

## Document in display case, Skuodas Museum<sup>1</sup>

The flow of time is carrying away those years when Yiddish was spoken and the laughter of Jewish children was heard in the Old Town streets of Skuodas.

As the elderly local people remember, many Jews once lived on Laisves Street and S. Daukanto Street in the Old Town. Even now, the Old Town of Skuodas is often called the Jewish town, although it has been a long time since you could find any Jews there.

It is not known exactly when the Jews settled in Skuodas. It was most probably after the town was granted the Magdeburg Rights, because some restrictions for Jews were mentioned in this law. This was during the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

There were continual restrictions on the Jews in Europe: where they could live, what they could do. The Jews were blamed for epidemics, famines, and other disasters in medieval towns; then pogroms were organized. Because of their practical common sense and wisdom, they were richer than other town residents, and that is why they suffered even without having done anything wrong.

Around the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when it was noticed that the smart Jewish tradesmen could benefit the region and town of Skuodas, those restrictions started to be contravened.

Jews were not allowed to live or have shops in the “new” part of town in Skuodas (today, the town centre) until 1747, so they settled in a kind of separate village with a market square and other buildings behind the river Bartuva. Jewish dwelling-houses were on Laisves Street and S. Daukanto Street. Further to the west, in the outskirts, was the Jewish cemetery.

Although many Jews worked in trades and crafts, eventually some, after obtaining suitable educations, became pharmacists, doctors, and teachers. Some elderly people from Skuodas remember the famous doctors Boris Lev and Fogelman, as well as dentists A. Solovei, Elmantas, Eizer, Rabinovich and others. They were masters of their professions.

Medicines were provided to the people of Skuodas by the chemists “Grand Pharmacy” and “Central Pharmacy,” which were owned by G. Katerfeld and by I. Ziberstein after 1930.

Jewish tradesmen were very important for the economic life of Skuodas. The people of Skuodas were invited to come and buy in Meier’s small department store on Laisves Street, as well as in the shop of Salamon Kan. There was the shop of Abraom Faktor on Vilnius Street, and the shops of Icik Kan, Abraom Mausha Urdang, Hirsh Gilder, Hirsh Tanur, the Fogelman brothers, and other Jewish tradesmen in Gediminas Square. There were D. David’s bookshop and a Jewish Folk-Bank.

The economic growth of the town was of course prompted by the Jewish businessmen. The biggest shoemaker’s shop, “Konkurencija” [English: “Competition”] was on Laisves Street 2. It belonged

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<sup>1</sup> This text appeared in a display case with photographs of the Mines family of Skuodas and the Skuodas telephone directory (summer 2010). Translated from Lithuanian by Indre Joffyte, University of Vilnius. Translation edited by Rachel Mines, Langara College, Vancouver Canada. Funding for translation provided by Langara College.

to a Jewish businessman, M. Mines. Its successful rival was Icik Kan's shoemaker's shop "Kontinent" on Vilnius Street 33. There were smaller shoemaker's shops owned by Ofsiejus Pres, Mausha Jankelovich, Mausha Grinblat, and Abraom Turk. The shoes were made of very high quality leather, which was brought from Siauliai. Every customer could choose according to his size and taste.

Markus Choicher's wool spinners spun wool on Laisves Street 8; the rich Fogelman's button shop produced buttons; Spichius worked with leather.

But ... the second World War approached. The fascist war machine swept away everyone in its way, everyone who contradicted its ideology; it swept away the Jewish nation.

In a few months during the summer and autumn of 1941, the majority of Lithuanian Jews were killed. This also happened to the Jews of Skuodas. The murderers were even more active here. Hardly anyone survived. Some of them were shot in the open pit to the south of Kulai I cemetery; others in the town of Skuodas, at the Riflemen's Hall; others were taken through the village of Lukniai to Dimitravas concentration camp. Not everybody reached the camp. The weaker, the elderly, and children were shot on the way. The pits of Skuodas had never absorbed so much blood in such a short time. Not only Germans were shooting. Local people were among those committing the Jewish genocide. Why and what for? Did they hate Jews? Because Jews were businessmen, merchants, tradesmen, doctors? Because Jews were richer, more clever, of a different faith? There is no answer, but there were murderers. The old hatred for the Jews became a cruel summary punishment. The Lithuanian nation, decent people, condemned the murderers and sentenced them, but who can forgive?

The old Jewish cemetery is on S. Neris Street in Skuodas. A strange tranquillity is felt there. It is the place of the eternal rest of the Jews of Skuodas. Many generations of Skuodas Jews rest here. Only some elderly people from Skuodas can tell how they lived and at what they worked, because it has been a long time since there have been any living Jews in Skuodas.

The victims of the Jewish genocide in Skuodas are buried in a common grave without a name. Your heart breaks when you stand here. How many lives were destroyed here? Here you understand how cruel the world is, what a terrible tragedy happened to the Jewish nation. Sixty-five years have passed since the mass murders of the Jews. Many events are still hidden in the mysteries of time, and only the pages of history and the modest monuments remind us of the Jewish community that once existed in Skuodas.

## Jews in the Memories of Skuodas People<sup>2</sup>

### Preface

It is not known exactly when the first Jews settled in Skuodas. The town was granted with Magdeburg (Kulm) rights in 1572. In the town's foundation document (the translation of this document into Lithuanian was first printed in the publication "Tauta ir Zodis" [English: "Nation and Word"], edited by V. Kreve-Mickevicius in 1923), it is mentioned that "Jews and non-Christians must not be involved in municipality matters, and have no right to be in trade or work in crafts." (A copy of the foundation documents of Skuodas town can be found in the Skuodas's regional museum.) Thus, according to this document, we can assume that Jews were already living in Skuodas in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Restrictions on Jews were also applied later. In 1747, Jews were not yet allowed to live or have shops in the "new" part of Skuodas (today, the town centre), so they settled in a kind of separate village with a market square and other buildings behind the river Bartuva (ref. Gediminas Bugaitis. Jews in Skuodas.//Zemaiciu Zeme, 2000, No. 1, p. 15).

In 1846, in the description of the Telsiai region, it is mentioned that Skuodas town consisted of a few stone houses and a few tens of wooden houses. The residents are mentioned in one sentence only: "The residents are all Jews" (Godan M. Opisanie Powiatu Telsziewskiego w gubernii Kowienskiej, 1946, Wilno.S.52).

As bishop Motiejus Valancius writes in his "Notes for Myself," Skuodas looked like this in 1873: "Skuodas is of two parts: Christian and Jewish. There are 40 Christian farmers; the Jews are difficult to count. That nation usually works in trade or owns taverns. Jews have two synagogues: one in the Christian part of town, the other one in the Jewish" (Kviklys. B. Skuodas//Musu Lietuva. T.4 Boston, 1968, p. 299).

It is not possible to find information about the exact number of Jews living in Skuodas between the wars. "There is an absolute confusion about the number of Jews (men, women, and children) killed during the first days of the war. Here, and also on the memorial, it is written around 3000; there, only around 1200. The animals were counted, not the people" (Annex 10, p. Vysniauskas Juozas. There Were.... But Not Anymore// Musu Zodis, 11-07-1992, No. 54).

There are no Jews in Skuodas town and suburbs now. A few houses where they lived are still standing, and also a well from which they drew water. But where have the Jews themselves gone? The fact that they lived, had families, raised children, and lived long lives is made known to us by the old Jewish cemetery, which is finally now being tended, and the memorials at mass murder sites. Is that all? No! The Jews have remained in the memories of the elderly residents of Skuodas.

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<sup>2</sup> Text prepared in 2002 by Brone Rusinskiene, history teacher and supervisor of the Pranciscus Zadeicus Gymnasium of Skuodas. Translated from Lithuanian by Indre Joffyte, University of Vilnius. Translation edited by Rachel Mines, Langara College, Vancouver Canada. Funding for translation provided by Langara College.

This work is based on the narratives of the elderly residents of Skuodas, with references to the available written sources, so that names and other facts will not be distorted. I interviewed V.D., J.B., K.V., A.S., V.V., P.K., and I.M.<sup>3</sup>; the written memories of Boris Fogelman are presented at the end of this work.

## *JEWS IN LITHUANIA BETWEEN THE WARS*

### **JEWS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT**

The elderly residents of Skuodas remember that before the Second World War, Skuodas looked different from nowadays. Of course there were no five-storey apartment houses. The Old Town of Skuodas looked completely different, as well as the town centre. Most of the houses were wooden; a lot of them burnt during the war. And the residential quarter in the eastern part of town was built during the last 25 years.

The Old Town was inhabited mostly by Jews, probably because they settled there a long time ago, as there was a restriction forbidding them to live in the centre. But in the times of Smetona (i.e. until 1940), the Jews started to settle and work in other parts of town also. V. V., P. K., V. D., and A. S. mention factories, shops, windmill, bakeries, synagogues, and Jewish schools in different parts of Skuodas. Among the streets mostly mentioned are Vilniaus Street (formerly Ylakiu Street), Laisves Street, J. Basanaviciaus Street (also called Ilgoji Street), Vytauto Street, Rojaus Street (now Darius ir Gireno), and Gediminas Square.

[Picture: Market square in Skuodas old town;  
Photo from the personal album of A. Bertasius in the Skuodas Museum]

Jews who had their own shops, pharmacies, and small businesses often lived in the same house where they worked. An interesting detail is that houses in the Old Town were built further from the street. There was a pavement along the houses, and the zone between the street and pavement was lined with trees, usually apple-trees. Even now, people visiting the Old Town of Skuodas can see this at the beginning of Laisves Street, and in autumn they can even eat apples from the trees, which were possibly planted by Jews.

[Picture: Present view of Laisves Street in the Old Town]

According to municipality documents of 1933, the total number of residents was 4000: 45% Lithuanians, 30% Jews, 20% Latvians, 4% Germans, and 1% Russians (Savivaldybe. 1933, No. 1, January, p. 30).

V. V., a resident of Skuodas, who worked as a teacher for more than 40 years, could write a history of the Jews in Skuodas. He remembers so many names, facts and various interesting details of Jewish life in Skuodas in different periods: until the Holocaust (he studied together with Jewish classmates in the Skuodas Gymnasium); about the mass murders of Jews at the beginning of the war; about the disinterment of the victims of mass murders; and about personal meetings with Jews

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<sup>3</sup> Full names and personal details of the interviewees are removed from this translation to protect their privacy.

who came back from exile, and with those who came from Israel to look for the roots of their ancestors in Skuodas.

## Trading

There were 204 trade companies in Skuodas between the wars, including travelling vendors (Savivaldybe, 1933, No. 1, January, page 30). Most of the shops were in Laisves Street, leading from the town centre to the railway station.

[Picture: House on Laisves Str. no. 21]

Meier's family lived in the next house, number 19 Laisves Street. There was a grocery store on the ground floor. The entrance was on the street side. There were shelves with neatly displayed items, and a counter. The shop-owner's family lived in the other rooms. Every time a customer opened the door, a bell hanging above the door rang, and the mistress of the house, who also worked as a shop clerk, would come out of the rooms. Residents of the Old Town would come to Meier's grocery store to buy food: flour and various grains. One kilo of bread cost 2 litas, 100 kilos of potatoes 2.5 litas. Everything here was of high quality. Prices were not written down. They did not hide anything under the counter, but everything was exposed to the public, in order to tempt the customer. It could not be any other way, as there were so many stores that if they sold something of bad quality, they would lose customers. The Meiers knew their regular customers; sometimes, when the customers had no money, the salesmen would still sell them something, write the transaction down in a special book kept for the purpose, and delete it from the list later, after payment. Others acted similarly. Supposedly, they ensured regular customers in this way. So it was useful for people to always shop in the same store, as they could expect help when in need.

Businessmen in the town had shops. This is what V. V. remembers about the trade: "Some businessmen worked wholesale. Among them were the brothers Tanur, who kept a shop next to Zilberstein's pharmacy. Abraom-Mausha Urdang was also a wholesaler. Hirsh Tanur and Abraom-Mausha Urdang had small trucks for transporting goods. The brothers Fogelman had a household goods shop in the Old Town, on Laisves Street, which was famous all over Skuodas. Kive Reif also had a shop on the corner of Laisves and D. Poskos Streets.

There was one public specialized drinks shop, "Monopolis." There was also a shop that specialized in hats. I was in this shop several times with my mother, who wanted to buy a hat. Putrius opened the first bookshop in Skuodas around 1936.

David had a small department store in the centre of Skuodas, today Birutes Street. Even today, I still have some things bought in David's shop at home: there is a clock, which my parents bought me as a birthday present (this clock is still hanging on my wall and counting my age), a "Kolumbija" gramophone, and a few records of Dolski's repertoire from between the wars. My parents paid 150 or 170 litas for the clock, it is really a very valuable thing. But my father was then working in the post office; he earned 150 litas per month and some extra money for the children (and we were four children), so he could afford to buy such a thing" (Annex 6, Memories of V. V.).

[Picture: Former house of David, where a small department store was. View today, Birutes Street]

[Picture: House owned by David on J. Basanaviciaus Street]

A. S. relates: “When I remember my childhood, the centre of Skuodas returns to life in my memories, the place where now the supermarket, “T-Market,” stands. At that time there were also shops there, one close to another, they occupied the whole square. And they all belonged to the Jews. You could walk a big circle going from one shop to another” (Annex 4, Memories of A. S.).

[Picture: A group of members of the firemen’s brigade. Behind them, a few shops.]

All the people interviewed remember that it was interesting to come to this shopping centre because you could go from one shop to another and buy the things you needed. The owner used to stand at the door and invite people to come and buy in his shop, promising them he would sell something cheaper. Jewish tradesmen used to get permits to reorganize a place for trade, so pretty quickly all the gaps between the shops in the centre were filled with new shops. Of course this was no decoration for the town, so it was decided to reorganize the shopping centre: to assemble new windows of one size, and to put all the shops under one roof. V. V. guesses that the building of the shopping centre could have been done using joint Jewish resources. Owners had premises of different sizes; some shops were very spacious, others were much smaller.

[Picture: Shops in the town centre around 1935]

Skuodas was badly damaged during the Second World War, and trading companies also suffered. The building was later restored and renovated.

[Picture: Shops in the town centre, 1956-1957]

I arrived in the Skuodas area in 1963. I remember that all the shops in the town centre were in one building. The building was restored, renovated, and reorganized several times. After the first floor was built, it housed the board of the local cooperative. Now it houses one of the largest shopping centres in town, the “T-Market,” the shop “Saules Uola,” and a few other small businesses.

A. S. recalls, “My parents usually bought food in Mrs. Melnik’s shop. There you could get bread, herring, and matches. If our mother was not able to go to the shop, she used to send us children. She did not give us money. Mrs. Melnik knew all of us. She would always ask us how we were doing, if everyone was feeling all right at home. She used to pack all the goods we needed and write them down in a book. Later, mother would pay for everything herself. We never heard that she had to pay more. I liked to go to that shop. There was a bell hanging at the door, and it always rang when somebody opened the door. Then the lady would come out of her rooms.

We always bought yeast in Meier’s shop. I do not know why; either it was not available elsewhere, or it was cheaper there.

On holidays, parents used to bring us gifts from the shops, usually sweets called “Vezeliai” [“Crayfish”] or sometimes bagels” (Annex 4, Memories of A. S.).

Some Jews sold grain and flax; others used to buy agricultural products from the peasants on market days and then take them elsewhere to resell. The least successful Jews would travel through

the villages, buying or exchanging various things like rags, bristles, and horsehair; selling needles and kerchiefs; and assembling windows.

V. D. remembers that *kromelninks* (as Samogitians used to call peddlers) used to come often to their home, because their family lived in the end of town on Ylakiu (now Vilniaus) Street. But their mother did not buy from them, because she could get all the same products at the shops of the Jews that she knew very well, and sometimes, when they had no money, it was possible to get what they needed and pay later.

## Schools

Residents of Skuodas remember that there were not only Lithuanian schools in town, but also Latvian, German and Jewish schools. Gediminas Bugaitis describes the schools of the Jewish community and their work during that period, using materials from the Lithuanian Central National Archives (Annex 11. Copy of the article: G. Bugaitis. Skuodo Zydai.// Zemaiciu Zeme. 2000, No. 1, pp. 29, 45, 48).

P. K., V. V., and V. D. remember that there were two Jewish elementary schools in Skuodas, supported by either the local community or a Jewish association. (We have found the answer to this question in G. Bugaitis's article: it was the Jewish community society "Ezra.") There was one school on Rojaus Street (now Dariaus ir Gireno Street), and the other was on Jono Basanaviciaus Street, in the synagogue building. Lithuanian children never attended these schools, because schools did not cooperate with each other at that time. But on their way to school, they often met Jewish children going to their own schools. Unfortunately, neither of these two buildings survived.

Later, after graduation, Jewish children continued learning in the Skuodas gymnasium [high school]. There were at least a few Jews in every class, and C. V., who graduated from the gymnasium in 1944, remembers that every second student in her class was Jewish. V. V. studied in the same class as Itzik Khokhman, who was called Itze, and shared a school desk with him. Itze entered the gymnasium in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, after finishing four years in a Jewish school. All the Jews were quite good at Lithuanian. Itze was a studious pupil who did not miss classes. He would come to school even on Sabbath, but he would only sit and listen, because he did not bring any books nor notebooks. On those days, V. would write down on a sheet of paper all the class work and homework tasks for him. Itze would come to school on Monday having done all the work. V. V.'s brother Edvardas was close friends with his classmate Boris Fogelman, whose father had several shops in Skuodas. Boria and Edvardas visited each other frequently, but Boria would wait outside for Edvardas to come out; he was not willing to enter the rooms, especially when he saw that the family was dining.

A. S. remembers that her sister J. Z. (she has already passed away) also studied in a class with a Jewish girl. She also did not work on Saturdays: she did not write, nor go to the blackboard to do exercises; she would just sit and listen. The teachers, although most of them were Catholic, did not terrorize or punish the Jewish children, respecting their religious beliefs. The Lithuanian pupils also got used to it, and were willing to write down homework tasks for their classmates.

## Health Care

Private medical practitioners caring for the health of people living in and around the Skuodas area until 1938 included doctors Boris Lev (remembered by P. K., V. V., V. D., and C. V.), A. Bacevicius, K. Gurauskas, N. Natanzon, Jonas Sandaras, and Saulius Traubas; and dentists Z. Janiloviciene, E. Rabinavicaite, A. Solovei, Elmanatas Eizeris, Rabinovich, and Vanda Lapsyte. Doctors usually received patients in their [the doctors'] homes, but if the patient was feeling very ill, they would make house calls. V. C. also remembered a Doctor Elert, saying that he was very honest, and would hurry to his patients day and night. If someone had no money to pay the doctor, Doctor Elert examined and consulted for free, and sometimes even bought and gave the medicines. He was especially good at treating children. Other people did not remember this doctor. Perhaps V. D. confused him with Doctor Elmantas Eizeris.

In 1938, a health centre was established in Skuodas. At that time, the doctors' salaries – 200 litas – were paid by the municipality. The interviewed residents remember that you had to pay two litas for an examination in the health centre, and if you wanted the doctor to visit you at home, the fee was 10 litas. These facts are also confirmed by J. Kanarskas, whose article “Skuodas Between the Wars” was published in the Skuodas newspaper (Julius Kanarskas. Skuodas tarpukariu.// “Musu Zodis”, 2002, No. 60). A copy of this article is presented in annex 11.

There were pharmacies owned by O. Kasperaviciene, L. Mazoniene, G. Katerfeld, and Dovid Mirkes, where people could buy medicines. The biggest were the “Didzioji Vasitine,” owned by Dovid Mirkes in Gediminas Square no. 20, and the “Centrine Aptieka” in Gediminas Square no.1, owned by G. Katerfeld. V. V. states that he can still remember the shop signs, written in big letters on plywood boards.

[Picture: In the pharmacy of G. Katerfeld. (The picture is in the Skuodas Museum).]

[Picture: Gediminas Square in Skuodas in 1930.]

It is possible to see in the picture the so-called Brick Cross, built in 1567, standing in Gediminas Square. On the left is G. Katerfeld's pharmacy. The houses seen to the right of the pharmacy also belonged to the Jews, and the first one on the right was the municipal building.

The pharmacists who worked in these pharmacies were graduates of medical schools with special education. Medicines were quite expensive: one had to pay 2-3 litas for a basic headache powder. Most medicines were produced in the pharmacies according to the doctors' prescriptions. But while it was possible to obtain food in grocery stores and pay for it later, credit was not available in the pharmacies.

## **Other Businesses**

Between the wars, Skuodas was a larger town than the regional centre, Kretinga. Elderly residents of Skuodas remember many small factories, companies, and manufactories (on almost every corner, they say); and they remember that many people had jobs.

In Skuodas, there was a municipality building, a post-office, a courthouse, a notary office, a police station, a border police office, and a customs office in the railway station; these were all governmental agencies, remembered by Skuodas people. There was also a dairy, a cooperative, a



lenders' association, a department of [the Lithuanian trade union] Lietukis, the "Maisto" cattle receiving point, the water mill belonging to General Povilas Plechavičius, two banks, a nursing home, one hotel, a cinema, and a brick-field. There were 21 industrial factories: six shoemaking factories, two factories producing confectionery, four leather workshops, a wool spinnery, a wool cardery, a dye-house and dry-cleaners, two factories producing soft drinks, and a windmill.

As we can see from the list of businesses in Skuodas (annex 14; the list was made according to "Visa Lietuva," the informational book of the Central Statistics Bureau), 48 of a total 57 companies were owned by people of Jewish nationality. This is also confirmed by the list of Lithuanian telephone users in 1939, p. 340; the copy is presented in annex 14. We can see from this list that in 1939, there were 59 telephone users in Skuodas. Sixteen of them were governmental agencies, and 23 of the remaining 43 were people with Jewish family names. This list of telephone users helps to find out on which streets and in which houses the Jews lived, and where they had their companies.

Let us go back to the list of companies. We can see from the list that there were 21 manufactory companies. Shoes were made in six companies. They produced 5000-6000 pairs of shoes per year, which were sold all over Lithuania. Skuodas residents P. K., V. V., V. D., and A. S. say that the largest factory in Skuodas was Itzik Kan's shoe factory "Kontinent" on Vilniaus Street, in the place where the municipality building now stands. They say that this factory employed around 150 workers. The shoe factory also had a shop in Gediminas Square.

Picture: [Firemen parade in Gediminas Square. Behind is the shop of Itzik Kan's factory "Kontinent."]

Another large shoemaking factory was "Konkurencija" ["Rivalry"] on Laisves Street no. 2, owned by M. Mines, which was in continual competition with the "Kontinent." It had around 100 employees. But a colleague in the Kretinga Museum, Julius Kanarskas, states in his article "Skuodas Between the Wars," that the largest factory was M. Mines's "Konkurencija" (Annex 12, Julius Kanarskas. Skuodas tarpukariu.//Musu Zodis. 2002, No. 58).

Smaller shoemaking factories with around 8-10 employees were owned by Ofsiej Pres (on Basanaviciaus Street), Mausha Jankelovich (on Laisves Street, no. 61), Mausha Grinblat (on Laisves Street, no. 63), and Abraom Turk. Skuodas was a famous centre for producing children's shoes.

Shoe boxes were made in Malkinson's small manufactory. P. K. tells about working at Malkinson's (annex 7): "When I was 12 or 13 years old, I worked for Malkinson, making shoe boxes together with his daughter. The workday started at 8:00 in the morning and lasted till 5:00 p.m. As I lived some distance from the workshop, I ate lunch at my workplace; mother used to prepare something for me. I earned 15 litas per month for my work. For a child, it was quite a lot. (For comparison: 1 kilo of butter cost 2 litas, 1 kilo of sugar 1.10 litas, one kilo of meat 2 litas, 100 kilos of potatoes 2.5 litas.) The work was not hard, but it was boring. There were machines to cut the paper. Then came making lines with a special device, then folding, then papering and pinning. And the whole day was like that. I did not count how many boxes I made per day. There was no time to be lazy or to rest as the workshop was in the same house where the owner lived. Besides, the owner's daughter was working together with me."

In the old town, on Laisves Street no. 8, was Markus Khoikher's wool spinnery, and at the end of Vytautas Street was a dye-house for woolen materials. V. V. remembers that they often liked to watch very long pieces of dyed materials (around 20 meters) being taken out to dry on the grass. He says it looked very nice.

V. V. and P. K. remember the windmill standing at the end of Skuodas town, by the road to Liepaja; the owner of the mill was also Jewish.

"Ragas," a workshop for art objects made of horn, stood on Laisves Street no. 1. Judelman had a small leather factory on Basanaviciaus Street. V. V. remembers that in the courtyard of this factory there was a leather tannery with a terrible smell. Lithuanians called Judelman "garborius," that is, currier.

Around 1938, Fogelman opened a button factory. Children used to go to this factory looking for the discarded plates from which buttons had been cut, and were very happy to find some with the original ornaments. The button factory employed up to 20 people. This small factory was established in the so called "Kiaules Ulycia," that is, Pig Street (now a pedestrian avenue leading from Gediminas Square to the dairy). The factory building burned down in 1941.

Around 1939, in the old town, on Laisves Street no. 8, Markus Khoikher opened a wool cardery and spinnery. Equipment for this factory was imported from Sweden. The owner's family lived on the first floor of the same building. In the spring of 1941, the equipment was taken to Kaunas, where it was used in a similar type of factory.

The brothers Fogelman had an ironmongery in Gediminas Square; they had another ironmongery in J. Basanaviciaus Street, which was always very noisy as they produced nails for horseshoes there.

There was a confectionery factory "Baltica," where sweets named "Dul dul dudele" were produced; children used to call them lollipops.

Visitors to Skuodas could spend a night in Berta Kostelianskiene's guesthouse. They could choose to eat in the restaurants owned by Antanas Sakalys, Justinas Silcius or Kubiloviciene in Vytauto Street, nos. 1 and 2. Those wishing to spend less could go to Kairys's teahouse or some other establishment.

Picture: [There was a restaurant in this house between the wars. Now it is the shop "Senukai."]

Passenger transportation from the Skuodas railway station to the town centre (about three kilometers) was the business of Efraim Segal. He had a green stagecoach. This service was usually used by richer residents, mostly Jews, who were going by train to Kretinga, Klaipeda, Liepaja (a town in Latvia, around 70 kilometers from Skuodas), or Riga. Sometime later, Efraim Segal acquired a rival; another Jew living in the old town, Gilder, also bought a stagecoach. He painted it red. Both had their clients.

In the beginning of Laisves Street, a Jew, Rakchind, had a butchery where Jewish cattle, cows and heifers, were butchered; because if an animal was killed by someone who was not Jewish, they could not eat that meat, they considered it unclean. Chickens were also slaughtered there.

Some Jews in Skuodas owned quite a lot of land. One of them, Leiba Jankelovich, had around 30 (or maybe even more) hectares. The land he owned extended up to the river Bartuva. And even though for a long time there has been no Leiba Jankelovich, the people of Skuodas still call this big territory by the river Leibine, although most of them do not know where this name comes from (Annex 8, Memories of V. V.).

If they had to deal with legal matters, the people of Skuodas usually turned for help to the private lawyer Povilas Soloveicikas, who lived on Vytauto Street.

## Religion

The Jews of Skuodas had several synagogues. There was a two-storey stone synagogue on Jono Basanaviciaus Street, where the healthcare centre now stands. There was also a Jewish school in the same building. Itze Khokhman, a friend of V. V., was a graduate of this school. V. V. remembers that there were also two wooden *Shuls* (in the Samogitian language, “shoules”) in town: one on Rojaus Street, the other in the old town, on S. Daukanto Street. The latter was given to the Lithuanian gymnasium [high school] of Skuodas in 1941, and was used as a gym.

A. S. remembers that it was very interesting for her, as a child, to watch the Jews (by the way, men only) going to their *Shuls* to pray. They all wore long black coats and carried huge prayer books in their bags. Sometimes the boys tried to look inside through the windows; they were curious to see how the Jews prayed.

### Religious holidays and rituals

The Jews celebrate the seventh day of the week, **Sabbath**. They are not allowed to do any work on this day, not even to light a match or blow out a candle: this was forbidden. Richer Jews had servants, so they did all the work. And those who had no servants used to ask Lithuanian children to light the fire. “When I was six years old, and already knew how to light a match, I was always hanging around Jewish houses waiting for someone to invite me. I got five or ten cents, I was going home happy, sometimes I managed to earn one lita or more in an evening,” P. K. remembers (See memories of P. K., Annex 7.).

Jews prepared special meals for Sabbath and for Passover. They baked special bread, the size of a griddle, called matzos. In the households of wealthier Jews, matzos were tastier as they were made of better flour, and those of the poor were not so good. There was a matzo bakery in the old town; Lithuanian bakers worked there. There were two types of matzos: white and yellow. V. V.’s father worked in the post office. He knew a lot of Jews who would bring special treats at Passover time: apple wine and matzos.

V. D. remembers, “My mother worked in a bakery which belonged to the Jews. She not only baked bread and buns, but also matzos. When I hear someone saying that the Jews use human blood for baking matzos, I start to laugh. Who can say such nonsense? Only those who were jealous and hated them. Sometimes mother would bring us some pieces of matzos after work; when the dough was rolled, it was pressed with a special mould, and we got the leftover margins. I remember that they were sweet, and we would gladly eat these pieces with tea” (Annex 2, Memories of V. D.).

P. K. remembers that when she was working at Malkinson's, she was treated with carrot sweets. She says they were very tasty and she has never seen them anywhere since.

[Picture: This building on Laisves Street, no. 24, housed a bakery (present-day view)].

Jews did not eat pork; their religion did not allow it. "But there was a Jew named Kachkel living on Vytauto Street. Once he came to our house at dinnertime. We were eating roast bacon. Mother invited the Jew to the table. And he ate that meat with us, and praised it, saying how tasty it was. Once my brother brought his classmate Gytis to our house. Again, our mother treated him with bacon. Just then, Gytis's mother came by, and she was very upset when she saw what her son was eating. But then she calmed down, thinking that he was just a kid, and that there is no sin in that. I remember another Jewish family, one brother and two sisters. They were very poor, so they ate anything edible they could get. I also saw them eating pork" (Annex 7, Memories of P. K.).

### Funerals

Jews would bury people in a different way from the Lithuanians. The body was wrapped in sheets and placed on the floor in a room. Two candles would burn. Women did not participate in funerals. There were just men, and a mourner by the deceased. The deceased was accompanied by men only, and a few hired mourners. There was one Lithuanian woman, Albina, who was often asked to mourn for the deceased.

"A Jew named Deivis lived in the old town, very tall, around two meters in height. When we saw him walking in the street, we understood that some Jew had died. Deivis would harness an old nag, barely able to walk, to a cart with a box resembling a coffin on it, and would walk holding onto the bridle. The body of the deceased, wrapped in sheets, was placed in that box. The deceased was accompanied to the cemetery by men only. I have never seen women participating in a funeral, except for some hired mourners. When the funeral came to the cemetery, which was on the present-day Salomejos Neris Street, the body was taken to the chapel close to the cemetery gate. As there were holes in the walls of the chapel (there were no window frames or glass windows), we would climb up the fence to see what the men were doing. They would place the body on the platform in the chapel, and would pray standing around the body. Then the aforementioned Deivis would knead and press small balls of clay and place them on the eyes, ears, mouth and nose of the dead. After that, Deivis would take the body and place it in the grave. Maybe because they were buried without coffins, or maybe so they could rise quicker on the day of the Last Judgment (at least this is how the Jews explained it, seriously or not), the grave was not deep, and Deivis was able to place the body by himself, without anyone's help. By the way, the grave was lined with planking. Then the grave was backfilled. Coming back from the cemetery, the Jews would stop by the river to wash their hands" (Annex 6, Memories of V. V.).

The Jewish cemetery in Skuodas did not remain. The people of Skuodas still remember where it was, on the present-day Salomejos Neris Street. The cemetery was quite extensive. It had a tall fence made of ferroconcrete blocks on two sides (on the street and the eastern sides). A history teacher from Bartuvos School in Skuodas, V. J., drew an picture of the fence according to the narratives.

[Picture: Fragment of the fence of the old Jewish cemetery; Drawing by V. J.].

**The Day of Atonement** was observed in autumn. Then the whole bank of the river Bartuva was black because of the Jews, who were performing special purification rituals by the river, wiping something off themselves.

Another holiday, the **Feast of Tabernacles**, was celebrated in autumn. Then the Jews had something resembling a tent, made of branches; two or three men would go inside and pray there.

**Wakes** were similar to Catholic wakes: watching the deceased family member or another Jew. But the Jews did not drink vodka, and the deceased was mourned by hired mourners, at home as well as at the funeral. The hired mourners were usually Jewish, but there was also one Lithuanian woman named Albina who was often invited to mourn the deceased.

“We also heard tales of the **Night of Horror**. It was believed that the devil takes the worst Jew of every 12 *Shuls* on that night. The men would gather in the *Shul* in the evening. They would take off their shoes in the cloakroom and go inside to pray. After the service, they would put their shoes back on and look to see whether there was a pair left over. If not, that was good; if there were extra shoes, it meant the devil had chosen one of them and taken him. Once the boys made a joke: when the Jews were inside praying, one boy came in and put an extra pair of shoes among the others. When the Jews were ready to go home, they put on their shoes and saw that there was a pair left. They started to groan and weep; they took their shoes off again and went back to pray for a few more hours. And the boys were hanging around laughing,” V. V. remembers.

“We have also seen **Jewish weddings**. Four poles were stuck in the ground, and a cloth was strung to them, like a blanket; it was something like a canopy. The bride and the groom were accompanied from home by their parents, who walked with their children three times around this canopy (I do not know what they called it), saying something. Then everyone went inside to celebrate. The Jews did not drink vodka. I have never seen a drunk Jew. There was only one shop for vodka in Skuodas. It was called “Monopolis.” And Lithuanians did not drink much either: a few men would sit with half a bottle (a quarter of a liter) for half a day. So they would celebrate the wedding till the evening; then there was an invitation to go to the *Shul* to pray, because Jews did not have bells. After hearing the shout “*Gei shulvei*,” we knew that it was time for the Jews to pray,” P. K. explains (Annex 7).

## **Lithuanian – Jewish Relations**

The Jews spoke their own language between themselves, but they communicated in Lithuanian with the Lithuanians. Of course they would pronounce some words in a funny way, but no one laughed at that. Lithuanian children got on well with Jewish children. Sometimes they asked favours of Jewish children, asking them to bring sweets from their parents’ shops. “We played together with their children. Our favourite game in winter was playing war with snowballs. We played girls against boys. The naughtiest boy was Jewish, we called him Abramke. Once he beat my head. But I was not angry, it happened accidentally, he did not mean to throw a stone at me. Maybe I was in the wrong place at the wrong moment” (Annex 7, Memories of P. K.).

Sometimes mistresses used to give gifts to the maids or other women working in their households to give to their children. “A few times, a mistress gave my mother some clothes that were too small for her daughter. We were so happy, because they were not outworn, we were proud to wear them.

Unfortunately my memory is not so good, I cannot remember the names of these benefactors,” says V. D. (Annex 2).

The people of Skuodas also remember other Jews whom everyone made fun of. Cinderis was one of them. Rumour had it that his mind was gone due to too much learning. He would walk down the street, carrying a stick and a bag, and would put everything he found on the way into this bag. Wishing to make fun of him, the children once made a cross and threw it on the ground where Cinderis was about to pass. When he arrived, he took the cross and tried to put it into his bag. But the cross was too big, so he put in only part of the cross and went away. So it happened that the Jew was carrying a cross. People would make fun of him, saying: “Cinder, trrr...” And then they would quickly run away, because Cinderis did not like it, and would chase them with a stick. There was also a Jewess named Beile. She used to slaughter and pluck chickens for the Jews. She was very messy, always going around covered in feathers and fluff. So everyone called her a “brood-hen.” Sometimes fun was made of the funeral specialist Deivis. Everyone was amused by his height, about two meters.

“The Jews did not drink vodka. I have never seen a drunk Jew. And there was only one shop for vodka in Skuodas. Lithuanians did not drink so much either; a few men would sit with half a bottle (a quarter of a liter) for half a day. By the way, Jews did not swear. The worst word I have ever heard them say was “*mishugene*,” P. K. recalls.

## **Mass Murders of Jews During the Years of the Second World War**

The German army occupied Skuodas on the very first day of the war against the Soviet Union. Mass killings of the Jews began. But the Lithuanians, as well as the Jews, experienced their first losses even earlier. V. V. remembers that the Fogelmans, a family of businessmen from Skuodas, were deported to Siberia, together with Lithuanians, in the first deportations, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, 1941. After 50 years, Fogelman’s son Boris, visiting his childhood town of Skuodas, and participating in the opening ceremony of the monument on the mass murder site, explains, “...it was 1941, the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, early morning. The Chekists were loudly knocking at our door. They explained their arrival as a search, they said they were looking for guns and illegal literature. But soon they revealed the real reason. One of them said that we would be deported beyond the borders of Lithuania. At that time I was seventeen; I still had to pass two exams to graduate. We were told to get ready in half an hour” (Annex 9, Memories of Boris Fogelman).

Kive Leizer, a son of a former shop owner, was also deported to Siberia together with his parents.

Although they experienced a lot of hardship and suffering, the deported at least had a chance to stay alive. The Jews had the feeling that they might be disposed of, so some of them hurried to escape not just from Skuodas, but also from Lithuania.

“When the war broke out, it was terrible for the Jews to live in Skuodas,” V. D. explains. “Doctor (Elert’s) wife complained to my mother that even if they had never done any harm to anyone, they might still suffer. When they started to chase and catch the Jews, they would shoot those who were not able to walk, right on the street. Then they put the bodies into carts and took them near the Kulai village cemetery, where they were buried in a common grave. Our mother was constantly crying and repeating: “What did the Jews do, that they are treated in such an inhuman way?” Right

from the start, there were Lithuanians who took Jewish houses and shared out their belongings. A few times they would provoke us to do the same, saying to my father, “Why are you, L., (this was my father’s family name), not taking any houses? You do not have your own home, you have a lot of children, you could at least have a good life now.” But my father answered that he did not need the property of strangers if he was not able to earn something himself. It is a pity and a shame that not everyone was so honest. I do not want to mention the names of those Lithuanians, because they are dead now. Let them rest in peace; God will judge them” (Annex 2, Memories of V. D.).

K. V. remembers, “Just when the war started, and the killings of the Jews started, some of them tried to escape from Skuodas. One Jewish family came to our village (we lived in the village Budviete, close to Skuodas) to ask for shelter. But my mother, although with a broken heart, refused to help them; she was afraid that our family would be in danger.

One slovenly, messy neighbour lived in our village, on the opposite side of the road. Everyone called him “Black Petrauskas.” His son-in-law was actually killing Jews. I would hear my family members, that is my mother and father, saying with disgust that Petrauskis’s son-in-law was boasting, “Oh, we did a good job today.” The property of the murdered Jews was shared between those who were killing. Sometimes people from the village would go to take things; they brought home furniture and clothes” (Annex 5, Memories of K. V.).

“Sometimes one can hear statements that the Jews offended Lithuania in 1940. Ostensibly, in Skuodas, after the Soviet occupation, two Jews were running around with guns... Two. And all the Jewish families of Skuodas, with children and small babies, suffered. It must have been unspeakable madness. An even greater hatred, when you could shoot or throw a stone at the doctor who once healed you, at a pharmacist, or at a child who does not understand anything,” journalist Juozas Vysniauskas writes (Annex 10, p. 48. Juozas Vysniauskas. “There Were... Now There are Not.” *Musu Zodis*, 11 07 1992, No. 54).

Extracts from trial interrogation reports, found in the Lithuanian National Archive by Josif Levinson, an employee of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, confirm that Albinas Meidus, Kazys Vysniauskas, Jurgis Embrasas, and the priest Lionginas Jankauskas participated in mass murders in Skuodas in 1941. This fact is proven by witness testimonies. The defendants also confessed to their participation in the killings of peaceful civilians (Annex 13).

Residents of Skuodas, mostly Jewish, were killed near the Riflemen’s Hall and in the village of Pirmieji Kulai on the outskirts of Skuodas. Others were sent to Dimitravas concentration camp in the Kretinga region.

### **The Jews in Skuodas after the Holocaust**

Most of the buildings in Skuodas burned down during the war. The Old Town was badly damaged, as almost all its buildings were wooden. The central town square was also ravaged and destroyed. In the town, where the Jewish population had been 30% of the total population before the war, only a few Jews remained.

To this day, K. V. remembers and speaks well of Leiba Yankelovich, the first editor of Skuodas’s local newspaper, “*Musu Zodis*.” He was a very kind, fair and honourable person, who employed a

young girl at the desk despite the fact that she had already been spied by Security agents. “If I had to prove the saying that every Lithuanian has his Jew, I would say that my Jew is Leiba Yankelovich,” K. V. says (Annex 5, Memories of K. V.).

V. V. remembers: “Kive Leizer, whose father had a shop on Laisves Street, was deported to Siberia together with his parents. He came back to Skuodas in 1946. He sent applications to Vilnius and Moscow, trying to receive permission to go to Israel. He even asked me to accompany him to Moscow, to meet Stalin, but my father would not allow me to go on such a long journey, saying that we would just waste our time in vain, without achieving anything. Later we learned that Leizer actually did go to Moscow. Of course nobody allowed him to meet Stalin, and he was not able to go Israel. He went to Riga, thinking it might be easier to leave from there. There, in Riga, he married a woman of the same nationality, stayed to live in Riga, and died there” (Annex 6, Memories of V. V.).

Leiba Yankelovich, the son of the shoe factory’s owner, was appointed editor of the new local Skuodas newspaper “Pergale” [English, “Victory”]. The people of Skuodas remember him as a fair and righteous person. K. V. remembers that, just after graduating from school, she was employed by L. Yankelovich on the desk in spite of the fact that she had been spied by Security agents. “If I had to prove the saying that every Lithuanian has his Jew, I would say that my Jew is Leiba Yankelovich”, K. V. tells. (Annex 5, Memories of K. V.).

Once, during a private interview, when he was asked how he managed to escape deportation, Leiba Yankelovich said that it was probably because he belonged to the Communist Party.

The Fogelmans were also deported. The only survivor was their son Boris, whom we called Boria. When a monument was built in Skuodas, at the Jewish mass murder site, Boris Fogelman came to participate in the opening ceremony. I had a chance to speak to him.

“A few years ago, a relative of the Fogelman and David families came to Skuodas from Israel, looking for his family roots. I showed him the clock and gramophone bought in David’s shop. We listened to songs performed by Dolskis, and visited those places where the houses of his relatives once stood,” V. V. remembers.

In 1962, the bodies of mass murder victims were disinterred. E. D., who lived close to one of these places, remembers that during the excavations, a terrible smell was in the air; she could not even open the window.

Many curious people came to see that terrible view. This is what J. B. tells:

“Originally, I am from Panevezys, but I have been working in the Skuodas area since 1950 . . .

One day my husband, who had just come back from Skuodas, told me that in Skuodas, near the Land Reclamation Office, the bodies of Jewish victims of the Second World War were being disinterred. As you do not see such things every day, we got onto our bikes and rode to Skuodas.

When we came to the mass murder site, we saw a horrible sight. In the place where now stands the memorial for the victims, huge trenches had been dug. In them lay the bodies of the victims. You could see human skeletons and rags of clothing; there was still hair on some heads. The area was



roped off; the guards did not allow anyone to come close. But it was not necessary, as the smell was so terrible that it is difficult to compare it with anything.

The people who gathered there were shocked and disgusted by this inhumanity, the murder of the innocent, peaceful people of Skuodas. Later the newspapers reported that in this mass murder site, the people of Skuodas, mostly Jewish, had been killed (Annex 3).

There was a trial of the mass murder participants in Klaipeda, but some defendants were missing. The name of a Skuodas priest, Lionginas Jankauskas, was mentioned many times. In a meeting of Skuodas town and area residents, the criminals and their assistants were condemned. A group of Skuodas residents even wrote a letter, appealing to the residents of New York, asking to extradite Jankauskas to Lithuania (Annex 8).

While preparing this work, I tried to find people who took part in the disinterment and reburials. I tried to interview several people, but it was not successful, they did not agree to speak. I do not know why; perhaps they really do not want to remember that event, or maybe they found something valuable in the graves, and took it, and feel ashamed of it, and do not want to speak about it. We can only guess.

All the people of Skuodas should be ashamed of a few other things.

In the Soviet period, the old Jewish cemetery was abandoned; no one was buried in it, because there were no Jews left in Skuodas. The people living in the nearby streets turned this place into a dump, a pasture, a playground. This terrible sight has been documented by the photographer of our newspaper “Musu Zodis” in this picture.

[Picture: View of the Jewish cemetery around 1988. The photo was published in “Musu Zodis”, 1992, No. 54].

In the previously mentioned article “There Were... There Are No More,” Juozas Vysniauskas also gives these facts:

“Hitlerism and fascism destroyed the Jews physically. This work, the destruction of what remained, was continued by Stalinism and communism. Purposefully, the synagogues were destroyed, the cemeteries were torn apart, historical memory was suppressed, and the use of the word “Jew” was avoided, as if there are no Jews and never were. This is what happened in all Lithuania, not only Skuodas. At that time, the Stalinists planned to build a new marketplace in the Jewish cemetery in the old town. But somewhere, there was a Jew of Skuodas who appealed to Moscow to prevent this vandalism.

A market place was not built in the cemetery, but neither was it left in peace. The destruction of granite tombstones continued. Broken stones, with their Hebrew inscriptions turned inward, were set into foundations and decorative walls. One such high wall separates the town’s cultural centre from the dwelling house on Gedimino Street, no. 3. There is no doubt that the Jewish tombstones, broken into three or more pieces, are set there; they can be clearly seen.

I heard a story that the walls built from tombstones were set by workers with the help of a student building party, which included one Jewish girl. While helping, she read the inscriptions on stones set into the wall, and cried” (Annex 10).

[Picture: the wall made in the 1960s from broken tombstones on the inner side of the cultural centre’s courtyard.]

[Picture: It is thought that this wall, by the Primary Health Centre of Skuodas, is also made from the tombstones of the Jewish cemetery].

## **Monuments of Jewish History and Culture in Skuodas**

After the renewal of Lithuanian independence on November 7, 1990, the presidium of the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian Republic passed a resolution, “Regarding the Reconstruction of Jewish Genocide Victims’ Graves and Cemeteries, and Marking of Heritage.” On April 17, 1991, in implementing this resolution, the municipality of Skuodas issued a decree “Regarding Reconstruction of Jewish Cemeteries and Burial Places.” The correspondent plan of reconstructing Jewish cemeteries was also confirmed by this decree.

There are two Jewish mass murder sites and one old Jewish cemetery in Skuodas.

One genocide site is at the edge of Skuodas, near the cemetery of Kulai I. In this place, a memorial was inaugurated with a ceremony on May 17, 1991. In the place of the former ditches, on the slope of the small cemetery, a monument, planned by the Skuodas architect R. S., was raised, consisting of two semicircular stones. One of them bears an inscription in Lithuanian, the other in the Yiddish language: “IN THIS PLACE, HELPERS OF HITLERISTS MURDERED ABOUT 800 JEWISH RESIDENTS OF SKUODAS TOWN AND REGION IN JULY, 1941.” These meaningful words are carved at the bottom of the monument: “HERE IS A BLEEDING WOUND ON THE LAND OF LITHUANIA.”

[Picture: Monument in the Jewish mass murder site in the village of Kulai I]

[Picture: Monument at the mass murder site by the Riflemen’s Hall]

These semicircular stones were not randomly chosen. They depict the canopy of heaven, since the Jews believe in an afterlife in heaven. The hexangular star of David connects the two stones, indicating that here, in the land of Lithuania, people of Jewish nationality lay their heads forever. Representatives of the Jewish Cultural Association, Jakov Rikler and Lev Beker, came to participate in the ceremony, in which I also had the honour to participate.

Another Jewish genocide site is in Skuodas, in the western part of the town park, not far from the Skuodas Museum and the Riflemen’s Hall. Here stands a sculptural composition made of red granite. In the centre of the composition is a cube made of red granite, standing on one corner. There are inscriptions on two sides of the cube in the Lithuanian and Jewish languages: “IN MEMORY OF JEWS – CHILDREN, WOMEN, AND MEN – AS WELL AS LITHUANIANS AND PEOPLE OF OTHER NATIONALITIES FROM SKUODAS, WHO WERE KILLED BY NAZI OCCUPANTS AND THEIR HELPERS IN 1941.”

A few years ago, this monument had a different inscription: an announcement in Lithuanian and Russian, indicating that in that place, during the years of Nazi occupation, around 3000 Soviet citizens were murdered. As there were no documents proving this number, the surface of the stone panel was filed down and the old inscription was replaced with the new, previously described inscription.

[Picture: Inscription in Lithuanian on the memorial]

[Picture: Another side of the memorial has an inscription in the Jewish language]

[Picture: The Jewish cemetery in Skuodas town did not survive. In this place, corresponding to the plans of the above-mentioned decree, a monumental stone was erected with inscriptions in Yiddish in 1992]

[Picture: Five or six tombstones were found in the territory of the cemetery, which were concreted into the centre of the cemetery; they make up a hexangular star, cast from concrete grout.]

An area for car parking and paths leading to the monument were asphalted nearby. In order to keep the environment safe, the territory of the cemetery has a metal fence on the street side. There is a memorial with inscriptions in Lithuanian and Yiddish at the entrance: "OLD JEWISH CEMETERY. REST IN PEACE."

[Picture: Memorial stone marking the place of the old Jewish cemetery. In this way, today's residents of Skuodas try to at least partly compensate the harm done to the Jews.]

## **Annex 1**

### **Businesses of Skuodas Residents**

#### **Trading Companies**

##### **Beer warehouses**

Shaf Yosel, Skuodas

Urdang Ber, Skuodas

##### **Horse trading**

Dimantas Elijas, Skuodas, Rojaus str.

##### **Shoe trading**

Berman Judel, Skuodas

Kan Itzik, Skuodas, Vilniaus str. no. 33

Mines Yosel, Skuodas, Laisves str. no. 2

Shpitz Ber, Skuodas

##### **Fruit and vegetable trading**

Koneris Sirts, Skuodas, Basanaviciaus str. no. 36

**Iron and iron goods trading**

Fogelman Brothers, Skuodas  
Yankelovich Leiba, Skuodas

**Grain trading**

Kan Markus, Skuodas, Mosedzio str. no. 12  
Zeligman Leiba, Skuodas  
Zelik Dovid, Skuodas, Gedimino str.

**Colonial trading**

Drazdauskas Antanas, Skuodas, Ilgoji str. no. 1  
Faktor Abrom, Skuodas, Ylakiu str. no. 5  
Faktor Golda, Skuodas, Laisves str. no. 59  
Gopelman Shija, Skuodas  
Brothers Kan, Skuodas, Laisves str. 43  
Kaplanski Yankel, Skuodas  
Kleineman Shliomas, Skuodas  
Segalis Mausha, Skuodas  
Segalis Yankel, Skuodas, Ilgoji str. no. 12  
Urdang Abrom, Skuodas, Gedimino square 13  
Urdang Efraim, Skuodas, Gedimino square 2  
Vainer Itzik, Skuodas

**Meat trading**

Beger Chaim, Skuodas  
Cernes Shliomas, Skuodas  
Daukantiene Lina, Skuodas  
Everis Leiba-Aizikas, Skuodas, Ylakiu str. no. 3  
Franciene Leontina, Skuodas  
Chatzkel Hirsh, Skuodas, Laisves str.  
Lekutiene Karolina, Skuodas, Gedimino road 12  
Pralgever Itzik, Skuodas, Ylakiu str. 3  
Rokchindas Faivelis, Skuodas, Gedimino road 11  
Sadeikis Kazys, Skuodas, Ylakiu str.  
Turk Iser, Skuodas, Gedimino road 13

**Restaurants and inns**

Kubilavicius Val., Skuodas  
Serafinas Klemensas, Skuodas

**Household goods trading**

Klein Chaim, Skuodas, Vilniaus str.

**Pharmacies**

Kasperaviciene Olga, Skuodas  
Katerfeld Hermann, Skuodas

**Drugs, cosmetics and other chemicals trading**

Tanuras Elijas, Skuodas

**Canteens, tea-houses and patisseries**

Namkind Eizer, Skuodas

Vaitkus Juozas, Skuodas, Gedimino str.

**Mills**

Plechavicius, Skuodas (water mill)

Fricolis Itzik (wind mill)

**Knitwear and hosiery**

Kostelianskis I., Skuodas

**Leather workshops and factories**

Grinblat Yankel, Skuodas

Hochman Leiba, Skuodas

Tuskas Abramas, Skuodas

Vaineris B., Skuodas

**Shoe workshops and factories**

Grinblat Mausha, Skuodas, Laisves str. no. 63

Yankelovich Mausha, Skuodas, Laisves str. no. 61

Kan Itzik, "Kontinent," Skuodas, Vilniaus str. no. 33

Mines M., shoe factory "Konkurencija," Skuodas, Laisves str. 2

Pres Ofsiej, Skuodas, Basanaviciaus str.

Abraom Turk, Skuodas

The list has been compiled according to the edition VISA LIETUVA, published in 1932 by "Press Fund" (information publication, edited in 1931 by V. Ruzgas), pages 250-273.

## Annex 2

### Memoirs of V. D., born in 1918, living in Skuodas

I was born and lived all my life in Skuodas. I come from a family of 13 children. My parents did not own any land, they were tenants: at first with the Shmitos family, and later with the Arlauskai family.

I remember very well that there were many Jews in Skuodas during the time of Smetona. Almost all the shops in Skuodas belonged to the Jews; maybe only three shops were owned by Lithuanians. The shops were mostly in the centre of Skuodas, on Vilniaus, Gedimino, and Ylakiu Streets, or in the Old Town, on Laisves Street. Some shop owners worked in their shops themselves; others employed Lithuanians. There was a big building in the centre of Skuodas, it was possible to walk around it from all sides; there were shops in this building. They were very tidy; every item had its place. As there were so many shops, there was almost no need to stand in queues. I remember the Jews, the owners of shops, as very good and honest people. As our family was quite poor, we often got goods, usually food, and paid for it later. We paid for everything when we could; nobody asked us to pay more. If there were no customers, the salesmen used to invite us to come in, promising to give us a discount; this was their form of competition. The shops were open from 8:00 in the morning till 6:00 at night. There were some shops that were also open on Saturdays and Sundays. I do not know how they agreed about the working hours between themselves.

There were separate shops for bread, meat, household goods, and hosiery. There was a big restaurant in the town centre. This building still stands there today; it houses the shopping centre "Senukai." Most of the shops were in wooden buildings.

We lived in Vilniaus Street, at the edge of town. *Kromelninks* (peddlers) often used to come to our home, but mother did not buy from them because she could get all the same products cheaper at the shops of local Jews. Also, sometimes we could get products from them and pay later.

We got on well with Jewish children. Sometimes we benefited from them. My brothers used to get sweets and bagels from Jewish children; sometimes they also gave these things to us girls.

I had the opportunity to visit Jewish homes. When I was still at school, Jews often used to invite me to their homes on Saturdays to light the fire or bring water from the well. Because they celebrate Sabbath on Saturdays and are not allowed to do any work, they would prepare food the evening before. We liked it, because we used to get some small change for this work, which of course we would immediately spend on sweets.

I do not know what work Jewish women did. I think they did not even clean the rooms themselves. When I was already a grown-up girl, I was sometimes asked to clean rooms and wash floors. The Jews (at least the ones I was working for) were very clean, so there was not much work to do. They paid for work immediately after it was done.

My mother worked in a bakery that belonged to the Jews. She baked not only bread and buns, but also matzos. When I hear someone saying that the Jews use human blood for baking matzos, I start to laugh. Who can say such nonsense? Only those who were jealous and hated them. Sometimes

mother would bring us some pieces of matzos after work; when the dough was rolled, it was pressed with a special mould, and we got the leftover margins. I remember that they were sweet, and we would gladly eat these pieces with tea.

Jews did not eat pork, only beef and poultry. They did not slaughter or pluck chickens; they asked Lithuanians to do this work, aside from one poor Jewess who lived in Skuodas. She was very messy, always going around covered in feathers and fluff, so even the Jews called her a “brood-hen.”

A few times, a mistress gave my mother some clothes that were too small for her daughter. We were happy, because they were not worn out; we were proud to wear them. Unfortunately, my memory is not good, so I cannot remember the names of these benefactors.

A very good doctor, Elert, lived in Skuodas. He treated everyone, Jews and Lithuanians. He usually received patients at his own home, but if someone was feeling very bad, he used to visit him at home, more than once if necessary. People from other districts used to come to him for consultations. He was a very honest person and did not charge too much. If he noticed that someone had no money to pay him, he consulted and examined for free, and asked if the patient had money for medicine. If not, he would sometimes buy the medicine and bring it to the patient.

Jews spoke their own language among themselves, and we did not try to learn it. They would communicate in Lithuanian with the Lithuanians. Of course they would pronounce some words in a funny way, but we understood them and did not laugh. Jewish children went to another, Jewish school, but we got together after classes and spoke together in Lithuanian. I knew a counting-out game, but I do not remember it now.

When we learned that some Jew had died, we rushed to watch. They were buried in a different way from the Lithuanian Catholics. They did not use coffins. The body was wrapped in a sheet, and knots were tied at the forehead and feet. It was strange to see that the body was not carried out of the house, but was pulled out, by holding onto the knot at the feet. Then the body was placed in a cart and taken to the cemetery. They did not sing any funeral hymns; they would just murmur something in their language, but we did not understand what. One Jew asked his wife to bury him according to Catholic traditions when he died. We were surprised that Jews other than family members accompanied the dead from home, but did not go to the cemetery. Probably their faith did not allow that. The grave was shallow, maybe just one meter deep, or even less. They lined it with planking, put into it the body (wrapped in a sheet), placed a plank on top, and covered the plank with earth.

When the war broke out, it was terrible for the Jews to live in Skuodas. The doctor's wife complained to my mother, that even if they had never done any harm to anyone, they might still suffer. When they started to chase and catch the Jews, they would shoot those who were not able to walk, right on the street. Then they put the bodies into carts and took them near the Kulai village cemetery, where they were buried in a common grave. Our mother was constantly crying and repeating: “What did the Jews do, that they are treated in such an inhuman way?” Right from the start, there were Lithuanians who took Jewish houses and shared out their belongings. A few times they would provoke us to do the same, saying to my father, “Why are you, L., (this was my father's family name), not taking any houses? You do not have your own home, you have a lot of children, you could at least have a good life now.” But my father answered that he did not need the property

of strangers if he was not able to earn something himself. It is a pity and a shame that not everyone was so honest. I do not want to mention names of those Lithuanians, because they are dead now. Let them rest in peace; God will judge them.

As far as I know, there are no Jews left in Skuodas. Most of their houses did not survive either: some burned down during the war, some were destroyed during the Soviet period. They built a Regional Executive Committee in the place of one, a shop or a block of flats in the place of another. So the Jews remain only in the memory of the old people. I remember only good things about them. I wish all people were like the Jews.

Memoirs written by Brone Rusinskiene, living in Skuodas.



### Annex 3

#### Memoirs of J. B., born in 1929, living in Skuodas

Originally, I am from Panevezys, but I have been working in the Skuodas area since 1950. I lived in the village and I worked in a seven-grade school in Teveliai.

One day my husband, who had just come back from Skuodas, told me that in Skuodas, near the Land Reclamation Office, the bodies of Jewish victims of the Second World War were being disinterred. As you do not see such things every day, we got onto our bikes and rode to Skuodas. (The distance between Teveliai village and Skuodas is seven kilometers.)

When we came to the mass murder site, we saw a horrible sight. In the place where now stands the memorial for the victims, huge trenches had been dug. In them lay the bodies of the victims. You could see human skeletons and rags of clothing; there was still hair on some heads. The area was roped off; the guards did not allow anyone to come close. But it was not necessary, as the smell was so terrible that it is difficult to compare it with anything.

The people who gathered there were shocked and disgusted by this inhumanity, the murder of the innocent, peaceful people of Skuodas. Later the newspapers reported that in this mass murder site, the people of Skuodas, mostly Jewish, had been killed.

Later I read that there was a trial in Klaipeda, but not all the organizers of the mass murders or their accomplices were present. The name of a Skuodas priest, Lionginas Jankauskas, was mentioned many times then (in 1963). I know that a group of people from Skuodas even wrote a letter to the USA, asking to extradite him to Lithuania. But they never received any answer.

Memoirs written by Brone Rusinskiene, living in Skuodas.

## Annex 4

Memoirs of A. S., born in 1928, living in Skuodas.

I have lived in Skuodas all my life, since I was born. This is the town of my childhood and youth. And the nicest memories come from childhood. You remember the interesting things your whole life long. When I remember my childhood, the centre of Skuodas returns to life in my memories, the place where now the supermarket, “T-Market,” stands. At that time there were also shops there, one close to another, they occupied the whole square. And they all belonged to the Jews. You could walk a big circle going from one shop to another.

My parents usually bought food in Mrs. Melnik’s shop. There you could get bread, herring, and matches. If our mother was not able to go to the shop, she used to send us children. She did not give us money. Mrs. Melnik knew all of us. She would always ask us how we were doing, if everyone was feeling all right at home. She used to pack all the goods we needed and write them down in a book. Later, mother would pay for everything herself. We never heard that she had to pay more. I liked to go to that shop. There was a bell hanging at the door, and it always rang when somebody opened the door. Then the lady would come out of her rooms.

We always bought yeast in Meier’s shop. I do not know why; either it was not available elsewhere, or it was cheaper there.

On holidays, our parents used to bring us gifts from the shops, usually sweets called “Vezeliai” [English: “Crayfish”] or sometimes bagels.

Usually the shops were in the same buildings where Jews also lived. There were a lot of small shops in the Old Town, but we went there less often.

When someone fell ill, we turned for help to doctor Lev.

It was interesting to watch the Jews (by the way, men only) going to their *Shuls* to pray. They all wore long black coats and carried huge prayer books in their bags. I never had the chance to go inside the *Shul*, they did not allow people of other faiths to enter. I remember that there were a few Jews who would go to *Shul* dressed in black long raincoats. These were Jewish rabbis. Only later I learned that rabbis are Jewish clergy.

At Jewish funerals, everyone going to the cemetery was dressed in black. I do not know why, but after the funeral in the cemetery, everybody went to the river to wash their hands.

On Saturday, the day of Sabbath, the Jews were not allowed to do any work. Those who had servants were lucky, as the servants would light the fire, bring firewood and water, cook, and do other work. Those Jews who were poor and had no servants would ask us kids to light the fire (the firewood had been placed in the stove beforehand).

My sister J. (she has already passed away) studied in a class with a few Jewish children. They would come to school on Saturdays, but would not do anything: they would not answer in the

lessons, go up to the blackboard to do exercises, or write anything in their notebooks; they would just sit – that was it. The teachers did not mind.

There was one strange Jew in Skuodas named Cinderis. He was fairly young, but probably mentally ill. He would walk in the streets, with different kinds of things tied to himself, or he would carry rubbish and tins; everything that he found on the way, he would take it. So the children, as well as grown-ups, would make fun of him, saying: “Cinder, Cinder, crrr, crrr.”

Memoirs written by Brone Rusinskiene, living in Skuodas.

## Annex 5

### Memoirs of K. V., born in 1932, living in Skuodas

I grew up and lived in a village about three kilometers from Skuodas. When I started to go to school, I went to Skuodas every day. I do not have much to say about the Jews from the period between the wars. I just remember that when the war broke out, and the killings of the Jews started, some of them tried to escape from Skuodas. One Jewish family came to our village to ask for shelter. But my mother, although with a broken heart, refused to help them; she was afraid that our family would be in danger.

One slovenly, messy neighbour lived in our village, on the opposite side of the road. Everyone called him “Black Petrauskas.” His son-in-law was actually killing Jews. I would hear my family members, that is my mother and father, saying with disgust that Petrauskas’s son-in-law was boasting, “Oh, we did a good job today.” The property of the murdered Jews was shared between those who were killing. Sometimes people from the village would go to take things; they brought home furniture and clothes.

I worked with one Jew for a few years. The story is as follows. In 1953, after graduating from school in Skuodas, I came to the office of the local newspaper “Pergale.” Leiba Yankelovich was the editor at that time. I think he was the first editor of the newly established (in 1950) Skuodas local newspaper. L. Yankelovich gladly employed me as a proofreader. At that time, the other people working for the newspaper did not have proper educations. I was the most educated, so soon I became an executive secretary. The editor was a very kind person; he did not pay attention to anyone’s political views or mind that I had fallen into disgrace with the KGB when I was still at school.

The editor’s kindness and humanity can be illustrated by the following example. I entered Vilnius University, the faculty of history and philology, department of extramural studies, to study Lithuanian language and literature. I was so happy to be a student that I did not come back to Skuodas nor to work for a whole two months while I was taking entrance examinations, introductory courses, etc. I did not inform the editor either orally or in writing. I was young and did not care. But the newspaper could not be published without an executive secretary. So another person was employed in my place. When I came back and appeared at work, the editor talked to me, but he did not fire me. He found a way: he established the position of correspondent. So in this way I stayed to work at the newspaper, and was very thankful to the editor. If I had to prove the saying that every Lithuanian has his Jew, I would say that my Jew is Leiba Yankelovich, the former chief editor of the local Skuodas newspaper.

But not all people had a good opinion of the Jews. In the fifties, aside from the aforementioned L. Yankelovich, there was one other young Jewish man living in Skuodas (I do not remember his name). He was a boyfriend of A. N. I know that for this reason, some young people would often mock A., they did not like her.

Memoirs written by Brone Rusinskiene, living in Skuodas.

## Annex 6

### Memoirs of V. V., born in 1927, living in Skuodas

I spent the years of my childhood and youth in Skuodas. I clearly remember what Skuodas looked like between the wars. Many Jews lived in the town then, maybe 1000 or even more. The present-day Vilniaus, Gedimino, Laisves, and J. Basanaviciaus Streets were full of small shops, factories, warehouses, workshops, and houses belonging to the Jews.

I remember that there were a few **pharmacies** in town: their owners were Zilberstein, Mirkes, and Katterfeld. Medicines were quite expensive: one had to pay two to three litas for a basic headache powder. Assistants working in the pharmacies had a special education. They prepared most of the medicines in the pharmacies according to the doctors' prescriptions. But while it was possible to obtain food in grocery stores and pay for it later, credit was not available in the pharmacies.

Most of the Jews worked in **trade**. Some businessmen worked wholesale. Among them were the brothers Tanur, who kept a shop next to Zilberstein's pharmacy. Urdang was also a wholesaler. Hirsh Tanur and Abraom-Mausha Urdang had small trucks for transporting goods. The brothers Fogelman had a household goods shop which was famous all over Skuodas. In the old town, on Laisves Street, the brothers Fogelman established a big household goods shop in their two-storey house. (This house still stands today; people live in it, Laisves Street, no. 19; see the picture). There was a brick warehouse nearby; flax and grain were stored there (now this house, on Laisves Street no. 21, has been renovated and houses ten apartments; see the picture). Kive Reif also had a shop on the corner of Laisves and D. Poskos Streets. David had a small department store in the centre of Skuodas, on Birutes Street. (See picture: the present-day view of the building). Even today, I still have some things bought in David's shop at home: there is a clock, which my parents bought me as a birthday present (this clock is still hanging on my wall and counting my age), a "Kolumbija" gramophone, and a few records of Dolski's repertoire from between the wars. My parents paid 150 or 170 litas for the clock, it is really a very valuable thing. But my father was then working in the post office; he earned 150 litas per month and some extra money for the children (and we were four children), so he could afford to buy such a thing.

There was one public specialized drinks shop, "Monopolis," in Skuodas. There was also a shop that specialized in hats. I was in this shop several times with my mother, who wanted to buy a hat. Putrius opened the first bookshop in Skuodas around 1936.

I remember three **restaurants** in Skuodas from that period: the one owned by Kubiloviciene; the Kryzias ("Cross"); and a third restaurant, "London," which belonged to a Jew whose name I do not remember.

Some Jews and some Lithuanians owned **tea-houses**; many people visited them, especially on market days; one could drink tea there, and get something to eat. One tea-house belonged to the Kairiai family. I do not remember names of the other owners, as we did not go to these tea-houses.

The Jews would also visit villages to market their goods, as the villagers did not come to town often.

A few **factories** operated in Skuodas. The largest factory was Itzik Kan's shoe factory "Kontinent" on Vilniaus (then Ylakiu) Street, in the place where the municipality building now stands. This factory employed around 150 workers. The shoes produced were of very high quality and were even exported abroad. The shoe factory owned by M. Mines was its constant rival; even its name was "Konkurencija" [English: "Rivalry"]; this factory was on Laisves Street. Mines's factory employed about 100 workers. Smaller shoemaking factories with around 8-10 employees were owned by Grinblat and Yankelovich.

Judelman had a small **leather factory** in Basanaviciaus Street. I remember that there was a leather tannery in the courtyard of this factory with a terrible smell. The Lithuanians called Judelman "garborius," that is, currier.

Around 1938, Fogelman opened a **button factory**. We used to go to this factory looking for the discarded plates from which buttons had been cut, and were very happy to find some with the original ornaments. The button factory employed up to 20 people. This small factory was established in the so called "Kiaules Ulycia," that is, Pig Street (now a pedestrian avenue leading from Gediminas Square to the dairy). The factory building burned down in 1941.

Around 1939, in the old town, in Laisves Street no. 8, Markus Khoikher opened a **wool cardery and spinnery**. The equipment for this factory was imported from Sweden. The owner's family lived on the first floor of the same building. My brother E. studied in the same class with the Khoikers' son, whose name was Boria. In the spring of 1941, the equipment was taken to Kaunas, where it was used in a similar type of factory.

The brothers Fogelman had an ironmongery in Gediminas Square. They had another ironmongery on J. Basanaviciaus Street, which was always very noisy, as they produced nails for horseshoes there.

There was a **dye-house for woolen materials** at the end of Vytauto Street. We used to hurry to watch very long pieces of dyed materials, around 20 meters, being taken out to dry on the grass.

There was a **confectionery factory**, "Baltica," where sweets named "Dul dul dudele" were produced; we used to call them lollipops.

**Passenger transportation** from the Skuodas railway station to the town centre (about three kilometers) was the business of Efroim Segal. He had a green stagecoach. This service was usually used by richer residents, mostly Jews, who were going by train to Kretinga, Klaipeda, Liepaja (a town in Latvia, around 70 kilometers from Skuodas), or Riga. Some time later, Efroim Segal acquired a rival, because another Jew living in the old town, Gilder, also bought a stagecoach. He painted it red. Both of them had their clients.

In the beginning of Laisves Street, a Jew named Rakchind had his **butchery**, where Jewish cows and heifers were butchered; because if an animal was killed by someone who was not Jewish, they could not eat that meat, they considered it unclean. Chickens were also slaughtered there.

The Jews of Skuodas had several synagogues. There was a two-storey stone synagogue on Basanaviciaus Street, where the healthcare centre now stands. There was also a Jewish school in the same building. My friend Itze Khokhman was a graduate of this school. There was a Jewish *Shul* (in

the Samogitian language, “shoules”) in the old town. Another *shul* was on S. Daukanto Street; in 1941, it was given to the Lithuanian gymnasium of Skuodas and used as a gym.

It was interesting to watch a Jewish funeral. A Jew named Deivis lived in the old town, very tall, around two meters in height. When we saw him walking in the street, we understood that some Jew had died. Deivis would harness an old nag, barely able to walk, to a cart with a box resembling a coffin on it, and would walk holding onto the bridle. The body of the deceased, wrapped in sheets, was placed in that box. The deceased was accompanied to the cemetery by men only. I have never seen women participating in a funeral, except for some hired mourners. When the funeral came to the cemetery, which was on the present-day Salomejos Neris Street, the body was taken to the chapel close to the gate of the cemetery. As there were holes in the walls of the chapel (there were no window frames or glass windows), we would climb up the fence to see what those men were doing. They would place the body on the platform in the chapel, and would pray standing around the body. Then the aforementioned Deivis would knead and press small balls of clay and place them on the eyes, ears, mouth and nose of the dead. After that, Deivis would take the body and place it in the grave. Maybe because they were buried without coffins, or maybe so they could rise quicker on the day of the Last Judgment (at least this is how the Jews explained it, seriously or not), the grave was not deep, and Deivis was able to place the body by himself, without anyone’s help. By the way, the grave was lined with planking. Then the grave was backfilled. Coming back from the cemetery, the Jews would stop by the river to wash their hands.

I remember some **Jewish holidays**. They celebrated their feast of purification in the spring. Sometimes it was celebrated at the same time that Catholics celebrated Easter, sometimes not. On this occasion, the Jews baked a special bread, matzos. There was a matzo bakery in the old town of Skuodas, on Laisves Street (see the picture). Lithuanian bakers worked there. There were two types of matzos: white and yellow. As my father worked in the post office, he knew a lot of Jews who would bring special treats at Passover time – a bottle of apple wine and matzos.

**The Day of Atonement** was observed in autumn. Then the whole bank of the river Bartuva was black because of the Jews, who were performing special purification rituals by the river, wiping something off themselves.

Another holiday, the **Feast of Tabernacles**, was celebrated in autumn. Then the Jews had something resembling a tent, made of branches; two or three men would go inside and pray there.

**Wakes** were similar to Catholic wakes: watching the deceased family member or another Jew. But the Jews did not drink vodka, and the deceased was mourned by hired mourners, at home as well as at the funeral. The hired mourners were usually Jewish, but there was also one Lithuanian woman named Albina who was often invited to mourn the deceased.

We also heard tales of the **Night of Horror**. It was believed that the devil takes the worst Jew of every 12 *Shuls* on that night. The men would gather in the *Shul* in the evening. They would take off their shoes in the cloakroom and go inside to pray. After the service, they would put their shoes back on and look to see whether there was a pair left over. If not, that was good; if there were extra shoes, it meant the devil had chosen one of them and taken him. Once the boys made a joke: when the Jews were inside praying, one boy came in and put an extra pair of shoes among the others. When the Jews were ready to go home, they put on their shoes and saw that there was a pair left.

They started to groan and weep; they took their shoes off again and went back to pray for a few more hours. And the boys were hanging around laughing.

When the mass murders started, most of the Jews were killed. Some of them survived, but their lives were ruined. The family of the aforementioned Khoikher, the owner of the wool cardery and spinnery, was deported to Siberia with the first deportations on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, 1941; Khoikher died there.

Kive Leizer, whose father had a shop close to our house, was also deported to Siberia. He came back to Skuodas in 1946. He sent applications to Vilnius and to Moscow, trying to receive permission to go to Israel. He even asked me to accompany him to Moscow, to meet Stalin, but my father would not allow me to go on such a long journey, saying that we would just waste our time in vain without achieving anything. Later we learned that Leizer actually did go to Moscow. Of course nobody allowed him to meet Stalin, and he was not able to go Israel. He went to Riga, thinking it might be easier to leave from there. There, in Riga, he married a woman of the same nationality, stayed to live in Riga, and died there.

Leiba, the son of the shoe factory's owner Yankelovich, was appointed editor of the new local Skuodas newspaper "Pergale" [English: "Victory"]. The people of Skuodas remember him as a fair and righteous person. Once, during a private interview, when he was asked how he managed to escape deportation, Leiba Yankelovich said it was probably because he belonged to the Communist Party.

The Fogelmans were also deported. The only survivor was their son Boris, whom we called Boria. When a monument was built in Skuodas, at the Jewish mass murder site, Boris Fogelman came to participate in the opening ceremony. I had a chance to speak to him.

A few years ago a relative of the Fogelmans and David came to Skuodas from Israel, looking for his family roots. I showed him the clock and gramophone bought in David's shop. We listened to songs performed by Dolskis and visited these places where the houses of his relatives once stood.

I could speak a lot about the Holocaust in Skuodas, about the exhumation and removal of the victims. But that is a topic for another interview.

Memoirs written by Brone Rusinskiene, living in Skuodas



## Annex 7

### Memoirs of P. K., born in 1925, living in Skuodas

I have lived all my life in Skuodas. I remember the Jews of Skuodas very well, as I communicated with them and worked for them. In a way, I am still connected to them, because I live in a house which was reconstructed from Meier's former warehouse. Nearby, still stands the house in which Meier lived; it also housed his shop, where it was possible to buy flour, bread, groats and other food. I heard that the Meiers emigrated to the USA in order to escape the murders, and that they are gone by now.

The Jews were very friendly. They always helped each other and got on well with Lithuanians. Their children had their own elementary school, and after graduation they would continue their studies in the Lithuanian gymnasium. Tuition fees was not small, but the Jews were able to pay for their children's education.

Skuodas was a big town before the war, even bigger than Kretinga. Almost all the shops and factories in the old town and in the town centre belonged to the Jews. In the centre, on J. Basanaviciaus Street, there was a two-storey synagogue, which was also their elementary school. There was a pharmacy owned by Mirkes at the corner of Gedimino Square.

The Malkinsons lived on the other side of the square. In their home, they had established a small manufactory of shoe boxes. As my father had died early (I was six years old then), my mother was very poor, and worked all the different jobs she could get to survive. I had the chance to go to school for only two winters. But when I was 12 or 13 years old, I worked for Malkinson, making shoe boxes together with his daughter. The workday started at 8:00 in the morning and lasted till 5:00 p.m. As I was living some distance from the workshop, I ate lunch at my workplace; mother used to prepare something for me. I earned 15 litas per month for my work. For a child, it was quite a lot. (For comparison: 1 kilo of butter cost 2 litas, 1 kilo of sugar 1.10 litas, one kilo of meat 2 litas, 100 kilos of potatoes 2.5 litas.) The work was not hard, but it was boring. There were machines to cut the paper. Then came making lines with a special device, then folding, then papering and pinning. And the whole day was like that. I did not count how many boxes I made per day. There was no time to be lazy or to rest as the workshop was in the same house where the owner lived. Besides, the owner's daughter was working together with me.

There were several shoe factories in Skuodas, and Malkinson provided them with shoe boxes. The biggest shoe factory was on Vilniaus Street and belonged to Itzik Kan. The factory employed around 150 workers. The other factory had around 100 employees. There were 50 people working in the wool cardery. There were also some other small companies and manufactories: a button factory, a windmill (on the way to Latvia), and a butchery where the Jews butchered their cattle. According to their faith, the meat is not clean if it was butchered by a goy. There was a leather factory, a dye-house for wool, a restaurant, and tea-houses. Lithuanians owned very few shops.

There were a few excellent doctors working in Skuodas: Boris Lev, Fogelman, Gurauskis, Jonas Sandargas, and Elert. The Fogelman brothers owned a few shops. When the deportations started, the Fogelman brothers were deported to Siberia.

Jews had different holidays, which they celebrated in various ways. On **Easter**, we saw them shaking their pockets, as if they were trying to shake something out of them. I heard that this was their way to get rid of sins.

They would **bury** people in a different way from the Lithuanians. The body was wrapped in sheets and placed on the floor in a room. Two candles would burn. Women did not participate in the funeral. There were just men, and a mourner by the deceased. They had a special cart to take the body from home to the cemetery. It was served by a single Jew, Deivis. He would harness an old nag, barely able to walk, and would walk holding onto the bridle. It was strange when some richer Jew was taken to the cemetery in such a poor cart: one part of it was black, and the other unpainted. The deceased was accompanied to the cemetery by men only, and a few hired mourners. There was one Lithuanian woman, Albina, who was often asked to mourn for the deceased.

We also saw **Jewish weddings**. Four poles were stuck in the ground, and a cloth was strung to them, like a blanket; it was something like a canopy. The bride and the groom were accompanied from home by their parents, who walked with their children three times around this canopy (I do not know what they called it), saying something. Then everyone went inside to celebrate. The Jews did not drink vodka. I have never seen a drunk Jew. There was only one shop for vodka in Skuodas. It was called "Monopolis." And Lithuanians did not drink much either: a few men would sit with half a bottle (a quarter of a liter) for half a day. So they would celebrate the wedding till the evening; then there was an invitation to go to the *Shul* to pray, because Jews did not have bells. After hearing the shout "*Gei shulvei*," we knew that it was time for the Jews to pray. By the way, Jews did not swear. Their main curse was "mishugene."

The Jews celebrate the seventh day of the week, **Sabbath**. They are not allowed to do any work on this day, not even to light a match or blow out a candle: this was forbidden. Richer Jews had servants, so they did all the work. And those who had no servants used to ask Lithuanian children to light the fire. When I was six years old, and already knew how to light a match, I was always hanging around Jewish houses waiting for someone to invite me. I got five or ten cents, I was going home happy, sometimes I managed to earn one lita or more in an evening.

Jews prepared special meals for Sabbath and for Passover. They baked special bread, the size of a griddle, called matzos. In the households of wealthier Jews, matzos were more tasty as they were made of better flour, and those of the poor were not so good. There was a matzo bakery in the old town; Lithuanian bakers worked there. When I was working at Malkinson's, they treated me with carrot sweets. They were very tasty and I have never seen them anywhere since.

Jews did not eat pork; their religion did not allow it. But there was a Jew named Kachkel living on Vytauto Street. Once he came to our house at dinnertime. We were eating roast bacon. Mother invited the Jew to the table. And he ate that meat with us, and praised it, saying how tasty it was. Once my brother brought his classmate Gytis to our house. Again, our mother treated him with bacon. Just then, Gytis's mother came by, and she was very upset when she saw what her son was eating. But then she calmed down, thinking that he was just a kid, and that there is no sin in that. I remember another Jewish family, one brother and two sisters. They were very poor, so they ate anything edible they could get. I also saw them eating pork.

We played together with their children. Our favourite game in winter was playing war with snowballs. We would play girls against boys. The naughtiest boy was Jewish; we called him

Abramke. Once he beat my head. But I was not angry, it happened accidentally, he did not mean to throw a stone at me. Maybe I was in the wrong place at the wrong moment.

I remember some strange Jews whom everyone made fun of. Cinderis was one of them. Rumour had it that his mind was gone due to too much learning. He would walk down the street, carrying a stick and a bag, and would put everything he found on the way into this bag. Wishing to make fun of him, the children once made a cross and threw it on the ground where Cinderis was about to pass. When he arrived, he took the cross and tried to put it into his bag. But the cross was too big, so he put in only part of the cross and went away. So it happened that the Jew was carrying a cross. People would make fun of him, saying: "Cinder, trrr..." And then they would quickly run away, because Cinderis did not like it, and would chase them with a stick. The Jews felt sorry for him, so they sometimes gave him something to eat and something to put in his bag. There was also a Jewess named Beile. She used to slaughter and pluck chickens for the Jews. She was very messy, always going around covered in feathers and fluff. So everyone called her a "brood-hen." Sometimes fun was made of the funeral specialist Deivis. Everyone was amused by his height, about two meters.

We were very sorry when the murders of the Jews started. Maybe because I live in a Jewish house, I often remember them, and always speak good of them.

Memoirs written by Brone Rusinskiene, living in Skuodas

## Annex 8

### **“We Appeal To You, Honourable Residents of America!”**

(Letter of Skuodas Residents Meeting)

Dear citizens of New York

The trial of Hitler’s henchmen, the Lithuanian bourgeois nationalist gang, has recently ended in Klaipeda. It has laid bare terrible pages of history: the horrible murders of peaceful citizens. Unhealed wounds have reopened in the hearts of relatives and friends; tears have again filled the eyes of people who remember the time of Hitler’s occupation. Everyone agrees with the judgement, according to which the killers received the penalty that they deserve.

But one thing does not let us keep silent. There was one empty seat in the dock. It should have been occupied by Jankauskas Lionginas, son of Antanas. Unfortunately, he has found a secure hiding place, and lives unpunished in your native city under the name Lionginas Jankus; his address is 105 Grand Street, Brooklyn, New York. As far as we know, he pretends to be an honourable person; he tells defamatory tales about Lithuania, and as a priest, he repeats God’s commandment, “You shall not kill.”

We, citizens of the Lithuanian Republic, residents of Skuodas town and region, are gathered to condemn the killer; we remember the horrors, and again the picture of those tragic times appears before our eyes, when the blood of our innocent fathers, brothers, sisters, children and grandfathers flowed. The conscience of Jankauskas is also covered by this innocent blood.

When Hitler’s people temporarily occupied Soviet Lithuania, a gang of enemy collaborators was founded in Skuodas. Lionginas Jankauskas was among those criminals. He actively participated in founding the gang that killed peaceful citizens and prisoners of war in the surroundings of Skuodas and Dimitravas concentration camp, with great sadism, without any trial. The killers would stick pregnant women with bayonets, would beat newborn children against the telegraph-poles.

Jankauskas, the leader of one band, often himself ordered such killings.

Several times, Lionginas Jankauskas, together with other killers, participated in the shootings of war prisoners near the Skuodas dairy. After breaking into the hospital, Jankauskas tore the bandage off the leg of a wounded prisoner of war, pulled him out into the street, and ordered his shooting. Here, in the courtyard of the hospital, this person was executed.

At the end of July, 1941, Jankauskas shot a Jew who was ordered to join a group of wounded prisoners; he threatened Lithuanians with shooting for speaking to Jews, and sentenced them to death.

These things are only a fraction of Jankauskas’s crimes, which have been proven beyond doubt by witnesses during his trial. We are referring this matter to you, so that you will know what kind of person is using your hospitality, the hospitality of the entire American nation, which is trying to extinguish discord and hate between our nations.

We hope that the residents of New York understand our desire for justice and sympathise with our suffering during the time of Hitler's occupation. This is why we invite you, residents of New York, and also honourable Lithuanian emigrants, to rise your voices in protest against the presence of the killer and sadist in your city. Do not listen to his false and hypocritical tales. Remember that his hands, which make the sign of the cross every day, are covered in the blood of innocent people. We ask you to demand that the Nazi killer not find a place for himself, not in New York, and not in the American nation. Let Lionginas Jankauskas take responsibility for his crimes in Lithuania.

We ask this in the name of humanity, in the name of the blood spilled in our nations' common fight against fascism, which Jankauskas sincerely served.

On behalf of Skuodas residents meeting, this letter was written by [names follow]

**Translation from the newspaper "Sovetskaya Litva", 1964, No. 70**

## Annex 9

### Memoirs of Boris Fogelman

The people of the older generation probably remember the Fogelman family. In fact, there were three Fogelman families. Doctor Yosif Fogelman had his physician's office in the same location as the present-day casino building. His whole family lived above the office. Mausha Fogelman's family had a big store that sold ironmongery, tools and utensils. And Michel Fogelman's family owned a shop in the location where there is now a radio equipment repair shop. The family lived above the shop. Most people may remember Michel Fogelman as a director of the Skuodas branch of the International Jewish Bank; he inherited the shop after his father died, and he started to work in the field of commerce.

I had the chance to have a cordial conversation with his son Boris this summer. He shared the sweet memories of his childhood spent in Skuodas, and also his bitter struggles as a deportee. I will try to convey this in his own words, as much as possible.

“There was a Jewish elementary school behind the present hotel. I finished four grades there, and then I attended the gymnasium, because the Jewish secondary school was closed due to lack of funds. My classmate, Rale Tanuraite, who was shot later, came from a well-known and wealthy family of tradesmen. I remember two teachers: officers, brothers Mykolas and Povilas Pakrovskis, who were never married and lived together all their lives. They moved away from Skuodas, bought a small house in Palanga, lived there till their old age, and then died one after the other. They are buried in Palanga.

Mykolas taught physics and mathematics in the gymnasium, and Povilas taught French and Russian languages and music; he was a very good musician.

There was discipline at school. The teachers were our role models; we viewed them with great respect. When teacher Zukauskas wrote something on the blackboard, there was such silence in the classroom that we could hear the chalk. There were no conflicts between students of different nationalities in gymnasium. It never happened that someone would disobey the teacher or argue. That is why I remember so well the only different case. Plechavicius's son Tadas was a very naughty child, and sometimes did not keep order. Frenkel Arnold was our German language teacher and our mentor. And Tadas's father was a general in the Riflemen. Once Tadas dared to say to our mentor that his father was a fascist and will shoot him. This was a big conflict; everyone in the class was disgusted by Tadas's impudent behaviour, and soon he was dismissed from the gymnasium, which was no honour for his father.

The German language was taught in the gymnasium, and we had to learn to speak fluently. Starting from the third grade, the Latin language was taught. All the languages were very important, as there was almost no literature available in Lithuanian.

There was also discipline outside gymnasium. Students could walk in the streets only at certain times. If someone did not obey, he was punished by having his hair cut, and this was a very grievous punishment for us. The warden would make a strip in the middle of your head, and then you had to cut your hair, whether you wanted to or not.

We did a lot of physical training; we played football and skated in winter.

Special attention was paid to cleanliness, order, and our uniforms. The girls' uniform collars had to be white and ironed; even the cleanliness of underwear was inspected, and no one was allowed to enter the classroom with messy hair.

There used to be parties on Saturdays. Students played the piano, read poetry, and danced. High culture, politeness, and invitations to dance featured in those parties.

Gymnasium students had a choice of eight organizations, various types of sports clubs, and political clubs for leftists, rightists, and so forth.

The Scouts organization participated in various activities: nature lovers, the choir, music enthusiasts. We went on excursions, often to Kaunas. Usually the children from well-off families went, as there was a fee. Children from poor families, if they were good students, were funded by the school. Tuition fees had to be paid twice a year. Free tuition was granted to excellent students.

It was 1941, the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, early morning. The Chekists were loudly knocking at our door. They explained their arrival as a search; they said they were looking for guns and illegal literature. But soon they revealed the real reason. One of them said that we would be deported beyond the borders of Lithuania. At that time I was seventeen; I still had to pass two exams to graduate. We were told to get ready in half an hour.

Mother was trying to pack more clothes, but father said that it was not worth it, as his two brothers were staying behind, and they could send our clothes later. I had the right not to go. Father was looking at me, asking whether I would stay or go. From his look, I understood that I could not stay, I could see from his eyes that he was asking me not to leave him in hard times. My brother had already graduated from the aviation school by then, and he was not at home. He found us later. Other families were also deported together with us, including the Mirkes family.

They took us to Darbenai by truck. Three cattle wagons stood there. Father was placed in one wagon, mother in another. They wanted to place me in the third, but as I was going voluntarily, they discussed it, and left me with my mother, as I was still young. We were taken to Naujoji Vilnia, where a few wagons were detached, among them the one with my father. We wandered through Russia for a long time. In Kotly, at the confluence of the Northern Dvina and Vychegda Rivers, we were transferred to three barges. We had to sit on the floor in the barges, like slaves, and then we sailed further upstream. We stopped many times on the way; some people were choosing us, looking for the most suitable workers; they were kicking us, beating us, treating us very badly. The disabled and elderly were of no use to them, so only those who were young, strong, and able to do hard physical work survived. While sailing, we were terribly bitten by mosquitoes. We became feverish. Most of us fell ill. We were not given any food.

Finally we reached the village of Sloboda. We were lodged with Komi families. Their houses were built in such a way that in summer they lived in one side of the house, and in winter, in the other. We lived with a family with an old man who had participated in the First World War and was taken into French captivity. Because of this culture, he was different from the other, almost wild, Komi

people. We worked cutting wood. The work was very hard, the food was very bad, we had no shoes to wear; we warmed our feet by the fire.

After some time we were moved to Syktyvkar, where we did similar work and lived in simple wooden houses. About 70-80 people lived in one small house. We had special barrels for heating; it rained through the holes in the roof. Mirkes's wife and son lived together with us. Because of the hellish work, bad living conditions, and lack of food, we were completely exhausted.

Liuba Ranconiene, a woman that we had known, a doctor from Taurage, worked in the hospital. At that time, thanks to an aunt living in Moscow, we found out where my father was. He wrote that he was together with Doctor Liuba Ranconiene's husband. The doctor helped us with food and medicines; she healed my mother. My weight was only 40 kg. I swayed when I walked, the wind could blow me away, and still I had to work hard, but the doctor helped me to regain strength.

Through my aunt in Moscow, my brother learned about us and our father. We started to write letters trying to find out why we were here despite having done nothing wrong. Father, who was in the Krasnoyarsk area, in the camp, and my brother, who was free, also wrote. I must thank doctor Ranconiene for my survival, since many people did not survive. It was especially hard for families with small children, as they could not understand why there was no food. Parents coming back from work brought water and called it soup. They were swelling from hunger themselves, they were fading like candles with only a little wax left.

I decided to look for salvation, but all the laws were against me, aside from one law in my defence, which stated that everybody had a right to an education. I hoped to use this law. It was the winter of 1943. I walked around 20 km to Syktyvkar. I went to the pedagogical institute; I wanted to enter the faculty of mathematics. I received a paper stating that I had been accepted, and I brought this document to my supervisor. After reading it, he said that we had been brought here for reformation, and this law did not apply to me. But soon after, he got an order from the trust company to send three people to study forestry in the technical school. This is how I got into technical school.

I was accepted into the department of automobiles and tractors, third year, according to my school certificate, as I had had no time to properly graduate and get a diploma. I received the average wage and a worker's card, and this was very good, because workers got 800 g of bread, so I could help my mother. When spring came, I worked as driver's assistant. In 1944, at the end of the school year, I got my driving license. I was told to return to the wood-rafting works for summer practice, but I refused, because I had worked many years there and damaged my health. I did not need any more practice.

That summer, I found a job in the Bureau of Geology; I was employed there as a driver, and I could help my mother. But soon I received an invitation to come to the prosecutor's office. I was accused of refusing to return to the wood-rafting works. I was taken to court. A mechanic who worked in the Bureau helped me. He said that according to Stalin's legislation, no person from the Bureau of Geology should be sent anywhere. Mentioning Stalin's name saved me from the camp, as we had no rights, and they were deporting people to the camp for even the smallest disobedience. I never returned to the technical school.

In 1946, we were taken to Vorkuta. It was very cold then. In that place of eternal cold, summer is very short. Only very small trees grow there. Snow starts falling in August, and permafrost lies



deeper than two meters underground. We had no right to send letters to our relatives or to receive mail. People could not stand it; around 300 people took part in an uprising. They were all shot. We were not considered human. We had to confirm in writing constantly that we were here, we had not escaped.

My father died in camp in 1943. We had received very few letters from him. They were very painful. He wrote about his terrible fate; he could not understand why all these things were happening to him. He wrote about famine, about how he was eating waste and looking for leftovers in the rubbish. Later, we tried to find the place where he was buried, but this was not possible, as the dead were all thrown like animals into a common pit which was then backfilled. Even their names were unknown, as they had only numbers in the camp, not names.

Our deportation was cancelled in 1956. We could leave, but not for Lithuania. I never stopped thinking about returning to Lithuania, although nobody was waiting for us deportees there; we were of no use to anyone.

I preferred to go to Klaipeda. My mother's sister and uncle lived there. On arrival, I went to the town hall, to meet Grigorjevas, the head of the municipality. After hearing my story, he said that we had been deported to the North, which meant that we had nothing to do here. I understood that I had to bribe him somehow, but I had nothing to give him. So I left without any agreement.

We were rehabilitated. Those who had worked in the North for more than 15 years had the right to get a flat or build a home. I returned to Klaipeda two years later and submitted all the documents. However, I found that I had been deleted from the list to get a flat. At that time, Zalyis was the head of the municipality. I asked for an audience. I talked to him and told about all my problems. He understood me. He was really a fair and just person; he put me back on the list, and so I got a two-room flat.

I worked in a mechanical factory in Vorkuta, as the head of department. I worked hard. It was difficult to keep the position, as I was not a party member, and there were a lot of applicants for my position. By the way, I received several offers to become a member of the party. In Vorkuta, in this "paradise," people of various nationalities were suffering, even foreigners.

I spent 14 years, four months, and four days in exile. My father died in the camp at the age of 52; mother lived till the age of 72.

We returned to Lithuania for good in 1979. My brother already had a flat. We had the privilege to travel for free to any place in the Soviet Union every third year. It was sort of a compensation for damaged health, destroyed youth, and a ruined life. But what privilege can ever compensate the moral harm?

I got married in exile; a son and a daughter were born. My daughter became a doctor and still lives in Vorkuta with her husband. She would like to come back to Lithuania, but it is not so easy, as there are problems with the flat. My son has lived in Riga for 16 years. He has a good apartment, he is married, and has two daughters. He is an electrician.

It took only half an hour to deport us, and now a few years are not enough to sort out many things. It is interesting for me to consider whom I should "thank" for having spent my best years in exile.

There must have been someone from the local people who “recommended” me. I wonder whether his heart is not aching today, if he is still alive.

However, today, when everything is in the past, I do not feel sorry about those years. I understand values, and I do not understand these people who fight for property today, thinking that it is the most important thing in life, while we deportees lacked even a simple piece of bread for many years. What I have in my life is enough for me; I do not try to reach for things that I cannot have; only good health is important. People were much kinder in exile. Everyone suffered equally, they tried to help each other, and that is what is missing nowadays. And today, it is easier for me to help someone than to ask for help.”

This memoir written by the teacher I. M. from Skuodas

## Extract from the Report of Interrogation

From the interrogation of October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1963, of the defendant Meidus Albinas, Jonas's son, born in 1915 in the village of Slapimas, Moletai region, USSR citizen, of Lithuanian nationality, not a Party member, having finished four grades of elementary school, married, no previous convictions, coming from a peasant family, working as a machinist in an automation tool factory in Kaunas, having lived in Kaunas, Kestucio Street no. 16, apartment 12.

I am explaining that at the beginning of the German fascist occupation, at the end of June, 1941, I joined the armed bourgeois nationalist gang which operated in Skuodas town. But I did not join them voluntarily. My living conditions were poor then, I could not have acted differently. At that time my girlfriend was Veitaitė, and her brothers were gang members. Besides, I had been serving in the frontier police until April 1941, and I was afraid I would be punished for that. I admit the fact that I joined the gang, but not voluntarily, as I was forced by Veitai and the gang leader Vasaris Kostas. When I joined the gang, I did not even know that the priest Jankauskas was a leader of the gang. I used to see a person whom I did not know, at the gang's meeting place. I saw him later in the church, preaching a sermon. Then I understood that this priest was also in the gang.

When I saw him in the church, he was saying that Lithuania had been liberated. I cannot remember his words, but his whole sermon was against the Soviet government.

I admit that when I was in the gang, I used to obtain guns from the gang's meeting place. I did not have a pistol, nobody gave one to me. As a member of the gang, I was an armed guard for four days by the Riflemen's Hall, where Soviet citizens were arrested.

While guarding the arrested people, I did not beat any of them. I never told any of the arrested to do any work, therefore I cannot confess to that.

I did not ask the arrested women to clean the floor of the gymnasium, and I did not kick them. I have not heard whether the arrested were forced to work.

When the people were shot in Skuodas town, close to the building of the Riflemen's Hall and on the gymnasium sports ground, I was first stopped by the Germans and held in the gymnasium. When they released me from the gymnasium building, Veitai and Vasaris forced me to guard the arrested so that they could not escape.

While guarding them, I was in the area of the Riflemen's Hall. Other gang members took the condemned from the hall, brought them to the gymnasium sports ground and shot them. I did not personally take anyone to the shooting grounds, and I did not shoot. When the shooting ended, I took two coats from the corridor of the Riflemen's Hall and put them in someone's barn or somewhere else. After a few days I brought them to Veitai in the village of Kubiliskiai.

I did not bring Soviet activists and Jewish men from Skuodas behind the Jewish cemetery, and I did not shoot them. I know that people were shot there only because Veitai told me about it.

In July 1941, I brought the arrested Jewish men from the Riflemen's Hall to the gravel pit of Kulai village, where they were shot en masse. Once Vasaris ordered me to do this, and the second time I

replaced Veitas when he went by bicycle to look for cigarettes. I did not participate in the shooting of these people. The first time Vasaris ordered me to come back straightaway, and I did. The second time, Veitas came back when the condemned were going through the railway station, and I went home by bicycle.

On three occasions, I went to the gravel pit of Kulai village to take the clothes of the killed people. When I arrived, the mass shootings were already over. I took clothes from the pit twice, and the third time, Veitas gave me the clothes when I met him on his way back from the shooting place. I gave these clothes to Aleksas Veitas.

I did not participate in mass shooting of the Jews in the gravel pit of the village of Kulai I in the second half of July, 1941. I do not know the circumstances of this mass shooting, and I cannot say anything about it. I know that the defendants Kniupys and Embrasus testify that I participated in this shooting together with them. I did not participate in it, and I do not know why they testify this.

I participated in leading women and children of Jewish nationality from Skuodas to Dimitravas in July, 1941. I did not know anyone among them. I led women and children from the level-crossing of the railway station to Dimitravas camp. But when the women and children were sleeping, I went home by bicycle to spend the night, and the next day I joined the column not far from Dimitravas.

The leader of the gang, Vasaris, helped to escort women and children only to the level-crossing of the Skuodas railway. From there, he went back. Before going, he appointed Veitas as leader. Veitas did not agree, and said that I should lead. Then Vasaris ordered me to do so. Vasaris told me that as leader, I would have to transfer the women and children to Dimitravas. I did not supervise the march of women and children as a leader, I just went together with other gang members.

I saw that, apart from me, no one was supervising the march, and the gang members were doing whatever they wanted. I did not tell the gang members Vysniauskas, Embrasus, Mockus and others to shoot the women who lagged behind. I know that women and children who lagged behind the others were shot straightaway. But I do not know who initiated this order. I did not notice that any woman or child was beaten. I saw the gang members carrying the belongings of women and children and placing these things in the houses of other people along the way. I do not know that more than 40 women and children were shot during the march. I saw only a few women shot. I did not lead their shootings, I did not beat the women, and did not shoot them. One woman gave me a coat and a pair of trousers. I did not take any other things.

I do not know anything about the shooting of four women and a child at the level-crossing of the Skuodas railway, because no one was shot there in my presence. I cannot admit guilt for telling Vysniauskas to shoot women there, because I do not know about the shooting as a fact either.

When the women were taken through the village of Lukne, I did not shoot those who lagged behind, and I did not tell gang member Embrasus to shoot elderly women.

I remember that when going through the village of Lukne, I walked in the front of the column, and sometimes at the side. I did not see and I do not know whether Embrasus shot a woman.

While taking women through the village of Lukne, I did not take any bicycles from Skuodas town residents Martinkus and Ziemelis, and I do not know whether the bicycles were taken from them or

not. I remember that one gang member's bicycle broke down close to the village of Lukne. I suggested he take a bicycle from somebody else. I do not know whether he did so.

I do not know where the village of Benaiciai in Kretingas area is. I cannot tell whether Urbonas and Serapinas live there. I did not shoot women there. I cannot tell whether Brickus shot women there. If this thing happened on the evening of the first day of the march, I had already left for home by then.