# Vladimir Khalfin

This is me, Vladimir Khalfin, photographed for the photo album of the former inmates of the ghetto on Victory Day, 9 May 2001. The photo album was compiled by the Hesed in Chernovtsy.

When Jews began to move to Israel in 1970s we couldn't go with my wife Silva Shelak, whom I married in 1955. She was confined to bed. Of course, if it hadn't been for my wife's illness we would have gone to Israel. Our daughter wanted to go to Israel, but she was reluctant to leave us on our own. I would love to visit Israel and hope I will get a chance to go there. It's a happy person who can say that he has had freedom to do what he wanted. I haven't had an opportunity to spend my vacation elsewhere in 20 years. I couldn't leave my wife because of her illness.

I left Chernovtsy only once in 1999 when I had to obtain a certificate of a former inmate of the ghetto from the archive of Luchinets. I was overwhelmed by reminiscences when I came there. The town made an impression of being decayed. There were old houses that I remembered since my childhood. There are no new houses. Where our house was there is a kitchen garden now.

After Ukraine declared its independence in 1991 Jewish life began to revive. In 1993 Joint organized Hesed in Chernovtsy. Hesed takes good care of old people. We receive food packages. Hesed also delivers food home. We can ask them to do the laundry. There are nurses who visit us to help to do the shopping and cleaning. There are clubs and various classes in Hesed. Every Jew can find interesting things to do there regardless of age. I began to attend Hesed from the first days after it opened.

My wife and I are members of association of former inmates of the ghetto. Until last years I was a volunteer in Hesed. I visited older people. Once I was asked to pay a visit to an old lonely woman in hospital. When I came to see her I saw that she was blind. Nobody came to pick her from hospital and personnel of the hospital were not willing to take care of her. I think it would be a good idea to organize an elderly people's home or hospital for lonely old people by the Hesed. They are very unfortunate, these people like that old woman. It is hard to see how lonely and helpless people become in their old age. I would like to take part in organization of such hospital, but I don't have time for anything now. My wife needs me and I have to be beside her. It's my duty.