

Olga Jakobovics With Her Daughter Rashela Katz



This photo was taken in Halmeu, just across the street from my grandmother Braha Moskovits' house, in 1935. The woman on the right is my mother's youngest sister, Olga Jakobovics. The blond girl, first from left, is my cousin, and next to her is my sister Rashela Katz. My sister Rashela was born in Satu Mare in 1929, but I spent too little time with her, because in 1935 I left for Bucharest to work; she was still in elementary school. She was deported with the rest of my family, and she died in Auschwitz in 1944. Aunt Olga was born in Halmeu in 1912. She was deported with the rest of my family to Auschwitz, and she came back, with only one cousin of mine, Joshua Teszler. Everybody else from my family had died there. I only got in touch with her in 1945, after the World War II had ended, through an ad in a newspaper. I was living in Cernauti at that time, and I was trying to find out what had happened to my family. I only met Aunt Olga when I came back to Romania, in 1955. She came from Cluj to Timisoara just to see us. My aunt told me how people were treated at Auschwitz. How they had tattooed her. Everyone there was given a number that could never be erased. She had managed to survive only by chance. They were separated in two groups: the ones who would be sent to the gas chambers and the ones who were apt for work. A mother asked my aunt to switch places with her, so that she could be in the same group with her daughter. This is how Olga survived. It was an extraordinary thing. The gassed ones were burned, then turned into soap. At Auschwitz, they would do whatever works they had to do. The young ones, who were stronger and had more faith in life, stood more chances. But things were very harsh. My aunt did various works; they were temporary, not permanent. She didn't tell me what she did exactly. I took a trip to Auschwitz in 1977 and I laid flowers at the gate of the crematorium where my parents had been burned. Aunt Olga told me that, when she returned from Auschwitz, she went to Cluj, not to Satu Mare. She met a Jewish dental technician there and she married him. His name was Tiberiu Jakobovics and he ran a private practice. She helped him and they had a good life together. She didn't keep the custom with the wig, as she was more liberal. Her husband was a decent man and he received us well when we went to Cluj. After she divorced, my aunt didn't get her maiden name back, but kept her former husband's, Jakobovics. She had learned how

to give massages in the meantime, and she lived from it. She didn't have any children. After the divorce, they both left for Israel separately. This is how things were. My aunt and my cousin, Joshua Teszler, left for Israel between 1958 and 1960. She gave massages there too and she had a clientele. While she was in Israel, we would write to each other all the time. She had a beautiful handwriting and a refined style. She was an intelligent woman. Even when she got old, she used to dress elegantly. She couldn't hear too well though.