

Review of the study by Arūnas Bubnys “Lithuanian Police Batalions and Holocaust (1941 – 1943)”

By prof. Liudas Truska

The Lithuanian police battalions and their activities is one of the most controversial topics in the contemporary Lithuanian history. Some consider them as champions of Lithuania's independence (fighters against soviet troops and communist partisans), others, especially Jewish authors see all them as murderers.

So far there have been no profound and detailed study into this issue. We never new what battalions participated in the Holocaust, and what part of their personnel was involved in the killing of Jews and people of other categories.

Basing his opinions on a variety of resources and mainly on the material available from the Lithuanian Central National and the Lithuanian Special Archives, Dr. A.Bubnys more or less provided answers to all of the key issues related to the Holocaust:

- 1) what Lithuanian police battalions were involved in the Holocaust and the killings in general;
- 2) what were the characteristics of such involvement in the Holocaust;
- 3) what was the approximate number of Jews killed by the police battalions;
- 4) what was the number of Lithuanian police battalions soldiers engaged in the killings.

Where Dr. A.Bubnys failed to clarify one or another thing, he fairly admits it (for instance, the part of the Vilnius 15th Battalion in the Holocaust).

Now, as for my critical opinions and requests. I think the historiographic part of the study is incomplete. It even bears absolutely no reference (while it should have) as to the works of Peter Stanker (*Lithuanian Police, Years 1941-1944*, V., 1998), and H.L.Gaidis (*A History of the Lithuanian Military Forces in World War, 1939-1945*, Chicago, 1998), or the book *Lithuanian Police. On Guard of Law and Order* published in Chicago.

Dr. A.Bubnys established that about one thousand of soldiers from the Lithuanian police battalions took part in the Holocaust. What percentage was that of all the soldiers serving in the battalions? Quite true, the author made clear that 10 battalions were involved in the Holocaust, making 40 per cent of total battalions. However, the ration of the battalions participating in the Holocaust does not demonstrate the ratio of such battalions' soldiers involved in the Holocaust. Obviously, the latter was quite smaller. Could Dr. A.Bubnys not have indicated at least an approximate figure of personnel that served in the battalions during 1941 to 1943? Then, one could decide what part of them participated in the killings.

On the whole, I am in favour of Dr. A.Bubnys' study. It shall provide a good basis for arriving at the Commission's conclusions.

I shall provide my detailed comments to Dr. A.Bubnys directly.

February 26, 2001