

Berta Mazo

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St. Petersburg

Russia

Interviewer: Marina Denissyeva

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Berta Evseevna Mazo is an amazing person. Recently she celebrated her 90th birthday, but she retained the use of her faculties. She is still very emotional and mentally agile. Berta lives with the family of her elder daughter in a small cozy apartment in the center of St. Petersburg. As she is in poor health, she never leaves home alone. Nevertheless Berta loves theater and does her best to get there as often as it is possible. During conversation it seems that Berta revisits everything she tells about. And her memoirs are filled with emotions.

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My family background

I was born in 1916 in Krucha shtetl of Vitebsk region [now Belarus]. My parents were Yevsey Yakovlevich Mazo and Maria Efremovna Merport. In fact I know nothing about my ancestors. I never saw my great-grandparents, and nobody told me anything about them.

My paternal grandfather's name was Yakov Samuilovich Mazo. I do not know where he was born. He died in 1930s in Leningrad. And my paternal grandmother's name was Lubov Mazo. I do not remember her patronymic, I also have no information about the place of her birth, but to my opinion, she came from Poland. She died earlier than grandfather: in 1928 in Malaya Vishera [a small town near St. Petersburg]. Our family moved there from Krucha when I was under 3 years old. There my grandmother and grandfather had got a house. They used to follow the plough and earned their living by agriculture (I think so, because in fact they had got no profession). I remember that they had got a large garden. In that garden there were different trees, including apple-trees. They kept a cow. My paternal grandfather was a handsome man with a long beard. He knew Jewish history, Yiddish and Hebrew very well, therefore people in the synagogue held him in high respect. He used to read much; he had got a lot of Jewish books, including different prayer books. I still keep some of them at home. Children used to come to our place to study Hebrew, including me and 4 my cousins. It was not a school, he taught children for his delectation (nothing else). We studied Hebrew (it was linear learning), and I remember some words till now.

My paternal grandparents were very religious. They spoke both Yiddish and Russian with each other. My grandmother was a housewife; she was a real cordon bleu. At their house there was a Russian stove [1](#), and she baked there wonderful rolls (I liked them very much!). There was no need in assistants, because grandparents had got 3 daughters, and all of them helped about the house. As far as I remember, there was no electricity or running water. They observed all Jewish traditions, including kashrut. They attended synagogue and celebrated Jewish holidays. Grandparents wore everyday clothes (grandmother usually put on a skirt and a jacket, and she did not wear a wig). They never discussed political problems, and were members of no organizations. In Malaya Vishera there was a large Jewish community: Jews of different professions lived in different city districts. Of course my grandparents communicated with other Jews. Among them I remember a dentist (he lived with his family in a two-storied house near the river) and a therapist. I do not remember their neighbors, because grandparents' house stood apart from others and their next-door neighbors lived rather far from it.

Parents of my mother lived in Ukraine (in Kharkov). They moved there from Krucha of Vitebsk region. My maternal grandfather's name was Afroim Merport. My maternal grandmother's name was Fruma Merport. I do not know where they were born. They both died before the war burst out. They had got an apartment in Kharkov, but I can't recall it very well, because I visited them in Kharkov rarely. When I became a student, I went to Zaporozhye for practical training, and on my way there I visited my maternal grandparents in Kharkov. I remember that grandfather worked: once he came to our place on business trip. I do not remember his profession exactly, but I know that he was engaged in something connected with timber-rafting. And my maternal grandmother did not work, she was a housewife.

Yes, my both grandmothers were housewives: they had got a lot of children and it was necessary for them to cook meals for everyone! My maternal grandparents were less religious, than parents of my father. They used to wear up-to-date clothes, but observed kashrut and celebrated all Jewish holidays. Their neighbors were very good people (not Jews, as far as I remember). Those neighbors had got a girl, whom we made friends with. Unfortunately I know little about my mother's parents: she did not tell me much about them.

I was born in 1916 and was under 3 when we left Krucha, therefore I remember nothing about the place. But I remember that on our way through Minsk [the capital of Belarus] we went out from the train. We saw people in German uniform on the platform. Probably Mom explained me that they were German, because I remember well myself shouting 'Nemtsy, nemtsy! (Germans, Germans!)' Probably I pronounced those words assonant with German 'Nimm, Nimm! (take, take!)', because those soldiers laughed and ran after me. Mom told me that story. We arrived in Malaya Vishera and lived there till 1928. I lived with my parents separately from my paternal grandmother and grandfather.

My father's name was Yevsey Yakovlevich Mazo, and my mother's name was Maria Efremovna Merport. Daddy was born in 1883, and Mom in 1893 (she was 10 years younger). They both came from Krucha shtetl. They got acquainted in Krucha and then got married. I remember I read one of old letters that '...Yevsey is going to marry Maria...' Most probably they had their wedding ceremony as was customary (no chuppah).

My Mom was a very beautiful woman and a good housewife. Among her traditional dishes there were tsimes [2](#), stewed carrots, and cholnt [meat with potatoes]. And she baked tasty pies. Later I started baking traditional karavay (round loaf) [traditional kind of pastry] myself, all my family members liked it very much. They used to ask me about it, and at present my daughters do it themselves. Here is the recipe: pour sunflower-seed oil into a deep frying pan and put the prepared small pies in it, side by side. The small pies cake together and make one big pie consisting of small pies. Later it is good to eat it dividing small pies from the big one.

In Malaya Vishera we lived not richly, but we had got a cow - our real mother. We called her Burenka. Parents stored up fodder for her, let her out to fields, met her back, and milked. I was brought up milk-fed. In my childhood I was a plump child with rosy cheeks, and my aunt, Liya Yakovlevna called me a bun. We lived in one big room. Grandfather had got a small shop (he sold different small items there), but the shop had different entrance. We also had got a kitchen, but no bath-room (we used to wash in the river). There was a hayloft, where we kept hay for our cow. Our furniture was ordinary. There was no water supply and we heated the house by means of stove. Certainly, we had got no assistants: everything was made by ourselves. My parents had neither an orchard, nor a vegetable garden.

At home we had got a lot of different books, including fiction, science, and religion. My Mom was an educated person (but I do not know in what sphere). She worked in a library, therefore our family members read much: she made us free of her library. I read much, especially fiction. Till now I remember by heart several fragments from Eugeny Onegin [the best known poem by Alexander Pushkin [3](#)]. My parents also read newspapers regularly, but I do not remember which ones. For the most part my parents spoke Russian, but they knew Yiddish and spoke it to each other when it was necessary to keep something from me. Nevertheless they celebrated all Jewish holidays, including Sabbath. Kashrut was not strictly observed, Daddy visited synagogue not often (the same with Mom). Parents were not active members of the Jewish community, they were ordinary persons of narrow interests.

Parents never discussed political problems at home, but I remember that they held Lenin [4](#) in great respect. And when he died, it was very terrible: steam locomotives hooted; people showed fussiness. In Malaya Vishera there was a club, parents liked to go there to watch concerts. About military service of my father I know only that he served as a musician somewhere in the south (in Tashkent [the capital of Uzbekistan] region): he played the trumpet. Sometimes parents left Malaya Vishera to visit Leningrad, later they started taking me with them.

At that time my cousin Alexander already lived in Leningrad. He was a lawyer and lived in Belinsky Street. We often visited him; I often stayed at his place. My cousins were very nice to me, I was their only sister. They were very cheerful and loved music (especially Lasar, my elder brother). They took me to theatres, for instance to the Theater for Young Spectators and Maryinsky Opera and Ballet Theater. My cousins Lasar, Solomon, Alexander and Grigory were sons of my aunt Bella Yakovlevna and her husband Efim Shlionsky. Parents kept in touch with all my aunts: Liya Yalovlevna also lived in Belinsky Street (she was a doctor), and Anna Yakovlevna lived in Sestroretsk [a suburb of Leningrad], she worked in a drugstore as the pharmacist. For some period of time she lived with us at our place. All of them were my father's sisters. They all finished some technical school in Vitebsk [a town in Belarus]. We often met together on different occasions, went

for a walk together. Anna Yakovlevna and Liya Yakovlevna did not get married.

Daddy also had got 2 younger brothers Moissey Yakovlevich and Israel Yakovlevich. Moissey worked with peltry-ware. He had got no children. Israel lived with his family in a small town near Vitebsk and worked in a drugstore. He had got a son Semen.

My mother had got 3 sisters (Rachel Efremovna, Liya Efremovna, and Mera Efremovna) and a brother Moissey Efremovich. Rachel was my favorite aunt, we were knit together by common interests. She was killed by Germans in 1941. Liya lived in Sverdlovsk, she had got no children. Mera and her husband Alexander Nezhevenko lived in Novosibirsk, he worked there at some institution as a manager of a household. They had got a son Oleg. Moissey died before the war of stomach cancer. He had got a daughter Bella (her husband's name was Vladimir Karetnikov). Their daughter Elena Vladimirovna lives now in St. Petersburg, and their son Yury Vladimirovich, a doctor lives in the Far East.

In Malaya Vishera I did not attend kindergarten. Later I became a pupil of an ordinary school (there were no Jewish schools). I played with my schoolmates, read much, but when my younger sister appeared, I was engaged in taking care of her. I remember that together with my classmate we went to buy ice-cream, and there on cornets we found different names written down (it was funny!). In Malaya Vishera authorities often arranged cheerful fairs with different contests and Petrushka [a national comic personage] shows. In the summer we used to swim and bask in the sun. I remember how I learned to swim: Daddy bought 2 wind-balls and tied them together. I went to swim. I swam, and swam, and swam - and suddenly noticed that my balls floated away, but I was still swimming! That was the way I learned to swim.

For the most part it was my Mom who took care of me. At school literature was my favorite subject. We studied German language. Our school principal Bashmachnikov was very good. He was a very interesting person. He held studies of theatrical circle, I attended it and we often appeared on stage. I also took part in performances: I recited poems. Some of them I remember till now, for example, a fable by Demyan Bedny [a Soviet poet] Christ Has Arisen! The fable told about a cunning priest:

A cunning priest Ipat was afraid to loose his money. One night he put his money into a trunk and hid it behind the altar. He wrote on it 'This trunk contains Christ's body'. But an artful sexton took away the priest's money and added to the inscription the following: 'There is no Christ's body here, because Christ has arisen!' A diddler deceived another diddler!

There also was a circle for amateur photographers. In our class there were Jewish pupils, but the atmosphere was always very friendly. I keep no negative memories. I was engaged only in studies at school and circles and helped Mom about the house. I can't recall very well my school friends from Malaya Vishera, except Lyalya and another girl with whom we went to a New Year party. After school I used to spend time with my cousins.

Later we moved to the house on the opposite side of the street. Family of the well-known bass singer Efrem Flaks lived there. My Mom was a friend of his sister Maria Borissovna, and I was a friend of his little son Boris. They were Jews, but not very religious.

In 1927 my sister Serafima Mazo was born. When we moved to Leningrad, I was a pupil of the 5th form. It happened in 1928. Grandmother and grandfather remained in Malaya Vishera, and after grandmother's death in 1929 grandfather moved to our place. He died before the war and was buried at the Preobrazhensky cemetery. We lived in Leningrad in a large two-room apartment until we left for evacuation (in 1941). In one room we lived four together with our parents and my sister, and the other room was occupied by my aunt Anna Yakovlevna (you remember that she was not married).

Growing up

In Leningrad I studied at a very good school near the October concert hall. The school was rather interesting. Our teacher of physical culture was Ivan Edmundovich Kokh. He also taught fencing at the College of Physical Culture named after Lesgaft, fencing was his profession. He was a remarkable teacher. I also remember our teacher of literature, she always created a friendly atmosphere in the class. At school I had a friend (we are still friends) Raisa Lukoshkova, nee Bleksmit. In our class there were several Jews. I remember Sonya Kamenkovich: she often invited us to her place, she played piano, and we sang. By the way, our singing-master was also very good. Later she married Alexey Antonov, a chief engineer at the Space Equipment Corporation. Now they live in Moscow and we keep in touch.

Besides my school studies, I was engaged in music lessons: a teacher came to our place. Later my sister started studying piano with Klara Efimovna Stolyar. My sister was talented and quickly left me behind, though she was younger than me. So I gave it up. My friends and I spent free time skating in the Tavrichesky garden [a big garden in the center of St. Petersburg] or preparing for school parties: we usually put different performances on the stage (once I recited Christ Has Arisen there!). Together with my parents we used to go to Sestroretsk for summer vacation (later I started coming there with children). Once when I was a pupil of the 7th form, I was in a pioneer camp [5](#). It was situated near Luga [a suburb of St. Petersburg]. There was a large lake and a small part of it was enclosed for little children. As for us, we used to get out of it and swim to the opposite bank of the lake (it was great!). Our PT teacher swam together with us. On the opposite side of the lake there was a tower, all children used it to jump down into the water. I was very much afraid of diving and never did it, though children tried to persuade me. A friend of mine was very good in diving. At that camp I was some sort of a pioneer leader.

Living in Leningrad, we continued celebrating all Jewish holidays. For Pesach we always bought matzot and did not eat bread (by the way at present we also try to observe this tradition). I always visited synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. My favorite holiday was Simchat Torah. It is the last day of Torah readings: Jews carry Torah scrolls and dance everywhere, even in the streets. I consider it to be the most cheerful holiday. Inna, a daughter of my cousin finished a choreographic school and used to dance at Simhat Torah. At present she works at LENFILM [a film studio in St. Petersburg]. And her elder sister Natalia works at the Conservatory. They are children of Lasar Efimovich, who was a lawyer. He was a very interesting and clever person. His wife's name was Marina Stepanovna Kuindzhi. And Solomon Efimovich was a pharmacist. Some time they lived in Sestroretsk and worked there. Alexander Efimovich (whom I loved very much!) graduated from the Polytechnical College, mechanical faculty. And Grigory Efimovich was lost during the war.

I finished my school and entered the Polytechnical College, faculty of industrial transport. At the College we often arranged dances, and I liked to dance very much. I also remember that when we were students of the 1st course, they taught us to march. Those studies were only for girls and other students called us Death Battalion (as a joke). In summer we used to go for practical studies. Once we (about 15 students) went to Magnitogorsk, there at a metal works we were engaged in time-keeping. We also went to Zaporozhye [in Ukraine], there we did the same, moving by steam locomotives wigwag.

During the war

I got acquainted with my husband Mikhail Borukhzon at our College (he was 2 years older than me). He was born in 1914 in Ukraine (in Varnavitsi shtetl). Later his parents together with him moved to Vinnitsa [a town in Ukraine]. His father's name was Akiva, and I do not remember his mother's name. In Vinnitsa he finished a Jewish technical school, where he studied Yiddish. He knew Yiddish very well and considered it to be his mother tongue. We got married after graduation from the College, in 1939. I worked at the PROMTRANSPROEKT institution [a designing organization for transport industry]. In 1940 my Mom died. Our elder daughter Mara was born in 1941. In summer of 1941 we rented dacha near Tosno [a suburb of St. Petersburg]. At that time Daddy worked in Tosno, and my husband worked in Kolpino. War burst out when my elder daughter was about 5 months old. We left almost everything and managed to escape before Germans occupied Tosno. We went to evacuation with my sister (she was 13 at that time), my baby daughter and my Daddy.

We went from Tosno in a heated goods van. [A heated goods van was a freight car adapted for transportation of people.] There were two-tiered plank beds in the van. Emotional shock resulted in disappearance of my breast milk, therefore it was necessary to take it from special canteens on our way, warm it and give to my daughter. We arrived in Perm. Initially we had to go to Chelyabinsk with my factory coworkers, but we went to Perm, because our neighbor and her family had moved there earlier and wrote us that it was very good to live there. At first we could not find her there, but then I met her near the railway station by chance. She took us to her place for a while. Not to lose touch with my husband, we decided that he would write us to Perm (to be called for). And you probably know that Mariinsky theatre was also evacuated from Leningrad to Perm. By the way, many years later I got to Perm on business trip and found it to be changed much.

Soon after arrival I found a small room for rent and we moved there. It was situated very far from the center. Therefore it was necessary to walk long to reach the canteen and get milk for my daughter.

Our room turned to be very cold: the stove did not function and the window was broken. That winter there was terrible frost. My daughter was a baby and I had to wash her linen in cold water. The only plus was that the linen was frozen and my baby got it extremely clean. It was no good to live in that room, therefore I started searching for something else. It appeared to be not easy task: all places were occupied already. At last I found an apartment very close to the center and rather warm, but again it was told to be occupied. Then I went to the Communist Party Committee and explained that I had to take care of my sister and a little daughter and described awful conditions we lived under. Then they allowed us to move there. Owners of our new apartment had got little children, so my sister cheered up. There I managed to unswaddle my daughter for the first time,

and she began to stir her arms and legs (before that she was swaddled all the time). Soon she started walking. So in the new apartment it was much better for us. On our way to Perm we got acquainted with Emma, a woman also going to Perm with her little daughter. Emma was a doctor. In Perm she began working and helped us very much: she wrote prescriptions for infant food. At the special canteen I received milk, porridge, kissels, etc. It was enough to feed both my daughter and my sister.

Later I became a school teacher. I taught drawing. At the school lunchroom I used to take meals (they had very good products: different sausages, second courses, etc.). I brought meals home and we ate it. At that school I worked till spring of 1942, but then we had to leave for Sverdlovsk. It happened because my husband was transferred from Izhorsky plant [a large diameter pipes plant] to Uralmash [a heavy machine production facility]. He visited us in Perm on his way to Sverdlovsk, but he could not take us with him at that moment. So we moved to Sverdlovsk when he settled in the new place. His apartment was very small, but later we received a new room in the attic. At that time all attics were equipped for habitation. Our room was about 16 square meters large and we lived there five together. We had a round stove for heating. The room next door was occupied by a woman with a daughter: very pleasant people, not Jews. We made friends with them. On a lower floor there was situated a military school. Every morning its cadets sang a song 'My dear Belarus, my beloved Ukraine!' My Mara learned it by heart and sang it, too.

In 1944 I gave birth to my 2nd daughter (we still lived in the attic). Lubov was a child full of play: all days long she stood holding on to the back of her bed and shaking it. Later (at last) we got a good apartment in a good house of Sverdlovsk (on the 3rd floor). There were 2 large rooms, balconies, central heating, and a bathroom. Things got better. There we had a neighbor who kept goats. Goats spent day time in the shed near our house, but every evening our neighbor dragged them into our bathroom, because she was afraid they could be stolen. One night one of her goats chewed up our linen put out to dry. We also got a small garden-plot, but we managed to grow nothing there, there were only mosquitoes. Later we received another one and cultivated potatoes, carrots, onions - a lot of vegetables.

After the war

Members of our family started their way back home (to Leningrad) in 1948. Serafima went first. She settled at my aunt Liya in Belinsky Street. She entered the Leningrad College of Foreign Languages, which was situated in Smolny [Smolny is a complex of buildings in St. Petersburg used as a residence of the city administration]. I remember that at that time we sent her potatoes from Sverdlovsk. Daddy was the next one to leave for Leningrad. He found out that our apartment was occupied by some people, but he managed to evict one room from its unlawful possessor. So we returned to Leningrad to that room. My husband remained in Sverdlovsk for some time, but at last they called him back to Leningrad.

During the war from our relatives there were killed my aunt Rachel, my cousins Grigory (he was lost at the front line) and Israel. When we arrived in Perm, we met there my cousin Bella Moisseevna with her daughter and son. My maternal grandparents died before the war burst out. Mera and her husband Alexander Nezhevenko left for Novosibirsk. Liya was in Sverdlovsk. Rachel and her husband Vladimir lived in Kharkov: her husband hid her from Germans, but someone gave her up, and Germans killed her. I know nothing about the fate of Vladimir.

So among my relatives only aunt Rachel was killed because of her nationality. Among my husband's relatives we lost his parents and his sister (her name was Rachel, too). They lived in a small town Shpikov [in Ukraine]. In the beginning of the war they were ready to leave, but Germans got them off the train. It happened probably in 1942. We got to know about it only in Sverdlovsk: we received a letter. I read it and hid: I was afraid to show it to my husband. Later he found it by chance and cursed me out for my silence. Several years later we (together with my children) visited cemetery in Shpikov: there we found common graves and a monument. In Shpikov my husband's cousin lived with her family and we often visited her in summer before the war burst out.

While we were in evacuation, a family from a destroyed house lived in our apartment in Leningrad. Almost no furniture remained in it. Later a husband of the woman died, and she remained alone in one of our rooms. Of course, it grieved me to see the changed city after our return: I saw a lot of destroyed houses. I know not much about the destiny of my college friends: some of them left, some of them remained in Leningrad. Victor Zhuk, for example, survived during the blockade of Leningrad, and his mother died.

We returned to Leningrad and at first I did not work, but later I started working and at last came to PROMTRANSPROEKT and worked there until my retirement on pension. My elder daughter became a schoolgirl. Daddy went on working (he died in 1952). And my sister studied at a college. Later she got married to a Jew. His name was Vladimir and by now he already died. Vsevolod was the only son of them. My sister taught English language at the Radio Polytechnical School.

We all lived in one room: not large, with 2 big beautiful windows. Our neighbors Elena Mironovna Chashnik and her parents lived in the same house, but later they moved to Petrogradskaya side [a district of St. Petersburg].

All our relatives from Ukraine left for America and live there now. We never visited them, but corresponded with each other. Distant relatives of my father live in Israel. Maria, a doctor works near Haifa [a city in Israel]. My cousin Alexander graduated from the Polytechnical College and was sent to Moscow. There he got married. I visited him several times.

I was in Israel only once (in 1996): when I accomplished 80 years, I was invited by my friend Serafima Epstein. Unfortunately she is not alive now; she was 10 years older than me. We were good friends. When she lived in Leningrad, I often visited her. She lived in a large apartment with her parents and a little son.

We always tried to bring our children up in the spirit of culture, to make them useful for our society. We often visited concerts at the philharmonic society, different museums and observed all holidays with great pleasure (including Jewish ones: we even made matzot ourselves).

After school my elder daughter Mara entered the College of Intercommunications named after Bonch-Bruевич. There she got acquainted with her future husband. Later they worked together at a plant. And my younger daughter Lubov entered the Radio Engineering Technical School №1. Later Lubov became a musician: she graduated from the Conservatory. Her husband Yakov Gull is a research worker in the sphere of biology. My daughters had got one son each. Mara's son is a musician (a violinist), and Lubov's son is a museum worker. My elder grandson had got 2 children (a son and a little daughter), and my younger grandson had got 1 son. So I have got 3 great-

grandchildren.

After the end of the war we went on keeping in touch with our relatives. Political situation did not have great influence upon us. Everything was quiet and stable at our working places. We kept an eye on political events, but never discussed them at home. Neither me nor my husband (he was always held in great respect by his coworkers) ever came across any manifestations of anti-Semitism.

We continue keeping in touch with our relatives in America: recently they sent us very interesting photos by e-mail.

I am in touch with members of the Jewish community. While I was able, I often visited Hesed Avraham Welfare Center [6](#): studied Yiddish, attended interesting concerts, took part in different excursions.

Glossary:

1 Russian stove

Big stone stove stoked with wood. They were usually built in a corner of the kitchen and served to heat the house and cook food. It had a bench that made a comfortable bed for children and adults in wintertime.

2 Tsimes

Stew made usually of carrots, parsnips, or plums with potatoes.

3 Pushkin, Alexandr (1799-1837)

Russian poet and prose writer, among the foremost figures in Russian literature. Pushkin established the modern poetic language of Russia, using Russian history for the basis of many of his works. His masterpiece is Eugene Onegin, a novel in verse about mutually rejected love. The work also contains witty and perceptive descriptions of Russian society of the period. Pushkin died in a duel.

4 Lenin (1870-1924)

Pseudonym of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, the Russian Communist leader. A profound student of Marxism, and a revolutionary in the 1890s. He became the leader of the Bolshevik faction of the Social Democratic Party, whom he led to power in the coup d'état of 25th October 1917. Lenin became head of the Soviet state and retained this post until his death.

5 All-Union pioneer organization

a communist organization for teenagers between 10 and 15 years old (cf: boy-/girlscouts in the US). The organization aimed at educating the young generation in accordance with the communist ideals, preparing pioneers to become members of the Komsomol and later the Communist Party. In the Soviet Union, all teenagers were pioneers.

6 Hesed

Meaning care and mercy in Hebrew, Hesed stands for the charity organization founded by Amos Avgar in the early 20th century. Supported by Claims Conference and Joint Hesed helps for Jews in need to have a decent life despite hard economic conditions and encourages development of their self-identity. Hesed provides a number of services aimed at supporting the needs of all, and particularly elderly members of the society. The major social services include: work in the center facilities (information, advertisement of the center activities, foreign ties and free lease of medical equipment); services at homes (care and help at home, food products delivery, delivery of hot meals, minor repairs); work in the community (clubs, meals together, day-time polyclinic, medical and legal consultations); service for volunteers (training programs). The Hesed centers have inspired a real revolution in the Jewish life in the FSU countries. People have seen and sensed the rebirth of the Jewish traditions of humanism. Currently over eighty Hesed centers exist in the FSU countries. Their activities cover the Jewish population of over eight hundred settlements.