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SOVIET CONSEQUENCES TO LITHUANIAN JEWS

A comparison with the lot of Lithuanians

LIŪTAS GRINIUS

Dov Levin* is a Lithuanian Jew who emigrated to Israel and established himself as a researcher and historian at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Institute of Contemporary Jewry. He has contributed worthwhile works on the experiences of Lithuanian Jews during World War II.

His most recent work, "Arrests and Deportations of Lithuanian Jews to Remote areas of the Soviet Union, 1940-1941" (Crossroads, Jerusalem 1984, Nr. 11, 67-107), is informative and, as is usual in this author's works, well documented by references. The author presents some new insights into Judaica of Lithuania, Russian Communism, and Jewish-Lithuanian relations.

Contrary to many contemporary works on Jewish-Lithuanian relations, the present Dov Levin's analysis is presented without rancor. It is not written, however, in a historically detached manner. Rather, it tends to romanticize Jewish humanitarian, religious, and Zionist values which places the author in the role of a popularizer.

The author has collected a wealth of information which is elaborated in footnotes and references. Most of the statistics are drawn from Lithuanian sources while individual experiences are based on archival testimonials and published memoirs of the Jewish survivors. Attempts to generalize on the basis of isolated experiences are always difficult and risky. The author used only positive and supportive cases of "good" Jewish behaviour. This tends to diminish the historic objectivity. No comparisons of Jewish experiences are made with other nationalities, although some instances of differences in attitudes between Jews and Lithuanians are highlighted.

The major contentions presented in this work can be summarized by excerpts and compared with Lithuanian experiences as follows:

FIRST. The Jews of Lithuania were generally supportive of Soviet occupation and of the Soviet regime in Lithuania:

"Willingly or otherwise, the Jews took an active part in the Sovietization of the country, thus bringing down upon themselves the anger of the nationalistic Lithuanian masses, who were to some extent already affected by anti-Semitism. In short, in economic, social, religious, and national terms the Jews fell victim to the process they themselves had catalyzed." (p. 70)

The said Dr. B. Bludz (Bliudzas) also migrated to Israel even though he willingly assumed the position of a NKVD physician in Kaunas during the Soviet occupation of 1940. It is interesting to note that while the Jews tried to adapt and support the Soviet Regime (with notable advantages), the Lithuanians chose defiance: attendance at worship increased, learning Russian became unfashionable, spontaneous underground publications appeared, national and religious demonstrations became a rule.

THIRD. The Soviet criteria for selecting deportees was less encompassing to Jews than those applied to Lithuanians:

"In contrast, the Jewish deportees were primarily wealthier industrialists and merchants as well as party leaders or high-rank party activists." (p. 79)

FOURTH. The sentences doled out to Jews were generally milder than those given to Lithuanians who were charged under the same Article 58 of the Soviet Criminal Code:

"In these terrible conditions, many prisoners underwent resumed interrogations, intended to extract from them confessions. At one or another time, but particularly in 1943, almost all were sentenced to a defined period of imprisonment: former political activists usually to 5 to 10 years according to Paragraph 58 of the Criminal Code of the USSR, the industrialists and merchants usually to 3 to 5 years according to Paragraph 35. In the event that the prisoners were still alive after having served their terms, they were exiled to specifically designated regions as Spetspereselentsy (special settlers), where they lived until the mid-1950s. Only a few of the released prisoners were permitted to join their exiled families." (p. 87)

The author cites sentences of eight years to R. Rubinstein, M. W. Begin, I. Levitan (p. 70, ref. 3). Most Lithuanians were usually given 25 year sentences. Three to five year "light" sentences given to industrialists and merchants were unheard of among Lithuanians.

SECOND. Considerable fawning to the Soviets took place among Jews. It manifested itself not only by a decline of worshippers (p. 69) but also by gains of influence in the Soviet occupation apparatus during 1940-1941:

". . . the new administration used a relatively large number of Jewish personnel in carrying out its economic policies. This phenomenon was even more noticeable within the security agencies, such as the NKVD, the militia, and the officer ranks in the army." (p. 69)

This influence was occasionally helpful in obtaining the freedom of some deportees while no such releases have been known to have occurred among Lithuanians.

". . . the interventions of the relatives of the Rumshishki Deul and Boris Bernstein families were successful. But when the Bernsteins, who were already inside the railway car, heard their names being called, they presumed that the purpose was to separate them and, fearing this, failed to respond — the consequence was that they went into exile. The Deul family was taken off the train and later found itself in the Ghetto." (p. 100, ref. 23)

"The relatives of B. Bernstein in Palestine made intensive efforts to get him and his family out of the USSR, but without success. However, the wife and the son of the well-known property owner Khodos from Kaunas were released shortly after the war, apparently through the efforts of his daughter Miriam, a prominent long-time Communist. But Khodos himself died in the Gari Labor Camp." (p. 107, ref. 84)

One could add that the said Miriam (Marija) Khodos (Chodosaitė) is believed to have left the USSR and is now safe and sound in New York City . . .

"Thus, for example, a well-known public figure from Kaunas, Dr. Lazar Finkelstein, went to the Jewish Communist leader, Genrik Ziman (who was also the editor of *Tiesa* and responsible for the Bureau for National Minorities in the Communist Party Center), and asked: "Why are Jews being deported?" The reply was: "That is a very naive question. The fifth column may well include Jews and particularly Zionists, and you should not raise such problems." Testimony of Dr. Benyamin Bludz." (p. 99, ref. 22)

FIVE. The Jews continued to support the Russian Soviet regime even in their places of exile and the forced labor camps. This set Jews apart from most Lithuanians:

"In many instances, the Lithuanians would criticize the Jews by making such remarks as: "Who do you think you are, you used to eat Lithuanian bread, and now you speak Russian?" (p. 92)

". . . almost all the Jews saw the war against the Nazis to a great extent as their own war. It is therefore not surprising that when an appeal for funds to buy tanks for the Red Army was announced in 1942, the response among the Jews was quite positive. But if among the Jews "no one objected," the Lithuanians resisted the appeal." (p. 92-93)

Under the circumstances, the Jews saw only two alternatives — Soviet or Nazi, and their choice was obvious:

"These attitudinal differences extended to the issue of enlistment in the army . . .

. . . many Jewish deportees and prisoners were willing to volunteer, and in at least one case an appeal was made to the authorities to accept volunteers." (p. 93)

Contrary to Jews, the Lithuanians regarded the war between the Nazis and the Soviets as a transitional evil and placed their faith in the ultimate triumph of "justice" over might which was to come about by Western intervention. Therefore, the majority of Lithuanians did not kowtow to the Communists but tried to stay "neutral" and tried to preserve, as much as they could, their national resources. As they knew then, neither the Nazis nor the Soviets bade them well. The reliance upon active support of Lithuania's right to independence by the Western Democracies turned out to be misplaced, to say the least.

The following desperate telegram to the President of the United States of America, H. S. Truman, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, C. R. Attlee, the Prime Minister of France, gen. C. A. de Gaulle, and his Holiness Pope Pius XII, illustrates this point:

"The Soviet occupation authorities are carrying out the systematic extermination of the Lithuanian people, the ruthless spoliation of the Lithuanian national resources and their transportation to Russia stop The encirclement and destruction by Soviet troops of about 50,000 Lithuanian patriots who were most active in the resistance movement against the Nazi occupation and who were forced to seek refuge in the forests are taking place and they have made a desperate appeal to the civilized world for help stop Mass arrests and deportations of Lithuanians to Siberia and the Altai are in progress while thousands of Russian colonists are being settled in Lithuania stop In the name of the Lithuanian people we appeal to Your Excellency to save the Lithuanian nation from starvation and complete annihilation stop.

October 26, 1945

Dr. Kazys Grinius,
Former President of the Lithuanian Republic

Reverend Mykolas Krupavičius
Former Minister, Chairman of the Supreme Lithuanian
Committee of Liberation

Prof. Juozas Kaminskas
Former Minister and Vice-Chairman of the
Lithuanian Democratic Diet

Bishop Vincas Brizgys
coadjutor the Archbishop Metropolitan of
Lithuania"

The Western powers did not react.

SIX. The Jews were probably the only nationality in the Soviet Union who tried to establish a national Soviet Jewish army:

"I wrote a letter to Stalin arguing that for historical reasons a Jewish army must participate in this war under the Jewish flag ... I wrote that volunteers for the Jewish Army would come from all over the world, even from the United States of America, and that this would speed up the opening of the second front ... I told no one about this letter because of the responsibility involved. I knew that very many of our fellow Jewish inmates would agree to go to the front . . ." (p. 93)

"At about the same time other attempts were made by prominent Jewish figures to persuade the Soviet and Polish military authorities in the USSR to set up a Jewish army unit, to be made of Polish Jews, on Soviet soil." (p. 106, ref. 75)

When this did not pass, many Jews found their way into the so-called Lithuanian Division which is said to have been some 40 percent Jewish.

SEVEN. The author presents interesting cases of organized welfare by the exiles who tried to help the Jewish inmates in the forced labor camps:

"Among the deportees who devoted themselves to organized relief for camp prisoners was the communal leader from Kaunas, Boris Bernstein. He and the members of his family, working in their exile home in Yakutsk, collected from the deportees in the far north and other places the contents of parcels destined for their relatives in the camps, wrapped them, and prepared them for mailing. They also mailed letters from deportees and prisoners in remote areas to destinations abroad." (p. 87-88)

"From a cable received by the Association of Jewish Lithuanian Immigrants in Johannesburg early in 1942, it appears that a Committee for the Assistance of Jewish Families from Lithuania had been set up in the town of Barnaul in the Altay region" (p. 105, ref. 62)

"At the Congress of the Federation of Jewish Immigrants from Lithuania to the USA in June 1943, it was reported that by then more than 4000 parcels had already been sent to Lithuanian Jews in Russia (including refugees) by the Committee of Lithuanian Immigrants in Tel Aviv. Jewish Lithuanian immigrants in Canada and elsewhere also participated in funding this campaign." (p. 104, ref. 58)

It should be noted that during the same time no relief from abroad for Lithuanian prisoners and deportees was possible.

EIGHT. In spite of attitudinal differences, there were cases of cooperation between Jews and Lithuanians:

"Dr. Hesselzon recounts how after being appointed a statistician in the labor camp, he was approached by "one of the Zionist leaders" to give up this position in order to let a former Lithuanian minister have it. He agreed, despite the fact that it meant a return to his former working assignment, that is, "to march to the forest in the frost and rain, risking life every day." (p. 105, ref. 69)

A Jew from Kaunas by the name of Perlstein joined a group of Lithuanians in the Gari Camp who organized for national-political activity. This was discovered, and according to rumors he was executed together with the other members of the group." (p. 105, ref. 69)

"There also were some exceptional cases such as that of the Lithuanian wife of a Severuralag prisoner, Natan Yaffe, who identified herself as a Jewess and even removed her crucifix. Likewise, Matulevičiene (the sister of General Karvelis) became friendly with Jews." (p. 105, ref. 70)

NINE. The suffering of Jews in Soviet forced labor camps and places of exile is attested by many memoirs of the survivors. The conditions of life and the development of national and religious communities there appear to have been quite similar, although separate, to those of Lithuanians:

"Commonness of background and fate contributed in many cases to the formation of exceptionally close ties between the exiles, regardless of whether they had known each other before the war or not. The solidarity and the willingness to offer help with various problems also increased under these conditions. "It never happened that any Jew died of hunger," recalls one of 10 Lithuanian exiles living in the Sovkhoz Dzerzhinsky in the Altay region, "because they shared their last chunk of bread." (p. 89)

The lot of the Jewish inmates at forced labor camps was also very much the same as that of other inmates:

"The terrible conditions rampant in the camps led to mass deaths. Yisrael Yeverovitz from Kaunas writes: Some died crushed by a felled tree, others froze to death during work in the Taiga. Still others were struck down by pneumonia and never rose again. But all those were lucky. The cruellest death is that which comes slowly and lasts endless days and nights (. . . It begins with a weakness which turns into exhaustion, and then into slow

agony when you long and pray for death to come to free you from this life). This was the commonest, the most usual form of death in the camp: becoming slowly extinct like a candle flame." (p. 86-87)

Yet, there was one big difference for the Jewish exiles: they had hope to be released and allowed to migrate to Israel. The Lithuanians hoped to be allowed to return to their country but could not hope to find freedom there.

* * *

A critical review of the author's interpretations would bring out a few significant differences of opinion.

The leading thesis of the work purports to prove that:

"The evidence as presented here clearly shows that the Jewish minority in Lithuania was very seriously affected by the wave of arrests and deportations carried out in Soviet Lithuania between June 14 and 22, 1941 — proportionally more than the rest of the Lithuanian nation. While in June 1941 the Jews constituted at the very most 10 percent of the general population of Lithuania, their numbers among those arrested and deported were at least 20 percent of the total, that is, at least twice their proportion in the general population." (p. 95)

Any human suffering and deaths are tragic events. A statement of mere percentages dehumanizes the fact and is not meaningful without analysis and comparison with other groups.

The Jewish community of Lithuania enjoyed considerable autonomy and was generally more affluent than the Lithuanian population as a whole. The author presents data:

". . . the Jewish minority of Lithuania, which before the agreement of October 10 had numbered 155,125, or 7.6 percent of the total population. With the addition of the approximately 85,000 Jews of Vilna and its environs and some 15,000 refugees from Poland, the Jewish population of Lithuania grew by two-fifths to reach almost a quarter of a million (10 percent of the total population)." (p. 68)

It has been shown that in spite of its affluence, the Jews generally were supportive of the Russian Communist regime and that the deportation criteria applied to them were less inclusive than those applied to Lithuanians. The author shows that Jews were economically considerably better off than Lithuanians:

"Although Jews represented only about 10 percent of the population, of the 986 factories and workshops employing 20 or more workers that were nationalized, 560 (57 percent) were owned by Jews. Of the 1,593 commercial enterprises and shops with an annual turnover of 150,000 Litas or more that were nationalized, 83 percent were owned by Jews! The majority of the 14,000 houses that were nationalized also belonged to Jews." (p. 69-70)

These owners represented an economic group which was subject to inclusion among deportees. It can be estimated that an additional 2000 Jews were among political activists. Perhaps another 1000 would be found among self employed professionals. Therefore, approximately 14,882 Jews (560 factory owners, plus 1322 businessmen, plus 10,000 house owners, plus 2,000 political activists, plus 1,000 professionals) or 5.84 percent of the Jewish population could have been subjected to deportation. If each family averaged four people, the number of potential Jewish deportees would be 59,528 or 23.3 percent. The author shows that the total number of deportees and imprisoned did not exceed 7,000 (p. 79, REF. 30) or 2.74 percent. This number is considerably less than the above cited potential of deportees!

Jewish sources differ widely on the number of deportees:

"For an estimate of 5000 to 6000 Jews deported, see Car, *Thus It Happened*, p. 136; cf. T. C. Chase, *The History of Lithuania* (New York, 1946), p. 273. For an estimate of 4000 Jews, see Sh. Grinhaus, "Hashana ha'akhrona lekiyum haYehudi beLita" [The last year of Jewish existence in Lithuania], *Sefer Yahadut Lita*, 2, 1972. Apparently these estimates do not include the Jews of Vilna and its environs. Nevertheless the estimate of 12,000 Jewish deportees cited in the Testimony of A. Rindzunski (*Arkhiyon Moreshet*, 03-381, p. 4) defies belief as much too high." (p. 101, ref. 30)

". . . 500 Jewish deportees and prisoners from Lithuania (excluding the Vilna area), exiled in June 1941, with known places of former residence and exile. The data concerning residence are taken from a list of 1400 Lithuanian Jews in the Soviet Union (as refugees or exiles) during World War II, compiled by the Association of Former Lithuanians in the USA, which served as a basis for correspondence and the sending of aid parcels . . . (from Vilnius, LG.)

". . . Most of the 1500 Jews deported (from Vilnius, LG.) were subsequently released from exile, as former Polish citizens, on the basis of the Sikorsky-Stalin Agreement of July 30, 1941." (p. 101, ref. 31).

The number of Lithuanian deportees is also uncertain. A total of 34,260 were deported during June 14-18, 1941 as reported by the Lithuanian Red Cross in 1941. 12,000 are known to have been imprisoned during the one year long occupation. Therefore, the total is at least 46,000, although others estimate it as high as 49,000 (cf. A Register of Deported Lithuanians, Lithuanian World archives, Chicago, IL 1981). If one subtracts from these numbers 4,000 to 7,000 Jews and 3,000 other nationalities, the total for Lithuanians will be 36,000 to 42,000, or between 1.44 percent and 1.69 percent (The Lithuanian national population was 2,492,000 in 1939, cf. Lithuanian Encyclopedia, Vol. 15, p. 449, Boston, MA 1968).

The author shows that most of the property owners were Jews. The Lithuanian farm population represented mostly small land owners. Therefore, the majority of Lithuanian deportees were "political" undesirables — a group which accounted for a much smaller ratio of the nation than the one found among Jews. Documents found after the outbreak of the Nazi-Soviet war indicate that Moscow had planned to deport as many as 700,000 of the population. Indeed, preparations for a second and third mass deportations were planned, but no one can tell whether the remaining Jewish population would have been affected to the same degree as Lithuanians.

The author adds that:

"Furthermore, the arrests and deportations of thousands of Lithuanian Jews that started at the beginning of World War II continued well after the war ended." (p. 96)

One has to remember that only a few thousand Jews remained in Lithuania after the terrible three years of Nazi occupation (1941-1944). Therefore, not many Jews could have been subject to deportation after World War II. In contrast to the Jewish situation, there were yearly mass deportations from Lithuania during 1945-1962 which affected an estimated 600,000 people or 27 percent of the population!

If percentages are used, these Lithuanian losses are staggering and greatly exceed even the genocide of Ukrainians, in 1933 when 6 to 7 million (15 percent) were exterminated by Soviet created famine.

The point to be made is that statistics are meaningful only when a comparative perspective is established.

* * *

When describing the inhuman treatment of deportees by Russian security forces, the author displays a seemingly supportive attitude toward the Soviet system during World War II:

"Of no minor importance is the fact that as a result of these arrests and deportations, the Jewish minority of Lithuania was at the time of the Holocaust deprived of a significant part of its political, cultural, and communal elite, as well as of large numbers of young people of draft age. Without the arrests and deportations both the elite and the young generation would have been able to contribute to the anti-Nazi war effort." (p. 96)

This sentiment is also displayed by a Jewish prisoner in a forced labor camp:

"In 1942 I was imprisoned in the forced labor camp Pechorlag in Siberia. Thousands died there from cold, sickness and starvation, and the treatment we received from political police there was the cruelest of all. My amazement may be imagined, therefore, when I was invited into the office one morning. The two high-ranking officers politely asked me to sit down, rest, and gave me hot tea and sweets . . . They asked me politely for my opinion on the general situation and the fate of the war. I gulped at the hot tea and said: "Well, what is there to say, this is a holy war and we must strike at Fascism in full force." "And what is your opinion as a Jew?" "As a Jew? A strange question. The Nazis are murdering my People throughout Europe, the Nazi scourge must be destroyed." "If these are your opinions," said one of the officers, "you certainly won't refuse to sign this document." He placed a typed sheet of paper on the desk. I read its contents. It was an appeal to world Jewry to help the Soviet Union in its struggle against Nazism by financial contributions . . . Naturally I signed . . . After I had signed the document, one of the officers patted me on the shoulder saying he had no doubt that my troubles were over now, that I would be released from imprisonment, for were we not allies?" (p. 93-94)

He was not freed.

While claiming Jewish support of the Soviet war against the Nazis and a seemingly wholehearted support of the Soviet Government, the author surprises the reader by stating that this was also a manifestation of a conflict between the Jews and Communism:

"Finally, the described events can also be seen as representing a stage in the conflict between the Jewish people and Soviet Communism that continues to the present day." (p. 96)

These diametrically opposed opinions can only be reconciled if one accepts a willingness by an individual to sacrifice himself in fighting a greater enemy — the Nazis — while bearing no apparent hostility to his own torturers — the Soviets! Such an attitude can only be found among true believers — believers in Russian Communism. How else could one be so naive or so optimistic in wanting to help a regime which is torturing one to death?

The truth of the matter probably lies in the fact that world Jewry was generally supportive of Russian Communism in spite of anti-semitic incidents until after the Jewish doctors' trial (incidentally, six doctors were Jews and three were gentiles) of 1953. Thus, the author is correct in his remark that ". . . the Jews fell victim to the process they themselves had catalyzed." (p. 70)

* * *

It may be said that in spite of seemingly willing participation of Jews in the Russian Communist ranks, in spite of their active role in helping in the Sovietization of Lithuania, and in spite of their efforts to engage in anti-Nazi activities (guerrilla warfare and the military), their true loyalty appears to have been not to Communism, but to themselves. Why else would long time clandestine Communists and Party functionaries (cf. Dr. B. Bludz, M. Khodos, and presumably many more) choose to leave the USSR?

One can argue that the exodus started only after the Soviet Government turned anti-Jewish and high ranking Jews (i.e. Kaganovich, Kamenev, Litvinov ...) lost their influence. But this would indicate betrayal of the Russian Communist ideal which had not changed. The only change that started to occur after 1953 was the waning of Jewish influence in the Soviet Government and Communist party circles.

"When Trotsky wrote that anti-semitism was still fairly rife in the Soviet Union, he was answered by the veteran American leftist, B. Z. Goldberg, that Trotsky seemed to have discovered anti-semitism in Russia only after he had fallen from power." (cf. C. Bermant, *The Jews*, Times Books, 1978, p. 172)

The loss of "equal opportunities" can, of course be classified as the recurrence of overt antisemitism. Covert anti-semitism was always present not only in the rank and file but also at the highest level of the Communist hierarchy of Russia:

"... Stalin unexpectedly asked me why there were not many Jews in the Yugoslav Party ... 'The only prominent Communist Jew is Pijade ...' — 'In our Central Committee there are no Jews!' he broke in, and began to laugh tauntingly. — 'You are also anti-Semite, you, too, Djilas, you too ...'"

I took his words and laughter to mean the opposite, as I should have — as the expression of his own anti-Semitism, and a provocation to get me to declare my stand concerning the Jews, particularly Jews in the Communist movement." (M. Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, New York, 1962, p. 154).

The pre-1953 covert anti-Semitic attitudes did not prevent the Soviet Jews from climbing the ladders of the various careers. The inability to actively pursue religious practice did not appear to deter the Jews from supporting Russian Communism until after 1953. If these observations are correct, then one must conclude that the principal attraction to Russian Communism was not ideological but the sense of "equal opportunity" wherein the potential to gain power, status, and well being for the Jews as a group was more attainable than in other states. This attraction appears to have been stronger than the loss of freedom for religious practice and the occasional risk for some individuals of being imprisoned or exiled.

* * *

The author's attention should also be drawn to a number of inaccuracies found in the article which is said to be part of a larger treatise.

Considerable ado is made of loyalty among Jewish deportees. The importance of communal support at times of deprivation cannot be over-emphasized. Yet, one would expect the text to be supported by cited references:

"A not inconsiderable number of prisoners owed their survival to the strong sense of solidarity and of mutual help exhibited by other Jews, whether fellow sufferers or staff members appointed by the security authorities. It is not by chance that the proportion of survivors among the Lithuanian Jews in the hell of the camps was many times higher than the proportion of survivors among gentile Lithuanian inmates." (p. 92)

Regrettably, Reference 68 presents a horrible death rate of Jews and Lithuanians alike:

"For example, out of the 43 persons held in 1940 in the Šiauliai Prison, and in March of 1941 evacuated to the Pechorlag Camp in the northern USSR, only 4 remained alive a year later. The two Jews from this group died." (p. 105, Ref. 68).

An isolated case does not prove a generalized statement. It is not meaningful without the knowledge of the physical conditions of the environment and of the inmates themselves.

The author pities the inability of the Jewish deportees to enlist in the Red Army:

"Being regarded as "unreliable elements," neither the deportees nor the prisoners, whether Jewish or non-Jewish, were called up to serve in the Red Army or other military formations. Whenever some Jewish deportees were enlisted, it invariably turned out that "there had been a mistake," since such people "are not taken into the Army, nor will they ever be." (p. 93)

But the cited reference supports the opposite:

"Testimony of Shapira, *ICJ*, p. 11. The young Shlomo Shugam, who had been deported to the Altay region, was one day in 1942 called to the local draft office and immediately conscripted. He served until the end of the war." (p. 106, ref. 74)

Finally, the author does not establish a differentiation where the statistics apply to Jews only (of which very little is available) and Lithuanian nationals as a whole:

"Thus, for example, of the 338 persons listed as anti-Soviet elements in the Mažeikiai region on June 7, 1941, 240 were designated for deportation and 98 for arrest." (p. 73)

The 338 persons represent a total but not a Jewish statistic.

Several mistakes should also be pointed out:

The cities of VILNIUS and JONAVA are written in the Yiddish version — VILNA (p. 68, etc.) and YANOVA (ref. 19, etc.) while all other localities with the exception of the Anglicized Rumšiškės (Rumshishki, p. 100) are named by their correct Lithuanian names. The Communist daily "TIESA" is misspelled as "TIASA" (ref. 22). The reference to "LIETUVIŲ ARCHYVAS" is translated into plural "ARCHIVES." Instead of being singular. The reference to the Lithuanian meat processing company "MAISTAS" (p. 88) translates to "FOOD", although the inference to the non-availability of meat is drawn correctly.

The percentages stated by the author must also be questioned. On p. 68 of his text he represents 155,125 Jews as 7.6 percent of the total population in Lithuania of 1939 while on p. 95 he claims approximately 255,500 Jews as representing 10 percent of the total population in 1941. The first percentage would indicate a total population of 2,041,118, while the second — 2,550,000. Both are understated and inconsistent for a two year change in population. In 1939 Lithuania counted approximately 2,850,000 inhabitants with a 5.4 percent Jewish minority, while in 1941 (after the repatriation of

Germans, the emigration of most Polish Army internees and some Polish Jew refugees) the population was approximately 2,900,000 with 8.4 percent Jews. Other percentages stated by the author are equally suspect.

* * *

Author Dov Levin's contributions to the history of Jews of Lithuania are interesting and should not be ignored by Lithuanians since they touch upon the fate, interrelations, and experiences of Lithuanian citizens during a very painful period of Soviet occupation. Such material is not collected and its study is not permitted in the Soviet Union which makes Dov Levin's work so much more important. The reviewer hopes that these comments will both stimulate more works on the subject and help to interpret the meager data.

* DON LEVIN was born in Kaunas, Lithuania on January 25, 1925. He attended Hebrew and Yiddish high schools and completed his secondary education at the onset of the Nazi-Soviet war in 1941. As survivor of the ghetto of Viliampolė, he joined the fledgling Jewish pro-Soviet guerrilla group which operated around Vilnius in 1944 and made his way to a Lithuanian Jew's kibbutz in Israel in 1945. Subsequently he pursued higher education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in sociology, Jewish history and economics and was awarded a doctorate in 1971. In 1962 he was a Fulbright scholar in sociology at the University of Chicago. He also served in the Israeli Army during 1947-1949, 1956, 1967 and in 1973. He joined the Institute of Contemporary Jewry of the Hebrew University in 1958 where he continues to work as a senior research editor. He is married to Bilha Deutsch and has three children: Nitzana, Basmal and Zvi-Yzkor.

Dr. Levin specializes in the history of Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, East Poland's, North Bukovina's and Bessarabia's Jews during the World War II period. He has published some 120 articles — mostly in Hebrew, some in English, Yiddish, German and one in Lithuanian ("Tėviškės Žiburiai", February 2, 1982). He has authored, co-authored or edited six books.

The author of this comparative review presented his draft to Dr. Levin and received the following comment dated July 28, 1984: "I thank you very much for review of my article. I was particularly interested to know your opinion on Footnote 69."