

Panel: “Heresy and War”

Andrew Hakes

Title: “Babi Yar”

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Andrew Hakes is a senior at IPFW, majoring in History and minoring in Political Science and Psychology. Andrew is also working towards his Honors Certificate. This semester he will be studying in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and while there he will be conducting research for his Honors Project on Che Guevara. In order to study abroad, Andrew received the Honors Program Study Abroad Scholarship and the Generation Study Abroad Scholarship. Andrew’s interests in history are revolutions and Latin America during the Cold War.

Abstract

Babi Yar is a ravine outside of Kiev that the Germans used during World War II to dispose of the bodies of over 100,000 people they killed, including 33,000 Jews who were executed over a two day period in 1941. By the time the Nazis reached Kiev the policy towards Jews had become one of not hiding German actions, but instead openly committing violence against Jews. In the greater area of Kiev before the Babi Yar atrocity, the Germans had become more directly involved in the execution of Jews, rather than delegating the responsibility to local collaborators. This paper shows that the German Army was not completely separate from the execution of Jews, while also looking at the involvement of collaborating local populations in the extermination of Jews. This paper also shows the reaction of both collaborators and survivors during and after the war. Finally, this paper looks at the legacy of the Babi Yar in the Soviet Union, including both the German efforts to cover up their crimes and then the Soviet strategy of minimizing the significance of the mass executions, and lack of interest in commemorating the atrocity and its Jewish victims.

Bibliographical Note

Primary sources, like survivor testimonies, came from online collections such as the *Holocaust Research Project* and *Nizkor*, and books such as *The Unknown Black Book: The Holocaust in the German-Occupied Soviet Territories* (2008) and *The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization* (2008). Secondary sources drew from the rich historiography on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, including Y. Arad’s *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (2009), C. Browning’s *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942* (2004), J. Cang’s *The Silent Millions: A History of Jew in the Soviet Union* (1969), and M. Dean’s *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941-44* (2000).