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An International Journal

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**United States Holocaust Memorial Council and
Yad Vashem, The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes'
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ROLLBAHN MORD: THE EARLY ACTIVITIES OF EINSATZGRUPPE C*

YAACOV LOZOWICK

Graduate Student, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Abstract — *Einsatzgruppe C* was active in the Ukraine and became responsible for the murder of Jews, including the Babi-Yar massacre at Kiev. At first, men only were murdered, but after a number of weeks, women and children became victims, too. The *Einsatzgruppe* was assisted in its task by the *Wehrmacht*, the German police, other units of the SS and by both individuals and organized groups of local Ukrainians and Germans. Though no clear orders regarding the scope of the Final Solution seem to have been given, *Einsatzgruppe C* relentlessly continued pursuing its victims until the act of murder itself became routine.

Das Kommando (EK 4a) war auf der 'Rollbahn Mord' — auf dem Marsche.¹

'Operation Barbarossa', the German invasion of the Soviet Union launched on 22 June 1941, was a turning point in the Nazi war against the Jews. Special SS and police units, among them the four *Einsatzgruppen*, embarked on a campaign of murder, directed mainly against the Jewish population of the newly occupied territories. A detailed examination of the early activities of the third of these units, *Einsatzgruppe C*, can contribute to understanding the development and execution of the 'Final Solution'.

A number of issues must be addressed. The *Einsatzgruppe* systematically murdered tens of thousands of people. Both the methods used and their evolution are therefore significant. The theatre of operations was occupied by many diverse German formations, military and other. The relations between the murderers and their colleagues in other units were generally good, although not always without friction, a subject which will be examined closely. Likewise, the reactions of the local population had an important effect on the fate of many victims. The ideology of the perpetrators also contributed to the outcome, of course, as it helped them to persevere in a task that generally would be regarded as extremely repugnant.

One final issue, currently under debate, will need to be addressed: What were the orders given to the unit? Was their mission to murder all Jews, or only specific groups? If an order for total eradication existed, was it given before the operation, and therefore must have been part of a pre-conceived plan, or did it filter down piecemeal, its origin unclear? It would seem that the answers to these questions differed in the various *Einsatzgruppen*, necessitating a detailed examination of each one of them individually.

I. GENERAL OVERVIEW

Einsatzgruppe C numbered between 800 and 1000 men and was commanded by Dr.

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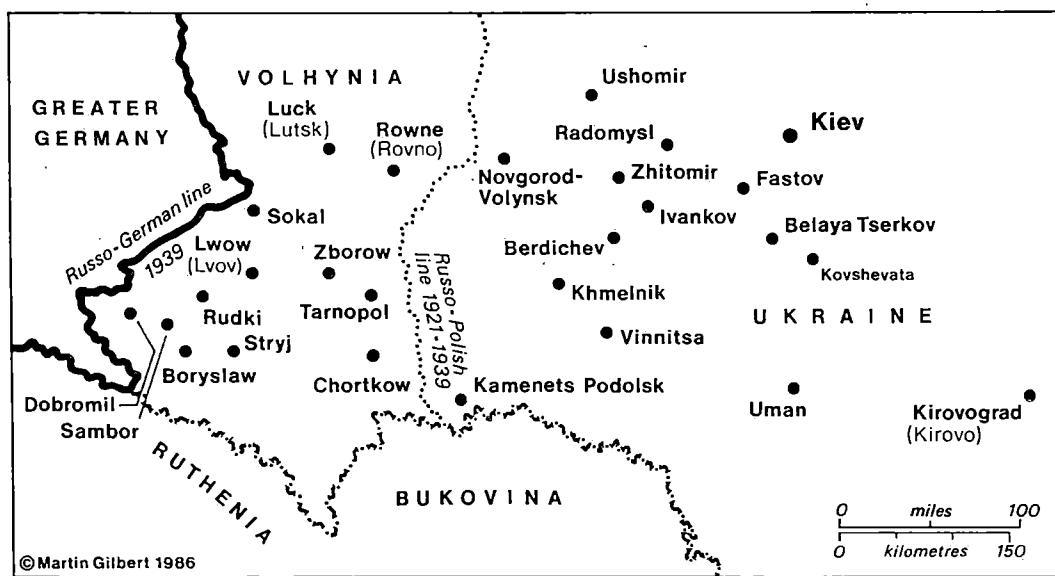
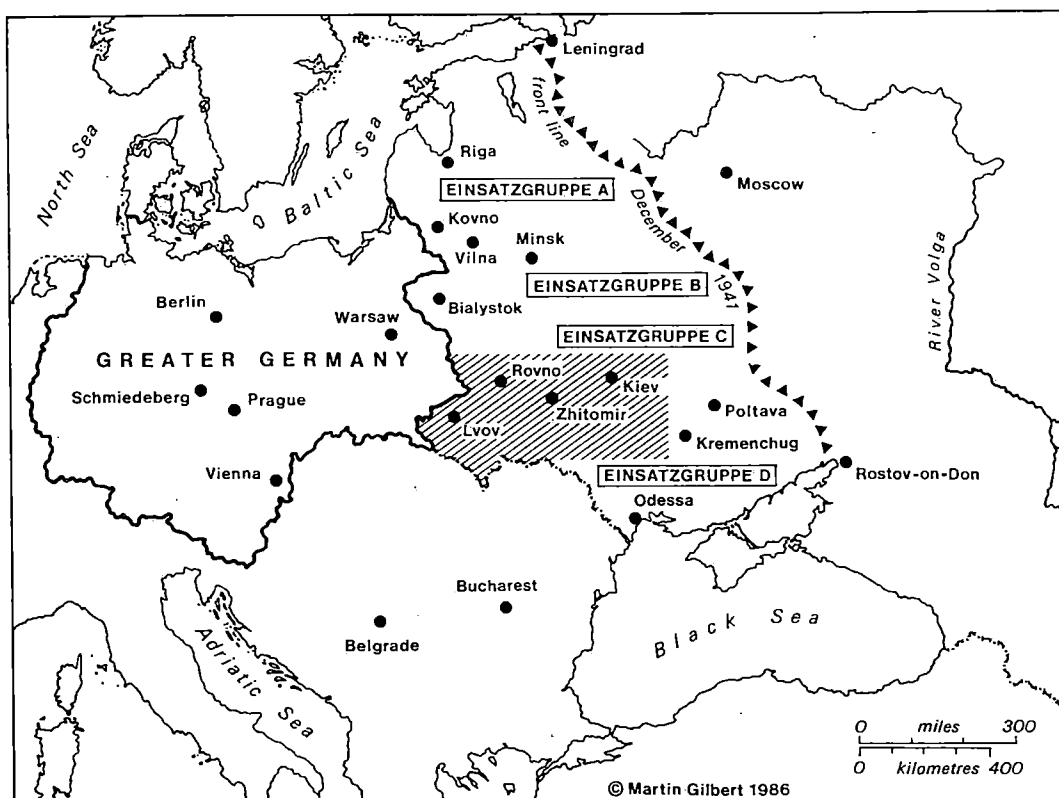


Fig. 1.

Editor's Note. The Editor wishes to thank Martin Gilbert, Fellow of Merton College, Oxford for his generous assistance in preparing the maps accompanying this article.

Otto Rasch. It was divided into four subunits, known as *Einsatzkommando* (EK). Paul Blobel commanded EK 4a, Gunter Hermann commanded EK 4b, Erwin Schulz led EK 5 and Dr. Erhard Kroeger led EK 6.² Each *Einsatzkommando* was mobile and included officers, staff, translators and drivers.³ Until approximately 10 July, this battalion was called *Einsatzgruppe B*, only afterward being renamed *Einsatzgruppe C*.⁴

Einsatzkommando 4a were the first to set out, from Bad Schmiedeberg in Prussian Saxony, on 23 June 1941.⁵ In early July, the entire *Einsatzgruppe* converged on Lvov (Lemberg), the only time that all the subunits were together. Thousands of the local Jews were then murdered.⁶

Until mid-July, the units advanced swiftly eastwards and many Jewish communities were hit.⁷ The method changed in mid-month when the various subunits set up headquarters in towns and despatched search squads to comb the villages and countryside for victims.⁸ There was no substantial advance for the next month, while the *Einsatzgruppe* waited for Kiev to fall. Since the *Wehrmacht* failed to capture the city, the plan was changed and *Einsatzgruppe C* moved southeast towards Kirovograd.⁹

Einsatzkommando 4a remained in Zhitomir, near Kiev, its squads systematically combing the region.¹⁰ In mid-September, they murdered the 3145 Jews still alive in Zhitomir.¹¹

At the same time, the unit in Kirovograd was preparing to advance to Poltava,¹² when Kiev fell. *Einsatzkommando 4a* went to Kiev immediately, and within a few days the headquarters of the *Einsatzgruppe* and part of EK 5 also arrived.¹³ After the city was captured, a series of detonations occurred and fires broke out, severely damaging the whole centre of town.¹⁴ Only after several days did the Germans manage to bring the situation under control. In an operation that had been coordinated with other units, 33,771 Kiev Jews were shot at Babi-Yar on 28–29 September 1941,¹⁵ dates which mark the time-frame of the research.

II. PREPARATIONS AND METHODS

The men in the ranks were not aware of the nature of their task until the operation began. Only after EK 4a arrived in Sokal on 27 June and was about to begin its murder operations did its commander, Blobel, gather all of his men and explain that 'the Jews and potential enemies must be put to death'.¹⁶ He described the method and added that everybody must participate. There was no need to repeat the order; Blobel's men understood that their victims were being shot 'because they were Jews'.¹⁷ One of them once explained to some *Wehrmacht* soldiers observing an execution that this was a 'Führer-order'.¹⁸

The men of EK 5 were informed of their task only about half an hour before they joined the men of EK 6, who had been shooting thousands of Jews in Lvov since early the same morning.¹⁹ It appears that there were some initial difficulties in EK 6. After they shot 90 Jews in Dobromil on 30 June, their commander, Kroeger, saw the need the next morning to assemble his men for a 'pep-talk'. He encouraged them and repeated the importance of their mission.²⁰

In order to boost their effectiveness, the units tried to advance with the first troops. An example of this is the three vehicles of EK 4a which reached Lvov even before the capture of the city had been completed and then became embroiled in the fighting.²¹ *Einsatzkommando 6* reached the city a few hours later,²² while a squad of EK 4b arrived in Kremenchug 'before all other units' (except, presumably, the conquerors themselves).²³

There were various methods of capturing the victims. *Einsatzkommando* 4a arrived at Luck, shot several hundred Jews, and then issued a proclamation ordering Jewish men to report for labour. The 1160 Jews who obeyed dug their own graves and were shot.²⁴ Posters were also used in Belaya Tserkov and Kiev.²⁵ The commander of EK 4b summoned the rabbi of Vinnitsa and ordered him to bring forward the Jewish intellectuals. When there were not enough Jews the next day, the order was repeated again and again. Shortly thereafter, the Jews were shot.²⁶ The Jews of Rovno hid outside the town and returned only by night. They were caught one evening in a joint *Einsatzgruppe-Wehrmacht* operation.²⁷ As more and more Jews fled from the advancing Germans, the units developed a new tactic. Upon entering a town whose Jews had fled, they harmed no one. Jews in hiding interpreted this to mean that the rumours of mass murders had been exaggerated, and they returned to their homes. There was then no problem in capturing them.²⁸ Individuals in hiding were occasionally turned in by local non-Jews. There were also cases of SS-men and locals together raiding Jewish areas and forcefully collecting the victims from their homes.²⁹

The efficiency achieved in these operations is evident in the case of Uman, where EK 5 arrived in the town shortly after the *Wehrmacht* and the local population had perpetrated a pogrom, resulting in the flight of many Jews. The SS then established order, searched homes for loot, and collected Jews, 1412 of whom were murdered the next morning.³⁰

While rounding up the Jews, graves had to be prepared. At times, anti-tank trenches or large shell-holes were used.³¹ In Luck, Jewish men dug the graves, whereas prisoners-of-war prepared the graves for the thousands of Jews of Zhitomir.³²

If the murder-site was distant, as in Lvov, the Jews were transported by truck.³³ On the other hand, the Jews of Ivankov and Kiev were marched to their deaths.³⁴ Before the mass murders at Zhitomir and Kiev, the Jews were registered, then forced to disrobe. Until then, the victims had been shot and buried in their clothing.³⁵

The victims knew their fate just before the end. At the point of concentration they were still ignorant of what awaited them, but as they approached the murder site, they could no longer have harboured any illusions.³⁶ Whereas small 'actions' lasted only a few minutes, the larger 'actions', where thousands were murdered, gave some victims a few more moments to consider their fate.³⁷ In most cases, the SS-men cordoned off the area, at times with the assistance of other units.³⁸

There were various methods of killing. In some cases, two SS-men shot each victim, but in other cases only one. The victims stood, facing their murderers.³⁹ Blobel testified that he disliked methods that were too 'personal'.⁴⁰ In EK 4b, one man shot bursts of machine-gun fire at groups of victims.⁴¹ If cruelty can be measured, it would seem that the most horrible murder method was that used at Babi-Yar, where the Jews were ordered to lie face down on the dead bodies while the SS-men walked on the mounds shooting them at close range with their pistols.⁴²

Not everyone died immediately. Some of the victims of Babi-Yar managed to escape at night and made their way to a nearby hospital. Those who were still alive but did not manage to crawl away were buried alive the next day, when the SS exploded the walls of the ravine. In doing so, they were aware that there were still living Jews among the dead.⁴³

There are very few testimonies relating to the perpetrators themselves. Rasch ordered that all personnel participate in the executions, and apparently he was obeyed.⁴⁴ One report tells us that during the first shooting, one of the men of EK 4a fainted.⁴⁵ There is no evidence of drunkenness. One of the killers at Babi-Yar recalled that the men received

rum, but he made no mention of being drunk.⁴⁶ A few days after the operation began, Blobel was hospitalized because of excessive drinking, but this was not the first such incident of his life.⁴⁷

The SS-men aimed at efficiency, and only seldom were there reports of mistreatment beyond what was deemed necessary. When they sensed that the populace was not cooperating, out of 'fear of Jewish power', they marched the Jews through the streets, thereby demonstrating Jewish powerlessness.⁴⁸ At the public execution of the Soviet judge Kiper, in Zhitomir, 402 Jews were forced to sit on the ground, hands above their heads, and to proclaim: 'Our Father, return us our leader Moses, we want to enter the Promised Land.'⁴⁹

At the outset of the shootings in Lvov, many detainees were interrogated. Those who could prove they had no communist connections were set free, while all others were shot.⁵⁰ It is conceivable that before the murderers adapted to their task they sought justification in the Jews' alleged ties to the Bolshevik enemy. In this case, such justifications would diminish or disappear with time. There are no other known reports of setting Jews free.

A search for traces of humaneness in the reports will be all but futile. At Babi-Yar, Blobel and one of his officers did allow a small blonde girl to escape, though her fate is unknown.⁵¹ Even Himmler was reputed to have once been willing to save a victim whose appearance was 'Aryan', but the man was shot when he told Himmler that he was definitely Jewish.⁵²

Kroeger related that he informed the first victims (at Dobromil) that they were being shot in retaliation for Soviet atrocities. His announcement was met with curses. Thereafter, the victims died without explanations.⁵³ There are no records of victims pleading for their lives, although the absence of such reports is not conclusive proof.

Another indication that the men adapted to their task is the issue of booty. Efficient collection of Jewish property began only towards the end of September, when trucks were needed to remove the 20 to 25 tons of booty taken from the Jews of Zhitomir.⁵⁴ The reports do not specify the weight of the loot collected at Babi-Yar, but they note with satisfaction that the disposal of almost 35,000 Jews would contribute to solving the lack of housing created by the destruction of central Kiev.⁵⁵

The *Einsatzgruppe* had other tasks in addition to killing. They also supervised the agricultural work of the Ukrainians. At times they joined the *Wehrmacht* in the campaign against the remnants of the Red Army, referred to euphemistically as 'partisans'. Occasionally, the units sustained casualties in these operations.⁵⁶ The writers of these reports complained that more time was dedicated to the war against these 'bandits' than to the main mission. However, through these actions, good relations with the *Wehrmacht* were established, allowing *Einsatzgruppe* units to enter towns immediately upon their conquest and to move freely throughout the military zone.⁵⁷ It is possible that the *Wehrmacht* agreed that the Ukrainian militia be attached to the *Einsatzgruppe* to make up for time 'lost' assisting the *Wehrmacht*.⁵⁸

Since these were units of the security police, they also collected intelligence material. However, they were not overly successful because the Soviets managed to destroy most of their official documents before their retreat.⁵⁹

At the time the units were organized, in the spring of 1941, a distinction was drawn between *sonderkommandos*, active near the front, and *Einsatzkommandos*, active in the rest of the conquered territories.⁶⁰ The reality represented in the reports reflects no such distinction.

III. EINSATZGRUPPE AND ARMY

In preparation for Operation Barbarossa, there were discussions at the highest echelons of the *Wehrmacht* and the regime regarding the upcoming tasks of the security police in occupied areas. In the context of these discussions, the commander of the army, von Brauchitsch, issued a 28 April 1941 command giving the *Einsatzgruppen* the responsibility for carrying out the special tasks of the security police. They had the authority to take action against the local populations as well.⁶¹

On 13 May 1941, Hitler issued a directive to *Wehrmacht* soldiers ordering that punishment of the local population should not be brought before military courts. The soldiers were permitted to shoot partisans, even when they surrendered, and to execute summarily anyone operating against the army. Furthermore, when those responsible for such acts could not be definitely identified, collective punishment could be imposed, and the soldiers performing any of the above acts would not be tried by military courts unless they had disrupted military discipline.⁶²

On 6 June, the army command issued the *Kommissarbefehl* (Commissar Order), at first only to the most senior officers. Others received the order verbally. The order asserted that the enemy would not abide by international law or humanitarian considerations, and especial cruelty was expected to be inflicted upon German POWs by Soviet political commissars. Therefore, political commissars in the Soviet army should be shot on capture. For other commissars and functionaries of the Soviet regime, a distinction was to be drawn between active opponents of Germany, who were to be executed immediately, and others who could be left alone. In the rear territories, all doubtful cases were to be transferred to the *Einsatzgruppen*.⁶³ Although the nature of the actions authorized for the *Einsatzgruppen* was vague, the *Wehrmacht* commanders could have harboured no doubts that they would not be within the scope of accepted behaviour in warfare.

The report writers of the *Einsatzgruppen* were pleasantly surprised to be able to relate that 'the attitude of the *Wehrmacht* to the Jews is downright heartening'.⁶⁴ A month and a half later, towards the end of August, we read that 'the relations are still excellent, the *Wehrmacht* personnel are showing interest and understanding for the actions of the *Einsatzgruppen*, and specifically towards the executions'.⁶⁵ Following the murder of 537 Jews at the beginning of October, the report states that 'the action was received with satisfaction by the army'.⁶⁶ Walter Hänsch, who commanded EK 4b, testified at Nuremberg that the units of the *Einsatzgruppen* could not have acted without the acquiescence of the *Wehrmacht*. At any rate, the relations between his officers and those of the military were more than collegial, they were friendly.⁶⁷

These testimonies reflect the feeling of the *Einsatzgruppe* troops that the army was not disturbed by their activities. A number of facts lend credence to this. *Einsatzgruppe C* received requests from the *Wehrmacht* to dispose of the Jews and communists in Radomysl and Kremenchug.⁶⁸ One case stands out: when the Germans suspected the Red Army of using dum-dum bullets, contrary to international law, a military doctor was commissioned to investigate the subject. At Zhitomir, Blobel placed SS-men and POWs at his disposal. To determine if the Soviet ammunition was indeed illegal, the SS-men used it on the prisoners. Consequently, the doctor returned to Berlin and published a 'scientific' article condemning Soviet methods of warfare and expressing abhorrence at their violation of international law.⁶⁹

In many instances, *Einsatzgruppe* actions were planned, and at times carried out, in cooperation with *Wehrmacht* units. The headquarters of the Seventeenth Army offered

assistance in inciting the populace against the Jews and communists.⁷⁰ The *Wehrmacht* and the *Einsatzgruppe* worked together to round up the Jews of Rovno, Novgorod-Volinski (Zwiahel), Zhitomir and other locations,⁷¹ while at Zhitomir and Babi-Yar, the massacres themselves were planned in conference with representatives of local army units.⁷² Members of EK 5 were present at the registration of all the men of Kiev by the army, after Babi-Yar, and arrested anybody identified as Jewish.⁷³

Jews in Lvov and Zhitomir were brutally beaten by soldiers before they were handed over to the EG for shooting.⁷⁴ Personnel of the Todt Organization also participated in the murder of Jews at Luck and Zhitomir.⁷⁵ There were cases where soldiers murdered Jews even when no *Einsatzgruppe* units were in the vicinity, such as near Tarnopol, Novgorod-Volinski and by the roadside near Lvov.⁷⁶

The first signs of friction between *Einsatzgruppe C* and the *Wehrmacht* appeared only when the SS-men started collecting victims from POW camps controlled by the army, but even then there were favourable reports, as well.⁷⁷ It may be that the tension was caused more by differences of opinion over jurisdiction than disagreement over the fate of the victims. On 19 October 1941, Field Marshal von Reichenau, commander of the Sixth Army, issued an order warning his men against mistaken feelings of compassion for the civilian population. He also called for the extermination of the Bolshevik doctrine of the Red Army. Two days later, the commander of all the forces on the eastern front, von Rundstedt, had the communiqué distributed to all his men.⁷⁸ The contents of the communiqué testify to *Wehrmacht* approval of the actions of the *Einsatzgruppen*, while the need to circulate it shows there must have been some difficulties.

One difficulty not mentioned in the reports occurred on 19 August 1941, in Belaya-Tserkov, where EK 4a murdered hundreds of Jews, including children. The younger children and infants were concentrated in a building near the edge of town in horrible conditions and without food. They remained there for a number of days, and their crying could be heard from the street. Nearby troops watched both the murder and the suffering of the children and described the events to two military chaplains of Field Hospital 607/4, Trewes and Wilczek. In an attempt to save the children, the chaplains turned to the local commander, who referred them to the chief chaplain of Infantry Division 295, stationed nearby. The issue was bandied from unit to unit, but in the meantime, the army prevented the murder of the infants, the protests of the EK commander notwithstanding. On 21 August, a meeting of representatives of the various units concerned authorized the shooting of the children. There was general agreement that the two chaplains had overstepped their authority and that the slovenliness of the operation had brought on the complication. It would have been far better, it was agreed, if the action had been completed immediately, efficiently and without publicity. The infants and children were murdered.⁷⁹

A number of points are apparent from this incident. First, the *Einsatzgruppe's* report writers, who never mentioned the case, are not totally reliable when describing relations with the *Wehrmacht*. Second, junior *Wehrmacht* officers could halt the murder actions, at least temporarily, when they discerned a reason to do so. The potential power of senior officers in this regard can only be imagined. However, these officers saw no need to intervene in the murder operations, making themselves accomplices.

It may be assumed that there were soldiers who witnessed the murders and disagreed with them, such as the two chaplains and the soldiers who alerted them. Letters or documents to this effect may yet be uncovered, but they cannot blur the essential fact: their writers took no action to interfere with the murders.

IV. COMPOSITION OF THE UNITS — OTHER UNITS COOPERATING WITH THE *EINSATZGRUPPEN*

In addition to the *Einsatzgruppe* and the *Wehrmacht*, there were also other groups stationed in the area, most conspicuous of these being SS units independent of the *Einsatzgruppe*.⁸⁰ At the end of June, such a unit was attached to *Einsatzgruppe C*, its platoon distributed among the *Einsatzkommandos*, and their separate identity lost.⁸¹

Einsatzkommando 6 consisted of approximately 130–150 men, including a platoon of the *Waffen-SS*, one of Gestapo, criminal police and SD, and a third of the order (regular) police. The rest of the unit was made up of drivers, translators and staff.⁸² The composition of EK 5 was similar, although it was somewhat larger (ca 200 men).⁸³

In addition to the *Einsatzgruppe*, the units under the command of the regional SS commander (*Höhere SS- und Polizei Führer*), Friedrich Jeckeln, also participated in the murder. Among these groups was the First SS Brigade, of the *Kommandostab Reichsführer-SS*, which probably could take credit for more murders than even *Einsatzgruppe C*.⁸⁴ These forces are mentioned occasionally in the reports: 600 Jews shot in Zborov in July, all Jews of Ushomir shot in early September and 1300 Jews shot in Berdichev.⁸⁵ A few days earlier, 23,600 Jews had been murdered in Kamenets-Podolsk.⁸⁶ A summary report of 25 September 1941 stated that Jeckeln's men had executed 44,125 people, most of them Jews, in August alone.⁸⁷ This sum is larger than the total of all *Einsatzgruppe C* murders before Babi-Yar, where Jeckeln's men also took part. It is impossible to trace these units through the *Einsatzgruppe's* reports, since they are mentioned infrequently and unsystematically.

A large degree of cooperation existed among the different groups because the Higher SS and Police Commanders (HSSPF), who were nominated by Himmler to serve as regional overall commanders of all police and security operations, were in charge of *Einsatzgruppen* sections in this area. Jeckeln, the HSSPF in the Ukraine, personally supervised the first murder action of EK 6 (90 Jews in Dobromil, 30 June 1941).⁸⁸ An SS officer named Maier was *Einsatzkommando C's* liaison officer in Jeckeln's staff.⁸⁹ As part of Jeckeln's forces, an unidentified unit of the order police assisted EK 4a in the murder of 1160 Jews in Luck on 2 July.⁹⁰ At Rovno, an additional, fifth *Einsatzgruppe* 'for special tasks' took over for the *Einsatzgruppe*.⁹¹ At least three units of *Waffen-SS* and police participated in the massacre at Babi-Yar, alongside EK 4a.⁹² This support was so extensive that the report author felt the need to point out, in early November, that EK 4a had already shot 51,000 victims 'without any outside assistance'.⁹³ He seemed to be reassuring his readers that his *Einsatzgruppe* was capable of doing its job unassisted.

Einsatzgruppe C also had good relations with the Abwehr and military police.⁹⁴ In at least one case, apparently at Fastov, military policemen shot Jews on their own.⁹⁵ Following the large mass murders, the *Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt* (National Socialist Welfare Organization) would collect the booty for distribution to Germans.⁹⁶

Throughout the region, there were thousands of *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans), some of whom assisted the *Einsatzgruppe* as informers.⁹⁷ Others joined the local militia and carried out their duties to the satisfaction of the SS. Nonetheless, they were not armed, contrary to their requests. The commander of EK 6 noted: 'Their blood thirst had us downright scared.'⁹⁸ Still, not all the *Volksdeutsche* were enthusiastic about the Nazis. There were at least four cases of local Germans being executed for pro-communist activities.⁹⁹ There are no reports of *Volksdeutsche* assistance to *Einsatzgruppe* victims.

V. THE LOCAL POLICE

The overall picture, then, is one of support for *Einsatzgruppe C* from all the German formations in the area. While the SS units competed with the *Einsatzgruppe* in murder actions, the responses of the bystanders ranged from indifference to active assistance. If there were attempts to help the victims, they left no visible traces.

According to the Nuremberg testimony of the commander of *Einsatzgruppe A*, Dr. Walther Stahlecker, his men attempted to incite the populace to enact 'spontaneous' pogroms.¹⁰⁰ Such a preliminary stage of action also existed in the region of *Einsatzgruppe C*. Many hundreds of Jews were murdered in pogroms at Tarnopol, Chortkov, Sambor and Kremenets.¹⁰¹ Synagogues in Rudki and Stryj were burned following the Soviet retreat.¹⁰² Yet, by the beginning of August, the reports were forced to admit that the policy had failed because there had been no other similar cases. The report cited the local population's fear of Jewish revenge, should the Soviet regime return, as the explanation for this.¹⁰³ If not for the fear, the author implies, the locals would certainly have taken a more active part in the murders.

Once the *Einsatzgruppe* understood that the populace was not going to rid itself of the Jews on its own, they organized their activity accordingly, so much so, that a pogrom perpetrated by the Ukrainians and the *Wehrmacht* in Uman in late September interfered with the plans of EK 5. The Jews fled from the town before they could be shot.¹⁰⁴

The population of Khmelnik held a special thanksgiving church service following the murder of hundreds of local Jews,¹⁰⁵ which was adduced by the report writer as proof that they approved of the executions.¹⁰⁶ A large crowd of civilians attended the hanging of the Soviet judge Kiper, in Zhitomir, and many joined in the beating of 402 Jews whose maltreatment and murder were part of the ceremony.¹⁰⁷ Many Ukrainians assisted the *Einsatzgruppe* by denouncing Jews. They turned in Jews allegedly responsible for murders perpetrated by the Soviet regime in Luck.¹⁰⁸ In rural areas, representatives of villages travelled miles in order to request the disposal of their Jews.¹⁰⁹ Villagers often reported to the SS on the movements of partisans in their locality.¹¹⁰ When EK 4a searched the POW camps for Jews, they were also assisted by Ukrainian informers.¹¹¹ This phenomenon was widespread, as reflected in the following November report: 'Until now the units have exterminated approximately 80,000 people, of whom roughly 8,000 were apprehended following denunciations.'¹¹² Even if many of the informers were ethnic Germans, Ukrainians must still have been responsible for thousands of those deaths.

According to historian Raul Hilberg, a Ukrainian militia operated alongside *Einsatzgruppen C* and D from August 1941.¹¹³ However, the operations reports show that this militia was already in the field by the third day of *Einsatzgruppe C*'s activities. On 29 June, this militia contributed to the uncovering of more than 100 NKVD men who were subsequently shot. On the following day, an additional 200 men, including Jews, were shot.¹¹⁴

The militia were organized as police units manned by trustworthy Ukrainians. They were armed only with truncheons, despite their request for arms.¹¹⁵ They collected the Jews who were to be shot, sometimes even before an *Einsatzkommando* arrived on the scene.¹¹⁶ For example, they sealed off the Jewish ghetto in Zhitomir the night before its destruction.¹¹⁷ In Kiev, they posted proclamations on the walls calling on the Jews to present themselves.¹¹⁸ In some cases they actively participated in the shooting,¹¹⁹ but Hilberg's contention that the SS shot adults while the militia shot children cannot be substantiated.¹²⁰ The militia also took part in the anti-partisan operations,¹²¹ while in

Rovno the militia continued the operations alongside other German units after the departure of the *Einsatzgruppe*.¹²²

At the same time, while Jews who hid in caves north of Zhitomir received no assistance from the local non-Jewish population, they were also not molested.¹²³ Some of the village representatives who travelled long distances to request the disposal of their Jews, changed their minds and tried to retract this information when they realized they were condemning the Jews to death.¹²⁴ Quite a few reports tell of communist Ukrainians or others apprehended during anti-German activities.¹²⁵ In one case, the Germans reported 'the necessity' to burn down several villages from which shots had been fired at German troops.¹²⁶ However, there is no evidence of popular attempts to save Jews. It seems that the case of the mayor of Kremenchug, shot in January 1942 for attempting to save Jews, was indeed unusual.¹²⁷

The *Einsatzgruppe* also had a secondary goal, that of supervising the agricultural labour of the Ukrainian population. Towards the end of July, the reports began to describe the agricultural conditions in the region. Preparations for the harvest began in early August, and SS men then went from village to village to ascertain that the labour foremen were reliable and that harvesting would proceed smoothly.¹²⁸ The second half of the month brought reports on the success of the harvest, a bumper crop by local standards.¹²⁹ It is interesting to note that the reports also tell of the harvests further east, in territory still controlled by the Soviets.¹³⁰ The harvesting continued undisturbed, even in areas which changed hands at the time.¹³¹

During September, preparations for the next agricultural season were begun with an attempt to deal with the lack of fuel and equipment.¹³² Only then do we hear of the first rumblings of discontent among the Ukrainian peasants, who were not pleased, for example, with the continuation of the hated collective farming system.¹³³

Is it possible to learn anything from all this? It seems that the local population knew that the Germans with whom they were in contact were the same people responsible for killing the Jews. Clearly, they were not troubled by this fact, or by the murders themselves. They also seem never to have considered the possibility that they might suffer the same fate after the Jews were gone.

VI. MOTIVATION

An important question to be raised regards the *Weltanschauung* (world-view) of the members of *Einsatzgruppe C* which may have helped them murder thousands of people. It may be assumed that as adult men they gave some thought to their actions, and it may be asked how their world-view was affected by their activities, if at all.

The SS-men attributed at least four typical characteristics to their Jewish victims. They were seen as communists, dangerous, spreaders of disease and insolent. It was believed that the Soviet regime and system were used by the Jews to control society. 'During the Soviet occupation of Poland, civil servants were removed from their posts and new people, mainly Jews, were brought in from Russia.'¹³⁴ 'Only the Jews benefited from the Soviet regime. Most of the Jews were Bolsheviks, and they were promoted by the regime even if they were not party members.'¹³⁵ 'The Jews are the main bearers of Bolshevism, alongside a small minority of others. They controlled the governmental bureaucracy.'¹³⁶ 'All key posts were in Jewish hands. In the middle and large-sized factories, the managers and foremen were always Jews, while the workers were Ukrainians.'¹³⁷

In October, when the report writers began to sum up the first months of action, they

remained convinced that 'it may be stated with certainty that, without exception, the Jews worked for Bolshevism. Again and again, especially in the cities, the Jews were Soviet powerholders; they brutally exploited the population and turned people over to the NKVD.'¹³⁸ 'The rampaging was the result of a deliberate program to achieve total control over the lives of the non-Jews in all of the Soviet Union.'¹³⁹

There are a number of indications in the reports themselves that the decisiveness of these comments was a reflection of political outlook that had little to do with reality. Dozens of reports enumerate separately the numbers of Jewish victims and of 'functionaries', an unnecessary distinction if they are one and the same. One of the men of EK 4a testified in the 1960s that even at that time, there was no problem in differentiating: 'Generally, the Jews in Russia had a distinct appearance, including beards.'¹⁴⁰

A second characteristic attributed to the Jews was their dangerous nature. 'Jews participated in all the bestial murders perpetrated by the Russians in Sambor and Dobromil The locals reported that Jews actively took part in murders of Ukrainians in Luck.'¹⁴¹ Later it was reported that 'not even one Jewish corpse was found in any of the mass graves left by the Russians'.¹⁴² There is no evidence that such graves were ever opened or searched by the *Einsatzgruppen*.

'The region of Khmelnik suffered from Jewish terror until our clean-up operation', noted one report.¹⁴³ 'The unrest in the streets and the communist propaganda abated only after the Jews were concentrated in a ghetto. This proved to be no more than a partial solution, as the ghetto was not sealed and the militiamen managed to determine that the center of activity was there.'¹⁴⁴

As the centre of Kiev was engulfed in fire, the report writer recorded: 'In town enormous fires are raging. Explosions and arson are still continuing, and all the efforts of the fire fighters have failed so far . . . some of the detonations are set by remote control. Jewish participation in these actions is obviously great.'¹⁴⁵ It is not clear what factual basis such a statement had or could have had. There are other cases of unsubstantiated accusations. 'The Jews were active in sabotage and terrorizing the local population in the region of Korosten',¹⁴⁶ but shortly thereafter unarmed militiamen 'concentrated 283 of the Jews in a building and handed them over to the *Einsatzgruppe*'.¹⁴⁷ Similar groups of unarmed Ukrainians did the same rounding up countless times, and it seems that their fear of the Jews was considerably smaller than the report writers would have the readers believe.

At times, the reality was so clear-cut that even the report writers acknowledged that not only were the Jews neither Bolsheviks nor terrifying, they were wretched. In such cases, a different danger was attributed to them, that of threatening public health. 'North of Zhitomir, Jews are hiding in caves and shacks. Their presence increases the danger of epidemics, and the area must be cleaned.'¹⁴⁸ 'Many Jewish refugees concentrated at Radomysl. The overcrowding was so severe that an average of fifteen people shared a room. The sanitary conditions were appalling and people were dying daily. It was impossible to treat them, and they were quickly becoming a source of epidemics. In order to remove the danger, EK 4a and the militia shot more than 1,600 Jews.'¹⁴⁹

Finally, the Jews were charged with insolence. 'The Jews continue to be insolent. Some of them are equipped with false papers stating that they are Ukrainians or even ethnic Germans.'¹⁵⁰ Their impudence seemed so great to the Germans that 'it seems someone has even been using military seals'.¹⁵¹ 'The Jews of Sibolov were exceptionally impertinent towards the local population, and therefore 78 of them were executed.'¹⁵² These 'insolent' acts can probably also be described as attempts by Jews to save themselves or their dignity in the face of the tortures.

None of these attributes appeared in the reports coincidentally. In most cases they were cited as the reason for the executions. Some Jews were shot because of their Bolshevik or partisan activities, while others were killed for being insolent or spreading epidemics. As the report author stated in late October, after accusing the Jews of murdering Ukrainians, 'therefore the need arose for special anti-Jewish activities'.¹⁵³ Nazi thinking attributed the various characteristics to the Jews collectively and then condemned them to collective death in recompense.

It may be asked why the report authors had to bother with justifications to their superiors at all. Perhaps there was a defence mechanism operating here. The same ideology which condemned the Jews to death demanded absolute obedience from the murderers. Once the murderers convinced themselves that the interpretation of reality inherent in the ideology was indeed accurate, it may have been easier to act accordingly, to murder. In other words, reality was reinterpreted to fit preconceived rationalizations to justify a mass murder that had been decided upon independently of any 'reasons' or 'causes'.¹⁵⁴

The ideology at work in these operations is also reflected in the language used to describe Germans, Soviets and Jews. The Soviet system represented bad government with horrendous results. 'Because of the Soviet regime, the Ukrainians are frightened and lazy. They live in sickening poverty and their only interest is to raise a minimum of crops which will not be confiscated by the government.' The Soviets were also accused of kidnapping people and exiling them to distant labour camps.¹⁵⁵ The Jewish-Bolshevik enemy was held responsible for countless inhuman crimes. They were accused of perpetrating 'bestial murders' in retreat, of being 'bloodthirsty murderers', and of committing 'atrocities' (an oft-recurring word).¹⁵⁶ The report authors were convinced that 'all the atrocities are part of a planned program, instigated by the Soviet leadership'.¹⁵⁷

The revulsion felt for Bolshevism was so intense that mythical accusations were made. 'A mass murder of Ukrainian intelligentsia is attributed to the Russians, although no corpses have as yet been found.'¹⁵⁸ A Soviet judge was accused of condemning people to death solely because he had been appointed to do so. 'In the context of his post, he murdered 1,060 people.'¹⁵⁹

In describing the Germans, no attempt was made to camouflage their actions. The descriptions of mass murders are dry and factual. The caption in the reports was often *Exekutionen*, but in each case described a different verb was used for literary purposes ('exterminated', 'removed', 'shot', 'finished', 'terminated', 'made harmless', 'uprooted').¹⁶⁰ The reader of the reports could become so accustomed to their murderous terminology that other uses of the same words broke the rhythm of reading, as when several soldiers who found explosives 'made them harmless'.¹⁶¹ All the terms had the same meaning and were completely interchangeable. Even when, after some deliberation, it was decided to execute a local ethnic German, the action was described as an 'extermination'. Once his guilt was determined, he deserved no better word. The language used reflected Nazi beliefs and prevented the perpetrators from comparing their actions with those of the enemy.

Regarding the Jews, the reports' language differs from that of other types of Nazi literature. The abusive, humiliating language used by Julius Streicher in *Der Stürmer* was totally absent from the reports. The Jews' murder was described in the cold and efficient manner in which it was carried out, in the manner in which one exterminates pests. There were no emotions or foul language. Occasionally, the victims were referred to as 'people'.¹⁶² It may be, in these instances, that the sight of hundreds of corpses daily

overcame the *Weltanschauung* to the extent that, in the language of the reports, the murderers acknowledged the humanity of the victims.

As noted, the report writers tended to adjust reality in their writing in order to fit their beliefs. Events which strengthened their beliefs were emphasized, others were neglected. Accordingly, a letter of gratitude written by local Ukrainians on their liberation from Stalin was quoted at length, and Soviet leaders' mansions were described in detail.¹⁶³ The Jewishness of two factory foremen near Berdichev was emphasized as an illustration of Jewish control of Soviet industry, but the identity of all other foremen is not mentioned.

Where recognition of unpleasant facts could not be avoided, explanations were concocted. Jews murdered by the Soviets died because they knew too much.¹⁶⁴ Soviet propaganda photos of German POWs were presented as fabrications; the Russians dressed their own men in German uniforms.¹⁶⁵ There were rare cases where the truth filtered through the language, even though it contradicted the ideology: 'The information we had concerning Ukrainian nationalism turns out to have been all wrong.'¹⁶⁶ Ukrainian sympathy for the Germans was also not uniform, according to the report. 'When a relative is discharged from a detention camp, they [Ukrainians] are pro-German. When a German unit tramples their fields, they are anti-German.'¹⁶⁷ There is no way of knowing if the report writers recognized the import of such statements, but, in any case, they are the exceptions which prove the rule.

VII. THE EINSATZGRUPPE AND THE FINAL SOLUTION

The significance of the *Einsatzgruppen* in the evolution of the Final Solution, a controversial issue in contemporary historiography,¹⁶⁸ remains to be determined. The source of the problem is the absence of any written order pertaining to the extent of the anti-Jewish actions. This order was apparently given verbally and never documented. Heydrich's only explicit written directive in this regard was 2 July 1941 and called, *inter alia*, for the shooting of 'party- and state-employed Jews'.¹⁶⁹ This could not have been the only order received by the *Einsatzgruppen*, as there is no evidence that any of them acted accordingly. Other orders must have been issued, but their content is a matter of speculation.

Those *Einsatzgruppe* commanders tried after the war, Otto Ohlendorf of EG-D foremost among them, testified that an order to shoot all Jews was delivered by Streckenbach, chief of Amt 1 of the RSHA (Reich Main Security Office), prior to the invasion of the Soviet Union. In 1955, Streckenbach, who had been presumed dead, returned from Soviet captivity, denied this allegation and succeeded in casting doubt on the EG commanders' version of events.¹⁷⁰ Contradictory testimonies claiming that such an order was received only in mid-August also cannot be accepted at face value. Defendants citing mid-June as the time they received the order may have hoped to benefit themselves by showing that they had only followed orders, while those ascribing a later date to the order may have done so to create the impression that when the order arrived they were already too deeply involved to be able to balk.

The fact that the *Einsatzgruppen* encouraged the local non-Jewish populations to start pogroms in the early stages of the operation does not, of itself, solve the problem. The policy of encouraging pogroms may have been planned as an intermediate stage before all-encompassing murder, or, alternatively, it may be an indication that no order yet existed, and the goal was limited to terrorization and murder of some of the Jews.

It would seem that only a study of the actions, their extent and the perpetrators' perception of these can help clarify the issue.

Helmut Krausnick, a leading proponent of the mid-June thesis, bases his contention primarily on the actions of *Einsatzgruppe A*, and to a lesser extent on the other units.¹⁷¹ He shows that the units at first refrained from killing women and children, while they shot Jewish men indiscriminately. It was only a matter of time and adjustment before all Jews were being killed. It is interesting to note that Krausnick cites no evidence from *Einsatzgruppe C*.

Alfred Streim, taking issue with Krausnick, does cite *Einsatzgruppe C* in his argument.¹⁷² Indeed, from tracing the operations reports, it becomes clear that the actions became more all-encompassing with time, and different stages are definable. Nevertheless, it seems that at least for the initial stages, there was no order to kill *all* Jews, and, in fact, not all were killed.

In the first operations, EK 4a shot only men. As many as 7000 Jews of Lvov (their gender was not specified) were shot, but 160,000 Jews were still there a month later.¹⁷³ In Zhitomir, not only were not all Jews murdered, but it was EK 4a who initiated the establishment of a ghetto.¹⁷⁴ In some places, the *Einsatzkommando* perpetrated many repeat actions, but always left behind living Jews.¹⁷⁵ In Kirovograd, when food was distributed to the population, non-Jews received 250 grams, Jews 150 grams.¹⁷⁶ This is overt discrimination, but hardly an obvious attempt to kill all the Jews at this stage.

In a Nuremberg testimony which is open to question, Schulz, commander of EK 5, said that 'At the beginning of August, Rasch, commander of *Einsatzgruppe C*, convened his officers. He told them of an order from Himmler, transmitted by Jeckeln, whereby all Jews, including women and children but excluding indispensable craftsmen, must be shot.'¹⁷⁷ The reports indicate no change in policy in early August, hence the doubt. However, there are definitely signs that classified workers were not always shot, as in Lvov in early July.¹⁷⁸ *Einsatzkommando 6* found several all-Jewish collective farms, and in order not to disrupt the harvest, they shot only the foremen. This was probably in September.¹⁷⁹ There is no evidence that this sparing of Jews resulted from *Wehrmacht* pressure, as was the case elsewhere.

The documents take us one step further, pointing to the possibility that the men of the *Einsatzgruppen* were not aware they were enacting the Final Solution. The term first appeared in the reports in mid-August 1941, when the report author suggested employing the Jews of the Ukraine in draining the Pripet marshes until a future decision on a final solution for the Jews of Europe.¹⁸⁰ Towards the middle of September, the report writer proudly noted that as a result of the *Einsatzgruppe* actions, 70% to 90% of the Jews were fleeing deep into the Soviet interior. He commented that the effortless removal of hundreds of thousands of Jews was a significant contribution towards solving the Jewish problem in Europe.¹⁸¹ A month later, Himmler forbade any Jewish emigration, and SS officers spoke differently.

The first marks of change appear as late as the report of 11 September, when, it seems, *all* the Jews of Fastov were murdered.¹⁸² Before the end of the month there was a 'special meeting' where the participants decided 'to exterminate the Jews of Zhitomir finally and radically',¹⁸³ and so they did. The terminology — 'special meeting', 'decided', 'radical solution' — indicates that this had not been standard procedure, and also that the ghetto was not set up, at the time, with the intention of liquidating it a month later. As the fourth month of action opened, both the extent of the murders and their interpretation by the men changed. It may be that the following remarkable passage was written when the report writer learned of the order to kill all Jews:

Even if the Jewish problem will find an immediate solution, the political one won't. Bolshevism is based on the Jews, and also on Georgians, Armenians, Poles, Latvians, Ukrainians, etc. Judaism and Bolshevism are not identical. We would miss the goal of political security if we replaced the main task of destroying the communist machine with the relatively easier one of eliminating the Jews. Moreover, solving the communist problem requires the best forces, making the solution of the Jewish problem all the more difficult. What's more, in the towns of western and central Ukraine, Jewry and skilled workers and traders are one and the same. *If we completely forego using Jewish labor, it will be nigh-impossible to rebuild Ukrainian industry and urban administrative centers* [italics in original]. There is only one way out . . . solving the Jewish problem through Jewish forced labor. This will lead to a gradual liquidation of Jewry, which would suit the potential of the country.¹⁸⁴

Whoever wrote these lines had no compunction about murdering Jews. He simply felt no need and saw no technical possibility of exterminating them all immediately, nor did he think anything would be achieved thereby. Until this point, he had not identified his actions with the Final Solution, if only because they had not been final for the whole Jewish community.

At the end of September 1941, there was an attempt to kill all the Jews of Kiev.¹⁸⁵ Only afterwards do the reports begin to tell of the total annihilation of whole communities, such as Koschewatoje.¹⁸⁶ The term *Judenfrei* appeared for the first time only in mid-October, regarding Borislav.¹⁸⁷ At the beginning of November, the report author seems to have known he was participating in the Final Solution, but he still disagreed with the plan. 'Even if about 75,000 Jews have been exterminated by such methods until now, still, it is clear that it will not be possible to solve the Jewish Problem this way. Granted, in the villages and towns they have been completely annihilated. However, in the larger towns, the Jews disappear after every action only to reappear in even greater numbers afterwards.'¹⁸⁸ There is no way of knowing if this reflected the general opinion of the units, or was only the personal view of the writer. It seems likely that reports such as this were among the causes for the establishment of murder camps, where the inefficient method of killing by shooting was replaced by gassing, which was both more efficient and less difficult for the murderer's psyche.

These findings do not concur with those of Krausnick regarding *Einsatzgruppe A*. Nevertheless, it seems quite unlikely that the two sister units received significantly different orders. The discrepancy may perhaps be explained by the thesis formulated by Christopher Browning: the order to kill Jews, although given early, was unclear and was interpreted differently in the various units. EG-C reached the radical interpretation only as late as the end of September 1941.¹⁸⁹ This might also explain the actions Schultz attributed to Jeckeln, the HSSPF: he seemed to have been pushing towards a more radical interpretation, but may not have been the bearer of the order.

Did Hitler initiate the Final Solution, or did the idea develop within the Nazi bureaucracy? The sources cited here give no clear answer. On the one hand, there seems to be no evidence for a clear pre-meditated plan, whereby the total murder of the Jews was to coincide with the invasion of the Soviet Union: during the first three months of action, not all of the Jews were killed, nor did the *Einsatzgruppen* seem to aspire to do so. If Hitler planned to kill all of the Jews, who was expected to complete the task?

On the other hand, there is just as little evidence that the murderers in the field were radicalizing their actions to such an extent that they would soon have been killing all Jews on their own initiative alone. On the contrary, the two above-quoted citations seem to indicate that the unit would never have made such a decision if left to itself.

Possibly, the truth lies between the two historiographical positions. The impetus indeed came from above, but not in the form of clear pre-planned orders. Rather there was a willingness on the part of the top Nazi echelon to exploit the potentials of the situation to their utmost. This might also explain the discrepancies between the various *Einsatzgruppen*: with no clear directives, the various commanders reached diverse conclusions as to the extent of their task. As time passed, and the men grew accustomed to their duties, the goals became broader.

Early in the operation, Schulz and Jeckeln disagreed over the number of Jews to be killed, with Schulz, the actual perpetrator, seeking to reduce their number. Elsewhere, the victims were informed of their fate, and the killers needed encouragement. With the entire *Einsatzgruppe C* in Lvov, thousands of Jews were murdered, but tens of thousands were not. As the weeks passed, such inconsistencies disappeared. Doctors were no longer needed to determine the deaths of the victims, and the murder method itself became more gruesome (especially at Babi-Yar). Murder was so routinized that not only was there time to consider the victims' property and capital, but this became more important than the human lives. The climax of the period June to October 1941 was indeed at the end. It seems no accident that the orderly, well-planned murder of 33,000 Jews took place at Kiev at the end of this period, rather than at Lvov near the beginning. If any Jews remained in Kiev after Babi-Yar, they were few and in hiding. If the men of the *Einsatzgruppe* had any human feelings regarding their victims in June, these had disappeared by October. The fact is, one can grow accustomed to mass murder.

APPENDIX

In general, the reports tended to be long-winded. Some of them spent dozens of pages on one EG. As opposed to this abundance of verbiage, the following report, with the first news of the largest action, at Babi-Yar, stands out in sharp contrast:

Standort Kiew.

Das Sonderkommando 4a hat in Zusammenarbeit mit Gruppenstab und zwei kommandos des Polizei-Regiments sud an 29. und 30.9.41 in Kiew 33,771 Juden executiert.¹⁹⁰
(Special commando 4a, together with *Einsatzgruppe C* Headquarters and two commando groups of the South Police Regiments, executed 33,771 Jews in Kiev on 29 and 30 September 1941.)

This was the complete report.

NOTES

1. From the Nuremberg testimony of Wilhelm Gustav Tempel, a member of *Einsatzkommando 4a*. Nuremberg Documents NO 5123.

2. Helmut Krausnick and Hans Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1981), p. 646.

3. Nuremberg Documents NO 3841; Yad Vashem Archives (YV), TR-10/698, p. 21, TR-10/610, pp. 134-5.

The two relevant types of historical sources on the *Einsatzgruppen* are contemporary reports and post-war legal material.

The reports, or *Ereignismeldungen* (EM), were sent daily from the eastern front to high-ranking Nazis. Among the thousands of pages of reports, hundreds of pages dealt with the daily actions of the *Einsatzgruppe*.

It is important to note Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm's observation that the extant reports are those edited in Berlin and not the originals written in the field. The editors regulated the daily inflow of material and sometimes added relevant information from other sources. As a result, the dates are not always accurate, and occasional insignificant contradictions can be found. On the whole, Wilhelm finds the reports to be generally reliable, which means that any reported event almost certainly did take place. (See Krausnick and Wilhelm, *Die Truppe*, pp. 332-47.)

There is little relevant information in the Nuremberg trial documents. More can be found in the proceedings of trials during the 1960s. Yad Vashem's archives contain the indictment from the trial of 10 officers of EK 4a (TR-10/616), as well as the verdict in the 1969 trial of Dr. Kroeger (TR-10/698) and the 1961 verdict in the trial of a member of Kroeger's command, EK 6 (TR-10/17).

The nature of the sources dictates an SS perspective on events in the research.

4. EM 19, 11 July 1941, p. 1.
5. EM 24, 16 July 1941, which refers to the chapter 'Einsatzgruppe C' in 'Ereignismeldung UdSSR des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD', in YV, 051-DN/67, 68.
6. EM 10, 2 July 1941; EM 11, 3 July 1941; TR-10/17, pp. 3-6.
7. See the reports from this period.
8. See, for example, EM 38, 30 July 1941; EM 60, 22 August 1941.
9. EM 60.
10. TR-10/616, pp. 130, 182, 260; EM 58, 20 August 1941.
11. EM 106, 7 October 1941.
12. EM 88, 19 September 1941.
13. EM 97, 28 September 1941; EM 106.
14. EM 97.
15. EM 101, 2 October 1941.
16. TR-10/616, p. 134.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 137, 142.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 262. On the significance of Führer-orders, see Helmut Krausnick *et al.*, *Anatomy of the SS-State* (London: Collins, 1968).
19. TR-10/17, p. 4.
20. TR-10/698, p. 34.
21. EM 23, 15 July 1941, p. 11; EM 128, 13 November 1941, p. 6.
22. TR-10/698, p. 57.
23. EM 111, 12 October 1941, p. 6.
24. TR-10/616, p. 155.
25. EM 128, p. 5.
26. EM 47, 9 August 1941, p. 9.
27. EM 128, p. 5.
28. EM 47, p. 9; EM 127, p. 3.
29. TR-10/616, pp. 224, 251.
30. EM 119, 20 October 1941, p. 6.
31. TR-10/616, pp. 174, 204.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 155, 240.
33. Nuremberg Documents NO 3644.
34. TR-10/616, pp. 302, 323.
35. EM 106, pp. 3, 18; TR-10/616, pp. 235, 302.
36. TR-10/616, p. 142.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 241-3, 324, 326.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 176; TR-10/698, p. 28.
39. TR-10/698, pp. 28-9; TR-10/616, pp. 227-8.
40. Nuremberg Documents NO 3824.
41. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1961), p. 209.
42. TR-10/616, p. 324.

43. *Ibid.*
44. Hilberg, *Destruction*, p. 215.
45. TR-10/616, p. 140.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 326.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
48. EM 81, 12 September 1941, p. 14.
49. TR-10/616, pp. 224-5.
50. TR-10/698, pp. 60-1.
51. TR-10/616, p. 237.
52. Hilberg, *Destruction*, p. 218.
53. TR-10/698, p. 20.
54. EM 106, p. 18; EM 132, 12 November 1941, p. 19.
55. EM 106, pp. 13, 15.
56. EM 63, 25 August 1941, p. 2; EM 94, 25 September 1941, pp. 15-16; EM 111, p. 7.
57. EM 74, 5 September 1941, p. 3; EM 97, pp. 23-4; EM 128, pp. 6-7.
58. Hilberg, *Destruction*, p. 205.
59. EM 24, pp. 9-12; EM 47, p. 11.
60. Krausnick and Wilhelm, *Die Truppe*, pp. 129-30.
61. Helmut Krausnick, 'The Persecution of the Jews', in Krausnick *et al.*, *Anatomy*.
62. Hans Adolf Jacobson, 'The Kommissarbefehl and Mass Executions of Soviet Russian Prisoners of War', in Krausnick *et al.*, *Anatomy*, pp. 505-36.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 519-20.
64. EM 14, 6 July 1941, p. 6.
65. EM 58, p. 12.
66. EM 119, pp. 7-8.
67. Nuremberg Documents NI 4567.
68. EM 8, 30 June 1941, p. 8; Hilberg, *Destruction*, p. 197.
69. TR-10/616, pp. 183-96.
70. EM 10, p. 2.
71. EM 28, 20 July 1941, p. 5; EM 38, pp. 9-10; EM 58, p. 12.
72. EM 106, p. 7; TR-10/616, p. 318.
73. EM 119, p. 110.
74. Nuremberg Documents NO 3644; TR-10/616, p. 228.
75. TR-10/616, pp. 155, 158, 227, 229; EM 24, pp. 12-14.
76. EM 28, p. 8; EM 119, p. 5; EM 38, pp. 9-10; EM 14, p. 6.
77. EM 128, pp. 7-8; EM 132, p. 16.
78. Nuremberg Documents NOKW 309.
79. TR-10/616, pp. 275-88.
80. See, for example, Yehoshua Büchler, 'Kommandostab Reichsführer-SS: Himmler's Personal Murder Brigades in 1941', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 1 (1986), 11-25.
81. EM 8; TR-10/616, pp. 202, 215-229; TR-10/698, p. 21.
82. EM 8; TR-10/698.
83. Nuremberg Documents NO 3841.
84. See, for example, Büchler, 'Kommandostab Reichsführer-SS', pp. 11-25.
85. EM 19, p. 5; EM 86, pp. 12-13, 19.
86. EM 80, 11 September 1941, p. 13.
87. EM 94, pp. 14-15.
88. TR-10/698, pp. 24-5.
89. EM 12, 4 July 1941, p. 5.
90. EM 24, pp. 12-14.
91. EM 28, p. 7. See also Büchler, 'Kommandostab Reichsführer-SS', p. 13.
92. TR-10/616, pp. 319, 322.

93. EM 111, p. 4.
94. EM 128, p. 8.
95. EM 80, p. 13.
96. EM 132, p. 19.
97. EM 28, pp. 5-7.
98. Hilberg, *Destruction*, p. 106.
99. EM 47, p. 30; EM 80, p. 12; EM 86, 17 September 1941, p. 12.
100. Nuremberg Documents L 180.
101. EM 47, p. 10; EM 24, pp. 7-12.
102. EM 20, 12 July 1941, p. 4; EM 24, pp. 10-11.
103. EM 47, p. 10.
104. EM 119, pp. 5-6.
105. EM 85, 16 September 1941, p. 18.
106. EM 81, p. 21.
107. EM 58, pp. 9-11; TR-10/616, pp. 224-5.
108. EM 24, pp. 13-14.
109. EM 8, p. 111.
110. EM 47, pp. 7-9; EM 74, p. 3.
111. EM 37, 29 July 1941, p. 7; EM 38, pp. 9-10.
112. EM 128, p. 3.
113. Hilberg, *Destruction*, p. 205.
114. EM 24, pp. 12-13.
115. EM 8, pp. 11-12.
116. TR-10/616, p. 251; EM 80.
117. EM 106, pp. 17-18.
118. *Ibid.*
119. EM 80, p. 13; EM 88, p. 8. For one of the more graphic descriptions of Ukrainian participation in murder actions, see the 1945 testimony of German army Lieutenant Erwin Bingel, 'The Extermination of Two Ukrainian Jewish Communities, Testimony of a German Army Officer', *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol. 3 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1959), pp. 303-20. Whereas Bingel testified regarding the murder of Jews in Uman and Vinnitsa, his details do not match those of the *Einsatzgruppe* reports for these cities. Bingel may have described the actions of one of the other SS units engaged in murdering Jews, perhaps at Kamenets-Podolsk.
120. TR-10/616 (Entire file); Hilberg, *Destruction*, p. 205.
121. EM 47, p. 12; EM 86, p. 17; EM 94, p. 15.
122. EM 28, p. 7. The other *Einsatzgruppen* also received active assistance from the local non-Jewish populations. See, for example, Krausnick and Wilhelm, *Die Truppe*, pp. 596-8, 629.
123. EM 94, p. 16.
124. EM 86, pp. 11-12.
125. EM 20, p. 4; EM 37, p. 7; EM 42, 3 August 1941, pp. 1-2; EM 47, p. 13; EM 58, p. 7; EM 59, 21 August 1941, p. 11; EM 119, pp. 6-7.
126. EM 28, p. 5.
127. Hilberg, *Destruction*, p. 201.
128. EM 20, pp. 19-20; EM 47, p. 8.
129. EM 59, p. 3; EM 60, pp. 13-18; EM 74, p. 6.
130. EM 59, p. 3.
131. EM 60, pp. 13-18.
132. EM 85, pp. 8-14.
133. EM 107, 8 October 1941, p. 11.
134. EM 20, pp. 5-6.
135. EM 40, 1 August 1941, pp. 16-19.
136. EM 25, 17 July 1941, pp. 4-11.

137. EM 80, pp. 13-15.
138. EM 127, pp. 4-5.
139. EM 129, 5 November 1941, pp. 6-12.
140. TR-10/616, p. 138.
141. EM 24, pp. 9-14.
142. EM 127, pp. 4-5.
143. EM 86, p. 18.
144. EM 106, p. 17.
145. EM 97, pp. 23-4.
146. EM 60, pp. 25-6.
147. EM 80, p. 13.
148. EM 94, p. 16.
149. EM 88, p. 8.
150. EM 94, pp. 16-17.
151. EM 86, p. 13.
152. EM 119, p. 7.
153. EM 127, pp. 4-5.

154. Helmut Krausnick suggests an interesting theory regarding this point: he believes the report authors justified their actions because they were ordered to do so. Nebe, commander of EG-B, did so only at the end of July. Krausnick does not clarify the reason for such an order.

Helmut Krausnick, 'Hitler und die Befehle an die Einsatzgruppen im Sommer 1941', in Eberhard Jäckel and Jürgen Rohwer, *Der Mord an den Juden im zweiten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1985), p. 98.

155. EM 45, 7 August 1941, pp. 4-7; EM 81, pp. 11-12; EM 119, p. 6; EM 127, pp. 3-4.
156. EM 9, 1 July 1941, p. 2; EM 20, p. 4; EM 47, p. 13.
157. EM 24, pp. 9-12.
158. EM 28, p. 7.
159. EM 47, p. 30.
160. EM 47, p. 12; EM 58, p. 9; EM 80, p. 13; EM 86, p. 17.
161. EM 119, p. 10.
162. *Ibid.*, p. 8; EM 128, p. 3.
163. EM 23, pp. 16-17; EM 106, p. 10.
164. EM 24, pp. 9-12.
165. EM 94, p. 18.
166. EM 52, 14 August 1941, pp. 4-11.
167. EM 86, pp. 23-4.
168. Helmut Krausnick, 'Hitler und die Befehle an die Einsatzgruppen im Sommer 1941', pp. 88-106, and Alfred Streim, 'Zur Eröffnung des allgemeinen Judenvernichtungsbefehls gegenüber den Einsatzgruppen', pp. 107-19, in Jäckel and Rohwer, *Der Mord an den Juden*.
169. Krausnick, 'Hitler und die Befehle', p. 90; Krausnick, 'The Persecution of the Jews', pp. 62-3. See also EM 10, p. 3.
170. Krausnick 'Hitler und die Befehle', pp. 90-1; Streim, 'Zur Eröffnung', pp. 106-9.
171. Krausnick, 'Hitler und die Befehle', pp. 94ff.
172. Streim, 'Zur Eröffnung', pp. 107-19.
173. EM 24, p. 212; EM 50, 12 August 1941, p. 3.
174. EM 106, p. 13.
175. EM 59, p. 11; EM 60, p. 28.
176. EM 87, 18 September 1941, pp. 8-9.
177. Nuremberg Documents NO 3644.
178. EM 24, p. 12.
179. EM 81, p. 14.
180. EM 52, pp. 12-13.

181. EM 81, p. 14.
182. EM 80, p. 13.
183. EM 106, p. 17.
184. EM 86, pp. 21-2.
185. EM 106.
186. EM 119, p. 9.
187. *Ibid.*
188. EM 128, p. 4.
189. 'Discussion', in Jäckel and Rohwer, *Der Mord an den Juden*, p. 121.
190. EM 101, p. 2.

VOLUME 4
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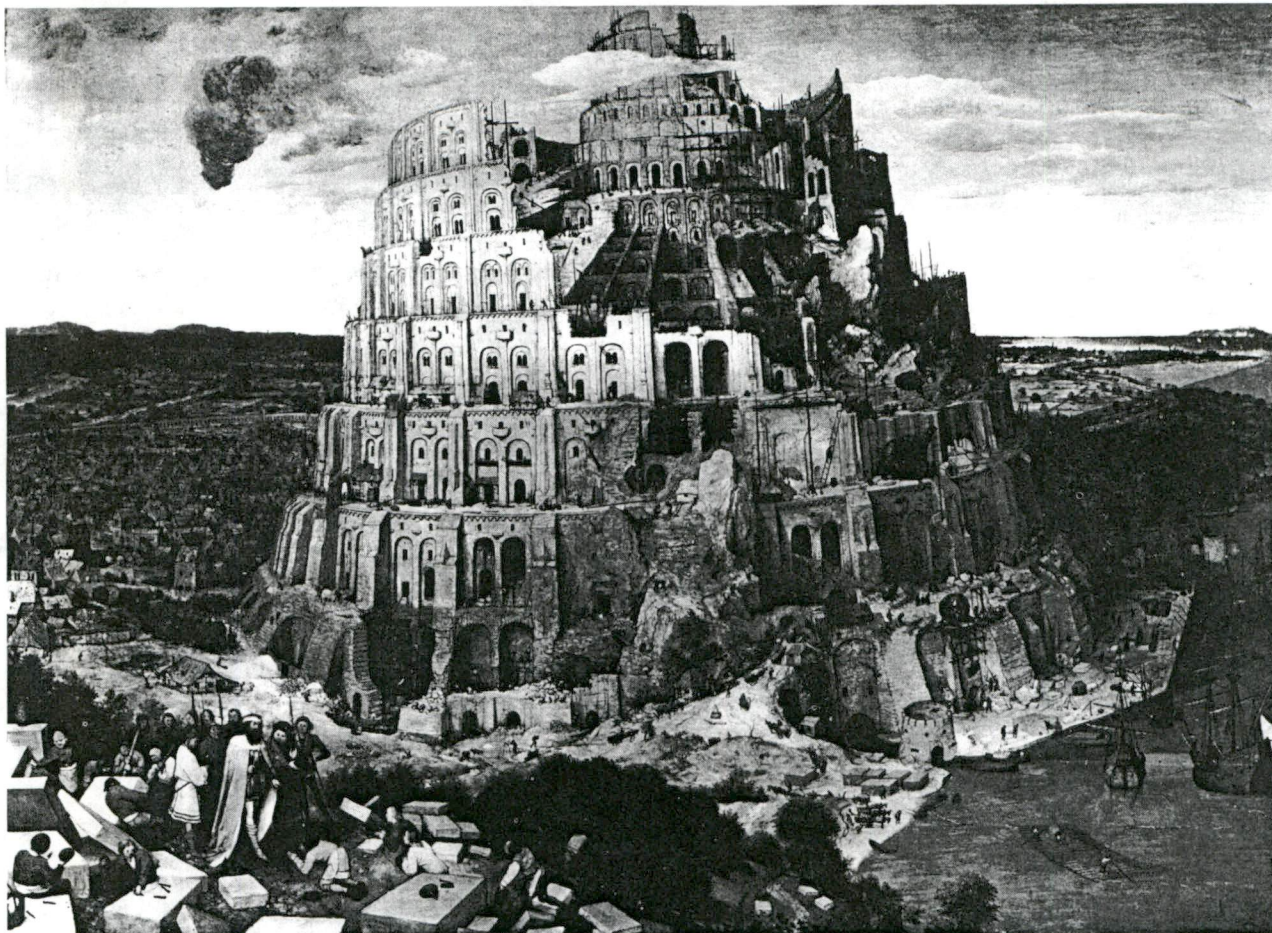


Figure 3. "The Tower of Babel" by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1563. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

daily scene, the Tower was of considerable interest to the early Flemish painters. It was generally depicted either as a multistory structure, diminishing in size as it rose or, more often, as a square or circular building surrounded by a ramp. Some artists illustrated contemporary building methods, a fine example occurring in the Book of Hours of the Duke of Bedford (Paris, c. 1423), where the construction of the Tower proceeds at night under the stars. In Pieter Bruegel's *Tower of Babel* (1563), the building—leaning slightly—is shown in a vast landscape near the banks of a river, with a king arriving to inspect the progress of the work.

Although the Babel story might appear to be a temptation to composers, since the confusion of tongues can be expressed most effectively in music, very few works have in fact been written on the theme. These are mainly oratorios including César Franck's *La Tour de Babel* (1865) and Anton Rubinstein's markedly unsuccessful *Der Turm zu Babel* (1858; revised as an opera, 1872). Two 20th-century works are *La Tour de Babel* (1932) by René Barbier and Igor Stravinsky's *Babel*, a cantata for narrator, men's chorus, and orchestra (1944, published in 1952). [ED.]

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Jews were machine-gunned there, according to an official German report. The carnage was performed by a special *SS unit (*Sonderkommando*) supported by Ukrainian militia men. At the end of 778 days of Nazi rule in Kiev, the ravine had become a mass grave for over 100,000 persons, the majority of them being Jews. A note of the Soviet government to the Allies about German war crimes, dated Jan. 6, 1942 and signed by V. M. Molotov, gives a vivid description of the massacre, pointing out that the victims

BABI YAR by Yevgeny Yevtushenko

No gravestone stands on Babi Yar:
Only coarse earth heaped roughly on the gash.
Such dread comes over me; I feel so old,
Old as the Jews. Today, I am a Jew . . .
Now I go wandering, an Egyptian slave;
And now I perish, splayed upon the cross.

The marks of nails are still upon my flesh,
And I am Dreyfus whom the gentry hound:
I am behind the bars, caught in a ring;
Belied, denounced, and spat upon I stand,
While dainty ladies in their lacy trim,
Squealing, poke parasols into my face.

I am that little boy in Bialystok
Whose blood flows, spreading darkly on the floor.
The rowdy lords of the saloon make sport,
Reeking alike of vodka and of leek.
Booted aside, weak, helpless, I, the child
Who begs in vain while the pogromchik mob
Guffaws and shouts: "Save Russia, beat the Jews!"
The shopman's blows fall on my mother's back.

O my own people, my own Russian folk,
Believers in the brotherhood of man!
But dirty hands too often dare to raise
The banner of your pure and lofty name.
I know the goodness of my native land,
How vile that anti-Semites shamelessly
Preen themselves in the words that they debate:
"The Union of the Russian People."

Now, in this moment, I am Anne Frank,
Fragile and transparent as an April twig,
I love as she; I need no ready phrases . . .
Only to look into each other's eyes!
How little we can sense, how little see . . .
Leaves are forbidden us, the sky forbidden . . .
Yet how much still remains; how strangely sweet
To hold each other close in the dark room.
They come? No, do not fear. These are the gales
Of spring; she bursts into this gloom.
Come to me; quickly, let me kiss your lips . . .
They break the door! No, no, the ice is breaking.

On Babi Yar weeds rustle; the tall trees
Like judges loom and threaten . . .
All screams in silence; I take off my cap
And feel that I am slowly turning gray.
And I too have become a soundless cry
Over the thousands that lie buried here.
I am each old man slaughtered, each child shot.
None of me will forget.

Let the glad "Internationale" blare forth
When earth's last anti-Semite lies in earth.
No drop of Jewish blood flows in my veins,
But anti-Semites with a dull, gnarled hate
Detest me like a Jew.
O know me truly Russian through their hate!

Translated by Marie Syrkin

Figure 1. A translation of Yevtushenko's *Babi Yar* by Marie Syrkin, Hadassah Magazine, March 1967.

→ **BABI YAR**, a ravine on the outskirts of *Kiev which has come to symbolize Jewish martyrdom at the hands of the Nazis in the Soviet Union. On Sept. 29-30, 1941, 33,771

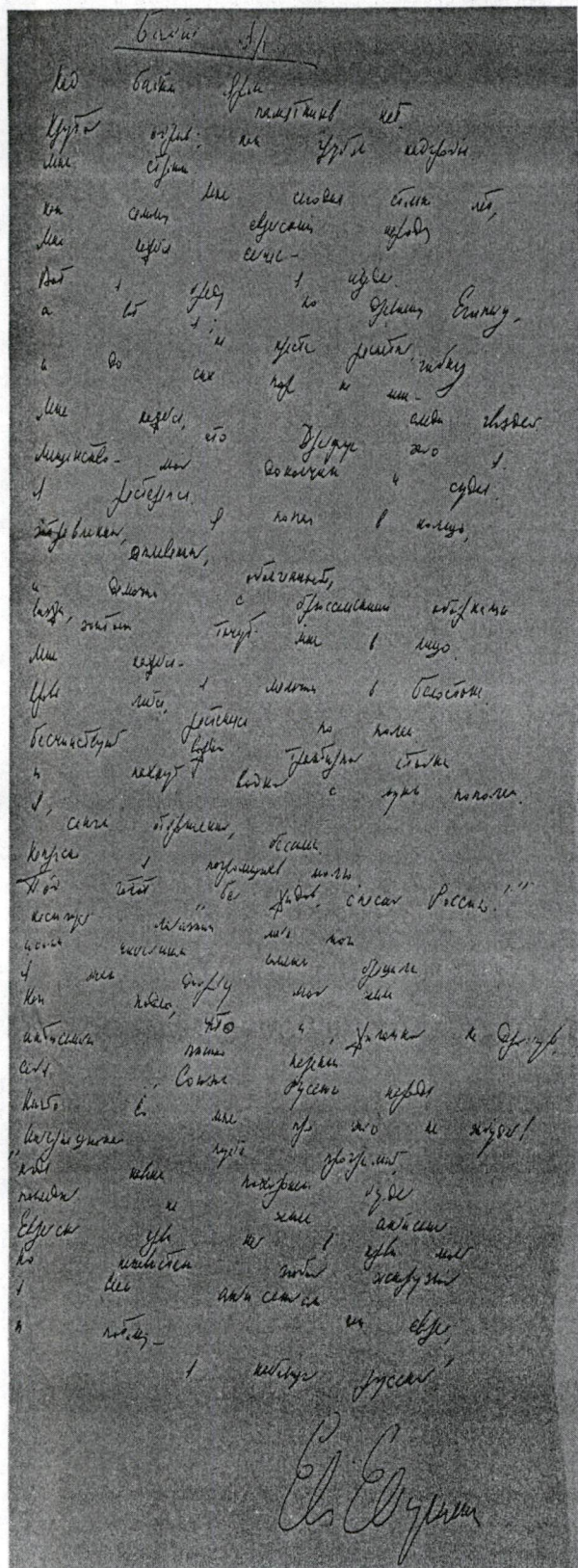


Figure 2. Beginning and end of the manuscript of the poem *Babi Yar* by Yevgeni Yevtushenko, Jerusalem, J.N.U.L. Schwadron Collection.

were "a great number of Jews, including women and children of all ages." In spite of German efforts in August 1943 to erase all traces of the mass burial through massive incineration, the evidence could not be suppressed and after the war the Soviet public at large learned of the martyrdom through newspaper accounts, official reports, and belles lettres. In 1947 I. Ehrenburg in his novel *Burya* ("The Storm") described dramatically the mass killing of the Jews of Kiev in Babi Yar. Preparations were made for a monument at Babi Yar as a memorial to the victims of Nazi

genocide. The architect A.V. Vlasov had designed a memorial and the artist B. Ovchinnikov had produced the necessary sketches.

But since the anti-"cosmopolitan" campaign of 1948-49, an effort was made to eliminate all references to Babi Yar. This policy had as an objective the removal from Jewish consciousness of those martyrological elements that might sustain it. Even after the death of Stalin, Babi Yar remained lost in the "memory hole" of history. Intellectuals, however, refused to be silent. On Oct. 10, 1959, the novelist Viktor Nekrasov cried out in the pages of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* for a memorial at Babi Yar, and against the official intention to transform the ravine into a sports stadium. Far more impressive was the poem *Babi Yar* written by Yevgeni Yevtushenko published in the same journal on Sept. 19, 1961. With its open attack upon anti-Semitism and its implied denunciation of those who rejected Jewish martyrdom, the poem exerted a profound impact on Soviet youth as well as upon world public opinion. Dmitri Shostakovich set the lines to music in his 13th Symphony, performed for the first time in December 1962.

Russian ultranationalism struck back almost immediately. Yevtushenko was sharply criticized by a number of literary apologists of the regime and then publicly denounced by Premier Nikita Khrushchev in *Pravda* on March 8, 1963. The theme of a specific Jewish martyrdom was condemned. But Babi Yar would not remain suppressed. It again surfaced during the summer of 1966 in a documentary novel written by Anatoly Kuznetsov published in *Yunost* (Eng. tr. 1967). Earlier that year the Ukrainian Architects Club in Kiev held a public exhibit of more than 200 projects and some 30 large-scale detailed plans for a memorial to Babi Yar. None of the inscriptions in the proposed plans mentioned Jewish martyrdom.

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[W.K.]

BABOVICH (Bobovitch), SIMHAH BEN SOLOMON (1790-1855), *Karaitic *hakham* in the Crimea. Babovich mainly devoted himself to obtaining more rights for the Karaites in Russia. In 1827, in conjunction with the Karaite scholar Joseph Solomon *Luzki, he obtained release of the Karaites from the law regarding military service for Jews. The Karaites in Eupatoria commemorated this event in an annual prayer. When in 1837 the Russian government granted religious autonomy to the Karaites, Babovich was appointed their spiritual head, although he was not distinguished as a scholar. In 1839 Babovich was instructed by the government to provide exact information on the origin, nature, and history of the Karaites. Babovich turned to A. *Firkovich, who then proceeded to produce a series of documents, some partly falsified.

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[I.M./Ed.]

BABYLON (Heb. בָּבֶל), ancient city located on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River, about 20.4 mi. (34 km.) S. of Baghdad, near the modern village of Hillah. Akkadian scribes derived the name from the words *bab-ili(m)* ("gate of god"), whereas in Genesis 11:9 the name is explained as a derivation from the root *bll* ("to confuse"). Biblical

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A DICTIONARY OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

*Elizabeth-Anne Wheal
Stephen Pope
and
James Taylor*



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pointment. Stability problems and insurmountable difficulties with complex pressurization and remote armament systems seriously delayed development, and the first Dominators were eventually delivered at the beginning of November 1944. Only fifteen of them saw combat in the Pacific War*.

BRIEF DATA (B-32) Type: 10-14-man heavy bomber; Engine: $4 \times 2,300\text{hp}$ Wright Cyclone; Max speed: 365mph; Ceiling: 35,000'; Range: 800m loaded, 3,800m clear; Arms: $10 \times 0.5''$ mg; Bomb load: 20,000lb.

Babi Yar A ravine near the Ukrainian city of Kiev*, where more than 30,000 Jews were massacred in September 1941 by SS *Einsatzgruppen** in a two-day-long 'reprisal action'. Allegedly a response to the NKVD's* sabotage bombing of Kiev, the action was described in a horrifying account by a German engineer, Gräbner.

Bach-Zelewski, Eric von dem (1899-1972) SS* General and specialist in anti-partisan operations (see Resistance) who served as senior SS and police chief of Army Group Centre area on the Eastern Front* during 1941-2 and later suppressed the Warsaw* rising of 1944. Sentenced to ten years' effective house arrest from which he was released early in 1958, Bach-Zelewski was rearrested and retried on charges associated with his wartime activities, and finally resented in 1962 to life imprisonment for murders committed during the mid-1930s.

Bäck, Leo (1873-1956) Jewish scholar and leader of the Jewish community in Berlin. He refused to leave Germany in 1933 and sat on the Jewish Council set up by the Nazis to defend those rights still remaining to German Jews. In 1943 he was sent to Theresienstadt concentration camp* where he became leader of the Jewish elders. In 1945 Bäck defended the camp guards against lynching by prisoners. After the war he lived in London and New York.

Bader, Group Captain Douglas (1910-82)

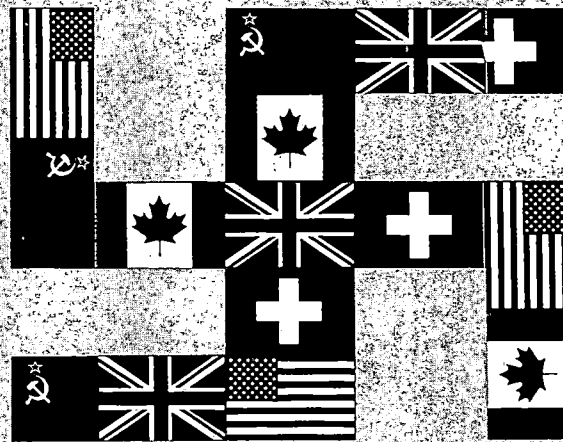
One of the best-known British airmen of WW2, he combined considerable skill with a legendary triumph over disability to regain entry to the RAF*, despite having lost both legs in a flying accident, and then to lead a fighter squadron in the Battle of Britain* from June 1940. Although highly successful in command of 12 Group Wing (with over 60 fighters) during the Battle of Britain, Bader was involved in arguments with Fighter Command over his controversial 'big wing'* fighter formation technique, which ignored the defensive doctrines prevalent in Fighter Command at the time. In August 1941 he was captured after a mid-air collision with an enemy aircraft. His notoriety assured him respectful treatment by the Germans, who even consented to an RAF parachute drop to bring Bader a new set of artificial legs.

Badoglio, Marshal Pietro (1871-1956)

Italian soldier and premier of the first post-Fascist government in Italy, he signed the Italian treaty of unconditional surrender to the Allies on 28 September 1943. Badoglio served as an artillery officer in the Italian colonial wars and as a colonel during WW1. An opponent of Mussolini's* regime from the outset, Badoglio nevertheless accepted an appointment as Field Marshal in 1926 and subsequently went as Mussolini's Governor to Libya (1928-34). He later commanded Italian forces in the war against Abyssinia (Ethiopia) during 1935 and served briefly as its Viceroy in 1936. His collaboration with Mussolini ended, however, in 1940 on Italy's entry into the war. He resigned as Chief of Staff four months later, following Italy's disastrous invasion of Greece*.

A conspirator against Mussolini from 1942, Badoglio was called upon by King Victor Emmanuel* to head the new government following the Fascist Grand Council's decision to depose Mussolini in July 1943. During negotiations with the Allies over Italy's capitulation and the planning of the Allied invasion of Italy*, the position of

THE HOLOCAUST CONSPIRACY



**AN INTERNATIONAL POLICY
OF GENOCIDE**

BY WILLIAM R. PERL

Foreword by
SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL
Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee
on Foreign Relations

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Chapter 5

SOVIET POLICIES THAT SUPPORTED THE FINAL SOLUTION

In assessing the part that Soviet policies played in the German Final Solution, we have first of all to recall the often forgotten fact that during the first two years of World War II, the Soviet Union and Germany were allies. Together they planned the attack on Poland which triggered the war. They decided on a mutually agreed undertaking that once the German forces invading from the West had reached a certain line, the U.S.S.R. would invade from the East. Germany and the Soviet Union agreed on how to share the spoils of their aggression—that is, they agreed to divide up their conquered neighbor.

The pact between the U.S.S.R. and Germany was formally signed on August 23, 1938, by Molotov, the Soviet Union's Foreign Minister and by von Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister (the latter was hanged for crimes against humanity after conviction by the Nuremberg war crimes tribunal). For the festive ceremony of the signing, the hall in the Kremlin was decorated with the swastika banner flying next to that of the U.S.S.R. Stalin delivered a toast in which he said he was drinking to the health of the Fuehrer, so beloved by the German people. If this was not encouragement, what would be? Toasting that monster, drinking to his health just a few days before German planes and tanks would start bringing death to thousands of Poles, and the SS Einsatzgruppen would advance into Poland ready to begin their task of slaughtering hundreds of thousands of people.

Clearly, much more was made certain by that pact than the invasion of Poland. France and Britain had left no doubt about it: if Poland were attacked, they would live up to their treaty obligations and enter the war. The limit had been more than reached; it had been exceeded as Britain and France stood passively by when Germany committed four major acts of aggression and international lawlessness: the military occupation of the Ruhr territory; the march into

and annexation of Austria; the occupation and annexation of the Sudeten; and, finally, occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia. Thus Hitler and Stalin knew what they were starting by guaranteeing Hitler the security that he need not worry about his major neighbor to the East when fighting against the French and the British. The green light had been given to Hitler; his generals no longer had to be concerned about the Soviet Union while fighting the West. Most likely Hitler would have started the war anyway, but now, with the Soviet alliance, war had become an absolute certainty. Only nine days after the U.S.S.R.-German treaty was signed, on September 1st at dawn, German planes started raining death on the population of Warsaw and other Polish cities, and German tanks broke through the border defenses. And with the advancing German military machine came the SS Einsatzgruppen. The Soviets knew well that by giving Hitler a free hand to start his war, they also provided him with the possibility to enact his plans to annihilate the Jews. Besides all the other proof, there was the formal circular of January 31, 1939 sent to all German diplomatic stations which followed Hitler's statement before the Reichstag on January 30, 1939, in which he asserted his intent to annihilate the Jews of Europe.

To fully understand the support which the Final Solution received from the Soviet Union, we have to keep in mind the engulfing influence which the Soviet information and propaganda system exercises upon the thinking and, thereby, upon the actions of the Soviet population. The Government exercises an absolute monopoly over the distribution of news. Public television did not exist in the early 1940's, but radio, newspapers, and public speeches and announcements were not only tightly controlled; they were used to the fullest extent to form opinions, to keep the thinking "correct," and to initiate desired action and forestall undesired ones. Because of the importance which news items in war time exercise upon the life of the community as well as of the individual, news reports are eagerly listened to and read. This was particularly true in the days of the rapid developments of the earlier phases of the German-Soviet war, and that is where the other major Soviet contribution to the German Final Solution program lay: the functioning of the Soviet news and propaganda system during the time of war with Germany.

After two years, the Soviet policy of alignment with Germany backfired. Its basis had been the hope that Germany, on the one hand, and France and Britain on the other, would tear each other to

SOVIET POLICIES

pieces and that all three parties would then be at the mercy of the Soviets. The rapid German victories in the West had, however, strengthened Germany so much that it thought itself now ready to attack its erstwhile partner. Not to lag behind Germany's expansionism, the Soviet Union, too, had begun to swallow its neighbors. In addition to invading the Eastern part of Poland, the Soviets invaded three small Baltic neighbors, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, and incorporated them into the Soviet Union as an "integral part." The U.S.S.R. had also invaded sections of Rumania. The Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, too, were occupied and annexed. All these remain today part of the Soviet Union.

During the two years of the German-Soviet alliance, the U.S.S.R. suppressed information that was unfavorable to Germany. The German atrocities committed against the Jews in Poland and elsewhere were taboo for the Soviet information machine. The news media in the West underplayed these happenings, but the Soviet information system either entirely quashed this news or reported it in a way and place which minimized the issue to almost nothing.

Due to consistently applied policy, the vast majority of Soviet citizens were either not, or at best, only vaguely, aware of the mass murders which the approaching German occupation would bring to them.

Detailed instructions on how to act and of what to do in case of falling within the German advance were issued incessantly and brought up to date almost hourly by the Soviet radio stations. These instructions were closely observed by the population which, without government instructions, would not know how to act under the hectic and completely unfamiliar circumstances. Accustomed to being ordered around, the Soviet people were particularly liable to do as advised by the media.

The Germans, of course, tried to bring their viewpoint to the populations of the invaded areas, broadcasting on a wave length likely to be heard when one tuned in to local stations. In this way, German propaganda also reached the Soviet population, and it contained massive anti-Semitic material. While the inhabitants of these soon-to-be-occupied areas were exposed to that barrage of hateful anti-Semitic propaganda, there was not one word over their own stations to combat it, not one hint to counteract the often specific German charges, cleverly adapted to issues of the locale and holding the Jews responsible for the war as well as for special local problems.

With so much of the German focus directed against alleged misconduct of the Jews and with their own stations silent on these issues, the Soviet population was bound to assume that this part of the enemy's contentions was true. At the very least, people had to assume that, from the Soviet point of view, what happened to the Jews was of little interest. Although the Germans were constantly talking and writing about them, the issue was not worth mentioning by the Soviet media. Although the Soviet information and propaganda system vehemently attacked German lies and tried to disprove them, not even the repeated German claim that General "Yankel" Kreiser, a Soviet General whose real name was Jacob Kreiser, a Jew, used Russians willfully as cannon fodder and that his order should be disobeyed was countered by the Soviet media.

Yet, the issue of Jews was not a minor one in the Soviet Union. At the start of the war against the Germans, there were about 5,000,000 Jews in the territories under Soviet control. The Soviet census of January 1939 counted 3,020,171 Jews. The natural increase between that date and June 1941 is estimated by population experts to have amounted to at least 100,000. To these roughly 3,100,000 have to be added the 1,900,000 Jews who lived in the newly "acquired" territories—Eastern Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and those in Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia. The inhabitants had all been given Soviet citizenship with the annexation of their lands. In the Soviet territory as it then existed, there were thus roughly 5,000,000 Jewish Soviet citizens alive in 1941. This figure does not include approximately 250,000 Jews from western Poland who had fled into Poland's eastern part to escape the advancing German forces. Of the latter—and fortunately for them—a substantial but uncertain number had been deported by the Soviets as "undesirable" to the Central Asian area of the U.S.S.R. or to the northern sections of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Most of the Soviet Union's 5,000,000 Jewish citizens lived in the country's western areas, most exposed to the threat of German occupation. At one time or the other, Jews in the following areas and numbers fell under German control:

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White Russia	375,000
Ukraine	1,533,000
Occupied areas of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic	250,000
Annexed areas	<u>1,900,000</u>
	4,058,000

This is a minimal figure.

The number of 4,100,000 would be a realistic, but low estimate. Of them, approximately two million, one half of all, were killed.

There can be no doubt that these more than 4,000,000 of her citizens were under very special risks if they fell into German hands. What special measures were taken by the Soviet Government to protect that highest risk group of its citizens? The answer is: none. No special measures whatsoever. To the contrary, there was silence regarding the murderously anti-Semitic German propaganda while other claims were vigorously denounced. This made it appear that the anti-Semitic aspects of the announcements were not disagreed with. The consequences of this policy were manifested by large sections of the Soviet populations cooperating with the German annihilation. This collaboration was responsible for the loss of huge numbers of Jewish lives.

To counter the German "kill the Jews" propaganda would have been the more imperative as the old Russian anti-Semitism was still very much alive in spite of more than 20 years of Soviet Rule. And anti-Semitism never had a rest in the newly annexed territories, particularly in the Baltic Republics and in Poland. In the Soviet Ukraine, Jew-hatred was just as strong as in the newly acquired Baltic countries and, all in all, the Germans could reasonably expect a favorable reception for their anti-Jewish broadcasts and leaflets. It is exactly for that reason that the Soviets avoided countering the anti-Jewish aspects of German propaganda and that, in deference to the prevailing anti-Semitic feelings, they decided to keep entirely away from the issue of the Jews. This policy was quite likely supported by the anti-Semitic attitudes of the Soviet decision makers, but if one neglects entirely the moral and humane issue, there was some realism in that reasoning. Building on the endemic anti-Semitism especially in the Polish and Ukrainian population, the Germans claimed that the Soviets were fighting to protect the Jews. For the Soviets, to have stood up in any way for the Jews would not have been popular; it would have tended to support the German claim

that communism was a Jewish invention and served Jewish interests. It would have likely weakened the desire to fight the German invaders who promised to free the country from the "communist Jewish yoke."

The Soviet policy of keeping entirely away from this issue proved catastrophic for the Jews, as the news media censored the mentioning of Jews as specific targets for murder when they accused the "fascist monster" of atrocities.

Jews in the Baltic countries had, up to a year prior to the German invasion, lived under a rule that permitted access to foreign news. They did not know specifics of what had happened in Poland. Yet they were frightened enough when the invasion of their homelands started to try to flee in masses toward the eastern parts of the Soviet Union. Although they had been Soviet citizens since the annexation and although it had since then all been one country, they were stopped by Soviet "border" guards when they reached the line which had once divided their Baltic states from the U.S.S.R. They pleaded with the guards to let them pass, explaining to them that they were Soviet citizens with the same rights and duties as any other citizens. This was to no avail. No imploring helped. The guards were under strict orders. Many of those who had reached these border lines returned to their homes where they were killed by the Germans.

There is a vivid description by Yankev Rasen, a Jewish scientist who survived.

We are not permitted to go farther...
Regardless of how much we implore
the Soviet border guards, we get one
answer only: "Nobody is allowed to
cross. These are orders. Move back,
twenty steps. We will shoot if you do
not. Get moving! One, two—fire."

For twelve horrible days and nights
we have stayed near the border. Dur-
ing that time crowds of thousands of
more refugees have arrived here.
Most of them are Jews with an occa-
sional non-Jew among them. They lie
in ditches nearby and in the fields and

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woods. They implore the guards to let them go on so that they can save their lives. Properly documented members of the communist party are allowed to pass... others have no right to be saved.

Suddenly the frontier guards disappeared. The Germans had come within 10 to 15 km of the dividing line... But how far can one flee when the dreadful enemy is so near?¹

Mr. Rasen could have added: "especially when the enemy is motorized." He and those who had waited it out to the last could finally cross, but they were all too soon overtaken by the Germans. By ingenuity and luck Rasen survived.

Those who had returned to the cities and those who had stayed there were the worst off. Particularly in the Baltic countries a very active Jewish life had existed. There were numerous Jewish organizations, whose lists were obtained by the advancing Germans. Also, in cities that had been part of the Soviet Union prior to 1939, the Germans succeeded in lining up almost all the Jews. In Byalistok, a city in White Russia, of a Jewish population of 50,000, only 900 Jews survived, as reported by the chairman of the postwar Jewish Committee for the Province of Byalistok. From the capital of White Russia, Minsk, government agencies and government personnel with families were evacuated in haste, but there, as well as in other cities, no special evacuation of the by far most endangered section of the population took place. Of the 90,000 Jews who lived in Minsk before the war, at least 85,000, more likely as many as 88,000, were murdered. Of course, towns where the Einsatzgruppen had a major installation were the worst off. Vitebsk housed a headquarters unit of the Einsatzgruppen. An SS radio station was located there that reported its daily achievements to the Reichssicherheitsamt in Berlin. Of Vitebsk's 50,000 Jews, only 500, one out of a hundred, survived.

The name of a ravine on the outskirts of Kiev, Babi Yar, stands next only to Auschwitz as a symbol of German inhumanity during the Nazi era, as well as for Jewish martyrdom. It also symbolizes the support which Soviet policy supplied to the effectiveness of the Final Solution. Reports on the Babi Yar carnage are both detailed and well

documented. They consist of German documents and other evidence produced in two major war crimes trials, the international one at Nuremberg and a trial conducted in the later postwar period before a German court in Darmstadt.

On September 29 and 30, 1941, in a 36-hour period—the Germans were very exact in their record keeping—33,771 Jews were machine gunned and those who were still not dead were buried alive. Not even the assembly line death factory at Auschwitz when working at full capacity killed that many in such a short period. How was Babi Yar possible? How could the Germans assemble and kill that many Jews without known resistance? It is here that Soviet policy and actions have to carry a heavy burden of guilt.

→ On September 19—the dates are important—The German Army Group South had breached the faltering defenses of Kiev, the capital of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, a city of about 1,500,000. Attached to Army Group South was the slaughtering Einsatzgruppen unit Commanded by SS Colonel Blobel. He expected considerable “difficulties from such a large scale action” as his task—killing Kiev’s Jews—demanded. One of the problems was that Jews lived not just in certain districts but were distributed all over the city. Yet, this Kiev mission was to be “carried out exclusively against Jews with their entire families.” Immediately he started rumors that Jews would soon be evacuated for “resettlement.” On September 28, the rumors seemed to be proven true. Overnight 2,000 announcements had been posted throughout the city declaring that the next morning, September 29, all Jews had to assemble at a certain road crossing located near a railroad station at Kiev’s outskirts. The Jews were to take warm clothing along and also their “documents, money, valuables...” Jews found not to have shown up would be shot. The SS expected at the most 6,000 Jews to fall for the trick. After what they had done in the more than three months since the invasion of the Soviet Union and after previous German actions in Poland, the Germans did not think that so many would be fooled to show themselves to be Jews and walk into the trap. Next morning to the surprise of the SS, the streets leading to that road crossing were fast teeming with large masses of Jews, estimated by the Germans at that time to amount to 30,000—later proven by the official headcount of victims to have been 33,771.

Much of the way toward the assigned gathering point led along Lvovskaya Street, one of the major streets of the city. Along it moved

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on that fateful September 29 an odd mass of desperate people. Most of them were elderly or women. Almost all of the younger men had, to their good luck, been drafted into the army. And there were children of all ages, approximately 6,000 of them, including the babies. The renowned Soviet writer Ilja Ehrenburg, who interviewed eyewitnesses of that death march writes: "A procession of the doomed marched along endless Lvovskaya, the mothers carrying their babies, the paralyzed pulled along on carts."

While, in the early afternoon, latecomers, mainly invalids and very old people were still arriving, the first hundred were already led toward the ravine. When they were out of sight they had to pass a line-up. Forming a narrow corridor on each side were SS and Ukrainian voluntary police equipped with rubber truncheons, brass knuckles and wooden clubs who beat them severely and shouted "run." Once through that passage, deadly frightened of more beatings and their spirits broken, the Jews were ordered to undress completely and, then, naked as they were, to proceed to the edge of a deep, wide ditch. There they were machine-gunned; the bodies fell or were kicked into the ditch, covered with a thin layer of dirt—and the next hundred were brought in for the same procedure. Small children were thrown alive into the ditch and perished as it became slowly filled with more bodies and dirt. Later groups had to dig their own ditches.

Full evidence for that unbelievable massacre was produced in the two war crimes trials. The Nuremberg International found Colonel Blobel guilty as charged and had him hanged. By 1967, 11 of the main participants had been apprehended and were charged before a German war crimes court. The trial lasted 4 months, 175 witnesses were heard, and a large number of documents was introduced, all of which corroborated the unbelievable facts. One of the defendants died in prison; the other ten were found guilty as charged and received prison sentences of varying lengths. Never charged were those responsible for the Soviet policy that multiplied the number of the ones whom the Germans would have caught anyhow. The Babi Yar carnage was committed more than three months after the Germans had entered Soviet territory. There was abundant time to warn Soviet Jews and to exhort the population to try to aid their fellow citizens, to save them by hiding them from the expected killing. Moreover, contrary to the newly acquired lands—and the west—there was no active Jewish life in the U.S.S.R.; there

were no lists of Jewish organizations, no Jewish community that could have been tricked to be halfway helpful in a plan for "resettlement." It was relatively easy for citizens of the old Soviet Union to disappear among their comrades.

Whatever the Germans did, the Soviets stuck to their policy of denying existence of the special danger to Jews. After the war, they resisted the idea of a special memorial at Babi Yar. A sports stadium was planned for that location. But opposition among non-Jews was too strong to be wisely neglected. A memorial was finally erected there. But it commemorates the murder of Soviet citizens only. The word Jew does not appear on the memorial, as if this action had not been conducted according to the German document "exclusively against Jews and their entire families."

A procedure often followed by the Germans was to have prisoners of war lined up and then order those who were Jews to step ahead. Knowing that worse treatment awaited them than their fellow prisoners, not all Jews followed the order, but some usually did. The Germans then addressed the rest of the prisoners, exhorting them to point out those whom they knew to be Jews. Following up the line of German propaganda steadily beamed at them they were told: "Think of all the misery of the war. The Jews are responsible for the war. Your government knows and cannot and does not deny it." The exhortation was as a rule followed by one or the other of the prisoners pointing out Jews among those standing in line, if there were any and if they were known to him as such. The Jews were then taken away and, sometimes still in the sight of the others, but always still in hearing distance, shot.

There were, of course, cases of heartwarming loyalty to each other among prisoners, but pointing out Jews to the Germans when exhorted to do so was not at all an unusual incident. Anti-Semitism was particularly rampant in units that contained large percentages of military drawn from the recently acquired areas of the Baltic republics, and from eastern Poland, or the Ukraine. Units with a relatively larger percentage from these areas were likely also to contain a larger percentage of Jewish draftees. With the annexation, many young people from the new areas had been drafted into the Red Army, and these areas, as most of the western part of the U.S.S.R., were the main locations of Jews in the Soviet Union.

Anti-Semitism, brought to a pitch by the steady bombardment by German propaganda, was so unchecked that it heavily afflicted

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even the partisan movement. In some partisan units, comradeship included Jews with no or hardly any discrimination. But there were other units. A Jew who wanted to join the partisans often found himself received with suspicion. He was taunted and often had to be afraid of his own comrades. Some Jewish partisans were even executed, framed with the absurd charge that they were spying for the Germans. It even happened that partisans chased Jews out of the forests which the Jews had entered to join the partisan forces. According to survivors of attempts to join, partisan leaders shied away from giving the impression of truth to the German propaganda—not rebuked by Soviet announcements—that the whole partisan movement was inspired by the Jews and that its main purpose was to aid the Jews. Acting that way, partisan leaders only followed the policy of the government to do everything possible not to appear friendly toward the Jews, as this might cause loss of public support. While the commanders might have been aware of such political considerations, the individual translated it into an occasional bullet into the back of one of those “suspect Jewish infiltrators.” It speaks for the basic goodness of human nature that in spite of such policies there were numerous acts of individual heroism, non-Jews risking their lives to save a Jewish comrade. Yet the overall mood was prevailing anti-Semitism.²

Viewing happenings in the partisan units, we must be aware that while conditions initially allowed much authority to individual commanders, the partisan forces soon became part of the Red Army and were under its control. Unlike most armies, the Red Army is most concerned with the political attitudes in its military, even in fine nuances and trends, and had a political commissar just for the control of “correct” thinking assigned to the units. The partisans were doubtlessly under the political control of these Red Army commissars, as control over partisan forces was centrally exercised.

The Soviets were quite aware of their failing to evacuate those who were so much more than anybody else at risk to fall victim to the enemy’s lust for murder. To counter such accusations and to create good will toward the U.S.S.R. in the West and thus increase pressure for an early opening of a second front, the Soviets founded a special committee. They named it the Jewish Antifascist Committee, and loyal communists who filled the bill of being qualified to promote propaganda effort abroad were appointed to it. Two men were sent abroad. One was Itsik Feffer, a Yiddish writer of considerable talent,

the other one was Solomon Mikhoels, a well known Yiddish actor. Feffer had shown his reliability by ridiculing the Jewish religion and tradition and by writing about Stalin's "wondrous heart." Mikhoels, too, throughout his career had proven himself well versed and anchored in communist ideology.

Early in 1943, they were sent to New York. There, meetings were called, and each time the number of those attending grew. Most Jews were captivated by the personalities of the speakers and happy to see, for the first time after many years of isolation, Jews from the Soviet Union, the more so as their message indicated a turn in the attitude of the U.S.S.R. toward Jews and Judaism. They heard of course of the massacres, but they also were told about the hundreds of thousands whom the Soviets had allegedly saved by evacuating them to safety before the advancing German troops could capture them. Feffer and Mikhoels visited not only the United States but also Canada, Mexico, and England. In 46 cities, they spread the tale of how the Soviets had snatched hundreds of thousands of Jews right from the advancing Germans, and how many more would be saved if only some relief would come to the heroic Red Army by early establishment of a second front.

As is often the case with a good lie, the Soviet fable of mass evacuation of Jews was built upon an element—entirely twisted though—of a true happening. When in the time of the German-Soviet alliance, the Soviets annexed the Baltic countries and marched into other territories and occupied them (Bukovina, etc.), they found that most Jews belonged to one or the other Jewish organization, almost all of them "dangerous" and "undesirable" from the Soviet point of view. One policy the U.S.S.R. took over from the Czars was: "If you do not like someone's political ideas, to Siberia he goes." In following this principle, Jews by the tens of thousands—especially Zionists and also members of the social democratic anti-Zionist *Bund*—were deported *prior to the war*—to Central Asia and to the cold northeastern regions of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic. They did then not know how lucky they were to be classified as undesirable or even dangerous. These newly acquired areas being heavily populated with Jews, it is estimated that 250,000 undesirables, maybe even more, were thus deported during that period in which the Soviet Union attempted to digest her new acquisitions.

The fable of mass evacuations in the face of the advancing Germans was not only spread by the messengers of the Jewish

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Antifascist Committee. It was, almost at the end of the war, continued by an American, who, with the convenient name of Goldberg, had been invited to visit the U.S.S.R. He names one person only as the source of his post factum report, a "Rabbi Shekhter." Mr. Goldberg's claims were broadly publicized by the American communist press. Not mentioned of course was that the evacuations he reported had taken place before the war and that no document—not even a hint of a post invasion evacuation—is to be found in any Soviet publication, including *Izvestiya* or *Pravda*. Yet some 3.8 million people are reported to have been evacuated from the Ukraine alone, to escape capture by the invading German armies.

By the way, both Feffer and Mikhoels were later shot by their masters. They were suspected—not without reason—to have been affected on their trip abroad by feelings of Jewish identification and were liquidated in the purge which Stalin conducted in 1952 against Jewish intellectuals.

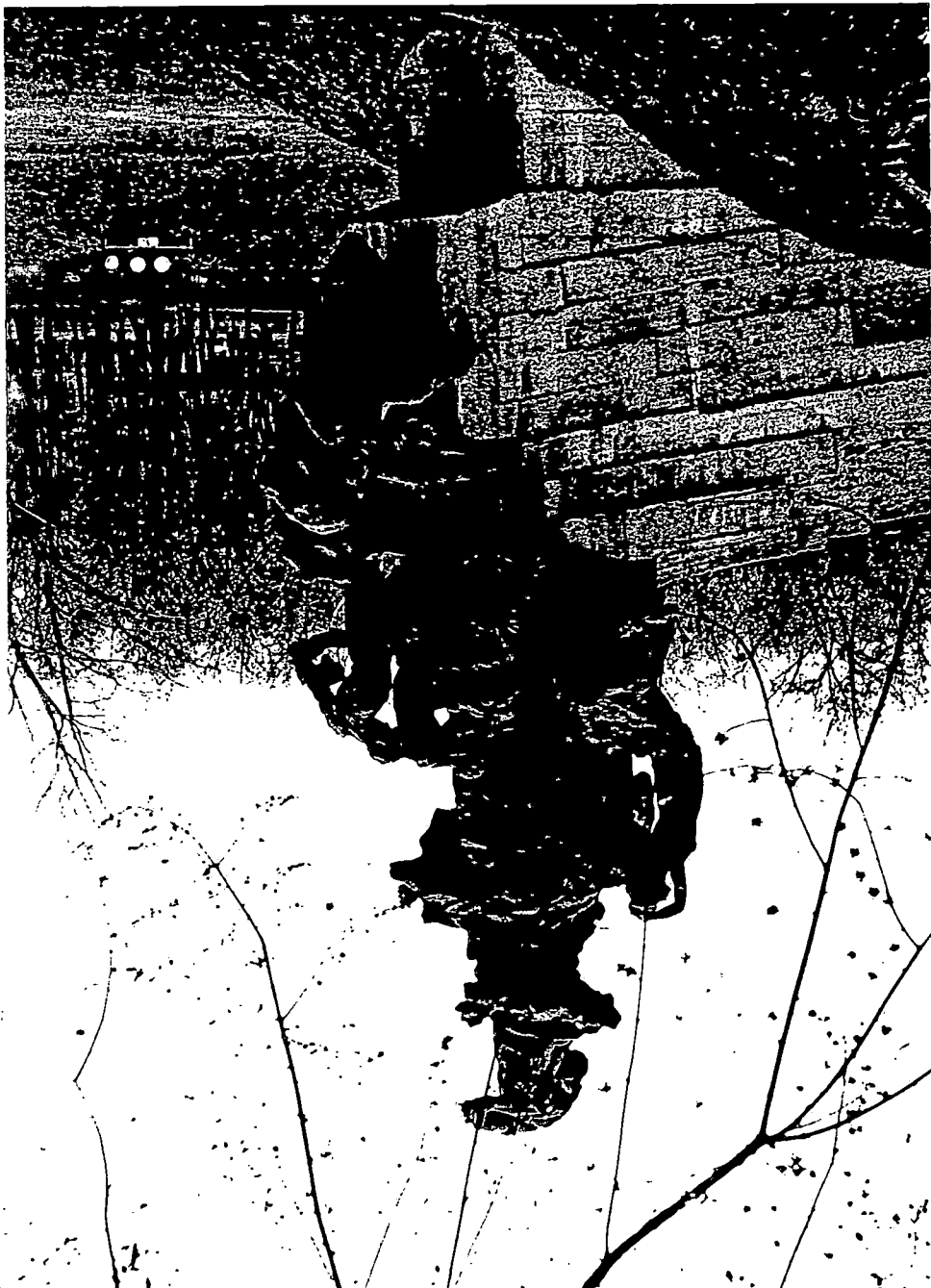
Of the four million Jews in Soviet-held lands who at one time or the other were in an area controlled by the Germans, two million were killed. Even if warnings would have gone out by the Soviets and instructions on how to try to evade capture; even if the population had been exhorted not to cooperate with the Germans but to the contrary to try to aid Jews in escape or hiding attempts; even if the flood of German anti-Semitic propaganda had been countered by the so active and so listened to Soviet propaganda machinery, the great majority of these two million Jews would have perished anyhow. But if one takes a very conservative estimate, at least one out of ten could have been saved.

This leaves us still with a figure of 200,000 humans who could have been saved if the Soviets had not followed the policies described above. And this includes some 33,000 children. This figure does not take into consideration that the Soviets, whose front was much nearer to Auschwitz than the Allies and whose medium-distance bombers were for at least four months close enough to destroy the death factory, never attacked that murder complex. Yet, such an act would have saved the lives of many tens maybe even of hundreds of thousands.

Figures are impersonal; statistics are experienced with relatively little emotion. If we just think of the 33,000 children as playing in the street, near or in their homes while inhuman men in faraway Berlin decided their death, we may be capable of assessing better what Soviet policies did in support of the Final Solution.

¹ Yankev Rasen, *Mir Vilm Lebn*, New York, 1949, pp. 22-25.

² Moshe Kahanovich, *The Fighting of the Jewish Partisans in Eastern Europe*, (Hebrew) Tel Aviv, 1954.



JACEK'S TRIP TO
BABI YAR

MEMORIAL AT
BABI YAR

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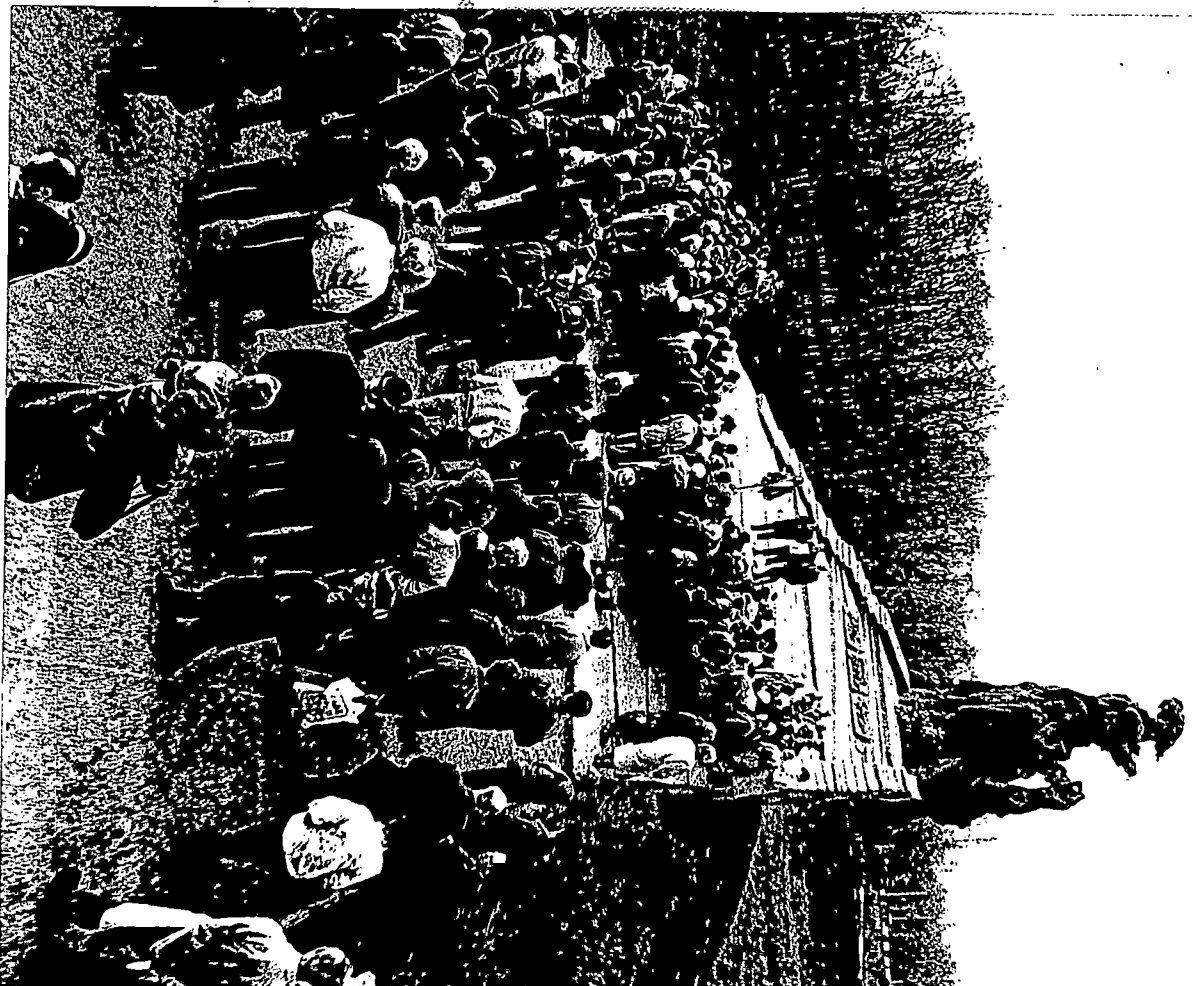
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July 24, 1991

TO: Ms. Carol Blymire

FAX: 202-456-6218

Dear Ms. Blymire:

Attached to this letter, please find a variety of materials relative to the Babiy Yar Massacre of September 29, 1941. They include historical information, personal narrative memoirs and poetic selections.

We found no reference in the RLIN database to a book titled, Pale of Bygone Years. I am confident, however, that you have adequate material in this package.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely yours,

Adaire Klein
Coordinator of Library and Archival Services

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B

BABI YAR, ravine, situated in the northwestern part of Kiev, where the Jews of the Ukrainian capital were systematically massacred. At the southern end of the ravine were two cemeteries, one of which was Jewish.

Kiev was captured by the Twenty-ninth Corps and the Sixth German Army on September 19, 1941. Of its Jewish population of 160,000, some 100,000 had managed to flee before the Germans took the city. Shortly after the German takeover, from September 24 to 28, a considerable number of buildings in the city center, which were being used by the German military administration and the army, were blown up; many Germans (as well as local inhabitants) were killed in the explosions. After the war, it was learned that the sabotage operation had been the work of an NKVD (Soviet security police) detachment that had been left behind in the city for that purpose.

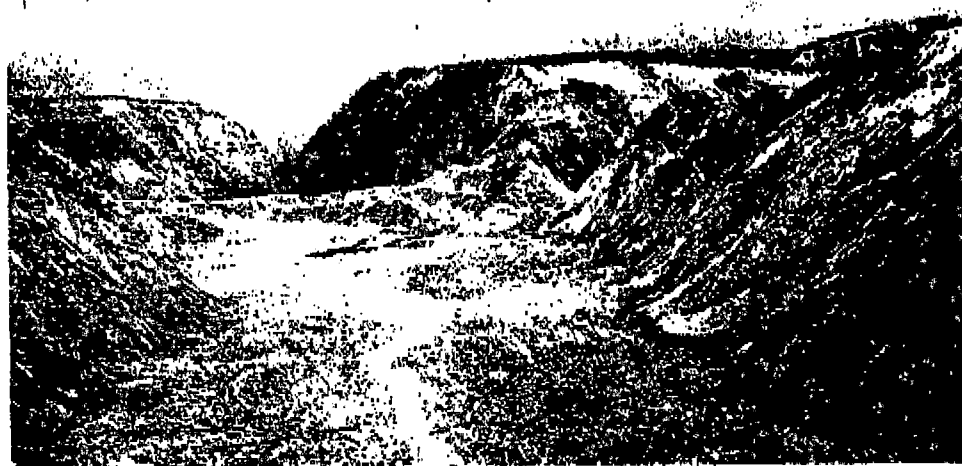
On September 26, the Germans held a meeting at which it was decided that in retaliation for the attacks on the German-held installations, the Jews of Kiev would all be put to death. Participating in the meeting were the military governor, Maj. Gen. Friedrich Georg Eberhardt; the Higher SS and Police Leader at Rear Headquarters Army Group South, SS-Obergruppenführer Friedrich JECKELN; the officer commanding Einsatzgruppe C, SS-Brigadeführer Dr. Otto RASCH; and the officer commanding Sonderkommando 4a, SS-Standartenführer Paul BLOBEL. The implementation of the decision to kill the Jews of Kiev was entrusted to Sonderkommando 4a. This unit consisted of SD

(Sicherheitsdienst; Security Service) and Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police; Sipo) men; the third company of the Special Duties Waffen-SS battalion; and a platoon of the No. 9 police battalion. The unit was reinforced by police battalions Nos. 45 and 305 and by units of the Ukrainian auxiliary police.

On September 28, notices were posted in the city ordering the Jews to appear the following morning, September 29, at 8:00 a.m. at the corner of Melnik and Dekhtyarev streets; they were being assembled there, so the notice said, for their resettlement in new locations. (The text had been prepared by Propaganda Company No. 637 and the notices had been printed by the Sixth Army printing press.)

The next morning, masses of Jews reported at the appointed spot. They were directed to proceed along Melnik Street toward the Jewish cemetery and into an area comprising the cemetery itself and a part of the Babi Yar ravine. The area was cordoned off by a barbed-wire fence and guarded by Sonderkommando police and Waffen-SS men, as well as by Ukrainian policemen. As the Jews approached the ravine, they were forced to hand over all the valuables in their possession, to take off all their clothes, and to advance toward the ravine edge, in groups of ten. When they reached the edge, they were gunned down by automatic fire. The shooting was done by several squads of SD and Sipo personnel, police, and Waffen-SS men of the Sonderkommando unit, the squads relieving one another every few hours. When the day

134 BABI YAR



Babi Yar, where Sonderkommando 4a of Einsatzgruppe C carried out the mass slaughter of 33,771 Kiev Jews on September 29 and 30, 1941.

ended, the bodies were covered with a thin layer of soil. According to official reports of the Einsatzgruppe, in two days of shooting (September 29 and 30), 33,771 Jews were murdered.

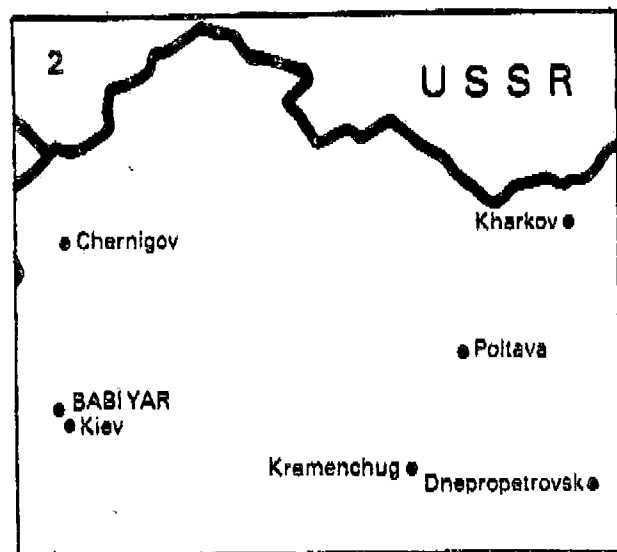
In the months that followed, many more thousands of Jews were seized, taken to Babi Yar, and shot. Among the general population there were some who helped Jews go into hiding, but there were also a significant number who informed on them to the Germans and gave them up. After the war, the officer in charge of the Sipo and SD bureau testified that his Kiev office received so many letters from the Ukrainian population informing on Jews—"by the bushel"—that the office could not deal with them all, for lack of manpower. Evidence of betrayal of Jews by the Kiev population was also given by Jewish survivors and by the Soviet writer Anatoly Kuznetsov.

Babi Yar served as a slaughterhouse for non-Jews as well, such as GYPSIES and Soviet prisoners of war. According to the estimate given by the Soviet research commission on Nazi crimes, 100,000 persons were murdered at Babi Yar.

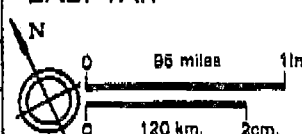
In July 1943, by which time the Red Army was on the advance, Paul Blobel came back to Kiev. He was now on a new assignment, in

coordination with SS-Gruppenführer Dr. Max Thomas, the officer commanding the SD and Sipo in the Ukraine; that of erasing all evidence of the mass carnage that the Nazis had perpetrated. For this purpose, Blobel formed two special groups, identified by the code number 1005. Unit 1005-A was made up of eight to ten SD men and thirty German policemen, and was under the command of an SS-Obersturmbannführer named Baumann. In mid-August the unit embarked on its task of exhuming the corpses in Babi Yar and cremating them. The ghastly job itself was carried out by inmates of a nearby concentration camp (Syretsk), from which the Germans brought in 327 men, of whom 100 were Jews. The prisoners were housed in a bunker carved out from the ravine wall; it had an iron gate that was locked during the night and was watched by a guard with a machine gun. They had chains bolted to their legs, and those who fell ill or lagged behind were shot on the spot. The mass graves were opened up by bulldozers, and it was the prisoners' job to drag the corpses to cremation pyres, which consisted of wooden logs doused in gasoline on a base of railroad ties. The bones that did not respond to incineration were crushed, for which purpose the Nazis brought in tombstones from the Jewish cem-

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BABI YAR



gent Yevtushenko published a poem, "Babi Yar," which begins with the lines:

No gravestone stands on Babi Yar;
Only coarse earth heaped roughly on the gash:
Such dread comes over me.

A year later, Dmitri Shostakovich set the poem to music, incorporating it into his Thirteenth Symphony. (Under pressure from the authorities, changes were made in the original text, and it is the amended text that is used today when the symphony is performed in the Soviet Union.) Both the poem and the musical setting had a tremendous impact in the Soviet Union, as well as beyond its borders. Demands increased for a memorial to be built at Babi Yar, but it was not until 1966 that architects and artists were invited to submit proposals, and it took eight more years for the memorial to be built. Since 1974 a monument stands in Babi Yar, but the inscription does not mention that Jews were among the victims there.

etery. The ashes were sifted to retrieve any gold or silver they might have contained. Cremation of the corpses began on August 18 and went on for six weeks, ending on September 19, 1943. The Nazis did their job thoroughly, and when they were through no trace was left of the mass graves.

On the morning of September 29, the prisoners learned that they were about to be put to death. They already had a plan for escape, and resolved to put it into effect the same night. Shortly after midnight, under cover of darkness and the fog that enveloped the ravine, twenty-five prisoners broke out. Fifteen succeeded in making their escape; the others were shot during the attempt or on the following morning.

It took a long time after the war for a memorial to be erected at Babi Yar. The demand for a memorial was first voiced during the "thaw" that set in during the Khrushchev regime, by which time Babi Yar had become a place of pilgrimage. Among those who made this demand were the writers Ilya EHRENBURG and Viktor Nekrasov, but their call was not heeded. In 1961, the poet Yev-



Monument erected in 1966 at Babi Yar. The Ukrainian text reads: "On this site there will be a monument for the victims of fascism during the German occupation of Kiev, 1941-1943."

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SHMUEL SPECTOR

BACH-ZELEWSKI, ERICH VON DEM
 (1899-1972), SS commander. Born in Lauenburg in Pomerania, Bach-Zelewski served as a private during World War I and then joined the police. He became a member of the Nazi party in 1930 and the following year enrolled in the SS.

After the Nazis' rise to power, Bach-Zelewski's career progressed rapidly, and in 1938 he was appointed SS commander in Silesia, with headquarters in Breslau (now Wrocław). After September 1939, the Polish part of Silesia was incorporated into his district of command and he was responsible for the expulsion of tens of thousands of Jews from the area. When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, Bach-Zelewski became the Higher SS and Police Leader in central Russia, attached to the Central Army Group; in November of that year he was promoted to the rank of SS-*Obergruppenführer* and general of police. His duties also included command of Einsatzgruppe B, which mass-murdered Jews in Belorussia. In 1942, Bach-Zelewski was appointed Heinrich HIMMLER's representative in the fight against the partisans, and from January 1943 he was the commanding officer of all the forces fighting the partisans in eastern Europe. Between August and October 1944 he commanded the forces that suppressed the WARSAW POLISH UPRISING. Bach-Zelewski's units taking part in these operations became infamous for the mass murder of civilians and for the destruction of numerous villages and towns and of large parts of Warsaw. From the end of 1944 he was in command of various army corps.

After the war Bach-Zelewski appeared as a prosecution witness at the NUREMBERG TRIAL, before the American military tribunal there; at the Einsatzgruppen trial; at the trials of senior SS and army officers; and at the Warsaw trial of Ludwig FISCHER, who had been governor of the Warsaw district. Bach-Zelewski was held in prison; in 1951 he was given a ten-year sentence in a trial held in

Munich, but was released after serving five years of his sentence. Re-arrested in 1958, he was sentenced at Nuremberg in 1961 to a further four and one-half years.

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SHMUEL SPECTOR

BAČKA, district in YUGOSLAVIA that now forms the western part of the autonomous province of Vojvodina. Jews lived in Bačka in ancient times, but the first known organized Jewish communities were established there at the end of the eighteenth century.

Prior to the German invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941, Bačka had a Jewish population of some sixteen thousand, representing 20 percent of Yugoslav Jewry and 2 percent of the district's population. There were seventeen Neolog communities, following a Conservative rite, and nine Orthodox communities. One-third of the Jews were engaged in trade and commerce, 20 percent were office workers, 10 percent were professionals (doctors, lawyers, and so on), and a similar number were skilled craftsmen and industrial workers. The Jewish community had a considerable impact on Bačka's cultural and educational life and on charitable activities. In the 1930s the Zionist movement gained the majority within most of the Jewish communities, and Zionist youth movements—Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir (with twelve hundred members), Tekhelet Lavan (Blau-Weiss, with seven hundred), and Betar (with four hundred)—played an important role by running summer camps and *hakhsharot* (training schools for agriculture) and issuing their own regular publications. The clandestine Communist youth movement also had a substantial number of adherents among Bačka Jews. Some three hundred Bačka Jews had moved to Palestine, and Bačka communities helped tens of thousands of legal and "illegal" immigrants from

BABI YAR by Yevgeny Yevtushenko

No gravestone stands on Babi Yar;
Only coarse earth heaped roughly on the gash.
Such dread comes over me; I feel so old,
Old as the Jews. Today, I am a Jew . . .
Now I go wandering, an Egyptian slave;
And now I perish, splayed upon the cross.

The marks of nails are still upon my flesh.
And I am Dreyfus whom the gentry hound:
I am behind the bars, caught in a ring;
Belled, denounced, and snat upon I stand,
While dainty ladies in their lace trims,
Squealing, poke parasols into my face.

I am that little boy in Bialystok
Whose blood flows, spreading darkly on the floor.
The rowdy lords of the saloon make sport,
Reeking alike of vodka and of leek.
Booted aside, weak, helpless, I, the child
Who begs in vain while the pogromchik mob
Guffaws and shouts: "Save Russia, beat the Jews!"
The shopman's blows fall on my mother's back.

O my own people, my own Russian folk,
Believers in the brotherhood of man!
But dirty hands too often dare to raise
The banner of your pure and lofty name.
I know the goodness of my native land.
How vile that anti-Semites shamelessly
Preen themselves in the words that they debase:
"The Union of the Russian People."

Now, in this moment, I am Anna Frank,
Frail and transparent as an April twig.
I love as she; I need no ready phrases . . .
Only to look into each other's eyes!
How little we can sense, how little see . . .
Leaves are forbidden us, the sky forbidden . . .
Yet how much still remains; how strangely sweet
To hold each other close in the dark room.
They come? No, do not fear. These are the gales
Of spring; she bursts into this gloom.
Come to me; quickly; let me kiss your lips . . .
They break the door? No, no, the ice is breaking.

On Babi Yar weeds rustle; the tall trees
Like judges loom and threaten . . .
All screams in silence: I take off my cap
And feel that I am slowly turning gray.
And I too have become a soundless cry
Over the thousands that lie buried here.
I am each old man slaughtered, each child shot.
None of me will forget.

Let the glad "Internationale" blare forth
When earth's last anti-Semite lies in earth.
No drop of Jewish blood flows in my veins,
But anti-Semites with a dull, gnarled hate
Detest me like a Jew.
O know me truly Russian through their hate!

Translated by Marie Syrkin

THE BLACK BOOK

The Ruthless Murder of Jews
by German-Fascist Invaders
Throughout the Temporarily-Occupied
Regions of The Soviet Union
and in the Death Camps of Poland.
During the War of 1941-1945

Prepared under the editorship of
Ilya Ehrenburg & Vasily Grossman

Translated from the Russian by
John Glad and James S. Levine



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Kiev, Babi Yar

German troops entered Kiev on the nineteenth of September, 1941. On that same day the Hitlerites began to loot stores on Bessarabka Street. Jews were detained, beaten, and hauled away in trucks.

Residents of Kiev watched Germans on Lenin Street beat male Jews on the legs with rifle butts, forcing them to dance. These cruelly beaten people were then forced to load heavy crates onto trucks. When people collapsed from the unbearable loads, they were again beaten with rubber truncheons.

On September 22 an enormously powerful explosion awakened Kievans. Smoke and a smell of burning were coming from the direction of Kreshchatik Street. People on the streets abutting Kreshchatik Street were driven by the Germans to move straight into the fire.

On that same day a newspaper in Ukrainian was affixed to the walls of city buildings. It stated that Jews, communists, commissars, and partisans would be destroyed. A reward of two hundred rubles was promised for each partisan or communist. Such papers were to be seen on Saksagansky Street, Red Army Street, and many other streets in the city.

Life in Kiev became increasingly unbearable. Germans barged into homes and abducted the inhabitants. These people never returned home.

On September 22 a mass beating of Jews took place on the streets, near the water towers, and in the parks.

Gestapo men checked the documents of people on the streets, beat Jews, and took them away to the police station or to the Gestapo. These people were shot at night.

Many residents of Kiev, particularly of the Podol and Slobodka districts, saw the bloated corpses of tortured old people and children float down the Dnieper River as early as the second or third day of German occupation. On September 26-27 (Friday-Saturday), Jews who had gone to the synagogue disappeared. Yevgenia Litoshchenko, a resident of Kiev, testified that her neighbors — an elderly man named Schneider and a couple by the name of Rosenblat — did not return from the synagogue. Later she saw their corpses in the Dnieper. Her testimony was supported by T. Mikhasev. German machine gunners and policemen surrounded the synagogues and took away those who had been praying there.

In several spots near Kiev the river current washed ashore bags containing articles of worship.

On the fifth day after the arrival of the Germans in Kiev, V. Liberman left his house, walked down Korolenko Street, and turned onto Tolstoy Square. He was stopped by a tall man in a cap and black overcoat who ordered him to show his passport. Liberman did not have his passport with him, and the police agent ordered Liberman to follow him. Walking down Kreshchatik Street, Liberman saw a car making frequent stops along the street. From it, someone with an enormous megaphone was shouting in a thunderous voice: "Inform the Gestapo and the police of the whereabouts of Communists, partisans, and Jews. Report them."

The agent took Liberman to a movie theater on Kreshchatik, not far from Proreznaya Street. The Gestapo man struck him on the back and shoved him into the theater foyer. Liberman passed through the foyer into the theater itself, where more than three hundred Jews were sitting. Most of them were gray-bearded old men. They were all absolutely silent. Liberman sat down next to a young Jew who whispered to him: "We're to be taken to Syrets, where we'll be shot at night."

Liberman walked up to an open window in the theater foyer and watched the passers-by as they hurried back and forth along Kreshchatik Street. Suddenly he caught sight of a man who lived in his building and called to him. When the man approached the window, Liberman asked him to tell his wife that he had been detained and that he was in the theater.

Soon Liberman's wife Valentina Berezlev arrived at the theater. She approached the Gestapo men and implored them to release her husband, but one of them pushed her as hard as he could. The unfortunate woman fell down the steps of the theater and hit her head against the sidewalk.

It was clear that all those being held in the theater were to be murdered, but chance saved them. At two o'clock in the afternoon there occurred a powerful explosion near the theater. Panic-stricken people, among them a woman smeared with blood, ran madly down Kreshchatik Street. Thick yellow clouds of smoke billowed down the street, and a second explosion soon followed the first. Shouting "Feuer!" (Fire!), the Gestapo men abandoned their posts. At that point the prisoners fled to freedom.

In the evenings the crimson reflection of an enormous fire tinted

the sky. Put to the torch, Kreshchatik Street blazed for six days.

On September 27-28, 1941, a week after the Germans had arrived in Kiev, announcements in bold Ukrainian and Russian script on a crude dark-blue paper were displayed around town:

"Kikes of the city of Kiev and surroundings! On Monday, September 29, you are to appear by 7:00 A.M. with your possessions, money, documents, valuables, and warm clothing at Dorogozhitskaya Street, next to the Jewish cemetery. Failure to appear is punishable by death. Hiding kikes is punishable by death. Occupying kike apartments is punishable by death."

There was no signature on this terrible order, which condemned seventy thousand people to death.* These Gestapo excesses continued on the streets and in apartments until September 29.

The head of a large and distinguished family which counted among its members many engineers, doctors, pharmacists, and teachers, the seventy-five-year-old Gersh Abovich Grinberg (22 Volodarskaya Street) was detained by the Germans at the Galitsky Market on September 28. He was robbed, stripped, and tortured to death in animal fashion. Grinberg's wife, an elderly woman, Telya Osipovna, never saw her husband again and herself perished in Babi Yar the next day, September 29.

The engineer I. L. Edelman, brother of the famous pianist and professor of the Kiev Conservatory, A. L. Edelman, was seized by the Germans on Zhelyanskaya Street. He was drowned in a barrel which stood beside a drain pipe.

B. A. Libman told of one Jewish family which hid for several days in a basement. The mother decided to take her two children and leave for the countryside. Drunken Germans stopped them at Galitsky Market and murdered them all cruelly. Before the mother's eyes, they decapitated one child and then killed the second. Insane with grief, the woman clasped the two dead children to her body and began to dance. When they had sated themselves with this spectacle, the Germans killed her as well. At this point the father of the family arrived on the spot where his family had just perished. He shared their fate.

Many Kievans knew the lawyer Tsiperovich, who lived at 41 Pushkin Street. He and his wife were shot.

The young writer Mark Chudnovsky was not able to leave Kiev,

*More than 100,000 people, mainly Jews, were killed in Babi Yar during the German occupation.

because he was ill. His wife, a Russian, would not permit her husband to go alone to the cemetery, since she knew what fate awaited him there. "We were together in days of joy, and I won't abandon you now," she said. They left for the cemetery together and perished together.

S. U. Satanovsky, a professor of the Kiev Conservatory, was shot together with his family by the Germans.

The Germans dragged Sophia Goldovsky, a paralyzed old woman, from her apartment at 27 Saksagansky Street and killed her. She was the mother of ten children.

An old woman, Sarra Maksimovna Evenson, had been — in the pre-revolutionary period — a political activist, organized discussion groups, and edited the newspaper "Volyn" in Zhitomir. An author of numerous articles (under the pen name "S. Maksimov"), she was also the first Russian translator of Feuchtwanger and a number of other contemporary foreign writers. She had an excellent command of foreign languages and maintained a correspondence with prominent figures in the world of art and literature.

Sarra Evenson's advanced age and bad health did not permit her to be evacuated from Kiev. She had not left the house for two years. This great-grandmother was thrown from a third-floor window at 14 Gorky Street.

Regina Lazarevna Magat (10 Gorky Street), the mother of a professor of medicine and biology who had died at the front, was murdered by the Germans. The well-known lawyer Ilya Lvovich Bagat died from a German bullet along with his two granddaughters, Polina and Malvina. Moisey Grigorievich Benyash, a professor of bacteriology known throughout the Soviet Union and Europe, also perished in those days together with his sister and niece.

But all this was merely a prelude to later events which unfolded in the cruelest and most treacherous fashion in Babi Yar.

At dawn of September 29 Kiev's Jews were moving slowly along the streets in the direction of the Jewish Cemetery on Lukyanovka from various parts of the city. Many of them thought they were to be sent to provincial towns, but others realized that Babi Yar meant death. There were many suicides on that day.

Families baked bread for the journey, sewed knapsacks, rented wagons and two-wheeled carts. Old men and women supported each other while mothers carried their babies in their arms or pushed baby carriages. People were carrying sacks, packages, suit-

cases, boxes. Children were at their parents' side. Young people took nothing along, but elderly people tried to take as much with them from home as possible. Pale sighing old women were led by their grandchildren. The paralyzed and ill were borne on stretchers, blankets, and sheets.

Streams of people flowed into the endless human current on Lvov Street, while German patrols stood on the sidewalks. So enormous was the mass of people moving along the pavement from early morning until late at night that it was difficult to cross from one side of the street to the other. This procession of death continued for three days and three nights. People walked, stopping once in a while, embraced each other without words, said good-bye, and prayed. The town fell silent. Crowds of people flowed from Pavlovskaya Street, Dmitrievskaya Street, Volodarskaya and Nekrasovskaya Streets into Lvov Street, like streams into a river. Lvov Street led to Melnik Street, which led to a barren road through naked hills to the sheer ravines of Babi Yar. As the people approached Babi Yar the din of angry voices, groans and sobs grew louder.

Dmitry Orlov, an old resident of Kiev, watched the execution from the area of the Cable Factory. He was unable to look at the terrible picture more than for a few minutes and fled, overcome by dizziness.

An entire office operation with desks had been set up in an open area. The crowd waiting at the barriers erected by the Germans at the end of the street could not see the desks. Thirty to forty persons at a time were separated from the crowd and led under armed guard for "registration." Documents and valuables were taken away. The documents were immediately thrown to the ground, and witnesses have testified that the square was covered with a thick layer of discarded papers, torn passports, and union identification cards. Then the Germans forced everyone to strip naked: girls, women, children, old men. No exceptions were made. Their clothing was gathered up and carefully folded. Rings were ripped from the fingers of the naked men and women, and these doomed people were forced to stand at the edge of a deep ravine, where the executioners shot them at pointblank range. The bodies fell over the cliff, and small children were thrown in alive. Many went insane when they reached the place of execution.

Many Kievans did not know until the last minute what the Germans were doing in Babi Yar. Some said that this was a labor

mobilization. Others believed that it was a resettlement. Still others claimed that the German High Command had arranged an exchange with a Soviet commission: one Jewish family for each captured German.

Tamara Mikhasev, a young Russian woman whose Jewish husband was a commander in the Red Army, also went to Babi Yar, planning to pass herself off as Jewish. She hoped to be exchanged and find her husband on free Soviet territory.

Tamara came to her senses only after she had passed through the fence. First she got into line to hand in her belongings and then in another line to be registered. Next to her stood a tall woman with an ostrich plume in her hat, a young woman with a boy, and a tall broad-shouldered man.

The man picked up the boy.

Mikhasev walked up to them, and the man looked at her and asked:

"Are you a Jew?"

"My husband is Jewish."

"You should leave if you're not Jewish," he said. "Wait here and we'll leave together."

He picked up the boy again, kissed his eyes, and said farewell to his wife and mother-in-law. Then he said something abrupt and commanding in German, and the guard moved aside the board. The man was a Russified German and had accompanied his wife, son, and mother-in-law to Babi Yar. Mrs. Mikhasev left with him.

From the direction of Babi Yar could be heard the barking of many dogs, the crackle of automatic-rifle fire, and the cries of the dying. The crowd moved toward them, and the road was packed. Loud speakers bellowed dance melodies which drowned out the screams of the victims.

The following is the testimony of those who miraculously escaped: Nesya Elgort (40 Saksagansky Street) was moving toward the ravine pressing her trembling son Ilya to her naked body. Carrying her son in her arms, she walked up to the edge of the ravine. In only partial control of her senses, she heard the shooting and the death cries, and she fell. Untouched by the bullets, she lay under a heap of warm bloody bodies. All around hundreds and thousands of bodies lay piled on top of each other. The bodies of old men rested on the bodies of children who lay on the bodies of their dead mothers.

"It is now difficult for me to understand how I got out of that ravine of death," Nesya Elgort recalled, "but I crawled out, driven

by an instinct for self-preservation. That evening I found myself in the Podol district with my son Ilya beside me. Truly, I cannot understand what miracle saved my son. It was as if he became part of me and didn't leave me for one second. I was taken in for the night by a Russian woman in Podol. I don't remember her surname, but her first name and patronymic was Marya Grigorievna. She helped me reach Saksagansky Street in the morning."

Another woman who was saved from death in Babi Yar was Yelena Yefimovna Borodyansky-Knysh. She arrived at Babi Yar carrying her child in her arms. It was already dark: "Along the way they added about one hundred and fifty people to our group — maybe more. I'll never forget one girl, Sara; she was about fifteen years old. I can't describe how beautiful she was. Her mother was pulling her own hair and screaming in a heart-rending voice: 'Kill us together. . . .' The mother was killed with a rifle butt, but they weren't in any hurry with the girl. Five or six Germans stripped her naked, but I didn't see what happened after that. I didn't see.

"They took our clothing, confiscating all our possessions, and led us about fifty meters away, where they took our documents, money, rings, earrings. They wanted to remove the gold teeth of one old man, and he tried to resist. Then one of the Germans grabbed him by the beard and threw him on the ground. There were tufts of beard in the German's hand, and the old man was covered with blood. When my child saw that, she started to cry.

"Don't take me there, Mama. Look, they're killing the old man."

"Don't shout, sweetie, because if you shout, we won't be able to run away, and the Germans will kill us."

"She was a patient child, so she kept quiet, but she was shaking all over. She was four years old then. Everyone was stripped naked, but since I wore only old underwear, I didn't have to take it off.

"At about midnight the command was given in German for us to line up. I didn't wait for the next command, but threw my girl into the ditch and fell on top of her. A second later bodies started falling on me. Then everything fell silent. There were more shots, and again bloody dying and dead people began falling into the pit.

"I sensed that my daughter wasn't moving. I leaned up against her, covering her with my body. To keep her from suffocating, I made fists out of my hands and put them under her chin. She stirred. I tried to raise my body to keep from crushing her. The execution had been going on since 9:00 A.M. and there was blood all over the place. We were sandwiched between bodies.

"I felt someone walk across the bodies and swear in German. A

German soldier was checking with a bayonet to make sure no one was still alive. By chance he was standing on me, so the bayonet blow passed me.

"When he left, I raised my head. The Germans were quarrelling over the booty.

"I freed myself, got up, and took my unconscious daughter in my arms. I walked along the ravine. When I had put a kilometer between us and the execution spot, I sensed that my daughter was barely breathing. There was no water anywhere, so I wet her lips with my own saliva. I walked another kilometer and began to gather dew from the grass to moisten the child's mouth. Little by little she started to regain consciousness.

"I rested and moved on. Crawling my way over the ravines, I made my way to the village of Babi Yar. I entered the yard of the brick factory and hid in the basement. I remained there four days without any food or clothing. I would come out into the yard only at night to forage in the garbage can.

"My child and I both started to swell. I was no longer able to understand what was happening. Machine guns were firing somewhere. On the night of the fifth day I crept into an attic where I found a very worn knit skirt and two old blouses. I used one of the blouses as a dress for my little girl. I went then to Litoshenko, an acquaintance of mine. She was petrified when she saw me. She gave me a skirt and a dress and hid both me and my girl. I spent a week locked up in her house. She gave me some money to take with me, and I went to another acquaintance, Fenya Pliuyko, who also helped me a lot. Her husband had died at the front. I spent a month at her apartment. Her neighbors didn't know me, and when they asked about me, Fenya said I was her sister-in-law from the village. After that I moved in with Shkuropadsky and I spent two weeks with her. But since everyone in the Podol district knew me, I couldn't go out in the daytime."

Dmitry Pasichny hid behind a gravestone at the Jewish Cemetery and saw the Germans shoot the Jews.

Pasichny's wife, Polina, and her mother, Yevgeniya Abramovna Shevelev, were Jewish. He hid both of them in a closet and spread the rumor that they had gone to the cemetery. Then both women were taken into the priest's house of the Pokrovskaya Church in Podol. The priest of that church, Glagolev, was the son of the priest who testified in the Beylis Trial.* Glagolev permitted Pasichny's

*Mendel Beylis was a Kievan Jew who was falsely accused of having murdered a Russian boy in 1913 for a religious ritual. He was acquitted. (J.G.)

wife to live in the rectory until August of 1942, and then he took her to Kamenets-Podolsk. Father Glagolev also saved many other Jews who turned to him for help.

The Germans and their (Ukrainian) policemen combed the countryside for new victims. Hundreds of Jews who had succeeded in avoiding execution in Babi Yar perished in their apartments, in the waters of the Dnieper, in the ravines of Pechersk and Demievka, on the city streets. The Germans were suspicious of anyone who looked like a Jew, and the documents of such persons were carefully checked. A single denunciation was sufficient to have anyone under suspicion shot. The Germans not only searched apartments, but also inspected cellars and caves, and even used explosives to blast open floors, suspicious walls, attics, and chimneys.

A handful of Kiev's Jews survived Babi Yar and have been preserved by fate so that mankind could hear the truth from the lips of the victims and witnesses.

Two years later, when the Red Army was approaching the Dnieper, an order came from Berlin to destroy the bodies of the Jews buried in Babi Yar.

Vladimir Davydov, a prisoner in the Syrets Camp, related how the Germans realized they would have to give up Kiev and how, in fall of 1943, they frantically covered up the evidence of the mass executions in Babi Yar.

On August 18, 1943, the Germans took three hundred prisoners from the Syrets Camp and shackled them in leg irons. Everyone in camp realized that some particularly important job lay ahead. This group of prisoners was accompanied only by regular officers and non-commissioned officers of the SS. The prisoners were taken from camp and transported to dark earthen bunkers surrounded by barbed wire. Germans stood duty day and night in machine-gun towers next to the bunkers. On August 19 the prisoners were led from the bunkers and taken under heavy guard to Babi Yar. There they were issued shovels. It was only then that the prisoners realized that they had been assigned the terrible job of digging up the bodies of the Jews shot by the Germans at the end of September, 1941.

When the prisoners stripped off the upper layer of earth, they saw tens of thousands of bodies. The prisoner Gayevsky went mad. Since the bodies had been lying in the ground for a long time, they had fused together and had to be separated with poles. From 4:00 A.M. till late at night Vladimir Davydov and his comrades labored

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in Babi Yar. The Germans forced the prisoners to burn what was left of the bodies. Thousands of bodies were heaped on stacks of firewood and soaked with petrol. Enormous fires burned day and night. More than seventy thousand bodies were fed to the fire. The Germans forced the prisoners to grind up the remaining bones with large rollers, mix them with sand, and scatter them in the surrounding areas. During this terrible labor Himmler, the head of the Gestapo, came to inspect the quality of the work.

On September 28, 1943, when the destruction of the evidence was almost completed, the Germans ordered the prisoners to heat up the ovens again. The prisoners realized that they themselves were to be murdered. The Germans wanted to kill and then burn up the last living witnesses. Davydov had found a pair of rusty scissors in the pocket of a dead woman, and he used them to unlock his leg irons. The other prisoners followed suit. At dawn on September 29, 1943 — exactly two years after the mass murder of Kiev's Jews — Germany's new victims rushed from their earthen bunkers toward the cemetery wall with a shout of "Hurrah!" Caught totally by surprise by the sudden escape, the SS men failed to open fire immediately with their machine guns. They did kill 280 persons. Vladimir Davydov and eleven other persons managed to climb the wall and escape. They were harbored by residents of Kiev's suburbs. Later Davydov was able to leave Kiev and lived in the village of Varovichi.

* * *

Not all the bodies were burned, and not all the bones were ground up; there were too many of them. Anyone who comes to Babi Yar — even now — will see fragments of skulls, bones mixed with coals. He might find a shoe with a decayed human foot, slippers, galoshes, rags, scarves, children's toys. And he will see the castiron grates ripped from the cemetery fence. It was this fence that provided the grates on which the exhumed bodies of the murdered were heaped for burning in those terrible September days of 1941.

This article is based on documental materials and testimony of Kievans.
Prepared for publication by Lev Ozerov.

WE MUST NOT FORGET

The German army entered Kiev on September 19, 1941. The same day they started to rob stores and arrest people at random, putting them in large, heavy trucks and taking them out of town somewhere; nobody from those arrested returned home. The Jews lived in anguish all the time, day and night. The Germans jeered and bullied Jews, ordering them to dance in the middle of the street, beating them severely and finally forcing them to load heavy chests on the trucks. Those unable to work fast were again beaten with rubber clubs.

Life in Kiev became intolerable. The Nazis seized homes and property, plundered whatever they liked and took the residents away to unknown places. On September 22, 1941, the Germans intensified the beating of the Jews on the city streets, in open markets and anywhere they could find Jews. The Gestapo arrested Jews in masses, and after checking their passports they took them to the police station or the Gestapo headquarters, killing them on the spot. The same day, on each street corner, posters in Ukrainian announced that communists, commissars and partisans would be exterminated. For each communist or partisan, an award of 200 rubles was offered, but the Germans were killing not only communists and partisans... On the third day of the German occupation, the Dniepr River was full of men's, women's and children's bodies.

On Friday evening, September 26th, and Saturday the 27th, Jews who went to synagogue never returned home. The Nazis with the help of the Ukrainian police surrounded the synagogues and took the Jews away. A few days later more bodies were thrown into the river together with the Jewish prayer books and little sacks with religious objects. For six evenings the sky was illuminated by gigantic fires. Kreschatik was burning. The Nazis accused the Jews of setting the fires,

promising to get full revenge.

On September 27 and 28, new posters appeared on the houses in Kiev in two languages, in Russian and Ukrainian: "Jews of Kiev and suburbs: on Monday, September 28th at 9 a.m., you have to appear with all your belongings, money, documents, jewelry and warm clothes at Dorogoshotskoy Street near the Jewish cemetery. For failure to appear — death. For hiding the Jews — death. For occupying Jewish homes — death."

There was no signature on the poster condemning 70,000 people to death. This was how the mass executions at Babi Yar started. This was the beginning of the slaughter of six million Jews.

At dawn September 29th, the Jews of Kiev from all corners of the city started to move slowly, in the direction of the Jewish cemetery, at Lukyanovka, in the vicinity of Babi Yar. Many believed that this was only an evacuation to small provincial towns, but others believed that Babi Yar meant death. Many preferred to commit suicide. Many families baked bread for the journey and sewed special traveling sacks. Supporting each other, old men and women rented small two-wheeled cars. Mothers held youngsters in their arms or pulled little strollers. People walked loaded with bags, suit cases, and boxes with children alongside their parents. Teenagers left everything at home. Elderly people took as much as they could. Many were supported by their grandchildren. The paralyzed and sick were carried on stretchers, on blankets and linen sheets.

Thousands of people marched in one big stream from early in the morning till late at night. On the sidewalks stood policemen and soldiers. The procession of death went on for three days. People were walking, stopping, embracing each other silently, parting, praying... The city became silent. To Lvov street, like rivers to the sea, poured crowds from Pavlova Street, from Dimitrevski, Nekrasovski... After Lvov Street began Mel-nus Street, then an open deserted road and a ravine with steep slopes.

This was Babi Yar. We heard a swelling murmur mixed with moans and sobs. Under open skies there was set an official area with long tables. In front of them were long lines of the

doomed. Those at the gate, at the end of the street, could not see the tables. From time to time a group of 30-40 people, accompanied by armed soldiers, were "registering"; all documents and jewelry were removed. Documents were left on the ground. In a short time the whole area was full of piles of passports, union cards, papers...

The Nazis ordered people to undress completely: men, women, children, old folks; there were no exceptions. Clothes were sorted and put neatly in place. From naked people, men and women, rings were forcibly removed. In groups of 30-40 people, the executioners placed them on the edge of a deep ravine and shot point blank. Bodies fell. Little children were pushed down alive. Many, approaching the place of execution, lost their minds. This went on for three days, three terrible days.

The Nazis and police, after the first killings in Babi Yar, began looking for new victims. Hundreds of Jews, who escaped the Babi Yar killing, met death in their own apartments, in the river Dniepr, in the ravines of Pecherska and Demiovka or were shot on the street. The Germans thoroughly searched the documents of all remaining people, especially these who looked like Jews. Suspects were killed arbitrarily. The police ripped floors, checking basements and caves; suspected places such as garrets, attics and flues, were blocked with cement.

Yet a few Jews saved their lives by running away from Babi Yar. Fate saved their lives to give humanity testimony of witnesses, the truth of people returning from hell. One of these was Dina Mironovna Pronicheva, whose testimony appears in this Memorial Book.

When the Red Army was approaching Dniepr River two years later, an order came from Berlin to the Nazi command: "Destroy the bodies of the Jews killed at Babi Yar. Cover all traces of this action." In the autumn of 1943, the Nazis foresaw the retreat from the USSR and tried to destroy all traces of the mass killing at Babi Yar. On August 18, 1943, the Nazis selected from the camp in Syretzk 300 prisoners of war, fettered them in chains, and sent them under strict convoy of SS officers to Babi Yar. They were housed in special previously prepared huts near Babi Yar. Around the huts

were placed machine guns. The Nazis watched the P.O.W.'s all the time, day and night.

On September 19, 1943, the prisoners of war, under armed escort, went to Babi Yar. Only then they understood their job: to dig up the bodies of the Jews shot in September 1941. Removing the earth, they found thousands of bodies. This dreadful picture made some of the prisoners of war insane. The corpses entwined together had to be separated with forks. From 4 o'clock in the morning till late at night, 300 prisoners of war worked at Babi Yar without stop, burning the bodies. On each row of wood they put two thousand corpses and poured on gasoline. Gigantic bonfires burned day and night, burning 70,000 corpses. This hellish work lasted ten days. The Nazis then forced the prisoners to smash the remaining bones, to mix them with sand and spread the ashes around. To inspect the results, Heinrich Himmler, SS chief, came from Berlin.

On September 28, 1943, when the work was finished, the Nazis ordered new bonfires to be started. The prisoners of war understood that this was their last day. The Nazis now planned to kill and burn the witnesses of their bestiality. But the prisoners were aware of their destiny from the beginning and prepared to run away. They accumulated a lot of iron, scissors and knives, and, helping each other, they removed their chains. At dawn, on September 29, 1943, exactly two years after the mass execution of the Jews from Kiev, they ran away from their huts in different directions. At first, the SS were confused and bewildered by the sudden escape, but soon began using machine guns and killed 280 men. These were the last victims of Babi Yar. Only 12 prisoners survived, 12 witnesses of the last Babi Yar tragedy. But... not exactly so.

When the war ended, the Jews from Kiev started returning from the front and from evacuation. With their heads down, they came to Babi Yar to pay tribute to their relatives and friends who had lost their lives because of Hitler's monsters. At that time, in the first days of liberation of the city of Kiev, they could see skulls and bones mixed with earth, a shoe with rotted human flesh, children's sandals, galoshes, toys. They also saw iron bars, dug out of the nearby Jewish cemetery, used for ovens to burn the corpses. Here you could see people

who lost their minds, crying constantly and calling somebody... Others silently prayed Kaddish. Many fell to the ground saturated with blood of their dear relatives and friends, and cried, cried, cried...

Every year on the 29th of September, hundreds and thousands of people come here, regardless of weather, to pay tribute to the dead. They come in deep silence, afraid to talk. All of them want a monument erected for the Jewish victims of Babi Yar. Some of them have tried to collect signatures on petition to the proper authorities to get permission to do this at their own cost. But many visits and interventions with various offices have been fruitless. "We will erect such a monument of our own," they decided...

Once, when there was a great crowd, a spontaneous meeting was organized. There were angry speeches by the well-known Russian writer Victor Nekrasov, the Ukrainian journalist Ivan Dziura, and the Jewish journalist Yehil Hirman. Everyone spoke in his native language. This was the first and the last meeting in Babi Yar where people said exactly what they thought.

The next day the speakers were called to the headquarters of the Communist Party and warned sternly about such activities in the future. The government had decided to convert Babi Yar into an amusement park with a platform for dances and a playground for children. This was the greatest blasphemy. But thousands of strong protests compelled the authorities to abandon this crazy idea. Finally, after twenty years, on the place where the mass shooting took place, a huge stone was installed with the following inscription: "Here will be erected a monument for Soviet citizens who perished during the occupation of the German army in the years 1941-1943." There was not a word that 70,000 Jews also were killed. To avoid spontaneous meetings, the government decided to call a meeting every September 29 and, of course, all speeches were written and approved in advance. Among the orators there was also a Jew, who denounced the Israeli "aggressors" and their American helpers in Russian. And, again, not a word about 70,000 Jews killed in Babi Yar. The authorities permitted visitors to place flowers and wreaths on the stone, but if somebody wanted to attach a

Yiddish or Hebrew inscription, there immediately appeared some youngsters who confiscated the wreaths. Those who tried to put a Jewish inscription on the stone were arrested and on the same day sentenced to 10-15 days in prison for "hooliganism." The author of this account was sent to jail in Lukyanov to a dark stingy cell together with drunkards and ruffians.

Once, a few men tried at one of these meetings to put candles over the wreaths. Quickly official helpers grabbed the candles and trampled them on the floor. And, again, Jews were jailed for "disturbing the peace."

The official stone remained for twenty years, when finally, under the pressure of foreign public opinion, the authorities were forced to erect a monument. But somehow from many outstanding expressive phrases only the following words were chosen: "Here about 100 thousand Soviet citizens were killed at the hands of German occupiers in 1941."

Again, not a word about Jews. The word "Jew" frightens and irritates Soviet leaders. Yet this place where the monument stands, became a holy place visited all year around by thousands of visitors to honor the memory of innocent old and young, men and women, killed only because they were Jews. And this place will remain sacred forever.

A. MYASTKIVKER

GREETINGS FROM HELL...

They call me Dina, Dina Mironovna Wasserman. I was raised in a poor Jewish family, but my upbringing was in the spirit of the Soviet ideology based on internationalism rather than nationalism, which could not have any place for any prejudices. So I fell in love with a Russian youth, Nikolai Pronichev, whom I married, becoming Dina Mironovna Pronicheva, giving my nationality in my passport as Russian. We lived in love and happiness for some time and I gave birth to two children, a boy and a girl. Before the war I was an artist in the special theatre for the teenagers in Kiev.

On the second day of the war, my husband was sent to the front line and I remained with my two little children and with my old, sick mother. On September 19, 1941, Hitler's army occupied Kiev and from the very first days started to annihilate the entire Jewish population. Rumors, passed from one to another telling us terrible stories of persecution and killings of the Jews were confirmed officially a few days later by posters placed on each corner: "All Jews from Kiev should come with all their belongings to Babi Yar immediately. Whoever will not obey the order will be killed in the spot."

We did not have the slightest idea where Babi Yar was, but we understood that nothing good would come of it. I dressed my children, the girl, three years of age, and my boy, five, and took them to my Russian mother-in-law. Then I, with my old, sick mother went to the road to Babi Yar following the Germans' last order. The Jews by the thousands were on the way to Babi Yar. Alongside us marched an old Jew with a snow white beard, with his tallit and tfilin, praying constantly and reminding me of my beloved father, who used to pray the same way. In front of me was marching a young woman with two children in both her arms. A third child, a little older, was

holding the woman's dress, trying with his little feet to keep up. Old and sick women were loaded in farmers' wagons filled up to the top with sacks and suit-cases. Little children cried; elderly people, who could hardly follow the crowd, cried silently. Russian husbands escorted their Jewish wives, and Russian wives escorted their Jewish husbands. We marched from the early morning till late in the evening — three days in a row...

Approaching Babi Yar we heard machine guns and terribly inhuman cries. I did not want to tell my mother what was going on. She was marching silently all the time, but I believe she realized what was happening. My mother, a medical doctor, a pediatrician, was a very intelligent and wise person. When we entered the gate of the camp, we were ordered to give up all our documents and leave all our baggage, especially our jewelry. A German approached my mother and with all his force pulled off the golden ring from her finger. Only then did my mother speak: "Denochnka, you are Pronicheva, you are Russian, go back to your little children. Your life is with them." But I could not run away. We were surrounded by German soldiers with machine guns, by Ukrainian policemen with wild dogs, ready to bite anyone trying to escape. I embraced my mother and with tears in my eyes said: "I cannot leave you alone. I will stay with you." But she shoved me away, ordering with a strong voice, "Go away immediately." I went to a table at which a heavy-set German was checking all documents and I said softly: "I am a Russian." He carefully examined my passport when one of the Ukrainian policemen said: "Do not believe her. We know her well. She is Jewish." The German asked me to wait on one side.

I was shocked to see how every few minutes a group of men, women and children were ordered to disrobe and to stand on the edge of a long ravine and... then were killed by machine guns. I saw it with my own eyes, and although I was standing far away from the ravine, I heard terrible cries and children's soft voices: "Mama, mama." I stood there paralyzed, thinking how could people be treated worse than animals and brutally killed for the only crime that they were Jewish. Suddenly I fully realized that the fascists were not human beings but wild

animals. I saw a young naked woman feeding a naked baby with her breast, when a Ukrainian policeman grabbed the infant and threw it into the ravine. The woman tried to save her baby, running toward the child, but she was killed instantly. This I saw with my own two eyes. I would never believe that this could happen. How can anyone believe it?

The German who ordered me to wait guided me to a high ranking officer and showing him my passport said: "This woman claims to be Russian, but one of the Ukrainian policemen knows her to be a Jewish woman." The officer examined my passport for a long while and in a harsh tone said: "Dina is not a Russian name. You are Jewish. Take her away." The policeman ordered me to undress and pushed me towards a hole where a new group was awaiting their destiny. But before the shots were fired, probably from great fear, I jumped into the hole on top of dead bodies.

In the beginning, I could not realize what was going on. Who I am? How did I reach the hole? I thought that I lost my senses, but when a new wave of human bodies started to fall down into the hole I suddenly understood the whole situation with sharp clarity. I started to examine my arms, legs and my entire body just to make sure that I was not wounded at all, and I remained motionless, like a dead person. I was surrounded by dead and gravely wounded people, when I suddenly heard a baby's cries: "Mamochka." It sounded like my own little daughter and I cried bitterly, not able to move. I still heard, from time to time, machine guns and bodies falling one on top of the other. I tried with all my force to push aside the falling corpses to have enough air to breathe, but doing this at long intervals, not to be noticed by the policemen standing outside the huge hole.

Then, in time, everything stopped and there was absolute silence. The Germans were checking the big hole, shooting from time to time, when they noticed some movement, killing the badly wounded but still-alive victims. On top of me was a body of a man, and although he was very heavy, I somehow supported him till the Germans passed this part of the big hole. Then suddenly I saw the earth falling down around me. I will be buried alive! I closed my eyes holding my arms high to keep

the air coming. When it became absolutely silent, dead silent, I brushed away the sand from my eyes and my body and with all my force started to climb from the huge hole.

I was among thousands and thousands of inert corpses and I became terribly frightened. Here and there the earth was moving — some of the buried were still alive. I was looking at myself and I was terrified. My thin nightgown, which covered my naked body, was red from blood. I tried to get up, but I was very weak. I started talking to myself: "Dina, get up, run away, run to your children", and with all my might I started to run when suddenly I heard shots. I fell down pretending to be killed. After a long while I started to run again in the direction of a huge mountain surrounding the huge ravine. Suddenly I felt some movement behind me and was frightened, but after a while I turned around and heard: "Tetenka. Do not be afraid. They call me Fema. My family name is Shneiderman. I am eleven years old. Take me with you. I am very much afraid of darkness." I came nearer to the boy. I embraced him wholeheartedly and I cried softly and the boy pleaded: "Do not cry, tetenka."

We started to move in deep silence, trying to reach the end of the ravine, helping each other, finally reaching the very top of the huge hole. But when we started to run we heard shots again and we fell down to the ground, afraid to say a word. After a long while I embraced the boy asking him how he felt, but he did not answer. In the deep darkness I started to check his arms, legs, his head. He was motionless — there was no sign of life. I lifted myself to look into his face. He was lying with his eyes closed. I tried a few times to open his eyes, then I understood that the boy was dead. Most probably the shot I heard a few minutes earlier had finished his life forever. I kissed the cold little body, lifted myself with all my strength and started to run as fast as I could, leaving behind me this horrible place called Babi Yar. I permitted myself to stand straight to my full height and suddenly I noticed in the darkness a little house. A cold chill penetrated my whole body but I overcame my fear and I silently approached the window, knocking delicately. A half sleepy voice of a woman asked: "Who is there? What do you want?" I answered: "I just ran

away from Babi Yar," and I heard an angry voice: "Go away immediately. I do not want to know you." And I went running as fast as I could.

As it was getting lighter, I was afraid to be caught by the Germans. I approached another house, knocking at the door softly. An old woman opened the door and seeing me in my bloody nightgown, she became panicky and shouted: "Who are you? Where are you from?" I answered: "Do not be afraid, I am not a devil. I am a human being." And here for the first time in my life I lied, saying: "I am a Ukrainian who went with my best friend to Babi Yar. I ran away to save my life." The old woman took me inside, helped me to wash my dirty body, gave me a clean nightgown, a skirt, blouse and an old pair of shoes. I looked at myself, wondering: "This is a real Ukrainian." The old woman also gave me a glass of hot milk, a large piece of homebaked black bread and told me to rest. After I finished my simple meal, I embraced her tightly and we both cried bitterly... After drying her eyes with her apron, she said: "Daughter mine, I know exactly who you are, but we all are God's children. I hope that my good deed will bring back my son who is now at the front. But you cannot stay here because the policemen and their wild dogs are searching our houses every day. They are looking for Jews because they are being paid to turn them in. Rest a little and then try to reach our lines. God shall guide you and be with you always."

I felt very relaxed and realized that there are people ready to help others. The old woman prepared a sofa-bed for me and covered me with a blanket. She left the house and I fell asleep. But I could not sleep long, having terrible nightmares, seeing vividly all of yesterday's madness. I could still hear shots and from far away soft cries of little children. Who knows where my children are? Did my mother-in-law save them? But there was no time to think about that. I began thinking about the old, honest woman, who could be an innocent victim for helping me. I decided to move again. Looking in a mirror I saw the face of an old woman, with completely gray hair. I put soot on my face to look older and covered my head with a scarf exactly as it is done by old Ukrainian women.

I said good-bye to my savior and walked to Darnitzia where I reached one of my best friends, Natalya, with whom I worked in the theater. It took quite a while till Natasha recognized me. She asked me to take off my clothes and take a good rest, but I felt from the beginning some coolness and strangeness. As soon as we finished our meal, she said: "Dina, I have to be very frank with you and to warn you that you cannot stay here long. My husband, Andrey, has deserted from the Russian army, and is full of hatred toward the Soviet government and the Jews, who created this form of government. I am afraid that he will denounce you; you better go away." And so I went...

Outside it started to rain; and standing under a tree, I began to think of what to do next. Where to go? All my Ukrainian and Russian friends lived far away, in center city, and I would not have enough time to reach them before curfew. The rain came down harder and harder. On the other side of the street, I noticed a large poster with huge letters: "Whoever gives shelter to the communists and the Jews will be shot on the spot." I crossed the street and noticed alongside the official poster a small piece of gray paper with an ad: "An elderly person will give shelter and free meals for helping to run the household." I grabbed the paper with the address on it and after two hours of wandering I finally found a little old hut, far from human eyes. This was what I was looking for. I knocked at the door a few times and finally decided to open it. In the corner of the room I noticed an old man in bed, covered with few blankets. It was dark, rough and cold...

"Who came in?" asked the old man.

"I read your note."

"All right, but where do you come from?"

Now I lied again. "I am from a nearby village called Andeyevka. The Germans destroyed our house and killed my family. I came to the city and here I read your announcement and came."

"What do they call you?" asked the old man more loudly.

"They call me Maria, Marinka."

"So take the matches from the table and light the lamp, and then we will drink tea. Be a housekeeper. We have enough

food till the next harvest. Go down to the basement and you will find potatoes, cabbage, carrots, groats. In the hallway you will find a goat. Take good care of her and we will have fresh milk every day. I am old and sick and have no family. Everything will be yours when I pass away."

I thought that the same God mentioned by the old woman who saved my life brought me to this house and to this old man. First of all, I completely covered the only window in the little hut, lighted the lamp and started to heat a tea-pot full of water. Then I served the old man a glass of hot, sweet tea. I sipped slowly my glass of tea, enjoying it enormously. The tea had the taste of a strong and sweet wine.

Thus I became the housekeeper of this little hut. My fluent Ukrainian and my behavior convinced all our neighbors that I was a farmgirl. On the third day of my new role as a housekeeper I asked the old man for permission to go to town, hoping to find some relatives from my village and basically to find out what had happened to my two small children. With the greatest caution I left the hut, trying to avoid my neighbors, and after reaching the town, I went straight to my mother-in-law's house. She was not at home. I found my children and crushed them to me. Tears flowed profusely. When my mother-in-law returned home she was astonished to see me alive. She was sure I had been killed together with my mother at Babi Yar. She called me to the kitchen and said: "Get out of here immediately. The police were here already twice, but I convinced them that these children belonged to my younger sister, who was killed during the last bombardment." I kissed my little children and returned to the old man, leaving my address and asking my mother-in-law to bring the children to me in case of an emergency.

After a few days my mother-in-law came to me and said: "Do not come to us anymore. One of our neighbors saw you coming out from our house and recognized you."

Two weeks passed, and I was afraid to find out what was going on and how my children were. One more week passed by, then on a rainy Sunday afternoon somebody knocked at the window. When I pulled aside the curtain, I almost fainted. There was my husband Nikolay, holding our two children in

his arms. I let him in as quickly as possible, explaining to the old man that these were the children of my younger sister, who was killed during the bombardment.

"Nu, nu," said the old man, "Let them stay with us. They will eat what we eat, they will not disturb us." After feeding my children, I put them to bed and walked out from the hut with my husband. Standing at the porch he told me that he had run away from a German concentration camp and that that morning two policemen accompanied by two German soldiers had searched their house. They knew that the children were Jewish because of their Jewish mother, and they even knew about my recent visit with the children. They wanted to take the children away, but he asked them to wait another day, when their mother was expected to visit the children again, so they would then have both: the mother and the children. "As soon as they left," continued Nikolay, "I grabbed some clothes for the children and brought them to you." Nikolay and I both wept. Then he tried to calm me down. When it got darker we parted and Nikolay went back to his mother. I cried through whole night long, thinking only how to save the children.

Three days passed by and my mother-in-law came to us again. This time she told me that when Nikolay returned home he had to face two policemen and a German soldier who demanded to know where the children were hiding. When he refused to disclose the place, they took him out to the street, called all the neighbors and killed him instantly. One policeman said: "This is nothing. We will find the Zhidovka with her offshoots and we will kill them like dogs." This was how my husband, Nikolay Pronichev, an honest Russian, the father of my children, was killed.

A few days later, the old man passed away. The supply of food, which was supposed to last to the new harvest, was almost gone, and I started to think about any kind of work to save the children. I was lucky enough to get a dishwasher's job in one of the restaurants. Every day after work I brought two plates of hot soup to keep the children alive. A few days passed by when the restaurant manager called me to his office. He told me that he knew of my work in the theater for teenagers and

knew that I was a Jew. "It will be better for you," finished the manager, "if you stop coming to us." His voice was rather sympathetic, but I lost the soup and bread, which the children expected to receive every evening. I was in despair. I did not think so much of myself, but what will happen to the children? To look for another job was almost impossible facing all these questions: "Who are you? Where do you come from?" And I did not have a passport... The only official document in my possession was my union card, which I had found some time ago in my mother-in-law's house.

But God to whom the old woman prayed, when I ran away from Babi Yar, was extremely good to me. It is impossible to explain how, within the next two days, I got a job as a dishwasher in an exclusive café for Germans only. And we lived again. I collected all the food from the tables left by the Germans in a large saucepan, which was very handy, and the children were satisfied. And then, something happened to me, which is very hard to describe. A high ranking German officer, a very nice fellow, started to court me. In spite of my many efforts to stay away from him, I was more afraid of him than of my death. He started to accompany me on my way home, and I was terribly afraid to be seen with him on the street. Once he came to me late in the evening, bringing with him bread, canned food and a huge piece of pork. He started to visit us very often, always bringing something to eat. The children loved him very much, because he played with them and amused them. But I was very much afraid of him, and he felt my resistance. In time I found out that he was called Albert and once he said: "Do not be afraid of me. I am not like the other Germans. I am entirely different. You may believe me." And I did believe him. He continued his frequent visits and gifts of food, even sweets for the children. I never asked him where he got all this food. He became a friend of the family and a very dear friend to the children.

But this idyllic life soon came to an end. Once Albert arrived in his old car and said: "Marinka, collect the children as quickly as possible and go with me. Somebody denounced you to our headquarters saying that you are not a Ukrainian but a Jew. I did not know this. Tonight they will come to pick you

up together with your children, and this means kaput. I will take you in my car wherever you want to go. The time is short. Let's go!"

Where to go? Who will accept me with two small children? But Albert would not let me think too long. He put me and the children in the car and also some food, and we started on the road to Belaya Tserkov, where a close friend, also an artist from the theater for teenagers, lived. When we arrived there, she was not home and nobody knew how to reach her. Albert took us to a Volksdeutsch and told him that we were his very good friends and that every Sunday he would visit us, bringing with him a lot of food. Albert then said good-bye to us and left...

This ends the story, which I heard from Dina Mironovna Pronicheva, who ran away from Babi Yar on September 29, 1941, and remained alive by a miracle. Actually this was not the end of her story. For two days in a row, she told me what she went through during the German occupation. On the third day of this terrible story of a woman-hero, who succeeded in saving her two youngsters, she collapsed and was taken to a hospital, from which she never returned. In a casket she looked like a young, beautiful girl — the skillful work of the make-up man from the theater for teenagers in Kiev. Hundreds of friends paid tribute to this wonderful woman, among them her daughter and son with their children. Dina was the last victim of Babi Yar. She was buried according to her wishes, in a Jewish cemetery.

Dina Mironovna could not tell me all the details... hounded not only by the Germans but Ukrainians, to the point of madness. Throughout the German occupation she felt like a hunted animal, facing threats all the time.

She did not have enough time to tell us how she was a witness in court at a trial of German officers involved in the Babi Yar slaughter. She recognized the Nazi general who had carefully examined her passport and said: "Dina is a Jewish name. Take her away!"

In spite of him she remained alive. In spite of him she was standing with her two rescued children in a cold autumn day in 1944 on the Kalinin Plaza in Kiev where German murde-

rers, who shot 70,000 Jews, were hanged. Among the hanged Germans was the general who gave the order to kill Dina Pronicheva for the crime of being a Jew.

Dena Pronicheva's story is a living account from the hell that she lived through.

Shimon KIPNIS

FLOWERS AND TEARS

It happened that on April 11, 1972, in Kiev, we learned through a foreign broadcast that a day had been set aside to memorialize the murder of six million Jews who had been killed by the fascist monsters. We reflected: how shall we, the Jews of Kiev, participate in this commemoration? Where shall we go, where assemble, when, in a city of 300,000 Jews, there is no Yiddish cultural center or Jewish club? The best place, we finally decided, to pay tribute to the Jewish victims would be the very place of their annihilation: Babi Yar.

One day, later that month, from all corners of the city, people came in family groups and pairs, silently, with their heads lowered, fresh flowers in their hands. At the ravine of Babi Yar, they placed their flowers and wreaths on the earth drenched with the blood of families and friends. Silently they wept. No one spoke. Each knew what the others were suffering. And people kept coming to Babi Yar, like an endless stream.

Caught by surprise, the authorities were apprehensive and sent police to the area. Quickly they began to disperse the mourners. Nor did the "guardians of order" hesitate to use force. Ten couples were picked at random and pushed into police cars. The others dispersed. But on the empty ground at Babi Yar rose a mountain of flowers, washed by human tears — a presence the police could not destroy.

Among the arrested, in addition to my wife and myself, were the electrical engineer Lazar Slucky and his wife and sister, the geo-physicist Samuel Nurenberg, the military engineer (Reserve Major) Michael Nayshtil, printer Isaak Kaplun, and a young tool-maker from the Artema factory, Igor Ingerman. They brought us to the police station, threw us into a cell, and, as usual, started the questioning late at night. We were accused of "trampling the lawn at Babi Yar," — an absurd charge. We

did not trample lawns not only because of our upbringing, but because there were no lawns, not even plain grass at Babi Yar due to the late spring.

Of course, we refused to admit to this terrible "crime," but the magistrate was not interested in our testimony. He had received an order and meant to obey it. An official accusation was speedily prepared and we were transferred under strict guard to the court of the Shevchenko district of Kiev. The "trial" was conducted by one judge without a jury, but with two "witnesses" — two policemen who confirmed the accusations: trampling on the lawn. The court procedure was swift. Three women had to pay a fine, but the men were sentenced to from 10 to 15 days in jail. Those who served in the war received a sentence of 10 days; the rest, 15. From the courtroom, the men were transferred to the Lukyanovska prison where our hair was cut short. We were put into a small dark and dirty cell already occupied by 18 drunkards and hooligans. In this stinking cell there was nothing but two rows of wooden beds and a bucket. No mattresses, no pillows, no blankets...

Early in the morning we were given some soup for breakfast and then sent outside to work, but after a while, those of us accused of the crime of trampling the lawn were returned to the cell. Perhaps the government was afraid of our anti-Soviet propaganda... Once back in the cell, I had the opportunity to learn more about my immediate comrades. I knew, of course, that they were innocent. Beyond that, I could not help observing their lack of knowledge of Jewish history, so I decided to introduce them to several classics of Jewish literature: Mendele Mocher Sforim, Sholem Aleichem, Peretz. I told them a little about the Soviet Jewish writers who had been killed during Stalin's Black Years: Itzik Fefer, Dovid Hofsteyn, Leib Kvitko, Peretz Markish, David Bergelson, and many others whom I knew personally. But the lack of fresh air finally took its toll and we proclaimed a hunger strike. We would go to work only if we had fresh air to breathe. We put our grievances on paper in the prescribed form and gave it to the officials. Eventually, we returned to work.

After ten full days and nights in prison, five of us were released after signing our names to a huge document and being

given a formal document describing in detail our crimes. Now, when I read it (see photocopy), I saw black spots before my eyes. The charge was not only of "trampling the lawn" at Babi Yar, but of "trying to destroy the lives of members of the police." I understood that this document would be kept in the Soviet files and some day it could be used against me for a more severe punishment. I refused to sign my name. The guard explained that a full investigation and clarification would take a few days. Meanwhile, I would have to return to the cell. However, I was fully aware that on the other side of the door, my wife and children were waiting for me. I cursed the official demands, and signed my name, took the document and went out to an ambiguous freedom.

Shimon KIPNIS

A CRYSTAL VASE OF EARTH FROM BABI YAR

For months after the liberation of Kiev, there remained many traces of the war: walls left naked from burnt-out houses, deep holes from bomb blasts, and pale, emaciated people, still afraid they might see a fascist face. As yet, there was no electric power and the city remained dark. Kreshchatnik, the most beautiful part of the city, seemed to me like an abandoned cemetery.

In the spring after liberation, however, there was a busy and bright spot: the theatre of musical operettas, where survivors of the war planned to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Jewish Theatre of Kiev. (This theatre had been moved to Chernovitz and was never returned to Kiev because it was destroyed by Soviet authorities in Chernovitz together with all leading figures in Jewish cultural life.) For the first time since the end of the war, we had the opportunity to hear voices in Yiddish. From Moscow arrived a delegation from its Jewish Theatre under the leadership of the great Yiddish actor and director Shlomo Mikhoels. They had come to greet their fellow artists and Jews in Kiev. There were many heartfelt speeches, but the most impressive was the speech of Mikhoels, which I will remember to the last day of my life.

With swift steps, Mikhoels walked to the podium holding a crystal vase in both hands. Everyone wondered why the vase was full of some black substance instead of flowers, but it became clear as soon as he began to speak. "Before coming here," he said, "to greet our friends and artists from the Jewish Theatre of Kiev, we bought this crystal vase and went to Babi Yar. We filled up the vase with earth from Babi Yar, the same earth which heard the cries of our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, the little children, boys and girls who never grew up, who perished at the hands of the fascist beasts." Raising

the vase higher, he continued: "If you examine the earth carefully, you will find shoelaces from a shoe belonging to little Sarele who was struck down together with her mother. Look carefully and you will see tears streaming down an old woman's face. Look deeply and you will see your father praying 'Sh'ma Yisroel' with his eyes raised to the sky, waiting for rescue from a good angel. Listen carefully and you will hear the thunder of the guns in the hands of the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto fighting the fascist murderers. Listen intently and you will hear the chant of the martyrs deported from the ghettos as they were marched to the death camps: "Never say that this is your last road." Look further and you will see that the earth is soaked with blood, the earth is trembling... It is the last breathing of our martyrs who gave their lives for us, for you, my friends, from the Kiev State Jewish Theatre, so that we may continue our work for our Jewish nation, our Jewish culture, our Jewish language."

Mikhoels then picked up a handful of earth from the vase and continued: "I brought you a vase of earth from Babi Yar. Throw in the seeds of flowers. They will bloom as symbol of the new flowering of the Jewish people whom Hitler sought to annihilate and obliterate from the face of the globe. In spite of him, we live and will continue to live. We, the Jewish artists, no matter whom we represent: Tevye the Milkman, Shimele Soroker, Hirsch Leckert or Bar-Kochba, we will always have before us this sample of Babi Yar earth, which calls to us and demands of us, despite our enemies, that we continue to live forever."

Thirty-seven years have passed by and the inspiring words of the great Shlomo Mikhoels are still with me, with the same vividness...

Shimon KIPNIS

I SAW THIS WITH MY OWN EYES...

My father was sent to the front, and I, with my mother and sister, Liza, were sent to Babi Yar. I am reminiscing with horror over the few terrible hours I was there and saw everything with my own eyes. To the last day of my life I will not forget the terror and fear. In the turmoil I lost my mother and my sister, but suddenly, somehow I was seized with a strong urge to save myself. I ran to the German, standing at an opening and explained in German that I was a Ukrainian who was accompanying a Jewish girlfriend. He believed me and... let me go!

Once free, I started to think what to do next, and where to go. Instinctively, I ran back to my home, but the janitor told the police that I had run away from Babi Yar. But, thank God, I succeeded in running away from my persecutors. By good fortune I met a girl, Rose, who also had run away from Babi Yar. Together we tried to reach the front line and after a few weeks, full of unbelievable obstacles and danger, we finally achieved our objective.

Forty one years have passed by and I cannot forget that terrible day, when my mother and dear sister were killed. Their only crime was that they were Jewish.

I was extremely happy to learn that somewhere far away from us, on the other side of the ocean, there are people trying to memorialize our relatives and friends who were killed in Babi Yar. Please, inscribe in your Book of Remembrance the names of my mother, Batasheva Riva, 36 years old, and my sister, Batasheva Liza, 17 years old.

My deep gratitude and many thanks to all those who are helping to publish this book.

Genya BATASHEVA

147, Enthusiasts St. 51, Apt. 106
Kiev, USSR

KILLED TOGETHER WITH THE PRIEST...

I still see them: Rose Kogut and her Russian husband, Peter, and the two beautiful girls, who did not succeed in running away from Kiev...

Peter's father, a priest from the Andreyevsky cloister in Kiev, hid them in a perfectly camouflaged place for several months, until one of the parishioners denounced them to the Germans.

The murderers, seeing that the priest was hiding Jews, transported him together with Rose, her husband and the two children to Babi Yar, where all were killed instantly. Honor to a noble priest, who was helping Jews and paid with his life for it!

Raya PAVLOVSKAYA

Los Angeles, California

A LETTER FROM KIEV

I am writing to you from Kiev, from the city where the terrible tragedy took place. My friends, now residents of Philadelphia, informed me that thanks to the initiative of Mr. Shimon Kipnis, a Book of Remembrance of Babi Yar is in the offing. What a reverent idea! Many thanks to you!

I would appreciate it very much if you would insert in your book the names of my mother, my sisters, brother and my grandfather.

My grandfather, Ushomirski David Yakovlevich, a shoemaker, one of the best in his trade, had twelve children; only eight survived the Holocaust. My grandfather was especially proud of my mother, Bronislava Davidovna, whom he loved and adored because, in spite of the fact that she was the daughter of a very poor Ushomirski, still she managed to obtain a higher education and became a medical doctor.

When the war started, two of her brothers were mobilized and sent to the front. Many of our relatives were evacuated. We were also planning to leave the city, when my three-year old brother, Data, became ill with scarlet fever. My mother hesitated to start a long journey with a sick child.

After a month, when we brought my brother back from the hospital, my five-year old sister, Mila, became seriously sick with the same illness. And yet my grandfather succeeded in sending my grandmother, one of his daughters, and myself with the last echelon out of Kiev. He and my mother remained in the city. He would not leave his most beloved daughter...

And they all perished in Babi Yar...

I am the only living survivor of a large, lovely family, and every year, on September 29th, I and thousands like myself, bring fresh flowers to Babi Yar, where the members of my family were killed, and I cry, and cry, and cry...

Now I will be aware that all of them: my grandfather, my mother, sisters and brother will be buried symbolically in a Jewish cemetery in Philadelphia, according to Jewish tradition.

Thank you very much, my dear friends!

Maria WEISSBAND

Boulevard Perova 32, Apt. 50
Kiev 125, USSR

HOW MY DEAR FRIEND RACHEL AND HER HUSBAND MEIR AND THEIR THREE CHILDREN WERE KILLED

My childhood friend Rachel was a beautiful and intelligent girl and I loved her like a sister. She and I were married about the same time and both our families lived with love and respect for each other. But full happiness was marred by the fact that Rachel remained childless and this gradually caused her deep concern and jealousy. In my girl-friend's family there started a deep discord because her husband expressed many times his desire to have a child. I travelled with Rachel to many famous doctors and even to quacks, but as time went by she remained childless. Husband and wife lived this way for eleven long years and finally in the twelfth year Rachel gave birth to a girl. As is said in the Torah, when God blesses somebody, He blesses fully. After a year she gave birth to another girl, called Milochka... The first girl was given my name — Eta. Another year and a half passed by and Rachel gave birth to a boy — Avremele.

Only a great writer could describe fully the happiness and contentment of Rachel and her husband Meir and all of us. Together with their relatives and friends we joined the family in their happiness. In March of 1941 Avremele was circumcised and festivities in the house of Rachel and Meir lasted a full week.

Everything became chaotic when the war started. I with my husband and son were evacuated. But Meir did not believe the many terrible stories about the Nazis in the newly occupied territories. "They cannot be as bad as they are described," claimed Meir. He started to make plans to open a store and to start a business. All our arguments and Rachel's appeals to leave Kiev fell on Meir's deaf ears.

When we returned to Kiev after the end of the war, we learned from the neighbors that Meir had rented a horse and wagon, that he loaded all his belongings and his wife and the children and started a journey — which proved to be very short and ended in Babi Yar. Two policemen grabbed the little girl: one each leg — tearing her apart. Later they did the same with the other girl and finally with the six-month old Avremele... Meir and Rachel tried to save the children but were both killed. An oncoming Nazi pushed the bodies with his boot to the gutter, already filled up with many other bodies of killed Jews.

My best friend Rachel, whom I treated like my sister, her stubborn husband Meir and their children: Eta, Milochka and Avremele — all perished in Babi Yar.

In my memory remains the day, when my dearest friends, Rachel and Meir celebrated the birth of their first child.

ETA FURMAN

Brooklyn, New York

ONE WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE...

When Lipa Resnik, my cousin, returned to Kiev after the war, he was decorated with medals for his bravery on the front line. But he learned that his entire family, including his wife and two children, had been killed in Babi Yar. He could not get over this horror and committed suicide.

Chaya SHWARZMAN

Brooklyn, New York

MY UNCLE DAVID AND HIS DAUGHTER GOLDA...

In 1921, in the time of the terrible pogroms, my family and I fled to America. But in Kiev where I was born, my uncle David Tamarkin and his daughter remained. We corresponded with them very often before the Second World War.

After the war, we learned that our uncle David and his daughter Golda perished in Babi Yar. We are very grateful to you for trying to collect and put together, in everlasting memory, all the names of the victims who perished in Babi Yar.

Esther KAUFFMAN

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I CANNOT FORGET MY FATHER...

I was a year and a half old, when my mother and I left Kiev. My father, Ephraim Zeilitch, served in the army defending our country. He and his younger brother Itzik soon ran away from the P.O.W. camp and found shelter under a roof of the house of a Russian woman whom they knew for years. But this woman denounced them to the Germans, who came to her house and killed them on the spot. So many years have passed by, and I cannot forget this disaster, which stays vividly before my eyes.

Fani ADELMAN-ZELDICH

Little Town, New Jersey

AND NOW THEY ARE COMING TO ME IN MY NIGHTMARES...

I, Yasha Kaper, was one of the 300 hundred war prisoners who for ten terrible days dug out corpses in Babi Yar and then burned them to remove all traces of the criminal activities of the Fascist monsters. We worked from sun-up till late at night under the watchful eyes of the SS officers. At night we were locked in small huts, previously prepared especially for us and were fed with watery soup. We understood that we also would be killed after finishing our job. The Nazis were not eager to have living witnesses. We collected keys, knives, hammers and all kinds of iron and succeeded in splitting the chains and running from the huts. We killed one nearby guard with our hammers and ran in different directions. The outside guard, as soon as he became aware of our escape, opened machine gun fire and, yet, fifteen of us remained alive. I reached the deep forest and joined the partisans.

Forty years have passed from this memorable day and I cannot forget those terrible days and nights, when we were ordered by Nazis to burn the corpses of men, women and children. During all these years I have not slept peacefully, disturbed by terrible nightmares.

Yasha KAPER

Kiev, USSR

MY GRANDFATHER'S THREE MISTAKES

My grandfather, Chaim Velvl Dubinski, lost his life in Babi Yar, because of three mistakes during arduous life.

His first mistake occurred in 1914 when he refused to join his father and other children who emigrated to America where the family grew and prospered, making a good living to this day.

He made the second mistake in 1937, when we received paid-up ship tickets to America, where we could live as free Americans, but he refused to leave the country, explaining: "My children, we were born here and we will die here."

The third mistake, which had such a tragic ending, came in 1941, when we begged him to run away from Kiev and he repeated again: "I am an old man and the Germans will not touch old people."

This was his last mistake.

Leonid LELCHYTSKY
Irvington, New York

MY GRATITUDE

My daughter-in-law, who resides in Philadelphia, informed me of your plan to prepare an Yizkor book with the names of the victims killed at Babi Yar. It is shameful that such a book cannot be published in Kiev, where this holocaust took place.

I will be very grateful to you if you will insert in this book the names of my father, Aaron Dukelski, my mother Yellene, my sister Mania, and my dearest brother Joseph Yuzik. He arrived in Kiev to help evacuate the entire family, but he was too late, and he was killed together with the others.

It was extremely hard and painful to write these words to you, but at the same time I am thankful that there is such a land and such wonderful people who will not forget the terribly tragic event experienced by our nation.

Vera DUKELSKA
Kiev, USSR

MY GREAT GRANDFATHER WAS 111 YEARS OLD

I will be very grateful to you if you would include in your Babi Yar Yizkor Book the name of my great grandfather, Yosef Slucki, 111 years old, and my great grandmother, 86 years old, whom the Nazis forcibly removed from their home together with their daughter and grandson — my father — Ben Zion Fainitsky. All were shot.

Let this Yizkor Book serve as their grave and as our monument.

Boris FAINITSKY
New Zealand

AFTERWORD

Very few people knew of Babi Yar until World War II, when on September 29, 1941, a great tragedy occurred there, a monstrous tragedy that is now part of Jewish and general history.

There, near the city of Kiev, at Babi Yar, Nazi murderers killed thousands of children, women and old people, hour by hour, day by day — only because they were Jews!

Jews have suffered greatly during their long history under the hands of Haman and the Spanish Inquisition, the Chmel-nitsky massacres and Russian pogroms perpetrated by his descendants in Kishinev, Odessa, Bialistok and countless other cities. Jews have also suffered through the ordeals of the Dreyfus Trial in France and the Beilis Trial in Russia... And now we add the tragedy in Babi Yar, one of the blackest and horrifying in our long history.

Babi Yar not only evokes the blood and tears and torment of the Jews of Kiev. It is a crime and scandal for all mankind, a perpetual stain upon its name. We speak of it and remember it because it is a nadir in history, like Auschwitz, Treblinka, Maidanek or the Ninth Fort at Kovno. We speak of it because it is a continual fire in our memory, a cry that comes from the depths of our heart.

We hope another book will follow this one, to include additional names of the martyrs who perished at Babi Yar and other Russian cities and towns during World War II.

⊗

PRAYER IN MEMORY OF THE JEWISH MARTYRS

May God be mindful of the souls of all our brothers, departed members of the house of Israel who sacrificed their lives for the sanctification of the Holy Name and the honor of Israel. Grant that their heroism and self-sacrificing devotion find response in our hearts and the purity of their souls be reflected in our lives. May their souls be bound up in the bonds of eternal life, an everlasting blessing among us. Amen.

⊗

KADDISH

Magnified and sanctified be the name of God throughout the world which He hath created according to His will. May He establish His kingdom during the days of your life and during the life of all the house of Israel, speedily, yea, soon; and say ye, Amen.

May His great name be blessed for ever and ever.

Exalted and honored be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, whose glory transcends, yea, is beyond all praises, hymns and blessings that man can render unto Him; and say ye, Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life for us and for all Israel; and say ye, Amen.

May He who establish peace in the heavens, grant peace unto us and unto all Israel; and say ye, Amen.

Babi Yar Remembered

By WILLIAM KOREY

Courtroom 214 in the district court building of the West German city of Darmstadt in Hesse is small and dingy, an unlikely setting for rendering justice in one of the twentieth century's greatest crimes. But every Monday and Tuesday for fourteen months, beginning on October 2, 1967, three judges sat here and listened to 175 witnesses give testimony concerning eleven (later, after the death of one, ten) defendants implicated in the massacre of Jews at Babi Yar. The defendants were also charged with mass killings in other parts of the Ukraine—Kharkov, Zhitomir, Radomysl, Lusk, and Belaya Tserkov. But Babi Yar was the central focus of the trial.

Chief Judge Vinzenz Paquet made it clear that "this is not a show trial . . . not an attempt to master the German past." But, he added with emphasis, "there is a historical background," involving, at the onset of the Nazi invasion of Soviet Russia, preparations for mass killing. That "historical background" was to be starkly illuminated by the court proceedings. Together with other documentation it forms an objective record of what transpired at the death ravine of Babi Yar on the outskirts of Kiev.

I

Those tried at Darmstadt were members of Einsatzgruppe C, Sonderkommando 4A which had been assigned a special function in the Kiev area. This unit, numbering some 150 men, with the assistance of several hundred men from two police regi-

ments, was responsible for the shooting of 33,771 Jews during a 36-hour period on September 29-30, 1941. The gas chambers of Auschwitz at the peak of their effort could not duplicate this feat. During the next two years, tens of thousands more Jews, Russians and Ukrainians were to be put to death at the same site.

Einsatzgruppe C was one of four "special task forces" organized in May 1941, by Reinhard Heydrich, Chief of the Security Police and Security Service, under a directive of Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler. Numbering approximately 3,000 men (drawn from SS, SD and Gestapo forces, as well as from various police units), the Einsatzgruppen were to be the principal instruments of terror in the Nazi war machine. Each Einsatzgruppe was divided into special commando groups (Sonderkommandos or Einsatzkommandos).

A confidential "Fuehrer Order" was given to the assembled leaders of the Einsatzgruppen and Sonderkommandos at top secret meetings held in Pretzsch, Saxony in May, 1941. The "order" was not written; it was transmitted orally by Major General Strackebach, Chief of Personnel of the Reich Security Main Office, in the presence of Heydrich. Under the guise of insuring the political security of the conquered Russian territories, the Einsatzgruppen were to liquidate all opposition to the Germans.

First listed for extermination were all Jews. Then came the following categories—gypsies, the insane, "Asiatic inferiors," "social people, politically

tainted persons, and racially and mentally inferior elements," and finally, Communist functionaries. The imprecision of the various categories made curbs on the homicidal operations of the Einsatzgruppen difficult, if not impossible.

An intimate relationship between the Army High Command and the Einsatzgruppen was worked out in written form at the end of May, 1941. Each of the Einsatzgruppen was attached to a major Army group ("C" was detailed to Army Group South), and extermination orders required the express approval or the tacit consent of the appropriate commanding general. Indeed, the mass shootings were regarded by high military officials as a kind of Roman spectacle to relieve boredom. As the Darmstadt trial makes clear, many officers watched the executions from a nearby hill with fascination.

The hunt for Jews was the first task of the Einsatzgruppen. It is significant to note that the "Fuehrer Order" with respect to Jews came six months before the infamous decision taken at Wannsee (January, 1942) to bring about "the final solution of the Jewish question." As a high official of the Einsatzgruppen explained at Nuremberg, "Jews were to be killed . . . for the reason that they were considered carriers of Bolshevism and, therefore, endangering the security of the German Reich."

The mass carnage that was to befall Kiev was illustrative of this objective. Two of the defendants at Darmstadt, Lieutenants August Haefner and Adolf Janssen, headed a fifty-man advance party of Sonderkommando 4A which entered the city on September 19, the day Army Group South began to sweep into the area. Two days later, the chief of the Sonderkommando, Col. Paul Biemel, arrived, and on the 23rd the

rest of the unit marched in. Final preparations were made for a decisive action "carried out exclusively against Jews with their entire families," as a top secret Einsatzgruppen report revealed.

On September 28, some 2,000 notices were posted throughout the city:

All Jews of the city of Kiev and its environs must appear on the corner of Melnikov and Dokhurov Streets (beside the cemetery) at 8 A.M. on September 29, 1941. They must bring their documents, money, valuables, warm clothing, etc.

Jews who fail to obey this order and are found elsewhere will be shot.

All who enter the apartments left by Jews and take their property will be shot.

These notices were printed in Russian, Ukrainian and German. (Strange as it may appear, the usually punctillious Germans had incorrectly designated the streets. There was neither a Melnikov Street, nor a Dokhurov Street in Kiev. There was however a Melnik Street and a Degtyarev Street, the intersection of which was near the Lukyanovka cemetery. Thus the designation was clear not withstanding the printing error evidently resulting from the use of incompetent translators.)

The notices were accompanied by a word-of-mouth rumor, a deliberate falsehood spread by the Kommandos that the Jews were to be evacuated and resettled elsewhere. Since the designated intersection site bordered on a railway station, the rumor seemed to have a plausible foundation. A secret official report spoke of the "extremely clever organization" utilized to overcome "the difficulties resulting from such a large scale action."

THE KOMMANDO GROUP did not expect the majority of the Jews to show up immediately. At the most, they expected some 6,000. But Kiev's Jews, unaware of the Nazi extermination campaign, believing apparently that they would really be resettled elsewhere, and fearful of the death threat for disobedience, assembled by the thousands—"more than 30,000," said the official report. It must be remembered in this connection that the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact was accompanied by a black-out of news in the Soviet press concerning Nazi atrocities against Jews in Poland. And the implementation of the Wannsee decision lay in the future.

The Jews who gathered on the streets of Kiev on September 29 were composed of mothers, children, the elderly and the sick. The male youth had left the city with the retreating Red Army. The late Ilya Ehrenburg described, in a moving section of his memoirs, how "a procession of the doomed marched along endless Lvovskaya [a thoroughfare leading to the intersection]; the mothers carrying their babies; the paralyzed pulled along on hand carts."

The unexpected size of the crowd made for a slow procession through the principal streets. It was not until late morning or early afternoon that most of the victims reached the cemetery. At that point the street was blocked with a barrier of barbed wire and anti-tank obstructions. A passage had been left through the middle, guarded on both sides by Kommandos assisted by Ukrainian *Polizei*. The victims were ordered to remove their clothing. An eyewitness, Sergel Ivanovich Lutzko, the warden of Lukyanovka cemetery, related in an official Soviet account, the grim finale of the march:

They were ordered to deposit on the

ground in a neat pile all the belongings they brought with them and then, in eight columns of one hundred each, were marched to the adjoining Babi Yar . . . I could see well how at the ravine's edge the columns were stopped, how everyone was stripped naked, their clothes piled in orderly bundles.

Before the shooting began, the Jews were required to run a gauntlet of rubber truncheons or big sticks as they entered the long passage. The Ukrainian *Polizei* were especially brutal with those who dallied. As described by the Soviet novelist Anatoly Kuznetsov, they were "kicked, beaten with brass knuckles and clubs . . . with [a] drunken viciousness and in a strange sadistic frenzy."

The initial executions were described in an early Soviet note dated January 6, 1942:

The first persons selected for shooting were forced to lie face down at the bottom of the ravine and were shot with automatic rifles. Then the Germans shoveled a little earth over their bodies. The next group of people awaiting execution was forced to lie on top of them and was shot in the same way . . .

Evidence at the Darmstadt trial confirms the technique. Then the procedure was altered. According to the Lutzenko account, the victims were "put in a row at the very edge of the ravine and shot in the neck by machine guns; children were thrown alive into the ravine." A Darmstadt defendant recalled how he would then enter into the "glutinous mass" of bodies to shoot at those which seemed still alive. Shovelfuls of sand covered the bodies. Then the machine guns would again stutter, and another group plunged downward. The sole survivor of the Babi Yar mass murder, Dina Mironovna Pronicheva, now with the Kiev Puppet Theater, came from the Soviet Union to provide the court with the

harrowing details that verified the technique of slaughter.

Col. Blobel later testified that his unit had been divided into squads of 30 men each; a squad would shoot for an hour and would then be replaced by a second squad. It continued until night when the Germans retired to their quarters, herding the remaining Jews into empty garages. Early in the morning the massacre was resumed. That evening, an eyewitness reported, "the ravine was dynamited so as to cover both the dead and those still alive." Illustrative of the mentality of the Einsatzgruppe was the testimony of one of them at Darmstadt. Following the massacre, he presented himself to an officer (also a defendant at Darmstadt) and asked: "Lt. Col., Don't you have anything more for me to shoot?"

DURING the subsequent two years of German occupation, the death roll of Babi Yar victims continued to mount with executions of prisoners of war, partisans, and Communist activists. Though the extraordinary pace set by the September 29-30 massacre was not duplicated, the rain of bullets never ceased. A report of the Einsatzgruppe stressed that even "the immediate hundred per cent elimination of Jewry . . . would not remove the political source of danger." The "main task," the report went on, was "the destruction of the communistic machine" and this purpose could not be replaced "in favor of the practically easier task of the elimination of the Jews." A post-war report of a USSR Special Commission chaired by Nikita Khrushchev estimated that over 100,000 men, women and children were liquidated at Babi Yar. (A total of 195,000 are said to have been executed in the general area of Kiev.) Tens of thousands of Russians and Ukrainians

lay buried in a common grave with Jews.

But there remained a Jewish stress to the extermination procedure. Characteristic was the selection process by which Soviet prisoners of war were chosen for execution at Babi Yar. An Einsatzgruppe directive specified that "the racial origin has to be taken into consideration." A report of executions by Sonderkommando 4A in November, 1941 noted: ". . . the larger part were again Jews, and a considerable part of these were again Jewish prisoners of war who had been handed over by the Wehrmacht." One day in March, 1942, Col. Blobel was driving in the vicinity of Babi Yar with Gestapo agent Albert Hartel when the latter noticed that the surface was agitated by pressures from below, the spring thaw having released gases from decaying corpses. Blobel proudly explained: "Here my Jews are buried."

But the SS Colonel had not finished his task, for the dead were not to be permitted even their rest. As German defeat neared and they feared that the butchery might come to the attention of the world, the SS ordered Blobel to erase all traces of the Babi Yar mass burial. In August, 1943, he supervised the digging up of the area: each corpse was examined for rings, earrings and gold teeth. Huge crude crematoria were built; the bodies were stacked alternately with logs, and doused with gasoline. Each pyre took two nights and one day to burn. The bones that did not respond to incineration were crushed, mixed with earth and scattered over the area. The fires lasted almost six weeks, the stench suffocating the entire Lukyanovka district.

The evidence could not, however, be suppressed. Disclosures of a hidden eyewitness, revelations of a survivor of the shooting, captured Einsatzgruppen records, reports of escaped slaves who

had participated in the 1948 excavation and charred pieces of bone which even today are dug up at the site—all brought to the world details of what had happened. Some details were made public at the Nuremberg trials of 1947-48 which concluded with a death sentence imposed upon Ebber and other Einsatzgruppen leaders. The Darmstadt trial provided the final chapter in the documentation process.

II

ON NOVEMBER 29, 1968, exactly 27 years and two months after the massacre at Babi Yar, 10 members of Einsatzgruppe C Sonderkommando 4A stood before the Darmstadt judges to hear the verdict of the court. They appeared as models of propriety, scarcely resembling the stereotype of the SS killer. Most were salesmen or merchants, solid middle-class burghers, with greying hair and fitted reading glasses. As with most defendants in German war crimes trials, they had pleaded that they had been forced to obey orders to kill. Had they not murdered, they argued, their own life would have been placed in jeopardy. One defendant observed: "For me it was a war operation. I couldn't do anything about it. . . . It was a sad affair to have to carry out this business."

But Judge Paquet ruled that "expert testimony proves that the defendants faced no threat to life or limb" had they refused to carry out "criminal commands." He pointedly noted how secret SS reports had heaped praise upon the special task force for its zeal in killing. The prosecution demonstrated that the defendants had been proud of their "elite" status as members of the Gestapo and the SS, that they relished "the great hour of the little man in uniform."

The principal defendant who had

been shown to have participated personally in organizing murders of Jews was former SS Lt. Col. Kuno Callen, a 56-year-old sales clerk. The prosecution had asked for a life sentence, but Judge Paquet sentenced him to 15 years at hard labor. Two defendants, 53-year-old bank director Adolf Jansen and 57-year-old insurance salesman Kurt Hans, each received 11-year sentences. (The prosecution had asked for 15 and 12 year terms respectively.) Hans fainted when he heard the sentence. The other major defendant, 56-year-old August Maefner, a wine merchant, drew a 9-year sentence (the prosecution had asked 12 years). Shorter terms were meted out to the other defendants, whose responsibility was less.

The West German public was hardly enthusiastic about the trial. Rarely were more than a handful of adults visitors in court on any trial day. After a flurry of press coverage when the trial began, German newspapers gave it little, if any, attention. (An exception was the Darmstadt *Echo* which provided extensive coverage. Some of the best international treatment was given by the Swiss *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* which offered at intervals solid reportage of the trial.) To the public it was simply one of twenty other such trials taking place today in West Germany. (199 have been completed in the last 10 years.) But the Babi Yar trial was second in length and importance only to the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt several years ago, and that trial had attracted considerable public interest. There exists a growing indifference among West Germans toward war crimes trials. The most recent public opinion poll showed 68 per cent of German men and 78 per cent of German women as opposed to the holding of such trials.

The lack of concern was explained by Bernd-Rüdiger Uebe, one of the

prosecutors at Darmstadt, as follows:

After all, the events we are talking about took place 26 years ago. If you see a car accident today and look at the bloody victims, you are horrified. But if you talk about the same accident five years later you will not get very upset about it.

A similar view was echoed by the younger generation. A group of Darmstadt high school students, while attending the trial as part of a civics course, felt that the Babi Yar atrocities were "past history." One young man thought the proceedings were "a good reminder" to keep men "aware of these things and remember that we were responsible for them," but his view did not represent the typical attitude. More characteristic was this comment: "These were things done 20 years ago. They have paid for their sins and will continue to pay for them..."

But at least the authorities are still intent upon meting out some measure of retribution for the past. And, if the punishment did not and could not fit the crime, the historical record now was there concerning what happened at Babi Yar.

III

THE TRIAL received very little coverage in the Soviet Union. This is not surprising, since Babi Yar constituted the most poignant example of Jewish martyrdom on Soviet soil. Soviet authorities have from the very beginning attempted to blur this aspect of its character. The official government report on the massacre, published some six months after Kiev's liberation, spoke of Nazi crimes at Babi Yar against Soviet citizens generally rather than against its Jewish community specifically.

But in the immediate post-war years, the Soviet regime was not yet express-

ly hostile to its Jewish community, and the Soviet public was able to learn of the distinctly anti-Jewish aspects of what had happened at Babi Yar. Much became known through the published war-time reports of Yevgenii Kriger, an *Izvestia* military correspondent, and through Ilya Ehrenburg's prize novel, *The Storm*, published in 1947. The massacre of Jews at Babi Yar also was sympathetically treated in poetry, such as the poem composed by the Ukrainian-Jewish writer, Savva Golovanivsky, and in recorded songs of the Yiddish singer, Nehama Lifschitz (one of which told of the grief of a Jewish mother unable to find the remains of her children who perished at Babi Yar). Indeed, official plans were laid for a public monument at Babi Yar. A prominent architect, A. V. Vlasov, prepared the design of a memorial, "strict, simple, in the form of a prism"; and the artist B. Ovchinnikov worked out the appropriate sketches "dedicated to Babi Yar."

But the anti-semitic campaign which burst forth in late 1948 required that Babi Yar be plunged into the "memory hole" of history. Golovanivsky's poem was singled out for attack in March, 1949 because he had dared to suggest that Ukrainians and Russians "had turned their backs on an old Jew, Abraham, whom in 1941 the Germans marched through the streets of Kiev to be shot." The poet was charged with "nationalistic slander" and "defamation of the Soviet nation." Another Ukrainian-Jewish poet, Pervomaisky, was also denounced for "repeating Golovanivsky's defamation of the Soviet people." The theme of Babi Yar was no longer countenanced in literature, and the plans for the memorial were quietly shelved.

So complete was the blackout that Soviet citizens were never informed that in June, 1951 one of the principal

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architects of the Babi Yar holocaust. Col. Blobel, was executed in Nuremberg for his crimes. And even such a knowledgeable Soviet writer as Anatoly Kuznetsov, the author of the recently-published documentary novel on Babi Yar, stated that, "... not a single Nazi has been tried or punished specifically for Babi Yar." (*Sputnik*, April, 1967.)

The death of Stalin and the beginning of the "thaw" did not bring any immediate change in the official attitude on Babi Yar. It was not until 1959, following the consolidation of Khrushchev's authority, that the search for coexistence with America coupled with the growing awareness of the need for widespread reforms in various parts of Soviet social life enabled Soviet policymakers to loosen some inhibiting restraints. The three years that followed saw a veritable renaissance in Soviet literature. Even Jewish communal life was tendered a few concessions.

The moment was opportune for sensitive intellectuals, brooding over the double tragedy of Babi Yar—first the holocaust there and then suppression of any reference to it—to voice concern. It was not long in coming. The distinguished Soviet writer, Viktor Nekrasov, upon learning that the Architectural Office of the Kiev Town Council planned to flood Babi Yar, fill it and "turn the site into a park, to build a stadium there," wrote a long letter to *Literaturnaya Gazeta* which appeared on October 10, 1959:

Is this possible? Who could have thought of such a thing? To fill a . . . deep ravine and on the site of such a colossal tragedy to make merry and play football?

Nekrasov noted that other sites of Nazi atrocities had been turned into memorials, and "lest people ever forget what happened," he boldly demanded

similar "tributes of respect" for the Kiev citizens who had been shot in Babi Yar.

Two months later, the same journal carried a letter signed by a number of inhabitants of the district near Babi Yar in which they supported the recommendation to erect a monument on the "murder site." They observed that Nekrasov's article "concerning the tragically famous Babi Yar attracted the particular attention of the Kiev inhabitants" but at the same time, they welcomed the idea that "a park be first planted in Babi Yar," and then "a monument erected in its center." What made the latter particularly significant was the lack of a single reference to Jews. It signalled an eventual half-way response of the authorities to the outraged conscience of the intellectuals: a monument should indeed be built, but one not specifically commemorating the martyred Jews. A further small item in the literary newspaper on March 9, 1960 pointed in the same direction. The editors noted that the Deputy Chairman of the Kiev Town Council Executive Committee had replied to the Nekrasov article with an explanation that the monument had not yet been erected because of "lack of reclamation of the region." The Deputy Chairman went on to promise that once the afforestation of the slopes of the ravine was completed and a public park planted there, then "an obelisk with a memorial plaque to Soviet citizens exterminated by the Nazis will be erected in its center. (Emphasis added.) The special martyrdom of Jews there was not noted.

The Deputy Chairman's reply was pertinent for another reason. It pointed out that his commitment to build a memorial was a consequence of "a resolution adopted by the Ukraine Government in December 1959," three months after Nekrasov

had raised the issue. It was clear that Nekrasov had pricked the conscience of the Kiev community.

IV

A MUCH LARGER COMMUNITY, extending far beyond even Soviet borders, was to be stirred by Yevgenii Yevushenko in September, 1961, almost twenty years to the day after the Babi Yar tragedy. In an autobiographical sketch published later in *L'Express*, Yevushenko explained how he had come to write his courageous and moving *Babi Yar*. He had waited for a long time, he said, to publish a poem on anti-Semitism, but an appropriate form had not presented itself until after he had visited Babi Yar in the Fall of 1961 to see and sense the holocaust. Upon his return to Moscow he wrote the poem in "a couple of hours." In it he identified himself with "each man they shot here," "every child they shot here," and, in his profound mourning, he was transformed into "one vast and soundless howl."

On September 16, Yevushenko recited *Babi Yar* to 1,200 students at the Polytechnical Museum. He afterward recalled being "so nervous" that he kept the text in front of him. The reaction was overpowering:

When I finished there was total silence. I just kept folding the paper in my hands afraid to look up. When I did, the entire audience stood. Suddenly the applause began and continued for nearly ten minutes. People rushed up on stage and embraced me. My eyes were filled with tears.

He was uncertain whether it would be published, but the forthright editor of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* gave the go-ahead signal, not without a last-minute warning to Yevushenko: "No telling what may happen. Are you prepared for it?" To which the poet replied, "I am."

On September 18, the poem was published and immediately became an international sensation.

The poem began with a reminder that "No monument stands over Babi Yar." Only a "steep precipice," remains as an "epitaph." Yet the memory cannot be erased:

There is a rustling of wild grass over
Babi Yar
The trees look fearsome, like judges.
Everything here screams in silence.

The poem was more than a reminder of tragedy; it probed the roots of popular anti-Semitism, and what made it particularly unusual was that Yevushenko did not hesitate to indict historic anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. After recalling the pogroms, the killing and beating of Jews, the poet declared:

Oh, my Russian people!
I know
That you are at heart internationalist
But often those whose hands were un-
clean
Blemished your purest of names.

On an official level, it is taboo to suggest that popular anti-Semitism persists to any significant extent. Yevushenko dared to imply the contrary:

Let "The Internationals"
Thunder forth
When the last anti-Semite on earth
Has been buried for good.

And in a section which he publicly recited, but which was excised from the version that appeared in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, he explicitly noted that anti-Semitic sentiments among Russians "still arise on the vapors of alcohol and in conversations after drinking."

More remarkable even than the attack on anti-Semitism was the poet's characterization of Jews throughout the world as people with a long com-

men history and a unifying tradition that made them a distinct entity. In a striking section of his poem, he linked together the ancient Israelites, Christ, Dreyfus and, significantly, defined this unity as a distinct and separate "Jewish people." This conception not only does violence to the analysis prescribed by Soviet ideologists; it flies in the face of the accepted doctrine that Soviet Jews have little, if anything, in common with Jews elsewhere in time or space.

THE STORM of criticism that followed the poem's appearance was not unexpected. Five days after "Babi Yar" was published, *Literaturnia i Zhizn'*, the journal of the Writers' Union of the Russian Federated Republic, carried a response in the form of a poem by another Soviet writer, Alexei Markov. Yevtushenko's patriotism was questioned—"What sort of real Russian are you . . . ?" By referring to Jewish martyrdom at Babi Yar and to Russian anti-Semitism, Yevtushenko had attempted to defile (with a "pygmy's spittle") "Russian crew-cut lads" who fell in battle against the Nazis. In a concluding line, Markov hung at Yevtushenko the accusation "cosmopolitan" which, in the Soviet lexicon of previous years, was an epithet that carried the implication of treason.

A less crudely violent if more trenchant attack appeared in the same journal three days later. Written by a well-known Soviet critic, Dmitri Starikov, the article by implication denied that anti-Semitism existed in the USSR. "The friendship of our peoples," Starikov wrote, "is now stronger and more monolithic than ever," and to suggest that anti-Semitism among Russians still exists is nothing less than a "provocation," as well as a "monstrous" insult to those "who have en-

trusted him [Yevtushenko] with their word . . ."

Finally, in typical post-war Soviet fashion, Starikov challenged the view that Babi Yar represented the martyrdom of Jewry. The "destinies of the persons who died there cry out" against the notion that Babi Yar was "one of history's examples of anti-Semitism." For, he went on, "the anti-Semitism of the Fascists is only part of their misanthropic policy of genocide . . . the destruction of the Jews was only the beginning of . . . a destruction of the lower races' including the Slavs." To underscore his argument, Starikov appealed to the authority of one of the Soviet Union's leading figures (and a Jew as well), Ilya Ehrenburg. Quoting arbitrarily from various war-time articles, including one on Babi Yar, Starikov contended that Ehrenburg "did not stress the fact that it was Jews who were killed there."

Starikov did not limit his criticism to Yevtushenko. In a scarcely veiled threat, he wondered aloud why the editors of *Literaturnia i Zhizn'* permitted the poet "to insult the triumph of the Leninist national policy" with "provocations." At the twenty-second Party Congress, the powerful chief editor of the journal *Sovetskii Soyuz*, Nikolai Gribachev, charged *Literaturnia i Zhizn'* with "irresponsibility" in "systematically publishing cheap sensations."

Ehrenburg came to the defense of the embattled Yevtushenko. He wrote a short note to *Literaturnia i Zhizn'* on October 3 (published on October 14) in which he sharply disassociated himself from the Starikov article, observing that the selected quotations in fact "contradicted" Ehrenburg's own views.

Yevtushenko won the hearts of young people throughout the USSR. Every copy of the *Literaturnia i Zhizn'* in which his poem appeared was "sold

out in a matter of minutes," he later reported. He was flooded with letters and telegrams--approximately 20,000 of them. Only 30 or 40 were abusive and these, he said, "were all unsigned and in obviously disguised handwriting."

Everywhere he went in Russia, his audience wanted to hear him read "Babi Yar." Patricia Blake, a close observer of the Soviet literary scene, who attended a number of Yevtushenko's readings, reported:

After nearly every one of his recitations the audience began clamoring again for "Babi Yar," pounding on the floor with a deafening roar with their feet. He read it again and again, and they clamored for it again. Toward the end of the evening, when this happened once more, Yevtushenko shouted for silence and said, "Comrades, you and I have been in this hall for five hours, and I have read the poem four times. I should think you would be as tired of hearing it as I am of reciting it." But again they pounded and again he complied.

IV

Yevtushenko and the support he received had not merely stung the doctrinaire apologists into action. The highest Party authorities became concerned. Khrushchev was later to reveal that "the Party Central Committee had been receiving letters expressing anxiety that in some works the position of Jews in our country has been depicted in a distorted way." He referred specifically to the Babi Yar poem.

At a Moscow meeting of several hundred intellectuals called by the Party leadership on December 17, 1962, the poem became a key issue. When Yevtushenko recited the last two lines of his poem to the audience, Khrushchev interjected: "Comrade Yevtushenko, this poem has no place here." At this point the poet commented that

he had selected Babi Yar because "the problem of anti-Semitism" continues to have "a negative consequence" which "has not yet been resolved." Khrushchev forcefully rejected the argument. Anti-Semitism "is not a problem," he declared. The young writer would not be silenced. He responded:

It is a problem, Nikita Sergievich. It cannot be denied and it cannot be suppressed. It is necessary to come to grips with it time and again. It has a place. I myself was a witness to such things. Moreover, it came from people who occupy official posts, and thus it assumed an official character. We cannot go forward to Communism with such a heavy load as Judophobia.

It was time for the "appropriate" discipline to be applied and for the customary public denunciations to be made. Besides, by the end of December, 1962, the Party leadership had become convinced that the liberalism of the previous three-year period had gone too far in various art forms, in literature, painting, sculpture, cinematography. Let the trend of critical examination of the past be extended to embrace the hallowed institutions of public life, brakes had to be applied.

A Kremlin conference of writers and artists on March 7-8, covered in detail in the public press, provided the setting for the disciplinary action. And none other than the Party boss and Premier, Nikita Khrushchev, was designated to administer it. While condemnation of liberating trends extended to all spheres of the arts and to numerous individuals, Babi Yar was the focus of the attack. Two types of criticism were levelled at Yevtushenko. The first was a rehash of the principal argument used by Markov and Starikov:

Events are depicted in the poem as if only the Jewish population fell victim

to the Fascist crime, while at the hands of the Hitlerite butchers there perished not a few Russians, Ukrainians and Soviet people of other nationalities.

The second criticism was more serious, and Khrushchev felt obliged to wander into a forest of questionable data to buttress it. The clearly implied reference in the poem, that anti-Semitism continued to exist in the Soviet Union, revealed that the author had lacked "political maturity" and displayed "ignorance of the historical facts." Sharply, the Premier demanded, "For whom and why was it necessary to present the matter as if the population of the Jewish nationality in our country was being harmed?" The charge is "not true," for, since the very early days of the October Revolution, Soviet Jews have been treated "on an equal basis in every way" with all other national groups. A bludgeoning suggestion that Yevtushenko had permitted himself to be used by alien and foreign sources followed: "With us there is no Jewish question, and those who devise one are singing to somebody else's tune."

Khrushchev then proceeded into a characteristic class analysis of anti-Semitism: it is typical of capitalist society and is alien to socialism. Jews do not constitute a single undifferentiated whole. Properly, they are to be broken down into social classes: bourgeois Jews are like the bourgeoisie everywhere; proletarian Jews are like the oppressed proletariat everywhere. "People's deeds," Khrushchev emphasized, are to be "measured not from a national, but from a class point of view."

To illustrate his theme, he pointed to an instance of alleged treachery to the Soviet state by a Jew during World War II. This was later proven to have been a pure fiction. But these

pressures exerted upon Yevtushenko's poem had the desired results.

This was first made apparent in the musical field. By December, one of the USSR's most prestigious cultural figures, Dmitri Shostakovich, had completed his 13th Symphony, a musical and choral setting of five poems by Yevtushenko, including "Babi Yar." The work received its first performance in Moscow on December 18, 1962 and was accorded a tumultuous reception. But no reviews appeared in the major press organs. The day before this performance, at a specially-called meeting held in Moscow between top Party leaders and leading Soviet intellectuals, the Party's then principal ideologist, Leonid Ilyichev, criticized Shostakovich for choosing an undesirable theme for his symphony and thus failing to serve the "true interest" of the people. Public performances temporarily ceased.

To meet the powerful Party thrusts, Yevtushenko made two additions to the text. At one point, the following line was added: "Here together with Russians and Ukrainians lie Jews." A second insertion read: "I am proud of the Russia which stood in the path of the bandits." Yevtushenko vehemently denied in a Paris interview in February, 1963 that he had capitulated to Party pressures. "I am not a man to take orders," he observed. All that he had done, he said, was to make a slight addition without changing a word of the poem. He further commented that the addition was merely a response to a letter he had received, after the poem's publication, which described how a Russian woman had saved the life of a Jewish child threatened by the S.S.

Shostakovich incorporated these revisions into his symphony, and performances were renewed. On February 10, 1963, *Pravda* observed that it was

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a truly "Russian" work. But sharply critical voices continued to be heard about its theme. On April 2, the Minsk newspaper, *Sovetskaya Byelorossia*, asked why Shostakovich "looked only here," at Babi Yar, for "material revealing the bestiality of fascism..." "Why was fascism terrible only and first of all because of anti-Semitism?" The critic took the occasion to chastise those who could "elevate a petty incident to the rank almost of national tragedy."

VI

Discussion about Babi Yar disappeared from the public arena and did not re-emerge until the summer of 1966. The intervening period was marked by increasing pressures upon the literary intelligentsia culminating in the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial in January, 1966. But, the intellectuals refused to capitulate. In March, 1966, a sizeable number of them petitioned the Presidium of the 23rd Congress of the Party, then meeting in Moscow, concerning the Sinyavsky-Daniel case, charging that it "creates an extremely dangerous precedent." Their criticisms, and those emanating from Communists abroad, may have encouraged the authorities to relax the pressures. In the changed atmosphere, it could be anticipated that the Babi Yar issue would once again arouse public discussion.

In August, 1966, *Yunist*, a liberal literary monthly, initiated a three-part serialization of a powerful documentary novel, *Babi Yar*, by Anatoly Kuznetsov. The young writer had accompanied Yevtushenko in the latter's visit to the Babi Yar site in the Fall of 1961. The impression which the visit made on both of them was described by Kuznetsov in the Soviet journal *Sputnik* (April, 1967):

One day we both walked to Babi Yar; we forced our way through the dense undergrowth, and stood on the edge of the ravine. The sun was shining, everything was as peaceful, so quiet.

We were standing where hundreds of thousands of people had once writhed and screamed in the throes of death. Almost all the victims had screamed horribly.

Kuznetsov, who had experienced Nazi rule in Kiev as a child of 12, had for some 18 years been accumulating a thick notebook on Babi Yar filled with clippings, documents, and personal notes. Just before the Yevtushenko trip, Kuznetsov had returned to Kiev to visit his mother. Deciding to take another look at a favorite childhood haunt, he went to Babi Yar "and suddenly I caught my breath and I realized that the time had come to start writing my book." Kuznetsov's account provided the Soviet public an opportunity to learn the full measure of the massacre for the first time since the war.

Kuznetsov's work did not suppress the specific element of Jewish martyrdom in the history of Babi Yar. In his Foreword to the novel, Kuznetsov recalls how, as a youngster, shortly after the war, he and a friend went to the site of the ravine to try to discover the exact place at which the massacres took place. Seeing an old man crossing the ravine, young Kuznetsov called out: "Hey, uncle! Was it here where they shot the Jews, or was it further on?" The old man called back: "And how many Russians were killed here, and Ukrainians, and other nationalities?"

Public reaction to the Kuznetsov novel was slow in coming. The first comment did not appear until November 18, in *Literaturnaya Rossiya*. The reviewer, Georgy Radov, described the book as "genuine art" written in the "richest prose." Then on November 22, the journal that had first published the

Yevuchenko poem. *Literaturnia Gazeta*, carried a powerful endorsement of the book by the liberal literary and film critic, Alexander Borshchagovsky. Its "destiny," he wrote is "beyond doubt." Terming the book "a marvel of art," Borshchagovsky went on to say that "Soviet literature has gained a passionate and talented work."

The critic did not hesitate to challenge the literary Establishment for avoiding the Babi Yar theme:

Our writers have hardly touched on the tragic theme of Babi Yar; they have treated it with the caution that does not promise discoveries.

He emphasized the overwhelming fact of Jewish martyrdom: "... the first act of the [Babi Yar] tragedy [was] when the Jewish population of Kiev was murdered, wiped out and cast into the ravine in the course of a few days." This "massive 'total' massacre was unprecedented" in history. Borshchagovsky then went on to note that Babi Yar became, after September 1941, "a commonplace of terrible everyday reality" with "victims of every nationality" sacrificed there by the tens of thousands.

WHILE Borshchagovsky spoke for the liberals, official comment from the principal authoritative sources was far slower and, when it appeared, much more restrained. On January 22, 1967, *Izvestia* finally carried a review by P. Troitsky. He found "contrivance" in the book's structure, an artificiality that was "at variance with the seriousness" of the author's purpose. Nor did he think that Kuznetsov had revealed a world of unexplored facts. The Babi Yar atrocities, the *Izvestia* reviewer contended, had "already cut deeply into our consciousness." But, if they did, the reviewer himself was reluctant to give expression to their principal feature. The words "Jew" or "Jewish" are

strikingly absent from the lengthy commentary.

Yet, the *Izvestia* review seemed to place a stamp of approval upon the work:

... the author evidently has been able to relate known facts in such a way that we feel we are coming upon much afresh.

The portrayal of the leading character was "scrupulously" presented and the emotion of hatred for the Nazi ideology effectively developed. The fact that the book was reviewed at all in this central Soviet organ, and in a not unfavorable manner, indicated that doctrinalism was, for the moment, not in the ascendant.

Notwithstanding official rejection of Jewish martyrology, the editors of *Literaturnia Gazeta* would not be held back from underlining the specific Jewish character of Babi Yar. On February 22, they ran another piece on the Kuznetsov book, this time a portion of a letter written by Dina Mironovna Pronicheva, the survivor of the Babi Yar massacre of September 29 and 30. The letter, in part, read:

After the massacre of the Jews, the Germans combed apartments and houses; if they found children of a Jewish mother they killed them, even when, as in our case, the father was Russian. The *Polizei* seized my son, who was two years and three months old then, and took him to the courtyard to shoot him. My husband begged them not to kill the child, saying that I would return that evening and they would then be able to join mother and child together. They left the child until evening. As soon as the *Polizei* went off, my husband wrapped Vovochka [her child] in paper, tied him with string like a large parcel and carried him to me in Darnitsa. I hid in an attic together with the child for four months.

In the same month, another strongly favorable review appeared in the liberal *Novyi Mir*. The author was Ariadna Gromova who had, a half year earlier, exploded the anti-Semitic myth fostered by Khrushchev that some Jews had served the Nazi cause. Her review, entitled "Truth, Only Truth," stated that Kuznetsov's *Babi Yar* story is "vitally necessary both here and abroad." The specific Jewish martyrdom of *Babi Yar* was alluded to briefly, but emphatically.

The publication and open discussion of Kuznetsov's *Babi Yar* was accompanied by related developments which suggested that strong pressures from the liberal intelligentsia for a memorial to the victims of *Babi Yar* were having some impact upon the political authorities. The outcry of Nekrasov in 1959 and the poetic appeal of Yevushenko seemed, in 1966, to find the appropriate milieu for fulfillment.

In April, 1966, the President of the France-USSR Association, Andre Blumel, who was touring the Soviet Union accompanied by forty prominent Paris lawyers, was told by Michael Burka, the Mayor of Kiev, that plans were being made to building such a memorial at the *Babi Yar* site. He carefully explained that it would carry no specific reference to Jews.

EARLY IN 1966, "Novosti," the Soviet press agency, publicly announced that the Ukrainian Architects Club of Kiev had placed on exhibit over 200 projects and some 30 large-scale detailed plans for a memorial at *Babi Yar*. Visitors to the exhibition were invited to express their views. The announcement further stated that, after the exhibition, the entries would be judged by a special tribunal consisting of representatives of municipal and governmental authorities as well as of representatives from the Academy of

Science and other cultural institutions.

Significantly, the inscriptions on the submitted projects avoided reference to the particular character of *Babi Yar* as a symbol of Jewish martyrdom. Instead, the inscriptions note that "in this place" over one-hundred thousand "Soviet citizens, Russians, Ukrainians and Jews were murdered" in 1941 by the Fascists. One architect of Jewish origin, Abraham Miletzky, was rumored to have submitted a plan bearing an inscription in Yiddish, but was requested to withdraw it and to submit another without the inscription.

Those who might have been disappointed with the projected character of the memorial could still take heart from the fact that the idea for a memorial was alive. Further verification came on April 29, 1966, when the London *Daily Telegraph* correspondent in the Soviet Union, John Miller, cabled his newspaper that he had been "emphatically" assured by Ukrainian writers that,

Babi Yar would have its monument in time for next year's 50th anniversary of the Revolution. Some 80 proposed models of a monument had been examined by a commission and the final choice would be announced soon.

Miller reported that the Ukrainian intelligentsia were "highly sensitive" to charges of "deliberate neglect" of the memory of the victims of *Babi Yar*. They offered the explanation that Russia had to rebuild its factories and homes before it could erect monuments to the past. The explanation did not take account of the fact that Soviet authorities had already built in various parts of the country monuments to Nazi persecution.

Final assurances about the memorial appeared during Yunoski's publication of the Kuznetsov novel. On September 9, 1966, Peter Tempest, the correspond-

ent in Russia of the British Communist daily, the *Morning Star*, cabled from Kiev:

The memorial at Babi Yar to 200,000 people, mostly Jews, massacred here during the war will "definitely" be erected next year, I was told today.

It is significant that Tempest had included in his cable the point that "mostly Jews" constituted Babi Yar victims. Soviet authorities, needless to say, rejected this view. More pertinent was the time-table which he reported. Like Miller, he was assured by Kievan authorities that the monument would be in place before the 50th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Tempest went on to say that a group of sculptors and architects were currently working on the final design of the monument, which would be inscribed simply "to the victims of fascism."

VII

CELEBRATIONS of the 50th anniversary have come and gone and still no memorial exists at Babi Yar. Nor was the enthusiastic reception to Kuznetsov's book to last long. 1967 was to be marked by one long paean of praise to the October Revolution with unpleasant reminders of the past fifty years muted and critical observations censored. The blow to Soviet pride flowing from the overwhelming defeat of the Arab armies—both Russian-supplied and diplomatically supported—in the Six-Day War intensified a burgeoning nationalism.

The super-patriots struck back. It was hardly surprising that the first and principal criticism of the Kuznetsov book should appear in a journal of the military—always the repository of correct national pride—or that its date of publication should be August 1967, following the setback for Soviet diplomacy

on the Middle East at the United Nations General Assembly. The rhetorical title of the review in *Sovetskii Voina*—"To A Full Extent"—set its tone. The reviewer, Alexei Yegorov, stated simply and dogmatically that Kuznetsov's description of Babi Yar was limited, restricted and therefore distorted. Equally unobjective, Yegorov declared, were such reviews as those by Borshchagovsky (who gave "free rein to his [own] imagination") and by Gromova (who had the gall to suggest that the book was "vitally necessary for readers both here and abroad").

What Yegorov found particularly distasteful was Kuznetsov's description of those Russians and Ukrainians who had been "Fascist lackeys and obeyed their criminal orders." References to Russian and Cossack collaborators, Ukrainian pro-Nazi policemen, Soviet black marketeers who pandered to the Germans, ordinary citizens who cooperated with occupation authorities (some by turning over their Jewish wives or informing on other Jews) are—*from Yegorov's viewpoint*—nothing short of "offensive" and hardly appropriate for a "historical work."

Nor did Kuznetsov's characterization of the category of the martyred fare much better. In a sarcastic introductory remark, Yegorov reminded his audience that Kuznetsov "is not the first artist who chose the tragedy of Babi Yar as a topic." Yevtushenko had "touched upon it and, as is known, twisted historical facts." The same type of "twisting" was characteristic of Kuznetsov's book, Yegorov suggested. He recalled the exchange in the Foreword of the novel between 18-year-old Anatoly Kuznetsov and the old man. Anatoly's question as to where the Jews had been shot was "intolerably irritating." Yegorov preferred the response of the old man.

But even Kuznetsov's treatment of Babi Yar as a "multinational tragedy"

—the words are Yegorov's—was declared to be inadequate. Kuznetsov was to be censured for being "brief" and "perfunctory" about the martyrdom of "Soviet citizens." His emphasis should have been:

In Babi Yar lie buried many Russians, Ukrainians and other nations. Here were shot the sailors of the Dnieper flotilla; the railway workers of the Kiev region; workers and employees of Kiev; Red Army soldiers and commanders who were taken prisoner.

But however the doctrinaire conservatives, now once again dominant in

Soviet literary and political life, might attempt to distort the reality of Babi Yar, they cannot make its significance compatible with their prescribed view. Embarrassment emerges each time the symbol is resurrected by some writer determined to confront Soviet society with the truth about Jewish martyrdom. For such confrontation inevitably raises the question of Jewish national identity and the problem of anti-Semitism, both currently now "unmentionable" in the Soviet Union.

WILLIAM KOREY is the Director of the B'nai B'rith International Council.



The Associated Press

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September 25, 1988, Sunday, AM cycle

SECTION: International News

LENGTH: 766 words

HEADLINE: Jews Criticize Soviets At Rally Marking Babi Yar Massacre

BYLINE: By ANDREW KATELL, Associated Press Writer

DATeline: MOSCOW

KEYWORD: Soviet-Massacre

BODY:

Hundreds of people gathered Sunday in an unusual officially sanctioned rally to commemorate the Nazi massacre of Jews at a ravine called Babi Yar. But several speakers directed their anger not at the Germans but the Soviet government.

"Babi Yar was a prelude to the spiritual genocide of the Jewish people of our country," Yuri Sokol, a veteran of World War II, told at least 500 people huddled on a tree-lined road outside the gates of Moscow's Vostryakov Cemetery.

A few years ago, police would have broken up such a demonstration as an anti-Soviet outpouring of nationalism. But under Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev's policy of glasnost, or openness, only a few policemen were on hand and did not interfere.

Standing alongside Jewish activists atop a makeshift speakers platform on a truck were a prominent Jewish Soviet army general, the head of the Soviet Anti-Zionist Committee and members of the national parliament, the Supreme Soviet.

"You must agree that some democracy exists because 10 years ago you couldn't have met here," William Perry of New York told the crowd in a mixture of Yiddish and English. Perry is president of the International Union of Industrial, Service, Transport and Health Employees.

It was the second year that authorities gave permission for a Babi Yar memorial rally in Moscow but the first in which a state organization was a co-sponsor.

The rally, which lasted 1 1/2 hours, was called by the official Anti-Zionist Committee, which includes Soviet Jews who oppose Israel, and by the unofficial Society for Friendship and Relations with Israel.

It marked the 47th anniversary of the killing of more than 100,000 people, mainly Jews, at Babi Yar in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev. Speakers said that

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shortly after occupying Kiev, the Nazis rounded up and shot to death 35,000 Jews on Sept. 29-30, 1941.

Pictures of women and children concentration camp prisoners, people hanging from gallows and piles of corpses were nailed onto the side of the truck. A Moscow rabbi led the crowd, assembled on the first night of the Jewish holiday Sukkoth, in a Hebrew prayer of mourning for the massacre victims.

Several speakers reminded the crowd that the suffering and repression of Jews did not end when the Nazis were defeated.

"After the war, members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were shot, there was the 'Doctors Plot' and they wanted to deport the Jews to Siberia," said Valery Sherbaum, the secretary of the friendship society.

Soviet dictator Josef Stalin accused some of the country's top physicians, most Jewish, of being spies and trying to kill Kremlin leaders. He had them arrested in 1953.

Sherbaum said repression of Jews did not stop after Stalin's death the same year. Even under Gorbachev, Jewish cemeteries have been destroyed in several Soviet cities, Jews are not permitted to organize classes to study Hebrew or Yiddish and unsanctioned Jewish organizations are denied meeting places, he told the crowd.

Yuli Kosharovsky, a Jew refused permission to emigrate, said the government still publishes anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist literature.

Other speakers said the Pamyat organization, an unofficial Russian political group that has sprung up under glasnost, was reviving the anti-Semitism symbolized by the Babi Yar massacre through its racist ultra-nationalist views.

For years, authorities arrested and harrassed Jews agitating for preservation of Babi Yar as a symbol of the Holocaust.

After poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko wrote a poem about the massacre deploring the lack of a memorial, authorities relented and a monument was erected in 1976 on the swampy ravine.

But many Jews have remained unsatisfied because the monument's plaque does not mention that most victims were Jews.

Among those at Sunday's rally sharing that view was a member of the first Israeli diplomatic delegation to visit the Soviet Union since the Kremlin severed ties with the Jewish state in 1967.

"It's very painful that there is not one word mentioning that Jews were killed there," said Gershon Gorev, who attended the ceremony with his wife Hasia and Yaakov Kedmi, another member of the six-member Israeli team that arrived in Moscow July 28.

Gorev said he was also distressed that rally speakers did not mention that some Ukrainian residents of Kiev helped the Nazis round up Jews and send them to their deaths.

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In a sign of official sanction, the Moscow Communist Party and government newspaper Evening Moscow ran an announcement of the ceremony on Thursday, and the state-run Tass news agency carried a dispatch after the demonstration.

The Associated Press, September 25, 1988

President Bush has read
this book
Bolin - pg 239

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A Complete History

MARTIN GILBERT

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Russia at bay

SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 1941

On 19 September 1941, German forces entered Kiev. That day, Leningrad suffered its worst air and artillery bombardment of the war, with 276 German bombers breaking through the city's anti-aircraft defences. More than a thousand citizens were killed, including many who, already wounded, were in one of the city's hospitals when it was hit. Two days later, on September 21, 180 bombers struck at Leningrad's principal defensive island, Kronstadt, seriously damaging the naval dockyard.

From London, with Churchill's authority, British Intelligence sent Stalin a series of warnings between September 20 and 25, based upon the reading of the most secret German Vulture messages being sent to and from the Eastern Front, giving details of German intentions and movements on the Moscow front. These details included information on the location and strength of German air and ground concentrations in the Smolensk area. For Britain herself, however, the end of the second week of September brought bad news at sea. On September 20, a convoy of merchant ships bound for Gibraltar lost five of its twenty-seven ships when German submarines struck. Morale was briefly raised when a German aircraft, flying over the convoy and radioing U-boat commanders of the location of the merchantmen, was shot down by one of the escort vessels. One of the merchant ships, however, the *Walmer Castle*, leaving the convoy to rescue survivors of two of the torpedoed ships, was bombed from the air, and sunk. Then, on September 21, the German submarine disappeared; they had found another target, a convoy on its way to Britain from Sierra Leone. In three nights, nine of its twenty-seven ships were sunk.

On the Eastern front, SS units fought alongside the regular German Army formations. Sometimes their brutality was particularly in evidence, as on September 23, when, near Krasnaya Gora, in reprisal for the killing of three SS sentries, the inhabitants of a whole village were lined up and machine-gunned. Sometimes it was the fearlessness of an SS man that was seen, as on September 24, at Lushno, when an SS corporal, Fritz Christen, after every soldier in his battery had been killed, remained at his gun, knocking out thirteen Soviet tanks.

The first Death's Head soldier to be awarded the Iron Cross First Class with the coveted Knight's Cross, Christen was later flown to Rastenburg to be decorated personally by Hitler.

In the Far East, the Japanese were making plans to start their war with the United States by means of a daring raid on the American naval base at Pearl Harbour, in mid-Pacific. On September 24 the Japanese Consul in Hawaii, Nagai Kita, was instructed to divide Pearl Harbour into five zones, and to report back to Japan on the precise number of warships moored in each zone. American Signals Intelligence in Hawaii read this message, but, having no decrypting facilities, had to send it back to Washington by Pan Am Clipper. There was only one flight a week; but the weekly flight on September 26 was cancelled because of bad weather. The intercept was therefore sent by sea, reaching Washington on October 6. Shortage of decrypting staff, and the fact that the message was not in the very highest grade of codes, led to a further three days' delay; but even then, with the message finally decrypted, it was not considered to be more than a routine espionage assignment, typical of those in a dozen other places, such as similar orders which were being decrypted from Japanese agents in Manila, Panama and Seattle.

Stalin, meanwhile, continued to be informed of the contents of the Enigma messages in which the Germans were transmitting their most secret military positions and plans. The only other Russian to be told was the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Shaposhnikov. Whenever the Russians asked for the source of the messages, Cecil Barclay, the special liaison officer with the British Military Mission, was instructed to maintain the utter secrecy of the intercepts by saying that the information came from an officer in the German War Office.

On September 25, the German forces launched their southern attack. Hitler intended this attack to precede the imminent assault on Moscow, for which German armoured units were even then reassembling after their transfer from the Leningrad front. But this twin drive towards Kharkov and the Crimea, which Hitler had expected to be swiftly accomplished, was to be checked and frustrated by a strong Soviet defence. A new and powerful Russian tank, the T-34, had begun to dominate the battlefield. It was on September 26 that the ss Death's Head Division was first forced to send into action special 'Tank Annihilation Squads' to attack the T-34, against which its hitherto devastating anti-tank guns had proved ineffective. These squads consisted of two officers and ten men who, carrying explosives, mines, grenades and bombs in satchels, had to go forward on foot towards any individual Russian tank that had penetrated through the German defensive line, and to destroy or disable the tank as quickly as possible with their hand-held explosives.

On September 26, an ss Captain, Max Seela, demonstrated what could be done when he destroyed the first of seven Russian tanks which had broken through to the German position. Seela crawled up to the tank on his own, placing two satchels of explosives against the turret, and detonating them with a grenade. He then led his squad forward to destroy the six remaining Soviet tanks. As their crews struggled to escape from their burning vehicles, they were shot down one by one and killed.

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Not only in battle, but far behind the lines, cruelty continued to be a daily feature of the war in the East. That September 26, when a Lithuanian policeman patrolling a street in the Kovno ghetto thought that he heard a shot being fired, 1,800 Jews living in the street – men, women and children – were rounded up, loaded on to lorries, driven to one of the pre-First World War forts on the outskirts of the city, and killed. On the following day, on no provocation at all, 3,446 Jews in the Lithuanian town of Eiskes, including more than eight hundred children, were taken to specially dug pits in the Jewish cemetery, and shot down by machine-gun fire.

The scale of the Special Task Force killings now exceeded anything previously recorded: by the end of September, in a two-day massacre, 33,771 Jews had been murdered in the ravine at Babi Yar, on the outskirts of Kiev, and a further 35,782 'Jews and Communists', according to the same Operational Situation Report – No. 101 of October 2 – in the Black Sea cities of Nikolayev and Kherson. There were German complaints, also, that their work of mass murder was being obstructed. On September 28, at Kremenchug, the Russian mayor, Vershovsky, ordered the baptism of several hundred Jews with a view to protecting them from the slaughter. He was arrested and shot.

On September 27, German forces captured Perekop, cutting off the Crimea from the rest of southern Russia. That day, in the Baltimore Naval Yard, the United States launched a 10,000 ton merchant ship, the *Patrick Henry*, the first of what were to be many thousand of standardized, mass produced vessels, known as 'Liberty ships', and overcoming by their mere numbers and rapid construction the loss inflicted upon Britain by the incessant German submarine attacks. With many of the parts prefabricated before the final assembly, one such ship, the *Robert E. Peary*, was constructed in the extraordinary record time of four days.

On September 28, the first British convoy of war supplies to Russia, Convoy PQ 1, left Iceland for Archangel. Two days later, Churchill announced in the House of Commons that the whole British tank production of the week just ended was to be sent to Russia. Large quantities of aluminium, rubber and copper, as earlier requested by Stalin, had already been despatched. On October 2, as German forces prepared to launch Operation Typhoon against Moscow, Churchill read the German secret messages giving details of the assault. 'Are you warning the Russians of the developing concentrations?' he asked the head of the Secret Intelligence Service, and he added: 'Show me the last five messages you have sent. ...'

In Moscow, the Anglo-American Mission headed by Lord Beaverbrook and Averell Harriman was finding out what Russia required, and doing its utmost to meet Stalin's requests. It was the Americans, for example, who were able to satisfy his appeal for four hundred tons of barbed wire a month. On September 30, Lord Beaverbrook agreed to send Russia the whole of Britain's share of her forthcoming supplies from the United States: 1,800 fighter aircraft, 2,250 tanks, 500 anti-tank guns, 23,000 tommy guns, 25,000 tons of copper, 27,000 tons of rubber and 250,000 soldiers' greatcoats.

The extent of Britain's material pledge to Russia was formidable, covering

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Holocaust historian, Sibil Wilton. Concise,
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SENDER'S NAME: UIC
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To: Naomi Paiss (cc: Sara Bloomfield)
From: Sybil Milton
Re: Background on Babi Yar
Date: 17 July 1991

Babi Yar

Babi Yar ravine, located to the northwest of the Ukrainian city of Kiev, is the site of the massacre of 33,771 Jews on September 29-30, 1941. Kiev was captured on September 19, 1941 by the 29th Corps and Sixth German Army. Kiev originally had a Jewish population of 160,000 people; 100,000 Jews had fled the city before the Germans occupied it.

From 24-28 September, a large number of buildings in the center of Kiev were blown up. The Germans decided to retaliate for this sabotage by killing the Jews of Kiev. The SS and Police Leader in Southern Russian Lieutenant General (SS Obergruppenführer) Friedrich Jeckeln and mobile killing squad (Einsatzkommando) 4a of Einsatzgruppe C, consisting of SS security police and security service men reinforced by German police battalions and Ukrainian auxiliaries were assigned to kill the Jews of Kiev.

On 28 September, posters appeared throughout Kiev ordering the Jews to report for resettlement the next morning, at 8 AM on 29 September 1941. The text of this announcement had been prepared by Propaganda Company 637 and printed by the German Sixth Army print shop. On 29 September, the Jews walked from the intersection of Melnik and Dekhtyarev streets in Kiev to the Jewish cemetery, located at the southern end of the ravine known as Babi Yar. The area was cordoned off by barbed wire and guarded by German and Ukrainian police as well as by the Waffen-SS. At the ravine, the Jews were forced to turn over all valuables in their possession, to disrobe, and

- 2 -

then walk to the ravine in groups of ten. At the edge of the ditch, they were mowed down by automatic fire.

In the months that followed many additional thousands of Jews were taken to Babi Yar and shot. Babi Yar was also the site where Gypsies and Soviet prisoners of war were murdered. Postwar Soviet legal and forensic experts have estimated that at least 100,000 persons were murdered at Babi Yar.

In July 1943, Paul Blobel, who had been the Commander of Einsatzkommando 4a of Einsatzgruppe C in 1941 and 1942, and was thus responsible for the massacre at Babi Yar, returned to the scene of his crimes at Babi Yar and Kiev. In 1943 he was appointed chief of Commando 1005 for the exhumation and burning of corpses buried after the mass executions he had previously committed. After the war, Blobel was sentenced to death by the United States Military Tribunal at Nuremberg in 1948, and executed in 1951.

Together with SS Lieutenant Colonel (SS Obersturmbannführer) Baumann, Blobel ordered that the corpses at Babi Yar be exhumed in mid-August 1943. This gruesome task was performed by prisoners from the nearby Syretsk concentration camp; the labor commando assigned to this job included 100 Jewish prisoners and 227 other prisoners. The prisoners were temporarily housed in small bunkers built from the ravine wall at Babi Yar. At night, they were locked in with an iron gate, and a cordon of armed German guards watched them. The mass graves were opened by bulldozers and the prisoners dragged the corpses to open cremation pyres, built of wooden logs atop railroad ties doused with gasoline. The bones that could not be incinerated were crushed with special "bone-crushing" machines. The ashes were then

- 3 -

sifted to retrieve any gold or silver particles. Cremation of the corpses took place for six weeks from August 18 to September 19, 1943. On September 29, 1943, the prisoners who had labored at this gruesome task were taken to be executed. In desperation, 25 prisoners broke out of the enclosure at Babi-Yar; 15 escaped, the others were shot on the spot.

After the war, Ilya Ehrenburg called for a memorial at Babi Yar. In 1961, the poet Yevgeni Yevtuschenko published a poem commemorating "Babi Yar." In 1962, Dimitri Shostakovich (check spelling) set Yevtuschenko's poem to music, including it in his 13th Symphony. In 1966, a memorial for Babi Yar was begun; it was completed in 1974 and carries a Ukrainian inscription commemorating "the victims of fascism during the German occupation of Kiev, 1941-1943."

Quotes of possible use:

In Operationsreport USSR (Ereignismeldung) No. 97, from Einsatzgruppe C in Kiev, dated 28 Sept. 1941, it states:

"....Town almost destroyed on entry of troops. Numerous barricades and tank traps set up in main street. On September 28, the citadel blew up and the Artillery Commander and his chief of staff were killed. On September 24, violent explosions in the quarters of the Feldkommandatur; the ensuing fire has not yet been extinguished. Fire in the center of the town. Very valuable buildings have been destroyed. So far, fire fighting almost without any effect. Demolitions by blasting being carried out to bring the fire under control. Fire in the immediate neighborhood of this office. Had to be evacuated for that reason. Considerable damage done in and around the building.... Up to now, 670 mines detected in buildings....all public buildings and squares are mined, among them, allegedly also the building assigned to

- 4 -

this office for future use....It was repeatedly observed that fires broke out the moment buildings were taken over. As has been proved, Jews played a preeminent part. Allegedly 150,000 Jews living here. Verification of these statements has not yet been possible. 1,600 arrests in the course of the first operation, measures being evolved to check the entire Jewish population. Execution of at least 50,000 Jews planned. German Army welcomes measures and demands drastic procedure. Garrison commander advocates public execution of 20 Jews. A large number of NKVD officials, political commissars, partisan leaders and partisans arrested. According to reliable information, demolition battalion of NKVD and considerable number of NKVD men in Kiev. This morning, enemy plots detected....Advance units of the Higher SS and Police Leader have arrived. Detailed reports to follow."

Additional quotes from postwar West German prosecutions:

Source: Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen and Volker Riess, "Schöne Zeiten": Judenmord aus der Sicht der Täter und Gaffer (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1988), pp. 66-70.

1. Statement by the Truck Driver Höfer, Aug. 27, 1959 to German prosecutors:

"One day, I was assigned to drive my truck to the outskirts of the city [Kiev]. I was accompanied by an Ukrainian. It must have been about 10 AM. En route, I was overtaken by columns of Jews, walking with luggage in the same direction I was going. There were entire families. These columns of people grew larger the further out of town we got. Piles of clothing lay in a large empty field. This was my destination. I had been lured there by the Ukrainian.

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After I stopped near the piles of clothing, my truck was then loaded with these pieces of clothing. This task was done by the Ukrainians who were assigned to this field. I looked at the place, where arriving Jews - men, women, and children - were received by the Ukrainians. They were led to various places, where they all laid down their luggage and then undressed removing coats, shoes, garments, and even their underwear. They also had to place their valuables in a specific location. A special pile was made for each type of clothing. This moved very rapidly and when anyone hesitated, things were speeded as the Ukrainians kicked and shoved them. I think only a very few minutes elapsed between removal of a coat and total nakedness. No distinction was made between men, women, and children. The Jews who were last in line probably had some chance to flee upon seeing the disrobing. I wonder today that this didn't occur.

The naked Jews were led into a ravine, whose measurements were approximately 150 meters long (ca. 450 ft.), 30 meters wide (ca. 90 ft.), and a good 15 meters deep (ca. 45 ft.) Two or three small passages led into the ravine and the Jews were channeled (?sluiced) into the large ditch. When they entered the edge of the ravine, they were attacked by the Security Police and shot while lying on top of the already murdered Jews. This happened very rapidly. The corpses were in regular layers. When a Jew lay down on the pile, a policeman came up with a machine gun and shot the person in the neck. The Jews who entered this ravine were so horrified at the gruesome sight that they lost all will-power. Allegedly, they even lay down in rows, each awaiting their death shot.

There were only two marksmen who did the shooting, each posted at opposite ends of the ravine.... I saw all of this for only a few moments. When I approached the ravine, I was so horrified by the sight, that I couldn't stay there very long. I saw three rows of corpses in the ravine, each ca.

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60 meters (ca. 180 ft.) in length. I couldn't see how many layers were already below the bodies in the gully. It was all so unbelievable, that I was not able to register all of the details.... The ravine was located about 150 meters (ca. 450 ft.) from the first piles of clothing, but it was impossible to see into the ravine from the piles of clothing and possessions left behind. Moreover, there was a gusty wind and it was also very cold. One couldn't hear the shots from inside the depth of the ravine.... I am still puzzled today that the Jews didn't try anything to escape or stop what was happening. New groups of people kept coming from the city to this field in the belief that they were being resettled." (pp. 66-69)

2. Statement by Kurt Werner, member of squad (Einsatzkommando) 4a on 28 May 1964 to West German prosecutors:

"The entire unit, except for the guards, were marched to the shootings at 6 AM. I sat on a truck. Everything at our disposal was put into service. We drove for about 20 minutes to the north. We stopped on a paved road next to an open field. There were innumerable Jews assembled there and a place had been set up, where the Jews had to deposit their luggage and clothing. About a kilometer further on, I saw a natural ravine. It was sandy soil. The ravine was 10 meters (ca. 30 ft.) deep, ca. 400 meters (ca. 1,200 ft.) long, and ca. 80 meters (ca. 240 ft.) wide.

After arriving at the execution site, I together with other comrades was compelled to go into this gully. It didn't take long before the first Jews were led into the gully. The Jews had to lie face down in the soil. There were three groups of marksmen in the gully, totalling about 12 men. Constantly new groups of Jews were led into the gully to where the marksmen stood. Each new group of Jews had to lie on the corpses of those shot before them. The riflemen stood behind the Jews and killed them with

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shots to the neck/head.... I spent the entire morning in the ditch and when I wasn't assigned to shooting, I would refill the chambers of the weapons with ammunition. We were ordered to leave the ravine at noon when our replacements arrived. In the afternoon, we were assigned to taking the Jews up to the ravine. The shooting lasted until 5 or 6 PM. We were then returned to our quarters and given a ration of alcohol that night." (pp. 69-70)

3. Operations report [Ereignismeldung] No. 101, Einsatzgruppe C, Kiev, dated 2 Oct. 1941:

"Sonderkommando 4a working together with the Staff and 2 units of Police Regiment south executed 33,771 Jews on 29th and 30th September 1941 in Kiev." (p. 69)

4. Operations report [Ereignismeldung] No. 128, 3 Nov. 1941:

"The difficulties of completing such a massive operation - especially the registration - were overcome in Kiev, only because the Jews were encouraged to report voluntarily for resettlement with our posters. Although we initially thought that only 5,000-6,000 Jews would show up, more than 30,000 Jews showed up as requested. Because of our skillful organization, they believed they would be resettled until moments before they were killed. Although 75,000 Jews have been liquidated until now, we are already positive that these methods will not provide a solution for the Jewish problem." (p. 70)

Translation from the German by Sybil Milton

Translations from Ernst Klee and Willi Dressen, "Gott mit uns": Der deutsche Vernichtungskrieg im Osten, 1939-1945 (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1989), pp. 117-36.

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1. Includes eyewitness account by Dina Pronitschewa of Feb. 9, 1957 to Soviet prosecutors, published later in the periodical Junost no. 8 (Aug. 1966):

"She went to read the orders. She read it through quickly and went away again. No one stood about for any length of time looking at these announcements, and few discussions took place...Her parents, her mother just home from a recent operation and still fragile, made her question: how would her mother be able to travel? The old folks were convinced that they would be placed in a train at Lukjanowka and deported to Soviet territory. Dina's husband was Russian, she had a Russian surname, and moreover, she didn't even look like a Jew. She considered the pros and cons, asked advice, pondered matters once again, and finally decided, that her parents should travel. Dina would accompany them, place them in the train, and remain behind with her children, whatever might happen.... (p. 121)

With the first ^ymorning light, she dressed, took her papers, and went to her parents nearby in Turgenevskaya Street. There were more people about than usual; all of them hurrying busily someplace.

She arrived at her parents home at 7 AM. The whole house was awake. They said farewell to the neighbors, promised to write, turned over the keys and contents of their home to these neighbors. The old folks couldn't carry very much. They had nothing valuable in any case, but took only the essentials and food with them. Dina carried their rucksack her back. They left exactly at 8 AM.... In Turgenevskaya Street and also in Artem Street, many people were already up and about. There was a crush of people with bundles, carts, cars, even trucks -- traffic was gridlocked, one could move a few inches and then stop again. It was like a muted demonstration, but one without flags, orchestras, or celebrations.

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... Dina wore a fur coat. She felt much too hot. Around noon, they reached the cemetery. She remembered seeing the brick wall and gate of the cemetery. Barbed wire was strung across the street at this point.... There was a chain of Germans and also Ukrainian police in black uniforms. The people filed single file through the controls, but no one returned. They left their belongings behind and stumbled forward en masse accompanied by whipping and curses of the guards. It made no sense at all. (pp. 122-23)

She placed the luggage in one pile to her left and the food in another pile on the right. Nothing looked like a train station here and although she didn't know what was happening, she instinctively felt that this was not a deportation transport..... To reassure her parents, she told them: "There are many different kinds of Germans, but in general they are cultivated and respectable people."... (p. 123).

Description of chain of soldiers, arrival at the ditch, chain of soldiers with dogs on leashes, walking into the pits unclothed as though made of wood....(p. 124-26)

....She feared to look at the person naked next to her. The number of unclothed people in the gully grew steadily. She no longer heard the screams or the gun shots. Dusk (nightfall) came. Dina came with the second group of ten people into the ditch. There was a wall on the left, small places for the riflemen on the right.... She began to dig in the sand with all her might. Although she was covered with other bodies, she didn't move at first. She didn't want to suffocate.... Her eyes were full of sand. It was darker than hell and the air was heavy....She crawled very slowly out of the pile of bodies through the whole night. She then found a bush at the edge of the gulley, where she could hide. She had hallucinations, imagining that her mother, father, and sister were walking past her....She crawled to a garbage dump, where she located scraps of paper and rags to cover herself.

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She discovered a small house nearby behind a gate early in the dawn hours. There were 20 soldiers at breakfast in the house. They offered her some clothing and a chance to escape. She thought it was a trap. Eventually she took the opportunity and fled to her sister-in-law's home, since her sister-in-law was Polish...."

2. The second report is by Jakow Abramowitsch Kapjer, who escaped Babi-Yar twice (once in 1941, the second time in 1943): pp. 133-34.

"On 29-30 September 1941, the Germans transported the prisoners by truck to Babi-Yar in order to execute them. I sprung from the truck on the way to Babi-Yar, but I couldn't hide....forced labor assignment....one of the few to escape on 29 Sept. 1943 from the prisoner detail burning corpses.

Summary and translation from the German by Sybil Milton

NAOMI: I think the first quotes are better. The German version of the Russian language material is stilted and third person and somehow the flavor of the originals never really come through.

Sources:

Anatoly Kutznetsov, Babi Yar (New York, 1967)

Ilya Ehrenburg, and others, The Black Book of Soviet Jewry (New York: Holocaust Library, 1981), pp. 3-12.

Ernst Klee and Willi Dressen, and Volker Riess, "Schöne Zeiten": Judenmord aus der Sicht der Täter und Gaffer (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1988) pp. 66-70. (see 4 translations above from postwar German judicial investigations and prosecutions)

Ernst Klee and Willi Dressen, "Gott mit uns": Der deutsche Vernichtungskrieg im Osten, 1939-1945 (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1989), pp. 117-36 (reports by survivors)

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Yitzhak Arad, Shmuel Krakowski, and Smuel Spector, ed., The Einsatzgruppen Reports (New York: Holocaust Library, 1989)