

Miriam Bercovici

Miriam Leah Bercovici

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Romania

Interviewer: Ana-Maria Hincu

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Miriam Leah Bercovici, an 80-year-old doctor, lives in Bucharest, in a three-room apartment on the third floor of an old building. Inside we find the intertwining of tradition with modern technology. Paintings and collection pieces are placed beside the computer, and the library is packed with books in German, English, Yiddish and Romanian, some of them with beautiful leather bindings, showing the passion for reading of their possessor. Miriam Bercovici is a neat, extremely active person, and she is getting help in the household matters by one of her neighbors. She is now retired, but she is still writing, and she has published her personal diary she wrote during the deportation. Now she is putting together the diary her mother wrote in the last three months of her life, articles on medical issues, etc. She is also working part-time at the polyclinic of the Jewish community.

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My family history

I'm originally from Campulung Moldovenesc, from a Jewish family three generations old in this town, a 'town of dreams,' as my best dreams are taking place there. My great-great-grandparents and their parents are resting in the Jewish cemetery of Campulung, which is so unkempt even now one can't visit it.

In Manfred Raifer's work 'Die ältesten Judensiedlungen im Kimpulunger Bezirk' [The Oldest Jewish Settlements in the County of Cimpulung], on pages 67–75, in the volume *Ausgewählte Historische Schriften* [Selected Historical Writings], Cernauti, 1938, on page 109, on the list of Jewish peasants in 1807, the name of a Jew called Michael Korber from the village of Musenita, Suceava county is mentioned. It is possible, as my grandparents told me, that we are originally from his family.

In search of my great-grandparents, following this thread, I visited all the Jewish cemeteries of the region, but I found nothing but rocks, with texts impossible to read. So I don't know whether my grandparents were telling the truth or not. During my search I found both Jewish and non-Jewish names of Korber in Vienna and Berlin, and I found out that even in Romania, in Timisoara, there was a hat factory called Korber.

My paternal grandfather, Abraham Mendel Korber, was born in Campulung Moldovenesc in 1857. He finished elementary school and became a tinsmith and glasscutter. He was a very open-minded

person. He used to read daily the Allgemeine Östidische Zeitung [The Eastern Journal] and the Morgenblatt [The Morning] newspapers, both in German, and all kinds of books, without any particular preferences – anything we could get him or that was published those days in Campulung. For example, a whole series of small volumes called Crimele Inchizitiei [Crimes of the Inquisition] was published, and he couldn't wait to read them. He used to go to the synagogue twice a day. He was a gabbai at the Temple – there were two synagogues, the old one, built a very long time ago, and the temple, built more recently; he used to go to the temple.

My grandmother, Tony Korber, was illiterate, and I don't know when exactly she was born. She took care of the household and I remember she made delicious cookies. She used to go to the synagogue, where there was a group of women one of who used to read the prayers. These prayers were written more plainly, that is, the stories with religious subjects were narrated in a simpler way, so even those who never went to school could understand them. My grandmother's maiden name was Merdler, and I know she had three sisters: Taube, Sosie and Sur – I knew the two latter ones –, and two brothers, Feivish and David. She was religious, wore a shawl and had a kosher kitchen. Even during the deportation my grandparents tried to respect the traditions, lit candles, fasted and tried to observe the holidays.

My grandparents had ten children, and seven of them survived. The oldest daughter was Ana Sternberg, nee Korber. She was a war-widow as her husband, Izi Sternberg, died at the end of World War I. I know he was a typographer. The second child of my grandparents, Isidor Korber, studied medicine in Vienna, and in 1936 he emigrated to Canada. He died one year later of cancer, I think. He was the only schooled one in the family; all the others finished elementary school and began to work so he could study. The third sister, Meta Korber, was a bit silly and I know that in 1913 she went to one of her aunts in America, to Los Angeles. My father, Leon Korber, was the fourth child, and the fifth, Mitzi Korber, died before World War II in Siret.

Eva Korber, the sixth child, was the only one who got divorced after six months of marriage; it seems she married a potato trader and they lived somewhere in Roman. But Eva couldn't take it anymore, divorced him and remarried Marton Szabo, a dentist from Maramures. They lived an extremely happy life in Sfantu Gheorghe. They were both killed in Auschwitz, and so were their children.

Rosa Korber, the youngest child, married Simon Blum, a shoe trader, and they lived near Cernauti. She was deported to Transnistria [1](#), to Mohilev-Podolsk. When they returned, they emigrated to Israel with their son, Martin Blum, who graduated from medical school.

The third child, my grandfather, also went to America, to New York, for some three years, there he manufactured and repaired roofs. This happened in 1892, during a massive exodus to the New World. He came back with some money, bought a small, one-bedroom house, where he accommodated his workshop. Later he opened a small glasscutter shop and hired some boys who learned this profession from him. It seems my grandfather had a brother, who was a tinsmith in Cernauti, and a sister; I don't know anything specific about them. I think he had one more brother in America, and I assume he was the one he went to stay with in 1892.

My father was born in 1892 in Campulung Moldovenesc. He finished seven elementary grades, like any other youngster in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Then he became my grandfather's apprentice and obtained his license as a tinsmith. Later he entered an exam for his master craftsman's

diploma; these things were treated very seriously in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. I know that before War World I my grandfather sent my father to Vienna for him to obtain a diploma that would give him the right to do autogenous welding. Any good tinsmith with self-esteem had to have all kinds of diplomas to certify his skills.

When World War I broke out, my father joined up as private – not voluntarily –, and when he came back home, he got married. With the dowry he got and the money he had earned working for my grandfather for two years, he opened his own business. He was a glasscutter and tinsmith, a respected craftsman in Campulung. I'm proud to say that the windows of the two Orthodox churches, the Catholic church, the Jewish temple and the hunting castle in Putna valley were put in place by my father.

My parents met in Siret. Grandfather Hutman was originally from Bukovina [2](#), and my father had a sister there. That's how my parents met, fell in love and later got married.

My maternal grandfather, David Leib Hutman, nicknamed 'Short hand' Hutman, was born in 1874 in Botosani, I think. He had a brother, Iosef Hutman, who emigrated to Canada in 1934, and two sisters. One of them was Rislă Hutman, who married Carol Katz, a poor middleman. She graduated from high school in Botosani and after she got married she became a housewife. She died in February 1944; I lived with them for two years during high school. Perla Hutman, my grandfather's other sister, married a very rich non-Jewish man, a fur trader, who died in 1934 in a car accident though. She emigrated to Canada with her three children: Miriam and Romi, who remained in Montreal, and Martha, who emigrated to Israel.

All the Hutmans gave the name Miriam to their first-born daughter, after their deceased grandmother. My mother told me my great-grandmother went to Israel to die. This was a trend before World War I: people used to go to die on the holy land. From what I've heard and from my mother's stories I know she first went to Chisinau, then to Vienna, and from there, by boat, to Israel. I looked for her grave, but I couldn't find it, so I don't know anything else about her.

Grandfather Hutman was a trader in Botosani, a very rich, but also very avaricious man, a hard giver. It's a known fact that one never refused the poor. The obligation of business owners was to donate from Thursday to Friday morning. People from the synagogue came to collect, especially for those from Maramures, from Borsa, where following the 1928 pogrom the synagogue, but also the houses burned down. [Editor's note: Between 1928 and 1930, the Alexandru Vaida-Voevod National Peasants' Party cabinet gave tacit assistance to the Guard, but Iuliu Maniu (representing the same party) clamped down on the Legion after July 1930. This came after the latter had tried to provoke a wave of pogroms in Maramures and Bessarabia. In one notable incident of 1930, Legionaries encouraged the peasant population of Borsa to attack the town's 4,000 Jews.] My grandfather though was very close-fisted, he always gave so little and all so hard, and he only pretended to be religious. He went to the synagogue just because he had to. He never ate pork. He looked religious, but in his heart he wasn't.

I think my grandmother's name was Ana. She died when my mother was eleven, in 1910. I heard she was a very delicate and fragile person. Grandfather remarried very shortly after her death, a Vexler girl from Iasi, a very good-looking woman, but just as severe as he was.

My mother, Klara Korber, nee Hutman, was born in 1899 in Botosani. I don't know whether she had any brothers or sisters, and I don't know much about her. I know she finished four grades at the Israelite-Romanian school. Before she got married she had a passion for reading and attended the reading club in Botosani, along with both Jewish and non-Jewish people. The only thing that brought them together was their passion for reading. The club had a rather leftist orientation, as many workers went there.

This reading club was in a way the predecessor of the library of Botosani: a large number of the books it holds are from this club. From the 1950s and until 1970 the librarian was a Jewish lady, Columbita Blumenfeld, a woman loved by everyone. I, too, knew her and I still visit her grave to place flowers on it. I always find fresh flowers there, which means people haven't forgot her yet.

My mother got married to my father on 31st August 1922 and moved in with him in Campulung. Because she was a very smart woman and made calculations quickly and easily, she was very good at keeping the books of the store. She had a kosher kitchen, and even during the deportation and the communist era she did her best to respect the traditions and observe the holidays as accurately as possible.

My sister Silvia, or Sisi, was born in 1927 in Campulung. She was a chubby, extremely kind girl, and I totally dominated her. She studied piano and Hebrew just like me, but at her own pace. She had to leave school at 13 because of the deportation, and it was very difficult for her to catch up, but despite all that she managed to graduate and she entered the medical school, of course. Her first revolt was when she had to choose her specialization. She told us she couldn't work on humans, so she chose the laboratory. She worked as researcher at the Cantacuzino Serum and Vaccine Institute in Iasi until 2003, and she is the discoverer of several vaccines, such as polidin.

One day she told me she had got married to Beno Hosie, an army-doctor with the rank of colonel, and later she told me she had given birth to a boy, Andrei Corbea Hosie. She always lived in Iasi, we kept in touch all the time, and we nursed together my mother during her sickness. My sister is a very delicate and shy person. She never told me anything about her accomplishments; I found out about most of her scientific discoveries from the newspapers or from television.

Growing up

I was born in 1923, when my father already had his small glasscutter shop, which later did quite well. Unlike my grandfather, he didn't hire any help; we worked for him. We had a housemaid, but the entire family worked in the shop, everybody helped out. We even learned the method of unloading, so when a truck full of glass arrived we used to unload it. I was happy to help because I was paid for it.

If we did well, we went out to the cinema on weekends, and I was very passionate about it. Movies were showing three times a week, and a ticket cost 7 lei. I saw Chaplin films, the movies 'Ben Hur,' 'Congress Dances' and others I can't remember any more. I was deeply impressed by the movie 'Jew Süß,' made by the Germans, reflecting their point of view, and I read the book to be able to make comparisons. [Editor's note: Jew Süß (1934), film directed by Lothar Mendes based on the novel by Lion Feuchtwanger. It is a story of life in the 18th century Jewish ghetto of Württemberg. Süß tries to better himself with the help of an evil Duke.]

I had a normal life, one could say. I attended elementary school, and then the girl's school in Campulung. I had good grades. I studied piano at home from the age of seven to the age of twelve with a music-mistress called Vanda Biscubska, who left the country around 1938-39. I studied Hebrew, French and English with a tutor, Doctor of Civil Law, attorney-at-law Berthold Hard. He was the son of the manager of the Eastern Bank and unable to work as a lawyer because he was Jewish, so he took up tutoring. Our parents weren't too easy on us: they paid for private lessons in piano and foreign languages, but they bought us just enough clothes for the fellow citizens to see we were children of well-fixed people, but not more. We had to work to get money.

In the house I grew up we usually talked in German and Yiddish, the language of the simple Jewish people, craftsmen such as tailors, boot-makers, cart wrights and framers, and small traders. Our grandparents spoke with each other in Yiddish. Mother knew better Yiddish than Father. The town was quite small, so people knew each other; we had German, Romanian and Jewish neighbors, and we spoke with them in their mother tongue. At home, though, we talked in German, and even though I never had a German tutor, I never made mistakes. My family observed every Jewish holiday: Pesach, Seder, Purim and Chanukkah, and we never worked on Sabbath.

Mother sent me to Botosani to attend the 6th and 7th grades there because there was no girl's school in Campulung. Thus I stayed at my maternal grandparents in Botosani and studied at the Carmen Sylva high school. I made some friends, girls and boys of my age, Jews, Germans and Romanians, and it seemed we were perfectly integrated in the town's life. About half of the pupils in my grade were Jewish.

Immediately after 6th September 1940 – it was during Antonescu's [3](#) dictatorship, under the Sima [4](#)-Antonescu legionary government – while I was in the 7th grade, as a result of the numerous clauses [in Romania] [5](#) we were only three Jews left in my grade. The selection was made based on the parents, whether they were heroes of World War I, and on the achievements at school. I was allowed to stay because I had very good grades. They put the three of us at the same desk, which previously was used for the weak students; it was very hard for me to accept this role and after three days I stopped going to school. Several weeks later, when the *numerus nullus* [in Hungary] [6](#) was adopted, I wasn't allowed to go to school any more, so I returned to Campulung.

An extremely difficult year followed [see anti-Jewish laws in Romania] [7](#): Jews were ordered out from villages and sent into the towns, and the identity cards of the Jewish people were changed based on deeds of citizenship. Later some were kept hostage in Campulung, and the wealthier owners were forced to stay in a Jew's house on an outlying street during daytime. There, because they had nothing to do, they played backgammon and discussed things. They weren't allowed to leave the house before dark, when they returned to their homes.

That year I decided to become a doctor because I had the opportunity to follow into the footsteps of one of my cousins, Berthold Merdler, or Berola, as we called him, a young doctor evacuated from Breaza to Campulung, who lived with us while trying to help anybody in need. He visited the sick for free, went to any village he was called to, and I thought this was extremely heroic, extraordinary. Later, in Transnistria, Berola worked in a hospital where he even fell ill with typhus fever. He was so dedicated he would have done anything he could to cure people.

That year I started to learn English zealously because I wanted to learn as many languages as I could. I also played the piano, I fell in love; I did everything a 17-year-old young lady would have

done. I was aware about what was happening around me. I daily visited my paternal grandparents, who were left all alone because my aunt who was living with them moved to Cernauti to be with her daughter who was about to get married there. So I took over the responsibility of taking care of my grandparents; I read them the newspaper or the books they wanted every day, I kept them up to date with the developments in the town. My grandfather went to the synagogue daily. I felt very attached to my paternal grandparents, much closer than to my maternal grandparents in Botosani.

There was no girl's school in Campulung, there were too few girls of that age, both Jewish and non-Jewish, people didn't really have money for school and, furthermore, the situation was quite messed up and there were no exams held that year. The community itself was too poor to support a girl's school. Under the circumstances my mother was afraid to send me to Botosani to continue my studies, and thus I had to give up school in the 7th grade.

During the War

Right after the war broke out, events got precipitated and restrictions got more severe. By winter-spring it became mandatory to wear the yellow star [8](#). I remember how I made it by stitching an approximately 1-cm-wide yellow ribbon on a black material. It had to be of certain dimensions, but I don't remember them anymore. Restrictions were introduced for the Jews to travel by train; they needed special permits to be able to practice medicine, advocacy, teaching. On the other hand one could only have a Jewish housemaid; it was prohibited to have a Christian housemaid.

In September 1941 the frictions reached the peak in Campulung when every Jewish house was searched, exactly on Yom Kippur, searches in which, beside the soldiers and policemen, even our former colleagues and friends took part. I don't know whether they had a permit for it or whether they did it only because they weren't Jewish, but this hurt me even more. The way Rabbi Rubin was treated, a well-known and learned man, came as a warning for the Jews, but we couldn't realize the gravity of the events that followed: he was harnessed to a barrow to carry everything discovered during the search, some food usual for any household, to the 'Green House.' It got its name from the color of the legionary uniforms, as it was a legionary [9](#) nest. I don't know what happened to my parents' house. I don't want to talk about this any more.

Several days later, on 10th October 1941, rumors began to arise, then the next day a mayoral order was issued through which we found out that we would be deported from Campulung, along with all the Jews from Bukovina, regardless of age, health condition and social status, within the following 24 hour. It said that one should take only what one could carry, but no money or jewels, under the threat of prosecution and condemnation. Only one Jew was left in Campulung, one of the two pharmacists, who was to be replaced only after three months. We knew we would be taken to some town in Transnistria, where we would be reintegrated through work and could rebuild our lives. I thought this would only last for a short period, and it would be like a trip, just until things would settle down. We didn't even think of hiding.

We left our houses open even though we were instructed to leave the keys for those who began to empty them even while we were still there: neighbors and friends with whom we used to spend Christmas or Purim. Suddenly we became 'others,' people who had to be sent away, and for whom no one felt, apparently, compassion or sorry anymore. Even the prosecutor of Campulung came to my father saying that if he had to leave the crystals and the Rosenthals [porcelain ware] behind anyway, it would be better to leave them with him. That's how it all began. We set off with all the

other Jews from Campulung, with the two 84-year-old grandparents, the asthmatic grandfather and the blind grandmother.

Accidentally I took with me a notebook with a leather cover that normally would have become my album of memories, just like the ones girls in my time used to have. The first note was by H. Bondy, the one who gave it to me. I also took something very dear to me: the transcription for piano of one of Ciprian Porumbescu's ballads, a thin partition, one of the last things I had studied before we left. [Ciprian Porumbescu, (1853–1883) was a Romanian composer.] I didn't have much luggage, on one hand because we only had one day to decide what to take with us, and on the other hand because I was responsible for my grandparents. When I finished packing, just like for a trip, we couldn't imagine we could be driven out of our house.

The next day at 11am carriages began to set off to the railway station located at the other end of the village. A long, muddy road, full of carriages packed with sacks, bundles, children and elderly. On foot, by the carriages, were the young people. Gypsies were doing better because they had carriages. We arrived at the station where crying and screaming awaited us. They entrained us on trucks normally used for horses: 38 people in a truck, including four elderly over eighty and a paralyzed child. We set off for a remote village in Bessarabia [10](#) called Ataki [Chernovtsy province, today Ukraine], where we would be colonized and could pick up a living. This much we knew.

Two days later we arrived in Ataki. We stayed in the open until the evening; then we went into the town. On the way we saw thousands of people, hundreds packed in each house, all destroyed, without roofs and windows, houses of murdered Jews, because on the walls the names of the killed ones had been written with coal. We were stuffed some 30 in a room, together with Garai, the pharmacist.

During our first night at Ataki we saw what human misery means: people with inhuman faces, children with swollen eyes, frost-bitten legs, mothers holding their dead children, elderly and young people covered in rags. They were the Jews sent away from the Edinets camp because of typhus symptoms or lice, and almost starved to death. They overran Ataki without having the permit to stay there. That night Garai the pharmacist went mad. At 5am we came out of the house and found a host on the hill. We washed up ourselves in the Dnestr in stale and unclean water, we paid 20 lei for a bucket of clean water and my mother gave a ring with a gemstone for a hen. People were throwing their jewels in the toilet in fear of the house-searches. The weather was nice, so those who arrived after us were lucky to stay in the open air. In Ataki I saw hunger knows no shame.

We managed to pull through the house-search, but the weather had broken, it began to rain and the mud was more than ankle-deep. We arrived by carriage at the Dnestr, at the place of embarkation. First my mother and my grandparents crossed, then me and my sister Sisi, and then my father with the luggage and Horovitz the pharmacist. We arrived in Mohilev-Podolsk [11](#), where everybody talked in Ukrainian, and among the Romanian soldiers one could see a few scattered Ukrainian militiamen.

Through rumors we found out we should stay away from the convoys; these would have taken us to the camp, so we tried to go or run away as far as we could. We struggled to carry our bags from the Dnepr to a yard where we stayed shivering for two hours until we found ourselves a shelter: 30 people in a room. We stayed in the same room with the Hausvaters, the Horovitzs, the Hellers, the Segals, the Javetzs and the Tartars, all of them Jews from Campulung. We exchanged our money in

Ataki, at a rate of 40 lei for a ruble. In Mohilev we had exchanged our money at the rate of 10, 7 and 6 lei, so this reduced us to almost complete poverty. The first news we got was that we would walk, so we sold everything we couldn't carry. We paid more than enough because we lived in constant fear of being taken to a camp, and the Russians knew how to exploit us.

When those deported to Mohilev began to organize themselves, they established an asylum for the helpless from all over Bukovina, people who were really unable to go further. I left my grandparents there with some money, and my aunt from Cernauti remained there to take care of them. Everything had to be done without papers because there weren't any, only passes. The other deported brought them food three times a day; otherwise they would have perished, as they were unable even to get themselves a cup of tea. One of the leaders of the asylum was a doctor from Campulung my father knew, Theodor Melman, and he helped us with our grandparents.

My mother and father began inquiring about how we could go further. Bondy managed to associate us with some Germans who, for a fee, were taking truckloads of Jews further into the country, so we paid them and they took us on a German truck to Dzhurin. That wasn't a ghetto surrounded by barbed wire; it was a Jewish zone known and acknowledged beforehand by the Jews from Dzhurin. The guards were Romanians; rarely did we see Germans who handled the mail and had administrative duties. I remember one of the guards, Costica, who had a terrible dog and always held a scourge in his hand; he was a cruel man.

At first we stayed 13 in a room and slept on the floor. We were together with the Horovitzs and the Hausvaters, but then my mother went looking for another room. We apportioned our food so we wouldn't starve to death in the next months. It was raining all the time, there was mud all over the place, there were no toilets at all, so, just like in Ataki, we all dealt with this problem as best we could. We found a room on a hill filled with mud. There was mud constantly, both outside and inside the house.

The Ukrainian peasants are very different from the Romanian ones: they are more underdeveloped, and are behind some 10-20 years. For them everything nice and modern was at the sugar factory. It had electric lighting, doors with keys, and only the sugar factory had toilets, but it was outside the ghetto. The other houses, in which we were living, were just like the Gypsy houses: holes, houses in verge of collapse because they were too old to stand. We heard rumors all the time about us going home, but after a while we didn't believe them any more. I offered to work for strangers, to do some knitting, but there was no one I could work for as there was no wool.

In January 1942 we took a trip to Shargorod [12](#), without any special permits, of course. We ran through the woods because we knew we would be sentenced to death in case we were caught. We set off on foot at 9am and arrived there around 2pm. The way through the woods of Shargorod was beautiful; it reminded me of the woods back home. We got really scared when we saw a militiaman, as we had no authorization, but we ran away and nothing happened. My father knew where Berola was staying, so we went directly to him. But he had just moved three days earlier to the isolation hospital, where he was the head physician. I looked up my girlfriend Marghit, and I found her mourning, with her mother lying on the ground. She had died in the asylum of Mohilev.

In Shargorod I saw so much misery; I thought it can't get worse than that. There was a typhus epidemic, brought by the people from Dorohoi, because only they were sent from camp to camp, while losing their clothes and health. The situation at the hospital where Berola was working was

very difficult: misery was extreme, a doctor from Dorohoi and three charity nurses were already sick with typhus. Lots of people were dying daily and someone told me one day 40 people died. They had been buried in a common grave; it was thought that the sheets in which they were covered had been stolen later. Common graves were usual: 15-20 people in one grave.

Father went back on foot the next day at noon. He made his way back in six hours because it snowed heavily and made it difficult to walk. I remained until the next morning and returned on a sled.

It was a very hard winter, and one night half of the roof fell in on us; it was minus 30-35 degrees Celsius outside, and the wind was very strong. In February I found out my grandparents had died, probably from starvation. My father wept silently and mourned them in his heart. He paid his tribute to them with the daily Kaddish.

In the same period Mr. Wassermann passed away. I remember him with a stick in his hand and his straw hat. I used to salute him with 'Shalom' and he used to reply calmly, like he was from a different region, because he was a Zionist and his creed in Palestine was so strong he should have been taken by Providence at least to die in the country he had such high hopes for and died for eventually. But now he was dead in Mohilev, far from his forefathers and loved ones for whom he would have given his last breath.

The president of the Israelite Community of Gura Humorului [Suceava county] also died in Mohilev, from exanthematous typhus. My father also got sick, in the summer; he was hospitalized, but got well. Many died, less than half of the deported came home because typhus and starvation decimated them. We had been given the name 'the Jewish colony of Transnistria.' We were getting news from home through mail, and we found out the grandparents from Botosani sent us some money. We knew nothing concrete about them; we only heard through rumors that the Jews who were living in the former kingdom hadn't been deported. I thought this could be true because only Jews from certain regions of Dorohoi were coming.

I remember when mother made her first cookies in Dzhurin: on 2nd March 1942; we were fasting, it was Estertanes [Fast of Esther in Yiddish, the fast that precedes Purim], and the next day was Purim. We prepared for Purim: we baked bread and made hamantashen. We made challah and some honey-cookies. These cookies and the catkin brought back memories of home. For Purim we were served turkey – only leftovers, but very delicious –, bread and brandy by the other deported we made friends with. On the next evening, for Shushan Purim, we invited them and made jam pockets with plum jam. For Easter, on the night of 28th April 1942, we made the preparations together with the other families. We baked our own matzah in our oven, that's how we learnt to value it. It wasn't allowed to bake matzah individually; you had to buy it from the committee. In Dzhurin Sunday was market day. We made beef soup and had some 20 eggs. It hurt that they forced us not to keep our national customs and traditions, even though I'm not devout.

Each week we were getting news from the I.P.A. agency [agency of Jewish lies – a notion invented in the ghetto]. Every time we were told other lies. So we were hearing all kinds of news about us going home on the 2nd, 10th or 20th of the respective month, or on any other date, but other news were saying we would be sent further towards the Bug. We fasted twice a week hoping we would be saved. We weren't allowed to go to the synagogue because of the diseases, but the people wouldn't get together anyway for the same reason.

In the summer my father got sick with typhus and after he had spent several days at home, he was transported to the hospital we, the deported, had set up. We visited him umpteen times a day – one needed lots of money for injections with camphor and caffeine, for the doctor and for the night duty. We were very scared, especially because illness wore you out and you didn't know what would await you when you got well. After spending a lot and getting proper care, Father got well.

Around that time rumor said Engineer Jagendorf – the leader of the deported Jews – was called in to Bucharest in our interest. We didn't know whether to believe it. Each day good news replaced bad ones, one rumor contradicted the other.

In June 1942 we received news from Romania, from Dr. Talik, a Jew who had been in a concentration camp in Transnistria and was in an army hospital in Tulchin. He came to Dzhurin to his sister-in-law, Ernestina Rosenfeld-Klipper, a lady-friend of my mother's. He told us the Jews back home had a very hard time, they had to face humiliating restrictions, but they were living in their own houses. Our grandparents in Botosani were well, and he was convinced they wrote to us, but the letters sent to Transnistria were destroyed by the censorship back at the postal offices. Shortly afterwards we received letters and money through mail, which had been sent several months earlier. We got less than half of what was sent to us. We lost a lot through the exchange rate, and taxes, including the community tax.

In the same week an order had been issued stating that Jews and Ukrainians were only allowed to go out into the streets between 6am and 9am, on Sundays all day, on Fridays until 12am, on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 2pm to 4pm, when it was bath time. The gendarmerie made sure this rule was respected, so, apart from the beating, the fear of death was also in the air, because they had the authorization to shoot anyone who violated this rule, at least to set an example.

In July another rumor seized us with fear. Rumor had it that a large number of Jews from Dzhurin would be evacuated, first those from Dzhurin, then those from Hotin and Northern Bukovina. They were talking about sums of money the community should give to escape evacuation: 70,000 marks for those from Dzhurin and two million for our folks. Another evacuation would have meant certain death. People were in despair.

In August I managed to get a job at the Satkovitz kolkhoz [13](#), for three soups and 800 grams of bread daily. I didn't go there alone; many well-situated girls were doing that. After eight kilometers of walking we arrived at the farm where they lodged us. We slept on straw, and the meal was promised for the next day. In the morning we went to work. We had to thin sunflower stalks. Then the common meal followed, but it was nothing like I imagined it would be. I thought it would be a hall where everybody would eat together, but, instead, one had to come with his or her own plate, and had to eat wherever one could. We had three meals a day: loblolly and 200 grams of bread, instead of the promised 800.

Most of us left after just a few days. I was ashamed to do that, and even though I had nothing to eat, I stayed. After two weeks I got sick and went home. After I got well I returned to work on the land. In September we began to work covered in blankets. I got high fever and jaundice, my mother fell ill as well; it was even harder throughout March 1943.

In the summer of 1943 rumors had it that we would be taken to a camp in Lublin, then to Bessarabia, but some said that this would only be 21 days of quarantine. Another period followed

when we didn't know what to believe. We heard about some cars at Lipnic [Poland] and that the Jewish community would have sent us facilities for the trip. Others said there would be an amnesty on 6th September, and the first to leave would be those from Southern Bukovina. Preparations to leave were in progress; people were agitated.

The first shock came when 100 men from Dzhurin were taken away for work, then 80 girls from Dzhurin and Hotin alone left. My father, too, was taken to work near Odessa; I only saw him again in 1944. We were hiding in a shed. The girls came back soon; it looked like things would settle down. Then we moved to another house; the host was filthy and unlikable. I knitted for strangers to earn some money, and I worked on the land six kilometers away from town, at our previous host's, digging out potatoes.

On an afternoon in October 1943 my sister noticed a little too much agitation on the street, so my mother went to the center to find out what that was all about. At first everything seemed normal. Word went round that the head of each family, men and women, had to sign at the community, in the presence of the chief of the gendarmerie, a declaration that they wouldn't leave the ghetto otherwise they would be sentenced to death. Because people were afraid, group leaders, policemen and even the leader of the colony [ghetto], Dr. Rosenstrauch, went out and encouraged people to leave their houses giving them their word of honor. My father left, too.

After people had gathered around a table in town, lists were drawn up and under the threat of guns the women and children were sent home and the men, both young and elderly, were taken to the gendarmerie, and from there to work near Odessa. Many escaped through slyness, bribery or courage, but the majority had fallen into the trap. The next days were horrible: the group leaders of a department were arrested because during a control the doctor didn't find cleanness. Apparently they were taken first to Mohilev, and then to a labor camp in Ochitkov and then God knows where. The next time I saw my father was in 1944; I didn't hear anything about him during this period.

In 1943, on Yom Kippur, everybody fasted either out of devotion, penitence or fear. At Kol Nidre the Jews crowded at the renewed temple of Dzhurin, made themselves shils [place of prayer in Yiddish] however they could and illuminated them sumptuously with barn lights, candles and kanitslach [lampion in Yiddish]. The prayer remained for many of us the last hope. We lived like animals, but we survived exanthematous typhus, typhus fever, hepatitis, scabies and other diseases, in cold, filth and constant starvation.

After the War

I returned home on 2nd May 1944, after a two-week long walk, together with nine other youngsters, following the tracks of the Soviet army that was marching westward. My mother and sister remained in Dzhurin until I'd found out what the situation in Botosani was like. I arrived in Botosani, at my maternal grandparents'; I knew there was someone there because they were sending us money. My father was already back, and I sent word to my mother and sister to come by giving letters to any Russian soldier I saw. One of these letters got through to them.

When we came back from Transnistria, my mother continued to be a housewife, and my father restarted to put windows he bought from Grandfather Hutmann. We were practically naked; the clothes we were wearing had to be burned. Grandfather laid off the housemaid and gave us a room to stay. He wanted me to get married. I was 21 and it was about time. I, however, had other plans; I came back from Transnistria filled with the desire of learning.

After the bombardment my grandfather hired my father as employee in his shop, but in 1945, when Grandfather died, my father, along with Grandfather's former partner, one of his nephews, took over the shop. They had to give up the shop during the nationalization [14](#) and my father was employed as salesman in a grocery – just like those food stores in the communist era with all kinds of departments –, and he retired from there. It's interesting that my mother died on 14th December 1970, and my father died on the same day and the exact time, only in 1987. That day he kept asking me what time it was, as if he had a date, and finally, when the time came, he died.

I started a new battle for readjustment to normal life, I re-learned to study and I redeemed the years of school I had lost. I finished the 7th and 8th grade at the Jewish high school in Botosani, and I worked at the same time as a clerk at the Mayor's Office, as a Russian translator. I graduated from high school in 1945 and I entered the medical school in Iasi; that year those demobilized and those who returned from the camps entered without exams. The first year at university was an ordeal; it was impossible for me to concentrate. I didn't even have my own books.

We were four girls and three boys staying in two rooms of a residence. The girls were Jewish and I know that after they graduated in Iasi they emigrated, one to Israel and the other two to New York. I used to get up at 5am and go to sleep at 12pm. I was the first to get up and the last to go to sleep. I had to learn by myself; I had even forgotten how to read. I passed all the exams and I was among the four students who were given a job in Bucharest, not even in the provinces. In that period after graduation everyone was assigned. I worked in a hospital from the 4th year, and I was competent in anything: I knew both the sick-nursing and the nursing profession.

In 1950 I was appointed to the laboratory of the Institute of Oncology, and I worked there until 1961, when the institute was transferred under the authority of the Ministry of Education. Then someone wanted to do me a 'favor' and sent an unsigned letter stating that I had enlisted to emigrate to Israel. I was laid off from university education and given a job at the new-born department. I was a doctor but I knew nothing about new-borns.

After three weeks the professor called me in and asked me whether it was true that I was enlisted to emigrate. He was probably stirred up by Manea Manescu's wife, but he was desperate because he was working on a book he had to publish. [Editor's note: Manea Manescu, born in 1916, was an economist and politician, vice-president of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the communist era.] In fact I was writing the book – I was mentioned last in the list of authors –, and I had to finish it. I told him I wasn't enlisted to emigrate, so he created for me a doctor job at the Fundeni Hospital in Bucharest [the largest oncology hospital in the country]. I had the same assignments as before, I worked with the students, but I wasn't getting paid for my tutor position. I did my doctorate and after 44 years of work I retired with honors.

Apart from the year 1961, when I was laid off from university education, I had no problems; I was appreciated as a professional. After my mother died, I specialized in pediatric oncology, and I published my PhD thesis on the same subject at the Publishing House of the Academy. But I never missed the opportunity to warn my foreign students, especially since most of them were Arabs then, or even the professor, that I wouldn't tolerate any Jewish jokes, not even harmless ones. I never started a course without telling my students I was Jewish and had to endure years of deportation, and could thus make some grammar mistakes. I suffered immensely and I was extremely concerned about the mistakes I made, because I had to think of a word before I could

say it. When I came back from deportation there was a mixture of languages in my head: there, people had talked in Ukrainian, Russian, Yiddish, German, Romanian, so I forgot everything I had known.

I met my husband, Israil Bercovici, two weeks after I came back from Transnistria. I was a clerk at the Mayor's Office in Iasi and he was in Bucharest. I used to write him, but he didn't; he'd rather come to Iasi than write back. Because I had nothing, he made me a blouse from one of his shirts by tearing off the sleeves. Even though he wasn't a shoemaker, he made me a pair of sandals, too.

He had a different social status than I did. He was from Botosani. His father was a tailor, poor, but with innate intelligence, full of jokes and sayings. His mother didn't even know how to read. Her family made sweets for the rich. She was a very discreet woman. They came from 'mendicancy,' and in the provinces social classes were always very clearly delimited; they didn't mix. Thus neither my, nor his parents were happy about our relationship, and never agreed with our marriage. Grandfather used to say that I would marry that man when hell freezes over.

When I met my future husband, they had a single room that served both as home and workshop, with the customer entrance from the street. My husband finished elementary school and, before the war, he wanted to be an agent to meet lots of people and travel all over the world. He ended up working in a shop, and then he was taken to forced labor from 1939 or 1940 until March 1944. He came home on leave and never returned because Botosani was occupied on 7th April. Forced labor meant carrying rocks in Edinets, Bentu, Otak and in other regions of Northern Bessarabia. He graduated from the Institute of Dramatic Art after the war. He became a publicist and, amongst others, he is the author of the only History of Jewish Dramatic Art in Romania. He was the literary secretary of the Jewish State Theater in Bucharest [15](#).

Because I wanted to work at the University of Bucharest, where I thought people were more open-minded and the professors better, I had to obtain a transfer from Iasi. But those days one could only obtain the transfer if based on a very good reason. Marriage was a good reason so we got married and I came to Bucharest. My husband's friends became my friends and they still are.

My husband changed me a lot, I was an expansive person and he didn't like to show tenderness in public. He was a good dancer and I would have wanted very much to go out dancing with him. He was very discreet and I could only manage to live with him by his rules. He thought only in black and white; I, on the other hand, accepted gray, I was much more malleable. For his sake I learned to read in Yiddish; he charmed me.

Why did I not leave Romania? Fate, destiny. In 1946-47, when things seemed to settle down, I chose not to go – neither to my mother's brother in Canada, nor to my father's brother in the United States, because I was a student and I was studying with frenzy. I asked them whether I could continue my studies there, and they told me I could have done anything as long as I would work. I didn't understand how this could be done, and I couldn't imagine one could work and study at the same time; I wanted to begin studying right away, without losing any more time. I said no. In 1951, while my parents were in Botosani, everybody enlisted to emigrate. I was working at the institute, I got married and I said no. And I haven't changed my mind ever since. Even when they laid me off from university education I chose not to leave; then I waited for my daughter to graduate. Then she was going to get married and planned to emigrate to Israel, and we should have followed her. But she changed her mind at the last moment and married a non-Jewish man, so

we remained here.

My daughter, Ada Bercovici, was born in 1953. She studied at the conservatory in Bucharest and became a university professor. She was deeply religious, lit candles, had a kosher kitchen and observed every Jewish holiday. She died in 1996. Her last wish was to be incinerated and have her ashes spread over the Black Sea. I'm not capable of commemorating her; my sister does that for me. After Ada's death her husband left Bucharest with his son, my grandson, Emanuel Ulubeanu. The boy was circumcised and he is registered at the community, because immediately after my daughter died I registered him.

For me home means both here and Israel: I love both countries and I feel at 'home' in both of them. I also love Paris. I lived there with my husband for three months in 1987, when he was critically ill and dying. We have many friends in Germany; I like Germany as well.

After my husband died, after 1989 [16](#), I had the opportunity to substantially better my situation by a marriage of convenience. I wasn't tempted though. My husband is still there in his office, smiling back to us. I'm not capable of arranging the books in the bookcase because I can still feel his hands on them. I'm working at a table that shakes and creaks, but I can't sit at his bureau because I can still feel his presence. Mr. Hart recited the Kaddish in his memory at the temple. I'm commemorating my husband every year and I lit a candle for a whole year; I respect the Jewish tradition.

After 1989 I worked hard for three years. I had to carry with me my bad social origin. I was a member of the Party. I was enlisted in honor of Stalin's birthday, when a certain number of students had to join the party. It would be interesting to see my husband's file. We were watched all the time; my husband was kind of an exhibition Jew.

In the first days of the revolution I was extremely happy: I felt like I was 20 again and I would have wanted to go to the Revolution Square. But I was cooled down by telephone calls in which they called me all kind of things: kike bitch, communist, etc. I didn't know who was calling me; I changed my number and calmed down. After the revolution I continued to work as a doctor at Fundeni Hospital. I learned medicine with a great deal of idealism; I was in a group of idealistic people.

Times are changing rapidly. It took two years until Rabbi Rosen [17](#) gave me a part-time job at the community. In 1976 there was some misunderstanding between my husband and Rabbi Rosen – I still don't know why and how it started – and we were put aside. The rabbi was stubborn, but my husband outdid him. Mr. Rosen asked my husband to bury any misunderstandings they had had, but he refused. Despite all this, when my husband died, Rabbi Rosen, who was abroad at that time, called us and saw to it that my husband would be given a resting place in the front row of the Jewish cemetery in Bucharest; I requested a place further back.

After my husband died I asked the community for help because I didn't want to lose the books in Yiddish my husband had in the bookcase. I went for a meeting with Rabbi Rosen, who told me he couldn't help me to send those books to the university in Israel because the community had no money, and that they barely managed to preserve the Torahs. Despite all this a series of my husband's manuscripts and notes are in the Dramatic Art department of the University of Tel Aviv. The books ended up in Potsdam [Germany], in the Hebrew section, which now includes the

donation of Israil Bercovici: 3,000 volumes in all, placed in a beautiful room.

I had no wish to return to live in Campulung although I visited it several times; I wanted to remember it as it appears in my dreams, as it was at the time of my childhood and adolescence, before the disaster. The events I lived through affected me deeply and, among other things, I've got a recurrent, incurable insomnia, and recurring nightmares in which the ghetto and my dead grandparents, along with different episodes I went through, appear with unbelievable accuracy.

A psychologist told me I should revisit the places of these events, and in 1967 I managed, despite adverse conditions, to visit Dzhurin and the town of Mohilev, the graveyards and common graves in which the remains of my dear grandparents are resting, and who, in my nightmares, are calling me to help them. But there is no cure for me and probably this is my condemnation.

By a happy occasion the diary I kept in Transnistria, the book with leather-cover Bondy gave to me before the deportation, its German translation, was published by the Hartung-Gorre publishing house in Konstanz [Germany] in 1993, along with a comprehensive historical documentation of that period. In 1995 it was published in Romanian by the Kriterion publishing house in Bucharest, with the support of the Soros [18](#) Foundation.

Now I'm working at a German kindergarten called Lauder and I have a part-time job at the polyclinic of the community. I visit the community very often, on each holiday, but also every time there are some cultural or other events I find interesting.

It is necessary to bring to the surface everything that happened because the ghettos and camps, and even the deportations of Jews to Transnistria are either denied or, if admitted, are considered mishaps that should better be forgotten and for which solely the Germans should be held responsible. The horrors were committed by those who governed the country then, and everybody should know about the past as it really was, and these deportations to and crimes in Transnistria are part of that past.

Glossary:

1 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.

2 Bukovina

Historical region, located East of the Carpathian Mountain range, bordering with Transylvania, Galicia and Moldova. In 1775 it became a Habsburg territory as a consequence of the Kuchuk-Kainarji Treaty (1774) between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empire. After the fall of Austria-Hungary Bukovina was annexed to Romania (1920). In 1939 a non-aggression pact was signed between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union (Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact), which also meant dividing Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of interest. Taking advantage of the pact, the Soviet Union claimed in an ultimatum from 1940 some of the Romanian territories. Romania was forced to renounce Bessarabia and Northern-Bukovina, including Czernowitz (Cernauti, Chernovtsy). Bukovina was characterized by ethnic and religious pluralism; the ethnic communities included Germans, Poles, Jews, Hungarians, Ukrainians and Romanians, the most dominant religious persuasions were Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. In 1930 some 93,000 Jews lived in Bukovina, which was 10,9% of the entire population.

3 Antonescu, Ion (1882-1946)

Political and military leader of the Romanian state, president of the Ministers' Council from 1940 to 1944. In 1940 he formed a coalition with the Legionary leaders. From 1941 he introduced a dictatorial regime that continued to pursue the depreciation of the Romanian political system started by King Carol II. His strong anti-Semitic beliefs led to the persecution, deportation and killing of many Jews in Romania. He was arrested on 23rd August 1944 and sent into prison in the USSR until he was put on trial in the election year of 1946. He was sentenced to death for his crimes as a war criminal and shot in the same year.

4 Sima, Horia (1907-1993)

Leader of the Legionary Movement from 1938. In September 1940 he became vice-president in the National Legionary government led by Ion Antonescu. In January 1941, following a coup d'état, with the help of Hitler, Antonescu assumed total control and unleashed persecution on the Legionary Movement. In 1944, when Romania turned to the Allies, Horia Sima became a political refugee. He continued to be the leader of the movement from exile and set up a Romanian government with headquarters in Vienna in the fall of 1944. After World War II, he fled to Spain. He was sentenced to death in absentio in 1946 by the Romanian people's tribunal.

5 Numerus clausus in Romania

In 1934 a law was passed, according to which 80 percent of the employees in any firm had to be Romanians by ethnic origin. This established a numerus clausus in private firms, although it did not only concerned Jews but also Hungarians and other Romanian citizens of non-Romanian ethnic origin. In 1935 the Christian Lawyers' Association was founded with the aim of revoking the licenses of Jewish lawyers who were already members of the bar and did not accept new registrations. The creation of this association gave an impetus to anti-Semitic professional associations all over Romania. At universities the academic authorities supported the numerus

clausus program, introducing entrance examinations, and by 1935/36 this led to a considerable decrease in the number of Jewish students. The leading Romanian banks began to reject requests for credits from Jewish banks and industrial and commercial firms, and Jewish enterprises were burdened with heavy taxes. Many Jewish merchants and industrialists had to sell their firms at a loss when they became unprofitable under these oppressive measures.

6 Numerus nullus in Hungary

With the series of 'numerus nullus' regulations Jews were excluded from practically all trade, economic and intellectual professions during World War II.

7 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.

8 Yellow star in Romania

On 8th July 1941, Hitler decided that all Jews from the age of 6 from the Eastern territories had to wear the Star of David, made of yellow cloth and sewed onto the left side of their clothes. The Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs introduced this 'law' on 10th September 1941. Strangely enough, Marshal Antonescu made a decision on that very day ordering Jews not to wear the yellow star. Because of these contradicting orders, this 'law' was only implemented in a few counties in Bukovina and Bessarabia, and Jews there were forced to wear the yellow star.

9 Legionary

Member of the Legion of the Archangel Michael, also known as the Legionary 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), which represented the movement in parliamentary elections. The followers of the Legionary Movement

were recruited from young intellectuals, students, Orthodox clericals and peasants. The movement was banned by King Carol II in 1938.

10 Bessarabia

Historical area between the Prut and Dnestr rivers, in the southern part of Odessa region. Bessarabia was part of Russia until the Revolution of 1917. In 1918 it declared itself an independent republic, and later it united with Romania. The Treaty of Paris (1920) recognized the union but the Soviet Union never accepted this. In 1940 Romania was forced to cede Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR. The two provinces had almost 4 million inhabitants, mostly Romanians. Although Romania reoccupied part of the territory during World War II the Romanian peace treaty of 1947 confirmed their belonging to the Soviet Union. Today it is part of Moldavia.

11 Mohilev-Podolsk

A town in Ukraine (Mohyliv-Podilsky), located on the Dniester river. It is one of the major crossing points from Bessarabia (today the Moldovan Republic) to the Ukraine. After Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, the allied German and Romanian armies occupied Bessarabia and Bukovina, previously Soviet territories. In August 1941 the Romanians began to send Jewish deportees over the Dniester river to Transnistria, which was then under German occupation. More than 50,000 Jews marched through the town, approximately 15,000 were able to stay there. The others were deported to camps established in many towns of Transnistria.

12 Shargorod

A town in Ukraine, also known as Sharigrad. During World War II Jews from Romania were deported to various towns in Transnistria, which was then under German occupation. Large-scale deportations began in August 1941, after Romania and Germany occupied the previously Soviet territories of Bessarabia (today the Moldovan Republic) and Bukovina. Jews from the newly occupied Romanian lands (Bessarabia and Bukovina), as well as from Romania were sent over the Dniester river to Transnistria. The severe living conditions, the harsh winter and a typhus epidemic contributed to the large number of deaths in the camps established in many towns of Transnistria.

13 Kolkhoz

In the Soviet Union the policy of gradual and voluntary collectivization of agriculture was adopted in 1927 to encourage food production while freeing labor and capital for industrial development. In 1929, with only 4% of farms in kolkhozes, Stalin ordered the confiscation of peasants' land, tools, and animals; the kolkhoz replaced the family farm.

14 Nationalization in Romania

Nationalization began parallel to the development of the communist regime in Romania after WWII. The industry, show business, medical and financial institutions were nationalized first. A year later, in 1949 Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, general-secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, announced the socialist transformation of agriculture. The process of collectivization ended in 1962. More than 90 % of the country's arable land became the collective property of either state farms or co-

operatives.

15 Jewish State Theater in Bucharest

It was founded in 1948 as a result of the nationalization of all performing institutions, including the Jewish theater. It staged classic plays of the Yiddish repertoire, but also traditional Jewish dance performances. Nowadays, because of emigration and the increasing diminishment of the aging Jewish population, there is only a small audience and most of the actors are non-Jews. Great personalities of the theater: Israil Bercovici (poet, playwright and literary secretary), Iso Schapira (stage director and prose writer with a vast Yiddish and universal culture), Mauriciu Sekler (actor from the German school), Haim Schwartzmann (composer and conductor of the theater's orchestra). Famous actors: Sevilla Pastor, Dina Konig, Isac Havis, Sara Ettinger, Lya Konig, Tricy Abramovici, Bebe Bercovici, Rudy Rosenfeld, Maia Morgenstern.

16 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.

17 Rosen, Moses (1912-1994)

Chief Rabbi of Romania and president of the Association of Jewish Religious Communities during communism. A controversial figure of the postwar Romanian Jewish public life. On the one hand he was criticized because of his connections with several leaders of the Romanian communist regime, on the other hand even his critics recognized his great efforts in the interest of Romanian Jews. He was elected chief rabbi of Romania in 1948 and fulfilled this function till his death in 1994. During this period he organized the religious and cultural education of Jewish youth and facilitated the emigration to Israel by using his influence. His efforts made possible the launch of the only Romanian Jewish newspaper, Revista Cultului Mozaic (Realitatea Evreiasci after 1995) in 1956. As the leader of Romanian Israelites he was a permanent member of the Romanian Parliament from 1957-1989. He was member of the Executive Board of the Jewish World Congress. His works on Judaist issues were published in Romanian, Hebrew and English.

18 Soros, George (born 1930)

International philanthropist, born in Budapest, Hungary. He immigrated to England in 1947 and graduated from the London School of Economics in 1952. In 1956, he moved to the US. George Soros founded the Open Society Fund in 1979, the Soros Foundation-Hungary in 1984 and the Soros Foundation-Soviet Union in 1987. He now has a network of foundations operating in 24 countries throughout Central and Eastern Europe, as well as South Africa and the US. These foundations are helping to build the infrastructure and institutions of an open society through the support of educational, cultural and economic restructuring activities. Soros is also the founder of the Central European University in Budapest established in 1990.