

After The Pogrom In Kishinev



This photo was taken by my grandfather, Shmul Benderskiy, after a pogrom in Kishinev in 1903. The picture shows my grandfather's destroyed house, which used to house his tobacco factory ?Benderskiy and sons? and his tobacco shop. In 1903 there was the most horrible Jewish pogrom in Kishinev. It lasted three days. People said it was arranged by the Russian government. Many Jews were killed and many houses destroyed. The police didn't interfere. There were no policemen in the streets. About 600 Jews were killed. There was a high number of injured people, too. Later the police arrested those that were involved in the pogrom. They were brought to court, and some well-known lawyers and writers spoke against them. The famous Russian writer Vladimir Korolenko demanded the death sentence for the pogrom-organizers. But the verdict for them was a short-term sentence. My father and grandfather told me about this pogrom. We had quite a few pictures that my grandfather took after the pogrom, but they were all lost during the war and evacuation. I remember a picture of my grandfather's store with broken windows and a total mess inside. I knew that there was also a picture of our house after the pogrom. I asked my relatives about it, and later my brother sent it to me from Israel. There's one picture of our house and another one of the street with the bodies of our neighbors on the pavement. My father told me that my grandfather presented these pictures in court. My grandmother also fell victim to this pogrom. My grandfather was on business in the surrounding villages at the time. My grandmother was alone at home. She was beaten very severely by the pogrom-makers. They left her unconscious in the yard thinking that she was dead. She survived, but she had her backbone injured and spent the rest of her life in a wheel chair. She had a woman to look after her. My grandmother died in 1923. My grandfather took a lot of effort and spent a lot of money to reconstruct his factory and house after the pogrom.