

Sonia Leiderman



This is me at present. I was photographed for the album "Prisoners of the Mogilyov-Podolskiy ghetto", issued by our Jewish community to the 60th anniversary of liberation of the town from fascists (19 March 1944). This photo was taken in 2004 in Mogilyov-Podolskiy.

We could hardly make ends meet. Besides, I tried to save some money hoping that when my husband and I retired, we would travel and enjoy ourselves. I took these savings to the bank. We had never traveled on vacation. Besides, we didn't want to be a burden for our daughter, when we grew old: old people need medications and doctors and this all requires money. We were hoping that we would manage at our old age having our savings, but then perestroika began, and all our hopes turned into ashes. The material level of living grew lower; our savings decreased in value and then were gone [The disintegration of the USSR in 1991 also resulted in the newly independent states introducing their own national currencies. Soviet Ruble ceased existing. Many people lost their life-time savings]. My husband and I were pensioners at this time. Again we were starving. Our pensions were hardly sufficient to pay our apartment fees and just for the most necessary food.

I became an invalid in 2000. I was walking back home from work, when a man attacked me in the dark entrance of the building and stabbed me with his knife: and he did this just to snatch away my bag from me: there was just enough money in it to buy 100 gram of sausage! I had to stay in hospital for a long time. The doctors were very sympathetic to me, operated on me at no cost and brought me to recovery. The man cut my femoral artery and I lost my leg: they amputated it as high as above my knee. When I was in the hospital, my husband decided he didn't want an invalid of a wife and found another woman. Of course, I felt painfully hurt, but what could I do... I had to learn to live alone. I live with my daughter and her husband. They look after me and help me

around. My sisters also remember me. I corresponded with Etia and Nyusia and they helped me with money.

When Ukraine became independent [1991], the Jewish life began to revive. There is a Jewish community and Hesed in Mogilyov-Podolskiy. Though I'm bedridden and do not go out, they remember me. They deliver hot meals to my home and a visiting nurse and a volunteer from the community visit me. I'm very happy, when they come to see me. My daughter and her husband are at work and I miss talking to people. I welcome the volunteers very much. When they celebrate a holiday in the community they tell me about the celebration and keep me updated on everything new. I receive Jewish newspapers and enjoy reading them. I think every person can find something interesting there. The community provides medications to me and supports me, when I have to go to hospital. They are good people - very good people. I thank them for their care and support.