

Estonian World Council, said the adverse publicity all over the world [caused by the mock trial] has pressured the communists to take such action in an attempt to discredit the trial.<sup>31</sup>

Another trial witness, Herbert Philbrick, who had infiltrated the communist party for the FBI throughout the 1940s,<sup>32</sup> “said it was quite likely that communists did the bombing.” Fred Schlafly, one of the mock trial’s prosecuting attorneys “said Russian effort[s] to blame the bombing on some conservative ‘fanatic inflamed by the mock trial’ was typical of the communists.” He also blamed Kennedy’s assassination on communism.<sup>33</sup>

A decade later, papers reported on a “melee” during a protest of 2,000 émigrés outside the Soviet’s UN mission. At this 1978 event, co-sponsored by the EWC, some “demonstrators bombarded officers with stones, eggs and firecrackers and a scuffle between police and demonstrators ensued.” Four were treated in hospital, including a policeman. Two antiSoviet protesters were arrested for “disorderly conduct.”<sup>34</sup> This violence, unlike the bombing ten years earlier, could not be blamed on the Soviets. When event organizers<sup>35</sup> publicized this rally in their far-right Ukrainian publication, they claimed that “over 8,000” had attended and bragged that it was “widely reported” in the mass media. However, they failed to make any mention of the protesters’ violence.<sup>36</sup>

### The EWC’s strategic forgetting

This neglect to report on their supporters’ violence actions reflects a broader pattern evident within antiSoviet émigré communities. For decades ethnonationalist organizations representing the anticommunist diaspora from Eastern Europe have neglected to account for their historic complicity in Nazi atrocities such as the Holocaust. For its part, the EWC has yet to acknowledge its historic links to the profascist ABN, to the CIA’s far-right front organizations, or its close relations with Nazi Estonian war heroes like Gerhard Buschmann.

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**Estonia’s last surviving SS officer, Harald Nugiseks, died in 2014 and he was buried with full military honors. Estonia’s war minister, Urmas Reinsalu, called him a ‘legendary Estonian soldier’ who fought for ‘Estonian freedom.’**



**For bravery in fighting the USSR, the Nazis awarded Nugiseks their top medal the Knight’s Cross of the Iron Cross.**

**Nugiseks fought for the Estonian Legion, a division of the Waffen SS.**

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(For more on YAF, see p. 61.)

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After serving as financial minister for two Nazi puppet regimes, prominent Lithuanian banker Jonas Matulionis fled to Canada.



He then founded and led the LCC and LWC.

When the Lithuanian Canadian Community (LCC) was formed in Toronto, its founding president was Jonas Matulionis (1952-55).<sup>1</sup> As a top, Lithuanian banker before and during WWII, he served as Finance Minister in the pro-Nazi “Provisional Government of Lithuania” (PGL). It was created by the Lithuanian Activist Force, an antisemitic, anti-communist militia funded, armed and trained by Nazi military intelligence, the Abwehr. When the PGL was replaced by another puppet regime, over which the Nazis had even more control, Matulionis remained and was called its “general advisor for finance.”<sup>2</sup>

During the Cold War, the LCC’s Matulionis also played a key role on the global stage. Active in the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania (VLIK), he was its chairman from Nov. 27, 1955 until June 1, 1957.<sup>3</sup> VLIK was a self-appointed, underground government that emerged in Lithuania’s second largest city, Kaunas, on November 25, 1943.<sup>4</sup> Earlier that year, after Germany’s defeat at Stalingrad, the Soviets began forcing the Nazis out of eastern Europe. VLIK was created when it was clear that the Red Army would liberate Lithuania from Nazi rule. Within months, most VLIK leaders fled to safety in Nazi Germany. To avoid the Soviets, VLIK moved its base of operations to Nazi Germany in 1944. VLIK moved again in 1955, this time to New York. By then the US had become the new centre of the global war against communism.

Throughout the Cold War, VLIK worked with, and was supported by, its close friends and allies in the profascist Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations.<sup>5</sup> (See p.48.)

VLIK leadership was also closely linked with the Assembly of Captive European Nations, which received CIA funds through its front, the National Committee for a Free Europe.<sup>6</sup> (See pp.18-19.) After Lithuania’s 1991 independence, VLIK disbanded. It had outlived its Cold-War value as an instrument of antiSoviet propaganda.

VLIK created a front called the Lithuanian World Community (LWC). Matu-

lionis was its founding chairman (1958-61)<sup>7</sup> and thereafter remained on its board. The LWC unites the world’s anticommunist Lithuanian émigré groups. For 40 years, its global congresses alternated between the US and Canada. Since the 1990s, these have been held in Lithuania’s capital, Vilnius.

Canada has one of the largest concentrations of Lithuanian émigrés. When the Red Army was about to free Lithuania from Nazi rule in the summer of 1944, about 70,000 Lithuanians fled to Germany with the retreating Nazi forces.<sup>8</sup> In the Cold War’s first few years, 20,000 of these émigrés were welcomed by the Canadian government.<sup>9</sup>

## Welcoming the Nazis as liberators

Many Lithuanians welcomed the Nazis as liberators when they invaded (June 22, 1941) during Operation Barbarossa. The Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF) timed its “June Uprising” to support this invasion by murdering Jews and communists before the Nazi occupation. LAF’s Berlin-based commander, Col. Kazys Škirpa, formed LAF in July 1940. His memoirs show that LAF was guided, supplied and trained by the German military intelligence agency, Abwehr.<sup>10</sup>

LAF’s ideological screed, issued from Berlin on May 10, 1941, asserted that “communism is directly rooted in Judaism.”<sup>11</sup> Rife with memes about a “Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy” by “Jewish bankers and communists,”<sup>12</sup> LAF’s vile ethnonationalist diatribes, matched those of the Nazis and their “captive-nations” allies across eastern and central Europe. (pp.18-19.) Bronys Raila, chair of LAF’s Propaganda Commission, was the architect of its vitriolic support for ethnic cleansing. (Later, as an antiCommunist activist in the US, Raila was regularly heard on the CIA’s Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe,<sup>13</sup> 1975-89.) (See pp.10-11.)

LAF also created a Provisional Government of Lithuania (PGL) and, with Škirpa as prime minister, declared “freedom” on June 23, 1941. While LAF continued the killing sprees, its PGL front “allied itself with the Nazis and passed numerous laws depriving Jews of their rights, inciting violence and horrific murders.”<sup>14</sup>

Although the PGL shared the Nazi hatred of “Judeo-Bolshevism,” its regime lasted only six weeks. While Germany expected utter subservience, the PGL wanted its ethnically-pure, anticommunist state to be *independent*. But, despite its brief life, said historian Algimantas Kasparavicius, the PGL’s “devilish machinery bore its fruit.”<sup>15</sup>

By war’s end, very few of Lithuania’s

208,000 Jews remained.<sup>16</sup> As US-born, Lithuanian-based scholar Dovid Katz notes:

Around 96% of Lithuanian Jewry was murdered during the Holocaust, the largest proportion in wartime Europe, and with massive local collaboration by “heroes” still celebrated by street names and an array of events.<sup>17</sup>

There are now only 3,000 Jews left in this country of three million.<sup>18</sup> Besides killing some 200,000 Lithuanian Jews, the Nazis and their local partners also murdered untold other Soviet citizens. The official indictment of the Nuremberg trial of Nazi war criminals stated in that “mass killings of Soviet citizens” in the Lithuanian SSR amounted to about 286,000.<sup>19</sup>

## Matulionis and the Holocaust

Among the Nazi collaborators who fled to Nazi Germany in 1944 and later found refuge in Canada was Jonas Matulionis, a top Lithuanian banker. In the 1920s and again in 1940, he helped lead Lithuania’s Christian Democratic Party,<sup>20</sup> which was rabidly antisemitic.<sup>21</sup> Matulionis was a top executive with Lietvas Bankas, Lithuania’s member of Switzerland’s Bank for International Settlements, which received gold looted by the Nazis.<sup>22</sup> Until his death in 1980, Matulionis continued his antiSoviet activism from Toronto, where he led far-right national and international Lithuanian groups that still venerate and revere Nazi collaborators and Holocaust perpetrators as WWII heroes.

On June 25, 1941, the PGL resolved to “expand partisan activities in the countryside where” “gangs of Bolsheviks, Communists and Jews still remain.” On the next day, the PGL asked Nazi Gen. Robert von Pohl “to step-up ... the cleansing operation” and “allow our partisan units to operate more widely.” On June 27, the PGL recorded its “great joy” that the Nazis let them create their first police battalion.<sup>23</sup> Over the next five months it killed “26,000 Lithuanian and foreign (German, Austrian and Czech) Jews” held in Kaunas.<sup>24</sup> Other Lithuanian units murdered 110,000 Jews and 2,000 communists.<sup>25</sup> The Nazis reorganized Lithuania’s battalions into auxiliary police units that killed another 21,000 Lithuanian Jews before the Soviets regained control in 1944. These units also killed 50,000 Jews in neighbouring Belarus, and helped execute the Holocaust in Ukraine, Russia and Poland.

On June 30, the PGL decided to fund its battalion under Kaunas military commander, Col. Jurgis Bobelis and to “approve the establishment of a Jewish concentration camp” near Kaunas. This task was assigned

to Col. Bobelis and to PGL deputy minister of infrastructure, Juozas Švilpa. The PGL also declared that “Property nationalized from Jews and Russians remains the indisputable property of the Lithuanian state.”

Further citing PGL cabinet minutes, Kasparavicius noted that:

Matulionis suggested opening the declaration not with a vague and notional phrase about the liberating mission of the Wehrmacht in Lithuania, but instead to place at the beginning a specific “statement underlining the role of the German military as Lithuania is freeing herself from the Bolshevik yoke.”<sup>26</sup>

In early July, Matulionis met leaders of Kaunas’ Jewish community, such as Jacob Goldberg, chair of the Union of Jewish Soldiers. He asked Matulionis to “try to prevail on his friends in the Lithuanian government to intervene to stop the killings.” Ma-

tulionis replied: “The wrath of the people is so great that there is no way to stop these acts. When you leave the city for good and confine yourselves in the Ghetto, things will quiet down.”<sup>27</sup> This was reported in the diary of Avraham Tory, who became secretary of the Kaunas [Kovno] Ghetto’s Jewish council. Matulionis, he said, told them that: according to the most extreme view all the Jews in Lithuania must be exterminated; a more moderate view demands setting up a concentration camp where Jews will atone with blood and sweat for their crimes against the Lithuanian people. As for the third view, I am a practicing Roman Catholic; I ... believe that no person may take the life of another person.... Only God may do this.... [D]uring the period of Soviet rule I and my friends realized that we did not have a common path with the Jews and never will. In our view, the Lithuanians and the Jews must

be separated from each other and the sooner the better. For this purpose, the Ghetto is essential. There you will ... no longer [be] able to harm us. This is a Christian’s position.<sup>28</sup>

After this discussion, said Tory, “those present decided that the state of affairs in the city gave us no option but to leave the city and move into the Ghetto.”<sup>29</sup> Matulionis’ memoirs, *Unquiet Days* (Toronto, 1975), are silent on this meeting. In fact, said political scientist Anatol Lieven, Matulionis “skates as quickly as possible over what was happening to the Jews.” One reason for this “silence of the exile community,” he said, was that “some of its original leaders, as well as a good many ordinary members, had ... been directly involved in the massacres.”<sup>30</sup>

On July 2, as the terror escalated, Matulionis attended a PGL meeting to grant themselves salaries (retroactive to the June-

## Lithuanian independence gave nationalists ‘freedom’ to glorify their Nazi heritage

**D**uring WWII, Lithuanian ethnonationalists and their Nazi allies killed almost every Jew in the country and exterminated as many communists as they could. After the USSR’s 1991 destruction, Lithuanian nationalists regained power. Their main goals were to continue fighting communism and to whitewash history by portraying their Nazi-collaborationist forebears as heroic, antiSoviet warriors. For example, Lithuania’s postSoviet governments have:

- Banned the communist party (1991).<sup>1</sup>
- Exonerated thousands of war criminals (living & dead) convicted by the Soviets, including confessed mass murderers, and made them or their heirs eligible for compensation (1991)<sup>2</sup>
- Endorsed, funded or otherwise aided yearly proNazi rallies, often with government speakers. These ethnonationalist events flaunt fascist flags, Nazi symbols and chants to glorify perpetrators of the Holocaust (since 1991)
- Sought prosecution of Jewish partisans who fought Nazism, but did not prosecute Nazis.
- Glorified Nazi collaborators using public cemeteries, parks, monuments, inscriptions, museum displays, and by the naming of a university lecture hall and streets<sup>3</sup> (since 1991)
- Created the “Red-Brown Commission” in 1998 to falsely equate Nazism with communism. It has urged the EU parliament to rewrite textbooks and to sideline Holocaust Remembrance Day by remembering Aug. 23 instead, i.e., “Black Ribbon Day”<sup>6</sup> (pp.24-26.)
- Outlawed all communist symbols (2008)<sup>4</sup>
- Criminalized opposition to revisionist “double-genocide,” Nazi=Soviet narrative (2010)<sup>5</sup>
- Lithuania’s parliament is drafting a law declaring that “neither the Baltic nation nor its leaders participated in the Holocaust.”<sup>7</sup> (2020)

Despite COVID-19, over 500 nationalists rallied on March 11. Nazi symbols, like swastikas and an SS death’s head, fluttered in the wind. Banners and signs hailed the nation’s top Nazi collaborators and proponents of ethnic cleansing.

Among these heroes was Kazys Škirpa, the *Abwehr* agent who led Lithuania’s anti-Soviet guerrillas. Lithuania’s Foreign Minister and the mayor of Lithuania’s capital spoke from the stage festooned with the ethnonationalist slogan: “*Lithuania for Lithuanians.*”



### Kazys and Jurgis Bobelis

One of Lithuania’s many postSoviet politicians with personal ties to Nazi collaborators and the Holocaust was Kazys Bobelis. A veteran of the proNazi Lithuanian Activist Force, he dedicated his life to the anticommunist cause of independence from the USSR. In 1979, he became chairman of the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania (see opposite page) and was highly praised by Yaroslav Stetsko, president of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations.<sup>8</sup> (See pp.48-49.) Remaining chairman until its final year, 1992, Bobelis was its longest-standing leader.

His father, Colonel Jurgis Bobelis, was the proNazi puppet government’s military commander in Kaunas who helped oversee the creation of its concentration camp.

Returning from the US to Lithuania in 1992, Kazys was aided by the neofascist ‘Young Lithuania’ group to get elected to parliament.<sup>9</sup> He was re-elected until retiring in 2006. As an MP, he repeatedly denied his father’s key role as a Nazi collaborator.<sup>10</sup>

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