Ruth Greif

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Romania
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Mrs. Greif is a 72-year-old woman with short gray hair. She always wears a pair of earrings that belonged to her grandmother, a family heirloom. She lives in a four-bedroom apartment in an apartment block; she only shares it with a small dog, to which she speaks in German. Her house strikes you the very moment you enter it: every piece of furniture and every ornament is a piece of art and has its own history and value. Her walls are covered with authentic paintings, some of them belonging to the Romanian patrimony. In her living room there is a 200-year-old chest of drawers, with hand-painted Sevres porcelain, intarsia, bronze sculptures, antique silver jewelry boxes, and an escritoire that belonged to a famous doctor from Brasov called Fabrizius, who lived in the 19th century. When she had it restored, she even found a secret drawer with some prescriptions written by the doctor himself. She values art and antiques more than anything, and her whole person has that aristocratic air of good upbringing, solid culture and good taste that are so very rare to find today.

My family background

I never knew my paternal grandfather, but I know his name was Goldstein. He was married to my grandmother, Rozalia Goldstein, who was born in Sibiu in 1874. I don't know her maiden name. They were poor, and for as long as I knew her, my grandmother lived in Sibiu and was supported by my father, Bela Goldstein. She had been a housewife all her life and had no pension. I used to visit her as a child; she lived in a shabby old house with only one room, a kitchen and a bathroom. She also had a little garden where she grew onions, salad and some vegetables. She bred some hens, I believe, but that was all. She didn't wear a wig, most Jewish women in Transylvania didn't wear

any. She took care of the house chores on her own because she couldn't afford a servant. Her kitchen wasn't kosher, and she only observed the high holidays: on Pesach she didn't eat anything with flour or bread, and she went to the temple. She also fasted on Yom Kippur. My grandmother was busy with the work around the house, and with her garden, but I don't really remember her much: I left Sibiu when I was eight years old, and I rarely went to visit her after that.

I didn't have the chance to spend a holiday with my grandmother, but I used to spend Pesach with a family related to my father: Heinirich Weiss was my father's cousin - my grandfather Goldstein and his father had been brothers. His family was very religious, and I enjoyed spending the holidays with them: they had separate tableware for dairy and meat products, and they also had special tableware for Pesach. And you would never find pork in their kitchen. In their family, there was always the Friday evening ceremony: candles were lit, they had barkhes, the traditional sponge cake, and cholent with goose meat. First they went to wash their hands and then they said the prayer. On Pesach there was no bread, but there were cookies or other dishes made from matzah flour: there were some dumplings made from matzah flour, boiled potatoes and eggs. I know the recipe as well. These dumplings can be either sweet or salted, it depends on how you want to have them. They are called kremzli in Hungarian. There were also dumplings for the soup, made from matzah flour and eggs; generally all the Pesach dishes require a lot of eggs. Heinirich was from Sibiu, but he left for Israel long ago, in 1949.

Sibiu didn't have a large population back then, but I think many of the inhabitants were Jews, and there they weren't deported. I had many relatives in Sibiu, especially on my father's side; he had cousins and uncles there who were rather religious. I don't remember how they were all related to us; it was a long time ago.

My father had one sister, Margareta Mutzel, nee Goldstein, who was born in Cernauti and was a housewife. She was married to a Jew named Mutzel and they had two daughters. He was from Poland, but I think he studied in Bucharest, where he became an engineer. Aunt Margareta lived with him in Bucharest first. After the war [World War II], I don't know when exactly, they moved to Poland, to Wroclaw, and he became the rector of the university there. I remember that they used to say to my father that even after the war, anti-Semitism in Poland was very strong, and that's why they always hid the fact that they were Jews; not even their daughters knew that. I don't know if they were religious or not. Margareta died in Poland in the 1980s.

My father also had a brother, Andrei Goldstein, born in Cernauti, who was single and who died in the 1990s. He worked as a clerk. Andrei lived and died in Sibiu.

One of my father's cousins was called Iosif Goldstein, the other Emerich Goldstein. The latter owned a grocery shop, which he ran along with his parents. I don't remember the name of my father's uncle, but I know his aunt was named Paula. Both cousins moved to Brasov as well, and Iosif studied at an optician school and then had a small shop downtown.

My father, Bela Goldstein, was born in Sibiu in 1906; his mother tongue was Hungarian. He graduated from high school. At first he had a tobacco shop in a rented house, and he took care of it alone, and later, after they got married, with my mother's help.

My maternal grandmother, Estera Goldsmann, was born in the 1880s in Turches, in one of the seven villages that now form Sacele. [In Hungarian the name of the town is Hetfalu, meaning made

up of seven villages: Baciu/Bacsfalu, Cernatu/Csernatfalu, Satu-Lung/Hosszufalu, Turches/Turkos, Tarlungeni/Tatrang, Purcareni/Purkerecz, Zizin/Zajzon.] Her husband, Bernard Goldsmann, had died when she was still young, and she never remarried.

My grandmother lived in Brasov when I knew her. She lived in a rented house, she never owned one. My grandmother shared a courtyard with several other tenants. There were no Jews there, but she was very esteemed all the same. She worked very hard. She had a store and it was open from morning until late in the evening. She lived in the same house where she had her shop; from the shop you could go into the living room of the house, and she occupied the other two rooms of the house, each with separate entries. She also had a kitchen and a bathroom. She sold several delicacies in her shop, sausages and other meat products, chocolate, liquors. And she was in charge of everything: the stocks, bookkeeping, selling. She was a very energetic and agile woman and she had no help. She didn't have time to breed animals or grow vegetables; she was too busy with the shop. For as long as I knew her, my grandmother never had a vacation. She couldn't leave the store; she didn't want to lose her clients.

When we moved from Sibiu to Brasov in 1940, we lived with her for a while, until we found our own place. I liked to stay around my grandmother in her shop; it was usually pretty crowded because it was very well located, and her business was going well. She was a bit severe with me. I remember I used to be afraid of her, but she was one amazing woman. I had my own two favorite delicacies in the shop: the Sibiu salami, which had a special flavor and taste, and the milk chocolate. I think my grandmother brought her merchandise, especially the chocolate, all the way from Hungary. Of course the shop wasn't kosher; she sold pork products as well.

My grandmother observed Yom Kippur, when she fasted; also, she didn't eat bread for ten days on Pesach, only matzah. [Editor's note: traditionally Jews are not allowed to eat bread on Pesach but only matzah for eight days.] She went to the synagogue on the high holidays. However, she didn't observe the kashrut; it was a bit hard with the shop. Nonetheless, she always lit a candle on Friday evenings and said the blessings, and her shop was closed on Saturdays. She got along well with her neighbors, I remember she cooked hamantashen on Purim and sent them to her Christian neighbors: sometimes she sent me, and I loved to go. I used to spend a lot of time with her, after we moved to Brasov. During the legionary 1 regime, the shop and house were taken away from her, and then my grandmother rented a place, a house on Lupeni Street, with six rooms, each with a separate entrance. She kept a room for herself and rented out all the others, and that's what she lived from. She died in the 1970s, and she was buried in the Jewish cemetery here, in Brasov.

My mother had one sister, Elisabeta Klausner, nee Goldsmann, born in Sacele in 1907. She was married to a Jew here, in Brasov, Edmund Benzel, who was the manager of a timber factory. He died in a train accident. Many years later she remarried a Jew named Klausner and moved to Bucharest with him. They didn't have any children. I don't remember what he did for a living, but he too had been married once before and had two children from his first marriage. When the legionaries came to power, he sent his two children to a friend in Oradea, hoping that they would be safer there; but the two kids were deported to Auschwitz and died there, and his wife got sick because of the grief and died. Aunt Elisabeta died in Bucharest in 1995, and she was buried in the Jewish cemetery there.

My mother, Paraschiva Goldsmann, was born in Turches in 1909. She spoke Hungarian. She graduated from high school. My parents' marriage wasn't an arranged one; I know how it happened because my mother told me. My father's mother, Rozalia, invited my mother and her sister, Elisabeta, to come to Sibiu. Grandmother Rozalia and grandmother Estera knew each other, in fact they were first cousins - their parents were siblings, but I don't know their names - and I think they kept in touch as much as they could, considering they lived in different cities. So, my grandmother Rozalia asked the girls to come to Sibiu for a short vacation, and I think they stayed in her house. My mother and her sister stayed there for two weeks, so my mother got to know my father and his sister; she made good friends with his sister, Margareta, but that was all. But there were young Jewish boys in Sibiu, and my mother was invited sometimes to go out for walks and the like. By that time, my father already had the tobacco shop, and as he told me, one day he saw my mother passing in front of his window shop on the arm of another man, and suddenly he felt jealousy and started to like her, to look at her as more than a cousin.

Growing up

The story with us living in Vienna was the following: my father had a good friend before he got married, and this friend of his left for Vienna and opened a bicycle workshop there. And because the business was going well, he asked my father to join him there. My father was already engaged to my mother at that time, but he did go. He returned after a year and married my mother. They married in the synagogue in 1929, with a rabbi, and they had a ketubbah. Then they left for Vienna together. I was born in Vienna in 1932 and I stayed there until I was three years old. My father was an associate with that friend of his in the bicycle business - I don't remember his name - and they stayed there for a few years. But they eventually went bankrupt, and thank God, my parents returned to Romania because the war started a few years after they had left Vienna and Austria was occupied by Germany. I don't remember anything from those years in Vienna, I was too little. I went on a trip to Vienna six years ago, in 1998. I wanted to see the city where I was born, and the places my mother used to tell me about: I visited the Jewish community there, Schoenbrunn castle and the cathedral [St. Stephen's Cathedral].[Editor's note: Schoenbrunn Palace was built in 1695 by architect Fischer von Erlach, who attempted to design a royal residence that surpassed Versailles' glamour. Financial and political problems interfered, but nonetheless it is one of Austria's most important cultural monuments. Used by Empress Maria Theresia as a summer residence for the Imperial family, Schoenbrunn has been one of Vienna's major tourist attractions from the 1860s.]

My mother tongue, the language my parents taught me, was German, but my parents spoke Hungarian with each other, and I learned Hungarian like this, by listening to my parents talking to each other, and in the end I could speak it very well.

My parents came directly to Sibiu, where they had a tobacco shop. The shop wasn't in the same house where we lived, it was in the center of Sibiu, in a rented house: it had one room and a little storage room in the back. My parents served the customers; they had no employees. They sold cigarettes, stamps, cigars, pipes, and tobacco in small carton boxes. My father didn't smoke, but my mother, especially after we moved to Brasov, used to smoke a cigarette every now and then.

The shop was only two blocks away from the house in which we lived; it was on Bruckental Street, in the very center of town. It was also rented, and we occupied the second floor of the house. We had two rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom, running water and electricity. I remember we had a

Persian carpet in the living room, but the rest of the house had ready-made furniture, nothing special. We also had a courtyard, but my mother didn't work in the garden, we shared it with the other neighbors.

Our neighbors were Romanians, and some Saxons I believe. We got along well with the neighbors there, but we weren't friends. There was no time for that because my parents worked a lot; that was the only reason. I don't remember my parents going on a vacation while we were in Sibiu. They couldn't afford to leave the shop because there was nobody to take care of it except them. They had no employees. That was the way people thought back then: of work first and then of fun. And I never went on a vacation or to a camp alone; back then there were no camps for children. When they had some free time, my parents used to go to the theater, but I don't know if they went to balls as well. The holidays we would spend with our relatives - they were our friends.

We had a Saxon servant, who cleaned the house, mainly the kitchen. Kati was her name. She was a stout woman, who was always dressed in long, large, pleated skirts and pleated blouses and wore black shoes with thick heels. That was how Saxon women dressed back then. She looked after me as well because my parents were rather busy with the tobacco shop. I remember I went to a German kindergarten as well, but I don't remember what it was like. Kati used to take me on long walks, or to the market. Everything at the market was sold on stands; it was very clean and orderly. Usually Saxon peasants came there, and they were and still are very tidy, honest and clean. Both my mother and Kati cooked, but we didn't observe the kashrut. I think we even ate pork.

We had a library in the house; my mother read a lot of fiction. My father, on the other hand, was very fond of lexicons and difficult philosophy books. Every night, before he went to bed, there was a pile of books on his bedside table, and I always teased him about it. I asked him, 'Do you want to read all of them tonight?' He always answered, 'No, but I will read something from each of them'. They both read in German, and we had religious books as well, the Siddur in Hebrew with Romanian or German translations, and the Haggadah for Pesach. My parents also read newspapers, like Universul; that's the one I remember. [Editor's note: 'Universul', 'The Universe': a Bucharest daily, a popular Romanian newspaper, founded by Luigi Cazzavilan which was first published in 1884.] My father wasn't involved in any political party, but I know he had social-democratic convictions, not communist ones. My mother, on the other hand, wasn't into politics at all. They never had to push me as far as reading was concerned, I myself was very passionate about reading. I used to read under the covers with a flashlight. Those were usually my mother's books, which I wasn't supposed to read at that age because they were a bit 'too explicit' for a girl my age!

Our religious life

Neither of my parents was very religious in an extreme way: my father didn't wear payes and my mother didn't wear a wig, but they both observed the high holidays. On Friday evenings, my mother used to light the candles and say the blessing and for dinner we also had barkhes. My father went to the synagogue every Saturday, for the minyan, and both my parents tried to observe Sabbath. I think it happened that my father went to the synagogue on Friday evenings sometimes as well, he went whenever the minyan took place. On Saturdays his shop was closed, and my mother tried not to work. My mother and I only went to the synagogue on the high

holidays; women didn't have to go back then, only on the high holidays. I didn't have to spend Saturdays or Sundays at home, there wasn't a special program for me. My parents used to talk to me about religion and tradition. It was usually my mother, who did so; she loved to read about these things. She used to talk to me about our history, about the exodus from Egypt, about Moses, Adam and Eve, about Abraham, about the first Jews. My father was also fairly religious, and it happened that he would talk to me on Saturdays about history, about the Torah, traditions, and so on.

On Chanukkah, I received Chanukkah gelt, and I spent the day at the Jewish community, with my colleagues. We used to play with the trendel [dreidel]. We went to the synagogue on Sukkot as well, but my father never built a sukkah. My favorite holiday was Pesach. All the family gathered around the table, and my father read from the Haggadah. Usually it was I who hid the afikoman, or some younger friend - we always had friends over as well - because it is the youngest of the participants who hides the afikoman. My father led the seder, and of course he had to look for the afikoman, so that I could get my present. However, when we reunited with all of my father's family, whoever was the eldest used to lead the seder, and that was, I think, my father's uncle. My parents always fasted on Yom Kippur and so did I, even when I was just a child: first until 10 o'clock, then until 12, and then the whole day. I think I was 12 when I started to fast all day long.

The Jewish community in Sibiu was small, I cannot say how many Jews there were, but I know that the community offices, the Jewish school and the temple were all in the same courtyard, near the railway station. Most of the Jews in Sibiu were merchants, or had shops - all my relatives there ran shops - and there were also doctors or jewelers, like my friend's parents, but not too many. There was only one synagogue, but there were functionaries, like shochetim and hakhamim. There was also a cheder, but that was only for boys. The community also had a Jewish elementary school, and it was for boys and girls alike. Jews lived all over the town, but I believe that the majority lived close to the synagogue: my father's relatives, his cousins, his brother and sister and their families lived there.

When we were in Sibiu, our financial situation was rather good, medium; there was no poverty. I remember I fell ill with scarlet fever in the 1st grade and had to stay at home. I couldn't be admitted to hospital because it was a contagious disease. Back then there was no penicillin, that was only invented after the war, so my parents treated me with tangerines and oranges. I remember the kitchen was full of fruit baskets; vitamin C helped. [Editor's note: Alexander Fleming actually discovered penicillin before WWII and presented his findings in 1929, but raised little interest. It took World War II to revitalize interest in penicillin.]

When I was little, my mother always put me to bed at 8 o'clock in the evening, and woke me up at 8 in the morning. So I used to think that the day stops at 8 in the evening, the clock as well, and it starts again the next day at 8 in the morning! I also remember I had a Jewish friend, Rose- Marie Springer, who lived across the street from us; we grew up together. She was two years older than me, I believe. Her mother was a doctor and her father was a jeweler. We used to play together, in our courtyard or in hers; we enjoyed going for walks in the central park, which had lovely alleys. She remained in Sibiu, and studied at the Jewish school.

My school years

I wasn't confronted with anti-Semitism in Sibiu, maybe because I went to the Jewish elementary school there. I studied the same subjects I would have studied in a normal state school. I remember space was a problem, and there were always two classes, the 1st and the 2nd, crammed into the same classroom. Our teacher from elementary school was a Jew named Cain. He was very religious: he never entered the classroom bare-headed; he always wore a kippah. We had religious classes with him as well: he taught us the alphabet, how to read prayers in Hebrew, things from the Old Testament, but I don't remember how often we had those religious classes. And as a rule, I was more fond of literature than of mathematics. When I was in elementary school, somebody always came to pick me up after classes; my mother or Kati. But one day they were late, so I decided to go home alone. I got lost and arrived at home an hour or so later. When I got home, my mother beat the hell out of me, she had been looking for me everywhere.

I don't remember participating with the school at parades on 1st May, or King's Day 2; they did that kind of thing in Cernauti. My husband, Carol Greif, told me he had been a watchmen, a strajer 3, and that he had seen King Carol 4. I don't think there were watchmen in the Jewish schools.

I don't know why we moved to Brasov, but we came here when I started the 2nd grade of elementary school, in 1940. My father set up a dental material depot here, along with a Hungarian associate, Juhasz. On paper, this associate was the owner of the depot, and he was the one doing all the traveling because Jews weren't allowed to travel by train [because of the anti-Jewish laws in Romania] 5.

I started studying at a regular state school in town, on Agriselor Street. One of my hobbies back then was gymnastics. My teacher was Borbala Farkas, a Jew; she had studied rhythmic gymnastics in Budapest, and she was very talented. She held the classes in her house, and several girls went there. I was in elementary school back then. I also remember that I kept a diary, which had a key, for several years, even after I married when I had time to write in it.

Back then, when I was in the state school, I had a good Jewish friend, Judita Graunfelds was her name. She lived on the same street as me, but farther from school than me and always came to pick me up. We were in the same class in school, we were of the same age. On our way we had to pass by a German high school for boys, and whenever we passed by, they came down and started to beat us, or called us 'stinking Jew'. The German boys beat us both several times. They knew we were Jewish; they probably saw where we were going. We were elementary school girls, and they were in high school, but that never stopped them. I saw one of those boys later, when he was an adult, and he pretended he didn't recognize me. The teachers didn't intervene. My parents knew about the beatings, but they couldn't do anything. In those times you were happy you got away only with that. Of course I only made friends with this Jewish girl. She came from a rich family; one of her sisters was married to Feiler Dezideriu, who was the president of the community. I remember that that sister had a workshop for pleating skirts, which was going very well. Eventually they all left for Israel.

I remember that Judita and me used to take little 'hikes' - the adventurous kind. One time we went to the airport, where the railway station is today, just to see the planes, although we knew very well we weren't supposed to go there - two girls on their own - because it was dangerous. We had to cross two railways, but still, we wanted adventure! She got quite a beating from her mother when she got home. Her mother was rather severe and used to beat her with the pot stick!

During the war

Then the legionaries came to power in 1940, and I was thrown out of school. The teacher came into the classroom, read my name out loud in front of the class and I had to pack and leave. Judita was also kicked out of school. So eventually I had to go to the Jewish industrial high school, which had four elementary grades and eight grades of high school, and which was located in a private house. After a while we had to move from there as well, to another private house. Judita went to the Jewish industrial high school as well. Stefan Guth was among my colleagues there. [Editor's note: Mr. Stefan Guth is vice-president of the Jewish community in Brasov.]

Anti-Semitism started when the legionaries came to power, but I also remember talks in our house about Hitler's rise to power, about the Anschluss 6 of Austria. We listened to the news on the radio, on BBC; I can still remember Hitler's shrill voice. My parents were very happy that they had left Vienna because by that time they would have been in Germany. [Mrs. Greif refers to the fact that they would have been deported if they had stayed behind in Vienna.] And we were affected by the anti-Jewish laws: I was thrown out of school, and my father had to have an associate to continue his business. There were no deportations in Brasov, but we had to give up our radios, and each Jew had to give a new bed sheet, shirts, other clothes and even money, I think, to the regime. We brought all that to the police headquarters.

I remember we learnt about the deportations from the BBC, in 1943 or 1944, I think. We lived in fear. I remember one time a convoy of legionaries passed by our house, with a lot of noise, in cars and motorcycles, and my mother looked out the window, saw their uniforms - all legionaries were dressed in black leather jackets and green shirts - and she immediately turned all lights off and we hid. Legionaries usually knew where the Jews in Brasov lived, and she didn't want to risk anything. They would just force their way into one's house. There was no direct incident concerning our family, but we suffered from the restrictions all Jews in Brasov suffered from: we weren't allowed to go shopping in most of the stores until 10 o'clock. Jewish stores were forced to have a sign outside saying 'Jewish store', so that people wouldn't come in.

My grandmother had to put up that sign outside her shop, and of course the business didn't go so well because most people didn't want to buy from Jewish shops because they were afraid of the consequences. And in the end, I don't remember when or the details, they took the shop along with the house from my grandmother because she was Jewish. The Saxon shops had a sign outside saying, 'Der Eintritt von Juden und Hunden ist unerwuenscht' ['The access of Jews and dogs is not wanted'].

Also, Jews weren't allowed to walk in the street, for example, in groups, and four people were already considered a group. We suffered from all these restrictions, but I cannot say that we suffered from hunger because my father still had the dental material depot, along with his Hungarian partner, who did the traveling. We only found out that there were extermination camps and not just labor camps, as we had thought, after the war, when some Jews started to come home. Usually, they were very reluctant to talk about what had happened to them, but that's how we found out in the end.

I went on vacation with my parents, I remember going to Sovata, to Cluj [Napoca]; I remember we had an old car back then, a BMW, and we used to travel in it. By that time my father already had that dental material depot. I remember going to a maial - it was a rustic party - with my parents in

our car. Since it was very old it broke down and it took us several hours to make this half an hour trip. These parties were held where the present neighborhood Racadau is; back then it was nothing but vacant land. Back then, when I was a child, there was also a little train, more of a tram actually, which connected Brasov to Racadau and the seven villages of what today is Sacele. We - my parents and I - also used to go out, eat out, usually at Aro [famous hotel and restaurant in the center of Brasov]. We had money back then, it wasn't a big deal like it is today, especially after the nationalization 7 came.

My parents divorced in 1943. I remember the divorce wasn't final yet, and Rabbi Deutsch, came to our house, to try and patch things up, like it is the custom when a Jewish pair wants to split up. He didn't achieve anything, however. The reason for the divorce was that my mother fell in love with my father's associate at the dental material depot, Iosif Juhasz. She was still young, I was 12 or 13 then, and she wanted a divorce. After the divorce, my mother married him and I had to stay with her. After many years, they had problems as well, so they also divorced, and he left my mother and left for Germany. After that, my mother worked as a nurse to support herself.

My father also remarried in 1945. He married a young Jewish woman from Brasov, Margareta Rosenberg, who got pregnant. She was 16 years younger than him. But my father fell ill, he had very high blood pressure. He went to Sibiu for merchandise for his depot, and his blood pressure went up very quickly. He had a stroke and died before he could get to the hospital. He died in Sibiu in 1946 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery there. Sibiu didn't have a rabbi, but there was a minyan. I don't remember who recited the Kaddish; maybe one of my father's cousins who were there, or somebody from the community. And on the very same day he died, his wife gave birth to his son, Benjamin. His wife was devastated; she loved him very, very much. She came from a very poor family: her father was a watchmaker, but he didn't have a shop, he worked at home. She had another sister and a mother to support. So Margareta had to work as a laborer at a weaving factory here, in Brasov.

Post-war

My father used to be stricter with me than my mother, but after he died, my mother became even more severe than he had been - I think she was trying to replace him in a way. And she was like that not only when I was little, but also when I was in high school. For example, I wasn't allowed to go to the cinema after 9 o'clock in the evening, even if I was going with friends or colleagues. I had to be home early. I was allowed to go to the cinema after 9pm only when I got engaged to my husband, but still, when we came home she was standing behind the window, waiting for me. I remember she slapped me once, but I don't remember what for. In any case, she was very strict.

After my parents divorced, the two families weren't exactly on amicable terms. There were no visits, only Benjamin came to our house. My mother was very fond of the small child. He was very quiet and he looked a lot like my father. Benjamin practically grew up in our house until he was four years old; I used to bring him over more and more often. He was always in our house. We fed him and bought clothes for him. We could afford it because we still had the dental materials depot, which was left to Juhasz because he and my father had been associates. Margareta had to work very hard and couldn't support them all: her parents, her sister and a small baby. But in 1949 she made aliyah with all her family; she was among the first to go. Emigrants still had to leave by ship back then. My mother insisted that she left Benjamin behind, that we would pay for his education

and look after him, and she almost convinced her. But in the end, Margareta, who still loved my late father, didn't want to give up her son, so they all left.

They settled in Holon, which back then was more of a village. They stayed in Beit Olim - a special place for the new-comers - for two years, in barracks, and after that they could move into a house, at the very end of Holon. Their backyard was sand and nothing else. Margareta used to write to me. Life was very hard for them. Once she asked us to send Benjamin a pair of shoes because she had no money to buy him one. They even endured hunger; they had to steal potatoes from fields in order to have something to eat; they lived from one day to the next. After many, many years, she remarried. She married a Jew from Czechoslovakia and had another daughter with him. I don't remember his name. I met him just once went I went to Israel for the first time, in 1973.

I finished elementary school at the Jewish high school - it had both elementary school and high school classes - and then I studied there in high school for a year, from 1943 to 1944. After World War II ended, I studied at Elena Princess high school. By that time, my mother and her second husband had a dental materials depot as well, I think, and they wanted to move to Bucharest. Juhasz had a friend and associate in Bucharest, who also owned a dental material depot, and he wanted us to move to Bucharest. So my mother enrolled me at Soazi Mangaru high school in Bucharest. It was very similar to Notre Dame; it even had a boarding school. My mother and her second husband didn't move their business to Bucharest after all. They lived there for as long as I studied there, but I lived at the boarding school, not with them because they weren't all set.

At that school I learnt French. You weren't allowed to speak Romanian, and actually you were supposed to know some French before you got there. But that was the case with me because when I was in high school in Brasov, I took private lessons in French, so I could already speak it. I took private lessons in English and in singing. I took singing-lessons for a year with a singer, a certain Mrs. Baciu; I learnt to sing sol-fas, different arias from operettas, and I had a rather pleasant voice. I also took some piano lessons with a Jewish piano teacher, Ilona Weiss. Back then we had a cottage piano at home, so I could practice, but after I went to high school, I gave it all up. The high school had no Jewish profile. I studied at Elena Princess high school [approximately from 1944 until 1947], then I studied two years at Soazi Mangaru in Bucharest, and then I returned to Brasov, to Elena Princess high school, and that's where I graduated in 1947. [Editor's note: It is very likely that she graduated some time later, Ruth doesn't remember dates very well.]

After the war, I also studied religion with Rabbi Deutsch in the community's headquarters in Brasov for two hours a week. Those were compulsory religious classes from school, but since we were Jews, we studied with the rabbi. The rabbi did something for a group of girls, I was among them as well, which was called confirmation, like it is for the Hungarians. It's the exact equivalent of bat mitzvah, but I don't know why everybody referred to it as confirmation back then. We were a group of girls, of different ages, and the ceremony took place in the synagogue with the rabbi. Each of us had to know by heart a prayer in Hebrew on that occasion.

There were Purim balls organized in the house of culture in Brasov by the CDE ['Comitetul Democrat al Evreilor', 'The Jewish Democratic Committee'] or by the Zionist organizations in Brasov, like Gordonia 8 and Hanoar [Hanoar Hatzioni] 9. All chairs were taken out of the ballroom, and the balls were held there. I participated in a Purim ball for the first time when I was 15, in 1947. They were rather elegant and usually for grown-ups. My mother had a dress made for me at

the dressmaker's, made from gray checkered taffeta, which was very hard to find in those times. It had a large cleavage on the back. I remember that was the first time I wore it.

I was also in a Zionist organization right after the war, but I can't remember if it was Gordonia or Hanoar; I think probably both. In any case, every day, after school, we were there, playing ping-pong, or dancing traditional Jewish dances, like Iulala. It's a dance very similar to the Romanian ring dance, the hora 10. It was danced in a large circle; you had to take two steps to the right, one to the left, and lift your foot. In the middle of the circle there was a boy who chose a girl from the dancers and danced with her in the middle, then the girl would be there alone and choose a boy, and so on. It was nice. We made friends, fell in love... we were young girls. I also participated in some classes held by a sheliach, about Jewish history, about religion, about making aliyah to Palestine because Israel didn't exist back then. I was just a child when Israel was born, in 1948, but I was happy. We, the Jews, who never had anything, finally had our own country. We heard the news about it on the BBC, it was the radio station we listened to back then. Zionist organizations were forbidden after a while, at the end of the 1940s.

Things weren't so good under communism either: during Stalin and Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej 11, my parents were afraid to be caught listening to foreign radio stations; that was also forbidden. Rose-Marie's father - Rose- Marie was my good childhood friend from Sibiu -suffered a lot when the communists came to power because they found gold and gold coins in his shop - he was a jeweler - and sent him to prison. That happened under Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. I don't remember exactly how I found out about it, but I kept in touch with Rose-Marie, we were very close back then and moreover, news traveled quickly in the Jewish circles.

I was allowed to go out with friends or with boys, when I was already 15 or 16, only that my mother didn't allow me to stay out later than 9 o'clock; I was a bit precocious from this point of view, not in the way the word is understood today though. When I was 13, a boy courted me. He was 14, my first big true love - platonic, of course - and it lasted for many years, until he left for university to Cluj [Napoca]. His name was Fleischer, he was the most handsome boy in town and all the girls were crazy about him. We broke up when he left, he was 18 or 19, but we remained good friends. He used to write to me, and his parents were my godparents when I got married.

My husband

I met my husband, Carol Ionel Greif, in the social circles in Brasov before I left for university. He was a Jew from Cernauti and older than me; he was born in 1923. He studied at two universities. He studied languages - he knew six or seven languages - and he studied chemistry by correspondence at a university in Belgium. He had quite a reputation with women, but to me he was friendly and he often took me out to the theater, behaved like a gentleman and joked that when I grew up he would marry me.

I studied at the faculty of medicine in Cluj for six years, from 1952 until 1959. I came home only during holidays, so I didn't spend much time with my mother. My financial situation wasn't so good anymore after the nationalization; my family had to support me, pay for my accommodation in Cluj and for my books. My schedule was so tight, I barely had time to live. I had classes in the morning, more practical assignments in the afternoon, but I still found time to go to the opera two or three times a week. I had a suitor, a Jewish opera singer from Cluj, a baritone. He was ten years older than me, but I got attached to him; he reminded me of my father. Victor Vida was his name, and

we remained good friends even after I married. He came to visit me in Brasov, but he eventually left for Germany, where he had a sister. He was also a chazzan with the Jewish community in Cluj, and didn't have a bohemian life-style like other artists; he took very good care of his voice. He had suffered a lot during the war: he had been deported and had severe burns on his hands.

I didn't have other contacts with the Jewish community in Cluj, but many of my colleagues were Jewish. We would have a party almost weekly, we could chat, dance and eat, especially because many of them were from Cluj and had houses there. I think my circle of friends was exclusively Jewish during those years; we were a lot of Jews. I had my friend Rose-Marie and others. It wasn't something premeditated, but I think we had more things in common. I didn't feel any anti-Semitism at the faculty, but we were afraid of the Securitate 12.

My friend Rose-Marie had some problems with the Securitate, and with communism: she had been a very good student, she tried to get into the Faculty of Medicine in Cluj for three times in a row and failed, only because her father had been sent to prison. She had a file and her origins weren't 'healthy' ['origine sanatoasa' in Romanian]. During communism, all kulaks 13, their children or landowners' children were considered to be of 'unhealthy' origins. Rose-Marie married when she was still a student - she was eventually accepted at the faculty of medicine in Cluj after trying for the fourth time - and she and her husband filed for aliyah. But you weren't allowed to take jewelry out of the country, only a seven-gram wedding ring. Her husband tried to send some jewels with somebody to Israel, but that person was caught, and Rose-Marie's husband was in prison for a year. After that, they both left.

My family wanted to make aliyah; my father had been a Zionist, but he died too young, before it was possible to do so. But my mother and I filed for emigration. I was a student, and I lived in fear all that time because if people found out that you filed for emigration, you were immediately expelled from university. And it was a high risk because it wasn't like now, that you know for certain that you will leave at some point; it could have been a yes or a no, but I could definitely have lost my chance to study at university. It happened to a colleague of mine because people found out that she had filed for emigration. The approval didn't come for years and years. We were getting ready to go, we sold things from the house, but still no answer.

For as long as I was in Cluj, I saw Carol only during holidays, and in the meantime he was engaged to someone else, but that didn't work out. In the end we fell in love and married in 1959, just before I took my state examination. We only had a civil marriage that year because my husband was very proud, and he said he would have a wedding only with a rabbi, not with a hakham. But we had the religious wedding later on, when my husband found out unexpectedly that Rabbi Moses Rosen 14 was in Poiana Brasov. He went after him and persuaded him to wed us, and he did. In Brasov Carol worked at first in a test laboratory.

Marrying someone who wasn't Jewish never occurred to me, and I'm sure my parents wouldn't have approved. But I never had Romanian boys court me, except one, maybe, but that was nothing serious. And I think tradition is good for something, in a marriage there can be so many problems, that a dispute over religion is the last thing one needs.

My parents-in-law were named Leo and Amalia Greif. My father-in-law had owned, along with an associate, an ethyl chloroform plant in Cernauti. My father-in-law was a very hard-working man; for example, he didn't take a vacation for ten years. He was that busy with the plant; he only sent his

wife and his son to Vatra Dornei [spa region located in Bistritei Mountains, in Suceava county] or Karlsbad 15 in Czechoslovakia. He and his family suffered a lot during World War II, but they had a bit of luck as well because the Russians needed the plant, so he and his family were only taken to the ghetto in Cernauti, not to Transnistria 16.

When the Germans came, he was still in trouble. Every time a German was shot, the authorities would take hostage some of the important people in Cernauti; he was taken from his house as he was, his wife only had time to throw him a blanket from the balcony as he was being taken away. They were very worried; a lot of time passed since he went missing and nobody knew where he was. When he came back, he was forced to move out of his house and leave everything there, and share a miserable house with several other families. That's why they came to Romania when they could, in 1946. When my parents-in-law moved from Cernauti to Romania, they knew nationalization would follow, so they wanted to invest all their money in something: they bought an old house, which also had lodgers.

Among other things, my father-in-law invented a recipe for bitter, bitter which gave me quite a big surprise one day in 2000. I was walking down one of the main streets of Brasov, and in front of a fancy and classy bar, Festival 39, I saw a plate outside with his signature, Leo Greif. He used to manufacture it in his laboratory and sell it while he still worked. I could recognize it among a thousand others, so I went inside and talked to the owner. Apparently, he was serving for free to every customer who entered his bar a Leo Greif bitter. And he asked me to give him something personal of Leo Greif if I had anything. I did and gave him a few old IDs. You can still find this bar, which is full of old pictures, and you can see Leo Greif's photos there if you ask for someone to show them to you.

The parents of my parents-in-law were very rich people. My mother-in-law's family had a house in the very center of Cernauti, with 27 rooms, and a space for a shop downstairs. My mother-in-law and her brother inherited it. My father-in-law's family had an estate in Plosca, which is a commune [10 km from Cernauti], and they had there 250 hectares of woods there, plus horses and a big manor. A law was passed last year [in 2003], saying that the Romanian state will make up for the losses, and I filed for it. I had all documents from those times; my parents-in-law were very careful with paperwork.

When I graduated from university in 1959, there was a social mark that was added to all the other grades I obtained after my final exams. I had an 'unhealthy' origin as well because my parents had owned a store; because of that, I had a file and couldn't choose a workplace where I wanted, even if normally I could have because my grades were very high. But because my social grade was 4, and it was added to the 9 point something I had in all my six years of study and state examination, I couldn't choose where I wanted to work.

I was repartitioned to some village in Moldova, I have no idea where because I never went there. By that time I was already married, and only those who were pregnant or had high grades could choose the town, but that wasn't my case. My husband told me that if I didn't get Brasov, then I shouldn't go where they sent me. But back then you couldn't just pass on what you were offered, not working wasn't an option. In order to work somewhere else, the chief doctor in Moldova, where I was initially repartitioned - he was a Jew called Merler- had to let me go first. My husband went there and asked him, but at first he refused. He said that, first of all, he was a Jew as well and that

would be too obvious, and second, he couldn't pretend that he didn't need me when he needed more doctors. I don't remember how my husband eventually solved the problem, but it was solved.

My husband, who was very versatile, got me a job as a nurse in Poiana Brasov. [Editor's note: Poiana Brasov is Romania's premier ski resort located 12 km from Brasov.] This was possible because my husband had a rather high position at that time: he was the president of the medical orderly Mutual Aid Fund here in Brasov. And, each doctor needed a loan and my husband gave loans, but could afford to ask for favors in return. He was very good friends with the chief doctor of the region [see Territorial reorganization in 1952] 17, and my husband asked him to get a petition for the need of a doctor in Poiana Brasov. That's how I got there. So he opened me a consulting room through ONT ['Oficiul National de Turism', 'The National Tourism Office']. It was the time when foreigners started to come and visit the country, and the fact that I could speak several languages was a plus. So my husband fixed it with the ONT in Bucharest, and I commuted to Poiana Brasov for a year. I worked as a doctor, of course, but on paper I was just a nurse.

Then another friend of my husband's, the chief doctor in Bod, made a request for a doctor in Bod because, presumably, they didn't have one. So my husband put me in the hospital and said I was three months pregnant - and I wasn't at all back then! - and went straight to Minister Burghelea [Minister of Health at that time] in Bucharest, with the medical certificate and the request that a doctor was needed in Bod. My husband later told me how the meeting went: he knocked on the door, opened it, took a large step inside with his right foot, and said to the minister, 'Comrade Minister, I entered with my right foot. I hope you will be able to solve my problem!' The atmosphere was immediately relaxed, and my husband brought home the approval. So I became a probation doctor in Bod, where I worked for a year; after that I worked for two more years in Halchiu [16 km from Brasov], and after that I took an exam and I was finally a doctor in town, in Brasov.

After I got married, I moved in with my husband and his parents, into two rooms: one was ours, and one was theirs. My daughter Beatrice was born in that room in 1961. It was getting pretty crowded. Then, in 1974 or 1975, OCRPP [state organization that was in charge of managing the locative resources of a town] appeared, and you could buy houses, but only if you didn't have one already. So we wanted to sell that old house, but it was very hard because it had several rooms and in each room there was a different family. We eventually did, but the new owner had to settle compensations with each lodger separately. After that, we got the apartment where I still live today.

My daughter

I raised my daughter to be a Jew, of course. I used to light candles every Friday evening, and say the blessing in Hebrew. I knew that by heart. We observed all high holidays, we fasted on Yom Kippur, we didn't eat bread on Pesach; however, we didn't follow the kashrut. My father-in-law led the seder, and after he died, in 1966, my husband did. My husband spoke Yiddish, and he read perfectly in Hebrew - which he also understood. I know he studied Hebrew, but I don't know if it was in a cheder or a yeshivah. Anyway, all the ceremonies in our house were very long because my husband insisted that we understood them as well, so he said the prayers in Hebrew first and then translated them for us. We went to the synagogue on Purim, on Sukkot, on Chanukkah, but not every Saturday. It wasn't dangerous for us, our positions weren't considered very high, and we weren't in the Communist Party. During communism I never had problems because of being Jewish,

and I never had to hide it, and neither had my daughter. And whoever says we didn't have religious freedom is lying. Of course, those Jews who had managerial positions and were party members were careful not to be seen at the synagogue, they didn't want to lose their position. But the rest of the Jews in Brasov could go anytime; there was no problem. And, during our marriage, our friends were Jews and Romanians alike; it didn't matter.

In the end, I gave up the idea of emigrating. My husband didn't want to leave under any circumstances. Back then the rule was that you were only allowed to leave with 70 kilograms of clothing, nothing else, and my husband had a lot of valuable things here in the country which he didn't want to give up. When I got married, I signed a paper saying that I had given up the idea of emigration. My husband insisted on that; he never wanted to emigrate. But we could have filed for it again, if we had wanted to.

My mother, on the other hand, eventually got the approval, in 1965 or 1966, and she left for Israel, but not to stay there. She went to Israel to take back some valuables she had managed to send there in 1964/5, with some Jews who left earlier and were supposed to keep the jewelry until she came for it. It was a risk, of course: if the jewels had been found, they would have been confiscated and lost. But my mother took the chance because she knew she would leave and would have lost the jewelry anyway if she had left it behind, so she sent some jewelry with brilliants and other precious stones to some Jews who left for Vienna and some others who left for Israel.

Those people had left with the ship Transilvania, but when my mother left, she went by plane. She stayed in Israel for about eight months, but she couldn't bring back much because those people pretended hat she hadn't given them anything. I think she only took back a few things from all she had sent. In Vienna - she left by plane and the plane stopped in Vienna on the way back to Romania - she got her jewelries back from the people she had given them to. She came home with the jewelries and kept them; she didn't sell them. She intended to do so only if we had stayed in Israel. It was something illegal back then, of course, but my mother thought the risk was worth taking. If we had started a new life in Israel we would have needed the money.

I wasn't a member of the Communist Party, but in high school I had to be a member of the UTM [Uniunea Tineretului Muncitoresc, The Young Workers' Union], and then in university I was a member of a student organization, which later became UTC [Uniunea Tinerilor Comunisti, Young Communists Union']. But when I started working, I was already married, and my husband wouldn't let me join the party. He wasn't a member either, but he had a good friend, a Hungarian doctor, who was very active in the party, and this friend wanted me to join. But my husband was very categorical about it and said, 'Up to here! She doesn't want to and she won't!' My husband had a managerial position, he ran the medical orderly Mutual Aid Fund for 30 years, and he was the vice-president of the medical syndicate, and he still managed not to join the Party. He declared very openly that his family had been landowners and kulaks, and that he didn't want to join just to be thrown out later. So I wasn't a party member, but I had to participate in marches on 23rd August 18, 1st May and 7th November [also known as October Revolution Day] 19 all the same.

Our attitude towards the government was hostile, but not openly so: we were afraid of the repercussions. When friends came over, we would put a pillow over the phone, just in case. [Mrs. Greif refers to the fact that many people, including her, suspected that the phones were tapped by the Securitate.] Anyone suspected anyone. One out of three friends was a snitch for the Securitate.

The suspicions were even worse because we didn't know from whom to stay away. But of course in very close circles, we told jokes about Ceausescu 20, we practically lived on those jokes and the BBC and Radio Free Europe 21!

My greatest pain during the communist regime was that I couldn't travel more; of course I saw with my husband all the countries in the socialist camp, but we still wanted more. And even a trip to a socialist country was a problem, not in terms of money - we had two wages and one was more than enough for a two-week trip - but we had to fill in tons of papers, whole files, really, just to be able to go on a simple trip. We had to write CVs of ourselves, we had to write what relatives we had abroad, their addresses, when they had left etc. We had to write who of our family had stayed behind and so on. They wanted to make sure we wouldn't run away.

We also suffered from the lack of heat: hot water was limited, and all the family crowded in the kitchen to get warm at the cooker. But I didn't suffer from hunger or food restrictions, that is true. As a doctor, I had to make periodical checks for different institutions, and those people had to come every month with their health books. I knew them already, and they would just send their books for me to sign. In return for that I never had to stand in queues at grocery shops because I knew the staff there. At restaurants I could buy meat as well for the same reason, and you could hardly find meat anywhere else. Some patients gave me Kent packs, and I used to trade them for meat at the butcher's shop. That's the way the black market worked.

Correspondence was a problem during communism: I couldn't write to my brother in Israel when I was a student in Cluj. I didn't even try. When the staff at the post office saw a stamp for Israel, or the USA, or any other country, they would open it and call the Securitate. It was that bad during Stalinism. After Stalin died [in 1953] and Khrushchev 22 came to power, it got better, that is you could write, but not be sure if the letters would reach their destination! It happened to me as well.

We did have some sort of unwanted contacts with the Securitate during communism. After Beatrice graduated from high school in 1973, she went on a trip to Israel, and a friend she made there, a boy, came to visit us as well, on Pesach. Of course we knew he wasn't allowed to stay in our house, so he stayed at a hotel. He came over for seder - my husband led it - and we celebrated. Then a very strong rain-storm broke out, the boy was tired and eventually slept over at our place and only went back to the hotel the next morning. Back then, all receptionists, chambermaids and so on were snitches for the Securitate, who wanted to keep an eye especially on foreigners, and each hotel had a Securitate officer. And of course the receptionist told the officer that one guest didn't sleep at the hotel that night, and the poor boy - I don't remember his name - was questioned by the officer and he told the truth, saying that a strong rain-storm broke out and that he had to sleep over at some friends. After that, the boy called my husband and told him what had happened. My husband immediately called the hospital Securitate officer, whom he knew, and explained the whole situation. I got pretty scared. I thought they would come to search our house, so I packed all the soaps I had received as gifts from patients, put them in a suitcase and stashed it at some neighbors. But fortunately, that was the end of it - nothing happened.

When the wars in Israel started, I was worried; first of all for my brother Benjamin, who was in the army for three years and who fought in the Six-Day- War 23, and for my father's cousins. I visited Israel and Benjamin in 1973. Unfortunately, I went alone, without my husband. Only two people from Brasov were allowed to leave the country that year, and I was one of them. I needed a lot of

approvals and my husband had to intervene in many places so that I could go. By that time, Benjamin was an adult, worked as a dental technician and was a married man. His wife was expecting their first child. I went to Israel three times after that as well, and they also came here. And I could visit Jerusalem, which had been liberated, and Bethlehem. I visited more or less every place I could. My husband had a cousin there, who was the director of the Haifa refinery, and he had a car and quite a talent for showing people around. I saw the north of Israel, I went as far as the border to Lebanon, and I also visited my childhood friend, Rose- Marie, who was by that time a doctor in Jerusalem. We are still good friends.

My mother died in 1988 in Brasov, and she was buried in the Jewish cemetery here; in 1988 we didn't have a rabbi here anymore, but we asked for a chazzan from Bucharest to come. I think it was someone from the community who recited the Kaddish. When my mother-in-law died we brought Rabbi Neumann all the way from Timisoara. We had to pay for it, of course, the rabbi couldn't travel all over the country for every funeral for free, but my husband insisted to bury his mother in the presence of a rabbi.

My daughter went to Iasi to study languages. She was forced to join the UTC because she was a brilliant student and there was no way she could have avoided it. My husband always joked about that, he used to call her 'The only UTC member in the family!' She married a Romanian, Dan Median, in 1987. He is an architect, and they have a daughter, Daniela, who was born in 1988. My husband suffered a lot when Beatrice married. He would have liked her to marry a Jew, that was the tradition in our family. But when Beatrice got pregnant, the dispute over the religion of the future child was inevitable. Dan's parents are also very religious people, Christian Orthodox, and after long deliberations we established that if it was a boy, he would be a Christian, and if it was a girl, she would be a Jew. I cannot tell you how much my husband concerned himself with this issue; during those nine months he prayed all the time that it would be a girl. He lost ten kilos! Although, as he later told me, he still couldn't see how a child from a Jewish mother could be anything but Jewish! Tradition was very important for him.

My daughter observes the high holidays, but she only lights the candles on Friday evenings when she remembers, and she doesn't fast on Yom Kippur. My granddaughter Daniela, on the other hand, is more religious and involved in the community. She has been to Szarvas three times already and she likes to learn about customs and religion. [Editor's note: Szarvas is a two-week Jewish camp that takes place every year in Szarvas, Hungary; it was founded by the Lauder Foundation, and it welcomes Jewish teenagers from Europe, USA, Ethiopia and Israel. It focuses mainly on preserving the Jewish traditions.] My daughter also trims a Christmas tree on Christmas; so more or less they observe both religions.

When the Romanian Revolution of 1989 24 started, I was at home with my husband, getting ready for Chanukkah to go to the temple. We heard what happened in Timisoara on the radio - that the students and other people were rebelling against the Communist Party - but we still didn't discuss it at work. You couldn't be sure how things were going to end and who was listening. Also, a student from Timisoara, who lived in our apartment block, came home and told us what was going on, about the slaughters. [Editor's note: several students were arrested, others beaten or even shot during the first confrontations between the revolutionaries and the authorities]. She could hardly make it home by train. So we sort of knew from the source what was going on, that the revolution had finally broken out, and that it wasn't just a pack of hooligans like the authorities said.

I found out that it had spread to the rest of the country on the bus, as I was coming home from work. I was listening to a conversation of two elderly ladies, who were commenting the balcony scene in Bucharest, and how the TV broadcast had been interrupted. We still wanted to go to the synagogue for Chanukkah, but then we looked out of the window, and all bus services had stopped running, and rows and rows of workers were heading downtown, to the party headquarters. We also saw red flames from the guns as shots were being fired in the neighborhood, but I honestly believe now that they didn't know whom they were shooting at, frightened people were shooting at other innocent people. Many civilians were given weapons back then, and they didn't know who they were fighting with. So many accidents happened.

I believe life got better after 1989. You have access to everything now, you don't have to stand in queues for everything. But we weren't doing too badly during communism either: we had good wages, I did night shifts for 30 years and those were well paid, and we could save a lot because there wasn't anything you could spend it on, except trips. After the revolution we had 700.000 lei saved, which was a huge amount of money back then. Immediately, my husband started to worry about how to invest it. He knew from his own experience in Cernauti that the money would devaluate, and that in the end we would only be able to buy a bag of onions with that money. So we started buying: we bought gold - the Russians were coming with gold jewelries - we bought hand-made carpets, which are extremely hard, if not impossible to find now, we bought a four-bedroom apartment for my daughter, furs and so on, And, we still had money left.

My husband died in 1994. He is buried in the Jewish cemetery here; there was a minyan at his funeral and someone from the community recited the Kaddish. And after my parents and my husband died, I sat shivah for seven days for each of them. The community has a long black prayer-stool, with two seats, for those who need to sit shivah. The first day I went out, I circled the building. I keep Yahrzeit for my parents and my husband and I go to the minyan for the prayer.

I receive a pension for my husband, under law 118 because he had been deported, which gives me free bus and train tickets, some tax exemptions and so on. I work at the community, I have been the community's doctor for 12 or 13 years now. I started working here one year before I retired, in 1992. I have consulting hours twice a week there, but we have many patients who need our assistance and cannot walk, so I have to do house-calls as well. I usually don't go to the synagogue on Saturdays, unless it is the Yahrzeit of my husband or my parents.

I keep in touch with my daughter's family. She visits me, and so does Daniela. On the high holidays we usually meet at the temple, where the festive dinners and ceremonies take place.

Glossary

1 Legionary Movement (also known as the Legion of the Archangel Michael)
Movement founded in 1927 by C. Z. Codreanu. This extremist, nationalist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic movement aimed at excluding those whose views on political and racial matters were different from theirs. The Legion was organized in so-called nests, and it practiced mystical rituals, which were regarded as the way to a national spiritual regeneration by the members of the movement. These rituals were based on Romanian folklore and historical traditions. The Legionaries founded the Iron Guard as a terror organization, which carried out terrorist activities

and political murders. The political twin of the Legionary Movement was the Totul pentru Tara (Everything for the Fatherland) that represented the movement in parliamentary elections. The followers of the Legionary Movement were recruited from young intellectuals, students, Orthodox clericals, peasants. The movement was banned by King Carol II in 1938.

2 King's Day

10th May; on 10th May 1866 a monarchy was established in Romania under King Carol I; and on 10th May 1877 the Independence War of Romania began.

3 Strajer (Watchmen), Strajeria (Watchmen Guard)

Proto-fascist mass- organization founded by King Carol II with the aim of bringing up the youth in the spirit of serving and obedience, and of nationalist ideas of grandeur.

4 King Carol II (1893-1953)

King of Romania from 1930 to 1940. During his reign he tried to influence the course of Romanian political life, first through the manipulation of the rival Peasants' Party, the National Liberal Party and anti-Semitic factions. In 1938 King Carol established a royal dictatorship. He suspended the Constitution of 1923 and introduced a new constitution that concentrated all legislative and executive powers in his hands, gave him total control over the judicial system and the press, and introduced a one-party system. A contest between the king and the fascist Iron Guard Iron ensued, with assassinations and massacres on both sides. Under Soviet and Hungarian pressure, Carol had to surrender parts of Romania to foreign rule in 1940 (Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR, the Cadrilater to Bulgaria and Northern Transylvania to Hungary). He was abdicated in favor of his son, Michael, and he fled abroad. He died in Portugal.

5 Anti-Jewish laws in Romania

The first anti-Jewish laws were introduced in 1938 by the Goga-Cuza government. Further anti-Jewish laws followed in 1940 and 1941, and the situation was getting gradually worse between 1941- 1944 under the Antonescu regime. According to these laws all Jews aged 18- 40 living in villages were to be evacuated and concentrated in the capital town of each county. Jews from the region between the Siret and Prut Rivers were transported by wagons to the camps of Targu Jiu, Slobozia, Craiova etc. where they lived and died in misery. More than 40,000 Jews were moved. All rural Jewish property, as well as houses owned by Jews in the city, were confiscated by the state, as part of the 'Romanisation campaign'. Marriages between Jews and Romanians were forbidden from August 1940, Jews were not allowed to have Romanian names, own rural properties, be public employees, lawyers, editors or janitors in public institutions, have a career in the army, own liquor stores, etc. Jewish employees of commercial and industrial enterprises were fired, Jewish doctors could no longer practice and Jews were not allowed to own chemist shops. Jewish students were forbidden to study in Romanian schools.

6 Anschluss

The annexation of Austria to Germany. The 1919 peace treaty of St. Germain prohibited the

Anschluss, to prevent a resurgence of a strong Germany. On 12th March 1938 Hitler occupied Austria, and, to popular approval, annexed it as the province of Ostmark. In April 1945 Austria regained independence legalizing it with the Austrian State Treaty in 1955.

7 Nationalization in Romania

The nationalization of industry and natural resources in Romania was laid down by the law of 11th June 1948. It was correlated with the forced collectivization of agriculture and the introduction of planned economy.

8 Gordonia

Pioneering Zionist youth movement founded in Galicia at the end of 1923. It became a world movement, which meticulously maintained its unique character as a Jewish, Zionist, and Erez Israel-oriented movement.

9 Hanoar Hatzioni in Romania

The Hanoar Hatzioni movement started in Transylvania as a result of the secession of the Hashomer organization in 1929. They tried to define themselves as a centrist Zionist youth organization, without any political convictions. Their first emigration action was organized in 1934. Five years later (1939) they founded in Palestine their first independent colony called Kfar Glickson. The Hanoar Hatzioni organizations of Transylvania and of the old Regat (Muntenia and Moldova) formed a common leadership in 1932 in Bucharest called Histadrut Olamith Hanoar Hatzioni. In 1934 the Transylvanian organization consisted of 26 local groups.

10 Hora

The best-known folk dance of pioneers in Eretz Israel. The dance is chiefly derived from the Romanian hora. Hora is a closed circle dance. Israeli dance is an amalgam of the many cultures and peoples which settled in Palestine, and then Israel. The original sources were Eastern European styles, Arabic and Yemenite.

11 Gheorghiu-Dej, Gheorghe (1901-1965)

Leader of the Romanian Communist Party between 1952 and 1965. Originally an electrician and railway worker, he was imprisoned in 1933 and became the underground leader of all imprisoned communists. He was prime minister between 1952-55 and first secretary of the Communist Party between 1945-1953 and from 1955 until his death. In his later years, he led a policy that drifted away from the directive in Moscow, keeping the Stalinist system untouched by the Krushchevian reforms.

12 Securitate (in Romanian

DGSP - Directia generala a Securitatii Poporului): General Board of the People's Security. Its structure was established in 1948 with direct participation of Soviet advisors named by the NKVD. The primary purpose was to 'defend all democratic accomplishments and to ensure the security of the Romanian Popular Republic against plots of both domestic and foreign enemies'. Its leader was

Pantelimon Bondarenko, later known as Gheorghe Pintilie, a former NKVD agent. It carried out the arrests, physical torture and brutal imprisonment of people who became undesirable for the leaders of the Romanian Communist Party, and also kept the life of ordinary civilians under strict observation.

13 Kulak

Between 1949-1959 peasants in Romania, who had 10-50 hectares of land were called kulaks, those who owned more than 50 exploiters. Their land was confiscated. They were either expelled from their houses and deported to the Baragan Steppes and the Danube Delta, where they had to work under inhuman conditions, or they were discriminated in every possible way (by forcing them to pay impossibly high taxes, preventing their children from entering higher education, etc.).

14 Rosen, Moses (1912-1994)

Chief Rabbi of Romania and the president of the Association of Jewish Religious Communities during communism.

15 Karlsbad (Czech name

Karlovy Vary): The most famous Bohemian spa, named after Bohemian King Charles (Karel) IV, who allegedly found the springs during a hunting expedition in 1358. It was one of the most popular resorts among the royalty and aristocracy in Europe for centuries.

16 Transnistria

Area situated between the Bug and Dniester rivers and the Black Sea. The term is derived from the Romanian name for the Dniester (Nistru) and was coined after the occupation of the area by German and Romanian troops in World War II. After its occupation Transnistria became a place for deported Romanian Jews. Systematic deportations began in September 1941. In the course of the next two months, all surviving Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina and a small part of the Jewish population of Old Romania were dispatched across the Dniester. This first wave of deportations reached almost 120,000 by mid-November 1941 when it was halted by Ion Antonescu, the Romanian dictator, upon intervention of the Council of Romanian Jewish Communities. Deportations resumed at the beginning of the summer of 1942, affecting close to 5,000 Jews. A third series of deportations from Old Romania took place in July 1942, affecting Jews who had evaded forced labor decrees, as well as their families, communist sympathizers and Bessarabian Jews who had been in Old Romania and Transylvania during the Soviet occupation. The most feared Transnistrian camps were Vapniarka, Ribnita, Berezovka, Tulcin and Iampol. Most of the Jews deported to camps in Transnistria died between 1941-1943 because of horrible living conditions, diseases and lack of food.

17 Territorial reorganization in 1952

The new constitution adopted in 1952 declared Romania a country, which started to build up communism. The old administrative system was abolished, and the new one followed the Soviet pattern: the administrative partition of the country consisted of 18 regions ('regiune'), each of them

subdivided into so called 'raions'. In the same year the so-called Hungarian Autonomous Region was founded, a third of which was made up by the Hungarian inhabitants living in Romania. The administrative center of this region was Targu Mures/Marosvasarhely, and it was subdivided into ten 'raions': Csik, Erdoszentgyorgy, Gyergyoszentmiklos, Kezdivasarhely, Marosheviz, Marosvasarhely, Regen, Sepsiszentgyörgy, Szekelyudvarhely.

18 23 August 1944

On that day the Romanian Army switched sides and changed its World War II alliances, which resulted in the state of war against the German Third Reich. The Royal head of the Romanian state, King Michael I, arrested the head of government, Marshal Ion Antonescu, who was unwilling to accept an unconditional surrender to the Allies.

19 October Revolution Day

October 25 (according to the old calendar), 1917 went down in history as victory day for the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. This day is the most significant date in the history of the USSR. Today the anniversary is celebrated as 'Day of Accord and Reconciliation' on November 7.

20 Ceausescu, Nicolae (1918-1989)

Communist head of Romania between 1965 and 1989. He followed a policy of nationalism and non-intervention into the internal affairs of other countries. The internal political, economic and social situation was marked by the cult of his personality, as well as by terror, institutionalized by the Securitate, the Romanian political police. The Ceausescu regime was marked by disastrous economic schemes and became increasingly repressive and corrupt. There were frequent food shortages, lack of electricity and heating, which made everyday life unbearable. In December 1989 a popular uprising, joined by the army, led to the arrest and execution of both Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, who had been deputy Prime Minister since 1980.

21 Radio Free Europe

The radio station was set up by the National Committee for a Free Europe, an American organization, funded by Congress through the CIA, in 1950 with headquarters in West Germany. The radio broadcast uncensored news and features from Munich to countries behind the Iron Curtain. The programs were produced by Central and Eastern European émigré editors, journalists and moderators. The radio station was jammed behind the Iron Curtain, team members were constantly harassed and several people were killed in terrorist attacks by the KGB. Radio Free Europe played a role in supporting dissident groups, inner resistance and will of freedom in communist countries behind the Iron Curtain and thus it contributed to the downfall of the totalitarian regimes of Central and Eastern Europe.

22 Khrushchev, Nikita (1894-1971)

Soviet communist leader. After Stalin's death in 1953, he became first secretary of the Central Committee, in effect the head of the Communist Party of the USSR. In 1956, during the 20th Party Congress, Khrushchev took an unprecedented step and denounced Stalin and his methods. He was

deposed as premier and party head in October 1964. In 1966 he was dropped from the Party's Central Committee.

23 Six-Day-War

The first strikes of the Six-Day-War happened on 5th June 1967 by the Israeli Air Force. The entire war only lasted 132 hours and 30 minutes. The fighting on the Egyptian side only lasted four days, while fighting on the Jordanian side lasted three. Despite the short length of the war, this was one of the most dramatic and devastating wars ever fought between Israel and all of the Arab nations. This war resulted in a depression that lasted for many years after it ended. The Six-Day-War increased tension between the Arab nations and the Western World because of the change in mentalities and political orientations of the Arab nations.

24 Romanian Revolution of 1989

In December 1989, a revolt in Romania deposed the communist dictator Ceausescu. Anti-government violence started in Timisoara and spread to other cities. When army units joined the uprising, Ceausescu fled, but he was captured and executed on 25th December along with his wife. A provisional government was established, with Ion Iliescu, a former Communist Party official, as president. In the elections of May 1990 Iliescu won the presidency and his party, the Democratic National Salvation Front, obtained an overwhelming majority in the legislature.