

# The Khatyn Massacre in Belorussia: A Historical Controversy Revisited

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**The brutal March 1943 massacre in the Belorussian village of Khatyn, commemorated in a 1969 memorial, has come to symbolize the horrors of the German occupation. Given the continuing centrality of the massacre to Belarussian memory politics, the details of the event remain understudied. For political reasons, Soviet authorities and Ukrainian diaspora nationalists alike had an interest in de-emphasizing the central role of collaborators in carrying out the massacre. Using German military records, Soviet partisan diaries, and materials from Belorussian and Canadian legal cases, the author of this article revisits one of the most infamous, yet least understood war crimes committed on Soviet territory.**

On March 22, 1943, the village of Khatyn in Belorussia was annihilated. Its residents were herded into a barn and burned alive. Between 1941 and 1944, the German invaders carried out 140 major “punitive” operations similar to the one that resulted in the destruction of Khatyn.<sup>1</sup> In the spring of 1943 alone, 12,000 partisans and civilians were killed in similar *Aktionen*.<sup>2</sup> Khatyn’s 149 murdered residents thus constituted only a tiny fraction of the 2,230,000 residents of Belorussia who perished during the war. The details of the massacre were documented in 1944 by the Soviet government’s Extraordinary State Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating Nazi Crimes, much like those of any other war crime committed in Belorussia.<sup>3</sup> For more than two decades, however, Khatyn remained a largely forgotten detail of a horrendous war.

In 1965, partisan movement veteran Piotr Masherau became the first secretary of the Belorussian Communist Party. Masherau considered the narrative of partisan heroism central to Soviet Belorussian national identity. New monuments commemorating the victims of war and celebrating the heroism of the Soviet partisans began to appear throughout the republic. In 1966, the Belorussian government resolved to build a massive memorial to the victims of the war at the site where the village of Khatyn had once stood. Masherau took a personal interest in the construction of the memorial, and visited the construction site with his family frequently.<sup>4</sup> The complex was officially opened on July 5, 1969, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Belorussia’s final liberation by the Red Army.<sup>5</sup>

At the entrance to the complex stands a six-meter-tall bronze statue of a man carrying his murdered son in his arms. Called “the undefeated man,” it was erected as “a symbol of . . . the wrath and suffering of the Belorussian people, as an eternal reminder of its shot and burned, hanged and tortured sons and daughters.”<sup>6</sup> The statue depicts the 56-year-old village smith Iosif Kaminskii, the only adult survivor of the massacre. At the center of the memorial stand three birch trees, with an eternal flame instead of a fourth tree completing the pattern—a laconic reminder that one in four inhabitants of Belorussia perished during the war.<sup>7</sup> Located only fifty kilometers from Minsk, Khatyn has fulfilled an important pedagogical function as a pilgrimage site for millions of Young Pioneers, students, and tourists. The memorial reminded the visitors of the horrors of war while at the same time serving to cultivate Soviet patriotism. The complex was intended to invoke feelings of solemn reverence for the victims of the war and respect for the partisans, and in doing so, to serve the political purpose of legitimizing the leadership’s hold on power.<sup>8</sup>

Recognition of these political goals also helps us to understand the very different treatment of the Babi Yar memorial in Kyiv. Calls for a memorial to Jewish



Statue of Iosif Kaminskii at Khatyn memorial site, Belorussia, ca. 1981. Courtesy of Michael Gelb.

victims there were long ignored by the Soviet authorities, and when one was built in 1976, it de-emphasized the victims' ethnicity. By contrast, the Khatyn memorial was built both as a universal monument to victims of the war, and as a monument to Belorussian suffering. As a symbol of the cruelty of war, it has come to occupy a central role in the collective memory of Belorussia, a country that had a higher proportion of population losses than any other European country. *Sovetskaia Belorussia* wrote on the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Khatyn massacre: "Three generations have grown up with Khatyn as a symbol of and popular memorial to Belorussian heroism, trials, and grief."<sup>9</sup> What at the time seemed a relatively minor event in the course of the war became a symbol of the war itself. As the importance of Khatyn as a central Belorussian and then Soviet narrative has grown, so has interest in what actually transpired in that village on March 22, 1943.

### Historiography, Sources, and Methodology

The topics of political violence, genocide, and partisan resistance on Soviet territory began to receive due attention only after the fall of the Soviet Union. Christian Gerlach's monumental *Kalkulierte Morde* is perhaps the most important work on the German occupation of Belorussia, while Ben Shepherd's *War in the Wild East* is the most detailed study of the stages of the brutal German counter-insurgency campaign in Belorussia. Partly on the basis of German war diaries, Shepherd discusses the kill ratios of anti-partisan actions, with scores of partisan and other civilian deaths for just a few German casualties. On the activities of the Soviet partisans in Belorussia, Bogdan Musial's *Sowjetische Partisanen* is particularly noteworthy.<sup>10</sup> Timothy Snyder places the Holocaust within the larger context of multiple ethnic wars in Eastern Europe, and it is within this context that the conflict between various Ukrainian groups, Belorussians, pro-Soviet partisans, and Poles studied in this article should be seen.<sup>11</sup>

The aim of this study is twofold: to shed light on the dynamics of collaboration in occupied Belorussia, and to highlight the Soviet and post-Soviet Belorussian leadership's political use of history. The article is based partly on archival material and partly on previously unavailable documents from Soviet war crimes trials conducted in the 1970s and 1980s involving alleged perpetrators of the Khatyn massacre. Records from Soviet war crimes trials are a largely untapped historical source. The Soviet authorities generated considerable materials on war crimes committed on occupied territory. Almost all trials involved multiple defendants, and were preceded by lengthy interrogations. Some defendants were subjected to more than twenty sessions of intense questioning. Interestingly, even under Stalin only a minority of the people sentenced received the death penalty. Instead, most were sentenced to lengthy terms in labor camps—typically ten to twenty-five years. Many were released as part of a 1955 amnesty under Khrushchev.

The 1960s saw some highly publicized war crimes trials in the BSSR. But continuing investigations of war crimes yielded new information, and some alleged war criminals who had benefited from the amnesty were re-arrested in the 1970s or 1980s. At this point the legal records were much more extensive, consisting of multi-volume sets, supplemented by captured German documents, lengthy interrogation reports, and survivor testimonies.<sup>12</sup> This article is based primarily on the materials from the case against Hryhorii Vasiura, a commanding officer of the collaborationist formation that destroyed Khatyn. The documents from his case were declassified only on March 22, 2008, on the occasion of the sixty-fifth anniversary of the massacre.<sup>13</sup> The Vasiura case consists of sixteen volumes and includes extensive interviews with survivors and witnesses as well as interrogations of many of the perpetrators. Khatyn was but one of many villages destroyed during the war, yet the details of this atrocity provide disturbing micro-level insight into the implementation of Nazi Germany's brutal policies in Belorussia.

Reliance on Soviet court materials is problematic, as the Soviet legal system, even under Gorbachev, left much to be desired. The Soviets sometimes exploited the issue of war crimes for political purposes; the materials should therefore be used with caution. In his work on Stalin-era Soviet war crimes trials, Alexander V. Prusin concludes that while the statements of Soviet judges and prosecution were heavily politicized, "there is no reason why [Soviet] interrogation and trials records—if combined with other available materials—should not be used as historical sources relating to the sites and instances of genocide."<sup>14</sup> In this article, some of the difficulties of using Soviet legal materials are offset through the use of partisan diaries, German internal reports, and Canadian legal records. These sources are supplemented by two interviews conducted with judge Viktor Glazkov, who presided over the trials of the commanding officers at Khatyn, as well as by Glazkov's personal archives and collections.

## Background

In June 1941, Heinrich Himmler declared that the impending invasion of the Soviet Union would result in the deaths of thirty million Slavs.<sup>15</sup> The Nazi blueprint for the postwar order, the *Generalplan Ost*, did not envision a future for the Belorussian people, seventy-five per cent of whom were to be deported.<sup>16</sup> Given the enormity of the territories under German occupation, German military personnel were stretched thin. Aware of this personnel shortage, Wilhelm Keitel argued: "Since we cannot watch everybody, we need to rule by fear." Hitler himself, upon learning of Stalin's 1941 call for a partisan movement in the summer of 1941, exclaimed: "That's all to the good—it gives us the possibility to exterminate everyone who challenges our rule."<sup>17</sup> Adolf Heusinger of the German Army High Command stated that "the treatment of the civilian population and the methods of anti-partisan warfare in operational areas presented the highest political and

military leaders with a welcome opportunity to carry out their plans, namely the systematic extermination of Slavism and Jewry.”<sup>18</sup> On September 16, 1941 Wilhelm Keitel issued an order that every German soldier killed in a partisan attack in the occupied Soviet Union would be avenged by the killing of “fifty to one hundred Communists.”<sup>19</sup>

The occupiers carried out a great number of punitive measures against the local population. Many of the victims of the anti-partisan operations were innocent bystanders, and women and children were deliberately targeted.<sup>20</sup> For instance, the village of Khvoinia had the misfortune of being erroneously marked as “Oktiabr” on the maps of a German punitive battalion sent to carry out an “anti-bandit” action in Oktiabrskii raion in the spring of 1942. That mistake cost 1,350 people their lives. Men and women were separated, and the men were forced to run with arms raised until they were exhausted. More than four hundred people, most of them men, were then forced into one of the village barns, which was sprayed with white phosphorus. The explosive fire burned the building in a matter of minutes. Women and children, in two groups of about 700 and 200, were burned alive in separate barns. Khvoinia, with its 360 farmsteads, was burned down. In this and many other cases, the partisans themselves were able to escape.<sup>21</sup>

In late 1942, Hermann Göring ordered that in “partisan-infested” areas, all food was to be confiscated, all able-bodied men and women were to be evacuated as forced labor, and children were to be sent to special camps. At this point it became a standard practice for the Germans and their local collaborators to surround and burn villages suspected of supporting partisans.<sup>22</sup> On November 18, 1942, SS-Obergruppenführer Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, the Higher SS- and Police leader for the center region, issued an order on Himmler’s behalf. It stated that the local leaders of the Sicherheitsdienst (SD, intelligence service of the SS) were to determine which villages should be burned, and which should have their residents deported.<sup>23</sup> The reprisals became more brutal as partisan resistance increased. In 1942, the German authorities introduced a policy of creating “dead zones,” totally destroying and depopulating entire areas. This policy was greatly expanded during the first half of 1943.<sup>24</sup> In April of that year, the command of Army Group Center introduced “battle instructions for the counter-partisan activities in the East”; according to these instructions, “large forested areas” were to be “totally evacuated.”<sup>25</sup> Belorussian lands were categorized as “liberated areas,” “areas endangered by bandit activities,” or “bandit-infested areas.” In areas “endangered by bandit activities” men were “allowed to work or leave the locality only under supervision.” Any men encountered without supervision were to be arrested or shot. In the “partisan-infested areas,” all men were to be deported.<sup>26</sup> The SS-und-Polizeigebietsführer (SS- and police district leader) for Rechitsa declared: “Burned villages are to be regarded as partisan villages and

may not be rebuilt. Anyone encountered in them will be regarded as a partisan and shot.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Schutzmannschaft Battalion 118**

In the occupied Soviet territories, Nazi Germany had no difficulty finding local collaborators—particularly in the western borderlands that had been integrated into the Soviet Union under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Stalinist rule there had brought an unprecedented wave of repression and violence, with arbitrary arrests, deportations, and random executions. Ukrainian nationalist movements had been forced underground, but reappeared with renewed strength following the German attack on the Soviet Union. With support from Nazi Germany, the two wings of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), the leading Ukrainian fascist movement, organized military formations: the Bandera wing (OUN[b]) and the Mel’nyk wing (OUN[m]).<sup>28</sup> The latter’s paramilitary force, the Bukovyns’kyi Kurin’ (Bukovinian Battalion), comprised 2,000 members, 900 of whom marched into Ukraine in the summer of 1941.<sup>29</sup>

The Germans captured Kyiv on September 19, 1941. Most accounts assert that the Bukovyns’kyi Kurin’ arrived with the German front-line troops and took part in the September 29–30 shootings that constituted the single largest massacre of the Holocaust. During the course of this massacre, Sonderkommando 4a (a unit belonging to Einsatzgruppe C) together with local collaborators and Ukrainian police formations, shot 33,771 Jewish civilians.<sup>30</sup> The executions in Babi Yar continued every Tuesday and Friday for the next 103 weeks; during that time some fifty to sixty thousand more people, many of them non-Jews, were murdered.<sup>31</sup>

In late 1941 and early 1942, OUN-German relations became complicated. The Nazi leadership refused to accept the “renewal” of Ukrainian statehood that the OUN(b) had declared in L’viv on June 30, 1941. Although the OUN(m) remained loyal to the Nazis throughout the war, and some of its leaders were murdered by the OUN(b) for their refusal to support the June 30 declaration, Ukrainian nationalist military formations supported by Nazi Germany were dissolved and reorganized as Schutzmannschaften (local auxiliary police units).<sup>32</sup> The members of the Bukovyns’kyi Kurin’ voluntarily joined the Schutzmannschaften, where they were organized first as Battalion 115; later, the third company of Battalion 115, consisting of about 100 men, became the first company of the 118th Battalion. These men were considered the elite of the battalion. They were “the harshest and most dedicated to the Germans. The majority . . . of [the company’s] members were nationalists from Western Ukraine,” one of the veterans of the battalion recalled.<sup>33</sup> The other two companies consisted of former Soviet POWs, most of them from central and eastern Ukraine. In all, the battalion comprised some 500 members.<sup>34</sup> There was a parallel command structure; every local officer had a German counterpart. Erich Körner, who had his own staff of about forty Germans,

commanded the battalion. As Körner was 56 years old and in poor health, 27-year-old Hryhorii Vasiura, the battalion's chief of staff, carried out the day-to-day operations. A Ukrainian from the Cherkasy oblast, Vasiura was a former senior lieutenant in the Red Army.<sup>35</sup> Vasył Meleshko, a former lieutenant of the Soviet infantry, and his German counterpart Hans Woellke led the first company.<sup>36</sup> With the exception of the POWs, the *Schutzmänner* were recruited on a voluntary basis.<sup>37</sup> The battalion, which incorporated perpetrators of the Babi Yar massacre,<sup>38</sup> came to serve as a *Sonderkommando* and was employed in the extermination of partisans.<sup>39</sup> In early 1943, *Schutzmannschaft Bataillon 118* was sent to Belorussia, where it participated in a number of the most brutal and infamous pacifications.<sup>40</sup> Together with local police, the SS, and German police and military formations, *Schutzmannschaft Bataillon 118* participated in large-scale anti-partisan "special actions," including the massive operations "Regenschauer" and "Frühlingsfest" in the Polatsk-Lepel' area.<sup>41</sup> The destruction of Khatyn was a part of an operation called "Wandsbeck."<sup>42</sup>

A "special action," or *Aktion*, usually constituted an order to kill specific groups of people: Communists, Jews, or partisans.<sup>43</sup> They often showed more resemblance to massacres than to military campaigns. For instance, during "Operation Cottbus" in May–June, eighty-eight Germans and forty local collaborators were killed, compared to twelve to thirteen thousand local residents. More than six thousand were deported for forced labor. Ninety percent of the locals killed were unarmed.<sup>44</sup>

### **Soviet Partisan Resistance**

The ferocity of the German onslaught took the Soviets by surprise and disillusioned the leadership of the BSSR, which was evacuated to Moscow. The brutal German occupation provoked increasingly violent resistance. Only in 1942 did the partisan resistance become a significant force, and after the turning point at Stalingrad, it came to control significant territories in the BSSR. One of the many partisan units was the "Diadia Vasia" (Uncle Vasia) brigade, formed on September 9, 1942, when two existing brigades were combined.<sup>45</sup> By March 1943 the detachment consisted of three companies totaling more than three hundred men.<sup>46</sup> The diaries of the partisan brigade "Narodnye Mstiteli" (People's Avengers) provide insight into everyday life under the brutal German occupation. The entries for the period September 11–December 30, 1942 list several atrocities similar to the one in Khatyn. These events were so frequent that they merited only minimal notice in the partisan diaries. The diary entry for October 5, 1942 reads: "In the village Mstizh-Voloki twelve houses were burned down, 316 men and women killed and burned in the barn."<sup>47</sup> For the area of Lahoisk-Pleshchenitse alone, the partisans report a number of atrocities between April 24 and July 1, 1943.<sup>48</sup> Many of the atrocities in the area were linked to the arrival of "up to 1,000 Ukrainians from

Minsk” on May 1. “Police, gendarmes, and Ukrainian battalions” abducted hundreds of young people for slave labor in Germany, and burned and looted, besides Khatyn, the villages of Kraisk, Khodaki, Lus’koe, and others.<sup>49</sup>

### **The Khatyn Massacre as Reflected in Partisan Diaries and German Reports**

While Khatyn differs little from other Nazi atrocities perpetrated in Belorussia, it has received perhaps more attention than any other massacre of that scale in the German-occupied USSR. Even so, certain details remain unclear.<sup>50</sup> Accounts differ on the events leading to the massacre. According to partisan diaries and testimonies, about seventy-five partisans took part in an ambush, an assault that appears to have been carefully planned. German gendarmerie documents had reported a significant increase in partisan activities in Pleshchenitsy in the second half of 1942.<sup>51</sup> The handwritten records of the Mstitel’ brigade list seven members of the Diadia Vasia brigade killed in various actions between January 1 and April 1, 1943.<sup>52</sup> The war diary of the Diadia Vasia brigade gives the following account of what transpired in Khatyn:

21-3-43. Two companies of the P[artisan] brigade “MSTITEL” [Avenger] (1 and 3) under the command of Dep. Commander of the Brigade Sr. Lieutenant Morozov was stationed on the road Pleshchenitsy-Lahoisk, looking for enemy vehicles.

22-3-43. At 12.00 we opened fire on three enemy cars, one of which was destroyed, two were taken out of action. Six fritzies were killed and three *Polizei*. Eight wounded. We suffered no losses. A major, commander of the Ukrainian police, was killed. After the operation both companies rested in the village of Khotyn [*sic*]. . . . At 17.00 that day the enemy surrounded the village. The company dispersed quickly. Three men were killed and four wounded. The village was destroyed and all its inhabitants burned in the barn. In total 140 people were burned, among them seventy children between the ages of 1 and 14.<sup>53</sup>

The ambush resulted in the deaths of Hauptmann Hans Woellke of the first company, a *volksdeutsche* machine gunner by the name of Schneider, and three Ukrainian Schutz­männer. Schneider was driving in an armored car, and behind him came two trucks on their way from Pleshchenitsy to Lahoisk. Both Woellke and Schneider sustained wounds to their arms from the first round of bullets. Woellke jumped out of the car and was shot as he ran for cover. Schneider and the chauffeur were also killed. One of the two wounded Ukrainian Schutz­männer was Zugführer (Lieutenant) Vasył’ Meleshko, who sustained a light wound to his head.<sup>54</sup> The earliest documentation of the skirmish in the archives is a March 23, 1943 report on a radio correspondence between Schutzmannschaft Bataillon 118 and the SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger, in which the former urgently requests reinforcements.<sup>55</sup> Following the attack, the



partisans escaped. The footprints they left in the March snow led to the nearby village of Khatyn.

To the Belorussian partisans, Woellke was just another fascist enemy who had ordered, initiated, and participated in war crimes.<sup>56</sup> The partisans were not aware that Woellke was well-known in Germany as an Olympic athlete who set a world record in the shot-put during the 1936 Berlin Olympics. He was also the first German male to receive an Olympic medal in track and field.<sup>57</sup> It seems that the killing of Woellke was intimately connected to what followed.<sup>58</sup>

Upon learning of the attack from Meleshko, Körner appears to have immediately ordered a collective punishment of the local population: the complete annihilation of Khatyn. Körner reinforced the unit with the infamous SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger, which was used in the most brutal punitive Aktionen.<sup>59</sup> The Sonderbataillon consisted of two “Russian” companies and one of Germans, including hardened criminals, some of whom were mentally ill.<sup>60</sup> The German company took part in the joint Khatyn operation together with Schutzmannschaft Battalion 118.<sup>61</sup> In all likelihood, the overall command was in the hands of the German unit’s commanders. We can follow the paper trail of the atrocity through the German administration. After being informed of the event, the general commissar in Minsk wrote to the district commissar of Barysau (Borisov) on April 1, 1943 requesting a detailed report.<sup>62</sup> Körner then provided the following report on the events:

On March 22, 1943, the telephone connection between Pleshchenitse and Lahoisk was destroyed by bandits. In order to protect the repair unit and to clear the road-blocks two platoons from the first company of Sch[utzmannschaft] Bat[ailon] 118 under the command of Hauptmann of the Sch[utzmannschaft] Woellke were sent out at 09.30AM. About 600 meters away from the Huba forest we observed a number of loggers at work. When questioned, they claimed that they had not seen any bandits. When the unit was about 300 meters away, it came under intense machine gun and rifle fire from the east. During the ensuing battle the Hauptmann of the Schutzmannschaft Woellke and three Ukrainian Schutzmänner were killed, and two other Schutzmänner were wounded. Shortly after the intense exchange of fire the enemy retreated eastward, bringing their dead and wounded toward Khatyn. At this point the battle with the Ukrainian platoon leader was interrupted, as they lacked the forces required for effective retaliation. Upon [the unit’s] return, the encountered forestry workers were captured, as they were strongly suspected of having assisted the enemy. A short way to the north, near Huba, some of them attempted to escape. We opened fire, killing twenty-five people. The remaining captured [loggers] were brought to the gendarmerie in Pleshchenitse for interrogation. They were later released since their guilt could not be established. In order to pursue the retreating enemy strong reinforcements were then brought in, among them parts of the SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger. Meanwhile, the partisans had retreated to the village Khatyn, which was known for its pro-partisan leanings. The village was encircled and attacked from all sides. The enemy put up fierce resistance and opened fire from all

houses in the village, so that also heavy weapons such as anti-tank guns [PaK] and heavy grenade launchers became necessary. During the battle several villagers were killed along with the 34 bandits. Some of them died in the flames. Most villagers had already left the village days earlier, since they were not interested in making joint cause with the bandits. This tendency could be observed in other villages along the road.<sup>63</sup>

### **The Khatyn Massacre through the Lens of the Vasiura Trial**

The tragedy that lies behind these official reports can be reconstructed in some detail from a number of sources. The German officers carried out a collective punishment, the cruelty of which stands out even by the standards of German-occupied Belorussia. It is difficult to establish the exact duties of each individual Schutzmann during the Khatyn massacre some seventy years after the event. Yet, the general picture that emerges from the testimonies by over two dozen victims and perpetrators, given in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s to Polish, Soviet, and Canadian investigators, concerning what transpired on March 22, 1943, is remarkably consistent.<sup>64</sup> The Schutzmänner had assisted the Germans in the execution of horrific atrocities, but the memories of Khatyn appear to have been particularly strong. In his March 21, 1973 testimony, Schutzmann Ostap F. Knap remarked: "I remember it as if it were today," since "the brutality of the [Khatyn] Aktion was horrendous."<sup>65</sup>

The Khatyn Aktion was a joint action of Schutzmannschaft Bataillon 118 and the SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger. According to Meleshko, 150–160 men from the first and third company of Schutzmannschaft Bataillon 118 and 100 men from the SS took part in the Aktion. The Second company of Schutzmannschaft Bataillon 118 did not, as it was away from Pleshchenitsy on that day.<sup>66</sup>

The first victims of the punitive operation were the loggers, who were from the nearby village of Kozyri. They had been working in the forest at the time of the ambush. Schutzmann Knap, who was later identified as one of the people who fired upon the loggers with machine guns,<sup>67</sup> gave the following description of the scene while testifying in 1973: "When I arrived at the site of the shooting, there were really a lot of people lying on the road. The entire place was drenched in blood. . . . I saw how Ivankiv was firing with a machine gun upon the people who were running for cover in the forest, and how Katriuk and Meleshko were shooting the people lying on the road. . . . Meleshko and Pankiv were particularly cruel to the loggers—Meleshko because he had been wounded, and Pankiv because he wanted to avenge [the killing of a soldier] from his home region."<sup>68</sup> A number of testimonies from later trials corroborate Knap's story.<sup>69</sup>

Some aspects of the massacre in the village of Khatyn are described with remarkable consistency, but others are not. Details such as whether the soldiers

were firing on the burning barn from fifteen, thirty, or 150 meters away, or whether the soldiers stood in a half-circle or a full circle formation, differ in the many accounts.<sup>70</sup> The fact that a child “who was crawling out of the burning barn was killed by a pistol shot” is remembered in several interrogation reports from the 1970s and 1980s, but the recollections differ in regard to the age of the child, or whether the child had been shot by Schutzmannschaft battalion commander Smowski or by someone who stood next to him.<sup>71</sup> Thirty years after the event, Knap recalled seeing Meleshko, his wounded head covered with white bandages, standing in front of the burning barn; he also remembers that the screaming and moaning from the burning barn quickly subsided as the burning roof collapsed.<sup>72</sup> Some testimonies provide details regarding even the make of the weapons the most active participants used; one witness stated that Schutzmann Katriuk had had “a Czech-manufactured machine gun.”<sup>73</sup>

That perpetrators often vividly recall the technical details of the massacres is well-documented. Harald Welzer explains this phenomenon by pointing out that the perpetrators often found the assignments they were to carry out “unpleasant,” and that they therefore concentrated instead on their specific, narrow task and the technical details surrounding it. This, he argues, explains why some memories are surprisingly clear so many years later. In his study of Police Battalion 45, Welzer notes how seldom the perpetrators describe the victims by individual traits, and concludes that “one probably did not want or could not concentrate on such personalizing qualities in the moment of perpetration.”<sup>74</sup>

The testimonies of the perpetrators of Schutzmannschaft Battalion 118 are consistent in that some Schutz männer are reported to have been particularly active; that Vasiura, Körner, Smowski, and Meleshko commanded the Khatyn Aktion is confirmed by more than a dozen testimonies by perpetrators, bystanders, and victims.<sup>75</sup> Vasiura is remembered as having herded the residents of Khatyn into the barn and participated in the shooting. He placed Schutz männer Abdulaev, Hutsilo, and Katriuk outside.<sup>76</sup> His adjutant Lukovich, an intelligence officer and translator, set the roof on fire with a torch.<sup>77</sup> One witness stated that Volodymyr Katriuk was a particularly active participant in the atrocity: he reportedly lay behind the stationary machine gun, firing rounds on anyone attempting to escape the flames.<sup>78</sup> “In Khatyn, [Vasiura] stood together with Smowski, Körner, and the SS-men about 100–120 meters from the burning barn in which the residents of the village had been gathered,”<sup>79</sup> Schutzmann Timofei Topchii testified in 1986. A number of his fellow Schutz männer gave similar testimonies.<sup>80</sup>

The residents of Khatyn did not stand a chance. There were five to six Schutz männer for every house in the village.<sup>81</sup> By the time the punitive expedition arrived in Khatyn, the partisans had moved on. Other than a young female, killed

in a shootout outside Khatyn, and from whose dead body Katriuk reportedly gathered a watch, a bracelet, and a small pistol, the *Schutzmäner* did not find any partisans in the village.<sup>82</sup> Very few people survived the massacre. One of them was the eight-year-old boy Viktor Andreevich Zhelobkovich. In a 1986 interview he gave the following account of the massacre:

That day before dinner my father and I went to the barn, to prepare *transianka*—a mixture of hay and straw—for the cow. Suddenly we heard gunshots. We ran into the house, told all the people . . . to hide in the basement. After some time the members of the punitive squad broke through the door to the basement and ordered us all out on the street. As we got out we saw that they were chasing people out of the other houses as well. They brought us to the kolkhoz barn, which stood a little bit outside the village. My mother and I stood right by the locked barn doors, and I could see between the planks of the barn wall how they piled up hay against the wall, which they then set on fire. When the burning roof caved in the people and people's clothes caught on fire, everybody threw themselves against the doors, which broke open. The punitive squad stood around the barn and opened fire on the people, who were running in all directions. We made it five or six meters from the doors of the barn, then my mom pushed me to the ground, and we both lay there. I wanted to get up, but she pressed my head down: "Don't move, son, lie still." Something hit me hard in my arm. I was bleeding. I told my mom, but she didn't answer—she was already dead. How long I was lying there, I don't know. Everything around me was burning, even my mother's clothes had begun to glow. Afterwards I realized that the punitive squad had left and the shooting had ended, but still I waited awhile before I got up. The barn burned down, burned corpses lay all around. Someone moaned: "drink . . ." I ran, brought water, but to no avail, in front of my eyes the Khatyn villagers died one after another. Terrible, painful deaths. . . . Among the people who were in the barn only five remained alive.<sup>83</sup>

Zhelobkovich, the last survivor, is often interviewed for anniversaries of the Khatyn massacre. Further details emerge in these interviews: "I saw half-dressed and barefoot children. The Germans did not allow anybody to get dressed. The barn was 10 by 12 meters. The people calmed each other, told themselves 'They are just trying to scare us and will let us go.' We sat for about an hour. When someone climbed up under the ceiling to see what was going on, the punitive battalion noticed it and opened fire. The bullet passed me by. Through the cracks I could see how they gathered hay and were pouring gasoline. People went out of their minds from fear, realizing that they were to be burned."<sup>84</sup> In court in 1986, Viktor Zhelobkovich gave a statement very similar to the one he had given on a number of occasions to the media.<sup>85</sup>

Another eyewitness at the 1986 trial was Aleksandr Petrovich Zhelobkovich, who had been 13 years old at the time of the massacre. He testified that partisans had arrived in Khatyn the night before (March 21), stayed overnight in his family's home, and left early the following day for the operation on the highway. After accompanying the partisans to the gravel highway connecting Pleshchenitsy and

Lahoisk, Aleksandr returned home and lay down to sleep. He was suddenly awakened by someone shouting “Germans!” He ran out on the yard and saw military personnel in yellow and green uniforms encircling the village:

Mother screamed: ‘Quickly get up on the horse, ride into the forest!’ I rushed ahead one, or maybe two hundred meters, but did not hold on strongly enough, and fell off the horse into the melting snow. I got up and ran to relatives in the village of Zamost’e, seven kilometers from Khatyn. I returned with my uncle, but we had to hide in the forest until darkness fell. Over our village stood a thick, black smoke, and we heard gun shots. In the morning a horrendous sight met our eyes: where the houses used to stand, only blackened fireplaces and chimneys remained. Here and there grey piles of ashes were still smoking. On the place where the kolkhoz barn used to stand, and around it, lay the burned corpses of my fellow villagers, adults and children side by side. After two days the villagers of the neighboring villages buried all the murdered people in three mass graves. In one of them lies my entire family: my father, my mother, and my four sisters.<sup>86</sup>

Vladimir Antonovich Iaskevich, who was 13 years old in 1943, also testified at the 1986 Vasiura trial. When he saw the members of the punitive squad surrounding the village, he started to run towards his house. He was about 200 meters away, but bullets began to fly over his head and he realized that he would not make it. He fell on the ground, crawled into a pit where they used to keep potatoes, and hid there. Soon two Germans with sub-machine guns came to the pit. He started to cry and asked them not to kill him. The Germans discussed something and left. He goes on:

Towards the evening I heard the trumpet signal and understood that the punitive squad was withdrawing. I got out of the pit and ran to my home, saw the burning logs and thought that my dear ones were possibly hiding in the forest. For a long time I wandered between the villages, shouting, but got no response. I walked to the village of Mokred’ to my uncle, Iosif Iaskevich. After some time Iosif Kaminskii arrived there, wounded and burned, and told us what had happened: ‘I saw how the entire village burned.’ In the morning the next day, when I returned to Khatyn together with my uncle, nothing but ashes remained. At the place where Iosif Kaminskii’s barn used to stand lay the shot and burned corpses of my fellow villagers, as well as thoroughly burned human bones. Among the burned corpses I recognized the body of my father, brothers, and sisters.<sup>87</sup>

While the commanders of the Schutzmannschaften had “disproportionate autonomy and influence,”<sup>88</sup> the order to kill all residents of Khatyn appears to have been issued by German officers. In court, Meleshko claimed that he was only following orders. “Yes, I gave the order to fire on people escaping from partisan settlements, as well as on barns with people in them. Nevertheless, I would like to bring your attention to the fact that the orders were not my own initiative, but were passed on from the staff of the battalion and originated with the

German command.”<sup>89</sup> Even so, Meleshko and Lakusta were both decorated for their role in the Khatyn Aktion.<sup>90</sup>

Having long denied his participation in the massacre, Vasiura finally admitted his guilt during his trial. *Izvestiia*'s correspondent Mikhail Shimanskyi, who was present at the trial, wrote that “for the longest time, Vasiura did not confess that he had been in Khatyn, but when he realized that there was no point denying it, he confessed, crying, ‘Yes, I burned your Khatyn!’”<sup>91</sup> Vasiura was found guilty on all counts, sentenced to death on December 26, 1986, and executed on October 2, 1987.<sup>92</sup> While many of the *Schutzmäner* from eastern and central Ukraine were repatriated to the USSR, most western Ukrainians remained in the West, where they began new lives.<sup>93</sup>

Not only Meleshko, but also Vasiura and Lakusta were sentenced to death and executed for war crimes, but most of the *Schutzmäner* of Bataillon 118 lived out their lives and died of natural causes.<sup>94</sup> Some are still living. At the time of this writing, Katriuk lives in Ormstown, Quebec, a small city outside Montreal, where he worked as a beekeeper and is an active member of the local Orthodox church.<sup>95</sup> He has donated money to the construction of a memorial to “the Heroes of the Bukovyns’kyi Kurin” in the city of Chernivtsy—which, according to some sources, has made Katriuk an honorary citizen.<sup>96</sup> Denaturalization and deportation proceedings against him have lasted more than a decade; in 1999, the Federal Court of Canada established that Katriuk had gained access to Canada by misrepresentation in 1951, and that he had not been “candid about his participation in Battalion 118.”<sup>97</sup> The judge concluded that Katriuk, “as a member of Battalion 118, took part in the operations in which his company was involved, and, as a result, was certainly engaged in fighting enemy partisans.”<sup>98</sup> Yet, the denaturalization and deportation procedures were dropped in 2007 due to lack of evidence—a decision that was challenged unsuccessfully by B’nai B’rith.<sup>99</sup> Some Ukrainian nationalist circles in Canada regard Katriuk as a hero and a martyr.

The cases against Meleshko and Vasiura contain detailed witness testimonies regarding other villages, including Chmelevichi, Koteli, Selishche, Zarech’e, Dal’kovichi, Bobrovo, Osovy, Makov’e, and Ubor’e, all of which were partly or totally destroyed along with many of their residents.<sup>100</sup> Khatyn was but one of more than 600 villages burned to the ground; there were “not one, or two, but 627 Lidices and Oradours in Belorussia,” Belorussian writer and activist Ales’ Adamovich observed.<sup>101</sup> “In Buchenwald every fifth inmate was killed (50 thousand out of 250 thousand), in Belorussia every fourth person. The Belorussian countryside was turned into one concentration camp.”<sup>102</sup> The tally of victims is extraordinarily high; the most authoritative study to date estimates the number of deaths at 2.3 to 2.4 million people on the territory of Belorussia—1.6 to 1.7 million civilians plus several hundred thousand fallen while serving in the Red Army.<sup>103</sup>

## Khatyn and Katyn

The Nazis and the Stalinists shared a cynical approach to mass murder. On the one hand, both regimes carried out state-sanctioned mass murder. On the other hand, both sought legitimacy by exposing and moralizing over the crimes of their opponents. The more horrific the crimes, the higher their propaganda value. Horror and moral outrage were treated as commodities that could be translated into political capital. Following the April 1943 discovery in Katyn (near Smolensk in the Russian SFSR) of the mass graves of thousands of Polish officers executed by the NKVD in 1940, Goebbels ordered a propaganda campaign to disseminate news of the atrocity across German-occupied Europe. He commented in his diary that “We shall be able to live on it for a couple of weeks.”<sup>104</sup> In the summer of 1943, the Nazis discovered mass graves in Vinnytsia and again used them for propaganda purposes as “evidence” of the cruelty of “Judeobolshevism.”<sup>105</sup>

The Soviet authorities’ treatment of the Katyn massacre was no less cynical. At Nuremberg, Stalin attempted to have the Germans declared guilty of the crimes committed there. When this effort failed, the Soviets changed their strategy to one of denial and mystification.<sup>106</sup> The official line blaming the massacre on the Gestapo was only partly successful. Rumors and speculation about Katyn complicated Polish-Soviet relations. Katyn became something of a modern legend, a focal point for an alternative historical mythology.<sup>107</sup> In 1990, the Soviet government finally acknowledged responsibility for the massacre.

## Khatyn in Soviet Political Culture

The cynicism with which the Stalinist and Nazi regimes treated the memories of mass crimes has led some observers to speculate about a second Soviet motive for the construction of the Khatyn memorial. Norman Davies believes that the memorial site was chosen for its name, since *Khatyn* is easily confused with *Katyn*.<sup>108</sup> When President Richard Nixon visited Minsk in 1974, he was obligated to lay a wreath at Khatyn, and the memorial became a pilgrimage site for various peace activists co-opted by the Soviets in the 1970s and 80s. The official Soviet narrative presented the event as an unprovoked attack on peaceful Soviet citizens. An official Soviet tourist guide to the Khatyn memorial complex introduces the event in the following words:

The tragedy took place on March 22, 1943. A punitive detachment surrounded the village . . . . They chased everyone out of their houses—children, old men, women. They forced sick people out of their beds, using rifle butts, showing no mercy for women with children in their arms. In their hearts, people felt that something horrific, inhuman, was in the making. They felt it, but were still hoping they would be spared. But what kind of mercy can be expected from executioners, from beasts in human disguise . . . ? They had already sentenced the residents of Khatyn to death without legal process or inquiry. They did so because the residents of Khatyn were

hard-working Belorussians with honest hearts who wanted to live in their dear Fatherland and work their land without any fascist “new order.”<sup>109</sup>

In this text, the issue of who, precisely, destroyed Khatyn was sidestepped. The atrocity was blamed on “German fascists,” or “fascists” in general.<sup>110</sup> Ales’ Adamovich’s novel on the Khatyn massacre, written in the form of historical fiction—a very popular genre in the Soviet Union—incorrectly presented the Khatyn murderers as members of the OUN(b), and as blind servants of their German masters.<sup>111</sup> The first detailed media report on the role of the Ukrainian perpetrators in Khatyn appeared in the Soviet press only in 1990. While it was otherwise objective and factually correct, the report likewise linked the atrocity to the OUN(b).<sup>112</sup> The Soviet allegation that this group was somehow responsible for the massacre has survived the demise of the USSR, and resurfaces occasionally in the press.<sup>113</sup>

### **The Vasiura Proceedings**

Hryhorii Vasiura’s wartime whereabouts were not fully uncovered until the 1980s. At the end of the war, Vasiura and his wife returned to his native village, claiming to have been in German prison during the war. While he admitted to having served the Germans, Vasiura denied any involvement in atrocities. For his involvement with the Germans, Vasiura was sentenced in 1952 to twenty-five years in prison, but he was rehabilitated in the amnesty of 1955.<sup>114</sup> In 1974 Vasiura’s name appeared in connection with a number of trials against his subordinate Vasyl’ Meleshko and other former members of Schutzmannschaft Bataillon 118.

The 1986 Vasiura trial was originally scheduled to be held at the central district court in Minsk. Ievhen Horelik from the BSSR news agency BelTA and Nikolai Shimanskyi from *Izvestiia* were assigned to report on it.<sup>115</sup> Journalists from other Soviet papers applied for permission to attend, but were turned down.<sup>116</sup> Shimanskyi and Horelik completed their articles, but their editors delayed publication. Finally, on December 31, 1986, the authors were informed that the articles would not be published at all.<sup>117</sup> Presiding judge Viktor Glazkov later explained that this decision was the result of the direct involvement of the general secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Volodymyr Shcherbyts’kyi, and Belorussian Communist Party First Secretary Mykolai Sliun’kov. Both were concerned that a public trial against a Ukrainian war criminal in Minsk would undermine the official historical narrative—a narrative that avoided the topic of wartime collaboration and emphasized the brotherhood of the Soviet peoples. As one observer noted in 1992, “Shcherbyts’kyi in particular was opposed to the dissemination under glasnost of facts about the crimes committed by the punitive police battalion. He was well aware that Schutzmannschaft Bataillon 118 had been formed in Kyiv, and that Vasiura was of Ukrainian nationality. He



apparently decided that the trial would damage relations between the two republics and cast a shadow over the friendship between the Ukrainian and Belorussian peoples.”<sup>118</sup>

Another observer offered a different interpretation of the events, explaining the fact that the trial had been closed in this way: “In our view, the problem was not that Ukrainians were put on trial, but that that it was the ‘wrong kind’ of Ukrainians. Rather than ‘Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists,’ agents of the Gestapo and the CIA, the hangmen were ordinary ‘Soviet people.’ . . . [The trial therefore] could lead to results contrary to those that the organizers intended.”<sup>119</sup> Concerns that a high-profile trial against Ukrainian collaborators would have unintended consequences were not entirely unfounded. During the 1974 case against Meleshko, Adamovich had mused on the group dynamics and the potential for tension between the two Slavic peoples: “All the ‘witnesses’ and accused from the 118th Bataillon are Ukrainians. They are sentenced here, in Grodno, where the audience and judge are Belorussian. What are their feelings as a *group*? It’s us (we Ukrainians) and them—those who judge us. Then there is the division between those who are more guilty, and those who are less, those who are more forthcoming, and those who are less so.”<sup>120</sup>

Vasiura faced a closed military tribunal, and the proceedings were not reported in the Soviet media. Yet, Judge Glazkov, who self-identifies as a Ukrainian, rejects the notion that the ethnicity of the perpetrators has any significance for the process, or that the Vasiura trial was somehow part of a campaign orchestrated by the Ukrainian KGB to discredit the diaspora by linking them to war criminals. “Traitors have no nationality,” Glazkov maintains.<sup>121</sup>

As a memorial site, Khatyn has come to be a powerful symbol of the atrocities that took place on Belorussian lands, as well as an important component of Belorussian identity. The memory of Khatyn plays a significant role in official memory and identity politics some seventy years after the event. As a symbol of Belorussian suffering, Khatyn has retained its central position in the national mythology. Wartime suffering remains an important identity marker, shared by both the current regime and the opposition alike. In 2003 the government set aside considerable resources for the restoration of the complex in time for the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Belorussia. The authorities’ stated purpose was to prevent this tragic event from being forgotten, and to retain the awareness of this atrocity indefinitely in Belarusian collective consciousness. Under President Aliaksandr Lukashenka, the representation of the wartime suffering has increasingly taken on nationalist characteristics. The website of the Khatyn memorial site presents the massacre as part of a policy described as “the genocide of the Belorussian people.”<sup>122</sup> At the same time, the Holocaust has received marginal attention, and its victims are sometimes included in the number of “Belorussian” casualties. Only in October 2008, as the European Union eased its sanctions on Belarus following

the Russian war in Georgia, did Lukashenka appear to take any interest in the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. At a ceremony at the site of the 1941–1943 mass murder of many of the Jews of Minsk, he declared: “We must not forget these tragic days, otherwise they will happen again. . . . Our sacred motto is ‘Nothing is forgotten, no one is forgotten.’ We have a great debt to the memory of front-line fighters, guerillas, underground resistance fighters, and the victims of Nazism.”<sup>123</sup>

It seems, however, that political expediency determines just how important these memories are. The topic of Stalinist atrocities in Belorussia remains neglected. A July 2009 Polish request to the Belarusian authorities for an investigation of a recently discovered mass grave of twenty to thirty people in the basement of the cathedral in Hlybokae, which Polish officials believe contains the bodies of Poles killed by the NKVD, was met with silence. Neither the local nor the central authorities have been willing to comment on the issue. Mikhail Kuz'mich, the director of the ideology department of the Vitsebsk district, dismissed the Polish inquiries, saying: “This all regards distant history. How are we supposed to comment on something from a bygone era—an era from which there soon will be no survivors?”<sup>124</sup>

Almost seventy years after their murder, a clear distinction is still made between those worth remembering, and those who are not. More than two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the memory of Khatyn remains obfuscated by the politicization of the tragedy.

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## Notes

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1. M. Kastsyuk estimates that a total of 5,454 other villages in occupied Belorussia were burned to the ground during the occupation; in 629 of these, the entire population

was destroyed as well. See M. Kastsjuk et al., eds., *Historyia Belarusi*, vol. 5, *Belarus' u 1917–1945 hh.* (Minsk: Sovremennaia shkola, 2007), 488; M. Kastsjuk et al., eds, *Narysy historyi Belarusi u 2-kh chastkakh* (Minsk: Belarus', 1995), 2:291.

2. Benjamin B. Fischer, "The Katyn Controversy: Stalin's Killing Field," *Studies in Intelligence*, Winter 1999–2000, [www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/winter99-00/art6.html](http://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/winter99-00/art6.html) (accessed December 8, 2011); *Velikaia Otechestvennaia voina, 1941–1944: Sobytiia—Liudi—Dokumenty* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1990), 143; Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde: Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941 bis 1944* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1999), 11; S.S. Maksimov, "Istoriia odnogo predatel'stva," in *Neotvarimoe vozmezdnie: Po materialam sudebnykh protsessov nad izmennikami Rodiny, fashistskimi palachami i agentami imperia-listicheskikh razvedok* 2nd ed. (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1979), 171–79.

3. Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. 7021, op. 87, d. 11, ll. 17–19ob., cited in Vladimir Adamushko, Igor' Valakhanovich, Natalia Kirillova, et al., *Khatyn': Tragediia i pamiat'. Dokumenty i materialy* (Minsk: NARB, 2009), 25–28. The formal title of the commission was the Extraordinary State Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating Crimes Perpetrated by the German-Fascist Invaders and Their Accomplices.

4. Natalia Meshерova, "Eto nuzhno zhivym..." in Leonid Levin, *Khatyn': Avtobiograficheskaia povest'* (Minsk: Asoby Dakh, 2005), 9.

5. "Khatyn'," *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia* (Moscow: BSE, 1978), 28:217; E.V. Bol'shakova, ed., *Khatyn': Memorial'nyi kompleks* (Moscow: Glavnoe upravlenie geodezii i kartografii pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR, 1987), 7.

6. Bol'shakova, *Khatyn': Memorial'nyi kompleks*, 8.

7. Vitali Silitsky, "A Partisan Reality Show," *Transitions Online*, May 11, 2005, available online at <http://www.tol.cz/look/TOL/article.tpl?IdLanguage=1&IdPublication=4&NrIssue=115&NrSection=4&NrArticle=14025> (Accessed December 8, 2011).

8. Per A. Rudling, "The Great Patriotic War and National Identity in Belorussia" in Tomasz Kamusella and Krzysztof Jaksulowski, eds., *Nationalisms across the Globe*, vol. 1, *Nationalisms Today* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 199–225; Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, "Enade vi stod'? Postsovjetiska berättelser om andra världskriget i Vitryssland," *Nordisk Øst-forum* 18, no. 3 (2004): 325–44.

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11. Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belorussia, 1569–1999* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) 154–201; idem, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 155–252; idem, *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Artist's Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 171–213.
12. Frank Buscher, "Investigating Nazi Crimes in Byelorussia: Challenges and Lessons," *Electronic Journal of Annual Holocaust Papers* (1996), available at [www.millersville.edu/~holo-con/buscher.html](http://www.millersville.edu/~holo-con/buscher.html) (Accessed December 8, 2011).
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14. Alexander Victor Prusin, "'Fascist Criminals to the Gallows!': The Holocaust and Soviet War Crimes Trials, December 1945–February 1946," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 17, no. 1 (2003): 18, 20–21.
15. Dietrich Eichholtz, "'Generalplan Ost' zur Versklavung osteuropäischer Völker," *Utopie kreativ* 167 (September 2005): 801, citing *Der Prozeß gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof (IMG)* vol. 4 (Nuremberg: Sekretariat des Gerichtshof, 1947), p. 536, Zeugenvernehmung von Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, 7.1.1946.
16. On *Generalplan Ost*, see Czesław Madajczyk, ed., *Generalny Plan Wschodni: Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1990); and idem, "General Plan East: Hitler's Master Plan for Expansion," *Polish Western Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1962).
17. Ales' Adamovich, "Zapisnye knizhki raznykh let," *Nëman: Ezhehesiachnyi literaturno-khudozhestvennyi i obshchestvenno-politicheskii zhurnal* 7 (July 1997): 14.
18. French L. MacLean, *The Cruel Hunters: Kommando Dirlewanger. Hitler's Most Notorious Anti-Partisan Unit* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishers, 1998), 69; citing Richard C. Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles under German Occupation, 1939–1944* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 5.
19. Order issued by Wilhelm Keitel, September 16, 1941, Central State Archive of the October Revolution and the USSR (TsGAOR SSSR), f. 7445, op. 2, d. 140, ll. 502–504, cited in I.N. Kuznetsov and V.G. Mazets, eds. *Istoriia Belorussii v dokumentakh i materialakh* (Minsk: Amalfeia, 2000), 542; Johannes Schlootz, "Erlaß des Chefs des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht Keitel über Vergeltungsmaßnahmen bei Widerstand gegen die deutsche Besatzungsmacht, vom 16. September 1941," in *Deutsche Propaganda in Weißrußland 1941–1944: Eine Konfrontation von Propaganda und Wirklichkeit*, ed. Babette Quinkert and Johannes Schlootz (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 1996), 13.
20. Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, 1,001.
21. Adamovich, "Zapisnye knizhki," 12–13.
22. Timothy Mulligan, *The Politics of Illusion and Empire: German Occupation Policy in the Soviet Union, 1942–1943* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 139.
23. Natsional'nyi Arkhiv Respubliki Belarus' (NARB) f. 845, op. 1, d. 237, l. 45.

24. Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, 1,010–11.
25. *Ibid.*, 1,028.
26. *Ibid.*, 1,029.
27. Report of the SS-und Polizeigebietsführer Rechitsa, June 21, 1943, Central State Archives, Minsk (ZStA Minsk) f. 658, op. 1, d. 1, l. 207, cited in *ibid.*, 1,020.
28. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, the OUN, was founded in 1929 as an amalgamation of associations of Ukrainian war veterans, ultra-nationalists, terrorists, and fascists. The organization attempted to achieve its goal of an independent Ukrainian state through revolutionary violence and a campaign of terror against Polish ministers, Soviet diplomats, and members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia who cooperated with the Polish state. The OUN split into two factions in 1940: the one around Andrii Mel'nyk (1890–1964) represented the older, more cautious wing of the movement; the more extreme wing of young radicals was led by Stepan Bandera (1909–1959). The two wings are known as the OUN(m) and OUN(b). On the history of the OUN, see Franziska Bruder, *“Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben”: Die Organisation Ukrainischer Nationalisten (OUN) 1929–1948* (Berlin: Metropol, 2007).
29. Andrii Duda and Volodymyr Staryk, *Bukovyns'kyi kurin' v boiakh za Ukrain's'ku Derzhavnist': 1918–1941–1944* (Chernivtsi: Ukrain's'kyi Narodnyi Dim v Chernivtsakh," 1995), 71.
30. Karel C. Berkhoff, “Dina Pronicheva’s Story of Surviving the Babi Yar Massacre: German, Jewish, Soviet, Russian, and Ukrainian Records,” in *The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization*, ed. Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower (Bloomington: Indiana University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2008), 292, 303; Orest Bilak, “Z istorii odnogo kurenia,” Archives of the Ukrainian Narodnyi Dim in Chernivtsy (henceforth Arkhiv UNDC) f. O. Bilaka, ark. 10; Manfred Messerschmidt, expert testimony cited in “The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (applicant) v. Vladimir Katriuk (respondent) (T-2408-96), Federal Court of Canada Trial Division, Nadon, J., January 29, 1999,” *Federal Trial Reports* 156 (Fredricton, New Brunswick: Maritime Law Book Ltd., 1999),” 179 (henceforth “Minister vs. Katriuk”); Duda and Staryk, *Bukovyns'kyi kurin'*, 84. On Babi Yar, see Wendy Lower, “From Berlin to Babi Yar: The Nazi War Against the Jews, 1941–1944,” *Journal of Religion and Society* 9 (2007): 3. Kyiv scholar Vitalii Nakhmanovych makes a different assessment, arguing that the unit arrived in Kyiv no earlier than October 29 or even in the first half of November. Nakhmanovych, “Bukovyns'kyi Kurin'.” This interpretation is contested by, among others, Oleksandr Burakovs'kyi, who dismisses Nakhmanovych’s study as tendentious and speculative. See “Memorializatsiia evreiskoi tragedii v Bab'em Iaru: Istoriia i sovremennost',” paper presented at the Association for Jewish Studies conference, Washington, DC, December, 2008; *idem.*, *Evrei i Ukraintsy, 1986–2006: Istoriia i analiz evreisko-ukrainskikh otnoshenii* (New York: IRSA, 2007), 234. Karel Berkhoff is of the opinion that a different group of Bukovynians had arrived in October; Karel Berkhoff, personal correspondence, November 6, 2009.
31. Aleksandr Shlaen and Alla Malitskaia, eds., *Naveki v pamiaty: Martirolog zhertv natsist-skogo genotsida v Babom Iaru* (Kyiv: Abris, 1995), 3.

32. On the Schutzmannschaften in Belorussia, see Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941–1944* (New York: St. Martin's Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2000); Oleh Roman'ko, *Sovetskii legion Hitlera: Grazhdane SSSR v riadakh vermakhta i SS* (Moscow: Bystrov, 2006), 73–354; Per Anders Rudling, “Szkolenie w mordowaniu: Schutzmannschaft Bataillon 201 i Hauptmann Roman Szuchewycz na Białorusi 1942 roku,” in *Prawda historyczna a prawda polityczna w badaniach naukowych: Przykład ludobójstwa na kresach południowej-wschodniej Polski w latach 1939–1946*, ed. Bogusław Paż (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2011), 183–204; and Petras Stankeras, *Litovskie politseiskie batal'ony 1941–1945 gg.* (Moscow: Veche, 2009), 141–217.
33. Testimony of G.V. Spivak at the Vasiura trial, cited in Nikolai Zen'kovich, *Tainy ushedshego veka: Granitsy, spory, obidy. Dos'e* (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2005), 318.
34. “Minister vs. Katriuk,” 165, 181.
35. Case files of Vasył Meleshko, Tsentral'nyi Arhiv KGB Respubliki Belarus (TsA KGB RB), criminal case 26613, Meleshko, p.d., t. 7, l. d. 98; Judge Viktor Vasil'evich Glazkov's legal notes, case summary of Vasiura and Meleshko cases (henceforth Glazkov notes), p. 1; Vasiliı Vladimirovich Zdaniuk, *Ia shturmoval dvorets Amiina: Armia bez grifa “sekretno”* (Minsk: Belarus', 1992), 134.
36. Vasiura testimony, cited in Evgenii Horelik, “Ubienie Khatyn'i: Palachi i podruchnye. Neizvestnyie podrobnosti izvestnykh sobytii,” *Belorusskaia Delovaia Gazeta*, no. 3 (14), March, 2003: 20; Zdaniuk, *Ia shturmoval dvorets Amiina*, 134; Adamovich, “Zapisnye knizhki,” 24.
37. “Minister vs. Katriuk,” 178–79.
38. Orest Bilak, “Z istorii odnogo kurenia,” Arkhiv Ukrainskoho Narodnoho Domu v Chernivtsakh (UNDCH), f. O. Bilaka, ark. 10.
39. Zdaniuk, *Ia shturmoval dvorets Amiina*, 134.
40. Duda and Staryk, *Bukovyns'kyi kurin'*, 145.
41. *Ibid.*, 131, 136, 140–41.
42. “Minister vs. Katriuk,” 183.
43. Martin Dean, “Microcosm: Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust in the Mir Rayon of Belorussia, 1941–1944,” in *Collaboration and Resistance During the Holocaust: Belorussia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania*, ed. David Gaunt, Paul A. Levine, and Laura Palosuo (Peter Lang: Bern, 2004), 234–35.
44. Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, 1,004; “Minister vs. Katriuk,” 183.
45. Top secret report from Major Voroniaskii of the partisan brigade Diadia Vasia to Kalinin, commander of the staff of the partisan movement in Belorussia, and to Ponomarenko, chief of the partisan movement in the USSR, March 19, 1943. NARB, f. 1450, vop. 4, d. 168, l. 84.
46. The number of soldiers and officers in the Narodnye Mstiteli brigade was 450 at one date or another in 1942, 381 in 1943, and 537 in 1944. All in all, 1,368 people passed

through its ranks. War diary summarizing the detachment's activities 1942–1944, entry for July 1, 1944, NARB, f. 1450, vop. 4, d. 168, ll. 352, 406–407. The detachment sustained significant losses; in 1943 alone, 138 of its members were killed, 137 were wounded, and six disappeared without a trace. Top secret report from Captain Es'kov, commander of the staff of the brigade Narodnye Mstiteli, summarizing its losses for 1943. July 1, 1944. NARB, f. 1450, vop. 4, d. 168, ll. 338–339. The brigade was quite diverse. On April 1, 1943, of its 327 members, 150 were Russians, 25 Ukrainians, and 92 Belorussians, while 60 belonged to “other nationalities.” Two hundred twenty-three were members of the Communist Party. Captain Voronianskii, top secret “Explanatory note on the composition of the Red Brigade Diadia Vasia as of April 1, 1943,” NARB, f. 1405, vop. 1, spr. 783, ll. 25–26. On July 31, 1944, of a total of 348 members, 320 were men, 28 were women. By nationality, 167 were Belorussian, 87 Russian, 43 Ukrainians, 42 Jews, one Pole, and one “other.” Captain Morodov, report on the activities of the Narodnye Mstiteli brigade, July 31, 1944, NARB, f. 1450, vop. 4, d. 168, ll. 425–26.

47. Diary entry for October 5, 1942, NARB f. 1405, vop. 1, d. 783, l. 34.

48. Report from partisan brigade “Narodnyi Mstiteli” on atrocities committed by the German occupying forces in the Logoisk and Pleshchenitsy districts during the period April 24–July 1, 1943, NARB, f. 1450, vop. 4, d. 168, l. 133.

49. Report from the partisan brigade “Narodnye mstiteli,” for April–May, 1943. NARB, f. 1450, vop. 4, d. 168, l. 122.

50. Zen'kovich, *Tainy ushedshego veka*, 317.

51. Major Voronianskii of the partisan brigade Diadia Vasia to Kalinin, the head of the Partisan movement of Belorussia and Pomomarenko, the head of the partisan movement in the USSR, March 19, 1943. NARB f. 510, vop. 1, d. 45, ll. 84–89. According to judge Glazkov, Woellke's men were attacked by a small group of five or six men. The unplanned operation was not sanctioned by the brigade's command. Glazkov maintains that this account is confirmed by two surviving participants of the partisan attack on March 22, 1943, Abraham Jochelman (Sperberg) and Yakov Ruderman (Arthur Lev). Interview with Judge Viktor Vasilevich Glazkov, December 21, 2008. For Glazkov's interpretation, see also Maksimov, “Istoriia odnogo predatel'stva.” (Although Glazkov provided me with the addresses, I was unable to reach Sperberg or Lev.) The ambush of March 22, 1943 follows the pattern of other attacks that took place during the fall of 1942. See the handwritten war diary for partisan brigade Diadia Vasia: “Dnevnik boevykh deistvii p/brigady ‘Diadi Vasi’, Nachalo: 1 ianvaria 1943. Okonch. 19.5.43 goda, delo no. 11,” entry for March 20, 1943. NARB, f. 1450, vop. 4, d. 168, l. 393.

52. Report on the war activities of the detachment *Mstitel*, “Svedeniia: o rezultatakh borbykh operatsii partizanskogo otriada brigady ‘Narodnoi Mstiteli’ za 1943 god.” NARB, f. 1450, vop. 4, d. 168, l. 76.

53. Diary of the military activities of the partisan brigade Diadia Vasia, January 1, 1943–May 19, 1943.” Handwritten war diary. NARB, f. 1450, vop. 4, d. 168, l. 255. A typed copy appears in NARB, f. 1450, vop. 4, d. 168, l. 72, 153. In the typed report the last sentence remains incomplete, reading “The village Khatyn was destroyed and all its inhabitants burned in the barn, the total casualty rate [blank] people.”

54. Meleshko testimony, May 13, 1975, TsA KGB RB, ug. d. 26613, t. l. 45; Adamovich, "Zapisnye knizhki," 24.
55. "Minister vs. Katriuk," 184.
56. For instance, in February 1943 Woellke and his Ukrainian deputy Vasiura carried out a massacre in the village of Zarech'e, during which more than thirty civilians were massacred, burned alive in a barn. G.G. Lakusta testimony of June 19, 1974, t. 4., l. d; Glazkov notes, p. 11; "Zdes' ubivali liudei," *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, March 22, 2008.
57. Sergei Krapivin, "Khatyn': 'Format tragedii'" *Ekspress Novosti: Informatsionno-analyticheskii ezhenedel'nik*, March 22, 2007.
58. "Minister vs. Katriuk," 184; Zdaniuk, *Ia shturmoval dvorets Amiina*, 137; Petr Moroz, "Palachi Khatyni—kto oni?" *Scoboda Slova: Ezhenedel'nik 2000*, no. 41 (289) 14–20 October 2005.
59. In March and April, 1943, the SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger participated in Operation Lenz Süd, an anti-partisan Aktion in the Barysau, Cherven', Sloboda, Smaliavichi, Dubnii, Zhodino, and Zabashevichi areas together with two German police regiments and several Schutzmannschaft battalions, including Schutzmannschaft Battalion 202. On March 13, SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger had "cleansed" three villages along the Borysau-Minsk railroad line. Schutzmannschaft Battalion 202 was recruited from among East Galician Poles, and used in anti-partisan activities in Belorussia and Volhynia. Frank Golczewski, "Shades of Grey: Reflections on Jewish-Ukrainian and German-Ukrainian Relations in Galicia," in Brandon and Lower, *The Shoah in Ukraine*, 153.
60. MacLean, *The Cruel Hunters*, 113.
61. The records of SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger for March 22, 1943 report the killing of thirty partisans and the "cleansing" of the village of Kossino. MacLean, *The Cruel Hunters*, 114, citing SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger, Befehl, 22.3.43, National Archives (Washington, DC) Microfilm Publication T354, roll 649.
62. "Minister vs. Katriuk," 184.
63. Erich Körner's report for Schutzmannschaft Battalion 118 to the SS- und Polizeiführer Barissow in Pleschtschenize, April 12, 1943. NARB f. 391, vop. 1, d. 67, l. 5.
64. Another twelve local collaborators serving in the SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger were put on trial in Minsk in 1961. Some of the materials from legal case no. 14864 (kept in the TsA KGB RB) are reproduced in Adamushko et al., *Khatyn'*, 53–76. While these testimonies are less detailed, they confirm, by and large, the picture presented in the trials conducted in the 1970s and 1980s of the men of Schutzmannschaft Battalion 118.
65. O.F. Knap, testimony of March 21, 1973, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 2, l. 61.
66. V.A. Meleshko, testimony of May 13, 1975, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 7, ll. 44, 55–60.
67. N.I. Savchenko, testimony of May 22, 1974, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 4, l. 86; Adamovich, "Zapisnye knizhki," 24.



68. O.F. Knap, testimony of November 19, 1973, TsA KGB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 2, l. 98, 100; O.F. Knap, testimony read in court June 21, 1974, TsA KGB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 4, ll. 243–44, 250–53, 260.
69. O.F. Knap, testimony of August 27, 1985, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 6, l. d. 232–33; S.P. Myshak, testimony of August 13, 1985, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 6, l. 1446 ob.; G. V. Spivak, testimony of August 16, 1985. TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 6, ll. 193–94. *Schutzmann* Mykhailo Dmytrievich Kurka, born in 1913, was sentenced to five years in jail for shooting people as he conveyed a group to their deaths. Adamovich, “Zapisnye knizhki,” 23; Stepan Sakhno testimony, cited in Horelik, “Ubienie Khatyn’i,” 21.
70. G. Dumych (M. Iankovskii) testimony, Białystok, Poland, April 29, 1974, Ts KGB RB Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 3, ll. 237–57. I.M. Lozinskii, testimony of June 10, 1974, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 4, ll. 216, 218–21, 230; O.F. Knap, testimony of March 21, 1973, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 2, ll. 53, 59–62.
71. I.D. Petrichuk, testimony of March 31, 1973, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 11, ll. 133–38; I.D. Petrichuk, testimony of May 28, 1986, TsA KGB RB ug. d. 26613, t. 11, ll. 122–26.
72. O.F. Knap, testimony of March 21, 1973, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 2, ll. 61–62.
73. S.P. Myshak, testimony of July 23, 1973, TsA KGB RB Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 2, l. 198, 200–204, 212.
74. Harald Welzer in cooperation with Michaela Christ, *Gärningsmän: Hur helt vanliga människor blir massmördare* (Gothenburg, Sweden: Bokförlaget Daidalos, 2007), 129.
75. S.V. Sakhno, testimony of June 9, 1986, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 12, ll. 28–29. See note 80 below.
76. Zdaniuk, *Ia shturmoval dvorets Amiina*, 138; *Belarus’ segodnia*, March 22, 2008.
77. Adamovich, “Zapisnye knizhki,” 24, 26.
78. S.V. Sakhno, testimony of June 11, 1974, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 4, ll. 127–37; interrogations of August 17, 1974 and 1986 (no information available for date), TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 4, ll. 113–69, t. 6 216–22, 306–10, t. 11, ll. 203–10. t. 12, ll. 40–45.
79. T.P. Topchii, testimony of May 26, 1986, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 11, ll. 16–37.
80. Testimony of I.D. Petrichuk, May 28, 1986, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 12, ll. 36–39; testimony of I.D. Petrichuk, May 30, 1986, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 11, ll. 122–38; Ivan Petrichuk 1986 testimony from the Vasiura trial, cited in Viktor Chikin, “Oranzhevye khroniki,” *7 dnei: Gazeta dlia vsei sem’i*, May 22, 2008; testimony of O.F. Knap, May 31, 1986, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 11, ll. 139–50; testimony of O.F. in the Vasiura case, cited in Horelik, “Ubienie Khatyn’i,” 21; *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, March 22, 2008; O.F. Knap, testimony of August 27, 1985, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 6, ll. 233–34. In other testimonies, Knap recalls that Vasiura, Smowski, and Körner were in

Khatyn and were at the barn, but does not remember which one of them gave the orders. O.F. Knap, testimony of October 24, 1985, t. 6, ll. 257–58 and 287–88. Knap’s responses were largely consistent with the answers he had given during the 1973 interrogations for the Meleshko trial. “At the interrogation of November 19, 1973, t. 2, ll. 92–97, Knap stated that Vasiura, like Smowski and Vinnitskii, was armed with a pistol, but whether he fired on the barn with the people inside, he cannot say. The three stood by the stationary machine gun. Vasiura led the punitive squad’s activities, issuing orders to chase the peaceful residents into the barn and shoot them. Executing Vasiura’s orders, the punitive squad fired on the barn with people inside as long as the screams and moaning of the doomed peaceful residents continued. Then the barn with the murdered people inside was burned down.” TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 2, l. 9. 92–97. The testimonies of the former Schutzmannen Sakhno, Lozinskii, Khrenov, Subbotin, Spivak, Dzieba, Dumych, Kurka, Lakusta, Meleshko, Topchii, Kachan, Vus, and Savchenko are, by and large, consistent. See testimony of S.V. Sakhno, August 17, 1984 and October 29, 1985, TsA KGB RB, ug. d. 26746 t. 6, l. 309, June 11, 1974, t. 4, ll. 113–69, t. 6, ll. 216–22, 306–10; t. 11, ll. 203–10; t. 12, ll. 40–45; I.M. Lozinskii, testimonies of June 2, 1986 and June 11, 1986, 26746, t. 12, ll. 40–45, G.P. Subbotin, testimony of June 10, 1986, G.V. Spivak, testimony of June 13, 1986, 26746 t. 11, ll. 239–53; G.V. Spivak, testimony of April 25, 1974, 26613, t. 3, ll. 191–92; G.V. Spivak, testimony of August 16, 1985, 26746, t. 6, l. 194.; P.F. Dzeba, testimony of April 18, 1974, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613 t. 3, l. 139; P.F. Dzeba, testimony of June 22, 1985, ug. d. 26746, t. 6, l. 103–104; G. Dumych, testimony of April 29, 1974, TsA KGB RB Arkh. ug. d. 26613 t. 3, ll. 251–57, S.A. Khrenov, testimony of July 26, 1985, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, ll. 136, t. 6, t.4 ll. 49–50; M.L. Kurka, testimony of June 24, 1974, t. 4, ll. 274–77; V.A. Meleshko, testimony of December 3, 1974 t. 5, ll. 394–95, October 25, 1974, t. 6, l. 61; Lakusta, testimony of June 19, 1974 TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613 t. 4, ll. 170–87; I.T. Kachan, testimony of June 24, 1986, P.S. Vus, testimony of May 21, 1986 and May 23, 1986, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746 t. 12, ll. 25–27. T.P. Topchii, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, testimony of July 25, 1973, March 23, 1974, t. 2 ll. 176, t. 3, ll. 21–23; T.P. Topchii, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746; T.P. Topchii, testimony of July 22, 1985, t. 6 ll. 108, 105–112, t. 11 ll. 59–111, t. 12 ll. 30–35. G.V. Spivak, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613 testimony of April 25, 1974, t. 3 ll. 191–92 and TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746; G.V. Spivak, testimony of August 16, 1985 t. 6, ll. 194. Other than Knap, most witnesses placed the officers at the site, but were unable to remember whether the men also participated in the shooting. The one exception was N.I. Savchenko, who testified that he saw “how Vasiura commanded the [Khatyn operation] during the time of the massacre of the villagers and fired on the packed barn with his pistol.” N.I. Savchenko, testimony of May 22, 1974, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 4, ll. 90–91, and t. 12, l. 29. O.F. Knap, testimony of March 21, 1973, June 31, 1974, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613 t. 4, ll. 232–33; The testimony was read in court again on August 27, 1985, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 2, ll. 59–62, t. 6, ll. 29–30, 233–34. G.V. Spivak, testimony of August 16, 1985, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 6, ll. 194–95; I.T. Kachan, testimony of August 30, 1985, 2 TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 6746, t. 6 ll. 257; G.P. Subbotin, testimony of September 13, 1985, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 6, ll. 267; T P. Topchii, testimony of May 26, 1986, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 11, ll. 16–37.

81. Zdaniuk, *Ia Shturmoval dvorets Amiina* 138.

82. G. Dumych (M. Iankovskii), testimony of April 29, 1974, Białystok, Poland, TsA KGB Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 3, ll. 237–57; V.A. Meleshko, testimony of May 13, 1975, TsA KGB Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 7, ll. 45, 55–60; Adamovich, “Zapisnye knizhki,” 24.
83. Horelik, “Ubienie Khatyn’i,” 20.
84. Viktor Andreevich Zhelobkovich, interview with Obschenatsional’noe televidenie (Belarusian TV channel, ONT), June 20, 2008. Iosif Iosifovich Kaminskii’s account of the massacre was published in Adamovich, *Khatyn’*, 149–50.
85. V.A. Zhelobkovich, testimony of June 4, 1986, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 2, ll. 214–17.
86. Horelik, “Ubienie Khatyn’i,” 20.
87. V.A. Iaskevich, testimony of June 10, 1986, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 12, ll. 205–208.
88. Jürgen Matthäus “What About the ‘Ordinary Men’?: The German Order Police and the Holocaust in the Occupied Soviet Union,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 10, no. 2, (1996): 138.
89. Maksimov, “Istoriia odnogo predatel’sтва.”
90. Adamovich, “Zapisnye knizhki,” 26.
91. Shimanskyi, interviewed on ONT, March 25, 2008. During the cross-examination, Vasiura admitted that “during the period of the battalion’s deployment in Belorussia I participated in several punitive expeditions against partisans and the civilian population in different *raiony* and settlements. During these operations the members of the battalion fought the partisans, killed civilians, stole their property, burned villages, and forcibly brought young and healthy people to forced labor in Germany.” Legal protocol from the Vasiura trial, cited in *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, March 22, 2008.
92. Marina Zagorskaia, “Poslednii protsess: I spustia shest’desiat let my znaem ne vsiu pravdu o tragedii v Khatyn’i,” *Belorussiiskaia Delovaia Gazeta*, March 25, 2003; Sorokina, “Khatyn.”
93. Khrenov testimony, March 30, 1998, “Minister vs. Katriuk,” 187.
94. Duda and Saryk, *Bukovyns’kyi kurin’*, 149.
95. *Visnyk: Ukraïns’ka pravoslavna tserkva v Kanadi*, nos. 5–6, LXXXIV, Arch 1/15 (2007): 8.
96. Duda and Saryk, *Bukovyns’kyi kurin’*, 243; Vladimir Tol’t, “Raznitsa vo vremeni: 60 let posle Bab’ego iara,” *Radio Liberty*, September 23, 2001.
97. “Minister vs. Katriuk,” 190–91.
98. *Ibid.*, 187.
99. A letter informing Mr. Katriuk of the decision not to revoke his citizenship is available online on the website of the Ukrainian-Canadian Will Zuzak: [www.telusplanet.net/public/mozuz/katriuk/katriuk20070518.jpg](http://www.telusplanet.net/public/mozuz/katriuk/katriuk20070518.jpg) (accessed December 9, 2011). To any who elect to search out further postings from that source, their orientation vis-à-vis the Holocaust and

purported “symbiotic” connections will be manifest. See also [www.bnaibrith.ca/files/03032011.pdf](http://www.bnaibrith.ca/files/03032011.pdf) (accessed January 27, 2012).

100. See, for instance, testimony of O.F. Knap, March 21, 1973, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 2, l. 56; O.F. Knap, testimony of June 21, 1974, t. 4, ll. 246–47; O.F. Knap, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 8, l. 138; S.A. Khrenov, testimony to Federal Court of Canada Trial Division, Nizhnyi Novgorod, Russia, March 30, 1998; “Minister vs. Katriuk,” 185–86; Adamovich, “Zapysnye knizhki,” 24, S.P. Myshak, testimony of May 14, 1974, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26613, t. 4, ll. 13–14; S.P. Myshak, testimony of August 13, 1985, 26746, t. 6, ll. 147–48; Ia.I. Butskovich, testimony of June 10, 1986, TsA KGB RB, Arkh. ug. d. 26746, t. 12, ll. 136–38. The pattern of collective “punishments” carried out against the local population can be observed in the neighboring Mir Raion. There the villages of Liadki, Novoe Selo, Pogorelka, and Oiutsevivchi witnessed gruesome massacres of civilians in early March, 1943. In Novoe Selo, some 150 people were burned alive in a barn. Dean, “Microcosm,” 251–52. On the activities of Schutzmannschaft Battalion 115/118, see Per A. Rudling, “Terror and Local Collaboration in Occupied Belorussia: The Case of Schutzmannschaft Battalion 118. Part One: Background,” *Historical Yearbook of the Nicolae Iorga History Institute* (Bucharest) 8 (2011): 195–214; and “Part Two: War Criminality” (forthcoming).

101. Adamovich, “Zapisnye knizhki,” 71.

102. *Ibid.*, 27.

103. Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, 1159n11, 1158. Claims that over three million Belorussians—one-third of the total population—were killed are not uncommon. See for instance Zina J. Gimpelevich, *Vasil Bykaŭ: His Life and Works* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 87.

104. Joseph Goebbels, *The Goebbels Diaries, 1942–1943*, ed. Louis P. Lochner (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1948), 328.

105. Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 264–68; and John-Paul Himka, “Ethnicity and the Reporting of Mass Murder: *Krakivs’ki visti*, the NKVD Murders of 1941, and the Vinnytsia Exhumation” (paper presented at the University of Alberta Holocaust Workshop, January 14, 2005).

106. Claudia Weber, “The Export of Terror: On the Impact of the Stalinist Culture of Terror on Soviet Foreign Policy During and After World War II,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 11, nos. 2–3 (2009): 285–306.

107. Vladimir Abarinov, *The Murderers of Katyn* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1993), 324. On the Soviet falsification of the Katyn murders, see Anna M. Cienciala, Natalia S. Lebedeva, and Wojciech Materski, eds., *Katyn: A Crime Without Punishment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

108. Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1005. The same claim is repeated in Fischer, “The Katyn Controversy.” Reflections on the Katyn-Khatyn link now appear regularly in the post-Soviet mass media. See for example Mikhail Trofimenkov, “Toponimicheskaiia operatsiia ‘Khatyn’,” *Vlast’: Ezhenedel’nyi analiticheskii zhurnal* no. 12 (766), March 31, 2008. Available online at [www.kommersant.ru/doc](http://www.kommersant.ru/doc).

aspx?DocsID=872470&NodesID=8 (accessed December 8, 2011). The same claim appears in Igor' Kuznetsov's documentary film *Prauda Khatyni*, dir. Nikolai Kniazev and Ol'ga Nikalaichik (Bramafilm for Belsat, Białystok, Poland, 2008). Thanks to Serguei A. Oushakine for these references.

109. Bol'shakova, *Khatyn': Memorial'nyi kompleks*, 7.

110. See, for instance, N.K. Andriushenko's documentary film *Khatyn* (Minsk: 1969); Anton P. Belevich, *Khatyn': Bol' i gnev* (Moscow: Politicheskoi literatury, 1974); Ivan Shamiakin and Iauhen' Kaziulia, *Khatyn'* (Minsk: Belarus', 1979). This version of the history survived the collapse of the USSR. See the entry "Khatyn'," *Entsyklapedyia Historyu Belorussiai* (Minsk: Belorussiakaia Entsyklapedyia, 2003), vol. 6, book 2, p. 64.

111. Ales' Adamovich, *Khatyn. The Punitive Squads: The Joy of the Knife, or The Hyperboreans and How They Live* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1988), 292–93.

112. V. Roshchin, "Neizvestnaia Khatyn': Tol'ko seichas my mozhem rasskazat'. Vmeste s fashistami etu Beloruskuiu derevniu vyzhigali i banderovtsy," *Rabochaia tribuna*, November 19, 1990. The content and report of the events of March 22, 1943 was otherwise objective and factually correct, but the subtitle (which may, of course, have been added by an editor) was misleading.

113. Following former Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko's controversial posthumous designation of Roman Shukhevych, a leader of the OUN(b), as a "Hero of Ukraine" in 2007, some Belarusian papers close to the regime angrily denounced the decision, insinuating that Shukhevych was involved in the burning of Khatyn. Viktor Chikin, "Oranzhevye khroniki," *7 dnei: Gazeta dlia vsei sem'i* 21 (May 22, 2008), claims that the OUN-UPA would have taken part in the burning of Khatyn. This claim was cited by the Ukrainian "anti-Orange" opposition as well. Iurii Lukanov, "Byli li razrushiteli Khiroshimy i Nagasaki chlenami OUN?" *Den'* (June 24, 2008). In actuality, Katriuk and several other Ukrainian nationalists from Bukovina at the Khatyn massacre were *Melnykites*, i.e. followers of the OUN(m), a rival wing under Col. Andrii Mel'nyk, that remained faithful to the Nazis throughout World War II.

114. "Obvinitel'noe zakliuchenie po ugolovnomu delo no. 104, voennyi prokuror KBVO, September 10, 1986," Obvynyval'noho vysnovku, protokolu sudovoho zasidannia ta vyroku u spravi uchashnyka 115/118/ karal'noho batal'ionu VASIURA Hryhoriia Mykytovycha," Haluzevyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Sluzhby Bezpeky Ukrainy, Kyiv (HDA SBU), f. 68, no. 10, tom. 1, l. 1.

115. Vitalii Nakhmanovych, "Bukovyns'kyi Kurin' i masovi rozstrily ievreiv Kyieva voseny 1941 r.," *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 3 (474) (2007): 88–89.

116. Tatstsiana Padaliak, "Znak zveria: U zradnikau-zlachyntsau niama natsyianal'nastsi. Interv'iu sa starshynei vaennaha trybunala 1986 h. Viktaram Hlazzkovym," *Zviazda*, March 25, 2008.

117. Zagorskaia, "Poslednii protsess."

118. Zdaniuk, *Ia shturmoval dcorets Amiina*, 139.

119. Nakhmanovych, "Bukovyns'kyi Kurin'," 93.

120. Adamovich, "Zapisnye knizhki," 25.
121. Padaliak, "Znak zveria"; Viktor Glazkov, interviews with author, November 18 and December 21 and 23, 2008.
122. <http://Khatyn'.by/en/genocide/expeditions/> (accessed December 9, 2011).
123. *BT, The National State Teleradiocompany of the Republic of Belarus*, October 20, 2008, [www.tvr.by/eng/president.asp?id=6465](http://www.tvr.by/eng/president.asp?id=6465) (accessed December 9, 2011); AP, "Belorussia president marks ghetto destruction in bid to court West," *Haaretz.com*, October 22, 2008.
124. Andrzej Poczobut, "Ofiary NKWD: Polska żąda śledztwa" *Gazeta Wyborcza*, July 23, 2009.