

Babyn Yar Memorial Center for the Holocaust concept presented in Kyiv Culture

Posted by:

Posted on : 2017/11/24 19:00:39

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From RISU: On November 21, Shevchenko Kyiv University hosted a public discussion of the concept of the Holocaust Memorial Center Babyn Yar, according to ‘Yevreyski Novyny’ (Jewish news). A group of historians working on the concept of the Babyn Yar Memorial was led by Professor Karel Berkhoff [pictured], Professor at the Holocaust and Genocide Research Center in Amsterdam. He told what the museum would be like. The exhibition will include a story about the life of the Jews of Kyiv in the first decades of the twentieth century, their evacuation, and a detailed description of how the killings occurred. It is possible that the museum will place a model place of shootings. According to Berkhoff, for the first time in the museum practice, Soviet and German documents, describing the concentration camps and the ghetto will be combined. One more new element will be the international context of mass shootings. “Less than in two weeks after the shooting in Babyn Yar in Kyiv, 25 foreign correspondents were invited. This fact is not well known, but it is very eloquent. This means that the Germans felt secure and had no doubt it constituted a problem,” Berkhoff said. “The narrative offers a frank but balanced view of the manifestations of anti-Semitism among local people: Russians, Ukrainians and others. Many of these facts were previously unknown or silenced,” said Berkhoff. As for the responsibility for the pogroms in eastern Galicia in 1941, the concept of the museum underscores German interference and incitement. According to the historian, the most massive pogroms were committed mainly by the Germans, in particular by the SS Division "Viking". Berkhoff noticed that historical literature exaggerated the role of the OUN UPA ([Ukrainian Insurgent Army](#)) in the Holocaust, although, as the report said, the support of massacres by Ukrainian nationalists took place. The museum will pay attention to the phenomenon of salvation of Jews and Roma during the Holocaust and the cooperation of local residents with the Nazis. Berkhoff emphasized that collaborationism was not a specifically Ukrainian phenomenon – this was the case in all the occupied territories. As reported, on October 19, the Kyiv authorities, together with the Jewish community, finally approved the boundaries of the land plot in Dorogozhichy, where the Babyn Yar Memorial Center for the Holocaust will be built. The museum will be built on the site of an abandoned sports complex.

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*The article above appears through courtesy of the Religious Information Service of Ukraine.
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