

# POST-SOVIET JEWRY REPORT

April 2019 Editor: Judy Patkin

Assisting Jews in the former Soviet Union since 1975

## WARM HOUSE IN ZHOVTY VODY, UKRAINE

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Members of the Warm House gather in Zhovty Vody, Ukraine, in a new home and with a new host -Margarita Lebedinskaya.

APSJ staff met for over 20 years with the Zhovty Vody Warm House in the home of our dear friend, Lydia Grimberg, who recently died.



A Letter from the Warm House in Zhovty Vody, Ukraine:  
“Dear American friends!”

“Once again, our Warm House gathered, which this year changed its place. The hospitable, skillful mistress, Lydia Stepanovna Grimberg, suddenly passed away. We were coming to her for pleasant communication and wise advice, tasty treats and to admire the creation of her skillful hands - embroidery and knitting. We are grateful to her for the warmth she was giving us. We are grateful to all those who helped her maintain the warmth of this house. We hope for further cooperation with Tatyana and Yan Sidelkovsky, who are sincerely interested in our life, share our joys and our grief. We are confident that the traditions of the Warm Grimberg House will be multiplied and preserved in the hospitable home of Margarita Sergeevna Lebedinskaya. She is an interesting, sincere, energetic person, a wonderful organizer and promoter of Jewish culture and Jewish traditions.

We thank our American friends for your participation and all support. We wish you health, peace and success, and look forward to a new meeting with you.”

“On behalf of the Warm House,  
Lyudmila Yevseevna Buryak”

*Zhovty Vody Warm House  
Bobruisk Yiddish Club  
Update on Antisemitism  
Adopt-a-Bubbe in Bryansk*

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## BOBRUISK, BELARUS, YIDDISH CLUB



Members of the Bobruisk Yiddish Club celebrate their 10th anniversary in December, 2018. Solomon Gorash, who signed the letter below, is in the front row, third from left.

“We, the Yiddish language circle, congratulate you and your loved ones on the New Year 2019. We wish you health and well-being! We have always appreciated your friendly attitude towards us.

Therefore, on our anniversary - 10 years of the circle - we are glad to tell you about our work and achievements. We began by studying our traditions and spending Jewish holidays together. We celebrated the birthdays of circle participants, read and translated poems by Yiddish poets. We prepared and performed at city events in which the city’s Jewish community participated. Last year we read short stories in Yiddish based on a book about the ancient history of Jews. And of course the most impressive and unforgettable event for us was the celebration of the decade of our Yiddish circle, which took place in December 2018. Once again, congratulations on the upcoming New Year!

Circle of Yiddish Conversation Language.  
On behalf of the circle participants,  
Solomon Gorosh

Members of the Conversational Yiddish Circle are of different ages and with different levels of Yiddish. So, Anatoly Markovsky was three years old when the WWII began. Leaving occupied Bobruisk, his mother left him in the nearby village.

For three years he wandered under occupation, then an orphanage. Blonde hair, blue eyes saved him, and, most importantly, he was not circumcised. He always attends wanting to know the language of his ancestors.

Misha Erenburg came into the circle to hear the language spoken by his grandmother. We also have a music director, Raisa Zelenfroyd and we sing with pleasure in Yiddish.

The main consultant of the circle is Solomon Gorosh and his assistant Sofia Privalskaya. On the same day we celebrated the 90th birthday of Felix Yakovlevich Shklyar, the oldest member of the circle. He told the audience a lot from Bobruisk life.

We do not allow the Yiddish light to die out in our old Jewish Bobruisk!! With respect and gratitude, Faina Paley, head of the circle.”

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UPDATE ON ANTISEMITISM

The following items are part of e-mail messages received on antisemitism and human rights in the FSU.

**October 9, 2018  
Omsk, Russian Siberia**

The Supreme Court in Omsk determined that the Chief Rabbi of Siberia, Rabbi Asher Krichevsky and his family, would be expelled from Russia because of "Harm to state security." The process, which was held behind closed doors, remains confidential.

**October 14, 2018  
Kiev, Ukraine:**

Ukrainian nationalists and members of far-right radical groups marked the Defender of Ukraine Day with a procession with as many as 10,000 participants. Extremists from abroad, including Germans, Norwegians, Swedes and Italians from the extreme right, flock to Ukraine to take part. On October 15 they gathered in Kiev for the Paneuropa conference organized by the Ukrainian neo-Nazi Corps party. Political analyst Anton Shekhovtsov said, "Kiev has now become one of the major centers of European far-right activities."

Far-right sentiments exist in Ukraine, but these ultranationalist groupings attract little public support. Polls show that the combined vote of far-right presidential candidates amount to around 4 percent. Casual antisemitism and Jewish stereotypes persist in everyday life, but not a single recorded violent attack against a Jewish person has occurred in Ukraine since October 7, 2016, when a visiting Hasidic rabbi visited Zhitomir was beaten.

**October 15, 2018  
Kazan, Russia:**

Mikhail Skoblionok's office in Kazan was targeted with an exploding parcel. Both he and his female assistant were hospitalized. Skoblionok is president of Jewish Cultural Autonomy, a local non-governmental organization he has led since 2008. He founded and heads a company that sells oil products and is involved in construction.

**October 24, 2018  
Fastiv, Ukraine:**

Yuri Gorbinko, regional leader of the Svoboda far-right party, posted a picture on Facebook of a Cossack beating a Jew with a bloody flail along with a poem celebrating the threshing. The Jew, dressed in Hasidic style, is on his knees looking up in horror. A second figure, a disfigured blond-haired man, possibly representing Polish people, is seen lying in a pool of blood. A third person, possibly Russian, is holding up his arms in defense. Gorbinko wrote in the summer of 2017 that he regretted that Hitler did not "finish the job." Eduard Dolinsky, head of Ukrainian Jewish Committee, stated, "These are the results of impunity, passivity and the irresponsibility of law enforcement."

**January, 2019**

**Visit of President Petro Poroshenko to Israel:**

Leading Nazi hunter Efraim Zuroff has criticized Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko for ignoring Ukrainian complicity in the Holocaust during his visit to Israel, and for urging Jerusalem to recognize the Holodomor, a man-made famine in the 1930s that killed millions of Ukrainians, as a genocide. Speaking to the "Times of Israel" in the wake of Poroshenko's trip, Zuroff also took the president's Israeli hosts to task for not having challenged him publicly on Kiev's policy of honoring Ukrainian nationalist wartime heroes, many of whom were involved in massacres against Jews before and during WWII.

The birthday of leading Ukrainian nationalist Stepan Bandera, whose associates were involved in the murder of Jews following the Nazis' invasion in

June 1941, was recently declared a national holiday by the parliament in Kiev. On the very day Poroshenko visited Israel, a new statue was unveiled in Kiev for Simon Petliura, who historians blame for the murder of 50,000 Jews in the 1920s. Eduard Dolinsky, head of the Kiev-based Ukrainian Jewish Committee, told the "Times of Israel" that just before that a book by Sweden's Anders Rydell which simply mentioned Petliura's pogroms was banned for import into Ukraine.

**January 23, 2019, Europe (not Ukraine):**

Jews have a bleak present and future in Europe because of anti-Semitism. That was the unusually pessimistic view outlined by the continent's Jewish community leaders at the European Parliament's annual International Holocaust Remembrance Day event. European Jewish Congress President Moshe Kantor in a speech read for him raised the possibility of Jews leaving Europe amid rising extremism. And it wasn't just European Jewish leaders. Jewish Agency Chairman Isaac Herzog called the reality for European Jews "a raging crisis."

**February 15, 2019  
Kolomyia, Ukraine:**

Unidentified individuals painted anti-Semitic cartoons on a memorial wall in Ukraine that was made of ancient Jewish headstones destroyed by Soviet authorities. Graffiti found in the western city of Kolomyia shows a man tossing a Star of David in the trash. The memorial wall commemorates one of three Jewish cemeteries that existed there before they were razed and plundered.

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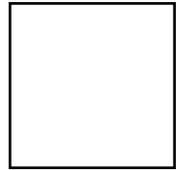
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# ACTION FOR POST-SOVIET JEWRY

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A portion of funding for Adopt-a-Bubbe is made possible by the Dnepropetrovsk Kehillah Project of CJP of Greater Boston



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### ADOPT-A-BUBBE IN BRYANSK, UKRAINE



Above: Alex Drozdov (front left) our new Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator in a new city for us, Bryansk, a port on the Sea of Azov in southern Ukraine. Seated on the right front is Tanya Sidelkovskaya, head of Adopt-a-Bubbe in Ukraine. This visit was made in August, 2018, to

meet Alex in person and see his clients. Seated in the rear are the Adopt-a-Bubbe clients, Raisa Tzvkina, born in 1950, and her nephew, Boris Moroz, born in 1960. Raisa Tzvkina never married and has no children. She is a Type II diabetic.