Holocaust Studies
A Journal of Culture and History

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/rhos20

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To cite this article: Franziska Exeler (04 Nov 2024): Death and destruction in Dayvd-Haradok. German crimes, local complicity in the Holocaust, and survivors' search for justice in a former Polesian shtetl, Holocaust Studies, DOI: 10.1080/17504902.2024.2392314

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/17504902.2024.2392314

Published online: 04 Nov 2024.

HOLOCAUST STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/17504902.2024.2392314

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Death and destruction in Dayvd-Haradok. German crimes, local complicity in the Holocaust, and survivors' search for justice in a former Polesian shtetl

Franziska Exeler

ABSTRACT
This article provides a microhistory of Davyd-Haradok during and after the Second World War. Within post-1945 Soviet Belarus, the case of Davyd-Haradok in August 1941 constituted one of the most extreme examples of local participation in the Holocaust, displaying a brutality and intimacy of violence previously known mostly from western Ukraine and the Białystok region. This article sheds light on this little-known history. By situating it in a larger context, in particular the 1941 wave of pogroms in the East European borderlands, it contributes to studies that examine variations in local complicity in German atrocities across time and space.

KEYWORDS
German occupation of the Soviet Union; the Holocaust in Soviet Belarus; communal violence; local complicity; seeking postwar justice and accountability

Introduction

In the early morning hours of 10 August 1941, the 3rd Squadron of SS Cavalry Regiment No. 2 arrived in Davyd-Haradok, a small town in southwestern Belarus. Davyd-Haradok (spelled David-Gorodok in Russian) is located in the historic Polesia region, a swampy, sparsely populated area that stretches along the Belarusian-Ukrainian border. Defined by the mighty Pripyat River and its tributaries, Polesia is the largest wetland area in Europe, although it is perhaps better known as the region that suffered greatly from radioactive fallout following the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 1986.[1] Davyd-Haradok is located about eighty kilometers to the east of Pinsk, one of the region's larger towns (see Figure 1). Over the centuries, Davyd-Haradok belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian empire, and the interwar Polish Republic. In the fall of 1939, after the Soviet Union annexed eastern Poland, it became part of Soviet Belarus. The town, with its wooden one-family houses, nestles around the Horin River, which flows into the Pripyat. On the eve of the German invasion, its Christian population was mainly Greek Orthodox and Belarusian-speaking. In the surrounding countryside, people usually spoke a Belarusian vernacular, although Ukrainian and Polish vernacular were common, too. In everyday interactions, people often mixed these Slavic languages, making it difficult to draw clear linguistic boundaries. Jews

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were the second largest population group in Davyd-Haradok. As was typical of East European shtetls, Jewish life shaped the center of the town, where most Jewish residents lived, whereas the non-Jewish population tended to settle on the outskirts of Davyd-Haradok.[2]

The history of Davyd-Haradok's Jewish community dates back at least to the seventeenth century. The arrival of the 3rd Squadron of SS Cavalry Regiment No. 2 on 10 August 1941 marked the beginning of its destruction. At six o'clock in the morning, all Jewish males over the age of 14 had to assemble in the market square, opposite the Catholic church. As the men and boys gathered in the square, SS men and local policemen – residents of Davyd-Haradok whom the German authorities had appointed as policemen – were guarding them. Local policemen were sent to search for those in hiding. Probably also present at the market square was Ivan Mareiko, the German-appointed mayor of Davyd-Haradok, and members of his staff.[3] With the help of part of the 3rd Squadron, the local police led the men to a site called Khinavsk, about three kilometers from the town, where they shot them over pits. Up to 1,000 men were killed on that day.[4]

On the following day, the SS and local policemen expelled the Jewish women and children from Davyd-Haradok, driving them to a manor on the way to the nearby town Stolin. Other locals from the vicinity arrived and began to steal the women's possessions.[5] At night, Davyd-Haradok's mayor Ivan Mareiko took a few Jewish women away. It is unclear what happened to them, but it is very likely that they were raped and killed. In the days that followed, local policemen and other residents hunted down fugitive Jews and tortured them to death. Some women and children fled to nearby towns like Stolin or Lakhva, while others tried to find shelter with peasants. Having nowhere else to go, most soon returned to Davyd-Haradok, where they were forced into the newly created ghetto. The ghetto existed for roughly a year, until mid-September 1942, when a German Security Police detachment arrived in town. Helped by regular German police units and local policemen, they murdered the entire remaining Jewish community of Davyd-Haradok.[6]

Roughly four years later, in the summer of 1946, Aharon Moravtchik arrived in Lower Silesia, Poland. A prewar resident of Davyd-Haradok, he came to Poland on a transport together with other repatriates, under the conditions of the 1944–1946 Polish-Soviet population exchange.[7] Moravtchik did not intend to stay, though. He had lost his wife, four children, and extended family in the Holocaust; he himself served in the Red Army during the war. Moravtchik's goal was to emigrate to Palestine – yet before doing so, he was determined to track down a group of former residents of Davyd-Haradok whom he believed guilty of the murder of his family. As they likely had left with the retreating Germans, he suspected them in Poland. On the train to Lower Silesia, Moravtchik had received their names from other repatriates who, like him, were leaving the Soviet Union. Among the names on his list were those of mayor Ivan Mareiko, Ivgeny Yavplov, one of his aides, and Yavplov's wife Marusya, who was said to have killed Jewish children by throwing them alive into the Horin River.[8]

In the following, I provide a microhistorical account of the events in Davyd-Haradok during and in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Within the territory of Soviet Belarus (in its post-1945 borders), the case of Davyd-Haradok in August 1941 constituted one of the most extreme examples of local participation in the Holocaust,

displaying a brutality and intimacy of violence previously known mostly from western Ukraine and the Białystok region. The article sheds light on this little-known history by investigating the extent to which residents of Davyd-Haradok participated in the murder of their Jewish neighbors. In a second step, the article turns to the immediate aftermath of Nazi occupation by examining the return of Jewish survivors to their hometown. It asks how survivors responded when they found out or surmised that town residents were complicit in the murder of their families, and it analyzes if, and if so how, they tried to obtain justice for wartime atrocities – inside and outside the Soviet Union.

The article forms part of research on what the anthropologist Jean-Philippe Belleau has termed the 'neighborly turn' in genocide and violence studies: why do neighbors kill neighbors?[9] Within Holocaust studies, Jan T. Gross's pioneering work on local anti-Jewish violence in Jedwabne, a small town in the Białystok region in northeastern Poland, in July 1941 turned out to be hugely influential.[10] The focus on neighborly (or communal) violence is also prominent in studies on genocide and mass violence elsewhere, most notably the 1990–1994 war in Rwanda and the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. As part of research on transitional justice and social reconstruction, a field that has been shaped by anthropologists, political scientists, and lawyers, scholars have asked how communal violence affects postwar societies and communities. Is it possible to reconstruct social life and find justice (as one sees it) in the aftermath of mass atrocities?[11] My research is inspired by these studies on mass violence and social reconstruction, which have examined instances of wartime communal violence and its impact on postwar societies.[12] To understand how the case of Davyd-Haradok compared to wartime and postwar developments elsewhere in the Soviet Union, the article situates its observations and findings within the larger history of the Soviet Union's western regions under Nazi occupation. In employing this comparative lens, the article's goal is twofold. First, it contributes to studies that seek to understand variations in local complicity in German atrocities across time and space. As part of these debates, scholars have examined the summer 1941 wave of local pogroms against Jews that swept through the Soviet regions annexed by Moscow in 1939 and 1940. However, in terms of scale, intensity, and brutality, local anti-Jewish violence varied considerably from place to place and region to region. The regions where anti-Jewish violence was highest – the Białystok region and western Ukraine – have been comparatively well studied.[13] In contrast, less is yet known about the summer of 1941 in Belarus (within its post-1945 borders).[14] As this article will show, although local anti-Jewish violence was less widespread here than elsewhere, smaller local pogroms did occur, too – although these in turn were confined to western Belarus and do not appear to have occurred in eastern Belarus.

Secondly, the article contributes to a relatively new, thriving research field that bridges the study of the war and postwar years by asking about the impact that Nazi occupation had on those two East European countries that were most heavily affected by German wartime rule: Poland and the Soviet Union.[15] Within the historiography on the Soviet Union, the war/postwar research field overlaps, to some extent, with studies that analyze the postwar Sovietization of the territories that Moscow annexed in 1939 and 1940. Yet it differs from analyses of Sovietization in that it asks specifically about the political, social, and personal consequences that the years of German rule had for the

reconstruction of postwar statehood, society, and local communities.[16] As part of this research, scholars have examined the criminal prosecution of individuals whom the postwar authorities (Polish and Soviet, respectively) accused of having worked for the Germans during the war.[17] Others – primarily focusing on Poland, and to a lesser extent on Belarus and Ukraine – have investigated the return of Holocaust survivors to their homes after the war, including postwar communal relations, property conflicts, and the extent of local anti-Semitism.[18] This article provides a snapshot of the return of survivors to Davyd-Haradok, showing the different ways in which they investigated and addressed their neighbors' wartime behavior.

In terms of sources, the article primarily draws on personal and autobiographical material such as memoirs, short recollections, testimonies, and letters, which are complemented with Soviet and German state documents. As it is often the case with microhistorical accounts of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, the source basis is fragmented. Specifically for the wartime history of Davyd-Haradok, the main source utilized in this book are the – relatively detailed – recollections by Jewish survivors collected in the memorial book of Davyd-Haradok. It was first published in Israel in 1957; parts of it have been translated into English as *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book = Memorial Book of David-Horodok*.[19] As is common for microhistorical accounts of violence, largely missing are first-hand accounts by the perpetrators themselves, in this case both German citizens (SS men) and Soviet citizens (local policemen and other residents of Davyd-Haradok). Franz Magill, the commander of SS Cavalry Regiment No. 2 (whose 3rd Squadron carried out the murder on 10 August 1941), was tried in the early 1960s by a West German court. The transcript of the trial, including his interrogation about the actions of SS Cavalry Regiment No. 2, has been published. Magill did not, however, specifically mention local participation in the Holocaust; his testimony focused on the deployment of his regiment in the summer of 1941, on what killing actions were carried out where, when, and on the basis of what orders. Those who formed part of the German-appointed administration of Davyd-Haradok, people like Ivan Mareiko and others, did not leave accounts of their wartime doings, or at least none that are accessible to researchers: Ivan Mareiko, who was apprehended by the Polish police in the late 1940s, was, likely, extradited to the Soviet Union. If so, then his trial records are stored in the archives of the Belarusian State Security Committee (KGB) or the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB), both of which are closed to researchers. This means that an analysis of the behavior of Ivan Mareiko and other non-Jewish town residents must rely primarily on the accounts of Jewish survivors. Their personal and autobiographical material provides important insights into their experiences, allowing one to examine questions of local wartime complicity and the ways in which survivors in Soviet Belarus sought postwar justice for wartime atrocities.

From Soviet to German rule

In western and eastern Belarus (as in Ukraine), the Second World War began on different dates. For the inhabitants of eastern Belarus, the war began on 22 June 1941, when the German army and its allies invaded the Soviet Union. For the inhabitants of what would become western Belarus, the war began on 17 September 1939. On that day,

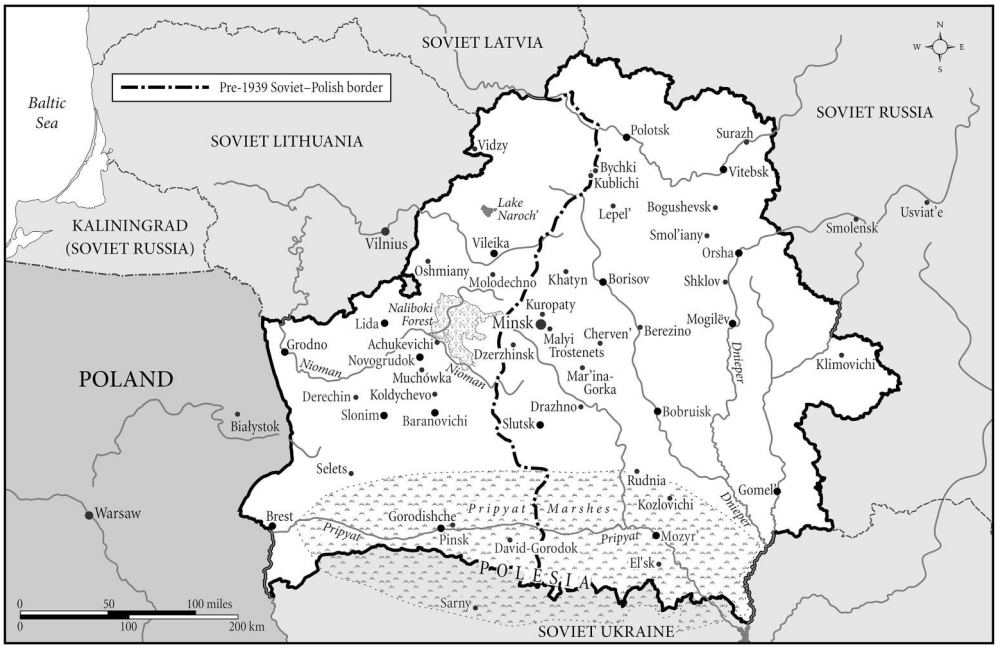

Figure 1. A map showing Soviet Belarus in its post-1945 borders. The town names are given in Russian. The dotted line indicates the pre-1939 Soviet–Polish border. Davyd-Haradok (David-Gorodok) is located in the southwest, close to the border with Ukraine. Map by Mike Bechthold.

about two weeks after the German army invaded Poland from the west, the Red Army invaded eastern Poland. After a brief military campaign, the region was annexed to the Soviet Union. Southeastern Poland became western Ukraine, and northeastern Poland, including the Białystok region, became western Belarus.[20]

In Davyd-Haradok, the initial phase of Soviet rule was relatively quiet. Soldiers' violence against civilians, as it happened in other localities, has not been recorded for Davyd-Haradok.[21] Refugees from western Poland, which had come under German occupation, were the first signs of the war. On 19 September 1939, a few Red Army soldiers passed through the town. The family of Litman Mor (born 1919), who owned the town's textile store, was worried about looting, but their fears did not materialize.[22] The quiet of the first days of Soviet rule were deceptive, though. Soon, the nationalization of businesses transformed the town's economy. Historical sources on this period in the town's history are scarce, but the memorial book suggests that, as elsewhere throughout formerly eastern Poland, the two years of Soviet rule had a negative impact on interethnic relations.[23] Initially, many residents welcomed the arrival of the Red Army, seeing it as the lesser evil. Other locals, who detested the Bolsheviks, are said to have pledged to take revenge on the town's Jewish population, whom they claimed were supporters of communism. As the Soviet state security organs began to carry out arrests of locals (Jewish and non-Jewish) deemed hostile to Soviet power and pressured some individuals to turn as informers onto their neighbors, an atmosphere of fear and distrust permeated Davyd-Haradok.[24]

On 22 June 1941, Berlin broke the Hitler-Stalin Pact and attacked the Soviet Union. In the first weeks, the Axis troops made large territorial gains. With its impassable marches

and lack of paved roads, Polesia was not on the main line of advance east and was initially bypassed by the German troops. Still, news of the German invasion quickly reached Davyd-Haradok. German airplanes were flying over the town, and Red Army soldiers passed through, retreating eastwards. Some town residents tried to flee east, too, but Soviet troops prevented them from crossing the border between western and eastern Belarus, which, despite official unification, had remained closed; permits were needed to cross.[25]

Once German troops and their allies arrived in a locality, they assumed authority and began to establish their occupation regime. By September 1941, Belarus was divided into five administrative units that cut across the republic's pre-1941 borders (see Figure 2).[26] Davyd-Haradok became part of the General Commissariat Volhynia and Podolia, which was a subunit of the Reich Commissariat Ukraine. Due to a shortage of personnel, the Germans kept the organizational structure of the Soviet administration's lower levels (district and below) by and large intact. In each district *(raion)*, Wehrmacht leaders appointed locals to serve as town and district mayors, and to serve in the local police forces. In each village, a local was designated to serve as head of the village or village elder *(starosta)*.[27] In regions that were located off the major roads, though, it was not uncommon for German troops to only show themselves days, even weeks after the start of the invasion. It was only on 7–8 July 1941 that the first soldiers reached Davyd-Haradok. They were members of an advance unit of Army Group South, which had reached Pinsk on July 4, and then continued further east. The German soldiers appointed Ivan Mareiko, a medical worker, as mayor of the town. They also organized local police forces and appointed Lyovo Kosarev as their head. The Jewish residents of Davyd-Haradok were ordered to wear white armbands bearing a blue Star of David. After setting up the local town administration, the German unit left the town. Indeed, for most of the summer of 1941, many local administrations in smaller towns throughout Belarus and Ukraine were left without direct German oversight. In the following weeks, it seems, Davyd-Haradok was ruled by Ivan Mareiko, Lyovo Kosarev, and their local helpers alone.[28]

For a variety of different factors, including frontline developments, institutional rivalries, and the need of local authorities to balance the demand for food, housing, and Jewish labor, the timeline of the Holocaust differed slightly in the occupied Soviet regions. At first, primarily male Jews, often those considered local elites, were killed, and the remaining Jewish communities forced into ghettos. Step by step, the Germans then began to liquidate the ghettos, murdering their inhabitants. In the regions under civilian rule, the shift from the selective killings of male Jews to the destruction of entire Jewish communities usually occurred a bit later than in the regions under civilian control.[29] In Polesia, the Holocaust began with an order on 19 July 1941, when Heinrich Himmler, chief of the SS and the Police, placed SS-Cavalry Regiments No. 1 and 2 under the command of Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski. Bach-Zelewski was the Higher SS and Police Leader for the terrain behind Army Group Center and thus for large parts of Belarus. Hitler is said to have regarded him as a 'man who could wade through a sea of blood.' SS-Cavalry Regiments No. 1 and 2 were to comb the Pripyat marches east of Brest for Jews, scattered Red Army soldiers, and anyone else deemed a partisan. On July 28, Himmler gave the explicit order to shoot all adult male Jews in the area. Jewish women and children were to be driven into the swamps.[30] In early August, SS-Cavalry Regiments No. 2 began its work, starting with smaller towns west of Pinsk. Between 5–8

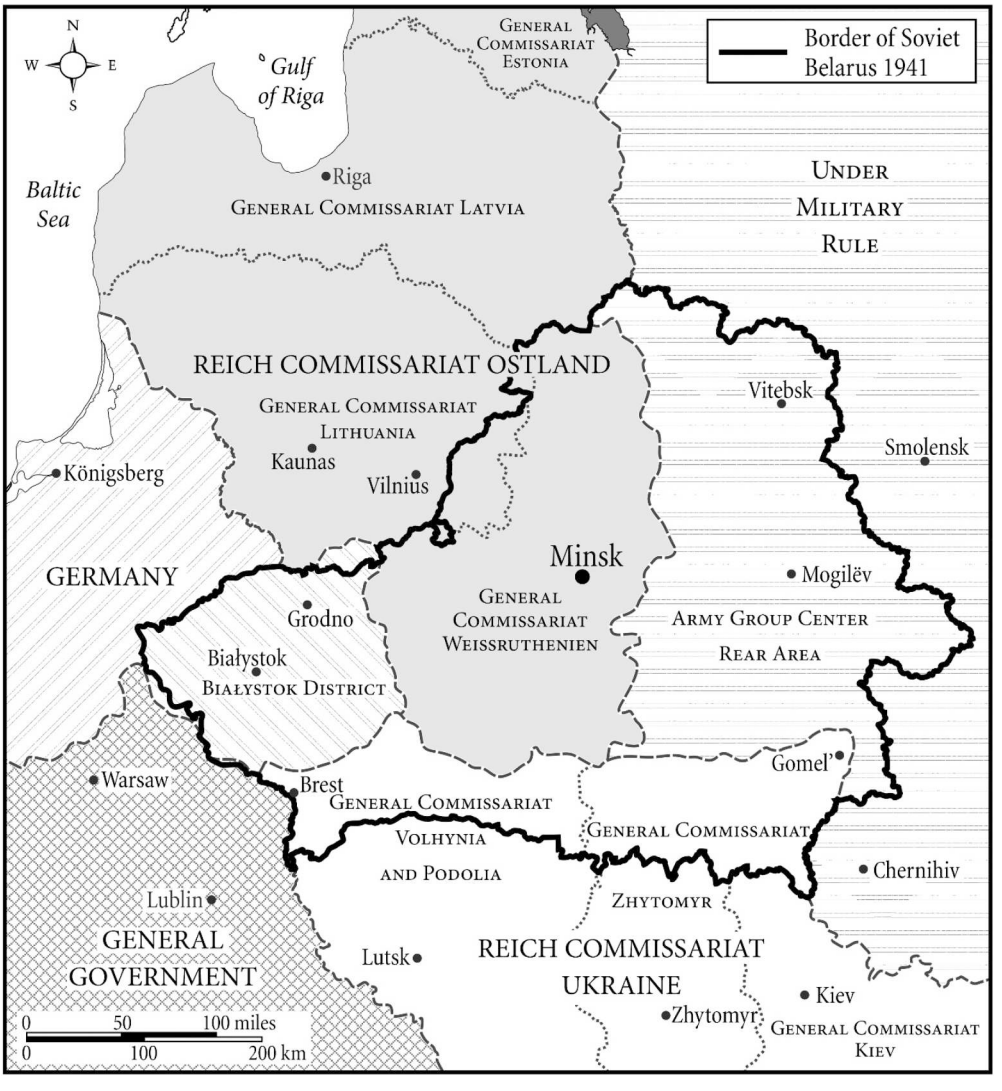

Figure 2. The administrative division of Soviet Belarus under Nazi occupation, 1941–1944. Map by Mike Bechthold.

August 1941, its members killed an estimated 7,000–10,000 male Jews in Pinsk. In the following days, divided up in squadrons, they continued their route east. In the early morning hours of August 10, the men of the 3rd Squadron of SS Cavalry Regiment No. 2 arrived in Davyd-Haradok, to murder the town's Jewish male population.[31]

Local anti-Jewish violence in the summer of 1941

What happened during the summer of 1941 in Davyd-Haradok? In what ways did town residents become complicit in the expropriation, abuse, and murder of their Jewish neighbors?

It appears that during the first two weeks following the German invasion, until German soldiers arrived on July 7, no abuse or individual acts of violence took place against Jews. After July 7, however, that changed. According to one account, by a Jewish resident of Davyd-Haradok whose name is not disclosed in the memorial book, at some point between July 4 (when the first German units arrived in Pinsk) and July 7 (when these units reached Davyd-Haradok), non-Jewish town residents sent a delegation to Pinsk. The delegation, which was headed by Ivan Mareiko, was said to have requested that the Germans soon appear in Davyd-Haradok. Upon the men's return to Davyd-Haradok, though, rumors spread that the Red Army would soon return, and the delegation fled back to Pinsk. On July 7, they were said to have returned with a German advance unit. Together with Ivan Mareiko, 'the brothers Tonio and Liovo Kosorev, Kulogo, Yavpolov (probably Yavplov, F.E.) and others' then conducted a public meeting, and the Germans 'gave over the civil authority' over the town into their hands.[32] Probably between July 7 and August 10, the first killings of Jews took place. According to Aharon Moravtchik, after Mareiko was appointed mayor, 'a terror campaign was waged against the Jewish inhabitants' of the town.[33] Two Jewish men, the dentist Itzhak Edel and his son Gedaliahu, were killed on the day the German army appointed Mareiko as town mayor (thus on July 7 or July 8). It is not clear if Aharon Moravtchik was present in the town at the time, just as it is unknown who carried out the killings, Germans or local residents.[34]

In the following days, at a time when German soldiers must have already left the town, it appears that two more killings occurred. As Meier Hershl Korman, who owned a butcher's shop in Davyd-Haradok and who was present in town at the time, recalled:

> The first Jewish victim in David-Horodok was Meir Eliyahu Kushner who had lived in Raditch. After they had driven him out of his house, the Horodtchukas attacked him and murdered him in the market place in the middle of the day. The second victim was Zev Grunya Kunds, a grandson of Velvel the blacksmith. The gentiles murdered him on Alshiner Street next to Shloma Fleishman's house.[35]

It is unclear exactly when these murders occurred. Seeing as Meier Hershl Korman called them the first Jewish victims, and in his recollections placed them chronologically before recalling the events of August 10, it seems likely that they took place right after July 7, possibly even before that. This means that it is plausible that at least two, perhaps even up to four killings of Jewish men at the hands of local residents took place before the arrival of 3rd Squadron of SS Cavalry Regiment No. 2 on 10 August 1941.

How do these tentative conclusions compare with local violence against Jews elsewhere in the summer of 1941? In the first weeks following the German invasion, a wave of pogroms swept through the regions that the Soviet Union had only annexed in 1939 and 1940. This violence differed from the more institutionalized violence that local policemen later perpetrated on an daily basis in that it often took the form of a riot or pogrom, understood here as a collective act of violence by members of the majority population against a specific minority group, Jews.[36] The perpetrators were usually local civilians, some of whom might later join the local police forces or administration; in other cases, a mixture of civilians and local police committed the violence. In each pogrom, the degree of German presence varied. Some violence occurred before German troops arrived in a particular region, while other attacks occurred with their

direct participation or presence. Still other pogroms took place after the Germans showed up in a locality but left shortly thereafter, leaving the town without clear authority. Just as German participation varied from town to town, so did the level of local anti-Jewish violence. In terms of intensity, scope, and brutality, it was highest in western Ukraine (eastern Galicia and Volhynia), the Białystok region (from 1939 to 1945 the westernmost part of western Belarus), and the Romanian-administered regions of northern Bukovina and Bessarabia. Mass killings of Jews with local participation also occurred in Lithuania. In Latvia, the level of local violence against Jews was lower. In Estonia, local anti-Jewish violence seems to have been minimal, probably because the republic's Jewish community (which was numerically much smaller than in Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, or Lithuania) had mostly managed to flee before the arrival of the Wehrmacht.[37]

While the violence that occurred in western Ukraine and around Białystok in the summer of 1941 has been well studied, it is less well known that local pogroms also occurred in the other regions of western Belarus, albeit on a much smaller scale and with far fewer victims. In the old Soviet territories that came under German occupation – eastern Belarus, western Russia, and central and eastern Ukraine – local pogroms against Jews during the summer of 1941 appear to have been almost nonexistent. Geographically, three clusters of pogrom violence emerged in western Belarus (in its post-1945 borders, without the Białystok region), in areas that differed from each other in terms of the linguistic and religious composition of the population: first, around Vileika (northwestern Belarus), second, between and around Baranavichy and Navahrudak (central-western Belarus), and third, to the east of Pinsk (southwestern Belarus), including Davyd-Haradok. Victims were often beaten or otherwise abused, and some were killed. For example, as recalled by Izaak Lichtenberg, in the small town Lakhva, which is located just to the northwest of Davyd-Haradok, the civilian population 'harassed the Jews for several days before the arrival of the German army on July 7–8. They smashed stores and plundered Jewish property, and they beat up the Jews.'[38] Shalom Yoran and his family, who were trying to flee east when the German army started bombing the small town of Smargon' in northwestern Belarus, were attacked by farmers on their way from Vileika to Il'ia.[39] Other violence was committed after German troops entered a given locality for the first time. According to a man by the last name of Ioffe, who was a lecturer of the Brest regional party committee, in Haradzishche just outside of Pinsk, 'in front of the eyes of German troops *(na glazakh u nemetskikh voisk),*' locals organized 'a Jewish pogrom *(evreiskii pogrom)*' and killed fourteen Jews in their apartments.[40] After Germans arrived in the small town Moŭchadz' in Baranavichy region on June 29, gangs of local residents, often intoxicated and armed with spades, picks, and axes, roamed the streets. As Martin Small, who grew up as Mordechai Leib Shmulewicz in Moŭchadz', recalled, they beat Jews who dared to leave their houses, raped Jewish women, and killed a Jewish family, whose house they plundered.[41]

It is not clear from Small's recollections whether German soldiers were physically present in Moŭchadz' when local gangs attacked and abused their Jewish neighbors. Most local anti-Jewish violence in small towns in western Belarus seems to have occurred after German frontline troops had passed through a particular district, but then left it temporarily without authority. This was the case in Davyd-Haradok, where two, perhaps four Jews were killed by non-Jewish residents without German presence. Similarly, in Vidzy, a town in the Vileika region, locals formed a self-defense force and started

arresting, beating, robbing, and murdering Jews before a more permanent German presence was installed in mid-July 1941. Similar incidents, in which gangs of locals broke into Jewish homes, robbing and beating their inhabitants and killing some of them, have been recorded for the shtetls Dzialiatsichy and Karelichy close to Navahrudak, for Serniki to the south and Stolin to the southeast of Pinsk, and for Kuranets to the north of Vileika.[42] It is often impossible to establish the identity of the perpetrators. In Moŭchadz', Martin Small remembered them as his Polish neighbors, in Lakhva, Izaak Lichtenberg recalled them to have been Poles and Belarusians, and in Stolin, Shammai Tokel described those who carried out anti-Jewish violence as a mix of former Soviet prisoners, 'hoodlums' from the town and vicinity, and 'local peasant gangs.'[43] None of the sources identify the perpetrators as (known) members of anti-Semitic nationalist organizations – which, as research on western Ukraine has shown, often acted as catalysts of local anti-Jewish violence there. Although it is important to recall that each episode of mass killing had its own situational dynamics, with its own unique set of actors,[44] the presence or absence of small, radical anti-Semitic nationalist groups likely constituted one, if not the most important factor that can help us to understand the variation in scale, intensity, and brutality of local anti-Jewish violence across those regions that Moscow had annexed in 1939 and 1940.[45] Compared to pogroms in other towns throughout western Belarus, then, the violence perpetrated by some local residents of Davyd-Haradok against Jews in July 1941 was, for lack of a better word, far from extraordinary. Indeed, compared to the June and July events in many towns in western Ukraine and the Białystok region, it was clearly at the lower end of the violence spectrum. However, local participation in the massacre of 10 August 1941 in Davyd-Haradok was another matter.

10 August 1941 and its aftermath Davyd-Haradok

In few other places throughout Belarus (in its post-1945 borders), the German-led killing of a large part of the town's Jewish community seems to have taken on such a communal, personal character as in Davyd-Haradok. After the 3rd Squadron of SS Cavalry Regiment No. 2 arrived in the early morning hours of August 10, the male Jewish population age 14 and older was first gathered and then led to a site called Khinavsk, where the men were shot over pits. With the support of local policemen, the SS men killed up to 1,000 men on that day. According to Meier Hershl Korman, the policemen used whatever means possible to carry out the killings: 'They stripped the clothes off the victims, smashed heads, cut off limbs and slaughtered with whatever came to hand: sticks, stones, iron bars and guns. Afterwards, they threw them into the trenches and buried them alive! Three days after the mass-murder, the ground still stirred.'[46] On the next day, the SS men and local policemen expelled the remaining Jewish population, women and children, from Davyd-Haradok. Following Himmler's order to 'drive them into the swamps,' they were helped by other locals. As described by Bas-Sheva Kushner and Gunm Pilavin, town residents chased after the women and children for several kilometers, 'with shouts of: 'Get out! We don't need you!'[47] According to Itzhak Nahmanovitch, the 'entire Christian population' took part in the expulsion: 'Young and old (…) they went to the Jewish houses with sticks and they drove out the housewives and their children with beatings, expecting to rob them of their possession.'[48] Several men, who had survived the killing on the previous day in hiding, were among the women, dressed in female clothing. One of them was

the father of Miriam Bragman, who had hidden in their cellar. As the women and children were driven along the road to Stolin, locals were inspecting the crowd. One of them recognized Miriam Bragman's father. As Bragman recalled, 'words were of no avail. He returned with him to the town.'[49]

That man was not the only one. According to Nahmanovitch, many locals 'stood at the bridge checking each Jewish woman to see if they could find a man disguised in women's clothing.' Several men were discovered, beaten, and then killed.[50] The women were taken to a manor along the road to Stolin. Peasants from the vicinity came and robbed them of their possessions. At night, Mareiko came and took some women away. The following day, the policemen continued to drive the women and children into the direction of Stolin, but before they reached the town, they ordered the group to turn around and return into the direction of Davyd-Haradok.[51] It appears that the SS men had left by then, leaving it up to the local policemen to decide what to do with the crowd. As the women and children were not yet allowed to return to the town itself, many of them tried to seek shelter in nearby towns or kept on wandering through the countryside. Miriam Bragman, her sister Faigele, and her mother were taken in by an acquaintance of her grandfather: 'One kind gentile (…) took us away to his farm (…) he treated us very well.' However, two days later, one of his neighbors saw the three women as he was passing by. Afraid for his own life, the man asked the women to leave, but he drove their belongings all the way to the town of Sarny across the Belarusian-Ukrainian border, where the three women were able to stay with Miriam Bragman's aunt for five months.[52]

In the days following the 10 August 1941 massacre, local policemen and town residents continued to search for Jews in hiding. Upon discovery, they tortured and killed them, exerting a form of violence that required actual physical exertion and close encounters with the victims. In some cases, the method of killing suggests that the perpetrators took a sadistic pleasure in their actions. As Meier Hershl Korman recounted: 'Baruch Katzman and his two sons were found and killed by Dmitri Pusik. Issur son of Nisson Gurvitch had his eyes gouged out by the Horodtchukas (the non-Jewish town residents, F.E.) and his limbs severed one by one.'[53] The killing, as recounted by Bas-Sheva Kushner and Gunm Pilavin, took place on the market square. When Haim Kalushnye's son Reuven was discovered by residents, they murdered him and threw him into the outdoor privy.[54] Barush Yosef Katzman and his two sons managed to hide for two weeks. When they had to leave their hiding place, they encountered Elia Stavor (or Stadnik), a local resident, who 'took an iron bar and murdered them on the spot.'[55] Among the victims were also Meier Hershl Korman's children, brutally murdered in full view of the public: 'My two children Bracha and Baruch who, thanks to a gentile woman, had fled to the Dubinitz forest, were returned to the town by the gentiles and were cut to pieces in the middle of the marketplace.'[56]

How can we find an explanation for the brutality, possibly even sadism with which some, perhaps many residents took part in the German-led killing of the town's male Jewish population? According to Aharon Moravtchik, in the case of Yavplov and his wife Marusya, their hatred of Jews was connected to Yavplov's arrest by the Soviet state security organs (NKVD) prior to 1941. For several years before the war, Aharon Moravtchik and Marusya had worked together in an office for translations and pleas in Davyd-Haradok. After her husband was arrested, allegedly by a Jewish NKVD

officer, Marusya threatened in Moravtchik's presence that 'there will come a day when I'll take revenge on the Jews because a Jew arrested my husband.'[57] In general, Jewish survivors describe the local non-Jewish town population as particularly hateful of Jews. Called the Horodtchukas, they were said to have held a distinct local identity, neither Belarusian nor Ukrainian. Claiming mixed Tatar-Cossack heritage, they supposedly thought of themselves as different from and superior to the district's peasant population.[58] It is difficult what to make of these descriptions, some of which are quite schematic and stereotypical, such as when the Horodtchukas are described as having been 'feisty and energetic' in contrast to the 'typical person' from Polesia who was 'phlegmatic and pessimistic.'[59] What the memoir literature does clearly indicate, though, is that the Jewish and non-Jewish town population had little sustained communal contact beyond economic or work interactions. People were neighbors, yet that did not mean that they had any meaningful social connection. This is consistent with Jean-Philippe Belleau's argument that 'being neighbours does not necessarily imply social relationships,' especially when communities 'are socially organized to limit interactions.'[60] The level of inter-ethnic integration, then, appears to have been low in Davyd-Haradok. However, this alone cannot serve as an explanation. Levels of interethnic integration were also low in other regions of western Belarus, but that did not lead to the same violence. In the absence of additional sources, especially from the perpetrators themselves, any answers to the question of what motivated the local perpetrators, people like Ivan Mareiko, Ivgeny Yavplov and his wife Marusya, and others – and why they killed as they did – will have to remain speculative.

From the fall of 1941 on, the sources on the town's wartime history become even more fragmentary. By late 1941, most of the women and children had returned to Davyd-Haradok. A ghetto was set up, which existed until the summer of 1942, when the head of the Security Police and SD in Pinsk, SS officer Wilhelm Rasp, received the order to kill the entire Jewish community of Polesia. On 10 or 11 September 1942, Rasp arrived with a small detachment of ten men in Davyd-Haradok. Together with German and local policemen, they escorted the ghetto inmates to the killing site near Khinavsk, where the victims of the August massacre 1941 had been murdered.[61] On that day, the remaining Jewish community of Davyd-Haradok – women, children, and the elderly – was killed. Of the few residents of Davyd-Haradok who would survive the war, most, it seems, had already fled to other towns or adjacent forests at the time. Once partisan units began to form in the region throughout late 1942 and 1943, Jewish survivors tried to join partisan units, which by 1943 had usually come under the formal command of the Soviet partisan movement. Miriam Bragman, for example, escaped the destruction of the ghetto in Sarny and survived many months hiding in the forests until she was admitted into a partisan unit that moved on to the Zhytomyr region in northern Ukraine. The partisan units that operated around Davyd-Haradok consisted of both non-Jews and Jews. In 1943, they launched an attack on the town, during which several policemen and their families were killed and parts of Davyd-Haradok set on fire. Their attack can be interpreted not just as a military operation against local representatives of the German occupation regime, but also, at least for the Jewish members of the unit, as an act of personal revenge against individuals who had tortured and murdered their relatives in the summer of 1941.[62] Where Ivan Mareiko and his local administration were during this attack in 1943 is unclear, yet they did survive it.

1943 was also the year when German large-scale reprisal actions against villages suspected of being partisan-friendly reached their peak. In Polesia, the German forces planned to create entire 'dead zones' along the Brest-Gomel' railway tracks, emptied of their inhabitants. Employing indiscriminate violence against entire villages, the supposed military aim was to deter locals from joining the partisans, and to prevent further partisan activity in the region.[63] In Pinsk region *(oblast)* alone, within which Davyd-Haradok was located, German units burned down 164 villages, the majority in 1943 and 1944, killing some or most of their inhabitants.[64] Yet the region was not only a site of German warfare against Soviet partisans. Toward the end of the war, the northern, Belarusian part of Polesia also experienced activities by Ukrainian nationalists, a spill-over of their activities in northern Volhynia (the southern, Ukrainian part of Polesia).[65] When the OUN-UPA began with its attacks on Polish-speaking villages in Volhynia, their inhabitants sought shelter in the forests and swamps of the Belarusian-Ukrainian border region. Some of them were accepted into partisan units. One of these units (the Kastiushka unit) operated just south of the Belarusian-Ukrainian border, but its members were also sent for missions north, into Belarusian territory around Davyd-Haradok. The Kastiushka unit consisted primarily of ethnic Poles; a smaller number were Jews. Linked to the unit was a family camp with their relatives, probably women, children, and the elderly. The Polish members of this camp had fled the Ukrainian ethnic cleansing of Polish villages, the Jewish members had fled from the ghettos or the German mass killings.[66] Together, they found themselves protected by a partisan unit that was operating under Soviet command.

Seeking justice

After the tide of the war turned at the battle of Stalingrad in the winter of 1942–1943, the Red Army began to push the German forces from Soviet territory. In the fall of 1943, Soviet forces crossed into Belarusian and Ukrainian territory; roughly six months later, the Red Army had retaken all of Russia, most of Ukraine, and parts of southeastern Belarus around Homel'. The Soviet High Command then began to direct its forces against Army Group Center, which was still holding on to much of Belarus. On 23 June 1944, almost three years to the day that Germany had invaded the Soviet Union, the Red Army launched Operation Bagration. Within less than two months, Army Group Center fell apart.[67] Many Soviet citizens who had served in the German occupation regime left with the crumbling German army. Among them, it seems, were Ivan Mareiko, Ivgeny Yavplov, Yavplov's wife Marusya, and others from Dayvd-Haradok.

As Soviet power returned to Belarus, one question hovered over encounters between the returning Soviet party-state representatives and those who had lived in occupied territory, between soldiers and family members, evacuees and colleagues, Holocaust survivors and their neighbors: What did you do during the war? The pursuit of truth was a common goal for individuals, communities, and the Soviet authorities alike – but they often had different understandings of what that meant. For local party leaders, state security officers, and members of the judiciary and procuracy, finding out what people had done in occupied territory was a task of the utmost importance, inextricably linked to the reestablishment of Soviet authority.[68] The Soviet authorities were

determined to punish local participation in German atrocities, and in the early years after the occupation, they prosecuted many policemen and others who had represented the Germans in their localities. In their search, the NKVD relied on different sources, including information provided by former partisans, captured German documents, and witness statements given to the Extraordinary State Commission (ChGK). At the same time, however, the search for alleged traitors was about defining who had, and who had not, been loyal to Moscow during the war. As military tribunals translated complex moral gray zones of war and occupation into the language of treason, external pressure or intent were not taken into account. Mitigating circumstances were recognized only if an individual had gone over to the partisans and thereby demonstrated a willingness to die for the Soviet Union. These tensions continued in later Soviet trials, too. Until the early 1950s, most people accused of wartime treason were prosecuted in secret trials that lacked the basic rule of law.[69] After Stalin's death in 1953, as part of a limited de-Stalinization effort, the state moderated its punitive policies and issued a partial amnesty in 1955. In the 1960s, domestic and international changes spurred a second wave of trials. With no statute of limitations for treason, the prosecution of Soviet citizens accused of wartime collaboration continued until the late 1980s.[70]

In contrast to the authorities who were preoccupied with the question of political loyalty, for many inhabitants of postwar Belarus, confronting people's wartime choices was a highly individualized process, dependent on a variety of interacting factors, circumstances, and personal experiences. Most cities in Belarus lay in ruins, entire rural districts had been burned to the ground, and large parts of the population were uprooted or displaced. For private individuals, the moment of return was first and foremost about the long-awaited reunion with family members. But returning home also led to encounters with former neighbors and friends, fellow villagers, and colleagues. These encounters not only highlighted that some, especially Jews, had lost more than others during the war. They also, and inevitably, raised questions about people's wartime behavior.[71]

Writing on Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, the human rights scholars Harvey M. Weinstein and Eric Stover have argued that justice 'is in the eye of the beholder and can be interpreted in a variety of ways.'[72] For some individuals, justice for wartime atrocities can be reached by testifying at a trial against perpetrators of violence. For others, justice means inflicting revenge, and yet for others, it can only take place if neighbors apologize for their deeds. For some, justice is about being able to return to the home they lost, while for others, it means finally learning the truth about missing relatives and being able to bury their bodies.[73] In the postwar Soviet Union, justice also carried different meanings to different people. As the names of the German perpetrators were usually unknown to survivors and their whereabouts unclear, people who sought accountability for the abuse and murder of their loved ones necessarily had to limit themselves to the question of local complicity. While some preferred not to approach their former neighbors or acquaintances, questioning them about their wartime behavior, others confronted the issue more directly. When former Red Army soldier Itzhak Nahmanovitch returned to Davyd-Haradok in August 1944, he saw a woman sell children's second-hand clothes at the local market, strongly suspecting that these were the clothes of murdered Jewish children. He passed a local on the street and noticed the man's bare feet yet wearing a good black pullover with silk lapels. As Nahmanovitch recalled that moment two years later, in 1946, the man

'doesn't speak … no one here talks now … They know nothing … They did hear about something but they don't remember exactly.'[74]

Nahmanovitch visited the mass grave in Khinavsk, where he stood 'shattered, dismayed and waiting … but in vain … in this small arid field, a town is hidden.' It seems that he left the town soon thereafter. He did not press the issue of local complicity further, writing 'what's the use of talking? It is better to be quiet in a cemetery.'[75] Other survivors, however, chose to confront their neighbors directly. When Litman Mor returned to Davyd-Haradok in the fall of 1944, he was determined to find out what had happened during the war. A native of the town, he had been a chemistry student at Vilnius University by the time of the German invasion. Forced into the Vilnius ghetto, he was able to flee and join a partisan unit operating under Soviet command in the Lithuanian-Belarusian border region. After liberation, Mor was first assigned to a job in Vileika district in northwestern Belarus, but soon returned to Vilnius and from there on made his way south.[76]

After days of travel, Mor finally arrived in Davyd-Haradok. He found the two-story brick building of his family's store destroyed, but the house where he grew up was still intact. The moment he entered, he was overwhelmed by the emptiness of the rooms. Nothing of his former life was left, not even a piece of furniture that could remind him that someone had once lived there. Mor realized that his family had not survived the war, but before he left town, he was determined to find out what had happened. He first visited the town's pastor, who had been on friendly terms with his father, but the pastor was reluctant to talk. Mor then sought out a man by the name of Timuch, 'who knew me well, since he used to work in our cowshed and was like a member of the family.' When Timuch recognized Mor, 'he began to make the sign of the cross on his body and yelled: "Litmanke! I know nothing!"' Litman Mor later found out that his parents had hidden some items from their store at Timuch's place. That was not on Mor's mind, though: 'Maybe he feared that I came to claim my family's property. But, of course, this did not concern me. I wanted to know what happened. My gentile neighbors' conspiracy of silence provoked me.'[77] Mor continued to walk through his hometown, but the people 'that I encountered showed no will to chat with me, and I knew many of them, personally. The meetings were as if friendly, but they did not want to tell anything.'[78] After much insisting, Timuch finally told Mor that his father and younger brother Sasha had died in the mass execution of 10 August 1941. After that, his mother and sister were driven out of the town. Timuch was not the only acquaintance who began to answer Litman Mor's questions. Slowly, people began to talk – not about what they personally had done during the war, but what Germans and other locals had done.[79] The effect of this information was devastating: All social ties that Mor had once held to non-Jewish acquaintances shattered: 'I walked about in my town and felt that I was walking about between murderers. I saw in every inhabitant a potential murderer of my family.'[80] As he explained: 'My hatred of the Germans was common, not aimed at a specific German. But my hatred of the locals, who murdered my family, was personal.'[81]

Some survivors like Litman Mor decided not to pursue the return of their family's property, either because it seemed too complicated, too painful, or because they already knew that they would not return to live in their former hometown. Others, however, turned to the Soviet authorities and asked to have their property restituted.

Precisely because so many items had passed in various ways through many hands during the war, what belonged to whom was an inherently difficult and at the same time highly contentious question in the immediate postwar years. It was so not just because in a country ravaged by war, there existed a dire shortage of housing and livestock. Rather, it was a deeply personal and at the same time highly political question, given that it went to the heart of someone's wartime behavior. After a mass killing, the German authorities usually took the most valuable items for themselves, allowing the local policemen and town authorities to take what remained. Perhaps this is what the resident of Davyd-Haradok, whom Meier Hershl Korman encountered on his return in 1945 and who lived in a house once owned by a Jewish family, meant when he told him that 'the David-Horodoker gentiles had received awards from the German authorities for their part in killing and exterminating the Jewish population.'[82] This practice had continued throughout the war: In 1943, a peasant from the vicinity of Davyd-Haradok received two cows and clothing that once belonged to Jews from the town authorities for giving away the location of partisans.[83] Yet people also simply took Jewish property of their own accord, without necessarily receiving them as a reward from the Germans. Others bought items at the market, only to resell them later. It is not too far-fetched to speculate that in a small place like Davyd-Haradok, most of the non-Jewish residents probably owned at least one piece of Jewish property after the war. Litman Mor, for example, discovered his family's furniture and clothes in a neighbor's home, while Meier Hershl Korman encountered the woman who used to work as a water carrier for him: 'Her house was filled with Jewish goods.'[84]

Especially for Jewish survivors, it was very painful to find neighbors living in their houses, among their furniture, or selling items at the market that might have belonged to Jewish victims – precisely because, as the recollections of Itzhak Nahmanovitch show, it opened up the question to what extent these individuals had benefited from the killing of their Jewish neighbors – indeed, might even have personally taken part in their murder. How had the woman at the market been able to obtain the clothes, of which he strongly suspected they were the clothes of murdered Jewish children? Having one's property returned was thus not only a way to seek the restitution of material objects. It can also be read as a means through which individuals – not just Holocaust survivors, but anyone who had lost property during the war – sought to ensure that those who were accused of having taken advantage of the absence, displacement, or murder of other locals would not continue to benefit from it.[85]

Property conflicts weren't the only instance in which survivors turned to the Soviet authorities. Another way of seeking justice for local complicity in German crimes was to alert the state security organs to those one believed guilty of wartime wrongdoings. These efforts intersected with the Soviet government's search for people who had worked (in its various meanings) for the German authorities. Notifying the authorities did not necessarily mean that an individual supported Soviet power as such – but it was the only way to seek prosecution of Soviet citizens who had participated in the murder of one's family. For example, when Miriam Bragman returned to Sarny in northwestern Ukraine after the war, she wanted to continue to Davyd-Haradok, to return home. Other survivors discouraged her, telling her that no one had survived. Bragman subsequently accepted an offer to work as a clerk for the Red Army commissar stationed in Sarny. The NKVD also offered her a job, but she refused. Soon after, however, her unit

was called to the front. Probably to avoid being sent there, she accepted the NKVD's job offer. As she recalled, the NKVD uniform not only protected her from attacks by Ukrainian nationalists. It also gave her the opportunity to seek the arrest of those locals whom she believed had committed crimes in the name of German power: 'My closeness to the public prosecutor also enabled me to arrest several gentiles who I recognized as murderers of Jews.'[86]

Few, perhaps, were as determined – and as successful – in their search for suspects as the aforementioned Aharon Moravtchik; his recollections are quite unique. It is unclear how exactly Moravtchik survived the war years, only that he did so fighting with the Red Army. His wife, four children, and extended family perished in the Holocaust. Having somehow heard of the role that local residents like Ivan Mareiko had had in the murder of the town's Jewish community, he vowed to himself that he would track down those locals who had actively helped murder the town's Jewish population: 'I resolved that I must find and unmask them at any cost.'[87] As a pre-1939 citizen of Poland, Moravtchik registered for population transfer to Poland. In May 1946, he arrived in Lower Silesia. On the transport to Poland, he had received from others traveling with him the names of individuals associated with the German occupation regime in Davyd-Haradok. After his arrival in a small town in Lower Silesia, he took up a position working in the district administration. After a while, he was sent on a business trip to Wrocław, where he ran into a friend who took him along to the local market. Walking through the market, Moravtchik's eyes met those of a vendor selling herring. Abruptly, that man asked in Russian: 'Are you a compatriot? (…) Are you Moravtchik?'[88] When Moravtchik inquired about the man's identity, the man suddenly backed off, pretending to have been mistaken. A small commotion ensued, during which Moravtchik called the police, who came and took both men to the police station. After checking that man's papers, it turned out that he had indeed been associated with the administration in Davyd-Haradok. That man also provided Moravtchik with important information about the whereabouts of Ivan Mareiko, who was said to be living in Warsaw by then.[89] Moravtchik made several trips to Warsaw, hoping to be able to uncover Mareiko. In the end, a secret agent, who happened to be Jewish, too, was able to locate Davyd-Haradok's former town mayor in a small town near Warsaw, where the latter was working as a medical doctor. Mareiko was subsequently arrested by the Polish police, as was the lawyer Evgeny Yavplov and his wife Marusya, who were hiding in a small village near Zielona Góra in western Poland. Due to Moravtchik's efforts, the Polish secret police was able to identify and arrest at least a dozen individuals from Davyd-Haradok and its environs. By 1954, it seems, they were still in Polish custody, awaiting extradition to the Soviet Union. Their further whereabouts cannot be identified.[90]

Conclusion

The events in Davyd-Haradok in August 1941 stand out as one of the most extreme cases of local anti-Jewish violence in Belarusn (in its post-1945 borders). The acts of violence perpetrated by some of the town's residents against their Jewish neighbors – the fact that the killings were carried out with axes, spades, and knifes, that people's eyes were gouged out or children torn to pieces in public, on the town's market square – are comparable to

what is known from several towns in western Ukraine and the region around Białystok in the summer of 1941.[91] How can we explain this kind of visceral, personal violence? Why here, in this small Polesian town? The level of interethnic integration was apparently low, and many Jews and non-Jews lived side by side without significant social relations – but that does not suffice as an explanation. In a way, the violence remains inexplicable, beyond words, and not only because we lack sources about the perpetrators' motives. Any attempts at explaining the violence have to remain just that, attempts. Too little is known about the massacre on 10 August 1941 to be able to fully reconstruct the dynamics of violence in town that day. The fragmentary evidence suggest that the role of individuals was key, people like Ivan Mareiko and others who administered the town in the name of German power. They stood out for the zeal with which they carried out the German-led murder of the town's male population, and they may have incited other residents (who would otherwise not have acted on their own) to join them.

Why, then, tell the wartime history of Davyd-Haradok if many questions remain? For one, this article seeks to bring a little-known history to light, if only sketched out. The case of Davyd-Haradok also shows the limits of studying wartime events within national containers only, that is, it shows the limits of studying the Holocaust in Belarus, Ukraine, or Poland as events separated by state borders. Polesia, the historic region in the Ukrainian-Belarusian borderlands, does not fit neatly into either 'Belarusian' or 'Ukrainian' history – not least because the post-1939 Ukrainian-Belarusian border was not congruent with the mental map of the region as held by its inhabitants. Future research could explore whether there was any connection between the smaller local pogroms against Jews that took place in Davyd-Haradok and Stolin in July 1941, and local pogroms that took place around the same time across the Belarusian-Ukrainian border, in nearby towns such as Berezhnytsia, about sixty kilometers to the south of Stolin, and Sarny, about eighty kilometers to the south of Stolin, in the Ukrainian part of Polesia. It is not inconceivable that news of the pogroms traveled from one place to the next and incited new ones, or that, unknown to the victims, some of the perpetrators belonged to the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN).[92] About eighty kilometers to the east of Sarny was the town Olevs'k, which until early November 1941, when personnel from the German civilian administration arrived, was practically in charge of the Ukrainian Polis'ka Sich (Polesian Sich). These paramilitary forces, headed by the nationalist leader Taras Bul'ba-Borovets', terrorized the Jewish community of Olevs'k and killed an unknown number of them.[93]

Of course, eighty kilometers in a region with few paved roads, deep forests, and marshes is a different kind of distance than it is today. Still, for debates that seek to understand variations in local complicity in German atrocities across time and space, more comparative research between individual Soviet and East European regions is required. This could also help shed more light on why local pogrom violence in western Belarus (in its post-1945 borders) occurred in three clusters in the summer of 1941: around Vileika, between and around Baranavichy and Navahrudak, and to the east of Pinsk, including Davyd-Haradok. More research is also needed on the possible connection between these pogroms, local participation in the Holocaust, and the willingness, or rather unwillingness, of survivors to return and live again in the towns that they had once called home. When Jewish survivors of Davyd-Haradok who had spent the war elsewhere, whether in the Soviet rear, with the Red Army, or with the partisans in the forests, discovered the

depths of local complicity, any social ties that they had previously had to non-Jews shattered. It was this experience that convinced someone like Litman Mor that he would never return. Others, like Miriam Bragman, initially settled in a larger town nearby, but soon moved away as well. Indeed, many, if not all of the surviving Jewish residents of Davyd-Haradok seem to have left – certainly the town, most likely the region, and eventually the Soviet Union as such. Who moved into the houses that once belonged to Jewish families in Davyd-Haradok, how non-Jewish residents of the town lived with other material remnants of Jewish life – furniture, household items, clothing – and who filled the occupations that their Jewish neighbors had held before the war, is another question for future research.[94]

Notes

1. Also known as Palesse in Belarusian, Polissya in Ukrainian, or Polesie in Polish. On Polesia and Chernobyl: Brown, *A Manual for Survival*.
2. In 1921, Davyd-Haradok had a Jewish population of 2,832, out of a total population of 9,851. On the town's composition, see: Dean and Hecker, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos,* 1345; Eberhardt, *Przemiany narodowościowe na Białorusi*, 68, table 14; *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book,* 4–9.
3. In the sources, Mareiko's last name is alternatively given as Maraiko or Mareyko.
4. The execution site is spelled differently in the sources. It also appears as Hinovsk, Hinavsk, Khinovsk or Khinovsk Gorki. Dean and Hecker, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos,* 1345; *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book,* 11, 62. On the execution site, see the database of Yahad – In Unum (Holocaust by Bullets), entry "Olshany:" https://yahadmap.org/#village/olshany-alshany-olszany-brest-belarus.1603. Last accessed July 20, 2024. On the 3rd Squadron of SS Cavalry Regiment No. 2, see the 1964 West German trial records in: *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen,* 58–9.
5. See Bragman's testimony in *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, 109–15, here 109.
6. This summary is based on the testimonies by Bas-Sheva Kushner, Gunm Pilavin, Meier Hershl Korman, and Miriam Bragman, who were present in town in 1941, in *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, 91–9, 109–15, as well as Dean and Hecker, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos,* 1345.
7. On the Polish-Soviet population transfer: Halavach, "Reshaping Nations"; Vialiki, *Na razdarozhzhy*.
8. See Moravtchik's testimony in: *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, 119–29.
9. Belleau, "'Neighbor' is an Empty Concept," 74.
10. Gross, *Neighbors.*
11. For an excellent discussion of the limits of reconciliation, social reconstruction, and criminal trials, based on case studies from Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, see: Weinstein and Stover, "Introduction: Conflict, Justice and Reclamation," 1–26; Fletcher and Weinstein, "Violence and Social Repair," 573–639. On the rebuilding of social lives, see also: Das and Kleinman, "Introduction," 1–30.
12. For an example of extreme communal violence, which took place in the Bosnian town Kulen Vakuf in September 1941, and the silence that persisted for decades after the war, see the nuanced analysis in: Bergholz, "Silence Enshrined," 7–44.
13. For a comparison of eastern Galicia (part of western Ukraine) to other Soviet western regions, see: Struve, "Anti-Jewish Violence in the Summer of 1941," 89–113. Kopstein and Wittenberg, *Intimate Violence,* focus on eastern Galicia and the Białystok region. For detailed accounts of the Białystok region: Bender, "Not Only in Jedwabne," 1–38, and Żbikowski "Pogroms in Northeastern Poland," 315–54. On western Ukraine: Himka, "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941," 209–43; Lower, "Pogroms, Mob Violence and Genocide in Western

Ukraine," 217–46; McBride, "'A Sea of Blood and Tears'," 122–49; Struve, *Deutsche Herrschaft*. On Bessarabia and northern Bukovina: Solonari, "Patterns of Violence," 749–87.

14. For studies on the German occupation of Belarus, see: Brakel, *Unter Rotem Stern und Hakenkreuz*; Chiari, *Alltag hinter der Front*; Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust*; Rein, *The Kings and the Pawns.*
15. Among the first studies that asked about the impact of the war were: Jones, *Everyday Life and the "Reconstruction" of Soviet Russia*; Penter, *Kohle für Stalin und Hitler*; Weiner, *Making Sense of War*.
16. Studies of postwar Sovietization (the political, economic, and social transformation of prewar capitalist states into a socialist dictatorship) include Ackermann, *Palimpsest Grodno*; Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv*; Kashtalian, *The Repressive Factors*; Szumski, *Sowietyzacja Zachodniej Białorusi*; Zubkova, *Pribaltika i Kreml'*.
17. On Poland, see: Kornbluth, *The August Trials*; on Soviet trials, see, for example: Exeler, *Ghosts of War*, 142–74; Mertelsmann and Rahi-Tamm, "Cleansing and Compromise," 319–40; Penter, "Local Collaborators on Trial," 341–64; Voisin, *L'URSS contre ses traîtres*, in particular 137–330.
18. See, for example, Aleksiun, "Returning from the Land of the Dead," 256–70; Cichopek-Gajraj, *Beyond Violence*; Gross, *Fear*; Krzyżanowski, *Ghost Citizens*; Michlic, *Jewish Children in Nazi-Occupied Poland.* On Ukraine, see: Jakel, "'Ukraine without Jews'?". On Belarus, see: Exeler, *Ghosts of War*; Smilovitsky, "The Struggle of Belorussian Jews," 53–70.
19. The original Hebrew and Yiddish version was published as: *Sefer zikaron: David-Horodok*. The Yiddish and parts of the Hebrew version were translated into English as: *Memorial Book of David-Horodok*. This article quotes from the 2003 English edition *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, which seems identical with the 1981 English edition.
20. Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 115–7.
21. On violent incidents during the initial stage of conquest: Gross, *Revolution from Abroad,* 17–69.
22. Mor, *The War for Life*, 54–61; *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book,* 54–5.
23. On the impact of Soviet rule on interethnic relations in western Belarus: Karpenkina, "Trade, Jews, and the Soviet Economy in Western Belorussia," 404–23.
24. *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, 57–60.
25. Shuri Ami's testimony in ibid., 90, also ibid., 60–2. On the closed border, see also the recollections by Petr Rabtsevich from Pinsk in: *Kholokost na Pinshchine*, 121.
26. Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde,* 134–42, 156–68, 173–6, 180, 196–200.
27. Dean, *Collaboration*, 105–6; Eikel and Sivaieva, "City Mayors, Raion Chiefs and Village Elders in Ukraine," 408, 411–3; Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, 196–202; Rein, *The Kings and the Pawns*, 100–7.
28. Dean and Hecker, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos,* 1345, 1442; *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, 61–2.
29. Dean and Hecker, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos,* xxxi–xxxv.
30. Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, 180–96, quote 182, 556.
31. Ibid., 560–4, Dean and Hecker, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, 1345.
32. *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, 61–2, quote 62. The (unknown) author of these recollections wrote a lengthy account of the history of the town. It is clear from his writings that he was a prewar resident of the town and a survivor of the war, although it is unclear under what circumstances he survived the war, and whether he was present in Davyd-Haradok during the summer of 1941.
33. Quoted from his recollections in ibid., 122.
34. Ibid., 122.
35. Quoted from Meier Hershl Korman's recollections, ibid., 97–9, here 98. It appears that he was able to hide throughout 1941, possibly parts of 1942, after which he fled from the town. It is unclear how he survived the war. He might have done so with the partisans

and was later drafted into the Red Army. His recollections only say that he 'returned from Russia' after the war.

36. For that definition of pogroms, see Struve, *Deutsche Herrschaft*, 36.
37. On the pogroms, see the literature cited in note 13.
38. Quoted from Lichtenberg's testimony quoted in: Żbikowski, "Pogroms in Northeastern Poland," 336, fn 69.
39. Quoted from: Yoran, *The Defiant*, 52.
40. Quoted from Ioffe's report, probably written between 8 July and 11 October 1941, in: Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI) f. 17, op. 88, d. 480, l. 144.
41. Small and Shayne, *Remember Us,* 106–11.
42. Dean and Hecker, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos,* 1212–4 (Karelichy), 1228–30 (Dzialiatsichy), 1146–8 (Vidzy), Serniki (1465). Serniki was part of Belarus from 1939 to 1944. Tokel, "The Liquidation of the Stolin Jewish Community," 216–22; Yoran, *The Defiant,* 55 (Kuranets).
43. Quoted from: Tokel, "The Liquidation of the Stolin Jewish Community," 217; Small and Shayne, *Remember Us*, 104–9; Żbikowski, "Pogroms in Northeastern Poland," 336, fn 69.
44. As argued by Gross, *Neighbors,* xxi. Similarly, writing on the extensive communal violence that engulfed the Kulen Vakuf region in Bosnia in the summer of 1941, Max Bergholz has drawn attention to the highly varied behavior of micro-level actors in multiethnic regions, which explains why continued escalation of violence on the ground can vary greatly according to time and place. Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force,* 310–2.
45. For a more detailed discussion of the different factors debated in the literature, see: Exeler, *Ghosts of War*, 78–84.
46. Quoted from *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, 98.
47. Quoted from Kushner and Pilavin's testimonies in *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, 91–3, here 92.
48. Quoted from Nahmanovitch's testimony in ibid., 93–7, here 94. It is not clear if Nahmanovitch was present in town at the time.
49. Quoted from Bragman's testimony in ibid., 109.
50. Quoted from Nahmanovitch's testimony in ibid., 94.
51. See Bragman's testimony in ibid., 109.
52. Ibid., 109–10, quote 109.
53. Quoted from Korman's testimony in ibid., 98.
54. Ibid., 91.
55. Quoted from Moravtchik's testimony in ibid., 123.
56. Quoted from Korman's testimony in ibid., 98.
57. Quoted from Moravtchik's testimony in ibid., 126.
58. Ibid., 4, 7–8.
59. All quotes from ibid., 7.
60. Quoted from Belleau, "'Neighbor' is an Empty Concept," 88.
61. Dean and Hecker, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, 1345.
62. See Nahmanovitch's testimony in *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, 95.
63. Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, 937–43, 1018–32.
64. The number comes from the online database "Belorusskie derevni, sozhzhennye v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny" of the National Archive of Belarus (hereafter NARB): http://db.narb.by/search/?title=&titles=old&region=16&district=&year=. Last accessed July 19, 2024.
65. By the fall of 1944, an estimated 12,000–14,000 members of the OUN–UPA were active in southern Belarus. Valakhanovich, *Antisovetskoe podpol'e,* 108. Specifically on Turovskii district, Poles'e region (oblast), fall 1944: NARB f. 4p, op. 29, d. 29, ll. 163–4.
66. The Polish name was probably the Kościuszko unit. See the recollections by Haim Hochman who fought in the unit: *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, 99–109, here 106. On the OUN–UPA's ethnic cleansing of Polish villages in western Ukraine: McBride, "'A Sea of Blood

and Tears'," 314–46; Snyder, "The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing 1943," 197–234.
67. On Operation Bagration: Stone, "Operations on the Eastern Front," 351–4.
68. On re-establishing political authority through trials: Kudryashov and Voisin, "The Early Stages of Legal Purges," 287; Cadiot and Penter, "Law and Justice in Wartime and Postwar Stalinism," 161–71.
69. On that tension inherent to the Soviet politics of retribution, see: Exeler, *Ghosts of War,* 142–74.
70. On the second wave of trials, see: Prusin, "The 'Second Wave' of Soviet Justice," 129–37; Sklokina, "Trials of Nazi Collaborators," 67–86.
71. On the moment of return, see: Exeler, *Ghosts of War*, 110–41.
72. Quoted from Weinstein and Stover, "Introduction: Conflict, Justice and Reclamation," 4.
73. Ibid., 4.
74. Quoted from *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, 96.
75. Both quotes from ibid., 96.
76. Mor, *War for Life*, 192–6.
77. All quotes from Mor, *War for Life*, 198.
78. Quoted from ibid., 199.
79. Ibid., 199–205.
80. Quoted from ibid., 207.
81. Quoted from ibid., 221.
82. Quoted from *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, 97.
83. See Hochman's recollections in ibid., 104.
84. Quoted from ibid., 97; Mor, *War for Life*, 208–9.
85. On the appropriation of Jewish property in western Ukraine, see: Wylegała, "About 'Jewish Things'," 83–119. On Poland: Krzyżanowski, *Ghost Citizens*, 208–64. On Ukraine: Jakel, "'Ukraine without Jews'?," 39–51. On Belarus: Exeler, *Ghosts of War*, 194–201.
86. Quoted from *Davyd-Haradok Memorial Book*, 114.
87. Quoted from ibid., 119.
88. Quoted from ibid., 121.
89. Ibid., 122.
90. Ibid., 124–9.
91. Struve, *Deutsche Herrschaft;* Gross, *Neighbors.*
92. On pogroms in Sarny and Berezhnytsia: Dean and Hecker, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos,* 1334–5, 1463–5.
93. See the entry by Jared McBride and Alexander Kruglov on Olevs'k in ibid., 1553–5.
94. For a study that has examined such questions pertaining to Galicia (its Polish and Ukrainian parts), see: Wylegała, "The Void Communities," 1–30.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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