PENSIONERS IN UKRAINE UNABLE TO AFFORD NUTRITIOUS FOOD

My Dear Bostonians,
I Roman Israelevich Massarsky, born in 1935, and my wife Larissa Viktorovna, born in 1940, want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your assistance that we receive on a regular basis. We and people like us are living and surviving in the midst of a true disaster. My wife recently had a leg amputated, followed by two strokes. She is in the cardiac section of the hospital now.

I can hardly move around the apartment. I am very sick and losing weight. The only comfort in our life is your support and care from Boris Rudman, our Adopt-a-Bubbe volunteer, who comes to visit us.

May G-d bless you for your good deeds.
With respect,
the Massarsky Family

Adopt-a-Bubbe provides important sources of protein, fresh fruit and basic cooking ingredients to over 1,000 elderly Jewish pensioners in Ukraine. Pensioners are not starving, but few can afford a balanced diet with meat or fish and fresh fruit. Even the price of potatoes is rising with inflation.

Right A typical food package from Adopt-a-Bubbe, which contains a whole chicken, oranges, cheese, butter and biscuits
ADOPT-A-BUBBE & ZAYDE CLIENTS VISITED LAST APRIL

Above: Vladimir Shifferman, born in 1936, lives in Melitopol, Ukraine. He complained of being paralyzed and has the beginnings of bedsores. A special mattress topper donated to APSJ was delivered to him on the staff’s Spring trip to visit Adopt-a-Bubbe or Zayde coordinators and clients.

Vladimir has been an invalid since he had a stroke in 2005. He has a Foley catheter and was using an inhaler for asthma—probably a unit we had recently sent.

During WWII, Vladimir was in Tajikistan with his mother. His father was evacuated with his factory and came back after the war. The father died in 1979. His mother was a high level communist and died at age 86 in 1991. There are no brothers or sisters.

Vladimir sits in despair. He lives on the 4th floor of a building with no elevator, so never goes outside. A son who lives in Melitopol comes and moves him from his bed to a chair.

Below: Some of Vladimir’s medicine, on which most of his $150 pension/month is spent.

Above, left to right: Ida Yakovlevna Frankel, born in 1923, with Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator in Kirovograd Elena Vishnevetskaya, Karen Rosner from APSJ, and our translator from the U.S. Faina Gendina.

Ida turns 90 next January. She has two cousins in the U.S.—one in Ohio and one in Phoenix, AZ. Two of her mother’s brothers emigrated. Ida traveled to the U.S. in 1979. Her husband died in 1978 at age 71. She collected her vacation days for the trip.

Ida’s daughter, Rita Dulina, was born in March, 1947 and is 66 years old and still works as a club receptionist. Her grandson is a 2nd group invalid from an army injury. A granddaughter studies English and German at a Kiev Language Institute.

Ida’s pension is $152/month. She has a 50% discount for rent and utilities from her WWII experience. She spent the war years in Uzbekistan, where her parents died—her father from malaria and her mother from a fever.

A food package for Ida contained chicken, bananas, apples, buckwheat, sugar and butter. This is what Ida had asked for from Adopt-a-Bubbe.
The following items are part of e-mail messages received on antisemitism in the FSU.

January 24, 2013, Ukraine: Svoboda, a Ukrainian party which holds 38 seats in parliament has a troubling record when it comes to Jews. Svoboda MP Igor Miroshnichenko provoked a scandal in December when he called Ukraine-born, American Jewish actress Mila Kunis a “Zhid,” an offensive word used to insult Jews and employed by the Nazis during the Holocaust in Ukraine.

Svoboda leader Oleg Tyahnybok defended the statement that there was nothing offensive about the term. He said, the word ‘Zhid’ is a common Slavic definition for Jews in most of Europe. The Jewish community of Ukraine disagrees and launched an international campaign to publicize the growth of antisemitism in Ukraine.

Since it was established in 1991, Svoboda has appealed to Ukrainian nationalists and often described Jews and Russians as enemies of the State and the people.

March, 2013, Ukraine: According to Jewish News, a news Website about Ukraine, posters containing profanities and calls for violence against Jews, who were referred to as trash, were signed by Svoboda. Svoboda is a nationalist movement with prominent members who have been accused of antisemitism.

April, 2013. Cherkassy, Ukraine: An April 6 rally in Cherkassy turned violent when six men took off their jackets to reveal T-shirts emblazoned with the words, “Beat the Kikes” and “Svoboda.” One person injured at the rally was Victor Smal, a lawyer and human rights activist. Smal was kicked and beaten until unconscious.

June, 2013, Ukraine: Two leaders of Ukraine’s ultranationalist Svoboda Party have been banned from entering the U.S.—Oleg Tyahnybok and Igor Miroshnichenko.

February 11, 2013, Siberia: Prosecutors in Siberia reportedly indicted a Russian citizen for inciting violence against Jews and quoting from Hitler’s “Mein Kampf.” A 65 year old man from Minusinsk in Krasnoyarsk region founded an antisemitic neo-Nazi cell called Minin and Pozharski People’s Militia. He faces charges of making appeals for public disorder and inciting ethnic hatred, punishable by up to two years in prison for each charge.

February, 2013, Siberia: A leaflet calling for the Jews of Abakan to report to a local train station for deportation was discovered on the front door of the city’s Jewish community center. The leaflet reportedly read, “Those who fail to report for deportation will be shot.”

February 17, 2013, Moldova: The Union of Moldovan Authors reportedly nominated Paul Goma, a Romanian author known for antisemitic writing, for the Nobel Prize in Literature. Iosif Belous, vice president of the East European Association of Former Prisoners of Ghettos and Concentration Camps, said that Goma’s claim to fame is denying the Holocaust, falsifying historical facts and antisemitic attacks. Goma suggested that Jews are guilty of the Holocaust, and a 1940 massacre in Dorohoi where 53 people were murdered was a retaliation by Romanian troops against Jews as an answer to Jewish aggression.

February, 2013, Ulyanovsk Russia: Vandals smashed a Holocaust memorial outside the Ulyanovsk Jewish community center, near the city of Kazan. The memorial, was a menorah inaugurated during the international 2011 festival of Jewish culture in Ulyanovsk. According to a report by the Interfax news agency, they smashed the menorah after they failed to enter the adjacent Jewish community center.

March, 2013, Mykolaev, Ukraine: A swastika and neo-Nazi symbols were spray painted on a monument in Mykolaev near Odessa to the late Lubavitcher rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

July, 2013, Derbent, Dagestan: Chabad Rabbi Ovadia Isakov was shot and seriously wounded in an apparent antisemitic attack as he left his car and headed into his home. After undergoing surgery in Derbent, he was flown to Petah Tikva’s Bellinson Hospital in Israel. Rabbi Isakov is reportedly in serious but stable condition. Police have narrowed the suspects to one of three possible attackers. Rabbi Isakov was attacked once before, in 2007, when his home was vandalized while his family slept. Isakov has been released from hospital.
Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation as allowed by law payable to Action for Post-Soviet Jewry.

NAME____________________________
ADDRESS_________________________
CITY__________________ STATE_____
ZIP CODE __________________
E-Mail ___________________________

Please charge my donation to:
[ ] VISA       [ ] MasterCard
[ ] American Express     [ ] Discover

Acct#___________________________
Exp. Date mm/yy____________________
Signature _________________________

[ ] $1,000    [ ] $500    [ ] $100    [ ] $50
[ ] Other _________

Above: Members of an Orthodox congregation in Bobruisk, Belarus, visited last April. APSJ has provided funds for several years to hire a nurse to make home visits. This has been a major priority for this community.

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.