

Leonid Dusman At The Foundation Of The Memorial 'Jews - Victims Of The Holocaust' In Odessa



This is me, the first from left, at the foundation of the memorial 'Jews - victims of Holocaust' in Odessa. Next to me are the mayor of Odessa, Ruslan Bodelan, and Rabbi Avrom Wolf. The photo was taken in Odessa on 6th May 2001. In 1989 I read in the newspapers that an Association of Former Inmates of Ghettos and Camps was being established in our country. I took an active part in the organization of such a society, and thus an association was also established in Odessa in 1991. Anna Kelina, a doctor from Odessa, was elected first chairwoman. She's a very respectable lady. In the association I met Boris Gidalevich who compiled a Book of Memory about Jews who had perished in Odessa. I helped him to install memorials at the locations of mass executions of Jews in Odessa and Nikolaev region. Gidalevich moved to Israel in 1996. In 2000 the Association of Former Inmates of Ghettos and Camps took the lead in creating a memorial complex dedicated to the Jews who perished in Odessa in the course of its history: the victims of pogroms and the victims of the Holocaust. It was decided to install it in the former place of the 2nd Jewish cemetery, which had been removed in the 1960s. I continued to collect all data about those who had perished. I began to write a book of my memoirs. Or Sameach, a Jewish newspaper, published my memoirs. I took children from the Or Sameach school to the places of mass executions of Jews during the Great Patriotic War. After that the children wrote compositions, which were very touching. I sent lots of documents related to the extermination of Jews in Odessa region to Yad Vashem in Israel. This museum authorized me to collect these documents from the archives of our town. I collected some material and wrote a book, Remember and Prevent, on the basis of this material. It was published in Odessa in 2002. I don't go to the synagogue, but I think that my activities are of importance to the Jewish community in Odessa.