

**Forgotten
Soviet War Crime**

To the memory of Rainiai Martyrs

Forgotten Soviet War Crime

**Rainiai in Lithuania
24-25th June, 1941**

Second and supplemented edition

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Front cover: Traditional Lithuanian cross at Rainiai victims' grave.
Picture taken by A.Beresnevičius.

Back cover: The Rainiai Memorial Chapel.
Another Picture by A.Beresnevičius

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KNOW AND REMEMBER

Preface

War crimes do not fall under statute of limitations provisions but, unfortunately, they grow clouded over with amnesia eventually. Sometimes that sets on purposefully, as some prefer to know nothing; as they again and again pretend that soviet war crimes, as well as such crimes against humanity never happened at all. Now and then, it is even proposed not to research, rather let them be forgotten. Exceptional monstrosity, at all events, deserves responsible attention be rendered it, should justice deter major crime from putting nations in harm's way.

Lithuania suffered several annexations: political breaking of its western part (through pseudo – irredenta) from its mainland in 1939; two occupations (by the USSR in 1940-1941 and the Nazi one in 1940-1944) to finally face the third, again another soviet occupation renewed, with all its coercive alien rule, from 1944-1945 through 1990, with the Russian army leaving only in 1993.

When the war between Nazi Germany and the USSR broke out in June 1941– after the two year long cooperation of both aggressors, as ipso facto they had initiated World War II in September 1939, later one of them outwitting the other – a new chapter was opened.

The dramatic events set about with first the German troops entering Lithuania, which was, as aforesaid, previously under the suppression of the occupying soviets. What followed was a hasty withdrawal of the previous red invaders and their collaborators on their way out of the country in panic. Although, not devoid of feeling of revenge, marking their retreat with monstrous sadistic deeds so difficult to conceive. Perhaps soberly considering, they merely revealed the very essence of the terror empire under Stalin.

The first decade of that calamitous period was especially terrible. Mass exterminations of civilians on racial or social (“class”, political) grounds and mass deportations to the invading country were the most disastrous of all war crimes to befall Lithuania and they are far from being researched properly yet. Among them were some crimes of soviet invading forces that are so far the least researched and had been even covered up, falsified and ignored. This publication is dedicated to one of them.

Here is a representative sample of that thinking: since people had been arrested they were already regarded guilty *per se* and could not intrinsically escape punishment. If any officer thought that the released or broken free prisoners might become political enemies to the “authorities”, then that “authority” would be instantly delegated to him, no matter of whatever rank he might have been, to destroy such would be potential enemies in advance: shoot them to death without any trial whatsoever. Puzzlingly, shooting to death did not suffice. Such actions were also determined by the hatred projected from the depths of the understanding of his own weakness and the revenge on those who were “different” – since one was just a rogue.

Documents collected in this publication furnish proof of what happened in Lithuania on the night of June 24-25, 1941, in the forest near Rainiai village, not far away from the town of Telšiai. Among documents are press articles, descriptions and conclusions of a legal medical report, as well as evidence of witnesses at trial.

One of the killers is still alive, unpunished after 66 years. He is former officer, captain and colonel of soviet secret services NKVD and KGB, Petras Raslanas, once exalted and awarded by the leaders of the so-called Lithuanian SSR, who knew about his involvement in the terrible crime, and is spending his last days sheltered in today’s Russia, given the citizenship of that country.

The Court of the Republic of Lithuania was denied the assistance of Russian law enforcement structures. It tried

P.Raslanas in absentia and sentenced him to life long imprisonment for his proven crime. According to the agreement on legal assistance between Lithuania and Russia, not to mention the EU-Russia agreement “On common space of freedom, security and justice”, and according to international practice, a citizen of Russia may be either extradited to an appropriate court or should serve his sentence in the country, in which he resides. At all events, this is not the country which punishes its war or state terrorism criminals. Lithuania has a number of proofs showing that. At the international level, one could compare the treatment of killers of FSB sentenced to life long imprisonment in Qatar and brought back to Russia. All the same, let people learn about the Rainiai crime.

Just as it is often said: “so that it cannot ever repeat”. The same is uttered when it is still repeating, over and over again.

Vytautas Landsbergis
Member of the European Parliament

THE RAINIAI TRAGEDY

Introduction

About 31,000 people of Lithuania became victims of the soviet terror, war crimes and crimes against humanity in 1940-1941, among them almost 20,000 people (12,560 Lithuanians, 2,202 Jews, 2,003 Poles and others) suffered in GULAG camps and under deportations; 5,157 deportees and prisoners died at deportation sites and camps, 595 prisoners were executed, the destiny of other 7,360 people is unknown yet. The war between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany ruined the plans of soviet occupiers and communist collaborators who supported them to proceed with the decimation of the Lithuanian nation. The USSR NKVD and NKGB (Ministries of Internal Affairs and State Security) were concerned with concealing their crimes immediately; the problem that worried them most was how to take prisoners and archives with them so most often they would cover up their crimes amidst the hasty escape through execution. The soviets killed almost 1,000 prisoners and civilians in Lithuania (99% Lithuanians) on June 22-28, 1941. Such was the end of the last and the most terrible week of the first soviet occupation.

One occupier killed hundreds of Lithuanians and then yielded place to yet another – the Nazi one. The ideology, direction and scale of terror changed; although, Lithuanian citizens continued to be killed: this time mostly Jews and on an increasingly large scale.

A state of war was declared near the front lines, in Lithuania as well, by the declaration of the then Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet on the first day of the war. Another order stated that the functions of state security and defense were passed over to military councils of military districts, fronts and armies. Cases of all political prisoners were handed over to military tribunals. The tribunals most often condemned prisoners to the highest penalty – by shooting. Such was the official policy.

In reality, unlimited freedom was accredited to local NKVD and NKGB institutions and even to soldiers who wardered prisoners (the convoy units). Officers of NKVD and NKGB considered shooting to death a means of prisoner's evacuation. The execution would be titled in their documents "evacuation classified under the first category".

Head of the Investigation Department of Lithuanian LSSR NKGB, E.Rozauskas, had by then not yet received any orders from Moscow, but had already addressed the USSR NKGB Deputy People's Commissar (minister), D.Bykov, and readily offered: "As there are no possibilities to evacuating prisoners from Kaunas prison No.1, we suggest to select the most dangerous ones and shoot them to death before retreating" (...) Furthermore, I proposed that in certain cases, should it become impossible to evacuate the prisoners, the most dangerous ones of them be isolated and shot before the retreat (from the message of E.Rozauskas to the secretary of LKP (b) (Lithuanian Communist Party) CK (Central Committee) A.Sniečkus September 7, 1941). The number of such prisoners (according to E.Rozauskas) was 400 (every fifth prisoner). Soviet occupiers and local collaborators were, however, forced to withdraw since the situation at the front was changing rapidly. Part of the prisoners were taken away and shot in Belarus.

Less than 25% of those people (1,363 prisoners) who were imprisoned in Lithuania from 1940 were transported deep into Russia until July 20, 1941. Along with untried civilian deportees, they were destined to dying slowly of hard work in soviet camps. The destiny of all the other prisoners was twofold: some got their freedom back, others were killed.

Documents prove that it was preplanned to kill the imprisoned "counterrevolutionaries" first. The status of a prisoner (sentenced or interrogated) was of no consequence. The information in NKVD documents of the executions that took place in Lithuania is very scarce.

In his reports NKGB People's Commissar [minister], P.Gladkov, had only mentioned shooting to death of 15 people in Panevėžys, 4 in Zarasai and 15 of the condemned in Kaunas, in the course of the evacuation. There is not a single mention of Pravieniškės and Rainiai crimes in NKVD and NKGB documents. Only prisoners who survived the executions in Pravieniškės, and the condition of the exhumated killed ones in Rainiai could witness the ferociousness of soviet NKVD and NKGB officers and their local collaborators.

The story of the martyring of political prisoners from the Telšiai prison is awesome among the killings of Lithuanians executed by NKGB and NKVD, June 22-28, 1941. That execution was the only one with no witnesses left over. The last living organiser and executor of the killing, Petras Raslanas, indicted for war crimes against humanity in Lithuania and sentenced to life long imprisonment in absentia is currently hidden and lives in Russia, Moscow oblast, Balashiha town.

There were 76 prisoners being interrogated by NKGB of the 162 prisoners held in Telšiai prison. P.Raslanas, who currently had found shelter in Russia, claimed: "I am sure that not a single of them was innocent" (from the explanation of P. Raslanas as of October 7, 1942 to the secretary of LKP (b) CK A.Sniečkus in Moscow).

That was the verdict. Red Army soldiers were taking prisoners from their cells to the warder headquarters. Later the prisoners were laid down in lorries one on top of another. When dawn was breaking on the 25 of June, the vehicles with prisoners went to the Rainiai forest. It is not known what exactly happened next. Only the perpetrators of the execution were giving evidence.

D.Rocius claimed: "The shooting to death was executed by the Red Army soldiers. The following men also participated: the head of NKGB commissariat, Petras Raslanas, operative agent Galkin, and the prison warder Pocevičius (from the explanations of D. Rocius on October 7, 1942 to the secretary of LKP (b) CK A.Sniečkus



Solicitor V.Petronaitis from Plungė was gagged and murdered in Rainiai on June 24,1941.

in Moscow. Only after June 28 when pits were encountered and uncovered, it became clear that all people were most ferociously martyred. Some of them had their ears cut off, eyes punctured; genitalia of almost half of them (35) were injured. Most of them were murdered by smashing their heads or puncturing with bayonets. Only 10 prisoners were shot to death. 46 corpses could not be identified due to injuries inflicted. There were 73 corpses of prisoners found in the Rainiai forest. Three prisoners who tried to escape, were shot and burned near Džiuginėnai village.”

Such was that terrible soviet war crime executed true to Satanist sadism.

Dr A.Anušauskas

The First and Subsequent Reports of the Rainiai Event, 1941-1942

“We have received news that the Reds had butchered 73 political prisoners in the most brutal way in Telšiai. They have had already escaped the prison, when the Bolsheviks caught them. The tortures were atrocious: poles hammered to throats, mouths pierced with wires, ears, noses cut off, etc. Tanks started engines in the town so that shouts of the victims could not be heard. Local communists participated in this atrocious undertaking.”

The Red's Martyrise 73 Political Prisoners in Telšiai //
Į laisvę (To freedom) July 10, 1941, No 15, p.6

“[...]Before their escape the Bolsheviks had managed to martyrise in the most brutal way 76 political prisoners held in Telšiai prison. The corpses of the martyrs were found buried near Telšiai, in the Rainiai forest. Due to very horrendous tortures most corpses of the martyrs were impossible to be identified by their people, however, we managed to find their list in the prison. The martyrs were mostly farmers, workers, white-collars and teachers from Telšiai and Kretinga districts. Owing to the concern of local people the corpses of all the martyrs were uncovered, put to coffins and escorted to their common grave in Telšiai Catholic Cemetery on July 3.”

Life in Telšiai country//Į laisvę (To freedom) July 26, 1941, No 29, p.6

“...The Golgota path of Telšiai political prisoners from the prison to Rainiai had repeatedly been reviewed in the press. It was well known to all Lithuanians. But still the Rainiai forest tragedy is a mystery till today. We hoped that it would be revealed



Some of the students of Plungė Commercial Shool and of Telšiai Latin School.
All of them were murdered in Rainiai forest after having suffered terrible tortures.



Murdered workers. Julius Simutis (in the middle of the third row)
was one of those who during the years of Independence (1918 – 1940) agitated
for Communism and later for the Bolshevik power.

at least partially by the special publication “Žemaičių kankiniai” (Samogitian martyrs) of Žemaičių Žemė (Samogitian land) dedicated to the first year mentioning of that tragedy. Alas, we have not learned anything new from it, although evidence of several prison officials who worked in the prison in Bolshevik times had been publicised. The sufferings of the killed and the tools and methods of execution might be determined only by the excerpts taken from the “Legal Medical Protocol”. Corpses were so violently injured that parents, relatives and close friends could recognize only 28 martyrs of 73 uncovered corpses.[...]

23 farmers, 13 white-collar workers, 12 pupils, 4 workers, 4 small traders, 4 former policemen, 3 primary schools teachers, 3 craftsmen, one student, one advocate, one notary, one journalist, one landlord suffered the Bolshevik terror in Rainiai, professions of other two killed people are still undetermined.

The Bolsheviks executed another annihilation on a similar scale on June 26 in Pravieniškės. There the Bolsheviks shot to death about 400 innocent people using automatic guns and machine-guns, among them 21 officials of the Pravieniškės forced labour camp and eight women of the camp – officials and their wives.

Victims of the red Terror: on the occasion of Telšiai Commemoration //
To Freedom (Į laisvę) June 27, 1942, No 148, p. 3



Farmers who were murdered in Rainiai.

Samogitians¹ Keep Recalling the Epic of the Rainiai Killing

The Rainiai forest is not far away from the town of Telšiai: about four kilometers. Going from Telšiai to Luokė one has to pass the lake Mastis. The road lies also within that Rainiai forest from which Telšiai is visible. However, this did not make the cruel torturers go deeper into the forest, they chose a place near the road – an edge of the forest, close to adjoining homesteads.

The place of killings is currently circled by a wooden fence. Boards are situated near the road and in the place of the execution itself on which, hopefully, a commemorating inscription will be made. Four pits are clearly visible. The forest in which people were tortured is meager. Firs are far one from another. The places in which the martyrs were buried are still discernable. The forest is situated on the slope of a small hill. When you look at the homesteads around, one is first surprised how local people could not possibly hear the shouts of the tortured people and the noise. They were unwilling to talk much even now. Kontautienė, who lives beside the road near that place, recalled that in the evening of June 24, a few lorries drove up before the sunset. Warders were standing on all roads. Talking to the current administration of the Telšiai prison it became clear that were the administration of the prison just honest and humane, all the prisoners could have survived because they all could have been released. It became evident that other NKVD officers had already run away from the town and returned to Telšiai together with the Bolsheviks only in the afternoon of June 24. The former head of Telšiai district Executive Office, D. Rocius, returned together with them. The warders explained that they had inquired what was to be done with the political prisoners. The Bolsheviks and chekists answered that they would be bringing about order.

The Respublika Str. passing near the prison was immediately rounded up by warders and people were not allowed to walk there.

¹ Samogitia – the historical, ethnical north-western part of Lithuania. This Latin name has been retained to the present day in the English language.



Coffins in the common grave of Rainiai martyrs in Telšiai cemetery.

Tanks took positions in the street on both sides of the prison. Lorries came and drove into the yard of the prison. Gravediggers had already been sent to Rainiai to dig pits, late on the same afternoon.

Thereafter, at about 11 p.m. or so, by midnight the prisoners were taken one by one from their cells to a room on the ground floor (currently a warders' headquarters). There they were ordered to open their mouths and utter "a". They were being curbed with bands made of towels, their hands were being tied and they were immediately thrown into lorries and transported to the Rainiai forest to be tortured.

The poison tablets found in the prison show that were the Bolsheviks not to have had any time to martyrize them, then all political prisoners of Telšiai were supposed to be poisoned. 300 tablets of poison were bumped into with a note instructing that those were meant for 100 people. Doctor Gutmanas participated in the torturing of the prisoners, as it became clear from the official record of investigation. It may be assumed that the poison was prepared by him.

Only tools of torture left over and injuries on the bodies show how the political prisoners were tortured in the Rainiai forest. Warders of the prison who were arrested claimed that they were



Grave of Rainiai martyrs.

not present at the place of torment and were only passive watchers, maybe, only of things happening elsewhere in the prison. A few warders who escaped (among them the governor of the prison in the Bolshevik times) might have known more. Currently the only of the escaped warders, Kabaila, who had been mentioned in the testament of the martyrs as a cruel supervisor, was caught; however, during interrogations he still remained silent. The only thing determined was that during the torturing, the engines of some vehicles were kept running and a special motor was installed to mute the shouts of the people being tortured. The corpses of the martyrs were encountered casually. Local guerrillas searching for hidden guns; starting to dig the ground picked up the killed. They also came upon a kettle with the water in it; water was boiled for scalding hands, and nearby a heap of skin scalded from arms and legs was found. No need to go on writing about other injuries on faces, arms, skin, heads and cutting off of extremities, because the press has already written extensively on that topic and data of official medical experts was publicized.

The vigilance of Bolshevik warders watching the place of torturing was witnessed by the fact that a person shot to death was picked up about a kilometer away from the place of his killing; most probably he was casually on the way somewhere nearby and was noticed by Bolshevik warders.



Grave of Rainiai martyrs.

The Telšiai prison a red-brick building is located almost in the centre of the town. The cell in which the political prisoners had written the widely known testament on a bowl is on the first floor. The prison workshop was in front of it. The cell was quite small. Only a few people could under normal standards be placed there, however, these Bolsheviks held as many as 13 prisoners in it. Prisoners could not see either the town outside or their surroundings from their cell, only a small part of the blue sky. Other prisoners were held in the next cell, which was arranged at the place of the former prison chapel. Among them was the later murdered Tarvainis, who on seeing the flying of German planes, through a small square of a window, told his friends held in the next cell about the approaching liberation.

Later bodies of all martyrs, which were not identified and taken by relatives, were buried in a common grave near the entrance to the Telšiai cemetery. It is a big pit of several meters in length. The grave is decorated with yellow sand, and a big cross of stone-bricks was arranged on it. A few wreaths are seen with bouquets of fresh flowers.

Į laisvę (To freedom), June 5, 1942, No 130,p.3

Signed by pseudonym Kusandra

Investigations

Massacre

1. The Execution of Samogitian Martyrs on 24 June 1941

The war between Nazi Germany and the USSR commenced on Sunday, June 22. The first reconnaissance plane reached Telšiai in the evening of the same day. Other planes appeared on Monday morning at about 4 a.m. Prisoners held in Telšiai prison saw the planes through their nailed-up windows through which only a fragment of the blue sky could be seen. The planes brought them hope to get free from that disgusting imprisonment; they brought optimism to our land that it soon would be freed from the beastly Bolshevik slavery.

On the same day at roughly 10 a.m., the first bombers flew over. Their aim was to destroy an oil transport coming from Šiauliai, which had by that time already reached the outskirts of Telšiai. The transport was destroyed and was burning for a long time. One of the bombers noticed lorries of the Bolsheviks in Žarėnai Str., it suddenly dived down and dropped bombs. People started quickly to run straight away. By the evening the town was empty: all Bolshevik institutions had moved from the town. The headquarters also moved leaving the former Patients and Bishop Palace empty; the NKVD left behind a mess in their premises, the militia went away and finally the Communist party and its committees also moved. The town was in great disarray because there were many Katyushas [nickname for wives of soviet officers], institutions in the town and they all were keen on leaving as soon as possible. Some were leaving by lorries, others by busses and trains. Members of the Plungė Communist party and the committee members passed Telšiai by bus on Monday night. The Telšiai Communist party and the district committee also went away by bus. That happened by midnight at 1 a.m. or so.

Thus everyone able to leave had escaped by that time, and the town was empty, not a single governing institution remained in place. But it was still full of army units, which were running in various directions; not aware themselves where they were running and where they had to run. The last civilians were also leaving their houses behind to the fate.

Nevertheless, one establishment had not run away or collapsed. It was the prison. The prison governor, warden Vaitkus, received 17 lorries for evacuation of the prison on Monday morning; for that purpose he took 600 rubles from the prison accountant Žutautas. News spread in the prison that both officials and prisoners would be moved by those lorries to Vilnius or even farther. However, the prison was not moved anywhere due to an unknown reason; either due to lack of means of transportation or because of some other motive.

Did the prison people know by then that all institutions had run away and that the authorities were not present in the town any longer? They did know, because the prison supervisors under the interrogation witnessed that they had clearly seen the Plungė and Telšiai communist party groups moving, they also named the time and some persons whom they had noticed. They phoned the NKVD and militia, nobody answered so they went to check why they were silent. They had come up a great mess and not a single person in the premises. There was evidence that the prison warder Songaila had visited the Russian headquarters. Most probably there were more persons who had visited the headquarters or had contacted them. First of all, the vehicles that were promised by the headquarters show that. Most probably the destiny of the prisoners was predetermined by people from the communist party, GPU – NKVD and the army headquarters, because being unable to transport them they decided to kill them on the spot. However, such decision could have been passed only on Tuesday morning. Until Tuesday morning the prison was entirely in the hands of its

officers, who kept it in strict and vicious order, although, as already mentioned, all institutions had definitely been moved away from the town. Had the prison administration been honest and had it had at least any conscious national feeling and humanism left over, it would have released the prisoners and withdrawn themselves. They clearly knew that the German troops would enter the town not a few days but only a few hours later. Unfortunately, they were both merely dishonest and also cruel. The Rainiai tragedy happened not without their efforts; uncovering such a terrible crime against humanism and human kind unknown to history before.

2. Bolsheviks Return to the Prison

On Tuesday morning at around 8-10a.m., a few prison warders were standing near the prison among them the accountant Žutautas and prison doctor Gutmanas. They were standing near the Aukštasis by street: about 40-50metres away from the prison entrance. Then two military vehicles stopped near them with some 20-30 Red Army soldiers. The warders later witnessed that the vehicles stopped, although they were not asked to do so. The Red Army soldiers got off and required the warders to introduce themselves. Those present did so, saying they were prison officers; that they were left alone after all institutions had moved away and did not know what to do with the prisoners.

It is clear that the prison administration had in the mean time been busy taking actions to solve the prison's destiny, so it must have had contacts with the Russians and did not do anything at all to release the prisoners. Warders also had not done anything, and, even had not thought of doing anything of the kind. Most of them organized the transportation of the prisoners from the prison and some of them also participated in the terrible massacre in Rainiai. It is also important to note that until Tuesday morning there were ample chances to release the prisoners and withdraw because there were no Russians in the prison and, moreover, the most ferocious warders-governors were already away. Besides, the Lithuanian

community had addressed the most reliable warders and they were asked to undertake something to release the prisoners. Forsaken, the community was left in despair. Instead of being released the prisoners were killed.

3. The List of Political Prisoners is Being Compiled

After entering the prison, the Russians started to set their order in: they organized the guards, checked prison weapons, selected the cases of political prisoners and compiled lists of them. The Russians classified cases according to indictment categories. The list was compiled by the warders. A list of 43 prisoners was compiled in the beginning. Later this was supplemented up to 73. Two Red Army soldiers who had broken Bolshevik discipline and regime rules were also added to the list. They were martyred together with the rest in Rainiai. Thus the list contained 76 prisoners all in all.

4. Pits, Strings, Bands

When the list was compiled, everyone got involved in the preparation for the massacre. First of all, the prison building and its cellars were inspected by military officers. Songaila, Žutautas and others accompanied them and showed the cellars. The cellars were small, “mesta malo” (Russ. Not enough space) said the Russians and decided to kill the prisoners at another place; namely the Rainiai forest.

Military units were located in the Rainiai forest. On the left side of the road were trenches, various vehicles, etc. This place was selected for the execution. However, there were no pits. So trenches were used instead. Reliable warders of the prison and 10 soldiers were sent to dig them deeper. The prison warder Pilibaitis supervised the digging. He went to Siraičiai manor and brought the necessary amount of spades, later together with the Russians he went to Rainiai and was digging the pits with the others. In the evening, he returned to the prison and participated in the preparation of the prisoners for their transportation.

Strings for hand tying and bands for mouth curbing were also brought. Torn towels were used as bands.

When evening drew on, the prisoners were taken from cell to cell. Political prisoners were gathered in separate cells, and severe Russian guards were placed at their doors. The warder Vaitkus together with a Russian guard was accompanying the prisoners and reading their names from the list.

5. The Terrible Execution

On Tuesday at about midnight, the terrible slaying commenced. The place was secured. Machine-guns were placed outside, the prison was being strictly guarded and traffic was blocked in the street (The traffic had been forbidden since morning). More guards were appointed, they also guarded the interior of the prison; they were all Russians. Five lorries were standing at the prison; engines of some of them were kept running so that shouts of the prisoners could not be heard. Several Red Army soldiers, GPU agents, Rocius, Gutmanas [...] and others were sitting at the table in the guards' headquarters. Armed Russian guards were standing at the door inside and outside.

Vaitkus and others went to cells with Russian guards and named political prisoners one after another. The prisoners were asking whether they had to take their things and clothes. They were ordered to take everything that was theirs. Then they were ordered to leave all their things at the door to the headquarters. The things were then taken by warders, brought to the yard and bundled into one heap.

Each prisoner was being interrogated in the headquarters. Each one was asked whether he admitted being guilty for counterrevolutionary activities, etc. They were all condemned right away on the procedure spot. It is important to note that all political prisoners held in Telšiai prison by that time had not undergone any trial procedure yet. Those who had already been sentenced were moved to other prisons. It was that now a comedy was to be played

out – an improvised “trial” which condemned all of them to terrible tortures, whereas in the mean time, others were busy preparing; digging pits and as to the plan of the performance itself; so that had been conceived well in advance.

At the headquarters each prisoners was ordered to open his mouth and utter “a”. As soon as a prisoner did so; opening his mouth, two Russians standing behind would put a band on the mouth and tie it so that the prisoner would be unable to shout. Before that they would have already had their hands tied behind.

Fastened in this way prisoners were brought to lorry through the yard. There other guards were waiting, to take them by hands and push into the lorry. The captives were not seated or let standing but were laid down disorderly. Other guards were standing in the lorry with guns and machine-gun ready to shoot. Resisting prisoners were beaten with gun butts and fists. Moans and groans of the unfortunate victims were heard. Some of the accompanying warders heard them say several words: “good bye”, “will be a witness”, “Maria”, (Words addressed to the more reliable warders).

The taking of prisoners to the lorries lasted about 2-2.5 hours. Five vehicles were loaded with inmates. Three vehicles were disguised with greenery and prisoners were covered by some material; two vehicles were with tents or boxes. When one vehicle would be full it went away to the street and another would be driven in instead.

When all prisoners had been loaded to vehicles, Vaitkus, Helmanas, Pilibaitis and others also boarded the lorries. They went to Rainiai. It was June 25, 1941, 1:30a.m. Nobody noticed the vehicles or their load and nobody helped the suffering prisoners.

At the break of dawn Red Army solders left the prison, also followed by several warders and Rocius. Rocius commanded to dismiss the guards before leaving. They were left to their fate. The guards were finally released by the units of frontier troops passing by.

6. In the Rainiai Forest

Masses of people saw the Rainiai martyrs, their broken skulls, spilled brains, punctured eyes, cut off noses and ears, punctured chests, messed guts, broken bones, cut off and put into mouths genitalia. The land had never seen such terrible views before and God forbid they see such scenes again. They also saw some tools with which the prisoners were tortured. However, they did not exactly know how they were tortured, who participated in the tortures. All martyrs were dead; no witnesses remained. All torturers were gone away or were hiding and unknown to them. So, they also could not be witnesses. Strangers saw nothing, for the forest was denied to them; it was being guarded strictly, guards were placed around, nobody was allowed to approach.

It is also difficult to tell exactly what tools were used. Maybe it would become clear later, they thought, when witnesses appeared and when the conclusions of some international scientific commission research were announced.

7. Encountering of the Martyrs

On June 28, 1941, the fire-fighters' instructor Peckus went with his driver Lauraitis to Rainiai manor tractor station looking for spare parts to replace the old ones on his vehicle. He saw people in the Rainiai forest and dug up the ground. He was looking forward to maybe finding some useful automobile parts or guns hidden there. However, when one pit was uncovered, corpses appeared. After some examination it was determined that those were the corpses of the political prisoners that had been held in the Telšiai prison. The martyrs were huddled to four pits, 18 to 20 people in each. The pits were uncovered, corpses of the martyrs laid in rows. The corpses were terribly violated. Mothers could not recognize their children, sisters their brothers. There were cases when wives buried unknown corpses as their own husbands'. By then they did not know that their husbands were moved to other prisons and would be coming home free. Incidentally, after the funeral some of them really returned.

Inscriptions in the Guest Book of the Exhibition The Red Terror

Dear Lithuanian brethren, let's be united, so that we do not ever

have such victims in the future.

Blood of brothers, tears of sisters and the yoke suffered by the nation make us work for the better future.

Although our life sees many painful hours but this Communist "friendship" surpasses all of them.

We will go the paths they had laid.

Let the blood of these martyrs wash the way to our freedom.

Who loved a lot, who suffered a lot, he did not bow to the storm.

The Rainiai martyrs were visited by masses of people. It was an unusual wake in the open forest. The whole region was attending it: people gathered in sorrow with tears in their eyes. Nobody could forestall such terrible fate and not a single even the toughest heart could resist tears.

The martyrs were buried in Telšiai cemetery in a common grave.

Žemaičių žemė (Samogitian land), 14 June 1942, No 22, p. 2-3 The name or pseudonym of the author: Pr. Žemaitis

Where and how Bolsheviks Were Executing and Torturing Lithuanians

A. Merkelis

The first Lithuanian political prisoners were imprisoned in Telšiai prison on July 12, 1940 during the first mass arrests of Lithuanians, and the last ones as of June 8, 1941, i.e. only a few weeks before the German-USSR war. They were being constantly interrogated in the prison and terrorised in various ways. There was some evidence proving that they were ferociously tortured in the prison, it was testified by two bloody shirts discovered in the prison... “Tenth cell in Telšiai prison, 23-6-1941, political prisoners: 1. Antanavičius Juozas, 2. Baltramiejūnas Albinas, 3. Baltrimaitis Kazys, 4. Bučius Kostantas, 5. Gaudutis Augustinas (deleted), 6. Jagminas Adolfas, 7. Katkus Kazys 8. Kisevičius Karolis, 9. Kvedaras Juozas, 10. Lileikis Vytautas, 11. Puškorius Kazys, 12. Rakas Adomas, 13. Rudokas Andrius, 23-6-1941, Telšiai”. There were the following inscriptions on sides of the bowl: “[...] Today, on the morning of June 23, 1941, our faces became brighter, hearts started throbbing with hope when we saw German bombers pounding military objects of the Bolsheviks in Telšiai. [...] Today, on June 24, 1941, the morning is beautiful and sunny; through the steel bars of the window we see the Lake Mastis glowing blue. We are waiting for the defeat of the Bolsheviks in high mood.”



Bowl with inscription.



Iron stove to keep the water on the boil. Switch box of the electric set. The political prisoners were tortured with electricity. Engine producing deafening noises.

[...] When the war started, some citizens of Telšiai undertook an attempt to release the political prisoners. Some of the warders of the prison had agreed to that effort but the warder Vaitkus opposed it and betrayed the political prisoners so precipitating their martyring. NKVD officers most likely learning about the intention to release the political prisoners: surrounded the prison, deployed tanks, machine-guns and Red Army soldiers at both ends of the street. Strangers were not allowed to walk towards the prison. The prison warders locked up many prisoners in a punishment cell; they were released only on the following day. Criminal prisoners were left without supervision and escaped.

[...] The prisoners were being accompanied to the interrogation room from their cells. There the executioners commanded them to stand still and shout “a”. Simultaneously a long band of cloth was held above the head of a man standing still: which was then tightened on his mouth just when he was uttering that sound. Then the lower jaw was being drawn to the neck to curb the tortured person so that he would be unable to shout.

The tortured curbed, with their hands tied behind them, were thrown into lorries like sacks under the command “raz, dva” (Russ. one, two) and transported to the Rainiai forest.



[...]During the torturing the Rainiai Forest was carefully protected just like the prison had been before. The Red Army

People being chained and then tied to the tree were tormented in a most horrendous way by pouring boiling water on them, gouging out their eyes and by spraining their joints.

sentries were assigned not only near the place of torturing but also at all the nearest roads and paths points to prevent people from walking around during the action. In order shouts and moans of the tortured were suppressed not to be heard, the engines of vehicles were kept running. Even though the place of torturing was being protected very carefully, as a number of chekists and Red Army soldiers were guarding it, the tied and curbed martyrs, who had no chance to escape alive, seeing the infernal sufferings prepared for them, still tried to escape; that is why two corpses were found shot to death at about 500 to 600metres from the place of the massacre, in the nearest vegetable garden of a homestead – in potato and rye fields.

The infernal, unbelievable sufferings of the Lithuanian political prisoners of Telšiai prison were testified by their injured corpses disfigured so intensively that it was difficult to recognize them. They enabled us to reconstruct at least partially that horrible reality of torturing, which was terribly disgusting by its sadistic ferociousness. It is noteworthy that political prisoners in the Rainiai forest were tortured not in order to get confessions (they had already been tortured enough by the interrogators in prison for that) but in order to satisfy a wild passion for sadism. Striving to that end the red terrorists sadistically invented the most sophisticated, unimaginable to a sane person, instruments for torturing their



Disfigured feet of martyrs.

victims. They were: singeing their victims on fire, burning them with fire and electricity, and were scalding their hands and legs with boiling water. Later They were beating the martyrs with gun butts, wires with lead pieces on ends and other solid tools, were cutting them with knives, puncturing with bayonets, breaking bones of arms and legs, puncturing their soles, backs, chests, abdomens with bayonets, were peeling skin from various body parts, while people were still alive, were cutting off ears of some of them, puncturing eyes and tearing tongues. Skulls of most martyrs were broken, brains effused. It is also important to note that

the red executioners being wild to madness were overtaken by some unheard-of ghoulish sexual sadism.

Genitalia of almost all martyrs were injured violently; even put into mouths of some of them. All things show that going frantic with anger, red inquisitors of the 20th century, were torturing their victims to give them as much pain as possible in order to satisfy the pervert feelings, while watching their victims twisting in pain and overcome by convulsions.

After a few days the foul deeds of the red barbarians were disclosed. On June 28, at 5 p.m. the prosecutor of Telšiai district, the district Governor, a doctor, other officials and witnesses came to the Rainiai forest and helped in the identification of the prisoners. The job was not easy: the excavated martyrs were so violently killed and injured that only a small part of them could be identified by their relatives.

Lietuvių archyvas: bolševizmo metai (Lithuanian archive: years of bolshevism). – Vol. 1. – Kaunas, 1942, p. 80-85

NKVD Interrogation Methods: from the Questionnaires of Political Prisoners

A. Vilainis

When more corpses of victims killed by the NKVD were placed in prison yards and secluded spots, they not only needed to be properly buried, but they also had to be identified. The department for the identification of the killed political prisoners was formed at the Kaunas penitentiary prison for this purpose. The data collected by it provides a lot of material for the research of NKVD torture methods. Especially notable in this sense is the tragedy of the political prisoners killed in Rainiai. It is known that they were killed by the NKVD officers; all of the most ferocious means known to the NKVD officers were used for their atrocities there.

The ferocity of the killing of those 73 martyrs is documented in inspection protocols provided by medical doctors. They were on show at the exhibition on the Red Terror, when it was opened. Later they were publicised in the “Žemaičių Žemė” (Samogitian Land) in 1941-1942. [...]

The NKVD officers were using methods they had already tested previously for killing. The only difference in that case might have been that earlier they were killing people not in groups, but one by one and they were demanding victims to claim being guilty, to betray friends, etc. Thus it might be said that by torturing their victims they also had an aim to get on the tracking down of new victims. It was, however, first and foremost, a mass killing in Rainiai, naturally, in that case not with an aim to get some information from the accused. The only explanation for it is that NKVD executioners were satisfying their pervert imagination and sadistic drives.

Lietuvių archyvas: bolševizmo metai (Lithuanian archive: years of bolshevism). – Vol. 4-1943, p. 94-96

Legal Medical Protocol

After the common grave of the murdered prisoners was opened on June 28, 1941, the commission of physicians immediately examined the bodies and described exactly its findings in the protocol.

1. Corpse unidentified. Epithelium peels. Left leg up to half of shank beaten. Chest beaten. Neck beaten. Skin of head peeled, bruised. Right cheek and temple beaten. A 2 cm wound with sharp edges in bones of forehead, above eyebrow, 3 cm deep. Blood effused.
2. Antanas Čiužas from Telšiai. Signs of beating on belly and chest. A wound caused by blow on left leg below joint, bruised. Both hands tied behind. All joints of cranium fractured, fractures of semi-oval form, while searching (measuring depth of wounds) the measurer freely goes through all cranium, brain is messed. Bruises under eyes.
3. Petras Kavolis (identified by his brother Matas). Cranium smashed, deformed. On the right part of head, between bones of forehead and bones of temple there is a wound with uneven edges. Blood effused from nose. Skin peeled. Brain effused. Near the right side of lips two punctured wounds, 10 cm deep. Lower jaw smashed. Signs of beating on the right side below arm. Genitalia beaten, blood effused. Hands scalded and abraded. Livores mortem clearly visible.
4. Stepas Bubelė from Alsėdžiai. Livores mortem clearly visible on the whole body, signs of beating on both legs peel off and macerate. Genitalia beaten, blood effused testicles full of blood. Signs of beating on glans. Lower jaw forced to the neck, curbed with a band, tongue protruding, lower jaw forced down, left eye open. Among parietal bone, bone of occiput and temple bone there is a wound with sharp edges, 8 cm. Brain effused.



The victims were so mutilated that they could not be identified



The Bolsheviks conveyed boiling water to the selected place for torturing. Pictures show a scalded head and burnt hands.

5. Unidentified. Livores mortem in the lower parts of body and head are clear. Stomach, legs and genitalia beaten, blood effused. Toes of the right foot bloody, middle of sole punctured to bone, wound of 1.5-0.5 cm. Neck tied with a strip of cloth, head with a hole, forehead punched on the right side – hollow, head bones smashed, hole of 12-8 cm, brain messed.
6. Unidentified. Livores mortem clear with marks of decay. Curbed with a strip of cloth, between the bones of occiput and temple a punctured wound of 5-8 cm with sharp uneven edges with brain effusing through it: brain is messed. Hands tied behind, genitalia beaten with marks of blood.
7. Unidentified. Livores mortem and marks of decay are clear. Cranium and facial bones beaten and deformed. Left eye punctured, eye-socket empty. Cranium fractured. Punctured



The victims of Rainiai.

wound from inside corner of eye going straight up, 10.4 cm, brain effused; hands violently beaten, left leg beaten and bruised, skin untouched.

8. Povilas Balsevičius from Kuliai district, Kumžaičiai village, identified by his brother. Various bruises on waist and lower extremities near abdomen, marks of decay on the left side of chest. Cranium deformed, a hole on the right side of cranium of 15.1 cm extending to the right part of bones of forehead, temples and parietal bone. Brain effused.
9. Unidentified. All skin with clear livores mortem and marks of decay. All face and body beaten with a blunt object, hypodermic blood effusion and also in all other organs. A hole of 15.8 cm between occiput and parietal bone. Brain effused. Genitalia beaten with a blunt thing, well expressed bruises.
10. Jonas Milius from Alsėdžiai district. Very clear livores mortem all over body. Cranium beaten and deformed. Wounds on the left side behind ear of 2 and 4 cm, cheeks beaten, hands tied behind, skin abraded.
11. Unidentified. Livores mortem clear, marks of beating on chest, face and all over body. Brows beaten, bruised. Hand tied with a



Some of the tortured and flayed victims of Rainiai.

- linen rope. Genitalia beaten with a blunt thing, extreme bruise on the left side.
12. Unidentified. Marks of decay up to knees. Hypodermic marks of beating on both sides, occiput with a zigzag lacerated wound, blood effusing from the left ear. Hands severely beaten with a blunt thing, skin of hands abraded. Genitalia (penis) violently beaten.
 13. Unidentified. Livores mortem and marks of decay well defined all over the body. Tongue protruding. On both sides– on the left side between cheekbones and parietal bone a hole, brain



Tortured bodies of political prisoners.

effusing. Edges of the hole uneven, sharp, punched. Hands tied, bones of left arm beaten and broken. Genitalia beaten with a blunt thing. Blood effusion in tissue and skin injuries. Left leg beaten with a blunt thing.

14. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible on whole body. All facial skin abraded and beaten. Blood effusion in the area of occiput. Chest beaten, 18.8 cm. Hands tied behind, all skin macerated.
15. Unidentified. Body skin smooth. Marks of decay up to knees. Cranium and face deformed. Right eye punctured. Right ear torn off. All bones of the right arm broken with a short stick. Tongue protruding. Hands tied around waist with a rope. Skin peeled off. Marks of decay on the right leg.
16. Vacys Pabarčius from Žemaičių Kalvarija. Livores mortem clearly visible marks of decay on the lower part of body and on the head. Cranium deformed; holes across occiput; eye bulging, tongue protruding; all head bloody; hands tied behind, macerated.



Tortured bodies of political prisoners.

17. Adolfas Butkevičius from Kaunas. Curbed with a horse band, right eye punctured, cranium and face deformed, punctured wound on the forehead and occiput of 2.3 cm. Edges uneven, sharp, moves while searching. Marks of beating, especially on the temple near left eye, on left side of chest and left leg.
18. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible on the lower part of body and cranium and face deformed. On the inner side of elbow a hole of 8.5 cm with uneven edges, bones broken. Lower jaw smashed without a wound. Tongue cut off. Open wound from right ear of 4.5 cm. Hands tied behind with a rope, skin abraded. Genitalia beaten with a blunt object, large bruises. Two wounds on soles.
19. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible on skin. In the upper area of head a wound through skin and bones of 2.1 cm with uneven sharp edges. Both legs are beaten violently with large bruises.
20. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible on the lower part of the body. A hole between occiput and parietal bone across the joint of the cranium, brain effusing. Skin cut across temple bone, which is broken. Blood effused, clotted. Gunshot wound

in the front side caused by a 0.65 caliber bullet. Genitalia had been beaten large bruises.

21. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible. Left part of bones of forehead, half of vertex and left part of vertex were missing. Brain missing. Left eye punctured. Marks of violent beating, corpse absolutely bloody.
22. Bronius Križinauskas. All face beaten. Large blood effusions. Upper cranium broken. A hole of 2 cm between upper cranium part and bones of forehead, blood and brain effusing. Livores mortem visible on extremities.
23. Pranas Guzauskas from Telšiai. Livores mortem clearly visible on the lower part of body. Hands tied behind. A hole of 8.8 cm between temple bone and left ear, brain effusing. Bones broken. Lower jaw broken.
24. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible in the lower and upper parts of body. A hole in the middle of bones of forehead, brain protruding. Cranium broken and deformed. A hole of 15.10 cm in the head with straight lines, sharp edges. Genitalia beaten.
25. Unidentified. Livores mortem of decay on the chest. Genitalia beaten. Left part of body beaten, blood effusing. Both calves beaten. Hands tied behind. Curbed with a band. The cranium smashed, also bones of forehead and upper part of head. A hole of 10.12 cm in the skin.
26. Unidentified. Shirt bloody. Livores mortem on neck and abdomen. Penis and glans beaten, bruised. Wound of 4.7 cm on left foot. Bones broken in the wound. Wound seems slashed. Hands tied behind. Marks of beating on right elbow and above elbow. Right eye completely missing and also cranium and skin from the corner of right eye to occiput bone on the left side 2 cm above brow. Brain missing in cranium. Upper jaw completely broken.

27. Unidentified. Livores mortem on abdomen and chest. Skin on abdomen macerated, marks of decay visible. Corpse already started decaying and marks of beating cannot be seen on the body. Vertex and jaw intersected deep into the cranium. All cranium bones smashed to smithereens.

28. Unidentified. Livores mortem on abdomen, body macerated. Genitalia beaten, blood effusions. Gunshot wound on the right side between ribs, blood effusing from the left side.



Tortured bodies of political prisoners.

29. Zigmas Sakelis (identified by Jonas Sakelis and Dr. Žilyte). Livores mortem on abdomen and genitalia. Genitalia beaten, bruised. Both calves beaten with marks visible. Right breast, side and back beaten, bruised. Head on the left side of vertex and occiput bone completely smashed. Wound of 12 cm.

30. Unidentified. Body and abdomen beaten, bruised. Livores mortem on the body, skin macerates. Hands tied behind. The cranium smashed, except right upper jaw and ear bone. Skin from right mouth corner to right eye and to the joint of vertex bone removed together with head bones. Brain missing.

31. Vincas Motuzas from Gaudikaičiai, identified by Motuzienė. Livores mortem macerating on body and abdomen. Marks

of beating on back and right side. Genitalia beaten, testicles swollen. Marks of beating on left calf with blood effused. Chin forced to neck with a cotton strip through lower lip and teeth. Left eye bulging. On the right part of vertex a wound of 16.8 cm. Broken bones of the wound not present. Brain missing.

32. Bučius (student at crafts school). Identified by St. Avelis. Marks on both sides. Genitalia beaten, bruised. Hands tied behind. Marks on both sides. Marks of beating on both calves. On left side of the head from the messial line an oblong punctured wound of 6.2 cm. Bone of forehead smashed, bruise around the left eye.
33. Unidentified. Abdomen, chest and neck covered with livores mortem. Genitalia beaten. Left feet beaten. Skin of right leg completely macerating. Head up to orbits completely macerating and vertex macerating.
34. Unidentified. Marks of decay on the abdomen. On the right side in the area of appendicitis, a punctured wound of 4 cm, part of intestine protruding, about 20 cm of length. Punctured wound of 1 cm on the right side of bottom. Hands tied behind. Right knee beaten, bruised.
35. Unidentified. Body covered with large bruises. They were especially visible on chest. Genitalia beaten, bruised. Skin of arms macerated. Punctured wound of 3 cm in the head above the right ear. Bruise on the forehead. Both eyes bulging.
36. Antanavičius. Large bruises on chest, right shoulder and right side. Bruises on left feet. Right arm bruised. Hands tied behind. A wound of 4 cm length and 3 cm depth on the left cheek. A cut of 10 cm above the left brow extending to the ear. A wound of 3.3 on the left part of forehead. A punctured wound of 4.5 cm on the vertex in front of a recess, right through the brain.

37. Unidentified. Livores mortem and marks of decay on abdomen and back. Marks of beating in the heart area on the left and on the right part of chest. Genitalia bruised. Skin of whole body macerates. Arms above elbow bruised. Left part of forehead bone and vertex bone smashed. A wound of 6.7 cm above left ear, brain protruding.
38. Unidentified. Marks of beating with bruises on abdomen and left side of chest and left shoulder. Marks of decay on right side and skin macerated. Right calf bruised. Right cheek shot through. Eye and forehead bruised. A wound of 6.6 cm in the left side of the forehead, above left brow. Brain protruding through the wound.
39. Antanavičius (identified with some doubt). Shallow wounds on chest, abdomen, left side above the hip and testicles. Penis bruised. Right calf bruised. Punctured wound of 3 cm depth in the lower part of calf going from front to back. Hands tied behind. On the face below left ear a punctured wound of 4.3 cm and 8 cm in depth. Lower jaw smashed, lower ear bone also. A punctured wound in front (2 cm) of right ear. Surface wound of 1,1 cm, bruises around eyes.
40. Unidentified. Livores mortem and marks of decay on abdomen and chest. Skin macerates all over body. In the middle of clavicle large bruise on the right shoulder. Large bruise on right calf. Both hands tied behind and beaten. A wound of 2.2 cm in the right part of head above the brow. Deep punctured wound in the right part of neck. Right eye punctured. Vertex smashed.
41. Unidentified. Bruises on chest, shoulders and genitalia. Livores mortem on the back. A punctured wound (diameter 3.2, depth 4 cm) in the left tarsus. The bone in the wound broken. A deep punctured wound in the right part of forehead. Bones of forehead and vertex smashed, wound of 20.8 cm. Brain protruding.



Process of identification.

42. Unidentified. Livores mortem on abdomen and chest. Skin macerated on the back. On the right side, below ribs two punctured wounds, round, diameter 1 cm. On the same side below the armpit a wound of 9.8 cm with lung protruding. Head, neck and face covered with marks of decay. Skin macerates. On the right side starting from neck up to vertex a wound of 3.8 cm, brain protruding.
43. Unidentified. Livores mortem on abdomen and chest. Head tied to neck through mouth and jaws. Vertex smashed. Brain smashed. A wound near the right brow. Genitalia beaten.
44. Unidentified. Livores mortem on abdomen and chest. Sides and shoulders beaten. Skin on back macerated. Genitalia beaten. Calves beaten, skin macerated. Left eye punctured. Brain messed.
45. Unidentified. Livores mortem on chest and abdomen. Skin macerated. Marks of beating on back and chest. Both hands tied and beaten. Face beaten covered with bruises. A punctured wound in head.
46. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible on the whole body. Eye bruised. Half centimetre from ear a wound, in 15cm diameter Wounds of 8 cm in diameter on the elbow and above elbow.



Discovered martyrs were laid down into the rows for identification.

47. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible on whole body. A gunshot wound of 15 cm in depth in the middle of bones of forehead, on the right side.
48. Unidentified. Livores mortem visible on the whole body. Head smashed, freely moves. Between the bones of occiput a wound of 22.5 cm with sharp uneven edges. Blood effusing through the wound. Under skin – large injury of the head. Genitalia injured violently. Left calf injured. Left leg in the calf injured. Hands tied behind.
49. Povilas Kazlauskis from Stalgėnai. Livores mortem clearly visible on lower and upper parts of body. The cranium smashed. A hole in the left side, brain visible through it. A punctured wound in the side. Hands tied behind.
50. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible on the whole body. A punctured wound in the left side and middle. The searching signal reaches bottom. Hands beaten violently. Cranium beaten.
51. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible on the whole body. Cranium smashed. Wounds on ears.
52. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible. Skin lacerated. A band of twisted material on the neck. Mouth tied.

53. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible on the whole body. Tongue torn. Lacerated wound of 15.25 cm on the left side of chest, searching on edges shows 20 cm. Also a wound on the other side. On the left side below pit a punctured wound of 15 cm depth with uneven edges. The second wound of 5.4 cm near the shoulder – goes from the shoulder joint to front side. The third wound of 3.3 cm on the back.
54. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible. Marks of decay clearly visible on abdomen. Violent beatings on the head, epithelium lacerated. Forehead, upper part of the nose and whole face violently beaten. A gunshot wound of 0.5 cm in the right part of neck. The bullet came through and made a bigger wound on the other side. Arms beaten and skin lacerated. Genitalia bruised.
55. Aleksas Jankauskas. Livores mortem clearly visible. Head beaten in the occiput area. Face and forehead bruised. Arms bruised. A bruise in the area of right shoulder.
56. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible in the area of hips and on back marks of decay. Face beaten and epithelium lacerated. Eyes with large bruises. A wound of 25 cm on the forehead with sharp edges. Genitalia bruised.
57. Jonas Šleinius. Livores mortem clearly visible on the whole body. Both cheeks bruised. Right eye beaten and effused. A gunshot wound, diameter 0.5 cm. Genitalia bruised. Hands tied.
58. Liudas Bachmanas. Livores mortem clearly visible on the whole body. Occiput beaten. Area of the wound – 3.8 cm. Left part of chest bruised. Four close shots near the spine.
59. Julius Simutis, identified by Piškienė. Livores mortem clearly visible on the whole body. Face beaten with a blunt thing. A bruise on the occiput.

60. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible on whole body. Cheek shot through, searching shows 0.5 cm. Several bruises in the area of the occiput. Hands tied, facial skin lacerated. Genitalia bruised.
61. Leonas Kusa from Alsėdžiai. Forehead and lips bruised, bones untouched. Injured with blood in the neck area. Genitalia beaten. Hands tied. Right shoulder beaten. Blood effused from the nose.
62. Balys Korza from Plateliai. Livores mortem clearly visible on the whole body. Two wounds on the forehead bones. Cranium smashed, edges uneven, 20.5 cm and 11.05 cm, punctured wounds. Edge of the cranium bottom beaten. Hands tied.
63. Albinas Baltramiejus. Livores mortem clearly visible and the whole skin macerates. Marks of decay on the chest near heart. A gunshot wound in the lower part of the body. Face beaten with a blunt thing, left eye bulging. Neck and part of the face macerated. A punctured wound of 3.2 cm above the right ear going to the brain. A punctured wound to the brain on the occiput above vertex.
64. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible on extremities and abdomen area. Cranium missing. Bone missing between ears and eyes (lines). Genitalia beaten.
65. Simutis from Kretinga. Livores mortem visible on abdomen. Genitalia beaten. Bruises on chest and neck. A gunshot wound (shot from behind) on the back in the left side near spine, the bullet came through sternum, 4 cm near the nipple.
66. Jakštas from Tverai. Chest shot on the left side. Bullet came through below scapula. The bullet came through chest, wound of 15 cm in diameter. Face beaten. Blood on nose and face. Hands tied behind.

67. Stasys Balsevičius. Bruises and marks on both hips and chest. Genitalia bruised. Face beaten. A punctured wound through left ear to the brain. Hands tied behind.
68. Unidentified. Livores mortem on abdomen and chest. Large bruises on neck and genitalia. Skin of legs macerated. Head beaten. Injuries of bones.
69. Juozas Beimavičius from Telšiai. Skin of the whole body macerated. Face also macerated. Eyes bulging. A wound on the right brow.
70. Tarvainis from Telšiai. Back beaten in the area of scapula. Genitalia beaten. Hands tied. Two gunshot wounds near the middle of sternum on the left side, 1 cm above nipple. Bullets came through in the back. A punctured wound above the right brow. On the right side a punctured wound through ear to the brain. Face beaten.
71. Unidentified. Genitalia bruised. Tree gunshot wounds in front: near the heart and above the navel. Hands tied. Back beaten. A wound of 5.5 cm in the left scapula going to the lungs. Lungs protruding through this wound. A punctured wound in the left side of the neck.
72. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible. Back and shoulders macerating. Back violently beaten. Skin peels off the arms. A cut of 4.4 cm going from the left groin. Hands tied behind. Head beaten, cranium smashed. Upper and lower jaws cut with a knife. The throat cut with a bayonet from inside of the mouth. Tongue missing. A wound between eyes and nose.
73. Unidentified. Livores mortem clearly visible on the chest. Genitalia beaten. Right eye punctured. Brain punctured.

Studien – Büro Bulletin Nr. 44, Vilnius, 1943, p. 565-569¹.

¹ The Protocol was written in summer of 1941.

Perpetrators Evidence

Explanation of D. Rocius of 7 October 1942
to the secretary of LKP (b) CK [Lithuanian Communist party
Central Committee] A. Sniečkus in Moscow

Fascist counterrevolutionaries¹ of Telšiai and Kretinga and their objectives

The counterrevolutionaries consisted of officers of Smetona times, kulaks [prosperous farmers], clergy, who played quite an important role in this work, and heads, deputy heads and members of all national fascist organizations which were active in Lithuania before the soviet rule.

They were receiving [from] Hitler Germany economic support, guns, instructions of when, where, what and how to do [things]. Having lost the Lithuanian people, on the blood and sweat of whom they were feeding and living like lords, they sold themselves to Hitler to do a traitorous work leading Lithuania to ruin and the destruction of Lithuania's name and people, as well as the destruction of the Soviet Union as a whole.

Part of the counterrevolutionary terrorists-traitors were arrested in Telšiai and Kretinga districts and held in Telšiai prison. When war came over unexpectedly, we were forced to evacuate. We could at no cost set the bloodsucker fascists free giving them a chance to continue killing our brothers. There were numbers of quickly formed bands of fascists that were still free, which fought against us.

In the morning of June 24, local authorities and party units evacuated themselves. Fascists who were held in the prison somehow learned that immediately and started to shout that soon they would be free – Hitler would liberate them. The guards of the

¹ Vocabulary supposed to be justifying the hatred and atrocious deed.

prison were weak, because a number of warders did not show up, and the head of the prison also did not return – the war encountered him in Kaunas. During that turmoil, only the senior warder Pranas Žalimas understood that they might be too weak to bring about order by themselves. So he applied to the army for help and received it. The Red Army came over and normalized the situation.

We spent the 24 of June together at the headquarters of the army in Tryškiai forest: I, as the chairman of the Executive Committee, party secretary Boris Mirinov and the head of NKGB Petras Raslanas. We wanted to evacuate the prison, but we lacked the necessary means: transport vehicles and some real armed force. The army headquarters undertook this work. We had no choice but to let them from the prison.

A Red Army unit with a commander was sent immediately, and a few lorries were followed by two tanks. On the night from 24 to 25 of June the Hitler's apostles¹ were loaded to lorries: 78 or 79 Hitlerites. We moved people whose cases were clear before arresting them and who later during the interrogation confirmed the cases and supplemented them with their own testimonies. A few of the people whose cases were not clear remaining in the prison – were not moved. Kulaks, sentenced for not delivering crops and hiding them under the ground, also remained in the prison. I do not remember their names, except one, Tumas from Plungė district. (Lith.:valsčius).

The army decided to bring them up to Rainiai forest where they were to be shot to death; and so it was done. When the army approached the forest, it was fired at. The prisoners tried to use this opportunity and escape but failed. Tanks dispersed the bandits, the location was cleared, and the shooting to death took place. The Red Army executed the shooting. During the shooting the following people of our crew were present: the head of local NKGB Petras Raslanas, operative agent Galkin and the head of the prison

¹ One more example of the vocabulary of hatred.

Pocevičius. While the prisoners were being loaded on to lorries at the prison and during the review of their cases, I was staying all that time, in the prison office. On June 25, together with all the guards we left the prison and Telšiai. The front was approaching the town, and the commandant had forbidden to remain any longer. Thus we had left Telšiai, in which civil life was dead, only the military continued.

Who were the ones shot to death and what were their activities they were arrested for?

I remember a few of them. I can describe somehow. The brothers of the head of the prison, Šalkauskas. The latter was also former head of Telšiai district in Smetona times [in general: 1926-1940]. Before the arrest he lived as a tenant in Luokė district, of Telšiai, Naujikai manor and was the central person in the counterrevolutionary work in Luokė district. According to their plan he would have taken the post of minister in Lithuania occupied by the Germans.

The former senior policeman Triuška, belonged to the same Šalkauskas' gang. He supervised guns for the revolt. That work was also being done by priests of Luokė and Pavandenė village (Varniai district).

Antanavičius from Plungė district, Didviečiai village. His father's farm was of more than 40 ha, and he himself was a permanent head of the local police office. Doing counterrevolutionary work, he had direct connection with the organization Kulturverband [German Culture association in Lithuania]. Also his brother, whom we did not manage to arrest, was armed and hiding. He was a former pilot with the Lithuanian Army.

Jogminas – a bookkeeper of Telšiai district Municipality and later of the municipal economy. He stole from us (from the head of the Telšiai district: at that time the post was held by Kazys Sidaravičius) a few browning guns and recruited a few youngsters, the names of whom I do not remember, except one, that of the

junior Tarvainis; their task was to shoot soviet and party workers and blow up the building of the party Abkom [Party committee of the district].

The head of Telšiai hypothecation books, he was an “ideological” fascist, since he had graduated from a higher school of fascist science in Italy. He was energetically organizing counterrevolutionaries against bolsheviks. I do not remember his name.

Beima – coming from a numerous family of a brick layer. His father was a drunkard and a lumpen proletarian. When he was 19 (in 1936), he was already working in the security department of Smetona. While he considered himself a member of Komsomol [Communist Union of Youth], he betrayed three other members of Komsomol and one party member – Antanas Bajorūnas, who was sentenced to 8 [years] in prison; members of Komsomol: Galdikas, Antanas Raibužis and Škimelis were sentenced to several years in prison, each differently. It happened in 1936, before the May celebrations.

Petras Kovalis (born in 1912) and his brother Bolis (22 years of age) – a student of the 7th form at Plungė Gymnasium. Their father was a former member of the Lithuanian Nationalists, owned some 60 ha of land and a brick works. His sons had stolen a typewriter from the Gymnasium; with it they typed counterrevolutionary leaflets and distributed them. When we went to arrest them, they tried to resist with new German parabellums but, of course, failed. They lived in Kuliai locality, Karklėnai village, Kretinga district.

Stasys Balsevičius (born in 1914); and Povilas Balsevičius (born in 1923) – a student of the 5th form at Plungė Gymnasium. His father’s farm was up to 30 ha of land and he also owned a brick works. They both belonged to the Kovaliai gang and were also

armed with parabellums. Their father was a former nationalist, his sons – riflemen, members of the movement “Jaunoji Lietuva” [“Young Lithuania“]. They lived in Kuliai locality, Kumžaičiai village, Kretinga district.

Vladas Songaila, a former policeman of Smetona times, also belonged to the gang of Balsevičiai and Kovaliai. Was also armed. Lately he was living in Kuliai.

Vladas Kareckis, the former supreme notary of Šiauliai, a deputy at the Seimas of Smetona times, trustee of fascists. His farm was of 60 ha in Palatis village, Kuliai locality, Kretinga district.

Zigmas Sakelis, owner of Pavandenės manor in Varniai district. Not only a Lithuanian fascist but also, as one may say, with some Polish taste: he always wanted Poland to be great “velika mocarstva” [Russ. great power] and Lithuania its dependency with subdued Lithuanian peasants, like in those “beautiful” times.

A number of others, whom, of course, I do not remember and cannot list here, but all, as one might say, children of one “beautiful” family. By far not all of them were rounded up in the prison. When war broke out those who were free immediately started working: constantly damaging telephone lines, hiding paratroopers, etc. In the evening of June 22, the line connecting Žarenai-Alsėdžiai-Luokė had already been damaged. They were damaging communication lines systematically and each time ever more rapidly, and with some districts (e.g. with Tverai) the connection was never reestablished.

On June 23, the fascists occupied Luokė district and arrested soviet officials. They could not call us in Telšiai due to the damaged line; but they managed to phone to Šiauliai, and so they were rescued by them but not for long. Although several fascists were killed, they gathered again and then, killed soviet and party officials, [among them] the chairman of the district’s Executive Committee, communist party member Pranas Simanavičius, admittedly the data cannot be verified.

Žarėnai district was also occupied by the fascists but they had escaped when the district militia came. However, they still managed to kill the chairman of the Executive Committee

Bronius Briedis, and the secretary of the primary party committee Valius Bažadragis.

They did the same in Alsėdžiai but we managed to reestablished order there. They all escaped.

A gang of 20 people was earlier organized in Plungė, they had to take over everything when the war started. They even had the task to take soviet and party officials alive and in case of failure shoot even at the army. With the help of Juozas Skinkis (a former policeman), who was a member of their gang and informed us about their job, they were immediately arrested by the army and sent to heaven to wait there for Hitler in Plungė Park. Besides, an instruction was found commanding them on the manner of doing all things. I remember only one name from this gang – Adolfas Lankauskas. He was working at the Plungė textile factory. Previously he lived in Klaipėda.

After betraying them, Juozas Skinkys evacuated together with us and now is a member of our national division. We should, probably, check how much he can tell and to whom now.

Fascists did not invade Telšiai itself in force, except firing several single rounds at various places. One of them was aimed at my wife, Antanina Rocienė, but they missed her. She was shot at while unlocking the door of her flat in the evening of June 23. When Telšiai was bombed from 23 to 24 [June], somebody lit electricity in the electric power station in the morning – giving a signal. It remained undisclosed. That is all I can say about the beginning of the war in Telšiai.

Lithuanian Archive of Public Organisations, f. 1771, ap. 5, b. 130, p. 19-21,
Original handwriting.

**Explanation of P.Raslanas of October 7, 1942
to the Secretary of LKP(b) CK A.Sniečkus in Moscow**

A few words for the clarity. I was the head of NKGB Telšiai department and M.J. Taurinskas was the head of NKVD Telšiai commisariat when NKVD was reformed. M.J. Taurinskas was also the head of the Telšiai prison. [...]

When the war started, i.e. on June 22, 1941, at 10-11 a. m , I was speaking to Gladkov on the phone; Gladkov gave short orders on how to behave. He ordered to repress all armed misdemeanants with all means. Besides, he told me to vacate the town only together with Red Army units in case there was a need. Then he started talking about the counterrevolutionaries in prison and the communication broke off. I was trying to reconnect but the connection with Kaunas could not be resumed.

Several times I spoke with Taurinskas telling him to organize moving of the prisoners from Telšiai. The Red Army units coming from the border let us understand that we would have to retreat. As we could see, Taurinskas was not very worried about it, just because the prisoners were not evacuated. In my opinion there was a possibility to evacuate them, because there was enough time to do that.

The Germans captured Plungė and were approaching the town of Telšiai; it was the 23rd of June 1941. The taking out of the prisoners was hindered, because the railway was not operating. Several times, I went to the military prosecutor and to the chairman of the tribunal asking them to help me doing of that work. They were offering various suggestions. But when I asked them to provide an approval in writing they started to shirk from the subject – so nothing was done.

Time was running. Prisoners, especially those convicted for criminal offenses, were raising their heads. Armed gangs [insurgency] became more frequent and active in the districts of

Kretinga, Mažeikiai and Šiauliai. It was rumoured that Mažeikiai and parts of Šiauliai district were overtaken by gangs, thus Telšiai was isolated. I tried to get the news from the headquarters of Telšiai military unit but could not. Almost half of the Telšiai militia had run away, the security officers were worried about continual aircraft attacks. In such circumstances, the commander of the military unit ordered us to leave the town in the morning of June 24, 1941. There was no sense to stay, because the army was retreating and inhabitants were hiding in villages and forests. The Telšiai security division left the town together with the army and settled behind the Tryškiai forest. I did not know in what direction officers of the NKVD Telšiai commisariat had gone.

Near the Tryškiai forest, I spoke to the prosecutor with a body of troops and to the chairman of the tribunal asking them to help to do this work [evacuation of

Telšiai prisoners]. We came to the conclusion that more than 70 counter-revolutionaries could gang up against the Red Army. It would have been a crime to leave them there. Then I was given a unit of soldiers, four lorries and two tanks, and it was suggested for me to return to Telšiai. I agreed, and together with a few more officials and with the Chairman of the Executive Committee of Telšiai, comrade Domas Rocius, I departed in the evening of June 24, 1941. We came to Telšiai in the evening. The Germans were seven kilometres off Telšiai. Since they could foray into the town any minute, we had to execute preparatory tasks urgently.

For the revision of cases, we formed a Commission comprising of the Chief of NKGB Telšiai commisariat, P. Raslanas, Deputy Chief of Telšiai district commisariat Security Lieutenant Ždanov, 2nd rank Intendant working in the political department of the 8th army, Kompanijec, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Telšiai, Domas Rocius, deputy chief of NKGB Kretinga district commisariat, second lieutenant of security Jermolajev. The commission reviewed over 70 cases of persons accused of espionage, counterrevolutionary

and agitation activities. The convicts included those from the Telšiai security commissariat and partially from Kretinga too. Some cases had already been closed, some not; however, there was no doubt about their crimes. [...]

I had never questioned their criminality. The detention of all of them was authorized by the prosecutor of the Republic of Lithuania, Kasha. All 75 people put to death had committed crimes that were counterrevolutionary in nature. They were interrogated for that. Then they were passed to the court. I was sure that there was no one without fault. [...]

When the commission was about to finish revising the cases, the news came that the Germans broke the defence line of Telšiai. Then in haste, I left the town with the convicts; and fearing the danger of taking them along further, 2-3 kilometres off Telšiai, in forests on the way to Luokė, they were shot by the Red Army soldiers given us as our backing. They were also buried in the place. Finally, we left Telšiai on June 25, 1941 at about 10 a.m. Should one say that it was a bad idea to execute all of it in one place and so close to the town, I could respond: that there was no time to do it otherwise. Sentences of all those persons and other acts were put into one case and sent to the centre via the NKVD Molotov division board. The centre recognized them [sentences] legitimate. Currently that case is being kept in the NKVD Molotov division board archive.

That is all I can remember and tell you about the shootings in Telšiai.

The Lithuanian Archive of Public Organisations, f. 1771, ap. 5, b. 130, p. 9-11, Original handwriting.

Testimony of a Witness

Evidence of the Former Prison Officer A. Žutautas

Prisoners are to be Moved

Monday evening of June 23, at about 4 p.m., Vaitkus, who was the prison governor at that time, returned from the city and met me at the door of the prison on the street. Hurrying he asked me to give him office money, because he had to pass it to the headquarters, from which we would get vehicles and everyone would move that evening (it meant both officials and prisoners). We would get 17 vehicles, he said. In the office, I gave the money to Vaitkus; he did not even count the money received and signed the check notifying that he received over 600 rubles. Soon he left for the city again.



10th cell of Telšiai prison where the bowl with the inscription was found.



11th cell of Telšiai prison.

New Governor of the Prison

At about 7:30 p.m. Taurinskas, the NKVD [district] head, came to the prison, made a list of warders and their positions, demanded who were party members and who were not. Only one person was a party member at that time. Raibužis, also doctor Gutmanas queried, whether he was a party member, and the former answered that he was a candidate, it seemed, that he was not yet approved. Then he asked who else of the head warders were present; somebody answered that Selenis was present, but was inspecting the prison at the moment. Meanwhile Selenis returned and according to the rules introduced himself to Taurinskas. Taurinskas appointed Selenis the governor of the prison. Then Taurinskas left at about 9 p.m. At that time the

Russians and security officers were not present.

The Communist party, NKVD and the Militia Leave

At about 2 a.m. (24 June) I went to the street, walked towards the headquarters of the Communist Party, where I had seen the militiaman Každailis standing. I also had seen the secretary of the Communist party, Baužas, Guiskis, several members of the Komsomol, about 20 people in all – I had seen them all on the ground floor of the Communist Party office, in the former premises of the curia. I didn't get to know Mironov and I hadn't seen Rocius. When I was there, two lorries full of people (men and women, about 10-20 people) came from the direction of Plungė. I decided that they were from the Plungė Communist party, because I recognized an official of the Plungė Communist party. Then I returned (to prison). About five minutes later I went to the street again. When I was out on the street, doctor Gutmanas suddenly appeared, and we saw that somebody was standing near the Executive Committee [of the municipality].



Facade of Telšiai prison.

When we came closer, we saw Rocius and Korietka standing; under the bolshevik rule he was a politruk in the militia, and later -the head of Alsėdžiai territorial district. Some time afterwards a vehicle departed from the bus station and stopped at the Executive Committee, or somebody had stopped it. I saw Lesys (member of the Komsomol) and Žukauskienė (who worked at the Executive Committee) in the vehicle. I don't know who else was on the vehicle; however, the vehicle, a bus, was full of people. Rocius hadn't boarded the vehicle, and I do not remember whether Korietka boarded it either. The

vehicle approached the prison, stopped immediately, and from the prison, which Gutmanas, who was visiting it at that time, came out from with his wife, Gutmanienė, led her to the vehicle but did not board it. I do not know where Rocius disappeared; I left him at the Executive Committee. When the vehicle departed I returned to prison together with Gutmanas, but then Rocius with his wife and somebody else, four people, all in all, with a driver, passed by the prison. They went downhill towards the town in a car. I think that the bus and Rocius' car went towards Tryškiai, because Gutmanas had mentioned it that way. No vehicles were standing at the prison, no Russian guards as well. When we came to the office, we reported that Rocius, the Komsomol members and other persons had left. Somebody advised to call up the security, ask if they still were there, so as to get their orders. I called several times but nobody had answered. In order to ascertain, after somebody's advice, I went to the

security with doctor Gutmanas; nobody was there, but all the doors were unlocked and all rooms were in a mess. Just then we went to the militia on the Kęstutis Str, the situation there was the same as at the security. We returned and reported everything at the office.

Russians Come to the Prison

Then Pliuškis and I left the prison and approached a motorcycle, which came to the backstreet near the prison. At that time doctor Gutmanas appeared, he asked Stonys to take him to the hospital, but the motorcycle tumbled while carrying Gutmanas. A bit later Selenis came running. I don't know where Pliuškis disappeared. While we were talking, a lorry with soldiers drove up. The officer who stepped out of the vehicle asked who we were. Gutmanas and I explained that we were prison officials; Gutmanas asked what we were to do with the prison. Then the officer promised to settle everything. Later he approached the prison and commanded to stop empty vehicles that were passing by. Soldiers stopped three vehicles that were going by. One of the stopped vehicles was empty, the others were with freight. Then all people that were in the street (the officer, who later introduced himself as the head of the unit, I, Gutmanas, Selenis, Milaučius and several soldiers) entered the office leaving in the street about 10 soldiers. The same officer commanded all warders to gather in the office. The officer did not say anything to the gathered warders, among whom, I remember, were Selenis, Gutmanas, Sungaila, Balniškaitė, Liaudanskaitė, Adomaitis, but he spoke to Gutmanas all the time. I don't know what they were talking about, although I understand some Russian. One of the Russian soldiers said something to Gutmanas and he commanded me to go and show the cellar of the prison, which was behind the kitchen of the prison. I showed it; after I had got the key of the cellar from Balvočius or Adomaitis. The Russian soldier looked at that cellar, shook his head, and I understood that the

cellar was too small for the shooting of the political prisoners, since warder Milaučius had been telling us that the prisoners would be shot. I don't know where Milaučius had heard about that. When we returned to the office, some soldier asked who of the people present in the office had guns. I had, so I raised my hand. Guns were not taken from people who had them. Women and the cook Adomaitis were ordered to leave the office and go home, because Adomaitis was just a cook, and Gutmanas had informed the soldier about that. Before leaving the officer who had ranked himself as head of the unit, I think, he was a major (had two oblong badges), commanded not to let anybody out of the office. It was about 7-8 a.m.

Cases of Political Prisoners Are Sorted

At about 9-10a.m. the same head of the unidentified unit returned with several soldiers and sat down at the table on which the cases of the political prisoners had been put. The cases were taken there on Monday, because Vaitkus wanted to make a list of the political prisoners. The head of that unit declared that unnecessary warders could leave the office.

The Russian soldiers, who were working on the cases, started to sort them according to the incriminated offenses. They classed them into two groups. As far as I understood, 43 prisoners were to be shot, others were to be freed or moved. Gutmanas and I compiled the list of those 43 prisoners. The soldiers took the list and left. Before leaving, the head of the unit left a captain from the NKVD to act in his place.

Searching for Spades and Ropes...

The captain asked Gutmanas whether there were any spades at the prison. Vaitkus, and later I, ran to ask warders, because Gutmanas ordered us to do so. I asked Balvočius, who with

other warders had been in the headquarters off the guard. Balvočius, who was kind of a storekeeper, answered that there were no spades there, and they were available only at the Siraičiai manor. Vaitkus returned and reported; I stayed silent. Soon the Russians left the office. At about 11-12 a.m., I went out to the street and saw that Russian guards stood in the street with machine-guns and did not let civilians pass through the street. There were no vehicles parked.

Kublickas told Vaitkus that a note was necessary in order to fetch the spades from the Siraičiai manor. Vaitkus answered that the note would be provided in the office. Kublickas, as far as I know, didn't go to fetch the spades. At about 9-10 p.m., the Russians changed the Lithuanian guards at prison gates for Russians.

Around 10 p.m., somebody commanded everyone to leave the headquarters. I don't know who gave the order, they didn't tell us where to go. I went to the corridor that led to the yard and saw that from the yard a Russian, the security officer Galkin, coming by, passed me and went towards the corridor that led to the office; he had ropes in his hands.

Prisoners are Taken out of Their Cells

When Visagurskis and Budginas came, the prisoners were taken from their cells, which were in the first floor, downstairs, because it could be heard as Vaitkus was naming prisoners one after another. I understood that Vaitkus led the prisoners, because I heard his voice and the steps of the prisoners with clogs on as they stomped out. I stayed in the corridor near the window for more than an hour. While I was standing, I constantly heard prisoners going from the first floor down to the ground floor. Prisoners were led with their hands tied behind, which was not very clearly seen, but, white strings could still be observed on the backs of their heads. Prisoners were taken one after another. While the prisoners were

led, vehicle engines were put off. Soldiers would lift prisoners to a vehicle

and push them. Three vehicles were loaded with prisoners; when one vehicle would be full, another would come up. 4-5 Russian soldiers would board the loaded vehicles. Prisoners were not standing in the lorry-vehicles but they were laid one on top of another. I do not know whether the prisoners were beaten hard but they walked on their own, led by two Russian soldiers. When the third vehicle drove off, I told Visagurskis and Budginas that most probably the moving of prisoners was finished because only 43 prisoners had to be shot or moved. I cannot tell you whether Visagurskis and Budginas had commented my report. It was about 12 p.m. on the night of the 24 to 25 of June. While I was standing on the first floor with Žalimas and Kublickas, Vaitkus and two Russian soldiers came to the first floor and went through corridors towards the former prison chapel. They opened the door of a cell, I think of the cell No. 10, took out one untied prisoner, whom I did not recognize, and led him down. At that time, I walked towards the dispensary, in which somebody was present; I don't know who it was, because it was dark.

They Tie Hands, Tie Mouths and Lay down in Lorries

While I was standing at the stairs of the kitchen, I saw that prisoners were taken not to the office, but to the headquarters. When they passed by the door of the corridor, I walked towards the window of the headquarters. The headquarters was lit by candlelight; electric light was not on. At that time in the headquarters, the following were present: Roslan [Raslanas] from the NKVD and Galkin from the security. In front of them two or three unfamiliar soldiers were sitting. Near the door I saw the prisoner they had brought in, I didn't recognize him, and about four other people. At that time I did not see Rocius. Nobody interfered

in my watching through the window, because the Russian guards who were standing in the yard were

looking at each other. When I walked away from the window, I thought it was the same prisoner whom I had seen through the window at the guard headquarters, he was taken away instantly. I noticed that his hands were tied and the mouth too: was tied with some white cloth. The prisoner was neither screaming nor crying. Two guards took him by his hands and led him to a vehicle standing at the gates in the prison yard. The guards lifted the prisoner into the vehicle and pushed him to lie down. I approached the Russian guards who were standing at the window and asked for a cigarette. Then the prisoner Sakelis was taken to the guard headquarters. Later standing at the window, I saw Rocius sitting beside Roslan [Raslanas]. The prisoner Sakelis was interrogated for what he was convicted, whether he pleaded guilty. His answers were not loud enough to be heard. Then his hands were tied. After that he was asked to open his mouth and utter “a”, and at that moment they put a stripe of cloth onto his mouth and were doing something behind his head, most probably tying it. Then I walked away from the window again and approached the door through which Sakelis with his hands and mouth tied was taken to the lorry and pushed unto it. I think three Russian guards were in the lorry, they lifted the prisoners into the vehicle. Those who were kicking or resisting were beaten with fists, because I didn't see guns on them. They were taken in one after another. While I was standing, about 15 prisoners were laid into that lorry. They all were with their hands and mouths tied. Some were wearing only shirts, others had also jackets on, all of them were without caps; I did not see any prisoner wearing a coat. At first some of the prisoners were lifted and pushed into the lorry, later a bench was brought from somewhere and put aside the lorry, and prisoners had to climb onto it and then were pushed into the lorry. Soldiers were turning them in various ways there. I saw that the shoes of two prisoners were taken off after they were pushed into a lorry. When

the fourth lorry was almost filled, Kublickas (warder) took out several armfuls of various clothes and threw them down at the kitchen stairs. Žalimas and I pushed the clothes downstairs, and Budginas threw them further towards the kitchen. It was Žalimas who ordered to do so. While we were throwing the clothes downstairs, Jermolajev, the Russian captain came out and commanded me to throw several coats and wraps to the lorry; so I did as I had been ordered. The soldiers who were in the lorry took the clothes and covered the prisoners who had to be moved. When the prisoners were covered the vehicle went down to the Respublika Str.

After a pause another lorry (tented with a box) came and again prisoners were led in. They were taken from a corridor on the ground floor. The Russians were leading them in the same manner: with hands and mouths tied. When two or three prisoners were taken out, Vaitkus came out from the corridor; he approached Žalimas and told him that he had to help lead the prisoners. Žalimas tried to avoid that by saying he had been sick or something like that. Vaitkus did not address me although I was standing near Žalimas. However, when Vaitkus went away Žalimas commanded me to go and help lead the prisoners, but I answered that it was not my business and did not lead the prisoners. Some time later, I saw that the warder Kublickas took a prisoner out with some Russian. The prisoners were being taken for about half an hour to the last lorry. I had spent all that time at the kitchen stairs. When the last prisoners were being taken out, the prisoners started to shout loudly, most probably they had untied their mouths. The people who already were in vehicles were shouting too. Then Galkin ran out of the corridor, ran up to the vehicle and started to swear threatening to shoot, then, taking a gun from the soldiers, he started to beat the prisoners in the lorry with the butt. The prisoners fell silent; but, heavy breathing could still be heard. There was no need to carry clothes to cover prisoners because the vehicle was tented. When order among the prisoners was set in, the vehicle went to

the prison gates and stopped there. I saw Vaitkus board onto the last vehicle; I did not see other prison warders boarding it. The vehicle went to the Respublika Str. and stopped again. I went to the prison corner and saw that some more lorries were standing in the street. Several screams were heard coming from the vehicles and about 15-20 minutes later they drove away. When the vehicles went away, I saw that Roslan [Raslanas] and Dušanskis, who had been carrying something, came out of the office. When I came back to the yard I had not seen any warders, neither Kublickas nor Žalimas, Budginas and others, in it. Russian guards were sitting at the well in the yard. I did not pay attention to the guard headquarters. When I came into the corridor on the ground floor of the prison, it could be about 10 minutes after the last vehicle had gone away, a number of prison overseers were walking in the corridor, among them I remember: Balniškaitė. Želvys, Basaras and, I think, Stonys; I do not remember any others. When I went to the office, I found Rocius there; I had not seen who else was present. Rocius was sitting and doing nothing. He did not tell me anything, neither did I. Then I came out to the yard again and, seeing light on in the kitchen, reentered it. I found the kitchen full of people: The Russians and prison warders. I remember that among prison overseers were: Budginas, Žalimas and, I think, Sungaila. There might have been also two Russian soldiers. They were searching through clothes and other things. I do not know whether they took anything. I returned to the corridor on the ground floor. More Russians came from the yard. They were carrying something with them and asked me where they could eat. We all entered the guard headquarters but it was dark there. We stroke a light, saw a candle and lit it. Then we started eating. While we were doing that more prison warders came: Sungaila, Balniškaite, Želvys, Budginas, Raibužis, and later Selenis and also Rocius. I do not remember who else was present.

Žemaicių kankiniai: Rainių miškelio tragedija (Samogitian martyrs: the tragedy of Rainiai forest).-Vilnius,1991, p. 10 – 15

Simutis is Threatened

(from underground press)

Liudvikas Simutis, son of Adomas, born in 1935, had been suffering in the Gulag from 1955 to 1977, for his participation in national resistance against soviet occupation of Lithuania after WWII.

On returning to Lithuania, though of poor health he found a girl ready for sacrifice, who took him as husband. Currently, he lives in Kaunas, performing joiner's work. The family is bringing up four children. Last autumn, the security [organs] had again intensified their persecution of Simutis. Some friends of his had been questioned; several of them were demanded that they persuade Simutis to cease taking part in publishing of the "Lithuanian Catholic Church Chronicle".

Romas Smailys, the young and promising folk artist, a wood carver, from Panevėžys, was being recruited to inform on Simutis. Romas, conversely, refused to submit. Shortly after that he perished, under obscure circumstances, hit by a militia vehicle.

A search was undertaken in Simutis' flat on the 29th of March, this year [1985]. Some tapes of sermon recordings conducted by priests Svarinskas, Kauneckas and others, a few photographs, letters and other objects were taken away.

Essentially, it was his draft of an "Open Letter to Lithuania's Priests and Clerics" written in autumn, last year, that was also carried away. At that time, the document had escaped the attention, for the closest friends of his persuaded Simutis to refrain from publishing it – the children still in their early years – was not the best time returning to the Gulag...

Since he has now been under immediate security surveillance, and, the secret police are likely to take revenge on Simutis even for the unpublished document (as they did sentence Lapienis, Dambrauskas recently for their unpublished memoirs). So we want

people to know what Simutis might be persecuted once again for. Here we publish the complete text of the document:

Open Letter to Lithuania's Priests and Clerics

This autumn, the Religious Affairs Council Commissioner, P.Anilionis, delivered his 17 page long lecture to Lithuania's priests and student-clerics, and, at some places he did so to communists.

In that lecture, P.Anilionis clarified to his audience that priests Alf.Svarinskas and S.Tamkevičius were real offenders who had been given a fair trial. One of the "substantiations", to prove their charge presented in the lecture, was the fact that priest Alf. Svarinskas warmly welcomed the "bandits" Simutis and Paulaitis on their return from captivity...

/.../ I do not believe any soldier present at the front and firing at his enemies did ever deserve to be called terrorist, neither do I think myself being one who deserves such a classification be applied to.

I cannot help but mention here one more fact, though I may be painfully avenged for it; since I am going to hint at a particular, as well as a pretty mighty man.

I would not like to be killed from around the corner, pushed under the wheels of a truck, or suffer otherwise.

But remaining silent with fear is a crime, calling for unavoidable punishment coming by in its own way. I have happened to meet quite many people in captivity that became dehumanized by anxiety of pain, sacrifice and death to grow repugnant, not only to those around but also to themselves.

Thus, if as a being, I cannot completely suppress the sense of fear, I infer, that one is to be apprehensive in the first place of the greatest of all evilness – becoming an inhuman savage, not man. It is much more horrible than death itself.

Of paramount importance to impact on my attitudes getting shaped and my path be chosen was the event that came when I was five.

It was my father's body exposed to me.

Half his face was swollen, blue, while the other half – a bloody wound, badly smashed. Father's eyes were gone, his tongue protracted, tied by a thin string. The skin of arms and legs was white, coming off his corpse; it had been scalded. Genitalia torn, that I learned later. There lay more bodies also unrecognizably disfigured.

Shocked and bewildered, stood, a crowd of people. The crying of my mother and those, whose relatives were scattered about the place, rang so high... Even men could not help but cry. I had never heard the word "Bolsheviks" before. The primary information on them to enter my ears and mind was shaped in those words aimed at them – beasts, sadists, degenerates – sounds coming not from propagandists but from wives, children and mothers breaking down with the horrendous sight of my father and their dear ones' tortured so brutally. Those were the sounds to linger on.

The place: Rainiai, nearby the town of Telšiai. The time: just after the Russians left in 1941.

In the words of a testimony by the then prison official, Žutautas – one of the major organisers of the tragedy in the Rainiai forest was the NKVD officer: Petras Raslanas, employed in Telšiai then.

Well, now, he is already a colonel, living in Vilnius, and an expert at Anilionis' office in deciding on matters of cadre – where to assign what priest to, who may be allowed to study at the priests' seminary, or who should not, and so forth.

Were Anilionis, really, so outraged with the fact that priest Alf. Svarinskas made friends with Simutis who had shot a militiaman, in that event how can he get along so well with Raslanas who condemned Simutis' father to the fate of one of the Samogitian

martyrs?! Well, the circumstance that I did not revenge upon Raslanas and do not intend doing so, does not help rule out Raslanas will not retaliate on me; for reminding of that past of his, for my fathers' horrendous death, while utterly innocent, either before people, or soviet power. But then, is this not a key argument to prove that I am neither an innate criminal nor terrorist, while one who conscientiously and firmly adheres to Christian world outlook ? /.../

Kaunas, December, 1984

L.Simutis, "Aušra", April, 1985, No. 48(88)

Quiet Pensioner

[...] Petras Raslanas was born on March 25, 1914, in Riga. [...] In 1938, he joined the underground Communist Party of Lithuania. [...]

After the soviet occupation of 1940, P Raslanas became a regular officer of the NKVD and made a heady career. In summer of 1941, on the eve of the war and the Rainiai tragedy, a 27-year-old man was already a captain, the head of the NKVD of the Telšiai district¹. After the war he plunged into studies: in 1954, graduated from the Vilnius Law School, in 1956, finished the High Juridical Courses in Moscow. In 1960, he obtained the diploma in law at the Vilnius State University.[...]

P.Raslanas had a lot to boast about during reunions of war veterans. In 1951, he received a honorable mention for “liquidation of bourgeois nationalist gangs in Samogitia”, a premium of 600 rubles and a second class Order of the Patriotic War. The former personal pensioner of the Lithuanian SSR is still a chevalier of the Red Star and a Honourable member of USSR KGB orders, which are accepted in [...] Russia.

[...]

P.Raslanas, who spends his last days in Moscow Oblast, is not in need. By the certificate of the The Ministry of Social Affairs of Russia issued by Balashiha Department in Moscow Oblast, P.Raslanas is a disabled of the first group, who became one while “on duty”. Therefore, he receives a regular allowance; as a veteran of the Patriotic War, he receives another bigger pension.

Excerpts from an article of A.Jančys, Pavėlavusi amžiaus byla
(The overdue case of the century) //Ekstra. – Nr. 9. – 2001



P.Raslanas on his 70th anniversary in 1984.

¹ After the changes of NKVD in 1941, P.Raslanas became NKGB officer.

P. Raslanas Case

[...] The journalists also poured some oil on the flame in the investigation of P.Raslanas' case when they wrote about the criminal Raslanas as about an elderly man who had been involved in some troubles during the war, currently living in Russia, and who is of sound mind and, thus, is never intending to return to his homeland of his own free will.

So, this should be understood as a suggestion not to ever present himself in the court.[...]

Today we associate the name Rainiai with the place of torment of the Lithuanian nation with the terror of Red Fascism: 76 Lithuanian civilians were killed there.

The arrested persons were called political prisoners and confined in the prison of Telšiai only because some of them had owned more land, or belonged to the organization of Riflemen' Union or to the movement "Jaunoji Lietuva" ["Young Lithuania"] or to Union of Lithuanian Nationalists, and because somebody laughed to one's neighbor at the ragged Russian army, or disparaged the Russian system and the collective farms (Russ. *kolkhoz*).

One or two talebearers were enough and the files fabricated in this way were referred to those under the NKVD.

Fascism is fascism, despite, what color it is: brown or red. Two sharks – Stalin and Hitler – were dividing the world with complete disregard for nations, sovereign states and people's tortures. Nothing was taken into consideration: were you a student, a worker or a peasant illiterate, whether you owned little land, were you penniless, were you guilty or not. Your biggest fault was that you opposed the occupation.

During the preliminary investigation in the criminal case, it was established that during the first soviet occupation of Lithuania, July 1940-June 1941, there were Lithuanian people confined in

Telšiai prison, accused under the provisions of the RTFSR [Russian] Criminal Code; under Articles: 58¹ to 58¹⁴. Those articles included criminal liability for the so-called “counterrevolutionary” crimes aimed to subvert and weaken the occupational soviet authorities and which were targeted against the forcibly imposed soviet ideology.

On 22 June 1941, Nazi Germany launched military operations against the former USSR which after the occupation encompassed Lithuania too. Due to the broken out war activities the prisoners of Telšiai was not evacuated because the employees of the soviet repressive structures and party organs and their families were like rats leaving the sinking ship.

So, on June 24, 1941, the so-called Special Council had gathered in Telšiai where it was bestowed with the power to shoot without trial and any evidence of guilt.

The Special Council¹ was composed of Petras Raslanas, the then Head of Telšiai district commissariat of the NKGB, in group with Chairman of the Executive Committee of Telšiai district, D. Rocius, the Deputy Head of Telšiai district commissariat of the NKGB, Ždanov, and the Deputy Head of Kretinga district commissariat of NKGB, Jermolajev. Such was the instrumentation of the commission mentioned here. Together they also reviewed the criminal cases of the political prisoners’ confined in Telšiai prison and decided that 76 prisoners were dangerous to the soviet rule, its ideology and therefore should be physically liquidated. [...]

The proof that these killings were not casual, but preplanned was the order given by the Lithuanian SSR People’s Commissar of the Interior Affairs, A. Guzevičius, of 1940,” stating which persons had to be “treated and liquidated”.

¹ Commission of three persons as an additional instrument of extrajudicial punishment introduced to supplement the legal system with a means for quick punishment of “anti-soviet elements“

This list included members of all national political parties and organizations: the nationalists, members of the movement “Jaunoji Lietuva” [“Young Lithuania“], members of the Union of Lithuanian Nationalists, Christian Democrats, active members of students’ corporations and Riflemen’ Union, former policemen, prison employees, officers of the Lithuanian Army, former officials of the ministries’ departments, noblemen, squires, merchants, tradesmen who would use hired labor force, enterprise owners and some others.

The next order was to “pass files-logbooks” for all the persons listed there “and to take them for active treatment by agencies”.

That was the specific wording of the red terrorists which meant merely annihilation of people of all those categories.

In the presence of close watch, armed with machine-guns and tanks, and a rather numerous troop of torturers, the martyrs had no hope that they could escape the torture site.

Yet, having seen, what infernal torments were to befall them, more than one must have tried to run, hoping even if not to escape then at least to face a lighter death.

Three of them made it even to Džiuginėnai, but bullets, nevertheless, struck them down there. There they were buried outright. Thus, instead of 76 only 73 corpses were found and exhumed in the Rainiai forest.

The burial ground was with moss covering and scraps of barbed wire lay around. Besides, there were two firs planted there. Before taking the detainees out of the prison, they would be curbed by a rope, a band or a wire, the band tightened so that the lower jaw would be pulled right to the throat; the hands would be tied behind their backs. The martyrs were unable to say a word, yet one could hear: “Jesus, Mary, where are they taking us...” Such a way of tying one’s mouth was noting else but torture.

Traces could yet be seen there of a big open fire on the spot of tortures. It seems that the fire was lit to have enough light to

devise the execution. In addition to it all, iron things were heated in the fire; the chekists would use them to burn wounds on prisoners' bodies. The chekists also used that fire for scorching the hands and feet of the victims. Finally, the torturers also used the fire to boil water and then would scald the martyrs with it.

The corpses of the martyrs were thrown into four pits dug beforehand. The bodies were excavated on June 28, but most corpses had been mutilated beyond all severity so that nobody could identify them: 27 corpses out of 73 were recognized by their clothes and other attributes only. [...]

Preparing for the case, there was a possibility to read all the archival files of the persons killed in the Rainiai forest that had been left in Lithuania. They consist of several dozens of pages; almost all written in clumsy Russian language; even if there does exist any Lithuanian explanation or an interrogation protocol, then it is mandatorily translated into Russian so that the "guys" [Russ.: Ребята] would understand it better.

The indictments were usually written in one or two pages, and the verdict of the Special Council was standard and the same for all:

"On evacuating Telšiai town due to the launched military operations, the arrested so – and – so, of Telšiai prison of the Lithuanian SSR, by the verdict of the Commission consisting of the representative of the 8th army and the representatives of the district commissariat of the Lithuanian SSR NKGB and of the Executive Committee, was shot on 25th June 1941."

There was no evacuation of Telšiai town: only the red murderers and the henchmen were fleeing. There was no trial either: there was only the afore mentioned *troika*.

The head of the implementation of the execution, M. Kompanijec was killed in the battle by Kingisep town; D. Rocius also died during the war.

Only the organiser of the killings, P. Raslanas¹, born on 25 March 1914 hid himself away in Russia after, April 21, 1992, the Lithuanian Prosecutor General's office had passed the decision to prosecute and arrest him. Currently, he is residing in Balashikha town, in Moscow district.

Excerpts from: V.A. Birbilas.

Penktasis Dievo įsakymas (The Fifth Commendment). – Vilnius, 1994.



P.Raslanas after the second Soviet occupation of Lithuania.

¹ There are some indications about one more alleged organizer, former NKVD officer N.Dušanskis, who is currently living in Israel.

JUDGEMENT
on behalf of the Republic of Lithuania

5 April 2001
Šiauliai

The Board of the Criminal Case Department of the Šiauliai District Court consisting of The Chairman V. Birbilas, The Judges: N. Matuzevičienė, D. Burbulienė, The Secretary: L. Songailaitė, also participating was The Prosecuting Attorney and Defense Lawyer V. Juozaitis, The Victims: Antanavičius, J. Jablonskis, V. Motuza, G.Savoniakienė, A.J. Damanskienė, V. Jakštas, O. Lapienė L, J.Visockienė, L. Simutis, P.Tumbrotas and K. Jonušienė participating at the court session, attended the criminal proceedings of the case of Petras Raslanas, born in Latvia, Riga, March 25, 1914, Lithuanian, currently citizen of the Russian Federation, graduate of higher education, married, pensioner, never convicted previously, permanently resident in the Russian Federation, Moscow oblast, Balashikha, Obyedineniye Str.3-60, who had been charged pursuant to: Part 4, Article 18, and Part 2, Article 71 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania.

On hearing the case, the court **determined:** that Petras Raslanas positioned as head of Telšiai district Commissariat of Lithuanian SSR NKGB together in-group with the Head of Telšiai district Executive Office, D. Rocius; the Deputy Head of Telšiai district commissariat of Lithuanian SSR NKGB, Ždanov; the Deputy Head of Kretinga district commissariat of Lithuanian SSR NKGB, Jermolajev; and the Commissar of the eighth army battalion of the USSR, M. Kompanijec with intent to physically eliminate part of Lithuanian people who consisted of a separate political group sharing

views opposed to the policy of the occupational soviet authorities in Lithuania on June 24, 1941, formed a special commission of the above mentioned representatives of the soviet occupational authorities, and himself as a member of this commission classed for shooting to death 76 unarmed citizens of Lithuania, illegally jailed in Telšiai prison for “counterrevolutionary” actions, categorized as opposing the ideology of the soviet occupational authorities, and assisted by soldiers of the eighth army of the USSR killed, that is physically exterminated part of unarmed civilian Lithuanian citizens belonging to a separate political group.

The 76 prisoners were being violently tortured with axes, knives, bayonets and other tools prior to being shot to death in Telšiai district, Rainiai forest on the night of June 25, 1941. They were: Juozas Antanavičius, Antanas Antanavičius, Jonas Antanavičius, Liudvikas Bachmanas, Kazys Baltrimaitis, Povilas Balsevičius, Stasys Balsevičius, Albinas Baltramiejūnas, Juozas Beimavičius, Kostas Bučys, Juozas Bumblys, Steponas Bubelė, Adolfas Butkus, Antanas Čiužas, Andrius Čiurinskas, Pranas Daukša, Stasys Daknevičius, Antanas Dibisteris, Henrikas Glazauskas, Pranas Gužauskas, Augustinas Gaudutis, Vaclovas Gailius, Ignas Geležinis, Kazimieras Galdikas, Juozas Jablonskis, Aleksas Jankauskas, Jonas Jakštas, Stasys Jocys, Adolfas Jogminas, Kazys Katkus, Kazimieras Kaulius, Juozas Kvedaras, Petras Kavolis, Boleslovas Kavolis, Povilas Kardelis, Povilas Kazlauskas, Karolis Kiševičius, Vladas Kaveckas, Boleslovas Korza, Leonas Kusa, Bronius Križinauskas, Vitoldas Lileikis, Mikas Lengvenis, Mikas Lionginas, Pranas Lukauskas, Liudas Malakauskas, Petras Maskolenka, Jonas Milius, Antanas Montvydas, Vladas Motuza, Motiejus Norvaiša, Liudas Pakalniškis, Zigmas Parašionavičius, Vaclovas Pabarščius, Kazys Puškorius, Vladas Petronaitis, Kazys Paulauskas, Andrius Rudokas, Jonas Rudokas, Adomas Rakas, Zigmas Sakelis, Adomas Simutis, Julius Simutis, Feliksas Stuka, Vladas Songaila, Česlovas Šalkauskas, Zenonas Šakenis, Edmundas

Šalčius, Jonas Šleinius, Jonas Telšinskis, Juozas Truška, Zenonas Tarvainis, Jurgis Vičius, Povilas Vilčinskis, Herminegildas Žvirzdinas and Georgijus Michejevas.

During a preliminary inquiry of him in the capacity of a witness in 1988 – 1989 (before Independence was restored), the convicted P. Raslanas had pleaded not being guilty to charges of participating in the killing of the prisoners under NKGB Telšiai commissariat.

On April 21, 1992, when the resolution to convict P. Raslanas and arrest him had been passed, he absconded from the investigation procedure to the Russian Federation and refused to reappear in court as asked by a writ.

While interrogated, during the [previous] investigation, he admitted that he had been head of the local department of the State Security Commissariat of Telšiai district at the beginning of the war on June 22, 1941. Their department undertook the



P. Raslanas (in the middle of the front row) with the group.

investigation of cases of political prisoners, interrogated those prisoners and arrested them.¹

On June 24, 1941, they received an order from the headquarters of the garrison to leave the town and evacuate themselves.

On their way they hated in a forest near Tryškiai. The units that were behind their main force were being regrouped there. They consulted the soldiers on the fate of the political prisoners held in Telšiai prison. An opinion had been brought up that the prisoners should be evacuated because otherwise they would become an armed gang fighting against the soviet power.

This assignment was commissioned to the party organs and him. Then there emerged the question of transportation. When transport facilities and a military unit were provided, he, D. Rocius, three security officers and others returned to Telšiai to undertake the implementation of the task.

He, D. Rocius and the commissar of the eighth USSR army battalion, M. Kompanijec, executed the evacuation.

Their task was to separate political prisoners from criminal ones. They and the officers were making up lists, and checking prisoner cases. There were no specific directives ordering how to evacuate or liquidate prisoners, verbal orders to do so were also not received.

They came to the conclusion that the 70 counter-revolutionaries if left behind would create an organized gang. Four lorries, two tanks and a military unit were provided. Each prisoner was brought to the prison office, where they were arranging documents and verifying identities. There in the office, the hands of the prisoners were being tied as they were told that they would be put to vehicles and evacuated. He took the documents of the selected prisoners; while the officers took the lists of the prisoners: The prisoners were already being put to vehicles in the evening. Kompanijec was handling the matter. Later they had departed, whilst he remained in Telšiai.

¹ Seemingly, at the previous one taken place in 1988 – 1991.

He learned that the prisoners were shot to death in the Rainiai forest by the morning of the following day.

During the evacuation he took the documents and the cases to Riga, there he burned them in a boiler-house of the commissariat, because they were not accepted there. He passed the documents on the detention acts for the prisoners held in Telšiai prison to the Perm State Security directorate.

The Victims made the following statements to the court:

J. E. Jablonskis testified that his father Juozas Jablonskis, at that time, lived in Mosėdis, and as his work place was searched; his father lost courage and ensconced. Father was arrested in April, 1941. He heard that an acquaintance of his father's had offered helping him to cross the state border, however, he was taken directly to the security officers instead.

V. Motuzas confirmed that his father Vladas Motuzas was killed in Rainiai.

His Mother told him that his father was arrested because a few people from Gudikaičiai reported on him having harvested mixed crops in order to hide them from the soviet authorities and was also disparaging the soviet rule. He had been member of the Riflemen's Union.

His mother identified her husband's corpse only by an innate spot on the body and a string of clothes.

G. Savoniakienė claimed that her father Vladas Petronaitis was arrested in July of 1940. He was a member of the Riflemen's Union. She learned about the killing only from newspapers thenceforth.

The victim A. J. Damanskienė stated that her father Juozas Truška was working in the police and was a member of the Riflemen's Union. Her father was arrested by Russian soldiers at the beginning of June 1941. Mother identified her killed husband

among other corpses. His head was spiked with nails, the body was scalded, skin peeled off in some places.

V.Jakštas testified that his father Jonas Jakštas was the senior in Tverai district in 1940, commander of a riflemen' squad, local chairman of the Union of Lithuanian Nationalists.

His father was arrested in July of 1940. Father's brother, Vincas told him that during the funeral of his brother five or six bullets plummeted out of his back. He was identified only by a scar on his hand and kersey trousers. Both hands and part of the face were scalded.

O.E.Lapienė reported to the court that her father Feliksas Stukas was killed in Rainiai because prior to the soviet occupation he had been a non-commissioned officer with the Lithuanian Army.

Alf. Antanavičius claimed that he did not know the reasons for which his three brothers – Juozas, Jonas and Antanas – were arrested and killed.

K. Jonušienė also claimed that the reasons for the arrest of her brother, Povilas Vilčinskis, were unknown to her. On returning from the Lithuanian Army in 1940, he became a warder at the Telšiai prison. The corpse was recognized only by his clothes. She also remembered that heads of all corpses were crushed, their bodies punctured.

The victim P. V. Tumbrotas told the court that his uncle Zigmas Sakelis was killed in Rainiai. His relatives told him that his uncle was injured badly: curbed, genitalia violated, part of the head was missing.

Officers of the prison told the court that vehicles, by which prisoners were transported, were full of blood.

The daughter of Antanas Dibisteris, J. Visockienė, remembered that her father was arrested in July 1940 because it was suspected that he would try to hinder the next elections soon to be held.

Father belonged to the Riflemen's Union and the Movement "Jaunoji Lietuva" ["Young Lithuania"].

L. Simutis testified that his father, Adomas Simutis, had guns and was preparing for an uprising. The corpse of his father was identified only by his clothes and hair. Mother told that his father was curbed, hands and legs scalded.

The victims J. Maskolenkienė, B. Stukas and S. Dauksienė (already dead), during the investigation, provided the following testimonies:

J. Maskolenkienė told the court that her husband Petras Maskolenka, her brothers Andrius and Jonas Rudokai, her cousin Zigmas Parašionavičius were killed in Rainiai. She identified her husband by his face. His chest was punctured (vol.4, c.p75-76).

S. Dauksienė pointed out that her husband Pranas Daukša was working in Telšiai district; he was the Head of Janapolė primary school. In spring of 1941, some military officers were searching their house and took him away with them. The corpse was identified: it was beaten, an eye punctured (vol. 3, c.p243-245).

B. Stukas claimed that he did not know why his father Feliksas Stukas was arrested. When the war began he learned that his father was killed (vol. 4, c. p. 97-98).

Witnesses also confirmed the circumstances of the killing of the political prisoners.

The daughter of the killed Vladas Motuzas, V. Gricienė, knew from her mother that her father had appealed against their claim that he had harvested unripe vetches so that they would not go to the soviet authorities, that he did not give his workers their wages in grain. Her father borrowed some grain and had given it to the workers. In 1940, her father was sentenced to eight years of imprisonment because he named the soviet Army ragamuffins. He was a member of the Riflemen's Union. She and her mother went to Rainiai after they had learned about the killing. They recognized her father by his trousers, bootlaces and shoes. Half of the head

was missing, half of the chest was scalded. His feet in the shoes blistered, nails were torn off.

J. Norkutė claimed that her mother, sister of Adomas Simutis, could barely identify A Simutis since he was so violently injured.

J. Norkutė knew from her mother that her brother A. Simutis was innocent. Mother went to identify him. She told her that he looked terrible.

T. Galdikienė stated that her father, A. Stukas was killed. Her mother said that she identified her husband by his sweater, because the body was so disfigured that it hindered the identification completely.

D. Jakštienė told the court that the killed Jonas Jakštas was her father-in-law. She was married to his son Viktoras. She knew that there was a gunfight between the NKVD officers and Lithuanian guerrillas¹. The guerillas were hiding in their underground hideout. During the search guns were found, also bullets and the book of martyrs.

Her husband's brother Vincas, who had been at his fathers' funeral, told the court that they recognized his father only by a scar of a gunshot wound on his hand and by his trousers. His mouth was curbed with a wire which was constricted with help of a stick and cut into the mouth, his arms were scalded up to elbows. Five or six bullets fell out of the body.

The witness S. Anulienė claimed that Pranas Daukša was her mother's brother. Her mother told her that P. Daukša was a teacher in Jonapolė primary school; he was in discord with the head of the school and so she could have reported on him.

S. Šedbaras told the court that E Daukša was his brother. People told him that he had been head of the Riflemen's Union. The wife of the killed also stated that E Daukša was arrested by the Russian security officers. The witness S. Pagojus claimed that he lived a kilometer away from Rainiai. When he went to the Rainiai forest, he

¹ This concerns events of later years.

saw three pits filled with soil. He met there his neighbour and they started to dig. Later they brought the Jews from Telšiai to do that work. Corpses were unrecognizably injured, mouths curbed. They saw that nails from hands and toes were torn off, skin was scalded.

Sides of some corpses were cut.

The witnesses E Balsevičius, K. Katkus and V. Jakštas (already dead), during the investigation, gave the following testimonies about the circumstances of the killing of their relatives:

P. Balsevičius testified that he had come to Plungė to invite his brother Povilas to his wedding on February 22, 1941. He did not find him at home and was told that his brother had been arrested.

He went to the Plungė security headquarters and learned that his brother would not be released and that he should have to disappear right away if he did not want to be arrested himself. He knew that his brother Povilas was one of the people who were publishing and distributing the newspaper *Laisvės Varpas* (The Bell of Freedom). On February 23, 1941, another brother of his, Stasys, participated in his wedding; on February 25 he had already been arrested. He was suspected of having been communicating with his brother Povilas, besides he was a member of the Riflemen's Union (prior to occupation).

When he learned that political prisoners had been killed in Rainiai, on coming there he could only identify his brother Povilas by a scar on his neck and clothes. A hole was instead of his right eye, the right side of his skull was smashed. The brain was effused, his mouth curbed, signs of tying were visible on his hands.

He recognized his brother Stasys by his shoes and face. A strip of skin resembling a belt was cut out of his waist, holes were cut in his sides and hands put into them. His mouth was curbed.

K. Katkus pointed out that his father Kazys Katkus was killed.

His father was the head of Plateliai district riflemen' squad, the chairman of the cooperative, the village senior. A

familiar policeman warned him that before the forthcoming elections to the Seimas he might be arrested, but he refused to abscond because he did not want his family members to be arrested instead of him.

When the family learned about the killing, his mother and he went to the place and recognized his father by the material of his trousers. His father's skull was smashed, all teeth knocked out, punctured wounds on both sides of his chest, arms and legs were scalded. He remembered that skulls of almost all corpses were smashed, it looked as if it had been done by an axe or a hammer.

V.Jakštas, told the court, during the investigation, that his killed brother Jonas Jakštas was the senior of Tverai district, head of a riflemen's squad.

His brother was arrested because a gun was found on him.

He could see the following site in the Rainiai forest: corpses were laying their hands twisted, some half-clad, others naked. One corpse was completely violated. His genitalia cut off and put into his mouth. Hands tied with wires cut up to bones.

He identified his brother by his trousers and a gunshot scar on his hand. His brother's face was a wound itself, half of the face was scalded, the mouth torn to ears. V Jakštas is already dead, his testimonies had been publicized thereafter.

The only survivor of the Rainiai massacre, J. Šapalas (already dead), during the investigation, on December 23, 1988, gave the following testimony to the prosecutor: he was arrested on March 11, 1941, by three men speaking Russian. He was interrogated to what party he had belonged. He admitted that he was a member of the Riflemen's Union.

He was violently tortured in Telšiai prison.

On the night of June 25, uniformed NKVD officers entered their cell, tied his, Korza's and Jakštas' and other people's hands behind their backs and took them out. They saw four lorries full of

other prisoners with their hands tied. Two NKVD officers were in each lorry; there were some Lithuanians among them.

They had been brought to the Rainiai forest.

The first ten of the people brought were selected from the prisoners: Korza, Jakštas and others. Then they turned on the engines of all vehicles which caused a lot of noise.

Two or three NKVD officers approached each of the ten prisoners; one was standing behind and holding a prisoner.

The hands of prisoners were tied. The prisoners started to shout vehemently. They must have seen how the NKVD officers, standing in front, cut off tongues of the ten people, took off their trousers and cut off their genitalia.

The prisoners were violently shouting and twisting. Later the soldiers with gun butts knocked on their heads and most, probably, in this way, they were killed, because not a single one of the ten was actually shot to death.

It was night; everyone started to run in various directions. He succeeded to escape.

The witness A.Bumblauskas, who lived nearby the Rainiai forest, saw the corpses which were dug out; their arms and legs were scalded. All corpses were curbed; some with wires, others with bands.

J. Lekavičius, at the investigation, also confirmed that heads of almost all corpses were smashed and it was impossible to identify them by their faces. He lived near Rainiai, that was why he heard the sound of engines and also sometimes people were heard screaming that night.

B.Vizgaudas (already dead), at the investigation, stated that, then, he had been supervisor at Telšiai prison.

Many people were arrested in 1940.

In June 1941, vehicles with soldiers came to the prison. He and other supervisors were ordered to let out the prisoners from their cells. Three or four unfamiliar plain clothes peoples in the

corridor were tying hands of the prisoners from behind, so they did with their mouths and eyes.

He thought that hands were being tied with bands of some fabric. The tied prisoners were brought to vehicles and laid down. That night about 60-70 prisoners were taken away.

Beside the testimonies of the relatives of the victims and witnesses, the culpability of P.Raslanas in organising of tortures and killing of the 76 political prisoners of Telšiai prison had been proven by his own admission of October 7, 1942 addressed to LKP(b) CK secretary A.Sniečkus (vol. 5, cp. 152-157). He was writing: "... several times I went to the military prosecutor and the chairman of the tribunal asking them to help us settle that matter.

We came to the conclusion that leaving over 70 counterrevolutionaries behind in Telšiai prison would naturally amount to an organized gang against the Red Army, and it would have constituted a crime to leave them there.

I was given a unit of soldiers, 4 lorries, and two tanks, and it was suggested to me to return to Telšiai. I agreed, and together with a few more employees, and with the head of the Telšiai county Executive Office, comrade Domas Rocius, I departed in the evening of June 24, 1941.

To revise the cases, we formed a Commission comprised of the Chief of NKGB Telšiai commissariat P. Raslanas, Deputy Chief of Telšiai district commissariat, Security Lieutenant Ždanov, 2nd rank Intendant working in the political department of the 8th army Kompanijec, Head of Telšiai district Executive Office Domas Rocius, Deputy of NKGB Kretinga district commissariat, Second Lieutenant of Security, Jermolajev.

The Commission reviewed over 70 cases of persons accused of espionage, counterrevolutionary and agitation activities. The convicts included those from Telšiai security commissariat and partially from Kretinga too. Some cases had already been closed, some not yet, however, there was not any slightest doubt about

their crimes... I have never had any queries about their criminality. Their arrest was sanctioned by the prosecutor of the Republic of Lithuania, comrade Kaša. All those 75 put to death had committed crimes of counterrevolutionary nature. I was positive that there was not one without fault.

When the Commission was about to finish revising the cases, the news was received that the Germans broke the defense line of Telšiai. Then in haste, I left with the convicts; and fearing the danger of taking them along further, some 2-3

kilometres from Telšiai, in the woods on the way to Luokė, they were shot by the Red Army soldiers given us as our backing. There they were also buried.

We finally left Telšiai at 10 a.m., on June 25, 1941. If any one thinks that it was bad to do it in one place and near the town, I can respond to it that there was no time to do it otherwise.

I sewed all resolutions on the cases of those persons and corresponding detention acts into one file and sent them via the Oblast committee of Molotov NKVD to the centre. The centre recognized the actions as legal and confirmed them."

A very similar explanation was written to A. Sniečkus by another member of the special commission, D. Rocius (vol. 5, c.p. 65-81):

"The counterrevolutionaries consisted of officers of Smetona times, kulaks, clergy, who played quite an important role in that work, and heads, sub-heads and members of all nationalist Nazi organizations which were active in Lithuania before the soviet rule.

The June 24, had been spent by us together at the headquarters of the army in Tryškiai forest: I, as the chairman of the Executive Committee, party secretary Boris Mironov and the head of NKGB Petras Raslanas. We intended to evacuate the prison, but we lacked transport means and some armed force. The army headquarters undertook that work. We only had to let prisoners out of the prison.

A unit of the Red Army with a commander, some lorries and two tanks were sent immediately. On the night from 24 to 25 of June, the Hitler's apostles were loaded to lorries.

The military decided to bring them to the Rainiai forest and shoot to death. When we approached the forest, we were confronted by being fired at. The prisoners tried to escape but failed. Tanks dispersed the bandits, the site was cleared, and the shooting to death took place.

The Red Army executed the shooting.

Of our crew the following were present: the head of the local NKGB Petras Raslanas, operative agent Galkin and the head of the prison Pocevičius."

The composition of counterrevolutionaries and actions executed on them were described by D. Rocius and had been confirmed by the Lithuanian SSR People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, A. Guzevičius, in his order of 1940, (vol. 1, c.p. 146-148). It is stated in the order that nationalists, members of the movement "Jaunoji Lietuva" ["Young Lithuania"], the voldemarians (voldemarininkai), members of the Union of Lithuanian Nationalists, Christian Democrats, activists of the Riflemen's Union, gendarmes, policemen, prison officials, landlords, priests, etc. were considered anti-soviet and socially alien elements.

The order also said that "it is necessary to know that... in order to determine counterrevolutionary forces and direct operational-agency apparatus for the processing and liquidation of them."

The activities of the head of the Telšiai commissariat of NKGB, P Raslanas, being precisely in line with the above mentioned order, through the Rainiai execution, confirmed it completely.

He personally interrogated, organized the prisoners', cross examinationed in the A. Rakas, G. Glazauskas, K. Puškorius, L. Malakauskas, V. Lileikis, P Gužauskas and Z. Tarvainis cases,

organized cross examination in the A. Čiužas case, and in S. Bubelė's case authorized his arrest, approved interrogation and "accepted" the indictment (vol. 6, c.p. 132-135, vol. 7, c.p. 154-161).

The then head of NKVD of Telšiai County, M. Taurinskas (already dead), during his investigation, explained that there were no guidelines, orders or instructions on the arrest, deportation (in case of war) or liquidation of anti-soviet elements and counter revolutionaries. P Raslanas did not discuss with him the evacuation of prisoners during the first days of the war (vol. 5, c.p. 100-101) P. Raslanas himself, during his investigation, admitted that he received neither any written directive nor other document nor verbal guidelines on the evacuation or liquidation of the prisoners (vol. 5, c.p. 121-124).

Thus P. Raslanas, when addressing an army division for help in solving the problem of the prisoners knew that they would be shot to death, because it was he, who himself admitted that 70 counterrevolutionaries were already actually an organized gang against the Red Army and it would constitute a crime to leave them in the prison. The assistance provided by the army – a unit of soldiers, four lorries and two tanks – tying of prisoners' hands, tying of their mouths, laying them to transportation means some only half-clad, also prove that they were taken out not for the evacuation but for shooting to death.

D. Rocius by his explanation to A. Sniečkus also as a matter of fact admitted that P. Raslanas and others asked the army headquarters to shoot the prisoners to death, and that that work was undertaken by the army headquarters. The army had agreed to take the prisoners to Rainiai forest and shoot them to death; the shooting was executed by the Red Army, and P. Raslanas, as well as by others who were present during the shooting.

The assertion of P Raslanas that he learned about the shooting of the prisoners to death in the Rainiai forest only on the following day was denied by his own explanation sent to A. Sniečkus where

he pointed out that”... we hurriedly left with the condemned, avoiding the danger of going with them further, they were shot to death by the soldiers of the Red Army who were sent to help us out, about two or three kilometers away from Telšiai, in the forest, on the road to Luokė.”

His active part in the case of killing of the prisoners was also proven by the fact that in the explanation to A. Sniečkus he has included himself as the first one under the heading of the organized commission, as well to the effect of having later worked with all documents, organised their transferring to certain security institutions. It was him who was assessing

the culpability of the prisoners when he was saying of never having doubted as to their felony, although, in fact, some cases were still open.

It is obvious from the material in the case that soldiers of the USSR eighth army battalion, under the command of M. Kompanijec, were merely executors.

M. Kompanijec and D. Rocius were killed during the war and thereby the cases against them were discontinued (vol. 5, c.p. 86,87).

The relatives of the victims and witnesses in court confirmed the killing of the prisoners and their violent torture. Testimonies laid down during the investigation and given by persons who by now are already dead were announced in the court.

Beside that evidence on the circumstances was also described in the “Legal Medical Protocol” published in the book *Žemaičių kankiniai* (Samogitian martyrs).

Experts, who examined the corpses, recorded facts of violent torturing in the protocol: hands of the prisoners were tied, some of prisoners were curbed through their mouths, skulls were smashed, parts of some prisoners’ skulls were missing, brains mixed or effused, lungs protruding in chests of some, extremities scalded, skin peeled off, bodies punctured, jaws of some fixed to their necks

with ropes, tongues torn or missing, throats cut from inside with bayonets, and so on.

All evidence had proven that P. Raslanas organized the premeditated killing of persons who were opposing the occupational authorities.

The crime had been proven. His acts by the investigation organs were qualified: pursuant to Part 4, Article 18, and Part 2, Article 71, of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania. Additional qualification done under: Part 4, Article 18, was unnecessary because Part 2, Article 71 of Criminal Code, includes activities which involve killing of people and also organization or perpetrating of activities described: in Parts 1, and 2 of this Article.

His activities qualify only under Part 2, Chapter 71, of the Criminal Code. Any extenuating circumstances were missing.

Aggravating circumstances established were the following: the crime was executed by an organized group with the help of a military unit, the crime brought about grave outcomes as many people were killed, the crime was executed with extraordinary violence and it was executed under the circumstances of a public disaster – the war.

When determining the penalty, the aggravating circumstances, inter alia its hazardous nature to the society had to be considered; therefore the strictest penalty was to be given – life-long imprisonment.

Material evidence: picture negatives and pictures should be passed to the Lithuanian Central State Archive, 23 archival criminal cases of political prisoners and one archival observational case should be returned to the Lithuanian Special Archive, the reproduction of J. Truška's funeral with a negative were to remain included in the case.

Civil suits were not claimed.

The court pursuant to Articles: 330-333 of the Criminal Procedural Code **decided:** to convict Petras Raslanas of the crime

described in: Part 2, Article 71, of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania, and sentence him to life-long imprisonment.

The sentence should be executed in a strict penitentiary prison.

The day of the arrest shall correspond with the announcement of the sentence.

Material evidence The Court: shall pass picture negatives and pictures to the Lithuanian Central State Archive, return 23 archival criminal cases of political prisoners and one archival observational case to the Lithuanian Special Archive, retain the reproduction of J. Truška's funeral with the negative in the case.

The sentence might be appealed against: at the Lithuanian Court of Appeal through that court within twenty days of its announcement.

It was signed by: The Chairman V Birbilas.
The Judges: N. Matuzevičienė, D. Burbulienė.

Not the Last Word yet

The cutthroat killer sentenced to life imprisonment by the Lithuanian court but living in safety and with honors – such is one of the post cold war paradoxes exposing absolute lack of justice extending to our times. The situation which reveals so much indeed. The individual who served a foreign country against his own, and committed, on behalf of the occupying USSR, crimes against humanity and war crimes as its military executed helpless civilians, is still sheltered in post-soviet Russia which at the same time does pretend to be a special and “sovereign democracy” and a partner of normal democracies.

When the Second World War turned its second page, Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, attacked its former ally the USSR, ruled by Joseph Stalin. The soviet occupation of Lithuania was only a minor part of the first page. Petras Raslanas, having been already for years before, recruited by soviet secret services, overtly surfaced in charge of activities as an officer of the soviet NKVD. This red terror organization of Russian bolshevik revolution initially being named CheKa, later was called and known everywhere as the KGB. Under Lithuanian law, chekists acting in then occupied Lithuania are now regarded as belonging to an organized crime structure.

The first year of soviet occupation of Lithuania-1940-1941 was already earmarked by arbitrary arrests, deliberately creating an atmosphere of terror –designed for rapid incorporation of the country into the USSR followed by mass deportations of civilians with their entire families in cattle wagons; and, finally, by unbelievable atrocities of the Red Army and NKVD fleeing eastwards.

Interestingly, what they committed in Rainiai forest, on June 24-25, 1941, was not a unique example of their behavior. It was differing only in numbers of fatally tortured victims. Let me also quote an account of the killing of several other men:

“At night, the Russian military troops were marching by the sanatorium [of the Red Cross in Panemunė] when somebody out there fired at the soldiers. They immediately surrounded the sanatorium and started searching for who had fired the shot. Searching all the wards, attics and the basements, they finally found in a boiler-room, five men among whom there were: a stoker, a night-watch, two male nurse attendances and an insurgent, the one who had actually shot. Not knowing where to hide away, he had plunged to those men into the boiler-room, carrying a gun along with him. So the soldiers captured him. Do you think they showed any mercifulness to those [the rest of the] men and let them in peace? Those who just had not stepped out of the sanatorium since the beginning of the war yet... [...] The soldiers tied all the five up with barbed wire, gagged open their mouths, coiled the wire by their necks, and having tied like this all the five, took them out. Where there is a water-power plant now, they crossed the river Nemunas, took the captives to the Pažaislis forest, brutally tortured all five to death and left there. In a few days people found them and only by some clothes, their people could identify that those had been their men” (J.Jakelaitis. Should anybody read. – Kaunas, 1996, p. 305)

The basic soviet “legal act” for such final solutions was issued yet in advance of the occupation of the Baltic States. It was related to Polish prisoners of the first year of current war and signed by J.Stalin, V. Molotov, L.Berya and others because of the really fundamental importance, as we may now see their “grounds” for capital punishment:

“The prisoners of war and policemen in field camps conduct anti-soviet agitation. Each one of them is only hoping and awaits release in order to have the capability actively to be included in activities against the soviet regime”. (USSR Peoples Commissariat of Internal Affairs. 5th of March, 1940. N 794/B. Moscow//Top Secret. 5th March, 1940. Central Committee, VKP (b)).

There were two more names affirming this very *raison d'être* and sentence (for the Katyn massacre) as noticed on the margin of that document: comrades Kaganovitch and Kalinin. The latter was granted immortality by giving Königsberg his name to serve a still greater site of soviet genocide soon afterwards.

Today's Russia is denouncing the signatures of its former leadership on the sentence to execute the Polish **war prisoners**. It was, allegedly, the routine killing, not a war crime.

Anyway, going back to Lithuania of 1941, the executions of the prisoners, suspected plotting against the failing soviet regime, were of even a greater special ideological and emotional motivation. They were driven by hatred beyond all sound sense. "The enemy" was treated as guilty merely because of the likelihood of being such or simply to justify the fact of actual arrest. On a bare suspicion the labeling ("fascist", "counterrevolutionary") was used to substitute any proven indictment and make it simply unnecessary. "The court" consisted of three communist activists or soviet officials. The "decision" taken in minutes implied only one possible punishment – capital. To add, as we see from many cases in then insurgent Lithuania, the revenge, so extremely cruel, torturing of those "convicted" was an actualization of perverted pleasure of those inhuman Bolshevik souls.

An illustration for this was published as the relation on the NKVD prison in Kretinga town, just after the bolsheviks fled from Lithuania. "At the pool of the monastery, near the edge of the cemetery, a place of torturing was found, after the executioners had left. Some trees were growing there, among them one was badly burned and succinct by an iron belt for the body. Buried and discovered corpses did witness people being fixed to the trees and burned alive. Many of the buried were pressed further more by stones and, which as a physician reported, meant they were buried while still alive. Others found with hands skinned, their heads

scalped or cut off.” (Lithuanian archive: years of bolshevism. – Vol. I. – Kaunas, 1942, p.79)

All of it was caused not only by possibly the bestial nature of the perpetrators, but also chiefly by soviet communist education. To hate the enemy, who does not deserve to live, stood in Marxist parlance for “class enemy”; it meant to terminate them deliberately in millions, in tens of millions all over the then USSR, as well as elsewhere. And to spill what you really feel during such a revolutionary action. A propos, the 100% ethnic cleansing of Königsberg region, in 1944-1945, it was also waged in the same style, complemented only by massively rapping of women of every age.

One more explanation for similarities in the methods of torturing used in Lithuania – i.e. the wire or band on an open mouth preventing the victims from shouting too loudly – was probably due to a specially distributed instruction of that time.

As usually, like also in the Katyn case, no living perpetrators are known and found in present Russia to be brought to justice. Anyway, having in mind that no single official response or statement of Russian authority is reliable, Petras Raslanas is an existing exception with officially known address, thus presenting himself a litmus paper for the Russian government and its judiciary of today, to prove the alternative.

What more can we say? **The last word is to be pronounced by international tribunal**, in Hague or anywhere, designated to deal about justice with all soviet war crimes and criminals.

Vytautas Landsbergis
Member of the European Parliament



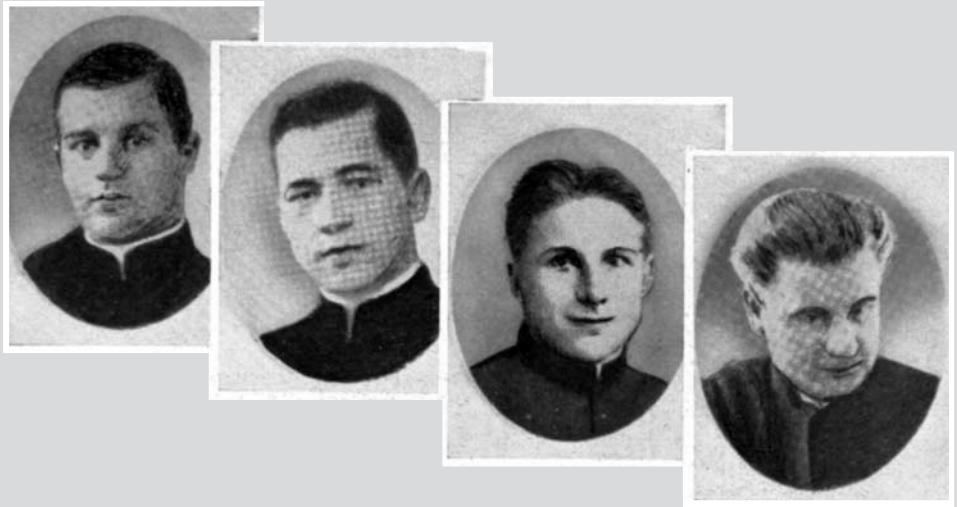
Petras Raslanas in about 1932-1938 before The World War Two.

P.Raslanas at home. (1977)



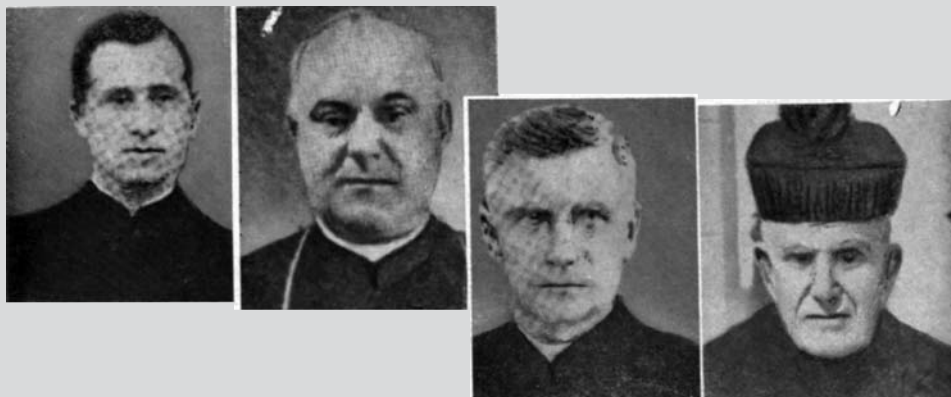
P.Raslanas signs into the “Chekists’ Book of Honour” (Approx. 1970).

Other Sites and Victims



These priests like many others were assassinated by the Bolsheviks.

- 1) The priest Povilas Racevičius, born in 1908, belonged to the parish of Joniškis. He was shot in June 1941 near Kriūkai.
- 2) The priest of the Stirniai parish Jonas Daugėla, born in 1909, faced the same fate in June 1941. The retreating Bolsheviks from Stirniai, at the end of June 1941, remembered the priest, came back and shot him.
- 3) The priest Valentinas Balčius of the Pusnė parish was shot on June 27 1941 together with his brother and some other refugees. They were killed in a ditch which they had dug out in order to hide from the Bolsheviks there.
- 4) The priest and clergyman Vaclovas Balsys of the Lankeliškiai parish, born in 1905, was tortured to death in a most brutal way in the Budavonė wood together with the priests J. Petrika and J. Dabrila on June 22 1941. These martyrs were found with holy-cross lines cut into their foreheads and chests and with their intestines slit.



The Bolsheviks were murdering priests:

- 1) The priest Andrius Juknevičius was ordained to officiate in the parish of Merkinė. On June 24, 1941, he was, after a brief interrogation at the Commandants' office of Kaišiadorys, taken into a wood and shot there at night. His body was found together with others only after five days. The Bolsheviks had poured petrol over his head and then set it alight.
- 2) The 62 years old priest and canon Vaclovas Dambrauskas of the Kuršėnai parish was murdered after suffering beastly tortures.
- 3) The 73 years old preacher Pranas Vitkevičius of the Skoruliai parish met the same fate together with the clergymen Vegėlė and Stankevičius.
- 4) A cruel death was inflicted by the Bolsheviks on the priest and canon Jonas Navickis of the Vieکشniai parish in spite of his being 76 years old.



On June 22 1941, in the forest near Budavonė, three priests were barbarously tormented to death by the Bolsheviks. The bodies were so disfigured, that they could not be identified with certainty. The above body is supposed to belong to the priest Jonas Petrika(s). He had been employed as a chaplain in the secondary school at Marijampolė. On June 22 he took part in an ecclesiastical ceremony at Lankeliškiai where he was arrested by the Bolsheviks and then taken to the wood of Budavonė



Justinas Dabrila, a priest, was tortured to death in the forest near Budavonė on June 22, 1941.



The same fate had to endure the priest and canon Matas Lajauskas of the Molėtai Parish. This 69 year old man had been confined to his sickbed for many years. Despite it the Bol-sheviks were forcing him to tell the hiding place of the vicar. As he didn't know it, he was dragged from his sickbed late at night on June 27, 1941. Two days later his dead body was found in a dirty little pool near Molėtai.



Victims of the cruel crimes of the Bolsheviks at Panevėžys. Those are bodies of workmen who on 26 June 1941 were murdered behind the sugar factory.



The blacksmith of the "Maistas" factory, Vilhelmas Vaišvila, was shot at Panevėžys on 26 June 1941. He was killed by the Bolsheviks without interrogation or trial.



The murdered nurse Kanevičienė in Panevėžys. Shortly before killing the Bolsheviks raped her.



Labour camp at Pravieniškės where the Bolsheviks killed the inmates and the supervising staff of the camp on June 26 1941.



Torture cell at Pravieniškės after the retreat of the Bolsheviks late in June 1941.



Disarmed camp staff was lined up against a barrack wall and shot at Pravieniškės on 26 June, 1941.



The pregnant wife of Kazys Budrys, warder at the Pravieniškės Labour camp, resisted attempts to force her into the courtyard and was killed in her own apartment by a few revolver shots.



Rainiai forest today.

**Forgotten
Soviet War Crime**

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