

Survey of Jewish History and Holocaust-Related Sites in Moldova
Initiated by Stuart Saffer, JDC Country Director for Moldova and Ukraine, in 2004.
Donated to CJA in 2021.

Place of execution of Jews in Pepeni

Type of object: Place of execution

Brief history:

On July, 13, 1941 all Jewish population (including the people, who had come from Balti, Telenesti and other places.), living at that time in the village of Pepeni, was brought to the building of local Primaria (Mayor office). In total there were approximately 300 – 350 persons. They were kept in the building three days without food and water. Among them there were children of 1 – 2 years old and pregnant women.

Under the order of the post-chief Ion Bordei on the third day in the evening the brutal murder began: several grenades were thrown through the window inside the building, and then the execution with rifles began. Some people tried to run away, but they were killed with whips and pales in the courtyard. The murder proceeded up to 1 – 2 o'clock in the morning, and then the corpses were brought during a night to the stone pit 4 kilometers from the village Pepeni to the southeast where had been buried. In total according to the eyewitnesses, the corpses of the killed people were buried in 4 tombs (natural channels of the pit).

Most of the murdered people were undressed and in an awful condition: with broken hands and legs, punched crania, without hands and legs.

Two children were rescued by miracle in that tragic night: Tolpolatskaia Sofia and her cousin Michael Tolpolatsky.

From Michael Tolpalatsky's memoirs:

« It was getting dark when they started to shoot us. Mother advised us to lie under the window from which the shoots were made. Zosia and I did so. We were lying with our backs to the wall and could see how our mums died from shots. In the beginning many people were crying and shouting, but soon the shouts stopped and we could hear only groans. Zosia and I went along the wall to other window guarded by an elderly man. My sister recognized him and said: «Uncle Ion, help us!» This man - Ion Hutsanu was a friend of her father. He looked round and said: «Jump, run along the street and move towards Copresti.»

We ran along the road to Copresti (nowadays it is called Gorodanesti).

The next few days the property of the murdered people was plundered and divided between the participants of the pogrom.

The place is: The place of execution and the burial place are not protected objects.

The size of the object: The burial place is a stone pit of the size 200 sq.m.

Access to the object: Free.

Features of the Holocaust period: the burial place is in 4 km from the village near the road Pepeni-Banesti.

Deliberate changes, which have occurred with object since the Holocaust time:
Now the pit is cultivated and surrounded with a field

Is there a monument or a sign: there is no any memorable sign. In 1971 under the initiative of Aron Zaslavsky, the kolkhoz chairman, the local people from the village Pepeni decided to erect a monument on the place where in July, 1941 the Jews - victims of fascism were brutally exterminated. The monument planned to be opened on July, 10, 1971 on the day of the 30th anniversary of this tragedy was created. But the communistic authorities did not allow to do it. Since then this monument is in the kolkhoz warehouse in the open-air.

Doctor Steve Makler (Greensboro, Northern Carolina, the USA) whose ancestors had come from Pepeni, allocated means for the installation of the monument. At the moment the Jewish Community of Balti is working for installing the monument.