Check for updates

East European Politics and Societies *and Cultures*
Volume XX Number X
Month 202X 1–19
© 2022 SAGE Publications

10.1177/08883254211070852
journals.sagepub.com/home/eep
hosted at
http://online.sagepub.com

The Gaze of the Implicated Subject:

Non-Jewish Testimony to Communal Violence during the German Occupation of Lithuania

Violeta Davoliūtė

Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania

The outbreak of communal violence against Jews catalysed by the German invasion of the USSR was long neglected by scholarship due to biases against eyewitness testimony and the opacity of local events to outside observers. A growing number of studies on the topic have recently emerged, drawing from the eyewitness testimonies of Jewish survivors and previously inaccessible Soviet archives. This article analyses the lesser-known audio-visual recordings of interviews with non-Jewish witnesses to communal violence in provincial towns and villages of Lithuania. Collected decades after the events, they relate the same cruelty and destruction as recalled by Jewish survivors. As insider accounts from the local, non-Jewish community, they disclose manifold and divergent subject positions in the face of extreme violence. Marked by a forensic mode of discourse that accentuates individual agency and responsibility, they diverge from the prevailing apologetics of national narratives of the period. Instead, they reflect an immediacy of apprehension rooted in the intimate topographical setting of rural Lithuania under German occupation, a local memory not yet assimilated to national narratives of heroism and suffering. Finally, they express the memory of mutual surveillance, intimidation, and coercion that would endure for decades after the end of the war in these locales.

Keywords: *Holocaust; testimony; collaboration; Lithuania; memory*

Introduction

As distinct from the later process of genocide in central, western, and south-eastern Europe, where the Jewish population was deported to the sites of industrial killing, the initial phase of the Holocaust in the USSR took place “on the spot”—on the streets, in town squares, and in nearby forests.[1] Although this process of annihilation occurred in plain sight and was described in testimonies collected immediately after the war, the local dimension of this process remained opaque to outsiders for decades.[2]

The role of non-German locals in the process of genocide has become the subject of intense study and debate, centred on the notion of communal or intimate violence.

Defined as violence "rooted at the local level against targeted groups within the community,"[3] communal violence was sometimes called "intimate" due to the close social ties between the victims and perpetrators prior to the outbreak.[4] Academic explanations of anti-Jewish violence among local gentiles range from a resurgence of primordial anti-Semitism, the effect of Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda, the cumulative impact of Soviet and German occupation, political or social competition, or plain greed and opportunism.[5] This article does not mean to weigh into this debate, but rather to present a hitherto unexplored body of gentile eyewitness accounts recorded in various provincial areas in Lithuania during about a decade (1998–2009), and to consider what insights the distinct perspective of non-Jewish testimony may offer.

Hannah Pollin-Galay is among the very few scholars to have analysed the significant amount of testimony available in audio-visual format on the communal violence that occurred in the small towns and villages of Lithuania. She makes a productive distinction between "forensic" and "monumental" memory, yielding significant insight into how these events are remembered and forgotten through different forms of representation.[6]

Forensic memory, she says, is marked by a precise sense of context, a concern with the details of time and place, operative questions of the identity of the perpetrator, the means and timing of the events, and most importantly, with making assessments of individual agency and blame. She contrasts forensic memory to monumental narratives which are imbued with a forward-facing sensibility. Monumental narratives are less invested in the individual identity of the perpetrator or the emotions/agency of the victim; they are not especially concerned with the perpetrator's name, psychological characteristics, or ethnicity.[7]

Pollin-Galay found the forensic mode most prominent in Yiddish-speaking Holocaust survivors, especially those still living in Lithuania. Interviewed in the 1990s and later, they remained "closer" to the events than survivors testifying in English or Hebrew in America or Israel. While Pollin-Galay's study is based on the testimony of Jewish survivors, this article argues that her characterization of the forensic mode of memory applies equally to the testimony of non-Jewish witnesses.[8]

To date, however, Jewish survivor narratives have routinely been contrasted with those of local gentiles. In her analysis of testimonies to events in the eastern Galician town of Zolochiv during World War II (WWII), Anna Wylegała notes that Polish and Ukrainian witnesses, unless asked directly, "behave as if there were no Jews at all" during the period in June 1941, when the town was swept by anti-Jewish pogroms.[9] Fielder Valone writes that Lithuanians "emphasize the intense suffering of non-Jews during the period of Soviet occupation" and "minimize the brutality of the subsequent German occupation."[10] Omer Bartov asserts that in the memory of locals, "the previous inhabitants and victims are blatantly absent," such that the "memory of Jewish life and death" is "detached from the sites in which life was lived and murder perpetrated."[11]

There is little question that the prevailing post-Soviet Lithuanian narratives and commemorative practices have been focused on the suffering of ethnic Lithuanians

at the hands of the Soviets, building moreover on the Soviet tradition of anti-fascist triumph and collective communist martyrology, glossing over Jewish suffering at the hands of "local Soviet citizens," be they Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and so on. Professional historiography and public commemoration of the Holocaust are of relatively recent vintage and have yet to exercise much influence on collective memory.[12] That said, generalizations about how "Lithuanians" remember the Holocaust should not end with an evaluation of the prevailing narrative. In other words, if the gentile memory of communal violence against Jews in Lithuania has not been heard, this does not mean that it does not exist.[13]

Testimony to the crimes of the Soviets has been harvested from Lithuanians at scale since the late 1980s and processed into countless publications, memorials, and cultural productions, but the number of projects to gather and disseminate local memory of the Holocaust can be counted on one hand.[14] Although few have ever looked for it, this memory persists, even to this day, in the very locales where the events took place.[15] In Poland, for example, Antoni Sułek has written volumes on the local memory of Jewish life and death that endures in provincial towns and villages. The issue, as he puts it, is that this memory has rarely been communicated, it has not become part of public memory, and so it is in danger of dying with the biological carrier of the memory. The challenge of gaining access to memory that implicates the witness is formidable and requires exhaustive fieldwork, but it is necessary for the sake of reckoning with a traumatic past.[16]

A similar insight motivated the Jeff and Toby Herr Foundation in the 1990s to sponsor the collection of testimony of non-Jewish eyewitnesses to the Holocaust in Europe. As distinct from the USC Shoah Foundation Institute Visual History Archive and the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, which consist mostly of testimonies by Jewish survivors, this unique campaign has gathered thousands of interviews with individuals described by the Foundation as "perpetrators, collaborators and non-Jewish witnesses across 21 European countries." Supplemented with interviews from other sources, they constitute the main oral history holdings of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.[17]

Approximately 300 interviews with non-Jewish witnesses from Lithuania can be identified in the databases of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.[18] This article is based on the examination of 150 interviews selected on the basis of their availability online and topographical coverage of events in provincial towns and villages, as distinct from the larger cities of Kaunas or Vilnius. Some of these testimonies are somewhat evasive or vague, presumably because of the complicity of the witness in the events related. The vast majority, however, are surprisingly frank and forthcoming, providing detailed information concerning episodes of communal violence by gentile residents against their Jewish neighbours, and more than a few show a clear determination to name individual perpetrators.

Virtually unknown to the broad public and little studied even by specialists, these testimonies have yet to be communicated and assimilated into national, regional, or

transnational collective memory. They deserve recognition as powerful insider testimony to atrocities committed by members of their own communities. They not only confirm the darkest accounts of Jewish survivors but also attest to the differentiated impact of, and reactions to, extreme violence among the non-Jewish community. In addition to making direct observations of events witnessed, the testimonies also relate intimate conversations arising within the family and local community, where taboo subjects like the looting of property and sexual violence were addressed.

When listening to such horrific testimonies of atrocity, a stream of questions floods the mind. How could such terrible actions occur? What could possibly have motivated the killers to resort to such extreme violence? Were all members of the local communities supportive of the violence? And if some were opposed, why did they not stop it? It is beyond the scope of this article to address these questions, nor can these testimonies, taken on their own, provide reliable answers. The material in this archive is vast, the topic of communal violence is complex, and it is beyond the scope of this article to analyse the events and actors mentioned in these testimonies as a historian should. Instead, they are analysed here as expressions of memory, building upon Pollin-Galay's analysis of forensic discourse among Jewish survivors, and Michael Rothberg's efforts to develop a more nuanced approach to the perspective of the "bystander," in what he calls the "implicated subject," to be described in more detail below.[19]

Testimony and Place

The audio-visual interviews conducted by the Herr Foundations contribute to what could be considered as the third wave of Holocaust testimony, coinciding with the end of the Cold War. The first wave emerged in the immediate aftermath of WWII, as Jewish survivors organized a massive effort to collect grassroots testimony to what they called the "catastrophe" or *khurbn* in the Yiddish term commonly used at the time. Laura Jockusch has documented how Jews in fourteen countries established historical commissions, documentation centres, and projects to "document, witness and testify" to the recent annihilation of European Jews.[20]

As concerns the genocide in Lithuania, an important early collection of survivor testimonies was compiled by Leyb Koniuchowsky.[21] An engineer from Alytus, he was imprisoned and then escaped from the Kaunas ghetto and survived in hiding until the German retreat. From 1944 to 1946, he travelled across Poland and Germany, gathering testimonies from Jewish survivors, amassing a total of 1,682 pages of eyewitness accounts by 150 survivors from 171 provincial towns and villages of Lithuania. He completed the work in 1949 and deposited copies with YIVO in New York and at Yad Vashem.[22]

However, the eyewitness testimony of Jewish survivors was received with scepticism and neglect. According to Jockusch, "historians cultivated a suspicion of memory and the accounts of contemporaries and studied the Holocaust almost entirely

without the voices of its victims."[23] Omer Bartov explains this neglect as the result of the focus of the early postwar historiography and judicial processes on the German perpetrators and German genocidal policy. The fate of the Jews came into view only after they had been separated from their communities of origin and placed into ghettoes or concentration camps. As a result, although most of the Jewish victims come from Eastern Europe, the places where they lived "remained a largely uncharted territory for the most prominent historians of the Holocaust."[24]

Attitudes towards testimony would change, driven by innovations in judicial process like the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961, which heralded a "revolution of the victim," and the "era of the witness"[25] and what is now seen as the second generation of Holocaust testimony by authors like Elie Wiesel.[26] Nevertheless, the indifference of West Europeans and their reluctance to examine the "messy details" of inter-ethnic relations behind the Iron Curtain would continue to thwart the development of systemic studies of the triangular relations between Germans, Jews, and the local population.[27] A similar prejudice is noted by Stathis Kalyvas in the "urban bias" that prevents metropolitan scholars from perceiving the dynamic processes at work in outbreaks of intimate violence in rural, peripheral areas.[28]

The enormous geographic scale of the Nazi empire and the closed nature of Soviet society and scholarship meant that research would begin to provide sufficient insight into the topic only with the collapse of the USSR, the opening of archives, and the spread of professional historical research throughout the former Eastern bloc, driven by growing collaboration between foreign and native scholars. Only after a critical mass of microhistories had been conducted across the region could a comprehensive picture of communal violence begin to emerge.

Today, with the abundant availability of testimonial material, the challenge lies not in the lack of information but in the complexity of the social relations that have been revealed and the inadequacy of the critical vocabulary used to describe it. To address this problem, Michael Rothberg introduced the concept of the implicated subject, to enable a more refined understanding of the diversity of roles played by historical actors synchronically, that is, at the time of the events, and diachronically, as remembering subjects looking back at the events from the context of the present.[29] He notes how the environment of extreme violence generates a "whole cast of characters marked by shades or degrees of complicity" over and above the perpetrators and victims.[30] To understand this spectrum of subjective positions requires a more nuanced analysis of the topography of violence and how it is rooted in a particular locale. And it is here that the testimonies of the non-Jewish witnesses have a unique value. These witnesses are certainly no less fallible in their memory of events than others, and each account must be assessed in a critical manner for bias and inconsistency, and compared with other sources. Nevertheless, the distinct perspective of these non-Jewish witnesses may lend support to ongoing efforts to understand the historical microcosm of the event.

Like the Yiddish-speaking Holocaust survivors interviewed by Pollin-Galay, they retain a closeness to events, to the topography of the scenes described. But insofar as they come not from the community of victims but from the community of implicated subjects or perpetrators or helpers, they speak from a different vantage point. Their testimonies hold the potential to help restore fragments of the scenes of neighbours' dislocation, violence, or humiliation; the names and the last words of the victims; the portraits; the speech of the perpetrators, heard or reported; and the items of the victims that travelled around the local area long after the victims' death.

The majority of the 150 accounts examined for this article were collected by Saulius Beržinis (from 1998 to 2004) or Alicija Žukauskaitė (from 2005 to 2008), both of whom are professional filmmakers and remarkably talented interlocutors.[31] Their approach was to find and interview only those individuals who could provide direct, eyewitness accounts of what they saw happening to their Jewish neighbours or those who were involved in perpetration. Aside from a few introductory questions about the subject's identity, there was no effort to solicit personal views or interpretations. Witnesses were asked to provide their name, place of birth, and personal background. Then followed a simple set of questions delivered in a fluid manner, designed to prompt recollection about the events at the beginning of the war without leading the witness, other than to provide details concerning the course events, the identity of actors, and the accuracy of recollection.

They made extensive preparations for each interview, including research into the files gathered on war crimes by the Soviet authorities. The interviews were conducted in Lithuanian, the native tongue of the eyewitnesses and the interviewers. The visit of the film crew was always preceded by preliminary visits to discuss the questions to be asked and to prepare for the recording process. Most of the interviews were held in the home of the interlocutor; in some cases (mostly those conducted by Beržinis), they also went outside to conduct interviews at the site of the events related. The resulting intimacy of the dialogue, which the project director Nathan Beyrak highlights as the essence of oral testimony, was enabled by the close rapport, detailed preparation, and the linguistic, social, and cultural closeness among Lithuanian interviewers and the interviewees.[32]

The Spectacle of Extreme Violence

Jewish survivor testimonies highlight the spectacular, public, and even ritualized forms taken by communal violence during the first days of the German invasion of the USSR.[33] The testimony of non-Jewish locals confirms the social and psychological impact of this spectacle while conveying the broad range of responses and reactions. The motif that comes through most strongly is how extreme violence suddenly transforms public space into a zone of fear and domination.

Jovita Benetienė, née Dargytė (b. 1930), a resident of Darbėnai, recalls the sight of the public torture of the Reisman brothers, local pro-Soviet activists, which she, an eleven-year-old at the time, observed with horror:

> They caught the two brothers somewhere on Vaineikiai street and forced them to crawl on their hands and knees to the central square . . . They were educated people, intelligent. Their father was a barber, he lived nearby . . . There was a podium, they dragged them onto the podium and tortured them, gave them some chemical to drink, put burning cigarettes in their mouths . . . Then they brought some older Jews and a boy, my age. They put these two brothers on the backs of those elderly Jews and told the boy to whip them. / Did he whip them? / No . . . Yes, he did, he was a child, my age, terrified. He was told to whip so he whipped.

Benetienė confirms that many local people were watching this spectacle, confused. She had no understanding of the purpose of the torture and did not recognize the perpetrators but heard them speaking in Lithuanian.[34]

For Regina Prudnikova, née Kirvelaitytė (b. 1925), the onset of violence catalysed a chain reaction of social disintegration, from murder to the looting of property, in her native town of Pilviškiai.

> The Germans arrived, and they shot Mauškė (Moshe). I myself saw how he was running across the road because I was standing right there. One German asked some person about him and that person answered that he is Jewish, and so the German shot him. And then the robbery began—everyone went and carried however much they could. Except for the Germans, they didn't take anything. Lithuanians, the locals from Pilviškiai, they took everything.[35]

The reign of violence unleashed by the invasion gave collaborators licence to wreak havoc. Aldona Dranseikienė, born in 1932 near the town of Panemunėlis, recalls hearing the singing of the white bands after they shot the two richest Jewish families in town and stole their belongings, instead of delivering them to German captivity. She also refers to the domination of locals not involved in the killing:

> Olkinas was a pharmacist in Panemunėlis, Jofė had a mill. They were the two richest Jews in town. Had they been taken to the ghetto, the white bands of Panemunėlis would have gotten nothing. So they killed them and probably made up some story to explain why they did not deliver them. In any case, then they got drunk and sang . . . They forced a man, our neighbour, to go round the neighbourhood to collect alcohol for them. Everyone was afraid of them and so they gave them whatever they had. Along the way the men shot our dog.[36]

For Leonas Levinskas (b. 1931), a schoolboy of about ten at the time, the transformation through violence of familiar places in his native town of Žagarė made the deepest impression. He was going to school along his usual path when he saw body parts, bits of food, and passports with Jewish names in puddles of blood.

> I was especially terrified by how some people were standing right there, in these puddles . . . it was in the market. Some men were standing in a puddle of blood, smoking,

> laughing; several women were crouching and selling milk products in a puddle of blood . . . I felt sick. I did not go to school. I went home and stayed away from school for several days. When I started going to school again, I did not walk through the centre, I took a longer path, taking different streets, so as not to see this place again.[37]

Levinskas also remembered the day before hearing the sounds of gunshots, shouting and then the singing:

> When they were shooting in the park one could hear the orders shouted in Lithuanian and in German. "Feuer" in German means fire . . . Ta, ta, ta, and then such terrible shouting a-a-a. When many people are shouting, the sound first goes up and then quiets down and dies. One could hear this the entire day. During that day my father turned grey because we could hear everything . . . We were sticking our heads under pillows to hide from these sounds, but it did not help. The shots and the moaning lasted all day till the evening . . . And then in the evening we heard singing, beautiful singing, in Lithuanian. It was those who were shooting—they got drunk to their fill and were celebrating the end of the workday . . . This sound was even more terrible than all the horrors before—to see that people are capable of committing such deeds, and with a song, that they enjoy doing it.

The prevalence of drunken euphoria among the perpetrators in public places made a deep imprint in the memory on multiple witnesses and forms a recurring motif in their accounts: "They were drunk. They were singing," recalls Adolfina Gylienė, nee Stankaitytė (b. 1931), in Žagarė.[38] Regina Prudnikova, née Kirvelaitytė, recalls the singing of Jew-shooters drinking in the restaurant: "They were drinking and singing in Štomberg's restaurant."[39] Stanislava Gaučienė, née Čiužaitė (b. 1918), from a village near Krakės tells of locals hearing singing in Lithuanian after the shooting.[40] Juozas Palšauskas (b. 1922 in Ariogala), tells how the perpetrators were singing after shooting all night as well.[41] Filomena Streikienė (b. 1922 in Žiežmariai) recalls,

> I was working in a canteen. They came there to eat. There were several of them. They came in singing, and this song was ringing in my ears for a long time, maybe some five years. The song of murderers . . . A terrible song.[42]

Another widespread motif conveying the participation of locals concerns the looting of the property of the victims. However, the positionality of the eyewitnesses and other locals towards this evidently widespread phenomenon was not uniform. In some testimonies, looting comes across as an integral part of the spectacle of violence with many benefitting and some seeing it as a shameful act. Ona Jačiunskienė (b. 1923) was then an eighteen-year-old worker at the Prienai brewery who lived right in the centre of town:

> We did not work on Sundays, so more people were gathered in the square than usual. The windows of our house faced the square. I noticed that something was happening.

> I ran out and saw German soldiers open the door and windows [of Jewish houses] with gun barrels, shouting to the crowd, "go and take whatever you want." Some went in and took but others did not, they simply watched. I stood behind this crowd and watched to see what would happen. The Germans saw that some people were not taking anything, so they started carrying out either pillows or covers from the Jewish houses, throwing them towards those who were standing and watching. I stepped further and kept watching what was going on, what was happening. The Germans were throwing and throwing all sorts of clothing and the Jewish people were crying and shouting in their houses. One young German took note of me, a young girl, poorly dressed in a homemade linen shirt and a black skirt. He brought a pillow to me. A totally new, feather pillow. "Take this," he told me. I had studied German and understood what he said. "Girl, take it!" I said "No, I will not take it." But several other people were stretching out their hands "Give it to us!" The soldier took out his pistol and told them to step back. He once again told me to take the pillow. I said no. So, he took out a dagger and cut this pillow and threw it on the ground right there with the feathers flying right on these people. And I ran right home to tell what was happening.

Vytautas Račickas (b. 1923) comments on how the act of looting was perceived by some as shameful and wrong, and how even those engaged in the crime employed euphemisms to discuss the activity.

> When Lithuania was independent, people would have called this theft, and called the thief a horrible person. Nobody wanted to have anything to do with a thief. But when some people started taking Jewish property, they invented the following phrase: "to go mushroom picking, to collect mushrooms." They would hide this from the authorities but not from each other.

When asked whether the beneficiaries felt sorry for the Jews, he responded,

> Who can say today what they felt? I think people felt sympathy, but regarding the property . . . I think they thought that by the time they arrived at the house, it was all already over. If not you, then a German or somebody else will take this property.[43]

While some witnesses describe this transformation as a disintegration of their lived environment, emphasizing how this transformation was etched in their memory for life, others profess not to remember the details of violence. As an example of the first, Bronė Gudžiūnienė (b. 1932 in a village near Jurbarkas) recalls how she and her father were driving in a cart to the town of Veliuona to buy gas for the lamps, soup, and other things. As they passed the Lithuanian cemetery, they chanced upon the following scene:

> And I saw how they took a girl, perhaps three years of age, perhaps four, a chubby child, by her legs, and smacked her into a birch tree. There was a birch tree there. I think the birch tree is still there . . . The parents threw themselves towards her, so they

> grabbed the parents and pushed them into the pit. My father quickly urged on the horse so that I would not see any more of what was happening there . . . I was so terrified; I cried the entire time for this girl and was asking my father: "Why did they do this? Why did they do this to them?[44]

The explicit detail of this scene, etched in the memory of a nine-year-old child, contrasts with the inability or unwillingness of interviewed active perpetrators to recall any graphic details of the killing of women or children they witnessed.

As an example of those who profess not to remember such details, Vaclovas Klimas (b. 1916 near Utena) talks of how he, a farmer, was recruited by the local estate owner to join a group of local "activists." Initially organized to "fight the Soviets and teach a lesson to the pro-Soviet activists," they ended up murdering the Jewish residents of neighbouring towns. Responding to the calm but persistent questioning of Alicija Žukauskaitė, Klimas relates his role in escorting the Jewish residents from the town of Inturkė to their place of execution at the Roša estate, which belonged to the leader of this "activist" group. Klimas says he was promised a horse in exchange for the service. When he appears reluctant to say any more, Žukauskaitė asks for clarification. Were there any children among the those he escorted?

> I do not remember. Maybe there were, where would they go? I do not remember. I know there were women . . . You see, at the time we were all a bit hit in the head. Such deeds are terrible deeds. There are not many memories left.

Žukauskaitė's questioning continues: "Some small children, teenagers?" / "I do not remember children. Women, women, those I remember." / "Did you see their faces?" / "No, only their backs." / "Did you shoot?" / "I tried."/ "How many times? / Perhaps some five times. I was about 15–20 meters away." / "Were there women who were still alive after shooting?" / "I do not remember. I think some men did not die right away, but regarding women I do not remember." / "Did you confess this in 1945?" / "I said I was there but I did not say that I shot." / "Did you confess this in 1951?" / "I admitted I was there but I did not confess to shooting. I am telling this only now."

Klimas concludes his testimony noting that in the end, he was given a horse for his service, an old horse that he believes belonged to one of the murdered Jewish families. When asked what he thought about this now, Klimas called it a tragedy:

> One wants to show off, to be a hero, but this is how it ends . . . These Jews would have been annihilated anyway, but why did I need to put my hand to it? To shoot an unarmed person is below any measure, it fits into no frame.[45]

The testimony of another witness, Antanas Galvydis, provides an example, rare for this corpus, of especially opaque, tortured, and evasive testimony. Like Klimas, he provides no details concerning the extreme violence he witnessed. Born in 1911

and living in the town of Zarasai at the onset of the German occupation, Galvydis was living with a Jewish woman, Bela, and he was also the brother of a white armband.[46] Galvydis was summoned by the leader of the German collaborators and told to shoot his Jewish wife or be taken along with her to be shot. He says he refused, saying that he would neither beat not shoot his wife, adding that he is not afraid to die: “One dies only once, not hundred times.”

This show of bravery appears to be contradicted later in the testimony. Galvydis was arrested together with his wife and marched in a column to the Vencava forest where they were to be killed. After some time, they were taken aside and imprisoned in a basement, spending the entire night there. “What did you do?” asks Beržinis. “What can one do? We cried all night. She cried and I cried.” In the morning, Antanas was told that his brother had asked to spare his life. He was given the choice to leave his wife, or to stay with her and die with the Jews:

> And so, after some time they took me out and brought me to the prison, so to say, where they were killing Jews. They put a white armband on my arm and said “now, walk peacefully, nobody will touch you.” I walked to the place where they were undressing them. I walked from one group of Jews to another, and nobody did anything to me. I thought I might find my wife’s clothing and take it home. I found nothing; everything was mixed up. Then they started taking Jews to where they were shooting. They did not touch me.

At this point, the incredulous interviewer asks the witness to clarify: Why did he not leave when the shooting began? Why was he just walking around during the shooting? Galvydis answered that he wanted to see, “I was looking for my wife’s clothes. I thought I will still find them somewhere.” Why were you looking for your wife’s cloths?—Beržinis asks. After a short awkward pause, the witness answers: “I thought I would take them home. After all, I bought them . . .” And at this point, he returns to the moment when he is forced to choose, re-narrating the scene:

> Žukauskas was the head of the partisans, my brother said I should go talk to him. He said, you can kill your own Jewess (*židalka*), I said no, I will not do it. Ok, then you will be taken together. Well, let them take me. I will die once, not ten times. That’s how it ended. When they took the Jews, I was taken as well. They said they were going to take the Jews and so I was taken.

While the facts of this event remain opaque, the subject position of the speaker is clearly tortured, seemingly intent to disassociate himself from the actions.

Insider Knowledge

If historical studies of perpetrators are often focused on the question of motivation and ideology at the individual level, testimony reveals how they are deeply embedded in social and familial contexts. Doris Bergen argues persuasively that

"family and intimate relationships facilitated the murders' actions by providing emotional and material support and easing troubled consciences after the fact. To borrow a cliché, it takes a village to commit genocide."[47]

The notion of a "village" committing genocide certainly resonates with images of anti-Semitic pogroms in Eastern Europe. Moreover, as argued by Tomasz Frydel in his analysis of rural Polish society under German occupation, the conditions of extreme violence triggered a rearrangement of social relations along an "axis of kinship networks."[48] However, the testimonies of non-Jewish Lithuanians suggest that even within nuclear families, never mind the "village," there was no uniformity of response or action, but rather a great deal of contestation and disagreement, along with mutual surveillance and intimidation.

The roles open to non-Jewish subjects ranged from collaborator to enabler or beneficiary, non-participant, frightened observer, dissenter, or protestor, with multiple variations and combinations. The dilemma did not reach the extreme of the "choiceless choices" of the victims as defined by Langer, but the choices were nevertheless constrained, often by members of their own community, and figure prominently in the testimony and memory of the respondents.[49]

Bronius Grižas (b. 1918) resided in the town of Svėdasai, right next to the Jewish cemetery. He recalls vividly how the window to his house was smashed by a stray bullet during the first shootings of Jews by local activists.[50] Valeckaitė, née Kaupienė, born in the village of Giedraičiai, recalls how her father sabotaged the order to transport local Jews out of their homes and was severely beaten for it by the village elder by the name of Mykolaitis "until blood started pouring out of his mouth."[51] Stanislovas Janevičius, born in 1933 to a peasant family in the village of Šulai in the Varėna district, recalls the beating and shooting of his mother and the burning of their house, killing two of his younger brothers (aged seven and four) trapped inside, by German collaborators as punishment for providing sustenance to Jews in hiding.[52]

The elaborate family negotiations over positionality are well represented in the testimony of Anelė—Mičiulienė, née Baublytė (b. 1911). In 1941, when the killing of the Jewish residents of Anykščiai and nearby towns started, Mičiulienė had just married and moved to the town with her groom:

> I heard everything at night. Could not sleep. My husband slept but I did not . . . He did not hear but I always heard the screams . . . As soon as I lay down at night, I heard everything. Everything was so close . . . I was young, I had not yet experienced such horrors.[53]

The scene of testimony shifts from her matrimonial bed to the house of her sister, married to a man involved in the shooting. Here, Mičiulienė summarizes what her sister heard from her husband.

> He would come home and would tell her everything he saw: "Good gracious, beautiful girls, sixteen or seventeen, wearing several dresses one on the top of another. They still

> hoped to live . . . And the partisans came, those whom we knew very well, our neighbour Gražys, and then Kalendra, they took them to the forest, raped them and then pushed them into the pit. And these girls still try to somehow dig themselves from under the dirt . . . [gesture of an attempt to clean the face of dirt]."

This horrifying image of rape and murder blends with talk about the impact of the violence on the sister's family life:

> This brother-in-law of ours was not a good man but when he would return home, he would hide his head under the pillow. My sister would ask: "Why aren't you talking to me? Say something . . ." And he would answer: "Shut up, my ears are going deaf from the horror . . . Young girls . . . They grab these children by their legs and toss them down.

When asked by Žukauskaitė how she could know that such actions were really occurring, Mičiulienė exclaims, "My God, how not to know? They were neighbours, we lived nearby! Gražys lived right next door, he walked around with a gun!"

Mičiulienė's narrative is frequently interspersed with references to how she heard events take place and how she would be "sitting and watching" the gruesome transformation of her hometown into a zone of brutality. Her testimony conveys a collective process of hearing, seeing, making sense of events, and deciding what to do: "In the evening I was sitting and watching"; "I was sitting and watching"; "I was lying and listening, etc." Her gaze is deeply invested in the subject positions of family members, acquaintances, and neighbours vis-à-vis the Jewish victims and their looted property.

For example, Mičiulienė describes the following exchange between her mother and their female neighbour, the perpetrator's wife:

> Our neighbour came to our place wearing several golden rings. My mother asked where she got these rings, because they were poor. "Oh, this one I got from my uncle, this one from another relative . . ." "And which one did your husband break off with the whole finger still attached?" asked my mother. The neighbour jumped up and stormed out; she did not answer anything . . . My mother was a religious woman, she was very angry about what was happening . . .

Later, Mičiulienė recounts a scene where her former boyfriend was beating a group of Jews that he was escorting, for trying to gather some carrots from a vegetable garden: "I saw how he was smashing those people with a rifle. 'Vladas!' I shouted; will this rifle not turn against you too one day? 'Shut up, you have no say', was his answer." This harsh response contrasts with her husband's decision to honour her plea not to join the local group of "activists."

> My husband was urged to go shooting but I hid him, and he did not join. They wanted him to join the partisans, but I followed him everywhere, I would sit on the threshold

> and cry, for as long as they continued talking, until Miškinis, their leader, finally said: "Dismiss Misiūnas. He cannot get out from under his wife's skirt!" And when the Soviets came, I said: "Remember how you were angry at me for not letting you mix in? Now you can sleep peacefully, and nobody will bother you."

Mičiulienė contrasts her persistence with her indignation at her sister, who, although treated brutally by her husband, was "clinging to his legs" when he was taking everything from the house for alcohol, and eventually left his wife as well. "I was so angry, I scolded her and shamed her," Mičiulienė concludes.[54]

One can observe a similar multiplicity of contrasting roles and conflicting loyalties within extended circles of kinship in Jonas Baura's (b. 1929) testimony. Baura starts by describing himself as the son of a poor single peasant woman who was often mocked for being a "bastard." In the summer of 1941, he was twelve years old, and his mother sent him to the nearest town called Dusetos to make purchases. As Baura was walking home, he accidentally stepped into a convoy of Jewish residents of the town forced out of their homes. After walking to the end of the town, when Baura tried to step away from the group, he was stopped by the German guard.

> We reached the intersection and I wanted to turn towards my home. The German shouted "halt!" and would not let me leave the group. I started crying . . . But he did not care, he pushed me in and forced to walk with the group. I started crying even more but so what? Everyone there was crying. You know, there were women, children, grandparents . . .

At some point, Baura was noticed by a Lithuanian "white band" called Vilius Beinoravičius, for whose family Baura sometimes worked as a farmhand.

> "Wait here," Beinoravičius said. "I will be back." I waited for some time. I do not remember many details. I could hear people crying and moaning around me. And after some five minutes Beinoravičius came back with a big officer, a German, with stars here, on his forehead, with a skull attached to his hat, they were saying something in German . . . In the end Vilius told me: "Child, run home and do not turn back." You know, I ran and ran for two kilometers . . . I will not forget this . . . Never, for my entire life.

After this recounting of the chance escape from a group of doomed victims, the scene of the testimony shifts to the private house of Baura's rescuer Beinoravičius, who was socializing with his companions:

> They drank, their tongues got loose, and they started to brag: "I shot this many, I shot that many." During these parties there was a guy called Jurevičius, he was shooting Jews in Rokiškis. Jurevičius said: "They were burying [corpses] and I forced aside two Jewesses, beautiful ones, raped them and forced them to dig their own pit. They dug that pit and started screaming. So then I [gesture] with the machine gun. And they tell

> me, "Child, the same will fall on your head." "Ha ha ha!," he roared with laughter. How can anybody live with such a conscience? I do not know.

Although he owed his life to Beinoravičius, Baura betrays no loyalty or sympathy for the man he calls "a Jew-shooter and nothing more."[55]

Traditionally dismissed as an inescapable, unspoken, irrelevant by-product of war, sexual violence is rarely investigated or documented in official records of war. It is frequently erased in public histories and is accessible only through the testimony of locals.[56] In this regard, some of the testimonies are notable for their candid revelations of the rape of Jewish women and girls by local men, confirming the accounts of Jewish survivors who present rape as an integral element of the process of capturing, segregating, and killing the Jewish population.[57]

For Janina Valeckaitė-Kaupienė (b. 1922), the rape and murder of her best friend Berta Maušaitė frames one of her most traumatic memories of the war.

> We were harvesting cereals, making sheaves. And then we saw her running towards us. "Help me, people!" We took her in and covered her with sheaves, like this . . . along the wall. And then, behind her came Kybartas and Stuokis, on horseback. Where did you hide the Jews? "We haven't seen anything," we answered. And they cursed at me in such an ugly manner, grabbed my spade and started stabbing (into the sheaves). They stabbed her into the shoulder, and she screamed. Then they pulled her out by the hair and forced her behind the barn. First, he raped her, and then he shot her once to the gut, and the second shot to the head. The pits were already dug, so they grabbed the cart used for carrying cereals, threw her into the cart, took her to the pit and threw her in.[58]

The interviewer then asks, "So which one of them did it? Stuokis? Kybartas? Which one was stabbing those sheaves?"

> Kybartas, mostly Kybartas. Stuokis joined in as well . . . And I could not . . . I could not watch to the end. I only saw the beginning when they hit her with the barrel of the rifle into this thing . . . I saw how she dropped to the ground. I lost consciousness so some others came to help me recover. I felt sick and weak and only afterwards people told me: "That's it, they shot her and took her away." There was also a guy called Kacevyčia (Kacevyčius) there, he worked with us. A big guy. He fainted as well, could not look at it.

Valeckaitė-Kaupienė makes clear that little effort, if any, was made to conceal the crime from the scrutiny of onlookers, and that these events took place in plain sight:

> He took her behind the barn. Those who had the nerve to look, looked. Those who could not, did not. There were those who looked and saw. Many people were working over there. Some fifteen people, I think. They saw.

The fear of breaking the taboo of silence about what was common knowledge at the local level, but unassimilated to collective, national memory, continues to be felt by

the witness in the “present” of 1998, when this interview was recorded. “So there. I have told everything,” she continues. “Now I will wait for the murderers who will come after me.” Whether this last statement was meant to be understood directly or at some degree of displacement, it vividly expresses the fear of retribution, the sense of mutual surveillance, intimidation, and coercion that was generated by the environment of extreme violence in these locales at the time. It encapsulates the burden of insider knowledge, the tortured memory of crimes committed by one’s own community, which persists to the day of enunciation.

Conclusion

This article has sought to identify and describe a hitherto unexplored collection of eyewitness testimony by non-Jewish witnesses to the communal violence that erupted in rural Lithuania under German occupation. Through a selective exploration of individual testimonies, it has also sought to highlight themes relating to the psychological impact of spectacular violence as well as the spatial relations and coercive interdependencies among individuals and groups in the local environment, and how these interdependencies would endure through time and memory.

These themes speak to the concept of the “grey zone” generated by conditions of extreme violence, used by Michael Rothberg to define the condition of the implicated subject in its synchronic and diachronic dimensions. The use of this concept is not intended to explain historical events, much less to excuse or accuse the “bystander” of action or inaction, but rather to draw attention to the complex, multifaceted and contradictory entanglements of subject positions situated between or beyond the opposed stances of perpetrator and victim.

One of the insights generated by this approach concerns the range of constraints and opportunities faced by individuals and groups, and how these constraints and opportunities were a function of the complex web of interdependencies at the local level of family and community. The gaze of the witness brings out the spatial relations among the various actors, the mutual surveillance, intimidation, and coercion that defined the grey zone of the provincial Lithuanian village engulfed by war and occupation.

Another broad observation to be made of these testimonies concerns the immediacy of their apprehension and presentation of events. The forensic detail of the narratives, and the concern of several witnesses to name the perpetrators, to assign blame and responsibility for the atrocities, was facilitated by the direct approach of the interviewers and the social intimacy they developed with their interlocutors. It is equally notable that these narratives, in which locals are named as the perpetrators of crimes against their Jewish neighbours, diverge from the collective memory of WWII as a period of Soviet victory or national victimization. Indeed, one might argue that the immediacy of these recollections is conditioned by the fact that they have not been communicated to the broader public, in the sense described by Sułek above.

Unable to relate the scenes they witnessed to the redemptive or apologetic narratives of WWII that prevailed in the postwar period, these witnesses could not allow themselves to "forget" the events they experienced. They had no choice but to pin their insider stories to the local topography, to their own personal rootedness the site of memory. They retain, willing or not, the burden of knowledge of crimes committed by their family, their community, if not themselves personally, along with the fear of mutual surveillance, intimidation, and coercion that would endure for decades after the end of the war in these locales, scarred forever by the experience of extreme violence.

Further exploration of this complex body of testimony will undoubtedly yield additional insights into the figure of the implicated subject and inform historical studies of the period, particularly the microhistory of specific locales. Beyond academia, the dissemination of these testimonies could have a salutary influence on the evolution of public understanding of WWII and the Holocaust in Lithuania and the region.

ORCID iD

Violeta Davoliūtė https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0578-971X

Notes

1. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New Haven: Yale Univerity Press, 2003), 276. On the manner in which the killing took place "in plain sight," see Patrick Desbois and Paul A. Shapiro, *The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews.* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

2. Omer Bartov, "Eastern Europe as the Site of Genocide," *The Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 3 (2013): 557–93; Hilberg, *The Destruction*.

3. Waitman Wade Beorn, "All the Other Neighbors: Communal Genocide in Eastern Europe," in *A Companion to the Holocaust*, ed. Simone Gigliotti and Hilary Earl (Hoboken: Wiley, 2020).

4. Jeffrey S. Kopstein and Jason Wittenberg, *Intimate Violence: Anti-Jewish Pogroms on the Eve of the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018); Omer Bartov, "Communal Genocide: Personal Accounts of the Destruction of Buczacz, Eastern Galicia, 1941-1944," in *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands*, ed. Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Natalia Aleksiun, "Intimate Violence: Jewish Testimonies on Victims and Perpetrators in Eastern Galicia," *Holocaust Studies* 23 (2017): 17–33.

5. For a recent survey of arguments, see the 2020 forum on Kopstein and Wittenberg's *Intimate Violence*: Tomasz Frydel, "Introduction: Anti-Jewish Violence between the 'Antisemitism of Men' and the 'Antisemitism of Things,'" *Journal of Genocide Research* 22, no. 2 (2020): 280–82.

6. Hannah Pollin-Galay, "Naming the Criminal: Lithuanian Jews Remember Perpetrators," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 30, no. 3 (2016): 506–31.

7. Hannah Pollin-Galay, *Ecologies of Witnessing: Language, Place, and Holocaust Testimony* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

8. Ibid.

9. Anna Wylegała, "Listening to the Different Voices: Jewish, Polish and Ukrainian Narratives on Jewish Property in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Galicia," in *The Holocaust in the Borderlands*, ed. Gaëlle Fisher and Caroline Mezger (Goettingen: Wallenstein Verlag, 2019).

10. T. Fielder Valone, "Rescued from Oblivion: The Leyb Koniuchowsky Papers and the Holocaust in Provincial Lithuania," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 28, no. 1 (2014): 88.

11. Bartov, "Eastern Europe," 557.

12. Dieckmann, Christoph. *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2011. Bubnys, Arūnas. *The Holocaust in Lithuania between 1941 and 1944*. Vilnius: Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras, 2005. Bubnys, Arūnas. *Lietuvių Policijos Batalionai 1941–1945 M. Vilnius*: Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras, 2017. Rukšėnas, Alfredas. "Holokaustas Lietuvoje: Kretingos Apskrities Palangos Ir Darbėnų Valsčių Žydų Bendruomenių Žūtis 1941 M. Vasarą Ir Rudenį." *Genocidas ir rezistencija* 37, no. 1 (2015): 26–46.

13. "Many aspects of the history of the Holocaust in Lithuania have been researched accurately by local historians, but almost none of this research has been either read or discussed seriously by the wider public." Ruta Vanagaitė and Efraim Zuroff, *Our People* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 154. The contradictory reception of Vanagaitė's book in Lithuania. harshly criticized by the cultural elites, and yet a sensational best-seller among the popular readership attests to the absence of any deep understanding of popular attitudes on the matter.

14. Irena Šutinienė et al., *Socialinė Atmintis: Minėjimai Ir Užmarštys* (Vilnius: Eugrimas, 2003); Šarūnė Sederevičiūtė, "Holokausto Užmarštis Kaip Istorinis Procesas: Vabalninkiečių Atminties Atvejis," *Lietuvos istorijos studijos* 37 (2016): 177–94.

15. A foundation established by Father Desbois has been collecting additional testimonies in Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, and Lithuania since 2014 and maintains an online map of killing sites: https://yahadmap.org/#map/.

16. Antoni Sułek, "Both Researcher and Second-Generation Witness: On Rescuing Local Memory of the Holocaust in Poland," *East European Politics and Societies & Cultures* 33, no. 2 (2019): 259–79.

17. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Searching for Truth: Toby and Jeff Herr," Fall 2014, https://medium.com/memory-action/searching-for-truth-toby-and-jeff-herr-9adb7cd02ce8.

18. Of these, 255 interviews are specifically identified as belonging to the Lithuania Documentation Project, launched on 14 April 1998, resulting from a grant from Jeff and Toby Herr, with Mr. Nathan Beyrak as project director. https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn502087.

19. Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2019), 1.

20. Laura Jockusch, "Historiography in Transit: Survivor Historians and the Writing of Holocaust History in the Late 1940s," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 58, no. 1 (2013): 75.

21. David Bankier, *Expulsion and Extermination: Holocaust Testimonials from Provincial Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2011).

22. Valone, "Rescued from Oblivion," 87.

23. Jockusch, "Historiography in Transit."

24. Bartov, "Eastern Europe," 559. Pioneer historians like Raul Hilberg were conscious of the distinction.

25. Shoshana Felman, "Theaters of Justice: Arendt in Jerusalem, the Eichmann Trial, and the Redefinition of Legal Meaning in the Wake of the Holocaust," *Critical Inquiry* 27, no. 2 (2001): 201–38; Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, trans. Jared Stark (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

26. Dennis B. Klein, *Narratives of Nazi-Era Destruction: The Second Liberation* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

27. Bartov, "Eastern Europe."

28. Stathis N. Kalyvas, "The Urban Bias in Research on Civil Wars," *Security Studies* 13, no. 3 (2004): 160–90.

29. Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject*.

30. Ibid.

31. Conversations with Alicija Žukauskaitė and Saulius Beržinis for this article were conducted in January to February 2021.

32. Nathan Beyrak, "To Rescue the Individual out of the Mass N Umbers: Intimacy as a Central Concept in Oral History," in *Ces Visages Qui Nous Parlent: Actes*, ed. Maurice Cling and Yannis Thanassekos (Bruxelles: Fondation Auschwitz, 1995).

33. Valone, T. Fielder. 2019. "Old Tensions, New Contexts" Religious Violence and Collaboration in Lithuania, June–December 1941. In Collaboration in Eastern Europe during World War II and the Holocaust. Edited by Peter Béla Rásky Black and Marianne Windsperger. Vienna: New Academic Press.

34. Jovita Benetienė, interview by Saulius Beržinis, 18 December 2000.

35. Regina Prudnikova, interview by Saulius Beržinis, 21 August 2000.

36. Aldona Dranseikienė, interview by Alicija Žukauskaitė, 13 January 2005. The pharmacist Olkinas, mentioned in this interview, is the father of a young poet Matilda Olkinaitė (1922–1941) murdered together with her family. Her diary and a collection of her poetry was recently published in a book called *Atrakintas dienoraštis* ('Unlocked diary'), 2019.

37. Leonas Levinskas, interview by Alicija Žukauskaitė, 26 June 2008.

38. Adolfina Gylienė, "Oral History Interview with Adolfina Gylienė."

39. Prudnikova, "Oral History Interview with Regina Prudnikova."

40. Stanislava Gaučienė, interview by Saulius Berzinis the Z requires a haček: Beržinis, 23 September 1998.

41. Juozas Palšauskas, interview by Alicija Žukauskaitė, 15 January 2005.

42. Filomena Streikienė, interview by Alicija Žukauskaitė, 1 April 2010.

43. Vytautas Račickas, interview by Saulius Beržinis, 22 September 1998.

44. Bronė Gudžiūnienė, interview by Alicija Žukauskaitė, 17 December 2007.

45. Vaclovas Klimas, interview by Alicija Žukauskaitė, 20 April 2007.

46. In his testimony, Galvydis refers to Bela as his wife and as a girlfriend interchangeably. His surname is misspelled in the museum entry as follows: Antanas Galuydis, interview by Saulius Beržinis, 21 September 1998.

47. Doris L. Bergen, "What Do Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Contribute to Understanding the Holocaust?," in *Different Horrors, Same Hell: Gender and the Holocaust*, ed. Myrna Goldenberg and Amy Shapiro (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013), 18.

48. Tomasz Frydel, "Judenjagd: Reassessing the Role of Ordinary Poles as Perpetrators in the Holocaust," in *Perpetrators and Perpetration of Mass Violence Action, Motivations and Dynamics*, ed. Timothy Williams and Susanne Buckley-Zistel (New York: Routledge, 2018), 200.

49. Lawrence L. Langer, *Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1982), 72.

50. Bronius Grižas, interview by Alicija Žukauskaitė, 19 December 2007.

51. Janina Kaupienė, interview by Saulius Beržinis, 23 September 1998.

52. Stanislovas Janevičius, interview by Alicija Žukauskaitė, 29 August 2006.

53. Anelė Mičiulienė, interview by Alicija Žukauskaitė, 16 March 2009.

54. Ibid.

55. Jonas Baura, interview by Saulius Beržinis, 21 September 1988.

56. Monika J. Flaschka, "Sexual Violence: Recovering a Suppressed History," in *A Companion to the Holocaust*, ed. Simone Gigliotti and Hilary Earl (Hoboken: Wiley, 2020).

57. Bankier, *Expulsion and Extermination*.

58. Kaupienė, "Oral History Interview with Janina Kaupienė."

Violeta Davoliūtė is professor at Vilnius University, Institute of International Relations and Political Science. Recently she was a fellow at the Imre Kertész Kolleg Jena (2018–2019) and associate research scholar at Yale (2015–2016). She completed her PhD at the University of Toronto and is the author of *The Making and Breaking of Soviet Lithuania: Memory and Modernity in the Wake of War* (2014). A specialist in matters of historical trauma, the politics of memory, and national identity, she has co-edited three volumes and has published articles in *Ab Imperio*, *Osteuropa*, *Ethnologie Française*, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, the *Journal of Baltic Studies*, *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*, *East European Jewish Affairs*, *Politologija*, and others.