Simon Glasberg

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Botosani
Romania
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Despite being retired, Mr. Simon Glasberg is a very active person. He still works as a technical law expert and an expert real estate assessor. In addition, he spends his spare time in the garden, growing vegetables for his household. He has a special love for plants – which I believe guided him in choosing to be an agronomy engineer – and an unconditional faith in people.

Family Background

My father’s parents were Moise and Rebeca Glasberg. They lived in the mountain-foot village of Straja, near Radauti. [Straja is located 33 km north-west of Radauti.] My grandfather worked in a timber station. These grandparents were no longer [alive] when I was born. My grandfather died when he was more than 80 years old, about the time that I was born, around 1937-1938, while my grandmother died some 4-5 years prior to this.

They had two sons and one daughter. My uncle, Fritz Glasberg, was about 2 years younger than my father. He went to Bucharest at an early age to work in a store, and he gradually saved some money, bought a small shop, and was a shopkeeper afterwards; he even owned a larger business in Bucharest, he had a larger store with hired employees on one of Bucharest’s commercial thoroughfares. This was before and for a very little time while after World War II, because his store was nationalized afterwards 1, and he became freelance, he worked here and there. He turned from a well-off individual into a proletarian. He was very upset about it, that’s why he actually left Romania. He left together with his daughter, Erica – his wife had died by then, she had fallen ill, she was suffering from something her body couldn’t cope with. He settled in the Netherlands, lived in The Hague. He ran small businesses there, for as long as he was able to work (he was older by

then) but he also got married afterwards, and lived for quite a few years after he retired. He died around 1989, in any case, a year either before or after the Revolution 2 in Romania. My cousin is still alive, she lived and still lives in Frankfurt am Main in Germany. She was a doctor, now she is retired. Erica is around 4-5 years older than me, so she is in her 70s, let us say.

I don't recall for certain my father's sister's name. She remained in Straja to live in the parental home, my grandparents' house. She was married, but I don't know too much about her family. They had no children, lived alone, but they died during World War II, they too were exterminated during the evacuation to Transnistria.

My father, Samuel Glasberg, was born in 1900 in Straja, near Radauti. He only graduated primary school, 7 grades. My father took part in both world wars, as a soldier during World War I, and as a deportee to Transnistria 3 under the Antonescu regime 4 during World War II. He was only a soldier during World War I, but he was promoted to corporal – that was it, he never made it past corporal. He fought in the mountains, I know for a fact that he actually reached Marasesti 5, but I don't know too many details about the war period, I didn't hear or learn any stories about it. My father was kind by nature, I can't imagine him taking aim to shoot someone else.

I didn't know the grandparents on my mother's side, either, they perished even before my other grandparents. They lived in the village of Marginea, also located near Radauti. [Marginea is located 9 km south-east of Radauti.] My grandfather was a religious person. He wasn't officially a rabbi, but he performed religious services, they often invited him to the ... [Torah], people knew him even in Radauti. I know this from my mother, for she told us that he recited the prayers with a very pleasant intonation. And this was proof of exercise and knowledge, for those who read it for the first time do so jerkily, heavily.

Their name was Licvornic – probably a name of both German and Polish origin. For we came from the south of Poland; we came to Romania through Galicia. At least that's what my parents told me about their grandparents and great-grandparents. I don't know anything about my great-grandfather. He might have been buried over there. In any case, there was no record of him. Our parents didn't know, either, they never told us stories about him. I forget my grandfather's name, I never knew it. And it's very odd, you see, how these things happen, nowadays data is more accurate, communication [is better]. But formerly, life was more existential, you weren't aware of these matters, they somehow came second. It wasn't because of lack of respect for parents, relatives, ancestors. On the contrary, there was respect, there just wasn't this notion: 'Well now, I must know for certain.' I used to ask my elder brother, who is 11 years older than me: "Herman, where are the grandparents from our mother's side of the family?" "Well, I don't know for sure. Perhaps they are buried in the cemetery in Marginea, perhaps they are buried in Radauti in the old cemetery..." I said: "I haven't seen any tombstone with the name of Licvornic in Radauti. I would have wanted to light a candle for them." To which he replied: "I haven't either. You see, I lost sight of this. Our parents are dead, and now whom could we ask?" And I set it as my task to go there, inquire at the town hall in Marginea, see if there is any trace of a Jewish cemetery. For there are Jewish cemeteries in villages as well, wherever significant Jewish communities lived, there are some in the county of Botosani, too, at Stefanesti, Frumusica, even at Bucecea. But I never managed to do it. Whenever I go there, time is always limited.

My mother had a sister, Ester Licvornic, who lived in Radauti and whom I have met. She was married, but had no children, either. I forget her husband's name. I went to visit her when I was little, my mother took me along when she visited her sister; I called her aunt Ester, but I don't know her family name after she married. They were taken to Transnistria 3 as well, but I don't know where exactly. In any case, they weren't taken to Djurin with us, they were taken somewhere else. They survived the war, both of them returned home, but he was very ill. They emigrated to Israel, but once again, I don't know exactly where and how they lived. We didn't keep in touch, those were the days of the iron curtain, we were wary of letting people know we had relatives abroad, for it went on your record in no time. I know that he passed away in Israel before she did – I know this from conversations with other people – and that she died of old age.

My mother's maiden name was Rasela Licvornic. She was born in Marginea, also in the vicinity of Radauti, in October 1898. My mother was the second born, but she was born late, after my grandfather from my mother's side remarried. My mother's sister was the offspring of my grandfather's marriage with his first wife, so the two of them were stepsisters. Just like my father, my mother's education consisted only of primary school, too. They lacked the material means to go to high school. My mother, at least, would have been prone to study. She greatly enjoyed reading, she was self-taught. She recited Heine [Editor's note: Heine, Heinrich (1797-1856), German poet] and Goethe [Editor's note: Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von (1749-1832), German poet, playwright, novelist, and scientist.] in a very literary German.

We were 3 brothers. The eldest, Herman, is 11 years older than me, he was born in 1928; the second born, Jacob, is also almost 5 years older than me, he was born in 1934.

My name is Simon Glasberg, I was born on 17 August 1939 in the town of Radauti in the county of Suceava. We spoke German at home. I spoke German fluently. I'm still pretty good at it even now but, naturally, I have forgotten some words, and other words I pronounce with an accent; not quite a Moldavian accent, but still, a Romanian one. I belong to the generation that lived and suffered – even if only as a child – the errors of World War II and in the wake of it, which were ridden with poverty, precarious living conditions, lack of education and so on.

Antisemitism, Deportations, and Forced Labor

I believe 99% of the Jewish population in Radauti was deported to Transnistria. Maybe they spared a doctor or specialists that they needed. But the rest of the population: craftsmen, shopkeepers, petty merchants – anyone belonging to the population that presented no interest to them and wasn't a necessity, such as medical assistance or any other field of special interest – the majority of the population was taken to Transnistria.

Let me recount the period of the departure. We know that we took very few things with us to Transnistria. An order had been issued that people should leave in a very short while with only the bare necessities: clothes and some suitcases, bundles, whatever they could carry. My mother wrapped the head of the sewing machine in a blanket, lest they should see it, because we weren't allowed to take such things with us – which is to say, a means of survival, basically, that's what it was. And that's what kept us alive in Transnistria. We traveled through Moghilev 6, and were taken to Djurin [nowadays Dzhurin, in the Vinnytsya region in Ukraine] in Transnistria. We were six all in all, the five of us – three sons and our parents – and there was also a first-degree cousin of my father's – I can't offer any details about her, as she died when I was very little. I know her name,

but I forget it right now. She was much younger than my father and was closer to our age, which is to say closer to my eldest brother's age, who was 12 years older than me. And the six of us received 'accommodation' – let us say, between inverted commas – in a single room in a semi-basement, it was more like a cellar, with a tiny vestibule in the front and some stairs that led directly from the street in that vestibule, and where we spent the 4 and a half years in Transnistria. We arrived there during the fall of 1941, and we returned home in 1945.

The living conditions there were extremely difficult. Shortly after we arrived there, my father was caught by the Germans, by the SS troops, and was arrested while simply walking in the street, taken to the concentration camp in Bug, the forced labor camp. And mother improvised a sort of chair on which to place the sewing machine, and my older brothers – I couldn't really do it, I was too little, only 2-3 years old – would take turns spinning the sewing machine's wheel with the help of a small stick; she sewed as much as she could for the diverse population there – especially Ukrainian, Russian and Moldovan women, those who spoke Romanian, that is, to a smaller degree. As payment for her sewing we would get a handful of flour or cornmeal, or they would bring us the smaller potatoes that couldn't be peeled – we would boil them as they were, whole –, and on many occasions my mother would ask them to bring us the potato peels as well. That was the reality of our life. I remember that. For it was because of this precarious food, and that's what we ate most of the time, that I have always been sickly as a child. It was there that I heard for the first time the word 'cir,' it was there that I learned the word 'prici,' which aren't Romanian words, but probably Ukrainian. Cir is a very light polenta, cornmeal with water, to which potatoes were usually added – it was the poor man's way of thinning the polenta, of combining –, small potatoes, rejects, as they say, which are kept neither for eating, nor for planting – these potatoes are too small. But we also added potato peels. Prici is a large bed – so-called bed, it doesn't come close to what we call bed nowadays – made of straw covered with sackcloth on top, and that was the bed people slept on using blankets as improvised pillows – as long as the blankets brought from home lasted –, and this is how we spent approximately three, if not four years in Transnistria.

At a certain point, my mother contracted exanthematic typhus, and was taken to the hospital in Moghilev, and we had no clear idea whether or not she would survive. And we, the three children and my father's cousin – she was slightly older – practically lived from the alms the people there gave us out of pity, they would bring us something to eat now and then. From what I recall and from what my parents told me, there is quite a long distance from Djurin to Moghilev, around 15-20 km, I believe. So it was too much for children to walk it on foot. I know that we went there only once, by cart, with one of our neighbors, and we talked with mother at the hospital's window. Even I remember that, although I was only a little child – by 1943-1944 I was 4 years old going on 5 –, but it remained stamped in my mind. Also stamped in my memory is the fact that when the front was being pushed back, the Russian armies advanced and bombed the area, as there were some resistance lines of the German army there, and my older brothers ran into the garden, hid themselves somewhere among whatever vegetation there was, and my mother took me, placed me on the ground and covered me with her body. For it was dangerous, bombs were dropping in the area of the Djurin village, too. To conclude, it was an utterly precarious episode, at the limit of existence, very hard to bear even by children, by a child less aware of what was going, like myself. But I remember that even in the latter period there I used to wear only a little shirt and walk completely barefoot – from spring till fall, this was my entire outfit. During winter, my mother improvised something for us to wear on our back, out of shreds of sackcloth or blankets. That was

Transnistria.

I also want to mention in relation with this episode that, even though I respect the Romanian people in the general context, for it is the people in the midst of which I live and have lived for so many years, my heart shrinks when it comes to this particular aspect, that such events were possible in which completely innocent people – such as my family and countless other families that I met afterwards, after they returned from Transnistria – could be punished in such manner, for absolutely no reason other than being Jewish. So, only based on ethnic origin, they could be deported in such conditions – the respective conditions being nothing else than more or less slow extermination. I say this because I shudder even at present, I am dumbfounded by certain voices trying to rehabilitate Marshal Antonescu 4. I admit, and I know he was head of his class at the Military Academy, I've read and heard say that he was a good strategist, a patriot in his way, but this aspect, that he could ally himself with the beast whose name was Adolf Hitler, and that he could share the same ideas with regard to the Jewish minority, that debases him in my eyes… the other qualities have no value as long as he could embrace such a conception, such a way of thinking as to send hundreds of thousands of people to extermination solely on ethnic grounds. My conception and my conviction is that a human being who is capable of doing such things, regardless of his name, regardless of what people he belongs to, even the Jewish people itself, can no longer be called a human being. He is subhuman. An Untermensch. With this, I'd like to close the chapter of Transnistria.

Let me tell you a little about the return home. With the liberation and the advancing of the Russian troops, my father returned from the concentration camp, and he came to Djurin, where he knew we were. So the Germans took my father, he was taken to a Nazi camp of the SS troops, a forced labor camp. I know a few episodes that happened there – in any case, its purpose was extermination as well. Through forced labor and also through the abuses that have been and are still committed throughout the world when some human beings that have weapons and power face another human being who is powerless and their prisoner, they believe to be superhuman. Let me recount a single episode my father told me, and I believed him, for he wasn't the kind of person to fabricate stories. They were eating – meaning they were sitting cross-legged around a so-called square, of course, there was a barbed wire fence behind them and they sat around that square with some sort of used military mess kettles and a spoon, and they ate first, second and third course consisting of a single dish, a very thin soup made from potatoes, vegetable marrow, beet, and so on – I've heard stories of soups that in any case do not belong to regular human cuisine, rather to that for animals. My father was sitting next to a good friend of his from Radauti, a tailor – he was a professional tailor in Radauti –, and while they were eating an SS sergeant appeared, and the rule was that they should stand up – as a sign of respect for the respective officer. The man sitting next to my father simply wasn't wearing his glasses, didn't notice him; they were generally starving, and when that food was brought they would rush to sip it, and he wasn't paying attention, and in the instant when that man had the spoon to his mouth the sergeant drew his pistol, and instead of swallowing the soup, the man was shot in the mouth by the sergeant; of course he died instantly. This is one of the episodes my father told me about the Bug concentration camp. But there were countless such episodes. Human beings didn't count for the Nazis. Even among them, there were some who, in turn, thought themselves to be elite citizens at home – and, like everywhere, the war, the weapons, the conceptions inoculated in people's consciences can turn even educated human beings, as many of the German officers and sub-officers were, into beasts.

They mainly worked at building roads, because this entire region: the south of Ukraine, Ukraine itself, Russia in general, the Russian steppes had very poor infrastructure – these were muddy roads; they carried stone, laid it, dug ditches, built bridges, and so on. They worked shifts of 12-14 hours a day, so tiresome that many would collapse on the way back from work – the elderly or the sick. God willed that father, who was a more robust individual, raised in the countryside, as I said, at Straja, and accustomed to hard work ever since he was only a child, should survive the efforts there, but with consequences, nevertheless. Meaning that he managed to return home, but he suffered all his life from angina pectoris, an ailment that he contracted there, and that's also what caused his early demise – he died at home at 59, in Radauti.

Liberation

After liberation, we remained in Djurin for a few years, because my father managed to find some jobs, earn some money. There was a sugar factory in the neighborhood – I don't know for sure whether it was in Moghilev 6 or in a closer locality –, and I know that my father, as he had a very legible and calligraphic handwriting, succeeded in getting hired there – temporarily, of course. Our wish was to return home immediately. We had our house in Radauti and it was meaningless to stay there and barely build a house; besides, these were different places, our acquaintances were here, our dead were buried in the cemeteries here.

Only 5 of us returned home, my father's cousin perished – she too fell ill, and they couldn't save her. I believe that she died approximately 3 years after we arrived there [around 1944], she was young, I think she was around 20. We returned home by means of a cart that we hired there [in Djurin]. I don't remember exactly how long it took us to get home, for anyway, it's a long distance to travel, but I remember this image, that in the spring of 1945, when we returned, the snow was thawing and there were many puddles to cross. And the horses weren't very tall and didn't look that good, but they were very good for pulling. They managed to take us – five persons, well, six if you count the carter –, we traveled by cart day and night, and we managed to reach our home in Radauti.

Certainly, we found the house devastated, there was no piece of furniture left. Our parents were able to scrape together the bare necessities for inhabiting it from whatever they managed to give some honest neighbors for safe-keeping [before the deportation]; some of them returned what we had left with them, others didn't want to admit, they said they didn't take anything, were never given anything. I don't know who had lived in our house during our absence, probably somebody from the German military who was quartered there, or somebody connected with the German military, because we found a collection of German war magazines, published in Romanian, called 'Signal.' I don't know if it was distributed throughout the whole of Romania, perhaps only in Bukovina 7, but such a magazine was indeed issued, it was an entire collection. And I read many of them, as a child I gathered much information about the war – of course, from the point of view of the German propaganda – from those magazines. Like any child, naturally, I enjoyed browsing through them, for there were many battle scenes, all sorts of stories. But it was very well printed for those times, the graphic quality was very good. To be sure, the content was as expected, it couldn't be otherwise, that of the Nazi propaganda.

Times were very hard after the war. Although my father had a store – he started to rebuild his store at the outskirts of Radauti, where we lived, on Putnei Street no. 162 –, even though my mother

managed to get her sewing machine working again, we struggled to get by, but times were very, very modest. Which is why at a certain point my father recovered his former horse from before the war and bought a cart so that he could do the supplying of the store himself. Among his customers were even people of different ethnic origins – Romanians, gypsies, even some Czechs or what have you. There was one in particular, and I remember him to this day, because he wore a beard, he said his name was Cerny, with a 'y' at the end. He was from Czechoslovakia – Slovak or Czech, I don't know for sure. But there were others who came to borrow. Times were very hard, poverty was widespread, there was also a severe drought back then – at least in Moldavia –, and people came to borrow on credit.

As long as he lived – only 59 years - and inasmuch as I knew him, my father was a man of rare good nature. He was almost too kind, too good-natured. As a dressmaker, my mother, who was more pragmatic, more calculated by nature, would tell him: "Husband, pay attention to whom and how much you give, for you won't have enough money to pay the wholesaler for the merchandise." My father couldn't follow her advice, out of pity for people, and he would record the debts in a notebook – he had a very calligraphic handwriting – but this didn't mean that everybody paid him the money. On the contrary, many of them couldn't pay their debts and, after a very short period, 3-4 years after the war, my father went bankrupt, because he literally couldn't pay for the merchandise he received, and it was only with the help of one of his brothers in Bucharest, Fritz, that he managed to escape legal punishment.

Also, times were extremely hard after the war, what with that drought. Children were actually starving to death. Since an international aid was probably offered in those days, children up to the 7th grade were given polenta to eat at school during the break, which was, of course, already cold by the time we got it, one slice of cold polenta and govidla – that means jam made from plums – and a cup of milk which was indeed warm or even hot. It was a delicacy for us. Even for me, the son of a shopkeeper. When I told my children what special cake I used to eat during the 10 or 11 o'clock break when they distributed it, they almost couldn't believe it. I was in the 2nd or 3rd grade – but I remember as if it were yesterday, to such an extent it made an impression on me, as it was very welcome. That's what I want to say, it was a very good thing to have. By comparison therefore, our welfare wasn't that great, since it seemed so special to me. Because a child coming from a family where dessert was a matter of course, where he would be well-nourished, would have perhaps turned up his nose at the polenta and milk we were given.

Judaism

My parents weren't particularly religious. But certain customs were observed – from the lighting of the candles on Friday evening to the prayer for peace and minimum welfare, to have bread on the table. We observed the Yom Kippur fast, when the isker [yizkor] was recited, the prayer for the dead, for the parents, the relatives, the oppressed. So it was somewhere in-between – observing tradition neither too strictly, nor too loosely. What I mean to say is that I have often seen my father wearing that tallit, even at home. When he couldn't go to the synagogue, he would wear it at home, take out the prayer book and intoned a few broche prayers as follows: starting with Sema Israel and those regarding thanksgiving or the respective holiday. These are my childhood memories. He didn't go to the synagogue during the week, I don't remember him going to the synagogue in the evening. Other people used to do so, those who were well off or weren't working at that hour. He used to attend the synagogue at the end of the week, whenever he could, not on

Fridays, but usually on Saturdays. But he couldn't go to the synagogue during the rest of the week, he was struggling and striving to make ends meet.

There were several synagogues in Radauti. The temple still exists to this day, it is one of the most beautiful temples – at least in the north of Moldavia, in Bukovina. On major holidays – Passover, the New Year [Rosh Hashanah] – we attended the religious ceremonies at the Temple, and I would regularly attend the prayers on Saturday together with my father; we used to go to a small synagogue in our neighborhood, which could house 25-30 people at the most, and where the service was performed by one of the citizens, the most knowledgeable one. I've been there countless times. Admittedly, my father wasn't a very religious person, but he tried as much as possible to attend the religious service at least on Saturday or Friday evening, in other words, to go to the synagogue once during the weekend. It was also a way for him to break with everyday life, to meet with people he knew, exchange an opinion, for, of course, people would sit and discuss worldly matters before or after the religious service was performed. And during the prayer people would usually meditate. At least that's how it was in Radauti, there was no talking during the religious service, people would pray to God for "Shalom veLehem", so for peace and bread. These were the two prayers. I never heard big words, happiness, anything else. But if there was peace and if there was bread, to ensure as tranquil an existence as possible…

We had silvered candlesticks, I remember that my mother used to light two candlesticks on Friday evening. She didn't bake coilici very often. [Editor's note: Coilici is a variant for challah, similar to the word „kajlics" used by some Hungarian-speaking Jews in Romania. Both words have the origin in the Hungarian word „kalacs".] She baked them when she could and when she had the necessary ingredients, but not very often. I remember that she covered it, she placed a clean kitchen towel over it, and recited the Friday evening broche. As for holidays, of course we could always hardly wait for the holidays to arrive as we ate better, special food. Not to mention that we performed a major cleaning of the house before the holiday, everything shined in the house.

On Passover we used the clean dishes we kept for holidays – my mother had special dishes for Passover, which were kept separate from the regular dishes. We bought matzah. But it was only later that we bought matzah through the Community; in the beginning, during the post-war period, my mother would bake bread that resembled matzah. For matzah is baked using a special technology, it is really made only from water and flour and is specially prepared, pressed, thin – you can't actually bake it like that at home. But she baked something similar. Father would organize a seder evening at home. It was shorter, I don't remember if he observed the entire seder, but we were raised in this tradition. We usually recited mah nishtanah. Being the youngest child, I didn't understand much of it. And, because of the war, the conditions, the miserly childhood, I probably was a rather feeble-minded child, who couldn't compare to my grandson in those days. I think he would have thought me to be the village idiot, or the neighborhood's. Because from what I remember, I was an ignorant, uninformed child. My parents didn't have much time for us, to explain things. For if the parents start explaining, the child asks: 'But why is that so? But why is that so?', and then they must explain in more detail, and, little by little every day, the child makes progress, becomes more informed. They didn't have much time to spend with me, it was rare when they did.

We didn't wear masks on Purim – I don't quite remember doing that. They recited one of the books of the Torah at the synagogue, in which are recounted the events that took place then, with Ester,

Haman, and people would make noise whenever the name of Haman was mentioned. My father used to read at home as well, we had prayer books for every occasion. The Machzor, for instance, was the prayer book we used on Friday evening, on Saturday, on all days, as it were. [Editor's notes: The Machzor is a specialized form of the Siddur. It is used on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot. It does not include the daily prayers and blessings that one should recite on week days and Sabbath, which are found in the Siddur. http://www.judaica-guide.com/machzor/] We observed the holiday with modest capabilities. People baked cookies and gave them to relatives, friends. We usually gave cookies to our neighbors, because we had good neighbors, not all of them were Jewish. Some of them were Jewish, in the house right across the street lived a certain Mehler, who was a Jewish carter – he earned his living hauling things. Unbelievable, but true. Just as I work in the field of agriculture – unbelievable, but true. Or just as my parents raised sheep at a certain point, my father was a sheep breeder.

On Chanukkah we used to go to the shil, and light candles at home. Usually, it was the children who lit the candles. But we, the children, left home one by one. At a certain point, I was the only child who was still living at home, and I would light the candles. We had candles at home and a special candelabrum for Chanukkah, with several brass branches, it was beautiful, it resembled gold, because it wasn't made from gold, far from it. You can usually find it in the home of every more or less religious Jew. We used to place it on the table, not by the window, we didn't expose ourselves, we didn't boast about this. I don't remember receiving toys on Chanukkah. Perhaps they gave us an improvised spinning top during my entire childhood. We didn't really have toys, only very few.

In addition to the temple, there was a Jewish school, this so-called chedder. They only taught Ivrit there, Hebrew, starting with the alef-beys, and including reading. I started to go to the chedder rather late, I believe I must have been in the 6th grade by then, so I was around 12. I attended the chedder for only 2-3 years. I could read well by then. Nowadays, I read the prayer book with punctuation, it's rather hard for me to read without punctuation. That's how it is. We were taught by a melamed, a teacher. He was an elderly man, I believe he was around 60 at that time, who didn't have any special didactic methods, for, after all, he gave us texts to copy. For instance, he would say: 'alef,' he had a small board on which he scratched this – for he didn't even have decent chalk, if I remember correctly, for there was a shortage of chalk –, and we all had a little notebook, and wrote down what he wrote.

The shochet – also a religious title – was the person who performed the kosher slaughters for the believers. People traveled to Radauti in order to go to the shochet. I remember that my mother would have wanted to take the fowl to the shochet, but she didn't always manage to do so because we lived far from the downtown area. There was one kilometer and a quarter from our house to the synagogue where we attended the religious service. We had to walk at least one kilometer and a half in order to reach the temple. Another 500-600 meters and you were out of the city. There was only one shochet in Radauti, also in the dowtown area, close to the Jewish bathhouse, that's where people went and where the shochet performed the ritual slaughter. It was a place specially fitted for this purpose, in a blind alley, similar to a courtyard, but still a public place, where there was someone who cleaned, erased any left-over traces, if there were feathers or… [other remains]. I used to go the shochet sometimes, I accompanied my mother. But she wasn't able to go there very often. She would ask one of the neighbors to do it. She didn't have the strength, the heart to do it,

and she had some good neighbors who used to say: ‘Give it here, Mrs. Glasberg, for I’ll chop its head in no time.’ In the Jewish tradition, for instance, fowls are not slaughtered in the fashion Romanians do it, by chopping the head completely. The head wasn’t severed, only the veins in the front, and the blood was drained – a certain ritual. I, for one, couldn’t find anyone to slaughter the fowls for me, and I slaughtered the birds as Romanians do. For there’s nothing you can do, you have to get by. Where would I go? There has been no fowl shochet in Botosani lately – for the last 20 years, if not more. You could only buy ritual beef that was brought from a slaughterhouse once every few months, usually around holidays. But there was someone who came from Bucharest for this purpose [to take care of the ritual slaughter]. They performed the slaughter in Botosani for several cities, for Radauti, Dorohoi, and they would deliver the meat. But nowadays, this has become ever more rare lately, as the Community itself is growing smaller – not by the day, but surely by the year. For there are many elderly people, many ailing people.

Growing Up After the War

After he went bankrupt, my father worked in a bakery as a worker – as a baker’s help, for he wasn’t really a baker – bread seller, then worker again, and he retired due to poor health, as he was suffering from a serious cardiac condition he contracted in the concentration camp during the war.

My father died at 59, in 1959, of a heart attack. It was basically an instantaneous death for him. He didn’t feel well after a sustained effort, he lay on the bad, and said: ‘I’ll rest a little.’ My mother was just preparing lunch. And he didn’t wake up to eat anymore. I was a student in the 2nd year at the university, of course I rushed back home. My mother didn’t even mention in the telegram that father was dead, she told me: ‘Father is gravely ill.’ In fact, he was dead. He is buried in the Jewish cemetery. There is a large Jewish cemetery in Radauti – it is one of the large cemeteries. These cities: Botosani, Radauti, Siret, Suceava, Dorohoi – even more than other cities –, have had large communities. I couldn’t believe my ears when I heard someone say, in a conversation about ethnicity attended by the mayor himself, that at a certain point before World War II almost 60% of the population of Botosani was of Jewish or mixed descent – which is to say, Jewish women married to Romanians and men belonging to other ethnic groups. After the war, it had dropped to approximately 40%, and then people emigrated en masse; now there are 50-60 of us left – museum items.

My mother died at 72, in 1970, after a prolonged period of suffering. She contracted a severe case of pneumonia, she fell seriously ill. And there was nothing we could do for her. We had her consulted by a doctor, of course, she followed a treatment, but... She died in Radauti, in her home, in the parental home. My middle brother was living there with her, he is now living in Germany.

But what did my parents want more than anything else? They wanted their children to learn. My eldest brother, Herman, attended school, completed his economy studies, and is living in Israel at present, at Bat Yam. My middle brother had no calling for studying, but he had a high-tech profession as a radio and TV break-down mechanic; he is living in Berlin. As for myself, I went to school as well, and, being the youngest and probably the least courageous to start a new living from scratch on foreign grounds, I stayed in Romania, also in a city starting with ‘b’, Botosani.

So I had a regular trajectory, as most children would: primary school, high school, faculty. I started attending primary school after the war, at a rather too early age, yet it wasn’t my parents’ fault but my own, for, seeing that my older brothers have books and that there are all sorts of pictures in

them, I thought that one goes to school in order to look at pictures. And I wanted books as well, I wanted to have my own books, to look at pictures, for they [my brothers] didn't really let me browse through their books, as the age gap was rather big, too. So I started attending school in 1945, as soon as we returned from Transnistria 3. We returned in spring-summer 1945, and I started going to school in autumn, it was a state school. And I received physical punishments for speaking a very broken Romanian, a medley of words. My language wasn't well-defined, as my entire childhood since I was 2 and until I was 5 and a half – for three years and a half – I spoke a medley of words. We spoke German at home, even during our period as evacuees; I would meet other Jewish children outside our home, they spoke Yiddish, Ukrainian, Romanian and, as a result, I spoke 2-3 words in Romanian and then 1 word in another language, or I used the Romanian word, but unintelligibly.

Elementary school consisted of 7 grades, after which I attended 3 years of high school – schooling consisted of 10 grades in those days – at the Eudocsiu Hurmuzache High School in Radauti, a very good high school with a good tradition, we didn't have much time for distractions as pupils. There was a high degree of knowledge compressed in the three years of high school. In other words, from a certain point of view it's better to stretch it to cover 4-5 years, so that pupils can be a little more relaxed, so that they a little have less to study. But we had to swot during those 3 years in order to graduate. I graduated high school in 1955. So I was 16 – a mere child.

On graduating from high school you received a bachelor's degree, you could attend any faculty you wanted. I wanted to attend the Military Academy as I had dreams of becoming an officer, but I wanted to become an officer dealing with technical matters, matters of design – I was dreaming of becoming an airplane designer. Those magazines I found [in the attic on returning from Transnistria] had a great influence on me. Seeing so many vehicles – those were war vehicles, of course –, and capable of very easily imagining ships, submarines, tanks, airplanes, you name it, I used to say: 'Well, here's what, I will become a designer of ships or airplanes.' And it goes without saying that my name and origin weighed heavily at the Military Academy and, without being communicated my results after the written examination, although having apparently passed it, my application for personnel was rejected… for personnel office. And I had to make an about turn, go home. There was nothing I could do at that point, I had missed all examination sessions [for entering another faculty], and I stayed home and tutored younger children for a year – in the 7th, 8th grade –, mainly in mathematics, but also in physics. And the following year, in 1956, I sat for an examination for medical school, failed to pass, and during the second session of exams I applied for agronomy in Iasi instead of medical school, and I passed the examination for agronomy. Of course, attending this faculty was easier despite the fact that it is a difficult faculty, contrary to some opinions that say: 'Wait, what do you study? About planting seeds and looking after animals.' But before studying about that, the direct technology of crops or raising livestock, you learn botany, plants diseases – which is called fitopathology –, I studied animal anatomy and physiology. The faculty lasted for 5 years and half – I could have easily completed medical school. I supported myself during the 5 years and a half using my stipend, otherwise my mother couldn't have supported me. And in 1962 I graduated the Faculty of Agronomy. I served my military service as students did, namely during the faculty, followed by a summons after graduation of two and a half months spent here, at the military facility in Botosani.

Five years later, around 1967, I started attending my second faculty, the technical-economic faculty in Bucharest, but under the optional attendance system. This lasted for 3 years, and by 1970-1971 I had already passed the state examination. So I also have a degree as economy engineer. This technical-economic faculty served a good purpose, as it broadened the horizon. For we, technicians, are rather narrow-minded when it comes to technical matters, and accountants, economists, are narrow-minded when it comes to economy issues. The technician became aware from a technical-economic point of view, namely that any technical decision involves an expense, requires a revision of expenses, and it proved the economist the importance technicians, for nevertheless, technicians are the ones who advance, they are the engine of society. I also received my degree as Doctor in Philosophy before retiring. At work, my colleagues used to call me ‘comrade Study’ – that was the term people used back then, comrade. I have been and I remained a person who enjoyed poring over books, considering issues of the past and present, and of course I try to imagine what the future will be like, like many people who hope it will be better.

After graduating my first faculty I started working as an agronomy engineer. You received a mandatory repartition from the agriculture faculties, you didn’t simply choose where you wanted to be hired. And I received a repartition in Botosani, I could choose the facility in Roma – there is a locality called Roma in the county of Botosani, but it had nothing to do with Rome in Italy, except for the fact that it was placed on some hills, some hillocks –, the village of Roma includes three villages: Roma de Sus, Roma de Jos and Cotargaci. [Roma is located 14 km north-west of Botosani.] And I worked there for a year, the facility underwent a merger, I was young, so they requested me to move, and afterwards I worked for almost 5-6 years in another village, a village called Corni. [Corni is located 23 km south-west of Botosani.]

Work was very hard. We belonged to the generation of collectivization, of agricultural co-operatives 8 – we were a sacrifice generation, despite outside opinions or ideas that are not familiar with the specificity of the profession of agronomy engineers, and that portray us as tools of the communist party for implementing collectivization and for administering those communal farmsteads – later called Agricultural Production Co-operatives. I say that on the contrary, the largest percent of those working in this branch were cannon fodder, meaning that I had an inhumane work schedule, we had to work even Sundays – during those 40 years of work I had no idea what weekend meant, except from foreign motion pictures –, and during the years of collectivization [the late 1940’s and throughout the 1950’s], and even afterwards, the amount of work was enormous because, being the only engineer in an agricultural facility with more than 3,000 ha and 2 livestock breeding sectors, as the case was in Corni, in the county of Botosani, there was work to be done. If possible, I could have worked for 24 hours out of 24, and still it wouldn’t have been enough, as I was the only one in charge of making all the technical decisions, and on many occasions, not only the technical ones; the citizen in charge of the facility was a very decent person, we got along well, he respected me, but it was still he who used to tell me: ‘Listen, please, you take care of my problems as well, for I will go wherever you send me to oversee a work process, where work is being done, but you run this facility.’

Being part of a facility in a locality with several thousand inhabitants, out of which some were active persons, was like being in a display case: everyone analyzed you, everyone knew what you did from dawn to dusk, what kind of person you were, how you talked, how you addressed yourself, how demanding – or lenient – you were, and you not only had to perform a purely technical work,

but also had to be a very tactful, respectful person – my parents had instilled this respect in me; they were simple people who indeed taught me when I was still in primary school or high school, they told me: ‘Son, you must respect each and single human being. You have something to learn from everyone.’ This principle helped me immensely, but it didn’t apply when having to do with that percent of unruly people present in any community, of rude people, of people accustomed to disobeying their parents, let alone strangers. However, I can say that during all the years of direct production, 7 in number, I was never told: ‘Jidan [derogatory term for Jew],’ I was never told: ‘Listen, go to your country, you have no business being here.’, I was never told: ‘We don’t need you here.’ On the contrary, despite being severe within humane limits, for otherwise it is impossible to run a business, I left room for mutual respect, so that even tens of years later I still meet peasants from the village of Corni who smile and ask me: ‘How are you doing, Mr. Engineer, sir?’ It is a small thing, yet small and modest as it is, the form of address makes me feel good every time, makes me feel taller as it were, as if unbent by the years that rest on my shoulders. That is why I emphasize once more – all the more so, as this recording might reach the western world: the collective farmstead wasn’t 100% bad. The collective system was a bad system, a bad planning system, a bad system regarding the infringement of human rights, a system that forced people to work mandatorily, both those that could and those that couldn’t – it was a political system, which was superposed over the economic one. But the technical-economic was good, because many regret it even to this day. They regret the large, cultivated, well tilled fields, the crop rotation, the absence of weeds, the large crops, and not what we have nowadays – something I often come across while wandering even today across the county of Botosani on various errands –, when you see countless untilled or poorly tilled lands – to the point that a country cannot rely on such a home agriculture. I believe we have become largely dependant on other countries’ well-organized agricultural systems – which is very sad for Romania, a country and a people with great resources.

I am married. I met my wife in Corni, she was teaching Romanian there at the school for 10 grades. As I was the best, the greatest, the nicest agronomy engineer in the village of Corni, seeing that I was the only one, I was invited, quite often even, to hold classes about my profession, about agriculture, nature. And as she was master of a class, we met, we started seeing each other.

Her maiden name is Marioara Sandu, she was born in Vatra Moldovitei in 1936. [Vatra Moldovitei is located 73 km west of Suceava.] She graduated the Faculty of Philology, has no brothers or sisters, is an only child and like no one else on earth. She is partly Jewish – from her mother’s side –, as her mother was 100% Jewish. Her mothered entered a mixed marriage, she married Sandu. Her mother’s maiden name, my mother in law’s, as it were, was Berta Zoller. Her father had been administrator of an estate, too, somewhere on the bank of the river Prut, he had several daughters, and Berta was among them. My father-in-law worked in the Romanian gendarmerie and was appointed head of the unit of that locality. He was a very spruce individual, and he looked very handsome in that gendarme uniform, for it had all sorts of belts, epaulets, golden laces, and what not. And she literally fell in love. Of course, he loved her too. Her parents were against it. Oh, it was a semi-tragedy, for Mr. Sandu basically ran away with my mother-in-law, and they eloped without the parents knowing anything about it and got married at the registrar’s office. She became a Christian then, so that they could perform the religious ceremony. And the reverse happened, as their daughter performed the Mosaic religious wedding ceremony with me. And, in turn, my son performed the Orthodox religious wedding ceremony with my daughter-in-law. There you have it, this is the fate of those living abroad, and it is natural that it should be so, in my opinion, and

something without significance, unimportant. My son asked me if I consented to his marriage. And I said: ‘If you like the girl, if you love her, if you believe it is something that will last and not a passing love affair, just because you happen to be together, then I can only give you my blessing; may you live a long life and may you love each other your whole life.’ That was it.

We were married in 1964, I was 25. We skipped the engagement period. We were good friends, determined to get married. My parents-in-law were aware of it, [that we will have the wedding ceremony at the synagogue], and, oddly enough, they also consented. Naturally, as my mother-in-law was Jewish by birth, she shouldn’t have had reasons to be against the marriage. But my father-in-law, a gendarme without higher education, as they only graduated some sort of military high school – he attended high school in far-away Oradea, he used to call it Oradea Mare, those were his words, for he graduated the gendarmes high school at Oradea Mare –, and he wasn’t against it, there were no discussions. But we didn’t have the religious ceremony in Botosani, for we didn’t know many people there [from the Jewish Community in Botosani]. And I asked my older brother – he was a university lecturer in Iasi – to inquire if we could perform it in Iasi. And they [the rabbi] agreed to perform it in Iasi, but we had to pay a fee, for her religion was considered to be Orthodox, and she had to enter the Jewish religion. And then my brother said: ‘Bear in mind, my brother is a student, and he doesn’t really have money.’ For I didn’t – I was recently hired, my salary was small, incredibly small. And we went there, but I had to pretend to be a student – such were the times. They charged me something symbolic, I only paid a symbolic fee. [Her entering the Mosaic religion] was like a sort of baptism, there was a mikveh there, I know that there was a bathtub there, and I don’t know how it was performed – my wife told me the details back then, but countless years have passed since then. There was a rabbi in Iasi, but it wasn’t the rabbi who performed the wedding ceremony, but an assistant, who was also a sort of rabbi. It was performed in a synagogue. A kippah was used as well, so it was performed with everything required for a marriage ceremony.

Marriage, Children, Family, and Later Life

Naturally, I don’t regret doing this, and neither does my wife, we never had an argument about this subject. I raised 2 issues before we got married. One of them received a negative answer, and one of them received a positive answer from my wife-to-be. One of the issues was: seeing how hard working conditions were at an APC [Agricultural Production Co-operative], and given the isolation, I said that I’d like to go to Israel while still young, start a life there. And she told me: ‘I can’t accompany you because I have my parents here, I am an only child. And my father has always got along very well with Jews, but I don’t think so, I can’t even suggest that he should leave his house here to go and live over there; he doesn’t even speak the language – it would be extremely hard for him, and it would mean punishing him in his old age. And leaving them here in order to go so far away would be like turning my back on them, like being indifferent towards my parents.’ So she didn’t agree to that.

And the second issue that I raised was: ‘You know what? There won’t be any problems at first, but there may be discussions along the way – the children might ask: "What religion are we? Where do we worship? In the church, in the temple? According to one of you, we should be going to the temple, according to the other, we should be going to church. What do we do?" And so, maybe we had better decide this, and given the fact that, nevertheless, you are half Jewish, and I’m not half Romanian, I’d like you to join the Mosaic religion if you believe, if you agree.’ And she said yes, that

she believed it was entirely up to her, and that there was no problem, she would convert to Judaism. So we settled that. Of course, the children followed the natural course [of their own life]. If it came to pass that our son should enter a mixed marriage, this didn't prevent him from becoming an Orthodox. He doesn't attend the synagogue. He isn't the type who goes to church too often, but on holidays, when celebrating the New Year or Easter with his parents-in-law, they do attend church. He doesn't parade it, but he doesn't conceal it either.

Our son was born in 1967, and our daughter was born in 1969. Our son, Marius, is living here in Botosani, he is married to Mariana, they are both engineers; I even have a grandson, Dan – or Dani, or Danut, as they call him –, who turned 5 recently [he was born in 2001]. My son graduated electronics at the Polytechnic Institute in Iasi, he works in computer informatics for a company from Botosani; he earns a modest salary, but he gets by. We sometimes work together, he helps me with computer tasks, for he is more skilled than me – I use the computer as well, but he helps me with certain projects that are more demanding, with tables and formulas, so that they are as correct as possible.

My daughter's name is Simona, she is a physician and is living in Israel. She left just after graduation, it will soon be 10 years since her departure. It was very difficult at first. She graduated medicine here, in Iasi, the school was very good, very demanding, but the state of Israel, and other states as well, require that her diploma be validated there. She had to pass an examination either in English or in Hebrew, and certainly, it was even more difficult to speak the specialized medical language in Hebrew – she speaks it now, but this is after several years of study, in addition to using it in order to talk to patients or co-workers. She passed the examination in English, she was crying almost every time we spoke on the phone; we encouraged her as much as we could, told her that everyone has difficult periods in life, that she must fight, that life itself is nothing but a choice between fighting and resigning, and more fighting again, of various degrees, of course, but even fighting a cold is still fighting. And she became a specialist physician, she is now a specialist in one of the most difficult specialties of medicine, endocrinology and endocrine diseases pathology; she is in London at present, where she was sent to complete a 1-year training course – different perspectives, different possibilities.

She is married to Hedvin Grozinschi, born in Piatra Neamt of Jewish descent; he also graduated from faculty in Iasi, and they emigrated together. He insisted that they should leave, she hadn't made up her mind, because she would have wanted us to be together. And we couldn't leave. We just couldn't. It wasn't because we were afraid, for it doesn't necessarily take a bomb to fall next to you to end your life, there is now a degree of insecurity even in Romania – it doesn't in the least compare to the one in Israel, but it is there. Besides, you could slip on a stone, or a street curb, and if it is your fate that your life should end then and there, it ends. They are living in Petach Tiqwa in Israel, it is a city slightly larger than Botosani, with approximately 150,000 inhabitants, somewhere in-between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, but much closer to Tel Aviv. My daughter gave me 2 granddaughters – one prettier than the other. The elder daughter, Maian, will be turning 9 [she was born in 1997], and the cadet, Shirley, will be turning 4 [she was born in 2003]. They were born in Israel. They speak Hebrew very well, as well as English, of course, but they also speak Romanian, they speak Romanian very often at home. We use Skype to talk over the Internet, and of course I freeze at first, but I can talk to them afterwards, for, you see, I am shy, sentimental by nature. But we are very happy to hear one another almost daily. Science put to the use of humanity solved

even this problem – people can hear one another, and they can do that for free. It's no small matter!

My older brother, Herman Glasberg, left to Israel many years ago, around 1967-1968. The family of my sister-in-law, Lea – God rest her soul –, left earlier. She had a sibling but, being the older one, she was her mother's favorite daughter, and she considered herself to be her parents' main support at old age. And they insisted very much in their letters that she should go there, so much that my sister-in-law was on the brink of a nervous breakdown because of this. My brother didn't really want to go, but the circumstances led to this, for he was a university lecturer in Iasi; however, as he wasn't a member of the Communist Party – and, probably, as a secondary but unofficial reason, on account of his name being Glasberg – he was dismissed from his position in the educational system and, as his formation was that of an economist, he was appointed inspector at a bank. And this disappointment, in conjunction with his wife's desire to emigrate, made him decide to leave. He remained rebellious in Israel, he was very puzzled by some aspects of capitalist society, despite the fact that he wasn't a communist or a member of the Communist Party, but he was brought up with this reality, life seemed to him much more difficult over there. But still, he didn't give in. He worked in a company as an economist, but it was rather difficult. People commute over long distances there. As he didn't have a car, and probably not wanting to have a car, he rode his bicycle to work. And he used to get up an hour and a half earlier, given the fact that it took him one hour to reach the company where he worked, and one hour to return home, of course; and what with the traffic, what with the pressure, it was rather tiresome.

His wife's maiden name was Lea Sapira, she too was born in Radauti. She was a very good person, a woman of rare kindness. She graduated from the Faculty of Natural Sciences in Iasi. But in Israel, she had to teach natural sciences in Hebrew. She worked for a hew years, but it was very hard. Israeli children – as will soon be the case with Romanian children, if it isn't so already – have no patience or tolerance towards an ole hadash teacher – ole hadash means new-comer –, and who, in addition to that, has difficulty speaking Ivrit. Hebrew is a very difficult language to master for someone born into another language. For it has no resemblance to European languages. It may be similar to Arabic languages – I do not know Arabic, but, hearing it on the radio, on television stations broadcasting in Arabic as well, it seemed to me that certain words, certain roots of words are alike. But it has no resemblance either to Romanian or to German, Russian, or other languages that we might have known, that we had learned at school. And due to the weakening of her nervous system at home, for her mother kept saying 'I need my daughter here,' and that she was missing her terribly, due to this unstable nervous system, it got worse after she arrived there; she practically had a nervous breakdown, and, as a result of that, she died after several years of suffering. For she couldn't stand being mocked, laughed at. So you can die in the Holy Land as well, in the midst of your own people.

Now my brother is living alone in Bat Yam, he has 2 happily married sons who, in turn, have children. The elder son, Avi, is an IT specialist, he is very successful, financially as well: he is the manager of a company which, although not that large, exports products abroad. And the other bears his grandfather's [my father's] name, his name is Samuil. He was actually born in Israel, so his Romanian is not so good. The elder one speaks a bit of Romanian, what he remembers from childhood – he was 5 when he left –, we sometimes conversed in Romanian, but mostly in German. He worked for a company representing a company in Brussels, and he had to deal with German

nationals as well, he was compelled to learn German, and he speaks it rather well. The children are eager to learn about their roots, and they promised they would come to Romania, to visit the cemeteries as well, see where their grandparents are buried. But they haven't been able to do so yet, for when the children are on school holiday, the parents have pressing business to take care of. [Editor's note: Herman Glasberg died in 2007.]

As for my middle brother, Jacob Glasberg, he too left Romania many years ago – in any case, it was before the Revolution 2, but I believe it was after the eldest brother left. He emigrated to Israel at first, he lived in Hedera, he couldn't integrate in Israel, was offered a job offer to work for Philips – he was a radio technician – in Berlin, Germany, so he went there. Philips offered him a service center workshop for repairing radios, radio cassette players during the warranty period. Afterwards, he started his own workshop, and he is still living in Berlin to this day. He has a family, a wife and two children, a son and a daughter. His wife is Jewish; officially, her name is Charlotte, but her pet name is Sari. Their son's name is Ronald, and their daughter's, Perla.

I have traveled many times to Israel, and I was impressed on every occasion. I'm particularly impressed by Jerusalem; I have been impressed, and still am, by Israel as a whole, by the fact that this people labeled – wrongfully to a large extent, I believe – as a people of former innkeepers, racketeers, profiteers on account of other peoples generally speaking, has managed through hard work to develop there that infrastructure, those buildings, that distinctive order. The Jewish people is an intelligent people, but we must also admit its shortcomings: everyone enjoys being slightly übergespitzt – this is a rather improvised German term – than others, which means being a smart aleck in relation to others. Nevertheless, it was there that they realized that only by means of determination and work… [will you accomplish anything]. Certainly, they received financial support, but that doesn't solve everything. No matter how much money there is, if there is no one willing to work and see to it that things get done in order to achieve what they have achieved, I believe it couldn't be done. It took the sacrifice of several generations of Jews, starting with the chalutzim, the youth that left just after the war and lived in tents, and down to the next generations who managed to improve, to perfect. Of course they have problems of their own over there; insecurity is first and foremost, the enmity of Israel's neighbors – hardly ever justified. It had something to do with land, territory, but any history will confirm that that was the land of Israel, and this people must have a territory to call its own.

Speaking about my children still living in Romania, they said they didn't want to leave, like father, like son, most likely. My son is decidedly conservative by nature, prone to philosophy – to a greater degree than I am –, he says that one can live anywhere as long as people respect one another, as long as they do unto others as they would be done by, live in harmony with one another. It goes without saying, I couldn't have forced him to do so, but neither did I urge him too persistently, for going to live in a foreign country, even that of your ancestors, is something that, nevertheless, involves a high degree of risk regarding integration, learning a new language which isn't an easy one to master, getting used to living among a diversity of people – it isn't by any means easy.

As for my life being a fulfilled one, I can say that I am a fulfilled person, even if I stayed in Romania and was criticized by former classmates who live abroad and who, truth be told, have a much better financial situation than me. My only possessions are a three-room apartment, an automobile, and a Dacia at that – I would have wanted to have a better car, maybe I will get it next year, or two years from now, if we live until then, if we are in good health –, a garden – actually, it is my wife's,

as mine remained in Radauti next to our parental home, and my middle brother lost it, for the house and land were somehow confiscated when he left for Israel. Back then, under the dictatorial communist regime, they gave you very small, symbolic compensations, which he refused to accept and he has an ongoing lawsuit against the Romanian State, but without any hope of winning the case. Be that as it may, I feel fulfilled, as I was saying, because my financial situation is modest yet satisfying, taking into account the conditions I was accustomed with for so many years – we are used to eating not only specialties, or driving cars that aren't necessarily luxury –, my children made a life for themselves.

And now, after having retired, I want to continue to be useful to society, I am a technical law expert, an expert assessor for real estate and other goods, and I want to render myself useful. That is what I did until recently, now I mainly handle projects for obtaining European funding, vehicles, tractors for farmsteads. I have my office at home – since I have a three-room apartment, one room serves as a dining room where we watch television, one as a living room, and one as an office. I still get working contracts, some of which are in the field of my former profession; for instance, I was recently told that they needed an agro-chemical study this autumn, a soil analysis to determine how to use fertilizers. I take on whatever I can and I try to be useful in any way I can, I charge negotiable, advantageous fees, much smaller than others so that I can get some work, earn some money – for we need it. My garden hasn't fared well this year, for there was the drought, and also the hailstone. I still have a decent crop of carrots, some root crops, I had potatoes, some fruit-bearing trees, but they were so damaged by the hailstone that they were affected and all fell to the ground, I have some grapevine left. It is a place where it is peaceful and quiet. I talk to the plants, and they are so obedient, they don't talk back, they listen to me, not a single one moves ostentatiously or defiantly. There are 4 km from my house to the garden – sometimes I even walk there, it's a half an hour's walk.

I still take part in the events organized by the Jewish Community in Botosani. The community's president [Iosif David] summons me, he calls me on the phone from time to time, as he has on this occasion. He knows that I am sometimes busy, for there is the garden as well, and my grandson. For some people only have their wife or husband when they retire, or they only have themselves to look after, and in that case of course they can be a pillar of the Community and of the synagogue. But when you have family, household obligations, you can't be readily available, you can't attend every event. But he sometimes calls me, when there are funerals, for a minyan is needed on such occasions, you can't recite the Kaddish for the dead without a minyan. And on these occasions I perform 'am mitzvah,' as they say.

Glossary

1 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.

2 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.

3 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 in 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.

4 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.

5 Marasesti, 1917

In the summer of 1916 Romania joined the Antant, declaring war on the Central Powers. After some unnoticeable Romanian conquests the troops of the Central Powers penetrated the country, occupying its capital, Bucharest. The Romanian counterattack started in July 1917 near Marasti, and the Romanian army rolled back the enemy in August 1917 in the battle of Marasesti. This battle is considered by the Romanian historiography the crucial moment of the Romanian war.

6 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.

7 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.

8 Collectivization in Romania

The Romanian collectivization, in other words the nationalization of private real estates was carried out in the first years of Romanian communism. The industry, medical institutions, the entertainment industry and banks were nationalized in 1948. A year later, Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, the general-secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, announced the socialistic transformation of agriculture. The collectivization process came to an end in 1962: by then more than 90% of the agricultural territories had been turned into public ownership and became cooperatives (Cooperativa Agricola de Productie). One of the concomitant phenomena of this process was the exclusion from public life of peasants, known as kulaks, who owned 10-50 hectares of land.