

**Handout**

# Mobile Killing Units

Physician Y. Kutorgene, who was not Jewish, witnessed the German invasion of her country, Lithuania. She wrote in her diary, “Thousands of people humiliated, without any protection, worse than animals, and that because they have ‘other blood.’” On October 30, 1941, Dr. Kutorgene wrote about what had happened the previous day in the city of Kovno as the Nazis prepared to murder (by shooting) the Jews in the ghetto there:

On [October 29] there was an announcement that everybody [every Jew] must come at six in the morning to the big square in the ghetto and line up in rows, except workers with the documents which were recently distributed to specialists and foremen. . . . The square was surrounded by guards with machine guns. It was freezing. The people stood on their feet all through that long day, hungry and with empty hands. Small children cried in their mothers’ arms. Nobody suspected the bitter fate that awaited them. They thought that they were being moved to other apartments. . . . [There] was a rumor that at the Ninth Fort . . . prisoners had been digging deep ditches, and when the people were taken there, it was already clear to everybody that this was death. They broke out crying, wailed, screamed. Some tried to escape on the way there but they were shot dead. . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Y. Kutorgene, “Kaunaski Dnievnik (Kovno Diary) 1941–1942,” *Druzhba Narodov* (“Amity of Nations”), VIII, 1968, 210–11, in *Documents on the Holocaust: Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland, and the Soviet Union*, ed. Yitzhak Arad, Israel Gutman, and Abraham Margalio, trans. Lea Ben Dor (Lincoln and Jerusalem: University of Nebraska Press and Yad Vashem, 1999), 405–06.