BOOK REVIEWS

The Vanished World of Lithuanian Jews (On the boundary of two worlds: identity, freedom and moral imagination in the Baltics, I), eds. Alvydas Nikžentaitis, Stefan Schreiner and Darius Staliūnas. New York – Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004. Pp. xv+323. ISBN 90-420-0850-4.

The life of Lithuanian Jews or so-called Litvaks is receiving a great deal of attention from researchers. During various periods Litvaks comprised an important part of the social landscape in the region in which they resided and affected economic, social, and cultural processes in one way or another. Therefore it is understandable that students of this region's past have paid attention to the Jews who lived here. In addition, the Jews developed a distinctive culture here, which has influenced Jews around the world; a large part of those who moved to Palestine came from this region and brought their ways of thinking and behaving with them. Therefore Litvaks are also receiving a great deal of attention as an important part of the world Jewry.

One of the most recent works devoted to Lithuanian Jewry is a collection of articles, *The Vanished World of Lithuanian Jews*. The name of the book in a way presupposes that it will discuss the Litvaks up until their murder during the Holocaust, when over 90 percent of the Jews living in Lithuania perished. Of them, as the article's compilers state, 'all that remains is a memory' (p. 1). Nevertheless more than just a memory remains of Lithuania's Jews; the cultural influence of the Litvaks remains for both Jews around the world and non-Jews living in this region. And it is especially this latter problem that is still awaiting its own investigators.

In the introduction to this collection of articles, the book's compilers, in a brief survey of the history of Lithuania's Jews from the fourteenth century until the Holocaust, state that this collection was compiled on the basis of papers from two conferences that took place in September 1997 at Nida and September 2001 in Telšiai. Besides these reports,

the book includes a number of studies dealing with pertinent issues like Lithuanian-Jewish relations, the attitude of the others towards the Jewish community, the policy of the Tsarist and Lithuanian governments toward non-dominant ethnic groups, and the Holocaust in the provinces of Western Belarus which once were part of the Litvaks' homeland, too (p. 3).

This fairly indefinite description of the book's content is nevertheless quite accurate, since it is fairly difficult to perceive this collection as a totality with some simple conception, that is, devoted to some clear

topical or theoretical problem. This is more the sum of articles devoted to individual periods and individual problems, which are frequently viewed through different methodological prisms. The articles range from an analysis of Lithuania's domestic policy during 1918–1940 to Jewish religious experiences during the years of the Second World War or an analysis of Jewish political behaviour during the nineteenth century. Thus it is necessary to describe this collection of articles as a totality of individual fragments compiled into one book. A thematic grouping of the articles into separate sections would have added consistency and clarity but the authors set out the articles in chronological order. In presenting the collection of articles, I will discuss them by grouping them by the topic investigated. Admittedly, the aim of this review is not a thorough analysis of the articles since a separate study would be necessary in order to discuss in detail each article and the problem investigated in it, especially keeping in mind that the very diverse problems that are investigated are seen from different perspectives. This review is intended to introduce and show briefly what issues are investigated in the articles.

Thus in discussing the articles found in the book, *The Vanished World of Lithuanian Jews*, I have grouped them into several main groups, ascribing to the first articles, which speak directly about Lithuania's 'Jewish world'. Above all, these articles analyse the activities and lives of Jews in Lithuania. Articles, which analyse the relationship of non-Jews with the 'Jewish world', are distinguished as the second group of articles. These analyse the attitudes and behaviour of the government and of various individuals and/or organisations in respect to the Jews. And finally the third group consists of articles, which analyse the annihilation of the 'Jewish world'.

In spite of the appearance of several works devoted to Litvaks and many-sided, complex studies based on original sources and devoted to various problems in the life of Lithuanian Jews, a great deal is lacking in the investigation of the activities of the Jews themselves and in seeing from their perspective. Therefore the articles by John D. Klier, Eglė Bendikaitė, Verena Dohrn, and Ezra Mendelsohn are interesting and important. Klier's article, 'Traditions of the Commonwealth: Lithuanian Jewry and the Exercise of Political Power in Tsarist Russia', presents the historiographical tradition of speaking about the Jews as about powerless observers of political events, about a people who *were* 'a people apart', who did not have 'politics' in the conventional sense (p. 5) and who in general had acquired an ideology of political passivity. Nevertheless, according to the investigator, this description is not accurate in speaking about the Jews of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations. On the basis of the study by Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, he shows that the Jews here had formed their own elective bodies, which, due to the favourable environment of the political institutions of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations, allowed them to become involved in political life, form a tradition of active political behaviour, and

acquire skills to actively function in political space. In his article, Klier presents how the Jews, by using the skills they possessed, attempted to defend their own interests during the tsarist Russian period. As Klier shows, their efforts to defend their interests were sometimes successful and sometimes unsuccessful. But the most important accent is that the ability of the Jews to mobilise resources for the organised defence of their interests grew steadily. In the first half and middle of the nineteenth century, according to Klier, Jews from the lands of the former Commonwealth of the Two Nations were the best organised and were the most active. Their representatives defended Jewish interests in a special committee created by Tsar Alexander I, the aim of which was to examine the status of the Jews and compile a code specially intended for them and later the representatives of Lithuania's Jews actively participated in various committees both in St. Petersburg and in Vilnius (p. 9–10). In the second half of the nineteenth century, the ability of the Jews to organise rose to a new level and grew from a regional level to a state level when the political activities of the Jews all around Russia became organised. During this period, Jews also began to use the press as a weapon in the political struggle; Jewish journalists were active not only in the Jewish but also the non-Jewish press. In order to block some local initiatives, the Jews were able to shift their activities to St. Petersburg, thus putting pressure on the administration of the local governor-general. This shows the new abilities of Russia's Jews to defend their interests (p. 11–14). Thus the author in his article presents the birth of modern Jewish politics in the Russian Empire, revealing its dynamics in the nineteenth century.

In the article, 'State and Minorities: The First Lithuanian Republic and S. M. Dubnov's Concept of Cultural Autonomy', Verena Dohrn reviews the life and activities of the Jewish ethnic minority in both Lithuania and Europe through the activities of one prominent person, Simon Dubnov, who fought for Jewish cultural autonomy. In her article she entwines several subjects: the struggle of Simon Dubnov for Jewish cultural autonomy, the development of Jewish self-government in Lithuania during 1918–1924, and international Jewish activities in seeking to defend their interests. The author shows that there was a discussion in polyethnic Central Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth century about granting cultural autonomy to national minorities. According to the author, this meant

the guarantee of national as well as civil rights for the minorities of the state. And the definition of national rights varies from time to time and place to place but essentially it means the use of one's languages and the acceptance of these languages in public life, business, politics, and the media; self-government of cultural and religious matters; and their own school systems (pp. 156–157).

Any discussion in the Russian Empire about the cultural autonomy of ethnic minorities was forbidden for a long time and only after the 1905 revolution did the regime allow this problem to be debated. Simon Dubnov,

according to Dohrn, immediately joined this discussion with the goal of realising it in Eastern Europe with respect to the Jews. He sought to raise these demands by becoming involved prior to the First World War in the political life of the Russian Empire. After the war began, according to the author, Dubnov saw new possibilities for solving the Jewish question, now on an international scale. Jews and Russian intellectuals, after organising in St Petersburg, also attempted to raise various Jewish issues on the international scene, for which a Jewish telegraph and special press agencies were founded (p. 157). Thus after recalling the dynamics of Jewish politics and their elevation to the state level, which are revealed in Klier's article, it is possible to see in this article the orientation of this policy to an international level.

The first attempt to implement the idea of autonomy promoted by Dubnov was made in Lithuania. The leaders of Lithuania's national movement were interested in attracting Jews and Belarusians to their side so that these would support the aspirations of this national movement to create a Lithuanian state and thus mobilise support against the Poles, who were denying the possibilities of a Lithuanian state and its legitimacy to exist as a sovereign entity. Thus the Jews were offered the idea of personal autonomy, which was attractive to many of them. Dubnov, according to the author, also indirectly contributed to the autonomy project; Shimon Rosenbaum, Naftali Friedman, Max Soloveichik, and Julius Brutzkus, all of whom participated in this project, were not only acquainted with Dubnov but had also participated with him in political activities when the idea of cultural autonomy spread (p. 159). Jewish autonomy, however, did not survive very long in Lithuania; it ceased to exist by the mid-1920s. The situation of national minorities in the greater part of Central Eastern Europe became much more vulnerable and unsure. For Dohrn this is connected with the inability of the national system to create effectively functioning institutions able to defend the rights of ethnic minorities, including the Jews, in individual states, as a consequence of which various ethnic minorities living in Central Eastern Europe frequently suffered.

Eglė Bendikaitė in her article, 'Expressions of Litvak Pro-Lithuanian Political Orientation c. 1906 – c. 1921' delves into the relationship of the Jews with the Lithuanian state. The author asserts that her goal was to investigate a Litvak community 'that had its own national interests, political aims and vision of its future existence in the Diaspora' (p. 89). The author, accurately noting that the Litvaks were not a single unit with a consistent, unanimous attitude but were rather a spectrum of differentiated attitudes, narrowed her study to 'the relationship between some Litvaks on the political right wing (whose position in hindsight is identified with the position of the majority of the Jewish society in the period) and a newly emergent factor, namely the Lithuanian national movement and the emerging Lithuanian state)' (p. 89). After discussing

the fairly brief Lithuanian-Jewish collaboration during the 1906 Duma election, the author shows that when the Lithuanian state was developing, the relationship between Jews and the new state was fairly ambivalent since it was not clear how long the state would last and how much it would eventually correspond to Jewish interests in just the sense that the creation of the Lithuanian state within ethnographical boundaries would in principle divide the territory inhabited by the Litvaks into separate states. But, according to the author, the anti-Jewish activities of the Poles and Soviet Russia as well as the cultural autonomy, which was promised by the Lithuanian state and which was attractive to Jews, played an important role for the Jews in supporting the Republic of Lithuania (p. 94). The Zionist Congress that took place in 1918 in Lithuania decided to support the creation of a Lithuanian state and some Jews were involved in Lithuanian political institutions, participated in military actions in fighting for Lithuanian independence and the dispute with Poland over the possession of the Vilnius region, and, as far as their possibilities allowed, supported Lithuania's claims to this region (pp. 97–103). Thus Bendikaitė reveals the pro-Lithuanian attitude of some of the Jews and shows the reason for this attitude.

These three articles devoted to the 'Jewish world' analyse the political activity of the Jews and show that the Litvaks were not just passive objects of the policies of others but were also active in political life, had their own policies and activity strategies, and attempted in one way or another to direct events in a direction beneficial to them by acting alone or by forming an alliance with others.

Ezra Mendelsohn, in his article, 'Some Remarks on the Jewish Condition in Interwar East Central Europe', discusses not so much Jewish activities as the circumstances which determined the trends in Jewish development in interwar East Central Europe. In describing the Jews in this region, the researcher asserts that great differences in opinion existed among Jewish groups and individual Jews and there was no single or predominant position. Mendelsohn, in noting that the typology he provides is incomplete or fails to accurately reflect the entire spectrum of Jewish positions and attitudes, shows three traditions that existed and had various aims and expectations; (1) Jews inclined towards integration (integrationists), who hoped to be able to smoothly flow into the social life of the new states, (2) Zionists, who sought to mobilise the Jews around the idea of modern nationalism, and (3) religious Orthodox Jews, who sought to preserve the traditional separation of the Jews through religion and the traditional way of life (part of these last also created their own branch in the Zionist movement). The investigator notes that there was no uniformity within these groups since the view of the social order frequently separates various persons and groups (pp. 73–74, 77). In discussing the ideas and aims of these groups, Mendelsohn shows how important factors affected their development: the integral nationalism of

the titular ethnic groups that existed in East Central Europe and the increased antisemitic feeling in the second and third decades of the twentieth century. This was a blow to those Jews who intended to integrate into the society of the new states. The formal and informal discrimination and alienation of the Jews, however, strengthened the attractiveness of Zionists and religious Orthodox Jews. The Jews during this period intensively developed Jewish nationalism, practiced Jewish cultural and religious traditions, and lived a life directed inwards into the community. According to Mendelsohn, that the environment in East Central Europe was unfavourable to Jewish integration and that an anti-Jewish feeling still lingered had a negative meaning for the life of the Jews as individuals but for Jews as a community this resulted in an advantage as the Zionist and orthodox movements acquired greater support and Jewish nationalism was strengthened (p. 84). In truth, the conclusions set out by the author in this article are poorly supported by empirical data; therefore it is necessary to view this article in the context of Mendelsohn's book devoted to the life of the Jews of East Central Europe during the interwar period.¹

The second group of articles that has been distinguished by us analyses the relationships of non-Jews with the 'Jewish world'. To this category we ascribe the articles by Darius Staliūnas, Theodore R. Weeks, Vladas Sirutavičius, and Saulius Sužiedėlis. Unlike in the aforementioned articles, greater attention is paid here to the position of non-Jews towards Jews or the policy of the public authorities in respect to Jews.

Darius Staliūnas, in the article, 'Changes in the Political Situation and the "Jewish Question" in the Lithuanian Gubernias of the Russian Empire (1855–April 1863)', presents the view of the Jewish Question held by the tsarist regime's administration in the so-called Lithuanian gubernias. Using primary sources, the author analyses in detail various projects intended to reform Jewish life in the Lithuanian gubernias and thus reveals the entire spectrum of attitudes that existed in the administration on the 'Jewish Question'. Staliūnas puts this problem in the context of the fairly broad circle of problems which the regime encountered. This detailed investigation allows one to comprehend the administration's views and behaviour in respect to the Jews without judging it as simply the totality of the anti-Jewish attitudes or sentiments, which determined various actions, but rather as an objective to implement a rational policy and ensure the regime's interests in this region which was not loyal to the Tsar's regime. This, of course, does not mean that officials were never guided by anti-Jewish attitudes but as is highlighted in precisely this article, this was a complex part of the policy implemented in consideration of the interests of the political regime (or more pre-

¹ E. Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars* (Bloomington-Indianapolis, 1983).

cisely whatever the regime considered its interests). As the author of the article asserts, in implementing a policy directed towards the Jewish minority, they were above all concerned about how 'the reform of Jewish conditions would affect other imperial subjects' (p. 24). Thus, the regime had to above all find or create a group of inhabitants loyal to the Tsar among the local inhabitants. Primarily this affected the peasants, who were seen as a hitherto passive group having no national self-consciousness, whom the regime could attract to its side and make oppose the disloyal Polish-speaking nobility (pp. 26–27). According to Staliūnas, several strategies were created to solve the Jewish problem: (1) to abolish almost all the restrictions on the Jews and equalise the rights of the Jews with those of other urban residents and merchants; (2) to abolish only some restrictions, first of all in the Pale of Settlement since the complete equalisation of the rights would mean Jewish domination in this region; and (3) to approve neither the abolishment of the Pale of Settlement nor the equalisation of Jewish and non-Jewish rights until the Jews had been broken of their 'bad' habits and until the local inhabitants were prepared to not allow the Jews to dominate. Thus they feared the damage, which the Jews could create for the Christian peasants, who were potential supporters of the regime (p. 28). Similar views, according to the author, were also held by Governor-General Vladimir Nazimov, who in 1860 stated that Jews could not be guaranteed equal rights. The Jews above all had to change their economic activities (not engage in illegal economic activities and stop selling vodka since this was greatly harming the morals of ordinary people) and become better educated (p. 29). Staliūnas describes in fairly good detail the plan proposed by Nazimov to re-educate the Jews, forcing them to integrate into the tsarist regime's educational system or attempting to change the economic activities of the Jews by making them into farmers (pp. 29–32). In truth, the tsarist regime did not support this initiative by Nazimov, as it also poorly supported later ones, which, according to Staliūnas, were modified depending on the circumstances. After unrest began and conflict with the irredentally minded part of the local inhabitants approached, in order to attract the Jews to their side it was proposed that the restrictions on them be reduced as had been done in Poland in order to separate the Jews from the rebellious Poles. But the tsarist government rejected these proposals. According to the author, it could have meant that the regime was afraid that if the restrictions on the Jews were abolished, they might begin to take advantage of the Russian peasants (p. 35). Thus, the author shows the fairly ambivalent relationship with the Jews of the northwest provinces, revealing that the Jews were a secondary factor for the regime and its view of them depended on the circumstances and especially on its view of the other subjects of the Russian Empire: above all the peasants, from whom a group of inhabitants loyal to the regime had to be created.

The articles by Theodore R. Weeks, 'Politics, Society, and Antisemitism: Peculiarities of the Russian Empire and Lithuanian Lands', and Vladas

Sirutavičius, 'Notes on the Origins and Development of Modern Lithuanian Antisemitism in the Second Half of Nineteenth Century and at the Beginning of Twentieth Century', are devoted to the problem of anti-Semitism. In his article, Weeks presents the special features of Central European antisemitism, later discussing the features of antisemitism in the Russian Empire and, finally, the experience of Lithuania. His study is more of a comparative nature, in which he strives to compare antisemitism and the conditions for its spread in the aforementioned territories. The author focuses mostly on antisemitism as a political, ideological movement. Weeks shows that unlike in Germany or the Austro-Hungarian Empire, antisemitism in the Russian Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century did not become organised as the axis of political movements and several factors could have influenced this. Above all no legal social and political mobilisation was permitted in the Russian Empire; therefore it is understandable that it was also difficult for antisemitism forces to operate openly in order to mobilise a political movement using anti-Jewish sentiment. Meanwhile, in Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire antisemitism was used as a certain political programme and was able at one time or another to mobilise varying degrees of support. On the other hand, as the author has noted, in the latter countries antisemitism was influenced by the development of capitalism, economic crises, and the economic success of some Jews. Capitalism began to develop rapidly in Russia only prior to the First World War. Therefore, in spite of the tsarist regime's looking suspiciously at Jews throughout the Empire (except in the Kingdom of Poland) and the Jews being a group which was legally and actually discriminated against, antisemitism did not become a popular mass movement (except in the Kingdom of Poland). In Lithuania, according to Weeks, antisemitism was also not characteristic of the Lithuanian national movement or political programmes. This does not mean that the relationships of the Jews and Lithuanians were good but that 'the Lithuanian peasant regarded Jews as part of the urban scene, alien from themselves, but a natural part of the world as it existed. Unlike modern antisemitism, they could not conceive of a world without Jews, even if their feeling toward individual Jews might have been hostile' (p. 53). The author connects the growth of modern antisemitism in Lithuania with the economic crisis in the 1930s and the late emerging nationalism of the Lithuanian nation, which influenced not only the self-awareness of the people and the forms of the political organisation but also their chauvinism and aggression in respect to other ethnic groups (p. 54).

Thus Weeks investigated antisemitism as a political movement. Sirutavičius, in making a very important analytical distinction between antisemitism as an ideology and/or political movement and antisemitism as a certain 'cultural code' manifesting itself as a steady, latent anti-Jewish attitude realised at the individual level through various political

and cultural practices (p. 62), began to analyse modern antisemitism in Lithuania in an attempt to reveal its social context. In speaking about antisemitism as an ideology and social movement, Sirutavičius' conclusions are similar to those of Weeks:

the Lithuanian national movement did not create political organizations and structures (such as anti-Semitic leagues, for example) which had the aim of mobilizing society for the struggle against the Jews as the agents of capitalism and modern society which could threaten Lithuanian identity or the aims of the national movement (p. 63).

Nevertheless, this does not mean that antisemitism did not exist in Lithuania. By analysing primary sources, the author shows that the anti-Jewish feelings at the end of the nineteenth century acquired new directions and became more intensive. (The author reveals this by comparing the views of Bishop Motiejus Valančius, an important social and cultural Lithuanian activist who lived in the middle of the century, and Vincas Kudirka, a no less important figure in the Lithuanian national movement). Sirutavičius convincingly shows that the most important reason for the growth of antisemitism was certain tendencies in the modernisation of Lithuanian society; the Lithuanians began to engage in new areas of social and economic activity, where they encountered Jewish competition. As a consequence, they began to view Jews as a certain hindrance to the modernisation of Lithuanian society. This anti-Jewish attitude existed, according to the author, together with the traditional Judophobic tradition of thinking and was frequently intertwined with it. The anti-Jewish feelings, however, did not grow into some political programme or mass movements and were influenced, according to Sirutavičius, by the fact that the modernisation of society occurred very slowly and the division of the traditional social structures and functions were essentially maintained.

It is worthwhile here to return to Weeks' assertion that the growth of nationalism matured Lithuania's antisemitism. Who knows if it is necessary to unanimously concur with it? The growth of antisemitism was affected the most by the fact that the process of the modernisation of Lithuanian society, which is discussed by Sirutavičius, was much more intensive during the period of the Republic of Lithuania when Lithuanians clashed with Jews as competitors in social and economic spheres. This should be confirmed by the fact that economic antisemitism was the most clearly manifested and intensively exploited in the Republic of Lithuania. Of course, an effort was made, as is usual, to use national sentiments in this antisemitism. Nationalism, however, was more of a tool here than a cause that influenced the growth of antisemitism.

Saulius Sužiedėlis, the author of the article, 'The Historical Sources for Antisemitism in Lithuania and Jewish-Lithuanian Relations during the 1930s', neither formulates the problem nor explains what the aim of this article is. In principle there is, in a way, no clear problem in this work since the article is created from several segments. Various issues are

presented briefly: the special features of the relationship of the Lithuanian peasants and Jews prior to the national movement, the views concerning the Jews that were expressed by several figures in the Lithuanian national movement, the co-operation of the Lithuanians and Jews in election in 1906 to the First Duma, the views held by Jews with respect to Lithuanian statehood, the participation of Jewish volunteers in the Lithuania's armed struggle for independence, the abolishment of Jewish Autonomy in Lithuania, the positions held by Jews in Lithuania's economic structure, the collision of various interests between the Jews and Lithuanians, the antisemitic attacks by Lithuanian businessmen, Jewish cultural changes during the period of the Republic of Lithuania, some expressions of sympathy for the Jews, the actions of the authorities in the fight against antisemitism, different geopolitical orientations on the eve of the aggression of the Soviet Union, the unrest in the city of Vilnius after the annexation of the Vilnius region to Lithuania, and some other problems. The author discusses many of these problems very briefly and only in very general terms; therefore the article sometimes appears to be more familiarisation than investigation in nature and outside the context of the entire collection. Perhaps the problem, which Sužiedėlis touches on somewhat more thoroughly (which is probably why he also devoted more attention to it in the conclusions), is showing that Lithuania as 'an independent state was not an antisemitic state' (p. 145).

In speaking about the articles devoted to the problem of the annihilation of the Jews, a comparison of the articles by Yitzhak Arad and Arūnas Bubnys is interesting. In their articles, both authors distinguish certain stages in the annihilation of the Jews and discuss the special features of these stages. It is here that the similarities and differences of the views of the authors become clear. Both authors divide the annihilation of the Jews into three stages. The chronological limits of these stages differ little. In setting the limits for the first stage, Arad indicates the period from the beginning of the war until December 1941 (p. 177), while Bubnys indicates from the beginning of the war until November (p. 206). The authors also devote the most space to this stage. This is understandable, since during this period alone 80 percent of the Jews living in Lithuania were murdered. Both authors note that during the first weeks of the war the mass murder of the Jews occurred rather unsystematically and was carried out, usually, by the local inhabitants. Beginning in mid-July the murder of the Jews became systematic with paramilitary units, created from local inhabitants and Germans, actively joining in. Finally, both authors assert that this intensive mass murder of the Jews could have taken place only thanks to the fact that there were many local inhabitants who helped in one way or another with the crime. Arad, however, asserts that the first pogroms frequently occurred at the initiative of the Lithuanians themselves and with the active participation of the Lithuanian partisans. The author essentially employs the recollections, in which the Jews themselves described the pogroms and the re-

port by Walter Stahlecker about the mass murder of the Jews. The author considers the assertions of the latter, that it was not easy to bring about the first anti-Jewish pogroms, a desire to stress the influence of the activities of the Germans (p. 178). Meanwhile Bubnys fairly cautiously evaluates the assertions that Lithuanian partisans during the first days of the war began to systematically annihilate the Jews since archival sources do not confirm it. The first mass Jewish pogroms were carried out only after the Nazi units arrived (pp. 208–209). In general, it is necessary to note that during the first days of the war partisans killed various Soviet activists and civilian inhabitants retreating with the Red Army, among whom were of course also many Jews but who knows if it is possible to consider this a systematic murder of the Jews.

The authors date the second stage until March 1943 and stress that this was a comparatively calm period since there were no mass killings of Jews. Those persons suspected of being criminals and rebels were killed. The Jews during this period were used intensively as a labour force. The authors note that the opinion was widespread among the Jews during this period that so long as they were economically useful they would not be killed (Arad, p. 194, Bubnys, pp. 215–216). This period of calm nevertheless ended and the mass murder of the Jews began again. The authors distinguish this period as the third stage, which continued until July 1944. Both authors note that the renewed murders could have been influenced by the great activeness of the Soviet partisans in the region of East Lithuania, whom Jewish escapees from the ghetto also joined (Arad, p. 195, Bubnys, p. 216). Already in March 1943 mass killings of the Jews confined in the ghettos of East Lithuania began again. The former ghettos were transformed into concentration camps. After the front approached, these camps were destroyed with part of the Jews being killed and part of them being sent to Dachau, Stutthof and Auschwitz, where some of them died and some of them, according to Bubnys, waited out the end of the war (Bubnys, pp. 217–218). Thus both authors show in fairly good detail the stages of the murder of Lithuania's Jews and the special features of these stages.

Yevgeni Rozenblat in his article, 'The Holocaust in the Western Regions of Belarus', reveals that the Holocaust in Western Belarus had different specific features than in Lithuania. The Jews there were seen as an important factor in ensuring the activities of the economic system, the smooth operation of which was important to the Nazi regime (p. 263). The author describes in detail the place of the Jews in the social structure and the changes after the arrival of the Germans and shows that frequently the Jews were the only ones able to ensure the activities of a large percentage of the enterprises since other people lacked the qualifications to perform various tasks. Rozenblat also reveals the brutal living and working conditions in the ghettos and in various enterprises. From this article it is seen that not just direct annihilation but also the slave labour and living conditions influenced the destruction of the Jews.

In the article, 'Lithuanian Participation in the Mass Murder of Jews in Belarus and Ukraine (1941–1944)', the historian Martin C. Dean presents facts showing that some of the Lithuanian police battalions actively participated in Jewish annihilation campaigns in Belarus and Ukraine. Admittedly, it should be noted here that it would have perhaps been more accurate for the author to have noted in the title that he was studying the activities of Lithuanian paramilitary units, which were completely under the control of the Reich, in murdering Jews in Belarus and Ukraine. Such a title would have been adequate for the subject researched by the author since the noun, 'Lithuanians' indicates too broad a group of people and thus tells nothing useful to a researcher or reader (unless the opinion is presupposed that the killing of Jews was characteristic of Lithuanians as an ethnic group, which is false since regardless of the fact that many Lithuanians actually joined in the killing of Jews; such assertions do not correctly reflect the entire spectrum of Lithuanian attitudes in respect to the Jews during the Holocaust). In principle, Dean catalogues in his article cases of the killing of Jews, in which Lithuanian police battalions participated (or are believed to have participated).

Gershon Greenberg's article, 'The Holocaust and Musar for the Telšiai Yeshivah: Avraham Yitshak and Eliyahu Meir Bloch' is fairly distinct, being devoted to the religious experiences of two brothers. The presented life and faith of Avraham Yitshak during the catastrophe that befell the Jews is especially interesting. Here is revealed how the evil done to Jews was ascribed by a devout Jew to a divine plan, for which all the people acting in it became tools. This faith in an all-encompassing divine plan and the merciful love of God allowed one to perceive one's own death as part of this divine plan and to meet one's executioners without hatred. It is necessary to note that the majority of this article, which is devoted to the search for God by two Jewish brothers, can be difficult to understand for people who have not delved into the special features of the Jewish faith. The part, in which the author, employing the evidence of witnesses who participated in the killings, describes how the Jews were apprehended and killed in Telšiai, is especially interesting for those interested in the murder of the Jews in Lithuania (pp. 233–239). This part reveals the special features of the annihilation of the Jews in a province of Lithuania.

Thus in summarising the collection of articles, *The Vanished World of Lithuanian Jews*, it is possible to assert that various issues are investigated in the articles: the activities of the Jews, the view of non-Jews towards Jews, the policies of various regimes in respect of the Jews, the mass murder of the Jews, and so on, and these could make this book attractive to a wide circle of researchers interested in the life of Jews in Central Eastern Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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