The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Kiev Honors Victims of Babi Yar Massacre

September 30, 2010

An elderly Ukrainian weeping during a rally commemorating victims of a Nazi massacre in Kiev's Babi Yar ravine. **Gleb Garanich**

KIEV — Hundreds of people gathered in Kiev to commemorate the 69th anniversary of the Nazi massacre of tens of thousands of Jews.

President Viktor Yanukovych, government officials and relatives of the victims laid flowers at the monument to those killed by the Nazis in the Babi Yar ravine.

More than 33,700 Jews were shot in Babi Yar over the course of two days, beginning Sept. 29, 1941, one of the most horrific killings of the Holocaust.

In the ensuing months, the ravine was filled with some 100,000 bodies, including those of non-Jewish Kiev residents and Red Army prisoners of the Nazis.

Mourning events also were being held nationwide.

One survivor of the massacre, Viktor Stadnik, said Wednesday that his mother thought that

they might be sent to Palestine as the Nazis rounded them up. "It would be great if we were taken to Palestine — it's warm there," he recalled his mother as saying as the Nazis were leading them to Babi Yar. Stadnik, who was 7 at the time, managed to escape, thanks to his Ukrainian neighbors.

"I cannot think about those days without tears. This crime against innocent people should never be forgiven," said Tamara Kovalenko, a 73-year-old Ukrainian whose aunt was killed together with her Jewish husband. Kovalenko said that her mother had been hiding a Jewish girl during the Nazi occupation.

The exact death toll at Babi Yar remains unknown. In 1943, as the Red Army approached to free Ukraine, the Nazis ordered Jewish prisoners to dig up the corpses and burn them.

For decades, the Soviets maintained silence about what happened in Babi Yar. Only after Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko drew international attention to the massacre with his 1961 poem "Babi Yar" did the Soviets put up a monument.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/09/30/kiev-honors-victims-of-babi-yar-massacre-a1847