LITHUANIA REGION

"The Main Gate" of the Kaunas ghetto; pen-and-ink drawing by survivor Esther Lurie, 1943.
USHMM WS #73488, COURTESY OF SARA MILO

LITHUANIA REGION (GENERALKOMMISSARIAT LITAUEN)

Pre-1939: Lithuania and parts of Poland; 1940–1941: Lithuanian SSR and parts of the Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Generalkommissariat Litauen, including part of the initial territory of Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien (transferred on April 1, 1942), Reichskommissariat Ostland; post-1991: Republic of Lithuania and part of Hrodna voblasts', Republic of Belarus

The German and local Lithuanian authorities established around 115 ghettos in Generalkommissariat Litauen. Of these, 38 were established in what became under the German civil administration, Gebiet Schaulen-Land; 25 in Gebiet Kauen-Land; and 22 in the area of Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, which was not formally split off from Gebiet Schaulen-Land until November 1941. In Gebiet Wilna-Land, as it existed initially in August 1941, there were 15 ghettos; another 15 ghettos, holding around 7,000 Jews, were added, however, when a strip of territory was included from Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien in April 1942.

Ghettoization began within a few days of the occupation in these regions and was effectively completed by the end of September 1941, when a remnant ghetto was formed in Święciany. The more than 80 ghettos and temporary holding camps established for Jews in a number of smaller Lithuanian towns and villages in the summer of 1941 were almost all liquidated within a few weeks or months by November 1941. The Telšiai ghetto outlasted most other short-lived ghettos by a few weeks, with the last inmates being shot at the end of December 1941. Effectively these sites were destruction ghettos, serving the purpose of concentrating the Jewish population prior to the killing Aktions. By January 1, 1942, the Germans and their Lithuanian collaborators had murdered more than 150,000 Jews in the territory of Generalkommissariat Litauen.

Many of the smaller temporary ghettos in Lithuania were established in synagogues, prayer houses, farm buildings, or barracks or on a few streets in the poorer section of town. The ghetto in Kaišiadorys, for example, consisted of a large grain storage building, where Jews from the town and other places nearby were held for two weeks under appalling living conditions.

From the end of 1941 until late 1943, most of the remaining Jews in Lithuania (ca. 43,000 people) were confined within the three main ghettos of Wilno, Kaunas, and Šiauliai. The only other ghetto that continued to exist until 1943 was the Święciany ghetto. However, some of the 15 ghettos added from Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien in April 1942, including those of Oszmiana, Michaliszki, and Soly, survived for another year. These ghettos were subordinated administratively to the Wilno ghetto and gradually consolidated in the fall of 1942. The Germans liquidated them in March and April of 1943, with some of the inmates being transferred to the Wilno ghetto or to labor camps in Lithuania, while several thousand were murdered at Ponary.

Including Jewish refugees from Poland who arrived following the September Campaign of 1939, more than 200,000 Jews were residing in Lithuania on the eve of the German occupation of the country in late June 1941. The Soviet deportation of people from Lithuania in 1940–1941 was blamed by many Lithuanians on the Jews, even though a considerable proportion of those deported were themselves Jewish. Following the German invasion, more than 8,000 Jews managed to flee into the interior of the Soviet Union, but many were turned back at the Latvian border or were overtaken by the rapid German advance. Some Jews fleeing on the roads were killed by Lithuanian partisan units, which were patrolling in search of Red Army stragglers.

In Lithuania, the arrival of German forces in late June 1941 was accompanied by the rapid establishment of a local Lithuanian administration and police forces, supported by the partisan units (often recruited from former Lithuanian riflemen's organizations [Šaulys]) that had formed on the Soviets' retreat. These interim organizations played an important role in the implementation of a wide range of anti-Jewish regulations and measures, including the ghettoization and mass murder of Jews in a number of Lithuanian towns.

Initially, Lithuania came under the German military administration, run mainly by the offices of the military commandants (Ortskommandanturen and Feldkommandanturen) based in the towns. However, from the start, units of Einsatzgruppe A (German Security Police) played a major role in security matters, especially the arrest and shooting of Jews. During the summer, authority was transferred to a German civil administration, headed by Generalkommissar Theodor Adrian von Renteln, which completed the process of ghettoization together with the local Lithuanian administration and police, subordinated to the German Gebietskommissare and the Kreischefs.

In the first weeks of occupation, Einsatzgruppe A, supported by SS, Order Police, Wehrmacht units, and Lithuanian auxiliaries, conducted a number of killing Aktions in Lithuania directed mainly against suspected Communists and adult male Jews accused of having supported Soviet rule.

At this time, orders were issued for Jews to wear yellow stars. Jews were strictly forbidden to leave their places of residence without an official permit, to engage in any form of business, to attend the market, or to use the sidewalk. Local authorities imposed additional restrictions that varied somewhat from place to place. Jewish stores were closed down; Jewish men were beaten, humiliated, and arrested; and Jewish homes were looted. Some synagogues were burned down shortly after the start of the German occupation.

Forced labor for Jews was also imposed quickly in most towns, often organized with the assistance of a Jewish Council (Judenrat). Jews were employed mainly on clearing rubble,

Mid-1930s portrait of Theodor Adrian von Renteln, Gebietskommissar Litauen.
USHMM/PHOTOGRAPHED FROM ERNST KIENAST (ED.), *DER DEUTSCHE REICHSTAG 1936: III. WAHLPERIODE NACH DEM 30. JANUAR 1933; MIT ZUSTIMMUNG DES HERRN REICHSTAGSPRÄSIDENTEN* (BERLIN: R. V. DECKER'S VERLAG, G. SCHENCK, 1936)

construction work, cleaning streets, and other public projects in the towns; sometimes they worked in agriculture or other labor outside the towns, such as road repairs and digging peat. In some places, local farmers could rent Jews as day laborers.

The process of ghettoization in Lithuania is relatively well documented in each of the four separate subdivisions (Gebiete). The earliest improvised ghettos were reportedly established at the end of June or early July 1941 as, for example, in Vyžuonos and Palanga. Planning for a ghetto in the city of Kaunas began in early July, and on August 7, orders were issued for the resettlement of Jews into ghettos in Kreis Kauen by August 15, the date set for closing the Kaunas ghetto. The same order also included instructions for the establishment of small units of Jewish Police (5 to 15 people) and Jewish Councils (of about 12 people) to manage the internal affairs of the ghettos.[1] In Garliava, in mid-August 1941, local policemen and partisans forced the Jews of the town and neighboring villages into the local synagogue, where they were confined for around two weeks in an improvised ghetto. The local chief of police then requested instructions from his superiors as to what should happen with the imprisoned Jews, as there were problems feeding them and no more suitable accommodations were available.[2]

Throughout Gebiet Kauen-Land, ghettos were set up somewhat sporadically over the period from mid-July until mid-September, when the ghetto in Lazdijai was established. This was also among the last ghettos to be liquidated in early November 1941. A number of ghettos in the area were liquidated in quick succession in early September 1941, including those in Vilkaviškis, Butrimonys, Alytus, and Merkinė. This intense wave of killings was coordinated by Einsatzkommando 3, assisted by Lithuanian policemen. As throughout Lithuania, however, the destruction often took place via a series of Aktions spread over several weeks. In Jonava, for example, 497 Jewish men and 55 Jewish women were shot on August 14, and only then were the remaining Jews, mostly women, children, and the elderly, confined to a remnant ghetto for two more

A map that accompanied a secret undated report on the mass murder of Jews by Einsatzgruppe A, submitted into evidence by US and British prosecution teams at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. The map is titled "Jewish Executions Carried Out by Einsatzgruppe A," stamped "Secret Reich Matter," and indicates that the Einsatzgruppe murdered 136,421 Jews in Lithuania. The Kauen (Kaunas) and Schaulen (Šiauliai) ghettos are also indicated.
USHMM WS #03550, COURTESY OF NARA

Jews move into the Kaunas ghetto, August 1941.
USHMM WS #1094, COURTESY OF GEORGE KADISH/ZVI KADUSHIN

weeks before they were shot in early September. Some ghettos, such as that in Krakės, were also used as collection points for Jews from a number of surrounding places, although in the case of Marijampolė the designation of the cavalry barracks as a "ghetto" was deliberately intended as a ruse to allay Jewish fears shortly before their destruction. The Jews from Kalvarija were brought here just two days before they were shot.

In Kreis Schaulen, the local Lithuanian authorities, in coordination with the German military commandant's office (Feldkommandantur), ordered on July 23 that all Jews should be moved into a locally established ghetto by August 15. Jews were also given until July 25 to wear the Star of David on their clothing.[3] The implementation of ghettoization, however, was delayed in most places until the German civil administration took over in August. In Jurbarkas, according to postwar testimony by the former chief of the police, "after the first shootings in June, mass arrests were carried out by . . . the police. The arrested Jewish men were transferred to two ghettos on Dariaus and Gireno Streets."[4] Another local policeman described conditions in one of the Jurbarkas ghettos: "The Jews with their children and the elderly were placed in the ghetto, which was a building surrounded by barbed wire. . . . There the Jews lived under prison conditions. The diet was poor, consisting of cabbage soup and a little bread. They were driven to work under guard and had to clean rubbish from the houses and the streets and do other disgusting and difficult work, with food being scarce."[5]

In mid-August 1941, Gebietskommissar Schaulen-Land Hans Gewecke ordered the establishment of Jewish ghettos in the larger towns of the Gebiet.[6] Subsequent local orders for Kreis Schaulen instructed that all Jews and half-Jews had to reside in ghettos and were obliged to be available for forced labor. All of their possessions were to be inventoried, including those items already in the hands of non-Jews. By August 30, all the Jews had to reside in enclosed ghettos, especially in Radviliškis, Joniškis, and Žagarė. The Jews could only take with them some clothes, household equipment, and up to 200 Reichsmark (RM) per family.[7]

In August 1941, the Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, Horst Wulff, also issued various instructions relating to the imminent confinement of Jews within ghettos. These were then passed down to the Kreischefs at the local level. On August 19–20, Wulff visited the Traken, Schwentschionys, and Wilna Kreise. Shortly thereafter, new restrictions were imposed on the purchase of food by Jews.[8] Then instructions were issued for Jews to be clearly segregated from non-Jews and for the locations of ghettos to be determined by September 5, 1941. Detailed instructions regarding the confiscation of all Jewish property soon followed.[9] Pursuant to these orders, the Jews of Gebiet Wilna-Land were concentrated in more than 10 short-lived ghettos, established mostly between late August and late September 1941.

On September 19, Wulff again urged the Kreischefs to isolate all Jews who were not yet residing in segregated districts. The Jews were to be placed behind barbed wire and guarded, and only those with a certificate from the German police would be permitted to leave the ghettos to go to work.

Mid-1930s portrait of Hans Gewecke, Gebietskommissar Schaulen.
USHMM/PHOTOGRAPHED FROM ERNST KIENAST (ED.), *DER DEUTSCHE REICHSTAG 1936: III. WAHLPERIODE NACH DEM 30. JANUAR 1933; MIT ZUSTIMMUNG DES HERRN REICHSTAGSPRÄSIDENTEN* (BERLIN: R. V. DECKER'S VERLAG, G. SCHENCK, 1936)

However, this final push to concentrate and isolate all Jews, accompanied by the seizure of their property, only served as a cover for the murder of nearly all the Jews of the Gebiet living outside the Wilno ghetto. The Jews of Kreis Wilna were then murdered at several different sites on September 20–22. Prior ghettoization could only be documented for the Jews of Mejszagoła.[10] The concentration and murder of Jews at the Veliučionys estate near Nowa Wilejka (Naujoji Vilnia), where some Jews resisted and a few managed to escape, occurred so rapidly (within a few days) that it is not possible to use the term *ghetto* for this killing site. In Kreis Traken, the Jews of Žiežmariai had already been ghettoized and murdered in the second half of August. Then the remaining Jews of the Kreis were concentrated in at least four ghettos before being murdered at two separate sites at the end of September 1941.

In Kreis Schwentschionys, temporary ghettos were set up in a number of towns by early September, in preparation for the transfer of the Jews to a site of concentration in Nowe Święciany at the end of September. Here several thousand Jews were crammed into an overcrowded barracks at a military camp (or shooting range) also known as the Poligon transit camp. Then on or around October 9, 1941, most of the Jews of the Kreis were shot, apart from a few hundred (mainly craftsmen and their families) preserved in the Święciany ghetto.

In what was subsequently to become Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, ghettoization mainly took place during July and August. In the area around Rokiškis the town authorities confined all the Jews in two separate ghettos in early July. They put the Jewish men into Count Przeździecki's stone stables, and the women and children up to the age of eight were moved to the Antanašė estate, between Rokiškis and Obeliai. Other Jews from the surrounding area were also brought to these two rural ghettos prior to their destruction. The men were shot first on August 15–16 and the women and children on around August 25.[11]

In contrast to most other regions, ghettoization in Lithuania was a very short-lived and improvised process that ran parallel to, and became an integral part of, the program of mass killing in the second half of 1941. Many of the makeshift places of confinement can hardly be described as ghettos, as they resembled more labor camps, prisons, or staging areas for the Jews, just prior to the mass shootings. However, the extensive use of the term *ghetto* to describe many of these camps in the orders of the German and Lithuanian administration, as well as in the testimonies of survivors and bystanders, necessitates the inclusion of many such improvised sites from Lithuania in this volume. Some, such as that in Ylakiai, are described in the immediate postwar Soviet Extraordinary State Commission (ChGK) reports as "ghettos."[12] Nonetheless, a number of similar sites have not been included, either because the period of incarceration was too short (less than 10 days), the descriptions indicated a labor or other type of camp, or there was simply insufficient information to establish that a ghetto existed. A few questionable cases have been included, which help to demonstrate the difficulties in making such decisions.

The Jews confined within the small, improvised regional ghettos suffered from severe overcrowding, inadequate food and clothing, unsanitary conditions, and often exposure to the elements. Little information is available concerning the existence of Jewish Councils or a Jewish Police in the smaller ghettos, but in some cases such structures are known to have existed. Jews in a number of short-lived ghettos continued to be exploited for forced labor and were subjected to beatings, robbery, and extortion. In the Mejszagoła, Vainutas, Šakiai, and other ghettos, Jewish women were sexually assaulted by the guards.

Einsatzgruppe A played a key role in organizing many of the Aktions, assisted by Lithuanian auxiliary forces. Prominent among the latter were the so-called Lithuanian Ypatingas Burys (special troops), which murdered tens of thousands of Jews at the Ponary killing site, and also the Rollkommando Hamann subordinated to Einsatzkommando 3, commanded by Karl Jäger. However, eyewitness descriptions from survivors also stress the key role played by local Lithuanian officials and partisan forces.

Jewish resistance in the smaller destruction ghettos consisted mainly of individual acts of defiance. Some Jews managed to escape from the ghettos when Lithuanian policemen turned a blind eye. Jews sometimes received warnings of forthcoming Aktions. However, hiding among the Lithuanian population was not easy, and despite selfless aid from individual Lithuanians, better chances of survival were offered by fleeing to other ghettos in Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien in the fall of 1941. Jews from the ghettos in Holszany and Oszmiana even managed to get transferred to Wołożyn and Mołodeczno, respectively, at the time these ghettos were transferred to Generalkommissariat Litauen in April 1942, as the Jews greatly feared coming under Lithuanian control. In 1942–1943, a number of Jews managed to escape from the Kaunas and Wilno ghettos, as well as from other ghettos and camps in Gebiet Wilna-Land, to join the Soviet partisans in the Belorussian forests.

In Wilno, 40,000 Jews were enclosed within two separate ghettos on September 6–7, 1941. These Jews were assaulted in a series of Aktions during the fall, including the liquidation of the small ghetto. At this time, there were around 17,500 "working Jews" in the Kaunas ghetto, following a similar series of Aktions there, and about 5,500 in the two sections of the Šiauliai ghetto.

From 1942 until the summer of 1943, there was a period of comparative quiet in these three main ghettos, as the Germans were in need of the labor they provided. The Kaunas and Wilno ghettos supplied labor to a number of German offices, including work at construction sites and some labor camps outside the ghetto. Conditions in these three larger ghettos resembled those in other large ghettos, such as Warsaw, Białystok, or Riga. The Jewish Councils ran a number of separate departments, including housing, food supply, health, and welfare to organize the ghettos' internal affairs. There were cultural activities, such as theater plays and concerts, the observance of religious holidays, and attempts to ameliorate conditions through smuggling and welfare efforts. Despite inevitable conflicts of interest between the Jewish Councils, the Jewish Police, and the various resistance movements, efforts at cooperation were at times attempted.

Resistance and flight to the partisans were strongest in the Wilno ghetto from the spring of 1943, following the murder in Ponary of several thousand Jews from the nearby smaller ghettos in early April. However, German fears of resistance getting out of hand in Wilno probably led to the liquidation of that ghetto in August and September 1943, with thousands of Jews being sent to the Vaivara camps in Estonia. At this time, responsibility for the Kaunas ghetto was transferred to the SS, and it was converted into a concentration camp. Its remaining labor outposts became subcamps of the Kauen main concentration camp, as was also the remnant of the Šiauliai ghetto. A few thousand survivors of the main Lithuanian ghettos ultimately entered the German concentration camp system from Kaunas and the camps in Estonia during the German retreat in 1944.

SOURCES Secondary works dealing with the fate of the Jews in the ghettos of Lithuania include: Yitzhak Arad, *Ghetto in Flames: The Struggle and Destruction of the Jews in Vilna in the Holocaust* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1982); Arūnas Bubnys, "Mažieji Lietuvos žydų getai ir laikinos izoliaviavimo stoyvyklos 1941–1943 metais," in *The Year Book of Lithuanian History, 1999* (Vilnius: Metai, 2000), pp. 151–179; Wolfgang Curilla, *Die deutsche Ordnungspolizei und der Holocaust im Baltikum und in Weissrussland 1941–1944* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006); Christoph Dieckmann, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944*, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011); Christoph Dieckmann and Saulius Suziedelis, *Persecution of Jews in Lithuania: Murders and Other Crimes Carried out during the First Days of the Nazi-Soviet War* (Vilnius: Margi rastai, 2006); Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003); Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009); Irena Guzenberg and Jevgenija Sedova, eds., *The Siauliai Ghetto: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2002); and U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, ed., *Hidden History of the Kovno Ghetto* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998).

Useful reference works include *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1968–2010); Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996); Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010); Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995); Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001); and Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984).

Relevant collections of testimonies and other primary sources include: B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970); B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 1 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1965); B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973); Wolfgang Benz, Konrad Kwiet, and Jürgen Matthäus, eds., *Einsatz im "Reichskommissariat Ostland": Dokumente zum Völkermord im Baltikum und in Weissrussland 1941–1944* (Berlin: Metropol, 1998); Rima Dulkiniene and Kerry Keys, eds., *With a Needle in the Heart: Memoirs of Former Prisoners of Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (Vilnius: Garnelis, 2003); Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman, *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002); Peter Klein, ed., *Die Einsatzgruppen in der besetzten Sowjetunion 1941/42* (Berlin: Hentrich, 1997); Herman Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939–1944* (New Haven, CT: YIVO, 2002); Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006); Joshua Rubenstein and Ilya Altman, eds., *The Unknown Black Book: The Holocaust in the German-Occupied Soviet Territories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press in association with USHMM, 2007); and Avraham Tory, *Surviving the Holocaust: The Kovno Ghetto Diary* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: BA-BL; BA-L; BA-MA; BLH; FVA; GARF; IfZ; LCVA; LVVA; LYA; MA; NARA; RGVA; USHMM; VHF; YIVO; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. LCVA, R 1534-1-193, p. 40, letter from chief of Babtai Police, August 11, 1941.
2. Ibid., R 683-2-2, pp. 8, 76, Garliava police chief enquiries, August 20 and 28, 1941, as cited by Dieckmann, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, section F.1.2.5.
3. LCVA, R 1099-1-1, p. 41, Kreischef in Šiauliai, Order no. 6, July 23, 1941.
4. LYA, B.14142/3, pp. 47–48, interrogation of Mykolas Levickas, November 24, 1948.
5. Ibid., B.16816, pp. 69–70, confrontation of P. Kairaitis with witness J. Keturauskas, June 21, 1948. The date on which the ghettos were established is not clear from these testimonies.
6. LCVA, R 1753-3-4, pp. 36–37, order of Gebietskommissar Schaulen-Land, August 14, 1941.
7. Ibid., R 1099-1-1, pp. 130, 134, 149, 156, correspondence of Kreischef in Šiauliai, August 1941, as cited by Dieckmann, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, section F.1.2.2.
8. LCVA, R 691-1-20, p. 76, letter of Kalendra to Kreischefs, August 21, 1941; Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes*, vol. 1, pp. 107–108.
9. LCVA, R 685-5-4, pp. 4, 9, letters of Gebietskommissar Wulff to Kalendra, August 23 and 28, 1941, as cited by Dieckmann, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, section F.1.2.6.
10. YVA, M-1/E/1689 (USHMM, RG-68.095), testimony of David Rudnik.
11. M. Bakalczuk-Felin, ed., *Yisker-bukh fun Rakishok un umgegnt* (Johannesburg: Rakisher Landsmanshaft of Johannesburg, 1952), pp. 383–390; RGVA, 500-1-25, pp. 111–112, report of Einsatzkommando 3 (Jäger report), December 1, 1941; USHMM, RG-50.473*0100, testimony of Elena Zalogaite, born 1928.
12. GARF, 7021-94-423, pp. 28–35.

Ghettos in the Lithuania Region

1941 - 1943

Borders as of 1942

AKMENĖ

Pre-1940: Akmenė (Yiddish: Akmian), town, Mažeikiai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Akmenė/Akmiane, uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Okmian, Kreis Moscheiken, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Akmenė, rajonas center, Šiauliai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Akmenė is located 50 kilometers (31 miles) west-northwest of Šiauliai. As of 1940, there were 25 to 30 Jewish families, or about 100 Jews, living in Akmenė.

On June 26, 1941, German armed forces captured the town. Lithuanian nationalist collaborators immediately arrested all the Jewish men and put them into the town's prison. On July 5–6, 1941, one of the few Germans present selected three Jews: the brothers Yosef and Faroush Yosselevich and a man named Shmidt. Assisted by 15 local Lithuanians, the Germans took these men out and shot them. The other Jewish men remained in the prison until early August. From available sources, it is not completely clear whether the Jewish women and children were imprisoned together with the men in July or rounded up only in early August.

On August 4, 1941, all the Jews of Akmenė were transported to three large grain silos on the banks of the Venta River near Mažeikiai. The escorting forces immediately took the men to the pits in the forest close to the Jewish cemetery, where German security forces and Lithuanian auxiliaries under the command of Lieutenant Vitkauska shot them together with the Jewish men from Mažeikiai and other nearby towns.[1] According to one account, the three rabbis from Akmenė, Mažeikiai, and Viekšniai donned their prayer shawls and phylacteries (tefillin) just prior to being shot. Kalman Maggid, the rabbi of Vekshne (Viekšniai), called out to the Jews not to show any signs of sadness to the Germans: "We must sanctify G-d. That is the loftiest, the holiest goal of a Jew. We must die as Jews, as holy people, as the members of G-d's people."[2]

The Jewish women and children from Akmenė were imprisoned together with the Jewish women and children of Mažeikiai and the surrounding area in the grain silos. On August 9, 1941, the Germans and their Lithuanian collaborators shot all these prisoners at the same site as the men.

SOURCES The following published sources contain information on the destruction of the Jews of Akmenė: *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), p. 240; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), p. 178; "Akmene," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), p. 155.

Relevant testimonies can be found in the following archives: LYA (e.g., 3377-55-111) and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/1637—Tzvi Rosenbaum testimony).

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. LYA, 3377-55-111, pp. 75–76, testimony of accused J., November 21, 1944. J. was present at the shootings of Jews in Mažeikiai in August 1941 and subsequently served in the police battalion led by Impulevicius.
2. As quoted by Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry*, p. 178.

ALSĖDŽIAI

Pre-1940: Alsėdžiai (Yiddish: Alshad), town, Telšiai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Alsėdžiai/Ol'siadi, Tel'shiai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Alsedziai, Kreis Telsche, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Alsėdžiai, Plungė rajonas, Telšiai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Alsėdžiai is located 13 kilometers (8 miles) west-northwest of Telšiai. According to the 1923 census, there were 199 Jews (19 percent of all inhabitants) living in the town. By June 1941, emigration had slightly decreased the number of Jews in Alsėdžiai.

German armed forces occupied the town on June 25, 1941. Immediately thereafter, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a police force, which soon introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures. For example, all Jews were registered; their valuables were confiscated; and they were forbidden to appear in public places or to associate in any way with non-Jewish Lithuanians. According to Jewish survivor Feiga Fishkin, within only a couple of days of the Germans' arrival, they told all the Jews to evacuate their houses and move into a ghetto, which consisted of just one street. Around 50 families lived together on this one street, with 3 or 4 families forced to share a house.[1]

Pinkas ha-kehilot reports the establishment of a temporary ghetto on July 5, 1941, when all the Jews were forced to move into the synagogue, the bathhouse, and two other houses. There was a roll call every morning at which the male Jews were subjected to humiliation and beatings by local antisemites. After the roll call, the Jewish men were assigned to various types of forced labor, such as weeding parks and cleaning latrines.

After only a few days in the ghetto, the Jews of Alsėdžiai were moved to the Viešvenai and Rainiai camps near Telšiai. Jews from other towns and villages of the Telšiai district were also placed in these camps. On July 15 and 16, 1941, all the Jewish men from these camps were taken out to be shot, while the women and children were transferred to the Geruliai camp. In late August 1941, about 400 young women were selected in the camp and moved to the Telšiai ghetto; Lithuanian police shot all the remaining women and children.

On December 24, 1941, 30 women and children from the Telšiai ghetto were shot at the home of the priest Dumbrauskas in Alsėdžiai as a symbolic reprisal against him, as in late June or early July of 1941 he had intervened to prevent the murder of the town's Jews. Dumbrauskas also helped to save the Torah scrolls from the Bet Midrash and subsequently returned

them to the family of Reb Yosef Ber Factor, the ritual slaughterer of Alsėdžiai, who managed to survive the German occupation by hiding with a Lithuanian farmer.

SOURCES Information regarding the persecution and murder of the Jews of Alsėdžiai can be found in the following publications: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 408; "Alsedziai," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); and "Alsedziai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 144–145.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: VHF (# 29324); and YVA.

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trans. Kathleen Luft

NOTE

1. VHF, # 29324, testimony of Feiga Fishkin.

ALYTUS

Pre-1940: Alytus (Yiddish: Olite), town, apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Alytus/Olita, uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Olita, Kreis center, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Alytus, rajonas and apskritis center, Republic of Lithuania

Alytus is located 56 kilometers (35 miles) south of Kaunas. In 1939, the Jewish population of the town was about 1,730, including a number of Jewish refugees from the Suwałki Region, which was annexed by Germany in 1939.[1]

German armed forces attacked the town on June 22, 1941. During the fighting, which lasted until June 24, 214 residences and 160 other buildings were destroyed by German bombardment.[2] A number of Jews died in the bombing and under the ruins, but on June 23, after two members of the Wehrmacht had been found killed near a mill, German soldiers shot the first civilians: 42 people, some of whom were Jews.[3]

Immediately after the occupation of the town, Lithuanian nationalist activists established local authorities. The commandant of the town (later the mayor) was Major of the General Staff Juozas Ivašauskas, and the head of the district was Captain Stepas Maliauskas. The head of the district police was Air Force Captain Antanas Audronis; the chief of the Lithuanian Security Police was Lieutenant of the Reserve Pranas Zenkevičius; and the head of the Lithuanian Criminal Police was Alfonsas Nykštaitis. At their disposal for the guarantee of order and security in the town of Alytus in July 1941 were 50 policemen and 100 Lithuanian partisans.[4] The newly created Lithuanian institutions were subordinated at first to the German military commandant (Hauptmann von der Marwitz); after August 5, when authority in Lithuania was transferred to a German civil administration, the Gebietskommissar Kauen-Land, SA-Oberführer Arnold Lentzen, assumed command.

According to Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, several prominent Jewish citizens, including Dr. Abramovich and Rav Levin, were arrested soon after the occupation; they were forced to work until near exhaustion, and then some were killed. On June 25, 1941, several hundred Jews were taken to Suwałki by Lithuanian nationalists for forced labor and killed. Other instances of violence occurred before the creation of the ghetto in Alytus—including the destruction of a synagogue after hundreds of Jews had been forced inside.

On July 1, 1941, the town mayor ordered the organization, as of July 5, of forced labor for Jewish males aged between 16 and 55 and Jewish females between 16 and 45.[5] The forced labor consisted of clearing the streets of rubble created by the bombardments.

On July 12, a series of new restrictions applying to Jews was announced: as of July 14, they had to wear a yellow Star of David on their clothing; they could not use the sidewalks; they were subject to a curfew between 8:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M.; they could shop only after 11:00 A.M.; they were prohibited from trading with non-Jews, while other Lithuanians were forbidden to sell food to the Jews; Jews also could not use the services of non-Jewish hired workers; and they were forbidden to swim in certain parts of the Memel River, to move from one place to another, or even to speak Yiddish on the telephone. They had to hand over radios, bicycles, and motorcycles, and they could not appear in public places in groups of more than two people.[6] On July 14, 1941, the German military commandant's office established a daily food ration for the Jews: 875 grams (3 ounces) of bread per week, 100 grams (3.5 ounces) of flour, and 75 grams (2.6 ounces) of groats.[7]

At the same time that these restrictions went into effect, the Lithuanian policemen and Lithuanian partisans began arresting and shooting Communists and Jews. In the entire Alytus district, before July 16, 1941, 82 Communists were shot, 389 arrests were made, and 345 more people were under investigation.[8] As a result of denunciations, in the town of Alytus alone, before the end of August 1941, 36 Communists, 9 members of the Red Army, and "a large number of Jews" were arrested.[9]

In late July and early August 1941, all the Jews of Alytus were placed in a ghetto, for which several streets in the poorest part of town were allocated. The ghetto contained between 1,300 and 1,500 people, including Jews from the surrounding area. Responsibility for maintaining order in the ghetto was assigned to the Jewish Council (Judenrat), which had three members (the lawyers Halperin and Salansky, as well as Kopl Nemunaitzky).[10] Information regarding living conditions in the ghetto remains scant, as very few of its inmates survived.

The liquidation of the ghetto in Alytus was carried out in several phases. First, on August 13, 1941, 617 men and 100 women were shot. From August 13 to August 31, 233 more Jews were shot, mainly people who were forced to come to Alytus

from neighboring localities. On September 9, 1941, the liquidation of the ghetto was completed: 1,279 people were shot (287 men, 640 women, and 352 children).[11] The victims also included Jews from nearby localities, around 1,000 in number, who not long before this Aktion had been forcibly driven into the town and were held for a short time in the yard of the prison.[12] The shootings were carried out in the Vidzgiris Forest by a detachment of Einsatzkommando 3, assisted by the Lithuanian Security Police under the leadership of Zenkevičius and 20 Lithuanian partisans led by Jonas Borevičius. Also participating in the last mass shooting was a Lithuanian platoon under the leadership of Air Force Lieutenant Bronius Norkus, which was subordinated to Einsatzkommando 3.[13]

Among the few Jews from Alytus who survived were some who received help from local Lithuanians. For example, two Lithuanians hid the Jewish girls Belkin and Chayah Kaplan throughout the occupation period. Another Lithuanian woman was imprisoned for helping Jews, as was a Lithuanian peasant, who was arrested and tortured for assisting Jews.[14]

SOURCES Information about the murder of the Jews in Alytus can be found in the following publications: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973); Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); "Alytus," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 140–143; and Inayet Erdin, *Deutsche Okkupationspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944 am Beispiel des Ortes Alytus* (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2006).

Documentation regarding the destruction of the Jews in Alytus can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-3); LCVA (R1436-1-29 and 38, R660-2-231); RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. "Alytus," in Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, p. 140.
2. LCVA, R 1436-1-29, p. 58.
3. Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje*, vol. 2, p. 389.
4. LCVA, R 1436-1-29, p. 14.
5. See ibid., R 1436-1-38, p. 115, order of the mayor of Alytus, July 1, 1941.
6. See ibid., p. 17, order of the chief of the Alytus district, July 12, 1941.
7. See ibid., pp. 18, 33, 126, orders of Ortskommandantur II/352, July 14, 1941, for the civilian population and civil authorities.
8. Ibid., R 1436-1-29, p. 69, report from Alytus, July 16, 1941, to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Provisional Government of Lithuania.
9. See short summary of the activity of the "self-defense force" in Alytus, August 31, 1941, ibid., R660-2-231, pp. 1–2.
10. "Alytus," in Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, p. 142.
11. Report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941, RGVA, 500-1-25, pp. 109–117, published in Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje*, vol. 2, pp. 131–140; B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970), pp. 231–241.
12. See the testimony of the former chief of the Lithuanian Criminal Police in Alytus, Alfonsas Nykštaitis, on June 28–29, 1960, published in Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), pp. 116–120.
13. See testimony of Nykštaitis, June 28–29, 1960, ibid.; and testimony of Borevičius, July 4, 1960, and April 21, 1961, published in Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje*, vol. 2, pp. 67–73.
14. "Alytus," in Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 142–143.

ANYKŠČIAI

Pre-1940: Anykščiai (Yiddish: Aniksht), town, Panevėžys apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Anykščiai/Anikshchiai, Utena uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Onikschten, Kreis Utena, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Anykščiai, rajonas center, Utena apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Anykščiai is located 101 kilometers (63 miles) northeast of Kaunas in the Svėtė River Valley. The Jewish population in 1940 was about 2,000.

On the first day of the German invasion (June 22, 1941), a young Jewish girl was raped near Anykščiai and murdered by local peasants. On June 24, the Soviet forces abandoned the town, leaving it without any local authority. German forces of Army Group North captured the town on June 26, 1941. In the first days following the German invasion, numerous refugees arrived in Anykščiai from Lithuanian territories to the west. On the arrival of German forces, Lithuanian nationalist partisans rounded up a number of Jews, including many refugees, and locked them up. Over the following days, the Lithuanian partisans beat and abused them, killing dozens of Jews, alleging that they were Communists. Then the remaining imprisoned Jews were either sent to Utena or released and sent back to their hometowns.[1]

In these first weeks, gangs of Lithuanians also broke into Jewish houses, which had been marked with the word *Jew*, plundering Jewish property and raping Jewish girls. After two weeks, the Jews were forced to abandon their homes and move into the Bet Midrash and its courtyard (the Shulhof Square). The people were squeezed together in a very confined area, and soon many decided to leave town, seeking shelter with peasant acquaintances in the surrounding area. However, most were recaptured by the Lithuanian partisans and forced to return. The German authorities imposed forced labor on the Jewish men, and the Lithuanian guards beat them as they went out to work.

In mid-July 1941, the local Jews were sent to an improvised open-air camp in the forest near some summer houses for a couple of weeks. From here, local farmers collected them daily for agricultural forced labor. At the end of July, the authorities sent the Jews back to the town, together with other Jews from the surrounding villages. On July 28, 1941, the Germans and their Lithuanian collaborators selected a group consisting mainly of Jewish men and took them to the sand hill known as Hare's Hill a short way outside the town. Some of the Jews were forced to dig a pit, while the others, including the rabbi of Anykščiai, Rabbi Kalman Yitzhak Kadeshwitz, had to do exercises to tire themselves out (reducing the chances of any resistance or escape). Then the Germans and their collaborators shot the Jewish men, throwing the bodies into the pit and burying them, including some who were only wounded.

The remaining Jews, mainly women and children, were subsequently imprisoned in an improvised and overcrowded ghetto in the town. The Jews were starving and begged the local inhabitants for food. On August 29, 1941, Lithuanian units under German authority shot the remaining 1,500 Jews of Anykščiai about 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) outside the town. Local Lithuanian nationalist activists (partisans) who participated in the mass murders also took the best houses in Anykščiai and other items of Jewish property for themselves.[2]

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Anykščiai during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: Joe Woolf, "Anyksciai," in *The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns*, available at www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/lithuania3/lit3; Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 151–155; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 181–184; and Rimantas Vanagas, *Nenusigręžk nuo savęs: Gyvieji tiltai* (Vilnius: Vyturys, 1995), pp. 45–52.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Anykščiai can be found in the following archives: GARF; LYA; USHMM (RG-50.473*0022 and *0056); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Testimony of V. Butenas, June 7, 1951, published in B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 310–311.

2. Vanagas, *Nenusigręžk nuo savęs*, pp. 47–48; USHMM, RG-50.473*0022 (oral history interview with Ona Balaisiene, April 20, 1998); and RG-50.473*0056 (oral history interview with Jonas Uzdonas, August 16, 2000).

ARIOGALA

Pre-1940: Ariogala (Yiddish: Eyragula or Ragala), town, Raseiniai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Eiragola, Kaunas uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Ariogala, Kreis Kedahneh, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Raseiniai rajonas, Kaunas apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Ariogala is located 48 kilometers (30 miles) northwest of Kaunas. According to the census of 1923, there were 456 Jews (38 percent of the total population) living in Ariogala.[1] Emigration in the 1930s slightly reduced the Jewish population.

German armed forces occupied the town as early as June 23, 1941. Immediately after the town's occupation, Lithuanian nationalists set up a local administration and a police force, which soon introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures. The Jews were used for various types of forced labor, during which the local antisemites subjected them to humiliations and beatings. Arrests and killing of Jews began, especially targeting those who had collaborated with the Soviet authorities in the period 1940–1941.

On July 30, 1941, a detachment of Einsatzkommando 3 shot 27 Jews and 11 Lithuanian Communists in Ariogala.[2] The remaining Jews were herded into a ghetto, and their property was stolen by Lithuanians. According to local witness Juozas Palšauskas, who was 18 years old in 1941, the ghetto existed for about one month. It was guarded by Lithuanian auxiliaries known as "white-stripers" for the armbands they wore. The Jews were not allowed to leave the ghetto or to have contacts with non-Jews, but Palšauskas recalls a local woman named Švelnienė, who brought food to the Jews in the ghetto.[3]

In about mid-August 1941, hundreds of Jews from Josvainiai also were brought into the Ariogala ghetto, escorted by Lithuanian collaborators.[4] A few days later, all the Jewish men (more than 200) were arrested in the ghetto, along with 80 Jewish women, who were suspected of collaboration with the Soviet authority in 1940–1941 and of "communist activity."[5] These men and women were placed in the synagogue and were the first in line to be shot. The shooting took place on August 30, 1941, and all the remaining Jews in the town were shot along with them. German records indicate that in total 662 people were shot: 207 men, 260 women, and 195 children. The shooting was carried out by members of the 3rd Company of the 1st (13th) Lithuanian Police Battalion, assisted by members of the local Lithuanian police.[6]

Some details of the mass shooting are given by the witness Palšauskas. Before they were taken away, the Jews were told that they would be transported to Palestine. They were taken out of the town on trucks escorted by only one German and about 30 Lithuanian collaborators. However, when the trucks turned into the forest, the Jews realized their fate, and there was a great uproar. Local Lithuanians were requisitioned to dig one or two large pits to form the mass grave. At the killing site, the Jews were made to undress down to their underwear. Then men were shot first, followed by the women and children. Two of the Jews attempted to escape, but both were chased down and killed. Those who were only wounded by the initial shots were finished off by machine guns fired into the pit. After the Aktion, the local collaborators involved celebrated for the rest of the day, drinking, singing, and firing off their

weapons. The property of the Jews was auctioned off the next day in Ariogala. Palšauskas says that he forbade his mother to buy any of the property, as he was still affected badly from witnessing the mass shooting.[7]

For participation in the murder of the Jews in Ariogala, as well as in other towns and villages of Lithuania (especially in Kaunas in July and October 1941), eight former policemen from the 3rd Company were sentenced to death in a trial held in Kaunas from September 27 to October 4, 1962.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Ariogala during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: "Ariogala," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); "Ariogala," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 135–138; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 54.

Documentation regarding the murder of the Jews of Ariogala can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-427); LCVA (R 683-2-2); LYA; RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM (RG-50.473*0114); and YVA.

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trans. Kathleen Luft

NOTES

1. "Ariogala," in Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, p. 135.
2. RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.
3. USHMM, RG-50.473*0114, testimony of Juozas Palšauskas, a Lithuanian resident of Ariogala, 2005.
4. Ibid.; LCVA, R 683-2-2, p. 30, report of police precinct in Josvainiai, August 14, 1941.
5. See report of police chief of Kedainiai district, August 17, 1941, in B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 138–139.
6. RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.
7. USHMM, RG-50.473*0114.

BABTAI

Pre-1940: Babtai (Yiddish: Bobt), town, Kaunas apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Kaunas uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kreis Schaken, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kaunas rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Babtai is located about 27 kilometers (17 miles) north-northwest of Kaunas. According to the 1923 population census, there were 153 Jews living in Babtai, comprising 20 percent of the total population. Owing to the migration of Jews away from the town in the 1920s and 1930s, the number of Jews had declined by June 1941.

Advance units of German Army Group North occupied Babtai on June 24–25, 1941. Immediately after the start of the occupation, the pre-1940 Lithuanian administration and police forces were restored. Justinas Janušauskas returned as head of the rural district, and Kazys Trebunivičius was appointed chief of police. A "partisan" squad commanded by Stanislovas Aniulis was organized from former riflemen (Šaulys), which took orders from the new Lithuanian administration.

During the first days of the occupation, a number of Russian citizens accused of being active Communists or Communist sympathizers were arrested, and several of them were shot. On July 17, 1941, a further Aktion took place. A detachment of Einsatzkommando 3 arrested and shot eight people, including six Jews, whom they also accused of being Communist activists.[1]

Largely on their own initiative, the new Lithuanian authorities introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were marked with the Star of David; were impressed into different forms of forced labor; and were subjected to robbery, assault, and humiliation by the local Lithuanian partisans. Jews were also forbidden to appear in public spaces or to have any relations with non-Jewish Lithuanians. On August 7, 1941, the head of the Kaunas District issued an order calling for the resettlement of Jews into ghettos by August 15. The same order also included instructions for the establishment of small Jewish police forces (5 to 15 people) and Jewish Councils (of 12 people) to manage the internal affairs of the ghettos. On August 11, the chief of the Babtai Rural Police reported that there were 93 Jews residing in the town.[2] A few days later, on secret instructions from V. Reivytis, 34 adult Jews were rounded up and incarcerated in the synagogues of Babtai. A number of male Jews from the nearby town of Vendžiogala, who had been arrested by Lithuanian activists while praying, were also brought to Babtai on carts and imprisoned in the synagogues.[3]

Apart from the above-mentioned order for the establishment of ghettos, the available sources do not otherwise refer to the imprisonment of the Jews in the Babtai synagogues as a ghetto; and it appears that not all of the Babtai Jews were confined together there. The initial aim of the arrests may have been rather that of hostage taking, as by August 25 the Jews had paid 9,000 rubles in response to a demand for "contributions."[4]

At the end of August 1941, local partisans and Lithuanian police from the area rounded up the Jews in Babtai and also those remaining in Vendžiogala and escorted them to a site in the Babtai Forest about 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) outside the town, near the Nevėžis River. On the morning of the Aktion, several dozen local men had been requisitioned to dig a ditch about 50 meters long, 1 meter wide, and 2 meters deep (164 by 3.3 by 6.6 feet) at the killing site. Two trucks carrying about 50 soldiers of the Lithuanian 3rd Company (1st Battalion) also arrived under the command of officers B. Norkus,

J. Barzda, and A. Dagys. The Jews were made to undress down to their underwear and were forced to go to the edge of the ditch, where the soldiers shot them in the back in groups. All the soldiers of the 3rd Company who arrived took turns shooting. Some women who refused to undress were separated from the rest and tortured before being shot. After the mass shooting, local people divided the clothes and more valuable items among themselves.[5] According to the report of Karl Jäger, 83 Jews (20 men, 41 women, and 22 children) from Babtai together with 252 Jews (42 men, 113 women, and 97 children) from Vendžiogala (in total, 335 people) were shot.[6] Very few Jews managed to escape from the roundup and survive to the end of the occupation.

For taking part in the murder of the Jews in Babtai and in other places in Lithuania, the Soviet authorities sentenced to death eight former policemen of the 3rd Company, following their trial in Kaunas in 1962. The mass grave for the Jews of Babtai is located about 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) outside the town on the right side of the road, in the direction of Memel, on the bank of the Nevėžis River. A memorial with an inscription in Hebrew has been placed to mark the site.

SOURCES Information on the persecution and murder of the Jews of Babtai during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); "Babtai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 160ff.; and Arūnas Bubnys, "The Holocaust in the Lithuanian Province in 1941: The Kaunas District," in D. Gaunt, P.A. Levine, and L. Palosuo, eds., *Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust: Belarus*, *Estonia*, *Latvia*, *Lithuania* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 299–301.

Documentation on the fate of the Jews of Babtai during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: GARF; LCVA (R 1534-1-190 and 193, R 683-2-2); LYA (K 1-58-47337/3); RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM; and YVA (M-1/Q-1198/57).

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 110, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.
2. LCVA, R 1534-1-193, p. 40, letter by the chief of Babtai Rural Police to the Kaunas District governor, August 11, 1941.
3. Ibid., R 683-2-2, pp. 20–89, reports by the chiefs of police stations to the Police Department. Sources differ on the number of Jews sent to Babtai from Vendžiogala: from 30 up to about 100.
4. Ibid., R 1534-1-190, p. 6, letter by the chief of Babtai Rural District to the Kaunas District governor, August 25, 1941.
5. LYA, K 1-58-47337/3, vol. 1, pp. 157–161, minutes of the interrogation of P. Matiukas, October 2, 1961.
6. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 113, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.

BATAKIAI

Pre-1940: Batakiai (Yiddish: Batok), village, Tauragė apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Taurage uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Botocken, Kreis Tauroggen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Batakiai, Tauragė rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Batakiai is located 19 kilometers (12 miles) northeast of Tauragė. According to the 1923 census, there were 88 Jews living in the village. In 1940, the Jewish community consisted of about 10 families. In the nearby village of Skaudvilė (Yiddish: Shkudvil), there were 1,017 Jews in 1923 and, according to one estimate, almost 2,000 Jews out of a total population of 2,800 in June 1941.[1]

German forces occupied the villages of Batakiai and Skaudvilė on June 22, 1941, the first day of their invasion of the USSR. Consequently, very few Jews were able to flee in time. As the German forces passed through Skaudvilė, many Jews sought shelter in the surrounding countryside. On their return home a few days later, some found their houses had been looted.

A German military commandant was based in Skaudvilė and a Lithuanian local administration was soon established there. Lithuanian partisans wearing white armbands, under the command of a man named Liepa in Skaudvilė, appeared on the streets acting as an auxiliary police force. One Jew, named Abromson, had managed to flee from Skaudvilė with the Soviets; a few days after the occupation, his remaining property was confiscated and taken away by truck on the orders of German officials.[2]

On July 16, 1941, an announcement was posted in Skaudvilė, signed by the German commandant and the partisan leader Liepa, which ordered all men over the age of 14 to appear at the horse market. Here the Lithuanians were separated from the Jews, and all the Jewish men, including Rabbi Rubinstein, were told that they were being sent on a labor assignment to the nearby village of Pužai. Nachum Levy was fortunate that his father instructed him to remain at home on this day, although he was over 14 years of age.[3]

About 300 Jewish men were escorted out of Skaudvilė on foot by a large group of Lithuanian partisans brandishing whips. In Pužai, they were joined in a storage building by small groups of men brought there from Batakiai and Upyna. Within three days, all the men gathered there were taken into the Pužai Forest and shot by a unit of German SS with machine guns, assisted by the Lithuanian partisans.

In Batakiai, the remaining Jewish women, children, and elderly persons were moved into barracks near the railroad line. Construction of the barracks was still incomplete, and many of them lacked a roof. A few days after the mass shooting, more than 100 horse-drawn wagons arrived in Skaudvilė and loaded up the remaining Jews of the town, together with much of their property. Tearful Jewish women gave a few of their more expensive items to neighbors they thought they

could trust, "asking not to be forgotten, and, if an opportunity should arise, to be helped in the future."[4]

The Jewish women, children, and old people from Skaudvilė, together with those from Upyna, were then crowded into three dilapidated barracks with the Batakiai Jews. Guarded by armed Lithuanian police, the Jews stayed in these barracks for about two months. Able-bodied women and adolescents were sent out every day to perform various kinds of work on Lithuanian farms in the vicinity. Conditions in the camp were filthy, and the Jews suffered from hunger. Nachum Levy recalls foraging for food: "During the day I would creep out to the neighboring villages and buy foodstuffs in exchange for clothing items and personal trinkets. I would set out with a few other boys, and we would barter with the locals. Another possibility was to buy food from the Lithuanian peasants who would bring farming products to the camp in horse wagons and sell them for money."[5]

On September 15, 1941,[6] this Jewish ghetto/camp was liquidated by shooting all of the prisoners, probably some 800 people, in the woods not far from Batakiai. The terrified and half-starved victims were forced to dig the grave and remove their clothing before they were shot. The shooting was carried out by members of the Lithuanian police and eight Gestapo officials from the Grenzpolizeiposten Laugszargen (Lauksargiai), headed by Kriminalsekretär Schwarz. Initially Schwarz suggested to SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans-Joachim Böhme, the head of the Tilsit Gestapo, that the barracks should be blown up along with the women and children inside, but this plan was rejected because the blasts could have damaged the nearby railroad station.[7]

After the war a number of Lithuanian partisans from Tauragė were tried by the Soviet authorities for their participation in the mass shooting of Jews in Batakiai. The massacre in Batakiai is mentioned also in the records of the trial conducted of Bernhard Fischer Schweder, Hans-Joachim Böhme, and a number of other defendants in Ulm in 1958 and in another German trial conducted against a member of the Lithuanian auxiliary forces in Frankfurt am Main in 1972.

SOURCES Information regarding the fate of the Jewish communities of Batakiai and Skaudvilė during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 169–171, 695–698; Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), pp. 130–135; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), p. 253; Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), p. 279; Urteil des Landgericht Ulm (Ks 2/57) v. 29.8.1958 gegen Böhme u.a., in *KZ-Verbrechen vor Deutschen Gerichten. Bd. II, Einsatzkommando Tilsit. Der Prozess zu Ulm* (Frankfurt/Main, 1966) and *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 15 (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 1976), Lfd. Nr. 465; Urteil des Landgericht Frankfurt/Main (4 Ks 2/71) v. 27.4.1972 gegen Juozas Sta., in *JuNS-V*, vol. 37 (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2007), Lfd. Nr. 773; and Nachum Levy, "How I Survived the Holocaust," available at shtetlinks.jewishgen.org.

Documentation on the persecution and murder of the Jews of Batakiai can be found in these archives: BA-L (e.g., B 162/14080); GARF (7021-94-429); LCVA; LYA (3377-55-2); MA (A.401); USHMM (RG-02.184); VHF (# 3247); and YVA (e.g., O-71/10 and 11).

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trans. Kathleen Luft

NOTES

1. "Everything Began in This Way," in Levinson, *The Shoah*, p. 135.
2. Ibid., p. 130.
3. Ibid., pp. 131–132; and Levy, "How I Survived the Holocaust."
4. "Everything Began in This Way," p. 134.
5. Levy, "How I Survived the Holocaust."
6. This date is given by Oshry, *The Annihilation*, p. 253, and is corroborated by Levy, "How I Survived the Holocaust," who escaped from the Batakiai camp on the eve of the Aktion. Other sources, e.g., Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, date the killing in August. Estimates for the number of victims vary between 300 and 1,800.
7. *JuNS-V*, vol. 15, Lfd. Nr. 465, pp. 215–216. A more precise description of the mass grave site can be found in *JuNS-V*, vol. 37, Lfd. Nr. 773, p. 213. See also, MA, A.401, testimony of Yoseph Ben-Yaakov, who managed to escape from the killing site.

BIRŽAI

Pre-1940: Biržai (Yiddish: Birzh), town, Panevėžys apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Biržai/Birzhai, uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Birsen, Kreis center, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post–1991: Biržai, rajonas center, Panevėžys apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Biržai is located 94 kilometers (58 miles) east-northeast of Šiauliai. In 1934, there were about 3,000 Jews in the town, making up just over one third of the population.

German troops captured Biržai on June 26, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalist activists formed a town administration and a local auxiliary police force, commanded by a man named Ignatavicius. A series of anti-Jewish measures were promptly imposed. They ordered the Jews to wear yellow Stars of David and forbade them to use the sidewalk. Jewish houses were marked with the letter *J*. Jews were dismissed from their jobs, and the authorities compelled them to perform forced labor in the course of which the Lithuanian overseers taunted and beat them.[1] The killing of individual Jews began immediately. Among the first victims was the rabbi, Rav Yehuda Leib Bernstein, who was shot by local Lithuanian antisemites who bore a personal grudge, as he had once reported them for breaking the windows in the synagogue. The community managed at some risk to bury him in the Jewish cemetery.

On July 26, 1941, the town authorities ordered all the Jews to move into a ghetto, for which purpose they had designated several small streets in the vicinity of the synagogue. Any Lithuanians living in this area were also forced to move out, exchanging houses with Jews who moved in. Barbed wire surrounded the area, and armed Lithuanian policemen guarded it. A lack of resources caused widespread hunger in the ghetto.

The Biržai ghetto existed for only about two weeks. On August 4, 1941, a group of about 500 Jewish men were sent out of the ghetto with spades, while the women, children, and elderly were locked up in the synagogue, guarded by Lithuanian auxiliary police (wearing white armbands). The men dug a ditch more than 30 meters long and 2 meters wide (98.4 by 6.6 feet), which took them three days. Then on August 8, German forces of Einsatzkommando 3, assisted by Lithuanian auxiliaries, surrounded the ghetto. The Jews were told that they would be sent to Palestine and were ordered to assemble. The men were marched out to the ditches first and were beaten and cursed on the way. Dr. Levin, a local physician, refused to go and was shot on the spot. They were taken to the ditches in the Astravas Forest, about 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) outside the town.[2]

About one hour later, the women and children were marched off in the same direction, waving good-bye to local acquaintances. At this time the sound of shooting could already be heard in the distance. Jews from the hospital were taken to the killing site on trucks.[3] At the ditch the Jews were made to undress and then shot in the graves in groups of 10, piled up on top of each other. Some of the Jews had their gold teeth ripped out of their mouths. The murderers drank heavily during the Aktion.[4] In total about 2,400 Jews (720 men, 780 women, and 900 children) were murdered. Several days later about 90 Lithuanians were shot into the same mass grave for alleged collaboration with the Soviets.[5] After the Aktion, local Lithuanians looted property from the empty ghetto, handing only the most valuable items on to the Germans. In September 1941, Einsatzgruppe A reported that Kreis Birsen was "cleansed of Jews" (*judenrein*).[6]

One Jewish girl, Helena Nosova, is known to have escaped from the murder Aktion and survived with the aid of local Lithuanians until the arrival of the Red Army. After the war, Jewish survivors and returnees to Biržai placed a memorial at the site of the mass killing.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jews of Biržai during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Henry Tabakin, *Only Two Remained* (Cleveland, OH: Private Edition, 1973); B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, ed., *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje (1941–1944) Dokumentų rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: "Mintis," 1973), pp. 115–118; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 184–186; Arūnas Bubnys, "Mazieji Lietuvos Zydu Getai Ir Laikinos Izoliaviavimo Stoyvyklos 1941–1943 Metais," in *The Year Book of Lithuanian History, 1999* (Vilnius: Metai, 2000), pp. 151–179, on p. 178; and Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 172–178 (an English translation of the article on Birzh [Biržai] by Yosef Rosin can also be found via jewishgen.org).

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Biržai can be found in the following archives: BA-BL (R 58/217) LYA (K 1-46-1294); TsGAMORF (335/5136/151, pp. 36–37); USHMM (RG-50.473*0099); and YVA.

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trans. Robert Haney

NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-50.473*0099, testimony of Regina Drevinskiene.
2. TsGAMORF, 335/5136/151, pp. 36–37.
3. USHMM, RG-50.473*0099.
4. TsGAMORF, 335/5136/151, pp. 36–37.
5. Ibid.
6. BA-BL, R 58/217, Ereignismeldung UdSSR no. 88, September 19, 1941. In this report Biržai is misspelled as Perzai, but it is correctly spelled in the Tätigkeits- und Lagebericht no. 5, for the second half of September; see Peter Klein, ed., *Die Einsatzgruppen in der besetzten Sowjetunion 1941/42* (Berlin: Hentrich, 1997), p. 203.

BUTRIMONYS

Pre-1940: Butrimonys (Yiddish: Butrimants), town, Alytus apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Eyshishkes uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kreis Olita, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post–1991: Alytus rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Butrimonys is located 69 kilometers (43 miles) south-southeast of Kaunas. In 1934, there were 948 Jews living in Butrimonys.

On June 23, 1941, the day after the start of the German invasion, Soviet forces abandoned Butrimonys, and units of the Wehrmacht seized the town. Immediately after the occupation began, Lithuanian nationalists established a town administration, and a militia or local police force was formed, composed of about 40 Lithuanians who were antisemitic. This force is also described in some sources as Lithuanian partisans. In Butrimonys, they were commanded by Leonardas Kasperiunas.[1]

The provisional Lithuanian administration in Butrimonys quickly implemented a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were marked with yellow stars, and special signs were put up on their houses. Jews were ordered to perform humiliating forced labor tasks without pay, such as cleaning toilets. The local partisans robbed and assaulted them. During the first two weeks, the partisans evicted all the Jews from the large houses on the market square and sent them to the side alleys. Many Jews were afraid even to go out on the street, as the Lithuanians and Germans could arrest or shoot them on the slightest pretext. Jews were not permitted to leave town except with special police permits, and non-Jews were forbidden to allow Jews into their homes or trade with them. According to one account, Jews in Butrimonys were not even permitted to wear shoes.[2]

On June 30, 1941, Lithuanian policemen carried out the first Aktion in Butrimonys. They arrested all remaining Communists and Soviet officials and imprisoned them. Shortly afterwards, the policemen released some of those who had been arrested. The remaining individuals, five Jewish men who worked as teachers and one Jewish woman, were taken to Alytus with a group of prisoners of war. On the way there, the Lithuanians murdered the Jewish woman and one of the teachers. All the others were shot in Alytus.[3] Sometime later, another six Jews were escorted to Alytus and shot.

During two separate Aktions on August 12 and August 22, 1941, 217 Jews from Butrimonys (including 32 women) were escorted to Alytus and shot there.[4] On their arrival in Alytus, some of the Jews were instructed by the Lithuanian police to write letters to their families asking them to send money, clothes, and food. In Butrimonys, a local Lithuanian named Vaitkevicius, among others, tried to use some of these letters to trick Jews into giving him the items, knowing full well that the intended recipients were dead. Riva Losanskaya recalls, however, that she learned from other neighbors that her father had already been murdered.

The Lithuanian police also exploited Jewish girls sexually. Pranas Senavaitis received permission from his boss, Kasperiunas, to "put to work" Asya, a 20-year-old Jewish girl of exceptional beauty. He continued periodic sexual relations with her until mid-November, when he shot her himself. Other Jewish women, handpicked by Kasperiunas for his "harem," were also among the few Jews temporarily spared from the mass shooting on September 9, 1941, along with the "leader of the ghetto," Izhak Miliunsky, his wife, and a few others.[5]

At the end of August, about 70 Jews from the nearby village of Punia were brought into Butrimonys and given temporary shelter. On the morning of Friday, August 29, 1941, the Lithuanian authorities again ordered all the Jews to assemble in the marketplace.[6] They conducted a further selection, choosing all the men (old and young) and some young children and younger women. Then they sent them to Alytus, where they were murdered. After the selection, they ordered the remaining Jews—the women and children—to leave their houses all over town and move into two streets, Tatarshe and Klidze. Those who lived outside this area moved in hurriedly, clutching their remaining bundles of belongings. This became the ghetto, which was guarded by the Lithuanian police. In the meantime, local Lithuanians, including a priest, helped themselves to confiscated Jewish furniture that had been put into storage near the synagogue.[7]

Over the next few days, more Jews from the villages of Stakliškes and Birštonas were forcibly resettled into the temporary ghetto in Butrimonys.[8] In the ghetto, the Jews now had no illusion as to their fate. Local Polish and Lithuanian neighbors offered to take their possessions into safekeeping, expecting that few, if any, would survive. On September 4, 1941, news arrived of the shooting of the remaining Jews of Jieznas (a few kilometers to the northwest) on the previous day. Over the next few days, as many as 80 Jews managed to leave the ghetto as some Lithuanian police turned a blind eye, being more intent on securing Jewish property. Most who left went into hiding with local peasants, although only a small proportion of them managed to survive until the end of the occupation.[9]

On September 6–8, 1941, some of the residents of Butrimonys and others from neighboring farms, under the direction of local authorities, dug two pits near the village of Klydzionys, about 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) from town. Then, on September 9, a church holiday, a detachment of German Security Police from Einsatzkommando 3, along with Lithuanian police, liquidated the ghetto. The Lithuanian police, assisted by local residents, rounded up the Jews and escorted them in a long column out of town. The Jews, shuffling to their deaths, were weak from hunger and trembling with fear. As the guard remained lax, Riva Losanskaya and her mother managed to escape into the forest just as the column was approaching its final destination. At the pits some Jews tore up their money, while others threw their clothes to peasants they knew in the watching crowd, to prevent the murderers from benefiting from their crime.[10] According to the Jäger report, on that day the Germans and their collaborators shot 740 Jews, including 67 men, 370 women, and 303 children.[11] Over the following weeks, Lithuanian policemen shot the few Jews (about 10 or 20) who remained.[12]

After the liquidation Aktion, the Lithuanian police continued to hunt down those Jews who had gone into hiding with local peasants, punishing also those non-Jews who concealed Jews. After one Polish family who hid Jews, the Golembowskis, was betrayed in 1942 by a greedy and vengeful relative, leading the Lithuanian police to arrest and kill the family's head, many other Jews were then turned out by their anxious protectors.[13]

In July 1944, the Red Army drove the Germans from the area. Shortly after the war, the few Jews who had survived locally, together with others who had returned from the Soviet interior, erected two memorials next to the mass graves, dedicated to the memory of the murdered Jews of the town. However, these monuments soon fell into disrepair, as no Jews remained in Butrimonys to look after them.

In 1961, the criminal affairs board of the Supreme Court of the Lithuanian SSR sentenced to death three former policemen, K. Stoškus, A. Jauneika, and I. Steponkavicius, who in 1941 had participated in the extermination of the Jews in Butrimonys. Kasperiunas/Kasperkis settled in Canada after the war. He died in Edmonton on April 18, 1974.

SOURCES Information about the elimination of the Jews in Butrimonys can be found in these publications: Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); N. Cohen, "The Destruction of the Jews of Butrimonys as Described in a Farewell Letter from a Local Jew," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 4:3 (1989): 357–375; Kh. Shneiderovich, "Dokument," in *Narod tvoi* (Jerusalem, 1991);

"Butrimonys," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas hakehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), p. 163; Arūnas Bubnys, "Mažieji Lietuvos žydų getai ir laikinos izoliaviavimo stoyvyklos 1941–1943 metais," in *The Year Book of Lithuanian History, 1999* (Vilnius: Metai, 2000), pp. 151–179, on pp. 172–173; and Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), pp. 297–298. There is also a relevant article titled "Dovanos Is Kanados" in *Svyturys* magazine (October 1962).

Published eyewitness testimonies can be found in the following books: Rima Dulkiniene and Kerry Keys, eds., *With a Needle in the Heart: Memoirs of Former Prisoners of Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (Vilnius: Garnelis, 2003), pp. 214–215; Laurence Rees, *The Nazis—A Warning from History* (New York: New Press, 1997), pp. 182–186; and Olga Zabludoff and Lily Poritz Miller, eds., *If I Forget Thee . . . The Destruction of the Shtetl Butrimantz* (Washington, DC: Remembrance Books, 1998), which also contains a list of the names of those who perished, together with some photographs.

Documents dealing with the persecution and murder of the Jews in Butrimonys can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-3); LYA (3377-55-92); RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM (Acc.2003.249.1); VHF; and YVA (e.g., M-33; E-146-2-8; O-33/1563).

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NOTES

1. YVA, E-146-2-8; an annotated English translation of this document has been published by Cohen, "The Destruction of the Jews of Butrimonys," pp. 357–375.
2. Ibid.; Zabludoff and Miller, *If I Forget Thee*, pp. 24–26; Dulkiniene and Keys, *With a Needle in the Heart*, pp. 214–215.
3. *"Esli zabudu . . ." Dokumental'naia povest' o gibeli Butrimonisa, evreiskogo mestechka v Litve* (Jerusalem, 1985), p. 37; Shneiderovich, "Dokument," p. 122.
4. Shneiderovich, "Dokument," pp. 123–124.
5. LYA, 3377-55-92; Zabludoff and Miller, *If I Forget Thee*, pp. 33, 49, 84; YVA, E-146-2-8.
6. Zabludoff and Miller, *If I Forget Thee*, p. 40.
7. YVA, E-146-2-8; Zabludoff and Miller, *If I Forget Thee*, pp. 40–42.
8. *"Esli zabudu . . ." Dokumental'naia povest'*, p. 54 (August 29, 1941); Shneiderovich, "Dokument," p. 122 (August 8, 1941).
9. YVA, E-146-2-8; Zabludoff and Miller, *If I Forget Thee*, p. 42.
10. Rees, *The Nazis—A Warning from History*, pp. 183–186.
11. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 113, report of Einsatzkommando No. 3 (Jäger report), December 1, 1941; B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 1 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1965), p. 135; B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970), p. 236.
12. Shneiderovich, "Dokument," pp. 130–131; LYA, 3377-55-92.
13. Zabludoff and Miller, *If I Forget Thee*, pp. 75–81, 88.

BYSTRZYCA

Pre-1939: Bystrzyca (Yiddish: Bistrits), village, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Bystritsa, Ostrovets raion, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Bystrzyca, initially Rayon Swir, Gebiet Wilejka, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then from April 1, 1942, Kreis Swir, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Bystrytsa, Astravets raen, Hrodna voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Bystrzyca is located 38 kilometers (24 miles) east-northeast of Wilno. In 1919, the Jewish population of the village was 154 (23 families).

German armed forces occupied the village on June 24, 1941. In the summer of 1941, a German military commandant's office (Ortskommandantur) governed Bystrzyca. In September 1941, authority was transferred to a German civil administration. Initially, Bystrzyca was part of Gebiet Wilejka in Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien.

In the summer and fall of 1941, the German authorities introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures in Bystrzyca: Jews were prohibited from leaving the limits of the village or from using the sidewalks; they were obliged to wear a yellow patch; and Jewish property, including agricultural land, was confiscated. The German authorities ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat).

According to survivor Saul Katz, who arrived in Bystrzyca during the summer of 1941, a ghetto was set up in the village within a few months, probably in the fall of 1941. The Jews lived in overcrowded conditions, with no running water. Each day a number of Jews were taken out of the ghetto to perform manual forced labor, mainly in agriculture, working land previously owned by Jews. The ghetto was only lightly guarded by a couple of local policemen, and the Jews managed to obtain some food by bartering their possessions with other local inhabitants. Katz received the impression that the Judenrat did its best to protect the Bystrzyca Jews but that it discriminated against newcomers. He left the ghetto during the winter of 1941–1942.[1]

Soon after the establishment of the ghetto, the German authorities imposed a fine of 50,000 rubles on the village's Jews. Subsequently the Germans demanded the surrender of all valuables, boots, and furs. Over time they also took furniture, bed linens, and whatever jewelry remained. The local policemen assigned as overseers constantly beat the Jewish laborers and displayed great cruelty. Groups of young Jews were sent to labor camps in Ostrowiec, about 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) distant; in the Lithuanian town of Vievis, about 150 kilometers (93 miles) away; and in other locations. A few of these people escaped into the forests, but most of the others were murdered when the camps were liquidated.

On April 1, 1942, the region including Bystrzyca was officially transferred from Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien to Generalkommissariat Litauen and became part of Gebiet Wilna-Land, headed by Gebietskommissar Horst Wulff. Among the restrictions imposed officially on the Jews living

in the ghettos in this region was a curfew from 7:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M., compulsory labor, and a prohibition on any personal or economic contacts with non-Jews.[2] According to the results of a census conducted by the Germans in May 1942, there were 194 Jews living in the Bystrzyca ghetto at that time.[3]

On October 27, 1942, the head of the Judenrat in Wilno, Jacob Gens, reported that the Germans had liquidated the ghettos in Bystrzyca and Kiemieliszki during the previous week. He regretted that no Jewish Police from the Vilna ghetto had been present, as "all the Jews were shot there without any distinction."[4] The list of victims prepared by the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission (ChGK) includes 153 names.[5] The mass shooting probably was carried out by a detachment of German Security Police from Wilno, assisted by the local police.

Some Jews evaded the roundup and found refuge with local farmers; of these, eight are known to have survived until the Red Army liberated Bystrzyca in the summer of 1944.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Bystrzyca during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: "Bystrzyca," in Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp. 175–176; Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 98; and Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany*, *Svir*, *Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners*, *1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), pp. 115–116, 414, 640.

Documentation regarding the murder of the Jews of Bystrzyca can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-89-11); MA (D.1357); VHF (e.g., # 43006); and YVA.

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trans. Kathleen Luft

NOTES

1. VHF, # 43006, testimony of Saul Katz.
2. Anordnung Betr.: Ghettoisierung der Juden, issued by Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, May 13, 1942, reproduced in Guzenberg et al., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany*, *Svir*, *Švenčionys Regions*, p. 130.
3. Ibid., pp. 115, 640.
4. See Jacob Gens's words at the meeting of the Judenrat in Wilno on October 27, 1942, MA, D.1357, published in I. Arad, ed., *Unichtozhenie evreev SSSR v gody nemetskoi okkupatsii (1941–1944): Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1991), p. 254.
5. GARF, 7021-89-11, pp. 10–13.

DARBĖNAI

Pre-1940: Darbėnai (Yiddish: Dorbian), *town*, *Kretinga apskritis*, *Lithuania; 1940–1941: Darbėnai/Darbenai*, *Kretinga uezd*, *Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Dorbianen*, *Kreis Kröttingen*, *Gebiet Schaulen-Land*, *Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Darbėnai*, *Kretinga rajonas*, *Klaipeda apskritis*, *Republic of Lithuania*

Darbėnai is located 133 kilometers (83 miles) west of Šiauliai, near the Baltic coast. On the eve of the German invasion, there were around 700 Jews living in Darbėnai.

On June 23, 1941, German forces occupied the town. On the same day, Lithuanian nationalists seized control of the local administration and formed a militia. Both these organizations later were subordinated to Hans Gewecke, the Gebietskommissar Schaulen-Land. Shortly after the Germans arrived, a fire broke out, and the Lithuanians blamed it on the Jews. In the ensuing chaos, Darbėnai's rabbi was beaten to death. After order was restored, the local administration introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures: Jews were required to perform forced labor and to wear the Star of David. The Jews were constantly beaten and harassed by local antisemites who also stole their property.

On June 29, the local Lithuanian militia rounded up 144 Jewish males aged 16 and older and shot them in the nearby woods. The remaining women and children were confined on the grounds of the old synagogue with little food or water and under hot and unsanitary conditions, guarded by members of the militia. On August 15, 1941, the chief of police in Darbėnai reported that he was holding 400 Jewish women and children in his "ghetto" and sought authority to hire contract policemen to guard it.[1]

This improvised ghetto was liquidated during the course of two further Aktions conducted during August and September. On August 24, 300 women and children were shot in the woods on the edge of town. On September 22 (Rosh Hashanah), the remaining prisoners were shot at the same site.[2] According to the testimony of a Jewish survivor, R.A. Šateliene, the local police (militia) played an active role in the Rosh Hashanah massacre.

When the Soviet authorities exhumed the mass graves in November 1944 following the German retreat, they found iron bars and wooden clubs that had been used to murder the Jews. Two memorials mark the site where the Jews of Darbėnai were murdered. The site is located on the edge of the forest, about 100 meters (328 feet) from the road, in the direction of Lazdininkai.

SOURCES Additional information on the fate of the Jews of Darbėnai during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: *Hitleriniai Žudikai Kretingoje* (Vilnius, 1960), pp. 36–40; and "Darbenai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), p. 209.

Documents dealing with the persecution and murder of the Jews of Darbėnai can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-422); LCVA (R 1665-2-36); and YVA.

Alexander Kruglov
trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. LCVA, R 1665-2-36, report of the chief of police in Darbėnai, August 15, 1941.
2. B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 395.

DARSŪNIŠKIS

Pre-1940: Darsūniškis (Yiddish: Darshunishok), village, Trakai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Darsūniškis/Darsunishkis, Trakai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Darsunischkis, Kreis Traken, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Darsūniškis, Kaišiadorys rajonas, Kaunas apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Darsūniškis is located 77 kilometers (48 miles) west-southwest of Wilno. According to the 1923 census, 120 Jews were living in Darsūniškis (14.7 percent of the total population). By June 1941, as a result of out-migration in the 1930s, the Jewish population had decreased significantly.

German armed forces occupied the village on June 24, 1941. Immediately afterwards, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and police force, which agitated against the Jewish population and implemented a series of anti-Jewish measures. Valuable items were confiscated from the Jews, and the Jews were prohibited from engaging in trade or other relations with non-Jews.

On August 7, 1941, the head of the Kaunas district ordered all Jews to be moved into ghettos by August 15.[1] Possibly in compliance with this order, or perhaps before this, all the Jews from Darsūniškis and neighboring villages, including those of Kruonis (Yiddish: Karon) and Pakuonis (Yiddish: Pakun), were resettled into a ghetto. The Jews were required to perform forced labor and were severely beaten by the Lithuanian guards.[2]

On August 15, 1941, the first killings took place; dozens of Jewish men were shot in the nearby Komenduliai Forest.[3] On August 28, 1941, the ghetto was liquidated. On that day, Einsatzkommando 3 shot 99 prisoners: 10 men, 69 women, and 20 children.[4] The killings were carried out in the Jewish cemetery in Darsūniškis. Some of the victims were reportedly buried alive. In 1991, a monument was placed at the site of the shooting.

SOURCES Information on the elimination of the Jews in Darsūniškis can be found in the following publications: Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); and "Darsuniskis," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 212–214. The ghetto in Darsūniškis is also mentioned in: Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 295; and *Rossiiskaia evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Rossiiskaia akademiia estestvennykh nauk, Nauchnyi fond "Evreiskaia entsiklopediia," "Epos," 2000), p. 368.

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NOTES

1. B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 290–291.
2. "Darsuniskis," in Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 213–214.
3. Ibid.
4. RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.

DAUGIELISZKI

Pre-1939: Daugieliszki (Yiddish: Daugelishok), village, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1940: Novye Dovgelishki, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1940–1941: Naujasis Daugėliškis, Sventsiany uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Daugielischki, Kreis Schwentschionys, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Naujasis Daugėliškis, Ignalina rajonas, Utena apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Daugieliszki, composed of two parts, new and old Daugieliszki, is located about 98 kilometers (61 miles) northeast of Wilno. In 1930, there were 175 Jews living in Daugieliszki, out of a total population of 350.

On the outbreak of war in September 1939, the Jews organized a self-defense force, which protected Jewish homes from being looted by hostile Christian peasants, until the arrival of the Red Army in the second half of the month.[1] Daugieliszki was initially part of the Belorussian SSR, but in 1940 it was transferred to the Lithuanian SSR.

Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, a few Jews fled with the Soviet forces. Others, especially the elderly, remained behind, not wanting to abandon their property. In the area, a Lithuanian partisan squad was formed, which soon started arresting suspected Communists, Komsomol members, and Soviet activists. According to Soviet postwar investigations, the Lithuanian partisans escorted 16 of the arrested Jews a few kilometers outside the village in the direction of Ignalino and then shot them. The yizkor book reports that among those shot were the parents of some of the younger Jews, who had fled with the Soviets.[2] In charge of the Lithuanian activists in Daugieliszki was Kazimierz Ziber.

The remaining Jews were then placed into a small ghetto in Daugieliszki.[3] Very little is known about conditions in the ghetto, as no survivor accounts have been located. At the end of September, probably on September 27, 1941, the local police and former Lithuanian partisans, all under the command of Juozas Reinys, assembled the Jews from the Daugieliszki ghetto and escorted them to an overcrowded barracks at the military camp (firing range), also known as the Poligon transit camp, located 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) outside Nowe Święciany.

The Jews were held in the Poligon camp for more than a week under atrocious conditions, together with thousands of Jews brought there from other places in the region. Disease broke out due to the overcrowding, and the Jews were forced to surrender their remaining valuables, supposedly as a ransom to save their lives.[4] Then on October 7–8, 1941, most of the Jews assembled in the Poligon camp were shot a short distance away in ditches prepared in the Baranower Forest.

The mass shooting was conducted by the German Security Police and the men of the Ypatingas Burys Lithuanian killing squad, assisted by 120 local Lithuanian policemen and former partisans. According to the report of Karl Jäger, the commander of Einsatzkommando 3, the 3,726 Jewish victims included 1,169 men, 1,840 women, and 717 children.[5] Other sources, however, indicate that as many as 6,000 to 8,000 people may have been killed at the site.[6]

During the war, the Jewish houses in Daugieliszki were burned down, leaving almost no trace of the village. Several Jews from Daugieliszki served with distinction in the Red Army and the Soviet partisans, including a few who died in battle.

SOURCES Relevant publications include Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-esrim ve-shalosh kehilot she-nehrevu be-ezor Svintsian* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Svintzian in Israel and the U.S., 1965), pp. 1170–1184; Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews in the Švenčionys, Oshmyany and Svir Regions (1941–1943)," in Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), pp. 83–118, here pp. 99–100; and Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.6. The ghetto in Daugieliszki is mentioned also in: Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 154; and Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 298.

Documentation regarding the murder of the Jews of Daugieliszki can be found in the following archives: LCVA; LYA (K 1-58-34823/3 and K 1-58-886/3); and RGVA (500-1-25).

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NOTES

1. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron . . . Svintsian*, pp. 1170, 1184.
2. LYA, K 1-58-34823/3, pp. 16 and verso, interrogation of D. Kuricka, May 12, 1945, as cited by Bubnys, "The Fate," p. 99; Kanc, *Sefer zikaron . . . Svintsian*, pp. 1172, 1184. This source indicates 18 victims.
3. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron . . . Svintsian*, p. 1172.
4. "Poligon in Yor 1941," in ibid., p. 5.
5. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 114, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941. This report gives October 9, 1941, as the date of the killing, but some other sources indicate it occurred on October 7–8, 1941.
6. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron . . . Svintsian*, p. 1376, gives the figure of 8,000 victims at the Poligon camp. Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," uses the phrase "at least 5,000."

DUKSZTY

Pre-1939: Dukszty (Yiddish: Duksht), village, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1940: Dūkštas, Zarasai apskritis, Lithuania SSR; 1940–1941: Dūkštas/Dukshtas, Zarasai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Dukschty, Kreis Ossersee, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Dūkštas, Ignalina rajonas, Utena apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Dukszty is located about 115 kilometers (72 miles) northeast of Wilno. Around 650 Jews were living in Dukszty on the outbreak of World War II, comprising two thirds of the population. Between September 1939 and June 1941, the inhabitants of the village witnessed two regime changes, as the region was first transferred from Polish to Lithuanian control in the fall of 1939, then came under Soviet rule in June 1940.

Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, in late June 1941, the Soviet authorities soon abandoned the village, and local Lithuanians began to plunder Jewish shops. German armed forces occupied Dukszty in early July 1941. A German commandant was officially in charge, but in practice local Lithuanians, led by Antoni Umbraz, the former owner of a bakery and a restaurant, seized control of local affairs. A few days after the Germans' arrival, the Lithuanians began to terrorize the Jews, murdering a number of them brutally in public. Large "contributions" were also demanded from the Jewish community, which soon exhausted nearly all its financial reserves.

At the end of August, the Jews were driven from their homes into two separate ghettos, being allowed to take with them only a very limited amount of their property. The more propertied Jews were put in a ghetto on the peninsula in Disner Lake, known as "Ostrov"; the rest were placed in the Jewish bathhouse and surrounding houses, known as "Azshutoviner." The Jews were completely isolated, and any contact with non-Jews was punishable by death. However, the Jews received help from some local inhabitants of Russian nationality, who brought food to them in the ghettos by various means. Every day men and women from the ghettos were escorted on foot several kilometers outside the village to work on the railway line.[1]

In early September, all the remaining Jews, with the exception of a few craftsmen, such as cobblers, were removed from the ghettos and incarcerated on the Antonove estate, about 3 kilometers (2 miles) outside of Dukszty. Here they were accommodated more or less in an open field, exposed to the wind and rain for nearly three weeks. They continued to be taken every day to the same work. The Lithuanian guards closely watched the Jewish workers, but some were still able to barter their remaining possessions for food with non-Jews, bribing the guards if necessary to bring it to their families on the Antonove estate. Living conditions for the craftsmen still in the village were somewhat less harsh.

On the evening of September 21, 1941, 16 Lithuanians arrived at the Antonove estate and informed the Jews that they would be moved to better conditions. The sick and small children were put on carts, and the remaining Jews were driven on foot, all to the north in the direction of Zarasai, without a specific destination being disclosed. After a Lithuanian guard murdered a newborn baby who was crying on one of the carts, one Jew attacked the guard, trying to strangle him. However, he was soon overpowered and shot by three other guards.

In the Degutsh Forest, about halfway to Zarasai, the Jews of Dukszty arrived at a collection point for the Jews from several places in the region. On the morning of September 22, the Germans and their Lithuanian collaborators separated the children from their parents in a field with machine guns

set up in each of the corners. From the description of a local forester, who observed events from a distance, the Jews were all shot as they attempted to run, mowed down by the machine guns. The craftsmen and their families from Dukszty were probably also included in the "last march" of the Dukszty Jews. At the end of the war, only one surviving Jewish family returned to live in the village.[2]

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish population of Dukszty during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-esrim ve-shalosh kehilot she-nehrevu be-ezor Svintsian* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Svintzian in Israel and the U.S., 1965), pp. 1328–1334; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 182.

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NOTES

1. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 1330.
2. Ibid., pp. 1331–1334.

DUSETOS

Pre-1940: Dusetos (Yiddish: Dusiat), town, Zarasai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Zarasai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kreis Ossersee, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Zarasai rajonas, Utena apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Dusetos is located 126 kilometers (78 miles) north-northeast of Wilno, on the Svėtė River not far from Lake Dusetos, for which the town was named. According to the 1923 census, 704 Jews were living in the town. As a result of out-migration in the 1920s and 1930s, the number of Jews in the town decreased significantly, to around 500 by 1939.

After Lithuania was annexed by the USSR in 1940, a Soviet regime was imposed. Private property was nationalized. Workers in various fields were organized into cooperatives (*artels*). The language of instruction in Jewish schools was changed from Hebrew to Yiddish. Zionist groups were disbanded, and Hebrew-language books were banished from the library.[1]

When the German army invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, a number of Jews fled from Dusetos into the Russian interior, alongside the retreating Red Army. Others, however, did not make it and were forced to return. Armed Lithuanian activists seized control of the town even before the arrival of the Germans. They greeted the advancing German troops with shouts of joy and white flowers on June 25, 1941. The Lithuanian activists established a local administration and police force. Local antisemites subjected the Jews to robbery, assault, and other forms of public denigration. Jews were also prohibited from walking in public places or having any relations with local non-Jews.

In early July 1941, all the Jews were driven out of their homes into an improvised ghetto "beyond the bridge." They were crammed into a number of houses from which the non-Jews had been evacuated, and there was great overcrowding. Each family was allocated one loaf of bread per day, and no one was permitted to leave the ghetto. This soon resulted in severe hunger among the Jews. Some were able to sneak out undetected and gather a few vegetables from the gardens of their former homes or from local Lithuanians to whom they had given property for safekeeping. Others, however, were not so lucky and were shot by the Lithuanian guards as they tried to cross the bridge or flee to the forest. The inmates of the ghetto suffered greatly at the hands of their Lithuanian captors. The vacated Jewish houses and property were seized by Lithuanians from the town and its vicinity. Over the course of several weeks, with little direct German supervision, the Lithuanian activists chased Jews with beatings and subjected them to forced labor in the town and on the farms.[2]

On August 26, 1941, the ghetto was liquidated. On that day, forces of Einsatzkommando 3, assisted by the Lithuanian police, escorted the Jews of Dusetos—the elderly and children on wagons and the others on foot—to the woods near the village of Diagučiai, a few kilometers to the southeast of Dusetos. There the Germans and their collaborators shot them, together with the Jews of Zarasai, and buried them in a long ditch, which had been dug by the Jewish victims themselves. A monument stands today at the site of the shootings. After the war, one of the local Lithuanian collaborators, Kuzmis, was tried and sentenced by the Soviet authorities.[3]

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews in Dusetos can be found in the following publications: Sara Weiss-Slep, ed., *Ayara Hayeta B'Lita; Dusiat B'Rei Hazichronot* (Tel Aviv: Society of Former Residents of Dusiat, 1969) (translations of part of this yizkor book are available at jewishgen.org); and Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 204–207.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Dusetos can be found in the following archives: BA-BL (R 70 SU/15); LYA; USHMM (RG-50.473*0028-29); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Weiss-Slep, *Ayara Hayeta B'Lita; Dusiat*, p. 207.
2. Ibid., pp. 207, 320, 359–360.
3. Ibid., pp. 207, 359–360; USHMM, RG-50.473*0029, testimony of Jonas Baura; BA-BL, R 70 SU/15, Jägerbericht, December 1, 1941.

ERŽVILKAS

Pre-1940: Eržvilkas (Yiddish: Erzhvilik), town, Tauragė apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Eržvilkas/Erzhvilkas, Taurage uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Erschwilki, Kreis Tauroggen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991:

Eržvilkas, Jurbarkas rajonas, Tauragė apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Eržvilkas is located 83 kilometers (52 miles) north-northwest of Kaunas. According to the 1923 census, Eržvilkas had a Jewish community of 222. Emigration in the 1930s reduced the Jewish population, and in mid-1941 there were only around 150 Jews living in Eržvilkas.

German forces occupied the small town on June 23, 1941. Many Jews fled the town at the time of the invasion. On their return a few days later, most found that their homes had been robbed. Immediately after the capture of Eržvilkas, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a partisan detachment. The new authorities introduced a number of anti-Jewish measures. All the Jews' valuables were confiscated. They were assigned to perform various types of forced labor, and they were subjected to humiliation and beatings by local antisemites. Jews were forbidden to appear in public places and to maintain relationships of any kind with other Lithuanians.

According to Alan Goldstein, a Jewish child survivor, shortly after the Germans arrived, all the Jews were herded initially into the synagogue and were told to pack their things. The Jews were then resettled to another street where the baths were located. Here about four houses were converted into a ghetto. Goldstein remembers the presence of the Germans in the town but recalls that it was the Lithuanian police who did all the dirty work.[1]

The ghetto was liquidated in mid-September 1941. The Jews were instructed to prepare for a three-day journey and were then taken out to the Griblauskis Forest, where they were shot. Goldstein's family received a tip-off from the wife of the chief of the Lithuanian police and were able to flee into the countryside in time.[2] There were 22 Jews from Eržvilkas who survived, hidden by Lithuanians.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Eržvilkas during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 157–158; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), pp. 368–369; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 195.

Documentation regarding the murder of the Jews of Eržvilkas can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-427); LCVA; LYA; VHF (# 44072); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 44072, testimony of Alan Goldstein, born 1935.
2. Ibid.

GARGŽDAI

Pre-1940: Gargždai (Yiddish: Gorzd), town, Kretinga apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Gargždai/Gargzhdai, Kretinga uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Garsden, Kreis Kröttingen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Gargždai, Klaipeda rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

The town of Gargždai is located roughly 200 kilometers (124 miles) northwest of Kaunas.

In 1939, Gargždai's Jewish community experienced a downturn when Germany annexed the Memel district, cutting off the town's strong economic ties with that region. As a result, some Jews, mostly younger members of the community, migrated to Kaunas in search of work, and the population declined from the 1923 figure of 1,049. On the eve of the German invasion in 1941, the community's population was estimated to be about 500, including some refugees from the neighboring Memel district.

German troops of the 61st Infantry Division captured Gargždai on June 22, 1941, following a brief but fierce battle with resisting People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) troops, which resulted in much of the town catching fire. Over the following 24 hours, men of the German Grenzpolizei (Border Police) in Memel, assisted by German customs officials, rounded up much of the town's population and selected out the male Jews, together with a few non-Jews suspected of being Communists. The other non-Jews were released, but the Jewish women and children were confined to a barn 300 meters (328 yards) east of the town. At this time, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and established a militia or "partisan" force. It appears that the Lithuanian auxiliaries did play some role in the arrest of the Jews. Both groups of Jews were then held captive for another day with little food and water.[1]

These arrests were conducted on instructions from the State Police office (Stapostelle) in Tilsit, commanded by SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans-Joachim Böhme, which had received authorization from the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) in Berlin on June 23 and 24 to conduct "pacification Aktions" against Jews and Communists inside a 25-kilometer-wide (15.5-mile-wide) strip of occupied Lithuania.

On June 24, 1941, a German detachment of the Stapostelle Tilsit, led by Böhme and reinforced by about 25 men of the Schutzpolizei from the Memel district, arrived in Gargždai in a number of vehicles. The male Jews were then escorted to an antitank ditch and forced to broaden and deepen it. Once they had completed this task, they were led in groups to the edge of the ditch and shot by members of the Schutzpolizei operating under Böhme's command. Some of the German policemen from the Memel area even knew the victims personally. One Jew called out to his former friend and neighbor, "Gustav, aim well!" After the shooting, some German policemen moved among the bodies, delivering the final blow to any survivors. After all 201 prisoners (including one woman, the wife of a Soviet commissar) had been shot,

the unit was distributed a ration of schnapps and retired to eat lunch.[2]

After the mass shooting, the surviving women and children were imprisoned in empty storehouses on the Aneliškiai Manor. This "ghetto" existed for slightly more than two months, during which time the adult women were required to work on forced labor projects. The children were so hungry that they had to pull up grass to eat.

At the beginning of August 1941, local Lithuanian officials in the Kretinga district met with Gestapo officials to discuss the situation of the remaining Jews. Gestapo official Behrendt recommended that the Lithuanians should murder the Jewish women and children, as they could not perform useful work and were "useless mouths." The Lithuanians wanted to obtain approval from the Lithuanian administration in Kaunas. After the chief of police in Kaunas replied that the decision was to be left to the local officials, plans were made for the Lithuanian forces to kill the remaining women and children in September 1941.[3]

The ghetto was liquidated between September 14 and 16, when the Lithuanian police and partisans wearing white armbands convoyed the remaining 200 women and children to the Vėžaitinė Forest, 11 kilometers (7 miles) outside the town, and shot them there. Some sources mention that the Lithuanians were drunk during the Aktion and that some of the victims, probably the children, were bludgeoned to death. According to the account in the yizkor book, the children were shot first and then the women two days later. The Aktion was conducted by Lithuanians under the command of Ildefonsas Lukauskas. In the postwar evidence of Bronnius Salyklis, no mention is made of Germans being present. Only one prisoner, Rachel Yomi, survived the mass shooting and was later hidden by a Lithuanian family. Following the liquidation of the ghetto, the Jewish cemetery was destroyed, along with the Jewish homes. The empty lots were used as farmland by residents of Gargždai.[4]

After the war, the Jewish community was not reconstituted in the town, and only a memorial to the victims remains to mark their former existence. On August 29, 1958, a court in Ulm, Germany, sentenced eight men to various terms of imprisonment for their participation in the murder of the Jews in Gargždai and other similar Aktions in the region during the summer of 1941. On February 5, 1963, a court in Dortmund, Germany, sentenced another former official of the Stapo Tilsit, Wilhelm B.W. Gerke, to three years and six months in prison for participating in the anti-Jewish Aktions on the Lithuanian border between June and September 1941.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Gargždai during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Y. Alperovitz, ed., *Sefer Gorzd (Lita); ayara be-hayeha u-be-hilayona* (Tel Aviv: Gorzd Society, 1980); "Gargzdai," in *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuanian Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 194–196; and "Gargzdai," Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 187–191.

Publications on the murder of the male Jews of Gargždai on June 24, 1941, include Jochen Tauber, "Garsden, 24. Juni 1941," *Annaberger Annalen*, no. 5 (1997): 117–134; Jürgen Matthäus, "Jenseits der Grenze: Die ersten Massenerschiessungen von Juden in Litauen (Juni–August 1941)," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, no. 44 (1996): 101–117; Konrad Kwiet, "Rehearsing for Murder: The Beginning of the Final Solution in Lithuania in June 1941," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 12:1 (Spring 1998): 3–26; and *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1976-2010), vol. 15, Lfd. Nr. 465, and vol. 19, Lfd. Nr. 547.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Gargždai can be found in the following archives: BA-L (B 162/2582-2615 and 14079-80); GARF (7021-94-422); RGVA (500-1-758); VHF (# 2514); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. *JuNS-V*, vol. 15 (1976), Lfd. Nr. 465, pp. 53–61, 210–211, and vol. 19, (1978) Lfd. Nr. 547, p. 13.
2. RGVA, 500-1-758, p. 2; *JuNS-V*, vol. 15, Lfd. Nr. 465, pp. 53–61.
3. *JuNS-V*, vol. 15, Lfd. Nr. 465, pp. 200–201.
4. Alperovitz, *Sefer Gorzd (Lita)*, English section, p. 38.

GARLIAVA

Pre-1940: Garliava (Yiddish: Gudleva), town, Kaunas apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Kaunas uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Godlewo, Kreis Kauen, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Garliava, Kaunas rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Garliava was originally located a few kilometers south of the city of Kaunas; later it was incorporated into the city as a suburb. According to the 1923 census, there were 311 Jews living there. Owing to the migration of a number of Jews abroad in the years before World War II, the Jewish population declined.

German armed forces occupied the city on June 24, 1941. Immediately afterwards, three Lithuanian partisan units were formed in the Garliava area, and they recruited approximately 120 men. Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and police force, which implemented a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were marked with the Star of David and were ordered to perform compulsory labor. They were also subjected to lootings and beatings by local antisemites and were prohibited from walking on the sidewalks or having any relations with the other Lithuanians.

On August 7, 1941, the Kaunas District governor issued an order calling for the resettlement of Jews into ghettos by August 15.[1] The Jews were also registered, and on August 12, 1941, the head of the Garliava Rural District reported to the Kaunas District governor that there were 285 Jews there.[2] Shortly after this, in mid-August 1941, local policemen and

partisans forced the Jews of Garliava and neighboring villages into the local synagogue, where they were confined for about two weeks in a form of "synagogue ghetto." Almost nothing is known about the conditions for the Jews in the synagogue, but clearly the sleeping and living arrangements were appalling.

On the morning of the liquidation Aktion, policemen and partisans drove several dozen Jewish men to a site close to the village of Rinkunai (just to the east of Garliava) and ordered them to dig a trench. When the Jews realized its purpose, they refused to carry out the work. The policemen then brought a group of Lithuanians from Garliava, who dug a ditch 60 meters long by 2 meters wide and 1.5 meters deep (197 by 7 by 5 feet).[3]

Men of the 3rd Company of the 1st (13th) Lithuanian Police Battalion arrived in Garliava in trucks on that day under the command of officers B. Norkus, J. Barzda, and A. Dagys. Local policemen and partisans drove the Jews out of the synagogue and escorted them to the prepared trench. The Jews were forced to surrender their possessions and remove their clothes and shoes. The Jewish men were shot first. They were lined up on the edge of the trench and shot from behind at a distance of several meters.[4] The mass shooting started in the afternoon and was completed by nightfall. By torchlight, men of the 3rd Company finished off some of the Jews who had only been wounded. Afterwards they returned to Garliava and drank alcohol in a pub before leaving for their barracks.[5]

According to the report of Karl Jäger, who was in charge of Einsatzkommando 3, the 247 Jews of Garliava (73 men, 113 women, and 61 children) were shot on a day between August 28 and September 2, 1941.[6] The witnesses do not mention the presence of any Germans, and it appears that the shootings were carried out by local policemen, partisans, and the men of the 3rd Company.

For their participation in the murder of the Jews in Garliava and other places in Lithuania, eight former policemen of the 3rd Company were sentenced to life in prison after court proceedings in Kaunas from September 27 to October 4, 1962.[7]

SOURCES Information on the extermination of the Jews in Garliava can be found in the following publications: Arūnas Bubnys, "The Holocaust in the Lithuanian Province in 1941: The Kaunas District," in D. Gaunt, P.A. Levine, and L. Palosuo, eds., *Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust: Belarus*, *Estonia*, *Latvia*, *Lithuania* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 283–312, here pp. 301–303; and Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 185–186.

Documentation on the fate of the Jews of Garliava during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: LCVA (R 1534-1-193); LYA (K 1-58-47337/3); RGVA (500-1-25); and YVA (O-3/3217 and 3239).

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NOTES

1. B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 1 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1965), pp. 290–291.
2. LCVA, R 1534-1-193, p. 17, letter by the head of Garliava Rural District to the Kaunas District governor, August 12, 1941.
3. LYA, K 1-58-47337/3, vol. 8, pp. 26–28, interrogation of J. Ivanauskas, March 20, 1962.
4. Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 36–38, interrogation of J. Vosyius, April 10, 1961.
5. Ibid., pp. 310–315, interrogation of J. Palubinskas, October 12, 1961.
6. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 113, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941 (the report spells it as Carliava).
7. *Sovetskaia Litva* (Vilnius), October 4, 1962.

GUDOGAJ

Pre-1939: Gudogaj, *village*, *Wilno województwo*, *Poland; 1939–1941: Gudogai*, *Vileika oblast'*, *Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Gudogaj*, *initially Rayon Aschmena*, *Gebiet Wilejka*, *Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien*, *then from April 1*, *1942*, *Kreis Aschmena*, *Gebiet Wilna-Land*, *Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Gudagai*, *Astravets raen*, *Hrodno voblasts'*, *Republic of Belarus*

Gudogaj is located about 45 kilometers (28 miles) east-southeast of Wilno. Very little information is available regarding the fate of the Jewish population in Gudogaj during the Holocaust. However, evidence of a ghetto there exists in the form of a census of Jews and Jewish laborers conducted by the Arbeitsamt (labor office) for Gebiet Wilna-Land in October 1942. According to this report, there were 104 Jewish men, women, and children at that time in the Gudogaj ghetto, of which 64 were deployed for labor tasks there.[1] The nature of this small ghetto may have been such that it was more of a labor camp, like the remnant ghetto in nearby Ostrowiec, but it appears also to have included the families of the workers.

Jewish survivor Julius Bastowski also mentions the existence of a ghetto in Gudogaj. He reports that the Jews were required to perform forced labor and that he observed trains passing through Gudogaj, which had a small railway station. The trains were packed with people jammed tightly together. The trains came from the southeast and were headed for Wilno. People on the trains were dying, and corpses were thrown out from the trains. Bastowski and parts of his family were assisted in obtaining false papers, and he managed to survive until the arrival of the Red Army in 1944.[2]

In October 1942, the German authorities in Generalkommissariat Litauen ordered the liquidation of the small ghettos in the region to the east of Wilno, concentrating their inhabitants in four ghettos: Oszmiana, Święciany, Michaliszki, and Soly. According to the diary of Kazimierz Sakowicz, Hirsh Berkowski, a Jew from Gudogaj, was among those murdered at Paneriai in April 1943.[3] Presumably some of the Jews from Gudogaj were transferred to Oszmiana in the fall of 1942 or thereafter and shared the fate of the Jews in the other ghettos of the region, some of whom were sent to Paneriai to be shot

at the time of the Oszmiana ghetto's liquidation in late March and early April 1943.[4]

SOURCES The existence of a ghetto in Gudogaj is mentioned in the following publication: Wolfgang Curilla, *Die deutsche Ordnungspolizei und der Holocaust im Baltikum und in Weissrussland 1941–1944* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006), p. 325 (spelled here as Gugadei).

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: LCVA (R 626-1-211); and VHF (# 1804, Julius Bastowski).

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NOTES

1. LCVA, R 626-1-211, p. 18, list of ghettos in Kreis Aschmena, October 1942.
2. VHF, # 1804, testimony of Julius Bastowski. Unfortunately this testimony is difficult to understand, so some reliance has been placed on the notes prepared by VHF indexers.
3. Kazimierz Sakowicz, *Ponary Diary, 1941–1943: A Bystander's Account of Mass Murder* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 79.
4. Yitzhak Arad, *Ghetto in Flames: The Struggle and Destruction of the Jews in Vilna in the Holocaust* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1982), pp. 359–362. Shalom Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorussia during World War II* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1998), p. 231, also mentions the murder of the Jews from "Gudagei" together with those from the Oszmiana ghetto but dates this erroneously in May 1943.

HODUCISZKI

Pre-1939: Hoduciszki (Yiddish: Haydutsishok), village, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1940: Godutishki, Vileika oblast'; Belorussian SSR; 1940–1941: Adutiškis/Adutishkis, Sventsiany uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Hoduciszki, Kreis Schwentschionys, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Adutiškis, Švenčionys rajonas, Vilnius apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Hoduciszki is located 97 kilometers (60 miles) east-northeast of Wilno. In 1921, there were 875 Jews living in Hoduciszki. By mid-1941, this number had probably declined somewhat.

Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, in late June 1941, a number of Jews attempted to flee from Hoduciszki, but they were prevented from escaping by Lithuanian collaborators of the Nazis. German armed forces occupied the village on July 1–2, 1941. As soon as the Germans arrived, the Lithuanian militia murdered around 200 Jews. A number of Jews from nearby villages also fled towards Hoduciszki, but some of these people were intercepted and killed.

In July 1941, a German military commandant's office (Ortskommandantur) governed the village. At this time a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established in Hoduciszki, which was required to provide a number of Jews daily for forced labor. In addition, the German authorities required Jews to wear markings bearing the Star of David and banned them from going outside the village limits.

In August 1941, authority was transferred to a German civil administration. Hoduciszki became part of Gebiet Wilna-Land within Generalkommissariat Litauen. On August 15, 1941, the German authorities established a ghetto in Hoduciszki. This timing roughly coincided with an order issued by Gebietskommissar Horst Wulff, on August 18, 1941, for the marking of the Jews and their confinement within ghettos and another order, issued by the police chief in Święciany, in mid-August, preparing for the transfer of the Jews of the Święciany subdistrict to the barracks near Nowe Święciany, about 10 kilometers (6 miles) northwest of Święciany, and the confiscation of their property.[1] The Jews of Hoduciszki were ordered to vacate their homes within two hours and were resettled into the run-down houses on Vidžių Street. Local Lithuanians then plundered the vacated Jewish houses. The overcrowding in the Hoduciszki ghetto was unbearable. Lithuanian policemen guarded its entrance.[2]

The village of Stojaciszki, located about 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) from Hoduciszki, was also subject to German regulations issued in Hoduciszki, which the Polish village elder passed on. The Jewish inhabitants in Stojaciszki became increasingly nervous by August 1941, as refugees from massacres elsewhere in Lithuania began to arrive there. On September 19, two policemen arrived from Hoduciszki to register all Jewish property. Then on September 26, four armed Lithuanian civilians informed the Jewish representative, Yisroel Gantovnik, that the Jews would all have to move to Nowe Święciany.[3] Apparently, the roughly 300 Jews from Stojaciszki were then brought briefly into the Hoduciszki ghetto at the end of September.

In late September 1941, the German authorities liquidated the Hoduciszki ghetto. The Jews were assembled, and the bulk of them (probably around 1,000 people) were escorted to Nowe Święciany. The sick and elderly Jews were placed on about 50 carts that were provided, and the rest of the Jews had to walk the roughly 40 kilometers (25 miles) on foot, guarded by Lithuanian policemen. A number of skilled craftsmen and their families were left behind in Hoduciszki at this time. On arrival in Nowe Święciany, the Jews were placed in an overcrowded barracks at a military camp (or shooting range) also known as the Poligon transit camp, located about 1.8 kilometers (1 mile) outside the town. During their brief stay in the barracks, the Jews suffered from hunger, thirst, abuse, and murder at the hands of the guards. Then, on or around October 9, 1941, the Jews from Hoduciszki were shot along with many other Jews from the region, who also had been assembled in these barracks.

A number of Jews managed to escape at the time of the roundup, during the transfer from Hoduciszki to Nowe Święciany, or possibly also from among the skilled workers that remained in Hoduciszki thereafter. On October 14, 1941, the head of Kreis Schwentschionys reported that the police in Hoduciszki had shot 19 Jews who had tried to escape.[4] Some of the Jews who escaped successfully from the Hoduciszki ghetto subsequently joined the anti-Nazi partisans, while others ended up in various camps and ghettos. Only a small

number managed to survive until the Red Army drove the Germans from the area in 1944.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish population of Hoduciszki during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: "Hoduciszki," in Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp. 277–280; "Adutishkis," in *Rossiiskaia Evreiskaia Entsiklopediia*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Rossiiskaia Akademiia Estestvennykh Nauk, Nauchnyi fond "Evreiskaiia Entsiklopediia," "Epos," 2000), p. 27; and Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews in the Švenčionys, Oshmyany and Svir Regions (1941–1943)," in Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), pp. 83–118, here p. 104.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH; GARF (7021-94-435); LCVA (e.g., R 685-5-4, R 1548-1-3); LYA (K 1-8-194); and YVA (e.g., O-71/169.1).

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NOTES

1. LCVA, R 685-5-4, p. 1, order of Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, August 18, 1941; and LYA, K 1-8-194, p. 280, protocol of B. Gruzdys—both as cited by Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," pp. 88–89.
2. Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," p. 104; Spector and Freundlich, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek*, pp. 277–280.
3. YVA, O-71/169.1, pp. 253–272, testimony of Zalman Yofe (born 1907), recorded by L. Koniuchovsky in April 1948, as cited by Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.6.
4. LCVA, R 1548-1-3, p. 522, letter by head of Kreis Schwentschionys to Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, October 14, 1941, as cited by Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," p. 104.

HOLSZANY

Pre-1939: Holszany (Yiddish: Olshan), village, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Gol'shany, Oshmiany raion, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Holschany, intially Rayon Aschmena, Gebiet Wilejka, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then from April 1, 1942, Kreis Aschmena, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Hal'shany, Ashmiany raen, Hrodna voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Holszany is located 70 kilometers (44 miles) southeast of Wilno. In 1921, there were about 800 Jews living in Holszany.[1]

German soldiers on motorcycles occupied the village on June 26, 1941, four days after their invasion of the USSR. A group of Jews tried to flee with the retreating Soviet forces, but the internal Soviet border with the Belorussian SSR remained closed, and most had to turn back. As soon as the Germans arrived, local peasants from the surrounding villages came to Holszany and started to loot the Soviet shops. German troops passing through also robbed Jewish homes and vandalized the synagogue, beating up a rabbi from another town whom they caught there.[2]

In the summer of 1941, a German military administration was in charge of the region. In September 1941, authority was transferred to a German civil administration. Holszany was part of Rayon Aschmena, which initially was included in Gebiet Wilejka within Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien. From April 1, 1942, until the occupation ended in early June 1944, Holszany was part of Gebiet Wilna-Land, within Generalkommissariat Litauen.

Upon the Germans' arrival, local non-Jews, mostly Polish, were recruited to form an auxiliary police force, initially headed by a brutal antisemite named Gan, which implemented the Germans' anti-Jewish measures. One policeman, named Petrusevich, was subsequently shot by the Germans for raping young Jewish girls.[3]

As recalled by survivor Selma Dunn, the Jews were required to make yellow patches in the form of a Star of David, which she embroidered onto the front and back of her clothing.[4] In addition, Jews were not permitted to use the sidewalks, and they were banned from having any relations with non-Jews. From the start, the local police drove Jewish men, women, and youths to perform forced labor, which included the humiliating job of removing the grass from between the cobblestones on the streets. Other tasks included road repairs, felling trees, harvesting potatoes, and clearing snow in winter.

The Germans also established a Jewish Council (Judenrat), headed by Rabbi Reuven Chadash, which registered the Jews and had to ensure that all the German demands and regulations were met. It also took over the task of assigning Jews to forced labor. To assist it in collecting items such as linen, clothing, and soap, which German officials in Oszmiana requested, the Judenrat recruited a unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) from among the Jewish youths. If the Jews could not find the required items, they purchased them illegally from non-Jews, as the Germans threatened to kill a number of Jews if their demands were not met.[5]

At the end of the summer or in the fall of 1941, probably around September, the *wójt* (local administrator) in Holszany passed on to the Judenrat German orders for the Jews to move into a ghetto.[6] Dunn recalls that the Jews were forced into the houses around the synagogue, from which non-Jews were evicted. The Jews were permitted to take with them only what they could carry in their hands. Her family shared a small house with another family. The ghetto was surrounded by a barbed-wire fence and was guarded by the local police.[7]

By the fall of 1941, a number of refugees from the massacres in Lithuania had arrived in Holszany, and some local Jews understood the likely fate that awaited them. For example, some Holszany Jews who had moved to Oszmiana were executed there in November 1941, on the orders of the head of the Gendarmerie, for not being properly registered.[8] The repeated German demands quickly impoverished the Jews; eventually they could no longer celebrate the Sabbath with a

special meal. The Jews, however, received some moral support from the local Polish Catholic priest, Chamski, who spoke out in his sermons against the murders of the Jews.[9] In the winter of 1941–1942, the Jews were also required to surrender their fur items of clothing for the use of the German army. The Jews were able to sneak through the wire and barter their remaining possessions with local non-Jews for food, as some of the local policemen occasionally turned a blind eye.

On April 1, 1942, the Germans transferred a strip of territory including most of Rayon Aschmena from Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien to Gebiet Wilna-Land. At the same time, Lithuanians came in and took over the local administration and local police. Knowing the fate of the majority of the Jews in Lithuania, the Holszany Jews feared for their lives. It was probably around this time that Rabbi Reuven Chadash took a group of around 150 Jews to the ghetto in Wołożyn, which remained within Gebiet Wilejka in Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, although the precise details of this transfer remain unknown. Unfortunately the Holszany Jews in Wołożyn were nearly all murdered in a brutal Aktion there on May 10, 1942.[10]

On May 13, 1942, the Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, Horst Wulff, issued instructions concerning the ghettoization of the Jews, which stressed that if any Jews left the ghetto illegally, stern reprisals would be taken against those Jews who remained.[11] Despite the desire to escape, most Jews were concerned not to give the Germans any reason to liquidate the ghetto.

In the summer of 1942, around 200 young people from Holszany were sent to various forced labor camps, especially to the camp in Žiežmariai in Lithuania. Dunn was in the second transport to Žiežmariai, where she joined her sister, only about two weeks after the first transport left.[12] According to Nechama Schneider, also sent to Žiežmariai, the transfer took place in trucks, and she spent one night on her way in the Oszmiana synagogue, where Jews from other ghettos were probably added to the transport.[13]

At the end of August 1942, according to a German Labor Office census, there were 450 Jews remaining in the Holszany ghetto, of whom 210 (133 men and 77 women) were assigned to specific labor tasks. Among the various labor assignments, there were 31 Jews performing forestry work, 15 men employed at the sawmill, 25 working on an estate, 24 cleaning the streets, 20 craftsmen, and 6 Jewish policemen.[14]

The ghetto was liquidated in October 1942, when the remaining Jews in the Holszany ghetto were resettled to the Oszmiana ghetto, which now came under the administration of the Wilno ghetto, where the Judenrat was headed by Jacob Gens.[15] When the Oszmiana ghetto was liquidated in late March and early April 1943, the Jews of Holszany shared the fate of all the Jews collected there. Those Jews deemed unfit for work were deported to Ponary and shot, while those able to work were moved to various labor camps in Lithuania.[16]

Of the roughly 800 Jews living in pre-war Holszany, only about 30 are known to have survived, mostly from among the youths sent to the Žiežmariai camp. After the village was liberated in 1944, several Jewish families returned, but by the 1950s they had moved to Poland and then from there to Israel or the United States.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Holszany during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: Shepsl Kaplan, "In di yorn fun der deytsher yidnoysrotung," in *Lebn un umkum fun Olshan* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Olshan in Israel, 1965), pp. 169–190; M. Gelbart, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kahilat Oshmana* (Tel Aviv: Oshmaner Organization in Israel and Oshmaner Society in the USA, 1969); "Gol'shany," in *Rossiiskaia Evreiskaia Entsiklopediia*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Rossiiskaia Akademiia Estestvennykh Nauk, Nauchnyi fond "Evreiskaia Entsiklopediia," "Epos," 2000), p. 323; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 523; and "Holszany," in Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp. 283–286.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/3626); GARF (7021-89-12); LCVA (e.g., R 626-1-211); VHF (e.g., # 6073, 13915, 28552, and 45832); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Spector and Freundlich, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek*, p. 283.
2. Kaplan, "In di yorn," pp. 170–171.
3. Ibid., p. 173.
4. VHF, # 28552, testimony of Selma Dunn.
5. Ibid.; Kaplan, "In di yorn," pp. 171–176; VHF, # 13915, testimony of Rita York.
6. AŻIH, 301/3626, testimony of Idel Kozłowski, dates it around two months after the arrival of the Germans.
7. VHF, # 28552.
8. Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 563. This volume, however, does not include an entry for the Holszany ghetto.
9. Kaplan, "In di yorn," pp. 175–177.
10. Eliezer Leoni, ed., *Wolozin: The Book of the City and of the Etz Hayyim Yeshiva* (Tel Aviv: Wolozhin Landsleit Associations, 1970), p. 537.
11. Anordnung Betr.: Ghettoisierung der Juden, issued by Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, May 13, 1942, reproduced in Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), p. 130.
12. VHF, # 28552.
13. Ibid., # 45832, testimony of Nechama Schneider.
14. LCVA, R 626-1-211, pp. 18, 28, list of ghettos in Kreis Aschmena, n.d., and list of Jews working in the Holszany ghetto, August 28, 1942.
15. Ibid., p. 18, list of ghettos in Kreis Aschmena, n.d., includes the comment that by October 31, 1942, the smaller

ghettos had been liquidated and the Jews accommodated in the Oschmiana ghetto.

16. Spector and Freundlich, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek*, pp. 285–286; and Kaplan, "In di yorn," pp. 186–190.

IGNALINO

Pre-1939: Ignalino (Yiddish: Ignaline), village, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1940: Ignalina, Švenčionys apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Ignalina/Ignalino, Sventsiany uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Ignalina, Kreis Schwentschionys, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: rajonas center, Utena apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Ignalino is located 84 kilometers (52 miles) north-northeast of Wilno. In 1925, there were 593 Jews living in Ignalino out of a total population of 773. On the outbreak of war in 1939, there were approximately 800 Jews residing there.[1]

Between September 1939 and June 1941, the inhabitants of Ignalino witnessed two regime changes, as the region was first transferred from Polish to Lithuanian control in the fall of 1939, then came under Soviet rule in June 1940. At the start of the German invasion in June 1941, very few Jews managed to flee the village. German armed forces occupied the town at the end of June.

In the first days of the German-Soviet war, a Lithuanian partisan squad of 20 to 30 men, headed by Jonas Liutkevičius, was formed in the area, which subsequently became an auxiliary police unit. The Lithuanian partisans, who wore white armbands, participated in the widespread plunder of Jewish property. The partisans also soon started to arrest Communists and Jews. Most of those arrested were taken into the forest near Lake Ilgio, where they were shot and buried. According to the research of Arūnas Bubnys, based on Soviet trial records, the partisans shot 14 Red Army soldiers and 26 Communist activists in late June 1941, then another group of 30 men and women, most of them Jews, in the first or second week of July. Soviet postwar exhumations uncovered four mass graves, containing the bodies of 32 civilians and 25 soldiers. During July 1941, in the area around Ignalino, a group of 10 Jewish men, women, and children was murdered in the village of Maksimonys and another 10 between the lakes of Mekšrinis and Pelėdinis.[2]

In early July 1941, units of the German army passed through the village, humiliating the Jews; but they soon moved on to the east. According to the recollections of Jewish survivor Tevye Solomyak, a new Lithuanian local administration, headed by Izidorius Tijūlenis, assisted by police chief Vladas Žilėnas and other partisans, administered Ignalino on behalf of the Germans. The new authorities issued a series of anti-Jewish regulations. Jews were ordered to wear yellow patches, they were prohibited from using the sidewalks or having any contacts with non-Jews, and they were confined to the village. Within a few weeks a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was appointed, which included Dovid Soloveytzik, Ele Gilinsky, Gershon Kideshman, and Ruven Kagan among its members.[3] The Jews were also required to perform forced labor, including especially degrading tasks during which they were beaten by the Lithuanian guards.

In August 1941, authority in the region was officially transferred to the German civil administration, and Ignalino became part of Gebiet Wilna-Land, within Generalkommissariat Litauen. On August 18, 1941, Gebietskommissar Horst Wulff issued an order for the confinement of Jews within ghettos; another order, issued by the police chief in Święciany, in mid-August, instructed the local authorities to prepare for the transfer of the Jews of the Święciany subdistrict to the barracks near Nowe Święciany, about 10 kilometers (6 miles) northwest of Święciany, and for the confiscation of their property.[4]

According to the research of Christoph Dieckmann, based mainly on the testimony of Tevye Solomyak, on September 5, the Jews of Ignalino were moved into an open ghetto, which was located on Gavėnų Street (later Ateities Street), one of the poorest sections of town. The Jews were permitted to leave the ghetto for only one hour each day other than for forced labor. The Jews lived in overcrowded conditions, and there was very little food for the Jews, many of whom worked repairing the railway lines.[5] Estimates of the number of Jews in the ghetto vary between 400 and 1,200, but probably there were around 700 Jews living there. Even after the move into the ghetto, the Lithuanians continued to plunder the impoverished Jews; on one occasion, aged Rabbi Aaron Hyatt was beaten severely by a pillaging Lithuanian.[6]

During September, reports of the mass murders in other Lithuanian towns started to arrive from Utena, Ligmainai, and Dukszty. Allegedly the Judenrat was warned on September 20, 1941, that something terrible was about to happen. However, the Judenrat did not pass on this warning throughout the ghetto, for fear of spreading panic.[7] Shortly before September 26, the Jews had to pay a "contribution" of 21,000 rubles to the Lithuanian authorities. By now armed Lithuanian partisans were guarding the ghetto perimeter to prevent any escapes. It is estimated that about 80 Jews, including the families of some Judenrat members, managed to flee just before or during the ghetto's liquidation, mainly to other ghettos in neighboring Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien.[8]

In late September 1941, the Germans liquidated the Ignalino ghetto. Uniformed Germans and armed Lithuanian policemen entered the ghetto to assemble the Jews at a central point. During the roundup some Lithuanians acted with great cruelty, killing a small child and raping a woman. The assembled Jews were then escorted to an overcrowded barracks at the military camp (firing range), also known as the Poligon transit camp, near Nowe Święciany. Carts driven by local peasants were used to transport the old, sick, and children, while the remainder had to walk. On October 9, 1941, after being held in the Poligon camp for more than a week under atrocious conditions, most of the Jews from Ignalino were shot, along with other Jews who had been collected in these barracks. Only a small group of craftsmen was selected just before the shooting and moved to the Święciany ghetto.[9]

Some details regarding the misappropriation of Jewish property in Ignalino emerge from a letter of complaint by three former Lithuanian partisans (who probably had been cheated of their share):

> The police in Ignalino and the former town mayor, Tijūlenis, as well as the present mayor, Albertas Olejunas, seized many objects of Jewish property for themselves. Police personnel and the two mayors hid these things with their relatives and friends in the villages. . . . We know that the police have the following in their possession: 220 gold rings, 55 gold watches, 35 sofas in good condition, 45 cabinets, 180 beds including mattresses, 45 cows, some 50 fur coats, and 250 tanned hides. In addition, there are many items that have been sorted, including clothing, shoes, etc. Only one tenth of the Jewish property was sold to the local residents when the Jews were liquidated.[10]

A subsequent investigation by German Gendarmes, however, did not result in the punishment of the Lithuanian officials assigned the task of collecting, administering, and selling off Jewish property in Ignalino.[11]

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Ignalino during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.6; Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews in the Švenčionys, Oshmyany and Svir Regions (1941–1943)," in Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), pp. 83–118, here pp. 100–101; and "Ignalino," in Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp. 114–117.

Documentation regarding the murder of the Jews of Ignalino can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-435); LCVA (e.g., R 685-5-4, R 613-1-62); LYA (K 1-58-20526/3; K 1-8-194); and YVA (e.g., O-71/169.1).

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trans. Kathleen Luft

NOTES

1. YVA, O-71/169.1, pp. 145–191, testimony of Tevye Solomyak (born 1900) given to Leyb Koniuchovsky in February 1948.
2. LYA, K 1-58-20526/3, pp. 15 and verso, 48, 56–58, 141–142. There are some inevitable discrepancies between the witness testimonies and the exhumation findings, as cited by Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," p. 100.
3. YVA, O-71/169.1, pp. 145–191.
4. LCVA, R 685-5-4, p. 1, order of Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, August 18, 1941; and LYA, K 1-8-194, p. 280, protocol of B. Gruzdys—both as cited by Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," pp. 88–89.
5. Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," section F.1.2.6; see also Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," p. 101.
6. Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," p. 101, cites 400 to 700. Spector and Freundlich, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek*, pp. 116–117, estimates 1,200, including a number of refugees.
7. YVA, O-71/169.1, p. 153.
8. Ibid., pp. 156–170.
9. Spector and Freundlich, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek*, pp. 116–117.
10. LCVA, R 613-1-62, p. 211, letter to Kreislandwirtschaftsführer Josef Beck in Święciany, January 22, 1942.
11. See Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," p. 101.

JONAVA

Pre-1940: Jonava (Yiddish: Yanova), town, Kaunas apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Jonava/Ionava, Kaunas uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Jonava, Kreis Kauen, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: rajonas center, Kaunas apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Jonava is located 32 kilometers (20 miles) northeast of Kaunas on the banks of the Neris River. After the partition of Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union in September 1939, a number of Jewish refugees arrived in Jonava, including members of the yeshiva in Kleck. The Jewish population in the town in 1940 was 3,000.

German forces captured the town by June 26, 1941. Several hundred Jews fled with the Red Army as it retreated. Of those who fled, several subsequently were forced into the Daugavpils ghetto in Latvia after being overtaken by the rapid German advance.[1] A number of houses were destroyed by the German bombardment of Jonava as the Red Army attempted to block the German advance across the Neris. Around 2,500 Jews remained in the town at the start of the German occupation. The destruction forced Jewish families to share the few remaining houses, and some homeless Jews moved into the synagogue and the Bet Midrash. About 150 Jews from Jonava moved to the Jewish village "Der Alter Gostinetz," 8 kilometers (5 miles) away, where they performed agricultural work.[2]

Immediately after the occupation, Lithuanian nationalists formed a municipal administration and a militia unit ("partisans") of around 50 men, under the command of Vladas Kulvicas, which soon began to act against the Jews. On the pretext of looking for weapons, armed Lithuanian partisans would break into Jewish houses and steal the best items for themselves. The partisans drove young and old Jews to perform forced labor, cleaning the streets, during which they beat the Jews brutally. Lithuanian activists also forcibly took some of the remaining Jewish businesses, including a bakery, which now served only non-Jews.[3] During the third week of the occupation, the local authorities issued an order that Jews had to wear yellow patches.

According to the account of Efraim Zilberman, a few days later the head of the Lithuanian partisans summoned Rabbi

Ginsburg and demanded that the Jews pay a large sum of money within three days. If this demand were met, the partisan chief promised that "there would be no shootings of Jews and that a ghetto would be created."[4] The Jews of Jonava, however, soon established that they were unable to pay the ransom, mainly because most of the wealthier Jews had been deported to the east by the Bolsheviks just a few days before the German invasion. When the rabbi told this to the partisan leader, he was taken hostage together with a number of other Jews and severely beaten. Then he was escorted to Kaunas by two Lithuanian partisans to obtain the ransom with the help of the Jews of Kaunas. In this manner, the money was raised and the arrested Jews were then released.[5]

This respite lasted only a few days. Soon afterwards, the Lithuanian partisans rounded up around 500 young Jewish men, saying they would be taken for forced labor. Instead they were escorted only about 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) outside the town in the direction of Ukmergė, where they were shot in the Giraitė Forest. According to German documentation, a detachment of Einsatzkommando 3, with the participation of Lithuanian partisans, shot 497 Jewish men and 55 Jewish women—altogether 552 victims—in Jonava, on August 14, 1941.[6] A few Jewish men managed to escape at the time of the shooting, but all but one of them were subsequently recaptured and killed.[7]

After this Aktion, the Jewish population in Jonava consisted almost entirely of women, children, and elderly men. Expecting another Aktion, some families went to hide in the forests or with Christians in the surrounding villages. When the partisan chief learned of this, he put up posters warning Christians not to hide Jews and offering a reward of pork or sugar equivalent to the weight of any Jew turned in. On August 23–24, the Jews of Jonava paid a "contribution" to the authorities of 120,000 rubles.[8]

About two weeks after the first Aktion, the remaining Jews in the town, together with the rabbi, were escorted to the same place in the Giraitė Forest, where large ditches had been prepared. Five Jews from among the 150 or so living in the Jewish village of Alter Gostinetz were also brought to the killing site. According to the report of Einsatzkommando 3, it was responsible (together with Lithuanian auxiliaries) for the shooting of 1,556 Jews (112 men, 1,200 women, and 244 children) near Jonava between August 28 and September 2, 1941.[9] Participating in the mass shooting were 16 members of the Lithuanian "self-defense" squad (as the militia had been renamed) from Jonava, under the command of Jonas Jurevičius, who had replaced Kulvicas.

The remaining Jews living in Alter Gostinetz were spared on this occasion, as their labor was still required to bring in the harvest. In early September, however, they all were transferred to a former barracks in Jonava, where they were kept under close guard by the partisans. At this time the staff of the Lithuanian partisans issued a proclamation that any Jews who returned to the barracks from hiding would not be harmed and informed the remaining Jews that they would soon be transferred to the Kaunas ghetto. As a result, some Jews emerged from hiding or were turned out by Christians, who said they were unable to help them anymore.[10] Thus the barracks in Jonava served as a form of "remnant ghetto," used by the authorities to tempt Jews out of hiding before their transfer to Kaunas.

On October 3, 1941, the Lithuanian guards took away any remaining valuables from the Jews in the barracks and announced that they would be sent to Kaunas the next day. The 180 Jews assembled there spent a sleepless night, still uncertain of their fate. On October 4, they were marched to Kaunas under close guard, arriving just too late to be included in the Aktion conducted against the "small ghetto" in Kaunas on that day, in which 1,845 Jews were shot. Instead, they were put into the Kaunas ghetto. Many of them were murdered, however, in the "large Aktion" conducted by the German police and their Lithuanian auxiliaries on October 28, 1941, when some 10,000 Jews from the Kaunas ghetto deemed "unfit for labor" were shot at Fort IX.[11]

In 1944, the Germans took about 50 Jewish Police from the Kaunas ghetto to the Giraitė Forest near Jonava and forced them to exhume and burn the corpses from the mass grave there. Afterwards these men, too, were shot.[12] Only a few Jews from Jonava in the Kaunas ghetto managed to survive until the end of the war.

SOURCES Publications regarding the fate of the Jewish community of Jonava during the Holocaust include the following: Shimon Noi, ed., *Sefer Yanovah*: *Le-hantsa hat zikhram shel Yehude ha-ayarah she-ne.herevah ba-Shoah* (Tel Aviv: Jonava Society, 1979); Arūnas Bubnys, "The Holocaust in the Lithuanian Province in 1941: The Kaunas District," in D. Gaunt, P.A. Levine, and L. Palosuo, eds., *Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust: Belarus*, *Estonia*, *Latvia*, *Lithuania* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 283–312, here pp. 294–299; and Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 282–285.

Relevant documentation, including the testimonies of survivors and eyewitnesses, can be found in the following archives: LCVA (e.g., R 1534-186, p. 11); LYA (e.g., K 1-58-47536/3); MA (D4/711); RGVA (500-1-25); VHF; and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/1345 and 1358; O-22/49; and M-9/15(6)).

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NOTES

1. For a description of the flight from Jonava, see Jesaiah Ivensky (Sidney Iwens), "My Years of Agony," in Noi, *Sefer Yanovah*, pp. 15–17. See also by the same author, Sidney Iwens, *How Dark the Heavens* (New York: Shengold, 1990).

2. Efraim Zilberman, "Aufn groysn masnkhever," in Noi, *Sefer Yanovah*, p. 373. This article is reproduced from "Joneve," in *Fun letstn khurbn*, no. 10 (December 1947): 64–69.

3. Reizl David (Rashkes), "Der anfang fun khurbn," in Noi, *Sefer Yanovah*, p. 383.

4. Zilberman, "Aufn groysn masnkhever," p. 373.

5. Ibid., pp. 373–374.

6. Ibid., p. 374—this source dates the first Aktion in early August. Also see RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.

7. LYA, K 1-58-47536/3, vol. 2, pp. 183ff., testimony of Nachumas Bliumbergas, October 30, 1945, the only survivor from the group of fugitives, as cited by Bubnys, "The Holocaust in the Lithuanian Province," p. 296.

8. Bubnys, "The Holocaust in the Lithuanian Province," p. 297.

9. Zilberman, "Aufn groysn masnkhever," p. 374—this source dates the second Aktion on August 13, 1941. Also see RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.

10. Zilberman, "Aufn groysn masnkhever," p. 374.

11. Ibid., p. 375; Ivensky, "My Years of Agony," p. 17; and YVA, M-1/E/1345.

12. Zilberman, "Aufn groysn masnkhever," p. 375.

JONIŠKĖLIS

Pre-1940: Joniškėlis (Yiddish: Yanishkel), town, Biržai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Joniškėlis/Ionishkelis, Birzhai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Johanischkehl, Kreis Birsen, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Joniškėlis, Pasvalys rajonas, Panevėžys apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Joniškėlis is located about 32 kilometers (20 miles) north-northwest of Panevėžys. According to the 1923 census, there were 162 Jews (28 percent of the population) living in the small town. By 1940, the 210 Jews of Joniškėlis represented 21 percent of the population.[1]

German armed forces occupied the town on June 27, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local authority and a police force, which began introducing anti-Jewish measures. All the Jews' valuables were confiscated; they were assigned to various types of forced labor, during which the local antisemites subjected them to humiliation, mockery, and beatings; and they were forbidden to appear in public places and maintain relationships of any kind with other Lithuanians. Lithuanian activists also killed a number of Jews. Dr. Lichtenstein, the head of the Jewish community, tried to intervene, but his best efforts could do little to stop the beatings and killings.

In July 1941, all the town's Jews were moved into a ghetto, for which 10 houses were set aside.[2] The ghetto was liquidated on August 19, 1941, when all the Jews—some 200 people—were resettled into the Pasvalys ghetto, located in the synagogue there.[3] They were shot on August 26, 1941, in the nearby Žadeikiai Forest, along with the other Jews gathered in the Pasvalys ghetto.

Only three Jews of Joniškėlis are known to have survived the occupation, having received shelter from local Lithuanian peasants.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Joniškėlis during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: "Joniškėlis," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 321–323; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 577; and "Ionishkelis," in *Rossiiskaia Evreiskaia Entsiklopediia*, vol. 5 (Moscow: Rossiikaia Akademia Estestvennykh Nauk, Nauchnyi-fond "Evreiskaia Entsiklopediia," "Epos," 2004), p. 511.

Documentation regarding the murder of the Jews of Joniškėlis can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-441); LCVA; and YVA.

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trans. Kathleen Luft

NOTES

1. Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, p. 321.

2. "Joniškėlis," in Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945*.

3. Report of the Biržai District Commission, May 26, 1945, published in B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 116.

JONIŠKIS

Pre-1940: Joniškis (Yiddish: Yanishok), town, Šiauliai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Joniškis/Ionishkis, Shauliai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Joniskis/Janischken, Kreis Schaulen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Joniškis, rajonas center, Šiauliai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Joniškis is located 39 kilometers (24 miles) north-northeast of Šiauliai. According to the 1923 census, there were 978 Jews living in Joniškis. By June 1941, as a result of out-migration in the 1930s, the Jewish population had declined to around 700 people.

German armed forces occupied the town on June 24, 1941. Soon afterwards, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration, headed by Mayor Antanas Gedivilas, and a police unit, headed by Juozas Sutkus. The police unit recruited 104 men, of which 54 were armed.[1] The local administration and police started their activities by arresting Jews and alleged Soviet sympathizers.

On July 11, 1941, the local Lithuanian Committee for Jewish Affairs, with Juozas Tininis as its head, announced a series of anti-Jewish measures. Among them was an order requiring that Joniškis Jews return from the villages. Other regulations included the compulsory wearing of the Star of David, a ban on Jews using the sidewalks, and a prohibition on Jews employing Aryans. Jews also were required to perform forced labor in agriculture and public works. On July 18, the Committee for Jewish Affairs demanded a "contribution" of 20,000 rubles from the Jews, which was to be paid to the local Lithuanian Activists' Front by the next day.[2] The contribution was actually paid on July 24.

In mid-July 1941, the Committee for Jewish Affairs examined the question of transferring the Jews to a separate quarter (a ghetto). It proposed putting some of the Jews in the synagogues and also housing the others on Dariaus, Girėno, and Pašvitinio Streets or transferring Jews to Žagarė. The same meeting prepared measures for the transfer of Jewish-owned farms to Lithuanians.[3] A few days later, some Jews were forced to live in the synagogues, and the remainder were relocated to a group of houses adjoining the market square. This ghetto area was guarded by the local police.

The German Security Police in Šiauliai put pressure on the head of the police in Joniškis, Sutkus, to complete the murder of the Jews. At some time in August 1941, two Gestapo officials from Šiauliai, accompanied by other Germans, arrived in Joniškis to organize the murder of the local Jewish men. Sutkus then ordered the local policemen to arrest around 150 Jewish men from the synagogue. These men were put on trucks and taken to a site 5 kilometers (3 miles) outside Joniškis in the Vilkiaušis Forest, where a large ditch had been prepared. The men were ordered to undress and had to surrender their valuables. The Jews were then shot by the Lithuanian policemen (wearing white armbands) under German supervision.[4] After the Aktion, the clothes of the murdered Jews were brought back to Joniškis, and the participants in the Aktion gathered at the local beer garden to celebrate with alcohol. Sutkus thanked his men for their "good work and sacrifices for the benefit of the Homeland."[5]

On August 24–29, 1941, another 150 Jews were transferred from Joniškis to Žagarė, where they were murdered with the Jews of the Žagarė ghetto on October 2, 1941.[6] The remaining 355 Jews in Joniškis, consisting mainly of the elderly, women, and children, were killed at the end of August or in September 1941 by a Lithuanian Self-Defense squad that arrived from outside the town.[7]

A number of Lithuanian collaborators, who were active in Joniškis, were tried by the Soviet authorities after the war. Among them were Antanas Gedivilas and Juozas Sutkus, who were tried in 1947.

SOURCES The main published source used for preparing this entry is "Joniškis," by Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews in Šiauliai and the Šiauliai Region," in Irena Guzenberg and Jevgenija Sedova, eds., *The Siauliai Ghetto: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2002), pp. 242–243. Additional information on the persecution and murder of the Jews of Joniškis can be found in the following publications: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 231, 240, 252, 403; "Joniškis," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 339–340; and Michael MacQueen, "Lithuanian Collaboration in the 'Final Solution': Motivations and Case Studies," in *Lithuania and the Jews: The Holocaust Chapter; Symposium Presentations* (Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies [2004]; first printing in July 2005), p. 8.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: GARF; LVOA (3377-55-150); and LYA (46599/3; 1356/3; K 1-46-1257).

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NOTES

1. LYA, 46599/3, vol. 5, pp. 342–344.
2. Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje*, vol. 2, p. 240.
3. Minutes of the Joniškis Committee for Jewish Affairs, not later than July 18, 1941, LYA, 46599/3, vol. 5, p. 18.
4. Ibid., 46599/3, vol. 1, pp. 307–313; K 1-46-1257, pp. 2–3; Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje*, vol. 2, p. 403.
5. LYA, 46599/3, vol. 3, pp. 63–64, testimony of J. Diržinskas, as cited by Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews," p. 243. See also MacQueen, "Lithuanian Collaboration," p. 8.
6. Mayor of the town of Joniškis to the mayor of the town of Žagarė, September 1, 1941, in Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje*, vol. 2, p. 252.
7. Ibid. Details of these murders can be found in the investigation of Zubrevičius, Brinklis, and others (LYA, 1356/3); verdict in the cases of Kakliauskas, Sutkus, and Ožalas, August 3, 1961 (LYA, 46599/3); statement of the former policeman Jonas Ožalas, January 25, 1961 (LVOA, 3377-55-150).

JURBARKAS

Pre-1940: Jurbarkas (Yiddish: Yurburg), town, Raseiniai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Jurbarkas/Iurbarkus, Raseiniai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Georgenburg, Kreis Raseinen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Jurbarkas, rajonas center, Tauragė apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Jurbarkas is located 72 kilometers (45 miles) west-northwest of Kaunas and 120 kilometers (75 miles) west of Wilno. A census conducted in 1940 recorded a population of 4,439, of whom 1,319 (29.7 percent) were Jews, although other sources put the number of Jews at about 2,000 or more.[1]

Following the annexation of Lithuania by the Soviet Union in 1940, all large companies and banks were taken over by the state, and Jewish cultural and political organizations were banned. In mid-June 1941, the Soviets deported at least 60 people from Jurbarkas, including several Jewish families (almost half of those deported).[2]

In 1941, the town was only 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the border with Germany. On the morning of the German invasion of Lithuania, June 22, the German army marched into the town. A local government was established immediately. The German military commandant (Ortskommandant), Hauptmann Baar, announced that the mayor had to obey his orders and that acts of sabotage and plundering would be punishable

by death. Officials who had served in the interwar Lithuanian Republic returned to their previous posts. Jurgis Gepneris again became mayor, and Mykolas Levickas became chief of police, serving until the middle of July, when he resigned to direct the local branch of the Lithuanian Nationalist Party. Levickas organized a regular police force, but an auxiliary police company (Lithuanian partisans) was also established for self-defense purposes.[3]

Jurbarkas lay within the border region of Lithuania assigned to the Tilsit Gestapo. Among those agents of the German SD who operated in Jurbarkas were Grigalavicius, Voldemaras Kriauza, Richardas Sperbergas, Oskaras Sefleris, and Karstenis.[4] The Germans organized the massacres of the Jews, but the direct responsibility of the local Lithuanian perpetrators is not in doubt. German SS men began killing individual Jews during the first days of the occupation.

The first massacre of Jews occurred on July 3, when a group of about 40 men from the Security Police in Tilsit arrived in town and, together with local Lithuanian policemen, began to round up Jewish men from their houses and workplaces on the basis of lists prepared beforehand. A column of more than 300 people was assembled, including about 70 Lithuanians believed to have supported the Soviets. They were escorted to the Jewish cemetery, shot, and buried.[5]

After the July 3 Aktion, Kriminalsekretär Carsten of the Gestapo in Tilsit put the policeman Urbonas in charge of guarding the surviving Jews: the families of the men who had been shot and about 50 male Jews who had been kept alive as workers and their families. From the second day of the occupation, Jews had been compelled to perform various work tasks. For example, Jewish women had to sew and repair German uniforms.[6]

According to eyewitnesses, the second series of mass killings took place at the end of July and the beginning of August. First, 45 men over the age of 50 were shot along with other Jews from neighboring places. At this time the Jews in Jurbarkas were also ordered to tear down the historic wooden synagogue, and Jewish books and pictures were burned, as well as a bust of Stalin. The Jews also were ordered to dance and sing while Germans photographed the spectacle.[7] Then, on August 1, 105 older women and children were marched in the direction of Smalininkai, where they were shot and buried in pits.[8]

In mid-August 1941, the Gebietskommissar in Šiauliai ordered the establishment of Jewish ghettos in the larger towns of the district, but in Jurbarkas such "ghettos" existed well before this order was given.[9] In Jurbarkas, the term *ghetto* was used to mean a few buildings where Jews were held under guard. According to postwar testimony by Levickas (chief of the police), "after the first shootings in June, mass arrests were carried out by a group of the police and the auxiliary police. The arrested Jewish men were transferred into the ghetto. . . . I think that there were two ghettos, both in Dariaus and Gireno Streets, being guarded by police and auxiliary police."[10]

Further testimony from a member of the Jurbarkas police states:

> The Jews with their children and the elderly were placed in the ghetto, which was a building surrounded by barbed wire. . . . There the Jews lived under prison conditions. The diet was poor, consisting of cabbage soup and a little bread. They were driven to work under guard and had to clean rubbish from the houses and the streets and do other disgusting and difficult work, with food being scarce.[11]

On August 21, there were still 684 Jews in the Jurbarkas ghetto, of whom 64 were engaged in forced labor.[12] From September 4 to 6, those Jews deemed unfit for work, about 400 women and children, were driven into the yard of the "Talmud-Torah," which served as the women's ghetto. They were then escorted to pits near Kalnėnai and murdered in cruel circumstances by Lithuanian police under German direction. On September 12, only 272 Jews were still alive in Jurbarkas, including 73 who were working.[13] These Jews were murdered shortly afterwards by a small killing squad from Kaunas, again assisted by the local police.[14]

In a letter dated October 6, the mayor informed the Lithuanian Office of Statistics in Kaunas that "on October 1 of this year there were no more Jews within the borders of the town of Jurbarkas, and such is the situation today."[15] Local Lithuanians profited from the murder of their neighbors. In Jurbarkas, 208 houses had lost their owners and inhabitants.[16] The names of 76 survivors from Jurbarkas have been documented.

SOURCES The main sources for this entry include an essay on the Holocaust in Jurbarkas by Christoph Dieckmann, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944*, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011); and also the useful B.A. thesis submitted at the University of Vilnius in 1997 by Ruta Puisyte titled "Holocaust in Jurbarkas: The Mass Extermination of Jews of Jurbarkas in the Provinces of Lithuania during the German Nazi Occupation," available in English at jewishgen.org, which is also linked to the English translation of the Yurburg yizkor book, edited by Zevulun Poran, *Sefer HaZikaron LeKehilath Yurburg-Lita* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Former Residents of Yurburg, 1991).

Other publications specifically on Jurbarkas include the following: Chayim Jofe, *Jewish Life and Death: Jurbarkas* (Vilnius, 1996); "The Destruction of the Jewish Community of Yurburg," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), pp. 295–297; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 285–289; Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 324–329; and an article on the murder of the Jews of Jurbarkas by Antanas Salynas, "Nuzudytu veles budi," *Kauno Diena*, August 7–8, September 23, 1996.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Jurbarkas can be found in the following archives: BA-BL (R 58/214); BA-L; LCVA (R 1753-1-3, R 1753-3-4, 12, 13); LG-Ulm; LYA (B.85/3, B.14142/3, B.16816); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. On December 26, 1940, 1,319 Jews were counted in the town; see LCVA, R 1753-3-13, p. 28. Also see Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 324–329.

2. See LCVA, R 1753-1-3, p. 212, and 1753-3-13, p. 22; Puisyte, "Holocaust in Jurbarkas," pp. 23–24.

3. Bekanntmachung des Ortskommandanten, June 24, 1941, LCVA, R 1753-3-12. After the war Levickas was tried and convicted by a Soviet military tribunal; see LYA, B.14142/3.

4. Transcript of the interrogation of Gepneris, August 22, 1945, LYA, B.85/3, p. 16.

5. BA-BL, R 58/214, p. 123, Ereignismeldungen UdSSR no. 19, July 11, 1941, records that 322 people, including 5 women, were shot; interrogation of Hans-Joachim Böhme, December 18, 1956, LG-Ulm, Ks 2/57 (Fischer-Schweder case), vol. 7, p. 1564.

6. *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 15 (Amsterdam: University Press Amsterdam, 1976), Lfd. Nr. 465, pp. 203–204 (LG-Ulm, Ks 2/57, verdict of August 29, 1958); Poran, *Sefer HaZikaron*, pp. 117–122, 404–405.

7. Puisyte, "Holocaust in Jurbarkas."

8. Poran, *Sefer HaZikaron*, p. 406.

9. LCVA, R 1753-3-4, pp. 36–37, order of the Gebietskommissar in Šiauliai, August 14, 1941, which reached Jurbarkas only on August 27, 1941.

10. Transcript of the interrogation of Mykolas Levickas, November 24, 1948, LYA, B.14142/3, pp. 47–48.

11. Transcript of the confrontation of P. Kairaitis with the witness J. Keturauskas, June 21, 1948, ibid., B.16816, pp. 69–70.

12. Reply of Gepneris on August 21, 1941, to the letter from the head of the district in Raseiniai, August 16, 1941, LCVA, R 1753-3-13, p. 22.

13. Poran, *Sefer HaZikaron*, pp. 392, 406–407. In the report of Einsatzkommando 3 on shootings carried out up to December 1, 1941, 412 victims were recorded for Jurbarkas; see BA-BL, R 70 Sowjetunion 15, p. 90. See also LCVA, R 1753-3-13, p. 58, letter of Gepneris to Kreischef in Raseiniai, September 12, 1941, which indicates that not all Jews had been shot by this date.

14. Puisyte, "Holocaust in Jurbarkas," appendix 3, lists the names of 31 local collaborators who participated in the murder of the Jews of Jurbarkas.

15. LCVA, R 1753-3-13, p. 148.

16. Ibid., R 1753-1-3, p. 3.

KAIŠIADORYS

Pre-1940: Kaišiadorys (Yiddish: Koshedar), town, Trakai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Kaišiadorys/Kaishadoris, Trakai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Koschedaren, Kreis Traken, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kaišiadorys, Kaunas rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Kaišiadorys is located about 39 kilometers (24 miles) northwest of Troki (Trakai). According to the 1923 census, 596 Jews were residing in Kaišiadorys (31 percent of the total). The Jewish population fluctuated during the 1920s and 1930s due to emigration. By mid-1941, the number of Jews in the town had declined somewhat. Under Soviet occupation in 1940–1941, a number of Jewish businesses were nationalized and Jewish organizations dissolved.

German armed forces entered the town on June 24, 1941. Immediately following the Germans' arrival, Lithuanian nationalists organized a local administration under the leadership of Povilas Gabe and an auxiliary police unit under Antanas Paškauskas. The new local authorities soon introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures. The Jews of Kaišiadorys were ordered to wear a Star of David on their outer clothing, and a Jewish Council (Judenrat), consisting of six members under the leadership of Aronas Jofanas, was established. The Jewish population was forced to perform a variety of labor tasks. While doing these unpleasant and arduous tasks, the Jews faced derision, humiliation, and beatings at the hands of local antisemites. In addition, Jews were forbidden to appear in public places or have any kind of direct contact with non-Jews.

During the first days of the German occupation, Lithuanian partisans murdered four local Jews. Shortly afterwards, local police auxiliaries maintained that they had "found" some machine guns and ammunition in the Bet Midrash and arrested the rabbi and the *shochet* (ritual slaughterer). The local police then chased the two men through the streets of the town, beating them until elderly Rabbi David-Aharon Yaffe died.[1]

On August 10, 1941, all the Jews of Kaišiadorys were resettled into an improvised ghetto, which consisted of a large grain storage building near the railway station that had been built under Soviet rule. A total of 105 Jewish families (375 people) were forced to live in the ghetto. Jews were taken out of the ghetto every day for forced labor, working in the town, digging peat, or performing agricultural work for local farmers. Lithuanian auxiliaries, assigned to guard the ghetto, beat and robbed the Jewish inmates.

On August 17, 1941, additional Jews from Žasliai (263 men and 85 women) and from Žiežmariai (193 men and 89 women) were transferred to the Kaišiadorys ghetto. These individuals were primarily male Jews older than 14 and Jewish women, who were accused of having worked for the Soviet authorities in 1940–1941.[2] The overcrowding in the ghetto and the lack of food and medication led to the outbreak of disease among the ghetto inmates. Noting the deteriorating situation in the ghetto, the head of the Kaunas police department, Reivitis, asked SS-Obersturmführer Joachim Hamann to remove the Jews to prevent the spread of disease to the local non-Jewish community.[3]

On August 26, 1941, the German authorities liquidated the Kaišiadorys ghetto, killing a total of 1,911 Jews in a major Aktion.[4] The shootings were conducted by members of Einsatzkommando 3, assisted by members of the Lithuanian auxiliary police. The killing took place in the Strošiūnai Forest about 5 kilometers (3 miles) outside the town. The German authorities subsequently shot one Lithuanian for giving shelter to a Jewish family who had evaded the mass killing.

Between 1943 and 1944, a labor camp existed in Kaišiadorys (Koschedaren), which was also a subcamp of the Kauen concentration camp.

SOURCES Information about the fate of the Jews of Kaišiadorys during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: "Kaisiadorys," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); "Kaisiadorys," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 571–573; and Neringa Latvytė-Gustaitienė, "Kaišiadorys," *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje/Voruta (Trakai)*, no. 9 (2003): 531.

Documents on the persecution and destruction of the Jews in Kaišiadorys can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-431); LVA; RGVA (500-1-25); and YVA (M-1/E/247).

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NOTES

1. YVA, M-1/E/247; Latvytė-Gustaitienė, "Kaišiadorys."
2. Latvytė-Gustaitienė, "Kaišiadorys."
3. See the letter of the head of the police in Kaunas, Reivitis, August 23, 1941, published in B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970), p. 216.
4. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 106, report of Einsatzkommando 3, September 10, 1941. It is likely that this number also includes the many Jewish women and children who had remained initially in Žasliai and Žiežmariai.

KALTINĖNAI

Pre-1940: Kaltinėnai (Yiddish: Koltenian), village, Tauragė apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Kaltinėnai/Kaltinenai, Taurage uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kaltinenai, Kreis Tauroggen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kaltinėnai, Šilalė rajonas, Tauragė apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Kaltinėnai is located about 48 kilometers (30 miles) south-southeast of Telšiai. The census of 1923 reported 130 Jews residing in Kaltinėnai, constituting about 20 percent of the total population. In 1940, about 15 or 20 Jewish families remained in the village.

German forces occupied Kaltinėnai shortly after they invaded the USSR on June 22, 1941. At the end of June, Lithuanian partisans and SS men from Heydekrug (Šilutė) arrived in Kaltinėnai and arrested all the Jewish men over the age of 15. These men were transported by truck to a labor camp in Heydekrug. At the camp, the Jews, together with other Jewish men from the region, were forced to work from sunrise until late in the evening. A number of these Jewish prisoners were shot after only four or five weeks, and the others remained as forced laborers for more than three years. Their rations consisted of 300 grams (10.6 ounces) of bread and half a liter (half a quart) of watery soup per day. In the winter, they were forced to load trains. Some of these Jews ultimately ended up in the concentration camp system, passing through Auschwitz II-Birkenau in 1943. From there a group was sent to clean up the area of the Warsaw ghetto.

On September 4, 1941, the remaining Jews in Kaltinėnai, mostly women and children, were isolated in an improvised ghetto located in an alley with the worst housing conditions.[1] The women and children were engaged primarily in agricultural work. On September 16, 1941, they were all taken to the Tūbinės Forest and murdered there along with Jews from the surrounding villages.

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews of Kaltinėnai can be found in the following publications: "Kaltinėnai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 596–597; and Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.2.

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NOTE

1. Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik."

KAMAJAI

Pre-1940: Kamajai (Yiddish: Kamei), village, Rokiškis apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Kamajai/Kamaiai, Rokishkis uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kamajai, Kreis Rokischken, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Rokiškis rajonas, Panevėžys apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Kamajai is located about 70 kilometers (43 miles) east-northeast of Panevėžys. In 1923, there were 336 Jews living in Kamajai, comprising 53 percent of the total population.

German forces occupied Kamajai on June 26, 1941. A number of Jews attempted to escape to the Soviet Union, but many became trapped in Rokiškis and shared the fate of the Jews there. In the interim period, before the arrival of the Germans, Lithuanian nationalists took revenge on Jews for the repression of Lithuanians under Soviet rule; several Jews were murdered, and others were beaten or had their property ransacked. The savagery against the Jews continued under German occupation. Jews were evicted from their homes and imprisoned in the large synagogue without regular provision of food or water.

A few weeks later all the Jewish men were sent to Rokiškis, where they were held briefly under even worse conditions. The women and children were sent to the nearby village of Obeliai. All the remaining Kamajai Jews were murdered between August 15 and August 27, 1941, together with other Jews from nearby towns and villages. The men were shot first in the Velniaduobė Woods, 5 kilometers (3 miles) north of Rokiškis. The women and children were shot later near the village of Antanašė, 5 kilometers (3 miles) south of Obeliai. The shootings were conducted by units of Rollkommando Hamann, subordinated to Einsatzkommando 3, assisted by Lithuanian partisans.[1]

After the liberation, only a few Jews returned to Kamajai. Most of those who survived had managed to escape to the Soviet Union in time.

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews of Kamajai can be found in the following publications:

Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), p. 604; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 198–199; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 280.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: LYA and RGVA (500-1-25).

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NOTE

1. Report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941, RGVA, 500-1-25, pp. 111–112; Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), p. 503; Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), pp. 288–289.

KAUNAS

Pre-1940: Kaunas (Yiddish: Kovne), city, apskritis center and provisional capital, Lithuania; 1940–1941: uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kauen, city and Kreis center, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kaunas, rajonas and apskritis center, Republic of Lithuania

Kaunas is located 100 kilometers (62.5 miles) west-northwest of Wilno. Prior to the war, roughly 40,000 Jews lived in Kaunas—about one quarter of the city's population. The Soviet occupation of Lithuania in the summer of 1940 aggravated antisemitic sentiments in the country. Soviet repressive and economic measures affected the Jews just as much as, if not more than, non-Jewish Lithuanians.

Two days after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, on the evening of June 24, 1941, the 2nd Corps, part of the 16th Army in Army Group North (General von Leeb) occupied Kaunas. Security Police and SD units charged with "special tasks" followed on the heels of the Wehrmacht; when the leader of Einsatzgruppe A, SS-Brigadegeneral Dr. Walter Stahlecker, reached the city about one day later, anti-Jewish violence was already in full swing. As elsewhere in Lithuania, nationalists took advantage of the withdrawal of Soviet troops to instigate pogroms against Jewish men. In Kaunas, one of the best-documented pogroms took place at the Lietukis garage, where Jews were beaten to death in front of German and Lithuanian spectators.

Stahlecker's unit swiftly channeled uncoordinated violence into organized terror and transformed bands of Lithuanian collaborators into regular auxiliary police units that helped kill Jews in old forts (Forts IV, VII, and IX) outside the city. SS-Standartenführer Karl Jäger, leader of Einsatzkommando 3—a subunit of Einsatzgruppe A—based in Kaunas, reported that 4,000 Jews had been killed in pogroms prior to his arrival in early July. With the consolidation of German rule, the death toll in Lithuania rose to more than 136,000 Jewish men, women, and children by December 1941. More than any other killing site in or around Kaunas, Fort IX became synonymous with German genocidal policies; the Germans murdered an estimated 50,000 people there, including Jews deported from other countries, during the war. By late 1941, except for the surviving Jews in the few remaining ghettos, the "Jewish question" in the region was already regarded as solved.[1]

Following the model that the Germans first adopted in occupied Poland in late 1939, the Nazi authorities in the major cities of Kaunas and Wilno, as well as in a number of other localities, registered, marked, and resettled the Jews into ghettos to work for the German war effort.[2] To organize the relocation of the 35,000 Jews in Kaunas to the designated area known as Slobodka in Yiddish, or Vilijampolė in Lithuanian, a part of town north of the Neris River that some 8,000 people (both Jews and Christians) had previously occupied, a Jewish committee was formed in early July 1941, headed by the well-known physician Elchanan Elkes (born 1879). This committee provided the nucleus for the Jewish Council of Elders (Ältestenrat) that was officially established on August 8, 1941. Despite protests by the committee about the lack of all vital preconditions (such as plumbing, sewers, and adequate housing) for the mass resettlement into Slobodka, the Lithuanian auxiliary city administration ordered on July 10, 1941, that the relocation had to be completed by August 15, the day on which the ghetto would be sealed off.[3]

The newly appointed German civil administration under Hans Cramer (former mayor of Dachau) as Stadtkommissar officially confirmed the Lithuanian mayor's resettlement order on July 31, 1941, and assumed authority over the emerging ghetto, while security matters remained in the hands of Jäger's police forces. A succession of German units and their Lithuanian helpers not only controlled the outer fence and the gates of the ghetto but, in January 1942, also set up a guard post within the ghetto. (The ghetto was guarded first by the 3rd Company of Reserve Police Battalion 11, followed by the 4th Company of an NSKK [Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrkorps, a motorized unit of the Nazi Party] detachment and from late August 1942 by Schutzpolizei from Vienna together with Lithuanian auxiliary policemen.)[4] For less than

Jews are gathered at an assembly point in the Kaunas ghetto during a deportation Aktion, probably to Estonia, October 26, 1943.
USHMM WS #10687, COURTESY OF GEORGE KADISH/ZVI KADUSHIN

Group portrait of staff from the Bikur Holim Jewish hospital in Kaunas, 1933. Seated at center is Dr. Elchanan Elkes, later chairman of the Kaunas Jewish Council of Elders.
USHMM WS #10191, COURTESY OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE LITHUANIAN JEWS IN ISRAEL

two months after its enclosure, the ghetto consisted of two separate areas: the "large ghetto" alongside the Neris River and the "small ghetto" to the west, connected by a wooden footbridge. Until its transformation into a concentration camp in the fall of 1943, the ghetto was reduced in size several times; simultaneously, the living space officially allocated to each ghetto inmate shrank dramatically.[5]

Elkes and his Ältestenrat met for the first time on August 17, 1941, before the Germans initiated a series of mass executions that claimed the lives of almost half the Jewish population in Kaunas. In an atmosphere dominated by confusion, fear, and desperation, the disparate gathering of men that formed the Jewish Council established a range of institutions designed to reconcile the irreconcilable: to alleviate the plight of the ghetto inmates, on the one hand, and to fulfill German demands, on the other. In 1942, the council supervised through its secretariat (headed by Avraham Golub [later Tory]) the work of the ghetto police and offices for health, labor, economics, food supply, housing, and welfare; there was also a fire brigade, a paint and sign workshop, a pharmacy, a hospital, a statistics office, and at times, a court, as well as education and residents' records offices.[6] (After August 1942, the Ältestenrat consisted of Elkes as chairman, his deputy Leib Garfunkel, Jacob Goldberg, and Avraham Golub as secretary.)[7]

Invariably, the administration of shortages and hardship affected some groups—the old, the young, the poor, and those without connections to the ghetto leadership—more than others. The Ältestenrat and its agencies, most notably the ghetto Jewish Police, could not avoid becoming key instruments for the implementation of German policies. In the eyes of most ghetto inmates, however, Elkes's personal integrity remained untarnished at the time as well as after the war, in contrast to the experience of certain other major ghettos in Eastern Europe. Avoiding the abuse of its powers, the Ältestenrat tried to uphold minimal legal standards and to appeal to the sense of duty of those administering its decisions. Perhaps the most symbolic measure taken by the Ältestenrat with a view towards fostering a sense of collective identity was the swearing in of the police on November 1, 1942; roughly one week after the Jewish Police had rounded up those Jews who were to be deported to Riga.[8]

Another aspect specific to the Kaunas Ältestenrat was its support for the underground inside and outside the ghetto. Resistance groups had emerged in the ghetto shortly after its closure and by early 1942 had consolidated along Zionist and leftist lines. Under the circumstances, contacts had to be highly clandestine to prevent the Ältestenrat from being implicated in resistance activities by the Germans; yet Elkes as well as his deputy Garfunkel became members of the Zionist umbrella organization "Matzok," and even the Jewish Police supported underground activities. The Ältestenrat also tried to document the ghetto history by secretly compiling evidence of German atrocities. Organized resistance efforts focused less on preparing a mass uprising in the ghetto than on preparing the way into hiding for as many Jews as possible. In the summer of 1943, the underground established close ties with resistance groups outside the ghetto, especially in the forests, that helped hundreds of Jews to escape from the ghetto.[9]

As in other ghettos, in Kaunas work was perceived as the key prerequisite for collective survival: all men aged 16 to 57 and women 17 to 46 performed forced labor. Jews worked in ghetto workshops (established in December 1941) or, more frequently, outside in construction brigades. Several thousand Jews left the ghetto every day for the city and its surroundings, one of the most notorious assignments being the Aleksotas airfield construction site, with almost 3,500 laborers in the spring of 1942. Elkes and his men tried to rotate assignments to this brigade by alternating with people from other less-exhausting details; at the same time, the daily quota of workers set by the Germans had to be met.[10]

Against all odds, ghetto inmates tried to eke out a living and to uphold hope for survival. The Jewish Council added to the official starvation rations by cultivating gardens or smuggling in food; often transgressing the limits of its functions as defined by the Germans, it created facilities to educate children and to prevent the already appalling health conditions from further deteriorating and tried to preserve a minimum of cultural life, for example, through concerts by the police orchestra and observing religious holidays as well as through exhibitions of art created in the ghetto.[11] For a few weeks in the summer of 1942, there was even room for a unique pastime when the Jews were permitted to bathe in the Neris River.[12]

It is estimated that of the roughly 40,000 Jewish inhabitants of Kaunas, only 2,000 survived the war. Most of the victims were killed in mass executions in the first six months of the German occupation; ghettoization itself went hand in hand with the extermination of those regarded as either dangerous or useless. Three days after the ghetto was enclosed, 711 Jews were shot as members of the "intelligentsia"; on September 26, 1941, Jäger's men murdered 1,608 more ghetto inmates, among them 615 women and 581 children, in an Aktion legitimized as a reprisal for an alleged attack on a German police officer.[13]

A musical performance in the Kaunas ghetto, n.d.
USHMM WS #10920, COURTESY OF GEORGE KADISH/ZVI KADUSHIN

On October 4, 1941, 1,845 Jews, including 818 children, were killed during the liquidation of the "small ghetto."

At the end of October, the ghetto went through what survivors remember as the "large Aktion": on October 28, German police selected from among the ghetto population assembled in Demokratu Square roughly 10,000 victims as "unfit for labor," almost half of them children. An estimated 30 people died from exhaustion on the assembly square; those who had tried to hide were killed in their houses, the 10,000 "unfit" were escorted to Fort IX, where they were shot into mass graves one day later. According to Jäger, some 15,000 "work Jews" (*Arbeitsjuden*) and their families were left alive for the time being.[14] Not only in scale but also in the manner of their conduct, these mass murders set a precedent; they incorporated elements that later became standard features of the "Final Solution" all across Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe. The expansion of the killings to include women and children on a massive scale and the "selection" of the "unfit," as performed during the "large Aktion" in the Kaunas ghetto, resembled the procedure adopted much later at the "Rampe" in the Auschwitz II-Birkenau killing center.

In Kaunas, a so-called quiet period followed the organized carnage of the second half of 1941: a time span of almost two years in which the brutal and often deadly "normalcy" of ghetto life replaced the mass killings of ghetto inmates. In this phase, everyday persecution took the form of countless German orders, for example, stipulating that Jews caught trying to smuggle food would be shot, or of assaults on the ghetto inmates.[15] At the same time, Kaunas remained the site of mass killings: in November 1941, almost 5,000 deported German Jews bypassed the ghetto and went straight to the killing fields at Fort IX; other transports from the west followed.[16] Bitter cold, starvation, disease, and desperation continuously drained the life of the ghetto inmates; for the period between June 1942 and July 1943, the Ältestenrat reported an average monthly death rate of roughly 20 people.[17]

The separation of tasks that the Germans enforced after the establishment of the Kaunas ghetto—with Jäger's office in charge of security matters, the Stadtkommissariat regulating the ghetto administration, and the Ältestenrat as executor of German demands—remained in place until the summer of 1942, when the civil administration and the Security Police curtailed the functions of Elkes's council. The civil administration took over the management of the large ghetto workshops in mid-June 1942; less than two months later, an identification card was introduced for all ghetto inhabitants. In early July 1942, the Security Police gave additional powers to its collaborators Joseph Serebrovitz (aka Caspi) and Benno Lipzer vis-à-vis the Ältestenrat and supported "clandestine agents" in the ghetto.[18]

In a seemingly "stable" situation, characterized, in the words of Avraham Tory, by "'normal' arrests, various persecutions, and excesses," the determination of the Germans to finish what they had started became visible in a number of incidents: the deportation of several hundred ghetto Jews to work in Riga in late October 1942; the public hanging of Nahum Meck in November 1942 for smuggling, accompanied by the arrest of three members of the Ältestenrat; and the execution of several dozen Jews in the "Stalingrad Aktion" of February 1943.[19] As planned by Jäger and Stahlecker as early as the summer of 1941, pregnancies and births in the ghetto were officially prohibited in July 1942; whoever violated this order was threatened with the death penalty.[20]

In the spring of 1943, following mass executions in other ghettos in Lithuania, organized efforts to escape from the Kaunas ghetto to the forests intensified, with the help of the Ältestenrat.[21] Simultaneously, German persecution increased as a result of Himmler's order of mid-June 1943 to transform all ghettos in Reichskommissariat Ostland into concentration camps. In Kaunas, the transition from ghetto to concentration camp was extended over several months. The formal transfer of authority to the SS under concentration camp commander Wilhelm Göcke took place on September 15, 1943. For information about this transition and the period of the concentration camp, readers are referred to the entry in Volume I of this series (**Kauen Main Camp,** pp. 848–852).

While survivors of the Kaunas ghetto played a major role after 1945 in collecting testimonies on German crimes in Lithuania,[22] it took decades until the history of the ghetto received appropriate attention in public memory. Until the early 1990s, the official Soviet commemoration of Nazi crimes and the sentencing of Nazi collaborators dominated perceptions in Lithuania. Lithuanians felt more reluctant to deal with the issue, but since the country became independent in 1991, discussion of Lithuania's role in the Holocaust has been more critical.[23]

The efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice remained haphazard, as many successfully escaped their responsibility. Karl Jäger committed suicide in June 1959 when German prosecutors started investigating the wartime activities of his unit in Kaunas. Against Helmut Rauca, a former member of Jäger's Security Police office who supervised the "selection" of ghetto inmates during the "large Aktion," investigations were initiated in his new homeland, Canada, as well as in Ger-

many, where he died in custody in 1983. The U.S. Department of Justice has conducted several denaturalization proceedings since the 1970s against former members of Lithuanian auxiliary police units. Together with the archival documentation and survivor testimonies available, partly in published form, the material generated in the course of postwar investigations provides unique insights into the history of the Kaunas ghetto.

SOURCES Among the most significant published source editions are the following: Wolfgang Benz, Konrad Kwiet, and Jürgen Matthäus, eds., *Einsatz im "Reichskommissariat Ostland": Dokumente zum Völkermord im Baltikum und in Weissrussland, 1941–1944* (Berlin: Metropol, 1998); Solly Ganor, *Light One Candle: A Survivor's Tale from Lithuania to Jerusalem* (New York: Kodansha International, 1995); Reinhard Kaiser and Margarete Holzman, eds., *"Dies Kind soll leben." Die Aufzeichnungen der Helene Holzman 1941–1944* (Frankfurt am Main: Schöffling, 2000); B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, ed., *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970); Avraham Tory, *Surviving the Holocaust: The Kovno Ghetto Diary* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

Of the many secondary works related to the Kaunas ghetto, the following are recommended for further reading: Wolfgang Benz and Marion Neiss, eds., *Judenmord in Litauen: Studien und Dokumente* (Berlin: Metropol, 1999); Christoph Dieckmann, "Das Ghetto und das Vernichtungslager in Kaunas 1941–1944," in Ulrich Herbert, Karin Orth, and Christoph Dieckmann, eds., *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Entwicklung und Struktur*, vol. 1 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1998), pp. 439–471; Dov Levin, *Fighting Back: Lithuanian Jewry's Armed Resistance to the Nazis, 1941–1945* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985); Dina Porat, "The Holocaust in Lithuania: Some Unique Aspects," in David Cesarani, ed., *The Final Solution: Origins and Implementation* (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 159–174; and U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, ed., *Hidden History of the Kovno Ghetto* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1998). For a more comprehensive listing of secondary works, see "Hidden History of the Kovno Ghetto: An Annotated Bibliography," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 12:1 (1998): 119–138.

Documentation on the history of the Kaunas ghetto can be found in the following archives: BA-L (ZStL, 207 AR-Z 14/58); LCVA (collections R 973 and R 1390: documents on the history of the Kaunas ghetto; R 731 and R 972: Security Police and SD in Lithuania [copies also available at USHMM]; LVVA (1026-1-3); LYA; USHMM (Acc.1995.A.989: Esther Lurie collection; "Tory collection of German laws," acquired for the Museum's Kaunas ghetto exhibition; and many oral testimonies); and YVA (B/12-4: Kovne Ghetto).

Jürgen Matthäus

NOTES

1. Ereignismeldung UdSSR no. 8, June 30, 1941, N-Document NO-4543; "Gesamtaufstellung der im Bereiche des Ek 3 bis jetzt durchgeführten Exekutionen," September 10, 1941; "Gesamtaufstellung der im Bereich des Ek 3 bis zum 1. Dezember 1941 durchgeführten Exekutionen," December 1, 1941; "Exekutionen bis zum 1. Februar 1942 durch das Ek 3," February 9, 1942, RGVA, 500-1-25 (microfilm copy at USHMM, RG-11.001M, reel 183).

2. Tory's *Surviving* offers the most complete account of the history of the Kaunas ghetto.

3. Order no. 15 by the Lithuanian military commander and mayor (Bobelis/Palciauskas), July 10, 1941, published in Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Documents Accuse*, pp. 133–134; memorandum by Jewish Committee, July 5, 1941, YVA, B/12-4, folder 109, printed in Tory, *Surviving*, pp. 29–30.

4. See Tory collection of German laws (entry for August 30, 1942), USHMM; Tory, *Surviving*, pp. 67, 97–98, 114, 403–407.

5. For reductions in ghetto size and allocated living space per person, see LCVA, R 1390-3-25, pp. 2ff.; and the documents of the secret ghetto archive printed in USHMM, *Hidden History*, pp. 151–154.

6. See USHMM, *Hidden History*, pp. 77–110; LCVA, R 973-3-4 (entry for August 17, 1941), R 973-2-7, pp. 84, 87.

7. See Tory, *Surviving*, pp. 103–104, 123.

8. See ibid., pp. 148–150; USHMM, *Hidden History*, pp. 34–35.

9. See USHMM, *Hidden History*, pp. 38–39.

10. Tory, *Surviving*, pp. 74, 81–86, 89–90.

11. See LCVA, R 973-2-40 (monthly reports by Ältestenrat).

12. Tory collection of German laws (entry for July 7, 1942), USHMM.

13. See Tory, *Surviving*, p. 38.

14. Fragmentary report by Einsatzkommando 3 regarding Jews, n.d. (early 1942), LVVA, 1026-1-3, pp. 268–273, excerpts published in Benz, Kwiet, and Matthäus, *Einsatz im "Reichskommissariat Ostland,"* pp. 174–176; investigative report by the prosecutor's office (Oberstaatsanwaltschaft) at Landgericht Frankfurt, November 16, 1965, BA-L, ZStL, 207 AR-Z 14/58, pp. 432–434.

15. For reports on daily violence in the ghetto, see, e.g., LCVA, R 973-2-47, pp. 12–13 (rape, October 11, 1941); R 973-2-32, pp. 102–103 (raid on ghetto by Lithuanians, December 12–13, 1941); R 973-2-46, pp. 118–120 (murder, January 8, 1942).

16. As for many other places of deportation in the east, no complete listing exists of all transports from the west to Kaunas. In January 1942, the Kaunas ghetto Ältestenrat prepared for the arrival of German Jews (see ibid., R 973-2-33, p. 620; R 1390-3-7, p. 6); the deportees never entered the ghetto but were shot at Fort IX.

17. Monthly reports of the Ältestenrat in ibid., R 973-2-40; based on these reports, see the compilation of deaths, births, marriages, and divorces in Benz, Kwiet, and Matthäus, *Einsatz im "Reichskommissariat Ostland,"* p. 220.

18. See Tory, *Surviving*, pp. 97–105, 120–122, 127–129, 165.

19. Ibid., pp. 148, 153–156, 189–196 (quote: 189).

20. Compilation of German orders, USHMM; YVA, B/12-4; Tory, *Surviving*, p. 114. See also LCVA, R 1390-3-15, p. 7.

21. On the flow of information from Vilnius and other sites of mass execution, see Tory, *Surviving*, pp. 273–292.

22. See Israel Kaplan, ed., *Fun letstn Khurbn: Tsaytshrift far geshikhte fun yidishn lebn beysn natsi-rezhim* (Munich: Central Historical Commission at the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the American Zone, 1946–1948).

23. Memorials were created at Fort IX and on the site of the former ghetto; files on Soviet war crimes investigations against Lithuanian collaborators are kept at LYA (see also USHMM, RG-26.004M).

KĖDAINIAI

Pre-1940: Kėdainiai (Yiddish: Keidan), town, Kaunas apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Kėdainiai/Kedainiai, Kaunas uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kedahnen, Kreis center, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kėdainiai, rajonas center, Kaunas apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Kėdainiai is located about 45 kilometers (28 miles) north of Kaunas. In 1923, the Jewish population was 2,499. On the eve of the German invasion, there were about 2,500 Jews in Kėdainiai.[1]

German forces captured Kėdainiai on June 24, 1941. In the short time available, some younger Jews tried to flee into the Soviet interior, but most were forced back by the rapid German advance or lost their lives on the roads. At least 2 Jews were murdered in the first days of the occupation, as Lithuanian "hooligans" went on a rampage. Immediately, local Lithuanian nationalists, including many from the educated middle class, formed a town administration. The local mayor was a man named Povilios, and a police force was established under the command of Vincas Mimavičius. At the end of June 1941, 30 Lithuanian partisans arrested about 100 Jews who were accused of being Communists and having collaborated with the Soviets. The partisans marched them through town in their underwear to the Babenai Forest about 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) outside the town, where they shot them.[2]

The new Lithuanian administration implemented a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were marked with yellow Stars of David, were ordered to perform forced labor, and were not permitted to maintain any relations with non-Jews. Local antisemites beat and plundered the Jews with impunity. Forced labor tasks included sorting out bombs left behind by the Soviets at the airfield, under close supervision by the Lithuanian police. About 10 Jews were killed during this work.[3]

On July 23, 1941, a second Aktion was carried out in Kėdainiai. On that day, Germans from Einsatzkommando 3 and Lithuanian policemen arrested 95 Jews (83 men and 12 women), as well as 15 Russian and 15 Lithuanian Communists.[4] They transported the prisoners on six trucks about 10 kilometers (6 miles) into the Taučiūnai Forest and then shot them. In return for a large sum, a local Lithuanian informed the remaining Jews of the fate of those arrested, but initially their relatives were reluctant to believe that it was true.[5]

At the start of August 1941, on the order of Dočkus, the head of the Kėdainiai district, Mayor Povilios established a ghetto in the town. He instructed the Jewish leaders that the remaining Jews in Kėdainiai had to vacate their homes within 24 hours and move onto Smilgia Street to the synagogue; this area, together with the surrounding lanes up to Gaidiminiu Street, was surrounded with barbed wire.[6] On August 14, 1941, Jews from the village of Žeimiai were resettled into the ghetto.[7] On the same day, 200 Jews were also resettled there from the village of Šėta. Others were brought in from Josvaniai. Overcrowding in the ghetto was severe, and almost all food reserves were used up. The inmates of the ghetto suffered from hunger and outbreaks of typhus. Povilios ordered the Jews in the ghetto to pay a "contribution" of 100 rubles per head, threatening to destroy the community if the sum was not paid. People gave up their last rubles to meet this demand.[8] Some Jewish youths wanted to flee to the forests and hide, but the community leaders urged them not to, lest they should endanger the entire community.

On August 16, 1941, on the orders of the director of the police department in Kaunas, all men over the age of 15 in the ghetto were rounded up. Women who allegedly "in the years of the Russian occupation worked for the Bolsheviks and at the present time continued with the same kind of insolent work" were also seized.[9] In total, 730 men and 183 women were arrested and imprisoned in the barn of the Kėdainiai School of Technology, under close guard. The men were held separately from the women. Among the men were 19 students from the Mir Yeshiva who had arrived in 1939–1940 and had not managed to escape.[10] The prisoners were held under terrible conditions, with almost no food and water for 13 days. The Lithuanian guards deprived them of their last few possessions. Each day they were transported to various forced labor tasks.[11]

On August 27, 1941, district head Dočkus called a meeting to coordinate the destruction of the Jews. About 150 Lithuanians attended, including municipal employees, 20 technology students, 20 railroad workers, and Lithuanian partisans. A German officer addressed the group, saying that it was necessary to help Germany destroy its enemies: the Jews of Kėdainiai. A former bank clerk, Kungys, then spoke, also calling on the assembled Lithuanian patriots to help destroy the Jews, accusing them of having helped the Bolsheviks bring Soviet rule to Lithuania.[12] Those attending the meeting were then assigned to three separate groups: one for escorting the Jews, one for guarding the ghetto, and a third for taking care of the site of the shooting. Volunteer shooters came forward from among the crowd.

The next day, forces of Einsatzkommando 3, Lithuanian policemen, and other local personnel assembled and were issued ammunition. Not everyone from the meeting the previous day chose to show up. First, the sick and the elderly were transported on trucks to the killing site in a ravine 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) northwest of the city, on the road to Dotnuva near the Smilga stream. Here, Soviet prisoners of war (POWs) threw the old people into the pit like sacks before they were fired on. The Jewish men were escorted from the Technology School on foot and were made to undress at the pits. During the shooting of the men, there were several individual acts of resistance. One Jew, Zadok Schlapoberskii, a former officer in the Lithuanian army, managed to grab a pistol from a Lithuanian guard and wounded the German commandant as they grappled with each other, falling into the pit. Other Lithuanian guards jumped in and bayoneted Schlapoberskii, but not before he wounded a Lithuanian, Aleksas Cižas, sufficiently to kill him. Two other Jews were shot as they attempted to flee.[13]

Last to be shot were the women and children; some children were merely tossed into the pit to be buried alive. To cover the screams of the victims, the Lithuanians revved the engines of their vehicles. The shooting lasted until evening, and the murderers had brought with them large quantities of vodka and beer. Present at the site was Mayor Povilios, the high school principal, and a young Catholic priest.[14] Among those who participated directly in the shooting were a restaurant owner, students from the College of Technology, railroad employees, and the manager of the power station. At the end, the Soviet POWs spread lime over the grave, and Police Chief Kurkitis gave his men permission to return home. In total, the few Germans present and their Lithuanian collaborators shot 2,076 people (710 men, 767 women, and 599 children).[15]

Local Lithuanians saw piles of tefillin and even baby's comforters next to the bloody grave site just after the massacre. They observed the ground moving over the following days as gas escaped from the grave. Locals looted the empty ghetto.[16] The more valuable property was taken by the Germans and the police, with less valuable property being sold to the local population at fixed prices. Only three Jews from the Kėdainiai ghetto, Chaim Ronder, Shmuel Smulasky, and Benzel Berger, are known to have survived the massacre by escaping from the ghetto or successfully hiding. They then managed to hide with local farmers before joining the Soviet partisans later in the war.[17]

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews in Kėdainiai during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: David Volpe, "Keydan," *Fun letstn khurbn*, no. 10 (December 1948): 48–56—a Hebrew version is in Yosef Krust, ed., *Kaidan: Sefer zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yotse Kaidan be-Yisrael, be-hishtatfutam shel yotse Kaidan be-Derom-Afrikah uve-Artsot-he-Berit, 1977), pp. 229–233, and an English version in David E. Wolpe, *I and My World: Autobiography* (Johannesburg: Dov-Tov, 1997), pp. v–x; *A Jew in the Forest* (New York, 1955); B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973); Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), p. 345; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 199–202; "Kedainiai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 581–589; "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns," published on the Web at jewishgen.org; and Arūnas Bubnys, "Mazieji Lietuvos Zydu Getai Ir Laikinos Izoliaviavimo Stoyvyklos 1941–1943 Metais," in *The Year Book of Lithuanian History, 1999* (Vilnius: Metai, 2000), pp. 168–169.

Documentation on the fate of the Jews of Kėdainiai during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: GARF; LCVA (R 683-2-2); LYA (33777-55-156); RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM (RG-50.473*102 and 103); and YVA (e.g., O-53/21, M-1/E/1415 and 1568).

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NOTES

1. Volpe, "Keydan," p. 49.
2. Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 581–589; Volpe, "Keydan," p. 49; Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), p. 290.
3. Volpe, "Keydan," p. 50.
4. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 110, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 10, 1941; Volpe, "Keydan," p. 51.
5. Bronstein *Yahadut Lita*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945*, p. 345.
6. Testimony of Chaim Ronderis, October 7, 1957, in Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944)*, vol. 2 pp. 136–137; and Volpe, "Keydan," p. 51.
7. LCVA, R 683-2-2, p. 20, report of the head of the police force in Žeimiai, August 15, 1941.
8. Testimony of Chaim Ronderis, October 7, 1957; Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945*, p. 345.
9. Citation from the order of V. Reivitis, the director of the police department, August 14, 1941, in B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, eds., *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970), p. 159.
10. Report of the head of the police force in Kėdainiai, August 17, 1941, in ibid., p. 215; Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry*, p. 202.
11. Bronstein *Yahadut Lita*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945*, p. 345; and "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns," available via jewishgen.org.
12. LYA, 33777-55-156, pp. 112–113, testimony of Edvardas Miceika to the KGB, July 14, 1945, as cited by Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust*, pp. 290–291.
13. "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns"; and Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust*, p. 291.
14. Wolpe, *I and My World*, pp. viii–ix.
15. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 112, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.
16. USHMM, RG-50.473*102 and 103.
17. "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns."

KELMĖ

Pre-1940: Kelmė (Yiddish: Kelm), town, Raseiniai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Kelmė/Kel'me, Raseiniai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kelme, Kreis Raseinen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kelmė, rajonas center, Šiauliai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Kelmė is located 100 kilometers (62.5 miles) northwest of Kaunas. In 1940, there were 2,000 Jews living in Kelmė.

German armed forces occupied the town on June 24, 1941, and the majority of the Jewish homes burned down during the fighting. A number of Jews fled the town to the east, and those Jews who lost their homes were accommodated in the few remaining Jewish houses, as well as on several Jewish farms near the town.

A few days after the occupation of the town, Lithuanian nationalists formed a town administration. The mayor was a Lithuanian named Cesnys, and the chief of police was a man

named Barkauskas (or possibly Kurkauskas).[1] On or just before July 1, all the Jews were required to gather in the marketplace and listen to a virulent antisemitic address by the authorities, which insisted that "all Jews should be imprisoned in camps, since they were responsible for the war." Then on July 1, 1941, the town administration ordered the Jews to wear yellow Stars of David, and the able-bodied men were separated from the women.

The Jewish women, children, and elderly people who were still in the town were resettled to seven Jewish-owned farms scattered in the countryside around the town, which formed a kind of rural ghetto. According to Haya Roz, "[T]he Jews in these farms lived relatively freely and worked on the farms in the area. There were no guards, but they were forbidden to leave the farm. One boy was shot by Lithuanians for going from one farm to another."[2] Another survivor, Jaakov Zak, noted that there were no guards around the farms, but the Lithuanians would come and rob the Jews.[3]

At the same time, the able-bodied men were moved to a camp in the granary of Zunda Lunts, which was closely guarded by the Lithuanians. Under armed Lithuanian escort, the men were sent out from there daily to perform various labor tasks, including cleaning the town and clearing away rubble. For their labors, the Jews received one cup of coffee with a piece of bread in the morning and evening and a bowl of watery soup with a little grain at midday. While working, the Jews were humiliated and beaten by the Lithuanian guards and by local antisemites. On one occasion, 11 Jews whose poor health kept them from working were shot dead in the Jewish cemetery. In addition to this group murder, individual killings of Jews also took place.[4] The Jewish farm owners were not taken to the granary of Zunda Lunts. They were ordered to keep running their farms and to provide work for the Jews from the granary.

On July 29, 1941, the first large-scale Aktion took place in Kelmė. On July 28, Lithuanian guards assembled all the Jews from the various farms at the Grušewskis farm and conducted a selection there. Then some of the women and children were sent back to the farms. On July 29, most of the Jews from the Lunts granary, apart from 36 who were left alive,[5] were also taken to a gravel quarry near the Grušewskis farm, where they were shot together with those women and children who had been kept at the Grušewskis farm overnight. According to the estimate of Haya Roz, about 1,200 Jews were shot altogether. Jaakov Zak notes also that several groups of Jews were shot throughout the day and that he learned from two Lithuanian students that all the Jews from Vaiguva and a great part of the Jews from the Jewish-owned farms had been shot to death. Zak was taken to sort out the belongings of the murdered Jews and recognized the clothes of his father, uncle, and other relatives.[6]

On August 22, 1941, a second Aktion was carried out in Kelmė. The remaining Jewish women, children, and elderly from the farms, along with the few Jewish workers still at the Lunts granary, were taken to the gravel quarry near the Grušewskis farm and shot there by the Lithuanians.[7]

A number of Jews managed to escape from the farms before the second Aktion and sought refuge with local peasants. Only a few Jews survived, as many people were betrayed by the peasants or were caught by the Lithuanian policemen and partisans.[8] When the Germans were driven from Kelmė in 1944, only 15 of the Jews who came under German occupation were known to be alive.

SOURCES Information about the extermination of the Jews of Kelmė can be found in the following publications: "Kelme," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 10 (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972), p. 902; Idah Markus-Kerbelnik and Bat-Sheva Levitan-Kerbelnik, eds., *Kelm—'Ets Karut* (Tel Aviv, 1993)—an English translation is available on jewishgen.org; Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 598–604; and *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), pp. 350–352.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: USHMM (RG-50.120*0105); VHF (e.g., # 24630); and YVA (O-71/46, 48).

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NOTES

1. YVA, O-71/46, testimony of Jaakov Zak, 1948; O-71/48, testimony of Haya Roz, 1948.
2. Ibid., O-71/48.
3. Ibid., O-71/46.
4. Ibid.; "The End of the Road for the Jews of Kelmė," in Markus-Kerbelnik and Levitan-Kerbelnik, *Kelm—'Ets Karut*, pp. 47–63.
5. B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 400.
6. Markus-Kerbelnik and Levitan-Kerbelnik, *Kelm—'Ets Karut*, pp. 47–63. YVA, O-71/48, estimates the number of victims on July 29 at 1,200. Also see O-71/46. Soviet sources indicate that after the occupation 483 corpses of men, women, and children were found in a mass grave 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) north of Kelmė; see Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 598–604.
7. Markus-Kerbelnik and Levitan-Kerbelnik, *Kelm—'Ets Karut*, pp. 47–63.
8. YVA, O-71/46.

KIEMIELISZKI

Pre-1939: Kiemieliszki (Yiddish: Kimelishok), village, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Kemelishki, Ostrovets raion, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Kiemieliszki, initially Rayon Swir, Gebiet Wilejka, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then from April 1, 1942, Kreis Swir, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kamelishki, Astravets raen, Hrodna voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Kiemieliszki is located about 48 kilometers (30 miles) northeast of Wilno. On the eve of World War II, there were 27 Jewish families residing in the village.

German forces occupied the village at the end of June 1941. In the summer of 1941, a German military commandant's office (Ortskommandantur) administered Kiemieliszki. In September 1941, authority was transferred to a German civil administration. Kiemieliszki was initially incorporated into Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien.

In the summer and fall of 1941, a series of anti-Jewish measures were introduced in Kiemieliszki. Jews marked their clothing with the Star of David, were forced into heavy labor, and were prohibited from leaving the village. The Jewish population was also subjected to systematic robbery and assault by the local auxiliary police, which initially consisted mainly of local inhabitants of Belorussian and Polish ethnicity.

In October 1941, a ghetto was established in Kiemieliszki. It was organized by the head of the local police, Ivan Lazugo, and the head of the local administration, Boleslav Legovec. It consisted of several houses, which were enclosed by a fence and guarded by the local police. Jews left the ghetto daily to perform forced labor.[1]

The number of Jews in the ghetto increased steadily in the fall and winter of 1941–1942, as survivors of the massacres in nearby places, including Niemenczyn and Podbrodzie, made their way there, as it was one of the few ghettos remaining in the area. Despite the strict rules against accepting newcomers, the Jewish Council (Judenrat), headed by Brumberg, did its best to accommodate the arrivals and provide them with shelter and work.[2] In early 1942, a number of Jewish youths were rounded up and taken away for forced labor.

On April 1, 1942, the region including Kiemieliszki was transferred from Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien to Generalkommissariat Litauen and now became part of Gebiet Wilna-Land. At this time, Lithuanians came in and took over the local administration and police.[3] Among the restrictions imposed officially on the Jews living in the ghettos in this region were a curfew from 7:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M. and a prohibition on any personal or economic contacts with non-Jews.[4]

The Germans liquidated the ghetto on October 24, 1942, when a Security Police detachment from Wilno, with the assistance of local police, shot more than 350 Jews in the forest about 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) outside the village, including a number of Jews brought in from other places at this time.[5] On October 27, 1942, the head of the Judenrat in Wilno, Jacob Gens, reported that the Germans had liquidated the ghettos in Bystrzyca and Kiemieliszki during the previous week. He regretted that no Jewish Police from the Wilno ghetto had been present, as "all the Jews were shot there without any distinction."[6] According to one report, however, some of the Jews may have been transferred to the ghetto in Michaliszki.[7] After the ghetto's liquidation, former Jewish houses were sold to local inhabitants for building material.

A few Jews from Kiemieliszki managed to flee the ghetto and survived in hiding with non-Jews in the region. Among them were Bronia Wluka, who escaped from the ghetto and lived on the Aryan side, and Hadassah Rozen, who narrowly escaped being shot when a non-Jew, who knew her from the Kiemieliszki ghetto, denounced her.[8]

SOURCES Information about the persecution and destruction of the Jews in Kiemieliszki can be found in these publications: Szmerke Kaczerginski, *Hurbn Vilne: Umkum fun di Yidn in Vilne un Vilner gegnt . . . : Zamlung fun eydus: Bavayzn oder dokumentn* (New York: Aroysgegebn fun dem fareyniktn Vilner hilfs-komitet in Nyu-York durkh Tsiko bikher-farlag, 1947), pp. 164–166; Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), pp. 115–116; Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 312–313; "Kiemieliszki," in Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas hakehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna, Bialystok, Nowogrodek* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp. 552–554; Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-esrim veshalosh kehilot she-nehrevu be-ezor Svintsian* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Svintzian in Israel and the U.S., 1965), pp. 1389–1390; and Vladimir Adamushko et al., eds., *Handbuch der Haftstätten für die Zivilbevölkerung auf dem besetzten Territorium von Belarus 1941–1944* (Minsk: Gosudarstvennyi komitet po arkhivam i deloproizdvodstvu Respubliki Belarus', 2001), p. 119.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: MA (D.1357); NARB (845-1-63, pp. 39, 44); USHMM (RG-50.473*0082); VHF (# 8796); YIVO (RG-104 I, no. 611); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Guzenberg et al., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir*, pp. 115–116.
2. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron . . . Svintsian*, pp. 1389–1390.
3. USHMM, RG-50.473*0082, testimony of Antoni Witold Rakowski.
4. Anordnung Betr.: Ghettoisierung der Juden, issued by Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, May 13, 1942, reproduced in Guzenberg et al., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir*, p. 130.
5. NARB, 845-1-63, pp. 39, 44.
6. See Jacob Gens's words at the meeting of the Judenrat in Vilnius on October 27, 1942, MA, D.1357, published in I. Arad, ed., *Unichtozhenie evreev SSSR v gody nemetskoi okkupatsii (1941–1944): Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1991), p. 254.
7. YIVO, RG-104 I, no. 611, report of Shmuel Kalmanovich, as cited by Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.8.1.
8. VHF, # 8796, testimony of Bronia Wluka; Kaczerginski, *Hurbn Vilne*, pp. 164–166.

KRAKĖS

Pre-1940: Krakės (Yiddish: Krok), town, Kėdainiai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Krakės/Krakes, Kaunas uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Krakes, Kreis Kedahnen, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Krakės, Kėdainiai rajonas, Kaunas apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Krakės is located 62 kilometers (39 miles) north-northwest of Kaunas. According to census data, there were 659 Jews living in Krakės in 1923; in 1930 the Jewish population numbered 550, or 165 families. By June 1941, emigration during the 1930s had further reduced the number of Jews, most of whom lived in the center of town.

German military forces entered Krakės soon after the start of the German invasion, probably on June 23, 1941, the same day that nearby Kėdainiai was captured.[1] Before the Germans arrived, local Lithuanians, the so-called activists, seized power within the community and arrested a number of Jews and alleged Communists. Some of those taken into custody were transferred to Kėdainiai and never seen again. Initial measures taken against the Jewish population included abuse, torture, and shootings, which were carried out mainly in the Jewish cemetery. The town's doctor, Dr. Alperovitch, was among those murdered at this time.[2]

Witnesses told postwar investigators that the situation calmed down somewhat once the main German forces had passed through Krakės. But in the wake of the German troops, Lithuanian activists carried out the first systematic measures against the Jews. They forced Jews to wear the yellow Star of David on their outer clothing and banned Jews from using the sidewalks. Property and valuables belonging to Jews were seized and often sold to the local population. The activists also carried out the first killings.

A few weeks after the German occupation of Krakės, probably in the first half of August, a ghetto was established in the town on a single street. A wooden fence about 2.5 meters (8.2 feet) high, topped with barbed wire, surrounded the ghetto area, and Lithuanian activists or members of the local police guarded the perimeter. The Jews suffered from overcrowding, with 10 people sharing a single room. The witnesses also remembered that some of the local Lithuanian residents aided the ghetto population, providing them with food in spite of the orders forbidding them all contact with the Jews.[3] The Jewish men and some women capable of work were soon separated from the others in the ghetto and taken to a building described in some sources as a monastery situated on the edge of the town. These Jews performed a variety of work tasks on a short-term basis.[4] *Pinkas ha-kehilot* indicates that in August the Jews of Dotnuva, probably around 100 people, were also sent to the monastery near Krakės, which was used as a ghetto.

The ghetto existed for approximately one month. According to an August 17, 1941, letter from the chief of the local police, A. Kuviotkus, a total of 452 Jews were residing in the Krakės ghetto at that time: 337 men and 115 women. The number of people held in the ghetto had increased considerably by the end of August 1941, as Jews from Kėdainiai, Ariogala, Baisogala, Gudžiūnai, Grinkiškis, Pociūnėliai, Dotnuva, and other nearby villages were moved into it.[5]

In the middle of August 1941, the 3rd Company of the 13th Lithuanian Self-Defense Battalion, consisting of approximately 30 armed men under the command of Juozas Bardza, arrived in Krakės. The battalion brought with it a note in German, stating that it was tasked with murdering all the Jewish inhabitants of the town. Precinct Police Chief Teodoras Kerza then selected a site for the killings in the Peštinukai Forest, 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) outside Krakės, and ordered local inhabitants to prepare large pits there about 2 or 3 meters (6.6 to 9.8 feet) wide. The members of the battalion carried out the mass shooting on September 2, 1941, assisted by six members of the local Lithuanian auxiliary police and 10 to 12 Lithuanian activists, who were also issued with weapons. The Jews were marched from the ghetto to the killing site, suffering brutal beatings from the Lithuanian guards on the way. On nearing the pits, the victims had to undress to their underwear and enter the pits, lying down on top of the bodies of the previous victims, in groups of 20 to 25. The Lithuanians then shot them from the edge of the pits. A number of Jews tried to escape, but most were shot by the guards, with only a few successfully evading their pursuers. The elderly and children were taken from the ghetto in trucks and were killed at the same spot after the Jews brought from the monastery had been shot.[6] Only one or two accounts mention the presence of a German official at the killing site; but there is no doubt about the participation of a number of Lithuanian policemen and activists from Krakės and its vicinity.[7]

The number of Jewish victims is not mentioned specifically by eyewitnesses, but it is likely that the ghetto liquidation was the incident reported by Karl Jäger in his report dated December 1, 1941. Jäger noted that between August 28 and September 2, 1941, a total of 1,125 Jews (448 men, 476 women, and 201 children) were shot in Krakės.[8] After the murders, the participants got drunk in celebration, having traded the clothes of the victims with local people for home brew.[9] A primary school teacher made a speech giving thanks for the "cleansing" of the settlement of its Jewish population. The remaining valuables belonging to the local Jewish population were gathered in one house in the former ghetto and distributed among the killers or sold to locals.[10]

For participation in the murder of Jews in Krakės, as well as in other localities in Lithuania, eight former policemen of the 3rd Company, Lithuanian Police Battalion 13, were sentenced to death at a trial held in Kaunas between September 27 and October 4, 1962.

SOURCES Additional information can be found in these publications: Arūnas Bubnys, "Mazieji Lietuvos Zydu Getai ir Laikinos Izoliaviavimo Stoyvyklos 1941–1943 Metais," in *The Year Book of Lithuanian History, 1999* (Vilnius: Metai, 2000), pp. 151–179; Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), pp. 293–295; "Krakes

(Krok)," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), p. 352, available in English on the Web at jewishgen.org; Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 208–209, 613–615; and "The Jews of Krakes," published on the Web at shtetlinks.jewishgen.org.

Information about the fate of the Jews of Krakės during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-421); LCVA; LYA (3377-55-60); RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM (50.473*0032-38, testimonies of Vytautas Racickas, Gėnė Rackienė, Valerija Krilienė, Antanas Petrauskas, Janina Kaupienė, and Stanislava Gaucienė); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Bubnys, "Mazieji Lietuvos Zydu Getai," p. 168.
2. Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, p. 613; and "The Jews of Krakes," which includes the "memories" of several local inhabitants, including Ona Rekstiene.
3. USHMM, RG-50.473*0032, statement of Vytautas Racickas. See also "The Jews of Krakes," memories of A. Jubauskas.
4. See USHMM RG-50.473*0035, statement of Antanas Petrauskas; and Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust*, p. 294.
5. "Krakes (Krok)," in Bronstein, *Yahudat Lita*, vol. 4, p. 352.
6. Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust*, pp. 293–295.
7. Ibid.; USHMM, RG-50.473*0034, statement of Valerija Krilienė, cassette 2; "The Jews of Krakes."
8. LYA, 3377-55-60, p. 18; and RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 113, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.
9. Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust*, p. 293.
10. "The Jews of Krakes," memories of Ona Rekstiene.

KRAŽIAI

Pre-1940: Kražiai (Yiddish: Krozsh), town, Raseiniai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Kražiai/Krazhai, Raseiniai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kraziai, Kreis Raseinen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kražiai, Kelmė rajonas, Šiauliai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Kražiai is located 37 kilometers (23 miles) northwest of Raseiniai. In 1923, there were 660 Jews residing in Kražiai.

German armed forces occupied the town on June 24, 1941. Right after the arrival of German troops, Lithuanian nationalists set up a local administration and organized an auxiliary police force. In Kražiai the head of the local police was named Jurevičius, and the leader of the partisan headquarters was Vytautas Sakalauskas. These new local authorities soon launched a series of measures against the Jewish population. All Jews who had fled the town and taken refuge in the nearby villages were ordered to return to Kražiai. Next, the Jews, numbering about 400, were concentrated and held in local storage buildings and in horse stables. Soon after their confinement in these facilities, Jews brought from the surrounding villages were placed with them. A short time later, all these individuals were assembled on the town's market square. They had to surrender all the valuables they were carrying. Then the victims were escorted to the Siuksta Manor about 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) from Kražiai and locked in a large storage barn. This barn, surrounded and guarded by armed Lithuanians, became a ghetto. Those Jews who were able to work were taken from the barn-ghetto each day, guarded by Lithuanians, and forced to perform heavy manual labor.

On July 22, 1941, a small squad of about 12 German policemen, assisted by around 80 Lithuanian partisans, carried out an Aktion. They transported on trucks about 250 to 300 Jews, consisting of most of the adults over the age of 14, to the Kuprė Forest about 9 kilometers (5.6 miles) east of Kražiai on the pretext of a forced labor assignment. In the forest, the Germans and Lithuanian partisans shot the Jews into a predug trench. The Germans tried to ensure that all the Lithuanians took part in the shooting; two who refused were beaten but suffered no further punishment. Jonas Vladička testified that with the help of Sakalauskas he was able to get his fiancée, Lėja Aronaitė, out of the ghetto.[1]

Following this killing, about 60 to 80 Jewish children and five adults remained alive in the barn-ghetto. About two weeks later, local Lithuanian women came to the barn to take home the children of particular Jewish friends, informing the Jews that the children's parents had already been murdered. However, Rabbi Kramerman, who was among the remaining adults, intervened and ensured that all but two sisters were returned, as the Lithuanian women intended to convert the children to Catholicism.[2] According to the account written by Antanas Jonynas, "The Hill," some of the Jewish children in the barn suffered from dysentery, but the Jewish doctor in Kražiai, who also had been spared from the initial Aktion, was not permitted to treat them.[3]

Among the children in the barn was Yoseph Ben-Yaakov, who recalled that some time after the first Aktion, "[a]ll of a sudden there were guards again. Two days later security was reinforced. We were guarded by Lithuanian partisans. . . . I understood that something bad was about to happen." In response Yoseph went and hid in a pile of hay in the attic of a nearby barn. After three days he emerged and sought refuge with Lithuanian acquaintances of his father.[4]

In the meantime, on September 2, 1941, the remaining Jewish children and adults were taken out to the Medžiokalnis Forest 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) northwest of Kražiai and were shot. Only a few of the youths managed to escape.

One of the Lithuanians who allegedly participated in the killing of the Jews, Bronius Kaminskas, went to the United States as a refugee after the war.[5] A number of others were tried by the Soviet authorities.

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews of Kražiai can be found in the following publications:

B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 401; "Kraziai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 607–608; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 367.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: LYA (3377-55-2, pp. 9, 22, 24, 26, 48); and MA (A.401). A short story by Antanas Jonynas, "The Hill," was published in the Soviet Union in 1966. It is reportedly based on real events surrounding the murder of the Jews of Kražiai. An English translation of the story is located at USHMM (Acc.2006.22).

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NOTES

1. LYA, 3377-55-2, pp. 9, 22, 24, 26, 48, as cited by Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), p. 279.
2. MA, A.401, testimony of Yoseph Ben-Yaakov, as cited by Efraim Zuroff, *Occupation Nazi-Hunter: The Continuing Search for Perpetrators of the Holocaust* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1994), pp. 102–103.
3. This detail is reported by Antanas Jonynas, "The Hill," (USHMM, Acc.2006.22). According to this source, the Jewish doctor was murdered some time later.
4. MA, A.401, as cited by Zuroff, *Occupation Nazi-Hunter*, pp. 102–103.
5. David S. Wyman, *The World Reacts to the Holocaust* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 351.

KREKENAVA

Pre-1940: Krekenava (Yiddish: Krakinove), village, Panevėžys apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Panevėžys/Panevezhis uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kreis Ponewesch, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: town, Panevėžys rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Krekenava is located 26 kilometers (16 miles) southwest of Panevėžys. According to the 1923 census, there were 527 Jews living in Krekenava, comprising half of the total population. By mid-1941, emigration, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s, had somewhat reduced the size of the village's Jewish community.

At the onset of the German invasion on June 22, 1941, many Jews attempted to flee from Krekenava in a convoy of horse-driven wagons, but they were stopped by Lithuanian nationalist activists in Panevėžys and forced to turn back. German armed forces occupied the town on June 25, 1941. Lithuanian activists immediately formed a local authority and a police force, which began their work by introducing a series of anti-Jewish measures.

First, the young Jewish men were arrested and jailed; a few days later they were taken from the jail and divided into two groups. Each group was taken to a separate site outside the village, where they were forced to dig their own graves and then shot. The Lithuanian activists also arrested a group of young Jewish women; in the jail they were subjected to gang rape and then murdered.

The remaining Jewish men were assembled in the Bet Midrash by Lithuanian activists. They were kept there under close guard without any food or water. One of the Jews attacked a Lithuanian guard with a knife, when the guard prevented him from leaving the Bet Midrash. After a few days the Jewish men were taken outside the village on the pretext of a work assignment breaking rocks for road construction and then shot. In total, about 200 people were shot near the village in the summer of 1941.[1]

The remaining Jewish women, children, and old people in the village were herded into the synagogue and a few neighboring houses, which the Lithuanian activists declared a ghetto. Hungry and thirsty, they remained in this ghetto until July 27, 1941, when they were told they could take their most valuable possessions with them, as they would soon be transferred to another camp. They were then loaded onto carts and escorted off in the direction of Panevėžys. The Jewish women and children were killed in the Pajuostė Forest, 8 kilometers (5 miles) west of Panevėžys, probably sometime later in August 1941. In the meantime they were apparently kept in a makeshift camp at the Pajuostė airfield, left without even the few possessions they had loaded onto the carts, which had been stolen on their arrival. They were shot together with other Jews from the Panevėžys ghetto and region. The report of Einsatzkommando 3, prepared by SS-Standartenführer Karl Jäger, noted that 7,525 Jews (including 4,602 Jewish women and 1,312 Jewish children) were shot at Panevėžys on August 23, 1941. These figures probably include the remaining Jewish women and children from Krekenava.[2]

SOURCES Information about the fate of the Jewish community of Krekenava during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: "Krekenava," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), pp. 354–355; "Krakenava," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 621ff.; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 676; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 368.

Documentation regarding the murder of the Jews of Krekenava can be found in the following archives: BA-BL (R 70 SU/15); GARF (7021-94-426); LCVA; and YVA (M-9/15[6], O-3/3034).

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NOTES

1. B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentų rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 400.

2. Report by Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941, BA-BL, R 70 SU/15.

KRETINGA

Pre-1940: Kretinga, town and apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kröttingen, Kreis center, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kretinga, rajonas center, Klaipėda apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Kretinga is located 133 kilometers (83 miles) west-southwest of Šiauliai. In mid-June 1941, there were about 700 local Jews in Kretinga. Including Jewish refugees, mainly from Klaipėda following its annexation by Germany in 1939, there were approximately 1,000 Jews in Kretinga at the time of the German invasion.

Kretinga lay within the zone (extending 25 kilometers [15.5 miles] behind the former Lithuanian-German border) that was subjected to "cleansing operations" against Jews and other suspected enemies, conducted by the head of the Staatspolizei (Stapo) office in Tilsit, SS-Sturmbannführer Hans-Joachim Böhme, during the first days of the occupation.[1]

German armed forces occupied Kretinga on June 22, 1941, without encountering any serious resistance. Immediately on the capture of the town, Lithuanian nationalists set up a local administration and police force. The so-called Lithuanian activists included the following individuals: the head of the district, Šedviatas; the mayor of the town, Piktučys; the head of the security police, Pranas Lukys (alias Jakys); the chief of police, Petrauskas; and other leading activists such as Petras Janušaitas and Brother Aloyzas.[2]

Measures were taken against the Jewish population during the first days of the occupation. All adult men (older than 14 years) were ordered to gather at the town's market square. Soon most of the non-Jews were released, but Lithuanian auxiliaries and German police beat the Jews brutally and made them kiss their boots. Local Lithuanians flocked to the square and demanded that those arrested be hanged for having collaborated with the Soviets. At the end of the day, most of the Jews were locked in the synagogue. Others were taken to the local prison.[3]

On the next day (either June 25 or 26),[4] forces of Stapo Tilsit, joined by others from Stapo Memel (Klaipėda), including members of the Schutzpolizei, traveled to Kretinga. Before their arrival, around 150 Jewish men had been escorted from the synagogue and herded into a fenced-in part of the square near the ruins of the Russian Orthodox Church, where they were held along with about 60 non-Jewish prisoners. German and Lithuanian police also searched the town for Jews in hiding. By afternoon, they had found about 30 more Jews, who were brought to the square. About half of the non-Jews were released by Böhme, who was in charge of the Aktion, after consulting with the local security police chief, Pranas Lukys. Then the Stapo forces, reinforced by Lithuanian police and about 20 soldiers of the local garrison (Ortskommandantur), conveyed all the victims by truck out of town to a place close to the estate of Pryšmančiai. At this site, the Jews were forced to dig trenches while being beaten heavily by their guards. Before the execution, more of the Lithuanian (non-Jewish) prisoners were released. The Jews were then forced to line up in groups of 10, and 20 members of the Schutzpolizei from Tilsit shot them from behind into the completed trenches. Each group was informed that they were being shot in punishment for crimes committed against the Wehrmacht (two soldiers had been killed by snipers in Kretinga shortly after the capture of the town). In total, the Germans killed 214 persons (mostly Jews and including one woman). The Lithuanian activists served as guards during this Aktion, but the Germans did the shooting.[5]

During the following night, a fire broke out in the local synagogue and spread to neighboring buildings of the town. The Germans and Lithuanians immediately accused the remaining Jews of starting the fire as an act of revenge. These few hundred Jews (mainly women and children) were arrested and taken to Pryšmančiai, where they were herded into a stable guarded by Lithuanian police (Litauischer Ordnungsdienst).[6] This became a de facto ghetto for the Jews, where they were held for more than two months.

Following the fire in Kretinga, the police chief in nearby Palanga received a call from Kretinga, ordering him to arrest all the Jews to prevent a repetition of the arson there. Over the following days, the Germans and Lithuanians arrested 78 more people and shot them near Pryšmančiai. Male Jews who had been hiding or were rounded up in the surrounding villages were taken to the prison in Kretinga, where they were abused and humiliated before being shot in turn after a few days or weeks. Between July 11 and 18, a further 120 men were shot at the Jewish cemetery in Kretinga.[7]

In early August, a meeting was held at the office of the Lithuanian head of the Kretinga district. Local Lithuanians met with several Gestapo officers to discuss the situation of the remaining Jews, among other issues. The Gestapo recommended that the Lithuanians should murder the Jewish women and children, as they were not worth feeding because they were unable to perform useful forced labor. The Lithuanians wanted to obtain confirmation from the Lithuanian administration in Kaunas first. The reply came the next day from the chief of police in Kaunas, saying that no decision had been made to murder the women and children, but this decision was to be left to the local officials. Plans were then made for the Lithuanian forces to kill the remaining women and children in early September 1941.

In mid-August 1941, the wives and children of 15 Jewish men who had been shot in early July—at least 20 people—were shot by the Lithuanian policemen.[8] The remaining Jewish women, children, and elderly confined at Pryšmančiai had been informed that their male relatives had been taken away to a separate labor camp. At the beginning of September, these Jews were told that now they would be able to join the men. They were taken to a nearby threshing hall, supposedly for a medical examination. As they left the hall, they

were attacked with iron bars, knives, and bayonets by drunken members of the Lithuanian auxiliary police. Some Germans stood by and photographed this gruesome scene. Those Jews who survived the attacks were shot, and all the victims were buried in a mass grave. The number of Jews taken from the barn in Pryšmančiai and murdered in early September 1941 was approximately 120.

In 1961, the German court in Tübingen, Germany, convicted and sentenced two former members of Stapo Tilsit, named Wiechert and Schulz, for taking part in the killings on June 26, 1941. Pranas Lukys was sentenced to five years in prison by the German court in Ulm in 1960.[9]

SOURCES Information on the murder of the Jews in Kretinga can be found in the following publications: *Hitleriniai žudikai Kretingoje*: *Faktai kaltina* (Vilnius, 1960); B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 396; Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), pp. 353–354—a translation can be found in Joseph Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), pp. 98–100; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuanian Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995); "Kretinga," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 617–621; "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns," published at jewishgen.org; *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1976–1979), vol. 15, Lfd. Nr. 465, vol. 16, Lfd. Nr. 499, vol. 17, Lfd. Nr. 509 and 521, and vol. 19, Lfd. Nr. 547; and Konrad Kwiet, "Rehearsing for Murder: The Beginning of the Final Solution in Lithuania in June 1941," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 12:1 (Spring 1998): 3–26.

Documentation on the fate of the Jews of Kretinga during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: BA-BL (R 58/214); BA-L (B 162/2582-2615); LCVA; LYA (3377-55-107); RGVA (500-1-758); and USHMM.

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. RGVA, 500-1-758, p. 2, report of Stapo Tilsit, July 1, 1941, published in Peter Klein, ed., *Die Einsatzgruppen in der besetzten Sowjetunion 1941/42* (Berlin: Hentrich, 1997), pp. 372–375.
2. Urteil LG-Tüb, gegen Wiechert und Schulz, May 10, 1961, in *JuNS-V*, vol. 17 (1977) Lfd. Nr. 509, pp. 343–344.
3. Ibid.
4. RGVA, 500-1-758, p. 2, report of Stapo Tilsit, July 1, 1941, dates the Aktion on June 25, 1941. Other sources date it on June 26, 1941.
5. Ibid.; *JuNS-V*, vol. 17 (1977) Lfd. Nr. 509, pp. 343–346.
6. RGVA, 500-1-758, p. 2, report of Stapo Tilsit, July 1, 1941; and LG-Ulm, Urteil gegen Böhme u.a., August 29, 1958, in *JuNS-V*, vol. 15 (1976) Lfd. Nr. 465.
7. The 78 victims include 15 Jewish men shot in early July with the participation of Lukys; see *JuNS-V*, vol. 16 (1976) Lfd. Nr. 499, pp. 816–817. Also see BA-BL, R 58/214, Ereignismeldung UdSSR no. 19, July 11, 1941.
8. *JuNS-V*, vol. 16 (1976) Lfd. Nr. 499, p. 818.
9. Urteil LG-Tüb, gegen Wiechert und Schulz, May 10, 1961, in *JuNS-V*, vol. 17 (1977) Lfd Nr. 509; Urteil LG-Ulm, gegen Lukys and Schmidt-Hammer, November 3, 1960, in *JuNS-V*, vol. 16 (1976) Lfd. Nr. 499.

KREWO

Pre-1939: Krewo (Yiddish: Kreve), village, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Krevo, Oshmiany raion, then Smorgon' raion, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Krewo, initially Rayon Smorgonie, Gebiet Wilejka, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then from April 1, 1942, Kreis Aschmene, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kreva, Smargon' raen, Hrodna voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Krewo is located 101 kilometers (63 miles) west-northwest of Minsk. On the eve of World War II, there were about 150 Jewish families living in the village.

In August 1939, several young Jewish men were mobilized into the Polish army just before the German invasion. On September 17, 1939, the Red Army occupied Krewo, which by the end of the year had been incorporated into the Soviet Union. The Soviet authorities nationalized all large businesses and closed down smaller enterprises. All workers were employed in cooperatives or worked for the state. There were shortages of goods, and people had to line up for basic necessities.[1]

German forces occupied the village on June 25, 1941. Initially a German military administration was in control of the area. Soon after the Germans' arrival, all Jews were assembled and ordered to select a Jewish Council (Judenrat). The Germans introduced a number of anti-Jewish measures: all Jews had to wear yellow badges on their chests and backs; Jews were prohibited from using the sidewalks and visiting the market; and they were forbidden to leave the village or to have any dealings with the non-Jewish population.[2]

On July 25, 1941, German security forces conducted the first Aktion in Krewo. Eight people accused of being Soviet activists were arrested and shot.[3]

The Germans also imposed forced labor on all Jewish adults of working age and on boys over the age of 12. The men worked cutting wood and building roads. Women did laundry and cleaned German homes and offices. On the way to work, Jews were beaten mercilessly by local policemen. A number of Jews worked daily at a German airfield run by the Luftwaffe, outside of town.

In September 1941, authority was transferred to a German civil administration. Krewo was initially incorporated into Gebiet Wilejka in Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien. Then from April 1, 1942, until the end of the Nazi occupation in 1944, Krewo was part of Gebiet Wilna-Land in Generalkommissariat Litauen.

By October 1941, the Jews of Krewo had been resettled into a ghetto in a run-down part of town on Bogdanover Street, from the area of the castle up to the market.[4] Farmers from the surrounding area plundered those houses that the

Jews vacated. According to one survivor, the ghetto remained unfenced,[5] but Jews were only permitted to leave for work, provided they had work passes. Local policemen counted the Jews as they left and returned to the ghetto in work columns each day.[6] There was severe overcrowding in the ghetto, and a number of Jews had to live in cold and uncomfortable conditions in the synagogue. Shortages of food and the unsanitary living arrangements resulted in the spread of infectious disease. However, the Judenrat tried to share the burdens as best it could; for example, refugees from other towns, who had been robbed of all their possessions by the local police, were assigned to eat with a different family every evening.[7]

Those employed outside the ghetto risked their lives by bartering possessions with local farmers for food and smuggling it into the ghetto. The German authorities periodically imposed "contributions" of money and goods on the Judenrat. In January 1942, the Germans rounded up a group of male Jews and escorted them out of town; they were never heard from again. In 1942, there were also assignments of Jews to forced labor camps, especially of young Jews to the forced labor camp in Žiežmariai run by the Organisation Todt, which involved the construction of a road between Kaunas and Wilno.[8]

According to German reports from the late summer of 1942, there were 447 Jews living in the Krewo ghetto, of whom 143 (102 men and 41 women) were deployed for work at various workplaces. Sixty-eight men and 26 women worked for the Wehrmacht (probably a Luftwaffe detachment), 10 men worked cleaning streets, and 8 men worked as artisans. The list also includes 3 men as ghetto guards and 3 working for the Judenrat (probably its members). Others include a female nurse and a female hairdresser, 2 men in the town bakery, and 2 men and 2 women in the dairy.[9]

In early October 1942, just after the High Holidays, the remaining Jews in the Krewo ghetto were transferred to the Oszmiana ghetto. Some of the Jews transferred to Oszmiana were subsequently murdered by a Lithuanian killing squad on October 24, 1942, in an Aktion directed against the elderly and the sick. When the Oszmiana ghetto was liquidated in March 1943, some Jews were sent to the Wilno ghetto, others were sent to the Ponary killing site to be shot, and a number were permitted to join relatives in labor camps in Lithuania, including the camp at Žiežmariai.[10] A few Jews managed to escape from the Krewo and Oszmiana ghettos and join the partisans. Most of the known survivors, however, passed through the Žiežmariai camp.

SOURCES Information about the extermination of the Jews of Krewo can be found in the following publications: Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp. 565–567; and M. Gelbert, ed., *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Oshminah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Oshminah be-Yisrael, 1969).

Documents regarding the fate of the Jews of Krewo during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-89-15); IPN (SWKsz 28); LCVA (R 626-1-211); NARB; VHF (e.g., # 4991, 7295, 16340, 18162, 46855, and 50668); USHMM (e.g., RG-02.002*21; RG-22.002M, reel 24); and YVA.

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. VHF, # 18162, testimony of Syma Freund.
2. Gelbert, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Oshminah*, [English section] p. 61; and VHF, # 18162.
3. GARF, 7021-89-15, p. 80. VHF, # 7295, testimony of Sonja Milner, mentions that four Jews were shot at the Jewish cemetery in the summer of 1941.
4. Gelbert, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Oshminah*, p. 292.
5. VHF, # 46855, testimony of Kalmon Jacobson in response to a direct question; most sources do not mention whether or not the ghetto was fenced.
6. Ibid., # 18162.
7. Ibid., # 4991, testimony of Ann Chinitz; and # 7295.
8. Ibid., # 4991; 7295; 16340, testimony of Leon Cepelewicz; 18162; and 50668, testimony of Naomi Milikowski.
9. LCVA, R 626-1-211, pp. 18, 26–27, list of ghettos in Kreis Aschmena, October 1942, and list of Jews working in the Krewo ghetto, n.d.
10. Gelbert, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Oshminah*, pp. 292, [English section] p. 70; and Herman Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939–1944* (New Haven, CT: YIVO, 2002), pp. 532–534.

KUDIRKOS NAUMIESTIS

Pre-1940: Kudirkos Naumiestis (Yiddish: Naishtat-Shaki), town, Šakiai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Šakiai/Shakiai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Neustadt, Kreis Schaken, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kudirkos Naumiestis, Šakiai rajonas, Mariampolė apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Kudirkos Naumiestis is located 60 kilometers (37 miles) west-southwest of Kaunas, on the banks of the Šešupė River. On the eve of the German invasion in June 1941, the Jewish community consisted of about 800 people, including a number of Jews expelled from the Suwałki region of Poland in 1939.

On the arrival of German troops on June 22, 1941, a number of individual Jews, including two Jewish barbers, were shot in reprisal for the killing of a German soldier in the town near the barbers' shop. Lithuanian nationalists established a local administration and a militia (police force) who wore white armbands. The policemen were subordinated to regional Lithuanian authorities recognized by the Germans in Kaunas. The new authorities soon imposed a series of anti-Jewish measures. Members of the local militia and other residents seized Jewish property and valuables. The community was also required to fulfill daily labor quotas for construction work and other forms of manual labor. Those working on these projects were often beaten and humiliated by their guards. The town administration also decreed that it was now illegal for Jews to

have any contact with non-Jews, and Jews were banned from public places.[1]

One evening during the first week of July, members of the Tilsit Gestapo and men from the Border Police (Grenzpolizei) post at Szyrwinty (Schirrwindt), led by SS-Hauptsturmführer Werner Hersmann, arrived in Kudirkos Naumiestis. With the assistance of the local militia, the German police rounded up all of the town's Jewish males over the age of 14 and assembled them at the District Council building. There they were ordered to hand over their valuables. Then they were escorted in groups of 50 to the Jewish cemetery, where they were forced to line up at the edge of several pits that Soviet prisoners of war (POWs) had dug earlier that day. Members of the Lithuanian militia shot the Jews into the pits; Gestapo men and men of the SD walked among the bodies, finishing off any who were still alive. After the Germans and their collaborators had shot 192 Jews, the murderers attended a banquet organized by the district governor and the mayor of Kudirkos Naumiestis, who had witnessed the executions. A few days after the Aktion, the Lithuanian militia discovered several male Jews in hiding who had evaded the roundup. These unfortunates, 9 in all, were also shot at the Jewish cemetery.[2]

Following the Aktion, Jewish women and teenagers were taken daily to perform public works in the town. On August 23, 1941, the remaining Jews in Kudirkos Naumiestis were relocated into a ghetto established in the most run-down part of town on Bathhouse and Synagogue Streets. Although the ghetto was not surrounded by barbed-wire fencing, it was heavily guarded by Lithuanian militia, and a curfew was imposed from 8:00 P.M. in the evening. Three weeks later, on September 16, 1941, the Lithuanian militia in the town liquidated the ghetto. The Jews were told that they would be sent to East Prussia for labor. Once assembled, the 650 ghetto inmates were loaded into carts and driven to a prepared execution site in the Paražniai Forest, 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) outside the town, where members of the local militia shot them into pits. On instructions issued by the Gebietskommissar in Kaunas, the property of the Jews was collected. Valuable items were taken by the German administration, while real estate and items of lesser value were administered by the local authorities. The distribution among local Lithuanians was accompanied by fierce disputes over who should get each item.[3]

A few of the Jews of Kudirkos Naumiestis, including Izaokas Glikas and his family, managed to escape from the ghetto prior to the liquidation Aktion. Two acquaintances of the Glikas family who served in the Lithuanian militia tipped them off, and the family went to hide on the militiamen's family farm, even though these men still participated in the ghetto liquidation. From this initial hideout, they subsequently moved on to Lithuanian farmers in more remote locations, who hid them without receiving any payment. Later, owing to security risks, the family was transferred to a Salesian monastery, where they were hidden, along with other Jews from the region, by Antanas Skeltys, the priest in charge. Although a handful of the Jews of Kudirkos Naumiestis managed to survive until liberation, the town's Jewish community was not reconstituted after the war, as the Jews soon moved away.[4]

SOURCES Information regarding the fate of the Jews of Kudirkos Naumiestis can be found in the following publications: Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 15 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1976), Lfd. Nr. 465; and Rima Dulkiniene and Kerry Keys, eds., *With a Needle in the Heart: Memoirs of Former Prisoners of Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (Vilnius: Garnelius, 2003), pp. 113–116.

Documentation regarding the destruction of the Jewish community in Kudirkos Naumiestis can be found in the following archives: BA-BL (R 58/214); BA-L (B 162/2615); LCVA (R 683-2-2); and VHF (# 11411).

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trans. Katrin Reichelt

NOTES

1. Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust*, pp. 316–317.

2. BA-BL, R 58/214, Ereignismeldung UdSSR no. 19, July 11, 1941; *JuNS-V*, vol. 15, Lfd. Nr. 465, pp. 171–172. On August 29, 1958, LG-Ulm sentenced Hersmann to 15 years' imprisonment for his role in the mass shootings; Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust*, pp. 316–317; Dulkiniene and Keys, *With a Needle in the Heart*, p. 114.

3. Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust*, pp. 316–317; letter from the head of the Šakiai District (V. Karalius) and the head of the police (Vilčinskas) to the head of the Kaunas police department on September 16, 1941, published in Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), pp. 213–214; Dulkiniene and Keys, *With a Needle in the Heart*, p. 114.

4. Dulkiniene and Keys, *With a Needle in the Heart*, pp. 115–116.

KUPIŠKIS

Pre-1940: Kupiškis (Yiddish: Kupishok), town, Panevėžys apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Kupiškis/Kupishkis, Panevėzhis uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kupischken, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kupiškis, rajonas center, Panevėžys apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Kupiškis is located 40 kilometers (25 miles) east-northeast of Panevėžys. In 1938, there were 1,200 Jews living in the town (42 percent of the population).

After the German invasion on June 22, 1941, approximately 40 families were able to flee into the interior of the Soviet Union. Many other Jews also escaped into neighboring villages, awaiting the end of the bombing of the town. In these villages, they were robbed and then sent back to Kupiškis.[1] Around 1,000 Jews remained in Kupiškis at the moment of occupation.

German forces captured the town on June 26, 1941. Some Jews from other places also became trapped in Kupiškis at

this time. Immediately upon the town's seizure, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and police force. The head of the police was P. Graizunas, and his deputy was V. Gudialis. The occupying forces appointed Dr. Werner Loew, a recent German immigrant and a teacher in the local high school, to the position of commandant of the town,[2] a position he held until the start of September 1941. During the summer of 1941, Loew organized the annihilation of Communist activists and all the remaining Jews in the town.

On June 28, 1941, 78 Jews and Lithuanians were arrested and shot in a nearby forest, accused of being Communist activists and collaborating with the Soviet authorities.[3] At the start of July 1941, Loew ordered all the Jews to be resettled into a ghetto, which consisted of a few dilapidated houses on Vilnius Street, near the synagogue, and in a large storehouse. The ghetto was fenced off with barbed wire. The overcrowding, hunger, and thirst for the Jews confined within the ghetto were unbearable.[4]

In July and August 1941, all the ghetto inmates were shot by the Lithuanian police, on Loew's orders. The men were killed first, then the women and children, about two weeks later. The shootings were carried out at the Jewish cemetery. (There are 808 people on the list of murdered Jews. This list was compiled in 1946 by the midwife from the Jewish Maternity Hospital in Panevėžys and from several other sources. Further research is being undertaken to determine the exact origins of this list that supposedly names all those residents of Kupiškis who were killed during the summer of 1941. As there are only 808 people listed out of approximately 1,200 known residents, a number of people may have either escaped, been killed in other locations, or just been forgotten in the process of listing the names, which occurred several years after the fact.) The property of the murdered Jews was confiscated, placed in a warehouse, listed, appraised, and then distributed among the local population. Money was passed on to the town's commandant.[5]

The shootings of the Jews were carried out by a special detachment subordinated to the commandant, which was allegedly headed by Lieutenant Antanas Gudialis (aka Gudeliavicius, who fled to Australia after the war). Also reportedly taking an active part in the shootings were Petras Bernotavičius, the adjutant of the town commandant (who migrated to the United States after the war), and Antanas Jokantas (who also escaped to Australia).

One of the first young Jews to offer resistance was I. Gershumet. Others included Ch. Yutin, H. Shoistevnia, Tzundel, and their friends. They rebelled against the Lithuanian students who aided the Nazis. They wounded two students, which only increased the hatred of Jews among the Lithuanians.[6]

A priest named Ragouskas, a teacher in the Kupiškis high school, tried in vain to save some Jews, but Loew and his followers found them. Dr. J. Franzkevich, a doctor in Kupiškis, tried to save Rabbi Pertzovsky's wife and Mrs. Meyerovitz and her children, but they were discovered and killed about six weeks after the other women and children.[7]

Of all the Kupiškis Jews, only a small number survived the war. They consisted mainly of people who had managed to escape into the Soviet interior in time and a few who survived in the ghettos of Wilno and Kaunas.

On September 25–28, 1965, in a trial in Kupiškis, five former policemen were convicted of having taken an active part in murdering the Jews. Jonas Karalius and Stasis Grigas were each sentenced to 15 years in prison, and Kazis Šniukas, Aleksas Malinauskas, and Danelius Kriukas were sentenced to death by shooting. The German investigation of Dr. Werner Loew (born 1912) was closed due to ill health, and he died in 1990. The Australian Special Investigations Unit investigated two suspects between 1988 and 1992 regarding the murders of Jews in Kupiškis in 1941. Both cases were closed due to insufficient evidence.

SOURCES Information about the elimination of the Jews in Kupiškis can be found in the following publications: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 399–400; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 214–215; Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas hakehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 561–565; Attorney-General's Department, *Report of the Investigations of War Criminals in Australia* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1993), pp. 121–124; and "Pages of Testimony from Yad Vashem," by M. Traub and D. Fleishman-Traub, Tel Aviv, available at jewishgen.org.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: ANA (SIU, PU 561 and 562); BA-L; LYA; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Oshry, *The Annihilation*, p. 214.
2. See V. Khotianovskii, "Ubiitsa zhivet na Mommsenstrasse," *Izvestiia*, September 18, 1967.
3. Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje*, vol. 2, p. 399.
4. Traub and Fleishman-Traub, "Pages of Testimony from Yad Vashem," pp. 1–3; Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 564–565; Oshry, *The Annihilation*, p. 214. There are some discrepancies in the respective descriptions of the ghetto.
5. Khotianovskii, "Ubiitsa zhivet na Mommsenstrasse."
6. Traub and Fleishman-Traub, "Pages of Testimony from Yad Vashem," p. 2.
7. Ibid.; Oshry, *The Annihilation*, p. 214.

KURŠENAI

Pre-1940: Kuršenai (Yiddish: Kurshan), town, Šiauliai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Kuršenai/Kurshenai, Shauliai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kurschenen, Kreis Schaulen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kuršenai, Šiauliai rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Kuršenai is located 26 kilometers (16 miles) west-northwest of Šiauliai. In 1939, there were around 900 Jews living in the town, out of a total population of 2,892.

Immediately after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, on June 22, 1941, many Jews from Kuršenai tried to escape into Russia. However, only 30 families succeeded, as the Soviet authorities forced many to turn back at the Latvian border. On the night that German forces first arrived in Kuršenai, towards the end of June, they murdered two Jews.

Immediately following the Germans' arrival, a Lithuanian partisan squad was formed in Kuršenai, which was headed by Antanas Petkus and soon comprised 70 men. The Lithuanian partisans arrested alleged Communists and supporters of the Soviet regime. They also ordered the Jews to assemble daily in the marketplace, and from there they assigned the Jews to various forced labor tasks, which included clearing rubble from the streets and interring fallen Soviet troops and dead horses. The forced labor was accompanied by frequent beatings. New regulations forbade the Jews from using the sidewalks and ordered them to wear yellow Stars of David.

In the first half of July, the male Jews were confined within the synagogue and Bet Midrash. In mid-July 1941, the Lithuanian partisans seized around 150 male Jews from the prayer houses and escorted them into the Padarbos Forest, about 3 kilometers (2 miles) outside the town. Together with four Germans, the Lithuanian forces then shot the Jews into a large pit. The shooting lasted about five hours. The pit then was filled in by other local inhabitants, requisitioned for this task by the Germans. The Lithuanian partisans took some of the Jews' clothing for themselves, and some subsequently moved into Jewish houses. After the Aktion, the participants returned to Kuršenai to drink in celebration at the local canteen.[1]

In July, a ghetto was established for the women and children, which was guarded by armed Lithuanian partisans, also known as "white-stripers." The Jews were confined within a small area of a couple of streets, which became very overcrowded. The women could only leave the ghetto for one hour per day to secure food from the locals, who cursed and chased them away from the stores.

After a few weeks the Lithuanian partisans were reorganized into a regular police force, which was headed by Povilas Vidugiris. In August or September 1941, the remaining several hundred Jews, mainly women and children, were transferred to the ghetto in Žagarė on about 50 carts, escorted by the local Lithuanian police. Before the transfer, the local police stripped them of any valuable possessions. Some non-Jews said farewell to their Jewish friends but were forbidden to reveal that they knew the cruel fate of the Jewish men.[2] The Jewish women and children from Kuršenai were all murdered on October 2, 1941, when the Žagarė ghetto was liquidated. Only one Jewish woman and one Jewish man from Kuršenai are known to have survived until the area was recaptured by the Red Army in 1944, having found refuge with sympathetic Lithuanian farmers.

After the war, the Soviet authorities tried and sentenced almost 40 former members of the Lithuanian partisans and local police from Kuršenai.

SOURCES The following published sources contain information on the persecution and destruction of the Jews of Kuršenai: Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 569–571; Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews in Šiauliai and the Šiauliai Region," in Irena Guzenberg and Jevgenija Sedova, eds., *The Siauliai Ghetto: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2002), p. 244; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 382.

Relevant testimonies can be found in the following archives: LYA (e.g., K 1-58-44084/3, K 1-58-14771/3, K 1-58-42308/3, K 1-46-1261); USHMM (RG-50.473*0041-44); and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/56, M-1/E/1566).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-50.473*0041-44; LYA, K 1-58-44084/3, pp. 65–70, 77, 105–107, and K 1-46-1261, p. 66, as cited by Bubnys, "The Fate," p. 244.
2. USHMM, RG-50.473*0041, testimony of Antanas Spulginas.

KVĖDARNA

Pre-1940: Kvėdarna (Yiddish: Khveidan), town, Tauragė apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Kvėdarna/Kvedarna, Taurage uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kvedarna/Kweidannen, Kreis Tauroggen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, post-1991: Kvėdarna, Šilalė rajonas, Tauragė apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Kvėdarna is located 51 kilometers (32 miles) south-southwest of Telšiai. The census of 1923 shows that 394 Jews resided in Kvėdarna. Emigration in the 1930s led to a slight decline in their numbers by June 1941. In mid-1941, 65 Jewish families (approximately 300 individuals) lived in Kvėdarna.

The village of Kvėdarna was occupied by German armed forces on June 22, 1941. A number of Jews attempted to flee at the onset of hostilities, but most were forced to return home within a few days. Lithuanian nationalists quickly established a local administration and an auxiliary police force, which began taking action against the Jewish population. The Jews were required to surrender all their valuables, and they were forced to conduct various types of forced labor. In addition, Jews were banned from appearing in public places and from having any contact with non-Jewish Lithuanians. The killings of Jews began immediately. On the very first day of the German occupation, Lithuanian partisans murdered two Jewish boys, Leibel Schwatz and Rubin Meyer.[1]

On Sunday, June 29, 1941, the first Aktion took place: Lithuanian partisans and 20 SS men from Heydekrug, under the leadership of SS-Untersturmführer Theodor Werner

Scheu, arrested all male Jews over the age of 15, about 80 individuals. They were held initially on the market square and were jeered by hostile Lithuanians emerging from the church. The rabbi's beard was shorn as an act of humiliation. Then the male Jews were transported by truck to a labor camp in Heydekrug. Eleven elderly Jews who were unable to work were shot by Lithuanian partisans, probably at the Jewish cemetery, on June 30, 1941.[2]

Of those taken to Heydekrug, together with Jews from Laukuva, Švėkšna, and other places, a number were shot after four to five weeks, and the remainder were kept as forced laborers for more than three years. Some of these Jews ultimately ended up in the concentration camp system, passing also through Auschwitz II-Birkenau in 1943. From there a group was sent to clean up the area of the Warsaw ghetto, and only a handful survived until liberation.[3]

The approximately 200 Jewish women and children left behind in the village were forced into a ghetto, for which a single street (Laukuva Street), including the synagogue, was set aside. The ghetto was under the control of local Lithuanian activists, who raped and murdered many of the women. This ghetto was liquidated in September or October 1941, when all its residents were taken by truck to the Tūbinės Forest near Šilalė and were shot by Lithuanian policemen.[4] A number of Jews from the surrounding villages were also murdered in this place.

The Torah scrolls from Kvėdarna were hidden in the home of the priest, Milimas, and returned to the few survivors after the war.

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews of Kvėdarna can be found in the following publications: "Kvėdarna," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), p. 295; Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 384; and *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vols. 17 and 20 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1976-2010), Lfd. Nr. 511 and Lfd. Nr. 579.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: BA-L; GARF; LCVA; and YVA. The testimony of Gershon Young (Jung) is also summarized at jewishgen.org.

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NOTES

1. Testimonies of Motel Druzin (born March 20, 1903), Chaim Nadel (born May 7, 1905), Berel Levit (born May 3, 1917), Gershon Jung (born October 15, 1923), and Rosa Rachmel (born September 13, 1924), in YVA.

2. Ibid.; LG-Aur (Az 17, Ks 1/61), verdict of May 29, 1961, in the case against Struve, Scheu et al., in *JuNS-V*, vol. 17, Lfd. Nr. 511, pp. 441–442; and vol. 20, Lfd. Nr. 579, p. 309.

3. Testimony of Gershon Young (Jung) from YVA, summarized at jewishgen.org; Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, p. 295.

4. Testimonies of Motel Druzin, Chaim Nadel, Berel Levit, Gershon Jung, and Rosa Rachmel, in YVA.

KYBARTAI

Pre-1940: Kybartai (Yiddish: Kibart), town, Vilkaviškis apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Kybartai/Kibartai, Vilkavishkis uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kibarten, Kreis Wilkowischken, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Kybartai, Vilkaviškis rajonas, Marijampolė apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Kybartai is located 79 kilometers (49 miles) west-southwest of Kaunas. According to the 1923 census, there were 1,253 Jews living in the town (20 percent of the total population). In the 1930s, emigration caused a decline in the size of the Jewish population.

German armed forces captured the town on June 22, 1941, the first day of Germany's invasion of the USSR. Consequently, the Jews were unable to evacuate, and almost all of them remained in the town at the start of the German occupation.

Immediately following the German capture of Kybartai, the Germans freed all the prisoners from the jail, including some who had been accused of resistance to Soviet rule. A few of the released prisoners, together with other Lithuanian nationalists, soon formed a town authority and a local police force. The head of the Lithuanian activists was the veterinarian Zubrickas, who had been among those imprisoned. The chief of police was a man named Vailokaitis.

Initially the German army remained in control of the town and did not take any measures against the Jews. However, soon the local Lithuanian authorities announced a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were forbidden to leave the town or to change their place of residence. They were dismissed from all positions working for government- and state-run business institutions. They had to hand over any weapons and radios in their possession, and they were forbidden to maintain relationships of any kind with non-Jews. A curfew was enforced for the Jews from 6:00 P.M. until 6:00 A.M., and they also were required to wear yellow patches on the front and back of their outer clothes. Murders of the Jews began, primarily of those who had cooperated with the Soviet authorities, during the 1940–1941 Soviet occupation, including members of the Komsomol, a Communist youth organization.[1]

In July 1941, on the orders of the Tilsit Gestapo, members of the Grenzpolizei (Border Police) office in Eydtkau (headed by Kriminalobersekretär Tietz), along with Lithuanian police, arrested all male Jews over the age of 16 and placed them in a barn in the village of Gudkaimis, 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) north of the town. A number of Jewish women and Lithuanians accused of having collaborated with the Soviet authorities were also arrested and taken to the same barn. There they stayed for several days without food or water. The guards turned back relatives who attempted to bring them food. On July 10, 1941, the prisoners from the barn were escorted by Lithuanian policemen to a meadow, where they were forced to enlarge existing Soviet antitank ditches. The male Jews then were made to undress, and the Germans took away any valuables from them. The Lithuanian police herded the

prisoners under severe blows to the ditch, where a squad of German Security Police (Sipo) shot each of them with a bullet fired into the nape of the neck. In total, 185 Jews and 15 other Lithuanians were executed. The shooting was carried out by a detachment of the Sipo and SD based in Tilsit, under the leadership of SS-Sturmbannführer Hans-Joachim Böhme, with the assistance of Lithuanian policemen. After the mass shooting, the participants ate a large dinner together, paid for from the money that had been collected from the victims.[2]

After the execution of all the men, the remaining Jewish women, children, and old people were placed in several red-brick buildings, formerly barracks, which became a ghetto for them. They remained in this ghetto for approximately one month, then they were moved to the Virbalis ghetto, having to leave most of their belongings behind. On September 11, 1941, the Virbalis ghetto was liquidated by shooting all of the inmates.[3]

On August 29, 1958, a court in Ulm, Germany, sentenced several persons, including Hans-Joachim Böhme, to various terms of imprisonment for participation in the execution of Jews in Kybartai, among other places, in July 1941. On October 12, 1961, a court in Dortmund, Germany, sentenced Gerke, another former official of the Tilsit Gestapo, to three years and six months in prison, also for participation in the Kybartai Aktion in July 1941.

After the war, several Lithuanian collaborators were convicted by Soviet courts for the murder of Jews and Communists from Kybartai. One of the last to be tried received a seven-year sentence, as it could only be proven that he had escorted the victims to their deaths.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Kybartai during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 412; "Kybartai," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); Yosef Rosin et al., eds., *Sefer HaZikron LeKehillot Kibart Lita* (Haifa: Executive Committee of the Society of Former Residents of Kibart, 1988)—an English translation is available at jewishgen.org; and "Kybartai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 575–580.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Kybartai can be found in the following archives: BA-L (e.g., B 162/4650, 14163); GARF (7021-94-419); LCVA; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Rosin et al., "The German Occupation and the Destruction of the Jewish Community," in *Sefer HaZikron LeKehillot Kibart Lita*.

2. Ibid.; see also LG-Ulm, verdict of August 29, 1958, against Fischer-Schweder and others, in *KZ-Verbrechen vor Deutschen Gerichten*, vol. 2, *Einsatzkommando Tilsit: Der Prozess zu Ulm* (Frankfurt/Main, 1966); LG-Dort, verdict of October 12, 1961, against Krumbach, Gerke, and Jahr, in *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 17 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1977), Lfd. Nr. 521; and Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 579–580.

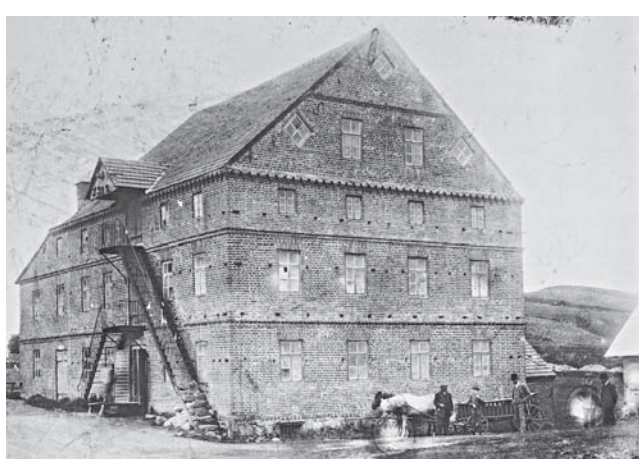
3. Rosin et al., "The German Occupation and the Destruction of the Jewish Community."

LAZDIJAI

Pre-1940: Lazdijai (Yiddish: Lazdei), Seinai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Lazdijai/Lazdiai, Seinai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Lasdien, Kreis center, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Lazdijai, rajonas center, Alytus apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Lazdijai is located 77 kilometers (48 miles) south-southwest of Kaunas. In June 1941, there were about 1,200 Jews living in the town, including around 150 refugees from the Suwałki region.

German forces occupied the town on June 22, 1941, following a heavy bombardment that destroyed two thirds of the houses in Lazdijai. Only 40 Jews were able to flee in time. On June 23, 30 local Lithuanian nationalists formed an administrative committee for the town, which soon implemented a series of anti-Jewish policies. After electing Antanas Aleliūnas as chairman, they thanked the German army and the "greatest leader, Adolf Hitler" by singing the Lithuanian national anthem.[1] On the next day, with the approval of the local German commandant, a Lithuanian police unit was organized, led by Julijonas Geiga. On June 25, 1941, the committee was ordered by the German commandant to resettle "the Jews who were endangering the public order" into two wooden barracks near the church, next to a camp established for the wives and children of Soviet officials, who had been unable to



Pre-war view of a flour mill, owned by the donor's grandfather, in the village of Katkishok outside Lazdijai. This mill later became the killing site for the Jews of Lazdijai.
USHMM WS #62818, COURTESY OF JUDY LUCAS

evacuate.[2] The Jews were ordered to perform heavy labor. They were subjected to public humiliation and assault by the Lithuanian guards and local antisemites. Germans and Lithuanians threatened the Jews with death if they refused to hand over money, gold and silver, jewelry, watches, and other valuables. Some Jews were arrested as alleged Communists and Komsomol members. These people were escorted to Marijampolė and shot there.[3]

Twelve members of the Lithuanian committee went to Kaunas and returned on July 2 with authority from the Lithuanian provisional government to reorganize the local administration in Lazdijai. Aleliūnas became head of the local branch of Saugumas (the Lithuanian Security Police), and Albinas Karalius became the new head of the Lithuanian police for the Kreis, while the policeman Mikas Radevičius was named head of the Kreis administration in Lazdijai. Among the new anti-Jewish measures was their exclusion from all trade.[4]

On September 15, 1941, all the remaining Jews of Lazdijai were resettled into a ghetto, which consisted of six Red Army barracks on the Katkiškės estate, 1.5 kilometers (0.9 mile) from the town. The ghetto grounds were cordoned off by barbed wire and placed under the watch of armed Lithuanian guards, commanded by Bronius Kazlauskas, who ran the ghetto. Jews were also resettled there from nearby towns and villages, including Veisiejai, Kapčiamiestis, and Rudamina, bringing the total number of inmates to more than 1,600 people. A Jewish Council (Judenrat) made up of representatives of the various communities regulated the internal affairs of the ghetto. It was headed by a man named Astromsky, a pharmacist from Kapčiamiestis, who consulted also closely with Rabbi Gerstein. A Jewish police force was created to maintain order. Each day the men were assigned to forced labor by a Jewish Labor Office. At first the inmates received a daily ration of 200 grams (7 ounces) of unsalted bread and 300 grams (10.6 ounces) of potatoes, but the portions gradually diminished, and the Jews suffered from hunger. Only those who could trade personal items for food with local Lithuanians or those who received food for their agricultural work fared a little better.[5]

The ghetto was subordinated to the Lithuanian police chief for the Kreis, Karalius, who issued regulations for the ghetto similar to those applied to German concentration camps. Jews were not permitted to approach within 2 meters (6.6 meters) of the barbed wire, and no contacts were permitted across it. The penalty for leaving the ghetto without permission was death for the offender and his or her entire family.[6]

At the end of October, rumors spread that mass graves were being prepared nearby. Two Jewish women, who worked in the office of the German commandant, had overheard a conversation in which the head official in Marijampolė criticized his colleague in Lazdijai, asking when he was finally going to clear his Kreis of Jews. On Thursday, October 30, 1941, the ghetto was closed, and no one could leave to go to work. A Lithuanian police officer confirmed that pits were being dug and would be ready in a few days. Jews now tried to escape, but some were killed in the attempt.

The Lithuanians surrounded the barracks and boarded up all the windows and doors. The Jews were trapped inside without food or water. In total about 180 Jews managed to escape in these final days, but their chances of surviving in the countryside remained slim.[7]

The ghetto was liquidated on November 3, 1941, when the Rollkommando Hamann, assisted by Lithuanian activists and police, shot 1,535 people (485 men, 511 women, and 539 children).[8] The Jews were forced to undress and climb into the pits. The Germans used machine guns, while the Lithuanians employed rifles. Local residents were requisitioned to fill in the pits, being forced to stay out of sight behind a hill during the shooting. The clothes of the murdered Jews were taken back to Lazdijai on wagons.[9]

Of the 180 Jews who escaped, most were killed by local farmers or were captured by the police and put in the Lazdijai jail. Once 35 Jews had been assembled there, they were all taken out and shot in the same mass grave as the others. Two escapees from the Lazdijai ghetto made their way to the Kaunas ghetto in July 1942. Only 8 Jews from the Lazdijai ghetto are known to have survived the war: Riva Gerstein-Michnovski, Zeiv Michnovski, Dov Zeif, Miryam Kuleiski and the sisters Gita and Batsheva Kaufman (all from Lazdijai), as well as Chmilevski (from Veisiejai) and Gedalia Kagan (from Rudamina).[10]

SOURCES Much of the information for this entry is based on the work of Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.5. Other relevant publications include "Lazdijai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas hakehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 349–352; Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), pp. 303–305, available also in English in Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), pp. 100–104; and Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), p. 299.

Documents dealing with the elimination of the Jews in Lazdijai can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-428); LCVA (e.g., R 409-2-5); USHMM (RG-22.002M, reel 19); and YVA (Koniukhovsky Collection, O-71/131, 132).

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NOTES

1. Protocol no. 1, June 23, 1941, in B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 151.

2. Protocols nos. 3 and 4, June 24 and 25, 1941, in Valentinas Brandisauskas, ed., *1941 m. Birzelio sukilimas. Dokumentu rinkinys* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2000), pp. 240–243, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik."

3. GARF, 7021-94-428; Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas hakehilot: Lithuania*, p. 351.

4. Brandisauskas, *1941 m.*, pp. 245–247, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik."

5. Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 351–352.

6. LCVA, R 409-2-5, pp. 33–34, Gettui-Taisyklės, September 22, 1941, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik."

7. Levinson, *The Shoah*, pp. 103–104.

8. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 114, report of Einsatzkommando No. 3, December 1, 1941; B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 1 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1965), p. 136; B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970), p. 237.

9. USHMM, RG-22.002M, reel 19, as cited by Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust*, p. 299.

10. Levinson, *The Shoah*, p. 104; Avraham Tory, *Surviving the Holocaust: The Kovno Ghetto Diary* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 109–110.

LINKUVA

Pre-1940: Linkuva (Yiddish: Linkeve), town, Šiauliai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Linkuva/Linkovo, Shauliai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Linkau, Kreis Schaulen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Linkuva, Pakruojis rajonas, Šiauliai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Linkuva is located 45 kilometers (28 miles) north-northwest of Panevėžys. According to the 1923 census, there were 625 Jews living in Linkuva. In the 1930s, the number of Jews declined slightly. After the beginning of the war, a certain number of Jewish refugees settled in Linkuva.

German troops captured the town on June 28, 1941. Immediately after its capture, Lithuanian nationalist activists formed a partisan squad in Linkuva, which was headed initially by J. Jakubaitis and Jonas Tinteris. On June 29, 1941, the Lithuanian partisans started to arrest Jews and Communists, taking them to the Linkuva granary, which served as a police jail. Here they were interrogated, and more than 70 were murdered in Linkuva during the first days of the occupation. For example, on June 30, 10 young Jews were selected from the prison and taken to be shot near the Catholic cemetery. During the execution, 1 of them managed to escape.[1] On July 3, 1941, 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) northeast of Linkuva, 32 more people were shot.[2] On the previous day, July 2, 125 Jews—men, women, and children, both local residents and refugees—were taken to Šiauliai, where 57 men were put in jail. Later, almost all of these men were killed. The women and children were allowed to return to Linkuva. On their return journey, however, as they were passing through the town of Pakruojis, some of them were killed by local Lithuanian activists.[3]

According to the research of historian Arūnas Bubnys, the Linkuva partisan squad was reorganized into an auxiliary police squad in early July 1941, now headed by Lieutenant Petras Beleckas.[4] The Jews who had survived the initial massacres were then locked up in the barns of David Davidson, probably before mid-July, establishing a kind of ghetto.

Accounts of the fate of these remaining Jews differ in the available sources. According to *Pinkas ha-kehilot*, all the remaining Jews were shot on July 23, 1941, when the barn ghetto in Linkuva was liquidated and up to 700 Jews (including some refugees from elsewhere) were shot in the Atkočiūnai Forest.[5]

On the basis of Soviet trials, Bubnys has reconstructed a more detailed version of the ghetto's liquidation. First the Lithuanian auxiliary police brought the Jewish men to the Tsalke farm, outside the town, probably near the village of Veselkiškiai. The next day, on or around July 26, 1941, a small squad of German Security Police, assisted by Lithuanian auxiliaries, shot between 180 and 200 Jewish men into a pit. The Jewish women and children (about 200–300 people) were taken from the ghetto and shot about one month later in the Atkočiūnai Forest. The women were forced to strip naked first, and the Gestapo men finished off with pistols anyone still moving in the pit. After the mass shooting, the executioners returned to Linkuva for a bout of drinking. More valuable possessions collected from the victims, such as gold rings, were taken by the Germans to Šiauliai, while the Jews' clothing was taken by the local policemen for their families.[6] (According to another source, the ghetto in Linkuva was liquidated between August 5 and 7, 1941, by executing about 500 Jews, with 300 women and children shot in the Atkočiūnai Forest, 5 kilometers [3 miles] southeast of Linkuva, and around 200 men shot in the Dovariukai Forest, 4 kilometers [2.5 miles] northeast of Linkuva.)[7]

Only a handful of Jews from Linkuva survived until the end of World War II.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Linkuva during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: "Linkuva," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), p. 306; Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews in Šiauliai and the Šiauliai Region," in Irena Guzenberg and Jevgenija Sedova, eds., *The Siauliai Ghetto: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2002), pp. 245–247; Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 360–362; and J. Woolf, ed., "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns," available at www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/lithuania3/lithuania3.html.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Linkuva can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-436); LCVA; LYA (e.g., K 1-46-1277 and K 1-58-39421/3); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945*, p. 306.

2. B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 404.

3. Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945*, p. 306.

4. LYA, K 1-58-39421/3, pp. 32–35, 69–70.

5. See GARF, 7021-94-436, p. 28.
6. Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews," pp. 246–247.
7. Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes*, vol. 2, p. 404.

LYGUMAI

Pre-1940: Lygumai (Yiddish: Ligum), village, Šiauliai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Lygumai/Ligumai, Shauliai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Lygumai, Kreis Schaulen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Pakruojis rajonas, Šiauliai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Lygumai is located 22 kilometers (14 miles) east-northeast of Šiauliai. According to the 1923 census, there were 240 Jews living in Lygumai, representing 32 percent of its population. In the 1930s, the number of Jews declined to 120.

In the first days of the war, Aleksandras Keniausis, head of the local detachment of Šaulys (marksmen), organized a squad of Lithuanian partisans, which was later reorganized into an auxiliary police detachment.[1] At this time a number of Jews attempted to flee Lygumai, but most were turned back at the Latvian border and forced to return home.

German troops captured the village on June 28, 1941. Immediately after its capture, Lithuanian nationalists seized power in Lygumai and soon introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures. All Jewish refugees were ordered to leave without delay. On the pretext of searching for weapons, Lithuanian activists robbed many Jewish homes. They arrested a number of Jews on a charge of collaboration with the Soviet authorities in 1940–1941 and sent them to Šiauliai, where they were killed. Several Jews were murdered in the nearby Benaraitsiu Forest.

In the second half of July, all the remaining Jews were rounded up and confined at two separate sites. The Jewish men were taken to a farm in the Juknaičiai Forest, about 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) outside Lygumai. The women and children were placed in the synagogue. These two sites served as a temporary ghetto for the Jews.

In early August, a squad of about 30 Lithuanian partisans assembled in Lygumai, where they were issued with weapons. They then went to the Juknaičiai Forest, where they escorted the Jewish men to a pit that had been prepared nearby. Under the command of four German officers from Šiauliai, the local partisans, reinforced by a squad of about a dozen men from Linkuva, carried out the shooting of the male Jews. The next day, or according to other sources, a few days later, the women and children from the synagogue were also escorted into the Juknaičiai Forest to be shot.

After each Aktion, the possessions of the victims were brought back to Lygumai on carts, and the participants congregated in the local government building to drink alcohol.[2]

SOURCES This account of the fate of the Jewish community of Lygumai during the Holocaust is based mainly on two publications: Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews in Šiauliai and the Šiauliai Region," in Irena Guzenberg and Jevgenija Sedova, eds., *The Siauliai Ghetto: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2002), pp. 228–259, here p. 245; and Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 352–354—an English translation is available at jewishgen.org.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Lygumai can be found in the following archives: BA-L (ZStL, II 207 AR-Z 104/67); GARF (7021-94-436); LCVA; LYA (e.g., K 1-58-P18194-LI and K 1-58-45022/3); and YVA (M-9/15[6], Leyb Koniukhovsky Collection [O-71, file 109]).

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trans. Kathleen Luft

NOTES

1. LYA, K 1-58-P18194-LI, p. 16, testimony of J. Barščiauskas, April 4, 1947, as cited by Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews," p. 245.

2. Available sources diverge somewhat on the precise chronology of events. For example, B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 404, indicates that about 190 Jews were shot in July 1941. The testimony of Nisn Goldes (YVA, Leyb Koniukhovsky Collection, O-71, file 109) also mentions an execution by shooting in July 1941. German investigative sources, i.e., BA-L, ZStL, II 207 AR-Z 104/67, Concluding Report, April 26, 1971, p. 10, as cited by Wolfgang Curilla, *Die deutsche Ordnungspolizei und der Holocaust im Baltikum und in Weissrussland 1941–1944* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2005), p. 297, reports that about 500 Jews were shot on August 1, 1941.

ŁYNTUPY

Pre-1939: Łyntupy (Yiddish: Lyntup), town, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Lyntupy, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: initially Rayon Swir, Gebiet Wilejka, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then from April 1, 1942, Kreis Swir, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Pastavy raen, Vitsebsk voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Łyntupy is located 76 kilometers (47 miles) northeast of Wilno. In 1930, there were 70 Jewish families living in Łyntupy.

German armed forces had occupied the town by the start of July 1941. As soon as the Soviets retreated, a Lithuanian, pro-Nazi militia took over and started to persecute the Jews, killing two people.

In the summer of 1941, a German military commandant's office (Ortskommandantur) exerted authority in the town. In September 1941, authority was transferred to a German civil administration. Łyntupy first was included in Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien (Gebiet Wilejka), and in April 1942, it became part of Generalkommissariat Litauen (Gebiet Wilna-Land).

In the summer and fall of 1941, a series of anti-Jewish measures was introduced in Łyntupy. These included marking the Jews with the Star of David, using them for forced labor, and

placing a ban on their leaving the town limits. The local auxiliary police robbed and beat the Jews with impunity.

Murders of Jews, singly and in groups, took place intermittently from the start of the occupation. Soviet records indicate that in 1941, 22 Jews were shot in Łyntupy.[1] For example, Lithuanian policemen arrested Rabbi Judkovsky and his family for listening to the radio illegally in the house of the former mayor. They were then taken outside the village and shot.[2] In addition, several Jews were arrested and sent to Wilejka, where they were shot despite bribes paid to the head of the German Gendarmerie in Wilejka.[3]

At some time in the second half of 1941 or in early 1942, all the Jews of Łyntupy were moved into a small, run-down section of town, where a ghetto was established.[4] On May 19, 1942, partisans killed two German Kreislandwirtschaftsführer (agricultural leaders) on the Święciany-Łyntupy road. In retribution, 400 "saboteurs and terrorists"[5] were shot in Łyntupy and the surrounding villages. Soviet sources indicate that Jews may have been among those killed in reprisal, but available Jewish survivor testimony does not mention this event.[6]

According to the child survivor Irene Skibinski, at some point, in the spring or summer of 1942, the ghetto was divided in two, and part of the Jewish population was then resettled to the Święciany ghetto. A census taken by the German authorities, officially dated May 27, 1942, reported that there were 161 Jews residing in Łyntupy.[7] This figure probably represents those that remained in Łyntupy, although it may have been taken just before this transfer.

More than 100 Jewish skilled and essential workers, such as an electrician, together with their families, remained in the town. These people were resettled into three houses in the town center, forming a small remnant ghetto or labor camp. They lived there in very crowded conditions, with four to five families sharing a room. Skibinski recalls that there was no school and a shortage of food. Her brother was able to sneak out and obtain food and medicine for her when she fell ill.[8]

Following a partisan attack on Łyntupy on the night of December 18, 1942, the remnant ghetto/labor camp was liquidated on December 22, 1942, when the 93 remaining inmates were rounded up and shot. Some were shot inside the town and the rest at the mass burial site on the town's southern edge.[9] During the roundup, Skibinski's brother was shot by Lithuanian policemen, but she managed to hide in a cellar with her mother. When they emerged from hiding some time later at night, the doors of the ghetto buildings had already been boarded up. They went to the house of Catholic priest Father Pakalnis, who instructed his housekeeper to hide them in the cellar until things quieted down.[10]

Basia Rudnicka also escaped successfully from the Łyntupy ghetto and found refuge with local people near Święciany. Some Jews from Łyntupy were active in the underground in the Święciany ghetto, where a group of Jews escaped to join the partisans in the spring of 1943.

SOURCES Information about the fate of the Jews of Łyntupy during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-esrim ve-shalosh kehilot she-nehrevu be-ezor Svintsian* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Svintzian in Israel and the U.S., 1965), pp. 1433–1446—an English translation is available at jewishgen.org; "Lyntupy," in Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp. 395–397; and Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany*, *Svir*, *Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners*, *1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), pp. 429–431, 640.

Documentation regarding the persecution and murder of Jews in Łyntupy can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-89-13); LCVA (e.g., R 685-4-6); VHF (# 38278); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Marat Botvinnik, *Pamiatniki genotsida evreev Belarusi* (Minsk: Belaruskaia Navuka, 2000), p. 180.
2. Mordekhai Kentsianski (Max Khenchynski), "Our Shtetl," in Kanc, *Sefer zikaron . . . Svintsian*, pp. 1433–1446; Spector and Freundlich, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek*, pp. 396–397.
3. Irene Mauber Skibinski, "Through the Eyes of a Child—My Childhood in Lyntupy," in Kanc, *Sefer zikaron . . . Svintsian*, pp. 1433–1446; see also her more recent testimony, VHF, # 38278.
4. Skibinski, "Through the Eyes of a Child," pp. 1433–1446.
5. LCVA, R 685-4-6, p. 22, Bekanntmachung, Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, Wulff, published in B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970), pp. 250–251.
6. According to Botvinnik, *Pamiatniki genotsida*, pp. 180–181, on May 19 and 20, 1942, 61 Jews were shot in a forest northwest of Łyntupy, and 66 were shot on Golubkov Street. This may, however, reflect the destruction of the labor camp in December 1942, due to incorrect dating.
7. Guzenberg et al., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany*, *Svir*, p. 640.
8. VHF, # 38278.
9. The date and number of victims are taken from the inscription on the memorial; see Guzenberg et al., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany*, *Svir*, p. 429.
10. Skibinski, "Through the Eyes of a Child," pp. 1433–1446; see also VHF, # 38278.

MARIJAMPOLĖ

Pre-1940: Marijampolė (Yiddish: Mariampol), town and apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Marijampolė/Mariiampole, uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Mariampol, Kreis center, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Marijampolė, rajonas and apskritis center, Republic of Lithuania

Marijampolė is located about 54 kilometers (34 miles) southwest of Kaunas. According to the 1923 census, there were 2,545 Jews living in the town. By 1940, it is estimated that the

Flowers and wreaths cover the base of a memorial to Jewish victims in Marijampolė, 1946.
USHMM WS #14816, COURTESY OF SARA TROZKI KOPER

Jewish population had increased to some 2,900, out of a total population of 15,700. This number included about 200 Jewish refugees from the Suwałki region.

After a heavy bombardment, which caused several casualties, German armed forces captured the town on June 23, 1941. The rapid German advance forced most Jews who attempted to flee to turn back to Marijampolė. As recorded by the Kommandant des rückwärtigen Armeegebietes 584, Generalleutnant von Speman, on June 28, 1941: "In Marijampolė the inhabitants formed a local self-defense and police force. Its measures were directed primarily against the Jews."[1] Many Jews were arrested in these first days, and they were subsequently shot in a forest about 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) outside the town in the direction of Vilkaviškis. Before July 18, five mass shootings were recorded in German reports, shootings that claimed the lives of at least 174 Jewish men, 14 Jewish women, and 15 Communists.[2]

On July 11, the Kreischef (regional head) ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat), headed by Rabbi Abrom Geleris, which had six members. By mid-July the Kreischef in Marijampolė had instituted a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews had to wear six-pointed Star of David patches on the front and back of their clothing, and they were required to perform various kinds of hard labor, which included clearing up bomb damage for the men and domestic service for the women. Jews were banned from most public places, including parks, restaurants, and libraries, and could only visit stores at certain restricted times.[3]

One day, the Jews were forced to burn the Torah scrolls from the synagogue, and later in July, the Jews were ordered to abandon their homes and gather in the synagogue and several adjacent houses. In this improvised ghetto, the Jews were subjected to robbery, forced labor, and the abuse of women at night. Some men, who were taken out for forced labor, were simply murdered on the outskirts of town.[4] According to an Einsatzgruppen report, on July 25, 1941, another 90 Jewish men and 13 Jewish women were shot.[5]

In August, the Germans forced Jewish youths to dig trenches behind the barracks near the Šešupė River. At the end of August, the Jewish Council was informed by the Lithuanian administration that a large ghetto was going to be established in the cavalry barracks and that the surrounding area would be handed over to the Jews. The German authorities also informed the Jews that they would be permitted to organize the social and economic aspects of their lives as they saw fit in the ghetto, as long as the war continued. This information was designed to allay fears and spreading rumors that the Jews would soon be shot. At the end of August, all the Jews of Marijampolė packed up their belongings and moved into the barracks. On arrival, the men were separated from the women and children and were crammed into the horse stables. Over the next days the men were subjected to physical abuse. Additional Jews were also brought into the barracks ghetto from Kazlų Rūda, Liudvinavas, and other nearby places at this time.[6]

Then on August 30, 1941, the remaining Jews in Kalvarija, probably in excess of 1,000 people, were told they would be transferred to the Marijampolė ghetto. They loaded all their belongings onto wagons, but these were only taken to the local synagogue. Then the Kalvarija Jews were also taken to the cavalry barracks in Marijampolė, which became extremely overcrowded, holding some 5,000 people by now.[7]

The mass shooting of the Jews concentrated in the Marijampolė ghetto was conducted between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. on September 1, 1941. The men were shot first, followed by the women, children, and the elderly and infirm. About 40 German officers and men organized the Aktion at the barracks, while the shooting at the trenches was conducted by 10 to 15 Germans, assisted by 20 to 30 Lithuanian policemen. According to the report of SS-Standartenführer Karl Jäger, in charge of Einsatzkommando 3, 1,763 Jewish men, 1,812 Jewish women, and 1,404 Jewish children were shot together with 109 mentally ill patients, a German citizen who was married to a Jew, and one Russian. The victims were stripped down to their

underwear, forced to lie down in the trench in groups, and then shot with machine guns from the side. Many of them were only wounded and buried alive. Three men of Einsatzkommando 3 prevented an escape attempt by killing 38 people who tried to flee down a forest path. Some infants were clubbed or trampled to death. Many of the killers were drunk during the Aktion.[8]

After the war, almost no trace of the former Jewish population remained in the town.

SOURCES Information about the elimination of the Jews in Marijampolė can be found in the following publications: "Marijampole," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 385–391; Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), pp. 292–293; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 216–218; and Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.5.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: BA-BL (R 58/214-216); BA-MA (RH 22/362); GARF; LCVA (e.g., R 1361-1-465; R 1361-3-21); LYA (3377-55-108); RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. BA-MA, RH 22/362, p. 32, KTB Nr. 2, Korück 584, June 28, 1941, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik."
2. BA-BL, R 58/214, Ereignismeldung UdSSR no. 11, July 11, 1941; RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.
3. LCVA, R 1361-1-465, p. 1; R 1361-3-21, pp. 4, 6, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik." See also Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 385–391.
4. Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 385–391.
5. BA-BL, R 58/216, Ereignismeldung UdSSR no. 54, August 16, 1941 (NO-2849).
6. Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 385–391.
7. Ibid., pp. 385-391 and pp. 590–594 (Kalvarija). These sources report some 8,000 Jewish victims gathered in Marijampolė, but German reports put the figure at around 5,000, which is probably more reliable.
8. Ibid., pp. 385–391; RGVA, 500-1-25, pp. 112, 116; Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust*, pp. 292–293; Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry*, pp. 217–218.

MAŽEIKIAI

Pre-1940: Mažeikiai (Yiddish: Mazheik), town, apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Mažeikiai/Mazheikiai, uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Moscheiken, Kreis center, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Mažeikiai, rajonas center, Telšiai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Mažeikiai is located 74 kilometers (46 miles) northwest of Šiauliai. According to the 1923 census, there were 771 Jews living in the town. As of 1941, there were around 1,000 Jews residing in Mažeikiai.

German armed forces occupied the town on June 25, 1941. At the start of July 1941, Lithuanian nationalists, headed by a certain Payulis, a former captain in the Lithuanian army, and his deputy Juozas Smauskas, ordered all the Jews to gather in the Bet Midrash. The dentist Dr. Fanya Lampe refused to leave her home, so the Lithuanians killed her and her child. A few days later, the Jews were moved from the Bet Midrash and resettled into a granary. There, Jewish men, over the age of 15, were separated from the women and children. The men remained in the building, while the women and children were resettled to the Psherkshkniai estate, near the village of Tirkšliai. In effect, two ghettos were set up in Mažeikiai, one for the men in the granary and one for the women and children on the Psherkshkniai estate, where the Jewish women and children from Tirkšliai were already concentrated. Able-bodied men were exploited for labor of various kinds in Mažeikiai and its surroundings. The intensive physical labor included loading and unloading trains at the railway station.

On August 3, 1941, all the Jewish men were taken out of the granary and shot near the Jewish cemetery. On August 5, the women and children were resettled into the granary. On August 9, the women and children were also shot near the Jewish cemetery. Along with the Jewish women and children from Mažeikiai, Jews from at least 10 other localities—Akmenė, Seda, Viekšniai, Tirkšliai, Židikai, Pikeliai, Klykoliai, Leckava, Laižuva, and Vegeriai—were also murdered. The total number of victims was around 3,000, buried in at least five separate mass graves. The killings were carried out by the Lithuanian police, under the supervision of the Germans, most likely a detachment of Einsatzkommando 2 from Šiauliai. About 30 non-Jewish Soviet activists, who had been held in the Mažeikiai jail, were also shot along with the Jews. The Lithuanian participants in the shootings were rewarded with Jewish clothing collected at the killing site. After the Aktion, the Lithuanian policemen celebrated their ill-gotten gains with a large meal accompanied by alcohol in Mažeikiai.

SOURCES Information on the persecution and murder of the Jews of Mažeikiai can be found in these publications: Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), pp. 309–310—an English translation by Arye Harry Shamir is available at jewishgen.org; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 218–219; Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 304–305 (Tirkšliai) and 367–369 (Mažeikiai).

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Mažeikiai in the Holocaust can be found in these archives: GARF (7021-94-423, pp. 51–52); LCVA; LYA (3377-55-111); and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/1555 and 1637; M-1/Q/279).

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MEJSZAGOŁA

Pre-1939: Mejszagoła (Yiddish: Meyshegola), village, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1940: Maišiagala, Vilnius apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Maišiagala/Maishagala, Vilnius uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Maischiogala, Kreis Wilna, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Maišiagala, Vilnius rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Mejszagoła is located about 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) north-northwest of Wilno. About 700 Jews resided in the village on the eve of World War II.

When the Soviet forces withdrew in late June 1941, local Lithuanians organized a pogrom in Mejszagoła. On the arrival of the Germans, Jewish property was confiscated, including their farms. On German orders, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established in the village. Jews were required to perform forced labor and were subjected to other restrictions, including the times when they were allowed to purchase food.

The most detailed account of the Mejszagoła ghetto is the testimony by David Rudnik in handwritten Yiddish. He reported that after about one month a ghetto was established in Mejszagoła on small streets that were muddy and dark. At night Germans and Lithuanians entered the ghetto to rob and scare the Jews. They dragged out young Jewish girls and raped them. The Jewish men left the ghetto to perform forced labor working on road repairs, and the women cleaned the homes of local non-Jews. The Jews obtained food from the local farmers.[1]

Living conditions in the ghetto were very overcrowded, with four families sharing a single room. This overcrowding became even worse when Jews from the surrounding villages were also brought into the Mejszagoła ghetto. The Judenrat did not treat the Jews badly but had to collect "contributions" in money, gold, and other items to meet German demands. The Jews also had to surrender all their livestock. The ghetto existed for about two months.[2]

The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos indicates that the Mejszagoła ghetto was liquidated on September 28, 1941, when its inhabitants were taken to the village of Wilanowa, where they were murdered a few days later by Lithuanian and German policemen. In the view of Christoph Dieckmann, however, it is possible that the Jews from the Mejszagoła ghetto were taken to the estate at Veliučionys, near Naujoji Vilnia, where the Soviets had erected a military college. Hundreds of Jews from the region were brought there around September 22 and were shot shortly afterwards. A brief report in *Hurbn Vilne* notes that the Jews of Mejszagoła were taken to Vilianove (12 kilometers [7.5 miles] from Wilno) on September 24 and were shot there within a brief time. It is likely that Wilanowa, Naujoji Vilnia, and Vilianove are all different spellings for the same place.

Rudnik reports that two days before Rosh Hashanah (on September 22 in 1941), on a Sunday, Lithuanian policemen arrived from Wilno and herded all the Jews into the synagogue. Here the Jews were forced to surrender their valuables, including their wedding rings. The Jews were told they would be taken to Wilno. The able-bodied were then marched 15 kilometers (9 miles) on foot to Wilanowa, not far from Podbrzezie,[3] with the children and the elderly transported on trucks. The Jews were brutally beaten with sharp sticks by the Lithuanian police along the route. On arrival the Jews were locked in a barn for three days and nights. About 80 Jewish men, including Rudnik, were taken out to dig a large pit in the forest about 500 meters (547 yards) from the barn.

On Wednesday morning (September 23) the Lithuanian and Polish policemen became drunk and raped the young Jewish girls aged 14 to 18. Then SS men arrived from Wilno and started to take groups of 13 to 15 men to the pit to shoot them. Rudnik was among the first group, which scattered in all directions on a signal. He was 1 of only 3 people who managed to escape from the killing site. The rest of his group was shot trying to escape. After the men, the women and children were forced to undress and were shot into the same pit, some being buried alive. After the Aktion, the Lithuanians auctioned off the Jewish clothing.[4]

SOURCES Relevant publications include Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 459; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 807; Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.6; and Szmerke Kaczerginski, *Hurbn Vilne: Umkum fun di Yidn in Vilne un Vilner gegnt . . . : Zamlung fun eydus: Bavayzn oder dokumentn* (New York: Aroysgegebn fun dem fareyniktn Vilner hilfs-komitet in Nyu-York durkh Tsiko bikher-farlag, 1947), p. 133.

Documentation on the persecution and murder of the Jews of Mejszagoła can be found in the following archives: LCVA; LG-Würz (Ks 15/49, case gainst Martin Weiss); and YVA (M-1/E/1689).

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NOTES

1. YVA, M-1/E/1689 (USHMM, RG-68.095), testimony of David Rudnik.
2. Ibid.
3. It is possible that there was also a ghetto in Podbrzezie, but no detailed information could be found about it for this volume.
4. YVA, M-1/E/1689 (USHMM, RG-68.095), testimony of David Rudnik.

MERKINĖ

Pre-1940: Merkinė (Yiddish: Meretsh), town, Alytus apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Merkinė/Merkine, Olita uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Merken, Kreis Kauen, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Merkinė, Varėna rajonas, Alytus apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Merkinė is located 84 kilometers (52 miles) south-southeast of Kaunas. According to the 1923 census, there were 1,430 Jews living in the town. By June 1941, the population had decreased,

owing to the out-migration of Jews, and stood at fewer than 1,000 people (350 families).

German forces captured the town on June 22, 1941. Merkinė endured severe bombardment, and many Jewish homes were destroyed. A few local Jews attempted to escape, but they were soon forced to return to Merkinė.[1]

Immediately after the seizure of the town, Lithuanian nationalists, led by Matuleitis, the head of the local detachment of Šaulys (marksmen), formed a town administration and a police force, which soon implemented a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were marked with Stars of David, ordered into compulsory labor, and subjected to robbery and assault (including rape) by local antisemites. On June 24, 1941, the first group of Jews was murdered. On the grounds of the Jewish cemetery, Lithuanian partisans shot several Jews whom they accused of being Communists and having collaborated with the Soviet authorities.

According to the account in Rabbi Ephraim Oshry's *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry*, in early July, the German commandant in Merkinė took 50 Jews hostage in an attempt to force the return of Rav Shtoppel, the town's rabbi, who had gone into hiding. As no one was willing to betray the rabbi's whereabouts, the commandant then threatened to kill all the Jews. When word of this reached the rabbi, he surrendered voluntarily. He was then forced to dance and sing before being brutally killed.[2] Other Jews were taken to the Niemen River and drowned there.

In the first half of July 1941, all the Jews in the town were ordered to resettle into a ghetto. The area around the synagogue, the Bet Midrash, and its courtyard was designated for the ghetto. The men resided in the Bet Midrash, separated from the women and children. The ghetto was surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by armed Lithuanian police. A Judenrat with a few members was formed to oversee internal ghetto affairs. Local Lithuanians were permitted to requisition Jews for work. Some selected Jews against whom they had a grudge to take their revenge. From the ghetto, several groups of Jewish men were taken away in the direction of Alytus, then shot.

The Merkinė ghetto remained in existence for about two months. At the end of August, the Jews were made to prepare long trenches in the Jewish cemetery, which allegedly were needed for military purposes. Then a few days later, armed Lithuanians surrounded the ghetto and guarded it closely during the night to prevent anyone from escaping. The next morning, the Jews were driven out of the ghetto to the Jewish cemetery, leaving all their possessions behind.[3]

According to German documentation, the Germans and their collaborators shot the Jews from the Merkinė ghetto on September 10, 1941. A detachment of Einsatzkommando 3, assisted by Lithuanian policemen, shot 854 Jews (223 men, 355 women, and 276 children) in the Jewish cemetery.[4] A few Jewish girls who managed to escape at the time of the roundup were subsequently captured and killed.

SOURCES Information about the persecution and killing of the Jews in Merkinė can be found in the following publications: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 1 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1965); Joseph Rosin, "Meretch (Merkine)," available at www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/meretch/meretch1a.html; Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), pp. 311–312; Uri Shefer, ed., *Meretch: Ayara yehudit be-Lita* (Society of Meretch Immigrants in Israel, 1988); "Meretsh," in Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 219–221; "Merkine," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 392–396; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 459–460.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: LCVA; RGVA (500-1-25); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, pp. 311–312.
2. Oshry, *The Annihilation*, p. 221. This incident, however, is not mentioned in the account by Rosin, "Meretch (Merkine)."
3. Rosin, "Meretch (Merkine)," and Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, pp. 311–312, both date the mass shooting on September 8, 1941.
4. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 113, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941; Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje*, vol. 1, p. 135; B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970), p. 235.

MICHALISZKI

Pre-1939: Michaliszki, town, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Mikhalishki, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: initially Michalischki, Kreis Swir, Gebiet Wilejka, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then from April 1, 1942, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Mikhalishki, Astravets raen, Hrodna voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Michaliszki is located 56 kilometers (35 miles) northeast of Wilno. In 1897, the Jewish population of the town was 951, out of a total of 1,224. Before World War II, there were about 800 Jews living there.

German forces captured the town on June 24, 1941. As the Germans arrived, many Jews fled into the forests. The non-Jewish local inhabitants exploited this opportunity to loot Jewish property. In response to a German order, warning that Jews who did not come home by a certain date would be punished, most of the fugitive Jews returned.

In the summer of 1941, the Germans ordered the chairman of the existing Jewish community (gmina) in Michaliszki, Ora Bleicher, to organize a Jewish Council (Judenrat). However, according to Bleicher's account, when it came to an

election, nobody wanted the position, as they were all afraid of the onerous responsibilities.[1] Nevertheless, a Judenrat was formed, which included the following as members: Yitzhak Świrski (chairman), Josef Chit, Szyjn Miller, Salmun Baruch, Salome Rabinowicz, and Szymon Eystein.

A ghetto was established in Michaliszki by October 1941 on two unpaved streets near the center of town. The spaces between the houses were boarded up with wooden planks, and there was only one exit to the ghetto, guarded internally by the Jewish Police and externally by non-Jewish local policemen. Inside the ghetto, several families had to share a single dwelling.[2] The Jews who performed forced labor left the ghetto area on a daily basis. The Jews worked mostly in the construction or reconstruction of bridges, roads, and railroad tracks, in mills, and in electrical companies. In addition, they had to clear the rubble and snow from the roads. Some Jews were also sent away from the ghetto for a period to cut lumber in the forests.

On April 1, 1942, the region including Michaliszki was transferred from Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien to Generalkommissariat Litauen and became part of Gebiet Wilna-Land. At this time, Lithuanians came in and took over the local administration and local police. Among the restrictions imposed officially on the Jews living in the ghettos in this region were a curfew from 7:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M. and a prohibition on any personal or economic contacts with non-Jews.[3] At the end of May 1942, there were 787 Jews in the Michaliszki ghetto: 363 men and 424 women.[4] In July 1942, a total of 35 prisoners from the Michaliszki ghetto were sent to work in the eastern branch of the Włokiennicze cardboard company.[5]

A document dated November 6, 1942, from the office of the Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, noted that Michaliszki had been recognized as a main ghetto, now subordinated to the administration of the Judenrat in Wilno, and that it had two subghettos, one in Łyntupy and a second in Świr.[6] According to one report, some of the Jews capable of work may have been transferred to the Michaliszki ghetto from Kiemieliszki and Bystrzyca when those ghettos were liquidated at the end of October.[7] Other Jews arrived in Michaliszki after fleeing from Aktions in nearby ghettos, including Świr. Among them was Yehoshua Swidler, who was told by the Judenrat on November 7 that he must leave Michaliszki, as German orders barred the absorption of refugees from other towns. However, instead, he was added to the next transport of laborers to the ghetto in Wilno.[8] At the end of 1942, about 500 inmates of the Świr ghetto were transferred to the Michaliszki ghetto. Only 60 "specialized" Jewish workers then remained in Świr.[9]

In a strictly confidential letter dated March 9, 1943, the Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land informed the Organisation Todt and the Giesler construction company of an order calling for the transfer of all the Jews working in these companies back to the ghettos in Oszmiana, Świr, Michaliszki, and Święciany by March 22, 1943. He also recommended in this memorandum that no appeal should be made against this order.[10]

In early March 1943, a group of young Jews from the Michaliszki ghetto managed to escape to the forests with the aim of joining the anti-German partisans.[11]

At the end of March, the Germans liquidated the Michaliszki ghetto. H. Kruk records that 400 wagons with Jews and their possessions arrived in Wilno from Michaliszki. They were accommodated temporarily on Strashun and Oszmiana Streets. Then in early April, many of the Michaliszki Jews were added to a train containing other Jews from the region, reputedly headed for Kaunas. Instead, the train went only to Ponary, where all the Jews were shot. The train contained Jews from the ghettos of Soly, Oszmiana, Gudogaj, and Ostrowiec, as well as Michaliszki, about 2,500 in total. Only about 50 Jews from this transport managed to escape. A number of Jews from Michaliszki, however, were selected for labor and remained in the Wilno ghetto or were sent to various labor camps subordinated to it, including the camp at Vievis.[12]

SOURCES Information on the ghetto in Michaliszki can be found in these publications: Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews in the Švenčionys, Oshmyany and Svir Regions (1941–1943)," in Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), pp. 83–118, here pp. 114–115; Shalom Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorussia during World War II* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1998); Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.8.1; Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 464–465; Yitzhak Arad, *Ghetto in Flames: The Struggle and Destruction of the Jews in Vilna in the Holocaust* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1982); and Herman Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939–1944* (New Haven, CT: YIVO, 2002).

Relevant documentation can be found in these archives: BA-DH (ZM 1641, A 23); LCVA (R 614-1-736, R 626-l-124, R 677-1-46); USHMM; VHF (e.g., # 30396, 35318, 39703); YIVO (RG-104 I, no. 611); and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/286).

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NOTES

1. YVA, M-1/E/286, testimony of Ore Bleicher, as cited by Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorussia*, pp. 252–253.
2. VHF, # 39703, testimony of Martin Kulbak; # 35318, testimony of Abraham Rudnick.
3. Anordnung Betr.: Ghettoisierung der Juden, issued by Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, May 13, 1942, reproduced in Guzenberg et al., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir*, p. 130.
4. LCVA, R 743-2-10274, pp. 31 and verso, as cited by Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," p. 114.
5. LCVA, R 626-l-124, p. 48.
6. Ibid., R 614-1-736, p. 299.
7. YIVO, RG-104 I, no. 611, report of Shmuel Kalmanovich, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," section F.1.8.1.
8. Yitzhak Siegelman, ed., *Sefer Kobylnik* (Haifa: Va'ad Yozei Kobylnik b'Israel, Committee of Former Residents of Kobylnik in Israel, 1967), p. 151, as cited by Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorussia*, p. 151.

9. BA-DH, ZM 1641, A 23, p. 129 (the case of Gite Mular); Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorussia*, p. 86.
10. LCVA, R 677-1-46, p. 5.
11. Kruk, *The Last Days*, p. 494.
12. Ibid., p. 534; BA-DH, ZM 1641, A 23, p. 129 (the case of Gite Mular); Arad, *Ghetto in Flames*, p. 359; VHF, # 39703, # 35318, and # 30396, testimony of Jack Wysoki.

NAUMIESTIS

Pre-1940: Naumiestis (Yiddish: Neishtot-Tavrig), town, Tauragė apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Naumiestis/Naumestis, Taurage uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Neustadt, Kreis Tauroggen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Žemaičių Naumiestis, Šilute rajonas, Tauragė apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Naumiestis is located 150 kilometers (93 miles) west-northwest of Kaunas. According to the 1923 census, there were 667 Jews living in Naumiestis, 37 percent of the town's total population. About 120 Jewish families remained in Naumiestis by the time of the Soviet occupation in June 1940.

German forces captured the town on the morning of June 22, 1941, the first day of their invasion of the USSR. Following the killing of 14 German soldiers by gunfire, probably from Soviet stragglers, the Germans arrested a number of Jewish men as hostages, holding them in the Lutheran church. However, after the local Lithuanian priest avowed that the Jews were innocent, the men were released to return home.

Immediately after the occupation of the town, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local authority and a police force, which, together with the German Ortskommandantur (military commandant's office), introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews had to report daily to the Ortskommandantur, where they were assigned to perform forced labor. The tasks included sweeping the streets, road repairs, work in a German field kitchen, and the burial of fallen soldiers. The Jews were required to wear yellow patches on their clothes and were forbidden to walk on the sidewalks. At the end of June, the Jews were forced to remove the Torah scrolls and even the benches from the synagogue and burn them.

In early July 1941, all the town's Jews were concentrated in a few houses on Pigs Street, a derelict quarter near the Sustis River, which became the ghetto.[1] The Germans and Lithuanians removed five Jewish girls from the ghetto, and they were never heard from again.

The first Aktion took place on July 19, 1941. Initially, all Jewish males older than 14 were assembled at the synagogue. From this group, 27 able-bodied men were selected and put in the barracks. They were subsequently taken to the Heydekrug (Šilute) labor camp. Of the remaining Jewish males, 10 were sent back to the ghetto, while the others, about 70 in all, were shot near Šiaudvyčiai along with more than 100 male Jews brought there from Vainutas. The shooting was carried out by Lithuanian police and members of the 2nd SS-Reitersturm, SS-Reiterstandarte 20. The Reiterstandarte was commanded by SS-Hauptsturmführer Karl Struve; the Reitersturm, by SS-Untersturmführer Theodor Werner Scheu. Other participants in the killing were members of the 2nd SS-Sturmbann, SS-Standarte 105, and two officials of the Tilsit Gestapo.[2]

During the mass shooting, at least one Jew tried to flee, but he was chased down and shot, and his body was also thrown into the mass grave. One of those selected for labor, Esriel Glock, heard the shooting in the distance (about 4 kilometers [2.5 miles] away) and learned from one of the Lithuanian guards what had happened to the other group of men. After a few hours, the SS men returned to the barracks from the shooting site. The forced laborers were then permitted to return home briefly to the ghetto to fetch some additional clothing before they were sent to the Heydekrug camp.[3]

According to *Pinkas ha-kehilot*, other Jews from Pajūris, Švėkšna, Veivirženai, Kvėdarna, and Laukuva were also brought to the killing site at Šiaudvyčiai on trucks and were shot there. These were probably male Jews who had been sent initially to the Heydekrug labor camp at the end of June 1941 and after four or five weeks had been deemed unfit, following a medical examination. Apparently these men were shot, probably at Šiaudvyčiai, in the second half of July.[4]

The remaining Jews in the ghetto continued to perform forced labor and suffered from hunger and abuse. The ghetto existed until September 25, 1941, when all the Jews were taken out and shot at the Šiaudvyčiai killing site.

The male forced laborers from Naumiestis were kept at the Heydekrug labor camp until the summer of 1943, when they were sent to Auschwitz II-Birkenau. Here, according to *Pinkas ha-kehilot*, 99 men from the group were sent to the gas chambers, and the remainder were sent in October 1943 to clear out the rubble from the Warsaw ghetto. Of the men originally from Naumiestis, only 7 are believed to have survived the war, some of them being liberated by the U.S. Army in Bavaria, after having been transferred to a Dachau subcamp.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Naumiestis during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: *Our Town Neishtot* (Israel: Neishtot-Tavrig Natives Committee, 1982); Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 398–401—an English translation is available at jewishgen.org; LG-Aur, verdict of June 26, 1964, against Struve et al., in *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 20 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1979), Lfd. Nr. 579, pp. 318–330; Ruth Leiserowitz, "Grenzregion als Grauzone. Heydekrug—eine Stadt an der Peripherie Ostpreussens," in Christian Pletzing, ed., *Vorposten des Reichs?: Ostpreussen 1933–1945* (Munich: Meidenbauer, 2006), pp. 129–149.

Documentation regarding the persecution and murder of the Jews in Naumiestis can be found in the following archives: BA-L (B 162/5394-5399); GARF (7021-94-429); and YVA (Leib Koniuchovsky Collection O-71, files 4, 16; M-1/E/1619).

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NOTES

1. The ghetto is mentioned in LG-Aur, verdict of June 26, 1964, against Struve et al., in *JuNS-V*, vol. 20, Lfd. Nr. 579, p. 319.
2. Ibid., pp. 320–321.
3. BA-L, ZStL, II 207 AR-Z 162/59, vol. 2 (B 162/5395), p. 320, testimony of Esriel Glock, 1961, as cited by Leiserowitz, "Grenzregion als Grauzone," p. 140.
4. YVA, testimony of Gershon Young (Jung) from Kvėdarna, summarized at jewishgen.org, who mentions the disappearance of a number of unfit men after four or five weeks.

NOWE ŚWIĘCIANY

Pre-1939: Nowe Święciany (Yiddish: Nei-Sventzion), town, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1940: Švenčionėliai, Švenčionys apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Švenčionėliai/ Novo-Sventsiany, Sventsiany uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Nowe Schwentschionys, Kreis Schwentschionys, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Švenčionėliai, Švenčionys rajonas, Vilnius apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Nowe Święciany is located about 76 kilometers (47 miles) north-northeast of Wilno. According to unofficial data from July 1940, there were 966 Jews living in the town, comprising 20 percent of the total population.

Following the German invasion of Lithuania, nationalist riflemen (Šaulys) and (Lithuanian) Red Army deserters soon joined forces around Nowe Święciany to form a Lithuanian partisan unit of about 60 men, led by Jonas Kurpis. This force attacked retreating units of the Red Army, and some fleeing Jews were killed in the cross fire.[1] The Lithuanian activists then began to arrest Jews and alleged Communists in Nowe Święciany, shooting a number of them in early July, after the arrival of German forces. Among the Jews murdered were Portnoj (mill owner), Epstein (turpentine factory owner), Gavenda (tradesman), and Dr. Kopelovitch (physician).

Bronius Gruzdys was appointed head of the local police in Nowe Święciany. In July the Jews suffered from looting and abuse at the hands of the Lithuanians. A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established to organize forced labor detachments. Among the Jews involved on the council were the merchants Berl Guterman, Yeshayohu Katz, and Osher Butshunsky. They assisted the rabbi, who was in charge of setting up the council.[2]

On July 22, 1941, Lithuanian activists arrested and registered 50 Jewish men. These men were then taken to be killed in groups. When the final group arrived at the killing site and saw the graves, some of the Jewish men fled in different directions, and a few, including Fayve Khayet, managed to escape unscathed. Among the victims were also some Jewish refugees who had fled from other towns in Poland in the fall of 1939.[3]

At the end of July 1941 (or in mid-August, according to Khayet), all the town's Jews were moved into a separate quarter (open ghetto) on Kaltanėnų Street. The Jews continued, however, to trade with local non-Jews illegally, despite the strict local regulations limiting their access to markets and stores. The Jews in the ghetto became increasingly resigned and desperate. However, rumors circulating about the murder of entire Jewish communities elsewhere in Lithuania encountered considerable skepticism.[4]

On September 26, 1941, the local police and former Lithuanian partisans surrounded the ghetto, and on the next day they transferred all the Jews (about 300 to 400 people) to an overcrowded barracks at the military camp (firing range), also known as the Poligon transit camp, located 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) outside the town.

The Jews were held in the Poligon camp for more than a week under atrocious conditions, together with thousands of Jews brought there from other towns in the region, including Ignalino and Podbrodzie. On October 6, the men were separated from the women, and on October 7 Fayve Khayet managed to escape, making his way to the enclosed ghetto in the nearby larger town of Święciany.[5] In the meantime, the German Security Police had informed the mayor of Nowe Święciany, Karolis Cicėnas, and the police chief, Gruzdys, that all the Jews were going to be shot, and these officials organized the preparation of large ditches in the vicinity. Then on October 7–8, 1941, the Jews of Nowe Święciany were shot, along with several thousand other Jews from towns in the region, including from Święciany, where a number of craftsmen were selected out and kept alive in a remnant ghetto. The Jews were taken out of the barracks in groups of 50 and transported by truck to the killing site. The Aktion was organized by the German Security Police and implemented by the men of the Ypatingas Burys Lithuanian killing squad commanded by Juozas Šidlauskas, assisted by 120 local Lithuanian policemen and former partisans. According to the report of Karl Jäger, the commander of Einsatzkommando 3, the 3,726 Jewish victims included 1,169 men, 1,840 women, and 717 children.[6] Other sources, however, indicate that as many as 6,000 to 8,000 people may have been killed at the site.[7]

SOURCES Much of the information for this entry comes from Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews in Šiauliai and the Šiauliai Region," in Irena Guzenberg and Jevgenija Sedova, eds., *The Siauliai Ghetto: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2002), pp. 83–118, here pp. 94–95; and Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.6.

Documentation regarding the murder of the Jews of Nowe Święciany can be found in the following archives: LCVA (R 1548-1-1); LYA (K 1-58-P19224); and YVA (O-71/169.1).

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NOTES

1. YVA, O-71/169.1, testimony of Fayve Khayet, recorded by L. Koniukhovsky, April 1948, p. 123.
2. Ibid., p. 126.
3. Ibid., p. 129. This source lists the names of 23 of the victims.
4. Ibid., pp. 132–133; for the restrictions on Jews visiting markets and shops, see LCVA, R 1548-1-1, p. 309, Order no.

25, issued by the Head of Kreis Schwentschionys, August 25, 1941.

5. YVA, O-71/169.1, p. 134.

6. Report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941, RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 114. This report gives October 9, 1941, as the date of the killing, but other sources indicate it occurred on October 7–8, 1941.

7. Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-esrim ve-shalosh kehilot she-nehrevu be-ezor Svintsian* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Svintzian in Israel and the U.S., 1965), p. 1376, gives the figure of 8,000 victims at the Poligon camp. Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," uses the phrase "at least 5,000."

OBELIAI

Pre-1940: Obeliai (Yiddish: Abel), village, Rokiškis apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Obeliai/Obialiai, Rokishkis uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Obeliai, Kreis Rokischken, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Rokiškis rajonas, Panevėžys apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Obeliai is located about 14 kilometers (9 miles) east of Rokiškis. In the early 1920s, there were about 760 Jews living in Obeliai, comprising around two thirds of the total population.

Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, many Jews tried to flee to the east, but the border with Latvia remained closed, and most were forced to return home. In Obeliai, local peasants exploited the power vacuum to attack the Jews and steal their property.

Germans forces occupied Obeliai on June 26, 1941. Lithuanian nationalist activists seized authority in the village. They arrested a number of Jewish men, who then disappeared, presumably killed. They forced the remaining Jews to perform hard labor. On August 6, 1941, the Lithuanian commandant in Rokiškis, Lieutenant Žukas, issued an order that any local inhabitants who collected Jews for work but then allowed them to move to other places or to avoid work by paying a bribe instead would be severely punished.[1] This reflected the common practice in the region of Jews being requisitioned by local farmers to work on their land.

As no survivor testimony could be located for this entry, details about the existence of a ghetto in Obeliai remain scant. However, a Lithuanian girl, who lived through the German occupation, mentioned the existence of a ghetto in testimony given more than 50 years after the events. She recalled that on the day when the Germans and Lithuanians planned to kill the Jews, some Soviet partisans intervened, emerging from the woods and opening fire, which apparently caused the Aktion to be delayed by 24 hours. The next day she went to the ghetto and observed that it was empty of Jews. She heard the sounds of shooting in the distance, and Jewish clothing was being brought back to the ghetto, where some Lithuanians had arrived with carts to loot the empty houses. She notes also that the Jewish men from Obeliai were taken to Rokiškis to be murdered, while the women and children were brought from Rokiškis to Obeliai to be killed.[2]

The men were probably shot first around August 15, 1941, in the Velniaduobė Woods, 5 kilometers (3 miles) north of Rokiškis. Then on or around August 25, 1941, Jewish women and children from Kamajai, Rokiškis, and several other places were brought to the village of Obeliai, where they were murdered together with the remaining Jews of Obeliai. This second mass grave lies near the village of Antanašė, 5 kilometers (3 miles) south of Obeliai. The shootings were conducted by units of Rollkommando Hamann, subordinated to Einsatzkommando 3, assisted by Lithuanian partisans. According to the Jäger report, on August 25, 1941, the Germans and their collaborators murdered 112 men, 627 women, and 421 children (1,160 people) near Obeliai.[3]

About six months after the massacre, Elena Zalogaite witnessed a local Lithuanian policeman and another man escorting two Jewish women to be killed, presumably after they had been denounced or revealed in hiding.[4]

In the spring of 1944, the Germans arrested a Lithuanian named Vladas Andonas, whom they accused of having given shelter to Jews.

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews of Obeliai can be found in the following publication: Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 113–116.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: LCVA (R 708-1-1); RGVA (500-1-25); and USHMM (RG-50.473*0100).

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NOTES

1. LCVA, R 708-1-1, p. 2, Order no. 5, issued by the Commandant of the Rokiškis District, published in B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970), pp. 149–150.

2. USHMM, RG-50.473*0100, testimony of Elena Zalogaite, born 1928.

3. Report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941, RGVA, 500-1-25, pp. 111–112.

4. USHMM, RG-50.473*0100.

ONUŠKIS

Pre-1939: Onuškis (Yiddish: Hanashishok), town, Alytus apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Onuškis/Onushkis, Trakai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Onuschkis, Kreis Traken, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Onuškis, Trakai rajonas, Vilnius apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Onuškis is located 27 kilometers (17 miles) southwest of Troki (Trakai). According to the 1923 population census, 342 Jews were living in the small town, comprising 56 percent of the total population. At the time of the German invasion, there were about 300 Jews living in Onuškis.

German armed forces occupied Onuškis on June 23, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists seized control of the town

and formed an auxiliary police force mainly composed of former members of the riflemen's organization (Šaulys). The Lithuanian policemen broke into Jewish homes and stole their property. Many Jews were arrested on the pretext that family members had collaborated with the Soviet regime or for the possession of firearms. Some of the prisoners were tortured and killed locally, and others were taken to Trakai to be jailed and subsequently killed. Other sources indicate that the local Catholic priest, Nikodemas Švogžlys-Milžinas, intervened with the German local military commandant (Ortskommandant), Major V. Finger, and obtained the release of at least two of the local Jews, who had been arrested as suspected Communists.[1]

During the first weeks of the occupation, a series of anti-Jewish measures were introduced. Jews were marked with the Star of David, and they were forbidden to associate in any way with Lithuanians. All the Jews were then assembled in the synagogue, from which they were taken to perform forced labor.

In the second half of July 1941, the head of Kreis Traken, Petras Mačinskas, issued orders for Jews to be registered, for Jewish Councils to be established, and for the Jews of the Kreis to be isolated in ghettos. The aim was to prevent Jews from moving about freely from village to village. The local authorities were instructed to make suggestions for places where the Jews could be isolated.[2]

On September 1, 1941, the head of Kreis Traken reported to the Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land concerning ghettoization that the Jews of Onuškis, which had been heavily damaged during the German invasion, had all been resettled in the nearby villages of Panošiškis and Žydkaimis. The Jews of the villages of Kęstutis, Pasamavės, and Žilinis would also soon be brought there too, when space could be found for them.[3] This report indicates that a form of rural ghetto may have been established in Panošiškis and Žydkaimis for the Jews of Onuškis and its surrounding villages.

The account in *Pinkas ha-kehilot*, however, only partially corroborates this report. This version indicates that most of the Jews remained in Onuškis until the eve of Rosh Hashanah (September 21, 1941). At this time, the men were rounded up by the Lithuanian police while praying, and the other Jews were collected from their homes. During the roundup, much Jewish property was looted. The Jews of Onuškis were then taken along with other Jews from Aukštadvaris to the village of Panošiškis, where they were held for more than one week. According to this version, the village of Panošiškis served only as a temporary concentration point for Jews, just prior to their extermination.

On September 30, 1941, the Jews of Onuškis, together with the other Jews concentrated in Panošiškis and Žydkaimis, were all escorted to the Worniki (now Varnikų) Forest, about 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) outside Troki. The younger Jews were escorted on foot, suffering blows from their Lithuanian guards, and the children and elderly were transported on carts. On arrival, they were shot by a detachment of Einsatzkommando 3, commanded by Martin Weiss and the Ypatingas Burys (Lithuanian execution squad), which had arrived from Wilno.[4] They were killed alongside other Jews brought there from Rudziszki, Landwarów, and Troki. The shooting started in the early morning and lasted until midday. The total number of victims was 1,446: 366 men, 483 women, and 597 children.[5]

Only a few Jews managed to evade the roundups and find refuge with local farmers. Most of these people were subsequently captured and killed by the Lithuanian police.

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews of Onuškis can be found in the following publications: "Onuskis," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 147–149; Neringa Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydų muziejus, 2002); and Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.6.

Relevant documentation can be found in these archives: GARF; LCVA (e.g., R 617-1-24); LYA (e.g., K 1-58-P14950); RGVA (500-1-25); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje*, p. 43.
2. LCVA, R 617-1-24, pp. 535–536, protocol of a meeting organized by Kreischef Traken, July 23, 1941, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," section F.1.2.6; Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje*, pp. 100–101.
3. Report of the head of Kreis Traken to Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, September 1, 1941, published in Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje*, p. 109.
4. LYA, K 1-58-P14950, p. 52.
5. RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.

OSTROWIEC

Pre-1939: Ostrowiec, village, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Ostrovets, raion center, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Ostrowiec, initially Rayon center, Gebiet Wilejka, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then from April 1, 1942, Kreis Swir, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Astravets, raen center, Hrodna voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Ostrowiec is located about 48 kilometers (30 miles) east of Wilno. In 1921, there were 30 Jewish families living there.

German forces captured the town in late June 1941. Immediately afterwards various anti-Jewish measures were promulgated, including the confiscation of property, the requirement to wear the Star of David on their clothing, and the introduction of forced labor. The Germans maintained Ostrowiec as a Rayon center, as it was located close to the railway line. Jews from neighboring villages were brought to the village by rail and murdered in the nearby forest.

In the fall of 1941, the German authorities ordered the establishment of a ghetto in Ostrowiec. Both local Jews and refugees were forced to move into the designated ghetto area,

where they lived under extremely crowded conditions. At the end of 1941, the Germans murdered most of the Jews in the ghetto. Only a few needed workers and their families were left in a remnant ghetto.

The ghetto area was then reduced in size, surrounded by barbed wire, and turned into a labor camp. Jews removed from other nearby ghettos were also brought to Ostrowiec—from Worniany, Kiemieliszki, and other places. The prisoners in the camp were put to hard labor, such as removing heavy tree stumps or repairing railroad tracks. They were seriously undernourished and frequently beaten by the Germans and local overseers.

On April 1, 1942, the region including Ostrowiec was transferred from Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien to Generalkommissariat Litauen and became part of Gebiet Wilna-Land. At this time, Lithuanians came in and took over the local administration and police. Among the restrictions enforced against the Jews living in the ghettos of this region was a prohibition on any personal or economic contacts with non-Jews.[1] At the end of May 1942, there were 102 Jews in the Ostrowiec ghetto.[2]

According to *Pinkas ha-kehilot*, in 1943, the surviving Jews learned that the Nazis intended to liquidate the camp. A sympathetic German officer secretly confirmed the report and advised them to hide with local farmers. Some Jews escaped into the forest, and a few of them survived until the Red Army drove the Germans from the region. On April 7, 1943, the remaining prisoners were taken to Szumsk, a neighboring village, where they were shot.

According to Herman Kruk, however, some Jews from Ostrowiec may have been taken to Wilno at the end of March, together with the Jews from other ghettos, including Michaliszki (it is likely some Jews were transferred to Michaliszki in the fall of 1942). Then in early April, many of these Jews were put on a train to Ponary, where they were shot. The train reportedly contained Jews from the ghettos of Gudogaj, Michaliszki, and other places as well as Ostrowiec.[3]

SOURCES Information on the ghetto in Ostrowiec can be found in these publications: Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp. 99–100; Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews in the Švenčionys, Oshmyany and Svir Regions (1941–1943)," in Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), pp. 83–118, here p. 115; Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 559.

Relevant documentation can be found in these archives: LCVA; NARB; USHMM; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Anordnung Betr.: Ghettoisierung der Juden, issued by Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, May 13, 1942, reproduced in Guzenberg et al., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir*, p. 130.
2. Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," p. 115.
3. Herman Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939–1944* (New Haven, CT: YIVO, 2002), p. 534.

OSZMIANA

Pre-1939: Oszmiana (Yiddish: Oshmene), town, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Oshmiany, raion center, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Aschmena, initially Rayon center, Gebiet Wilejka, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then from April 1, 1942, Kreis center, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Ashmiany, Hrodna voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Oszmiana is located about 56 kilometers (35 miles) southeast of Wilno. On the eve of World War II, there were about 3,000 Jews living in Oszmiana.

German armed forces occupied the town on June 25, 1941. Because the town was captured so quickly, most Jews were unable to evacuate, and almost all remained in Oszmiana under the occupation.

After about two weeks, the new authorities rounded up about 40 people, both Jews and Poles, accused of having collaborated with the Soviet authorities, and shot them.[1] On July 25, 1941, the Jewish Council (Judenrat) was ordered to supply a list of all male Jews aged between 17 and 65. The next day, on the basis of this list, a detachment of Einsatzkommando 9 rounded up almost all the adult male Jews in Oszmiana. According to the relevant Einsatzgruppen report, 527 people were shot. The victims were buried in the nearby village of Bartel.[2]

In the summer of 1941, the town was run by a German military commandant's office (Ortskommandantur). In September 1941, authority was transferred to a German civil administration. Oszmiana initially was part of Gebiet Wilejka in Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien. The German authorities introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures in Oszmiana, including the appointment of a Jewish Council, with eight

Exterior of the Oszmiana synagogue, photographed in the mid-1990s.
USHMM WS #97259, COURTESY OF JACK KAGAN

members; the marking of Jews by requiring yellow Stars of David on their outer clothing; and the use of Jews for forced labor. Jews were forbidden to leave the town limits or to have any dealings with non-Jews.

In early October (or, according to one source, early September) 1941, on German orders, all the town's Jews were moved into a ghetto, along with those from the surrounding villages. The Jews were able to move their property into the ghetto in an orderly fashion, but some chose to give items to non-Jewish acquaintances for safekeeping. Those Jews already living inside the designated ghetto area had to take in those forced to move in from outside. The ghetto was fenced and guarded by the local police. Jews working outside the ghetto required permits in order to leave.[3] On one occasion the Germans demanded that the holy books be burned, and a few old books were burned to satisfy them. In the ghetto, a number of newborn boys were circumcised by a mohel, who came from Wilno to perform the service.[4]

Living conditions in the ghetto were overcrowded, and there was a shortage of food. Jews leaving the ghetto on work details were able to barter clothing and other items of property with non-Jews and smuggle the food back into the ghetto. Some Jews, especially youths, also climbed over the ghetto fence at night to obtain food.[5]

In the fall of 1941, the German commandant arrested and shot two Jewish women, alleged to have participated in Soviet activities before the German invasion, and a girl caught not wearing her armband. Another woman was arrested for trading illegally with a non-Jew, and the commandant had her shot.[6] The German authorities imposed repeated "contributions" on the Judenrat, including one demand for 200,000 rubles, of which only 64,000 were collected. Other demands were for soap, perfumes, fur clothing, and textiles. The Jews were also forced to surrender their cows and other livestock, apart from 10 cows needed to provide milk for the sick and children. Jews who entered the ghetto illegally from other places were also shot upon capture. However, with the help of a bribe to the Polish mayor (at that time, Skrzat), the Judenrat managed to prepare a new list of residents when the German commandant was replaced, which served to legitimize around 200 Lithuanian refugees.[7]

From April 1, 1942, Oszmiana became part of Gebiet Wilna-Land, now in Generalkommissariat Litauen. At this time new Lithuanian officials were appointed to take over, including Jonas Valys as head of the administration in Oszmiana and Vincas Tiknys as head of police.[8] Just before the handover, around 120 Jews took the opportunity to be transferred to a labor camp at Mołodeczno (in Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien). They, like others, were anxious about what would happen once the Lithuanians took over, as almost all the provincial Jews in Generalkommissariat Litauen had already been killed. The new Gebietskommissar, Horst Wulff, in Wilno ordered the surrender of precious metals and other valuables, which had raised the sum of 26,546 Reichsmark by April 20.[9]

At the end of May, 1,849 Jews were registered in the Oszmiana ghetto.[10] In August 1942, 80 Jewish men and 200 Jewish women were sent to a labor camp in Lithuania.[11] In the late summer or fall of 1942, there were 1,649 Jews reported to be in the Oszmiana ghetto, of which 702 were deployed for labor. By mid-October most of the remaining Jews from Holszany, Smorgonie, Krewo, Żuprany, and Soly had been resettled into the Oszmiana ghetto, increasing the total number of Jews there to around 4,000. This influx exacerbated overcrowding, such that about 20 people had to share a single house.[12]

The German Security Police, believing there were too many Jews in the ghetto, instructed the Jewish Police from the Wilno ghetto to select 1,500 people for liquidation, including women whose husbands had been shot in 1941 and women who had four or five children. They sent the chief of the Jewish Police, Dessler, to Oszmiana, and he determined that, first, the women who had lost their husbands in 1941 were working and therefore could not be liquidated and that, second, there were no families with four or five children; at most there were two children in a family. Therefore, after Dessler's return to Wilno, the number of Jews subject to liquidation was decreased to 800, and when Jakob Gens, head of the Judenrat in the Wilno ghetto, and SS-Hauptscharführer Martin Weiss from the SD Wilna arrived in Oszmiana, the number of Jewish victims was further reduced to 600. As a result, on October 23, 1942, with the participation of the Jewish Police from Wilno, 406 elderly people were rounded up and shot.[13]

In the following five months, life in the ghetto of Oszmiana was comparatively uneventful. The Jewish administration managed to organize the work of the craftsmen, a clinic, and a small hospital; ensured that the ghetto inhabitants had a regular supply of food; and set up a library, a club, a bath, and a boarding house for Jewish workers whose health had deteriorated.[14]

The situation altered sharply in late March 1943, when the decision was made to liquidate the ghetto. During its liquidation in late March and early April 1943, some of the Jews were sent to labor camps in Lithuania and to the ghetto in Wilno, if they had relatives there, and 713 Jews, together with Jews from other liquidated ghettos (around 4,000 in total), were taken to Ponary, near Wilno, and shot there.[15]

According to Shalom Cholawsky, there was an underground organization in Oszmiana that received a warning from the resistance movement in Wilno about the upcoming liquidation. As a result a group of about 50 Jewish youths, armed with two rifles and two grenades, managed to escape from the ghetto on the eve of the Aktion. Of this group, about 40 people subsequently joined up with partisan units to the east in the Belorussian forests.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Oszmiana during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: M. Gelbart, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Oshmana* (Tel Aviv: Oshmaner Organization in Israel and Oshmaner Society in the USA, 1969); Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews in the Švenčionys, Oshmyany and Svir Regions (1941–1943)," in Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany*,

Svir, *Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners*, *1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), pp. 83–118, here pp. 105–110; "Oszmiana," in Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp. 107–114; Herman Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939–1944* (New Haven, CT: YIVO, 2002); Yitzhak Arad, *Ghetto in Flames: The Struggle and Destruction of the Jews in Vilna in the Holocaust* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1982); Shalom Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorussia during World War II* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1998); and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 562–564.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Oszmiana can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/2244, 2537); BA-BL (R 58/216); GARF (7021-89-12); LCVA (R 626-1-211; R 1363-1-1 and 2); MA (D.1357); USHMM; VHF (e.g., # 11883, 20551); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/2537, testimony of Lejzer Pert; 301/2244, testimony of Sima Baran.

2. BA-BL, R 58/216, Ereignismeldung UdSSR no. 50, August 12, 1941; Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 27; "The Diary of Hinda Daul," in Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron* (English section), p. 60. AŻIH, 301/2244—this source gives the number of victims as about 1,000. In the ChGK materials (GARF, 7021-89-12, pp. 2, 4), the number of Jewish victims is stated as 573, but the Aktion is erroneously dated on July 3–4.

3. AŻIH, 301/2537; Chanan Peled (Cepelunski) testimony, available at www.eilatgordinlevitan.com/oshmany/osh_pages/oshmany_stories_chanan.html; "The Diary of Hinda Daul," p. 62. Kruk, *The Last Days*, p. 533, however, dates the establishment of the ghetto on September 5, 1941, as recorded by the former Judenrat of Oszmiana in 1943.

4. Pesie Kustin, "Oshmener geto," in Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron*, pp. 348–351. This source also gives a rough description of the streets on which the ghetto was located.

5. VHF, # 11883, testimony of Rose Boyarsky.

6. "Durkh geto un katzetn," in *Fun letstn khurbn*, vol. 1 (Munich: Tsentral historishe komisye baym Tsentral komitet fun di bafrayte Yidn in der Amerikaner zone, 1946), no. 6, pp. 37–43.

7. "The Diary of Hinda Daul," p. 62.

8. LCVA, R 1363-1-2, pp. 4, 7, as cited by Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," p. 108.

9. LCVA, R 1363-1-1, p. 7, as cited in ibid.

10. AŻIH, 301/2537; Guzenberg et al., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany*, p. 634.

11. Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron*, pp. 29–30.

12. LCVA, R 626-1-211, p. 18, list of ghettos in Kreis Oschmiana, October 1942; Kruk, *The Last Days*, pp. 385, 439, 443; "The Diary of Hinda Daul," p. 70; Kustin, "Oshmener geto," pp. 348–351.

13. See Arad, *Ghetto in Flames*, pp. 342–347; see also Jacob Gens's words at the meeting of the Judenrat in Wilno on October 27, 1942, MA, D.1357, published in I. Arad, ed., *Unichtozhenie evreev SSSR v gody nemetskoi okkupatsii (1941–1944): Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1991), p. 254.

14. Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 31.

15. Ibid., pp. 31–32; and Arad, *Ghetto in Flames*, pp. 359–362.

PAJŪRIS

Pre-1940: Pajūris (Yiddish: Payura), village, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Pajūris/Paiuris, Taurage uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941-1944: Pajuris, Kreis Tauroggen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Pajūris, Šilalė rajonas, Tauragė apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Pajūris is located about 97 kilometers (60 miles) southwest of Šiauliai. The 1923 census recorded 280 Jews residing in Pajūris, constituting about 58 percent of the total population. Just prior to the German invasion, only about 30 Jewish families remained.

The Wehrmacht occupied the village of Pajūris shortly after the start of the invasion on June 22, 1941. According to the account in *Pinkas ha-kehilot*, at this time, a part of the Jewish population of Pajūris escaped to the nearby village of Teneniai, where two local families had been killed by local Lithuanians. The arriving Jews were imprisoned in a barn and held for several days without food or water. Subsequently they were taken to Kvėdarna. *Pinkas ha-kehilot* reports that these Jews were killed in Kvėdarna on June 29, 1941. Other sources, however, indicate that on June 29, most able-bodied Jewish men were rounded up in Kvėdarna and taken to the Heydekrug (Šilutė) forced labor camp. Only a smaller group of 11 elderly Jews, deemed unable to work, were shot by Lithuanian partisans in Kvėdarna on June 30, 1941.[1]

Of those Jews who remained in Pajūris, very little information is known concerning their fate. It is likely that the SS also rounded up most of the able-bodied men and took them to the Heydekrug camp, where some of the prisoners were killed a few weeks later. The remaining prisoners there worked as forced laborers for more than three years; some of them later went into the concentration camp system, where they passed through Auschwitz II-Birkenau in 1943.

In early September 1941, the remaining Jews in Pajūris, consisting of only 4 men and 51 women and children, were locked up on an estate near the village, which became a provisional ghetto.[2] After about two weeks in the ghetto, they were all taken to the Tūbinės Forest, near Šilalė, and were murdered there together with other Jews from the surrounding villages.

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews of Pajūris can be found in the following publications: "Pajuris," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 477–478; and Christoph Dieckmann,

"Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.2.

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NOTES

1. LG-Aur (Az 17 Ks 1/61), verdict of May 29, 1961, in the case against Struve, Scheu et al., in *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 17 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1977), Lfd. Nr. 511, pp. 441–442; and vol. 20 (1979) Lfd. Nr. 579, p. 309.
2. Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik."

PAKRUOJIS

Pre-1940: Pakruojis (Yiddish: Pokrai), town, Šiauliai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Pakruojis/Pakruois, Shauliai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Pakruojis, Kreis Schaulen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: rajonas center, Šiauliai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Pakruojis is located about 36 kilometers (22.5 miles) east of Šiauliai. According to the 1923 census, there were 454 Jews living in Pakruojis. By June 1941, the Jewish population had declined slightly as a consequence of emigration in the 1930s.

Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, many Jewish refugees arrived in Pakruojis. Some refugees and local Jews tried to flee on towards Biržai and the Latvian border, but many of these people were intercepted by Lithuanian nationalists. Some were murdered, and the others were forced to return home. German forces captured the town on June 28, 1941, and Lithuanian partisans immediately formed a local authority and a partisan force, which subsequently became an auxiliary police unit.

The Lithuanian partisans soon began to arrest Jews, accusing them of having collaborated with the Soviets. Some of those arrested, including Moshe Plocki and Chaja Edelman, were murdered, and about 30 others were transferred, in early July, to the prison in Šiauliai. Anti-Jewish measures enforced by the Lithuanian authorities included the seizure of property, the imposition of forced labor, and the requirement to perform menial tasks; Jews also endured physical abuse.[1]

On July 10, 1941, Lithuanian partisans rounded up and shot the Jewish men who remained. The women, children, and old people were then resettled into a ghetto formed in the courtyard around the synagogue, where they were detained under guard for several weeks. They were permitted to take part of their property with them and also some food. The ghetto was liquidated on August 4, when Lithuanian policemen shot all the Jews in a nearby forest. The Jews were made to stand on wooden boards placed across a prepared ditch and were then shot such that they fell into the ditch.[2] According to one Soviet source, the total number of victims was 265.[3] The Jews were shot and buried in the Morkakalnis Forest, about 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) southeast of Pakruojis.[4]

Some of those sent to the prison in Šiauliai were subsequently transferred to the Šiauliai ghetto, and a few of these people ultimately survived the war. The Jewish doctor in Pakruojis, Markus Screiber, was initially spared, as his services were still required. He was murdered in April 1942, in front of the church.[5] Around this time, other Jews uncovered in hiding were also killed.

SOURCES Information regarding the fate of the Jewish community of Pakruojis can be found in these publications: "Pakruojis," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), p. 333; "Pakruojis," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 472–475; and Joe Woolf, ed., "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns," available at www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/lithuania3/lithuania3.html.

Documentation on the persecution and murder of the Jews of Pakruojis can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-436); LCVA; VHF (# 34991); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 472–475; David Katz, *The Lord Has Chastised Me Severely* (Stony Brook, NY: Y. Katz, 2001), pp. 31–32.
2. "Pakruojis," in Bronstein *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, p. 333; Woolf, "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns"; VHF, # 34991, testimony of Ruth Igdal.
3. GARF, 7021-94-436, p. 29.
4. Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), p. 505.
5. VHF, # 34991.

PALANGA

Pre-1940: Palanga (Yiddish: Polangen), town, Kretinga apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Kretinga uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Polangen, Kreis Kröttingen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Palanga, Kretinga rajonas, Klaipėda apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Palanga is located about 144 kilometers (90 miles) west of Šiauliai on the Baltic coast. According to census records, a total of 455 Jews were residing in Palanga in 1923. The size of the town's Jewish population fluctuated over the next decade, with some individuals emigrating, and as a result, the number of Jewish residents had decreased slightly by June 1941.

Palanga was occupied by German armed forces on June 22, 1941. Just one day after the arrival of German troops, a German officer was killed in the town. On orders from the head of the Gestapoleitstelle Tilsit, SS-Sturmbannführer Hans-Joachim Böhme, the head of Grenzpolizeikommissariat (Border Police Office, GPK) in Memel, Dr. Frohwann, began to arrest all the male Jews and suspected Communists residing in Palanga. This order was carried out by members of GPK

Memel and the Tilsit Gestapo, assisted by the Lithuanian auxiliary police. The male Jews were locked in the town's synagogue, and from there, they were taken to the building that served as the bus depot. At the end of June, 111 men were shot in an Aktion organized by the Tilsit Gestapo. At least 100 of the victims were male Jews; they were shot together with about 8 suspected Lithuanian Communists. A detachment of 30 members of the Memel Schutzpolizei under the leadership of Polizeileutnant Werner Schmidt-Hammer, and at least 15 airmen from the 6th Company of pilot candidates from Fliegerausbildungsregiment 10, also participated in the mass shooting, which took place on the sand dunes near Birutė Hill.[1]

Following the killing of the Jewish men, the women and children were initially taken to the synagogue, where they were imprisoned for several days under subhuman conditions. They received almost no food or water, and at night the Lithuanian guards would shoot in the air, break windows, and instill fear in the prisoners. After a few days they were taken to a farm near Kretinga, which served as an improvised ghetto. The farm buildings held 226 people for nearly two months, guarded by a detachment of the Lithuanian auxiliary police. The able-bodied were employed in carrying raw amber to a central warehouse. Food and water were supplied in very sparing quantities, and around 10 people died of starvation and disease. In late August or early September, all the women and children (at least 200 people) were taken to the Kunigiškiai Forest, where they were shot by a detachment of the GPK Memel, assisted by Lithuanian auxiliary policemen.[2]

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews of Palanga can be found in the following publications: Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 491–495; LG-Ulm, Ks 2/57, verdict against Böhme and others, August 29, 1958, published in *KZ-Verbrechen vor Deutschen Gerichten*, vol. 2, *Einsatzkommando Tilsit. Der Prozess zu Ulm* (Frankfurt/Main, 1966); and LG-Tüb, Ks 2/61, verdict of May 10, 1961, against Wiechert and Schulz, published in *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 17 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1977), Lfd. Nr. 509, pp. 350–357.

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trans. Katrin Reichelt

NOTES

1. Report of Staatspolizeistelle Tilsit to RSHA, July 1, 1941, published in Peter Klein, ed., *Die Einsatzgruppen in der Sowjetunion 1941/42. Die Tätigkeits- und Lageberichte der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD* (Berlin, 1997), pp. 373–375 (see also BA-BL, R 58/214, Ereignismeldungen UdSSR no. 14, July 6, 1941); LG-Tüb, Ks 2/61, verdict of May 10, 1961, against Wiechert and Schulz, in *JuNS-V*, vol. 17, Lfd. Nr. 509, pp. 350–357; and LG-Ulm, Ks 2/57, verdict against Böhme and others, August 29, 1958, in *KZ-Verbrechen vor Deutschen Gerichten*, vol. 2.

2. Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 491–495; *JuNS-V*, vol. 15 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1976), Lfd. Nr. 465, p. 214.

PANEVĖŽYS

Pre-1940: Panevėžys (Yiddish: Ponevezsh), city and apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Panevėžys/Panevezhis, uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Ponewesch, Kreis and Gebiet center, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Panevėžys, rajonas and apskritis center, Republic of Lithuania

Panevėžys is located 97 kilometers (60 miles) north-northeast of Kaunas. In 1923, there were 19,147 people living in Panevėžys, among them 6,845 Jews (36 percent). The town's population had risen to 26,000 (among them more than 7,000 Jews) by 1939. Under Soviet rule between June 1940 and June 1941, a number of Jewish businesses were expropriated, and at least 27 Jews were exiled into the Soviet interior.

German armed forces captured the city on June 26, 1941, but attacks on local Jews likely began two days earlier. The Lithuanian activists who took the initiative in the persecution of the Jews included the gymnasium director Elisonas, his inspector Kasparavičius, the assistant prosecutor Grigaitis, the district court secretary Jasaitis, and others under the leadership of Lieutenant Ižiūnas. Immediately after the occupation, Lithuanian nationalists formed a city administration and police force, which introduced a number of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were ordered to wear Stars of David on their clothing and forced into various kinds of heavy labor. At the same time, the Jewish population was required to register, and non-Jews were strictly forbidden to sell them food. The Jews were also subjected to humiliation, degradation, and assaults by local antisemites. A rumor spread in the town that a Lithuanian physician had been murdered by Jews, and this served as the pretext for attacks on the local Jewish population. Groups of young Jewish men were marched out of the city and ordered to dig peat. These men never returned to Panevėžys.[1]

Jews were ordered to settle into a ghetto before the night of July 11, 1941. The ghetto area incorporated three streets—Klaipėda, Krekenava, and Tulvičius (J. Tilvytis)—and the city's slaughterhouse. The ghetto borders were closed on July 17, 1941, at 6:00 P.M. It was surrounded with barbed wire and guarded by armed Lithuanian policemen. Non-Jews who moved out of the ghetto area were given Jewish houses outside the ghetto in exchange. The Jews Avraham Riklys and Moshe Levit were appointed to administer the ghetto. To discourage escape attempts, 70 Jews were taken hostage and imprisoned.[2] At the end of July, the ghetto contained 4,457 Jews, of whom 1,250 were still without any accommodation.[3] The overcrowding, filth, and terrible shortage of all items necessary for living led within a few weeks to the outbreak of disease. The Jewish doctors had no medicine or other materials to cope with it. Dr. T. Gutman received permission to open a small hospital, but under these conditions, there was little that could be done for the sick.

Jews from the ghetto were taken for forced labor, for example, digging pits for rubbish or carrying heavy barrels at the local railway station, during which they were severely beaten and humiliated by the Lithuanian overseers. On one occasion a group of Jews was reportedly forced into a scalding

lime pit, causing severe wounds, before most of the men were shot.[4] Up to the middle of August, Einsatzkommando 3 and the Lithuanian police carried out four large Aktions in Panevėžys, on July 21 and 28 and on August 4 and 11, in which they shot more than 1,220 Jews. Apart from 115 women, all of these victims were Jewish men.[5]

The ghetto in the city existed for about six weeks before it was liquidated. In mid-August 1941, a German Gestapo official informed the Jews that they would be moved to a former military barracks at Pajuostė, about 5 kilometers (3 miles) from Panevėžys, which would serve as a labor camp with better conditions than in the overcrowded ghetto. The ghetto residents, however, suspected that this was a trap, intended to lure them to their deaths, and had to be forced to leave the ghetto.[6] A few days later, the majority of the Jews were marched under armed guard to Pajuostė. The elderly, the sick, and small children were transported on peasant carts. After arriving there, the Jews were taken in groups of 200 and shot in a nearby forest by men from Einsatzkommando 3, with the help of the Lithuanian police. The last to be shot were the elderly and infirm, accompanied by Dr. Gutman. Some people, including small children, were only wounded and were buried alive. The pits were filled in by Soviet prisoners of war (POWs), who discovered one Jewish child who was still alive. While they tried to conceal the child, the Lithuanian policemen soon discovered and shot the child. The next day, participants in the murder rummaged through the piles of clothes and shoes at the pits, taking any items they fancied.

According to the Jäger report, on August 23, 1941, 7,523 Jews (1,312 men, 4,602 women, and 1,609 children) were shot in Panevėžys.[7] These numbers may include Jews from nearby villages, including Raguva, Ramygala, and Krekenava, who were also brought to Pajuostė on carts with their property and were murdered there in the second half of August.

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews in Panevėžys can be found in the following publications: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973); Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), pp. 329–331, published also in English translation in Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), pp. 106–112; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 229–230; Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.1; and "Panevezys," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 457–466, available also in English at www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/panevezys/pon3.html.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: BA-BL; GARF; LCVA; LYA; RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM; and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/357, 1128, 1731, 2280, 2551; O-3/2322, 2581; O-71/61, 62, 63).

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1. Levinson, *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania*, pp. 106–112.
2. Ibid.; Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 457–466. On ghettoization, see the newspaper *Išlaisvintas Panevėžietis*, July 12 and 20, 1941, and Višniauskas, *Žydų tragedija*, p. 51, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik."
3. Višniauskas, *Žydų tragedija*, p. 69, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik."
4. This incident is reportedly described in an article by P. Yanusheitis, published in the Lithuanian Communist journal *Tieso* in February 1945; see Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry*, p. 229. Similar accounts can also be found in the secondary sources cited above.
5. RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.
6. This account was reportedly given to Meir Gendel, who had survived the war in the Soviet Union, by local inhabitants in Panevėžys shortly after the city was reoccupied by the Red Army. For a more detailed version, see Levinson, *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania*, pp. 108–111.
7. RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.

PASVALYS

Pre-1940: Pasvalys (Yiddish: Posvol), town, Panevėžys apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Panevėžys/Panevezhis uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kreis Birsen, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: rajonas center, Panevėžys apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Pasvalys is located 32 kilometers (20 miles) north of Panevėžys. About 700 Jews lived in the town on the eve of the war.

German armed forces captured the town on June 26, 1941. Immediately after the occupation, Lithuanian nationalists formed a town administration, which actively took measures against the Jewish population. On June 27, four Jews—Sheina Kretzmer, Nehemiah Millin, Chanan Forman, and David Shapiro—were arrested and accused of being Communist activists and having collaborated with the Soviet authorities. On July 4, on this same pretext, more Jews were arrested. Some of them were put in the local prison, and some were held in Joel Farber's granary. After a few days, the arrested Jews were transported to Šiauliai. Sometime later, a number of Jewish women were released and returned to Pasvalys.[1]

In mid-July 1941, the Lithuanian administration ordered all remaining Jews into a ghetto. Parts of Biržai Street and Polivan Street were cordoned off for this purpose.[2] The town council provided food to the internal ghetto administration, which operated under the leadership of the town rabbi, Rav Yitzchok Agulnik. In the meantime, the Lithuanian guards subjected the inmates to repeated abuse. Conditions were so bad that Rabbi Agulnik even wrote to the head of the Šiauliai ghetto,

begging him to try to influence the Germans to rescue the Jews of Pasvalys from the clutches of the Lithuanians.[3]

Jews from outlying villages, including Joniškėlis, Pumpėnai, Vaškiai, Krinčinas, Daujėnai, Saločiai, and Vabalninkas, were subsequently brought into the Pasvalys ghetto after the middle of August. At this time the ghetto was surrounded by barbed wire.[4] The Jews from Joniškėlis were reportedly transferred on August 19. According to Sheina Sachar Gertner, a survivor from Vabalninkas, she was transferred to the Pasvalys ghetto on August 20, 1941, where she was held in very overcrowded conditions.[5] Among these new arrivals were at least 40 Jews from Vabalninkas, who had converted to Catholicism. These people were interned separately from the other Jews in Pasvalys.

The ghetto in Pasvalys existed for about one and a half months. Following a meeting by the town council, it was decided to liquidate the ghetto. On August 26, 1941, the Jews were informed that they would be transferred to a camp, and the men were separated from the women and children in the town. The separate groups were then escorted to two pits prepared in the Žadeikiai Forest, 4.5 kilometers (3 miles) outside Pasvalys. The converts to Catholicism were taken along with the rest of the Jews from the ghetto. According to a Lithuanian woman bystander, some of the Jews attacked their captors with their bare hands on the way to the pits, but the Lithuanians responded brutally, killing some of them on the way and dragging the others to the killing site. According to the report of Karl Jäger, in charge of Einsatzkommando 3, on August 26, 1941, 1,349 Jews (402 men, 738 women, 209 children) were shot in Pasvalys.[6]

Before and during the Aktion, a number of Jews managed to escape, including Sheina Gertner, who was warned by an elderly priest the night before and fled with her husband.[7] However, most of the escapees were captured and killed shortly after the mass shooting; only a handful managed to escape successfully.

Participating in the mass shooting were members of the 3rd Company, Lithuanian Auxiliary Battalion 1 (later Schutzmannschafts-Bataillon 13), which arrived from Kaunas in two trucks. A unit member, Balys Labeikis, claims that the local police and the men of his company only guarded the victims and herded them to the pits. After the Aktion, the Lithuanian participants returned to Pasvalys, where they celebrated with a large dinner, and many of them got drunk.[8]

Among the small number of Lithuanians in the region who risked their lives and saved Jews was a man named Baniolis. He hid three Jewish girls for three years in a stable and provided them with food.[9]

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews in Pasvalys can be found in the following publications: B. Reinus, "Oysrot fun di yidn fun Posval un fun di derbeyike shtetlekh (Yanishkel, Vashki, Linkuva, Salat, Vabalnik)," in Mendel Sudarsky and Uriah Katzenelenbogen, eds., *Lite*, vol. 1 (New York: Jewish-Cultural Society, 1951), pp. 1859–1861; B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 116–118; "Pasvalys," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 466–470; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 230–232; Joseph Levinson, ed., *The Shoah in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), pp. 112–114—translated from Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), p. 332.

Relevant documentation can be found in these archives: GARF; LCVA; LYA; RGVA (500-1-25); and USHMM (RG-02.002*12).

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. Reinus, "Aysrot fun di yidn fun Posval," pp. 1859–1861.
2. Ibid.
3. Letter of August 23, 1941, as quoted in Levinson, *The Shoah in Lithuania*, p. 113.
4. Report of the Birzai uezd commission, May 26, 1945, published in Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944)*, pp. 116–118. On August 19, 1941, around 200 Jews were sent to Pasvalys from Joniškėlis, 90 families (around 300 people) from Vaškiai, 90 Jews from Vabalninkas, 13 Jews from Saločiai, 21 Jews from Krinčinas, and 11 Jews from Daujėnai; see Barbara Armoniene et al., *Leave Your Tears in Moscow* (New York: J.P. Lippincott, 1961), p. 19.
5. USHMM, RG-02.002*12, pp. 1–4, testimony of Sheina Sachar Gertner, 1984.
6. Report of Einsatzkommando 3, September 10, 1941, RGVA, 500-1-25; and report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941, p. 113. Also see B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970), p. 234.
7. USHMM, RG-02.002*12, pp. 1–4.
8. Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), p. 289.
9. Reinus, "Aysrot fun di yidn fun Posval."

PAŠVITINYS

Pre-1940: Pašvitinys (Yiddish: Pashvitin), village, Šiauliai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Pašvitinys/Pashvitinis, Shauliai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Poswitenen, Kreis Schaulen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Pašvitinys, Pakruojis rajonas, Šiauliai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Pašvitinys is located 39 kilometers (24 miles) northeast of Šiauliai. According to the 1923 census, there were 274 Jews living in Pašvitinys. By June 1941, the Jewish population had declined slightly, as a result of emigration in the 1930s.

German forces captured the village on June 28, 1941. In the first days of the war, Lithuanian partisans, led by Leonas Balčiūnas, arrested up to 50 people alleged to have supported the Soviet regime, including a number of Jews. These prisoners were interrogated in Pašvitinys by the head of the local police, Povilas Pilka, and were then sent to the Šiauliai prison.

Some were executed, others were subsequently deported to Germany for forced labor, and a few were released.[1]

In Pašvitinys the local Lithuanian authorities introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were forbidden from having contacts with non-Jews, and their property was confiscated. Non-Jewish local inhabitants physically abused Jews. In one incident, a Jewish girl was molested, and her grandfather, who tried to protect her, was shot to death. Some Jews tried to leave the village, but on at least one occasion they were stopped by Lithuanian activists and forced to turn back.

Soon after the start of the occupation, all the Jews were rounded up and locked in an old horse stable next to the flour mill, called the "Magazine," which served as an improvised ghetto. They remained there for approximately one month, and during this time the able-bodied Jews were sent out of the ghetto every day to perform agricultural work on neighboring farms. Those who were not physically strong and healthy were murdered, together with a group of Jews from Linkuva, along the road to Šiauliai; among the victims were the village's last rabbi, David Nachman Dodman, and all his sons. In late August 1941, the remaining 70 or so Jews were transported in carts to the Žagarė ghetto, where they were shot on October 2, 1941, along with the other Jews gathered there.[2]

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Pašvitinys during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: "Pašvitinys," in Shalom Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), p. 334; Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews in Šiauliai and the Šiauliai Region," in Irena Guzenberg and Jevgenija Sedova, eds., *The Siauliai Ghetto: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2002), pp. 228–259, here p. 250; Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), p. 506; and "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns," compiled by Joe Woolf, available at www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/lithuania3/lithuania3.html.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Pašvitinys can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-436); LCVA; LYA (K 1-58-P19196LI); and YVA.

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trans. Kathleen Luft

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1. Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews," p. 250.
2. "Pašvitinys," in Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita*, vol. 4, p. 334; Woolf, "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns."

PLUNGĖ

Pre-1940: Plungė (Yiddish: Plungian), town, Telšiai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Plungė/Plunge, Tel'shai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Plunge, Kreis Telsche, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Plungė, rajonas center, Telšiai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Plungė is located 26 kilometers (16 miles) west-southwest of Telšiai. According to the 1923 census, there were 1,815 Jews living in the town.[1] By June 1941, emigration had reduced the Jewish population, and about 1,700 Jews remained in Plungė.

German armed forces captured the town on June 25, 1941. Immediately afterwards, Lithuanian nationalists formed a town administration and police force, which implemented anti-Jewish measures; the Germans played only a minor role in what followed, although they did immediately round up and kill approximately 60 young male Jews, whom the Lithuanians accused of having provided a rear guard for the retreating Red Army.

On or about June 26, the Lithuanians gathered all the Jews on the grounds of the synagogue and the Bet Midrash, which the captors declared a ghetto. Each day, Jews were taken out of the ghetto to perform different kinds of heavy physical labor in the town—such as street sweeping or cleaning latrines by hand—or on local estates. Beatings and humiliation accompanied the work. Some of the laborers never returned but were murdered. At the same time, the Lithuanian authorities extorted and stole the Jews' valuables.

The living conditions for Jews in the ghetto were nearly unbearable. Overcrowding, filth, and lack of food and water brought about disease and death, especially among the elderly. The Jews lived in those conditions for approximately three weeks. The ghetto was liquidated on July 13 or 15, 1941 (sources differ), when Lithuanians trucked and marched the Jews to ditches located 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) to the northwest of the town, near the village of Kausenai, where they shot them.[2] Only those few Jews who had escaped or been deported to the interior of the Soviet Union survived.

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews in Plungė can be found in the following publications: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 408; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 223–225; Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), pp. 125–127; "Plunge," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 484–491; and Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), p. 278. *Avotaynu: The International Review of Jewish Genealogy* 12 (22) contains a list of Plungė ghetto residents.

Documentation regarding the killing of the Jews of Plungė can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-430); USHMM (e.g., RG-50.473*0097 and 0098); and YVA.

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. *Blackbook of Localities Whose Jewish Population Was Exterminated by the Nazis* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1965), p. 421.
2. GARF, 7021-94-430; the official number of victims is 1,704.

PODBRODZIE

Pre-1939: Podbrodzie (Yiddish: Podbrodzsh), town, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1940: Pabradė, Švenčionys apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Pabradė/Pabrade, Sventsiany uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Pabrade, Kreis Schwentschionys, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Pabradė, Švenčionys rajonas, Vilnius apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Podbrodzie is located 47 kilometers (29 miles) northeast of Wilno. Nearly 1,000 Jews were living in the town on the eve of World War II, comprising about one third of the inhabitants.

A number of Jews attempted to flee with the retreating Soviet forces at the end of June 1941, but they came under attack from (Lithuanian) Red Army deserters who had joined with local Lithuanian partisans led by Edvardas Baranauskas, and only a few dozen Jews escaped successfully. The Lithuanian nationalists soon seized control of the town, and eight Jews were shot at the end of June for alleged collaboration with the Soviets, around the time of the arrival of the German army. Jews were subjected to plunder at the hands of the Lithuanians.

On July 15, 1941, the Lithuanian police arrested more than 60 Jews and took them to the mill to be shot. Only one of the victims, Velvel Abramovich, managed to escape from the grave site.[1]

In the period from July to September, the German military commandant and the local Lithuanian authorities enforced a series of anti-Jewish measures in Podbrodzie. Jews were required to wear patches bearing the Star of David, initially in white and later in yellow fabric. They were forbidden from buying food products in the market or from having any contacts with the non-Jewish population. In July a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established, which had to ensure that all German orders were carried out.[2] Among its members were Ben-Zion Vilian, Dr. Reyshevsky, Boris Blushinsky, Elye Likht, Yisroel Bratinsky, and Dovid Suzan.[3]

On September 1, 1941, all the town's Jews were moved into an open ghetto located on two streets inhabited by Christians, described in the yizkor book as Arnianer and Boyareler Streets. Initially the Jews were permitted only to take with them what they could carry in their arms, but the Lithuanian mayor permitted Jews to move in all of their property.[4] Some sources date the ghetto's formation earlier, but this account matches with instructions issued by the office of the Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land to determine where ghettos were to be established by September 5.[5] There was no Jewish police force. Local non-Jews moved into the vacated Jewish houses in Podbrodzie. At the time of the move into the ghetto, many Jews buried their valuables in their gardens and other hiding places or gave them to non-Jewish acquaintances for "safe-keeping."

Aware of the complete elimination of the Jews in some Lithuanian towns, the Jews of Podbrodzie discussed how best to save themselves. They collected money to bribe the Lithuanian police to warn them of an impending Aktion. After learning of the murder of the Jews in nearby Niemenczyn on September 20, 1941, a number of Jews prepared to go into hiding or flee the Podbrodzie ghetto to the towns of neighboring Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, where the situation was not yet so bad. On September 23, the authorities demanded a large "contribution" from the Jews, and then on September 26, expecting an Aktion, many Jews secretly left the ghetto or went into hiding. According to survivor Morris Engelson, a local official of Polish ethnicity had tipped off a Jew who had given him refuge before under the Soviet regime—and word then quickly spread through the ghetto.[6]

On that day, many local non-Jewish inhabitants, including teachers, postal officials, forest wardens, as well as criminal elements, were mobilized to assist the local police in clearing the ghetto. Once the Jews' flight was detected, these local forces sealed off the ghetto, and some of the escapees were recaptured. Due to the mass flight, only just over 100 Jews were then rounded up by Lithuanian policemen, under the command of Antanas Žilėnas, which included also men brought in from Joniškis. Then the Jews of Podbrodzie were escorted to an overcrowded barracks at the military camp (firing range), also known as the Poligon transit camp, near Nowe Święciany. The able-bodied Jews had to march there on foot, and the sick and elderly were loaded onto carts. On October 7-8, 1941, these people were all shot, along with thousands of other Jews who had been gathered at the Poligon camp.

The Lithuanian police in Podbrodzie searched for the escaped Jews and shot any they found on the outskirts of town. Some Jewish escapees and their families were fortunate to have Christian friends who gave them food and shelter for several weeks, before assisting them with their journey across the border into Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien. A number of the Jewish escapees subsequently made their way to the ghettos in Kiemieliszki, Michaliszki, Świr, Łyntupy, and other places deeper in Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, where they shared the fate of the Jews there. About 100 Jews from the town survived the war, mostly from among those who escaped successfully into the Soviet Union.

In May 1942, 400 Jews were brought to Podbrodzie from the Wilno ghetto and placed in a newly built labor camp; these Jews were used to work on a railway line for the German Giesler company. In 1943, those who were still alive were returned to Wilno.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jews of Podbrodzie during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews in Šiauliai and the Šiauliai Region," in Irena Guzenberg and Jevgenija Sedova, eds., *The Siauliai Ghetto: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2002), pp. 83–118, here pp. 98–99; Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-esrim ve-shalosh kehilot she-nehrevu be-ezor Svintsian* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Svintzian in Israel and the U.S., 1965), pp. 1371–1406; Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.6; B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Lei-

dykla "Mintis," 1973); and "Podbrodzie," in Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp. 515–518.

Documentation regarding the murder of the Jews of Podbrodzie can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/3531 and 3532); GARF (7021-94-435); LCVA (R 865-5-4); LYA (K 1-58-3501/3); USHMM; VHF (e.g., # 20551, 48155); and YVA (e.g., O-71/169.1).

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NOTES

1. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 1373; see also Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," p. 98.
2. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron*, pp. 1373–1374.
3. YVA, O-71/169.1, pp. 209–227, testimony of Yisroel Bavarsky, as recorded by Leyb Koniuchovsky—as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," section F.1.2.6.
4. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron*, pp. 1373–1374, 1383–1384—one survivor account states specifically that the Jews were in the ghetto for 26 days from September 1 to 26. Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," p. 98, gives Lithuanian spellings for the two streets. AŻIH, 301/3531, testimony of Chuna Zak, March 25, 1948.
5. LCVA, R 865-5-4, p. 4, letter of Gebietskommissar Wulff to Kalendra, August 23, 1941, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," section F.1.2.6.
6. VHF, # 48155, testimony of Morris Engelson.

PRIENAI

Pre-1940: Prienai (Yiddish: Pren), town, Marijampolė apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Prienai/Preny, Mariiampole uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Prienai, Kreis Mariampol, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: rajonas center, Kaunas apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Prienai is located 31 kilometers (19 miles) south of Kaunas. According to the 1923 census, there were 954 Jews living in the town. By mid-1941, emigration, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s, had somewhat reduced the size of the Jewish population in Prienai.

German armed forces captured the town on June 24, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a police force, which instituted a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews had to wear Star of David patches on the front and back of their clothing, had to perform various kinds of compulsory labor, and were robbed and beaten by local antisemites. Jews were also prohibited from walking on public sidewalks and from having any relations whatsoever with non-Jewish Lithuanians. A special decree even forbade the Jews from lighting fires in their own hearths, so that they could not cook food—the sight of smoke from a Jewish chimney was enough to bring the authorities.

The Lithuanians also started killing Jews almost immediately after the Germans' arrival. First they arrested and shot a group of Jewish intellectuals. Then they arrested another group of Jews, accusing them of collaboration with the Soviet authorities, and imprisoned them in Marijampolė, where they subsequently were killed.

On August 14, 1941, the Lithuanians established a ghetto for the town's Jews in a few unfinished barracks nearby. By order of the police administration in Kaunas, Jewish men and women who had collaborated with the Soviet authorities, and had been arrested in nearby localities, also found themselves in the Prienai ghetto. On August 16, 1941, 63 Jewish men and 26 Jewish women from Jieznas were sent to the Prienai ghetto.[1] Another 100 Jewish men and 6 Jewish women were brought there from Balbieriškis.[2] Others came from Veiveriai, Stakliškes, and other nearby localities. In all, 493 Jews were resettled into the ghetto from neighboring localities.[3] The population of the ghetto in Prienai, as a result, exceeded 1,000 Jews.

Conditions in the ghetto were ghastly. There was no food, water, or sanitation. The barracks were horribly overcrowded. Diseases soon began to spread.

After nearly two weeks of this torment, the Prienai ghetto was liquidated. On August 25 the Lithuanians forced men from the ghetto to dig two large pits behind the barracks. The next day, with help from a German police unit, the Lithuanians marched approximately 1,100 Jews to the pits in groups and shot them with machine guns.[4] A layer of lime was spread over each group. Witnesses reported that the piles of bodies heaved from the people who were only wounded. One woman even managed to crawl out of the pit and beg for her life, but the Lithuanian partisan Juozas Maslauskas shot her.[5]

Only about five Jews from Prienai managed to survive the war; most of them had been able to flee deeper into the Soviet Union in time. A few Jews found refuge with Lithuanians or fled into the forests around Prienai when the Jews were collected in the ghetto. However, almost all of these people gave themselves up, were thrown out by their protectors, or were denounced after a time. Peninah Binyaminovitz-Levitan managed to survive, as she was concealed successfully with the aid of a Lithuanian priest.

SOURCES Information about the elimination of the Jews in Prienai can be found in the following publications: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 86, 164, 176–177; Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), pp. 122–123, 211; "Prienai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), p. 502; and Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), pp. 289–290.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: GARF; LCVA (e.g., 683-2-2, p. 77); LMAB (RS, f. 159, b. 46, l. 22); LYA; RGVA (500-1-25); and USHMM.

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NOTES

1. Report of the chief of the police precinct in Jieznas, August 16, 1941, published in Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944)*, vol. 2, p. 86.
2. Ibid., p. 164.
3. Letter of the director of the police precinct in Kaunas to "Obersturmführer Mr. Hamann," August 23, 1941, published in B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970), p. 216.
4. See the report of Einsatzkommando 3 from September 10, 1941, RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 106.
5. See the testimony of Marė Brasokienė to the Special State Commission, in Levinson, *The Shoah*, pp. 122–123.

PUMPĖNAI

Pre-1940: Pumpėnai (Yiddish: Pumpian), village, Biržai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Pumpėnai/Pumpenai, Birzhai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Pumpenai, Kreis Birsen, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Pumpėnai, Pasvalys rajonas, Panevėžys apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Pumpėnai is located 23 kilometers (14 miles) north of Panevėžys. According to the 1923 census, 372 Jews were living in Pumpėnai. By June 1941, as a result of emigration in the 1920s and 1930s, the Jewish population had decreased significantly. One source has about 60 Jewish families living there when the war began.

German armed forces occupied the village on June 26, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a police force, which implemented anti-Jewish measures. Valuable items were confiscated from the Jews, and they were required to perform various kinds of labor. They were subject to robbery, assault, and other forms of public denigration by local antisemites. They were also prohibited from walking in public places and maintaining any relations with the Lithuanians.

On July 15, 1941, all Jews of Pumpėnai were resettled into a ghetto. Several houses were assigned for this purpose, and the ghetto was surrounded by barbed wire. They remained there, reportedly without provisions, put to forced labor, and abused, until August 26, when the ghetto was liquidated. On that day, a detachment of Einsatzkommando 3, with the assistance of the Lithuanian police, shot nearly all the Jews of the village in a forest near Pasvalys. The town's pharmacist and his family were killed in Pumpėnai itself.

SOURCES Relevant publications include Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 451–452; and "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns," available at www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/lithuania3/lit3_002.html, pp. 9–10.

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RADVILIŠKIS

Pre-1940: Radviliškis (Yiddish: Radvilishok), town, Šiauliai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Radviliškis/Radvilishkis, Shauliai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Radwilischken, Kreis Schaulen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Radviliškis, rajonas center, Šiauliai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Radviliškis is located 19 kilometers (12 miles) southeast of Šiauliai. According to the census of 1923, there were 847 Jews living in Radviliškis. By June 1941, the Jewish population had decreased as a result of emigration in the 1930s.

German armed forces captured the town on June 25, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a police force, which began to implement anti-Jewish measures. The authorities confiscated all the Jews' valuables and used the Jewish population for forced labor. Local antisemites subjected the Jewish laborers to humiliation, taunts, and beatings. Jews were forbidden to appear in public places or to maintain relations of any kind with non-Jews.

Accounts of events in Radviliškis vary somewhat. The most detailed, that in *Pinkas ha-kehilot*, states that the Lithuanians forced all the Jews into a ghetto in an abandoned Lithuanian army barracks on July 8. Some of the Jews had to build a barbed-wire fence around the place. Then, on July 12, the first Aktion took place when Lithuanian gunmen rounded up nearly all the men in the community (some 300 total), marched them to a grove next to the Jewish cemetery, and shot them.[1] The remaining women, children, and old people were later sent on to an enclosure that had formerly held Soviet prisoners of war. On August 22, 1941, the chief administrator of the town and of the county of Šiauliai (Kreis Schaulen-Land), J. Norejka, citing directives from the Gebietskommissar in Šiauliai, ordered all the county's Jews to be resettled into a single ghetto—the Žagarė ghetto—between August 25 and 29, 1941.[2] In compliance with this order, the ghetto in Radviliškis was liquidated in late August 1941, and all the Jews were transferred to the Žagarė ghetto. On October 2, 1941, they were shot along with the other Jews in the Žagarė ghetto. (Other accounts state that only about 400 of the Jews went to Žagarė, while the rest went to the Šiauliai ghetto. Some of these Jews subsequently wound up in camps in Germany and thus survived the war.)

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Radviliškis during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: "Radviliskis," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 625–628; Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), pp. 279–280; Irena Guzenberg and Jevgenija Sedova, eds., *The Siauliai Ghetto: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2002), pp. 250–251; "Radviliskis," in Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University

Press, 2001), p. 1050; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 639.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Radviliškis can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-436); LCVA; LYA (K 1-46-1261); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 405.
2. Ibid., pp. 226–227.

RASEINIAI

Pre-1940: Raseiniai (Yiddish: Raseyn), town, apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Raseinen, Kreis center, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Raseiniai, rajonas center, Kaunas apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Raseiniai is located 72 kilometers (45 miles) northwest of Kaunas. According to the 1923 census, 2,035 Jews were living in Raseiniai; by 1939, that number had declined to around 2,000.

Units of the German armed forces captured the town on June 23, 1941.[1] Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a town administration and a police force, which they used to implement anti-Jewish policies. The Jewish population had to wear the Star of David on their clothing. In addition, Jews were assigned to various kinds of forced labor, including cleaning the streets, collecting armaments from the battlefield, and burying dead Soviet soldiers. Jewish women were forced to clean the homes of Lithuanian officials and Germans. Jews were subjected to robbery and assault at the hands of local antisemites. One of the victims of the terror and torture was the rabbi of Raseiniai, Reb Ahron Shmuel Katz. He was forced to dig his own grave and then was shot. On July 29, 1941, the head of the Raseiniai district, A. Sabaliauskas, issued Order no. 743, which imposed new restrictions on the Jewish population, including prohibiting them from using the sidewalks and public transportation and from appearing in public places.[2] An estimated 150 Jews were arrested during the first 8 to 10 days of the German occupation of Raseiniai.[3]

In the first half of July 1941, local authorities set up a ghetto or camp in the town in a monastery building. The area of the ghetto was cordoned off by barbed wire, and armed Lithuanian policemen stood guard around the perimeter. The ghetto commander was a local auxiliary policeman named Aleksas Grigaravičius; he already was very active in enforcing anti-Jewish measures and the physical abuse of Jews. His deputy, Kostas Narbutas, was placed in charge of the economic issues of the ghetto.[4] Those Jewish men and women who were able to work were transferred from Raseiniai, in the direction of Jurbarkas, to the farm of Žuveliškis, where they were told by the authorities that they would work as laborers. However, witnesses state that a unit of Lithuanian activists, led by Grigaravičius, took these approximately 500 individuals to a site and shot them. The victims had to wear blindfolds and had no knowledge of where they were being led.[5] Before being shot, the victims had to undress, and their clothes were sent back to the ghetto. Zisla Flaumienė, who was in charge of the clothing department of the ghetto, found her husband's shirt among the items delivered.[6] The remaining elderly people and the children from the ghetto were settled into some farm and storage buildings on Nemakščių Street that once belonged to the local Catholic Church. Witnesses later told investigators that Grigaravičius, at the beginning of the ghetto's existence, conducted a selection among the women. Women with children were allowed to stay in the ghetto, while approximately 50 girls and women without children were brought to Žuveliškės, where they were shot by Lithuanian "activists."[7] Another selection among the ghetto inmates identified those able to work. They were assigned to carry out some labor projects in the town and at several farms near Raseiniai. Some Jews also worked just outside the town, at the construction site of an air base that the Soviet authorities had started to build in 1940.[8] Throughout these months, many Jews and suspected Communists were arrested and brought to the town's prison by local Lithuanian activists.[9]

The first major Aktion was carried out on July 29, 1941, when several hundred Jews and a number of Communists were selected in the ghetto and in the local prison. These people were herded to the Žuveliškės farm, approximately 5 kilometers (3 miles) outside Raseiniai. Not far from the farm, pits had been prepared in advance by the inhabitants of the surrounding farms. The victims were taken to the pits, forced to undress, and shot: a total of 254 Jews and 3 Lithuanian Communists. Witnesses stated that Jews from the surrounding smaller towns and villages such as Tytuvėnai, Nemakščiai, and Šiluva were also murdered at the Žuveliškės farm.[10] The Aktion was conducted by members of the Gestapo. Lithuanian partisans guarded the victims at the killing site. The Gestapo men told these guards that they should learn to shoot Jews, as they would have to conduct the next anti-Jewish Aktion.[11] However, according to numerous witness statements, Grigaravičius and the following Lithuanian auxiliary policemen actively participated in the above-mentioned killing: deputy Kostas Narbutas, Jablonskis, Kaupas, Antanas Alemas, Kazys Stoikas, Kazys Barauskas, Pilionis, Urbšaitis, and Antanas Klimas.[12]

The town's ghetto existed only for about two months. It was liquidated on September 6, 1941, when all the remaining Jews were shot. According to the report of SS-Standartenführer Karl Jäger, the commander of Einsatzkommando 3, forces under his command, assisted by Lithuanian partisans, carried out three further "cleansing" Aktions in Raseiniai in August and September 1941. On August 5, 213 Jewish men and 66 Jewish women were murdered. Then on August 9–16, 294 Jewish women and 4 children were killed. Finally, between

August 25 and September 6, 1941, Raseiniai was "cleansed" of Jews, resulting in the deaths of 16 Jewish men, 412 Jewish women, and 415 Jewish children. In total more than 1,500 Jews were reported killed in the town.[13]

Some of the Jewish victims who were killed between August 25 and September 6, 1941, were transferred to the farm of Biliūnai. It had been the property of Count Bilevičius, who had been deported to Siberia by the Soviet authorities. The Jews were murdered there by members of the Security Police over the following weeks. At first, the victims were settled in two houses on this farm, and a Lithuanian activist named Viliamas acted as a de facto camp or subghetto commander during this time. The last Jews of Raseiniai were killed between August 29 and September 6 at the Kurpiškės farm.[14]

Only a handful of Jews managed to save themselves by escaping and hiding with local farmers, who risked their lives by offering protection. In addition, some, mostly younger Jews, had managed to escape into the interior of the Soviet Union in time in June 1941, and a few of these people returned to Raseiniai after the war.

SOURCES Information on the extermination of the Jews in Raseiniai can be found in the following publications: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 400–403; Shalom Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 235–238; "Raseiniai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 641–647; L. Kantautienė, *Raseinių Krašto Žydai* (Vilnius: Kronta, 2004); Arūnas Bubnys, "Mažijei Lietuvos Žydų Getai ir Laikinos Izoliavimo Stovyklos 1941–1943 Metai," in *Lietuvos Istorijos Metraštis, 1999 Metais* (Vilnius, 2000), pp. 151–179; and Alfonsas Eidintas, *Lietuvos Žydų Žudinų Byla* (Vilnius, 2001). The existence of a temporary ghetto in Raseiniai is mentioned in Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), pp. 295–296; and in *Rossiiskaia evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 6 (Moscow: Rossiiskaia akademiia estestvennykh nauk, Nauchnyi fond "Evreiskaia entsiklopediia," "Epos," 2007), p. 334.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: LCVA (R 1753-3-1); LYA (K 1-46-1269; 3377-55-119); RGVA (500-1-25); and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/625).

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NOTES

1. Bubnys, "Mažijei Lietuvos Žydų Getai," p. 165.
2. LCVA, R 1753-3-1, p. 97.
3. Eidintas, *Lietuvos Žydų Žudinų Byla*, p. 155.
4. Ibid.; *Lithuania: Crime and Punishment*, no. 6 (January 1999): 87.
5. Kantautienė, *Raseinių Krašto Žydai*, p. 83; see also LYA, 3377-55-119, pp. 57–69.
6. Eidintas, *Lietuvos Žydų Žudinų Byla*, p. 155; and interrogation statement of Aleksas Grigaravičius from October 3, 1947, in LYA, 3377-55-119, pp. 57–58, 61.
7. Eidintas, *Lietuvos Žydų Žudinų Byla*, p. 156; see also statement of Zisla Flaumienė, October 2, 1947, in LYA, 3377-55-119, pp. 76–78.
8. Statement of M. Karašas, in Kantautienė, *Raseinių Krašto Žydai*, p. 96.
9. Bubnys, "Mažijei Lietuvos Žydų Getai," p. 165.
10. Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945*.
11. Bubnys, "Mažijei Lietuvos Žydų Getai," p. 166; LYA, K 1-46-1269, pp. 37–39, testimony of A. Kmito, October 22, 1968.
12. LYA, 3377-55-119, pp. 57–69.
13. Adapted from a table compiled from the report of Einsatzkommando 3 on December 1, 1941; see RGVA, 500-1-25, pp. 111–113.
14. Bubnys, "Mažijei Lietuvos Žydų Getai," p. 166.

RIETAVAS

Pre-1940: Rietavas (Yiddish: Riteve), town, Telšiai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Rietavas/Retavas, Tel'shiai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Rietavas, Kreis Telsche, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Plungė rajonas, Telšiai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Rietavas is located 34 kilometers (21 miles) southwest of Telšiai. According to the 1923 census, there were 868 Jews living in Rietavas. Emigration during the 1930s had probably reduced the number of Jews by June 1941.

On June 24, 1941, German armed forces captured the town. The night before their arrival, some Jews fled from Rietavas to neighboring villages. According to one account, local Lithuanians started to plunder Jewish property even before the Germans arrived.[1] At this time, a number of homes, including Jewish residences, were destroyed either by the retreating Red Army or by German bombardments.

Immediately after the German takeover, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a police force, which introduced anti-Jewish measures. Jews were ordered to return to the town. Lithuanians were forbidden to hide Jews. All Jews were registered and ordered to turn over their valuable possessions. Jews were forbidden to use the town's sidewalks; they were subjected to beatings, hard labor, and starvation at the hands of local antisemites. One of the first victims was Rabbi Shmuel Fundiler, who had half of his beard cut off. He was forced to burn holy books and then was harnessed to a wagon loaded with garbage before the Lithuanians shot him. At least six other Jews were also shot and killed, accused of having collaborated with the Soviet authorities. Among those allegedly participating in these murders were the brothers Kazys and Stasys Rimayke.[2]

On June 27, 1941, all the Jews in the town were arrested and resettled to the nearby Prince Oginski's estate, which became a temporary ghetto or camp. Jews lived for three days in this ghetto without food or water. On the fourth day, they were given sugar and salted fish. The starving people devoured this food like animals. Some stuffed whatever they could get into

dirty jars they had found in trash heaps. As a result, many developed diarrhea. Jews in the ghetto/camp were also compelled to perform physical exercises, despite their poor physical condition. From the ghetto/camp, five Jewish girls were sent back to Rietavas, where they had to clean out the Bet Midrash and burn the holy books kept there.[3]

On around July 10, 1941, the ghetto on the Oginski estate was liquidated.[4] The Jews were sent to the Viešvenai camp, near Telšiai, where Jews from several other towns and villages also were concentrated. A few Jewish men from Rietavas were taken instead to the Heydekrug labor camp.[5] On July 16, 1941, the remaining Jewish men were taken out of the Viešvenai camp, and after being forced to perform exercises and beaten, they were all shot. The women and children were taken one week later to the Geruliai camp. At the end of August 1941, around 400 young women were released from the Geruliai camp and were brought to the Telšiai ghetto. The remaining women and children at Geruliai were shot by Lithuanian policemen. Most of the 400 Jewish women relocated to the Telšiai ghetto were shot at the end of December 1941.

Two Jewish women and a Jewish girl from Rietavas are known to have escaped from the mass shooting Aktions. A mother and her daughter subsequently made their way to the Šiauliai ghetto. The other woman, Haya Movshovich, had fallen into the ditch unwounded and then fled naked to an elderly local peasant, who vowed to protect her despite German rewards for the betrayal of Jews. She survived the war.[6]

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Rietavas during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: Alter Levite, ed., *Sefer Ritova; gal-ed le-zekher ayaratenu* (Ritova Societies in Israel and the Diaspora, 1977)—an English-language version is also available, *Ritavas Community: A Yizkor Book to Riteve—A Jewish Shtetl in Lithuania* (Cape Town: Kaplan-Kushlick Foundation, 2000), which includes a useful additional essay by Roni Stauber, "The Destruction of the Riteve Community," pp. 149–152; "Rietavas," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), p. 359; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 238–241; and "Rietavas," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 636–639.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Rietavas can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-430); LCVA; LYA; and YVA (e.g., M-1/Q/1322/136).

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. YVA, M-1/Q/1322/136, testimony of Shaul Shenker, as cited by Stauber, "The Destruction," p. 150.
2. Shaul Shenker, "Riteve," in Levite, *Ritavas Community*, p. 157.
3. Zlatta Olschwang, "Thus the Town Was Destroyed," in ibid., p. 164.
4. Stauber, "The Destruction," p. 150, notes that accounts differ regarding how long the Jews were held in the ghetto/camp on Prince Oginski's estate, but most survivors indicate that it was about 10 to 14 days.
5. Shenker, "Riteve," p. 157.
6. Chana Borochowitz-Golany, *A Childhood in the Storm* (USA: A.I. Saeks, 2003), pp. 30–31.

ROKIŠKIS

Pre-1940: Rokiškis (Yiddish: Rakishok), town, apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Rokiškis/Rokishkis, uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Rokischken, Kreis center, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Rokiškis, rajonas center, Panevėžys apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Rokiškis is located about 80 kilometers (50 miles) east-northeast of Panevėžys. In 1939, on the eve of World War II, there were about 3,500 Jews living in Rokiškis, 40 percent of the total population. A number of Jewish refugees arrived in the town, following the German invasion of Poland.

On the outbreak of war between Germany and the USSR in June 1941, many Rokiškis Jews attempted to flee east with the retreating Soviet forces. However, most were turned back at the Latvian border and returned towards Rokiškis. In the meantime, a large Lithuanian partisan force had been organized in the region, which attacked the retreating Soviet forces and also robbed, beat, and killed Jews it encountered on the roads.

German forces took Rokiškis on June 27, 1941. Immediately after the occupation, Lithuanian nationalists in the town formed a civil administration and a police force. Lieutenant Žukas became town commandant, and Lieutenant Petkunas headed the guard company attached to the commandant's office. Their first order of business was to initiate antisemitic measures. Jews were required to wear Stars of David, and they were assigned to various kinds of compulsory labor in the course of which local antisemites subjected the Jews to humiliation and beatings.

At the beginning of July 1941, the town authorities confined all the Jews in two separate ghettos. They put the Jewish men into Count Pzezdetski's stone stables, and the women and children up to the age of eight were moved to the Antanašė estate, between Rokiškis and Obeliai.[1] One of the local collaborators, Zenonas Blynas, noted subsequently in his diary: "Interesting, Germans give a written order to herd Jews into a ghetto. Later German officers participate, as they are shot to death."[2] For a short period a Jewish Council (Judenrat) operated in Rokiškis, which was headed by Ozinkowitz and Jacob Kark.

On August 4, 1941, Lieutenant Žukas ordered all Jewish inhabitants of Rokiškis to give up their valuable property such as furniture and other movable items. The items had to be registered at the office of the military administration by August 28, 1941. At the same time, he announced officially that all Jews able to work had to conduct labor for the community.[3] On August 6, 1941, Žukas issued a further order that any local inhabitants who collected Jews for work but then allowed

them to move to other places or to avoid work by paying a bribe instead would be severely punished.[4] This reflected the common practice of local farmers requisitioning Jews to work on their land.

As soon as German troops occupied Rokiškis, Lithuanian partisans began shooting Jewish men, as well as Lithuanians and Russians, who were believed to have collaborated with the Soviet authorities in 1940 and 1941. By August 14, 1941, they had killed 493 Jews, 432 Russians, and 56 Lithuanians.[5] They carried out the shootings in the woods near the village of Steponai.

On August 15 and 16, 1941, a detachment of Einsatzkommando 3, with the participation of "Lithuanian partisans," shot 3,200 Jewish men, women, and children, although the vast majority were probably men, including a number of men brought in from the surrounding villages, including Obeliai. Besides those victims, the firing squad shot five Lithuanian Communists, one "partisan," and one Pole.[6] Among the approximately 80 Lithuanian partisans who participated, more than 60 were detailed to escort the victims to the site of the killing and to cordon it off. The others did the shooting.[7] The killing took place in the woods near the village of Baiorai, to the north of Rokiškis. Members of the guard company (the partisans) who took part in the killing received a bonus of 150 rubles each "for the performance of special duties."

On or around August 25, 1941, the Jewish women and children from Rokiškis, Kamajai, and several other places, who had been concentrated in the village of Antanašė, 5 kilometers (3 miles) south of Obeliai, were shot. The shootings were conducted by units of Rollkommando Hamann, subordinated to Einsatzkommando 3, assisted by Lithuanian partisans. According to the Jäger report, on August 25, 1941, the Germans and their collaborators murdered 112 men, 627 women, and 421 children (1,160 people) near Obeliai.[8] A local inhabitant recalled in the 1990s: "Men from Obeliai were taken to Rokiškis to be murdered. Women, children, and old people were taken from Rokiškis to Obeliai to be murdered. I saw the carriages with old people arriving from Rokiškis to Obeliai, the road goes next to my house. One old person fell out of the carriage, and a guard killed him, beating his head with a rifle butt."[9]

A few Jews from Rokiškis survived the war initially in the Kaunas ghetto and later in various camps. A number of the Jewish men who fled successfully from Rokiškis served subsequently in the Lithuanian Division of the Red Army, which was established in Gorki in January 1943.

On November 15, 1965, a court in Rokiškis sentenced to death four former policemen (Dagis, Lašas, Vamas, and Strumskis) who had participated in the killing of Jews in Rokiškis.

SOURCES Information concerning the extermination of the Jews in Rokiškis may be found in the following publications: M. Bakalczuk-Felin, ed., *Yisker-bukh fun Rakishok un umgegnt* (Johannesburg: Rakisher Landsmanshaft of Johannesburg, 1952)—an English translation is available at jewishgen.org; B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 403; Shalom Bronstein, *Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); "Rakishok," in Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 233–235; "Rokiškis," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 646–653; and Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), pp. 288–289.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: LCVA (R 317-1-1); LYA (3377-55-39); RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM (Acc.2000.212, RG-50.473*0100); and YVA.

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trans. Robert Haney

NOTES

1. Bakalczuk-Felin, *Yisker-bukh fun Rakishok un umgegnt*, pp. 383–390; "Rokiškis," in Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, p. 650.
2. LYA, 3377-55-39, p. 129, diary of Zenonas Blynas, as cited by Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust*, p. 289.
3. LCVA, R 317-1-1, p. 1. See also USHMM, Acc.2000.212, reel 1.
4. LCVA, R 708-1-1, p. 2, Order no. 5, issued by the Commandant of the Rokiškis District, published in B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970), pp. 149–150.
5. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 106, report of Einsatzkommando 3, September 10, 1941. Bakalczuk-Felin, *Yisker-bukh fun Rakishok un umgegnt*, p. 388, dates the murder of the men on August 10 and the women and children on August 20.
6. Ibid., p. 111, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.
7. Ibid., p. 116.
8. Ibid., p. 112; Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), p. 505; Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust*, pp. 288–289.
9. USHMM, RG-50.473*0100, testimony of Elena Zalogaite, born 1928.

RUDAMINA

Pre-1940: Rudamina (Yiddish: Rudomin), village, Seinai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Seinai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kreis Lasdien, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Lazdijai rajonas, Alytus apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Rudamina is located about 75 kilometers (47 miles) south-southwest of Kaunas. In 1923, there were 98 Jews living in Rudamina, constituting about 30 percent of the total population. On the eve of World War II, around 20 Jewish families resided in the village.

At the time of the German invasion on June 22, 1941, Rudamina suffered heavy bombardment, and several Jewish homes were severely damaged. Initially many Jews tried to escape deeper into the Soviet Union, but soon most were forced to return to the village. Lithuanian partisans seized power in

Rudamina and started to rob Jewish homes, beating the occupants. Jews were also forced to perform degrading work. The new authorities introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures, including a prohibition on buying certain food items and the requirement to wear a yellow patch in the shape of the Star of David. Disobeying these orders was punishable by death. In July 1941, the Jews had to pay a fine of 500 rubles per person. A makeshift ghetto was formed for the Jews, which included the Bet Midrash and several damaged houses.

On September 15, 1941, all the Jews were expelled from Rudamina and taken to the ghetto on the Katkiškės estate, where the Jews from Lazdijai and its surrounding villages were incarcerated. They all lived there under subhuman conditions for about six weeks. On November 3, the Jews from the Katkiškės ghetto were all murdered in the nearby forest. A number of Jews managed to escape from the Katkiškės ghetto just before its liquidation, and these people tried to hide with farmers in the area, but most were caught and killed. Only Gedalia Kagan from Rudamina is known to have survived until the end of the occupation.

SOURCES Much of the information for this entry is based on "Rudamina," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas hakehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 631–632. The ghetto in Rudamina is mentioned also in Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 668.

Martin Dean

RUMŠIŠKĖS

Pre-1940: Rumšiškės (Yiddish: Rumshishok), town, Kaunas apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Rumšiškės/Rumshishkes, Kaunas uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Rumschiskis, Kreis Kauen, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Rumšiškės, Kaišiadorys rajonas, Kaunas apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Rumšiškės is located 19 kilometers (12 miles) east-southeast of Kaunas. According to the 1923 census, there were 288 Jews living in the town. By June 1941, emigration had reduced the size of the Jewish population.

At the onset of the German invasion, few Jews were able to flee Rumšiškės due to the rapid German advance, but a number of refugees fleeing from Kaunas and other places became trapped in Rumšiškės. In the first days of the conflict, a Lithuanian partisan squad was formed, which soon started arresting Communist activists, Jews, and Red Army stragglers. The soldiers were transferred to the German army, which occupied the town on June 24, 1941. The Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and police force, which agitated against the Jewish population and carried out anti-Jewish measures. Several Jews were killed during the first weeks of the occupation, including the pharmacist Yirmeyahu Rubinstein and others accused of supporting the Soviet authorities. Valuable items were confiscated from the Jews, and they were forced into various kinds of labor, including cutting peat. They were subjected to robbery, assault, and other forms of public denigration by local antisemites. They were forced to surrender their cows and other livestock. Despite a ban on contacts with Lithuanians, the Jews traded remaining property, such as clothing, with Lithuanian peasants to obtain food.

On August 7, 1941, the head of the Kaunas district ordered all Jews into a ghetto by August 15.[1] Two houses, owned by the Katz brothers, were initially used for this purpose, resulting in terrible overcrowding within the ghetto.[2]

The head of the police post in Rumšiškės reported on August 19, 1941, to his superior that on August 15, of the 140 Jews gathered there, 70 Jews (people aged between 15 and 70) had been arrested for allegedly supporting the Communists and escorted away by German and Lithuanian soldiers, commanded by Lieutenant Skaržinskas. This left only just over 70 women and children in Rumšiškės, who were crowded into the house of Yankl-Leyb Langman, which was guarded by the Lithuanian police.[3] On August 22, the authorities demanded a "contribution" of 8,000 rubles from the Jews; the sum was delivered by a man named Rubinstein, the head of the Judenrat, on August 23.[4] On August 29, 1941, the ghetto in the town was liquidated, and the Jewish women and children were shot at the edge of the Rumšiškės Forest by Lithuanian policemen arriving from Kaunas.[5] It is likely that the Jewish men were taken to a labor camp at nearby Pravieniškės (a few kilometers north-northeast of Rumšiškės) and had been murdered there by September 4, 1941.[6] Other sources, however, indicate that they may have been taken to Kaunas. Remaining Jewish property was auctioned off in the town by September 21, 1941.

The Germans were driven from Rumšiškės on July 20, 1944, but the Red Army found that most of the town had been destroyed.

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jewish population of Rumšiškės can be found in the following publications: Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); "Rumšiškės," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 633–635; and Arūnas Bubnys, "The Holocaust in the Lithuanian Province in 1941: The Kaunas District," in D. Gaunt, P.A. Levine, and L. Palosuo, eds., *Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 283–312, here pp. 303–305.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: LCVA (R 683-2-2; R 1534-1-190); LYA (K 1-58-47533/3); RGVA (500-1-25); and YVA (O-71, file 148).

Alexander Kruglov and Martin Dean
trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 290–291.

2. Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, p. 635.

3. LCVA, R 683-2-2, p. 63, report of the head of Rumšiškės police precinct to the director of the police department in Kaunas, August 19, 1941; Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, p. 635.

4. LCVA, R 1534-1-190, p. 3, report of the head of Rumšiškės district to the head of the Kaunas Region, August 25, 1941.

5. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 112, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941. On August 29, 1941, 20 Jewish men, 567 Jewish women, and 197 Jewish children were reportedly killed at Rumšiškės and Žiežmariai.

6. Ibid., p. 113. Only 6 women were among the 253 Jews reportedly killed at Pravenischkės, which presumably included the 70 Jews from Rumšiškės. See also Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), p. 506.

ŠAKIAI

Pre-1940: Šakiai (Yiddish: Shaki), *town*, *apskritis center*, *Lithuania; 1940–1941: Šakiai/Shakiai*, *uezd center*, *Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Schaken*, *Kreis center*, *Gebiet Kauen-Land*, *Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Šakiai*, *rajonas center*, *Mariampolė apskritis*, *Republic of Lithuania*

Šakiai is located 56 kilometers (35 miles) west of Kaunas, close to the German-Lithuanian border. The available demographic records show that a total of 1,281 Jews resided in Šakiai in 1923. By June 1941, the number of Jewish residents had decreased slightly, a change caused by the emigration movements of the 1930s. There were about 1,000 Jews living there when the Germans arrived, plus about 100 Jewish refugees who had fled from German-occupied Poland.

The German army occupied Šakiai on June 22, 1941, the first day of its invasion of the Soviet Union. Only about 50 Jews succeeded in fleeing. The local Lithuanian nationalists established an administrative authority and a police force immediately. These bodies worked together and organized the initial measures against the Jewish population, many of whom they accused of collaborating with the Soviets. The Lithuanians confined all Jewish males aged 15 and over in a large barn on the outskirts of town. Jews were ordered to give up all their valuables, and they had to conduct physically demanding forced labor. While they worked, they had to face all kinds of mistreatment, harassment, and abuse from local antisemites. In addition, Jews were forbidden to appear in public places and banned from any private contacts with non-Jewish Lithuanians. The Jews had to wear yellow patches on their outer clothing, and they also had to give up radios and other similar equipment. In addition, a curfew between 6:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M. was declared for the Jewish population.

On July 5, 1941, in the first Aktion against the Jews in Šakiai, Lithuanian auxiliary police took all the male Jews they had confined to a place in the woods outside of town, where they had already forced some of the Jews to dig a large trench. There the Lithuanians shot them all. There was some resistance, and one young Jew, Benjamin Rothschild, managed to beat one of the executioners severely before he was killed. When the men were all dead, the Lithuanians brought out 40 of the wealthier Jewish women and killed them as well.

The Lithuanians forced the remaining Jewish women and children into a ghetto in the poorest part of the town. Although few specifics are available, it is known that conditions in the ghetto were terrible. Lithuanians were forbidden to give food to the Jews, so hunger was rampant. More direct abuses were also common. In the first days of the ghetto's existence, a group of Lithuanian youths abducted six Jewish girls and raped and killed them. Similar incidents continued in the weeks that followed.

The Lithuanians liquidated the open ghetto of Šakiai on September 13, 1941. During this Aktion, Lithuanian police shot 890 Jews at the same site where they had killed the others in July. On September 16, 1941, the Šakiai district was officially declared to have been cleared of Jews.[1] The total of 890 victims also included Jews from the villages in the vicinity of Šakiai, including Kriukai, Lukšiai, Šiaudinė, Sintautai, Griškabūdis, and Sudargas. The Lithuanians loaded the victims' belongings onto carts, brought them back to town, and distributed them to the local population.

SOURCES Information about the killing of the Jews of Šakiai can be found in the following publications: Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 699–704; Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.5; and Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), pp. 287–288. The ghetto in Šakiai is mentioned also in Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1120.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archive: LCVA (R 683-2-2, p. 86).

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trans. Katrin Reichelt

NOTE

1. Notes of the head of the Šakiai county (V. Karalius) and head of the local police (Vilčinskas) to the head of the Kaunas police department, September 16, 1941, published in B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 111.

SALAKAS

Pre-1940: Salakas (Yiddish: Salok), *village*, *Zarasai apskritis*, *Lithuania; 1940–1941: Zarasai uezd*, *Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kreis Ossersee*, *Gebiet Ponewesch-Land*, *Generalkommis-*

sariat Litauen; post-1991: Zarasai rajonas, Utena apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Salakas is located about 120 kilometers (75 miles) east of Panevėžys. In 1923, the village had a Jewish population of 917. By mid-1941, emigration in the 1920s and 1930s had reduced the number of Jews in Salakas slightly.

German armed forces occupied the town on June 26, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local authority and a police force, which began introducing anti-Jewish measures. All the Jews' valuables were confiscated, and they were deployed for various types of forced labor, during which local antisemites subjected them to humiliation and beatings. They were forbidden to go to the market, had to wear distinguishing patches on their clothes, and had to mark their houses with the word *Jude* (Jew). Some Jews were blackmailed by Lithuanian policemen. A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established on which Rabbi Jacob Relve, Feibush Gilinksi, and Abraham Bach served.

In the first days, the local authorities arrested and shot people they suspected of having collaborated with the Soviet authorities, including Berl Krupnik, whose son had been a member of the Komsomol. Then on August 9, 1941, the first large-scale Aktion took place in Salakas when Lithuanian partisans rounded up about 150 people, mainly Jewish men, and shot them in the nearby Songard Forest.[1]

The remaining Jews, mainly women, children, and the elderly, were then placed in a ghetto on Planova Street. Lithuanians looted the vacated Jewish homes. The ghetto was liquidated on August 26, 1941, when all the Jews were shot in the Pažeimis Forest near the village of Diagučiai, along with other Jews from Kreis Zarasai.[2] A local Lithuanian named Radzewicz was subsequently shot by the Germans when he was found to have aided Jews in hiding.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Salakas during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: "Salakas," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); "Salakas," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 427–430; and "Salakas," in Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1120.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Salakas can be found in these archives: GARF (7021-94-439); LCVA; and YVA.

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trans. Kathleen Luft

NOTES

1. "Salakas," in Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945*; and B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 414.
2. GARF, 7021-94-439.

SEDA

Pre-1940: Seda (Yiddish: Shad), Mažeikiai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Mazheikiai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kreis Moscheiken, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Mažeikiai rajonas, Telšiai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Seda is located 23 kilometers (14 miles) northwest of Telšiai. According to the 1923 census, 814 Jews were living in the town. By mid-1941, owing to the emigration of Jews in the 1920s and 1930s, the Jewish population had decreased significantly.

German armed forces occupied Seda on June 24, 1941. As the retreating Soviet forces had shot 12 Lithuanian partisans in the town, the new Lithuanian nationalist administration and police force soon started arresting alleged Soviet activists. The new authorities also instituted measures discriminating against the Jews. By the end of June, Lithuanian partisans were rounding up young Jews, and those who were arrested were taken out and shot in the Jewish cemetery. Among those killed was Rabbi Mordechai Rabinowitz.

At the end of June 1941, Lithuanian collaborators gathered all the Jews at the market square between warehouses that belonged to Jews. There the Jews were held without food and water and in unsanitary conditions for several days. Then they were transported to a Jewish agricultural colony not far from the town, known as the "Jewish village." The Jews were quartered in granaries and cowsheds, which were guarded by armed Lithuanians, forming a temporary ghetto. The young Jewish men were separated from the women, children, and the elderly and were killed near the village on July 3, 1941. In early August 1941, this ghetto was liquidated, and the remaining Jews (around 200 people) were brought to Mažeikiai. On August 9, 1941, the Jews from Seda were shot at the Jewish cemetery in Seda together with the Jews of Mažeikiai. For participating in the mass shooting, the Lithuanian policemen received 300 rubles and strong alcohol that was available in plentiful quantities at the killing site.

SOURCES Information about the fate of the Jews of Seda in the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: J. Woolf, ed., "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns," available at jewishgen.org; Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), p. 320; Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), p. 278; "Seda," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 421–422. Information on the initial days of the German-Soviet war and German occupation in Seda can be found in Valentinas Brandisauskas, ed., *1941 m. Birzelio sukilimas. Dokumentu rinkinys* (Vilnius:

LGGRTC, 2000), pp. 109–128; and in B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 178–185.

Relevant archival documentation can be found in LCVA and LYA (3377-55-111, pp. 70–71).

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ŠEDUVA

Pre-1940: Šeduva (Yiddish: Shadeve), village, Panevėžys apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Šeduva/Sheduva, Panevezhis uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Scheddau, Kreis Ponewesch, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Šeduva, Radviliškis rajonas, Šiauliai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Šeduva is located 37 kilometers (23 miles) west of Panevėžys. According to the 1923 census, 916 Jews were living in the village. By mid-1941, as a result of emigration in the 1920s and 1930s, the number of Jews in the village had decreased.

German armed forces captured Šeduva on June 26, 1941. Lithuanian nationalists, headed by the teacher Gorionos, began to terrorize the Jews even before the Germans arrived. Jews trying to escape into the Soviet Union were stopped by the Lithuanian partisans, who murdered several on the road and robbed others, compelling them to return to Šeduva.

The Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a police force, which carried out a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were forced to wear white armbands bearing a yellow Star of David. Valuable items were confiscated from the Jews, and they were required to perform various kinds of forced labor, guarded by armed Lithuanians, who abused them. Young men who had performed administrative functions in the Soviet regime were murdered. Other Jews that were forced to clear up the bombed armament factory in Linkaičiai were accused of stealing grenades and also killed.

In mid-July 1941, all the Jews were settled into a ghetto. First they were ordered to gather in the marketplace and to surrender the keys to their homes to the Lithuanian police. Under guard they were then escorted to the village of Pakuteniai, a few kilometers to the southwest, where they were placed in an abandoned barracks without water or electricity. The building was surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by armed Lithuanians. Other Jews, who had been working on local farms, were brought, beaten and bleeding, to the ghetto, where the Jewish physician Dr. Patorski gave them first aid.

From time to time, the Lithuanian partisans shot groups of Jews taken out of the ghetto on the pretext of conducting agricultural work. On August 3, 10 Jews were shot and buried in lime pits. In mid-August, 27 more Jews were shot, including Rabbi Mordechai David Henkin. Around the same time, another 35 who had been assigned to work on the Red Estate were murdered and buried in its surrounding fields.

On August 25 and 26, 1941, the ghetto was liquidated, and Lithuanian partisans shot most of the remaining Jews in the Liaudiškiai Forest, 10 kilometers (6 miles) southwest of the village. According to the Jäger report, in total, 664 people were killed in Šeduva: 230 men, 275 women, and 159 children.[1] After the massacre, the Lithuanian murderers ate and drank all night in celebration.

Three Jewish families, including that of Dr. Patorski, were kept alive for another six weeks before being killed. One Jewish woman, Shulamith Noll, escaped from the pit in her underwear and survived the mass killing. She went to the local Catholic priest, who arranged for her to be hidden with local farmers for the remainder of the German occupation.

SOURCES Secondary sources on the fate of the Jews of Šeduva during the Holocaust include the following: J. Woolf, ed., "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns," available at www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/lithuania3/lithuania3.html; Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), pp. 363–364; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 244–246; Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 654–658; and Efraim Zuroff, *Occupation: Nazi Hunter—The Continuing Search for Perpetrators of the Holocaust* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, 1994), p. 154.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: RGVA (500-1-25).

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTE

1. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 112, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.

SEIRIJAI

Pre-1940: Seirijai (Yiddish: Serey), town, Alytus apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Seirijai/Seiriiai, Olita uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Seirijai, Kreis Olita, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Lazdijai rajonas, Alytus apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Seirijai is located 24 kilometers (15 miles) southwest of Alytus. According to the 1923 census, there were 880 Jews living in the town. By mid-1941, emigration had reduced the number.

German forces had captured Seirijai by June 24, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local authority and a police force, which introduced anti-Jewish measures. For example, Jews were required to wear Stars of David and were used for various types of forced labor, during which they were subjected to humiliation and beatings by local antisemites. Jews were forbidden to appear in public places or to maintain relationships of any kind with Lithuanians.

As early as June 26, 1941, the first Aktion took place in Seirijai. At that time, Lithuanian partisans, led by Alfonsas Nykstaitis and Antanas Maskeliunas, shot about 50 Communists and Komsomol members, some of whom were Jews.[1]

During a second Aktion on August 2, 1941, 115 Jewish men and 15 Jewish women were sent to Alytus and shot there.[2]

According to the account in Oshry, the town's remaining Jews "were crowded together in the Christian art school like herring in a barrel."[3] This building served as a ghetto. The homes and belongings of the Jews were appropriated by their Lithuanian neighbors. Also placed in the ghetto were Jews from neighboring towns and villages, and as a result the ghetto population rose to nearly 1,000 people. The young and strong Jews were taken off for forced labor, such as repairing roads.

The ghetto in Seirijai was liquidated on September 10–11, 1941, when 953 Jews—229 men, 384 women, and 340 children—were killed. The Jews were driven from the town by the local police armed with clubs. After being forced to remove their clothes, they were shot in the Baraučiškės Forest, 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) east of the town, with the participation of members of 3rd Company, 1st Lithuanian Auxiliary Police Battalion, commanded by Bronius Norkus.[4] According to the account in *Pinkas ha-kehilot*, several local dignitaries of the town, such as teachers, were present at the massacre of Seirijai's Jews.[5]

For participation in the killing of Jews in Seirijai, and in other places in Lithuania, eight former members of 3rd Company were sentenced to death at a trial in Kaunas in September–October 1962.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Seirijai during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: "Seirijai," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); "Serey," in Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 243–244; "Seirijai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 444–447.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-3); LCVA; LYA (K 1-58-46373/3, vol. 2); RGVA (500-1-25); and YVA (M-1/Q/142; M-33/994; Leyb Koniuchovsky Collection, O-71/131).

Alexander Kruglov
trans. Kathleen Luft

NOTES

1. GARF, 7021-94-3, p. 39.
2. Ibid.
3. Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry*, p. 244.
4. RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.
5. "Seirijai," in Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 446–447.

SEMELIŠKĖS

Pre-1940: Semeliškės (Yiddish: Semilishok), village, Trakai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Semeliškės/Semelishkes, Trakai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Semelischkes, Kreis Traken, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Semeliškės, Trakai rajonas, Vilnius apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Semeliškės is located about 40 kilometers (25 miles) west of Wilno. About 60 Jewish families resided in the village on the eve of World War II.

No ghetto was established in Semeliškės for the 261 Jewish inhabitants until the end of the summer of 1941.[1] Fifty-four Jewish refugees from Baranowicze were also living there. On July 21, 1941, on German orders, the Jews assembled in the synagogue and elected a 12-man Jewish Council (Judenrat), which was headed by Šaja Šeškinas. At some time during the summer a group of Jewish men was shot by the local Lithuanians in charge of the village.

At the beginning of September, the local Lithuanian police moved all the remaining Jews into the synagogue, the Bet Midrash, and the former church building (that had been converted into a social club by the Soviet authorities), establishing a form of ghetto. Every day a number of Jews were taken out to perform various forced labor tasks.

On September 22, several hundred more Jews from Vievis and Žasliai were also brought to Semeliškės on carts. The Jews of Vievis were robbed of most of their property by Lithuanian auxiliary policemen just before their departure. In Semeliškės, the new arrivals were incarcerated separately from the local Jews. In early October, all the Jews in Semeliškės, including those brought in from outside, were escorted to a forest about 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) outside the village to the northeast, where they were shot. According to the report of Karl Jäger, forces subordinated to Einsatzkommando 3 shot 962 Jews (213 men, 359 women, and 390 children) in the vicinity of Semeliškės on October 6, 1941.[2]

A number of Jews managed to escape before or at the time of the Aktion. However, some of these people were caught subsequently, and only a few survived until the end of the occupation. Liubovė Slepak-Zacharaitė recalls:

> Some people sheltered us for one night. Others for a week, or for some three days. They used to feed and hide us, risking their own lives and the lives of their families because there were many collaborators and local nationalists from whom nobody could expect mercy. . . . Death lay in wait for us around every corner and every bush. . . . In the autumn of 1942, my mother, brother and sister were caught and I never saw them again.[3]

SOURCES Relevant publications include Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 697; Neringa Latvyte-Gustaitiene, "The Genocide of the Jews in the Trakai Region of Lithuania," translated by Svetlana Satalova, available at jew ishgen.org; and Rima Dulkiniene and Kerry Keys, eds., *With a Needle in the Heart: Memoirs of Former Prisoners of Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (Vilnius: Garnelis, 2003), p. 330.

Documentation on the persecution and murder of the Jews of Semeliškės can be found in the following archives: GARF

(7021-94-431); LCVA; RGVA (500-1-25); VHF (# 10804); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Dulkiniene and Keys, *With a Needle*, p. 330, testimony of Jewish survivor Liubovė Slepak-Zacharaitė.
2. Report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941, RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 114; Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), p. 506.
3. Dulkiniene and Keys, *With a Needle*, p. 330.

SEREDŽIUS

Pre-1940: Seredžius (Yiddish: Srednik), town, Kaunas apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Seredžius/Seredzhius, Kaunas uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Seredschius, Kreis Schaken, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Seredžius, Jurbarkas rajonas, Tauragė apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Seredžius is located 37 kilometers (23 miles) northwest of Kaunas. According to the 1923 population census, 449 Jews were living in Seredžius. By mid-1941, the number of Jews in the town had decreased significantly, owing largely to emigration.

German troops captured the town on June 24, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a police force, which implemented a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were marked with the Star of David and were forced into labor of various kinds. The Jews were subjected to assault, robbery, and other forms of degradation by local antisemites. Jews were also prohibited from appearing in public spaces or having any relations with the Lithuanians. The Lithuanian nationalists arrested and shot Jewish men suspected of having collaborated with the Soviet authorities.

Soon the Jews were evacuated from their homes and resettled into the town synagogue, which effectively became a ghetto for them. The homes and property of the Jews were confiscated and distributed among their Lithuanian neighbors. In the middle of August 1941, Jewish men aged over 15 and Jewish women who had been accused of collaborating with the Soviet authorities in 1940–1941 were singled out and transported to Vilkija. In Vilkija, they were shot along with the local Jews on August 28, 1941.[1] The 193 Jews that remained, comprising 6 men, 61 women, and 126 children, were shot in the Pakralė Forest, just outside the town, on September 4, 1941.[2]

SOURCES Information on the persecution and murder of the Jews in Seredžius may be found in the following publications: Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), p. 325; "Seredzius," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 442–443; and J. Woolf, comp., "The Holocaust in 21 Lithuanian Towns," available at www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/lithuania3/lithuania3.html.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: LCVA; and RGVA (500-1-25).

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. Bronstein, *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, p. 325; Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, p. 443.
2. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 113, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.

ŠIAULIAI

Pre-1939: Šiauliai (Yiddish: Shavl), city and apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Šiauliai/Shauliai, uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Schaulen, Kreis center, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Šiauliai, rajonas and apskritis center, Republic of Lithuania

Šiauliai is located 68 kilometers (42 miles) west-northwest of Panevėžys. On the eve of the war, the Jewish population of Šiauliai numbered between 6,500 and 8,000.

Following the occupation and annexation of Lithuania by the Soviet Union in 1940, 202 Jews became victims of the

The murder of a woman in the Šiauliai ghetto, n.d.
USHMM WS #70806, COURTESY OF ELIEZER ZILBERIS

Soviet deportations on June 14, 1941.[1] When Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, some of Šiauliai's Jews tried to escape into the interior of the Soviet Union. Approximately 100 refugees managed to reach the Soviet rear areas. Others failed, however, because of the Germans' rapid advance. They either returned to Šiauliai or sought refuge in the surrounding villages. The Red Army abandoned the city on June 26.

In the first days of the German occupation, a Lithuanian administration and police force were established. Various German institutions were also based in the town. Feldkommandantur 819 administered the town initially, then passed on its authority to a civil administration headed by a Gebietskommissar and his staff in August. Units of the Secret Military Field Police (GFP) and elements of Einsatzkommando 2, under Einsatzgruppe A, were also present. SS-Hauptscharführer Werner Gottschalk, head of the Restkommando, a subordinate unit of Einsatzkommando 2, directed the first murders of Jews from the city and region. In late July, the 3rd Company of German Police Battalion 65 arrived in Šiauliai. This company repeatedly participated in the murder of Šiauliai's Jews during the summer, assisted by other German military and police units.

The first mass murder of Šiauliai's Jews took place in the Kužiai Forest, 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) from Šiauliai, on June 29, 1941. The victims also included ethnic Lithuanian and Russian members of the Communist Party and the Komsomol. According to witness accounts, the Germans perpetrated the Kužiai killings.[2] Mass arrests of Šiauliai's Jews took place on June 30, July 1, and July 5. Among those whom the Lithuanian police arrested were 20 of the most distinguished members of Šiauliai's Jewish community, including Chief Rabbi Aron Baksht and Rabbi Avrohom Nochumovsky. They were held as hostages in the city jail until July 11, when they were murdered in "reprisal" for an alleged Jewish attack on German soldiers. Approximately 1,000 Jews were murdered before the establishment of the ghetto, many by Lithuanian partisans.[3]

The German occupation authorities began to plan for the establishment of a ghetto in Šiauliai in early July 1941. On July 10, a Lithuanian attorney named Linkevicius was designated mayor; Jews were ordered to wear yellow stars shortly thereafter.[4] At that time, deputy mayor Antanas Stankus was put "in charge of Jewish affairs," a post he held until February 1, 1942.[5] The military commandant, Konowski, issued instructions for establishing the ghetto. In cooperation with the Lithuanian authorities, a Jewish committee was established to deal with the problems of moving the Jews into the ghetto. The committee included Mendel Leibovitch, Ber Kartun, Fayvel Rubinstein, and Aron Katz.[6] In accordance with a proclamation, all Jews had to register at the city administration office between July 19 and July 22. In July, Linkevicius and Konowski announced that the Jews were to move either to the Šiauliai suburb known as Kaukazas or to the town of Žagarė. According to the Judenrat secretary, Eliezer Yerushalmi (author of *Pinkas Shavli*, a journal of life in the ghetto), although Stankus and the mayor proposed the transfer of the Jewish community to Žagarė, the Jewish leaders (Kartun, Leibovitch, and others) weighed the proposal and appealed for assistance from local Lithuanian intellectuals and the priest, Lapis. Yerushalmi notes that Jewish opposition to the idea caused it to be abandoned, and the ghetto was subsequently created in Kaukazas.[7] (Nesse [Galperin] Godin, a survivor from Šiauliai [b. 1928], recalls that the Jewish committee managed to bribe Gestapo officials with valuables and promised to produce goods essential to the German war effort to avoid the transfer of the Jewish community to Žagarė.)[8] The non-Jewish residents of these areas "were allowed" to move to other parts of the city of Šiauliai, some moving into formerly Jewish-owned properties.[9]

Two neighborhoods were chosen for the ghetto. One was Kaukazas, while the other encompassed Ežero and Trakų Streets. The two areas were separated by 300 meters (984 feet). After the ghetto was enclosed, the Jews began moving in from various city districts, starting with the Kaukazas area. The Jewish committee was responsible for allocating accommodation inside the ghetto. The resettlement was largely complete by August 15, 1941, and the closed ghetto was officially established on September 1.[10] Between 4,000 and 5,000 Jews were forced into the two ghettos, around which ran 2-meter-high (6.6-feet-high) barbed-wire fences. Police guarded the ghetto gate, and no one could leave without a special pass.

After the Jews were confined in the ghetto, confiscated Jewish gold and other valuables were remitted to the Šiauliai Gebietskommissariat. This was done in accordance with detailed inventory lists. Some Jewish property (primarily furniture) was taken by Gebietskommissariat officials; the rest was sold to the local population.[11]

The number of Jews forced into the ghetto was greater than the available housing could hold. To solve this problem, in the first days of September, a number of "excess" Jews were herded into the synagogues and the Jewish Home for the Elderly on Vilnius Street, where they were registered. Most of these Jews (the elderly and those deemed unfit for work) were taken to Žagarė or to Kužiai, where they were murdered. On September 7 (according to other sources, September 6), a squad commanded by Lieutenant Romualdas Kolokša, formerly a lawyer in Užventis, raided the Jewish orphanage and seized 47 children and two teachers (A. Katz and Zhenia Karfel). The group was taken to the forest and murdered. On September 13, the police entered the ghetto, arrested many elderly people, and took them away to be shot.[12]

Mass murders of Šiauliai Jews took place near the village of Bubiai, in the Gubernija Forest, a part of the Normančiai Forest District approximately 15 kilometers (9 miles) from Šiauliai, during September 1941. Groups of victims, numbering close to 500, were brought to the site in 10 trucks. Before they were shot, the Jews were forced to undress, beaten, and then driven into the pits. Witnesses to the murders stated that the executions were directed by German officers, although Lithuanian partisans participated as well.[13] Yerushalmi describes one victim who managed to survive the shootings near Bubiai and returned to the town to report what was occurring there: "The representative M. Leibovitch went there (to visit the survivor of the shootings) and he became aware of the terrible

truth: all of those who had been seized were taken to the woods near Bubiai and there they were shot next to pits that had been prepared beforehand. The survivor had himself been wounded, but he still managed to escape from the pit."[14] The shootings would start at about 3:00 or 4:00 P.M. and were supervised by German officers. The executioners were Lithuanian partisans and soldiers of the 14th Lithuanian Police Battalion, quartered in Šiauliai. In the Gubernija Forest, approximately 1,000 people were murdered.[15] The last major shooting of Jews in 1941 took place between December 8 and December 15. On the orders of Gebietskommissar Hans Gewecke and the head of the German Security Police and SD, 72 Jews from Šiauliai, who worked in nearby villages, were seized and then shot. The executioners were policemen from the villages of Kuršėnai, Stačiūnai, Radviliškis, and Pakruojis.[16]

Following the mass murders in September 1941, the number of Aktions against the Jewish population declined. A Jewish administration and a unit of Jewish Police were created in the Šiauliai ghetto, similar to the structure of the ghettos in Wilno and Kaunas. Inside the ghetto, the original Jewish committee was reorganized into a Jewish Council (Judenrat). Its authority extended to both the Ežero-Trakų and Kaukazas ghettos. The Judenrat was headed by M. Leibovitch, and it included other influential Šiauliai Jews, such as Aron Heller and B.M. Abramovitch, and the teacher Eliezer Yerushalmi. The main responsibility of the Jewish Council was to direct internal life within the ghetto, while also maintaining contacts with the German and Lithuanian administrative offices. In addition, the council appointed the heads of the Ežero-Trakų and Kaukazas ghetto administrations. The administration of the Ežero-Trakų ghetto included S. Burgin, S. Kultchenitski (social affairs), and Ch. Cherniavski (labor affairs).[17] The ghetto administration supervised the maintenance of public order in the ghetto, assignment of forced laborers, distribution of food supplies within the ghetto, sanitation, and other everyday activities.

A food shop and 40-bed hospital (headed by Luntz and Peisachovitz) opened in the ghetto. Beginning in September 1941, the inmates were driven to work at locations such as the Zokniai airfield, various workshops, the Frenkel leather factory (in Kaukazas), the Rekyva and Radviliškis peat bogs, the Linkaičiai weapons workshops, and the Pavenčiai sugar refinery. Ghetto inhabitants deemed capable of working were assigned yellow work cards. The Jews were not paid money for their work. The German Arbeitsamt (labor office) transferred the money to the ghetto administration.[18] (Nesse Godin recalls that when her family of five was transferred to the ghetto, they were allotted only four yellow work cards. Nesse, who was 13 at the time [August 1941], was too young to receive a work card. Her mother bribed a Lithuanian officer accompanying the Gestapo official, who left a fifth card for Nesse. While this card offered the opportunity to work, Nesse did not receive a ration card because she was not officially registered in the ghetto.)[19]

Ephraim Gens was made head of the Ežero-Trakų ghetto police in early September 1941. He had 11 or 12 policemen at his disposal, who were unarmed. The ghetto policemen were responsible for maintaining public order inside the ghetto.

Nathan Katz works in the radio laboratory in the Šiauliai ghetto, 1943.
USHMM WS #07367, COURTESY OF NATHAN KATZ

More specifically, their duties included the housing and resettlement of inmates, prevention of crimes, such as robbery and speculation (food smuggling), maintenance of proper sanitary conditions, and the formation of "work brigades." Those who violated the ghetto regulations were punished with fines, beatings, confinement in solitary cells, and temporary prohibition from work. The punishments were issued by the Ghetto Court of Law.[20]

On February 7, 1942, an order was issued forbidding childbirths in the ghetto. The order went into effect on August 15, 1942. Doctors had to perform abortions to prevent violation of this order.[21] (The Judenrat discussed whether it was possible to force women to have abortions under the circumstances. Three births had taken place since August 15, 1942, and up to 20 women were estimated to be pregnant in the ghetto in late March 1943. Dr. Aron Pick, a physician living in the Šiauliai ghetto, kept a diary recording events in the ghetto. In a January 1944 entry, he details the birth of a Jewish baby girl born to a slave laborer. The child was drowned after birth to avert the "terrible danger [that] hung over the entire ghetto.")[22]

E. Gens remained head of the Jewish Police in the Ežero-Trakų ghetto until March 25, 1944, when he resigned because of a disagreement with the new ghetto administration chief, Georg Pariser. Gens then became an ordinary ghetto inmate, while Chaim Berlovitch occupied his previous post. David Fayn was head of the Jewish Police in the Kaukazas ghetto. His deputy was Zavel Gotz, who replaced Fayn in his duties in July 1943.[23]

Underground anti-Nazi resistance groups emerged in the Šiauliai ghetto. The most active members of the Zionist youth movements created a secret organization in late 1941. Another "self-defense" organization, headed by engineer Yosel Leibovitch, appeared in 1942, with both Zionist and Communist membership. They acquired and concealed weapons but undertook no armed action. Small underground newspapers, *Massada*, *Hatechiya*, and *Mimamakim*, were produced.

Youth movements (Hechalutz, Betar, and the Communist group) were also active in the ghetto and commemorated certain Jewish and national holidays. In 1943, schools opened in both ghettos, with an enrollment of 90 pupils in the Ežero-Trakų ghetto and 200 pupils in Kaukazas.

The Šiauliai ghetto was under the supervision of Gebietskommissar Gewecke until mid-September or October 1, 1943, when, the SS assumed jurisdiction. The ghetto then acquired the status of a subcamp of the Kauen concentration camp. The head of the Schaulen subcamp was SS-Unterscharführer Hermann Schleef. For information about this transition and the period of the concentration camp, readers are referred to the entry in Volume I (**Schaulen**, pp. 858–859).

Some Jews from Šiauliai were among the concentration camp inmates liberated by Allied troops at the end of the war. The number of survivors from the Šiauliai ghetto was between 350 and 500.[24]

Hans Gewecke, the Gebietskommissar in Šiauliai, was tried in Lübeck in 1970 and sentenced to four and a half years for hanging a Jew who was caught smuggling food into the ghetto.[25]

SOURCES In addition to the entry on Šiauliai in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 658–671, a number of other published works on Jewish life in the Šiauliai ghetto are useful. In particular, see Eliezer Yerushalmi, *Pinkas Shavli: Yoman mi-geto Lita'i, 1941–1944* (Jerusalem: Mosad Byalik and Yad Vashem, 1958), a journal detailing daily events in the ghetto—an abridged version of this can also be found in *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry*, compiled by Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002). *Shirim me-geto Shavli* (Israel: Yotse Geto Shavli, 2003) is a collection of poems and songs from the Šiauliai ghetto. See also Levi Shalit, *Azoy zaynen mir geshtorbn* (Munich: Organization of Lithuanian Jews in Germany, 1949). Among those memoirs published by survivors of the Shavli ghetto are Sarah Yerushalmi, *La-geto lo hazarti* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1980); Harry Demby, *Life Story of a Holocaust Survivor from Shaulen Lithuania, Who Lived His Life to Help Others* (Delray Beach, FL: H. Demby, 2003); and Meyer Kron, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (Montreal: Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 2000). The diary of Aron Pick has been published in Hebrew: *Reshimot mi-ge ha-haregah: Zikhronot ketuvim be-geto ha Shavla'i (Lita)* (Tel Aviv: Igud yots'e Lita, 1997).

The trial records of Lithuanian collaborators can be found in the Lithuanian Special Archives (Lietuvos ypatingasis archyvas, or LYA). Additional documentation on the German occupation can be found in the Central State Archives of Lithuania (Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas, or LCVA), including the records of the "Šiauliai City SS and Police Leader" (LCVA, R-717; see also USHMM, Acc. 2000.195). See also the trial records for Hans Gewecke: Sta. Lübeck, 2 Ks 1/68.

The diary of Dr. Aaron Pick describes life in the Šiauliai ghetto, public health, and Judenrat activities (see USHMM, Acc. 2000.132). A number of oral histories and testimonies on Šiauliai are available at the USHMM (e.g., RG-50.030*0080 [Nesse Galperin Godin]; the memoirs of Sonja Haid Greene, "Between life and death," RG-02.112; Acc.1994.A203; Simcha Brudno: "Witness to Nazism," RG-02.101; Acc.1994.A.159, transcription of oral history interview; and "The Family of Aryeh-Leyb Fingerhut [Leo Gerut]," RG-02.210). Numerous survivor testimonies and other sources can also be found in Israel: at YVA (e.g., M-1/E-575, 1206, 1233, 1472, 1555; M-9/9[6], 15[6]; O-3/3831, 3856; O-33/56, 60, 62, 284, 956, 1381, 1392, 2582, 3368; O-4/[15]); at the MA (A.258, A.685); also in the Oral History Division, Institute for Contemporary Jewry (i.e., [4] 37, [12] 58, 72, 77, 80, 82, 95, 103, 112, 113); and in the archives of the ITS.

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NOTES

1. List of the Jews deported by the Bolsheviks in 1941, LMAB, RS, fr. 76-190, pp. 19–23.
2. Memorandum by the Šiauliai Region's Working People's Deputies Council Executive Committee, April 4, 1968, LYA, K 1-46-1261, p. 86.
3. Yerushalmi, *Pinkas Shavli*; and Yerushalmi's Diary, Šiauliai (Shavli), in Ehrenburg and Grossman, *The Complete Black Book*, pp. 265, 522. Yerushalmi, *Pinkas Shavli*, p. 31, also cites mass arrests carried out by Lithuanian partisans.
4. See Yerushalmi, *Pinkas Shavli*, p. 32.
5. Šiauliai City Government's Report to Gebietskommissar Schaulen-Land, August 13, 1941, LMAB, RS, fr. 76-181, p. 2.
6. Excerpts from A. Stankus's Examination Record, October 20, 1950, LYA, K 1-8-182, pp. 158–159. See Yerushalmi, *Pinkas Shavli*, pp. 32–33, on the creation of a Jewish administration.
7. Yerushalmi, *Pinkas Shavli*, pp. 33–34.
8. Nesse Godin Oral History transcript, USHMMA, RG-50.030*0080, p. 8.
9. Šiauliai City Mayor's Announcement, July 18, 1941, ŠAA, 269-1a-27, p. 27.
10. Ehrenburg and Grossman, *The Complete Black Book*, pp. 296–300 (extract from the diary of E. Yerushalmi). See also Kron, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, p. 64, which states that the ghettos were closed by August 31.
11. Excerpts from A. Stankus's Examination Record, October 20, 1950, LYA, K 1-8-182, pp. 158–160.
12. Ibid., p. 160; Statement of the Description of Murders in the Šiauliai City Jewish Ghetto, November 25, 1944, LMAB, RS, fr. 159-29, p. 3.
13. Note issued by the Soviet Lithuanian KGB about mass murders in the Šiauliai Region in 1941, February 7, 1973, LYA, K 1-46-1274, p. 1; Z. Ašmonienė's Examination Record, January 23, 1973, K 1-46-1274, pp. 5–7.
14. Yerushalmi, *Pinkas Shavli*, p. 41.
15. Note by Captain Obraztsov, Soviet Lithuanian KGB Šiauliai City Chief Operative Official, about the 14th Lithuanian Police Battalion, n.d., LYA, K 1-47-1268, p. 145.
16. Statement of the Description of Murders in the Šiauliai City Jewish Ghetto, November 25, 1944, LMAB, RS, fr. 159-29, p. 3.
17. E. Gens's Examination Record, June 29, 1948, LYA, K 1-58-P42809/3, pp. 18, 25; Avraham Tory, *Surviving the Holocaust: The Kovno Ghetto Diary* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 460.

18. USHMM, RG-50.030*0080, p. 10.

19. A. Galiūnas's Examination Record, September 6, 1951, LYA, K 1-58-P16850, p. 19.

20. E. Gens's Examination Record, January 21, 1948, ibid., K 1-58-P42809/3, pp. 13–14.

21. See Yerushalmi, *Pinkas Shavli*, for a copy of the order officially dated July 13, 1942 (p. 88), as well as the minutes of the Judenrat meeting on the topic, March 24, 1943 (pp. 188–189).

22. Dr. Aaron Pick Diary, USHMM, Acc. 2000.132, January 1944 (Hebrew).

23. E. Gens's Examination Record, January 21, 1948, LYA, K 1-58-P42809/3, pp. 15–16; also L. Lazeris's Examination Record, June 21, 1950, K 1-58-18181/3, pp. 13–14.

24. L. Peleckienė, "Prie Šiaulių geto vartų skambėjo gedulingas 'Requiem,'" *Lietuvos rytas*, 1994m. liep. 26d.; E. Gens's Examination Record, January 21, 1948, LYA, K 1-58-P42809/3, pp. 12–13; Walter Zwi Bacharach, ed., *Dies sind meine letzten Worte . . . Briefe aus der Schoah* (Göttingen: Wallenstein, 2006), p. 124.

25. Kron, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, p. 66; Sta. Lübeck, 2 Ks 1/68.

ŠILUVA

Pre-1940: Šiluva (Yiddish: Shidleve), town, Raseiniai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Šiluva/Shiluva, Raseiniai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Schidlowo, Kreis Raseinen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Šiluva, Raseiniai rajonas, Kaunas apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Šiluva is located 78 kilometers (49 miles) northwest of Kaunas. According to the 1923 census, there were 365 Jews living in Šiluva, constituting 37 percent of the total. Owing to emigration in the 1930s, the Jewish population declined somewhat. Around 80 Jewish families were living in Šiluva in 1938.

German armed forces captured the town on June 24, 1941. Lithuanian nationalists immediately arrested all the Jews and resettled them into barns in the village of Ribukai. These barns in effect became a ghetto for the Jews. Jewish property was stolen by the Lithuanians. Each day Jewish men were exploited for heavy physical labor at the nearby Lyduvėnai railway station. While at work, the Jews were subjected to beatings at the hands of the Lithuanian guards.

On August 15–16, 1941, 115 to 120 Jewish men were taken out en masse and shot near the village of Padubysis (according to another source, near the village of Zakeliškiai). On August 21, 1941, the ghetto was liquidated, and all the remaining Jews, around 300 people, were shot and buried in sand pits near Ribukai, about 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) east of Lyduvėnai. Three Jews who received advanced warning from a Lithuanian friend were able to escape to the Šiauliai ghetto. The killings were carried out by a detachment of Einsatzkommando 3, assisted by Lithuanian policemen.[1]

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Šiluva during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: "Siluva," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 681–683; and Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1184.

Documentation regarding the persecution and murder of the Jews of Šiluva can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-427); LCVA; and YVA (O-3/2580; M-9/15[6]).

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NOTE

1. YVA, 0-3/2580, M-9/15(6); B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 401–402.

ŠIRVINTOS

Pre-1940: Širvintos (Yiddish: Shirvint), town, Ukmergė apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Širvintos/Shirvintos, Ukmergē uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Schirwinten, Kreis Wilkomir, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Širvintos, rajonas center, Vilnius apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Širvintos is located 47 kilometers (29 miles) north-northwest of Wilno. In 1939, about 700 Jews lived there; they comprised about one third of the town's population.

German armed forces captured the town at the end of June 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and police force, which proceeded to murder several Jews, burn the synagogue, and implement various anti-Jewish measures. All Jews were marked with the Star of David and forced into labor. The Jews were subjected to murder, assault, rape, robbery, and other forms of degradation by local antisemites. The Jews were also prohibited from appearing in public places and having any relations with non-Jewish Lithuanians.

In July or August 1941 (accounts differ), the Germans forced the remaining Jews into a ghetto composed of about 20 buildings and required them to leave most of their possessions in their old homes. From the ghetto, able-bodied Jewish men and some women were marched about 10 kilometers (6 miles) daily to a forced labor site outside the town. Each day the numbers of Jews returning from work diminished, as they were shot for the slightest infraction. The ghetto existed for little over a month and was liquidated on September 18, 1941. At that time, Lithuanian police, Gestapo officers, and Wehrmacht troops surrounded the ghetto in the middle of the night, forced the Jews into trucks, took them to the pine forest of Pivonija, about 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) from Ukmergė, and shot them.

SOURCES Information about the fate of the Jews of Širvintos in the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 248–251; Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish*

Communities: Lithuania (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 687–689; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 715–716.

There is survivor testimony about Širvintos in USHMM (RG-02.170; Acc.1994.A.0312).

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SMORGONIE

Pre-1939: Smorgonie (Yiddish: Smorgon), town, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Smorgon', Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Smorgonie, initially Rayon center, Gebiet Wilejka, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then from April 1, 1942, Kreis Aschmena, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Smarhon', raen center, Hrodna voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Smorgonie is located 72 kilometers (45 miles) east-southeast of Wilno. In 1931, there were some 4,000 Jews living in the town.

In 1939, the Soviet Union occupied Smorgonie. Under Soviet rule, a few wealthier Jews were exiled to Siberia. With the outbreak of war in June 1941, many Jewish males were conscripted into the Red Army.[1]

The Germans occupied Smorgonie on June 26, 1941. At the time of its capture, local Poles took the opportunity to rob and beat Jews with impunity. When the German civil administration was set up in Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien on September 1, Smorgonie was incorporated into Gebiet Wilejka. In September, the German authorities established two ghettos in the town. One was located in the synagogue courtyard, the other in the Karke.[2] The Jews in the Karke ghetto (which remained open) were taken daily to build a railroad line.[3]

The main ghetto consisted of an area of about eight blocks, with the synagogue courtyard at its center; a wooden fence topped by barbed wire surrounded it. The Jews there were gathered and counted every morning, then sent to work cutting grass, cleaning the town, and so forth. Polish local police, led by Koszukowski, supervised them; they frequently harassed and beat the Jews. Jewish women were also made to cook, clean, and sew for soldiers quartered in barracks in Smorgonie on their way to the front. Some of the more lax German officers would let the women barter with the peasants for food. It was also possible to sneak out of the ghetto to barter with local non-Jews, although this was forbidden and therefore dangerous. Those who could obtain food would go to the synagogue to share it with others who could not. In January 1942, Belorussians replaced the Polish policemen.[4]

A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was also established in the main ghetto. It consisted of Rabbi Yitskhok Markus (the chief rabbi of Smorgonie), Rabbi Slodzinski, Meyer Goldberg, Abrasha Tsirulnik, Noyekh Yavitsh, Mordekhai Mirski, Perl, Sarakhan, and Tshertok. All were chosen because of their important roles in the pre-war community. The main task of the Judenrat was to fulfill a series of demands for money and property from the Gebietskommissariat in Wilejka between the fall of 1941 and March 1942.[5] There was an underground organization in Smorgonie beginning early in 1942; it established contact with the underground in Kurzeniec, the center of a local network that was allied with a group of Soviet partisans in the nearby forests.

In April 1942, Smorgonie and other nearby towns were transferred to the Wilna-Land Gebietskommissariat in Generalkommissariat Litauen, under the jurisdiction of Gebietskommissar Horst Wulff.[6]

The ghetto was liquidated piecemeal through a series of deportations to various forced labor camps. The deportations focused on moving those who were fit for forced labor to locations where they could be of use. In the summer of 1942, the Karke ghetto was liquidated and its population moved into the main ghetto, which was enlarged to make room. The deportations began in August. First, 60 or 70 young Jews were deported to a forced labor camp in Varena and others to one in Olkieniki (Valkininkai). Shortly thereafter, 170 Jews were sent to the forced labor camp in Žiežmariai and 120 to Rudziszki (Rūdiškės).[7] By this time, the majority of the young and able-bodied Jews of both genders had been deported. In September or October, most of the remaining Jews were sent to Oszmiana and a few others to Soly. About 150 remained in the ghetto, which was transformed into a small forced labor camp.[8] In March 1943, the 74 Jews remaining in the camp were transferred to the Wilno ghetto. In early April, they were taken from there to Ponary, where they were killed.[9]

The Red Army liberated Smorgonie on July 6, 1944. The town was almost completely destroyed, and Jewish gravestones had been used to pave the sidewalks. Only about 60 Jews managed to survive the German occupation in the camps, in the forests, or in hiding. These Jews all left the town within a few years after liberation.[10]

SOURCES Smorgonie's small size made it necessary to rely almost entirely on survivor testimony for this article. Several survivor testimonies appear in the yizkor book: Abba Gordin and Hanoch Levin, eds., *Smorgon, meboz Vilna: Sefer 'edut vezikaron* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Smorgon be-Yisrael, 1965). The author of this entry also conducted an interview with Tania Rosmaryn, a native of Smorgonie who was interned in the ghetto there and was able to provide several important details. Herman Kruk's ghetto diary contains scattered references to Smorgonie: Mordecai W. Bernstein, ed., *Togbukh fun Vilner Geto* (New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 1961). It is now available in an excellent English translation by Barbara Harshav: Herman Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939–1944* (New Haven, CT: YIVO, 2002), which includes material from manuscripts not consulted in earlier editions. Most important, Kruk recorded the testimonies of other Jews about the camps and ghettos outside of Wilno, including the testimony of Rabbi Yankev Shneidman on Smorgonie.

Smorgonie is scarcely mentioned in the secondary literature, probably because of its small size, the lack of secondary sources, and the fact that it does not fit squarely into works on

the Holocaust in either Belarus or Lithuania. However, the Smorgonie ghetto and the resistance are mentioned in Shalom Cholawsky, *'Al naharot ha-Nyemen veha-Dnyeper: Yehude Byelorusyah ha-ma'aravit be-milhemet ha-'olam ha-sheniyah* (Tel Aviv: Moreshet, Bet 'edut 'ash. Mordekhai Anilevits' ve-Sifriyat Po 'alim, 1982)—available in English as Shalom Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorussia during World War II* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1998). The information on Smorgonie in Marat Botvinnik's *Pamiatniki genotsida evreev Belarusi* (Minsk: Belarusskaia Navuka, 2000) is partly based on unreliable sources.

An account by Fishl Kustin is in YVA (O-33/5278) and has been published in Leonid Smilovitskii, *Katastrofa evreev v Belorussii 1941–1944 gg.* (Tel Aviv: Biblioteka Matveia Chernogo, 2000). There is also a detailed account in the archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (AŻIH, 301/2276).

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NOTES

1. Elke Baranovski, "Vos ikh hob ibergelebt," in Gordin and Levin, *Smorgon*, *mehoz Vilna*, p. 425.
2. Smilovitskii, *Katastrofa evreev v Belorussii*, p. 227; Kruk, *The Last Days*, p. 629; Baranovski, "Vos ikh hob ibergelebt," pp. 426–427; Tova Dunski, "Keta'ei 'edut," in Gordin and Levin, *Smorgon*, *mehoz Vilna*, p. 449. Also in Gordin and Levin, see Sh. Greys, "'edut," p. 453; and Rivke Markus, "In geto un in lagern," pp. 401–402.
3. Greys, "'edut," p. 453.
4. Markus, "In geto un in lagern," pp. 402–403; Kruk, *The Last Days*, p. 627; interview with Tania Rosmaryn, February 26, 2004, Washington, DC; AŻIH, 301/2276, p. 9.
5. Kruk, *The Last Days*, p. 491.
6. Announcement of Generalkommissar Adrian von Renteln, in B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970), p. 103; Kruk, *The Last Days*, p. 629.
7. Maryashe Yentes, "Khurbm Smorgon," in Gordon and Levin, *Smorgon*, *mehoz Vilna*, pp. 379–382; Kruk, *The Last Days*, p. 629.
8. Yentes, "Khurbm Smorgon," p. 386; Markus, "In geto un in lagern," p. 406; Kruk, *The Last Days*, pp. 387, 670.
9. Kruk, *The Last Days*, p. 533; Yentes, "Khurbm Smorgon," p. 391.
10. AŻIH, 301/2276, p. 17.

SOLY

Pre-1939: Soly, village, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Smorgon' raion, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Soli, initially Rayon Smorgonie, Gebiet Wilejka, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then from April 1, 1942, Kreis Aschmena, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Soly, Smarhon' raen, Hrodna voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Soly is located 16 kilometers (10 miles) northeast of Oszmiana and 66 kilometers (41 miles) southeast of Wilno. On the eve of World War II, there were 130 Jewish families living in Soly.

In accord with the terms of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the Red Army entered Soly on September 17, 1939. Then German forces occupied the village on June 25, 1941. In July, a German military commandant's office (Ortskommandantur) was in charge of Soly. In September, authority was transferred to a German civil administration. Initially Soly was in Rayon Smorgonie in Gebiet Wilejka, within Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien.

In the summer and fall of 1941, the German authorities implemented a series of anti-Jewish measures in Soly. They appointed a Jewish Council (Judenrat), headed by Michel Magid, and marked Jews with distinguishing badges in the form of a yellow Star of David. Jews were required to perform physical labor, and they were restricted to the limits of the village.

On July 12, 1941, German security forces conducted the first Aktion in Soly. They arrested 12 people, accused of being Soviet activists, and shot them.[1] In October, the Jews of the village were forced to move into a ghetto, which was located on the side streets and consisted of dilapidated buildings. The ghetto was soon enclosed by a wall with a gate, through which only forced laborers were permitted to exit if issued with passes, usually escorted by the Polish police. A small unit of Jewish Police guarded the gate on the inside. Jewish forced laborers worked on the railroad and on other tasks 10 to 12 hours per day. However, forced laborers did receive some pay or at least coupons that entitled them to food.[2]

In April 1942, the Germans transferred a strip of territory including most of Rayon Smorgonie from Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien to Gebiet Wilna-Land in Generalkommissariat Litauen. The Jews of Soly now feared for their lives, as the majority of the Jews in Lithuania had already been murdered. In the summer and fall of 1942, most of the young people in the Soly ghetto and other ghettos in the region were sent to various forced labor camps, including those in Žiežmariai, Kiena, and Biała Waka.

In October 1942, the German authorities in Generalkommissariat Litauen ordered the liquidation of the small ghettos in the region to the east of Wilno, concentrating their inhabitants in four ghettos: Oszmiana, Święciany, Michaliszki, and Soly. At this time there were reportedly 295 Jews living in Soly, of whom 160 were deployed for labor. The Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, Horst Wulff, instructed the head of the Judenrat in Wilno, Jacob Gens, to organize the four new ghettos along the lines of the Wilno ghetto. Gens sent four teams of policemen and administrators to the ghettos. By the end of December 1942, a number of Jewish forced laborers from Soly had been transferred to the Wilno ghetto.[3]

In the fall of 1942, newcomers were registered by the Jewish Council. One child survivor, Morris Engelson, who was then aged seven, recalled that he went to school in the Soly ghetto, but the Jews there feared that the Germans might organize an Aktion to round up and kill remaining Jewish children. In response, youths lied about their age on registration, and Jews prepared hiding places, usually behind false walls in their apartments, teaching the children to run and hide at the first sign of danger.[4]

An underground resistance existed in Soly, and efforts were made to contact Soviet partisans, but these were sometimes rebuffed. Nevertheless, a report had reached the Wilno

ghetto by early April 1943 that some Jews from the Soly ghetto had fled to the forests. For example, Morris Engelson and his family managed to flee the Soly ghetto with the aid of a peasant acquaintance in December 1942.[5]

In March 1943, the German authorities forbade the presence of Jews within 50 kilometers (31 miles) of the Generalkommissariat Litauen border with Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien. Therefore, the four remaining ghettos there had to be liquidated. Some of their inhabitants were relocated to Wilno and to the labor camps in Žiežmariai, Kiena, and other sites. Then in late March 1943, the Jews of Oszmiana and Michaliszki were brought to Soly. The Germans had informed Gens that these Jews, together with the remaining 700 Jews in the Soly ghetto, would be sent to the ghetto in Kaunas. Gens even traveled to Soly with the intention of accompanying the transport. In Soly, the Jews were taken to the local train station and put into freight cars with windows sealed by barbed wire. Previously loaded onto the train were Jews from Oszmiana and Michaliszki. However, en route Gens learned from a Polish railway worker that their true destination was the killing site of Ponary and that the Germans had deceived them. When the train made an intermediate stop, Gens and his men were sent back to Wilno and replaced by German Gendarmes and Polish policemen. At the Ponary station, the Jews were held overnight in the sealed cars. When the cars were opened at daybreak, they were led to the murder site and shot next to the death pits. On that day about 3,800 people were murdered, including at least 400 from Soly.[6]

By the time the area was liberated by the Red Army in the summer of 1944, only a few Jews from Soly remained alive. These were mostly young people who had escaped from labor camps and linked up with partisan units. No Jewish community was reestablished in Soly after the war.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Soly during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp. 468–469; and Herman Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939–1944* (New Haven, CT: YIVO, 2002).

Documentation on the persecution and murder of the Jews of Soly can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-89-15); LCVA (R 626-1-211); VHF (# 6067 and 48155); and YVA.

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trans. Kathleen Luft

NOTES

1. GARF, 7021-89-15, p. 38 verso.
2. VHF, # 6067, testimony of David Cwei.
3. LCVA, R 626-1-211, p. 18, list of ghettos in Kreis Aschmena, October 1942; Kruk, *The Last Days*, pp. 385, 439, 443.
4. VHF, # 48155, testimony of Morris Engelson.
5. Ibid.; # 6067; and Kruk, *The Last Days*, p. 494.
6. Kruk, *The Last Days*, pp. 486, 494, 534; GARF, 7021-89-15.

SUBAČIUS

Pre-1940: Subačius (Yiddish: Subotsh), village, Panevėžys apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Subačius/Subachius, Panevezhis uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Subotsch, Kreis Ponewesch, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Subačius, Panevėžys rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Subačius is located 23 kilometers (15 miles) east of Panevėžys. In 1921, the Jewish population was 250. More than 20 Jewish families were living in the village on the eve of the German invasion.

German forces captured Subačius in late June 1941. At the time of the Germans' arrival, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and police force. Initially the German army only passed through the town, but a small garrison was established in Subačius after about one month. Some Jews fled into the countryside as the Germans first approached, but they returned to Subačius after a few days.

One day, probably in the second half of July, all the Jews were ordered to gather in the home of a prominent Jewish family. Five German soldiers and some Lithuanian activists selected about 10 families for work. The other Jews were escorted out of town and were all shot in the Ilčūnai Forest, about 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) west of the village.[1]

The remaining Jews were placed in a ghetto near the railway station, about 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) from the center of the village. The ghetto consisted of one street and was surrounded by a wooden fence with barbed wire. More than one family had to share each house. The Jews were forced to wear a Star of David on the chest and back of their clothing, and they were taken every day for forced labor. The labor tasks included harvesting potatoes and cleaning for the Germans. After about five months, at the end of 1941, the German garrison left for the front, and the Lithuanian activists took this opportunity to murder the remaining Jews. A few Jews managed to hide and to escape through the snow at this time. For example, Ascia Lieberman escaped through the barbed wire with her brother when the Lithuanians came to surround the ghetto. Her mother, however, went back to fetch her sister in the ghetto and was shot at the ghetto fence.[2]

SOURCES The existence of a ghetto in Subačius is mentioned in Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 771.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: LYA and VHF (e.g., # 5112, 50638).

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 50638, testimony of Sara Widawski; # 5112, testimony of Ascia Lieberman; Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), p. 506.
2. VHF, # 50638; # 5112.

ŠVĖKŠNA

Pre-1940: Švėkšna (Yiddish: Shvekshne), village, Tauragė apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Švėkšna/Shvekshna, Taurage uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Schwekschne, Kreis Tauroggen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Švėkšna, Šilutė rajonas, Klaipeda apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Švėkšna is located 51 kilometers (32 miles) northwest of Tauragė. According to the census of 1923, Švėkšna had a Jewish population of 519. By June 1941, the size of the community had been reduced somewhat by emigration in the 1930s.

German forces occupied the village on June 22, 1941, the day of their invasion of the USSR, and therefore almost no Jews managed to evacuate. Before the village was taken, it was subjected to artillery bombardment, and this caused many Jews to flee to surrounding villages. Upon returning, however, they found that Lithuanians had looted their homes.

As soon as the town was captured, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local authority and a police force, which began implementing anti-Jewish measures. The Jews had to surrender all radios, bicycles, and precious metal objects. They were prohibited from using the sidewalks or associating in any way with non-Jewish Lithuanians. They also were required to wear yellow patches in the shape of the Star of David on their clothing. Jewish men were compelled to perform heavy labor and Jewish women to do menial cleaning jobs.

On June 27, 1941, members of the 2nd SS-Sturm/20th SS-Reiter-Standarte (SS-Hauptsturmführer Karl Struve commanded the Standarte; SS-Untersturmführer Theodor Werner Scheu led the Sturm), assisted by Lithuanian partisans, gathered about 150 to 200 able-bodied Jewish males in the synagogue. They were instructed to bring a cup, a plate, and a change of clothes. After forcing the Jews to witness the burning of their religious books, the Jews were shaven, robbed, beaten, and forced to perform gymnastics. The physical abuse lasted several hours. The following day, Scheu selected 120 of these men, including the town's rabbi, and they were taken on trucks to the labor camp at Heydekrug (Šilutė). Those deemed unfit for labor were probably killed outside the village. Many of the Jews sent to Heydekrug became victims of the successive killings at the camp in the summer and fall of 1941. Only a few survived to be transferred, first in July 1943 to the Auschwitz concentration camp, then after selections there, on to other locations in the camp system.[1]

Pre-war postcard of the synagogue in Švėkšna. The German captions read, "Greetings from Schwekschne" and "Jewish synagogue."
USHMM WS #03927, COURTESY OF SAM SHERRON

In Švėkšna, 4 women and 1 man were killed on the spot on June 27 after leaving their homes in violation of instructions to remain at home. On June 28, Lithuanian partisans murdered 3 more girls, who were Komsomol members. According to German investigative sources, at least 20 Jews were murdered in Švėkšna at the end of June or in July 1941, either by members of the Border Police from Memel or the Staatspolizei based in Tilsit.[2]

The approximately 300 women, children, and old people remaining in the village were moved into a ghetto, which was located on the "Jewish Street." The women were forced into hard labor and suffered from hunger and physical abuse.

The ghetto was liquidated on September 22, 1941. Lithuanian partisans shot the remaining Jews in a forest between the villages of Inkakliai and Raudiškiai.[3]

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Švėkšna during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 673–676; Ruth Leiserowitz, "Grenzregion als Grauzone. Heydekrug—eine Stadt an der Peripherie Ostpreussens," in Christian Pletzing, ed., *Vorposten des Reichs?: Ostpreussen 1933–1945* (Munich: Meidenbauer, 2006), pp. 129–149, here pp. 138–149; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 253–254; and "Sveksna," in Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1268.

Documentation regarding the murder of the Jews of Švėkšna can be found in the following archives: BA-L (ZStL, II 207 162/59); GARF (7021-94-429); LCVA; and YVA (Leyb Koniuchovsky Collection, O-71/File 14; and O-3/2580).

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NOTES

1. See LG-Aur, verdict of June 26, 1964, against Struve et al., in *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 20 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1979), Lfd. Nr. 579, pp. 308–310; Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry*, p. 254.

2. See LG-Ulm, verdict of August 29, 1958, against Hans-Joachim Böhme et al., in *JuNS-V*, vol. 15 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1976), Lfd. Nr. 465, pp. 159–160. Very few details are available concerning this Aktion—it is possible this reflects the killing of those men deemed unfit for labor.

3. YVA, Leyb Koniuchovsky Collection, O-71/14 (testimony of Moshe Ment, Yitzchak Markowitz, Naphtali Ziv, and Meir Shmulevitz); and O-3/2580 (testimony of Meir Ladon).

ŚWIĘCIANY

Pre-1939: Święciany (Yiddish: Sventsian), town, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1940: Sventsiany, raion center, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1940–1941: Švenčionys/Sventsiany, uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Schwentschionys, Kreis center, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Švenčionys, rajonas center, Vilnius apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Święciany is located about 80 kilometers (50 miles) northeast of Wilno. In 1925, the Jewish population of Święciany was 2,750. On September 18, 1939, the Soviet army entered Święciany. Initially incorporated into the Belorussian SSR, after August 1940, Święciany was transferred to the new Lithuanian SSR.

Following their invasion of the Soviet Union, German forces occupied Święciany by July 1, 1941. At the time of the invasion, a number of Jews, especially those with links to the Soviet authorities, fled into Russia. Lithuanian partisans soon organized in the Święciany area and fired on retreating Soviet soldiers and officials, and also on fleeing Jews, forcing some to return to Święciany, where Jewish firemen had established a self-defense unit.

A German military commandant's office (Ortskommandantur) was established in the town, as were a local administration and police force. The latter institutions were dominated by Lithuanians, as Poles were excluded from holding office.[1] From August 1, 1941, P. Skrabutėnas was in charge of the Święciany district police force and Juozas Šležys the Święciany town police. Head of the Kreis Schwentschionys administration was Mykolas Kukutis, and mayor of the town was Vincas Blažys.

In the first days of the occupation, Jews were harassed and seized for forced labor, and a number were murdered as suspected Communists. According to Yitzhak Arad: "[N]ow the hatred of the Lithuanians for the Jews exploded in full force. Jews were beaten in the streets; their homes were looted; they were snatched away for forced labor and cruelly molested." Available sources indicate that around 140 Jews were arrested and shot in July 1941, in at least two Aktions, in which local Lithuanians played an important role.[2]

In August 1941, the German military administration was replaced by a German civil administration. The new Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, Horst Wulff, ordered the registration of all Jewish residents. At this time, a series of anti-Jewish measures was introduced, including the wearing of the Star of David, a ban on travel by Jews, and restrictions on when Jews could buy food.[3] Rumors spread about the liquidation of entire Jewish communities elsewhere in Lithuania. When the Jews learned, in the second half of September, that the Germans were preparing a concentration point for the Jews of the region in Nowe Święciany, Jewish representatives appealed to the Catholic priest for help, but he claimed he was powerless to intervene.[4]

On September 26, 1941, German and Lithuanian police surrounded Święciany and ordered the Jews to prepare to move to the barracks at the military camp (firing range), also known as the Poligon camp, near Nowe Święciany, some 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) away. The Germans prepared a list of needed specialists, who would be permitted to remain in Święciany with their families. People attempted to bribe their way onto the list. During the night, a number of Jews fled towards Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, including Yitzhak Arad. On September 27, the majority of the Jews were then taken to the Poligon camp, where they were held, together with several thousand others collected from throughout the region, for just over a week under terrible conditions. After a few days the remaining Jews in Święciany were permitted to bring a little food to the inmates, but the prisoners were robbed and abused by their Lithuanian guards. A few additional specialists were selected out, with the aid of bribes, and brought to Święciany, where a small remnant ghetto was established around the large synagogues. The vacated Jewish houses were soon looted by the Lithuanians.[5]

Some people who had evaded the roundup soon joined the craftsmen in the ghetto. However, when they were urged to register, to become legal, the Germans arrested those who came forward and took them to the Poligon transit camp to be shot with the other Jews there. In total there were around 300 Jews in the remnant ghetto.[6]

According to Einsatzkommando 3 commander, Karl Jäger, 3,726 Jews were shot at Święciany by October 9, 1941, reflecting the killing of the inmates of the Poligon camp at two sites nearby.[7] Other sources, however, indicate that perhaps as many as 8,000 Jews from the region were murdered by the Security Police, members of the Lithuanian Ypatingas Burys killing squad, and other local auxiliaries at Poligon.[8]

A report, dated December 17, 1941, from the head of Kreis Schwentschionys to the Gebietskommissar, noted that the remaining Jews of the Kreis had been resettled into the Święciany ghetto, which was surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by the Lithuanian police. Those Jews assigned to perform labor were specially registered. Inside the ghetto, Antanas Markauskas, a Lithuanian policeman, was in charge of enforcing order and cleanliness. A five-man Jewish Council (Judenrat) had been formed, which was charged with maintaining order in the ghetto and dealing with internal Jewish affairs.[9] In April 1942, the Gebietskommissar ordered the head of the Kreis to organize all Jews, regardless of age or sex, for labor details to clean the streets of Święciany.[10]

One of the earliest and strongest Jewish resistance groups in the region emerged in the Święciany ghetto. Gertman, Rudnicki, Shutan, Porush, Wolfson, Ligumski, Nadel, Beck, and Miedziolski were some of its members. At first, the resistance group planned to fight inside the ghetto, but later it decided its members should escape to the forest and join partisan units. The underground and the Judenrat came into conflict over the question of purchasing arms, probably following an incident that provoked a deadly response.

On May 13, 1942, on the orders of Jonas Maciulevicius, the head of the Lithuanian Criminal Police, two members of the Jewish underground, Beck and Miedziolski, were arrested in the ghetto after Miedziolski had accidentally shot and wounded Beck with an illegal firearm. This was reported to

the Judenrat by the Jewish doctor who treated Beck, and the Jewish Police also reported the incident to the Lithuanian police. The two prisoners were interrogated and tortured for days, then killed. More or less at the same time, Sonia Lewin, another resident of the Święciany ghetto, was also arrested and shot.[11] Subsequently, the Judenrat tried to weaken the resistance by sending its members to work for the Organisation Todt (OT) in a labor camp.

In July 1942, the Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land banned Jewish artisans from practicing their crafts in the ghetto, unless there was a great need for their services, and ordered that 50 percent of their salary was to go directly to the Gebietskommissar's office.[12] At this time, some Jews in Święciany were working as shoemakers and tailors, while others worked in agriculture and in a factory making boots for the army. On August 6, 1942, the German office dealing with social affairs (Sozialamt) in Święciany reported that there were 566 Jewish men, women, and children in the ghetto of which all 353 able-bodied men and women were currently already deployed for labor.[13]

On August 28, 1942, the Generalkommissar in Litauen, owing to the lack of guards for Jewish work details, ordered the deployment of ghetto laborers to forestry, agricultural work, and road building to cease immediately. This was in response to increased partisan activity in the region. Soon afterwards, the German authorities also ordered the dissolution of the smaller ghettos east of Wilno and the resettlement of their inhabitants into the ghettos of Święciany, Oszmiana, and Wilno. Exceptions were made for Jewish workers needed by the German army and the OT and for Jews working as artisans in specific towns.[14] At this time, most of the remaining Jews from the Widze ghetto were transferred to Święciany. Around 80 craftsmen and their families initially remained in Widze, but these Jews were also sent to Święciany subsequently.[15] The ghettos in Święciany and Oszmiana were also subordinated administratively to the Wilno ghetto.

After the arrival of the Jews from Widze, overcrowding intensified, and an epidemic of typhus broke out. The Jewish doctor, however, tried to keep the outbreak secret from the Germans, for fear it might give them a pretext to liquidate the ghetto. The Wilno ghetto Judenrat provided some assistance.[16]

On March 5–6, 1943, shortly before the liquidation of the ghetto, 22 people connected with the underground decided to flee into the forest to join partisan resistance units. However, 2 of them, Kosha Ligumski and Gershon Nade, gave up their weapons and stayed behind with their widowed mothers. Around this time, about 40 Jews escaped the ghetto altogether.

In late March 1943, members of the Jewish Police from Wilno arrived in Święciany and, on German instructions, prepared two lists: one for those Jews destined to move to the Wilno ghetto and one for those to be transferred to the Kaunas ghetto. Initially people were not sure which would be the better destination. However, once it became clear that all the members of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police were going to Wilno, others also sought to get on this list.[17]

On April 4, 1943, the Jews of Święciany were transported on trucks initially to a barbed-wire enclosure at the railroad station in Nowe Święciany. On the evening of April 4, 1943, the train departed, reaching Wilno before dawn the next day. The members of the Święciany Judenrat and their families, with others from the list, were then taken to the Wilno ghetto. A few hours later, the train left, taking the remaining Jews to Ponary rather than Kaunas. When the Święciany Jews realized the deception, many of them tried to flee. The German and Lithuanian guards opened fire on the fleeing crowd. Around 600 people from the ghettos in Oszmiana and Święciany, who had been in the transport, were killed at the Ponary railway station and its vicinity. On that day, around 4,000 Jews, who had been brought in the two transports, died in Ponary.[18]

A few of the Jews from the Święciany ghetto survived the war, either with the partisans, in hiding, or after being in the Wilno ghetto and other camps.

Jonas Maciulewiczius (Maciulevicius), the head of the Lithuanian Criminal Police in Święciany, was tried by a Polish court in Olsztyń on May 2, 1950, and was sentenced to death. He was executed by hanging on December 12, 1950.[19]

SOURCES Information about the fate of the Jews of Święciany during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews in the Švenčionys, Oshmyany and Svir Regions (1941–1943)," in Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), pp. 83–118, here pp. 86–94; Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), sections F.1.2.6 and F.1.8.1; Shalom Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorussia during World War II* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1998); Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-esrim ve-shalosh kehilot she-nehrevu be-ezor Svintsian* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Svintzian in Israel and the U.S., 1965), pp. 545–558; and Yitzhak Arad, *Ghetto in Flames: The Struggle and Destruction of the Jews in Vilna in the Holocaust* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1982). Also useful are Arad's personal memoirs: Yitzhak Arad, *The Partisan: From the Valley of Death to Mt. Zion* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979). There are two short survivor testimonies published in Rima Dulkiniene and Kerry Keys, eds., *With a Needle in the Heart: Memoirs of Former Prisoners of Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (Vilnius: Garnelis, 2003), pp. 38–40, 240–242.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/3327, 5462); BA-BL (ZM 1641, A. 23); GARF; IPN (SAOl, I K 39/50); LCVA (R 1548-1-1 and 11, R 614-1-736, R 617-1-1, R 626-1-211, R 659-11-58, R 677-1-46, R 689-1-3, R 721-3-3, R 760-1-104); OKŚZpNPGd (S1/00/Zn); USHMM (RG-50.120 # 0266); VHF (e.g., # 03620, 11047, 51769); and YVA (e.g., O-71/169.1).

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NOTES

1. Ber Kharmats and Jekov Levin, "Khurbn Sventsian," in Kanc, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 545; Arad, *The Partisan*, pp. 32–34.

2. YVA, O-71/169.1; Klara Jovitsh, "In geto," in Kanc, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 555; Arad, *The Partisan*, pp. 35–36.

3. LCVA, R 617-1-1, p. 565; R 659-11-58, p. 53; R 760-1-104, p. 4; and R 1548-1-1, p. 309.

4. YVA, O-71/169.1.
5. Arad, *The Partisan*, pp. 38–39; Jovitsh, "In geto," pp. 556–557.
6. VHF, # 03620, testimony of Anna Nodel (née Gordon); # 11047, testimony of Rywa Gordon.
7. Report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941, RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 114. This report gives October 9, 1941, as the date of the killing, but other sources indicate it occurred on October 7–8, 1941.
8. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 1376, gives the figure of 8,000 victims at the Poligon camp. Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," uses the phrase "at least 5,000"; IPN, SAOl, I K 39/50, case against Jonas Maciulevicius.
9. LCVA, R 1548-1-11, p. 12.
10. Ibid., R 721-3-3, p. 69.
11. IPN, SAOl, I K 39/50, case against Jonas Maciulevicius; Jovitsh, "In geto," p. 557.
12. LCVA, R 721-3-3, p. 146.
13. Ibid., R 626-1-211, p. 33.
14. Ibid., R 689-1-3, p. 102.
15. Gershon Vainer and Yitshak Alperovitz, eds., *Sefer Vidz: 'Ayera b-hayeha u-ve-khiliona* (Tel Aviv: Widze Association in Israel, 1977), pp. 457, 467–476.
16. VHF, # 11047; Jovitsh, "In geto," p. 557.
17. Kharmats and Levin, "Khurbn Sventsian," p. 551.
18. Jovitsh, "In geto," p. 558.
19. IPN, SAOl, I K 39/50, case against Jonas Maciulevicius.

ŚWIR

Pre-1939: Świr (Yiddish: Svir), town, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Svir', raion center, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Swir, initially Rayon center, Gebiet Wilejka, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then from April 1, 1942, Kreis center, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Svir', Miadzel' raen, Hrodna voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Świr is located 37 kilometers (23 miles) southeast of Święciany. Around 800 Jews were living in Świr on the eve of World War II. Under Soviet occupation, between September 1939 and June 1941, more than 1,000 people were deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan from the Svir' raion, including a number of Jews.

German forces entered Świr on June 24, 1941. They soon established a local administration and police force, recruited, initially, mainly from among ethnic Poles. The new authorities imposed a series of anti-Jewish measures, including the wearing of yellow patches bearing the Star of David, a ban on using the sidewalks, and an order for Jews to sweep the streets on Sundays. A four-member Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established, headed by Chaim Reznik. The Judenrat had to meet regular demands for money, fuel, and clothes by the Germans and organize the required forced labor details. Jews performed forced labor mostly in agriculture on the surrounding estates.

The Germans established a ghetto in Świr in early November 1941. Initially, it was not surrounded by a fence, and subsequently its area was diminished to a few houses around the synagogue, probably following a major transfer Aktion. Survivor Rachil Schper states that the ghetto was in the poorest part of town and the Germans forced all the Jews to relocate there, once the non-Jews had moved out. The synagogue was converted into a warehouse, and the holy books were burned in front of the Jews.[1]

On December 1, 1941, the Judenrat was ordered to arrest 12 young Jews, who were then murdered by the Germans. In January 1942, Gite Mular, who had escaped from the Wilno ghetto, arrived in Świr. She was 1 of more than 100 Jewish refugees who had fled to Świr from Lithuania, following the massacres there in the summer and fall of 1941. In early 1942, the local police, by now composed mostly of Belorussians, arrested these refugees. The authorities subsequently released the prisoners, on condition that they leave the town.[2]

In February 1942, the Germans ordered the Judenrat to supply several hundred Jews for the forced labor camp at Žiežmariai in Lithuania. When some of the Jews went into hiding to avoid being deported, the Judenrat threatened to take their relatives instead. According to *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos*, 200 Jews in total were sent.[3]

In April 1942, Rayon Swir was transferred from Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien to Generalkommissariat Litauen. At this time, Lithuanians came in and took over the local administration and local police. Many Jews feared attacks by the Lithuanian police, and some fled east from Świr to other ghettos and labor camps, which were to remain within Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien. Among the restrictions imposed officially on the Jews living in the ghettos in this region were a curfew from 7:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M. and a prohibition on any personal or economic contacts with non-Jews. In the summer of 1942, the Wilno Department of Labor conducted a census that registered 817 Jews living in the Świr ghetto at just over 50 separate addresses on seven or eight streets.[4]

On September 8, 1942, the Wilno Department of Labor agreed to the transfer of 100 Jewish laborers from the ghetto in Świr to Wilno, for them to work on construction tasks for a company called "Haus und Wohnung" (House and Apartment), provided that their food rations and guarding were assured.[5]

Rasia HaYisraeli recalled, after the war, the mood in the Świr ghetto as the fall of 1942 approached. There were many signs that a liquidation Aktion was impending, and people could not sleep. "The situation was morbid; the prospect of escape was very slim. The ghetto was like a tightly shut cage. In spite of the danger, a few were able to arrange hiding places in the villages around the town." Her aunt prepared bags with food in case the family had to escape at a moment's notice.[6] Others prepared hiding places inside the ghetto, to avoid being taken in the next roundup.

At some time in the second half of 1942, most probably in October, most of the remaining inmates of the Świr ghetto (about 500 people) were transferred to the Michaliszki ghetto. Only 60 specialized Jewish workers then remained in Świr.[7] According to a document from the office of the Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, dated November 6, 1942, at that time

Świr was deemed to be a subghetto of the larger ghetto in Michaliszki.[8] Effectively it now more resembled a small forced labor camp.

In a strictly confidential letter on March 9, 1943, the Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, Horst Wulff, informed the Organisation Todt and the Giesler construction company that there was an order calling for the transfer of all Jews working in these companies to be returned to the ghettos in Oszmiana, Świr, Michaliszki, and Święciany by March 22, 1943. He also recommended in his memorandum not to protest against this order.[9] This order probably signaled the evacuation of the last Jews from Świr.

At the end of March 1943, the Germans liquidated the Michaliszki ghetto. Some of the Jews were transferred to the Wilno ghetto, others were sent to forced labor camps in Lithuania, and some of the Jews from Michaliszki, including also Jews from Świr, were among about 2,500 Jews from the ghettos east of Wilno who were murdered at Ponary in early April.

A few Jews from Świr managed to escape from the ghetto or from other ghettos and labor camps subsequently. Some, such as Rachil Schper, managed to live on the Aryan side, as their looks enabled them to pass as non-Jews, and a few survived in hiding in the vicinity of Świr.[10] Others escaped to join the Soviet partisans in the forests, especially from the Wilno ghetto. In the summer of 1945, only about 40 Jews returned to Świr, some from Germany, having been deported to Estonia and then Stutthof from the Wilno ghetto.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jews of Świr during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews in the Švenčionys, Oshmyany and Svir Regions (1941–1943)," in Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), pp. 83–118, here pp. 112–114; Shalom Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorussia during World War II* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1998); and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 777. The testimony of Rasia (née Dudman) HaYisraeli, "All That I Experienced during the Day of Annihilation," translated by Eliat Gordon Levitan and Gil Benjamin Villa from the Vishnevo yizkor book, is available at jewishgen.org.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: BA-BL; LCVA (R 614-1-736; R 626-1-211; R 677-1-46); VHF (e.g., # 9698, 18340, 34933); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Bubnys, "The Fate of the Jews," p. 113; VHF, # 18340, testimony of Rachil Schper; # 9698, testimony of Irving Simon.
2. BA-BL, ZM 1641, A. 23, p. 129 (case of Gite Mular); Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorussia*, p. 86.
3. Miron, *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos*, p. 777; HaYisraeli, "All That I Experienced," notes that she met up with her cousin Zelda again later in the Žiežmariai camp.
4. Guzenberg et al., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir*, pp. 130, 636–640.
5. LCVA, R 626-1-211, p. l3.
6. HaYisraeli, "All That I Experienced."
7. BA-BL, ZM 1641, A. 23, p. 129; Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorussia*, p. 86.
8. LCVA, R 614-1-736, p. 299.
9. Ibid., R 677-1-46, p. 5.
10. VHF, # 18340.

TAURAGĖ

Pre-1940: Tauragė (Yiddish: Tavrik), town, apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Tauragė/Taurage, uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Tauroggen, Kreis center, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Tauragė, rajonas and apskritis center, Republic of Lithuania

Tauragė is located about 100 kilometers (62 miles) southwest of Šiauliai. In 1940, there were approximately 2,000 Jews in Tauragė, including a number of refugees from the Memel region who had fled there when it was occupied by the Germans in March 1939. In the summer of 1940, Tauragė came under Soviet rule. In June 1941, just before the German invasion, 17 Jewish families (about 60 people) were deported to the Komi SSR as "unreliable elements."

On June 22, 1941, the first day of the German invasion of the USSR, German armed forces captured the town. The town was bombarded, destroying many Jewish homes and injuring about 20 Jews. Many Jews left the town because of the bombardment. When they returned, they found that local Lithuanians had looted their homes.

Immediately after the German occupation, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a police force in the town. Jonas Jurgilas was appointed mayor, and F. Mintautas became the chief of police. The administration and police implemented a series of antisemitic measures. The Jews were ordered to hand over valuable items, forced into compulsory labor of various kinds, and subjected to robbery, assault, and degradation by local antisemites. They were forbidden to appear in public places and to have any relations with their non-Jewish Lithuanian neighbors.

On July 2, 1941, a Gestapo and SD detachment from Tilsit, with the assistance of local Lithuanian policemen, shot 133 Jewish men, who had been arrested in Tauragė. A few days later, the Border Police post (Grenzpolizeiposten) in Laugszargen, under which the Tilsit Gestapo served, arrested and shot 122 Jewish men in Tauragė and its vicinity.[1] Arrests and murders of Jews continued after this on an almost daily basis. Among the many victims was the town's rabbi, Rav Levi Shpitz, who was asked to give the Germans a list of the local Communists.

On September 6, 1941, V. Milimas, the head of Kreis Tauroggen, sent Orders No. 227 and 228 to the mayor and police chief in Tauragė. These orders instructed that all the Jews be concentrated in one place. All Jews had to be registered and

wear a yellow Star of David on their clothing. In addition, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was formed, Jewish property was confiscated, and Jewish doctors were only permitted to treat other Jews. In response to these orders, all the remaining Jews in the town—composed mainly of women, children, and the elderly—were gathered into hastily constructed barracks on Vytautas Street, which were surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by Lithuanian policemen. Able-bodied women and children in the ghetto were sent to work, and it was forbidden to bring food into the ghetto. The Jews were housed under filthy conditions in the ghetto for about 10 days, with very little food. On September 13, they were informed that they needed to prepare themselves for transfer to another place with better living conditions.

On September 16, 1941, the ghetto in Tauragė was liquidated, and 513 Jews were taken on trucks out to a small forest 6 kilometers (4 miles) to the northwest of the town, where Lithuanian policemen shot them.[2] A few Jews, who were needed for economic reasons, were kept alive in Tauragė for a few weeks longer before they in turn were murdered or committed suicide. Several Jews had gone into hiding with peasants in the vicinity, but most of these people were also captured and killed.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Tauragė during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: "Taurage," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); "Tavrig," in Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 254–257; and "Taurage," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 298–302.

Documentation on the persecution and murder of the Jews of Tauragė can be found in these archives: BA-BL (R 58/214); GARF (7021-94-429); and YVA (M-1/E/1619; M-9/8[3], 15[6]; M-21/I/661, III/41; M-33/984, 4043; Leyb Koniuchovsky Collection [O-71], files 6, 7, 20, 40, 46, 163).

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. BA-BL, R 58/214, Ereignismeldung UdSSR no. 19, July 11, 1941; LG-Ulm, Ks 2/57, verdict of August 29, 1958, against Böhme et al., in *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 15 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1976) Lfd. Nr. 465; LG-Tüb, Ks 2/61, verdict of May 10, 1961, against Wiechert und Schulz, in *JuNS-V*, vol. 17 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1977), Lfd. Nr. 509, pp. 334–367.

2. YVA, M-1/E/1619; M-9/8(3), 15(6); M-21/I/661, III/41; M-33/984, 4043; Leyb Koniuchovsky Collection O-71, files 6, 7, 20, 40, 46, 163; Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 301–302. According to ChGK materials (GARF, 7021-94-429), around 3,000 Jews were shot in September 1941, at a site 6 kilometers (4 miles) from the town. This figure is written on the monument, but in our estimation, based on the number of Jews in the town on the eve of the war, it is too high. Also too high is the figure given for the number of Jewish men—900 persons—shot near the village of Vizbutai, 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) from Tauragė.

TELŠIAI

Pre-1940: Telšiai (Yiddish: Telz), city and apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Telšiai/Tel'shiai, uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Telsche, Kreis center, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Telšiai, rajonas and apskritis center, Republic of Lithuania

Telšiai is located 159 kilometers (99 miles) northwest of Kaunas. In 1939, around 2,800 Jews lived in Telšiai, comprising 35 percent of the total population.[1]

German expansionism first affected Lithuanian Jews on March 20, 1939, when Hitler issued an ultimatum ordering Lithuania to leave the port of Memel within 24 hours. As a result, about 7,000 Jews fled into Lithuania. Many found asylum in Telšiai, where the community offered them assistance. In June 1940, the USSR annexed Lithuania and imposed the Soviet political and economic system.

The Germans bombed Telšiai on June 23, 1941, and units of the German army entered the city on June 25. At this time, Lithuanian Major Alfonsas Svilas became commandant of the city and its surrounding area. Even before the arrival of the Germans, Lithuanian nationalist activists had started to loot Jewish property and arrest Jews. The initial arrestees were soon freed, but the next day Lithuanian nationalists took about 200 men from their homes and held them for a full day before releasing them. Jews appealed to Lithuanian civic and religious leaders to intervene, to no avail.

On June 27, remembered as the "Friday of Terror," Germans and their Lithuanian collaborators went house to house and ordered all Jews to assemble in the main square. From there they were marched to the shore of Lake Mastis, where the Lithuanians proclaimed that the Jews were responsible for the murder of 72 Lithuanian political prisoners during the final hours of Soviet occupation. (During the night of June 24–25, 1941, following a prison uprising, the fleeing Soviet authorities took the prison inmates to the neighboring town of Rainiai, shot them, and buried them in a mass grave in the nearby forest.)[2] The Lithuanians forced the Jews to exhume, clean, and reinter the bodies. The Jewish men were subjected to torture, then finally shot on July 15–16.

After a few days, the surviving women and children were moved to a detention camp at Geruliai.[3] They were joined there by women and children from the Viešvenai camp. Jews from a number of smaller towns had been concentrated at this site: Alsėdžiai, Rietavas, Varniai, Luokė, Laukuva, Žarenai, Navarėnai, and other places.[4] Altogether about 4,000 women and children were held at Geruliai, packed into six abandoned and empty army barracks, where they slept in two-tier bunk beds nailed together from boards. Several hundred young women were made available to local farmers, who used (or

abused) them as agricultural laborers. Most of the others remained in Geruliai, where a committee managed the affairs of the camp. Food was obtained by bartering with the farmers. There was widespread disease (especially typhus and diphtheria), with virtually no medical resources, and many children died. Worst of all, the inhabitants were exposed to armed incursions and rapes by their Lithuanian guards. When the agricultural jobs were finished by the end of August, rumors spread about an impending Aktion. One day before the Aktion, the camp commander, B. Platakis, offered to save the people in exchange for a gift of 100,000 rubles. Overnight the women's committee conducted a frantic collection of valuables, which Platakis happily accepted. However, on Saturday, August 30, 1941, a group of about 600 women ages 15 to 30 were ordered to stand aside. The rest of the women and all the children were taken to the Geruliai Forest, murdered, and thrown into pits.[5]

The 600 young women were taken back to Telšiai and put into a ghetto that had been established in a run-down neighborhood on Ezero Street near Lake Mastis.[6] It was enclosed on one side by the lake and on three sides by a high wooden fence and several lines of barbed wire. The empty buildings had been stripped of their windows, doors, and furnishings. There were neither blankets nor sheets, and the prisoners slept on the floor. The women and girls were compelled to wear Star of David armbands, but they were allowed to leave the ghetto to search for menial work and beg for food. However, most of the local population avoided them like the plague. A few threw them scraps of food. There were some medical services in the ghetto, as two male Jewish doctors had been kept alive and ran a dispensary, assisted by a nurse.[7] At the end of December, between Christmas and the New Year, the women learned that the ghetto would be liquidated within a few days. A fair number fled, some of them finding shelter with the farmers they had met during forced labor as agricultural hands. A small number of Jewish women were subsequently accepted into the Šiauliai ghetto. On December 30–31, 1941, the downtrodden and exhausted remnant was taken to Rainiai and shot to death.[8] Of those women who escaped from the ghetto at the end of 1941, only 64 were alive when the Red Army liberated the area.

SOURCES Information on the Jews of Telšiai and their fate during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Yitzhak Alperovitz, ed., *Sefer Telz (Lita); matsevat zikaron le-kehila kedosha* (Tel Aviv: Telz Society in Israel, 1984); Arūnas Bubnys, "Mažieji Lietuvos žydų getai ir laikinos izoliaviavimo stoyvyklos 1941–1943 metais," in *The Yearbook of Lithuanian History, 1999* (Vilnius: Metai, 2000), pp. 151–179, here pp. 155–158; Rima Dulkiniene and Kerry Keys, eds., *With a Needle in the Heart: Memoirs of Former Prisoners of Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (Vilnius: Garnelis, 2003), pp. 125–129, 173–180, 244–245, 312–313, 367–371; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 257–265; Yitzhak Arad et al., eds., *Neizvestnaia chernaia kniga* (Jerusalem: Tekst, 1993), pp. 306–308; and at www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/telz/telz.html.

Documentation on the persecution and murder of the Jews of Telšiai can be found in the following archives: GARF; LCVA; LYA (K 1-8-194); USHMM (RG-50.473*0086-87); VHF; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Alperovitz, *Sefer Telz*, p. 330.
2. Ibid., p. 321; Bubnys, "Mažieji Lietuvos žydų," pp. 155–156.
3. USHMM, RG-50.473*0087.
4. Alperovitz, *Sefer Telz*, p. 324; Dulkiniene and Keys, *With a Needle in the Heart*, pp. 245, 369.
5. Alperovitz, *Sefer Telz*, pp. 324, 332.
6. USHMM, RG-50.473*0086; Bubnys, "Mažieji Lietuvos žydų," pp. 155–158.
7. Dulkiniene and Keys, *With a Needle in the Heart*, pp. 174–177. One of the doctors, David Kaplan, survived and continued to work in Telšiai after the war. He died in Kaunas in 1994 at age 84.
8. Alperovitz, *Sefer Telz*, pp. 324–325; Dulkiniene and Keys, *With a Needle in the Heart*, pp. 126, 176–178; Bubnys, "Mažieji Lietuvos žydų," pp. 157–158.

TROKI

Pre-1939: Troki (Yiddish: Trok), town, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1940: Trakai, apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Trakai, uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Traken, Kreis center, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Trakai, Vilnius apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Troki is located 26 kilometers (16 miles) west-southwest of Wilno. According to the 1931 census, there were around 400 Jews living in the town. By mid-1941, there were about 500.[1]

German armed forces occupied the town on June 24, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a police force. The head of the police was Kazys Čaplikas. The head of the local administration initially was J. Navikas. These collaborating organs implemented a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were marked with the Star of David, forced into various forms of heavy physical labor, prohibited from appearing in public spaces, and forbidden to have any relations with the local non-Jewish Lithuanians.

A Jewish Council (Judenrat) with 12 members was formed, with Šimonas Kucas as the head, Ovsiejus Levinas as his deputy, and Šimonas Cvi as the secretary. Other members were Chaimas Bavarskis, Boruchas Bunivavičius, Izakas-Nochimas Galperinas, Gedeonas Klauzneris, Edmundas Levinskis, Cemachas Milikovskis, Leiba Percovičius, Chavonas Šneideris, and Abromas Šubas.[2]

The Jews were permitted to remain in their homes until the end of August. By September 1, 1941, all the Jews of the town were resettled into a ghetto. The ghetto was located at the Bernardinų Lake and was bounded by water on three sides.[3] Within three weeks, all the Jews' personal property and real estate were registered and transferred to the town's administration by the local auxiliary police.[4] Policemen from Troki, Aukštadvaris, Onuškis, and Landwarów guarded the ghetto.[5]

The ghetto existed until the end of September 1941. According to the testimony of the police chief, Kazys Čaplikas, the head of the local administration instructed him to murder the Jews.[6] On September 30, 1941, a detachment of Einsatzkommando 3, commanded by Martin Weiss, and the Ypatingas Burys (Lithuanian execution squad) arrived from Wilno and liquidated the ghetto in collaboration with the ghetto guards, led by Kazimieras Vasilevskis.[7] These forces shot all the Jews in the Worniki Forest, about 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) outside the town. Jews from Troki were killed alongside Jews from Rudziszki, Landwarów, Onuškis, Žydkaimis (in Onuškis parish), and Aukštadvaris. The shooting started in the early morning and lasted until midday. The total number of victims was 1,446: 366 men, 483 women, and 597 children.[8]

In the region around Troki, there were a number of cases of Polish and Lithuanian inhabitants who risked their lives by offering aid and shelter to fugitive Jews. In October 1941, the German administration issued instructions to investigate ethnic Poles who worked as administrators on farms, as it was suspected that they were mostly refugees who were also assisting Jews.[9] Among those who gave assistance were Juozas and Leosė Didikai, who concealed Mejeris Sinderovskij throughout the occupation, and Irena Bartišauskaitė-Kazlauskienė, who hid two Jews until they were able to join up with a Jewish partisan unit.[10]

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews of Troki can be found in the following publications: "Trakai," in Neringa Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydų muziejus, 2002); Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp. 358–361; and Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.6.

Documents describing the fate of the Jews of Troki during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-431); LCVA (R 685-1-4, R 713-1-1); LYA (K 1-58-P14950); RGVA (500-1-25); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas*; and *Voruta* (Trakai), no. 9 (531) (2003).
2. K. Čaplikas, *Saugojau žmonių gyvybė ir turtą* (Vilnius, 2001), p. 191.
3. Ibid., p. 191. See also the report of the Kreis head to the Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, September 1, 1941, which noted that in Troki and several other towns the Jews had been separated from the rest of the population in their own section of town, facsimilie published in Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas*, p. 109.
4. LCVA, R 713-1-1, p. 6.
5. Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas*, p. 39.
6. The heads of the local administration successively were J. Navikas, P. Mačinskas, and P. Brakauskas; see ibid., p. 38.
7. LYA, K 1-58-P14950, p. 52.
8. RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.
9. LCVA, R 685-1-4, p. 24, Gebietsrat Kalendra an die Amtsbezirkschefs, October 6, 1941, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik."
10. Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas*, pp. 75–80, cites as many as 41 cases of assistance for the region.

UKMERGĖ

Pre-1940: Ukmergė (Yiddish: Vilkomir), town, apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Ukmergė/Ukmerge, uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Wilkomir, Kreis center, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Ukmergė, rajonas center, Vilnius apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Ukmergė is located 72 kilometers (45 miles) north-northwest of Wilno. According to the 1923 population census, there were 3,885 Jews living in the town.

Following the start of the German invasion, many Jews attempted to flee Ukmergė, but most were forced to turn back. German armed forces occupied the town on June 25, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a town administration

Memorial to the Jews murdered in Ukmergė, 1946.
USHMM WS #00474, COURTESY OF PESE TURETS

and a police force, which actively implemented anti-Jewish measures. Jews were required to perform various kinds of forced labor and were subjected to assault, robbery, and humiliation by local antisemites. Jews were also prohibited from walking on public sidewalks and from maintaining any relations with the Lithuanians. The first systematic measures against the Jewish population were initiated by the German authorities. However, they were largely implemented by members of the local Lithuanian police under the supervision of the town and district police chief, Mečis Paškevičius, and the regional chief of the Security and Criminal Police, Povilas Zamauskas.

On the day of the occupation, two German soldiers were killed by friendly fire. Jews were blamed for the incident. Members of the intelligentsia, including rabbis, doctors, nurses, and teachers, were arrested and then killed near the Christian cemetery. One week later, a number of Jews were arrested in Ukmergė for having allegedly supported the Soviet authorities. On July 4, 1941, around 200 of those under arrest were shot in the nearby Pivonija Forest. On July 10, 1941, 83 more people were killed at the prison farm, 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the town. Finally, in the middle of July 1941, the Lithuanians arrested, raped, and killed 12 Jewish girls in the center of Ukmergė.[1] From the end of June through the middle of July 1941, Lithuanian partisans killed more than 300 people.

According to police instructions, from July 23, 1941, the Jews in Kreis Wilkomir had to wear the Star of David on their chests and backs, were not permitted to leave their places of residence, and were not permitted to buy food products from farmers. The heads of police posts were instructed to draw up lists of Communists, Komsomol members, Jews, Poles, Russians, and former employees of Soviet institutions, together with information on their "activities hostile to the State."[2]

On August 1, 8, and 19, 1941, the mass shootings in the Pivonija Forest continued. This time a Lithuanian killing squad from Kavarskas participated. The hundreds of Jews under arrest in the town's jail were taken directly to the Pivonija Forest and shot in several Aktions.

In early August 1941, the authorities established a ghetto for the remaining Jews of Ukmergė who were not already under arrest. The Jews were ordered to abandon their homes within 12 hours and move into the ghetto, which was located on two narrow streets in an impoverished section of town, on the banks of the Šventoji River.[3] The newspaper *Naujoji Lietuva* reported on August 5 that the Jews of Ukmergė and several smaller nearby towns had been settled in one place, in the suburb of Smėliai.[4] The ghetto was not fenced but was guarded by armed Lithuanian policemen. Men and women were taken from the ghetto every day to perform forced labor.

On August 22, 1941, 125 Jews from the village of Želva were transferred to Ukmergė.[5] Jews from other nearby localities, including Balninkai, Alanta, Musninkai, Bagaslaviškis, Giedračiai, Šešuoliai, Kurkliai, Vidiškiai, Siesikai, Dubingiai, Gelvonai, and Taujėnai, were either brought into the Ukmergė ghetto or subsequently taken to the vicinity of Ukmergė to be killed there. In mid-August, mass violence against the ghetto residents began. Besides the Lithuanian activist groups, men from the Rollkommando Hamann also were involved in these Aktions.

The Ukmergė ghetto existed for about one month. The Jews in the ghetto were aware of the fate of those who had been taken away in August, and they were left waiting for their turn, without any hope for the future. Most attempts at escape were unsuccessful.[6]

The Germans and their collaborators conducted the main liquidation Aktion against the ghetto on September 5, 1941. Most of the Jews in the ghetto were rounded up and shot in the nearby Pivonija Forest by members of Einsatzkommando 3, assised by the Lithuanian police. Before the liquidation of the ghetto, Einsatzkommando 3 and Lithuanian policemen carried out three separate mass shootings in Ukmergė in August. The results of all four "cleansing Aktions" are shown in the following table:[7]

Date of Aktion	*Number of Victims* (Jews)				*Russian and Lithuanian Communists*
	Men	Women	Children	Total	
August 1, 1941	254	42	—	296	4
August 8	620	82	—	702	
August 19	298	255	88	641	2
September 5	1,123	1,849	1,737	4,709	
Total	2,295	2,228	1,825	6,348	6

After the main liquidation Aktion on September 5, some old and sick people, mostly women and children, remained in the ghetto. These people were killed on September 26 by German and Lithuanian policemen in the Pivonija Forest.

From the end of June to early September 1941, some 6,700 Jews were murdered in Ukmergė.

Ten Lithuanian perpetrators from the Kavarskas squad were tried after the war by the Soviet authorities in 1945 and 1946. M. Paškevičius (aka Mikas Povilionis), who also participated in anti-Jewish measures in the Ukmergė region, fled to the United States after the war. His U.S. citizenship was revoked by a federal court in California in 1979.

SOURCES Information on the persecution and murder of the Jews of Ukmergė can be found in the following publications: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973); Neringa Latvytė-Gustaitienė, "The Mass Extermination of the Jews of Ukmergė during the Hitlerite Occupation," republished in Josef Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), pp. 64–77; "Vilkomir," in Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 272–274; "Ukmerge," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 240–248; and Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.1.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: GARF; LCVA; LYA (e.g., 3-46-1211, 3-46-1258, 3-46-47397/3); RGVA (500-1-25); TsGAMORF (52/11302/244); USHMM (RG-02.170); and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/585, 1207, 1620).

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NOTES

1. Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje*, vol. 2, p. 307.
2. Head of Kreis Police in Ukmergė to Police post commanders, July 23, 1941, published in ibid., pp. 294–295.
3. TsGAMORF, 52/11302/244, p. 307, Akt, Vil'komir, July 18, 1944.
4. *Naujoji Lietuva*, August 5, 1941, as cited by Neringa Latvytė-Gustaitienė in Levinson, *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania*, p. 70.
5. Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje*, vol. 2, p. 307.
6. USHMM, RG-02.170, "The Story of the Jews of Vilkomir," November 24, 1948.
7. RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.

UTENA

Pre-1940: Utena (Yiddish: Utyan), town and apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: uezd center, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kreis center, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: rajonas and apskritis center, Republic of Lithuania

Utena is located 94 kilometers (58 miles) north-northeast of Wilno. Utena had a population of more than 10,000 in 1941, including probably about 4,000 Jews.

Anti-Soviet Lithuanian partisan units, which were also actively antisemitic, were already active in the area when news of the German invasion, the capture of Kaunas, and the declaration of a provisional Lithuanian government came over the radio. Lieutenant Antanas Patalauskas was the head of the local partisan unit in Utena, which had 76 members. On June 27, 1941, 484 men were registered in the Utena district as partisans and had received permission from the Germans to bear arms.[1] Responding to announcements over the radio, many former officials and policemen returned to the positions they had held in 1940, prior to the Soviet annexation of Lithuania. For example, the Voldemaras supporter and Gestapo agent Malinauskas became chief of police in Utena on June 25, 1941.[2]

In the first days following the German invasion, numerous refugees arrived in Utena from areas to the west. Many were arrested by the Lithuanian partisans. Throughout the district, violence against the Jews had already begun prior to the arrival of the Germans. Lithuanian partisans broke into Jewish houses, searching and plundering them and beating and even killing some occupants. Lithuanian forces also started to arrest people, especially the so-called Jewish intelligentsia,

A member of the Lithuanian auxiliary police, who has just returned from an Aktion against Jews in the Rašė Forest, auctions off their personal property in the central market of Utena, July to August 1941.
USHMM WS #25736, COURTESY OF SAULIUS BERZINIS

members of the Communist Party and the Komsomol (youth activists), and other supposed supporters of the Soviet regime. Assisted by the records left behind by the retreating Soviets, the new authorities prepared lists containing detailed information on all persons they deemed suspicious.[3]

On June 26, 1941, part of the German LVI Army Corps, belonging to Panzer Group 4, passed through Utena on its way to Daugavpils.[4] Some young Lithuanians joined with the advancing German troops, acting as scouts. During July 1941, a series of German local military commandants (Ortskommandanturen) administered the town of Utena successively.[5] German Security Division 281 was based in Utena for just under a week in mid-July (from July 10 to 15, 1941).[6]

With the arrival of the German occupiers, anti-Jewish policies became more systematic. Jews were made to perform humiliating forced labor tasks. Some were deployed to search for booby-traps in houses abandoned by the Soviets, which resulted in several deaths.[7] Within a few days, all Jewish houses were marked with the inscription "Jude" (Jew) and therefore exposed to the arbitrary violence of Germans and Lithuanians. The plunder and robbery of Jewish property went unpunished. Many Jewish males were arrested and put in jail. The three synagogues and the prayer houses were desecrated. Those rabbis who refused to burn the Torah scrolls were publicly humiliated and brutally abused. The damaged religious institutions were converted into prisons to hold Jews, refugees, and Communist activists.[8]

On the morning of July 14, 1941, the Lithuanian administration in Utena published an order requiring all the Jews to leave the town by midday; anyone who remained would be shot. Within hours, the Jews had to go to the Šilalė Forest outside of town, where they were registered and robbed of their valuables. Local newspapers proclaimed Utena to be the first Lithuanian town to have been "cleansed" of Jews.[9] For two weeks, nearly 2,000 Jews were imprisoned in the open-air forest camp (described in some reports as an improvised ghetto) with no sanitary facilities, exposed to the rain and the chicanery of their Lithuanian guards. There was hardly anything

to eat, only some bread, and during the day the younger ones had to perform forced labor. All men and women between the ages of 17 and 55 were registered again.[10]

German Security Police and their collaborators shot 718 Jewish men, 103 Jewish women, and 6 other persons in two mass shooting Aktions on July 31 and August 7, 1941, in the Rašė Forest, about 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) north of Utena.[11] The murders were carried out by German and Lithuanian police in the presence of representatives of the local Lithuanian administration. The infamous Hamann mobile killing squad also came in from Kaunas on both occasions. During the second Aktion, two of the assembled Jews, Tzadok Bleiman and Kalman Katz, fled from the killing site. Katz was shot by the guards, but Bleiman, though wounded in the leg, managed to hide in the swamps and survived to testify about the massacres after the war.[12]

In mid-August, the Lithuanian authorities established an improvised ghetto for the remaining Jews in Utena, which existed for about two weeks. The Jews were closely confined and guarded under the most inhuman conditions. On August 29, 1941, the Germans and their collaborators shot the remaining older men, women, and children from Utena and the surrounding villages in the Rašė Forest. In total there were 582 Jewish men, 1,731 Jewish women, and 1,469 children among the victims.[13] The local murderers were reinforced by Lithuanian units brought in from outside and probably again by German forces subordinated to the Commanding Officer of the Security Police and the SD Lithuania (KdS Litauen) under the leadership of Hamann, as well as members of the 3rd Lithuanian Auxiliary Police Battalion from Kaunas.

The partisan group led by Patalauskas also participated in the anti-Jewish measures in a variety of ways. They arrested Jews, escorted them to the Shilali Forest camp, guarded the ghetto in Utena, and acted as perimeter guards at the killing sites. The Lithuanian commandant in charge of the ghetto was also an officer in the partisan forces. The partisan unit was dissolved at the beginning of September 1941, once the mass murder of the Jews was completed. Throughout the fall of 1941, however, individual Jews continued to be captured in the area, and they were brought to the Utena jail before being shot.

Not only Jews from Utena but also Jews from other places, including Dabeikiai, Inturke, Kuktiškės, Moletai, Tauragnai, and Užpaliai, were murdered in the Rašė Forest. According to the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission report, some 9,000 people altogether were murdered there.

SOURCES Information on the Jewish community of Utena and its fate during the Holocaust can be found in Kalman-Meir Goldfayn et al., eds., *Yizkor-bukh Utian un umgegnt* (Tel Aviv: Nay Lebn, 1979). There are also relevant short articles in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 118–125; and Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 265–271, which includes extracts from the testimony of the Jewish survivor Tzodok Bleiman. Mention of the improvised ghetto in Utena can be found in Arūnas Bubnys, "Mažieji Lietuvos žydų getai ir laikinos izolaivimo stovyklos 1941–1943 metais," in *The Year Book of Lithuanian History, 1999* (Vilnius: Metai, 2000), pp. 151–179, here pp. 176–178.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Utena can be found in the following archives: BA-BL (R 70 SU/15); BA-MA (RH 21-4/14); GARF (7021-94-433); LCVA (R 715-1-1; R 1399-1-9; R 1444-1-9; R 1652-1-1); LYA; NARA (RG-226, M 1499, reel 258; RG-242, T-315, reels 1869-1870); RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM; and YVA (e.g., O-3/718; O-53/21).

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NOTES

1. LCVA, R 1652-1-1, pp. 1–6, published in Valentinas Brandišauskas, ed., *1941 m. Birželio sukilimas. Dokumentu rinkinys* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2000), pp. 163–174; Order No. 1 of the Lithuanian commandant in Utena, Hauptmann Benediktas Kaletka, June 26, 1941, LCVA, R 1444-1-9, p. 56.
2. See the report of Malinauskas to KdS Litauen, March 16, 1943, LCVA, R 1399-1-9, p. 179.
3. See ibid., R 715-1-1, p. 129.
4. BA-MA, RH 21-4/14, KTB Panzergruppe 4, Ia.
5. NARA, RG-242, T-315, reel 1869, pp. 745 ff., KTB Sich. Div. 281, Ia, orders of July 16 and 19, 1941: OK 862 (7.7.-16.7.1941), OK II 349 (16.-20.7.1941), OK II 350 (from 20.7.1941). Also see reel 1870, p. 498, activity report of Sich. Div. 281, Abt. VII, July 10, 1941. The commandant's offices were staffed by personnel from Feldgendarmerie-Abteilung 691.
6. Ibid., reel 1869, p. 5, War Diary of Sich. Div. 281, Activity report IVa, March 25, 1941, to December 31, 1941.
7. Testimony of Tzodok Bleiman, cited in Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry*, p. 268.
8. See LCVA, R 715-1-1, p. 2, report of the head of the Saugumas in Utena on the arrest of 30 Jewish men and their imprisonment in the synagogue, July 14, 1941.
9. See Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry*, p. 269.
10. See GARF, 7021-94-433, pp. 56–57 and reverse, testimony of the survivor Musja Buraetenaite, which mentions the improvised "ghetto" in the forest.
11. BA-BL, R 70 SU/15, Jägerbericht, December 1, 1941. On July 31, 1941: 235 Jewish men, 16 Jewish women, 4 Lithuanian Communists, 1 murderous plunderer (256); August 7, 1941: 483 Jewish men, 87 Jewish women, and 1 Lithuanian grave robber (571).
12. Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry*, pp. 268–271.
13. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 112, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941, gives the total of 3,782 Jews shot in Utena and Moletai, but this also includes Jews from other nearby villages.

UŽPALIAI

Pre-1940: Užpaliai (Yiddish: Ushpole), town, Utena apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Užpaliai/Uzhpaliai, Utena uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Uschpol, Kreis Utena, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Užpaliai, Utena rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Užpaliai is located 109 kilometers (68 miles) north-northeast of Wilno. The census of 1923 indicated that Užpaliai had 551 Jewish inhabitants, 36 percent of the town's total population. Emigration in the 1930s reduced the size of the Jewish community, and by mid-1941 there were about 350 Jews living in Užpaliai.

German forces captured the town on June 26, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local authority and an auxiliary police unit composed of local partisans; these organizations then introduced anti-Jewish measures. All the Jews' valuables were confiscated; Jews were required to wear patches in the shape of the Star of David on the front and back of their clothing; they were assigned to perform various types of forced labor, during which they were subjected to mockery, humiliation, and beatings by local antisemites; and they were forbidden to appear in public places and to associate in any way with non-Jewish Lithuanians. Within a couple of weeks, all the Jews were ordered to move into a designated ghetto area, which consisted of a few small streets near the prayer house and the traditional bathhouse.

Lithuanian partisans conducted several group killings of Jews, which resulted in the deaths of several dozen people at various sites. Some were drowned in local swamps; others were slaughtered and thrown into lime pits. Subsequently, a group of wealthy Jews was murdered near the village of Butiskis. A number of Jewish women from the ghetto were raped. The rabbi's daughter was raped in front of her father, Leib Kamraz. The rabbi was arrested and held for several days without food or water. Then, while being forced to dig his own grave, he attacked one of the guards but was soon shot and killed.

Living conditions in the ghetto deteriorated, as the number of men steadily decreased and the women were repeatedly attacked. The remaining Jews, some 300 in number, were taken to Utena in late August 1941. On August 29, 1941, together with other Jews, they were shot in the Rašė Forest, about 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) north of Utena.[1] Very few Jews from the town managed to survive the German occupation; among them was a Jewish woman who was married to a Christian Lithuanian, and Shulamit Shefek, who migrated to Israel after World War II.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Užpaliai during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: "Uzpaliai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 128–129; Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), p. 242; and Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1369.

Documentation regarding the murder of the Jews of Užpaliai can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-433); LCVA; LYA (K 1-15-3388); and YVA.

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NOTE

1. B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 1 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1965), p. 134; see also LYA, K 1-15-3388 (report of the Utena raion office of the KGB of the Lithuanian SSR regarding the punitive detachment that operated in Užpaliai).

UŽVENTIS

Pre-1940: Užventis (Yiddish: Uzhvent), Šiauliai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Užventis/Uzhventis, Shauliai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Uschwentis, Kreis Schaulen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Užventis, Kelmė rajonas, Šiauliai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Užventis is located about 45 kilometers (28 miles) west-southwest of Šiauliai. In 1923, the Jewish population of the village was 173, comprising 22 percent of the total. In June 1939, local antisemites burned the main Jewish institutions in Užventis.

Soon after the German invasion of the Lithuanian SSR, a Lithuanian nationalist partisan squad was formed in Užventis, which was led by Vilius Prancūzevičius, who later became a regional head in Užventis. The partisans wore distinctive white armbands and were armed with rifles and pistols. German forces captured Užventis in late June 1941. In the first days of Nazi occupation, 17 alleged supporters of the Soviet regime were killed on the orders of the partisan headquarters.

In early July 1941, on instructions from the German authorities, the Lithuanian partisans rounded up the Jewish population and moved them into a former spirit-making factory on the outskirts of Užventis. Juozas Čepauskas, the deputy head of the Užventis partisans, was assigned to act as commandant of this Jewish "camp" or ghetto.

On July 30, 1941, the partisans prepared a large pit in the Želviai Forest. On the following day, several officers of the German Security Police arrived from Šiauliai to oversee the murder of the Jews. First the partisans loaded a majority of the Jews from the ghetto on trucks (probably about 50 to 75 people), consisting mostly of the elderly, women, and children. These Jews were then transported to the Želviai Forest, where they were shot by 17 members of the Užventis partisan squad and the German Security Police officials. The clothing of the murdered Jews was then transported back to Užventis, where the murderers indulged in a bout of drinking.[1]

Not all the Jews were killed during this Aktion. Some of the male Jews from Užventis were transported to Žagarė and Šiauliai in the summer of 1941. About 20 Jews remained in Užventis, presumably as they were required as specialist laborers. These Jews were murdered in the Želviai Forest in December 1941.[2]

After the war, the Soviet authorities arrested nearly 20 members of the Užventis partisan squad; all of them were convicted, and some of them received the death penalty.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jews of Užventis during the Holocaust can be found in Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews in Šiauliai and the Šiauliai Region," in Irena Guzenberg and Jevgenija Sedova, eds., *The Siauliai Ghetto: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2002), pp. 228–259, here pp. 253–254.

Documentation regarding the persecution and murder of the Jews of Užventis can be found in the following archives: LCVA and LYA (e.g., K 1-46-1275, K 1-58-24967/3, K 1-58-34340/3).

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NOTES

1. LYA, K 1-46-1275, pp. 10–12, K 1-58-24967/3, pp. 56–57, 145–146, as cited by Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews in Šiauliai," p. 254.
2. LYA, K 1-46-1275, pp. 7-9, K 1-58-24967/3, p. 326, as cited in ibid., p. 254.

VABALNINKAS

Pre-1940: Vabalninkas (Yiddish: Vabolnik), town, Biržai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Birzhai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kreis Birsen, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Biržai rajonas, Panevėžys apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Vabalninkas is located 35 kilometers (22 miles) northeast of Panevėžys. According to the 1923 census, the town had 441 Jewish residents, 32 percent of the total population.

German forces occupied the town on June 27, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalist activists set up a town authority, which began introducing anti-Jewish measures. In the first days following the town's capture, Lithuanian activists arrested and killed at least 86 people, including many Jews, as well as some non-Jewish Communists.[1] The Lithuanian administration then ordered the remaining Jews, consisting mainly of women, children, and the elderly, to be removed from the better homes and placed in an open ghetto in mid-July 1941.[2] The ghetto was located on Paryžiaus Street and consisted only of poor cottages, which several families had to share.

The ghetto in Vabalninkas was in existence for about one month. During that time, the local priest Matas Kirlys baptized 40 Jews with the hope of saving them. The ghetto was liquidated at some date between August 18 and 24 (sources vary), 1941, when the Jews were transferred to the Pasvalys ghetto. Initially the baptized Jews were separated out from the others in the ghetto, but subsequently they were added to the trucks going to Pasvalys. According to survivor Sheina Gertner, the Jews were permitted to take with them a suitcase and food for three days; they were told they were being taken to a labor camp.[3]

The Pasvalys ghetto was liquidated in turn on August 26, 1941, when members of the 3rd Company, Lithuanian Schutzmannschaft Battalion 1, shot 1,349 Jews (402 men, 738 women, and 209 children).[4] The victims included the Jews from Vabalninkas. The shooting was carried out in the Žadeikiai Forest.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Vabalninkas during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: Juozas Daubaras, *They Lived in Vabalninkas, 1925–1941* (Vilnius: R. Paknio Leidykla, 2009), pp. 17–18; B. Reinus, "Oysrot fun di yidn fun Posval un fun di derbeyike shtetlekh (Yanishkel, Vashki, Linkuva, Salat, Vabalnik)," in Mendel Sudarsky and Uriah Katzenelenbogen, eds., *Lite*, vol. 1 (New York: Jewish-Cultural Society, 1951), pp. 1859–1861; Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 867; "Vabalninkas," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 214–216; "Vabal'ninkas," in *Rosiiskaia Evreiskaia Entsiklopediia*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Rossiiskaia akademiia estestvennykh nauk, Nauchnyi fond "Evreiskaia Entsiklopediia," "Epos," 2000), p. 198.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Vabalninkas can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-441); LCVA; RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM (RG-02.002*12); and YVA.

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trans. Kathleen Luft

NOTES

1. Reinus, "Aysrot fun di yidn fun Posval," pp. 1859–1861.
2. Ibid.
3. USHMM, RG-02.002*12, pp. 1–4, testimony of Sheina Sachar Gertner, 1984. Report of the Biržai District Commission, May 26, 1945, published in B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 116–118.
4. See report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941, in RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 113.

VAINUTAS

Pre-1940: Vainutas (Yiddish: Vainuta), village, Tauragė apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Taurage uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Kreis Tauroggen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Šilutė rajonas, Klaipeda apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Vainutas is located about 30 kilometers (19 miles) northwest of Tauragė. According to the census of 1923, Vainutas had a Jewish population of 348, constituting 27 percent of the total.

German armed forces captured Vainutas on the first day of the invasion, June 22, 1941. Many Jews fled at this time to nearby villages, seeking hiding places with local farmers. However, the farmers usually proved unwelcoming, and the Jews soon returned to Vainutas. Only a few Jews, mostly those who had been active in the Soviet administration, managed to escape to the Soviet Union. The returning Jews found that their homes had been robbed and occupied by their Lithua-

nian neighbors, who also took their livestock and horses. The homeless Jews had to move in with relatives or live together in the prayer house.

The Lithuanian nationalists took charge of most affairs in the village, although a German commandant was based there by July. The Lithuanians issued orders for the Jews, on pain of death, to surrender their valuables, weapons, and radios. In response, many Jews buried their valuables or asked the Lithuanian priest to keep them safe until the end of the war. On June 24, 1941, all Jews over the age of 12 had to register with the police. Jewish men were required to perform forced labor, cleaning the streets and other tasks. Lithuanian policemen visited Jewish homes and demanded gifts.

On around July 10, 1941, the Lithuanian policemen assembled the Jewish men on the square in front of the church. Then SS men forced another Jew to cut off the rabbi's beard. Afterwards the rabbi was dragged through the streets by a horse ridden by an SS man as a crowd of Lithuanians looked on. The rabbi became sick after his ordeal, and five Jewish men were shot following the incident. A few days later, the Jews were forced to burn all their religious books and Torah scrolls in the courtyard of the synagogue.

On July 19, 1941, SS men from Heydekrug (Šilutė) and local Lithuanian policemen rounded up all the adult Jewish males from their homes, about 150 people, and assembled them in the synagogue. From there they were driven along the road to Žemaičių Naumiestis, while being physically beaten by their guards. On the way, an SS officer in a vehicle, probably SS-Untersturmführer Theodor Werner Scheu, selected 29 able-bodied men who were sent to the barracks in Žemaičių Naumiestis and later from there to the Heydekrug labor camp. The remaining 120 or so Jews, including the elderly and unfit men, who were brought from Vainutas by truck, were all shot by Lithuanian police at an execution site at Šiaudvyčiai, about 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) east of Žemaičių Naumiestis.[1] Among the group of men selected for labor was Isaac Markus, who subsequently, in July 1943, was transferred to Auschwitz II-Birkenau and from there to clear out the rubble from the Warsaw ghetto before being sent on to other concentration camps, including Dachau.[2]

According to a report by the Lithuanian police chief in Vainutas, dated July 28, 1941, by this time a so-called Jewish quarter or ghetto had been established in Vainutas on Synagogue Street for the remaining women and children. The Jewish women were engaged in farmwork and also in cleaning the streets. Jewish property had been secured, awaiting further orders. A few Jews were known to have escaped and were hiding in the Vainutas woods. The police chief reported: "We are doing our utmost to capture them, for they are known to be real Communists."[3]

According to *Pinkas ha-kehilot*, the young women in the Vainutas ghetto were frequently raped by SS men and Lithuanian guards during August 1941. In September, the 125 remaining women and children were forced to surrender their remaining property, as they were told they would be reunited with their male family members. However, instead they were taken to the Gerainiai Forest, where they were all forced to undress, then shot.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Vainutas during the Holocaust can be found in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 231–233.

Documentation regarding the persecution and murder of the Jews of Vainutas can be found in the following archives: BA-L (B 162/5394-5399); LCVA (1476-1-3); VHF (# 15646); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. See LG-Aur, verdict of June 26, 1964, against Struve et al., in *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 20 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1979), Lfd. Nr. 579, pp. 320–321.
2. VHF, # 15646, testimony of Isaac Markus.
3. B. Baranauskas and K. Ruksenas, *Documents Accuse* (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1970), pp. 198–199, Chief of Vainutas Police Station to Tauragė District Police Chief, July 28, 1941. VHF, # 15646, also states that the Jewish women and children were moved onto one street near the synagogue, which was "like a ghetto." However, Issac Markus must have heard this secondhand, as he had already been deported to Heydekrug by this time.

VENDŽIOGALA

Pre-1940: Vendžiogala (Yiddish: Vendzigole), village, Kaunas apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Vendžiogala/Vendzhegala, Kaunas uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Wendziogala, Kreis Kauen, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Vandžiogala, town, Kaunas rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Vendžiogala is located 24 kilometers (15 miles) north of Kaunas. In 1940, the Jewish population was 350, or 58 percent of the total.

German troops occupied the village on June 25, 1941. A number of Jews tried to flee Vendžiogala at the start of the German invasion, but most of them were forced to turn back, and some were killed on the roads by Lithuanian nationalists. At the time of the Germans' arrival, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a police force, which under German direction soon introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were forbidden to use the sidewalks or to maintain relationships of any kind with non-Jews. Jewish houses had to be marked with a sign saying "Jude" (Jew). In addition, Jews were forced to perform forced labor, which included domestic service, agricultural work, and humiliating tasks such as cleaning outhouses.

Arrests and murders of Jews began, particularly of those who had cooperated with the Soviet authority in 1940–1941. For example, on July 9, 1941, 32 Jewish men, 1 Jewish woman, 2 Lithuanian Communists, 1 Russian Communist, and 1

Lithuanian woman were shot in a grove near the Jewish cemetery. Between July 11 and 31, 13 more Jews and 2 "murderers" were shot in the same location.[1] On August 9 (other sources give the date as August 16), 1941, another Aktion was conducted in the village. During its course, dozens of Jewish men, including the rabbi, Chaim Klebanov, along with 4 girls, were seized and taken away to Babtai. There they were murdered with the local Jews in the second half of August 1941.

On August 7, 1941, the officials of the civil administration in Kreis Kauen ordered all Jews to be concentrated in ghettos, fenced with barbed wire and guarded by Lithuanian partisans, by August 15.[2] Pursuant to this order, the Jews of Vendžiogala also were moved into a ghetto, which consisted of several houses on Keidan Street. Most of their property was confiscated or stolen by Lithuanians.

The Vendžiogala ghetto was liquidated on August 28, 1941, when local partisans and Lithuanian policemen rounded up the remaining Jews (mainly women and children) in Vendžiogala and escorted them to a site in the forest near Babtai, where a large ditch had been prepared. Men of the Lithuanian 3rd Company (1st Battalion), under the command of officers B. Norkus, J. Barzda, and A. Dagys, arrived to carry out the shooting. Afterwards, local people divided the clothes and other items among themselves.[3] According to the report of Karl Jäger, 252 Jews (42 men, 113 women, and 97 children) from Vendžiogala, together with 83 Jews (20 men, 41 women, and 22 children) from Babtai, were shot.[4]

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Vendžiogala during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 268–270; Arūnas Bubnys, "The Holocaust in the Lithuanian Province in 1941: The Kaunas District," in D. Gaunt, P.A. Levine, and L. Palosuo, eds., *Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust: Belarus*, *Estonia*, *Latvia*, *Lithuania* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 299–301; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 869.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Vendžiogala can be found in the following archives: BA-BL; GARF (7021-94-420); LCVA (R 1534-1-186); LYA (K 1-58-47337/3, vol. 1); RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM; and YVA (e.g., O-71/143).

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NOTES

1. See RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 111, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941. This appears to be the same incident that is reported in Tätigkeits- und Lagebericht der Einsatzgruppen Nr. 3, Berichtszeit August 15–31, 1941, published in Peter Klein, ed., *Die Einsatzgruppen in der besetzten Sowjetunion 1941/42* (Berlin: Hentrich, 1997), p. 158.

2. LCVA, R 1534-1-186, p. 37, published in B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 1 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1965), pp. 290–291.

3. LYA, K 1-58-47337/3, vol. 1, pp. 157–161, minutes of the interrogation of P. Matiukas, October 2, 1961.

4. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 113, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.

VIDUKLĖ

Pre-1940: Viduklė (Yiddish: Vidukle), town, Raseiniai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Viduklė/Vidukle, Raseiniai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Vidukle, Kreis Raseinen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Viduklė, Raseiniai rajonas, Kaunas apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Viduklė is located 64 kilometers (40 miles) south-southwest of Šiauliai. According to the 1923 population census, there were 221 Jews living in the town. By the middle of 1941, the number of Jews had decreased significantly, owing in large part to emigration.

On June 23, 1941, Viduklė was occupied by German troops. Due to the rapid German advance, scarcely a single Jew was able to flee in time into the interior of the Soviet Union. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a police force, which implemented a series of anti-Jewish measures. All Jews had to wear the Star of David and were taken for forced labor of various kinds, during which they suffered beatings and humiliation. The Jews received only a few morsels of bread from the rations distributed among the local population. The Jews were also prohibited from appearing in public places or having any relations with the Lithuanians. Germans came periodically from the nearby village of Nemakščiai and, together with local Lithuanians, plundered Jewish homes.

During the first days of the occupation, about 15 Jews, both men and women, were arrested as alleged Communists and were taken to the prison in Raseiniai. After several days the women were released, but the men were never heard from again.

In the first half of July, all Jewish men aged 14 and over were ordered to gather at the offices of the local council. There the elderly men initially were separated out and locked up in the Bet Midrash, while the others were escorted under close guard to the railway station, where they were concentrated, together with the male Jews of Nemakščiai, in the home of the Friedman family and the threshing mills nearby. Here the male Jews were forced to perform various physically demanding exercises. On July 14, the elderly male Jews, including Rabbi Yehoshua Hacohen Kaplan, were brought to join the other Jews near the railway station, as were the elderly Jews from Nemakščiai. All the male Jews were then escorted to a nearby pool, where they were forced to undress. Then Lithuanian partisans shot the Jews in groups of 10 in a nearby pit.

After the mass shooting of the Jewish men, the Jewish women and children were herded into the Bet Midrash and four other houses nearby, which formed a small ghetto. Jewish girls went out each day to perform various tasks, including washing the floors at the police station and the town hall. On August 21,

1941, suspecting that something was about to happen, a number of Jewish women fled the ghetto, either to hide with local peasants or to seek refuge in the larger ghetto in Šiauliai. On August 22, armed Lithuanians rounded up the remaining Jewish women and children and shot them in the Jewish cemetery. According to Soviet sources, about 100 women and children were buried in a mass grave at the Jewish cemetery and about 200 male Jews in another grave near the railroad station.

According to a secondhand account published in *The Complete Black Book*, the local Catholic priest in Viduklė tried to save about 30 Jewish children by concealing them in his church. He was betrayed, however, and was shot by the German commissar Dietrich, who also ordered the murder of the children found hiding in the church.

SOURCES Information on the persecution and murder of the Jews in Viduklė may be found in the following publications: Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 223–225—a translation is available at jewishgen.org; "Vidukle," in Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984); B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 402; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1391; and Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman, eds., *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), pp. 279–280.

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VIEKŠNIAI

Pre-1940: Viekšniai (Yiddish: Vekshne), village, Mažeikiai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Viekšniai/Vekshniai, Mazheikiai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Wjekschnen, Kreis Moscheiken, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Viekšniai, Mažeikiai rajonas, Telšiai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Viekšniai is located 14 kilometers (9 miles) southeast of Mažeikiai. In 1921, there were 300 Jews living in the village. By the middle of 1941, owing to emigration, the Jewish population had declined.

With the start of the German invasion on June 22, 1941, many Jews tried to flee into the interior of the Soviet Union, but only a few were successful, most having to turn back. Even before the Germans arrived, Lithuanian nationalists accused the Jews of cooperating with the Soviet authorities. The Lithuanians, led by the school principal, seized power in Viekšniai and and greeted with joy the arrival of the Germans on June 25, 1941. They arrested former Soviet activists and murdered a number of Jews, including Rabbi David Levin.

Early in July, the local commandant, Juozas Mačius, received orders from the Mažeikiai regional commandant, Pečiulis, to arrest all the Jewish men and lock them up in a ghetto. In response, a squad of 20 to 25 Lithuanian partisans, assisted by several uniformed Germans, arrested about 150 to 200 Jewish men within a few hours. The Jewish men were taken to the winter prayer house, which was fenced in with barbed wire and guarded, and from there they were taken daily to perform forced labor. The Jewish women and children were permitted to bring food to the men.

On July 7, the men were sent home and were instructed to prepare their families for being moved to Lublin in Poland. Shortly thereafter, all the Jews were ordered to appear in the marketplace. The Jewish physician, Dr. Chaim Lipman, was forced to identify those who were Communists, but he claimed that there were none. In response, the nationalists cut off the beards of the rabbi and other Jews. The women and children were then imprisoned in the Bet Midrash, and the men were taken to the synagogue and ordered to dance and perform other exercises. Some Jews were forced to do humiliating work or were abused to the amusement of a crowd of non-Jews who had assembled.

According to Soviet trial records, those Jews who had gone into hiding on July 7 were soon rounded up and placed with the other Jews. Then on July 15, two Germans arrived and collected the money that had been seized from the Jews in the ghetto. They also reportedly issued instructions for the Jews to be exterminated.[1]

Subsequently, all the Jews were taken and imprisoned in the grain storage house of Shimon Wachs, where they were held for about three weeks. During this time the Lithuanian guards beat the Jews, who also suffered from starvation, many falling ill.

On August 4, 1941, armed Lithuanians rounded up the remaining Jews and escorted them to the Jewish cemetery in Mažeikiai. Here, together with other Jews from the surrounding villages, they were forced to dig pits. Then they were all shot and buried in those same pits.

One Jewish man managed to evade the roundup and fled to the ghetto in Šiauliai. In 1943 he escaped from that ghetto and survived until the arrival of the Red Army.

SOURCES Publications concerning the persecution and murder of the Jews of Viekšniai include the following: Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 270–274; Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), pp. 277–278; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), p. 272; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 876.

Relevant archival documentation includes the following: LYA (3377-55-113) and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/1555, 1771).

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NOTE

1. LYA, 3377-55-113, p. 87, testimony of Juozas Mačius, November 26, 1944, as cited by Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust*, p. 278.

VIEVIS

Pre-1940: Vievis (Yiddish: Vevie), town, Trakai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Vievis/Vevis, Trakai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Vievis, Kreis Traken, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Trakai rajonas, Vilnius apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Vievis is located 30 kilometers (19 miles) west-northwest of Wilno. In 1940, there were 350 Jews living there (39 percent of the total population).

After the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, many Jews abandoned the town and sought refuge with farmers in the surrounding area. On June 24, German armed forces captured Vievis, and the Jews in the countryside were compelled to return. Immediately after the occupation, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a police force, which began persecuting and murdering the Jews, as well as non-Jews suspected of having collaborated with the Soviets. Particularly known for their cruel actions against the Jews were Kazys Čaplikas, who subsequently became head of the police; Juozas Dzena (sentenced to death in 1945); Viktoras Vasilevskis (also sentenced to death in 1945); a man named Šavreika; and many other Lithuanian activists. By the end of June 1941, they already had accused six Jews of Communist activity and killed them. The victims included Josef Baider, Motel Pik, and Chaim Sherman. The families of these Jews were arrested and transported to unknown destinations.

The new authorities introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures. The Jews were ordered to wear the yellow patch. Some of them, men and women, were pressed into forced labor. The chief of police demanded, and received, a daily payment of 400 rubles. In accordance with instructions issued by the head of Kreis Traken in late July, by August 1941, an eight-man Jewish Council (Judenrat) had been established, headed by Gensas Bereikas, with Mejeris Kurganas as his deputy, and an improvised ghetto had been set up.[1] Each day, several groups of Jewish men were led out of the ghetto to work on road construction. During the work the Jewish men were severely beaten by Juozas Dzena for being too slow. The women went out to perform cleaning work in Lithuanian homes and farms, including work on the estate of the local priest.[2]

Confirmation of the existence of a ghetto in Vievis can be found in the report of the Kreis head to the Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, dated September 1, 1941, which noted that in Vievis and several other towns in the Kreis, the Jews had been separated from the rest of the population in their own section of town.[3]

On September 22, 1941, the Vievis ghetto was liquidated. The Jews were rounded up in the town square and ordered to hand over all their valuables. Then they were transported in carts to Semeliškės. The Vievis Jews remained there, confined separately from the local Jews, until October 6, 1941, when all the Jews assembled in Semeliškės were shot in a nearby wooded area. Among those participating in the murder of the Jews of Vievis were Lithuanian members of the Self-Defense Battalion based in Wilno.[4]

A few Jews were able to evade the roundup. Meir Koren and his family went into hiding with the assistance of non-Jews and then moved into the Kaunas ghetto in August 1942. Ch. Goldstein and his wife, Dora, remained in hiding until the end of 1942. At that time they were placed in the labor camp that had been established in Vievis in May 1942, when 700 Jews from the Wilno and Kaunas ghettos were brought to the town. The prisoners worked constructing the Wilno-Kaunas highway. Dzena was the head of the camp, or Lagerführer. The camp was liquidated in December 1943. All the Jewish prisoners were shot in Ponary, near Wilno.

A small number of Jews were saved by local Lithuanians who hid them and gave them assistance. Worthy of mention are Zofija and Adomas Valantavičiai, Viktoras Vitkauskas, Skorupskis, Valerijonas and Teklė Paulauskai, A. Mikalauskienė, Kazys Macijauskas, Petras Luskevičius, and Juozas Gurskas.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Vievis during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: "Vievis," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 217–219; Neringa Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydų muziejus, 2002), pp. 34–36—an English translation of parts of this by Svetlana Satalova, "The Genocide of the Jews in the Trakai Region of Lithuania," is available at jewishgen.org; and Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.6.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-431); LCVA; LYA (K 1-58-45615/3); VHF (# 22421); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. For details regarding these orders, see Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," section F.1.2.6, "Kreis Trakai." Facsimilies of the orders have been published in Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje*, pp. 100–101.
2. LYA, K 1-58-45615/3, p. 64, testimony of witness Ch. Goldstein, as cited by Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje*, pp. 34–36.
3. A facsimile of the report can be found in Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje*, p. 109.
4. Rima Dulkiniene and Kerry Keys, eds., *With a Needle in the Heart: Memoirs of Former Prisoners of Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (Vilnius: Garnelis, 2003), p. 41.

VILKAVIŠKIS

Pre-1940: Vilkaviškis (Yiddish: Vilkovishk), town and apskritis center, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Vilkaviškis/Vilkavishkis, uezd

center, *Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Wilkowischken*, *Kreis center*, *Gebiet Kauen-Land*, *Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Vilkaviškis*, *rajonas center*, *Marijampolė apskritis*, *Republic of Lithuania*

Vilkaviškis is located 61 kilometers (38 miles) west-southwest of Kaunas. The 1923 census recorded a Jewish population of 3,206 in the town. By June 1941, emigration had reduced the size of the Jewish community to some extent, but there still were more than 2,500 Jews living in Vilkaviškis, including some Jewish refugees from areas to the west.

German troops occupied Vilkaviškis on June 22, 1941, at 8:00 A.M., following a heavy bombardment that destroyed the 400-year-old synagogue and some Jewish homes.[1] Immediately after the occupation, Lithuanian nationalists established a local authority and a police force, which implemented a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were required to wear the yellow Star of David on their chests and were forbidden to use the sidewalks. Jews had to perform various kinds of forced labor in the course of which they suffered insults, humiliation, and beatings at the hands of local antisemites.

On June 27, 1941, the occupying authorities confined all Jewish men in the building of a Catholic seminary outside the town.[2] In mid-July, they transferred the Jewish inmates to a former military barracks, also on the edge of town. Barbed wire enclosed the area, which was to become the ghetto. A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established that consisted of at least four people.[3] At the same time, the Jews were ordered to give up possessions such as money, watches, knives, suspenders, and other items. All the work sites where the ghetto inmates performed forced labor were located outside the ghetto. Witnesses also state that special grocery shops for the Jewish population were established on the edge of town and that the water supply in the ghetto was very limited.[4] The ghetto guards were Lithuanian auxiliary policemen.[5] As in other ghettos, skilled workers were needed, but much of the work done by Jews was connected with the local German Feldkommandantur. Some Jews worked on farms in the surrounding villages.[6]

In the second half of July 1941, a major Aktion took place in Vilkaviškis. On the orders of the head of the Tilsit Gestapo, SS-Sturmbannführer Hans-Joachim Böhme, members of the SD and Gestapo Tilsit, under the leadership of officers Tietz and Krumbach, shot at least 120 male Jews on the edge of the town. The victims were buried in two mass graves.[7]

On July 28, 1941, a Gestapo detachment and the SD from Tilsit, together with Lithuanian police, shot most of the remaining Jewish men (about 800 people) and 63 Lithuanian Communists.[8] They were buried in two ditches near the barracks that served as the ghetto. The 4th Company of the German 11th Reserve Police Battalion, which had been stationed in Vilkaviškis since mid-July, also took part in the Aktion, which lasted about four hours.[9] The 4th Company commander also served as the town commandant (Standortkommandant).[10]

On August 1, 1941, the authorities rounded up the Jewish women and children in Vilkaviškis and took them to the ghetto, where they joined the 50 to 100 men who were still alive. The buildings of the ghetto consisted of a number of large rooms in each of which members of several families resided.[11] On arrival, the women discovered the worn-out clothes and shoes of their murdered husbands and fathers and screamed with horror.[12] Since the members of the previous Jewish Council had been murdered, Yisroel Zilber was designated as the Jews' representative. The ghetto existed until late September 1941. A few of the remaining Jews were selected out and assigned to work in the nearby town of Pilviškie. Other Jewish women worked in agriculture.

On September 24, the day after Rosh Hashanah, uniformed Germans and the Lithuanian police shot the remaining Jews in the ghetto (about 1,300 people). Only a few Jews managed to escape or evade the roundup.[13] The last Aktion took place on November 15, 1941. On that date, a unit of Einsatzkommando 3, which was commanded by Karl Jäger, shot 115 Jews (36 men, 48 women, and 31 children).[14] These victims were likely Jews brought in from neighboring villages where they had been working or had been found in hiding. After this Aktion, the property of the victims was sold to the local population.

Subsequently, 12 more Jews were arrested and placed in the custody of the Lithuanian police in Vilkaviškis. At the beginning of 1942, Krumbach contacted the head of the Tilsit Gestapo, Böhme, asking what should be done with these Jews. Both Krumbach and Böhme declined to kill the remaining Jews at this time because they were convinced that the period of mass killings was over, and all Jews now were to be settled into the few large ghettos. SS-Standartenführer Jäger, however, ordered the immediate killing of these Jews. This task was assigned to the Lithuanian auxiliary police who had arrested them. Two Jews that had converted to Christianity were reportedly released, but the remaining 10 were shot by members of the Lithuanian police in the presence of a German observer.[15]

Due to the continued searches for Jewish escapees, only a handful survived the occupation. Ranana Malchanovna-Kleinštein survived with the help of the Strimaitis family and other Lithuanians. Judith Sperling survived both passing as a non-Jew and hiding with the help of the Maladauskas and Jureviciene families.[16]

SOURCES Relevant publications include the following: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973); Shalom Bronstein, ed., *Yahadut Lita: Lithuanian Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Holocaust 1941–1945* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Lithuanians in Israel, 1984), pp. 273–274; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 275–277; Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 233ff.; Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.5; Rima Dulkiniene and Kerry Keys, eds., *With a Needle in the Heart: Memoirs of Former Prisoners of Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (Vilnius: Garnelis, 2003), pp. 233–238; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during*

the Holocaust (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 877. See also www.shtelinks.jewishgen.org/vilkovishk/vilkovishk3.html.

Documentation relating to the persecution and murder of the Jews of Vilkaviškis can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-419); LCVA (R 678-1-1); LYA; RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM; VHF (# 4679, 15261, 32422, 38035); and YVA (M-1/E/1208; M-33/987; TR-2/154; and O-3/3770).

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NOTES

1. Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry*, p. 277.
2. GARF, 7021-94-419, p. 29.
3. Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, p. 236.
4. VHF, # 15261, testimony of Isaak Demantas.
5. Ibid., # 32422, testimony of Lazar Lapidus.
6. Ibid., # 38035, testimony of Morris Penn.
7. LG-Ulm, Ks 2/57, verdict against Fischer-Schweder and others, August 29, 1958, in *KZ-Verbrechen vor Deutschen Gerichten*, Bd. II, *Einsatzkommando Tilsit: Der Prozess zu Ulm* (Frankfurt/Main, 1966); and LG-Dort, 10 Ks 1/61, verdict against Krumbach and others, February 5, 1963, in *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 19 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1978), Lfd. Nr. 547, pp. 19–20.
8. GARF, 7021-94-419, pp. 36–39.
9. Arūnas Bubnys, "Mažieji Lietuvos žydų getai ir laikinos izolaivimo stovyklos 1941–1943 metais," in *Lietuvos Istorijos Metraštis*, *The Yearbook of Lithuanian History 1999* (Vilnius, 2000), p. 170.
10. LCVA, R 678-1-1, p. 1.
11. VHF, # 32422.
12. Testimony of Ranana Malchanovna-Kleinštein, in Dulkiniene and Keys, *With a Needle in the Heart*, p. 235; VHF, # 4679, testimony of Ranana Malkhanovna.
13. GARF, 7021-94-419, pp. 53 and verso.
14. RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.
15. *JuNS-V*, vol. 19, Lfd. Nr. 547, p. 21.
16. Dulkiniene and Keys, *With a Needle in the Heart*, pp. 237–238; Mordecai Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous: Gentile Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1992), pp. 257–258.

VILKIJA

Pre-1940: Vilkija (Yiddish: Vilki), *town*, *Kaunas apskritis*, *Lithuania; 1940–1941: Vilkija/Vilkiia*, *Kaunas uezd*, *Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Wilki*, *Kreis Schaken*, *Gebiet Kauen-Land*, *Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Vilkija*, *Kaunas rajonas and apskritis*, *Republic of Lithuania*

Vilkija is located 25 kilometers (16 miles) northwest of Kaunas. According to the 1923 census, there were 829 Jews living in the town. As emigration was common in the 1930s, by June 1941 around 400 to 600 Jews remained in the town.

German armed forces occupied the town on June 24, 1941. Immediately afterwards, Lithuanian nationalists set up a local administration and a police force (a so-called white armband company under Stasys Gudavičius), which implemented anti-Jewish measures. The Germans also established a military commandant's office under SS-Obersturmführer Missenbaum. Jews were marked with the Star of David, forced into labor of various kinds, and robbed and assaulted by local antisemites. Jews were also forbidden to walk on the sidewalks and to associate with Lithuanians.

Sources differ on the first Aktion in Vilkija. One account states that Lithuanian auxiliaries, acting on Missenbaum's orders, arrested between 150 and 200 male Jews on July 7–8, 1941, and conveyed most of them to Kaunas; they shot 21 of them close to Vilkija, near Jagminiškiai village. Another account simply has the Lithuanians killing nearly all the Jewish men in the town on July 15.

In July 1941, the Germans created a ghetto in Vilkija. Details are scant; it may have consisted of nothing more than the synagogue. In mid-August 1941, Jews from several surrounding jurisdictions—Čekiškes, Veliuona, Seredžius, and Lekėčiai—were concentrated there. They totaled 138 people: 23 men and 115 women.[1] At about the same time, approximately 400 men and women were sent away from Vilkija, possibly to the Kaunas ghetto.

On or just before August 25, the remaining Jews were forced to pay a "contribution" of 21,400 rubles.[2]

On August 28, 1941, the ghetto was liquidated, and 402 Jews—76 men, 192 women, and 134 children—were shot.[3] The shooting was carried out by the 3rd Company of the 1st (13th) Lithuanian Police Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Barzda, in the Pakarklė Forest, about 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) from Vilkija. Members of the local police brought the Jews to the shooting site and guarded it.

Eight former policemen of the 3rd Company were accused of participating in the murder of the Jews in Vilkija and in other localities in Lithuania, and their trial was held in Kaunas from September 26 to October 4, 1962. They were found guilty and sentenced to death.[4]

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews in Vilkija can be found in the following publications: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 349; Arūnas Bubnys, "The Holocaust in the Lithuanian Province in 1941: The Kaunas District," in David Gaunt et al., eds., *Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust: Belarus*, *Estonia*, *Latvia*, *Lithuania* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 308–310; and Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 248–249.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: LCVA (e.g., R 1534-1-190 and 193; R 683-2-2); LYA (e.g., K 1-58-47588/3, vol. 2, pp. 227–228); and RGVA (500-1-25).

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NOTES

1. See the report of the head of the police unit in Lekėčiai from August 17, 1941, in Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944)*, vol. 2, p. 349.

2. LCVA, R 1534-1-190, p. 21, as cited by Bubnys, "The Holocaust in the Lithuanian Province," p. 309.

3. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 106, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.

4. *Sovietskaia Litva* (Vilnius), October 4, 1962.

VIRBALIS

Pre-1940: Virbalis (Yiddish: Virbaln), town, Vilkaviškis apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Vilkavishkis uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Wirballen, Kreis Wilkowischken, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Virbalis, Vilkaviškis rajonas, Marijampolė apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Virbalis is located 75 kilometers (47 miles) west-southwest of Kaunas. According to the 1923 census, the town had a Jewish population of 1,233. In the 1930s, emigration reduced that number by about half.

German armed forces captured the town on June 22, 1941, the first day of Germany's invasion of the USSR. As a result, the Jews were unable to evacuate, and almost all remained in the town at the start of the German occupation.

Immediately after the town's capture, all the prisoners in the local jail were released, including those who had resisted Soviet rule. Lithuanian nationalist collaborators, including some of the released prisoners, organized local groups to take revenge on the Communists and Jews, who were viewed as having supported the Soviet authorities. After a few days, the Lithuanian nationalists formed a town administration and a police force, which began to enforce anti-Jewish measures. Jews were forbidden to leave the town or to associate in any way with non-Jews. A curfew was imposed on the Jewish community, and its members also were required to wear yellow patches on their outer garments and to surrender all radios.

On July 7, 1941, on the orders of the Tilsit Gestapo, members of Grenzpolizeikommissariat (Border Police Office, GPK) Eydtkau (headed by Kriminalobersekretär Tietz, who later committed suicide after being arrested for stealing Jewish property), along with Lithuanian police, arrested all Jewish males over the age of 16 (more than 200 people) and took them to the Raudondvaris estate north of the town. There they were confined in a cellar for several days with no food or water. On July 10, 1941, after being forced to enlarge an existing antitank ditch 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) north of town, they were all shot together with 20 Lithuanians who were accused of having aided the Soviets. Before the massacre, the Jews were forced to undress and hand over all their money and valuables. The shooting was carried out by a squad of Security Police and SD men, led by the head of the Tilsit Gestapo, SS-Sturmbannführer Hans-Joachim Böhme, assisted by Lithuanian policemen.[1]

After the men were shot, the Jewish women, children, and old people were moved into houses on several streets, where ethnic Germans had lived before their repatriation to Germany in 1939–1941; these streets became a ghetto. The town's only dentist, a woman named Sheine Pauzisky, was appointed head of the ghetto. Using her connections with prominent Lithuanians in the town, she managed to open a food shop for the ghetto, which was run by a Lithuanian who ensured that adequate supplies were available to the Jews as long as the ghetto existed. Young girls and women were used for various types of labor in the town. Lithuanian farmers also came to the ghetto to recruit women and girls for work. Some treated them badly, but others helped Jews to hide at the time of the massacres.

On July 29, 1941, the women who were ill, old, and unable to work were taken from the ghetto and shot, possibly together with a few elderly men and the remaining Jewish children and their mothers. After the war, a former midwife in Virbalis provided a description of a mass shooting in a meadow near the town, which reportedly took place about three weeks after the first Aktion. Significant details in her account include the absence of any Lithuanian policemen on this occasion and the fact that two sons of a local peasant also were shot for attempting to bring the Jews awaiting execution some food. According to the witness, the number of victims is estimated to have been between 200 and 300, including a number of children. One severely wounded Jew managed to climb out of the mass grave and returned to the town, but then he died there of his wounds.[2]

After the second Aktion, the authorities reassured the remaining women that no more evil would happen to them and informed them that their husbands were working at different jobs not far away. Some Jewish women in the ghetto even gave money, valuables, and clothes to Lithuanians who promised to take them to their husbands. Those women working on farms, however, discovered the true fate of those who had disappeared and tried to convince the others when they returned to the ghetto. At some time in August, the Jewish women and children from Kybartai were also moved to the Virbalis ghetto.

On September 11, 1941, the ghetto was liquidated. All the remaining Jews were loaded onto carts driven by Lithuanians and were taken to prepared pits, where they were all shot.[3]

In a postwar letter, an ethnic German from the region wrote to a Jewish survivor: "Many [Jews] went into hiding with Lithuanian farmers. But due to the long time, some were discovered and killed together with the farmers."[4] Among the few who hid successfully were Bela Mirbach and her mother, who hid on the farm of a Lithuanian teacher, and Bela Rosenberg, whose family had previously owned a farm.

On August 29, 1958, a court in Ulm, Germany, sentenced several individuals, including Hans-Joachim Böhme, to various terms of imprisonment for participation in the shooting of the Jews in Virbalis and other places in July 1941.

On October 12, 1961, a court in Dortmund, Germany, sentenced another former Tilsit Gestapo official, Gerke, to three years and six months of imprisonment. He also took part in the Aktion in July 1941.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Virbalis during the Holocaust can be found in these publications: B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), p. 412; "Virbalis," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996),

pp. 254–259; and Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.5.

Documentation on the murder of the Jews of Virbalis can be found in the following archives: BA-L (B 162/2582-2615, 14079-14080); GARF (7021-94-419); LCVA; and YVA (M-9/12[6], 798; M-33/987, 995; Koniuchovsky Collection O-71/154, 157, 158; O-33/1348).

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trans. Kathleen Luft

NOTES

1. Verdict of LG-Ulm against Fischer-Schweder et al., August 29, 1958, in *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 15 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1976), Lfd. Nr. 465, pp. 182–183; verdict of LG-Dort against Krumbach, Gerke, and Jahr, October 12, 1961, in *JuNS-V*, vol. 17 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1977), Lfd. Nr. 521.
2. See *JuNS-V*, vol. 15, Lfd. Nr. 465, pp. 206–207. It is possible, however, that this is a description of the final liquidation Aktion a few weeks later. According to this witness, the Jews who were shot had been confined for about three weeks in a red-brick building in Virbalis, guarded by the Lithuanian police.
3. YVA, M-9/12(6); M-33/987, 995; Koniuchovsky Collection O-71/154, 157, 158.
4. Ibid., O-33/1348, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik."

VYŽUONOS

Pre-1940: Vyžuonos (Yiddish: Vizhun), village, Utena apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Vyžuonos/Vizhuonos, Utena uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Wischuny, Kreis Utena, Gebiet Ponewesch-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Vyžuonos, Utena rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Vyžuonos is located 13 kilometers (8 miles) north-northwest of Utena. In 1923, there were 367 Jews living in Vyžuonos (27 percent of all residents).

German armed forces occupied the village on June 26, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists started looting Jewish property and Jewish men were required to perform forced labor. Two Jewish women were murdered when they brought food to their men in the forest.

According to the account in *Pinkas ha-kehilot*, already on June 26, 1941, all the Jews were driven out of their homes and were forced to reside together in two small alleys, which became an improvised ghetto. According to Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, the Jewish houses were marked with the word *Jude* (Jew) as a service to the Germans.

On June 27, several Jewish families were arrested and taken to a nearby forest to be murdered. On June 29, armed Lithuanians arrested another group of Jewish young men and women. They took them to a farm and held them there for several days without food or water. The women were raped, and then all of them were murdered and buried nearby.

The remaining Jews in Vyžuonos lived in the ghetto for more than one month. A local Lithuanian woman, Ona Eigelienė, visited the village in early August and observed that the Jews were praying there all night. The next morning they were loaded onto carts and were driven away, clearly aware of their impending fate.[1]

On August 7, the Jews of Vyžuonos were taken to the Rašė Forest, about 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) north of Utena to be murdered together with other Jews from the region.

Eigelienė also witnessed the sale of Jewish property in Vyžuonos after the Jews had been killed: "The partisans were displaying items in the window. There was a huge crowd of customers. The things were cheap. We were so shocked that we returned home immediately. The priest said nothing in church."[2]

Only two Jews are known to have survived the Holocaust in and around Vyžuonos: a young woman who had papers showing that she was of Tatar origin and a man who worked for a Lithuanian farmer.

SOURCES Information about the fate of the Jews of Vyžuonos during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *The Annihilation of Lithuania Jewry* (New York: Judaica Press, 1995), pp. 277–280; "Vyzuonos," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 226–229; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 892.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: USHMM (RG-50.473*0058) and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/1539; M-33/971.

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-50.473*0058, testimony of Ona Eigelienė.
2. Ibid.

WIDZE

Pre-1939: Widze (Yiddish: Vidzh), town, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Vidzy, raion center, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Widsche, initially Rayon center, Gebiet Glebokie, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then from April 1, 1942, Kreis Schwentschionys, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Vidzy, Braslav raen, Vitsebsk voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Widze is located 80 kilometers (50 miles) northwest of Wilno. Of about 3,000 inhabitants on the eve of the war, the majority were Jewish, but there were also Poles, Lithuanians, Belorussians, Tartars, Russian Orthodox, Old Believers, and Roma (Gypsies) in the town.[1]

The Red Army occupied Widze on September 17, 1939. The so-called transition from capitalism to socialism was a difficult one. Some wealthy Jews and refugees were among

those deported to Siberia, and others had to adapt to the new Soviet social structures to avoid this fate.

Shortly after the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, the Soviet authorities abandoned Widze, taking almost every available vehicle, and a period of lawlessness ensued. Before the arrival of a German garrison in the town, local antisemites formed a self-defense force and started arresting, beating, robbing, and murdering Jews. This lawlessness continued until a German military commandant arrived and restored a semblance of order in mid-July 1941.[2]

The German commandant issued instructions in mid-July that no Jews were to be killed or robbed without his permission, and the Jews breathed a sigh of relief. Jewish women baked cakes for the German commandant. The commandant established a Judenrat, headed by Lipa Levin, which had the task of passing on German instructions and also ensuring that they were fulfilled. To meet the demand for a "contribution" from the Jewish community, each family had to surrender to the Judenrat some of its cash or treasured possessions, such as engagement rings or Sabbath candleholders. Other restrictions included the introduction of the wearing of the yellow star and a prohibition on Jews using the sidewalk or visiting public places.[3]

Assisted by local collaborators, the Germans also began driving Jews to forced labor, making them perform the dirtiest and most humiliating work. At first, only the men were required to work, but soon women had to work as well. Women worked, for example, in the community's welfare organizations, as cleaners or gardeners, and in the knitting factory, making clothes for the Germans.[4] Sporadic killings also continued. For example, according to one account, in the fall of 1941 Shapiro and his wife were murdered in the Jewish cemetery for 7 kilograms (15.4 pounds) of gold.[5]

Initially, the German authorities established a local Belorussian police, later called the Schutzmannschaft, headed by Yan Gadzhon, with Stefan Zhokovska as his second in command.[6] In April 1942, the area around Widze was transferred from Gebiet Glebokie in Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien to Gebiet Wilna-Land in Generalkommissariat Litauen. At about this time, the Belorussian police officers in Widze were mostly replaced by Lithuanians.[7]

The ghetto was formed in early 1942.[8] All the Jews were forced to move onto Tatarskaia Street, near the houses of study and the synagogues. A mixed crowd of hooligans taunted and attacked the Jews as they made their way into the ghetto with their heavy loads. Germans and local policemen stood at the entrance to the ghetto to check for restricted items. When such items were found, the Jews were beaten in punishment and the property confiscated. Christians soon moved into the homes vacated by the Jews.[9]

Inside the ghetto, the new inmates had no room even for the few items they had brought with them. There was poor sanitation, people had to sleep on the floor, and the women had to cook in turns, sharing the same stove. Overcrowding in the houses, which held as many as four families, inevitably led to arguments. Somehow this fighting at least distracted from the many other existential problems, as families worried constantly about feeding their children and staying alive. A number of ghetto inmates, especially the elderly, died of weakness and disease. The favorite pastime of the children was the "Funeral Game": they would cover the table with a black rag and raise the roof with their wailing and lamenting.[10]

The local police constantly guarded the ghetto fence to limit contacts with non-Jews and control those entering the ghetto. The only way out was as part of a work brigade. Those working outside the ghetto were sometimes able to trade items for food with the non-Jewish population. Those trapped inside could trade only by throwing valuables over the fence to obtain food that was thrown in by local inhabitants.

On March 23, 1942, the Germans escorted about 50 Jews from Dryswiaty into the Widze ghetto. Jews were also brought to Widze in early 1942 from the shtetls in Drujsk (around 1,000 people), Opsa, Dubene, and Koziany.[11] The ghetto population was augmented slightly by the arrival of a few half-dead survivors from places where much of the Jewish population had been murdered, such as Ignalino and Święciany. On August 29, 1942, according to a letter from the social administrative office (Urząd Socialny) of the Wilna Gebietskommissar, 1,505 Jewish men, women, and children were living in the Widze ghetto, which was now subordinated administratively to the ghetto in Święciany. Of these, 721 were able to work and 520 were employed.[12] Subsequently most of these Jews were transferred to Święciany in the fall of 1942. Horses and carts arrived to move the Jews, each with small bundles, to the railway station in Nowe Święciany. From Święciany, most Jews were sent on to the Wilno ghetto or were murdered in Ponary. Only about 80 Jews (the craftsmen and their families) remained in Widze at this time, but these Jews were also sent to Święciany later.[13]

By the summer of 1942, the Jews in the Widze ghetto knew it would soon be liquidated, and most Jews accepted the transfer to the Święciany ghetto. Rumors circulated about Russian partisans living in the surrounding forests. Noel Svirsky and his friend Zalman Zilber organized a group of nine people planning to escape to the woods and join the partisans. However, owing to German warnings, they were afraid of the collective punishment that would be meted out to those remaining in the ghetto, once their absence was known. This group left the ghetto shortly before the transfer of most of the Jews to Święciany. Eventually they formed a larger group with other Jewish escapees from Koziany, as the Soviet partisans would not accept them without weapons. Even obtaining food was very difficult in the forests without arms.[14] For example, local peasants who found Jews outside the ghetto were offered a reward of 15 kilograms (33 pounds) of salt or sugar. The Germans also burned down local villages in an attempt to deny food and support to the Soviet partisans. Under these adverse conditions, some Jews even returned to the ghetto to face almost certain death, but others managed to form or join organized partisan units offering resistance to the Germans and their collaborators.[15]

Among the survivors from Widze were Zelda Skop (born 1931), who also survived concentration camps in Latvia

(Kaiserwald) and Germany (Stutthof) after being transferred to Święciany, and Jenny Chinitz (née Luba Misuszczyn), who escaped to join the partisans after being in the Święciany and Wilno ghettos.[16]

SOURCES The yizkor book edited by Gershon Vainer and Yitshak Alperovitz, *Sefer Vidz: 'Ayera b-hayeha u-ve-khiliona* (Tel Aviv: Widze Association in Israel, 1977), contains several detailed accounts describing conditions in the ghetto and also contains some witness statements from a postwar Polish trial in Koszalin in 1962.

Documentation on the fate of the Jews in Widze under the German occupation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/3601); IPN (e.g., SOWr 127); LCVA (R 626-1-24; R 614-1-336); VHF (# 3743); and YVA (e.g., 2846/99-S [Noah Svirsky]).

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NOTES

1. Vainer and Alperovitz, *Sefer Vidz.*
2. Hina Koritsk-Lifthin, "Memories from the Era of the Holocaust in Vidz," pp. 470–478, here p. 472; Noah Svirsky, "Holocaust and Resistance," pp. 167–181, here pp. 169–170; and testimonies from the Polish trial in Koszalin in 1962, pp. 481–483—all in ibid.
3. Koritsk-Lifthin, "Memories from the Era of the Holocaust in Vidz," pp. 470–478.
4. Svirsky, "Holocaust and Resistance," pp. 172–173; Vainer and Alperovitz, *Sefer Vidz*, p. 473.
5. Vainer and Alperovitz, *Sefer Vidz*, pp. 482–483. According to another witness, the Shapiro couple may have been killed during the initial thefts and murders.
6. Ibid., p. 482.
7. See Shlomo Yahilchik, "Years of Trouble and War," in ibid., pp. 393–396.
8. Ibid.
9. Svirsky, "Holocaust and Resistance," pp. 173–174.
10. Ibid., pp. 173–175.
11. Szmerke Kaczerginski, *Hurbn Vilne: Umkum fun di Yidn in Vilne un Vilner gegnt . . . : Zamlung fun eydus: Bavayzn oder dokumentn* (New York: Aroysgegebn fun dem fareyniktn Vilner hilfs-komitet in Nyu-York durkh Tsiko bikher-farlag, 1947), p. 153. The Jewish population of Dryswiaty was 85 at the time of the German invasion. Five craftsmen with their families remained in Dryswiaty after March 1942. On Drujsk, see Schmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), pp. 334–335. According to one account, there was an earlier transport of women and children to the Wilno ghetto in February 1942; see Sarah Dembovski (Korb), "In the Ghetto of Vidz and in the Concentration Camps," in Vainer and Alperovitz, *Sefer Vidz*, pp. 459–462. On Dubene, where 90 families lived, see Spector and Wigoder, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Life*, p. 336.
12. LCVA, R 626-1-24, p. 34, and R 614-1-336, p. 299.
13. Vainer and Alperovitz, *Sefer Vidz*, pp. 457, 476–477.
14. Svirsky, "Holocaust and Resistance," pp. 167–181.
15. Koritsk-Lifthin, "Memories from the Era of the Holocaust in Vidz," pp. 470–478.
16. See *Benjamin and Vladka Meed Registry of Jewish Holocaust Survivors 2000* (United States Holocaust Memorial Council, 2000); and VHF, # 3743, testimony of Jenny Chinitz, July 7, 1995.

WILNO

Pre-1939: Wilno (Yiddish: Vilne/Vilna), city and województwo center, Poland; 1939–1940: Vilnius, apskritis center and capital of Lithuania; 1940–1941: uezd center and capital of Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Wilna, Kreis center, Stadthauptmannschaft and center of Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Vilnius, rajonas and apskritis center, capital of the Republic of Lithuania

Wilno is located 100 kilometers (62 miles) east-southeast of Kaunas. On June 24, 1941, when German troops entered Wilno, approximately 60,000 Jews were in the city. In the previous two days, after the start of the German invasion, about 3,000 Jews managed to escape. At the same time, many Jewish refugees from western Lithuania arrived in Wilno.

The first German Security Police detachment to arrive in Wilno was Einsatzkommando 9. In July 1941, this unit, together with the Lithuanian Ypatingas Burys (special troops), murdered about 10,000 Jews near the Ponary railroad station, not far from Wilno.[1]

The Germans ordered the establishment of a 10-member Jewish Council (Judenrat) on July 4, 1941. By the end of the month it had been expanded to 24 members, and Shaul Trotski was appointed as its head. Within a few days, rumors of the massacres, soon confirmed, spread back to the Judenrat.[2]

At the start of August 1941, a German civil administration took over from the military in Wilno. The city's Stadtkommissar was Hans Hingst, and the Gebietskommissar for

Jewish and Lithuanian police guard the entrance to the Wilno ghetto, n.d. Pictured at left is the chief of Jewish Police, Ferdinand Beigel.
USHMM WS #64118, COURTESY OF WILHELM BEGELL

the surrounding rural region (Wilna-Land) was SS-Sturmbannführer Horst Wulff. Franz Murer served as assistant to Hingst for Jewish affairs, policing, and judicial questions, among other tasks.

On the orders of the German authorities, the Lithuanian civilian and police forces imposed restrictions on the Jews, including markings and a curfew. The Germans stole Jewish money and property.

In August 1941, Einsatzkommando 3 took over responsibility for Wilno. The report of its leader, SS-Standartenführer Karl Jäger, recorded the number of Jews killed in Wilno during August, September, and October as 21,105, about 70 percent of whom were women and children.[3]

Local Lithuanian planning for a ghetto in Wilno had started at the end of June 1941. The German military commandant, Zehnpfennig, decided on July 11 that no more than 20,000 Jews should be confined within the ghetto, and he instructed the local Lithuanian authorities to make proposals concerning its borders.[4]

Under the new civil administration, Generalkommissar von Renteln ordered Hingst to establish a ghetto. Hingst selected the old part of the city from among several Lithuanian proposals, as most Jews already lived there.[5] The ghetto was established in early September 1941. Formally, Hingst, together with the Lithuanian authorities serving under him, oversaw the ghetto. Murer also played a leading role in its administration. The German Security Police, subordinated to Einsatzkommando 3 in Kaunas, handled security; they assigned the Ypatingas Burys to guard the ghetto perimeter and to conduct mass killings.[6]

The resettlement of the Jews into the ghetto took place on September 6–7, 1941. Lithuanian policemen drove the Jews out of their homes, and Lithuanian Self-Defense officials forced them into the designated ghetto areas.[7] The sick and those unable to walk were left in their homes temporarily.

Some 40,000 Jews were crowded into two separate ghettos, whose combined area had previously housed only about 4,000 people. The small ghetto included Jatkowa, Żydowska, and parts of Gaon and Glezer Streets. The large ghetto included Oszmiańska, Dziśnieński, Jatkowa, Żmundzka, Rudnicka, Szpitalna, and Straszun Streets. At this time, the Judenrat was liquidated, and separate Jewish Councils were created for the two ghetto areas.

Overcrowding was extreme. Several families had to share a single room, and each person was allotted only 1 to 2 square meters (11 to 22 square feet). Some of the buildings in the ghettos were not connected to the local sewage system. Initially, there was only one public bath, but a second opened later. However, their use by so many people may have contributed to the spread of infectious disease.[8] A hospital with more than 150 staff treated some 3,000 patients in 1942.[9]

A Judenrat report from October 1941 stated that the daily ration for each ghetto inmate was 100 grams (3.5 ounces) of potatoes, 50 grams (1.8 ounces) of cabbage, 30 grams (1 ounce) of carrots, and 20 grams (0.7 ounces) of turnips—produce that normally was used to feed cattle.[10] On April 9, 1942, the Generalkommissar issued the following regulations: nonworking Jews would receive half the rations issued to the local population; working Jews would receive a full bread ration; and Jewish workers necessary for the war effort would receive full rations, equal to the local population.[11]

The ghetto exits were sealed with barbed wire, windows and doors along the ghetto boundary were barricaded, and the telephone lines were cut. For each ghetto there was only one gate, located in the main ghetto on Rudnicka Street. The ghetto was guarded internally by about 200 Jewish policemen, under the command of Jacob Gens. At the beginning, Lithuanian auxiliaries guarded the exterior of the ghetto. In August 1943, external security was made the responsibility of the German police.

After the sealing of the ghetto in September 1941, the number of its inhabitants was reduced drastically by a series of additional mass killings. They took place several times per week, with about 1,000 victims on each occasion, mostly people unable to work. During September, most of those not registered for work were transferred to the smaller ghetto, known as Ghetto no. 2. On October 1, 1941, on Yom Kippur, the Germans conducted a large Aktion during which several thousand Jews were taken to Ponary and shot. In mid-October 1941, Ghetto no. 2 was completely liquidated, and the remaining 6,000 to 8,000 inmates were chased to Ponary and shot.[12] Through the end of October, about 5,000 to 7,000 Jews were killed in the first "yellow certificate Aktion," and about 2,000 more Jews were killed in the second yellow certificate Aktion in early November, as the ghetto was brutally searched for any Jews in hiding. During the next Aktion, which took place at the end of November/early December 1941, 200 ghetto inmates were executed, and during the "pink certificate Aktion" on December 20 and 21, 1941, about 400 more Jews were killed. At this time, some Jews in hiding physically resisted efforts to extract them.[13]

After December 1941, the situation in the Wilno ghetto became relatively stable for about a year and a half, until the events leading up to the ghetto's liquidation in September 1943. In February 1942, there were probably about 17,200 Jews in the ghetto: 14,200 legals, receiving bread rations, and about 3,000 illegals, many of whom were gradually legalized during 1942.[14] Still, repressive Aktions continued sporadically. The reasons for arrest included illegal acquisition of food, use of false documents, illegal trade, planned escape from the ghetto or the workplace, staying outside the ghetto with false documents, and ownership of valuables. In most cases, the punishment was execution, described in the documents as "dealt with according to orders" or "liquidated."[15]

On September 30, 1941, Hingst ordered that wages for male Jews, aged between 16 and 60, should be 0.20 Reichsmark (RM) per hour; for female Jews, 0.15 RM per hour; and for younger workers under 16, 0.10 RM per hour. The wages increased in June 1942.[16] These rates applied only to private companies. The German local employers, military employers, and the city of Wilno paid only half of these amounts, as they had to transfer the other half to the city authorities. If the employer

provided the working Jews with a warm soup, he could deduct 0.30 RM from their daily wages. Jewish laborers could be hired only through the Labor Administration in Wilno. The police station in charge of the ghetto controlled the Jews leaving the ghetto. Only Jews assigned by the Labor Administration with a corresponding pass could leave the ghetto, in groups, under escort, for their workplaces. Jews could not buy food or wood and take them into the ghetto. Deliveries of these goods were organized by grocery companies and the city administration.[17]

The places that employed Jews in Wilno included the Kailis factory, which made fur products; workshops for cars; a Jewish labor camp on Antakolskų Street; and another Jewish labor camp whose inmates worked for the German Security Police. Outside of Wilno, Jews were used to dig peat, especially in the areas of Biała Waka, Bezdany, Rzeszy, Podbrodzie, Nowa Wilejka, and Ignalino. One of the largest outside labor sites was the Giesler Company camp, which built and repaired railroad tracks for the Wehrmacht.[18]

In April 1942, a ghetto theater opened, and there was also an orchestra, a music school, and two choirs. A public library contained some 45,000 books, many of them in Polish. A number of sporting events also were organized. These activities gave Jews the opportunity to free themselves from the pressures of ghetto life for a few hours and represented a form of passive resistance to Nazi oppression. Three synagogues served the needs of the faithful inside the ghetto.[19]

In July 1942, the Judenrat was dissolved, and Gens was appointed head of the ghetto, while remaining chief of the Jewish Police. On July 12, Gens announced: "The basis of the ghetto is work, discipline and order. Every resident of the ghetto who is capable of work is a pillar on which our existence rests."[20] Thus Gens pursued a strategy of survival through labor, trying to make the Jews useful to the Germans. The ghetto administration included departments for police, labor, industry, supply (primarily food), health, housing, social welfare, and also culture.

In the fall of 1942, the ghetto administration under Gens assumed responsibility for the remaining small ghettos to the east in Gebiet Wilna-Land. Over the following weeks these ghettos were consolidated, with some Jews being transferred to labor camps and others being selected and shot. During the final liquidation of these ghettos in late March and early April 1943, some Jews were sent to labor camps and others to the ghetto in Wilno, while some 4,000 others were shot.[21] This shooting severely undermined morale in the Wilno ghetto, as it showed that Gens was powerless.

Between January 1942 and September 1943, Zionists, Bundists, and Communists came together to plan armed resistance in the Fareynikt Partizaner Organizatsye (United Partisan Organization, FPO). The leader was the Communist Yitzhak Witenberg. For a certain time, another smaller armed group under the leadership of "Jechiel" was active, and in 1943 it managed to establish contact with the FPO. The FPO was in contact with the Jewish Police, as Joseph Glazman had a senior position in both organizations. However, in the spring of 1943, when relations between the German authorities and the Jews deteriorated markedly, the FPO demanded armed resistance. Gens, aware that resistance would threaten the very existence of the ghetto, increasingly acted against the FPO's plans, although he allowed some resistance fighters to leave for the forests.

In July 1943, after the capture of two non-Jewish Communists who had contacts to the FPO, the Germans demanded that Gens hand over Witenberg, believing he was part of the city's Communist resistance. Witenberg was briefly arrested but then escaped with the aid of FPO fighters. Gens then spread word that the Germans would destroy the ghetto if Witenberg did not surrender. Eventually, on July 16, Witenberg surrendered voluntarily and committed suicide in jail. Abba Kovner then became the leader of the FPO.

After this crisis, some groups of the FPO decided to escape to the surrounding forests to join up with the Soviet partisan units. One group, including Glazman, was ambushed on the way to the forest, and most were killed. The Germans then conducted severe reprisals, killing the families of those who had fled the ghetto.

Following Heinrich Himmler's order of June 21, 1943, for the transformation of remaining ghettos into concentration camps, there was a further intensification of anti-Jewish policy in the Wilno region. The Security Police dissolved five labor

Wilno ghetto partisan commander Abba Kovner (center) poses with Ruska Korczak (left) and Vitka Kempner (right) on a street in Wilno the day of the city's liberation, ca. July 13, 1944.
USHMM WS #76842, COURTESY OF VITKA KEMPNER KOVNER

camps over the following weeks, murdering most of the inmates, as they feared these Jews would flee to join the Soviet partisans. Then in August 1943, a series of deportations to Estonia started, which spread alarm among the Jews and further undermined trust among the Jews in Gens's leadership. In total, according to German figures, 7,126 Jews were sent to Estonian concentration camps for the extraction of oil shale in four deportations (on August 6 and 24 and on September 2 and 4, 1943).[22] From early September the ghetto was sealed off, and even the Wehrmacht was denied access. No additional food entered the ghetto, and prices rose immediately. Gens ordered a new registration on September 6, which recorded 9,637 Jews (2,157 men, 5,827 women, and 1,653 children).[23]

In mid-September, SS-Obersturmbannführer Göcke, the commandant of the new Kauen concentration camp, was briefly given responsiblity for the Wilno ghetto.[24] Over the next few days, the ghetto was liquidated. Gens was shot on September 14, 1943, signaling the failure of his attempts to placate the Germans. The Germans had decided to liquidate the ghetto, fearing the development of widespread Jewish resistance inside the ghetto, similar to that encountered in Warsaw.

The man in charge of the liquidation of the Wilno ghetto was SS-Oberscharführer Bruno Kittel. On September 16, 1943, about 1,500 Jews were sent to the military motor pool (Heereskraftpark, HKP) in Wilno; after that, another 1,500 Jews were sent to the Kailis fur factory. Dozens of people were sent to work for the Security Police and at the military hospital. During the Aktion between September 22 and 24, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and other auxiliary police units together with German SS and Order Police took part. About 1,600 Jewish men were deported to Estonia, and between 1,400 and 1,700 Jewish women were sent to the Kaiserwald camp near Riga. More than 3,000 people were killed, either in the ghetto or probably by shooting at Ponary. The search for Jews in hiding continued for a number of days. Several thousand Jews remained at the various work sites that now became labor camps.

In the period between July 2 and 7, 1944, the camps and workshops at the HKP, the fur factory, the Security Police, and the hospital were liquidated; most of these Jews were murdered in Ponary. The Jews working for the Security Police, together with their families, were transferred to Fort IX in Kaunas and shot.[25]

One of the main German perpetrators was Martin Weiss, who served in the Security Police office in Wilno. He organized and led the Lithuanian special unit (Ypatingas Burys) that conducted the mass murder of Jews in Ponary and was the Security Police officer responsible for the Wilno ghetto. On February 3, 1950, the regional court in Würzburg (file Ks 15/49) found Weiss guilty of murder and sentenced him to life in prison. His colleague, August Hering, was also convicted and received the same sentence.

Franz Murer was handed over to the Soviet authorities by the British after the war and was sentenced to 25 years in prison. He was released, however, in 1955 and repatriated to Austria in connection with the Austrian State Treaty. Simon Wiesenthal subsequently undertook efforts that resulted in a trial in Austria in the 1960s. Murer was initially acquitted, and despite a reversal by the Supreme Court in 1963, no further punishment was administered.

The courts and tribunals of the Lithuanian SSR charged a number of people with participation in mass murder at Ponary. Among the accused were the following members of the Lithuanian special unit, Ypatingas Burys, who were sentenced to death on January 29, 1945: Juozas Augustas, Borisas Baltutis, Mikas Bogotkevicius, Jonas Divilaitis, Jonas Macis, Vladislava Mandeika, Jonas Ozelis, Kozlovskij, Stasys Ukrinas, and Povilas Vaitulionis. Julius Rackauskas was sentenced to 25 years in prison on March 15, 1950.[26]

The following persons were sentenced by Polish courts for participation in the mass killings at Ponary: Witold Gliwinski, Jozef Miakisz, Wladyslaw Butkun, and Jan Borkowski.[27]

SOURCES Information about the fate of the Jews of Wilno during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Herman Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939–1944* (New Haven, CT: YIVO, 2002); I. Guzenberg, ed., *Vilnius Ghetto: List of Prisoners*, 2 vols. (Vilnius: Jewish Museum Vilnius, 1996); B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 1 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1965); Yitzhak Arad, *Ghetto in Flames: The Struggle and Destruction of the Jews in Vilna in the Holocaust* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1982); Arūnas Bubnys, "Massacre of Vilnius Jews and Vilnius Ghetto 1941–1944," *Genocydas ir Rezistencija* 2:14 (2003); Solon Beinfeld, "The Cultural Life of the Vilna Ghetto," in *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual*, vol. 1 (1984); Kazimierz Sakowicz, *Ponary Dairy, 1941–1943* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); N.N. Shneidman, *The Three Tragic Heroes of the Vilnius Ghetto* (Oakville, Ontario, 2002); and Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002).

Important survivor sources include Rachel Margolis, *A Partisan from Vilna* (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2010); A. Sutzkewer, *Getto Vilna* (Tel Aviv: Shavi, 1947); Yitskhok Rudashevski, *The Diary of the Vilna Ghetto, June 1941–April 1943* (Tel Aviv: Ghetto Fighters' House, 1973); Szmerke Kaczerginski, *Hurbn Vilne: Umkum fun di Yidn in Vilne un Vilner gegnt . . . : Zamlung fun eydus: Bavayzn oder dokumentn* (New York: Aroysgegebn fun dem fareyniktn Vilner hilfs-komitet in Nyu-York durkh Tsiko bikher-farlag, 1947); and Wladimir Poroduminskij, ed., *Die Juden von Wilna: Die Aufzeichnungen des Grigorij Schur 1941–1944* (Munich: DTV, 1999).

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH; BA-BL (R 91/10); BA-L; BA-MA; BLH; CDJC; GARF; IfZ; IPN (e.g., SOOl, IIK 59/76; SOW, IVK 130/73, I KR 37/74, IVKR 228/77); LCVA (e.g., R 626-1-14; R 677-1-11; R 685-4-28; R 689-1-2, 10; R 691-1-4, 28); LVVA; LYA (Case No. 11713, vol. 1); MA; NARA; RGVA; USHMM (e.g., RG-50.120*0127, oral history with Nissan Reznik; Acc.1999.A.0108 [Gebietskommissar Stadt Wilna]); VHF; WL; YIVO (e.g., RG-223, no. 282); and YVA (e.g., O-3; O-18; O-33; JM/1951).

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NOTES

1. LCVA, R 677-1-11, p. 1; R 691-1-4, p. 33; R 1436-1-38, p. 91; R 689-1-2, p. 19; R 691-1-28, p. 109.
2. Kruk, *The Last Days*, pp. 66–67.
3. LCVA, R 685-4-28, p. 8; R 626-1-14, p. 182; Sta. Frankfurt am Main, 4 Js 1106/59.
4. LCVA, R 643-3-4152, pp. 80, 82, letters of Feldkommandantur 814 to the citizens' committee, July 11, 1941, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," section F.1.3.2.
5. Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," section F.1.3.2, cites the interrogations of Murer in LYA, Case No. 11713, vol. 1, pp. 49, 58–59, 72–73, as well as other sources in support of this interpretation.
6. LCVA, R 691-1-4, p. 190.
7. Ibid., R 689-1-10, pp. 4, 9, 15, 18, 33–34, 37, 38a.
8. Ibid., R 614-1-286, p. 70.
9. Arad, *Ghetto in Flames*, pp. 121, 315.
10. LCVA, R 626-1-14, p. 120.
11. Ibid., R 689-4-950, pp. 518–519; LG-Würz, Ks 15/49, case against Martin Weiss and August Herring.
12. Kruk, *The Last Days*, p. 126, dates its liquidation on October 21. Arad, *Ghetto in Flames*, pp. 139–142, notes that according to the Jäger report, 2,367 Jews were killed in Wilno on October 21, but the Germans continued to comb the empty ghetto for Jews in hiding for several days afterwards.
13. Arad, *Ghetto in Flames*, pp. 149–163.
14. Ibid.; Kruk, *The Last Days*, pp. 302–303.
15. LCVA, R 730-2-84, p. 112; R 1673-1-1885; R 1673-1-3313; R 1673-1-526; R 1673-1-1151.
16. Ibid., R 626-1-11, p. 232. The new rates were: for male workers between 16 and 60, 0.30 RM; for female workers between 16 and 60, 0.25 RM; for younger laborers, 0.20 RM. See also R 1550-1-2, p. 198.
17. Ibid., R 626-1-4, p. 11.
18. Guzenberg, *Vilnius Ghetto: List of Prisoners*, vol. 2, pp. 24–59.
19. Arad, *Ghetto in Flames*, pp. 318–327; Kruk, *The Last Days*, pp. 183, 271.
20. As quoted by Shneidman, *The Three Tragic Heroes*, p. 109.
21. Arad, *Ghetto in Flames*, pp. 359–362.
22. BA-BL, R 91/10, WeWiKdo Vilnius, Bericht September 1943.
23. YIVO, RG-223, no. 282, Protocol of the meeting of the section leaders in the Wilno ghetto, September 20, 1943.
24. BA-BL, R 91/10, Aktenvermerk WeWiKdo Vilnius, September 13, 1943, as cited by Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," section F.1.8.2.
25. Bubnys, "Massacre of Vilnius Jews"; Sta. Frankfurt am Main, 4 Js 1106/59.
26. LYA, K 1-58-27968/3 and K 1-58-16944/3.
27. IPN, SOOl, IIK 59/76; SOW, IVK 130/73, I KR 37/74, and IVKR 228/77.

WORNIANY

Pre-1939: Worniany, village, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Vorniany, Ostrovets raion, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Worniany, initially Rayon Ostrowiec, Gebiet Wilejka, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then from April 1, 1942, Kreis Swir, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Vorniany, Astravets raen, Hrodna voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Worniany is located 45 kilometers (28 miles) east-northeast of Wilno. In 1921, there were 240 Jews living in the village, out of a total population of 300.

German armed forces occupied the village on June 25, 1941. Most of the Jews remained in Worniany at the start of the occupation. Just prior to the Germans' arrival, gangs of local residents and farmers plundered Jewish shops and homes and killed at least two Jews.[1] A local police force was then appointed, which restored order, but abuse of the Jews continued under the new local authorities.

In the summer of 1941, a German military commandant's office (Ortskommandantur) based in Mołodeczno governed Worniany. In September 1941, power was transferred to a German civil administration. Initially Worniany became part of Gebiet Wilejka, within Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien. From April 1942, it was in Gebiet Wilna-Land, within Generalkommissariat Litauen.

In the summer and fall of 1941, a series of anti-Jewish measures was implemented in Worniany. A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established, which was chaired by Herschel Magid. The Jews were forbidden to leave the village or associate in any way with non-Jews. Jews had to wear a yellow Star of David. Jewish land and livestock were confiscated, and Jews were required to perform forced labor. Initially, they were put to work pulling weeds from between the cobblestones or on other cleaning jobs. Then some were sent to work for farmers in the fields. The Judenrat played a role in the selection of Jews for forced labor and in the collection of property needed to meet German demands.

In the late summer or fall of 1941, according to one source in October,[2] the Jews of Worniany were moved into a ghetto. It was set up along four narrow streets in a number of small wooden houses. The ghetto was enclosed with a fence and barbed wire, and local policemen guarded the entry gate. Those moving into the ghetto could only bring with them what they could carry in their arms. Only Jews assigned to work were permitted to leave the ghetto. Overcrowding in the ghetto was severe, with 15 to 20 people sharing a single house, and the Jews suffered from hunger and deprivation.[3] A number of Jews who had escaped from small towns in Lithuania reached the Worniany ghetto in the fall, bringing news of the mass killings of Jews throughout Lithuania.

On October 15, 1941, SS men, German Gendarmes, and local police surrounded the ghetto, and the Jews were told to assemble in front of the Bet Midrash. The Germans then arrested the rabbi, his son, and 15 others. For a bribe, they agreed to release the rabbi and his son in exchange for 2 others. Then the prisoners were taken to a large pit, where they were shot and buried. However, several of the men survived the ordeal and escaped from the pit. A few days later the Germans returned to the ghetto and took a group of young men

for work in a distant forest, cutting wood. Subsequently these men returned to the ghetto.

The head of the Judenrat, Herschel Magid, resigned his position after defending his wife from drunken local policemen, who were rampaging in the ghetto. He then bribed the Germans to send him to join the group working in the forest, to avoid expected retribution from the local police. Yudel Weinstein succeeded him as head of the Judenrat. The workers in the forest and others managed to smuggle some food into the ghetto, which they acquired by barter with local farmers. By May 1942, most of the ghetto inhabitants—men, women, and children over 12—were working daily outside the ghetto, and a number prepared hiding places in the forest or even fled from the ghetto. At the end of May 1942, 198 Jews were registered as living in the Worniany ghetto.[4]

In August 1942, the remaining Jews in Worniany were transferred to the Michaliszki ghetto. Then in March 1943, in turn they were transferred with the other Jews in Michaliszki to the Wilno ghetto.[5] In Wilno, the Jews deemed unfit for work were separated from those who were physically fit and were shot in Ponary, while the Jews judged fit for work were sent to various labor camps. About 10 Jews from Worniany, mainly from among the latter group, managed to survive the war. The priest in Worniany, Janas Sielewicz, assisted a number of Jews of the region by organizing hideouts for them in the surrounding villages. He was named as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem.[6]

SOURCES The main published source on the fate of the Jewish community of Worniany during the Holocaust is "Worniany," in Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 8, *Vilna*, *Bialystok*, *Nowogrodek* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp. 307–309.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-89-11); LCVA (e.g., R 743-2-5525); NARB (845-1-63); VHF (# 1675, 42723, 42811, 45647); and YVA (e.g., M-1/Q/110).

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 42723, testimony of Malka Wainsztain.
2. A. Mal'dis, "Velikolepnye semerki," *Sovetskaia Belorussiia* (Minsk), September 30, 2008.
3. VHF, # 45647, testimony of Sarah Resnick.
4. Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), p. 640.
5. GARF, 7021-89-11, p. 33. This file (pp. 14–19) contains a list of the names of 169 Jews.
6. Guzenberg et al., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Švenčionys Regions*, pp. 113–114.

YLAKIAI

Pre-1940: Ylakiai (Yiddish: Yelok), village, Mažeikiai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Mažeikiai/Mazheikiai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Illoken, Kreis Moscheiken, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Ylakiai, Skuodas rajonas, Klaipeda apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Ylakiai is located 281 kilometers (175 miles) northwest of Wilno. According to the 1923 census, there were 409 Jews (41 percent of the total population) living in the village. By mid-1941, emigration—particularly in the 1920s and 1930s—had somewhat reduced the number.

German armed forces occupied Ylakiai on June 26, 1941. Immediately, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration (district head: Vaitkus) and a police force (chief of the police: Strikaitis) that began persecuting the Jews. All the Jewish men were arrested at once and placed in the synagogue, which according to the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission (ChGK) report was declared to be a "ghetto" for the Jews.[1] Among the Lithuanian perpetrators, one was the owner of a restaurant who hacked off the beards of elderly Jews with a knife.

The Jews remained in this synagogue under the guard of armed Lithuanians for about 10 days. On the evening of July 6, 1941, the Jewish males were escorted out of the synagogue to the Jewish cemetery and were shot there with submachine guns and rifles. Then the women and children were herded into the synagogue, and during the night of July 6, 1941, they also were shot at the Jewish cemetery to the southwest of the village.[2]

After the liberation of the village in 1944, three graves were found in the Jewish cemetery. One contained about 300 corpses of men, women, and children; the second held about 100 corpses; and in the third, there were 3 corpses.[3]

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Ylakiai during the Holocaust can be found in "Ylakiai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 330–332.

Documentation on the persecution and murder of the Jews of Ylakiai can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-423); LCVA; USHMM (RG-22.002M, reel 19); and YVA.

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trans. Kathleen Luft

NOTES

1. GARF, 7021-94-423, pp. 28–35.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 27 and reverse.

ŽAGARĖ

Pre-1940: Žagarė (Yiddish: Zhager), town, Šiauliai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Žagarė/Zhagare, Shauliai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Schagarren, Kreis Schaulen, Gebiet Schaulen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen: post-1991: Žagarė, Joniškis rajonas, Šiauliai apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Žagarė is situated 64 kilometers (40 miles) north of Šiauliai, on the border with Latvia. In 1923, there were 1,928 Jews living in Žagarė (40 percent of the town's population).

On June 28, 1941, during the first week of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, members of the LAF (Lithuanian Activist Front) in Žagarė set up a committee of 4 people, of whom Stanislovas Kačkys was the chairman. (This is probably the person known to Jewish survivors as "Statkus," a Lithuanian from Žagarė who previously had good relations with the Jews.)[1] The committee decided to organize an armed squad to maintain order. Approximately 30 to 50 men, mostly former Šaulys (nationalist paramilitaries) and policemen, joined the squad. They were armed with rifles and pistols. On June 29, 1941, the Red Army and most of the remaining Soviet officials abandoned Žagarė. The Žagarė Activists arrested those supporters of the Soviets who remained behind. On the order of the Activists' headquarters, 8 of the arrested people, including the Jews Ayzenshtat and Lazerson, were shot. The Žagarė police chief, Samaitis, directed the Aktion.[2]

Persecution measures against the Jews started once the supporters of the Soviets had been dealt with. The LAF Headquarters imposed a "contribution" of 30,000 rubles on the local Jews.[3] On July 25, 1941, Silvestras Rakštys, the mayor of Žagarė, repeated proclamation No. 6 issued by the head of the Šiauliai district and issued an order prohibiting those Jews who had fled Žagarė from returning to their homes. After July 26, various other restrictions took effect.

All the Jews of Žagarė were ordered to move to a specifically designated neighborhood, or ghetto, at their own expense. This had to be accomplished between July 26 and August 2.[4] In late July, the Activists made a list of the Jews who remained and began to transfer them to the ghetto. The Jews who lived in nearby shtetls were also moved into the Žagarė ghetto. The area chosen for the ghetto adjoined the marketplace, and it included Daukanto, Vilniaus, Maluno, Pakalnio, and Gedimino Streets. Non-Jewish residents of these streets were moved to other neighborhoods. According to the Jewish survivor Yaakob Kagan, the ghetto straddled the Švėtė River, which ran through town.[5]

On August 22, the chief of the Šiauliai district, Jonas Noreika, informed the local authorities and mayors of the smaller towns in the district that, according to the order of the Šiauliai Gebietskommissar, all the district's Jews and half-Jews had to move to Žagarė by August 29.[6] Therefore, Jews began to be transferred from Šiauliai, Joniškis, Kuršenai, Žeimelis, and other localities. On August 25, the mayor of Žagarė informed the Šiauliai district chief that the ghetto occupied an area of 12,135 square meters (14,513 square yards) and had a population of 715 Jews.[7] By August 29, 949 Jews from other localities in the Šiauliai district had been moved to Žagarė.[8] On September 20, 2,402 Jews and 3,164 non-Jews resided in Žagarė. Lithuanian families were given 250 grams (8.8 ounces) of butter each week per person, while Jews received only 100 grams (3.5 ounces).[9] The ghetto of Žagarė was fenced off with barbed wire and guarded by local Activists and police. Jews were forced to perform various jobs, mainly cutting wood in the forests and chopping logs. Some Jews also collected furniture and household goods from Jewish homes for the Germans. It does not appear that the Žagarė ghetto had its own internal administration, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) or a Jewish Police, as existed in Lithuania's larger ghettos.[10] The ghetto was too short-lived for such institutions. Local rabbis exercised spiritual authority over the ghetto inmates. It is known that Yisrael Reif, the rabbi of Žagarė, was murdered with other Žagarė Jews on October 2, 1941.[11]

In late August 1941, the Žagarė Activists and policemen, headed by police chief Juozas Krutulis, arrested scores of Jewish men in the synagogue and shot them in the Jewish cemetery. Prior to their murder, the Jews were forced to remove their clothing, which the murderers stole. Then they were taken to the pits in groups of 4. The perpetrators, approximately 20 men, were paid 20 to 30 rubles each.[12] The Soviet Extraordinary State Commission (ChGK) for the investigation of Nazi crimes exhumed the grave site in 1944 and discovered the corpses of 38 men.[13] The German commandant of Žagarė, Manteuffel, constantly urged local Activists and policemen to be more energetic in tracking down and eliminating Soviet officials, as well as Jews.[14]

In the last days of September 1941, several local Lithuanians were driven to the town park (formerly Naryshkin Park), where they dug an L-shaped ditch, 120 meters long, 2 to 3 meters wide, and 2 meters deep (394 by 6.6 to 9.8 by 6.6 feet). On the morning of October 2, the Jews from the Žagarė ghetto were ordered to gather in the market square. Commander Manteuffel addressed the crowd in German, assuring them that they would be transported to another location, where they would all be given work to do. The Jewish men, women, children, and elderly people were made to form separate lines. In response to the German's whistle, the Activists and policemen from Žagarė and other towns began to surround the square. Panic arose among the Jews. Some tried to escape. The guards responded by shooting at the groups of prisoners and beating them. Scores of dead and wounded people were left on the square. The survivors were forced to lie on the ground until several trucks arrived. The Jews were then transported to the Naryshkin Park.[15] Money, jewelry, and other valuables were seized from the Jews as they marched to the murder site. At the ditch, the Jews were made to remove everything except their underclothes before lying down in the pit to be shot. The murderers were men from Lieutenant R. Kolokša's Self-Defense unit, which had arrived from Šiauliai, and partisans (Activists) of the Linkuva squad. The Žagarė Activists guarded the ghetto territory and led the victims to their deaths. Several German SS men who had arrived from Šiauliai supervised the killings and also participated in them.

The Aktion continued until very late at night. On the following day, another group of Jews, who had been discovered and seized, were brought to the park and murdered in the same ditch. The report issued by Chief of the German Security Police and SD in Lithuania, SS-Standartenführer Karl Jäger, stated that on October 2, 1941, 2,236 Jews (633 men, 1,107 women, and 496 children) were killed in Žagarė.[16] During the

panic that arose on the market square before the executions, 150 Jews were killed, and 7 partisans, who guarded them, were wounded. The ChGK, which examined the mass grave in 1944, found 2,402 corpses (530 men, 1,223 women, 625 children, and 24 infants).[17] The Žagarė ghetto was completely destroyed. The Germans took the Jewish valuables back to Šiauliai.[18]

The Žagarė ghetto existed for only two months, from August until October 2, 1941. Its inmates were Jews from Žagarė and from other shtetls in the Šiauliai region. For this reason, the number of victims imprisoned and murdered in Žagarė exceeded the Jewish population of the town at the time of the German invasion. In the annihilation of the Žagarė ghetto, an active role was played by Lithuanian police forces (Šiauliai Police Battalion 14, the Activists, and policemen from Žagarė, Linkuva, and Užventis).

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jews of Žagarė during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Arūnas Bubnys, "The Fate of Jews in Šiauliai and the Šiauliai Region," in Irena Guzenberg and Jevgenija Sedova, eds., *The Siauliai Ghetto: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2002), pp. 228–259, here pp. 254–258; and Rose Zwi, *Last Walk in Naryshkin Park* (North Melbourne, Victoria: Spinifex, 1997).

Documentation regarding the persecution and murder of the Jews of Žagarė can be found in the following archives: BA-BL (R 58/220); LCVA; LYA (Case 45006/3; Case 6458/3; K 1-8-128; K 1-46-1135; K 1-46-1282); RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM (RG-11.001M, reel 183); and YVA (e.g., O-33/284, Berta Taubman; O-33/1261, Yaakob Kagan; M-9/15[6]).

Arūnas Bubnys

NOTES

1. See YVA, O-33/1261 and M-9/15(6).
2. LYA, Penal Case No. 45006/3, pp. 49–53, interview of Kačkys, August 15, 1958. The first names of Ayzenshtat, Lazerson, and Samaitis are not given in the document.
3. Ibid., K 1-8-128, p. 269, interview of J. Janickis, September 13, 1944.
4. Order issued by the mayor of Žagarė, July 25, 1941, ibid., Penal Case No. 6458/3, p. 48.
5. An excerpt from the interview with A. Plekavičius, October 17, 1944, ibid., K-1-8-128, p. 272; Zwi, *Last Walk in Naryshkin Park*, p. 102, citing the testimony of Yaakob Kagan, YVA, O-33/1261.
6. B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 226–227.
7. Žagarė mayor's telephone message to the Šiauliai District Chief, August 25, 1941, LYA, Penal Case No. 6458/3, p. 60.
8. Žagarė mayor's telephone message to the Šiauliai Region Chief, August 29, 1941, ibid., p. 62.
9. Žagarė mayor's official letter to the Žagarė dairy milk processing society, September 20, 1941, ibid., p. 70.
10. Zwi, *Last Walk in Naryshkin Park*, p. 103, citing the testimony of Yaakob Kagan, YVA, O-33/1261.
11. *Zagare, Lithuania: Crime and Punishment*, no. 6 (January 1999): 99.
12. Excerpt from interview with A. Plekavičius, October 15, 1944, LYA, K 1-8-128, pp. 278–279, 284.
13. ChGK report on Nazi Crimes in Žagarė, September 24, 1944, ibid., K 1-46-1135, p. 173.
14. Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje*, vol. 2, p. 265.
15. Interview with J. Kukšas, November 11, 1946, LYA, Penal Case No. 6458/3, pp. 36–37; Soviet Lithuania's KGB memorandum on the mass murders in Žagarė and Radviliškis, April 3, 1973, K 1-46-1282, p. 2. There is a memorial to the Jewish victims located in Naryshkin Park. See also BA-BL, R 58/220, Ereignismeldung UdSSR Nr. 155, January 14, 1942.
16. "Gesamtaufstellung der im Bereich des Ek 3 bis zum 1. Dezember 1941 durchgeführten Exekutionen," December 1, 1941, RGVA, 500-1-25, pp. 109–117 (copy available at USHMM, RG-11.001M, reel 183).
17. B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje*, vol. 1 (1965), p. 135; conclusion of the Forensic Medical Committee of Experts, LYA, K 1-46-1282, p. 36.
18. Soviet Lithuania's KGB memorandum on the mass murders in Žagarė and Radviliškis, April 3, 1973, LYA, K 1-46-1282, pp. 3, 4.

ZAPYŠKIS

Pre-1940: Zapyškis (Yiddish: Sapizishok), village, Kaunas apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Zapyškis/Zapishkis, Kaunas uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Sapieschyschken, Kreis Kauen, Gebiet Kauen-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Zapyškis, Kaunas rajonas and apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Zapyškis is located 14 kilometers (9 miles) west of Kaunas. According to the 1923 census, there were 293 Jews living in the village, 50 percent of the total population.

German armed forces occupied Zapyškis on around June 24, 1941. Immediately afterwards, Lithuanian nationalists started to rob the Jews on a massive scale. A local administration and police force were established, which implemented a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews had to wear the Star of David and were required to perform various kinds of forced labor.

On August 7, 1941, the Kaunas district governor issued an order calling for the resettlement of Jews into ghettos by August 15.[1] That same day, all the Jews of Zapyškis were evicted from their homes and moved into a ghetto. According to the research of Christoph Dieckmann, 38 Jews (consisting mainly of women) from the villages of Paežerėliai and Jankai were also concentrated in Zapyškis during August. In mid-August, Lithuanian policemen removed 40 young men from the ghetto and murdered them near the Jewish cemetery.

On September 4, 1941, the remnants of the Jewish community were taken to a site near the village of Dievogala, 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) southeast of Zapyškis, where they were all murdered and buried in a mass grave. According to the report of Karl Jäger, who was in charge of Einsatzkommando 3, 47 men, 118 women, and 13 children (178 people in total) were murdered there.[2]

SOURCES Information about the ghetto in Zapyškis can be found in the following publications: Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 438–439; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1489; B. Baranauskas and E. Rozauskas, eds., *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje (1941–1944): Dokumentu rinkinys*, vol. 2 (Vilnius: Leidykla "Mintis," 1973), pp. 290–291; and Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.5.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: LCVA (e.g., R 683-2-2) and RGVA (500-1-25).

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NOTES

1. Baranauskas and Rozauskas, *Masinės žudynes Lietuvoje* vol. 2, pp. 290–291.
2. RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 106, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941.

ŽIEŽMARIAI

Pre-1939: Žiežmariai (Yiddish: Zhezmir), town, Trakai apskritis, Lithuania; 1940–1941: Žiežmariai/Zhezhmariai, Trakai uezd, Lithuanian SSR; 1941–1944: Schischmaren, Kreis Traken, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Žiežmariai, Kaišiadorys rajonas, Kaunas apskritis, Republic of Lithuania

Žiežmariai is located 37 kilometers (23 miles) east-southeast of Kaunas. In 1937, there were 981 Jews in the town.

German armed forces occupied Žiežmariai on June 24, 1941. Immediately thereafter, Lithuanian nationalists formed a local administration and a police force. Teofilis Kelbauskas was appointed chief of police. These organs soon introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were required to wear the Star of David on their clothing, and they were forbidden to appear in public places, to buy food, or to associate in any way with non-Jewish Lithuanians. Individual Jews were arrested and shot, including three members of the Ilionsky family. Jewish homes were searched and valuables confiscated.[1]

In the second half of July 1941, the head of Kreis Traken, Petras Mačinskas, issued orders for Jews to be registered, for Jewish Councils to be established, and for the Jews of the Kreis to be isolated in ghettos. The aim was to prevent Jews from moving about freely from village to village. The local authorities were instructed to make suggestions for places where the Jews could be isolated.[2]

In response to these instructions, on August 5, 1941, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was appointed, which was headed by Benjaminas Benesevičius. His deputy was Dovidas Stražas, and there were five other members. In early August 1941, some of the able-bodied Jewish men were sent to the labor camp in Pravieniškes to cut peat.[3]

Then on August 16, 1941, 193 Jewish men over the age of 14 and 89 Jewish women were arrested "for collaboration with the Soviet authorities and for communist activities." These people were sent to Kaišiadorys and later shot along with the local Jews there. The remaining Jewish women, children, and elderly people were resettled into a synagogue, which in effect became a ghetto for them. The ghetto existed for almost two weeks, during which the Jews received very little food and water.[4]

At the end of August 1941, the Germans and their Lithuanian collaborators liquidated the ghetto in Žiežmariai. The Lithuanian police rounded up and shot all the remaining Jews in the Strošiūnai Forest. In total, 784 persons were executed: 20 men, 567 women, and 197 children.[5] Among the victims were 706 Jews from Žiežmariai and 78 Jews from Rumšiškes.[6]

On September 1, 1941, the head of Kreis Traken reported to the Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land that no Jews were living in Žiežmariai, as they had all been murdered.[7]

Several local inhabitants testified, more than 50 years later, regarding certain details of the murders. The women and children were forced to undress before being escorted out of town by armed Lithuanians. The pit had been prepared beforehand by local inhabitants. People in the town heard the shots in the distance. After the pit was filled in, the earth was observed to be moving. Jewish clothing was stored in the synagogue and sold to local people cheaply in the days after the massacre.[8]

In the summer of 1942, the Germans established a forced labor camp for Jews in Žiežmariai. Hundreds of Jews were transferred there from the smaller ghettos (including the ghettos of Holszany and Smorgonie) in Gebiet Wilna-Land, which had previously been part of Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien.[9]

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews of Žiežmariai can be found in the following publications: "Ziezmariai," in Dov Levin and Yosef Rosin, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), pp. 286–288; Neringa Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydų muziejus, 2002), pp. 16–30; and Christoph Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Freiburg, 2002), section F.1.2.6.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-94-431); LCVA (R 1534-1-190; R 617-1-24; R 683-2-2); RGVA (500-1-25); USHMM (RG-50.473*0105-0108); and VHF (e.g., # 28552 and 45832, regarding the labor camp).

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NOTES

1. Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, pp. 286–288.
2. LCVA, R 617-1-24, pp. 535–536, protocol of a meeting organized by Kreischef Traken, July 23, 1941, as cited by

Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," section F.1.2.6; Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje*, pp. 100–101.

3. Dieckmann, "Deutsche Besatzungspolitik," section F.1.2.6. Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, note that young women were sent to Pravieniškes at this time, while a group of young men were sent to another camp at Palemonos.

4. Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje*, pp. 16–30.

5. RGVA, 500-1-25, report of Einsatzkommando 3, December 1, 1941. This source dates the shooting on August 29, 1941. According to Levin and Rosin, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Lithuania*, the few remaining men were shot on August 27 and the women and children on August 28, 1941.

6. LCVA, R 1534-1-190, p. 3, report of the head of Rumšiškės district to the head of Kaunas region, August 25, 1941.

7. Report of the head of Kreis Traken to Gebietskommissar Wilna-Land, September 1, 1941, published in Latvytė-Gustaitienė, *Holokaustas Trakų apskrityje*, p. 109.

8. USHMM, RG-50.473*0105-0108. These witnesses, however, refer to the subsequent labor camp as the "ghetto."

9. VHF, # 28552, testimony of Selma Dunn; # 45832, testimony of Nechama Schneider.

ŻUPRANY

Pre-1939: Żuprany (Yiddish: Zupran), village, Wilno województwo, Poland; 1939–1941: Zhuprany, Oshmiany raion, Vileika oblast', Belorussian SSR; 1941–1944: Zuprany, initially Rayon Aschmena, Gebiet Wilejka, Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien, then after April 1, 1942, Gebiet Wilna-Land, Generalkommissariat Litauen; post-1991: Zhuprany, Ashmiany raen, Hrodna voblasts', Republic of Belarus

Żuprany is located 11 kilometers (7 miles) east-northeast of Oszmiana. According to the 1897 census, there were 415 Jews living in Żuprany (50.3 percent of the total population). On the eve of World War II, there were about 30 Jewish families living in the village.

German armed forces occupied the village on June 26, 1941. At the time of their arrival, Jewish homes were looted by other local inhabitants. In September 1941, authority was transferred to a German civil administration. Żuprany at first was part of Gebiet Wilejka in Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien. From April 1, 1942, to the end of the occupation (early July 1944), Żuprany was included in Gebiet Wilna-Land, within Generalkommissariat Litauen.

In the summer and fall of 1941, a series of anti-Jewish measures were implemented in Żuprany, including the marking of Jews with the Star of David and Jewish homes with a *J*. Jews were required to perform forced labor. In the late summer or fall of 1941, the Jews of the village were moved into a ghetto. According to survivors, it consisted of about three to five houses that were fenced in on the side of the village around the synagogue. One recalls also that most of the adult Jewish men were shot in the woods around the time the ghetto was established.[1]

The remaining able-bodied Jews in the ghetto went out to work daily, providing services such as cooking for the Germans, repairing roads, and cutting wood. They were guarded by local policemen of Polish ethnicity. The ghetto was very overcrowded, with six to seven families sharing a single house; and some people lived in the synagogue, which prevented people from worshipping. Jews were able to barter personal possessions for food with the local population.[2]

At the end of May 1942, there were reportedly 128 Jews in the Żuprany ghetto.[3] The ghetto was liquidated in the fall of 1942 when all the Jews were resettled to the Oszmiana ghetto. Subsequently they shared the fate of the other Jews concentrated in that ghetto.

SOURCES Information about the persecution and murder of the Jews of Żuprany can be found in the following publications: M. Gelbart, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kahilat Oshmana* (Tel Aviv: Oshmaner Organization in Israel and Oshmaner Society in the USA, 1969); and "Zhuprany," in *Rossiiskaia evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Rossiiskaia akademiia estestvennykh nauk, Nauchnyi fond "Evreiskaia Entsiklopediia," "Epos," 2000), p. 454.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Żuprany during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: GARF (7021-89-12); LCVA; VHF (# 1921, 4085); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 1921, testimony of Sam Porec; # 4085, testimony of Larry Kushlin, who mentions the murder of the Jewish men.

2. Ibid., # 1921; # 4085.

3. Irena Guzenberg et al., eds., *The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Švenčionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners, 1942* (Vilnius: Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydu muziejus, 2009), p. 635.

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