even outsiders, neutral witnesses of the developments in Lithuania noted an extreme increase in anti-Soviet feelings in Lithuania. For instance, General S. Rowiecki, an activist of the Polish underground movement, stated in his report to London of 19 February 1942: “the hatred of Lithuanians towards the Bolsheviks is all-round”⁸⁷.

Deportations were not fully completed as the German occupation interrupted them. It was innocent people, mainly the intelligentsia, rather than the “true” enemies of the Soviets that were deported and suffered from repressive Soviet actions. The “true” enemies of the Soviets, the patriotic young generation that grew up and matured during the two decades of independence and its radicals practically remained untouched.

On the other hand, the Soviet repressions weakened that part of society whose mind was oriented towards the statehood of Lithuania and which was realistic in its thinking; this part of society could have resisted the artificial euphoria and prevented the radicals from executing ungrounded “punishments”, inadequate to the crimes committed during the Soviet period, and from national and personal revenge and retribution actions, or could have interceded for the victims of repressions (at the outbreak of the war) or condemned the killings.

⁸⁶ Misiūnas, J., Taagepera, R. *Baltijos valstybės:priklausomybės metai 1940–1980* (The Baltic States: Years of Subjugation 1940-1980), p. 49.

⁸⁷ Eidintas, A. *Ųydai, lietuviai, holokaustas* (Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust) (draft), p. 91.

A question arises as to the social category of the people who comprised the group of the Communist Party and Soviet authorities' activists as well as the social and political nucleus of Soviet collaborators. Already in the first months of the Soviet regime in Lithuania, around 10,000 workers, farmers and working intellectuals were involved into the "administration" of the country; a considerable number of them were "filled with resolution" and were "capable of implementing" the Party and Government policy⁸⁸.

The participation of local Communist Party members and activists in the "administration" of the Soviet state was formal, however, their participation in the deportations of June 1941 (often called the "great" deportations in émigré historiography), in compiling the lists of people to be deported, in hunting down those condemned for deportation, in attempting to justify deportations in the propagandist meetings organised then as well as in implementing many other tasks of sovietisation (nationalisation of land, confiscation of property, etc.) was real and massive. The total scale of "Soviet reform" involved (immersed) into the political life many ordinary people, with whose hands numerous true or alleged crimes were committed. Since the Red Army and the Soviet authorities soon withdrew from Lithuania, these people were left to their own devices, condemned to brutal political persecution and retribution; often they would even fall victim to their former victims.

As has already been mentioned, the brief (less than a week long) military action in Lithuania resulted in minor victims among the people of Lithuania. However, the factor of time had a different effect in the case of Party and Soviet activists. Retreat to the Soviet Union probably was their sole chance to save themselves, but a considerable number of the activists did have enough time for that. No clear directive was issued as to evacuation and no preparations were made for this; the uprising of June 1941 and the remaining state border between the occupied Baltic states and the "old" Soviet republics, etc. prevented the evacuation. Generally, no one expected such unfavourable developments in the war and by far not all the activists, especially those from the lower ranks, were resolved to retreat from their homeland.

According to the data of Soviet historiography, as few as 20,000 Lithuanian inhabitants (among them 8,500 Jews) were evacuated; out of 4,625 Communists, 2,553 (55 per cent) managed to retreat; out of over 13,000 members of the Komsomol, as few as 2,200 (16,6 per cent) retreated⁸⁹.

The war and the coming of the Germans stopped the Soviet occupation, the crimes of the Stalinist regime, the Soviet repressions and the destructive sovietisation. This is one of the aspects of the turning point in history of 22 June 1941. On the other hand, this turning point raised the nation's hopes of restoring freedom and statehood, which were not fulfilled, unfortunately. A considerable number of the country's residents not only welcomed the Germans as liberators but also became active participants of the anti-Soviet uprising, one of the most controversial historical processes in Lithuania.

The formation of the groups of the June 1941 uprising participants (partisans) was not altogether spontaneous (as it is sometimes suggested in historiography). In many parts of Lithuania, the nucleus of the uprising groups and the organisational framework of the uprising emerged already on the eve of the war among patriotically minded people,

⁸⁸ *Lietuvos komunistų partijos istorijos apybraiža* (Outline of the History of the Lithuanian Communist Party), vol. 3, 1940–1959. Vilnius, 1958, p. 95.

⁸⁹ Varažinskis, K., *Karo sukūriuose* (In the Vortex of War), Vilnius, 1970, p.p. 35, 39-40

hiding from deportation and other Soviet repressions. They started bearing arms, they would get into fights with the Soviet militia, and it was from them that the first Soviet officials suffered before the outbreak of the war⁹⁰.

Mass persecution and arbitrary killings of the officials of the Communist Party and Soviet authorities and the true and alleged Soviet collaborators started in June 1941, after the Germans invaded the country. In many locations of Lithuania this persecution transformed into pogroms. This “area” of activity (alongside with the action against retreating Red Army troops) became the major focus of the partisan groups of the June 1941 uprising.

The developments in “the Lithuania of June” and the further events related to the terror against the Soviet collaborators, the massacre of non-Jewish people committed not on racial but other, political motives, have barely been analysed before; these events have not been properly reported and remain idealised and mythologised, not separated from the Holocaust, even though these processes were historically (qualitatively) different.

Terror against the activists of the Party and Soviet activists and the massive killings of non-Jewish people were 1) partly a phenomenon inspired” from on high”; 2) a spontaneous, chaotic and unorganised reaction against Bolshevism. Generally, as it is stated in one of the documents of those times, it was “retribution” for participation in destroying the state of Lithuania and all the cultural, economic and other achievements of the independence period, for the killings of people and deportations to Russia, for their deaths; it was revenge on a patriotic (national) and personal basis against the people (Bolsheviks) as the “gravediggers” of Lithuania and the killers of Lithuanians. “Personal motives and retaliation (revenge, pay-off actions)” were also among the reasons behind these repressions against the Soviets; all this determined the repressive actions against innocent people and resulted in victims among them⁹¹.

A question arises as to the relation between the organised and unorganised, spontaneous elements of anti-Soviet terror.

The proclamation (directive) of the LAF propaganda centre in Berlin – Lithuanian Information Bureau, issued on 19 March 1941, after the outbreak of the war, urged to start “local uprisings”, seize power, “immediately” (promptly) arrest local Communists and other traitors of Lithuania, so that not a single one of them would avoid retribution for their actions⁹².

The Germans sought to demonstrate that that outbreak of the massacre of Jews and people of other nationalities was spontaneous, a cleansing action resulting from national wrath and committed at the initiative of the locals. According to Stahlecker, “...action was taken at the very start to ensure that reliable people from among the locals would help to fight the vermin, that is Jews and Communists primarily”. It was allegedly no less important to establish an undeniable fact that could later be used to prove that the liberated locals themselves naturally resorted to

⁹⁰ For instance, St. Stepšys, Soviet activist of Marijampolė district, was sent on a mission on 28 January 1941 “to confiscate a kulak’s farm” and did not return from the “mission”; he was found murdered, his body bearing signs of torture; LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 66, file.18, p. 58.

⁹¹ See: Eidintas, A. *1946 metų dokumentas VLIK’ui apie lietuvių–žydų santykius* (Document of 1946 on the Lithuanian-Jewish relations addressed to VLIK), *Kultūros barai*, 2000, No. 8–9, p. 93.

⁹² *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje* (Mass Killings in Lithuania), part 1, p. 49; LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 55, file 50, p. 212.

the most strict measures against the Bolshevik and Jewish enemies. This had to be done without revealing the instructions given by the German authorities⁹³.

Other Nazi officials suggested employing similar tactics. Knut Stang writes that Heydrich issued on 29 June a directive urging to prepare for pogroms and encourage anti-Communist and anti-Semitic sectors of society to undertake “cleansing” themselves; the directive stated that pogroms should be incited and intensified without leaving any trace and, if need be, put on the track suitable for the Germans, so that the local elements were unable to base their activities on decrees or instructions. Pogroms of the Jewish population were to appear as a particular national wrath against the Jews, which rose after the Red Army withdrew⁹⁴.

However, one should not overestimate the impact of the initiative “from above” on resorting to the highest form of terror (killing). The directives on the arrests of “local Communists” and “traitors” were not a direct incitement to kill these people. In the documents of the first year of the Nazi occupation, the term “cleansing” the area of Jews, Communists and the Soviet troops meant hunting down (catching) persons in hiding⁹⁵.

Contrary statements might be more true to life. Spontaneous and uncontrolled killings of Soviet collaborators as well as the anti-Communist terror was easy to predict; on the other hand, all of this was revealed in the scale of the first acts of terror. Thus, more effort was taken “from above” to prevent the atrocities and to curb them so that they do not gather momentum.

The first issue of the Kaunas-based daily *Į laisvę* of 26 June 1941 included information “For the riflemen and the partisans”. According to this piece of information, “the Home Guard use their weapons too often, fire needlessly and cause alarm” among the population; it was also noted that the Home Guard and the partisans attempt to deal with unreliable persons. A further statement was even stricter: “It is strictly forbidden to take the law into one’s own hands. All the elements that have done injustice to the Lithuanian nation will pay the penalty by a decision of the court”.

The Kaunas Military Commandant J. Bobelis warned by the order No. 6 of 24 June 1941 that thieves, marauders and the other “elements” similar to them would be punished [that is executed – R. Z.] on the scene of their crime. Partisans of the Kaunas City and County without a license to possess a weapon were “strictly” forbidden as of 11 p.m. of 25 June to appear in public when armed. The Ministry of Trade and the Kaunas Commandant suspended the sale of alcoholic beverages. It was informed on 3 July that licenses to possess weapons would not be issued to “all citizens”; people were recommended not to address any institutions regarding this issue⁹⁶.

The *Naujoji Lietuva*, published in Vilnius and marked by extreme anti-Semitic and-Polish views, also issued statements forbidding “dealing with unreliable persons” and administering “arbitrary” justice⁹⁷.

The German military authorities also curbed and restricted the activities of armed people in order to ensure their own security: on 25 June 1941 they announced that the German army will treat “all armed men” who do not possess documents stamped “Wehrdienst” as enemies and that the lives of such men are in danger. Partisans were

⁹³ *Stahleckerio ataskaita, Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje* (Stahlecker’s report, Mass Killings in Lithuania) part 2, p.19.

⁹⁴ Quoted from: *Lietuvos žydų žudynių byla, Dokumentų ir straipsnių rinkinys* (The Case of the Killings of Lithuanian Jews). Compiled by Eidintas, A., Vilnius, 2001, p. 100.

⁹⁵ Truska, L. *1941 m. Birželio sukilėliai–tautos didvyriai ar nacių agentai* (The partisans of June 1941 – heroes of the nation or Nazi agents), *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, 2001, No. 2(10), p.169

⁹⁶ *Svarbios informacinės žinios* (Important News), *Į laisvę*, 26 June 1941; 3 July 1941.

issued special documents, and the forging of such documents and the stamps was proclaimed “treason” which was threatened to be punished by the “most strict measures”⁹⁸.

In order to secure against “evil-minded persons”, the Military Commandant of the Vilnius City changed the bands that had to be worn by the police officers: the bands had to feature two stamps and a number⁹⁹.

However, restrictions on different arbitrary action must have primarily been aimed at fighting the criminal elements, marauders and the plunderers of material property and assets rather than the arbitrary acts of terror against the enemies of the “Lithuanian nation” and the German Reich. The following example illustrates this. When considering in 1942 who had the right to call themselves “Lithuanian partisans”, it was decided to exclude such persons who had “disgraced their name by the plundering of property”. Participation in different repressive actions against innocent people was not mentioned as discrediting behaviour. Consequently, such actions (excluding anti-Semitic actions) did not bring “discredit” on the partisan’s name. No data exists on any penalties on the people who took part in the repressions.

On the other hand, the position of the official press was ambiguous and controversial. Alongside the prohibition of acts of violence and arbitrary “justice”, other statements were issued as well. The *New Lithuania* invited the residents of Vilnius to help the security eliminate in Vilnius and the liberated areas of the province “the remaining radical elements”, to act “radically and resolutely, since “it is enough with the losses inflicted during the bloody years of the Red rule – the years of subjugation”¹⁰⁰.

The Kaunas daily *Į laisvę* reported in early July in the column “Partisans and Lithuania” the situation in Keturvalkiai (Vilkaviškis County) as a normal phenomenon: “Life is back to the normal in Keturvalkiai area. Local “activists” have been eliminated”¹⁰¹.

Controversial and inconsistent reasoning on the issue of political anti-Soviet repressions can also be found in the original of a document from the war period – diary of Zenonas Blynas, Secretary General of the pro-Nazi Lithuanian Nationalist Party (LNP). In the record of 15 July 1941, he commented on an interesting, according to him, article by A. Bružas under the title “Let us not judge others so that we are not judged ourselves”, published in the *Naujoji Lietuva*. Blynas wrote in comment about the journalist’s condemnation of the killings of the people: “consequently, all the spies, provocateurs, informers and Communists [...] deserve respect and gratitude. We should not overdo in idealising”.

However, Blynas, one of the nationalist leaders, later spoke against the anti-Soviet repressions. On 14 August, he wrote in his diary: “I have talked to the County Governor of Rokiškis. I advised him to watch closely so that Lithuanians are not eliminated needlessly. I told him to be careful with repressions against members of the Komsomol. Reminding him about the Jews, Poles and Russians, I told him to keep in mind that there is only 2 million

⁹⁷ *Vykdyti teismus savo nuožiūra draudžiama* (Administering arbitrary justice is forbidden), *Naujoji Lietuva*, 7 July 1941.

⁹⁸ *Į laisvę*, 25 June 1941.

⁹⁹ *Naujoji Lietuva*, 1 July 1941; 2 July 1941.

¹⁰⁰ *Naujoji Lietuva*, 29 June 1941, p. 2–3; 5 July 1941.

¹⁰¹ *Į laisvę*, 4 July 1941.

of us, and there will surely be others who come to annihilate (terrorise – R. Z.) us..., we should not slaughter each other¹⁰².

The Provisional Government also condemned the arbitrary punitive actions. In its “Appeal to the Nation”, the Government claimed: “And it is not the fight of the classes that we need. We do not need a fight between the worker and the farmer because both of them are labourers. We are too small a nation to afford destroying each other in such fights. Let the nations of hundreds of millions allow themselves such luxury and degeneration; we cherish every single Lithuanian irrespective of his social standing and views¹⁰³.”

High-ranking responsible officials of the Provisional Government and newly-established administration of Lithuanian self-government also made attempts to stop the killings that had gathered momentum. Firstly, Prosecutor M. Krygeris of the Šiauliai District Court should be mentioned. In his note to the district’s county governors of 29 July 1941, he disapproved of “the ungrounded elimination of Lithuanians who had served in the Bolshevik institutions”, treating this as “the extermination of the Lithuanian nation”; he suggested to the county governors “taking strict measures against those who commit the acts of terror, pass capital sentences and execute them”. In the same note M. Krygeris underlined that some of the county governors and LAF county headquarters have “reacted properly” to this and their officers had already resorted to concrete measures aimed at “eliminating all the abnormal phenomena”¹⁰⁴.

On the basis of this note, the chief of the Tauragė County police ordered the police officers on 5 August to “follow closely” the instructions by the Šiauliai district prosecutor¹⁰⁵.

Panevėžys Prosecutor Ig. Kazlauskas, Ukmergė County Governor J. Krivickas, Ukmergė District chief of Lithuanian security police and several other responsible officials issued similar notes in July 1941 with the same goal, instructing to refrain from “purposeless executions and other ungrounded repressions”¹⁰⁶. All the mentioned measures, the statements condemning the repressions, and the orders and instructions by officials in particular, must have undoubtedly limited the scale of arbitrary repressive actions.

On the other hand, one should be aware that, in the historical context, managing the situation and controlling the emotions under the circumstances of “revolutionary state of affairs” was difficult even with good will. The massacre of the Communist elements, not to mention the other forms of repressive action, was perceived as inevitable reality and the policy of the German occupants which had to be supported¹⁰⁷.

The sovietisation of 1940-1941 and the Soviet repressions – massive arrests, killings, tortures and deportations – had a very broad political and social basis and touched nearly all the sectors of society in Independent

¹⁰² Blynas, Z. *Karo metų dienoraštis* (Diary from the Years of the War), LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 55, file. 235, p. 63, 159.

¹⁰³ *Nepriklausomos Lietuvos Laikinosios Vyriausybės žodis į Tautą: Lietuviai tautiečiai!* (Appeal to the Nation of the Provisional Government of Independent Lithuania: Fellow Lithuanians!), *Ūkininko patarėjas*, 28 June 1941.

¹⁰⁴ Note by M. Krygeris of 29 July 1941 to the County Governor of Tauragė Vl. Mylimas, LCVA, doc. f. R-1476, inv. 1, file. 3, p. 110–111; *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje* (Mass Killings in Lithuania), part 1, p. 87–88.

¹⁰⁵ LCVA, doc. f. R-1476, inv. 1, file 3, p. 112.

¹⁰⁶ *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje* (Mass Killings in Lithuania), part 2, p. 187–188, 293–294.

¹⁰⁷ Eidintas, A. *Žydai, lietuviai, holokaustas* (Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust) (draft), p. 139.

Lithuania – the military, members of the patriotic Homeguard Union, the police, civil servants, the clergy, farmers and even workers. The retaliatory anti-Communists repressive action was also large-scale and all-round.

The process of anti-Communist repressions and the elimination of Communist Party and Soviet officials can be roughly divided into three stages (periods):

1) 22 June 1941 – early (mid) July 1941. This was the initial or “interregnum” period when one occupation (Soviet) was replaced by the other (Nazi): the Soviets no longer had the power but the Nazi military administration had not yet taken control of the situation (in the periphery in particular); organised and unorganised groups of anti-Soviet partisans had almost absolute freedom, and arbitrary action prevailed; massive arrests of Communists as well as their spontaneous executions after brief “trials” started.

A specific feature of this period lies in the fact that, with minor exceptions, Jews were being arrested and massacred not on a racial basis (though there were such cases), not because they were Jews, but on anti-Communist grounds, as activists of the Communist Party and the Soviet authorities. The perpetrators of repressions were mainly after the Communist “anti-state” elements rather than Jews; the Jewish population was apparently left at the “competence” of the Germans.

Jewish Communists accounted for as little as 15 per cent of the Soviet officials in Lithuania, thus, the anti-Communist repressions had by far greater impact on the Lithuanian and other (non-Jewish) elements. Various sources and data serve as proof of this. For instance, the “List of Anti-State Elements” of Alytus County Merkinė police station of 6 July 1941 included 98 persons, of whom as few as approximately 15 were Jewish. The list of the residents of Alytus to be arrested included 51 persons, of whom only 7 were Jews, etc.¹⁰⁸.

The fact that a relatively large number of innocent people who were suspected by mistake became the victims of repressions (were killed) can be considered as yet another specific feature of the period. All the arrested can be grouped under two categories: 1) persons who did not manage or did not wish to retreat and were arrested in their areas of residence, and mainly well, sometimes even personally, known to the partisans; 2) persons who unsuccessfully attempted to retreat to the Soviet Union and were arrested not in their places of residence. The number of innocent victims might have been relatively high in these two groups since all the retreating were considered enemies: the prevailing opinion was that retreating (escaping) is proof of “guilt”.

The *Į laisvę* wrote on 24 June 1941 (in its first issue): together with the “Bolshevik collaborators, the Jews”, all the Lithuanian traitors who served the Russian Bolshevism are escaping from the Lithuania. They were described as pitiful people, disappointed and deceived victims, who had imagined they were working for the well being of the people and the nation but who in reality served “the insatiable and predatory greed of the Russians”, their imperialist goals, etc.¹⁰⁹

The first period was rather brief. In early July, the German military leadership informed the partisans about the end of their activity as “individual units” and ordered them to disarm as well as banned them from any administrative action (carrying out searches, arresting people and interfering into the other affairs of the citizens). The

¹⁰⁸ *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje* (Mass Killings in Lithuania), part 2, p. 90-94, 44-47.

¹⁰⁹ *Priespaudą numetant* (Predicting Subjugation), *Į laisvę*, 24 June 1941.

partisans could only be used as an auxiliary force for the police (and only in that case if the police asked for that). Disobeying partisans were threatened the most harsh measures of “the military law”¹¹⁰.

A witness of anti-Soviet terror in Vyūonos rural district, Utena County, gave in his memoirs a very vivid (and true) description of the initial stage of anti-Soviet terror: the June of 1941 (after the outbreak of the war – R. Z.] was the time of “free days”. “The Red” had not been “banished” yet when the rural district gave permission to execute the Jews, and “again we had to” fire at people¹¹¹.

2) mid-July 1941 – November 1941. This was the period of massive killings of the Jews (the Holocaust) in Lithuania, and of most atrocious acts of terror against the Communists, the period of massive arrests and massacre. The authorities and the repressive institutions of the Nazi occupant regime took over the control and perpetration of anti-Communist terror. The Communist “anti-state elements” were being arrested on a mass scale by “cleansing the areas”, hunting down those who failed to hide, returned back after unsuccessful attempts to withdraw to the Soviet Union, those whose collaboration with the Soviet authorities was revealed, etc. “Trials” of the “offenders” were held, and executions of the “guilty” were carried out; those whose “crimes” were less grave would be released and live under the supervision of the police.

3) November 1941 – late 1944. This was the period of repressions against (isolated killings of) Communists and officials of the Soviet authorities who survived the massive killings or were imprisoned in prisons or forced labour camps but failed to register at the police (or violated the procedure of registration), also persons whose Communist activities or new facts about such activities and their “guilt” had been recently revealed. This period continued to the very end of the Nazi occupation in Lithuania.

As has already been mentioned, this is only a rough division; the three periods constituted continuous repressions against (elimination of) the Communist (Soviet) elements during the entire period of the German occupation. (The process was even more intensive in the post-war years, during the armed anti-Soviet resistance, when it took increasingly violent forms).

In order to have the broadest possible picture of the anti-Communist terror in Lithuania during the German occupation, extensive empirical materials from various sources, numerous facts and data on the course of the entire process or its different stages, forms and methods, which reveal the most characteristic details, can be presented.

The data “on those who died for the Soviet power in Lithuania”, collected from 1979 to 1985 in the framework of the Soviet Lithuanian Socialist Republic regional studies on the basis of specially prepared forms (registration lists) at the instruction of the Centre Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party constitutes one of the most valuable sources of information about the victims of anti-Communist terror in the years of the German

¹¹⁰ Order by the Kaunas Commandant Lieutenant J. Bobelis of July 1941 “To all chiefs of partisan groups of the Kaunas City and County, *The Uprising of June 1941: document collection*, p. 70.

¹¹¹ Sakalauskas, J. *Buržuazinių nacionalistų teroras Utenos aps. Vyūonos valsčiuje 1941 m.: atsiminimai* (Acts of Terror by Bourgeois Nationalists in Vyūonos rural district, Utena County in 1941: Memoirs), 1951, LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 3377, file 996, p. 2.

occupation. In total, data about 4,254 persons was collected. Although the information included into the forms is far from being exact and fully reliable (inaccuracies are possible), and the majority of the registration lists deal with those killed in the post-war years, this source still presents considerable valuable data on the victims among the Soviet activists in 1941, the circumstances of people's deaths in particular¹¹².

During the spontaneous executions and "trials" (sometimes called "court-martials") in the first and second period of anti-Communist terror, it was primarily the people who had contributed to the deportations of June 1941 and the Soviet land reform (members of county and rural district land commissions), party organisers (partorgs) in rural districts, agricultural products purveyance agents, active members of the Komsomol, militia officers, etc. who became victims of massive killings. It should be noted that membership of the Communist Party was often treated as a formality: Communists would survive (suffer more lenient repressions), whereas "non-party activists" would be killed. Various "denouncers" and "informers" belong to the category of people who were executed on the largest scale or suffered the most violent repressions. (Certain sources and research literature sometimes call them "innocent" victims of "account settling").

Various sources give ground to identifying such categories of the people who were the first to suffer repressions (be executed). In January 1943, Lithuanians who had served in the German army, the so-called military transport specialists, were taken prisoner in the Leningrad front by the Red Army and Soviet partisans and gave evidence still in the war period. According to them, when arrested and interrogated by Lithuanian officers in June 1941, they were primarily asked whether they had participated in the Soviet deportations of the people of Lithuania and in exacting the Soviet duties, whether they were members of the Komsomol, whether they spied and reported on Lithuanians, where they had weapons, etc.¹¹³

As has already been mentioned, in some areas, the so-called "courts" were set up and operated in the first days of the German occupation. Prosecutor M. Krygeris of the Šiauliai District wrote that not all of the arrested were "handed over to the Gestapo"; sometimes "brethren Lithuanians" carried out the executions of arrested Lithuanians at their own initiative. In Telšiai, a "super patriotic" Lithuanian "court-martial" was set up, which put Communists on trial and executed capital sentences; once it executed 13 people, 1 managed to escape. The Telšiai LAF headquarters kept a large number of people under arrest, and it took a lot of persuading to achieve that they are released¹¹⁴.

A similar "court" operated in Pasvalys and was headed by Reserve Second Lieutenant Stasiūnas. The court put people "on trial" and executed capital sentences, killing a total of 15 persons¹¹⁵

In Jurbarkas, an "anti-Soviet committee" was set up, which compiled lists of "all Communists", Jews and other Soviet activists to be eliminated by the Nazi punitive structures¹¹⁶

The Soviet propagandist literature also provides reports on the activities of the "courts" and the execution of punishments: in Kretinga, the "trial" was conducted by the Nazi Gestapo officers and Lithuanian policemen, P. Jakys

¹¹² Note on the resolution by the Centre Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party "Regarding the collection of data and materials on the people of the Soviet Lithuanian Socialist Republic who died for the Soviet power", 1979–1985. , LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 66, file 1, p. 1–4; Forms (registration lists) see *ibid.*, file.1–89.

¹¹³ LYA, doc. f. 1771, inv. 6, file 124, p. 1, 6–7, 32, 44, 47.

¹¹⁴ Quoted from Eidintas, A. *Žydai, lietuviai holokaustas* (Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust) (draft, p. 123.

¹¹⁵ Evidence given by A. Ogintas on 18 May 1944, LYA, doc. f.1, inv.1, file 99, p. 43–44.

and G. Bražinskas. The arrested were called one by one, and P. Jakys would briefly inform the Gestapo officers about the arrestees' activities during the Soviet rule. The "defendants" would either be sent to the left (and later released) or to the right (and sentenced to death). Thirty-five people were released. Later, the execution started. Lithuanians were executed kneeling on one knee and facing the pit, while Jews were executed standing and facing the executors, who were Gestapo officers from the Tilžė operational squad and German police officers from Klaipėda. A total of 214 men and 1 woman, mainly Jews, were executed¹¹⁷

The victims who survived the repressions also wrote in their memoirs about the "trials" and their procedures. For instance, Pr. Saulevičius (born in 1908, Communist and Soviet official of Alytus County in 1940-1941) gave the following description of the "trial" that took place in Alytus prison: on 13 August 1941, all prisoners were taken to the courtyard and lined up against the wall. Officials from the Alytus Lithuanian security police brought the files of the prisoners and piled them up on a table in the middle of the courtyard, whereas two Germans brought two long whips. Having "pushed aside" the files, they walked along the lined up prisoners, chose at random those to be interrogated, asked them how long and where they had worked, and flogged them¹¹⁸.

The report of 1 December 1941 by the Chief of the German Security Police and SD (as well as the 3rd Squad of the Operational Group A) K. Jager on the executions implemented by the Squad under his leadership gives a rather detailed description of such "trials". Prisoners would be lined up in the courtyard of the prison and checked and assigned according to the lists and documents to separate groups: those imprisoned needlessly or due to minor offences; those sentenced to 1-3 or 6 months of imprisonment; those to be eliminated – criminals, Communist activists, political instructors and other "scum". In addition to their sentence, some of the prisoners, Communist activists in particular, would be flogged on the spot, receiving 10-40 blows. After the checking, the prisoners would be again taken to their cells. Those to be released would be taken to the market places and, "in the presence of many residents", the Germans would address them through interpreters with a speech of the following content: "If we were Bolsheviks, we would execute you, but since we are Germans, we are releasing you"¹¹⁹.

K. Jager's report is also interesting in terms of the other aspects of anti-Communist terror. Besides the massacre of the Jewish population, one of the major tasks of the 3rd operational squad was "checking the most often overcrowded prisons in different locations and cities". K. Jager reported the situation in prisons with true "horror", overcolouring it: in the prisons of each city of the county, approximately 600 Lithuanians were allegedly kept without "any grounds" for arrest; the Germans (K. Jager) were even concerned about the hygiene in the "packed" cells, which "beggars all description". In Jonava, girls of 13-16 years of age were imprisoned for attempting to join the Komsomol in order to get a job.

According to K. Jager's report, the Germans had to resort to "harsh measures" so that the respective sectors of Lithuanian society would be perfectly aware of a "clear division". The essence of this "clear division" can be described in the following way: not all enemies of the Lithuanian nation and the state of Lithuania (in the

¹¹⁶ Evidence given by A. Mikalauskaitė on 28 November 1945, LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 55, file 151, p. 148

¹¹⁷ *Hitleriniai žudikai Kretingoje* (Hitlerian Killers in Klaipėda) Vilnius, 1960, p. 21–22.

¹¹⁸ Saulevičius, Pr. *Atsiminimai – autobiografija* (Memoirs and Autobiography), 1959, LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 23, file. 298, p. 3–4.

¹¹⁹ *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje* (Mass Killings in Lithuania) part 1, p. 139.

understanding of Lithuanian officials) were also enemies of the German Reich. The report reflects the pragmatic interests of the Germans in Lithuania, covered up with demagogy and “humanism”: all the inhabitants, even the less “guilty” Soviet collaborators, had to “immediately and efficiently join the rehabilitation, primarily in the agricultural sector, refrain from any political activity and inform the German authorities about any hostile feelings among the population¹²⁰”.

It is possible to draw a conclusion that such pragmatism of the occupants saved many of the Soviet collaborators from the revenge of Lithuanian radicals. No data suggests that the Germans could have at first restricted the departure of the Communist elements as labour force to Germany. It is interesting to note that the 1941-1942 mobilisation of labour force for working in Germany was called in Lithuania the “Komsomol” mobilisation due to the relatively large number of former Komsomol members who had enrolled for the mobilisation.

As has already been mentioned, one of the tasks for the German security police was to encourage “tendencies” of political “cleansing” and put them “on the right track”, proving that “the liberated residents resorted themselves to the most harsh measures against the Bolshevik and Jewish enemies”¹²¹. Defending their own interests in Lithuania, the Germans had not to encourage but rather suppress the anti-Communist terror; directing the terror and the atrocities against the Jews was a more complicated task.

Specific “trials” were conducted not only in prison courtyards but also in public places, city squares (market places). The official press reported the extraordinary celebration that took place on 19 September 1941 (Saturday) in Īiauliai, when 85 residents of Īiauliai, “disorientated” by the Bolsheviks, were granted amnesty and released. The “celebration” was organised at the Īiauliai market place, decorated with the German and Lithuanian national flags, and with the participation of 2,000 city residents. In the middle of the crowd, a group of men and women stood surrounded by the police. The Commissar of Īiauliai District (region) H. Gewecke arrived and delivered a speech, which was word for word translated into Lithuanian. According to him, the saboteurs were executed in public, whereas the 85 men and women brought by the guards were clearly misguided by the promises of the Bolsheviks, however, they “took no active part in serving Moscow”. The great German Reich harshly punishes the criminals but is kind towards the misguided who can return back to their work and to the community of nations, he said. H. Gewecke then granted amnesty to the 85 arrested people. They were allowed returning home and justifying the trust that was put in them. The released allegedly listened to the Commissar’s statement “with tears in their eyes”.

Similar “celebration” took place in TelĪiai and was attended by as many as 6,000 people. H. Gewecke gave a speech there as well, noting that the Germans had come to Lithuania not as enemies of the Lithuanian nation but as “friends and defenders”. In TelĪiai, 62 “Lithuanians disorientated by the Communists” were “granted amnesty”¹²².

Thus, the occupants used demagogy, played the role of “liberators”, judges and defenders of the repressed; in general, they made a psychologically subtle use of the situation to promote their interests, improve their image among

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 139–140.

¹²¹ Report by the Chief of Operational Group A Stahlecker, up to 15 October 1941, *ibid.*, part 2, p.19.

¹²² *Šiauliuose amnestuoti 85 bolševikų sukraidintieji* (85 people misguided by the Bolsheviks granted amnesty in Šiauliai), *Ūkininko patarėjas*, 26 September 1941; *Mūsų krašte: iškilmės Telšiuose* (In our land: celebration in Telšiai), *ibid.*, 10 October 1941.

the population and form a group of people well-disposed towards them. This might have generated certain results in the beginning. (In return for their saved lives, some of the former Soviet activists became active collaborators of the Germans).

Several categories of the killings can be singled out in the process of anti-Communist terror.

First, the cases of massacre or revenge which were marked by extreme violence and torturing of the condemned. One could even state that some of the Communist and Soviet activists suffered greater torment and derision than the Jews, executed on a mass scale.

P. Mikailionis (born in 1918), the head of the Ryliškių cooperative in Alytus County, member of the Komsomol, was tortured to death in June 1941: his eyes were put out, ears and nose cut off, his body thrown into a lake; P. Pašiškevičius (born in 1922), member of the Komsomol of Pagirnykai village in Pakruojis District, Linkuva County, was found dead from wounds, tied to a tree with a rope, with a pentagram burned on his chest; A. Dumpis (born in 1907), chairman of the executive committee of Saboniai area, Pasvalys District, was tortured and afterwards hanged by the “white-bands” on 22 June 1941; his wife was allowed to bury him only as a “an infidel”; P. Čekanauskas (born in 1903), a Communist from Zarasai, was arrested near Rokidkis; he was lead across the town of Salakas carrying the portraits of Lenin and Stalin, suffered beating and torture and was executed on 22 June; Z. Bertulytė (born in 1924), the head of a club in Zarasai district, was raped and killed with the butts of rifles in the forest of Baltamiškis when driven to Zarasai; J. Venskūnas (born in 1922), the secretary of the Komsomol of Devynduoniai village, Kėdainiai County, was lead across the village and tortured before his execution in 1941; K. Mačernis (born in 1908), the headmaster of Žagarė Secondary School, was brutally tortured and executed on 14 July; V. Sapožnikovas (born in 1904), member of the council of Smalvų area, Zarasai County, was brutally tortured by the “white-bands”; a pentagram was burned on his chest, his legs broken; he was left unconscious for three days, later executed; his remains were buried in the cemetery only 6 months afterwards; P. Kolys, chairman of the executive committee of Lukšiai rural district, Šakiai County, suffered derision and humiliation at the Lukšiai market place before his execution in July; Diržinskas (born in 1899), member of the underground Communist Party since 1933, chairman of the executive committee of Pajevonis rural district, Vilkaviškis County, was executed in Vidtytis on 14 July after brutal torture; A. Osmolskas (born in 1893), headmaster of Merkinė pro-gymnasium, was arrested and brutally tortured, and executed on 6 July; Br. Čižauskas (born in 1909), secretary of the Bureau of the Lithuanian Communist Party in Kybartai rural district was executed together with the other Soviet activists in June 1941 in the trenches of Soviet border guards; the body of a horse was thrown onto the executed; when examining the burial place near the Zarasai church of people executed in 1941, the Special Soviet Commission found the body of one victim with a bucket on the head, etc.¹²³.

Not only the activists of the Communist Party and the Soviet authorities but also members of their families and sometimes even entire families perished during the period of anti-Soviet terror.

¹²³ Registration forms of the killed, LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 66, file. 9, p. 5; Būtėnas, J. *Nebaigta byla* (Unfinished Case), *Švyturys*, 1978, No. 22, p. 18; LYA, doc f. 3377, inv. 66, file 29, p. 89; file 31, p. 19; file 55, p. 34, 23; file 21, p. 244; file 13, p. 101; file 55, p. 112; file. 42, p. 59; file 54, p. 48; file 53, p. 53; file 54, p. 136; doc. f. 913, inv. 913, file 1, p. 4.

In Kudirkos Naumiestis, Šakiai County, 4 brothers – Soviet activists and father and son Linkaitis were executed in 1941; on 29 June 1941, K. Zicevičius (born in 1888), non-party supporter of the Soviet authorities, was executed in his home in Pakruojis rural district on 29 April 1941 together with his son Alfred who was active in campaigning for the Soviets; L. Vistelytė (born in 1923), member of the Komsomol, pioneer leader in Pakruojis, was executed together with her father, a blacksmith; Iz. Griūnovas (born in 1887), deputy chairman of the executive committee of Vištytis area, Vilkaviškis County, was executed in Vilkaviškis on 14 July 1944 together with his two sons, Jonas and Juozas; K. Dailyda (born in 1904) campaigned in Vilkaviškis for the Soviet rule; he was executed together with his wife O. Dailydienė on 21 July 1941; J. and K. Medelis, Soviet activists, members of the underground Lithuanian Communist Party since 1926, were executed in Vilkaviškis in June 1941; N. Spornovas (born in 1911), Soviet activist of Plungė rural district, was executed in 1941 together with his three brothers; A. Kadusevičienė, resident of Babtai rural district, Kaunas County, was executed in July 1941 as the wife of a Communist underground activist; S. Potašova, resident of the same rural district, assisted her husband, a Communist underground activist, gave speeches in meetings; she was executed in Babtai in 1941 together with her son Leonas¹²⁴.

In certain cases, hostages were killed or innocent people fell victim to collective punishment:

P. Gūžė (born in 1923), resident of Klaišiai village, Aleksandrija area, Skuodas District, took part in no Soviet political activity in 1940-1941, however, he was arrested in June or July of 1941 and executed as he had two brothers, active Soviet administration officials, who had retreated to the Soviet Union; A. Čerškus (born in 1921), a worker of a mill in Utena County, was arrested as a hostage instead of his father who served as a lay judge in court. After the father failed to appear, the son was executed on 4 August 1941¹²⁵.

Other cases of anti-Communist terror and killings are shocking due to their ungrounded violence and their inadequate severity in terms of the “crimes” committed:

P. Sapagovas (born in 1908), farmer of Rokiškis County, non-party Soviet activist, attended the events organised by the Soviets in 1940-1941 and was executed in 1941; Vl. Jurėnas (born in 1919), member of the Komsomol, student of Vilnius military school, escaped the German captivity and was hiding in Kupiškis, was arrested and executed; N. Rybakova (born in 1920), active member of the Komsomol in the area of Siesikai, Ukmergė County, who “carried” a red flag during the period of the Soviet rule, was executed in 1941; R. Fresdorf, farmer (German) from Šakiai County, had put up a red flag on a church tower, and was executed on 28 June 1941 in Kudirkos Naumiestis together with the other Soviet activists; T. Kaštaljanovas (born in 1905), a resident of Skuodas who supported the Soviet authorities, was executed before right before the coming of the Red Army in 1944; V. Inta (born in 1903), resident of Skuodas District, was in hiding during the years of the German occupation, returned home before the very withdrawal of the Germans but was arrested and executed; S. Ūsas (born in 1923), member of the Komsomol of Kėdainiai County, was executed in 1944 at the 9th Fort of Kaunas as an active member of the Komsomol; J. Ražinskas (born in 1920), secretary of the Komsomol of Pakruojis Soviet farm, was arrested in 1944 as a former member of the Komsomol and executed in Šiauliai prison in July; V. Čžinauskas, chairman of the executive committee of Babtai rural district, Kaunas County, was executed in the spring of 1942 for failing to register at the

¹²⁴ Registration forms of the killed, LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 66, file 42, p. 910; file 29, p. 153–154, 84; file 54, p. 86, 57–58, p. 44, p. 102–103; file 32, p. 69; file 19, p. 43, 74–75.

¹²⁵ Ibid., file 87, p. 13; file 52, p.14

police; Juškėnas (born around 1900), secretary of the Communist Party of Salakas rural district, Zarasai County, was informed that his wife had been arrested and subjected to torture; trying to save her, he came to Salakas, however, his wife had already been executed; Juškėnas was executed as well; L. Fiodorovas (born in 1901), Communist from Ukmergė County, was in hiding after the outbreak of the war; when he returned, he got arrested. When the “white-bands” surrounded his house on 28 June 1941, he hanged himself¹²⁶.

Cases of dealing with the Communists and Soviets which were initiated “on the grassroots” level, without any instructions from outside, even ignoring the rulings of the courts set up by the occupant authorities or the Lithuanian police not to punish the accused, are also reported:

A. Norgėla (born in 1914), resident of Šyliai village, Žemaičių Naumiestis rural district, Tauragė County, secretary of the rural district’s Komsomol, was handed over by the people of the village to the “Gestapo” of Žemaičių Naumiestis in June 1941. He was imprisoned for a month, interrogated, “acquitted” and released. However, the villagers arrested him again, “subjected to humiliation (thrust cabbage into his mouth, etc.)” and delivered him to Žemaičių Naumiestis, demanding his execution. A. Norgėla was imprisoned again and executed in mid-July 1941; J. Jurevičius, resident of Uţventis rural district, Āiauliai County, forester, Soviet activist, was reported to the occupants; during a search in his home, a red flag and Soviet books were found. When driven for execution, he addressed the Germans in fluent German and explained that the flag did not belong to him but was the property of a state institution. The Germans released J. Jurevičius, however, the “white-bands” executed him in early July 1941 in Kuţiai; J. Kaminskas (born in 1921), member of the Komsomol in Raseiniai County, agent of food products purveyance, was found in July 1941 shot¹²⁷.

Still, despite the hatred towards Communists and Soviet officials and the anti-Communist psychosis that had overtaken the minds of the majority, some people (mainly the clergy, just like in the case of saving the Jews) attempted to save the people condemned to execution;

P. Peĉiulis (1896-1948), resident of Vangelioniai village, Alovė rural district, Alytus County, chairman of the rural district’s Soviet land commission in 1940-1941, was arrested by the “white-bands” on 23 June and imprisoned together with the other activists in Nemunaitis. The majority of the Soviet activists were executed but Peĉiulis was saved by priest Źelnia. In 1942-1944, P. Peĉiulis was hiding on his farm a Jewish doctor O. Belkinas and his wife, and saved them; priest J. Āepėnas of Anykščiai urged his congregation to avoid revenge and participation in the killings of the Soviet activists and Jews; he visited the German commandant in Utena regarding this issue¹²⁸.

All the mentioned “forms” of anti-Communist terror and the killings of the activists of the Communist Party and Soviet authorities as well as members of the Komsomol testify to the enormous political and ideological gap that existed between those who collaborated with the Soviets and the rest of society, and to extreme hatred.

A question arises as to the scale of the massacre of the Communist Party and Soviet activists during the German occupation of Lithuania in 1940-1941. Authors of the Soviet period claimed, without referring to any sources, that a total of 5,000 were killed (perished in the fight). A. Rakūnas wrote that around 10,000 Soviet activists assisted

¹²⁶ Ibid., file 87, p. 223; file 35, p. 90; Simonaviĉius, V. *Atsiminima* (Memoirs), *ibid.*, inv. 53, file 359, p. 201.

¹²⁷ Ibid., file 87, p. 223; file 35, p. 90; Simonaviĉius, V. *Atsiminimai* (Memoirs), *ibid.*, inv. 53, file 359, p. 201.

the Red Army in fighting the German invaders and the armed gangs of LAF. Approximately 5,000 of them allegedly were either killed in battle or died in the hands of “bourgeois nationalists” and Hitlerian occupants as victims of their bloody terror. P. Štaras gave a similar account of the events: according to him, around 5,000 Soviet activists were killed in armed clashes with the enemy or in breaking through encirclement. K. Rukšėnas claimed that 5,000 Soviet activists were eliminated in the first days of the occupation, and another 800 Soviet activists and participants of the resistance were killed from July to December 1941¹²⁹.

Lithuanian historiography has also used these figures to reveal the scale of the killings of 1941. On the basis of anti-Nazi resistance press (the newspaper *Nepriklausoma Lietuva*; the Soviet authors must have also relied on this source), L. Truska stated that the “hours of retribution” claimed over 5,000 lives in Lithuania; due to the retaliation, the nation lost in the first weeks of the war many of its patriots, even former volunteers¹³⁰.

Is this figure grounded and reliable? So far, no one has doubted it or presented other data.

The *Nepriklausoma Lietuva*, a leftist (populist) newspaper of Lithuanian anti-Nazi resistance mentioned this figure during the Nazi occupation on several occasions. In the summer of 1942, when condemning massive killings by the occupants near Švenčionys (around 400 people were massacred), the newspaper denounced the massacre as a “totally arbitrary, atrocious, brutal and inhuman act”. The newspaper also reminded then of the killings in the summer of 1941 (unequivocally condemning them):

“We urge you to register all Lithuanians who were killed and to remember the perpetrators, however, we strictly forbid to execute arbitrary punishments, as a result of which different irresponsible elements, evil avengers, various narrow-minded and fanatic people engaging in account-settling, partially provoked by the aliens, massacred around 5,000 Lithuanians. Independent Lithuania will get even with all those taking arbitrary action, all those who have played or will play with the lives of Lithuanians. No one who has committed a crime against Lithuania will avoid justice¹³¹”.

The sources on which the publishers of the newspaper based this figure are unclear. It is unlikely that any “study” could have been carried out under the circumstances of the German occupation, a study on the deaths (losses) of the inhabitants of this category in particular. The Museum of Red Terror, established in the years of German occupation, collected data mainly on the victims of the Soviet terror in 1940-1941; throughout the country, the Lithuanians killed were being registered; the registration was followed by a respective propaganda campaign.

¹²⁸ Registration lists of the killed, LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 66, file 87, p. 66–70; Bubnys, A. *Holokaustas Lietuvos provincijoje 1941 metais* (The Holocaust in the Province of Lithuania in 1941) (draft), p. 82.

¹²⁹ Rakūnas, A. *Klasių kova Lietuvoje 1940–1951 metais* (The Fight of the Classes in Lithuania in 1940-1951). Vilnius, 1976, p. 102; *Tarybų Lietuva Didžiąjame Tėvynės kare* (Soviet Lithuania in the Great Patriotic War), Vilnius, 1975, p. 26; Rukšėnas, K. *Hitlerininkų politika Lietuvoje* (Hitlerian Policy in Lithuania (research paper in Russian), p. 11.

¹³⁰ Truska, L. *Lietuva 1938-1953 metais* (Lithuania in 1938-1953), p. 102.

¹³¹ *Dėl teroro veiksmų* (Regarding the acts of terror), *Nepriklausoma Lietuva*, 1 August 1942, No. 3-4, p. 4. In the autumn of 1943, unequivocally condemning statements in the official press encouraging Lithuanians to prepare for “the hour of retribution for the traitors”, the newspaper said: “Such “hours of retribution” have already cost us over 5,000 lives”. *Dėl atsiskaitymo valandų* (Regarding the hours of retribution) *Nepriklausoma Lietuva*, 15 September 1943, No. 15-16.

It should be noted that the official daily of Kaunas, *Į laisvę*, estimated in May 1942 that, on the basis of then available data, the Bolsheviks “must have massacred” over 5,000 Lithuanians when withdrawing from Lithuania¹³². Is this an accidental coincidence in figures? Possibly not. The underground newspaper “appropriated” the figure, distorting its essence for the purposes of propaganda; the newspaper sought to “neutralise” the Bolshevik crimes by bringing to the attention of Lithuanian society other (non-Soviet) crimes and by expressing concern about future “hours of retribution” and their disastrous effect on the vital interests of the nation.

Irrespective of the “origin” and “story” of this figure, its propagandist nature is undeniable, and figures used for the purposes of propaganda are always considerably exaggerated (inflated). This must have been the case with the figures related to the scale of the killings of the Communist Party and Soviet activists and people connected to them.

What could be the approximate real scale of the massacre of Communist and Soviet activists in 1940-1941?

When collecting in 1979-1985 the mentioned information on those killed in the fight for the Soviet rule, over 1,000 activists of the Communist Party and the Soviet authorities killed during the years of German occupation (mainly in 1941) were registered. Although the data is generally incomplete, more or less full data was collected in several districts of Lithuania: in Zarasai District, 78 people were killed, in Vilkaviškis District – 76, in Alytus District – 47, in Pakruojis District – 61, in Pasvalys District – 38, in Raseiniai District – 37, and in Rokiškis District 54 people were killed¹³³.

The scale of the killings of the Communists who remained on the territory occupied by the Germans is rather precisely reflected in the documents of the Lithuanian Communist Party. In the period from 1944 to 1945, the Party closely followed their lives and political behaviour and solved the issue of their further membership in the Party.

In the occupied Lithuania, 72 Communists of Kėdainiai County stayed; 24 of them were executed, 9 were missing (must have been killed when retreating to the Soviet Union), and 6 were deported to Germany for forced labour. In the same County, 461 members of the Komsomol stayed; in the four rural districts of the County, 19 members of the Komsomol were killed, 14 were taken to Germany for forced labour¹³⁴.

In Telšiai County, 70 Communists stayed during the German occupation, 24 of whom were either executed or died; in Trakai County, 52 Communists stayed, 15 of whom were executed; in Tauragė County, 35 Communists stayed, 13 of them were executed, etc.¹³⁵

By 1 April 1945, the Communist Party committees in counties and cities detected a total of 1,046 Communists who had stayed on the occupied territory; 371 of them were killed, and 38 were deported to Germany. According to the data of 1 July 1950, the fate of 1,400 Communists had become known; 591 of them either were killed or died¹³⁶.

¹³² *Traukdamiesi iš Lietuvos bolševikai išžudė per 5 000 lietuvių* (Retreating Bolsheviks kill over 5, 000 Lithuanians), *Į laisvę: Kauno dienraštis*, 22 May 1942, p. 6.

¹³³ See: Registration lists (forms) of the killed, LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 66, file 1–90.

¹³⁴ Note of 1945 by J. Piligrimas, secretary of the Kėdainiai County Bureau of the Lithuanian Communist Party, to the Bureau of the Centre Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party, LYA, doc. f. 749, inv. 749, b. 49, l.16–109.

¹³⁵ LYA, doc. f. 1203, inv. 4, file 3, p. 1; doc. f. 164, inv. 164–7, file 3, p. 22–23; doc. f. 381, inv. 381–16, file 3, p. 41.

¹³⁶ Treinienė, E. *Lietuvos komunistų partijos greičio augimas ir stiprinimas* (The Increase and Strengthening of the Ranks of the Lithuanian Communist Party) Vilnius, 1977, p. 16.

Annex No. 8 “Report on the liquidated” to the report on the period up to 15 October 1941 of W. Stahlecker, chief of operational group A, indicated that 860 Communists were liquidated in Lithuania (Kaunas City and District and Šiauliai and Vilnius Districts). The same report noted that 5,502 Communists and Jews were liquidated in the frontier area controlled by the Tilžė security police and security services¹³⁷. There can be no doubt that the total majority of these victims were Jews, Communists were not many (the number of Communists killed is reflected in the mentioned registration lists of those killed in the fight for the Soviet rule).

In the “consolidated news”, presented by K. Jager, chief of the Nazi security police and SD as well as the 3rd operational squad of the operational group A, on the executions perpetrated by the squad till 1 December 1941, a total of 283 eliminated Communists (Communist activists) of different nationalities can be counted¹³⁸.

Historian K. Rukšėnas estimated on the basis of the report by the chief of the Nazi security police and SD in Lithuania and the files of the executed kept by the Vilnius SD division that 781 non-Jewish Communists, members of the Komsomol and Soviet activists were killed in 1941 (however, the victims of executions by the Tilžė Gestapo were not included; also, the data on the number of people from this category killed in Vilnius District in July-August 1941 and in Šiauliai District in July-August 1941 is insufficient).

According to the data of K. Rukšėnas, the operational squad of the security police and SD, headed by K. Jager, killed by 1 February 1942 a total of 1,064 Communists. In 1942, the German security police and SD executed 415 Soviet activists, red partisans and underground activists¹³⁹.

In the period from December 1942 to 1943 (the data of June, July and November excluded), 99 people were executed in Lithuania for “Communism and Marxism”¹⁴⁰.

Thus, the data presented by different authors differs; archive sources provide incomplete information and have not been fully analysed. Still, a conclusion can be drawn that 1,500-2,000 activists of the Communist Party and the Komsomol, officials of the Soviet authorities and the Communist Party and activists of the Soviet authorities in 1940-1941 were killed during the Nazi occupation (mainly in 1941). These people constitute the largest category of victims from among non-Jewish civilians who perished in the years of Nazi occupation.

Some of the Communists, members of the Komsomol and Soviet officials were imprisoned for long periods in prisons and forced labour camps. However, the majority of them, having pledged to refrain from any political activities and agreed to register at the police, were released and lived under the supervision of the police, and some were even exempted from it. Some established contacts with the Communist underground.

Apart from the killings as the highest form of terror and punishment, former Communists and members of the Komsomol were also subjected to different forms of moral terror, humiliation of their dignity and ridicule of their views. Such cases were reported in the official press: “Former members of the Komsomol were taught a lesson in Joniškis in a rather original manner. Lined up in ranks and carrying Stalin’s portraits and slogans, they had to march through the city. The people were at first surprised but later roared with laughter when they saw “father” Stalin with his eyes put out, his head parading a pair of horns, and a caption “Stalin – the Jackass of Georgia” under the portrait.

¹³⁷ *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje* (Mass Killings in Lithuania), part 2, p. 22.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, part 1, p.131–137.

¹³⁹ Quoted from: Bubnys, A. *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva (1941-1944)* (Lithuania Under the German Occupation) (1941-1944) p. 310–311

After the march, the same Komsomol members had to pile up the former “scarecrows” and burn them¹⁴¹.

In the prison of Telšiai, Communist prisoners were forced to make confessions and repent for their sins; those who refused to obey were threatened execution¹⁴².

The anti-Communist terror was determined by the complicated historical situation and the events of the 1940-1941 Soviet occupation; however, its violence was unjustified, brutal, ruthless, inadequate in terms of the “crimes” committed by the victims, and unlawful. The problem of political violence is complicated and difficult to approach in terms of historical research and interpretation.

The anti-Communist terror of 1941 and later years can be compared to the punitive acts during the post-war armed resistance, the fight against the Soviet occupants, the elimination of their political and social base, and the merciless punishment of the true and alleged Soviet collaborators.

Lithuania must have been distinguished in the entire Eastern European region by the scale and tragedy of the events discussed. These events can be (at least partially) compared to the behaviour of those who had suffered the Nazi occupation with the Nazi collaborators in some of the Western European countries after World War II. In the Netherlands, around 150,000-200,000 people were identified as suspected collaborators; the fact that a person had lunched with a German or subscribed to a collaborationist magazine was enough to accuse him or her of collaboration. During the liberation period in France, thousands were lynched on the basis of capital sentences passed by courts that had not been set up by anyone. According to the official data alone, the partisans killed 4,500 collaborators, and the unofficial figures are even larger, etc¹⁴³.

Victims of Repression against the Soviet Underground in Lithuania

The Soviet underground and its political-social base was nipped in the bud by the anti-Soviet terror against Communists, Members of the Young Communist League and Soviet government officials in Lithuania and the murder of prolific members of the Soviet government in the first phase of military occupation. This circumstance, however, was only one of many reasons behind the weakness of this underground. In general, there were no historical preconditions for the activities of a Soviet underground in Lithuania, which had only recently (on the eve of war, in 1940) been occupied by the USSR, and the majority of residents did not support it, even when more favourable conditions arose for anti-Nazi action. Somewhat more massive and better-organised activity by the Soviet (especially armed) underground with significant participation of local residents only began in autumn 1943.

¹⁴⁰ *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje* (Mass Killings in Lithuania), part 1, p.140

¹⁴¹ *Žinios iš visos Lietuvos* (News from all over Lithuania), *Naujoji Lietuva*, 21 August 1941.

¹⁴² Evidence by M. Nikas given on 14 February 1950, LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 55, file 250, p. 98.

¹⁴³ Laqueur, W. *Europa mūsų laikais 1945–1992* (Contemporary Europe 1945-1992), Vilnius, 1995, p. 42–43, 46–47

According to preliminary general (and, without a doubt, exaggerated) data in Soviet sources, in total 3904 Soviet (red) partisans operated in Lithuanian territory, of whom 1386 were Lithuanian, 1475 Russian, 676 Jewish and 367 of other ethnicities. The number of Lithuanian residents among them came to 1884.⁵⁴

Despite the fact the Soviet underground in Lithuania was small, weak and without influence, its actions incurred massive repressions by the German occupational forces, the sacrifice of the lives of residents and material damages. From the first days of occupation the Germans announced a severe, uncompromising war on the Soviet underground. Whereas they somewhat limited massacres of Communists, Soviet government officials and activists by Lithuanian radicals at the beginning of the occupation (for these had not yet committed crimes against the German Reich), once the German occupation had begun any expression of resistance or even the possibility of such expression was ruthlessly silenced through application of the death penalty (shooting, incarceration, etc.).

Repressive measures by the occupation forces against the Soviet underground can be provisionally categorised in the following way: 1) direct repressions against members of the underground, 2) massive terror and revenge ("pay-back") operations against local inhabitants applying the principle of collective responsibility and collective punishment for acts of subversion and sabotage.

The German occupiers carried out many such massive repression operations in Lithuania. They were especially merciless when it came to members of the Soviet underground, although many innocent people also became victims. Collective (and even individual) punishments were cynically made public in the government-controlled press or in special proclamations made by high-ranking officials in the occupational regime (usually district commissars). This "publicity" was a military and political tactic on the part of the occupiers, designed to intimidate citizens, to psychologically break the spirit of any kind of resistance and to discourage them from resisting.

The occupiers carried out the following massive (and individual) repression operations against the Soviet underground (examples of anti-Soviet propaganda, threats and warnings which accompanied them are presented as well):

13 December 1941 (Saturday), Kaunas, three Soviet soldiers, A. Vilimas, Vl. Baronas and A. Slapšys (all of them members of the underground Lithuanian Communist Party, and NKVD

⁵⁴ General statistics on Soviet partisans from the Headquarters of the Lithuanian Partisan Movement (Lietuvos

staff in Kaunas from 1940 to 1941), sent from behind Soviet lines to organise armed resistance, publicly hanged in Ažuolynas.⁵⁵

These organisers of the Soviet underground in Lithuania were accused of the murder of 29 Lithuanians, other murders, of taking part in the 1941 exile of people to Siberia and other serious crimes. Although the hanged men had just been sent in to Lithuania from behind Soviet lines, and had not really had time to accomplish anything, they were condemned to death for activities during the Soviet occupation, so that in effect they were dealt with as if they had been former officials in the repressive organs of the Soviet government. The official press noted that the punishment was "a clear and drastic warning to all who violate the law, who maintain ties with Communists and Jewish Bolshevik criminals." Further, they had been typical "criminals of the red underworld," and "therefore the healthy national sentiment required exemplary punishment."⁵⁶

This barbaric punishment, which people had never witnessed before, attracted a lot of attention among Kaunas residents. Announcements were distributed in the city before the fact, and crowds of people came to watch. Z. Blynas, mentioned earlier, wrote in his diary that "many people, especially women and even children" came to watch the hanging, and "Two were hung, the rope broke on the third, he fell, so the Germans fired 5 shots... Barbarism. I do not justify the participation of Lithuanians. The Germans were ordered to participate (and the heads of Lithuanian institutions?)."⁵⁷

12 February 1942. Forty-two Communists convicted by a German court martial were shot in Kaunas. The Kaunas newspaper *Į Laisvę* (To Freedom) reported they had been "arsonists, murderers, instigators and supporters of Jews," and that the verdicts of the court martial demonstrated that "Bolshevik elements would not be tolerated in this country," /i.e. in Lithuania - R.Z./, "which had already suffered so much from them. The Bolsheviks are driven out and they will never return, not even as individual, unclean elements."⁵⁸

10 March. Thirty-seven "members of a terrorist group" (they were members of P. Malinauskas' Communist anti-fascist group) were shot in Kaunas. They were accused of incredibly wide and diverse anti-German activities: harbouring and arming Soviet prisoners of

partizaninio judėjimo štabas (LPJŠ)), 4 November 1945, LYA, doc.f. 1. inv.1, file 489, p.3; file 135, p. 3.

⁵⁵ See their autobiographical documents, LYA, inv.1, inv.1, file 188, p.p.125, 127, 128.

⁵⁶ "Pakarti trys raudonieji žudikai ir sovietinių teroristinių grupių vadai" (Three Red Murderers and Heads of Soviet Terror Groups Hang), *Ūkininko patarėjas* newspaper, 19 December 1941, p.16.

⁵⁷ Z. Blynas' diary, entry for 13 December 1941, LYA, f. 3377, inv. 55, file. 236, p. 113.

⁵⁸ "Sušaudyti 42 komunistai" (Forty-two Communists Shot), *Į laisvę, Kaunas* daily newspaper, 13 February 1942, p. 6.

war, communist instigation, murder, arson in Kaunas, attempts to blow up railroad equipment and a military storehouse, anti-German propaganda, publication of anti-German proclamations, possession of explosives materials and weapons, forgery of passports and German and Lithuanian official seals. Civilian residents were warned not to maintain any relations with prisoners of war, and were warned of the most severe punishments in the future for doing so.⁵⁹

On 16 June the newspaper *Į Laisvę* gave details of the attempted escape on 11 May by 3 Communists, D. Putilovas, J. Slavinskas and F. Vetrinas, who had been sentenced by a special German court: one of them was shot and killed as he tried to escape, the other two were caught on the run and sentenced to death. The newspaper commented on the facts thus: "there can be no doubt of the most severe punishment for even the smallest attempt to anger the German government. In no way will it be tolerated that the Bolshevik elements carry on their destructive work. Bolshevism will be fought against severely and without any turning back even there, where it expresses itself in unconnected incidents. Whoever touches even a single hair of a German of the Reich or of a Lithuanian who is performing the work assigned him by German institutions, that person will be appropriately punished without any mercy." Further, "the language of the verdict is terse, clear and firm," and the verdict itself should be considered a clear and unambiguous warning to others.⁶⁰

12 June, Kaunas. "Suspicious people" observed in one building. Police throw grenades at the building from the perimeter, and fire tracer bullets into it. One terrorist is killed, another arrested. The usual "final warning" appears in the press, warning that all enemies will be treated harshly, and a reward of up to 500 reichmarks for the arrest of anyone who has ties with terrorists, Soviet partisans or prisoners of war is promised.⁶¹

The Communist underground and its potential for growth were broken in Kaunas and surrounding areas in 1942 as a result of these massive and single repression operations and the propaganda which accompanied them.

Similar repression operations were carried out in other Lithuanian cities. According to data from a Lithuanian anti-Nazi underground source, on 12 May 1942 in the Kaiserlingas Woods (in Kurganava Forest) in the Panevėžys County, 32 Lithuanians were shot to death. Forty-eight people were shot on June 5 in Kaunas as a result of a verdict by the special German court there,

⁵⁹ "Teroristų gauja paversta nekenksminga" (Terrorist Gang Rendered Harmless), *Į laisvę*, 11 March 1942.

⁶⁰ "Teisinga baismė už užpuolimą" (A Just Punishment for the Attack), *Į laisvę*, 16 June 1942, p. 6.

⁶¹ "Policija imasi griežtų priemonių" (Police Take Harsh Measures), *Į laisvę*, 14 June 1942, p. 6.

apparently most of them Communists from the city and county of Panevėžys who had attempted to organise themselves into the K. Požėla's anti-fascist organisation. They were likewise accused of incredibly serious crimes: disruption of supplies, attacks on farmers, preparations to blow up bridges and important military enterprises, drawing up lists of distinguished Lithuanian partisans (participants in the June, 1941 anti-Soviet uprising) slated for murder and others. Each resident noticing "any kind of destructive activity" and failing to report it was proclaimed a criminal.⁶²

24 April 1942, sixteen people shot in Vilnius after a court martial verdict. They were accused of attempts to form terrorist organisations, resisting arrest (murder of a police officer).⁶³

July, 1942, a Communist anti-fascist organisation forming in Īiauliai is discovered and liquidated, several of its members die.⁶⁴ Unlike in other large Lithuanian cities, no massive anti-Communist terror operations are conducted here, and larger numbers of victims are avoided.

Unusually harsh accusations for the slightest anti-German activity, harsh and extreme punishments, the slaughter of members of the Soviet underground, imprisonment and fierce anti-Communist propaganda in the press aimed at intimidating the public destroyed organised resistance by the Soviet underground in Lithuania in 1941-1942 in its very infancy; it was isolated from the people. Without favourable historical conditions, it failed to spread in Lithuania even when more favourable external (and domestic) factors for anti-Nazi activity came into play.

Members of the Soviet underground can be thought of as exotic kinds of hostages of the war between Germany and the USSR: at the beginning of occupation, convinced of their own invulnerability and the success of their *blitzkrieg*, the German occupiers, after staging show trials and even without them, gave amnesty to many active Soviets. When the tide turned in the war (after the loss of the battle for Moscow and others), they arrested and repressed the Communist element on the slightest suspicion.

Another anti-Soviet terror operation took place on 23 March 1943. In Kaunas the death penalty was carried out on "members of a large gang of robbers," who had committed "grave crimes" in 1942 in the area around Jonava (the murder of Lithuanian retired colonel K. Alytas, sabotage of the Kaunas - Daugavpils railroad route). Twenty-seven people were arrested and 13 of them shot.

In summer 1943 a Communist organisation operating in Vilnius, Kaunas, Alytus and other places was discovered (it was the so-called *Lietuvos išlaisvinimo sąjunga*, or Lithuanian

⁶² Announcement by the /Panevėžys/ district commissar, 5 June 1942, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 512, p. 15-16.

⁶³ *Kronika* (Chronicle): *Į laisvę*, 27 April 1942, p. 4.

⁶⁴ P. Štaras, "*Partizaninis judėjimas Lietuvoje*" (The Partisan Movement in Lithuania), p. 60.

Liberation Union, organised by J. Vitas and others). More than 50 members of this organisation were arrested and they without a doubt awaited "the punishment they deserved."⁶⁵

It is not tenable to claim that the Communist element and, in general, political prisoners were murdered on a larger scale in Lithuanian jails or forced labour camps (in Pravieniškės, Dimitravas, Pabradė, Alytus and elsewhere). Concentration camps in the true sense of the word did not exist in Lithuania.

In 1944, as the Germans withdrew, some of the guards at the Dimitravas camp organised a prisoner uprising and escape. The prisoners were released in an organised manner, they were given personal identification documents and prison records were destroyed.⁶⁶ During the evacuation of the Pravieniškės camp to Tilsit 270 people were shot, but they were not from Lithuania (those shot and killed included 250 French Jews and 20 Russian political prisoners⁶⁷). Political and other prisoners were also released from the Marijampolė prison on 18 July 1944 as the front approached.⁶⁸

According to the data presented, one can conclude that several hundred people were victims of repression against members of the Soviet underground. Other sources confirm such a conclusion. The document "Results of massacres in Lithuania over ten months in 1942-1943 by followers of Hitler and nationalists," referenced earlier, indicates the following number of people shot: 365 as "partisans, parachutists," 99 "for Communism and Marxism," 99 "members of the resistance movement," 82 "for sabotage and acts of terror" and 37 Russian prisoners of war. Not by a long shot were all of these people killed as members or supporters of the Soviet underground, and clearly they were not all local residents, Lithuanian citizens. Some of these people were victims of the anti-Nazi armed struggle, not of repressions.

It should be noted that the military forces of the Polish underground in East Lithuania also engaged in anti-Communist terror and killed members and supporters of the Soviet underground, as did the repressive structures of the German occupational power. In that regard, one leader of the Soviet underground in Southeast Lithuania, G. Zimanas, sent reports (by radiogram) to Moscow that in the beginning of 1944 Polish partisans had begun to systematically annihilate active

⁶⁵ "Išaiškinta Lietuvoje veikusi slapta komunistų organizacija" (Secret Communist Organisation Discovered Operating in Lithuania), *Ateitis*, September 29, 1943, p. 6.

⁶⁶ J. Tanskis' testimony, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 55, file 16, p.1–6.

⁶⁷ F. Sokolov and K. Raugas' testimony, *ibid.*, inv. 52, file. 63, p. 56; inv. 55, file153, p.27.

⁶⁸ Note from 1978, *ibid.*, inv. 53, file 213, p. 175.

Soviets, and during a brief period had murdered 14 former Soviet activists in the small Rural District of Rūdninkai in Trakai County alone.

Soviet activists fled to Vilnius and attempted to hide there from Polish partisans coming from Belarus (from Ašmena and other counties), who reportedly had lists of former Communist Party members and supporters of the Soviet government. These people were killed based on verdicts rendered by the Polish partisans' special court tribunals.⁶⁹ Strained relations between Poland and the USSR and the Soviet underground's aggressive activity vis-à-vis the Polish anti-Nazi underground were behind the anti-Soviet repressions carried out against the Polish partisans.

Retribution ("Pay-back") Operations by the Occupiers to Avenge for Activities Carried out by the Soviet Underground

These kinds of massive repression operations do not differ in any way from the already mentioned massacres in Ablinga, Alytus and Ėvendūna (Raseiniai County). The only difference is that once Lithuania had come under Nazi occupation and stood behind German military lines, actions by the armed Soviet underground instead of those by the Red Army were the provocation. German occupational regime officials called on Lithuanian (and all Ostland's) people from the beginning of the occupation until its end to join in the battle against "gangs and terrorist groups," to report suspicious people, especially parachutists, Red Army officers and soldiers, spies, saboteurs and members of their families. The strictest penalties (execution by firing-squad) were threatened for failing to report such people or for helping them in any way. As an incentive, a reward of up to 5000 rubles (500 reichmarks) was promised for useful information and reports.⁷⁰

The Germans did not trust in the "goodwill" of the residents of occupied countries, and held the view that it was impossible to carry out sabotage or acts of terror without "at least the passive participation of residents," but, lacking sufficient forces to stand guard behind the fighting front, they foisted responsibility for "order and security," first and foremost for protecting rail lines, roads and bridges, on to local residents.⁷¹

⁶⁹ LYA, doc.f.3377, inv. 55, file 217, p. 42.

⁷⁰ Reich Commissar for Ostland Lohse's proclamation of 15 November 1941, published in the newspaper *Ūkininko patarėjas*, 15 December 1941.

⁷¹ Secret instruction from Commissar General of Lithuania A. Renteln to Lithuanian first advisor P. Kubiliūnas, 9 September 1943, published in "*Lietuvos liaudis Didžiajame Tėvynės kare (1941–1945): dokumentų ir medžiagos*

Members of the Soviet underground, sabotage groups sent from behind Soviet lines into Lithuania, were geared up for carrying on active armed struggle, for sabotaging transportation and performing terror operations against German officials. Members of the Soviet underground did not feel any responsibility for their actions or their consequences as they bore on local residents, and did not try to defend the local population from German repressions made in reply. These circumstances (especially from autumn 1943 on, when Soviet partisan activities intensified) resulted in agonising massive repression operations carried out by the occupiers: the wholesale burning of villages, massacres, transport to Germany as forced labour and others.

The largest such repression operations carried out by German occupiers and their collaborators in various places in Lithuania were the following:

In **Užusaliai** Village (Kaunas County) between Kaunas and Jonava, on 12 September 1941, 48 people were murdered. The absolute majority of Village residents were Russians. Reasons and motivations for the massacre were various and mixed. During the years of Lithuanian independence the Village was one of the largest centres of Communist, anti-state activity. After the war and German occupation began, Red Army, Communist and Communist youth members remained in the area around Jonava and found refuge with local ethnic Russian residents, and they began to form the rudiments of a Communist underground. There are data to the effect that Germans drew fire on the road to Paskutiškiai in summer of 1941. In early September, units of the 12th Lithuanian Self-Defence Battalion and local police carried out sweeps through the woods around Užusaliai and searches of local residences. Around 200 people were arrested on suspicion of maintaining ties with the Communists and Soviet POWs. On 12 September two Germans arrived there from Kaunas, and under their supervision a "trial" of those arrested was held. The prisoners were mocked: they were driven into an Orthodox church to pray (to repent), they were forced to dance to Soviet songs, people were beaten with the butts of rifles and so on. The "convicted" were told they were to be transported to Germany for labour, but they were herded instead along the fence of the Užusaliai graveyard and shot to death (one of those herded died of a heart attack).

rinkinys" (The Lithuanian People in the Great War of the Homeland (1941-1945): a selection of documents and material), Vilnius, 1982, p. 188.

Jonava Rural District. Kungišilai Village, 23 September 1941: thirteen people including five women were shot to death.⁷²

A massacre took place on 20 May 1942 in the area around **Švenčionys**. In the morning of 19 May Švenčionys County agricultural directors J. Beck, W. Grahl and a Wehrmacht officer, senior lieutenant Schmidt, were brutally murdered and their corpses desecrated as they travelled from Dvenčionys to Lentupis. Soviet partisans belonging to F. Markov's Belarussian group carried out this act of terror⁷³. Vilnius County Gebietskommissar H. Wulff announced in a public proclamation following that "in retribution for this heinous move, 400 saboteurs and enemy terrorists have been executed,"⁷⁴ but in fact those killed were innocent people from the area around Dvenčionys, mainly Poles.

Following the act of terror Gestapo officials and Lithuanian police officers performed searches looking for weapons and the uniforms of the murdered Germans, and made mass-arrests of males from neighbouring towns and villages as hostages. Some of those detained were released, others managed to escape. Strained and hostile national relations between Poles and Lithuanians influenced the selection of those to arrested and condemned to the firing-squad: mainly Polish men made it onto the lists of those to be shot. On May 20 people were shot in several locations: at Adutiškis Village (33 shot), at Švenčionys (29-32 people killed) and at Švenčionėliai (24-26 killed).⁷⁵ The other sites of massacres are not known.

There were various speculations and propaganda declarations in the Polish and Soviet sources (and persist in Polish historiography even today) concerning the massacre around Dvenčionys during the German occupation, and especially on the number of those shot. It is claimed, for instance, that 1200 Poles were killed, and that people were killed in the streets, in their homes and elsewhere.⁷⁶

⁷² See "Jonavos rajone Užusalių apylinkėje 1941 m. rugsėjo mėn. sušaudytų gyventojų ir pogrindininkų vietos nustatymo aktas" (Report defining the site of the shooting of residents and members of the underground in September 1941 in the Užusaliai area in Joanava District," 26 May 1965, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 635, p. 9d, 10, 31–33; autobiography/memoirs of A. Voitenka, *ibid.*, inv. 46, file. 999, p. 19–20; autobiography/memoirs of I. Sergejev, 1967, *ibid.*, file 774, p.18.

⁷³ LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 58, file 512, p. 13; Feiger Meuchelmord an Reichsdeutschen, *Wilnaer Zeitung*, 23. Mai 1942.

⁷⁴ S. Apyvala's 17 May 1943 report to A. Sniečkus, LYA, doc.f. 57, inv.1, file1, p.1; doc.f.3377, inv. 58, file702, p. 3; V.Maldžiūnas, "Išaugau Vilnijoje" (I grew up in Wilno), *Atsiminimai*, Kaunas, 1996, p.128. V. Maldžiūnas writes that all Germans killed had their corpses desecrated (undressed, genitalia cut off and discarded next to bodies).

⁷⁵ "Aktai žudynių vietoms nustatyti" (Report for Defining the Sites of Massacres) , 1965, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 635, p. 91, 93– 94.

⁷⁶ LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 273, p.3; J. Wolkonowski, *Okręg Wilenski Zwęzku Walki Zbrojnej Armii Krajowej w latach 1939–1945*, Warszawa, 1996, s. 96.

A different statement, however, should not be rejected and is worth discussing, namely, that the total number of people cited in Vilnius Gebietskommissar H. Wulff's proclamation (400) was not actually the number murdered (at least not within the current territory of Lithuania). Švenčionys, Švenčionėliai and Adutiškis should be considered the most significant sites of these massacres, but in those places about 100 people were murdered. On the other hand, people may have been murdered on the other side of Lithuania's current border with Belarus. The large number of those executed which was announced was intended to scare the local population, cause psychological shock and demonstrate that such acts of terror would not be tolerated. In his proclamation, H. Wulff told the public that those who "give aid to the Bolshevik enemy or its terrorist groups or fail to report their appearance" would "in serious cases" face death, and "collective measures for settling accounts" were again threatened.⁷⁷

However, as mentioned before, after the Švenčionys massacre of 28 May 1942, H. Wulff called on county chiefs to maintain calm and, based on economic considerations, to avoid similar massacres and avoid victims in carrying out repressions.⁷⁸ In another proclamation on 14 November 1942 he assured Vilnius County farmers (mostly Poles) that the transfer of (Lithuanian) farmers from Lithuania to the Vilnius area had ended, and that all Vilnius County farmers "will remain and continue in control of their farms." He expressed hope that all would do their work and fully meet their obligations.⁷⁹

Ferma (in some sources **Trakėnai**), a village in the Trakai County, 5 kilometres from Lentvaris, was burned to the ground on 8 September 1943. In early September Soviet partisans (the detachment *Išlaisvintojas*, or Liberator, operating in the Rūdninkai forest) blew up a military train on the Lentvaris-Rūdiškiai route. The 11th company of the 16th SS and Police Regiment (under Commander Hoer) burned the village down. Twenty-one farmsteads were burned to the ground and 136 village residents (30 men, 51 women and 55 children) were driven to Lentvaris and sent as slave labour to Germany. One village resident escaped. Forty heads of cattle, 57 sheep, 6 pigs and a calf were confiscated. Data from the German invaders show a large number of explosives exploded during the incineration of the village.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 512, p. 13.

⁷⁸ LCVA, doc.f.R-500, inv.1, file 2, p.569-570.

⁷⁹ LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 512, p. 17-18.

⁸⁰ "Lietuvos liaudis Didžiąjame Tėvynės kare," (People of Lithuania in the Second World War) p. 190; "Pirčiupių tragedijos kaltininkai" (Perpetrators of the Pirčiupiai Tragedy), Vilnius, 1975, p.17-18; LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 3377-9, file 42, p. 164; Naujoji Lietuva, 3 October 1943; *Laisvės kovotojas*, 19 October 1943.

Lazdėnai, a village in the Trakai County, not far from Balcieriškis on the Vilnius-Kaunas rail line, was burned down on 11 September 1943. The 11th company of the 16th SS and Police Regiment (under Commander Hoer) carried out the operation. The Nazi punitive squad surrounded the village and searched for Soviet partisans, weapons and explosives. Village residents (about 25 families) with their belongings and their farm animals were driven out of the village onto the highway. Twenty-one residences and other buildings were put to the torch. Older village residents were freed, while the others were transported to Vievis, from there to Vilnius and after the passage of some time to Germany. Those transported as slave labour to Germany worked at labour camps in Neumark and Chemnitz doing railroad and forestry work, while residents suspected of ties with partisans were sent to concentration camps.⁸¹

Družiliai (Dryžuliai, Družiliškiai in some sources), a village in the Rural District of Magūnai within Švenčionys County on the Vilnius-Daugavpils railroad line, was torched on 11 September 1943 in retribution for the blowing up of a rail line by Soviet partisans. The village was surrounded, the people herded onto a road at the edge of the village. After the village was looted, farm buildings were burnt and all 12 residences were consumed in the flames. Older people and pregnant women were allowed to go free, those capable of work were sent to Vilnius for later transport to Germany.⁸²

Šarkiškės (a village in the Alytus County, near Matuizos) was burnt down on 30 September 1943. Some of the villagers had maintained ties with Soviet partisans and on the eve of the village's destruction a train was derailed near the village. Members of punitive squad arrived by train at the small Matuizos station, surrounded the village, sent residents and farm animals on the road to Matuizos and burnt down the buildings. Seventeen residences and 75 other buildings were destroyed. People and animals were driven off to the Varėna train station. On the way a great number managed to run away. Only 7 prisoners failed to escape. They were taken to Lukiškės Prison in Vilnius, later transported to Germany to work.⁸³

Miliūnai (a village in Rokiskis County, 7 kilometres north of the town of Rokiškis) was incinerated on 13 October 1943. Village residents, most of them Russians, actively supported the Soviet partisans operating out of the Miliūnai Woods, and many of them belonged to the Soviet

⁸¹ "*Vieninga kova*" (United Struggle, an underground newspaper), 25 September 1943; S. Šiukštienė's 1951 memoirs, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 3377, file1,1. 40.

⁸² "*Pirčiupių tragedijos kaltininkai*," p. 17–18.

⁸³ L. Biekšaitė's 1949 memoirs, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 3377, file 103, p.1–3.

partisans. Aircraft flying in from behind Soviet lines across the front used to drop weapons and ammunition near the village. There are reports that 4 German soldiers were killed in the Miliūnai Forest in August 1943, and on September 23 a confrontation with Soviet partisans took place. Some data show the punitive operation against the village had taken place by 4 October, during which 4 residential farmhouses were burned down, 2 people killed and another injured. The punitive squad which on 13 October completely incinerated the entire village was composed of a German military unit arriving from Kaunas, Germany security police from the Panevėžys County and the Rokiškis gendarmerie. In total 67 residences (64 belonging to Russians and 3 to Lithuanians) were burned to the ground and 4 people killed (one Russian priest and 3 other villagers). People were only allowed to rescue bedding from the burning homes. Villagers were sent to Pravėniškės, later on to Germany as labour. Younger men from the village fled to the forest and joined in Soviet partisan operations. Forces carrying out the operation looted the village, shot and carried off pigs and other assets. Livestock were turned over to the Rokiškis state farm.⁸⁴

The official paper *Ateitis* wrote about the torching of Miliūnai Village: "On 13 October 1943, Miliūnai Village was razed to the ground after livestock and harvest surpluses were removed. Residents, if they did not take up arms, were taken away and will be employed for meaningful work. This is the last warning to all those who support gangs. In the future [this is how] every instance will be treated without compromise."⁸⁵

Šlapekiai, formerly a small Lithuanian residential village next to Miliūnai, incinerated together with Miliūnai on 13 October. Punitive squads arrived at the village after the destruction of Miliūnai had begun, allowing a large number of residents to abscond to the forest. They drove people out of homes and used incendiary bullets to set buildings ablaze. All 7 of the village's residences were burnt to the ground. Village resident Staigys (his son worked in a self-defence (police) battalion) was found burnt up in the ashes. Members of the punitive squad were in favour of shooting some of the villagers arrested, but the Vyžuona forest-keeper managed to talk them out of it. Attackers looted the village as they destroyed it. Villagers now made homeless found shelter in the village of Sodeliai.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, b .266, p. 1; file 12, p.34–35; *Į laisvę*, 30 October; 18 December, 1943; "Lietuvos liaudis Didžiąjame Tėvynės kare," p. 244–245.

⁸⁵ "Kieta, bet teisinga bausmė už gaujų rėmimą" (Harsh but Just Punishment for Supporting Gangs), *Ateitis*, 15 October 1943, p.6.

⁸⁶ LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 266, p.1; file 512, p. 34–35.

Lauciūnai, another small former Lithuanian residential village near Miliūnai, burnt down on 13 October. The village was burnt down in exactly the same way as Šlapekiai. Seven residences were burnt to the ground, while 2 more, further away from the forest, remained standing.

Gumbas (a village in the Eišiškės County, 12 kilometres northwest of Šalčininkiai), was burnt to the ground on 9 April 1944 in revenge for Soviet partisan sabotage on the Vilnius-Lyda (Lida) railroad route. On the eve of the operation the punitive unit arrived by train in Kidarai Village and from there reached Gumbas in armoured vehicles. Beiteranas manor was surrounded first, where there lived 4 families of labourers along with 12 women with children who had fled there from Belarus during the occupation. The people were herded into a grain-storage barn and shot to death. The barn and corpses were later burned. Only one injured woman managed to escape. The punitive squad drove other villagers into R. Godlevskis' barn and burnt it down, burning 18 people to death. The burnt village's livestock were herded to the railroad, loaded onto train cars and carried away.⁸⁷

Kernavė (Kernova), a village in the Jašiūnai Rural District within the Eišiškės County, burnt to the ground on the same day. The village was looted during the destruction, herd animals were confiscated and sent away along with other assets. Four villagers were shot to death, others managed to escape.

Gudeliai (a village in the Jašiūnai Rural District within the Eišiškės County) mentioned in Soviet underground sources as another village burnt to the ground along with Gumbas and Kernavė.⁸⁸

Pagražupys (a village in the area near Lieponys in the Trakai County) was partially burned on 13 April 1943. A German punitive squad (around 150-200 troops) and 3 tanks attacked the village, shot and killed P. Jurgelewicz (who was 15) and E. Kozlovskaya (aged 76), burnt down S. Jurgelevičius' house and threw A. Varsalskis and St. Matkevičius (aged 15) into the flames. Other villagers escaped to the forest.⁸⁹

Inklėriškės (a village in the Rūdiškiai Rural District within the Trakai County) was attacked by a German punitive unit (about 150 soldiers) on 14 April 1944. The base of the Trakai

⁸⁷ R. Ėarmaitis, "*Gumbo kaimo tragedija*" (The Gumbo Village Tragedy), *LKP istorijos klausimai* (Historical Problems of the Lithuanian Communist Party), vol. 38, p. 101–102; LYA, doc.f. 1771, inv. 43, file 12.

⁸⁸ LYA, doc.f.1771, inv. 43, file13, p. 7.

⁸⁹ April 15, 1944 Report by the Soviet Partisan Commission, LYA, doc.f. 51, inv. 51–1, file5, p. 4–5; M. Afoninas' 21 April 1944 radiogram to A. Sniečkus, doc.f.1, inv. 1, file 411, p. 340.

brigade of Soviet partisans was located on the outskirts of the village. Some villagers actively supported the Soviet partisans, and acted as look-outs and helpers. The village provided the Soviet partisans bread, clothes and medicines, and villagers carried out intelligence and other tasks for the Soviet partisans.

Data from Soviet partisan sources show German troops burnt the homes of 2 or 3 villagers (A. Jančevskis, A. Dubrovskis, K. Jančevskis), shot 13-15 people, mostly women and children, and injured 6. The troops drove around 30 villagers into a site and were preparing to burn them alive when Trakai brigade partisans stepped in to put a stop to it and drove the German troops out of the village. On 13 May the punitive operation against Inklėriškės was repeated. The village was bombarded from the air with 70 incendiary and explosive bombs. Twelve residences were destroyed and 16 people died with many more injured during the aerial bombardment. Almost the entire village was burnt to the ground.⁹⁰

Plunksnočiai (a village in the Rokiškis County, 12 kilometres from the town of Rokidkis, along the Rokidkis-Čedasai highway) was torched on May 16, 1944. Villagers were Russians, and there were 13 residences. During the inter-war period some of the villagers took part in activities of the Communist underground and during the Nazi occupation supported Soviet partisans. There were strained relations between the Russian villagers and the local Lithuanian authorities and Lithuanian society over the villagers' co-operation with Soviet partisans. Villagers were followed and persecuted, and they included some of those who were arrested and sent to Germany as slave labour or shot. Circumstances surrounding the incineration of the village are not clear: it was torched at night by people laying in ambush, according to the testimony of villagers, by "white armbands, Lithuanian bourgeoisie nationalists." All village residences were burned to the ground. Residents were not murdered.⁹¹

Pirčiupiai (Naujieji Pirčiupiai), a village in the Valkininkai Rural District within the Trakai County, along the Vilnius-Eišiškės road, burnt down on 3 April 1944. The 9th and 10th Companies of the 3rd Battalion of the 16th SS and Police Regiment executed the operation. The incineration of the village was an especially brutal act of terror by the German occupiers in

⁹⁰ 15 April and 5 May 1944 reports by the Soviet Partisan Commission on German atrocities in Inklėriškės, LYA, doc.f. 51, inv. 51-1, file 5, p. 5-7.

⁹¹ *Tiesa* (Lithuanian Communist newspaper), July 26, 1970; LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 45, file 32, p. 165; Work by the Ethnographers of the Čedasai School "*Paminklas sudegintam Plunksnočių kaimui*" (Monument to the Incinerated Village of Plunksnočiai), 1973-1983.

Lithuania. Contrary to the way other villages were burnt down, the village was burnt down and all its residents were shot dead or burned alive.

The German punitive squad surrounded the village, assembled all the villagers and people who happened to be in the village at the time, divided the condemned up into groups, locked them in farmsteads and barns and burned them alive. Twenty-seven residences were torched and 119 people, including 58 men, 61 women, 49 children up to age 15, 14 children under age 5 and 4 toddlers were burned or shot to death. Only 9 people of those rounded up (assembled) by the punitive squad managed to save themselves, and in total 39 villagers survived. Burial of the remains of the murdered was only allowed on 11 June.⁹²

The Pirčiupiai tragedy was provoked by Soviet partisan subversion in village areas in that a portion of villagers supported them. Soviet partisans had continually organised ambushes of Germans near Pirčiupiai, and one of the ambushes took place on the morning of the village tragedy: passenger vehicles (other reports say trucks) of the German gendarmerie travelling the Vilnius-Eišiškės were shot at, several Germans killed and several others taken prisoner.⁹³ Soviet partisans based near the village did not do anything to stop the German punitive operation, which lasted several hours.

The burning down of villages and massacres of people in 1941 and 1942 were "pay-back" for separate attacks by Soviet partisans against Germans, and in 1943 and 1944 the "result" of their stepped-up and more wide-spread sabotage on the Lithuanian railroads. The villages burned down in autumn 1943 were "pay-back" by the German occupiers for sabotage in the so-called "rail war" beginning in August. In spring 1944 activities in a new stage of the "rail war" provoked repressions by the Germans.

In response to sabotage on the rail lines, the Germans also burned down separate rural residences in addition to entire villages. For example, in summer 1943 after the railroad between

⁹² S. Sinkevičius, "*Pirčiupiai: dokumentinė apybraiža, Antrasis papildytas leidimas*" (Pirčiupiai: a Documentary Sketch, second abridged edition) Vilnius, 1977, p.60; Soviet Partisans' 5 June 1944 report on the burning of Pirčiupiai, LYA, doc.f. 51, inv. 51-1, file5, p. 2-3; M.Afonimas' (Petras') 6 June 1944 radiogram to A.Sniečkus, ibid., doc.f.1, inv. 1, file 412, p. 439.

⁹³ Archive documents of the Soviet partisan unit "Death to the Occupiers" claim ambushes of Germans were organised on 21 March 1944 (see LYA, doc.f. 32, inv. 1, file 124, p. 1), April 15 (when 9 Germans died, many were injured, (see: ibid., file1, p.68)), 31 May, 2 June d.(see: L.Solominas' (Pranas') 6 June 1944 radiogram to A.Sniečkus, ibid., doc.f. 1, inv.1, file 412, p. 446, 447); J. Žemaitaitis, "*Pietų Lietuvos partizanų veikla 1943-1944 m., Atsiminimai*" (Activities by the South Lithuanian partisans 1943-1944, Reminiscences), 1950, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 3377, file 1297, p.22-23; *Lietuvių fronto biuletenis* (national underground newspaper) 23 June 1944, p. 7 and others.

Vievis and Žašliai was blown up, the farms of the two brothers Seiliūnas were burned down, and in 1944 a farm residence and 4 people were incinerated in Doniai Village in Kretinga County.⁹⁴

The facts given show that mostly villages in East and Southeast Lithuania were burned, or from the ethnic perspective, mostly Russian and Polish villages (although Lithuanian villages did not escape repressions either). Russian (Old Believer) villages were the most active in supporting Soviet partisans, such villages existed in almost all Lithuanian regions, and a wider range of measures were used to terrorise such villages, including murdering the people. An example of this occurred in the Tryškiai County within the usually "calm" Šiauliai County on 18 May 1943, when the mostly Russian-inhabited villages of Degimai, Bobulina and Severėnai were surrounded and their inhabitants accused of sheltering and feeding parachutists, partisans and escaped POWs. In total 43 people were arrested. Six were summarily shot, 12 sent to the Šiauliai prison and 25 given severe warnings and released.⁹⁵ One Soviet underground leader in Lithuania, M. Ąumauskas, reported to A. Sniećkus in Moscow that people from 5 Russian villages had been transferred elsewhere (it is not known where) in Šiauliai County in 1943 for actively supporting the Russian partisans, and that evacuated Russian refugees who had actively participated in the war "against Bolshevism" had been set up in their place on the now vacant farms. According to another Soviet partisan, J. Baščiuilis, Russian peasants were moved from the Šaukėnai Rural District within Šiauliai County to the Alytus County, and 150 Ukrainian families were moved in to replace them. According to data from the Lithuanian national underground, in December 1943 in Šaukėnai Rural District within the Šiauliai County, the deportation of people living along the forest periphery, mostly Russians, to camps began as part of the battle against "Bolshevik banditry." Russian families evacuated from the East were settled on their farms.⁹⁶

Russian villages and individuals were constantly terrorised in Zarasai, Rokiškis and other counties.⁹⁷

Soviet partisans in Lithuania (as elsewhere) in carrying out acts of subversion did not pay heed to the consequences for local residents, nor to the danger of German revenge operations. That's well illustrated in the following example. After the Polish underground liquidated

⁹⁴ J. Dzeinas' 1945 testimony, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 55, file 128, p. 38; inv. 35, file 11, p. 372; P. Ątaras, *"Partizaninis judejimas Lietuvoje"* (The Partisan Movement in Lithuania), p. 212.

⁹⁵ *"Lietuvos liaudis Didžiajame Tėvynės kare,"* p. 141; LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 635, p. 17.

⁹⁶ M. Šumauskas' (Kazimieras') January 31, 1944 radiogram to A. Sniećkus, LYA, doc.f. 1, inv. 1, file 410, p. 168; J. Baščiuilis' 1951 memoirs, *ibid.*, doc.f.3377, inv.3377-1, file 4, p. 13; inv. 58, file 263, p. 151.

Lithuanian criminal police inspector M. Padaba in Vilnius in autumn 1943, 100 Polish intellectuals were taken hostage and 10 of them shot at Paneriai. The Polish underground, in order to avoid victims, renounced such acts of terror. Soviet underground leaders in East Lithuania condemned the tactic, saying the "Polish nationalists" had formerly carried out sabotage, acts of terror but after the execution of hostages turned back from that and whenever they can they hinder our people from carrying out such acts.⁹⁸

It is possible to suggest that the leaders of the Soviet underground even had an interest in the continuation of massive repressions and sought to use them for their own political purposes and propaganda. After the Pirčiupiai Village tragedy G. Zimanas recommended to A. Sniečkus that "the brutalities of the Germans in Pirčiupiai should be disclosed as widely as possible in Lithuania and the world. We will use the events of Pirčiupiai to invite the people to armed struggle."⁹⁹

What the consequences were for the local residents of the all-out active armed partisan struggle can be seen clearly in the destruction of Belarussian villages. According to Soviet historiography data, 5295 villages were destroyed during German punitive operations, with either their entire populations or a portion of them killed, the rest sent to Germany as slave labour.¹⁰⁰

On the other side of the equation, German trains, sadly, moved to the front without any interruption: not a single Wehrmacht operational transport was stopped as a result of partisan activities, nor was a single large German offensive operation hindered.¹⁰¹

In discussing repressions, revenge ("pay-back") operations and massacres of civilians by the German occupiers, it is impossible not to touch upon analogous actions against civilians carried out by the Soviet and Polish underground forces. When the armed Soviet underground stepped up activities in Lithuania in autumn 1943, the Germans allowed the setting up of so-called local self-defence units, "to safeguard the assets and lives of the people" and to fight "banditry by the Bolshevik element." In East and especially in Southeast Lithuania, where the forces of the armed Soviet underground were concentrated, "local," mainly village, self-defence became a wide-spread and popular phenomenon, and Soviet partisans became embroiled in armed struggle

⁹⁷ Report on German atrocities in the Zarasai District, LYA, doc.f. 1, inv. 1, file 438, p. 56, 36–37; file 21, p. 11; *Žemaičių žemė* (periodical), October 16, 1943.

⁹⁸ M. Miceika's 6 March 1944 letter to A. Sniečkus, LYA, doc.f.1, inv.1, file 40, p. 19.

⁹⁹ G. Zimanas' (Jurgis') 19 June 1944 radiogram to A. Sniečkus, LYA, doc.f. 1, inv.1, file 413, p. 65.

¹⁰⁰ *Всенародная борьба в Белоруссии против немецко-фашистских захватчиков*, т. 3, Минск, 1985, с. 219.

¹⁰¹ Б. Соколов, *Оккупация: правда и мифы*, Москва, 2002, с. 104.

against armed villages. In that struggle, the Soviet partisans used measures similar to those employed by the German occupiers: they torched villages and killed civilians, including women and children. On 29 January 1944, Soviet partisans burnt down Kaniūkai Village in the Jašiūnai Rural District within the Eišiškės County and killed 38 people there, including 19 women and 7 children aged from 1.5 to 16, and severely wounded another 15 people. The Kaniūkai Village tragedy is comparable to the tragedy of Pirčiupiai Village, burned down by the German occupiers. On 12 April 1944 (Easter Sunday) Soviet partisans in the Onuškis Rural District within the Trakai County burnt down Bakaloriškės Village (about 40 residential buildings and 300 farm buildings), and in this and neighbouring villages murdered 18 people.¹⁰²

Strained relations between Poles and Lithuanians in East Lithuania also led to revenge ("pay-back") operations with civilian casualties. Lithuanian police and military structures did not shy away from repression and violence toward Polish civilians in fighting Polish opposition, and for their part the armed Polish underground terrorised Lithuanian residents. The most tragic episodes in the armed conflict between Lithuanians and Poles took place in April 1944. On 20 April of the same year Polish partisans helped by local residents in Glitiškės in the Vilnius District took captive and killed four soldiers from 258th Lithuanian Self-Defence Battalion. In revenge battalion soldiers shot to death 38 local residents -- men, women and children. Carrying out a revenge operation in response to that, Polish partisans killed more than 80 Lithuanian residents in Dubingiai, Bijutiškis, Joniškis, Inturkė and elsewhere at the end of April.¹⁰³ Even so, the bloody conflict between Lithuanians and Poles did not result in a wider conflict, was sporadic and did not reach the level of the bloody massive conflict between Poles and Ukrainians in Western Ukraine.

Massive repressions and various attacks were executed against the armed Polish anti-Nazi underground and its members in a similar way as they were against the Communist (Soviet) underground. In general, the policy of the Nazi occupiers (and of the local Lithuanian autonomous administration) toward the Poles was incomparably harsher than toward Lithuanians. Over the entire course of the Nazi occupation of Lithuania, the Polish intelligentsia, clerics, military and others were terrorised and annihilated. As seen from data presented by Polish historian M. Wardzyska, more than 1000 Poles may have been killed during various massive punitive

¹⁰² R. Zizas, "Žudynių Kaniūkuose pėdsakais, *Genocidas ir rezistencija*" (Along the Tracks of the Massacre in Kaniūkai, in *Genocide and Resistance*), 2002, No. 1(11), p. 149-165; "*Bakaloriškių sunaikinimas, Genocidas ir rezistencija*" (The Destruction of Bakaloriškės, in *Genocide and Resistance*), 2002, No. 2(12), p. 233-245.

¹⁰³ R. Zizas, "*Lietuvos kariai savisaugos batalionuose (1941 - 1944 m.)*" (Lithuanian Soldiers in the Self-Defense Battalions 1941-1944), *Lietuvos archyvai*, vol.11, 1998, p. 52.

operations and about 7000 Poles were deported from the Vilnius area for slave labour in Germany.¹⁰⁴

Repressions for Resisting German Military and Labour Mobilisations and Economic Exploitation of the Country

We can distinguish the results of occupational repression policy on resistance to the German occupiers' goal to use the human potential of Lithuania for their own ends (military and manpower mobilisations), to exploit the country economically (various fees, obligations and so on), resistance to their economic social policy, and victims and losses as a separate field of German repressions (to place them in a separate category). Problems on the history of German occupational repression policy in this field and, in the wider sense, general historical problems concerning Nazi-controlled German occupational policy, its effects and overall situation in Lithuania have not been addressed with objective scientific studies up till the present day, and in the historiography until now this has been dealt with tendentiously and in a politicised manner. Even in relatively objective works there tends to be a plethora of abstract propaganda declarations about the massive destruction of local populations (to the effect that they were on par with the massacre of Jews) and others, although more specific data or facts, or even reasonable arguments, are not provided. Without a scientific and objective assessment of all this, a lot of space exists for different kinds of speculation and for old Soviet clichés and stereotypes.

1) General Notes

War failed to bring the Lithuanian nation the expected political changes; Lithuania jumped out of the Soviet into the Nazi occupation. The new occupiers were not prepared to tolerate the aims of Lithuania and other East European nations to maintain a separate political identity and statehood, refused to recognize a newly-formed provisional Lithuanian government and prevented it from operating. Unimpeded direct German occupational rule was introduced in Lithuania. On July 17, 1941 by order of Hitler, the Ostland Reichskommissariat was established (under command of Commissar H. Lohse with headquarters in Riga), and Lithuania was included in it as one of four general areas. A. von Renteln was appointed Commissar General of Lithuania. The Lithuanian generalgebiet was subdivided into 6 administrative counties: 2 municipal (Kaunas and

¹⁰⁴ M. Wardzynska, Sytuacja ludności Polskiej w Generalnym komisariacie Litwy: czerwiec 1941– lipiec 1944,

Vilnius) and 4 provincial (Kaunas, Vilnius, Šiauliai and Panevėžys) districts under the command of gebietskommissars. The Commissar General of Lithuania and the County Gebietskommissars had unlimited direct occupational regime and military, executive and judicial power.

The introduction of direct occupation rule and the disregard of any aspirations (even symbolic) toward statehood immediately caused great tension, which lasted throughout the period of occupation, and hostile relations between the German occupational regime and classes of Lithuanian society (even among those who were disposed toward collaboration with the occupiers). In Lithuania (from the end of 1941) a national anti-Nazi underground began to form, which would wield much influence on society, consistently defending the idea of Lithuanian statehood, harshly and negatively judging Germany's aim to bring Lithuania into full participation in the war on its side, and holding a position based on international law to the effect that occupiers were not allowed to decree and carry out various mobilisations of the country's population, first and foremost not military mobilisations.

The basic cause of tension was Germany's aggressive geopolitical, racial, economic and military ambitions, and a real threat to Lithuania's vital interests in terms of historical prospects was perceived in the event Germany lost the war. According to the unfinished and vague scenarios contained in the general Ost plan, Lithuania was to be joined to Germany, and over the course of 20 to 30 years colonised and Germanised.

An article which appeared in the SS press in 1942 (in the weekly *Das schwarze Korps*) entitled "Germanise?" stated that Germany's "task is not to Germanise the East in the old sense," i.e. to force German language and laws onto the local inhabitants, but rather to ensure that only people of German and Germanic heritage would inhabit Ostland. Local nations "are just separate drops on a hot stone. They are only the sprouts of development, but not the fruits." Soviet historiography made frequent use of the article to illustrate Germany's aggressive plans for the Baltic states and the fate that would have awaited these nations.¹⁰⁵

This is actually a clear example of German Nazism's aggression toward the Baltic nations, but at the same time it is also a propaganda declaration. Somewhat different (opposing) statements by the German occupiers can be presented as well. For example, in issue number 5 of the magazine *Ostland* in 1942 an article called "Lithuania's Destiny" stated that the Grand Duchy

Warszawa, 1993, s. 64, 116 et al.

¹⁰⁵ J. Bulavas, "*Vokiškųjų fašistų okupacinis Lietuvos valdymas*" (Governance of German Fascist Lithuania), p. 183–184; *Naujoji Lietuva*, 10 September 1942.

of Lithuania had been "Europe's rampart" against Tatars and Muscovites for several centuries, and that Germany had now taken over that tradition of the truly Nordic-minded Lithuanian grand dukes, and would gladly allow the small nation of Lithuanian farmers to march in the ranks of Europe, if only she consciously consented to it.¹⁰⁶ Both the one statement and the other are reflections of separate Nazi German State institutions, harsher and softer occupational policy directions and distant post-war historical prospects.

The German occupiers restored the laws of Independent Lithuania (although Germans and Jews were made exempt from the power of Lithuanian courts). The German occupiers held only the apex of power; ranks lower than County Gebietskommissar did not exist in the more integral structures of German-occupied Lithuania. The Lithuanian autonomous administration operated alongside the civilian occupational government. It was made up of general advisors, county heads, municipal *burgermeisters*, rural district chiefs, village elders and others. Unconditional leadership, supervision and control by Germans with practical matters of governance left to the Lithuanian administration was essentially the governing principle. This system (structure) of occupational government left room for manoeuvre, to defend Lithuanian interests, and, if need be, to sabotage, but on the other hand, it placed the burden of responsibility for criminal acts by the occupational government, for collaboration, on Lithuanian officials.

Although there was disappointment with Germany, objective historical realities gave Germany a favourable (compromise) sentiment and perception in Lithuania. Although disappointed, a significant portion of society linked hopes for political independence and restored statehood with Germany, because there simply was no alternative. During the war and its hardest period (perhaps except for the very first months of the war), the Soviet Union never renounced its imperialist designs on Lithuania. The Lithuanian anti-Nazi resistance's faith in the implementation of the principles of the Atlantic Charter vis-à-vis Lithuania in the near term was illusory, unrealistic, which was demonstrated by her representatives' fruitless attempts in 1943 and 1944 to open ties with the West. The official representatives of Western states, the victors in the war, steered clear of such ties, since they had already recognised back in 1942 the incorporation of the Baltic States in the Soviet Union, and greeted their reoccupation (annexation) with silence. By spring of 1944 the national underground had real information that such was the inescapable fate of the Lithuanian state and nation.

¹⁰⁶ Cited from: LYA, doc.f. 17637, inv.1, file 305, p. 59–60.

This (and other) factors led to a strategy of passive resistance by the Lithuanian anti-Nazi underground. Unlike the resistance movements in the West, Lithuanian patriotic forces did not face a single enemy – Nazi Germany – but a second also – the Soviet Union. Taking into consideration that Lithuania was condemned to a Soviet reoccupation, active armed struggle was not a guarantee for regaining statehood and freedom. Quite the opposite, objectively it would have hastened and facilitated the return of the Soviet occupiers. In this the situation of the Lithuanian underground differed from that in Poland, the Czech Republic and other Eastern and Central European countries whose right to statehood was officially recognised by the USSR, and where anti-Nazi resistance (including material and human losses) had a political future and a purpose.

Racism comprised the foundation of Nazi Germany's state policy, and the ethnic groups living in Lithuania were categorised and divided based on racial principles. Although Lithuanians were recognised as people of a lower race than Estonians or Latvians, together with Germans they belonged to the ranks of "first class" citizens in Lithuania. Poles, Russians and Belarussians were second-class citizens, although people belonging to these groups were not singled out for extermination based on racial considerations, rather they were persecuted for tactical political motivations based on real and active as well as potential resistance to the occupiers (it should be noted that even so, Nazi occupational policy towards these groups, Poles for example, was more lenient in Lithuania than in Poland itself). Of all the ethnic groups inhabiting Lithuania, only the Jews (and the small Gypsy community) were condemned to violence and total annihilation (genocide).

The specific policy of the German occupiers in Lithuania raised the position of Lithuanians as the dominant ethnic group above all other nationalities living in Lithuania and provided for a comparatively good "common life" with the Germans, and at the same time encouraged the comparatively greater aid Lithuanians rendered to them (greater collaboration), and less hardship as a result of the occupation.

Initially the consequences of the Nazi occupation of Lithuania were mitigated by the fact that the Nazis planned a *blitzkrieg* against the USSR and were prepared for such a conflict, meaning that in the beginning, in 1941-1942, they did not need the support of occupied nations in the military sense. On the German occupiers' part there was a political purpose in avoiding such aid and cooperation: they did not want to tie their hands or hinder their free movement when it came to deciding the fate of these nations after the war (therefore the Germans turned down an offer by the Provisional Government to organise a Lithuanian military corps for fighting Bolshevism, limited the number of self-defense (police) battalions being set up, giving them only the role of auxiliary police, and originally did not even vigorously demand the carrying out of agricultural obligations, contributions, etc.). The situation began

to change drastically at the end of 1942 and beginning of 1943, when events at the front began to go poorly, and a "total mobilization" was announced, i.e. an entire array of extraordinary measures were put in place with the aim of using the people and material resources of Germany and the occupied countries for the war effort, however, Germany already lacked the power to intensify repressions as it was losing the war, and there was little sense left in doing so.

The situation was softened also by the pragmatic characteristic of Nazi policy in Lithuania (in part this pragmatism was compulsory). They did not seek the massive destruction of inhabitants, as Soviet propaganda emphasised (except, of course, for the Jews), but rather to exploit the human and economic resources of the country to the maximum for satisfying the needs of Germany's war effort and to maintain order and the economic capacity of the country. Lithuania, because of her geographical situation, was a strategically important country behind the front, and the Germans needed Lithuania as a peaceful, functioning country providing comparatively large amounts of food and raw materials for the war industry. Because of that, the Nazis reconciled themselves with many expressions made against them, with passive resistance, unsuccessful military and labour mobilisations and other failures. These stated goals and the massive annihilation of the Lithuanian population, other massive repressions between members of the Lithuanian population, were not reconcilable positions.

In pursuing their interests the Germans endeavoured to adapt themselves to local conditions and to historical features and traditions in the country rather than go the way of increased repression, complication of the existing situation and destabilisation. For example, Kaunas County Gebietskommissar A. Lentzen wrote in the Lithuanian press in 1942: "...If Lithuania as a country liberated by the Germans does not have the ability [does not want, does not agree -R.Z.] to expose all its men worthy of a weapon to the war against our former oppressors, at least everyone and all forces should contribute to the economic war and its successful prosecution." ¹⁰⁷

That for the reasons mentioned the Nazis in Lithuania were not at all interested in extreme repressions and the carrying out of massacres is clearly to be seen in Vilnius County Gebietskommissar H. Wulff's writing of May 28, 1942, written right after the massacres earlier detailed in the area around Dvenčionys to the heads of subdistricts in that county. Wulff wrote "it is in and of itself clear" that "having carried out attempts on the lives of German civilian governmental and Lithuanian public servants, on the military and others, the appropriate

¹⁰⁷ "Atviras žodis II: Rašo Gebietskommissar Lentzen, Kauėn-Land," (Open Word II: Gebietskommissar Lentzen, Kaunas-Land, writes), *Ūkininko patarėjas*, August 7, 1942, p.12.

retribution measures must be introduced immediately." But it was also "clear in and of itself" that once those measures were effected, calm and order "immediately and one-hundred percent," in other words, a return to normal and peaceful life, were necessary. H. Wulff, one of the most brutal officials in the Nazi occupational regime in Lithuania, in carrying out repression operations desired "that it would be done without victims (shootings), arrests at the sites and elsewhere," and insistently recommended avoiding punitive operations similar to the ones at Lentupis (Dvenčionys), because the farmers failed to do their agricultural and forestry work, and neither did the work at state farms make progress. He was to be informed about all "necessary shootings" carried out in cases of extraordinary violations so that he could frighten the population with the appropriate proclamations (posters).¹⁰⁸

Thus, massacres of residents as an extreme form of repression (with the exception of mass murder based on racial considerations and exceptional cases of armed resistance) were used sparingly (in moderation) by the occupiers and unsystematically. On the other hand, separate brutal massacres and their "disclosure", intimidation, threats and scare mongering can be considered a tactic or method of occupational repression policy aimed at breaking any form of disobedience or resistance.

2) Repressions for Sabotage of Military and Labour Force Mobilisation

It has been mentioned earlier that at first the Germans did not need assistance of the occupied nations of Eastern Europe. They had military and political reasons to give no permit to restore the Lithuanian Army and only allowed setting up auxiliary police formations (*Litauische Schutzmannschaft*), i.e. battalions which operated under the supervision of SS and police. The establishment of these formations alone was considered a certain honour and privilege granted to the Lithuanian people. Self-defence (police) battalions were numbered throughout the entire Ostland Reich Commissariat. Lithuania was particularly "honoured" as it was given the right to form the first battalions according to the said numbering (No. 1 - 15). Additional numbers (No. 250 – 265) was issued in 1942.

There was no shortage of volunteers willing to join the battalions at the very beginning. Between 1941 and 1942, around 20 battalions were formed, but later the situation started changing, and the flow of volunteers drained off. All in all, 25 Lithuanian self-defence

¹⁰⁸ LCVA, doc.f.R-500, inv.1, file2, p.569-570.

(police) battalions were formed in Lithuania where the total number of 12 – 13 thousand men served, thus, the number of battalions allowed by the occupant had not been exhausted.

Criminal, i.e. the most painful, aspect of battalions' activity was their partaking in the Holocaust operations: shooting people, securing places of massacres, driving people to them, fighting against the Soviet partisans (also by applying criminal measures), etc. They were used against the interest of the Lithuanian people, too (by taking part in manhunt operations, exaction of tributes and obligations, etc.). According to the inconclusive research by historian A. Bubnys, approximately ten battalions took part in the Holocaust in one or another form¹⁰⁹.

The loss suffered by the battalion soldiers themselves (in fighting against partisans and the Red Army on the front) was not big. By 1 March 1944, 451 soldiers were killed, including 8 officers.

In May 1942, Lithuanian men born between 1919 and 1922 were called up to the so-called transport service to fulfil their duty to labour for the Wehrmacht. They should have been used as civil carriers. 7 thousand men¹¹⁰ should have been employed in the service which had to be composed on a voluntary basis and partly by applying repressive or police measures (as mentioned earlier, the Communist element had a significant presence among the military drivers). A spontaneous demonstration of 1.5 thousand people took place in Marijampolė when men were recruited to this service. The German and Lithuanian police succeeded in appeasing the wild crowd without use of force. This fact adequately defined the Nazi policy in the occupied Lithuania, i.e. no force or repression in suppressing the incident in Marijampolė. The local commandant, as he remarked himself, was “aware of political consequences of a single shot in this non-enemy territory”, thus, acted reservedly and addressed the crowd of the demonstrators warning that such behaviour should not be interpreted as a manifestation of weakness of the Germans¹¹¹.

In fact, there had been no larger repressions in Lithuania in response to avoidance of military or labour force mobilisation until the beginning of 1943. There were volunteers enough in Lithuania which was little affected by the war. The situation started changing at the beginning of 1943 when the “total mobilisation” was announced as a result of the absolute

¹⁰⁹ *Lietuvos žydų tragedija* (Tragedy of the Lithuanian Jews): materials of the conference to commemorate the Holocaust, 19 September 2001, Vilnius, 2001, p. 50.

¹¹⁰ *Nacionalistų talka hitlerininkams* (Nationalists Aid to Hitlerites), Vilnius, 1970, p.

¹¹¹ *Lietuvos liaudis Didžiąjame Tėvynės kare* (Lithuanian People in the Great Patriotic War), p. 61.

German failure to form a Lithuanian SS legion in February. This failure was a big blow to German politics, propaganda, prestige (ambitions), and it predetermined a more stringent occupation policy, considering that the nationalist SS formations were successfully set up in Latvia and Estonia (15th and 19th in Latvia and 20th Waffen SS division in Estonia). When the “total mobilisation” was called up, the nationalist underground assessed setting up an SS legion as the start of massive mobilisation of Lithuanian youth, their condemnation to meaningless fights and death for the German interests on the Eastern Front, and, thus, unanimously resisted this development.

The Germans viewed the right to form an SS legion as a great honour to Lithuanians and they were also positive in the success of its establishment. When the establishment failed, German officials were very much surprised and insulted. The danger of wholesale Nazi repressions became imminent in Lithuania, but the officials of the occupying regime differed on the kinds and scope of repressive measures.

Supporters of strict repression (Ostland SS and Police Chief F. Jeckeln and others) made proposals on evacuation (sending to Germany as labour) of the entire village and rural district population, deployment of a German police brigade in Lithuania for some time, which should filter forests and catch men who were hiding there, gunning down of several hundreds in order to frighten and discipline the rest, and delivering those in hiding to the mobilisation commissions by force (which would have very much resembled the Soviet post-war repressions). However, F. Jeckeln had no forces at his disposal, i.e. “neither a police regiment, nor a battalion”, to carry out these massive repressions as his forces were regularly weakened by fights against the Soviet partisans in North Russia and Belarus¹¹².

The key provisions of the German repression policy were formulated in the letter of 21 March 1943 by Ostland Reich Commissar H. Lohse to Commissar General of Lithuania A. Renteln. The letter blamed Lithuanian intelligentsia for ruining the formation of an SS legion; the Lithuanian people reportedly were “under the influence of certain politicised groups”; demagogic statements were made about “enormous” harm to the interest of Lithuania itself and consolidation of the efforts of all European peoples combating bolshevism; allegedly, it “is impossible to stand the situation where the impact of groups delinquent to the interest of

¹¹² Testimony by E. Just signed in 1946 at KGB, *Laisvės kovų archyvas* (Archives of Freedom Fighters), vol. 9, Kaunas, 1993, p.p.149–150.

Lithuanian people, irresponsible and unpunished, continue to harm the healthy part of the nation". These accusations were threatening.

Nazi Commissar General of Lithuania A. Renteln was obliged to undertake the following measures:

1. Root out negative "sources, particularly those within the system of education, which disguise real attitude of the Lithuanian people".

2. Abstain from implementation of re-privatisation in the occupied territories announced by the Reich minister on 18 February 1943 until the existing conditions remain unchanged. Exceptions to the rule were possible if the stance of persons could prove to the regime their willingness to join the fight against bolshevism.

3. Under the existing circumstances, attempts to expand self-governance in the General Region of Lithuania should have been considered unbiased and Lithuanian autonomy should have been limited where possible as soon as a negative position towards military issues was revealed.

4. Take a particular care of the families of persons who during the call-ups (mobilisations) were obliged to join the battle in civil and military fields. (The latter request by H. Lohse was formulated as a special task to the German civil authority in Lithuania).

H. Lohse regretted that he was forced to take over such measures and expressed his hope that the "healthy" part of Lithuanian people would not resign to the influence of "short-sighted" and egoist elements, and would follow the "good" example of Estonians and Latvians and give him a possibility of changing these decisions¹¹³.

Repressive measures recommended by H. Lohse to A. Renteln were comparatively mild, stricter measures were recommended (and applied) only against the Lithuanian intelligentsia, i.e. in the field of cultural life. Measures of this kind were most hurtful to the interests of not only Lithuanian people and society at large, but also the German occupant, considering that the latter had least interfered into cultural sector so far.

On 17 March 1943, Commissar General of Lithuania A. Renteln made an official statement where he refused to establish an SS Lithuanian legion by stating that "the registration in the future will be carried out only for labour in the army and military economy" and talked about the execution of the following punitive measures:

¹¹³ Library of the Lithuanian History Institute: archival records of Br. Nemickas' document fond.

“1) University with all its departments shall soon be closed. A special representative shall be appointed to take care of the matters of Lithuanian education.

2) Only those individuals who personally or whose families contribute to the fight against bolshevism shall be able to take part in re-privatisation.

3) Those who try to escape a labour duty or help others to escape this duty shall be subject to the severest punishment”¹¹⁴.

The comparison of the repressive measures recommended by H. Lohse and those announced by A. Renteln leads to conclusion that they grew even milder. A. Renteln’s official statement makes no reference to the restriction of Lithuanian “self-governance”. The Germans seemed to have had no courage to touch the sensitive issue for Lithuanians, i.e. their sovereignty. In practice, the restrictions related to the re-privatisation process had no real significance.

What repressions were realised against the boycott to set up an SS legion? On 16-17 March 1943, 46 more prominent representatives of the Lithuanian society, culture, and intelligentsia of different professions were arrested and transported to the Stutthof Concentration Camp from Kaunas, Vilnius, Marijampolė, Šiauliai. The Universities of Kaunas and Vilnius were closed, and so were several other establishments of higher education, institutions of art and science (Lithuanian Academy of Science, Art and Music Academies, Kaunas Conservatoire, Vilnius Pedagogical University, College of Commerce in Šiauliai etc.). The closure of these establishments brought along damage to their inventory, assets, and values of art and science accumulated there.

There were also four counsellors (Pr. Meškauskas-Germantas, M. Mackevičius, S. Puodžius, J. Narakas), five professors, four directors of gymnasiums, three advocates, two priests, teachers, journalists, etc. among the deportees to Stutthof. All of them were arrested without any concrete accusations; they were not interrogated and imprisoned without trial¹¹⁵. The composition of deportees can lead to the conclusion that people who collaborated with the Germans suffered more rather than those who resisted. There were only few persons who were directly involved in the anti-Nazi activities among them. In practice, all the deportees were imprisoned in the Stutthof Concentration Camp and their fate depended on further developments in Lithuania as well as success of the Nazi policy of occupation. Later, German Security Police

¹¹⁴ *Ateitis* (Future), 17 March 1943.

¹¹⁵ A. Bubnys, introduction of the book. “*Pragaro vartai – Štuthofas*” (“Gates of the Hell – Stutthof”), Vilnius, 1998, p.13.

and SD Chief in Lithuania K. Jager made a standard accusation against them all. “They led the Lithuanian resistance movement and, in particular, instigated Lithuanian people against the mobilisation called-up by the Reich Commissar”¹¹⁶.

The repressions against Lithuanian intelligentsia continued. In April 1943, 16 anti-Nazi underground press publishers, disseminators and supporters were arrested in Kaunas and Vilnius and sent to Stutthof.

Nine persons out of 46 deportees died by May 1943 (and several other persons by 1945 when the Stutthof Concentration Camp was liquidated). On 31 May 1943, when the situation in Lithuania improved, the other persons from this group were announced “prisoners of honour” and their living standards were improved as well: they were exempted from compulsory labour and did not have to wear the prisoner’s number (only the yellow band). However, the situation in Lithuania was not good enough until the end of the occupation to let the “prisoners of honour” free.

Two out of the group of 16 deportees died, the remaining but one were set free at the beginning of March 1944.

In summer and autumn 1943, about 250 Lithuanians found themselves in Stutthof for “re-education” apart from the “prisoners of honour” (in general, Stutthof was a concentration camp of “re-education” rather than that of people extermination). At the beginning of January 1944, 143 Lithuanian workers (Lithuanian, several Poles and Russians) were brought there and 536 persons, including 135 women, followed at the beginning of July¹¹⁷. (All in all, more than one thousand Lithuanians could have been imprisoned in concentration camps in Germany during the Nazi occupation).

In spring 1943, in order to intensify the impression of applied repressions, the Germans disseminated threatening rumours about the ready-made lists of the representatives of intelligentsia doomed to physical extermination. As the measure of pressure, they employed the sensitive issue for Lithuanians, i.e. national dependency of Vilnius Region, promised to pay more attention to the Polish interests in Eastern Lithuania, intensified the colonisation processes, etc.

In general, the repressive policy of the occupant, as mentioned earlier, had been reinforced since spring 1943. Latvian, Estonian, and Ukrainian police battalions were sent to

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.p.13–14.

implement different political tasks of the occupation policy. With the failure to establish an SS legion in Lithuania and with the successful formation of SS military units in Latvia and Estonia, which were actively fighting and shedding blood on the Eastern Front, forced participation of Lithuania in the warfare on the German side started essentially differ from the forms of partaking of these neighbouring nations. Lithuania had no national units fighting on the Eastern Front, therefore, its people were deported as labour to Germany even to a larger extent. Lithuania was more intensively exploited economically, particularly in the agricultural sector, etc. This, however, predetermined preservation of the Lithuanian youth and the living potential of the nation in general from fighting and meaningless death on the German – USSR war fronts. The following data can be presented to compare different number of victims: 50 – 60 thousand Latvians perished within the SS Army alone.

Mentioned here should be the fact that bigger or severer repressions in Lithuania were escaped in spring 1943 by concessions to the occupant. On 5 April 1943, the so-called conference of all Lithuania representatives was held in Kaunas (it was attended by approximately 90 more prominent representatives of the society elected throughout the entire Lithuania) and it made the statement on “behalf of Lithuania” to contribute to the fight against bolshevism. It also supported the formation of Lithuanian units on a voluntary basis (not within the subordination of the SS troops) and mobilisation of labour for “the military matter”. The resolutions of the conference were severely criticised by the nationalistic underground (it was called the “Seimas of the occupant” and the second “People’s Seimas” with condemnation and sneer as well as parallels drawn with the LSSR Seimas of 1940, etc.). Germans themselves viewed the conference as an event “significantly reducing tension” between the Germans and the Lithuanians at least for the fact that it formally demonstrated the will of Lithuanian people to take part in fighting against bolshevism, but hopes were little satisfied¹¹⁸.

Nevertheless, in view of the occupant, the conference resolutions gave legal and moral grounds to call up mobilisation in Lithuania.

On 6 April 1943, referring to the conference resolutions, A. Renteln and the First Counsellor General of Lithuania, P. Kubiliūnas, announced decrees calling for the registration of Lithuanian men born between 1919 and 1924 as well as Lithuanian Army officers. Later, on 6 June, registration was announced for the men born between 1912 and 1918 as well as in 1925.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.p. 28–29, 33.

Registration should have been carried out by the Lithuanian mobilisation commissions rather than the German ones (like at the time of efforts to set up a Lithuanian SS legion), and mobilisation tasks and responsibility for their fulfilment were entrusted to the Lithuanian self-governance administration. The Germans were ready to forget the failure of setting up Lithuanian SS battalions. As Commissar of Panevėžys District W. Neum noted, they proved that Lithuania was not treated as an occupied country, and that despite provocations of the “irresponsible small clique” a decent Lithuanian once again extended a “friendly hand”¹¹⁹.

From May to August 1943, five Lithuanian construction (engineering) (*Litauische Bauabteilung*) battalions were formed and sent to the German North Front for fortification works. These battalions as well as the Lithuanians who were mobilised to different other services of “military assistance” (air-defence, etc.) were to become far from adequate replacement of an SS legion and “compensation” for the failed mobilisations and insulted German ambitions.

Noted here should be the fact that concessions made to the Germans in the field of military mobilisation were predetermined not only by danger of real or potential repressions of the occupant but also by the attempts of Lithuanian self-governance and a part of the society to have national formations set up on a compromise basis as an armed force and the source of the future Lithuanian Army. The boycott of setting up an SS legion was followed by the fear of threat that the Germans could oppose the establishment of Lithuanian military formations and try to mobilise Lithuanians directly in their own military and police units, as it was done, for instance, in the occupied territory of Poland.

Nevertheless, some success of these mobilisations in Lithuania was predetermined mostly by increasing repressive operations of the occupant and the Lithuanian self-governance administration. Those who were not registered were threatened with harsh penalties (imprisonment, hard labour prisons, and forced labour camps), seizure of farming and other property. The military that refused to register were subject to big pecuniary penalties, arrests, etc.

In May 1943, punitive and repressive measures were supplemented with planned wholesale application of the principles of collective responsibility and collective punishments, i.e. hostage taking and other measures when parents, other members of the family, and people who helped those in hiding had to be liable (or suffer) instead of those who failed to appear at the commissions.

¹¹⁸ *Nacionalistų talka hitlerininkams* (Nationalists Aid to Hitlerites), p.111.

The governors of some counties (it is still unclear whether of them all) with “German – Lithuanian” pedantry in detail regulated the procedure of application of these repressive measures. For instance, in his letter to the police chief of the county of 5 May 1943, Governor of Tauragė County Vl. Mylimas indicated that if “a conscript is not at home, his father should be seized, if his father is not there, his mother should be taken instead, in the absence of mother, other closest relative should be taken and kept in the place of confinement until the conscript himself appears at the police. In the event the conscript fails to deliver himself within a week, the detainee should be delivered instead to Tauragė confinement place for further instructions”¹²⁰.

Between 8 and 12 May 1943, a mixed squad of 26 men of German gendarmerie and Lithuanian police operated in Gaurė Rural District of Tauragė County and with the help of the local police seized 1 person in hiding and 7 parents of men in hiding: 5 fathers and 2 mothers. However, none of the conscripts in hiding whose one of the parents had been seized turned up at the commissions; therefore, the detainees were brought to Tauragės confinement place. The idea to continue arresting people was abandoned as there was no room to keep detainees in the confinement place of the Rural District. Thus, the police search of those in hiding “resulted in no other consequences”.

Operational motorised squads of the German gendarmerie and Lithuanian police, referred to as “special teams”, performed repressive action of this kind in many parts of Lithuania. Early morning of 26 May 1943, the workers district of Đančiai in Kaunas was surrounded in search for unemployed men born between 1919 and 1924. 150 people were caught all in all. The operation was carried out by the German gendarmes only. In a few days the raid was repeated.

In May Latvian police units carried out raids in Rokiškis County (and most likely in other counties, too) hunting for those who had not turned up at the commissions. On 22 May, they surrounded Vaineikiai Village in Kamajai Rural District and opened fire at people running away. Two men were gunned down. The sources of the Lithuanian anti-Nazi underground recorded the case when a mother of two sons who refused to register was arrested in Kaišiadorys and was brought to the prison in Vilnius. She was severely beaten and returned disabled, but she was released, though her sons had not registered.

¹¹⁹ *Panevėžio apygardos balsas* (Voice of Panevėžys District), 24 April 1943.

Collective responsibility was applied and punishments were carried out in other ways, too. Following the order by A. Lentzen, Gebietskommissar of Kaunas District, flats were taken away from parents and relatives of youngsters in Kaunas. People had to leave their flats within 48 hours and those who refused were evicted by force¹²¹.

Arrests were made throughout the entire Lithuania of relatively prominent persons who were accused of sabotage. Significantly many people were arrested in Kėdainiai, Marijampolė and other places. Such repressive action with involvement of the Lithuanian police and other municipal officials highly annoyed the society and was severely criticised by anti-Nazi underground press. The latter emphasised unlawfulness of mobilisations announced, violation of principal international legal and moral norms, particularly the fact that the local self-governance administration dared to threaten with collective responsibility and punishments. The underground "*Nepriklausoma Lietuva*" ("Independent Lithuania") of 15 May 1943 contained a severe article – warning to P. Kubiliūnas, First Counsellor General of Lithuania. In view of the newspaper, that "was enough, Mr Kubiliūnas". The paper stated that the latter "dared" to undertake "Bolshevik" measures and, thus, was warned "for the last time". According to the paper, officials of Lithuanian self-governance raised the "wave" of indignation, and the Bolshevik repressive measures, i.e. collective punishments against the Lithuanians, hostage taking instead of those who failed to turn up at the commissions etc. were stopped. Only the conscripts were not lucky to escape raids, arrests, forced deportation to military units and labour as they were subject to individual punishments considering concrete "guilt-based" evidence. Collective responsibility and punishments were employed only against Poles in Eastern Lithuania where the members of the family suffered repressions instead of those in hiding from deportation to Germany as labour (however, military mobilisation did not affect the Poles substantially).

In general, the Germans were forced to initiate repressions and execute them themselves. In his circular note of 1 June 1943, Gebietskommissar of Īiauliai District H. Gewecke authorised district governors and lower ranking Lithuanian self-governance officials "to take care of all the measures" ensuring that registration of men and check-ups were carried out and, as it was vividly described in the circular note, had "the last man in the worst rural district registered". Those who failed to turn up for the check-up had to be immediately arrested and

¹²⁰ LCVA, doc.f. R-1476, inv.1, file 139, p. 99.

detained in the county prisons. All the family members of men in hiding and fugitives had to be arrested except for patients and elderly and at least one member of the family had to be left for works on the farm. H. Gewecke specified the disseminated circular note on 3 June by appealing it moderately. Families with one son serving in the army, self-defence units or German offices should not be repressed.

In spring and the beginning of summer 1943, the manhunt operation of 4 June in Kazlų Rūda (Marijampolė County) was probably the largest in Lithuanian province. According to the data of the Lithuanian underground, it was carried out by several hundred executioners, including German gendarmerie and security police, soldiers of Latvian and Estonian police battalions, and Lithuanian policemen. Even high-ranking German officials took part in the operation, SS and Police Chief of Lithuania Maj. Gen. L. Wysocki, Kaunas District Gebietskommissar A. Lentzen etc. among them. The executioners arrived by train and cars at night and surrounded the town by the dawn. They placed machine-guns at the crossings of several roads (streets) and sent a car with a loudspeaker to the town to wake up its population. Then each of the houses was searched in an effort to find men born between 1919 and 1924 who had not been registered and had no certificates of employment; food and things of some value were plundered. The majority of captured men were driven into the barracks and kept there until the entire town was searched. After the check-up of the detainees, 31 men were selected and the rest were released. Some of the selected were beaten, and as soon as the train arrived, all of them were deported to Germany. The following day announcements appeared in Kaunas and other places threatening with similar raids in the entire country¹²².

Details in the underground sources lead to conclusion that the punitive expedition in Kazlų Rūda was a “demonstration” and warning, considering that much noise was made, but there were few human victims and even detained persons in the end. These operations aimed to make Lithuanian men register and turn up at the mobilisation commissions. (The Germans did not aim at carrying out real punitive operations performed in Belarus and Russia due to the reasons of general character mentioned above. They did not have required forces either).

In spring 1943 and later, a contradictory and ambiguous role of the Lithuanian self-governance administration and police, particularly its lower ranks, became particularly clear. On the one hand, these authorities more actively or passively tried to perform mobilisation which, in

¹²¹ K. Rukšėnas, *Į vergovę* (Towards Slavery), p.p. 62–63.

their point of view, had to become extremely “vital” for the future of Lithuania. On the other hand, faced with public resistance, they acted without determination or even sabotaged execution of repressive measures. Even the sources of the Soviet underground in Lithuania contain a big number of documents of this kind.

M. Dumauskas (Head of the Operational Group of the LCP (b) CC and most senior ranking Chief of the Soviet underground in Lithuania) referred to the testimonies by Soviet partisans in his letter of 15 July 1943 to A. Sniečkus who was in Moscow and described the following generalised picture of raids against those in hiding from mobilisation and the role of Lithuanian policemen in the raids:

“The majority goes into hiding from mobilisation. When the German gendarmes leave for the search of those in hiding, they take Lithuanian policemen with them. The Lithuanian policemen will knock on the door and shout: “Run away through the window”. The German will ask: “What have you said?”. The Lithuanian will answer: “I ordered them to open the door immediately”. There were also facts about policemen who would inform about the forthcoming manhunt in advance”¹²³.

Lithuanian police turned to be unreliable in executing repressive measures against its own countrymen (the other thing was partaking in repressions against the Soviet underground activists, Soviet prisoners of war, Lithuanian residents of other nationality, e.g. the Poles). There were cases in 1943 of disarmament and even isolation of Lithuanian police during the operations of a larger scale.

Noted here should be the fact that between April and July 1943 the German occupation policy was characterised not only with enhanced repression, but also with active manifestations of propaganda aimed to appease the impression of large-scale terror actions. The German occupying government was strengthened in Lithuania, and German officials with the command of the Lithuanian language appeared (they were referred to as “Prussians” by the Lithuanians). The most important task of the latter was to “promote mobilisation”, *in loco* find out who did not register and why, inspect the farms of such persons, monitor the fulfilment of obligations in agriculture, etc.¹²⁴ The 2nd anniversary of 1941 Soviet deportations and German “liberation” was

¹²² LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 263, p. 69; *ibid.*, Collection of Documents No. 167, p. 21.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, doc.f. 1, inv. 1, file 436, p. 6.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, Collection of Documents No. 167, p.p. 11–12.

widely celebrated. Efforts were made to achieve a propaganda impact on the Lithuanian society and set it favourably towards the Germans.

The tension that mounted as a result of registration and mobilisation was appeased by friction among different services of the occupant. German officials in charge of economy (e.g. so-called “trustees” in companies) were interested in normal operation, thus, the majority of them persistently defended people who worked under their supervision. Buyout and bribes became an efficient measure of self-defence against mobilisation.

The repressions had been enhancing since the end of July 1943. On 18 July, upon his arrival in Kaunas, F. Sauckel required a significant increase in export of labour force from Lithuania to Germany and strict control over engaging Lithuanian population in work to satisfy the German needs. He demanded to mobilise 10 per cent of the Lithuanian population (270 – 280 thousand people) as labour. The civil government of the occupant started implementation of his orders by increasingly tightening mobilisation measures. In the middle of August it launched check-ups of men born between 1919 and 1924, 1912 and 1918 and in 1925 who were exempted from mobilisation and significantly limited categories of armed workers even without excluding physically handicapped persons etc. Following F. Sauckel’s visit, registration of women born between 1914 and 1922 for labour in Germany started. The German propaganda began announcing that the place of the Lithuanian woman was in the Reich industry along with the German woman. Works in the Reich first and foremost threatened unmarried girls born between 1919 and 1922. Therefore, the number of marriages in Lithuania increased by several times, and queues appeared at the town metrication offices. Although 12,394 women and girls were registered in summer 1943, only 3,256 were employed¹²⁵.

According to the sources of the anti-Nazi underground, the summer 1943 saw efforts by the Germans to strengthen their repressive bodies within the police for manhunt in Lithuania, i.e. to send in several Estonian and Latvian battalions. In July rumours were about (purposefully disseminated) in Lithuania that a regiment of the SS troops would come from Holland, however, it had not appeared in Lithuania. SS and Police Chief of Lithuania Maj. Gen. L. Wysocki was sent out from Lithuania to the East (and H. Harm from Ukraine came to replace him).

At the beginning of August 1943, a manhunt started in great many places of Lithuania. The manhunt was carried out in the streets, marketplaces, cinemas, etc. of Kaunas City. Means

of transport, including trains, steamboats, and lorries, underwent thorough check-ups. German, Estonian, and Latvian police took part in the raids, but the tactics of these executioners differed. The Germans arrested persons of mobilisation age, plundered property of some value, the Estonians tried to “overlook” many things, and the Lithuanians even attempted to help those who were hunted. Many residents of Kaunas left for the province or were in hiding in the city.

Manhunt was also carried out in Panevėžys. On 2 August, Panevėžys marketplace was surrounded, people ran away, and only several women farmers were arrested. 30 people were caught in both the cinemas on the following day, 20 were released, 10 were arrested. On 4 August, the swimming place was surrounded in Skaistakalnis, the holidaymakers ran away, and only 4 persons were arrested.

The manhunt and massive flee from jobs would disrupt operation of enterprises and offices, even nurses at the German military hospital in Kaunas would return to work only after they had been persuaded that mobilisation would not touch them. The number of workers in enterprises dropped by 30-40 per cent and by 80 per cent in those where younger staff prevailed.¹²⁶ The German military authority interfered in making sure that its interests were protected when mobilisation was carried out.

Manhunt operations spread from towns to the province, and they were carried out in Marijampolė, Alytus, Šeduva, Kuršėnai, etc. Persons caught were locked up in emptying camps of prisoners of war (some young men who tried to escape mobilisation were equalled to partisans). In other places, they were terrorised in different ways, poorly fed to make them sign letters on joining the organisation at their free will (*Freiwillige*).

The hunt between 1 and 12 August 1943 resulted in the arrest of 451 young men of conscription age. In July 1943, 468 men born between 1918 and 1919 and trying to escape mobilisation were imprisoned in Vilnius hard labour prison¹²⁷.

As a result of massive avoidance of mobilisation, wholesale arrests (analogous to the repressions carried out in March 1943) were pending of more prominent public figures, representatives of intelligentsia, and particularly military officers.

¹²⁵ Ibid., inv. 58, Collection of Documents No. 167, p. 39; A. Bubnys, *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva* (Lithuania Occupied by the Germans), p. 399.

¹²⁶ A. Bubnys, *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva* (Lithuania Occupied by the Germans), p. 400.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 399.

Lithuanian anti-Nazi press reminded the Germans about inefficiency of strengthening repressions and possible alternative of armed resistance to passive resistance. For example, one of the most influential underground newspapers “*Laisvės kovotojas*” (“Freedom Fighter”) wrote “...we do not believe that ... terror could be employed at a far-reaching scale. If it were, our passive resistance would turn into active and even very dangerous not only for the pheasants of the occupying government, but also threaten army-related issues”. The newspaper continued with a rhetoric question on whether, indeed, efforts were made in Lithuania to have “the situation like in Russia with partisan and sabotage squads”¹²⁸.

Since August 1943, the situation, particularly that in Eastern Lithuania, had been complicated by strengthening activity of the Soviet military underground and German response measures, i.e. incineration of villages, deportation of their people to Germany as labour, and other repressions. The situation in August 1943 was very tense and the fear of massive repressions and Brown terror was in the air. However, the Germans were forced to weaken their deployed forces as a result of constantly deteriorating situation on the fronts. Ukrainian and Latvian battalions were sent away from Lithuania, some officers of the occupying regime and German repatriates were sent to the front. At the end of August 1943, the Deputy of A. Rozenberg, Dr. A. Meyer, came to Kaunas and ordered the civil government to carefully observe the most rational exploitation of the country’s economic capacity and treat the population in a more merciful manner, but conspiratorial activity had to be monitored and actively fought against.

However, the failures of military and labour force mobilisation and the increased diverse terrorist activity of the Red partisans preconditioned launch of the punitive and manhunt operation “Sommer” on 23 August 1943 by the Germans in Eastern Lithuania, of the scope never seen before. It involved units of German gendarmerie, Latvian and Estonian battalions, i.e. approximately 5 thousand executioners in total who were led by Maj. Gen. A. Harm and Gebietskommissar of Vilnius District H. Wulff. The operation started in Āvenčionys and Svyriai Counties. Adučiškis, Vydžiai, Tverečius, Melagėnai, Dūkštas, Švenčionėliai, Lentupis and other environs in Švenčionys District came under particularly severe devastation. The inhabited areas were surrounded at night and armed guards were placed along the roads and paths. At the dawn, loudspeakers urged people to gather in one place, i.e. the marketplace, of the towns. Residential

¹²⁸ *Laisvės kovotojas* (Freedom Fighter), 15 August 1943.

houses were searched and personal property was looted. Health check-up commissions were operating in places where people were concentrated, and practically released nobody suited for any job. Men and women between 15 and 45 years of age were particularly “hunted”. The executions were accompanied with noise and shooting by the executioners, cry and moan of the arrested. There were injured and gunned-down, too. As the sources of the anti-Nazi underground noted, favourable attitude of Estonians towards Lithuanian population which mitigated executions, as the former presumed that the Lithuanian battalions in Estonia were not trying to hunt and harm local population either (however there were no Lithuanian self-defence (police) battalions in Estonia). Estonians let the arrested people run away. Approximately 60 persons fled in Āvenčionys alone within one night. The arrested were driven to the railway stations, from where they were transported to different directions. According to the data of the underground, more than 2 thousand persons were deported from Švenčionys County.

The wave of manhunt in Āvenčionys spread towards Vilnius and the surroundings of Pabradė, Nemenčinė, Riešė, Lentvaris, Trakai, Valkininkai, Varėna, Perloja, Žiežmariai, and Kaišiadorys were devastated. One of the underground sources reported on how the punitive expedition developed further: “the phones were switched off everywhere they arrived, the Lithuanian police were arrested, disarmed and isolated for the whole period of the operation. Participants of the operation who travelled to Valkininkai suffered a train catastrophe on the route Vilnius – Valkininkai. When they finally reached the place, there were almost no persons to hunt. All the offices were emptied. Outside Varėna the expedition was arranged into the battle order, i.e. 50 metres in between the soldiers. Perloja people met them approaching from the forest side with machine-gun fire targeted at the flank (this fact is highly doubted). As soon as three battalions came, the participants of the expedition searched the forest through, but found nobody.

By the end of this violence demonstration, the expedition grew a little milder. The hunters followed formal instructions in Trakai and took only those who worked nowhere. In total, about 70 persons were deported from Trakai.

The situation in Žiežmariai was totally different. Hunters raged even the church with their caps on and pushed people out of the confessionals”¹²⁹.

¹²⁹ *Žmonių gaudymai ir turto grobimai* (Manhunt and Looting of Property), 1943, 22 September, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, Collection of Documents No. 167, p.162.

According to the same source, a part of the punitive expedition stayed in Vilnius for several days and took part in the liquidation of Vilnius Ghetto with the Germans “acting” inside the Ghetto. Within 3 days approximately 10 thousands Jews were deported to the direction of Daugpils.

Although the operation “Sommer” could be referred to as the largest punitive and manhunt operation in scale, as mentioned earlier, the Lithuanian underground sources emphasised those mayhem acts (though there was no particular violence or human victims) most probably considering that Lithuanian populated areas of Eastern Lithuania were raged, and that manhunt and executioners’ violence stepped over the former “demarcation” line. The German repressive policy in Eastern Lithuania started acquiring more evident anti-Lithuanian characteristics (up to that moment repressions here were mostly carried out against the Poles). What did the “Sommer” campaign give to the Germans? Within two weeks 1815 men, 1061 women and 155 children were sent to Germany¹³⁰.

The punitive expedition brought about harsh socio-economic consequences. It left incinerated, raged villages and non-harvested fields behind in Eastern Lithuania. Left without their owners, run-away livestock herds wandered in Dvenčionys environs. They would be caught and driven to “Maistas” factories and crops from the emptied farmsteads were brought to the warehouses of “Lietūkis”. In his letter of 14 September 1943 to the Governor of Trakai County, the Governor of Kaišiadorys Rural District noted that people were so frightened that they could not feel at ease any longer; they would leave their places of residence and work; as soon as the most innocent rumour reached them and rushed to hide “without any knowledge where they are running”. The fulfilment of obligations to deliver agricultural products dropped, sowing of winter crop was carried out poorly, and farmers were afraid to come to Kaišiadorys. According to the Governor, the manhunt did not achieve its goal, since only those who worked had been caught. The unemployed and profiteers had not been caught, because they did nothing and had sufficient time to hide or run away. If no peace were returned to people, the entire life would be ruined and famine would come¹³¹.

The manhunt in Tietmariai church overstepped the mark. During the High Mass on 10 September 1943, armed gendarmes surrounded the church, broke in with arms, and started pushing people towards the churchyard. Approximately 20 younger men and women were

¹³⁰ K. Rukšėnas, *Į vergovę* (Towards Slavery), p. 83.

transported to Kaišiadorys and were locked up in the premises of the primary school. The men were taken from this place to Vilnius in a lorry and the women were driven to the railway station and transported to Germany¹³².

The incident in Tietmariai (the incursion of armed executioners into the church during the mass) stood out with its brutality. There were more facts about manhunts during religious holidays making use of people's gathering. On 19 August 1943, two lorries brought the Lithuanian police, 10 – 15 Estonian soldiers, and 5 – 8 German gendarmes to Krekenava Town of Panevėžys County during the Assumption Feast when they launched the hunt and caught 3 men. (The following day, people were hunted in Ramygala. One man was caught and another one was severely injured. The same hunters were also active in Naujamiestis Rural District. In general, few people were caught. Although 3 big villages were surrounded during the hunt in these rural districts, not a single person was caught as all the men and women of mobilisation age hid.. The executioners found only elderly and small children. By 29 August 9 men had been caught in Krekenava and taken to Panevėžys)¹³³.

At the beginning of August 1944, the Germans came in several lorries during the feast in Šilalė of Tauragė County and caught young people whom they met in the town. Later, the churchyard was surrounded. People who came there for the mass started panicking, and a nine-year old was shot dead. The Germans caught 20 men and took them away¹³⁴.

Lithuanian Counsellor General appealed to Commissar General of Lithuania A. Renteln at the start of September 1943 and requested to stop the punitive “Sommer” expedition and oblige Lithuanian self-governance to take care of mobilisations and fulfilment of obligations. During the consultations, the Germans demanded 60 thousand Lithuanian people as labour in Germany, though the Counsellor General offered only 20 thousand. A compromise was reached. The Germans supported it and Lithuanian self-governance committed by 7 November 1943 to mobilise 30 thousand people as labour to Germany. Having reached the agreement, the Germans

¹³¹ LCVA, doc.f.R-500, inv.1, file 25, p. 319.

¹³² S. Kiškis, *Aš padarysiu jus žvejais* (I Will Turn You into Fishermen of People), Kaišiadorys, 1944, p.p.36–37.

¹³³ Manuscript of the editorial office of the “*I laisvė*” (Towards Freedom, underground newspaper) and other information materials, LYA, doc. f. 3377, inv. 58, file 263, p. 101.

¹³⁴ R. Zizas, *Šilalės kraštas nacių Vokietijos okupacijos metais* (1941–1944) (Šilalė Region During the German Occupation, 1941 – 1944), *Šilalės kraštas* (Šilalė Region), vol.3: *Nacizmo ir bolševizmo laikotarpis, 1940–1953* (Period of Nazism and Bolshevism, 1940–1953), Vilnius, 2001, p.100.

stopped their punitive operation on 10 September, by declaring their position to continue “intolerance of the Eastern part of Lithuania as the nest of banditism”¹³⁵.

The tension in Lithuania was released when the German civil and Lithuanian self-governance administrations (A. Renteln and P. Kubiliūnas) reached an agreement concerning the mobilisation and other issues at the beginning of August 1943. The Germans committed to abstain from interference into the issues of mobilisation at least until the beginning of November, and all those who had not registered and had been hiding could return to their places of work.

What were the results of military and labour force mobilisations announced by the occupant and its repressive policy from March 1943 (when the idea of establishing an SS legion was abandoned) to the beginning of September? The Germans evaluated them as “unsatisfactory in all respects”, and, according to their calculations, approximately 50 thousand of men of conscription age born between 1919 and 1924 and almost the same number of those born between 1912 and 1918 failed to turn up¹³⁶.

Indeed, the results of military mobilisations were catastrophically scarce. The Germans and Lithuanian self-governance were challenged with big problems in supplying the Wehrmacht with Lithuanian construction units of 3 – 4 thousand men out of 100 thousand Lithuanian men reserve, the majority of whom undoubtedly suited for military service. This evidently showed some kind of anti-German moods in Lithuania and approach towards the German warfare. On the other hand, this also witnessed about a relevant (limited) scope of German repressions and the nature of their “efficiency”.

The agreement between A. Renteln and P. Kubiliūnas at the beginning of September 1943 could be considered as a new stage in carrying out military and labour force mobilisations. A. Renteln issued orders to the Lithuanian administration enterprises and offices whose employees’ mobilisation was not compulsory and who had to be exempted from mobilisation as they possessed certificates of indispensability (UK). This made it more difficult for the Lithuanian self-governance administration to carry out its mobilisation commitments.

In the middle of October 1943, letters were sent to the county governors directing them to mobilise people aged 16 to 50 and solve all problems and disputes *in loco*.

Soon after Lithuanian police manhunt and selection operations were launched throughout Lithuania. Some of the counties (Kėdainiai, Ukmergė, etc.) were engaged in fulfilling

¹³⁵ *Lietuvos liaudis Didžiąjame Tėvynės kare* (Lithuanian People in the Great Patriotic War), p.190.

mobilisation quotas attributed to them, however, in general it was difficult to mobilise the established number of 30 thousand persons. According to the underground source data, almost 3 thousand persons had to be mobilised in Kaunas (only 400 were mobilised in the middle of November). Namely at that time check-ups of identity documents started in the streets of Kaunas. 50 persons (out of 86) ran away from the vehicle in Tauragė which headed for labour. The policemen accompanying the vehicle ran away together with the people (the award of 2 thousand reichmark was to be granted for each fugitive delivered).

Strict mobilisation measures were undertaken in Vilnius. On 8 October 1943, following the announcement by Commissar of Vilnius District H. Wulff, all those who failed to register themselves in their places of residence and had no certificates of employment had to be viewed as vagrants and arrested by the police. The announcement of 30 October by the Catering and Economy Department of Vilnius City detailed that food and tobacco cards could have been issued upon the delivery of not only identity documents but also certificates from the mobilisation commissions.

Vilnius Burgomaster made his announcement on 3 November and called all men aged between 16 and 50 and women between 17 and 50 to register with the commissions¹³⁷. All these measures were mostly targeted at the Polish population.

Mobilisation carried out throughout Lithuania by Lithuanian administration and police acquired distinctive anti-Communist characteristics. It was also characterised by actions targeted against asocial and criminal element of the society. Persons who came in view of the Lithuanian security commission were first caught as labour for Germany. They were former Communists, Communist Youth members, Soviet activists, persons who tried to escape work, persons convicted of crimes, homemade vodka distillers, profiteers, violators of public order, etc.

The aforesaid was recorded in different sources. The official press wrote that at the beginning of January 1944 several dozens of gypsies, different “vagrants”, beggars, “barterers” (profiteers), alcoholics, and persons who had no permanent employment were deported as labour from Biržai¹³⁸. In her letter of 12 December 1943 to her son A. Ališkauskas (soldier of self-defence battalion) N. Ališkauskienė from Utena wrote that the police “cleaned up” the town like with a “broom” and collected those who “served under the Russians, all Communists and

¹³⁶ *Lietuvos liaudies Didžiąjame Tėvynės kare* (Lithuanian People in the Great Patriotic War), p.164.

¹³⁷ *Ateitis* (Future), 3 November 1943.

¹³⁸ *Naujosios Biržų žinios* (Latest News from Biržai), 19 February; 26 February 1944.

atheists, “homemade vodka distillers”, women of immoral behaviour, profiteers¹³⁹. During its chase after people in Igliškėliai Rural District of Marijampolė County, the Lithuanian police announced that it caught only Communists and “different offscourings”¹⁴⁰.

Such trends in organising chase and planning mobilisations appeased the annoyance of the population (the said women from Utena was happy about cleaning up of Utena). But they raised dissatisfaction of the Germans themselves. Referring to the labour mobilisations Gebietskommissar of Panevėžys District W. Neum “noted” in the press many negative developments. Reportedly only asocial and criminal element was sent to the Reich. Until that moment Germany accepted them only because of its “confidence in its own power” and knew that these people would bring no harm in the disciplined German environment. However, the Reich needed mobilising honourable people willing to work. An interesting thing was that, in general, the Gebietskommissar did not oppose the methods of arresting people and forcing them into prisons and then transporting them to the Reich¹⁴¹.

In the middle of October 1943, the German civil government warned the Lithuanian administration to abstain from hunting of the undesired element. County governors were authorised “to improve” the composition of persons deported as labour.

The Lithuanian self-governance administration failed to mobilise and sent 30 thousand people to the Reich as labour. According to the calculations of the underground sources, only 8 thousand people were deported from the said agreement of the beginning of September 1943 to the middle of November¹⁴².

In the middle of November 1943, A. Renteln raised new requirements to the Lithuanian administration concerning labour force mobilisation. Reportedly Lithuania had no SS legion of its own on the Eastern Front; therefore, by July 1944 it had to send 100 thousand people as labour. The self-governance administration replied that “proper management of use and distribution of the labour force would make it possible to find 50 thousand people of free labour force.

A strict plan of measures concerning registration and collection was drafted under the German pressure. Application of family collective responsibility had to be one of the measures to

¹³⁹ LYA, doc.f. 1, inv.1, file 128, p.p. 6-7.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 263, p. 155.

¹⁴¹ *Panevėžio apygardos balsas* (Voice of Panevėžys District), 22 January 1944; LYA, doc.f. 17637, inv.1, file 305, p.p. 55–56.

¹⁴² LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, Collection of Documents No. 167, p. 97.

realise the plan. One or several other members of the family had to be taken in exchange to one person who had been called up for labour but failed to appear at the mobilisation commission. The commissions in charge of the labour force were taken over by the German *arbeitsamt* again.

In February 1944, the network of labour force mobilisation commissions was set up throughout Lithuania, from the chief commission to the commissions of rural districts and wards. Massive deportations of people as labour to Germany had to start at the beginning of March 1944. “Idling”, “vagrant”, and “Communist” element had already been deported, therefore, the German and the Lithuanian administrations claimed to take people from enterprises and offices which were still operating.

People detained in forced labour camps and prisons were sent to Germany, too, and so were people who were evacuated from the East and settled in Lithuania, i.e. war refugees, etc.

With the front approaching and the system of the German occupying government as well as the control over the situation collapsing, the plans for massive deportation of population were subject to failure.

By the end of 1943 and the beginning of 1944, negotiations between the German occupying regime and self-governance administration on the establishment of Lithuanian military units were renewed again. In November 1943, counsellors general finally gave up an idea of organising Lithuanian armed forces in the form of an SS legion. Following long negotiations an agreement was reached in February 1944 on organising a local Lithuanian formation subordinate to the SS and police chief headquarters in Lithuania (the Germans called it *Litauische Sonderverbände*), which had to act only on the territory of Lithuania. The Lithuanian side hoped that it would be the nucleus of the future Lithuanian Army, which was needed in fighting for the restoration of the State of Lithuania when the Germans were moving away from Lithuania and the new Red Army invasion was pending.¹⁴³

The Lithuanian youth encouraged by the patriotic feelings and promises that they would be able to serve in Lithuania (and would not be sent to Germany or Eastern Front, thus, they willingly joined the Local Formation. From 21 February to 1 March 1944, 19.5 thousand men registered. 13 battalions with 750 men each had to be organised¹⁴⁴.

Having got accustomed with unsuccessful mobilisations in Lithuania, the Germans were surprised at the success of establishing the Local Formation. Making use of the latter, they tried

¹⁴³ A. Bubnys, *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva* (Lithuania Occupied by the Germans), p. 411.

to take as many men as possible to the German Army and carry out the massive mobilisation in Lithuania, thus, demanding to immediately gather 40-60 thousand war assistants (*Hilfswillige*) who would serve the entire Northern Front from Narva to Vilnius, by promising not to take 100 thousand Lithuanian people to the Reich as labour. The Germans kept on raising new and new requirements again and threatened with massive repressions. The first battalions of the Local Formation (seven, all in all) were formed and sent to Vilnius Region where they got involved into armed conflicts with the units of the Polish Army *Krayova*. On 15 – 21 May 1944, the Germans disarmed the Local Formation. Commander Gen. P. Plechavičius, staff of the Formation and some of the officers (52 in total) were arrested and sent to Salaspils Concentration Camp in Latvia. 106 cadets of the Formation were deported to Stutthof and 983 soldiers to Oldenburg Concentration Camp.

When the Local Formation was in the process of disarming, shooting broke out between its soldiers and the Germans, several cadets perished as a result. On 17, 18 and 21 May, the Germans gunned down 84 soldiers of the Local Formation in Vilnius and Marijampolė. Approximately 3.5 thousand soldiers were sent to Germany to the air-defence council. The Germans succeeded in disarming only a small part of the formed battalions of the Local Formation. The other still armed, left for the forest or returned home¹⁴⁵.

The Nazi repressions against the Local Formation, gunning-down of its soldiers (this could be considered as one of the far-reaching killing operations), as well as unsuccessful efforts to reach an agreement concerning organising the Lithuanian Army and common defence against the Red Army finally destroyed confidence in the Germans.

On the other hand, repressions against the Local Formation could be evaluated as the bloody upshot of unsuccessful German mobilisation attempts and the German patience wearing thin. All their efforts to carry out massive mobilisation in Lithuania and sent as many Lithuanian men as possible to the front failed.

When the Local Formation was disarmed, the Germans published an article in their official press condemning Gen. P. Plechavičius for allegedly making the Formation of men who had not previously served in army and were not fit for the military service, they reportedly terrorised the population, robbed and plundered, “in separate cases they even threatened the

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.412.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.p.421–422.

Germans and persons who belonged to the German Wermacht”; its commanders were accused of sabotage of mobilisation; its soldiers were instigated, deceived, misled etc.¹⁴⁶

According to the data of the German occupant officials of 1943, in total, more than 57 thousand Lithuanian men were recruited and mobilised. This figure (also was mentioned by foreign authors)¹⁴⁷ was exaggerated, overstated and it should be decreased at least by half¹⁴⁸.

The conflict between the Lithuanian people and the Nazi concerning mobilisations and fate of Lithuanian youth resulted in the victory of all the forces of the anti-Nazi underground and the entire Lithuanian people. The most important thing was that the German mobilisations were disrupted without suffering larger (mass) repressions and loss of human lives. The failure of the mobilisations by the occupant (particularly those military) coincided with the interests of not only the Lithuanian people but also those of the anti-Nazi coalition states and peoples; it was also useful to the Soviet Union.

Lithuanian political activists of in the West recommended the national underground leaders to avoid actions during the occupation, which could complicate and compromise Lithuania’s international position and its future, and politically make it into a vassal of Germany, thus releasing hands to Moscow as well as aggravating possibilities of and “taking away the wish” from the USA and England to stand for its interests. They considered unacceptable “the idea and behaviour of the Estonians and Latvians under the occupation, which was unconditional cooperation between the allegedly national organs and the German Reich”, and receiving the status of statehood out of the German hands (in autumn 1943, the German policy was said to “foresee” to grant this status to Estonia and Latvia). Lithuanian political leaders looked forward to political benefits (benevolence) in settling post-war political problems considering the political reality (firstly, the boycott of setting up a SS legion) which differed from that of the neighbouring countries. If the Germans had granted statehood to Latvia and Estonia, this would have been the “biggest favour that the Reich had ever made to Lithuania”¹⁴⁹.

Unfortunately, in the post-war years discussing the issues of Lithuania’s liberation, the same Lithuanian political activists in the West were forced to state that Western states made no

¹⁴⁶ *Teisybė apie Vietinę rinktinę* (Truth about the Local Formation), *Naujoji Lietuva* (The New Lithuania), 27 May 1944.

¹⁴⁷ Отечественная история, Nr. 6, 2001, c. 68.

¹⁴⁸ A. Bubnys, *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva* (Lithuania Occupied by the Germans), p. 403.

¹⁴⁹ Letter of 21 November 1943 to the Central Lithuanian Committee (VLK) and the Council of the Nation (TT), LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 268, p. 62–64.

difference between the Estonians and the Latvians, on the one hand, and the Lithuanians, on the other hand, regarding their position (resistance, although passive) during the years of German occupation. All the Baltic States were doomed to the Soviet occupation on equal footing (as Soviet republics).

Nevertheless, there were differences preconditioned by specific circumstances of the Nazi occupation. Lithuania secured its youth potential against the German mobilisations and meaningless death on the Eastern Front, and anti-Soviet armed resistance continued for almost 10 years.

Although the repressions during the German occupation in response to the disruption of massive military and labour mobilisations were brutal and painful to the people of Lithuania, particularly intelligentsia, and single national minorities, it bore no all-destructing and exterminating nature. It was possible to escape mobilisations during this occupation without suffering larger repressions, jeopardising life, or suffering. In post-war years it was often assumed that “the Germans selected men to the army, but we hid the men from them, so we will hide them from the Russians, too”¹⁵⁰. In the first post-war years, the leading Communist party and the Soviet government officials complained that during the German occupation people “got used to drive through any laws issued by the government and now kept on using the same methods”¹⁵¹. Human experience accumulated during the German occupation when it was possible to sabotage fulfilment of obligations and payment of tributes, escape military and labour mobilisations without suffering major repressions, harm, and efforts to apply this experience directly under the Soviet regime resulted in tragic consequences. Unfortunately, it was almost impossible to hide away “from the Russians”, escape the forced Soviet military mobilisation etc. Attempts to resist brought about massive (incomparable to those of the Germans) repressions and victims.

3) Repressions for Resistance to Economic Exploitation

One of the key (and probably the most important) goals of the occupying regime introduced by the Nazi Germans was economic exploitation of Lithuania for the interests of the

¹⁵⁰ *Šilalės kraštas* (Šilalė Region), vol. 3, p. 108.

¹⁵¹ Information by the Secretary of Seiniai county Committee of the LCP(b) of 22 September 1944, LCP(b) CC, LYA, doc.f. 1771, inv. 7, file 150, p. 41.

warring Germany. Taking into account that Lithuania was an agrarian country, its economic exploitation was first mostly targeted at agriculture and manifested in different tributes in kind and obligations. The latter probably made the most important part of economic exploitation of the occupied Lithuania¹⁵². On the other hand, the biggest resistance took place namely in this sector of the country's economic life, which threatened with occupant's repressions and doomed human lives.

The Germans considered that Lithuania belonged to the occupied countries which had the largest surplus of agricultural products (foodstuffs). They based their claims on that assumption and had aspirations to make use of that.

In an effort to make the maximum use of possibilities opened by the Lithuanian agriculture and economic resources in general, the occupants were guided by their pragmatic interests and pronounced the slogans of peace and order, work and submissiveness. At the very start, the press announced that “no essential changes shall be made in agriculture”. All farmers, including all the settlers (Soviet – R.Z.), shall be managers of land plots of their own and those entrusted to them, harvest them, prepare for winter crops, and honestly and diligently carry out all other agricultural work¹⁵³.

During the liquidation of the consequences of the Soviet agricultural reform, the land given by the Soviet government to those who had little land could have been used by the latter if productivity of the “small farms” had been satisfactory. Those who sowed could use the harvest¹⁵⁴ (and certainly fulfil obligations to the German Reich).

Such a German policy and tactics had to be evaluated as something in contrast to the social class policy of the Soviet government and agricultural reform carried out on the eve of the war, which significantly set off the Lithuanian village.

Although they were only managers of their farms (rather than owners), Lithuanian farmers in view of the Nazi ideology were a more valued and privileged class of the society, “the fundamental of the entire country”. When the “blitzkrieg” failed, shortage of agricultural products and its raw materials was suffered, and Germany was about to lose the occupied fertile regions of Russia, Ukraine, etc., the significance and role of Lithuanian farmers grew even more.

¹⁵² J. Bulavas, *Vokiškuju fašistų okupacinis valdymas* (Occupying Governing by the German Fascists), p. 97.

¹⁵³ *Naujoji Lietuva* (The New Lithuania), 2 August 1941.

¹⁵⁴ *Naujoji Lietuva* (The New Lithuania), 2 August, 25 September 1941; *Šilalės kraštas* (Šilalė Region), vol. 3, p. 66.

On 22 August 1941, Commissar General of Lithuania A. Renteln received a “big delegation of Lithuanian farmers” and later delegations from different districts of Lithuania (e.g., representatives of farmers from Northern Lithuania). At the beginning of September a meeting (congress) of Lithuanian agricultural specialists took place in Kaunas, etc.¹⁵⁵

The ideologists of the German occupying government stated that Lithuanian farmers were not interested in politics (Lithuanian independence and statehood). They only wanted to work on their land and receive the biggest possible material benefit. They were not even accused of hindering the founding of the SS legion in Lithuania (when Lithuanian intelligentsia was blamed for that).

The war and the German occupation positively affected socio-economic situation and moods of farmers at the very start. The aforementioned LNP Secretary General, Z. Blynas, made a note in his diary at the beginning of August 1941 that farmers paid debts and were satisfied with their lives. In Suvalkija a litter of sour cream cost 18 roubles, and they [farmers] thought that they would be able to enjoy such life for a long time. The workers were happy with high wages in Eastern Prussia¹⁵⁶.

On 19 September 1941, the Governor of Tauragė County wrote to the Director of the Lithuanian Police Department about the situation in the County and noted that the “standard of living” grew by almost 100 per cent and continued to grow. Buy-up of foodstuffs to the German citizens, officials, and marching army continued, remuneration came in marks and nobody negotiated the price, etc.¹⁵⁷.

Already in 1941, the occupant introduced the first quotas of compulsory agricultural tributes and obligations. They were high and made up a significant part of the gross agricultural production. The bulk was made up of grain, milk and its products, meat (pigs and livestock), eggs, potatoes etc. Nevertheless, the tributes and obligations established by the Germans were smaller than those set by the Soviet. In addition, they were differentiated (what was not the case under the Soviets) with regard to the quality of land, number of livestock, crop area, and family composition, therefore, they were more just from a social point of view and easier implemented. Commissar General of Lithuania A. Renteln made a promise in the congress of the Lithuanian agronomists by the end of 1941 that he would take care of maintaining the tributes “at the

¹⁵⁵ *Ūkininko patarėjas* (Farmer’s Mentor), 22 August; 19 September; 26 September, etc. 1941.

¹⁵⁶ LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 55, file 39, p. 65.

¹⁵⁷ *Šilalės kraštas* (Šilalė Region), vol.3, p. 81.

bearable level” and urged to maintain pedigree and working livestock while fulfilling them, have seeds enough for the sowing time in the coming spring “under any circumstances” etc.¹⁵⁸

There were many reasons why the tributes and obligations were poorly paid or fulfilled between 1941 and 1942. At the beginning, the Germans were not strictly demanding. Later, when the situation grew worse on the front, there were no possibilities of forming their repressive bodies and imposing stricter control over the situation, many factors and circumstances (e.g. activity of the Lithuanian self-governance administration) entered into play, which “depreciated” impact of occupation policy, exploitation of agriculture and oppression. As it has been mentioned before, the Germans needed peaceful back areas and their economy, which supplied big amounts of food and raw materials to the military industry. Lithuania, most likely except for its Eastern part, remained the back area of this kind for the whole period of the German occupation.

It is possible to state that trying to maintain peace and quiet in the field of agricultural production, the Germans first avoided massive terror and abided the majority of unfavourable phenomena, even the failures of military and labour force mobilisations.

The first repressive operations (or at least threatening to carry them out) were recorded in the middle of 1942. For instance, at the beginning of July 1942, the Governor of Tauragė County strictly urged the governors of rural districts to collect the quotas of tributes and obligations by threatening with fines and arrests¹⁵⁹.

In general, farmers who avoided or delayed fulfilment of obligations were entered into special lists and punished with 1) fines or prison, seizure of livestock and crops; 2) deportation to labour camps until the members of their family meet obligations; 3) seizure of farms; 4) exceptional extreme (highest) penalty of public gunning-down of selected farmers.

Repressions and measures of repressive nature grew stricter in 1943, but varied in different districts of Lithuania. Comparably “soft” measures remained in Īiauliai District up to the end of the occupation. In autumn 1942, Gebietskommissar of the District H. Gewecke reproached the governors of the counties of the district for outstanding fines and urged them to collect the payments noting that “this time” it was not acceptable to remind about such miserable amounts that often. Proposals were made to arrest those who did not pay fines in the immediate

¹⁵⁸ *Ūkininko patarėjas* (Farmer’s Mentor), 21 November 1941.

¹⁵⁹ *Šilalės kraštas* (Šilalė Region), vol. 3, p. 81.

future¹⁶⁰. There is no data that larger scale or stricter repressions were employed in Diauliai District.

At the beginning of 1943, listings were made of farmers who poorly paid tributes and fulfilled obligations. Following the decree of January 1943 by Commissar General of Lithuania A. Renteln, an order was issued to seize cows from farmers who failed to fulfil the milk delivery quota. The following punishment was carried out in Panevėžys Rural District: cows were taken away from 8 farmers and passed to farmers in another rural district who duly fulfilled the milk duty.

In spring 1943, labour camps were set up in Raguva and Subačius (Panevėžys County) for farmers who failed to meet at least 60 per cent of all obligations. Farmers (“family heads”) were placed there and kept until the members of the family met the obligations. The detained farmers were subject to forced labour. There were several farmers in March. Such labour camps (also called “education” camps) operated in Kaunas District, too¹⁶¹.

In autumn 1943 and in 1944 commissions were set up following the decree by the Commissar of the Ostland Reich who travelled round Lithuania and verified the fulfilment of obligations, number of the registered livestock, etc.¹⁶² In fact, these were “punitive expeditions”, they seized livestock and other property, arrested people etc.

Severe measures against farmers who failed to perform their duties were imposed in Vilnius District (undoubtedly, repressions in this District were preconditioned by other factors too, activity of Polish and Soviet underground, and a more complex political situation in general). The letter of 2 March 1943 by Gebietskommissar of Vilnius District concerning the sabotage of delivery of quotas indicated that announcements by the end of 1942 made it “plain” to all the population of villages and urged them to fulfil their obligations as well as threatened them with “strict and very strict” punishment. The deliveries of quotas improved to a certain extent, but they hardly reached the required levels, thus, H. Wulff ordered to gun down “undoubted” saboteurs of quota delivery. According to H. Wulff, the “security services” gunned down 40 saboteurs in different rural districts between 5 and 17 February 1943¹⁶³. Before the poor

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁶¹ *Panevėžio apygardos balsas* (Voice of Panevėžys District), 6 February; 13 March 1943.

¹⁶² Ibid, 25 September 1943; LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 263, p. 160; doc.f. 1, inv. 1, file 410, p. 179.

¹⁶³ According to J. Bulavas, peasants were gunned down by Chief for Agriculture of Vilnius County (*kreislandwirtschaftsfürer*) Horst. After the execution he would make a speech, see J. Bulavas, *Vokiškųjų fašistų okupacinis Lietuvos valdymas* (Occupying Governing by the German Fascists), p. 112.

people were shot, they had been interrogated for 20 – 30 minutes. The executions were carried out in public by forcing the population and officials of local governments to the places of killings.

H. Wulff was positive that considering “local experience” such measures had to be applied only in specific and exceptional circumstances as they might have the effect of a “temporary shock” only¹⁶⁴.

No other sources prove that so many people were gunned down in Vilnius District in February 1943. According to the data of the Soviet underground agency, Petras Stravinskas (who possessed the farm of 40 ha) from Petkaučizna Village, Žasliai Rural District, Trakai County, Feliksas Lapinskas from Vievis Rural District, Žalinskas, D. Žalakas from Žiežmariai Rural District, and Bartkevičius from Kaišiadorys Rural District were gunned down in February 1943¹⁶⁵.

In spring 1943 (?) V. Marcinkevičius from Naručionys Village of Vievis Rural District was shot dead. The management of the farm of the latter was passed to his brother¹⁶⁶.

On 15 February 1943, the Germans shot dead 4 persons in Valkininkai (Alytus County): 3 farmers for the failure to fulfil obligations and 1 for “profiteering” (as he was caught transporting one hundred kilograms of rye to Vilnius)¹⁶⁷.

In winter 1943 (?) 4 men were gunned down in Trakai marketplace, one of them was from Aukštadvario Rural District¹⁶⁸.

J. Bulavas ascertained that one peasant was shot both in Rudamina, Turgeliai, Jašiūnai and other places¹⁶⁹.

In his diary Counsellor General for Finance J. Matulionis wrote that on 13 February 1943, following the order by H. Wulff, 9 farmers were shot dead in Trakai County, 7 Lithuanians among them¹⁷⁰. Generalised data of the Soviet underground sources stated that 20 peasants were

¹⁶⁴ *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje* (Mass Killings in Lithuania), Part 1, p.p. 96–98.

¹⁶⁵ LYA, doc.f. 1, inv. 1, file 56, p. 20; file 32, p. 140.

¹⁶⁶ Testimony by military driver Br. Bagdonavičius, LYA, doc.f. 1, inv. 1, file 99, p. 67.

¹⁶⁷ Letter of 15 February 1945 by Governor of Valkininkai Rural District to heads of wards of the Rural District, LYA, doc.f. 1, inv. 1, file 90, p. 10.

¹⁶⁸ V. Steponavičius, *Vokiečių ir sovietų kareiviai Čyžiūnuose* (German and Soviet Soldiers in Čyžiūnai), *Gimtinė* (Native Land), 1–28 February 1998, No. 2, p. 7.

¹⁶⁹ J. Bulavas, *Vokiškųjų fašistų okupacinis Lietuvos valdymas* (Occupying Governing by the German Fascists), p. 112.

¹⁷⁰ J. Matulionis, *Neramios dienos* (Unquiet Days), Toronto, 1975, p.

gunned down “without court” in Trakai County in March 1943 (it seems that it should have been February –R.Z.)¹⁷¹.

The occupant was likely to shoot peasants who failed to meet obligations only in Vilnius District and did not dare to carry out those extreme (highest) punishments in other Lithuanian districts. By 1943, the governors of rural districts in Kaunas District had received orders to single out several bigger farmers who failed to fulfil obligations “intentionally” (which could have meant gunning down). However, governors of rural districts replied that farmers performed their duties within the existing possibilities and that the “intentional bad will” was absent¹⁷².

Lithuanian farmers suffered not only the failure to fulfil duties, but also other measures of punitive and economic pressure, bans, restrictions, and different manifestations of the occupation politics. In 1942, repatriates started coming back to Lithuania. The decision to return Lithuanian Germans to their old places of residence was an exceptional case in the Nazi colonial policy, no other group of repatriates was given such a possibility¹⁷³. In March 1941, approximately 50 thousand repatriated from Lithuania, and only slightly more than 20 thousand Germans returned during the Nazi occupation, thus, repatriation was not large in scale. Nevertheless, it provoked political opposition, social tension, national tension (Lithuanian were moved away from the former German farms and those of their own to the Russian and Polish farms in Eastern Lithuania), and danger of repressions. On 10 June 1943, farmer K. Ulevičius and his sons from Egliniškės Village of Pajevonys Rural District in Vilkaviškis County shot 4 Gestapo soldiers from Eitkūnai who came to resettle them and pass their farm to the German colonist and the child of the neighbour repatriate who showed the way. On 27 July, 12 persons were shot in Marijampolė and 2 persons were sent to the concentration camp in revenge for this resistance¹⁷⁴.

Killings of Lithuanian farmers as a punishment for their failure to meet the obligations and disobedience to the occupying government were not wholesale. Other forms of repressions were undoubtedly applied to a significantly lesser extent, but there were no general record about them. According to the data of J. Bulavas, in total, more than 4 thousand families of Lithuanian farmers were evicted from their farms for unsatisfactory fulfilment of duties¹⁷⁵.

¹⁷¹ LYA, doc.f. 1, inv. 1, file 58, p. 109.

¹⁷² Manuscript of the editorial office of the “*Į laisvę*” (Towards Freedom, underground newspaper) and other information materials, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 263, p. 150.

¹⁷³ A. Bubnys, *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva* (Lithuania Occupied by the Germans), p. 349–350.

¹⁷⁴ LCVA, doc.f. R.–689, inv. 1, file 49, p. 193; *Tėviškė* (Homeland), 30 July 1943.

¹⁷⁵ J. Bulavas, *Vokiškųjų fašistų okupacinis Lietuvos valdymas* (Occupying Governing by the German Fascists), p. 113.

No matter how painful and brutal repressive operations were, they still did not harm the social structure of a Lithuanian village. Although a Lithuanian village was barren and impoverished in an economic sense, the fundamentals of socio-economic life were left unharmed.

Repressions for Rescue of the Persecuted Persons

The Nazi occupied Lithuania was not equally hard and cruel to single peoples, social classes, and groups of individuals. However, in general, the occupation, totalitarianism and police nature of the Nazi-introduced regime and the circumstances of war predetermined large numbers of persecuted and terrorised people in Lithuania. Undoubtedly, the Jews and Soviet prisoners of war fell among the categories of people who were numerous and exceptionally cruelly terrorised. The massive extermination of people of these categories was the most terrifying crime committed in Lithuania under the occupation by the Nazi Germany. Lithuanian people who tried to help the victims risked their security, property and even life, as they would appear in the role of enemies of the occupant and fell victims of persecution and different repressions themselves. Although there were not so many people like those, their activity was very significant in different points of view. Therefore, it is expedient to briefly discuss the repressions by the occupant and its collaborators referring to some of the facts about those who suffered as a result of their attempts to save persecuted and harmed people, and their activity, which often saved honour and consciousness of the Lithuanian people.

1) Repressions for Assistance to the Soviet Prisoners of War

Unsuccessful beginning of the war for the Soviet Union meant giant losses in terms of dead and capture soldiers of its own army. Direct extermination and surrounding of the Red Army, formations of “boilers”, and massive capturing of the Red Army soldiers were the most important strategic tasks of the Wehrmacht. According to the German sources, even 5.75 million (2.5 million in 1941 alone) were captured, whereas the Soviet sources and authors record more than 4.5 million Red Army soldiers.¹⁷⁶ In any case, the figures of captives were astronomic.

At the very beginning, the Germans threatened with the severest punishment for any help and aid to the Red Army soldiers retreating from Lithuania. The appeal “To Lithuania” of 26 June 1941 by the Commander-in-Chief of the German troops stated that “the ones who hide Soviet soldiers or arms, ammunition and any other assets of the Red Army and USSR or appropriate them will be shot dead”¹⁷⁷. Any contacts were prohibited between the civil

¹⁷⁶ В.В. Похлебкин, Великая война и несостоявшийся мир 1941–1945–1994: Военный и внешнеполитический справочник, Москва, 1997, с. 334.

¹⁷⁷ *I laisvę* (Towards Freedom), 26 June; 5 September 1941.

population and the prisoners of war, i.e. supply of food, clothing, and tobacco. Their guards were ordered to arrest the violators of this ban and shoot those who would try to escape.

A big number of the Red Army soldiers – prisoners of war who found themselves in the German captivity were kept in the camps of prisoners of war in Lithuania: Kaunas, Vilnius, Alytus, Īiauliai. Larger or smaller branches set up throughout the entire territory of the country (Naujoji Vilnia, Bezdonys, Virbalis, Kalvarija, Kudirkos Naumiestis, etc.). Despite the strictest bans the camps open doors to wide contacts between the prisoners of war and Lithuanian people. Even wider contacts were predetermined by the fact that already in the summer 1941 the Germans allowed prisoners of war to work for Lithuanian farmers. Such labour force was particularly widespread in Źemaitija, Źiauliai District. On 31 July 1941, the Commandant Office of Tauragė discussed the issue of using “Russian women” (wives of the Red Army soldiers, etc.) who stayed in Lithuania and were interned for agricultural labour. The work by the prisoners of war should have compensated for the shortage of labour force, agricultural machinery, fuel, etc. as well as helped Lithuanian farmers to fulfil obligations and pay tributes and the occupant to use all the potentials of Lithuanian agriculture. Lithuanian farmers, in their own turn, experienced big demand for prisoners of war as labour. This was testified in the letter of 7 July 1942 by the Commandant of Źiauliai Camp of Prisoners of War to the Governor of Tauragė County where he asked to inform the governors of rural districts that farmers should not file applications demanding prisoners of war without any need and the governor of the county was asked to “hinder” their coming to Źiauliai with claims for the prisoners of war as labour¹⁷⁸.

In 1942, the process of taking away the prisoners of war from Lithuanian farmers started. The Germans believed that there was too much of “the Russian labour force” in Lithuania. The latter was in great demand for “tasks which predetermine the war”, i.e. labour in the industry of the German Reich¹⁷⁹. The prisoners of war were taken away, but a significant part of them was still left. Having the permits by the German commandants they continued to work on Lithuanian farms until the end of the occupation.

The issue of relations between the Lithuanian people and the Soviet prisoners of war were complex historically. For the majority of Lithuanians they were occupants and enemies of yesterday who failed to escape and who destroyed the statehood of Lithuanian, brought other

¹⁷⁸ LCVA, doc.f. R-1476, inv.1, file 14, p. 6; file 8, p. 591.

¹⁷⁹ Appeal by Renteln and P. Kubiliūnas in “*Lietuvių ūkininkas*” (Lithuanian Farmer) (no date), LYA, doc.f. 1771, inv. 7, file 91, p. 5.

evils which shook the country and even committed cruel executions (in Rainiai, Pravieniškės, etc.) when trying to escape. On the other hand, those classes and groups of the population, from which they could expect help and sympathy, found themselves in the roles of those subject to terror. The local Russian population and partly other Slavs residing in Lithuania were somewhat exceptional and prisoners of war could find and found shelter there.

Only cruel and inhuman behaviour of the Germans with regard to the Soviet prisoners of war as well as extermination and starving of the latter changed the situation and despite bans and dangers opened doors and motivated to compassion, provisions of help, etc.

Rescue of the Soviet prisoners of war was even more complicated by the fact that the majority of those who escaped from the camps would arm and become the activists of the Soviet underground which was unpopular in Lithuania and antagonist to the Lithuanian people. Soviet historiography states that the prisoners of war made up one fifth of the Red partisan who operated in Lithuania and, practically, their percentage was even higher as there were squads formed mainly out of them.

With the absence of a larger scale support from the local population, the Soviet partisans and particularly their squads made up of prisoners of war used brutal armed force, violence and compulsion, and sometimes followed chauvinistic, imperialistic Russian traditions and ideas. They promoted the ideas of “liberation” of Lithuanian people and Soviet Lithuania without even disguising under the slogans of fight against fascism. The aggression of the Soviet partisans – prisoners of war was also instigated by the wish to get rid of the guilt for the Soviet Homeland and pay the debt for giving in to the enemy, often for serving in different German military and police formations. The memoirs of former prisoners of war contain quite a few references to “armed to the teeth”, fight against different “fascists”, “Lithuanian riflemen”, police, and extermination of anybody who stood against the “Soviet government, the “Soviet people”, the “cause of the Russian people”, “attempted to possess the sacred Russian lands”¹⁸⁰, etc.

A lot of other factor and circumstances pushed the Soviet prisoners of war into conflict with the society of the occupied Lithuanian. They were Soviet people who had grown up and matured in the environment and spirit of the Soviet government and ideology, where there was no room for respect for private property, tolerance, inborn human rights, etc.

¹⁸⁰ Autobiography – memoirs by P. Poliakov, 1944, LYA, doc.f. 32, inv. 1, file 114, p. 1; autobiography – memoirs by N. Sorokin, 30 July 1944, *ibid.*, file 136, p.p. 1–2; autobiography by I. Palchikov, 24 August 1944, *ibid.* doc.f. 49, inv.1, file 8, p. 3, etc.

Soviet prisoners of war committed a lot of cruel crimes in Lithuania, killed innocent civilians (which was efficiently used by the German propaganda for its own purposes). On 18 February 1942, Soviet prisoner of war V. Samilenko used an axe to kill the family of farmer J. Andrejauskas from Petrošiai Village of Šaukėnai Rural District (Šiauliai County) who took him from the camp of prisoners of war to labour on the farm, i.e. J. Andrejauskas himself, his wife, 14-year old daughter, 8-year old son, and severely injured 4-year old son. V. Samilenko was detained in Riga, brought to Lithuania and hanged in Šaukėnai market place on 11 April¹⁸¹. Earlier, on 26 February, another two Soviet prisoners of war had been hanged in Šaukėnai for murdering two policemen and so had been Russian peasant and Soviet activists P. Kupreshenko who hid them. The hanged were kept in gibbets for 4 days¹⁸².

A group of prisoners of war who escaped Alytus Camp of Prisoners of War killed the family of big farmer J. Kaminskas in Krasnėnai Village of Krosna Rural District in Alytus County. They burnt down his farm and seized property and cattle. On 25 September 1943, prisoners of war in Kaunas attacked and killed J. Monkus – Monkevičius, Head of Kaunas Drama Theatre, pursuing the goal of robbery¹⁸³. There were many other facts of this kind which cast a shadow on the relations between prisoners of war and local population, and allowed German propaganda to form and enhance hostile approach of the society towards prisoners of war and assistance to them.

On the other hand, a significant number of other facts and testimonies can be produced about good relations between the local population and Soviet prisoners of war. It can be stated that Lithuanian farmers tried to take prisoners of war as labour not only for economic but also for humanitarian reasons in an effort to save them from starvation and enervating work in the camps of prisoners of war. They also sometimes helped them to acquire arms and reach safe places of hiding, etc. There were also prisoners of war who were benevolent, wandering from village to village, who learnt some Lithuanian, though they hardly differed from prisoner of war hiding away from the local population¹⁸⁴. The majority of farmers hid them from the Germans and the police, and deportation to Germany as labour. For instance, on 20 November 1943, 80 prisoners

¹⁸¹ *Žemaičių žemė* (Land of Ţemaičiai), 23 April 1942. The newspaper wrote that V. Andrejauskas reportedly insulted the murderer of his family by saying that Russians were bad soldiers and now they would learn to work.

¹⁸² *Žemaičių žemė* (Land of Ţemaičiai), 14 March 1942; *Tėviškė* (Homeland), 6 March 1942; LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 55, file 139, p.p. 2 – 11.

¹⁸³ Testimony by K. Gliaudanec of 26 May 1944, LYA, doc.f. 1, inv. 1, file 98, p. 101; file 99, p. 72; *Naujoji Lietuva* (The New Lithuania), 1 January 1944.

of war employed on farms in Raseiniai County had to go to the registration commission, but only 36 turned up: 33 were taken as labour and 3 were released for the bribes that farmers had paid¹⁸⁵.

The decree “concerning the ban to get married with prisoners of war in the General Region of Lithuania” issued in 1943 by First Counsellor General of Lithuania P. Kubiliūnas gave proofs of good relations between Lithuanian people and the captives. The decree banned marriages with prisoners of war or those who were exempted from captivity as of 15 March 1943, except for the persons who had been the citizens of Lithuanian before 15 June 1940¹⁸⁶. Prohibitions seemed to have been in significant numbers.

A significant episode of captives’ rescue was recorded by Kaunas resident M. Rutkauskienė – Tamašauskienė. Other women and she would cook “huge pots of lunch” and carry them to the winter port docks of the Nemunas for captives working there. One old German guarded the captives and allowed to pass them food. He also warned that the women “should be quick” so that the officers saw nothing. He would also refuse to take cigarettes in exchange to his service and asked to give them to the captives¹⁸⁷.

This episode shows that German soldiers were sometimes benevolently inclined towards the Soviet prisoners of war. At least the satisfactory behaviour with the captives was regulated in German guidelines too. For instance, Russian women who worked for farmers had to be fed, clothed and paid 20 reichmark monthly wages. Farmers who misbehaved would be punished; workers would be taken away from them and passed to other farmers¹⁸⁸.

Facts and data can be produced about different and often cruel punishments for hiding prisoners of war under the whole period of Nazi occupation.

S. Lisauskas, Russian peasant of Vandžiogalos environs in Kaunas County, was arrested by the Germans for hiding prisoners of war and shot dead together with the former Soviet activists in 1942. I. Jasevičienė from Babtai Rural District of Kaunas County who hid captives and A. Zablockis were shot dead in February 1944 and at the end of April, respectively¹⁸⁹.

¹⁸⁴ Testimony by J. Borevičius of 1944, *ibid.*, doc.f. 1, inv.1, file 99, p.p. 31–33.

¹⁸⁵ *Ivykiai Raseinių apskrityje* (Events in Raseiniai County), (source of Lithuanian anti-Nazi underground of 30 January 1944), *ibid.*, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 266, p. 13.

¹⁸⁶ *Lietuviškosios savivaldos administracijos žinios* (News of Lithuanian Self-Governance Administration), 1943, No. 1–13, p. 50; *Panevėžio apygardos balsas* (Voice of Panevėžys District), 10 April 1944.

¹⁸⁷ Memoirs of M. Rutkauskienė – Tamašauskienė of 1961, LYA, doc.f. 16928, inv. 2, file 82, p. 8.

¹⁸⁸ *Šilalės kraštas* (Šilalė Region), vol. 3, p. 88.

¹⁸⁹ *Ūvusiųjų už tarybų valdžią anketos* (Questionnaire of Those Who Perished for the Soviet Government), LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 66, file 19, p.p. 61, 33, 105.

These facts show that different repressions against people who hid the captives were employed in Vandtjogala, Babtai and other rural district of Kaunas County where many local Russians lived and where prisoners of war were hid during the entire period of the occupation. The situation seems to have been similar also in those parts of Lithuania where more Russians lived. In July 1942, the security police and SD team searched Baisogala environs (Raseiniai County) where they “established a special order”, i.e. gunned down 11 persons, including one prisoner of war and 10 local Russians who hid captives and armed partisans. In addition, 25 persons were arrested¹⁹⁰.

In 1942, peasant J. Muravjovas from Nekriūnai Village of Lazdijai County was arrested for hiding prisoners of war and arms. He was taken to Alytus and hanged in June¹⁹¹. At the beginning of December 1942, the family of peasant A. Muravjova from Gremzdai Village of Lazdijai County was arrested. She and two of her sons as well as three prisoners of war were gunned down in Marijampolė prison in 1943.¹⁹²

In 1942, K. Zmitrienė and M. Ledukienė were arrested for hiding prisoners of war in Seda (Mažeikiai County). They hid two captives from Šiauliai Camp of Prisoners of War who worked for farmers and had contacts among the local population. Both the arrested women were subject to “severe punishment”. S. Zmitrienė was sentenced to 6 months in a forced labour camp¹⁹³.

At the end of 1942, the occupant press widely reported on the seizure of farm of Jonas and Michalina Jaglauskas in Sodeliai Village of Vabalninkas Rural District, Biržai County¹⁹⁴.

In spring 1943, farmers in Ąiauliai and other counties were punished for illegal possession of captives. Farmers of Kalnėnai and Dargiai Villages in Mažeikiai County also hid captives. “Marauding” captives were arrested, and when interrogated they named the farmers who hid them. Even 15 farmers were arrested as “severest criminals”¹⁹⁵.

In 18 May 1943, the German executors launched the aforesaid penal operation against Bobulina, Severėnai and Degimai Villages in Tryškiai Rural District to a large extent owing to

¹⁹⁰ *Lietuvos liaudis Didžiajame Tėvynės kare* (Lithuanian People in the Great Patriotic War), p. 75.

¹⁹¹ *Ųuvusiųjų už tarybų valdžią anketos* (Questionnaire of Those Who Perished for the Soviet Government), LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 66, file 26, p. 83.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, file 26, p.p. 32, 43, 60, 82; file 25, p.p. 79, 36, 43, 55.

¹⁹³ *Ųemaičių žemė* (Land of Ųemaičiai), 15 August; 7 November 1942.

¹⁹⁴ *Ųemaičių žemė* (Land of Ųemaičiai), 22 December 1942; *Karys* (Soldier), 19 December 1942; *Į laisvę* (Towards Freedom), 10 December 1942.

the hiding of captives (on the other hand, owing to the Soviet partisan activity). Those who were suspected of contacts with the captives and partisans were arrested and placed in Degimai primary school. The following day people were interrogated and punished: 12 of them were sent to Īiauliai prison, 25 were released upon strict warning, and 6 former members of the Communists Youth were shot (one of the detainees was lucky to escape)¹⁹⁶.

Soviet prisoners of war were mostly hidden by Lithuanian people of Russian nationality (there was only one Lithuanian out of 34 people living in the said Bobulina Village). Nevertheless they were hidden by Lithuanian, Poles and other peoples, too. Poles Kardis, A. Osipovičius, M. Kijutis, J. and V. Lukoševičis, A. Nanievičius, J. Pekarskis, A. Źarnauskas, Lithuanians M. Jakubėnas, A. Miškutavičius, St. Kerđys (hanged), St. Skarđinskas were shot dead in 1941–1942 in Vilnius Districts for attempts to help to escape from the camps of prisoners of war, support to the captives and possession of weapon¹⁹⁷.

It may be presumed that the Russian population of Lithuania suffered relatively more from the repressions of the Lithuanian administration and Lithuanian police for hiding prisoners of war, which was easier for the Lithuanians to escape when they rendered support to the captives. However, repressions by officials of the Lithuanian self-governance administration should not be overestimated. The government of the German occupying regime balanced in order to secure the support for realisation of its interests, “protected” Russians and other national minorities. Decree of 6 March 1943 by Commissar General of Lithuania A. Renteln established “Trust office for Russian population in General Region of Lithuania” (Head A. von Stavrovski) with its branches in Vilnius, Źiauliai, Panevėžys, agents in other towns, counties, rural districts, where Russians lived. In their appeal of 13 March 1943, Lithuanian Old Believers priests (with their highest authority– Central Council of the Old Believers) addressed Lithuanian Old Believers urging them to join the German Army¹⁹⁸. One of the reasons why Lithuanian Russians would not join the German Army (Russian Liberation Army) in big numbers was the fact that no police or military formations were made of them as a result of the pressure by the Lithuanians

¹⁹⁵ *Tėviškė* (Homeland), 12 March 1943; M.D., *Atsargiai su karo belaisviais* (Beware of Prisoners of War), *Źemaičių žemė* (Land of Źemaičiai), 19 June 1943.

¹⁹⁶ Act of establishing the place of massacre of 29 April 1965, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 635, p. 1g- 1I; *Tėviškė* (Homeland), 28 May 1943; *Lietuvos liaudis Didžiąjame Tėvynės kare* (Lithuanian People in the Great Patriotic War), p. 141.

¹⁹⁷ *Lietuvos liaudis Didžiąjame Tėvynės kare* (Lithuanian People in the Great Patriotic War), p.p. 77–79.

¹⁹⁸ *Ateitis* (Future), 13 March 1943.

and even threats to treat them with summary dispatch and undertake repressions¹⁹⁹. Upon the initiative of November 1943 by A. von Stavrovski the Lithuanian Russian Conference was convoked in Kaunas to discuss the policy of suppression of the Russian population by the Lithuanian administration, solidarity with the Germans, Russian schools and other issues. Open dissatisfaction was expressed regarding the situation of the Russians in Lithuania. The German government was requested to render assistance against the “self-rule” of the Lithuanian administration. The Lithuanian administration treated such accusations of the Russians as “misunderstandings”²⁰⁰.

Although, in general, a significant number of Soviet prisoners of war were saved in Lithuania from starvation and other dangers, their absolute majority perished. Almost all the surviving prisoners of war were mobilised and sent to the front when the Red Army came to Lithuania.

2) Repression for Saving Jews

Repression for saving Jews might be dealt with as a separate subject, an integral part of the tragic, complicated and broad history of the Holocaust in Lithuania, nonetheless, repressive actions by Germans and their collaborators against Jew saviours must be addressed at least briefly. The number of persons who suffered for saving the victims of the Jewish Holocaust was rather small, however, due to a series of political, moral and other circumstances, they make up a special category of the Lithuanian population repressed during the Nazi occupation.

At least 90 percent of Lithuanian Jews were killed during the German occupation. Almost three-quarters of them were exterminated in the first stage of the Holocaust – by the end of 1941. The last six months of 1941 were the most tragic period of the annihilation of Lithuanian Jews. “That was an unprecedented case in the history of Lithuania – never before had there been so many Lithuanian people slaughtered in a short period of time in such a systematic way”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Certificate by the Soviet partisans on the basis of testimony by G. Ilginskis, LYA, doc.f. 1, inv. 1, file 99, p. 104.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., doc.f. 3377, inv. 55, file 153, p. 107–108; *Naujoji Lietuva* (The New Lithuania), 2 February 1944.

²⁰¹ *Lietuvos žydų žudynių byla: dokumentų ir straipsnių rinkinys*, (The Case of the Murder of Lithuanian Jews: collection of documents and articles), compiled by A.Eidintas, Vilnius, 2001, p. 169. (hereinafter – A.Eidintas, *Lietuvos žydų žudynių byla*); Saulius Sužiedėlis, *Avrahamo Torio Kauno getas : diena po dienos, Ivadas knygai “Avraham Tory, Kauno getas: diena po dienos*, (Kaunas Ghetto: Day after Day by Avraham Tory, Introduction to the book Kaunas Ghetto: Day after Day by Avraham Tory), Vilnius, 2000, p. XXXII.

There is variety of reasons behind Jew-saving: political or conjunctural, social, personal or conspirational, diplomatic or territorial, and lots of others that are difficult to classify and are usually subjective in nature²⁰².

Compared to the Soviet prisoners of war, the situation of Jews was by far more difficult, and their chances of survival were much slimmer. The POWs, as has already been mentioned, received a firm backing of a certain ethnically defined part of the Lithuanian population, i.e. Russian Lithuanians and other people of Slavic origin. Soviet POWs often experienced even mercy and sympathy to them by German soldiers; they had a certain freedom of choice, etc.

People saving Jews risked to be subjected to a more severe punishment: historian V.Sakaitė provides the following description: if a person told on as saving Jews pretended to have done so for money, he/she was sentenced to three months in prison; those who explained their actions as a Catholic's sympathy to the dying were regarded as partisans and their families with young children were shot down, while farms set ablaze or given over to the informer²⁰³.

At the very beginning, when massive murder of Jews had not started yet, people who had any contacts with Jews were publicly denounced by Germans and their collaborators: "Those who communicate to Jews, serve Jews, mediate for Jews in buying food products or support Jews in one or another way and have sexual intercourse with them, shall be betrayers of the nation placed on the board-column of shame and later punished".²⁰⁴

This is an extreme example of the early Nazi occupation, a certain "euphoria" of 1941, bestial anti-Semitism and its rhetoric that eliminated occurrences of any help to Jews. Similar stance and propaganda statements, unambiguous incitements to kill, condemnation and threatening rhetoric, however, were also abundant later, when the "Jewish issue" had already been "solved"; they existed throughout the whole period of occupation. Nonetheless, such a promotion of inhumanity and bestiality did not reach a universal effect. In spring 1943, the official publication *Ateitis* was forced to regret that "unfortunately, there are some individuals" who "forget about their dignity and self-respect" and "start rig businesses with Jews", "sympathy for Jews is always

²⁰² V.Sakaitė, *Žydų gelbėjimas, Genocidas ir rezistencija* (Saving of Jews, Genocide and Resistance), 1998, No. 2 (4), p. 82.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.95

²⁰⁴ Speech by A.Audronis, Alytus County Governor and Police Chief, in the congress of county precinct commanders on 16 July 1941 in Alytus, Uprising of June 1941: collection of documents, p. 198

incongruous ”, “those who stay in contact with Jews leave the community”, “every decent Lithuanian must turn his/her back to this element”²⁰⁵, etc.

It has to be admitted, however, that the Holocaust and its tragic development did not attract a considerable attention of the Lithuanian anti-Nazi press, which did not write about it openly, did not condemn the murder of Jews firmly and principally, or encourage the audience to save Jews or help them in any way.

As the process of driving Jews to ghettos and the operations of the Holocaust commenced, some Lithuanian public figures tried to stand up for Jews and protest against their murder. Z.Blynas, Secretary General of the Lithuanian Nationalist Party (LNP) wrote in his diary on 13 August 1941 that Col. J.Narakas (former Minister of the Interior of the Provisional Cabinet, and after it was dismissed General Advisor on Foreign Affairs) had called on him that same day to talk about a General whose wife was a Jew (they spoke about the family by Gen. V.Giedrys). Both of them agreed that persons, Jews and mixed families who had rendered special services to Lithuania should not be driven to ghettos but rather be accommodated at a separate place (e.g., in Panemunė) or in a province. In relation to this, J.Narakas had to write a note, and the first to speak to Germans on this was General Adviser P.Kubiliūnas²⁰⁶. In Kaunas, Gen. S.Raðtikis tried to defend Jews, in Īiauliai this was done by F.Bugailiðkis, Dr D.Jasaitis and Rev. Lapis. Unfortunately, their efforts yielded no result, and nobody suffered because of them. In Īiauliai, officials of the German occupational regime rejected all requests and criticism by Lithuanians, and one of them said to Dr D.Jasaitis: if further effort is made to interfere with Jewish matters, “you, sir, will be laid down to the same pit as the Jews”²⁰⁷.

Some ordinary citizens of Lithuania were much more courageous in protesting against murdering of Jews. Utena resident L.Vabalienė was arrested for attempting to help a detained Jewish white-band, scolded angrily for sympathising with Jews and beaten severely. In Strėvininkai (in between Rumšiškės and Kaišiadorys) women tried to prevent Germans from annihilating Jews by obstructing their path. The deranged Germans and Gestapo officers attacked the women by beating them with butts and kicking them. Severe injuries were inflicted on U.Paulauskienė, a 43-year old woman²⁰⁸.

²⁰⁵ *Kas su žydais palaiko ryšius, yra savo tautos išdavikas* (Those who stay in contact with Jews are Betrayers of the Nation), *Ateitis*, 21 April 1943.

²⁰⁶ Z. Blynas diary of the war years, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 55, file 235, p. 155.

²⁰⁷ A.Eidintas, *Lietuvos žydų žudynių byla*, p. 170.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.171

In Švenčionėliai, A. Tomilin, a peasant of Russian origin, spoke out aloud against shooting of Jews. The “nationalists” arrested and shot him down together with Jews in Dvenčionys shooting range²⁰⁹.

Even towards the end of the massive murder of Jews, the threat of actual criminal penalties and repression for any contacts with Jews stayed on. Announcement No.35 *Concerning Relations to Jews* by H.Cramer, Commissar of Kaunas city, issued on 13 October 1941, prohibited the population from maintaining any contacts with Jews, even “simple conversations” were banned, selling, exchanging or presenting food products and other goods for Jews, maintaining any commercial contacts was forbidden as well; officers of the German Police and the Lithuanian auxiliary police were warned to preclude any relationship with Jews without any reserve. All prohibited actions had to be severely punished²¹⁰.

Let me give some examples of specific punishments for the refusal to obey the interdictions of “any type” of contacts with Jews. Vilnius resident E.Zdanevičiūtė was standing on the sidewalk of Visų Šventųjų street in Vilnius talking to Jews. She had to be punished for that as she “obstructed the traffic”. Her “case” was sent over to the burgomaster of Vilnius city, the woman had to be sentenced to a harsh penalty as every person who “wore the Jewish star” was “a people’s enemy”, everyone who had “private affairs” with Jews was considered such an “enemy” and treated as a Jew²¹¹.

As early as in summer 1941, strict penalties were imposed on farmers who tried to sell food products to Jews. The Governor of Marijampolė County threatened with a fine of up to 10 thousand roubles or a year of forced labour in labour camps for such incidences²¹².

In September 1941, the Vilnius newspaper *Naujoji Lietuva* published a short article with an interesting headline “*Market Places Feel no Shortage of Assistants to Jews*” which wrote that E.Jurolovičiūtė employed at *Rūta* co-operative shop sold bread to Jews, without making them wait in a queue, at a prohibited time and at quantities higher than fixed. She was imposed a fine of 500 roubles and 30 days of detention by Vilnius County Governor²¹³.

The outset of the Holocaust was associated not only with punishments for contacts with Jews, but also with a series of other repressive actions. On 31 October 1941 in the Cathedral

²⁰⁹ questionnaires of the Perished for the Soviet Power, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 66, file 48, p.25.

²¹⁰ *Į kaisvę*, Kaunas daily, 14 October 1941.

²¹¹ *Naujoji Lietuva*, 16 November, 21 November 1941.

²¹² *Į kaisvę*, 19 August 1941

²¹³ *Naujoji Lietuva*, 13 September 1941

square in Vilnius, a person (the name unidentified) was hanged for concealing Jewish property or for the failure to inform about it.²¹⁴ This was probably the first case of hanging in public in Lithuania.

Officials of various authorities and repressive bodies used to be denounced, at least morally, for refusing to take part in the Holocaust operations. Joniškis Police Chief P.Vaitkus was arrested for refusing to shoot down Jews. Organiser of a rebel detachment Pyliponis, too, refused to shoot at Jews and forbade the operation as such. In Vilkaviškis, some policeman let some arrested Jews escape. Policeman Petraitis asked to be discharged from the service²¹⁵.

For refusal to shoot at Jews, a private of the Lithuanian self-defence (police) battalion was executed together with Jews in Kaunas; army officer B.Kirkila, who participated in the execution and later shot himself, is a kind of a Holocaust victim, as well²¹⁶. In autumn 1941, chief of Trakai police precinct K.Čaplikas, policeman J.Rimkus and others sheltered Jew Basas who had escaped ghetto for some time. Both of the police officers were arrested, taken to Vilnius and succeeded in escaping the capital punishment by a hair's breadth²¹⁷. Facts like these (and they were many more) alleviate, at least to some extent, the guilt of numerous Lithuanian participants of Jew shooting during the Holocaust.

Attempts to save Jews sometimes used to be mentioned by the press alongside descriptions of minor infringements in the relations with Jews and relevant penalties. The *Naujoji Lietuva* newspaper wrote about a Jewish lady calling herself L.Đtram who was arrested in a shelter in Vilnius. She pretended to be a Pole from Suvalkija and was harboured by Vilnius resident I.Stalnovich. A week later, the same newspaper reported about two other persons who gave refuge to Jews and they were said to be in for harsh penalties²¹⁸.

In Rūdninkai Street, Vilnius, about 50 Jews were sheltered in a house attic. They were located by yard-keeper G.Tirilas. He did not give the sheltering people away, rather than that, he

²¹⁴ Ibid., 1 November

²¹⁵ Notes by B.Baranauskas of 1963, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 55, file 16, p.187; A.Eidntas, *Lietuvos žydų žudynių byla*, p.173.

²¹⁶ R.Zizas, *Lietuvos kariai savisaugos batalionuose (1941–1944m.)* (Lithuanian soldiers in self-defence battalions (1941-1945)), Lithuanian archives, book. 11, Vilnius 1998, p. 58.

²¹⁷ LCVA, doc.f. R– 500, inv. 1, file 4, p. 702–703.

²¹⁸ *Naujoji Lietuva*, 20 November; 27 November 1941

helped them to hide, supplied them with water and food. The Germans exiled the yard-keeper to a concentration camp and he survived there²¹⁹.

Former eminent public figures of Lithuania, such as K.Grinius, M.Krupavičius and J.Aleksa, too, could be regarded as people who suffered for saving the persecuted. On 9 November 1942, they sent a memorandum to Commissar General of Lithuania A.Renteln in protest against colonisation of Lithuania and displacement of Lithuanian and Polish farmers. The memorandum contained a short mildly worded protest against occupant policies vis-à-vis Jews: “The Lithuanian people cannot support such measures, just like they do not support measures against the Lithuanian Jews”²²⁰. In general, the memorandum evoked a vast response in Lithuania. The reaction of Germans was as follows: M.Krupavičius and J.Aleksa were arrested and exiled to Germany, K.Grinius, due to his old age and poor health, to a village nearby Marijampolė.

In general, the data on the number and type of punishments for people supporting Jews in Lithuania have not been summarised yet. A.Eidintas indicates that the following people were detained and executed together with the Jews they sheltered: Jablonskis from Kaunas, Košeniuskas from Jonava Rural District (in October 1942), K.Markevičius from Kiduliai Rural District, Šakiai County, Miniotas from Betygala Town in Raseiniai County, Mingaila from Kaunas, Jasaitienė from Raseiniai, father and son Mizeris from Šakiai Rural District, Radzevičius from Sakalas Rural District Zarasai County, farmer Rinkevičius from Pabradė Rural District, V.Žakavičius from Gelgaudiškis, Šakiai County, etc. According to the data from the questionnaires of the Lithuanians incarcerated in DP camps collected by J.Rimažauskas alone, about 50 Lithuanians from various parts of the country were arrested and imprisoned for harbouring Jews²²¹.

In addition to the above-mentioned names, V.Sakaitė mentions the execution of Vytas Vaitkus, Bronius Jocy (Kaunas IXth Fort), Vytautas Kadzevičius, all members of the Kerza family, Petras Požėla, all members of the Jablonskis family, Juozas Rutkauskas (who saved the lives of more than 150 persons), Priest of Viduklė Town, who tried to shelter 30 Jewish children in his church and was shot together with them²²².

²¹⁹ Statement by F. and R.Feldman of June 1946 to the Government of the LSSR, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 3377, file 302, p.1-4.

²²⁰ The Archive of Freedom Fights, vol.2, Kaunas, 1991, p.87.

²²¹ A.Eidintas, Lietuvos žydų žudynių byla, p. 177.

²²² V.Sakaitė, *Žydų gelbėjimas* (Saving of Jews), p.95

On 31 January 1942, in Vilnius Vytautas Juodka was shot down for sheltering two Jewish women M. and I. Podselver in his flat; he was shot together with the women. J. Matlakas, resident of Paberžė Ward, was sentenced to one year of hard labour in prison for giving refuge to 5 Jews at the end of 1941²²³. According to the testimony of a Soviet POW hiding in East Lithuania, an old Lithuanian in Januđevčina was caught and torched together with his house for sheltering Jews²²⁴. In October 1942 a woman in Vilnius was sentenced to death for trying to sell meat to Jews in the ghetto²²⁵.

Examples of other ways of tragic deaths of Jew saviours than being shot are available, as well. On 12 January 1944, in Simnas under the ashes of a barn, a burnt body of Steponas Paulauskas was found. Steponas Paulauskas had helped Jews a lot. Here is the story of his death: when the police started breaking into his home, he decided to oppose. Thus he shot down a policeman, wounded another, and ran to the cellar for sheltering Jews. Upon arrival, Germans threw a grenade into the bunker, set the house ablaze, and S. Paulauskas was burnt alive²²⁶.

A peculiar way of saving Jews was to christen them, and there were some Catholic priests who were punished for christening Jews. The Note of Vilnius Gebietscomissar of 23 September 1941 to the SS and to the Police Chief in Vilnius stated that everybody around were informing him that a "part" of the christened Jews had not been taken to the ghetto yet and were still walking in the streets of the city. The Note includes instructions on who must be considered a Jew. Persons with one or two of the grandparents of Jewish origin belonging to the Jewish religious community and spouses of a Jew had to be considered Jews.

Later, the "definition" of Jews was slightly narrowed. The secret Order of the Security Police of 4 November 1942 to the Lithuanian security police concerning registration of "mixed Jewish" marriages instructs that a person with three or four of the grandparents "belonging to the Jewish race", irrespective of the religious affiliation, shall be considered a Jew; a christened Jew does not become an "Aryan". The Order demonstrates that at the end of 1942, there were some mixed families with one of the spouses being a Jew, and they lived free, thus, the Order instructed that they had to be registered by the end of the year. Jews were prohibited from living with "Aryan" wives, they had to move to ghettos, while their wives and children were allowed to

²²³ *Lietuvos liaudis Didžiąjame Tėvynės kare*, (People of Lithuania in World War II)p. 83.

²²⁴ LYA, doc.f. 16895, inv. 2, file 186, p. 152.

²²⁵ *Kaip naciai žudo žydus Lietuvoje (sovietinių partizanų šaltinis)* (How Nazis kill Jews in Lithuania (a source of Soviet partisans), LYA, doc.f. 1771, inv. 6, file 174, p. 140.

²²⁶ A.Eidintas, *Lietuvos žydų žudynių byla*, p.185; LYA, doc.f. 1771, inv.6, file 174, p.140

continue living unconfined (in case of refusal to divorce, all family members had to move to ghettos). Jewish women who married “Aryans” were allowed to stay with them, though their rights were restricted: they were not permitted to visit restaurants, hotels, cafes, theatres, “bathing” places, though they could attend Lithuanian cinemas²²⁷.

Later, the legislation concerning mixed families most probably became more stringent. All Jewish members of mixed families were placed in ghettos, their “Aryan” spouses who refused to get divorced appeared there, too. For instance, son Algirdas of Lithuanian writer and diplomat Jurgis Savickis (1890-1952) did not repudiate his Jewish wife and went to the ghetto together with her. In early October 1943, he was shot down by a Lithuanian guard when trying to defend his wife against sexual harassment of the guard. J.Savickienė and her daughter were deported to Stuthof, where they received the care of Lithuanians, including B. Sruoga²²⁸.

The State Jewish Museum in Vilnius has gathered data on more than 3 thousand saved Jews, and 2.7 thousand Lithuanians helped them to survive. The figures are not finite. As the research of the Holocaust history advances, the number of saviours grows, new and new names are identified. The bitter truth of history is that Lithuania did not have any organised underground movement and no more effective effort was made to save Jews, thus, the absolute majority of Jews were exterminated, and only individual courageous people who, unfortunately, were not many, tried to save them.

German-USSR Warfare in Lithuania in 1944-1945 and Civilian Losses

In summer 1944, three years after the outset of the German-USSR war, the territory of Lithuania became the theatre of war once again. Like in 1941, military actions resulted in the killing of Lithuanian civilian population, material damage and various other losses. The Red Army chasing the withdrawing German army entered Lithuania in early July 1944, while its Western-most part (the city and region of Klaipėda) was occupied at the end of January 1945. Thus, the territory of Lithuania witnessed more than six-months-long military operations that finished the Nazi occupation and brought about the Soviet liberation of Lithuania.

²²⁷ LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 58, file 811, p.8.

²²⁸ *Apie Jurgį Savickį: atsiminimai, dokumentai, kritika*, (About Jurgis Savickis: Memories, Documents, Criticism), Vilnius, 2000, p. 39–40, 96–97.

In terms of the destructive, disastrous and ruining affect of the war actions on the country and its civilian population, some of the factors and circumstances played a similar role as in 1941, when the war began. When invading Lithuania in 1941, Germans encountered a weak and poorly organised resistance of the Red Army, while in 1944, the situation was opposite, as it was the retreating German army that was hardly able to resist. Objectively, this eliminated the possibility of major material damage and losses of civilian people.

From the military perspective, when the front reached Lithuania, the outcome of the war had already been solved long ago adversely to Germany, as its army had been irretrievably crushed on the Eastern front, thus it had lost the strategic initiative irreversibly. The majority (about two thirds) of the territory of Lithuania was liberated during the combat operation launched by the Red Army on 23 June 1944 in Belarus: the four front troops of the Red Army broke the German front nearby Vitebsk and Orsha and besieged a huge group of the German army nearby Minsk. Further to the West, there was no continuous front line, and the withdrawing Germans resisted with relatively small forces. The attack of the Red Army via Lithuania was aggressive and rapid, Germans being left with no time to build entrenchment by the Nemunas - the last natural barrier suitable for defence on the way to East Prussia. Vilnius was taken on 13 July, Panevėžys on 22 July, Šiauliai on 27 July, Kaunas on 1 August, etc. Germans succeeded in stabilising the front for a longer period of time only in late August 1944 on the line Vilkaviškis-Šakiai-Raseiniai-Kuršėnai.

The unexpectedly broken front in Belarus and the rapid approach of the Red Army to Lithuania ruined not only the defence, withdrawal and evacuation plans of the German military and political leadership, but also the plans of nationalist underground organisations preparing for the anti-Soviet resistance. Moreover, the situation discouraged a certain share of the population, which collaborated with Germans, from defending the borders of Lithuania against the Red Army invasion. The latter circumstance prevented the Lithuanian people from participating in the war and, inevitably, becoming politically meaningless human victims.

The Lithuanian public was rather concerned about the actions of the German occupiers during their retreat from Lithuania. In Lithuania, there were thousands of people evacuated from the front zones in Russia and Belarus, victims, witnesses and executors of brutal German occupational policies, various repressive operations against civilian population (Lithuanian policemen, self-defence battalion soldiers, etc.). Germans were thought to be able to behave the

same in Lithuania. Archival sources indicate that leaders of the Polish underground in East Lithuania did not discount the possibility that retreating Germans would evacuate the population by force: special military units would repress those refusing to evacuate, they would shoot them down, throw grenades to flats, cellars, explode and set various objects ablaze, etc. This was said to have been their behaviour during the evacuation in Mogilev, Orsha, Vitebsk and other places of Belarus, thus, the evacuation would be the same in Lithuania²²⁹.

Potential risks of forced evacuation and various repressive operations against the population are evident in the documents of the Soviet underground and Lithuanian nationalist underground, as well. At the beginning of 1944, the representatives of the two movements established certain contacts and discussed, despite huge contradictions between each other, the ways to build up "real forces" that would not allow Germans to "transport people and property of Lithuania out", would hinder their "destruction of cities, residential areas and other assets of Lithuania"²³⁰.

No data, however, exist on a larger-scale forced evacuation of people, destruction of residential areas, cruel treatment of civilian population and other actions conducted by the withdrawing Germans that could be termed war crimes, crimes against humanity, etc. Due to the reasons mentioned above, the German occupiers had no time for actions like those or operations analogous to the 1941 "pay-back" actions.

On the other hand, sources and historiography contain opposing ambiguous facts, thus the actual specific developments of 1944, during the war, call for further research. For instance, in the environs of Nemunaitis, Alytus County, Southeast Lithuania, the withdrawing German army would not put to the torch farmsteads located either on their way, or further away, though most of them were empty, meanwhile in neighbouring Miroslavas Town and its surroundings in Užnemunė, special arson teams, prior to withdrawal, burnt down a number of farmsteads in order to leave Russians without any landmarks²³¹.

²²⁹ *Visuomenės nuotaikos* (Public Moods): 15 January 1944 Report by an Authorised Representative of the Polish Government to Warsaw, LYA, doc.f. 3377, inv. 55, file 217, p.p. 20-21

²³⁰ Letter by S.Apyvala, Commander of Soviet partisans in East Lithuania, to A.Sniečkus of 7 April 1944, LYA, doc.f.1, inv.1, file 42, p.p.26-35.

²³¹ *S. Jegelevičius, Nemunaitis ir jo parapija* (Nemunaitis and its parish), book II, Vilnius, 2002, p.1052.

In the first years after the war, the Soviet press used to publish facts and data on farmsteads or entire villages burnt by the withdrawing German army: Miežiūnai, a village in Krinčinas Rural District, Biržai County, North Lithuania, was set ablaze; a nice primary school of the village was consumed in flames; Sakališkės village in Švenčionys County, East Lithuania, was burnt to the ground²³², etc. Establishing whether fire to farmsteads and villages was set deliberately or due to the actions of war is difficult.

In general, the first Soviet sources after liberation describe the state of most Lithuanian counties, cities and towns liberated from the German occupation as relatively good, with few human and property losses, and this, probably, reflected specific realities of the historical truth. Soon afterwards, however, data about damage done by German occupiers were quickly swollen, politicised and ideologised, thus they reached an incredibly high level. German occupiers were also held guilty for property looting, various acts of abuse of power and other crimes committed by the Red Army or repressive structures of the Soviet occupational regime.

Nonetheless, even the Soviet propaganda sources reflecting the real historical reality tendentiously and the Soviet propaganda literature of a later period provide no data about the losses of Lithuanian people during the actions of war. Party and Soviet official sources from Zarasai county note that the remaining corpses after the battle in the fields of Smalvai Rural District, Zarasai County, make harvesting difficult (most probably, these were the remains of Germans soldiers killed in the battles rather than civilian victims). Documents of the authorities of Alytus County mention incinerated villages or individual farmsteads, shortage of animals, "dispersed", though not killed, local residents²³³. The front that swept Nemunaitis environs did not inflict either major property or human losses. During the warfare, 3 people were killed in the parish of Nemunaitis, 10 were wounded, and 4 went missing²³⁴.

In 1944, the greatest damage was suffered by the counties of Lithuania (particularly cities, towns, settlements) which were geographically located on the way to East Prussia and in which the front made a stop and battles took place (Vilkavīdkis, Ėakiai, Raseiniai, Ėiauliai, Mažeikiai, etc.). In these counties, residents of the front zone were evicted by the German military authorities

²³² *Tiesa*, 6 February; 11 November 1945

²³³ Minutes of the Meeting of the Zarasai County committee of the LCP(B) on 20 August 1944, LYA, doc.f. 913, inv. 913, file 1, p. 11; Minutes of the Meeting of the Alytus County committee of the LCP(B) and the Executive Committee on 18 August 1944, LYA, doc.f. 1308, inv. 1308, file. 1, p. 4 .

and mobilised to open trenches and do other military enforcement works. For example, residents of 10 villages (out of the total of 13) were evacuated to Tauragė County from Šakiai County across the Nemunas. About 80 per cent of buildings, animals and other property were burnt down as a result of war actions in Šakiai County. A great damage was inflicted on Raseiniai County which had 4500 farmsteads, all of the buildings in which were set ablaze, the Raseiniai town was burnt and destroyed by 90 per cent: ca 740 buildings, 429 of them residential houses²³⁵.

Civilian population suffered seriously from mines and other explosives left by the German army in fields. According to Soviet sources, from 1944 to 1945, 873 people were killed and 1347 injured in Lithuania. The figure in Šakiai County is, accordingly, 347 and 820, Vilkaviškis County 122 and 222, Ukmergė County 123 and 42, Mažeikiai County 55 and 44, Raseiniai County 25 and 39, etc.²³⁶

Some civilians were killed during air raids and bombardments even at the time when the front had moved far away and no threat was perceived any longer. On the night of 13 September 1944, Germans bombarded the city of Panevėžys, liberated by the Red Army back on 22 July, 55 buildings were damaged, 24 people killed (including 6 militaries), 48 wounded. The bombardment scared people who had returned to the city, and they began fleeing it again²³⁷.

The retreating Germans carried out massive evacuation of people from the region of Klaipėda separated from Lithuania in 1939 and annexed to Germany. The Red Army found only a few people in Klaipėda, and about 6 thousand in the entire region.

M. Gedvilas, Chairman of the LSSR People's Commissar Council, mentioned the following figures in his speech on the consequences of the German occupation delivered at the session of the LSSR Supreme Council: during the actions of war, German occupiers killed 1235 people²³⁸. This is an additional fact and proof (particularly bearing in mind its propaganda nature) that the human losses during the warfare in 1944 and 1945 were not significant.

²³⁴ S. Jegelevičius, *Nemunaitis ir jo parapija* (Nemunaitis and its parish), p. 1069-1070.

²³⁵ 1945 Note by the Āakiai County committee of the LCP(B) to M. Suslov, A. Sniečkus, M. Gedvilas, LYA, doc.f. 1806, inv. 1806, file. 1, p. 63-65; Material of the 1945 Seventh Plenum of the Central Committee of the LCP(B), LYA, doc.f. 1771, inv. 7, file 86, p. 123-124.

²³⁶ LYA, doc.f. 1771, inv. 8, file 191, p.97.

²³⁷ 19 September 1944 Report by the Panevėžys County LCP(B) to the Central Committee of the LCP(B), LYA, doc.f. 1771, inv. 7, file 149, p. 147.

²³⁸ *Tiesa*, 24 July 1945.

Unfortunately, the Red Army that liberated Lithuania did not bring the true freedom, independence, other social political values and expectations with it. The Nazi occupation and dictatorship were replaced by another (Soviet) occupation and dictatorship. Together with the German occupiers and their collaborators, thousands of "innocent" people from various strata of the Lithuanian society, first of all, from the intelligentsia, escaped the Soviet regime by fleeing to the West. Soviet sources recognise that there were 4 to 5 farms in each rural district of Īiauliai County and their owners fled together with Germans: they did not possess major assets, they had not inflicted any harm on anyone, they escaped just "out of fear"²³⁹. The situation was more or less similar all over Lithuania. By 1949, farms of 13 928 "people's enemies" who escaped to the West, i.e. more than 485 thousand hectares of land, were appropriated to the Soviet land reform fund²⁴⁰. Ca 60 thousand people left Lithuania. In 1944, the front that crossed Lithuanian while moving to the West marked a breakthrough, a new page in the history of the Lithuanian people.

CONCLUSIONS

The present research work on the Persecution of Non-Jewish Citizens and Murder of Civilian Population covers a broad spectrum of complex problems of Lithuanian history in the period of Nazi occupation from 1941 to 1944. The historical heritage of this period, possibly except for the Holocaust that has been subject to intense research lately, has been scarcely analysed, and its understanding remains politicised and ideologised, the historiography remains under influence of old (Soviet) myths and stereotypes.

Under occupation, Lithuania could not make a state-level research into the Nazi occupation period so that it would be objective, based on witnesses and sources, likewise, it could not objectively assess the developments of the past and reveal the historical truth to its own people and to the international community. According to the data of the Soviet Special State Commission that worked in autumn 1944-spring 1945, 300 thousand civilians were killed, later, due to political considerations, the losses were inflated, and the concept of massive annihilation of various nationalities emerged in the domain of historiography. The Lithuanian émigré and foreign historiography had a larger variety of opinions and evaluations, however, the latter historians, too,

²³⁹ LYA, doc.f. 1771, inv. 1771, file 48, p.25.

²⁴⁰ Resolution of the Central Committee of the LCP(B) and Council of Ministers of the LSSR on The Results of the Land Reform, LYA, doc.f. 1771, inv. 51, file. 289, p. 20.

were prone to swell the actual consequences of the Nazi occupation and demographic losses of the population. (According to the data of the émigré economist A.Tarulis, 14 to 16 thousand of Lithuanian people were killed, J.Misūnas and R.Taageperos put the figure at 10 to 20 thousand, A.Damušis at 45 thousand). Similar figures indicating the scope of the murder are quoted in the historiography of independent Lithuania.

What were the repercussions of the repressive policies of the Nazi occupational regime to non-Jewish citizens, how many of them fell victim to the Nazis, what categories of victims can be distinguished, what does the picture of the legacy of the Nazi repressive policies look like compared to other countries? To answer these and a number of other questions, an in-depth thorough research needs to be conducted and the well-known events and facts call for further consideration.

The present research is an effort to approach, at least to a certain extent, to the historical truth on these issues, to present factual material, to mention the most important developments and facts necessary to reveal the repressive events and processes of the Nazi occupation period.

The losses of life (deaths) of the Lithuanian population due to the warfare in 1941 were not great as they were estimated at several hundred. This was owing to the shortness of the military actions, weak resistance of the Red Army to the attacking German army, and other factors.

The majority of the population of Lithuania met the invading German army as "liberators". This made a positive influence on the behaviour of Germans and their treatment of local people. In spite of that, while invading Lithuania, the occupying German army perpetrated brutal massive violent operations provoked by the resistance of the Red Army. Abligiai, a village in Kretinga County, was burn down, 42 people shot; Alytus witnessed a yet more cruel and massive murder when from 150 to 300 people were executed, 11 men were shot down in Švendūna, a village in Raseiniai County, and the village was set ablaze, etc. The actual and fake attacks against the German army were used as a pretext to commit the first murders of Jews and Communists.

In Lithuania, the war and the German occupation were accompanied by the outburst of murders and other repressive operations against communist, members of the Young Communist League, Soviet officials, activists of the Communist party and other Soviet organisations, i.e. the political social category of people shaped following the 1940-1941 Soviet occupation of the state of Lithuania. The Soviet occupation of Lithuania and sovietisation on the eve of the war determined a positive attitude of the majority of the Lithuanian population towards Germans

(differently from the Western European countries occupied by them), and hatred, national and personal revenge to the true and suspected Soviet collaborators. Terror against Soviet partisan activists (a part of Jews suffered from it, too) was, to a certain extent, a phenomenon inspired by Germans; on the other hand, it was a local spontaneous, impulsive responsive, unjustifiably violent reaction against the perpetrators of Soviet repressive actions aimed at sovietisation. A significant role in the anti-Soviet repressive actions was played by the participants of the uprising of June 1941, and later, by the units of the auxiliary police.

Killed communists, members of the Young Communist league, Soviet officials and activists, all of whom were regarded as an anti-state element, together with collaborators of the Soviets fall into the most numerous category of the Lithuanian population killed during the Nazi occupation period. The victims of this category totalled to 1.5-2 thousand. The anticommunist terror was unreasonably cruel, merciless, inadequate to the "crimes" committed by the victims, unlawful.

Another sizeable group of the murdered or otherwise repressed consisted of the victims of repressive operations against armed Soviet underground in Lithuania, terror and revenge ("pay-back") on the local population according to the criminal principle of "collective responsibility and punishment" for committed subversion and sabotage operations. To fight against the Soviet underground, to intimidate the local people, to break the spirit of any anti-German resistance, the occupiers perpetrated massive and individual murders of persons accused of communist activities in various places of Lithuania (Kaunas, Vilnius, Panevėžys, Šiauliai etc.), and several hundred people were shot down during massive and individual executions. In the revenge operations in spring 1942, about 400 people were shot down in Dvenčionys environs, about 15 villages were put to the torch during the entire period of occupation (mainly in autumn 1943), their residents were taken to Germany for labour. Exceptionally heinous was the operation in Pirčiupiai village (Trakai county), which was set ablaze and its residents were killed (119 people were burnt alive and shot) in June 1944.

Strict occupational policy of the Nazi occupational regime (and the Lithuanian self-governance administration as an integral part of it) was pursued vis-à-vis Poles living in Lithuania. Ca 1 thousand Poles, mainly representatives of the intelligentsia, fell victim to massive and individual execution. The deportation of Lithuanian people for forced labour to Germany had a clear anti-Polish shade.

Murders and other types of repression for actions of the Lithuanian national anti-Nazi underground, resistance to occupier military and labour force mobilisations, economic exploitation (refusal to pay duties or perform other obligations), etc. did not reach a large scale in Lithuania. Boycotting the idea to form a Lithuanian SS legion on a voluntary basis inflicted damage to the Lithuanian intelligentsia and the sphere of cultural life (ca 60 Lithuanian intellectuals and public figures were incarcerated in Stuthoff concentration camps, institutions of higher education were closed, etc.). All in all, several thousand of Lithuanian people might have been imprisoned in German concentration camps.

In villages and cities, mainly in summer 1943, Nazi occupiers carried out punitive manhunt operations (usually Latvian, Estonian and Ukrainian police battalions sent to Lithuania were employed for that), in autumn 1943, they devastated East Lithuania for resisting military and labour force mobilisation, killed and arrested well-known people, employed various intimidation and blackmail measures. The threat of massive repression was permanent. After a failure to organise the mobilisation of Lithuanian men in spring 1944, more than 80 soldiers of the Lithuanian Local District were fired down.

In the repressive operation against economic saboteur (for refusing to pay duties and perform obligations, etc.) early in 1943 in Vilnius County, ca 40 farmers were executed. Mentally ill and incurables were eradicated.

Various ways of Nazi repression (including the severest ones, when death penalty was applied) were targeted at those residents of the occupied Lithuania who tried to save persecuted and terrorised people. The most sizeable categories that were subjected to exceptionally atrocious Nazi terror consisted of Jews and Soviet prisoners of war.

Specifying the data about civilian losses (direct victims of murder) during the Nazi occupation years is difficult due to the state of research and historiography. The approximate direct losses of murders committed in Lithuania add up to ca 5 thousand people. A conclusion can be drawn that the scope of repressive operations and loss of non-Jewish citizens of Lithuania were not great.

The Nazi occupational regime tried to exploit Lithuanian resources to the maximum to satisfy the needs of Germany's war effort, to maintain order and economic capacity of the country. As a strategically important country of the rearward, Lithuania was needed to the occupier as a peaceful, functioning country supplying large amounts of food and raw materials to the war industry. Therefore, the occupiers tried to put up with many hostile phenomena,

failures of military and labour force mobilisation, and during the war, they were forced to give up their aggressive plans.

In the specific historical context of the war and the Nazi occupation in Lithuania, the biggest and the most vicious crime perpetrated by German Nazis and their collaborators in Lithuania, its scope and number of victims being incomparable to any other repression and human murder, is the murder of the almost entire Jewish community in Lithuania (the number of the Holocaust victims amounts to about 200 thousand) and massive annihilation of Soviet POWs.

Documents Annexed

No.1 - Testimony of witnesses (J. Borevičius and A.Vilimas) on the murder of civilian population in Alytus in June 1941.

No.2 - 6 July 1941 Order by the German Local Commander to the civilian population threatening with shooting for refusal to give up arms.

No.3 - 1965 Act of the Party History Institute on the murder of Jews and Soviet activists in 1941-1942 in Marijampolė.

No. 5 - Announcement by Vilnius County Gebietscommissar H.Wulff "Vilnius County Men and Women" on mass murder of people in Švenčionys region in May 1942.

No.6 - Vilnius County Gebietscommissar H.Wulff Note of 28 May 1942 to District County Governors concerning restriction of repressive measures after mass murder in Švenčionys region in May 1942.

No.7 - Announcement by Panevėžys County Gebietscommissar (W.Neum) on mass murder on 5 June 1942 in Panevėžys district.

No.8 - 15 February 1943 Note of the Head of the Valkininkai Rural District, Alytus County, to wardens of rural district concerning executed farmers for failure to pay duties.

No.9 - 1965 Act of the Party History Institute on the arson of villages in May 1943 in Šiauliai County.

No.10 - Lithuanian national underground source on the manhunt of people for labour in Germany in June 1943 in Kazlų Rūda (Marijampolė County).

No.11 - Lithuanian national underground sources about mass manhunt in summer and autumn 1943 in Lithuania.

No. 12 - 14 September 1943 Report by the Head of Kaišiadorys Rural District, Trakai County, to the Governor of Trakai County concerning economic effect of the manhunt in autumn 1943.

No. 13 - 9 September 1943 Note No. 12438 by A. T. Renteln, Commissar General of Lithuania, to P.Kubiliūnas, First Counsellor General, concerning collective responsibility and application of tight penalties on the population for partisan diversions on railways.

No.14 - Announcement of 15 September 1943 by Vilnius County Gebietscommissar H.Wulff on burning of villages and deportation of people to labour from Vilnius County in autumn 1943 for diversions on railways organised by Soviet partisans.

No. 15 - Extract from the report of the Lithuanian police concerning arson of villages in October 1943 in Rokiškis County.

No. 16 - Source of 23 October 1943 of the Lithuanian national underground concerning burning of villages in Rokiškis County.

No. 17 - Acts written by Soviet partisans in 1944 concerning villages burnt to ground by German occupiers in South East Lithuania in spring 1944.

No. 18 - Source of the Lithuanian national underground (author Z.Blynas?) on the village of Pirčiupiai (Trakai County) burnt down on 3 June 1944 together with people.

No. 19 - 25 July 1945 Report by the Special State Commission of the Lithuanian SSR to the Special State Commission of the USSR on the identified consequences of the war and the Nazi occupation in Lithuania.