

The First Days of the Shoah in Trashkun [Troskunai], July 1941

Most of the Jewish people of Trashkun were shot to death in large pits which were dug in the Payost [Pajouste] forest, a few miles east of Ponevezh [Panevezys]. This was the work of the Einsatzgruppen, mobile killing units that followed behind the German front and whose job was to round up and murder all the Jews they could find. Most of the actual shooting at Payost was done by Lithuanian volunteers under the supervision of the German Security Police. For the Jews of Trashkun, the massacre occurred on 23 August 1941.

But in July, before the Germans even arrived in Trashkun, some Lithuanians were incited to anti-Jewish violence by the anti-Semitic propaganda of the Nazi-backed Lithuanian Activist Front. The two incidents recounted below happened in July 1941, after the Germans invaded Lithuania but before they established political control. Some Lithuanian Nazi sympathizers in Trashkun took advantage of the chaos to go on several killing sprees, leaving approximately 15 Jews dead. These Jews were buried in a small mass grave next to Trashkun's Old Jewish Cemetery.

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Miriam Shumacher was a university student in Kovno when the war broke out, so she was trapped inside the Kovno Ghetto. In July 1944, Miriam managed to escape a column of ghetto prisoners who were being marched out of the work camps. At that precarious moment she was [rescued by Jonas Paulavicius](#), who was later named Righteous Among the Nations. After hostilities ended, Miriam and her friend Itzik Konkurovich, who also survived the Kovno Ghetto, traveled together to Trashkun to look for their families.

Almost five decades later, Miriam went back to Trashkun, this time with her husband and grown daughters. Standing in the [Old Jewish Cemetery](#), she told them how she learned what happened to her family:

I. Shoah Testimony of Miriam Shumacher Krakinowski

remembering

Chaim Shumacher (1898-1941)

Perl Shumacher, née Yuter (~1896-1941)

Esther Shumacher (1927-1941)

Chana Leah Shumacher (1930-1941)

I went to a Polish lady. Her name was Hela. Hela told me that they were in ghetto. My mother and my father had to move from our house across the street, which was the ghetto. They* knocked on the doors. They knocked on the door where my father lived. And they took my father because he opened the door. That night, everybody who opened a door, they took out to shoot. And they took out my father. And my mother heard it and she went out and she stood in front of him with her hands stretched out, and she said, "If you want to kill him, you will kill me too." And so they did. My mother forgot that she had two small children sleeping there.

— Miriam Shumacher Krakinowski (1924-2010)
recorded by her daughter in a [1993 video](#)

*The people who knocked on the doors in Trashkun that night were not Germans but Lithuanian Nazi sympathizers.

Miriam's younger sisters, orphaned that night, didn't survive much longer. They were murdered the following month in the mass killings at Payost.

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Like Miriam Shumacher, Itzik Konkurovich was a university student in Kovno when the war broke out. He too was trapped in the Kovno Ghetto, but at some point he escaped and joined the Lithuanian Division of the Soviet Army. His testimony, like Miriam's, was based on accounts by non-Jewish inhabitants of Trashkun whom Itzik visited after the war, since no Jews remained in Trashkun after August 1941.

II. Shoah Testimony of Itzhak (Itzik) Eliezer Konkurovich

remembering

Chaim Klatchko (1913-1941)

Zalman (Tevke) Klatchko (1923-1941)

Hirsh Itzikovich (1905-1941)

The local hooligans collected a group of young Jews, among whom were the brothers Chaim and Zalman Klatchko and Hirsh Itzikovich,** led them to the Jewish cemetery and ordered them to dig a pit. Hirsh Itzikovich bowed at the feet of Zabodskis, who was his neighbor, and pleaded to be spared. Zabodskis mocked Itzikovich, ordered him to run, and shot and murdered him. They also murdered the other young Jewish men of the town. The murderers went home singing songs. Passing the house of a farmer who was milking his cows, they asked for milk to celebrate and drink to the spilled Jewish blood.

— Excerpt from testimony of Itzhak Konkurovich (1912-1990)
published in *Yahadut Lita* in 1984, [translated here](#)

**Other accounts identify more of the young Jews who were murdered, including brothers of those named above:

Nosen (Noske) Klatzko (1916-1941)

Ruven (Ruvke) Itzikovich (~1907-1941)

Itzik's father and six of his siblings emigrated before the war, but his mother and the three sisters who remained in Lithuania, along with their families, were killed in the Shoah.

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Submitted by Sonia and Johanna Kovitz