APSJ STAFF VISITS ADOPT-A-BUBBE IN UKRAINE

Left: 87-year-old Leah Shalomovna in Mariupol talks with Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator Nina Ivanovna in the kitchen. Leah’s daughter Sonya died four years ago in her 50’s. We saw photos of a grandson in Israel with three children. Leah has a large wooden mezuzah on her door, which was made many years ago by her husband. She told us that he was a very good carpenter. She received a gift of food from Adopt-a-Bubbe.

Right: Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator Sasha Slobodanik stands beside one of his 85 clients in Kirovograd - Emma Arnoldovna Melnitsanskaia. Emma never married and recently discovered a cousin who lives in Kiev. She worked for many years as a dentist near the Perm Labor Camp for recently released prisoners. Emma received a gift of food from Adopt-a-Bubbe.

Left, left to right: APSJ Staff member Galina Zilberstein talks with 80-year-old Zinaida Isaevna Bravatskaya Yekhinich, who was born in a small town near Donetsk. She now lives in Dniprodzerzhinsk. Zinaida is the eldest of three children, who were evacuated to Bashkria with her mother. They eventually moved to Rikitanka in the southern Urals, which was near where her disabled father worked.

Zinaida was given a small lamp from Adopt-a-Bubbe funds, which is just what she needed.
MORE ON APSJ STAFF VISITS IN UKAINE

Above, left: Entrance to the new Jewish Medical Clinic in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine. On the steps are Yan Sidelkovsky, Karen Rosner (APSJ) and Galina Zilberstein (APSJ Staff). This Clinic was built beside the Beit Baruch Assisted Living Center, and opened at the end of February, 2012. They serve both paying and non-paying clients of any age. The Clinic holds regular hours and is open into the evening. They have already examined the pensioners who live at Beit Baruch and discovered two with previously undiagnosed diabetes.

Above, right, left to right: Dr. Vera Volchik, who heads the clinic, Dr. Vitaly Nikolaievich and Yan Sidelkovsky.

During our recent trip, APSJ Staff participated in three Warm Houses Gatherings - in Dnipropetrovsk, Dniprodzerzhinsk and Mariupol.

The Warm House program allows about a dozen pensioners to gather in an apartment for a hot meal on a regular basis. Because pensions are so small, most retired people can no longer afford to feed guests. APSJ provides funding for each Warm House to cover the cost of food. The participants share in the shopping and cooking—many sharing their favorite recipes for Jewish holidays and birthday celebrations. In smaller cities with no rabbi or synagogue, this is often the only opportunity to gather for a Jewish holiday or share a Passover Seder. Many of the Warm House gatherings meet every month. Some meet on major holidays, such as Rosh Hashanah, Chanukah, Passover and Veteran’s Day, and they become an important support group for pensioners.
UPDATE ON ANTI-SEMITISM

The following items are a small part of the e-mail messages from the Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union, our umbrella organization.

April 4, 2012, Kiev, Ukraine: Aharon Alexander Gorshonov, a 25-year-old Yeshiva student was recently flown to Israel for further treatment. Gorshonov was last seen leaving the synagogue with a white kipa on his head on the 2nd night of the Pesach Seder. Jewish community members identified him at a Kiev hospital some 48 hours after his disappearance, where he was treated for serious head wounds.

Yaakov Zilberman, a member of the Jewish community and a representative of Zaka, an emergency response group, found him at the hospital. His face was bloodied and his skull shattered. He was recognized by his circumcision. Zilberman said Gorshonov went missing in the same area of Kiev where another member of the local Jewish community was brutally attacked by skinheads seven years ago.

March 23, 2012, Lviv, Ukraine: A Holocaust memorial was vandalized in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv. Oleksandr Nazar of Lviv’s Sholem Aleichem Jewish Culture Center said that red and blue paint had been smeared over the memorial. The paint has been mostly cleaned off and the police have launched an investigation.

March 14, 2012, Baku, Azerbaijan: Azerbaijan has arrested 22 people on suspicion of plotting attacks on the U.S. and Israeli embassies in Baku on behalf of neighboring Iran. According to the Azerbaijan National Security Ministry, 22 citizens of Azerbaijan were arrested for cooperating with the Iranian Sepah, referring to the elite Iranian Revolutionary Guards. The suspects were recruited from 1999 onwards and trained in the use of weapons and spy techniques at military camps in Iran to enable them to gather information on foreign embassies, organizations and companies in Azerbaijan and stage attacks. Firearms, cartridges, explosives and espionage equipment were found during the arrest.

March 12, 2012, Moscow, Russia: After last December’s elections to the State Duma, a number of Russian citizens went to studios of the web TV channel Dozd to tape a short message explaining why they and their country need free and fair elections. While speaking, each held a handwritten sign with his or her name and occupation.

Someone gathered still photographs of participants with Jewish last names and made a YouTube video set to a Jewish tune and accompanied by the statement, “We Russians don’t deceive one another.”

The obvious intention of this antisemitic smear was to show that the opposition to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin’s regime consists mostly of Jews and a handful of members of other ethnic groups, and that a true Russian patriot should not rock the boat but support the status quo.

March 8, 2012, Lithuania & Latvia: The “Legionnaires Day” march in Riga Latvia, organized by war veterans who fought for the Nazis, is due to take place on March 16. On March 11, neo-Nazis will hold a parade in Vilnius, Lithuania on Lithuania’s independence day. International petitions are being put together to urge the governments of Lithuania and Latvia to ban these upcoming marches through their respective capitals.

In Riga in a period of about 10 days, close to 30,000 Latvian Jews, including women, children and the elderly, were taken out of the city’s ghettos and shot into mass graves. In Lithuania, over 95% of the Jewish population perished in the Holocaust. In both states, local veterans freely collaborated with the Nazis in the killing.

February 17, 2012: Kazakhstan: Human rights campaigner Yevgeniy Zhovtis was released from a penal colony. He was sentenced in 2009 to four years in prison for manslaughter in a lethal car accident. Zhovtis was a prominent human rights campaigner and ex-head of the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law.

Zhovtis once again expressed his sorrow to the mother of the deceased Kanat Moldabaiyev and thanked her for the words of forgiveness. He also said that, “I have changed neither my views nor my attitudes towards what is happening in our country and other parts of the world. I am going to further stand on my vision of freedom and justice.”
Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation as allowed by law payable to Action for Post-Soviet Jewry

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ADDRESS_________________________
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ZIP CODE __________________
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Please charge my donation to:
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Above: Frieda Raisman, a Holocaust survivor of the Minsk Ghetto, shares documents with APSJ staff in Minsk. They are part of the documentation for German Claims Conference funds, which were not distributed to the survivors, but were given instead to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Survivors, who are now elderly and poor, are badly in need of financial support, but are unable to access these funds meant for them.

According to Raisman, there are approximately 100 Holocaust survivors left from the Minsk Ghetto, a group which is rapidly dying out. The Minsk Ghetto was particularly brutal, and many thousands did not survive.

A portion of funding for Adopt-a-Bubbe is made possible by the Combined Jewish Philanthropies and the Dnepropetrovsk Kehillah Project of the JCRC of Greater Boston.