

Isac Tinichigiu In Front Of The Police Station In Iasi



This picture was taken in Iasi, in 2001, when I took my son Paul with me to show him where I was born. I showed him the house where I was born, and also the police station where me and my mother were brought to in 1941. Paul asked me to lift up my hands when he took this picture; he said: 'This way I will always remember that we were treated like cattle?'. I brought my son here to this horrible place because I had to tell him the story of the massacre in Iasi, in 1941, when 11,000 Jews were slaughtered, some of them in this very courtyard. The massacre happened on 28th June [the pogrom actually took place on 29th and 30th June]. The number is still under debate, some claim there were only 4,500 - which they equal to 0. On the day before we had found out that in Abator, a Jewish neighborhood, several Jews were killed in their houses by Iron Guard members and hooligans. The next day - it was Sunday morning - a sergeant, Zamcanu, came into our courtyard and yelled: 'All Jews out of their houses!' We were taken out in the street and forced to march with our hands up. We were mainly women and children. We walked like that for five kilometers, to the police station. My mother was sick and couldn't hold her hands up; a policeman hit her with his rifle over the shoulders, so I went by her side and held her hand up. In the police courtyard they started giving tickets to women and children, which said 'free' and had been stamped, and they announced that every Jew that didn't have that ticket would be shot. I remember somebody started saying: 'He's a dirty gipsy; he's not a Jew! What is he doing here among us?', and pointed to my mother and me. The man knew me and started talking like this because he tried to save me from a very certain death. He succeeded. I never knew who he was. That was the great trick, because many men who had gone into cover early morning came of their free will, to get their 'free' tickets and they never came back: some were shot down in the police courtyard - about 500 men - and the rest were taken to the railway station, and forced to get on a train, 130-140 people in each wagon. The doors and windows were closed and nailed, so there was no air. After a day and a night they stopped to get rid of the dead and bury them in mass graves.

This went on and on until the town of Roman, where something very unusual happened. A lady, the president of the Red Cross Committee, imposed her will of giving water to the prisoners on the leaders of the convoy. Then the train went on from Iasi to Calarasi, where the rest of the men were forced to work on different estates. The Jewish communities, which keep an exact record in their books of the Jews in the synagogues, estimate that there were 11,000 people killed.