

The Holocaust in Ukraine

Prior to the war, about 2,5 million Jews lived in Ukraine. In addition to be known as the founders of the Hasidic movement, Ukrainian Jews had also long been important actors in the economic and cultural development of the country. Antisemitism, however, was rife among the population, and many pogroms occurred in the prewar period.

Ukraine was invaded by the German troops in 1941. Soon after, special forces called *Einsatzgruppen* arrived with orders to kill civilians perceived to be enemies of Nazi Germany. They divided the local population in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, identifying the Jews and recruiting local collaborators. Most Jews in Ukraine were shot to death close to where they lived, not deported to distant camps. This extermination practice is often referred to as the "Holocaust by bullets." The executioners were German and Russian, but also Ukrainians. Scholars estimate at least one and a half million Jews were killed in Ukraine.

Text adapted by the Montreal Holocaust Museum
Source: Website of the exhibition Shoah 'Les fusillades massives des Juifs en Ukraine 1941-1944. La Shoah par balles' by the Mémorial de la Shoah (Paris):
<http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/upload/minisites/ukraine/index.htm>;
and USHMM article about Ukraine:
<https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/special-focus/ukraine>