

## **Review of the Study by Dr. Arūnas Bubnys “Lithuanian police battalions and Holocaust (1941 – 1943)”**

*by prof. Konrad Kwiet*

Generally speaking, Dr Bubnys' conclusion that Lithuanian Police Battalions (we are talking here only of the "geschlossenen Einheiten" of the Lithuanian "Schutzmannschaften" (Schuma) were involved in the murder of the Jews falls within the realms of historical truth: He confirms the findings of numerous war crimes investigations and trials as well as the findings of recent historical research. However, I question his assumption that only two Battalions (1/13 -2/12) "were involved in systematic and mass killings of the Jewish population". Moreover, I do not share his view that the murderous campaigns were limited to 1941 and restricted to Lithuania and Belarus.

It is not clear to me how Dr. Bubnys explains the distinction between "involvement" and "participation", or how he defines the concept of perpetrator, let alone, how he arrives at a death toll of "some 78 000" Jews and a figure of "some 1 000 servicemen... involved in the murder. Does this figure of 1 000 relate only to marksmen, to shooters of execution squads or to all other members of the Battalions who carried out relevant functions ensuring the successful implementation of "Judenaktionen". The tasks assigned ranged from fetching victims from their houses, via escorting and guarding them at "collecting points" to escorting them to the execution sites and sealing off the killing fields. In 1942, according to German records, the strength of 17 Lithuanian Schuma Battalions (1-15, 251, 252E) amounted some 7 800 men (some 250 officers, 1 700 NOCs, 5 900 men). To my knowledge, there are no statistics disclosing the exact figures (or brake ups) of those fulfilling relevant functions within the process of destruction.

I have some reservations in accepting the conclusion that Battalions guarding Jews in KZ and Ghettos took part in executions only occasionally, "only episodically". Killing was part of their daily routine, especially at the final stage when decisions had been made to liquidate KZ and Ghettos.

Battalions were not only deployed in Lithuania and Belarus but also in Poland ( f.e. guarding the KZ Lublin-Maidanek), the Ukraine and other areas of Nazi occupied territories. They participated in numerous "anti-Partisan" operations many of which served only as a smoke screen to implement the program of the "Final Solution". Exemplary for this was the large-scale operation "Sumpffieber". Two Lithuanian Schuma Bataalions (3, 15) were involved. There is also sufficient evidence to suggest that Schuma Battalions played a vital role in hunting down and liquidating Jews who had escaped into forests attempting to join the partisans and/or to set up "Jewish family camps". Are these anti-Jewish operations incorporated into Dr Bubnys' research report?

Another question. Four Battalions (4, 7, 8, 11) were sent to the Ukraine largely deployed along the DG 4 ("Durchgangsstrasse 4"), a transit and supply route of utmost significance for the German war effort. Stationed at various sections near Stalino, Winniza and Uman, they were guarding numerous Jewish labor camps, escorting inmates to their working places as well as killing those declared as "unfit for work". Are these activities incorporated into Dr. Bubnys' research report?

