



**The Babi Yar Massacre in Kiev, September 29–30, 1941**

**Map 11**

## **BABI YAR**

One of the largest massacres perpetrated by members of the *Einsatzgruppen* took place just outside the Ukrainian capital city of Kiev. Tens of thousands of Jews were systematically massacred at Babi Yar, a ravine to the northwest of the city.

German forces entered Kiev in September 1941. During the first days of the occupation, several buildings used by the German army were blown up, apparently by the Soviet security police (the NKVD). The Germans blamed the Jews for the explosion and, ostensibly in retaliation, decided to kill the Jews of Kiev. At that time, there were about 60,000 Jews in the city. Detachments of the *Einsatzgruppen*, together with Ukrainian auxiliary units, were assigned to carry out the massacre.

In late September, the Germans posted notices requiring all Jews to report for resettlement outside the city of Kiev. Failure to report was made a capital offense. Masses of Jews reported and were directed to proceed along Melnik Street toward the Jewish cemetery and Babi Yar. Under guard, the Jews were directed to hand over all their valuables and to disrobe. As the victims moved into the ravine, they were shot

in small groups by *Einsatzgruppen* detachments. The massacre continued for two days. It is estimated that over 33,000 Jews were killed in this operation. In the months that followed the massacre, thousands more Jews were shot at Babi Yar. Many non-Jews, including Roma (Gypsies) and Soviet prisoners of war, were also killed at Babi Yar.

In July 1943, as Soviet forces appeared likely to recapture Kiev, the Germans attempted to destroy any trace of the crimes committed at Babi Yar. As part of *Aktion 1005*, which aimed to obliterate the evidence of mass murder all over Europe, the Germans forced prisoners to reopen the mass graves and cremate the bodies. Once this was done, the Germans killed the remaining prisoners. The Soviet army liberated Kiev in November 1943.

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