

Sandor And Bozsi Bacher



This is my brother with his second wife. The photo was taken after the war.

He was taken in 1942, from Gyergyovarhegy to Ukraine. He was married already. I didn't even hope that he would survive, but he came home. I couldn't have imagined meeting him again, that he would resist, because he spent twelve months in Ukraine, in hell. And he barely was home for five months, and in 1944 they took him to Auschwitz. He was a thin, meager man. So I came home very sad. I came home in summer. I knew nothing about him. He was in Auschwitz, then in several concentration camps [forced labor camps] to work. His wife was a young woman from Nagyvarad, they took her to Riga, the capital of Latvia. People still hoped there that the Germans would win. So the Fuhrer from there received the command to shoot all the concentration camp.

I was home for several months, I mourned already my poor brother, I buried him in my heart. Once, it was around the middle of summer, I was going to work, when a stranger comes to my place from somewhere the countryside. He was a Jew from the surroundings, he knew the town. I didn't know him, he didn't know me either, but my brother explained him: 'Go there, look for this person.' He explained him where our house was, he told him my maiden name and my name after my husband. He found me at once. 'I bring you news about your brother, he is in Germany, he works in a factory, and he doesn't want to come home.' My brother knew that my mother wasn't alive, and because he thought too about me - well, I was a young, protected child, though he knew I was a sportswoman - that I wouldn't survive Auschwitz or working in a factory. He was in a place, where a group of women worked in the wood, at logging. Imagine women, like we are, chopping wood, in such a weather, with 'druzba'... [Editor's note: the Druzba is a Russian chain-saw; this was the only type available in Romania during the communist regime.] So women didn't have the slightest

chance to survive. My brother didn't want to come home at all. I was very desperate. He found employment in Germany, in a factory, and stayed there. A friend of him too stayed there. 'Let's not go home, it's useless. Let's start a new life!' Especially that he spoke German perfectly, it wasn't a problem for him to do every kind of work. His wife was a young woman from Nagyvarad, they took her to Riga, the capital of Latvia. People still hoped there that the Germans would win. So the Fuhrer from there received the command to shoot all the concentration camp. My brother knew this. He felt he had nothing to come home for: 'I have no wife, Bella - that's me - won't resist, I have no mammy, Bella's husband died.' 'And one night - he says - I felt I had to come home.' So I arrived home around June, and he stayed there until the end of October, one morning he got up and said: 'I'm going home though, perhaps Bellus is alive.' In November he just stepped in one day. The poor man, how bad he looked like... in an awful clothe, shabby, famished. The trains didn't run then [as they do now]. So he related me that one night he dreamt that maybe - as he knew me as a fit girl, who has such strength of will -, maybe I'm alive after all. And he came home.

After my brother came home, he lived in one room, me in the other. He got married in 1946, that was his second marriage. He married a Jewish woman. I got married for the second time in '47, he a few months earlier. He got married quite stealthily, I don't know why. Bozsi wasn't deported, because she was in Gyulafehervar [today Alba Iulia]. So all I got, a few valuable things, I inherited from them. They met each other as she came here. She was a dental technician, and she worked here, a common acquaintance introduced her to my brother. He got married in 1946, and he was placed in Brasso. So he lived in Brasso. When I got married in 1947, he came with his wife already, they stayed in a hotel for one night, then went back. He moved back when the wood association was established. His name was known, he got employed immediately. This happened one or two years after. This association was established very soon, his name was well-known, he was in too, and a few other former producers came too, Christians, Hungarians, so they established together the wood association. They restored the factory as they could, so they formed a wood trust here, and it was due to my brother too that this could have been established. That was in the Hangya building. The Hangya didn't exist anymore, because this was Romania again. But he wasn't a party member, nor later, nor him or my husband. He got married, and was a clerk here. They made him a chief clerk, because they knew he was an expert, they asked him his opinion. There were Christian producers too of course, this is normal, but most of the people in this industry were Jews. Experts. It doesn't mean that hundreds of office-holders were Christians, but they had other possibilities. He was good in it, well, they couldn't make him a director, but he was the chargeman of the commercial department. Of course, in the beginning there were people here, who knew the name Bacher, because they knew my father's name, since he was a good expert. There was a good-for-nothing drinker chap here, a doorman, who was shouting every morning in the market for example: 'It's over with the masters, it's over with the Bachers!' Then the state seized everything.

My brother and I had different societies. He played bridge, and adored the cinema. I played rummy, and I preferred the theatre company to a good movie. Well, it's true that I watched an exceptionally good movie, but he had a subscription ticket, and he frequented... [the cinema]. My poor sister-in-law never could dispose of her time well. She couldn't keep her job as a dental technician, as she was working there too, and to prepare a lunch... the poor, may she rest in peace, she was unable for that. She was such a trifler: she went in the bathroom, and she stayed there for one hour, and the laundress waited her outside. Besides, the poor woman, I don't know why she got obsessed with the idea, that my brother loved me more than her. That's when our relationship

started to get worse. She didn't know what was to love a brother or sister. I always felt she was envious of me, if my brother came to me and embraced me. I always told her: 'But Bozsi, it's totally different to love a sister than to love a wife. Why are you doing this?' But she went on about the same idea. She was alone, the poor woman lost her parents at a very young age, in fact she didn't even know her father, he had died during the [first world] war, and her mother too, at a young age. So two old people, an uncle and an aunt raised her. She finished the gymnasium, and they sent her at 14 to learn a profession. My brother worked here too, because the wood association was here [nearby]. Finally my poor brother, to avoid all this - he always had a coffee break during the morning - just a few steps, so he came over, that's how we met. At the end, when my brother fell sick, I visited them regularly, but I couldn't endure to see my brother's suffering. My brother died in 1984. Then my brother's wife had a physiotherapeutic treatment: her back, her back... she couldn't bend down, she suffered terribly. Finally she had to go into a hospital, she was operated, and they took out a malignant tumor in her back, big as a mandarin. I couldn't take her out from the hospital. I paid in the hospital to keep her there, because she had only weeks to live. She died in two months, may the poor woman rest in peace. She is buried here, at least they rest next to each other. They are both buried in the Jewish cemetery, this is normal.