

Birthday Telegram Sent To Jozsef Grunstein



This is a luxury telegram. It was sent to my husband by his workteam - 'La multi ani' [Happy birthday] - to his birthday; the date is illegible, it seems the stamp shows 1974. They sent the telegram home, and they always gave him a lot of presents as well. They loved him a lot, he was good to them.

My husband went to school in Bethlen; he was studying a lot using electric light, until he went blind. All this happened when he was some fifteen-sixteen years old; so they took him to Kolozsvár, and he was operated. They told him he must stop learning. Thus he learnt to work in leather, but I don't know where. Before the war he worked already in leather in Bethlen, then he moved to Marosvásárhely. Here he was selling broadcloth in a private shop; he met his first wife, Helen Grun there. She was from Beszterce. In Kolozsvár she stayed at an uncle, who raised her, then she came to Marosvásárhely to work, she was an employee in a hardware shop.

Before the war my husband worked in the leather factory. I don't know what the factory's name was before the war. After the war an enterprise was established, it was called 'Intreprindere de sortare' [sorting enterprise], and he was its director. They sorted out the leather. He had fifty employees; the enterprise was across the Maros bridge, on the right side. They got the leather from our county and from other six counties. They sorted the leathers and they sent them to factories to process them. He worked there forty-two years. They didn't let him retire; they issued his papers only after two months, because there weren't many people in the country who were such good experts, who knew so well the leathers, maybe four or five only. When they didn't accomplish the plan by the end of the month, he had a driver, so they brought leather from elsewhere so that people could get their entire wages. There was a time when fifty people worked under his guidance, both men and women. People loved him a lot.

My husband wasn't a party member, and still he was a director, because he was a very good expert, they needed him. In those times it meant a huge thing to be director without being a party member. He was denounced, and they called him in to the Securitate. They even came to our house; we weren't at home. They looked in through the window, and they said we had Persian carpets up to the ankles. So they called him in to the party office; for there were people who informed about everything, but there were people who knew these; so at the end my husband found out who had turned him in. They didn't harm him, because they needed him.