

Clara Foldes



This is me. The photo was taken in Arad in the 1950s. In 1941 my parents were forced by a new law to move to Arad. All Jews who lived in villages had to move into towns and Arad was the closest one to Curtici. I was 21-22 years old then. I couldn't visit my parents because Jews weren't allowed to travel; there was a law passed by the legionaries. One day I received a paper from the Educational Inspectorate, saying that I had to bring to the law-court in three days written proof that I had never been sentenced. What could I do? I wasn't allowed to travel to Arad to get proof. But if I didn't bring the paper I was in danger of losing my job. I went to the law-court to see the public prosecutor. I knew what he looked like: a small, thin man. I went straight to him and told him, 'I'm a Jew, you know very well that I'm not allowed to travel. I think that you could help me, by asking the court in Arad for a paper, which proves that I've never been sentenced. You give me this paper and if it proves that I'm not telling the truth, you can cancel it.' He looked at me and asked, 'Is this legal?' I replied, 'I don't know if it's legal, but it's human!' He gave me the paper I needed and I

never saw him again. It was through connections that I managed to go home and visit my parents. I think that my parents talked about me to the Jewish community in Arad, saying that I would like to move to Arad. When one of the teachers retired, I was brought here. I taught at the Jewish school in Arad for seven years, from 1942-1948. I taught the Aleph-Bet at the Jewish school because I had learned a little Hebrew in Alba Iulia. The Aleph-Bet was a very good book, with pictures; it was easy for children to learn from it. There were many children in one class at the Jewish school in Arad, some 30 to 35 pupils, most of them Orthodox Jews. During the war, the Germans needed the building of the school and we had to move into the building where the community had its office. The Jewish School was closed by the Nationalization Law in 1948 - all schools of the minorities were turned into state schools. I was moved to a state school in Arad, the Ghiba Birta School, where I worked for 30 years, until I retired in 1978.