

America Knew What Its Lithuanian Allies Had Done

The American archive is not Lithuania's alibi. It is a hostile witness.

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For decades, Lithuanian political and memory institutions have worked to separate the men from the offices they held, the offices from the institutions they served, and the institutions from the nation whose authority they claimed. A biography becomes an anomaly. A police file becomes a German story. An intelligence relationship becomes an American moral failure, and a denaturalization judgment becomes a question of immigration paperwork. The pieces are kept apart so that the pattern never has to be named.

United States records put the pieces back together. They identify an acting head of government, a municipal administrator, a security-police chief and his deputy, two more officers from the same police apparatus, and members of a Lithuanian mobile killing battalion. Some were useful to Western intelligence. Some received immigration assistance. Some entered and naturalized by concealing the record that later caught up with them. Several returned to Lithuania when American scrutiny began.

This is not a theory about collective ethnic guilt. Ordinary Lithuanians are not on trial in these pages. The accusation concerns identifiable institutions, identifiable officials, and state-sponsored memory practices. The American files show how deeply Lithuanian political, police and armed structures were represented among the men who reached the West, and how modern Lithuania later tried to convert American use, American delay and American administrative closure into national innocence.

Paperclip established the method

Operation Paperclip has become shorthand for one of the defining moral bargains of the early Cold War. The United States wanted German scientific knowledge more urgently than it wanted a clean accounting of how that knowledge had been produced. The program had a specific scope: German and Austrian scientists, engineers and technicians. It would be inaccurate to place every compromised European later used by American intelligence inside Paperclip itself.

The narrower label must not conceal the broader method. In July 1945 the Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized the recruitment of up to 350 specialists under the code name Overcast. By 1946 the Pentagon's Joint Intelligence Objectives Agency wanted a thousand of them and wanted authority to naturalize them. President Truman approved the expanded plan in September 1946 on a stated condition: nominal participants in the Nazi Party could come, active supporters of Nazism could not. Between 1945 and 1955, 765 specialists entered the United States under Overcast, Paperclip and related programs. The National Archives' own account records the estimate that at least half of them, and perhaps as many as eighty percent, had been Nazi Party members.¹

¹ National Archives, Implementation of the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act: An Interim Report to Congress (October 1999), sections on Overcast and Paperclip, Truman's September 1946 condition, the 765 imported specialists, Nazi Party membership estimates, and the request for revised security reports, <https://www.archives.gov/iwg/reports/nazi-war-crimes-interim-report-october-1999>.

The condition did not survive contact with the requirement. When the interagency review panel rejected dossiers on the strength of Nazi records, the JIOA director wired the intelligence chief at U.S. European Command and asked that revised security reports be prepared so that the men could qualify.

The state did not lose the evidence. It changed the administrative meaning of the evidence.

The same calculation appeared outside science. The desired product was intelligence about the Soviet Union, access to émigré organizations, psychological warfare, clandestine contacts and political influence behind the Iron Curtain. Lithuanian political and security networks supplied those commodities.

The American government described the bargain in its own words

On May 17, 1982, Peter Rodino, chairman of the House Committee on the Judiciary, asked the General Accounting Office to determine whether federal agencies had helped Nazi war criminals and Axis collaborators enter the United States and had concealed their backgrounds. The GAO reported on June 28, 1985. It found no government program designed to import Nazis and collaborators, and it entered one exception on the face of that sentence. The exception was Project Paperclip. It then found something harder to dismiss: American intelligence units knowingly employed alleged Nazis and Axis collaborators to obtain information about Soviet intentions and capabilities.

Reviewing the files of 114 Europeans, the GAO identified twelve immigrants with undesirable or questionable Nazi or Axis backgrounds. Five received individual immigration assistance from American agencies. Two of the five were afterward protected from investigation. Among the five were two alleged war criminals, an Allgemeine-SS officer, a man convicted of conspiring in an assassination, and a traitor.

A former intelligence officer told the auditors that the decision came down to weighing “their present value versus their past history.” Another said that whether a man was used depended on what he could do for you.²

That is the controlling formula for the Lithuanian record. Present value was separated from past history. What a man knew about the Soviet Union went into one file. What he had done to Jews went into another. The first file was operational. The second could wait.

American law contained exclusions and gaps

American law did not simply invite Nazi persecutors through an open door. The Displaced Persons Act and Refugee Relief Act contained exclusions that should have barred people who had assisted persecution. The later denaturalization cases established that several Lithuanian subjects had never

² U.S. General Accounting Office, *Nazis and Axis Collaborators Were Used to Further U.S. Anti-Communist Objectives in Europe—Some Immigrated to the United States*, GAO/GGD-85-66 (June 28, 1985), including the Paperclip exception, the 114 files reviewed, the twelve identified immigrants, the five who received assistance, the two protected from investigation, and the “present value versus past history” formulation, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/ggd-85-66.pdf>.

lawfully qualified for admission or citizenship. The system failed because records were unavailable, ignored, compartmentalized or concealed.³

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 still lacked an explicit and comprehensive Nazi-persecutor bar. That gap was closed only in 1978 by the Holtzman Amendment, which made ineligible for admission, and deportable if already present, any alien who had ordered, incited, assisted or otherwise participated in persecution on grounds of race, religion, national origin or political opinion between March 23, 1933 and May 8, 1945. Every principal Lithuanian subject examined below entered before that amendment existed.⁴

Section 8 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, the so-called One Hundred Persons Act, separately permitted the Director of Central Intelligence, with the agreement of the Attorney General and the Commissioner of Immigration, to admit up to one hundred people a year without regard to ordinary inadmissibility rules. The National Archives records at least one instance in which it was used to permit a Nazi collaborator and possible war criminal to remain in the country. No record cited here establishes that Section 8 was used to admit any Lithuanian named in this article. It demonstrates the CIA's statutory capacity to override ordinary inadmissibility, not the proven immigration route of these particular men.⁵

The Lithuanian operation had names and numbers

The National Archives cryptonym lexicon describes a linked group of Baltic operations under AEFREEMAN, running from 1953 to 1964. Its Lithuanian component was AEPOLE, previously AECHAMP, which ran from 1949 to 1959, and before that BGLAPIN. AEPOLE targeted Soviet-occupied Lithuania through radio broadcasting, mail operations, liaison with émigré organizations, political and psychological briefings for legal travelers, demonstrations and intelligence collection. AEMANNER, from 1955 to 1958, recruited returning Lithuanians and Lithuanian merchant seamen calling at Lithuanian ports, exploited postal channels and interrogated people coming out of the Lithuanian SSR. AEBALCONY, from 1960 to 1962, used United States citizens with Baltic-language fluency in legal-traveler operations into the occupied Baltic states. A further project,

3 See *United States v. Lileikis*, 929 F. Supp. 31, 33–35 (D. Mass. 1996), discussing the displaced-person and refugee-law provisions under which assistance in persecution and material concealment defeated eligibility, <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/929/31/1812830/>.

4 National Archives, *Implementation of the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act: An Interim Report to Congress* (October 1999), discussion of the 1978 Holtzman Amendment, <https://www.archives.gov/iwg/reports/nazi-war-crimes-interim-report-october-1999>.

5 National Archives, *Implementation of the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act: An Interim Report to Congress* (October 1999), discussion of Section 8 of the CIA Act of 1949; U.S. GAO, GAO/GGD-85-66 (June 28, 1985), <https://www.archives.gov/iwg/reports/nazi-war-crimes-interim-report-october-1999> and <https://www.gao.gov/assets/ggd-85-66.pdf>.

AEGEAN, formerly CAPSTAN, used support bases developed inside Soviet Lithuania as transit points.⁶

This was not an accidental conversation with a refugee. It was a sustained Baltic intelligence structure operating for fifteen years under an umbrella program and multiple Lithuanian project names.

The lexicon identifies Lithuanian participants and assigns several of them numbered cryptonyms, working names or service aliases. Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis, listed there as “Jouzas Brazaitis,” appears as AEPOLE-8. Aleksandras Lileikis appears as AECHAMP-7 and AEMANNER-7. Stasys Raštikis, listed as “Rastikis,” former commander-in-chief of the Lithuanian armed forces, appears as AEPOLE-5 under the working name Everett M. Ghormley. Antanas Bernotas and Ignatz Apyrubis appear alongside them. Kazys Gimžauskas appears with a Gehlen Organization number and service alias. Stasys Žakevičius appears in the CIA record under the surname Žymantas and was described through American channels as exceptionally useful for psychological warfare.

Lithuania's memory politics asks the public to consider these men one at a time. The American archive records a network.

AEPOLE-8: the acting head of government

Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis was not a displaced intellectual who happened to reach America. He was acting head of the Lithuanian Provisional Government that sat from June 23 to August 5, 1941, the weeks in which the destruction of Lithuanian Jewry began.

On July 5, 1941, that government approved requested funding for 824 members of the TDA Battalion and for the concentration site at the Seventh Fort in Kaunas. Between June 28 and July 6, the TDA Battalion murdered approximately 5,000 Jewish men. Jewish women and children were held at the Seventh Fort without food or water. On August 1, the government issued the Regulations on the Status of the Jews, signed by Ambrazevičius and Interior Minister Jonas Šlepetys. In 2005 the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania designated the TDA Battalion a responsible agency in the killings and treated those regulations as the fullest expression of the Provisional Government's official antisemitism. That government did not control the German extermination program. It was not a neutral spectator standing outside the administrative persecution of Jews either.⁷

6 National Archives, Research Aid: Cryptonyms and Terms in Declassified CIA Files (June 2007), entries for AEFREEMAN, AEPOLE, AECHAMP, BGLAPIN, AEMANNER, AEBALCONY, AEGEAN/CAPSTAN, AEPOLE-8, AEPOLE-5, AECHAMP-7, AEMANNER-7, and Gimžauskas V-15775/ULMANN, <https://www.archives.gov/files/iwg/declassified-records/rg-263-cia-records/second-release-lexicon.pdf>.

7 International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, Approved Conclusions on the Persecution and Mass Murder of Lithuanian Jews (approved May 2005), and Christoph Dieckmann and Saulius Sužiedėlis, The Persecution and Mass Murder of Lithuanian Jews during Summer and Fall of 1941, https://www.komisija.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Approved-Conclusions_Persecution-and-

In 1944 he adopted the surname Brazaitis, the name under which he later emigrated.

The CIA lexicon assigns him the cryptonym AEPOLE-8 and associates him with AEPOLE and AEBALCONY. That does not adjudicate his personal criminal responsibility. It establishes that the United States found operational value in a former head of the 1941 Lithuanian government.⁸

Modern Lithuania later claimed that the United States had “completely exonerated” him. It had not. The American record was an immigration inquiry whose stated window, written into Commissioner Leonard Chapman's own letter, ran from June 23 to July 12, 1941, closing three weeks before the Provisional Government did. It ended without trial, hearing, judicial finding or congressional verdict. Brazaitis was never interviewed and died while the correspondence was still unfolding. The file remained capable of reopening if significant evidence emerged. Congressman Brad Sherman corrected Lithuania in 2019, again in 2021 and again on March 20, 2026. On May 12, 2026, the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs conceded that the exoneration language was legally imprecise. As of publication, the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre has not retracted it. The manufactured exoneration is documented in *The Verdict America Never Issued* and *The Ally That Forged America's Verdict*.⁹

Lithuania fused two unrelated American facts into absolution. One American institution found Brazaitis useful. Another later found insufficient evidence, on the limited record then before it, to continue an immigration inquiry. Neither is an acquittal. Use is not exoneration, administrative closure is not a judgment, and a cryptonym is not a certificate of innocence.

The administrator America called valuable

Stasys Žakevičius chaired the Vilnius City Committee in 1941. On June 28 he broadcast an address describing Jews as the backbone of Bolshevik terror and announcing their removal from Lithuania's political, economic and cultural life. The text appeared the next day in *Naujoji Lietuva*. The same issue carried an order for the seizure of sixty Jewish and twenty Polish hostages. Most of the Jewish hostages were later murdered at Paneriai. Further published orders required Jews to wear identifying badges, barred them from sidewalks, imposed a night curfew, and required residents to register themselves and their households by racial category.¹⁰

Mass-Murder-of-Lithuanian-Jews.pdf and https://www.komisija.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/B.Mihok_RC_S.SuziedelisC.Dieckmann_En.pdf.

⁸ National Archives, Research Aid: Cryptonyms and Terms in Declassified CIA Files (June 2007), entry for “Jouzas Brazaitis,” AEPOLE-8, AEPOLE, and AEBALCONY, <https://www.archives.gov/files/iwg/declassified-records/rg-263-cia-records/second-release-lexicon.pdf>.

⁹ Grant Arthur Gochin, “The Verdict America Never Issued,” *Times of Israel*, <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-verdict-america-never-issued/>; and “The Ally That Forged America’s Verdict,” Substack, <https://grantgochin.substack.com/p/the-ally-that-forged-americas-verdict>.

¹⁰ Mallory Needleman, *American Intelligence, Lithuanian Collaboration, and Holocaust Atrocities in Lithuania: The Case of John F. Mazionis and Stasys Žakevičius* (M.A. thesis, University of

His legal responsibility was never adjudicated. His office, his words and his administrative acts are matters of record.

In 1955, John Mazionis forwarded Žakevičius's immigration request through CIA channels and described him as “extremely valuable” for psychological-warfare work behind the Iron Curtain. Žakevičius entered the United States in 1959, settled in Los Angeles and naturalized in 1966. His route is documented in The Lithuanian Ratline to Los Angeles.¹¹

His usefulness was not discovered after admission. It was part of the case for helping him reach America. The Lithuanian administrator who had marked Jews for exclusion was repackaged as a Lithuanian anti-Soviet asset, and the victims disappeared from the qualification.

*Evidentiary limits. Denaturalization is a civil remedy, not a criminal conviction for murder. The presence of a name in a CIA file does not by itself prove criminality; the National Archives says so, and it is right. Not every Lithuanian named here is shown to have been an American intelligence asset. What follows distinguishes court findings, official allegations, historical evidence and documented intelligence relationships. Those distinctions do not weaken the pattern. They prevent Lithuania from escaping it by attacking an overstatement.*¹²

Lileikis: what America knew, and when

Aleksandras Lileikis commanded the Vilnius branch of the Lithuanian Security Police, the Saugumas. Under German occupation the organization arrested Jews who escaped the ghettos, arrested those who sheltered them, and delivered prisoners into the chain that ended at the execution pits of Paneriai. The Justice Department filed a seven-count denaturalization complaint against him in Boston on September 21, 1994.¹³

The court's decision of May 24, 1996 sets out what he signed. On December 1, 1941, six-year-old Fruma Kaplan and her mother Gita were arrested after fleeing the Vilnius ghetto. Lileikis signed the decision placing them at his disposal, and the following day signed the order transferring them to the German Security Police. Their execution cards record that they were treated according to orders on December 22, 1941. Judge Richard Stearns held that such activities so clearly constituted personal participation in persecution that the statutory qualifier was irrelevant to the case, and that it

Haifa, 2019), documenting the June–July 1941 orders and Žakevičius’s later intelligence relationship.

11 Needleman, American Intelligence; Grant Arthur Gochin, “The Lithuanian Ratline to Los Angeles,” Times of Israel, July 19, 2026, <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-lithuanian-ratline-to-los-angeles/>.

12 National Archives, “Name Files: Second Release,” cautioning that the presence of a name in a CIA file does not by itself establish criminality or the person’s role in the file, <https://www.archives.gov/iwg/declassified-records/rg-263-cia-records/second-release/name-files.html>.

13 U.S. Department of Justice, “Justice Department Moves to Revoke U.S. Citizenship of Former Security Police Chief of Nazi-Occupied Vilnius, Lithuania,” September 21, 1994, https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/Pre_96/September94/537.txt.html.

was inconceivable Congress had meant to exclude the triggermen of genocide while admitting their commanding officers.¹⁴

Two objections are usually raised against that judgment, and the opinion answers both. Lileikis invoked the Fifth Amendment and refused to answer the substantive allegations, which were deemed admitted. The court granted summary judgment on an independent ground as well: 194 documents running to more than a thousand pages, together with the affidavit of the historian Yitzhak Arad. His own brief did not deny that he had personally ordered the officers under his command to cooperate with the Germans in arresting, detaining and delivering thousands of Jews to the death squads. His claim to have rescued a Jewish girl rested on an untranslated newspaper article whose author denied the Saugumas had existed at all.¹⁵

A declassified CIA memorandum dated May 9, 1995 states that Lileikis was a paid CIA asset from 1952 to 1957, performing debriefing and linguistic work and possibly surveillance and preliminary recruitment tasks. See the declassified CIA file. The adverse information was not a later discovery. A 970th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment document in that file, D-169382, records that headquarters had reported him as chief of the political Lithuanian Security Police in Vilna during the German occupation and possibly connected with the shooting of Jews.¹⁶

Then comes the sentence that gives this article its title.

Lileikis raised an estoppel defense. His argument was that the United States could not now denaturalize him because American authorities had known he headed the Vilnius Security Police and had known he was, in the phrase carried in his own pleadings, possibly connected with the shooting of Jews.

The court rejected the defense on legal grounds. Equitable estoppel rarely runs against the government, and Lileikis was at best the would-be beneficiary of an official error rather than a party who had changed his position for the worse. The ruling decided that prior American knowledge could not become a shield against denaturalization. It did not need to decide, and did not decide, that every element of his premise was true. The documentary record establishes what American authorities knew, and it establishes it independently: the CIC report, the operational relationship that followed it, and the payments recorded in the Agency's own file.¹⁷

14 United States v. Lileikis, 929 F. Supp. 31, 35–38 (D. Mass. May 24, 1996), including the records concerning Gita and Fruma Kaplan and the court's personal-participation analysis, <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/929/31/1812830/>.

15 United States v. Lileikis, 929 F. Supp. 31, 33–39 (D. Mass. 1996), addressing the deemed admissions and the independent documentary basis for summary judgment, <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/929/31/1812830/>.

16 CIA, declassified Aleksandras Lileikis file, including the memorandum of May 9, 1995 and CIC document D-169382, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/LILEIKIS%2C%20ALEKSANDRAS_0027.pdf.

17 United States v. Lileikis, 929 F. Supp. 31, 34 n.6 (D. Mass. 1996), rejecting the estoppel defense; CIA, declassified Aleksandras Lileikis file, <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district->

The perpetrator's defense and the intelligence file say the same thing from opposite directions. America knew. America used him anyway. When accountability finally arrived, he tried to convert that knowledge into immunity, and a federal court declined to let him.

His citizenship was revoked. He left the United States for Lithuania on June 19, 1996, abandoning his home in Norwood, Massachusetts. The Justice Department's 1998 account described captured documents proving that he had personally signed orders consigning Jewish men, women and children to death by gunfire at Paneriai. He was never punished.¹⁸

Chief. Deputy. Officer. Officer.

Lileikis was not an isolated recruitment, and this is where the argument stops resting on one man.

Kazys Gimžauskas was his deputy, second in command of the Vilnius Province Saugumas from late 1941 until July 1944. The National Archives records him with Gehlen Organization number V-15775 and the alias ULMANN. The Gehlen Organization was the German intelligence apparatus built around Reinhard Gehlen after the war, financed and directed under American sponsorship until it became West Germany's foreign intelligence service in 1956. The federal denaturalization record states that documents signed by Gimžauskas prove he personally ordered the arrest, interrogation and incarceration of civilians, and establish that he ordered civilians, primarily Jews, turned over to the German Security Police for execution. He had already returned to Lithuania while under investigation.¹⁹

One of those documents, the Justice Department noted, shows Gimžauskas dispatching for execution an American-born woman who had been arrested because she was suspected of being a Jew. The Boston court record sets out the same case at length. Lucija Pojevanskaite-Sutarskaite, a Roman Catholic born in the United States, was arrested in Vilnius on December 11, 1941. Lileikis signed the order committing her to the Vilnius Hard Labor Prison that day, recording that she was suspected of being a Jew and would be held at his disposition. On December 17 an order issued from his office transferred her to the German Security Police. Her execution card, on which her surname is spelled differently again and the word Jewess appears beside her name, reports that she

courts/FSupp/929/31/1812830/ and
https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/LILEIKIS%2C%20ALEKSANDRAS_0027.pdf.

18 U.S. Department of Justice, “Alleged Nazi Criminal Flees the United States and Returns to Lithuania,” June 19, 1996, <https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/1996/Jun96/289crm.htm>;
U.S. Department of Justice, “Attorney General Commends Lithuanian Decision to Prosecute Former U.S. Citizen for World War II Genocide,” February 9, 1998,
<https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/1998/February/054.htm.html>.

19 U.S. Department of Justice, “Court Revokes U.S. Citizenship of Former Security Police Official in Nazi-Occupied Lithuania,” June 26, 1996,
<https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/1996/Jun96/302crm.htm>; National Archives cryptonym lexicon, entry for Gimžauskas V-15775/ULMANN.

was treated in accordance with orders on December 22, 1941. Gita and Fruma Kaplan were killed that same day.²⁰

A woman born in the United States was sent to her death on paper generated inside the Vilnius Saugumas by two men who later became American citizens themselves.

Algimantas Dailidė served in the same Vilnius apparatus. Judge Paul R. Matia revoked his citizenship on January 29, 1997, in the third such case the Office of Special Investigations brought against members of the Vilnius Saugumas. It was that release which recorded the Boston court's determination that "tens of thousands died under his command of the Saugumas." The Sixth Circuit affirmed in 2000, holding that Dailidė's acts had gone far beyond the innocuous and had provided an inextricable link in the Nazi regime's chain of genocide.²¹

Adolph Milius, formerly Adolfas Milinavičius, was the fourth. A federal court in Tampa revoked his citizenship in August 1998 after finding that his Saugumas service and his personal involvement in anti-Jewish measures had made him ineligible for citizenship. Captured records placed him in a sting operation that entrapped Jews attempting to escape the Vilnius ghetto.²²

Chief. Deputy. Officer. Officer. Four members of one Lithuanian security-police organization reached the United States, naturalized, and lived here for decades before the Office of Special Investigations reconstructed the files.

That is not collective guilt. It is institutional evidence. The July 1941 seizure of the Lithuanian police machinery that produced this apparatus, and the impunity that followed these men home, are documented separately in *The Coup That Captured Lithuania's Killing Apparatus*.²³

Denaturalization convicted none of these men of murder. Under 8 U.S.C. § 1451, it revoked citizenship that had been illegally procured or obtained by concealment of a material fact or willful misrepresentation, and the revocation operated back to the original date of naturalization. The limitation strengthens the indictment against Lithuania's memory politics rather than weakening it.

20 U.S. Department of Justice, "Court Revokes U.S. Citizenship of Former Security Police Official in Nazi-Occupied Lithuania," June 26, 1996, <https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/1996/Jun96/302crm.htm>; *United States v. Lileikis*, 929 F. Supp. 31, 35–36 and n.9 (D. Mass. 1996), setting out the arrest, committal and transfer of Lucija Pojevanskaite-Sutarskaite and the inconsistent spellings of her surname in the underlying documents, <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/929/31/1812830/>.

21 U.S. Department of Justice, "Former Member of Nazi-Sponsored Security Police in Wartime Vilnius, Lithuania, Loses His Citizenship," January 30, 1997, <https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/1997/January97/043crm.htm>; *United States v. Dailide*, 227 F.3d 385 (6th Cir. 2000), <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F3/227/385/615219/>.

22 U.S. Department of Justice, "Court Revokes U.S. Citizenship of Florida Man Who Arrested Jews in "Sting" Operation in Nazi-Occupied Wartime Lithuania," August 18, 1998, <https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/1998/August/375crm.html>.

23 Grant Arthur Gochin, "The Coup That Captured Lithuania's Killing Apparatus," Substack, <https://open.substack.com/pub/grantgochin/p/the-coup-that-captured-lithuanias>.

American civil courts were not staging symbolic historical debates. They were determining whether the wartime record was so material that these men had never lawfully qualified to be Americans at all.²⁴

From police command to killing formations

The docket reaches beyond one Vilnius police force.

Juozas Budreika admitted service in the 2nd/12th Lithuanian Schutzmannschaft Battalion, an armed unit sponsored and controlled by Nazi Germany which, during 1941 and 1942, murdered thousands of unarmed Jews and other civilians in Lithuania and Byelorussia. In Byelorussia it functioned largely as a mobile killing unit, conducting a town-by-town hunt for Jews and suspected communists. Budreika agreed that he had illegally procured his citizenship by concealing that service, relinquished it, and departed for Lithuania.²⁵

Kazys Čiurinskas served in the same battalion. In June 1998 the Seventh Circuit unanimously affirmed his denaturalization, and the holding matters more than the outcome: armed, uniformed membership and service in that battalion was itself sufficient to establish assistance in Nazi-sponsored persecution, without proof that he had personally committed an atrocity. The Office of Special Investigations called it the first appellate decision anywhere in the world involving that battalion.²⁶

The Lithuanian record in America therefore runs from an acting government to a city administration, from a security-police command to its officers, and from there to a mobile killing battalion. Lithuania's preferred method is to litigate each name in isolation until the institution disappears. The archive defeats that method.

These men did not perform the same acts or carry the same degree of responsibility, and not all of them entered American intelligence. They came from a recognizable set of Lithuanian structures that participated in exclusion, arrest, transfer, dispossession and killing. The pattern survives every proper disclaimer.

Lithuania authenticated the evidence against its own officials

The strongest answer to Lithuanian denial is not American. It is Lithuanian.

²⁴ 8 U.S.C. § 1451, revocation of naturalization for illegal procurement or concealment of a material fact or willful misrepresentation,
<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?edition=prelim&num=0&req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title8-section1451>; *United States v. Dailide*, 227 F.3d 385 (6th Cir. 2000).

²⁵ U.S. Department of Justice, “Former Member of Nazi-Sponsored Lithuanian Mobile Killing Unit Is Denaturalized,” June 3, 1996,
<https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/1996/Jun96/251crm.htm>.

²⁶ U.S. Department of Justice, “Court of Appeals Affirms Denaturalization of Former Member of Nazi Mobile Killing Unit,” June 22, 1998,
<https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/1998/June/295.htm.html>.

The documents that destroyed Lileikis in a Boston courtroom were not produced by Lithuania's enemies. The Director of the Lithuanian Central State Archives certified them. The Legalization Division of Lithuania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs attested that certification. A consular officer of the United States Embassy in Vilnius certified the attestation. Examiners from the United States Secret Service Forensic Sciences Division found no sign of alteration or false dating and confirmed that the typewriting was of a kind in use in 1941. The Immigration and Naturalization Service Forensic Document Laboratory matched the signatures to known exemplars of Lileikis's handwriting. His counsel's suggestion of Soviet forgery collapsed under the obvious question the government put to the court: why would the KGB forge documents implicating him and then hide them for fifty years.²⁷

Lithuania helped establish the documentary record against the former chief of its own security police. Lithuania has punished no one for Holocaust crimes—not Lileikis, not his deputy, not the officers who served under them, and not any other Lithuanian perpetrator.²⁸

When American proceedings finally began, Lithuania repeatedly became the destination. Lileikis left for Lithuania after denaturalization. Gimžauskas returned while under investigation. Milius moved there after the complaint was filed. Budreika departed under the settlement that stripped his citizenship. This does not prove a formal sanctuary program, and no such claim is required. It proves that the American accountability record and the Lithuanian return route repeatedly converged, and that men whose American citizenship collapsed under their wartime records could re-enter a public sphere in which anti-Soviet credentials remained powerful and Holocaust responsibility remained negotiable.

The Justice Department also thanked Lithuanian officials for archival access, and that should be acknowledged. Opening files is not the same as accepting what the files prove. Lithuania could help American investigators locate documents and still preserve national myths about the institutions those documents implicated. It did both.

27 *United States v. Lileikis*, 929 F. Supp. 31, 37–39 (D. Mass. 1996), describing certification by the Lithuanian Central State Archives, attestation by Lithuania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, U.S. Embassy certification, and forensic examination, <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/929/31/1812830/>.

28 Simon Wiesenthal Center, “Wiesenthal Center Denounces Lithuanian Decision not to Implement Jail Sentence for Convicted Nazi Criminal,” November 16, 2008, stating that no local Holocaust criminal had been punished, <https://www.wiesenthal.com/about/news/wiesenthal-center-denounces-3.html>; Simon Wiesenthal Center, 2013 Annual Report on the Status of Nazi War Criminals, identifying Lithuania among states that had consistently failed to hold Holocaust perpetrators accountable, <https://wiesenthal.org/news-archive-prior-to-2020/swc-2013-annual-report-on>; and Efraim Zuroff, Israel director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, quoted in “The Holocaust in Lithuania: One man's crusade to bring justice,” CNN, stating that since independence in 1991 Lithuania has failed to punish a single one of its own Holocaust war criminals, <https://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/europe/06/03/lithuania.nazi.prosecutions/index.html>.

The Škirpa question

Kazys Škirpa belongs at the edge of this account, and not through an unproved intelligence claim.

He founded the Lithuanian Activist Front in Berlin and developed a political program connecting national restoration with the deprivation of Jewish rights and the removal of Jews from Lithuania. He entered the United States in 1949, after periods in France and Ireland, and worked at the Library of Congress for sixteen years, retiring as a senior research librarian in 1965.

Federal employment at a cultural institution is not proof of an intelligence relationship, and this article does not claim one. Establishing it would require the agency, the file number, the dates, the operational designation and the documented function. None has been produced.

The proven American transformation is instructive on its own. His Washington obituary presented him principally as a Lithuanian leader deposed and imprisoned by the invading Germans. The founder of the LAF was memorialized in the American capital through the portion of his biography most useful to Lithuanian innocence. His anti-Jewish political program disappeared from the account.²⁹

That is how national rehabilitation works. It does not always falsify a fact. It selects the fact that acquits the nation and discards the fact that indicts it.

America's files are Lithuania's chain of custody

America eventually built institutions capable of examining some of this history. Federal courts revoked citizenship. The Justice Department pursued removal. Congress challenged Lithuania's invented claim that Brazaitis had been exonerated. Those actions deserve recognition, and they do not convert the earlier American bargain into Lithuanian innocence.

American intelligence use and delay cannot cleanse the Lithuanian record. They explain how compromised figures acquired decades of Western legitimacy before accountability arrived. Denaturalization did not convict Lithuania, but it destroyed the claim that these men were merely victims of Soviet propaganda whose histories dissolved under examination.

The archive identifies the offices and the men: AEPOLE-8, AEPOLE-5, AECHAMP-7, AEMANNER-7, V-15775, the Vilnius Saugumas chief, his deputy, two of his officers, and members of the 2nd/12th Battalion. It records recommendations, cryptonyms, payments, concealed service, court findings and revoked citizenship. The National Archives cautions, correctly, that a name in a CIA file proves nothing by itself. These are not names in an index. They are numbered operational identities attached to named projects.³⁰

29 "Kazys Skirpa, 84, Ex-Leader in Lithuania, Dies," Washington Post, August 21, 1979, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1979/08/21/kazys-skirpa-84-ex-leader-in-lithuania-dies/0641e67e-7f52-49b3-84ca-11d9d90eb71e/>.

30 National Archives, "Name Files: Second Release," <https://www.archives.gov/iwg/declassified-records/rg-263-cia-records/second-release/name-files.html>; National Archives, Research Aid: Cryptonyms and Terms in Declassified CIA Files, <https://www.archives.gov/files/iwg/declassified-records/rg-263-cia-records/second-release-lexicon.pdf>.

Lithuania's defense depends on keeping the records apart.

The acting head of government becomes a misunderstood patriot. The city administrator becomes a refugee. The intelligence asset becomes an anti-Communist. The security-police chief becomes an isolated offender. His deputy becomes another isolated offender. The officers become immigration cases. The battalion men become footnotes. The state then looks across the fragments it has created and announces that no Lithuanian institution stands in the dock.

The fragments are the institution.

Paperclip gave the American bargain a famous name. The Lithuanian files give the Lithuanian pattern names, ranks, offices and numbers. America knew enough to use some of these men. American courts later knew enough to strip citizenship from others. Lithuania knew enough to build myths around the difference.

The archive is not Lithuania's shield.

It is the chain of custody.