

## Mir

Town in Belorussia, and home to one of the most famous *Yeshivas* in Eastern Europe. In September 1939, Mir was annexed by the Soviet Union, where 2,500 Jews lived. The *yeshiva* was moved to Vilna and most of the students eventually escaped to Shanghai.

In June 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union. German troops entered Mir on June 26; on November 9, the Germans launched an *aktion* in which 1,500 Jews were murdered. Next, they established a ghetto and crammed 850 people inside.

Soon, an 80-man underground was formed in the ghetto, whose goal was to defend the Jews of the ghetto in case of another *aktion*. Oswald Rufajzen, a Jew posing as a Volksdeutsche, who had been appointed assistant to the district commander and translator for the district commander of the German police, helped supply the underground with arms.

On August 6, 1942, Rufajzen was informed that an *aktion* would take place in the ghetto on August 13. He gave the information to the underground, and told them that on August 9, he and the rest of the police would be out of town on a "raid against the Partisans" - providing the Jews with a perfect opportunity for escape. When the time came, only 180 Jews actually fled the ghetto. All those who remained were exterminated during the *aktion*.