

Russian Renaissance in Bnai Zion

Celebrating the 5th anniversary of the revival of the Russian Division

The Russian Division of the Bnai Zion Foundation is the child of this century; as of spring 2011, it is only five years old. However, its history goes back to the previous century. It was originally founded about a quarter of a century ago, at the initiative of a vice president of Bnai Zion, Boris Kiderman. Under his leadership and with active participation of the leaders of Russian-Jewish community of New York, among whom were Edward Nakhamkin, Klara Kuchment, Margarita Polonskaya, as well as dozens of other volunteers, the Russian Division had, for more than ten years, promoted the activities of Bnai Zion in the Russian community and had successfully fundraised for its projects in Israel.

The presidency of the revived Russian Division was transferred to Oleg Liner - a successful businessman and a talented manager with a charming and energizing personality. The careful consideration and efforts by Boris Kiderman in choosing the right head of the Russian Division were fully rewarded.

The new division, its president and the board of its supporters, such as M. Patin, L. Levina, N. Saulina, I. Libkhen, E. Rozentsvit, R. Sirota, A. Kagan, L. Zaslavsky, B. Gutkin, F. Furman, M. Libin, V. Sholokhov, as well as donors and volunteers, had a mission: to find and win its place in the very diverse Russian-Jewish community of New York.

The charity meetings and events organized by the Division bridged the past and present life of the immigrants. Among those meetings were ones dedicated to the Great Victory in 1945, to a small Jewish town (a shtetl) before 1917, to Sholom Aleichem and his literary talent and inheritance, to 100-year-old Bel Kaufman – the granddaughter of Sholom Aleichem, to the centennial jubilee of Bnai Zion and fundraising for its ongoing projects in Israel, to the exhibition of works of the Guild of Jewish Artists (immigrants in New York) in honor of the anniversary of Israel, and to the collection of pictures from famous Soviet-era photojournalist Yuri Shalamov. Among the attendees at these events were representatives of the Israeli Consulate and guests from Israel, local public and religious figures known in the community, media representatives and journalists, singers, musicians and dancers. At these events, raffles were held with very attractive prizes, with proceeds going to Bnai Zion initiatives in Israel.

With the help of local Russian media - newspapers, radio and television - a powerful campaign was organized to familiarize the community with the history of Bnai Zion and its projects, philanthropy in America in general, and with the activities of our Russian Division. This campaign actively involved journalists from leading Russian newspapers in New York and reporters and hosts of local Russian radio and television.

This cultural and informational diversity - a kaleidoscope of people and names, speeches and publications, concert performances and art presentations - makes the philanthropic activities of the Russian Division very attractive and creates the popularity and identity we have aimed to achieve, while helping to achieve our success - though modest – in fundraising for Israel. We hope you will help us grow that success by contributing.

On this page you will find more information about past, current and future activities of the Russian Division - articles, announcements, invitations to events, our photo gallery etc. - mostly in Russian for the convenience of our Russian-speaking supporters. Thank you for your feedback, which will help us improve this page.

F. Furman, member of the Board

Translated from Russian into English by R.Sirota