

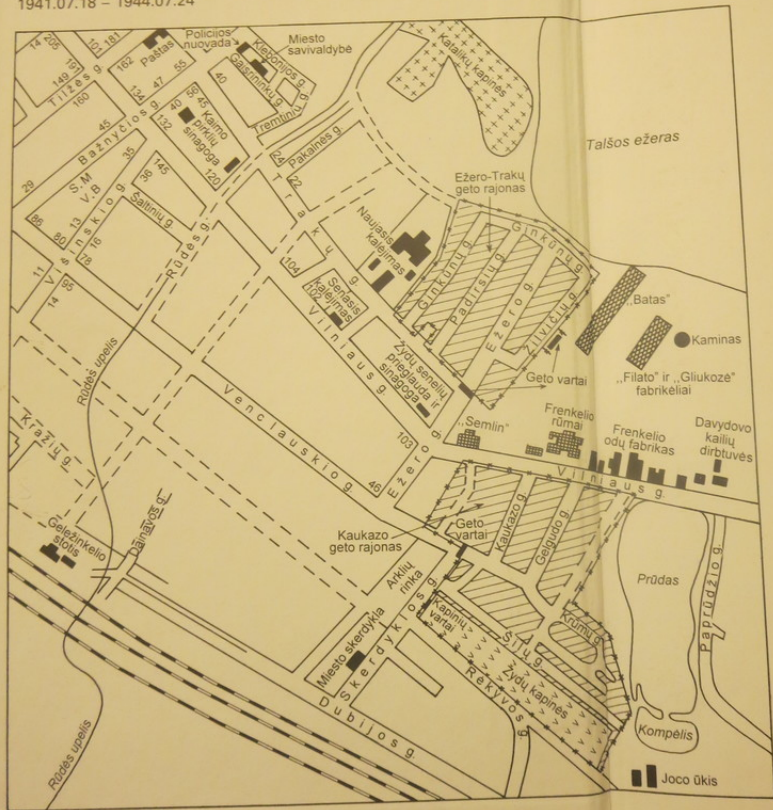
# Šiaulių getas: kalinių sąrašai 1942

Шяуляйское гетто: списки узников

The Šiauliai Ghetto: Lists  
of Prisoners



ŠIAULIŲ MIESTO ŽYDŲ GETO PLANAS  
1941.07.18 – 1944.07.24



Almanacho „Žydų muziejus“ priedas  
Приложение к альманаху «Еврейский музей»  
Supplement to the almanac "The Jewish Museum"

Šiaulių getas: kalinių sąrašai

Шяуляйское гетто: списки узников

The Šiauliai Ghetto: Lists of Prisoners

1942



VILNIUS

Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydų muziejus  
2002

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03/13044

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Ižangos žodis ....

Leiba Lipšicas. Ši

Arūnas Bubnys. Ši

1941 metai, Šiauli

Kaukazo geto kal

Ežero gatvė .....

Gelgudo gatvė .....

Kaukazo gatvė .....

Krūmų gatvė .....

Šilų gatvė .....

Venclauskio gatvė .....

Vilniaus gatvė .....

Ežero-Trakų geto

Žydų, buvusių už

Jevgenija Sedova.

Geto kalinių pav

Bendras Šiauliu

surašymo duome

Darboviečių pav

Dažniausiai vart

Pavardžių rodyk

Вступление .....

Лейба Липшиц

Арунас Бубнис.

1941 год, Шяу

Списки узник

Улица Эжяро .

Улица Гялгудо

Улица Кауказо

Улица Круму .

Улица Шилу .

Улица Вяндла

Улица Вильня

Списки узник

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Santrumpos ir sutartiniai ženklai  
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Abbreviations and Symbols

KIXFM	– Kauno IX forto muziejus / Каунасский музей IX форта / The Museum of the Kaunas Ninth Fort.
LCVA	– Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas / Литовский центральный государственный архив / Central State Archives of Lithuania.
LYA	– Lietuvos ypatingasis archyvas / Литовский особый архив / Special Archives of Lithuania.
LVGA	– Lietuvos vaizdo ir garso archyvas / Литовский архив изобразительных и звуковых документов / The Lithuanian archives of Image and Sound.
MAB RS	– Lietuvos mokslų akademijos bibliotekos rankraščių skyrius / Отдел рукописей библиотеки Академии наук Литвы / Library of Academy of Sciences Manuscript Department.
ŠAA	– Šiaulių apskrities archyvas / Шяуляйский уездный архив / Šiauliai Regional Archives.
ŠAM	– Šiaulių „Aušros“ muziejus / Шяуляйский музей «Аушра» / The Šiauliai “Aušra” museum.
ŠAŽB	– Šiaulių apskrities žydų bendruomenė / Еврейская община Шяуляйского уезда / The Jewish Community of the Šiauliai Region.
VŽM	– Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydų muziejus / Государственный еврейский музей им. Виленского Гаона / The Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum.
F., f.	– fondas / фонд / stock.
Ap., ap.	– aprašas / опись / inventory.
B., b.	– byla / дело / file.
L., l.	– bylos lapas / лист дела / file sheet.
a. p.	– lapo antroji pusė / вторая сторона листа / reverse side of sheet.
T., t.	– tomas / том / volume.
D., d.	– dalis / часть / part.
*	– sąrašuose – įvairuojanti vienos šeimos pavardžių rašyba / в списках – неодинаковая запись фамилий членов одной и той же семьи / the lists give various spelling versions of the same family surname.
**	– sąrašuose – neigiamas atsakymas, jei nemoka lietuvių kalbos / в списках – отрицательный ответ, если не владеет литовским языком / on the lists – the negative answer if he or she does not speak Lithuanian.

## Preface

The Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum continues to publish unique documents, which began with the two volumes of the Vilna ghetto prisoner lists\*.

In this book, are published the lists of the Šiauliai ghetto inmates, according to the data of the general population census, carried out in Lithuania in May 1942. The victims of the mass murders of 1941 were not included in the census. A special archaeological commentary refers to the process the lists underwent while being prepared for publication. The book is illustrated with photographs from the collections of various Lithuanian museums and private archives, and other photographs made precisely for this publication.

Consolidated tables of the number of inmates for each street and for the entire ghetto, an alphabetical name list, a dictionary of occupations and places of work of ghetto prisoners which are mentioned in the lists and the transcripts of abbreviations denoting workplaces have also been prepared.

In addition to the census lists, two articles, with a detailed description of the Šiauliai ghetto and the Holocaust in the Šiauliai Region, have been prepared for this publication. The author of the first article is a former prisoner of the Šiauliai ghetto. His research was based on his own recollections and the memoirs and chronicles of those who survived the Nazi horrors. He also used the information on the history of the Šiauliai ghetto he had been scrupulously collecting for many years.

The second article describes the same events as seen by a professional historian. The latter's study departs from archival documents, such as communications of local Lithuanian and Nazi authorities, examination records of Holocaust perpetrators or witnesses, etc. Not everything coincides in the two articles. The sources used by the authors sometimes give conflicting data for the same facts. Not many wartime documents have reached us. Living witnesses are very few. The history of the Šiauliai ghetto still awaits its researcher. We hope this publication will assist in the study of one of the most tragic pages in the history of Lithuanian Jews.

Compiling authors

\* Žydų muziejus. The Jewish Museum. Vilniaus getas: kalinių sąrašai. Vilnius Ghetto: Lists of Prisoners. Vilnius, Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydų muziejus, v. 1 – 1996; v. 2 – 1998.

Leiba Lipšicas

Šiaulių geto

1941 m. lie

1944 m. lie

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jos direkt  
mė 1930  
Šiauliu  
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lietuvių  
baigiau,  
Lietuva  
1941  
buvo į



32.

Areštuoti žydų bendruomenės nariai – įkaitai Šiaulių kalėjimo kieme. Iš kairės į dešinę: advokatas Izraelis Abramavičius; nežinomas asmuo; parduotuvės savininkas Simonas Rozenbergas; nežinomas asmuo; vyriausiasis Šiaulių rabinas Aronas Bakštas; juvelyrinės parduotuvės savininkas Kadišas Šapira; muitinės ekspeditorius Elias Penas; rabinų teismo narys Abromas Ickich Nochumanskis; pabėgėlis iš Lenkijos.

Арестованные члены еврейской общины – заложники во дворе Шяуляйской тюрьмы. Слева направо: адвокат Израиль Абрамович; неизвестный; владелец магазина Симон Розенберг; неизвестный; главный раввин г. Шяуляй Арон Бакшт; владелец ювелирного магазина Кадиш Шапиро; таможенный инспектор Элия Пен; член раввинского суда Абрам-Ицик Нохуманский; беженец из Польши.

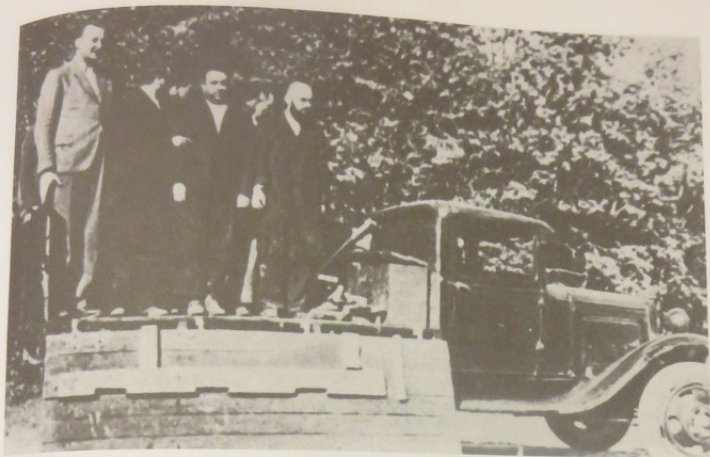
Members of the Jewish Community in the Šiauliai jail courtyard, arrested as hostages. Left to right: lawyer Israel Abramovitch; unknown; shop owner Simon Rosenberg; unknown; Šiauliai Chief Rabbi Aron Baksht; jewelry shop owner Kadish Shapiro; customs official Elijah Pen; member of the Rabbinical court Abraham Itzik Nochumanski; a refugee from Poland.

33.

34.

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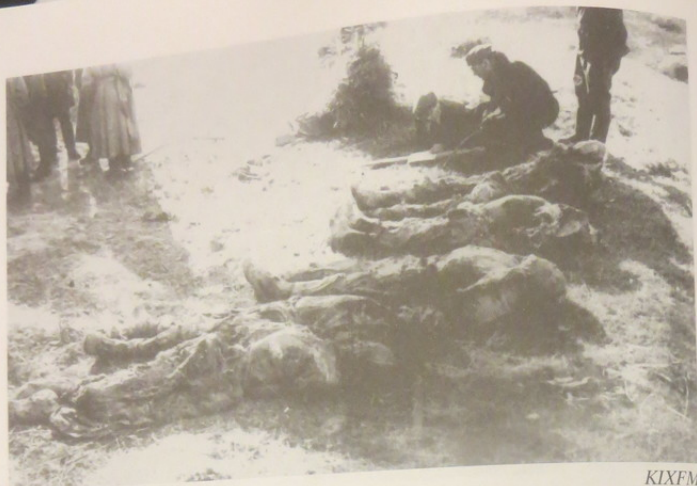


34.

Tie patys asmenys, sunkvežimiu atgabenti į mišką šalia Pročiūnų kaimo; jie varomi į sušaudymo vietą. 1941 m. SS karininko nuotraukos iš „Juodosios knygos“, jidiš k. Jeruzalė, 1980.

Они же привезены на грузовике в лес около деревни Прочюнай; их гонят к месту расстрела. Фотографии офицера СС из «Черной книги». Иерусалим, 1980 (идиш).

The same persons brought on trucks to the forest near the village of Pročiūnai, and led to the site of murder. An SS-man's photographs from the "Black book". Jerusalem, 1980, in Yiddish.



KIXFM

35.  
Palaiku ekshumavimas šalia  
Pročiūnų kaimo. 1944 m.

Эксгумация трупов около  
деревни Прочюнай. 1944 г.

Disinterment of corpses at the  
village of Pročiūnai. 1944.



36.  
LVGA

37, 38

Miš  
Zok  
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37, 38.



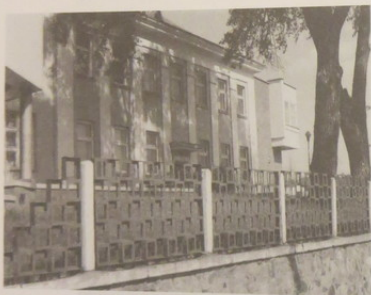
Miškas šalia Pročiūnų kaimo, Zoknių aerodromo teritorijoje, ir 1997 m. prie kelio šalia žudynių vietos pastatyta paminklinė lenta.

Лес близ деревни Прочюнай, на территории Зокняйского аэродрома, и памятная доска у дороги около места расстрелов, установленная в 1997 г.

Forest near the village of Pročiūnai, in the territory of the Zokniai airfield, and a memorial plaque placed by the road, near the site of murder in 1997.



The Jewish home for the elderly, 86 Vilniaus St., burned down at the end of the war. There was a synagogue on the upper storey. Jews were gathered here in 1941 before being murdered. 1944.



40.

Pastatas Vilniaus g. 88, pastatytas sudegintos Šiaulių žydų senelių prieglaudos vietoje. Sovietmečio laikais – Inžinierių rūmai, dabar – Šiaulių universiteto centriniai rūmai.

Здание по ул. Вильняус, 88, построено на месте сожженного еврейского дома престарелых. В советское время – Дом инженеров, сейчас – центральное здание Шяуляйского университета.

The former Engineer Center on 88 Vilniaus St., built during Soviet times on the site of the burned-down Jewish home for the elderly. Šiauliai University presently occupies this main building.



41.

Buvusi kaimo pirklių sinagoga Trakų g. 43. Į ją suvarydavo žydus prieš sušaudant. Pokario metais čia įsikūrė vienas „Verpsto“ trikotažo fabriko cechų.

Бывшая синагога сельских купцов, ул. Траку, 43. Здесь собирали евреев перед расстрелом. С послевоенных лет – один из цехов трикотажной фабрики «Вярпетас».

The former Village Merchants' Synagogue, 43 Trakų St. Jews were gathered here before being murdered. Since post-war times: one of the premises of the Verpstas knitting factory.

39.

ŠAM

Sudeginta Šiaulių žydų senelių prieglauda Vilniaus g. 86. Antrame pastato aukšte buvo sinagoga. 1941 m. čia būdavo suvaromi žydai prieš sušaudant. 1944 m.

Сожженный во время войны еврейский дом престарелых, ул. Вильняус, 86. На втором этаже здания находилась синагога. В 1941 г. здесь собирали евреев перед расстрелом. 1944 г.

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1937–  
here b

42.

SAM

Šiaulių choralinė sinagoga „Baltoji gulbė“, Varpo g. 35. 1937–1938 m. Čia buvo suvaromi žydai prieš sušaudant.

Швяльдийская хоральная синагога „Белый лебедь“, ул. Варпо, 35. 1937–1938 г. Здесь собирали евреев перед расстрелом.

The Šiauliai Choral Synagogue, “The White Swan”, 35 Varpo St. 1937–1938. Jews were gathered here before being murdered.



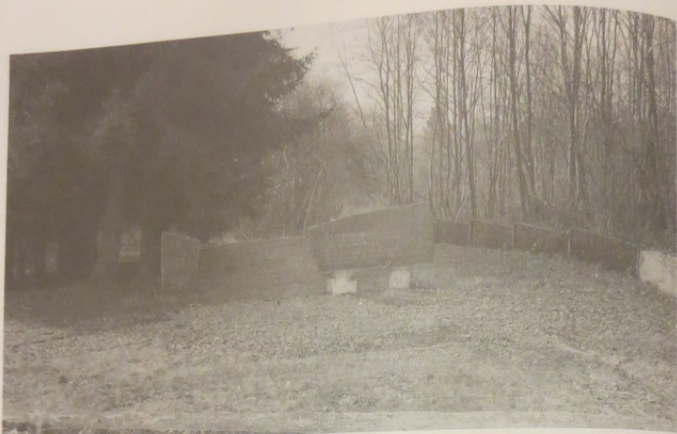
43.

LVGA

Buvusi sinagoga po karo. 1944 m. Sugriautas pastatas pokario laikais nebuvo atstatytas, o išardytas statybų reikmėms.

Бывшая синагога после войны. 1944 г. Разрушенное здание не восстанавливалось и было разобрано для строительных нужд.

The former synagogue after the war. 1944. The damaged building was disassembled for construction material.



44.

1941 m. rugsėjo 14 d. Bubių piliakalnio papėdėje (14 km nuo Šiaulių) buvo sušaudyti 500 žydų – vyrų, moterų, vaikų. Bendras kapavietės vaizdas.

14 сентября 1941 г. близ городища Бубяй (14 км от Шяуляй) были расстреляны 500 евреев – мужчин, женщин, детей. Общий вид места захоронения.

On Sept. 14, 1941, 500 Jewish men, women, and children were murdered near Bubių Hill, 14 kilometers from Šiauliai. A general view of the site.



45.

Paminklas, pastatytas 1993 m.

Памятник, установленный в 1993 г.

The memorial, erected in 1993.

46.

1987

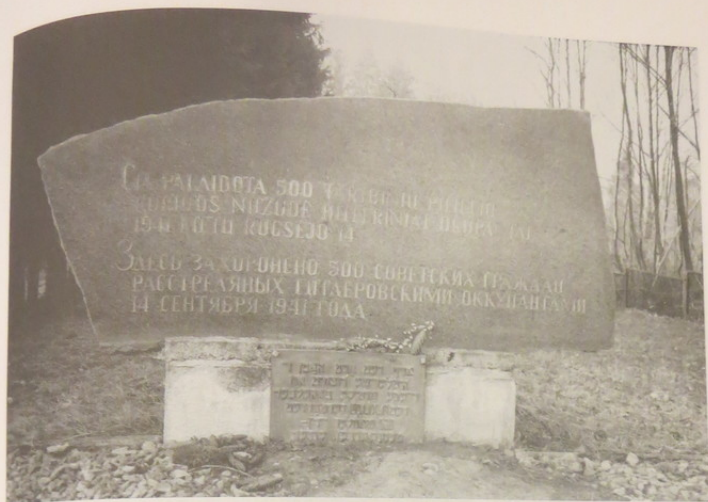
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Памя

и мем

Мемо

47.

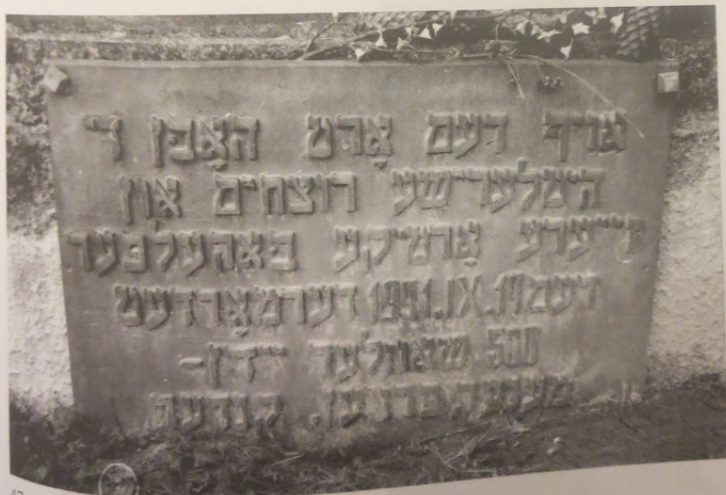


46.

1987 m. pastatytas paminklas 500 sušaudytiems „tarybiniams piliečiams“. 1993 m. prie šio paminklo pritvirtinta memorialinė lenta jidiš k.

Памятник 500 расстрелянным «советским гражданам», установленный в 1987 г., и мемориальная доска на идише, укрепленная на этом памятнике в 1993 г.

Memorial to 500 “Soviet citizens” (erected in 1987) and a plaque in Yiddish, added in 1993.



47.



48.

1941 m. rugsėjo 7–15 d. Gubernijos miške, prie Normančių eiguvos, buvo sušaudyta apie 1000 Šiaulių žydų – vyrų, moterų, vaikų. Šalia šio vienkiemio pasmerktuosius nurenginėjo prieš sušaudant.

С 7 по 15 сентября 1941 г. в лесу Губерния, близ лесничества Норманчяй, расстреляли около 1000 шяуляйских евреев – мужчин, женщин, детей. Близ этого хутора обреченных раздевали перед расстрелом.

On Sept. 7–15, 1941, approximately 1000 Jewish men, women, and children from Šiauliai were murdered in the Gubernija Forest, near Normančiai. The victims were forced to undress near this farmstead.



49.

Paminklas šalia kelio su rodykle į žudynių vietą.

Придорожный указатель места расстрела.

A sign pointing to the site of murder.

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ir jidiš  
Три с  
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(при  
Three  
plaqu  
1993)



50.

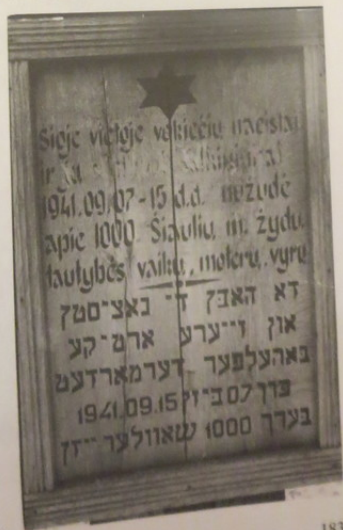


51.

Trys bendri kapai su paminkline lenta lietuvių  
ir jidiš kalbomis (sutvarkyta 1993 m.).

Три братские могилы с мемориальной  
доской на литовском языке и на идише  
(приведены в порядок в 1993 г.).

Three common graves with a memorial  
plaque in Lithuanian and Yiddish (placed in  
1993).



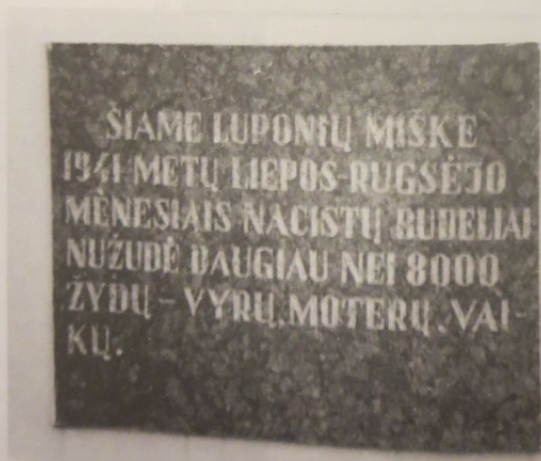
52.

183



53.

*G. Šubo archyvas*



54.

Luponių m.  
apie 8000  
geto kalin  
lenta (54)

В лесу Л.  
расстрел  
с надпис  
Около  
в 1999 г.  
в 1996 г.

Approxim  
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(53) fixe  
Paneriai,  
ghetto G  
Jews (54)

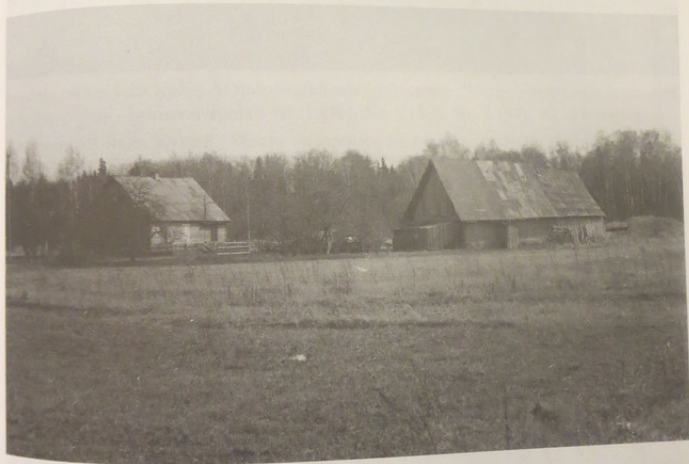
55.

Naratai  
Хутор  
The Na

Luponių miške šalia Kužių (15 km nuo Šiaulių) 1941 m. vasarą ir rudenį buvo sušaudyta apie 8000 žydų – vyrų, moterų, vaikų. Stela šalia kelio (53). Prie stelos stovi buvęs Šiaulių geto kalins Gidonas Šubas, aplankęs Lietuvą 1999 m. Stela pastatyta 1958 m.; paminklinė lenta (54) pritvirtinta prie stelos 1996 m.

В лесу Лупоний близ Кужяй (15 км от Шяуляй) летом и осенью 1941 года были расстреляны около 8000 евреев – мужчин, женщин, детей. Придорожная стела (53) с надписью: «Не допустим повторения трагедий IX форта, Панярай и Пирчюписа». Около стелы – бывший узник Шяуляйского гетто Гидон Шуб, посетивший Литву в 1999 г. Стела установлена в 1958 г., мемориальная доска (54) прикреплена к стеле в 1996 г.

Approximately 8000 Jewish men, women, and children were murdered in the Luponiai Forest, near Kužiai, 15 kilometers from Šiauliai, in the summer and autumn of 1941. A sign (53) fixed in 1958 with the inscription, "We shall not allow the tragedies of the 9<sup>th</sup> Fort, Paneriai, and Pirčiupis to repeat." Standing by the sign is former prisoner of the Šiauliai ghetto Gidon Shub, on his visit to Lithuania in 1999. The plaque referring to the murdered Jews (54) was fixed on the sign in 1996.



55.

Narataičių vienkiemis, šalia kurio pasmerktieji buvo nurenginėjami prieš sušaudant.

Хутор Наратайчий, близ которого обреченных раздевали перед расстрелом.

The Narataičiai farmstead, near which the victims were forced to undress before murder.



56.



57.

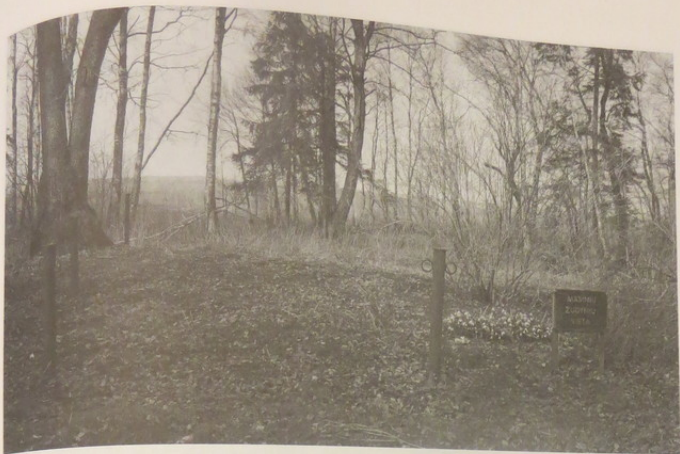


58.

Luponių p  
žydų kara  
Лес Лупо  
табличка  
установле  
The Lupo  
No. 4 and



59.

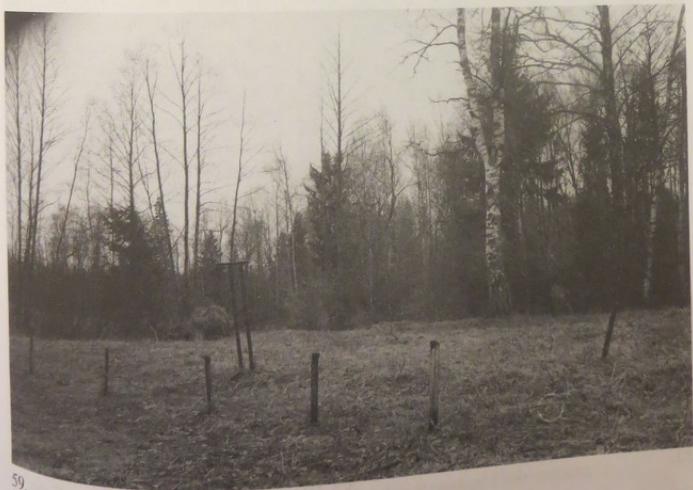


58.

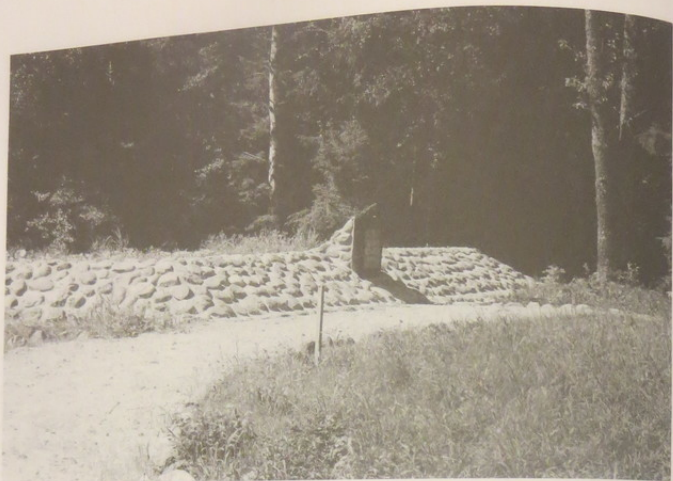
Luponių miškas šalia Kužių. Metalo lentelėmis (pastatytos 1958 m.) pažymėtos sušaudytų žydų kapavietės – buvusios duobės Nr. 1 (56), Nr. 2 (57), Nr. 3 (58), Nr. 4 ir 6 (59).

Лес Лупоний близ Кужий. Места захоронения расстрелянных евреев отмечены табличками – бывшие ямы № 1 (56), № 2 (57), № 3 (58), № 4 и 6 (59). Таблички установлены в 1958 г.

The Luponiai Forest, near Kužiai. Signs (1958) for pits No. 1 (56), No. 2 (57), No. 3 (58), No. 4 and 6 (59) at the sites of murder.



59.



60.

ŠAŽB



61.

ŠAŽB

Bendras kapas – duobė Nr. 5. Sutvarkyta Lietuvos Respublikos kultūros ministerijos kultūros vertybių apsaugos departamento lėšomis 2002 m.

Братская могила – яма № 5. Приведена в порядок на средства Департамента по охране культурных ценностей Министерства культуры Литвы в 2002 г.

A common grave, pit No. 5. This memorial site was restored with the expenses of the Department for Protection of the Cultural Heritage, of the Ministry of Culture of Lithuania in 2002.



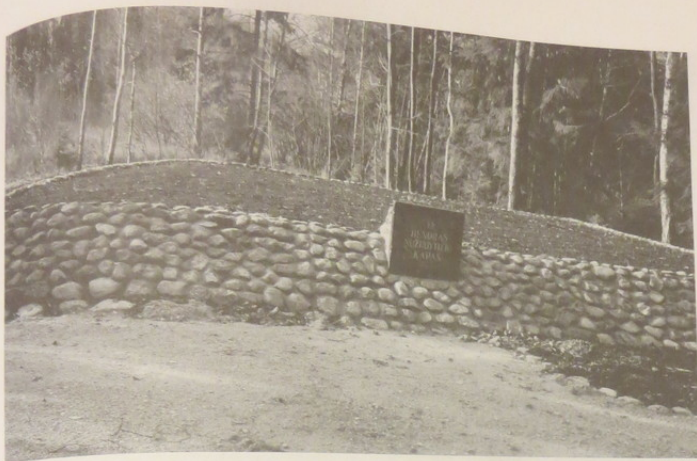
62.

Duobė N  
Яма №  
Pit No. 7



63.

Duobė  
Яма №  
Pit No.



62.

ŠAŽB

Duobė Nr. 7, sutvarkyta Šiaulių miesto savivadybės lėšomis.

Яма № 7, приведена в порядок на средства мэрии г. Шяуляй.

Pit No. 7, restored with the expenses of the Šiauliai City Government.



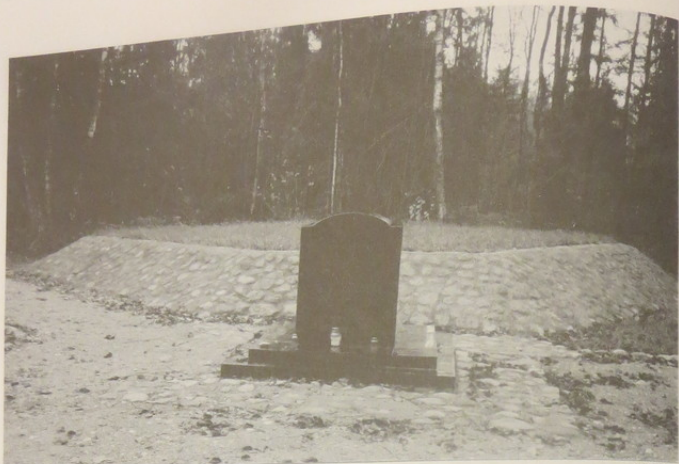
63.

ŠAŽB

Duobė Nr. 8, sutvarkyta Šiaulių rajono savivadybės lėšomis.

Яма № 8, приведена в порядок на средства мэрии Шяуляйского района.

Pit No. 8, restored with the expenses of the Šiauliai Regional Government.



64.

ŠAŽB

Bendri kapai (duobės Nr. 7, 8, 9), sutvarkyti 2001 m. minint žydų genocido Lietuvoje pradžios 60-meči. Duobė Nr. 9 (64) sutvarkyta ir paminklas (65) pastatytas JAV gyvenančio buvusio Šiaulių geto kalinio Natano (Nachmano) Kaco lėšomis.

Братские могилы (ямы № 7, 8, 9), приведены в порядок в 2001 г. к 60-летию начала геноцида евреев в Литве. Яма № 9 (64) приведена в порядок и памятник (65) установлен на средства бывшего узника Шяуляйского гетто Натана (Нахмана) Каца, ныне проживающего в США.

Common graves (pits No. 7, 8, 9) restored in 2001, for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of Holocaust in Lithuania. Pit No. 9 (64) restored and a memorial (65) erected with the expenses of Nathan (Nachman) Katz, former prisoner of the Šiauliai ghetto living in the US.



65.

ŠAŽB

66.

Bendri  
Братские  
приве  
The c

67.



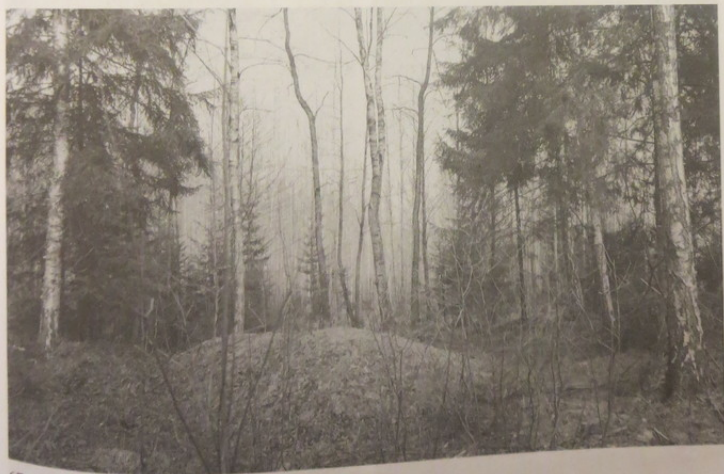


66.

Bendri kapai: duobė Nr. 10 – sutvarkyta 1998 m., duobė Nr. 11 – sutvarkymo metu.

Братские могилы: яма № 10 – приведена в порядок в 1998 г., яма № 11 – в процессе приведения в порядок.

The common graves: pit No. 10 – restored in 1998, pit No. 11 – reconstruction process.



67.



68.

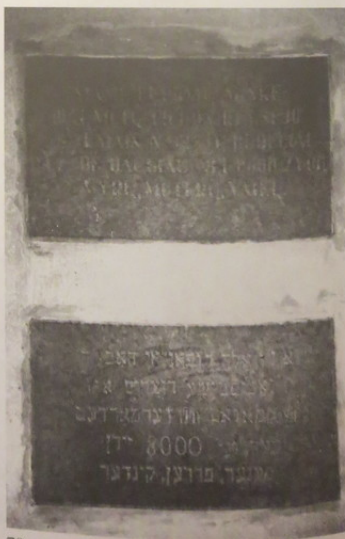
Žudynių vietos Luponių miške šalia Kužių bendras vaizdas. Paminklas pastatytas 1958 m., atnaujintas 1996 m.

Место расстрела в лесу Лупоний близ Кужий. Общий вид мемориала. Памятник установлен в 1958 г., обновлен в 1996 г.

The Luponiai Forest near Kužiai. A general view with the memorial (erected in 1958, renovated in 1996).



69.



70.



71.

*G. Šubo archyvas*

Paminklas žuvusiems Šiaulių žydams Cholono m. kapinėse. Po paminklu – žemė, atvežta iš Kužių. Izraelis, 1999 m.

Памятник погибшим шяуляйским евреям на кладбище в городе Холон. Под памятником захоронена земля, привезенная из Кужий. Израиль, 1999 г.

A memorial to Šiauliai victims of the Holocaust, the cemetery of Holon. Beneath the memorial there is some earth brought from Kužiai. Israel, 1999.



72.

Padarbų miškas šalia Kuršėnų. Paminklas 180 Kuršėnų vyrų žydų, sušaudytų 1941 m. liepos 21–22 d., žudynių vietoje pastatytas 1960 m.; lentos hebrajų ir jidiš kalbomis pritvirtintos 1993 m.

Лес Падарбое близ Куршенай. Памятник на месте расстрела 180 куршенских мужчин-евреев 21–22 июля 1941 г., установлен в 1960 г.; памятные доски на идише и иврите были установлены на памятнике в 1993 г.

The Padarbos Forest near Kuršėnai. Memorial (1960) to 180 Jewish men from Kuršėnai murdered there on July 21–22, 1941, with plaques in Hebrew and Yiddish added in 1993.

73.

74.

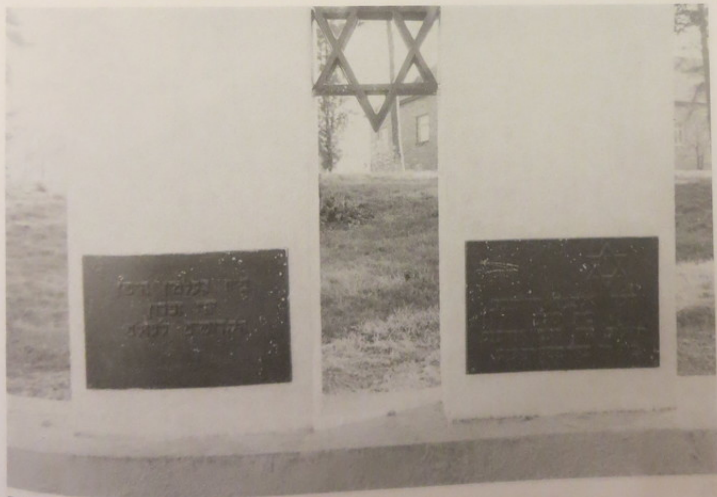


73.

Žydų kapinės Kuršėnuose beveik neišliko. 1991 m. teritorija sutvarkyta, pastatytas paminklas su užrašais jidiš ir hebrajų kalbomis. Prieš laiptus – paminklinis akmuo su užrašu lietuvių kalba.

От бывшего еврейского кладбища в Куршениной почти ничего не осталось. В 1991 г. территория была приведена в порядок; установлен памятник с надписями на идише и иврите. Перед ступенями – памятный камень с надписью на литовском языке.

Nearly nothing remains of what once was the Jewish cemetery of Kuršėnai. In 1991, the site was restored and a memorial was erected with inscriptions in Yiddish and Hebrew. At the steps there is a memorial stone with an inscription in Lithuanian.



74.



75.

Senosios žydų kapinės Gruzdžiuose, 20 km nuo Šiaulių.

Старое еврейское кладбище в Грудзжяй, в 20 км от Шяуляй.

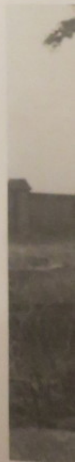
The old Jewish cemetery in Gruzdžiai, 20 kilometers from Šiauliai.



76.



77.



78.



77.



78.



79.



80.

46 Gruzdžių žydų vyrų, sušaudytų prie kapinių tvoros, ant kurios iki šių dienų liko kulku pėdsakai, kapavietė (sutvarkyta 1991 m.).

Место захоронения 46 груздзийских евреев-мужчин, расстрелянных у кладбищенской стены, на которой до сих пор видны следы пуль (приведено в порядок в 1991 г.).

Burial site (restored in 1991) of 46 Jewish men from Gruzdziai murdered at the cemetery wall, where traces of bullets still remain.





81.

KIXFM



82.

KIXFM

Palaių ekshumavimas Joniškyje 1944 m.  
Экзгумация трупов в Ионишкисе в 1944 г.  
Disinterment of corpses in Joniškis, 1944.



83.

ŠAŽB

Paminklas 3000 Šiaulių apskrities žydų sušaudymo (1941 m. spalio 2 d.) vietoje Žagarės mieste parke. Paminklas pastatytas 1952 m.; atnaujintas žydų genocido Lietuvoje pradžios 60-mečio proga Joniškio rajono savivaldybės lėšomis; lenta su antraštemis lietuvių ir jidiš kalbomis sukurta JAV piliečio Ričardo G. Minco lėšomis 2001 m.

Памятник в городском парке Жагаре на месте расстрела 3000 евреев Шяуляйского уезда 2 октября 1941 г. Памятник установлен в 1952 г., обновлен к 60-летию надписями на литовском языке и идише установлена на средства гражданина США Ричарда Г. Минца в 2001 г.

Memorial in the Žagarė town park, at the site where 3,000 Jews of the Šiauliai Region were murdered on October 2, 1941. The memorial was erected in 1952 and reconstructed for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of genocide of Jews in Lithuania. The reconstruction was sponsored by the Joniškis District Government. The plaque with inscriptions in Lithuanian and Yiddish was fixed with the expenses of Richard G. Mintz, US in 2001.

Leiba Lipshitz

## The Šiauliai Ghetto, July 18, 1941 – July 24, 1944

Leiba Lipshitz (Lipšic, June 14, 1925 – June 9, 2002), formerly one of the prisoners of the Šiauliai Ghetto, speaks about himself and his family (Ežero-Traku ghetto, No. 1732, 1733, 1734, 1735):

I was born in Riga, Latvia, on July 14th, 1925. My parents were employees and residents of Šiauliai.

My father, Mordechai Lipshitz, was the Chief Accountant and Director of Production at Frenkel's Footwear Factory. My mother, Esther Rabinovičh Lipshitz, was a teacher and principal of a private Yiddish school. I had a younger brother, Uri, who was born in 1930.

I completed the sixth grade at the Šiauliai Jewish School No. 8 and entered the Lithuanian-language Boys' High School, which I was unable to finish because of the Nazi occupation.

On August 15, 1941 our family was confined to the Šiauliai ghetto. At that time, I was hiding in the village of Deiviai, 12 kilometers from the shtetl (small town) of Kelmė. It was not safe there, however, and in late August I came to the ghetto.

All our family, including my small brother, worked at Frenkel's factory until the liquidation of the ghetto on the 24th of July, 1944. On that day, we were forced to walk from the ghetto to the railroad

station of Pavenčiai, 30 kilometers away. We were put on train cars and transported to the Stutthof concentration camp. On the 16th of August, 1944, my father and I were transferred to Section 10 of the Dachau camp. My mother and brother remained in Stutthof.

My father and I stayed at Dachau until April 23, 1945. When the allied troops drew close to the site, the prisoners were forced to walk on foot to another camp. There I was separated from my father, who had become quite weak. I was among the thousands of prisoners driven from Dachau through the Alps, towards Austria. On the 2nd of May, 1945, we were liberated by American troops at Waakirchen. My father died in Dachau a month after the liberation, on the 10th of June, 1945, and was buried at the city cemetery.

In July 1945 I reached Šiauliai in hopes to find my mother and brother. I learned, however, that they had died during the liquidation of the Stutthof concentration camp, which occurred after the 25th of January, 1945. They were forced to march away from the advancing American armies (that was later known as the "death march").

When I returned from the concentration camp, my nervous system was unable to function normally. The disease lasted for years, which caused me to change my places of work often. When I recovered, I obtained a mechanic's qualification and worked as a chief mechanic and in other capacities on the Šiauliai and Panevėžys sections of the railroad. I retired in 1992, after 29 years of work there.

Since 1989, I have been working on a voluntary basis for the Šiauliai Region Jewish Community. I also write and publish articles for the Lithuanian press, mainly on Jewish themes.

## The Mass Murder of Šiauliai Jews

The Jewish population of Šiauliai was between 8,000 and 8,500 people in 1939. Their number, however, soon increased because the Klaipėda Region was annexed by Germany in late 1939, and the Region's Jews moved to Lithuania, including Šiauliai. Furthermore, when Germany started the Second World War on September 1, 1939 and soon occupied Poland, many Polish Jews also sought refuge in Lithuania, in the hope of being saved from Nazi persecution. Some of them settled in Šiauliai.

When Germany invaded the Soviet Union territory on June 22, 1941, many Jews from Southern Lithuania tried to save themselves by escaping northwards, through Šiauliai. Some of them continued their way to the Soviet interior, without stopping in Šiauliai. Many others, however, tried to stay in this city, because of the following reason.

The German advance was immobilized for almost three days by the 28th Colonel (later General) Tchernyakhovsky's Tank Division 14 kilometers south of Šiauliai. The *Wehrmacht's* tank vanguard column was destroyed at Bubiai. This gave the Jews the impression that the German offensive had been neutralized and the front line stabilized. They thought that, if they stayed in Šiauliai for the moment, they would return home sooner. They were, however, wrong.

The Germans bypassed the Soviet resistance line through Panevėžys and Radviliškis and entered Šiauliai at 5 p.m. on June 26, 1941. All the Jews staying in the city were trapped. Among those who had a chance to survive were the Jews deported to Siberia together with other "anti-Soviet" Lithuanians on June 14, 1941, and others who managed to escape to Russia at the start of the war. In fact, not many did have time to escape at that time. Those who tried to escape a few days later, found themselves encircled by German troops or attacked and fired upon by Lithuanian "volunteers" from the LAF\*. They were either killed or forced to return.

The Soviet administration left the city on Monday, June 23. Prior to this, in the morning of that day, my father was summoned by the director of Frenkel's factory, and was assigned as responsible for the factory's functioning. This made it impossible for us to escape with the others. Before leaving, the director assured him they would let my father know when his turn would be to leave the city. On Wednesday, the 25th, it became clear that it was already too late to leave. The Germans had already arrived at the Latvian border. Neither of us, or my mother's sister (Asya Krinker, a widow with three small children) had time to escape.

As soon as the German troops entered Šiauliai, LAF volunteers started

\* LAF (Lithuanian Activist Front) was founded in Berlin in November 1940 with the aim of restoring Lithuania's independence. LAF was based on armed voluntary militia squads which were known under various names: Activists, Partisans, sometimes the National Labor Guard. Their distinctive sign at the start of the Nazi invasion were white arm-bands. Many of these volunteers took part in the persecution or murder of Jews. Some of the squads were later dissolved; some others (with additional volunteers) were reorganized into regular police structures, namely, the City Police, Police (or Self-Defence) Battalions (known in the German version as Auxiliary Police), etc. Some of these formations also took part in the extermination of Jews. The activities of the LAF were terminated by the order of *Generalkommissar* A. T. von Renteln on September 26, 1941. (Ed.)

persecuting Jews in the Šiauliai city and even more so, in small neighboring towns and villages. They robbed Jewish property, raped women, forced Jews to clean outhouses with bare hands and clean the streets with toothbrushes. Jews were brutally beaten, crippled, and killed individually and in groups. The cruellest scenes took place in small towns (*shetels*) and villages, which had dense Jewish populations. Even though there were no German military units there, the LAF members captured Jews and locked them in synagogues, keeping them without any food or drink, and appropriated their property. The LAF sometimes killed Jews on their own initiative, the Germans being unaware of that. That was the first stage of Jewish martyrdom.

Many Jewish residents of different parts of Lithuania tried to reach Šiauliai or Kaunas, believing that they would be safer in larger towns with a greater concentration of Jews. However, Šiauliai was not a safe place for them. A German garrison was stationed there. The Military Field Police, the Security Service (SD), the Security Police (SiPo, comprised of the Gestapo and the Criminal Police) operated there, as did the Operational Squad EK-2A of the Operational Group (*Einsatzgruppe*) A\*, organizing the annihilation of Jews in Northern Lithuania, and specifically in the Šiauliai Region. Šiauliai was also

the home of the local LAF headquarters and numerous Lithuanian police. Local volunteers actively cooperated with them. The target of all those forces were the approximate 14,000 Jews who were in Šiauliai at that time\*\*.

On June 28, 1941, two days after the German troops entered the city, a streak of arrests of Jewish men started. The arrests lasted more than a week. The victims were driven into the Šiauliai prison. Virkutis\*\*\*, then the prison chief, was a sadistic person with a special hatred towards Jews. German-appointed Kraulich, who occupied a similar post at the same time, was not more humane either. They both created unbearable conditions for the imprisoned Jews, who were starved, constantly beaten, and crippled.

There were four or five times more prisoners in each cell than were usually kept. Every time the number of imprisoned Jews reached 250 to 300, the LAF members took them to the Luponiai forest, to be killed. The doomed people were forced to dig pits for themselves.

Approximately 1,200 Jews were seized and murdered in the first weeks of the German occupation. Out of those who were forced to dig pits for themselves, only three people escaped death. Those were young boys, Berel Shilanski, David Furman (both living presently in Israel), and Leiba Kan (living in the U.S.).

\* Operational Group (*Einsatzgruppe*) A was one of the four Operational Groups A, B, C, and D, formed with the aim of destroying Communists, Soviet officials, Jews, Gypsies, and sick people in the course of so-called *Aktionen*. The Operational Groups, which included Gestapo, SS, and SD officials, were subdivided into Operational Squads (*Einsatzkommando* – E.K.). The latter were further subdivided into Special Squads: *Sonderkommando*, *Restkommando*, and *Rollkommando*. (Ed.)

\*\* According to the author's estimations, the number of Jewish victims were: 8,000 in the forest of Luponiai, near Kuziai, 1,000 in Normančiai, 500 in Bubiai, 340 in Pročiūnai; totally, approximately 10,000 victims. Over 4,000 Jews remained in the ghetto after the *Aktionen*. (Ed.)

\*\*\* It has been impossible to verify the first names of this person and of some other persons mentioned in this article. (Ed.)

Though his direct duties were to supervise the Soviet war prisoners' camp, Kraulich took part in the shootings on his own initiative. Thousands of prisoners were forced to stay in the prison courtyard and literally starved to death. About a hundred people died daily from exhaustion, cold conditions, and beatings. The weakest were murdered. The war prisoners were under *Wehrmacht's* control. They did various kinds of work together with the Jews. Later Kraulich was succeeded by an SS officer, Krause. (Some time later he was appointed the commandant of the Salaspils concentration camp in Latvia because of his devotion to Nazi ideals, and finally became Deputy Commandant of the Auschwitz concentration camp).

The Jews were killed by LAF volunteers under the commandment of SS officers from Šiauliai SD and SiPo, specifically the so-called *Restkommando* belonging to the EK-2A. The *Restkommando* head was *Hauptscharführer* (master sergeant) Gottschalk, who was responsible for supervising the extermination of the Jews, and, among other things, for appropriating Jewish gold, tooth crowns, and other valuables for the Reich.

At the same time when Jewish men were being arrested, the Military Field Police captured twenty to thirty of the most prominent Šiauliai Jews, using lists made by a committee of the city authorities. The arrested, who were Jewish community's spiritual leaders, well-known intellectuals, and the most affluent businessmen, were imprisoned as hostages. It was announced that they would be "liquidated", if Šiauliai Jews offended the Germans. Among the hostages were the Šiauliai Chief Rabbi Aron Baksht, the *Dayyan* (religious judge) Abraham Itzik Nochumanski,

Rabbi Samuel Rabinovitch, teachers Mordechay Rudnik, Leib Chaitin, Meyer Shub, the Hebrew Gymnasium Principal Joseph Rudnik, lawyers Israel Abramovitch, Hirsh Rachmil, and Dr. Getz, traders Simon Rosenberg and Kadish Shapiro, and customs expeditor Elijah Pen. A few days later they were shot in a forest at the village of Pročiūnai, in the Zokniai airfield territory. The pretext for the execution was a Nazi-spread rumor that Jews had fired at some *Wehrmacht* soldiers. (Actually, the drunken German soldiers started shooting among themselves.)

On the morning of July 11, 1941, the LAF leadership sent about 50 squads of three or four men each to seize Jews and reappropriate the most valuable family property. The "volunteers" appeared in Jewish homes at about 9 o'clock in the morning. They started searching for gold, jewelry, money, valuable household objects, clothes, and other items of interest. Such searches lasted for three up to five hours. The "Activists" snatched bedclothes, suits, coats, footwear, and table and tea settings. The arrested Jews were forced to carry the objects, loaded into suitcases, baskets or sacks, to the police station (presently, the City Government building).

At first, the German administration was unaware of this action. In fact, the Germans needed gold, currency, jewelry, and securities for the Reich, but had little interest in Jewish immovable property, clothes, bedclothes, and household objects. Actually, that day, July 11, the LAF leadership in Šiauliai had planned to seize about 600 Jews. They however only managed to arrest 140. Finally, the German Military Field Police interfered. They stopped the squads of Activists with the arrested Jews near the "People's Home" cinema and the

police station. The Germans disarmed the Activists and sat them on the sidewalk, while the Jews were allowed to return home with their possessions (however, some 30 Jews had already been taken by Activists to the jail, and then shot). The Military Field Police stopped the arrests and searched the "volunteers". They requisitioned the gold, jewelry, and currency the Activists had put into their pockets. Thus the German military administration showed the LAF leadership, the Lithuanian police, and the City Government who really controlled the city.

I recall that day the "volunteers" arrested my father, me and Jacob Kasin (a relative of ours, who happened to be at our house) and forced us to pack the objects that had value to them, into three sacks. While we were marched towards the *Kommandatur* with these belongings, under armed guard, we were stopped by the Field Police. The Germans disarmed the "white arm-banders" and searched them. They appropriated all the valuables. We were released and told to take the bedclothes, shoes, clothing, and other things back home.

The City Mayor, Petras Linkevičius, former director of the "Pienocentras" Dairy Trust, started his duties on July 10, 1941 (Juozas Naujalis had been the mayor the two previous weeks). He and his deputy for Jewish affairs, Reserve Captain Antanas Stankus, summoned the members of the Jewish Committee, which had been created on German orders. They informed the Committee members that the territory known as Kaukazas (*Kavkaz*) had been designed for Jewish residence in Šiauliai. In that neighborhood, which was between the Jewish cemetery and Vilniaus Street (opposite Frenkel's leather factory),

there were about a hundred hovels with 400 or more poor Lithuanian and Jewish families living there. The Jewish representatives were told that the Jews who could not be housed in the Kaukazas neighborhood, which was far too small for everybody, would be taken to the town of Žagarė.

The city residents learned about this decision from the Mayor's announced Regulations on Jewish Rights, issued on July 18, 1941. The Šiauliai Jews were ordered to move to the Kaukazas neighborhood and to Žagarė between July 22 and August 22. Some of the Jews were relocated on the very day of the announcement, to fence off the Kaukazas territory. Thus, the Šiauliai ghetto was established. The regulations were also published in the Šiauliai newspaper, "Tėvynė", on July 20.

The Jewish representatives were incredulous of the mayor's and his deputy's assurances and of their ideas of relocating the Jews to a ghetto in Žagarė. They visited the City Government several times, asking to settle the "extra" Jews somewhere else in town instead of taking them to Žagarė. After all their requests failed, they decided to address the Šiauliai City *Wehrmacht* Military Commandant. This time they had better results. The Commandant received the Jewish representatives, listened to them, and telephoned immediately to the Mayor, P. Linkevičius, ordering him to assign another city neighborhood for the ghetto. Thus, the second part of the ghetto, named Ežero-Trakų, was founded. It comprised the area surrounded by Frenkel's footwear factory, the Talša lake, the old Catholic cemetery, the "Red Jail", and Trakų Street. It included Ginkūnų, Padirsių, and Žilvičių Streets, and fragments of Ežero and Trakų Streets.

My father decided I should better stay with the Andriulis, a farmer family and friends of ours, who were living in the village of Deiviai. Actually, the entire family, including Andriulis' sons, young boys Kazys, Pranas, and Antanas, their married brother Tamošius, and their sister's family, Rimkus knew I was hiding there.

Meanwhile, Jews were moving into the ghetto. My father went to the house at 9, Žilvičių St., where our family and also a distant relative of my father's and her daughter were being transferred. The two tiny rooms, one of which also included a kitchen, had nothing but bare walls. My father hired a horsecart and brought in three beds, an old chest of drawers, and five chairs. There was no room for anything else. We had to leave all the remaining furniture behind, and soon everything was ransacked.

Andriulis' neighbors, "white-armed" Taučius, began to suspect that somebody was hiding at the farm. I had to escape and make my way on foot to Šiauliai. I entered the ghetto with a group of workers who were returning from Frenkel's factory. It was late August, and the ghetto was already a closed territory.

I was struck to see the extremely crowded conditions of the ghetto. People tried to find a dwelling even in small garden sheds, trying to make them warmer and habitable for the winter, filling in cracks. Anyway, this was better than the pits of Kužiai. Horrible rumors spread. Many Jews were working with Christians, who had begun to tell us about Nazi plans even before we were taken to the ghetto. Would we be killed or not? We all lived like rabbits, with danger hovering everywhere.

Close to 2,950 Šiauliai Jews were housed in the Kaukazas ghetto. The Ežero-Trakų ghetto territory, where some 3,000 people were taken, was not sufficient for all the others. The Jewish

Committee representatives started requesting city authorities to assign a third area in town for the Jews. P. Linkevičius and A. Stankus promised them the Kalniukas neighborhood, on the condition that the Jews assigned to the Kalniukas ghetto would temporarily reside in the Village Traders' Synagogue (now a shop of the "Verpstas" knitting factory), the Jewish Home for the Elderly, and the Central Choral Synagogue at 35 Varpo Street.

The assignment of a "third ghetto" actually turned out to be complete deception. Groups of 200 to 300 Jews were herded into the above mentioned buildings, and then taken to the Luponiai Forest near Kužiai and shot at pits prepared beforehand. The empty buildings were continually filled with new groups of 200 to 300 Jews. The shootings lasted for about a month. The last three execution days were rainy, and the shooting sites became marshy and intransitable. For this reason, the last 500 Jews were killed at the village of Bubiai, at the foot of the Bubiai hill, where some pits had been dug for clay excavations.

## In the Ghetto

The Jewish Council (*Judenrat*) and its members were assigned upon the establishment of the Kaukazas and Ežero-Trakų ghettos. Mendel Leibovitch was elected President of the Council, and Aron Katz, the secretary. Berl-Menachem Abramovitch, Aron Heller, Ber Kartun, Fayvel Rubinstein, and Yosel Leibovitch became members of the Council. Elieser (Leyser) Yerushalmi was assigned as the administrator and deputy secretary.

Chief administrators were responsible for a certain sphere of activities. In



the ghetto of Ežero-Trakų, these positions were occupied by Samuel (Shmuel) Burgin (food supplies), Aron Abramson (housing and workshops), Ayzik Kulpenitski (cooperatives and social welfare), and Chaim Cherniavski (the ghetto *Arbeitsamt*, a work distribution entity). Ephraim Gens was head chief of the Ežero-Trakų ghetto police. Dr. Vulf Peisachovitch, a physician, was responsible for the health services.

The Kaukazas ghetto administration included Leyb Gotz, David Fayn, Chaim Zhilinski (each of them was head chief of the police, at different times), Hertz Berelovitch and Fayvel Vitz (housing and workshops), Berl Abramovitch (cooperatives and social welfare), and Abram Slezin (the ghetto *Arbeitsamt*).

Mendel Leibovitch, whom my father knew quite well, enjoyed confidence both among Jews and Lithuanians, for his integrity and keeping his word on all occasions. Shmuel Burgin was one of the most influential leaders of the Šiauliai ghetto. He was responsible for such an important task as supplying the ghetto with food, and the ghetto hospital with medicine. Apart from this, he also had unofficial duties to contact Lithuanian and German police and power structures, a task he fulfilled quite successfully, also thanks to his ability to drink without getting drunk. He seized every opportunity to help Šiauliai Jews survive in Lithuania, and later, in the Dachau concentration camp in Germany. As to Ephraim Gens, he had a leader's vein, but often lacked diplomacy on his dangerous post.

On September 8, 1941, when both ghetto districts were already filled with people, their territory was completely isolated from the outside world. Leaving and entering the ghetto was allowed only with special per-

mits and in groups of workers. Virtually no Jews remained in town outside the ghetto. On Monday, September 8, 1941, the City Government's commission headed by Liuberskis and Liolis (formerly, the Šiauliai City Education Department Inspector), checked the inmates of both ghettos and made lists of those who were sick and those unable to work. (The Commission had been set up on P. Linkevičius' and A. Stankus' orders, and it had to decide which Jews were to be taken to the ghetto and which were to be imprisoned in the synagogue and then murdered.)

On September 11, a company of the German Military Field Police, headed by Lieutenant Potschalski, and a LAF detachment headed by V. Ivanauskas, the Šiauliai LAF headquarters member, arrived at the ghetto. They arrested about 100 Jews from Liuberskis' list, took them in trucks to the Gubernija Forest, and murdered them.

The same V. Ivanauskas-headed detachment arrived again on September 12, with another list of 300 Jewish names. Some of the doomed people managed to hide, while the others were taken to the Gubernija Forest and murdered.

On September 15, LAF members Liuberskis and Pimpa arrived at the ghetto with a large detachment of Lithuanian police. They checked the documents of all the ghetto inmates and issued them yellow passes instead of the previous blue and pink ones.

During the establishment of the ghetto, all those who were selected for the ghetto and not "for the synagogue", were given blue certificates ("passports", *Scheinen* in German). In late August, during the sorting out of ghetto inmates, pink passes were issued to the families of the Jews who

were allowed to walk outside the ghetto alone and not in columns of workers. These included all members of the *Judenrat*, the Jewish police, ghetto employees and administrative workers. Because of their jobs, they needed to pass from one ghetto to another, and visit the City Government and the German institutions. In addition, pink passes were issued to leading specialists whose employers needed them to remain at work for longer hours.

Thanks to my father's occupation, all members of our family received blue and pink passes. In mid-September, we were given yellow *Scheinen*. At that moment, a yellow *Schein* meant life. Those who did not receive one, were destined to die. The police put those without the yellow pass and their families on trucks and took them to the Gubernija forest, where they were murdered.

When the "selection" was already half-done, the vice-mayor A. Stankus arrived at the ghetto. The *Judenrat* members managed to get him drunk. Then Burgin took some 500 forms of yellow passes out of the official's bag (the forms were to be given to Liuberskis and Pimpa). The yellow passes were needed for the ghetto's illegal inhabitants. Included were those who had escaped from murder sites or avoided being taken there. These were not only Jews from Šiauliai, but also residents of the neighboring towns and shtetls in the area around Telšiai, Mažeikiai, Biržai, Radviliškis, Raseiniai, and Panevė-

žys. The Šiauliai ghetto became a refuge and a fragile life guarantee for Northwestern and Southern Lithuanian Jews who had managed to escape death. The ghetto's Jewish authorities made strenuous efforts to legalize these people gradually, by any possible means.

Thanks to Frenkel's Leather and Footwear factory's\* administration, along with the efforts of Danutė Venclauskaitė, who established workshops for Jewish women, came an opportunity to legalize all the ghetto's illegal inhabitants.

### A Job as a Chance to Survive

The Jewish workers of Frenkel's Leather and Footwear Factory returned to their work places on June 30, 1941. However, the new LAF-assigned factory administration and foremen, and the new factory director Šalkauskas issued an order not to allow Jews (no matter if they were workers or administrators) into the office premises and shops. The Jews were forced, instead, to clean the factory territory, the water-cleaning equipment, and the outhouses.

Since the German authorities did not trust the Lithuanian administration, they assigned several wounded or recovering German officers to manage the factory. Müller, a wounded pilot, became the director. He was not satisfied with the work of the Lithuanian administration, which was unable to recover production. Müller ordered *Wehrmacht*-needed production to be

\* Chaim Frenkel established a tannery in Šiauliai in 1879. In the early part of the XX century, it was the largest enterprise (800 workers) of its kind in the entire Russian Empire. Chaim's son, Jacob, took over the enterprise, which became the largest factory of sole leather, box-calf, and tas", with close to 850 workers, started in 1926. Most of the factories' specialists and members of the administration were Jews. On the eve of the Nazi invasion, both factories were nationalized by the Soviets and united into Factory No. 5. In 1946, the enterprise was renamed "Elnias", the name which still remains today. (Ed.)

started in a week's time. All his efforts, however, were fruitless, due to a lack of specialists. Therefore, Müller readmitted all the Jews to their former work places in the shops and offices and removed the Lithuanian administration. He added that the Lithuanians should learn from the Jews, to be better able to replace them in the future.

Due to difficult circumstances, the *Judenrat* took counsel with the former Jewish factory administrators and appealed for help to the footwear factory's chief accountant V. Šumnauskas, who was sympathetic with the Jews. They told him about the difficult ghetto's situation and the city government's desire to liquidate the ghetto. They also informed him that the LAF leadership had made an appeal to the German administration, through the local paper, "Tėvynė", asking them to remove Jews from Šiauliai and make the city "Jewish-free". The legal ghetto dwellers did not have any other documents or certificates except for the yellow passes, while the "illegals" lived with no documents at all. The *Judenrat* saw that the only way to survive was for the Jews to acquire the status of "workers for the *Wehrmacht*". For that purpose, they made lists of the Frenkel factory's Jewish workers and their family members. An agreement was reached with all the factory workers, including the "illegals". Illegal ghetto inmates, women, children, the workers' disabled parents and other relatives were also registered as family members.

Upon completing the lists, it showed that the average family size for the approximate 600 factory workers was five people. It seemed possible to enlist the ghetto inmates in the so-called category of "useful Jews" with a right to live. V. Šumnauskas handed the list to the fac-

tory Director Müller, who checked it and consulted the German *Arbeitsamt*. He then wrote a corresponding request. Upon receiving a written agreement from the German *Arbeitsamt*, Müller presented the documents to *Gebietskommissar* (The Commissar of the Šiauliai Area) Hans Gewecke, as a list of Jews who were needed to teach Lithuanian personnel. The teaching process was planned to last several years, after which there would no longer be a need for Jews. Having obtained Gewecke's written approval, Müller went to Riga, to apply to *Reichskommissar* Lohse. He managed to convince Lohse that Frenkel's enterprise was working exclusively because of Jewish efforts and it was thanks to the Jews that *Wehrmacht* was receiving the necessary production. Müller succeeded in obtaining Lohse's corroboration of the lists and came back to Šiauliai, thus giving the *Judenrat* and the Jewish residents hope and a temporary guarantee to live.

Outside of the ghetto territory, there was "Davidov's Enterprise" on 66, Vilniaus Street, near the Frenkel Synagogue. Hirsh Davidov and his family (wife, daughter, father-in-law and mother-in-law) lived in a brick building. Tanning and leather processing workshops were located in the yard annexes. The premises were leased from Frenkel, a distant relative of Davidov's.

Prior to WWII, twenty people were employed in the workshops. The German occupational authorities, needing to maintain the work process uninterrupted, left the Davidov family in town, equipping the enterprise with the most up-to-date machinery. High-ranking *Wehrmacht* officers, the Security Service, Gestapo, and the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissariat* officials became Davidov's constant customers. Others arrived repeatedly from Kaunas

(i.e., the *Generalkommissariat* officers) and from Riga, the site of the *Reichskommissariat*.

By then, the number of workers reached 30. They were skin and leather tanning specialists, driven daily from the ghetto under guard. (The author also worked there for about seven months). Hirsh Davidov and his family continued living in their own apartment, but were not allowed to leave the workshop premises. Like the ghetto inmates, they wore yellow stars on all their clothes.

Sheepskins and lambskins were supplied to Davidov's. Germans brought fox and wild-boar skins. Large amounts of rat and polecat carcasses were brought by Germans for fur-coats to be made for their wives. We had to skin them, tan the skins, sew them into two square meter pieces on a special fur-sewing machine, and then remit the pieces to their German customers. The sheepskins were supplied to the *Wehrmacht*.

On July 8, 1944, the ghetto was closed. The inmates were told they were being taken to Germany. The Davidovs decided to leave the city and hide with a farmer, who was an acquaintance of theirs. The Lithuanian Security Service, however, tracked them down and arrested them near the village of Žuvininkai. The Davidovs were sent to the city jail. On July 18 or 19, they were executed in the jail by Lithuanian guards. The victims' bodies were interred in the jail territory.

The military airfield in Zokniai, near Šiauliai, also played an important part in the Jewish ghetto's survival. The Germans were enlarging it substantially, stretching runways and building large hangars for the planes. Close to 600 Jews were employed in the construction, living in barracks nearby. This relieved pressure on the ghetto, since it was impossible to give room for any more Jews

within its borders. Labor in the airfield was hard and exhausting, but the food was satisfactory. Jewish women working there were victims of German soldiers' and officers' abuse. They were raped and sexually persecuted and could not register complaints to anybody anywhere.

Many Jews worked in military units, front supply shops, the militarized railroad, the military *Todt* organization's construction works, in the *Gebietskommissariat* premises, and with the SS, SD, and SiPo auxiliary services. This made them believe they were a useful labor source, and that there was no reason to annihilate them.

A lot of help came from the Venclauskis family. They not only hid Jews and Jewish children saving them from imminent death. Lawyer Kazimieras Venclauskis' (died in 1940) elder daughter Danutė opened several workshops in the city center, on Varpo Street, producing gloves, brushes, and other similar items. Their aim was to give employment to Jewish women whose profession was not useful in war time or who had no trade or profession at all. Some Jewish men found employment there as well. Danutė Venclauskaitė became the official workshop owner. She managed the workshops to be given the status of *Wehrmacht* suppliers from the occupiers' *Arbeitsamt* and the *Gebietskommissariat*. She used to bribe the Germans, having them sign that they had received the necessary production. She also handed the city financial officials fictitious profit and turnover reports. Danutė paid the taxes for this fictitious production from her own pocket, since the Jewish women had already been deprived of all their resources and had nothing to pay with.

For a while, these efforts thwarted the ghetto inmates' selections and the murdering of the disabled.

However, danger arose for the ghetto because of the SD Mobile Squad (the *Rollkommando*) and its head, SS *Obersturmführer* (senior lieutenant) Joachim Hamann. On September 3, 1941, Hamann arrived from Kaunas at Gewecke's office in Šiauliai, upon SS *Standartenführer* (colonel) Karl Jäger's assignment. (Jäger was commander of the Operational Squad EK-3A, responsible for the annihilation of Jews in Lithuania.) He insisted on liquidating the Šiauliai ghetto and murdering its inmates. Gewecke, however, felt secure with *Reichskommissar* Lohse's resolution on Frenkel's factory Jewish workers' lists. As Gewecke knew, part of Northern Lithuania, including the Šiauliai Region, was under the control of the Operational Squad 2A, mainly operating in Latvia. Therefore, Hamann had no authority to decide the fate of the Šiauliai ghetto. Hamann received Gewecke's absolute refusal to destroy the ghetto and the Jews. Gewecke insisted that the Jews were necessary for the Germans because they assured the functioning of factories and production supplies to the *Wehrmacht*. In spite of all his efforts, Hamann did not come to an agreement with the *Gebietskommissar*. Moreover, after the *Rollkommando* head left, Gewecke sent a written complaint about Hamann's actions to Lithuania's *Generalkommissar* von Renteln and to *Reichskommissar* Lohse.

The reason for the SS official's visit to Šiauliai were complaints received by the Operational Squad's 3A head, SS *Standartenführer* Jäger and Lithuania's *Generalkommissar* von Renteln. The complaints were addressed by the Šiauliai City Government's leaders, P. Linkevičius and his deputy, A. Stankus, the LAF leadership V. Ivanauskas et alia,

the local pro-Nazi paper's "Tėvynė" editor V. Pauža, lawyer J. Šerksnys, brothers Šablinskas, and several other influential Šiauliai's personalities. Their desire to get rid of the city's Jews, however, was not satisfied.

The "Volunteers" who had taken part in the murder of the Jews of Šiauliai and its vicinity, were particularly thirsty for Jewish blood. The lawyer and LAF leader of the small town of Užventis, Romualdas Kolokša was especially cruel. He participated in the murders of Užventis Jews and did not fail to take part, together with his squad, in any Jewish murders that took place in Šiauliai and the Šiauliai Region.

The ghetto of Žagarė was annihilated on October 2, 1941. They started killing Jews in the local market square, then continuing in Count Naryshkin's park, at the pits prepared previously. Approximately 3,000 Jews from Žagarė and those taken to the Žagarė ghetto from around the Šiauliai Region, were murdered.

The Šiauliai Region on that day had come under control of the SS Operational Squad 3A, instead of Squad 2A, which operated in Latvia. Therefore it was J. Hamann who organized and controlled the Jewish murder in Žagarė.

The last killings of the Šiauliai Region Jews outside the ghetto were carried out in the forest at the village of Ilgoji Lova (near the villages of Kairiai and Naisiai) from the 8th through the 15th of December, 1941. The 72 surviving Jews from the districts of Kuršėnai, Stačiūnai, Radviliškis, and Pakruojis were the victims. The Jews had been loaned out to the farmers to do agricultural work, and became unnecessary when the labor season ended. The Lithuanian police gathered the Jews from the countryside areas and murdered them.

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In the new year, 1942, ghetto life remained as hard as before. The question of "liquidation", however, was adjourned. There were no major *Aktionen*, but separate Jews were still arrested for violating regulations set up for ghetto inmates. Attempts to procure foodstuff, taking off the "Jewish star" patches, leaving one's workplace, and smuggling food into the ghetto were considered as major crimes punishable by death. Such "criminals" were imprisoned in the jail and then executed in the small forest at the village of Pročiūnai, in the Šiauliai airfield territory.

The Jews received miserable payment for their work, and many inmates starved. Their employers paid a part of each worker's salary to the *Arbeitsamt*; up to 50 % of the sum remained for the *Gebietskommissariat*. Only a small portion was paid to the workers through the ghetto administration. With this money, Jews had to buy food in ghetto shops. The food was supplied by the City Government, in coordination with the *Judenrat*. All hopes were therefore set on members of Jewish families who managed to procure extra food in their work places.

In early April 1942, the Šiauliai mayor, P. Linkevičius and his deputy for Jewish affairs, A. Stankus informed the *Judenrat* that the size of the Ežero-Trakų ghetto territory would be reduced, to exclude all the houses on Trakų Street, a quarter of the buildings on Ežero Street, and the beginning of Žilvičių Street. The *Judenrat* was told to start immediately erecting a new fence. The City Government would provide barbed wire, wood for the poles, and nails. Upon finishing the fence, close to 1,000 inmates were to leave their dwellings.

The *Judenrat* started the assigned works, digging pits for the poles while discussing the question about the territory with the mayor and with the *Gebietskommissariat* officials. They managed to persuade the Germans from the *Gebietskommissariat* that the City Government wanted too many buildings, which would deteriorate the Jews' living conditions and thus diminish their work capacity.

The City Government was forced to reduce the size of the ghetto only by a few buildings on Trakų Street. It was discovered that Stankus, the meat processor and trader, had buildings and a slaughterhouse (previously nationalized by the Soviets) inside the ghetto territory. He arranged it so the City Government would give his property back. This particular occasion was used by the City Government to make life harder for the Jews. This time, half of Trakų Street (up to the jail) and all of Ežero and Žilvičių Streets were left in the ghetto.

### The 1942 Residents' Census in the Šiauliai Ghetto

The general population census of occupied Lithuania (*Generalbezirk Litauen*) was planned to be carried out on May 26 and 27, 1942. For this purpose, the city of Šiauliai was divided into four "census districts", No. 1, 2, 3, and 4. The districts were further subdivided into "census areas". The Ežero-Trakų ghetto section was included in the 3rd district, and that of Kaukazas, in the 4th. The *Judenrat* and its chairman, Mendel Leibovitch, became personally responsible for the inmates' census listing. The *Judenrat* appointed some of the Jews as "census officials".

Panic arose among the ghetto dwellers when the listing started. Most be-

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lieved that other murder *Aktionen* were being planned, and that the census was a means to find out who the disabled were. Only upon learning that the census was indeed being carried out in the whole city, did the Jews relax. However, many did not trust anybody and avoided the census. Among those who were not listed in the census were Georg Pariser (who was later assigned the ghetto's "Internal Commandant"), Elieser Yerushalmi, Chaim Zhilinsky (head of the Kaukazas ghetto police), and many others\*.

According to *Judenrat's* information, there were 4,753\*\* legal ghetto dwellers. This number included the inmates of several labor camps, where Šiauliai Jews worked and lived on site.

### The Šiauliai Ghetto's Exterior Labor Camps

On September 1, 1941, approximately 500 Jews started working the night shift at the Šiauliai City *Wehrmacht's* military airfield, returning daily to the ghetto. In the daytime, Soviet war prisoners worked there. Later the Jews were quartered in the barracks of the airfield territory. They numbered anywhere from 350 to 600, depending on the ghetto's capacities to supply a labor force, which was a subject of constant airfield administration's discontent. This labor camp existed until the ghetto liquidation in July 1944.

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From May 1, 1942 Jews from the Šiauliai ghetto were taken to the Radviliškis peat-bog. Soon about 480 Jews were housed in barracks. Work lasted throughout the whole labor season until mid-November 1942, when the peat was loaded and transported. The arduous, backbreaking labor was poorly remunerated with a very meagre food ration, and people starved. The policemen from Radviliškis mistreated the Jews badly, subjecting them to harassment and beatings. As a result of the mistreatment, there were many sick, maimed and exhausted people by the end of the season.

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A group of Jews were taken to a peat-bog belonging to the Radviliškis dairy and placed in barracks on June 2, 1942. Work was hard, but the food ration was sufficient. Work lasted until the end of the peat-cutting season.

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31 Jews were taken from the ghetto to the Pavenciūnai sugar factory's peat-bog at the village of Gaudučiai on June 5, 1942. They lived in barracks. Although work was hard, work conditions were not too bad. Upon finishing the peat-cutting season, production at the sugar factory started. Jews then worked and lived at the factory.

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250 ghetto Jews were taken to the Bačiūnai peat bog on July 15, 1942, and housed in barracks until the end of the season. Work conditions and food were

\* Among the inmates who were not registered by the census, were Ida Levitonienė, Liuba Stulgaitienė, and Yosel Turkas, see p. 380 and 381. These people presently live in Lithuania. (Comp. auth.)

\*\* According to Yerushalmi, see [4, 1779, 1829], 4,753 Jews entered the ghetto; the same number is mentioned at the beginning of 1942. A document on the utilization of manpower, dated May 1, 1943, gives the number of 4,759 Jews in the Šiauliai ghetto (Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje. 1941–1944. Dokumentų rinkinys, II d., Vilnius, „Mintis“, 1965, p. 117). According to the census lists published in this book, the ghetto had 4,665 legal dwellers, including the 160 people temporarily transferred to a peat-cutting camp near Radviliškis, see p. 644. (Comp. auth.)

satisfactory. No special abuse was committed by Lithuanian guards who allowed the Jews to go begging neighboring farmers for bread.

240 Jewish men and women were taken from the ghetto to the Bačiūnai peat-bog on May 5, 1943, when the peat-cutting season started. They lived there until the end of the season.

The Jews employed at peat-bogs (with the exception of the peat-bog at Gaudučiai) were taken back to the ghetto by November 20, when the labor season finished.

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On September 22, 1942, a camp was set up at the Linkaičiai weapon workshops. The German military airfield's administration made it into an ammunition and bomb depot. 125 Jews, among them 15 women, were housed in barracks. This was considered a good camp because of the relatively good food rations. The camp existed until the ghetto liquidation in early July 1944.

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In mid-November 1942, a group of 126 Jews were taken to the Pavėnčiai sugar factory, where they worked until January 15, 1943. During the sugar producing season, 31 Jews were also sent there from the Gaudučiai peat-bog. Work, which consisted of loading and unloading railroad cars, was quite exhausting. The duration of the working day was unlimited, and food and living conditions were very bad.

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On May 1, 1943, 60 women from the Šiauliai ghetto were taken to the storage premises of the "Sodyba" estate at Viduklė, to sort out potatoes from the previous year. They worked there for one month and were taken back to the ghetto upon finishing their work.

## The *Judenrat's* Decision. Betzalel Mazovetsky's Fate

On August 30, 1942, a group of approximately 30 Jews were returning to the ghetto through Trakų Street. Members of the German administration, including *Gebietskommissar* Gewecke, *Wirtschaftleiter* (Head of Economy Services) Schriwer, *Stabsleiter* (HQ chief) Derwarter, Dr. Tcharny, one of the SiPo heads Schwant (a Lithuanian-speaking German from Klaipėda), the *Arbeitsamt* head Günter, and about ten *Gebietskommissariat's* staff workers, were waiting for the Jews at the city jail building.

The Germans searched the Jews, who were hiding various food products (either bought, bartered, or begged from Christians) under their clothing. As the search took place, packets of flour and cereal, a couple of half-kilo packages of butter, some loaves of bread, beets, carrots, apples, and other food, were discovered and thrown on the pavement.

The Jews were driven into the ghetto, and the *Judenrat*, summoned to *Gebietskommissar's* office. Gewecke presented the Jewish Council with an ultimatum to bring 50 Jewish smugglers (*Schwarzhändler* as they were called by the Germans) to the city jail building at 12 o'clock, September 2, for execution at the jail stone wall.

Back in the ghetto, the *Judenrat* gathered the heads of all ghetto departments to take counsel. What was to be done? It was evident that the Nazis wanted to murder the Jews with Jews' hands. The council was held till dawn. Finally it was decided that no Jews would be sent to the Nazis for murder. Instead, the ghetto leadership headed by the Jewish Council should arrive at the indicated site and sacrifice themselves.

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They communicated their decision to the head of the *Arbeitsamt*, Günter, whom they were allowed to contact at any time on their own initiative.

At the indicated hour, all the Members of the Jewish Council and heads of ghetto services, headed by the *Judenrat* chairman, arrived at the jail gate, awaiting to be executed.

In the last moment, *Gebietskommissar* Gewecke permuted the death sentence for a 20,000 Reichsmark contribution. He also issued an order to continue controlling and searching the ghetto inmates who returned home from work.

On May 31, 1943, Gewecke, together with several German officers, including *Gebietskommissar's* Headquarters Head, Ewald Bub, Dr. Tcharny, and the SiPo official Schwant, arrived at Traku Street and started searching the returning ghetto inmates. Concealed food was found on two people, Betzalel Mazovetsky (formerly a baker) and Lena (Leah) Bayer (formerly a teacher of music). Both had some bread, cigarettes, and half a kilogram of meat.

On June 3, 1943, the *Judenrat* members were summoned by the *Gebietskommissar*, who told them that both smugglers would be hunged in the view of all the ghetto inmates. The *Judenrat's* task was erecting the gallows and getting the executioners from among the Jews themselves.

The gallows were built in a small garden in the Kaukazas ghetto. Two Jews, Kerbel and Davidovitch, were hired as executioners, for several thousand marks. At the same time, the *Judenrat* was conducting very intensive talks with Bub, trying to convince him to take pity on the two doomed people. Finally, after long talks and bribes of gold, jewelry, and man's leather boots, it was

agreed that Lena Bayer would be pardoned. Mazovetsky's fate, however, could not be changed.

At 9 o'clock on Sunday June 6, 1943, all inmates of the two ghettos were gathered at Kaukazas. Several *Gebietskommissariat* officers, including the Headquarters Head Bub, arrived to see the hanging.

Betzalel Mazovetsky and Lena Bayer were brought from prison by policeman Belkštys, widely known as a murderer and torturer of Jews, and another policeman. Belkštys carried a machine gun on his shoulder. *Stabsleiter* Bub, one of the most repugnant *Gebietskommissariat* officials and an atrocious enemy of the Jews, said a short threatening speech to the inmates. He declared that all those who would try to bring food illegally to the ghetto would be hanged. He then ordered Lena Bayer to be freed. After shackles were released from her hands and feet, she mixed with the inmates' crowd. Bub announced the death sentence for Betzalel Mazovetsky. Kerbel and Davidovitch prepared to carry out the sentence. Mazovetsky put his own head into the noose, having first begged pardon from the ghetto Jews for having caused them so much trouble. Betzalel Mazovetsky's death was certified by Dr. David Druyan.

### The Šiauliai Ghetto under the Jurisdiction of the SS

In July 1943, the Šiauliai ghetto was transferred to the jurisdiction of the SS. The Kaunas ghetto was restructured into the Kaunas concentration camp (*Stammlager*). The Šiauliai ghetto became the "exterior camp" (*Außenlager*) of the Kaunas concentration camp. The SS liquidated immediately all Jewish

work places at private firms and city factories whose production was not destined for the *Wehrmacht*. Jews continued to work at the Frenkel factory, army supply depots, and some other places. Several dozens of Jews made birch blocks for gas generators used in German trucks. The new SS ghetto authority ordered permanent branch camps (*Nebe lager*), each with a strictly fixed number of workers, to be started on September 21, 1943. Some of the existing camps were included in the list of the "branch camps". Among others were: the *Wehrmacht's* military airfield in Zokniai – 500 Jews; the Zokniai airfield's ammunition and bomb depots situated in the former Linkaičiai weapon workshops – 250 Jews (half of this number were workers sent by the *Judenrat* to join the others who were already working there); the Pavėnčiai sugar factory – 250 Jews (125 of these workers were sent there to join the others).

According to the list, the Jewish Council sent the following groups of Jews to the assigned sites, in fulfillment of the SS orders: *A.B.A.*, housed in an unfinished hospital building (presently, the Šiauliai hospital; the camp barracks were destroyed by fire at the end of the war and afterwards) – 800 Jews; the lime-burning and brick factory at Akmenė – 250 Jews; the brick factory in Daugėliai, near Kuršėnai – 250 Jews.

The Jews employed at the Daugėliai brick factory and the Pavėnčiai sugar factory, additionally did seasonal agricultural work at the former Ringuva farmstead, which was under SS authority. Work conditions were horrible, with starvation, constant beatings, and harassment.

In January 1944, after the end of the work season at the Pavėnčiai sugar factory, 250 Jews were taken back to Šiauliai and employed at the *A.B.A.* The

*A.B.A.* thus became the largest (except for the ghetto itself) Jewish labor camp in Šiauliai, with 1,050 Jews.

After the SS sent Jews to the labor camps in Šiauliai's vicinity in 1943, the number of ghetto inmates was reduced by 1550. The Kaukazas ghetto section was liquidated immediately. All the remaining Jews were driven to the Ežero-Trakų section. The *Judenrat* chairman, Mendel Leibovitch, was made an ordinary member of the Jewish Council. The SS-man H. Schlöf appointed a German Jew, Georg Pariser, instead. Pariser actually became an SS informer.

Pariser lived in the Šiauliai ghetto together with his Christian German wife and two children. His wife had the opportunity to divorce him, declaring her children as Aryans. She, however, chose to enter the ghetto together with her husband and children. On July 22, 1944, when Šiauliai ghetto inmates were being deported to the Stutthof concentration camp, the SS officers placed the Pariser family on the train separately from the other inmates. Upon arrival at the last station before Stutthof, their baggage, comprised of some suitcases and sacks, was unloaded at the freight station. "The Parisers took off the Jewish stars and were never seen again", the surviving Šiauliai Jews from the same train later remembered. In the summer of 1945, when Danzig was Soviet-occupied, a former ghetto inmate, Liuba Lipshitz, daughter of pharmacist Levik Lipshitz, recognized Pariser walking along a street in Danzig (now Gdansk, Poland), and informed the Soviet Commandant's Headquarters. Georg Pariser was arrested, tried and sentenced to ten years of imprisonment, which he completed in Kazakhstan. His family emigrated from the Soviet-occupied zone to West Germany, where Georg Pariser finally joined them having emigrated to Germany from the USSR.

The SS *Oberscharführer* (master sergeant) Hermann Schlöf was appointed the ghetto Military Commandant. The SS *Rotenführer* (non-commissioned officer) Henning became the Ghetto Guard chief. The Lithuanian Police were removed, and replacing them was an SS company brought from Romania and lodged at the former Jewish home for the elderly.

New measures were taken, since a concentration camp could not have disabled inmates. On November 5, 1943, the SS waited for the ghetto residents to leave for work. Then, according to a previously elaborated plan, the SS, together with a company of the Russian Liberation Army (R.O.A)\* and all of the SD and SiPo personnel, surrounded the ghetto with a reinforced guard, allowing nobody to enter or leave through the ghetto gates. They started looking for children under 13. The ones they found were dragged into trucks and piled there like firewood. They were then taken to the railroad station and shut into freight cars. Some children tried to hide. The murderers found them and dragged them remorselessly by their legs or hair from under beds and wardrobes. They threw others from the roofs and attics as if they were just rubbish, maiming the children. The former Ghetto Police head, Ephraim Gens, forced to be an example to others, brought his baby daughter and put her on the truck.

That horrible day, 725 Jewish children were abducted from the Šiauliai ghetto, Linkaičiai, the Zokniai airfield, Pavenčiai, and Daugėliai. In addition, 92 disabled or sick inmates were seized. They all were taken in freight cars to

Auschwitz, where they were murdered. Ber Kartun, member of the *Juderat*, and a children's physician, Uriah Razovski, chose to accompany the children to this horrible destination.

The only Jewish labor camp spared the *Aktion* was that of Akmenė, the furthest away from Šiauliai. However, on December 12, 1943, a detachment of R.O.A. arrived there as well. The camp commandant, SS *Oberscharführer* Graudel, ordered seven children and one sick Jewish woman to be seized and killed at a prepared pit on site.

The *Aktionen* against the children and disabled Jews were directed by SS *Hauptsturmführer* (captain) Förster from the *Einsatzgruppe* 3A and the Šiauliai ghetto commandant Schlöf. With this, the ghetto was paralyzed, and its inmates felt they were indeed in a concentration camp.

In the spring of 1944, the front line was approaching Lithuania. The Red Army was steadily advancing, giving the ghetto inmates hope and a chance for survival.

The Germans, on the other hand, became nervous; so did their Lithuanian helpers. They all felt that retribution was approaching. Jewish labor conditions worsened; the foremen and chiefs at work found fault with the ghetto workers at the slightest opportunity. In the ghetto, "prison regime" became more strict. It was becoming more and more difficult to procure food. Nazis began to transfer Jewish prisoners from labor camps which were close to the front line, to the Šiauliai ghetto.

This happened in the following way:

A camp of the German *Todt* organization was set up in Joniškis, with 483 Jews from Smorgon and Oshmyany, Belorus-

\* A. Vlasov, a Soviet general who fell into German captivity in 1942, became head of the Russian Liberation Movement (a. k. a. Army), abbreviated as R.O.A. (R.O.A.) in Russian, formed mainly from the ranks of Soviet war prisoners. Vlasov's military units formed part of the SS troops. (Ed.)

sia. They had been employed for erecting fortifications and were exhausted and sick because of starvation and arduous labor. 70 Jews from this camp worked separately in Latvia, at the Lithuanian border. In spite of *Todt* administration's objections, the S.S. liquidated this small camp and transferred its inmates to Joniškis. All the Jews in the Joniškis camp were quite exhausted. Only 220 people were able to work. When the camp was joined to the Šiauliai ghetto, all sick people were transferred to the ghetto. The SD ordered 50 strongest Jewish men from the Joniškis camp to be selected and taken to Fort 9 in Kaunas, to burn the corpses of murdered Jews. B. Kittel, the well-known "liquidator" of the Vilnius ghetto\*, arrived by motor-cycle. The Jews were removed in two trucks with the inscription, "Mail".

Approximately 3,000 Jews were brought from Panevėžys. The majority were former inmates of the Kaunas and Vilnius ghettos, deported in 1943 to Estonian concentration camps of Vaivari and Klooga and to Salaspils in Latvia. Some time later, some of those who were still alive were sent to work on expanding the Panevėžys airfield and building fortifications, under the aegis of *Todt*. Their physical state was better than that of the Joniškis camp's prisoners.

Among those who arrived from Panevėžys, were 250 Jews, who had been removed in early spring 1944 as stronger workers from the Zokniai camp to work in the Panevėžys airfield.

The group of Jews brought to Šiauliai from Panevėžys included 240 Jewish women from Hungary who had dug trenches and done other work in the

Eastern front. Also taken to the ghetto were ten Jewish women from Germany, who had stayed in the Riga ghetto and were auxiliary workers in military unit kitchens (among them were two sisters with the surname Shavl, the Yiddish for Šiauliai. The younger one, Zelma, worked as a maid at ghetto commandant H. Schlöf's apartment).

### The Annihilation of the Šiauliai Ghetto and Evacuation of the Inmates

On July 8, 1944, the Ghetto Commandant, H. Schlöf, informed the *Judenrat* that the ghetto was closed. Nobody was allowed to go to work; everybody had to prepare for evacuation to Germany, because the front line had come near Panevėžys. When the ghetto inmates learned the news, they were panic-stricken. Several hundred Jews managed to break through a side ghetto gate to the territory of Frenkel's factory (the factory adjoined the Ežero-Trakų ghetto and had a direct entrance from there). They jumped over the factory fence and started running northeast through fields. Sigel, the factory's Chief of Production, and a Šiauliai jail ward, Antanaitis, who happened to be at the factory by chance, started firing with pistols at the running people. Sigel shot two Jewish women dead. Antanaitis killed two children, Malka and Nudel. Meanwhile, some SS men, who learned about the escape of the Jews, got on a truck and chased them along Vilniaus Street. They barred the way to the escapees, putting the truck across the road to the village of Žuvininkai. Those who attempted to escape were returned to the ghetto.

\* The Vilnius ghetto was liquidated on Sept. 23, 1943. (Ed.)

That was a period of anxiety and waiting. The Jews were not allowed to take any luggage except for a sack or a knapsack and the clothing they had on.

On July 15, 1944, the first group of Jews was put on freight train cars and transported. This group consisted of 3,000 Jews from the Panevėžys *Todt* camp and 480 Jews from the Joniškis *Todt* camp.

On July 19, 1944, another group (1990 inmates) was sent in the same direction: 1,050 Jews from the A.B.A. workshops and storehouses, 250 Jews from the Zokniai military airfield, 250 Jews from the brick factory in Daugėliai, near Kuršėnai, 200 Jews from the ammunition and bomb depots in Linkaičiai, and approximately 240 Jews from Akmenė.

On the night of July 21 to July 22, Soviet aircraft started intensive bombardments of the city of Šiauliai. Some bombs fell on the ghetto territory, killing several inmates, among them, a *Judenrat* member and its former chairman, Mendel Leibovitch.

On July 22, a third party of ghetto prisoners (1,500 people) were marched to Pavenčiai, which had a railroad station. They were forced to walk because the railroad and station in Šiauliai had been destroyed with bombardments.

Our family was marched in this column. Latvian SS men drove us 30 kilometers to the Pavenčiai sugar factory, where we were herded into some warehouses, which were empty in the summer. We spent the night there. In the morning we were put on railroad cars at the Pavenčiai railroad station, and transported to Stutthof. On the train,

we were guarded by the entire squad of the ghetto SS guard. Some twenty kilometers from Stutthof, we were put on open wagonettes of a narrow-gauge line and taken right to the gate of the Stutthof concentration camp\*.

These three groups of prisoners were sent by railroad directly to the Stutthof concentration camp.

On July 24, 1944, the last group of inmates left the city on foot and then on trucks. 160 workers of *Wehrmacht's* storehouses were sent to the Salaspils concentration camp near Riga. From there, they and the other Salaspils prisoners were sent by sea to Danzig and then, by rail, to Stutthof, 28 kilometers from Danzig. Several hundred men who were able to work were sent directly to the Dachau concentration camp.

The evacuation of the Šiauliai ghetto was done under the direction of the ghetto Commandant, Schlöf, and Operational Squad 3A officer, Förster.

While the trains with the ghetto inmates were moving westward, the troops of the Red Army's 1st Baltic Front, a reinforcement of the 3rd Belorussian Front's 5th Tank Army and the 3rd Mechanized Corps were approaching Šiauliai. After a series of harsh battles, they entered the city on July 27, 1944. Soon the 16th Lithuanian Division, where many Lithuanian Jews served, arrived to take part in neutralizing German counter-attacks.

As for the former Šiauliai ghetto inmates, they still had nearly a year of martyrdom in Stutthof and Dachau.

\* At present, this narrow-gauge line is part of the Museum complex of the Stutthof concentration camp (now the town of Sztutowo, Poland). (Ed.)

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\* The author, whose maiden name is Pesin(aitė), was born in Šiauliai.

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Žydai varomi į gėtą. Dešinėje matyti nebaigta statyti ligoninė, kur būvo *A.B.A.* dirbtuvės. Šiauliai, 1942 m.

Колонну евреев гонят в гетто. Справа видно недостроенное здание больницы, где находились мастерские *A.B.A.* Шяуляй, 1942 г.

A group of Jews being driven towards the ghetto. The *A.B.A.* workshops were in the unfinished hospital building (seen on the right). Šiauliai, 1942.



85.

Šiaulių ligoninė, V. Kudirkos g. 99. Nebaigtame statyti ligoninės pastate karo metu buvo žydų darbo stovyklos *A.B.A.* dirbtuvės.

Шяуляйская больница, ул. В. Кудиркос, 99. Во время войны в недостроенном здании больницы размещались мастерские еврейского рабочего лагеря *A.B.A.*

Šiauliai hospital, 99 V. Kudirkos St. Workshops of the Jewish labor camp, *A.B.A.* operated in the unfinished hospital building during the war.



86.



87.

Buvę Radviliškio durpyno žydų darbo stovyklos gyvenamieji barakai. Sutvarkytuose ir plytomis apmūrytuose namuose dabar gyvena durpyno darbininkai.

Бывшие бараки еврейского рабочего лагеря на торфянике в Радвилишкисе. В этих домах, облицованных кирпичом и благоустроенных, сейчас живут рабочие торфопредприятия.

Former barracks of a Jewish labor camp at the Radviliškis peat-bog. Workers of a peat-extracting enterprise are now living in these houses, which have been provided with amenities and tiled with bricks.

88.



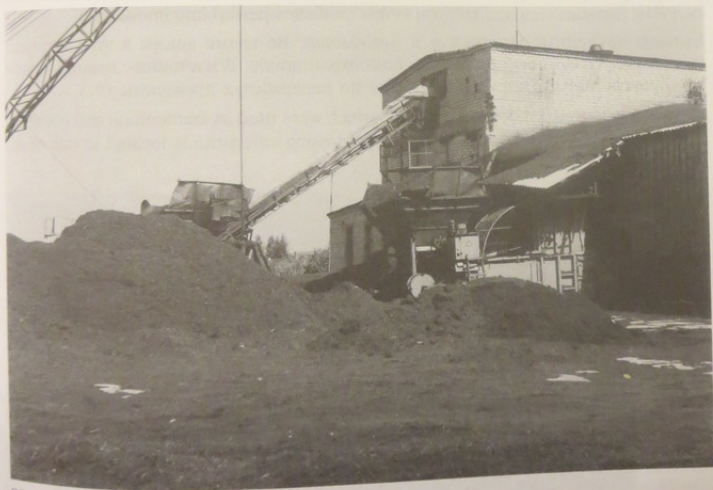
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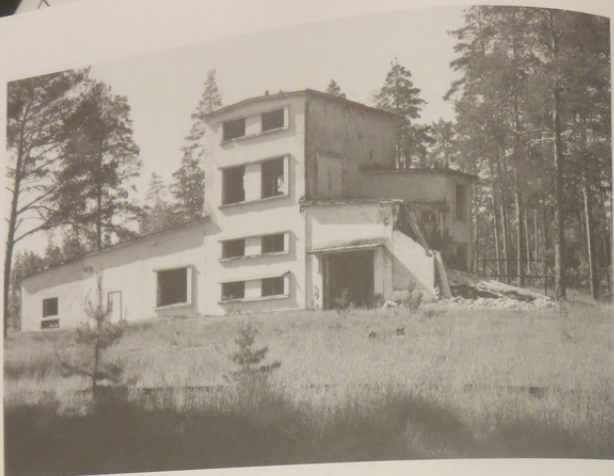


88.



89.

Radviliškio durpynas. Dabartinis vaizdas.  
Торфопредприятие в Радвилишкисе. Современный вид.  
The Radviliškis peat-cutting enterprise. Present-day aspect.



90.

Buvusios ginklų dirbtuvės Linkaičiuose. Karo metais čia buvo šaudmenų sandėliai ir bombų saugykla. Šiandien viename korpusų veikia medienos perdirbimo įmonė (91).

Бывшие оружейные мастерские в Линкайчяй. Во время войны в этих корпусах находились склады боеприпасов и бомбохранилище. В настоящее время в одном из корпусов размещается предприятие по переработке древесины (91).

Former weapon workshops in Linkaičiai, which were used as ammunition and bomb depots during the war. Presently, a timber-processing enterprise is located in one of the buildings (91).

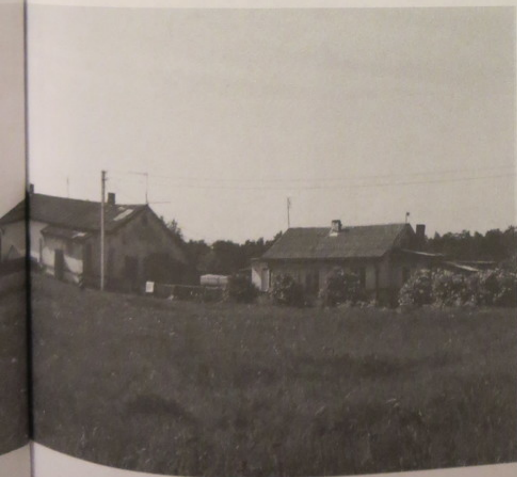


91.





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92.

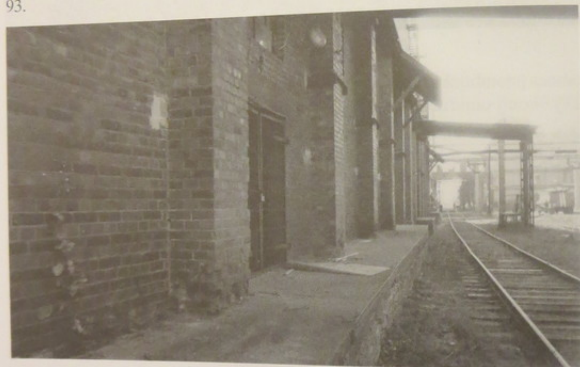
Buvę žydų darbo stovyklos gyvenamieji statiniai Linkaičiuose.

Здесь жили узники еврейского рабочего лагеря в Линкайчяй.

Former premises of the Jewish labor camp in Linkaičiai.



93.



94.

Cukraus fabrikas Pavėnčiuose, šalia Kuršėnų. Gatavos produkcijos sandėliai, viename kurių buvo žydų darbo stovyklos gyvenamosios patalpos. 1944 m. liepą čia buvo įkurdinta 1500 iš Šiaulių atvarytų žydų; jie prekiniuose vagonuose buvo nugabenti iš Pavėnčių stoties į Stuthofą.

Сахарный завод в Павяничай, близ Куршенай. Склад готовой продукции, в одном из помещений которого находилась жилая часть еврейского рабочего лагеря. В июле 1944 г. здесь разместили 1500 пригнанных из Шяуляй евреев, а затем в товарных вагонах отправили со станции Павяничай в Штуттгоф.

Sugar factory at Pavėnčiai, near Kuršėnai. The labor camp workers were housed in one of these warehouses. In July 1944, 1,500 Jews were driven here from Šiauliai and accommodated on the premises. From the railroad station of Pavėnčiai, they were transported in freight cars to Stuthof.

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96.

Plytinė Daug  
1943–1944 m.  
Кирпичный  
производств  
лагеря.

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where the inn

95.

Viena iš cukrinių runkelių perdirbimo operacijų cukraus fabrike.

Одна из операций по переработке сахарной свеклы на сахарном заводе.  
The processing of beetroot at the sugar factory.



96.

Plytinė Daugėliuose, šalia Kuršėnų (pastatyta 1938 m.) Buvęs gamybinis korpusas, kur 1943–1944 m. dirbo žydų darbo stovyklos kaliniai.

Кирпичный завод в Даугеляй, около Куршени (построен в 1938 г.). Бывший производственный корпус, где в 1943–1944 г. работали узники еврейского рабочего лагеря.

A brick factory at Daugėliai, near Kuršėnai (built in 1938). Former production premises where the inmates of the Jewish labor camp worked in 1943–1944.

Arūnas Bubnys

## The fate of Jews in Šiauliai and the Šiauliai Region

Arūnas Bubnys, Ph. D. was born in Ignalina, Lithuania, in 1961. Upon graduating from Vilnius University History Faculty in 1985, he started work as a researcher for Lithuanian Academy of Science, Institute of History. Through 1993–1997 he was Head of group of Lithuanian Archives Head Office and also Director of Lithuanian Special Archives (formerly, the KGB Archives). He is presently senior researcher at Lithuanian Institute of History, XX Century History Section. His research deals with the period of the Nazi occupation of Lithuania. In 1994, he got a Humanitarian Science doctor's degree for the thesis, "Lithuanian Anti-Nazi Resistance in 1941–1944". His major scientific works are "Lithuanian Anti-Nazi Resistance in 1941–1944", Vilnius, Vėja, 1991, 167 p.; "The Polish Underground in Lithuania, 1939–1944", Kaunas, Lituanica, 1994, 64 p.; "German-occupied Lithuania (1941–1944)", Vilnius, Center for Lithuanian Population Genocide and Resistance Research, 1998, 606 p., all in Lithuanian.

## The Šiauliai Ghetto

Before the Second World War, Šiauliai was home to one of the brightest Jewish communities in Lithuania. 9,847 Jews, or 71 per cent of the town's population, resided there in 1902. In 1915, during the First World War, when the armies of the *Kaiser* approached the area, Czarist authorities ordered that most of the Jews be deported to Russia, because they doubted Jewish loyalty. Many deportees returned to their home town when the hostilities were over.

During the times of the independent Lithuanian Republic (1920 through 1940), the Jews of Šiauliai enjoyed active professional, cultural, and political lives, with their own trade unions, banks, political parties, synagogues, a yeshiva, religious and secular schools, gymnasias (high schools), kindergartens, an orphanage, a hospital, a home for the aged, and other institutions. On the eve of World War II, the Jewish population of Šiauliai numbered between 6,500 and 8,000 people.<sup>1</sup>

Upon the annexation of Lithuania by the Soviet Union, 202 Jews became victims of the June 14, 1941 Soviet deportations (when approximately 700 Šiauliai residents were deported to Siberia and other distant areas).<sup>2</sup>

When Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, some of the Šiauliai Jews tried to escape to Russia. Approximately a hundred refugees managed to reach the hinterland. Others, however, did not have enough time, because of the rapid advance of Nazi troops. They had either to return to Šiauliai or seek refuge in the surrounding villages.<sup>3</sup>

The Red Army units stationed at Šiauliai left the city without offering any major resistance. Four German sol-

diers, eleven Jews, and fifty-one Lithuanians were killed during the occupation.

At the end of the war, the Lithuanian Jews became again victims of the Šiauliai Region. The Lithuanian LAF Board, headed by Juodis, C. Head of the Šiauliai. The "Lithuanian Red Army" fighting or still as Communist (Y. Soviet official the Soviet Jews became Nazi auth-

On the eve of the occupation in Šiauliai, the administration was established. Many officials and officers from the previous period of the LAF active officials and the role of the when the LAF created. They eventually given by Šiauliai Gewecke c-

Juozas M. City Mayor July 5, 1941 was assigned deputy mayor and Antanas appointed City Lithuanian

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diers, eleven anti-Soviet "Partisans", and fifty-one civilians died during the occupation of the city on June 26.<sup>4</sup>

At the start of the war, members of the Lithuanian Activists Front (LAF) became active in Šiauliai and the Šiauliai Region, as was the case all over Lithuania. Members of the Šiauliai LAF Board included J. Vilitis, A. Raulinaitis, V. Pauža, V. Ivanauskas, and P. Juodis. Captain L. Virbickas was the Head of the LAF Headquarters in Šiauliai. The "Partisans" began to persecute the Red Army soldiers who were retreating or still remained in the area, as well as Communists, members of the Komсомol (Young Communist League), Soviet officials, and other supporters of the Soviet regime. The persecution of Jews began, on the instigation of the Nazi authorities.

On the first days of the German occupation in Šiauliai, the Lithuanian administration and police force were reestablished. Many of President Smetona's officials and policemen returned to their previous positions. Initially, the Šiauliai LAF actively interfered in assigning officials and in administration affairs. The role of the LAF, however, decreased when the Lithuanian administration was created. The activities of the Front were eventually terminated upon instructions given by Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar* Hans Gewecke on September 29, 1941.<sup>5</sup>

Juozas Naujalis became the Šiauliai City Mayor. He held this position until July 5, 1941, when Petras Linkevičius was assigned to this post. Linkevičius' deputy mayors were Vaclovas Gedvila and Antanas Stankus.

Antanas Vabolis was the first to be appointed as the head of the Šiauliai City Lithuanian Police. Albinas Greb-

liūnas became the deputy chief. Initially, 75 servicemen served in the City Police, a body which received its orders from the local German military command. The main tasks of the police were to maintain order in the city and to assure the protection of the lives and property of the local population.<sup>6</sup>

Apart from the Lithuanian administration, various German institutions had their offices in Šiauliai. They included the Military Field Command (*Feldkommandantur*) No. 819 (in August 1941, its civil functions were assumed by the *Gebietskommissariat*), the Secret Military Field Police, and Squad No. 2 of the Operative Group (*Einsatzgruppe*) A. The squad was later reorganized into the Šiauliai Department of the German Security Police (the Gestapo) and of the Security Service (SD). The murder of Jews in the city of Šiauliai and in the Šiauliai Region (in Kuršėnai, Lygumai, Joniškis, and Radviliškis)\* was initially directed by SS *Hauptsturmführer* Werner Gottschalk, head of the *Restkommando*, a military unit belonging to the aforementioned Operative Squad No. 2.

We know that in late July 1941, the Third company of the German Police Battalion No. 65 arrived in Šiauliai. This company would repeatedly participate in the murder of the Šiauliai Jews during the summer of 1941. Other German military units also took part in the massacres. They included the 11th Reserve Police Battalion Squad, several units of the 307th Rifle Battalion, and even volunteers of the Reich Labor Service.<sup>7</sup>

The mass arrests of Šiauliai's Jews took place on June 30th, July 1st, and July 5th. Among the arrested were twenty of the most distinguished mem-

\* According to German historian, Christoph Dieckmann.

bers of the Šiauliai Jewish Community, including the Chief Rabbi, Aron Bakst. The victims were taunted, and anything of value was stolen from them. They were held as hostages in the city jail until July 11, when they were executed for an alleged Jewish attack on German soldiers. Approximately 1,000 Jews were murdered before the establishment of the ghetto.<sup>8</sup>

The first mass murder of Šiauliai Jews was perpetrated in the Kužiai forest, 12 kilometers from Šiauliai, on June 29, 1941. According to estimates, several thousand Jewish residents of the city of Šiauliai and of the Šiauliai Region were murdered in the forest during the summer of 1941. The victims also included ethnic Lithuanian and Russian members of the Communist party and the Komsomol. According to witness accounts, the Kužiai killings were perpetrated by the Germans.<sup>9</sup>

In July of 1941, the Nazis began to remove, by truck, Jews and Soviet supporters imprisoned in the Šiauliai jail. The victims were taken to a location near the Šiauliai – Radviliškis road, seven kilometers from Šiauliai, in the vicinity of the village of Pročiūnai, where they were murdered. In 1944, a State Commission<sup>9</sup> that worked at the site, uncovered eight large pits where the corpses of 732 victims were buried. According to the witness account of Rakauskas, a resident of the village of Pročiūnai, most of the victims were

murdered during daylight hours. The executioners, who were servicemen of the Operative Squad No. 2, used rifles and automatic weapons.<sup>10 \*\*</sup>

Mass murders of Šiauliai Jews were carried out near the village of Bubiai, 15 kilometers from Šiauliai, during September of 1941. Groups of victims, numbering close to 500, were brought to the site in ten trucks. The murders would begin early in the afternoon and last until dark. Before they were shot, the Jews were forced to undress, beaten, and then driven into the pits.<sup>11</sup> Witnesses to the murders state that the executions were directed by German officers, although Lithuanian "Partisans" participated as well.<sup>12</sup>

The destruction of Šiauliai's Jews was most intense in the early part of September 1941. From September 7 through 15, Jewish men, women, and children from Šiauliai were killed in the Gubernija Forest, a part of the Normančiai Forest District. Local inhabitants testify that a total of 25 large trucks arrived in the forest, with close to forty people in each truck. In addition, a yellow passenger bus also transported victims to the murder site. The shootings would start near 3 or 4 p. m., and were supervised by German officers. The executioners were the Partisans and the soldiers of the 14th Lithuanian Police Battalion, quartered in Šiauliai. In 1944, the Commission that investigated the murder site, uncovered four ditches and

<sup>8</sup> The Special State Commission for Ascertaining the Crimes of the Nazi Invaders and Their Local Assistants <...> was established in Moscow in 1942. After the retreat of the Nazis from their occupied territories, including Lithuania, commissions correspondingly for republics, regions, cities, etc., for investigating the crimes of the Nazis and their assistants, were established. At that time, the Soviet security service arrested some of the murder participants, who were sentenced to various punishments, including the death punishment. Some of the murderers managed to flee abroad, and remained unpunished (as did Romualdas Kolokša).

<sup>\*\*</sup> According to Leiba Lipshitz's data, the murders in the Kužiai forest and in the village of Pročiūnai were carried out by the "Activists", and directed by the *Restkommando*. (Ed.)

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found corpses with bullet-wounds to the head. The Commission estimates that approximately one thousand people were murdered in the Gubernija forest.<sup>13</sup>

The last major murder of Jews in 1941 took place during December 8–15. On the orders of *Gebietskommissar* H. Gewecke and the German Security Police and SD head, 72 Jews from Šiauliai, who worked in nearby villages, were seized and then shot. The executioners were policemen from Kuršėnai, Stačiūnai, Radviliškis, and Pakruojis.<sup>14</sup>

The statistical data from the autumn of 1941 verifies a decrease in the population of the Šiauliai ghetto. On August 20, the Šiauliai City Government informed the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar* that the city had 36,200 inhabitants. 30,801 of them were ethnic Lithuanians, and 5,034 were Jews.<sup>15</sup> A similar report for November 1941, informed the *Gebietskommissar* of 39,678 city residents (35,000 Aryans and 4,674 Jews).<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the arrests and executions, legal discrimination against Jews was carried out. The Jews were gradually deprived of their civil rights and property. An order by the mayor of Šiauliai, issued on July 5, 1941, prohibited the Jews from displaying the Lithuanian national flag on their houses. The same order was given by the Šiauliai Regional Head to the authorities of rural districts and mayors of smaller towns on July 7.<sup>17</sup> On July 15, the mayor of Šiauliai issued an announcement compelling Jews to hand in to the City Government all radio sets in their possession, by July 16th.<sup>18</sup>

The German occupation authorities began to envision the establishment of a ghetto in Šiauliai as early as the beginning of July, 1941. At that time, vice

mayor Antanas Stankus was put “In charge of Jewish Affairs”, a post he held until February 1, 1942.<sup>19</sup> Instructions for establishing the ghetto were given by the Šiauliai City Military Commandant. For this task, and in order to relocate the Jews to their new residences, A. Stankus elicited the participation of the city’s authoritative Jewish representatives. A Jewish committee, in cooperation with the Lithuanian authorities, was set up to deal with the problems of moving the Jews to the ghetto. The committee included Mendel Leibovitch (the former owner of a car- and motorcycle shop), Ber Kartun (a merchant), and Fayvel Rubinstein (formerly a workshop owner).<sup>20</sup>

Jewish registration was proclaimed. All city Jews were required to be registered at the City Government’s office at 3, Gaisrininkų St.\*, from July 19 to July 22, 20 p. m.<sup>21</sup>

On July 18, the Šiauliai city mayor, in agreement with the German Military Commandant, Konowski, issued the following announcement regarding the Jews. Jews who had escaped from Šiauliai at the start of the war were prohibited from returning. Those who considered doing so were threatened with arrests. All Jews residing in Šiauliai, irrespective of their sex and age, were compelled to display a yellow Star of David on the left side of their chest. This order had to be implemented no later than July 20, 1941. Jews were allowed to walk in the streets and appear in public places only between the hours of 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. The announcement stated that the Jews were to move to the Šiauliai suburb known as Kaukazas and to the town of Žagare. Non-Jewish residents of these areas

\* Pre-war addresses.

"were allowed" to move to other parts of the city of Šiauliai. The Jews who owned immovable property in Šiauliai, were required to exchange their property with Lithuanians in Žagare who had immovables and were willing to move out of their town.<sup>22</sup>

Two neighborhoods were chosen for the ghetto. One, as mentioned above, was Kaukazas. The other encompassed Ežero and Trakų streets. The two areas were separated by 300 meters. The Jewish Committee was given a room at the site of the City Government. The latter paid for the expense of fencing off the ghetto, while the Jewish Committee had to provide the work force. After the ghetto was enclosed, the transfer of Jews from various city districts to the assigned territory proceeded.

Upon the instructions of A. Stankus, several commissions were set up for the removal of the Jews to the ghetto. Each committee had three members: a teacher, a representative from the city government, and a policeman. Their task was three-fold: they delivered to the Jews the order to move to the ghetto; they registered Jewish property (especially gold and other valuables), and were responsible for delivering the property to the City Government. The process of moving the Jews to the ghetto and the confiscation of their property took several weeks.<sup>23</sup>

On August 9, 1941, the mayor of Šiauliai issued a declaration with specific instructions for establishing the ghetto. The Jews who lived in the city were told to move to Kaukazas, to the territory between Ežero and Trakų Streets, and to the Kalniukas neighborhood. (However, it was later decided not to include Kalniukas as part of the ghetto). By August 13, the Jews had to provide information regarding their apartments to the official in charge of Jewish affairs.

Non-Jews who lived in the areas designated for the ghetto were invited by the City Government to choose the locations and the apartments they would like to move into.<sup>24</sup> The Jewish Committee was in charge of distributing ghetto dwellings to the Jews.

The relocation of the Jews began with Kaukazas, then included the ghetto of Ežero-Trakų. The resettlement was completed by August 15.<sup>25</sup> Between 4 to 5 thousand Jews were forced into the ghettos. The ghettos were encircled by two-meter high barbed wire fences. The ghetto gate was constantly guarded by police. Leaving the ghetto was allowed only upon the presentation of special passes.

The number of Jews forced into the ghetto was greater than the available housing. To solve this problem, the "excess" inmates were removed from the ghetto and murdered. In the first days of September, a number of Jews for whom there was no room to be found, were herded into the synagogues and the Jewish Home for the Elderly on Vilniaus Street. There, they were registered, and the lists were handed to A. Stankus. As Stankus later said, most of these Jews (the elderly and those deemed unfit to work) were taken to Žagare or to Kužiai, where they were murdered.<sup>26</sup> When the chairman of the Jewish Committee, Mendel Leibovitch, visited the synagogues on September 4, he found them empty. On September 7th (in other sources, 6th), the squad under the command of Lieutenant Romualdas Kolokša, formerly a lawyer in Užventis, raided the Jewish orphanage, where they seized 47 children and two educators. These Jews were taken to the forest and murdered. On September 13th, the police entered the ghetto, arrested many elderly people, and took them away to murder.<sup>27</sup>

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In late August 1941, A. Stankus, the official in charge of Jewish affairs, received instructions from the *Gebietskommissariat* to issue new personal identity cards for the Jewish population. Thus it was expected to reduce the population in the overcrowded ghettos. A special commission established upon the instructions of A. Stankus, worked in contact with the Jewish Committee and fulfilled its task for the Ežero-Trakų Ghetto. According to A. Stankus, dozens of Jews who were considered unfit to work were sent to Žagarė, where they were later murdered.<sup>28</sup> A. Stankus later affirmed that he and members of the Jewish Committee tried to find out why some Jews were being removed from Šiauliai. The *Gebietskommissar's* representatives answered that they were following the orders of their superiors, because it was impossible to house all the Šiauliai Jews in the ghetto.<sup>29</sup>

During the establishment of the ghetto and immediately afterwards, the German and Lithuanian administrations showed particular interest in Jewish property. While the ghetto was being organized, the Jews were allowed to sell their movable and immovable property. Those who wanted to do so were to appear at the City Government office for registration. Jewish property could be sold or acquired by the non-Jewish population only with permission from the city government.<sup>30</sup>

After the Jews were confined in the ghetto, the confiscated Jewish gold and other valuables were remitted to the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissariat*. This was to be done according to corresponding acts and inventory lists. Some Jewish property (namely, the furniture) was taken by *Gebietskommissariat's* officials. The rest was allowed to be sold to the local population.<sup>31</sup>

In later months, the problem of Jewish property continued to be of great interest to the occupational authorities, which issued numerous instructions and announcements regarding the property.

On August 18, 1941, A. Stankus announced that all persons who had bought or otherwise acquired Jewish property, were required to register at the City Government's office no later than August 23. An exception was made for people who had already registered with the official in charge of Jewish affairs and received permission to buy Jewish property.<sup>32</sup> The deadline for registration, however, was repeatedly extended, and finally became effective on December 1, 1941.<sup>33</sup>

The Jewish issue was discussed in more detail at a meeting of the Šiauliai *Gebiet* district authorities and police heads, which took place on September 4, 1941. Officials of the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissariat* made it clear to the representatives of local administrations that "all Jewish property will be confiscated and dealt with according to the instructions of the *Gebietskommissar*. The local administrations are responsible for having all Jewish movable and immovable property registered".<sup>34</sup> The Jews were thus deprived of any right to dispose of their own property. Jews who violated this regulation were arrested and put into the custody of the German police.<sup>35</sup>

On October 18, 1941, the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar* Hans Gewecke sent written instructions to all chiefs of Šiauliai *Gebiet's* districts and city mayors regarding property that formerly belonged to Jews, freemasons, political parties and organizations. The order was given to confiscate and seal:

"1. All synagogues.

2. All the Jewish Community's offices, with their archives, libraries, and other property.

3. The apartments and offices of Rabbis and Chief Rabbis.

4. All Jewish bookshops and Jewish shops dealing with works of art. <...>”

This act had to be completed before October 23.<sup>36</sup>

The Šiauliai city mayor, in response to H. Gewecke's written instructions, informed him that there was a synagogue at 136, Tilžės Street, in Šiauliai, where a bookcase of religious books was placed in the courtyard. In addition, two other synagogues were located at 19 Varpo and 27 Varpo Street, but without any Jewish books or works of art at the site. The Šiauliai State Library took approximately 1,300 Jewish books, which were placed in storage and not made available for people to read.<sup>37</sup> The Jewish High School's library had been ransacked by the local population, and what remained was handed over to the city Library.

The German occupational administration allowed some of the confiscated Jewish property to be sold to local inhabitants. On October 14, the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar* informed the regional administration heads of the Šiauliai *Gebiet*, that “the expropriated Jewish objects, with the exception of the more valuable ones, can be sold, with the participation of a Commission assigned by the Regional Head and Mayor. The income should be placed in the *Gebietskommissariat's* special account J of the State German Credit Fund”.<sup>38</sup> In late October, the *Gebietskommissar* allowed the Lithuanian administration to sell the remaining Jewish furniture. The money obtained from this sale was also placed in the aforementioned special account J.<sup>39</sup>

Jewish administration and a Jewish police force were created in the Šiauliai ghetto, similar to the structure of the

ghettos established in Vilnius and Kaunas. As mentioned above, the Jewish Committee, which included M. Leibovitch, B. Kartun, and F. Rubinstein, was founded during the preparations to establish the ghetto. Inside the ghetto, this committee was reorganized into the Jewish Council, or *Judenrat*. Its authority extended to both Ežero-Trakų and Kaukazas. The *Judenrat*, headed by M. Leibovitch, maintained contacts with the German and Lithuanian authorities.<sup>40</sup>

Other members of the *Judenrat* were influential Šiauliai Jews: Aron Katz, Ber Kartun, Aron Heller, and B. M. Abramovitch. Teacher E. Yerushalmi was the *Judenrat* secretary. The main responsibility of the Jewish Council was to direct the inner ghetto life, while maintaining contacts with the German and Lithuanian administrative offices and institutions. 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).<sup>41</sup> The ghetto administration supervised the maintenance of public order in the ghetto territory, the assignment of labor forces, food supplies and their distribution within the ghetto, sanitation, and other everyday activities.

A food shop and a forty-bed hospital were opened in the ghetto. Beginning in September 1941, the inmates were driven to their different places of work at locations such as the Zokniai airfield, various workshops, the Rekyva and Radviliškis peat-bogs, the Linkaičiai weapon workshops, and the Pavenčiai sugar factory.<sup>42</sup> The Jews were not paid money for their work. The *Arbeitsamt* (German Labor Exchange) transferred the money to the ghetto administration.<sup>43</sup>

Ephraim Gens was made head of the Ežero-Trakų ghetto Police in early September 1941. He had 11 to 12 policemen at his disposal, who did not carry weapons. They wore white armbands (on their left arm) with a six-pointed star and the inscription "Ghetto Police" in Yiddish and in German. The ghetto policemen were responsible for maintaining public order inside the ghetto. More specifically, housing and resettlement of the inmates, prevention of crimes, such as robbery and speculation (food smuggling), maintenance of proper sanitary conditions, and the formation of "work brigades" (groups of workers). Those who violated order in the ghetto were punished with fines, confinement in solitary cells, and temporary prohibition to work. The sanctions were assigned by the Ghetto Court of Law.<sup>44</sup>

Ephraim Gens remained Police Head of the Ežero-Trakų ghetto until April of 1944, when he resigned because of a disagreement with the new ghetto administration head, Georg Pariser. Gens then became an ordinary ghetto inmate, while Chaim Berlovitch occupied his previous post.<sup>45</sup>

David Fayn was Police Head in the Kaukazas ghetto. His deputy was Zavel Gotz, who eventually replaced Fayn in his duties, in July 1943.<sup>46</sup>

Underground anti-Nazi resistance groups emerged in the Šiauliai ghetto. The most active members of the Young Zionists movement created a secret organization in late 1941. Another secret "self-defense" organization, headed by engineer Yosel Leibovitch, appeared in 1942, with both Zionist and Communist membership. They acquired and kept weapons, although no armed action was undertaken. Small underground newspapers, "Massada", "Hatechiya", and "Mimamakim" were issued.<sup>47</sup>

In 1943, schools were established in both ghettos, with an enrollment of 90 pupils in the Ežero-Trakų ghetto, and 200 pupils in Kaukazas.<sup>48</sup>

The Šiauliai ghetto fell under the supervision of *Gebietskommissar* Gewecke until October 1, 1943, when, like the Kaunas ghetto, it came under the jurisdiction of the SS. The ghetto then acquired the status of a concentration camp, whose head was SS *Oberscharführer* Hermann Schlöf. The ghetto was then guarded by a squad of 30 SS-men, headed by SS *Rottenführer* Henning. Order inside the ghetto was maintained, as before, by approximately ten servicemen of the Ghetto police.<sup>49</sup> A German Jew, Georg Pariser, became head of the ghetto interior administration on April 1, 1944. His deputies were S. Burgin (ghetto economy), M. Leibovitch (administrative issues), and Ch. Berlovitch (Police Head). Ch. Tcherniavski was the secretary; Dr. Vulf Peisachovitch was chief of the Sanitation and Health Department; Josel Leibovitch was the Housing Department chief.<sup>50</sup> Pariser carried out the instructions of the German authorities with thoroughness. He became the secret informer for the concentration camp head Schlöf. As such, he denounced six Jews to the Germans, for their intentions to escape from the ghetto. These people were arrested and transferred to other concentration camps, with more severe regimes. (According to other sources, they were executed).<sup>51</sup>

With the end of the mass murders that took place during the summer and autumn of 1941, the Šiauliai ghetto enjoyed a relatively calm period. However, on November 5, 1943, under the active leadership of SS *Hauptsturmführer* Förster, a "selection" of children and people unable to work was carried

out in the ghetto. On that day, SS-men who had arrived from Kaunas seized 570 children and 260 elderly Jews and sent them westward to concentration camps (as supposed, to Auschwitz). The *Judenrat* members B. Kartun and A. Katz accompanied the detainees.<sup>52</sup> In June 1943, S. Mazovetsky was publicly hanged for attempting to smuggle food and cigarettes into the ghetto. The execution was carried out on the order of Šiauliai *Vice-Gebietskommissar* E. Bub.<sup>53</sup>

On December 12, 1943, SS *Oberscharführer* Graudel, Commandant of the Akmenė Jewish labor camp, ordered the seizure of eight children and one woman. They were killed by members of the so-called Russian Liberation Army (a pro-Nazi military unit), with all the inmates forced to watch.

On the eve of the evacuation of the ghetto, on July 8, 1944, several Jews who worked in Frenkel's factory tried to escape. Reinhardt, the factory director, ordered guards to shoot at the fleeing Jews. Two women and two children were killed.<sup>54</sup>

The Kaukazas ghetto had been liquidated in mid-October 1943. The only ghetto remaining in the city was that of Ežero-Trakų. Some of the Jews were transferred to the labor camps of Daugėliai, Pavenčiai, and others in the vicinity.<sup>55</sup>

On July 15, 1944, the final liquidation of the Šiauliai ghetto began. Several thousand Jews were deported, in four large groups, to the Stutthof concentration camp. From there, the men were taken to Dachau concentration camp. The women who had children were taken to Auschwitz. Women who,

according to the Nazis, were fit for work, were left in Stutthof. Some Jews from Šiauliai were among the inmates liberated by American troops on May 2, 1945. The number of survivors from the Šiauliai ghetto was between 350 to 500 people.<sup>56\*</sup>

The history of the Šiauliai ghetto can be divided into four periods.

The first period was September-November 1941. Administrations for the two ghettos were created, comprising the Jewish Council, various services, and the Ghetto Police. This was also the period of implementing mass murder *Aktionen* against the Jews, especially in September 1941.

The second period was from late 1941 until the summer of 1943. It was marked by relative calm and stability, without any mass murders.

The third period, from September 1943 until mid-July 1944, is when the ghetto passed from the German civil administration to the authority of the SS, and became a concentration camp.

The fourth period refers to the second half of July 1944, when the Šiauliai ghetto was liquidated and its inhabitants deported to German concentration camps.<sup>57</sup>

1. N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, Lithuanian Jewish Communities, London, 1996, p. 273-275; Enzyklopädie des Holocaust: die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden, München-Zürich, Bd. 3, 1995, p. 1280 (further Enzyklopädie...).
2. List of the Jews Deported by the Bolsheviks in 1941, MAB RS, f. 76-190, l. 19-23; Data of Šiauliai City Government's Administrative Department for 1942, *ibid.*, f. 76-185, l. 166.

\* Some were liberated in the concentration camps, others survived thanks to local Lithuanian people, who risked their own lives to give refuge to the Jews. (*Ed.*)

3. Enzyklopädie..., Bd. 3, p. 1281; Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, New York, London, 1990, p. 1348-1349.
4. Šiauliai City Government's Administrative Department's Report to Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar*, Nov. 14, 1941, MAB RS, f. 76-179, l. 15.
5. Šiauliai City Police Chief's report to the mayor of Šiauliai, Oct. 1, 1941, MAB RS, f. 76-181, l. 125; LCVA, f. R-1099, ap. 1, b. 1, l. 99. H. Gewecke had repeated the order of A. T. von Renteln.
6. German Military Commandant's instructions for the Šiauliai city police, July 4, 1941, MAB RS, f. 76-182, l. 1-2, 4.
7. Ch. Dieckmann, Überlegungen zur deutschen Besatzungsherrschaft in Osteuropa 1941-1944: Das Beispiel Litauen, *Annaberger Annalen*, 1997, No. 5, p. 34.
8. Дневник А. (Е. - Ed.) Ерушалми, Шяуляй (Шавли), Черная книга, сост. под ред. В. Гроссмана, И. Эренбурга (Jerushalmi's Diary, Šiauliai (Shavli), The Black Book, ed. by V. Grossman and I. Ehrenburg), Vilnius, YAD, 1993, p. 265, 522; r. E. Oshry, The Annihilation of Lithuanian Jewry, New York, 1995, p. 248; Enzyklopädie..., Bd. 3, p. 1281.
9. Memorandum by the Šiauliai Region's Working People's Deputies' Council Executive Committee, April 4, 1968, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1261, l. 86; L. Peleckienė, Prie Šiaulių geto vartų skambėjo gedulingas „Requiem“, *Lietuvos rytas*, 1994 m. liep. 26 d., p. 12.
10. Statement of disinterring the remains of the Šiauliai city inhabitants murdered in the forest at the village of Pročiūnai, October 14, 1944, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1274, l. 32-1-32-4.
11. Note issued by the Soviet Lithuanian K.G.B. about mass murders in the Šiauliai Region in 1941, Feb. 7, 1973, *ibid.*, l. 1.
12. Z. Ašmonienė's Examination Record, Jan. 23, 1973, *ibid.*, l. 5-7.
13. Statement of disinterring the remains of the Šiauliai City inhabitants murdered in the Gubernija Forest, Nov. 16, 1944, *ibid.*, l. 47-1-47-2; Note by Captain Obratsov, Soviet Lithuanian K.G.B. Šiauliai City Chief Operative Official, about the 14th Lithuanian Police Battalion, undated, *ibid.*, ap. 47, b. 1268, l. 145.
14. Statement of the Description of Murders in the Šiauliai City Jewish Ghetto, Nov. 25, 1944, MAB RS, f. 159-29, l. 3-3 a. p.
15. Šiauliai City Government's Report to the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar*, Aug. 20, 1941, MAB RS, f. 76-181, l. 5.
16. Šiauliai City Government's Report to the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar*, Nov. 14, 1941, *ibid.*, f. 76-179, l. 15.
17. Šiauliai City Mayor's Order No. 4, July 5, 1941, see p. 72.; Šiauliai Region Chief's Report, July 7, 1941, LCVA, f. R-1099, ap.1, b. 1, l. 13.
18. Šiauliai City Mayor's Announcement, July 15, 1941, see p. 74.
19. Šiauliai City Government's Report to the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar*, Aug. 13, 1941, MAB RS, f. 76-181, l. 2.
20. Excerpts from A. Stankus' Examination Record, Oct. 20, 1950, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 8, b. 182, l. 158-159.
21. Announcement by the Šiauliai City Government's Official for Jewish Affairs, *ibid.*
22. Šiauliai City Mayor's Announcement, July 18, 1941, see p. 75,77.
23. Excerpts from A. Stankus' Examination Record, Oct. 20, 1950, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 8, b. 182, l. 158-159.
24. Šiauliai City Mayor's Announcements, Aug. 9, 1941, see p. 89.
25. Дневник А. Ерушалми, p. 522.
26. Excerpts from A. Stankus' Examination Record, Oct. 20, 1950, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 8, b.182, l. 160.
27. Statement of the Description of Murders in the Šiauliai City Jewish Ghetto, Nov. 25, 1944, MAB RS, f. 159-29, l. 3-3 a. p.; Дневник А. Ерушалми, p. 266, 267.
28. Excerpts from A. Stankus' Examination Record, Oct. 20, 1950, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 8, b. 182, l. 161-162.
29. A. Stankus' Examination Record, Sept. 28, 1950, *ibid.*, ap. 58, b. 23103/3, l. 26-27.

30. Šiauliai City Mayor's Announcement, July 23, 1941, MAB RS, f. 76-183, l. 1.
31. Excerpts from A. Stankus' Examination Record, Oct. 20, 1950, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 8, b. 182, l. 159, 160.
32. Announcement by the Official for Jewish Affairs, Aug. 18, 1941, MAB RS, f. 76-183, l. 2.
33. Šiauliai City Mayor's Announcement, No. 26, Nov. 20, 1941, *ibid.*, l. 5.
34. Summary of the meeting held at the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissariat* on Sept. 4, 1941, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1274, l. 74.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar's* Message, Oct. 18, 1941, LCVA, f. R-1099, ap. 1, b. 1, l. 377-379.
37. Šiauliai City Mayor's Report to the *Gebietskommissar* (undated), MAB RS, f. 76-181, l. 171.
38. Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar's* Message, Oct. 14, 1941, *ibid.*, f. 76-180, l. 15.
39. Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar's* Message, Oct. 24, 1941 *ibid.*, l. 19.
40. E. Gens' Examination Record, Jan. 21, 1948, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 42809/3, l. 18.
41. E. Gens' Examination Record, June 29, 1948, *ibid.*, l. 25; A. Tory, *Surviving the Holocaust: The Kovno Ghetto Diary*, London, 1990, p. 460.
42. *Enzyklopädie...*, Bd. 3, p. 1281.
43. A. Galūnas' Examination Record, Sept. 6, 1951, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. P-16850-L1, l. 19.
44. E. Gens' Examination Record, Jan. 21, 1948, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 42809/3, l. 13-14.
45. *Ibid.*, l. 15-16.
46. L. Lazeris' Examination Record, June 21, 1950, *ibid.*, b. 18181/3, l. 22-23.
47. *Enzyklopädie...*, Bd. 3, p. 1281.
48. *Дневник А. Ерушалми*, p. 269.
49. G. Parizer's Examination Record, April 17, 1945, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1228, l. 1-2.
50. G. Parizer's Examination Record, April 24, 1945, *ibid.*, l. 1-9-1-11.
51. Military Tribunal's Sentence to G. Parizer, July 2, 1945, *ibid.*, l. 1-18-1-19.
52. *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje (Mass Murders in Lithuania)*, 1941-1944. *Dokumentų rinkinys*, II d., Vilnius, „Mintis“, 1973, p. 342; Notes about H. Schlof's activities (Feb. 4, 1972), LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1228, l. 1-2; *Дневник А. Ерушалми*, p. 279.
53. E. Gens' Examination Record, March 11, 1969, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1228, l. 14, 15.
54. Statement of the Description of Murders in the Šiauliai City Jewish Ghetto, Nov. 25, 1944, MAB, f. 159-29, l. 2 a. p.
55. *Дневник А. Ерушалми*, p. 276-277.
56. L. Peleckienė. *Prie Šiaulių geto vartų...*; E. Gens' Examination Record, Jan. 21, 1948, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 42809/3, l. 12-13.
57. *Enzyklopädie...*, Bd. 3, p. 1281.

## The Šiauliai Region

During the Nazi occupation period, the Šiauliai Region was comprised of 23 districts, or lesser administrative units (rural districts). At the beginning of the occupation, most of these districts had large Jewish communities. The largest Jewish populations were in the towns and districts of Žagarė, Joniškis, Kuršėnai, Linkuva, Pakruojis, and Radviliškis. In other districts, the Jews were not as numerous. According to the general population census of 1923, the Šiauliai Region (not including the city of Šiauliai) Jewish inhabitants numbered 8,161.<sup>1</sup> By the end of August 1941, when the mass murder of Jews was its most intense, only 3,226 Jews, or 1.5 per cent of the total Region's population, remained.<sup>2</sup>

With the beginning of the Nazi occupation of Lithuania, violent and indiscriminate persecution of Jews began in the Šiauliai region, as it did in other parts of the country. The Jews were

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deprived of their civil rights. Jewish arrests and confinement to temporary ghettos as well as their murder were a common thing. Jewish men were taken away to be killed mainly in July and August of 1941. Some weeks later, the slaughter escalated to include women and children as well.

In many district centers, small "ghettos" were established. Usually comprised of a few houses, former soldiers' barracks, or a farmstead situated in the outskirts of the town, these "ghettos" actually were nothing more than transit points for the victims. The Jews would spend anywhere from a few days to several weeks, before they were murdered, or transported to the ghetto of Žagarė. Jews from all over the Šiauliai Region were concentrated in Žagarė.

Lithuanian administrative officials were widely involved in the oppression of Jews. The officials included members of regional administrations, the heads of districts, police officials of various ranks, and the so-called "Partisans", or "white arm-banders". They organized and carried out, upon the instructions of the German occupational authorities, the establishment of the ghettos. They also made the actual arrests of Jews, confiscated Jewish property, and participated in the massacres. Almost all the Jews of the Šiauliai Region (apart from the city

of Šiauliai) were murdered in the summer and autumn of 1941.

The Lithuanian administration, abolished by the Soviets in 1940, was re-established throughout the country in the initial days of the Nazi occupation. The Šiauliai Region was no exception. Encouraged by the Lithuanian Provisional Government in Kaunas, many former functionaries from Independent Lithuania recovered their positions of regional and district authority (officials, policemen, etc.). Ignas Urbaitis was the first person to occupy the post of "Šiauliai Regional Head", from June 30 until August 5, 1941. He then resigned from this position, which was subsequently taken over by Jonas Noreika.\* The Regional Head supervised the formation and function of the administrative apparatus, the revival of economic structures, food supply, transportation, and other issues related to the economy. It was not long, however, before the Lithuanian administrative officials were involved by the occupational power into the "solution of the Jewish question".

In mid-July, 1941, Konowski, the German Military Commandant of Šiauliai, ordered Urbaitis to organize the relocation of Jews from all the districts of the Šiauliai Region into isolated ghettos. Correspondingly, the Head of the Šiauliai Region issued his own or-

\* Jonas Noreika (1910-1947), Captain, Kaunas University Faculty of Law graduate. In 1941 he became a member of the LAF, and directed the uprising in the Telšiai Region. The Temporary Government of Lithuania appointed him Head of the Šiauliai Region. When he wrote (but not published) an article in 1943 about his impressions of his trip to Germany, he fell into disgrace with the German authorities. Noreika, with 45 other Lithuanian intellectuals, was imprisoned in the Stutthof concentration camp, from where he was liberated by the Red Army in 1945. He then worked as a legal adviser for the Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. He was arrested by Soviet Security personnel in 1946, for having established an anti-Soviet organization, known as the National Council of Lithuania, and for the preparation for an armed uprising. (He used to sign his appeals and documents with the pseudonym, General Vėtra). In 1947, he was executed (shot) for his collaboration with the Nazi regime during the years 1941-1943, and the creation of an anti-Soviet organization. In 1997, he was posthumously awarded the 1st Grade Vytyis Cross (from the book: Viktoras Ašmenskis. *Generolas Vėtra. Kaunas, Aušra, 1998*). (Ed.)

der, allowing the Jews one week's time to move to sites appointed by the district heads.<sup>4</sup>

The archives preserve the Šiauliai Regional Head's announcement No. 6, issued on July 23, 1941. This order banned the Jews who had fled their towns or villages from returning to their former homes. Jews were forced to sew yellow Stars of David on their clothing\*, and were only allowed to be out of their homes between the hours of 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. The Jews who lived in small towns were ordered to move to sites appointed by the district heads and town mayors. This was to be done in the period between July 25 and August 15.<sup>5</sup>

While the Jews were being forced from their homes, regional authorities were engaged with settling the disposition of Jewish property. On August 6, 1941, the new Šiauliai Regional Head, Noreika dispatched the following instructions to district heads and town mayors, stating that "both movable and immovable property of Communist officials and citizens of Jewish ethnicity, left behind without custody, should be put under the supervision of local governments for protection, until the government issues a decision on how this property should be disposed of".<sup>6</sup> The local governments were put in charge of preserving, listing, and evaluating the property. The lists, one for movable property and another for immovable, were to be made in triplicate. Two copies were sent to the Regional Head, and the third copy remained for the local government. The movable property, which could be ruined if kept for too long, was allowed to be sold at auctions, held on site. The auctions were organized by district heads

and town mayors. The income from the auctions remained at the cashier's offices of the local government, until they received special instructions. The Jews who were moved into the ghettos were allowed to take property "upon their own criterion".<sup>7</sup>

On September 22, 1941, carrying out the instructions of the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar*, the Šiauliai City and Regional Head, Jonas Noreika, sent a message to the Region's district heads and town mayors. According to this message, the period from August 25 through 29 was set as the timetable for all Jews of the Šiauliai Region to move to Žagarė. They were allowed to take only clothing and the necessary household objects. Each family could take money, up to the amount of 200 marks. The newly established Žagarė ghetto had to be completely fenced off by August 30. The inmates were not allowed to leave the ghetto. Only those Jews who worked outside the ghetto received permission, and were escorted under armed guard.<sup>8</sup> For the Jews of the Šiauliai Region, the ghetto of Žagarė became their last home.

On September 4, 1941, the Heads of the Regions and the regional police chiefs were summoned to the office of the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar*, for a meeting that dealt primarily with the Jewish "problem". As for Jewish property, the *Gebietskommissar's* instructions were as follows:

"All of the Jewish property should be confiscated and dealt with as appointed by the *Gebietskommissar*. The Regional heads are responsible for having all Jewish movable and immovable property registered.

\* See Šiauliai Regional Head J. Noreika's Memorandum No. 776, Aug. 16, 1941 (i. e. after Gevecke's announcement No. 2, Aug. 13, 1941) on wearing the Star of David by the Jews both on their chest and back. LCVA, F. R-1099, ap. 1, b. 1, l. 130. (Ed.)

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4. Ibid., l.

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7. Ibid.

8. Šiauliai  
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"From this day on, Jews have no right to dispose of their property. If a Jew is seen trying in any way to transfer his property to another person, he should be arrested and placed in the custody of the German police".<sup>9</sup>

The ghetto was liquidated a month later, on October 2, 1941, when the remaining 2,236 Jews from the Region's villages and towns were murdered.<sup>10</sup>

Further, we offer an overview of the Holocaust in a few districts of the Šiauliai Region. Out of the 22 pre-World War II Jewish Communities (apart from the city of Šiauliai), the author describes only the destruction of fifteen communities, about which he managed to collect a minimal amount of information.

1. Lietuvos gyventojai. Pirmojo 1923 m. rugšėjo 17 d. visuotinio gyventojų surašymo duomenys (The Population of Lithuania. Data of the Sept. 17, 1923 General Population Census), Kaunas, [1925], p. 23–24.

2. LCVA, f. R-1099, ap. 1, b. 1, l. 150.

3. I. Urbaitis' testimony to the Soviet Security Service, Dec. 6-7, 1944, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 45, b. 1389, l. 33 a. p.–34; I. Urbaitis' and J. Naujalis' Examination Record, Dec. 22, 1944, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. P-20125, l. 51.

4. Ibid., l. 34–35.

5. Šiauliai Rregion Head's Announcement No. 6, July 23, 1941, Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje, II d., 1973, p. 225–226, see p. 80.

6. Šiauliai Rregion Head's Instructions No. 429, Aug. 6, *ibid.*, b. 1, l. 113.

7. Ibid.

8. Šiauliai Rregion Head's Instructions, Aug. 22, 1941, Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje, II d., 1973, p. 226–227, see p. 99, 101.

9. Summary of the discussion held at the meeting of heads of regions and police chiefs, Sept. 4, 1941, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1274, l. 74.

10. Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje, I d., 1965, p. 135.

## Gruzdžiai

According to the 1897 population census, Gruzdžiai had 482 Jewish inhabitants, or 41 % of the shtetl's population. These numbers diminished greatly in the course of World War I. The shtetl Jews engaged in small-scale trade, crafts and agriculture. They had a prayer house, an interest-free loan society, and a section of the Jewish People's bank. In addition, in the period between the two world wars, Jews emigrated massively to South Africa, the United States, and Mexico. A few went to Palestine. On the eve of the Nazi invasion, only 27 Jewish families remained in Gruzdžiai.<sup>1</sup>

It is known that 46 Jews were murdered by the Nazis and their local collaborators at the Jewish cemetery gate, in the outskirts of Gruzdžiai in late August 1941.<sup>2</sup>

Jewish women, children and elderly people were taken to Žagarė and murdered during the liquidation of that town's ghetto. Petras Bračas, Abakavičius, Tataras – ethnic Lithuanians known for their pro-Soviet activities – were murdered with the Jews.<sup>3</sup>

1. N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, Lithuanian Jewish Communities, p. 106–107.

2. Memorandum by the Šiauliai Region Gruzdžiai District Executive Committee, Aug. 15, 1969, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1274, l. 22; Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje, II d., p. 403.

3. Memorandum by the K.G.B. of Soviet Lithuania about the Gruzdžiai Police and Punitive Squad, July 29, 1963, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 47, b. 1268, l. 128. The document does not give the first names of Abakavičius and Tataras.

## Joniškis

The population census of 1897 stated that 2,277 Jews lived in Joniškis at that time, out of 4,474 town inhabitants. In 1915, the Czarist authorities forced Joniškis Jews (like those of many other Lithuanian localities) to move to Russia. Not all of them later returned home. During the period between the two world wars, most Joniškis Jews were engaged in commerce. The Jews had three houses of worship, a Hebrew school which included a kindergarten, a library, and a local section of the Jewish People's Bank. They participated in the activities of various Jewish parties and social organizations.<sup>1</sup> The Second World War and the ensuing Soviet and Nazi occupations destroyed the calm and rather prosperous life of the Jewish community.

Members of the LAF and anti-Soviet partisans started their activities in Joniškis, like in other Lithuanian localities, on the first days of the Nazi invasion. On June 28, 1941, these "Activists" organized a committee for the town defense and the maintenance of public order. The town government and police were started. Several committees were established, among them, the Committee for Jewish Affairs, headed by Juozas Tininis. The Activists' squad assembled 104 men (54 of whom were armed and 50, unarmed). In the beginning, their headquarters commanding officer was Kazys Ralys.<sup>2</sup> In early July 1941, the Joniškis Committee for the Maintenance of Order was renamed into the Joniškis Section of the LAF, with Stasys Kakliauskas as its Board chairman. One of the most important tasks of local Activists was the arresting of Communists, supporters of the Soviet regime, and Jews. Juozas Sutkus was summoned

from Pakruojis to become the Joniškis District Police chief.<sup>3</sup> He cooperated closely with the local Activists' Headquarters, specifically, preparing orders to arrest Soviet supporters and Jews. As early as July 1941, the Headquarters already had a plan to transfer the town Jews to a separate quarter (a ghetto), and to use the Jews for agricultural and public works.<sup>4</sup>

On July 11, 1941, the Joniškis Headquarters' Committee for Jewish Affairs issued nine anti-Jewish orders, including the orders for the Jews' returning to Joniškis from villages, on the bearing of the Star of David, and the proscription for the Jews to walk on the sidewalks and to use the services of the Arians. On July 18, 1941, the Committee for Jewish Affairs penalized Joniškis Jews 20,000 roubles for the incompletion of these orders, to be paid to the Activists' Headquarters by 3 p. m., July 19.<sup>5</sup> The contribution was actually paid on July 24.

In mid-July 1941, the Committee for Jewish Affairs examined again the issue of transferring the Jews to a ghetto. The Committee stated that approximately 1,200 Jews were living in Joniškis. It was suggested that some of the Jews be housed in synagogues, also in the Dariaus, Girėno, and Pašvitinio streets triangle, or moved to Žagarė. The Committee also entitled the town government to register Jewish property; the Jewish-owned or leased farms were to be given to their former owners or to "reliable" people.<sup>6</sup> In the second half of July, some Jews were forced to live in a synagogue, while the others were left to live in houses adjoining the Market Square. The ghetto territory was guarded by town police.

In July and August 1941, the head of the Joniškis District Police Precinct, J. Sutkus was summoned several times to

the German Security Police and the SD Office in Šiauliai. The Gestapo insisted that Sutkus hurry up to carry out the murder of the Jews. Sutkus, however, was adjourning the completion of the German orders, until the arrival of two Šiauliai Gestapo officials (together with several other Germans) in Joniškis in late August 1941. The latter demanded that the execution of local Jews be carried out without further delay. Sutkus summoned all the precinct's policemen, ordered them to seize Jewish men housed in the synagogue and take them to the Vilkauišis Forest, six kilometers from Joniškis. A large ditch had already been prepared there. The Jews were taken to the forest in trucks. They were ordered to undress and to hand over their valuables and money. Then they were taken to the pits, one group after another, and murdered. The shootings were carried out by Joniškis policemen and the "white arm-banders", and supervised by the Germans on site. That day, at least 148 Jewish men were murdered. Only one man, Reznikovitch, survived.<sup>7</sup>

Upon the murder of the Jews, the victims' clothes were loaded on trucks and transported to Joniškis. In the evening, participants involved in murdering the Jews were offered copious drinks, during which the police head Sutkus said that the Jews had been killed for being the Bolsheviks' adherents and the Fatherland's traitors. Sutkus thanked the policemen and Activists for their "good work and sacrifice for the Homeland's benefit".<sup>8</sup>

The remaining Joniškis Jews (men, women, and children, at least 345 people), were murdered in the Vilkauišis Forest in September 1941, by a Lithuanian Self-Defense Squad which arrived from somewhere else (the nearest

Lithuanian police battalion was quartered in Šiauliai). The total of the Joniškis Jews murdered in Vilkauišis Forest was, therefore, not less than 493.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, 150 Joniškis Jews were taken to the Žagarė ghetto on August 24–29, 1941, and murdered there during the annihilation of the ghetto.<sup>10</sup>

1. N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, *Lithuanian Jewish Communities*, p. 377–378.
2. *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje*, II d., p. 227–228.
3. *The Accusation Conclusion to S. Sakliauskas' Penal Case*, LYA, No. 46599/3, t. 5, l. 342–344.
4. *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje*, II d., p. 228.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
6. *Minutes of the Joniškis Activists' Leadership's meeting on the Jewish Question* (not later than July 18, 1941), LYA, Penal Case No. 46599/3, t. 5, l. 18.
7. *J. Sutkus' Examination Record*, Jan. 7, 1961, LYA, Penal Case No. 46599/3, t. 1, l. 307–313. Memorandum about the murders of Joniškis Jews in 1941, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1257, l. 2–3. Reznikovitch's first name is not given in the document.
8. *J. Diržinskas' Examination Record*, Oct. 20, 1960, LYA, Penal Case No. 46599/3, t. 3, l. 63–64.
9. *Record of the exhumation of corpses in the Vilkauišis Forest, Joniškis District*, Oct. 15–22, 1960, *ibid.*, t. 4, l. 231–233.
10. *Message No. 493 by the Joniškis town government to the mayor of Žagarė*, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 8, b. 194, l. 59.

## Kuršėnai

At one time, Kuršėnai boasted a substantial Jewish community. As stated by the 1897 population census, it accounted for 1542 people, or nearly a half (48%) of the shtetl's population. The population census of 1923 registered 841 Jews (404 men and 437 women) in the Kuršėnai District (in the town and neighboring villages). In 1939, the Jewish population of Kuršėnai grew to 900 people. As they did in other Lithuanian shtetls, local Jews engaged mostly in trade and crafts. The Jewish People's Bank had 207 members in 1932. There were two synagogues, several Jewish charitable organizations and a charity fund, a Hebrew school, a Jewish kindergarten (founded in 1927), and a sports club. The shtetl Jews also actively participated in various Zionist parties.<sup>1</sup>

In the days immediately following the Nazi invasion, Lithuanian "Partisan" squads and groups began to appear in Kuršėnai and in the neighboring villages. The Partisans arrested groups of retreating Red Army soldiers, Soviet officials and their supporters, and Communists. The Kuršėnai Partisan squad, headed by Antanas Petkus, comprised 70 men. At the beginning of the Nazi occupation, the chief of the Kuršėnai District Police Precinct was Povilas Vidugiris.

The persecution of Jews began in July 1941. In that same month, a ghetto was set up in Kuršėnai on the orders of the Nazi authorities. Many Jews were housed in the two synagogues. Around July 20, the Lithuanian Partisans and policemen seized from the synagogues approximately 150 Jewish men (other sources mention 168 Jewish victims), and murdered them in the Padarboš Forest, about three kilometers from Kuršėnai. Four Germans, among them,

an officer also participated in the murder. The victims' clothing was seized by their executioners. The Partisans and policemen, having completed the killings, went to Kuršėnai, where they drank in celebration at a local canteen.<sup>2</sup>

Some weeks later, the Kuršėnai Partisan squad was reorganized, and became a police unit. The several hundred Kuršėnai Jews who remained were transferred by local policemen to the Žagarė ghetto in September 1941. As witnesses reported, at least 50 carriages transported Jewish women, children, and elderly people to Žagarė.<sup>3</sup> They all were murdered on October 2, 1941, during the liquidation of the Žagarė ghetto. According to the information presently available, the Kuršėnai policemen did not take part in this action.

In the post-war years, the Soviet Security Service found and arrested close to forty former Partisans and policemen of Kuršėnai. Approximately twenty other members of the Kuršėnai Partisan squad that functioned in 1941, were killed in skirmishes with the Soviets in the years following the end of the war.<sup>4</sup>

1. N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, *Lithuanian Jewish Communities*, p. 166; *Lietuvos gyventojai*, p. 23.
2. A. Liaugminas' Examination Record, April 19, 1945, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 44084/3, l. 105-107; J. Ribikauskas' Examination Record, May 26, 1945, *ibid.*, l. 65-70, 77; Memorandum by the Šiauliai Region's Working People's Deputies' Soviet Executive Committee, April 4, 1968, *ibid.*, ap. 46, b. 1261, l. 66.
3. S. Gužauskas' Examination Record, September 26, 1949, *ibid.*, ap. 58, b. 14771/3, l. 26.
4. Šiauliai City K.G.B. Section's Memorandum about the Kuršėnai Partisan squad, Dec. 6, 1966, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 42308/3, l. 441-450; Šiauliai City K.G.B. Section Head's message, Jan. 18, 1989, *ibid.*, l. 433.

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## Lygumai

At the end of the 19th century, Lygumai had a significant Jewish community. In 1897, 482 people, out of the total shtetl's population of 801, were Jews. In the early 20th century, however, many Jews left the shtetl for the U.S., England, and South Africa. As late as 1923, 240 Jews (126 men and 114 women) still lived in the Lygumai District (i.e. in Lygumai and its surroundings). They had a prayer house and a primary religious school (cheder). Thirty Jewish families resided in Lygumai before the Nazi invasion.<sup>1</sup>

In the first days of the war, teacher Aleksandras Keniausis of Lygumai, the former head of a local detachment of *Šaulys*<sup>2</sup>, established a squad of "Partisans", which was later reorganized into an Auxiliary Police unit.<sup>3</sup>

In late July 1941, the local *Šaulys* drove all the Jewish women and children of the Lygumai District into the synagogue, while the Jewish men were taken to the Juknaičiai farmstead, three kilometers from Lygumai. Several days later, in early August, the former *Šaulys* and the Partisans, totaling about 30 men, were summoned to Lygumai and given weapons. Local authorities sent them to the Juknaičiai farmstead, where 70 to 80 Jewish men were being held. The Jews were arranged in ranks of four people and marched to the Juknaičiai Forest, about one kilometer from the farmstead. When they were near a pit, which had been prepared for them, the victims were forced to undress. Soon a Partisan squad from Linkuva, numbering between 11 to 20 men, and several Germans arrived at the site. There, local *Šaulys* and the Partisans stood guard over the Jews. The Germans ordered for the killing to begin. In small groups, the

Jews were led to the pit and murdered. The murders lasted for several hours. Then, the victims' possessions were put on carriages and taken to the Lygumai police station. Afterwards, all participants in the murder were invited to the District Government's building and offered beer.<sup>4</sup> On the following day, 100 Jewish women and children were murdered in the same forest.<sup>5</sup>

Some members of the Lygumai Partisans later took part in the liquidation of the Žagarė ghetto on October 2, 1941.<sup>6</sup>

1. N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, Lithuanian Jewish Communities, p. 174; Lietuvos gyventojai, p. 24.
2. Šaulys ("marksman") – member of a militarized sports organization, „Šaulių sąjunga" ("Marksmen's Union") in Lithuania in 1919–1940 (Ed.).
3. J. Barščiauskas' Examination Record, April 4, 1947, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. P-18194-LI, l. 16.
4. L. Dauparas' Examination Record, Jan. 12, 1950, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 45022/3, l. 113–115; J. Mišeika's Examination Record, July 8, 1969, *ibid.*, ap. 46, b. 1277, l. 23–25.
5. J. Kriščiūnas' Examination Record, Jan. 24, 1950, *ibid.*, ap. 58, b. 45022/3, l. 116.
6. J. Barščiauskas' Examination Record, April 4, 1947, *ibid.*, b. P-18194-LI, l. 15–22.

## Linkuva

From early times, Linkuva was home to an important Jewish community. According to the Population Census of 1897, 1213 people out of the entire population of 1992, were Jews. Prior to World War I, there were approximately 300 families. The population census of 1923 registered 625 Jewish residents (321 men and 304 women) in the Linkuva District. Nearly all of them lived in the shtetl itself and worked mostly in

trade and crafts. The Jewish People's bank had 167 members.<sup>1</sup>

A Partisan squad was organized in Linkuva and its surroundings in the first days of the Nazi invasion. It was headed by Lieutenant J. Jakubaitis and Captain Jonas Tinteris, and consisted of approximately 50 servicemen. The squad members fired into retreating Red Army soldiers and arrested Soviet supporters and Communists.<sup>2</sup>

On June 23, 1941, the squad led by Lieutenant J. Jakubaitis arrived in the village of Plentas, where they seized Leonid Shlosberg and two Komsomol members, Leonid's son Abram and Povilas Atkočiūnas. The detainees were locked in a cellar, and then executed on the same day.

A few days later, on June 28, when Linkuva was already occupied by the Germans, the squads of Jakubaitis' and Tinteris' arrived in the shtetl. The arrests of Soviet supporters and Communists intensified. Every day, more groups of detainees were herded into the Linkuva granary, which served as a jail. The prisoners were brought for interrogation, where they were beaten, and then either executed or released. Most of the prisoners were ethnic Lithuanians and Jews. In 1944, the Commission that investigated Nazi crimes reported that 71 Soviet supporters and Communists were murdered in Linkuva at the start of the Nazi occupation (37 of the corpses were able to be identified and 34 others were not).

The Germans transported some of the arrested Jews to Šiauliai. These 125 victims were murdered in the forest near Kužiai, with Šiauliai Jews.

\* The full person's name must be Tsalel (Betzelel). (Ed.)

\*\* According to Leiba Lipshitz's information, the forest where the murder took place was near the village of Veselkiškiai, 5 kilometers from Linkuva. (Ed.)

In early July of 1941, the Linkuva Partisan squad was reorganized into an Auxiliary Police squad, with Retired Lieutenant Petras Beleckas as its head.<sup>3</sup>

Jonas Petraitis was initially in command of the District Police. Later, Brazaitis was assigned to this post. On July 25 or 26, Brazaitis ordered the police squad to the village of Valakai, approximately two kilometers from Linkuva. Prior to this, Linkuva's Jewish men had been herded to the farm of the Jew Tsalkė\*, in Valakai, and left unguarded there. The policemen only watched the farm until the arrival of Brazaitis and several officers of the Šiauliai Security Police and the SD on the following morning. The police then drove the Jews to a forest near the village of Dvariukai, roughly six kilometers from Linkuva. The victims were forced to undress and then stand at the edge of a pit, which had previously been made ready for them. The murders continued for almost two hours. Between 180 and 200 Jewish men were killed by the policemen that day.<sup>4</sup>

A month later, at the end of August, Linkuva's Jewish women and children (the exact number varies between 200-300 people) were murdered in the forest of Atkočiūnai (several kilometers from Linkuva)\*\*, after they, like the men, had been removed to Valakai. With the arrival of several Gestapo members, the Linkuva policemen and members of the Auxiliary Squad (totaling about 20 men) began the executions. The women were forced to remove everything except their underclothes, then driven to the pit, and shot. The Gestapo men insured that no one remained alive; anyone who

showed signs of resistance, was given a pistol. Continued the murder of their day. Prisoners remained on a taurant. A valuable object, while distributed themselves.

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1. Еврейский циклон. С.-Петербург. N. Sc. Jewish gyver.
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3. Ma. 257; June 3, l. 3. June.
4. J. Ga. 2, 19. l. 42. strict. Exec. f. K-1. kūna. LYA. zaitis. not g.



showed signs of movement was shot with a pistol. One German officer documented the murders with photographs. With their day's work completed, the executioners returned to Linkuva, where they went on a drinking spree at a local restaurant. The Germans took the more valuable objects (gold rings, etc.) to Šiauliai, while the Auxiliary Squad members distributed the victims' clothing among themselves.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from killing local Jews, the Linkuva Auxiliary Squad participated in the murder of Jews from Lygumai, Pakruojis, Žeimelis, Biržai, and Žagarė.<sup>6</sup> In cooperation with the local Partisan and police squads, they destroyed almost 6,000 Jews from the Šiauliai and Biržai Regions.<sup>7</sup>

1. Еврейская энциклопедия (Jewish Encyclopaedia). Изд. Брокгауз – Ефрон, С.-Петербург, 1910–1918, т. 10, p. 221; N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, Lithuanian Jewish Communities, p. 175–176; Lietuvos gyventojai, p. 23.
2. Memorandum by the Linkuva District's Working People's Deputies' Council Executive Committee, May 16, 1959, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 45114/3, t. 2, l. 88; L. Gairenis' Examination Record, March 16, 1950, *ibid.*, b. 44443/3, t. 2, l.164–166; J. Vilutis' Examination Record, Dec. 15, 1970, LYA, f. K-1, ap.58, b. 47618/3, t.1, l. 117–118.
3. Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje, II d., p. 255–257; K. Jasiukaitis' Examination Record, June 20, 1946, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 39421/3, l. 32–35; S. Giršas' Examination Record, June 19, 1946, *ibid.*, l. 69–70.
4. J.Gasiulionis' Examination Record, April 2, 1952, LYA, f.K-1, ap. 58, b. No. 23620/3, l. 42–44; Memorandum by the Linkuva District Working People's Deputies' Council Executive Committee, June 27, 1957, LYA, f.K-1, ap. 58, b. 44443/3, t. 1, l. 259; K. Tankūnas' Examination Record, May 26, 1969, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1277, l. 52–54. Brazaitis' first name and Tsalke's surname are not given in the documents.

5. J.Mišėika's Examination Record, July 8, 1969, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1277, l. 55–59; J. Čepaitis' Examination Record, April 17, 1969, *ibid.*, l. 43–45.
6. J.Mišėika's Examination Record, July 8, 1969, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1277, l. 55–59; Memorandum issued by the Soviet Lithuanian K.G.B. about Linkuva's squad's activities in 1941, April 9, 1957, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 44443/3, t. 1, l. 49–50.
7. Conclusion to the Penal Case No. 309, Aug. 6, 1971, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 47618/3, t. 4, l. 258.

## Pakruojis

Pakruojis was at one time home to one of the oldest Jewish communities in Lithuania. According to the Census of 1897, 1093 out of the 1545 town inhabitants were Jews. There were approximately 300 Jewish families (close to 1,400 people) in Pakruojis before World War I. The number of Jews decreased during the war and in the subsequent years, with numerous emigrations (especially by the young people) to South Africa, Mexico, Uruguay, and Palestine. In 1923, the Pakruojis District had 454 Jewish residents (210 men and 244 women). Approximately the same number remained prior to World War II.<sup>1</sup>

In the initial days of the Nazi invasion, former *Šaulys* armed volunteers, policemen, and officials from the period of President Antanas Smetona formed Partisan squads in Pakruojis and the neighboring villages. The Pakruojis squad, organized and headed by Antanas Gaščiūnas and Žukauskas, numbered 100 men.<sup>2</sup> The Partisans fired at the retreating Red Army soldiers, and arrested Soviet officials and supporters. Five Lithuanian Partisans died in a skirmish with Red Army soldiers at the Kapčiūnai village in late June 1941.<sup>3</sup> The Pa-

kruojis District Partisans seized and executed 36 Communists and Soviet "agents", mainly ethnic Lithuanians.<sup>4</sup> In early July 1941, the German occupation authorities appointed lawyer Petras Požėla to be chief of the Pakruojis Partisan Squad. For several months, the squad's activities continued. Afterwards, the active squad members enlisted in police and self-defense units. As for Požėla, he was executed by the Germans for looting and the appropriation of alien property.<sup>5</sup> \*

In mid-July 1941 (some sources indicate the date was July 13<sup>th</sup>), several German officers who headed a squad of 50 to 60 servicemen arrived in Pakruojis. With the collaboration of Požėla's Partisans, they arrested all the shtetl's Jewish men (more than one hundred people), including the Rabbi of Pakruojis. The victims were driven to the Morkakalnis Forest, two kilometers from the town, and on the same day, they were murdered. The German soldiers carried out the shootings, while the local "white arm-banders" were used to guard the murder site.<sup>6</sup>

In early August 1941 (August 5, according to certain sources), several German officers and a Partisan squad from Linkuva arrived in Pakruojis. Local Partisans and policemen were sent to help them. Their orders were to arrest the remaining shtetl Jews (the women, children and old people). They rounded up over 200 Jews, who were told they would be taken to another location, where they would work. They were instead driven first into the sy-

nagogue, and then marched to the Morkakalnis Forest. When the victims were within several hundred meters of the pit, they were forced to undress. Then in groups of five, the Jews were led to the pit and murdered. The perpetrators of the shootings were the Pakruojis and Linkuva Partisans. German officers supervised the course of the killings. One of them took photographs. During the murders, the senior German officer told the Jews that those who handed over their gold and jewelry, would be allowed to live. Eight or nine Jews did so, and they were sent home. Later in the day, those same Jews were brought back to the murder site and killed with the remaining victims.

The participants in the slaughter were each given one hundred roubles for the "job" they had carried out.<sup>7</sup> A feast was made for them in Požėla's house. Also present at the feast were the German officers. One of them addressed the murderers through an interpreter. He declared that the Jews were not worth compassion and were all to be exterminated, since the war had started because of them.<sup>8</sup>

A total of 400 Pakruojis District Jews were murdered in the Morkakalnis Forest.<sup>9</sup> \*\*

1. Еврейская энциклопедия, т. 12, p. 22; N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, Lithuanian Jewish Communities, p. 222; Lietuvos gyventojai, p. 24.
2. Soviet Lithuania's MGB Pakruojis District Department's Memorandum about the Pa-

\* A short note appeared in the Šiauliai newspaper, "Tėviškė" (No. 15, April 10, 1942, p. 3): "Petras Požėla, formerly a lawyer, has been recently arrested. As it has been discovered, he was an agent of the NKVD (Soviet Security Service - Ed.) under the Bolshevik regime". (Ed.)

\*\* Leiba Lipshitz knew about another Aktion from the beginning of the war, when thirty most affluent Jews of Pakruojis were murdered at the Jewish cemetery near the village of Linksmučiai, damming up the Kruoja, and reburied in Morkakalnis. (Ed.)

- kruojis District Partisan Squad, Sept. 27, 1952, LVA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 22760/3, t. 2, l. 415-2; A. Sheining's Examination Record, Aug. 26, 1944, *ibid.*, b. 44393/3, l. 47-48. Žukauskas' first name is missing in the document.
3. Conclusion to J. Martinaitis' Penal Case, March 24, 1955, *ibid.*, b. P-18164-LI, l. 246-247.
  4. Soviet Lithuania's MGB Pakruojis District Department's Memorandum about the Pakruojis District Partisan Squad, Sept. 27, 1952, *ibid.*, b. 22760/3, l. 415-2.
  5. *Ibid.*, l. 415-1, 415-2; A. Sheining's Examination Record, Sept. 2, 1944, *ibid.*, b. 44393/3, l. 52-53.
  6. A. Sheining's Examination Record, Aug. 26, 1944, *ibid.*, ap. 46, b. 1277, l. 31.
  7. A. Sheining's Examination Record, Aug. 21 and 26, 1944, *ibid.*, l. 30, 32; I. Valter's Examination Record, Aug. 19, 1944, *ibid.*, ap. 58, b. 44393/3, l. 164-165.
  8. J. Mišeika's Examination Record, July 8, 1969, *ibid.*, ap. 46, b. 1277, l. 25-26.
  9. A. Sheining's Examination Record, Aug. 21, 1944, *ibid.*, l. 29-30.

## Papilė

Prior to World War I, a significant Jewish community lived in Papilė. In 1897, there were 965 Jews out of the general population of 1877. In 1915, as the war ran its course, Czarist authorities deported Jews to the Russian interior. During the period between the two wars many Jews emigrated to South Africa and some, to Palestine. The Jewish population dwindled further and became more impoverished, until just 257 people (116 men and 141 women) for the Papilė District (Papilė and its surroundings), in 1923. There were a synagogue and a Jewish library in the shtetl. The Jewish People's Bank had 82 members.<sup>1</sup>

At the start of the war between the Nazis and Soviets, residents of Papilė

and the surrounding villages organized a partisan squad of 70 men, which was headed by Vincas Šilkus, Adomas Petrauskas, and Kazys Šniutė. The Partisans detained approximately 50 Communist and Soviet supporters, and close to 100 Red Army soldiers.<sup>2</sup>

In July 1941, by the order of Vincas Viskantas, Head of the Papilė District Police, the policemen and Partisans forced all the shtetl Jews into the town school, and then marched them to the village of Šiaudinė. There, after their money and valuables were seized from them, the Jews were housed in the local farmstead buildings.<sup>3</sup>

In mid-July, the Head of the Šiauliai Region Police, B. Paliulionis, arrived in Papilė. He gave V. Viskantas the order to prepare for an *Aktion*, which meant the murder of all Jewish men aged 18 to 50 years old. On July 22, 1941, B. Paliulionis sent a telephone message to V. Viskantas, regarding the murder of Papilė's Jewish men. That same day, several Germans from the Gestapo and an officer of the Šiauliai *Gebiet* Lithuanian Security Police, Kazimieras Malinauskas, arrived in Papilė from Šiauliai. Some of the Jews were ordered to dig a ditch in the Šiaudinė forest. In the afternoon, the murders began. Before the shooting started, V. Viskantas checked the age of each Jew. Several, whose age did not correspond to the limits previously indicated, were sent back to join the women and children. The others were taken to the Šiaudinė forest, where they were led to the pit in groups of five and executed. Two servicemen from among the "white arm-banders" or the policemen were used to target each Jew. K. Malinauskas and V. Viskantas directed the course of the murders. A total of 40 Jewish men were killed by the 20 policemen and Partisans from Papilė. Follow-

ing the slaughter of the Jews, several Soviet supporters were brought to the murder site. Some of these ethnic Lithuanians tried to escape. Three of them were successful. The remaining two were shot. When the killings were finished, the pit was covered up.<sup>4</sup>

A commission of forensic medical experts, which investigated the murder site in 1967, stated that 55 people had been killed in the Šiaudinė forest.<sup>5</sup>

The fate of the Jewish women and children who remained in Papilė is unclear. It is most likely that they, like Jews of other districts in the Šiauliai Region, were taken to the Žagarė Ghetto and were murdered during the liquidation of the ghetto.

1. Еврейская энциклопедия, т. 12, p. 741; N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, *Lithuanian Jewish Communities*, p. 232; Lietuvos gyventojai, p. 24.
2. Note by Soviet Lithuanian's KGB about the Papilė Partisan group members, July 7, 1967, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 47542/3, t. 5, l. 102-103, 177-183; Conclusion for K. Kazlauskas' Penal Case, Aug. 1, 1955, *ibid.*, b. 27835/3, l. 43.
3. J. Borusas' Examination Record, March 28, 1945, *ibid.*, ap. 58, b. 2395/3, l. 16.
4. V. Viskantas' Examination Record, July 1, 1967, *ibid.*, b. 47542/3, t. 1, l. 341-342; J. Borusas' Examination Record, March 28, 1945, *ibid.*, b. 2395/3, l. 18.
5. Law-Court Medical Investigation Act of Exhumation of Corpses No. 3 (June 30, 1967), *ibid.*, b. 47542/3, t. 5, l. 13-22.

### Pašvitinys

Approximately 120 Jewish families lived in Pašvitinys before World War I. In 1897, there were 435 Jews, or 59% of the shtetl's population. The Population census of 1923 registered 274 Jews (120 men and 154 women) in the Pašvi-

tinys District. Many Jews emigrated to South Africa during the period between the two world wars. Only 25 Jewish families remained in the shtetl on the eve of the Nazi invasion.<sup>1</sup>

In the first days of the war, local Partisans headed by Leonas Balčiūnas seized Communists, Komsomol members, and Soviet regime supporters, numbering 45 to 50 people. The most active members were brought in for interrogation by Povilas Pilka, head of the local police, and then sent to the Šiauliai prison. Some prisoners were executed; others were deported and forced to do hard labor in Germany. The remaining 20 people were given freedom.

The Pašvitinys Jews, who at that time barely totaled 70 people, were seized in August 1941. Local policemen and Partisans transported them to the ghetto of Žagarė, where the Jews were murdered during the liquidation of the Žagarė ghetto.<sup>2</sup>

1. N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, *Lithuanian Jewish Communities*, p. 234; Lietuvos gyventojai, p. 24.
2. Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje, II d., p. 258; Resolution for P. Pilka's Penal Case, April 4, 1963, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. P-19196-LI, l. 70.

### Radviliškis

The completion of the St.-Petersburg - Berlin railroad in 1870 heralded the beginning of rapid growth for the shtetl of Radviliškis. By 1897, it had 675 Jewish inhabitants, or 17 per cent of the total population. The population census of 1923 registered 847 Jews (390 men and 457 women). Between the two world wars, the local Jewish community enjoyed active cultural and social lives. The community had two synagogues, a Hebrew school, and several lo-

cal sections of social organizations, however, some population emigrated at the start of the war. There were 250 Jews in the shtetl.

Around the time of the war, Jewish men of military age near the Jewish ghetto were murdered and Lithuanians. The Jewish women were confined in the military barracks when they were taken to Žagarė. There was no liquidation of the ghetto.

1. N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, *Lithuanian Jewish Communities*, p. 234; Lietuvos gyventojai, p. 24.
2. P. Kaplanas' Examination Record, Jan. 2, 1945, *ibid.*, b. 2395/3, l. 17-18; II d., p. 405.

The Jewish community was one of the largest in the region, according to the 1923 census, represented by 62.4 per cent of the shtetl's population. There were 300 Jewish men and 164 Jewish women in the shtetl prior to the liquidation to the Palestine. 519 Jews remained in the shtetl after WWII. The Jewish community was one of the oldest in the region, so was a prayer house, school, with a synagogue. In the first years of the Nazi occupation,

cal sections of the various political and social organizations. During this time, however, some of Radviliškis' Jewish population emigrated to Palestine. By the start of the Nazi invasion in 1941, there were 250 Jewish families in town.<sup>1</sup>

Around the 12th of July, 1941, all 300 Jewish men of Radviliškis were seized. The Jews were transported to a forest near the Jewish cemetery, where they were murdered by the German Nazis and Lithuanian "white arm-banders". The Jewish women and children were confined in the ruined Radviliškis army barracks until September 1941, when they were taken to the ghetto of Žagarė. There, they were murdered during the liquidation of the ghetto.<sup>2</sup>

1. N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, *Lithuanian Jewish Communities*, p. 239-240; *Lietuvos gyventojai*, p. 24.
2. P. Kaplanaitė-Tokerienė's Examination Record, Jan. 23, 1968, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1261, l. 17-18; *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje*, II d., p. 405.

## Šaukėnai

The Jewish community of Šaukėnai was one of the oldest in Lithuania. According to the 1897 census, it was represented by 624 Jews, who made up 62 per cent of the shtetl population. In 1923, there were 324 Jewish residents (160 men and 164 women). The number of Jews decreased because of their emigration to the U.S., South Africa, and Palestine. 519 Jews (close to 100 families) remained in the shtetl on the eve of WWII. The Šaukėnai synagogue was one of the oldest in Lithuania. There also was a prayer house and a "Yavneh" school, with an enrollment of 54 pupils.<sup>1</sup>

In the first days of the war and the Nazi occupation, a squad of Lithuanian

Partisans was organized in Šaukėnai. The squad was headed by the Chief of the Šaukėnai District Police, Pranas Klemanskis, and employed 40 to 70 servicemen. The Šaukėnai Partisans were first engaged in protecting the town from attacks by Soviet soldiers. Then they began to arrest Soviet officials, Communists, and members of the Komsomol.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of July 1941, the Šaukėnai Partisans and policemen rounded up the shtetl Jews and herded them into a big barn on the Šukiškiai farmstead, one kilometer from Šaukėnai. The "white arm-banders" made several local people dig a large ditch (28x2x2 meters) in the Juodlė Forest, approximately 7.5 kilometers from Šaukėnai. On the afternoon of July 31, 1941, the Šaukėnai Partisans drove the arrested Jews to the site of the ditch. Close to 20 members of the Užventis Partisan squad and several Gestapo men arrived there. The Jews were forced to undress. Then in groups of ten, they were taken to the ditch and shot. Each victim was the target of two executioners. The Jews who were still alive after the shooting were killed by the Gestapo men, who issued gunfire from automatic weapons. A total of 300 (some sources mention 273) Šaukėnai Jews, mostly men, were murdered that day. The clothes which had belonged to the victims were brought to the police station, where they were distributed among the executioners. The remaining Jewish women and children were taken to the Žagarė ghetto. Sixteen members of the Šaukėnai squad took part in the liquidation of the Žagarė ghetto on October 2, 1941.<sup>3</sup>

1. N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, *Lithuanian Jewish Communities*, p. 285; *Lietuvos gyventojai*, p. 24.

2. F. Girijotas' Examination Record, Aug. 23, 1946, LYA. t. K-1, ap. 58, b. 28973/3, l. 105; *ibid.*, l. 225.
3. Memorandum by Soviet Lithuania's KGB Kelmė District Section, Dec. 18, 1990, *ibid.*, ap. 46, b. 1297, l. 27-29; B. Barauskas' Examination Record, Feb. 12, 1969, *ibid.*, b. 1275, l. 29-30; F. Venckus' Examination Records, Aug. 1 and Aug. 6, 1946, *ibid.*, ap. 58, b. 28973/3, l. 12-12 a. p., 14-15.

## Šiaulėnai

Šiaulėnai was home to one of the oldest Jewish Communities in the Šiauliai Region. Jews settled there as early as mid-16th C. The census of 1897 registered 547 Jewish inhabitants, or 53 per cent of the shtetl's population. Jewish numbers decreased after the 1st World War. In 1923, 237 Jews remained in Šiaulėnai. The community had a synagogue, a library, and a reading hall.<sup>1</sup>

A squad of Partisans was formed in Šiaulėnai at the beginning of the Nazi-Soviet war. Vladas Zaleckas became the distrital police chief. He formed up a local police unit with six policemen.<sup>2</sup> In the first days of the Nazi occupation, local Partisans arrested Adomas Abramikas, the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Šiaulėnai District Soviet, and many other Communists and Soviet activists. The police station was full of prisoners. Some of the prisoners were then removed to Radviliškis, where they were murdered; some others were killed by local "white arm-banders". We know the names of seven victims: Vladas Norvydas, Izidorius Bokas, Stasys Ženkus, Targūnas, Požaitis, brothers Prov ir Nikita Dementyev.<sup>3</sup>

Around August 1941, the Šiaulėnai District Police Head, Zaleckas, received an order from the Police Chief of the Šiauliai Region to arrest all the Jews of the District and imprison them

in one site. The local police and the "white arm-banders" fulfilled the order. Approximately 60 to 70 Jewish families were arrested. They were guarded by the policemen. Soon the victims were removed to the ghetto of Žagariškė, where they were murdered during the liquidation of the ghetto, on October 2, 1941.<sup>4</sup>

1. N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, Lithuanian Jewish Communities, p. 270-271; Lietuvos gyventojai, p. 24.
2. An excerpt from V. Zaleckas' Examination Record, June 14, 1948, LYA, f. 3377, ap. 55, b. 154, l. 57.
3. Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje, II d., p. 260. The first names of Targūnas and Požaitis are not indicated.
4. An excerpt from V. Zaleckas' Examination Record, June 14, 1948, LYA, f. 3377, ap. 55, b. 154, l. 57-58.

## Tryškiai

At the turn of the 19th century, 681 Jews lived in Tryškiai. In 1897, they accounted for 35 per cent of the shtetl's population. The data from the population census of 1923 give the number of 335 Jewish residents (153 men and 182 women). Most of the Jews were engaged in crafts (especially tanning), trade and agriculture. Two flour-mills and a sawmill were Jewish-owned. The shtetl had a synagogue, a library, a cheder, and a Tarbut school. The Jewish popular bank boasted 96 members.<sup>1</sup>

In the first weeks of German occupation, local Partisans and policemen arrested Communists, members of the Komsomol, and active Soviet supporters. The persecution of the Jews started in mid-July 1941. All the Jews of Tryškiai, 70 to 80 families, were herded into a barn at the Tryškiai farmstead.

Later, the Jews were taken from their homes and they were liquidated at the same place.

In late July (July 20), the Jews of Tryškiai and one of the other Jews of the district (Pranas (also Girdvainis, District, or Partisans to farmstead. shtetl, a pit in the Virvytė Germans sent groups. One of the other groups were driven to the "white arm-bander" Police Chief. The Jews expressed their protest. The Jews were taken to groups of families. The pit one of the Jews. The execution of the Jews. 70 to 80 Jews per day.

Two or three women and children were deported. They were taken to the liquidation site.

1. N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, Lithuanian Jewish Communities, p. 270-271; Lietuvos gyventojai, p. 24.
2. P. Kataras, Lietuvos gyventojai, 1986, LYA, f. 3377, ap. 55, b. 154, l. 57.
3. Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje, II d., p. 260. The first names of Targūnas and Požaitis are not indicated.

Later, the Jewish men were separated from their families and for a short time, they were locked up in another section of the same farmstead.<sup>2</sup>

In late July (some sources indicate July 20), three Germans, two officers and one civilian, arrived in Tryškiai. Pranas (also mentioned as Antanas) Girdvainis, Police Chief of the Tryškiai District, ordered the policemen and Partisans to gather near the Tryškiai farmstead. Half a kilometer from the shtetl, a pit had already been dug, by the Virvytė River. At the farmstead, the Germans separated the victims into two groups. One group consisted of adults, the other of children. The Jewish men were driven to the pit by policemen and "white arm-banders". On the offer of Police Chief, P. Girdvainis, six volunteers expressed their willingness to kill the Jews. Before their execution, the Jews were forced to undress. Then in groups of four, the victims were led to the pit one after another and murdered. The executioners were Germans and their Lithuanian volunteers. Between 70 to 80 Jewish men were killed that day.

Two or three weeks later, the Jewish women and children of Tryškiai were deported to the ghetto of Žagarė, where they perished during the ghetto's liquidation.<sup>3</sup>

1. N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, *Lithuanian Jewish Communities*, p. 314; *Lietuvos gyventojai*, p. 24.

2. P. Katariskis' Examination Record, June 24, 1986, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1146, l. 33.

3. Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje, II d., p. 262; D. Liūnas' Examination Record, July 22, 1947, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 7042/3, l. 10-19; ap. 46, b. 1146, l. 152.

## Užventis

At the end of the 19th century (in 1897), the Jewish population of Užventis comprised 300 people, or 35 per cent of the total population. According to the census of 1923, 173 Jews (79 men and 94 women) lived in the Užventis District. In 1941, there were 30 Jewish families in the shtetl.<sup>1</sup>

In the wake of the Nazi invasion, a Lithuanian Partisan squad was established in the vicinity of Užventis. The organizers and leaders of the squad were Vilius Prancūzevičius (who later became the Head of the Užventis District), and a lawyer, reserve lieutenant Romualdas Kolokša. In early July of 1941, the squad accounted for close to 50 of its most active members. The Partisans were armed with rifles and pistols. Their distinctive sign was a white armband.<sup>2</sup>

In the first days of the Nazi occupation, approximately 17 Soviet supporters were executed by order of the Partisan Headquarters.

In early July of 1941, the Partisans, following directives from the German authorities, seized the entire Jewish population of Užventis and herded them into a former spirit-making factory in the outskirts of the shtetl. Juozas Čepauskas, vice-head of the Užventis Partisan squad, was assigned to be the Commandant of the Jewish "camp".

On the eve of the murder of the Jews, Užventis Partisans dug a large pit in the Želviai Forest, approximately two kilometers from the shtetl. On the following day, July 31, 1941, several German Security Police officers arrived from Šiauliai, to take charge of the killing. The members of the Užventis squad loaded the Jews, mainly elderly people, women, and children onto a truck and several





charitable institutions, including a Jewish home for the aged.<sup>1</sup>

On June 28, during the first week of the war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, the LAF members of Žagarė set up a committee of four people. The former head of the Šaulys Union Žagarė Detachment, Stanislovas Kačkys was made the chairman. The committee decided to organize an armed squad in Žagarė, to maintain order in the town. Approximately 30–50 men, mostly former Šaulys and policemen, joined the squad. The Committee headed by S. Kačkys soon became known as the “Žagarė Activists’ Headquarters”, according to instructions received from the LAF Headquarters in Šiauliai. The squad members were armed with rifles and pistols; they also had several light machine guns. Most of the weapons had been collected at the sites of Soviet-German battles, after the front line had moved eastward.<sup>2</sup>

On June 29, 1941, the Red Army units, and the Soviet Regime’s officials and active supporters moved from Žagarė to Russia. The Žagarė Activists arrested the supporters of the Soviet regime who remained in the area. On the order of S. Kačkys, they detained the former Principal of the Žagarė “Progymnasium” (school), Vladas Mačernis. Mačernis had taken part in the June 14, 1941, deportation of Žagarė’s teachers’ families to Siberia. Scores of people were detained and held in the Žagarė provisional jail.<sup>3</sup> On the order of the Activists’ Headquarters, eight of the arrested people, including the Jews, Ayzenshtat and Lazerson, were executed by the fence of the Latvian cemetery, on the outskirts of the town. This occurred in early July of 1941. The Žagarė police chief Samaitis directed the execution.<sup>4</sup>

Local authorities and institutions were established by officials, policemen, and the Šaulys of the pre-Soviet Lithuanian Republic. The pre-Soviet Žagarė Town Council gathered on June 30, 1941. Initially, the mayor was Juozas Briedis. Several weeks later, Silvestras Rakštys took over this post.<sup>5</sup>

Persecutions of Jews began after the reckoning with Soviet supporters. The “Activists’ Headquarters” imposed a “contribution” of 30,000 roubles on the shtetl Jews.<sup>6</sup> On July 25, 1941, the mayor S. Rakštys repeated the announcement No. 6 by the Head of Šiauliai Region and issued an order, prohibiting the Jews who had fled from Žagarė from returning to their homes. From July 26, 1941, all Jews were compelled to wear a yellow Star of David, on the left breast. They were allowed to walk in the streets and appear in public places only from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m., except for those who received special permission. They could buy the necessary food items at the market only after 12 a.m. All the Jews of Žagarė were ordered to move to a specifically designed neighborhood, or ghetto, at their own expense. This had to be accomplished during the period from July 26 to August 2.<sup>7</sup>

In late July, the Activists made a list of the Jews who remained in Žagarė, and began to transfer them to the ghetto. The Jews who lived in nearby shtetls were also moved to the ghetto of Žagarė. The area chosen for the ghetto was adjoining the market place, and included Daukanto, Vilniaus, Malūno, Pakalnio, and Gedimino streets. Non-Jewish residents of these streets were moved to other neighborhoods.<sup>8</sup>

On August 22, the Chief of the Šiauliai Region, Jonas Noreika, informed local authorities and mayors of smaller

towns of the Šiauliai Region, that, according to the order of the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar*, all the Region's Jews and half-Jews were obligated to move to Žagarė by August 29.<sup>9</sup> Transfer began of Jews from Šiauliai, Joniškis, Kuršėnai, Žeimelis, and other localities. On August 25, the mayor of Žagarė informed the Šiauliai Regional Chief that the ghetto occupied an area of 12,135 square meters, and had a population of 715 Jews.<sup>10</sup>

As the Jews were being forced into the ghetto, "Jewish and Bolshevik" property was registered. The immovables were valued at 5,794,600 roubles.<sup>11</sup> By August 29, 949 Jews from other localities in the Šiauliai Region had been moved to Žagarė.<sup>12</sup> On September 20, 5,566 people (2,402 Jews and 3,164 non-Jews) resided in Žagarė. Non-Jewish (ethnic Lithuanian) families were given 250 grams of butter per week for each family member, while Jews received only 100 grams.<sup>13</sup>

A telephone message issued on September 11, 1941, by the Šiauliai Regional Chief, informed the "elders" (authorities) of the Šiauliai Region districts, that the property expropriated from the Jews on the order of the *Gebietskommissar*, and the corresponding lists were to be remitted to the Šiauliai *Gebietskommissar* by September 20.<sup>14</sup>

The ghetto of Žagarė was fenced off with barbed wire and guarded by local Activists and police. Jews were forced to do various jobs, mainly cutting wood in the forests and chopping logs. The Žagarė ghetto did not have any internal administration, such as a Jewish

Council or a Jewish Police, which existed in the larger ghettos. The ghetto's existence was too short-lived to create such institutions. Local rabbis exercised spiritual authority over the ghetto inmates. It is known that Yisrael Reif, the Rabbi of Žagarė, was murdered with the other Žagarė Jews on October 2, 1941.<sup>15</sup>

In late August of 1941, the Žagarė Activists and policemen, headed by Police Chief Juozas Krutulis, forced scores of Jewish men from the synagogue and executed them in the Jewish cemetery. Prior to their murder, the Jews were forced to remove their clothing. Then they were taken to the pits in groups of four. The murderers appropriated the clothing and footwear of the victims, and took everything to their own homes. The executioners, who were approximately twenty men, were given 20 to 30 roubles for their job.<sup>16</sup> The Soviet Special Commission that investigated Nazi crimes uncovered the pit in 1944, and discovered the corpses of 38 men.<sup>17</sup>

The German Commandant of Žagarė, Mannteuffel\*, constantly urged local Activists and policemen to be more energetic in reckoning with and eliminating Soviet officials, as well as Jews.<sup>18</sup>

In the last days of September 1941, several local ethnic Lithuanians were driven to the town park (formerly, Count Naryshkin's park), where they dug a ditch, in the shape of an "L" (120 meters long, 2 to 3 meters wide, and 2 meters deep). On the morning of October 2, the Jews from the Žagarė ghetto were ordered to gather in the mar-

\* Mannteuffel's exact post and his first name have not been able to be ascertained. It is known that Silvestras Rakštys occupied Žagarė's mayor's post from Aug. 2 to Oct. 27, 1941. Mannteuffel was then the acting mayor until Oct. 30, when he was succeeded by Liudas Krupšas, and on Nov. 11, by Stasys Šiaučiūnas. See: Memoranda of Žagarė's Local Government, LCVA. F. R-1099, ap. 1 b. 9, l. 1, 33, 112-113, 117-118. (Ed.)

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ket square. Commandant Mannteuffel 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 and children, and elderly people were made to form separate lines. Upon the German's whistle, the Partisans and policemen from Žagarė and other towns began to surround the square. Panic rose among the Jews. Some tried to escape. The Partisans responded by shooting into the prisoners, and beating them. Scores of killed and wounded people were left on the square. The survivors were forced to lie down on the ground, where they had to stay until several trucks arrived. The Jews were then transported to the Naryshkin park.<sup>19</sup>

Money, jewelry, and other valuables were seized from the Jews as they marched to the murder site. At the ditch, the doomed were made to remove everything, except their underclothes, before they were forced to lie down in the pit, to be shot. The murder participants were Lieutenant R. Kolokša's "Self-Defense" unit, which had arrived from Šiauliai, and Partisans of the Linkuva squad. The Žagarė "white arm-banders" 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 murder 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. During the panic which arose at the Market Square before the executions, 150 Jews were killed and seven Partisans who guarded them were wounded. The Soviet Special Commission, which examined the mass grave in 1944, found 2,402 corpses (530 men, 1,223 women, 625 children and 24 babies).<sup>20</sup>

The Žagarė ghetto was completely destroyed. The Germans took Jewish valuables to Šiauliai.<sup>21</sup> On October 24, 1941, the Žagarė town mayor informed the Šiauliai Region's authorities that no Jewish property remained in the town:

"<...> 1) All six synagogues have been confiscated and sealed. They all were ransacked during the killing of the Jews. Anything that had value was stolen. Only some torn prayerbooks and benches remain.

2) As for the Jewish Community's institutions, their archives and libraries, there have not been any in Žagarė, and there are presently none.

3) The apartments of Rabbis and Chief Rabbis, which were also their offices, were in the ghetto territory at the time of the execution. They were ransacked by unknown persons. Presently, nothing but empty walls have been found there. <...>"<sup>22</sup> \*

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 mur-

\* This is Žagarė's mayor's answer to Šiauliai Gebiet's Commissar H. Gewecke's memorandum of Oct. 18, 1941, with a note from Šiauliai Region's Head, I. Noreika: "To be taken into account and carried out", see p. 233. On § 3 of the answer, 'Chief Rabbis' - so in the document. (Ed.)

dered in Žagarė is comparable to that of the large Lithuanian ghettos in Vilnius, Kaunas, and Šiauliai. In the annihilation of the Žagarė ghetto, an active role was played by Lithuanian police forces (the Šiauliai Police Battalion No. 14, the "white arm-banders", and policemen from Žagarė, Linkuva, and Užventis).

1. N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, Lithuanian Jewish Communities, p. 389-391.
2. S. Kačkus' Examination Record, Aug. 15, 1958, LYA, Penal Case No. 45006/3, l. 49-50.
3. Ibid., l. 52.
4. Ibid., l. 52-53. The first names of Ayzenshtat, Lazerson and Samaitis are not given in the document.
5. Žagarė Town Council's Report, June 30, 1941, LYA, Penal Case No. 6458/3, l. 41.
6. J. Janickis's Examination Record, Sept. 13, 1944, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 8, b. 128, l. 269.
7. Žagarė Town Mayor's Order, July 25, 1941, *ibid.*, Penal Case No. 6458/3, l. 48.
8. An excerpt from A. Plekavičius' Examination Record, Oct. 17, 1944, *ibid.*, f. K-1, ap. 8, b. 128, l. 272.
9. Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje, II d., p. 226-227.
10. Žagarė mayor's telephone message to the Šiauliai Region Chief, Aug. 25, 1941, LYA, Penal Case No. 6458/3, l. 60.
11. Žagarė mayor's telephone message to the Šiauliai Region Authorities, Aug. 13, *ibid.*, l. 58.
12. Žagarė mayor's telephone message to the Šiauliai Region Chief, Aug. 29, *ibid.*, l. 62.
13. Žagarė mayor's official letter to the Žagarė dairy milk processing society, Sept. 20, 1941, *ibid.*, l. 70.
14. Šiauliai Region Chief's telephone message, Sept. 11, 1941, *ibid.*, l. 65.
15. Žagarė, Lithuania: Crime and Punishment, 1999, January, No. 6, p. 99.

16. Excerpt from A. Plekavičius' Examination Record, Oct. 15, 1944, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 8, b. 128, l. 278-279, 284.
17. Act of the Special Commission Investigating Nazi Crimes in Žagarė, Sept. 24, 1944, *ibid.*, ap. 46, b. 1135, l. 173.
18. Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje, II d., p. 265.
19. J. Kukšas' Examination Record, Nov. 11, 1946, LYA, Penal Case No. 6458/3, l. 36-37; Soviet Lithuania's KGB's memorandum about mass murders in Žagarė and Radviliškis, April 3, 1973, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1282, l. 2.
20. Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje, I d., p. 135; Conclusion by the Forensic Medical Committee experts, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1282, l. 36.
21. Soviet Lithuania's KGB's memorandum about mass murders in Žagarė and Radviliškis, April 3, 1973, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 1282, l. 3, 4.
22. Žagarė mayor's telephone message to the Šiauliai Region Authorities, Oct. 24, 1941, LYA, Penal Case No. 6458/3, l. 73.

## Žeimelis

In 1897, 679 out of 1266 residents of Žeimelis were Jews. Before World War I, this shtetl was home to 150 Jewish families. In later years, the Jewish population constantly diminished. The population Census of 1923 registered 378 Jews (183 men and 195 women) residing in the Žeimelis District. Many emigrated to the U.S., South Africa, and Palestine. The Jews who remained were engaged in crafts and commerce. There was an old synagogue, a prayer house, a Hebrew school, a Jewish library, a bank and a football team, the "Maccabee". 205 Jews remained living in Žeimelis on the eve of the Nazi invasion. In the first days of the war, 44 of them managed to flee to the hinterland of the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

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As in other Lithuanian shtetls, a Partisan squad began to operate in Žeimelis at the start of the war. Most of its members belonged to the *Šaulys* Union. The squad was headed by Captain J. Jasiūnas and Lieutenant Colonel B. Pulkauninkas. They arrested the remaining Communists, Komsomol members, and Soviet officials.<sup>2</sup>

On August 7, 1941, the eve of the murder of the Žeimelis Jewish population, local policemen and members of the Partisan squad, totaling about 30 servicemen, were summoned to the police station and given weapons. The head of District police, Antanas Šparkevičius told them to patrol the settlement to insure that its inhabitants did not walk in the streets at night. All local Jews were herded into a threshing barn belonging to a resident of the village of Vileišiai, J. Žilgužis, two kilometers from Žeimelis. They were told they would be removed to a new location, where they would be given work. On the following morning, a truck with the Linkuva detachment members (over ten servicemen), and a car with three German officers and the head of the Pakruojis squad, P. Požela, arrived in the shtetl.<sup>3</sup>

A long ditch had already been prepared about one kilometer away, in the Glebava Forest. First, the local policemen and Partisans took all the Jewish men, approximately 50 people, to the murder site. The victims were undressed and beaten. The executioners insisted that Jews tell them where they had hidden their valuables. The men were led to the ditch in small groups and shot. Then, the women, children, and old people were killed. The Linkuva squad members carried out the murders, while the local policemen guarded the site. The Germans finished

off, with pistol shots, the Jews who remained alive in the pit. A total of 160 Jews from Žeimelis were murdered on August 8, 1941.<sup>4</sup> The murder continued for several hours. At its completion, the Linkuva servicemen and the local Partisans returned to Žeimelis and were invited to dinner and vodka. After the murders, the remaining Jewish property was distributed or sold to local inhabitants.<sup>5</sup>

1. Еврейская энциклопедия, t. 7, p. 537; N. Schoenburg, S. Schoenburg, Lithuanian Jewish Communities, p. 393-394; Lietuvos gyventojai, p. 19; Žeimelis District Government's message to the Šiauliai Region Head, Aug. 25, 1941, LYA, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. P-18293-LI, l. 49.
2. A. Figūrinas' Examination Record, March 30, 1945, f. K-1, ap. 58, b. 46648/3, l. 16.
3. Ibid., l. 17; Records of a talk with P. Motviekas, May 21, 1969, *ibid.*, ap. 46, b. 1277, l. 69-70.
4. Ibid., ap. 58, b. 46648/3, l. 18; Žeimelis District Government's message to the Šiauliai Region Head, Aug. 25, 1941, *ibid.*, b. P-18293-LI, l. 49.
5. J. Mišeika's Examination Record, July 8, 1969, *ibid.*, ap. 46, b. 1277, l. 26; S. Juzėnas' Examination Record, Aug. 18, 1944, *ibid.*, b. P-18293-LI, l. 42.

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Polinos Tokerienės laiškas  
Письмо Полины Токерене  
Polina Tokerienė's letter

## The March of the Šiauliai Ghetto\*

As soon as the morning is coming  
The lamp at the gates is shining well  
And fast to the work Jews are running  
First to "Zokne" and then – Ha Ve El.

To be driven in row they have to march so  
That the "klumpes" knock loud on the way  
A bag from the left, the guard's far away  
Like the pharao's times might've come back to this day.

Both columns have left to the rear  
The others are coming instead  
People's feet have the same wooden wear  
And the clothes are the same worn and wet.

To "be-ve" and "o-te" are going the first  
They are marching together in rows  
They are watched day and night  
From all the four sides  
And get in the backs heavy blows.

My dear, my Jews, don't be bad in your mood  
Though the guards are equipped very well  
The day that will come will bring us some good –  
Every night makes an end to the stench.

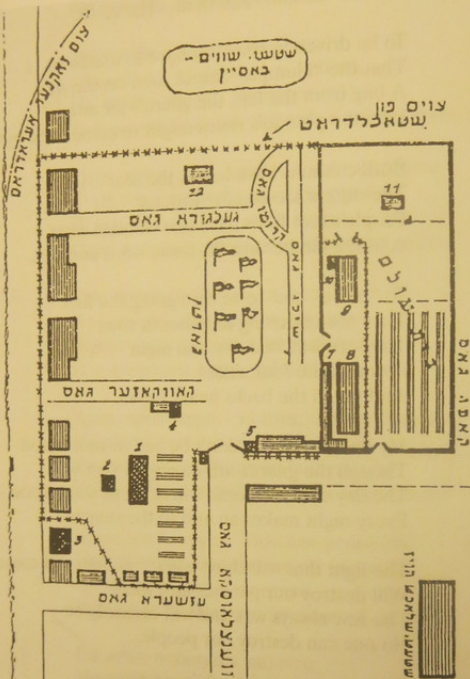
The light that will shine when freedom will come  
Will destroy our patches and wires  
The Jew always was and will certainly be  
No one can destroy our people.

So ever be merry and be in high spirits  
Don't think of the evil and death  
When the heart's always grieving, grieving  
The enemy gets his revenge...

*Translated from Yiddish by Rachel Kostanian*

\* We received this poem, the March of the Šiauliai Ghetto, from Jerusalem. The Yiddish original was reconstructed from memory and sent to the Jewish Museum by a former prisoner of the Šiauliai ghetto, physician Polina Tokeriené. The name of the author has not been ascertained. (*Comp. auth.*)

Kaukazo geto kalinių sąrašai  
 Списки узников гетто Кавказас  
 Lists of the Kaukasas ghetto prisoners



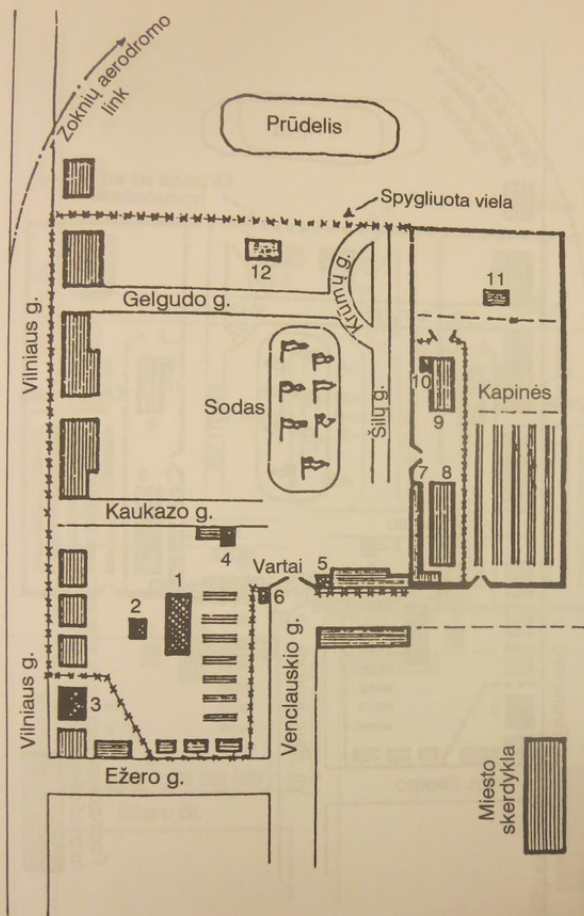
פלאן פון געטא קאווקאז (סקיצע)

- |                        |                                   |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 7 טארטאק               | 1 פארשטייערשאפט                   |
| 8 געטא קראנקן הויז     | 2 די שול                          |
| 9 קראנקן הויז פאר אנשט | 3 ליטווישע געטא פאליציי           |
| 10 צוגעבויטע טהרה-שען  | 4 געטא אמבולאטאריע                |
| 11 הוהל פון שאוולער רב | 5 ביידל פאר ייד, געטא פאליציי     |
| 12 סטאליצריי           | 6 ביידל פאר ליטווישע געטא פאליציי |

Pagal knygą: Leivi Šalit. Taip mes mirėme. Munchenas, 1949 (jidis k.).  
 По книге: Леиуи Шалит. Так мы умирали. Мюнхен, 1949 (идиш).  
 From the book: Leivi Shalit. So We Died. Munich, 1949 (in Yiddish).

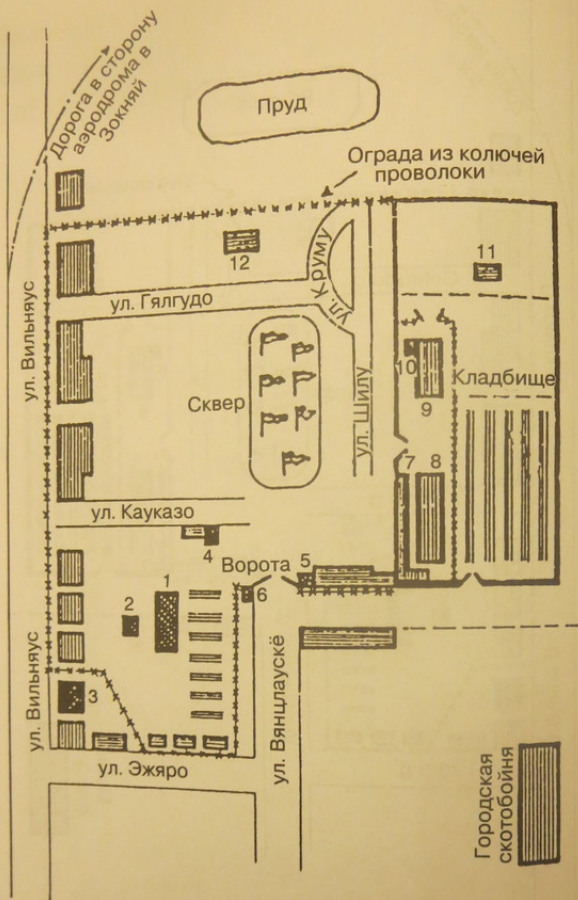
1. Žydų
2. Mok
3. Lietu
4. Amb
5. Žydu
6. Lietu





Kaukazo geto planas

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Žydu tarybos būstinē                | 7. Lentpļūvē                     |
| 2. Mokykla                             | 8. Ligoninė                      |
| 3. Lietuviu policijas sargyba          | 9. Karantinas naujai atvykusiems |
| 4. Ambulatorija                        | 10. Lavoninė (pristatya)         |
| 5. Žydu policijas būstinē – būdelē     | 11. Maisto sandēļiai             |
| 6. Lietuviu policijas būstinē – būdelē | 12. Staliu dirbtuvēs             |

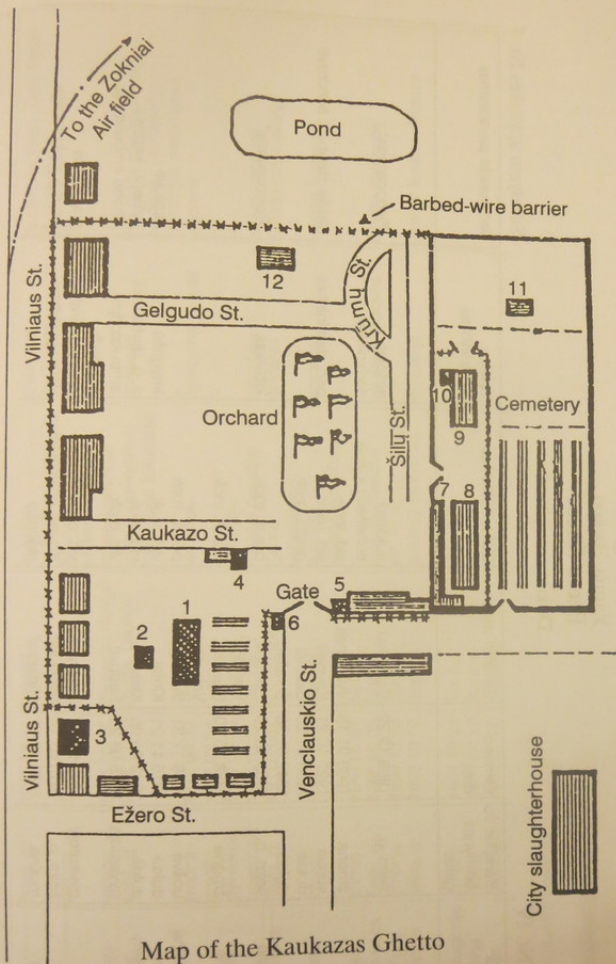


План гетто Кауказас

1. Помещение юденрата
2. Школа
3. Литовская охрана гетто
4. Амбулатория
5. Будка еврейской полиции
6. Будка литовской полиции

7. Лесопильня
8. Больница
9. Карантин для вновь прибывших
10. Морг (достроен)
11. Продуктовый склад
12. Столярные мастерские

1. Site
2. Scho
3. Lith
4. Out
5. Jewi
6. Lith



Map of the Kaukazas Ghetto

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Site of the Jewish Council (Judenrat) | 7. Sawmill                         |
| 2. School                                | 8. Hospital                        |
| 3. Lithuanian police guard               | 9. Quarantine for the new arrivals |
| 4. Out-patient clinic                    | 10. Morgue                         |
| 5. Jewish police booth                   | 11. Food storehouse                |
| 6. Lithuanian police booth               | 12. Carpentry workshops            |