Lietuvos laikinoji vyriausybė. Posėdžių protokolai. 1941 m. birželio 24 d. – rugpjūčio 4 d. [Protocols of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 24 June – 4 August. 1941], ed. A. Anušauskas (Vilnius: Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras, 2001) ISBN 9986-757-45-2, 183 p.

It has turned out that even in comparatively small archives one can still find important and unexpected things. Prolonged and unsuccessful efforts were made to find the protocols of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Lithuania formed on 23 June 1941 and there was almost no hope left of finding them at all. Meanwhile since 1974 the protocols have lain quietly in the Manuscripts Department of the Lithuanian Martynas Mažvydas National Library. It was not until 2 April 2001 that the Head of the Department of Special Investigations of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, Rytas Narvydas, discovered them.

The question naturally arises why those researching the occupation period did not find those protocols earlier although many of them looked for the material in that Manuscripts Department. It turned out that Library employees hid them in an original way: they did not want this collection of documents acquired from a private person to be assigned to the category of secret documents and they did not inventorise them. In such a case all searching is fruitless – as researchers are not allowed to enter the depositories. However, even after the collection had inventorised under a very delusory name of “Documents of the period of German occupation”, a lot of time passed before finally they were discovered, because it had never occurred to earlier researchers “to tread the beaten path” again. One has to state that relations between academic institutions and archives and library manuscripts departments are not close enough. More than once academic publications and even newspapers lamented the loss of the session minutes the Provisional Government’s. However, the concern of the researchers was somewhat ignored by the National Library’s employees.

Making use of the discovery made by Rytas Narvydas, Arvydas Anušauskas, the Director of one of the Departments of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre compiled a collection of documents in a very efficient way. In the middle of June 2001 the book was already placed on the shelves of many bookshops. It seems there were two reasons for trying to do the work so efficiently: to prevent anybody else from doing

this work first and to have the collection compiled before the sixtieth anniversary of the formation of the Provisional Government.

The collection contains 34 protocols of the sittings of the Provisional Government and 33 laws and resolutions adopted by the Government. According to the compiler of the collection, these documents “will bridge gaps in our knowledge of events of those days, show the real activity of the Government that was formed during the uprising in June 1941, and help assess its role against the background of the events of that time”. As for bridging the gap in knowledge, there may be some doubts about this since these protocols are extremely short and laconic. Expectations that the Provisional Government did not continue a bad tradition established by the previous governments and saw to it that its protocols were more detailed were not fulfilled. They contain no new information, so consequently, the gaps have not actually, been bridged. This, naturally, is a great disappointment, and the compiler is not completely correct to maintain that the protocols will help assess the role of the Provisional Government. Since opinions about that role radically differ, each detail gains of paramount importance. On the other hand, it is due to different viewpoints and assessment criteria rather than the lack of documents that differences arise. The first reviews about the collection of documents confirmed that fact once again. Though the documents, without doubt, support more the sceptical attitude towards the Provisional Government, its apologists are determined not to step back an inch in their position. Hence, the disagreement deepened.

Nevertheless, the position of the supporters of the Provisional Government is weakening. It does not matter that they refuse to admit it. It is becoming ever more difficult to convince them that the king is naked. Besides, it becomes more and more evident that the members of the Provisional Government, whose reminiscences are sometimes cited like Holy Write, are frequently economical with the truth. For example, when they categorically denied that on 1 August 1941 the Provisional Government adopted the discriminatory “Regulations of the Condition of the Jews”. Despite the fact that they were announced in the publication “Laws, Resolutions and Ordinances of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Lithuania” (23 06 1941 – 05 08 1941)” as early as 1941, Juozas Ambrazevičius (Brazaitis) himself – the former Head of the Government – maintained that “the document was false”, and some emigrant authors said that its was a Nazi falsification.

The truth is that serious historians never doubted the authenticity of the regulations, and they proved without any difficulty that the argumentation of Juozas Ambrazevičius and his followers was full of holes. However, the die-hards held their grounds. For example, when Liudas Truska explained in minute detail to the director general of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, Dalia Kuodytė, that there were

insufficient grounds to doubt the authenticity of the Regulations¹, the latter, instead of admitting it, retorted as follows: “I do not say that the document is not authentic, however, the question is whether it is authentic. One should understand that it is seriously doubted whether the Provisional Government could adopt “an absolutely unnecessary document that was illogical at that time”². One can define such a strange and ambiguous position as follows: a step forward, two or even more steps backward. It is an irony of fate, however, that the article by Liudas Truska, bearing Dalia Kuodytė’s comments, appeared after Rytas Narvydas had discovered the protocols of the Provisional Government among which the “Regulations of the Condition of the Jews” with the postscript made by Juozas Ambrazevičius were found.

Hence, the people who in the summer of 2000 put pressure upon the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania to adopt the law on “legalising” the Provisional Government of Lithuania, that is, to announce the laws and resolutions adopted by that Government “a constituent part of legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania”, are definitely not happy with the unexpected find that had been made at Martynas Mažvydas Library. However, despite quietly resigning, they decided not to give up and demanded that the documents should be subject to judicial examination. According to them, the documents could have been falsified. By the way, this happens every time when some documents are announced, which ruin the idyll that has been created. One can understand the vexation caused by the shattered illusions, however, it is impossible to justify sheer stubbornness. All the more so, that the doubts about the authenticity of the documents are absolutely groundless.

Thus, the necessity of publishing such a collection of documents does not raise the slightest doubt. No matter how meagre those protocols might be, they still reveal at least some insinuations and the rebukes indicate that the “Regulations of the Conditions of the Jews” was a logical outcome of the activity of the Provisional Government and its attitude towards the Jewish community. Today it will be much more complicated to prove that it allegedly ‘did its best’ trying to put a stop to the extermination of the Jews.

It is true that the protocols confirm that the Government isolated itself from the rage of Algirdas Klimaitis’ gang. However, having learned about especially cruel massacre of the Jews in *Lietūkis* garage, it did not respond in the sensitive way that was shown in the reminiscences of some authors. All in all, the following rather ambiguous resolution was adopted: “The following has been decided: Despite all the measures necessary to be taken against the Jews because of their communist activity and sabo-

¹ L. Truska, ‘Kita versija’, *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, 2001, Nr. 1(9), p. 164–167

² D. Kuodytė. Dėl ‘Žydų padėties nuostatų autentiškumo’, *ibid.*, p. 167.

tage committed to the German army, partisans and individual inhabitants, public executions of the Jews are to be avoided" (p. 18). Does it mean that massacres are not bad, if it is not carried out in public?

It goes without saying that it was not the Provisional Government that created that terrible situation because, on the whole, it exerted insufficient control over the situation in Lithuania. However, a large part of blame falls on it too. For all that it did not voice a single protest against massacre of the Jews and did not at least once officially address the Germans with the request that the massacre should be terminated. Besides, it undisputedly contributed to ousting the Jews from public life since in a number of laws and resolutions, for example, in those concerning denationalisation and property restitution it approved the regulations that were discriminating to the Jews. Hence, it is quite obvious that by dissolving the Provisional Government the Germans did it a great favour. By the way, they did a favour not only to the Government but also to the Lithuanians since they stifled their desire to take an active part in the creation of the "New Europe". Unfortunately, some people still find it very difficult to get used to such an idea.

Arvydas Anušauskas is worthy of praise for his efficiency indeed, though on the other hand, he encountered no serious problems in compiling that collection. The number of documents is comparatively small, they are quite orderly, typed, and presented no difficulties in selecting or classifying them. In short, it was not difficult to prepare an irreproachable publication. Unfortunately, it abounds in drawbacks, which are too numerous for an academic work. On the whole, one forms the impression that the compiler has a vague idea of the most fundamental principles of archeographic arrangement of documents.

The way of publicising the documents is nearly a photographic one: the titles of the compilers of the documents and even the requisites of the forms have been retained, the structure of the text is changed only insignificantly. There are no editorial titles at all – the compiler of the publication decided that the titles of the compilers of the documents were sufficient. Partly it is so, however, in some places they are absent, therefore the reader has to elucidate the nature of the document by himself.

However, this is not the most serious problem. A much greater offence lies in the fact that the documents are published without any details of their whereabouts. The compiler vaguely mentioned in the introduction that the documents were stored in the Manuscripts Department of the National Library "among other documents from World War II". However, this is not enough because there is an acquisition fund, which bears number 141 and the title "Documents of the Period of German Occupation", and each of the documents published bears its separate registration number. Unfortunately, the compiler, ignoring the alphabetic requirements of publishing the documents, failed to specify that.

It was also obligatory to specify, which documents have already been published before and which are being published for the first time. It has

been mentioned in the introduction that the laws and resolutions adopted by the Provisional Government were issued in the years of German occupation³ (in 1941 rather than in 1942 as Arvydas Anušauskas states), but, not all of them. The resolutions that have been unknown thus far, however, were discovered in the National Library's Manuscripts Department. Unfortunately, the reader must find out all that for himself.

In publishing documents it is very important to preserve their authenticity, therefore no considerable invasions into the text are allowed to be made. Usually only punctuation, as well as obvious spelling mistakes are corrected, writing of capital and small letters is made uniform. However, the language and style are untouchable. If a word is has to be replaced, each such case is usually discussed in the notes presented at the end of the text. Arvydas Anušauskas seems to know this rule, but, he follows it only in part. For example, having emphasised in the introduction that "only spelling, punctuation and the proof-reading mistakes have been corrected", in the following sentence he already admits that he has slightly corrected the language of the documents. However, the words he mentioned were not necessary to correct at all (*sekantis* = *kitas*, *principe* = *iš principo*, *daviniai* = *duomenys*). Though they are considered to be incorrect in the present-day language, they do not pose any problems in understanding the meaning of the text. Whereas various writing of capital and small letters in the documents had to be made uniform, however, uniformity was achieved only within the same document.

The documents abound in different abbreviations. Some of them are deciphered in brackets, whereas others are not. Everything would be all right if the reader could find a list of abbreviations at the end of the collection. Unfortunately, there is none.

The compiler has already been reproached for publishing the documents without giving any commentaries. However, they are not especially necessary in that publication since the documents contain no obscurities. It seems that only the apologists of the Provisional Government reproach the compiler, as they are disappointed that Arvydas Anušauskas failed to present adequate interpretations of the documents. He is to be reproached for violation professional ethics. Vaguely pointing out in the introduction, that it was the specialists of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania who found the documents, Arvydas Anušauskas failed to mention that he made use of what Rytas Narvydas had discovered. Trying to steal the credit for another person's discoveries is not quite 'U'

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³ Most authors, including Arvydas Anušauskas, constantly repeat for some reason that this publication is available only at the Manuscripts Department of the Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. However, the Library of the Institute of History Lithuanian has some copies at its disposal too.