

Baranovichi

(in Polish, Baranowicze), city in Belorussia and site of a Ghetto and labor camps. Before World War II, Baranovichi was part of Poland. The Germans invaded Poland in September 1939, and divided the country into three parts. The easternmost third, including Baranovichi, was given to the Soviet Union. However, the Germans then invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941 and took control of Soviet territories. They entered Baranovichi on June 27. At that time, there were 10,000 Jews living there.

Just a few days after the invasion, the Germans killed 73 Jews who they said were Communists. Another 350 Jews were murdered soon thereafter, and 759 Jews were sent to be killed at the Koldichevo camp.

The Germans formed a *Judenrat* and named Yehoshua Isikson its chairman. They then ordered him to supply them with Jews for forced labor, but he refused. On March 3, 1942, 2,300 Jews were murdered in retaliation. Isikson was forced to watch the killing, and was then murdered himself. Following the massacre, Jews from surrounding towns were brought to the Baranovichi Ghetto.

An underground organization was formed in Baranovichi in mid-1942 with 200 members. Their major dilemma was whether to fight the Germans from inside the ghetto or from the forests. The underground decided to launch a ghetto uprising on July 19, 1942. They made a detailed plan and acquired weapons, but decided at the beginning of July to postpone the uprising, out of consideration for the rest of the ghetto. After that, the members of the underground concentrated on simply escaping the ghetto.

In late summer 1942, the Germans began arresting, killing, and deporting Jews from the Baranovichi Ghetto. The underground again discussed the possibility of an uprising, but abandoned the idea when they realized that they did not have the full support of the rest of the ghetto population. When the *aktion* ended, Jews began to run from the ghetto. In December 1942 the Germans initiated a final *aktion* in Baranovichi, murdering 3,000 Jews and totally liquidating the ghetto. After December 17, only 700 Jews remained in Baranovichi as forced laborers. (see also Resistance, Jewish)

