

Theodore Magder



That's me, photographed at work in Kishinev in 2001. In 1975 the chief engineer of the Moldavhydromash industrial association, which was engaged in the industrial machine building and included three big plants and scientific research institutions, approached me. He offered me to write a book about the association on the occasion of its 100th anniversary. I thought it over and agreed. I visited this enterprise, familiarized myself with documents, and I understood that I couldn't write a proper book from the outside. I quit my work with the magazine and went to work as a laborer at this enterprise. I wrote the book in cooperation with the employees of the plant newspaper. Later the management offered me to establish and become the director of the museum of this enterprise. The museum I established got the status of people's museum and became very popular in Kishinev. We received many national and foreign delegations. I worked in the museum until 1990. Then something happened that had an impact on all of us in one way or another: perestroika, the breakup of the Soviet Union. The premier [Snegur, Mircea, president of Moldova from 1991-96] of the first government of independent Moldova offered me to take part in

the establishment of the department of national issues. I was so dedicated to my job as director of the museum of the plant that I accepted this offer on condition that I could keep my position at the plant. I worked in the department for national relations for ten years. I had very good relations with the premier. He also involved me in diplomatic work. I did a lot for the Jews of Pridnestroiye, when the war began there. As for me, I've always associated my life with my homeland - Moldova - and my favorite town, Kishinev. In 2001 the government changed and I quit my post. In the past I was executive director of the Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities, had ties with Joint representatives and accepted the offer to become full-time director of the Jewish community center. I'm not a religious person: I've never observed Jewish traditions or gone to the synagogue. However, I dedicate myself to the revival of Jewish culture, traditions and the upbringing of young Jews, and I'm content with the place I have in life. I don't feel like quitting my job or my life, I understand I need to train a good and decent successor, who can take over my place in the Jewish life of Kishinev.