

Boris Iofik At The Hesed Avraham Welfare Center



This photo was taken in 2000 in St. Petersburg.

You can see me at the St. Petersburg Hesed Avraham Welfare Center during Shabbath celebration.

Here I'll tell you about my life on pension and my views on life and events.

I became a pensioner and at first I was in low spirits without work: I didn't know what to do with myself. Therefore I decided to study at some courses. I chose binding courses (probably I was moved by my love to books). It was always a pleasure for me to have a neat beautiful book in hand.

Therefore I tried to make all books beautiful. Many years I bound books in the library of the Hesed Avraham Welfare Center. At present the library at Hesed Center fell into decay: nobody keeps an eye on it, the number of books decreased, and I have nothing to work on. Till now I keep a full set of binding equipment at home and sometimes bind books for myself or for my neighbors.

I remember the Doctors' Plot very well, especially expose of Lidia Timashuk and her frank confession that the charges were framed-up. [Timashuk Lydia (1898-1983) was a doctor.

It was she who paid attention to strangeness in treatment of Zhdanov (in 1948 Zhdanov was a well-known figure of the CPSU), resulted in death of the patient. It was the beginning of Doctors' Plot.]

Of course I often thought about the reasons of arrests around me, but understood that I had to keep silence.

When Stalin died, I did not grieve. I worried about the future of my country.

Regarding the Hungarian events and the Prague spring, I was concordant with the official opinion.

I was not indifferent to the Israeli wars. I am Jewish and it was very pleasant for me to hear about Israeli victories. As a former soldier, I also admired military art of the Israeli army.

I also was pleased to know about demolition of the Berlin wall. [Berlin wall was erected in 1961 to divide Western part of Berlin from the Eastern one. It was symbolical that its concrete was used to construct highways of the united Germany.

It was demolished in 1989.] I could not understand the purpose of dividing a country and its people into 2 parts.

Reforms of Gorbachev (the so called Perestroika), distressed me rather than made happy. I was sorry to know about the USSR disintegration. In the USSR everybody kept order, and pilfered less. At present I consider our democracy to be forged.

I used to visit Hesed Center to play chess there, but at present I have pain in my legs, so twice a month they come and bring me to the Day Time Center [one of the Hesed programs].

There we spend all the day long: we have meals, sometimes excursions. Hesed Center gives us necessary medicine at half-price. But you see the point is that we lack intercommunication. I do, and the others, too.

Last year I was crossing the road, stumbled and fell down. Unfortunately right near that place workers were occupied with repaving. I managed to fell down in the molten asphalt and burnt both hands. I spent in the hospital more than 2 weeks and was discharged with my both hands still bandaged.

At home I usually do everything myself, but at that time I was absolutely helpless. And then they sent a woman (a volunteer of Eva Jewish Society) to my place. [The St. Petersburg Jewish Charitable Organization Eva was founded in May 1989.

The organization runs a lot of programs for pensioners, lonely elder or bed-ridden persons, needy invalids, etc.] She helped me about the house until I was my own master again. They saved me, really.