Livia Diaconescu

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Livia Diaconescu is an expert in food chemistry who discovered her vocation of an archivist some time after she retired. She is a dynamic person with an extraordinary memory. At 72, she is still very stylish, paying much attention to her appearance. Her white, wavy hair still adds a lot of personality to her posture. She has been living on her own since her husband died and her only child left for Israel, then Canada. She resides in a green neighborhood, where streets are named after famous composers – a connection of sorts with the old piano in her living room. The walls are decorated with watercolors (the most valuable of which she gave to her child as a gift), while the massive, Viennese furniture, with leather-upholstered chairs, comes from her parents' home in Focsani.

My family background

My paternal grandfather was named Avram Filderman. I don't know my grandmother's name, as she died before I was born and they wouldn't talk about them much at home. They were born and lived in Focsani, but I don't know what they did for a living. I do know they had four children: Leon, Lazar, Mayer and Rebeca.

The first boy was Leon Filderman. He was born a few years before 1890, went to college in Germany and was an engineer. Back in the country, he became an oil engineer, lived in Ploiesti for a few years and married Malvina Bischoff. He had two children: Rozita (shortened to Zita) and Albert. Zita married for love, becoming the wife of Oscar Holsman, that is Oscar Lemnaru [a journalist who Romanianized his name]. Zita's daughter taught Latin at a school in Lehliu [a town at about 100 km. from Bucharest] until she flunked the boy of a party member; she was forced to quit her teaching career and she stayed like that [unemployed] until she left for America. Albert Filderman ended up in Israel. I only met him once, in 1988, when I went to visit the children. I

called him and, to my surprise, he came to see me. He didn't invite me at his home in Tel Aviv and I never met his family.

My father, Lazar Filderman, was the second child. Mayer Filderman was the third. I know about him that he lived on Moise Nicoara St. [a residential area in Calarasilor quarter, in the eastern part of Bucharest], where he owned a vila [a residence larger than a house, of some pretensions to elegance], and that he didn't have children.

The fourth child, Rebeca Filderman, married a Reichmann Her husband worked together with Leon Filderman in the oil business, but he wasn't an engineer – he did something in the administration. They had two children: Rudolf and Edmond. Rudolf Reichmann went to the Commercial Academy and married the daughter of a fervent Communist. He had met her before the war, in college. She had been baptized before the war, her name was Angela, but she had to return to the religion she had been born into, whether she wanted it or not [in observance with a State decree of 8th August 1940 establishing the criteria to determine who was a Jew and who was not]. They didn't have children. Edmond Reichmann went to study industrial chemistry, but only graduated after World War II because he had to register again. He worked at the Ministry of Paper and Wood (I don't know the exact name) and was a manager at the Cellulose Institute. He got married, but he didn't have children.

My father, who was born in 1890, was very bright, but lazy, and it was with great pains that he completed 4 years of high school. He didn't want to go any further with his education. He later regretted this very much, for he was very fond of reading and listening to heavy [classic] music. He spoke French and German. While he was serving in the army, during World War I, they wanted to send him to a military academy, but he deemed it pointless. When he returned from the war, he went to work for his cousin in Bacau. Then he left for Constanta, where he took up the grain trade.

My father came to Focsani in the 1920s. He married my mother, Fanny Filderman (nee Finkelstein), both religiously, in front of a rabbi, and civilly. I don't know more about this, since my parents didn't talk about this period. My maternal grandfather, Lewi Finkelstein, owned a store called 'Lewi's' and gave it to her after the wedding. Even after my grandfather died, the business kept its old name, in his memory.

My mother's father was named Lewi Finkelstein. Although he didn't wear traditional clothes, my grandfather was a very religious man, who went to the synagogue on a regular basis. At his place they kept all the holidays, used separate vessels for milk and meat and had special vessels for Pesach, which they only used once a year, on that particular occasion. My grandmother, Perla Finkelstein (nee Rabner), kept all the holidays and the Sabbath She observed the kashrut and went to a hakham-butcher who slaughtered poultry and animals in a ritual way. They only ate the parts that were allowed. There were also traditionalist Jews, but my grandparents would dress in a manner that was modern for that period, without breaking the religious prescriptions They spoke Yiddish and Romanian, but they didn't teach us Yiddish so that they could speak freely about things we weren't supposed to learn. My grandfather died in 1927 and my grandmother – in 1946.

My mother had taken piano lessons at the boarding school and my grandfather, having six daughters, kept three pianos at home. She had five sisters – Clara, Maria, Mina, Rebeca, Sofie – and two brothers, Oscar and Mayer. My grandmother was very busy looking after so many children. The eldest child was Clara Finkelstein, who got married, settled in Bucharest and, shortly after, died, at

21 or 22 years of age; she is buried at Filantropia [Jewish cemetery in Bucharest]. My mother was the second child; she was raised at the boarding school. Of course, she also stuck around the store to give a hand or learn the trade She loved piano. My piano is from my mother. She was very proud of it because it had bronze keys.

The third child was Maria Finkelstein, who married Jacques Ianconescu, a very good lawyer, nicknamed Jacques 'silver spoon', who was registered in a Masonic lodge. Another child was Mina Finkelstein, who married a Librescu and lived in Focsani. Her husband was a very good lawyer, but his practice was rather small. During World War II, he was sent to Transnistria 1 and this Mina stayed at Maria's. I believe, however, that they provided for themselves. But what is praiseworthy for me is that my cousin, Isidor Librescu, aged 9, was the one who supported the family. The Germans had moved into the commercial school and he had come to do small business with them – he would buy and resell drugs or food that the Germans probably brought from somewhere else. One evening, he offered me some food I had never seen in my entire life. The Germans had an inspection once and he stayed hidden in a wooden box until the inspection was over. After the war, he went to high school and college, worked with Prof. Carafoli, then left for Israel. He married there and had two children.

Rebeca was another child of my grandmother's; she was also called Rebecuta, hence the short form Cuta. She was a beautiful woman who also married a lawyer, Moritz Terdiman. They lived in Husi, in a beautiful house, with a vineyard; during the war, they stayed at Mita's. Her husband was sent to the labor camp in Targu Jiu. My cousin, Angelica Terdiman, went to college in Husi and was appointed to work in Brasov She fell in love with a foreman from the 1 Mai Plant and married him. She became Angelica Sfetcu after the marriage. She supported her husband in learning more and becoming a technician. She had a boy, Adrian, who was raised by aunt Mita. They left for Israel in the 1970s, but didn't stay there for long; then they went to Canada, where they had a hard time at the beginning. Today, Angelica Sfetcu owns 110 apartments in Montreal that she rents. Adrian Sfetcu, who was a very good student, works for Bell Helicopters.

Another sister was Sophie Finkelstein. She married a lawyer herself (and a good one too), Bernard Simiu. He also attended the Commercial Academy (this is where they met) and worked at the Bragadiru brewery. They bought a house, a vila on Alba St [a street in the center of the city that still exists today, in the vicinity of the Regina Maria Square]. Their next door neighbor was Lucretiu Patrascanu 2. During the war, the house was taken away from them and they rented a place from a Romanian who lived on Masina de paine St. [in the Colentina quarter, in the eastern suburbs of Bucharest]. They moved back after the war and he continued to work. My cousin, Lidia Simiu, who is five months older than me, went to the Jewish school during the war. She registered for the medical school and married a doctor, Marcel Solomon. They had a boy, Emil. She was appointed to work somewhere far away and quit the medical school. She worked as a translator for an institute.

Oscar Finkelstein, my mother's brother, left for France after World War I, married a French Jewish woman and owned a stationery factory near Paris. I got a pencil box with everything from him. During World War II, his family was supposed to be sent to the Drancy camp, but they managed to hide. They had two children (a girl and a boy), Michelle and Jean-Jacques. While they were hiding, aunt Germaine had an intestinal occlusion. They couldn't get a doctor, for they would have all been caught, so she died earlier than she should have. After the war, he lived in Paris, in a very nice apartment on Avenue de Versailles. The daughter became a doctor, got married and moved to

Caen. After Oscar's death, Jean-Jacques inherited the factory. But he changed his name a little, making Finkelstein a bit more French. He once manufactured some object at the factory and named it Perla, after his grandmother. The other brother, Mayer Finkelstein, attended the Faculty of Pharmacy in Germany. He was a very good pharmacist. Unfortunately, he was shy. He never married and didn't have any children.

Childhood memories

I love Focsani, the town of my childhood, though it looks terrible now. I couldn't even recognize the Cotesti St., where we lived. All I recognized was a house that was opposite from the school and which lost its courtyard. Modern buildings were erected and the old ones stand neglected, dilapidated – it's such a pity. Foscani was a quiet, patriarchal town, with large courtyards and nice, neat houses. The streets were paved. There were two Jewish streets: one of them was Dindos St., near the Jewish elementary school, the other one was Artelor St. At the end of Cotesti St., which opened on to the Main Street, carriages would wait for customers. Their owner was a Jew named Poitas, whose daughter, Lili Poitas, was a fellow-student of my sister's in high school.

The Zamfirescu family lived on Cotesti St. too. Mrs. Stela Zamfirescu had preconceptions about the Jews. I once entered her courtyard and was heading for the main stairs, when she told me 'Get out, jidoavco [abusive word for female Jew in Romanian]!'. I didn't know what jidoavca meant, but I thought it sounded like an insult, so I replied 'You're the jidoavca!' and left the courtyard. They later turned out to be nice people and we became close.

Focsani was a town with many Jews. There were two Jewish quarters. They were situated pretty close to each other, but then again, the town itself was small. I lived, however, in a Christian quarter, inhabited by many officers. The Jews in Focsani were tradesmen – some of them had big businesses. There was a Chamber of Commerce and my father was a member. We had manufacturing workshops and tailor's shops, many stores, drugstores, pharmacists, craftsmen, clocksmiths, hatters, tinsmiths, photographers, physicians. The town had many synagogues – there were eight Orthodox ones [3].

Since the minute I saw the light of day for the first time, I remember my father being a community man. He was tall, had a stately appearance and made himself noticed everywhere. He was severe by nature and very intelligent. He cared a lot about the Jewish community and he held many offices – he was a president for 3 years, around 1938, and then a vice-president. I have a photo of my father with Heinrich Israel, the president of the community in the period before World War II. My mother observed the tradition; she kept the Sabbath. She had a candlestick with one branch that she would light for Sabbath on Friday evenings. She would cover her hair with a white kerchief and would say the prayer above the candle. She had a very nice siddur, with a nacre cover. She went to the synagogue each Saturday and wouldn't have it any other way. Men were separated from the women at the synagogue – women stood upstairs. I rarely went there as a child and this didn't change as I grew up. I don't know the name of the rabbi, but I know he was also a religion teacher. I enjoyed the classes when he spoke about the history of the Jews. My mother and father regularly went to the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, until the synagogue burnt. I don't know whether the fire was set by the Germans or by the Legionaries [4]. It was pulled down during the war and it remained in ruins after the war – walls only. I don't know if they recovered anything. I didn't think of the sacred rolls back then.

My mother was a very gentle person. She gave birth to several children, but they didn't survive for long. At 2, Adolf caught diphteric angina and died of asphyxiation. Rodica died at 2 and my mother was walking around the room with the child in her arms and couldn't believe she was dead. My sister, Clara, was six years older than me. She was born in Focsani, in 1922. I was born in October 1928, in Focsani. Clara wore braids and was pretty. When she was 11, they realized she had diabetes. After the disease was spotted, they took her to the clinic, but an assistant told them to take her to Vienna. In those times, at the beginning of the 1930s, getting a passport wasn't a problem; generally speaking, money wasn't a problem either. They went to a sanatorium there and the doctors managed, through diet, to bring her to the minimum risk level. They also gave her a book about how she had to be nursed – she had to use scales to portion her food. There was a time when she had to weigh her cherries and, to get another portion, she also added the weight of the pits. My mother cooked specially for her. Clara had to measure her glycosuria twice a day using a solution, she dosed the insulin on her own and injected it in her leg by herself – she did that from 11 to 22 years old.

My mother had the works of Goethe, Schiller, Molière. She loved to read. She had a very beautiful hair and wore it in a knot that was not to her best advantage. Even at 72, her hair was still wavy and beautiful. The only time she had her hair done was when she left for Paris with my sister. She had long hands, slender fingers and beautiful nails; when she played the piano, she stroked the keys. She had an unusual sensitiveness. When she felt upset or moved, she would sit at the piano. She particularly liked Beethoven (symphonies, sonatas and overtures), Chopin (nocturnes and waltzes), Brahms, Liszt and Schubert. Before we got to go to opera performances, she had already played for us at home the entire Rigoletto and The House of the Three Girls. She loved Gounod's Ave Maria. When I was a child, I would sit next to my mother while she played. She would often play the Pastoral Symphony in the evening and that was the time when cows came back from the pastures. Every time I listen to this work, I can't help recalling this episode, which I kept deep down in my heart. She also liked The Moonlight Sonata a lot. All I know about music I learnt from her. When I was 15 or 16, they hired a piano teacher for me. I enjoyed studying. One day, I was returning from her place and the air-raid alarm sounded while I was still on the street. I interrupted the piano lessons in high school.

When she was in high school, my sister, Clara, had her friends come over on Saturday and my mother would play the piano for them. She was so thorough that she chose her repertoire every week and rehearsed it lest she should make mistakes. I turned the pages for her and she used to ask me how she had played. I didn't know too much, but everything my mother did was very good. She sometimes played together with a schoolmate of my sister's, Misu Mendel, who played the violin. It was a pleasure to listen to them. We didn't have too much dancing at our place, though I suppose they liked it. We would also go to Clara Zeidman's. She was our neighbor and she sang extremely beautifully. I once enjoyed it so much that I started to sing along and my sister urged me to shut up. Mrs. Zeidman told her to let me sing, for they couldn't hear me anyway – her voice was strong and covered mine, and thus I was able to indulge in singing. They served chocolates there and everyone helped themselves except Clara. Both their place and ours were nice. There was another family, Csato, who came from Transylvania. According to the records I researched, their sons were sent to forced labor. There was also the family of the pharmacist Rudich, who used to go out in the morning and walk barefoot in the dew. I recently heard this is a healthy thing to do. Mrs. Rudich was a walking encyclopedia; she read enormously.

There were some nice pillars in the front part of our house; the stairs were large and the entrance door had a stained-glass window. There were two doors: a wooden one and a glass one. After the hallway, came a huge room, like a ballroom, then some other rooms and a spacious kitchen; it had a stove with a range, a cupboard and a rack of vessels which were so tidy they shone. We had Viennese furniture, nice and enduring. (Later, my husband made friends with a Greek lawyer who tried to persuade me to give up this massive furniture. He failed.) We also had a crystal Venetian mirror, in my sister's room. Her bed was covered with a large bedspread that had Arab letters on the four sides. This bedspread now belongs to Diana, my granddaughter.

We always had a maid. We had a water pump in the courtyard and I would carry water in a bucket. My mother taught me that, although there was a maid, it wasn't beneath my dignity to do chores (like carrying water, cleaning windows or removing snow) once in a while. We had a Turkish toilet [a flat, 'elephant's feet' type of toilet on which one squats rather than sits], but it was properly maintained and tidy. I once grew fond of a Russian maid. She tried to teach me a few Russian words so that I would impress my father. But I forgot them before I got to utter them. I was very upset when she left. Then we had another one, a stout girl from the countryside. She had white, shiny shirts made of a fabric that I liked. During the war, we kept a girl whom we hid with us. My mother knew how to spare her – she would ask for the least possible from her and did all the hard work herself. The girl used to sleep outdoors; it was nice, because there were the flowers – queens of the night, irises – which spread their perfume all over the courtyard. I wanted to sleep next to her too, but my parents wouldn't let me. In the summer evenings, I looked at the sky and saw the Milky Way and other constellations. I wanted a little dress made of dark blue velvet, with silver stars. It was a child's dream. A woman did our laundry once a month, for three days in a row. She washed, boiled, dried and ironed it.

Wednesday was the market day, when peasants would come to town. If one didn't get to the marketplace in time, chances were the peasants wouldn't be there anymore. My mother went there with the maid, who carried a large basket. They would take me with them – it was a very rich market and I enjoyed it. I never asked for anything – I knew they wouldn't buy candy because of my sister with diabetes. I used to eat at least one kilo of fruits daily: apricots, plums, cherries, apples. In the fall, a cart with cretesti apples [a local variety of green, slightly flattened, crisp, tart apples] would come by our place. We would buy for the winter and store them under the table in the big room, which wasn't heated. Other foods supplies were also delivered at home: there was the woman who brought us quality milk, cheese and cream, the cart loaded with water melons, the peasants carrying yokes with yogurt loads, the man who sold pretzels and croissants.

Our store wasn't a large store [near Moldovei Sq., perpendicular on the Main Street, a ten minutes' walk from home] My father sought to extend it and bought other stores next to it. When I was very young, my father kept a second store together with a German, Leon Proschinger, who often came by. I couldn't say why they broke up, but I was sorry. He employed clerks (shop assistants) at 'Lewi's'. Two of them were about 25 years old. The others were raised at the store from the age of 12-13. Before World War II, he had a contracting agent who would travel to many places and order merchandise. My father set the prices so that his own benefit would not encumber the customer. He sold small wears, clothes, ties, peaked caps, silk stockings, photo cameras with a tripod. My father had turned the little room next door into a small lab where he developed the films; I don't think he charged much for this – it was fun for him. My sister, Clara, received an Acqua camera as a

gift. It was very easy to use.

The Zamfirescu sisters would come to the store and talk to my father, who was always willing to learn from the others, if there was something to learn. The program at the store was from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., then from 4 to 8 p.m., but I think my father had a replacement during the time he spent at the community. He came home for lunch at an exact hour. At 1, the table had to be laid. In the summer, we ate outdoors, in the courtyard. There was always a bucket of cool water with a bottle of soda and a bottle of wine in it. He didn't drink in excess, but good wine was never missing. A friend of his would provide a demijohn of wine. He would pour it into bottles, put a cork and some bitumen, and kept it in the cellar. In the afternoon, when the store was closed, he liked to sit on a small chair and clear the grass growing between the stones in the courtyard – one part of the courtyard was a garden and the other one was a playground and a space of transition. He wasn't harsh with the children. However, if he asked something of you and you let him down, you would go crazy only if he looked at you. I remember one time when I climbed the fence with my sister to eat cherries and she squeezed some in my hair. My father disentangled my hair and pulled a bit too hard. When he was done combing, I was so upset that I took hold of my hair and got it all tousled. My father said something to me. Pretty naughty as I was and not knowing the value of the words he had told me, I talked back. He gave me a hard glance and I left walking on the tip of my toes.

I didn't go to the kindergarten much. There was a teacher there, Betty, who prepared a Chinese dance for a festivity. I was in it and wore a crepe dress. When there wasn't anyone I could play with – there weren't many children in the neighborhood – I would sing on my own and jump up and down to the tune of the songs I had learnt in school.

I studied at the Jewish School in the first three grades. I did my homework by myself and I never thought of asking for help. I remember Mrs. Weber, a very good teacher, Mrs. Leslean from Falticeni, Mrs. Vigder. Towards the end of the school year, I usually caught some contagious disease and could not attend the festivities marking the end of the school year. In the 4th elementary grade, they transferred me to the Romanian school, the School no.1 for girls, which was very close to home. One day, during the break, I was summoned to the entrance gate – my former mates from the Jewish School, Suzy Leibovici and Felicia Marcus, had come to ask me if I wouldn't return there. I didn't go back – even if I had wanted to, the decision had already been made. It was pretty hard at the beginning, but I had a tutor and I caught up fast. I enjoyed everything I studied in the 4th. I was good at math, I liked Romanian and physical training. I had heard there would be some exams at the end of the year and I was terrified because I wondered whether I would remember anything I learnt. It wasn't like that. One of my teachers at the School no.1 for girls was Mrs. Popescu. Her husband was the headmaster of the School no.1 for boys; they were very nice people.

I had both Jewish and Romanian friends. My mother thought I wasn't old enough to go see my schoolmates, Suzy Leibovici or Felicia Marcus, by myself (they didn't live far from the end of the Cotesti St.), and so I made friends with Romanian girls. My mother began to teach me French. Then my sister took care of me. My mother would have me memorize fables by La Fontaine, fragments from Corneille's Cid and Racine's Athalie She would constantly check on me – there was no escape from that. Before the school started, she made me study the history and geography lessons. I felt frustrated then, but now, when I look back, I realize what she did was right.

During the war

In the summer of 1939, my mother took my sister to Paris for treatment. They left on 13th July, although my sister wanted to catch the parade [the parade on 14th July, France's national holiday]. While in Paris, my sister bought me a hardback fairy-tale book gilded at the edges, with thin pages and nice pictures, and a picture of Santa Clause and other characters. (I gave them to my son in 1988, but I don't know if they made it to my grandchildren.) On their way to Paris, they made stops in Milan and Venice. They were gone for a month, but my mother had wanted to come back sooner. From Venice, my sister brought home some gondola-shaped brooches for her schoolmates and two coral necklaces for me. She was friends with almost everyone in her grade, especially with Adina Rabinovici. Her father was an engineer and later taught geometry and Hebrew at the Jewish High School. When she was sick, she sent me over to Adina's to get the lessons for her. She had very nice schoolmates, but, unfortunately, the war came and those friendships had to come to an end. During the war, Dorina Gheorghe got married. While she was in love, mail was exchanged through my sister. When she was 16, her mother wanted to marry her with someone else and arranged for a 'viewing session'. Dorina claimed she would teach her mother a lesson and, when the suitor came, she laughed all the time and acted funny. Dorina came to our place and told my mother (who was her confidante) everything. During the war, Clara began to break the rules of the diet and had to increase the dose on insulin. Insulin was hard to get – it came from Germany. When she was with friends, she had to eat; she couldn't say she had diabetes. This was a shameful thing back then and brought about complications – girls couldn't find a husband anymore. Clara tutored in literature and studied English.

What I particularly enjoyed about the school for girls was strajeria [the scouting] 5. As a strajera [girl scout], I was sub-chief of unit. I loved it – I don't know why children like this military thing so much. There were six of us in a unit. In the morning, we would sit in a square, the flag would be raised, we would report, then sing Long Live the King: 'Long live the King / In peace and honor, / Who loves his country / And defends his country. / May he be eternally victorious / In war, / May he reign eternally / Over us / Oh, holy Lord, oh, holy Lord, / Heavenly Father, / May Thy hand protect / The Romanian Crown.' [text reproduced by Mrs. Livia Diaconescu] 6 On 10th May [Heroes' Day], I went to the Stadium with my class. There were other schools too – not the Jewish school though. I sang and I exercised with my scout uniform on. I had the country's coat of arms sown with silk, a tie fastened with a ring, a white blouse with shoulder straps, a folded navy-blue skirt and a belt on whose buckle was written 'Always ready, for the country and King' I was really into it. I had a picture of the royal family [the family of King Carol II] 7 which I recall with pleasure. This is how I grew up – with the king and the royal family [in the sense of a monarchist education]. I didn't experience anti-Semitic episodes at the public school; my fellow-students were very nice.

My father didn't come with us on vacations, he stayed at the store – he said he couldn't close it. My mother would take us and the maid. First, we would go to Techirghiol [a lake near the Black Sea], then to Carmen Sylva [a spa at the Black Sea]. I loved the seaside. We went sunbathing between certain hours, like it was recommended. Other relatives of ours would come too – Mita Ianconescu, my mother's sister, with her children, Dori and Bernel. We were a small pack. Then we went to the mountains, to Soveja [close to the Vrancei Mts.], where the air was very good. We used to go to the park, where Tita Pavelescu, Zelea Codreanu's godmother 8, would sell croissants with nuts. Other relatives and acquaintances would come there too and it was nice. When I was 19, I went with my

mother to Poiana Tapului, and I was amazed by all that beauty. Two friends came along, Ernest and Lazar Rudich, and we went together on short trips, for my mother would have never let me go climbing mountains with two boys. Years later, my mother took her grandson, Gabriel, to Poiana Tapului; the boy tired her very much, but she had an advanced sense of duty.

My father used to tell us about Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact 9. In 1939, we sheltered Polish refugees at our place – they were clean and very refined. Uncle Leon Filderman from Bucharest also had Poles living with him – one of them even sculpted him a bust. When they took Bessarabia and Transylvania away from us [the Second Vienna Diktat] 10, we all felt hurt. Although I was only a child, I suffered for these losses. I was a Romanian Jew, I lived in this country, I was born here and I love my country. There were suspicions about a Jewish involvement [in connection with the so-called Jewish Communist conspiracy], but I think all the Jews were hurt by these territorial losses.

In 1940, a colored square with two dots in the middle was painted on the wall of our house – a warning that we were Jewish. I strived to wipe them off – it was a black paint, very hard to remove. We had a Telefunken radio that we hid. [Jews were not allowed to keep radio sets so that the lack of information would make them even more vulnerable. Any failure in observing this rule was harshly punished.] My father did everything he could and got a 2nd-category Jew certificate [as a WW I Romanian veteran, he could gain certain civil rights, proving that he had been 'loyal' to the Romanian nation], so that we could enter a public high school, but it wasn't meant to be, it turned out useless. I went to high school in the 1st grade, but I had to quit. [In October 1940, Jewish pupils and students were forbidden access to public education of any level. Jews were left the liberty to organize private primary and secondary schools.]

I was lucky the Jewish High School was founded pretty soon after, in 1940. There were engineers and teachers in the staff: Sami Lazar, who was the president of the Jewish community until a few years ago, taught law, Romanian history, and some geography; Mr. Gabor was also the headmaster; Mrs. Ida Kholf, a teacher whom we loved and who taught us Romanian language and grammar in an exemplary way. I liked the Latin teacher and the one who taught German (and did it beautifully). I also liked the physical training teacher, because I liked physical training. My father bought me skates, took me to the Maccabi 11, put me on the ice and let me learn to skate by myself. He wasn't a Maccabi member.

I could keep in touch with the girls from the Jewish School, as I would meet them in the religion class; in the period when I attended the Romanian school, I studied religion separately, with the Jewish children. One time, at the Jewish High School, during the war, I was so naughty that the rabbi told me to leave the classroom. I met Iosefina Grunberg in the schoolyard. She wanted to go home, but was afraid to, because it was time for the boys from the Romanian high school to come out. I offered to help. We went out on the street together and the boys tried to scare us. But they mustn't have been too brave, after all, since they let a girl intimidate them! As the windows of our classroom opened on to the street, our boys heard us and wanted to join me and beat up the other kids. Luckily, the rabbi (who was usually a soft man) had the strength to forbid them to get out; a fight between the Romanian and the Jewish students was not a good thing to happen.

At the festivities, we used to sing in a choir. While at the Jewish elementary school, I witnessed an unforgettable seder, held in a large hall, at the public School for boys. My schoolmate, Felicia

Marcus, who had an exceptional voice, was a soloist. A boy played the father, another boy – the son who was supposed to find the hidden matzah and ask 'Ma nistana?'. We sang certain fragments and we all wore white veils on our heads. I had a booklet with religious songs and I sang them at home too. We also had festivities during the war, but the authorities had to be present to supervise us. [The law forbade the Jews to organize gatherings, on the grounds that they could plot against the State. Even the religious gatherings had to be announced in advance at the Police. They were attended by representatives of the State. The punishment for failing to observe this provision was the deportation to Transnistria.] Some schoolmates would organize a 'jour' [tea-party], but with few guests, as Jews weren't allowed to gather in great number. I was happy to go, as we couldn't have that at our place, because of my sister's diabetes. When friends would come over on Saturday, they weren't offered anything, for my sister would have wanted some too.

During World War II, I had some troubles with anti-Semitism when my mother sent me with a basket to buy bread. The rations were small, so I had to be there at a certain hour. Well, that cursed hour [at noon] was also the time when the girls came out from the vocational high school. I got called a jidoavca sometimes, but I grew used to it in time and stopped being afraid. An unpleasant episode took place when I was walking on the roundabout route – I wasn't allowed to take the Main Street [the Jews' access to the central areas was restricted]: a carriage stopped, the passenger stood up, spit me in the face, and then signaled the driver to move on. That was humiliating. He knew I was Jewish because I wore the Star of David, which wasn't yellow, but was sown with blue on a white background (that is the colors of the tallit and of today's Israeli flag). I don't remember how long I had to wear the Star; it didn't bother me though. We didn't have too much trouble – however, we couldn't see our Romanian friends anymore.

A curious thing: our neighbors, the Gheorghe family, kept on inviting us at their place; Dorina Gheorghe came to my mother to learn how to make hamantashen, which she liked very much. Communications were exchanged through my sister and me. Mr. Gheorghe was in a forced labor commission and could provide some help [he could remove those who had large families to support from the forced labor lists, or could help them by sending them to less demanding places]. The relationship with our neighbor, Coca Radulescu, was resumed after the war. We didn't have problems with our neighbors – we would talk to them over the fence. I would hear Mistress Aretia call 'Ioane, Maria, come and get a load of these songs!'. Of course, those were songs of the Legionary Movement 12: 'The Guard, the Captain and the Archangel from Heaven'. Our friends, the Leustean family, wouldn't have us over anymore. Lucian, however, was too young to be an anti-Semite. I once went skating on the street (I had nowhere else to go) and Lucian began to sing me 'The Guard' loud. I sang just as loud myself, I wasn't intimidated.

My father kept his store during the war. I think even the Germans bought from him and sent many items back to Germany. It was a store with quality products, which were hard to find under war circumstances. I enjoyed working there. I remember that, during the war, he gave me the key from the shutter and I was the one who would open the shutter, the door, the store. At a certain point in 1941, Jewish clerks were doubled by Romanians [because of the numerus clausus] 16. I was on my summer vacation, but I wasn't allowed to walk on the Main Street. I would stay at the store till 6 p.m., when my father would send me home. However, there were times when I came back home with him, in the evening. I had a double too at the store [the employers had to hire one Romanian for every Jewish employee they kept]; she was a very kind-hearted girl, who also went to work in

the campaign hospitals on the front; she told about how she washed the frostbitten feet of soldiers and her hand dived into live flesh. One would wonder what those poor men had gone through and why they had to suffer so much.

During the Holocaust, we lived in fear; we had heard talks in the town about us being deported too, I don't know whether it was to Auschwitz or to Transnistria. I talked to my friends about what we would take with us, for the luggage was limited. Thank God we stayed at home! [Editor's note: The Jews of Focsani were not mass deported. There were only individual cases caused by certain incompliances with the rules.] I didn't know much about the massacres in Transnistria, but I wasn't totally ignorant of them either – my father thought I shouldn't become a wimp. I learnt about 'that Sunday', how they called it [the pogrom in Iasi, 1941] 14, in college, from a fellow-student whose father had died on the Death Train. I knew everything about the forced labor – including the places where it was performed.

We received a notification that we had to move, as the house was to be taken by the CNR [Centrul National de Romanizare – The National Center for Romanianization]. A plate with the initials of the CNR showed up on our door. We went to see a place to rent and my mother pulled out the roses from the garden and gave them to the neighbors Eventually, we were allowed to remain at our place, on condition that we paid a rent. My father had to give clothes, footwear, linen and blankets [the Jewish population had to contribute effects towards supporting the war effort of the Romanian army and population]. I don't have the receipts to prove it, but I think my father contributed money to help the needy – there were several categories of Jews who could no longer work or whose clientele had diminished. Towards the end of the war, they summoned my father with only one day's notice and he did forced labor at a German military airfield near Focsani, although he had exceeded the age limit. He was afraid he would go there just so that they could shoot him. In exchange, the Germans gave them papers with the eagle of the Third Reich, certifying they had worked there.

Until the Russians arrived [before 23rd August 1944] 15, there was peace and quiet. The Germans had requisitioned the front part of the house and had brought Russian girls there. When the Germans had to withdraw, the girls were very frightened, as they had left Russia with them by their own choice. In the vicinity of our house, was a spirits factory, where a man named Cosnita would manufacture alcoholic beverages When the Russians came, they carried the liquor cases in our garden and took great pleasure in emptying them. They lived opposite from us, but they also lived at our place – they never asked if we agreed. They turned a part of the place in a warehouse. Because of it, I found myself facing a rat one night – it was on me. I got up, turned on the light, caught it and threw it away. My father was glad to see I had guts. After the warehouse routine was over, it was their turn to settle in. I was 16, they called me Liduska and I was stunned with fear. I was in mourning for my sister, Clara. My mother and I, wearing veils on our heads, went to spend the night at some relatives'. They protested – they said they had sent their wives to a safe place only to find themselves stuck with us. The Russian captain – who was in a good mood – looked for me at home with a lamp in his hand. Thank God I wasn't there!

Another time, it was in the evening and my father told us: 'Pay attention, when they start to sing, you get inside, lock yourselves in and, when I say «Now», you jump out of the window'. We stayed in the courtyard until the 'choir' began and my father sent us inside. They were talking with him and, at a certain point, we heard him say 'Now' My mother (who was 53 at that time) and I both

jumped out of the upper window and went to a Jewish family who let us spend the night at their place. Afterwards, I found out the Russians had broken the door open, but found no one. They got over it and had my father drink with them. They brought a wine demijohn which had also contained gas and water melons. My father, who was used to quality wines, had to drink that!

The Russians didn't linger long, they left for the front. I felt pity for them a couple of times. A small creature once entered the courtyard… It was a man on a carriage, a Russian soldier whose legs had been amputated. Russian women were so crazy about nice things that they would take the Milanese silk lace chemises and wear them on the street. There was a time of such great shortage. They had their picture taken while holding watches.

A family who lived on our street was deported to Siberia because one of them, who worked at the camp for German prisoners of war, was said to have done some favors to the inmates. The Romanians sent one of our shop assistants to Transnistria because she had organized a party – I don't know if the authorities actually caught her red-handed. Nothing could be done for her and she was never heard of again.

Hard times came after the war, after 23rd August 1944. It wasn't very hard at the beginning though. I went to the public high school, where I studied with many of my former teachers. My schoolmates from the Jewish High School sat at desks in the back of the classroom, but I didn't want us to look as though we were keeping our distance, so I sat in the third row. I interrupted my piano classes so I could study properly. My father, who wasn't used to seeing me so persevering, would send me to bed, but I always had something extra to do. I was an ordinary student, but I caught up with what I had missed at the Jewish High School, where I had been able to choose the subjects I liked more. They didn't give me this opportunity at the public high school.

Post-war

I thought of emigrating to Israel. Misu Leibovici, a very smart boy, came to me and said 'We can use someone like you in Israel, Livia!'. I never knew boys appreciated me, in spite of my being rather boyish. I wanted to go, but my parents told me about the conditions there. My father donated money to Keren Kayemet 16 and Keren Hayesod 17, but there was no real interest in emigrating to Israel. I joined the Hanoar LeZioni, but got disappointed: the leader of the group didn't manage to persuade me, he didn't explain anything to us, nor did he tell us about Israel. All we did was get together and dance. I later found out that a friend of ours was with the Betar – this would have tempted me, for it was a combative organization. I also know of the existence of Hasomer Hatair; a high school mate was there – he was a left-winger. I rejoined the Maccabi and I had a very nice time. I did gymnastics, volleyball and table tennis. We also had dancing parties, but not often.

I continued to live in Focsani. I was sick for two years, stayed indoors and lost contact with my schoolmates. I wasn't allowed to make any effort; they confined me to the bed and protected me as if I were an eggshell. My mother took me to Poiana Tapului, as the doctor recommended.

After two years, I had had enough and began to study really hard in order to catch up for admission to college. But what college was I supposed to choose? I was drawn towards the Letters, as I had enjoyed reading ever since I was a child. But my frustration about not having studied chemistry at the Jewish High School and about having had a chemistry teacher who used to humiliate us at the

public high school made me go for the Faculty of Chemistry in Bucharest. I also had to learn about the nationalization, the laws and so on, and about the rights of the socialist woman: how ‘she used to be long-haired and short-minded in the past’ and how things had changed for the better after the war [the emancipation of the socialist woman and the parting with the bourgeois traditions, according to which a woman could be successful in life only through marriage]. My average was over 8 and I took the exam. I was very delighted. I went to college with Dori Ianconescu and Lili Bercovici, her former classmate, who had to leave for Israel soon. My fellow-students were very special, both the Romanians and the Jews. I didn’t keep in touch with the community in Bucharest, as I was very busy. My daily schedule was always full, I studied a lot and didn’t go to parties much. Looking back, I feel frustrated about that. In the first two years, they didn’t give me a free ticket for the canteen, as my father was an owner (he still had one shop assistant). In the 3rd year of college, the State took away his store [through nationalization] 18, and moved him to another store. Things became more difficult for us. I had to find another place to rent in Bucharest.

Married life

I met my husband, Ioan Diaconescu, while I was in college, in the 3rd year, at the Calarasi student canteen in Bucharest. We married in Bucharest, at the City Hall. It was a simple ceremony, with only a few members of the family attending. We didn’t go to the meal they had prepared for us. We thanked them, took the train to Focsani and went to my parents’. We didn’t have a religious ceremony – it would have been impossible anyway, as my husband was a Christian Orthodox –, though any girl wants to be a bride. Ioan was a very hard-working man. Even as a student, he would work in the summer to make some extra money, as he didn’t get much from home. His parents came from the countryside and didn’t have money, and the scholarship wasn’t enough to cover the expenses. He was born in Bucharest, but grew up in Malureni [a village in the Prahova County]. He went to high school in Pitesti and attended the Faculty of Law in Buhcarest. In 1954, the year of his graduation, he was hired at the Prosecutor’s Office. His mother came from the countryside; she had worked at the Filatura Factory in Bucharest and had lost an arm in a work accident. His father was modestly employed as a lamp maker. They had a plot of land in the countryside which they labored. My husband supported them. 3 or 4 years before he died, he became a lawyer. He was earnest, didn’t charge big fees, like other colleagues did, and helped everybody.

The Jewish origin was not a criterion in choosing my husband. I chose the one I loved, the one who had charmed me at that age. My husband was a very agreeable, intelligent, civilized man. Although he was ailing and weakened, everyone loved him for his conduct and his good heart.

After graduation, I first worked for the State Committee for Planning I stayed with them for just a month or two, because I wanted to actually work in my field, chemistry; so I got employed at a new factory, called Electroizolantul, based at the exit from Bucharest, on Catelu Dr. It was hard to get there. After I got married, my husband and I lived in Focsani for a year, in 1958. I worked in the local industry, at a factory that processed meat and made tin cans, then at a medical lab where I did tests. I only encountered overt conflicts because of my Jewish origin once: it was in Focsani, in the food industry. I had discovered some shocking errors. Someone told on me to the party. They called my husband there, told him that, if it hadn’t been for that regime, I would have never married him, and asked him to divorce me.

Our boy was born in 1955, in Bucharest. My husband gave him the name of Gabriel and my mother named him Paul, after grandmother Perla. In 1959, we moved back to Bucharest. I worked for a little while at the lab of the Vasile Roaita Hospital, then I applied for another job and, after passing an examination, I was employed at the Food Research Institute. I stayed there until 1979, when the Sugar section was closed and a new institute for the cultivation and processing of the sugar beet was founded. I worked for them till 1st January 1986, when I retired.

In Bucharest, we first lived in an apartment on Mosilor Ave. As he was working for the Prosecutor's Office, my husband was supported by the housing authorities to get an apartment. I worked in Catelu [outside the city], where access was hard, by bus, and the work day was more than 8 hours long. We would come back with the factory's truck, even when it snowed or rained. This is where the winter of 1953-1954 caught me. Bucharest was buried in snow and I once left to work on foot and went in a wrong direction. When we came back from Focsani [she only stayed there for a year; she returned in 1959, after her father's death.], my husband obtained a two-room apartment on Beethoven St., where we lived together with my mother and our son. The following year, we changed the apartment with a place on J. S. Bach St.

Having a job and a small child, I didn't have much time for anything else. After my mother moved in with us and started to look after the boy, we could go to the theater and the opera once in a while. We loved to buy books – literature and anything else. We would return from business trips with a suitcase full of books. [During the communist regime, light books were the only way of evasion for many; the television, the press and even the theatrical performances were politicized.] After the war, my father had received a book about Antonescu's trial 19 from a friend. My husband tore it to pieces and burnt them, because he was afraid [possessing books that rendered history differently from the official version was dangerous]. When I went to Israel, in 1988, I also destroyed the sale purchase papers of my father's store, for I feared the Securitate 20 Now I have no proof left. But it's not a great loss.

We would celebrate both Christian and Jewish holidays. Speaking of holidays: we were under the communist regime, the Romanians refrained themselves from going to church, many priests had been imprisoned, people were afraid. Jews kept their holidays, even though some of them didn't go to the synagogue. I would make hamantashen for Purim, as my mother had taught me. On Pesach, my husband would make me a surprise and bring me matzah, or we would go to the synagogue on Adamache St. and buy it from there.

One time, we went on vacation to my husband's parents', who were simple, decent people, and we slept at his aunt's. When we returned, we found the priest there, who had performed a service because a Jew had set foot in there. My husband got very upset and didn't speak with her anymore. But I don't think it was her fault, but the fault of the environment in which she had grown up. [The rural environment is full of superstitions about the image of strangers, especially if they belong to another religion, like the Turks or the Jews. Her husband's aunt probably feared for her very own salvation or that bad luck would fall upon her house because a Jew had been there.]

When Gabriel became older, we went on vacations to the mountains. My husband took him to the Black Sea. I couldn't accompany them there [because of the health problems]. We sent Gabriel to youth camps in Navodari [at the Black Sea; children of school age or under school age would board special trains and go to youth camps where they were under the strict surveillance of their

teachers]. I was waiting at the station for their return once. The train had already emptied and Gabriel was nowhere to be found. I was desperate. All that had remained on the platform was someone small, weak and with a suntan. It was Gabriel.

Gabriel was a good boy. He went to school in the Floreasca quarter, where we lived. Then he went to the D. Cantemir High School, which was a good high school. Though he enjoyed reading all sorts of books, he was inclined towards science. He went to the Thermal Engines Department of the Faculty of Mechanics, at the Polytechnic After graduation, he was employed at the National Institute of Thermal Engines. He worked there until 1987, when he emigrated to Israel. He married Carmen Matei. Her father was a manager at the Craftsmen's Cooperative and her mother worked for the Ministry of the Light Industry. My daughter-in-law is a Christian Orthodox. They met in college (she went to the Polytechnic too), got married in 1979 and had three children. The eldest, Diana, was born in 1981, in Bucharest, and got married in 2003, with an engineer born in Timisoara. Her husband is an expert in computers, while she studies medicine at McGill, in Canada. The second child, Marius, was born in 1984, in Bucharest. He wants to study medicine too, and now goes to a Jewish school in Canada. The youngest child, born in 1987, in Israel, also goes to a Jewish school.

Gabriel didn't receive any special religious education; we let him choose his religion at an adult age. He probably had an inclination towards Judaism, as he left for Israel, where he stayed for 7 years. He now lives with his family in Montreal. He moved to Canada in 1994 to seize a new career opportunity. He keeps both Jewish and Christian holidays. They celebrate Christmas too – it's a happy holiday, they adorn the tree, buy presents. They even celebrate Halloween.

Many people in our circle of friends would brag about the trips they had taken abroad, in the socialist countries [Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Poland, East Germany etc.]. I would remain quiet, I had nothing to say about this. My husband decided I couldn't go on like this and sent me on a trip to Czechoslovakia by coach. I enjoyed it a lot and felt sorry I was alone – he couldn't come with me, as he was busy. Then I went to Vienna for a month, at a cousin of my mother's, and to Paris, in 1976, at my mother's brother, Oskar Finkelstein, with whom I kept in touch. While both in Paris and Vienna, I went to museums, performances, and even to cemeteries. When I came back, I was nervous, as I carried books by Solzhenitsyn in my luggage 21.

We would listen to Radio Free Europe 22 on a regular basis during the communist period. At a certain point, a prosecutor who had fled the county made a positive comment about my husband on air. I don't know if my husband, who was still a prosecutor, had troubles because of it. I knew from this radio how the Securitatea acted against those who had responsibility positions and tried to eliminate them physically.

My relatives are buried in different places. My sister, Clara, and my father are buried in Focsani. My husband placed a special order for two marble monuments for them – he thought it was his duty. My mother is buried in Bucharest, at Filantropia, a Jewish cemetery. She died in 1964. My husband is buried at Izvorul Nou, a Christian cemetery; he died in 1977. I wanted to bury him at the Bellu cemetery, but it was impossible those days, so I took him where I could find a place. I held requiems for each commemoration of his death until now. The other relatives' funerals were always attended by a rabbi and a cantor; someone would recite the Kaddish for them. I kept the Yahrzeit, the day when their death is commemorated.

The birth of the State of Israel was a great achievement. Although I was married to a Romanian, that made me happy and my husband was happy with me too. While in high school, I wanted to do aliyah. Several decades after, my son wanted me to come with him to Israel, but I wasn't young anymore and I was afraid. I was used to this place and I thought it best for the children not to live with the old folks. I don't know whether this was a right decision or not. I hadn't been to Israel before 1988. If my husband had still been alive, maybe we would have gone to Canada together, after 1994. The parents of my daughter-in-law, Carmen Diaconescu, the Matei family, have lived there for almost 5 years. Before 1989, I had relatives in the US and kept in touch in them in writing. We couldn't exchange very detailed news – it was dangerous, as the mail was read by the secret police – so we would write what we could. Uncle Oscar Finkelstein from Paris paid our subscription to Paris Match. We regularly received the magazine for as long as he lived, and it was a delight.

I was very glad after 1989 23. When things started to happen, I was just queuing – like we all used to, for hours, in order to get one liter of milk or oil, or half a pack of butter. Today, at my age, I realize how cruel it is to do this to an elderly. At the beginning, the market was flooded with all the products that Ceausescu had denied us 24. I was delighted with the freedom of speech, the food, the export clothes [of superior quality compared to those manufactured domestically]. Then, slowly but surely, we couldn't afford them anymore [due to the decrease of the standard of living]. When the Berlin Wall fell, I was glad the Germans would be reunited. I will never forget the news I heard in the 1980s, about how they shot the Germans trying to get across the wall.

During the mineriada in 1991 25, I was preparing to get out from the subway station, when a lady warned me it was dangerous. At the University, there was this student girl coming my way, crying, with a miner behind her. Playing the brave and totally unaware, I asked her why she was crying. She didn't replied, so I asked the miner 'What have you done to her to make her cry and unable to speak?'. He didn't pay any attention to me either. I climbed a large stone, to see what was going on. I made some comment, but was quickly silenced [by their allusions]. I had a sack full of medicines from abroad and I was afraid I would only provoke them. I left on foot and came across more miners. All that made a very unpleasant impression on me.

After I retired, I got closer to my Jewish origins. I could afford to make anything I wanted of my spare time and I wasn't tired anymore. I went to Israel and met Romanians who acquired the Jewish lifestyle. There is another atmosphere there. Every time I hear Ivrit, I prick up my ears, because I like how it sounds.

From a professional point of view, I turned from chemist to archivist [at the Center for the Study of the History of the Romanian Jews, where she has been working for 9 years]. I like this work. I processed documents from the time when Jews would leave [emigrate] on foot [until the end of the 19th century]. These were things I hadn't heard about before, and there were others just like them. I am delighted I can work, for I feel totally useless at home. [Mrs. Livia Diaconescu deals with the compensation claims submitted by those who were discriminated during the Holocaust]. I received damages from Switzerland myself, and they were welcome.

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 Patrascanu, Lucretiu (1900-1954)

Veteran communist and appreciated intellectual, who successfully conducted an underground communist activity before the Communist Party came to power in Romania in 1944. Following this he was in charge of the Ministry of Justice. He was arrested in 1948 and tried in 1954. He was allegedly accused by Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, the leader of the Romanian Communist Party, of helping Antonescu in his war against the USSR and of being a spy for the British secret service. In fact, he was the only rival from an intellectual background Dej had. His patriotism, which he openly expressed, was interpreted by the communists as chauvinism.

3 Orthodox

Orthdox Judaism: observant, traditional religious Judaism.

4 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) that represented the movement in parliamentary elections. The followers of the Legionary Movement were recruited from young intellectuals, students, Orthodox clericals, peasants. The movement was banned by King Carol II in 1938.

5 Strajer (Watchmen), Strajeria (Watchmen Guard)

Proto-fascist mass-organization founded by King Carol II with the aim of bringing up the youth in

the spirit of serving and obedience, and of nationalist ideas of grandeur.

6 Heroes' Day

The former National Day of Romania was held on 10th May to commemorate the fact that Romania gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1877. This day was also the day of the Proclamation of the Romanian Kingdom since 1881, celebrated as such from that year on. After the establishment of the communist regime, the new leaders were fervently interested in erasing that day from the national collective memory. For that reason the day of 23 August 1944 had been appointed as the National Day of Romania. Even the historical meaning of that day had been changed, confiscated as an act made only by the Communist Party of Romania, nothing more false. The Day of the Proclamation of Independence made in 1877 was to be identified incorrectly as 9th of May, so to erase completely the former National Day from the collective memory.

7 King Carol II (1893-1953)

King of Romania from 1930 to 1940. During his reign he tried to influence the course of Romanian political life, first through the manipulation of the rival Peasants' Party, the National Liberal Party and anti-Semitic factions. In 1938 King Carol established a royal dictatorship. He suspended the Constitution of 1923 and introduced a new constitution that concentrated all legislative and executive powers in his hands, gave him total control over the judicial system and the press, and introduced a one-party system. A contest between the king and the fascist Iron Guard ensued, with assassinations and massacres on both sides. Under Soviet and Hungarian pressure, Carol had to surrender parts of Romania to foreign rule in 1940 (Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR, the Cadrilater to Bulgaria and Northern Transylvania to Hungary). He was abdicated in favor of his son, Michael (b. 1921). When Carol II abdicated in 1940 Michael became king again but he only had a formal role in state affairs during Antonescu's dictatorial regime, which he overthrew in 1944. Michael turned Romania against fascist Germany and concluded an armistice with the Allied Powers. King Michael opposed the "sovietization" of Romania after World War II. When a communist regime was established in Romania in 1947, he was overthrown and exiled, and he was stripped from his Romanian citizenship a year later. Since the collapse of the communist rule in Romania in 1989, he has visited the country several times and his citizenship was restored in 1997.

8 Codreanu, Corneliu Zelea (1899-1938)

After he was the leader of the youth movement beneath the LANC, on June 24, 1927, he founded the Legion of the Archangel Michael, and became known as 'The Captain'. The Legion was also known in Romania as the Legionary Movement - in foreign circles and in the press. After the period of paramilitary activities and political terrorism as instruments of the movement, in the early 30's he founded the political organization of the movement, named the Iron Guard. The principles of this extreme right wing organization were founded on the belief in the 'Orthodoxism', theoretised by Nae Ionescu and Nichifor Crainic, as well as exclusive nationalism. By the end of the 1930s it became a mass movement and came into conflict with King Charlesl II of Romania. Codreanu was trailed first for political terrorism in the 1924, but it was finally jailed and assassinated in 1938.

9 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

Non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, which became known under the name of Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Engaged in a border war with Japan in the Far East and fearing the German advance in the west, the Soviet government began secret negotiations for a non-aggression pact with Germany in 1939. In August 1939 it suddenly announced the conclusion of a Soviet-German agreement of friendship and non-aggression. The Pact contained a secret clause providing for the partition of Poland and for Soviet and German spheres of influence in Eastern Europe.

10 Second Vienna Dictat 1940

The Romanian and Hungarian governments carried on negotiations about the territorial partition of Transylvania in August 1940. Due to their conflict of interests, the negotiations turned out to be fruitless. In order to avoid violent conflict a German-Italian court of arbitration was set up, following Hitler's directives, which was also accepted by the parties. The verdict was pronounced on 30th August 1940 in Vienna: Hungary got back a territory of 43,000 sq.km. with 2.5 million inhabitants. This territory (Northern Transylvania, Seklerland) was populated mainly by Hungarians (52 percent according to the Hungarian census and 38 percent according to the Romanian one) but at the same time more than 1 million Romanians got under the authority of Hungary. Although Romania had 19 days for capitulation, the Hungarian troops entered Transylvania on 5th September. The verdict was disapproved by several Western European countries and the US; the UK considered it a forced dictate and refused to recognize its validity.

11 Maccabi World Union

International Jewish sports organization whose origins go back to the end of the 19th century. A growing number of young Eastern European Jews involved in Zionism felt that one essential prerequisite of the establishment of a national home in Palestine was the improvement of the physical condition and training of ghetto youth. In order to achieve this, gymnastics clubs were founded in many Eastern and Central European countries, which later came to be called Maccabi. The movement soon spread to more countries in Europe and to Palestine. The World Maccabi Union was formed in 1921. In less than two decades its membership was estimated at 200,000 with branches located in most countries of Europe and in Palestine, Australia, South America, South Africa, etc.

12 Legion of the Archangel Michael (also known as the Legionary Movement)

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) that represented the movement in parliamentary elections. The followers of the Legionary Movement were recruited from young intellectuals, students, Orthodox clericals, peasants. The movement was banned by King Carol II in 1938.

13 Numerus clausus in Romania

In 1934 a law was passed, according to which 80 % 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.

14 The pogrom in Iasi and the Death Train

during the pogrom in Iasi (29th-30th June 1941) an estimated 4,000-8,000 people were killed on the grounds that Jews kept hidden weapons and had fired at Romanian and German soldiers. Thousands of people were boarded into two freight trains 100-150 people were crowded in each one of the sealed carriages. For several days, they were transported towards Podul Iloaiei and Calarasi and 65% of them died from asphyxiation and dehydration.

15 23 August 1944

On that day the Romanian Army switched sides and changed its World War II alliances, which resulted in the state of war against the German Third Reich. The Royal head of the Romanian state, King Michael I, arrested the head of government, Marshal Ion Antonescu, who was unwilling to accept an unconditional surrender to the Allies. Ca urmare a acestei decizii sfarsitul razboiului a fost mult grabit.

16 Keren Kayemet Leisrael (K

K.L.): Jewish National Fund (JNF) founded in 1901 at the Fifth Zionist Congress in Basel. From its inception, the JNF was charged with the task of fundraising in Jewish communities for the purpose of purchasing land in the Land of Israel to create a homeland for the Jewish people. After 1948 the fund was used to improve and afforest the territories gained. Every Jewish family that wished to help the cause had a JNF money box, called the ‘blue box’. They threw in at least one lei each day, while on Sabbath and high holidays they threw in as many lei as candles they lit for that holiday. This is how they partly used to collect the necessary funds. Now these boxes are known worldwide as a symbol of Zionism.

17 Keren Hayesod

central fundraising organization for Israel, operating in 45 countries and established by the World Zionist Conference in London on July 7-24, 1920. It’s purpose was to gather Zionists and non-

Zionists to contribute toward the building of the Land of Israel through the organization.

18 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.

19 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.

20 Securitate (in Romanian

DGSP - Directia generala a Securitatii Poporului): General Board of the People's Security. Its structure was established in 1948 with direct participation of Soviet advisors named by the NKVD. The primary purpose was to 'defend all democratic accomplishments and to ensure the security of the Romanian Popular Republic against plots of both domestic and foreign enemies'. Its leader was Pantelimon Bondarenko, later known as Gheorghe Pintilie, a former NKVD agent. It carried out the arrests, physical torture and brutal imprisonment of people who became undesirable for the leaders of the Romanian Communist Party, and also kept the life of ordinary civilians under strict observation.

21 Solzhenitsyn, Alexander (1918-)

Russian novelist and publicist. He spent eight years in prisons and labor camps, and three more years in enforced exile. After the publication of a collection of his short stories in 1963, he was denied further official publication of his work, and so he circulated them clandestinely, in samizdat publications, and published them abroad. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970 and was exiled from the Soviet Union in 1974 after publishing his famous book, The Gulag Archipelago, in which he describes Soviet labor camps.

22 Radio Free Europe

The radio station was set up by the National Committee for a Free Europe, an American organization, funded by Congress through the CIA, in 1950 with headquarters in West Germany. The radio broadcast uncensored news and features from Munich to countries behind the Iron Curtain. The programs were produced by Central and Eastern European émigré editors, journalists and moderators. The radio station was jammed behind the Iron Curtain, team members were constantly harassed and several people were killed in terrorist attacks by the KGB. Radio Free Europe played a role in supporting dissident groups, inner resistance and will of freedom in

communist countries behind the Iron Curtain and thus it contributed to the downfall of the totalitarian regimes of Central and Eastern Europe.

23 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.

24 Ceausescu, Nicolae (1918-1989)

Communist head of Romania between 1965 and 1989. He followed a policy of nationalism and non-intervention into the internal affairs of other countries. The internal political, economic and social situation was marked by the cult of his personality, as well as by terror, institutionalized by the Securitate, the Romanian political police. The Ceausescu regime was marked by disastrous economic schemes and became increasingly repressive and corrupt. There were frequent food shortages, lack of electricity and heating, which made everyday life unbearable. In December 1989 a popular uprising, joined by the army, led to the arrest and execution of both Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, who had been deputy Prime Minister since 1980.

25 Mineriade

in 1990 and 1991, waves of miners from the Jiu Valley came to Bucharest to ‘restore order’; the acts of street violence directed at those who protested peacefully in the Revolution Sq. against the newly-installed power destabilized the internal political life and were even considered a coup attempt. They affected the positive perception that the Romanian revolution of 1989 had created abroad, of fight for freedom.