

Fani Goldenstein



This woman here is my mother-in-law Amalia Greif's mother: Fani Goldenstein. The photo was taken in Cernauti, but I don't know when exactly, sometime in the 1910s, I think. I know little about her, just that she lived in Cernauti and had two children, Amalia and Wilhelm Goldenstein. The baby in her arms is Amalia, her daughter. The parents of my parents-in-law were very rich people.

My mother-in-law's family had a house in the very center of Cernauti, with 27 rooms, and a space for a shop downstairs. My mother-in-law and her brother inherited it. My father-in-law's family had an estate in Plosca, which is a commune [10 km from Cernauti], and they had there 250 hectares of woods there, plus horses and a big manor. A law was passed last year [in 2003], saying that the Romanian state will make up for the losses, and I filed for it. I had all documents from those times; my parents-in-law were very careful with paperwork. My parents-in-law were named Leo and Amalia Greif. My father-in-law had owned, along with an associate, an ethyl chloroform plant in Cernauti. My father-in-law was a very hard-working man; for example, he didn't take a vacation for ten years. He was that busy with the plant; he only sent his wife and his son to Vatra Dornei [spa region located in Bistritei Mountains, in Suceava county] or Karlsbad in Czechoslovakia. He and his family suffered a lot during World War II, but they had a bit of luck as well because the Russians needed the plant, so he and his family were only taken to the ghetto in Cernauti, not to Transnistria. When the Germans came, he was still in trouble. Every time a German was shot, the authorities would take hostage some of the important people in Cernauti; he was taken from his house as he was, his wife only had time to throw him a blanket from the balcony as he was being taken away. They were very worried; a lot of time passed since he went missing and nobody knew where he was. When he came back, he was forced to move out of his house and leave everything there, and share a miserable house with several other families. That's why they came to Romania when they could, in 1946. When my parents-in-law moved from Cernauti to Romania, they knew nationalization would follow, so they wanted to invest all their money in something: they bought an old house, which also had lodgers.