Kaunas — Town Research Report (1915–1945)

Lithuanian insurgents, battalion companies, police, the military commandant, the city government and the 1941 cabinet took part in the arrest, confinement, plunder and murder of the Jews of Kaunas. Lithuania's public institutions describe the Soviet killers by name and the Lithuanian killers in the passive voice.

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On 22 June 1941 about 35,000 Jews lived in Kaunas. Fewer than 3,000 survived the war. This report sets out what Lithuanian men and Lithuanian offices did to them, what the German authorities ordered and did, and how Lithuania's encyclopedia, museums, city government and research center describe it today. It covers 1915 to 1945, with the greatest detail on 1941. Every material statement is tied to a numbered source; where sources disagree, each figure is given separately.

Part One states the findings. Part Two gives the detailed historical record. The appendix sets out, claim by claim, which documents support and which conflict with each institutional account. A Lithuanian summary follows.

Findings

1. In the first week of the war armed Lithuanian insurgents arrested, beat, robbed, humiliated and killed Jews in the streets and homes of Kaunas; about 600 to more than 1,000 were murdered in Vilijampolė on 25–27 June and about 50 to 70 at the Lietūkis garage on 27 June. [1, 2, 3]
2. The German Security Police instigated the pogroms through the Lithuanian journalist Algirdas Klimaitis and filmed the killings to show that Lithuanians carried them out. [1, 4, 5]
3. On 27 June 1941 the Provisional Government recorded that "measures … must be taken against the Jews," asked only that public executions be avoided, and in the same sitting resolved to finance the security battalion. [1, 6]
4. On 30 June 1941 the Provisional Government approved a "Jewish concentration camp" and charged Vice-Minister Vladas Švipas to establish it with Kaunas Military Commandant Jurgis Bobelis. [2, 6, 7, 138]
5. Bobelis formed the TDA battalion, placed a company at the German Security Police's disposal on 30 June, ran the Seventh Fort camp through his office and gave orders to its guards. [1, 8]
6. On 4 and 6 July 1941, 2,977 Jews were shot at the Seventh Fort; Jäger recorded the executions as carried out by "Lithuanian partisans" on his orders, and the TDA battalion's First and Third Companies supplied shooters. [1, 9, 10]
7. Lithuanian guards at the Seventh Fort selected young Jewish women at night, raped them and murdered them. [1, 11, 12]

8. Order No. 15 of 10 July 1941, issued by the Kaunas commandant and the mayor, forced the Jews of Kaunas into the Vilijampolė ghetto by 15 August and required them to give up their real estate. [7, 11, 13]
9. On 25 July 1941 an interdepartmental meeting of the Kaunas commandant, the mayor, the security and police department directors and the city police chief forbade Jews to sell any property and placed all property they could not carry "at the disposal of the Kaunas city government." [7]
10. A United States court found that the Kaunas municipality under Burgomaster Kazys Palčiauskas appropriated Jewish property, ordered the ghetto's barbed-wire fence and redistributed murdered Jews' homes. [13, 14]
11. The Provisional Government excluded Jews from the return of nationalized houses, businesses, ships, bank deposits and securities. [7, 15]
12. Officers of the TDA battalion's Third Company, Juozas Barzda, Anatolijus Dagys and Bronius Norkus, commanded and took part in the shooting of Jews at the Seventh, Fourth and Ninth Forts; LGGRTC's own journal counts 104 Third Company shooters. [8]
13. On 18 August 1941 the Lithuanian official Mikas Kaminskas told the Jewish Council that 500 educated men would work in the city archive; they were taken to the Fourth Fort and shot. [9, 11, 16]
14. On 29 October 1941, 9,200 Jews, 4,273 of them children, were shot at the Ninth Fort; Lithuanian battalion companies guarded the ghetto and the column and supplied shooters, and Lithuanian guards beat Dr. Elchanan Elkes unconscious when he tried to save people. [8, 9, 11, 16]
15. Lieutenant Jonas Stelmokas commanded the ghetto guard that enforced the Jews' confinement; a United States court found the conditions were "extreme deprivation, brutality, and arbitrary shootings." [17, 18]
16. From 1942 to 1944 Lithuanian police and guards shot Jews at the ghetto fence and labor sites and delivered escaping Jews to the Gestapo. [11, 16]
17. Lithuanian guards formed the permanent staff of the Ninth Fort until September 1943 and shot survivors in the pits. [19]
18. German personnel committed killings, rapes and humiliations of their own, and the Children's Action of March 1944 was carried out by SS men and Ukrainian auxiliaries; those acts are attributed to them. [11, 16, 20]
19. VLE's two Kaunas entries contradict each other on whether the pogrom killers were insurgents and on how many they killed. [3, 20]
20. VLE's fort entries, its Kaunas history entry and the Ninth Fort Museum name no Lithuanian perpetrator, while the same institutions name Soviet killers in the active voice. [21, 22, 23, 24, 25]
21. VLE's biographies of Bobelis, Butkūnas and Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis omit their 1941 roles in the persecution, which other VLE entries and the cabinet minutes record. [26, 27, 28]
22. Kaunas City Municipality commemorates the June uprising and honors its leaders, including a member of the cabinet that approved the Jewish concentration camp, without mentioning the Jews murdered in Kaunas that week. [29, 30, 31]
23. LGGRTC's 2000 roster says the Germans "entangled" battalion officers in mass killings that the Centre's own journal later attributed to their commands. [8, 32]

24. Accurate public accounts exist in VLE's ghetto entry, the Seventh Fort's own history and LGGRTC's 2006 battalion study; the problem is not the absence of knowledge but its uneven use. [8, 20, 33]

Part One — The findings in brief

1 What Lithuanian actors did to the Jews of Kaunas

Arrest, beating and murder in the streets and homes, 22–29 June 1941. Armed Lithuanian insurgents wearing white armbands, about 3,400 men organized in 42 city stations, arrested Jews in their homes and in the streets, beat and robbed them, humiliated them in public and killed them. At the Neris bridge on Jonavos Street they made 25 to 30 Jewish men dance and sing, then shot them. In Vilijampolė, on the nights of 25–27 June, the Klimaitis group and armed groups led by Kazys Šimkus and Bronius Norkus went from house to house with rifles, axes and saws and murdered between 600 and more than 1,000 Jews. They cut off the head of Rabbi Zalman Osovsky and set it in a window. They cut off the hands and feet of Mordechai Yatkunski and his wife. They murdered the Puchart family at Ariogalos Street 10 and shot 26 Jews against a wall on Jurbarko Street. On 27 June, in the yard of the Lietūkis garage, Lithuanian men in white armbands beat about 50 to 70 Jewish men to death with iron bars and clubs before a crowd of German soldiers and Lithuanian civilians, women among them. [1, 2, 3]

Raped Jewish women. During the raids on Jewish apartments Lithuanian armed men raped Jewish women. At the Seventh Fort Lithuanian guards took young Jewish women from the casemates at night, raped them and murdered them; the International Commission study attributes about thirty to forty such murders to the guards, and the women imprisoned there described two selections of twenty under the pretext of "peeling potatoes." Raped Jewish women came to the Jewish transfer committee for help. [1, 11, 12]

A camp approved by the Lithuanian cabinet. On 30 June 1941 the Provisional Government, after hearing the Kaunas military commandant, Colonel Jurgis Bobelis, approved a "Jewish concentration camp" and charged Vice-Minister Vladas Švipas with establishing it in contact with Bobelis. At the Seventh Fort, guarded by 49 men of the Lithuanian TDA battalion on each shift, Jewish men were held in the open without water and shot when they moved. On 4 and 6 July 2,977 Jews were shot there. Jäger's report records these executions as "conducted by Lithuanian partisans" on his instructions; the Commission study identifies TDA companies shooting alongside German security police. Bobelis visited the fort, gave orders to the guards and released about seventy Jewish former volunteers of the Lithuanian army. [1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 138]

Shooters at every fort. Officers of the TDA battalion's Third Company, Juozas Barzda, Anatolijus Dagys and Bronius Norkus, commanded and took part in the shootings of Jews at the Seventh Fort in July, the Fourth Fort in August, and the Ninth Fort on 4 October and 29 October 1941. Barzda gave the firing command on 2 August; Barzda and Dagys finished wounded victims with pistols on 9 August. LGGRTC's own journal identifies 104 men of the Third Company as shooters. On 29 October 1941 9,200 Jews, 4,273 of them children, were shot at the Ninth Fort; the Third Company supplied shooters, other companies guarded the ghetto and the assembly square, and battalion men took the victims' clothing and belongings afterward. [8, 9]

Confinement, escort and the ghetto fence. Lithuanian battalion guards escorted Jews from the prison to the forts and guarded the ghetto. Lieutenant Jonas Stelmokas commanded the ghetto guard of 16–17 September 1941; a United States court found that the Jews he helped confine suffered "extreme deprivation, brutality, and arbitrary shootings." On 29 October Lithuanian guards beat Dr. Elchanan Elkes unconscious with a rifle butt when he tried to save people from the condemned group. From 1942 to 1944 Lithuanian policemen and guards shot Jews at the ghetto fence and labor sites: Dr. Zerah Gerber for not removing his hat, the eighteen-year-old Blecher for his boots, Danishevski for walking by the river, three sleeping workers at Palemonas. Lithuanian police arrested Jews who left the ghetto and delivered them to the Gestapo. [11, 16, 17, 18]

Deception for murder. On 18 August 1941 the Lithuanian municipal official Mikas Kaminskas, assistant to Fritz Jordan, told the Jewish Council that 500 educated men would work in the city archive. They were taken to the Fourth Fort. Jäger records 711 "Jewish intellectuals" among the 1,812 murdered that day. Before the 4 October killings, Kaminskas told Dr. Elkes the rumors were unfounded. [8, 9, 11]

2 Forced labor, plunder and the beneficiaries

The city ordered the ghetto and took the property. Order No. 15 of 10 July 1941, issued in the names of Military Commandant Bobelis and Burgomaster Kazys Palčiauskas, forced every Jew in Kaunas into Vilijampolė by 15 August and required Jews to liquidate or exchange their real estate with Lithuanians leaving the district; the municipality would take what remained. The commandant's instructions let each family take one table, one chair per person and two plates per person; everything else was inventoried by the police for the burgomaster and handed to custodians, and a municipal commission with Palčiauskas among its members was charged with its liquidation. A United States court found that the municipal government appropriated Jewish property outside the ghetto and that Palčiauskas's housing subcommittee redistributed murdered Jews' homes to other Lithuanians. [1, 11, 13, 34, 35]

The government excluded Jews from recovering their property. The Provisional Government retained nationalized Jewish property for the state and excluded Jewish owners from the denationalization of houses, businesses, ships, deposits and securities; its housing regulations let non-Jewish co-owners take their Jewish partners' shares. [7]

Jews were made to build their own enclosure. The municipality ordered Jews to erect the ghetto fence and its Roads Department demanded fifty, then one hundred, Jewish men daily with their own spades. An instruction attributed to the Lithuanian Minister of Education ordered Jewish children in children's homes across Lithuania delivered to the ghetto committee. [11]

Lithuanian police stations registered Jewish property. German Order No. 4 of September 1941 required all Jewish property, including property in non-Jewish hands, to be registered on forms issued and collected by the police stations, whose chiefs were personally responsible. [11]

Looting and extortion. Insurgents and later Lithuanian partisans looted Jewish apartments during arrests and every ghetto "action." Battalion men took the clothing of the murdered at the Ninth Fort. Lithuanian ghetto guards set a tariff of bribes for passing food through the gate and broke into apartments at night. [1, 8, 11]

Unresolved. Which households lost which apartments, who received them, and where the proceeds went remain undocumented in the sources examined; the municipal housing and finance records are the place to look.

3 What Lithuania tells the public

The national encyclopedia names Soviet killers in the active voice and Lithuanian participants in the passive. VLE's survey "Lietuva Vokietijos okupacijos metais (1941–1944)" states that the retreating Soviet army "griebėsi teroro" and "nužudė daugiau kaip 1000 žm." ("resorted to terror … killed more than 1,000 people"). Of the Holocaust it states that the Lithuanian administration, "pirmiausia įvairių rūšių lietuvių policija ir policijos batalionai," "buvo iš dalies įtraukta" ("above all various kinds of Lithuanian police and police battalions … was partly drawn in"), and that "buvo nužudyta apie 175 000–200 000" Jews ("about 175,000–200,000 were killed"). In the Kaunas history entry ("Kauno istorija") the only killers are "Naciai" ("the Nazis"); the 1941 deportees are counted exactly (1,849 people, 642 families); the murdered Jews of Kaunas are not counted. [23, 25]

The fort entries name no Lithuanian. VLE's "Septintasis fortas" attributes the 4 and 6 July shootings to the order of "the Nazi German occupation authorities" and does not mention the TDA battalion, the Provisional Government's camp decision or Bobelis. "Ketvirtasis fortas" states that "naciai" ("the Nazis") carried out the killings; "Devintasis fortas" uses only the passive and names the NKVD as the killer of the Soviet period. VLE's own "Kauno getas" entry names the TDA battalion at the Seventh and Fourth Forts and the Third Company in the Great Action. [20, 21, 22, 36]

The biographies omit what VLE states elsewhere. "Jurgis Bobelis" and "Andrius Butkūnas" say nothing of the camp, the battalion or the ghetto order; Butkūnas appears as a June uprising participant and brewery director. "Juozas Brazaitis" presents the acting prime minister of 1941 as a leader of unarmed anti-Nazi resistance and omits the camp decision and the anti-Jewish provisions that VLE's entry on the Provisional Government acknowledges in a parenthesis. [26, 27, 28, 37]

The Ninth Fort Museum names the Red Army and not the battalion. Its history page, in Lithuanian and English, states that "Sovietai … nukankino ir iššaudė" political prisoners and that "raudonoji armija … sušaudė" others, while the 1941 pogroms "prasidėjo" ("began") and the shootings were "vykdyti" ("carried out"). Its 2026 campaign page speaks of "Nacių ir vietinių kolaborantų" crimes ("of the Nazis and local collaborators"). [24, 38, 39]

The city commemorates the uprising without its victims. Kaunas City Municipality's 2026 program for the 85th anniversary of the June uprising, "ATMINTI. BUDĖTI. GINTI.," began with flowers at the grave of Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis, the 1941 acting prime minister, followed by an honor guard at the monument to fallen insurgents in the Old City Cemetery. Its 2024 text, identical to the Vytautas the Great War Museum's, calls the uprising an expression of "tautos valia" ("the nation's will"). Neither mentions the Jews murdered in Kaunas that week. The city's Fourth Fort monument speaks of "naciai ir jų vietiniai talkininkai" ("the Nazis and their local helpers"); its 2016 Seventh Fort ceremony text says more than 3,000 people "buvo sušaudyta" ("were shot"), naming no perpetrator. [29, 30, 40, 41]

The city honors the 1941 leadership. Kaunas named streets after Kazys Škirpa (1991) and Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis (1994); a 2001 plaque honors Škirpa as founder and leader of the LAF; a 2009 plaque at Vytautas Magnus University honors the LAF leaders and states that the uprising "išreiškė tautos valią"; a 1998 municipal plaque honors Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis as "Laikinosios vyriausybės narys" ("member of the Provisional Government"), the cabinet that approved the Jewish concentration camp. [31, 42, 43]

The War Museum uses "local collaborators" for Soviet crimes only. In 2025 the state Vytautas the Great War Museum described the uprising as a response to "žvėriškų sovietų ir jų vietinių kolaborantų nusikaltimų" ("the bestial crimes of the Soviets and their local collaborators"). Its anniversary texts say nothing of the Jews of Kaunas. [44, 45]

The Foreign Ministry speaks of "observers and collaborators." On 27 January 2026 at the Ninth Fort, the Foreign Minister described the Holocaust as requiring "a carefully crafted plan" and "observers and collaborators." [46]

Accurate accounts exist. VLE's "Kauno getas" names Lithuanian insurgents, local white-armband men, the TDA battalion and its commander, Bobelis and Palčiauskas; VLE's "Holokaustas" entry names the Lithuanian 1st police battalion as the core of the mobile killing unit; the Seventh Fort's operator names the Provisional Government and the TDA battalion; LGGRTC's own journal published Bubnys's study naming officers and shooters. The Lithuanian Jewish Community states plainly that "Lithuanians murdered about 50 Jews" at Lietūkis. [8, 20, 33, 47, 48]

4 What the documents contradict

The Provisional Government did not condemn the killings; it approved their infrastructure. VLE presents the cabinet's 27 June 1941 minute as in part an appeal to partisans and residents to dissociate themselves from the pogroms Stahlecker initiated. The minute itself reads: "notwithstanding all the measures which must be taken against the Jews because of their Communist activity and harm to the German Army, partisans and individuals should avoid public executions of Jews." In the same sitting the cabinet received "with joy" the news that the Germans permitted a security battalion and resolved to support and finance it; three days later it approved a Jewish concentration camp and assigned a vice-minister to establish it with Bobelis. The International Commission study calls the 27 June formulation incriminating and finds that the government made no discernible attempt to prevent the German takeover of Lithuanian units for mass killing. Kaunas Mayor Palčiauskas attended the 27 June sitting. [1, 3, 6]

VLE's two Kaunas entries contradict each other on who the pogrom killers were. The "Kauno getas" entry states that the pogroms were carried out by Kaunas insurgents led by Algirdas Klimaitis and that "local white-armband men" murdered more than 1,500 Jews. The "žydų pogromai Kaune" entry states that Klimaitis's group should not be regarded as insurgent partisans because it did not belong to the LAF, and assigns the other armed groups in Vilijampolė to officers it describes as disloyal to the Provisional Government. One entry places the killers inside the uprising; the other places them outside it. The same entry that excludes Klimaitis's men names Kazys Šimkus and Bronius Norkus, both later officers of the battalion the Provisional Government financed. [3, 20]

VLE's two entries give different counts and categories. "Kauno getas" gives about 8,000 Jews killed in pogroms before the systematic fort shootings and more than 1,500 in Vilijampolė; "žydų pogromai Kaune" gives about 1,000 for all pogroms and 600–800 for Vilijampolė. Stahlecker's report gives 3,800 and EM No. 19 gives 7,800 for pogroms plus shootings by Lithuanian detachments. Numerical resemblance does not show which source VLE used; VLE has been asked to identify it (BOB-R2). [3, 4, 20, 49]

VLE explains the Lietūkis murders with the victims' conduct. The pogrom entry states that the white-armband men began beating and killing the Jews "when the Jews tried to disobey their tormentors" ("kai žydai pamėgino nepaklusti kankintojams"). No source is given for this causal sequence. The same entry states plainly that German soldiers did not kill the victims, which is an accurate attribution of the killing to the Lithuanian perpetrators. [3]

VLE's Bobelis biography omits what VLE's ghetto entry attributes to him. The biography lists his appointment as Kaunas city and district commandant on 23 June 1941 and his service as head of the Main Housing Administration in 1942–1944. It says nothing about the battalion he formed and placed under German command, the Jewish concentration camp he reported to the cabinet, the Seventh Fort, or Order No. 15. VLE's "Kauno getas" attributes the ghettoization order to him and Palčiauskas. [20, 26]

VLE dates Order No. 15 to 7 July; the documents give 10 July. The authenticated draft examined in the Palčiauskas case and the 31 July notice of the Kaunas city commissioner both refer to Order No. 15 of 10 July 1941; the cabinet minute of 7 July records Bobelis's report that Stahlecker had ordered ghettoization. VLE has been asked for its source. [1, 13, 20, 50]

The Ninth Fort Museum names the Soviet killers and not the Holocaust killers. Its English history states that "retreating Soviets brutally tortured and murdered many political prisoners" and that released prisoners "were shot by the retreating Red Army." Of 1941 it says that "the pogroms against the Jews in the temporary capital began" when the German army occupied Kaunas, that "the first organised shootings of Jews took place in the Seventh Fort," and that on 29 October the condemned "were brought to the Ninth Fort and shot." No Lithuanian formation, officer or official appears. LGGRTC's own journal names the Third Company, its officers and its 104 shooters. [8, 24]

The Foreign Ministry speaks of "observers and collaborators" at a site where Lithuanian battalion men did the shooting. At the Ninth Fort on 27 January 2026 Foreign Minister Kęstutis Budrys said that the Holocaust "required not only a carefully crafted plan, but also observers and collaborators" who "relied on a mix of fear, indifference, and pragmatism." At the Ninth Fort, the shooters on 4 October and 29 October 1941 included the TDA battalion's Third Company, and battalion men took the victims' clothing. The Ministry has been asked for the records behind the statement (URM-HC-04). [8, 46]

LGGRTC's 2000 officers' roster says the Germans "entangled" the officers. The Centre's 2000 roster of battalion officers states that Barzda, Dagys and Norkus were "vokiečių įpainioti į masines žydų žudynes"—"entangled by the Germans in mass killings of Jews"—and omits Stelmokas's ghetto-guard command and the American proceedings against him. The roster acknowledges the mass killings. Its verb assigns agency to the Germans for men who gave firing commands and finished wounded victims, as the Centre's own journal later documented. [8, 17, 32]

LGGRTC's journal reallocates Stahlecker's dead. Rukšėnas reconstructs Stahlecker's 1,500 as about 800 murdered and 700 arrested, and the 3,800 as about 1,000 murdered and 2,800 arrested, then assigns the 2,800 to later shootings (2,060 under Ehrlinger and a possible 740 under Jäger). Stahlecker's German text describes the first group as "beseitigt" (eliminated) and the later 2,300 as "unschädlich gemacht" (rendered harmless); the Nuremberg prosecution placed the figure among execution statistics. The reconstruction does not claim the people survived; it moves their deaths from the pogrom category to later dates and institutions. The article publishes its inferential chain and citations (pp. 52–55, notes 88–118). Its subtraction of estimated totals and assignment of the remainders do not identify the prisoners who comprised the reconstructed groups or establish their overlap with later execution lists. Those identities and overlaps require the underlying custody and execution records. [2, 4, 51]

LGGRTC's journal measures participation against a chosen denominator. Rukšėnas estimates about 300 pogrom participants and expresses them as 8.83 percent of 3,396 partisans in Kaunas and its surroundings. That figure measures one category of pogrom participant against one denominator. It is not a measure of Lithuanian participation in the persecution and murder of Kaunas Jews, which included the battalion's companies, the police, the commandant's office, the municipality and the cabinet. [2]

LGGRTC's director separates the uprising from the Holocaust. In a May 2021 interview Arūnas Bubnys described the June uprising and the Holocaust as connected but separate phenomena and relied on former ministers' accounts of unsuccessful Provisional Government interventions, while acknowledging that some former insurgents entered structures that arrested, imprisoned and murdered Jews. In Kaunas the same commandant, the same cabinet and the same men moved from the uprising into the battalion within six days. [1, 8, 52]

Testimony removed from a Lithuanian edition. Vilnius University historian Nerijus Šepetys documents that a privately published 2021 Lithuanian edition of the Kaunas ghetto police chronicle removed its introduction on the first murders, which described robbery, beatings, rape, shootings and murder by Lithuanian perpetrators, as "neobjektyvi ir provokuojanti" ("unobjective and provocative"). The edition carries a foreword by Bubnys. The English edition of the chronicle was published by Indiana University Press in 2014. [53, 54]

An accurate control. The Seventh Fort's own site, operated by the public institution Karo paveldo centras, states that the Provisional Government decided on 30 June 1941 to establish the camp at the Seventh Fort and that the newly formed TDA battalion was assigned to guard its prisoners and carry out the killings. VLE's ghetto entry names the TDA battalion at the forts and the Third Company in the Great Action. These texts show that an accurate public account of Lithuanian agency in Kaunas is available and in use. [20, 33]

5 What remains unverified and why

The prison registers of 1941–1942, the interrogation files behind the battalion officers' personal acts, the battalion's rosters, the municipal property and housing records, the opening leaf of the 25 July 1941 municipal minutes, the original of Order No. 15 and the security police card index have not been examined in the original. The acts attributed to individual officers rest on the published studies of LGGRTC historians and the International Commission, which cite those

files. The gaps, their consequences and the records that would close them are set out in section 26.

6 What LGGRTC and other institutions are asked to investigate and explain

LGGRTC publishes the research on which Lithuania's public account of Kaunas depends. It is asked to locate, examine and disclose, within its remit, the following, and to state for each item whether it holds the record, has requested it from a custodian, cannot obtain it or has not searched for it:

- The interrogation files cited in Bubnys's 2006 study and the Commission study for the Seventh, Fourth and Ninth Fort shootings, with the pages naming Barzda, Dagys, Norkus, Obelenis, Klimavičius, Skaržinskas and Arlauskas.
- The TDA battalion orders and rosters for June–December 1941, including Order No. 3 of 7 July (49 Seventh Fort guards), Secret Order No. 1 of 1 September (32 ghetto guards) and Order No. 10 of 15 September.
- The Kaunas prison registers for 9 August 1941 (543 Jews to the German security police), 27 October 1941 and 1942.
- The municipal minutes of 25 July 1941 (R-1444/1/6, leaves 2–4), the property inventories, and the housing and finance records showing who received the property of Kaunas Jews.
- The Lithuanian security police card index of Kaunas Jews (EM No. 54).
- The source chain for Rukšėnas's division of Stahlecker's 3,800 into about 1,000 murdered and 2,800 arrested, and for the further division of the 2,800 into 2,060 shot under Ehrlinger and 740 under Jäger; the exact denominator behind the 8.83 percent figure.
- The scope of its historian's foreword to the 2021 private edition of the ghetto police chronicle and any role of the Centre in preparing or distributing that edition.
- An explanation of why the Centre's 2000 roster of battalion officers describes Barzda, Dagys and Norkus as having been "entangled by the Germans in mass killings of Jews" and omits Stelmokas's ghetto-guard command, when its own journal later published their operational acts.

VLE is asked to answer the questions of BOB-R2 and to reconcile its "Kauno getas," "žydų pogromai Kaune" and "Jurgis Bobelis" entries with each other and with the sources set out here. Kaunas City Municipality is asked to answer LAN-R4. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is asked to answer URM-HC-04.

Part Two — The record, 1915–1945

7 The Jewish community of Kaunas, 1915–1940

Origins. Jews are first recorded in Kaunas in 1410. For centuries they were repeatedly excluded from the city and lived across the Neris in Slobodka (Vilijampolė); restrictions on Jewish residence in Kaunas were abolished in 1858. The 1897 census counted 25,448 Jews in a city of 70,920, about 36 percent. Gilbert gives about 32,000 Jews in 1908, 40 percent of the population; Pinkas Hakehillot gives 40,000 on the eve of the First World War. [11, 55, 56]

Expulsion, 1915. On 18 May 1915 the Russian commander-in-chief, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, ordered the Jews of Kaunas province, including the city, to leave within 24 hours on pain of death. The Germans took Kaunas on 17 August 1915 and held it until 1918; the city's population fell from about 90,000 to 16,000, and those who remained suffered expropriation and forced labor. About 9,000 Jews returned under German occupation and many more after 1917. [11, 55, 57]

The independent state, 1918–1926. From 1919 Kaunas was the temporary capital of Lithuania and the seat of the Ministry for Jewish Affairs and the Jewish National Council. Jewish national autonomy was declared on 5 August 1919 and given legal form in the Temporary Law on Jewish Communities of 10 January 1920. Dr. Jacob Wygodzki was named minister without portfolio for Jewish affairs on 26 December 1918, followed by Dr. Max Soloveitchik and Bernard Friedman. The Seimas abolished the ministry in 1922–1924; police dispersed the Jewish National Council without warning on 17 September 1924; the Kaunas Jewish community council functioned from July 1919 to March 1926. In the 1921 municipal elections 12 Jews were elected to the Kaunas city council, with 16 Poles, 14 Lithuanians and 3 Germans. [11, 55, 57, 58, 59]

Jews in Lithuania's independence wars. About 500 Jews volunteered for the Lithuanian army out of some 10,000 volunteers; at least 73 Jewish soldiers were killed. The Kaunas branch of the Union of Jewish Soldiers who fought for Lithuanian independence listed 542 Jews who served between 1918 and 1923, 245 of them decorated. Historian Hektoras Vitkus estimates 2,000–4,000 Jewish soldiers in all. The union's records are in LCVA fond 593. In 1941 that service did not protect them: Bobelis released about seventy from the Seventh Fort, and the veteran Yakov Goldberg was arrested by an armed group while acting as a community representative. [1, 11, 55, 58, 60, 61]

Population. The 1923 census counted 25,044 Jews in a city of 92,446, 27.1 percent; a 1922 city-council count gave 32.78 percent. Encyclopaedia Judaica gives 38,000 Jews in 1933 (30 percent). Pinkas Hakehillot gives 37,000 Jews in 1940, 24 percent of 154,000. The Lithuanian Statistical Office, as cited by VLE, gave 32,595 Jews in Kaunas on 1 January 1941. Refugees from Klaipėda in March 1939 and from Poland in 1939–1940 raised the number; on the eve of the German invasion estimates range from 35,000 to nearly 40,000. [20, 56, 57, 62, 63, 64]

Institutions. Slobodka's yeshivot, among them Knesset Yisrael, Or Haim, Etz Haim and Ateret Tzvi, drew students from abroad; 231 studied there in 1938. The chief rabbi was Avraham Dov-Ber Kahana-Shapiro, who died in the ghetto in 1943. The Hebrew gymnasium opened in August 1920 and the Yavne gymnasium in 1928; in 1937 ten of the city's 43 schools were Jewish, with 2,181 pupils. The Zionist daily *Di Yidishe Shtime* appeared from July 1919, the Folkspartei's *Folksblat* from 1930; in the 1930s five Jewish dailies were published in Kaunas. The Bikur Cholim hospital had 320 beds and treated Jews from 45 towns without state subsidy; its director of internal medicine was Dr. Elchanan Elkes. The Jewish People's Bank, founded in 1920, had 3,526 members by 1929. The Historical and Ethnographical Society of Lithuanian Jews was founded in Kaunas on 30 May 1922. [55, 57, 58, 65]

The economy. The 1931 count recorded 909 of the city's 1,216 shops and businesses (75 percent) and 525 of its 754 light-industry enterprises (70 percent) in Jewish hands. In 1936 only eight or nine of the municipality's 800 clerks were Jews; Gilbert records that very few Jews were

judges or government employees and that no Jew reached the rank of colonel in the Lithuanian army. [11, 55]

The 1923 sign campaign. In January and February 1923 Yiddish and Hebrew shop signs in Kaunas and other towns were tarred and defaced in an organized campaign. A Jewish council letter of 31 January complained of the "systematic and evidently clearly organized" defacement. Vladas Sirutavičius finds that several hundred people may have taken part in Kaunas, that up to thirty were detained, and that the vandals included soldiers, junior officers, riflemen and students; no vandal was formally charged. Pinkas Hakehillot states that the tarring took place with the government's knowledge. [55, 66, 67]

Violence in Slobodka, 1929. On 2 August 1929 about twenty rioters, three policemen among them, attacked Jews in Slobodka. Sirutavičius links the attack to radical-right groups that equated Jews with communism; the attackers were prosecuted only after their faction lost the political struggle. [55, 67]

The *Verslas* campaign, 1930–1940. The Lithuanian Businessmen's Union (Lietuvių verslininkų sąjunga), active in Kaunas from 1930 to 1940, published the weekly *Verslas* from 1932 to 1940 in runs of 5,000–10,000. VLE's own article on antisemitism states that *Verslas* spread antisemitism because Jews were its members' economic competitors. Its campaigns urged Lithuanians to buy only from Lithuanians; a 20 January 1939 editorial demanded the emigration of Lithuania's 150,000 Jews. [68, 69, 70]

The university. Jewish students made up 31 percent of the university's students in 1922 and 26 percent in 1932. In 1926–1927 medical students demanded corpses from the Jewish hospital for dissection. In 1937 three of sixty admissions to the medical faculty went to Jews; in 1938 Lithuanian students demanded separate "ghetto seats" for Jews. Tory recalled the cry "Jews, go to Palestine!" and violent clashes "more frequent from year to year." [11, 55, 71]

The state's position. The International Commission concluded that no anti-Jewish law was adopted under President Smetona, but that Jews were treated as second-class citizens. State Security reports of 1939–1940 show the authorities suppressing antisemitic actions. In June 1939 a clash in Leipalingis led to the smashing of windows in Jewish homes and fines for 39 people. These events show a hardening climate; they do not make prewar antisemites perpetrators of the 1941 killings absent separate evidence. [72, 73, 74]

8 The Soviet year and the LAF program, June 1940 – June 1941

Soviet rule. The Soviet Union occupied Lithuania on 15 June 1940. Of the 466 businesses, stores and factories nationalized in Kaunas and its surroundings, 393 belonged to Jews; houses larger than 220 square meters were nationalized. Zionist parties and youth organizations were dissolved; the Tarbut and Yavne Hebrew schools were closed and the Jewish schools converted to Yiddish; the Historical and Ethnographical Society was closed in August 1940; the Jewish press was replaced by the communist *Kovner Emes*. USHMM finds that the occupation brought a swift end to Jewish communal life and hit hardest the city's largely Jewish middle class. [57, 64, 75]

Deportations. In the deportations of 14–18 June 1941 at least 18,500 people were deported from Lithuania. The International Commission found that about 2,600 Jews suffered Soviet repression

in 1940–1941; the Lithuanian Jewish Community gives 2,613 Jews deported on 14 June 1941. In Kaunas hundreds of Jews were arrested, among them leaders of the Zionist parties. Tory himself was repeatedly interrogated by the NKVD and was on a deportation list. [11, 64, 72, 76, 77]

Refugees and rescue. Almost all of the roughly 9,000 Jews of the Klaipėda region fled in March 1939, many to Kaunas. About 15,000 Polish Jews found refuge in Lithuania in 1939–1940. In Kaunas in July and August 1940 the Japanese consul Chiune Sugihara issued transit visas to 2,140 people, covering some 300 more; with the Dutch consul Jan Zwartendijk he gave about 2,100 Polish Jewish refugees a route out. [58, 78, 79]

The LAF program. The Lithuanian Activist Front was founded in Berlin on 17 November 1940 under Kazys Škirpa; VLE records the removal of Jews from the country's political and economic life as one of its principles. Its instruction "Lietuvai išlaisvinti nurodymai" of 24 March 1941 stated: "It is very important on this occasion to get rid of the Jews as well. Therefore an atmosphere so stifling against the Jews must be created in the country that not a single Jew would dare even to think that in the new Lithuania he could still have even minimal rights or means of livelihood." Its leaflet "Svetingumo atšaukimas žydams" declared Vytautas the Great's privilege to the Jews revoked forever. A variant of its 19 March 1941 appeal "Brangūs vergaujantys broliai" told readers to inform the Jews "already today that their fate is clear"; another variant promised forgiveness to traitors who proved they had "liquidated at least one Jew each." VLE's article on antisemitism states that LAF appeals identified all Jews with communists without foundation. [69, 72, 80, 81]

The fusion of the categories. By 22 June 1941 Lithuanian propaganda had declared Jews collectively Bolshevik and their place in Lithuania forfeit. The Commission study records that from March 1941 the uprising's leaders sought through propaganda to drive Jews out of the state and on occasion threatened to kill them. When the armed insurgents took the streets of Kaunas, the arrests began with that accusation. [1, 20]

9 Lithuanian authority and armed formations, 22 June – 10 July 1941

The Soviet withdrawal from Kaunas began on 22 June 1941. On 23 June the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF) uprising took control of the city, and the Provisional Government proclaimed itself the government of Lithuania. Within days, the city contained four Lithuanian structures that would carry out or administer the persecution of its Jews: armed insurgent groups wearing white armbands; a military commandant's office; a restored police and security police; and a municipal administration. [1, 20]

The military commandant. Colonel Jurgis Bobelis became Kaunas city and district military commandant on 23 June 1941. His Order No. 1 of 24 June recalled to duty all police officers who had served before 15 June 1940; about 3,000 men, about 40 percent of the prewar force, returned. On 24 June he called on house owners and hotel keepers to report fugitives and persons in hiding. He ordered a radio announcement that shots had been fired at German troops from Jewish houses and that one hundred Jews would be killed for every German shot. The International Commission study records the effect: the announcement heated an atmosphere already ready for pogroms. [1]

The insurgent groups. The commandant's office grouped the insurgents into 42 city stations with 3,365 men. Rukšėnas gives 3,396 partisans in Kaunas and its surroundings. These armed

men, uniformed and civilian, wore white armbands. The Commission study records that they arrested Jews methodically in their homes and, on their own initiative, stopped Jewish men, women and young people in the streets. Arrested Jews were taken to the central prison on Mickevičius Street and to the Seventh Fort. Beatings, robbery, theft and public humiliation became daily events. [1, 2]

The TDA battalion. On 28 June Bobelis's Order No. 9 directed the replacement of the insurgent groups by a militarized unit, and from 29 June the commandant's office formed the Tautinio darbo apsaugos batalionas (TDA, National Labor Defense Battalion). The Provisional Government approved its formation. On 30 June it decided that the commandant's office would finance the battalion from its budget. Lieutenant Andrius Butkūnas was its first commander, with Major Antanas Impulevičius as deputy; Major Kazys Šimkus succeeded Butkūnas after the 24 July change of command. The battalion's first order, signed by Butkūnas, thanked Hitler and invoked the earlier Lithuanian volunteers and the restoration of the homeland. [1, 8]

Transfer to German command. On 30 June Bobelis placed the battalion's Fifth Company at the disposal of SS Lieutenant Colonel Erich Ehrlinger's Sonderkommando 1b. On 1 July Ehrlinger reported that he had formed five Lithuanian auxiliary police companies, two placed at his command, one of which was already guarding prisoners and carrying out executions at the Seventh Fort. EM No. 14 of 6 July reported about 1,500 Jews held at the Seventh Fort and 1,860 in the central prisons, and that "guard duty is performed by Lithuanian guard formations." The Commission study concludes that the Lithuanian authorities made no discernible attempt to prevent the German takeover of these units; the Commission's approved conclusions of 2005 state that the units carrying out the 4 and 6 July killings were "formally reporting to the Lithuanian Commandant of Kaunas." From 30 July the Lithuanian commandant's office was placed under German Reserve Police Battalion 11. [1, 82, 83, 84]

The Provisional Government. The cabinet met in Kaunas throughout the first week of killings. On 27 June, after Minister Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis reported the torture of Jews at the Lietūkis garage, the cabinet recorded its decision: notwithstanding "all the measures which must be taken against the Jews because of their Communist activity and harm to the German Army," partisans and individuals should avoid public executions of Jews. The Commission study calls this an incriminating formulation. On 30 June, after hearing Bobelis on a "Jewish concentration camp," the cabinet approved the camp and assigned Vice-Minister Vladas Švipas to establish it in contact with Bobelis. Bobelis's 5 July budget for the commandant's office contained a line for the camp and its guards. On 7 July Bobelis reported to the cabinet that Stahlecker had begun the ghettoization of Kaunas Jews. Kaunas Mayor Palčiauskas and Vice-Mayor Pikčilingis attended the 27 June sitting. Szarota records that when the cabinet asked why the police had not prevented the Lietūkis massacre, Interior Minister Jonas Šlepetys answered that the Bolsheviks were to blame. In the same sitting the cabinet received "with joy" the news that the German command permitted a security battalion and resolved to support and finance it; on 30 June it advanced the battalion 7,492 rubles a day for ten days. Between 30 June and 2 August the cabinet adopted laws and decisions excluding Jews from the return of nationalized houses, businesses, ships, deposits and securities; its fleet law reserved to the cabinet the decision of "who is considered a Jew." The Provisional Government dissolved itself on 5 August 1941. [1, 2, 6, 7, 15, 85, 138]

The police and security police. The cabinet's first session on 24 June placed the security police, the city police and the prisons under a restored Ministry of the Interior. EK3 records cited by the

Commission show a Lithuanian police group of forty men under Jonas Dainauskas working under German supervision. EM No. 54 reports that a Lithuanian security police office prepared a card index of Kaunas Jews under German direction, together with anticipated reports on their finances and capacity for work. [1, 86]

The municipality. Burgomaster Kazys Palčiauskas headed the city administration. The American district court found that the municipal government appropriated Jewish-owned property outside the ghetto, ordered the barbed-wire enclosure and, through a housing subcommittee Palčiauskas established, redistributed murdered Jews' former homes to other Lithuanians. [13]

German command. The forward detachment of Einsatzgruppe A entered Kaunas during the night of 24–25 June. SS Brigadeführer Walter Stahlecker arrived early on 25 June; Sonderkommando 1b's main body arrived on 28 June; Einsatzkommando 3 under Karl Jäger took over security police tasks on 2 July. Stahlecker's report states that it had been unexpectedly difficult to start a large-scale pogrom in Kaunas and that the first pogrom began after Klimaitis was given instructions. The same report states that the Einsatzgruppe photographed and filmed the killings to show that the "first spontaneous executions" were carried out by Lithuanians. The report describes the Security Police's task as setting the local "self-cleansing efforts" in motion so that no German order or instigation would be visible from outside, and records that a unit of 300 "reliable" partisans was formed under Klimaitis to prepare and take part in larger liquidation actions under the constant supervision of the Einsatzkommando. These statements establish German instigation; they also establish that German officers organized, filmed and documented Lithuanian killers in action. [1, 4, 5, 51]

10 The first killings, 22–29 June 1941

22–24 June. Gilbert's introduction to Tory's diary records that several hundred Jews were seized and murdered in Kaunas on the day of the invasion. The Commission study records a killing near the Neris bridge to Vilijampolė on Jonavos Street: 25 to 30 Jewish men were forced to dance, recite prayers, sing Russian songs and perform "exercises" before Lithuanians made them kneel and shot them. Among them was Šmuel Matz, a journalist of the Yiddish daily *Folksblat*. Rukšėnas, citing Sara Ginaitė's memoirs, records Jewish men taken to Vytautas Park and shot on 26 June; Rukšėnas cites the Lithuanian Partisan Movement Staff's data naming Vytautas Park and the Vilijampolė riverbank by the bridge as the first collective grave sites. [1, 2, 11]

Elena Kutorgienė's diary. The Lithuanian physician Elena Kutorgienė recorded on 26 June armed men entering the house at Kranto Street 13 and shooting a Jewish family, then murdering Jews in another house. Peisach Šater testified that white-armband groups beat arrested Jews and killed detainees in the streets. These smaller killings formed a citywide pattern alongside Vilijampolė and Lietūkis. [2]

25–27 June: Vilijampolė (Slobodka). On the nights beginning 25 June, Lithuanian insurgents armed with rifles, axes, saws and knives, students among them, broke into Jewish homes in Vilijampolė and murdered their inhabitants. VLE identifies the forces as Algirdas Klimaitis's group of about twenty men, armed groups led by Kazys Šimkus and Bronius Norkus, and German soldiers, encouraged by Stahlecker. Rukšėnas lists the streets: Jurbarko, Sinagogos,

Veliuonos, Vidurinė, Ariogalos. The killers went from house to house and room to room. [1, 2, 3]

The named victims establish what the killings were. Rabbi Zalman Osovsky was tied to a chair, his head placed on an open volume of the Talmud and cut off; the head was set in the window with a note promising the same to all Jews. His son Judel was murdered and his wife shot; his five-year-old granddaughter Esterka survived under a bed. Rabbi Jona from Minsk was disemboweled. The yeshiva's sexton, Rabbi Gershon, had his throat cut. The killers murdered the yeshiva head, Shraga Feivel Hurvitz, and dozens of yeshiva students. They cut off the hands and feet of the dentist Stein-Yatkunski and her husband Mordechai Yatkunski, a leading Zionist, and murdered their son. Szarota, citing the survivor-historian Alex Faitelson, names the killer of Rabbi Osovsky as Lieutenant Viktoras Vitkauskas, a resident of Vilijampolė, who took a saber with him. They murdered the Puchart family at Ariogalos Street 10: Akiva Puchart, a mechanic at the Drobė factory, his wife and two children. On Jurbarko Street they shot a smith and then 26 Jews lined up against a wall. At the Vilijampolė bridge they beat 30 to 34 Jews, forced them to dance and sing, made them dig pits and shot them in front of a crowd; among them were Ichak and Shmuel Kaplan, father and son, the brothers Chaim and Ichak Ragolsky, the tailor Baranov and Shmuel Matz (a journalist in the Commission study and a physician in Rukšėnas's account). Houses with families inside were set on fire. [1, 2, 11, 85]

The Commission study states that the Vilijampolė massacre "was an attack on Jews as Jews." Victim estimates range from 600 to more than 1,000. Pinkas Hakehillot and Garfunkel give 800; Tory gives at least 700 for the night of 25–26 June; the Soviet *Black Book* and Gar give about 1,000; Gilbert's introduction gives a thousand. Stahlecker reported 1,500 killed on the first night and 2,300 "rendered harmless" on later nights, a total of 3,800 in the pogroms. These figures are not added together. [1, 4, 11]

27 June: the Lietūkis garage. In the yard of the Lietūkis cooperative garage on Vytauto Avenue, opposite the old cemetery and about 200 meters from the headquarters of the German 16th Army, Lithuanian men in white armbands and Lithuanian soldiers beat Jewish men to death with iron bars, wooden clubs and the hoses used to wash trucks. The victims were first made to clear horse manure and wash the yard with water hoses; they were then murdered one group after another. Photographs show about ten killers; two photographs show the same man posing with a crowbar after killing his victim. Spectators included German soldiers and Lithuanian civilians, women among them; witnesses testified that onlookers encouraged the killers and that someone played an accordion. Others shouted "Shame on Lithuania!" and were silenced. The bodies were buried in the old cemetery. Archbishop Juozapas Skvireckas recorded the killings in his diary on 28 June after the physician Matulionis and a priest asked him to intervene with the Germans. [1, 3]

The German witnesses' statements of 1958–1959 add detail. Wehrmacht photographer Wilhelm Gunsilius stated that the civilians wore armbands and carried rifles, that one young man killed a group of 45–50 people within three-quarters of an hour, that the killer then took an accordion, stood on the pile of bodies and played the Lithuanian national anthem, and that the crowd, including women with small children in their arms, applauded after each killing. Colonel Lothar von Bischoffshausen stated that women lifted their children or stood on chairs and boxes to see, that each blow was met with enthusiastic shouts, and that he was told "the death dealer of Kovno" was at work. Lance Corporal Karl Röder stated that the beaters were released Lithuanian

convicts; First Sergeant Lesch heard "shouts of approval and encouragement" from Lithuanian civilians. The International Commission study questions the claim that mothers lifted children to watch, noting that German soldiers had an interest in depicting Lithuanians as the more brutal, and records other witnesses who say the crowd was mostly German soldiers and that the anthem account is contested. A German soldier's letter of 29 June 1941, held by Yad Vashem, describes the massacre of Jews by Lithuanians with crowbars in the garage yard. [1, 85, 87, 88]

Named Lietūkis participants. Szarota records that Henrikas Zemelis, who had been tortured in an NKVD prison, admitted in testimony that he "took part in the execution"; Pranas Baleniūnas identified Jozefas Vaitkiavičius as the man forcing the hose into victims' mouths; an account attributed to Barskeitis and cited by Faitelson accuses Juozas Lukša. The accusation against Lukša has not been tested against original records and is examined in the author's separate report on him. [85, 89]

The Commission study names victims: the soap-factory worker Yitzchak Grin, the musician Shlomo Goldstein, the water supplier I. Kurliančikas, the merchants B. Komašas and Ch. Cukermanas, the students Pessach and Goldberg, and Moshe Strom. VLE adds the brothers Peisach and Moshe Goldberg, schoolboys, Rabbi Aron Braude and Jurgis Štromas. Estimates range from about 50 to 70 victims: Pinkas Hakehillot and Tory give 52, Garfunkel and Gar about 60. VLE and the Commission study both record that German soldiers took part in humiliating and beating the victims and that the killing was done by the Lithuanian perpetrators; VLE states that German soldiers did not kill the victims. [1, 3]

29 June. The 16th Army's quartermaster recorded on 29 June that the "Lithuanian freedom movement's" actions against communists and Jews had been stopped and that future executions would take place under the supervision of the SS commander in Kaunas. A Luftwaffe liaison staff diary of 28 June, citing the military commandant's office, recorded that "partisans" had shot 1,500 Jews the previous day and 1,000 that night. The killing did not end; it moved to the forts. [1]

11 The Seventh Fort, 29 June – 10 July 1941

A Lithuanian-designated camp. From 29 to 30 June, Jewish men, women and children were brought to the Seventh Fort, which Sonderkommando 1b also called a "Jewish concentration camp." The Provisional Government had approved the camp on 30 June and assigned it to Švipas and Bobelis. The Commission study notes that Lithuanians regarded the fort camps as set up by the Lithuanian military commandant's office; on 10 August the camp commandant reported to the Kaunas commandant on liquidating the camps. At the beginning of July the fort held about 1,500 Jews and the central prison 1,869 Jews; more than 3,200 people had been arrested in Kaunas. Jews from the Kaunas district were brought there as well. [1]

The regime of the fort. A secret TDA order of 7 July required 49 guards for continuous security at the Seventh Fort, against eight at the Provisional Government building; Bubnys identifies the fort as the battalion's most heavily guarded object. The battalion posted 49 soldiers to the fort and 18 to the central prison for each shift. Men were made to lie on the ground in the open and remain motionless; women and children were locked in the casemates. In summer heat, prisoners were denied water from the nearby well; guards, often drunk, fired at anyone who moved and allowed some prisoners to crawl to the well in order to shoot them while they drank. Bread

arrived on 3 July after four or five days without food. Groups were led out under the pretext of registering doctors, lawyers, engineers and people who wore glasses; they were shot beyond the ramparts. [1, 8]

Men at the fort. The Koniuchowsky testimony describes Lithuanian armed men taking women and children from bread lines, arresting women who asked after detained relatives and beating women who brought food. A mother who had left her baby locked in an apartment to bring food to her husband was beaten and imprisoned. At the fort, guards separated families and estimated which boys were old enough to stay with the men. Men were held without food or water in a depression called the "kettle" and fired upon for moving. Isaac Kobrovsky, arrested on 6 July, was struck with a club, kicked, marched to the Yellow Prison, stripped of his belongings and taken to the "kettle"; he survived when he and 24 other men were returned to the prison for work. [12]

4 and 6 July. Jäger's report lists 463 Jews (416 men, 47 women) shot at the Seventh Fort on 4 July and 2,514 Jews on 6 July, under the heading "On my instructions and orders the following executions were conducted by Lithuanian partisans." On the night of 6 July the remaining men, about 2,500, were killed by rifle and machine-gun fire and grenades thrown from the ramparts. Jäger later testified that Norkus, without direct orders, killed about 3,000 Jews at the fort, that his men fired chaotically, and that he reprimanded Norkus. Stahlecker came from Riga and told the Wehrmacht that "nervous Lithuanians" had gone too far. Three hundred Soviet prisoners of war were made to bury the bodies in bomb craters. Within five weeks residents complained of the stench to the commandant's sanitary division. [1, 9]

The shooters. German shooters came from Sonderkommando 1b, including Waffen-SS men, Gestapo officer Kurt Burkhardt's squad and a company of German Police Battalion 9. Lithuanian shooters came from the TDA battalion. Former prison chief Ignas Vėlavičius testified that the shootings were carried out mainly by the Third Company under Lieutenant Juozas Barzda, with a platoon under Bronius Norkus, and by the Fourth Company under Captain Viktoras Klimavičius. Soldiers of Barzda's and Norkus's company confessed to shooting at the fort. A First Company soldier testified that his company killed Jews at the fort almost every day and did nothing else. Gar's 1948 compilation names "a Lithuanian officer, Kirkila" as having "himself shot hundreds of Jews" there. A study of the fort by Vytautas Petrikėnas and Martynas Kosas finds that the shootings of 30 June – 6 July were carried out by soldiers of the First and Third Companies, "mostly under the supervision and active participation of several German officers," that guards took Jewish women to outer parts of the fort to rape and shoot them, and that the camp was officially closed on 10 August 1941. Field Marshal von Leeb's diary records "mass executions of Jews in Kaunas (thousands!) performed by Lithuanian protective units" on the instructions of the German police. One German witness, the medical orderly Heinrich Hippler, stated in 1959 that the guards were "only Germans, not Lithuanians"; the battalion orders, EM No. 14, the survivors and the Lithuanian studies contradict him. Survivor Yitzhak Nemenčik identified Sergeant Major Julius Tamulis, later commander of the Fifth Company, and Bobelis himself at the fort. Bubnys names Norkus and Junior Lieutenant Juozas Obelenis in one shooting and Barzda, Dagys and Norkus in the 6 July killing, and records officers finishing victims with pistols. [1, 8, 10, 16, 85, 87]

Resistance. During one execution unarmed prisoners tried to break through the guard line; the steep sides of the depression left them exposed and guards shot those climbing out. Bubnys associates the attempt with the physician Borisas Chodosas, who was killed. [8]

Bobelis at the fort. The Commission study records that Bobelis frequented the Seventh Fort, gave orders to the guards and ordered the release of about seventy men who had served as Lithuanian military volunteers. The release establishes his authority over the guards and over who would live. A German staff sergeant, acting at the request of a Jewish friend, took nine prisoners out of the fort as laborers on 5 or 6 July. [1, 12]

Victim totals. Nemenčik estimated about 7,000 killed at the fort; Koniuchowsky, citing the Jewish Council, gave 8,000 men and 50 women from Kaunas and its surroundings; the Commission study, working from the Council's 1942 statistics, estimates about 5,000 at the Seventh Fort. Jäger's dated entries total 2,977 for 4 and 6 July, a further 24 Jews on 9 July, and 19 Jews among 26 victims on 19 July. The entries are event counts, not the full site total. [1, 9]

12 Ghettoization and dispossession, July – August 1941

Order No. 15. On 8 July Stahlecker and Jäger told Jewish representatives that the persecution by Lithuanian partisans would end and about 3,000 women and children would be released from the forts only if all Jews moved to Vilijampolė by 15 August. On 10 July Military Commandant Bobelis and Burgomaster Palčiauskas issued Order No. 15: every Jew was to move to Vilijampolė by 15 August and, from 12 July, wear the yellow badge. Jews were barred from sidewalks, parks and public transport. The Commission study records that the Jewish transfer committee's attempts to obtain a more suitable area and a less harsh timetable were frustrated by the city's Lithuanian authorities. A certified copy of the order in the commandant's file (LCVA R-1444/1/6, leaf 5), printed in the Vilna Gaon Museum's documentary edition, is headed "Order No. 15 of the Commandant of Kaunas and the Mayor of the City of Kaunas," is dated "Kaunas, July 10, 1941," and closes with both offices. It also barred Jews who had fled from returning to the city, punished house owners who let them in, required them to pay for their own resettlement and forbade them to employ non-Jews. A moving permit of 12 July 1941 in the USHMM collection carries the names of Colonel J. Bobelis and Burgomaster K. Palčiauskas. The German civil administration confirmed the mayor's resettlement order on 31 July. VLE dates the order to 7 July. [1, 7, 11, 13, 20, 50, 90, 91]

The American court's findings. The district court authenticated the corrected draft of Order No. 15, found no Palčiauskas signature on that copy, and found his implementation of its directives established by the wider record. It found that the municipal government appropriated Jewish-owned property outside the ghetto, ordered the barbed-wire enclosure and redistributed murdered Jews' homes. [13, 14]

The 25 July 1941 interdepartmental meeting. On 25 July 1941 an interdepartmental meeting at the Kaunas Commandant's headquarters decided the transfer of the Jews to Vilijampolė. The minutes list the participants: Kaunas Commandant Captain Kviecinskas (chair), Deputy Commandant Colonel Kalmantas, Mayor Palčiauskas, Security Department Director Vytautas Reivytis, Police Department Director Taunys, Kaunas Police Chief Reinigeris (Renigeris), and Major Biknaitis, head of the commandant's organization department (secretary). It decided that the commandant and the mayor would issue the order and the Kaunas city police chief the

instructions. The order prohibited Jews from selling, mortgaging or exchanging real or personal property and from engaging in trade; everything they could not take "shall be left at the disposal of the Kaunas city government"; the instructions provided that "the property left behind by the Jews shall be disposed of by the mayor of the city of Kaunas, in agreement with the police chief of the city of Kaunas"; the city police chief would fix the time and manner of each family's transfer. These minutes are LCVA R-1444/1/6, leaves 2–4; the surviving leaves 3–4 held for this report are their second and third pages. [7, 34, 35]

The chronology resolves the apparent discrepancy in the titles. Vaitiekus records that Reivytis replaced Dainauskas as head of the State Security Department on 1 or 2 July 1941 and was appointed director of the Police Department on 26 July 1941, the day after the meeting. His 25 August letter to Hamann, signed as Police Department director (p. 211), postdates that appointment. The surviving image of leaf 4 names Kviecinskas, Kalmantas, Palčiauskas, Reivytis, Taunys, Reinigeris and secretary Biknaitis and expressly assigns liquidation of Jewish property to the burgomaster in agreement with the city police chief. [7, 35, 132]

Property rules. The surviving pages of the commandant's file prescribed what a Jewish family could take into Vilijampolė: one dining table per family, one chair per person, two plates and a drinking vessel per person, restricted clothing and equipment, and no expensive or fixed professional apparatus. Everything else stayed in the apartments. Police were to inventory the apartments and hand them and their contents to appointed custodians, with one inventory copy for the Kaunas burgomaster and one for the police precinct chief. Leaf 4 assigns the disposal of the property to the city burgomaster acting in agreement with the city police chief and carries the signature block of the meeting. Gar records that the Lithuanian officials of the city administration set a smaller area for the ghetto than first proposed and that Lithuanian residents moved into the former Jewish homes in the city. [16, 34, 35, 92]

Real estate. Paragraph 8 of Order No. 15 directed Jewish owners to liquidate or exchange real estate, mainly with Lithuanians moving out of Vilijampolė, and provided for the municipality to take property not disposed of. Jews had to supply their own transport. [11]

Forced construction of the ghetto. On 24 July the municipality ordered Jews to erect the ghetto fence themselves. On 30 July the Roads Department, in municipal document No. 2143 supervised by technician J. Ratcevičius, required fifty Jewish men that day and one hundred each day thereafter, with their own spades, at Jurbarko Street 12. [11]

Children. A 27 July instruction attributed to the Lithuanian Minister of Education required Jewish children in children's homes throughout Lithuania to be handed to the Jewish committee in Vilijampolė. The record links a Lithuanian ministry to the racial concentration of children. [11]

The negotiation record. The 22 July negotiation record contains a living-space formula, a removal timetable and the transfer of non-Jewish families out of Vilijampolė. Jewish representatives sought rooms, transport and exemptions for the sick and were told removal would proceed regardless. Two of them, the architect Anatoly Rosenblum and the aviator Adolf Blumenthal, a contributor to Lithuania's early air force, were later murdered. [11]

Arrests on the way to the commandant. Tory's 7 July entry records that Jewish representatives Goldberg and Garfunkel were stopped and arrested by an armed group on their way home from

Bobelis's office, where they had been told to return in an hour. Goldberg's service in the Lithuanian independence struggle did not protect him; both men had been imprisoned under Soviet rule. After headquarters confirmed their appointment, Bobelis received them and arranged an escort home. [11]

Population of the ghetto. On 15 August 1941 the ghetto was closed with about 30,000 Jews inside, in an area previously inhabited by about 7,000 Jews and non-Jews; the Jewish Council's figure for August 1941 was 30,022. About 6,000 of Kaunas's Jews had lived in Vilijampolė before the war. Fritz Jordan was the German official for Jewish affairs; his Lithuanian assistant was Mikas Kaminskas. [11, 20]

13 The Fourth Fort and the August killings

2 August. Bubnys records TDA men under Juozas Barzda and Jurgis Skaržinskas taking prisoners from the Mickevičius Street prison to the Fourth Fort, where a ditch had been prepared and German personnel were present. The victims were stripped to their underwear and driven to the ditch in groups; Barzda gave the firing command. Jäger lists 209 victims: 170 Jewish men, one American Jewish man, one American Jewish woman, 33 Jewish women and four Lithuanian communists. [8, 9]

7 August. On 7 August Lithuanian partisans seized about 1,200 Jewish men in Kaunas; according to the editorial note in Tory's diary, about 900 were shot and 300 released. Tory's 7 August 1942 entry records the anniversary of the "large-scale arrests and abductions of Jews on the streets of Kovno." The diary also records that Elimelech Kaplan was murdered by Lithuanian partisans during the mass killings of 6 August 1941. Gar records that "within a few hours, the Lithuanian murderers managed to capture around 1200 Jewish men" and took them to the prison (pp. 50–51). Jäger's report contains no Kaunas city entry for 7 August; the relation of this killing to Jäger's later dated entries is a research question. [11, 16]

9 August. The Third Company under Barzda and Anatolijus Dagys escorted several hundred Jewish men and women from the prison to the Fourth Fort. Sergeant Major Zigmas Arlauskas distributed vodka brought by the Germans. Women were shot first; the men were made to strip to their underwear and shot. Barzda, Dagys and Germans finished the wounded with pistols. Soviet prisoners of war covered the bodies between groups. Jäger lists 534 victims: 484 Jewish men and 50 Jewish women. The Kaunas prison register records 543 Jews handed to the German security police that day. [8, 9, 93]

18 August: the intelligentsia action. Fritz Jordan demanded 500 educated Jewish men for "work in the city archives." Mikas Kaminskas, the Lithuanian municipal official serving as Jordan's assistant (the Tory edition calls him "the Lithuanian head of the Kovno municipality"), assured the Jewish Council they would return the same day. Tory records that it was Kaminskas who said the men had been taken to the archives; "he always concealed the truth." Jäger lists 1,812 victims at the Fourth Fort that day: 698 Jewish men, 402 Jewish women, one Polish woman and 711 "Jewish intellectuals from the ghetto." The original image reads 698, not the 689 in some web transcriptions. Gar records that Kaminskas, "the former high officer from the Kovno Magistrate" installed as councilor for Jewish affairs in the German city commissariat, gave the Council the order to assemble the 500, and that "a large guard of Lithuanian partisans" under Rauca took them; USHMM states they were taken to the Fourth Fort and shot, "most likely

by Lithuanian policemen." Bubnys names victims: the violinist and concertmaster Robertas Stenderis, the film director Marekas Martensas, the painter A. Kaplanas and the journalist Maksas Volfovičius, together with physicians, engineers, lawyers and teachers. Tory's edition says 534 men presented themselves and gives the Ninth Fort; other accounts give the Fourth Fort. [8, 9, 11, 16, 75]

14 September – November 1941

Labor, certificates and confiscation. From 1 October Jordan required 1,000 men for the day shift and 1,000 for the night shift at the Aleksotas airfield. On 15 September Jordan issued 5,000 "Jordan certificates" for skilled workers in a ghetto of about 27,000 people. Orders transmitted through Kaminskas required the surrender of all fodder; a Jordan order required every family to hand over soap. [11]

Searches and confiscation. From 19 August to 4 September 1941 German police under Tombaum searched the ghetto for money above 100 rubles per family, foreign currency, securities and gold, including wedding rings; the German order of 3 September required delivery of all valuables on pain of death for the whole ghetto. [11, 16]

17 September. The small ghetto was surrounded by German guards and Lithuanian partisans; its inhabitants were assembled and hospital patients and children from the orphanage were taken toward the Ninth Fort before the action was called off. While the deportees stood in the square, Lithuanian partisans looted their apartments. [11]

26 September. After Ghetto Guard commander Kozlovski staged a fake attack on himself, the inhabitants of Veliuonos Street and the surrounding old quarter were removed. Tory gives about 1,000 deportees taken to the Ninth Fort; the editorial note gives 1,200. Jäger lists 1,608 victims at the Fourth Fort on 26 September: 412 Jewish men, 615 Jewish women and 581 Jewish children, described as "sick and suspected epidemic cases." The deportees' apartments were sealed and their furniture removed from the ghetto. [9, 11]

4 October: the small ghetto. At 6 a.m. about fifty German policemen and about one hundred Lithuanian partisans blocked the bridge (Gar: "groups of German police, together with Lithuanian partisans, entered every house, kicked the Jewish population out onto the street") between the small and large ghettos. Residents without Jordan certificates were driven to Sąjungos Square and then to the Ninth Fort. German policemen kicked infants laid in the hospital courtyard and threw children and nurses into a truck. The Germans sealed the contagious-diseases hospital and set it on fire with its patients, physicians and nurses inside; the orphanage was burned with it. Workers at the nearby Lape factory saw shootings in a pit beside the hospital. Two days earlier Jordan and Kaminskas had inspected the site and ordered twelve spades; Kaminskas told Elkes the rumors were unfounded. At the Ninth Fort, Bubnys attributes the shooting to nearly the whole Third Company with about twenty German soldiers and names Bronius Norkus as the Lithuanian commander. Jäger lists 1,845 victims: 315 Jewish men, 712 Jewish women and 818 Jewish children. [8, 9, 11]

28 October: the selection. All ghetto inhabitants were ordered to Demokratų Square at dawn. Under German police and Lithuanian armed guard they stood for hours in rain and cold while Gestapo official Helmut Rauca divided families, sending the sick, the elderly, large families and those judged unfit for work to the condemned group. Battalion commander Kazys Šimkus was

present at the ghetto that day; soldiers from several companies guarded the ghetto and the square. A crowd of Lithuanian spectators gathered on the hills overlooking the ghetto and watched the selection for hours. [8, 11]

29 October: the Great Action. The next morning, as the condemned were being taken away, Elkes tried to reach them with Rauca's authorization to remove one hundred people from the condemned group. Lithuanian guards ordered him away, threatened to send him to the Ninth Fort and attacked him; one struck his head with a rifle butt. Tory and others carried the unconscious, bleeding physician back into the large ghetto. Gar describes the guard on the column as "made up mainly of Lithuanian partisans" and records that "a Lithuanian partisan wounded Dr. Elkes in the head with his gun"; during the selection some Lithuanian partisans robbed the empty homes (pp. 76–81). At dawn German policemen and Lithuanian armed men drove the condemned out of the former small ghetto with rifle butts and formed guarded columns on the road to the Ninth Fort. Those who tried to escape were shot. Lithuanian guards drove back people who approached the fence from the large ghetto; families called to one another across the barrier. At the fort, groups were forced into prepared trenches, stripped to their underwear and shot. Bubnys names Dagys, Norkus and Barzda among the participating officers, records that the Third Company supplied the shooters together with German shooters, and states that afterward battalion men selected the victims' clothing and other belongings before returning to barracks. Jäger lists 9,200 victims: 2,007 Jewish men, 2,920 Jewish women and 4,273 Jewish children, "mopping up the ghetto of superfluous Jews." The Commission study states that the Great Action employed large numbers of Lithuanian police battalion personnel and was not primarily a Rollkommando operation. [1, 8, 9, 11, 16]

12–13 December 1941. A Lithuanian archival file cited in the USHMM *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos* records a raid on the ghetto by Lithuanians on 12–13 December 1941 (LCVA R-973/2/32, pp. 102–103). The file has not been examined. [91]

Jonas Stelmokas and the ghetto guard. Secret battalion Order No. 1 of 1 September 1941 assigned 32 guards to the ghetto at Veliuonos Street 17 to keep the Jews confined, separately from four guards at the Eighth Fort ammunition depot. Order No. 10 of 15 September named Lieutenant Jonas Stelmokas for the next day; the court established his command of the ghetto guard for 24 hours from 1 p.m. on 16 September, enforcing confinement under brutal conditions. The Third Circuit affirmed his civil denaturalization on 12 November 1996. On 23 April 1998 the Justice Department reported an immigration-court removal order resting on captured wartime documents establishing his responsibility for enforcing the Jews' internment under inhumane conditions. The appellate majority did not find that he personally took part in the Great Action or that his men shot the two victims of 16–17 September. [17, 94]

25 and 29 November: Jews deported from the Reich. Jäger lists 2,934 Jews deported from Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt killed at the Ninth Fort on 25 November (1,159 men, 1,600 women, 175 children) and 2,000 from Vienna and Breslau on 29 November (693 men, 1,155 women, 152 children); a separate 29 November entry records 34 further victims: 17 Jewish men and one Jewish woman accused of violating ghetto laws, a Reich German who had converted to Judaism and attended a rabbinical school, and fifteen people labeled by Jäger as “terrorists of the Kalinin group.” Bubnys places battalion personnel under Šimkus and Barzda beside German personnel in the November killings. Former prison chief Vėlavičius described victims forced to lie in water and on the bodies of earlier victims, beaten with sticks and rifle butts, and wounded

people trying to climb out of the pits and being forced back; German and Lithuanian personnel removed the better clothing. The nationalist diarist Zenonas Blynas recorded that the First Battalion was shooting the foreign Jews. The foreign-deportee groups were brought to Kaunas to be murdered; that stated origin does not establish the residence of the separate thirty-four victims. [8, 9]

The battalion outside Kaunas. EM No. 19 records that about 205 Lithuanian partisans (250 in the Arad–Krakowski–Spector edition) were retained as a special detachment available for executions beyond Kaunas. Bubnys describes the Third Company as the core of the mobile killing unit associated with Joachim Hamann; local police assembled and guarded victims while pits were dug, and a detachment from Kaunas did the shooting. His overall estimate of about 36,000 victims concerns operations in Kaunas, the provinces and Belarus with German and other personnel; the Belarus operations account for about 1,400. These provincial victims belong to their own towns' histories and are not added to the Kaunas count. [8, 49]

14A Lithuanian arresting offices and the prison route to the forts

Lithuanian offices supplied the machinery of detention before the victims reached the forts. Bubnys's prison study records that the principal arresting agents in the first occupation days were Lithuanian insurgents and policemen. Prisoners were initially delivered to the State Security Department and then imprisoned. On 25 June the Eighth Police Precinct detained Izraelis Raimonas and Giršas Raimonas and delivered them to the security department as persons allegedly engaged in anti-state activity. On 28 June the Vilijampolė insurgent headquarters reported handing over 326 Jewish men and 252 Jewish women with children. These are records of capture and transfer; the allegation used to arrest them is not an established fact about their conduct (p. 23, notes 31–35). [93]

The cited wartime instruments make those arrests traceable: the Eighth Precinct letter of 25 June is LCVA R-731/4/24, leaf 21; the list of persons arrested that day is in the same file, leaves 31–31 verso; the Vilijampolė headquarters letter of 28 June is leaf 106. The 26 June security-department letter to the prison is leaf 15. LGGRTC must obtain and produce these instruments with the corresponding admission entries and personal files. Their record connects a local arresting body, a receiving security office and a prison rather than leaving "arrests" without an institutional subject (p. 35, notes 31–35). [93]

The execution-transfer process required prison clerical work. Bubnys describes the German security service sending lists of condemned prisoners; prison office staff selected the prisoners' files and passed them to the responsible official, who handed both people and files to the German authorities. Staff then placed certificates in the files recording transfer into German Security Police custody. Prisoners were transported in covered trucks and were told that they were going to work. The study cites Juozas Sinevičius's 22 June 1987 interview, LYA K-1/58/P-18129, leaf 452, for this description (p. 25, note 53). The account identifies an administrative sequence to be tested against surviving wartime records. [93]

The prison registers must be read against those transfers. The outgoing correspondence book records 543 Jews handed to the German security police on 9 August 1941; Jäger's Fourth Fort entry for that day records 534 victims. These figures require a person-by-person reconciliation, not silent substitution. On 27 October the prison again handed over twenty-eight Jews; Bubnys considers their murder in the Great Action probable. That inference must remain distinct from

the recorded handover. The respective references are LCVA R-731/4/8, leaf 49, and R-731/4/7, leaves 101–108 (pp. 24, 35, notes 46–47). [93]

Jewish imprisonment did not end with the ghetto's closure. A list of 30 May 1942 identifies fifty-seven Jews in the central prison. Lists record twenty-one Jews sent to the Ninth Fort on 5 May, twelve on 6 July and nine on 16 October 1942, described as transfers for continued imprisonment. A 20 February 1942 list records twelve deceased Jewish prisoners of war. The transfer groups, the prison population and the deceased prisoners of war are different categories and dates. They cannot be combined into a newly invented execution total (pp. 24, 31, notes 48, 100–101). [93]

The corresponding documentary route is specific: the fifty-seven-person list is LCVA R-731/4/59, leaves 260–261; the transfers to the Ninth Fort are R-731/4/38, leaves 35, 47 and 81; the deceased Jewish prisoners of war are R-731/4/58, leaf 332. LGGRTC must obtain the lists, identify the people, and connect each transfer with subsequent custody, release, death or execution records. A statement that only small groups of Jews remained in ordinary prison statistics conceals the historical sequence unless it also explains the earlier murder and confinement in the ghetto (pp. 35–37). [93]

The Ninth Fort was a branch of the central prison with a succession of named administrators. Bubnys identifies Juozas Sliesoraitis's appointment on 5 August 1941; Antanas Etneris took temporary charge from 11 October 1942; Jonas Milišiūnas was appointed on 26 November; Benediktas Kuzmickas became head in June 1943. The fort passed into German Security Police control in autumn 1943 for the destruction of the mass graves. These offices, dates and changes must be distinguished from the separate shooting detachments and from Ignas Vylius's central-prison and guard-command responsibilities (p. 32, notes 118–121). [93]

Jokimas Barkauskas served as deputy fort administrator from 1 August 1941 to 1 May 1943. Bubnys records his beating poorly working prisoners with a stick and humiliating them. The source is Barkauskas's 9 October 1944 interrogation, LYA K-1/58/42022/3, leaf 14. This is attributed evidence of personal abuse, alongside his defined administrative post. The later interrogation and wartime appointment documents must be reproduced and compared; neither a job title alone nor an anonymous reference to "guards" gives the necessary individual account (p. 32, notes 122–123). [93]

The statistics themselves have a crucial boundary. Bubnys states that Jews brought for the one-day mass executions were not entered in the fort's ordinary prisoner statistics. The fifty to one hundred, or later roughly two hundred, resident labor prisoners therefore do not measure the number brought there to be murdered. An institutional account of the prison branch must state that exclusion beside its administrative population figures. Otherwise a reader cannot distinguish the prison's resident population from the transports entering the killing ground (pp. 31–32). [93]

The study also records a final connection with Vilnius: before withdrawing toward Germany, the German Security Police and SD Special Squad arriving from Vilnius shot about one hundred remaining prisoners at the Ninth Fort. Bubnys cites P. Černiauskas's 12 November 1969 interrogation, LYA K-1/58/47746/3, volume 1, leaves 217–219. The passage supplies a unit and a late operation; it does not supply a Jewish-only victim count or identify every shooter. The

Vilnius personnel files and Kaunas prisoner lists must be reconciled before the episode is assigned individual perpetrators or added to either city's victim ledger (p. 32, note 125). [93]

14B The commander's account of organization and intended destruction
Jäger's organizational account identifies cooperation with Lithuanian armed men and the responsible civilian offices. Collection of Jews, the choice and excavation of pits, movement of groups of five hundred, transport and cordoning formed the operation's division of labor. His Rokiškis example assigns more than sixty of eighty available Lithuanian men to escort and perimeter duties, with the remainder working alongside his own men. His account of Kaunas characterizes the shootings as comparatively easy because enough partially trained Lithuanian personnel were available. He also states that all members of his own Kaunas command took part in the major actions apart from an employee excused through illness. The German commander's record identifies both the directing formation and the Lithuanian personnel needed to carry out murder (original facsimile, sheets 7–8). [9]

The same report gives its objective explicitly: the destruction of Jewish life. Jäger estimated that roughly fifteen thousand Jewish workers and family members remained in Kaunas and a similar number in Vilnius. He wrote that he wanted to kill them too, but encountered opposition from German civilian and military authorities. He proposed sterilizing male Jewish workers and killing any Jewish woman who nevertheless became pregnant. These were stated proposals in the commander's report; implementation of a sterilization program is a separate factual question. Labor functioned in this account as a temporary exception to intended destruction (sheets 7–8). [9]

14C The Kaunas apparatus and killings beyond the city
Kaunas supplied shooting personnel for the destruction of other Jewish communities. Bubnys describes Hamann's mobile detachment as a force assembled for individual operations from several German security men and several dozen Lithuanian TDA personnel, usually from the Third Company. Local police concentrated and guarded the victims, selected an isolated site and arranged pits; the arriving detachment supplied shooters. Hamann sometimes assigned tasks to Dagys, Barzda or Norkus without going to the killing site himself. This account identifies coordination, preparation and execution as connected acts (2006, p. 40). [8]

On 16 August 1941 Police Department director Vytautas Reivytis sent secret circular No. 3 to the Kaunas county police chief. As reproduced by Bubnys, it ordered the detention of all Jewish men aged fifteen and over in the specified places and of women selected by its political or behavioral criteria. Police were to concentrate the detainees near main roads, report exact locations and numbers to the department, guard them and await removal to a "camp." Implementation was required within two days. Published compliance reports connect the department's orders to local arrests. The full circular, distribution list, incoming reports and transport instructions are the records needed to trace each group (p. 41, note 59). [8]

At Prienai on 27 August, the study places about twenty-five to thirty Third Company men under Norkus, selected for the operation by Sergeant Major Zigmas Arlauskas. Local police and white-armband auxiliaries brought victims to the pits and took watches, rings and money. The Kaunas men fired on Norkus's command; some wounded victims were buried alive. Norkus packed the most valuable possessions into a suitcase and took them to Kaunas. Jäger records 1,078 victims

for the Prienai operation. Their deaths belong to Prienai's ledger; the journey of the killers and stolen property also belongs to Kaunas's history (pp. 41–42). [8, 9]

Battalion Order No. 68 of 1 September records a Third Company assignment to Pasvalys for 28–31 August. Bubnys compares that itinerary with Jäger's 26 August Pasvalys entry and preserves the discrepancy. Testimony describes the detachment traveling through Babtai, Ariogala, Krakės and Pasvalys. At Ariogala the study identifies Barzda's arriving men, local escorts, shooting into prisoners' backs and additional local shooters. At Krakės it describes a sealed German-language authorization, selection of the site with police chief Teodoras Kerza, and successive shootings of men, women, elderly people and children. The dates, travel order and witness sequence require reconciliation rather than substitution of one date for another (pp. 42–44). [8]

For September operations in Alytus district, Bubnys identifies the Kaunas detachment led by Norkus and Junior Lieutenant Juozas Obelenis. Local police and auxiliaries escorted victims, took valuables and guarded the killing sites. At Seirijai men were made to lie in a pit and shot from its edge, followed by women and children at another pit. At Lazdijai successive groups lay on earlier victims after a thin covering of earth. The study attributes at least 11,598 Jewish deaths in fifteen named provincial locations to the Third Company's operations. That is its operation-based attribution, separate from its Kaunas and Belarus components (pp. 45–47). [8]

The export of personnel continued to Belarus. Dagys selected fourteen Third Company men who left Kaunas on 17 September under Junior Lieutenant Stasys Sutkaitis, accompanied by German security officers. Under the Baranovičiai SD office, the detachment participated in shootings there and at Slonim, alongside German personnel and men of another Lithuanian battalion. Bubnys describes searches and theft from Jewish homes and distinguishes the Jewish victims from a separate group of about forty Roma men. His estimate is 1,100–1,400 Jewish victims for these Belarus operations (pp. 47–48). These deaths are recorded at their killing sites and are not added to Kaunas's local total. [8]

15 Raped Jewish women and the women who reported it

In the homes. Tory's account of the first days records rape during the armed raids on Jewish apartments, alongside looting and killing. [11]

At the transfer committee. The Jewish transfer committee's office at Daukšos Street 24 became the place where parents sought abducted children and wives sought husbands. Tory records that women came there after being raped. Their appearance before the committee is a separate fact: raped Jewish women reported the crimes to their community's representatives while the persecution was under way (4 August 1941, p. 26). [11]

At the Seventh Fort. Tory records that Lithuanian guards at the Seventh Fort selected young women at night, raped them, tortured them and murdered them, and that the guards called the selection "going to peel potatoes" (p. 24). The International Commission study attributes the rape and murder of about thirty to forty women at the fort to Lithuanian guards. It cites Leib Koniuchowsky's 1946 record of the women imprisoned there (Yad Vashem O.71/163, pp. 4–23), Yosef Gar's *Umkum* and the 1959 interrogation of the German medical orderly Heinrich Hippler, who did not help a wounded woman. [1, 11]

The Koniuchowsky testimony. The Seventh Fort chapter of the Koniuchowsky compilation closes with attestations by Khasye Khodash (24 May 1947) and Peshe Kagan, née Kilm (Munich Hospital, 19 May 1947), translated by Jonathan Boyarin. It describes the removal of young women under the pretext of kitchen work. First twenty volunteered to peel potatoes, hoping for food or water; later the guards forcibly selected another twenty, among them a sixteen-year-old whose mother insisted on going with her. A woman thrown back into the casemate, recognized by the prisoners as that mother, reported that the women had been raped and shot in the tunnels. The women still inside smeared themselves with mud and ashes and put on discarded clothing to look older and avoid selection. The narrative gives two selections of twenty; its later summary states that fifty young women were taken, raped and shot on Friday, 4 July 1941. [12]

Dovidl. The same chapter describes the torture and murder of a schoolboy called Dovidl, not quite seventeen. A guard identified in the narrative as a Kaunas technical-faculty student and another armed man whipped the wounded boy and two schoolgirl classmates, forced or attempted to force them to undress, and demanded that they perform a sexual act before the other prisoners. The girls resisted; Dovidl struck one of the tormentors; the two armed men shot him. Spectators nearby watched and urged the killing. The account names neither killer and gives no surname for Dovidl. [12]

Inside the ghetto. Tory's testament of late December 1942 records hearing women describe public rape and humiliation before the Jewish Council, together with workers broken by forced labor and people suffering hunger (pp. 167–168). In his entry of 24 July 1943, Tory describes repeated incursions into the ghetto by uniformed men who raped residents (p. 435). The December testament is retrospective; the later dated entry documents continuing sexual violence. [11]

German perpetrators. On 30 June 1943 Tory identified German police commander Alfred Tombaum as forcing Jewish women to undress, subjecting them to invasive searches and beating them (pp. 403–404). The record identifies both German and Lithuanian men who exercised this power over imprisoned Jewish women. [11]

Reproduction. On 24 July 1942 the Gestapo ordered that pregnancies in the ghetto be terminated and that no births take place after September; on 8 September the Council announced the German threat to kill pregnant women. Rauca, touring the ghetto, said of a woman seven months pregnant that "this embryo must perish." The order was an attack on the future of the community and on the bodies of individual women. [11]

Numbers. The Koniuchowsky narrative's two selections of twenty, its later figure of fifty, the Commission study's thirty to forty and Tory's account rest on overlapping witness chains. No total is fixed here by combining them. What is established is the practice: Lithuanian guards at the Seventh Fort selected, raped and murdered Jewish women and girls, and the women who survived described it.

16 The ghetto and KZ Kauen, 1942–1944

A labor ghetto under guard. After the Great Action about 17,000 Jews remained. Through 1942 and 1943 about 8,000 left the ghetto each morning for labor details in the city and at the Aleksotas airfield, and about 2,000 worked in the ghetto's workshops; a further 8,000, mostly women, children, the old and the sick, did not work, and about 2,000 of them were concealed

from the German registers by the Jewish Council. The ghetto's German commandant and the German police controlled it; Lithuanian police and former partisans guarded its fence, its gates and outside labor sites. By December 1942 the ghetto's population had fallen from 30,022 in August 1941 to 16,601. [11, 20]

Lithuanian guards and police killed Jews at the fence and at work. Tory's diary records these killings by name:

The named record also includes the fireman Puner, shot by a Lithuanian policeman while repairing the ghetto fence; Tory's 11 April 1942 entry records his funeral, not the exact day of the shooting (p. 76). On 2 October Lithuanian policemen wounded seventeen-year-old Leib Kaplan and Mrs. Kanzer at the fence (p. 138). On 24 October armed Lithuanian policemen attacked a Jewish house near the fence to rob it (p. 148). On 19 December a Lithuanian policeman shot the worker Fisher dead at the gate while he tried to bring food into the ghetto (p. 161). These entries identify work, access to food and the home as settings of continuing violence. [11]

- **Dr. Zerah Gerber**, physician, shot dead in a ghetto street by a Lithuanian policeman on 30 January 1942 because he did not remove his hat. The editorial note observes that the German edict required Jews to remove their hats only before uniformed Germans (p. 68).
- Arieh Strash, Haim Akerman and Shlomo Levin, killed on the night of 29 June 1942 when the Lithuanian guards of the Palemonas labor camp fired on the workers' huts (pp. 100–101).
- **Blecher**, eighteen, an airfield worker, killed in November 1942 by the Lithuanian guard who took his boots and hid his body; the German report states he was killed by a Lithuanian policeman to whom he had tried to barter the boots (12 November 1942, p. 152).
- **Danishevski**, a Jew from Oszmiana transferred from the Žiežmariai camp, shot dead by a Lithuanian police patrol on the bank of the Neris near the ghetto in September 1943 while carrying bundles; the ghetto guard's verdict was that Jews were forbidden to walk outside the perimeter (p. 489).

Tory records in the same weeks that a Lithuanian policeman shot Stasys Savickas, a Christian who guarded the ghetto's vegetable gardens, after calling him over to "patrol together" (pp. 488–489). On 16 December 1942 the Jewish police guard at the furniture factory beside the ghetto was replaced by Lithuanian police (p. 161). On 9 December 1942 Tory recorded that Lithuanian partisans had volunteered to be sent to Lublin, allegedly to take part in "actions" against Jews there (p. 159). In May 1943 a Lithuanian criminal police official told a Jewish physician that the Gestapo had twice asked the Lithuanian criminal police for lists of policemen willing to take part in a massacre of Jews and twice rejected the lists submitted (28 May 1943, p. 356). [11]

German killings in the ghetto. The record identifies German perpetrators by name where the sources do. Leah Gilelson, twenty-two, was shot by a German policeman while trying to flee a work detail on 28 February 1942. Nachman Shrak and Josel Fried, airfield workers, were shot while buying groceries; the entry does not identify the shooters. On 10 March 1942 Jäger had twenty-four Jews shot for trading with Lithuanians and not wearing the badge, and ordered the Council to make the killings known. After Meek's attempted escape in November 1942 the Gestapo tortured him, took hostages, ordered his public hanging in the ghetto and left the body

displayed for twenty-four hours; German and Lithuanian policemen were present and the ghetto population was forced to attend; Meek's mother and sister were taken to the Ninth Fort and shot. On 4 February 1943, in the "Stalingrad action," the Jewish police were forced to round up twenty-seven men, women and children, whom the Germans took to the Ninth Fort and killed. Gar records that in the same action "a few dozen Jews were arrested in the city by the Lithuanian police, according to a decree from the Gestapo," and that Ratnikas, "the Chief of the Lithuanian Police of the Ghetto Guard," also arrested Jews inside the ghetto; he gives the ghetto's loss in this action as fifty lives (pp. 135–137). [11, 16]

Deportation to Riga, February and October 1942. The Germans demanded 500 workers for the Riga ghetto. On 6 February 1942 Jordan, with Schtitz of the Gestapo, assembled the ghetto in Demokratų Square and selected 300 people; by the Tory edition's count 380 Jews, 140 of them women, were sent to Riga, of whom twenty survived the war (p. 69). Gar gives 500. A second demand for 300–400 workers for Riga followed at the end of October 1942. [11, 16]

The Book Action. On 27 February 1942 Alfred Rosenberg's book-confiscation organization ordered every book in the ghetto, in any language, handed over by 28 February. Part of the collection was sent to Frankfurt; the rest was pulped (pp. 71–72). Yad Vashem gives more than 100,000 books confiscated. [11, 95]

Ratnikas and Smailis. In February–June 1943 Tory names the Lithuanian guard Ratnikas as searching homes, arresting women carrying flour and sending Jews to the Gestapo, sometimes beyond his superiors' instructions (1 February 1943, pp. 186–188). On 4 March 1943 Ratnikas searched Tory himself for money, called Jews liars and took his fountain pen, returning it only when Tory invoked the German official Miller (pp. 248–249). Tory's 30 June 1943 retrospective names Ratnikas and guard chief Smailis as feared for cruelty and extortion and describes the tariff of bribes at the gate. The same retrospective records Tory's judgment that "the Lithuanians competed with the Germans in their deep hatred of the Jews," that when German police were withdrawn from the ghetto Lithuanian "so-called partisans" took their place under four German supervisors, and that Lithuanian guards broke into apartments at night and took whatever they could carry (pp. 405–407). [11]

Lithuanian police and those who tried to escape. Gar records that in 1942–1943 almost all who left the ghetto to reach the partisans "were arrested on the way by the Lithuanian Police, who had the Jews delivered to the Gestapo" (p. 145). Levin describes Lithuanian sentries posted along the whole length of the ghetto fence, with German guards at the gates. [16, 96]

Escape and resistance. From late 1941 the Antifascist Struggle Organization under Chaim Yellin, with about 500 members, prepared armed resistance and sent fighters to the Soviet partisans; the Jewish ghetto police helped train them and obtain weapons. A group sent toward the Augustów forest and a group that went toward Vilnius in the summer of 1943 were largely destroyed; others formed a separate unit of about 200 fighters. USHMM gives at least 250 fighters who escaped to the Rudniki forest; Dov Levin gives about 350 of more than 600 underground members. Tory was a founder of the Zionist underground Matzok. Tory found no Lithuanian outside the ghetto willing to hide his diary. [11, 20]

Estonia, Auschwitz and KZ Kauen. On 26 October 1943 about 2,700 Jews (Gar 2,700; USHMM 2,709) were seized; about 2,000 young men and women were sent to the Vaivara and Klooga camps in Estonia, and children and elderly people, about 700, were deported to

Auschwitz and murdered. Gar records Lithuanian security police in civilian clothes and a large unit of "Vlasovites" (USHMM: Ukrainian auxiliaries) taking part in the round-up, with Rauca directing the selection at the airfield (pp. 160–164). The ghetto became Konzentrationslager Kauen under the SS, with SS Major Wilhelm Göcke as commandant; sources date the change from September to 1 November 1943. [11, 16, 20, 75] The Jewish Council lost its authority; the 93 labor brigades were reduced to 44 and sent only to closed camps at Aleksotas, Šančiai, Ežerėlis, Petrašiūnai, Palemonas, the rubber factory, Marijampolė, Kaišiadorys, Kėdainiai and Panevėžys; 2,000 people worked in the ghetto workshops. Gar gives about 1,500 prisoners at Aleksotas, exactly 1,000 at Šančiai from 19 December 1943, about 700 at Petrašiūnai, about 500 at the Kėdainiai airfield, about 300 each at Palemonas and Kaišiadorys. USHMM estimates that of about 30,000 Jews confined in August 1941, about 13,000 were alive in November 1943. [16, 20, 75]

The Ninth Fort's Lithuanian staff. Aya Ben-Naftali's study of the Ninth Fort records that "the Lithuanian permanent staff of the Ninth Fort was comprised of seven senior officers and several dozen guards," stationed there for two years until German units replaced them in September 1943; it names the commander Slezuraitis (Juozas Sliesoraitis in Bubnys and Sabutis), his deputies Brauskis and Prusinskas and the duty officers Masiunas, Pusiukas and Milkevicius, and Captain Vylius as guard commander during the 1941 killings. Their tasks during the mass killings included guarding the victims and killing survivors after the German units withdrew; Slezuraitis stated that when they heard moans from the pits, "we shot at them without pulling them out of their grave" (pp. 5–10). [19]

The Children's Action, 27–28 March 1944. On 27 March 1944 the Germans took most of the ghetto's 130 Jewish policemen to the Ninth Fort and tortured them to reveal the hiding places; about forty senior officers were shot. SS men and Ukrainian auxiliaries went from house to house, took children under twelve and elderly people from their families and threw them into trucks; music was played over loudspeakers. Gilbert gives about 1,200 victims; Gar about 1,000 on the first day, about 300 on the second and about 500 from the labor camps; USHMM about 1,000 children and 300 elderly people plus 500 from the subcamps; VLE more than 1,300 children, most deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau; the Lithuanian Jewish Community's 2021 commemoration about 1,700 and quotes testimony identifying Ukrainian policemen and a German soldier, including the bayoneting of a three-year-old hidden in a sack. The sources consulted name no Lithuanian unit in this action. The Jewish Council was abolished on 5 April 1944. [11, 16, 20, 75, 97]

Liquidation, 8–13 July 1944. As Soviet forces approached, the SS deported the remaining Jews, most from the outlying camps: women to Stutthof, men, including Dr. Elkes, to Dachau and its Kaufering subcamps. Gilbert gives 8,000 deported, VLE about 7,000, USHMM about 6,100. Then every house was blown up and burned to kill those hiding in bunkers; VLE gives about 1,000 killed, Gar about 1,500 still hidden when the burning began, and USHMM "thousands." Gar records Lithuanian SS men guarding the ghetto gate and the Gestapo leaving on 15 July "together with their Lithuanian helpers" (pp. 232, 242). Some deportees who jumped from the trains "fell into the hands of Germans or bad Lithuanians who killed them" (p. 239). From Stutthof about 1,000 mothers with small children were sent to Auschwitz. Elkes died at Landsberg, in the Dachau subcamp system, on 17 October 1944. [128] More than three-quarters of the deportees died before the end of the war. Soviet forces entered Kaunas on 1 August 1944. VLE states that fewer than 3,000 of Kaunas's Jews survived; Gar estimates about 2,500,

USHMM about 2,000 who survived the camps and about 500 in forests or bunkers. [11, 16, 20, 75]

16A Security police and the connection with Vilnius
The Lithuanian security-police headquarters in Kaunas administered a network of regional divisions. Bubnys's 2011 chapter identifies surviving German and Lithuanian security-police fonds, including the Kaunas division (LCVA R-972), the central Lithuanian security-police section (R-1216), and Kaunas prison (R-731). It rejects the proposition that security-police participation in the Holocaust was merely a Soviet historical insinuation and points to authentic wartime records. It also identifies the post-1990 Lileikis and Gimžauskas criminal cases as repositories of documents. Those are routes for reconstructing the offices, custody decisions and transfers, not substitutes for inspecting the files (pp. 359–364). [133]

Kazimieras (Kazys) Gimžauskas served in both cities. The U.S. Justice Department's 26 June 1996 account reports a default judgment revoking his citizenship. It identifies the complaint's service chronology: head of the Kaunas Interrogations/Investigations Section from July to October or November 1941, followed by deputy chief under Aleksandras Lileikis in Vilnius. The department states that signed documents recovered from LCVA show Gimžauskas ordering arrests, interrogation, imprisonment and transfer of civilians, primarily Jews, to German Security Police for execution. It describes one document dispatching an American-born woman arrested on suspicion of being Jewish. The release does not locate every described transfer in Kaunas. Those individual instruments must be assigned by place and date. [134]

VLE says the Provisional Government appointed Gimžauskas to the Kaunas interrogation post in July and dates his Vilnius deputyship from 1 December 1941. It records the 2001 guilty finding and exemption from punishment because of age and health. Its account emphasizes resistance service and attributed claims of saving thousands of Lithuanians, while omitting the specific arrest and lethal-transfer documents described by the Justice Department. VLE must present the acts underlying the case alongside its existing narrative. The appointment chronology and individual victim records must be reconciled with the judgment and service files. [134, 135]

17 The destruction of bodies and the survival of testimony

The Ninth Fort burning detachment. From the autumn of 1943 the Germans forced prisoners, Jews from the ghetto and Jewish Red Army prisoners of war, to open the Ninth Fort mass graves, lift the decomposing bodies, remove valuables, build pyres and crush the remaining bones. German supervisors counted the bodies and threatened punishment for incomplete burning. Gold teeth, rings and bracelets were taken from the dead; prisoners recognized acquaintances among them. On 25 December 1943, sixty-four prisoners escaped. Tory recorded their account as told to him by Captain Kolia Vassilenko, the leader of the escape, including the planning, the failed tunnel and the flight (9 January 1944, pp. 508–515; introduction, p. xxii). [11]

Elkes's warning. In the postscript of 11 November 1943 to his letter to his children, Dr. Elchanan Elkes wrote that the Germans were trying to erase the evidence by burning the victims' remains. The escapees' account and Elkes's postscript describe the same process: the perpetrators destroyed bodies while Jewish witnesses preserved names and knowledge. [11, 98]

The diary itself. Tory hid his diary and documents in five crates beneath Block C of the ghetto workshops. Outside the ghetto, he wrote, he was "unable to find a single Lithuanian who was

willing to hide it"; he later left instructions with the priest V. Vaickus. He recovered three of the five crates after the Soviet army entered Kaunas on 1 August 1944. Tory later brought the diary to the Palčiauskas denaturalization trial in Tampa and the Rauca extradition proceedings in Toronto, where the court accepted its Great Action entries as proof of Rauca's part; he had earlier testified at the 1962 Wiesbaden trial of Heinrich Schmitz and Alfred Tombaum (introduction, pp. vii–ix, xxiii–xxiv). [11]

18 Dr. Elchanan Elkes: service to Lithuania and betrayal

Dr. Elchanan Elkes, a physician, was elected head of the Jewish Council at the last assembly of the prewar community on 4 August 1941. His letter to his son and daughter, written between 19 October and 11 November 1943, is printed in the English edition of Tory's diary (pp. 503–507). In it he recalls the Jewish contribution to Lithuanian independence, "with all our strength, we helped to achieve their own national independence," and then describes the Lithuanian perpetrators' barbarous killings and their hunting of Jewish fugitives within the German murder system (p. 506). The letter is identified and dated by USHMM; a scholarly German translation is published by the Institut für Zeitgeschichte; the English text was reproduced in the author's 2022 article. These are presentations of one letter. [11, 98, 99, 100]

His letter rests on what happened to him. On 29 October 1941, with Rauca's authorization to remove one hundred people from the condemned group, he tried to reach them. Lithuanian guards ordered him away, threatened to send him to the Ninth Fort and beat him; one struck his head with a rifle butt. Tory was among those who carried the unconscious physician back into the large ghetto, where doctors stitched his wounds and nursed him for days (pp. 56–58). Elkes was deported with the men to Dachau in July 1944 and died at Landsberg on 17 October 1944. Gilbert’s introduction gives his death at Dachau on 25 July 1944; Yad Vashem records Landsberg, 17 October 1944. [128] [11]

The service-and-betrayal contrast has a companion episode in the first days. Yakov Goldberg, a veteran of Lithuania's independence struggle, and Leib (Leon) Garfunkel, both imprisoned under Soviet rule, were arrested by an armed group on their way back from Bobelis's office on 7 July 1941. Two other Jewish representatives on the transfer committee, the architect Anatoly Rosenblum and the aviator Adolf Blumenthal, who had contributed to Lithuania's early air force, were later murdered. Service to the Lithuanian state did not protect Jewish citizens' homes or lives. [11]

19 The perpetrators: formations, offices and named individuals

Each entry gives the person's office or formation, the act in the source's own terms and an evidence grade. **A**: a contemporaneous official document or a judicial finding. **B**: a scholarly attribution resting on identified archival records or named postwar testimony, or a contemporaneous diary. **C**: a single witness account. **D**: a lead requiring documents. A grade attaches to the act, not to the person. Office, guard duty, command and personal shooting are recorded separately.

Lithuanian formations

- **Insurgent ("white-armband") groups, 23–28 June 1941.** About 3,365–3,396 armed men in 42 city stations. Acts: arrests of Jews in homes and streets, beatings, robbery,

public humiliation, killings in streets and homes, transfer of prisoners to the prison and the Seventh Fort. Grade B. [1, 2]

- **The Klimaitis group.** About twenty men under the journalist Algirdas Klimaitis. Act: the Vilijampolė pogrom of 25–27 June. Grade A for German direction and Klimaitis's identity as leader (Stahlecker's report); B for the group's acts. [1, 3, 4]
- **TDA battalion, later the 1st Lithuanian Police Battalion (1st Auxiliary Police Service Battalion; later 13th).** Formed by the Kaunas military commandant's office from 28–29 June; financed by the commandant's office on the Provisional Government's decision of 30 June. Acts: guarding the Seventh Fort (49 men per shift) and the central prison (18); shooting at the Seventh Fort, Fourth Fort and Ninth Fort; escorting prisoners; guarding the ghetto and Demokratų Square; selecting victims' clothing and belongings after executions; mobile killings outside Kaunas. Bubnys identifies 104 officers, noncommissioned officers and soldiers of the Third Company as shooters and finds most of the battalion, including the First, Second and Third Companies, involved through shooting, guarding, convoying and ghetto or fort duties. Grade A for orders and appointments; B for acts. [1, 8]
- **Lithuanian police.** The restored city police and the Police Department in Kaunas; a forty-man Lithuanian police group under Jonas Dainauskas worked under EK3. Lithuanian police guarded the ghetto perimeter and labor sites in 1942–1943 and shot Jews there (see section 16). Grade B. [1, 11]
- **Lithuanian security police (Saugumas).** Prepared a card index of Kaunas Jews under German direction (EM No. 54). Grade A for the German report's statement; implementation requires the original index. [86]

Lithuanian officials

- **Jurgis Bobelis**, Kaunas city and district military commandant from 23 June 1941. Ordered prewar police back to duty (Order No. 1, 24 June; A). Called on house owners to report fugitives (A). Ordered the radio announcement threatening the killing of one hundred Jews for each German shot (B). Ordered the formation of the TDA battalion (Order No. 9, 28 June; A). Placed the Fifth Company at the disposal of Sonderkommando 1b (letter to Ehrlinger, 30 June; A). Reported to the cabinet on the "Jewish concentration camp" and was assigned to it with Švipas (30 June minutes; A). Submitted a budget with a line for the camp and its guards (5 July; A). Frequented the Seventh Fort, gave orders to the guards and released about seventy Jewish former volunteers (B). Reported Stahlecker's ghettoization order to the cabinet (7 July; A). Co-issued Order No. 15 (10 July; A, signature question open). Head of the Main Housing Administration 1942–1944 (VLE). [1, 7, 26]
- **Kazys Palčiauskas**, burgomaster of Kaunas. Co-issued Order No. 15 (A); implemented its directives (court finding; A). The municipality appropriated Jewish property outside the ghetto, ordered the barbed-wire enclosure and, through his housing subcommittee, redistributed murdered Jews' homes (court findings; A). Member of the property liquidation commission (leaf 4; A). United States citizenship revoked (1983, affirmed 1984). [13, 14, 35]
- **Vladas Švipas**, vice-minister. Assigned by the cabinet on 30 June to establish the Jewish concentration camp in contact with Bobelis (A). [2, 7, 138]

- **The Provisional Government.** Approved the TDA battalion; decided its financing; approved the Jewish concentration camp; recorded on 27 June that measures "must be taken against the Jews"; adopted denationalization measures that excluded Jewish owners (A for the published minutes and documents). [1, 7]
- **Mikas Kaminskas**, municipal official and Lithuanian assistant to SA Captain Fritz Jordan. Gave the false assurance that the men taken on 18 August would work in the city archive (B); inspected the hospital site with Jordan on 2 October and told Elkes the rumors were unfounded (B); transmitted German orders to the Council (A for the documents). [8, 11]
- The interdepartmental meeting of 25 July 1941 at the Kaunas Commandant's headquarters (LCVA R-1444/1/6, leaves 2–4): Kaunas Commandant Captain Kviecinskas (chair); Deputy Commandant Colonel Kalmantas; Mayor Palčiauskas; Vytautas Reivytis, Security Department director (Police Department director from 26 July 1941); Taunys, Police Department director; Kaunas Police Chief Reinigeris (Renigeris); Major Biknaitis, head of the commandant's organization department (secretary). Decided the transfer of all Kaunas Jews to Vilijampolė, the prohibition on Jews selling, mortgaging or exchanging property, the leaving of their property "at the disposal of the Kaunas city government," and its disposal by the mayor in agreement with the city police chief (A). [7, 34, 35, 132]
- **Jonas Šlepetys**, Interior Minister. Explained to the cabinet on 27 June that the Bolsheviks were to blame for the police's failure to prevent the Lietūkis massacre (B); co-signed the text of the Regulations on the Status of the Jews dated 1 August 1941 (A for the published text; the Commission calls it a draft; the edition notes that at least one provision "was not put into effect"). [7, 83, 85, 101]
- **Juozas Ambrazevičius (Brazaitis)**, acting prime minister and Minister of Education. Signed the 30 June minutes approving the Jewish concentration camp and the text of the 1 August Regulations (A). [6, 7]
- **Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis**, Minister of Communal Economy. Reported the Lietūkis torture to the cabinet on 27 June; the housing regulations are attributed to him and Ambrazevičius in the Vilna Gaon Museum edition (A). [1, 7, 102]
- **J. Ratcevičius**, municipal Roads Department technician. Supervised the forced Jewish labor that built the ghetto fence (municipal document No. 2143; A). [11]
- **The Minister of Education.** A 27 July 1941 instruction attributed to the minister required Jewish children in children's homes to be handed over to the Vilijampolė committee (A for the published text). The education portfolio in the Provisional Government was held by Juozas Ambrazevičius, its acting prime minister; the original instrument and signature remain to be examined. [11]

Named battalion officers and men

- **Andrius Butkūnas**, first battalion commander. Signed the first order thanking Hitler (A). Issued the 11 July order forbidding arrests and house searches without authorization and plunder, on pain of death (A); the Commission study records that a similar order had to be repeated in November. [1, 8]
- **Antanas Impulevičius**, deputy battalion commander (B). [1]

- **Kazys Šimkus**, major; leader of an armed group in Vilijampolė named by VLE and Rukšėnas (B); battalion commander from 24 July (A); present at the ghetto on 28 October (B); in command of battalion personnel at the November killings (B). [2, 3, 8]
- **Juozas Barzda**, lieutenant, Third Company commander (appointment 3 July; A). Shootings at the Seventh Fort (Vėlavičius; soldiers' confessions; B); firing command at the Fourth Fort on 2 August (B); finished wounded victims with a pistol on 9 August (B); Great Action and November killings (B). [1, 8]
- **Anatolijus Dagys**, Barzda's assistant and successor (A). 6 July shooting; 9 August finishing of wounded victims; Great Action (B). [8]
- **Bronius Norkus**, lieutenant, Third Company platoon commander (A). Armed group in Vilijampolė (B); Seventh Fort shootings, with Jäger's postwar testimony attributing about 3,000 killings at the fort to Norkus's unit (B); commander at the Ninth Fort on 4 October (B); Great Action (B). Bubnys disputes descriptions of Norkus as permanent commander of the whole company. [1, 8]
- **Juozas Obelenis**, junior lieutenant. Seventh Fort shooting (B). [8]
- **Jurgis Skaržinskas**, Third Company platoon officer. Escort of prisoners to the Fourth Fort on 2 August (B). **Stepas Dubinskas**, Third Company platoon officer (appointment; A). [8]
- **Bronius Kirkila**, First Company commander (A). His company participated mainly in the Seventh Fort killings (First Company soldier's 1947 testimony; B). Gar names "a Lithuanian officer, Kirkila" who "himself shot hundreds of Jews" at the Seventh Fort (C). Bubnys records his suicide. [1, 8, 16]
- **Norbertas Gasėnas**, Second Company commander (A). [8]
- **Viktoras Klimavičius**, captain, Fourth Company commander. Seventh Fort shootings (Vėlavičius; C). [1]
- **Julius Tamulis**, sergeant major, later Fifth Company commander. Seen at the Seventh Fort by survivor Nemenčik (C). [1]
- **Zigmas Arlauskas**, sergeant major. Distributed vodka before the 9 August shooting (B). [8]
- **Jonas Stelmokas**, lieutenant. Commanded the ghetto guard for 24 hours from 1 p.m. on 16 September 1941, enforcing the Jews' confinement (A: battalion orders; United States court findings; 1998 immigration removal order). [17, 94]
- **Named at Lietūkis.** Henrikas Zemelis admitted taking part (C); Jozefas Vaitkiavičius identified as forcing the hose into victims' mouths (C); Juozas Lukša accused in an account cited by Faitelson (D; open). [85, 89]
- **Viktoras Vitkauskas**, lieutenant, resident of Vilijampolė. Named by Faitelson, cited by Szarota, as the killer of Rabbi Zalman Osovsky (C). [85]
- **Ninth Fort permanent staff, 1941–1943.** Seven senior officers and several dozen Lithuanian guards: commander Slezuraitis (Juozas Sliesoraitis, appointed 5 August 1941), deputies Brauskis and Prusinskas, duty officers Masiunas, Pusiukas and Milkevicius; Captain Vylius-Velavičius commanded the guard during the 1941 killings. Guarded victims and shot survivors in the pits after German units withdrew (B). [19, 93, 131]

- **Juozas Kopūstas.** Ninth Fort prisoner, imprisoned for theft on 17 September 1941; took part in the shooting of Jews at the Ninth Fort; sentenced to death on 4 October 1962 and executed (B). [131]
- **Lithuanian police at the ghetto, 1942–1943.** Unnamed policemen shot Dr. Zerah Gerber, Blecher and Danishevski; the Palemonas guards fired on sleeping workers; Lithuanian police arrested Jews in the city and Jews escaping to the partisans and delivered them to the Gestapo (B). [11, 16]
- **Ratnikas** and **Smailis**, Lithuanian ghetto guards (Smailis as guard chief), 1943. Searches, arrests of women carrying flour, transfers to the Gestapo, extortion at the gate (B). [11]

German command and personnel

- **Walter Stahlecker** (Einsatzgruppe A): instigated the pogroms through Klimaitis; ordered ghettoization. **Erich Ehrlinger** (Sonderkommando 1b): took Lithuanian companies under command. **Karl Jäger** (Einsatzkommando 3): ordered the Seventh Fort executions and recorded the Kaunas killings. **Joachim Hamann**: led the mobile killing unit. **Helmut Rauca** (Gestapo): conducted the Great Action selection. **Fritz Jordan** and **SA Colonel Hans Cramer** (city commissariat): ghetto administration and orders. **Alfred Tombaum** (German police third company): commanded the ghetto actions of September–October 1941. **Kozlovski** (Ghetto Guard): staged the 26 September pretext. **Heinrich Schmitz** and **Schtitz** (Gestapo): later ghetto actions. **Wilhelm Göcke**: commandant of KZ Kauen from 1943. German Police Battalions 9 and 65 and Wehrmacht security units also took part. [1, 9, 11]

20 Plunder, dispossession and forced labor

Looting during the killings. The insurgent groups plundered Jewish homes during the arrests of late June; flats of Jews who had fled were emptied. The Commission study records that it partly depended on house owners whether the plundering squads learned which tenants were Jews, and that some house owners informed on their tenants while others refused. During the 17 September assembly, Lithuanian partisans looted the deportees' apartments; on 28 October armed Lithuanian partisans searched every apartment, attic and cellar of the ghetto for hidden Jews, and many looted, some carrying out suitcases. After the 26 September action the deportees' apartments were sealed and their furniture removed from the ghetto. [1, 11]

Plunder of the dead. After the Great Action, battalion men selected the victims' clothing and other belongings before returning to barracks. At the November killings, German and Lithuanian personnel removed the better clothing. At the Ninth Fort in 1943–1944 the burning detachment was made to take gold teeth, rings and bracelets from the exhumed bodies. [8, 11]

The state's property measures. The Vilna Gaon Museum's documentary edition reproduces the Provisional Government's 4 July 1941 economic declaration retaining nationalized Jewish property for the state, and the exclusion of Jewish owners from the denationalization of houses, businesses, ships, deposits and securities. The edition attributes the housing law and its implementing regulations to Ambrazevičius and Landsbergis-Žemkalnis; the regulations allowed non-Jewish co-owners to take over the shares of their former Jewish partners. The cabinet declared that "property nationalized from Jews and Russians remains the indisputable property of the Lithuanian state"; its fleet law reserved to the cabinet the decision of "who is considered a Jew"; its decisions of 2 August 1941 on returning bank deposits and securities to their owners

each stated: "This decision does not apply to Jews." These are acts of a Lithuanian government, not of opportunistic looters. [7, 15, 103]

The municipal mechanism. Order No. 15 required Jews to liquidate or exchange real estate, mainly with Lithuanians leaving Vilijampolė, and gave the municipality what remained. The commandant's instructions limited what each family could carry and placed everything else under police inventory and appointed custodians, with copies to the burgomaster and the precinct chief; the interdepartmental meeting of 25 July 1941, chaired by Commandant Kviecinskas with the mayor, the security and police department directors and the city police chief, forbade Jews to sell, mortgage or exchange any property, left everything they could not carry "at the disposal of the Kaunas city government," and assigned its disposal to the mayor "in agreement with the police chief." The district court found that Palčiauskas's housing subcommittee redistributed murdered Jews' homes to other Lithuanians. [11, 13, 34, 35]

German confiscation orders and the police registration duty. After the ghetto was closed, the German city administration under SA Colonel Hans Cramer and Fritz Jordan ordered the surrender of electrical appliances (30 August), forbade bringing newspapers and food into the ghetto (29 August) and the purchase of food in the city (7 September), and required the delivery of horses, cows, carriages and poultry (10 September). The order of 3 September required every ghetto inmate to hand over, by 6 p.m. the next day, all money above 100 rubles per family, all gold, silver and precious stones, securities, paintings, furs, carpets, pianos, typewriters, electrical appliances, good cloth, livestock, carts and stamp collections, on pain of death for the offenders and for the whole ghetto. Order No. 4 of the Vilnius regional governor, Hans Hingst, which also applied to Kaunas, required registration of all Jewish property by 9 September 1941, including property held by non-Jews for safekeeping, on forms issued and collected by the police stations, and made the police station chiefs personally responsible for complete registration. The Lithuanian police stations were the registration offices. [11]

Labor. The municipality made Jews build the ghetto fence and supply fifty, then one hundred, men daily to its Roads Department. From 1 October 1941 Jordan required 1,000 men for the day shift and 1,000 for the night shift at the Aleksotas airfield. Through 1942 and 1943 about 8,000 Jews left the ghetto each morning to work and about 2,000 worked in its workshops. The German civil administration paid the Jewish Council 3 Reichsmarks per woman and 3.5 per man per day of labor; Germans also had suits, shoes and jewelry made in the ghetto without payment. Labor sites guarded by Lithuanian police or partisans included the airfield and Palemonas, where guards fired on sleeping workers on the night of 29 June 1942. [11]

The guards' tariff. Tory's retrospective of 30 June 1943 records that Lithuanian guards broke into ghetto apartments at night, that a fixed scale of bribes developed for passing food and parcels through the gate, and that guards who controlled entry enriched themselves; it names Ratnikas and guard chief Smailis as feared for cruelty and extortion. [11]

What remains to be traced. The record establishes the rules and the officials. It does not yet connect them to named households: which apartments were inventoried, who held the keys, who authorized each sale, who received the property and the proceeds, and where the municipal housing, finance and police accounts are. The 1941–1944 Main Housing Administration that Bobelis headed is a further line of inquiry.

21 The count ledger

Every figure below is stated with its source and scope. Figures for the same event are not added. Figures for victims brought from elsewhere are kept separate from Kaunas residents. Provincial killings by Kaunas-based units are excluded.

Population

- **1897:** about 25,000 Jews in Kovno and Slobodka, one-third of the city (Gilbert). [11]
- **1908:** about 32,000 Jews, 40 percent (Gilbert). **1915:** about 32,000 Jews expelled by the Russian authorities; about 9,000 returned after the German occupation (Gilbert). [11]
- **1 January 1941:** 32,595 Jews in Kaunas, by the Lithuanian Statistical Office as cited by VLE. **On the eve of the war:** "more than 30,000" (Gilbert); "Kovno's 35,000 Jews" in 1941 (Gilbert, including refugees). [11, 20]
- **August 1941, ghetto:** 30,022 (Jewish Council). **15 September 1941:** about 27,000. **After the Great Action:** about 17,000. **December 1942:** 16,601. [11, 20]
- **Survivors:** VLE states that fewer than 3,000 of Kaunas's Jews survived. [20]

Killing events in Kaunas, June–November 1941

- **22–24 June, city streets:** several hundred (Gilbert); 25–30 at the Jonavos Street bridge (Commission). [1, 11]
- **25–27 June, Vilijampolė:** 600–1,000+ by survivor and historical estimates (Pinkas Hakehillot and Garfunkel 800; Tory at least 700 for 25–26 June; Gar and the *Black Book* about 1,000). Stahlecker: 1,500 on the first night and 2,300 later "rendered harmless," total 3,800; Rukšėnas reconstructs these as deaths plus arrests. VLE (pogrom entry): 600–800. [1, 2, 3, 4]
- **27 June, Lietūkis garage:** 45–50 killed by one man (Gunsilius); 50 (Yad Vashem photo record); more than 50 (USHMM); 52 (Pinkas, Tory); 57 (Yad Vashem place entry); about 60 (Garfunkel, Gar, VLE ghetto entry); 50–70 (VLE pogrom entry). [1, 3, 20, 87]
- **All pogroms, 25–29 June:** about 1,000 (Commission; VLE pogrom entry); about 8,000 (VLE ghetto entry, combining pogroms and the period before the fort shootings); 7,800 (EM No. 19, pogroms plus shootings by Lithuanian detachments). [1, 20, 49]
- **Klimaitis unit:** about 20 (VLE); 300 (Stahlecker). **Insurgents in Kaunas:** 3,365 (Commission), 3,396 (Rukšėnas), about 3,400 in 42 groups (VLE). **Held at the Seventh Fort:** about 1,500 on 6 July (EM No. 14); 10,000–12,000 (Gar). [1, 2, 3, 5, 16, 82, 104]
- **4 July, Seventh Fort:** 463 (416 men, 47 women) (Jäger). **6 July:** 2,514 (Jäger). **9 July:** 24 Jews. **19 July:** 19 Jews among 26 victims. **Site estimates:** about 5,000 (Commission); 7,000 (Nemenčik); 8,000 men and 50 women (Koniuchowsky). [1, 9]
- **2 August, Fourth Fort:** 209, of whom 205 Jews (Jäger). [9]
- **7 August, city:** about 1,200 men seized, about 900 shot (Tory edition note). [11]
- **9 August, Fourth Fort:** 534 (484 men, 50 women) (Jäger); prison register: 543 Jews handed to the German security police. [9, 93]
- **18 August, Fourth Fort:** 1,812 (698 men, 402 women, one Polish woman, 711 "intellectuals") (Jäger); 534 men (Tory edition). [9, 11]
- **26 September, Fourth Fort:** 1,608 (412 men, 615 women, 581 children) (Jäger); about 1,000 (Tory); 1,200 (Tory edition note, Ninth Fort). [9, 11]

- **4 October, Ninth Fort:** 1,845 (315 men, 712 women, 818 children) (Jäger). Patients, staff and orphans burned in the hospital are not separately counted. [9, 11]
- **29 October, Ninth Fort:** 9,200 (2,007 men, 2,920 women, 4,273 children) (Jäger); about 10,000 (Gilbert; VLE). [9, 11, 20]
- 25 November, Ninth Fort: 2,934 Jews deported from Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt. 29 November: 2,000 from Vienna and Breslau. These foreign-deportee totals concern people brought to Kaunas. A separate thirty-four victims comprised eighteen Jews accused of ghetto-law breaches, a German convert to Judaism who had attended a rabbinical school, and fifteen people Jäger labeled "terrorists of the Kalinin group." Their residence is not established by the entry. [9]

Later events

- **February 1942:** 380 Jews, including 140 women, deported to Riga; 20 survived (Tory edition). **March 1942:** 24 Jews shot on Jäger's order. **February 1943:** 27 Jews taken to the Ninth Fort in the "Stalingrad action." [11]
- **October 1943:** 2,800 assembled; young men and women to Estonian labor camps; children and elderly people to Auschwitz (Gilbert). [11]
- **25 December 1943:** 64 prisoners escaped from the Ninth Fort. [11]
- **27–28 March 1944:** about 1,200 (Gilbert), more than 1,300 (VLE), about 1,700 (Lithuanian Jewish Community) children and elderly people; 40 senior Jewish policemen shot at the Ninth Fort. [11, 20, 97]
- **8–13 July 1944:** about 8,000 deported to Stutthof and Dachau (Gilbert); about 7,000 deported and about 1,000 killed (VLE). [11, 20]

22 After the war

Survival and return. Soviet forces entered Kaunas on 1 August 1944. Between about 2,000 and 3,000 Kaunas Jews survived, most of them in German camps; about 500 survived in forests or bunkers. At the end of June 1945 about 500–600 liberated Jewish women returned to Kaunas. Tory recovered three of his five crates of diary pages and documents. [11, 16, 20, 75]

German perpetrators.

- **Karl Jäger** was arrested in Heidelberg in 1959 and took his own life in his cell on 22 June 1959, before trial. [105]
- **Joachim Hamann** took his own life in July 1945. [106]
- **Helmut Rauca** emigrated to Canada in 1950, was arrested in June 1982, and was extradited to the Federal Republic of Germany in May 1983 after the Ontario courts accepted Tory's diary entries on the Great Action as proof of his part; he was charged with the murder of more than 11,000 Jews and died in prison hospital custody on 29 October 1983 before trial. [11, 107, 108]
- **Heinrich Schmitz** of the Kaunas Gestapo took his own life during his 1962 trial in Wiesbaden; **Alfred Tombaum** was acquitted for insufficient evidence. [11]
- Proceedings by the German Central Office (ZStL) against **Algirdas Klimaitis** for the Kaunas pogroms (II 207 AR-Z 41/83) and against **Vytautas Reivytis** for murders in Kaunas (II 207 AR 6/85) are cited in the Commission study; neither resulted in a trial in the sources examined. [1]

Lithuanian perpetrators.

- **Kazys Palčiauskas**, burgomaster in 1941, was found by a United States district court in 1983 to have procured his citizenship by concealing his service as mayor of Kaunas from 25 June 1941 to May 1942; the Eleventh Circuit affirmed in 1984. He died in Florida on 7 January 1992. He was never prosecuted. [13, 14, 109]
- **Jonas Stelmokas**: a federal court found in 1995 that he served in the battalion from July 1941 to August 1944 and that the Jews he helped confine "were subject to extreme deprivation, brutality, and arbitrary shootings"; his denaturalization was affirmed in 1996 and an immigration judge ordered his removal in 1998. Lithuania decided there were insufficient grounds to prosecute him. [17, 18, 94, 110]
- **Antanas Impulevičius**, deputy battalion commander in 1941 and later commander of the 2nd (12th) Lithuanian police battalion, was sentenced to death in absentia by the Supreme Court of Soviet Lithuania in October 1962; the United States did not extradite him and he died in Philadelphia in 1970. [111]
- **Ignas Vylius-Velavičius**, guard commander at the Ninth Fort in 1941, was tried in 1945–1946; the deputy fort commander **Barkauskas** was put on trial in January 1945. The testimony of Vylius-Velavičius is a source for the Seventh and Ninth Fort shootings. [1, 8, 19]
- Soviet courts tried former battalion members in the 1960s; the testimony from those files (Palubinskas, Matiukas, Raižys and others) is cited by Bubnys and the Commission study. [1, 8]
- **Jurgis Bobelis** left for Germany in 1944 and the United States in 1948 and died in Chicago in 1954. **Algirdas Klimaitis** died in 1988. **Juozas Barzda** died in December 1944 after parachuting into Lithuania as an anti-Soviet partisan. None was tried for crimes against Kaunas Jews. [3, 26, 112]

Commemoration. The Soviet Ninth Fort memorial complex opened on 15 June 1984, dedicated to the "victims of fascism." In 2002 the municipal authorities placed a memorial stone at the Lietūkis garage site. In 2016 Kaunas unveiled a sign at the Seventh Fort stating that more than 3,000 people were shot there in July 1941. A memorial stands at the former ghetto gate at Linkuvos Street. Plaques for Jews deported from Berlin (2011) and Frankfurt (2018) were placed at the Ninth Fort. [24, 41, 113, 114]

22A Seventh Fort privatization and the treatment of remains

In its statement of 27 July 2016, the Lithuanian Jewish Community says the State Property Fund allowed the Seventh Fort buildings to be privatized in 2009 despite its opposition, after which the owner leased the surrounding state land. The Community reports repeated approaches to the government, Kaunas council and operator concerning the grave. It dates the discovery of exposed remains to spring 2012, its renewed reburial initiative to August 2014 and the reburial to 28 October 2014. It also identifies a Cultural Heritage Department letter of 17 July 2015 demanding an end to activities disturbing the dead. These are the Community's published account and references to correspondence; the sale, lease and underlying letters remain to be inspected. [136]

The municipality's 2 November 2016 announcement records the new Seventh Fort memorial, municipal funding and a warning that mass-killing sites are unsuitable for recreation and

entertainment. Read with the Community's statement, it establishes a dated sequence of complaint, disputed handling and subsequent commemoration. It does not resolve who authorized each earlier activity or establish present-day conditions. The institutions must produce the ownership, heritage, commission and maintenance records needed to answer those questions. [136, 137]

23 What Lithuania says: the public texts

All texts were captured on 31 October 2026. The original Lithuanian is quoted; translations are the author's.

The national encyclopedia (VLE, National Library of Lithuania)

- **"Kaunas"** (main entry). No 1940–1944 history; refers to "Kauno istorija." [115]
- **"Kauno istorija."** "Naciai Kauno tvirtovės fortuose vykdė masines žudynes (IX ir VII fortuose buvo žudomi daugiausia žydai …)" ("The Nazis carried out mass killings in the forts of the Kaunas Fortress (in the IX and VII Forts mostly Jews were killed …)"). The 14–19 June 1941 Soviet deportation is counted to the person: "ištremti 1849 gyventojai (642 šeimos)." Coding: perpetrators German only; pogroms, Lietūkis, Lithuanian formations omitted (HM-01, HM-04). [23]
- **"Kauno getas."** Names LAF insurgents ("baltaraiščiai") arresting Jews from 23 June; "Kauno sukilėliai, vadovaujami … Algirdo Klimaičio"; "vietiniai baltaraiščiai nužudė daugiau kaip 1500 žydų"; about 8,000 killed in pogroms "vietinių gyventojų įvykdytų"; the TDA battalion under A. Butkūnas in the fort killings; the order "pasirašytu" by Bobelis and Palčiauskas dated 7 July; the TDA Third Company in the Great Action. Coding: an accurate control on actors; date and figures disputed (HM-05, HM-09). [20]
- **"žydų pogromai Kaune."** Initiative assigned to Stahlecker; Klimaitis's men "vertintini ne kaip partizanai sukilėliai, nes jie nepriklausė Lietuvių aktyvistų frontui" ("are to be assessed not as partisan insurgents because they did not belong to the LAF"); Norkus and Šimkus "nebuvo lojalūs" ("were not loyal") to the Provisional Government; Lithuanians "ginkluoti kirviais, pjūklais"; at Lietūkis "kai žydai pamėgino nepaklusti kankintojams, baltaraiščiai pradėjo juos mušti ir žudyti"; "vokiečių kariai aukų nežudė"; 600–800 in Vilijampolė, about 1,000 overall; the 27 June protocol read "iš dalies" as an appeal to dissociate. Coding: names Lithuanian killers; distances them from the uprising and the government (HM-06); causal construction from victims' conduct (HM-07); counts contradict "Kauno getas" (HM-09). [3]
- **"Septintasis fortas."** "1941 07 04 nacių Vokietijos okupacinės valdžios įsakymu … sušaudyti 463 žmonės (dauguma žydai), 07 06 – dar 2514 žydų ir kitų asmenų." Coding: order attributed; shooters omitted; TDA, cabinet decision and Bobelis omitted (HM-01, HM-04). [21]
- **"Ketvirtasis fortas."** "Ketvirtajame forte naciai vykdė žydų žudynes (spėjama, kad nužudyta apie 4000 žydų)." Gives 2 August, 9 August, 18 August and 26 September figures; prints "1841 08 09" for 1941. Coding: TDA omitted although "Kauno getas" names it for 2 and 9 August (HM-03, HM-09). [22]
- **"Devintasis fortas."** "Buvo nužudyta … Manoma, kad … iš viso nužudyta apie 50 000 žmonių"; the NKVD named as killer in the Soviet period. Coding: agentless (HM-04). [36]

- **"Kauno tvirtovė."** "kai kuriuose fortuose buvo vykdomos gyventojų, daugiausia žydų, masinės žudynės." Coding: agentless (HM-04). [116]
- **"Birželio sukilimas."** Rebels "saugojo nuo plėšimo turtą, patruliavo miesto gatvėse"; "dėl nacių įtakos prasidėjo intensyvi antisemitinė propaganda, įvyko pirmieji žydų pogromai"; 161 insurgents killed in Kaunas counted; Jewish victims not counted; "Sukilimu lietuvių tauta įrodė, kad gali kovoti dėl valstybingumo." Coding: pogroms agentless and attributed to Nazi influence (HM-04, HM-06). [104]
- **"Lietuvos laikinoji vyriausybė" (1941).** About 100 acts, "(juose buvo ir žydus diskriminuojančių nuostatų)" ("they also contained provisions discriminating against Jews"); no mention of the camp decision or the 27 June protocol. Coding: HM-01. [37]
- **"Lietuva Vokietijos okupacijos metais (1941–1944)."** Soviet army "griebėsi teroro … nužudė"; Lithuanian administration and police battalions "buvo iš dalies įtraukta"; "Buvo nužudyta apie 175 000–200 000 (90–95 %) Lietuvos žydų." Coding: asymmetry of agency (HM-04). [25]
- **"Holokaustas."** "organizavo vokiečiai, bet į šį nusikaltimą buvo įtraukta dalis vietos gyventojų ir kolaboruojančių institucijų"; the mobile unit's "branduolį sudarė Kaune dislokuoto lietuvių policijos 1-ojo bataliono kariai"; "be vietos administracijos, policijos ir dalies gyventojų paramos jis nebūtų įvykdytas taip greitai." Coding: accurate on the battalion; frames participation as being drawn in and support (HM-04 partial; control case). [47]
- **"Tautinio darbo apsauga."** "Tarptautinė komisija … pripažino, kad šios organizacijos daliniai prisidėjo prie Lietuvos žydų genocido." Coding: participation stated only on another body's authority; no Kaunas forts (HM-01). [117]
- **"policijos batalionai."** Founded by the Provisional Government's decision; "Policijos batalionai padėjo naciams vykdyti holokaustą: dalyvavo žudant žydus." Coding: control case, framed as help. [118]
- **"Jurgis Bobelis," "Andrius Butkūnas," "Juozas Brazaitis."** 1941 roles in the persecution omitted. Coding: HM-01, HM-06. [26, 27, 28]
- VLE must identify its biographical coverage of Algirdas Klimaitis, Kazys Palčiauskas, Jonas Stelmokas, Kazys Šimkus and Bronius Norkus and account for the acts documented here, alongside its coverage of the Lietūkis massacre and Kaunas's Jewish community.

The Kaunas Ninth Fort Museum (state museum)

- **"Istorija" / "History"** (LT and EN). "Žydų pogromai laikinojoje sostinėje prasidėjo vos nacistinės Vokietijos kariuomenei užėmus Kauną"; "Pirmieji organizuoti žydų šaudymai vykdyti VII forte"; "pasmerktieji … atvaryti į IX fortą ir šalia esančiame lauke sušaudyti." Soviet passages: "Sovietai atsitraukdami žiauriai nukankino ir iššaudė daugybę politinių kalinių"; "besitraukianti raudonoji armija juos sušaudė." Coding: HM-04 asymmetry; HM-01. [24, 38]
- **"Saugoti atmintį dėl ateities"** (4 February 2026). "Nacių ir vietinių kolaborantų vykdyti nusikaltimai paženklino visą Lietuvą." Coding: HM-02. [39]
- **"Nacistinė okupacija."** Exhibitions show "antisemitizmo įsigalėjimas Vidurio Europoje" and foreign rescuers. Coding: HM-01. [119]

The Seventh Fort (VšĮ Karo paveldo centras)

- **"Istorija."** "birželio 30 d. Lietuvos laikinoji vyriausybė (LLV) priėmė nutarimą stovyklą steigti VII forte. Jos kalinių apsaugai bei žudynių vykdymui buvo paskirtas naujai suformuotas Tautinio darbo apsaugos batalionas (TDA)"; 3,000–5,000 killed. Coding: accurate control case; Bobelis not named. [33]

Kaunas City Municipality and the Kaunas memorial register

- **Uprising anniversary, 2026.** Program "ATMINTI.BUDĖTI.GINTI": flowers at the grave of "1941 m. Lietuvos laikinosios vyriausybės ministro pirmininko dr. Juozo Ambrazevičiaus-Brazaičio"; honor guard at the monument to fallen insurgents; reading of the 23 June 1941 act. Coding: HM-01, HM-06. [29]
- **Uprising anniversary, 2024.** "Sukilimas įrodė, kad lietuvių tauta turi teisę ir gali kovoti dėl valstybingumo … buvo išreikšta tautos valia." Coding: HM-01. [30]
- **Fourth Fort inscription.** "Čia, IV forte, 1941 m. naciai ir jų vietiniai talkininkai nužudė apie 4000 žydų." Coding: HM-02. [40]
- **Seventh Fort sign, 2016.** "1941 metų liepą Kauno tvirtovės VII forte buvo sušaudyta per 3000 žmonių"; "Holokaustas yra visos Lietuvos tragedija." Coding: HM-04. [41]
- **Commemoration, 2015.** "Lietuvoje buvo sunaikinta didžioji Lietuvos žydų dalis." Coding: HM-04. [120]
- **Honors.** Street named for Škirpa (1991) and plaque (2001: "Lietuvos aktyvistų fronto įkūrėjas ir vadovas"); street named for Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis (1994); Vytautas Magnus University plaque (2009) naming the LAF leaders; plaque to Landsbergis-Žemkalnis (1998: "Laikinosios vyriausybės narys"); the register also records that Bela Rozenberg, a girl who escaped the ghetto, sheltered at his Kačerginė summer house. Coding: honors without the 1941 record (HM-01). [31, 42, 43]
- **Lietūkis memorial stone** (municipal, 2002). Inscription not captured.

The Vytautas the Great War Museum (state museum)

- **2025.** The uprising followed "žvėriškų sovietų ir jų vietinių kolaborantų nusikaltimų." **2026.** Anniversary text lists Soviet repressions; Jews omitted. Coding: HM-07 (the category "local collaborators" applied to Soviet crimes and withheld from the 1941 killings). [44, 45]

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- **27 January 2026, Ninth Fort.** "The Holocaust … required not only a carefully crafted plan, but also observers and collaborators. They relied on a mix of fear, indifference, and pragmatism." Coding: HM-02. [46]

LGGRTC

- **Genocidas ir rezistencija 2000, no. 1(7), officers' roster.** Barzda, Dagys and Norkus "vokiečių įpainioti į masines žydų žudynes"; Stelmokas's ghetto-guard command and the American proceedings omitted. Coding: HM-04, HM-06. [32]
- **Bubnys 2006.** Names the officers and the Third Company's 104 shooters. Coding: accurate control. [8]
- **Rukšėnas 2021.** Reallocates Stahlecker's figures; 8.83 percent participation figure. Coding: HM-08 (characterization of a source's categories), open to answer. [2]

- **Bubnys 2009, Kaunas prison.** Criticizes Soviet publications for inflated figures and "real or alleged" atrocities and argues that the Ninth Fort's prison history has been overshadowed by murder; its own archival references record 543 Jews handed to the German security police on 9 August 1941 and 28 Jewish prisoners transferred on 27 October. Coding: control case for the record; framing to be tested against the registers. [93]
- **Knezys 2007** (Lithuania in the Second World War, LGGRTC-associated volume). Describes the TDA as a hoped-for nucleus of the Lithuanian army "used by the Germans" and asks why there was no strong resistance to its murderous use. Bubnys's 2006 article asks which companies shot, where and how many men. Coding: HM-04 (agency displaced onto German use). [8, 121]
- **LRT interview with the LGGRTC director, 25 May 2021.** Uprising and Holocaust described as connected but separate; Provisional Government interventions described as unsuccessful. Coding: interpretation to be tested against the cabinet minutes. [52]
- **Metadata.** The repository's short Lithuanian abstract of Bubnys 2006 gives 140 victims of the Belarus operations; the article itself gives 1,400. A metadata error, not concealment. [8]
- **genocid.lt** pages on the Lietūkis garage ("Nauja apie žudynes „Lietūkio“ garaže") and on the Holocaust in Lithuania could not be captured (automated access blocked). NOT CAPTURED.

The Holocaust Atlas of Lithuania

- Kaunas entries could not be captured (the site renders only through scripts). NOT CAPTURED.

23A The published research agenda and the acts recorded within it

The opening page of the 1998 police-history article states a published decision about what deserved research. Arūnas Bubnys alleged that historians working for American and Canadian war-crime institutions had motives little different from Soviet historians: identifying more Lithuanian war criminals and magnifying Lithuanian participation in the Holocaust. He acknowledged unjustifiable war crimes but called that aspect “pakankamai išnagrinėtas ir nebeįdomus”—“sufficiently studied and no longer interesting.” The English abstract states the reason: the aspect was “so heavily exploited during the Soviet era that, in the author’s opinion, it has been sufficiently explored and has been exhausted.” The abstract then defined the article’s purpose around police formation, hierarchy, attitudes and resistance to occupation demands. That expressed choice relegated perpetration while imputing motives to investigators (1998, p. 81). [129]

The complete article makes the treatment more specific. At p. 89 Bubnys positively assesses the public police as maintaining order and moderating occupation pressure. At p. 90 he states that German Security Police and SD used a TDA company of about 205 men for mass killings at Kaunas’s forts and in the provinces, and describes the Vilnius Special Squad shooting Jews at Paneriai. Yet the English summary reduces the battalion role to “a small number” engaged in “the security of Holocaust actions” executed by German Security Police (p. 104). Its own body records participation in mass killing while its summary emphasizes a limited security role. The full text therefore supports a comparison of research selection and presentation, including the acts it does acknowledge. [129]

The comparison with his 2006 article is material. Its introduction says that émigré military writing largely omitted the Holocaust and describes Henry L. Gaidis's account as suppressing police-battalion participation while transferring blame to the German occupation authorities. It also states that historians in independent Lithuania had devoted insufficient attention to the Holocaust, especially police participation. LGGRTC must explain that publication chronology: why a subject declared sufficiently studied in 1998 was later described as insufficiently studied, and how the journal now contextualizes the allegation about investigators' motives (2006, pp. 31–32). [8, 129]

The 2006 study's definition of genocide also requires an exact account. At p. 41 it places the beginning of the "actual genocide of the Jews (the Holocaust)" at the point when all Jews, including women and children, began to be killed solely on the basis of nationality. Destruction of entire communities was an escalation; the earlier Jewish victims remain part of the Holocaust. Jäger already records forty-seven Jewish women among the 463 Jews killed at the Seventh Fort on 4 July. LGGRTC must explain the scope of its chronological category and present the earlier racial arrests and killings beside it. A period label must not remove victims or the Lithuanian acts committed against them. [8, 9]

Rukšėnas's 2011 motives study supplies further acts behind its explanatory categories. It reports testimony that TDA officers shot a man in the genitals during a Fourth Fort execution, and that men took suitcases of victims' property from the Seventh Fort. Its primary-motive hierarchy—duty first, fear and other stimuli second—must be distinguished from the acts it documents. It identifies Jonas Baranauskas as the Seventh Fort soldier who refused to shoot and was reassigned to outside guard duty (p. 44). The same article reports that Baranauskas took two suitcases of property stripped from the Jews, had K. Ūzas drive him home, left the property there and returned to the fort (pp. 52–53). Both accounts come from one interrogation file, LYA K-1/58/47745/3, vol. 2, leaf 215 and its verso (notes 37 and 134; the article dates the record 22 March 1979 in one note and 22 February 1979 in the other). Rukšėnas himself lists J. Baranauskas among the soldiers who used the killings to acquire victims' property (p. 53). His refusal to shoot coexisted with participation in the robbery of the condemned. Those passages require comparison before treating compulsion as universal. The individual testimonies and the author's psychological inference are separate evidence (pp. 41–45, 51–53, 61). [130]

A 2024 article by Ninth Fort Museum historian Karolis Sabutis names Sliesoraitis and Barkauskas and describes inflicted starvation and beatings. It cites a seventeen-person armed-guard list, LCVA R-731/4/26, leaf 44, and distinguishes it from a possible eight-person shift. This gives a dated comparison with the museum's general history page, which omits the Lithuanian personnel. The institution must connect that published personnel and abuse research to its public historical account. Sabutis also reports that Sliesoraitis, interrogated in 1949, first denied that killings took place and then stated that the guards did not shoot but escorted the condemned, sometimes beat them and guarded them against escape (LYA K-1/58/14438/3, leaves 44–45, 62). He identifies Juozas Kopūstas, imprisoned at the Ninth Fort for theft on 17 September 1941, who took part in the shooting of Jews there and was sentenced to death on 4 October 1962; the sentence was carried out. The article's interrogation citations and wartime roster remain distinct sources. [131]

24 Findings against the institutions

Each count identifies a text, the defect and the evidence. A count states what the text does to the reader's knowledge of the Kaunas record; it is not a finding of intent.

- **Count 1. VLE, "žydų pogromai Kaune" and "Kauno getas": contradictory classification of the pogrom killers.** One entry places the Klimaitis group among the "Kauno sukilėliai"; the other removes it from the insurgents and calls Norkus and Šimkus disloyal to the government. Both cannot stand. Evidence: Stahlecker's report; the TDA appointment of Norkus on 3 July and Šimkus's command from 24 July. HM-06, HM-09.
- **Count 2. VLE, "žydų pogromai Kaune": victims' conduct as cause.** "Kai žydai pamėgino nepaklusti kankintojams" introduces a sequence for which no source is given. HM-07.
- **Count 3. VLE, "žydų pogromai Kaune": the 27 June protocol.** The protocol required measures "against the Jews" and asked only for discretion about public executions; the same sitting financed the battalion. VLE presents it as partly an appeal to dissociate. HM-06, HM-08.
- **Count 4. VLE, "Jurgis Bobelis" and "Andrius Butkūnas": omission.** The founder and the first commander of the battalion that shot Jews at the Seventh Fort appear without that record, which VLE states in "Kauno getas." HM-01, HM-09. Prior notice: BOB-R2 (Bobelis).
- **Count 5. VLE, "Kauno getas": date of Order No. 15.** 7 July against the certified copy of 10 July. HM-05. Prior notice: BOB-R2.
- **Count 6. VLE, "Septintasis fortas," "Ketvirtasis fortas," "Devintasis fortas," "Kauno tvirtovė," "Kauno istorija": shooters and administrators omitted.** The fort entries attribute the killings to German orders or to no one; the TDA battalion, the commandant and the cabinet decision are absent. HM-01, HM-03, HM-04, HM-09.
- **Count 7. VLE, "Lietuva Vokietijos okupacijos metais": asymmetry of agency.** Soviet killers are subjects of active verbs; Lithuanian participants are "drawn in." HM-04.
- **Count 8. VLE, "Juozas Brazaitis": omission.** The acting prime minister who signed the 30 June minutes approving the Jewish concentration camp is presented as an anti-Nazi resistance leader. HM-01, HM-06.
- **Count 9. Ninth Fort Museum, "Istorija"/"History": agentless account of the 1941 killings beside named Soviet killers.** HM-01, HM-04.
- **Count 10. Kaunas City Municipality: commemoration of the uprising and its leaders without its victims.** HM-01. Prior notice: LAN-R4 (Landsbergis-Žemkalnis plaque).
- **Count 11. Vytautas the Great War Museum: "local collaborators" applied to Soviet crimes only.** HM-07.
- **Count 12. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 27 January 2026: "observers and collaborators" at a site where Lithuanian battalion companies shot Jews.** HM-02. Prior notice: URM-HC-04.
- **Count 13. LGGRTC, 2000 roster: "entangled by the Germans."** HM-04, HM-06.
- Count 14. LGGRTC journal, Rukšėnas 2021: reallocation of Stahlecker’s dead through an inferential reconstruction. The published citations and arithmetic do not establish the

identities and overlap of the reconstructed prisoner groups. Produce the records connecting the arrests, custody and executions. HM-08 (open). [2]

Count 15. LGGRTC journal, 1998 and 2006: the published research agenda and presentation of police participation. The 1998 article's p. 81 declares the war-crimes aspect sufficiently examined and no longer interesting; p. 90 acknowledges a TDA company's use in mass killing; its English summary describes a small security role. The 2006 article diagnoses insufficient research and documents named shooters. Produce the editorial and research records explaining these dated treatments and the 1998 allegation about investigators' motives. [8, 129]

Count 16. LGGRTC journal, 2006: the threshold for "actual genocide." Explain the term's intended scope and account for earlier killings of Jewish men and women, including 4 July at the Seventh Fort. Produce the original-source basis for the chronology. [8, 9]

Count 17. Ninth Fort public history and personnel research: identify the Lithuanian prison administration and explain the movement from arrest and custody to the execution ground, drawing on the dated research already published. Produce the named appointments, armed-guard roster, prisoner lists and death or execution records. [93, 131]

25 Notice and response

These filings on Kaunas subjects preceded this report. Each is recorded as sent; receipt, registration and replies are stated only where documented.

- **URM-HC-04** (8 October 2026), to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: a narrow request for the existing drafting and source records behind the Ministry's 27 January 2026 Ninth Fort communication, following the Ministry's reply (13.1.2E)3-6288 to an earlier request. Outcome of URM-HC-04 not yet reconciled in this record.
- **BOB-R1** (23 October 2026), to the Lithuanian Central State Archives: location of the 10 July 1941 Order No. 15, the description of fond R-1444 and the missing opening leaf of R-1444/1/6.
- **BOB-R2** (23 October 2026), to the National Library's encyclopedia publishing group (VLE): the source for VLE's 7 July date and its statement that Bobelis and Palčiauskas signed the order; the chronology of the 7 July cabinet minute and the 10 July order; authorship and editing history of the "Kauno getas" and "Jurgis Bobelis" entries; and the omission from the Bobelis biography of his 1941 role.
- **LAN-001** (23 October 2026), to the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with separate requests including LAN-R4 to the Mayor and Council of Kaunas: review of Kaunas's 1991 honorary citizenship, 1993 street naming and 1998 memorial plaque for Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis, member of the 1941 cabinet.
- **MAC-06** (28 October 2026), to the USHMM reference desk: holdings of LCVA fonds R-731 (Kaunas Hard Labor Prison) and R-624 (Justice Directorate). The reference desk replied on 28 October 2026 identifying the Kaunas prison records (accession 2000.197, RG-26.035M) and their prisoner-file index. [122]

No Kaunas town application has been filed. The public texts examined in section 23 were captured on 31 October 2026.

26 What remains unverified

- **The Kaunas prison registers (LCVA R-731).** NOT INSPECTED. They would establish which named Jewish prisoners the prison handed to the German security police and the TDA battalion on 9 August, 27 October and later dates, and the receiving authority for each transfer. The USHMM index identifies files; the files themselves have not been examined.
- **The interrogation files cited by Bubnys and the Commission study** (Vėlavičius, Palubinskas, Matiukas, Raižys, Taparauskas, Vosylius, Baranauskas, Nėnius). NOT INSPECTED in the originals. They are the basis for the personal acts attributed to Barzda, Dagys, Norkus, Obelenis and Klimavičius. Sliesoraitis's 1949 interrogation, LYA K-1/58/14438/3, leaves 44–45 and 62, also remains uninspected; its account is known here through Sabutis. [131]
- **TDA battalion orders and company rosters (LCVA R-1444/1/1; R-1444/2/1a).** Known through published citations; originals NOT INSPECTED. They would give the dates of each officer's command and the guard rosters for the forts and the ghetto.
- **LCVA R-1444/1/6, leaf 2.** The image of the opening leaf is NOT INSPECTED. Its text is published: the leaves 2–4 are the minutes of the interdepartmental meeting of 25 July 1941 at the Kaunas Commandant's headquarters, printed in *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje*, vol. 1, pp. 234–237, and in the Vilna Gaon Museum's documentary edition, pp. 197–198, with the participants' offices and ranks. The image would confirm the edition.
- **Order No. 15 of 10 July 1941.** The text of a certified copy (LCVA R-1444/1/6, leaf 5) is published in the Vilna Gaon Museum edition, pp. 196–197; the image and any signed original are NOT INSPECTED; requested in BOB-R1.
- **Municipal housing, finance and police property records, 1941–1944**, and the records of the Main Housing Administration. NOT INSPECTED. They would connect the inventory rules to named households, custodians, purchasers and proceeds.
- **The Lithuanian security police card index** described in EM No. 54. NOT FOUND.
- **The Hebrew or Yiddish original of the Elkes letter.** NOT INSPECTED.
- **The ghetto police chronicle** (LCVA R-973/2/30) and its 2021 Lithuanian editions. NOT INSPECTED; the reported editorial cut rests on Šepetys's account.
- **Yad Vashem O.71/163** (Koniuchowsky's 1946 Seventh Fort record). NOT INSPECTED in the original; the English compilation was read.
- **Stahlecker's report (L-180)** in facsimile. NOT INSPECTED; the published German transcription was used.
- **LGGRTC's own Lietūkis page, the Holocaust Atlas Kaunas entries and the Lietūkis memorial inscription.** NOT ACCESSIBLE (automated access blocked or script-rendered) or NOT FOUND; a manual capture is needed before they are assessed.
- **The Regulations on the Status of the Jews (1 August 1941).** Their status is disputed: "adopted" (Kasparavičius), "draft" (Commission), a signed handwritten text with a note that a provision "was not put into effect" (Vilna Gaon Museum edition). The original minutes No. 31 have not survived except for appendices.
- **LitvakSIG All Lithuania Database.** Town search "Kaunas" run on 31 October 2026 returned 450,965 index matches across collections; individual result pages were blocked by the site's security verification. Index entries and originals NOT INSPECTED; name and town variants (Kovno, Kowno, Kauen, Slobodka, Vilijampolė) not yet searched.

27 Anticipated defenses and the answers

- **"The Germans organized and ordered the killings."** They did, and this report says so: Stahlecker instigated the pogroms, Jäger ordered the fort executions, German police and SS men shot victims. German command does not remove Lithuanian conduct. Jäger's own report states that the Seventh Fort executions were "conducted by Lithuanian partisans"; the Lithuanian commandant formed the battalion, financed it on the cabinet's decision and handed a company to the German security police.
- **"The pogrom killers were not partisans, because Klimaitis's group did not belong to the LAF."** VLE's pogrom entry advances this classification. The group's membership does not change the killers' identity as Lithuanians, and the same entry names Šimkus's and Norkus's armed groups in Vilijampolė; Norkus was appointed a TDA platoon commander on 3 July and Šimkus became battalion commander on 24 July. The question is which Lithuanians did what, not which organization's label they wore.
- **"The Provisional Government condemned the violence."** The 27 June minute asked partisans and individuals to avoid public executions of Jews "notwithstanding all the measures which must be taken against the Jews." On the same day the cabinet resolved to support and finance the security battalion; on 30 June it approved a Jewish concentration camp. The record is one of approval for removal and concentration, with a request for discretion about public killing.
- **"Stahlecker's numbers are inflated."** The report uses the survivor and historical estimates for the pogroms and Jäger's dated entries for the forts. Stahlecker's figures are recorded as his and not added to others.
- **"The testimony was taken by the Soviet KGB."** Some of it was. The same acts are attested by German perpetrators' postwar testimony (Jäger on Norkus), by survivors (Nemenčik, Koniuchowsky's witnesses, Tory), by the battalion's own orders, and by Bubnys and the Commission study, which evaluated the testimony and published it. Provenance is stated for each act.
- **"Bobelis released Jewish prisoners."** He released about seventy former volunteers. The release shows his authority over the Seventh Fort guards and over who would live; it does not answer what happened to the other prisoners under the same guards.
- **"Kaunas has acknowledged the Holocaust."** VLE's ghetto entry attributes pogrom killings to local white-armband men and fort killings to the TDA battalion; LGGRTC's journal published Bubnys's operational study. These accurate passages are recorded in section 23 as control cases. The defects identified concern particular omissions, euphemisms and contradictions in particular texts.

Appendix A — Institutional contradiction and independent verification

Each entry gives the institutional statement, what supports it, what conflicts with it, the dependency between sources, and the open question.

- **Who killed the Jews of Vilijampolė (25–27 June 1941).**
  - *Institutional statements:* VLE "Kauno getas": Kaunas insurgents led by Klimaitis, "local white-armband men." VLE "žydų pogromai Kaune": Klimaitis's group,

"not partisan insurgents," and armed groups of Šimkus and Norkus, "not loyal" to the government.
  - *Supporting:* Stahlecker's report (Klimaitis; 300 men under the Einsatzkommando); survivor accounts (Gar, Tory, Oshry); Rukšėnas 2021.
  - *Conflicting:* the two VLE entries with each other; VLE's "about 20" against Stahlecker's 300.
  - *Dependency:* the German report and survivor memoirs are independent; Rukšėnas and VLE draw on the same literature.
  - *Open question for VLE:* which source supports excluding the group from the insurgents.
- **The count of pogrom victims.**
  - *Institutional statements:* VLE "Kauno getas": more than 1,500 in Vilijampolė, about 8,000 in pogroms. VLE pogrom entry: 600–800 and about 1,000. LGGRTC journal (Rukšėnas): Stahlecker's 3,800 reallocated as about 1,000 dead and 2,800 arrested.
  - *Supporting:* survivor estimates of 700–1,000 for Vilijampolė.
  - *Conflicting:* Stahlecker ("beseitigt"); EM No. 19 (7,800, pogroms plus shootings).
  - *Open question:* the sources behind each VLE figure and the source chain for the reallocation.
- **The Lietūkis massacre.**
  - *Institutional statement:* VLE: white-armband men killed; German soldiers did not; killing began "when the Jews tried to disobey."
  - *Supporting the attribution:* photographs; Gunsilius, Bischoffshausen, Röder, Lesch; Survila; the Commission's 2005 conclusions ("predominantly by Lithuanian irregulars").
  - *Conflicting on the causal clause:* no witness account cited for it.
  - *Control case:* the Lithuanian Jewish Community's "Lithuanians murdered about 50 Jews."
- **The Provisional Government's 27 June minute.**
  - *Institutional statement:* VLE reads it as partly an appeal to dissociate.
  - *Supporting the text:* the minute (published by LGGRTC, 2001).
  - *Conflicting with the reading:* the minute's "measures … against the Jews," the same sitting's financing of the battalion, the 30 June camp decision; the Commission calls the formulation incriminating.
- **The Seventh Fort.**
  - *Institutional statements:* VLE "Septintasis fortas": shot by order of the German authorities. Seventh Fort (Karo paveldo centras): Provisional Government decision; TDA battalion assigned to guard and kill.
  - *Supporting the second:* cabinet minutes of 30 June; TDA orders; EM No. 14; Jäger; Bubnys; Commission; Petrikėnas and Kosas.
  - *Contrary evidence:* Hippler's 1959 statement that the guards were only German.
- **The Fourth and Ninth Forts.**

  - *Institutional statements:* VLE "Ketvirtasis fortas": "the Nazis"; VLE "Devintasis fortas": agentless. Ninth Fort Museum: agentless. VLE "Kauno getas": TDA battalion on 2 and 9 August and the Third Company on 29 October.
  - *Supporting the latter:* Bubnys 2006 (named officers, testimony); Gar; USHMM.
  - *Open question:* why the fort entries omit what the ghetto entry states.
- **Order No. 15.**
  - *Institutional statement:* VLE: signed by Bobelis and Palčiauskas on 7 July.
  - *Supporting the signatories:* certified copy (R-1444/1/6, leaf 5); 12 July moving permit with both names; Palčiauskas court findings.
  - *Conflicting on the date:* the certified copy and the 31 July notice say 10 July.
  - *Prior notice:* BOB-R2 (23 October 2026); no reply recorded.
- **Bobelis, Butkūnas, Brazaitis biographies.**
  - *Institutional statements:* VLE biographies omit 1941 persecution roles.
  - *Supporting the roles:* cabinet minutes; TDA orders; VLE "Kauno getas"; Commission.
  - *Favorable evidence:* Bobelis's release of about seventy Jewish former volunteers; his escort of Goldberg and Garfunkel; Butkūnas's 11 July disciplinary order.
- **Agency in survey texts.**
  - *Institutional statements:* VLE "Lietuva Vokietijos okupacijos metais"; Ninth Fort Museum; War Museum 2025.
  - *Comparator:* the same texts' active, named Soviet agents.
  - *Control case:* VLE "Holokaustas" names the 1st police battalion as the core of the mobile unit.
- **"Observers and collaborators" (Foreign Ministry, 27 January 2026).**
  - *Comparator:* the documented shooters, escorts and plunderers at the Ninth Fort.
  - *Prior notice:* URM-HC-04 (8 October 2026); outcome not reconciled.
- **Kaunas commemorations and honors.**
  - *Institutional statements:* 2024 and 2026 uprising programs; plaques and streets for Škirpa, Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis and Landsbergis-Žemkalnis.
  - *Comparator:* the cabinet's 27 June and 30 June minutes; the LAF instruction of 24 March 1941.
  - *Prior notice:* LAN-R4 (23 October 2026).
  - *Favorable evidence recorded:* the register's note that a girl who escaped the ghetto sheltered at Landsbergis-Žemkalnis's summer house.
- **LGGRTC officers' roster (2000).**
  - *Institutional statement:* officers "entangled by the Germans."
  - *Supporting the officers' agency:* Bubnys 2006; Stelmokas judgments.

A15. The research agenda and summary: compare the 1998 opening (p. 81), acknowledgment of mass-killing participation (p. 90), limited-security formulation in its English summary (p. 104), and the 2006 diagnosis and named-shooter findings. LGGRTC must produce the relevant editorial record and explain the published treatments. The comparison concerns texts published eight years apart. [8, 129]

A16. The genocide chronology: explain the 2006 “actual genocide” threshold beside the earlier Seventh Fort killings of Jewish men and women. Preserve the whole passage and the dated execution entries. [8, 9]

A17. The prison and fort personnel: compare the general museum history with the names, roles, guard roster and abuse recorded in the 2009 study and the museum historian’s 2024 article. Produce the identified appointments, lists and individual files. [93, 131]

Appendix B — Related research by the author

- What the Jews Could Not Carry, Kaunas Ordered Liquidated (20 October 2026). [92]
- What Dr. Elchanan Elkes Witnessed (2022). [100]
- Slaughtering Jews in Kaunas (2023). [123]
- Research reports on 1941 cabinet members and officers: Jonas Šlepetys [101]; Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis [102]; Mečislovas Mackevičius [124]; Ksaveras Vencius [125]; Antanas Novickis [103]; Juozas Obelenis [126]; Juozas Krikštaponis [127]; Juozas Lukša [89].

Appendix C — Archival facsimiles

The following eight pages reproduce the supplied copies cited as sources 34, 35, 49 and 86. They provide the source images inside this report. Leaves 2 and 5 of LCVA R-1444/1/6 are not among these copies. The interpretive passages and translations appear in the historical sections above.

C1. LCVA R-1444/1/6, leaf 3

Parašyta	N u t a r t a

Žydams leidžiami pasiimti daiktai nustatyti atskiroje instrukcijoje, kurią išsikeliantiems žydams paskelbs policija. Kitas turtas paliekamas Kauno miesto savivaldybės žinioje.

Žydų paliekamus butus ir turtą apsaugoti policija paves įpareigotiems asmenims.

I n s t r u k c i j a.

§ 1.

Išsikeliantiems į Vilijampolėje skirtą rajoną žydams leidžiama pasiimti žemiau nurodytieji daiktai:

1. Virtuvės daiktai.

Visi virtuvės rakandai, išskirus elektrinius.

2. Valgomojo kambario daiktai.

Vieną valgomojo kambario stalą šeimai, be to po vieną kėdę kiekvienam asmeniui, po dvi lėkštes, po vieną stiklinę ar puoduką gerti su lėkštele, po vieną stalo šakutę, peilį, šaukštą ir šaukštelį ir prieskonio indus.

Pastaba: indai turi būti imami tik nebrangūs.

3. Miegamojo kambario daiktai.

Kiekvienam asmeniui po vieną lovą, po vieną komplekt patalinės ir po tris komplektus patalinės skalbinių.

4. Drabužiai ir avalinė.

a) Vyrams po du kostiumus, žieminį ir vasarinį paltą, po dvi poras batų, po keturis komplektus baltinių;

b) Moterims po ketures sukneles, žieminį ir vasarinį paltą, po tris poras batukų, po aštuonis komplektus skalbinių;

c) Vaikams iki 14 metų amžiaus leidžiama pasiimti visus vaikiškus drabužius ir avalinę; vyresniems kaip 14 metų leidžiama imti tik suaugusiojo norma.

Be to, leidžiama pasiimti darbo įrankius, išskyrus stacionariniai įrengtų mašinų ir kitų brangių aparatų (rentgeno aparatų, determijos ir pan.).

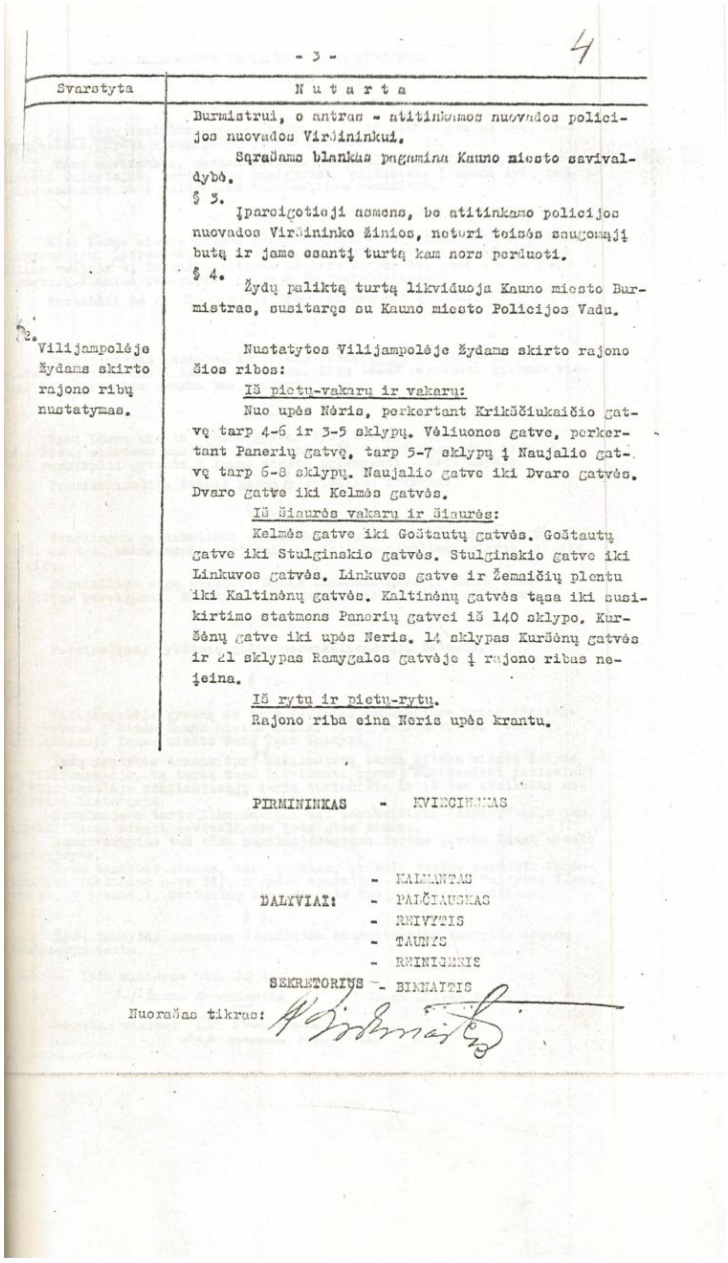
§ 2.

Pirmame § leidžiami pasiimti daiktai turi būti paimti per nustatytą šeimai išsikelti laiką.

Nepasiimti daiktai per duotą išsikelti laiką, o taip pat pirmame § nepaminėti daiktai turi būti palikti butuose kuriuos policijos pareigūnai įtraukia į atitinkamus sąrašus ir paveda butą ir daiktus saugoti įpareigotiems asmenims.

Daiktų sąrašai sustatomi kiekvienam butui po du ekzemplioriu, kurių vienas perduodamas Kauno miesto

C2. LCVA R-1444/1/6, leaf 4



Svarstyta	N u t a r t a
	Burmistrui, o antras - atitinkamos nuovados policijos nuovados Viršininkui. Sąrašams blankas pagamina Kauno miesto savivaldybė. § 3. Įpareigotieji asmens, be atitinkamo policijos nuovados Viršininko žinios, neturi teisės saugomąjį butą ir jame esantį turtą kam nors perduoti. § 4. Žydų paliktą turtą likviduoja Kauno miesto Burmistras, susitaręs su Kauno miesto Policijos Vadu.
2. Vilijampolėje Žydams skirto rajono ribų nustatymas.	Nustatytos Vilijampolėje Žydams skirto rajono šios ribos: Iš pietų-vakarų ir vakarų: Nuo upės Nėris, perkertant Krikščiukaičio gatvę tarp 4-6 ir 3-5 sklypų. Vėliuonos gatve, perkertant Panerių gatvę, tarp 5-7 sklypų į Naujalio gatvę tarp 6-8 sklypų. Naujalio gatve iki Dvaro gatvės. Dvaro gatve iki Kelmės gatvės. Iš šiaurės vakarų ir šiaurės: Kelmės gatve iki Goštautų gatvės. Goštautų gatve iki Stulginskio gatvės. Stulginskio gatve iki Linkuvos gatvės. Linkuvos gatve ir Žemaičių plentu iki Kaltinėnų gatvės. Kaltinėnų gatvės tąsa iki susikirtimo statmens Panerių gatvei iš 140 sklypo. Kuršėnų gatve iki upės Neris. 14 sklypas Kuršėnų gatvės ir 21 sklypas Ramygalos gatvėje į rajono ribas neįeina. Iš rytų ir pietų-rytų. Rajono riba eina Neris upės krantu.

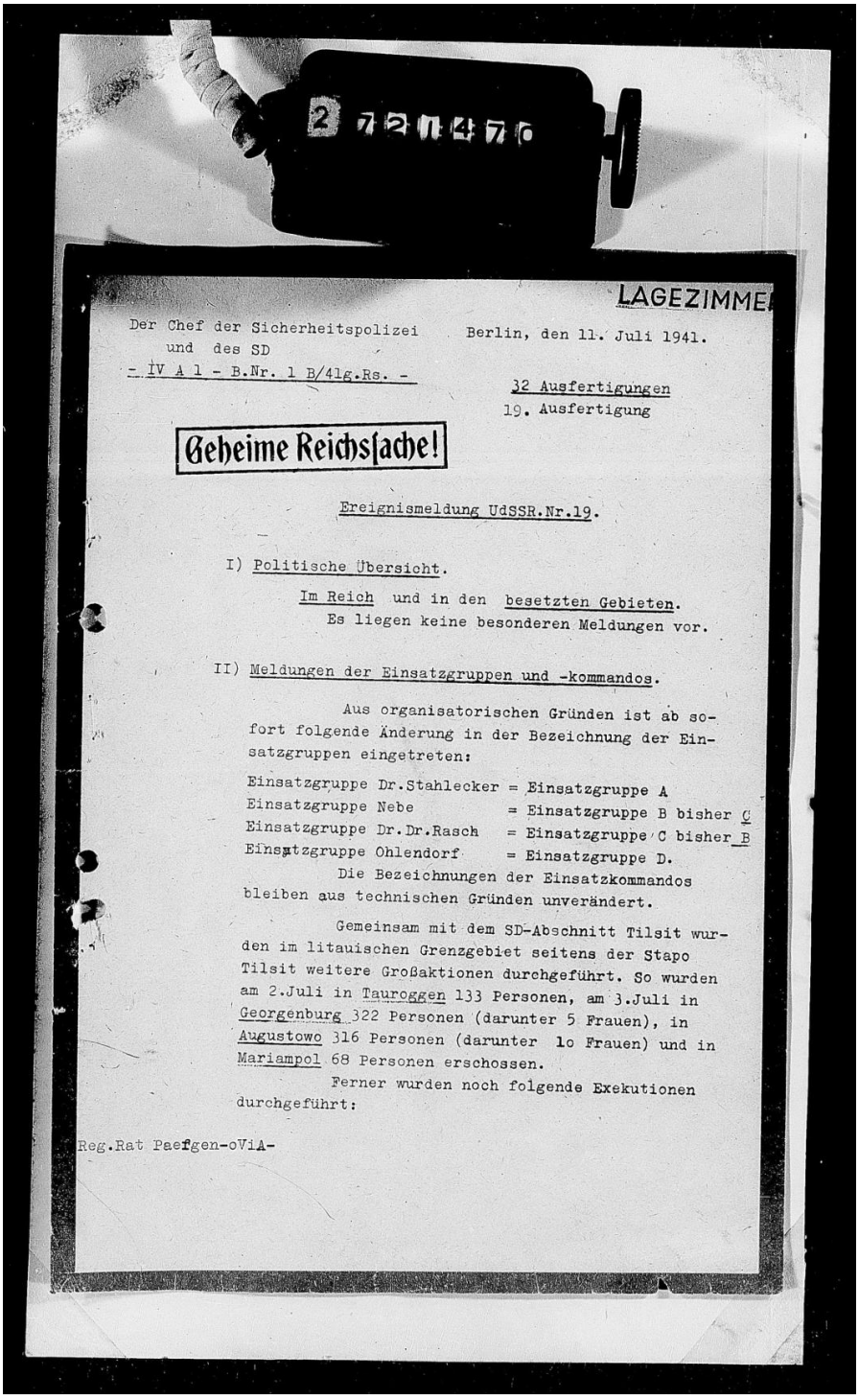
PIRMININKAS - KVIDERIS

DALYVIAI: - KAIRANTAS
- PALČIAUSKAS
- RMIVYDIS
- TAUNYS
- RMINIGERIS

SEKRETORIUS - BINKAITIS

Nuorašas tikras:

C3. Ereignismeldung No. 19, 11 July 1941, report pp. 1–4 — image 1 of 4



LAGEZIMME

Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei
und des SD
- IV A 1 - B.Nr. 1 B/41g.Rs. -

Berlin, den 11. Juli 1941.

32 Ausfertigungen
19. Ausfertigung

Geheime Reichssache!

Ereignismeldung UdSSR.Nr.19.

I) Politische Übersicht.

Im Reich und in den besetzten Gebieten.
Es liegen keine besonderen Meldungen vor.

II) Meldungen der Einsatzgruppen und -kommandos.

Aus organisatorischen Gründen ist ab sofort folgende Änderung in der Bezeichnung der Einsatzgruppen eingetreten:

Einsatzgruppe Dr.Stahlecker = Einsatzgruppe A
Einsatzgruppe Nebe = Einsatzgruppe B bisher C
Einsatzgruppe Dr.Dr.Rasch = Einsatzgruppe C bisher B
Einsatzgruppe Ohlendorf = Einsatzgruppe D.

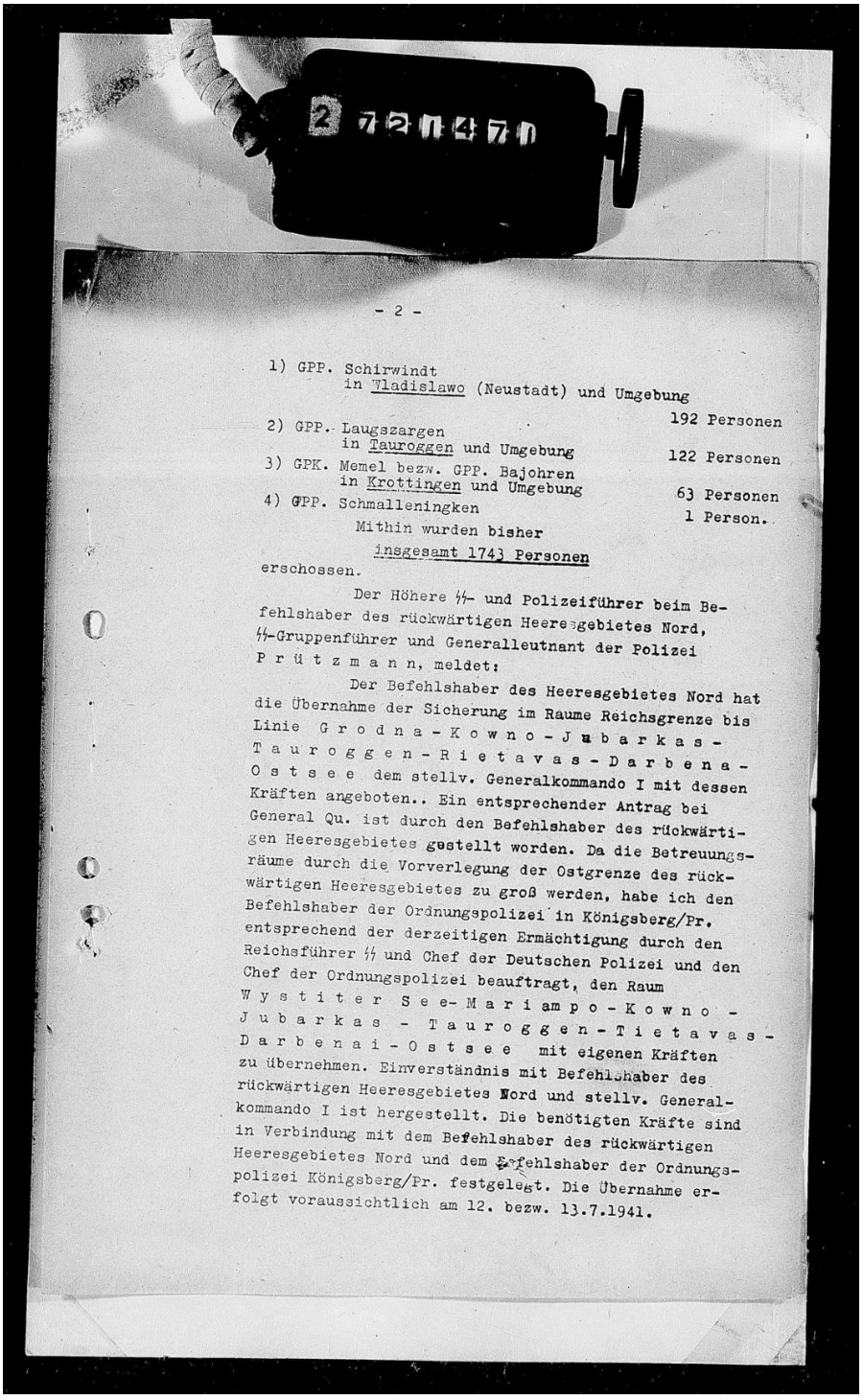
Die Bezeichnungen der Einsatzkommandos bleiben aus technischen Gründen unverändert.

Gemeinsam mit dem SD-Abschnitt Tilsit wurden im litauischen Grenzgebiet seitens der Stapo Tilsit weitere Großaktionen durchgeführt. So wurden am 2.Juli in Tauroggen 133 Personen, am 3.Juli in Georgenburg 322 Personen (darunter 5 Frauen), in Augustowo 316 Personen (darunter 10 Frauen) und in Mariampol 68 Personen erschossen.

Ferner wurden noch folgende Exekutionen durchgeführt:

Reg.Rat Paefgen-oVi A-

C3. Ereignismeldung No. 19, 11 July 1941, report pp. 1–4 — image 2 of 4



1) GPP. Schirwindt
in Wladislawo (Neustadt) und Umgebung 192 Personen

2) GPP. Laugszargen
in Tauroggen und Umgebung 122 Personen

3) GPK. Memel bezw. GPP. Bajohren
in Krottingen und Umgebung 63 Personen

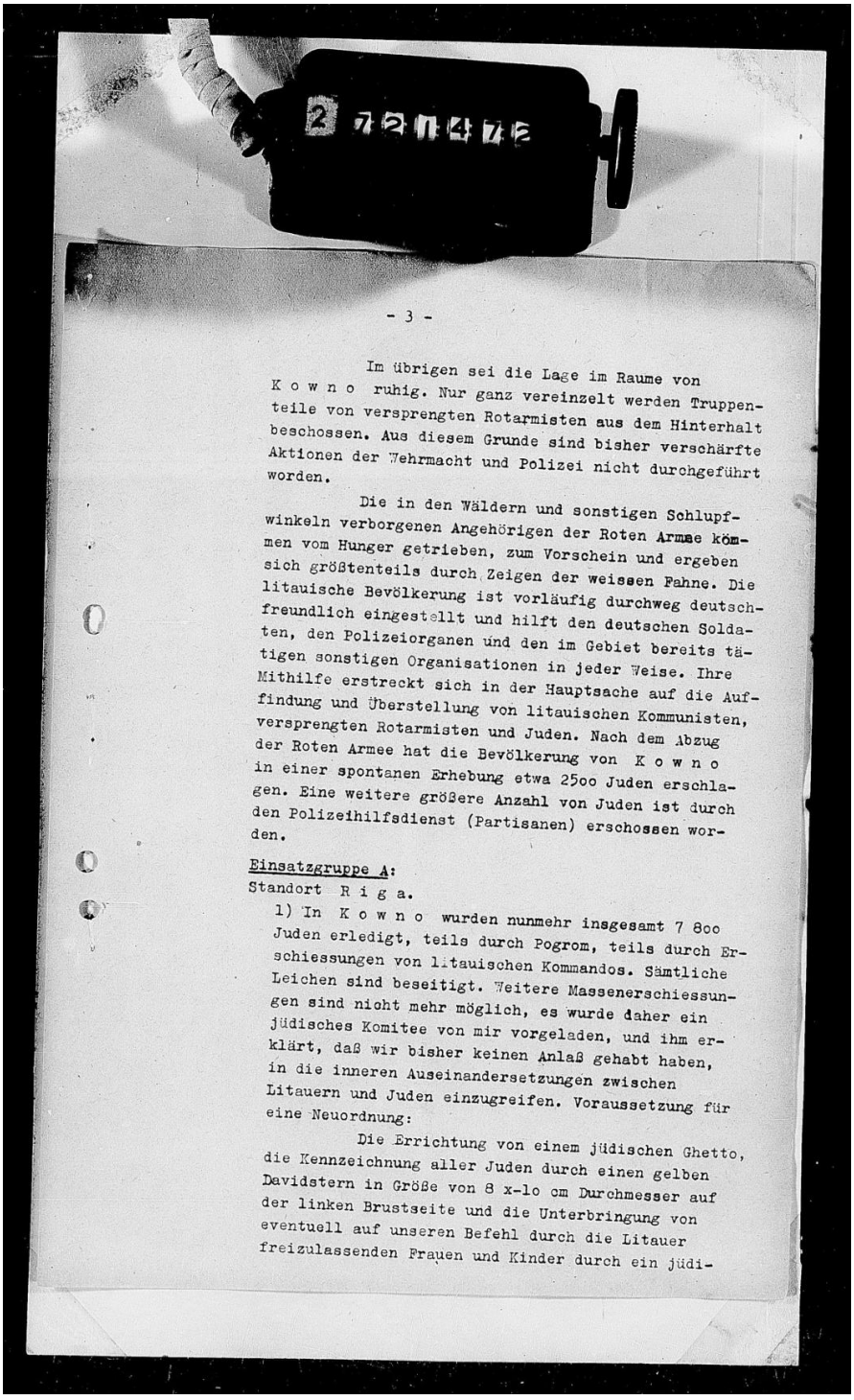
4) GPP. Schmalleningken 1 Person.

Mithin wurden bisher
insgesamt 1743 Personen
erschossen.

Der Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer beim Befehlshaber des rückwärtigen Heeresgebietes Nord, SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Polizei P r ü t z m a n n, meldet:

Der Befehlshaber des Heeresgebietes Nord hat die Übernahme der Sicherung im Raume Reichsgrenze bis Linie G r o d n a - K o w n o - J u b a r k a s - T a u r o g g e n - R i e t a v a s - D a r b e n a - O s t s e e dem stellv. Generalkommando I mit dessen Kräften angeboten.. Ein entsprechender Antrag bei General Qu. ist durch den Befehlshaber des rückwärtigen Heeresgebietes gestellt worden. Da die Betreuungsräume durch die Vorverlegung der Ostgrenze des rückwärtigen Heeresgebietes zu groß werden, habe ich den Befehlshaber der Ordnungspolizei in Königsberg/Pr. entsprechend der derzeitigen Ermächtigung durch den Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei und den Chef der Ordnungspolizei beauftragt, den Raum W y s t i t e r S e e - M a r i a m p o - K o w n o - J u b a r k a s - T a u r o g g e n - T i e t a v a s - D a r b e n a i - O s t s e e mit eigenen Kräften zu übernehmen. Einverständnis mit Befehlshaber des rückwärtigen Heeresgebietes Nord und stellv. Generalkommando I ist hergestellt. Die benötigten Kräfte sind in Verbindung mit dem Befehlshaber des rückwärtigen Heeresgebietes Nord und dem Befehlshaber der Ordnungspolizei Königsberg/Pr. festgelegt. Die Übernahme erfolgt voraussichtlich am 12. bezw. 13.7.1941.

C3. Ereignismeldung No. 19, 11 July 1941, report pp. 1–4 — image 3 of 4



Im übrigen sei die Lage im Raume von K o w n o ruhig. Nur ganz vereinzelt werden Truppenteile von versprengten Rotarmisten aus dem Hinterhalt beschossen. Aus diesem Grunde sind bisher verschärfte Aktionen der Wehrmacht und Polizei nicht durchgeführt worden.

Die in den Wäldern und sonstigen Schlupfwinkeln verborgenen Angehörigen der Roten Armee kömmen vom Hunger getrieben, zum Vorschein und ergeben sich größtenteils durch Zeigen der weissen Fahne. Die litauische Bevölkerung ist vorläufig durchweg deutschfreundlich eingestellt und hilft den deutschen Soldaten, den Polizeiorganen und den im Gebiet bereits tätigen sonstigen Organisationen in jeder Weise. Ihre Mithilfe erstreckt sich in der Hauptsache auf die Auffindung und Überstellung von litauischen Kommunisten, versprengten Rotarmisten und Juden. Nach dem Abzug der Roten Armee hat die Bevölkerung von K o w n o in einer spontanen Erhebung etwa 2500 Juden erschlagen. Eine weitere größere Anzahl von Juden ist durch den Polizeihilfsdienst (Partisanen) erschossen worden.

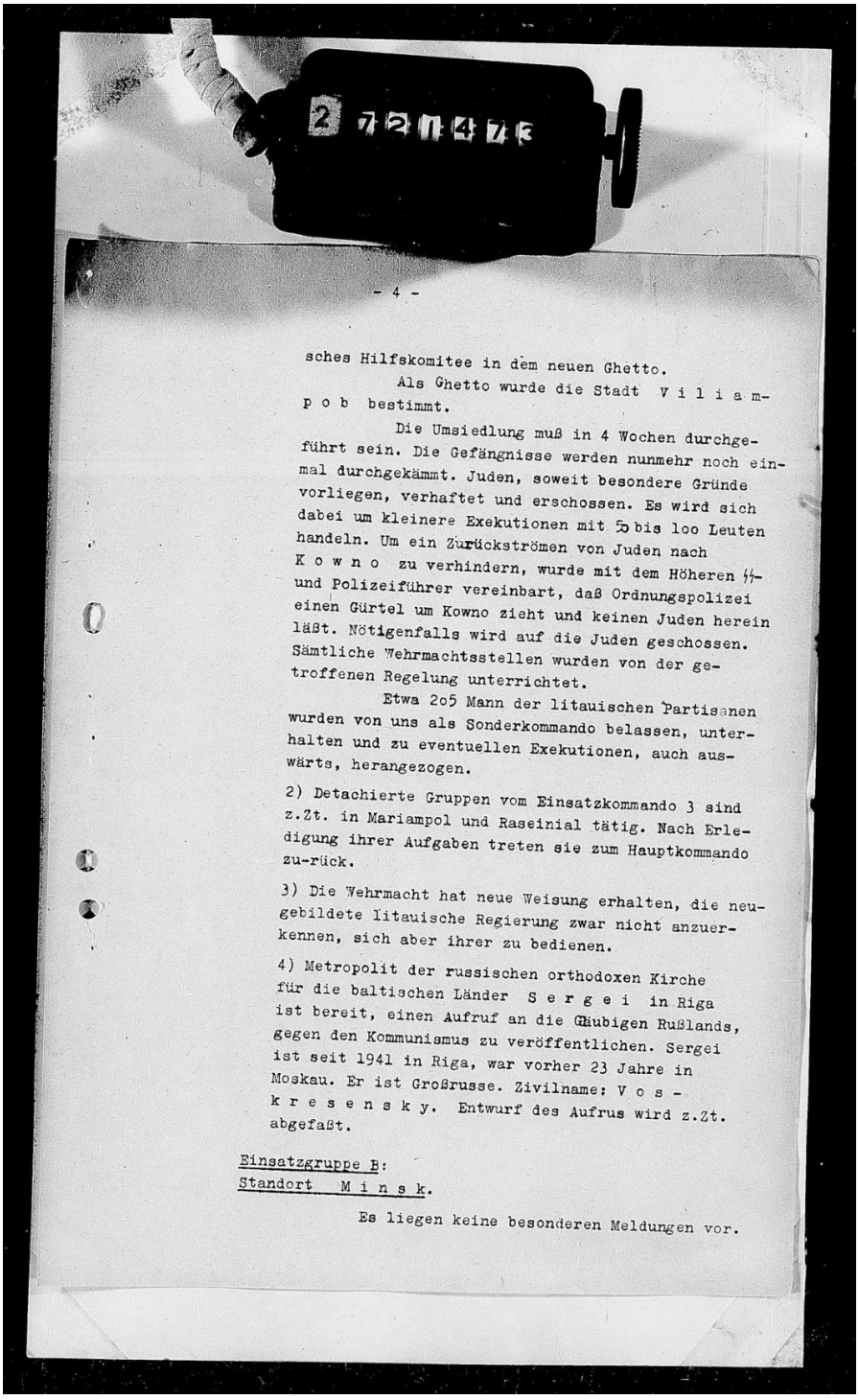
<u>Einsatzgruppe A</u>:

Standort R i g a.

1) In K o w n o wurden nunmehr insgesamt 7 800 Juden erledigt, teils durch Pogrom, teils durch Erschiessungen von litauischen Kommandos. Sämtliche Leichen sind beseitigt. Weitere Massenerschiessungen sind nicht mehr möglich, es wurde daher ein jüdisches Komitee von mir vorgeladen, und ihm erklärt, daß wir bisher keinen Anlaß gehabt haben, in die inneren Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Litauern und Juden einzugreifen. Voraussetzung für eine Neuordnung:

Die Errichtung von einem jüdischen Ghetto, die Kennzeichnung aller Juden durch einen gelben Davidstern in Größe von 8 x-lo cm Durchmesser auf der linken Brustseite und die Unterbringung von eventuell auf unseren Befehl durch die Litauer freizulassenden Frauen und Kinder durch ein jüdi-

C3. Ereignismeldung No. 19, 11 July 1941, report pp. 1–4 — image 4 of 4



sches Hilfskomitee in dem neuen Ghetto.

Als Ghetto wurde die Stadt V i l i a m p o l bestimmt.

Die Umsiedlung muß in 4 Wochen durchgeführt sein. Die Gefängnisse werden nunmehr noch einmal durchgekämmt. Juden, soweit besondere Gründe vorliegen, verhaftet und erschossen. Es wird sich dabei um kleinere Exekutionen mit 5o bis loo Leuten handeln. Um ein Zurückströmen von Juden nach K o w n o zu verhindern, wurde mit dem Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer vereinbart, daß Ordnungspolizei einen Gürtel um Kowno zieht und keinen Juden herein läßt. Nötigenfalls wird auf die Juden geschossen. Sämtliche Wehrmachtsstellen wurden von der getroffenen Regelung unterrichtet.

Etwa 2o5 Mann der litauischen Partisanen wurden von uns als Sonderkommando belassen, unterhalten und zu eventuellen Exekutionen, auch auswärts, herangezogen.

2) Detachierte Gruppen vom Einsatzkommando 3 sind z.Zt. in Mariampol und Raseinial tätig. Nach Erledigung ihrer Aufgaben treten sie zum Hauptkommando zu-rück.

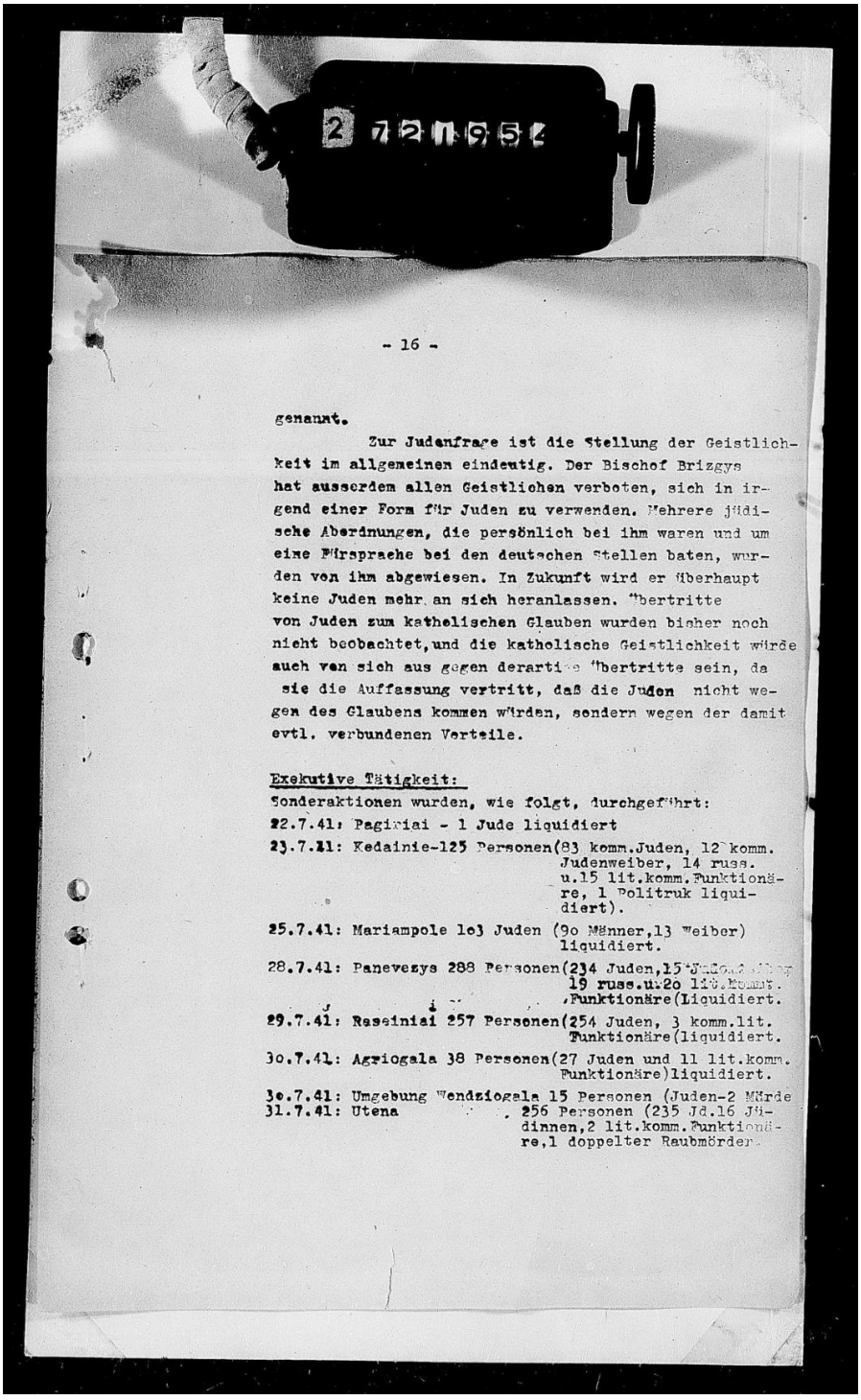
3) Die Wehrmacht hat neue Weisung erhalten, die neugebildete litauische Regierung zwar nicht anzuerkennen, sich aber ihrer zu bedienen.

4) Metropolit der russischen orthodoxen Kirche für die baltischen Länder S e r g e i in Riga ist bereit, einen Aufruf an die Gläubigen Rußlands, gegen den Kommunismus zu veröffentlichen. Sergei ist seit 1941 in Riga, war vorher 23 Jahre in Moskau. Er ist Großrusse. Zivilname: V o s k r e s e n s k y. Entwurf des Aufrus wird z.Zt. abgefaßt.

Einsatzgruppe B:
Standort M i n s k.

Es liegen keine besonderen Meldungen vor.

C4. Ereignismeldung No. 54, 16 August 1941, report pp. 16–17 — image 1 of 2



genannt.

Zur Judenfrage ist die Stellung der Geistlichkeit im allgemeinen eindeutig. Der Bischof Brizgys hat ausserdem allen Geistlichen verboten, sich in irgend einer Form für Juden zu verwenden. Mehrere jüdische Abordnungen, die persönlich bei ihm waren und um eine Fürsprache bei den deutschen Stellen baten, wurden von ihm abgewiesen. In Zukunft wird er überhaupt keine Juden mehr an sich heranlassen. Übertritte von Juden zum katholischen Glauben wurden bisher noch nicht beobachtet, und die katholische Geistlichkeit würde auch von sich aus gegen derartige Übertritte sein, da sie die Auffassung vertritt, daß die Juden nicht wegen des Glaubens kommen würden, sondern wegen der damit evtl. verbundenen Vorteile.

Exekutive Tätigkeit:

Sonderaktionen wurden, wie folgt, durchgeführt:

22.7.41: Pagiriai - 1 Jude liquidiert

23.7.41: Kedainie-125 Personen(83 komm.Juden, 12 komm. Judenweiber, 14 russ. u.15 lit.komm.Funktionäre, 1 Politruk liquidiert).

25.7.41: Mariampole 103 Juden (90 Männer,13 Weiber) liquidiert.

28.7.41: Panevezys 288 Personen(234 Juden,15 [illegible] 19 russ.u.20 lit.komm. Funktionäre(Liquidiert.

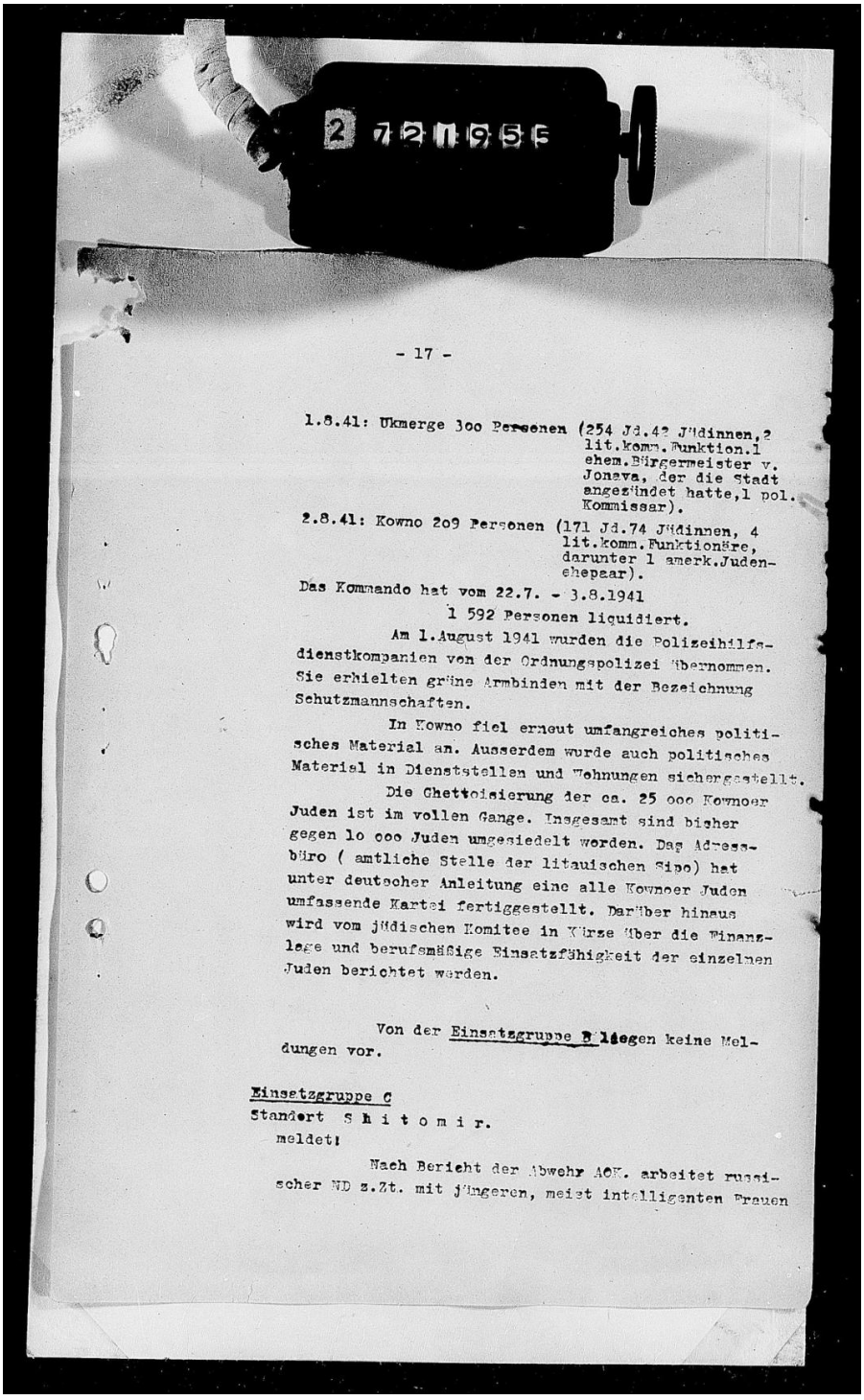
29.7.41: Raseiniai 257 Personen(254 Juden, 3 komm.lit. Funktionäre(liquidiert.

30.7.41: Agriogala 38 Personen(27 Juden und 11 lit.komm. Funktionäre)liquidiert.

30.7.41: Umgebung Wendziogala 15 Personen (Juden-2 Mörde

31.7.41: Utena 256 Personen (235 Jd.16 Jüdinnen,2 lit.komm.Funktionäre,1 doppelter Raubmörder.

C4. Ereignismeldung No. 54, 16 August 1941, report pp. 16–17 — image 2 of 2



1.8.41: Ukmerge 300 Personen (254 Jd.42 Jüdinnen,2 lit.komm.Funktion.1 ehem.Bürgermeister v. Jonava, der die Stadt angezündet hatte,1 pol. Kommissar).

2.8.41: Kowno 209 Personen (171 Jd.74 Jüdinnen, 4 lit.komm.Funktionäre, darunter 1 amerk.Judenehepaar).

Das Kommando hat vom 22.7. - 3.8.1941

1 592 Personen liquidiert.

Am 1.August 1941 wurden die Polizeihilfsdienstkompanien von der Ordnungspolizei übernommen. Sie erhielten grüne Armbinden mit der Bezeichnung Schutzmannschaften.

In Kowno fiel erneut umfangreiches politisches Material an. Ausserdem wurde auch politisches Material in Dienststellen und Wohnungen sichergestellt.

Die Ghettoisierung der ca. 25 000 Kownoer Juden ist im vollen Gange. Insgesamt sind bisher gegen lo 000 Juden umgesiedelt worden. Das Adressbüro (amtliche Stelle der litauischen Sipo) hat unter deutscher Anleitung eine alle Kownoer Juden umfassende Kartei fertiggestellt. Darüber hinaus wird vom jüdischen Komitee in Kürze über die Finanzlage und berufsmässige Einsatzfähigkeit der einzelnen Juden berichtet werden.

Von der Einsatzgruppe B liegen keine Meldungen vor.

Einsatzgruppe C

Standort S h i t o m i r.

meldet:

Nach Bericht der Abwehr AOK. arbeitet russischer ND z.Zt. mit jüngeren, meist intelligenten Frauen

Why I wrote this report

My family's history is part of the history of Lithuanian Jews. I have studied the Holocaust in Lithuania for decades and I am a doctoral student in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. I wrote this report to document and make public what was done to the Jews of Kaunas, and by whom. In my assessment, the omissions, euphemisms and redefinitions identified here in the institutional texts examined minimize Lithuanian culpability. That is my opinion of those passages, stated separately from the findings.

Corrections

These findings are not exhaustive. I invite documented corrections and counterevidence at ggochin@gmail.com. I will consider every substantiated submission and publish dated corrections where they are justified.

Santrauka lietuviškai

Kaunas — miesto tyrimo ataskaita (1915–1945). 1941 m. birželio 22 d. Kaune gyveno apie 35 000 žydų; karą išgyveno mažiau nei 3000. [11, 20]

Ką darė lietuviai. Pirmąją karo savaitę ginkluoti lietuviai sukilėliai (baltaraiščiai) gatvėse ir namuose suiminėjo, mušė, plėšė, žemino ir žudė žydus. 1941 m. birželio 25–27 d. Vilijampolėje A. Klimaičio būrys ir K. Šimkaus bei B. Norkaus vadovaujamos ginkluotos grupės nužudė nuo 600 iki daugiau kaip 1000 žydų; rabinui Zalmanui Osovskiui buvo nupjauta galva. Birželio 27 d. „Lietūkio“ garaže baltaraiščiai geležiniais laužtuvais užmušė apie 50–70 žydų vyrų. Pogromus inicijavo vokiečių saugumo policija (F. W. Stahleckeris). [1, 2, 3, 4]

Laikinoji vyriausybė ir karo komendantas. 1941 m. birželio 27 d. Laikinoji vyriausybė užrašė, kad „nežiūrint visų priemonių, kurių reikia imtis prieš žydus“, reikia vengti viešų žydų egzekucijų, ir tame pačiame posėdyje nutarė remti ir finansuoti apsaugos batalioną. Birželio 30 d. ji pritarė žydų koncentracijos stovyklos steigimui ir pavedė tai viceministrui V. Švipai kartu su Kauno karo komendantu pulk. J. Bobeliu. Bobelis suformavo TDA batalioną, birželio 30 d. perdavė jo kuopą vokiečių saugumo policijai, lankėsi VII forte ir davė nurodymus sargybai. [1, 6, 7]

Fortai. VII forte 1941 m. liepos 4 ir 6 d. sušaudyti 2977 žydai; K. Jägeris užrašė, kad egzekucijas jo įsakymu vykdė „lietuvių partizanai“. VII forte lietuviai sargybiniai naktimis išsivesdavo jaunas žydes, jas iššagindavo ir nužudydavo. TDA bataliono 3-iosios kuopos karininkai J. Barzda, A. Dagys ir B. Norkus vadovavo žydų šaudymams ir juose dalyvavo VII, IV ir IX fortuose; LGGRTC žurnale A. Bubnys priskaičiuoja 104 šios kuopos šaulius. 1941 m. spalio 29 d. IX forte sušaudyti 9200 žydų, iš jų 4273 vaikai. [1, 8, 9, 11]

Getas ir turtas. 1941 m. liepos 10 d. Kauno komendanto ir miesto burmistro įsakymu Nr. 15 visi Kauno žydai iki rugpjūčio 15 d. privalėjo persikelti į Vilijampolę. 1941 m. liepos 25 d. komendantūroje vykęs tarpžinybinis pasitarimas (pirmininkas kpt. Kviecinskas, dalyvavo plk. Kalmantas, burmistras Palčiauskas, Saugumo departamento direktorius Reivytis, Policijos

departamento direktorius Taunys, Kauno policijos vadas Renigeris) uždraudė žydams parduoti, įkeisti ar mainyti turtą ir nutarė, kad paliktas turtas lieka „Kauno miesto savivaldybės žinioje“, o juo disponuoja burmistras, susitaręs su policijos vadu. JAV teismas nustatė, kad savivaldybė perėmė žydų turtą ir perskirstė nužudytųjų būstus. Laikinoji vyriausybė žydams neleido susigrąžinti nacionalizuotų namų, įmonių, laivų, indėlių ir vertybinių popierių. [7, 13, 15]

1942–1944 m. Lietuviai policininkai ir sargybiniai šaudė žydus prie geto tvoros ir darbo vietose (gyd. Zerachas Gerberis, aštuoniolikmetis Blecheris, Danyševskis) ir sulaikytus bėglius perduodavo gestapui. IX forto nuolatinę sargybą iki 1943 m. rugsėjo sudarė lietuviai. 1944 m. kovo vaikų akciją vykdė SS ir ukrainiečių pagalbiniai policininkai. [11, 16, 19]

Ką sako Lietuvos institucijos. VLE straipsniai „Kauno getas“ ir „žydų pogromai Kaune“ prieštarauja vienas kitam dėl to, ar pogromininkai buvo sukilėliai, ir dėl aukų skaičiaus. VLE fortų straipsniai, „Kauno istorija“ ir Kauno IX forto muziejus neįvardija nė vieno lietuvio vykdytojo, nors sovietų žudikus įvardija veikiamąja rūšimi. VLE biografijose neminimi J. Bobelio, A. Butkūno ir J. Ambrazevičiaus-Brazaičio 1941 m. vaidmenys. Kauno savivaldybė mini Birželio sukilimą ir pagerbia jo vadovus, neminėdama tą savaitę Kaune nužudytų žydų. LGGRTC 2000 m. karininkų sąraše teigiama, kad vokiečiai „įpainiojo“ karininkus į žudynes, kurias vėliau to paties centro žurnalas priskyrė jų įsakymams. Tikslūs aprašymai egzistuoja (VLE „Kauno getas“, VII forto istorija, A. Bubnio 2006 m. straipsnis); problema – ne žinių stoka, o netolygus jų naudojimas. [3, 20, 21, 29, 32, 33, 38]

Ko prašoma. LGGRTC prašoma surasti, ištirti ir paskelbti: tardymų bylas, kuriomis remiasi Barzdos, Dagio, Norkaus ir kitų karininkų veiksmų aprašymai; TDA bataliono įsakymus ir sąrašus; Kauno kalėjimo 1941–1942 m. registrus; savivaldybės turto ir būstų dokumentus; Stahleckerio skaičių perskirstymo šaltinius. VLE prašoma atsakyti į BOB-R2 klausimus ir suderinti savo straipsnius. Pataisymus ir priešingus įrodymus prašau siųsti adresu ggochin@gmail.com.

Kauno kalėjimo dokumentai leidžia atsekti lietuvių policijos ir sukilėlių suėmimus, saugumo įstaigų perdavimus ir kalėjimo administracijos darbą prieš išvežant žmones nužudyti. Bubnys nurodo Izraelio ir Giršo Raimonų suėmimą, 1941 m. birželio 28 d. Vilijampolės sukilėlių perdavimą, vėlesnius žydų sąrašus ir perkėlimus į IX fortą. Žudynėms atvežti žydai nebuvo įtraukiami į nuolatinių forto kalinių statistiką. Šis skirtumas turi būti aiškiai nurodytas šalia skelbiamų kalinių skaičių. [93]

IX forto administracijos vadovai buvo Juozas Sliesoraitis, Antanas Etneris, Jonas Milišiūnas ir Benediktas Kuzmickas. Jokimo Barkausko smurtas siejamas su konkrečiais tardymo parodymais ir jo tarnybos laikotarpiu. Kalėjimo administracijos, sargybos ir atvykstančių šaudymo padalinių funkcijos turi būti nustatytos pagal konkrečius dokumentus. [93]

1998 m. Bubnio straipsnio anotacijoje policijos dalyvavimo Holokauste tyrimas laikomas pakankamai išnagrinėtu ir nebeįdomiu. 2006 m. straipsnyje konstatuojamas nepakankamas tyrimas ir išeivijos nutylėjimas. LGGRTC turi paaiškinti šių publikacijų chronologiją bei genocido pradžios apibrėžimą ir pateikti redakcinius dokumentus. [8, 129]

Elchananas Elkesas po deportacijos mirė Landsberge 1944 m. spalio 17 d. Jo laiške žydų tarnyba Lietuvai gretinama su jų patirtu persekiojimu ir išdavyste. [128]

Kauno daliniai vyko žudyti žydų ir į kitus Lietuvos miestus bei Baltarusiją. Bubnys aprašo Reivyčio aplinkraštį, vietos policijos vykdytus suėmimus, Kauno 3-iosios kuopos keliones, šaudymus ir aukų turto pasisavinimą. Šių operacijų aukos nepridedamos prie Kaune nužudytųjų skaičiaus. Gimžausko tarnyba sieja Kauno ir Vilniaus saugumo policiją; konkrečius perdavimo nužudyti dokumentus reikia priskirti pagal vietą ir datą. [8, 133–135]

1998 m. straipsnio pradžioje Holokausto nusikaltimų tyrimas laikomas pakankamu, o angliškoje santraukoje policijos batalionų vaidmuo apibūdinamas kaip nedidelio skaičiaus karių dalyvavimas apsaugoje. To paties straipsnio tekste minima TDA kuopos veikla masinėse žudynėse. Šie konkretūs teiginiai lyginami su 2006 m. tyrimu. VII forto privatizavimo ir palaikų tvarkymo klausimai išdėstyti pagal 2016 m. žydų bendruomenės pareiškimą ir savivaldybės pranešimą. [8, 129, 136, 137]

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