

Gabrielius Žemkalnis's (1929–2017) memoirs *Lithuanians in Gestapo Prisons* tell the story of the arrest and imprisonment of a 15-year-old resistance fighter, a student of the Kaunas “Aušra” boys’ gymnasium, first in Kaunas, Lithuania, and later in German prisons. Written in 1944–1945, the memoirs describe in detail the repressive actions of the Nazi German occupation authorities against the Lithuanian resistance fighters, twenty-seven Lithuanians who in spring of 1944, were arrested by the Gestapo, cruelly interrogated, and imprisoned in inhuman conditions. Prof. Vytautas Landsbergis notes that in some respects, Žemkalnis’s descriptions are reminiscent of the style of another Lithuanian writer, Balys Sruoga’s memoir *Forest of the Gods*, which depicted author’s life experiences as a prisoner in Nazi German concentration camps.

Žemkalnis’s joined the Lithuanian resistance fighters when he was still in high school. He published and distributed the underground newspaper *Jaunime budėk!* together with his peers, Valdemaras Adamkavičius (after 1955 Valdas Adamkus), Liūtas Grinius and others. He was the only one arrested by the Gestapo on May 13, 1944 and imprisoned until April 13, 1945. After the war, Žemkalnis emigrated to Australia, where he was active in local Lithuanian organizations. From 1998, he lived in Lithuania, was the representative of the Lithuanian World Community in Lithuania (1998–2009) and chair of the Community’s Board (2003–2006). From 2009 to 2012, he was a member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and the Lithuanian World Community Commission (representing Australia), and after returning to Australia, the chair of the Australian Lithuanian Community Board.

The transcripts of Gabrielius Žemkalnis’s father, Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis’s, previously unpublished letters with Lithuanian political prisoners who were imprisoned in the German prisons of Landsberg an der Warthe and Bayreuth, as well as correspondence between Landsbergis-Žemkalnis’s and the mother of the first Lithuanian to die in a German prison, Aleksandras Liudvikas Viršila, Jadvyga Viršilienė, supplement the memoirs. An article by historian Dr. Ilona Strumickienė, a prologue, and an epilogue by Žemkalnis’s younger brother, Prof. Vytautas Landsbergis, provide a broader context of the Nazi German occupation in Lithuania and the Lithuanian resistance against it. Several appendices: Adolfas Damušis’s answers to the questions of the Court of Honor of the Lithuanian Union of Former Political Prisoners of the Anti-Nazi Resistance, detailed and updated information about some of the persons mentioned in Žemkalnis’s memoirs, illustrations, and an index of names and place names complete the book.
