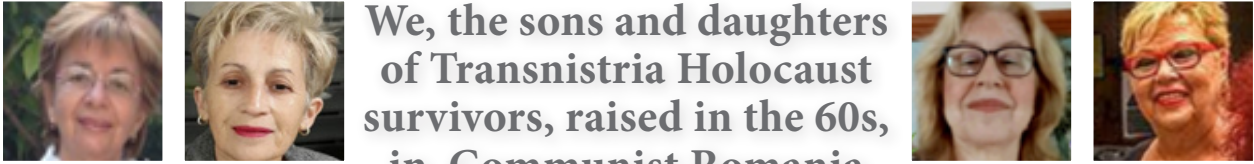


Once upon a Time in Suceava - Bukovina



Lily Pauker
producer

1



We, the sons and daughters
of Transnistria Holocaust
survivors, raised in the 60s,
in Communist Romania
are the authors of
**Once upon a Time in
Suceava-Bukovina**

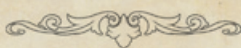


Imobile de pe Strada Curtea Domnească (1960)
Dwellings on Curtea Domnească Street (1960)



Suceava Periferiilor
- Pierdută, uitată, necunoscută

Album



Editura Karl A. Romstorfer
Suceava - 2013

**Once upon a Time in
Suceava - Bukovina**

Volume 1



Photo: Ica Mandrila, Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru

"Once upon a Time in Suceava-Bukovina"
Pauker Lily collected the stories and produced the book.

The authors of this collection of stories and pictures sent the material to the book producer with the purpose to publish and distribute the printed and digital versions of "Once upon a Time in Suceava-Bukovina".

Published by the 56 authors of the book.

© All rights reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, or without prior written permission of the book producer except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission request write to the producer, at the email address: lilypauker@gmail.com

ISBN 978-965-599-712-5



9

7 8 9 6 5 5 9 9 7 1 2 5

ISBN 978-965-599-712-5

Cover: Paul Leinburd's painting

Book designed by Orni Drori Studio

Printed by Millenium-Ayalon Ltd. 2021



The five Pioneers



Israel
Hubner



Simcha
Weisbuch



Yehuda
Tennenhaus



Benzion
Fuchs



Meir
Kostiner

These are the five authors of the "Book of the Jews of Suceava (Schotz) and the surrounding communities" which was published in 2007.

They were the first to commemorate in writing the story of the Jewish community of Suceava, and therefore we, the second generation, wish to thank them for their groundbreaking work.

Our Jewish Teachers



Betzalel
Grinberg
Yiddish & Music



Marta
Schmeterling
English &
Russian



Clara
Surkis
Latin



Corina
Riemer
French



Haim
Riemer
Mathematics



Sigi
Rohrllich
French



Frieda Vigder
Principal



Explanations

The margins of each page are decorated with a pair of holding hands: an adult hand holding a child's hand. It emphasizes the main idea of the book: parents and children. As the readers turn these pages, and touch the joining hands, they become part of the endless chain that joins us all. The book is written mainly in two languages: Hebrew and English. Some stories were originally written in Romanian, and it was decided to preserve the beauty of the original script. There are more English than Hebrew and Romanian stories, as all the stories appear in English, but some were translated from Hebrew, while the rest were other originally written in English. Stories written in English were not translated in another language. The underlying thought was that English is well understood by everyone. For the same reason most photos appear in the English version of the story.

I am sincerely thankful to Mr. Dani Lev, CEO Millenium Ayalon Digital Printing, for his decision to print in color the entire book.

All the stories are presented to the reader in their original form; no editing whatsoever was performed. The power of the book is in the interplay between styles and contents of the different stories, as an authentic mosaic of voices.

Despite the many proofreadings, some errors may still exist. Also, the English native speakers
Pleasant reading,

Lily Pauker – producer of the book



Thanks to the book designer,

Designing the book took over six months, due to its complexity. Orni Drori was entrusted with the difficult job of designing a book of 900 pages, containing more than 300 pictures and documents, and written in three languages (Hebrew, English, Romanian). The design had to allow both right-to-left as well as left-to-right text directions, depending on the language. The abundance of photos and documents had to be positioned properly without crowding the text. Over the years, these old photos and documents, which were initially created using a less sophisticated technology compared to today's, lost much of their sharpness and quality. In her quiet, patient and attentive manner, Orni was capable to adapt visual representation to the content. She succeeded overcoming the complexities of the task and resourcefully and creatively managed to emphasize the meaning of each story with the proper visuals and aesthetics.

Our gratitude goes to Orni Drori for designing our special book,


















Lily Pauker – producer of the book



Content				
	Authors	Address	Volume	Page
	Introduction		1	11
	Memories		1	67
	"The Silence"		1	69
	Adolf Copelovici		1	70
	Any Katz		1	72
	Alina Itianu	alina.budin@gmail.com	1	74
	Beate Herman	beatriceherman@hotmail.com 054-4606509	1	81
	Beno Budic		1	88
	Betty Merdler	beti4455@bezeqint.net 054-527668	1	170
	Bibi Ruhm		1	179
	Coca Rachmuth	hava@bresler-law.com 052-2542991	1	187
	Cuta Avram	esterav123@gmail.com 052-2361944	1	192
	Dani Ramer		1	195
	Denise Horowitz	severin@inter.net.il	1	210
	Dory Hörer	dory461@gmail.com 050-7445397	1	213
	Dorly Weidenfeld	zdorly@gmail.com	1	218
	Paul Leinburd	paul@crowncap.com	1	249
	Harry Bolner		1	288
	Emanuel Menczel	emma47@netvision.net.il	1	301
	Eugen Weitmann	alexWeitmann@yahoo.com 054-9933891	1	303

Content				
	Authors	Address	Volume	Page
	Gerty Wassermann	gerti@012.net.il 052-8371928	1	314
	Gitta Weitmann	gitta@c21earll.com 1(626)2331638	1	316
	Haiuta Schmeltzer	ivory591@zahav.net.il 054-4633883	1	321
	Harold Einav	harold.eynav@gmail.com	1	326
Volume 2				
	Harry Fleischer		2	9
	Iancu Manash	ymanas@zahav.net.il	2	12
	Iuliana Herscovici	itapal2@gmail.com 050-4947937	2	19
	Itzhak Shapira	· Prof. Itzhak Shapira, MD Deputy Director General & Director of Rehabilitation Hospital, Tel Aviv Sourasky (Ichilov) Medical Center Mobile: (+972)524262626 email: shapira@lvmc.gov.il	2	23
	Jacky Gotlieb		2	27
	Jana Rohrllich	arielzoar@gmail.com	2	32
	Karin Mandler		2	35
	Karol Abramovici		2	38
	Lica Olarasu	zeevlmo@gmail.com	2	44
	Lily Weintraub	lilypauker@gmail.com 054-4911021	2	53
	Ludwig Peltz		2	83
	Lotty Schertzer		2	86
	Mara Bodinger		2	88
	Marghit Friedman	dentalma@walla.co.il dentalmarg@gmail.com	2	97



Content				
	Authors	Address	Volume	Page
	Mausí König		2	102
	Mendel Brecher	mendelbrecher@yahoo.com 050-7706509	2	105
	Mira Seidler		2	108
	Moshe Herzberg		2	114
	Nelu Eidinger	fire_el@netvision.net.il	2	123
	Paulica Davidovici	paulah2004@gmail.com 054-8009071	2	125
	Pia Klein	pgreer777@gmail.com 1(619)8955545	2	137
	Reizale Shauer	skahana6@gmail.com	2	144
	Relu Faienstein	fire_el@netvision.net.il	2	149
	Renee Schwerberg		2	167
	Riry Schwartz	riry68@gmail.com 1(917) 8411918	2	173
	Romy Rohrlich	rshenhar@yahoo.com 1-(703)861-4633	2	178
	Ruthy Glickman			181
	Ruthy Hubner	ruth@golanhome.com	2	185
	Saul Grinberg	perlagrinberg1@gmail.com 052-3661228 / 04-8386812	2	213
	Senta Grill	senta6@walla.com 054-4808077	2	221
	Sheni Schechter	steinmerm@gmail.com	2	225



Content				
	Authors	Address	Volume	Page
	Shuki Lakner Moscovici		2	228
	Shie Rosenblum	simar12@walla.com 052-8390335	2	232
	Tamara Hirshhorn	tamaralevinson@gmail.com	2	235
	Tony Silber	tonydori@hotmail.com	2	238
	Uzi Kimmel	kimuz411@walla.co.il	2	244
	Zwi Fuhrer	zfuhrer@gmail.com	2	247
	Zwia Peltz	zfuhrer@gmail.com	2	252
	AMINTIRI		2	261





Photo: Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru

Mihai - Aurelian Căruntu

Suceava Verifieriiilor
- Pierdută, uitată, necunoscută

Album

Editura Karl A. Romstorfer
Suceava - 2013

Suceava Album
Forgotten, Lost, Unknown

**Introduction
&
Thanks**



"Papirku" – un personaj nelipsit al periferiei din urmă cu un veac
"Papirku" – a well-known character of the outskirts during a century ago

Photo: Mihai Aurelian Caruntu "Suceava Periferiilor - Album"



Thanks

Lily (Weintraub) Pauker

It took me five long years and much hard work to produce the book you are holding in your hands. Paul Leinburd originated the idea of recording the stories our fathers told us. I have always loved words, ideas, languages. Through the production of this book, I was privy to the past of our community, a life I never knew. With each story added, the book reshaped itself unfolding untold personal memories. It did not turn out to be a customary commemorative book, but a colorful, interesting, fresh, and vivid symphony of 56 voices and many images that resonate and celebrate our past. This is a moment in time, when the past asks something of the present for the benefit of the future: what legacy do we leave for future generations?

We could not have presented such a multifaceted book without the lyrical stories of the late Beni Budic or the entertaining story of sexual maturity written by Eliezer Fairstein, alongside the suffering, loss, and pain depicted in Mausik Konig, Lica Olarasu, Iuliana Herscovici, Ruthy Glickman, and Alina Itianu's stories. The sad singing of the "Russian" mothers in Suceava, after Transnistria, as described in Nelu's story, is the epitome of the past still alive in their souls.

Over the past five years, I have encouraged, supported, and helped friends in writing their own stories. I collected documents and pictures that revealed the past in all its glory, such as the one presented in Ruthy Hubner mother's pictures from the pre-war years, but also the horror in all its magnitude as presented in the pictures of Shaul Grinberg's grandfather from the Valley of Killing. What can be more alive and shocking, even today, than Camilla Eisenberg's testament, that survived the Holocaust. This document was written by this educated, wealthy, and desperate woman in Transnistria (Alina Itianu's relative) on the brink of her death. What can be more heartbreaking than the fate of Shaul Grinberg's brother, David, born in Transnistria, who died of hunger and illness only a short time after his birth, but only after being circumcised by his devout family, even in those terrible conditions.

I would also like to thank Norman Manea for his contribution of the Foreward.


The book is of personal and public importance. Over time, as generations of people might ask about the lives of Jews in the diaspora, our book will portray in 56 vivid colors creating a picture, which will still maintain its freshness and authenticity.



It is my pleasure to thank my husband Yigal Pauker and my daughters Efrat and Sharon for their patience, encouragement, and constant help. Creative, talented and kind-hearted people, whom I met along the journey, assisted me to publish this book. Thanks goes to my son Nitay for his involvement in the digital version of the book - Thank you Harry Bolner and Meirav Bercowitz. My gratitude goes to all who helped, translated, and corrected the manuscript. When you have the fortune to get to know such people, you realize how beautiful life is.

I can guarantee you, that even in a hundred years from now we will still smile at you from the pages of this book

Thanks and gratitude goes to:

- Mihai Aurelian Caruntu, (2013) Suceava Periferiilor - Album
- Ica Mandrila and Nicu Idol, Dimitrie Balint, Liviu Burac and all other Suceava artist photographers of  [Suceava Leaganul sufletului nostru](#), who gave thier permission to add the pictures they had published. D. Balint, D.Vintila, L. Burac, N.Idol, Studio Black Wolf Suceava.

My deepest thanks go to my faithful friend Cica Maerean from Suceava.





Acknowledgement

Lily (Weintraub) Pauker

For a long time, Paul Leinburd contemplated the idea of creating a book to be written by the children of those who survived Transnistria Holocaust. He envisioned their memories being shared in the spirit of "stories that my father told me".

After the first reunion of the SUCEAVA Children group in 2015, the idea was briefly mentioned in an e-mail. The proposal was compelling, and raised much interest and admiration among the members.

With each additional story the book, which started with Paul's idea, evolved into an authentic, original saga of life in Suceava during the 1950's. While initially Paul's own story was intended to portray a "my father told me" narrative, throughout the writing process, his narrative has developed beyond it, portraying not only life under oppressive regimes, but his childhood experiences as well.

Skeptical at first, members of the SUCEAVA Children group joined in. They gradually became more and more enthusiastic after discovering the cathartic powers of reliving old memories, and the healing influence of uniting their former Romanian-Jewish identity with their newly one, built in a free country.



Paul Leinburd and Norman Manea

Paul feels strongly attached to historic processes.

Documents, pictures and other visual items are of

his interest. To add to the verbal flavor of the book, Paul shared the documents he collected and kept for years.

For many years, Paul has been admiring Norman Manea's writings and has been cherishing their long lasting friendship. Paul sees the stories portrayed in this book through Manea's prism. As a homage to Paul, Manea agreed to write a commentary piece to be included in the book. As many of you know, Manea is a renowned international writer, a Suceava native, and a Transnistria survivor.

Moreover, being an artist himself, Paul willingly allowed us to use one of his paintings as the book cover.



I had a hard time deciding which of his art pieces to choose from. Finally, I picked the painting you see on the cover, to symbolize the gestalt created by our group of authors and friends. As the shapes and colors in the painting differ, so do we differ one from another, but the whole is greater than its parts. The flow, the mood, the colors and shades, orchestrate a different view in the eye of the reader. The passing time redesigned our childhood memories, similar to the way the painting depicts pieces in space. While they seem initially isolated, they come together resonating differently in our adult perception. The overall mood in the painting reflects optimism and hope, and so is our outlook into the future.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Paul Leinburd for initiating the project and sustaining the long process, which fruitfully ended with bringing it to print.





Prologue

Paul (Poldi) Leinburd

It is Pesach and we are all gathered at my home, including my brother Sorel and his family, from Vancouver. I am attempting to concentrate on the ceremony that we have done once a year, every year, since I was little, with my grandfather presiding over the family.

The Hagada Stays: "Vehigada-Ta Le-Bincha" - Tell Your Son!

As head of the family it is now my turn.

I am telling:

Not only are we no longer slaves, but we are alive and we enjoy the modern equivalent of being freemen. I consider Stalingrad the reason why we are here. In my humble way of connecting the dots, it was Stalingrad, without which we, at least of Romanian origin, had not been delivered.

Then, it dawns on me. On a larger scale, we, the kids from Suceava, have experienced our own Exodus. Except ours was from Suceava, Romania. This was our Mitzraim. Each one of us has experienced the Exodus, in his own way, and passed on the memory of it to his children and grandchildren.

The memory of the city of our childhood lingers on, in spite of having lived in a country that was the last in Europe to give Jews the right to vote (1918), in spite of the murders and robberies that took part in the last 70-80 years, regardless of the color of T-shirts worn by the perpetrators – green in the 30's and 40's, red, in the 50's to 80's and red, yellow, and blue afterwards.

The name Suceava evokes long lost friends, growing up surrounded by families that the Exodus have split up, memories on emigrating with all connections lost.

Most Suceveni I have spoken to, envy us because of where we live. Yet, I still recall my mother's stories about growing up in Falticeni. How the teachers would taunt the half dozen Jewish kids with "go back to Palestina". Well, we did! That is our cry of defiance. This is what I remind my children every year on Passover.

Our reunion in 2015 was like a spark; we reconnected with long lost friends, and even family. Memories of five decades ago became flesh and blood. We all share the same backgrounds,



schools, streets. Our coming together was a reawakening of our soul. Who in their dreams, does not re-live their childhood. To a large extent, we knew each other's families, teachers, and friends. The SUCEAVA Children f/b site, with its photographs is without parallel.

Recently, a close friend of mine, Norman Manea from Suceava, received the highest honor Romania could bestow on its writers.

It is an amazing feat in a country, where my first glimpse of a book in my native tongue, in 1994, was "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion", at the Dulles Bookstore, in Bucharest, a block away from my hotel. "The Protocols" is one of the vilest anti-Semitic texts, purporting to describe a plan for Jewish domination, originally published in 1903.

A lot of books were presented in the front window, but I have never seen this one, so prominently displayed. Inside, I found some of Norman Manea's books, one of which is my favorite. "Return of the Hooligan" which struck a dissonant chord, is a play on words on Mircea Eliade's book "The Hooligans". It exposes the strong affinity between himself and the Legionary Movement and which, without doubt, served as a shining light for the Iron Guard, the only fascist movement with a religious affiliation.

Even though, I now live in Canada, I am rather ambivalent. I miss the Suceava of my youth, yet I am eternally grateful to my parents for having had the courage to leave it, and thus provide a future for my brother and myself, our children and grandchildren.

It was my idea to write this book. Connecting the dots once more, between the stories our fathers told and our own childhood memories, in the same spirit as the Hagada, we present to the generations to come our version of

"Vehigada-Ta Le-Bincha" - Tell Your Son!





The Future is in the Past

Lily (Weintraub) Pauker

Beginning with **The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizens** issued after The French Revolution at the end of the 18th century, an attempt to grant Jews their natural rights in France, and later on in other countries, was on the table.

Enlightenment swept Europe, raising hopes for Jews as equal partners in the social and professional life.

Moses Mendelssohn, a German-Jewish philosopher is considered the father of the "Jewish Enlightenment" movement. Although being a devout Jew, a Bible translator and commentator, he greatly contributed to the efforts of Jews to integrate into the German society. According to Moses Mendelssohn, Jewish faith is compatible with good citizenship, and traditional Judaism is a rational religion, consistent with the values of the Enlightenment.

Emancipation for the West European Jewish population was achieved along a hundred year slow and painful process.

In 1866, Yehuda Leib Gordon wrote a poem named "Wake up my people". One of his verses has been adopted as the enlightenment manifesto "Be a citizen outside your house, and a Jew in your home".

Jewish emancipation didn't last long. The roots of hatred towards the one who is different, who will contribute but not fully assimilate, were bubbling underneath. At the first opportunity antisemitism erupted – this time covered in a "scientific" quasi-Darwinist-biological theory of the inferiority of the Jewish race, a race which threatens the good old white Ari world and thrives to control it. Once again, legal and full political participation was rejected along with the denial of social and human rights. This time the mere Jewish existence was in real danger.

Mihail Sebastian, a well-known Romanian playwright of Jewish decent (**Iosef Mendel Hechter**), asked for answers to his dilemmas: "who am I", "where do I belong", "why am I hated". In one of his novels, Sebastian puts in one of his character's mouth the following words: "Let's be clear. I'm not anti-Semitic.... However, I'm a Romanian. And, **all that is opposed to me as a Romanian I regard as dangerous. There is a corrosive Jewish spirit. I must defend myself against it....**" Being a writer, he finds writing the only tool, which can deal with being different.

40 years before Sebastian's writings, another writer dealt with the Jewish problem - Herzl, who was initially devoted to the propagation of Jewish-German 'Liberal' assimilationist doctrine. He



came to reject his early ideas regarding emancipation and assimilation. At the end of 19th century he became aware of the fact that antisemitism could not be defeated or cured, only avoided, and that the only way to avoid it was the establishment of a Jewish state.

Herzl, as Sebastian, were both men who understood the power of words. But, Herzl had come to the understanding that words were not enough. He turned to real- politic. In contrast, Sebastian stayed and suffered, did not reinvent himself, desperately wanting to belong to the Romanian society only to be killed and, thus, shut up.

On 29 May 1945, Mihail Sebastian was hit and killed by a truck in downtown Bucharest.

Nowadays, Romania honors Sebastian, holds festivals. Sebastian is widely played on stage; they celebrate his works, especially in Braila where he was born. In Romania, as in other countries, the dead Jews are well loved.

Our parents, Transnistria Holocaust survivors, understood that free Jewish life could never be possible in Romania. Emigrating is the only way to reach the goal. This wasn't easy to achieve under the totalitarian communist regime.

More than 50 of Suceava Children are the authors of this book. We were born after WWII, brought up in communist Suceava by Holocaust survivors. This unique setting, had a powerful influence upon our upbringing, chiseled our childhood experiences.

If history is studied because it provides examples of national behavior, this book provides a glimpse into the fascinating human world, from a personal perspective.

On a personal note:

In the 60s, as a newcomer student in Israel, I used, automatically, to consider (in my mind): "Who is the teacher asking this difficult question?", "Is he asking a Jewish kid? as it was customary in Suceava to address Jewish students difficult questions. A second later, I would startle and correct myself – "God, all kids in this class are Jewish, what am I thinking!", "I live in Israel!" This is how deep Romanian anti-Semitic persecution ran into the veins of a school kid. The awareness that I am different was still deep-rooted in my mind.

Thank God for Israel!

It must be said that the will to live and our parents' support contributed and enabled us to thrive. We, the authors, wish to present a complex world of childhood, overclouded by a forceful intrusive regime, in which we tried to live a normal life: attended school and trips, forged life-long



friendships. However, we had to mature at a tender age to learn that free speech must be avoided, not to endanger our family's life.

A word to the generations to come

How can we understand our present look into the future if we cannot understand our past? How can we know who we are if we don't know who we were?

Although history is usually delivered in dates, rigorous researched facts, I think that people relate to the past by feelings. Given the fact that Jews were never on the winning side, it's up to us to write OUR own story.

Paraphrasing Stephen Fry, I ask: "Is OUR BOOK cheap culture or is it the perfectly human truth that conjures up the 50s and the lives of the children born after WWII to Bukovina Jews, Transnistria survivors."

Might it lead people to suspect that our book is akin to cuisine gossip?

I have no doubt that in the years to come our book will be appreciated not only by our kids but also by all those who would attempt to research the life of Romanian- Jewish diaspora.

References:

- The Guardian: 'The future's in the past' (<http://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2006/jul/09/featuresreview>)
- For Two Thousand Years by Mihail Sebastian, translated from the Romanian by Philip Ó Ceallaigh





My First Exile

Norman Manea

My first exile happened when I was 5 years old.

We lived at that time in Ițcani, a suburb of Suceava, our grandparents, aunts, uncles and their families lived in Burdujeni, another suburb of that same former old medieval residence of the Prince Ștefan cel Mare.

It was in October 1941, when the Romanian Antonescu nationalist and anti-Semitic regime allied with Nazi-Germany, deported the entire Jewish population of Northern Bukovina over the Dniester, to the concentration and extermination camps of Ukraine.

At that age, the spoiled boy that I was didn't really know what it meant to be a Jew and why was this a damned sign of destiny. When I was suddenly taken out from my family cocoon, and brutally thrown into a shabby pestilential cattle wagon full of desperate people of all ages, lamenting their ordeal, praying, crying, imploring salvation, I was totally lost in that frightening nightmare.

When we arrived, after two days and two nights in Ataki, at the Ukrainian border, the doors were opened, the corpses were taken out, and the Romanian soldiers started their savage operation of robbery and killing. It was the bleak start of our overwhelming Transnistria chapter, which I used to call it **Trans-Trista**: hunger, cold, fear, misery, diseases, killings, forced labor, lack of any medical assistance, a continuous uncertainty, under a fierce hunting operation for victims. The grandparents died after 3 weeks and were buried in a forest nearby, without any sign of identification; we, the provisional survivors, were reduced to insects in search for food, of heat and medication, at the caprice and criminal instinct of our oppressors.

“In their eyes, we weren't more human beings, but disgusting dogs and destined to be beaten up and overwhelmed with nasty jokes and insults... a herd besieged by armed beasts. Around us were the corpses from the prior convoys”, wrote Dr. Teich, former president of the Suceava Jewish Committee. Other locations were Moghilev, the Peciora extermination camp (“The captives were eating excrements and dead bodies”, wrote M. Katz, the former president of the Moghilev Jewish community), many other horror places of starvation and killings. When finally my father was allowed to work in a factory he was payed with one bread loaf a day (for our group of 6 people.) We wandered frightened from Moghilev to Vindiceni and Iurcauti, always depending on the tolerance, the mood and the local Romanian army and administration. Even if after the Stalingrad defeat the situation improved, uncertainty and fear and misery remained constant. In



1940, the Romanian Jewish population was 728,000, in 1942, it was reduced to 272,000, 61% died in two years. In Bukovina, Bessarabia and Dorohoi, that suffered deportation, from 110,000 people, survived only 50,000. Bessarabia statistics are even more amazing, taking in account the very small number of Jews living today in Moldova Republic, compared with the great Jewish community of the past.

Such bleak, criminal results represented, in fact, this fulfilment of the national ethnic ‘purification’ announced in advance by the Antonescu regime. “I grew up hating Turks, kikes and Hungarians. This hatred should be extended and I take this responsibility,” declared himself in April 1941 General Antonescu. “I will overcome all obstacles in order to purify our nation from this ugly chaff.” He was, indeed, following this solemn promise.

“The purification of the atmosphere from Judaic elements” as the official order stipulated, meant removing the Jewish element and other ‘parasitical alien’ from the country, a truly “physical extermination of the Jews.”

“General Antonescu considers that the national purification which is to be carried out requires a period of total isolation of Bessarabia and Bukovina from the rest of the Kingdom.”

Significant to mention is the official declaration of vice-president of the Ministers council: “I am for the forced migration of the entire Jewish element in Bessarabia and Bukovina, that should be thrown over our borders... **I don’t care if we will enter in history as barbarians.**”

After the war, Ion Antonescu and his closest collaborators were judged and executed as war criminals, some documents and memories were published (to mention, first of all, “THE BLACK BOOK”, by Matatias Carp), but the topic vanished, step by step, from the public conscience, as this and other atrocities were attributed solely to the “bloody German guilt.” At the first post-war period, the topic was used as a political tool in the Communist propaganda against the West, and gradually vanished when the “internationalism” of the Party was replaced by the nationalist policy of the Ceausescu dictatorship.

Only after the collapse of the European communism started in Romania a real public debate about the issue.

The massive study by Matatias Carp, “The Black Book”, was republished in 1996; the sad saga of suffering of the Jews in Romania, 1940-1944 where the Romanian Holocaust finds its convincing and expressive retrospective.

Many important writers, historians and cultural-political researchers, in Romania and outside, were preoccupied and wrote about this topic. We should mention at least Aharon Appelfeld and Jean Ancel, Radu Ioanid or the great poet Paul Celan.



Among the many studies and documents, published in and outside Romania in the last decades, we should mention, first and foremost, the volumes appeared between 1990 and 1995 at the HASEFER Publishing House in Bucharest, “THE JEWISH PROBLEM”, (Romanian Jews between 1940-1944), Anti-Jewish Legislation, Sources And Testimonies Concerning The Jews In Romania.

It is a massive prove about the Romanian anti-Semitism of the period, about the genocide that took place against the Jewish population before, and during the war.

Transnistria was only a terrible part of this nightmarish issue; many local pogroms, the Odessa massacre, were a sinister addition to the same bloody chapter. However, the published testimonies and archival material remained in the libraries, with a very narrow influence on the public awareness and interest. There were many angry voices, in that postwar and post-communist time, from Romanian authorities and personalities against any suggestion about a “Romanian Holocaust”, invented, as they claimed, by the international Jewish ‘conspiracy’, to revive a dead and manipulated accusation. I was myself part of an accused part the hot debate about Mircea Eliade’s “happy guilt” of complicity with the anti-Semitic Iron Guard.

Only after Romania was admitted in the European Community, the tone and structure of the national debate changed; today exist a Holocaust memorial and a project for a Romanian National Holocaust Museum in Bucharest and in some other cities.

In my thank you speech last fall in Washington DC, at the ALIANTA festive dinner where I received the cultural prize, I decided to mention a very special and significative case related to this topic and my own connection to it.

It was about Traian Popovici, the distinguished former major of Czernowitz, during the Romanian administration, before it was occupied by the Soviets and became, a Ukrainian city. “He opposed the blind xenophobia of his government and succeed, with great risks and courage to save thousands of Jews from deportation to exemplary action of an individual faithful to his humanness and his unshakable belief in justice. In his memoir published after the war, he mentioned that his “strength and will to oppose the politicians in power came from his families of rural priests that constitutes his ancestry, from the education in high school (Lycee) in Suceava, where he received the light of classic literature, and the values that differentiates man from the brutes.”

Traian Popovici was born in a village near my own birth place, he attended the same Lycee in Suceava and remains for me an unforgettable example of the luminous good side of Romania. It’s probably not by chance that he was praised and celebrated among the Righteous of Nations at the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem. This happens in 1969, more than 20 years after his death, but still much earlier that the first Romanian recognition of his noble stature, in June 2000, when a



street in Bucharest was named after him. To this day, at his and my high school, in Suceava, where you find at the entrance hall the portraits of two Romanian writers, without any connection to the school, the great name of this brilliant student and hero is totally forgotten. And not by chance, I would add.

This is the only one example of a case that contradicts, even in extreme situation, the simplifications and manipulations so often used by politicians, ignoring the individuals and individuality that remain faithful to truth and their conscience.

Although the opposition to the Antonescu dictatorship was weak and almost inexistent, we are not allowed to ignore the complexities in such a totalitarian oppression, always avoid the political “collectivization” of the individual, even if timid, the isolated individual invisible in the crazy hysteria of the moment. “Romanians and Russians, Germans and Jews, Americans and Japanese and Africans” are approximations ignoring individuality, where the real and only human drama takes place.

We should never become complicit to pragmatic accommodations, that ignores nuance and exceptions.

Romanian anti-Semitism, opposite to secular Nazism and Fascism, was deeply rooted in the Christian Orthodox faith, the Church in Romania played a nasty and criminal role in the genocide of the Jews.

Yes, we should remember what the Christian French thinker Leon Bloy said “Anti-Semitism remains the most horrible slap on the face that our Lord received in his unending Passions, the most bloody and most unforgivable, because it was received by his Mother from the hands of the Christians.” Jesus was a Jew, who propagated love among his people; his sanctified Jewish Mother did not enroll among his Christian followers.

The exemplary Popovici case wasn’t followed by too many similarities in that pace and time, but I had one in my own family.

My grandfather Abraham, a very religious bookseller, took under his protection a paysan Christian orphan met on the streets of the little Burdujeni town. The ‘Saint Maria’, as I used to call her, soon proved to be extremely devoted to my grandparent’s household. She spoke perfectly Yiddish after a while and knew everything about the daily Jewish life. When my mother married the young Maria followed her in the new life and domicile, in Itcani, and soon was in charge with all the big and small daily housework, and with me, of course, her adored little prince. She was very beautiful, the town photographer, Bartferd, was deeply in love with her, dreaming to marry her. In October 1941, when we were deported, she was with us in the damn train station and fought



stubbornly with the Romanian soldiers to be let in the shabby train, to go with us. After some months in the camp, she appeared at the gates with a big luggage full of food and winter clothes. Everything was immediately confiscated by the guards, she was arrested and threatened to be sent to the Court Martial to be punished with a death sentence for unlawfully helping Jews. She returned to Romania but came back after a while and opened in the neighborhood of the camps – the so called ‘occupied territory’ – a little tobacco shop, hoping to help us. She had again to return home and we weren’t more in touch until our “repatriation”. At that point she was already the wife of the leader of the Communist Party in Suceava. Her husband, comrade Victor Varasciuc, summoned my father to the party headquarter for a decisive political discussion and urged him to apply to become a member of the Party. My father was never involved in politics but had to carefully listen, of course, to the husband of our dear Maria. “I know you already too well, she told me everything about you and your family, she considers you the very best people in the world. So now, after this cruel war, you should be with us. Never will we allow to happen again the nightmare that you went through. Be sure of that. We start now a society, we need you and you should be with us.”

When I saw Maria in Bucharest in my student years, I asked her if she thinks she can ever repeat the heroism of that terrible past of ours. She was silent for a while. “I am not sure. Anyway, the time in your family, our family, was the best in my life.”

I saw her for the last time in the last days, in 1986, when we were ready, me and Cella, to leave the country. She seemed a very tired, exhausted woman, without any residuals from her past beauty. An adolescent girl, her illegitimate daughter, accompanied her. She told us her now dead husband fathered the girl from one of his adulterous affairs. Maria adopted the girl taking good care of her education and future. Her husband finished his days as a big drunk, humiliated and destroyed by his glorious Party.

For Maria, Transnistria was an essential life experience that brought her, full of bitterness and hope, close to the militant Party of the working class, and to her future husband, himself at that time, a simple, honest man, from the poor lower class of the country.

Thinking about Trans-Tristia today, in its current turbulent posterity, we cannot avoid looking to the increased anti-Semitism all around the world, and its almost mysterious appeal and longevity. Indeed, it still seems almost mysterious if not magical and mystical, so we should, probably, not try to solve it through discussions and analyze. I would prefer a more modest and semi-humorous end to my notes.

In a surprising gesture of good will and good memory, the Romanian Parliament decided in 2017



to grant people persecuted by the political regimes during September 1940 and March 1945. It seems to mean a monthly sum of 400 lei for each year of deportation or detention.

The boy that was 5 years old in 1941, is now a childish old man of more than 80 years!

I was very reluctant, at first, to pay attention to this charity act, provoked, probably, by political calculations and external pressure. Parents and grandparents are already dead, what kind of fictional postal service can transmit them with this ‘huge’ amount of compensation?

Still, many friends argued and convince me that I should rather take this late opportunity to prove that the Romanian Holocaust wasn’t an invention of the clever Jewish international conspiracy, but a historical act, confirmed legally by the highest institution of the country.

My father was to the end a very scrupulous and disciplined man, so I was lucky enough to find the official 498 Repatriation Note (CERTIFICATE) from the police of Jassy, (April 18th, 1945) and the nr. 320 Certificate of June 3rd, 1970 from the Jewish Community of Suceava, confirming our return from the Transnistria camps where we were deported in the period of 1941-1945. I added the Romanian birth certificate, a copy of my Romanian marriage certificate and a copy of my valid Romanian citizenship. Even the 1945 copy of my very medical stand at the date of our return, by the International Red Cross.

In October 2017, the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Theodor Viorel Melescanu was asked, in his official visit in Israel, by his counterpart, Tzipi Hotovely, for a “simplification of the bureaucratic procedures for Holocaust their compensations and restitutions”. The Romanian diplomat promised to send a representative to solve this issue.

Still, my application was rejected by the Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, Office of Public Pensions, Bucharest, in an official letter nr. 20087/183, 19.01.2018, with 12 legal signatures of members of the high Commission for the Application of the Law 189/2000. The motivation was that I didn’t prove persecution, and that I didn’t prove my Romanian current residency. Agnostic and isolated as am I didn’t know any wise Rabbi to explain me the logic of such a motivation, but I found out, also through friends, that the real necessary solution to this convoluted impasse might be a legal declaration of two witnesses who confirm my Transnistria experience. I was 5 years when I was granted the Transnistria viliage and am over 80 when I am forced to look for witnesses. Should they survived and how old are they? 80, 90, 99? And where are they, since so many survivors left their dear homeland and started to wander the world in search for paradise, as I did myself? Meantime, the Suceava Jewish Community that my name doesn’t figure in any archive of the forgotten deportation, which, by the way, doesn’t even exist in the city.

What to do? To start looking for the mysterious immortal witnesses, of course. I asked for help at



the Bucharest Jewish Federation and at the National Institute for Holocaust Studies in Romania, but without success.

And yet, I found, finally, the right blessed helpers! Far away, of course, but still alive!

A former colleague in my Suceava Lycee and his sister, both now Israelis, immigrants some decades ago, from Socialist Romania, agreed, both of them, to go to a Tel-Aviv lawyer and sign the necessary paper. And wonder after wonder: a former university colleague, now retired as an engineer in Bucharest, agreed to take the legal Procure, signed by me at the Romanian Consulate in New York, and deal with the overwhelming bureaucratic task.

Why do Romanian Authorities find this declaration of an aged witness more valid than the official, Certificate at the date, 70 years ago, of our happy return to this homeland?

Again, I missed the wise Rabbi with the answer.

My newly enriched Dossier with old and new documents was lay down, by my faithful colleague and mandatory, at the Bucharest Office of Pensions.

Finally, I received in December 2018, the new decision of the Bucharest Office of Pensions, that revised the Decision 20087/183 from 19.01.2018 and accentuates that “The persecution mentioned by Mr. Norman Manea is valid, in conformity with art 1, a. in The Law 189/2000, for the period of 15.10.1941 – 15.04.1945.”

The legal prove for sustaining my demand are mentioned as followed: Certification 1165/27.06.2018 by the National Archive, Suceava and Certification A189/19.11.2018 by the Center for Study of the Jews in Romania.

No mention at all about the Tel-Aviv confirmation of my deportation, as signed by the two witnesses or the several other personal document. The new Decision is also signed by 12 members of the Commission for the Application of the Law 189/2000.

I found in the same envelope a Certificate by the Center for the Study of the History of Jews in Romania, confirming the persecution of my family and myself, and the deportation in the camps of Moghilev, Transistria, Vindiceni and Iurcauti, as well as the ‘re-patriation’ in 1945.

I am still searching for the magical Rabbi to make sense of such esoteric logic.

It might also enhance our deep and durable memory of the Transnistria, as a telling chapter of the sacred privileges owned by the “chosen people”, and their bitter-sweet humor in dealing with it...

January 20, 2018



Life In Suceava Before WWII

Morris Glickman (taken from the book “Shotzer”)

Before the war, Suceava was inhabited by a number of nationalities: Romanians, Germans, Poles, Ukrainians and Jews.

The relationships between the Jews and other nationalities were mainly based on commercial ties. Jews from Russia and Galicia arrived in Suceava around 1780. In those days, Suceava belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and German was the official language. German was still well established after the WWI, being used by most of the secular Jews. The Hassidic Jews spoke Yiddish.

Following WWI, Suceava came under Romanian rule. The new order didn't affect Jewish life. German was still the language in use for a long time. Mr. Glickman, the author of this text, recalls that the purchase contract of their new home was written in German.

During 1920-1940 Jewish life went on as if nothing had changed. Jews were part of every aspect of public life except the army, the educational system or the civil administration. Most of the physicians and lawyers in town were of Jewish descent. There were only two Jewish teachers, prof. Gingold who taught geography at the Girl High-School and the French teacher at Stefan cel Mare High-School, prof. Feuer. Eventually he moved to Iasi, where he and his son were killed during the Iasi pogrom.

Jewish social and cultural life

“Ostjüdische Zeitung” printed in Czernowitz under Dr. Mayer Abner's sponsorship was read by most of the Jewish upper class.

Others read “Renașterea Noastră” which dealt with Zionist items and the progress achieved by the settlers in Palestine.

“Tribuna Evreiască” printed news about the Jewish life in Romania.

The synagogues and The Jewish House were the focal points of social and cultural life. The Zionist youth movements were also active. The building next to the Jewish House belonged to the OSEE – the center for social assistance. Many Jewish women volunteered and donated for the welfare of the less fortunate in the community.

The Jewish House hosted cultural and sport activities. The Jewish archive and other Zionist organizations had quarters in the building. In the basement, a well-equipped gymnasium and an assembly hall was regularly frequented. A second gymnasium belonged to the Maccabi football



team, and was used for children sport activities as well. Willy Laden and Fritz Herzberg were the coaches. During the summer, they exercised in the open-air court.

The Jewish community was forced to evacuate the Jewish House in 1940 and the local police took over the building...

Here are some names of the Maccabi football team players: Salpeter, Dermer, Fredi Horowitz, Willy Laden, Heiferman, Hurtig, Rotstein, Bernstein, Merlaub, Tutiver. Shamiso Rosenberg was the team's manager. Later he was a well-known referee. They played football on a court next to the "Cetate: (old fort). Later the football team was renamed to "Cetatea Suceava".

As antisemitism was rising, the Zionist movements increased their activities: craftsmen and merchants were part of "Poalei Zion" (workers of Zion) while the religious people were part of "Mizrachi" or "Agudat Israel". The younger generation joined the revisionist movement. Even the lawyers Sherf and Wijnopolski, who were older, joined in.

The Keren Kayemet drive for donations continued all the time as there was almost no household without the familiar KK white-blue donation box. From time to time fundraising campaigns, supported by Palestine Jews or Bucharest representatives, were launched. Donations were on a volunteer basis but there was a minimum contribution requested from every family.

The synagogues in town were frequented and not only during the holy days. Most of Suceava Jews observed kosher in their kitchens.

At a tender age children were introduced to the Hebrew script. Teachers Kalechstein, Carten and Miller taught them at "Talmud Torah".

I fondly remember Mrs. Blanca Isoliz kindergarten. She coordinated the activities according to the seasons and the Jewish holidays. For example: we prepared little flags for Simchat Thora, we ate dates, figs and raisins on Tu Bishvat day and picnicked on Lag BaOmer.

When the Queen of Romania asked for the return of the orphan children, Mrs. Blanca Isoliz was chosen to accompany the Murafa orphans back to Romania; these kids immigrated later to Palestine.

Mr. Nossig painted the Chevre Gah synagogue. Seeing him on the scaffolding painting the ceiling was as if I witnessed Michelangelo painting the Sixteen Chapel.

This is a short account of the Jewish life in Suceava before the deportation in 1941.



Romanian Antisemitism

Lelia Munteanu

Lelia Munteanu, a Romanian journalist, expresses her views about antisemitism in Romania by agreeing and quoting Hannah Arendt's assessment pages 230-234

"The Origins of Totalitarianism" Humanitas Publishing House. 2007.

*It is not exaggerate to say that Romania was the most anti-Semitic country in pre-war Europe. As early as the 19th century, Romanian anti-Semitism was a well-established fact. In August 1940, a few months before Romania joined Hitler's forces and entered WWII - Marshal Ion Antonescu, declared all Romanian Jews stateless, except for a few hundred families of Jews, who had been Romanian citizens before the previous peace treaties. In the same month, he instituted anti-Jewish legislation that was the most severe in Europe at the time. **Hitler himself was aware that Germany was in danger of being overtaken by Romania**, and he drew Goebbels' attention in August 1941, that "a man like Antonescu is preceeding us in this matter in a much more radically manner than we have done so far".*

*The Romanian style of ethnic cleansing included crowding five thousand people in freight wagons, leaving them to die by asphyxiation, while the train crossed the country for days (**Iasi Pogrom**), without any established plan or purpose.*

Unlike other Balkan governments, the Romanian government had very accurate information about the beginning of the massacres. In 1941, even after the Iron Guard was removed from government, a program of massacres and deportations was launched, atrocities that "overshadowed even the Bucharest rebellion of the Iron Guard" held in January of that year - a program that is unmatched, in terms of horrors (Hilberg). They displayed the corpses in Jewish slaughterhouses.

Because deportation to the East was not possible, Romanian camps run by the Romanians, were more elaborate and atrocious than anything known at the time. Eichmann sent Hauptsturmführer Gustav Richter, his regular Jewish adviser, to Bucharest. Richter reported that Antonescu wanted to liquidate 110,000 Jews by sending them to "two forests on the other side of the Bug River", which was under German control. The Germans were horrified and everyone intervened: army commanders, Rosenberg's Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, Berlin's Foreign Ministry, Baron Manfred von Killinger. Even Eichmann himself implored the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a letter dated April 1942, to stop these Romanian efforts, "premature and disorganized".

In mid-August – at the time when Romanians had already killed almost 300,000 of their Jews, without German aid - the German Foreign Ministry agreed to Antonescu's request, to evacuate Jews from



Romania (Regat). As a result, Eichmann began negotiations with the German railways to obtain enough wagons to transport 200,000 Jews to the Lublin extermination camps. However, when everything was ready, the Romanians suddenly changed their minds. Like a sudden streak of lightning, a letter arrived in Berlin from a trusted man (Mr. Richter): marshal Antonescu had changed his mind reported Ambassador Killinger. The marshal wants to get rid of the Jews in a more 'convenient way'.

What the Germans did not take into account was the fact that Romania was not only a country with a fantastically high crime rate but, in fact, the most corrupt country in the Balkans. In parallel with the massacres, a thriving business was born: the sale of deportation exclusions, in which every branch of the bureaucracy, national or municipal, had gladly engaged. The government's specialty was to impose huge taxes, at random, on certain groups or entire Jewish communities. As the Red Army approached, Antonescu became more and more 'moderate'.

*It is worth to mention that Antonescu was never more 'radical' than the Nazis (as Hitler thought), but only **permanently one-step ahead of Germany's** progress on "the solution of the Jewish problem". He was the first to deprive the Jews of their citizenship and to start the massacres on a large scale, openly and without any shame; this at a time when the Nazis were still busy testing their first experiments. Antonescu entertained the idea of selling Jews, more than a year before Himmler offered "blood for trucks".*

Some Romanian criminals were executed, Killinger committed suicide before the Russians could seize him. Only the Hauptsturmführer Richter lived quietly in Germany until 1961, when he faced trial.





From Suceava to Transnistria and back

My name is Lily (Weintraub) Pauker

I was born in Suceava, Bukovina, Romania born to HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS. On October 10, 1941, my mother, Frantzi (Itzig) Weintraub, born in Suceava, 15 years old, was deported with her family to Shargorod, Transnistria.

My father, Nathan Weintraub, born in Ilisesti, was deported with his family to Moghilev, Transnis.

Map of Romania
(Wikipedia project\ - Andrei Nacu)



Jews in Suceava

The first written evidence of Jews living in Bukovina seems to appear in a letter from June 15, 1473. The name "Fleischer" seems to indicate Jewish origin.

The same name, Fleischer, can be found in a letter from April 10, 1481. Jurors from Suceava wrote to those from Bistrita, asking a question submitted by Peterman Fleischer from Suceava through the Armenian Sahac for Waltazar Kuersmaer from Bistrita.

The tradition attests the fact that the ruler Stephen the Great had a Jewish doctor named Shmil. Testimony of the antiquity of the Jews in the former capital of Moldavia is also the tombstones from the Jewish cemetery at the foot of Tatarasi Hill, one of them dating from 1700.

(File din istorie, Documente privitoare la istoria oraşului 1388-1918, vol. I, Bucureşti 1989. Direcţia generală a Arhivelor Statului).

http://www.cjsuceava.ro/2018/parteneriate/etnii_din_suceava/20180515_evrei.pdf

In 1790 a German-language Jewish school was opened in Suceava, under the leadership of Professor Enoch Goldenthal.

Starting with 1848, the Jewish population of Suceava increased. Thus, at the end of 1880 out of 10,104 inhabitants of Suceava, 3,750 were Jews (37.1%).

At the end of the 19th century, the Jewish community in Suceava owned a temple and 8 prayer-houses. The "Beth Hamidrash" synagogue was built in 1860 by Hersch Langer and Jakob Beer Weidenfeld (Dorly's grandfather).

The two rabbis, Hager and Moskowitz, had their own houses of prayer. In addition, the "Chewrath Thilim" (built by Moshe Matian), the "Tailors' Synagogue" (Eisig Rothkopf), the "Wiznitzer Klaus" (Mordche Tennenhaus), the "Klaus Sadagurer" (Mordche Leib Saffron, Jonas Schwalbach and Wolf Sigal) operated in Suceava.

By the order of the military cabinet in Bukovina, a census was conducted on April 6, 1942

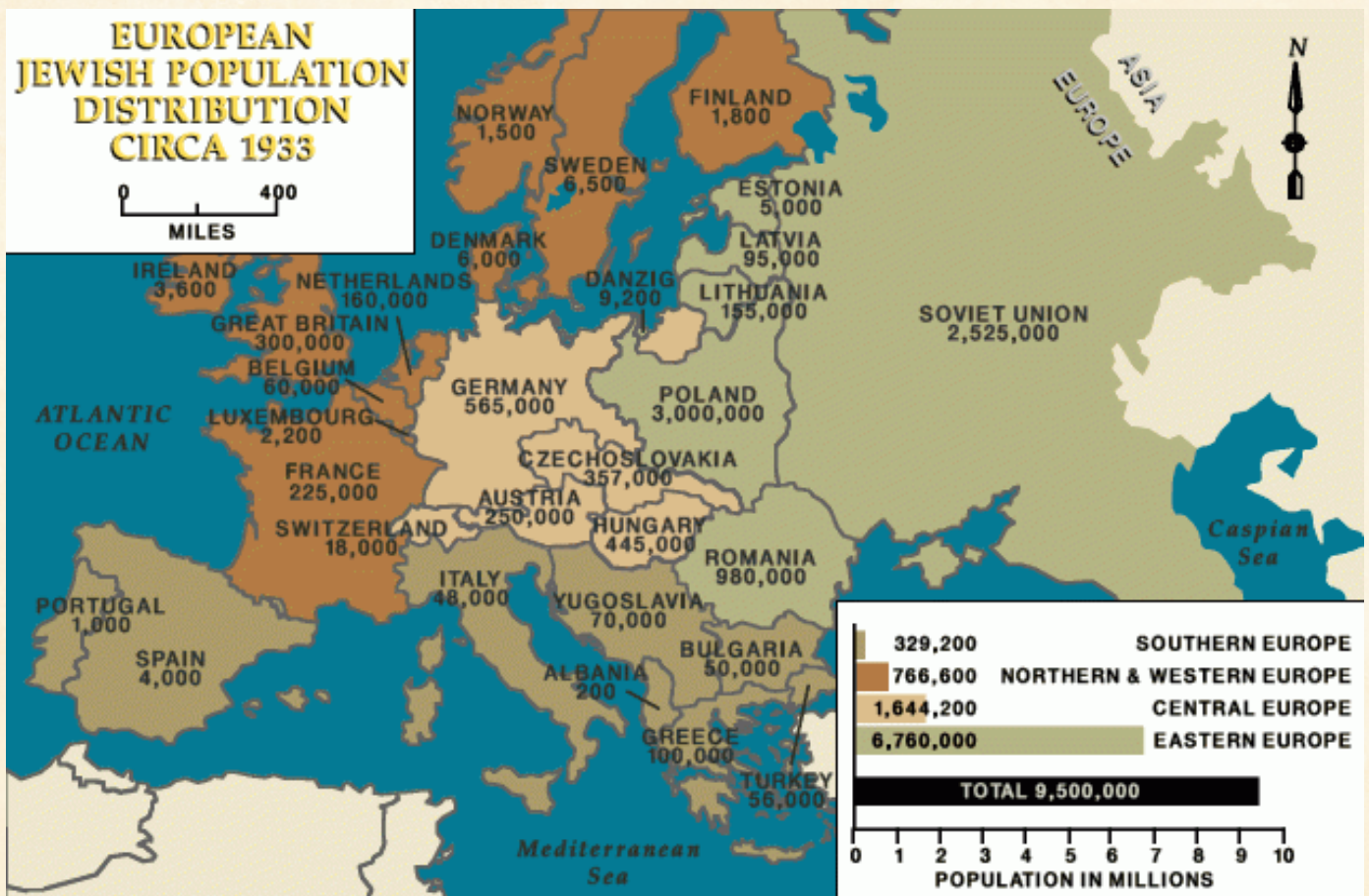
The table indicates the number of inhabitants of Jewish blood which were left in the cities in 1942.

<https://razboiulpentrutrecut.wordpress.com/2016/05/05/soarta-evreilor-din-bucovina-de-sud-in-timpul-regimului-antonescian>

South Bukovina demographic data				
county	census	census	deportees	Inhabitants of Jewish blood
	1930	1941	1941	1942
Cimpulung	7748	6572	6118	76
Suceava	6697	5874	5942	31
Radauti	8609	6447	9169	72
Total	23054	18893	21229	179

Jews from the surrounding were deported along with the local Jews from Suceava and Radauti, therefore 21229 people were deported





US Holocaust Memorial Museum

HOLOCAUST under Antonescuregime - by MARCU ROZEN

Holocaust sub guvernarea Antonescu

Ed. Bucuresti 2004

Place	Total Population 1930	Jewish Population	Percent
Romania	18,057,028	756,930	4.0
Altenia	1,513,175	3,523	0.2
Dobrogea	815,475	4,031	0.5
Moldova	2,433,596	162,268	6.5
Basarabia	2,864,402	206,958	7.2
Bucovina	853,009	93,101	10.8
Transilvania	3,217,988	81,503	2.2
Banat	939,958	14,043	1.2
Crisana Maramures	1,390,417	97,287	6.4



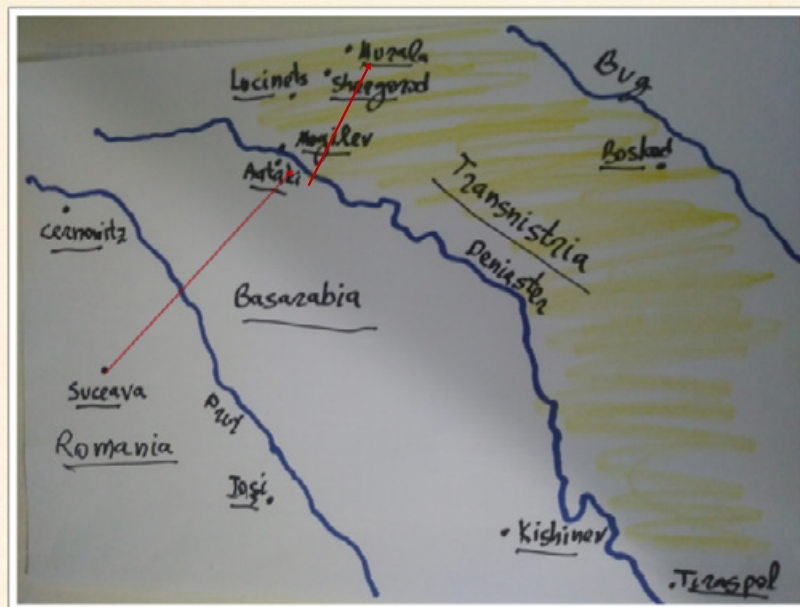
TIGHINA AGREEMENT

The Tiraspol Agreement was an agreement between Germany and Romania signed on 19 August 1941 regarding the Romanian administration of the region of Transnistria, which became the Transnistria Governorate. It fell under the rule of Gheorghe Alexianu, Ion Antonescu subordinate. The Tighina Agreement, in which specific issues were discussed, entered in force shortly after, on 30 August 1941. The agreement allowed full Romanian control over the territory between the rivers Dniester and Bug, with the exception of the city of Odessa. The latter was ceded to Romania in the Tighina Agreement with some privileges for Germany.

Discussions were concluded by the German General Arthur Hauffe and the Romanian General Nicolae Tătăranu in the city of Tighina . It was agreed that until military operations ended, Romania could not evacuate its Jews east of the Southern Bug (to lands under German control). Therefore, they were to be placed in camps and labor camps until then. This is probably because of the inability of the Einsatzgruppe D to deal with all of the Jews, as it operated over a very large area. The intention was to kill the Jews or to enslave them permanently under hard labor conditions. The agreement also allowed the German army to enter periodically into the region to "perform special jobs", referring to actions against the Jewish population.

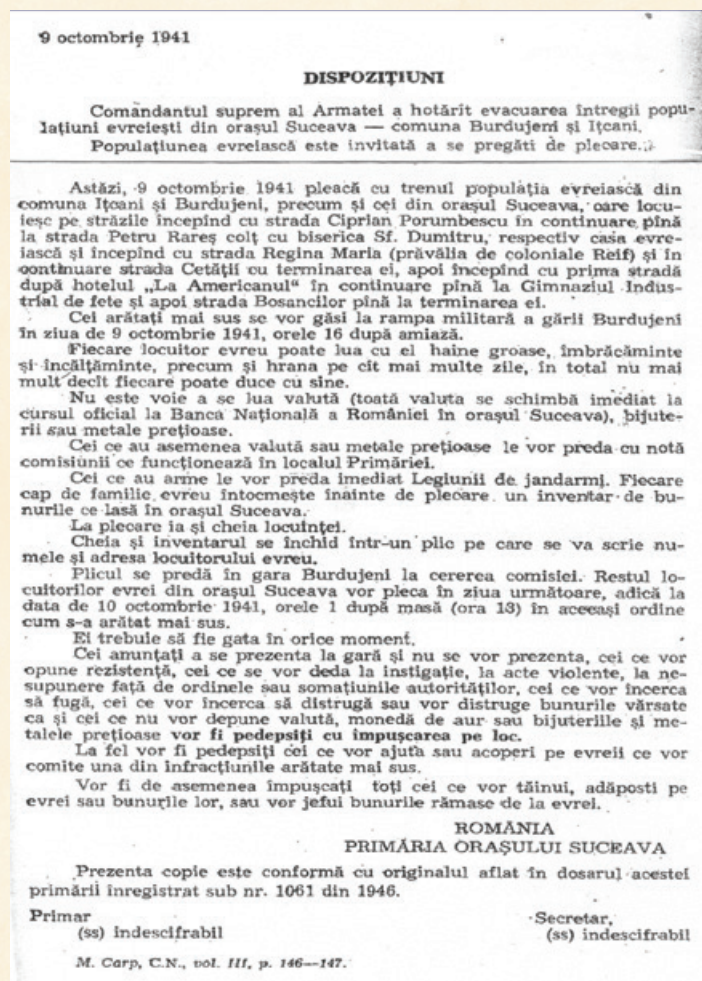
Transnistria became the destination of many Jewish deportees. Antonescu planned to colonize Transnistria with Romanian settlers once the invasion of the Soviet Union and the extermination of the Jewish and Romani population in the region was completed.

Wikipedia site:he.askwiki.ru



Evacuation Order 9 Oct 1941

By Order of the Municipality of Suceava stipulated by the Romanian Supreme General Staff.



ORDER

The Army supreme commander decided to deport the entire Jewish Community of Suceava, Burdujeni and Ițcani.

The Jewish population living on and between the streets Ciprian Porumbescu, Petru Rares, Regina Maria up to Reif grocery store are being deported today, Oct.9, 1941, at 4p.m. Death penalty will be immediately effective

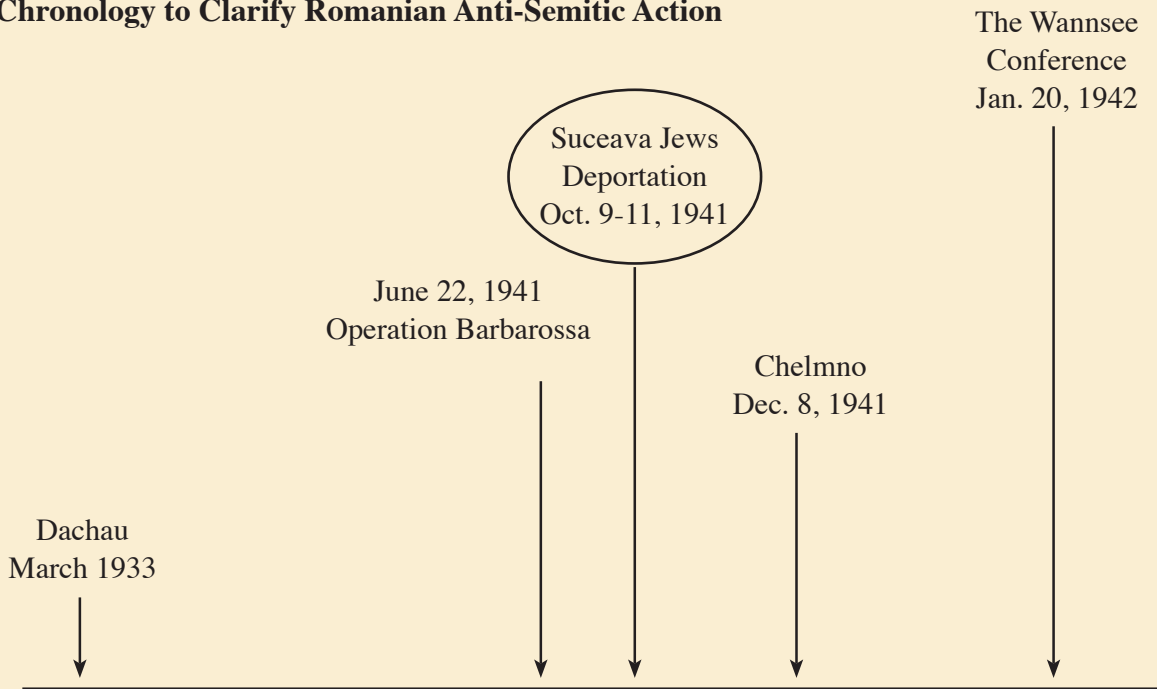
- for any attempt to evade deportation.
 - for any refusal to leave valuables behind or to give them to Christians,
- You are allowed to carry only small bags and food for 8 days.

The order hold more instruction with immediate effect.

The evacuation order was announced through drum rolls that very morning.



Chronology to Clarify Romanian Anti-Semitic Action



1933 Dachau first Nazi concentration camp.

1939 Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact.

1941 Operation Barbarossa (code name for the Axis invasion of the Soviet Union).

1942 The Wannsee Conference meeting of German officials to discuss and implement the so-called “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” (mass killing extermination of the Jewery, world-wide).

We would like the reader to pay attention to the fact that Suceava Jewish community was deported well before The Final Solution of the Jewish Question was conceived by Nazi Germany.

Book: The Holocaust in Romania by Radu Ioanid

Radu Ioanid: Former vice-president of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania headed by Elie Wiesel in 2003/2004.

Forward by Elie Wiesel

“While there were no gas chambers in Transnistria, everything else was there: terror, threats, death marches, executions, sealed wagons, plagues, humiliation, fires”.



Testimony: Dr. Teich head of the Jewish community of Suceava

Pages 160-162

“On Thursday, October 9, at 5:30 AM, I was awakened by a bailiff from the prefecture, who told me to come immediately to the deputy prefect’s office. I reached the office of the Deputy Prefect Iachimescu at around 6:00 where I found Major Botoroaga and the mayors of Burdujeni and Itcani.

The deputy prefect opened an envelope, as if he had received it at that very moment. He read it to me, showed the evacuation order stipulated by Supreme General Staff in which Jews had to be deported in 2 shifts: those of Burdujeni and Itcani and half of Suceava were to leave in two hours, the other half of Suceava the next day”.

Death penalty

- *** for any attempt to evade deportation.*
- *** for any refusal to leave valuables behind or to give them to Christians, for safe keeping.*
- *We were allowed to carry only small bags and food for 8 days.*
- *I asked why are they adopting a policy that would lead to our death. Major Botoroagareplied “The higher interest of the state”.*
- *The evacuation order was announced through drum rolls*
- *The first transport left several hours later on the same day, the second on the next day.*
- *Because there were not enough train wagons, a third transport was organized on October 11.*
- *Heartbreaking scenes unfolded at the loading areas and at train departures. Members of families were separated parents losing their children, brothers separated from sisters etc. The air was filled with wails. The separation often was forever.*

Meir Kostiner, Henrietta and Yotam’s father, one of the authors of the book "Shotzer", wrote in his memoirs about the ride on the deportation train: The train station in Burdujeni was packed with people and their belongings . We were forced into cattle wagons. The train began to move into an unknown direction. Night, pitch black, a heavy silence descended upon us, everyone engrossed in his thoughts. Suddenly, in one of the corners of the wagon, someone lights a candle, and the melodious voice of Berl Druckman emerges in a prayer "Hear, O Lord our God, save us."

- *The first transports had been robbed by soldiers and gendarmes – many Jews have been executed.*
- *In Atachi I encountered a living hell: several thousand people were waiting without food or shelter. Some were housed into dilapidated ruined houses with no doors or windows, most often lacking a roof exposed to wind, and rain. Some lost their minds in Atachi. There were corpses everywhere, in the streets, houses, cellars.*
- *We were led to the banks of the Dniester, to cross it on rafts. The soldiers did their share of stealing. They joked: “where is your God –He should part the water for you as he did in the past with the waters of the Red Sea”.*

Dr. Meyer Teich testimony



Book: The Holocaust in Romania by Radu Ioanid

Fred Sharaga

A member of the Aid Committee of the Central Jewish Office went to Transnistria ghettos on Jan 1943. They weren't allowed free access to the deportees, BUT the overall picture was clear. Here is an excerpt from the report.

In addition, M. Rozenreports the existence of 117 Camps and ghettos in Transnistria

Ghetto	Total no. of Jews	Romanian Jews	Orphans
Djurin	4,050	3,053	249
Lucinet	2,897	?	116
Moghilev	15,000	12,000	900
Murafa	4,500	3,700	?
Shargorod	5,300	3,500	500

Historical Population Report

Suceava (wikipedia)

Year	Population	Increase / Decrease
1912	11,229	-
1930	17,028	+ 51.6%
1948	10,123	- 40.6%
1956	20,959	+106.9%



Suceava old cemetery
Photo: Paul Leinburd



List of Ghettos and Camps in Transnistria				
1. Alexandrovka	25. Cariskov	49. Ivascauta	73. Odessa	97. Tiraspol
2. Ananiev	26. Codima	50. Israilovka	74. Ozarinet	98. Tridubi
3. Akmecetka	27. Cuzmint	51. Iampol	75. Olgopol	99. Trihat
4. Arva	28. Comotcauti	52. Iaroga	76. Olianita	100. Tibulovka
5. Balanovka	29. Cucavka	53. Iarisev	77. Ostia	101. Trostinet
6. Balta	30. Crijopol	54. Kolosovka	78. Pavlovka	102. Tropava
7. Balki	31. Chirnasovka	55. Kopaigorod	79. Pasiuka	103. Vazdovka
8. Bar	32. Crasnoje	56. Ladija (quarry)	80. Popivitz	104. Vapniarka
9. Bogdanovka	33. Ciorna	57. Lohova	81. Pankovka	105. Vitovka
10. Budi	34. Chianovka	58. Lozova	82. Peciora	106. Vorosilovka
11. Bondarovka	35. Clocotma	59. Lucinet	83. Rabnita	107. Vigoda
12. Bucov	36. Crivoje-Ozero	60. Lucinik	84. Raschstadt	108. Vinduieni
13. Birzula	37. Dubasari	61. Malo Kiriuka	85. Savrani	109. Vinozi
14. Britovka	38. Djurin	62. Manikovka	86. Sumilova	110. Vladislavka
15. Brailov	39. Dimidovka	63. Marinovka	87. Sargorod	111. Verhovka
16. Bersad	40. Derebcin	64. Murafa	88. Suha-Balka	112. Vaslinovo
17. Briceni	41. Domanovka	65. Miscovka	89. Stanislovcek	113. Vendiceni
18. Cetvarinovka	42. Frunza	66. Moghilev	90. Stefanka	114. Varvarovka
19. Cicelnic	43. Golta	67. Moloknia	91. Slivina	115. Zabokirit
20. Cernevt	44. Gorai	68. Mostovoi	92. Scazinet	116. Zatisia
21. Cazaciovka	45. Grabivt	69. Nikolaevka	93. Slidi	117. Zemrinca
22. Capustiani	46. Grosolovo	70. Nimrat	94. Tatarovka	
23. Capusterna	47. Hrinovka	71. Nesterovka	95. Tulcin	
24. Carlovka	48. Halcinti	72. Obodovka	96. Tivrin	

List of German Camps Beyond the Bug			
1. Bratlav	6. Gaisin	11. Nimierov	16. Taplic
2. Bogokov	7. Ivangorod	12. Nicolaev	17. Zarodnita
3. Berezovka	8. Mateevka	13. Ordovka	
4. Ciucov	9. Mihailovka	14. Seminka	
5. Corievka	10. Narajevka	15. Talalaievka	

Note: The list of ghettos and camps was taken from Sonia Palty's Romanian book "Evrei treceti Nistrul," pp. 223-224, Editura Libra, 2002



Romanian Citizens Distinguished By The State Of Israel With
The Title And Medal Of "Righteous Among The Nations"*

In 1953, the Israeli Parliament (Kneseth) voted a special law by which Yad Vashem Institute was authorized to honor the non-Jewish persons that risked their own lives to save Jews from the Holocaust.
Below is a list of Romanians that have been awarded with "The Righteous Among the Nations" medal and title.

Agarici Viorica	Dumitru Adrian	Moldovan Valeriu	Pop Valer	Strul Elisabetha
Antal Rozalia	Queen Mother Helena	Motora Sabin	Popovici Traian	Suta Ioan
Anutoiu T. Anghel	Farcas Rozalia	Muranyi Rozalia	Profir Grigore	Szakadati Ianos
Baias Maria	Farcas Stefan	Onisor Ioana	Puti Alexa	Szakadati Iuliana
Baias Vasile	Florescu Constanta	Pantea Nona	Puti Maria	Sorban Raoul
Beceanu Dumitru	Ghitescu Alexandru	Pelungi Stefan	Puti Tudor	Toth Jozsef
Catana Maria	Grosz Bandi	Petre Gheorghe	Simionescu Constanti	Tubak Maria
Cociuba Traian and his son	Grosz Rozalia	Pocorni Egon	Sion Mircea Petru	Vass Gavril
Cojoc Gheorghe	Hij Metzia	Pocorni Nicolina	Stoenescu Ioana	Zaharia Isif
Craciun Ana	Hij Simion	Pop Aristina	Stoenescu Pascu	
Caciun Pavel	Manoliu Florian	Pop Maria	Strauss-Tiron Gabriela	
Demusca Letitiana	Marculescu Emilian	Pop Nicolae	Stroe Magda	

*From "The Memorial of Jews Martyrs from Romania" by Lya Benjami, Hasefer Publishing House, Bucharest 2003, p.69.



Suceava old cemetery
Photo: Paul Leinburd

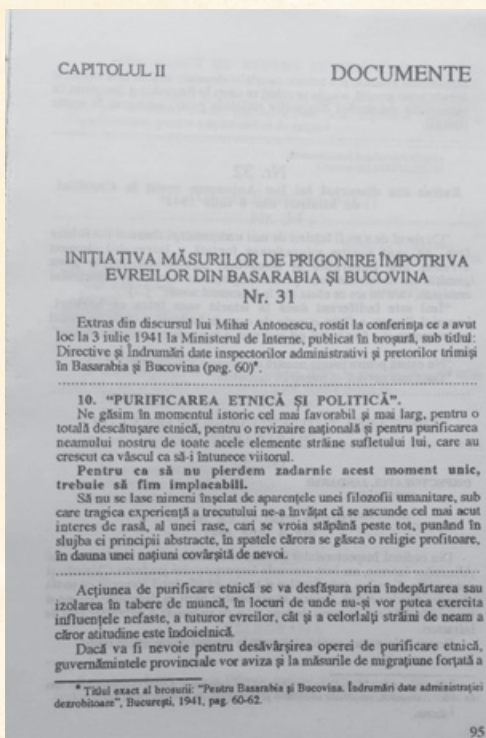
Editor's Note:

The extensive Bibliography of the book, mostly from Romanian sources, has been omitted, but available upon request.



The Black Book and other sources

Matatias Carp, 1996, CARTEA NEAGRA, Diogen Ed. Mihai Antonescu's July 3, 1941, speech at the Ministry of Interior was distributed in limited-edition brochures entitled, "Guidelines and Instructions for the Liberation Administration." The regime's intentions regarding the Jews: "This is the...most favorable opportunity in our history...for cleansing our people of all those elements foreign to its soul, which have grown like weeds to darken its future." He elaborated on this theme during the cabinet session of July 8, 1941: "At the risk of not being understood by traditionalists...I am all for the forced migration of the entire Jewish element of Bessarabia and Bukovina, which must be dumped across the border....You must be merciless to them.... I don't know how many centuries will pass before the Romanian people meet again with such total liberty of action, such opportunity for ethnic cleansing and national revision.... This is a time when we are masters of our land. Let us use it. If necessary, shoot your machine guns. I couldn't care less if history will recall us as barbarians.... I take formal responsibility and tell you there is no law.... So, no formalities, complete freedom.



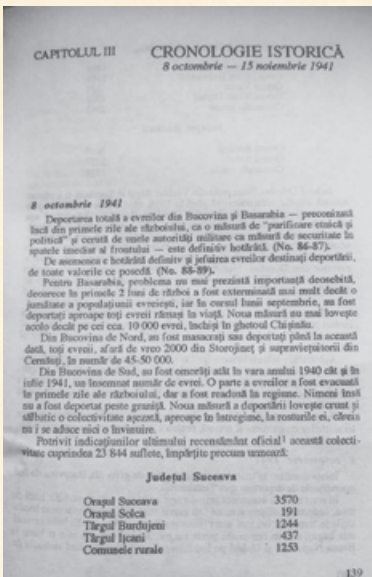
From Mihai Antonescu's speech July 3, 1941

10. Ethnic Cleansing

"We have to cease the moment, we have to be firm, it's a unique opportunity. Don't let human philosophy leads you astray, beneath a fierce racial desire to rule over us is hidden.

The means to achieve this goal are distancing, isolating, forced labor, and if necessary forced deportation.



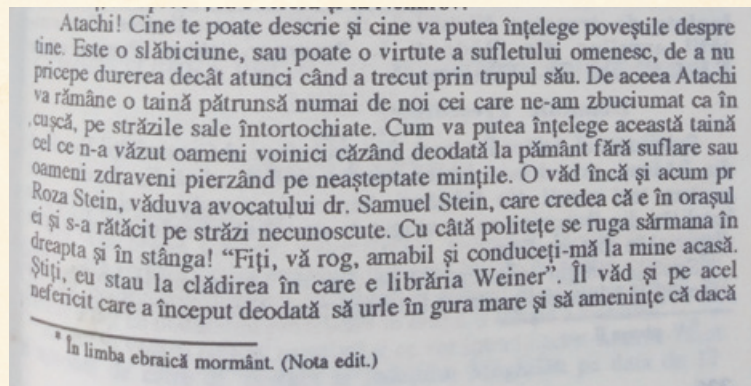


October 8-15, 1941

Measures to relocate Jews were taken in the past. This time Jews face deportation beyond the Romanian border, exiling innocent people who have never committed a crime.

According to the last official census 23844 souls live in Bukovina and Basarabia

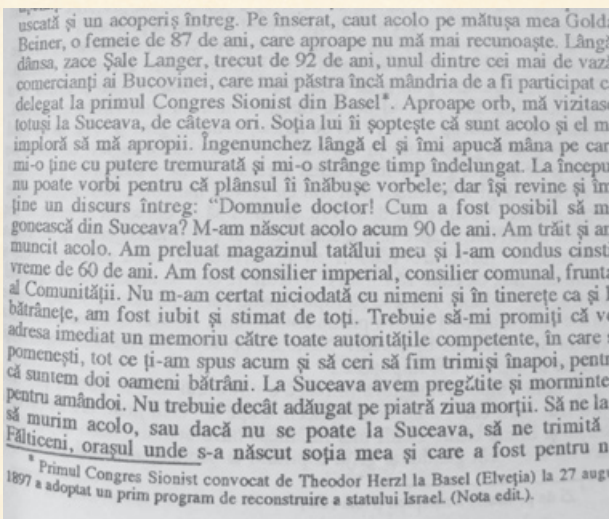
Suceava region, 6695 Jews



Suceava people's reaction to the deportation. Upon arriving in Atachi, Roza Stein, doctor Stein's widow lost her wits. Walking confused, she asked strangers, in a polite manner "Could you please show me the way home? I live above Mrs. Weiner's library".

Suceava people's reaction to the deportation

Shale Langer 92 year old a widely acclaimed merchant from Bukovina, still proud of his achievements, a delegate to the First Zionist Congress at Basel, almost blind, tells me: "How was it possible to exile me from Suceava?! I have been born in the town, I was an honest man, I worked hard at the store I inherited from my father. I held positions at the local and the Imperial Council. I was always well regarded, loved by my fellow men, I never quarreled, Dr. Teich, you have to promise me you will write all this down and address it to the authorities so we can be sent home. In Suceava I have prepared our graves, just the tombstone has to be added".



Murafa as an example

Murafa is a town in Mogilev County. A Jewish community had existed from the 17th century. At the outbreak of the Second World War, some of the Jews were recruited into the Red Army. Others fled out of fear of the Nazis, who invaded in June 1941, but the Germans caught and killed them. Those who survived returned to their homes, making for a total population of 800 Jews living in Murafa in the fall of 1941.

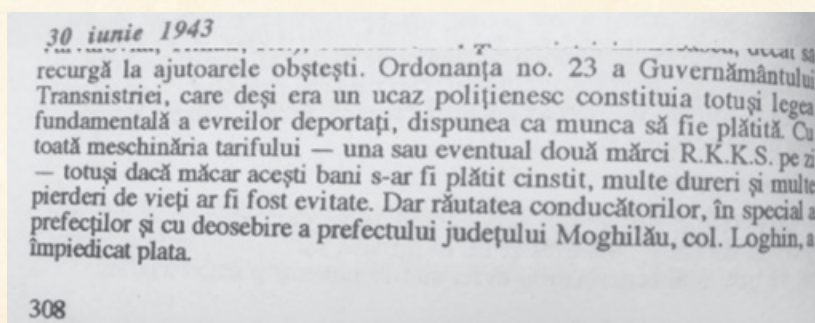
During the period from the fall of 1941 until January 1942, approximately 3500 people arrived in Murafa, mostly from South Bukovina and the Dorohoi district, no infrastructure was able to provide for this kind of population growth.

wikipedia

Order 23 issued by the

Transnistria Governor.

The deported Jews have to be reimbursed 1-2 mark for a day work. Col. Loghin, Moghilev prefect, stopped the payment.



De la 18 decembrie 1941, în 18 luni, evreii din orașul Moghilău și principalele colonii din județ (Șargorod, Murafa, Djurin) au executat munci în valoare de:

Orașul Moghilău	R.K.K.S.	238 500	
Șargorod (până la 30.IV.1943)	R.K.K.S.	76 490	
Murafa (până la 15.II.1943)	R.K.K.S.	38 012	
Djurin (până la 15.II.1943)	R.K.K.S.	34 863	387 865
În contul sumelor ce se cuveneau pentru aceste munci, s-a plătit:			
Orașul Moghilău (alimente și numerar)	R.K.K.S.	35 808	
Șargorod (alimente)	R.K.K.S.	8800	
Murafa (alimente)	R.K.K.S.	5500	
Djurin (alimente)	R.K.K.S.	6250	56 358
S-a plătit deci o proporție de 14.50%.			
A rămas de plată un rest de R.K.K.S.: 331 507			
cari, socotite la cursul oficial de 60 lei marca, ajungeau la suma de:			
Lei 19.890.420.—			

Această sumă reprezentând valoarea de atunci a 220 vagoane de cereale din cari ar fi putut avea câte 250 gr. de pâine pe zi, timp de 7 luni de zile, cei 40 000 de evreii deportați în jud. Moghilău, nu s-a mai plătit, deci nu s-au plătit nici sumele ce s-ar fi convenit mai târziu pentru muncile prestate până la eliberare. (No. 211).

RKKS = REICHKREDITKASSENSCHEINE

Detainees from Moghilev, Shargorod, Murafa, Djurin paving roads, picking tobacco leaves etc. They should have got 387865 RKKS. Instead, the committee got products worth 56358 RKKS, 14.5% only. Had they got the entire sum, it could feed 40000 Jews, a bread a day for 7 months.



History of the Holocaust in ROMANIA.

Jean Ancel,2002, History of the Holocaust in ROMANIA, Yad Vashem.

Alexianu, the Governor of Transnistria, told at the court hearing held in 1946, that the deportees from Bukovina and Basarabia were meant to be handed over to the Germans, thus forcing them to cross the Bug River. An incident impeded the plan to be implemented. The first transport of 1000 deportees, crossed the Bug River and was handed to the German authorities. The Jews were murdered, but the Romanians didn't get a receipt – a “written proof”. Isopescu, the local prefect, stopped sending more transports because of lack of evidence! Alexianu tried to hide the fact that handing the Jews to the Germans meant annihilation.

Jean Ancel,2002, History of the Holocaust in ROMANIA, Yad Vashem.



A typical courtyard
Photo: Paul Leinburd





Traian Popovici, Mayor of Czernowitz

(born in Udesti, Suceava county, studied in Suceava, at the “Stefan cel Mare” high school)

On October 9, 1941 the Bukovina administration ordered the military authorities in Czernowitz to prevent Jews from leaving the municipality. The following day the mayor met General Calotescu, Governor of Bukovina.

Here is the discussion:

Popovici: *"I am aghast, you are sending thousand of human beings to their death in early winter". High ranking officers, General Topor, Colonel Petrescu, General Calotescu were present.*

Popovici: *"How do you want to be remembered? At Robespierre's side?"*

As for me I do not wish to see history tarnish my name. Think of what you are doing. You still have time. Talk to the Mareshal (Antonescu), postpone it at least until spring".

Colonel Petrescu: *"Mister Mayor, who will write this history, the Jidani perhaps? I have come here to pull out the weeds from your garden by myself."*

General Vasile Ionescu entered the room. *"I ask you not to do this. It is a scandal. It is a shame, it is awful. It would have been better for me not to have come to Bukovina to witness such barbaric acts".*



From Ioanid Radu, 2000, “The Holocaust in Romania: The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies Under the Antonescu Regime, 1940-1944



Trihati - Forced Labor Camp in Transnistria

In the spring of 1943 the Germans started to build a bridge over the river Bug. It was meant to connect Trihati and Nikolaev, on German occupied territory. Its length was 1500 meters. The Germans attached explosives to the bridge's pillars to enable its quick destruction, when the time comes.

The German companies, Krupp and Munirbau were in charge of the building. Transnistria deported Jews were the labor force. Among them was Mira Seidler's father, Carl, Gitta Weitmann's father, Simon, Lily Weintraub's father, Nathan, Denise Horowitz's father, Fredi and many others.

The camp commander was a cruel construction worker from Hamburg, Hoekele. In his book "The Holocaust of the Jews of Romania" Jean Ancel writes that Hoekele used to walk around in civilian clothes, armed with a gun and a rubber club.

At 5 a.m. the forced laborers started their daily routine. After a meager breakfast they were divided in groups of 20. Accompanied by guards they walked from the stables they were hosted to the bridge. In the stables, three layer bunkbeds, one above the other, covered with a thin layer of straw were installed. There was never a bunk which belonged to a person; the rapid changes couldn't afford it. Guards were watching them and Ukrainians were placed around the fence.

Mornings and evenings, they marched the detainees along the barbed wired paths. On each worker's belt a black plaque was attached, bearing his serial number. Work continued from the morning hours until dark, with an hour - long lunch break. The work was so hard that only the young and sturdy could survive it. Most detainees felt exhausted after a few weeks of labor. Two Jewish doctors from Iasi worked at the camp clinic. Their dedicated care saved considerable lives. Upon arrival at the camp, under the threat of execution, the Jews were ordered to hand over their valuable possessions. A number of Jews were ferociously beaten as they handed over their money. Hoekele's special pleasures were to whip Jews at rollcall but his favorite torture was to immerse Jews into the toilet pit, leaving them to die from asphyxiation. A death sentence was imposed for any violation of provisions. On one occasion, a Jew was executed because he took some oil to apply to his cracked hands.

Hoekele shot three Jews when he discovered that they had received letters from their families. A railway worker delivered the letters he had received from the respective families still living in



the ghettos. Hoekele stoned the Jews and shot them in the end. A 59 yr. old Jew was accused of insubordination because he went before a medical committee without prior approval. Hoekele used to summon Jews to his office. They were never seen again. After a while their corpses were found in the vicinity of the camp. Ten famished Jews, were shot dead only because they dared to remove a pumpkin and a beet from the side road.

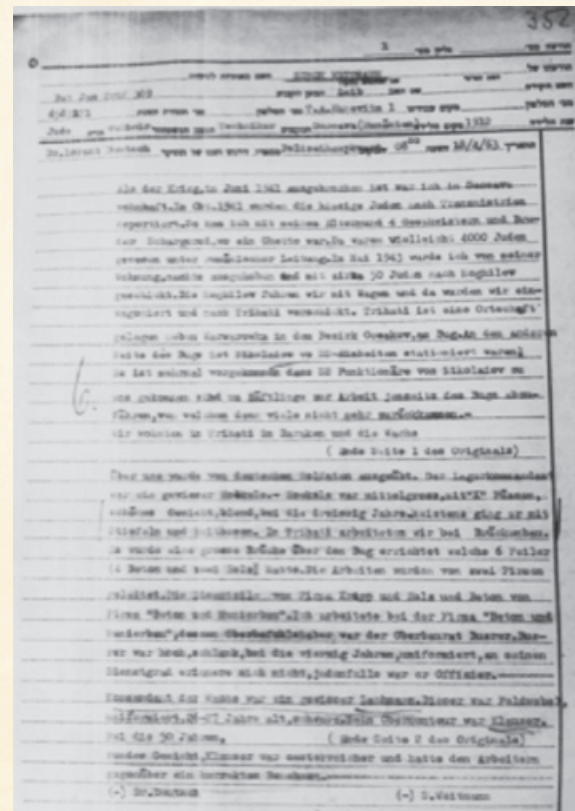
Hoekele even murdered the German engineer Neumayer.

In 1963 Simon Weitmann, Gitta's father, gave evidence against Hoekele who faced trial in Frankfurt Germany. Here is the first page of Mr. Weitmann's affidavit as taped by a lawyer. Simon Weitmann was a witness at the trial. Hoekele was never convicted.

Mr. Weitmann's affidavit

Carl Seidler, Mira's father, Fredi Horowitz and others were together in Trihati. Mira recalls her father's memories about some incidents that occurred at that time: Her father was a tailor. He had the good fortune to sew and mend uniforms for the German officers. Each time he delivered the product he would get a loaf of bread and "speck"- *slanina de porc*.

He would bring the food into the barracks and share it with his comrades. One day, the officer who usually repaid Carl with food wasn't present when Carl brought the uniforms. Carl decided to wait for him. The officer returned late, but did not fail to give him the usual food package. It was difficult to find the way back in complete darkness. Karl kept going along the railway track. He stumbled and fell, but in the early morning, he arrived back with the food. His friends were happy to see him safe – they had feared for the worse.



Another incident deals with Hoekele's way to amuse himself. The Germans ordered the inmates to line up in two lines so they could hit one another in earnest. Mira's father was a very tall man. One time a small, skinny Jew stood opposite to him. Carl didn't really hit him, out of fear that he might kill him. The German officer, realizing the situation, stopped the charade and started to hit Carl Seidler (Mira's father) fiercely. Fredi Horowitz fainted while being present and forced to



watch the awful scene.

Another time, a group of Jewish men planned to flee Trihati. They had bribed the assistance of some low rank German officers. One Jewish boy, who was not included, denounced their plan to the authorities. The Jewish group was shot. At the same night those Germans, who took part in the scheme, entered the barrack and murdered the young boy by beating him up, maybe out of fear he might reveal their names as well.

Summarized by Lily Pauker



Distinctive Jewish badge (Star of David badge) that the Jews of Romania were forced to wear on their clothing in accordance with the directives of the Germans. This badge belonged to Moshe Ze'ev Gelbert from the village of Ilisesti in Bukovina



Life in Suceava after the Holocaust

Simcha Weisbuch (taken from the book "Shotzer")

The Jewish people who survived the inferno of the Holocaust started to return home in spring 1944, after the Red Army liberated Transnistria and advanced towards Bessarabia and Bucovina. The way back wasn't packed with roses. Many a time, the Russian soldiers confiscated the horses harnessed to the wagons carrying the old, the sick and the small children as well as the few belongings the Jews had still possessed. Those who hurried succeeded in reaching their former towns and villages. In contrast, those who lingered were delayed in Bessarabia and in Czernowitz, Bucovina. Some of them were forced to join the Red Army only to return after almost two years. Some vanished without a trace. In 1940 the Russians annexed Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina. As a result, they closed the border with Romania. The Jews were permitted to return only in April 1945.

Approximately 6000 Jews arrived in Suceava. These were people originally from Suceava along with others coming from Chernowitz, Northern Bucovina, Bessarabia and other Romanian cities. Upon their arrival, the Jewish community organization started to function under communist control. All its leaders, starting with Mr. A. Shechter, were communist party members. The JOINT helped the community with money, food and clothing, took care of the great synagogue's renovation (whose walls were the only thing still standing) and the repair and maintenance of the cemetery which was desecrated, many headstones being broken.

Jewish Life

The rabbis who serviced the Suceava community were Rabbi Goldenberg from Falticeni and, after his immigration to Israel, Rabbi Tirnaur from Radauti. Sometimes Rabbi Wasserman from Dorohoi would also come to Suceava. Efraim Weisbuch started teaching youngsters Hebrew under the pretext that this was necessary to understand the Hebrew Bible and the Prayer Book. A shochet came twice a week and performed Jewish ritual slaughter.

For a certain period, Romania sold to Israel kosher meat. To this end, 5 or 6 shochatim came from Israel and performed the ritual slaughter in Burdujeni, thus enabling the local Jewish population to acquire kosher meat. For Passover, matzot and kosher wine were brought from Israel with the help of the JOINT.



The Integration of Jewish People in Civic Life

Jewish people were integrated in important positions in town. The head of the Regional Department of Education was Haim Rimer, the head of the Municipal Commercial Department was I. Strominger, the head of the Regional Sanitary Department was Dr. B. Merdler and that of the Municipal Sanitary Department was Dr. I. Stetner. The manager of the hospital was Dr. A. Weitmann and that of the clinic – Dr. A. Anderman. The regional council secretary was Faienstein and the president of the cooperative association was A. Segal. The manager of the leather and shoe factory was T. Hilsenrat.

The authorities accepted the opening of the Jewish High School, which had as an objective the accelerated completion of studies for the students who missed out school during the deportation years. Head of the school was Dr. Roza Levi and, later, Professor Shulman. At this school taught Sigi Rorhlich, Mrs. Schleir, Haim Rimer, Efraim Weisbuch.

Franzi Itig and Paula Behr were among the graduates. Part of them joined the Zionist movements and many of them underwent training in preparation for immigration.



All Jewish families returned to their former houses, and reopened their stores.

A small part of the Suceava Jews reckoned that a society based on socialist principles is able to solve humanity's greatest challenges (problems) in general and specifically those facing the Jewish people. Thus, Jews held important positions both in the communist and social-democratic parties and in governmental, municipal, militia and Securitate services. The C.D.E. (The Jewish



Democratic Committee) was established as a means to persuade the Jews to remain in Romania. The chair of the committee was A. Segal. The organization set up a club, which wasn't successful amid the Jewish population.

Towards the end of 1953, the Jews were discharged from the Militia, Securitate and other important institutions.

The Zionist Movement in Suceava

The Zionist movement renewed its activity at an even higher amplitude within the youth and adult members.

In Suceava, Etzel operated illegally to prepare the revisionist youth to fight undercover against the British Mandate. Subsequently, the youngster I. Kaufman arrived one day at Dr. Weitmann's clinic with a gunshot wound he got during the training. Dr. Weitmann took care of it secretly.

Some examples of open Jewish marches were noticed in two instances - on the day the war was over, where Zionist youth movements walked under blue white flags, and in 1946, six years after Jabotinsky's death, a Jewish march took place on the town main street.

In February 1948 the Beitar Movement in Suceava was declared illegal and went into hiding. In March 1949 all other Zionist movements were demobilized. The Romanian authorities started arresting Zionist activists, among them Israel Abush-Druckman (Lily father's cousin) who was questioned for many days and nights and eventually sentenced to numerous years in prison.

Aliya

The immigration, legal and especially illegal, increased. People crossed the border into Hungary and Yugoslavia; the destination was Israel, Germany, France and Italy. Dr. Boimovich travelled in his own car, as a tourist, to Yugoslavia and from there, to the free world, leaving behind a fully equipped nice apartment and a substantial sum of money in the bank.

At the end of 1947, around 15 000 Jews got out of Romania through the Bulgarian port Burgos on their way to Palestine. All was done semi-officially as the authorities approved these departures, but didn't furnish passports or any other documents.

C.D.E. initiated two legal immigration waves to Israel.

In May 1948, after the establishment of Israel, Romania opened its borders for a short while. The local Jews submitted a great multitude of requests to immigrate and, indeed, some were allowed to do so. In their narratives in this book, Paulica Davidovici, Mendel Brecher, Ruty Hubner tell how families were disrupted when only some members got permission to leave Romania and others were left behind for many years, because the border closed in 1952. A small part of the Jewish families didn't ask for permission to immigrate. These were usually ardent communists.



In 1958 the Aliya was again permitted. Among the authors of this book, the first to receive approval to leave Romania were Ruty Hubner, Paul Leinburd, Karin Mandler, Dorly Weidenfeld, Harry Fleischer.

The Jews who asked for permission to immigrate to Israel but were not granted visas, were sacked from work. In exchange, they were given modest jobs with starvation wages. Jewish students were expelled from universities, as Mira Seidler was, in the midst of a lecture, in front of an auditory full packed with students. No new students were accepted. Doctors weren't allowed to take specialization tests and were employed in general practice. (Read Dr. Dory Hörer's story).

The Romanian Gold Rush

The Romanian government issued a decree, which banned ownership of golden coins and foreign currency. Whoever was in possession of such "treasure" was asked to hand it in. Many members of our community who didn't confirm, were arrested, tortured, prosecuted, sentenced and sent to devastating work at the Danube – Black Sea Canal. Many died, among them Gross and Haimovich. Others were sentenced to long years in prison – Bloom, Dr. Scheffer and his wife, Meirovich, Klopfer, Folkman and many more.

American Jews and Israel paid "ransom" in dollars for those who wanted to immigrate and weren't given permission. The "value" of the payment per person was decided according to the education level. A British Jewish man named Jakober transferred the payment to the Romanian authorities, in foreign currency, in cash. This is how some families were saved. Thanks to a committee headed by an American rabbi, some Jews were even liberated from prison, of course in exchange for money. Among them were Schmeltzer, Merdler and Meirovich.

And so, for the majority of the Jews who survived the Holocaust, Jeremiah's prophecy "וּשְׁבוּ בָנִים לְגְבוּלָם" - "*And thus, the sons returned to their homeland*" was at last fulfilled. Most of them immigrated to Israel.



What really happened in Romania on August 23, 1944

I lived fifteen years in Romania. August 23 was always celebrated in Suceava and all over the country as the most important day in the calendar - the Romanian Independence Day, *"the day Romania was liberated from the fascist yoke"*. This is what we were told. It was mandatory for government-officials, doctors and nurses, workers and peasants, schoolchildren and teachers to march along the main street in Suceava. They would carry the tri-color Romanian flag, the communist red flag, posters of the communist leaders, and chant slogans praising the party and the government.

The local communist party members would stand proudly, in festive clothes, on the tribune built in the middle of the parade route, waving at the crowd. In appreciation for their wise leadership, the grateful crowd would throw fresh-cut flowers, a rare commodity in those days.

This kind of charade went on year after year. We sensed the deception, but never knew the whole truth. Schoolbooks skipped the entire WWII chapters



Photo: Dumitru Vintila - orasul Suceava

about the corresponding Romanian history, never disclosing what had happened in the country or with its citizens between 1940-1944. Those who knew the truth refrained from talking – it was too dangerous. The Securitate was always listening and watching; you could disappear without trace in one of the communist prisons.

In reality, the 62-year-old Marshal Antonescu met on August 23 1944 the 23-year-old King Mihai at the Royal Palace in Bucharest. Three years earlier, in June 1941, Queen Elena, the King's mother, alarmed by the BBC news, rushed into the King's apartment telling him that his army



had already joined Germany and was attacking the Soviet Union on Antonescu's orders.

The Romanian army, with its 473,000 men, including infantry, tanks, air force and battleships crossed the Russian border taking part in the Barbarossa Operation.

Later, the Romanian forces were active in the Odessa massacre. Two Romanian armies were involved in the battle of Stalingrad, but in the end were defeated. They suffered enormous losses.

Marshal Antonescu met Hitler 20 times during the war, more than any other axis leader.

They met for the last time on August 5th, 1944 in Rastenburg, Germany. When asked by Hitler what his policy was, Antonescu hinted that his country was committed to the alliance with Germany until the very end. Both dictators regarded the Soviets as their worst nightmare.



The Queen Mother Elena received the title righteous among nations posthumously in 1993 for her acts of courage in saving the Jews during the Holocaust, especially for her countless pleas between 1943-1944 to allow the deported Jews to return from Transnistria. (Wikipedia)



Antonescu and Adolf Hitler at the Führerbau in Munich (June 1941). Joachim von Ribbentrop and Generalfeldmarschall Wilhelm Keitel in the background (Wikipedia)

In August 1944, the Soviets broke the Iasi-Chisinau front and headed towards Focsani. At 4pm, on August 23, upon his return from the Moldova front, Antonescu asked for an audience with the young King.





(Wikipedia)

After a 55 minutes of discussion, during which the King demanded that Antonescu break the alliance with Germany and the latter declined; the King then ordered the immediate imprisonment of the surprised marshal. For a couple of hours Antonescu was held in the Palace in King Carol II's stamp collecting room, then moved to a secret apartment in Bucharest. A couple of days later he was handed over to the Soviets, which have already occupied Bucharest.

In June 1946, the People's Tribunal in Bucharest sentenced Antonescu to death. With him, three others were shot dead, including Alexianu, Transnistria's Governor.

Reference:

Cea mai frumoasa poveste (2016) Adrian Cioroianu, Editura Curtea Veche



Photo: Dumitru Vintila





The Phoenix People

Lily (Weintraub) Pauker

Romanian Jews suffered from antisemitism before and after the wars.

This well-known phenomenon manifested itself through many forms from mocking, contemptuous ill will to murderous pogroms. It was present in the market as in the Academy of Sciences, in the soul of an old man as in the games children play. Antisemitism is still as strong in the age of atomic reactors and fast computers as in the age of the oil lamp and spinning wheels. The church supplied amply reasons to propagate it.

In his book "Genius and Anxiety" Lebrecht starts with Felix Mendelssohn, Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx and Benjamin Disraeli who according to the author were "the breakthrough Jews", the first to stand up to the immemorial insults hurled at them by Christians.

Only a Jewish mind, like Emma Lazarus', the poet, tormented by her people's history of injustices and persecutions, could have written the lines, which ended up on a bronze plaque, installed in 1903, on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty.

"Give me your tired, your poor, / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Since the fall of the Temple in Jerusalem, THE BOOK took the most significant place in the Jewish life. Based on Thora reading and learning, teaching to read was of utmost importance. Almost all male Jewish toddlers learned to read in a world where few people could read. Moreover Jews distinguished themselves from other minorities

Another trait that distinguishes the Jews from other minorities is that rather than relegating themselves to the periphery, Jews have always chosen to play a role at the center of society's industrial and ideological development.

In the 20th century, people like Anne Frank, Mihael Sebastian did not think of themselves as particularly Jewish until they were confronted by antisemitic violence.

After being stripped of every human right: from keeping pets to travelling on trams or putting on plays – together with the raids, the expropriations, the beatings, they were left with nothing to cling to, except their Jewishness, which was simultaneously turned into a source of shame.

Nationalist regimes in Romania lit the hunger - cold – typhus - murder cycle of Transnistria, and later the terror of purges in the communist country.

In Romania as in other countries, Jews wanted for centuries to contribute and belong; they worked hard to achieve goals in industry, commerce, science, arts. Repeatedly, the fruit of their hard work



had been robbed, until in the 40s Party and State went openly after their lives as well. For our ancestors, Transnistria was meant to be their graves.

Having learned their lesson, most of Suceava Jews in the early 50s wanted to immigrate. The way to freedom was denied for most of them. A window of opportunity opened in 1956 after the crush of the Hungarian uprising; the Soviet army withdrew from Romania. Hoping to trade with the West and to get preferential treatment of trade with the USA, a new policy for Jewish immigration was adopted.

Romanian Jews, including those from Suceava, leapt at the chance. In Rabbi Rosen's words, published by Radu Ioanid in his book "Ransom", the news electrified the people:

"On Yom Kippur 1958 an overwhelming feeling of joy, excitement, swept the Jews that even the ultra-orthodox Jews of Satmar (Hasidim of Satul Mare) took off their "talithim" (prayer shawls) put down their prayer books, left the synagogues and began to queue at the police stations for exit permits. Every day thousands of Jews gathered in Bucharest outside the central police station for miles. The scenes were reminiscent of Messianic times".

Ion Gheorghe Maurer, the Romanian Prime Minister, on meeting Chief Rabbi Rosen complained and protested: *"My colleagues and I hit on the idea of starting the registration of Jews to find out how many of them really wanted to leave. We expected 10,000 to 20,000 applications, but we received 130,000. Yes 130,000! Who could have imagined such a figure? What terrible harm have we done to the Jewish people that they wish to leave in such huge numbers? We saved your lives, we granted you equal rights."*

Was the Romanian PM sincerely and fully aware of the meaning of his statements: *"What terrible harm have we done to the Jewish people?"*, *"We saved your lives, we granted you equal rights!"* The PM felt insulted, mistreated. Was he so terribly uninformed of the past 15 years of Jewish history on his Romanian soil?

Anyway, we know now what happened to our families and what happened to Communist Romania. The Romanian Jews were sold. In an attempt to achieve favorable trade relations with the USA, Romania used its Jews as leverage.

After long deliberations, Israeli PM Ben Gurion decided that in order to save human lives one could deal with scoundrels.

Romanian government functioned as a merchant of human beings (Eli Wiesel's phrase in Radu Ioanid's book "Ransom"). If 380,000 Romanian Jews established themselves in the Jewish State, it is because Romania sold them as if they were slaves. Where was the money coming from? Mainly from American Jewish sources. A British-Jewish businessman, with friends in official circles in Bucharest, was doing the same transactions for a "commission" paid for his services.

Finally, our families reached the free world.



This book is dedicated to the Phoenix People.

As the famous Phoenix Bird, the Jewish people regenerate, being reborn from the ashes of its predecessors, after dying in a show of flames.

Their legacy is:

REMEMBER!

References:

Vassily Grosman "Life and Fate".

Radu Ioanid "Ransom".

Norman Lebrecht "Genius and Anxiety"

Number of Romanian Jews who immigrated between 1944-1989

Anexă

*Emigrarea din România în Israel
între 1948 și 1989**

Ani	Număr de emigranți
15 mai 1948-1949	31.274
1950	47.071
1951	40.625
1952	3.712
1953	61
1954	53
1955	235
1956	714
1957	594
1958	8.954
1959	8.360
1960	9.321
1961	21.269
1962	9.878
1963	13.243
1964	25.926
1965	10.949
1966	3.467
1967	779
1968	226

* Surse : Shlomo Leibovici-Lais/Arhivele ACMEOR și Yosef Govrin, *Israeli-Romanian Relations at the End of the Ceausescu Era : As Observed by Israel's Ambassador to Romania, 1985-1989*, Frank Cass, Londra, 2002, p. 261.

204 EMIGRAREA DIN ROMÂNIA ÎN ISRAEL ÎNTRE 1948 ȘI 1989

Ani	Număr de emigranți
1969	1.754
1970	5.614
1971	1.861
1972	3.005
1973	4.123
1974	3.729
1975	2.393
1976	2.223
1977	1.501
1978	1.223
1979	1.113
1980	1.241
1981	1.179
1982	1.720
1983	1.340
1984	2.010
1985	1.374
1986	1.348
1987	1.673
1988	1.473
1989	1.499



Partisans in Transnistria

At the end of 1942 an underground movement was established in Bershad, Transnistria. Nachman Farstendiger and Jacob Talis were among the founders of the group along with 40 followers. Jacob Shloven was their leader. Before the war he was the head of the Jewish Council in Chechelnyk. They organized an underground printing press, and printed leaflets against the occupation regime. Moreover, they purchased weapons and established contacts with the partisan units, which operated in the area. Talis and some others went into the woods and joined the partisans. Some were captured and executed.

As the frontline approached in 1943, the relations between ghetto Jews and partisans deepened. Dr. Fleischman, the deputy of the local Jewish committee, assisted partisans with money, clothing and medicine. The committee had prepared lists of names of all the members who helped the partisans. Unfortunately, in January 1944, the Gestapo caught one of the group members. He was bitterly tortured. Finally, he revealed the existence of the lists and their whereabouts. February 2, 1944 near Bershad, 148 Jews, the activists, their families and their neighbors were arrested and shot. At the last months of war, before retreating, the Romanians killed the members of the Jewish ghetto committee and the religious activists along with other deportees.

https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/he/research/ghettos_encyclopedia/ghetto_details.asp?cid=178

Meir Teich (Shargorod) and Mihael Shrenzel (Bershad) were connected to the underground. Dr. Teich helped families whose members were on the front, in partisan units, or in the underground, and supplied the underground with identity cards permitting free movement around the district. Shrenzel also arranged the escape of Yakiv Talis, a captured member of the underground. Shrenzel was arrested by the gendarmes and tortured for information about Yakiv Talis; Shrenzel refused to give his comrade away; in the end he was murdered. Additionally, the sources document the efforts of the Chechelnyk and Olgopil ghetto community leaders—both Jews from Bukovina—to organize financial assistance for the anti-Nazi Soviet underground and the partisans.

Taken from: Faina Vynokurova The Fate of Bukovinian Jews in the Ghettos and Camps of Transnistria, 1941–1944: A Review of the Source Documents at the Vinnytsa Oblast State Archive
http://www.holocaust.kiev.ua/Files/golSuch2005/Vynokurova_Eng.pdf



Teich recounted the stories of several local Jewish orphans who came to Shargorod: Yosel Blech, Clara Moskal, and Leon Schuster young people from Kamenetz and some from Kyiv, along with others from different parts of Transnistria. Some of them spoke only Russian and the ghetto committee helped disguise them as Romanian Jewis, teaching them critical phrases in Romanian".

Teich and others went to dangerous lengths to protect refugee orphans from the authorities. Orphans like Moskal and Schuster, who joined the partisans were supported by Shargorod and other ghettos members, defying the orders. The camaraderie instilled during Soviet years may have helped Transnistria, and Shargorod, in particular, be a place where nationalities were more easily set aside.

Taken from:

Institutions for survival:

The Shargorod ghetto during the Holocaust in Romanian Transnistria

Iemima D. Ploscariu Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland*

Nationalities Papers (2019), 47: 1, 121–135 doi:10.1017/nps.2018.16

[https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/9051870E2DA989D1EE898509B2E65389/S0090599218000168a.pdf/div-class-title-institutions-](https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/9051870E2DA989D1EE898509B2E65389/S0090599218000168a.pdf/div-class-title-institutions-for-survival-the-shargorod-ghetto-during-the-holocaust-in-romanian-transnistria-div.pdf)

[for-survival-the-shargorod-ghetto-during-the-holocaust-in-romanian-transnistria-div.pdf](https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/9051870E2DA989D1EE898509B2E65389/S0090599218000168a.pdf/div-class-title-institutions-for-survival-the-shargorod-ghetto-during-the-holocaust-in-romanian-transnistria-div.pdf)

Moshe Gelber from Suceava tells that on 19.3.44 in the afternoon a Romanian unit arrived at the ghetto Katzmazow, Transnistria.

"The commander ordered all the Jews to gather outside the ghetto in a valley between two hills. He announced that he decided to execute us all, therefore he ordered the sergeant to position the machineguns on the hilltop. Since ammunition was scarce, the commander ordered us to stand in a certain formation, which could allow a bullet to kill several people at once. The platoon was in position; the commander gave the sergeant the final order. At this crucial moment, the sergeant ordered the troops to empty all ammunition by shooting in the air. It was obvious; the sergeant violated a direct order. All those present were aware of it. The commander slapped the sergeant's face several times and announced that he will be court-martialed for treason.

On the very next day, March 20, 1944, in the early hours of the morning, the partisans arrived and liberated the ghetto. The sergeant who had breached the command the day before was among them. The partisans declared that we, the Jewish detainees, are finally free".

Summarized by Lily Pauker.



Soundtrack of our Generation

Kindergarten children all over the world are taught songs. So were we. Every child in Suceava learned “Vine, vine primavara” (Spring Comes) and many other songs.

All schoolchildren and all pioneers sang the national anthem at the beginning of each school day and the pioneer salute on every occasion.

Life was not easy in Suceava of the 1950's - 60's. Even young children felt the intense surrounding atmosphere that kept us under surveillance. Nevertheless, children as well as adults, made the most to enjoy life.

Music is one of the most powerful tools that enable mood modulation. In the 1950's few people had a radio. I cannot remember people owning a record player, or a shop that sold phonograph records. This was the era before television. Therefore, the radio-fixture loudspeaker “DIFUZOR” was the main music source. We could listen to popular music. Maria Tanase and Ioana Radu sang “Doine si Romante”, Maria Lataretu's hit was "Sanie cu zurgalai". On Sundays peasants danced hora and sarba according to popular music, shouting rap verses. Dorina Draghici was the queen of “light music”- “muzica usoara. She sang in a silky voice about love and life. In the 1950's and 60's a singer had to have a beautiful voice; the lyrics and the melody could be repeated even by regular schoolgirls.

On the afternoon program, they would present opera and operetta arias. This is how we learned about great Romanian opera singers like Zenaida Pali, Magda Ianculescu, and about the famous Iosef Schmidt, whose sister lived on our street.

Some of us learned to play an instrument, others learned to dance.

All the girls knew part of the lyrics by heart and were able to hum the tune of songs heard over the radio or seen in movies.

Sometimes the radio play was accompanied by a melody. This was the case with the play "Nota zero la purtare" ("Zero for Conduct"). The plot was about the life of teenagers in the 1950's. In the background a violin would play a wistful tune.

American music was banned. We had no idea about music or musicians abroad. In those days we were not aware of the existence of Cole Porter, Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington and many others. Jazz was perceived as decadent music, and as such had no place in the lives of communists. Paul Robeson, the deep bass voice of America, was well known in Romania due to his political activity and sympathies for the Soviet Union. He toured the Soviet Union and performed for the Russians,



criticizing the United States' foreign policy. Russian movies and Russian war songs were played on the loudspeaker. In the 1950's the "The World Youth and Student Festival" was celebrated in different communist capitals. The Moscow festival marked the international debut of the song "Moscow Nights" which we all loved.

- In the late 1950's "*Besame, besame mucho*" was playing constantly on the radio. Only later "*Malagueña Salerosa*" bewitched us.
- During a trip on the Danube, Rosemary, in her wonderful voice, performed on the deck, in front of a large audience Vico Toriani's songs like "*Bella, bella dona*".
- Movies were a constant source of new songs. I remember "*Le Chanteur de Mexico*". The exquisite, seductive Sarita Montiel sold small bouquet of violets in Madrid singing "*La Violetera*".
- Much later, at the Cinemascope, Caterina Valente's musicals conquered our hearts. She played the guitar, danced and sang in almost every European language, "*Granada*" and "*Wo meine Sonne scheint*".
- The Austrian comedy "Hannerl", was one of my favorites. it featured a German song "*Ich tanze mit dir in dem Himmel hinein in den sibenten Himmel der Liebe*". A delight.
- French music was part of our upbringing, since Romanians were a francophone nation. Who doesn't remember "*La vie en rose*" performed by Edith Piaf and Yves Montand strolling "*Les grands boulevards*" of Paris as a "Citroen worker".
- The Los Paraguayos came to perform in Suceava. Some of us snuck in to see their performance without paying. We added their South American songs to our repertoire: "*Guantanamera*", "*La Bamba*".
- The Italian music caused much excitement with songs like "*Marina*" and "*Ciao ciao bambina*".

Sometimes we also listened to live music. For example in the Dom Polski hall, or on summer evenings at the the open air *chermeza*, where adults used to danced and drink beer. Occasionally we heard the violin sounds of a gypsy. They camped on the outskirts of the city in large groups *o satra de tigani*. Women dressed in colorful skirts used to dance and sing. Men were making large copper cooking pots *ceaun* and barefoot children were running around. The men were experts in fiddling on the violin.

Cliff Richard's movie "The Young Ones" was forbidden to watch - the school was banning movies and checked for disobedient pupils. Some of us came inside the cinema hall only after the movie had begun and were quick to exit during the list of credits, at the end. The song about the fall of Jericho's walls made a strong impression on me. Only later, during Hebrew



lessons with Efraim Weisbuch, did I understand that Joshua and the story of Jericho is part of my history.

Older people in Suceava sang sad Yiddish songs like "*Reizale*" and "*Oyfen pripetchik*", but we did not. During the holidays, we went to the synagogue and listened to the traditional Kol Nidrei tune. I listened to music all my life. Melodies evoke distant memories, places, people, and surroundings. I could not have presented a book about life in Suceava without mentioning my generation's soundtrack, the voice of our past.

Thankfully, most songs are today on YouTube, thus preserving and making them widely available to the younger generation. For those who wish to picture us as youngsters, this music can transport you back to those days.

As Woodie Allen says in his film "Radio Days", the voices of these songs are still with me, but they grow dimmer with every passing year.

Lily Weintraub Pauker





Photo: Mihai Aurelian Caruntu "Suceava Periferiilor - Album"

Memories



Instalație de captare a apelor la Șipotul Mic (1940)
Water pipelines from Șipotul Mic (1940)

Photo: Mihai Aurelian Caruntu "Suceava Periferiilor - Album"

The Silence

Zvia Pelz-Fuhrer

We were the children born into the silence after,
And the silence stays
It invades the rooms
In place of brothers,
Occupies the living room
In place of cousins.
Even into the kitchen, when mother doesn't drive it away
with the slash of a knife
With the wooden hammer that smashes the eggplant's flesh,
With a fist that beats the dough.

We were a generation that longed for relatives
A generation without grandmothers and grandfathers,
Many of us were single children
And the silence clung to us like a step-brother
At zero decibels in the sorrowing ash.

We were the generation that fled into the movies,
Into neighbors' homes, alive with children
To the Ashkars
Where the grandmother fried
Brown fragrant meatballs.

We were the children that fled the silence
And no one understood.

Translation from Hebrew by Prof. Noam Flinker





A Last Memory from Suceava

Adolf Copelovici

At the end of the school year 1961-1962, when I was in the 9th grade, I was offered to become an UTM member. As you well know, it was considered "an offer you couldn't refuse"!

It was explained to me that the decision was taken because I was a good student and that, from my father's side, our family was poor and belonged to the working class, thus, "beseder" under the communist regime. However, they had to overcome a huge hurdle as, my mother's family was rich and, because of that, they were the enemies of the working class!

Anyway, it was a big end-of-year ceremony, the entire school gathered and, one by one, the students nominated for the UTM were called out. Applause!! Glory to communism...and the complete usual circus!

I felt extremely uncomfortable. I knew that the legal steps needed for us to leave Romania were nearly at the end, but I wasn't allowed to say a word. On the other hand, I had hated the sad comedy of the communism for a long time!

Summer came and the date of our departure was nearing...And when the UTM found out about our departure, they got furious! I was urgently summoned to attend a meeting in a huge hall, where a



From the left: Adolf, Gerty W.,X, Eugen, Bianca

caricature court of law was organized: The guilty part (this being, of course, me, guilty before the trial), the UTM secretary (prosecutor and judge) and two teachers – Mrs., sorry, comrade Nicolaeva Esfira (the Russian teacher) and comarade Reut Florica (the English teacher).

The secretary started "barking", telling the usual lies of the communists! I didn't care about it and I wasn't even listening...however, when he started spitting lies about my father (saying that he was a thief, a liar and so on), I couldn't accept! I forgot to be prudent in front of these poisonous snakes. I started screaming louder than him, saying that my father is a good man and that I didn't permit





From the left: Eugen, the Copelovici brothers



From the left: Paul, Eugen, Adolf, my brother, Gerty W.

them to talk like this about my dad. At this moment, both teachers got up. Nicolaeva went to the secretary and convinced him to go. Afterwards, the teachers came to me to calm me down. These two teachers knew and appreciated me. They told me to remember only the beautiful memories and that they wish me the best of luck in France.

A few years later, I had the opportunity to notice that the French communists are the same detestable creatures, with the same lies.





Childhood Memories

Any Katz

My Dearest,

I decided to add to the book some of my childhood memories. It starts with Stefanita Voda Street where I, as a young child, used to go with my mom to the Sipot. This was a fast stream with clean water. This is the place women used to gather weekly, so they could confide in one another about what was bothering them. My grandmother and I used to go to the haham (the man who performed kosher slaughter). There I first understood I was Jewish. At home, my parents told me that there are many Jewish people in the world. They underlined the fact that we should be proud of being Jewish, that these were good people with kind hearts, who help one another if needed. In the Great Temple, which usually was full of people during holidays, children were usually asked to play outside so that they wouldn't disrespect the prayers.

To the right, at the end of the main street, in front of Sfintul Dumitru Church, you could find Mr. Mayer and his son who had horse carriages and sleds with horses in winter. During the freezing winter, wrapped in warm coats, my father and I would hire a sled to Burdujeni, Icani and back. There was snow all around us and the sound of the bells made us feel like we were in a fairy tale, in a dream. A bewitched world.

I studied at the Stefan cel Mare high-school. I still keep in my heart Mosh Ursu, the genitor. For years, he rang the bell after each class and before we had to reenter the classroom.

At 12 o'clock, Mosh Ursu used to come with bagels for which I would pay a few pennies my grandmother had given to me.

If I had some pennies left, I would give it to the



From the left: in front of the teacher Beate, Shelly, I, Vasile.



beggar at the corner of the street, who needed them more than I needed the bagel.

Going on Dragos Voda Street you could reach Zamca. I used to go there with my mother for the clean air and the beautiful flowers. Lilac flowers had a wonderful smell.

I also remember the wonderful taste of the rose petal and the green nuts comfiture our mothers would prepare.

I knew the children's parents from Suceava and I dearly remember them. Most of them were hard working craftsmen. It was a world rich in kind hearted people. I respect all of them, I remember their everyday lives in which happy and sad moments intertwined with little gossip and dreams.

As dusk fell, many young people would gather on the Main street, walking and laughing, having fun together.

Strolling along the Main street people would enter a lane next to the bust sculpture of the famous Bukovina composer Ciprian Porumbescu, born in Sipotele Suceavei. Here is a picture taken in the 60s. Ety Schertzer and I in the front row. Senta Grill stands behind me.

These memories have always been in my heart and in yours.





My Father's Story

Alina Itianu

I am about to tell the story of my father's family, but my knowledge is limited. I regret that like many other children of Holocaust survivors, I did not ask questions and my father never talked about that past.

One thing remained in my memory though. My father never let me wear pearls because his mother had to give hers away as a mean of survival in during the Holocaust. No details were every given to me but I am sure it must have been in traumatic circumstances.



My mother's parents Marcus and Ernestina Segall and my father's parents Adolf and Hermina Itianu were friends, as young couples I believe in Falticeni where my father and his brother were born. My mother's family lived in Falticeni in the years before the Holocaust, were not deported. However, my father's family that included his grandparents, his mother, his brother and himself lived at that time in Suceava that was part of Bucovina. Bucovina Jews were deported to Transnistria, specifically those in Suceava were deported in October 1941.

My father returned from Transnistria, according family stories, in 1944 before the liberation. I do not know how he escaped, exactly from where, whether it was from a forced labor or from the getto. The story that I was told by family was that he came by himself by foot, arrived with injuries to his feet, with boots made of felt and a felt coat. He came to the Segall family, his mother's friends. There he met my mother, they fell in love, married in April 1945 and moved to Iasi to college studies and a new chapter in their life. My father closed the Holocaust chapter deep in his memory. Until he passed away in 2002 he never reopened those memories or talked about them. He went on to become a doctor despite the fact that when he finished high school at Stefan Cel Mare school he wanted to be an engineer, because medicine was the only profession that was helpful in any situation, as he learned in Transnistria. He was a very dedicated doctor and helped people selflessly for the rest of his professional life.

My father's family has deep roots in Bucovina.

My grandfather, Adolf Itzig (who later changed his name to Itianu as a pharmacist) was one of the brothers of Lily's grandfather Moritz Itzig. Moses Itzig, their father, was a bread baker and lived in Langedasse in Suceava, in the same house as the bakery. The bakery was advertised in the "Yellow Pages" of 1903. From my family stories I learned that Moses was the first to introduce



machinery in the bread baking business. Adolf and his younger brother were sent to Vienna to study, Adolf pharmacy and Leon, medical school. Moritz continued the family business and took over the bakery.



Etti and Isidor Eisenberg

My grandmother Hermina Itianu was the daughter of Etti and Isidor Eisenberg. The Eisenbergs were a well to do family, Isidor was a banker and properties owner in Suceava. As the rest of Suceava Jews they were deported to Transnistria in October 1941. Both Isidor and Etti Eisenberg died of Typhoid Fever after the terrible winter that was that year, in February-March 1942 at Shargorod getto.

As mentioned before, she married Adolf Itianu and they had two children: My father Mury born in 1922(Mauritius) and his younger brother Martin, born in 1924.



An interesting story about their changed name, from Itzig to Itianu:

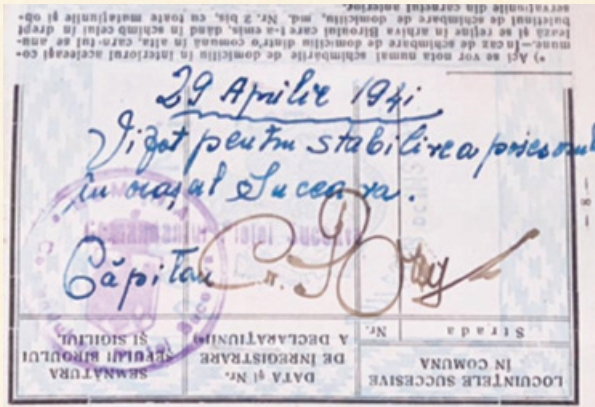
My grandfather, Adolf, who changed the name due to having to display the name above the pharmacy, was sued by another pharmacist that was named Iteanu. My grandfather however won in court because of the one letter difference in the name (the “i” versus”e” in the middle of the name). My parent's and my own maiden name was Itianu. However, Martin that moved to Bucharest became Iteanu most likely out of pronunciation convenience, as Itianu was always more challenging to spell. The Itianu name continues to live on as the middle name of my grandson!



My grandmother Mimi (Hermine) Eisenberg as a child



My father graduated from high school Stefan Cel Mare in 1940. The same year he got an identification card that shows that he was born on April 14th, 1922 in Falticeni, that the family lived at the address Vasile Bumbac 20 and that his “occupation” was “High school graduate”.



The house at Vasile Bumbac 20, in Suceava is engraved in my memory. I spent there a few summer vacations, between the age of 4 and 7. During the post war Communist era, my grandmother was allowed by the Romanian authorities to use one room in her own house, the bathroom and the kitchen. The other rooms were transformed in apartments for eligible “tenants”. As I grew up in this reality, it never crossed my mind to ask why and how. She had though a beautiful flower garden and lots of plants on the



Picture of Omama, my grandmother Hermine Itianu, as I remember her. She passed away in 1964.

sill of her only window in her room, which I remember fondly. I believe that her love of flowers and gardening lives in my soul.

1940 was the year that Jewish persecutions became “official”: curfew, wearing the yellow star of David, limited movement etc.

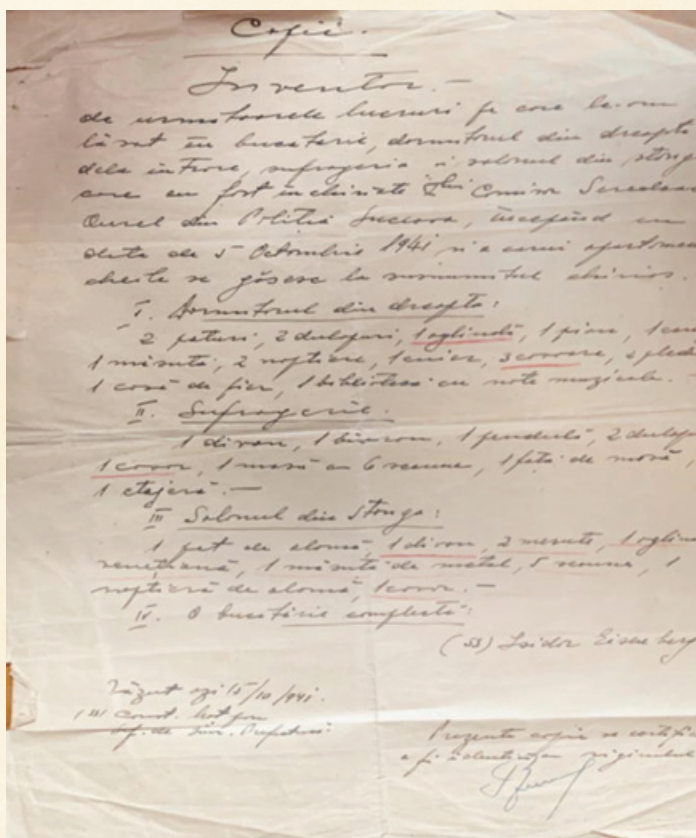
On October 5th, about a week before the Jews were expelled to Transnistria, my father's family rented part of the house, including the content, to a local police office Aurel(not readable name) who probably knew about what was going to happen. My grandmother Mimi, her parents the Eisenbergs, the two sons Mury and Martin were ordered to leave for Transnistria most likely on the second



day of deportation, October 10th, 1941 based on the location of their home and the allocation to each of the two transports. Isidor Eisenberg, the grandfather, like other homeowners in Suceava, prepared an inventory of the content left in their house – in the care of the Romanian non Jewish people. The original document that includes that list is an opportunity to view the world and way of life that the Jews from Suceava left behind when deported. The list includes furniture, books, musical sheet, a piano, rugs, fancy mirrors, a fully appointed kitchen and even a safe that were left in the house at Vasile Bumbac 20. From the document it is also obvious that their house was roomy, other later documents list it as having 10 rooms.

From that list, I have childhood memories about very few items that returned to the family's possession: the piano which eventually became our piano and I practiced until age 18 when I left Romania, the metal bed that became my grandmother's bed in the single room the she lived after Transnistria and a metal table that my father brought with him to Israel, as the sole reminder of his childhood home and that I further shipped from Israel to my residence in the US, as I sign of respect for my father's attachment to that item. I seem to remember also some wool rugs at our house that were used as wall rugs and a mirror that my parents told me it was made from a larger Venetian mirror that broke and now I see such an item in the list. It seems that the items underlined in red upon their return from Transnistria were the items found at their home.

The next document is a very clear summary of the suffering and atrocities that Suceava Jews were subject to during their transfer to Transnistria and the life and for some, death there. This is a declaration written in a dry, legal language in Romanian and which I summarize below:



DECLARATION

Mauritius (Mury) Itianu that live at 20 Vasile Bumbac St between 1940-1941 and suffered the following:

1. Inability to continue his studies after 1940.
2. Loss of freedom: Curfew after 6PM, restriction in leaving the town (from November 1940 until deportation in October 1941)
3. Stigmatization by wearing the yellow start of David
4. Loss of property valued at 250000 lei that was left in Suceava: furniture, clothing, books, rugs, money.
5. Robbery of personal possessions and valuables including watch and money at the crossing of the river Nister.
6. Loss of freedom by being transported first to Atachi, then to the camp at Murafa and then to the camp at Shargorod, first in closed wagons under heavy guarding and then over the Nistru., being forced to live in concentration camp conditions.
7. Forced to work as slave labor at stone quarries.
8. Living harsh conditions of extreme hunger, cold, disease
9. Suffering from disease. Mury Itianu suffered from Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fever in 1942. As a result of the life in concentration camp he suffered from lifelong chronic diseases as ulcer and other.
10. The death of the grandparents Isidor and Etti Eisenberg within months after deportation.

DECLARAȚIE

Subsemnatul Gabor Konrad, domiciliat în Iași str.Șinelei nr 70 declar pe propria răspundere,conștient de excepțiile legii penale pentru încălcarea legislației medicale:

Cunosc din copilărie pe Itianu Mauritius, care este soacot paronem cu Itianu Mauriciu,domiciliat în Iași str.Pușkin nr 22. Tatăl său domiciliat în perioada 1940-1941 în Suceava str.Vasile Bumbac nr 20 și gata să în perioada 1940-1941, a avut de suferit o serie de persecuții rasiale,privându-l de libertate,deportare, muncă forțată și pagube materiale după cum urmează:

1. **Introducere de ștampilă:**
Itianu Mauritius a fost alinat să-și introducă ștampilele din anul 1940, când a luat bătălișorul la Liceul Ștefan cel Mare din Suceava până în anul 1940, când a-ă întors din lagărele din Transnistria.
2. **Restricții de libertate și izolarea sa pe cale de ștampilă.**
La Suceava, pe data 1940 (noiembrie) până în 1941 (decembrie) nu a avut voie să părăsească locuința după orele 10 și să intre sau parcură să a avut voie să părăsească orașul Suceava, trăind în condiții de restricții de libertate similare celor din gheto.
3. **Deportare de ștampilă.**
Începând cu luna aprilie 1941 până în luna octombrie 1941 la Suceava și apoi în continuare tot timpul deportării în Transnistria, respectiv până la eliberare, a fost obligat să poarte ștampilă distinctiv pentru creștii "neștampilă".
4. **Pierdere de ștampilă fără recuperare care a-ă pierdut în Transnistria.**
În luna octombrie 1941 la deportarea în Transnistria a fost obligat să părăsească locuința din Suceava cu ștampilă, ștampilă, ștampilă și alte bunuri prezente în valoare actuală de peste 25.000 lei (cuștină,ștampilă) lei care au rămas fără recuperare și a-ă pierdut în totalitate.
5. **Conștientizarea de bunuri și izolarea la lagărele din Iași.**
La începutul anului 1941, după ce a fost internat în lagărele de muncă, bunurile și mijlul său au fost confiscate de autoritățile germane-române, fiind în valoare actuală de lei 2000 (patrușeci și lei).
6. **Deportare în lagăre și pierderea de libertate.**
La 11 octombrie 1941 a fost internat în lagărele împreună cu întreaga familie locuina din Suceava, a fost internat sub pază în vagonul de marfă, sigilat din exterior fiind în perioada de călătorie și transportat până la localitatea Atachi Jui.Șinelei. Trezind în starea sub pază a fost dus în convoi în lagărele Murafa, regional în lagărele Șargorod și Jui.Șinelei, regiunea Viteaz, unde a trăit în condiții de lagăre până la eliberarea de către trupele sovietice în aprilie 1942, apoi conștient de ștampilă și izolarea, izolându-se de tifus exantematic, febră tifoidă și paratifoiză.
7. **Muncă forțată sub supraveghere.**
În perioada 1941 până în noiembrie 1942 Itianu

- 2 -

Mauritius a lucrat la cariera de piatră și șosele în împrejurimile lagărele Murafa.

8. **Boli contractate în timpul lagărele.**
Itianu Mauritius a suferit în timpul deportării în cursul anului 1942 de tifus exantematic, febră tifoidă și paratifoiză. În urma acestor boli a rămas cu următoarele sechele: ulcer duodenal cronic, flebită varicoasă a membrului inferior stâng și nevroză astenică, după cum rezultă din certificatul medical și declarația medicului curant anexate în acest dosar.

9. **Decesul bunicii în lagăre.**
Din cauza condițiilor dure de trai în lagăre au murit bunicii săi și anume: Eisenberg Ștefan Isidor și Eisenberg Etti.

Cunosc aceste fapte și împrejurări întrucât am locuit în aceeași localitate, Suceava și am fost deportat în aceeași condiții din Suceava în Transnistria.

Deu prezenta declarație spre a-și servi lui Itianu Mauritius domiciliat în Iași str. Pușkin nr 22, la obținerea de pagubilor pentru persecuțiile rasiale suferite.

R.S.R.
Notariatul de Stat județean Iași
Închiriere de autentificare nr
anul luna ziua

În fața noastră
Notar de stat, s-a prezentat Gabor Konrad, domiciliat în Iași str. Șinelei nr 70 cu buletinul de identitate seria P. nr 55896 eliberat de Miliția Iași, care a conștient la autentificarea prezentului înscris și a semnat exemplarele.

Se autentifică acest înscris .
Costul de taxă de timbru conf. par. 103 lit.p, din IMF.
17/11/1960.

Notar de stat



What this very dry and clear document does not mention but I believe to be true based on my experience and the experience of people with other similar family experience is that the 4 years of inhumane condition, suffering, disease, loss of life and loss of dignity left life-long psychological scars to the people that were lucky to return alive but forever changed. My father suffered from severe hunger and ate peels of potatoes in Transnistria. In my parents' household, we had potatoes every day and no piece of bread or food would ever be wasted. Having plenty of good food was always a high priority, in Romania where it was scarce and in Israel, where it was plentiful. And some of the joy of life was lost forever in Transnistria. Many of the Holocaust survivors did not want children or had an only child, as the world looked such an awful place to bring children into. The richness of the Jewish family life, with many children and holiday celebrations never returned to my surviving family and I am sure many others. Even for those that survived and lived to bring alive a next generation, the families shrunk.

My mother's family, the Segalls, were living in Falticeni in 1940: my grandparents Marcus and



From the left: my mom as a young girl, my maternal grandmother and my aunt Fifi (Sylvia) sitting in their home garden. Architectural decorated old windows, with interesting details, offer a hint about the beauty of my mom's home, and their financial status.

Ernestina Segall, their daughters Maura (my mother) and her younger sister Sylvia (Fifi) and Marcu's parents Avram Shlomo Segall and his wife Sabina.

The fate of the Jews in Falticeni was different than the Jews of Bucovina despite the two locations being relatively close.

My grandfather, Marcus, owned in Falticeni a furniture factory called "Moldova" and a lumber processing factory "Slatioara", a home in Falticeni and a rental property in Iasi. He was a self-made successful businessman throughout the 1930's. His father was a teacher of Jewish studies, but Marcus was an entrepreneur and businessman.

In a letter that he wrote to one of his brothers in the US in June 1940, he expressed some concern but seemed to have very little insight about what was about to come.





The Jews from Falticeni(that belonged to the “Regat” – the “Monarchy” – were not deported. I know that at first German officers occupied my grandparent's house and took over the factory, for their army use. My mother could not continue her high school studies as Jews were not allowed to register in non-Jewish schools. I was told that she worked in a hair styling business owned by a Jewish relative.

I also know that they had to wear the yellow star of David and that there was a curfew every evening for the Jews.

I do not know the exact date, but after a while the Jews in Falticeni were evicted from their homes that were taken over by the officers and had to leave town. I believe they left to Suceava and found shelter in houses of the Jews that were deported. I do not know when they returned, but I was told that they found their home looted, the valuables that they carefully left packed in trunks, including apparently works of art the Marcus liked to collect, gone. Also as the Germans left, they shipped all the machinery from the factory to Germany. His factory was upon his return an empty building. They used the land to grow vegetables.

Within a few years, the Communist regime took whatever was left from both sides of my family's self-created wealth, through hard work, ingenuity and courage of two generations during the first half of the twentieth century as well as robbing my parents of 25 years of hard work, before they were finally allowed to leave for Israel and freedom.

Most of my knowledge of the events in my mother's family came from stories that my aunt, Fifi(Silvia), my mother’s younger sister, told me during the years after my mother passed away (2002). She even told me some facts about my father's return from Transnistria to their home. My parents and my aunt Fifi were very close until the day they died. It took about 60 years for people to start telling the stories of the traumas suffered and my parents just did not live long enough to get to that stage.



My parents Maura and Mury Itianu





Flashes of Childhood Memories from Suceava

Beate-Beatrice Herman

The sources of this narrative are stories heard from my parents and their friends. I built the different periods in my life in Suceava upon this information

I was born to Carl and Rica Herman (nee Hauswater) in Suceava in 1946, a year after the end of WWII. My dad was a watchmaker, a jeweler and the first violinist in the town orchestra.



The picture was probably taken at a Festive Meeting of CGM, CONFEDERATIA GENERALA A MUNCII. Chorus and orchestra on stage. Max Glickman first on the left, my father, with glasses, first violin, next to the conductor. A real historic photo. On the wall posters of the great leaders: on the left Gheorghe Ghoerghiu-Dej, Prime Minister, Engels, Stalin. On the far right Ana Pauker, Foreign Affair Minister. In between the posters of Marx and Lenin.

My mom was a housewife, a beautiful, talented impressive woman, an artist at heart.

During the war, my parents, like all Suceava Jews, were deported to Transnistria, to Moghilev or Shargorod. The story of their survival oscillated between hope and desperation, between life



and death. Horrific stories about starvation, typhoid fever, persecution by the Ukrainians, sudden appearances of the Germans were their life's routine. My father was a resourceful man who understood the Russians love for watches. He took advantage of their addiction and used it to save and provide for his family. At the end of war, he even succeeded purchasing a cart and two horses with which our family returned home. Once back, he sadly understood that his house and all its possessions were looted. Bribing officials and police officers helped father to get back nearly every item. In addition, he repossessed his store on the Stefan cel Mare main street and immediately started working. On the way back from Transnistria, father lost his parents. My mom, my dad and my maternal grandfather were the only survivors. My granddad's story is sad and tragic. Being a dog lover, grandfather got a puppy from a town resident who couldn't raise it. However, the latter didn't tell him that this was only temporary. A year later, the dog disappeared. Subsequently, it turned out that the previous owner took the dog without my granddad's knowledge, which inflicted grief and anguish, eventually leading to a heart attack. That is how I grew up without any grandparents.

The legendary midwife Nossig and Dr. Hoch assisted my mother during delivery. After birth, the midwife put me in a shoebox and passed me to my dad, who nearly fainted.

When my dad asked what was the gender of his baby he was told "a girl". His face reflected his feelings – disappointment mixed with happiness (redundant to explain why). During the first months of my life my dad used to walk me in a beautiful perambulator, a gift from my maternal uncle who lived in Bucharest. When his friends or acquaintances asked if he had a girl or a boy, he always answered in a soft voice "a girl". The answer he got was "auch gut" (this is also good) and, thus, I got a new nickname.



As an only child, I was loved and spoiled, but I longed for one thing only; from a very young age I wanted a sister or a brother. My mom's advice was to put sugar cubes on the window ledge so the stork would fulfill my wish. It didn't work. Only later on I understood they "tricked me".

The house I was born in was on Curtea Domneasca Street. It was a detached house with a large living room, a medium bedroom, a kitchen and a long corridor with one exit towards the attic and another towards the basement. In the latter, we would store wood for the winter, wine, and potatoes. As children, we would use the basement to play hide and seek. The bathroom was in the yard as it was customary during those times.

However, during the 50s this "luxury" came to an end. The communist regime confiscated part of





In front of my father's shop



the house (the big living room and the yard around it) and built a wall (the Berlin wall) between the living room and the bedroom. Thus, we were left with a bedroom, which served also as a living room, a kitchen, a small back yard where we used to grow some vegetables. My dad built a sort of summer kitchen in the yard, which served as a meeting place for my friends and me.

After being nationalized, adding two partners, my dad's shop was turned into a cooperative. Fortunately, these were two Jewish partners, a watchmaker named Spiegel and a jeweler named Montag. From that moment on, until we immigrated to Israel, we were permanently under the "big brother's" watchful eye. As a result, the atmosphere at home changed as well. Fear and dread had become a lasting occupant in our house. My parents started talking between themselves in code since any unnecessary word could have repercussions (my father could have been arrested). The authorities strictly forbade people to possess foreign currency or to trade with gold. My dad was indirectly connected to both of them.

I remember a puzzling incident, which could explain the fear and the action taken as a result. One day as I returned from school, I felt smoke in the house and, when asked what happened, I was





My mom and I

told that some paper was burnt, but now everything was all right. Later on, dad told me that he burnt 300 000 lei in the attic. It turned out that in 1952, the Romanian authorities performed a currency reform. It was done to lower the excess of local currency liquidities and, at the same time, to hurt wealthy people, as the value of the local “lei” was devalued. To exchange the old currency for the new one, only a small quantity was permitted. The new financial policy affected the Jews who planned to immigrate to Israel and especially those who sold their property and raised money to pay taxes and fees. All of a sudden, they found themselves destituted. Those who didn’t sell their belongings were inflicted as well since it was difficult to find buyers.

My parents’ social life was connected to a small group of friends: Paula and Lion Berenthal, S. Rauch, Rita and Sami Rosenthal, the Spivak family, Berta and Milio Meir, Helen Brender (the famous bread seller), the Goldenbergs and their son Sandy.

Summer holidays were mostly spent in Bucharest at my cousin Alex Hauswater’s house. Thus, I had the opportunity to go to the Jewish Theatre and watch Dina Koenig and her husband performing, or eating at mythological restaurant, "Carul cu Bere" which exists even today, or ice cream at the famous "Nestor" or "Capsha".

During the autumn holidays, I used to join my parents at the Gah Synagogue. I especially loved the fashion show put by two extremely trendy women – Dr. Hoch’s wife and Dr. Weitmann’s wife.

From the 1st to the 6th grade I went to the school Liceul de fete not far from my house. At the beginning, it was an all-girl school. Towards the 4th or the 5th grade boys joined and the school was named Scoala Mixta nr. 2. I studied in the



Paula Berenthal, the pharmacist and mom





My parents with friends and with father's coworkers



same class with Tony Silber, Hani Fuchs, Rita Lauer, Sheli Rubinger, Ani Katz, Senta Grill. Mrs. Schmeterling was my best loved teacher. I especially loved to admire her meticulously chosen, fashionable clothes.

Three events are imprinted in my mind. The first was the impressive ceremony

during which I received the red tie (*cravata*) as a symbol of becoming part of the communist children movement. For this occasion, we had to prepare thoroughly and at the ceremony we had to recite poems praising Stalin "the sun of peoples".

The second occasion was Stalin's death and the heavy grief in aftermath. The third was the moment it became known that my family intended to immigrate to Israel. I was labeled "state enemy"; during a humiliating "ceremony", I was stripped from my red tie.



At the school orchestra: Mira at the piano, Rita with the accordion, I with the violin.

My first exposure to anti-Semitism is connected to the autumn holidays. I, Tony Silber, Rita Lauer, Sheli Rubinger and Hani Fuchs decided not to go to school on Yom Kippur. The following day our class-teacher, Nikitovich, received us with anti-Semitic comments and derogatory names. This was the first time I understood that my place wasn't there. Therefore, I started putting moderate pressure on my parents to immigrate to Israel.



Between 1952-1957 my parents' requests to immigrate to Israel were rejected. At the end of the 50's a new opportunity opened. December 18th 1958 is the day I'll never forget. Coming home from school, my father told me: "*Deine freude ist meine sorge*" (your happiness is my concern). We received permission to immigrate to Israel within three weeks. I was happy, of course. I understood that, together with us, Tony, Rita and Sheli's families have also received the much-awaited visa. My parents' dilemma was how to conform to the limits imposed by the Romanian authorities and pack 70 kilos of non-valuable possessions, actually a life, into a wooden crate and two carton suitcases with wooden stripes all around them.

The government nationalized our house with all its furniture. My mom had to travel to Bucharest to run some documents errands, while my dad and I stayed in Suceava. Rumors regarding my dad being arrested for keeping gold and foreign currency started spreading throughout town. This information was passed to us by one of our neighbors. As a result, my dad started to walk around the town every day to put an end to the rumors. Mom returned and we started to pack. On January 18 1959 we were supposed to leave. We took the following route to Israel: train from Suceava-Bucharest-Arad-Curtici-Budapest-Vienna-Naples. From Naples we boarded the "Theodor Hertzl" ship to Haifa on January 31 1959. Although it may sound easy, it was anything but.

At the border, before leaving Romania, men and women were separated so the Securitate people could check them. My parents hid in my thick socks a few valuables (a ring, a necklace, a brooch my dad made for my mom). That is why my boots were twice my regular size. Fortunately, the checker controlled only my upper part of the body and not my feet. Sandy Goldenberg waited for us in Vienna (at the time he was studying medicine). He helped us with the bureaucracy. For the first time we felt free. On the way, my dad told mom about what happened while she was in Bucharest. My mom's jewels, which were ingeniously hidden in the wooden stripes of the suitcases, and the few dollars my dad welded into the knives' handles disappeared. The little we had that could help our first settling in Israel disappeared. The jewels were given to my dad's sister who was married to Dragos, the Suceava railway manager who was well-connected to the authorities. The knives were given to my mom's brother. Many years later, my dad's sister claimed that the jewels were

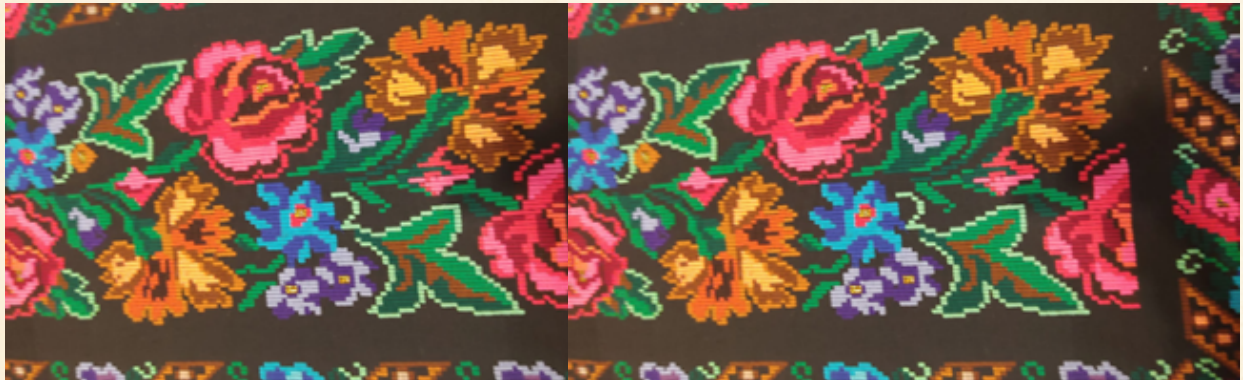


With Iudit Kohn performing at school



confiscated by the tax people when they performed a sudden search at her house. Although the knives reached eventually Israel with my uncle's arrival, my father gave them up.

Writing these lines was kind of closure for my parents who strove to offer me the best, for which they sacrificed a lot so my life could be better than theirs. On the other hand, this is my legacy for generations to come.





My Home-Town SUCEAVA.

Beni Budic

I left Suceava on a Saturday evening.

In the night train to Bucharest, I was starting to realise that every kilometre was taking me further and further away, forever wrenching me from my childhood lands. Could I have known then that I would be back – in my thoughts, in my dreams –, countless times, in the town on the hill and in my grandparents' house in Burdujeni, beyond the Suceava's meadow? And that many years later I would have the opportunity to light a candle at my mother's grave in the Jewish cemetery on the small hill beyond the grove? The lights of the station platforms flashed on, tearing at the darkness, accompanied by the groaning of the train brakes: Dolhasca, Paşcani, Roman, Bacău... My thoughts, however, were taking me back to the platform of the wonderful Burdujeni station, to the places where I lived my teenage years, experiencing moments, feelings and sensations which would forever be rooted in my mind.

I was born in Burdujeni and there I spent the first four years of my life, which left me with only scattered memories. But I was to return many times to the little town where my grandparents and the family of my beloved Aunt Frieda still lived. Aunt Frieda was my mother's younger sister and she was always by my side, from afar and in person, offering me her care and love until she passed away three years ago here in Israel.



photo taken from Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru



We moved to Suceava in 1950. My father had been given a job at the “Alimentara” (that is, the grocery store) on the left side of the picture above. He managed to get a house as well (true, it was a rented house) at No. 6, Cetății Street. It was the third house on the right on the gravel street which made its steep descent to the Cacaina brook and the foot of the hill, with the path climbing to the ruins of the citadel. The house had probably been owned by a family of wealthy Jews, but in those days it had already been divided into four dwelling places where several families lived. At first we had the flat with three connecting rooms on the right of the house. In the next flat, parallel to ours, but placed in the middle of the house, being thus more protected from the cold and damp, lived the Kavons who had a son and two daughters, all grown-ups. They had a horse and cart sheltered in the stables at the back of the yard. Soon enough (I think in less than a year) the Kavons left for Israel, and the stable was turned into a woodshed. On one side of the shed, connected to the building by a wall, were the two toilet stalls. One night we moved into the Kavons’ flat, where we lived for the next 13 or 14 years, until our departure. The Chibici family moved into our former flat. Ștefan Chibici, a uniquely talented watchmaker and mechanic, paralysed of both legs, lived with his wife and her son Armin (of German origin). Armin was a few years older than me. Over the years, from beyond our common wall, I would hear the grandfather clocks striking the hours in the workshop which gave on to the street. The workbench was next to one of the two windows, and, when I passed in front of the house, I couldn’t help noticing Mr. Chibici with his clockmaker’s eyeglass, armed with the tweezers and other tiny tools, bent over some clockwork mechanism. Mr. Chibici played the accordion and the upright piano. He was also an angler, and his friendly face made a great impression on me in my childhood years. Without a doubt, he was quite well-known in Suceava at that time, when he went out in his wheelchair. At first he would operate his wheelchair with his strong arms. After a while he added a small engine to it, and several years later the wheelchair was replaced by an actual three-wheeled motorbike, that could be operated using one’s hands. It also had a back bench, large enough to carry Armin and me from time to time. Sometimes I went fishing with them on the banks of the Suceava River. He kept his wheelchair for use when he went to the cinema. I can picture him even now, in front of the house, or in the backyard, disassembling, repairing, adjusting and reassembling the motorcycle engine.

All the pieces were laid out on a blanket and Chibici, squatting, moved with the help of his strong arms. The entire procedure took several hours, with Armin helping him. I used to watch fascinated as a handful of metal pieces turned back into an engine that would eventually work, purring harmoniously, filling the yard with the smell of burnt gasoline. When I turned thirteen, I was given the “Doxa” watch I inherited from my mother. It wasn’t a solid watch – it was delicate and elegant, and suffered some damage from my games. Mr Chibici always rescued me. I haven’t worn my



mother's Doxa for years, but, when I take it out of my drawer and wind it up, it still works.

Our home had two rooms and a kitchen. The room leading to the street was the living room and my parents' bedroom. It was furnished with a studio couch, a wardrobe and a square massive table.

My room was in the middle. It was the warmest, but light came in only through the doors and windows leading to the first room and the kitchen. In winter, when the kitchen was not heated, this room was also used as a dining room. In the kitchen, the main piece was a large cast-iron range with an oven next to it. But we were already cooking on the gas cooker, so we hardly used the range and the oven - only on Fridays which was cooking and baking day, and on the days we had to wash clothes. The shuttered kitchen door led to the yard through a small porch. It was a large yard, which actually surrounded the house on three sides. Next to the covered staircase leading to the attic was a tall locust tree. In spring it was laden with sweet white blossom flowers which filled the yard with their scent. Further up was the tall fence which completely blocked the view to the apple orchard that surrounded the Birth of St John's Church. From the porch, I could make out the church belfry tower and our Sunday mornings were dominated by the chiming of bells. The sour apples from the church yard were appealing, but the fence was too high and there were only a few branches within reach from behind the woodshed... On the church side of the yard, we would grow onions or tomatoes in two or three rows in summer. Next to the neighbouring fence was also a small shed that had been used in the past by its former owners as a "Suka" – the hut used in the week of the biblical autumn holiday (the Festival of Huts, the Festival of Tents or "Tabernacles"). The plate roof could be raised and temporarily replaced with a makeshift roof of leafy boughs while the festival lasted. I would find out about this later, though. During my time, the Chibici family used it as a larder. There was also a small fenced barn behind the shed, where they would fatten the pig in the autumn months. Several days before Christmas, on Saint Ignat's day, they would slaughter it. The entire ceremony was supervised by a hired butcher. I witnessed it several times, fascinated, watching the ritualistic crucifixion of the animal near the vats of boiling water and the burning fire.

The yard's main attraction, however, was the "pump". The water pump, – actually, a big iron drinking fountain –, supplied the tenants with water and water was running only one or two hours a day. It was right next to our kitchen, so, unlike our neighbours, we had only a few steps to take with our laden buckets to the barrel covered by a zinc-plated lid, where we always had several tens of litres of water stored. (In the kitchen, right next to the barrel stood the "washbasin", with its large enamelled bowl and a mug with a huge handle, almost as big as a pot, with which we took out the water from the barrel). Water supplying was sometimes quite an adventure in winter when



the pump often froze, despite being covered and lined with straw. Thawing out the pump was a complicated process involving several pots of boiling water and it wasn't always successful. In such cases, when we could already see the bottom of the barrel, the only thing we could do was take our buckets to Mrs. Haimovici at number 4, who had an indoor tap (quite a rare item in those years). Or we could walk about a hundred or two hundred metres to another pump down the street.

The other side of the yard stretched from the woodshed to the street, along the flats of the Hibners and the Shibers. This was actually a wing with one kitchen and three rooms, divided into two flats. The Hibners' place had an indoor bathroom fitted with a toilet next to the kitchen. They even had a tap in the kitchen, useless since there was running water only for the toilet, so they had to get their water from the pump as well. The two couples lived in the two flats, each with their small child, a boy and a girl. Izu Hibner was a good-looking plump young man with curly brown hair, in touch with the latest technological advances. He was an amateur photographer and he even developed his own movies and photos at home. He managed the "Photo-Music-Sports" store downtown. His wife, Piri, was a beautiful woman with short black hair. She was from Transylvania. I didn't know then that the number tattooed on one of her arms proved that young Piri was one of the few survivors from Auschwitz. Their little boy, Meir, was three or four years younger than me. Sometimes in summer our parents would bring a sand cart and set up a playpen for us. One winter, when the snow reached the eaves of the house, we would go out through an actual tunnel of snow. A path had been made by the Hibners' entrance, more than a metre above the ground. With the spring coming, the path thawed a little, and I remember how Izu Hibner sank waist-deep in the snow one day while he was leaving the yard. At the end of the 1950's both the Hibners and the Shibers left for Israel and other tenants moved in their place.

In the early years, that side of the yard was a very large plot that was later on separated from our yard by a fence. Corn was planted there then. But before this change, we had to ourselves a large open space covered with grass, with a magnificent walnut tree towering over it on one side. Apart from the walnuts it gave us, it gave us shade and a place to lie down on a blanket during the summer afternoons. It was also the favourite place where Mr. Panzaru, the photographer, was called to take pictures of the children. I have proof of that – a picture of me when I was about five, sporting a fringe and dressed in a sailor's suit, proud of my new tricycle. Foto Panzaru was a true institution in Suceava. He had a studio not far from our house, on Luca Arbore Street. In the centre, there was another photographer's studio, Foto Colbert.

The third wing of the yard was small and separated the three-door façade from the street. Cetății Street was narrow, unpaved, with no sidewalks. It was steep and flanked by two shallow ditches



invaded by nettles and camomile flowers in the summer months. I don't remember any car passing and the horse-drawn carts were few and far between. In winter it would become an ideal sleighing slope, slightly shorter than the one on Mirăuților Street, but just as exciting. In summer I used to watch the companies of soldiers living in the barracks, as they were marching along, singing on their way to and from the shooting range behind the citadel.

On summer afternoons my mother would take me for a stroll around town. It was quite a short walk from our house to Ștefan cel Mare Street where the "town centre" began. We used to go up Curtea Domnească Street, then called Stalin, and pass the bakery. A cart looking like a dirge stopped in front of it from time to time. Fresh round loaves of brown bread, still warm, were unloaded from the cart and taken into the store. Then the very short shopkeeper in her white coat would sell them through a small window to the people already queuing on the pavement. When I was a little older, I used to be sent once or twice a month to buy half a loaf of bread for two lei. On my way home I would munch on the warm, fragrant crust. Yet after several hours the bread would harden, becoming sour and quite uneatable.

We then passed by the girls' secondary school (I will mention it later), across the street from St. Dumitru's church, reaching the "Rozenberg Agency".

In the picture, on the far right there is the school building, on the left the church fence could be seen; the large wooden doors of "Rozenberg Agency" on the near right.



photo Dimitrie Balint



It was actually a newsagents' with newspapers and magazines exhibited in the shop windows and in racks on the open shutters by the entrance. Years later, I made a habit of buying there the issues of the magazine with science-fiction stories, the Contemporary, the almanacs which came out around New Year and many others. Behind the counter with its cigarettes was a desk with two typewriters, where young girls learned how to type, as well as one of the only phones in Suceava. But the scratchy tickets, the lottery tickets, and especially the football sweepstakes were the heart of the "agency". On Sunday afternoons and evenings the agency and the pavement in front of it were packed with people waiting for the results of the matches to be transmitted via the telephone; they were ardently commenting on the details they learned and constantly checking the numbers on their scorecards. The comments would go on each Monday morning at the barbershop around the corner, where the team of barbers, armed with the "Popular Sport," would analyse, together with their customers, what had taken place on the stadiums. Mr. Rozenberg reigned genially over this cultural and sporting empire. He was a short, plump man, quite energetic, an expert on all the activities going on in his store, with his wife assisting him duly. A few years later, he was arrested and charged with embezzlement and the agency vanished from the scene of Suceava.

After we left the newsagent's behind, we passed by the panel with posters for the upcoming movies and turned a corner into the town centre. Right on the corner was the "Alimentara" (the grocery store) where father worked at first. Later he worked for several years at the central store, across the street and further down the road; it was a larger store with several rooms – stands for groceries, sweets, bread, drinks, cheese, and salami. It was the biggest grocery store in town and took up an entire street corner. I remember how one evening – I think it was in winter – a huge fire destroyed the lateral side of the building. A lot of people had gathered to see the fire. They took me home immediately, but from our backyard I could still see the sky reddened by the flames for hours.

Our walk took us past the barbershop and not far from the corner we walked into Mrs. Herrer's perfume store. Mrs. Herrer and mother were friends. While they were chatting, I, drunk by the scents of the small store, would marvel at the large bottles on the counter, from which Mrs. Herrer would carefully pour cologne water or walnut oil through a small funnel, first into a graded tube and then into the bottles of her customers. NIVEA adverts were displayed in the shop windows and on the walls of the store. Mrs. Herrer had apparently taken a liking to me. Once she even insisted I take a picture with her in front of the store. I was about four or five years old, wearing a spielhozen, while she was leaning slightly forward, with her hands on my shoulders. We were in front of her store. Her son Dori was several years older than me. When I was about eight, Dori and his playmates took me once to the soldiers' shooting range beyond the citadel. After the soldiers



left, we were allowed to gather the lead cartridges that would be later on melted on the stove under my very eyes, in the lid of a shoe-polish jar, turning them into a lead disc, incredibly heavy for its size.

Across the perfume store a narrow passageway led through a labyrinth of entrances to the “butter market” lying behind the building of the central grocery store. Through that passageway we would climb the stairs to Dr. Rauch’s house, our family doctor, where we would call on from time to time. In most cases, though, when there was an emergency, Doctor Rauch would make a house call, carrying his large bag with the stethoscope, the glass syringe in a nickel box and various other medical instruments.

If we kept walking along the same side of the street, after the perfume store, we reached the corner, and found ourselves in a little lane that led on its left to the back of the girls’ secondary school. In the building next to it, towards the town centre, was a pharmacy where our neighbour, Mrs. Shiber, worked. On the same street, in a building on the ground floor was one of the two soda fountain stores in our town. Inside was a large machine for filling the thick soda bottles. It took up an entire room and it had wheels, relay belts, balloons of carbon dioxide and all sorts of levers and taps. The shop assistant placed the soda bottle upside down inside a metal mesh cage, filling it in front of my enchanted eyes. That was a true technological marvel. After the soda fountain store came the entrance leading up, following a staircase, to the first floor, to the Bodingers’ place, where the largest room was used as Mrs. Bodinger’s tailor shop for children. This was another well-known establishment in Suceava. I don’t think there was any “well-to-do” family in town whose mother did not choose one of Mrs. Bodinger’s creations for her children. She was a true artist. Two or three apprentices worked under her and the “sailor” or “hunter” suits or various patterns of dresses, trousers, and so on were considered first-quality stuff: true haute-couture masterpieces. As a child, I used to go there often enough, with my mother, with aunt Freida and with my younger cousin Iani, who were coming from Burdujeni specially to have new clothes made. Several years later, when I was already in secondary school, I used to be a regular guest in that house to see Mara – the Bodingers’ daughter. In Mara’s room we would meet regularly, the five of us, three girls and two boys, all of us schoolmates.

During the warm summer days, the stroll took us as far as the public garden, along the path of old chestnut trees on the street-side of the park. Across the street was the “telephone house” where sometimes, after long hours of waiting, my parents managed to be put through to their relatives in Galați and Bucharest for a three-minute long-distance call. Next to it was the headquarters of the CEC (that is, the Savings Bank) and “Our Bookshop” with two shop windows full of treasures.



Further up the street rose the proud, wonderful building of the Town Hall (back then it was the “Folk Council” and the Party’s regional headquarters), dominated by the clock tower and the belfry, a true architectural gem. In the park, almost opposite the Town Hall and a bit hidden by the trees lay the Roman-Catholic Church, also with a clock tower, its façade making one think of a Greek temple. Further up was a round artesian well and next to it Ciprian Porumbescu’s bust stood on a plinth.

A short way from the park we reached the “Tineretului” Cinema. This was to be a true sanctuary for me and my group of friends from school when I was a teenager. At the Tineretului and at the more modern Cinemascope (which opened in those very years next to “Ștefan cel Mare” secondary school), we would gather religiously four times a week. Over the years we watched hundreds of films, most of them Russian, but there were Chinese, French, Italian, German (DEFA) and occasionally American ones as well. Once in a while, some films were censored by the school. The secretary went from classroom to classroom and read the announcement with a grave demeanour. But even in those cases I hardly ever missed a film— I somehow managed to go in and out of the hall while it was dark... Sometimes, when I was a child, my parents would take me to the Tineretului. It was then that I saw (two evenings in a row!) “The Count of Monte Cristo”... My parents also took me to the theatre from time to time, at the fabled Dom Polski, behind the park. Further on was the kindergarten I attended for two years. During the first year my teacher was Mrs. Otilia. One of the activities now fixed in my memory was to cut up a figure drawn on a small cardboard piece, using a long pin with an end like a pearl, by applying frequent holes in the cardboard along the lines of the drawing. But the kindergarten was pulled down several years later and the Summer Theatre was built there, for open-air shows.

The street stretched on towards the courthouse, the outpatients’ surgeries (Policlinica), the Arini park (from which, in later years, we, the pioneers, set out for the 1st of May and the 23rd of August parades), towards the town stadium and the hospital. We never got that far - we usually turned back home near the cinema. We picked up father along the way at closing time.

On Sundays, the three of us would climb into a carriage and set out for Burdujeni, to my grandparents. The carriages, drawn by two horses, were about the only means of public transport in town, and there were quite a few of them in Suceava, some driven and owned by Jews. They waited for customers in front of St. Dumitru’s church, between Petru Rareș Street and the beginning of Ștefan cel Mare Street. It’s the same place where, several years later, they set up the stop for buses bound for Ițcani and Burdujeni. These buses, together with the taxi service in Pobeda cars, led to the disappearance of the carriages from the town streets. The carriages were tall and had



two benches – an upholstered one and a smaller, folding one. A convertible roof in the back could protect the passengers in the event of rain. But the tallest side – open to the elements – was the driver’s bench. When we travelled with a cabbie that we knew, if it was fine weather, I was allowed to climb on his bench next to him, and I could gaze upon the sights from up high.

The horses started at an easy canter down towards the Ițcani way, and then the cabbie turned right on the steep road towards the rickety wooden bridge that crossed the Suceava River. Getting closer to the bridge, the road, unpaved back then, became smoother. Right before the bridge I could glimpse on the right the “water castle”, a kind of small mill, with tall widows, from where the filtered river water was pumped towards the water tower in Zamca. It would take us two or three minutes to cross the bridge, although in some years, after heavy rainfalls, when the angry river almost burst its banks, the bridge was unusable. Then the crossing was made either along a makeshift footbridge – you had to be very careful doing that – or we took the long way round, through Ițcani. When the waters withdrew, but the bridge was undergoing repairs, you could wade your way straight through the river. The two horses were quite reluctant to go into the water, but a few whip cracks managed to persuade them. A concrete bridge was built only a few years later; it was a sign of the changes that would turn the Suceava meadow into a great polluted industrial area. However, the landscape was still idyllic in those early days. The tree-flanked road led to the railway barrier, where the signalman pulled on a lever, raising or lowering the barrier gate. As we waited for a train to pass, I could glimpse from the height of the driver’s bench the number of the railway tracks increasing to the left, towards the red-brick building of the Burdujeni station in the distance. Then the road climbed steadily ahead. I could spot, also on the left, the tall chimney of the “slaughterhouse”.

Next we passed by the marmalade factory, and, after a short while, we were already at the Primary School, passing the town hall and the dispensary. We were on the “First Street”, which had been the merchants’ street where, between the two wars, over a thousand Jews lived; that was about half the population of the little town. The only two-storey house in Burdujeni was here, further down this street. Almost all were terraced houses – built like bungalows, with connecting rooms. The shops faced the street. In the past, in the second and third streets lived the people of slender means, the shoemakers, the tailors and other craftsmen. In the years of my childhood, however, this arrangement could be only partially noticed. On the pavement, women would take out chairs in front of their houses and sat gossiping in the quiet of the Sunday mornings, curiously inspecting the passers-by. Then we passed the house where I was born and reached our grandparents’ house, about two hundred metres down the street, where the town ended and the village began. Burdujeni



was to be a small paradise for me during the next ten years. There I attended almost the entire first school year while my mother was operated on in a Bucharest hospital; she then spent the convalescence months in my grandparents' house. Mother was about three years older than her sister, Freida. The two years spent together in the hell of Transnistria had surely brought the two teenagers together in a strong bond of friendship and mutual abnegation seldom seen between sisters. After my mother's death, I was to become the object of that affection, and my aunt's house, which was close by, near the end of the village, became a second home for me. It was there that I spent, as a days and evenings, surrounded by care and love.

When it was a religious holiday I went with my parents to the synagogue. It was usually during autumn, when, for about three weeks, there come the most important holidays of the year. Father had joined the congregation of the "Taylors' Synagogue", situated at the beginning of Petru Rareș Street. It was a rather modest place. It couldn't be compared to the large synagogue in Burdujeni, built in the first half of the 19th century, where I occasionally went with my grandfather and which left me with very impressive memories. In later years, when, together with groups of Israeli tourists, I visited the largest synagogue (today, the only one) in Botoșani, built around the same time and in the same style, nowadays restored, I rediscovered the memories of that synagogue in Burdujeni; sadly, it is no longer there, just as the other ones in Suceava. In the Suceava of my childhood there were about six synagogues, and during holidays we the children made the most of the game with our playmates, which sounded more interesting than the prayers we sometimes hardly understood. We sometimes went to visit the groups of children frolicking around other synagogues, all dressed in their best clothes. I remember how, on the holy day of atonement, "Yom Kipur", while all the congregation was deep in pious prayers, having fasted for 24 hours, the ones who couldn't get a day off work would sneak in for an hour or two, dressed in their work overalls. Most of the Jews in Suceava were no longer orthodox, but this was more than faith – the tradition was deeply rooted even in the modern ones. In Suceava, the second largest town in Bukovina, between the two World Wars, there lived about 4,000 Jews, about one fifth of the town's population. Each and every one of them was deported in Transnistria in October 1941, just as were the ones from Burdujeni, from the villages around and from Dorohoi. Actually, all the Jews from Bukovina, almost two hundred thousand souls, were driven out of their homes. Fewer than half survived the oppressions, the cold, the hunger and the diseases. Those who returned to Suceava were joined after the war by others from the north of Bukovina, which was annexed to the Soviet Union. Also, Suceava attracted many of the ones from the nearby town and villages, originally "kingdom-dwellers", many of them Jews. Thus, the Suceava of my childhood years was still a town with a prominent Jewish population. Many of its teachers, doctors, pharmacists,



lawyers, craftsmen or shop-assistants in the “state stores” were Jewish. So I grew up with many who shared my religion, friends and family acquaintances, neighbours, schoolmates, but I also knew many others who were Christians. During my childhood and teenage years, I saw this reality as completely normal. I can’t remember in those years any situations in which I felt different, or was in any way affected by my ethnic origins, except that we, the Jews, were all waiting to get approval to leave for Israel. I knew subconsciously that time would come one day, but my life continued the smooth steady course of my younger years. The years spent in Suceava were probably among the best of my life. By the middle of the 1960’s, most of the Jews in Suceava immigrated to Israel, one family at a time. In secondary school, a classmate would leave us almost every few months. In my last year there, in the 11th form, there were only three of us, and after my departure in spring, about two months before the final exam, only Mira Zeidler and Emanuel Menczel were left. They were to come here a year or two later.

I attended “Ștefan cel Mare” school for the first three years. My first primary-school teacher was Mr. Crudu, a grey-haired man, apparently gentle, but who knew how to keep us on our toes; many a time did he bring me back to reality with a flick over my close-cropped hair, when I lost myself in daydreams or found myself reading at the end of the Reading textbook, with more interesting texts than the ones we did in class. But, after some time, only a few weeks after the start of the school year, worrying things happened at home. My parents grew grave and were obviously worried about something. My mother’s visits to Dr. Rauch, then to other doctors, became more and more frequent, while Aunt Freida would come by quite often and sometimes tearful discussions took place. Then I was told that my mother was ill and had to leave for Bucharest for a long time; my father would go with her and I would live with my grandparents until my mother got better. This is how I was transferred in the first form at the primary school in Burdujeni. My mother was diagnosed with a brain tumour and had to be operated on. The day before the operation, already in the middle of winter, my mother insisted on seeing me, so for two or three days I was taken to Bucharest where I visited her in hospital. Then I went back to school where, apparently, I was quite a diligent student. My mother returned to Burdujeni around springtime to convalesce. I was glad of her arrival, even if it bothered me to see her beautiful red hair now cut short, like a boy’s; I was also taken aback by the fact that I could see she was walking with a limp and using a cane. But things seemed to be improving. I finished my first form in Burdujeni with flying colours, then we returned home to Suceava. My mother was helped around the house by Maria, a good-looking young girl, full of life and with a heart of gold. I was very fond of her in those three years she lived with us. The summer of 1954 – my first school holiday - with its smell of lilies of the valley and daffodils, was a good summer for me.



In August I went with my parents to Vatra Dornei, to take the baths; there I met my relatives from Iasi. Even my grandmother stayed with us for a few days. For me, it was a wonderful adventure. Yet things were to change for the worse after about a year. After I finished the second form, my mother's illness relapsed. She was once more operated on in Bucharest (during that summer I stayed at my mother's uncles' in Galați, where I would spend enchanting holidays in the years to come). At the end of summer, my mother, now untreatable, was sent back home to Suceava. She died one Saturday morning, on the 2nd of September, and was buried the next day. She was only 33. The saddened cortege, leaving our house, passed behind the girls' secondary school, then along a little street behind the park, descending by St. John's monastery, by the power station, and then climbed by the grove, reaching the Jewish cemetery, where my mother's resting place has been since then. When I started the third form, I was an orphan.

Father remarried two years later. Then my two brothers were born. Avi, the older, attended a kindergarten near the Armenian church for almost a year. He was only about five when we left Suceava.

In the autumn of 1956, when the motion for co-ed schools came into force, I moved to Middle School number 2. There, in the old building of the former girls' secondary school, I was to attend the 4th to 8th forms. In the last years I studied for a time in a wing of the newly built vocational school, until our school moved for good into its new location on Petru Rareș Street. The new school was a bright building with wood flooring. In order to keep it clean, we were asked to change our shoes at the entrance on rainy days. During the 4th form my teacher was Mrs. Zavulovici, my violin teacher's wife. During those years the school was already too cramped and there were times when we had classes in the afternoon, from two until the evening hours. Almost all the time, school was for me a place I went to gladly, as well as a source of great satisfaction. Mrs. Frieda Vigder was headmistress when I was in middle school. Several years later she would be removed from her position, because she had allowed a teacher to continue working in the school, although she was registered to emigrate to Israel. This would give me the happy occasion to know her better, because she became my form teacher during the 10th and 11th forms. She taught us Physics and Chemistry. She had an imposing, charismatic personality. Seemingly stern and unforgiving, I discovered outside class that she was a sensitive, empathetic woman. As a teacher, she could work true miracles. The lessons she explained were understood even by the worst students in class. She was undoubtedly one of the best-known, appreciated and respected personalities in Suceava. I know that, long after she had retired, even in her nineties, she continued to tutor countless of generations of pupils for the university entrance exams. As for the rest of my secondary school teachers, I still have fond memories of Mrs. Cristea, Mrs. Soroceanu, Mrs. Macioapă, Mrs. Pavel,



Mr. Lazurcă, Mrs. Riemer, Mr. Eichorn, Mrs. Mustață, and others whom I beg forgiveness for not mentioning.

Moving to the new school, starting with the 4th form, was probably a crucial moment in my life. I was to encounter a new reality – female classmates, whose presence changed the atmosphere completely. More than that, though, during the 4th form I met a new classmate, Mihai Drișcu. From that day onward until my departure from Suceava, we were almost inseparable. Time proved our friendship had a lot of common ground to stand on. We were never bored with each other. After classes, we would meet at the Drișcus' humble place, on Ștefan cel Mare Street (which you could gain through the back, crossing the open yard with the entrance to the “wine cellar”). In time I became a regular fixture for Elena and Grișa Drișcu and their two boys: Dănuț (Mihai) and his little brother, Titi. More often than not, though (and I'm talking about my high-school years), we would gather in a group of five, the two of us and three girls – our hostess Mara Bodinger, Mira Seidler and Betty Merdler. I admired and appreciated Mihai from the very beginning. I was aware even then of his intellectual superiority, his special way of looking at things, his wide knowledge; for a teenager, he had a great skill of interpreting and analysing what he read and saw. Truth be told, he was a role model for me, one I strove to emulate. Not as far as his artistic talent was concerned, something he excelled in even then, since I was aware I didn't have the skill for that. It was in all our other spiritual activities that I tried to be like him. During those few happy years the harmony between us was perfect. Never – not even once in eight years – did we have any personal conflict.

They were beautiful years, when the future seemed very promising. And that was due to the special charm of our town. Then came the time for us to part ways. I entrusted Mihai with my notebooks with all that I had written during those years, since we were forbidden to take with us any kind of written information. Many years later, especially after Mihai's tragic and as yet unsolved death, I thought they were lost, but I was to find them in completely paradoxical circumstances. Mara, Mira and Betty had also come to Israel. Mihai had gone to seek his fortune in Bucharest. Once there, he proved “he was already a complete man, one who wrote with extraordinary skill and thought better than many in Bucharest,” according to Gheorghe Vida, one of the friends he made there. He studied Fine Arts, he created works of art, wrote and published articles, especially as an art critic. For years he was the editor of “Arta” magazine, until his absurd and probably planned accident that ended his days at less than 43 years of age.

The night train rushed on, puffing and whistling. Adjud, Mărășești, Focșani... My thoughts were flying forward as well, to what awaited me, to the grand adventure of the journey to a



far-off country, to an unknown land full of promises. For a 17-year-old young man, that was quite emotional and exciting. But I kept returning in my mind's eye to what I had left behind. About three weeks before leaving, I had written the following lines in my diary: *“As with every journey to come, the preparations have already begun. This time, however, it's something quite special. I'm mentally preparing myself to forever part with the world of my childhood. Regrets are inevitable, as well as natural. It's impossible for my soul not to carry the mark of the places where my life began. Could I possibly long for the town I've known since I've known myself?!... I for one don't really feel it in my bones that I belong to Suceava. I'm not at all familiar with the rank and fashion of Bukovina – now scattered all over the world. My acquaintances are only limited to quite a small circle and there are more (so I believe) who know me without me being aware of it. Suceava. It doesn't mean that much to me. Still... I'm in danger of becoming sentimental, but that's that. There's a latent romantic buried somewhere inside me – as Drişcu rightly remarked. These hills I look upon every time I leave for Burdujeni, with their church towers, the quiet that surrounds them in the green summer months, when the orchards in Zamca are full of leaf, they all make me nostalgic and I don't know why – but the feeling is there to stay. Especially now, when I know I'm seeing them for the last time.”*

In one of those evenings, close to the day of departure, I found a rather eccentric way of saying farewell to Suceava. The town centre was completely different from that of my childhood years. Countless buildings had been torn down and replaced with blocks of flats, the shops were no longer the same, Ana Ipătescu Street had been opened and in the new square a high-rise building was still under construction, the first ten-storey block in town. Actually, in those years, according to my diaries, the town centre was full of trenches, like a war zone. It was an evening at the beginning of April, a few days before I left for good. My father had to go to Bucharest for a day to get some papers. I had seen him off at Iţcani station. On my way back, I got off the bus right next to the entrance to St. John's church, close to home. Afterwards, I wrote in my diary: *“I'm seeing my father off and, as I get back, some wacky ideas cross my mind. It's dark inside the church and I wouldn't want to disturb some happy couple. I go around it. I'm not scared, am I?? Of course not! To prove it, in ten minutes I'm on the terrace of the high-rise building, after taking the lift to the fifth floor and then climbing up the stairs the remaining five in almost total darkness. Eleven o'clock at night. It really is romantic. It's rather windy, though. My matches are almost all used up. Finally! I have to be careful. There's a steel wire mesh down below. Next summer there will probably be a confectionery or cafe on the ground floor. I have to tread carefully and, to be honest, I'm rather scared. I'm shaking a bit. There's a light in the cabin of the lift engine– someone might hear me. Any explanation for my presence there would be in vain. The view is disappointing. Far*



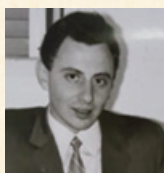
away, it's pitch-dark."

Dawn was creeping in. I had already left behind the platform of Buzău station. The train sped on towards Ploiești. The morning before, the last one spent in Suceava, I said my farewells to classmates. I had a class with my form teacher on Saturday. During the break, I went to the humanities' classroom to see Mihai and the girls (Mihai was the only boy in the class). Then I went to our classroom and sat down at my old desk. The boys, Mihăiță Rusu, Florin Solonaru, Puiu Urian, Bărbulescu, greeted me with pats on the shoulder. I attended the class without realising then the tricky situation I was placing our form teacher, Mrs. Vigder, in. But, in her wisdom, she found a way to give me a warm farewell, without crossing "the party line". Around lunchtime I went to the Drișcus' place. I left Mihai my notebooks.

After lunch I went to Burdujeni for the last time. Aunt Freida would come to Bucharest later, but I said farewell to all the others there. I spent an hour near tears in my grandparents' house. I dropped by my grandparents' neighbours as well. That spring evening I left many teary eyes in Burdujeni. It was morning by now. The train was drawing closer to Bucharest. Two weeks later I was to find myself in other lands, in another reality, far from the Suceava of my childhood and adolescence. I would return, years later, but only in passing.

I left Suceava that Saturday for good. But Suceava has never left me.



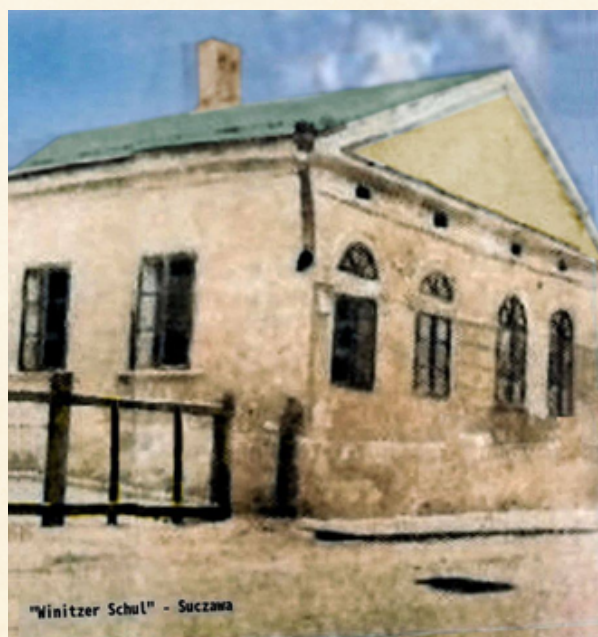


My Synagogues

Beni Budic

About 15 years ago “Shotzer”, a commemorative book about Suceava Jewish community, was published in Israel. “Shotzer” comprises a wealth of historical and personal information. In Simcha Weisbuch’s introduction, I read that, among other institutions of the Jewish communities, ten synagogues functioned in Suceava before WWII. We, the generation born after war, only six prayer houses were left: the Great Synagogue – or the Temple; the Beit Midrash Synagogue (located in the same complex with the Temple); the Wijnitz Synagogue (located opposite the two); Sadigura synagogue; the Tailors’ Synagogue and Hevre Gah Synagogue, the only one which survived the communist era and still exists to this day.

Since the 19th century, Moldova and the Maramureş were under the influence of Hasidut, a religious doctrine with certain mystical tendencies. Hasidic rabbis “courts” were formed in certain towns and disciples worshiped the Jewish religion. Those who took part in the Hasidic movement obeyed the advice of the rabbi, recognizing his absolute spiritual authority. In the Hasidic universe, there were multiple, small, modest synagogues which blended into the town buildings. I believe I’m not mistaken if I characterize the Suceava Jewish population of those times as belonging to the Hasidic movement. The religious faith lost its intensity during the interbellum period and, even more during the communist years. However, the majority followed tradition.



Wiznitzer Schul -Suczawa (on a post card)

With regard to their architectonic style, the Temple, the Beit Midrash Synagogue, the Gah Synagogue and the Great Synagogue in Burdujeni (Die Grosse Şil) are an exception. Their exterior stood out as places of worship. The Temple’s interior consisted of a big, tall and majestic hall, lit by immense windows, nearly two stories high. The benches and desks of the congregants





The Sadigura Temple (photo from Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru)

were arranged in parallel eastward towards the Holy Ark (chivotul). In the middle of the hall was the Bima, the impressive podium where the holly scrolls were read. The women's prayer gallery was on the upper level stretching to the south, west and north sides of the central hall. I don't remember other details, but certainly the Holy Ark was a superb piece made of carved wood. The ceiling and the walls were decorated with paintings – scenery from the Holy Land and the symbols of the 12th tribes. I assume the Temple was built according to the architectural fashion of Central Europe synagogues in the second half of the nineteenth century. The size and grandeur of the building was proof of a numerous and wealthy Jewish community in Suceava.

On a few occasions, I was able to see the interior of Sadigura synagogue. In my childhood, I had, like all Jewish boys, to study the secrets of the Hebrew language. Actually, we learned only to read, without understanding anything, texts from the Sidur – the praying book. I studied with Mr. Zonnenshein for about two years, after which I was to be transferred to Mr. Wijnitzer, a small, strict man, with a goatee, who would introduce me a little also to the study of the Pentateuch (Torah). Mr. Zonnenshein was a tall and kind man. He and his wife used to teach the first Hebrew letters to many boys and girls, even to preschoolers. The individual lessons took place in the couple's home, which was next to Sadigura synagogue, in front of the market. Mr. Zonnenshein



was also the synagogue caretaker. Sometimes, on Fridays, when their house was being cleaned, the lesson took place in the synagogue. Its building was only a little different from the houses around it and the interior, as I remember it, was simple and modest like the one of the Tailors' synagogue, which I used to know better.

When we moved to Suceava in 1950, dad joined the Die Schneiderișe Șil's congregants. This synagogue was at the beginning of the Petru Rareș Street, a few meters away from our house. Later on, at the beginning of the 60's, the building was demolished and the land became part of the one on which was built the new building of the school where we were studying – Middle School number 2. Perhaps in the beginning the synagogue was built by the guild of the tailors, but during the years I knew it only few of the congregants were tailors. Then the synagogue was active daily for the morning prayer (Shahrit), but especially on Shabat and holidays, when it was filled with the faithful (more or less) who used to come even from the farthest neighborhoods. I remember, during the autumn holidays, especially on Yom Kippur, the holiday for the forgiveness of the sin, people who couldn't get a free day would sneak in the synagogue dressed with the blue overall which they used to take off discreetly near the entrance, wrapping themselves with the Talit and joining the other for at least an hour.

The Tailors' Synagogue was probably built at the beginning of the century. From the exterior, it couldn't be distinguished from the neighboring houses. It was a simple single-storey building with a tin roof. On the right side, a gate led into a long and narrow yard from where one could enter in the women praying room, adjoining the main hall. Because of the terrain, it was one or two meters higher. The entrance was directly from the sidewalk through a double door with shutters. When the synagogue was opened, one of the shutters which opened towards the street was always closed. The second door, which had a glass window, opened in the interior. To get in one should get down two low steps. On the left side, near the wall stood a narrow table on which in an oblong tray (platter) full of sand tens of candles were burning. On the right side, there was a big terracotta stove. During cold winter Saturdays, a man was hired to take care of the fire and candles. Contrary to expectations, the part overlooking east, where the Holy Ark (chivotul) could be found, was on the right broad side of the rectangular room. On the same side there were also two or three windows.

The Holy Ark (Aron Hakodesh) was a pretty simple piece in the form of a big wood cupboard with carved elements. The compartment where the holy scrolls (Torah) were kept was in the superior part of the cupboard. These embodied the real treasure of the synagogue, the element that transforms a simple building into a holy edifice meant for praying and studying. Our synagogue



had 5-6 scrolls that could be read in during prayers and 2-3 which, from different reasons, weren't pure enough for this purpose. All of them were kept in the ark covered by an embroidered velvet curtain. The lower part of the ark functioned as a stand for the cantor when he performed the prayers. The congregants used to sit on the benches situated on both sides of the long tables, arranged along the walls. In the center of the hall another row of benches was put on both sides of the tall table with a slightly oblique top on which the holy scrolls were set and where they were read. This simple table covered in velvet replaced what should have been the Bima, the podium, in the bigger synagogues. In our synagogue, as a result of its modest size this wasn't possible. At Simchat Torah (the celebration of the Torah), which concludes the autumn holidays, all furniture around this table was removed and this became the axis around which the congregants would dance and sing with the holy scrolls tightly held in their arms. In that day everyone, big and small, is equal to some extent. Thus, I see myself as a child with a little Torah in my arms, encircling the table and blushing to the top of my ears hearing the blessings bestowed upon me by those dancing around: "Have a healthy new year!" The moment I finished this "task" I was free to concern myself, together with other kids, with the sacks full of roasted nuts made by the Hermans in their kitchen and in their close by bakery.

On the north side of the hall, about a meter above the long table, there were a series of windows, partially covered on the other side with white curtains. The windows opened towards the women praying room and, during holidays, when women came to the synagogue, they were wide open so the cantor's prayer could be heard well in there, too. In our synagogue, the women praying room was bigger and brighter than usual and the large windows created a complete sound communication with the main hall.

During those years, the "house cantor" at the tailors' synagogue was Mr. Țighelnic, my friend Tully's dad. Unfortunately, Tully left us a few years back, I believe the first from our generation to do so. Sometimes, largely during holidays, my father would perform some prayers as a cantor. Although not a professional, dad had a warm pleasant voice and he knew the texts, music and the traditional intonations of the prayers (which were according to the Hassidic ritual).

I don't remember accurately if the ceiling of the synagogue (which was pretty low) or the walls were decorated with any painted images. Could be that the walls had some naïve painting of the Biblical land. However, I do remember well the many lighting spheres hanging from the ceiling one next to the other. Actually, the number of the spheres was much bigger than necessary for lighting the synagogue. All of them were donated by families in the memory of their dead loved ones. On each of the whitish opaque spheres were written in black letters in Romanian



and Hebrew the name and the death date. I was still a child when a sphere containing my mom's name joined the others on the Tailors' Synagogue's ceiling. After that, unlike most children and adolescents, I used to stay in the synagogue during Izkor prayer. This prayer is, according to the Ashkenazi rite, whispered four times a year, at certain holidays, by anyone who lost one of their parents. Those whose parents are alive must leave the synagogue for the duration of the prayer, 10-15 minutes. In addition, on the Izkor days, it is customary to light remembrance candles, which burn for 24 hours. I was one of the 2-3 children who didn't get out and witnessed the depth of the feelings of people around us and the muffled crying which could be heard from the women wing. Now I understand the pain and the inner turmoil, especially considering the fact that we were then only a few years after the calamity of the Suceava and the entire Bucovina Jews who were deported to Transnistria, where tens of thousands died from every family. At the end of the Izkor personal prayer, the cantor returned, with a powerful and emotional voice, to one or two prayers on the same theme, bringing again tears in many eyes and at the end he used to read the long list of parishioners who passed away over the last decades. The list read loudly by Mr. Țigheľnic was monotonous, long, arranged chronologically and, to be honest, a little tiring for a nine-year-old child. Towards the end of the list my mom's name, Clara, was also mentioned.

As I said before, during childhood, my presence at the synagogue was connected to the holiday periods, when I, dressed in new clothes and shoes (which, oh! were too tight and hurt me), joined my parents, like all my playmates. During the autumn holiday, the prayers went on for many hours. Mothers and grandmothers used to bring something to eat for the kids, usually the unforgettable traditional "honey cake" – honiglekeh. We, children, were more interested in meeting our playmates than hearing the prayers. Many were living in faraway neighborhoods and, so, we didn't meet too often. The yard and the surroundings of the synagogue were ours. When we grew older, we, groups of boys, used to go and meet others like us, wandering around to other close by synagogues, especially near the Temple. There boys from other two-three synagogues would gather and it was a lot of fun. Sometimes I would even enter the Temple and listen part of the holiday prayer performed by the town rabbi. Then I could somehow see the interior of this synagogue.

After my mom's death, my presence at different synagogues was nearly daily. I had the duty, as a son, to say aloud during the entire mourning year at each of the three daily prayers the short text of the orphans' kadish. Even then, in the mid 50's, the number of those taking part in the day-to-day prayers was already small. As a result, the congregants from the Tailors' Synagogue and those from the Wijnitz Synagogue united: the dawn prayer (Shaharit) took place at the former and the



shorter afternoon prayer (Minha) and the evening prayer (Maariv) were held 15-20 minutes before and after the sunset at the latter. My dad, may he rest in peace, took upon himself the obligation to say kadish at dawn, thus exempting me, a nine-year-old child, to come to the synagogue la 6 o'clock a.m., winter and summer as one. I used to go (more or less) every day for the evening prayers to Wijnitz and, thus, I had the possibility to know closer this synagogue.

I have already mentioned that Wijnitz was opposite the Temple and the Beit Midrash, on a Suceava street which, before the war was called the Synagogues Street, not far for the carts' market. In winter 1955/56, as in many other years, the town electrical plant didn't function properly, so, immediately after sunset, Suceava's streets were plunged into darkness. To ease my groping around in darkness on the sloppy streets I was equipped with a simple bakelite flashlight. Not exactly the dreamy "hunters'" flashlights other boys had, but something anyway! Only the batteries unfortunately would drain fast and it was difficult to find new ones in spite of the fact that I knew some shop assistants...

Anyway, all through that year in the evening I would go to the Wijnitz Synagogue. Its building was a modest one, completely lacking any ornament or architectural symbol, totally different from the two impressive synagogues on the opposite side of the street. The entrance was through the yard, up a few wooden stairs leading to a small verandah and from there to a hallway from which two doors would open: on the right side towards the main praying hall and on the left towards the women praying hall. Like in the Tailors' Synagogue, the main hall was oriented so that the modest Holy Ark was placed in the middle of one of the longer walls in the room facing eastward. The parishioners would sit on wooden benches on both sides of the long tables set along the walls. Another row of tables and benches were in the center of the room, on both sides of the inclined tall table on which the Torah was read.

In between the Minha and Maariv there usually was a 20 minute break. During this time, and after the Maariv, some of the parishioners would gather around a table in the corner of the synagogue for a Mishna or Talmud lesson. During winter nights, on a close by table there were thick glasses, a small teapot with tea essence at the disposal of those studying. On the round cast-iron oven, near the big brick stove, was boiling a teapot with water. I, the little one, kept away and I couldn't say I understood something, although each sentence was translated into Yidish which I knew a little. In those evenings at Wijnitz I had the opportunity to know (this is a little too much to say) Mr. Avigdor Nussbauh, the one who usually coordinated the lesson. He was already an elderly man with a white short goatee who was part of the town-restricted circle of Jewish scholars. Much later I found out he was one of the leaders of the Zionist movement in Suceava during the years when



this was legal. There I also met Avram-Haim Ghelber, also a scholar, however not of Nussbauh's prominence. He was a tall man, thin also with a small white goatee, with blue eyes you couldn't be oblivious to even from the first glance and a permanent happy smile in the corner of his mouth. During those years, although not very young, he earned his living as a glazier. Everybody in town knew him and, when needed, they turned to him. Then, I couldn't imagine that, in about two years, my dad would marry his daughter, Ruti, and Avram-Haim Ghelber would in a way become my granddad. Unfortunately, it was only for a short time, since he passed away pretty young, only a year later.

A few years later, when I was 13 years old and, so, reached Bar Mitzva – the maturity acknowledgement ceremony for boys –, the Tailors' Synagogue was scheduled for demolition. Still my dad chose this place of worship for me to take part at the Shaharit prayer after, with many efforts and with my father's help, placing on my forehead, left arm, near my heart, the Tefilin, the ritual phylacteries.

To be with my two cousins in this important moment, uncle Burțu came early in the morning with the carriage from Burdujeni. It was probably an emotional moment, especially for the boy who got tangled in the long and thin leather straps of the phylacteries and, who, understandable, was relieved when the prayer finished and the parishioners, who hurried to get to work, were served with brandy and slices of lekah, after being congratulated by the family members. If I'm not mistaken, this was the last time I was at the Tailors' Synagogue. The next Saturday, already ritually "mature", I participated with my dad at the Shabat festive prayer at the Wijnitz synagogue. According to tradition, I was called for the first time in my life to read in the Torah, after which I was given the honor to utter in a somewhat musical tone, in keeping with a pre-established canon, the chapter in the Prophets Book – Aftara – associated with the week periscope. It was a serious thing for which I prepared during a few weeks with Mr. Shapira with whom I studied then Hebrew. At the end of that Saturday prayer, also in honor of my Bar Mitzvah, all those present were served with brandy or liquor and with big diamond form slices of țukerlekah a yellow-golden cake, tasting of paradise, reserved for special occasions. Also, for the parishioners' wives and the families were given packages with this cake. This was the last stage of my reaching the maturity, at least ritually speaking.

Later, after the demolition of the Tailors' Synagogue, whose land was part of the one on which our school was built, on Izkor days I and my dad would go on Petru Rares Street to Wijnitz. For my dad it was an opportunity to exchange with Artur Shapira a few Hebrew words he remembered from his youth.



I guess that my most early colorful and vivid memories are those linked to the big synagogue – Die Groise Şil - in Burdujeni, the little town where I saw the light of day, where I lived with my parents for my first four years and where I would often return in the following years to visit my grandparents. Before becoming a Suceava neighborhood, Burdujeni was, before the war, a shtetl with more than 1000 Jews and about 6 synagogues. During the years, I remember only 3 were left. One synagogue was in the center of the town and the other two in a sort of campus in which once there were a few synagogues. This place wasn't far from the center, but it was in a way isolated, no other houses being around, on a road leading on one side towards the market and on the other side towards the Jewish cemetery. Even when I was a little child, the town started to be abandoned by the Jewish people when the immigration wave to Israel began. One of those synagogues was then closed and the only left was “the big synagogue”, where sometimes as a child I used to visit with my maternal grandpa by zeida. Later, the once beautiful building was abandoned for years, becoming a ruin, an open wound to the few passers-by, until it broke apart all together and was demolished.

In the last few years, I had the opportunity to visit a few times with groups of tourists the big synagogue of Botosani. In the past I didn't see it, but now, after being renovated about 10 years ago, I was impressed and stunned by how much it looked like our Die Groise Şil from Burdujeni. Perhaps both buildings were built during the same period (around 1840) and even if not by the same architect, at least by architects belonging to the same school.

Die Groise Şil in Burdujeni was a rectangular building of impressive size. It stood at about two-storey height and it had a shingle roof descending asymmetrically towards the sides of the building. According to the Central and East-European fashion, the roof was extremely inclined and an eaves overhang was placed in its middle, under which the tilt was even sharper. Under this roof it must have been a huge attic in which, who knows, maybe once slept a clay giant, brother of the Prague Golem. I have no idea as I have never been in the attic and I haven't heard any of the boys to say something about it. Nearly all the windows were at the second storey level, just under the roof. The ones of the great praying hall were larger so it could get more day light. On the western wall, at the superior floor, where the women praying room was, there was an open porch bordered by a few simple columns, giving the building an aspect of classical massiveness. The entrance was on the southern side of the building. In the south-west corner, a wooden door would open towards the wooden stairs (already precarious during those years) leading to the porch and the entrance to the women praying room, where our mothers and grandmothers were waiting for us with cakes and other tasty things. The main entrance was more to the right, near the women's



room. It was a large double wooden door, with a small porch, towards which a flight of stone stairs bordered by a wall lead to a door. A dark passageway with some doors led to the Shtibl, and to the great hall. The first door in front led to the Shtibl, the room where everyday prayers were held whenever there were few participants and especially in the winter when heating the large hall of the synagogue would have been too expensive. The double-leaf bigger door on the right opened to 2-3 stairs that led to the great hall of the synagogue.

I remembered this rectangular, vast, high and full of light when, a few years back, I entered the great synagogue in Botosani. Seen with the eyes of the child I was, this hall seemed like the temple of Solomon. The ceiling was high, painted all over, from which chandelier arms would descend towards us, the ones standing underneath. All around the walls under the high windows were somewhat naïve mural paintings of idyllic scenery of the Holy Land and the emblems of the 12 tribes (any human figure being absolutely forbidden according to one of the Ten Commandments). In the middle of the eastern wall stood the ark, a piece of sculpted furniture more than two meters tall, covered by a heavy velvet curtain, embroidered in golden letters. On the top, over the lions sculpted in wood, would rise the bicephalous eagle, a sculptural motif present on the arks of many local synagogues.

The rows of benches, except those near the eastern wall retained for special parishioners, were parallel, aimed towards east. Instead of tables, everyone had a sort of personal stand with a slanted top, which could be moved. Each one had a little locker. The center of the room was dominated by the Bima, towards which ascended two flights of stairs, from the south and the north, surrounded by the same railing. Above was, of course, the big table with its slanted top where the Torah scrolls were placed to be read.

My memories about the great synagogue from Burdujeni would be incomplete had I not mentioned the legendary cantor Talic Grinberg, an impressive and honorable figure, who also served as a cantor abroad during the interbellum period (please read about Mr. Grinberg, in his grandson, Shaul, story). Although he had already been an elderly person, his superb appearance, dressed in his white praying robe and his hexagonal tuft cantor cap, his voice raising towards the high places of the temple to the women praying room, is something I can't forget! The backside of the Burdujeni Synagogue

I don't believe I had ever entered the Gah synagogue during my Suceava years. At the beginning of the '70s, when I return to Suceava as a tourist (about ten years after I had left) there wasn't any functional



Betzalel (Talic) Grinberg

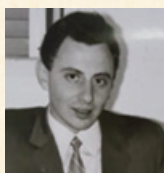


synagogue in Burdujeni. It was during the autumn holidays and when we had to pray Izkor we left to Suceava, to Gah, the only functional synagogue. Many people recognized me and immediately the guest who came from Israel was honored with the reading of the Aftara of the respective holiday. Actually, I was quite scared – I did this only twice in my life: at my Bar Mitzva and on the Saturday before my wedding. Somehow I had to make it work: I couldn't embarrass zeida who was extremely proud of me, and, even more, I had to defend my reputation as an Israeli! I gathered all my Hebrew knowledge and I read the long text without any mistake, improvising a rhythm and melody matching the task. Everything passed well! Those around me, including zeida, didn't know the text better than I did... Anyway, since then I can definitely say that I received Maftir (the role of the one being honored by reading Aftara) at the Suceava synagogue Gah.



Suceava Hevre Gah Synagogue
Photo: Paul Leinburd





In Suceava, between the Kerosene Lamp and the Shvitz Bath

Beni Budic

Suceava, our hometown, was lucky to be considered the second largest town and the second in importance in the Austrian province of Bukovina. As such, it was among Romania's first towns to get electricity, a running water system, and a sewage network. The old electric power station became operational in 1908 and, almost immediately, the town's center streets were neatly lined with electric lamp posts. Four years later, in 1912, the waterworks became operational. The water system filtered and pumped the water from the Suceava river into the water tower on Zamca hill. From there, the water flowed down the pipes to the town households. The town's historians attribute these achievements to Franz Des Loges, Suceava's first mayor, who was in office for a quarter of a century, until 1914. Anyhow, as it always happens in life, the ruthless passage of time changed and damaged everything.

In the 1950's, during my childhood, Suceava benefitted from an electric power station and a waterworks buildings positioned on the north and south entrance to the town. Both buildings were erected in the industrial style of the beginning of last century, with a huge hall in the middle, for the pumps and motors, large glass windows that let the light flood the interior, and wide doorways, almost as tall as the height of the buildings. I used to pass by the electric power station quite often, on my way to the swings, which were in a nearby grove. Even then, the old motors, which were supposed to supply the town with electricity, were outdated and timeworn, and apparently needed many breaks to rest... these breaks were officially labelled in technical lingo as "power cuts."

Every Suceava inhabitant remembers the long winter evenings when a series of "power cuts," were part of our daily life. In the 1950's adults and children witnessed quite often the sudden flicker of the electric bulbs, usually dim, losing their last bits of power as they went out altogether. I don't know why, but these issues usually occurred mostly during the winter season. However, I fondly remember the late summer evenings (are they real or only a dream?), bright with the light of the electric bulbs gleefully shining during the vacation months. However, during the bleak European winter, when night fell around 4 or 5 in the afternoon, the season of darkness literally begun. There were winters when the power station broke down and didn't work for weeks or even months. Could it have been a shortage of spare parts? Who knows? Anyhow, we had to live, like in the 19th century, by the light of the kerosene lamp.





Photo Cozmin, Muzeul Suceava

A true maintenance ritual grew around these lamps. The “plain” kerosene lamp was actually a kind of glass chimney, a small transparent tank, like a jar, which was filled with the precious and rather smelly fuel known as kerosene. The middle part of the tank was bottlenecked – it looked like a lady’s small waist; it was surrounded by a plate strip held tight, on which a strong wire rod was fixed. The rod was hooked in such a way as to allow the lamp to hang by a nail on the wall. The rod was sometimes fitted with a round, metal-framed mirror, ideal for reflecting and focusing the flame. The wire rod was also used to hold the lamp if it needed to be moved to another place. The narrower mouth in the upper part of the rotund tank was fitted with a screw thread on which the wick was fixed. The quality of the mechanism, the quality of the cotton wick and, no less, the purity of the petroleum – were all the parameters taken into consideration in buying such a lamp. Other considerations were

“will it light the room brightly, or will it smoke and fill the room with the smell of burnt kerosene”? In other words, “will the kerosene be burnt in vain?” or “will it produce useful light”.

The 2-to-3-cm-wide, white, cotton wick, dipped into the kerosene in the fount, was controlled by a knob, which allowed adjusting the size of the flame. Moreover, the already burnt, black part of the wick had to be carefully trimmed with the scissors. This operation was of extreme importance and needed an unflinching surgeon’s hand to ensure the wick would remain in an upright position...

But the main stage of paramount importance in the daily maintenance process was the cleaning of the glass chimney. This was the most sensitive part, which took precedence over the rest; it reminded one of the shape of a violin, or rather, a perfect female silhouette. The lower part perfectly fitted the edge, resembling turned-down mouth corners, of the metallic mechanism, which held the wick. There followed the thicker, larger part which encircled the bright flame of the wick in the middle. In addition, the upper part, slender and elongated like a graceful swan neck, opened up to the outside world. Through that opening rose to the heights currents of warm, even hot air at best, and sometimes smoke, after covering the inside of the glass chimney in black soot. I must mention that the chimney was quite fragile, as it was made of an extremely thin sheet of glass. The gentlest hit or some stray water droplet on the heated glass was enough to crack it, or, worse, break it into tiny shards. In short, it required special care and deftness to clean the inside



of the smoked glass with a piece of old newspaper without damaging it. One way or another, in the afternoon hours, the two or three kerosene lamps in the house were ready for another “power cut” evening.

In some houses I had seen more elegant kerosene lamps, whose fount was made of a semi-opaque whitish glass, like some kind of china; the fount was placed on a slender stand of the same material. The elongated rod of the stand when moved could hold such lamps. Yet, even these craftier lamps seemed to suffer from the same issues as our simpler ones. In old movies, I had seen how the wealthier bourgeois houses were lit in the 19th century: they had a huge kerosene lamp, with a big chimney, hanging from the ceiling above the dining table. However, I never saw anything of the kind in the Suceava of my childhood. After all, more than half a century had passed since the town had electricity and since the invention of the power cuts...

The kerosene lamp with its glass chimney, more or less smoked, with its rather dim, yellowish light, was the best solution for house lighting. For the public places, such as shops, cafes, or restaurants, which had a considerably larger space, this poor object was insufficient. A more modern invention was used here: the “Petromax” kerosene lamps with pressure. Bigger than its sister for household use, made of shiny crown metal, a semicircle hook could hold the “Petromax” in a higher place. Inside the cylindrical glass, in the middle of the lamp, was a kind of bulb made of metallic mesh. The microscopic kerosene droplets burst under pressure in contact with the air within the lamp fount and burned inside the bulb; the mesh became incandescent and the lamp cast around a strong, almost blinding, white light. However efficient the lighting with such a contraption would have been, it infused respect and fear, besides admiration. Not everyone could tend to such a lamp and there were rumors of Petromax explosions...

As I said before, the streets of Suceava had public lights since the beginning of the century, under Franz Des Loges’ mayorship. Around the mid 1950’s, big electric lamps, with a semi-opaque whitish glass chimney and a kind of enameled metallic cover (or hat), hung on wires stretched over the streets, from building to building. From what I remember, the lamps in the downtown streets provided enough light for a safe evening stroll. This was during the first years of my childhood, when I wasn’t yet looking for more discreetly lit places... Around the beginning of the 1960’s the shops and restaurants put up signboards with huge neon lettering, which gave the downtown streets an extra shade of blue or red light. Also around those years, during the preparations for the 1st of May parade, when the pavement was still being repaired and the facades were being painted, workers started putting up tall metallic lamp poles, which were fitted with modern, elegant neon



lamps which cast a bright blue light all over the street.

Going back to the years of the power cuts, when the town used to plunge into darkness in the long winter evenings, I also remember the fact that we used pocket torches but even they didn't provide us with a proper solution given the long-term shortage of batteries in the shops. After my mother's death, during the winter of 1955-1956, while in third grade, I was in mourning. The mourners' duty, especially the orphans', was to say out loud the traditional prayer of kadish for 11 mourning months. The prayer had to be said as part of the 3 daily prayers in the synagogue. Father spared me the trouble of rising up with the lark for the dawn prayer, which was held at 6 am, so that the worshippers could get to work in time. All that year, father took it upon himself to replace me saying kadish in the morning (in accordance to the religious requirements, as a widower, he was not under such an obligation). I was doing my duty saying it during the other two prayers, Mincha and Maariv, which were held in the evening, and after sunset. Therefore, here I was at the Wijnitz' Synagogue on Synagogue Street at the right time. The Synagogue was right across the street from the Great Temple. When I left the Synagogue, I had to stumble across snowdrifts or puddles along the darkened lanes. This is why I was provided with a simple rectangular Bakelite torch, which spread a dim circle of light even in its finest hours. It was far from the spectacular performances of the much-dreamt-of hunters' torches, which cast a radius of about a hundred meters around – the pride of the older boys who went sleighing down Mirăuți Street. Even so, my torch did not work all the time, because of the continuous lack of batteries. The “Tesla” rectangular ones, which were supplied by grandfather from Haim Meirovici's shop in Burdujeni, were short-lived. When I realized that their “time has come”, I used to prolong their suffering by keeping them behind the stove overnight. This is how I squeezed some more energy out of them; I used to check by getting the two contact bars close to my tongue. If I felt a sharp sting, there was still hope...

In the first decade of the “socialism system,” unlike the electrical grid, the supply with water to our houses was somewhat better, more regular. Well, this is just one way of putting things. Unlike the years of Franz Des Loges, running water was now provided in Suceava for only about an hour a day. So every household had to store water for at least 24 hours. Only a few of the flats equipped with water pipes in the kitchen or even in the bathroom, were lucky enough to get water. One could get drinking water from the pumps at street corners, or, as in our lucky case, right in the front yard, close to our door. It was not actually a pump, but rather a big iron-cast drinking fountain, fitted with a tap. One could fill a bucket in almost no time; the water from the bucket was then poured into a zinc-coated barrel covered with a lid, which stood in a corner of every kitchen.



Bucket after bucket had to be carried to fill the barrel with a good supply of water which lasted for several days. This is how, over the winter days, when the water source happened to freeze (despite being covered quite well in a warm straw coat), we could enjoy a steady supply. Anyway, “the water cuts” lasted for only a few days at worst...

We, the townspeople, were lucky as far as the running water supply was concerned (well, just one hour a day...), having it by the door, at arm's reach. The Austrian administration had not reached as far as my grandparents' house in Burdujeni. In consequence, their water supply was as good as during Ștefan cel Mare's reign – one could get water from the draw well at the street corner. The liquid, cooling even in the heat of the height of summer, was aplenty 24 hours a day, cold and tasty. Still the two buckets filled with water to the brim, carried a hundred or two hundred meters, were heavy and you had to stop several times on the way home for a rest. Not to mention the slippery glazed frost around the draw well in winter, from the water dripping out when you emptied the well bucket into your own. About ten years after we settled in Israel, I returned to Suceava, and I remember that the first thing I did was to see my family in Burdujeni. My younger cousin was sent to the draw well to fetch cold fresh water for the guests, which was served with the bitter cherry jam... Bittersweet nostalgia, just like the jam's taste of heaven.

Besides the supply of drinkable water, either from the drinking fountain or from the draw well, there were huge barrels placed under every spout pipe from where the rain water flowed from the roofs. The rain water filled the barrels and was used for washing linen and, more importantly, for washing the ladies' shiny long hair. Rain water was soft, that is, it had no minerals, and reacted much better with the low-quality soap found in the shops at that time. In some houses in town there were former bathrooms with big enameled metal tubs, most of them yellowed by time, presently used just to store water...

For the daily wash-up, every house had its own washstand, a special piece of furniture, on which the washbasin lay on an opening in the stand. A large jug, made of china or enameled tin, was also on the stand. The washstand was placed near the barrel filled with water, at least in our house. Under the washbasin, on a lower shelf, was one of the buckets; on a shelf above the basin were the soap dish, the Odol or Clorodont toothpaste and the glass with the toothbrushes. In winter, when the water from the barrel was ice cold, we used warm water from the kettle mixed with the water in the barrel for the morning wash-up.

For the weekly bath, we had several options. The simplest and quickest was a rather superficial wash, to the waist, over the basin filled with warm water, which was placed on a stool. Then



followed washing the feet and legs in the same basin placed this time on the floor. This was the special procedure when we were in a hurry. For a more thorough bath, some people used the linen washbasin. We, on the other hand, had a zinc-plated-sheet tub with a higher back rest, where an adult could lie comfortably. We usually had the weekly bath on Friday, in honor of the Shabbat, after all the preparations had been done, when the house was spick-and-span and the cooking and baking had filled it with delicious smells. There was enough water for the whole family in the cauldron heated on the range (and in later years on the cooker). I should not forget the old Cheia soap, rather coarse, but efficient. After several years, this soap was replaced by the so-called “toilet soap bars”, which were not always better...

Still, the ultimate weekly bath was at the Communal Bathhouse. This old building lay behind the park, opposite St. John’s monastery until the 1960’s. It had been built around the same time as the power station and the waterworks. It had a shvitz, or Turkish bath, a heritage from the Turks, but improved by the Habsburg period in Moldova. Until I was 11 or 12 years old, father would take me with him to the shvitz around noon every Friday: it was one of the days reserved only for men. Carrying large bath towels to dry ourselves and the usual Cheia soap bar, we went from the entrance hall where tickets were sold (as well as bottles of cold beer for those interested) into the locker room, a rather large room with huge arched windows of semi-opaque glass, which let the light in. The locker room had long wooden benches, with curved back rests, painted in white. Along the walls were white lockers for our clothes. Small groups of men, already heated from the steam of the Turkish bath, were sitting on the benches. Some were refreshing themselves with a beer or two. A separate wing opened from the locker room, with separate booths with a bed, for which you had to pay extra. Sometimes, father took a booth for the two of us.

Stark naked, each carrying a wooden pail with a long handle, we left the locker room for the main hall of the bathhouse. The pail was going to be quite useful in the steam hall. Showers were lined along one of the walls. Several yellowish tile-covered massage beds lay on the opposite wall, while two rows of low benches stood in the middle of the room. The hall was complete with two middle-aged male employees, scantily dressed with only a kind of large baggy trousers. One of them was a hunk of a man, tall, broad-shouldered and pot-bellied. The other was shorter, darkish and scrawny, but both had the steely hands of a good masseur.

“Mister Budic, sir, shall I put you down for a massage?” asked the paunchy one.

“Undoubtedly,” answered father. “See you in the locker room when I leave, I have the money ready for you.”



We walked around the room, from one shower to the next, to wait for our turn; we gave ourselves a good soap rub, we rinsed off, and, if the wait was longer, father would take me to the Turkish bath hall. Here was in fact the hub, the central attraction of the schvitz. When we opened the heavy, airtight door even slightly, hot steamy air would burst out. Layers of steamy fog, sometimes thinner, sometimes thicker, hung in the not very large room. The opening of the heated stone furnace, shut with a small iron door, was placed in the middle of the wall, to the left of the bath door, while 5 or 6 high steps, like stadium stands, were lined against the entire right wall. The “stands” were usually crowded with naked men, each with his own pail filled with cold water. The men immersed their faces into the water from time to time when the burning steam was too much to stand. The regular patrons would come equipped with a small whiskbroom made of mulberry branches, used to flagellate themselves gently to increase blood circulation. Everyone was happy, in high spirits, and joke followed joke to no end, although some were rather racy. When the temperature in the hall dropped and the steamy clouds thinned, some man, braver than the others, would reheat the room; otherwise, the scrawny guy was called to do the job. This is how it was done: he opened the door to the stone furnace wide, while the men who cared for their skin stood at a safe distance. The brave man, his back leaning against the wall, next to the furnace mouth, would empty a pailful of water into the furnace in one forceful move. A hot steamy jet burst out all of a sudden, rapidly rising to the ceiling, while the brave ones on the higher steps immersed their heads into their own pails filled with cold water, or even poured them over their bodies. The operation was repeated 5 or 6 times until the hot steam filled the whole room and you could hardly see the man next to you... The brave ones remained at their posts, but the faint-hearted (including children like myself) ran outside for a breath of cool air.

Afterwards, we went to the massage room, where one of the bath workers tended to me, with the other tending to my father. First, they applied a thorough soap rub, after which their steely hands started to knead our bodies, from head to toe and from toe to head, just like baba, my maternal grandmother, used to knead the dough in the kneading trough on Thursday evenings. At one point, a slap on the butt invited me to turn around, on my back, and the whole process continued until not a single bone in my body was left untouched. It all lasted for a good quarter of an hour, then we took another shower or two, and maybe a second time sweating in the steam room. When we finally got back to the locker room, we felt like newborn babies, exhausted but happy. I would go back home for a rest. Father, on the other hand, returned to the shop to open it at 4 in the afternoon. How did he have the strength to go on?

Around the beginning of the 1960's, the old communal bathhouse was demolished. The vocational school was built in its place. In the ninth or tenth grade we also studied there until the new building



of “Petru Rareș” secondary school was erected. As I was older then, I no longer tagged along with my father to the Turkish bath.

A new communal bathhouse was built in the other part of the town, not far from the boys’ secondary school. Here, there was a continuous flow of steam produced by a motor. The heated stone furnace and the two brave workers who poured the water from the pails into it were long forgotten. In the middle of the large hall was even a tile-plated tub. Truth be told, the charm of the shvitz bath had much decreased as far as I was concerned. One Friday, when I found myself in the stuffy locker room in the company of some soldiers who were untying their smelly foot wraps, I came to the conclusion that it was time for a change. In the next two years, my weekly bath was either a shower (which cost 3 lei), or, if I wanted to pamper myself, a proper bath in a tub (which cost 5 lei).

But, my memories always bring me back to the hot room of the old communal bathhouse of my childhood

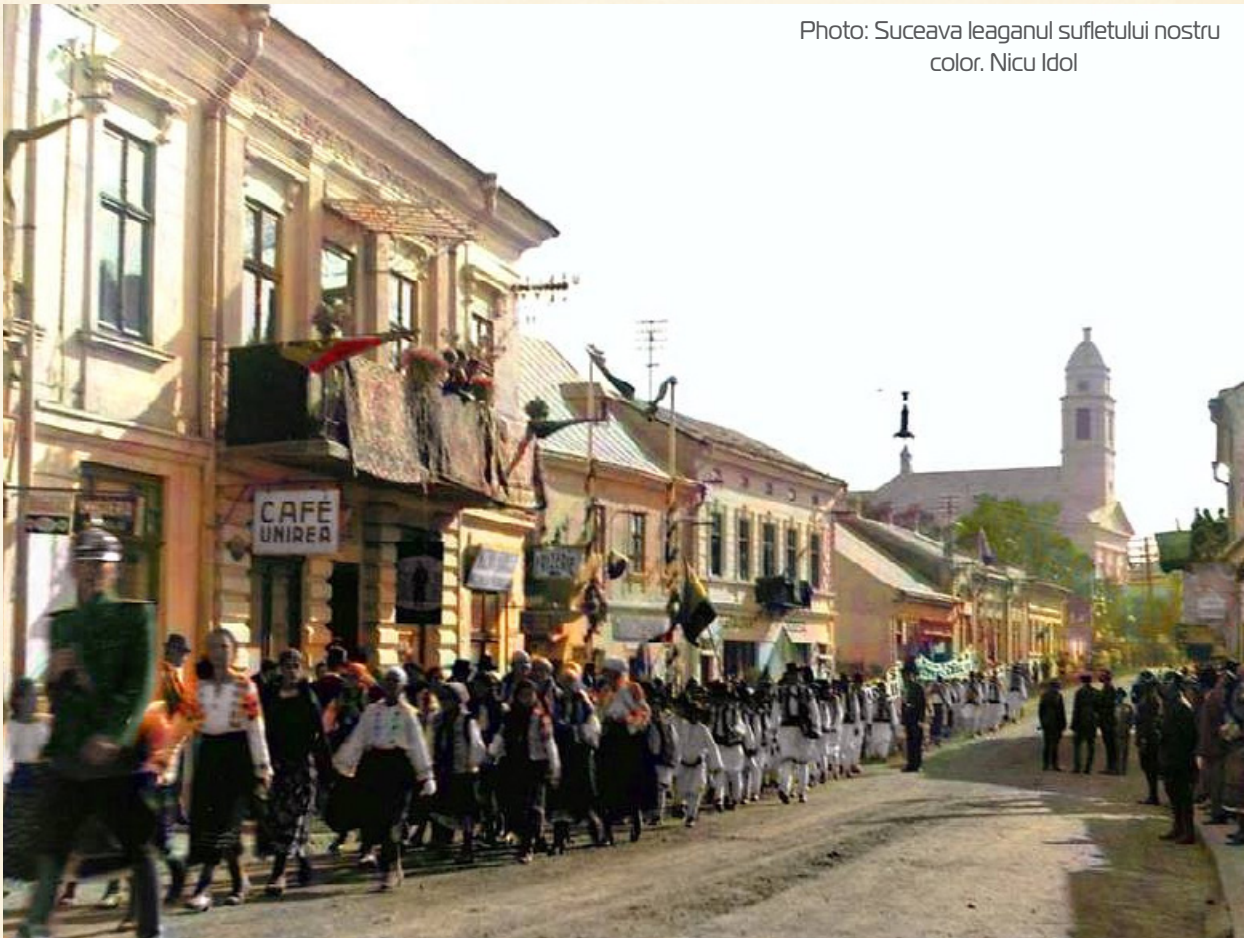
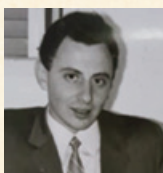


Photo: Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru
color. Nicu Idol





The Loudspeaker (difuzorul)

Beni Budic

I had been living in Suceava for about two years when one summer afternoon a team of technicians turned up on Cetății Street, tinkering at the electricity pole in front of our house. One of them fitted some iron hooks with sharp metal spikes to his boots and climbed up the pole. Then they extended some wires to the house and fixed them under the eaves. The electric wire went on to the Chibici family's house, then to our own house all in about half an hour. They inserted the wire through a small hole they drilled in the window frame, near the transom, which gave onto the yard. After that, they fixed a sort of contact socket on the windowsill and drew the wire to the floor level and then along the wall as far as the corner table, near the stove, in the main room.

The small black wooden table with incrustations, a bit wobbly on its three flimsy legs, was only a decorative piece of furniture. It was covered with a white crocheted tablecloth on which lay a vase with artificial paper flowers. But that day the vase was taken away and another object took its place on the little table: a small red wooden box. The front side of the box was covered with shiny beige cloth and a black button was in the left bottom corner. The backside of the box was covered with a perforated sheet of thick cardboard. The wire, which had been extended from the electric pole with so much toil, was introduced through a hole in the cardboard into the entrails of the magic box. In addition, this is how the Loudspeaker came into our lives. From then on, our family was connected to the town's radio broadcasting network.



The loudspeaker and rationing tickets for rationed bread purchase (photo Cozmin Suceava Museum)

In the early 1950's, the already fully established socialist regime found a simple way of spreading the penetration of ideological propaganda, probably after the Soviet model. A large part of the population did not have a radio set. The radio sets in the shop were made in Romania and they received only medium and high frequency bands broadcasts. There were very few lucky ones who



still owned radio sets made abroad or had older ones, made before the war, which received low frequency band broadcasts as well. They could listen to Europa Liberă (Free Europe) or The Voice of America stations in Romanian. There was no radio in our home. I remember that, about ten years later, when I was in high school, we used to meet at Aunt Freida's and barricade ourselves in the room, behind closed doors and shutters. There, we tried to catch a few disconnected words from the Kol Israel programs, which were badly jammed...

However, in the '50s, propaganda aside, the loudspeaker was for me, and certainly for others as well, adults and children alike, a window open to the "wide world", beyond the confines of our little town. The wires drawn into our house with so much sweat brought the miracle of an entire universe of sounds to my room. The network connected the studio and the local radio station to almost every house in town. After some time, the network reached as far as Burdujeni, Ițcani, and the surrounding villages.

In my grandparents' house, the Loudspeaker hang on the wall, above the divan where "zeida" (grandfather) slept, while at Aunt Freida's it was in the kitchen, the place where the family spent most of their time. It was at the head of the divan where my cousin Iani used to sleep. When I spent the night there, on weekends, we slept together, crammed on the narrow divan. The loudspeakers in Burdujeni were a new model, smaller, black, with less elegant cloth. Instead of a button, they had a small pin to adjust the sound volume.

The programs were the ones broadcast by Radio România. They were on air from 5 o'clock in the morning till midnight. Radio România became Radio București a few years later and soon enough there were two stations broadcasting simultaneously – Programul 1 and Programul 2 (Channel 1 and Channel 2). The editors of the town's radio station decided (probably in accordance to the party directives) when and what program to broadcast. There was also another program at 7 in the evening, "The Local Broadcast", presented by the staff of the studio near the park.

The Loudspeaker became a part of our daily life. It was on for hours on end, all throughout the day, with the endless flux of sounds as some sort of background noise to everything going on around the house. Above all else, we set our clocks by it: "This is București. The local time. At the fifth signal it will be ***** o'clock. It was ***** o'clock." It was then that I started noticing that the grandfather clocks next door were not keeping the right time. Our neighbour, Chibici, repaired clocks and watches.



There were also the long hours of music to listen to. Quite a lot of traditional folk music, which I didn't really enjoy at that time. However, the famous names Maria Tănase, Dorina Drăghici, Maria Lătărețu stayed in my mind until later in life when I came to understand their music and appreciate the importance of all folk creation. I even presented the music to my travellers. Classical music was not forgotten, either. However, neither my parents nor I liked symphonic music or chamber music. It was not to our taste, but opera and especially operetta arias were much appreciated. But first and foremost, we loved pop music with the hits of those years. The romances ("songs for a blue heart") in particular went to the souls and hearts of the grown-ups, who were listening to the ageless, amazing Gică Petrescu, the star of five generations. In spite of it all, I received some musical education nonetheless: I must bring to mind the Sunday mornings with the 9 o'clock Music Competition, in which the winners had to recognize the most pieces of classical music.

There were a lot of programs for children and young people as well. Every evening, at ten to eight, the lively voice of a little girl greeted us: "Good evening, children!". A short story or a fairy-tale followed and ten minutes later the girl bid to us in a sleepy voice: "Good night, children!". On Saturday afternoons there was a competition for pioneers and teenagers – "Happy Hikers" (Drumeții veseli), which was a version for the young of a programme for adults, "Who Knows, Wins" (Cine știe, câștigă). After the music competition, the "Radio play for children and teenagers" was next on Sunday mornings.

However, the real radio play or "Teatru la microfon" was broadcast in the evening, about twice a week. I became a passionate listener of the radio play over the years. It was really food for the soul. Elbows leaning on the wobbly small table, I used to listen entranced to the play. During the winter months, my senses were enveloped by the fragrance of the orange peels drying on a tray between the stove and the wall. I could hardly see a live play, since theatre companies came only rarely to Suceava, at Dom Polski. But thanks to the Loudspeaker I had my share of plays and playwrights – Caragiale, Goldoni, Moliere, Chekhov, Delavrancea, Gorki and many more. I could listen to the great actors – Giugaru, Birlic, Angelescu, Calboreanu, Lucia-Sturza Bulandra, all stars of the Romanian stage of the time. Oh yes, and we cannot forget the great, incomparable Radu Beligan, who was relatively young then. At the end of the Sunday radio play, Beligan presented "The radio play's mail". It was a short program filled with the master's humour and irony, peppered with "backstage" anecdotes and funny stories. That's when I first learned that "Lord willing, the sword shall shoot bullets." Years later, I heard the Hebrew version of the saying: "Lord willing, the broom shall shoot bullets." Then I understood that the Lord's will is the same: everywhere and whoever has to shoot shall do it in the end, no matter with what...



On Sundays, around lunchtime, a different program was broadcast – “The Hour of Skits and Humour” (Ora de satiră și umor). We used to listen to it while we were having dessert around the table in Aunt Freida’s kitchen in Burdujeni. This is how I got acquainted with the great names of comedy and music-hall who, although restricted by the constraints of the socialist regime (something that I understood much later), still succeeded in continuing the glorious tradition of Romanian acting. There were Stroe and Mircea Crișan, Tomazian (“Hi, gheezer, and cheers!” – “Sal’tare, taică... și noroc”), Horea Șerbănescu and Radu Zaharescu and many others, with their scintillating vaudeville and puns and cracking jokes that had us rolling on the floor with laughter...

I must have been about 12 or 13 when I had the opportunity to see what the studio of the radio station looked like.

I had been having violin lessons with professor Zavulovici for a few years. Not that I was ever a grand virtuoso, but I could, more or less, play some rather difficult pieces without feeling ashamed



This building housed the radio-station.
(photo Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru)

of myself. I said before that the Local Program was broadcasted at 7 o’clock every evening. The program exulted the townspeople’s successes in all domains and their continued enthusiasm in building socialism in factories, plants, in the fields and in schools. Apart from that, there were cultural moments, a few dedicated to the young talents of the town. This is how I was invited to take part in one of the programs, probably at the recommendation of a pioneers’ instructor, a teacher who knew me well. The radio station was on the upper floor of a beautiful building, dating from the Habsburg years and I believe it was the Community Cultural Centre. In the few halls on the ground floor, art exhibitions were put up once in a while. Two students had been invited to take part in that program, a student from Ștefan cel Mare high school and myself, with our



violins. The recording was made on the same afternoon of the program. The studio was a medium-sized room, its walls lined with large perforated plywood panels, under which there was probably some phonetic insulation. In the middle were a table, 3 or 4 chairs, some desks and an imposing microphone. There was a window in a wall looking into the technical room full of all sort of equipment. In the middle of the director's room, near the control panel, was a tape recorder on a table. Both the technician and the editor of the program were there, busy at work. I began to play Schubert's Serenade when I heard the editor's voice in the loudspeaker on the upper part of the window. I was so nervous that probably the first sounds were no more than a pathetic screech. Scarcely two minutes into the three-minute song, I made a mistake. From the loudspeaker I heard the command to start again. Only after the third recording was the result deemed satisfactory. I placed the violin back in the case, relieved, but flushed with embarrassment. It was a small comfort, though, that the other student went through the same ordeal. That evening, the family took delight in listening to the music (still screechy, even at the third attempt), while I would rather have forgotten the entire affair. At any rate, I had been introduced by the broadcaster and so I was famous in Suceava for a few hours...

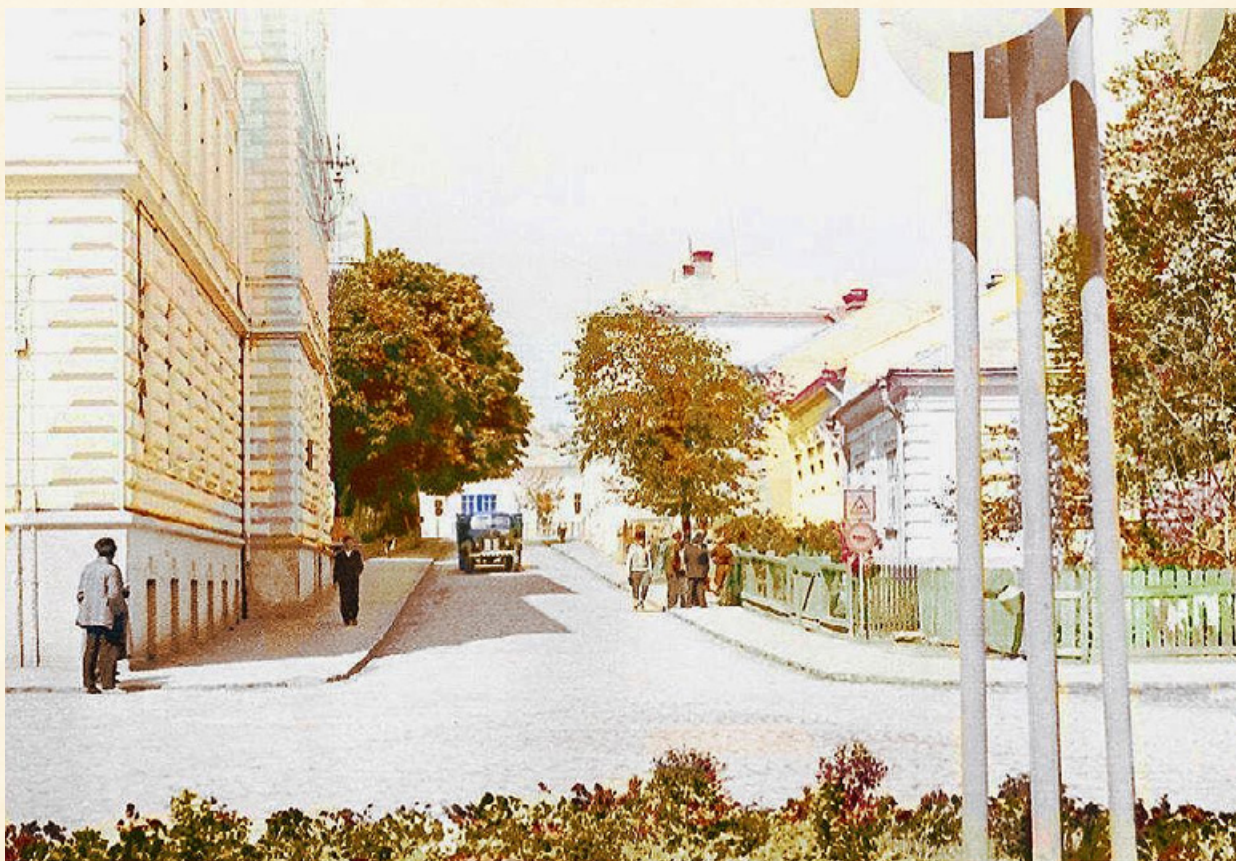
We also heard the news reports – ideological, political, local, national and international news. The news reports were broadcasted several times a day, and a “Radiojurnal” was broadcast at 10 every night. Of course, just as with the written news, everything was penned, edited and filtered through the authorities' efficient control and censorship network. Even so, we still had a window open to the world. I remember a day at the beginning of March 1953 when I witnessed the mourning days at the death of Stalin, “The peoples' Sun”. For days on end, the loudspeaker at home, as well as the megaphones in the town center, played dead marches and we heard long speeches about the great leader... Similarly, but on more festive occasions (May Day and 23rd August), loudspeakers and megaphones would blare out solemn or joyful marches, with live coverage from the great parades of the working people.

It is a known fact that certain dramatic moments are forever imprinted in our memory. Each one of us can say exactly where they were and what they were doing when a dramatic event took place, like the first landing on the moon. Such a memorable event, of great emotional charge, was Kennedy's assassination, which affected the common memory of the adult generations for decades to come. On a Friday evening, it was 22 November 1963, I was reading while waiting for the 10 o'clock news on the loudspeaker, which, as usual, was droning on in the background. Although the news of the tragedy in Dallas about an hour before must have reached the newsroom in Bucharest, the regular programs continued until the 10 o'clock news report. The news stunned



me and left me with a twinge of anxiety for the future. I was only 17 then, but the same feeling of disquiet is still in my heart even today.

Five months later, on the dot, we left Suceava for good. It was a Saturday evening in late April. The house at number 6, Cetății Street, empty now, was waiting for its new tenants. All the furniture was gone. The only piece left was in my room in the middle of the house. It was the small wobbly three-legged table, on which stood the faithful friend that had enriched my childhood and adolescence; our good old Loudspeaker. May its memory never fade!

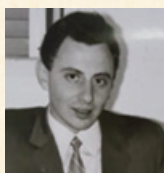


34

Clădiri vechi din preajma Liceului „Ștefan cel Mare” (1960)
Old buildings nearby “Stephen the Great” High - school (1960)

Photo: Mihai Aurelian Caruntu "Suceava Periferiilor - Album"
Color. Nicu Idol





Movies, Movies, Movies

Beni Budic

Throughout my childhood and my youth, the cinema was for us - the post-war generation, not only the main source of entertainment, but also the only window through which we could catch a glimpse of what was going on in “the world beyond the confines of our little town”.

As most of the young parents in Suceava, my parents took me along to the movies, even before I started school. The reason was not only the lack of babysitters or the fact that children didn't pay entrance fee, but mostly because it was a sort of family entertainment. Therefore, I often saw the movie sitting on my father's lap. I might not have understood much, but I was always spellbound by what was taking place on the screen. My senses were always completely immersed into the new reality projected from the silver screen. Yet, sometimes, I had to tear myself away from the virtual world and ask an endless string of questions. “Daddy, what are they doing there? What's that? Why did he (Edmond Dantes – the future Count of Monte Cristo) get into the sack with a knife? My father used to say “Wait for it, you'll see.”

And I waited, even managing to understand the script. Usually, the mysteries were clarified during part two, a week later.

In those days, we used to watch the movies either at *CINEMATOGRAFUL TINERETULUI* (Youth Theatre) or, if the weather permitted it, at the open-air cinema which was a structure right behind the regular cinema. For a long time, *CINEMATOGRAFUL TINERETULUI* was the only movie theatre in town, the sanctuary we religiously frequented, where our hearts, full of great expectations, were driven each week, in search of adventures and excitement.

The old cinema theatre building, on the main Suceava str., not far from the public gardens, was crammed between the library and a building with a restaurant. In contrast, the open-air cinema which was built on the same side of the street, to the left, was a modern design, amphitheater-like, which hosted besides movies, all sorts of performances - shows and concerts.

The entrance double doors, holding glass panels on either far side of the cinema, were the starting point of magic. Between the doors a large bulletin board with posters and pictures of the running movies was placed while, on the sides of the doors, two smaller panels proudly held the posters of the upcoming movies. Over a small roof (or rather, a wider overhang), a large panel promoted the show. It was painted the same way the Magheru Boulevard movies were advertised in Bucharest, intending to imitate the official posters with the pictures of actors in rather garish colours, along





The only cinema hall in Suceava in the 50s
(photo - Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru)

with the name of the movie in huge block letters. I passed it almost daily to keep myself updated.

The large exterior doors led to a rather nondescript lobby. On the left there was the ticket counter. The entrance fee was just 1.75 leu. Really cheap!. However, there was an even cheaper way of seeing a movie.

Entering the lobby, on the left, after climbing up a step, was a refreshment bar. Under the ceiling, all over the walls, hung glass-framed pictures of famous cinema actors. Birlic and Simone Signoret, Gina Patrichi and Gerard Philippe, Giugaru, Jean Gabin, Alida Vali, Vittorio De Sica and many others. If memory doesn't fail me, on the right side of the lobby, a door led to the projection room, through a small staircase.

A wide, winged door led to the cinema hall; only the right wing was used. There stood the kind, middle-aged ticket control man. His job was also to alert the officials in case anyone tried to sneak in without a ticket. Still, we were part of a rather large group of friends and acquaintances, and we had clear access to the hall, after lights-out, in exchange for 1 leu. And if I happened to be one leu short, for some reason, that was fine. I'd enter free and the ticket controller would stop by my father's shop the next day to settle the account. The last barrier to the show, which proudly stood between the entrance door and the theatre hall, was the heavy reddish curtain; it was open when the lights were on in the theatre and closed as the show started. Latecomers and those of us without tickets, who were set to get in once the show started, had to squeeze carefully through its folds, not to let light from the lobby pour in.

The hall was rectangular, long and narrow, with an aisle in the middle and 20 rows of seats on each side. The dark brown reclining chairs, made of thick plywood, weren't upholstered. The aisle in the middle was quite wide. Along the walls were also narrower aisles, so it wasn't that difficult to get to an empty seat even when the hall went dark. The screen took almost the entire front wall. The narrow parts left free on either side of the screen were covered with slogans. I remember one slogan, which went like this: "The Cinema – the most important means of spreading the



communist ideas to the large masses of the people!”

However, what we absorbed didn't necessarily fall under that ideology...

Since my first school years, I went either alone or with a neighbour or friend of my age, to Sunday morning matinees, when most of the shows were Russian cartoons. We were charmed by the stories about “The Hunchbacked Horse” or those about fairies (rusalkas) and the hardworking dwarves from the amber mountain. Later on, being about nine or ten, I already enjoyed two weekly movies at the cinema. I can't remember all of them – it wouldn't even be possible. If I were to count the movies seen in the last nine or ten years spent in Suceava, they'd surely exceed a thousand. During my high-school years, when the Modern Cinema had already been opened, I could watch about four movies a week. I used to write down the titles. Sometimes they reached the unbelievable figure of 170-180 a year. I can't recall them all, but quite a lot remained in my mind, at least part of them. We had the opportunity to watch plenty of Russian movies, Chinese, Vietnamese and even an Albanese movie about Skandenberg, their national hero. There were also movies from Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The German ones, made at Defa-Berlin, were very highly rated. The ones we appreciated the most, though, were the Italian and French ones. And, of course, our own movies, from the Bucharest Studio.

Around 1954 or 1955 I remember seeing at *CINEMATOGRAFUL TINERETULUI* a show combined of two medium-length films, like: “*Evolution*” and “*Ilie practices sport too.*” The first one was about the wonders of collectivization and was far from interesting. What about Ilie, though?! well, it's for Ilie's sake that I spent an entire afternoon at three consecutive shows (which was simple – I stayed put in my seat until 8 in the evening!). Ilie was a comedy and, to be fair, it was rather naive, as were all the beginnings of the Romanian cinematography. But, seeing Mircea Crisan, Puiu Calinescu, Horia Caciulescu and all their hilarious adventures, got us rolling on the floor with endless laughter which brought tears to our eyes. We had no idea then, that this was a young film director movie debut, whose name was Andrei Calasaru's (alias Bernard Gropper), Jewish survivor of the one of the death trains, during the Iasi Pogrom in June 1941. In the following years, until leaving for Israel, he offered several other films (*Eagle 101*, *Portrait of a Stranger*) but the ones that had the greatest impact on my teenage years were *Hello? Wrong Number!* and, a few years later, *Seaside Holiday*. They were both movies destined for young people, filmed in wonderful summer colours detailing the “blissful” and enthusiastic life of Bucharest students/workers/engineers, concerned only about music, pure love, trysts in Herastrau Park, holidays in the mountains or at the seaside, while the consolidation of socialism was constantly in the background. For us in the provinces this was the stuff of dreams! All that was left to us was to hum the hit composed by the hero of *Hello? Wrong Number!*, sung by the amazing Iurie Darie. It



was also the debut movie of the late Stela Popescu, but without any doubt, the movie established Iurie Darie as the next decades idol of all young girls (and, later, of more mature girls...). He was probably the ultimate attraction of Romanian cinema. I read somewhere that he had come to Tel Aviv in 2007 to honour Calarasi on his 85th birthday and *Seaside Holiday* was shown!. Speaking of Iurie Darie, in the 50's and 60's, there was hardly a Romanian movie without him starring in it. Among those we watched: *General Delivery*, *Love at 0 Degrees Celsius*, *The Bugler's Grandsons*, *Mountain Alert*, *Our boys* and so many others...

Among the memorable movies of those years were also adaptations of Ioan Luca Caragiale's plays and short stories. Who could ever forget Birlic carousing with his mates at the landmark Bucharest pub *Carul de Biere* (Beer wagon), or swinging from the chandelier in the great lobby of the Central Bank building and then, disorientated, loitering the streets mumbling incessantly: downward, and vice-versa"?. I remember *Telegrams*, *A Stormy Night*, *A Lost Letter*, *Carnival Pranks* with Alexandru Giugaru, Marcel Anghelescu, Radu Beligan, Ion Lucian among many other talented actors... I also have to pay my dues to Goppo's 'little man', the funny cartoon impersonation of *homo sapiens*... I don't know how many of my classmates enjoyed these short movies, but I for one, loved them endlessly, especially since I had started reading the cinema column-review in *The Contemporary*, at Mihai Drişcu's advice. Later, at the new Modern Cinema, I also saw Goppo's first feature film, *They Stole a Bomb*, starring Iurie Darie of all actors.

Still, the good old *CINEMATOGRAFUL TINERETULUI* was not forgotten; we had our share of Europe's leading star at that time, Gerard Philippe, whose acting career was cut short by an untimely death. There I marched with "the Great Maneuvers", fought alongside *Fanfan la Tulipe*, I dreamt of *The Beauties of the Night*, I wept for Julien Sorel in *The Red and the Black* and trembled with emotion at *The Devil's Beauty*. Besides Gerard Philippe's charm, we were also enthralled by Michelle Morgan's sad smile, by Gina Lollobrigida's beauty, by Danielle Darieux... The Italian movies spring to mind as well; most of them were comedies (*The Italian Divorce*, *Marriage in Italian Style*, and many others, starring Mastroianni, Sofia Loren, Stefania Sandrelli, De Sica, Alberto Sordi, Eduardo de Filippo in his Neapolitan movies); but there were also dramas, very sad ones (back then I had no idea that what I was watching were neo-realist movies, a landmark in cinema history): *Miracle in Milan*, *The Bicycle Thieves*, *Umberto D*, *Rome Open City*, *Stomboli*. They were all movies which "exposed the exploitation of the masses and the dehumanization of the individual in the capitalistic world". Yet, they were true gems!!!

Have I mentioned the English movies? There were not too many, and most were dramas
(*Richard III*, *Room at the Top*).



Then came the musicals, which, apart from the sheer pleasure of the entertainment, providing the unforgettable songs we used to hum. Who could forget Vico Toriani („Bona sera signora, bona sera”...) in *Street Serenade*, or *The Mexican Singer* (Luis Mariano), or Mario Lanza in *Serenade*, or in *The Student Prince*? And a special mention: *A Song Sweeps the World*, the West German movie, about “our” tenor, Joseph Schmidt, the Jew from Bukovina. What about the Spanish movies with Sarita Montiel, her silky deep voice and fascinating beauty (*The Violet Seller*, *Carmen de la Ronda*)? Later, I think it was at The Modern, I saw the wonderful Silvia Popovici in *Darce*, a great Romanian movie, from the musical view point (it was an opera!) and for the authentic scenes, minutely shot at site -in the real European cities opera halls. About the same time Raj Kapoor Indian movies were released all over the world. They arrived even at Suceava, dramas along with Indian songs and dances, as were *The Vagabond* (parts I and II) and *Article 420*.

The Modern opened about 1960 or 1961. It was a modern building, near „Stefan cel Mare” Secondary School, built in an open space, at the crossroads of Mihai Eminescu and Dragoş Vodă streets.

Unlike the old cinema hall, rammed between two Habsburg buildings and looking exactly like them, this new cinema looked on the outside like many other public buildings of the much-sung “socialist era”, slightly

resembling the Stalinist architectural style. A wide flight of stairs led to the large entrance doors. On either side of the doors were two big glass cases for the movie posters (the one on and the coming one). Inside, a bright large lobby welcomed the spectators. A modern atmosphere swept the viewers to enjoy the show. Rows of polyvinyl upholstered seats were arranged in a gentle slope towards the screen. A few steps climbed to the upper rows on the two sides of the entrance. All in all, the hall looked very much like an auditorium, providing a leisurely, gentle, downward view at the screen. And what a screen!! Double the size of the one at the *CINEMATOGRAFUL TINERETULUI*. It was in perfect agreement with the latest technology of those times, perfect for grand shows. The entrance fee at the *CINEMASCOP* was 2.25 lei, but it was worth every penny.



The new Modern cinema hall
(photo - Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru)



Even the older movies, designed for a less wide screen, seemed brighter... I saw quite a lot of movies there! *Ulysses*, *The Vikings* with Kirk Douglas and Tony Curtis. “The Teutonic Knights” was a Polish blockbuster and “War and Peace” starring Audrey Hepburn, Mel Ferrer and Henry Fonda. There I saw the old *Alexander Nevsky*, a Soviet movie shot at the end of the ‘30s, but spectacular nonetheless. Oh yes, we also fought at *Austerlitz* (directed by Abel Gance, starring Jean Marais, Claudia Cardinale, Elvira Popesco, De Sica...). And speaking of blockbusters, the ultimate example (quite rare, too) was the American musical *7 Wives for 7 Brothers*. Yet, at least for me, the most remarkable of all was *Les Misérables*, with Jean Gabin (by far the best actor!!), with Bourvil as Thenardier, and Bernard Blier as Javert. For years later, I couldn’t be dissuaded from the fact that it was the best movie I had ever seen...

In those days, school authorities had a tight control over the movies students were allowed to watch. Running times were restricted, too. The last show, which began at 8 in the evening, was forbidden – as was the presence of any student outside at that time of night unaccompanied by their parents. Movies that were too daring never made it into Socialist Romania, but even so, those which passed government censorship weren’t always approved by the school board. Under no circumstances should teenagers be lured into some sort of temptation. In our school, the elderly secretary used to announce the latest verdict limping through the long corridors, from one class to another. The teacher read to us aloud which film was allowed or forbidden to be watched by students. Those rules included even students in their final school year!!!! The teachers were probably assigned to see the movie on different days and at different hours, so that one of them could always be present at each and every viewing. Offenders risked expulsion from school!! Nevertheless, we always found ways to beat the system...the classic one was to sneak out of the cinema hall before the lights came on. But that meant we had to guess if the movie was really over, or IF there were still a couple of scenes left to see...it was a risky business. You either missed the end of the movie, or a teacher spotted you...I have to confess that, from time to time, I was too much of a coward to stick out until the end and so I gave up on a few movies for fear of being caught. But usually I managed to sneak out unnoticed. Or maybe there were times when some teacher pretended not to see me. For all I know, that may have been the case. I was regarded as a well behaved student. The fact remains, I was never, ever, punished for my cinema-going transgressions. Yet I could swear Mrs. Pavel spotted me once. I was at *CINEMASCOP* and the movie was “A Life”, adapted from a novel by Maupassant, starring Christian Marquand and Maria Schell. There were a few saucy scenes in the movie when Marquand, the boorish, churlish master of the house seduces the maid (Antoanella Lualdi). I was still immersed in the scene when the lights were switched on. But Mrs Pavel forgave me. Or could it be that she really hadn’t see me?



It was a beautiful April evening when I saw my last movie in Suceava. We were to leave Suceava for Israel for good the very next evening. It was a Friday and, due to my new status as former student, I allowed myself the luxury of going to *CINEMASCOP* and attend the late show, from 8 to 10pm!!! I saw a Romanian movie, ‘A Midsummer Day’s Smile’. It wasn’t that good, just another one of those comedies exalting the wonders of collectivization. Still, there was a good side to it: the lead actor was an extremely talented, a nice youth whom I had never seen before. His name was Sebastian Papaiani.

Three weeks later, we were already in Israel. We were living at an uncle’s apartment; in the same town I’ve been living for more than fifty years now. In spite of all the rushed events, preparations and anxieties before our departure, one thing that concerned me most were - the movies. I did not understand Hebrew. I didn’t know English, either. We had studied French for four years, first with Mrs Riemer and with Mrs. Lazar in the last years.

Most movies were American, maybe subtitled in Hebrew?. What was it going to be like? How was I going to spend the months, maybe years, before I master the new language? Dear God, how could one live without movies?!

One afternoon, I picked up my courage. As I was passing one of the cinemas in town, when I spotted a huge poster advertising “Circus World” (with John Wayne, Claudia Cardinale, and Rita Hayworth).

The door was left open to let the air in. In broken Hebrew mixed with Yiddish, I begged the cinema official to let me take a peek for a couple of minutes, to see if I could understand the subtitles. If I decided the subtitles weren’t beyond me, I promised to be out in a jiffy and buy a ticket. He was a nice man, and seemed to understand I was “new around these parts”. He allowed me to enter and told me not to worry about a ticket...

So in I went, and that’s how I discovered that in 1964 Israel, all English movies were not only subtitled in Hebrew but also in FRENCH (to help the tens of thousands Moroccan immigrants who were arriving into the country during that period). What’s more, I also discovered that the French, I thought I barely knew, was good enough for me to read the subtitles quickly and - yes, indeed – to understand them as well. And thus, thanks to my French teachers, blessed be their memory, I was able to resume watching the endless string of films which marked my life.



Mrs. Lazar



Mrs. Riemer





Suceava's Culinary Delights

Beni Budic

I must have been around five when, one sunny morning at the beginning of summer, my mother took me to the fair held in and around the courtyard of the „*Sfântul Ioan cel Nou*” church.

In time, I was to learn that the feast in Suceava on 24th of June brought into town not only thousands



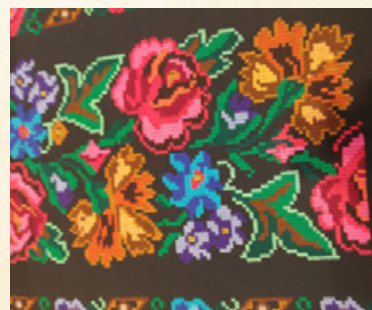
photo wikipedia

of peasants from the surrounding villages but also a host of visitors from other counties. They all gathered to take part in the procession, in the religious services and enjoy the commotion that took over the town. The courtyard of the monastery and the nearby streets teemed with peddlers selling all sorts of bits and pieces.

Some had a makeshift stall, others displayed their merchandise on small carpets or in bags on the ground, and yet others were walking around among the crowds, with a

tray attached to a cord around their shoulders, offering their goods as they passed by.

There was a crowd of customers of all walks and ages, peasants and townspeople, little old women and proud young girls, old men, young men, boys and girls. The housewives, my mother among them, were looking for and buying spools of sewing thread, embroidered napkins, both large and small, to decorate the kitchens with idyllic and naive scenes of family life, colored shawls, flaxen towels, wooden spoons, and sundry other stuff, as everything was in bright colors and tempting



I was not tall enough to see all these treasures well; maybe I completed the images in my mind, when I grew a little older or when I heard stories about the fair. What I do remember, though, are the toys and the sweets – my first Suceava treats.

Children of all ages could not escape the traps and temptations, which presented themselves under the guise of coloured lollipops and candy, both sweet and sticky. The rounded red and white lollipops on their thin sticks were the top attraction, because we could lick them and then pretend the sticks were cigarettes. Truth be told, they were far from delicious; they tasted rather like some sweet flour which left your fingers and cheeks sticky. The candy came in the shape of red



roosters on a wooden stick and they were glassy and very sweet. And there was also the halva which stuck to my teeth from the first bite. I would come back from the fair happy, with one or several toys which accompanied me throughout the summer. Among the marvels displayed by the peddlers was the ‘50s version of the modern ‘yo-



yo’; it was a small ball filled with sawdust packed in several layers of corrugated paper, and tied up with string and hanging from an elastic cord. I can’t forget the “sunglasses” made of cardboard with green, yellow, or red cellophane lenses. But the best toy of all was the “spyglass”, a simple



ALIMENTARA - (photo Balint - Suceava leaganul suflelui nostru)
The shop was famous for having two entrances

cardboard kaleidoscope with three longish layers of mirror and a handful of colourful glass shards. Crude though it was, the multicolored images of perfect symmetry kept me enchanted for weeks, until the “spyglass” finally came unstuck and revealed its secrets.

Another treat for the children was the chocolate, very difficult to get at that time, but we got some regularly thanks to my father’s connections at the grocery store (“*Alimentara*”).



It came as a prize for the afternoon nap, or when we gave up “*Pogonici*”, a children’s magazine that preceded “*Luminița*” (both were educational publications, in the spirit of socialist realism). Mother used to come with a glass of milk and about a third of a chocolate bar “*Urs de Dorna*” (“Dorna Bear”). It was dark and not very tasty, but still chocolate. The dark-brown bars were wrapped in red paper (or was it brown?), with the image of a huge bear. Then there was a thin tinfoil leaf and under it was hidden the same huge bear embossed in bas-relief over the entire length of the tablet. On the first day, we got the head and the forelegs, on the second day the trunk of the bear, and on the third the rest of the body...

A few years later, the bear was replaced by “the chicks,” which I was already buying on my own for 50 *bani* apiece at some street stall or from the sweets counter at the “*Alimentara*”. It was a kind of fondant with chocolate and nougat filling, wrapped in a thin piece of paper with folded ends with the image of a tiny yellow chick printed on it. And it was “oh so tasty...”

When I finished an exam (I was already in the seventh form), I would drop by at my father’s shop to tell him how I did, and he gave me 2 or 3 lei to pay for a cake at the nearby confectionery. The confectionery was opposite the street and I indulged in some delicious cake – amandine, brownie, eclair, or *dobos* – and a glass of juice. The cakes, even the ones prepared in the *TAPL* laboratory, were undoubtedly tasty. Yet they were no match for the cakes I had eaten a few years before in a private confectionery, which had “survived” in Fălticeni. It was when I went with my father to visit an uncle who was living there. And another delicious treat in the confectionery was the ice cream in the summer. The vanilla, chocolate or assorted ice cream was served in tall glasses. There were also two other places where we bought ice cream in cones: either at some of the few stalls placed in the town centre, between the confectionery and the public gardens, or in Burdujeni, at Natan’s (actually, Natan, the former owner, was an employee in the confectionery with state ownership). Speaking of ice cream, I remember that Herman, one of father’s friends and colleague at the *Alimentara* dropped by one Sunday. Herman seemed to hold the secret of the ice cream preparation. He brought ice and two metal basins, one small and a larger one. He put the crushed ice in the larger basin, while in the smaller one (placed over the large one) he put all the ingredients which he kept stirring all the time. After an hour’s toil, the result was a large jug filled to the brim with delicious ice cream, which we had to devour that same day, before the ice melted. Another day, at Herman’s place, I witnessed the secret of making the ice cream cones. He used a very soft, cream-like batter, which he poured into a special metal cast with a lot of holes, like a honeycomb. The cast was heated on the stove. We, the children, were given the rejected cones, as well as the left batter. The second time I could eat ice cream to my heart’s desire was after my tonsils were taken out in the private clinic at Dr. Siminel’s house.



The refreshing drinks were also part of summer's treats. There were some soda fountain shops in the town centre where you could buy seltzer water with raspberry or fir syrup in bottles of 250ml. The bottles were well capped with a rubber ring and a pressed cork. But the main attraction in summer was the refreshing drinks stall around the corner from the confectionery. Next to the big ice cream lumps, the stall proudly displayed 2 or 3 glass cylinders, each containing a syrup of a different colour: red, of raspberry, green, of fir, yellow, of lemon. The seller trickled the syrup through the taps into glasses (rather carelessly washed up), adding seltzer water from a paunchy copper jar, resting on a sheet of ice surrounded by big ice blocks.

The town of my childhood had many more common treats, and not all were sweet. Who among us did not enjoy, on a spring evening, a slice of brown bread and butter, topped with green ewe cheese and a stalk of green garlic on the side? And who could resist the temptation of wild strawberries topped with cream and a pinch of sugar? Sometimes I used to spend the night at my grandparents' in Burdujeni. (in winter, mother was in hospital in Bucharest, I stayed with them the whole year when I was in the first form). Every Thursday evening, Grandmother would knead a basinful of dough for the Sabbath's "*kolachs*". The dough, covered with a towel, was left to rise overnight. Early the next morning, grandmother made the festive white loaves and put them into trays: two trays with twists, a large round twist and two more round loaves made from three intertwined long pieces of dough. Then she covered the bread with beaten eggs and sprinkled plenty of poppy seeds over it. *Zeida* (grandfather) would take the trays stacked in two rush baskets to the Riegler sisters' bakery. He came back at noon, carrying the Sabbath's freshly baked white loaves of bread, which smelled delicious. However, at dawn, when she was still busy with the dough, grandmother prepared a pita made of a little dough, which she set to bake in the "*rulă*" (which was a small tin oven inside the stove in the room). When my cousin and I woke up, we could smell the fresh pita greased with goose fat. It was hot and so tasty that it melted in your mouth...

Bukovina could boast some other traditional culinary treats, and not only in the Jewish kitchens.

I had been used to many since I was a little child, as



cherry dumplings, cucumber and onion sour salad, stuffed cabbage

I ate them at home, or at my grandparents, or at Aunt Freida's in Burdujeni. I still can't find an answer to this mystery: Which of them were better at making traditional dishes – the housewives in Suceava or the ones in Burdujeni? Whatever the answer, the dishes prepared at the Wagner House, which had the best of Bukovina's traditional food, surpassed them all. The Wagner house had been



famous even before the war, but in the communist era the former restaurant had turned into a small eating house, serving lunch to a tiny circle of acquaintances, mostly single or widowers.

There was also the odd client, who came accompanied, or a family with a child, who wanted to indulge themselves and have a taste of past times with their delicacies. The little eating place in the Wagners' house had five or six tables in a room with a view to *Ștefan cel Mare* Street, opposite the *Tineretului* Cinema. As far as I can remember, the small dining room was devoid of any decoration. Mr. Wagner was a tall slender middle-aged man (I think in his late 40s) who managed an *Alimentara* (grocery store), just like my father and other friends of his. His wife did all the cooking and they both served at tables. The shops were closed at noon, so Mr. Wagner could help at lunchtime, when the place was full. During the summer holiday, after my mother's death (I had graduated from the third form), I used to spend some mornings in the public gardens, sitting on a bench and reading a book. Father would take me to the Wagner house for lunch when the shops closed for the lunch break. You could enjoy the taste of home-cooked meals there! And what a taste!!! Mrs. Wagner's capable hands turned everything into true culinary masterpieces: the simple noodle soups, the chicken or beef steaks – *Braten* –, and, above all, the Viennese veal schnitzel - *Karmenadel* - with mashed potatoes and home-made pickled cucumbers on the side. And to top it all, the part I liked best, the dessert: "*Eisbombe*". It was neither ice cream, nor cassata, nor was it profiterole, it was all of these put together and so much more. So it comes as no surprise that the aromas and tastes tickling my senses and tastebuds in the small restaurant on *Ștefan cel Mare*



cremeschnitte

Street have remained fresh with me after so many decades.

Speaking of fine cakes, I have no doubt that the greatest Viennese confectioner could not equal any confectioner in Cernăuți, or the Jewish wives in Suceava or Burdujeni. Even if they could not speak any German, they mastered the art of preparing the two unmatched cakes, which crowned them all. I am talking of the sweet dreams of our childhood, mixing refined tastes of cream, vanilla, ground walnuts, sugar, fine layers of dough which were left, under strict surveillance, in the oven, not to be over-baked or, God forbid, crumble. I have never tasted *cremeschnitte* as the *cremeschnitte* in Suceava anywhere else – neither in Bled, nor Budapest, nor Vienna. While the "*Șmetn Torte*" – Bukovina's traditional cream "*tort*" (cake) – is totally unknown to any other peoples in the Habsburg Empire. Lately there have been rumors in Haifa that there are a few girls from Suceava who can prepare such treats.

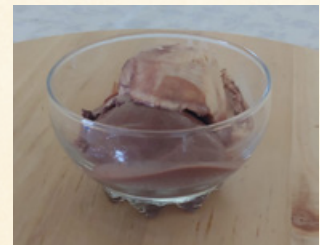
I could write a whole book about all the goodies prepared by our mothers and grandmothers for Shabbat, about all sorts of dry cookies or cakes with a lot of savory creams for the holiday of "Purim", about the honey sponge cakes of the autumn holidays, and about many more. Maybe



some other time...

It was in '63 or '64, I was in high school and my days in Suceava were coming to an end. It was a time when the first signs of culinary “progress” came to our little town. In summer there were ice cream sellers in the town centre. But this ice cream was different: it came in a small packet, quite like that on a stick which I had seen in Bucharest. Unfortunately, the ice cream in Suceava had no sticks so the ice cream melted in our hands... Then, a pastry shop opened near the bus stop, opposite St. Dumitru’s church. The seller cut the cheese or meat pies into pieces with a small cleaver and served them on a piece of grease-proof paper. They were ambassadors of the “balkanization” of Suceava, which was losing the good old Bukovina’s traditions more and more. Another change for the worse was the doughnut shop opened on *Karl Marx* Street. It had an automated machine, which tossed bagels of dough into a cauldron with heated oil. Then the seller fished the doughnuts out with a long metal skewer, placed them on the counter, sprinkled them with sugar and served you the hot doughnuts for one leu.

The doughnut was no *Eisbombe*, but it was hot and sweet and tasty enough. And this is how I was getting used to the Levantine (Middle Eastern) tastes I was about to experience in my new country, Israel.



eisbombe





From the Farmer's Markets to our Tables

Beni Budic

Two or three weeks before I graduated from the third form, father asked me what prize I wanted for the end of the school year. I showed him a big hardback book, entitled “The Book of the Forest.” As it had just come out, it was displayed in the window of the newsagent’s. I had no idea what it was about, neither was I a fan of nature sciences; I was probably drawn by the colored illustration on the cover, which showed a group of Mongolian-looking hunters sitting around a campfire. They were dressed in knee-long cloaks, and were wearing bandoliers full of cartridges. Some rifles were lying next to them. So, at the end-of-school festivity - lo and behold! – what other thing was in the prize packet I feverishly unwrapped but the book I had dreamt of. Truth be told, it wasn’t exactly what I thought it would be, but it was still an interesting book.

I still remember a fragment from the book: while the hunters were spinning yarns, one of them took out a leather pouch from deep inside his pockets. Then he took out of the pouch some wooden splinters, small bits of resin, pieces of leather or cloth and, biding his time, he started to smell each one of them, lost in thought. Afterwards, he told his companions about his tribe’s tradition of always having on him the little pouch with smells, each smell reviving a different memory. This was indeed so true. Over the years, I learned how smells bring back to memory, with the speed of lightning, scenes from the past associated with that particular smell. In the same way, the tastes we have the fortune to re-discover plunge us to the days we first knew them, to the innocent, happy days of childhood. Nature, in its unrelenting desire to ease our struggle for survival, may have endowed us with the ability to relive the moments which made us happy, with the aid of our senses of smell and taste.

Since times immemorial, finding and preparing food have been people’s main preoccupation, which took them most of their time. It was so in the town of Suceava in the ‘50s, where most of the day was dedicated to getting food and cooking it. After all, our mothers and grandmothers were “professional” housewives for the vast majority. They were the ones who woke up with the lark to go to the outskirts and find some peasant coming to market, in order to get the best produce – a fatter hen, some eggs, a few tomatoes, radishes, several apricots... But even before that time, when I was around five or six and hadn’t woken up yet, a guest would knock on our door almost every day. It was Natalia, the peasant from the village of Lisaura; she had milked the cow early in the morning and then left home around 5 or 6 to walk over the fortress hill with her knapsack filled with bottles with warm milk... In summer, good Natalia sometimes arrived with her shoes



hanging on her shoulder so they don't get dirty before she got downtown. The milk brought by Natalia, boiled for a long time, was then mixed with coffee or cocoa, or we simply drank it plain. A thick layer of cream was floating at the surface of the boiled milk in the pot when it cooled. I couldn't stand the cream, but there were those who loved it. The rest of the milk was poured into thick glasses, covered with cheesecloth and placed on the kitchen window sill between the two panes, to cool. It turned into good sour milk a few days later...

After the housewives carefully chose the first batch of produce at the town's outskirts, they went on with their wicker baskets to the farmers' market. The market still lies in the same place today, in the town centre, not far from St. Dumitru's church. Here, the hustle and bustle started from dawn, with the place quieting down gradually towards noon. The farmers, both men and women, were displaying their merchandise either on the cement counters or even on a straw mat or a thick kerchief placed on the ground. There were sacks full of new potatoes, young corn cobs, still wrapped in their husks, clusters of apples, pears, sweet cherries, small boxes with tomatoes, cucumbers, or radishes, bundles of green onions and garlic, large heads of lettuce, carrots, parsley, celery, dill, and lovage, and whatever other vegetables and fruits in season you could think of. In another corner of the market the peasants stacked mountains of ewe-cheese, green cheese, and feta cheese on parchment sheets; large clay jugs filled to the brim with thick sour cream were arranged next to the cheeses. They also lay oval cakes of yellowish butter on large lettuce leaves still glistening with dew drops. The butter cakes were carved with various lines traced with the spoon. And I have yet to mention the large variety of hens, large and small, with their legs tied. The housewives felt them to see how fat they were. There were also white eggs for sale, nestled in thick head-kerchiefs. All these were the wonders supplied a-plenty by Bukovina's land.

On one side of the market was the meat house (the butchery), a relatively modern building for that time. I only went inside that large hall a couple of times, as far as I can remember. You had to climb up a flight of steps and once inside, you saw a row of counters along the walls; behind them hung chunks of beef, veal or pork on big iron hooks. The butchers, with their white aprons stained with blood, were cutting the meat for the customers. I think the meat was produced and sold by a state farm. The kasher meat (from cattle slaughtered according to Hebrew rites by the town's hakham at the slaughterhouse at the end of Mirăuți Street) was sold on a special counter every Wednesday and Thursday. Beef was cheaper, less appreciated by the Jewish wives, but it was staple food nonetheless. Still, you couldn't have a shabat meal without chicken. The hens or the chickens, carefully chosen, were locked in wooden cages and fattened for a few days. At my grandparents, the cages were in the shed in the yard, while at our place in Suceava they were kept



in the huge dusty attic. When their time came, it was the children's duty to take the basket with the hen to the Jewish slaughterhouse, down in the valley of the rivulet; we gave it to the hakham and paid him 2 lei. Next, a short horror scene unfolded before our eyes. But while I was waiting for the last signs of life of the poor hen to flow with the last drops of blood into the cement drainpipe, I took comfort in the fact that the wild ballet of the hens beheaded by our neighbours in our courtyard was even more terrifying.

Even if the farmers's market and the butchery were the main sources of fresh produce, one couldn't imagine the housewives' culinary art without the daily shoppings at the "Alimentara" (the grocery). As far as this was concerned, our family was lucky. Over the years, father was the manager of several such shops in town, so most of the time we did not lack in grocery supplies. There were years when the staple food was hard to find, and, when such stuff was finally in the shops, there was a long queue of tens of people forming within minutes. Whatever was being sold, oil or sugar, soap or olives, the news spread around in no time and the townspeople, who were always carrying a shopping bag with them, headed for the shops quickly. Of course, there were never enough goods for everybody.

And, as it always happens in life, the strongest, the fastest, the shrewdest, the big-mouthed were the first to get in the queue. The others left empty-handed, or with just a tin of some dubious-tasting stuff...

Most shops were small (just one or two rooms) so most of the goods were sold at the same counter. Yet the central shop was different – it had 4 or 5 rooms on the ground floor of the building situated at the corner of Ștefan cel Mare and Gh. Dimitrov streets. One of the first neon signboards in town was placed above the entrance to the shop; it had huge red letters. Father worked there for many years. In fact, all the building belonged to the "O.C.L. Alimentara." The management and the accountants had their offices on the upper floor, as was the meetings hall. Father spent a lot of time there, returning home late at night, long after the shop had closed. The hall housed a kind of club for the employees, furnished with a table-tennis table at the beginning.

Later, around 1962 or '63, one of the first TV sets in town was brought in. It was there that I watched the variety theatre shows every Sunday night.

The most emblematic food shop in Suceava, the ground-floor shop, had several departments. I think the most important was the groceries department where they sold sugar, oil, olives (those



The scale and the queue at ALIMENTARA (Photo Cozmin Suceava Museum)





TV set
(photo - Cozmin Suceava Museum)

were rare to find), rice, wheat and maize flour, semolina, pearl barley, biscuits and sponge fingers, plum jam, vanilla, baking powder and all sorts of essences, pepper, salt, cinnamon, vegetable and fish tins, sometimes even meat tins, and so much more. The winter months brought with them small cases of exotic fruit – oranges, tangerines, and lemons. Apart from a few products that were packed, most stuff was sold in paper bags, after being taken out of the sacks or cases behind the counter and weighed. The oil from the iron barrel was poured from the one-litre measuring jug into the customer's bottle through a funnel. Shopping was far from being easy. First, the customers had to queue at the counter, where the shop-assistant was weighing, measuring or packing the goods, calculating the price for everything, writing the sum down in a notebook and handing the customer the sales slip. The customer hurried to the queue at the cash desk in the corner of the hall. The cash desk was inside a glass booth. Once there, the cashier entered the sum from the sales slip in the sales register, in ink pencil, took the money, gave the change and stamped the sales slip. She did all this with the utmost care and decorum. Once the sales slip stamped, the customer hurried back to the queue at the counter and handed it to the shop-assistant. The latter stuck it into a spike on top of numberless other sales slips. Next he handed the happy customer the bag with their hard-earned shoppings... So the customer could extract themselves, with a sigh of relief, from the queue forming behind them and continue the process to a different department.

Next to the groceries department was the sweets department (chocolate, candies, a few fondants, several kinds of comfits in large metal boxes, which had to be weighed and sold in small paper bags or cornets, boxes with halva, also weighed before being sold). The next counter sold bread and bakery goods, then there was the alcoholic drinks and sparkling water department. There was usually less commotion at these counters, and there was no cash desk, so the shop-assistants were in charge of the payment as well. The shelves were more empty than not in the bakery department. When fresh bread was brought in, it was sold like hot cakes in a few minutes. As far as I can remember, they sold rye bread, white French bread, round buns and croissants. For a short period of time they even sold larger buns and a sort of loaves made with intertwined long pieces of dough; but these did not last long. The 2-kilo brown bread, the staple food of most families, was sold in the small bakeries in almost all the neighbourhoods. On weekdays the family was eating either brown or rye bread. For the festive Saturday meals, the housewives kneaded the dough, intertwined the famous long pieces into loaves, spread egg yolks and sprinkled poppy seeds on them and then baked them in the oven. My grandparents sent these loaves to the town's bakery in



Burdujeni. (I have described all this in detail in the text “My Suceava.”).

At the sweets counter I sometimes got to buy for 50 bani a “puișor” (a “chick”) which was a chocolate wrapped in a piece of paper with the drawing of a fluffy yellow chicken. I seldom visited the beverage department. A couple of times I was sent to buy two or three bottles of caramel beer (on the rare occasion when it was in store); it was a somewhat sweet, alcohol-free beer. We didn’t use to buy sparkling water too often. Instead, we went to the seltzer store for a refill of the seltzer bottle almost every day.

Strangely enough, there was in the Alimentara shop a department where no food stuff was sold. You could buy only toilet and domestic soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes, shoelaces, shoe polish, wicks and glass funnels for the oil lamp, large jars with pickles and sundry other items. There were never long queues in this department either, just one shop-assistant was enough to sell the items and act as a cashier as well, without too much trouble.

The last department took up the largest and brightest hall of the shop; access to it was through the smaller entrance on Dimitrov Street. It was the delicatessen department, furnished with two or three large fridges and a display showcase. There were always long queues at that counter, and the three or four shop-assistants, together with the cashier, never had a moment’s rest. The procedure was the same as in the groceries department, but here all the goods had to be cut or sliced, weighed, wrapped in white paper, so the poor shop-assistants had a busy time all day long.

The staple food was bought at the farmers’ market, at the “Aprozar” (the state-owned shops selling fruit and vegetables), or at the “Alimentara”; this was one of the main activities of the housewives. I would also like to mention several seasonal activities, which consisted in preparing food (preserves, pickles, and stews) to last the family for longer periods of time, mainly throughout the winter.

Two or three times a year, Catrina, the good peasant who helped mother with the harder household chores (cleaning, washing the laundry and ironing), applied herself to noodle making for about two days. On the first day they made the round sheets of yellowish unleavened dough, as large as a cart wheel. The dough was placed to dry on white bedsheets spread on any flat surface: beds, tables, sofas. After a few hours, the dough sheets were rolled. The next day the long dough rolls were placed, one by one, on the kitchen board and cut deftly – some as thin as string, others as thick as a finger – noodles large or small, *lokshen*, *farfaleh*, little squares, or crumbles.

After they were dried, they were put, by shape and size, into



A noodle, *lokshen*, salt and pepper kugel



small white cotton bags, to be kept in a dry place for later use during the next months. The noodles, whatever their shape and size, were served boiled as a side dish or in a variety of other dishes. Most of the times, the thin noodles or the little squares were boiled in the chicken soup. The housewives also made cheese noodles, which were sweet, buttered, sugared, even with one or two raisins on top. For the festive meals of shabat, grandmother sometimes made a kind of dessert, "*imes farfaleh*", from the square variety, with ground walnut and sugar. The wider variety were for the "*kughel*", a pudding with a mixed taste – sweet-peppery -, baked until it turned the colour of caramel.

I will not go into details about the laborious preparation of the preserves and pickles for the winter in our houses. It was the activity common to all housewives, be they Jewish or Christian. But autumn brought an extra activity to the Jewish homes: the preparation of the *kasher* wine for the still far-off days of the *Pesah* holiday, the Jewish Easter celebrated in the spring. Once the grapes were in season and sold in the farmers' market, our parents bought many kilos of grapes, white and red. After the bunches were carefully washed, the grapes were picked one by one (the children were welcomed to take part in this activity) and made to slide along the long neck of a big round demijohn which was sometimes encased in wickerwork. When the demijohns were almost full, father would add 2 or 3 kilos of granulated sugar to each of them. Then the demijohns were covered with a piece of gauze tied tight and left to ferment for several weeks, usually in the coldest rooms, close to the front door. During the winter months, the demijohns with grapes/fermenting wine were sitting in state behind the front door of all our Jewish friends' houses. In time, a liquid blanket of grapes which had almost turned into raisins was floating at the surface of the demijohns. When the liquid cleared a little bit and the dregs could be seen at the bottom of the demijohn, father inserted a thin rubber tube into the demijohn and poured out 4 or 5 litres of "the first wine" into clean bottles which he then capped tight with cork stoppers, and even sealed with red wax, previously melted in a small cup. Then the bottles were stored in the pantry, in wait for the Easter days. A new quantity of sugar was added to the demijohns, and in about 3 weeks a second batch of wine was ready, this time for daily use, as were the other batches, until nothing was left in the demijohns but "borscht", as father used to call it. If you added seltzer, it tasted like spritzer at first, then it had a more syrupy taste after the third "harvest". It goes without saying that no oenologist could even consider adding sugar to the grapes and even under torture they would not call that stuff "wine", but for us this home-made wine was tasty, sweetish, rather high in alcohol, and, according to the immortal poet of the psalms, "it rejoiced man's soul." And, above all, it was in accordance with all the ritualistic requirements connected to the consecration of "the fruit of the vine." Lechayim!!



I also witnessed the preparation of another staple food one autumn afternoon, when I wasn't at school yet. This food, just like the wine, was meant not only for the pesah days, but also for daily consumption. Together with a neighbour and a friend, mother had bought several fat geese and taken them to the hahkam, at the poultry slaughterhouse a few days before. The geese were scalded and plucked in our yard. They were then singed to get rid of the stubs, cut open, and the giblets, especially the liver, were well washed and stored in a cool place. The fatty chunks of skin were next melted in a large frying pan on the cooker. The end product was a sizable amount of fat, "*schmaltz*", a highly-valued delicatessen, which was stored in jars for *pesah*, obviously (the frying pan had previously been carefully cleaned and scalded, according to the rites).



A spoon full of schmaltz and schmaltz spread on bread next to a piece of whole wheat bread.

A much-treasured cluster of golden greaves was left on the bottom of the frying pan; they were well parched, crunchy and so tasty you licked your fingers. These were the famous "*grivaleh*". The bigger chunks of white meat were seasoned and left to dry, after which they were smoked for many hours. For this operation, a huge fire was lit in the large stove in the kitchen; I think they also added some sawdust to the fire. The brick smokestack went up to the attic; there was a small tin door and some iron skewers in the attic part of the smokestack. The chunks of the future dried meat were stuck on the skewers, up to the roof, along the way of the smoke to the sky. Yet the main by-product was the fine fat, the queen of all fats. I remember a rather strange-shaped blue bucket, covered with a lid, placed on the upper wooden steps (clean as a whistle) leading to the attic, at my grandparents'. Grandmother used to put the *schmaltz* for Easter in that bucket.

So, what were the special dishes on the table of a Jewish family living in Bukovina in the years after the war and of the new "socialist" regime? The culinary customs of the Jewish population were subject to a lot of influences. First of all, one of the factors was the food characteristic to the area, or rather, that food which could still be found in those years of want. Then there were the culinary traditions brought by our Jewish ancestors from Poland, Galicia, the Ukraine, or Russia a century before (maybe this is where the tendency to have a sweetish taste to almost all the dishes came from). Apart from that, there was also, to a certain degree, the influence of the Balkan-Turkish cuisine. And one should not forget the strong influence of the Austrian-Hungarian cuisine (and confectionery, especially). Yet the most powerful influence was the local cuisine, coming from the years spent in harmony along the Christians in Bukovina and Moldova. However, all the



influences were supervised by the *kashrut* regulations, the religious law which was still dominant in those years, even if the modern Jews already made room for some freedoms.

Breakfast was plain and quite monotonous during the weekdays. Milk with coffee, brown or rye bread and butter, a slice of feta cheese, a tomato when in season, or an egg. The children were given a soft-boiled egg mixed with bread crumbs, placed in a small glass. To keep it warm, the glass was dipped straight into the hot water in the small pot where the egg had been boiled... The Jewish



Butterbrot – a thick layer of butter spread on a slice of whole wheat bread

mothers in Bukovina were famous for the care with which they chose high-quality butter. The children were “chased” around the house by their mothers holding the “*butterbrot*” with a thick layer of butter on top and cut into small squares, offering it with a toothpick to their little treasures. No one knew about the effects of cholesterol in those days; they worried about the dangers of tuberculosis more.

There was hardly a day when the housewives would not cook a fresh lunch. First of all, they made the aubergine salad with tomatoes on the side, and then pea, tomato, potato, or bean soup. The beetroot borsch was usually served at weekends; a little sour borsch was added to make it even more sour (the same was done with the other kinds of soup as well). The borsch was made from bran fermented in a barrel, and we used to buy it in 1-litre standard bottles from Herman’s bakery. The usual main dishes were either “*karmenadel*” – Bukovina’s version of the Viennese schnitzel, or big meatballs (we called them “*shniṭaläh*”) fried in plenty of oil, or “*rosale*”, which was actually the Jewish-Bukovinan version of goulash, or a steak – “*braten*”, on the odd occasion. All these were cooked from beef. The side dish was mashed potato or chips, sometimes boiled rice, or, more rarely, *tocinei* or “*tocicläh*”, oval cakes made from grated potatoes which were deep fried in oil. From time to time, the Thursday or Friday lunch consisted of the usual beetroot borsch, seasoned with egg and a bit of garlic sauce, and sometimes a marrowy bone, with “*toci*”, fresh out of the oven; the “*toci*” were the *tocinei* variety cooked in the oven, a kind of well-salted, peppered crunchy pie, which was great! The main dishes, with their side dishes, were served with pickles, and, in summer, a lettuce salad, which our mothers drained excessively and then drowned in a lot of vinegar, oil, salt, sugar and garlic sauce (I don’t know why they did it). Dessert was usually the traditional sweet stewed apples, and a fruit from time to time.

Meat was not served at all lunches. The vegetarian meals (the so-called “milk meals”) were not linked to any fasting periods. The vegetable or potato soup was seasoned with sour cream, and the



main course was fried cauliflower balls, or another cooked vegetable. Sometimes we were regaled with dumplings or piroshki filled with sweetened cheese or sour cherries (“*pirogn*”); they were seasoned with butter and sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon. If the main course was meat, the piroshki were filled with potato (“*varenikes*”), seasoned with *schmaltz* and some *griven*.



Potato dumplings seasoned with *schmaltz* and some *griven* (or salty caramelized onions)

Another dish which was the tradition in Moldova, and we enjoyed it too, was polenta with salty sheep’s cheese and sour cream; it was served either for lunch or for dinner, with an onion. Or, we had a sweet maize pie with raisins, baked in the oven and served with thick sour cream. I have to mention another item which was staple food: our daily bread, regarded with sanctity. Apart from the portions of boiled dough or polenta, all the meals came with bread, lots of it; without it, all food was “tasteless”.

As early as Wednesday, our mothers and grandmothers were already preoccupied with the next two *shabat* meals. Actually, the preparations for the holy day of the week involved the greatest effort in the Jewish homes as far as the meals were concerned. The fish had to be bought in good time, as it was rather hard to find. We sometimes had marinated mackerel for dinner on weekdays. Mackerel stored in barrels was easier to find; marinated with onion, pepper seeds, and bay leaves, it had been a traditional Jewish meal for generations. If for the Friday dinner we should have the good luck of a helping of boiled carp in aspic, with a salad of tangy horse radish (grated at the expense of the housewife’s hot tears) mixed with sweetish beetroot, then we had the feeling that the Messiah was close by. There were special occasions when part of the fish was minced with boiled onion and spices, and then stuffed inside the carp slices. At other times it was shaped into balls and boiled one more time. This is how the table for the holiday meal was laden with the legendary “*gefilte fish*” (stuffed fish), which was a real “tour de force” of the East-European Jewish cuisine. Naturally, the fish, just as any other *Shabat* special dishes, had to be eaten with plenty of intertwined loaves of white bread with their delicious smell, freshly baked in honour of the holy day.

As I have said before, fish was quite rare to find, so most Saturdays we had what was considered the most appreciated and finest meat: chicken. The chicken soup with noodles, “*farfaleh*”, or rice, or even fried semolina, the golden chicken soup on which you could see the translucent droplets



of fat was not the queen, but the empress of all soups and borsches. To this day, chicken soup is thought to be a true medicine, over which all our mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers toiled hard, with tears in their eyes; it is our turn now to pass it on to our grandchildren, the ones with the tablet stuck to their hands.

Even in the neediest families, who bought just one chicken for the shabat meal, the housewife managed to cook 4 or 5 dishes, using every bit of meat or bone. Our family, as well as our grandparents', was more well-to-do. Still, the chicken, meat, bones, and giblets, each and every one part became one tasty delight after another. Two varieties of meatballs were cooked with minced chicken. The first, called "*fishelāh*" (white "little fish"), were made with white meat mixed with thinly-cut onion and boiled in a lot of translucent sweetish sauce. The others were small, round meatballs boiled in sweet tomato sauce. The wings and other small parts, more skin than meat, became "*essig fleish*", a tasty dish with plenty of thick red gravy, both sourish and sweet. In the years to come, I was to re-discover my grandmother's *essig fleish* in some Chinese restaurant, under a more sophisticated name. The legs, neck, and gizzard were used for a different dish with a long gravy, and you needed a lot of white bread to eat it. It was called "*pitzea*", and the best part was the sweetish, yellowish gravy with egg and garlic.

The festive Friday dinner, to welcome the *shabat*, was a true feast with sundry dishes served by the shabat candle light, after the "*kidush*" – the prayer for the consecration of the bread and wine. In some families, the chicken soup was served on Friday as well, but in our family the chicken soup was the main course of the shabat lunch the next day. My memories mostly bring me back to the Saturday meals at my grandparents' in Burdujeni. Grandmother still used to stick to the old traditions, while my aunt Freida was the one who brought a hint of Bukovina's modern cooking into the kitchen. Traditional or modern, the lunch always started with a salad of minced chicken liver, "*anghehakte leiber*", an aubergine salad with tomato, an egg salad with thinly cut onion, and sometimes a helping of *fishelāh* or meatballs in tomato sauce, all eaten with thick slices of *halā*, the intertwined loaves of white bread baked specially for Saturday. Then came its holiness, the chicken soup with noodles, followed by the drumsticks or other parts of the chicken which had been boiled in the soup, served with a side dish of white beans, boiled so well that they melted in your mouth. And I shouldn't forget the pickled cucumbers cut into very thin slices by grandfather. Meanwhile, grandmother put the desserts on the table: "*țimes*" made from carrot slices and raisins, another "*țimes*" made from tiny square noodles mixed with ground walnut and sugar, the "*kugel*" (the noodle pudding the colour of caramel, with a sweet-peppery taste), and finally the traditional stewed dried plums, for the ones with a larger belly.





I still have to talk about the cakes and all sorts of baked goodies. This is a world in itself, to which I'll come back later. What is worth mentioning now is that grandmother, and especially aunt Freida baked at least 3 or 4 kinds of desserts for the great day of Saturday. Now is the time to say something about that apparently common Jewish sponge cake, "*lekah*" sweet and filling, with its few varieties, from a festive golden sponge cake to the harder, heartier one, with plenty of honey, decorated with a line of walnuts turned golden from the heat of the oven; this was the delicious "*honiglekah*" which was always on our tables during the autumn holidays.

And you couldn't have the festive meals of the two days of New Year, "*rosh hashana*", without serving mainly the *shabat* dishes. However, the carp head in aspic was the centrepiece on the table, since it was offered to the head of the family as a symbol, urging him to be "the head, not the tail" in the new year. Another custom was to use honey to consecrate the bread, or to taste apple slices dipped in honey, as a symbol of our craving for and desire to have a sweet year. Who knows, maybe this obsessive Jewish yearning for something sweet is the natural response to the bitter fate endured by countless generations?

One way or another, the autumn holidays' meals were, with slight variations, along the lines I have



described above. For the holy day of *Yom-Kipur*, the housewives used to make piroshki stuffed with minced liver, which they put into the chicken soup; this was served before and after the fasting periods. Another custom (truth be told, not so rooted) was to cook cabbage, or rather vine, leaves stuffed with minced meat for the days of *sukot*, the Feast of Booths.

A rather stable period followed, as far as the festive meals were concerned, after the autumn holidays until the *hanuka* days, the Festival of Lights held in December. It was then that we celebrated, through our food, almost everything to do with oil, in remembrance of the miracle with the oil jug in the temple. And this is how our mothers were again busy around the frying pans where they were frying potato *tocinei* and hot sweet doughnuts which were floating in oil, later to be sprinkled with sugar; we used to call them *crafle* in Burdujeni.

The next holiday to come was Purim, around the beginning of spring. It is one of our few happy holidays, so it turns into a kind of carnival for all those young at heart. Drinking alcohol is especially recommended... Its main characteristic is to exchange gifts, especially sweet, with neighbours and friends. For Purim, my so very talented aunt Freida, blessed be her memory, used to bake 8 or 10 kinds of cakes. She put them on any flat surface in the cold room by the front door, when there was no more room for storage in the kitchen. There were horn-shaped cookies made with French dough, crunchy horn-shaped cookies, romboid cookies with layers of ground walnut, sugar, honey, and cocoa, "*honig strudel*", delicate Swiss rolls made of cake sponge, with a layer of sour cream and ground walnut on top. There was also the legendary Bukovinan "*fluden*" made of gossamer-like dough sheets, alternating with layers of ground walnut, cocoa, honey, and rose jam; this was one of the high-quality cookies. I can't forget at least one sour cream cake, "*şmeten torte*", found only in Bukovina, as well as the classic cremeschnitte. And, of course, there were also the cookies traditional for Purim, the "Hamman's ears" ("*Humentashen*"), in the shape of triangles, made with tasty dough with a walnut and cocoa filling. And this is how we ate the head and ears of the bad hero of the Purim legend.

On the day of Purim, in the afternoon, we used to sit at table for the great feast in my grandparents' house. A huge intertwined loaf of white bread, the "*Purim koilich*", took place of honour on the table. Grigore, the old gypsy from Plopeni street, came with his fiddle when the meal was almost over. Actually, Grigore was a virtuoso, he knew all the Jewish tunes and he knew how to touch our hearts. When he arrived at our place, to the end of the town, he had left behind many Purim feasts, and was already a bit tipsy as he had drunk a glass too many. Yet, with his fiddle in his hands, he forgot all of it, as did we. The fiddler on our *ştetl* roof was a genius of an old gypsy...



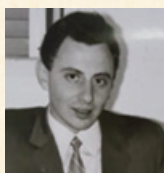
After Purim, grandmother collected all the *humentashen* leftovers in a clean, small, white pillowcase. They were meant to last until the eve of the holiday of *pesah*, which was exactly in four weeks. You can write an entire book about the spring holiday. Its culinary customs are all derived from all the customs I have described here, save one single, extremely important restriction: never touch even a crumb of risen dough.

For now, however, I will return to the pouch with the hidden memories of smells and tastes of my childhood. Truth be told, writing this text has left me extremely hungry.....



A glass with cold water and a spoon of homemade gem was the usual welcome in Suceava .





My Last Summer in Suceava

Beni Budic

The town of Suceava was rather small in the early 1960's, with probably only around 20,000 inhabitants. Most lived in one story homes, surrounded by courtyards and gardens. The farther from the town center they were, the larger the flower and vegetable gardens were. Colorful flowerbeds or vegetable patches were a very common sight. Many of the people had deep roots in the town, their families having lived here for many generations. Usually, they inhabited primarily the first floor, above the shops, of former Habsburg era buildings in the town center or its vicinity. The bourgeoisie of Bukovina had lived there in the "good old days" before the communist regime. Now their apartments were turned into two or three humble units for working people. Some people were lucky, as the bathroom was included in their portion of the larger units. However, they had running water for only an hour a day, while the bathtub was used as a water reservoir. Most of these buildings were in shabby condition, with flaked outside walls, rickety stairs and balconies about to collapse. They were soon to be demolished and the town was to change its appearance. You could only see, here and there, in the town center a few villas built between the war years, in the "international" style. During my childhood, they retained their beauty, even though they had been subdivided into two or three units.

The part of town, which was particularly familiar to me, was around the center. It covered the space between the Cetate (in fact, I lived at no. 6, Cetate Street, the part closer to town) and the area around "Ștefan cel Mare" High School. My friends' houses were spread along these streets. During the summer evenings people used to stroll along these same streets. I also knew quite well the streets leading toward the Suceava River and the Burdujeni suburb. From time to time, I used to venture farther north, towards Turnul Roșu and Zamca, or the Armenian neighborhood. However, that part of town, in the north-west, was rather strange to me. It so happened that I had the chance to roam around it, almost every day, for a few weeks, during my last summer holiday in Suceava in 1963.

After the fun and excitement caused by the performance of the play "DRUM BUN, Astronaut!" the much awaited holiday finally arrived. I have already mentioned the play in the story "An Astronaut at Dom Polski." There is no exaggeration in saying that I had put a lot of effort and energy into the preparation of the show, given that I was only 16-year-old. I felt empty after it



was staged, in spite of the satisfaction it had given me. All the activities, which had filled my life in previous months, had vanished. I had no idea how or where to spend my summer. I could no longer go to Galați, as I used to in the past, since Aunt Anuța and Uncle Zissu had left for Israel. All that was left were the boring pastimes, though, not entirely unpleasant, but still routine: sitting up late reading books, waking up very late and meeting my friends at Mara's. Occasionally, I went to the Suceava River for a swim (yes, I had finally taught myself how to swim a few years before). There were the long walks and prolonged talks with my friend Mihai Drișcu and the girls (Mira, Mara, and Betty). My grandparents came up with the idea of going to Bucharest to visit relatives for a week at the end of August. I was to join them. That was a great plan for a young man who had seen the city in a rush, on only some very short trips. However, the end of August was more than two months away. As I was pondering what to do in the meantime, I met Mihăiță Rusu, one of my nicest classmates. He was not among the best students, but best loved for his quick wit and fun loving nature. Mihăiță was not too tall, his full head of nice dark hair, his intelligent eyes and the mischievous smile added to his charm. He told me he was working at DSAPC (which meant The Department of Architecture, Designing and Planning), assisting an engineer who was doing some measurements for an architectural survey in one of the neighborhoods on the outskirts. The engineer was a single young woman and seemed nice; the work sounded as easy as "a piece of cake". Moreover, he was paid for the job, quite well in fact. It was a pity, though, that pupils could only be employed for three or four months and his term of employment was to end in a few days. He told me that I should hurry and go to DSAPC to apply for the job as soon as possible if I was interested, before someone else. Therefore, on the next morning, equipped with my identity card and the application file I went to the Department of Architecture, Designing and Planning. The department was near Cinema Tineretului. A lorry could go through the wide archway, which led into the inner courtyard.

This is how I came to be employed as a temp at DSAPC Suceava. My first day at work was the Monday of the following week. I met Betty, the engineer, in the courtyard, where a worker was loading the equipment onto a horse-drawn cart. The equipment was the Zeiss theodolite in a metal cylindrical box with a curved lid. The box was hanging from a short strap. The first thing clear to me was that the theodolite had to be kept under watch at all times lest it should, God forbid, be damaged in any way. Then there was the wooden tripod of the theodolite, in its cover made of very hard cloth, like a sheet of a tent. The cover had a leather patch at the end, for protection. Next came the levelling staff, a long ruler of about two meters and a half, divided into centimeters in red and black lines and figures. It could be folded in two and it was wrapped in a ragged cloth. Finally yet importantly, the worker loaded about three wooden posts of about half a meter, painted



in white and red stripes. After he threw several iron stakes and a huge hammer (which only he could handle) into the cart, he jumped into the driver seat. Betty put on her shoulder a large bag resembling a sack. The bag was filled with all sorts of things: a hat, a blanket, the notebook in which she took down the measurements, the measuring tape, a sandwich, some fruit and a real treasure, which I will mention later. She jumped onto the cart nimbly, next to the driver, and she motioned me to jump in the back, among the pieces of equipment. I wasn't too comfortable. Luckily, it wasn't a long drive. The cart stopped near a house in the Zamca neighborhood, near the end of the town. Betty talked for a short while with the housewife and a part of the equipment was put in the shed in her yard. Our driver took the hammer and the iron spikes to put them in the ground in the spots known only to him and the engineer. Then he left and I didn't see him again for over a week.

Betty showed me how to set up the theodolite on the tripod then she put it over her shoulder, like a boy. I was in charge of the levelling staff, the red and white posts and her extremely large bag. Therefore, we went on our way. After no more than a hundred steps, we stopped in the shade, near a fence and a ditch covered by camomile flowers. The spot was marked in red chalk on the fence and we found one of the iron stakes dug deep into the ground. We put the theodolite on that spot and Betty calibrated it with the lead string, just above the spike marking the starting point for a new set of measurements.

Betty Abramovici had just turned 29 at the beginning of summer and she knew that she could do her job very well. She was a woman of medium height, just a little bit plump. She had a round face which showed determination, a rather sharp nose and eyes as blue as the sky. Her wavy fair hair was beautiful. I soon learned that she got the job in Suceava but her family (her parents and a younger sister, my age) lived in Fălticeni, where she was born and raised. She had graduated from the faculty of geodesics in the early '50s. Her studies took their toll on her, but her strong will and determination made her overcome all hardships and she became Miss Engineer, just as her father had dreamt.

I started work and, just as Mihăiță had said, it wasn't hard at all. Mainly because, before setting down to work, Betty took her "treasure" out of the bag: it was a Tesla portable transistor radio, the state-of-the-art of Czeck technology at that time. These radio sets had become a true symbol of the modern life style and it was the dream of every young man to have one. I didn't even dare dream of owning such a treasure... The plastic transistor radio was about the size of a huge book, with a metal handle, which went up and down, and plastic padding. Betty's was white. There was



a transparent disk with markings on it on the right top side, used to search the radio stations. Soon Betty found a station, which was broadcasting pop music and then placed the radio on the small blanket, on the grass, right next to the tripod. Work became real fun from then on...

The levelling staff was about a perch long after I put the two halves together. With the red and white sticks in one hand and one end of the tape in the other, I first marked, either with the stick or with some stone and red chalk, the points, following Betty's indications. Then I came back with the levelling stick at each point and Betty, with the theodolite, was reading the numbers through the tachometer and writing them down in a notebook. This is how we did the job, for an hour or an hour and a half. Then Betty decided to take a break. She sat down on the blanket and invited me to join her. She took out some fruit from the bag, told me to help myself and started asking me questions about my parents past, about school, my hobbies, and a few other less important things. All this was accompanied by the music coming from the Tesla radio. She did the same during our lunch break, when we ate our sandwiches. Our workday ended soon afterwards. We gathered the equipment and stored it in the shed where we had stopped in the morning. We drank some cold water there and headed back to town. It was only 2 o'clock in the afternoon when we said good-bye. Afterwards we decided to meet at 8.30 next morning, at the house where we had our equipment stored. The first day of work in my life had come to an end. The future looked promising...

Nothing changed throughout the next days. The fine weather allowed us to continue working for the geodesic measurements along the narrow streets of the outskirts, as well as the streets leading to the town center, all of which I did not know until then. We went to the head office just once or twice to leave or pick up some other piece of equipment. The cart took us as far as one of the houses closest to the area that required measurements, further and further on narrower and narrower streets. Our conversations were becoming more frequent and friendlier, but Miss Betty, the engineer, knew how to keep her distance with a high school student. Hence, our discussions did not include a wide range of topics. The work was quite easy and, more than that, I found it exciting: I was in a pleasant company and I had the opportunity to earn some money for my upcoming trip to Bucharest. But the most important thing of all was that I had, as usual, my afternoons and evenings free to spend with my friends. Even though the trip to Galați was no longer in the cards, I was definitely having a wonderful summer.

One day, during our lunch break, Betty told me that her younger sister, who had just finished the 10th grade in Fălticeni, was in Suceava, "the big town", for a couple of days. However Suceava



might have seemed big compared to Fălticeni in those days, but the possibilities for entertainment left much to be desired; so Betty asked me if I would agree to take her sister for a stroll one afternoon. I accepted gladly although I felt that neither Betty nor her sister had any illusions about how much fun she could have with a teenager.

I met Rica one late afternoon near the park. She resembled her sister, same eyes, same hair, but she was slimmer, and looked more confident. At first sight, she seemed nice and, although she wasn't the best in her class, she definitely seemed a smart girl. I believe she was wearing a pair of tights, which went a little, below her knees, quite the fashion, and a light-colored blouse. She had a light jacket over her arm. First, we strolled around the town center, at a loss for words and for a topic. Soon enough, though, we realized that we had common interests and hobbies. We had read the same articles in "Contemporanul" magazine, we had seen the same movies and plays. I told her at great length about how I had put on the show "Godspeed, Our Beloved Astronaut!", while Rica shared her love for the theatre and how she played the main role in "Năpasta" (Injustice) by Caragiale, staged by her Romanian teacher. I thought "Năpasta" was an odd choice for a school play. We also talked about George Bernard Shaw's plays, which we had happened to read recently and about much more. After walking twice around the town centre, we headed for the grove. On the way, close to St. John's monastery, some troublemakers overtook us and bestirred some bees swarming around the flowers. When one of the bees stung Rica on the arm, they ran away laughing. Despite the incident, Rica was quite composed. She wiped her arm with a wet handkerchief and didn't scream, or say a word, even though she was quite red with pain. After a while, she insisted we go on with our stroll and talk. We said good-bye later on, when it was getting darker. Rica went back home the next day. I have never seen her again.

I think my walk with Rica was on a Saturday afternoon. When I went to work on Monday morning, Betty cast me a long look and told me about how pleasantly surprised her sister had been. Contrary to her expectations, her companion had passed the test and proved to be a perfect partner for great conversations. She had never thought that the high school students in Suceava read "Contemporanul" ... I must admit I enjoyed being praised. I thanked her, without revealing my satisfaction and surprise that girls of such high intellectual standards could be found in Fălticeni. Then we went about our business as usual, with our measurements around the houses in Zamca. It was my last week at work. My cousin Iani was to take over, even though he had only finished the eighth grade.

The last days of summer went fleetingly by. I spent the last week of August with my grandparents



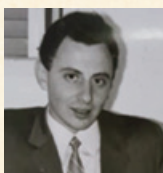
in Bucharest. I was free to roam all over the city. It was the first time I really took advantage of my stay in Bucharest, the dream of every provincial boy. It was wonderful. Naturally, the money earned proved of great use. I came back to Suceava during the rainy days at the beginning of September. The school was about to move into the new building on Petru Rareș Street. Some of the students were called to unload the desks brought from the building where the school had had temporary quarters the previous year. Then the 11th grade began. I was unaware at the time that I wouldn't get to finish it in Suceava. In April, during the Easter holiday (it was also Pesach – the Jewish Easter), the authorities let us know that our application for emigration to Israel had been finally approved, after six years of waiting. Two weeks later, on a Saturday evening, we left Suceava. 53 years has passed since that day. It is already 54 years since the days of my very first job of geodesic engineering and my meeting Rica. I have almost forgotten Betty and Rica, and it seems they don't remember too much from that summer of 1963, either.

About three months ago, an acquaintance of mine recommended a recently released book. It is a book of memoirs, written in a strange mixture of dream and reality, nostalgia and grief, about the life of a teenager and of her family in Fălticeni in the '60s. The book is written in Hebrew and bears the title "Republica 65" (65, Republic Street), the address of the Abramovici family. The few words written on the back cover mentioned that the author had already published a novel and a book for children. She has also been an active playwright, director and actress in the drama circles of her town, in the north of Israel. Her name is Rica Ram.

After reading a few pages, I couldn't help leafing through the book anxiously, looking for the chapters describing Rica's high-school years. To my disappointment, I found no mention of the days of the summer of '63. The next day I managed to talk with Rica on the phone, and a few days later, with Betty. Neither remembered the teenager carrying the theodolite, the teenager who was a theatre fan, but did agree with all the details of my story.

Maybe it was once, in the distant past that my story actually occurred. If it had not happened, I would not feel so compelled to disclose my memories to you now.





An Ode to Mihai

Beni Budic

I met Mihai Drişcu for the first time on the day we both arrived, rather unfamiliar with our new surroundings, in one of the two fourth forms of Middle School Number 2, the former Secondary School for Girls. It was the autumn of 1956, the year we started mixed classes, a true revolution in the Romanian educational system. I got there after three rather grey years at “Ştefan cel Mare”, known as “The Secondary School for Boys.” My new school was a stone’s throw from our house on Cetăţii Street. The Drişcu family had moved from Rădăuţi that summer. They were living downtown, quite close to the school’s back entrance. So, due to our locations, we were both registered at the same school where we would spend about eight years together. The years of our friendship.

I don’t have too many memories from that school year. Although we had already discovered several common traits and pursuits, apparently Mihai and I met only seldom outside school. In the first months of the school year, probably due to lack of space in the fairly small building of the former “Regina Maria” secondary school, we studied in the so-called “afternoon shift”. Classes started at 2 o’clock, with the mornings passing so quickly that we barely had time to grab some lunch after briefly reviewing our lessons and then playing more. So, when we got to school, we were already half asleep. Our classroom was on the ground floor, the first on the left from the front door. It was a large room, with tall windows facing the street and drowning the place in light. To get in, we had to climb down a wooden step straight after the tall door. The teacher’s desk was on a small wooden dais on the right, next to the wall opposite the door; of course, it dominated the entire room with its height. The blackboard was next to the desk, placed in the centre of the wall. There were three or even four rows of desks. I’m not entirely sure, but Mihai and I were probably already desk mates. And we continued being desk mates until the tenth form, when Mihai was transferred to the humanities class. The form teacher and all the other teachers throughout the years always allowed us to sit together. We weren’t chatting a lot and we did not disturb the rest of the class. We didn’t need words to understand each other – at times a look was enough, or a hint. But this happened mostly in the following years, especially in secondary school, after we got to know each other much better.

I have in front of me a picture taken in the classroom, around the end of that school year.



We are a group of pioneers, three boys and four girls, standing in front of the classroom; we all



wear red ties (young communist party pioneers ?) around our necks, and the division flag is next to us. The blackboard takes up half of the background. The second half, on the right of the picture, is taken by the contrasting white wall and, high up, the portrait of comrade Chivu Stoica, with the slogan “Long live the People’s Republic of Romania!” The picture was probably carefully framed by the photographer. He arranged us with true skill, the tallest, Betti and Lică, standing a little behind. In the front row, flanked by three girls, Mihai and I hold the flag proudly. The girls were obviously taller than us and definitely

prettier. Especially Didina Chirică, who was even then the most beautiful in our class, with an elegant white bow in her curls the colour of chestnuts. We all wear dark shorts or skirts (probably dark-blue, since the picture is, of course, black and white), short-sleeved white blouses, sandals and white stockings or socks. Mihai and I, clearly the shortest (but definitely of the same height, so much so that the hems of our shorts are perfectly aligned), still manage to stand out, probably because we are the ones entrusted with the flag. I, with my short fringe, as per regulations, hold the flag with my right hand hidden under its folds, while supporting it with my left. Standing straight, without blinking, looking straight at the photographer and towards a bright future... Next to me, already together and not only because of our height, Mihai, with his dark, rather rebellious hair, stands in a classic *contraposto* position, with his left leg slightly in front, a little bent at the knee, and the edges of his red tie seem to break the picture’s symmetry. It’s hard to guess what he was thinking from his look in that picture, but I’m sure it was something like: “I’ll go along with those idiots for now, but we’ll see what happens later...”. Mihai would reveal the true nature of his non-conformism only about twenty years later, in the years leading up to his strange, unlikely “accident” which took his life in April 1989.

Back then, though, when we were only in the fourth form, and, up to a certain point, also during the next few years of middle school, I still used to spend the best part of my free time with the boys’ gang (Jacky Gotlieb, Tully Țighelețnic, Micky Kerner, Zwi Fuhrer), playing all sorts of games that turned into chess and backgammon matches – and even tournaments in time. Mihai didn’t belong to that circle. The time spent with him was mostly at school, and only seldom in our free



hours, on Sunday or during the holidays. But gradually, although I can't pinpoint the exact time, we began to be almost inseparable.

In school, we quickly adjusted to the new reality. Sharing the same classroom with the girls made life much more interesting and gradually it turned out to be absolutely normal. During the breaks, as we were almost always together, we became a sort of attraction. Our jokes and banter, like a constant exchange of retorts, seemed to amuse our female classmates who, I must modestly declare, would flock around us. As far as I can tell, Mihai never fell under the spell of any romantic relationship. But who knows?...

In those years, the compulsory school uniforms were far from being appealing. The girls wore cross-hatch dresses with alternating black and white little squares, crinkly around the waist and with a tight white collar around the neck. You couldn't glimpse even the tiniest patch of skin! There was a sort of black apron over the dress, its colour contrasting with the dress. Their hair was tied with a white band and they wore coarse grey stockings of mercerized cotton. Mihai couldn't stand the lack of elegance in the girls' uniforms, and never hesitated to point that out, in his dry style: *"They're stockings for nuns and spinsters!"*

The boys' uniforms weren't a marvel either. We all wore suits, with long trousers and a buttoned-up jacket, with lapels and a small collar, made from some coarse, dark-blue fabric, rough to the touch. We were probably supposed to wear a white shirt under the jacket, but actually each of us wore what we had. The cheap fabric of the uniform made the trousers start to shine at the knees (and in other places as well) and the jacket started to wear off at the elbows. Of course, all of us, boys and girls alike, had the school emblem sown on our left sleeve, along with the registration number. When we were in the upper forms, our only freedom regarding the uniform was the permission to take-in the trousers at some tailor, according to the demands of that day's fashion. Mihai claimed jokingly, the trousers were as wide as the sailors' in the Soviet fleet. So, it was only natural that, once the school day was over, we got rid of the uniform, regaining our status as *civilians* for the rest of the day. For Mihai and I, "the rest of the day" gradually turned into an extension of that togetherness at school, the only difference being that now we wore more comfortable clothes and could enjoy complete freedom.

I don't know exactly when, but I think it was around the sixth form that I started to spend most of my afternoons at Mihai's place. Even when we were going to the cinema (and we went hundreds of times!), my evening ended up at his family's place. The Drișcus lived in a modest house right in the centre of the town. Access to it was gained from Ștefan cel Mare street, climbing up a few



steps towards an arched passageway, leading to the ground floor residences and the large staircase to the building's upper floor, on the right. You could also get there through the back, from the school yard, crossing a small yard which also opened to the entrance of the underground winery; in those years the winery was a well-known institution to those with a liking of mash, wine, beer and other similar beverages...

After a while, I became like one of the family.



Mihai as a child



Mihai and family

The front door led to a small, long, narrow room, in fact a sort of kitchen and corridor, used only in the warm months. In the winter, the stove was moved into the living room. In that room there was also Mihai's small desk, where we used to sit for our many talks. I'm fairly certain that at the back, there was a sofa and some shelves crammed with books and newspapers. The largest room of the house was on the left, from that hallway. It was the dining room, as well as the bedroom of the two Drișcu brothers. There were two sofas and a table that occupied the centre of the room. On the left, near the door leading to the parents' bedroom was a cupboard with a glass case and shelves; piles of books took up the upper shelves as high as the ceiling. At the opposite end, next to the front door, was a tall antique ceramic stove. I don't think I was ever in the parents' bedroom (it was also probably a "drawing room" for guests). But through the glass door I could glimpse a wide cupboard with a glass case and mirrors and countless of bookshelves going up to the ceiling. At home, to his family, Mihai was Dănuț, and his younger brother Petru was Titi.

Titi was six years younger than us (there was only a twenty-day age difference between Mihai and myself), so during that time he was about seven or eight years old. He was already a lively kid, driven by a constant, insatiable curiosity. Mihai said his brother was a bottomless well of



questions: you could keep getting water from it all the time (that is, answering all his questions), it still remained filled to the brim (which meant, he kept asking even more questions). He had already taken his brother as a role model, trying to follow in his footsteps, especially since he took up reading all the time. In the summer of 1974, when I came with my wife Ana back to Romania as tourists, we met them both in Bucharest. Titi was a student and it was obvious that he wanted to emulate his brother.

It was clear that the passion – I’m tempted to call it obsession – of the two Drișcu boys for reading, for art and aesthetics can be traced down to their parents. Their father, Grigore Drișcu, passed on to his boys the quenchless thirst for knowledge. He was a medium-sized, plump man, with a sharp nose and a bald shiny head.

Most of all, he always had a smile, or at least, the trace of a smile on his lips, and a few ironic words at the ready. Grișa, as he was called (even by his boys) was a jurisconsult at an institution in town. Plenty of times did I witness his return from work, carrying a briefcase filled with newspapers and magazines he would share with us. During the eighth form, we started a satirical wall gazette called *The Horn* (it was my idea, and we worked on it together, but the drawings were all by Mihai). I think we had a new issue about once a month and it was all typed (with two-fingers, and sometimes even with only one). This was possible thanks to



Mr. Driscu – Mihai's painting

good old Grișa, who gave us a typewriter, which he borrowed from his office, for a few days. He carried it daily, to and from work, along with his briefcase of magazines...

Dănuț and Titi's mother, Elena Drișcu, was a much shorter woman with black hair, a dark complexion, thick eyebrows and fine features. Even if she had not been to university like Grișa, she did her best to encourage any kind of intellectual pastime in her boys. Who knows? Maybe that was why she approved of our friendship? Anyway, I was treated with the greatest kindness and warmth in their home. I don't remember Mihai having any other close friends besides me. The only one I sometimes ran into at the Drișcus' place was Doru Boca, Mihai's cousin on his mother's side. He was several years older than us, well-read and smart.

Mihai was short, just like me. But that is where the physical similarities between us ended. Even in childhood he looked quite well-built, and his shoulders were wider than mine. He exuded



energy and even physical strength (you never forgot a handshake from Mihai...). Even then he was preoccupied with toughening his body and somehow freeing himself from its limitations. He told me more than once that he'd like to wear the same clothes in winter and in summer, if only his body could adapt to the changes in the weather. He even tried to do that up to a point, despite his mother's pleading and objections. Grişa, however, was on his side... Anyway, Mihai never wore a fur or woollen cap, not even when it was freezing outside. At most, he wore his dark blue beret. There was a certain toughness in him, which was probably deliberate.

In front of me I have a small, passport-type photograph, probably taken when he was a fresher. On the back, the following message is written: "For grandma, with thanks, Dănuţ". The grave face – far graver than it actually was, makes an almost perfect rectangle. His cheekbones are protruding, his nose is straight and symmetric with the rest of the face, his mouth thin, his chin prominent. The eyes are a little hidden by the eternal thick-rimmed, slightly rounded glasses, making a pleasant contrast with the dominant sharp angles of his face. His dark hair is probably combed with a lot of effort to the left, to hide its unruliness, at least until after the picture is taken. He also has a pair of long sideburns which went down under his ears and they are unfamiliar to me. He didn't use to wear them during our years in Suceava.

In a text written by Gheorghe Vida, his best friend from his Bucharest years, I found out that Mihai read one book a day. I don't know if he performed such feats during his school years as well, but the truth is he absorbed unbelievable numbers of books, newspapers and magazines of all kinds. I didn't even try to measure up to him, although for a while I compelled myself to read 100 pages a day; yet, it was a rule which I gave up soon enough. Still, my ability to express myself in Romanian well after years of communicating only in Hebrew, is probably due, to a large extent, to Mihai and to my desire to keep up with him. Our reading preferences were somewhat different. I was more attracted by adventure stories, romance, technical literature and sci-fi. Mihai preferred non-fiction, although this was more difficult to swallow, history and even philosophy, but more often than not he read about art and aesthetics. It was always art. We devoured everything we could find about the cinema and had heated talks and debates on the topic, centred around the many films we used to watch. I never managed to spot every weak point in a movie the way Mihai did, since he was a critic with sharp eyes and an equally sharp tongue. He had no mercy at all... We both bought and read *The Contemporary*. Mihai also bought the *Literary Gazette*, while I bought *The Tribune*, a weekly newspaper from Cluj. These two we exchanged between us. I think Mihai read everything in them, but I did nothing more than skim through them, since there was also *The World*, *The Flame*, *The Magazine*, *The Collection of Sci-fi Stories*, as well as the daily papers I would glance at from time to time, from which I read only what was of interest to me. And, of course, at the



same time we travelled the roads of the great classics, constantly republished in those years, with long intellectual forewords, filled with the omnipresent ideology of those times. I remember how Adi, Mara's elder brother, advised us with the expertise of his maturity (he was about 23 or 24):

“Read all you can now. You'll have no time for that later on...”

And we complied. Mihai once expressed his faith in the value of what he could learn from reading when he told us something he had read about George Călinescu in *The Contemporary*. Călinescu had been included as an important member of a cultural delegation that was to leave for the People's Republic of China. For three months before his departure, he “locked” himself inside the Academy Library and read all he could find about China. When the delegation got there and the talks with the hosts began, “Călinescu had the Chinese utterly astonished with how much he knew!” Mihai was quite colourful in his expression. Several years later, his good friend Gheorghe Vida said what Mihai answered once when asked where he'd be spending his holidays: “I'm going to sunbathe in the Academy Library!”



Back to our early years in secondary school – I remember that was when our group of five was formed: Mara (Bodingher), Mira (Seidler), Betty (Merdler), Mihai and myself. The almost daily meetings took place at Mara's home, the “Bodingher House”, where we would spend almost all our free time. I hardly ever found my way to the Drișcu family. During that time Mihai started to attend an evening painting course at the Community School of Arts in town. His talent for drawing was obvious to everyone by then.



Mihai's drawing

Often we would find ourselves breathless when Mihai, armed with charcoal or a pencil gave life to the piece of paper in front of him with only a few movements of his hand! Years later, I described that period in a letter that, I paradoxically rediscovered, quoted in a novel published in 2010, in which Mihai and I found ourselves among the protagonists. “I admired and appreciated Mihai from the start. Although I have tried myself to write from time to time, I have already been



aware of his intellectual superiority, as well as his amazing way of seeing things, and his ability to analyse and interpret everything. To be honest, he's been for me a role model I have tried to emulate and, at the same time, my first reader and ruthless critic. I have learned so much from him. The differences between us have never caused any sort of envy whatsoever. During those happy years the harmony between us was complete. Never – not once in eight years – did we have any personal conflicts.”

Undoubtedly, the countless books and articles which we read, the wealth of words and ideas which filled our souls, made us, in time, capable of expressing ourselves naturally and with ease. And, as far as Mihai was concerned, he had plenty to say, important and original ideas, serious, well-documented and well-reasoned. I, on the other hand, tackled lighter subjects, more prone to fantasy and romance, but I had taught myself to express them in a style that kept the reader engaged. At the end of the term in the ninth form, when Eichorn (our form teacher who taught History) brought us our checked term papers, he said that, if he could combine my passionate style with Mihai's knowledge, we would make an amazing writer.

Around December 1961, during the ninth form winter holidays, I read *The Diary of Andrei Hudici* by Felix Aderca. Back then I had no idea the author was already a well-known writer, appreciated since before the Second World War. Nor did I know he was Jewish and that, apart from that novel for children, he had written a lot, yet most of his works were unfamiliar to the youngsters of the post-war years. Inspired by that book, I decided I had to write a diary. This is how I actually started to write. The Diary – although there were sometimes months in which I didn't write a word – became a part of me until the spring of 1964, when I left for Israel. No one, not even Mihai, nor the girls, had any idea of its existence. Several months later, *The Collection of Sci-fi Stories* – which I read religiously – announced a contest of sci-fi short stories for young readers. Without hesitation, I started to work and I even got Mihai involved in the project. After months of writing and typing (Mihai was helped by Grişa, while I paid for the services of a professional typist), we each came out with our own stories of several tens of pages each. Mine was full of adventures and included even a timid love story. I entitled it *The Second Ending of Atlantis*. Mihai's short story – unfortunately, I have forgotten its title – had a social and psychological topic and an idea I considered brilliant at the time. We both sent our typed manuscripts to the editorial office in Bucharest and, after several months of biting our nails (outwardly, Mihai kept his cool, uttering the usual cynical jokes), we reached the conclusion that our literary adventure had come to an end. The only readers of our two stories would be only ourselves and the girls.

Then the tenth form started and Mihai transferred to the Humanities class for the next two years, together with Mara, Betty, and an entire bevy of girls. Mira and I remained in the Sciences class.





A few of Mihai's paintings

But of course we were still together almost all our free time. At the end of that year we all lived the adventure of *Godspeed, Our Beloved Astronaut*, the sci-fi show mounted by our school. Mihai skillfully portrayed the “good” teacher and of course dealt with everything that had to do with designing and painting the scenery (helped by Mara).

The next year, the eleventh form, passed by like a dream, and in April 1964 I left my friends. Our family’s turn had come and we were to leave for Israel. During my last Saturday in Suceava I went to the Drișcus to bid my farewells to Mihai and his family. I gave Mihai the few notebooks with my “manuscripts”. We weren’t allowed to take any written materials with us. In time, I forgot about them completely and not even during the other two or three encounters with Mihai did I remember to ask him what had become of them.

In the first months after my departure, the “club” at Mara’s was as lively as ever, in spite of the worries everyone had about the upcoming baccalaureate exams. We wrote to one another for several months. This is Mihai’s answer to my first letter around July 1964:



What have I done recently? Well, first of all, I read all your diary. I quote from my notes: ‘...it’s as if he played the part of a small Romeo (the girl’s folks are extremely stubborn). The poem about the eyes (the one written in capitals) is a little bit too personal. I was touched by the confession about his mother’s memory. Would you mind if, in the next years, I would steal some of your ideas about a series of literary portraits? I mean the teenager who, between two rocket launches, gives a deep sigh to the heights of heaven and the ungrateful girl’s eyes.

Then, in the same letter, he gives an account of that year’s Romanian literature national contest, when he was awarded the first prize: “Before I left for the contest, I dropped a hint calmly to father: ‘Grişa, you should know that I’m coming back with a camera.’” says he. We made a bet. ‘If I come back with it, you don’t shave for a year.’ ‘Fine!’ says he laughing. It was hot in Bucharest. I was going mad in my rough Terylene (polyester) uniform. I was so mad that I got first prize (the topic was ‘*Life in the new village in contemporary fiction*’).”

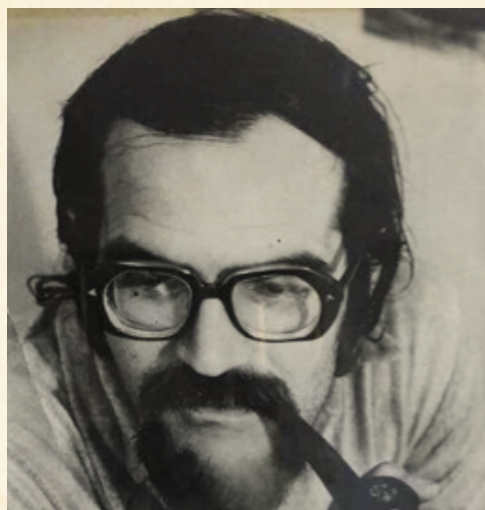
Mihai went through other trying experiences that summer. When he took his entrance exam at the Fine Arts University, he would have liked to take up scenography, but in the end he decided on taking up Art History and Theory. His future career stemmed from that, and he became one of Romania’s outstanding art critics in the decades to follow. Once the trying events of the entrance exam were over, and the teenager got acquainted with a student’s life in Bucharest, this is how Mihai described his life as a fresher in November 1964: “*My life is better than if I were living in Texas, especially since nobody shoots anything or anybody except at the fair. I have good money from my scholarship, I have made a home in the hostel, I eat well, I have put on weight, and I have taken up weight-lifting. We have no seminars, just around 20 classes a week; Saturday is free, and we will take only 4 exams in the summer. So, my time is well-spent going to the cinema and to the three libraries well-stocked with books in foreign languages. I also have some excellent acquaintances and friends (The girl has already told me that she would like me better if I grew a beard...). Some professors are exceedingly well-read (Schileru, who had the movie column at The Literary Gazette; history is taught by one Ionescu, familiar with all the historical gossip and who seasons his lectures with all sorts of anecdotes...). And finally French is quite popular with us, not only as far as painting is concerned. We discover Camus, Malraux... There is a lot of reading in foreign languages for the lectures, especially in French.*”

In the next years, caught in the whirlwinds of life, we grew apart even more. The girls in our group all came to Israel, one after another. I met Mihai briefly two more times in Bucharest in 1973 and 1974. Both times were too short to be able to tell too much of the countless tales we wanted to share. The last time I saw him was also in Bucharest in 1984. The only place where we could



talk was the bar of our hotel, The Union. Mihai was the one who talked most of the time, and he carefully avoided talking of nostalgic memories. It was not in his nature.

He talked a lot about what he was doing, and especially about what he “was not allowed to do” or write. I think we were the only customers in the bar, but who knows how many ears were listening! In those years of terror in Romania, Mihai freely expressed his views in such a way that it made me, a tourist with a foreign passport, fidget on my chair uncomfortably. But it all ended well. We said



our good-byes when Mihai left the bar. It was Forever. In less than five years later, he was to be killed in the stupid “accident” which is far from being elucidated.

Still, those eight years of friendship between two kids, turned into teenagers and young men in the ‘60’s Suceava will forever be imprinted in my mind; they have not been effaced by neither the frantic rush of life, nor the daily routine, nor the passage of time.

A few years ago, in a series of unbelievable events worthy of a science-fiction story, possible only now in the Internet era, the two of us met again; Mihai Drișcu and myself, in a universe beyond the mirror, beyond *The Memory Mirror*. And, this is how I found my diary again, the diary I had forgotten about, the diary I had found fit to entrust Mihai with. I found my diary among Mihai’s papers and documents in the “I. G. Sbiera” Library in Suceava. Who knows, maybe the idea launched as a joke by our history teacher, Eichorn, almost 60 years ago, to blend our spirits together, became manifest in this way.....





Childhood Memories

Betty Merdler

My name is Betty Wagner (nee Merdler). I was born in Suceava, Romania. My father, Beni Merdler, as his parents, was born in Suceava. My mother, was born in Czernowitz. She adapted herself easily to her new life in Suceava. There is a funny story about her being named Josephine: my mother used to tell us that her father asked the clerk at the Czernowitz town hall whether the name chosen by him (Perale) was a good one; however, the clerk (an Austrian in the service of Kaiser Franz Joseph) said: *“Nein, es passt nicht. Josephine ist viel besser.”* And this is how my mother came to be Josephine in the birth certificate and called Perale by everybody else.

My father was a handsome man with kind blue eyes and a heart of gold. He was a very good story teller – you could sit for hours, mouth agape, and listen to him spinning yarns of stories. He would tell us about his youth and about the war, which shattered the life of every Jew in the world. His talent did not go unnoticed: whoever was in need of a well-written letter came to father. He was keen on chess and, as such, he was a regular customer at the Wagner confectionary where all the passionate chess-players used to spend their time over the chessboard until the small hours of the night. Mother was a well-read educated woman who could speak several foreign



My parents and I

languages. She took pleasure in teaching me poems, but I mostly liked playing with dolls. She had studied Pharmacology for two years at the University of Czernowitz; unfortunately, her father's death put a brutal end to her studies.

I was born in 1946, after my parents came back from the camps. Being an only child, I was naughty and spoiled.

If anyone refused to play with me, I would beat him or her up. I didn't like going to the kindergarten, but, I had no choice. The kindergarten was in the courtyard of a church. There was no proper toilet place, just a screen with a bucket behind it; a place for children to relieve themselves. A boy, called Garibaldi, who had a thing for my braids, was pulling them hard every day. Garibaldi was a big boy and I didn't dare to fight him. I was too afraid I would be hurt. But, when I couldn't put up with his repeated teasing, I pushed him into the toilet-bucket where he took a not so pleasant and



quite smelly bath. I don't know how he dried himself up, but his revenge came on the next day. He hid and waited for the right moment. When I came to the kindergarten wearing a nice new coat, he pushed me into a mud pool. Although my coat was totally ruined, I didn't care so much about it as I was scared of my mom's reaction. My best friend, Dorly, rushed to my mother and told her everything about the "kindergarten war" and the sad aftermath of the ruined coat, which was anything but nice or new anymore. When I got home, I was in for a scolding, but it was not so bad as it could have been, had Dorly not intervened.

As for Dorly, she got a shiny new bike, and I, as her best friend, had the honour of trying it out. Truth be told, I had never ridden a bike before. A funny wall happened to cross my path when I was riding Dorly's bike faster than I should have. Obviously, the bike was in a worse state than the wall.

The Jews in Suceava believed that their children must learn to play an instrument. This was the tradition and, as such, mother unavoidably enrolled me into piano lessons, without my consent. The piano teacher used to play the piano for me, explaining the classical music, while I was cradling in the rocking chair next to her. She had an amazing collection of dolls and I was allowed to play with each one. I couldn't understand why she needed dolls at her age, especially since she was single and childless.

Her place was nice; we both enjoyed our time together, although we never took the teaching and learning the piano too seriously. When mother came to see, that is, hear how I was doing with my piano lessons, she immediately interrupted the "*symphony*" and started looking for another project, which of course, was not approved by me either. I had no say in it anyway, whatever mother decided, I obeyed without a squeak. Mother hired a "*rebale*" to teach me Hebrew. He was rather old, hard of hearing and with poor eyesight. As soon as the lesson started, he fell asleep; I hid under the table playing with my dolls, whom I never taught Hebrew. Again, mother discovered soon enough the sleeping old fool and his happy pupil and gave him short shrift, as he might find someone more diligent elsewhere.

You could not find too many toys after the war. As father was in Bucharest, he managed to buy a drum. I was very pleased with my gift, especially since the noise of the drum beatings could even raise dead from the grave. Yet my joy was short-lived. Our landlord and landlady, Mr. and Mrs. Hilsenrad, both as old as the hills, with the mentality of shrivelled corpses, presented mother with an ultimatum: either the drum was to be turned over to them, or the lease was to be broken. The



Hilsenrads were both impressive people: he was as tall and stiff as a pole, holding a cane when walking, she was short and stout, like a crooked root. Therefore, the drum was confiscated. My very short career as a drummer ended before it even started. However, my father was inventive and understood my big problem. As a result, he ordered a small buggy, which could hold two children. All the children in the neighbourhood gathered around to have a look at the buggy and I was happy to “rent” it to whoever wanted a ride. It was convenient to everyone: I was always in the buggy with a "customer" while the others were pushing us. That was fair enough, both parties were winners. But, even the career of a buggy owner came to an end soon enough. The buggy was made of wood. The square in front of our house was cobblestone paved; the noise of the buggy was too much for the neighbours, who obviously complained. So they stopped me from having this pleasure as well.

I started going to the cinema instead. Mother was an avid cinemagoer and as she had no other option, I went along. Yet I would not go without my “*urs-de-Dorna*” (the chocolate brand



of that time), so the bear quickly settled the matter. I was sitting in the front row, with all the children who came to the cinema. I used to finish my chocolate, made some noise and after half screening time I went to mother saying, “*genug gesehen*” (I have seen enough). Nothing could be done. She had to leave the cinema hall. When I went with her, mother had never had the chance to watch a movie to the very end.



I remember ome joyous occasion: it was during the autumn holidays when people used to go to the synagogue. While the parents went inside, the children stayed in the courtyard and played games. We were divided into small groups and the game was actually a fight between the groups. The din brought the rabi out of the synagogue to hush us but to no avail. The moment he went back inside, the racket went on even louder and stopped only with the end of the prayer when everyone left for home.

The older I grew, the more I started to like different things. I was invited to a party on New Year’s Eve to Rica's house. At midnight, the lights went out and her mother came into the room carrying a lit candle. Had she come in minutes before, valerian would have been more effective.

Overall, we were good, quiet kids. Our favourite pastime was to gather in the courtyard of my house to chatter about this and that, but our main interest was the stork and babies story. I don’t



think any of us knew exactly how babies were born, but our questions were legitimate. Where does the stork take the babies from? Why does the baby look like us, humans, and not like the stork? How can the stork carry such a weight in its long beak? What happens if the baby falls off the beak? And many such good questions. The word 'sex' didn't exist in our vocabulary, we were so naïve. Compared to the children nowadays, we were plain stupid. There was no such thing as sexual education and nobody talked about sex. It was shameful.

In time, we grew wiser and more knowledgeable and we started to understand how things were going. The stork retired and we were growing up. I started dating, playing society games and other grown-up games. During high school Mara Bodinger, Beni Budic, Mihai Drișcu, Mira Seidler, and I got quite close and were almost inseparable. We were very good friends. We used to go to the cinema together to meet at Mara's place; we listened to the BBC on the radio. Our chats went on into the night until Mara's father sent us home.



My class colleagues in the late 50s. The teacher stands behind me.

In the first row, from the right: Mara. Jacky, Feller. In the middle, Ziporah Curelaru, left to the teacher, Pia Klein.

At this moment I would like to think back about Mihai Drișcu (I think he is the boy in the second row, the first from the left) who was one hell of a boy. He was brilliant, very talented (a great painter), clever, accomplished, who acquired tremendous general culture. For his age, I think he



was a genius.

His fate was grim, the Romanians made sure to have him murdered.

His eyesight was poor, he could hardly see with one eye. He was also quite eccentric: he would come to school wearing one sock with stripes and the other with squares.

During the summer holiday, we used to go sunbathing at the Suceava River. I couldn't swim, I only pretended to swim on the riverbank, but sunbathing was still a joy. One day I went down to the riverbank with Mara and Drișcu. Beni was already in Israel. Drișcu had pulled down his trousers and put his glasses in the trouser pocket. He then hanged the trousers on a tree branch. A few cows were grazing on the river meadow, sunbathing with us. A fat cow passed by the tree where Driscu hang his trousers, caught them in its horns and started running. Drișcu was not able to see very well even with his glasses on, without them, he was as good as blind. And so we started a mad race after the tubby cow. Drișcu was running to the left, the cow was going to the right, without giving up the trousers. After a few good minutes the cow, apparently bored, shook the trousers off and didn't even bother to apologise for all the hustle. It all ended well - the glasses were still in one piece.

In high school we had a music teacher nicknamed "muzicuta" (Harmonica). In town there was a cobbler who chose a funny name for his business, 'Tip Top at Ianovici Ilie.' When Harmonica hummed the beginning of "The International" march and encouraged us to sing it, instead of singing "Stand up all victims of oppression," we used to sing "Tip Top at Ianovici Ilie." Harmonica could sense that something was not right, but she never understood what the matter was.

There are many things, which I remember, but it is difficult to sum up my 19 years spent in Romania in a few pages.

I came to Israel in 1965. In Israel my life really started. When I think about the hard life in Romania, I wonder why some people have still feelings for Romania and the Romanians. There were shortages of everything, mainly food, you had to queue for everything and when your turn came, they had run out of what you wanted to buy. Mother used to go to the outskirts of town at 5 in the morning to catch the farmers coming to the market and buy a chicken or any other product.

The police in town were particularly interested in the Jews. I can't remember the year, but one day they launched a campaign against the Jews who had gold, foreign currency or silver coins. None of it was stolen, of course, but it was forbidden to keep such possessions. Hundred of Jews were arrested, sentenced and imprisoned for long periods of time in the harshest communist prisons. Most of them were sent to forced labour to build the Danube-Black Sea canal, and it was a known



fact that there was no coming back from there.

My parents told me that during the war, the Romanians treated the Jews even worse than the Germans. The Romanians were doing the Germans' dirty job and they were quite happy to humiliate and kill the Jews. The Jews' possessions had, of course, been confiscated without being returned after the war.

In short, I do not miss either Romania or the Romanians. They are no better today than they were in the past, just their anti-semitism is more concealed than it used to be. Let's not forget that the former Romanian president, Ion Iliescu, stated that the Romanian Jews did not go through any 'SHOAH'; he claimed this did not even exist. And if Iliescu said that years ago, let's not forget that the present president is also an anti-semite who never misses the opportunity to mention the topic. Undoubtedly, the Romanian Jews have a very short memory and don't want to remember what happened to them in Romania. People go to Romania year after year as if there is nowhere else they can spend their dollars. But this is only my honest opinion and nothing more.

The Romanians used to sing "*Awaken Thee, Romanian.*" I don't think it would be a bad idea for us to say "*Awaken Thee, Romanian Jew.*"

I look in the mirror and I think "I am 72 years old". The years have passed by like a dream – when – how? It is what it is. Tomorrow I am going to buy a new mirror, maybe I'll look better and younger in it.

I salute you all, a pioneer's merry salutation – SALUT VOIOS DE PIONIER! do you still remember the greeting?





Childhood Memeories - 2

Betty Merdler

Previously, I mentioned my father's story telling talent. Let me share with you one of his stories that stayed in my mind all those years. My father had five brothers, all quite close to each other in age. They were all fine boys and they enjoyed having fun downtown – in coffees and restaurants, in the company of beautiful girls (that's how I like to think). Their house was close to the outskirts of town, in the direction of Botoșani; thus, they had to walk quite a bit to get home. Each of them had their own circle of friends. They never walked home together.

One night, dad was on his way home. He was just walking down a wide road, flanked by trees on one side. It was winter and freezing – the temperature was minus 20 degrees. He noticed in passing a woman in the middle of the road. She was wearing a black suit and high heels. He was a little curious, but not too much, so he kept on walking. This scene repeated itself several times, until dad decided to stop the woman and ask why she was dressed like that in the freezing winter night and what she was doing so late outside. He looked at the woman. At the same time, she raised her head and glanced at him. At that moment, dad felt his knees getting weak. He was scared to death. He used to say that the woman's look was like an arrow, freezing the blood in his veins. He used all his energy to run back to the town center. His friends were still there and he told them the story. After a while, he decided to get a carriage and look for the woman, but there was no trace of her. When he told his brothers about his frightening experience, they all claimed to have also seen the same woman. They decided she needed to be taught a lesson so that she wouldn't frighten people anymore. They planned to go out, the five of them, late at the night and wait for her. The clamor woke their father up; he went to see what his sons were doing. He listened to their story, declared it was “the evil spirit” and forbid the boys from going out.

I heard plenty stories like this. They got me so scared that I couldn't sleep at night. But I still wanted to hear them. I don't have any explanations for what happened. Dad wasn't a fantasist, though, and it's not likely for five people to invent the same thing.

My mother experienced something strange as well. When war ended, mother returned to Suceava while father was forced to join the Red Army. A year had gone by, and father still wasn't back. Mother was in town for groceries when a gypsy woman approached her and told her: *“I see that you are very sad. Don't be upset. Go home. There, you will meet the one you love.”*



Mother gave her a few coins but didn't pay attention to her words. What could a gypsy woman know? When she got home, father was waiting for her. How could the woman had known, it's hard to tell. But the story is true.



From the left: Tzipora, I, Mihai Driscu, the flag, Beni Budic, Didina Chirică (the girl with the white ribbon)

Next to our house, there was a pub. Drunkards came to our yard to do their business. The children from the yard planned to teach them a lesson and to stop the bad habit. I offered to be the first to try our plan. I saw a drunk staggering through the yard, next to a wall. I took a glass of cold water and poured it down his neck. Probably the water was really cold – either that or because he wasn't that drunk –he quickly sobered up, and chased me for a while across the yard. I was afraid he would catch me, so I hid in Ety and Betty Goldenberg's attic. The man got tired climbing so many stairs. He went back to his drinking, all the while muttering about catching me at some point. I have some stories about school as well. My best friend in primary school was the most beautiful girl in our class. Her name was Didina Chirică. She lived on the street leading to the Citadel (Cetate) in a new house with fruit trees in the

garden. I don't know why, but I can still remember how the house smelled at Christmas and New Year. There was a scent of vanilla and baked dough. A large Christmas tree stood ready for us to be decorated. It was the same at Easter. They baked sweet bread with cheese and raisins and had painted eggs. We were very close and I always felt at home in the company of her family. We went our separate ways in highschool and I don't know what became of her.

I remember a lot of funny stories from high school. We had an Economics teacher with a very long nose. We used to laugh at him and say that if he turned a street corner, you would first see his nose, and then the rest of him. Our Botany teacher was old. We all knew when he would call on us to grade our answers at his questions. He went through the register alphabetically and examined three students at a time. There were no surprises. We used to call him the “tank-man” because he wore a pair of high boots from the war, both in summer and in winter.

We also had two “cool” teachers. Mrs. Pavel at Math and Mrs. Mustață at Russian. They were



young and beautiful and the “freshmen” (the lads from the 9th form, that is) sat there entranced during their classes. They did not know much about the content of the lessons. But they could tell you immediately what the two teachers were wearing.

Our Romanian teacher was very strict. Her name was Mrs. Obadă. At the end of the school year, we would hold a festivity. Mrs. Obadă decided I would be the one presenting the program since I had “good oratory skills” (so she said).

The day before the festivity Mara got a new pair of very nice shoes. I asked and she lent them to me for the event. We started our festivity and everything was perfect until the shoes started to pinch me so hard, I couldn't see straight. I knew the presentation by heart, so I began to say my piece as quickly as possible, longing for the moment I would cast aside those beautiful but unfriendly shoes. Afterwards, Mrs. Obada congratulated me on my presentation and told me she had not realized the text was so short. I didn't have the heart to tell her the truth.

During our breaks, we would step out to unwind in the school yard. I remember once there was a group of us and one girl had lost her panties while we were chatting. The elastic got torn and they fell down. She didn't even blink – she simply picked them up and put them in her pocket. If she ever reads these lines, I hope she remembers the troublesome panties.

I don't want to go on, because if I do, I'll keep going on until tomorrow. So, I'll say good-bye and may you all stay healthy. I think that's what we need the most at our age....





An Orphan in Transnistria

Bibi Ruhm

I was an only child. My mother Caroline was a native of Pascani and my father Bruno Ruhm - a native of Suceava. We lived at Regina Maria Street 10. My family owned a pretty big building which included our own apartment, rooms for rent and a pub on the ground floor. My father had two sisters, Olga and Tzila. Later on, Olga married Beresh Kern, a relative of Poldi Kern, Dutzu's father.

In 1939, my father and other Jewish men were arrested and locked up in the Great Synagogue – Templul cel Mare. They were kept as hostages. Every day I used to bring my father food. Once my father explained to me the great irony: the synagogue where my father was kept was built with the help of his father's financial donation.

I attended Stefan cel Mare school. In my class there was another Jewish boy, his name was Hecht. In 1940, when I was 8 years old, the Jewish students were expelled from school on the authorities' order. My mom hired a Jewish teacher, whose license to teach was deregistered. He would come to our house and give me lessons.

In 1941, during the autumn holidays, a rumor spread about deportations. Indeed, on Sukkot the order came. All the Jews were ordered to leave their homes in 24 hours to be deported eastward. A lot of stress, a lot of instant panic engulfed the families. People, living on the same street as ours, left on October 9, 1941, the first deportation transport. We reached the Burdujeni train station by carriage and, from there, we were loaded in overcrowded cattle cars. Because there were no toilets in the cars, my father, a strong sturdy man, succeeded to break a floor board, so people could relieve themselves undisturbed during the train ride. The train stopped not far from the Dniester River, at Ataki. The deportees found "accommodation" in the deserted houses of the local Jews, who had fled or were killed during Operation Barbarossa (which began on July 22, 1941). On one occasion, I saw a human hand, part of a corpse, emerging from the water. The bridge over the Dniester had been bombed; consequently, people were waiting for the raft to take them across the river from Ataki to the opposite bank, to Moghilev, the county capital of the region. During the crossing from one bank to the other, the Romanian supervising gendarmes, abused us, pushed old people into the river or threw our meagre belongings into the water. From Moghilev walking convoys started moving towards different camps. A Romanian soldier slapped my father and his eyeglasses fell on the ground. While I was helping my father to pick up his eyeglasses, a Romanian officer who



recognized my father from Suceava arrived at the scene. After asking the redundant question “*Ce faci aici Bruno?*” – “What are doing here Bruno?” -, he volunteered to help, arranging for us to stay in Moghilev. During that year, we encountered hunger, cold, diseases, constantly looking for a place to live in and, especially, taking care of diseases. I became ill with hepatitis. Unfortunately, the officer who helped us was transferred to another camp; we were asked to relocate again. We were moved from Skajinetz to Tyvriv and my father was sent to forced labor, to build a bridge over the Bug at Tiraspol (an awful camp where no one survived, except for those who succeeded to run away). When the work was completed, everyone was shot. We heard about my father begin killed only later, from a man who met him in the camp. Now, I had just my mother.



During the march to Tyvriv, 100+km, the convoy stopped in Murafa. A woman named Fuchs, our former neighbor from Suceava, saw my mom among the marching people. Fuchs was the Murafa gendarme commander’s girlfriend. She agreed to pass a message to my mother’s uncle, Beresh Kern, through people from the Jewish community. Beresh was one of the community’s employees in Shargorod. The request was to get us out of the Tyvriv camp and allow us to be reunited with our family members in Shargorod. The woman indeed kept her promise. Moreover, the entire group of people who marched towards Tyvriv owe her their lives as, immediately after we got out of Murafa, the Romanian gendarmes, together with the Ukrainian collaborators, took us to a



forest. There, they pulled their guns and demanded our money or else they would shoot us. The unfortunate people started screaming. The screams could be heard from afar. The woman urged the commander to intervene. He arrived on a horse accompanied by another group of gendarmes who replaced the ones who threatened us. We resumed our march, 42 km. At last we reached Tyvriv. We were housed in one of the destroyed buildings. My mother still had her fine fur coat. She sold it and the money enabled us to survive.

One Ukrainian woman saw me. I was a handsome blue-eyed fair boy. She wanted to adopt me. Of course, my mom and I wouldn't accept, therefore the woman suggested that I come to her house every time I feel hungry. Indeed, I went to her a few times and she offered me food. And so, nearly a year passed by. One night, towards the end of the winter, two men and a woman arrived and asked about us. They were sent by my uncle from Shargorod. They brought with them clothes and boots so we could look like locals. Under the cover of darkness, we set off. We would walk by night but during the days we would hide in the woods. After a few days of walking we finally arrived in Shargorod. Dr. Teich, the head of the Jewish Committee in Shargorod, refused to sanction our stay out of fear that we might endanger the Jews in the camp, as we were fugitives. Even the intervention of Beresh Kern, my uncle, who was also an activist in the Jewish Committee, didn't help. Dr. Teich was about to hand us to the gendarmes. The next day, by chance, my mother's uncle, Katz, who was the chairman of All Jewish Committees, arrived in Shargorod from Moghilev. My mother sneaked into his office for a heart to heart talk. Eventually, Dr. Teich agreed to approve our stay in Shargorod. I was sent to the orphanage, which was managed by Dr. Lowe, a place where I ate, studied and even slept. One day I got sick with typhoid fever. The doctor at the orphanage couldn't help me much because there were no drugs. In the meantime, the Russians arrived and set up a few tents near the orphanage.

One day, a delegation of doctors belonging to the Russian unit came for inspection. The head doctor walked around to see the patients. He saw me lying in bed, sick. After assessing my condition, he invited me to the Red Cross tent. On the way, he spoke to me in Yiddish and asked me to answer him also in Yiddish but in a low voice. At the army clinic, he injected penicillin for 7-8 days. It was forbidden, because not only was penicillin extremely difficult to come by, but also because it was forbidden to treat civilians. They was intended for army use only. Occasionally he gave me a little piece of bread.

At the orphanage, a delegation from Romania arrived. Their purpose was to help orphans to return to Romania, to the places where there was no war. It was one of the humanitarian initiatives of the Queen of Romania. My mom didn't allow them to take me, so I stayed.



In April 1944, we started to prepare to walk from Shargorod to Cernovitz, to one of my uncles place. We walked along the railway. Soviet tanks were loaded on train platforms. High ranking Red Army officers accompanied the artillery. Most of them were Jews and they spoke Yiddish. They told us to get on the train and taught us what to do in case of air raids. When we arrived, the border was closed and we couldn't cross into Romania until 1945, when it was reopened.

In Suceava little had changed, besides the obvious: the names of the streets, Regina Maria Street became to I.V. Stalin Street.

Our house still existed, but a local Romanian resided there and didn't want to give up the property. My mom went to the police. At the time, the police commander was Jewish and he knew my father. Thanks to him, we got back our house within a month.

My mother opened a grocery shop and started earning a living for us. One day, a peasant woman came with a case of soap. People who started using it got soars. Mother went to the Jewish Committee. It turned out that it was RJF – Reine Juden Fet -, soap made of Jews' fat. The case was buried in the Jewish cemetery; a plaque was erected to mention the atrocity.

School started, in the afternoon. We had to prepare for the high school entrance exam. The exam was called in German "*Die kleine Matura*".

I was Aron (Artziu) Weidenfeld's bench-mate at Stefan cel Mare School. One day, the chemistry teacher mocked Aron's Jewish-Yiddish accent, clearly audible, when the youngster tried to answer a question. Immediately, the whole class followed along, laughing and mocking Aron. I (Bibi) rose and asked the teacher to stop dealing with politics. My Romanian was perfect due to my mother's upbringing. She learned Romanian at school and had private lessons with Sadoveanu, the famous Romanian novelist. I was able to be eloquent, clear and persuasive, when exchanging words with the chemistry teacher. Moreover, I refused to leave the classroom when asked. I was sent immediately to the Headmaster's office. D-nul Obada, the School Director, who was furious about my "insolence". During our brief discussion, I mentioned the fact that my father was killed, as a victim of antisemitism. Nothing happened, and so I went to the city education council the very next day. Their reply was that there are no replacements available, so the anti-Semitic teachers should be kept. The only satisfaction I felt was when I learned that the teacher himself was under pressure – he sent people to speak with my mother so she can stop me from further interventions. I continued studying, joined the Zionist movement and left my town and Romania. I immigrated to Israel.

(Sadly, Bibi Ruhm passed away a couple of years ago. I feel privileged to be able to write his story the way he told it, and approved to print by his son Benji).

Lily Pauker

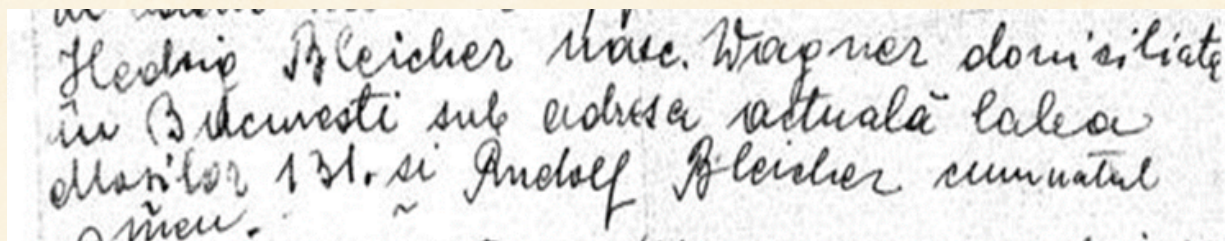


Camila Eisenberg's Testament

This is a rare document. It is Camila Eisenberg's testament, written in those dark hours of deep despair in Shargorod Transnistria, March 1, 1942, six month after the deportation.

Mrs. Eisenberg is fully aware of her personal loss, there for she tries to rescue whatever possible in favor of her sister, who was still living in Bucharest. Her document is a monumental silent witness to the Jewish people tragedy and their need to cling on to a twinkle of hope, wanting to believe that they are still in control of some aspects of their life. The document is written in an almost steady handwriting hinting about the huge self control Camilla imposes on herself, to present a credible document to the reader. She leaves her property which includes real estate, money, a piano and a violin, clothes, fine lingerie, furs, a silver framed Venetian mirror, crystals, houseware, elegant bedware etc. to her sister Hedwig Wagner Bleicher and to her brother in law Rudolf Bleicher, Bucharest, 131 Calea Mosilor. She mentions the names of each person she had entrusted the specific items, before deportation, and their respective addresses.

The document is written in a dry, accurate, lawyer style, but betrays the emotions, the sorrow, the anguish and the despair behind an incomprehensible, shuttered world



At the bottom of the third page you can see her signature.



Testament.

Însemnata Leuilla Eisenberg
nasc. Wagner, cu ultimul domiciliu în
România la Suceava, jud. Suceava de-
prezent coacută cu domiciliu obligatoriu
la Iașgorod, jud. Moghilaș. Transmiștră
simțindă-mă completamente sănătoasă,
impletitudinea puterilor mele mintale,
având în vedere împrejurările actuale, ale
vârstii mele, și pericolul de viață care mă
înconsoară, m-am hotărât să dispun pentru
cazul decesului meu prin următorul

Testament alograf:

Institui ca credetă mea universală cu
privirea la întreaga mea avere mobilă
și imobilă, prezenta și viitoare conform
tabelului anexat, care face parte integrantă
al acestui testament pe unica mea fiică
Hedwig Fleischer nasc. Wagner domiciliată
în București sub adresa actuală la casa
Marilor 131. și Adolf Fleischer cumnatul
meu.

Doresc ca această ultimă a mea dorință
și voință să fie respectată de or ce rindă
și să fie adusă la îndeplinire întoc-
mai. Împun surorii mele obligativă de
a plăti lui Dumitru Paltinas funcționar
la Primăria Suceava actualmente mobiliza
drept legat suma de lei 150.000 adică
cincizece mii imediat din...

anexa la Testamentul meu depe contra
 propria.

I. averea imobila:

a) Se compune dintr-o sumatata de casa, situate la Suceava strada Vasile Pambac Nr 6 (casa din front si a doua din curte) si cu toate dependintele. Aceasta avere imobila este actualmente expropriata in folosul statului pe baza unei din legile restrictive cu privire la regimul exsilului, pentru ca s-a la data decesului meu sau ulterior aceasta lege restrictiva nu va fi inlaturata atunci moartea mea va fi legala ce se cere pentru indemnitate intrucat starea de exsil nu a acitat pată asupra indemnitatei legale.

b.) portinea mea legitima suma $\frac{1}{4}$ (un sfert) din casa situata la Roman strada Avram Costin Nr 87, ramasa depe urma de functii mele matusei Essie sive Sta Risia Schöcker, succesora dupa dusa fiind descrisa la Tribunalul din Roman si facand obiectul dosarului Nr 270/28.

II. averea mobila:

a) suma de 417 (patru sute sapteszeci) dollar Usa depusa de către unchiul meu Maximilian Schwerberg fost farmacist in Suceava la Doamna Josefine Bisiloff din strada J. C. Duca.

b.) colectia de legatură compusa din sumi de perle, pandative de aur cu pietre pretioase, inel multe si mele cu corali.

...asamen ... cu necesitate.
 sunt păstrate.
 a) obiectele de argint, cristale, astorunt, lingerie și
 alte obiecte predate într-o cută mare închisă domni
 Elena Malchivochi, Suceava strada Tarile Bumbac
 nr. 4. spre păstrare.
 b) diferite obiecte ca, oglindă renouată într-o
 ramă de argint, mai multe vase de cristal
 rozulate de argint, predate spre păstrare tat
 domnișor Elena Malchivochi.
 c) haine, p. blăuuri, lenjerie, împachetate
 într-o fată de cântă mare, apoi în cos mare
 continuând un serviciu complet de masă
 pentru 36 persoane și încă alte obiecte. aceste
 două pachete adică, bălăbul și cosul închis le
 am predat spre păstrare domnișor Elena Hana
 din Suceava, strada Tarile Bumbac nr. 8.
 d) haine de lână, pantofi, plote, perole
 coșturi, vase de argint, o stăna perisă
 lenjerie, astorunt, covor, predate spre
 păstrare domnișor Veronica Paltinaș, și fiica
 ei soacra Olga Sachelariu din Suceava,
 strada Cetatei.
 e) o casetă de fier predată în stare închisă
 spre păstrare dănișor George Miliuta prest din
 Suceava.
 f) complectul mobil, pianul, violă, covor
 în general toate obiectele rămase, în casa moșie
 din strada Tarile Bumbac nr. 6 și în locuința
 din curtea casei ocupată de către dănișor
 de poliție Alexandru Glogescu slujnic.
 Supra celelalte obiecte, după ale căror aflare actuală
 nu pot da o precizare, va putea să dea informații
 preciza lista mea servitoare Veronica Hosten din
 curtea casei nr. 4 Suceava.
 dată la Sargorod
 astăzi 1. Martie 1942.
 Camilla Eisenberg





Memories of Suceava – My Hometown

Evelyne (Coca) Rachmuth

My hometown, Suceava, evokes many memories. They have shaped my entire childhood, for better and for worse.

My father, Meir Rachmuth, courted my mother for many years, but they had to wait a long time until my mother's parents gave their consent. The problem was my maternal grandmother, who was firm in her belief to marry off her eldest daughter first. In those days it was not acceptable to marry off a younger daughter before her elder sister was settled. As my mother had 3 sisters (and 4 brothers), she and her sweetheart had to wait. It is exciting to imagine the waiting years of my in love parents, who respected the family law as devotedly as believing in their own love. They silently waited for their turn. However, the long waiting period did not even slightly diminish my father's love to my mother. My father's love was as deep as the ocean. Being ten years older than my mother, he was willing to wait for the girl of his choice, just as Biblical Jacob was devoted to Rachel.

My parents, who were born in Falticeni, got married in Dorohoi, the town they were exiled to during World War II. How typical to Jewish history – sorrow, dangers and a bit of happiness.

When the war was over, my father chose to live in Suceava, close to some of his relatives, who had returned from Transnistria: his cousin Klara Zlotzover, later a district court judge in Suceava, and her sister Frida Vigder, a revered teacher and principal of the high school in town, as well as Mrs. Koka Bogen (whose maiden name was Rachmuth).

I, the eldest daughter to Sara (nee Beer) and Meir Rachmut, was born on June 11, 1946 in Suceava. They named me Evelyn Rachmut, but at home they always called me "Coca".

My family lived on 14 Armeneasca Street, next to the Armenian Church, at Zinger's house. It was a big house. My family lived together with the Zingers – Zita, Moshe and his mother, who had just returned from the deportation to Transnistria. Later on, my mother's young sister (Rachel Shapira), who had recently arrived in town, joined us.

Zita Zinger was childless, therefore she "adopted" me. Like all Bucovinians, education was her top priority, so she decided to talk German with me. My parents, originally from Regat, did not speak the language. The German language I understand today results directly from Zita's long-term vision that languages have both cultural and moral values. I looked up to Zita. Mrs. Zinger told me – and later to my brother – about the Land of Israel, its people and sceneries. That's how



I learned about the existence of the Jewish State, established in 1948. I was impressed with the description of that land, a sandy, warm country, unlike temperate, green and lush Romania. To get there, was another story.

My brother Moshe was born when I was 4. Throughout the birth I was waiting with my father in the kitchen, listening to the voices behind the wall. Dr. Hoch assisted my brother to come into the world but my mother's agony was painful to hear. I loved my brother and cared for him. When I was told in 1953 about Stalin's death, I cried a lot, while continuing to caress and calm my baby brother.

Father was managing a bodega in Curtea Domneasca Street, not far from the girls' school. Mother and I visited him occasionally, but tried not to be too conspicuous. The fact that father served us food, should not have been misinterpreted.

The wine barrels were placed in the cellar under the bodega. It happened that a filled barrel was found empty after a short while. When the act repeated itself and a suspicion of thievery came up, father decided to catch the "wine thirsty" person himself. Father hid and waited, and one night he actually caught the culprit.

The main street was a source of multiple temptations: I liked visiting a shop which sold halva. Its taste was special and very tasty. To honor Sabbath, father bought chocolate from a shop located on the main street.

Before Christmas the whole of Suceava turned festive. A huge and well-decorated Christmas tree rose in midtown. It was surrounded by stands and stalls. You could purchase red hot spicy wine – the taste of the drink was divine, fermented apples – mari murati – also a delicacy to me – which were sold in the market square by Lipovani peasants.

Family was the main source of joy and love. During family celebrations I was happy to be with my extended family. In particular I liked Ika's birthday parties. She is my cousin. The celebration was held in the family circle and lasted a whole day. This memorable experience is still kept deep in my heart, especially the "salat de beuf" which tasted "heavenly" and was displayed as a proud and luxurious decoration at the center of the table.

Children were free to roam.

I liked the changing seasons each one bringing new colors, fragrances, different outdoor games. The old ruins of Suceava historic sites were a place which attracted old and young. I visited with



my parents the Cetatea lui Stefan cel Mare, a tall castle overlooking the city and river. We used to play inside its ruins. We also played hide-and-peek among the graves in Zamca.

The cold snowy winter was delightful. Wrapped in a blanket and accompanied by my parents, I enjoyed riding to Burdujeni in a horse-drawn slide, crossing on our way flowing rivers, forests and fields.

Jewish holidays were an important part of my life. In the autumn holidays I used to go with my mother to the Chevre Gah Synagogue. In recent years, while visiting Suceava, I went up to the ladies section at Synagogue and still found, on the long shelf where prayer books were placed, next to the small windows facing the prayer hall, the names of ladies who were praying – in a nice and fine print under a transparent cover, memory of a world that had disappeared, a world of women who used to pray and ask God in Heaven to have a better year, for themselves and all Suceava Jews.

On Simchat Torah evening I accompanied my father to another synagogue, where Mr. Shapira was the money collector. Unlike the rest of the year, when a girl was required to join the ladies section, on Simchat Torah it was allowed to enter the main prayer hall. We celebrated and danced during the Hakafot, holding a flag with an apple and a lit candle at its top. I was ever so happy and proud.

Spending time with the entire family during Sabbaths and holidays was also delightful. We, the kids, were just waiting to meet and play together.

I went to First Grade in Doamna Maria School, which was in those days a school for girls. My friend, Rosmary Rorhlich and I studied together in the same class. I still remember that despite our friendship, already at the beginning of the first class we quarreled over a pencil and, to my shame, the teacher asked us to leave the classroom...



From the Fourth Grade onwards schools were open to a mixed population, boys and girls. As a result, I started studying at

Stefan cel Mare school, a reputable school not far from my home. I became friends with Haiutzza Schmeltzer.

The entire class joined a youth movement and I became a pioneer. The Communist Party's youth movement made sure we were brainwashed about the Party's just ways and towards the admiration of its leaders.



I learnt to play the violin and was chosen to be part of the school band. I liked the studies and was a good student.

As I grew up I became more aware about the complexity of my parent's lives.

In the mid-Fifties, the atmosphere in town worsened for all Jews, our family included. Incarceration of Jews became common practice, leading to a constant sense of fear and apprehension. The authorities were looking for foreign currency, gold and diamonds among Jews. As Jews were "experienced" with suffering, they were always ready for times of stress. With whatever they had, they purchased "insurance" for hard times. The gold coins were called "cocosiclech" (French coins with a rooster imprint – symbol of the French Republic) or "Hazerlach". This small fortune could, at times of need, save a family. Nearly every Jew had a hiding place in the wall, in the holzcamer of even at the cemetery. A valuable small bundle was generally all the savings a person had. Even that was coveted by the authorities.

The regime started arresting Jews and torturing them until they confessed and handed over their possession. However, torture continued in view of the demand to give information about others who were selling the forbidden property or were known as its holders. To stop or prevent the beatings and torture, many Jews had no choice but to tell on their neighbors and acquaintances. Numerous accusations were not at all substantiated – some Jews had no involvement whatsoever in the possession of forbidden property. Pain and fear had such an impact that snitching seemed like a reasonable solution, only to stop the nightmare.

From my window at home I could see the Securitate (armed forces) arrest members of a neighboring family in shackles. The horrible sight has remained deeply engraved in my memory.

One day father, too, was arrested in that way. The sight of father shackled in chains was extremely painful. Father was led to the police station. I went with mother to visit him. Luckily – for us and for him – a few days later he was released.

My parents started thinking about making Aliyah and submitted an application to leave Romania. At the end of 1958 the permit of immigration to Israel was received. Rumors of our expected departure also reached school. The anti-Semitic class teacher assembled all pupils at the schoolyard for a roll call. I was demanded to step forward.

The moment I did so – the teacher ripped the red pioneer bowtie off my neck, with all students watching, in front of my close friends, proclaiming that "This will be done to all traitors in the homeland of Romania". The taste of that anti-Semitic humiliation has left a deep mark in my soul. Mrs. Bodinger used to sew all my dresses, so she sewed new clothes for me in preparation for the trip. A Jewish family who lived next to the high-school made all our lingerie.

In January 1959 we left Suceava and Romania and immigrated to Israel, together with the Leinbord





From the left: Beni Budic, Zwi Fuhrer, Arni Merdler,
my brother Moshe

family. Mrs. Betty Leinbord, the mother of that family, had been my mother's friend since the Falticeni days.

One day before the trip we held a special farewell event from father's cousin, Jerzy Rachmuth, a university personality and a devoted communist. We met him secretly, in a dark place, so he would not be seen with relatives who were leaving the Romanian paradise. Jerzy Rachmuth was certain then that a socialist-communist regime would also develop in Israel. With those farewell words we left Romania.

In Israel, my husband and I have raised an amazing family and we are deeply rooted in the landscapes and soul of the State of Israel. My children and grandchildren make me happy and bring great satisfaction and pleasure. However,

I never forget my sources, which have shaped many of my childhood memories.

Last but not least, my brother and his Jewish friends from Suceava.

Hava Bressler
(Coca Rachmuth)





My Story

Cuta, Esther Cufaru

My maiden name is Esther Cufaru and here is my story.

Since childhood, I liked to read books and to think about the faraway places and characters depicted in them. I like languages as well, especially the Russian language. I still possess some command of the Russian language learned at school.

My parents

My mother had joined the Zionist youth movement in her youth. She wanted to make Aliya, but my grandmother would not even consider parting from her daughter; therefore mother stayed put. However, her younger brother Shmaiah fled the house when he was in his teens and immigrated to Erez Israel. Had my mother followed her plan she would have spared the sufferings endured during the Holocaust.

Mother and father met in Burdujeni before the war; but they got married only after the war was over. Mother waited for his return.

While mother was deported to Moghilev Podolsk, father was drafted into the Red Army. Many years later, he told us how much he liked Riga, the Latvian capital, set on the Baltic Sea, at the mouth of Daugava River.

At the age of 2 my father lost his mother and at the age of 9 his father passed away. The one who raised him was his older sister Clara (Chaike), Nelu Eidinger's grandmother.

During the bitter years of deportation, mother and her family suffered a lot.

On one occasion, being marched for hours, Hilda, my mother's relative, a young, resourceful teenager, addressed her relatives and said: "here is a beet, let's take it " as a premonition of the hunger which awaited them.

In Transnistria they lived in a stable, partly open to wind and rain. The freezing weather, hunger and illness shortened people's lives. Every morning there were dead bodies inside and outside the stable. This is how mother lost her father and her older brother. They were buried in a mass grave. To provide for her family, mother sewed "cojocole" (winter sheepskin coats) for the peasants. In return she received some groceries, barely enough to keep her family alive, to save them from starvation.

In later years, mother would only occasionally tell bits of what happened during the Holocaust.



My life in Burdujeni

My parents wrapped me with much love and care; therefore, I had a happy joyous childhood, sheltered from worries.

In spite of restricted financial means, my mother always dressed me as best as possible. In my opinion, I had the most beautiful dresses in Burdujeni.

Mother invested a lot of time and attention to create for me the best outfit. The most renowned dressmaker in Burdujeni was always hired to sew my garments. It started at the local TEXTILE shop. My mother and I browsed through the newest arrivals, touched the fabrics, admired the colors and

the print, and looked for the finest material in stock. Sometimes we chose ordinary stamba, but at times we fell in love with organza or crepe de chine. I preferred red fabrics that matched my dark complexion and my black braided hair. Yellow and especially white were also my favorites. Mostly I chose solid color material but sometimes my heart went after playful, happy printed fabrics.

The summer dresses were the dearest to my heart. The bottom skirt-piece of the dress was usually cut in an A style – which was the most popular silhouette among dresses at the time. Blouses were also sown by my seamstress. Usually the blouses had a round neckline but the style and lengths of sleeves changed according to what local fashion dictated. I remember my beautiful yellow organza blouse with puffy sleeves. Ready-to-wear garments of good quality were rare in those days. However, I can remember my mom buying a pink velour coat in a store, perfectly cut to fit my figure.

I liked it very much and I was proud to wear it. One winter day I put it on when I went with friends for a sleigh ride. This is when I ruined my beautiful pink coat. I was so very sorry, but the coat was beyond mending.

New clothes were usually bought or made before each Jewish holiday. Accessories were necessary to match the garment. I had small cute bags, some straw-vowed, others leather bags with flower ornaments. When I got ready to meet friends, I made sure to match the outfit with a beautiful one-strip shoulder purse, with a starched handkerchief inside.

Before immigrating to Israel, I ordered some high quality summer dresses from my seamstress. Unfortunately, I haven't worn them even once, since the fashion in Israel was very different from the Romanian one.

On my birthday parties in Burdujeni, children would gather around the large table in the living



room. Cakes and cookies were displayed on a white tablecloth. My mother's pastry was famous and deliciously mouthwatering. She would bake sacharlech, schmeten torte, crème-schnitt, chocolate roulade; puff pastry filled with grinded walnuts, cocoa powder and well whisked egg whites.

One day, my Russian teacher, Doamna Mustata, passed by. My mother welcomed her and served some pastry. She was amazed by the taste and shape of mother's baking.

All my life I was a shy, quiet girl, but once I dared to be disobedient. One day, at the elementary school, during the intermission, I stood on the desk and started moving the bench attached to it from right to left at a fast pace. The squeaking wooden school bench attracted one of my teachers, Doamna Dracinski, the wife of the well-known Burdujeni physician. She was amazed to find out that the quiet, polite girl was making the rattle.

I graduated primary school in Burdujeni. On a very crowded bus, Saul, Shlomo and I, along with other students, rode daily from the suburb Burdujeni to Suceava High School. During the freezing Romanian winters, we had to wait a long time for the bus. Their arrival time was irregular; sometimes the transport was sparse and slow. My leg fingers froze while waiting so long for the bus. I suffered of those frozen fingers even after arriving in Israel.

In High School, I enlarged the already existing circle of friends. On Yom Kippur all Jewish children went on foot to school, from Burdujeni to Suceava. We did everything possible not to write on the sacred day. Being afraid of teachers' anger or punishment, we would simulate writing.

Simhat Torah was a very happy time at the synagogue. Alongside my father, I would join the circle of men who danced and chanted holding the Torah. I stepped beside father, holding a paper flag with an apple and a candle on top. A long table full of goodies was displayed in the synagogue. The kids played outside, ate honey cake and grapes. I really liked fried walnuts and a dry kind of pastry with super-thin layers of dough filled with nuts and dried fruits – called fluden.

Those days are gone but friendships and memories last forever.



From the left: Cuta, Harry Barid, Frida Laster, Karol Abramovici, Shulamit, and Karol Abramovici the cousin of the other Karol.



From the left: Cuta, Nelu Eidinger, Shie Rosenblum standing





My Story

Dani Ramer

I knew Dani all my life. He was Edith's youngest son. Our mothers were good friends. In the mid-60s I met Dani again in Israel. He was already a tall, handsome young man ready to embark a career in architecture. Dani studied architecture in Italy and practiced it in Israel. His love for history, architecture and languages led to a new career. He became an accomplished travel-guide, highly regarded and well loved.

Unfortunately, he passed away before writing his story. Ety, his wonderful wife, was gracious enough to let us browse through Dani's family album. Much more than words, his pictures tell the story of his family.



Franzi, Lily & Edith in Bucharest
next to the Romanian Athenaeum Concert Hall

את דני הכרתי כל חיי, כבנה הצעיר של החברה הטובה של אמי, אדית רמר. הוא ומשפחתו עלו לארץ לפנינו, כך שפגשתי בו שוב, הפעם בישראל, כאשר הוא היה בחור גבוה ונאה, מתכוון לנסיעתו לאיטליה כדי ללמוד ארכיטקטורה. לאחר שנים של עבודה כארכיטקט, שילב בין אהבותיו, ופנה לדרך חדשה. את הידע הארכיטקטוני ואת השליטה בשפות יצק בכישרון לתוך הדרכת קבוצות תיירים, בעיקר קבוצות מחו"ל, שסיירו בארץ. דני אהב מאד לטייל עם אתי אשתו, לצלם, לאגור ידע. לצערנו, הוא נפטר בטרם הספיק לכתוב את סיפורו לספר. אתי, אשתו המדהימה, מסרה לנו את אלבום משפחתו, לכן נזכור את דני, את אחיו ואת הוריו באמצעות הסיפור שניתן להבין באמצעות התמונות של משפחתו.





1939, Edith & Sigmund Ramer



1939, Edith & Sigmund Ramer



Edith Weiss Ramer



My maternal grandparents



Binca & Lasar Weiss

Edith's sisters:



Beatrice, Binca (Mother), Gerta & Edith





Beatrice and Erwin
(Edith's sister & brother)



Gerta's wedding



1929 Gerta & Beatrice Weiss



Gerta, Erwin, Beatrice & Edith Weiss





Regina Ramer



Nathan Ramer



from the right: Jean, Sabine & Sigi (my father)





My father's siblings



Sabine Ramer



Jean Ramer





At leisure and at work



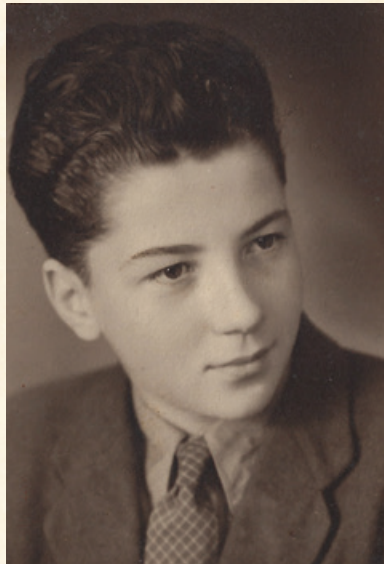


My paternal grandparents



1939





Sandu, Dani & Mother





Mother, Dani & Sandu



Mother, Sandu & baby Lulu
(who fell from the crib and died - one year old)



The Ramers and Glickmans



Dani, Mela, mother, Max, father



Dani, mother, Mela, Johnny, father





Dani and Johnny.
(Johnny died in an accident during his military service)





View of Suceava





1953 Slanic Moldova





Dani (1949-2019)
Architect and a loved tourist guide





Memories about my Parents and my Childhood

Denise Horowitz

My name is Denise Horowitz Weinstein. I was born in Suceava on 23 Armeneasca street. I am the only daughter of Meta and Fredi Horowitz. My story is about my parents and my childhood. Everybody in Suceava knew my parents. They met in Transnistria. Father was in Trihati during the war, mother in Mogilev. Severe hardship was inflicted upon my father, especially during the time he was forced to work in Trihati, building the bridge over the Bug River.

Many of his friends were murdered before his eyes. In the evenings, after hard, back-breaking work, the commander ordered the Jews to line up. Whoever did not look healthy enough was shot on the spot. One evening after work, the men lined up as usual. The commander started shooting every other person until he reached my father. By some divine intervention he was spared – the shooting stopped when his turn came up. This event deeply scarred my father for life.

My parents got married after the war and set up their home in the same house mother was born, and later so would I.



My mom Meta Horowitz



My dad, Fredi Horowitz

The sounds of childhood accompany our lives. The memories of those days are still deeply embedded in our hearts and mean a great deal to us.

I lived all my childhood in the same house. I was a naughty girl. I vividly recall beautiful fragments of childhood: The garden around our house was something to behold; we had flowers of all kinds, trees, and a vegetable garden. I would eat the fruits right from the trees. Black cherries were my favorites. I had so much of them, I could live off of them.

Winters in Suceava were long and cold, but the picturesque appearances of the frost on the windows was more beautiful than in paintings. Sometimes, the snow would pile up to a meter or more. I liked to step on the fresh snow, where nobody stepped before me. The Jewish holidays were the most beautiful. Our home was at its best. For the holidays I would get new shoes and new clothes.



With my parents





The wedding of my uncle Poldi Bruckner with Wilma Folkman. Behind Wilma, the bride, Jacob Leinburd, my mom, Betty Leinburd, my dad and Wilma's sister.

Most of all I loved the togetherness of the Jewish community. People would help each other; they were rejoicing together.

Sukkot and Simhat Thora were my most loved holidays; I remember children meeting at the synagogue and playing together.

I finished the eighth grade in “Stefan cel Mare” elementary school. Half the students in my class were Jewish. We were all good friends, so I cannot recall any anti-Semitic occurrences.

Despite being a girl, father taught me some “boyish” behaviors like playing football in the streets, riding a sled, or “saniuta” in Romanian. Father showed me how to fight back and defend myself if I needed to.

I had piano lessons with a funny teacher. She would hit my fingers with a long ruler whenever I made mistakes. Her name was Mrs. Feur. I had French lessons with Mrs. Jacobowitz. She taught good manners as well. She trained me to sit straight up, as a lady should, by holding two books under my arms.

After elementary school we immigrated to Israel. The difficulties we encountered are familiar to



the readers. Apparently, I could go on telling much more about my youth in Suceava, but to me, the most important part is to remember our childhood and the beautiful united Jewish community.

It is impossible not to mention the special friendship between the families Hubner, Leinburd and Horowitz. Our parents were friends and so were we Ruthy, Poldi and me. We met every day. We invented new games and were happy. Our friendship lasted even after our immigration to Israel, even though we no longer lived close to each other.



My mom and I

In this context I would like to quote Miliu Hubner, Ruthy's father: *“it’s a pity we didn’t establish the Suceava street in Israel so that we could stay in touch with those we knew and loved”*.





My Story

Dory Hörer

I am an orthopedic surgeon. I live in Haifa. I'm married to Izraela, a family therapist. We have two children – Adi (who is a senior psychologist, mother of two boys), lives in Haifa, and Tal (who is a vascular surgeon, father of four boys), lives in Sweden.

I was born in Suceava in 1939. I got my name (Dory) as a way of honoring my maternal grandfather who died two months before I was born. His name was Yitzhak. When I was born, the anti-Semitic movement Garda de Fier (Iron Guard) was active. A Jewish child couldn't be called Yitzhak. The Iron Guard was collaborating with Nazi Germany. After consultations between the rabbi and the sages of Suceava Jewish community, it was decided that the foreign counterpart of Yitzhak is Isidor; this is how the name Dory was born.

Both my parents, Martin and Tova, were born in Suceava. My mom's family lived in Mihoveni, a village about ten kilometers away from Suceava. They were the only Jewish family in the village. At the beginning of the 20th century, during the Russian revolution, my grandfather, Yitzhak Slutzkin, left Byelorussia and settled in the Bukovina village. The relationship between my grandfather and the locals flourished thanks to the fact that he was an educated and cultured man, who used to counsel the people in the village on many issues.

My mother was the third child of the family. Her siblings were Iancu and Elka. As a young man, Iancu worked at the Segal family factory "Tricotania" in Czernowitz. In 1944, on our way back from Transnistria, we were delayed for a few days in Czernowitz before getting permission to return to Suceava. Iancu decided to go to "Tricotania" to find a position. Unfortunately, he disappeared, never to be found again. The rumor was that the Russian soldiers kidnapped him.

After finishing elementary school, my mom and her sister left Mihoveni and went to live with their grandmother (my great grandmother – Golda). They were trained in sewing. My great grandmother (Mima Golda) passed away on the way to Transnistria.

My father, Martin, was the fourth child of Shmuel and Shifra Hörer from Suceava. His brother Iulius lived in Bucharest, before the deportation. His other brother Heinrich lived in Falticeni, 30 km away from Suceava. During the war, Heinrich and his family were deported from Falticeni and at the end of the war they found themselves living in Suceava. My father's sister, Sally, lived in Suceava with her parents and was deported to Transnistria with us.

My parental grandfather, Shmuel, and my maternal grandmother Sarah, passed away in Shargorod, seemingly of typhoid fever. They were buried in the camp.



My parents met in Suceava. At the time, my mom was taking a sewing class; my father was working in a textile shop belonging to the Ellenbogen family. After getting married, in 1938, my father opened on the main street of Suceava (Hauptstrasse) a store (galanterie). Deportation caused to abandon the shop. When we returned to Suceava his dream was to reopen it, and that's what he did. Dad opened the store at the same place as before. However, he was forced, once again, to close it the moment Romania became a popular republic and the communist regime confiscated all private property.

I was about two years old when all Suceava Jews were deported to Transnistria. I don't remember details. I was told that the order permitted hand luggage only, parcels that could be carried. My father had to take care of his elderly parents. My mom had to carry me. I was told that for months nobody could take me away from mom's arms. In my parents' luggage, there were two objects that are still in our possession: my father's tallith and the embroidered Sabbath chalah cover which was my grandmother gift at my parents wedding.

In Shargorod we were close to Dr. Hoch's family and his son Zwi. Zwi and I grew up together, later we went to the same school and we were inseparable friends, later on studying together at the university.

Like nearly all Suceava inhabitants, my mom's native tongue was German. Upon returning to Suceava, at the age of 5, I was already able to read German, even passages written in Gothic script.

At the age of 6 I went to elementary school. The language was Romanian. I was in the same class with Zwi and with other Jewish boys who arrived in Suceava after the war: Beno Fischel (today Dr. Beno Fischel). Zwi and I were together until the end of the fourth university year, when he immigrated to Israel. Later we met during our medical studies in Jerusalem. Afterwards we worked together at Rambam hospital until Zwi and his family left for America. Zwi's daughter, Dana, and my daughter, Adi, studied in the same class at Reali High-School. Beno Fischel studied medicine in Iasi and later completed his studies in Jerusalem. I had many friends. Almost all studied medicine: Sacha Koerner (Dr. Sacha Koerner), who studied medicine in Iasi, Reghi Ruhm (Dr. Reghi Ruhm) who studied in Cluj, and Marcel Shartzter (Sacha Koerner's cousin), who nowadays lives in Natzeret. Since I was an only child, our house was always open to everyone. Friends always surrounded me. Among my closest friends was Nicu



The blessing on bread embroidered on the Shabbat chalah cover. *Blessed are You, L-rd our G d, King of the Universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth*



Tarnovetzki (grandson of the Armenian priest Mandelian) our neighbor on Strada Armeneasca. Nicu's mom, Aza, was my mom's friend. As a result, we spent a lot of time together after school, on trips to the mountains, going to swim in the Suceava River and watching football matches on Sundays.

In the '50s, Stefan cel Mare School was a all boy-school, so we couldn't meet girls during the day. At some point, we started being active within the "pionieri" (scout) movement. This was really a "treat" as we could meet and spend time with girls, take part in folk dance courses, participate in different collective activities, and go on trips with the girls.

At school, we studied Russian and French. Apparently, I was a good student and that was the reason our teacher decided I had to sit at his desk, not at mine, during tests, so others couldn't copy from me. During tests, with his back at me, while supervising the students, I could browse undisturbed through my book and notebook.

Occasionally, I would need help on school subjects. I asked older students for help, like Bernhard Klar, Didi Pinzaru or Stefi Petrescu.

Another close friend who studied with me from the first grade to high-school graduation was Gica Despina. He studied medicine in Bucharest and became a psychiatrist. We stayed in close touch even after I immigrated to Israel and met years later when I visited Suceava. It was a really touching reunion.

A close friendship was forged between a number of girls and me: Mausy Konig (Daniela Koerner), Tory Brilant-Merdler, Coca (Michaela) Anderman. I fondly remember how we waited for our birthday parties so we could celebrate together. Actually, we were so close that we weren't reluctant to ask our friends' parents for counselling on different subjects that bothered us at the time. Even when we grew up and each started to study at various universities all over Romania, we would look forward to returning to Suceava during holidays so we could meet our friends.

Our generation graduated high school after ten years, according to the Russian system. The "communist spirit" influenced our studies: we learned Russian as a second language, "decadent" western literature was banned. Adventure and detective books were passed secretly among friends. I remember that a school librarian "sneaked" for me "The Count of Monte Cristo" which was on the "black list".

At high school, we had to wear uniforms with our names and student number sewn on the sleeve. Part of my education was learning to play an instrument – the piano. I studied with Mrs. Isopescu, Mrs. Sobe and Mrs. Nusbrauch. I didn't become a pianist, but music "stayed" with me.



As it was customary, I was sent to learn Hebrew with Herr Brandes. I even learned to read prayers without understanding a word. At holidays we would go to the synagogue and at Passover we didn't eat hametz. Before reaching bar mitzvah age, I decided I should learn Hebrew, not only to be able to read the prayer book. I found a Hebrew teacher in Suceava – Simcha Weisbuch. He taught me Hebrew well. I also studied with Mrs. Clara Neuman.

At the age of 16, together with my friend Zwi Hoch I started studying medicine at the Cluj University. Despite being visited frequently by our parents, we would long for holidays so we could go home and meet our friends.

While I was studying, my family went through extremely difficult times; my father was arrested and sent to prison for a number of months. During those hard times, we got help from various people from Suceava and from my mom's village. Thus, we could ease my father's condition and shorten his prison sentence. After his release and until immigration my father returned to his previous work as a state employee.

Our decision to immigrate to Israel brought about a strong reaction from the university management. I was expelled from my studies, being accused of a non-accepted student behavior. As such, I had to return the entire scholarship I had got for being an outstanding student. The announcement came on the very day I was supposed to take my final exam at the university, (at the 6th year of medical school).

We tried in different ways to reverse the decision – but in vain. We asked Dr. Rosen, Romania's chief rabbi, to intervene, but the decision was final.

With the help of some good people, I managed to get my student report card and other documents proving I finished 6 years of medical school. My friend, Zwi Hoch, had more luck. Nobody knew about his family's intention to immigrate to Israel. Suddenly, in the middle of the fourth school year, their application was approved. Zwi left Cluj quickly and, after a few days, his family left Romania. I went on studying until exmatriculation.

I returned home, to Suceava. We couldn't know when, or if, we were going to receive permission to leave Romania. I had to do something... to work and wait for Aliya. Given the fact that I volunteered at the Suceava hospital during my previous school holidays, I was accepted to work there. The position of "doctor assistant" was made up especially for me. This was a way to earn a little money and still hang on to my dream – to become a doctor. Dr. Andriu and Dr. Posteuca from the Surgery Department helped me a lot, took me under their wings until we left for Israel. With our arrival in Israel, another problem started – enrolling to finish my medical studies. In



1961, the Hebrew University was the only University entitled to offer medical studies in Israel. I was 22 years at the time and wanted to finish studies, but I didn't know Hebrew. I managed to bring from Romania documents which proved I was a medical student. I was called to an interview with the Dean in Jerusalem, held in Yiddish. He suggested I learn Hebrew first before returning to him. Incidentally, he told me that students in the 6th year of their studies are a few years older than me as most of them served in the army before beginning their studies. Having no choice, I enrolled in a Hebrew course in Kibbutz Sarid. I had no idea what "kibbutz" meant. I remember that I showed up on the first day of the course dressed in a suit with a tie. Obviously, at the end of the day I put on khaki pants.

While I was studying Hebrew at the ulpan, I remembered the Hebrew lessons I had as a teenager. After a few months, I had a second interview with the Dean of the medical school. This time I was accepted. I joined the fourth year of studies, according to the age of the students. Three years later, I graduated from the medical school.

To make a long story short, following my graduation I enrolled in the army. Afterwards, I was accepted and finished my specialization in orthopedic surgery. I worked at Rambam hospital as deputy director of the department, until retirement.





Jenny Weidenfeld's (Shneiderman) Story

Dorly Weidenfeld

My name is Dorly Weidenfeld and I was born in Suceava, but my mother Jenny Weidenfeld was born in 1923 in Murafa near Shargorod (Ukraine) – her mother was a seamstress and her father was a tinsmith.

The clothes she sewed reflected my grandmother's skill and creativity. My mom inherited her mother's talent and, after immigration to Israel, she amazed me with the splendor of her own creations. I absolutely loved the choice of cloth, the way she designed and cut the models. My mom had two sisters and a brother. Her sisters, their children and her brother's daughter immigrated to Israel later on. All the Schneidermann children were known for their prominent beauty; my mom, who was considered the "ugly duckling" in the family, was exceptionally beautiful. With her high cheekbones, she looked like an Italian movie star.

My grandmother got sick with tuberculosis at a very early age and died when she was 49 years old.

Suceava people were deported to Transnistria in 1941. My father, a physician, arrived in Murafa and got to be the Schneiderman's family doctor. On her deathbed, my maternal grandmother asked my father to take care of her young daughter. At the end of the war doctor Jacob Weidenfeld married Jenny and took her to Suceava.



My maternal grandparents Dvora and Moshe Shneiderman

In 1937, at the age of 15, my mother decided to study nursing at Shargorod (maybe she wanted to help her sick mother). The minimum acceptance age at school was 16; to meet the requirement she forged the birth date. Suddenly, the girl was one year older. After graduation, my mom became a registered nurse and midwife; she was hired at the Murafa Hospital.

One day, while she was returning home, she met an old gypsy woman who offered to read her palm. The gypsy told her that she was going to live a long life, longer than the other family members did. It turned out to be true!



At work she met a young Jewish doctor who fell in love with her; they got engaged. He was drafted into the Red Army and went to fight the Nazis. The war ended but he didn't return. My father asked her hand in marriage. As she thought her fiancé died, she married father and left for Suceava. Her fiancé returned later from the war. He went to look for Jenny at her parents' house, but she was already married in Romania.

From the many stories I heard about Murafa I am going to retell only a few:

- The president of the Jewish community in Murafa was Mr. Bakal from Suceava. His son, Vicu, courted my mother for a long time. The young couple was very much in love but Vicu's family put up strong opposition on grounds of social position discrepancy. The couple parted. Imagine, even during those bitter days, when the war was raging, the social position was significant!
- The typhoid fever killed many people. My father told me that there was an experimental vaccine for typhoid fever at the beginning of the deportation to Murafa and he administered it to himself. That was the reason he survived while other doctors who weren't vaccinated didn't.
- My mom told me that one of her Christian classmates joined the police forces and, later on, chased her with a bat, spat on her, hit her and insulted her calling her "jidauca".
- I also remember my mom telling me that the Jews were forced to dig holes outside the town (to be thrown into, after being shot). The Red Army arrived just in time and saved them.
- I remember my mom telling me about her doctor friend, who was shot and fell into the hole. During the night, feeling she was still alive, she got out and ran away. She was left with a limping foot, but she was alive. She resumed her work as a doctor. I have been trying for a while to remember her name, only in vain. Does someone recognize the story and knows her name?

After the war my mom kept on working with my father in his private practice in Suceava. She kept warm relations with her Jewish-Ukrainian friends. I will remind some of them:

In Shargorod she met Fira Goldschmidt, Martiu's mother, and Raia Bogen who were students at the university. She stayed friends with the Murafa friends: Asia Rozenbaum, Shie's mother, with Nelu Eidinger's mother, with Fani and, of course, Clara Grossman (Doctor Harry Grossman's mother), Sheindele Gitter, Havale Zaltzman and Mrs. Ita Shtahl (they appear in the picture taken at Mrs. Shtahl's son britmila), Hana Zandberg, Margit's mother. In addition to her Russian friends, she acquired two other soul mates in Suceava, Medi Klein (Pia's mother) and Anni Koenig, Muasi's mother. She also continued her friendship with Marion Distelfeld; the friendship started during Murafa days. For many years I thought that my mother, as a friendly person, found friends in Suceava after the war. However, after talking with Marion Distelfeld (Gerty Wasserman's aunt) it turned out that mom made long lasting connections even in Murafa during the deportation.

At that time there were few doctors in Murafa and those who didn't get ill with typhoid fever were



busy with the great number of sick people in town and in the hospital. There weren't medicines to administer and nurses were in great demand. Her experienced nurse hands could ease and comfort a sick person. Marion told me that her brother was severely beaten; my mother, like a redeeming angel, offered her help. She visited him nearly every day, took care of his injuries and when she had the possibility to bring medicine from the hospital she did. Meanwhile my mom became friends with Marion and her sisters. At the same time, Marion fell in love with my mom's brother, Noah, who was known as a handsome man. Many women were in love with him.

Mother had many friends and was loved by many people. She was extremely generous, all her life. She used to donate secretly money to friends and family. Years after her death people told me that thanks to her they could purchase electrical appliances, essential to their household. On each occasion, or family celebration, she was given the much deserved respect and was placed in the most important seat in the room. She was always loved and appreciated.



From the left: Jenny Weidenfeld, my mom, Essia, Shie's mother, Sheindale, Marcel's mother, Ita Stahl, Fira, Martiu's mother, X, Havale, Sandi and Harry's mother. Zwi and Moishale in the back.



From the left: Any Koenig, Mausi's mother, Medi, Pia's mother, Jenny, my mother





My Father's Story

Dorly Weidenfeld

My name is Dorly Weidenfeld and these are my parents.



This is my father's story, Dr. Yaakov Behr Weidenfeld.



My father and his father were born in Suceava. Aharon Weidenfeld, my paternal grandfather, was considered a very wise man, a scholar who mastered the Torah as well as mathematics. He was also born in Suceava. According to the stories I heard, he raised a family of 13 children. He studied

Torah, mathematics and physics all day long, while the entire burden of providing for his large family fell on his wife's shoulders – Sosia Tanenhaus. They had a shop (it isn't clear if the shop was a grocery or a hardware store). Grandma worked from morning until late at night. My grandfather, who was a Talmid Chacham, served also as a counsellor or a rabbi for the Jewish community. Although it isn't a genetic feature, the talent for math was passed on from generation to generation, including to me and my children.



Sosia Weidenfeld nee Tennenhaus,
my paternal grandmother with my father
in front of grandma's shop



My father's grandfather, Yaakov Behr Weidenfeld (after whom my father was named), together with Hersh Langer established in 1860 a synagogue called Beit Hamidrash. He was a Talmid Chacham as well, and functioned as a counsellor in the community. Aharon Weidenfeld, my grandfather, donated to the construction of the "Hevreh Gah" synagogue. His name is engraved on a black marble plaque in the synagogue.

In my father's family the job of raising kids was left to the elder brothers. Therefore, my father was the one who cared for his little brothers. There are stories about the Weidenfeld children searching scraps of food thrown away by others in garbage bins. One of the children left in my father's charge got sick with pneumonia and passed away. Believing it was his fault, my father felt guilty his entire life.

On my grandfather's headstone, found by Lily in the Suceava cemetery, an image of a pile of books is carved into the stone. It represents the fact that grandfather was a wise man. The inscription on the tomb stone states he was intelligent, honest and a smart person. Although he died at a young age, grandfather succeeded to instill in his children the importance of values, of studying, of being the best they could be.



Ahron Weidenfeld headstone at the Jewish cemetery in Suceava.

My father graduated the German gymnasium in Romania. During the school years, he was Ludwig Peltz (Zwia's father) best friend. After graduation, my father was accepted at the medical school in Iasi. When the antisemitism become unbearable, he left Romania with a one-way ticket and travelled to Bologna, Italy. He stayed in Bologna for seven years. Since he didn't have the necessary funds, he wasn't able to afford the journey expenses. Therefore, during his study-years he never visited his family in Suceava. He graduated with honor from the medical school. To support himself, he worked as a guard. I remember him telling that he used to spend hours in the library every day until closing time; this was the only heated place he could use. At the library, he could study and get heat for free. When my father returned to Romania with a respectable profession, he started carrying for his family. He paid for the girls' dowry and for his brothers' studies, who became engineers, lawyer, teachers.

In 1941 the whole family was deported to Transnistria. They crossed the Dniester at Ataki and from Moghilev reached Murafa by cart.

Today I know how difficult and strenuous my father's work was in Murafa. He treated not only the patients at the town hospital but also those who were sick at home and couldn't afford to get



to the hospital. At the same time, he was the Murafa orphanage doctor. Despite the meager means and the poor diet there were nearly no deaths among the children of the orphanage, partly thanks to his care. Along with the orphans, Jewish children were also fed since their families couldn't provide for them. In the spring of 1944, the orphans were transferred to Mogilev and then sent back to Romania.

The typhoid epidemic, which erupted in the winter of 1941-1942 was a serious problem. Two committee members volunteered to help the population at large: my father, Dr. Weidenfeld, a physician, and Mr. Leinburd, Paul's grandfather, both from Suceava.

They held explanatory meetings in which the importance of cleanliness and hygiene was stressed as a preventive measure. Moreover, sanitary superintendents were appointed to patrol the streets and to prevent people from defecating in the street. There were three natural small lakes close to the river. The locals used the waters to bathe, wash their laundry, and defecate. Cesspits were dug near one lake for the local sewage, as only a few houses had cesspits in their yards. The Committee encouraged people to use the latrines after they were dug. The newly dug installations were regularly covered with lime, and the water wells, which were a source of infection and typhoid, were kept clean. In addition, a sterilization facility was built in order to combat the lice that transmit typhoid. 25 beds were added to the existing hospital. People of means, especially deportees from southern Bucovina, purchased some kerosene with which they cleansed themselves daily. They also washed themselves daily, even when it was extremely cold outside.

At the Murafa hospital, my father met my mom, Jenny Schneiderman, who worked as a certified nurse. Thanks to his presence of mind and his special way of thinking, my father managed to survive the typhoid fever. He vaccinated himself with an experimental serum against the disease before the outbreak of the epidemic.

In 1945, my father returned to Suceava as a married man. He continued working at the local hospital and clinic (*policlinica*). Simultaneously, he worked at his private clinic at our house; my mother used to help him. My father was considered to be an excellent doctor, a pre-eminent diagnostician. Many of my friends, whose parents were treated devotedly by my father, tell even today about his competence. After we immigrated to Israel, I used to listen to the conversations patients were having in my father's waiting room. They all praised his thoroughness and his vast knowledge. He never stopped studying and always used to read professional foreign magazines (especially German weekly medical magazines). In those days, these magazines had to be ordered from abroad, but my father never hesitated. He always investing in widening his knowledge.



The striving for excellence, so characteristic to my father, was passed on to me, too. He devoted hours to enrich my general knowledge.

When my father was on call at the hospital he used to invite me to his room. I absolutely loved the hours we spent together. The walk from my house to the hospital was long for a young girl, but it didn't deter me to cover the distance. To me it seemed like a child play since I knew I would greatly enjoy the sessions. Every evening, my mother and I were looking forward to our “entertainment hour” – my father would read to us in German or Yiddish stories from Shalom Aleichem, or Grimm brothers' fairytales and more.

My father loved to hear me play on the accordion pieces from Verdi's operas, it was probably a sweet reminder about his days in Italy.

My school achievements were of the utmost importance. Getting a 10 was the only acceptable grade for me. Any other grade was disappointing. My father passed on these values.





Shuri Dunaevski, Herman

Dorly Weidenfeld

A week ago, I got from Suceava the headstone of Shuri's adoptive father, Sami Herman, a righteous man with a kind heart, who raised the orphan Shuri in his house as his own child.

Shuri was born in the Ukraine in 1934. I know that his father's name was Dunaevski and that he was an engineer. The Germans killed his parents while the child was hiding and watching. For the seven-year-old orphan, left alone in the world, a survival battle started.

Sami and Mrs. Herman were childless and lived in Suceava before deportation. Originally, Sami was from Falticeni and he was the uncle of Bettica Leinburd (Paul's mother). On October 1941, the Hermans were deported to Shargorod.

Like all the other deportees from Suceava, they were trying to survive. Gradually and secretly, Sami started paying attention that a small child was sleeping and hiding in his barn. When the child spoke Yiddish to him, Sami understood that he was a Jewish boy. The child was skinny, sick, full of lice and dirty. Sami cooked potato peels soup and started feeding the child. From time to time, he could afford a slice of bread. Despite the difficult situation and the risk for their own lives, the Hermans brought the boy into their home, cleaned him, healed his sores. Sami decided that, even if he himself was hungry, he would give the child his last slice of bread.

At the end of the war, when they returned to Suceava, they took the child with them and adopted him. Shuri was ten years my senior. Paul had told me that the boy was visiting often in their house and was considered a member of the family.

Mrs. Herman passed away. Sami kept taking care of Shuri with great love and devotion. My mother, Jenny Weidenfeld, played frequently poker with Sami Herman. She got a great idea - to pair the widower with my 42-year-old spinster aunt, Fani Weidenfeld (the math teacher). My aunt was living on 17 George Dimitrov Street on the first floor, while we were living in the same building on the top floor.





At my aunt Fani's wedding to Sami Herman. From the right: Dorly, Tutzi, father and mother, Fani Weidenfeld and Sami Herman, Hans Weidenfeld, Blanca his wife, father's brother who lived in Iasi, Holdy and Nora my father's sister, Tutzi's parents.

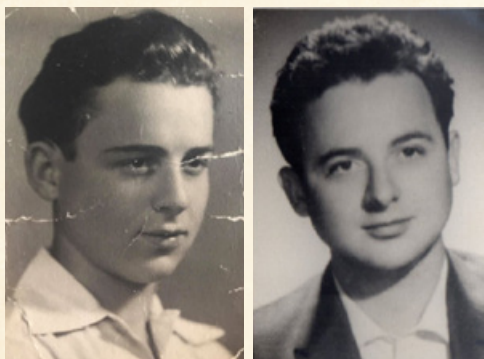


My aunt Fani and her husband Sami Herman in front of our house

They got married in 1955, when I was 8 years old. My life changed in the most meaningful and significant way. Shuri, the most beautiful boy I had ever seen in my life, a prince, entered our house. Affectional he was nicknamed Lulu by his adoptive father. Subsequently, the family loved and used to call him Lulu.

At 18 he was a student at the faculty of mechanical engineering in Iasi; he was a young educated and charming man, blessed with all the best qualities one can think of. He didn't get along with my aunt Fani, therefore he spent most of the time at our house (on the upper floor). He decided to put his educational aspirations to good use, and bestowed on me his wisdom, his knowledge, his life experience. Most importantly, he become my spiritual teacher, mentor and idol. I gratefully





accepted his extensive knowledge. He recommended books to read and continued guiding and advising on every aspect of life. Everything I strived for I got from him. Because of Shuri's counsel, I used to go every day to the town library, close to my friend Gitta's house. I would choose books that Shuri recommended despite the fact they were intended for older children. On my way home, I would start reading one of the books. Until I got home I

would finish one of them.

He also taught me how to ride a bike. In addition, he would sit for hours reading to me Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Cosbuc and more. I was sitting on his lap and Pia Klein on the floor, by his feet, hypnotized, devouring every word he uttered. This bliss went on for a few years, until my family got the green light to immigrate to Israel. Then I understood that Paradise was lost for me, that I was going to part from the man who had influenced my life.



Shuri getting off the plane in Venezuela

Before immigrating to Israel, my mom corresponded with the Red Cross searching for Shuri's relatives. Her numerous efforts payed off. She tracked down Shuri's uncle who had succeeded to leave the Ukraine before the war started. He immigrated to Caracas, Venezuela. My mom talked over the phone with him in Russian. The uncle was extremely happy to have found his brother's son; he sent Shuri a visa for Venezuela (visa to leave Romania).

Thus Lulu left Romania (after we had left to Israel) and was lovingly received by his uncle in Venezuela, an affluent businessman. Shuri's uncle possessed a few successful crystal trinkets shops. Shuri was offered to manage one of the shop. Lulu got married, fathered three daughters, and became a very wealthy man.

Years later, he moved to Miami where his daughters studied engineering. Shuri adopted Sami's family name, Herman (changing the name from Dunaievski to Herman) as a token of appreciation towards the man who saved his life, Sami Herman, raised and loved him as his own son. Sami



Herman didn't have children of his own, but the name Herman survived because of Sami's kindness. Years later, by total chance, Lulu entered a restaurant in Miami. At a table next to his, a few women were having lunch; it turned out that one of the ladies was Bettica Leinburd, Paul's mother, Sami Herman's niece. The surprise meeting at the restaurant ended by reconnecting the Hermans and Leinburds.

40 years after my painful separation from Lulu, whom I considered being my "older brother", I met him and his family in Israel. He came for a visit and looked me up. Words can hardly describe the touching meeting and the pounding hearts at the reunion.

Even today the memory is still as intense in my heart as it was then. I met his wife and his daughters. Unfortunately, Lulu passed away at the age of 70, but his memory is alive in my heart as powerful as it was the moment he entered my life at the age of 8 in a tempestuous manner.





Greeting the New Year at Sfantul Dumitru Church in Suceava

Dorly Weidenfeld

The year was 1958 and my parents went out with their friends to celebrate the New Year's Eve. Most of the Jews in Suceava had a nanny or a housemaid living on the premises, helping with household chores and taking care of the children. Our nanny at that time was Maricica. All my friends who took part on the Romania trip in June 2016 had the chance to meet her and her daughter Daniela, at a gathering at the Zamca Restaurant.

Maricica, our esteemed nanny, was two years older than I was. She lived in our house, and I considered her as one of my friends. Often, when my Jewish friends came to play, she would join us. She was a country girl, which was sent by her parents to live and work in Suceava, to help her poor family. Amongst other jobs, he was supposed to keep me company, take me to school, and watch over me when my parents went out.

My parents left for the New Year's Eve Celebrations; Maricica and I stayed at home; but she wanted to celebrate as well by going to the Church and pray. She took my hand and off we went. We all got a strict Jewish upbringing, in the spirit of deep faith in Judaism, God, and the believes attached to it. No doubt, I was scared of entering a church, scared of the Church symbols (Icoane and holy water), and was sure that God who was watching from above, aware of all our actions, overseeing us, would punish accordingly if we were to make mistakes.

Still, I was very curious, and joined Maricica at the Church. The Church packed with paintings depicting saints (Icoane).

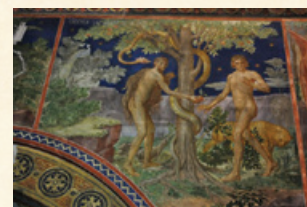


Photo: Cozmin Agheorghesiei



The priest passed by with a swinging ball spreading smoke everywhere; he sprinkled holy water, and blessed us with his smoke fuming ball. My heart was racing. I was sure that Our God was watching, and I would surely get my punishment later on.

I couldn't fall asleep that night, and was sure that by morning I will receive my punishment, or perhaps never wake up again.

Morning came, and to my complete amazement, nothing happened. Then I thought my punishment would come in the next days.

I'm almost sure it happened exactly like this. For years to come I would wake up sweating at night, with nightmares from the sights I had seen in Church that evening. In my opinion, the impression of the Church encounter lasted forever.

Has Maricica been punished?

After leaving Suceava, Maricica moved in to my Aunt Fani's house. My aunt, the math teacher, took upon herself to teach her reading and writing, helped her with matriculation examinations, and Maricica finally became a nurse. She got married and had two children.

Later on, Maricica helped my aunt; my mom promised her she would eventually get my aunt Fani's house as a gift if she would continue helping. It was actually our house before we immigrated to Israel.

Years have passed, and I never knew if my mother's wish was respected and carried out.

At our last meeting in Suceava in 2015, I found out that after my aunt's death, the house was indeed registered in Maricica's name. She has been living there with her family ever since. Maricica even invited me to stay with her on my next visit to Suceava.

Eventually, Maricica wasn't punished. Quite the contrary. She was blessed, in spite of my traumatic memories of the event.



The Church Sfintu Dumitru
(Photo Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru)





Suceava Children Group

Dorly Weidenfeld

About five years ago I read an announcement posted on a site named “Romanian Roots”. “Are there any people born in Suceava?” The person who posted the question was Dor, about 30 years old. I wondered what possible interest could a young man have in older people from Suceava. I left Suceava when I was 12 and; at first, I kept in touch with part of my friends by writing letters. As time passed by, my connections dwindled until, eventually, the memory of my friends faded away and I forgot all about them. Later, my life in Israel changed completely. I lost interest in my childhood memories or my Suceava friends.



Senta Grill

It seems that Dor’s post came at the right time. I was ready to reconnect. My soul was once more longing to rekindle the past.

I asked Dor the reason he was interested in people from Suceava. I understood that his mother was born in Suceava and he was interested in people on her behalf. Moreover, Dor informed me that his mom was corresponding with a friend from Suceava, who presently lives in the US. Based on the information I got, I tried my luck with Dor and asked whether his mother corresponds with Pia or Gitta

(the names of my two childhood friends who lived in the USA). I got his mother’s phone number.



Gitta Weitmann

Enthusiastically, I called Dor’s mom who happened to be Senta Grill. Her name was familiar to me. Senta sent me her picture as a teenager. This was exactly how I remembered her, a beautiful girl a couple of years my senior. Senta and I talked for a long time; our conversation is going on until this day.

Gitta Weitmann is my friend from the States. In Israel we kept in touch during the 70s. Nevertheless, we haven’t seen each other for a long time. Senta gave me Gitta’s phone number.

I called her immediately. Words cannot express the joy we both felt the moment we heard each other's voice. It was as if the years hadn’t passed by.

Gitta told me that one of her sons is living in Israel and that she frequently visits him. She sent me the picture from her ninth birthday and asked me to track down the children (our friends) present in it to set up a reunion on her next visit to Israel.





From the left: Mario, Shelly, Senta, Gitta, Gita, Lia, Ruthy, Aric, Gitta's brother, in front row next to Senta and Gitta.

At this point the grueling searches started. After a long and hard journey, I was able to find most of my old friends and to establish the group nowadays known as Suceava Children.

I would like to share with you the adventures I encountered on my quest.

Lily gave me Lia Avram's telephone number. Lia and I had a few emotional conversations before we decided to look for Harry. Lia discovered that Harry left Israel and nowadays lives in Canada. Lia remembered that at the end of Harry's military service, her husband, Harry and another man, Paul, worked at the control tower of Ben Gurion Airport. Lia tracked down Paul on Facebook. She posted the details of our plan, asking about Harry's whereabouts. However, the answer was belated. An idea popped into my mind. If Paul was on Facebook, it stands to reason that Harry may also be among his friends. Indeed, I found Shoshana Fleischer (who proved to be Harry's wife). The profile photo shows Shosh and Harry Fleischer. I also found Shosh through a friend on another website. In short, we reached Harry in Toronto. You can just imagine how emotional the talk has been.



Harry Fleischer



Iancu Manash

I thought that it would be easier to find the boys, as they hadn't changed their names through marriage. So no problem, right?! As it turned out, there was a problem!!! This time I will walk you through the long and difficult path to Iancu.

Iancu was my best friend in Suceava, the prince charming of my childhood. Despite the fact I knew him well, I was never aware of the fact that he was Beno's cousin. This information would have shorten by far the process, since Beno was among the first I located in Israel. I met Beno



about 30 years ago, in 1984, at Pia's daughter's Bat Mitzva. As I didn't know the fact, my searches lasted more than six months.

In spite of being best friends in Suceava, Iancu never visited me in Israel. I got Iancu's explanation in 2015 – it was his phone book which fell into the sea and got lost; this is how we lost touch. At least this is the official explanation.

I heard about Iancu when I was 22 years old. His brother, Beni, who was studying at the time at Haifa Technion, came to my house in Haifa and handed me an invitation to Iancu's wedding, which was about to take place on 22nd September 1969. I returned the favor by sending Iancu through Beni an invitation to my own wedding. I got married on 6th October 1969, two weeks after Iancu. None of us attended each other's wedding. So, this is how I lost track of Iancu; I even forgot about the invitation which was on the name Manas instead Manash.

These are steps I took in my search:

- I called the telephone information office and I asked about people called Iancu or Yaakov Manash. The operator replied she couldn't track down anyone.
- I heard from Adi Rosenberg that there was a volunteer from Suceava for an ex-Romanian immigrants organization named Sica Manash. I called the organization and after a while I got the volunteer's phone number. When I asked if he was related to Iancu Manash from Suceava, the answer was positive, but Sica had no information about my friend Iancu. Sica's brother Lica was a very good friend of Iancu's and they were closely connected, but, unfortunately, Lica Manash passed away a few months before. I reached dead end again.
- I googled Iancu Manash in every possible spelling and in every language but with no avail. Then I wrote only the family name - Manash – and I received 10 results. One had the name Doron Manash. I remembered Iancu having a younger brother named Dorel. Maybe Dorel is Doron in Hebrew?!
- After getting Doron's phone number, a secretary answered, asking who I was. I told her "a childhood friend". When Doron answered, I asked him if he was born in Romania? The answer was "yes". I went a step further and asked if he was born in Suceava? Again, the answer was positive. Next, I asked the crucial question – do you have a brother named Iancu? Finally, the answer was "yes". More than six months of inquiries came to a successful end!!!



Carla Wax

Despite being a year older we were friends in Suceava. She lived in Piata de Unt (in the same neighbourhood with Iancu, Tzili and Paulica) which was around my own house. She used to play with us. Sometimes we were playing at my house. I remember her as a beautiful girl with long black hair and amazing green eyes.



After leaving Suceava, in December 1958, we didn't correspond and eventually we lost touch. In 1984 Pia arrived in Israel to celebrate her daughter Ora's Bat Mitzva. On the festivity evening I met again all Pia's friends – Rosemary, Mara, Mira, Gerty, Sheni Shechter, Betty Merdler and, of course, the late Beno Budic. For some reason, Carla didn't come. The following day we set another meeting at Mercaz HaCarmel in Haifa. Among the few friends who showed up was Beno Budic who brought Carla. She was still the same green-eyed, black-haired beauty I remembered. We were extremely happy to see each other, but, as much as I remember, we still didn't stay in contact.

Five years ago, Senta told me that, in one of her working tours, she visited a lab in Hadera. There she met Iuliana, the lab manager. Senta passed Iuliana's phone number. Reconnecting with Iuliana made me very happy. During one of our conversations, I learned that Carla worked at the dental health clinic, which was part of the Hadera general health clinic (HMO). I asked Iuliana for Carla's phone number. However Carla's phone number was privileged. I got the same answer from the telephone information office.

Paulica informed me that Carla Wax was Betty Asael's cousin. I called the latter but she as well didn't have Carla's phone number. I nearly gave up. All of a sudden, I had a brilliant idea – I called the health clinic retiree organization. After giving them my mom's name, Jenny Weidenfeld, who was a retired nurse, I explained that I was looking for another retiree named Carla Wax. The woman at the other end checked and told me that indeed there was a retiree with that name. Mentioning my maiden name, I requested her to call Carla and let her know that her childhood friend was looking for her. Ten minutes later, the secretary of the HMO got back with Carla's number adding that my old friend was waiting for my call.

The rest is history!

A vague remembrance of Beno's face was still in my memory: a fair-haired gentle boy who excelled in his studies. As I recall, he was Harry Fleischer's friend and used to come for visits. He was Pia's classmate and a friend of Mihai Drishcu, Mara, Mira and Betty Merdler's. I don't remember having a conversation with him in Suceava. Much later I learned that Beno and Iancu are related.

Beno immigrated to Israel in the 60's. In 1984, when we already were about 37-38 years old, Pia arrived from the States to celebrate her daughter Ora's Bat Mitzva.

Among those invited were a lot of girls (Rosemary, Mira, Mara, Gerty, Sheni Shechter, Dorly, Betty Merdler and Carla and Beno Budic. After the celebration, our ways parted and I haven't heard from him or the group. The girls in the group I remembered well, but I have forgotten all about Beno.



The late
Beno Budic



About five years ago, when I found Gitta, I also renewed my relationship with Rudi, another common friend. During one of our conversations, Rudi told me “I believe you are from Suceava and, to the best of my knowledge I received an article about your native town written by someone born there”. Rudi sent me the Romanian language article, “Suceava mea”. I started reading and in spite of the length of the article (15 pages) I couldn’t put it down. I have forgotten all the years I was disconnected from my native town, the fact that I was not interested in it before. The high language of the article wasn’t a problem for me. After reading, I started looking with awe and reverence for the author of the article and I saw that it was “Beni Budic”. In the beginning I didn’t make the connection, but the more I thought about it the more I linked the name to the man I met at Pia’s celebration. At the end of the article there was an e-mail address. I decided to write an appreciation letter attaching two pictures from the Bat Mitzva in which we stood one next to the other. I asked if he was the one present in the pictures, if he was Beno Budic. The answer was clear “YES”. He didn’t remember me from our childhood, but he did recall the meeting at the Bat Mitzva. I sent the article to all the e-mails which started to amass (including all my girl friends – Pia, Lotti Shertzer and Rosemary Rohrlich). Beno replied that he thanked for the public relations I created. Later on I tried to correspond with him (like a little groupie), but, unfortunately, the connection was lost and it wasn’t because of me.

In my search for the other Suceava children, I was told that Beno could help in finding Saul Grinberg, a Burdujeni native. I hesitated to bother Beno again. When I presented Iancu with my concerns he confided that Beno was his relative and that he would talk to Beno who, undoubtedly, would help with the matter at hand. This new attempt to ask Beno for help was successful. I informed Beno about our intention to organize a reunion and he asked if his friends could join in. I was thrilled. Thus, we welcomed Beno and felt blessed to have him as a special friend.



From the right: Romy, Mira, Betty Merdler, Mara, my cousin Tutzy from Galatz, Pia, Ora, Dorly (yours truly), Beno, Sheni Shechter and Gerti Wasserman.





1984, Ora's Bat Mitzva (Pia's daughter).
Left: Pia, her husband, Burshi, Marion and Shamo Distelfeld, Margit, Bella, Romy, Mara, Poldi Korn, Jenny and Aharon Weidenfeld, Beni Budic, Sheny Shechter. Sitting Gerti first from the right, Medi and Ora in the front.

Since then we sometimes talked on the phone. I keenly read his articles and I was looking forward to reading the next one.

I felt like the boy in the Bible story, the one who accompanied Saul in his search for the lost donkeys but eventually found a kingdom, i.e. while I was busy with my own affairs I got to know a special person, Beno.

Every one of the Suceava children is a story in itself, but there is not enough space to write about each and every one.

Many times I look fondly at the picture taken at the 1984 Bat Mitzva. The young face of my friends are imprinted on it How young and beautiful we were!



Pia, Dorly, Mara, Carla, Mira at Pia's daughter Bar Mitzva, 1984.





First Love in Suceava

Dorly Weidenfeld

My childhood passed pleasantly and I remember Suceava as "The Paradise" on earth. My first experiences are still deeply engraved in my heart. Values acquired in Suceava as a child shaped my life, influencing my way of thinking, my beliefs.

I grew up in a beautiful old house, surrounded by the love and support of my parents. A peasant girl was my nanny. She joined our family, helping my mother with house chores.

I had many friends; Pia Klein has been my friend since infancy and, as our mothers were close friends, we frequently used to sleep at each other's house. We spent many hours together.

In kindergarten, Tzili Avram became my closest friend. My neighborhood (Piata de Unt), was a former market place. It was surrounded by houses full of children my age. We played together forging friendships. This way I befriended Iuliana.

During my school days, Lily and Gitta became my friends.

In those days, at the age of 8-12, it wasn't customary for girls to become friends with boys. Groups of boys and groups of girls would play separately. Besides a large number of girlfriends, I was lucky enough to befriend two boys as well. These are Iancu Manash and Harry Fleischer. Both became my best friends, although they weren't friends one with the other. We would spend together as threesome many hours in the afternoons and in the evenings. I used to dance ballet, excelled in artistic gymnastics and at school. I played with my girlfriends, but I still found time to have great moments with the two boys.

They both loved me and competed for my young heart. Harry used to declare his love for me openly. However, he would always point out that undoubtedly, my heart belonged to Iancu and that his battle had been lost from the start. However, he didn't give up. The year before I left Suceava, I joined Iancu in his exploits.

In my opinion, one couldn't find two children, more different than us. We differed on any account possible; we disagreed nearly on any subject, we had different preoccupations regarding personal interests or school requirements. Maybe this was the reason he intrigued me so much – he opened a door to new adventures, otherwise unknown to me. I was spellbound.

In Israel we married to two different partners a fortnight apart. None of us was able to attend each other's wedding. We lost touch for many years.

When we finally met again, in 2015 I felt that nothing has changed. We still differ as before; our



ways of life are totally opposite. We don't see eye to eye on any subject. Nevertheless, if you ask me who has always been my best friend the answer remains the same - Iancu.

Iancu was the knight in shining armor of my childhood, my first love at the age of 12. I have to thank him for a world of wonderful adventures. I keep dear to my heart those magical childhood memories. The shadow of those days has accompanied me all these years. Therefore, I have always expected to meet him again.

After the first heart-warming meeting of SUCEAVA Children on August 2015, I sent a picture of me and Iancu to Harry (who hadn't attended the gathering). Harry responded promptly: "Iancu has finally got the girl!!!"

I answered Harry: "Has he really?"



Dorly and Harry



Dorly and Iancu





Gypsies are Kidnapping Children in SUCEAVA

Dorly Weidenfeld

In 1958, a rumor was circulating in Suceava that groups of poor gypsies, living on the outskirts of town, were kidnapping children. The rumors stated that the gypsies lived in poor hygiene conditions, made their living by stealing and on top of everything, were kidnapping children for ransom or some other purposes.



On Sundays in Suceava, all the children in my neighborhood, at Piata de Unt, played all day long in the yard. On that specific Sunday, my parents had decided that I wasn't practicing the accordion enough, and forbade me from going out to play; so I stayed home to practice. My hands played the keyboard, but my heart was drawn to the playground downstairs.

Suddenly, lady luck came knocking. My parents' friends came to visit, so I seized the opportunity, left the accordion and told my parents I was going downstairs only for a few minutes; in reality I vanished from sight. I grabbed my bike, and met the already worried Iancu outside, who waited for me downstairs. It was a beautiful day, the sun was shining, and Iancu suggested that instead of playing with the other children, we should take a bike trip to Zamca Monastery.



(Photo Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru)

I was so taken by the offer that I completely forgot about my promise to my parents to stay close to the house, not to be away and of course to return for lunch.

Iancu and I enjoyed Zamca, we had many adventures. We stepped in the mud and our socks got dirty; we had to wash and dry them. We picked flowers and enjoyed the lovely view.

We have completely lost track of the



passing time; I forgot my promise to my parents, and the fact that I haven't told a soul where we went.

Back home, Iancu's parents and mine started looking for us. The children told them that we have driven off together, but nobody knew where to. It was getting dark and a rumor started in town that Dorly and Iancu had disappeared; the Gypsies might have taken them.

All the Jews in town spread out in search parties with lanterns and dogs, but we were nowhere to be found. Our parents and friends waited worried in the town square and I can't remember if they went to the police or continued trying to decide what to do next.

When we finally arrived back after dark, we could not understand what all the fuss was about. Pia's mom, Medi, intervened on my behalf, took me to her home to spend the night with Pia, just to escape the beating and the punishment my mom was going to administer. Iancu? He suffered them all (for me too).

Looking back, there is no doubt that our parents were probably traumatized not knowing what had happened. Go figure the audacity, curiosity (and probably the stupidity) of two eleven-year old youngsters who in spite of being well educated, acted irresponsibly.

Fifty years later, I have managed to find Iancu, and many more of our friends from town.

Undoubtedly, Iancu is still the unusual one in our group, with his initiative, creativity, energy and determination.

Looking back, I must admit that he evolved into the person he is today as a natural consequence to that bold non-conformist boy he once was.

George Dimitrov street. We lived on the second building from the right on the second floor.



George Dimitrov St.
(Photo Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru)



Medi and mom





Farewell, Scheia

Dorly Weidenfeld

The name of the village was familiar, but I didn't recall its significance for me. A few days ago, Tamara sent me her memories. She wrote: "I saw the ruins of Zamca Monastery and at a distance I could catch a glimpse of the little village Scheia, with its river and the peasants' whitewashed houses." And then... I remembered...

A few days before I left for Israel, on a Sunday, Iancu suggested we go on a daylong bike outing to Scheia. He had solid motives for the trip to come. Manash family's maid, originated from Scheia. She mentioned that a horseback riding competition with special prizes was going to take place that Sunday. In addition, the road to Scheia had just been asphalt paved and a bike trip would be special.

I was fascinated. An adventure with Iancu was always special, but this time I thought about what could happen: we could take a wrong turn, be late coming back and there was also the fear of being punished. With a heavy heart, I refused Iancu's proposal and, as a result, he left for Scheia by himself.

After many years in Israel, I wrote in my diary how sorry I was for not going to Scheia, for losing an unforgettable adventure and an exceptional memory, especially as I knew I wasn't going to see Iancu anymore after leaving for Israel.

If I had gone with him, we could have said our farewells, I could have parted properly before immigration.

I met Iancu only 50 years later. I haven't visited Scheia then and I may never visit the village. Maybe I lost a dream?!





The First Kiss in Suceava and Sex Education

Dorly Weidenfeld

All the children in Suceava shared the same education; we were brought up upon the same values. Our education was conservative, puritan, based entirely on the desire to excel in studies.

In the matters of romance, we lacked guidance. Our parents never talked with us about it, never explained what happens when a boy and a girl fall in love. Many of us didn't know how children were born. I'm referring to ages of 12. Gita (Weitmann) told me she received an explanation about "how children are born". Lily read probably in some book and explained Gita that parents have sex; the mother gets pregnant and then a baby is born. Gita was deeply offended and told Lily "how dare you say such things about our parents, they do no do such ugly things, storks bring children to us". Gita was so furious she didn't talk to Lily for a while. They eventually made up. As I gathered, in the following years after we left Suceava, when boys and girls started forming friendships, besides walking hand in hand on the main street, little was happening, even after several years of friendship.

As for the romantic education, we were lucky to get the knowledge under different circumstances: My aunt Fani (the math teacher) was married to Sammy Herman (Betty Leinburd's uncle). Sammy Herman moved in with my aunt, and brought his adoptive son, Shury, with him. Shury was a very handsome, well educated, charismatic 20-year-old young man, and naturally, he had already gathered knowledge and experience on matters we knew nothing about. He spent most of his time in our home. He was studying mechanical engineering in Iasi, but on weekends and holidays, he spent his time with us. This charming, young man took me under his wing. He became my mentor, broadened my education, read books to me. I was 11 when he read to me War and Peace by Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky. He taught me to recite El Zorab by Cosbuc by heart. He talked to me on every subject in the world and explained many things my parents didn't.

During the daily book reading, I used to sit on his lap and Pia Klein (my oldest friend) sat at his feet on the floor, listening with gaping mouth, looking at him admiringly.

Shury was a part of a group of boys and girls (Norman Mania included)). They spent time going places like Zamca and Cetate (Stefan the Great's citadel)

Some children got bikes and Pia suggested we form a group of our own to spend time together and follow Shury's group, in order to understand the secret things, they do together.

Our group members were Pia Klein, Iancu Manash, Harry Fleischer and I, Dorly. We followed



the older guys for many evenings. This was how we acquired sex education; we were watching the older guys. They never found out about us witnessing their actions, watching from our hiding place.

Looking back, if I were to ask myself "who could I had the first kiss with?" I would surely say either Harry or Iancu. Harry and Iancu loved me and were my suiters. Harry confessed his love, but said he was afraid my heart belonged to Iancu (considering him his rival). Iancu, however, never told me his feelings, but in one of our trips to Zamca, he held my hand. In those days it was considered a very bold move. However, none of them were my first kiss.

My first kiss came as a surprise. In 1958 (the year we left Suceava) Pia celebrated her Bat-Mitzva. She invited to the party all her class girlfriends and me (I am a year younger), because of our close friendship. This time, Pia had decided to invite only older boys, like Nelu, Relu and Sasha. I think I had never talked to these boys before the party took place, but I knew about them from Pia's stories. In spite the age difference, they were Pia's friends.

At the party, we played many society games that are still "modern" today. One of them is "Truth or Dare". A boy spins a bottle and asks a question the girl the bottle faces. Relu spun the bottle which stopped facing me. Being young and shy I blushed and I was too embarrassed to cooperate. Pia took me aside and explained that Relu is the most popular boy in town, considered smart and handsome and desired by most of the girls so I better not miss this chance. I returned to the game and Relu said: "I dare you to go out of this room with me" and there I got my first kiss. I haven't mentioned in my diary if it was a kiss on the cheek, the forehead or lips. It didn't matter – it was the boldest thing that had ever happened to me till then.

I knew I could never tell my friends about this experience, Harry, Iancu, Lily, Gitta, Tzili and Iuliana, and I would cherish that day in my heart forever without telling anyone.

Pia knew. As the years passed, I forgot the story, but right before the last meeting of Suceava's Children in Garden Hotel, Pia asked me if I know what had beoame of Nelu, Relu and Sasha. When Relu's name popped up, I had to go back to my diaries to check why it rang a bell. And in the diary, I have found the story about Pia's famous birthday.

I realized that in those days, as today, our lives were intertwined ; the age differences haven't played part.

Before the meeting at the Garden Hotel, Relu told me: "Don't forget to remind Pia to bring the bottle from America!"

He remembered!





The Eventful Abortion in My Father's Clinic in Suceava

Dorly Weidenfeld

Today we have met Hayuza Shmeltzer. During the meeting, after listening to her stories, Lily has brought up the idea that "Jewish children had to mature quickly in Suceava". My story proves her saying right. I never thought of this story quite this way, but over time, meeting and talking to different people from Suceava, I think Lily's argument gets stronger.

I think that most people didn't know that in addition of being a general practitioner, my father was also a gynecologist. As long as I can remember, I saw different women come into his clinic, disappear behind the doors, my father and mother (who was a nurse) attending them. I wasn't allowed to make any noise or to disturb them, and after a while I saw the women leave. Only then was I allowed to jump and make noise again. I was curious to know what went on but I didn't dared to ask. At some point, my curiosity got the better of me and I sneak peeked through the keyhole. What I saw that day stayed with me for many years, causing me nightmares. But, this is not what I meant by "maturing".

When my parents were busy in the clinic with illegal abortions, I was assigned a job – I was to play in our front yard, in order to prevent unwanted visitors coming to the clinic. As fate would have it, a ten-year-old girl was playing in the yard when a party of two men and a woman came to perform a sanitary inspection in the clinic "Inspectie Sanitara la cabinet". I quickly understood what this visit meant. Even though my heart was pounding and my face turned pale, I decided to work my charms. Therefore, I smiled at them and in a brave voice, but with pounding heart, said that my parents weren't at home and I'm not allowed in my parent's absence to bring strangers home. I asked them to come another time. They patted my head and praised me for being such a nice polite girl. They left.

This is what we meant by "maturing" in Suceava. We all understood from a very young age the meaning of being in danger and the difference between "to be or not to be". A parent going to prison and a family falling apart is "not to be". We have mustered all our resourcefulness and abilities to act as adults, even if we were 10 years old. Every one of us tried to cope and save his family, one way or another.

Talking to different people from Suceava, we concluded that we behaved like grownups when necessary. Way to go Suceava Children!



My family's house was on George Dimitrov street – we lived on the upper floor of the second house from the right.



George Dimitrov St.
(Photo Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru)





My Friend Tzili Avram

Dorly Weidenfeld

In kindergarten Tzili was my first “best friend”. Every day, at 2 p.m. Tzili’s mother came to the kindergarten and took Tzili and me to her home. We would spend all afternoon at Tzili’s house. In the evening, I would return home. The years passed by and more children joined my circle of friends. Apart from the girls there were also two boys – Harry and Iancu who were my friends. Harry, Iancu, Pia and I set up "the secret group of four", or, the way Betty Merdler called it in Romanian, “gașca”. I teamed up with the boys carrying out daring activities which only boys were usually involved in. I concealed these activities from my girl friends. I believe that only Pia and later Tzili were partners in these exploits. I wouldn't dare telling Gitta or Lily about it. One of the “very daring and secret deeds” was to smoke the cheapest cigarettes in hidden places (I think the brand was “Marasesti”). I was the only girl who would join the boys. I remember Dutu Gaitan who was always with us and, as he informed me recently, Zwi used to come occasionally, too. There could have been other children as well, but I don’t remember.

Now let’s go back to my story about Tzili.

On the day my story starts, Iancu and I bought cigarettes at the local grocery. We planned to buy a watermelon as well and head towards Zamca. Suddenly, Tzili entered the shop with money in her hand to buy groceries for her parents. We told her we were going to Zamca to smoke and eat watermelon. She offered immediately her money as a contribution (totally forgetting why she was sent the grocery shop).

The three of us set out happily in the direction of Zamca, but we noticed that Stefan Panzaru, our classmate, saw us and asked to join in. We refused. Other boys from our class, Alex Stefanescu among them, started following us. They threw pebbles on us. We tried to find cover. Eventually we met one of our schoolteachers and told him that the other kids were bothering us. He ordered them to leave us alone and to return home at once. We were happy and free at last!

The three of us arrived at Zamca. It was a nice day. We ate watermelon slices, laughed and smoked. Tzili, feeling extremely enthusiastic because of the watermelon, managed to smear its juice all over her face. Soil grains got stuck on the juice which covered her face. She wasn’t aware of her funny look. We were mean; Iancu and I laughed madly while Tzili wasn't aware of the reason. After a while, she joined in and laughed. On our way back home, Tzili couldn’t understand why people were staring at her and why we went on laughing hysterically.



When she parted and got home, she looked in the mirror and finally realized. She forgave us. I am not sure that her parents forgave her for coming home late, without the money, or the groceries she was supposed to buy.

Tzili, we love you!



First on the right is Tzili at my wedding reception



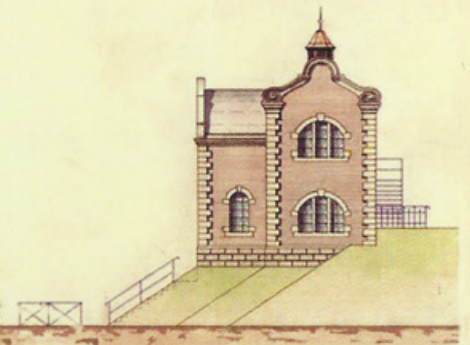
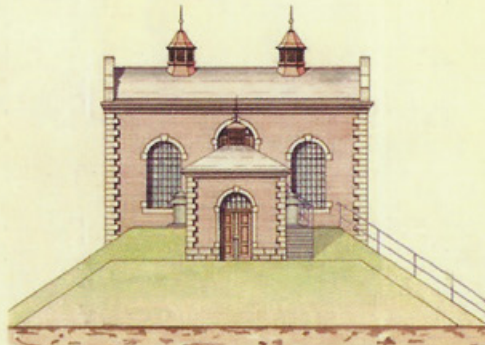
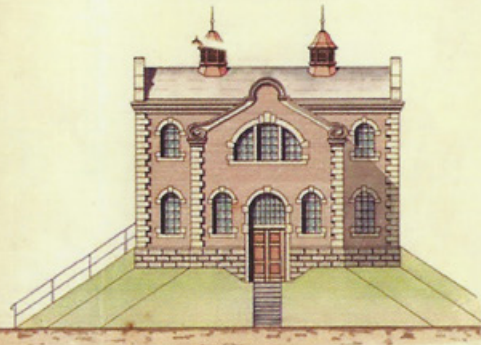
Enteisungsanlage.

1:100.

Südwestliche Ansicht.

Fronztliche Ansicht.

Südöstliche Ansicht.

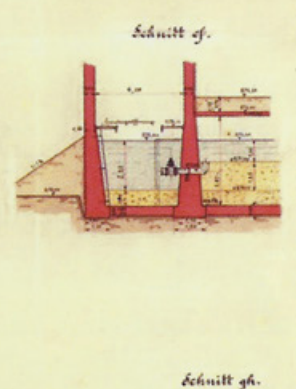
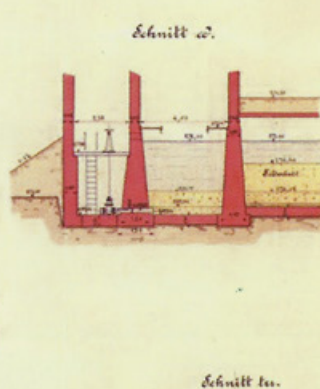
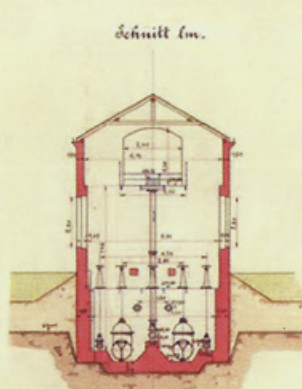
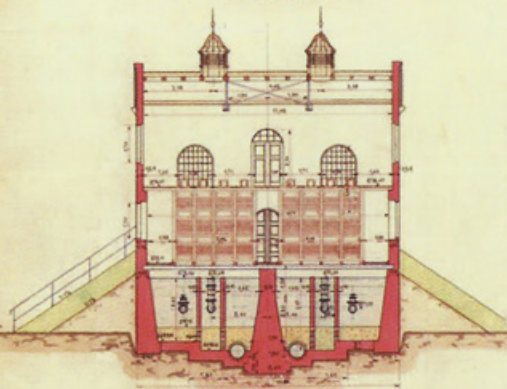


Schnitt no.

Schnitt lm.

Schnitt od.

Schnitt of.



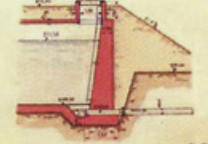
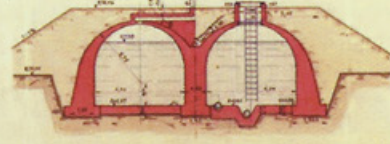
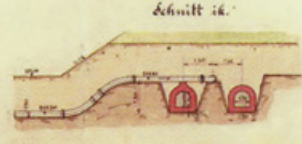
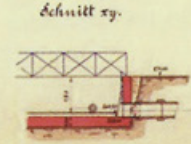
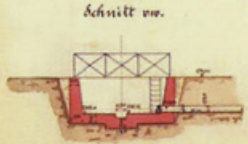
Schnitt on.

Schnitt og.

Schnitt ih.

Schnitt io.

Schnitt jh.



Ing. G. Thien
LIPSK
J. 21. November 1898.

Planul Uzinei de apă
Layout of the Water Plant



The Place Where I Was Born Splintered Memories

Paul (Poldi) Leinburd

I am staring at paintings of old architecture from the Bucovina of our parents, as I am sipping red wine, and listening to Brazilian guitar music.



I am trying to focus, and I see my family. Photos are coming alive. I see my parents, and their friends, my young brother, Sorel (Sonny) and our friends.



My paternal grandparents, my parents and I

My brother Sorel in my father's hands and I



My maternal grandparents from Falticeni and my paternal grandparents from Suceava had left for Israel long ago, in the early 50's. We followed later, in 1959. Within 10 to 15 years there were hardly any Jews left in a part of Romania where Jews had been an integral part of the country, contributing to the arts, sciences, literature and economics. Sort of like the Sephardim of Spain, 700 years ago.

This is where I was born, on April 20, 1946. This is where generations and generations of my family lived, fought for their country and died. I have read most books on the topic, and I still don't get it. A fascist movement had been in power in Romania in one form or another for decades, but in the 1930's it grew stronger, spurred on by what was happening in the rest of Europe. A second, more extreme, mystical, messianic fascist movement, the Legion of the Archangel Michael, also known as the Iron Guard or the Green Shirts, led mainly by theology students and supported behind the scenes by the Romanian Orthodox Church, was gaining momentum. In the 30's Romania had the third largest fascist movement in Europe, consisting mainly of students.

January, 1941. Everyone in power is competing in their anti-Jewish behaviour to gain favor from the European Fascist powers, who had started the war two years earlier. It is another six months before Romania invades the Soviet Union. Then, the news reaches Suceava like an avalanche. There has been an attempted coup by the Iron Guard in Bucharest against the fascist government of General Ion Antonescu. As I listen to these stories, I cannot understand. Two fascist movements, one more vicious than the other with only one thing in common, their hatred for Jews. I knew my Dad had a book, called "Cartea Neagra", but he kept it hidden. I never understood why, until many, many decades later. The "Black Book" by Matatias Carp. Now I understand why the authorities would not want it taken out of the country.

But back to January, 1941. A few days after the Rebelliune (as the fascist uprising of the Iron Guard was known) my dad ended up in Bucharest on a buying trip for his father's company "Groper and Lainburd"... special permit... special this... special that... there was talk of thousands of Legionari students shot dead by the Romanian army. But first, they were given a free hand to destroy the Jewish areas, the businesses, the synagogues. After three days of madness, they attacked the Bucharest centres of political power. Antonescu's Romanian army met them with French supplied quick firing howitzers. How crazy is that? Fascist fighting extreme fascist. Hard to believe, but it actually happened. How could anyone survive such insanity?

Later, many years later, I came across other crazy scenarios, that had taken place, like the macabre scenario of approximately 100 human beings, Jews, herded into the Bucharest abattoir and slaughtered, with their entrails cut out and hung around their necks, and a five year old girl skinned



alive, all with kosher stamps on their chests.... all this, while the green shirted perpetrators, loyal members of the Iron Guard were singing Orthodox hymns. Among the dead was a musician from Suceava, Jacob Katz, and a renowned architect, Jules Iancu, the brother of Marcel Iancu, one of the founders of the Dadaist movement. This unbelievable twentieth century version of the Inquisition was witnessed the next day by the American ambassador (who subsequently reported on it), representatives of the Red Cross and the Queen.



Marching Legionari - Wikipediaen



Bucharest - January, 1941.
Remains of destroyed Spanish synagogue.
Wikipediaen

And my family lived through this.

As I am writing this, I recall that Montesquieu, the French philosopher, wrote during the time of the French Revolution, that Religion and State must be separate entities in order for liberty and democracy to exist. That speaks for itself. Have the descendants of the Iron Guard stopped pretending it never happened or have they come back in a different form...?

My great uncle, Harry Lane, and I always had great discussions whenever we met. The last time we saw each other was in Los Angeles. Harry would have been around 80 years old. I smiled. I asked about where he and the Leinburd family had lived, how they survived.



Harry Lane (Leinburd)
approx. 1955

The village Harry and his brother, my grandfather, Nathan, grew up in, was Pavolich, a small village bordering Skvira, near Kiev. They are both now



suburbs of Kiev. He just smiled. No straight answer. But I was curious about this village. How he grew up in the volatility around Kiev. Why did they not live in Kiev? Ah, well, Jews were not allowed to live in Kiev, so they settled in towns outside of it such as Skvira and villages nearby like Pavolich. He remembered the village being attacked occasionally by Cossacks, as he was growing up in the 1890's. Actually, Pavolich and Skvira were both headquarters to Cossack regiments in the 1650's and the Haidamaks in the 1700's. It must have been a tough environment to survive. My grandfather left home and joined the pre-revolutionary Russian army at the beginning of World War I. In 1917, Russia got out of the war and a vicious civil war ensued in Russia and Ukraine. The Jewish community was constantly pummeled. In 1917, Skvira experienced 2 pogroms and in 1919, there were 6 pogroms. The perpetrators were nationalist Ukrainians fighting for independence. There were murders, rapes, rampant thievery. After surviving these events Harry, together with two or three of his friends, packed their belongings in 1922-23 and left for Romania. The two other Leinburd brothers, one married to a Stolyarski girl, decided to stay behind and knowledge of them was lost. By then, my grandfather had settled in Suceava, so that seemed like a good destination. Harry also told me the family had been running a flour mill in Pavolich. I was not aware of most of this, so my questions kept pouring on.

Harry and friends left Skvira, driving in a horse drawn wagon, heading toward the border with Romania, when they were stopped by Ukrainian paramilitary. Harry did not exactly know which group of Whites caught them, but knew that loyalists to Makhno, a Ukrainian anarchist revolutionary, were in the area. There were around 3 dozen of them, all on horseback, and when they found out that Harry and his companions were Jewish, they hung them and left soon after. A young Romanian shepherd, tending his sheep nearby, had been watching, and as soon as it was safe, he cut everyone down. I smiled. My uncle took this as a sign of my disbelief, and to my



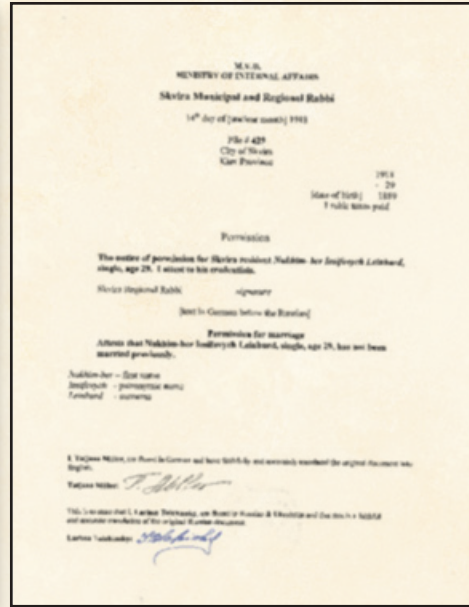
Stefan cel Mare - Stefan the Great raised to sainthood in the 1970's



surprise, he opened a few buttons high up on his shirt. There it was, a reddish, purplish mark still very visible around his neck where the rope almost deprived me of my great uncle Harry. How did Suceava, famous as the seat of power, of my favorite Romanian ruler, Stefan cel Mare, become the place where my grandfather settled?



Letter from the Skvira rabbi, in the original Russian and German language.



Skvira letter English translation

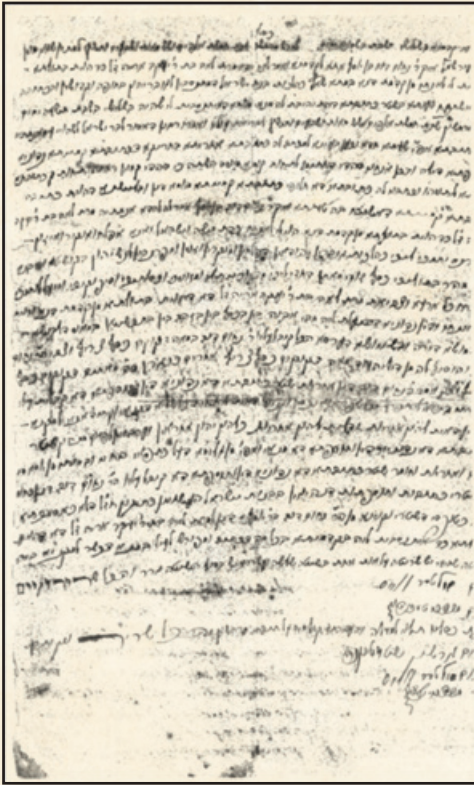
While with the Russian army, my grandfather was bivouacked in Suceava close to where my grandmother and her family lived. Love stepped in, and Nathan asked for Leah Schwerberg's hand in marriage.

Mrs. Schwerberg gave her approval on condition that Nathan go back to Skvira, and bring to her a letter from his rabbi stating he had never married. Or, at least that was the family legend. At a family gathering in Toronto, a few decades ago, my uncle Joe (Ioji), my father's younger brother, smiled and confirmed that it was fact and not a legend. After a few long minutes he came back with a document, the rabbi's letter!

Long story short, my grandparents were married in Suceava on Oct. 15, 1918. When I found their Ketubah, not long ago, written in Hebrew, I was stunned, and with a feeling of pride, touched the letters. Here is the Marriage Certificate in German "Traungschein".

I started contemplating how it was that Jews had settled in





The Ketuba – in Hebrew, 1918



Loti (Leah) Schwerberg

Suceava. So I did some research. Around the 1480's the Tatars swept through the Skvira region, destroying the area and they headed toward Suceava. Suceava seemed to have been on the way west for most tribes that were pushed or fled westward from Mongolia. The tribe I found most fascinating was the Khazars, a very warlike tribe, who around 400 AD controlled the area between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The Khazars were left in control of this area by the Huns, who had invaded Europe. Around 550 AD following a debate before the king of the Khazars and his court about the virtues of their respective beliefs, among the local religious leaders of the Jews, Christians and Muslims, the king chose to convert the entire tribe to Judaism. At some point around 750 AD, three of the seven Khazar tribes decided to leave their kingdom and move westward.

Skilled warriors, with cavalry moving forward, they took along another tribe who had been subservient to them, in their kingdom, the Hungarians. They moved forward through Romania, some settling in the south western areas, Oltenia and Ardeal. I have always imagined they passed through what became Moldova, 600 to 700 years later. It is generally understood that Hebrew was the language spoken in Romania and Hungary, in those years. After Hungary, these tribes invaded Europe and they were feared as warriors. The constant foraging stopped only when they were

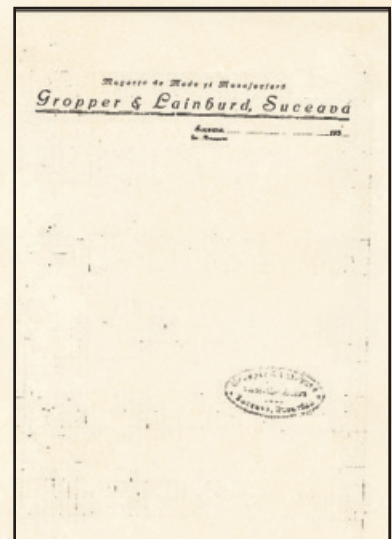


converted to Catholicism. But they did not forget their Judaism. Their first kings and families all had Hebrew names, their writings were in Hebrew, and their first coins had Hebrew lettering. I am thinking that possibly, Hebrew may have been the lingua franca around Suceava as well. I am smiling. For certain, some would have settled and intermarried with the local inhabitants, as did the members of the warring tribes who came before and after them, such as the Tatars and Cossacks.

Now, back to my story about Harry. After his narrow escape, Harry arrived in Suceava where he was reunited with my grandfather. After a short stay, Harry left for Canada and settled in Winnipeg, the city to which my family ultimately immigrated. He was the lucky one, having put himself at a safe distance from the horrible future that awaited the Jews who stayed in Romania and the rest of Europe. My dad, Jacob, was born to Leah and Nathan on Dec.25, 1919. In and around that time my grandfather and his partner, Gropper, started a textile business “Gropper & Lainburd”, in Suceava. The business prospered at Stefan cel Mare 40 (Strada Mare). If you wanted a fashionable suit, it was ‘the’ place to go.



There were three tailors on hand to create whatever Romanian fashion dictated. Interestingly, I met the son of one of these tailors, Zigi Blaustein, in 2004, when I took my two children, Lauren and Cole, to check out my “meleagurile natale”. At the time, Zigi was on the Suceava Jewish council, located at #8, Armeneasca Street. When he heard our last name, he immediately asked about our uncle Joe with whom he had been close friends. He asked about our dad, who regrettably had passed away in 1987. We were elated to have found a person who still remembered our family.



Around 1923, my grandfather, Nathan, realized that given the instability of the political scene in Romania, coupled with antisemitism, he would need to have proof of his citizenship. Russian papers weren't a realistic option, as this could lead to him being deported or arrested. He also didn't want or would not





NANSEN passport, issued by the League of Nations

apply for Romanian citizenship. In the end, he asked Harry to obtain a Nansen passport for him. An “international passport” sanctioned by the League of Nations. He wanted to be prepared.

Repressive anti - Jewish laws came into effect in Romania, in 1939, and Romanian citizens were told not to patronize Jewish establishments. After these ordinances, orders for merchandise would come in to Groper & Lainburd from the upper classes (boieri), like the Pruncu family, which my dad would deliver to their home, so that they would not be seen shopping in a Jewish enterprise. The irony of this makes me smile. Sometimes I used to go home from the Stefan cel Mare school, by turning right, as I came out of the

school, and then, turning right again, on Dragos Voda Street, so that I could pass by the Pruncu’s former residence with its enormous and beautiful front garden.



Frida, Iankel, Mrs Schwerberg (Chaia), Gabriel, Loti (Leah), and Iosef Moses.

It seems that my grandfather was very welcome into my grandmother’s milieu, even though he did not speak German.

It seems that my grandfather was very welcome into my grandmother’s milieu, even though he did not speak German. The Suceava Jewish community could be called Germanophiles and Romanian came second, with French lagging somewhere behind. Sort of a left over from the pre-World War I Austro-Hungarian empire. My grandmother, Leah, was born in Kloster Humor



(Manastirea Humorului). Her father, Jacob Schwerberg, my great-grandfather managed a property in the area that had burned down, possibly in the peasant uprising of 1907. There was no absolute confirmation either way. Leah's dad, passed away in the next couple of years, and the family moved to Suceava, where they had a lot of relatives. I only know of the Schwerbergs, and the Wagners. There were a lot more. The Schwerbergs were proud of being Austrians, as were the Jews living in Bucovina. Their loyalty was put to a test when World War I started. Many volunteered as did Iankel Schwerberg, the oldest brother of our grandmother. Unfortunately, he was killed in one of the first battles in Transylvania.

I recall meeting far and close relations both on my dad's side and my mom's side in Suceava.



We came across the name of Dr. Bernhard Wagner in a book on the Romanian Shoah sometime in the '70's. Till then, no one had known what had happened to him and his daughter. They were deported and ended up in Mogilev. Within a couple of weeks of getting there, they both committed suicide. This renowned doctor, who practiced at the Suceava hospital, was physically abused and kicked out on the very day that an ordinance was published that barred Jews from working in public places. I have always wondered how many local Romanians suffered and maybe even lost their lives due to his absence, and their own discriminatory laws.

June, 1941, and the Romanian army invades the USSR. A few months later... October 16, 1941, the Jewish population of Suceava is given 24 hours' notice to leave town, with only what they can carry. All they own, other than what they can physically carry, must be left behind. Houses complete with contents, businesses, everything must be handed over to the local authorities. I believe the mayor of Suceava was in charge. Greed and thievery are the order of the day, on an unprecedented scale.

The deportation order of Oct. 9, 1941, indicating the order for the departure of the Jewish population of Suceava. Destination – Transnistria. They were forcibly sent to Transnistria, on the eastern part of Bessarabia, bordering Ukraine, across the Bug River.



ORDER

The Army supreme commander decided to deport the entire Jewish Community of Suceava, Burdujeni and Itcani.

The Jewish population living on and between the streets Ciprian Porumbescu, Petru Rares, Regina Maria up to Reif grocery store are being deported **today, Oct.9, 1941, at 4p.m.** Death penalty will be

immediately effective

- for any attempt to evade deportation.
- for any refusal to leave valuables behind or to give them to Christians, You are allowed to carry only **small bags and food for 8 days.**

The order hold more instruction with immediate effect.

The evacuation order was announced through drum rolls that very morning.

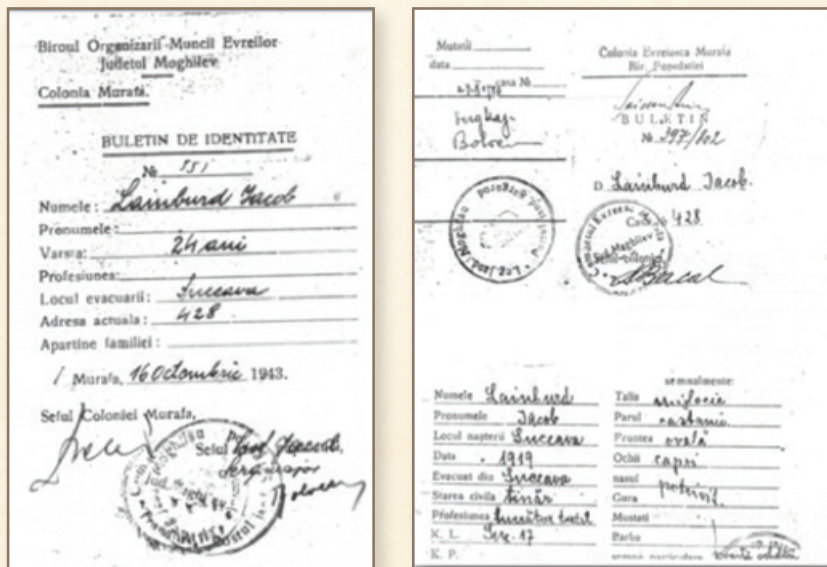


My grandfather, Nathan, believed that his League of Nations issued Nansen passport would protect him and his family. The story I heard is that they were the last family to leave Suceava. The Romanians were not about to honor any League of Nations mandates, if they applied to Jews. The law was applied one day, but not the next.

In recent search, I found a list of "Stateless Deportees to Transnistria" 1941. Under the region JUDET SUCEAVA, number 151, it mentions the name of my grandfather:

151. Leimburd Nuchem Beer comerciant carnet Dr. Nansen

I am not sure how, but luckily they ended up in Murafa, one of the better locations in the Romanian killing fields of Transnistria, if there was such a thing. One story my dad told me was that when they crossedgoing east, they came across messages that appeared to have been written in dried blood, saying “say kaddish for me”, and then the writer’s name. A forewarning!



Jacob Leimburd's identity card from Murafa, located in Moghilev County.

I know from other sources that my grandfather was on the first committee set up to organize the camp and ensure some form of organization, but that may have lasted only a year or so. I assume this was because of his knowledge of Ukrainian and Russian, as well as his knowledge of what the local economy lacked, so that it could be used as a resource for survival. Salt was one such item. I asked my dad if there had been any partisan activity in the vicinity. Not that he knew. Any partisans that my dad saw were around 16 years old. Apparently, at some point, some of his friends/acquaintances from Shargorod, ten in total, concocted a plan to escape into the forest. The



only way to survive in the forest was if you found any partisans and were allowed to join them. Unfortunately, Romanian soldiers tracked them down and killed them. News did not travel far in those days. I shared this story, totally by accident, at the time when the original Suceava Book was being put together. No one had known of this previously. To this day, only one person of the ten lost boys is known, and that is only because he was married pre-war to our mom's best friend.

Life in Murafa was tough. The Leinburds and Weidenfelds bunked in a dilapidated, abandoned home. The young men were occasionally obliged to dig ditches and other roadwork. I understand that my grandfather always tried to do what he could to help his sons.

From the document SURVIVING IN MURAFĂ GHETTO: A CASE STUDY OF ONE GHETTO IN TRANSNISTRIA by Sarah Rosen I learned that Nathan Beer, my grandfather was involved in the problem dealing with typhoid epidemic which erupted in the winter of 1941-1942. Two Committee members volunteered for this activity: Dr. Widenfeld, a physician, and N. Leinbord, both from Suceava.

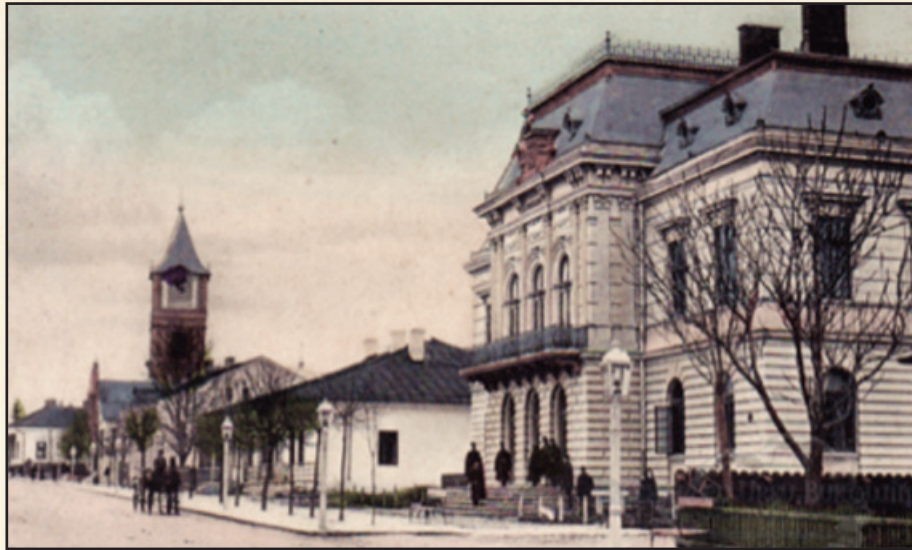
Life was rough and dangerous. I came upon a story about a Ukrainian girl that disappeared one day. The Ukrainian residents of the town spread the rumour that she had been kidnapped by Jews. A pogrom was in the making. The Jews were able to bribe the Romanian soldiers controlling the town. The young girl reappeared shortly after.

Road work was mandatory for all and my Dad related to me that on one occasion, a soldier smashed him on the side of his head with the butt of his rifle. His hearing was permanently impaired. A great piece of luck was that Dr. Weidenfeld was the brother-in-law of our grandparents and if anyone got sick, he found the drugs necessary to cure the illness. After news of Stalingrad, reached Murafa, conditions improved somewhat, as the perpetrators and their assistants, knew what was around the corner and waiting for them.

While my dad's Suceava family was fighting for survival in Murafa, Transnistria, my future mom's family, the Calmanovici's, were living in Falticeni, 22 km south from Suceava. My mom, Betica (Betty) was born in Falticeni, on April 25, 1922, to Calman and Ghitel Calmanovici.

Falticeni was a very interesting town. The history of the town goes back to the days of Stefan cel Mare. This king had an advisor named Isac Shor, who in or around 1570, purchased land in the region that comprises Falticeni and the neighboring countryside and Jews settled in the area. Some 200 years later Jews founded the town of Falticeni. Even though old journals and Jewish historical tomes state this, no modern Romanian historical or tourist books ever mention the town's true





The Falticeni City Hall

history of having been founded by Jews. It is as if Jews had never lived anywhere near there. The Jews of Falticeni and Suceava fought and were involved in all the conflicts that Romania fought, to gain its independence. But, there was the occasional aberration. Like the 1821 Greek uprising for independence from the Turks, that started in Iasi, Romania. The proud and glorious Greek revolutionaries marched through countless battles, all the way south west, to Falticeni, where they proceeded to kidnap the Jewish leaders of the town to hold them for ransom. No one paid and the Jews were murdered. Such brave historical incidents seem to have received mention only in the Jewish annals for the region. There is no historical reference as to what happened to the perpetrating heroes, but every time I see paintings of the glorious fighters for independence I think of this episode. At that time, Jews had no country they could retreat to for safety. Next it was Romania's turn to fight for independence from the Turks. My aunt, Clareta mentioned that she recalled stories of my grandmother's family, the Hermans. Apparently one Herman had joined the Romanian army and fought at Plevna, known as the quintessential place where Romanian independence was won. She recalls that he was awarded a decoration for bravery. The rest is a bit fuzzy. Apparently, it was not too safe for Jews to stand out in the crowd, so in the 30's the medal disappeared.

Falticeni is the town best known for the Iarmaroc (an annual fair), held on July 20th, to celebrate Sfintul (saint) Ilie.

To me, this was the famous Iarmaroc, which I used to love going to when I was a child. It was such a magic attraction for me and to this day I think upon it with fondness. Amazing music, varying from gypsy, Armenian, and klezmer floated through the air. I think my love for certain kinds of





The ride that stands most in my mind and which I loved the most.

the magical Romanian music dates to those events. To this day, I can still hear it when I close my eyes. Years later, many years later, Romica Puceanu came to Winnipeg to give a concert, which of course, I attended, with my mother. I could not get her music out of my head. She gave me her address to visit her, with the promise to give me more of her tapes. Sadly, she was killed in an auto accident around six months before we got there in 1994.

Sorry, I got side-tracked.

Even though Falticeni had a population of only around 10,000 – 15,000 people, it was renowned for the quantity and caliber of its writers, pedagogues, lawyers and artists. Falticeni was, and still is, renowned as a very creative community. During the time of my grandparents and parents, the Jews of Falticeni, even though on the surface appeared to be accepted, in reality, were not. I recall asking my mom, while we were in Suceava, why she could not skate. Ah, well, that was because Jews were not allowed on the skating rink.

Her stories abounded with tales of Mihail Sadoveanu, Ion Creanga, Eugen Lovinescu and Nicolae Labish, whose houses she had pointed out to us when we walked through the town, at the time when my mother, my brother and I went back in 1994, for the first time. Most of all, our mom had a love of history, especially Dimitrie Bolintineanu, whose poem she kept repeating, in unending remembrance of her childhood in this town.

Pe o stinca neagra, intr-un vechi castel,
Unde curge-n poale un rau mititel,
Plinge si suspina tinara domnita.

On a black rock, in an ancient castle,
Where a small river runs through,
Cries and sighs the King's young wife,



Dulce si suava ca o garofita.

As sweet and suave as a carnation.

But her remembrances were crossed with stories that were not as nice and hard to forget...of being in class with her best friend, Floreta Meirovici, and having her teacher, at the front of the class, loudly proclaim, "Jidani – la Palestina!" There were only 6 or 7 Jewish kids in her class, but what a shock to have this addressed to you by your own teacher. In the 60's and 70's, with a smile on her face, she re-told the story countless times. I pressed on, wanting to know the teacher's name, but time unfortunately, had erased that memory. How ironic that the hateful pain caused by the ignorance of the teacher, ended in truth ... we did go to Palestine, actually Israel. Would love to see that teacher's face now!



My maternal grandparents Calman and Ghitel Calmanovici

My mom and I with my maternal grandparents fighting at Marasesti, the site of a very famous battle. All the sources I have read say the battle ended in a draw. My grandfather, though, was caught by the Austrians and held captive for a few months. During that time, he practiced his Judaism openly without any animosity from his Austrian guards. As a matter of fact, he became friends with one of them, and they corresponded freely, for years, until 1939 – so hard to believe, given the events that followed. Even though he was not very religious, whenever he had an important issue to deal with, he would consult with the Skuliner Rabbi, from Stefanesti.

I remember my maternal grandfather, Calman Abraham Calmanovici, as the kindest soul ever.

He owned the flourmill called Moara Taraneasca, on Strada 2 Graniceri in Falticeni. After arriving in Canada, he would tell me stories of when he was serving in the Romanian army in World War I, and

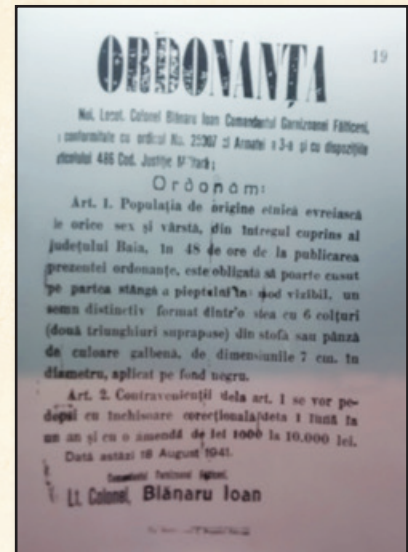
In Falticeni, almost across the Calmanovici residence, on Strada Mare, lived rabbi Moses Rosen,



who after the Communist takeover, became Chief Rabbi.

Because Falticeni was considered Romania proper (and Suceava was ruled by the Austro-Hungarians, until 1918) the Jews, who comprised roughly 35% of the Falticeni population, were not deported like those from Suceava, though they were still subject to crazy privations, like wearing the yellow star and not being allowed to go shopping until 3:00 in the afternoon, by which time most of the food and produce was gone. In 1938, at the age of 16, my mom was not allowed to go to school, because she was Jewish. The mill was taken over.

Effective Aug.18, 1941, all Jews were obliged to wear the yellow star. See a copy of the Ordonanta, following.



For the Jews in Falticeni and my family, in particular, it was fortunate that General Neculce was the mayor of the town. He had a special relationship with my mother's family.



General Neculce

No story I heard of from those days lacked mention of him, his family and his nephews, Dan and Radu Irimescu. Given all that this mayor did for the Falticeni Jews and the Calmanovici family, I would say he greatly contributed to their survival during the war years. He should be honored at Yad Vashem.

The war started in September 1939. Germany invaded Poland and within 3 weeks, Poland capitulated. Part of the Polish army that managed to escape, retreated into Romania, and stopped at Falticeni, trying to regroup. According to multiple sources, almost immediately, they started to propagate the antisemitism so prevalent in pre-war Poland, telling all the locals that they should treat the Jews the way they were being treated in Poland. All of a sudden, Falticeni was afloat with palpable anti-Jewish sentiment. From the stories I heard, it may have been a pogrom in the



making. However, General Neculce, called up his troops, surrounded the Poles and disarmed them. Then, within 24 hours, they were expelled from the region.

General Neculce traced his ancestry to the famous chronicler, from the 1700's, Ion Neculce. All kids going to school in Romania learn of Ion Neculce's writings. I certainly did. In a bizarre way, the General liked the Jews, but he also liked Hitler's SS. He was important enough in the Romanian political culture of the day, that whenever the King or members of government came to Falticeni, they always stayed with him, either in town or at his estates. So, my mother's stories of living in Falticeni, were filled with tales of the Irimescu brothers, General Neculce's two nephews, dressed in SS uniforms, recently returned from Germany, carrying boxes of food, medicines, and jugs filled with wine from the Cotnari vineyards, for her parents. My mother had two brothers: Eli, the eldest and Lica (Sol) the youngest.



My Mom, grandmother, Ghitel, Lica(Sol), and Eli, on the occasion of her 85th birthday

The eldest, Eli, had been drafted into the Romanian army, but because he was Jewish, he was kicked out and together with other former Jewish soldiers from Falticeni, was sent to work in the stone quarries of Calfa in Bessarabia. Fortunately, he survived the war. My mom's middle brother, Lica, known in Canada as Sol, got his draft papers, but knowing what was in store for him, ran away and hid at Cotnari, one of the General's estates. He was caught, but fortunately ended up as the General's personal driver, in spite of all the anti-Jewish legislation and restrictions.

One story Lica loved to tell was how he was invited to attend a meeting given by the General and



attended by the top major fascist and religious members of the community. He hid, terrified. The General sent his adjutant to seek him out, wondering why he did not show up. Thus, having no choice, he attended the meeting together with individuals whose hands were dripping with Jewish blood. He told me that he was shaking with fear the whole time, not realizing that by asking him to attend, the General was actually telling those present that, he, Lica, was under the General's protection.

Another such story was the time a policeman, who had been a night employee at the family mill before it was taken away from my family, spotted my grandfather shopping before the permitted time. He reported my grandfather to the authorities, and my grandfather was taken to jail. He was freed as soon as the General heard of his predicament.

Such were the tales I grew up with. Everyone wondered and no one could figure out why the General would protect mom's brother and the Calmanovici family. Well, this past October, 2018, I was in Israel, with my wife, Ceci, and met with a relative, originally from Falticeni, now practicing medicine and residing in Petak Tikvah, Rumelia Zalmanovici-Korn. At some point, during a lull in the conversation, I popped the question. What was the connection that caused the General to save the Calmanovici family? She started to laugh and was very surprised that we did not know. She said, "it was simple". The General's daughter had been in love with my mom's brother, Lica. It took 77 years to solve the puzzle. It is true – love conquers all!

The war was over, in Romania at least, in 1944. Generals, colonels, war criminals of all sorts were put on trial for war crimes. General Neculce and his nephews were put on trial. Lica testified extensively on their behalf, stating how he and the rest of the Jewish community had been saved by the General's actions. The General, his nephews, and other members of the Neculce and Irimescu families were exonerated. However, all their estates that had been in the family for hundreds of years, the Cotnari vineyards, their Falticeni mansion, etc. were confiscated.

It is still 1944, and the Romanians are still retreating. It is a long way west from Stalingrad. Following this epic battle, the treatment of the Jews eased and surviving deportees were able to return home. I believe the reason they survived can be directly attributed to Stalingrad.

For Falticeni, the Russians were just around the corner. At some point, it was threatened with bombardment. All the population was evacuated to the safety of the neighbouring towns. The Calmanovici family was evacuated to Suceava, where the Leinburds had recently returned, all safe, from the hell-hole called Transnistria.

Businesses are attempting to get back on their feet.





Former "Gropper and Lainburd" store on the main street, also known as Strada Mare (Stefan cel Mare Street). The photo on the right also shows the store renamed "Textile". The building at the top of the photo is where my grandparents lived after coming back from Transnistria.

Before the war our grandparents lived above the store. After the war they lived in the building at the top of the photo, on the second floor, seen above, with the balcony.

Surviving deportees are trying to find their stolen possessions. Neighbours who were entrusted with valuables, upon being asked to return them, simply cannot find or remember. Hard to believe, but neighbours and former friends, took the opportunity to rob their neighbors who just happened to be Jewish and acted as though nothing had happened over the past three years. Another story I heard was about the Sunday promenade in Falticeni, where all the girls used to sport new earrings and necklaces. There were never any questions as to where their soldier boyfriends found them, however the Jewish population always knew.

Soldiers return from the front, to their families. I surmise that no one is asking any questions. Soldiers of gypsy background, are coming back to find their families have disappeared. They find out that they had been deported and killed in Transnistria. My grandfather, Nathan, finds his store has been emptied.



Lea (Loti) and Nathan Ber Leinburd



But, life goes on.

Young people still hold hands, kiss when no one is watching, and are grateful to be alive. Eli Calmanovici has found a temporary job at the same location as my dad, Iacob (Jacob, or Jack in Canada) and they become friends. On a fateful day, my dad gets introduced to Eli's sister, our mom, Betty, and the rest is history. The wedding is to take place on January 25, 1945 in Falticeni. That January 25th was remembered as the coldest day of the year. My mom and dad, his parents, uncle Ioji (Joe) and his girlfriend, were in a four-horse sleigh, followed by a similar sleigh that carried the famous Max Glickman and his orchestra.



Ioji, and Clareta Leinburd – roughly 1947



My parents' marriage certificate, Falticeni, January 25, 1945.

And so, they left Suceava for the 22 km ride to Falticeni. In Falticeni, the town's electric grid had been destroyed, so electric power lines were drawn from the flour mill, to the Calmanovici residence. Other than family and friends, General Neculce and the Irimescu brothers attended.

By all accounts, it was a wedding well worth remembering.

In 1994, when we were back, for the first time, in Bucharest, Dan, Radu and Bonbonel Irimescu could not stop talking about the wedding.

Looking back, growing up, to the age of 12, in Suceava, was very magical for me. My mom had a helper, Rosalia, who in my memory was a very beautiful 17-year old. I remember that she



Suceava, Feb. 1945, a week after the wedding, walking on Karl Marx (Main Street).





Cetatea (the Fortress) – remnants of the famous fortress dating to the 1400's.

lived with her parents, near Zamca, just to the left of the crossroads, past the giant cross. Her parents, in addition to being farmers, were great weavers of carpets. We were lucky to have some in our home. Traditional colors and patterns – red and black. I have always regretted that our parents never took any of them with us. They were simply too heavy to fit into the shipping box that contained all of our belongings.

Many years later, in Canada, we were reminiscing, when Rosalia's name came up. Our mom told us that like most country people around Suceava, Rosalia could not read or write. So my mom became the secret intermediary with Rosalia's boyfriend, who at the time, was in the army. What I became fascinated with, were the words Rosalia dictated to my mom. All were in perfect rhyme. Pure poetry! She was a natural born poet, of the type that disappeared long ago. When I pressed for more detail, I was referred to the traditional type of folk song and folk poetry... "foie verde, trei castane". My mother did not think much of it as she said most country people had similar talents. I am thinking of "Mioritza" and wonder who may have known other traditional folk ballads, that are now lost. Today, rhymed verse must be formally taught. What a loss to literature, poetry, and music.

That is the Suceava I remember. Pe linga plopii fara sot..... walnut and chestnut trees all around. Walking toward Zamca, Ceci and I, pick grapes and pears that are just hanging over the fences that line the road. The restaurants serve mititei and mamaliga and wines from Cotnari. As I close my eyes, I hear our mom's favorite romantze of Ioana Radu, the tangoes of Vasile Cristian, and the incredible Maria Tanase. But above all, what always rings in my ears when I think of Suceava is the "Balada" of Ciprian Porumbescu, whose bronze sculpture stands in the main park, across from the Habsburg era City Hall.

We left Suceava on Jan. 1, 1959, at 8:00 in the morning, 61 years ago.

We were all packed and ready when the fiacker came to pick us up. The big, heavy box with all



our belongings left for Bucharest a few weeks ago. I recall sitting up on top beside the birjar (the driver), and looking back as we were leaving our whole universe behind. A thin layer of snow had recently covered the ground. Early morning. Rather chilly. Everyone must have celebrated the reveion last night. Too early for anyone to be out on the streets. No one to say goodbye to.

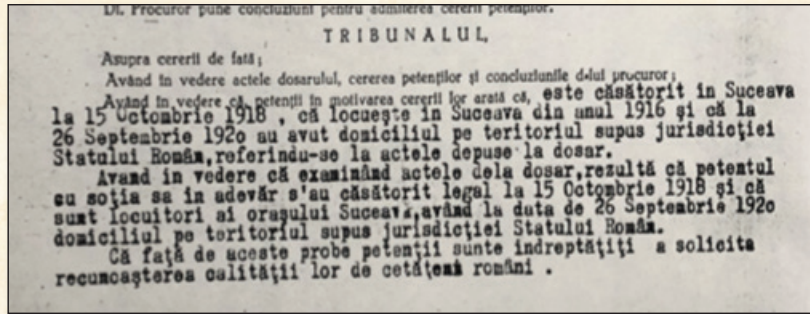
In Bucharest, we stayed with our mom's friends, Floreta and Dodo Meirovici, and their son, Marian. I remember going with my parents to a huge auditorium, where all families who got recent exit permits, were gathered to have their belongings inspected and looked over in great detail. Our trunk, in the middle of hundreds of other similar boxes, roughly 40 x 30 x 24" contained the family belongings of a lifetime, and at least 200 years of Romanian history. No furniture, no books, no photographs, no valuables of any sort. This is where our mom had her Shabbat candlesticks confiscated. They were a wedding gift from her grandmother, who received them from her grandmother. Mom kept mentioning them for decades after. In a way, it seemed like another deportation, except that this time, we were finally going home, to Israel. It seemed to take 2 – 3 hours. How do you decide what to take to a place to which you've never been? My parents agonized, but after waiting almost ten years for permission to leave, they were simply too tired to care anymore. In Israel, our Mom's parents had been waiting patiently for us. They immigrated to Israel 8 years before.

The next day, my Dad and I went to the Israeli consulate to pick up our visas. He had forewarned me what might happen when we exit the consulate, and he was absolutely right. Within a few minutes, we spotted a couple of guys sort of hanging around outside. I remember they were dressed the part, just like in future flicks I would see, with hats just hanging slightly over their faces. As they accosted us, we were notified that they were from the Securitate, and we had to go with them. We disembarked at a very informal building, went up some stairs and after being ushered into a large room, we were separated, with my Dad going into another room with the second agent. As in movies I would later see, I was asked to empty my pockets and then I was questioned about everything. The agent picked up a couple of Chinese stamps that I had in my pocket. Ahhhh Chinese. Not allowed to take out of the country. He notices that I am holding on to a book. I place it on the table. Alexandru Vlahuta. He reiterates that this book and any others cannot leave the country. Shortly after, my Dad comes into the room and we leave. No one speaks a word until we are blocks away.

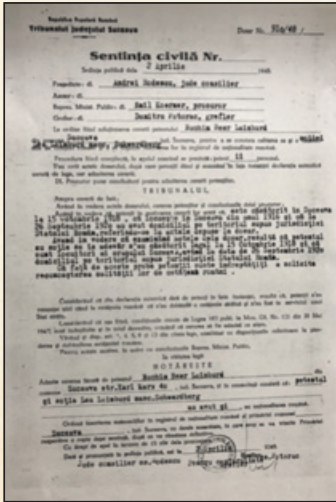
Now I am back to the trip in 1994, that my brother, Sorel, my mom and I, took to return to Suceava and Falticeni to possibly re-capture our roots, and childhood memories. It has been over



35 years. It was great to walk street by street, house by house, with our mom giving details on who had lived there and details on their lives and occupations in Suceava and Falticeni. The centres of both towns, centres of Jewish life and culture for hundreds of years, had



Lives in Suceava since 1916, married in town on October 15, 1920, residence 20 Karl Marx Str. since September 26, 1920.



been razed. The Habsburg era architecture of my memories was gone, replaced by clean and sterile architecture. So, in future decades the city fathers could say with impunity that there had been very few Jews living there, if any, as opposed to around 40% of the population. This fits in with a disturbing trend of some European countries to try to revise their roles during the war, specifically as it relates to collaborating with Germany and Austria to implement the Shoah.

The building complexes where the Leinburd grandparents had lived prior to leaving in 1952, and where my pediatrician, Perry Schwartz, had lived with her family afterwards, were gone, as was the business district, known as the Yddische Gasse.

My paternal grandfather Nachum Ber, the one stateless person, who was deported to Murafa, applied and was granted Romanian citizenship on April 2, 1948. The next document sums up personal data 1916-1920.

Only one synagogue, out of eleven, Chevre Gah, survived, in Suceava.



This is the synagogue I used to attend as a child with my parents and grandparents, before we left Suceava.

Walking in, we found our grandfather's name together with around a dozen other names on a plaque that commemorated the repair done to the synagogue in 1929.



The famous painted blue ceiling that had been in the deep recesses of my memory all those years was now totally revealed to my visual senses. Around the 1930's, David Nasic, the local zugrav and artisan, fixed the damage left by World War I, and added a few ornaments of his own creation.

The women's gallery, upstairs, had never been accessible, always under renovation. Only in October, 2017, 23 years later, did I get access. Unbelievable.



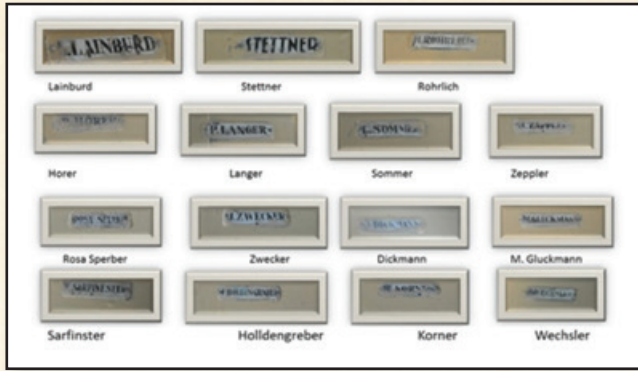
I spotted in the front row, on small metal plaques, the L. (Leah) Leinburd name, spelled Lainburd, Romanian

style, together with other familiar names, some of who were relatives and others family friends: Kasswan, Bige....., Rachmuth, Korner, G. Beyner, F. Holdengraber, J. Dickman, F. Sarfinster, B. Wechsler, H. Holdengraber, M. Glickman,Sperber, Rosa Sperber, J. Zweecker, L. Lainburd, H. Rorhlich, M. Stettner, L. Sommer, P. Langer, B. Horer, B. Zappler.



David Nasic





The management and donors who renovated the Hevre Gah synagogue in Suceava in 1929:

Achman		Weize Achman
Gabor Zelig	Haiim Merling	Gilbert Berl
Kasier	Oischuss	Shriffurer
Leinburd Nachum		Leib Glickman
Tulpan Fischel		Moshe Bogen
Naftali Redlich	Iosef Weidenfeld	Moshe Wechsler

We walked up to our old residence on Ion Creanga Street #11, named after the famous writer of my favourite children's stories. This is the home where my brother and I were born. It was as if time stood still, except that now another family was living there. They were gracious enough to let us in and we looked around. Everything looked familiar but smaller than I remember.

We walked up to our old residence on Ion Creanga Street #11, named after the famous writer of my favourite children's stories. This is the home where my brother and I were born. It was as if time stood still, except that now another family was living there. They were gracious enough to let us in and we looked around. Everything looked familiar but smaller than I remember. We went upstairs in the attic.



Chevre Gah synagogue founders



Walnuts were still drying on the floor. I was looking for the books I placed there before leaving the country. I was also looking for a painting done by my uncle Joe, of a nude, lying horizontally, with her back to us. Nowhere to be seen. As expected.

My parents had rented the house from its owners, Sophie Hellman(Mitzi)Hellman and her sister. Mrs. Helman's sister was married to Prof. Feuer who taught French, at Stefan cel Mare school in Suceava. My dad and his brother, were both his students.

I saw a photo of him, surrounded by his colleagues, when I visited the school.



Our home, at 11 Ion Creanga Street.

In early 1941, he and his son, together with 8,000 to 9,000 other local Jews, were put on a train, in Iasi, and disappeared. It was not until 1956, that we found out from the Red Cross what had occurred. This became known as the Death Train.

Reminiscences of the house kept popping up. Great place to be isolated in during the pandemics of the early 50's, measles and polio. The large garden I cannot forget. Opening the front gate, one would immediately see the enormous walnut tree. It took three men to surround it. I especially liked climbing the black, bittersweet cherry tree. The prunes were exceptional. In the fall, a peasant (tzaran) would come in from the countryside, dig a deep hole in the ground, light a fire, and boil all the prunes in a huge cast iron cauldron. That's how the majiun (jam) was made. Have not tasted anything as delicious since.



My dad, Miliu Hubner and myself, around 1955.

The house was located on a corner lot, with a large dining room window facing Ion Creanga. This is the window where my friend Ruti and I waited patiently until my parents and my newborn brother, Sorel, came home from the hospital on Oct. 16, 1956. Unforgettable.





Ruti, my brother and I in our back yard.



April 20, 1959, my brother Sorel, and I.

I enjoyed watching my little brother in a playpen under the plum tree in the center of the garden. In the fall, he tried to reach for fallen fruit, but my dog would bark preventing his fingers from touching any.

One day I came home from school and found our dog dead. No one would tell me till years later what had happened. The dog was poisoned. Probably to enable a member of the Securitate to enter the house undetected. Actually, this was my second dog that suffered the same fate. This probably was a result of my parents applying to immigrate to Israel. They applied around 1952. First thing that happened was that my dad was kicked out of the Communist party. But he retained his job. I guess he could not be easily replaced.

My friends, Dutu, Joni and Ruti would occasionally come to visit.

However, in the fall, I preferred visiting Ruti because I loved to raid her apricot tree, incurring major disapproval from Fani, her mother. I mean major *Verbotten* for sure. “Das ist nicht correct”, she would admonish me, which I never forgot.



Any Scheffer, Ruti and I



In Kindergarten, we played the "Season Story".
This iconic picture is a nice reminder.



From left: Romy, Paul, Mira,Tamara, Hedi. Sitting Ruti, Lily, Mara (all Jewish kids).



La cetate: Betty and Iacob Leinburd, Fani and Miliu Hubner, Mrs. Dermer Sitting, Mrs. Dermer's son, and Ruti

I studied at Stefan cel Mare school, as did my father and uncle, Ioji.



1860 Stefan cel Mare school, a piece of Habsburg architecture that has survived the times to the present day



Iacob Leinburd in school uniform - March 13, 1936



Group photo of the teachers at Stefan cel Mare High School in 1938. This photo was displayed on the left wall, second floor, in 1994. Second row, center, is Dr. Isik Feuer (French language) the only Jewish teacher. He and his son were murdered in the Iasi Pogrom.



It is interesting to notice that pupils were taught not only the usual subjects but classic languages (Latin and Greek), religion, hygiene, calligraphy, as well.

As I mentioned before studied at Stefan cel Mare school, as did my father and uncle, Ioji. Some of my father's teachers were my teachers as well.



End of 4th Grade celebration, in the area behind the school.



In the picture, our teacher, Prof. Crudu, Bosinceanu, Furman,, Nomi with the accordion, Rami (Dutu) Kern, Adolf Copelovici,, Micki Korner,, Paul Leinburd, Kremer, Kneeling below, from left, Iosale Furman, Jacki Gotlib,, Constantinescu, and Beni Budic. Most of us are pioneers and wear the red tie (cravata rosie).

Mitzi Hellmann became my piano teacher. It seemed very odd living in the same house as my teacher, but it all seemed to work out in the end. When I was around 11 years old I knew how to play well enough to be asked to give a concert at Stefan cel Mare. I played Weber's "Invitation to Dance" and "Blue Danube".

It seems rather cool now, except that I memorized the notes and unfortunately never learned them. Unfortunately!

Summer Sundays were reserved for Soccer games (football). My dad would take me, and meet with Miliu (Ruti's dad) and Fredi Horowitz (Denise's dad), and enjoy the game and crowds at the stadium. Here is their picture.



Fredi, Miliu and Iacob at the Stadium.

The traditional snack was roasted pumpkin seeds in a newspaper folded as a cone. These three buddies were inseparable, as were their wives. The separation upon immigration was extremely difficult for all.



Mrs. Brucker, my dad, Iacob Leinburd, Meta, my mom Betty Leinburd, Fredi Horowitz and Vilma's sister. In the center are the newlyweds, Vilma and Poldi Brucker.





Vilma, Meta, my mom, Betty, above is Mrs. Hubner, Tity Schwerberg, Sila Rudner, Marion Dusenfeld, and Piri in the back.

Sometimes, the Hubners and Meta and Fredi Horowitz would come over for dinner. Ruti, Denise and I, would play house under the dining room table, with the large tablecloth hanging over the side, shielding us from our parents.

Occasionally the men were hanging out in the bedroom. I could hear whispering and the very low sound of the radio. Later I found they were listening to the broadcasts of Radio Free Europe. I specifically recall the funeral of King George in 1952. I snuck a peak and saw the three guys bent over the radio listening. At that time I never realized this was forbidden.

I am still staring at the front of our old house, facing the garden.

The massive and huge walnut tree is gone. In its stead is another house. The double lilac bushes are gone. The prune trees, from which we made povidla, are nowhere to be seen. I looked for the black cherry trees. Firewood. White cherry trees. Gone.

As we came outside, I glanced right toward Armeneasca Street. Walking down this narrow street, I recall tall fields of corn on our left, and neighbours houses with tall fences on the right. The first house when you turned left, belonged to the Meta and Fredi. They had a wonderful house designed and built by an Austrian engineer. In the back, an immense covered space, most likely used to house a “trasura” and horses. Perfect now for cars. In the front the most amazing garden with row upon row of magnificent roses. I always felt this house in its setting was a perfect



example of Suceava architecture.

I would always find Meta and her mom, Mrs. Brucker, doing the gardening. I have no memory of the overall design of the house, except for what I now will call “the drawing room” situated just before the entrance to a spacious bedroom with magnificent windows facing the rose garden. It is in this drawing room that Meta and Fredi would entertain my parents and their friends. The ceiling was magnificently painted. I cannot recall, unfortunately, any of the actual design details other than there were around a dozen or so cherubs floating in the clouds above the table. The colors, muted browns, pinks and greens, seemed to come alive above me. My first vision of a mural in my home town. Much later, the Horowitz house became a place to run away to for my brother. He simply could not resist Meta’s pickles.

Fredi, who was almost like a second father to me, was always around. I spent hours upon hours with Fredi teaching me how to play backgammon. Meta and Fredi. With them and my parents I went to see movies. The first film I recall seeing was the Russian film, “The Fall of Berlin”. I was mesmerized. This started my love of film, which remains with me to this day.

Back to 1994. We wanted to enter the garden and see the Horowitz house.



Fredi, Meta and Denise Horowitz, circa 1964. Here, they are facing their house, with their back to Strada Armeneasca.



We could not open the gate. No one came to greet us. Dogs were barking. The house was not as I remembered. An additional house appeared to have been built, obstructing half the view. All I could think of was what happened to the painted ceiling. Was it still there?

We walked back to Ion Creanga Street, and met the neighbors now living across from my old home.

A very nice lady and her daughter engaged our Mom in conversation. “Times were really good when the Jews lived here”, she said. We smiled, and nodded, as I translated to my brother. Nice to hear, but....

We went a little further up the street to visit with Parintele Bratianu, our former neighbour. He and his wife opened their doors wide open. Their granddaughter was there visiting. A turceasca coffee and dulceata de cirese negre amare, with a glass of cold water, the traditional Suceava greeting, made their way to the table very quickly. A wonderful neighbour, the Orthodox priest was still in charge of Biserica Sf. Nicolae, beside the school.

I had always found him intimidating. And now, we were in his home full of shelves filled with books. I was thinking that I have to come back and go through them, and talk to him about the 30's, the communist days, and how he survived. Must have some older printings. I have to ask if he will sell some from his collection.

Going up the street, only a couple of houses, we reached the houses of my three great friends, Ruti, Dutzu Kern and Joni Nidermayer. All are living in Israel at present. If we turn left, we will reach another Armenian church, Turnul Rosu (The Red Tower), which I read had been raided and pilfered, by Cossacks in the 1650's. If we go beyond that, we will reach Zamca, the 15th century



Turnul Rosu (the Red Tower) Armenian Church, dating to the 1650's, viewed from Armeneasca Street.

Armenian church and fortress, where I used to go and play as child. Every spring, I remember “salcimii inflorits”, with their white aromatic blooms. I used to play on the half broken down exterior granite defence walls, and on the inside. I recall wondering why the half painted saints were crying. The ceiling was in disrepair for hundreds of years as was the rest of the complex, so the paintings were exposed to the elements and the rain, causing the



saints to cry. I recalled a story told by my dad years after we had come to Canada. In the very early 1930's an archeological team discovered a tunnel, big enough to hold a man on horseback, that led from Zamca to the Cetate (the Fortress), dating to the days of Stefan cel Mare. What a great piece of engineering, to provide escape when under siege. However, it appears that even to this day, very few are aware of it or where it is actually located. The famous citadel was built in the 14th century and destroyed in the 17th century.



Zamca, the walled Armenian fortress/church was built in 1600.

We turned around and walked back, on Armeneasca, towards the school, Stefan cel Mare.

We reached the Armenian church at the corner with the school, and instead of turning right, toward the school, we went straight. I was looking for the bakery and a bit further for the restaurant, the places that I recall my parents frequenting. That restaurant housed my old memories of Max Glickman, the famous Suceava musician, who played at my parents wedding, and whose son was one of my best friends. There, for the first time, I had heard tango music, and even better, marvelled at seeing my parents dancing the tango. The music and the dance stay in my memory to this very day, and are among my favorites.

No sign of the buildings where Dr. Schwerberg had his dental clinic, and residence. The Schwerbergs were related to us on my paternal grandmother's side. Max Glickman survived Transnistria, by going from village to town and from town to village, and entertaining the Romanian troops who needed to be entertained while brutalizing the deportees and the local inhabitants. Very sadly, his son, Joni Glickman, who was a very close friend of mine, got killed in a car accident after the Six-Day War.

One person from my past with whom I was able to meet with, is my friend, Ionut Andriu. We met long ago when his grandmother suggested that we study French together. Even though decades and thousands of miles have separated us, we find we have a strong connection in our creativity, and our friendship continues to last. He has become a renowned architect in Romania, a field that I once aspired to but ended up instead, making films and painting. Each time I have gone back to Romania, we have made a point of getting together.



Falticeni is 22 km to the south of Suceava. Beautiful countryside with rolling hills. The colors are as if painted. We went to the Main Street to see our grandparents' house. Like the Jewish homes in Suceava, my grandparents' home was gone, but unlike Suceava a significant portion of other Jewish homes on the main street were preserved, giving us an idea of what the architecture must have been.

We wanted to see the synagogue, which I had never seen. We asked around and were directed to the local Pharmacy to see Tania Grinberg, head of the Falticeni Jewish Community, and the person holding the keys to the synagogue. We got to the pharmacy located on a street corner in an open square, in the middle of which stood a huge bronze sculpture that later on, we would find, was created by Ion Irimescu, whom my brother and I had just discovered in Bucharest.

Tania immediately recognized our mom, and a lively conversation ensued. Tania remembered our mom's wedding dress. She remembered more. Her mom, Florica, was the famous seamstress who created our mom's wedding gown, and Claretta was her apprentice. On the day of the wedding, Florica took ill, and Claretta had to attend in her place. Claretta's attendance at our mom's wedding was fateful as it was there that she met my dad's brother Ioji (who came with a date) and the rest was history. It seems that both Leinburd boys fell for girls from Falticeni.



Façade and interior of Falticeni Synagogue, built 1838-1854, the only one left out of 11 synagogues.

The synagogue tour would have to wait as Tania was very busy and couldn't take us there. It was not to open its doors to me, until October, 2017, when I took my wife, Ceci to visit the place where I grew up. The synagogue was indeed a masterpiece, as I had heard of so often from my Calmanovici grandfather.

Our first stop in arriving in Romania, in 1994, was Bucharest.



The Irimescu brothers, Radu and Dan, of whom I had heard so much about, for the last half century, picked us up at the airport, and took us to our hotel. As some of the conversation revolved around Romanian art and culture, Dan Irimescu suggested that he could take us to meet an artist friend of his. I sort of hesitated as our time was rather limited, but not wanting to offend him, I agreed and we made a date to be picked up by Dan the next day.

When my family left Romania, the two books I had with me were confiscated. It seemed to me that Romanian writers and poets were on some forbidden export list, as it may have been illegal to take books in the Romanian language out of the country. Maybe the Romanian language itself was a secret! So, until 1994, I never read anything in the Romanian language. So the morning after we arrived in Bucharest, I stopped in to the Dulles bookstore, right beside our hotel. One of the first books I picked up was an art book on a sculptor named Ion Irimescu. I had never heard of Ion Irimescu prior to 1994, even though in Romania, he is considered on a par with Michelangelo. As promised, Dan picks us up that afternoon. Sonny and I are in Dan's car getting the scenic route, as I translate Romanian into English for him. Then, Dan mentions the name of the sculptor who we are going to see. It is none other than Ion Irimescu (no relation to the General's nephews as Dan confirms). As we drive down embassy row, we end up in a garden-like setting that houses the Korean Embassy and Ion Irimescu's studio. The moment I walked in, I realized we should be spending the rest of our holiday there. On entering the studio, on my right was a small half sculpture of a nun, with the habit on her head, and her breasts fully exposed. Nice opening presentation to an artist's studio. The works of art were magnificent. One more creative genius that I can add to those of Falticeni provenance.

Shots taken at Ion Irimescu's Bucharest studio, 1994. At present, all his works are displayed in the Ion Irimescu Museum in Falticeni.





Ion Irimescu in his studio, 1994.

I am so pleased that on a second visit to the studio, a few years later, when I went back to purchase some of his drawings, to my absolute surprise, I received a gift of a dozen personally inscribed drawings that I was allowed to choose.



One of Ion Irimescu drawings I received in 1994.



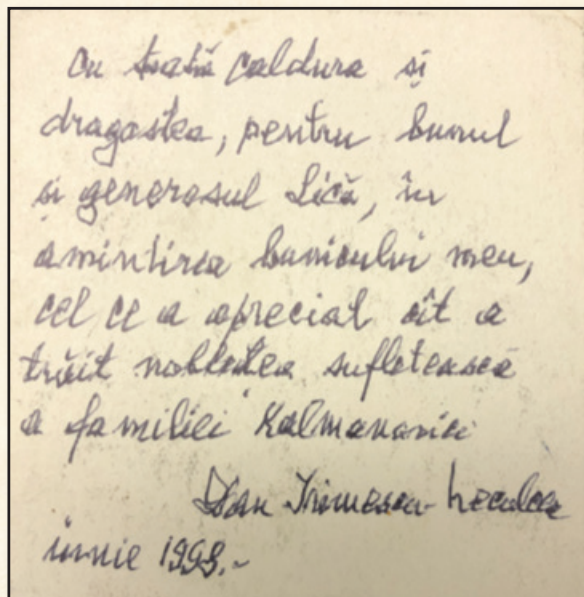
Inside the sculpture's studio



When we returned to the hotel, I mentioned the studio visit to our mom. She said that while she did not know the sculptor, she actually knew his brother, Alexandru, who was a painter, and a close friend of her brother, Eli. Since she did not have the skill to do homework assignments that required three dimensional drawings, Eli would bring Alexandru home to help her with her homework. Unfortunately, Alexandru passed away at an early age. Sad. I wished I had known of this when we were at the studio. Oh well!

Back at the modest apartment of the Irimescu brothers, we met Bonbonel, the wife of Radu Irimescu. Mom later related how Bonbonel was considered the most beautiful woman in Falticeni. From the stories I heard, the Sunday promenade in Falticeni, always put the Falticeni beauties on display with Bonbonel at the very front. Anyways, here we were in their modest Bucharest apartment. I look around and I see old photos. I gravitate to ones that appear to be of General Neculce. The two brothers confirm. I photograph everything in sight from left to right, every wall. I come across a photo with a medal. Radu tells us that it is the Mihai Viteazu medal that he received for the fighting in the Crimean Peninsula, in World War II. This medal is the highest honor given by the Romanian Army. I want to find out more details, but I don't dare to ask. I don't want to find out that there may be a connection to Odessa. I would rather not ask. Great conversations follow... Reminiscences about Falticeni.

The main question we are asked is how is Lica, and how is his family doing. As the conversation goes on, we find that Lica (Sol), our Montreal uncle had been steadily sending the Irimescu brothers funds which enabled them to survive. No one in the family knew. Here is a thank you note from Dan Irimescu to Lica (Sol).



Cu toată căldura și
 dragostea, pentru bunul
 și generosul Lică, în
 amintirea bunicii mele,
 cel ce a apreciat și a
 trăit nobletea sufletească
 a familiei Kalmanovici
 Dan Irimescu Neculce
 iunie 1998.

At some point, Bonbonel presents me with a piece of embroidery. It is about 13 inches long, and she explains that it is a piece of a brau, a Romanian traditional handmade woven wide belt.

"To our good and generous friend Lica, with all our love and gratitude, in memory of our grandfather, the one who appreciated all his life the noble soul of Kalmanovici family" - signed Dan Irimescu-Neculce, 1998.



It is around 200 years old, and a piece of it was always given to a male descendant, on his wedding day. I am stunned. What can one say at such a moment? I feel embarrassed and honored at the same time. A fairly large painting keeps staring down at me. It is of purple double lilacs, same as those that were on the side of our house, in Suceava. As I come closer to check out details, I notice the signature of Octav Bancila. It turns out that Bancila was related to the General, and often came to visit and stay. So there were a lot of his paintings around. I offer to buy the painting with the lilacs. Unfortunately, it is the last one in the family. I cannot take my eyes off it. Bonbonel comes close to me and gives me a hug.



There we were, in the country of our birth, recapturing friends and memories of long ago.



At the same time, my brother and I would like to add that we are grateful to our parents for making the decision to leave, giving the family a better and safer future.





În toamna anului 1941, au fost deportați din Bucovina
 91.845 de evrei, din ordinul lui Ion Antonescu.
 Ca urmare a politicii antisemite a regimului de la București,
 în zilele de 9, 10, și 11 octombrie 1941, 5.942 de evrei din
 Suceava și împrejurimi, bărbați, femei, copii, au fost trimiși forțat
 din această gară în Transnistria.
 Mulți dintre ei au murit acolo executați, din cauza epidemiilor,
 de frig sau de foame. Fie ca memoria acestei tragedii să rămână vie
 ca un avertisment pentru generațiile viitoare.
 Federația Comunităților Evreiești din România - Cultul Mozaic
 Institutul Național pentru Studierea Holocaustului din România "Elie Wiesel"
 Octombrie 2016

Suceava

Hevre Gach Synagogue and the memorial plaque
 which commemorates the deportation
 of the 5942 Jews on October 9-11, 1941





My family

Harry Bolner

My family on both sides, maternal **Herman** and paternal **Bolner** goes back at least 3 generations in Falticeni since early 1800's. I was born in Falticeni, just south of Suceava, Romania on May 1946 to my mother Bella Herman Bolner and father Iosef Bolner.

My father Iosef and his elder brother Max Bolner had a sawmill in Bacau, that was devastated during the WWII and after the war when the communists came to power it was confiscated by the state. During WWII around 1,000 men of Falticeni including my father and uncle were arrested and deported to forced labour camps in Bessarabia, a fact that was never well explained to me as a child as to where, when and what they did. More about it later.

In 1951, we left with one suitcase each, to Israel from Constanta aboard the Romanian passenger ship "Transilvania".

About my family

I would define my family as essentially a Jewish middle class in their area. My grandfather Israel Bolner had a sawmill in **Sasca**, Moldova, and traded in farm animals as well, probably horses. aternal grandparents had another traditional Jewish business that came down from Galicia/ Ukraine – the *cârciumă* or tavern/ pub where people had food and alcohol and sealed business deals.



Circa 1929 - from Left to right: Max and wife Margareta, Iosef (father), Rica, Isac, Ida Bolner Barat, Marcel Barat, sitting Grandfather Israel and wife Reina Reicher Bolner holding Lia Barat



Paternal- Bolner- side of the family



Father Josef Bolner



Mother Bella Herman Bolner



Parents with Harry born 1946, Falticeni

Maternal-Herman- side of the family

About the town of Falticeni- my birthplace and family origins



Maternal grandfather Herscu Herman



maternal grandmother Sura (Diamand)-Herman



Vatra Dornei- L to R Marieta Herman (sister), unknown, Bella Herman



Aunt Esterica and Adolf Strul

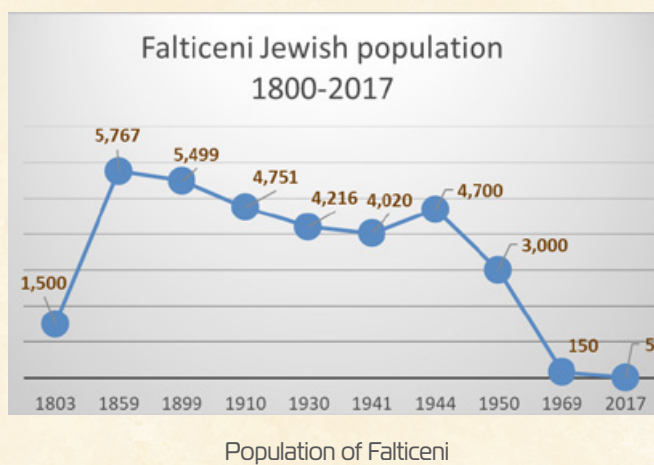


Falticeni was founded by Jews between 1779, an organized community existed from 1780, when the town was officially founded under the name of Șoldănești, later changed to Fălticeni, as a commercial center between Austrian Bukovina and Moldavia. In 1781 the estate owner, Ioan Basota, permitted the building of a synagogue in the form of a regular house and put a plot for a cemetery at the disposal of the community. Many of the Jews were Sadagora Hasidim or belonged to Lubavitcher Hasidim later known as Chabad. They were given permission to engage in commerce, and they were obligated to pay only the fixed taxes. The residents were forbidden to sell their houses without the permission of the estate owner. The contract was authorized by the prince and signed by the boyars who owned the neighboring estates. It was noted that there would be no restriction on the number of Jews who would come to settle in the city, and that the power of the contract would be forever.

The experiment of founding such a city was so successful that the prince granted similar rights to Jews of other towns as well. In order to attract other Jews to settle in the place, the estate owner added to the original rights, such as the right to raise animals for sale. He wrote a letter to the Jews of Suceava in Bukovina informing them of the privilege granted to them on his lands, and even requested the authorization of the Austrian authorities to verify his letter. He also invited Jews from Bessarabia and Galicia. Many Jews came to Falticeni from the nearby town of Baia, having left after the floods of the Moldova River. Another wave brought Jews to Falticeni from southern Bukovina, having left due to the refusal of the Austrian authorities to lease estates and inns to Jews.

Overall the community lived in harmony in its region. Up to World War I the majority of the Jews in Falticeni worked in crafts, and in commerce. Jewish traders held the annual fair (Tirg). Falticeni developed one of the most important agricultural trading centers in Romania and people came from across the region to trade in farm animals and agricultural products.

The community had a hospital, an old age home, 11 synagogues, a Talmud Torah and two schools (one for boys one for girls). There were several prominent rabbis in the community among them Solomon Schechter, as well as mathematicians, the painter Rubin Zelicovici (Rubin) and a famous traveler Israel Joseph Benjamin, who travelled the world from New Orleans-USA to Saudi Arabia.



There were 4,020 Jews living in Falticeni in 1941, about one-third of the total population. Under the Fascist regime (September 1940–January 1941) a “Green House” was set up in the center of town, where Jewish merchants were brought and tortured until they agreed to pay for their release. On the eve of WWII (June 1941), a German headquarters was set up in town, the synagogues were expropriated in order to be used as military barracks. All Jewish males were concentrated in camps, from which 1,000 were sent on to Bessarabia for forced labor; the wealthy ones were able to ransom themselves. Some perished as a result of the harsh conditions. Falticeni was evacuated in the spring of 1944, (Evacuarea), at the time when the Soviet Red Army approached town. The Jews took refuge in Suceava and Botoșani only to return six months later and to find their houses stripped of all their possessions

Family origins

Here are some pictures from my childhood



Life in Falticeni, my uncle and my cousins.



From the right father Iosef and I



This was once...

Visiting Falticeni in 2017 I went to see my former family homes that were confiscated by the state and since sold to local citizens.



former 1930s Home; (1973 picture)



former family home (2017 Picture)



Uncle Max Bolner home (1973 picture)



former uncle Max Bolner home (2017 picture)



Former Bolner home/estate around WWI, (1973 picture)

Bacau - the pre WWII Bolner family sawmill (fabrica de cherestea)

Before WWII my father and his brother Max Bolner had invested in a sawmill in Bacau.

It was my father's wish to revisit the sawmill in 1973, when we visited Romania for the first time since we left in 1951.





Ana Ipatescu str., altered and replacing former homes (2017)



Bacau- Josef Bolner visiting his former Sawmill in 1973;
Falticeni Sinagoga Mare (Grand Synagogue)



Falticeni Sinagoga Mare (Grand Synagogue)

Falticeni has a history of a large number of Romanian writers, artists, scientists and rabbis who were born, lived, studied or have created here. It's municipality of French Architecture stands out. The Jewish population has mostly emigrated but have left its footprints especially the Grand synagogue (Sinagoga Mare) which recently (2019) became a Cultural center for Falticeni and a showcase of its Jewish past.

In the 19th century there were 16 synagogues, while in 1916 there were 34 synagogues and prayer houses. For more pictures visit: <http://www.romanian-synagogues.org/falticeni-synagogue>**Search for Forced Labour camps of 1941-44 - Rep. Of Moldova (former Bessarabia)**

In Feb 2017 I embarked on a Search for my Roots including the Forced Labour camps of WWII that the men from my family served in Bessarabia. In my youth in Israel, I heard 2 forced labour camps: Alexăndreni and Calfa and I was intent on finding their traces and stories.



I started my tour from Odessa, Ukraine through Transdnistria breakaway region of Rep. of Moldova (Transnistria) into Moldova proper and then on to Falticeni, Suceava, Rădăuți, Botoșani and Dorohoi.

My search for the labour camps was assisted greatly by Dr. Irina Shikhova, the Curator of Chisinau Jewish Museum and others. We travelled north where In Edinetz a retired high school teacher, Iuri Zagorcea, joined us. He got interested over the years in the local Jewish history and what happened in the Holocaust in the Edinetz region. He showed us memorials he endeavored to build for the local massacres and recounted his findings and efforts to memorialize the past of the Jewish community that was wiped in that area.

Alexăndreni (former forced labour camp Bessarabia-near Edinetz)

We drove in pouring rain in the late afternoon till I was taken to a surprising site “*ALEXANDRENI*” the name I heard my father often mention as his labour camp. We visited the village with no sign of the former camp. I was told they worked in stone quarries, and we saw the remains of the probable quarries.

Harry Bolner at Falticeni synagogue (1973 photo)

My emotions were raw, being in a place where my father and others spent their war years in captivity in miserable conditions, but survived.

Calfa (former forced labour camp-Bessarabia - near Bender) Calfa, former forced labour camp. To Calfa I drove on my own. I found a local resident who brought me to the only survivor in his 90s from WWII. He lived in an unheated house and looks robust for his age. We had about an hour interview..

On return to the Calfa village centre I asked my local guide to maybe identify the only picture I have of my father from the war. She asked me to stop the car and get out to look in front and said, “I think you are standing on the road”. The men in the picture were putting on gravel, from the quarries on the main road of Calfa today!. I was truly shocked by the discovery.

We then proceeded to see the local quarries, where the rock and gravel came from.

Testimonial document on the Forced labour camps in Bessarabia and my father’s involvement in saving the author.



Picture taken probably 1942-43 on forced labour in Calfa; Iosef Bolner standing on right



2017 Picture taken on same road (probable); which is the central road through Calfa





↳ Former stone quarries in Calfa where the Jews laboured

Testimonial document on the Forced labour camps in Bessarabia and my father's involvement in saving the author

On subsequent departure from Rep of Moldova and arrival in Falticeni, Romania, I contacted Prof. Virgiliu Lupu, He presented me a document that was published in a book on Falticeni, where a Mr. Iosef Bacalu wrote how my father saved him in labour camp during WWII. Therein I found the proof that I was searching: where was my father detained and forced to hard labour ?.

The described camps were in Căușani ♦ Calfa ♦ Alexandreni ♦ Manzâr in former Bessarabia

O întâmplare din timpul muncii obligatorii

de Iosef Bacalu



În vara anului 1941 când încă nu împlinisem 18 ani, am fost ridicat de pe stradă de un polițist și dus împreună cu mulți alți evrei la bariera 2 grănicori din Fălticeni. Acolo am lucrat toată noaptea la construirea unei cazemate din butuci lungi și groși, pe care îi căram cu brațele însoții de lovituri de cravașe ale poliștilor. În zorii zilei, când cazemata era terminată, am fost duși în lagăre, care au fost amenajate în sinagogi.

De-acolo eram repartizați la munci zilnice, în diferite puncte ale orașului sau județului.

Într-o zi am fost anunțat că va veni colonelul Diănaru, care era comandantul Cercului de Recrutare și că e dispus să asculte pe oricine

are vreo problemă. Printre alții am lăsat și eu la raport și i-am spus că n-am împlinit 18 ani și că stau în lagăr pe ne drept.

"Dar ce vârstă ai?" m-a întrebat. I-am răspuns că am 17 ani și nouă luni. "Nu-i nimic, îi vei împlini în lagăr, cei 18 ani", a răspuns colonelul.

La 18 mai 1942, am fost anunțat că vom pleca la muncă în Basarabia, în cadrul Batalionului 6 Drumuri, cu sediul la Căușani, jud. Tighina. Am fost îmbarcați în vagoane cu care se transportau vite.

Drumul a fost anevoios, neavând loc suficient, căci eram îngrămădiți foarte mulți în vagon.

A doua zi am ajuns la destinație la Căușani, unde am fost repartizați, o parte la Calfa, alta la Manzâr și alta la Alexandreni, printre care eram și eu.

Ni s-a pus la dispoziție o căruță pentru transportul bagajelor, iar noi am parcurs cei circa 30 de kilometri pe jos.

Ajunși la Alexandreni am fost cazați la un conac părăsit, unde originarii din Pașcani s-au instalat în grajdul mare al conacului iar ceilalți printre care și eu, în clădirea conacului. Am avut proasta inspirație de a mă plasa în bucătărie unde era ciment pe jos și noaptea aveam cărcei la picioare, neavând decât o pătură și o pernă mică. Ulterior mi-am făcut rost de un sac cu paie și m-am simțit mai bine. De la conac plecam în fiecare zi la muncă la punctele: vie, la drumuri sau la cascade, după cum eram repartizați, iar cei 7 km. dus și 7 km. înapoi, îi parcurgeam pe jos, bineînțeles.

Într-o zi pe când eram la cariera de piatră, deci la cascade, m-au apucat niște dureri acute la stomac, niște crampe îngrozitoare, de-mi venea să mă zvârcolesc pe jos de durere. M-am dus la sergentul Stan care stătea pe o moviță înaltă de piatră și nisip și ne dirija. El ne păzea ca să nu stăm cumva și să avem timpuri morți. Stan, un oștean rău, s-a îmbunătățit când i-am întins cei 20 de lei pe lângă rugămintea de a-mi da voie să mă duc undeva să mă culc, până îmi vor trece durerile. M-am dus pe deal în apropiere, lângă o stâncă, m-am culcat pe burtă și am adormit.

Între timp, a venit locotenentul Ionescu în control. Acesta era comandantul companiei. Aves un caracter feroce. Se spunea că este învâștor în viața de toate zilele.

Sergentul Stan, de frică să nu facă apelul, i-a raportat că Bacalu Iosef a dispărut. A fost trimis Samy Blumer să mă caute, iar eu am auzit la un moment dat ecoul unui strigăt al acestuia... Bacalu, Bacalu... M-am ridicat speriat, dar fără dureri. Samy mi-a spus să vin imediat că a venit locotenentul și e jale.

Am venit în fața locotenentului și după ce ce am luat poziția de drepti, acesta mi-a apucat o lovitură de cravaș pe spate, neapucând să-mi aplice și a doua lovitură, deoarece am fugit. Cravașa primită era foarte

dureroasă și el ar fi fost stare să mă omoare, dacă nu procedam așa. Tipul m-a chemat înapoi, iar eu mi-am zis că mă lovește mai tare fiindcă am fugit. Nu m-a mai lovit, dar mi-a spus să-mi fac bagajul, iar de acolo urma să fiu trimis în Transnistria. Nu mi-am făcut probleme, fiindcă mi-am zis că "ce mi-e Alexandreni sau Transnistria, tot un loc de lucru ca toate celelalte!"

Seara, la întoarcere spre conac, am intrat într-o harbuzerie și am luat un pepene. Ajuns la conac, m-am spălat și am început să mănânc din pepene.

Nu după mult timp a intrat la mine domnul Iosef Bolner (Domnul să-l odihnească), care mi-a spus: "Nesimțitul, mâine voi pleca cu familia ta în Transnistria, iar ție nici nu-ți pasă!". Am izbucnit în plâns, eu neștiind ce înseamnă Transnistria și regimul aspru de acolo, la care **Di Bolner**, om minunat și tată de copii, m-a liniștit și mi-a spus să nu am nici o grije că el a aranjat să nu mai fiu trimis.

Cât a costat afacerea asta nu știu, pentru că noi cei tineri nu contribuam cu bani, fiindcă nici nu aveam.

După întâmplarea aceasta, la prima ocazie, am fost trimis în cadrul unui grup de 100 de oameni la Manzâr, unde căram piatra cu targa și o împrăștiam pe șosea. Era mai bine, căci sublocotenentul nu umbra cu cravașa și era un om liniștit.

După puțin timp a venit și tatăl meu la muncă la Manzâr iar după căderea zăpezii, am plecat la Alexandreni în cadrul aceleiași grupe de o sută de oameni, inclusiv tatăl meu.

Acolo tatăl meu a ocupat locul de artelnic și de șef în locul domnului Bolner, care a plecat între timp în concediu. Desigur că am dus-o mai bine și primeam un supliment mai mare de hrană.

Aceasta este doar una din multiplele întâmplări din timpul muncii obligatorii.



Tineri evrei din Fălticeni la muncă obligatorie în Basarabia la Calfa (1942)

Testimonial by Iosef Bacalu (Israel) on life in the forced labour camps and how Iosef Bolner, my father saved him



Translation of Article by Iosef Bacalu (from Romanian)

In the summer of 1941, when I barely made 18 y old I was picked up from the street by police with many others and send to the “two graniceri street” checkpoint in Falticeni. There, I worked there the whole night carrying thick and long logs to create a fortified position while being subjected to whipping by the policemen. When the position was completed we were sent to holding camps set up inside synagogues. From there we were dispatched daily to other working locations in the town and the county.

On one day we were informed a certain Colonel Blănaru, commander of the recruitment center, could come and he would listen to anyone who has a problem. I joined others to see him and when before him I said “I am not yet 18 years old and I am therefore illegally held here”, whereupon he asked “How old are you?”. I answered “I am 17 years and 9 months”. He responded “it’s not a problem you will soon make 18y old while in the camp”.

*On 18 May 1941 it was announced we would be deployed to labour camps in Bessarabia as part of the 6th Road Battalion, with headquarters in **Căușeni**, Tighina county. We were loaded into cattle cars. The voyage was difficult as we were many and crowded. The next day we arrived at our destination in Căușeni where we were reassigned, some to **Calfa, Manzâr and Alexăndreni** including me. We did not even have a cart to carry our luggage for the 30km we made on foot.*

*Once arrived in Alexăndreni we were housed in an abandoned estate, where others from the town of **Pascani** settled in the stables while we were settled in the main building. I had a bad idea choosing the kitchen, where there was a cement floor that gave me cramps at night due to the cold as my only cover was a blanket and a small pillow. Later on I created a bag of straw and I felt better. From the estate we were sent out daily to different areas: vineyards, roads or the waterfall. It was 7 km each way, on foot of course.*

One day, when we were at the stone quarry near the waterfall I got some severe stomach cramps. I therefore went to the sergeant Stan, who was sitting on a tall pile of rocks and sand and controlled us. His job was to make sure we do not stay idle. Stan, from Oltenea region, was a mean guy, warmed up when I gave him 20 lei to let me go somewhere to lay down until the cramps / pain will pass. I climbed to a nearby hill, near a rock and fell asleep on my stomach.

In the meantime, lieutenant Ionescu who was company commander, showed up to check. He had a furious character; they said he was a teacher in civilian life.

Sergeant Stan who was afraid that I will not show up in the count, reported that I, Bacalu Iosef, disappeared. Another prisoner, Samy Blumer, was sent out to search for me—shouting my name Bacalu, Bacalu. I got up scared but the pain was gone. Samy told me to come quickly as the lieutenant showed up and its’s desperate.



I was standing in attention in front of the lieutenant who proceeded to hit me with the whip on my back. He never managed to hit a second time as I ran away. The whip beating was very painful and he would have killed him had I not run away. The lieutenant called me back and I was expecting he would beat me even harder as I ran away. But he did not beat me. Instead he told me to pack my things as I will be sent to Transnistria. I was not worried as I said to myself “w hat’s the difference, to work in Alexăndreni or Transnistria, it’s all the same to me”.

*On the way, returning to the camp in the evening, I entered a watermelon field and picked one up. Arriving to the camp, I washed and started eating my watermelon. Not much later, Mr Iosef Bolner (peace be upon him!), entered and said “ you bastard, tomorrow you and your family will be sent to Transnistria and you do not seem to care”. I started crying, not knowing what Transnistria meant and how cruel the conditions were there, to which **Mr Bolner**, a wonderful man and father of children, calmed me down and said he arranged things so I will not be sent away.*

How much this event cost I do not know, as we young folk did not contribute money and anyhow we had none.

*Shortly after this event, I was sent within a group of 100 men to **Manzar** where we carried gravel and spread on the roads. It was better here as the sub-lieutenant was not carryin1951g a whip and was a calm guy.*

*Soon after my father arrived to **Manzar** too. After the snowfall, the same 100 men including my father were sent back to the **Alexăndreni** camp. There my father occupied the quartermaster and leadership role (distribution of food, supplies etc.) instead of **Mr. Bolner**, who was in the meantime on leave. Naturally, I felt better now as I received larger portions of food.*

These are just a few of the events that happened during the forced labour period

A 1943 telegram to sister in Cuba via the Romanian Red Cross

A sister of my father, Rica Bolner, left in the 30’s to study in Vienna, not a mean feat for a girl from a small Moldovan town. In Vienna she married a chemist, Dr. Muneck Benczer. They had a daughter Noemie. Following the German Anschluss (annexation) of Austria, they moved to Paris where another brother Isac Bolner was studying medicine. When the Germans invaded Paris, my uncle Isac went in the Maquis underground, hidden by friends and a nurse (he married later). My aunt Rica’s family escaped to Marseille, Algiers, from where they took a boat to Casablanca, Morocco and then



Telegram sent by Bolner family 29 July 1943 to sister Rica in Havana, Cuba via Red Cross



boarded the after a wait boarded a ship to Havana, Cuba-- as the borders of US and Canada were closed to Jewish refugees.

On 29th of June 1943 a telegram was sent from Romania in German via the Romanian Red Cross to Havana, Cuba stating that the family was alright in German, although the men in the family were still in forced labour camps somewhere in Bessarabia. This telegram was forwarded to Mexico City, since the addressee left Havana, Cuba. Their daughter Noemie gave me this telegram after her parents passed away. It is both a sad and happy memory that they survived.

1944 the Evacuation (Evacuarea) to Suceava

In August 1944, as the Soviet armies were advancing the front westwards, in the Chisinau-Iasi offensive, the Jews of Falticeni were evacuated to Suceava and Botoşani for several months. My parents went to Suceava while other relatives to Botoşani.

1951 Alia to Israel

In June 1951 we made our way to Constanta to board the ship Transilvania to Haifa. On passing the customs control in Constanta the officer took off a small kid binoculars my father got me for the trip and a coloured metal lunchbox with a comment like “you jidani (Jews) do not need that”. As a 5 year old, I made a “scene” that was calmed when my father told me he will get me new ones on arrival.

In Haifa we were sent to a “triage” tent Maabara called “Shaar Aliyah”. From there we were assigned to a tent Maabara in Kfar Hassidim. Subsequently, my parents found employ in Iafó and we moved and lived there till 1964. In 1972, after my Technion University studies, I moved to Germany and in 1977 to Canada, where I live now.





*Atelierul fotografului J. Chrzanowski din Suceava
 The studio of J. Chrzanowski - the photographer - from Suceava*

Photo: Mihai Aurelian Caruntu "Suceava Periferiilor - Album"



My Pictures

Dorly Weidenfeld



Riry, Pia, Dorly at the little forest "padurice" when the families had fun and music played.



Pia and Dorly in costumes – as characters in the story "Little Muck".



Left: X, Nomy, Dorly, X, Martiu



Left: X, Gitta, Dorly.





My Personal Story

Emanuel Menczel

Family

The name Menczel was never popular in Suceava, the town where I was born and lived with my family until we immigrated to Israel. We were a family of four: my father Moshe (Elias), my mom Batia (Basia), my sister Sarah and myself – Emanuel. The source of our family name, Menczel, is, apparently, from a region in Germany. Somehow it seems to be connected to the word mensch (man in Yiddish). The name “obliges”. My paternal grandfather (Emanuel) was born in Poland. I have never met him. My grandfather, my grandmother (Rivka) and another sister, Berta, died in Transnistria. My maternal grandparents – Nahum and Sarah – died as well during the Holocaust. Therefore, I grew up without knowing my grandparents. One of my mom’s sisters disappeared in Russia; to this day nobody knows what happened to her. My mom had a sister, Fani (Feiga – Tzipora) who loved dearly my sister and me. Every morning she would put on the window ledge two cakes for us.



My family

Memories

Suceava was a small town; to a great extent the Jews knew each other. My dad studied at a commercial school and started to work at an early age. He worked at OCL as a store manager in Burdujeni. He loved football and math.

In those days there were no automatic means to perform calculations. You had to do it mentally. For the purpose of checking the accuracy of the multiplication, my dad had a special method. It was very useful during the store inventory checkups. He taught me his method, which works splendidly, but even nowadays, I couldn’t find the mathematical basis of it. I asked university math professors but even they couldn’t give me an answer. Maybe you, the readers, will find the answer.



My mother loved music and I, apparently, inherited it. To this day I love all kinds of music – from the ‘50s, ‘60s, ‘70s.... to contemporary music.

We, Suceava children, used to play a lot of football. A number of prior conditions were required. For a game to take place you had to get a ball and players, but suitable weather was also needed, even if we used to play football in the snow. On Sundays, real football games took place at the Suceava stadium. Dad would take me to the game, but first we would fill our pockets with roasted pumpkin seeds. At times, we would travel to Falticeni or Botosani to watch the games.



At school

Life was not entirely rosy. My parents tried to conceal the truth, but I knew they were living in constant fear. Fear of police, of the existing harsh laws. I know the following story personally. Stealing from the state more than 150 000 lei, would sentence the culprit to death. One of our neighbors, a 25-year-old young man, was the manager of the state electronics store in town. During an inventory checkup the balance sheet was short of over 150 000 lei. The man was sentenced to death. Later, the law was repelled. While the young man was in jail, his sick and disabled mother was left alone at home. My 10-year-old sister Sarah, would go to her house every day to bring her food and to help. In the end, the man and his mother immigrated to Israel.

I had three wishes: a bicycle, a record player and a German Shepard dog. The first two I got in Israel, but the third never came to be.

When I was in the 9th grade my parents bought me a Reflex camera which worked with 6x6 cm film. I took a lot of photos and developed it by myself.

Suceava makes me feel nostalgic and tempts me to visit and remember. I am sure, the reason is my friends.





For Nicky (Norman Manea)

Eugen Weitmann

Sometime ago, talking with you on the phone about "Atrium", the book I had just finished reading, I mentioned a terrible true story, which happened to me during the 60s. It marked my life forever. It is similar to the story depicted in the German movie "The Lives of Others" by Florian Henckel von Dörmersmarck, a much admired and praised film.

It happened like this: on a "wonderful" spring morning in 1966 when I, not yet 18, was preparing myself to go to Stefan cel Mare High school (we were then living at 9 Vasile Alecsandri Street), suddenly spotted two "comrades" in civilian clothing entering our house. They asked my mother, me and the maid to join them (a "request" you couldn't refuse). The reason for the request was to give some statements regarding the "unlawful" work of Iancovici Ihil, the tailor, who rented a room in our house. My father had already left for the hospital.

We all joined them to the "Securitate's" offices, which at that time were on Petru Rares Street. Each of us was questioned separately in different rooms. I was investigated from eight in the morning till three in the afternoon, being asked a number of idiotic questions (for example, if at night I hear the tailor working on his sewing machine, who enters and who gets out and so on). Not only I, the naïve 17 and a half-year-old adolescent, but also the maid – a simple country woman – understood that everything was brewed beforehand. I wasn't abused physically, but mentally – I was threatened that if I refused to tell the truth, my parents would go to jail, I



Mother and I

would suffer, I wouldn't be accepted at the university and so on. At the end, the investigators (who worked in changing shifts) yelled at me: "*Everything you wrote here is a lie; you'll see what will happen to you!*" Then, they let me go; I met my mother and the maid at home.

Afterwards, I found out that in the morning a lady who used to receive packages from Israel (so that she could sell the items and earn a living) – I believe her name was Mrs. Reisman – came to see my mother but was turned away by a "comrade" in civilian clothing, watching our house, on



the grounds that mom was absent.

The moment we got home, my mother wanted to prepare a late lunch. When she reached the cutlery drawer under the table, she found that it was gone. However, it wasn't gone completely. The drawer "got transferred" to the other side of the table, naturally, because of the spinning of the earth. Everything was clear!

A day later, my father received an anonymous phone call. A man's voice told him: "Doctor Weitmann, don't talk what you shouldn't talk". That was all. As a result, until 1973, when we immigrated to Israel, neither my parents nor I talked in our house, or in our garden, or on the street or anywhere else "about things we weren't supposed to".

These seven years taught me to speak less than I should have otherwise, to censor myself, to my loved ones disappointment – my parents, my wife and my children.

My father found out directly from the source that the mysterious voice on the phone was that of major "C", the person responsible with the wiretapping.

C saved us, because unaware of, my dad helped him in the past. Dad spoke with Professor Rimer and other people so that C's wife (a nurse at Suceava hospital) could receive her matriculation diploma faster (she was studying at distance learning studies). He presumably helped her in other ways, as well.

A few years back, while visiting Suceava, I looked for and found major C, a gentle pensioner. I connected him with my father on my cell phone. My father thanked him from the bottom of his heart for the noble gesture; Mr. C risked not only his job, but his life as well. Talking about the 1966 event, C told me: "They were extremely sloppy; the microphone was in the phone receiver." The best I could do to show my gratitude was to leave him an envelope.

Half a century passed by, but even now, dear Nicky, I avoid telling who Mr. C was; I don't dare. If you find the story about Securitate's actions and our benefactor suitable, you can incorporate it in one of your future books.

I would be enormously pleased to see you in Israel; you are most welcome to stay with us.

Warm regards, with all my admiration,

Eugen Weitmann

Israel.





My father's story

Eugen Weitmann

I would like to add some of my observations regarding the tumultuous years in the East-European country – Romania – from the 30s to the end of previous century. The narrative is about my father, Dr. Adolf Weitmann.

My father was born in a traditional family, in Bukovina, under the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. The year is 1914 (the outbreak of WW I), the place is Bosanci – Suceava. My grandfather enlisted in the empire's army, fighting for Franz-Joseph in Northern Italy. After being injured, he was awarded a medal for his bravery.

My father's first "schooling" years took place at the "heder" with a "melamed" who had a weird habit: he used to play with the boys' private parts. Today he would have rotten in jail.

Time went by. My father's secondary education took place in Suceava, at "Stefan cel Mare" high school, which was the obvious choice. Mr. V. Burduhos was the principal at the time. It seemed that young Adolf Weitmann was more interested in football than in his studies.

Starting with 1918 Suceava was part of greater Romania. As such, fondness towards the Jewish people was not extremely fashionable. People used to yell at football matches: "*Jew, iufla,*



Weitmann's brothers mill (Photo Caruntu Suceava Periferiilor and Nicu Idol)

tartan, harhar, HEP, HEP (from "*Hierosolyma Est Perdita*")". Understanding that his chances to obtain a high-school diploma at "Stefan cel Mare" were minimal, dad transferred to Tecuci at a high school where his great uncle, Dr. Kluger, was teaching. In the end, by the skin of one's teeth, he graduated



successfully and got his high-school diploma.

Dad felt attracted by medicine much more than by all the jobs at home, with the mill, the houses and the forest in Plavalari.

Thus, in 1933 he entered the Medicine Faculty in Iasi. The Jewish students “enjoyed” humiliation, foul language and even beatings, not to mention the “*numerus clausus*”. After being maltreated, father went to the police to make the incident known. The police officer inquired first about the plaintiff’s name. In spite of not looking as an Eskimo, it was clear that the police officer wanted to be sure about my father’s provenance.

Father understood the situation well; therefore, he transferred to the school of medicine in Modena, Italy. He rented a room on Due Stelle Street. His landlady, Mrs. Tenca, used to steal his food and wood for heating. Knowing she was a God-fearing woman, dad wrote a note in Italian: “God will punish the one who steals wood!” (“*Chi rub ail legno Dio lo punisce*”). The note was efficient. Although she had never met a Jew in her life, Mrs. Tenca used to say: “Stingy as a Jew”. You can imagine how “friendly” the relationship between the tenant and landlady was.

The only vivid memory my father had about a trip back to Romania, via beautiful Vienna (he was visiting it for the first time) was the fact that his feet hurt terribly, since his shoes were one size smaller.

Anyway, Modena could also be fun: at the students’ festival, there were parades during which a gigantic model of a penis was exhibited on the city streets – ohhh, these students! Of course, this inspired envy in boys and hope in girls. During exams, when my father talked, obviously in Italian, his professors were shocked; they kept crossing themselves (undoubtedly, out of fright). In spite of all, Mussolini was nicer than Antonescu. Father graduated in 1939. It is worth mentioning the fact that, during his university studies, and even before, dad was the leader of the Beitar cell in southern Bucovina, being active and working towards recruiting new members.

My father met Zeev Jabotinsky in Czernowitz. The Zionist leader’s charisma left a deep and lasting impression on him. At one of his conferences, Jabotinsky said: „Jews, flee Europe, a catastrophe is getting near!”. My father was forever marked by his clear-sightedness.

In 1939, after graduating from the university, dad tried to find a job as a physician in Suceava county. The door would close in his face on every occasion. As a result, he opened a private medical practice with absolutely no experience. Needless to say, people would „siege” my father’s doors!!! However, his suffering was short-lived. On October 9, 1941 the „deliverance” came – the deportation to Shargorod, Transnistria. There he experienced a nightmare that lasted for 1000 days and 1000 nights (and it wasn’t the exotic saga „1001 nights”). My grandpa died of typhoid





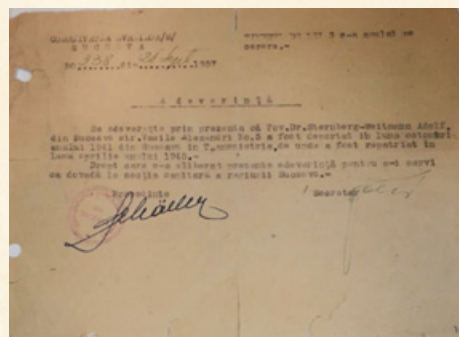
In the picture father holds the Beitar flag

fever and my father found himself threatened by gendarme major Botoroaga who placed a pistol to his head. My grandmother was spared this nightmare: she passed away in 1938 in Suceava; although my dad carried her in his arms to a Vienna clinic, metastatic breast cancer put an end to her life. Despite the exorbitant sums paid, nothing helped. She was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Suceava, whereas my grandad had no grave, not even a headstone with an inscription, because he passed away in Shargorod.

In Transnistria living conditions were harsh. My dad, his brother and sisters deloused themselves a few times a day, having had lice even in their eyebrows. Once, when he was taken to pave a road, a Suceava man told him: „*You, doctor, here, paving roads?!*”

My father's elder sister got engaged and, for unknown reasons, the head of the local gendarmes decided to send her fiancé to the other side of the Bug River, a place controlled by German troops. This would have put him in a life-threatening situation. My father's humble appeal worked. His brother-in-law had been grateful for dad's intervention all his life.

In Shargorod, with minimum experience and practically no drug prescriptions or medical equipment, my dad did his job to the best of his abilities. Obviously, about Transnistria thousands and thousands of pages can be written. Nevertheless, I will stop here. Father was infected with typhoid fever, but, being young, he overcame the disease.



Document that certifies that Dr. Weitmann was deported on October 1941 to Transnistria and repatriated on April 1945.



In 1944 the Red Army liberated Transnistria. Dad returned home, to a totally empty house, but healthy and mentally sound.

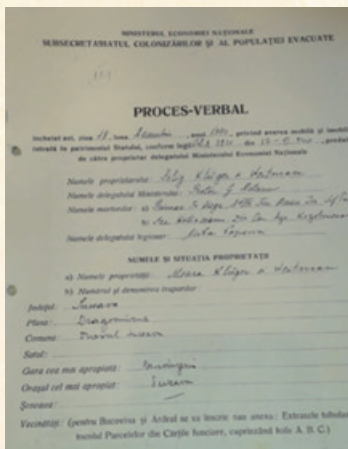
Before deportation, according to the racist Romanian laws in effect, my grandfather was forced to surrender the keys to the Weitmann mill, to give up in writing the Plavalari forest along with all his other possessions.

Even after the liberation in 1945, antisemitism was alive and kicking in Romania. When my father accidentally met an ex-faculty

colleague, the latter asked him „courtly”: „*Haven't you kicked the bucket, Jew?!!!*”

Not only the Legionary government, but the communist régime too confiscated all Jewish possessions. On June 11, 1948, the Nationalization of the means of production took place; consequently, the Weitmann brothers were left only with the clothes on their backs.

June 11 1948. Document that certifies that the Mill was nationalized



Suceava mayor's secretary and the local police commissioner expropriated Kluger-Weitmann flourmill according to Order 13826, based on the Law 3810. The signatures are Selig Kluger, Suse Weitmann, Helzer Hilda cashier. Witnessed by the mill's accountant Banateanu Grigore



Unified Suceava Hospital staff in 1954

It is a well known fact that, during the first years of popular democracy, the Jewish people were „fashionable”, thus, my dad was chosen in 1949 to be the director of the Unified Suceava Hospital. With the enthusiasm characteristic of a person who survived the Transnistria abyss and with the



naiveté of believing that the new régime was based on the dictum “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!” father received a delegation of left-wing Americans, who arrived under the Marshall plan, for a possible financial help to the hospital. Obviously, the communist régime contemptuously refused the help extended to the Suceava medical system on the ground that the funds originated from the largest imperialistic state in the world! As the word goes, it is like “casting pearls before swine!” Incidentally, most of the delegation members were Jewish, the talks being held in Yiddish (my dad didn’t speak English at the time).



Father giving a speech at the US delegation meeting



Opening the maternity ward, August 26 1951

Father paraded holding photographs of Gheorghiu-Dej, Ana Pauker (in the beginning) and others. Having to be in the first rows, he couldn’t leave, as he had to be a role model. At one of these demonstrations, my dad overheard one of the members of the medical profession holding Ana Pauker’s poster saying to a colleague: “*If you continue making me nervous, I will hit you over the head with this jidauca!*” (meaning Ana Pauker's poster).

My father’s attachment towards the new establishment was extremely strong. I would like to tell a short story just to illustrate my father's dedication. In 1952, while building the new maternity ward of the hospital, at some point the work stopped due to lack of funds. My dad wanted to bring money from home so that the project could be finished. It was quite a blessing that mom, being more practical and less naïve, opposed father's plan.



Father, first on the right. August 23 1951 in the hospital garden



Obviously, May 1, August 23 and November 7 parades (yes, 7 November) my dad was in the first rows dressed in a white robe.



Father holding the hospital poster



Regarding the characters I presented above, people in the hospital used to tell a joke: When the chairman of the party organization told the cleaner: *“Take down that pig’s picture!”* the latter asked: *“Which one?”*

In his capacity as the hospital director, my father had at his disposal a carriage with a horse led by comrade Gheorghe. My school building was in the town park, and as such, I was given a “lift” with the carriage.

One day, my teacher, Mrs. Sumanaru, told mom, half-serious half-joking, that she should come to school on foot, whereas I... This was the end of my carriage-days; I was indignant for the drastic decrease in my standard of living!





My family

I remember my dad's generosity and kindness. At his youngest sister's wedding, he offered his brother-in-law the only valuable thing he possessed his watch. My father told me that twice in his medical career he was called by two extremely scared Suceava ladies to check on their husbands as they weren't moving, probably dead, in the middle of sexual intercourse. The enthusiasm towards the new establishment decreased quite fast. The "insight" came parallel



with the Soviet Jewish Doctors' Purges. Jewish doctors were accused of conspiracy to assassinate Soviet leaders, were incarcerated, and later murdered. Other terrifying actions, such as the killing of the Jewish communist leaders in socialist countries, the suppression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956-1957, the 1959 order to close down all private medical offices, and my dad's dismissal from his hospital managerial position (as he was the son of a representative of the bourgeois régime) changed my father's mind. My mom was happy with the fact that father wasn't the director of the hospital, but, understandably, my dad took it hard. Then, in 1959, my parents decided to submit papers to immigrate to Israel. They waited for a long time. Mr. Jacober from London, who was contacted through a middleman, wasn't too much in a hurry to pay ransom for our family's departure. In spite of the fact that the payment was put forward, my family's request for a visa was denied repeatedly. Although "business is business", one side didn't honor its engagement. I have to explain the fact that the Jewish British businessperson Mr. Jacober used to be the intermediary who exchanged Romanian Jews for money. He did it for personal gain as well.

At the same time, my father was dismissed as the chief of the oncology department, which, during that time, was in the fourth place in Romania regarding medical skill and equipment (after





Bucharest, Iasi and Cluj). Father was downgraded not only from his management position, but also professionally, from a senior specialist to a general practitioner.

This was the hospital director's doing. After years of professional humiliation, my dad went to see the party's vice first secretary of Suceava county branch, Mr. Dumitru. I have to admit that,

thanks to Mr. Dumitru, my father was reinstated as head of the department and as a senior medical specialist (anyhow, he received a very high grade at the professional exam for the upper level of seniority). As they say, no prophet is accepted in his own town... but in the neighboring one!

In parallel, it is worth mentioning the fact that during 1966-1973 our family went through a stressful time living in our house that was bugged by the Securitate. I have described the incident in its entirety in a previous story, printed in this book.

In spring 1973 we applied again for a visa to immigrate to Israel and, this time, we received a positive answer; comrade Ceausescu got 5000 dollars for my father and another 3000 for my mom and myself. Let's not forget, it is about the green paper's value from 1973!

When we got off the plane in Ben Gurion airport, my dad hugged the first Israeli police officer he met, expressing his love towards the young Jewish state.

Initially, we settled in Natzaresh Ilit. My dad obtained the position of the head of the clinic in Kfar Cana (the place where, according to the tradition, Jesus, being at a wedding, transformed water into wine – depending on how much wine they had before that!). It is interesting that a native Jew from Eastern Europe, whose mother tongue was German and Yiddish, learned and spoke Arabic with his patients and with the medical personnel. Among other things worthy to note was the fact that my father was invited by Marc Chagall to the inauguration of his stained glass windows at the Knesset building in Jerusalem – obviously, a great honor.

And here is the story how it came about to meet Chagall. On July 7, 1887 a newborn baby-boy entered into the poor Chagallov family at Liazna near Vitebsk in Byelorussia. His name was Moshe. A year later, in 1888 a beautiful black-eyed baby-girl was born in the town of Zaleszczyki in western Poland-Golde, the daughter of Berish and Perl Schmeterling. It so happened that in the first years of the twentieth century the two young people met and got to know each other. Moshe learned at the heder and the technique of drawing at the Russian school. In 1907 he left for St. Peterburg where he studied with Leon Bakst and in 1910 he went to Paris and became the "ordinary" Mark Chagall. In 1922 after a short revolutionary period, he left Soviet Russia for good and settled in France.



Meanwhile Golde Schmetterling and her family settled in Bosanci in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. She met Sussie-Kissiel Weitmann. They liked each other and got married on December 12th, 1909. Their second son Adolf, my father, was born after 5 years of marriage. As I have already said, grandma Golde died in 1938 after a terrible battle with cancer. During the Communist Romania days there was no talk at home about the Mark Chagall episode. In 1969, 31 years after my grandmother's



death, my father applied and received approval to visit Israel, leaving his beloved son at home as collateral. Since my father wanted to make Alyia at all cost, he was looking for any possible connection to achieve his goal. He remembered the Mark Chagall episode; in spring of 1969 he wrote a letter to St. Paul de Vence to Mark Chagall. Not only did he get the master's answer but Chagall announced my father that he would be in Jerusalem in the fall for the inauguration of his work, the stained glass windows in the Knesset building. Father and mother went to Israel for a visit. Chagall and father met at the inauguration, they spoke in Yiddish and in French. It seems that later, Mr. Chagall spoke on our behalf, I don't know exactly with whom, but the Weitmann family got the visa for family reunification purposes in Israel, which could not be arranged by the British businessman Jacober. One more reason to feel deep respect and deep gratitude towards Mark Chagall. The master painter died at the age of 98 on March 28, 1985 at St. Paul de Vence. In 1986, my parents moved to Tel-Aviv, following their „darling” son. My dad worked until he was 80 years old, in 1994. In all modesty, it must be emphasized that my father had a stupendous memory, a fact that can be also observed in „The Book of Jews from Suceava - Shotzer”, a substantial part of which was being written by him.

On September 19 2005, at 7:03, a huge tragedy stroke the Weitmann family. My dad was in great physical and mental state for a 91-year-old ; every morning he would take a 40-minute walk. That dreadful morning, while taking his usual walk, the moment he walked on the Kikar Hamedina crosswalk he was run over by a truck driven by a driver from Taibe. The last flutterings of his generous heart took place at the Ichilov Hospital a few minutes before I got there. When I was sitting „shiva” I used to say that „my dad died on his feet” and I was answered: „He died with many years ahead”. Maybe it was true.

Even today, I would often like his advice, I love him and I miss him. As someone used to say: „*It is easy to love Adolf!*”

Eugen Weitmann, Tel-Aviv





My Story

Gerty Wasserman

Suceava, my extended family, my parents, my childhood adventures are well- guarded in my memory. Without closing my eyes, I see my parents' faces, places where I lived as a child and where I used to hangout as a teen.

My parents, Era and Melech Wasserman returned to Suceava in 1944 from Murafa, Transnistria. Despite the horrors, they experienced or because of them, I was conceived as a way of believing in a better future. I was born in 1945.

Looking at my parents' life, I realize now that their paths crossed several times even before marriage. My father, Melech Wasserman, a tall and strong red-haired man, was born in Suceava to a pious family. His father was a rabbi. The Wasserman family possessed a gristmill and a seeds oil machine in Itcani together with Bibi Weitmann's family. The Wasserman family had six children. The elderly children worked with their father at the gristmill.

At age of 13, the strong and handsome Melech met my maternal grandmother in a chance encounter. She asked her future son-in-law (without knowing his role to come in her family) to help get onto a wheelbarrow a complex printing machine. Jokingly, my grandmother promised Melech to give him one of her daughters as a bride in reward for his help. Both of them didn't know then that someone in heaven would fulfill the prophecy.

After their first newborn baby died in the Murafa camp, my parents "planned" to have me already at the end of the war as an appropriate way of renewing life and hope. My mother's 21-year-old brother also died in Murafa.

When I was a bit older, I wanted a brother. I used to put sugar lumps on the windowsills to tempt the stork to bring us a baby. Finally, I got a brother, but the stork didn't bring him.

As all long-suffering Jews, my parents worried about my future. When, in the 50s, there was an opportunity to immigrate to Israel, they seriously thought of sending me, a young girl then, alone in with Alyat Hanoar. I was lucky that they changed their minds!

I have always been very energetic and active. Two important pastimes characterized my childhood and my adolescence: On the one hand, hanging out with my friends, taking part in their adventures and, on the other hand, my passion for cooking and baking.

When my mother was forced to stay in bed after an operation, I decided to take upon myself her job as a housewife. As it was common in those days, I went to the big market in town, where



I bought a chicken that I liked. Then I took it to the "shochet", paid him and the woman who plucked the feathers. At home, I prepared 4 dishes: chicken broth, stuffed neck, crochet leg and pot roast meat. After buying a bottle of borsh I prepared "ciorba" which is a kind of vegetable soup. I also prepared lots of cakes and cookies which my family enjoyed eating. Most of my time was spent with my friends: Gitta, Relu, Nelu, Bianca, Margit and Sacha. I met Haiuta when I was 7. I also met the late Esterica Grinberg in high school and loved her very much.

In summer, I used to travel to Radauti, especially to meet my friend Nana. Because cooking was my hobby, I became a gourmet. I used to ask both families (Nana's family and my aunt's) what was being cooked for lunch and I decided, according to the menu, where to eat - at my aunt Jena's place or at my friend's.

The same year in Radauti, I met a charming blue-eyed boy who was also tall, dark and handsome. I will never forget that adolescent summer love.

At 6 and a half, also in Radauti, I learned how to ride a bike in a court facing the railroad. During one of my visits, I decided to ride a bike for 20 km. to the Siret River to visit my aunt, my father's sister. I rode confidently, but when my strength left me, a truck transporting pigs stopped and offered

me a more comfortable way to travel. Therefore, in the truck with the pigs and my bicycle, I arrived in the village Siret. In my heart, I was grateful to the driver who gave me a lift.

In 1964 we made Alyia to Israel, where I built a family.





My Story

Gitta Weitmann

My name is Gitta Earll, my maiden name is Weitmann. My parents are Ruth and Shimon Weitmann. The year is 1941. My mom and grandma, Anna Ellenbogen, who lived in Bucharest, traveled to Suceava to visit the Grellers, the Walters, the Ladens and the Ostfelds, all family. They got caught at the wrong place at the wrong time and got evacuated and deported to Transnistria.

The horrors of their trip had been experienced, most likely, by all the parents and relatives of the participants in this book.

Having only 24 or 48 hours to reduce your entire life to one suitcase, allowed to take only clothes and some food, being loaded into cattle cars like animals, without water or bathrooms and then being marched on foot for many miles to the final destination.

I regret now, since my parents are no longer alive, that I did not ask more questions. And, for some reason, they didn't talk much about their horrible past. Although my parents knew each other from Suceava prior to the deportation, they forged a friendship in Transnistria and got married upon their return.



My parents



I was born in 1947

After my birth, my parents applied for a visa to immigrate to Israel and five years later, when we finally got it, my brother was only 6 months old and was not allowed to leave, not having a visa. No intervention could help secure a visa for him. So, we had to forgo our visa and re-apply and this time it took 8 years to finally be approved and then we made Aliya in 1960. The Romanian government had wanted to punish my father for wanting to leave to Israel and fired him from his job. So, we encountered some hard times.





Gitta on the left, next to Doamna Jescu

While in Transnistria, they sent my father to a labor camp. He escaped months later when their labor on the project was almost completed and it was rumored that they may be sent to another camp for extermination. He managed to bribe the driver of a horse drawn carriage, that would come into the camp every day with supplies, to help him escape and was tied up under the carriage and managed to escape, making his way back to the camp in Transnistria. Our parents never talked about the horrors of the lager with us. I guess they didn't want to burden us with the ugly past.

Years later, after we already lived in Israel, the Nazi commander of that camp was caught in Latin America and brought back to trial in Germany. The German government was looking for witnesses and found my father. They flew him to Germany and paid for his stay during the trial. My dad ended up with a job in Frankfurt. That was a blessing since his business in Tel Aviv was in bankruptcy and we again had no money, no income and very poor. To all the people that used to question me how could my dad work in Germany, I had to say it was actually a miracle (Nes Gadol) that put food on our table. Eventually, my mom joined him, and with the help of the German government, was able to get my Oma out of Romania to Frankfurt, where she lived with my parents until her death.

I met Terry Earll in Israel at I A I, better known as "Bedek". We had worked together in the engineering department at Israel Aircraft Industries since 1969. He had come from America under



contract with an American firm. We moved to California arriving in August, 1974. We had just had our first baby boy, David, on June 12, 1975 and days later I got a call from my brother, Ariel, who had been working with my father in Germany. He said that our father had a heart attack and passed away. My mother was visiting with us and helping with the baby. She flew back and made arrangements to fly him back to Israel. He was buried in Haifa. Later, my Oma, living in a senior facility in Frankfurt, passed and we flew her to Israel to be buried. It hurts me, even today, that she never made it alive to Israel. It was her dream. My brother moved back to Israel after our father's death, married the love of his life, Sarale, and bought a house in Nof Yam where they still live today and where we had our first "Suceava Children" Reunion in 2015. They have a daughter and a son, both married, each with a boy and a girl. My mother, who we convinced to go back to Israel in 2010, after living 40 years in Germany, also passed away in 2015. She and Oma are now buried next to my father in Haifa.

We had our second son Ryan, on August 29, 1977. Both our sons grew up in the United States. David graduated university with a degree in Telecommunications and Film and Ryan got his business degree in Marketing.

David, after college, has been living in Tel Aviv since 2003 when we all went to Israel to celebrate my mother's 80th birthday. He was enamored with Israel and wanted to stay for "a few months". The few months have now



Mom, Aric and I

turned into 16 years and now that he found the love of his life in Israel and planning a wedding in 2020, and doesn't look like he will come back soon. Ryan is married to Candice who he met at college and they have a girl, Micaela (Lali). She celebrated her Bat Mitzvah on November 17, 2017. Also, a boy named Coby, who is working toward his Bar Mitzvah in 2020. They live close to us.

The only good thing about our delay in leaving Romania, due to the visa problems was meeting all of you, my friends from that era and growing up together. While in Suceava I had relatively a happy childhood and I have fond memories of the school, the plays, the interaction with all my friends and the Jewish life that was so important to all of us to preserve. My best girlfriend was Lily Weintraub, later on Dorly Weidenfeld joining us.



From the very few pictures recovered much later (when we left Romania in 1960 taking pictures with you was forbidden) one in particular stands out and it's the one on our Suceava children profile on Facebook.



From the left: Lia, Shelly, Senta, Gitta, Aric, Gita, Ruthy

I sent that to Dorly in 2014 after we found each other again and it started the avalanche, her quest of finding you all. Dorly did an outstanding Sherlock Holmes search, pursuing her new vocation and found you all. She worked relentlessly, day and night and was very successful.

I will treasure forever our Suceava kids reunions, new forged friendships and our Tiul shorashim.



Two pictures taken at my 9th birthday party. From the left: Mario Wasserman, Shelly Rubinger, Senta Grill, I, Gita Ostfeld, Lia Avram, Ruthy Hubner. Aric, my brother in the front.





This picture was posted in the local newspaper:
From the right: Lily, Ica, Gitta, Pia, Carmen, X.X.

I must add my mom's connections with Suceava friends



At our window, looking into the street
From the left: Burshi Kelin, Pia's father, Ruth, my
mom, Poldi Kern, Rami-Dutu's father.



Dr. Perry Schwartz, Riry's mother, my mom Ruth, and Medi, Pia's mom.





My Story

Haiutza Schmelzer

I am the only child of Rozica and Zeleg Shmeltzer. My mother was born in Dorohoi and my father, in Ilisesti. During the war, my father was deported with his family to Moghilev. My mother stayed in Dorohoi.

After the war, my maternal uncle introduced them. When Rozica married Zeleg Shmeltzer, my father, then a handsome thirty-eight-year old, she was a twenty-year-old beautiful young woman. I was born one year after they got married. My parents were happy. My father took care of me (provided for me), constantly asking and being concerned, while the expression "das kind" ("the kid") was always on his lips. I was surrounded by ceaseless love and pampering. For my loving parents, I was the centre of their life and the epicentre of their existence. There wasn't anything impossible to achieve when something was connected to me. Even when I was an infant, my father made an effort to offer me the best it was. He purchased in Bucharest a modern and special kinder pram, called "lando" in Romanian.



Pictures from a happy childhood

My mom was very proud to walk around the town while I was laying in the beautiful and unique perambulator. Much later, when I grew up and my heart desired a special winter "cojoc" (sheep skin coat), my mom did everything she could to get it for me, not a meager thing in poor and engulfed in bribery communist Romania.

My grandmother, my mother's mother, who during that time lived in Dorohoi, used to come





With friends: Ella and Bianca in the left picture, Bianca and Monica on the right

from time to time to our house to cook different tasty food for me: calachlach, essig fleish, friptura. My health was a reason for concern. Therefore, my anxious parents were always on guard.

I suffered from an early age from an allergic cough; my parents used to take me to health resorts, such as

Vatra Dornei, where I could enjoy the pure air, and Slanic Moldova, for inhalations. In addition, once a year, the well-known specialist, Dr.

Wiesenthal, from Bucharest would give me a through physical examination.

My family used to live on Vasile Alecsandri Street opposite Stefan cel Mare high school. This was a beautiful central street. Our apartment included a sizable room in which our daily activities took place. My family had a big kitchen where, first, the cooking was being done over a wood-fire oven and, later, over a gas stove. In the huge living room a terracotta stove diffused lovely heat during winter days. I loved leaning against the glossy terracotta bricks and getting warm while the burning wood emanated warmth and pine sweet fragrance. At times, soft crackling sound could be heard.

Our neighbours were Dr. Hoch and the Shmeltzer family. They had the same family name as ours, but were unrelated to us. I used to play in the (our) yard with girls older than me, such as Bianca Shmeltzer, Margit Zandberg, Gerti Wasserman, as well as with girls my age, like Coca Rachmut, Betty Merdler and Tamara Hirschhoren. We played the well-known childhood games, including jump rope. My doll playing partner was a boy, Monica Schternlieb.

Sometimes I travelled to Bucharest with my parents, and my father used also to invite my cousin Puiu to the trip.



With dad and mom at Slanic Moldova, a well renown Romanian resort. From the left: my father, my mother and I, Mrs. Holzer and Mr. Fishler.



On hot summer days, I used to go with other girls swimming in the Suceava River. Winter, was the time to slide on snow with my sled.

Mrs. Bodinger sewed my clothes. I was always a very well dressed and well nurtured. My mom would weave white ribbons into my two thick blond braids.

When my father died, all of the sudden, my entire world had fallen apart. He wasn't feeling well, but when his condition worsened and it was really difficult for him to walk, he understood that the doctors didn't diagnose correctly his illness, so he turned to Dr. Weidenfeld, Dorly's father. Dr. Weidenfeld identified immediately the brain cancer and sent my dad to Bucharest to get treatment. After only two months, my father died in Bucharest. My dad's death was a fierce blow for me, one which has had a lasting effect on my entire life. Despite the fact that my mom did everything in her power to make it easier on me, it was very difficult for me to feel relieved. Today, when I think about the fact that she became a widow at the age of 28, my heart aches for the beautiful woman who experienced the death of her husband at such an early age.

As a small girl of 7, who had just begun her first grade, I didn't express my opinion, feeling caught up in my own personal pain and focusing on it.

I couldn't explain myself but I felt the change; I missed my father and I was jealous of every one who had a father. Today I understand the anxiety that got a hold on me: in addition of the loss I felt I was afraid that something bad was also going to happen to me and, especially, I was terrified of losing my mom.

During those times, it wasn't customary to talk to children about pain and loss. My mother was my support. She displayed infinite patience. Her love continued to shroud me, protect me, but it was difficult for me to find comfort and return to a regular life. I was entirely immersed in grief and that's why a number of phenomena and behaviours are obvious to me only today. First, I refused to return to school. I slept at my neighbour's house, Bianca Shmeltzer. After persisting in my refusal to go back to school for a long time, my mom resourcefully succeeded in finding a solution to the problem. She asked teachers from my school to visit me at home and try to teach me in a safe and familiar environment. I remember domnul Alaci, the geography teacher, who came with his globe to teach me. There were also others, who came to teach me. Gradually I returned to school and I as a very good student. The school was opposite my house, so I just had to cross the road. My mom took care of my uniform. It was always clean and ironed, my collar and apron were well starched, the ribbons in my hair adorned my appearance so I could feel pretty, nurtured and special as before.



Mom took me to Mrs. Esther Galitzer to learn Hebrew and to Buki Gropper to learn to play the violin.



On the left at the kids party: I am standing.
Next to me are Arik and Gitta



My mother, second on the right

From time to time, we would go for strolls on the main street towards the Wagner's confectionery shop to eat schnitzel ("carmenadel") and a special ice cream – eisbombe.

Frau Mina would come to our house on occasion to bake schmettentorte for us.

However, in spite of all the endless love, caring and attention, I was still anxious. For instance, I was afraid to get sick. My mom talked with Dr. Kreizler she knew from Dorohoi. He was aware I was frequently addressing him as a result of my concerns regarding my health. I used to rush to him each time with another complaint: my head ached, my throat was sore. Most of all I was afraid to get scarlet fever (scarlatina), as during those days sick children were taken to the hospital. The thought that I might be separated from my mother frightened me a lot. When a polio epidemic spread through town, I was terrified of getting sick. I was careful not to come into contact with other children and I followed all the instruction given at the time regarding food and drink. With the same concern, I followed my mother closely. When the neighbours' dog bit her and she had to be vaccinated against rabies I was afraid I would lose her. One winter, my mother was ill and suffered from excruciating ear aches. I remember myself running at night, on snowy ground, for a substantial distance to Zamca, to Dr. Siminal's house, a specialist in otolaryngology, and begging him, while crying uncontrollably, to come and check urgently my mother. The doctor understood my distress and accompanied me on my way back. After he checked her and prescribed medicine, he refused to receive payment.

In winter I loved the homey atmosphere, I liked to listen to the children passing from house to house blessing people and chanting the traditional "colinda" songs. However, I was afraid to open the door, when they wanted to bless me.

My precious family and good friends were always loving and supportive.



The Romanian communist regime reinstated the possibility to immigrate to Israel after discontinuing the program during the 50s. My mom went to the police station and signed up for emigration. I knew it was forbidden to tell anyone about it. We were among the first to be given approval to emigrate. I remember very clearly the moment we received the announcement. I, an 11-year-old girl, was alone at home when two policemen knocked on our door and wanted to come in. I got very scared, turned white, but I opened the door. The fright was very distinct on my face. I mumbled a few times "I haven't done anything wrong". They calmed me down and announced that our request to leave Romania was approved. I waited impatiently at home for my mother's return. The joy was massive. Excited, my mom decided to take me on a short outing on the main street. Our neighbour, Cicea, was known as a cruel policeman. Mother warned me not to tell anyone about the approval so that he wouldn't find out about our journey.

We were extremely surprised when, in the evening, the policeman Cicea came to our house with a huge bouquet of flowers to congratulate us for our journey. He asked us one thing...to send him chewing gum from Israel. For our journey, mom ordered from Mrs. Bodinger new clothes for me and especially a green corduroy suit. The day we were supposed to leave came, the boxes in which we packed 70 kg of our clothes and other belongings were ready.

My violin was confiscated at the Customs at the Romanian-Hungarian border. My mom bought me another one in Italy, so that I wouldn't miss having a musical instrument in Israel.

Today, I am a mother and a grandmother. The way I see my childhood has changed over the years. I still feel the pain of the little orphan girl and that of the woman who became a widow at such a young age. However, my children and grandchildren offer me much happiness, a compensation for those days.





My Family

Harold Eynav / Weininger

I was born in the year 1946 in the house of my grandparents, Josef Reif and Fani Ellenbogen, two years after all my family returned to their home in Suceava having survived the horrors of their deportation to Transnistria

My grandfather Josef was a good family man, honest and hardworking and from the early 1900s had a grocery store on the main street of the city. The store was well known and was mentioned even in the deportation order of the Jews from the city in 1941 by the Romanian authorities

My mother Else Weininger was born in Suceava in the year 1920, two years after her sister Betty Kinsbrunner

They were raised in a warm home, full of love and they had a happy childhood

Following the antisemitic policies of the Romanian government and the creation of the Iron Guard movement, since 1936 the conditions of Jews in the whole country including Suceava started to deteriorate

At the age of 16 my mother was expelled from the school after one of her Romanian classmates accused her singing the Internationale with her Jewish friends and a criminal trial was opened accusing her of being a communist, a very serious charge at the time

The trial went for more than a year, the lawyers and judges were super expensive, and even the Russian ambassador from Bucharest was called to testify in her favor!

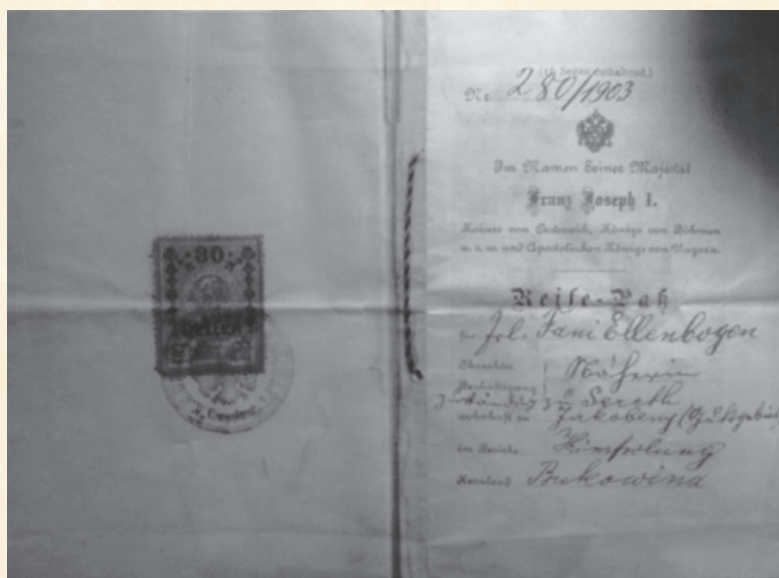
In the end she received a suspended sentence and movement restrictions but she lost a whole school year and all her friends who were afraid to be seen with her

In the year 1940, while visiting relatives in Czernowitz she was separated from her family when the northern Bukovina was annexed by the USSR

There she met and married my father, Shiku Weininger from Vama, a village in the Suceava district

After the Germans invaded the USSR in 1941 and the Romanians returned to Czernowitz, most of Bukovina Jews were deported to Transnistria





My grandmother's Fani Ellenbogen passport

My mother, father and the whole family suffered there 3 terrible years of deprivation, hunger and abuse but managed to return alive

Our family was able to emigrate to Israel only in 1964, and my mom could finally live a new and free life and she is blessed to reach the age of 100, wrapped with the love of her son, 3 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren



My grandparents Josef Reif and Fani Ellenbogen wedding picture



Once upon a Time in Suceava - Bukovina



Lily Pauker
producer

2



The Ellenbogen/Reif family in Suceava 1922
 Second row from the left: Sali Reif (from Josef's first marriage), Rosa Ellenbogen, Hanan CHUNE Ellenbogen, and his father Benjamin BUMI Wolf Ellenbogen
 First row: Fani Reif – Ellenbogen, her husband Josef Reif and Israel Leib Ha Levi Ellenbogen father to Rosa, Bumi and Fani. Sitting in front: my mother Else Weininger – Reif and her sister Betty Kinsbrunner – Reif



My mother's birth certificate in Suceava 1920



My mother Else, 20 years old
 Me, 10 month old with my mom in the garden of my grandparents house in Suceava where I was born



Me, 6 year old



Neomi, the daughter of Betty, my mother's sister with our grandparents Fani and Josef



**Once upon a Time in
Suceava - Bukovina**

Volume 2




















Casa Hopmeier, Strada Armenească, Nr. 13, în anii '30
Hopmeier House, Armenian Street, No. 13 during the 30's

Photo: Mihai Aurelian Caruntu "Suceava Periferiilor - Album"

Content				
	Authors	Address		Page
	Introduction		1	11
	Memories		1	67
	"The Silence"		1	69
	Adolf Copelovici		1	70
	Any Katz		1	72
	Alina Itianu	alina.budin@gmail.com	1	74
	Beate Herman	beatriceherman@hotmail.com 054-4606509	1	81
	Beno Budic		1	88
	Betty Merdler	beti4455@bezeqint.net 054-527668	1	170
	Bibi Ruhm		1	179
	Coca Rachmuth	hava@bresler-law.com 052-2542991	1	187
	Cuta Avram	esterav123@gmail.com 052-2361944	1	192
	Dani Ramer		1	195
	Denise Horowitz	severin@inter.net.il	1	210
	Dory Hörer	dory461@gmail.com 050-7445397	1	213
	Dorly Weidenfeld	zdorly@gmail.com	1	218
	Paul Leinburd	paul@crowncap.com	1	249
	Harry Bolner		1	288
	Emanuel Menczel	emma47@netvision.net.il	1	301
	Eugen Weitmann	alexWeitmann@yahoo.com 054-9933891	1	303



Content				
	Authors	Address	Volume	Page
	Gerty Wassermann	gerti@012.net.il 052-8371928	1	314
	Gitta Weitmann	gitta@c21earll.com 1(626)2331638	1	316
	Haiuta Schmeltzer	ivory591@zahav.net.il 054-4633883	1	321
	Harold Einav	harold.eynav@gmail.com	1	326
Volume 2				
	Harry Fleischer		2	9
	Iancu Manash	ymanas@zahav.net.il	2	12
	Iuliana Herscovici	itapal2@gmail.com 050-4947937	2	19
	Itzhak Shapira	·Prof. Itzhak Shapira, MD Deputy Director General & Director of Rehabilitation Hospital, Tel Aviv Sourasky (Ichilov) Medical Center Mobile: (+972)524262626 email: shapira@lvmc.gov.il	2	23
	Jacky Gotlieb		2	27
	Jana Rohrllich	arielzoar@gmail.com	2	32
	Karin Mandler		2	35
	Karol Abramovici		2	38
	Lica Olarasu	zeevlmo@gmail.com	2	44
	Lily Weintraub	lilypauker@gmail.com 054-4911021	2	53
	Ludwig Peltz		2	83
	Lotty Schertzer		2	86
	Mara Bodinger		2	88
	Marghit Friedman	dentalma@walla.co.il dentalmarg@gmail.com	2	97

Content				
	Authors	Address	Volume	Page
	Mausi Konig		2	102
	Mendel Brecher	mendelbrecher@yahoo.com 050-7706509	2	105
	Mira Seidler		2	108
	Moshe Herzberg		2	114
	Nelu Eidinger	fire_el@netvision.net.il	2	123
	Paulica Davidovici	paulah2004@gmail.com 054-8009071	2	125
	Pia Klein	pgreer777@gmail.com 1(619)8955545	2	137
	Reizale Shauer	skahana6@gmail.com	2	144
	Relu Faienstein	fire_el@netvision.net.il	2	149
	Renee Schwerberg		2	167
	Riry Schwartz	riry68@gmail.com 1(917) 8411918	2	173
	Romy Rohrllich	rshenhar@yahoo.com 1-(703)861-4633	2	178
	Ruthy Glickman			181
	Ruthy Hubner	ruth@golanhome.com	2	185
	Saul Grinberg	perlagrinberg1@gmail.com 052-3661228 / 04-8386812	2	213
	Senta Grill	senta6@walla.com 054-4808077	2	221
	Sheni Schechter	steinmerm@gmail.com	2	225



Content				
	Authors	Address	Volume	Page
	Shuki Lakner Moscovici		2	228
	Shie Rosenblum	simar12@walla.com 052-8390335	2	232
	Tamara Hirshhorn	tamaralevinson@gmail.com	2	235
	Tony Silber	tonydori@hotmail.com	2	238
	Uzi Kimmel	kimuz411@walla.co.il	2	244
	Zwi Fuhrer	zfuhrer@gmail.com	2	247
	Zwia Peltz	zfuhrer@gmail.com	2	252
	AMINTIRI		2	261



Memories



Gospodărie tradițională (Strada 6 Noiembrie, 1960)
Traditional dwelling (November 6th Street, 1960)

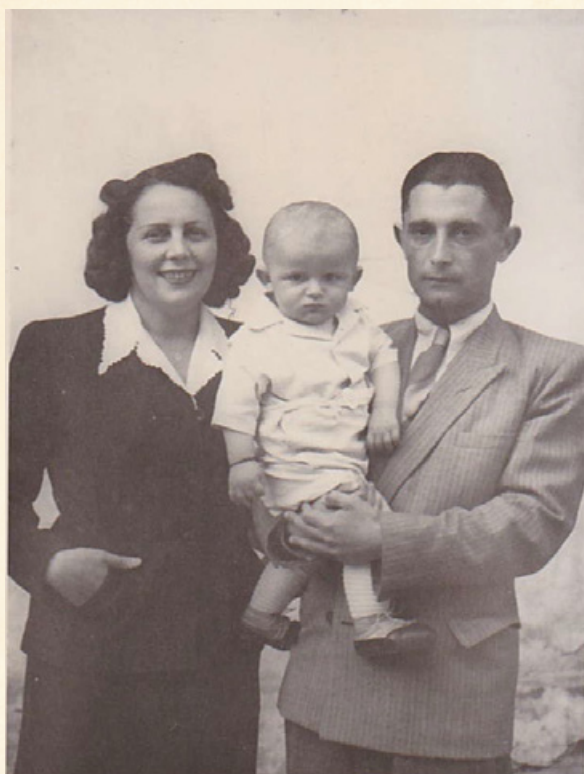
Photo: Mihai Aurelian Caruntu "Suceava Periferiilor - Album"



Harry Fleischer

Written by Dorly Weidenfeld

Harry was and is one of my best friends.



Mrs. and Dr. Fleischer with Harry



Father and son

Harry and his family live in Canada and it will be extremely difficult for me to go to Toronto to interview him for the book. Until Harry writes his memories by himself or comes to Israel for a visit, I took it upon myself to write three stories that remind me of him.

First Story about Harry: a family house.

It was pretty daring in those times for children in Suceava to “build” a family household of two wives and a husband. When I found Lia five years ago, she told me that somehow she remembers a play house built by kids, a place she used to visit and have fun. It didn’t dawn on me immediately. After a while, Pia cleared the haze by sending me a picture where two girls and a boy stand in front of a “house” made of rags. The two girls were Pia and I – the wives, Harry was the husband.



The blanket house walls hung on ropes. The “house” was “built” in my yard. Inside there were a kitchen, a table and chairs, a lot of kitchenware and a bed to rest on. Many of the neighborhood children came to visit, drank tea and played with the hosts. The owners were three kids: the husband – Harry Fleischer, and his two wives – Pia and Dorly. Harry, you can’t beat this success at 12. When I asked Harry, years later, if



he remembers the adventure he answered negative, he didn’t, but “a picture is worth more than a thousand words”. Harry, I confess, you were a wonderful husband to your two wives.

Second Story about Harry

One hot summer evening, Harry, Iancu and I got together. We decided to take advantage of the quiet evening hours to have some wild fun. One of us had in the pocket a packet of cigarettes. Without any fear and worry, each one of us lit a cigarette with a gleam of mischief in the eyes. Feeling important, we wandered the streets till we reached Gitta’s house, where we stopped for a few moments. Suddenly, the window facing the street opened and Gitta’s mother appeared. Our heart missed a beat! We were sure that Ruti, Gitta’s mother, saw us and comprehended what we were doing. Seized by fear and terror, we ran for our lives, away from the danger. Our self-confidence melted in seconds and we didn’t feel like having fun anymore.

We returned worried. I didn’t sleep a wink all night, thinking that in the morning I would have to be held accountable by my parents. A few days passed in panic and regret, but the feared call didn’t come. After a while, I understood I was in the clear. However, to this day I am not sure if Ruti noticed us and spared Harry, Iancu and me the trouble of being punished or maybe she didn’t recognize us in the dark.

Third Story about Harry

Lia Avram, Harry Fleischer and I were classmates in Suceava.

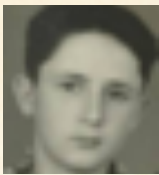
Harry was one of my best friends. Sometimes I also used to play with Lia. The three of us lived around the same place (*near Piata de unt*) and were part of a larger group of children who grew up and used to play in the same neighborhood. I remember playing cops and robbers, riding bikes and so on.



At the end of 1958, my parents, as well as Lia's and Harry's were given the permission to immigrate to Israel. The common destiny inspired the three with a feeling of kinship and comradeship. At a certain moment we stopped going to school and we used to wake up every morning and wander around the town. We told all those who were ready to listen that we were Three Palestinian Representatives (*Trei Delegati din Palestina*) who arrived in Suceava for a limited period of time and that we were bound soon to return to the place we had come from.

During our roaming we met our beloved homeroom teacher, Olga Strambu, who lovingly and with tears in her eyes said goodbye to us. She kissed and hugged us, wishing us success. I remember that I was vexed by not being able to part with Alex Stefanescu and that for many years afterwards, while living in Israel, I planned to write him a goodbye letter. I even remembered the address – 1 Dimitrie Dan Street. However, the years passed by and eventually I had never written the letter. The “representatives” bade Suceava goodbye with mixed feelings. On the one hand, we were enthusiastic facing the “new tomorrow” in a new country, actually our ancestors' country. On the other hand, we were sad to part from our native country and town, and from our many Jewish friends, not knowing when or if we were going to meet again. We also left behind Christian friends, with whom we were sure we wouldn't meet again. Nevertheless, as you all know, destiny wanted the other way around, and we all met eventually in 2016.





Iancu Manash and his Brothers

Written by Dorly Weidenfeld

Iancu was my classmate and “my best friend” in Suceava. He lived next to “*Piata de Unt*”, not far from my house. We spent most of the days together; we were partners in many adventures and secrets.

I met Iancu and his brother Beni in order to write this narrative on his behalf. Their parents, Iosi and Ghizela, were born in Burdujeni, and so was Iancu. After the family moved to Suceava, his two younger brothers, Beni and Dorel, were born.

During the war, each of his parents with their respective families, were deported to the Lucinetz ghetto, in Transnistria. They got married after the war.

His mother, Ghizela, was one of six siblings. They were craftsmen who barely made a living.

On October 9, 1941, a messenger walked the streets. While beating a drum he announced that all Jewish families are going to be deported on the same day and on the next.

Each family was permitted to take a backpack or a suitcase with clothes and personal items. Rich people hid money and valuables in their garments. These were traded later for different services or for food. Ghizela Tzenker’s family didn’t have any valuables. They were hardworking professional tailors and shoemakers. When they reached Lucinetz, they struggled to survive. The two sisters Haike and Ghizela were seamstresses. Their brother, Iosika, was a good tradesman (many years later, after the war, he immigrated to Israel, and became a successful tradesman in Tel-Aviv). Iosika took huge risks sneaking out of the ghetto, associating himself with the local Ukrainian villagers. The locals used to buy clothes at the flea market (*talcioc*). The girls would adjust the clothes according to the necessary size and the boys would fix shoes. The villagers paid with food – potatoes, bread, and milk. This is how they managed to survive. All the children in the family survived except the youngest daughter, Etti. In January 1942 when Etti was 20 years old, she went out. Two drunk police officers tried to catch her. Not being able to do so, they shot and killed her and stole the coat she was wearing. Families that were united survived. On the other hand, rich people who lacked surviving skills, didn’t make it sometimes, especially when money ran out. Betty, Ghizela’s sister, remembers the heartbreaking incident before leaving home. On the day they were deported to Transnistria, everybody was sad and afraid, but Etti, the youngest sister (who was later killed) could vividly feel what the deportation meant. She hugged one of the walls



and cried saying she was sure she wouldn't see the house again. Indeed, she didn't survive. That day, before deportation, was Etti's last time at home.

Iancu's paternal grandfather was Yaakov Manash (Menashe). He imported fur and animal skin and exported wheat. He was a generous, wealthy man. He would regularly donate money to brides in need, for a decent dowry. The secret "Gmilut Hassadim", is the bestowal of loving kindness. Consideration toward one's fellow man was for Iancu's grandfather the cornerstone of all Jewish social virtues. Iancu's grandmother was an important woman, the "pillar" of the family, their permanent adviser. The couple worked hard and played hard. The couple was known as skilled dancers, which distinguished themselves at family parties.

The Manash family – Iancu's grandfather and grandmother and their three sons (Burech – Baruch Max, and Iosele – Iancu's father) - was deported to Transnistria. They arrived at the Lucinetz ghetto. Some of the family members were sent to forced labor, which included road paving. In spite of being strictly prohibited to leave the camp, Iancu's father sneaked out to search for food. At times he used to work for local Ukrainians.

Iancu's grandfather, Yaakov Manash, died of typhoid fever in 1943. His grandmother died of stroke the previous year out of stress thinking that Iosele, Iancu's father, was caught during one of his ghetto flights.

At the end of the war, Iosele procured a horse and cart to get his family back to Romania. When they arrived in Burdujeni, the house was empty, robbed of its content. They got help from the local police officers to find the stolen furniture. Iosele, 35, and Ghizela got married in Burdujeni.

As Mr. Manash had a professional high school education, it was not difficult to secure a job as a clerk at the Alimentara; competent workers were needed. He was appointed head of logistics, running all the warehouses. Alimentara served goods to the entire county.

Iosele knew how to make his own way among the party members and among those in charge of him, in spite of not being a communist. He became famous all around the region and brought a lot of respect to his family.

In 1949 the family moved to Suceava. Iancu's dad started working at MAT, the Administration for Alcohol and Cigarettes, in a management position. The warehouses were on Curtea Domneasca Street.

Iancu, the eldest child, was born in Burdujeni, his younger brothers, Beni and Doron (Dorel) were born in Suceava.





The three siblings were and still are different in nature, but love connects them all. As a child, Iancu was considered a very naughty boy. During those days, he was less interested in school since the world around him was much more interesting and attractive: the fort at the outskirts of town (cetate), the bike, the boys' group and their games. In the class, there were about 12 Jewish kids and Iancu was the exact antithesis of the usual Jewish child. People would often admonish him by saying "a Jewish kid doesn't behave like that", "this doesn't suit a Jewish child". Excelling in studies was very important to most Jewish kids. However, a maximum grade didn't mean a thing to Iancu. At the time, this attitude surprised me, but, in spite of everything, I didn't give up my friendship with him. Apparently, it was exactly Iancu's mysteriousness and the differences between us, which enchanted me.

While I was still in Suceava, Iancu was a good friend with Dutzu Gaitan, Marcus Solomon and, of course, through me, he befriended Harry Fleischer.

It was obvious that Jewish children didn't take part in pranks and that was why Iancu's joining the Romanian boys group was just a matter of time.

The next story happened after I left Suceava. Julei, one of the Romanian classmates, who was considered to be a serious "criminal", called Iancu "dirty Jew". To Julei's great surprise, Iancu



attacked him and hit him with all his strength. It was winter time; the blood flowed and colored the snow in red. Iancu was sure that Julei would retaliate the next day. In light of the possible future threat, he amassed stones and sticks – indispensable equipment necessary for what was to come. However, nothing came! This time it was Iancu’s turn to be surprised. Not only didn’t Julei retaliate, but from that day on, Iancu became his friend and a member of Julei’s notorious group of Christian boys. Moreover, Iancu and Julei shared a desk at the back of the class. The moment Iancu got bored and the teacher was busy, he would jump out of the window to find something more interesting to do while Julei was covering for him.

It can be assumed that Iancu’s determined nature was inherited from his mother. She was a great woman and an excellent mother, but didn’t give up easily. One freezing winter, as retribution for a number of mischievous deeds, one of the neighbors emptied a bucket of cold water on Iancu. The consequence was that Iancu got sick with pneumonia, a very serious disease at the time, which caused much concern. His mother planned carefully her reckoning with the neighbor, filling some buckets with cold water. When the woman was in the yard, she emptied on her the buckets one after another. Understandable, a commotion started in the yard, but Iancu’s mother had the last say. His aunt tried many times to explain Iancu why he shouldn’t use the approach “an eye for an eye”, but to act according to the Jewish custom and not to respond. She used to say “*Capul plecat sabia nu-l taie*”. Despite the fact that, at the time, Iancu didn’t know the continuation of the saying “*dar nici soarele nu-l vede*”, he absolutely didn’t agree with her. He loved the wide spaces, the sun and justice and, as such, fiercely opposed the submission approach.

In 1961, the family got the much awaited visa to leave for Israel. Iancu thought to himself “if everybody in Israel behaves submissively and does not demand justice, I don’t belong there” and he meant it. He felt an acute opposition to his parents’ decision. While they were waiting in Bucharest awaiting the flight, Iancu decided to run away from the hotel, to carry on in Romania. Iancu was 14 years old at the time. He didn’t know the capital at all, but he heard about Cismigiu Park. There he fled. In the meantime, the parents got a frightening message from their relatives. The police was in pursuit of Mr. Manash. Therefore, they should speed up their departure. The entire family was ready to depart, but Iancu was missing. One of his uncles found him after searching and brought him to his parents. You can only imagine what they went through, searching for the missing son.

Another story of opposition is the story of the red tie. According to what Iancu has told me lately, he was asked to play on the accordion a song that glorified the communist authorities and the party, during a “*pionieri*” roll call. He was very good at playing the accordion. Many times before, he had been asked to play at ceremonies and performances. At that specific event, the twelve-year-



old Iancu refused firmly to play that song. In consequence, he was publicly dispossessed of the right to wear the red tie. Since the authorities didn't consider it to be a satisfactory punishment, the shocking event and the designated penalty along with the culprit's name was mentioned on the radio. On this occasion, the name of a Jewish person was heard on the local broadcast news program. According to Iancu's account, Jewish names were never mentioned on radio news before. At the Romanian Border Customs, the officers "surprised" the Manash family. They confiscated Beni's violin. Iancu's accordion had already been sold in Suceava. They ordered Mrs. Manash to get off the train. They wanted to detain her, claiming she was wearing two blouses, one above the other. Following a heated discussion and a substantial bribe Mr. Manash paid surreptitiously, the family succeeded to leave Romania in its entirety.

Iancu never involved his brothers in his mischievous deeds, and, as such, Beni and Doron grew up exemplary sons, disciplined and straight A students. Beni and Dorel (Doron) used to have fun in customary ways.

Here are some photos of the Manash family.

In the cold and snowy Suceava winter, wearing appropriate warm clothes (fur-lined coat, wool scarf and hat that covered their ears, gloves and boots), they would surf on snow all the way to the fort (cetate). The sharp slope made the sled slide fast, had it been controlled by a skilled child. The exhilaration and the pleasure were massive provided the sled wouldn't turn over and send the riders in the ditch at the side of the road. Snowball fights provided multiple moments of enjoyment to the participants and, occasionally, a sharp pain when the snowball hit them in their faces.



Manash family



Manash family

One of the winter events was the custom of "colinda" in which children were passing from house to house, chanting traditional Christmas songs, accompanied by the deep and strange sound of the



“*buhai*” – a primitive instrument made of a box covered by stretched skin. When the wet fingers pulled the horse tail hairs coming out of the box, a deep and peculiar sound could be heard, to the enchantment of the listeners. The house occupants would offer the children sweets or money. Beni and his good friend, the town’s head of the Securitate’s son, were going together to sing the songs of the “*colinda*”. Every time they got to a house, a line of officers was protecting them from behind. At that time, Beni didn’t understand how they got such a warm welcome and generous sums of money.



“buhai, (Wikipedia)”

During the 50s, the Romanian authorities understood that they could force Jews to part with their savings. These honest, hardworking people saved money for a “rainy day”. From experience, they learned that a few gold coins, a diamond stone or foreign currency could be of much help and, sometimes, even seal one’s family fate for better or for worse. That’s why nearly every regular person purchased the illegal merchandise and kept it hidden at home and sometimes at the cemetery, concealed in the headstone.

Yours truly, Dorly Weidenfeld, who is writing these lines, immigrated to Israel in the winter of 1958 and a few months later the Manash family received the happy news as well – the visa was approved. I was glad; not before long I would see my friend, Iancu, in Israel once more. His family started making the usual preparations for the journey. Just before the day they were supposed to leave Romania, Iancu’s father was arrested, tortured at the local police headquarters. The authorities demanded the gold. Eventually, the pain was too much to endure. Father led them to the hiding place and turned the savings in. As a result, he was arrested. I read the news in Iancu’s letter. I felt deeply sad for his family’s suffering. Suddenly, he had to mature. His mother was left alone at home concerned with two heavy missions. She had to take care of the legal aid on her husband’s behalf (Mr. Manash was still in the penitentiary). She also had to find a way to provide for her family. At the end of long debates at the courthouse, Mr. Manash was sentenced for two years in prison. At home, his wife started sewing bedware and Iancu started to assemble carton boxes for the local thread factory. He took his job very seriously. He, the first-born, was contributing to the family struggle for subsistence.

In those years I continued corresponding with Iancu and Dutu (Vladimir) Gaitan, who is nowadays a well-known actor in Romania. In 1961, I received the last letter from Suceava. Iancu let me know that he and his family were at last on their way to Israel. He expressed his hope that once





in Israel, our friendship would keep going on. On the way, he sent me a wonderful postcard from Naples.

Our friendship has survived for more than 50 years.

Undoubtedly, Iancu is even today the special one in our group. He is still the one full of enterprise, creativity, energy and determination. I feel that his development is a natural continuation of the same nonconformist, daring child he once was.





My Story

Written by Dorly Weidenfeld

My name is Dorly Weidenfeld, Iuliana's childhood friend, and I am writing part of her memories. Iuliana's life is full of achievements and accomplishments; she is too modest to write appreciative words about herself, in spite of deserving them.

I remember Iuliana as a very serious, neat, fair-haired blue-eyed girl. Her mother would skillfully weave in her braids starched white ribbons to decorate her beautiful face.

Iuliana arrived in Suceava from Falticeni. Since she was 4 years old, she lived in a big building near the Butter Market (*Piata de unt*). The building had a few floors. Along the open terrace which surrounded the entire floor there were apartment doors. The Herscovici family's apartment was small and unassuming - one undersized, neat room and a kitchen. Many other children lived in the same building – Mario Wasserman (Gitta's cousin), Palatnic family (Dr. Izu Palatnic junior became later Iuliana's husband) Stefan and Mihai Pinzaru; apartment after apartment. On the other side of the road lived Paulica, Iancu, Tzili, Carla, Harry Fleischer, Betty Merdler, Lia Avram, Betina Sheinfeld, Etti and Betty Goldenberg and yours truly, Dorly Weidenfeld – we were all friends.

Mr. Herscovici, Iuliana's father, was her mother's second husband. He was a polite, modest, quiet and intelligent man 20 years older than Mrs. Herscovici. He met his wife through a matchmaker. Iuliana's mother's first husband was shot only 8 days after their wedding, during the notorious Iasi Pogrom. Despite the fact that Iuliana's father was head of department (*Sef de Planificari and Contabil Sef*) money was scarce in their house.

Iuliana was an exceptional student from the first grade until she graduated the Chemical Engineering Faculty in Iasi. Moreover, during the junior high and high school years, Iuliana gave private lessons in mathematics, thus helping financially her family.

During the first four school years, her parents lived a modest, but happy life. Iuliana used to come to my house permanently, to play with my dolls, with the doll-houses and other games. We loved children's plays such as *Alunelu hai la joc*, *Presedinte vrem ostasi*, *Moara*, *Rata si cei trei boboci*. Of course, we played hide and seek, tag and jumping the rope.

Iuliana's mother cared for her daughter's education and monitored her progress in school. She was involved in everything that was going on at school and was pleased with her daughter's accomplishments. At the end of each school year, Iuliana received First Prize (*Premiul Intii*) for excellency in studies and good behaviour.



When she was in the forth grade, all of a sudden, Mr. Herscovici had a stroke and passed away. This was a shock for us children, but for Iuliana and her mother this wasn't only a tragedy blow, but a financial one as well. The main breadwinner in the family was gone and his family's subsistence was indeterminate. I can't imagine how they managed, but I'm sure that they had to deal with scarcity, privation and paucity.

Iuliana continued to be a straight A student and to regularly receive certificates of excellence. I was sure that after the tragedy she experienced, Iuliana would want to study medicine. However, at the very sight of blood, she fainted, so she decided to study Chemical Engineering in Iasi. The very story of how Iuliana got to the entrance exam in Iasi is so extraordinary that it deserves to be told.

As I mentioned before, there was no money at home. The train ticket wasn't cheap, she also had to stay in Iasi overnight to finish the exams. Getting the necessary money worried her more than the difficulty of the exam. Mrs. Herscovici managed somehow to get 50 lei, which was enough to cover her expenses, but left no money for food.

Her maternal uncles lived in Iasi, but they refused to help her, not even letting her stay for one night in their house during the exams. Iuliana absolutely aced the entrance exams and, as a result, she was granted a scholarship. During her studies she lived in the student dormitories and knew how to use wisely the means she had in short supply.

In Suceava, Iuliana's mother lived with the grandmother. For a woman, the only way of earning a living was to rent a room. The occupants weren't always good people, sometimes even being drunks. Mrs. Herscovici couldn't be picky as this was nearly her only means of subsistence.

I, who was raised in comfortable conditions, regard Iuliana with much appreciation. She struggled with personal and financial hardships but she never let anyone know that they had a difficult life. Her clothes were always clean, starched, ironed, with a pleasant smell, sometimes looking even better than other girls in our class.

I haven't seen Iuliana for many years. She stayed in Romania for family reasons. However, when the connection was restored, I felt the



Iuliana is in the front row, the girl in the middle.



friend to whom I have always looked up to has come back to me. She still has the modesty, honesty and the internal and external beauty I have always seen in her.



Geography lesson with doamna profesora Silvia Miclescu
 From the left: Lia, Paulica, Iuliana, Ileana Marceanu, Ruthy Glickman, Gitta, Tzili, Rusu, Lucica Rusnac, Moshe, Stefan Panzaru, Dorly, Harry Fleischer. In the back: next to the teacher stands Lily.



Iuliana standing first on the right, Paulica at the end. Sitting from the left: Gitta and Lily. Jumping into the picture Dutu Gaitan





In front of the school building with colleagues: Iuliana with white cap in the middle. Tall in the back Dutu Gaitan.
On the left: Moshele Knealing.



At Ica's birthday
The boys standing (from the left) Arni Merdler, X, Meir Lazarovici, Moshele Herzberg, Avi Shapira, Saul Grinberg.
The girls (from the left) X, Agnita Rimer, Ica Zloczever, Iuliana, Shulamit. Behind Ica and Iuliana smiles Eugen Weitmann.





My Story

Itzhak Shapira

On August 19, 1964, which also happens to be my birthday, I reached Haifa Port on a ship named Moledet (Fatherland). In Romania, I was registered as Isaac Schapira, and on the ship itself, I told the clerk who processed me that my name was Itzhak Shapira, and that my last name was written Shapira, and no other way. I was thereby disconnected from my entire childhood.

I was born in Suceava, where I spent my entire childhood. My longest trip was to Falticeni for visits to Esther, my beloved grandmother on my mother's side and my two cousins there, Poli and Silviu, and their families. I traveled once to a village near Timisoara, where my uncle on my father's side, Ioşu, was the village doctor. Actually, you could say that my entire childhood was in small space – our two-room apartment (with no running water and an outhouse in the yard on the other side of the road), my grandfather's house, the churchyards, schools, and the fortress (Cetatea), where we went to play and dream about other worlds.

I was the only child of my mother, şeli, from the Beer family, which originally came from Falticeni, and my father, Udi, a native of Suceava. During WWII, my mother's family was deported to Dorohoi and to Suceava until September 1944. When they returned, her parents and their six children, they found their home burned down, and grabbed an empty house. My father was in Transnistria during the war, and I regret to this day that I did not have the patience to listen to his stories about hunger, distress and the troubles that they went through. Maybe I did not listen because I did not believe at the time that such things could happen. I was an only child, and I received a lot of love and pampering. My father was later sent to a labor camp in the Delta for forbidden activity, and my mother used to take a circuitous route to visit him every few months to bring him food, and especially cigarettes, which he traded for food that enabled him to survive there. My father later got cancer, and was hospitalized for a long time in Bucharest, where he died. My mother stayed constantly at his side with limitless devotion. Three months after my father's death, the Romanian government allowed us to immigrate to Israel, about ten years after we "registered." Several years after that, my grandmother and my mother had my father's body brought to Israel for burial.

That is why I spent most of my childhood in the home of my grandmother and grandfather, Elza and Artur Schapira. They lived in a large house with a big yard, not far from our apartment. They



took care of me and made sure I had everything I needed. They spoke Yiddish with each other, and in time, I also became fluent in the language. My grandfather was a very learned scholar in Halacha (Jewish law). His father, Itzhak, whom I am named after, was a rabbi and familiar with the Kabbala, but he believed that a public servant should not be a burden on the public, and made his living as a shochet (ritual kosher slaughterer). My grandfather learned a lot from him about Halacha – Mishna and Gemara – and of course had an amazing command of Hebrew and Aramaic.

His handwriting in Hebrew was also stunning. He of course tried to teach me Hebrew, and also German (which he spoke much better than Romanian), but at the time, it seemed ridiculous and unnecessary to me. I enjoyed seeing how he taught children for their bar mitzva, and especially his lesson in Gemara in the synagogue after prayers, when complicated texts in Aramaic were made to seem simple, logical, and understandable (in Yiddish, of course), even for a small boy. Many people came to consult him about Halacha. Even though he was a brilliant scholar, he behaved modestly, and dressed like everyone else in the town, and his rulings were mainly on the human aspect of questions. I remember a case of a new shochet in town who treated his wife in a way my grandfather considered “unfit” (he beat her). My grandfather was called to deal with the matter, and ruled that the man should leave his home and the town. That is what happened and how he dealt with violence in the family. Next to his house lived the Budic and Hibner families, with whom my parents had a deeply affectionate and daily friendship. Ruti Budic and Clara, another neighbor, were my mother’s best friends. Moshe Budic worked at the Alimentra supermarket, where he handled non-kosher food, probably including pork products. He went to my grandfather to discuss the question of whether he could serve as the cantor on Yom Kippur and other holidays, because he was afraid that he was unfit for the role. In his inimitable way, my grandfather put him at his ease, telling him that a livelihood was a livelihood, and did not keep him from leading the prayers., as long as he observed the commandments of Halacha and was a God-fearing person. What is interesting is that when my grandfather immigrated to Israel, the Vizhnitzer Rebbe, whom my father taught in heder (Jewish elementary school) sent goodwill messengers to my grandfather to recruit him as a supporter.

As a child, life in Suceava was good. There was plenty of food and space for games, and I had friends. On the other hand, the regime at the time was oppressive. We had to wait on endless lines for everything because of the austerity imposed by the Ceaușescu regime. My father used to move the radio dial to an approved local station after listening to a foreign station, on which they told the truth about what was happening in the Communist bloc, the US, and so forth, just in case a search was conducted, because it was forbidden to listen to foreign radio stations. He was careful



not to travel to a soccer game with a cart, so that he wouldn't be asked where he got the money for luxuries. They bought me a nice bicycle, which we stored in my grandfather's storeroom. Actually, I never rode it, out of fear that the neighbors would inform the authorities that my father had money for such things. The local newspaper consisted mostly of speeches by the leaders at some conference or other.

As I said, my connection with Suceava and Romania was severed when I immigrated to Israel. After about 30 years, I visited Bucharest on a work trip, and the local authorities fell all over themselves to do things for me, including taking me to Suceava with an escort convoy to visit my home town. I recognized the sites of my childhood by the churches and the schools, but I could find nothing else. After a few hours, I asked to leave, and didn't even have the mental strength to visit the fortress where much of my childhood was spent. Years later, before my eldest son went into the army, I took my children on a tour of my home town, and a few years after that, I traveled with my extended family and showed them the town of my childhood, the streets on which I walked, and the places where I played. My cousin Hava, whom we called Coca when she was a girl, was (with her parents Surica and Meir, and her brother Moshe) our neighbor in Suceava, and we were very friendly with them. A while ago, she notified me that Beno Budic had died, and said that my mother was a good friend of his stepmother, Ruti. I knew Beno and his family, of course, and I was sorry that he died. Hava also sent me some of his stories, and I was surprised at the richness of his writing in Romanian, most of which I have lost, his high literary level, and his memory for details from our distant past. Reading his stories, I revisited my childhood scenes, and I was surprised to discover that he also used to "enjoy" the apples in the yard of the church at the entrance to his home and that of the home of my grandfather. He also stood in line for bread at the hunchbacked merchant, and he also paid the ticket seller a bribe in order to see each movie innumerable times.

Together with the nostalgia, it is impossible to forget that the Jews of Suceava were deported to death camps in Transnistria operated by Romania. The final solution of the Romanians was to leave the Jews to their fate, without food, clothing, or other essential items, in freezing cold Ukraine. This was even before the Nazis settled the matter at the Wannsee Conference. It is impossible to forget the cruel Communist regime, the constant fear, and life under various restrictions there. Beno Budic summarized the story of his immigration to Israel by writing, "I left Suceava on the Sabbath, but Suceava has never left me." As far as I'm concerned, I left Suceava, and it has left me, at least in my daily life. In my opinion, had we remained there, we who grew up there could not have developed and achieved what we did.



As a side note, over the years, I had the opportunity to work on various projects with Shaiké Dan. Shaiké was parachuted into Romania in 1944 in order to assist British and American pilots who had to bail out in Romania. Among other things, he was among the founders of the Nativ organization, which brought Jews out of Eastern Europe. He told me quite a bit about how he got Jews out of Romania by passing bags of cash to people in the government there. We will not wish to recall how many dollars each “head” (of ours) was worth, including the 70 kilos of cloths and pans they allowed us to take with us to our new lives.



From the left: Arni Merdler, Micki Korner, Zwi Fuhrer, Iosele Fuhrman, Tuli Tzigelnik. In the back: Itzhak Shapira





My Story

Jacky Gotlieb

I am the eldest son of Hania Rozner from Radauți and Michael Gotlieb from Stroiești. My mother was deported to Lucinetz, Transnistria. Later on, she met her sister there who was deported from Suceava. Eventually, after the war, her sister's husband would introduce her to my father.

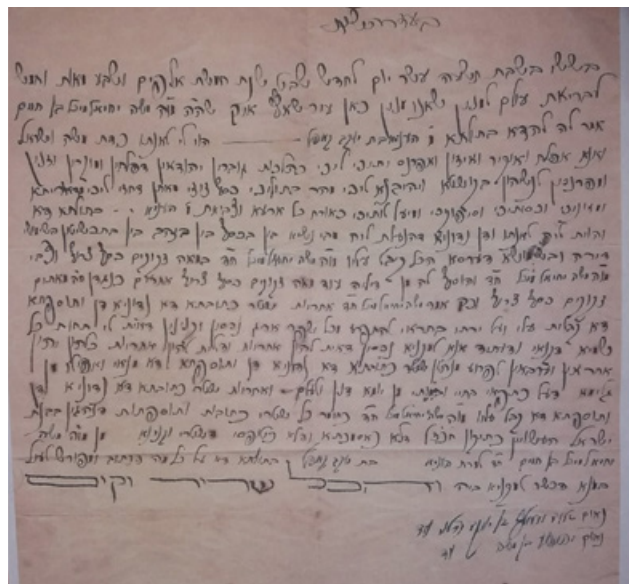
My father had three sisters and two brothers. They got separated during the deportation. My father fled from place to place until he reached Odessa. On the way, every now and then, he was caught and compelled to do forced labor, in road construction or laying train tracks.

In recent years I tried to trace my father's escape route. Although there are documents proving that he was at Koločovska, everything he remembered didn't match the German records and that was the reason he wasn't entitled to compensations.

One of my father's sisters died in Transnistria, but the other siblings survived and returned together with their mother.

In 1943, my mother started working as a nurse in the Russian army hospital.

In February 1945 my parents got married in Suceava and I was born in 1946.



This is my mother's KTUBA

Doctor Hoch was the obstetrician and he worked together with Mara's aunt, Mrs. Nossig. Our family doctor was Dr. Weitmann. In Transnistria my mom got sick with typhoid fever.

Despite the gravity of the illness, she survived. In Suceava, during the summer of 1957, my mom got sick with encephalitis which caused paralysis to the left side of her body. One of our cousins, who lived in Cluj, recommended Professor Prag from the Neurology Department at the City University Hospital. We took his advice and mom was hospitalized under his care. When she returned home we carried out the doctor's instructions regarding treatment and medication. My dad's sister took diligent care of mom at our house. A neurologist who was living across the street from the cinema suggested a Swiss drug which, of course, couldn't be found in Romania. My father



succeeded in acquiring the medicine with the help of our neighbors' daughter, who was working at the Foreign Affairs Ministry. It proved to be of great help. I remember perfectly the package, a small metal box; in it there were pills – like a small box with diamonds. A year later, we went to Felix Baths – a resort in Romania. We spent the entire month of August at Felix; we stayed at a local family. A routine was established. My aunt would accompany mom every day



Father, mother, I am standing, my younger brother sits in the middle

to treatment and return with her at noon (mom was afraid to return by herself). One day, my aunt came back earlier and told us that she would go later to bring mother back. Suddenly, I saw my mom returning all by herself, with no help at all. Mom returned to Suceava on her feet and healthy, as healthy as a Transnistria survivor could be, and, in 2019, on the 19th of April, she celebrated 100 years birthday!!!

In Suceava we lived at 28 Karl Marx Street, in the same neighborhood with Carla Wax, Harry Fleischer and Moshe Herzberg. I went to Mrs. Jescu's kindergarten. My classmates at Stefan cel Mare school were Naomi Haiimovich, Beno Budic, Iosele Fuhrman, Dutu Keren, Miki Kerner, Poldi Leinburd.

After the third grade I was transferred with some of the boys to Liceul de fete which became Scoala Mixta no. 2. I remember the uniform – trousers, a jacket slightly opened near the collar so the tie could be visible. When children were nine



On my knee, the third from the left



years old, they could join the “pionieri” and put around the neck the red scarf and the badge (insignia) on the jacket.

From my school days I have few memories. (I am the second from the right, on the next bench sits Emanuel Menczel).



My brother and I



Emanuel Menczel second in the first row. I sit in the adjacent bench

One memory is connected to the roll call, which took place in the schoolyard. I was standing in the last row, when, suddenly, I passed out. Before I fell down my teacher, Mr. Crudu caught me in his hands. To this day I have no idea why caused it. Another memory, this time a painful one, is connected to Pia. A group of children were talking, among them were Pia and I. I made a comment and Pia gave me a kick in the backside with her pointed shoe, a very painful hit.

At a certain time, we studied at school in shifts – the older kids studied in the afternoon.

Students had to carry out “volunteer” work and it was my class turn to pick corn from a relatively remote field, after Areni. Black clouds were building up in the sky and it was obvious that a storm



was about to begin. The instructor, who in the past presented me with the “pionier” tie, was joining us. As the storm was going to hit any minute, everybody started running. The instructor took me in his arms and carried me while running all the way to the nearest refuge. Heavy rain and hail hit us. My best friends were Tuli Tzigelnik, Emmanuel Menczel, Harry Fleischer, Miki Kerner, Zwi Fhurer, Arni Merdler. We played football together wherever there was an empty lot - near Tuli’s house next to the Securitate camp, or in Arni’s yard, or in the schoolyard.



From the left standing: I, Emanuel Menczel, Zwi Fuhrer,
kneeling first on the left and Moshe Herzberg, Alex
Stefanescu next to him



Micky Korner, Zwi Fuhrer, Yosele Fuhrman, and I

On the May 1, 1959 we played football. I was fighting for the ball against Tuli when I twisted my leg and my knee popped out of place. The pain was excruciating. As it was a holiday and no telephones were around, no one could help me. Among the boys was the son of Suceava’s chief of Securitate (șeful de Securitate). He ran home and told his father. It didn’t take long for the ambulance from Carta to come and they took me to the Suceava hospital. Because of the holiday the entrance to the main street was blocked and the ambulance was forced to make a detour on Marașești Street which wasn’t paved. The ride was bumpy, as the streets were full of broken stones. Every time the ambulance drove over stones it caused unbearable pain! All this hopping made my pain even stronger, but eventually it was my salvation. When I reached the hospital, I understood that the doctor on duty was an otolaryngologist and not an orthopedist. He wanted to put my leg in a cast and I was afraid; I worried since the doctor wasn’t a specialist. While all the preparations were being done, my knee got back to its place, apparently as a result of the hopping



on the way. I returned home on foot – quite a distance. All around my knee the skin was black and blue. However, since then, it popped out a few more times.

I studied Hebrew with Sonnensein sometimes at his house, other times at the synagogue. Later on, Efraim Weisbuch took his place.

As a means of stopping the Christian kids to go to church on Christmas, a dance night was organized at school and all students were invited. Attendance was mandatory and everybody had to come dressed in school uniform. The entire teacher faculty was present. Oh, joy?! I remember getting drunk at this party.

One day my mom was told that I was punished at school and that I had to write a great number of times a certain sentence (as was the custom in those days). She got extremely angry because I hadn't told her. I ran to our neighbors' house to escape punishment.

At first, I studied the piano, but on my way to the piano teacher I had to pass some houses with dogs in the yard. As a dog bit my mom, I got scared and refused to keep on going to the lessons. As a result, I started playing the violin with Buki Gropper. I was accepted in the school orchestra led by Doamna Şindilaru, whose nickname was "*muzicuța*" ("the harmonica")



From the left: Beate Herman with the violin, Gitta Segal at the piano, X, the brothers Stefan and Mihai Panzaru with violins, Iancu Manas, Rita Lauer, X playing the accordion, X, Beni Budic, I and Rosemery Rohrich with violins. Behind me Tully Zigelnik. At the door Mrs. Sindilaru, named "*muzicuța*"

My father used to read to me Shalom Aleichem's stories. My mother would speak to me in German and I would answer in Yiddish or Romanian.

Once a year I, my brother and my mom would go on vacation to visit distant relatives in Campulung or Vatra Dornei.

In November 1963 we were permitted to immigrate to Israel.





My Suceava Story

Jana (Ariela) Rohrlich

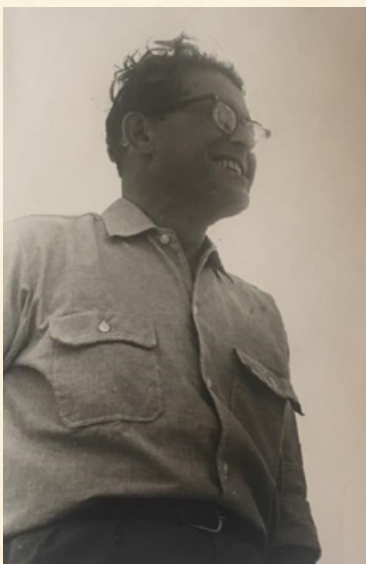
I lived only a few years in Suceava. When I heard about the project, I decided to write about my father, professor Rohrlich, Siegfried, Siggy, the teacher, Ziv... my father!!!! The task isn't easy. Although many years have passed since he left us, he is still very much alive in my heart. Writing about my dad takes me back and, suddenly, the feeling is as though he were alive, closer than ever. We are two sisters: Romy and I.



In our family there was a clear division between my sister, Romy – she “belonged” to mother and her relatives, whereas I – to my father.

However, we understood that our parents loved us, girls, equally and provided for each one's needs, and yet, I have always felt that I held a special place in my dad's heart, maybe because of my difficult birth. I was born prematurely by an extremely sick mother. I was told that, the night I was born, my

father didn't move from my crib, keeping an eye on me so I wouldn't die. He sat rocking me all night long...I have no idea if this is a true story or a family myth. Either way, the connection between us was forged forever.



My father taught French and Latin at the local Suceava girls' high-school. Being a teacher at heart, he was dedicated to teaching and education, none of his students could ever forget him. Teaching was not a vocation for him, but a mission, a way of life. As a result, the students really appreciated and valued his unique approach to the younger generation. When I visited Suceava with my sister and her classmates, I got to hear more stories about professor Rohrlich's glorious days as a teacher, as an educator and about the mark he left in his students' hearts. He devoted himself to his students.



Sometimes, my mom would get angry and say that he invested more in his students than in his family. I don't remember ever being emotionally neglected by my father. Actually, the other way around is true. I remember us reading together stories and going on long excursions on our town's streets. I was a little girl, but the moments spent with my father, are still alive; they were reawakened especially when I visited my native town. All of a sudden, I felt as though I was sitting again on his shoulders on the way uphill to the fortress (Cetate) on the wide forest paths... and again lying in the tall grass at Zamca, near the church. We used to watch the scenery taken place over us. Furthermore, I remember swimming together in the Suceava River, not being afraid of the thick reeds or of the deep waters. I always felt safe and shielded in my dad's hugging arms. I was a very young girl and his presence beside me contributed a great deal in shaping my future life. When we left Romania and immigrated to Israel father built a new household for us providing a safe existence for our family. He worked in every job that was offered in order to earn a living. My mother was a housewife and took care of our food, both physical and spiritual. My dad was a father figure worth to be admired; a combination of guidance, comfort, attentiveness, besides constant love and support. Walking together along life's path, dad instilled in me the love of teaching which ultimately turned into my life objective.

I didn't choose to teach languages, as he did. Actually, my sister followed this venue. I developed into a professional teacher and a fine educator nearly as good as my dad.

In Israel, being much appreciated, father was sent to France for the enhancement of the French language. Beforehand, he got a Hebrew name, as people used to get during those days in our young country. It happened during Hanukkah when a party was organized in my dad's honor. He was given an impressive Hanukkiah engraved with the words: "For our teacher who enlightens us with his light" and the name he received, Ziv (spark and brightness in Hebrew), befitted both the holiday and the man...In Israel, as in Romania, during all the years in which he served as principal, as a French teacher and as educator, the love and the honor bestowed upon him were numerous. He was sympathetic to his students' problems, invested time and effort and loved his job. For me, my dad continues to be a pillar I can lean on, a loyal companion through all the twists and turns in my life, easing my pain.



My father and I at my wedding



When my dad became a proud grandfather, first for my sister's children and later for mine, there wasn't a soul more loving and devoted than him. He was repaid with endless love.

When mother, his beloved wife for 51 years, died...his condition started to worsen. My love and devotion didn't help. Gradually, the man full of vigor and enthusiasm faded. Only the old man full of sadness and nostalgia remained. I hope that I had succeeded in relieving his final years of pain and give back a little for all the love he bestowed upon me.

My father has long been gone and I miss his smile and his assurance that everything will be all right. Rest in peace, dear father, our Siggyle who spread his light in the world.



Photo: Paul Leinburd





My Story

Karin Mandler

My name is Karin (Mandler) Gottfried.

In 1946, after WWII, my parents, Sigi and Fritzi Mandler, came to Suceava from Czernowitz, Bukovina. The first to arrive was my mother with her family. At the end of the war, being afraid of the Russian communist regime, they fled Czernowitz which was occupied by the Russians. They stayed with my cousin Mira Seidler's family in Suceava. For about five years, My mother had no news from my father. He was forcefully drafted into the Red Army. At that time, they were already married. Returning to Czernowitz after the war father found out that my mother was already in Suceava. The border between Romania and Russia was closed and nobody was allowed to cross it. My father got back only after a Suceava man was paid to sneak him illegally across the border. My mother collected money from rich friends and family members and paid for father's return a large sum of money.

I was born two years later, in 1949, at my cousin Mira's house.





My younger sister was born in 1954.
Here we are in the park

My mom decided to give birth to me and to my sister at home as, during those years, the sanitary conditions at the Suceava hospital were extremely poor. The midwife, Mrs. Nossik.

I have many pleasant memories from Suceava. Among them, I remember fondly the snow in winter and the beautiful ice formations on our house windows, The trips to the little forest outside the city called “*padurice*”, picnics on the Zamca hill, the walks from school to the fortress – cetate, were my favorites.

Once, while I was spending time on the Suceava riverbank, I lost my golden ring in the water. I loved going to Yiddish plays at Dom Polski theater hall. I took piano lessons with Miss Tiron and ballet lessons as well.

When I was 4 years old, Anna Schaefer’s grandfather, Dr. Strominger, who was my parents’ friend, came for a visit with his German shepherd dog. The dog entered the room holding a big bag in his mouth. The dog put the bag near me. When I opened it, I found a little black kitten. I was greatly surprised and happy, as I loved cats very much.

As children, Mario Wasserman and I were very close friends, our parents were good friends as well. One evening we went with our mothers to the park. The moon was big and beautiful and we decided to throw stones at the moon. One stone hit Mario on his head. He was injured and our mothers were extremely worried. I went to Scoala Mixta nr. 2.

My school was in the Volksgarten Park. I remember that, at a “*pionieri*” ceremony, out of five students who were supposed to receive the red tie, four were Jews.

Even as a little girl, I knew my parents were living in a lot of stress because of the communist regime and its strict laws. It wasn’t allowed to leave the country as desired. My parents went to



Mario Wassermann and I



Bucharest almost every year to submit documents to get a visa for Israel. The years went by and nothing happened. In September 1958, a secret police high-ranking officer came to our house. When my mother saw him, she started trembling with fear. However, he came to hand her our passports. This made her so happy that she even kissed him. He told her that we were allowed to tell the big news to others only a few days before departure. So we withheld the news from our family and friends.

The day of our departure arrived, and our family and friends came to say goodbye. The Suceava railway station was outside the town, in Itcani. To get there we needed a vehicle. My parents decided to take a carriage with horses, a "*fiker*", very common at that time.

While we were making our way slowly through the town some Jewish friends opened their windows and waved to us goodbye. The carriage continued its way slowly, when, suddenly, a bus carrying all my parents' friends passed us by. They also waved to us. Later on, two taxis in which there were members of our family passed us. Finally, our carriage reached the railway station and there we saw family members and all our friends waiting for us. We parted with everybody with hugs, kisses and tears, boarded the train to Bucharest and left Suceava to fulfill our dream of building a new life in Israel.





A Field Day at the Suceava River Grassland

Karol Abramovici

I was a student at Stefan cel Mare High School in Suceava. In those days, I was still excited about my new status as a student in this prestigious and famously laborious school, with strictly controlled discipline and serious teachers. I was a good student but a naughty one too. I spent my free time with my older cousin Karol the Great, two years my senior, who attended Liceul de Fete High school. This school was a more relaxed school regarding discipline.

More than once, I heard Karol's friends talking about days of fun they had instead of school days. I was curious to know how they managed to skip class, and still managed to keep up with what their studies and homework. Nonetheless, I considered them heroes, older and wiser, worthy to be role models.

It started during the morning bus-ride to school from Itcani to Suceava. It was a beautiful sunny day. The bus slowed down because of the bumpy road. Sitting at the window-seat I overheard the big guys chatter: "such a nice day, isn't it a pity to spend it at school?". An alternative was considered instantly: "a fun day at the Suceava River Grassland". They went on to planning the details: where exactly would it be better to bathe, how large was the food stock they had, and more. I envied their dauntless planning, but I felt like a coward. I wanted to join them but I was also worried I would get in trouble.

Suddenly, like a lightening the decision hit me: I also wanted to join the adventure.

I whispered in a low voice: "I want to join in". A lively discussion quickly ensued: pros and cons regarding me joining the group were brought up and debated. The arguments against me joining the big boys were that I was still a rookie, a novice, I might reveal the activity to my parents in some way or another. After pleading my case and considering my contribution to the food stock: two fine sandwiches and two apples, I got the green light, but only after I took an oath not to reveal a word to anyone. We reached the final stop on our route. Our group of 5 boys started to go back from the town to the Suceava Grassland by the River, between Burdujeni and Itcani.

I remember getting off the bus and turning left towards the river instead turning right to school. A flash of conscience struck me but I was gone very quickly, especially after seeing the contempt and superiority stares on my friends' faces. It was a really fun day. We bathed, ate, told jokes. At the appointed time, we started walking home towards Itcani, along the railroad tracks. While walking



back I was briefed on what to tell my parents when I get home, how not to raise suspicions and how to keep the secret.

My mother had the habit to ask me questions about my school day. She usually asked how it was, did I get any grades, was I tested orally by the blackboard.

Father, may he rest in peace, was never involved in school affairs. He worked hard at the Itcani Crasma – his business at the Itcani alehouse. When I got home, my mom started the usual drill of questions, for which I was fully prepared. Nevertheless, I sensed something unusual in her voice and in her facial expressions. Suddenly, while reciting the answers the way I was instructed by my friends, my mom retorted: “so how come father came to school to pick you up and was told you didn’t show up? He planned to go with you to apply for an ID certificate”. I felt the sky falling on me. Never before had dad gone to my school. Mom would always come to the parent-teacher meetings, or when my parents were summoned to discuss my mischievous behavior.

The situation deteriorated quickly. It didn’t take long my mom to learn the truth: where I was, what I did, and with whom. The situation worsened when my friends’ parents got involved. Those who initially objected me joining the party felt they were right: “we told you not to allow him to join us”.

It took me a lot of time to redeem my good name.

In spite of the conundrum, I don’t remember feeling sorry for my actions. Thinking about it, there is nothing sweeter than the taste of sin.



Photo: Paul Leinburd





Christmas Blessing Wishes

Karol Abramovici

Christmas time had always been for us, Suceava and Itcani children, a time of thrill and excitement. On the eve of New Year, December 31st, which was by far the most important evening of the year children would visit the neighbors and wish them a happy new year in the traditional Romanian way.

We waited for this event all year. The preparations started a few weeks earlier and was organized like a military operation: we planned, rehearsed, performed, gave each other feedback and drew conclusions to perfect the act.

Jewish and Christian kids between the ages of 12-14 operated in teams of 4-5 each. Each of us had a role: There was the head of the group, a kid was responsible for ringing the bells (clopotei), a kid responsible of the money people donated, a kid who recited and sang the traditional song called “*uratura*” (blessing), and finally a kid who had to build and operate the Buhai.

The song went like this:

*Aho, aho, copii și frați,
Stați puțin și nu mânați
Și cuvântul mi-ascultați:*

*Am plecat să colindăm
Pe la case să urăm,
Plugușorul românesc
Obiceiul strămoșesc.*

*Vă urăm cum se cuvine
Pentru anul care vine
Holde mari
Cu bobul des
Și pe creste
Și pe șes!*

*Ahoy, ahoy, children and brothers,
Wait a little, don't drive passed
Listen to me please:*

*We went caroling
Blessing houses,
According to the Ancestral custom
The “Romanian Plow”*

*For the upcoming year
On the ridges and on the plains
We wish you abundant crops
Rich in grains.*



*Câte mere în livezi
Atâtea vite-n cirezi;
Câtă apă în izvoare*

*Cattle heads as many as apples in the orchards,
Milk as much as water in the springs.
Wealth for home and country*

*Să ne fie-ndestulată
Casa toată!
Țara toată!
Ia mai mânați, măi flăcăi!
Și strigați cu toții, măi!
Hai, hai!*

*Cheer on, guys!
And shout! All of you!
C'mon C'mon!*

The Buhai accompanied the song and emphasized its meaning.

A few words about the Buhai. This makeshift musical instrument consists of two main parts: a large can or tin or a small barrel open on one side and a 0.5 cm diameter hole in the middle of the other side, from which dangled a braid made of horsehair. The tin part was easily obtained from any grocery store. The problem was obtaining the horsetail hair to make the typical sound of the Buhai. My story is about how I managed to build the Buhai on time.

My family and I lived in Itkani next to the train station. Opposite the exit, horse-drawn carriages were stationed in order to service the passengers who wished to travel to Suceava. December was always a very cold month. Most passengers preferred to take the bus or a taxi (which operated, but in very small numbers). Consequently, the coachmen would sit idly for hours, often falling asleep in their fur coats. The carriage station was my destination for getting this coveted essential item. The horsetail is the ID and the pride of the horse. The coachman would groom it, comb it with a special comb. I tried several times to buy a few horsehairs but each time I was categorically denied. The coachmen were well aware that the Christmas season was a perilous time regarding the integrity of their horses' tail hair. They did whatever they could to protect the animals. Among other measures, the coachmen made a mutual assistance pact to prevent such theft.

Stealing horsehair was a bold endeavor requiring careful planning and execution. I had the knowhow: buggies' schedule, coachman's characteristics. It was important to know whether the coachman was able to chase me in case he caught me. On D-Day, the operation started under the cover of darkness. Equipped with a pair of scissors I skulked beside the carriages while the coachmen were napping. I approached a horse from the opposite side to the sidewalk, grabbed a handful of hair and cut. The cutting was the critical moment of the operation: the coachman could wake up, the horse could kick or make protest sounds that would alarm the coachmen. If



the operation was successful, I would continue to walk nonchalantly as if nothing had happened, serene but careful not to attract attention from the surrounding coachmen or people passing by on the opposite side walk.

Nevertheless, the operation has not always gone according to plan; people walked down the street, or the coachman didn't fall asleep. It meant that I had to repeat the procedure the next evening. As you may have already guessed, I was determined to complete the task successfully and on time. I couldn't let my team down. I had to be ready for the upcoming rehearsals. Otherwise, what would I tell my friends?

I would like to point out that I would never cut the whole amount of hair from one single horse; by doing so I might damage its beauty and pride. Moreover, the horse's owner would be terribly upset (there were Jewish coachmen as well), or even get a heart attack.

I used to repeat the operation several times to ensure that the outcome would be a three-way win situation: for the horse, the coachman and myself.

In hindsight I am wondering: was this the sort of conduct you would expect from a nice 12 year old Jewish boy who played the violin?



Itceni Church – photo Nicu Idol page





Good Intention, Poor Results

Karol Abramovici

I would like to mention, right from the start, that I was an excellent student, but a naughty kid. At the end of each school year I was awarded one of three certificates of excellence, but with a caveat. It was stated: “this certificate is awarded for outstanding academic achievements...”, but the end of the sentence: “...and good behavior” would be scratched out.

The incident I am going to tell you about happened when I was a student in the 7th grade in Ițcani elementary school. One time, after I had behaved mischievously in the class, the teacher asked me to leave the room. It wasn't the first time I was punished in this manner, so I took it in a stride. When I stepped outside, I met two other kids in the schoolyard who were punished similarly. Right next to our school stood a beautiful Catholic church, which was decorated with multi-colored stained-glass windows. The parishioners were extremely proud of their church and the fine artisanship that adorned the church uniquely. The two kids in question were busy throwing stones at the windows, competing whose stone gets closer to the church.

Since I had been training throwing stones at the Suceava River pasture for some time, I became quite a skillful stone-thrower. Feeling apt and proud about my skill, I quickly joined the boys and started coaching them, showing them how to throw stones properly. It was a matter of holding the hand at specific right angle, applying the amount of energy suitable to ensure the right trajectory to the target.

My demonstration resulted in hitting the target successfully in two out of three throws. Their results were far less good. We summed up the activity agreeing that more practice under my guidance was necessary in order to improve their skill.

Luckily, the school bell rang; otherwise, we would have continued the act. The commotion started the next day. Complains were raised by church officials, the local police started an investigation, and the school administration became involved. The inquiry ended very quickly. It turned out that both boys praised my ability to throw stones before the entire school. Positive result indeed. The inquiry report stated: “Jew breaks church windows”.

From my perspective, I was simply helping my friends improve their physical fitness and their stone-throwing skills. Case summary: My dad (may he rest in peace), paid a large sum of money to repair the windows, to calm the clamor and to change the report title into: “children's mischief”. I am still pondering over the question: If damaging a synagogue by Christians is considered anti-Semitic, what is it called when Jews damages a church?





My Story

Lica Olarasu

Philosophers who contemplate the meaning of happiness believe that living in the past doesn't offer much to it and being preoccupied with the future might lead the way towards doubts and worries and, therefore, doesn't instill a feeling of well-being. As a result, the search for happiness points in the direction of the present – here and now.

I was asked to write my memories; I chose not to do it in a chronological order, but according to the imprints they left in my heart. That is why I will start with the day I had to part with my mother.

My mother

I will never forget the terrible day at the geriatric department of the Sharon Hospital in Petach Tikva. Suffering from an abundance of illnesses and undergoing dialysis, my mom had been already hospitalized. For six weeks they tried to treat the accursed illness – kidney failure. In addition, she suffered from a number of other illnesses, which is better not to elaborate on. Every day after work, I would go to visit her, to keep her company and to assist in any way I could. I felt she was fading away, that I was losing her gradually. Every evening the professor used to make his rounds. He used to greet us and, in terse language, he explained to us that my mom's condition was unchanged. He would then lower his voice and whisper that he did not expect any change.

On that bitter day, the professor's visit started as usual. However, this time his examination took longer and, unlike, the usual routine, he asked me to accompany him to his office. My heart started to beat faster. I wondered if the uncontrollable worries, I was feeling portended by something awful he was going to inform me about. "We reached a point in which we have to make some difficult decisions. The gangrene on your mother's legs has started to spread. Both her legs must be amputated."

I was dumfounded by the doctor's verdict; I asked for time to think and consult. "There is no time", said the professor. "If we don't proceed with the amputation immediately, everything will be over next morning. I am here for you. Of course, we won't do anything without your consent." "All the same" was my reply, "I have to think about it", I left trembling and went into the hallway. I was thinking of my beautiful, generous mother who brought me into this world; her life was full of struggles to provide for us.



Having to choose between amputation and losing her altogether, backed me into a corner. Despite the fact that I hadn't smoked for 17 years, I bought a packet of cigarettes and went to the smoking area. I had never felt so lonely before in my life; I was the one who had to choose between two horrendous options. Somehow, it didn't seem fair to me to involve my son and my wife in this dilemma. How could I burden them with the responsibility for the impossible question; should I add to mom's horrible suffering or should I come to terms with the end? I tried to find the logic of it. Adding suffering without having a prospect of hope didn't seem fair to my mother. I went back to the professor and told him in a broken voice that I didn't agree. The professor looked at me sympathetically. Suddenly I understood that I was left with a few precious hours to spend with my mother. Reality kicked in. I took mom's hand into mine and our eyes met. She beckoned to get near and kissed me on my forehead.



My beautiful mom

I understood she knew I was saying goodbye. I kept holding her hand and my thoughts took me back to Suceava, to our house, to the horses in the yard, to my childhood friends - Iziu, Johnny, Hermica, Maricica, Radu Spataru, Marcel Gitter and others.

At dawn, a man I didn't know came to me and gave me his business card. "I make headstones", he told me. "If you want you can use my services". I realized that "Hevra Kadisha" works like a Swiss clock. Everything ended.

Three days later I was standing next to my mother's grave. On my mom's headstone was engraved according to my desire:

"שמע קול בכי עליך כלו עיני בדמעות באהבה עטפתיני עליך נפשי בערגה תמיד. בנך"
*"Hear my weeping voice, my eyes full of tears; I wrap you with my love,
 my everlasting longing for you. Your son"*.



My family's Story

It is customary to think that one of the characteristics of a Jewish family is migration. My family was one of “wandering Jews” as well. My mother was born in Roman, and, following her father (my grandfather), Yaakov Helman, bless his soul, she moved to Falticeni and after that to Suceava. My grandfather was, among other things, a cantor, one of the first to establish, after the war the synagogue Chevre Gah in Suceava. He's name is still on a plaque in the synagogue.



My maternal grandfather,
Yaakov Helman

Suceava wasn't the last stop in my mother's itinerary. When I immigrated to Israel, I took my mom and dad with me. My father was born in Ciumuleasa (I believe that you have never heard of such a place). His parents, his four brothers, and a sister were born and lived in the village. Later, the entire family moved to Lespezi, then to Dolhasca, Falticeni, ultimately reaching Suceava. During WW II they were deported to Transnistria.



These are my paternal grandparents, Olarasu, with their sons and daughter. Another son is missing from the photo since he immigrated to Palestine before the war

When they returned, my paternal grandmother got very sick. She passed away on 28.8.1944. I remember this date since she died on the day I was born (not the year I was born). That's why every year on my birthday there was also a memorial service for my grandmother.

”גם אם אגרש הזכר, המראה האיום הנורא - הוא חוזר ודבק ומתעתע, שבעתיים מפחיד עיד אימה. הוא חוזר ודבק וקודח, וקשה, נוראה התמונה. למרות שחלף, כמו איננו, המראה, מעשה משכבר, הוא קרוב, הוא נוגע, הנה הוא וגם מלבבי ניגר. לכן על הכל מסתכלת, בלי שמחה, בלי אושר, בקור. רק עלבון בי, שנאה מתסכלת. ואין על דרכי עוד אור, לכן מסביב יש רק עלטה.”



Our house was close to the Electrical Company, to the big Flour Mill and up the road to the famous little forest (Paduricea). I remember that in the forest there was a fountain, which served as a reference point. From there the road split into a fork – one leading to the Jewish cemetery, the other one to the Christian cemetery. A little further, away there was Stefan cel Mare's fortress (Cetatea). The road also led to a number of villages: Ipotesti, Bosanci and Lisaura. One could say that our house was situated at the town's periphery, but in reality we were closer to the center.

My father and his brother were wheat merchants. My mother was my father's right hand. Once a week they would drive the horse-carriage to the market in Dolhasca. My father overlooked the communist régime orders; people weren't supposed to be

merchants. After being followed, he was arrested, convicted and sentenced to many years in prison. He served his sentence in Poarta Alba, near Constanta (a port town at the Black Sea).

As it usually happens in life, something goes wrong and it has an impact on your entire life. As a supplemental source of income, my father bought gold (Napoleon coins, rings, watches) to give his family a chance to survive in times of trouble.

My father confided in mother about the hiding place, the site where his "bank" was buried. It was at Michel (Haiim), my mother's brother, headstone, in the Jewish cemetery.

What did the loyal sister do? She told her brother Haiim the big secret.

Haiim was a gold merchant, and thus followed, arrested and tortured to divulge the place he had hidden the valuables. Believing that father had less gold than he did, he decided to snitch on his brother-in-law's hiding place, hoping that this would reduce the jail time he was



My mother and father got married on October 28, 1945 and started a family on 32 Pushkin street in Suceava



Haiim, my mother's brother



Michel, my mother's brother





My maternal grandparents and Haiim

supposed to serve. It turned out that he was wrong twice my father had much more gold than he did, he destitute and harmed his sister. He was sentenced to more years in jail than he would have if he had announced the authorities of his possession. So, my father was in jail, my uncle was in jail and my mother worked from six o'clock early morning until ten at night, in a bakery in the park opposite the main town's library.

The moment Haiim, her son, my mother's brother, was arrested, my grandmother, who was blind, was left alone at home.

She was the only grandmother I knew and I loved her dearly, in spite of not being my mother's real mom (therefore, not my real



My most beloved grandma

grandmother). Facing the gravity of the situation, my mother had no choice, but to ask me to take care of my grandmother, every day from 4 p.m. to the next day at 8 o'clock a.m., when I had to go to school. Accordingly, I had to sleep at her house. I was 12 at the time. This was my life for a year. It had a deep impact on my soul. My grandmother had Austrian roots and under her supervision, I read for the first time Heine's poems, Goethe. She hired for me a violin teacher named Dimitriu (I think he was also Bumtiu Spivak's violin teacher).

The government amnestied all those involved in gold transactions (late 50s). My mom's brother came back and declared that there was no future for him in Romania and that he wanted to immigrate to Israel. For this reason, he needed all the money (gold) he possessed. However, he would give back what he had taken from us, if the circumstances got favorable. The moral is, if you reveal your secret, don't be surprised if you are left with nothing.

When I returned home from my grandmother, my mother decided I was mature enough (12 years old) to travel by myself to Poarta Alba to bring my father food packages and to see how he was doing. I would not wish any teenager of 12 to travel alone by train at night from Suceava to Poarta Alba, for 12 hours. Even today, when I am "a little" older, I'm not able to travel at night by train.



“כי כל מי שיש לו, נתון יינתן לו ושפע יהיה לו, אך מי שאין לו, גם מה שיש לו יילקח ממנו” (מתי, כ"ה, 29).

It means:

“but he that has not, from him shall be taken even that which he has” (Matthew, 22, 25).

I was born on August 28, 1946 in Suceava. Eight days after that my parents brought someone to mark me for life. Despite it, I know from reliable sources, that later in life nobody complained or was not happy about it.

Every person has a name and, according to tradition, it has to be decided on the eighth day. However, the process through which I got my name proved not to be that easy. For example, according to his identity card, my father's name was Strul Herscu. Nevertheless, on my identity card, my father printed the name Herman, but, when I was called up to the Torah reading in the synagogue, my father was called Zwi Israel. Pretty confusing. The story of my name is no less complex. It seems that on the eighth day of my birth there were some negotiations going on between members of my family regarding my name. My paternal grandfather proposed Wolf, after his brother, while my maternal grandmother asked to name me after her son – Michel. My mom decided my name would be Lica. That's why, whenever my family got together for holidays or at the synagogue, some of my relatives called me Velvale (Wolf), my grandmother called me Shelu (that actually is Michel) and my parents called me Lica. What's more, since I arrived in Israel, I have been called Zeev (which actually means Wolf). Because of the multiple names I bear, an attention problem has developed.

August 28 is not only my birthday and the commemoration of my grandmother's death, but has a historical meaning. On this day, in the year 70 AD, the Romans, led by Titus, destroyed the Second Temple in Jerusalem, marking the end of the Jewish state. In memory of this event, I used to go to the Western Wall in Jerusalem to pray for my loved ones and, at the same time, I make the victory sign as a symbol of our being here, in our country, and for the fact that we are ready to sacrifice our life in order to defend it.

Childhood

When I was about three years old, my grandfather passed away. When I returned from the funeral, one of our neighbors played a practical joke on me: “*You know*” he said, “*your grandfather doesn't have a chamber pot to urinate in*”. I didn't say a word to anyone. I took my chamber pot and I walked for about 2 kilometers to bring it to my grandfather's grave. I returned home 4 hours later, and I found out that everyone was worried because of me. I couldn't understand. My mother took me aside and,



“Marine suit” was in fashion. My mom made sure I got one, with a cap



without too many explanations, spanked me. I started crying and I told her: “*What have I done wrong? After all, I did bring grandfather my chamber pot so he can use it*”.

After attending school, in the afternoons, I used to play different games with my friends, studied Torah with Sonenstein or read books and poems. But, most of all I liked to take care of our horses and feed them. Our transport company used horse-carts to deliver and trade goods.

Holidays:

On Jewish holidays, I used to sit at the synagogue all day long. For me Pesach was special. On the eve of the holiday the traditional ceremony started: switching all kitchenware and searching the house for chametz. Before the Seder night the search for chametz crumbs, as I see it, is like the story in which someone locked themselves in a room and doesn't know he has the key: I understood that our sages forced us to look into our souls. Holding a small-lit candle (which symbolizes our soul) we were passing from room to room in search for chametz. We looked along the walls (which symbolize our heart), in the corners. I considered searching for chametz as the very heart of Pesach tradition, our freedom celebration. The purpose of searching for the *chametz* is to find the key to our soul, to our freedom.

Another Pessach tradition engraved in my memory is to get everything kosher mehadrin. In Suceava, there was doubt regarding the kashrut of the water we were receiving; therefore, my father made wine from the oranges we got from Israel. During the eight days of the holiday, we drank only orange wine made from Israeli fruit. I remember that when I was 8 or 9 years old, during the Chol Hamoed, in the morning, I drank orange wine and went to school drunk. When I reached Clara Wagner's small wine shop (bodegă) I fell and started bleeding. I still have scars from that event.

My Bar Mitzvah Celebration:

I was 13 years old when my father was in prison. The burden of preparing me for my bar mitzvah fell on my uncles. They made a face-saving gesture taking me to the synagogue and staying with me for about 15 minutes. When we got out, they told me that I was a “real man”. The ridiculous celebration felt like a slap on my face, a frustrating missed opportunity.

33 years passed and my son reached the bar mitzvah age. The deep scar left in my heart by the so-called “bar mitzvah celebrations” made me organize an impressive festivity for my son. I rented the banquet hall at “Diplomat” Hotel in Tel-Aviv; I invited all the workers at the factory that I managed at the time to celebrate with us.



Next year, my grandson, Idan, will reach the mitvah age. In honor of this event, I suggested to my son to organize a similar celebration in Tel Aviv. His reaction surprised me. *“Father”, he said, “I don’t remember anything from my bar mitzvah. In addition, Tel-Aviv doesn’t seem to me an impressive place at all. For Idan’s bar mitzvah I am organizing a trip to the United States, during which he will go to NBA games. This will be a trip he will never forget.” I was speechless; every generation has its quirks! The conclusion – if you don’t know anything about children’s parties, don’t guess what they may wish!*

A 50-Year-Old Friendship:

When I was 17, I passed by the post office in Suceava. On the other side of the park, I met a beautiful girl; we studied at the same school. I saw her many times. Without thinking twice, I asked her to be my girlfriend. We are celebrating now 55 years together. It can be said, without a doubt, that our intuition was right. I am happy and she has declared many times that she is happy too. We didn’t get anything from anyone. We have three grandchildren who brighten up our lives and wrap us with their love. It is well known that everybody claims he has the most beautiful, the most successful and the best grandchildren; so do we. We are definitely happy.

Photos of Dorina's family. Dorina is my dear wife.



Dorina’s grandparents, the Leibovici



Dorina's parents, the Leibovici



Dorina’s maternal grandparents



Here is what my granddaughter wrote on my birthday:

“To our beloved grandfather,

Thank you for always taking care of us. Sometimes when we go to the mall you would like to buy the whole store and this is a little too much. But, we know that your intentions are good. Thank you for loving us no matter our moods – when we are angry, sad or happy. Based on your vast life experience, you are always the one who puts things in the right perspective.

As you always say, life is like a travelling train. Along the way people get on and some get off. In my opinion, people who get on the train are successful people, happy with their lives. We wish you never get off the train; we wish you keep on travelling because you really deserve to stay on this train.

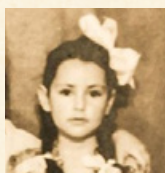
We would like to wish you good health. As you say, some things aren't up to us. I, personally, won't forget the night in the emergency room. I and Rony kept complaining but you calmed us down. Thanks to you, we survived that night. I can definitely tell you that if mom and dad had been there, things would have looked different – not necessarily for the better.

We wish that you and grandmother would always stay on the love train. Keep on buying grandma beautiful and expensive gifts and keep on being an amazing husband.

*So, grandpa, happy birthday! We love you to the end of the world,
Your children and grandchildren.”*

Do you still remember Matthew's prophecy “he that has not, from him shall be taken even that which he has”. It turns out that even if you didn't get a well-enough start in life you can still succeed and get the utmost love possible from your wife and grandchildren. Isn't it amazing! Life is worth living when the family you created surrounds you.





Recollections from a Place where the Lilac Blooms and Fear Rules

Lily Weintraub

Introduction

In a city not known to many, in Eastern Europe, there are still streets and houses. However, our own houses have long been destroyed in an attempt to wipe out the memory of the Jews who were born, resided and lived in them. Our neighbors' and relatives' faces are hard to remember today. Most of them can be found in the Jewish cemetery located on the outskirts of the city. There they rest in peace and quiet, among tall trees, being good neighbors and trying to hold onto past memories for those who occasionally drop by.

When the time comes, the images of the people who are writing this book will also fade from the memory of generations to come. To this end, this mosaic of tales attempts to capture the fragrance of the past, the taste of life abroad, the spirit of that period: our childhood in a communist city, the memory of our parents who had lost their youth in Transnistria. As our parents had requested before, we would like to ask the readers: "Remember us!".

The beginning

My mother, 21 years old, two years after returning home from Transnistria, was about to give birth on a Thursday in June in our apartment only after calling the midwife herself. The obstetrician was Dr. Lang. I was in a hurry to emerge into the world, so my speedy birth left a positive impression in everyone's memory. Mother was looking for a name to commemorate her grandmother Leah. In consultation with father and the doctor they decided to call me Lily.

Father went to the Chevre Gach Synagogue to bless my birth and call me by name.

Later, when grandfather Itzik Weintraub wanted to tease me, he used to call me, jokingly, "Leah" or "Leah'le" – both names I disliked, but I knew what he meant and joined his laughter.

I have my mother's face, and as Nurit Zarchi, the Israeli poet wrote in her poem "The Face", she also got her face from her mother. My grandmother from Suceava gave me her face through my mom. Such a long journey! That's how she passes it onto her grandchildren in Israel, then



to the great grandchildren. In my family those who are born receive a gift – the face of grandma from Suceava.

In those days we lived in a single-room apartment rented from Domnisoara Drapel.

Because my mother couldn't produce enough breast milk to feed me, I was hungry and cried at nights. Father used to drag the heavy pram down the long staircase and walk me through the empty streets, until I finally fell asleep. Soon they started feeding me solid foods. I have never liked porridges, not even as a baby. My mother was a great cook, and I had a good appetite....

I was blessed for being loved by many people who made me happy, and I don't only refer to my family, but also to my neighbors. Doamna Gusta Strominger, who lived on the ground floor, used to play with me, tell me stories and teach me long poems in German, which I recited by heart. Others used to pinch my chubby cheeks, calling me fondly "tuterl, tuterl". I liked it less, but even as a baby I understood it was an act of affections. Ghenia, who worked with father in the textile shop downtown used to hug me, sit me down on the counter (*pe tejghea*) and encourage me to stand on my feet, saying "*copacel, copacel*", namely "stand upright like a small tree".

Thinking about my childhood in this manner, by piecing together past events from shards of memories and faded images, is like putting a huge puzzle back together. In a way it's like reliving my life.

The roots

My mother's family lived in Suceava for many years.



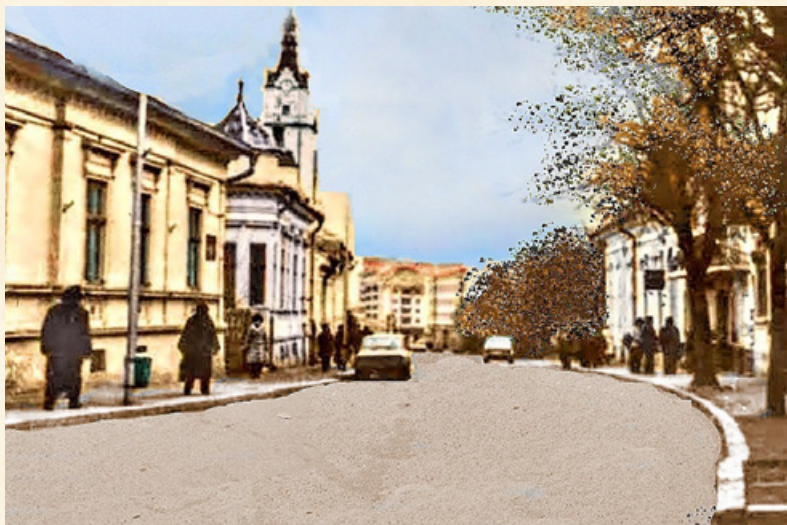
This is a postcard from 1898, a time when my great grandfather, Moses Itzig, lived in town. The records of Suceava's "yellow pages" equivalent from 1909, state in German: *Itzig Moses Bäcker, Langegasse 40* (Langegasse – the long street - was renamed in later years to Petru Rares str.).

My great-grandfather Moses had three sons and a daughter: Moritz, Leon, Adolf and Anna. My grandfather's two brothers studied in Vienna. Leon became a dentist. Adolf became a pharmacist. Anna, their sister, went to Bucharest and married Sami Schneberg. All the Itzigs and their families were deported to Transnistria.



My mother and her parents, Moritz and Amalia Itzig.

On October 9, 1941 a drummer announced the deportation order. On the eve of the deportation, my grandma, Amalia, was sick in bed. Therefore, my grandfather and my fifteen-year-old mom packed a few things, harnessed the horse, which was usually used for delivering bread by cart to the neighboring villages, laid her sick mother on the cart, and went together to the Wagners' home. Mom held the harness and in walked beside the cart, at an even pace, not to attract too much attention. It was forbidden to change your address, since the Jewish town population was deported according to the order of streets pre-announced in the deportation decree. Mother succeeded to lead the cart from Petru Rares Street to the main street, Stefan cel Mare, the residence of my grandmother's sisters. Despite her fear of animals, mom managed to get there and unite the families. Amalia Itzig, Clara Wagner, Berta Hacker, their brother Emanuel Wagner, and eat-grandma were deported together with their respective families.



They took part in the second transport, on October 10, Clara

The main street in Suceava. On the left in the white house lived the Wagners. Opposite their house was the Cinema (Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru)



and Max Wagner's son, Marcel Wagner, who was paralyzed, was among the deportees. They took comfort in the fact they were together. The decision to keep the family together proved to be a wise one. The chances of survival were higher when the extended family was present, offering help or even moral support. Marcel, great grandmother and Marcel's portable toilet were carried to Burdujeni's train station on a cart. The other family members walked on foot.

Before leaving home, mother went to her friend, the priest's daughter, in order to give her the candlesticks, the silver cutlery and some valuables for safekeeping. When the family came back from Transnistria, these items were never returned. The priest claimed they were lost, although my mother saw them when she came to visit.

The Itzig, Wagner and Hacker families were deported to Shargorod, crossing the Dniester River in Ataki. So were all my grandfather Itzig's siblings and their respective families. The chairperson of the Jewish Committee from Suceava, the lawyer Dr. Meir Teich was instrumental in keeping things orderly in Shargorod. As far as I know Dr. Teich had one son, Gideon. He was ill even before the deportation. At Shargorod he died. His mother, Mrs. Teich committed suicide. They were buried together in the same grave.

M. Carp reported in his famous "CARTEA NEAGRA" – "The Black Book" about the following incident that occurred in Shargorod in 1942 (a year after the deportation).



Ana Teich (2/17/1890-8/15/1943) and Gideon Alexander Teich (2/27/1923-8/15/1943), Shargorod (photo Beit Lochamei Haghetaot)

5 octombrie 1942
 Maiorul Orășeanu, comandantul Legiunii de jandarmi Moghilău vine la Șargorod, pentru a anunța personal pe conducătorii ghetoului, că a ordonat evacuarea la Peciora, a unui număr de 3 000 evrei din raion și anume câte o mie din ghetourile: Șargorod, Djurin și Murafa. După lungi tratative, maiorul a consimțit să revoce ordinul după ce a primit prețul convenit: o piatră de briliant de un carat și jumătate.

12 octombrie 1942
 La Moghilău începe evacuarea a 3 000 evrei în lagărul Peciora. Generalul Iliescu, inspectorul Jandarmeriei Transnistria, recomandă să fie trimiși cei săraci, întrucât — după părerea sa — oricum sunt sortiți pieirii, iar lagărul Peciora este special creat în acest scop.
 Comitetul Evreiesc intervine pe lângă Legiunea de jandarmi ca deportarea să se facă în loturi de câte 500 oameni.
 Cunoșcând faima lagărului despre care se știe în toată Transnistria că este "lagărul morții", după cum indică de altfel și o tăbliță atârnată la poarta de intrare, populația ghetoului, caută cu orice chip să scape de evacuare. Fie că stau ascunși în beciuri sau hrube, fie că fug, în vreme de ploaie pe câmp, adăpostindu-se în porumbiște, șanțuri etc., evreii sunt



October 5, 1942

Major Oraseanu, Moghilev's gendarme commander, came in person to Shargorod and announced that 3000 Jews have to be deported to Pechora camp. Shargorod, Djurin, Murafa Jewish committees were asked to perfect lists of 1000 people from each camp for deportation. Long negotiations took place in Shargorod. Finally, Dr. Teich was able to strike a deal: 1.5 karate diamond was handed to the Major and he withdrew the claim.

I can imagine what kind of skills Dr. Teich employed to seal the deal.

October 12, 1945

Moghilev starts to deport 3000 Jews to Pechora. General Iliescu Transnistria gendarme commander suggests that the weak, the poor, should be included. Their fate is sealed anyway, he says. The infamous Pechora camp was well known. An inscription on its fence, as in reality, announced - "Death Camp". Moghilev Jews ran to escape the terrible fate; they hid in the fields even at rain time, in ditches and in cellars.

Although he was considered a controversial figure among the people of our town, nowadays I can appreciate Dr. Teich's contribution. He initiated various projects to help the deportees: he improved the sanitary condition in the lager, installed a public kitchen to feed orphans. On the other hand, he also sent men to forced labor work according to the authorities' orders. He bribed the Romanian gendarmes that ran the place as well as the Russian partisans, and so it happened that during the freeing of Shargorod by the Red Army, the Russian soldiers and partisans did not harm the Jewish refugees. The partisans testified on Teich's behalf at his trials in Romania and Israel. Teich was prosecuted but never convicted.

In Shargorod my mother became ill with typhoid fever and arthritis, as a side effect. The diseases caused her heart problems, which worsened over the years. Her physicians' advice was to avoid having children. That is why I was an only child. The stress, the diseases, the worries, all contributed to her death at a relatively young age. What happened in Shargorod is obscure to me. One thing is sure: the memory of famine, disease and danger never faded from my mother's memory. When she saw me with a blanket over my shoulders, she would always say: "*it's just like the children in Transnistria*". Whenever I would leave food on my plate, she would say: "*This food could have helped a child live for several days more in Transnistria. You must finish all the food on your plate.*"

It is interesting to learn how my parental grandparents, the Weintraubs, reacted when the family was deported. When walking away, my grandmother kept looking back at the house they left.



Being a veteran-soldier of WWI (drafted into the Austro-Hungarian Army) grandfather Weintraub, who knew intimately what war meant, comforted Malca, his wife, by saying “*Maly, we are now three on the road, let’s pray we come back three*”. Practical and clever! The essence of life.

As their only grandchild, I feel blessed when I realize that my family “went for a trip abroad” only once during their lifetime – when they were deported to Transnistria. Every time I get on a plane to travel abroad, I remember those who did not have the freedom of buying a plane ticket to a destination of their choice. My grandparents were born and died in Bukovina, oppressed by the rules of totalitarian regimes.

Could the reader of this account understand the lives of a generation of Jewish young people, who endured the tyranny of the Romanian Legionaries, the atrocities during the Holocaust, and the frightening terror under the communist regime? Such was our parents’ reality.

Family

Today I understand that I am the only representative of my family, the only one born after the war.

My parents themselves were only children to their parents. My maternal grandmother Amalia had two sisters and a brother: Clara, Berta and Emanuel.

Aunt Clara, or “Tante Clara” as we called her, married uncle Max Wagner, or “Onkel Max”.

They owned the famous Wagner Patisserie (Conditorie).



Clara Wagner



Max Wagner in officer uniform during WWI

Their only child, Marcel, fell ill with polio. His parents never spared efforts to ameliorate his condition. He was operated in Vienna, but the doctors mistakenly worsened his condition. Clara and Max never had more children. Marcel never married.

Aunt Berta married Siegmund Hacker, who secured a position as a clerk at Suceava Municipality due to his famous handwriting. They had no children either.



My grandma's brother, Bobby Emanuel Wagner, stayed single and passed away several years after my birth.

For my father's parents I was the only grandchild as well.

I assume our apartment on Petru Rares street was chosen for its proximity to my maternal grandparent's house, who needed care and household assistance. I cannot remember my grandma healthy. After Transnistria she suffered from kidney dysfunction. Mother cared for her devotedly every day, almost all day long. Every morning my mother and I would walk from our apartment to grandma's house. Mother would cook the meals, entertain grandma, administering the prescribed medications. Even my father would take lunch at grandma's house and rest a bit during the midday closing time of Textile – the store he managed.

My grandfather's bakery was part of house, which was a one story building. It was inherited from my great grandfather Moses Itzig, who was a baker himself. Moritz and Amalia Itzig, my grandparents, lived in the front rooms, the bakery was in the back.



Moritz and Amalia Itzig in front of their shop on Petru Rares str.
photo taken before deportation

Dr. Rauch used to pay daily visits to Amalia, trying to ameliorate grandma's condition. He used to go through a routine of checking Amalia's pulse, her blood pressure, encouraging and consulting her, listening to her and to my mother, administering injections or prescribing medicaments.

The empty tubes, boxes and bottles were my prized possessions. I was two and a half years old when the "tachterl" ("shachterl" - German for boxes, which I couldn't pronounce) fascinated me. I was happy with each one and kept them like a treasure. Later I used them to enrich my makeshift "pharmacy" with new acquisitions, which supposedly could cure all kinds of diseases. Toys were scarce in the late 1950's. The little flacons, boxes and tubes were my toys. My teddy bear, made from the striped plain cloth, was my humble, obedient patient. Occasionally it received shots from my improvised syringe, made of a piece of wood pierced at both ends: one canal held



a sewing needle, the other carried a nail as the syringe piston. He got cuddled in my arms after treatment.

I received my first and only doll at the age of five, only after I behaved exemplarily while staying at home with my grandparents, when my parents went to Bucharest to watch the events of The Students' and Youth Festival. My father wanted to meet the Israeli delegation. My parents' hearts were filled with pride when they watched the beautiful Israeli youths dancing the Hora. They just did not understand why the Israelis were dancing barefoot. At any rate, they brought me Blonda, which in fact had chatain hair (which is closer to brown than to blonde), but since I had always wanted to be blonde myself, at least my doll could be one, at least by name.



My paternal great
grandfather Nathan
Weintraub

Leah Weintraub, my paternal great grandmother, was, what is called today, a single mother. Nathan Weintraub, her husband, died at a young age (my father was named Nathan in his grandfather's memory). Their widow mother raised grandpa Weintraub and his younger brother Leib.

Leah provided for her family by selling alcohol to peasants in Ilisesti, a village 11 miles from Suceava. I assume she inherited the alcohol tavern, *crasma*, from her husband, after his death. She carried a loaded pistol under the counter to protect herself in case she would be attacked. Thank God, it never happened.

In 1914, WWI started and Leib was called to join Frantz Josef's army. My grandfather made sure that his name was registered instead of his younger brother. This is how Itzhak Weintraub from Ilisesti ended up in Italy, fighting for the Kaiser. A long deep scar on his forehead kept remembering the shrapnel that wounded him during the war.

Early life

Petru Rares street was the market street even before WWII. Nowadays tourists visit markets all over the world, considering it exotic and entertaining. In the 1950's, a market was considered an inferior place. However, I remember the street as vibrant, colorful and full of activity. Mother, who spent most of the time at my grandma's house, would take me with her, and I would take Blonda and my teddy-bear with me. My pharmacy stood proudly awaiting my arrival at grandma's.





Photo Caruntu: Album Suceava Periferiilor

“My world” was spread between my grandpa’s house to the Securitate camp and Tuly Tzigelnik’s house, along Petru Rares street.

In the picture, my grandparent’s house is the first at the right. In the 1950’s, the entrance to the house and bakery was no longer from the street but through a gate in the wooden fence. Next door lived Romy Rorhlich and her sister Jana, then Lica Manash, Reizela Shauer, Tuti Silber (Tony) – my cousin, and Tuly Tzigelnik. We played together in the street (traffic was almost non-existent), on the sidewalk, and in the tiny garden before the military camp, where a huge chestnut tree would cover our activities with its generous shade. During winter, we rode the slide down from the top of the same small hill (next to camp). I was the youngest but almost the tallest in the bunch. In the early 1950’s, permanent stalls were built in the market, which had roofs and floors installed. While the construction took place, planks were laid as support for the future floors. We used to



Photo Caruntu: Album Suceava Periferiilor



jump over those planks, racing and skipping over them, playing hide and seek, cops and robbers, and jumping rope.

Below is the market from two points of view.

When the new market opened, an abundance of the farmers' products were on display for sale: yellowish butter and white cheese wrapped nicely in fresh green leaves, eggs in small straw woven baskets, seasonal fruit and vegetables freshly collected the same morning.

Bucharest had much less food. Once a year, Pauli, my mother's favorite cousin from Bucharest, came to Suceava and left by train equipped with many bags of dried and preserved foods: bags of nuts, apples, potatoes, jars of handmade gem and pickles.

On the other side of the market stood Mr. Shauer's chemical cleaning laundry business. Slightly to the corner stood the *Sodawasser Fabric* (German for soda-water factory) where my grandfather Itzik Weintraub worked.

Next door was Perry (Paula) and Lazar Schwartz's apartment. Perry was my mother's best friend. After returning from Shargorod, they studied together for their matriculation exams. My mother was then introduced to my father. He took both girls to Botosani by cart for the tests. Some months later, he married mother. Perry went to medical school in Iasi, met Lazar and married him. Melamed

Sonnenshein's heder stood on the other side of the market. He was often seen when he stepped into the market place looking for his pupils, wearing a black kapota and holding a small stick in his hand.

I always knew that I am a Jew, that I have to follow "our tribe's" rules, and that I have to be even more polite and well behaved than ordinary kids. I learned to read Hebrew but I also hurried to greet a neighbor or an acquaintance with the German "küß die hand" along with a short knickserl (curtsy).

The Regime

Two major elements come to mind: the joys of childhood, and the constant fear from the authorities.

No specific explanation was needed in order to sense the atmosphere of fear casted by the Communist Regime. It penetrated the hearts without a whisper. Even a small child felt it. I have learned without being told overtly that free speech is not part of our civil rights in Suceava. When an innocent neighbor asked me, only to start conversation: "What have



Old soda water glass bottles once used at my grandpa' Sodawasser Fabric



you eaten today?” I replied immediately: “I forgot”, being afraid something bad might happen to my parents if the meal would be considered too rich.

When all my friends from Petru Rares Street, being older than I was, went to kindergarten, I was left to play alone at home. Therefore, at the age of three I begged mother to send me to kindergarten as well. It was unusual, because in those days kids started kindergarten at the age of four.

However, mother persuaded Doamna Jescu, the teacher, and I was admitted. Kindergarten was fun. We learned songs, played and were happy. We even learned to read time on an analog clock. However, the day Stalin died is still deeply ingrained in my memory. I remember well the feeling of joy that filled my heart when Doamna Jescu announced that Stalin had died. I can still see myself as a kid, sitting on a small chair in a circle with my other kindergarten friends during assembly time. I was so happy, so incredibly happy, but I did not dare move a muscle, not to mention the fact that I couldn't share my feelings with my Jewish friends, not during assembly or after it was over.

At night, my parents listened to broadcasts of “Europa Libera”, “Vocea Americii”, in Romanian, ND “Kol Israel Lagola” in Yiddish or Romanian. This was one way to get the real news in the countries that banned freedom of information. Finding the channel was not easy since it had to be adjusted each time, because the Romanian government kept jamming the broadcasting frequency. It was only done in silence, at night, as it was imperative not to awaken any of our neighbors, who could potentially report us to the authorities.

I have come to understand that a knock on the door in the middle of the night was a bad omen. I have noticed that my father had asked my mother not to go on Main Street wearing her beautiful champagne colored velour coat, which suited her magnificently, especially when she put on a scarf and her white crochet gloves. The sight of her might attract unwanted attention. My father was afraid that the regime guardians would wonder: “*How can Nathan Weintraub afford to dress his wife like that?*”. Therefore, the moths got the better from the coat, while my mother never enjoyed it. The moth holes left in the coat were evidence that the fabric was probably of high quality. The lavender fragrance from the dried “*levantzica*” bouquet in the wardrobe, did not prevent them from eating the coat.

I lived almost 16 years in Romania, but I remember that general elections took place just once. I was still in kindergarten when my mother took me to the polls. I clearly remember our entrance into the big building in the center of town; I think the polls took place at the courthouse. My mom whispered: “*we are going into the booth to vote* (ridiculously, the communist party was the only one “in the race”) – *keep very quiet*, she said. “*There are blank notes as well, but I am afraid there*



is surveillance on the premises and they will find out if I put a blank note into the envelope”. Thus, the communist party won the election by 98% - over whom?

Under the communist regime, each child learned, without even being taught, that deceit and telling lies were crucial to surviving. In Suceava, a rumor started: you could be admitted to a girls' camp by the Black Sea if you suffered from rheumatism. THE Black Sea! Who in Suceava could afford to spend a month's vacation by the sea? It was a dream. When an opportunity presented itself, you just had to suffer from chronic rheumatism.

Some 15 girls aged 8-16 came forward to convince their family physicians that they were eligible to travel to the Black Sea to receive the treatment. I was the youngest person going, but neither I nor the others were really ill. Under the communist regime, you grew up fast and learned at a young age how to adapt. Being 8 years old, I did not know exactly what to say when interviewed by the doctor, but I knew I had to be ill if I wanted to go to the sea. Therefore, I invented a story about being sick since birth, making the rheumatic pain an inseparable part of my life. Little did I know that pretending to be so ill would send me and all the others to Techirgiol (a lake next to the sea), where I was to be covered in the lake's famous black smelly mud, instead of sunbathing freely at the seashore resort in Eforie, as I imagined.



from the left, Maria, Lily, the camp nurse, Tory Brilliant, Vera Gaitan.

Heritage

Many times I asked myself how could those who survived the camps and carried a baggage of pain, tolerate the daily challenges under the communist regime, and still be such good parents.



Today I understand the tremendous gift I received – a family that surrounded me with endless love. What a meaningful gift for life!

Fortunately, I had a very smart and clever mother. I felt everybody's love and especially my mother's. She knew very well how to raise me on the one hand, but also how to avoid from spoiling me on the other hand. How could a 20-year-old woman, who spent her youth in Shargorod, manage to be so level-headed and insightful is beyond my understanding. Unfortunately, many questions remain unanswered, because when I came to the age when I wanted to know more about my parents' past, they have already passed away. My father was 49 and my mother was 56 when they died in Israel.

One can surmise that the principles acquired at home before deportation, what is referred to in Romanian as: *cei sapte ani de acasa* – “the seven home years” (first years of life crucial to the formation of one's adult personality) were the cornerstone of my mom's preparation for parenthood. I was raised in the light of my family's words of wisdom. They are still close to my heart and I am always aware of them. My maternal grandmother Amalia Itzig (Wagner) used to say: “*always look up*”, meaning that one should always try to take example from those who are smarter and more successful than you. My parental grandfather Itzik Weintraub used to say: “*foolishness that succeeds is still foolishness*”, meaning that when doing things, you better to them right, even if you succeeded doing them the wrong way, otherwise you would repeat your mistakes, which won't get you far.

Grandma Malca Weintraub (Fallenbaum) used to bless my father with: “*May you be liked by people*”, and “*may you wear-out these new shoes in good health*”. When I was young, these proverbs often puzzled me. It took me years to understand the wisdom behind her words.

My mother said that a person should be honest and good “*to God and mankind*”.

My father used to say “*dai un ban dar stai in fata*” (literally: “pay a coin and sit in the front”), meaning it is worth to make an effort and spend more in order to get the better outcome or place. My children never got to meet their grandfathers; they knew their grandmothers for a short period of time; they have learned the family's words of wisdom from me, some of the proverbs even in their original Romanian language.

I inherited my diligence from my father, although my mother nurtured it as well.

“*Cine se scoala de dimineata, departe ajunge*” would my mother say. It is similar to the English proverb: “the early bird gets the worm”. I do believe that I have lived my life according to my family's values. Therefore, working, having a job and making myself useful are crucial to me.





Our balcony was the first from the left. Reizale Shauer's balcony was the next. Photo Caruntu: Album Suceava Periferiilor

As soon as I reached the age of four, when my mother used to get up “*cu noaptea-n cap*” (very early in the morning) in order to stand in the endless ques for buying food, I stayed at home, behind a locked door. On sunny days I used to get the pillows out into our little balcony. After fluffing them, I used to chat with Reizale Shauer, my next-door neighbor whose balcony was adjacent to ours. After returning the pillows and blankets, I made the bed. On top of the blankets I used to spread the big embroidered cover, with the long soft silk tassels on either side.

Then I would return to the balcony and watch the urban scenery of the market below: the commotion, the changing colors of the market products with each season, the smells, the buyer - vendor interaction. Beyond the market square was Reizale's parents' and uncles' laundromat, the Shauer Laundromat. Mrs. Tony Shauer, Reizale's aunt, used to cross the square at noon and go up to her apartment (the building next to ours) carrying on a hanger on which hung a clean, starched and ironed tailored dress, for her daughter Frederica Shauer, a very pretty young maiden.

To make myself useful, at the age of seven, I have already learned how to fill customers' bottles with *bors* for ciorba. *Bors* is a liquid ingredient used to make traditional sour ciorba soup. The





Here are the 4 kids who lived in the building. From right: Rodica Ureche, Yudit Spiegel, Jacky Rotstein and I. The picture was taken at the church iron fence next to the entrance to our yard.



Our apartment, the second from the left on the second floor My school (opposite our apartment) The tower and the church in the back.

Photo Caruntu: Album Suceava Periferiilor



My school (opposite our apartment)



liquid is an extract of fermented wheat. Grandpa Moritz Itzig, the baker, would prepare the bors from bran - *tarata* – a byproduct of the flour sifting process.

When I was nine, we moved to an apartment located across from the girl's school, as tenants of Mrs. Rosa Rotshtein, the seamstress. Roza Rotstein and Mr. Heinrich Spiegel were the owners. There were 2 entrances for each owner. They lived on the ground floor, the tenants, we and the Ureche family, lived on the first floor. The building was adjacent to Sfintu Dumitru church and to the very tall, Lapusneanu Tower Bell, which was seen from most parts of the city.

We only had about a couple of hours of running water a day. However, the water pressure was too low to reach our apartment on the second floor. My job was to fill the barrel in our kitchen, by carrying buckets of water from the cellar. By the way, Rosa Rothstein's summer kitchen was located in the basement. Next to the kitchen was the bathroom, which was tiny and had space for only a large white enamel-coated bathtub. At least once a week, we washed thoroughly in the pre-heated water in the bathroom. When I was in sixth grade, I started tutoring children, and got paid for my work. These little chores gave me a lot of satisfaction as well as self-confidence and a feeling of capability and belonging. To this day I acknowledge "the right to work" as a top value.

The 1950's

On the entrance door of my grandfather's bakery was a little bell that rang every time a client would enter. A big brick oven inhabited the relatively small room. It was a wood oven. Grandpa used to get up very early and prepare the dough in a wooden pail. The risen balls of dough were put in the hot oven. These would turn into the wonderful smelling loaves of bread, a scent so intoxicating and so distinctive it filled the house and the street nearby. Every day grandpa would bake round loaves, but on Fridays he prepared braided challah breads as well. On rare occasions, he would bake pretzels with coarse salt sprinkled on top, which I considered to be a special delicacy. Grandpa used to keep cats as a natural pest control. They knew how to handle rodents that craved the flour. I loved the tabby cat Nushka very much. She loved to sleep on the oven in the bakery in the winter, but never forgot to patrol and kill the pests.

Grandfather used to tell me stories and taught me to draw houses with facades on which the windows carried moldings in the Viennese style.

Every day Annrl would come to clean the bakery. But whenever the childless, pious Christian spinster heard mourning prayers coming from the street and smelled the incense the priest had spread lavishly, she would cross herself several times, then cast her apron, brush and broom aside, and step outside to join the funeral procession.



Before Passover each year, grandpa would sell all the “*hametz*” to the rabbi. The rabbi used to ask him: “*Can you manage financially during the Passover week?*”. The rabbi cared more for a person’s welfare than for keeping the “*mitzvas*”.

Before the war, grandpa had a horse and a cart. The coachman would load the bread and distribute the loaves to costumers in the surrounding villages. On his way back he would get drunk and fall asleep, but the horse knew the way back, and would bring him and the money bag safely home. After a several talks in which he promised to stop drinking wine, everyone understood that they



Grandpa Itzik, father and I The tower and the church in the back.

must ask the priest for help. At church, in the presence of the priest, the coachman swore not to drink wine again. He kept his oath. He stopped drinking wine but continued getting drunk by consuming large quantities of beer.

As mentioned earlier, next to grandpa’s house lived together the Rohrlich, Fishler and Landman families. That was the home of Romy and Jana Rohrlich. Tante Tina managed the household. Her husband Yossi Landman was a quiet man.

The word in town was that he was a math genius. I remember Tante Tina feeding Jana, who was a very picky eater. She tried to vary the menu creatively. For example, she peeled pumpkin seeds and put them on a buttered bread trying to tempt Jana to eat it.

Their father, Sigi Rohrlich, the French teacher, was my mother’s teacher at the Jewish school



after the war, when my mother and Perry Behr (later Dr. Perry Schwartz) studied for their matriculation exams.

Professor Rohrlich was a genuinely nice man, with a good disposition, always smiling. He loved children in general and his pupils in particular. On school vacations, he participated in Jana’s feeding efforts. In an attempt to increase her appetite, he planned trips in which Romy, Jana, and even my cousin Tuti and



I would participate. We went to Zamca or Cetate hoping that the fresh air would increase the little girl's appetite.

Professor Rohrlich staged many plays at school, which he also used to direct. In the summer of 1958 Professor Rohrlich and other teachers (including doamna Almazova) were assigned to lead a students' trip which ended with a cruise on the Danube. Even though the pupils were boys and girls in the 9th and 10th grades, he decided to take his daughter Romy along, and suggested I joined them as her companion, since we were close at age. Until this day, I am grateful for his suggestion. The trip was very interesting, not only for the places we visited, but also for the opportunity for a 10 year old girl like me, to watch and listen to the older girls' conversations about nail polish, fashion and hairstyling. While slowly sailing through the Danube's delta, Romy sang songs for the crowd on board the deck. She was a huge success. Romy was a beautiful



From the left: Efraim Weisbuch with hat, x,x, prof. Sigi Rohrlich with glasses, Perry and mom.
Sitting: x, prof. Surkis. At the end of the row, sitting, Clara Zloczever (Ica's mother).

girl, an excellent pupil with a wonderful singing voice. Next to the Rohrlich family, lived the Krulikovskis. Burshrl Krulikovski grew in his back-yard chickens, geese and pigs. All the animals walked freely from the yard into their flat and back. Although he loved the pig and spoke to him in a sweet voice, on Christmas the pig was butchered and smoked. I still remember the delicious flavor of the zigeunerbraten.



My Father

My father, Nathan Weintraub, was a very handsome man. He oversaw the staff that worked in Textile store in town. Father loved fabrics.

He could identify, by touch alone, any kind of fabric: percal, organza, tafta, crepe de chine, stamba or gabardine. His greatest love was reserved for English wool cloth, which was very rare in Suceava in those days. When he spoke of it, his eyes gleamed with endless appreciation for those who wove the fabric. Every lady in town consulted father about what kind of fabric to buy for a specific purpose, or how to design the outfit. He had an excellent taste. In addition, he had a talent for designing window displays. Father would prepare a sketch beforehand and chose the appropriate fabrics. Later, in Israel, he took part in the interior design of the ship “Shalom”.

Father grew up in Ilisesti, a village near Suceava. Grandpa Weintraub sent him to the “*heder*”, where he learned Hebrew. He knew by heart “*The song of the Sea*” and “*Deborah’s song*” – both from the Bible. This is why he knew Hebrew fairly well when we came to Israel. In those days, the government approved only those with an academic degree to study Hebrew in Ulpan, so his previous knowledge turned out to be a blessing.

Mother read Hebrew very well – as most of the Jews in the diaspora knew to read the prayers from the “*Siddur*”, the Jewish prayer book. With her talent for languages, mother learned Hebrew very quickly and also mastered Hebrew writing without any spelling mistakes.

In Ilisesti, in addition to Hebrew, father learned to play the violin and the clarinet. He played well. He never owned any of those instruments, but



My father



The Textile store on the left. Photo Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru



whenever he could get his hands on one, he would play for us at home. My father was a Zionist. While Suceava was covered in snow, my father would dream about “*Eretz Isruel*” (the Ashkenazi sound), covered in golden sunrays. He carried logs of wood from the “*holtzkamer*” (German name for the shed we kept the wood) to feed the oven into the only heated room, as we couldn’t afford to heat the whole apartment. His gaze betrayed his longing to our homeland the minute he spotted the one Jaffa orange my grandfather bought for us on the black market.

As I said, father was a Zionist. He longed to make Aliya (to immigrate



My father praying



to Israel). Before the war, he wanted to immigrate to Palestine, but grandma Malca (Maly) could not bear parting from her only beloved son. Little did she know that father would end up in the forced labor camp Trihati to build a bridge over the Bug River for the Germans and under their supervision. At a certain point, my father escaped with some other men. I never found out how. Much later, after reading accounts of similar events, I understood that there were several ways of escaping; but the unfortunate who failed, were doomed to an immediate death sentence.

He worked at *OCL Produse Industriale* with many Jewish and non-Jewish employees. He was well- liked, and his skills were greatly appreciated.

The logic of communist commerce management: a few months ago, I had a conversation with Burshi Klein, Pia’s father, who lives in California. He has still a remarkable memory. I asked him how did he ordered the missing merchandise for the shops he managed. My



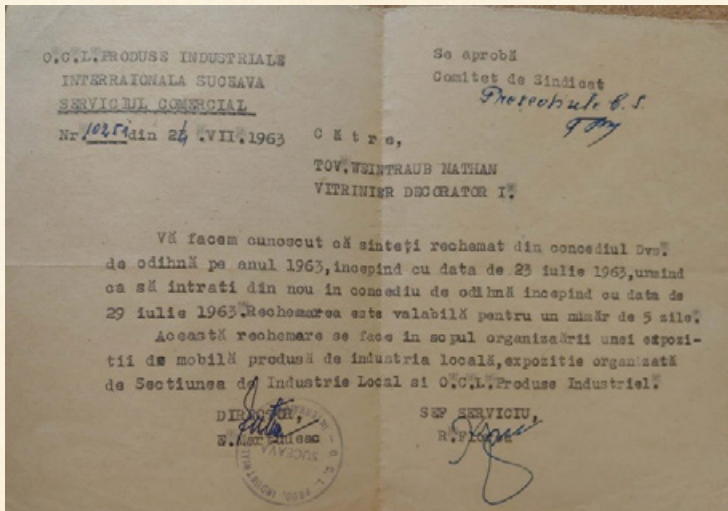


1955 - Third prize at a window dressing competition on the country level, went to Weintraub Nathan.



1957 - Diplome to praise my father's work before and during the Youth Festival in Suceava.

question amused him. Burshi, the manager of the complex OCL-Produse Industriale, told me that he would accept whatever merchandise was produced in one of the Romanian plants and sent to him, regardless of the season or importance. This is how the economy worked. For example, his stores would sell winter gloves, sent by the Romanian plants in the middle of summer, and people would buy them in spite of the hot season, thinking that in winter the store would be out of gloves. My father was the responsible employee of the textile store. The loudspeaker at the state-owned shop would always broadcast music. When Maria Tanase sang a Doina or a Romance, in her incredible deep, throaty voice, my father would ask all the customers and employees to quiet down and listen.



On July 24 father had to cut short the summer vacation by 5 days in order to organize a furniture exposition in Suceava. On September 1963 we got the visa and left Romania

Since he had no specific profession, he would tell me over and over: learn a profession, be independent in life. A profession is like a “bratară de aur”, “a golden bracelet” for a person. I tried to fulfill my dad’s wish, though I changed professions three times during my life.

Pauli

Pauli was my mother’s cousin, Ana (Itzig) Schneberg’s daughter. Tante Ana and Uncle Sami immigrated to Israel



after the war, while Pauli, their only daughter, waited until the 1960's to get a visa and be reunited with her parents.

Pauli and her husband Felix lived in Bucharest. Pauli had her two daughters only after arriving in Israel, so to me she seemed more like an older sister, despite our 20 years difference. She was small, slim, coquette, full of energy and always in a good mood. In a word - YOUNG. I always admired her dark blonde curls and her polished long nails. Pauli worked at a foreign publisher's company store. Sometimes she would bring me illustrated French books like "Roudoudou les belles images". Pauli would tell me the stories behind the great operas, the lyrics of some of the arias and about famous opera singers.

We didn't have a record player at home, just the difuzor (the loudspeaker that the authorities provided), but even on this device they would occasionally play arias from operas and operettas. Pauli told me about the big ballet performances, like Swan Lake and Giselle, and about Irinel Liciu, the gracious Romanian prima-ballerina.

In the 50s the world was running in an analog pace. The Romanian government was reluctant to present a true picture of the life in the West. Therefore, it is hard for me to tell how I came to know that Vienna Opera celebrated New Year by holding the famous Opera Ball. I could imagine the young debutants dressed in long white gowns waltzing at a 3/4 Strauss waltzes tempo. But, Strauss music was ours



Ana and Sami Schneberg



too. After passing the admittance exams to Junior High, father bought 2 round trip tickets for him and for me. For a month, we toured Romania by train and foot. We were walking at the Radetzky March tempo, humming, clapping and stomping according to the famous March tune.

Once a year mom and I would visit Pauli and Felix in Bucharest, eat ice cream at Capsha and profiteroles and Coupe-Jacque at Nestor, two very elegant, old fashioned pastry/ice cream shops. The places were opulently furnished in the



old baroque style with sparkling chandeliers hanging from the ceiling, velvet upholstery, pre-war European atmosphere and old-style delicacies, never to be met in other places. Once Pauli was able to get opera tickets for us. I was dazzled by the fancy ladies in evening gowns, the jewelry they wore and the magnificent opera hall.

Once a year Pauli would come for a vacation to Suceava. On her way back, she would carry copious amounts of food and supplies for the wintertime, as they were scarce in Bucharest: Sacks full of potatoes and apples, jars of preserves and pickles and a couple of my grandfather's wholegrain bread loaves.

In 1958, after the comprehensive exams at the end of 4th grade (before entering the next education level) Pauli took me on a two-week vacation to Sinaia. We visited the Peleş Castle, went hiking, including the daily walk to the canteen at Furnica (which was on the top of Furnica



Pauli and I at the Peleş Castle

mountain, 2000 meters above sea level) for meals. In those days you couldn't get meals wherever you wanted. You needed a pre-paid meal card, which was difficult to obtain. We were quite lucky as Felix, who worked at the Athene Palace Hotel, was able to secure it for us.

Mourning customs in Suceava

I don't remember grandma Amalia healthy. Although she died at a relatively young age, the disease made her look old and frail. She would usually sit on the edge of the sofa in her living room, wearing a flannel dress and a sweater. Neighbors and friends used to visit and have a chat. She used to wear her braided auburn hair covered under a scarf. Our routine schedule revolved around Oma. Mutti, my mom, would come every morning to her parents' house to take care of grandma and cook the meals. At dinnertime, we all ate together: my grandparents, my parents and myself. Since she suffered from kidney failure, there was always talk about the albumin levels, which made me draw the conclusion that this element endangered Oma's health.

At the time, I was a student in the first grade, attending the same school my mother and grandmother attended before me; the school was located opposite the Sfintu Dumitru Church. One autumn evening, Dad informed me I am going to sleep over at Tutty's that night. That was highly unusual, but I was happy since I liked Tutty and her family. Aunty Fanzia, uncle Gavril and Tutty made me



welcome. I went to bed without asking any questions. I got up very early the next morning. The sky looked eerie. The sun had not yet fully risen but among the clouds, there were ominous spots of light. Later father came to greet me. Contrary to his custom, he was unshaved, and I asked why. Father smiled without uttering a word.

When school was finished, I decided to walk home alone. I walked slowly along Sfintu Dumitru Church's high iron fence. Suddenly, an old, deeply bent woman, assisted by a walking cane, approached me. I recalled that some time ago mother told me that she was Madame, Oma's French teacher. Madame turned to me and said: "you are Amalia's granddaughter, yes? I am very sorry that she passed away". Then she walked away.



Standing from the left to right: Felix, Pauli, mom and dad. Sitting from the left to right: grandpa Moritz Itzig, I, grandma Amalia (just 56 years old, a few months before her death).

My heart sank. I hurried to my grandparents' house. I opened the large wooden gate at the garden's fence. As soon as I entered I saw Mother. She seemed transformed. I was deeply distressed by her appearance. She was dressed in black from head to toe: a black kerchief on her head, black dress, black socks, and black shoes. On top of the dress a black apron was tied around mom's waist. I later learned that the apron would be burned at the end of the mourning year. Mom hugged me



tightly. I did not resist in spite of being terribly afraid of the closeness to the black clothes. I did not say a word, not then and not later. I knew how close mom was to her mother and how much she loved her. The house was in mourning. All the mirrors were covered and men came to pray during the Shiva days. Mourning in Suceava lasted a full year. The mourners were clad in black. Joy of any kind was banned, including laughter. The radio was turned off, so no music could be heard, no cinema, no gatherings of happy nature. Men said Kaddish twice a day. The head stone was erected only when the mourning year was over.

School

My school years bear pleasant memories for me. Somehow, I remember being with my mother in Bucharest at Pauli's, when the scholastic year started. I used to walk from the market street to my school carrying a nice little brown leather bag I bought in Bucharest to be used as a *ghiozdan* (a school-bag), in which I put in some notebooks and a pencil case. Before the war, the school was called Scoala Doamna Maria. It was my mother's school too. When I entered the schoolyard, a girl came running towards me and hugged me. She took my hand and led me to our classroom. I did not know her, but her kindness and her vivaciousness won my heart over then, as it does today. Her name was Dorly. Gitta Weitmann was my best friend since kindergarten. Now we were a group of three friends. Our names were the last names listed in the ABC student list: Weidenfeld Dorly, Weintraub Lily, Weitmann Gitta. The most important skill I learned at school was reading. I remember seeing Rutica Hubner, a tiny blond beautiful girl, reading a storybook on our first school day. I was full of admiration for the girl. Eventually I learned to read too. My mother, who liked reading, introduced me to authors I never heard before: Erich Maria Remark, Leon Feuchtwanger and others. Some of their works were clandestinely available in Suceava, and I read them.

I had many Romanian friends: Lucica Rusnacu, Ileana Marceanu.

When I started second grade, my parents moved to the flat across the school. We rented the flat from Mrs. Rosa Rotstein, the widowed seamstress. The strategic location of our flat became a meeting place for all the Jewish children in class on "Yom Kippur", when we didn't go to school. We used to watch the class learn from across the street, enjoying our free day.

In the 50s polio epidemic spread rapidly. My parents were extremely worried – Marcel, the only son of my aunt and uncle was paralyzed after polio in the 30s. I remember the restrictions imposed and the hygienic treatment of vegetables and fruit before eating.

One day, my father came home early. A young, Romanian, tall lady doctor came with him. She administered an injection in my stomach – it was Salk's vaccine, my father bought clandestine, paying handsomely for it.



The location of the school across the street proved to be very useful in the many occasions when I forgot my training outfit at home, or forgot to get it back home from school. My mother used to say: “it’s a good thing that your head is attached to your shoulders, otherwise you would lose it too”. As soon as they announced on Difuzor (the government-issued radio) that Yuri Gagarin made it to space, I ran to my class, in which the students were still studying, and announced “*un om in spatiu*”, “*a man in space*”.

The friendships I forged at a young age proved to be lifelong relationships. It is interesting to know that during elementary school, there were times when we studied in shifts, starting classes in the afternoon. School was over at 6 pm or later. I would do my homework after dinner, many times at kerosene lamp light, because electricity shortages were often in Suceava.

In the first classes, we used to write with pencils; ink was forbidden until the handwriting got automatic.

There were calligraphy classes to teach us proper handwriting: “*subtire-gros*” which means “thin-thick” strokes. When the time came to write with ink, my mom got an inkwell from her friend’s son, who was already at the university. I used to hold the inkwell rapped into a yarn net which had to be hold in my hands, to and from school. You can imagine that my fingers were covered in ink many times. Then the ink stylo pen appeared, Dr. Mury Itianu, my mother’s cousin, presented me with a fabulous, expensive gift, a Montblanc ink stylo. My happiness was short lived; the pen was stolen from my school desk, never to be found.

Israel

In the 1950’s a small window of opportunity to immigrate to Israel opened for Romanian Jews. Most Suceava Jews applied. Very few Very few got immediately the permission to immigrate. The border closed for 7-8 years, until Romania realized that Jews can be “traded” for goods or money. The word “Israel” was never openly spoken by Suceava Jews, but rather whispered or



The 3 Wei names at the end of the student list: Weidenfeld, Weintraub, Weitmann.



photo Cozmin Suceava Museum



referred to covertly. We exchanged letters with relatives, friends and former neighbors, who got lucky and made Aliya. Security could open letters, read and punish people if they decided the content was inappropriate. Therefore, it was customary to use codes when touching on sensitive content. “*Is Ilana (code name for Lily) going to visit her aunt?*”, was a frequent question. It meant “*did you get the documents to leave Romania?*”.

Jews from Suceava would travel to the Israeli Embassy in Bucharest to check whether their documents had been already signed. The travel document had to be signed by the embassies of those countries, which had permitted (signed) transit to the document bearer. Solidarity in those days meant to make inquires at the Israeli Embassy



Doamna Aza (Azaduhi)
Mandalian-Tarnovietzki

about the fate of neighbors and relatives’ documents. People would return to Suceava and bring the news: “*your papers passed the embassy*”, meaning they had been signed. The happy recipient could start preparing for the journey.

Mother went once to the Israeli Embassy in Bucharest. It was obvious that the cameras surrounding the building registered her presence. When the audience finally started, the Israeli representative turned on the tap,



The family passport photo in the 50s



The document on the left was annulled since it had to be used until Feb.2, 1963. The document on the right proves that since validation date expired, it had to be sent once more to the Italian, Hungarian and Israeli embassies, to set a new validation date.



the noisy water stream covered his voice, and then he turned on the radio on a high volume. Only then, mom and the Israeli representative started talking.

Our papers were processed in 1962 but were never delivered to us. As a result, the time window passed and the immigration certificate “certificat de calatorie” was annulled. The process of approval had to start from the beginning. One year later, in September 1963, our papers were approved and delivered. We could finally leave for Israel.

Meanwhile, mother and her good friends, Edith Ramer, Mela Glickmann and Aza Mandalian used to drink Turkish coffee in the afternoons. Doamna Aza, the Armenian priest’s daughter, would perform the ritual of reading their fortunes by swirling the coffee cup and turning it upside down. The leftover, thick mud-like coffee grains clinging to the sides of the cup, left various patterns and shapes. These images were then “read” by the self-proclaimed fortune teller. Every afternoon in our apartment, Doamna Aza would predict that her three Jewish friends will have a long journey ahead of them – to Israel of course. Even though the audience was accustomed to the “show” they would all willingly participate and enjoy that moment of hope.

The 1960s

In those days, the movies started with a short news-journal telling people about the great achievements of the communist regime and some foreign affair news. Israel was in the Romanian news just twice to my recollection: in 1956 when Sinai Operation begun, and in 1961 when Eichmann was on trial in Jerusalem. We went to those movie-news-journals all week long just to catch some news about Israel. Watching the tanned burly Jewish soldiers marching on the silver screen, before our eyes, was extremely emotional to us.

We were captivated by the prosecutor’s speech at the Eichmann’s trial. In the shielded glass booth at “Beit Ha’am” in Jerusalem, Gideon Hausner delivered one of the most iconic speeches in the history of the Jewish people and the state of Israel:

“When I stand before you here, Judges of Israel, to lead the Prosecution of Adolf Eichmann, I am not standing alone. With me are six million accusers. However, they cannot rise to their feet and point an accusing finger towards him who sits in the glass booth and cry: “I accuse.”

In that moment, every Jew, young and old, identified himself with the prosecutor. For he was not speaking on behalf of the victims alone, but also on behalf of all of us, all human beings on this planet. Gideon Hausner's voice was the voice of justice as he spoke against the man sitting in the glass booth, representing the pure evil of the Nazi regime



Epilogue

My childhood is long gone.

My parents are gone.

However, their memories are still alive. My memory does not conjure their faces alone, or my Suceava acquaintances', but also the wooden floors in our apartment, the red geraniums on the windowsill, the white handmade lace curtains, the bright white starched bed linen, the taste of the plump red cherries and the exquisite fragrance of the lilac flowers in old Suceava...





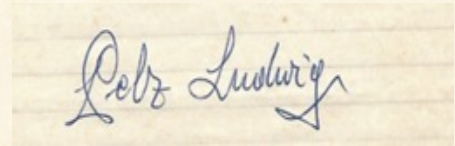
My Story

Ludwig Peltz

Zwia Peltz Fuhrer, a writer and poet in her own right and the only daughter of Mr. Ludwig Peltz, found a rare document in her father's belongings. It is a first-hand account, written in a curriculum vitae style that discloses the events in Mr. Peltz's life between 1925-1946.

Zwia's father's account describes the facts and dates in fine handwriting. The German language used in the document is factual and accurate, but the text also reveals a world of feelings and desires. The restrained style of this young, talented man who wished to fulfill his academic ambitions, rightfully nourished by his abilities, knowledge and good education, collocates with the hostile anti-Semitic surroundings, which even threatens his very existence.

He writes: *"I was born on September 2nd 1902 in Suceava, Romania, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. I graduated from "Stefan der Grosse" high school and successfully passed the German matriculation exams"*.



Meet Mr. Peltz's face and signature



Ludwig and his sister at home in Suceava

Subsequently, he had academic aspirations. In 1921 few students graduated from high school and even fewer successfully completed the matriculation exams in the German language. Ludwig's first step towards an academic career was the University of Czernowitz, where he studied chemistry from 1921 until 1922.

Family constraints forced Ludwig to quit University and join the family business.

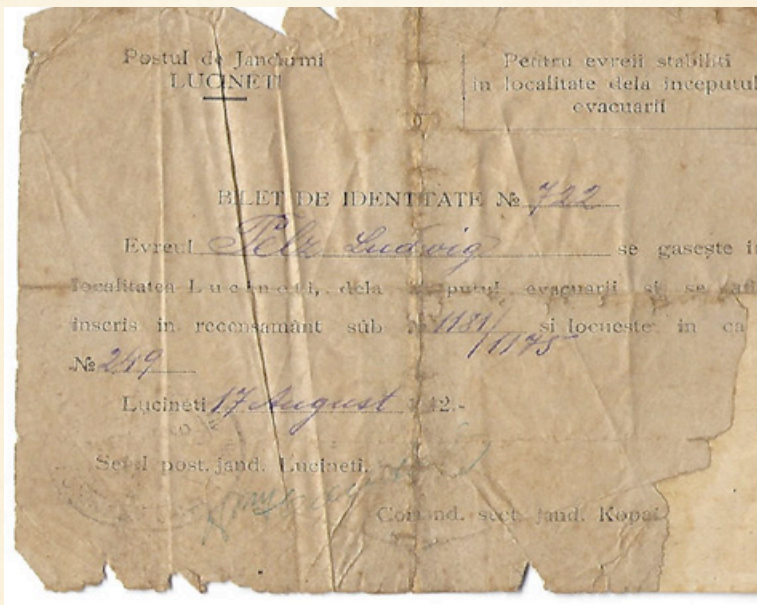


“From 1922 to 1925 in Czernowitz I worked for “Export Getreide”, a company owned by my father”. His father died at the age of 45. Shortly thereafter he quit his job and renewed his academic aspirations. He travelled to Berlin hoping to be admitted at the University of Berlin-Charlottenburg. There were no vacant places, so he applied at the engineering school in Hildburghausen Thuringen, where he successfully completed two semesters of engineering studies.

Being the only Jewish student in class, he suffered severe anti-Semitic persecutions until his life was put in real danger. At this

point Ludwig had to run for his life, leaving behind his clothes, his books, and his possessions.

He returned home to Suceava. However, despite personal loss and anti-Semitic aggressions, Ludwig Peltz did not give up in his dream. He started working at a bank in the Department of Foreign Relations. His knowledge of languages, among other skills, was a valuable asset. However, the scientific realm attracted the young man. He travelled to Czechoslovakia and in 1933 he enrolled in the *Bruno Deutche Technische Hochschule* and studied there for a year. Later,



he started running a private company. In 1939 he was sent to the forced labor camp Soroca, in Bessarabia. In 1941 he and his family were deported to Transnistria.

After the camp’s liberation, the Russians forced him to work for them. He was injured and tired when he returned home to Suceava in 1946. I was stunned to read Zvia’s father account. His willpower, courage to pursue his dreams and relentless struggle in a brutal racist world left me



speechless. With Zwia's consent, I attach two of her father's paintings, proof of his talent and ability to express his feelings in form and color.



Some of Mr. Peltz's paintings



Father and daughter

(written by Lily Pauker)





My Story

Lotty Scherzer

My name is Lotty Glassman. I was born in Suceava Romania and my maiden name was Scherzer. I live in USA for 43 years. I came to visit Pia, my childhood best friend, met my husband and we are married for 43 years. When thinking about my birth place, my brain is assaulted with lots of memories, good and bad. I remember our elementary school teacher very stern, caring a ruler to beat us if we were not prepared for school. We feared her and we learned.



First row on the right: I, Romy, Etty. Next to the teacher, sitting on the right, Mira with her wonderful long braided hair.

We lived in one bedroom apartment: mom, dad, my sister and I. The toilet was a hole in the earth in a woodshed. All the neighbors shared the facility. One time a huge rat crossed my legs and I almost fell into the hole. The window faced our schoolyard; it took a second to be in school. Pia lived in the same courtyard across the church. I remember ones Pia got sick with the mumps. Being my best friend, I would stand outside her door every day after school and teach her the stuff



we learned at school that day; entertain her. My mom, who was a great cook, would bring food for Pia (mumps was very contagious).

I loved spending time in Pia's place; I liked to watch her mom, Medi, getting ready to go out. I remember the sad day when our Temple was set on fire. We were so young and so scared. I had a crush on Adi Rosenberg who was Tzili'Curelaru neighbor. He still does not know about it. I remember my mom always bringing me the most beautiful flowers blooming in May, my birthday month. Every Sunday she would go to the open market. Everything was cooked fresh every day. I remember our Main Street where everybody was strolling up and down on Sundays. I remember our old movie theater where as school students we were not allowed to watch all the movies and certainly not after 8pm. As I'm writing, all those old hidden memories are surfing up. I remember May 1 the Labor Day. We had to take part at the city parade, rain or shine, wearing our communist uniform. I hated it but my dad forced me to go even when I was sick. Suceava was a very small town, everybody knew everything about everybody and I hated it, but I'll always have enough fond memories. I'll never forget my friends and my teachers.

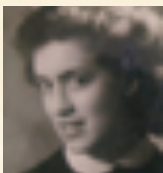


With Pia at the Carnival



With Pia and Carla in the Suceava River





Mara's Story - The Bodinger House

Written by Beni Budic

The one-storey building, situated on the corner of Ștefan cel Mare Street with the narrow lane leading to Hackney Cab Square (this is the name I found in an old map of the town) was strategically placed. It was right in the town centre, close to where our evening walks began in summertime. It was at a stone's throw from the school (the former Girls' Highschool), opposite the central grocery store (Alimentara), and close to the park; but, most importantly, it was at the center of the town's hustle and bustle. On the ground floor, towards Ștefan cel Mare Street (renamed in the 1960s, from the former Ferdinand and previous Republicii Street), was the main pharmacy, one of the two in town. Around the corner, on the narrow little street, which was always in shade, was one of the two soda fountain shops in town. A little further was a house with a front yard surrounded by a fence. On the first floor, the house had a long, rickety, wooden balcony, which led to the wing where, in the "golden years" of Habsburg Bukovina, the servants' quarters used to be. On the right of the building there was the stairway leading to the first floor, where the Bodinger family lived. I had visited their apartment on many different occasions since childhood. I used to go there from time to time, with my mother, with Aunt Freida and with Iani, to have new holiday suits made for us. During the high school years, I was there almost every day, with Mara's group of friends. By then Bodinger House had become the "headquarters" of our gang. We were welcomed with open arms and we felt at home, spending hours on end.

The double doors with exterior shutters and windowpanes opened onto a large kitchen. There was a gas cooker (quite the rage at the time), while the big, manorial stove, with the heavy cast-iron hob, was lit only on special occasions. I remember that, in the early years, in one corner of the kitchen was a laboratory table where Adi, then a high school student, would get busy with all sorts of Chemistry experiments. Adi and Mara were the Bodingers' children. There had been another child between them, born in Transnistria, but he did not survive the deportation. Mara, like all of our generation, was born after the war, when the family returned to Suceava. Adi was about ten years older.

From the kitchen, a double-winged French door led to the next room, just as big as the first. That was the parents' bedroom, which was also used as a living room. The main pieces of furniture were two sofa beds, the "studio" type, very fashionable back then, an impressively large wardrobe and a dressing table. Here, in front of the big mirror, the clients would try on their clothes. The



third room was just as large as the others were, but, unlike them, it was a lot brighter. Light from the street flooded the room through the two wide windows and the French door leading to the balcony. This was the dressmaker's shop, which made Bodinger House famous, known for years as the town's most elegant and stylish couture destination for women and, most of all, for children. Mrs. Bodinger was already a middle-aged woman, not too tall, with a dark complexion and wavy black hair which was starting to turn grey, when I first met her. She was very energetic, giving snappy orders and instructions in broken Romanian to a team of hardworking apprentices who busied themselves like industrious ants around the sewing machines. Most of them came from the nearby villages, and wanted to learn the trade from a first-class seamstress who took on only the best. The girls had board and lodgings at the Bodingers and, as I found out later, when their apprenticeship was over, they left with a trousse.

From the workshop, a wooden door led to the right side of the house, to Mara's room, where we would all meet several times a week during our high school years. It was actually Adi's room, but he was at university in Iasi during most of that time. That room also opened onto the balcony, and like the French door and window, it overlooked Ștefan cel Mare Street that filled it with light. The center of life at the Bodinger residence was defined by the tailor shop. Every year, almost every child "of good stock" in town came there to have new clothes made to order. As far as I can remember, the patterns were in a German/Austrian style – or the style of Bukovina, in short. The boys' clothes came in two classic patterns: a dark blue sailor's suit and a hunter's suit. The sailors wore navy blue trousers (long or short, depending on the season) with cuffs and a shirt of the same colour, buttonless, which you pulled over. But the main attraction of the suit was the large sailor's collar falling over the back and shoulders. In front, the collar ended in a short sailor's tie. Both collar and tie were trimmed with white ribbons. For little girls, the suit followed the same lines, only the trousers were replaced by a pleated skirt. The hunter's suit was a pair of green trousers (long or short) with Tyrolese shoulder straps. There was also a grey jacket with a small green collar and round lapels, hemmed with a thin satin tape. The jacket also had a pocket adorned with a felt oak leaf, hemmed with white trimming. This gorgeous costume was crowned with a little green hat with a bonny blackcock feather. It goes without saying that the hunter also had his rifle at hand ...

Apart from these clothes, there were also countless little dresses, evening gowns, casual clothes, coats and topcoats, tailor-made suits and so many other beautiful creations, all sewn by the busy hands of Mrs. Bodinger and her apprentices. Mrs. Bodinger may have got her inspiration from some fashion magazine or another; still, her imagination, creativity, talent, perfectionism, as well



as her aesthetic sense turned her into a top-class artist, worthy of the great European capitals. But she landed in Suceava, to the joy and fortune of her local clientele.

In fact, our story started several decades before and 200 kilometers west of Suceava, in the village of Prundu Bârgăului. At the beginning of the 20th century, Prundu Bârgăului was already a fairly large place in Bistrița-Năsăud county. The village was “on the slopes of heaven, in a valley at the foot of the Bârgăului Mountains, close to the springs of the Bistrița Aurie. On clear days one could see the peaks of the Rodnei Mountains in the distance. 20 kilometers to the west lay the small town of Bistrița, while 80 kilometers to the east was the railway towards Vatra Dornei and the other towns in Bukovina. The Austrians had built the railway during the war. The Marian-Egers were among the many Jewish families in the village, and the Jewish community in Prundu Bârgăului was one of the hundreds of such communities in each village, town and city of Transylvania. The family was quite well off and they even owned part of the forest. Her patriarch was probably a learned man; he used to wear traditional black clothes and the villagers called him “rabbi”, although he hadn’t graduated from the seminary. As was the custom in those days, most Jewish people, including the Marian-Egers, were practicing Orthodox Jews, respecting all the holy teachings. But things were about to change. Roza was the third of the family’s seven children. Apparently, even during her childhood she had shown a talent for sewing. What is certain is that one day, when she was only 11, while her parents were away; she decided that one of her younger brothers urgently needed a new pair of trousers. She found one of her mother’s dresses which she thought was the perfect thing, and sewed a great pair of trousers for her little brother. The result was extraordinary and the girl’s talent was quickly acknowledged. She was forgiven for the sacrificed dress. That is why, a few years later, teenage Roza was sent to Sighet, where she entered the apprenticeship of a well-known dressmaker. When she got back several years later, she was already a talented, fairly experienced seamstress herself, with a refined aesthetic sense. Soon enough, a lot of ladies became her clients and her hands were full. What was more, she was the first (Jewish!) girl to ride a bike all over the village to her clients for fittings. Time passed and Roza was already in her twenties, but, as she was so engrossed in her work which she certainly found engaging (although her work has provided her family pretty nice income), she never thought of getting married. Her elder brothers had already left home. One of them, Israel, had run away from the “yeshiva” (the religious school) in Satu Mare, cut off his sideburns, and joined the communist circles in Budapest.

This probably saved his life. During the war, he was detained in a communist camp, whereas the other Hungarian Jews were sent to the extermination camps in Poland, from where almost no one returned. In the concentration camp, Israel-Istvan Marian met Ianos Kadar, the future president



of Hungary. This helped him become, years later, a recognized name in communist Hungary. He even became Hungary's ambassador to Bucharest for a while.

The mother, weakened by the many births, was always ill. So their father decided to move the family to Suceava, closer to the capital of Bukovina, Cernovitz, where she could be treated by the famous doctors there. So, in the early 1930's, the Marian-Egers settled in a house on Mirăuților Street, on the corner with Luca Arbore Street.

Roza had more and more work to do in Suceava, which was a large town, and hence had more demand for tailoring. Just as before, she worked from dawn till dusk, riding her trusty bike to clients and suppliers. Then she met Emanuel Bodinger at the water pump on the corner of Mirăuților Street, "at the spring."

The Bodingers had lived there for years, in a house exactly opposite that of the Marian family. The father had died during the war, in 1915, when he was only 35 years old, leaving his nine children – one girl and eight boys – in his wife's care. In order to make ends meet, the widow Reizel Bodinger accepted any job offered to her. For years, during the first part of the week, the house and the yard turned into a laundry, with both mother and some of the children toiling. On Thursdays and Fridays, the activity was moved to the kitchen, where the Shabbat food was being prepared for the well-off clients, who had come to appreciate the culinary talents of the worthy woman. Each Friday, around noon, the pots and jars filled with soup, jellied fish with sweet carrot with raisins times, or the plates of Kugel with noodles and the jugs filled to the brim with prune sauce were all loaded in the cart, carefully covered with a piece of clean thin cloth and taken by the widow to her customers. As the years passed, the children left home one by one. The first was Fanny, who went to a nursing school in Cernovitz. After graduating, Fanny returned to Suceava, where she married and became Mrs. Nossik. For decades she was the legendary midwife to the babies of Suceava, being also one of the most prominent fixtures in town. Two other brothers moved to Iasi, one settled in Cernovitz and yet another got as far as Poland. Emanuel was the youngest and since the beginning he caused his mother's hair to turn grey... Rather short and curly-haired, constantly in motion, he had become a rebel even from an early age. When he was about 13, he boarded a train without a ticket, without any money, and without a word to anyone, and went to Bucharest and then to Constanta. He even managed to sneak aboard a ship, dreaming of sailing the seas, far away from the people he wanted to take revenge on. Somehow, his dreams were shattered and the stowaway was sent to the address he gave: his brothers' home in Iasi. They brought him back home, to Suceava, where his mother forgave him, as most mothers usually do. When he met Roza, he was already about 23 or 24 and had an apprenticeship as a skilled house painter, a job that, apparently, made him quite successful. Roza was about three years older but



they took to each other when they first met. The only one who did not think it was a good match was Roza's father. He had no choice, though. Roza threatened that, if he did not agree for her to marry Emanuel, she would become a Zionist and run away to Palestine. She even joined a Zionist "training camp" in Radauti, where she developed pneumonia, which nearly cost her her life. The person who had a hand more than anyone else in Roza's return to good health was Emanuel... And, after this miraculous recovery, her father agreed to the marriage.

Roza and Emanuel Bodinger were married on the 24th of March 1936. The young couple rented two rooms in a house at the Stromingers. The house was near the end of Armaşului Street (also named "The Jewish Lane", before it became "Karl Marx"). Bodinger House – the well-known couture shop for ladies and children – had thus been born. It became a well-known destination in Suceava for the next 30 years.

Adi was born exactly nine months after his parents' wedding, on 24 December 1936. The young family enjoyed several years of prosperity, especially due to the activity in the tailor shop, which increased with each day. Roza started to hire girls from the surrounding area, so that she could complete all the orders. Adi was growing up in comfort, spoiled by his mother and the workshop apprentices. Things seemed to be going well, but the wind boding grave change started to blow all over the country. In addition, in October 1941, the good life seemed to come to an abrupt end. During a period of three days, all the Jews in Suceava –the Bodingers among them - were thrown out of their homes, made to board cattle trains and taken, with the few ragbags they were allowed, over the Prut River to Ataki, on the banks of the Nistru River. They crossed the river at night, on rafts on which the soldiers callously crammed them. Many died that terrible night, drowned in the freezing waters of the river. The Bodingers were among the lucky few to reach Mogilev, frightened, frozen despairing – but alive.

That was how the horror of Transnistria started, and it lasted almost three years, with its biting cold, constant bitter hunger and the typhoid fever, which cut many lives short before their time. In the terrible winter of '41-'42, they left Mogilev for Şargorod, where they found shelter in the basement of some peasants, a place they shared with about 30 other members of both families. The three of them survived, but the child Roza was pregnant with, did not. Neither did most of the other members of Emanuel's and Roza's families. After the war, out of Emanuel's relatives only the sister, Fanny Nossik and Iosef, one of the brothers from Iasi survived. His other brother was one of the thousands of Jews who feel victims in the pogrom of June 1941. Roza's parents and one of her younger brothers also lost their lives in Transnistria.

Emanuel, Roza and their son returned to Suceava in the summer of 1944. The war had left its ugly mark on the town, changing it and the people for the worse. Then the regime changed as well.



Everything they had left behind was gone. They had to start life all over again.

During the first few years after their return, they lived in a tiny apartment, one of the 30 in a former



Emanuel and Roza, 1936

textile factory.

It was a two-story building with a large inner yard, not far from the Armenian Church. The apartments were lined on either side of a long corridor, on the two floors, each with an open balcony, like some monastery cells. Many families back from Transnistria found a home in this building, which Adi called “the bunkhouse”.

The Nossiks lived there as well. Little by little, Roza started her business again in “the bunkhouse”. Mara was to be born about two years later. The first years after the war were hard – there was a draught, there were shortages, there was political unrest. At the beginning of the ‘50s, however, things started to become more or less normal. The orders for clothes flooded the shop again. It was the post-war baby boom and the parents were ready to spoil their children at all cost, so the sewing machines were buzzing day and night.

Emanuel, who even before the war was drawn to the communist ideology, joined the party. The red member card cleared the path to a much better job. He became the manager of the local energy trust – meaning he was responsible with supplying wood for the heating of the town. Yet, this situation was to last only for a few years. In 1958, when he applied for emigration with his family to Israel, Emanuel had to resign the comfortable job, being demoted to a “low-ranking position”) he was also excluded from the communist party. Around 1951, the family was able to move in the



Mrs. Bodinger, Adi and Mara, 1949



large dwelling place on Ștefan cel Mare Street. The move cost Adi his cacti collection, as they all froze. However, a wonderful room made up for the loss, a large room with a balcony and view to the street. Later it became Mara's room, during his university years.

The Bodinger House of Couture grew in popularity during those years, becoming one of the town's trusted institutions. Clothes for the children, haute couture for the ladies, as well as trousseaux for the brides, and sets of bed linen (in great demand by the families about to leave for Israel), all this made Roza take on 12 or 13 apprentices and dressmakers. As a result, Roza Bodinger was declared a "wealthy upper-class" by the authorities. But, apparently due to the select clientele which included the wives of many high-placed members of the communist party, Bodinger House was allowed to continue its activity unhindered. And, who knows, maybe one such client, who did not want to lose a first-class dressmaker, intervened to delay by several years the official approval for the departure of the Bodingers to Israel...

I first met Mara when we were in 4th grade, after the establishment of primary school gender integration. By then, she was already friends with almost all the girls in Suceava, who came with their mothers to the famous dressmaker. Our friendship grew especially during the high school years, when our became larger; many of us are still close friends even today.

There were five of us: three girls (Mara, Mira and Betti) and two boys (Mihai Drișcu and myself). Mrs. Bodinger welcomed us warmly though she was busy all the time. In time, we became a regular presence in the house and would spend long hours in Mara's room, chatting or playing childish games. Except for Mihai, my closest friend, who has lain to rest in the grave in Suceava since 1989 when he was killed in a strange and unexplained "car accident", the rest of us have been in Israel for more than half a century.



Mara on the balcony of their home overseeing the main Suceava street, 1962

About two or three years ago, Mara gave me a reproduction of a painting she had done recently

from a photograph taken on the balcony of number 15, Ștefan cel Mare Street. I see in it the central grocery store (Alimentara), the textile shop, the newsagents', the Sport-Foto-Muzică shop at the



end of the street, and no hint of car traffic. We used to see all this from the far end of the balcony, which was barely large enough to hold all of us cramped together. Suceava's scent of our youth, which makes my soul vibrate at the fond memories...

When he came back from college, Adi was already engaged to Țili (Ina), whom he had met in Iasi. She was a slender, delicate girl, with fine features and she looked like she was still in high school. She had just graduated from college, where she studied languages. She was assigned to the position of Romanian teacher, in Suceava. It was easy for her to join our group, even though she was older than us by a few years. Indeed, Țili took part in our talks and games on more than one occasion, as she lived in the house.

Țili and Adi got married in 1962, on New Year's Eve. The wedding, combined with the celebrations for the coming of the New Year, was held in the spacious rooms of the Bodingers' residence. Most of the guests were friends of the bride and groom, the most beautiful young girls in town, and our own group, Mara's friends. It was actually the first true New Year's Eve party for me – I was 16 and in the 10th grade. When Mauzi Kerner, who was a beauty and the wife of one of Adi's friends, invited me to dance, I melted completely, especially when she complimented me several times on being a good dancer ... At around 3 or 4 in the morning we went out on the snowy street of the town centre. I felt as if I was floating, in spite of the sound of the snow crunching under the thin soles of my shoes. And no, I didn't have one drink too many. I was not aware then that, in time and space, I was at the peak of my existence in the universe of Suceava. It was a sort of galaxy, with Bodinger House as its core.

The New Year's Eve '62-63 was the last one I spent in the old house at number 15, Ștefan cel Mare Street. That same year, "my last summer in Suceava," a part of the Habsburg centre of the town was demolished. The Bodingers moved into a modern house, much smaller, near the "Gah" Synagogue. It is understood that the tailor shop had to downsize a lot, too. The headquarters of our small group moved to that new Bodinger House. There, we celebrated the New Year's Eve '63-64. I was to leave in a few months. That summer, when almost everyone was caught up in their exams – the baccalaureate or the entrance exams –, I knew that my four friends would meet at Mara's to read my letters from Israel. The following year, the Bodingers finally got their immigration papers. For many years in her new country, Israel, Roza Brodinger continued to practise the trade which had made her famous. But what had once been "Bodinger House", that special refuge for me and my friends, remains only in our memories of Suceava. The talented seamstress died in 2002, 95 years of age, of sound mind, 13 years after Emanuel was gone. All her family was at her deathbed. Adi left us several months ago. It is to their memory that I wish to dedicate this story, which I consider a token of my lifelong friendship with Mara and as a sign of the respect I hold for Țili - Ina, the only ones left to carry in their souls the recollections from "Bodinger House".



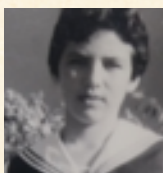


Beni and Mara still young at heart, 2016



Beni and Mara teenagers, 1963





Marghit's Story

Margalit Friedman Erel

When I was in my twenties, during a conversation with my aunt, she said: “well, you know, it is because of the event”. I had no idea what she was talking about. She was amazed at the fact I had no clue about the tragic incident in my mom’s life. Quietly she uttered that the case was the shot to death of my mother’s fiancé in Suceava.

More than thirty years later, during my mother’s shivaa, Bella Schechter, one of my mom’s friends, heard us talking about the murder. She said strictly that we shouldn’t talk about it. I wondered what could be the reason not to discuss something that occurred almost 60 years ago. Life was hectic and I didn’t find the opportunity to ask Bella about it while she was still alive.

My mother chose not to tell her story in the “Shotzer” book, a fact I regret deeply. In order to make some ‘Tikun’ I decided to share my family’s story here.

My mother, Sally Gelber(t) was born in 1926(or1925) in Darmanesti in Suceava county. Within six years, the Gelbers had four children. My grandmother’s name was Rivka Haas (Hess) and my grandfather’s name was Avrum-Haim Gelber. Their four children were: Zisel (Cohen), Sally (Friedmann), Ruthie (Budic), Israel-Schulziu (Gal).

I was told that my grandfather Avrum-Haim Gelber was a handsome, redhead man, an accomplished painter, hot-tempered. He used to be a cantor because of his excellent voice.

Grandma was one of the eleven Hass children. Her respectable family belonged to the Wiesnitz Hassidim, a fact that had a big influence on their lives in Romania, and afterwards in Israel, until our days.

As mentioned before, the Gelbers lived in Darmanesti. Part of the extended family lived in Suceava. The children attended elementary school in the village. My mother and her older sister were sent to high-school in Suceava and lived there in a hired relative’s apartment. On vacations, they returned home to the village, which was about an hour and a half away, by carriage. As I understand this arrangement stopped when Jewish students were collectively forbidden from attending public schools in August 1940.

First, Jews were exiled from their home villages to country towns, Suceava in their case. The Gelberts rented a residential dwelling unit at Dr. Weitmann’s house. Years later, my mother was Dr. Reghina Roytman’s patient, Dr. Adolf Weitmann’s granddaughter.



Their world came apart on Sabbath evening (Friday) October 10th, 1941, during Sukkot.

On their way to be deported to an unknown destination, my grandmother Rivka, a deeply devout woman, stopped the carriage on a curb on the way, and lit Sabbath candles. Israel, the youngest family child, who was 10-11 years old became very excited about riding the train and couldn't understand why the others didn't share his enthusiasm.

As mother wouldn't add any other information, I fill in the gaps by relying on our relative's testimony – Moshe (Mishu) Gelbert from Kfar Saba who told us that: "All Suceava's Jews were assembled in the Great Synagogue courtyard. From this place they were driven to the Burdujeni's train station, some 5 km away. The order was to hand over the keys to their homes to officials at the station and surrender all valuables to the local bank or town authorities. People were loaded on cattle trains, condensed and starved. It took 24 hours for the train to get to the Russian border. Many died immediately because of the terrible travel conditions. The whole Jewish population of Suceava was deported, regardless of their age, health, or mental state. We arrived at Ataki border station on the banks of the Dniester River. We were housed in the demolished synagogue. On the walls we saw inscriptions like "Here Jews were murdered", and "you, who passes through this place, say Kaddish in our memory"."

For me, it was too painful to hear their experiences during the Holocaust and my mom didn't share much.

I was aware only briefly about the existence of Moghilev, Murafa, Shargorod. I heard about endless bodies, frost, shoes made of ropes and fierce hunger.

In Transnistria, families stuck together: Rivka's brothers, the Hasses and her sisters's families - Peltz, Sand and Mechloviz. Wassermann and Karp families, grandfather's Avrum Haim sisters – Taube and Dina. Children of all ages, from toddlers to adolescents – all helped each other and their families to survive.

The fact that most of my family returned from Transnistria and immigrated to Israel, made me believe for many years that the Holocaust in Bucovina wasn't of major consequence to our people. Compared to my friends of Polish or German descent, my family was an almost normal one, happy family blessed with grandparents, uncles and cousins. As years passed by I understood, or at least tried to, that what had happened during the years 1941-1944 in Transnistria was traumatic and awful to them, to us, the second generation, and to our children (the third generation).

In March 1944, the families returned to Suceava, first to Dr. Weitmann's house and then to an apartment of their own. My grandparents' house was a central gathering place for the family and their friends. I learned that women would use their oven to bake there food, Chalot and Chulent.



Many people, including Mishu and Malusha Gelbert, told us how significant that place was for the family post-war, and how delicious my grandmother's cooking and baking was. (Kichalach, Fluden. Laikech and Buchtalach)

Bnei Akiva was the largest Zionist youth movement in the city. They even established a "kibbutz" which trained and prepared the youth for Alia to Israel. Years later, my mother, we, her children and grandchildren made a choir singing proudly Bnei Akiva's anthem together.

My mother and Ben Zion (Baruch's son) Schechter fell in love. He was a scholar. The wedding to come caused the families much joy and excitement. I imagine that starting a new family after the sufferings they lived through was an enormous source of pride and happiness.

One Saturday night, grandpa Avrum-Haim and Ben-Zion were playing Chess at home. Grandma Rivka, my mother and her sisters were at home, when a shot was fired from the street into the room through the open window and killed Ben Zion.

I can't imagine the overwhelming heartbreak and devastation my mother felt.

My mother's eldest sister Zisel, married Moishe Cohen in 1946 and moved to Maramuresh, Transylvania. Their children Rachel and Benzi were born in Romania, and their youngest son, Reuven, was born in Israel.

Benzi Cohen, 24 years old, was killed during the Yom Kippur War in the Golan Heights. He left Leah, his wife, Chen, his infant daughter and Aviad-Ben Zion who was born after his death.

My mother's youngest brother Israel, came to Israel with 'Aliyat Hanoar'. He became an officer in the Israeli Air Force and was involved in bringing the Hawk missiles from the USA to Israel.

My mother, Sally and her most beloved sister Ruthie stayed home in Suceava with their parents. I have no idea about what had happened during those years and how they got by.

However, I do know that on March 1951, in the neighbor's house in Suceava, a precious baby boy was born. My mother "Die sheine" (the beautiful) was invited to the Brith. This baby was conceived after 13 years of marriage of the Hershcovitz couple: Israel (Strul) and Miriam (Mirza Gutman).

The sweet baby, Hanoch Reuven, is my husband. We changed the family name from Hershcovitz to Erel, a Hebrew name.

Erica Steiner, my mother's good friend, lives in Minneapolis, and she told me about my parents wonderful meeting at her home and how they fell in love. My father, Marcus Mordechai Friedman from Radauti, married my mother in 1/1953.

I have no information about my father's whereabouts during WWII

I know he lost in Transnistria his mother Mina (which I was named after), his sister Sophie-Coca Dechner, who was only almost 30 years old, and her 5 years old son, Herbert, who died out of sorrow after the loss of his mother.

My father never shared his grief with us.



in January 2020 Beni suddenly passed away. He is much missed and may his memory be forever blessed.

My parents are no longer with us. My father passed away in 1995 and my mother accomplished 50 years in Israel and died in 2009.

Over the years, the roots of my family in Suceava became increasingly intriguing. On the eve of Rosh Hashana, last year (2019) the descendants of the Haas family have reunited for a special Sabbath. Twenty five families from the Haas clan attended this exceptional event and many other families contributed their memories and knowledge. We remembered the family history, before and after Transnistria, the devotion to the Wisnitzer Hassidim, the Zionism, the love of tradition and the Thora.

Hanoch and I have three daughters: Einat is married to Yossi Mann and they are parents to Amit (Miriam) and Beery (Benjamin), Reut is married to Elad Segal, and they are parents to Ori, Yuval and Ariel, and Shira is married to Elazar Gur, and they are parents to Stav (Sarah) and Ophir (Avraham). The more the better!

Willie, my brother, is married to Mia (Kozma), and they are parents to Dana and Ran.

Irit, my youngest sister, is married to Ghershon Koren, and they are parents to three children: Adi who is married to Ido Walk and they are parents to Yarden; Itamar who is married to Abigail (Goldman), and Shir-Tehila, the youngest grandchild of our beloved parents Sally and Marcus Friedmann, may their memory live on forever.





Mausi's story

Danille Koenig Korner

I, Danielle Konig, was born in Czernowitz, Bucovina, on March 28 1941, the only child to my parents Any and Otto. My mother tongue was German.

World War II had devastating effects on countries and nations but civilian casualties were no less common or painful. The war has disrupted my family's life, affecting me but mostly my mother for years to come. Mother did her best to shelter me, not to allow her pain to shatter my world. House, personal belongings can be provided after losing them during wartime, but was it possible in the 50s to provide remedy for loss, anguish, emotional and psychological injuries?

My mother, Any Konig was a true lady-fighter. She would not allow her grief to be seen or her difficult life to be witnessed by friends or relatives. She always put on a brave face, worked very hard and did everything possible to provide me with a happy childhood.

I think that she believed that whatever misfortune came her way, her duty was to cope and transform it into something of value. For her, I was the reason for her brave persistent struggle.

In the 40s raising me in the Czernowitz ghetto, providing what little food was available, represented a daily battle. Father disappeared from my life, being drafted into the Red Army, only to reappear 17 years later and even then for only a week.

Many were hurt by the war, but today, 7 decades later, I can't help thinking how difficult it was for me as a child to be raised fatherless, not knowing whether he is alive somewhere or dead. I think that for my mother it was a living hell. She never rebuilt her life; the deep sadness was locked inside while the daily duties took precedence.

In 1945 my mother and I joined her family in Suceava. I fondly remember Mrs. Isolis' kindergarten. I was popular among my peers; many were my friends.

To my big surprise, I was the one chosen to play the leading character in "Alba ca Zapada" – "Snow White" kindergarten play.

At the time, we lived in a beautiful house, which belonged to Mr. Polack; but the comfortable life was short-lived.

Under the watchful eye of the authorities, the apartment was divided and a new family shared the place with us. Later we moved to str. Republicii in a one-room apartment.

My mother worked hard at ICRM.



My mom



We had little money, at times the situation worsened; I can remember that one afternoon I wanted to eat an apple. We had none. My mother and my grandmother tried to comfort me, but they couldn't afford to buy the fruit. Even now, seven decades later, remembering the incident, I still feel pain and sorrow for the little girl who cried herself to sleep not getting an apple.

I grew up and went to school. I was a very good student.

My father got lost during WWII, his regiment was decimated. He was looking for us but the Soviet regime would not allow either contact or repatriation. 15 years after his disappearance he was finally able to contact us. My mother and I went to Astrakhan, crossed the beautiful Volga Delta, glad to meet him. The reunion



From the right Dory Hörer, I, my future husband and Sandu Ramer.
All three boys graduated Medical School

lasted a week. My father wasn't allowed to join us. I was able to see him one more time after my mother's death.

Years passed by, I went to college in Bucharest to continue my studies. My mother died when I was only 20. I was left alone in this world.

As the Americans say: "every cloud has a silver lining". Losing my mother was a terrible shock; I felt that dark clouds would block my sun forever.

Luckily, I got moral and emotional support from my peers. Although I had many friends and suitors, I loved Sasha. I married Dr. Sacha Korner. Eventually, we left for the USA where we built our lives and raised our children.

Human sacrifices during WWII were horrendous. At the request of the editor, I have briefly told my story, a story of a courageous mother and a girl, both robbed by dictatorships of their respective husband and father, denied the future



Mausi, Mira in the middle





they could have lived had the war not interrupted the normal course of life. We were among the numerous war casualties.

Zwi Hoch and Dory Hörer kneeling, Mausi and Torry behind them. The picture was taken in Dr. Hoch's garden. Stefan cel Mare High School is seen in the back.



photo P.Leinburd





The Brecher Family

Mendel Brecher

My father, Friedrich Brecher, was born in 1920 in Cernowitz. The family used to live in Bilergasse. My grandfather, Max Meir, was a furniture painter. My father studied at the Jewish school in the German language. After being trained and certified as a butcher, he started to work at the Cernowitz slaughterhouse. In 1939 the Russians occupied North Bucovina up the Siret River. Thus, Cernowitz became part of the conquered territory. The Russians moved the slaughterhouse and its employees, my father among them, farther East into Russia. The German advancement was fast and they caught the transport. Being Jewish, father was sent first to Moghilev, then to Shargorod in Transnistria.

My mother was born in Hertza, a border town between Romania and Basarabia. After the Russians conquered Basarabia, in 1939, the Romanians deported the Jews to Shargorod.

When war ended, my father was sent to Iasi against his will, but his parents ended up in Dorohoi. Later father was reunited with his parents in Dorohoi. My father met my mom there; in spite of the fact that she was only 16, they got married.



I was born nine months later, in 1947.

My parents moved to Burdujeni in 1949. Father worked at the local slaughterhouse. At the same time, my parents, my uncles and my grandparents asked for a visa to immigrate to Israel.

In 1950, all my family members, except my parents and I, were allowed to immigrate. We had no choice but to stay put in Romania for more than a decade. Romanian authorities disrupted families, separated parents from sons and daughters without hope to ever be reunited. I grew up without grandparents, uncles and



Here is the family picture from the papers submitted for immigration



aunts, missing my relatives. We got permission to finally immigrate to Israel only in 1964. In 1951, when I was four years old, we met the Schechter family in Suceava. At the time, the Schechters, who were extremely religious, lived in Suceava on 7 Ilie Pintilie Street. They owned a very big house; therefore, they were concerned that the authorities would force them to share the place with a Christian family. For that reason, they asked my dad to move in with them. This is why we moved to Suceava.

My father started working at the only butcher's shop in town, "*Hala de carne*". My mom worked as a secretary at Institutul de Constructii. For me the Schechter family fulfilled the role of grandparents. They taught me Yiddish, placed me in the Heder and helped me prepare for the Bar Mitzvah. Around the huge Schechter house was a big yard, a fountain, a cowshed, horses and a cart.



In the garden with the Schechter family. My father is standing on the left, mom is sitting.

The garden-grown corn and potatoes were superior in texture and flavor to those sold in grocery shops.

Since the family was extremely orthodox, they used to produce at home their entire food – bread (including challah), cheese and butter, as well as soap. The slaughter was, of course, kosher mehadrin.

Every Friday I was taken to the Mikve to get a thorough wash and on Saturday morning I went to the Synagogue to pray.

I spent the elementary school years at



Mom working in the yard



Mom and I in the yard dressed for Shabbath



Scoala Mixta nr. 2. The Yiddish lessons with Mrs. Clara Neuman are still fresh in my memory. I studied at Stefan Cel Mare high school until 1964, when we immigrated to Israel. Marcel Gitter and I were the only Jewish kids in my class. His aunt, Mrs. Surkis, the Latin teacher, used to help us a lot.

I had a happy childhood. I was an only child and, as such, my parents invested a lot in my upbringing.



Mom on the left, Mrs. Sandberg and Marghit, her daughter, during a vacation in V.Dornei



I learned to play the accordion.



Mr. Shapira was Zwi's melamed. Actually, we all studied with him for our Bar Mitzva.

Nevertheless, I had many Romanian friends as well.

In the 1960, the Shapira family and our family moved into the new block-apartment building in the center of the town





Mira's Story

by Lily Pauker

Every friendship is dear to me but the friendship with Mira is a special one. I have no recollection about when or how I met this beautiful intelligent girl, but our friendship and my admiration for her are more than half-century-old.

An observant eye could have guessed from an early age that Mira would be successful in every aspect of her professional life.

Mira was strong-headed all her life.



This was the building Mira lived in. The front room was her mother's bread shop "PIINE".

Saly Seidler, Mira's mother, wanted Mira to join Doamna Jescu's kindergarten class, but the old lady refused under the pretext that she teaches only elder kids (which wasn't always true). In retaliation, Mira held her ground, being adamant when she was asked to join *"The Four Seasons"* iconic kindergarten play in the leading role. When she finally got older and joined Doamna Jescu's class she accepted the part and played it extremely well.



Mira in the middle



Mira has never failed at school or on stage.

At the end of school year in Suceava it was customary to put on stage a two-hour play. When I was in the 6th grade the school teachers worked on a script based on the poems of Mihai Eminescu, the famous national poet. The older students played the different characters, but some six graders were chosen to dance in the last scene of the well-known poem LUCEAFARUL. I was in the lead. We trained daily knowing that the last scene may influence the audience's overall opinion. Doamna professor Martha Schmeterling suggested Verdi's music for the dance. We speak about the Gipsy Chorus from the opera Il Trovatore as the score for this particular dance. It ended with me meeting the prince, played by Mihai Pinzaru.

The pianist who usually played Il Trovatore Gypsies Chorus Music couldn't always attend our training sessions. On these occasions, Rodica Mihalcea, a talented girl from a senior class, played the music on the piano. Rodica was an excellent student, a fine pianist. Doamna Bencu, Adriana Bencu's mother, was sewing for us special dresses. It was an A cut tight dress, in different bright colors. My dress was yellow. An outstanding lenient instruction was given: we were advised to polish our nails in "jungle red" color, so our hand and fingers would stand out during the movement. In those days, nail polish was considered decadent and utterly inappropriate for pupils. Normally you would be severely punished for wearing nail polish. How could we pass such an extraordinary occasion!

In vain had I dreamed, prepared, and trained. The excitement was gone the minute my very ill maternal grandfather died a week before the show. It was obvious that I could not step on stage while my family was grieving.

We were living opposite the school. The sports teacher, who took care of the dance performances, Doamna Stefanescu, came to see me at home. I was devastated, she was desperate. An important item was lost because of my absence. I came up with the idea that Mira should take my place. The performance was saved – Mira danced beautifully, in my yellow dress, ending the dance with a gracious smile while extending her hand to the prince and looking into his eyes.

Doamna profesoara Stefanescu was forever grateful, never forgetting Mira's performance.



Lily and Mira at school



Mira knew a family in Suceava who was willing to lend books, forbidden by the Romanian authorities. During a winter's cold afternoon, we went to meet the family. They were childless. They lent us "*Gone with the Wind*", "*East of Eden*" and other books. It was a delight.

Mira was an exceptional talented student. Many times she suffered persecutions just because she was outstanding.

At the entrance exam at the Junior High, they failed her in spite of her correct answers. If light had stricken me I would have felt a lesser blow than at the time the news reached me. Mira failed the entrance exam?! For heavens' sake? What is she going to do? What is going to happen to me the next year when my turn to take the exam will arrive? It was obvious, Mira didn't fail, she was punished by the head of the local education department for being Jewish and excellent. Mr. Bernstein, a Jewish official was the initiator of this kind of punishment towards the students whose families applied to immigrate to Israel.

I don't know what Mira felt. All I know is that in order to take care of her wonderful long hair she cut the thick, rich, long braids and went for a month to a trip around Romania. Today I know that the hairdresser asked for Mira's mother's presence and approval in order to cut her unique braids. Upon her return, she took the exam again and entered Junior High with excellence.

Time went by. Mira got first prize for Romanian Literature. Her classroom teacher Mr. Einhorn, handed her the prize, but, instead of praising Mira, he found the appropriate occasion to scold the Romanian girl, who got lesser achievements, although it was about the Romanian girl's native language.

The time for the final matriculation exams arrived. As expected, Mira was wonderful in the written exams as in the oral ones.

Some weeks after the finals, Mira's mother met Doamna professor Vigder, the former school director, then Mira's classroom teacher.

During the exam sessions, she headed the examination committee in a neighboring town. Mrs Vigder told Saly Seidler that Mira passed all the exams with straight As, her name being eligible to be written in The Gold Book of Achievement. Why didn't that happen? One of Mira's teachers asked the physics-examining teacher to change Mira's oral achievement from A to B. The local teacher's reason was: the previous student listed in the Golden Book of Achievement was



more than 10 years ago, also a Jew, Hadassah Susmann . Since than nobody was eligible. It would not be appropriate to have two consecutive Jewish names mentioned in The Gold Book of Achievement, WOULD IT?



Professor Frieda Vigder who didn't stop teaching even in Transnistria

Have I mentioned that Mira played the piano?

In spite of all the dark forces, Mira has succeeded in every endeavor. I am proud to be her friend.



Mira is the third from the right





Mira's Mother

by Lily Pauker

Mira's mother, Sally Rübner, was a fearless woman. Not many Jewish women of her time swam, rode a bike or drove the horse-cart to Ilishehsti, a village near Suceava, to sell the bread her father had baked.

She started to work early in life, first as an apprentice at Doamna Rotkopf's workshop; she learned to sew women's underwear. After the war, a tiny room in the family house served as a bread selling shop. These were the times when bread was baked in large industrial ovens, only to be distributed later in shops similar to Sally's shop. A process called "panificatie".

Sally had two brothers: Isiu, two years her senior, and Haskel, six years younger than Mira's mother, whom she fondly raised.

The family was deported from Suceava on October 9 1941. This was the first deportation day, and the most painful of all, not only because people had only 4-5 hours to gather their belongings but also because nobody knew the reaction of the authorities towards the deportees. Many Jewish families gave up their valuables, as ordered, out of fear for being shot on the spot if not doing so (the regulations were very clear on this subject). Their experience at the Burdujeni train station was extremely enlightening for the transports to come, in the next two days. It was obvious that the Romanian gendarmes were not thorough when checking for forbidden items: dollars, jewels, and diamond stones, golden French coins called "*cocosei*" (because a rooster, the symbol of France, is called in Romanian *cocos*). Moreover, the understanding that Romanians could be easily bribed helped at times to hold on their belongings. At times, the soldiers or gendarmes who watched the deported Jews, took the bribe but stole and "confiscated" whatever they liked.

Paula Bernthal's muff was ripped off and taken by a Romanian soldier. Paula was a successful pharmacist, trained in Prague and Mira's mother's cousin. In the muff, Paula had hidden cyanide pills for the entire family – she had understood perfectly what was to come. The pills were meant to be their last resort, when everything else had failed.

As all the other Suceava Jews, Sally's family crossed the Dniester River at Ataki. Upon arriving in Moghilev they were housed in an open stable. One of the brothers looked for a better "accommodation". He encouraged the family to march to Shargorod. The winter of 1942 was later known as an exceptionally cold one. Sally mentioned later that the snow was so high it reached one's waist. Grandfather Ruebner and grandfather Seidler died during the winter of 42. The earth was frozen, therefore digging a grave was extremely difficult.



In Shargorod, Dr. Meir Teich, the chief of Suceava community, took charge of the deportees first to ease the living conditions as best as it could be done, and secondly, second to keep order and to be an intermediary between the deportees and the Romanian authorities. Hygiene was a high priority on his list. Therefore, he appointed people to draw water from the well; in doing so he prevented water contamination by using personal buckets.

Numele <i>Rübler</i>	Mutatii _____
Pronumele <i>Sali</i>	data _____
Locul nasterii _____	casa № _____
Data .. <i>25 ani</i>	
Evacuat din <i>Suceava</i>	
starea civila _____	
Profesiunea <i>croitorie</i>	
K. A. _____	
K. I. _____	
K. P. _____	
Comandă sect. jand.	

Sally was the woman who carried two buckets full of water to people's houses. She was paid with food: a potato, some oil or flour.

Isiu was sent to Trihati as was Carl Seidler.

Mother and her younger brother got typhoid fever, and were sent to a hospital. As part of the treatment their heads were shaved.

Carl met Sally one day standing in a queue. He switched places with her. As it happened, Sally got the bread while he got Sally but not the bread. He got her heart and this was enough for a long and happy married life.

<p>25 I. 1944 VIZAT SECT. POST. JAND. SARGOROD</p> <p>Comandă sect. jand.</p>	<p>Colonia Exceasca Sargorod Bir. Populatiei</p> <p>BULETIN № <i>740</i></p> <p>D <i>Rübler Sali</i></p> <p>Casa № <i>336 Sub</i></p> <p>șeful coloniei <i>Teich</i></p>
---	--

Sally's identity card in Shargorod now at Yad Veshem





Suceava Memories

Moshe Herzberg

General

I was born on July 29, 1947, the fourth generation of the Herzberg family in Suceava. Having belonged to a middle-class family before the war, my fate was predetermined by the socialist régime. As a result, I was socially isolated, fact which affected me severely. I understood my situation when nobody ever entered my house.

My Paternal Lineage

My great-grandfather Mendel Herzberg arrived in Suceava in the 19th century. Apparently, he got his surname at the municipality as the Austrians, who governed the region at the time, wanted to prove that there was a German population in this area. Another way to explain our family name might involve our Polish origin, presumably an honorable name. My family, like all old families in town, was religious, but influenced by the Austrian administration and the German culture as well. For example:

- During WWI, my father's brothers-in-law were Austrian officers and his own brother fought on the Austrian side. Afterwards he settled in Paris.
- My grandfather's sister immigrated to Canada. After WWI, her son, Fitch, was Canada's general prosecutor as well as chairman of the local Zionist movement.

My Maternal Lineage

Both my maternal great grandparents came from Poland as part of "cost and quarter" matchmaking. This meant that the bridegroom would continue his studies at the yeshiva over a period of five years, after which he would dedicate himself to supporting his family.

One of my great grandfathers didn't agree to leave the yeshiva and was a honored religious figure in Falticeni. Because of my great grandfather's zeal towards learning at the yeshiva, his sons couldn't stand the poverty they lived in. They hitchhiked their way across Europe, reaching the United States. Consequently, my great-grandfather suffered a heart attack and died. Two of his grandsons were submarine commanders during WWII.



Another branch of family on my mother's side of the family worked in business trading and became rich. After leaving Romania they were among the founders of a settlement in Yehuda Mountains in the Jerusalem surroundings.

My grandparents:



Moses and Hanzie Herzberg



Nachum and Otilie Litman

My Parents:

General

Both my parents were very intelligent and extremely skillful people able to survive any hardship.

My mother

My mom came to Suceava during the population transfer carried out by the Romanians from the kingdom to more distant regions.

My Dad

Here are some important facts from my dad's life which points to the complexity in which Jewish life materialized in Suceava. My dad always refused to disclose information, but I deduced it little by little.

- My father was born in 1909 in Suceava. He was well-educated at an Austrian school. He studied German, Latin and ancient Greek among other subjects. He aspired to study mechanical engineering in Cernowitz,



but his father convinced him to stay and continue managing the family tavern. He was the one who enlarged the family business to a considerable size. My dad served in the Romanian army in the “Vinatorii de Munte” unit. When the Jews were deported from Bucovina, he was in the middle of military maneuvers. Apparently, as a result of unit pride or out of a private initiative, dad was accompanied by 12 volunteers on his way home. During the journey, the Romanian nationalists attacked them and a knife fight started. My father refused to share more information with me. After returning home, he and his family were deported to Transnistria.

- A well-known fact is that the Romanians were in charge guarding the Jewish population in Transnistria. The guards couldn't overpower my father who each night would sneak out from the ghetto to provide people with food. Sometimes he would hand out everything he had and he himself remained hungry as he wasn't able to see people being deprived. The Romanian guards were annoyed by my father , therefore a group of about 40 Romanian guards decided to kill him. My dad discovered the scheme, laying on the floor he prayed the confession prayer, which is usually recited before death. When the guards saw him on the floor they, believing he was planning a trap, got scared and ran away.
- After liberation, dad volunteered with the Red Army and took part in different battles. It was customary that veterans (soldiers who survived combat units) were moved at the back. My father reached Moscow. At first, the Russians refused to let him return home. Nevertheless, he indirectly succeeded in getting home in 1946.
- In the same year, my parents got married and I saw the light of day in 1947.



My Cousin, Fredy:

At the end of 1947, my cousin, Fredy Eydinger, one of the leaders of Aliya Bet from Romania, came to my dad and asked him to join the last train he succeeded organizing before the borders were about to close. Father refused, as he was afraid I would not survive the hardships of the way. The authorities caught him , arrested him as an illegal Aliya leader and was imprisoned for a year.



Our Family House:

Our house had 12 rooms with an inside closed, paved yard. Three big basements serviced the tavern, as they were equipped with a network of pipes through which wine and beer were distributed. Upon my dad's return from Russia, he was licensed to reopen the tavern. However, the communists hardened their policy regarding the economy. The tavern was closed once again. The state took over nearly all our rooms and forced us to live in a one- room "apartment" with a common kitchen for our use, my grandmother's and my dad's sister's family.



School:

General:

The school system included elementary school (first to fourth grade), junior high-school (fifth to seventh grade) and high-school (eighth to eleventh grade). During the elementary school I was a very happy child.

Junior High-School:

The Beginning of My Formation as a Student:

When I was in the fifth grade, the math teacher, who was my dad's friend, noticed that instead of learning I was watching a huge tree in the yard and the birds on its branches. He started testing me every day and little by little I learned how to study efficiently. As a result, I acquired a systematic learning method, which was essential.

The Persecutions:

Good friends of my family revealed the painful truth: my social origin could not provide me with academic studies unless I got an average of 100% in the junior school final exams in and at in the high-school entrance exams. I chose to ignore everything, be indifferent and not fight for my grades.



On the right, at the technology workshop





On the right, in the third row, Zwi and I

The Attack in the Yard

One day I went to the yard and, suddenly, in one of the corners I was attacked by one of the non-Jewish students threatening me with a dagger. I started fighting back and, at a certain point, some classmates came running, overpowered the attacker, took his dagger and beat the heck out of him. One of them, whom I would call “A”, told me that at home he was asked to keep me safe as a sign of respect for my family, not adding anything else.

High-school:

Math, Physics and Chemistry Competition: Every year competitions in mathematics, physics and chemistry took place. I participated each year on all three subjects. I won first prize at the municipal level.

However, each time I reached the county level, the monitor, who was one of the math teachers, would inform me that I had to participate, but no one was going to check my exam.

The Enrollment of High-School Students for Agricultural Work:

As the land wasn't private property any longer, the peasants didn't make any effort to save the agricultural production. One autumn, as it happened, there was a very rainy season and there wasn't enough time to pick up all the potatoes from the field. The authorities decided that all high-school students had to work one day in the fields to gather potatoes. That same day was Simchat Torah and, as a result, the Jewish children didn't come to do the volunteer work. The teacher was angry with me.



Parting with my Classmates before Immigrating to Israel:

I immigrated to Israel after the tenth grade. The boys in my class were certain I was immigrating to the US. I told them I was leaving for Israel. At this point, the guys decided they didn't want me to go as I had good grades and they wanted me to stay and strengthen Romania. After I refused, A. (the student who saved me from the attack in the schoolyard) declared, "I wish we could also rule our country!"

The Synagogue:

General:

My parents' synagogue was "Beit Hamidrash" which belonged to rabbi Moscovitz, from the Hassidim movement. Later on the rabbi's son was the head of the religious courts in Haifa. A few years ago, while walking around Beit Shemesh, I saw a small sign on which was written that the synagogue belonged to "Hassidut Shotz". I immediately checked and it turned out that one of the Moscovitz family who returned from Canada wanted to establish again "Hassidut Shotz" community.

The Structure of the Synagogue:

The Synagogue consisted of two big rectangular rooms: one for men and another one for women. The only connection between the two rooms were a series of narrow windows five meters high through which women could hear the cantor and the reading of the Torah. There wasn't any possibility of an eye connection between the two rooms.

The synagogue had a ground floor apartment for Gabay use. He was a cantor, a devout man and sifrei Torah writer. Adjacent to the synagogue was a garden area and a cowshed which was the synagogue property for Gabay's use.

Submmiting Documents for Immigration to Israel:

When I was 7 years old, on Yom Kippur after the prayer Kol Nidrei, the honorable rabbi Moskovitz got on the stage and announced that the following day the prayer would start very early in the morning in darkness. The next day, after the Musaf prayer, the rabbi told the congregation that the Romanian authorities offered the possibility to hand in the documents needed for immigration to Israel. This was valid for one day only, on Yom Kippur. The rabbi also said he was going to hand in his request and who else wanted to join him was more than welcome.

Another memory imprinted in my mind was that of a long row of Jewish people waiting to enter the police office and on the side people with short sticks. They were hitting those standing in line and trying to draw them out while the Jews resisted. Later on, I understood that these were communist Jews who opposed the immigration to Israel. The following day after registering for



immigration to Israel, my father was fired from his job and was forbidden to get any other one instead. The Romanian authorities closed down the tavern.

The Relationship Between my Family and the Population:

General:

My family had a good name among the Christian population. They were honest merchants and especially respected people.

Meeting a Peasant's Grandson:

One day I accompanied my grandmother Hentzi Herzberg during her daily stroll. Every person we met approached her, kissed her hand and asked for her advice in nearly every possible matter. All of a sudden, a big cart harnessed by huge horses stopped near us. A young man dressed in national costume with daggers hanging from his brău got off his cart. He approached us, got on his knee, kissed her hand and didn't get up until grandma told him to. The youth told that his grandfather on his dying bed confessed that my grandmother saved his life. Therefore, he beseeched his grandsons to honor her even at the price of their own lives.

My Paternal Grandmother's Funeral:

Grandma Henzie's funeral was an impressive event which is still imprinted in my memory. About the time of the funeral the market shut down, the peasants from villages around Suceava came in town and offices closed. A few Jews marched ahead the funeral procession. An interminable line of Romanian people plodded along the main street. The sidewalks were loaded with people. When the procession reached the cemetery the Jews alone entered. The hills around overlooking the Jewish graveyard were full of people granting my grandmother their last respects.

Yidish, Hebrew and Jewish Studies:

General:

My father's sister, Zofi, was very determined about Hebrew and Jewish studies.

Jewish Studies

Here are a few observations:

- Before 1958's Aliya there were many teachers, who demanded memorization. However, this was never my



My paternal grandmother's headstone at the Suceava Jewish Cemetery



strongest side. When I was about four one of the teachers forbade me to ask questions, to make comparisons. He demanded total submission – “learn the Yiddish translation and stop asking so many questions!” Afterwards, he hit me on my hands and he locked me as punishment in a timber storage room. Despite this, I couldn’t succeed with any other teacher.

- There was one nice custom. At the end of a newborn’s first week of life, all those studying at the heider would go to pay a visit. They would read “Shma Israel”. Afterwards, everyone would get a piece of cake.
- My salvation came from rabbi Weisbuch. I took Hebrew lessons.
- In addition, we reviewed a great part of the Torah books, but it had been too late since it was a short time before immigrating to Israel.
-



Yidish Studies:

As part of the régime’s efforts to reconcile with the Jewish population, we studied Yidish for an hour a week in the first and second grade. However, our lessons stopped the moment the teacher immigrated to Israel.

Hebrew Studies:

There were many Hebrew teachers in town, but I didn’t get along with any of them. However, rabbi Weisbuch taught me in a very organized and systematic way. He really enjoyed teaching me and, sometimes, he was so enthusiastic that we continued studying for three or four hours. My dad wanted to pay him for all the time he invested, but he refused to accept money.

Childhood:

Below I will present some funny stories from my childhood:

- My mom was an avid reader. That’s why, my mother used to place me in front of her and read to me especially Romanian translations from French authors. She would read me for a long time, sometimes our sessions extending from morning to late in the evening. She managed to find a children’s book by the Romanian author Ion Creanga. She used to read to me for hours. I was so immersed in my mom’s readings that I would always imagine palaces, houses, imaginary creatures, feeling extremely happy. During these sessions I kept quiet, as words weren’t necessary.
- In front of my house there were a number of craftsmen – a shoemaker, a tailor and a tinsmith. I believe that when I was two and a half years old I crossed the road and settled in at their shops. They gave me to do different jobs and taught me the secrets of their trades. All these without talking. I was happy.



- At that time, children would go to the kindergarten from the age of five. When I was about three, I used to play with one of the neighbours' children who was going every morning to the kindergarten. One day I joined him and after that I continued to go to the kindergarten and there I learned how to speak. In my eyes, the huge number of wooden cubes in different forms was the most attractive activity. I could go haywire with my imagination.



From the left: Moshele, Gita Ostfeld, X, Gitta Weitmann, Doamna Jescu, the kindergarten teacher, Ruthy Hubner, X, Erica Shapira, Tzili Abram. Behind Gitta, Lily Weintraub. Behind Ruthy Hedi Salpeter. Sitting second on the right Zwi Fuhrer. All the kids mentioned above are Jewish children.





Childhood Memories

Nelu Eidinger

My name is Nelu Eidinger I was born in January 1945 in Murafa, Transnistria to my father David Eidinger, born in Suceava, and to my mother Fany Goldring born in Russia. They met after father was deported to Transnistria along with all Suceava Jews.

Childhood memories

It was warm and cozy at home, all the lights were on, not usual at our house.

On the table there were refreshments and homemade wine which we used all year round and not just on Passover. There were also deserts. The “Russian” woman played cards; laughter, jokes and a bit of gossip merged into the conversation. But when they started singing there was sadness and a lot of tears. Russian

was incomprehensible to me, I couldn’t understand a word except for a song that its lyrics were a mixture of Russian and Yiddish. This particular song told about an orphan child who tried to persuade passers to buy his papirosen (cigarettes) for a few pennies to buy food.

The women sang and cried.

I couldn’t understand: singing is joy, singing is good mood, dancing to music and singing is what happy people do. Why were my mother and her Russian friends so sad?

Four, five years passed by. At the age of 9, I already understood Russian. In time, I guessed more about their sufferings, about what happened there. The constant



My family



My mother’s Russian friends. From the left Jenny Weidenfeld, Essia Rosenblum, Scheindale Gitter, Fira Goldschmidt, Ita Stahl, Hava Zaltzman



uncertainty regarding the next day was terrifying: would there be something to eat, would it be possible to get a bit warm. In those times, nobody thought about the future. The challenge was to pass the day, to stay alive, to survive.

At home, my parents never talked about Transnistria. The memories surfaced only at gatherings of the “Russian” women, who married Suceava men and settled in Suceava, building in town their families.

During these encounters, I was preoccupied with the sadness at home. Only later did I realize the reason for the meetings held at my home. Dad worked at the grocery store, mom started to work later at the ALIMENTARA.

Shortages of the most basic necessities were the order of the day. People were queuing up for hours for almost every commodity. It stands to reason that the closer circle got the daily or weekly “bargains” easier than the others. Therefore, the meetings were held at our home. I was happy when I could be out the day they met.

Children want to be happy. Then and now, they don’t need a lot of reasons to rejoice.



The different ethnic groups in Bucovina 1902: Hutsui, Hungarian, Romi, Lipovan, Jew, Pole, Shwab Romanians, Russian.
color: Nicu Idol





What is in a Name?

Paulica Davidovici

My name is Paulica. This is the name my close family and my friends from Suceava call me by. Actually nobody, except them, knows me by that name. Even on the Matriculation and University diplomas, my name is Paula David. This is the reason why, when somebody calls me Paulica, it sounds like a caress.... The sound of this name, Paulica, takes me back to my childhood, to my parents, to my eldest sister, Clarisse, to Dora, my second sister, all of whom aren't with me anymore.

However, not everything is so gloomy in my life, my childhood friends call me by this name. So, please, my dear friends continue to call me Paulica... I like the sound of it!!!

pregnancy. She went to Bucharest (a 10 hours distance by train from Suceava) to consult a famous gynecologist. He told her that ending the pregnancy could endanger her life. As a result, here I am the fourth daughter! I was born on October 29, 1947, when my mother was 41 years old and my father was 43. At that time my eldest sister, Clarisse, was 15 years old, Dora, was 12, and Miriam was eight. The fact that my sisters are much older than I am affected my life.



1949 family passport picture: mom holding me on her lap, Clarisse, Dora, father and Miriam



My Family

My parents' names were Ghittale and Iosef Meir.



My mother



My father drafted into the Romanian Army



Ghittale and Iosef Meir on their wedding, 1931



1931 when life was good. Mother, her brother Itzik and her sister Adela, with my father

My father went daily (no matter the weather) to the morning prayers at the synagogue Gah, where he met members of the Jewish community.

After the prayers, they used to discuss the latest political events broadcast on the clandestine radio channel "Free Europe", transmitted from West Germany in Romanian. So, if someone wanted to know what was really going on in the world, they would listen to it. When my father came home from the synagogue, at about 7 a.m., my mother would always ask the same question in Yiddish: "Yosel, vus hertzeh?" and my father's answer was always the same: "Ghittel, sez im irtze hashem zan ghit!" I woke up every morning with these words.



My mother was born in Piatra Neamt. It was, and still is, a beautiful town in Moldova. My grandmother, Miriam, had a son, Itzik, and two daughters - Adela and Ghizela (Ghittale), who was the youngest. Itzik was my mother's twin brother. He died when he was about 14. I was told that one of the Romanian neighbors convinced him to swallow mercury they extracted from a broken thermometer. He was told that the stuff would make him strong and handsome. Actually, what happened was that he died two days later, being poisoned.

My mother family was Swartz (or Negru, as they changed it later). It was a large family. They had many shops in town, selling carpets, furs, designer hats for ladies, etc.

However, my mother's close family didn't live in luxury. Actually her father, Levy, was killed during the First World War, while serving in the Romanian Army.

It is interesting to mention that during World War I, Jews, didn't have any citizenship. They weren't considered Romanian citizens and, therefore, they didn't have any civil rights ... except to serve in the army and ...die.

Between Adela and my mother was a difference of 15 years... My grandmother's family helped Adela to open a shop. Adela married Pinhas, but she had a very unhappy marriage. Pinhas (Pincu, as we called him) was a drunkard and a cheating husband. They lived in Iasi and had three sons and a daughter. Adela was a beautiful woman. Once, after the birth of her third son, she left the house with her children and came to live with her mother in Piatra Neamt. Divorce wasn't an option in those days. Later, in 1937, they moved to Calarasi, in the southern part of Romania. There, with the help of a Jewish family, my aunt opened a store. She managed the store alone and it became very successful. Pincu continued to behave as usual, but my aunt didn't care anymore. Her main concern was to be able to provide a good education for her children. They became wealthy. During World War II, when my father was taken to a forced labor camp and my mother couldn't feed her three daughters, her mother-in-law and Adela helped by sending food packages. This is how my family survived.

At the beginning of her marriage, my mother was quite unhappy as she had to leave her parental family and move to a small village, without electricity, where only a few Jewish families lived. However, Clarisse was born, and later Dora and Miriam. When my mother was pregnant with Miriam, her mother died in Piatra Neamt. My father didn't want to upset mom, therefore she was told about her mother's death only after Miriam's birth.

My family did very well between 1933 – 1940. They had a big store in the village with many customers from the neighborhood. A good relationship was established between the local villagers and my parents, respecting each other. Then the anti-semitic propaganda reached. The mayor of the village warned my father many times advising him to hide because of the growing acts of anti-Semitic violence. Unfortunately, one night the whole family had to flee suddenly, leaving all



their belongings behind, because they found themselves in a life-threatening situation. They went to live in Falticeni, a small town with many Jewish families. Not long after that, my father was taken to a forced labor camp. He spent two years in the camp. My mother was alone with three daughters and with her mother-in-law. How was she able to provide food? She started to sew sacks for the army. Clarisse and my grandmother, Sara, helped as well. Their hands were full of bleeding bruises because of the sack rough cloth. My mother got a few coins, just enough to buy a loaf of bread.

Jews were allowed to buy bread only at 5 o'clock in the morning and for a short period of time. In order not to miss out buying bread for her family, my mother would go at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, hiding in a basement she found near the place where bread was sold. When they started selling it, she was among the first in the queue.

Once she was apprehended with other Jews. They were forced to walk in line to the nearest forced labor camp. While walking on the main street of the town, people were watching them helplessly. Suddenly, my sister, Miriam, saw mother and ran to her, crying: "Mommy, Mommy!" She was a beautiful little girl with blond curls and blue eyes. Suddenly, something amazing happened: the armed guard was impressed and released my mother.

My father succeeded in escaping from the camp, which was a few hundred kilometers east from where we lived. Later I was told that Aunt Adela who tried desperately to help her sister, using her influence and money, managed to reach one of the guards in the camp, bribed him with a large sum of money; he turned a blind eye and let my father escape.

My father had to hide during day light and walk during the night. He ate what he found on the ground. This is how he wandered for a few months; when he finally reached our house, my mother was unable to recognize him. He was a living skeleton, full of fleas and lice, dressed in rags. Unfortunately, his sufferings weren't over. He had to hide in the cellar because they could have arrested him again and this time send him to prison or even kill him as a fugitive.

At the end of 1943, the situation of the Jews aggravated in Falticeni. Now Falticeni belonged to Romania, while Suceava belonged to Bucovina. My parents understood that they had to flee again. My father made a sort of wooden cart in which they put a few belongings, my old grandmother, who was unable to walk, and occasionally Miriam, who was three years old.

They didn't have horses, so my parents pulled the cart for about 20 kilometers. When they arrived in Suceava they found a ghost town. The streets and the houses were empty. The entire Jewish community had been taken to camps in Transnistria.

My parents chose a house suitable for the family. It seemed appropriate for their needs. They wanted to open a store, which could provide what was needed for the family. One day, while cleaning the house, my mother found an old wooden box. When she opened it, she saw there gold



coins, rings and other valuables. She understood that it belonged to the Jewish family who lived there but was deported to Transnistria. She closed the box, hid it and didn't touch it. At the end of the war, the Jews of Suceava started coming back. Among them, the Shibber family who owned the very same house. The Shibber and we lived for a few months together in perfect harmony, until my parents moved to a house not far from the market. Naturally, the Shibbers got back the wooden box and friendship was forged.

After the war, many orphans returned to Suceava. My mother used to take them in, sometimes for days, sometimes for weeks, until some arrangements were made: either they found somebody from their family or they were put in orphanages. There wasn't much room in our house and sometimes either my sisters or the poor orphans slept on the floor. However, my mother always found a way to feed everybody....

My Grandmother Sara's Alyia

Between 1950-1952, there was a massive immigration to Israel. The Jewish population wasn't aware of why the communist regime suddenly allowed people to immigrate to Israel, our young Jewish state. My family also wanted to make aliyah. They provided all the necessary documents. After a few weeks, a much awaited permit was received. However, it was only meant for Sara David, my grandmother. She was the only one who was allowed to immigrate to Israel.

My father went to get advice from a rabbi, to ask him what he should do. He had a terrible dilemma: how could he, the only son, send his mother to Israel alone? The rabbi gave my father many examples of families who either sent their elderly parents first and joined them later with their children or did the opposite, first the younger generation left and the elderly followed later. He said that it was only a matter of a week or two until all the family would be reunited in Israel. As a result, my parents agreed that my grandmother leave for Israel with half of the things we were supposed to take with us.



Sara David my grandmother



They were sure that it was a matter of days or one week at most until they would join her. She left and we waited for our viza to leave. The house was empty because my parents sold everything, expecting to leave soon. Unfortunately, the allyiah was suddenly stopped. We were no longer permitted to leave Romania. My grandmother was in Israel, alone. Communication was difficult in those days, so we didn't know anything about her.

Our life under the strict communist regime wasn't easy.... Miriam underwent a traumatic experience when, in front of the entire school, was accused that she was the daughter of a "chiabur" (a landlord)...and they took her "cravata rosie" (the red tie), the pupils' symbol of belonging to the communist party. Being dispossessed of the red tie was a great shame, meaning that your family belonged to the enemy, anti-revolutionary, anti-communist forces. Not wearing it made you automatically, an outsider. The irony was that at that time my parents could hardly provide for us the basic necessities, such as food and clothes.

The years passed by and, in 1957, we got a very short note from Israel about my grandmother's death which had taken place a few weeks before. My father sat "shiva" and we cried a lot. About 7 years later, my sister, Dora, made allyiah with her husband Pinhas (Puiu) and their young daughter Zehava. My brother in law, Puiu, started searching for our grandmother's grave. The task was extremely difficult: how could one find the grave of a woman called Sara David in Israel. It was such a common name! After a long search, he finally found it in the Pardes Hana cemetery. He also found out what happened to her during her stay (about 5 years); she had been waiting for her son and family to join her. It was a tragic. Without knowing Hebrew, old and alone, she was put in a home for the elderly in Pardes Hana. She waited until her last breath for her son and didn't sell any of the things she came with, keeping them and hoping that one day she would see him again. In her honor, every year on the month of Elul, we visit her grave. In her memory, we tell her story to the next generation which is always present with us.

Memories of my Childhood in Suceava

When I think about my childhood in Suceava, I go back in time almost 60 years. I hark back to the images, voices, colors, smells of a different world as if a curtain raises and you can see a different era.

My parents' house on Karl Marx Street was part of a complex of many flats arranged in the same way, like compartments in a train. The front room used to be a shop; the one next to it was small and served as a storeroom. The following one was the room the family lived and then another one, which was the kitchen. One quarter of the kitchen was taken by the "soba". During the cold months, it had many functions. We got warm at its fire and my mother was cooking on it. It also had a very good oven where my mother used to bake every Friday the challah bread for Shabbat.



Their smell filled the whole house and it let us know that we were in the middle of preparations for Shabbat. I must add that our “soba” served also as the traditional heating plate for Shabbat. If the fire was extinguished, my parents would ask a Romanian to rekindle it. The kitchen was the only room that had a big double window and a door. Outside the door there was a small 1-square-meter porch where we kept a big wooden barrel with water. We watched the barrel closely so it would always be full because it provided all the water necessary for our family.

Our flat had two ways out: one, at the front, where the shops were, and another which opened to the yard. In the shop mother sold all kinds of sweets: candies, chocolate, biscuits, wafers, even chocolate cakes. Her store was called DELICIA. We also sold soda water with various fruit juices. Whenever there were many customers my mother would call me for help. My father also worked hard running a mini-market. My sisters had already married, left the house and went to live in Iasi and Falticeni. When my mother was sick, I remember that I used to come from school and immediately open the store until late in the evening. Then I did my homework.

My mother worked very hard, but never complained. She lifted big metal containers of soda water to put them in even bigger ones in which, there were blocks of ice, in order to cool the soda water. In addition, all kinds of biscuits were stored in big wooden containers of 20 – 30 kilos and she arranged them in the storeroom. Work never ended. I remember that she prepared soup on a gas primus while working in the shop. When she had to add some vegetables or some salt, she would leave the customers and run to the kitchen to see what happened with her soup.

She has always been an example for me.

My Childhood Friends:

As I mentioned before, the stores were in front of our flat and on the opposite side was the yard. All our neighbors, with the exception of one very nice family, were Jewish. It happened that all their children were about my age and, of course, they were my best friends. Let’s start with Tzilica. She was a real beauty with blond curly hair and brown eyes, Simone Signoret style (when she was young). I spent a lot of time at her house. She had two younger sisters and I loved the youngest, Sophie, very much.

On the floor above us was living the Ribner family. Dina, a mother of three, two girls and a boy, was pretty with black long hair, brown eyes and a lot of energy. Her husband worked in a bakery. He was a quiet man and I don’t remember ever talking with him.

The next yard was called “curtea mare” (the big yard), and it was really big. On the floor above, lived my friend Carla. We were all admiring her beautiful dresses, she wore gracefully. Downstairs lived the Shoenfeld family. They didn’t have any children and Mrs. Shoenfeld was crippled as a result of an injury from Transnistria.



The only non-Jewish family had a son who was our friend. His parents were very nice people. The Manash family lived on the first floor. They had three sons: Iancu, Benny and Dorel. Iancu was my classmate. He was very intelligent, but didn't invest a lot of effort in his studies... Moreover, he preferred spending time with his best friends, among them Vladimir Gaitan who is now one of the best actors in Romania. If Iancu's father wanted to know something about his son, he used to ask me. Iancu owes me a lot as I lied many times about where he was during school hours.

Here is a picture taken at school in 1965. I am the second from the right standing next to the wall.



Iancu's mother, Ghizela, was a gentle woman. I remember her sitting at her sewing machine, wearing glasses and making bedclothes, which were special. They were artistically embroidered with the monograms of her clients. All the Jews from Suceava possessed a few of these bedclothes and I am sure that there are houses here in Israel where they still can be found.

In the late 1950's, the communist authorities found a new source of income - Jewish property. My parents weren't worried because their possessions were very limited... Two of my sisters got married - Clarisse in 1957 and Dora in 1958. As a result my parents owed a lot of money to our neighbors from whom they borrowed it. In order to return it, understandable, my parents were struggling day by day to make ends meet.

One day, Ghizela, Iancu's mother brought in our humble house a lot of valuables, such as jewels, fur coats and money. Iancu's mother knew that it was only a matter of hours until the police would



come and confiscate, incarcerating her husband. everything from them. She was right. Not only did the police come, but they also took Iancu's father. He was in prison for a few years. He and many other Jews were sentenced to forced labour in the South of Romania.

During the years when her husband was in prison, Iancu's mother worked hard at her sewing machine. They had a maid, Leonora. She was part of the family, raised the boys and loved them as if they were her own children. I remember her; she wasn't tall, nor young, nor pretty but she was talking about the boys, especially, Dorel, the youngest. In return, she was very much loved by the children. When Mr. Manash came home from prison, they succeeded to make allyiah. They left in 1961. After their departure, Leonora was wandering the streets of Suceava, crying and holding one of Dorel's shoes. It was such a sad view...

Next to "curtea mare", there was another one, where only Jewish families lived. I had many friends there. To name only a few: Lia Avram (Tzilica's cousin), Bettina Shoenfeld, Betty Merdler, Harry Fleischer, the sisters Etty and Betty Goldenberg. My best friend during those years was Bettina Shoenfeld. She was a very a smart girl with black hair and black eyes. I met her two years ago. She is one of the scientists at the Weizman Institute in Rehovot. When she immigrated to Israel, I missed her very much. Bettica was also my friend. I used to spend a lot of time at her house especially during the time her father was, like many Jews, in prison.

Both yards ended into a big square, which was previously called "Piata de Unt" (the Butter Market). We would frequently meet other friends and have fun: Dorly Weidenfeld, Iuliana Hershkowitz, Ghitta Weitman and her cousin, etc.

At the end of 50's and the beginning of the 60's, the communist government "let my people go". Then, we didn't know why, but now we know. Israel and The American "Joint" simply bought us. They paid large amounts of money ranging from \$3000 to \$6000 per person. The younger a person and the more educated the more expensive he was.

As it's easily understood, at school, our class had almost only Jewish pupils. During the Jewish holidays, the class was almost empty. However, suddenly, the situation changed. When I was in the sixth grade, my friends started to leave. Their families immigrated to Israel. In two years there were only a few Jewish pupils. I was very sad, I cried because I missed my friends terribly. The saddest period was when, a few weeks before leaving, my friends' families were trying to sell their belongings and their houses emptied little by little. I was trying to spend as much time as possible with my friends as these were our last moment together. It was so sad... Once they left, they simply vanished. I didn't expect to have any communication with them. We were at the beginning of the 60's, there were no cell phones, no Internet...

Since their departure, I haven't heard anything about my childhood friends. I came to Israel on



February 19th, 1974, soon after the end of the YOM KIPPUR war. I was married and had a little baby. Since the beginning, we lived in Netanya because my parents and my sister Dora lived there. My parents helped us a lot with our son, while we were struggling to make a living in the new country. Sometimes I was wondering where my old friends might be.

Then, about four years ago, I got a surprising telephone call from Dorly. She succeeded to find Iuliana Hershkowitz who gave her my number.

Dear Dorly and our beloved Lilly decided to make their mission to reach as many old Suceava friends as possible: all those who were born in 1947. And they succeeded! On August 1 2015, we all met for the first time after so many years. People came from all over Israel but also from different countries in the world - from Italy, Canada, the United States, Germany, South Africa and Mexico.

The following summer we went on a trip to Suceava. I also wish to mention the fact that all of us had in Suceava many dear non-Jewish friends with whom we were very close. We grew up together and we were very fond of each other as children and, later, as adolescents. I didn't feel any difference. We simply loved each other. When we visited Romania, my old best friends joined us. I was so surprised when Ileana Marcianu came to meet me. She lives in Bucharest, her daughter is a psychiatrist in Sweden. She came especially to meet us. Isn't it amazing ???

Nowadays we are happy to meet and talk to each other whenever possible.

I wish we would continue being best friends as years pass by, in good health and always feeling pleased and overjoyed in each other's company.

AMEN !!!!!



Paulica, second from right





Suceava Picture-Story

Pia Klein

I was born in Suceava, Bukovina, Romania to my mother Medi Sommer and my father Burshi Klein.

As it happened in many Jewish families, I was also an only child. The pictures I carry with me speak about a happy childhood, about taking part in all sorts of activities, engaging in recreation enjoyments, having fun and amusing myself with friends and schoolmates.



From an early age, I got ballet-lessons. Even today, dancing is always my favorite activity. The 7 girls at the bar is a picture taken by a local journalist and published in the local paper, but the entire group was photographed, as seen in the pictures bellow.



First on the right Ica, X, Dorly. Second on the left Gitta, Pia next to her. Kneeling on the right Agnita and Karin.



Pia, in the middle





From the left: X, Lily, Gitta, Pia, Karin. Third from right Dorly, the only girl wearing a wrist watch (highly unusual for children in those days).



Pia, first on the left

The next pictures were taken in kindergarten and elementary school





Father, Jenny Weidenfeld, Mother, Dorly and I



Dorly and I

Once a year the school held a Carnival celebration. My mom went in to much trouble to assemble a costume by collecting different pieces of clothes and accessories to fit Madame Pompadour or the Grand Visier in the story about Little Muck.



In the winter, we wore hats, gloves and big coats, almost identical.



Under the communist regime one kind of winter coats was sold. Here are my classroom friends: from right Romy, Mira, Mara, I, Lotty, Ety, Gitta Segal.

I grew up feeling loved by my friends, Dorly, Betty, Lotty, Cuta, Carla.



In the summer, we went to the Suceava River to swim.



My mom and dad had also fun, especially on holidays



From the left: my paternal uncle and his wife, X, my mom and dad

Wishing to familiarize the generations to come with the way we were, I opted to present a photo-story. Those days are gone, but they are still fresh in my memory.

People often say ‘**A picture is worth a thousand words.**’ I believe the **original** quote was actually, ‘**A picture is worth ten thousand words**’ as stated by Fred R. Barnard, of Printers’ Ink, 10 March 1927. Indeed, the pictures are extremely effective. Abstract thoughts and myriad of details are presented to the viewer at a glance. Each reader is given the chance to scan and focus on the items he is interested. I hope that my kind of presentation will capture the imagination of those who browse through the book to get a glimpse of how we were.





My Cinderella Story

Pia Klein Greer

My name is Pia Klein Greer. I was born in Suceava Romania on June 1946. This is my Suceava story.

My parents, Burshy and Medy Klein, met in Shargorod, in the Jewish Transnistria ghetto. They were married there. When the war ended, my parents returned to Romania, and settled in Suceava. My father became a member of the Communist Party and was in charge of a big company as a CEO.

I was an only child.

Suceava was a very small town. Everybody knew everybody, a small place where it was very hard to keep secrets.



Mom and Max Glickman
the violin player



I had lots of friends - Lotty, Dorly (my mother and Dorly's mother were best friends) Mira, Etty, Mara, Carla, Cica, Beno, Martiu, and many more.

I did not like school and I wasn't a very good student. I got in trouble a lot of times like not having the correct uniform...the white collar on my uniform was missing... my hair was not in braids... my grades were failing. I was picked on a lot by the teachers. My mother was very often called into the principal's office. What I didn't know at the time was that I had a learning disability called dyslexia. Today this is not a problem since it can be treated.

Summer vacations were the best. No school, no uniforms, no curfew. For three months in the summer we were free from being hounded by the teachers. We went to the river to swim; picnic'd and came home late.

We went to the movies, to Padurice, and to Zamca. Some of us were lucky to be accepted to attend summer camp held in different Romanian cities.

I didn't really know the burden of communism. The only thing my parents drilled into me was not to talk to anybody, including family, about any personal happenings in our family life. It wasn't safe. We couldn't be sure who listened to our conversations, it wasn't safe and reported to the police. We could get in trouble, be arrested, lose our jobs or have our possessions taken and end up in jail. That was scary! Fear was how the communist party ruled the country.



Max Glickman at my birthday party. I sit on Max's lap





My life changed dramatically when I turned 15.

The Romanian government contracted companies from all over Europe – England, Germany, France and Italy - to build a paper factory in Suceava (Burdujeni.) The foreign engineers were housed in an apartment building next to one my parents and I lived in.

Everyday, going to school, visiting my friends, going to the center of town, I had to pass the building where the foreigners lived. The Suceava police informed all the citizens not to have any contact with the foreigners or we could be charged as conspirators.

One of the English engineers, Eric Greer, noticed me and tried to speak to me in broken Romanian. I was flattered but also very scared to engage in any kind of conversation because the consequences of any interaction between locals and foreigners was well known. A conspirator could be arrested, lose his job, or get kicked out of school.

I told my parents what was happening. At first, they were very worried. Eric kept insisting to speak to me and gave me a little note written in his poor Romanian. He could not understand all the restrictions put on us by the Communist Party. After some time my parents realized that Eric was in love with their daughter and they allowed me to meet him secretly. Our date was held inconspicuously in the monk's monastery, not far from our apartment complex.

We would have Eric over for dinner at our apartment late at night. I would turn off the electricity at the main electrical panel in the building so he could come to our apartment in the dark. When he left I would turn the electricity back on. I remember neighbors complaining that at least once a week we had the electricity going off and coming back on again.

Eric proposed marriage to me when I was in tenth grade. I accepted but told him I must finish high school first. For the next couple years Eric worked on multiple contracts in different towns around Romania. Eventually, my parents and I moved from Suceava to Galati, where Eric was working, so I could be near him. To get married with a foreign citizen meant to get a special permission directly from the government, not easy to obtain in those days.

After two years waiting for permission to get married, we were finally married at the City Hall in Galati.

Eric and I left Romania in March 1966. My parents left Romania six months later and emigrated to New York.

This is where my Cinderella story ends.





My Story

Reizale-Soshana Schauer

My name is Resie, the daughter of Isidor and Clara Schauer. I have three half-brothers: Fredi (Efraim) and Rolfi (Rafi) from my mother's first marriage, and Henri from my father's first marriage.

I was named Resie, in the memory of my grandmother's memory, who died in Transnistria in terrible circumstances. Upon arrival in Israel, in 1962, I was given the name Shoshana. The sound seemed strange to me and I didn't understand the meaning. Even to this day, there are people who call me Resie and others who call me Shoshana.

After the war, my mother returned to her house in Czernowitz, but her house was taken. At the beginning of the war her husband, being a soldier at the time, was killed. The war atrocities and her personal loss were horrendous. She returned from Transnistria as a widow caring for her two small children, Fredi and Rolfi. After the war, she was introduced to my father, who was divorced and had a boy, Henri. They started a new family in Suceava.

I was born in 1948



I as a toddler



Mom, dad, I and Rolfi





Rolfi and I at different ages

My father, who was an electrician, went on working at the family business together with his cousin Nathan (who was also his ex-brother-in-law). They owned a chemical laundry near the market. This was the only private laundry in town; my father was adamant to be part of a cooperative.

The authorities bullied my father in order to make him accept entering the cooperative, but he absolutely refused.



My mom and I

Unfortunately, I have many childhood memories regarding my mom being ill. My mother's illness worsened when my brother Fredi left Romania in 1947 for Israel. He joined a boarding school of war orphans. His group was delayed in Holland for an year before arriving to Kfar Glickson in Israel. We were promised that we would follow, but immigration from Romania had been stopped. Mother kept saying that she felt

extremely guilty about Fredi growing up far from her.

Since I was 9, I took some household responsibilities upon myself, including cooking for our family. My mom was hospitalized in Cluj and Iasi; my father accompanied her. Our relatives, Nathan and Tony Schauer and my brother Rolfi took care of me. My father officially adopted Rolfi and raised him lovingly. My mother's sister, Frida Blei (Zamler) who arrived in Israel earlier, was happy to have fourteen-year-old Fredi. Fredi grew up with her family in Haifa. Later he served



in the Navy. On the eve of the Sinai Operation Fredi left for the United States to join our mom's sister and brothers, who lived in the States for many years. He travelled to the US through Cuba, where he waited for two years until he received the entrance visa. In spite of all the hardships and wanderings, Fredi excelled in his studies and got high academic degrees. He taught political sciences and architecture at the University of Chicago.

The influences of the Transnistria Holocaust marked my parents and my brothers for life. Our parents and our relatives used to talk all the time about the ordeal they were subjected to. We, the children, would beg them to stop. My mom used to talk ceaselessly about her sister's husband. He worked in a kitchen. Fortunately, he managed to bring some food home for the children. These Holocaust stories were especially difficult for my brother Rolfi. He said repeatedly that he didn't remember nor did he want to hear about what had happened. In spite of the terrible cold weather my brother Fredi was one of the kids who sold cigarettes in the street; he lacked proper shoes or clothing. Many years after, he told me that he frequently suffered from hunger; to chase the thought away, he went outside to play.

During the Holocaust, mother, Frieda and her husband Herscu saved the seven-year-old Perla Fuhrer whose mother Yeti (Herscu Blei's sister) died in Transnistria and whose father, Shlomo Fuhrer, (Zwi's father) was drafted in the army. Coming back from the war, Shlomo was sure his daughter perished. When he discovered that she was alive he said: „It seems that Messiah is on his way!”

Chaia and Shlomo Fuhrer married in Suceava after the war; they had a baby boy - Zwi. Back in Suceava, Shlomo and Chaia raised Perla with much love and care as a sister to Zwi. Although not related, our families have always been in close relationship.

In Transnistria, mom worked for a little food, as a cleaner for a Jewish family who cooperated with the Germans.

She would hide whatever she received and keep it for her children. When her employers discovered what she was doing, they gave her half of what they had given before, to prevent her from taking food home. Occasionally, Frieda worked for a peasant and got a little milk for baby Rolfi. The employers insistent she come to work even when she became ill with typhoid fever.

My father was in Moghilev with his son Henri, who was seven at the time. Fortunately for my father, he was needed as an electrician at the power station and this is how their lives were spared. He and Henri lived in a small room near the bridge. When the bridge was bombed, the room burned while little Henri was alone inside. My father could barely save him from the fire.





From the moment Fredi left Suceava, my parents had tried to immigrate to Israel. They submitted endless documents and papers asking to be reunited with their family in Israel. This was the picture submitted to the authorities to get the visa (1950). My parents, I a toddler and Rolfi

The visa was always denied. In 1962, bribery worked and we received the much-awaited permission to immigrate.

My father taught me the Hebrew alphabet from a prayer book. He knew Ashkenazi Hebrew very well from the time he was a child and learned at the „heder”.

Regarding my studies, I remember Lily Weintraub for the better. She was our closest neighbor



Photo Caruntu: Album Suceava Periferiilor

(one wall separated our apartments). Lily was a beautiful and intelligent girl who, from an early age, had the will and skill to teach. She was a year my senior.

From her balcony, first from the left in this picture, she used to pass me everything she learned in the first grade. I lived in the apartment which balcony can be seen next to hers, on the right of



the picture. Therefore, in the first grade I was bored; consequently I used to disturb others from learning. The teacher, Mrs. Sumanaru, found a solution. She seated me in the first row, very close to her table so I wouldn't bother anyone. Her wool scarf was placed near me and, out of boredom, without intention, I took hold of a thread from it and pulled...and pulled...till most of the scarf unraveled. Mrs. Sumanaru was left without her scarf... You can imagine how extremely angry she was.

I had a few friends, all of them Jewish, among them Betina Sheinfeld. We used to play together, especially in our houses.

Not far from our house lived Zwi Fuhrer and his family. As I mentioned before, our parents were very good friends. On my way back from the kindergarten, I used to stop at their house. My parents didn't know where I was disappearing until they understood that this was a "daily stop" on my way home. Zwi's mother would pamper us with delicacies – potato fritters, whole wheat bread (made by Lily's grandfather) smeared in goose fat and garlic. She had always rose-petals homemade jam and a concentrate for a sweet drink. I called Zwi's mother "aunty" despite the fact that we weren't really connected. The boys played football in Harry Feller's yard and I liked to watch them. I loved it more than playing with dolls.

I loved to read; I had subscriptions at three town libraries. Mostly, I enjoyed the Russian authors' and Eminescu's poems.

When I was 9 years old, my brother Rolfi and I were sent to Mr. Salo Klar to learn how to play the accordion. My parents had to "fight" with me to practice, but Rolfy loved to play, although he preferred to do it without notes.

We arrived in Israel on the board of "*Flaminia*", a very old ship. Through connections, we got a tzrif in the Kiriath Motzkin "maabara". Later we moved to Ramot Remez in Haifa. I studied at Ort boarding school – "*Hapoel Hamizrahi*" in Bnei Brak (Aliyat Hanoar). Afterwards, I went to the army and served in the Northern Command. Moshe Herzberg served with me. I was asked to join the reserve forces as well. I went on studying Building Engineering, and I worked in this profession for 47 years in I.D.C. and the Electrical Company.





Relu and Adriana

Relu (Eliezer) Faienstein

Adriana (a pseudonym) – her real name is still engraved in my memory and my heart. She appeared in my life when I was quite young. I used to call her “Tzumpi” (scumpa), a nickname derived from the Romanian word for “precious”. She was a foreign languages teacher in one of the high schools in town. Adriana had a breathtaking, slender, firm body, sunrise-golden hair that cascaded down over her shoulders, deep blue eyes you could dive into and sensual full lips that tasted unforgettably sweet. She was about 20-21 years old and I was nearly 17. She was a woman at the beginning of her maturity just about to discover her wonderful womanhood, and I was a hot-blooded adolescent.

In the beginning of the 1960’s we had to move into the new block of flats built on Mihai Viteazul street, because the Lazarov family house, in which we had been living until then, was meant to be transformed into a prayer house. Our apartment windows faced Gitta's house (my wife for the last 50 years). In the yard next to the huge nut tree, I used to play numerous times with Gitta and Shoshana Fishler.

The apartment we received had two small rooms, which were part of a three-bedroom apartment. The entrance was through a 2x2 meter hallway in which there were two doors leading into two small apartments: the one on the left belonging to us and the one on the right belonging to our new neighbors. It was a one-bedroom apartment suitable for a young couple. We shared one common bathroom. These were typical communist housing options in a typical communist block of flats in a communist city.

In the one-bedroom apartment lived a married young man whose wife was a student at the Gorki Institute in Bucharest. She studied languages - French and Russian.

It did not take long for me to get acquainted with the couple and to befriend them. He was a nice, polite young man, not exactly the communist type. His biggest dream was to leave Romania for Germany, in order to join his relatives. He used to get (nobody knew how) magazines from Italy (Nostre Donne). During the first months I had not seen his wife once. However, I could often hear strange noises, moans and sighs indicating a lot of “suffering” coming from their apartment, each time his female colleagues visited him to “deliberate”, “promote projects” or to simply “study” together. My curiosity overcame my good manners and I asked him once about the intense occurrences in his apartment. His cryptic answer was: *“wait until you’re grown up and mature and*



you'll understand". He did not add an explanation. The wisdom of his words became clear to me many years later.

Months passed by when we were informed that Adriana, our neighbor's wife, graduated and got a job as a language teacher at a high school in Suceava (not the one I attended). And one day, Adriana appeared in all her splendor...Wowwww! What a beauty! Immediately afterwards her husband resumed his engineering studies in Iasi, which meant he was often away from home. He was immersed in his studies, attending lectures, handing in assignments, etc.

And so, life went on. Adriana was quite enthusiastic about her new job, enjoying every minute of teaching at the high school. She used to talk a lot about her experiences and her progress at work. Only later was I able to understand the extent of her success; how talented and good she was (and I don't only refer to her teaching skills...). And he? He kept on working, coming home and returning to Iasi, to study. The relationship between the young couple and myself grew closer. Even my parents had good neighborly and friendly relations with them.

I was 17 and in my senior year in high school, rather busy preparing for the matriculation exam. It was a winter day. I was home, suffering from a terrible tooth ache, but studying nonetheless. Adriana came back from school and, as usual, came by to say hello. She had a big compassionate heart; she felt sorry for the suffering teenager. Then, I heard: *"do you think a kiss will make you feel better?"* Till I pulled myself together and comprehended what was going on, her red, sensual, delicious lips stuck to mine in a long kiss. Pain? What pain? Who was still thinking about pain? It was so wonderful! At that moment, our special love affair started – a fiery passion, a total bliss that lasted until I left Suceava for Israel.

Her husband continued his studies, which forced him to be away from home frequently. Our relationship developed and progressed as a result of such propitious conditions. We didn't even try to conceal it. We walked through town hand in hand, going to Zamca, Cetate and Padurice, actually everywhere. We went to the cinema (not to the movies, but to the cinema...) and there, in the darkness... well you all can probably guess what was going on. Sometimes, her mother, who lived out of town, came to visit. We would take her along on our walks and to the cinema. We didn't hide ourselves. How careless of us. Who cared?! We were young, we had fun, we were happy and elated. We looked forward to being together as much as possible and whenever possible...and it was possible!

After graduation from high school, I went to Bucharest. During that year, we met only when I returned home for holidays. Once Adriana came to Bucharest. Her desire drove her to come. For two days we tore the city up and had a blast.



When I returned from Bucharest at the end of that year, I matured and was quite experienced, being exposed to the big city's "depraved" way of life.

On the first morning after my return, I was wandering about the town when I happened to pass near the Pruncu house. A pioneer camp took place on the premises. And guess who was there with the children? - Adriana! She was standing in the yard, looking ravishing in a skintight white garment perfectly fitting her slim, tanned body (she had just returned from the Black Sea) and her naughty blue eyes. Maybe it wasn't by chance that I passed there? I stopped to say hello and she told me that she was going to finish work around noon and that she would come to my place later. There she was! She entered my apartment like a white angel descending from heaven. Where were the wings and the aura? She looked like a seraphic being, a divine creature. She dropped the white costume. The white lingerie was glowing on her tanned skin as she stood next to me; and when that also came off the tanning lines on her exquisite body were exposed in all their splendor. The heavenly artist had created nature's masterpiece filled with beauty and passion. We held each other in an exhilarating embrace as we danced the dance of fire; just as flames unite and grow into a powerful unison so were our bodies united into one, burning with intense passion, fireworks, volcanic eruption...heavenly beatitude ...a supreme moment...profound delight...and then, silence. There were no words, only rapid, deep breaths. In that moment I experienced and understood the legend of "paradise".

Our passionate romance lasted the entire summer. I decided to take the entrance exams at the Polytechnic Institute in Iasi, so I had to be in Iasi for three weeks. Adriana came to Iasi twice during the exams period. We clung together because it was extremely difficult to be apart from each other.

Then, my family got the green light to immigrate to Israel. the preparations for the journey started. Adriana and I were still together all the time. My tactful and extremely discreet parents told me that I might be spending too much time at her apartment whenever her husband was missing and that I had to be more careful. But I went on spending time with her, taking advantage of every minute we still had.

Time flew quickly as October came by. We had to leave, not before handing our apartment to the authorities. As a result, we had to stay for a few days with our family in Falticeni, which was also an opportunity to say good-bye. When we got back we didn't have where to stay for five days. It was decided: my parents would stay at Sasha Lechner's family and I - at Traian's (pseudonym) and Adriana's. In the evening of our return from Falticeni, before we went to sleep, Traian informed me, with great regret, that we must say goodbye earlier than expected, because he had to leave



for Iasi. Early in the morning, he went on his way and I and Adriana went on “ours” - a delightful five-day journey, filled with passion, as if life would come to an end after these five days. The thought of our imminent separation was tough. We stayed indoors. Adriana didn't go to school (she got a sick leave – passion and desire sometimes are an incurable “disease” indeed). We didn't eat and we only parted for a few hours each day when I joined my parents to say goodbye to our acquaintances in town. Then we were together again, living the primal paradise story and later on experiencing our own personal paradise lost.

Then the time came. We had to leave for Bucharest, and I had to tell Adriane goodbye forever. The pain was excruciating. She ran after me in her pajamas to give me another hug, and another last kiss...how agonizing. My heart and soul were torn apart. It was a tremendous pain. Life is so unfair!

When I got to Sasha's to join my parents and was about to climb into the taxi, Adriana appeared in her pajamas, exactly as she was when we parted only a few minutes before, with a coat thrown over. When she ran after me, the door to her apartment slammed and she couldn't get in, so she borrowed a coat from a neighbor and came for one last hug, one last kiss. I got into the taxi, still smelling her perfume, feeling the heat of her body and the taste of her red, sensual lips.

We lost touch. At one point, I heard that she and Traian succeeded leaving Romania for Germany. However, I never found out if that was indeed the case. While I was living in Europe at the beginning of the 1970's, every time I visited Germany, I tried to find them in the telephone directory, but all my efforts were in vain.

There's a story connected to the account above. Adriana taught some of my friends (today they belong to Suceava Children group). One day when she was lying in my bed in my apartment, someone knocked on the door. I opened. To my big surprise, two of my Jewish friends came in asking if “Tovarasa Profesoara” lived there. They wanted to talk to her on some pressing matter. I was embarrassed and didn't know what to do. Then I heard Adriana's voice from my room: “let them come in”. They went in, while she was lying nonchalantly half-naked in my bed.

The girls entered the room and one of them started to apologize. It turned out that there was an incident at school. One of the girls talked back to the teacher. The student was thrown out of the classroom and an account of the incident was written in her personal record. “Please, forgive me” pleaded the girl. “I don't want to hear ... you were insolent” retorted Adriana. The scene went on for a few minutes without Adriana changing her posture.

I was bewitched by the surreal scene. How captivating was Adriana when she got angry, blushing (was it out of anger or as a result of the hugging before the girls' arrival?!). She was so beautiful



with her bright blue eyes. In the end she said she would think it over.

While I was walking the girls out, one of them said: *“I see you have a really good relationship with her, maybe you can put in a good word for me”*. As much as I can remember, the record was erased. The things we do for friends...

I would like to remind you that in order to protect their privacy all the characters' names have been changed. Nevertheless, their real names are forever engraved in my mind and in my heart. Did all this really happen, or maybe these are the wet dreams of an old man fantasizing about of his adolescent years? I know it was.



Relu and friends, Relu is first on the right





My Parents

Relu (Eliezer) Faierstein

It would be an “an unfinished symphony” if I attempted to write my memories without talking about my origin, my parents or my teachers.

I was born on a cold winter day in January 1945 to my parents Dora (nee Lazarovich) and Gershon Feuerstein. My father kept for many years the calendar pages with the exact date and time of my birth (3rd Shevat 5705 at exactly 5:55). I was named Lazăr.

At the circumcision ceremony I was formally given the Hebrew name Eliezer Ben Gershon.

Some Biblical figures called Eliezer emerged to mind: Eliezer, our ancestor, Avraam’s servant, aka Damascus Eliezer, is a Biblical character whose name is mentioned in the Bible just once, when he is sent to find a bride for Yitzhak, Avraam’s son. He could also be the son of Moshe and Tzipora, who was born after Moshe’s return to Egypt. Another Biblical character called Eliezer was present at King Ahaziah Ben Ahab, as a prophet and continued his sacred mission during Judea King Yehoshafat Ben Asa’s reign.

Historical events in Romania influenced and changed my father’s family name. In the beginning, the name was Feuerstein, with emphasis on German origin. In the ‘30s, under nationalist Romanian regime (Goga-Cuza) the spelling of the name was changed into regular Romanian orthography, and so it lasted to the present.

I looked up the origin of the name Feuerstein. At Beit Hatfutsot some possibilities were offered to me. In the early German translations of the Bible „Amud Haesh” (The Fire Pillar) it was translated into „Feuerstein”. After the Trianon Treaty (in 1920), which finalized WWI, a border was drawn between Romania, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. The Northern Romanian border was the Southern Polish border. The Ukraine came in between the two countries only after WWII. At the common border between the four countries (named Carpatho-Russia, Carpatho-Ruthenia, Zakarpattia, Trans-Carpathia), there is a mountain chain (perhaps the Tatra mountains) and the name of one of the tops in German is Feuerstein (it may have been a volcano?!).

However, the explanation that most fits the method of name adoption by the Eastern European Jews is the one which names a person according to a profession he practiced, in my case, a person who sold or put in flint stones in flintlock firearms or a topographical name for someone who lived next to a quarry of flint stone.



I must point out that I have always been a “phenomenon”. First, surprisingly, I was born only after “three” months of pregnancy: my parents got married in October 1944 and I was born in January 1945?! A very extraordinary pregnancy! I haven’t found any explanation for this phenomenon!!!! Second, I was born through a breech birth, which occurs rarely (1 in every 25 births). There is an advantage to a breech birth: you can find out the sex of the baby before seeing his face...I emerged into the world presenting the part of my body that showed my attitude towards it. Everything would have passed smoothly unless I hadn’t been stuck and stopped sliding out. It was decided that forceps were needed and, therefore, breech birth was joined by forceps birth. Blue marks from the forceps stayed imprinted on my behind for a few weeks as a reminder of the way I was born. However, not even the forceps helped me get out. When the midwife noticed that my little body started turning blue, she understood that something went extremely wrong. Actually, what happened was that, besides breech and forceps birth, the umbilical cord was wrapped around my neck. Thus, the meaning of having a noose put around your neck was made clear to me even before I was born!!! As soon as the midwife understood the situation, she removed the umbilical cord enabling me to come out smoothly, screaming of pain and joy until my oxygen depleted lungs filled up with air. What a relief!

The icing on the cake was the coincidence that the joy of my birth occurred at the same time as the joy of the Romanian holiday, celebrating the union of the Romanian Principalities. Since I heard and felt the exhilarating preparations taking place around me, I was looking forward to my birth milah celebration (maybe we could dance there "Hora Unirii"). I really wanted to enter into the Covenant of Abraham our father, and feel Jewish. Everything started nicely. They gave me wine, wine is good, much better than my mom’s milk, which by the way was too abundant... maybe it could be thinned with wine instead of water?! Wow, my little head felt dizzy, my first intoxication...till nearly losing my consciousness... First, like in a dream, I felt a pleasant touch at a certain private place at the inferior part of my body where the mohel’s fingers touched the birth “target” till...”Hey, just a moment! It hurts, it’s not pleasant any more...why such violence? Till now it was pleasant... I have expected a day with wine and sex... why do you behave like this?

It hurts!!!! Really hurts!!!” I felt the pain deep in my brain...sharp...burning...an unforgettable experience till this day, not to mention the loss of length. Years later, when I grew up and matured, they tried to convince me that “the length isn’t important” ...revenge of the stupid “...What are you doing to me?! What now? Ahhh, the mitzvah of metzitzah...really? I’m hurting and bleeding and this is what you feel like doing now???” Fatigue and wine made me throw in the towel and fell asleep, victim to my first “getting high” experience!





My parents were wonderful, loving, pampering, my best friends all my life, supportive and encouraging. I had never called them “mother” and “father”. We had nicknames for each other speaking eye to eye, like they say today, my father was “Tuky”, my mom was “Duda” and I was Lutu, derived from my name Lazar – Lazarelu-Relu-Relutu-Lutu. Many years have passed since they went to a better place (at least this is what they say) ...and I still miss them very much!

My great grandfather, Leon Feurestein, left Lemberg in Galicia (Lemberg in German, Lwow in Polish and Lviv in Ukrainian) and settled in Falticeni, Romania. Yes... yes... I am a Galician! At the time my grandfather was only 6 years old. My father was born in Romania in an observant religious family. My grandpa Iona, who had a beard, peyos and wore a black bowler hat, and my grandma Toyva (Iona in Yiddish) ran a tavern and inn in Falticeni.

They had 4 children (two boys and two girls). The youngest girl passed away when she was only two years old. The other sister grew up as a kosher Jewish girl destined to become a woman and mother in a Jewish traditional family. My father’s elder brother left the family home, “abandoning” it in a certain way. However, he remained a good, warm and loyal Jewish man knowledgeable in Hebrew and in Jewish religion. He travelled to France, returned before the war and became a lawyer. He was connected to Suceava as, during the first years after the war, he was a prosecutor (procuror) and was engaged in catching the Romanian legionaries, hiding in town. He took part in some operations and told me how they caught them, especially the case in which one of the Iron Guard (Garda de Fier) heads was apprehended after hiding in Zamca tower.

My grandfather destined my father for greatness, being the youngest, after his sister’s death. He sent him to study Torah at the “heider” wishing he could become a rabbi. However, my dad rebelled, ran away, absolutely refusing to continue this kind of education. This prompted his father to confine him in their storage unit in the yard. Without grandpa’s knowledge, grandma would bring him food and water to make it easier for him. Eventually, he succeeded in convincing his



father, therefore he was sent to a regular school. My grandmother died when I was one and a half years old and my grandpa when I was 7. By the way, my grandma was part of the Rohrlich family from Bucovina. Although it happened when I was at a very tender age, I remember her funeral extremely well. The room in which her body laid on the floor covered in white, the lit candles next to her head. The funeral remained well imprinted in my mind. I have very few memories of her or her family.

During the war, my father was taken by Antonescu's army, together with many other Jewish people from Falticeni, to a forced labor camp in Calfa, Basarabia, where he worked at the stone quarries.

My mother came from a wealthier family, they led a better life. Lazarovich brothers, my grandfather's siblings, owned in Falticeni storage facilities for wood and alcohol. My grandpa owned a restaurant and a hotel and he passed away at the age of 48, before I was born, and my grandma in 1949. I remember her very well because of her kind heart and her love for me. I knew my maternal grandfather's family, but, because they lived in Bucharest, our relationship was precarious. On the other hand, I was well acquainted with my grandmother's family. Her brothers were social-democrats, ideologically close to the communists. They spent in Jilava, the most notorious prison during the reign of the Romanian King, most of their young lives. After the communists came to power, they studied and advanced, being appointed to the Romanian communist Parliament. The youngest, who was an engineer, was appointed to the position of minister of heavy industry (ministrul industriei grele) during the 60's and the eldest, who was a journalist, historian and writer, held the position of president of the Academy of History and head of the Journalist Association. I remember them well from the time I studied in Bucharest in 1962. At the eldest brother's house cultural and brainstorming sessions were held, during which Romanian intellectuals, most of them Jews, took part. I participated in these Sunday mornings sessions. Between eating a piece of herring and another of salami sidelong shots of "tuica" and vodka together with Cotnari wine, matters of the utmost importance were discussed. For example, there I heard for the first time that "anti-Semitism doesn't exist in Romania! Anti-Semitism is just a Jewish complex!" Maybe there is some truth to it, but of course only partially; anti-Semitism exists, plain and simple! I also heard stories about prominent Jewish communists who were caught by the Gestapo following reports by non-Jewish party members only because they were Jews... but in Romania anti-Semitism didn't exist?!

My mom became an orphan when she was only 16. My dad was 9 years older; he taught her private lessons in French and...who knows in what else?! After all, I am the result of all these studies! Mom brought me up by herself without the help of a nanny. She started to work only



during the 50s, after we submitted the application to immigrate to Israel, as my father was sacked from all his positions in the communist apparatus. During that time, she was the only breadwinner in the family. She worked for the C.R.R., the governmental bureau responsible for gathering the wheat from peasants. When we arrived in Israel, she went on working hard. My father studied in the ulpan and I was in the kibbutz but she, again, was the main breadwinner. A really exceptional woman.

How did my father become a “communist”?

Before the war, like all Jewish adolescents, dad joined the Zionist youth movements, which operated in Falticeni. In the beginning, he was a member of the “Hashomer Hatzair” movement. He and his colleagues were trained to settle in Israel. Later, he entered the apprenticeship to become a barber in a kibbutz. The activity was denounced to the Siguranta (King’s secret police) which searched his house. The informant stated that there are “communist books” in the house. Truth be told, “Hashomer Hatzair” educated young people in the socialist ideology and even gave him to read books about the history of the workers’ movement. Dad was taken to the Siguranta headquarters. Due to his young age, and perhaps my grandma’s pleas, he was let go, but on his personal file the Siguranta noted that he was suspected to be a “communist”.

At the beginning of 1944, the Red Army entered Falticeni and set up their headquarters in a villa on the outskirts of town. They started looking for someone who knew how to draw beautifully. My dad was known as someone who was able to perform the task. After all, he was the one who usually prepared the posters at the local cinema. (By the way, I wasn’t very good at drawing, to say the least, but had the loveliest drawing notebooks in school...my father used to draw them for me.) Dad was singled out due to his skill. The Russians, who had at their disposal the Siguranta’s files, were very happy to see that he was labelled as a “communist”. The Soviet soldiers came, covered his eyes and took him to the Red Army headquarters. There, over a period of two or three weeks, he worked to update the war maps of the Russian army front. When he finished his work, he was brought home, in a horse carriage, once more with his eyes covered. The carriage was full of potatoes, canned food and more. In addition, they wrote in his personal file that he assisted the Red Army in their war effort.

Many of my father’s friends chose the path of communism and integrated into the party apparatus in Bucharest. My father was sent to Botosani to manage the state properties, Bunurile Statului, a company which gathers all the properties of landowners (boieri), wealthy people (chiaburi) and of the Romanian legionnaires, for the people's benefit. I was born in Botosani during that time in Vila Ipateanu on 34 or maybe it was 26 Eminescu Street. It was a beautiful, sumptuous house, owned



by a lawyer who, no one knows why, fled with the arrival of the communists. Not long after that, my dad was appointed Secretary of the local council – Prefectura (Sfatul Popular Judetean) in Suceava. Later on, he became one of the five vice-presidents of the council as well as a member of the communist party. At that time, my mom and I (at the age of 2) got to Suceava. In spite of his job, my dad was still a good Jewish man, possessing a special kind of honesty, a naïve idealist. The Jewish people in Suceava treated him suspiciously. “Er ist nicht Unseriger”, being labelled as a communist, saying “he is not one of us” (he came from the “regat”). In time, I believe they changed their minds and knew how to appreciate him the way he deserved. There are a number of stories regarding the process of reconciliation between my father and the Jewish community in Suceava. For example, the great synagogue was in need of renovations after the war and they turned to my father. He passed on the request to the heads of the party. The secretary of the party told my father: “Gersh (this is how they called him, my dad’s name was Gershon), these are you Jews (or, in “friendly” language, “astia sint jidanii tai”), take care of them”... and indeed the renovation was done. Another story was about a Jewish man who, in the heat of business, took a wagon full of beans to the Black Sea to sell abroad, in spite of it being intended to feed the Red Army. The Red Army beans??? Who was the man who dared to carry out this betrayal??? The Jewish people from Suceava turned to my dad for help. My dad met the local commander of the Red Army and the problem was solved. My father was offered many presents afterwards, but he never ever took any of them – he turned down money, different objects and various valuables. There are many more stories about him.

Very “important” people (part of them Jews) visited us at home or we visited them at their house. Do you still remember which part of my body was first exposed when I entered into this world through breech birth?! The same part sat on the knees of “important people” (at least they were thought of being important) in Suceava of those times: the chief of Militia Gabor, the infamous Colonel Popik from the Securitate, an elegant officer with ironed spic and span uniform, wearing permanently dark glasses. (It was rumored that if he had turned his gaze unprotected by glasses towards someone he hated, that man would have disappeared instantly.) Another “important person’s” knee I sat upon was that of the Soviet comrade “polkovnik” (colonel), the commander of the Soviet garrison in Suceava - a short, chubby, funny man who let me play with his many shiny “coins” attached with colorful strap to his chest. Later I understood, that those were medals of valor he had received for taking part in battles, even in the battle for Berlin. There were also Turcanu and Munteanu, the former chairpersons of the Prefectura and the latter - the party secretary or maybe the other way around, forgive me for not remembering quite precisely after so many years. We also had a



car (a black Ford) with a chauffeur - Mitica; my dad had also a jeep (Jeep Willis) which served him on his rides to the villages. Life was pretty good...but everything ended one day, in 1950, when my parents decided to ask permission to immigrate to Israel. My dad was expelled from all his positions...! (from a high rooftop to a deep pit).

However, he had never regretted anything... like always, an incorrigible idealistic optimist. He didn't have a job for two years. He stayed at home. He and I spent a lot of quality time together. We would cook together and would wait for mom to return from work.

After two years of unemployment, he was given a temporary job as a daily worker at Combustibil, the wood storage facility in town. A few years later, he received a permanent position in Alimentara (till this day I have no idea what a "merceolog" is, but he held this good office job until we immigrated to Israel).

Like all the other olim who arrived in Israel then, following Hebrew studies at the ulpan, dad declared he was a "buchhalter" – bookkeeper. While at the ulpan, he passed some courses in bookkeeping and, thus, he worked at the bank until his retirement.

Mom worked until retirement at the candy factory in Haifa Bay "Hashahar HaOle" (who doesn't know the chocolate spread "hashahar"?!!).

My dad passed away in 1993 and my mom – in 2008. Both of them are buried in Krayot, near Haifa. I really miss them!

We Applied to Make Alyia:

It was 1950 and I was 4-5 years old. It was evening. My parents and I were sitting around our table after diner – a regular evening at our house. At the time, we were living in the Lazarov family's building, at the end of the Stefan Voda Street, near the animal market (Obor) in Suceava.

Suddenly, mom asked me if I remember the time when dad took a course in Bucharest and wasn't at home for a few months. Of course, I remembered!!! How could I forget?! After all he returned with lots of toys and even brought me a scooter, things which were really difficult to procure during those times in Romania. Among them was also a dwarf that could roll down a slope, as well as many other things. Of course, I remembered! My dad, who was a high-ranking personality in the local communist apparatus, was sent to advanced studies to Bucharest, a three-month course at the Internal Affairs Ministry. All that time he wasn't allowed to return home and that's why his absence was long...nevertheless, how many toys I received when he returned?! He sent all his books and his luggage by post and filled his suitcases with toys...

The discussion went on: it might be that dad would once more have to go for a long time but upon his return he would again bring many beautiful toys and maybe a football and a bike as well. It



was also possible that for a number of days mom would also have to join him and she would be absent, too, but not for long. If I agreed, I should know that there (my dad got on a chair and opened the lid of the kitchen lamp) were a few gold coins. Later on, I found out that they were called “cocosei”, French gold coins and the symbol of the French republic was still the cock) and hazerleh, gold Russian rubles from the tzars’ period. I wasn’t supposed to tell anyone, except my uncle Misu (my father’s elder brother who was a lawyer in Falticeni).

During that period my father held an important position in the regional hierarchy. He was a secretary and afterwards one of the five vice presidents of the regional council (Prefectura – Sfatul Popular Judetean) and, obviously, he was a member of the communist party. He was about to be appointed head of the propaganda division in the Defense Ministry with the rank of colonel and we were supposed to move to Bucharest. Fortunately, my mom was extremely realistic, as opposed to my father who was naïve. She reminded him he was Jewish and, in her opinion, nothing good awaited the Jewish people going up the communist “ladder”. The higher their position, the more difficult and painful their downfall would be! How right she was!

The rumor regarding the possibility that the Romanian Jewish people would be permitted to immigrate to Israel turned to be an official announcement at a very important moment for my family. We feared the consequences this decision would have on a high-class Jew in the communist structure, especially, the vindictiveness of the authorities under those circumstances. Bearing these in mind, my parents decided to prepare me for the worst in case my father would be arrested and my mom would also be taken for inquiries to elucidate the “Zionist plot concocted by Zionist agents”. Actually, it was about the possibility of my dad missing from home for a long time. They decided that the next day my mom would go to the militia station and hand in the forms asking for the permission to leave Romania. Obviously, I didn’t know anything about it.

The next morning, a regular day, my parents went to work and the rest was known to me only from my parents’ stories.

My mom went to the police and handed in the Cererea de plecare and afterwards went to my father’s office to inform him that it was done. Militia was on the Strada Mare, the main street, a few tens or maybe hundreds of meters further from my father’s cabinet opposite the clinic. My father’s office was in the building of the Prefectura, which today, I believe, is a museum, only a few minutes away. When she reached the office, she was told my dad was already at a party meeting, the meeting during which he was dismissed from the communist party and stripped of all his other positions. For me it was terrible, as I also had to part with Mitica, the chauffeur, together with the black Ford and the Willy’s jeep, the American Army remnant. The main argument against my dad was that, if a Jewish person at his status wasn’t afraid and dared to take such a drastic step,



it would be a bad example for other Jews in town who might still be hesitant but would still like to immigrate to Israel.

It was a long period, of about two and a half years, in which my dad stayed at home without work. True, he was unemployed, but, at least, he wasn't missing from home. Although I didn't get my toys, I got to spend a lot of quality time with him.

What about the fate of the napoleons (cocosei) and the hazerleh? Since money was very scarce throughout that time, my mom being the only one permitted to work, the gold pieces were sold to a Jew who exchanged it for Romanian currency. Nevertheless, in 1952, in Romania, a currency reform (revalorizarea leului romanesc) took place because the currency had lost its value. At the bank, the monetary exchange was limited to a certain sum. My parents went to the one who bought the gold pieces and paid for it in old Romanian currency, which now was useless. The man was considerate or he just felt sorry, therefore he gave my parents three kilos of butter...?!! as compensation for their loss. Thus, we didn't miss the butter on our bread!!!!

The delay in receiving permission for Aliya went on for 13 more years. In 1953, the party decided to partly acquit my father's "sins". He was allowed to work as a temporary worker, only to be approved as a steady worker later on.

In summer 1958 my dad was called again to the authorities..."Look Gersh, you are one of us, you have always been...people make mistakes sometimes...years have passed by...maybe time has come to return to us..."

I was 13 years old and I remember my parents' worries and dilemma. What would happen if he had turned down such a "generous offer"?! I, in my heart, thought that the opportunity would return for my father to bring me toys and maybe Mitica, the chauffeur, would come back with the Ford and the jeep...Just joking.

In that same summer, the authorities permitted the Jews once more to apply for immigration to Israel. For the authorities this change of heart had no consequence, but for our people it created illusions as well as disappointments?! The new policy lasted for only a few days and my parents didn't succeed to renew their application in time.

I remember the end of Yom Kippur 1958. We got out of the great synagogue together with other people who prayed and finished fasting and were on their way home for the meal. Capitanul Marici was waiting at the gate. Marici, a former apprentice to a Jewish shoemaker spoke Yiddish perfectly, addressed the Jewish crowd "אידן גוט כסימעת גוט יאר...גוט ניס... מארגן ווידער וועט קענען צו ימיגרירן צו ישראל" - "immigration to Israel will take place". The next day, my parents hurried to seize the moment.



.Thus, even his “friends” at the party understood that my father was irremediably lost to them. We waited another 5 years (in total 13 years) and only in 1963 we received permission to leave Romania. Interesting was that on my father’s Certificat de calatorie there were visas to travel to Israel through Turkey from 1953, but we left only in 1963, through Italy. This means that we had got the visa to leave paradise in 1953, but it was never delivered to us. Was it at the police station or at the local communist party?!! The fact is we were detained for 13 years.

We reached Israel at Haifa port on November 8, 1963, on a hamsin day. We stood on board the ship Pegasus and watched the green and beautiful Carmel. We were all festively dressed, the men in suits and ties, after all we reached the holy promised land. While we were on board, we heard calls from the platform of the port: “Feuerstein... Feuerstein...” We looked at the people on the quay and recognized someone waving at us and calling our name and who, obviously, was from Suceava...the tinsmith Rhum. He ran and brought another Jewish man, also from Suceava, Gerty’s uncle, Donio Distelfeld. “ Are people from Suceava even here, in Israel,?” I thought to myself. Of course there are. There were also, the Nachgeher family, Gerty’s grandparents, and her aunt Marion who hosted us for a few weeks until the time we got an olim apartment in Kiryat Shmuel. The first to meet on the street were Gitta’s uncle, Iosele Weitman (Haiutza’s stepfather) and, later on, Rozica, Haiutza’s mother.

Many years ago, my parents hoped that I would start elementary school in Israel, but, as it happened, I arrived in Israel only after matriculation. The most significant thing was that my dad didn’t go away from home, not to study and not for any other reason. This is my aliya story.

I am a UTM or maybe UTC member:

In summer 1962, I successfully finished maturity exams and, while all the other schoolmates applied to different universities, I and a few more like me, refrained from doing it. With my parents’ help and following advice from “knowledgeable” people, it was decided that I will travel to Bucharest. There, far away from home, the terrible sin of being a Jewish person who asked to immigrate to Israel would hopefully be forgotten and, perhaps, the stigma of being “registered” (inscris pentru plecare) would be erased. So, I and my friend Nelu left for Bucharest. We registered at the Sanitary Technical School on Pitar Mosi Street, a splendid “institution” next to the well-known Gorki Institute. It was meant for those who wouldn’t be accepted at universities...Jewish people who asked to immigrate to Israel, unreliable elements, disloyal to the régime and unwanted by universities (*elemente nesanatoase si nedorite*). In certain unofficial, but questionable circles in Bucharest, this school was known under the “sumptuous” name of The Institute for thieves, Jews and hookers - *Institutul de pungasi, jidani si curve* (I beg the pardon of those with sensitive



ears). The syllabus was great: three mornings a week practical work at a factory for electronic medical instruments and on other days in the afternoon frontal lessons in class. For our work at the factory we received monthly pay, but we had to save it on a C.E.C. as, in case of discontinuation of studies, when we would have to return the savings. After all, we came with a specific purpose in mind, leaving the school was an undeniable possibility.

Well, Nelu and I came to conquer the beautiful and big Bucharest. We settled ourselves “in gazda” at Horowitz family, a Jewish family made up of mom, dad, a teenage daughter, Rela, and a young boy, Toli. The family used to live in two rooms out of a five-room apartment with common kitchen and bathroom. In one room, there lived the slender and friendly Greek Stefi, who spent many hours in our room since we had a television set. In the other two rooms lived Stefi’s mother and, respectively, Stefi’s ex-husband. Mr. Horowitz was working in Focsani, far from home, and would return only at weekends. That was why the entire Horowitz family lived actually in one room. When Mr. Horowitz would return home, we would be asked to let Toli sleep in our room. I don’t remember where Rela would sleep on those occasions. That was how we lived for a year while we were studying and enjoying everything that the capital city had to offer. I had a full cultural life. I had an opera subscription on Sunday mornings, a cinema subscription at Aro (Republica) or, maybe, at Scala, I would listen to symphonic concerts in the orchestra hall of the Radio/Televiziune, go to the theatre, exhibitions and museums, but also to the bars and night clubs of communist Bucharest. I hadn’t neglected my studies. I studied French with the widow of the Romanian King’s ambassador to France, an interesting lady who taught me to love Paris (whoever dreamt then that this could really happen, that a day would come and we would visit the French capital?!). With her I read in French Molière (le voleur!! le voleur!!! Le voleur!! For the diction), as well as Balzac and other classics. This was an unforgettable experience which I remember till this day! We also had Mathematics and Physics private lessons with famous professors from the Bucharest University, as, after all, at the end of the school year we would go to Iasi to pass our entrance exams at the Politechnic University... This was our routine in Bucharest.

One day I met at the technical school a petite, gentle, graceful, nice and pleasant girl named Mariana (a pseudonym, her real name remaining inscribed only in my memory). She had dark hair, light skin and blue eyes. Actually, she was the one who started talking to me in the school’s corridor. We became friends and went out together a few times. After a short time we even got closer, no longer in a platonic phase. At that stage, I didn’t know that Mariana was an “appreciated and important” member of the school communist committee (*comitetul UTM pe scoala*) as we found ourselves in certain circumstances that weren’t about ideology, religion etc. These subjects



didn't really concern us. We were only 17-18 years old. It was pure fun, feeling good together. One afternoon, while we were spending time together in bed in her apartment, completely oblivious of the communist morals and totally immersed in faulty bourgeois pleasures, exploiting shamelessly our passion, I imagine that my "skills" stirred and impressed "comrade" Mariana too much. As we were resting pleasantly, having a perfect quiet moment after losing our senses, I heard her as if in a dream: "You have to join the UTM!" ... Just a moment, where does this come from??? What's happened??? I knew I was "good" (!) but not that good to gain me the appreciation of the party?! That was exactly what I was missing!! They would start prying and poking into my life and in "*originea mea nesanatoasa*" and would find that I am a Jewish person who asked to immigrate to Israel!!! What am I going to do? The following morning after parting with Mariana, I called my father and told him the whole story. My dad, with his characteristic calm, answered me: "Son, you made your bed, now sleep in it!" I knew (this is how they taught me) that it was possible to get in trouble with girls in many ways, but this kind of complication, with the communist ideology?! It was worse than pregnancy... On our next date, Mariana "said and done" (*spus si facut*) brought me forms and convinced me (by sweet and passionate persuasion) to fill them up. Who could say no to her... this is how it was among "comrades" (*tovarasi*), everything was done without delay... "volens nolens bibi"

A few weeks later, I was a full member with a red card to Mariana's complete satisfaction who, now, could enjoy entirely and safely her "kosher" UTM boyfriend, without ideological barriers. The ideological pressure put an end to the romantic relationship!

Did the red card help me when I had to pass the entrance exams at the Politechnic University in Iasi? No! Except having fun with Mariana on the way to receiving the red card... and the very pleasant and special means of persuasion she put on me... no! May I add the "difficult and tiring" way, full of "sweat", "efforts" and "energy" on the path of fulfilling "communism"... but it was extremely delectable and... *Multumesc tovarasi!* (Thank you comrades).

Despite the fact that my matriculation grades put me on the third place on the list of applicants, I wasn't accepted. We, the Jews, were sure and convinced that we could always cheat the non-Jews. But they were smart. Before the results were released, the Internal Affairs Ministry sent the Politechnical University's vice-dean, upon his personal request, a list of all the Jewish youngsters who took the exam. It was meant to check the truth at the source. The truth was that before taking the exams, my family and I actually got the approval to immigrate to Israel. However, we postponed our departure for a few weeks to allow me to take the exam and learn the outcome. Had I been accepted we would have given up the idea of immigrating. They did me a favour and



I reached Israel...This wasn't what I believed then...I learned the Biblical term: "waste energy for nothing!" Those who know the real meaning of this sentence are invited to understand me correctly!

What was the fate of the red card? I left it with my good friend Nelu. When he arrived in Israel, about six months later, he told me that they left Romania by train. When the train stopped at the border and the police officers got in to check the passengers, he threw the red cards under the train. We both would have liked to see the faces of those who found it later on the railway tracks...or maybe they didn't find them at all...One thing I haven't understood till this day. Why was the card red...after all, no blood was spilled on my way to UTM membership.

But, my true love has been and always will be, Gitta, my wife.



Gitta and mother - Relu and mother





My Story

Renee Schwerberg

I was born in Suceava on Oct 29th, 1950. I do not remember the exact address of my birthplace but I was told it was very close to the park in the center of town, the one who was the main attraction for the residents.

Our next address was 39 Karl Marx Str. We had a large apartment on the second floor, off a catwalk, facing an interior courtyard.

At one point, both my paternal grandmother and my maternal great grandmother lived with us in a three-room apartment. My younger brother, Marius, my parents Beatrice (Titi) and Herbert, grandmother and great grandmother constituted our family.

Our apartment had a tiled “soba “, wood heated fireplace that provided us with some comfort during the cold winter months. We heated our blankets against the tiles just before wrapping ourselves in them so we can fall asleep. I still remember my toes and my fingers always being ice cold most of the winter.

We had a toilet with a pull chain that was frozen during the winter months and needed to be flushed with buckets of hot water. Mother would carry up the buckets of water from the thread factory which was located in the courtyard. Watching its operation kept us amused for many hours.

My mother Beatrice (Titi) was born in Czernowitz in 1923 and was raised mainly by her grandmother since her mother, Regina Robinsohn, was sickly. Her father, Moritz, was a bank accountant and my mother always said they were very educated people. During WWII my mother's education was interrupted while the family was living in the Jewish ghetto. Distant relatives to my father introduced my mother, then 19, to my father; because he could help save her life. My father, Herbert Schwerberg, had a work permit from the Antonescu's regime, which allowed him not to be deported by the Nazis. By marrying him in 1942 she was able to escape her parents' fate, of being deported to a concentration camp. My father was working as an apprentice to a Romanian dentist and that is where he learned his lifelong skill of dental technician. With this skill he supported our family in Romania and then in the US. My dad was born in Cacica, Romania. His family, which owned a lumber factory, was apparently quite large, because he had a lot of cousins all over Romania. My dad had 3 brothers, all Zionists, who left for Palestine.

Being Jewish was something I was always aware of in Suceava. I knew we were different and that there was really no future for us. My great grandmother, from Czernowitz, who lived with



us, was very religious. She ate only kosher meat, which necessitated buying one more chicken, just for her, that I had to take to the "Shochet" for kosher slaughter. Then, my mother plucked and salted the chicken going through the whole ritual of kosher-making the meat. I also remember taking my great grandmother to the synagogue on Shabbat. Women and men sat separately. At the temple on Simchat Torah I danced along with other kids holding a flag with an apple on top of it. By being a dental technician, dad got a position in the Suceava Polyclinic as a dentist. They called him "Domnu doctor". Sunday he went to Cacica, "la tara", to service the farmers for their dental needs and he was paid in chickens, eggs, butter.



My father, sitting second from the right, in the dental clinic in Suceava.

The jobs were directed by the communist party. My mother had learned nursing skills in the Czernowitz ghetto while working in the hospital.

After she had me she stopped working. Life was difficult - shopping, cooking, cleaning and all the other household chores, which took all day. When it became available, almost every food



purchase required getting and standing for hours in a long queue. Bread lines, oil lines where you came with your own bottle, sugar lines where you needed a newspaper to make a cone to hold the sugar were part of a housewife daily chore. If you had an ice chest, you picked up a block of ice, which was half melted by



the time you reached home. And of course, you had to go to the farmers market to pick up a chicken for the family, for the week.

We did not own a refrigerator until 1956 when my mother brought one from Russia. I think we were the only family in Suceava who owned a refrigerator.

I remember going shopping for shoes and had to squeeze my feet into a smaller size because that's all they had. When my parents bought me a coat, it was the same model everyone my size wore. One fabric, one style for all.

On the other hand, I enjoyed the seasons, which were more distinctive than now. Spring was a time of knee-high socks and flowers.



With Riry and Bitty in the spring

Many of my fun times were spent on a trip to the "padurice" picking flowers (ghiocei, branduse) with one of my girlfriends. March was for "martisoare". May was the big communist parade.

In Suceava, the only mode of transportation was walking. You walked to work, to school, to the market, and to meet friends. People were strolling along the Main Street (strada Mare, strada Stefan cel Mare) "plimbare" and whisper about politics.





Occasionally we went on trips: mom, dad and I next to Palatul Peles



I studied music



From the left: I, mom, Perry holding her hand on Riry's shoulder

Mother and Perry, Riry's mom were good friends and so were we. We used to spend time together in town or in the country.

ORAR
ZILELE

Orele	luni	marți	miercuri	joi	vineri	sâmbătă
	Matem.	Matem.	Musica 8-9	Isi.	Fizica	Romina
	Francez.	Romina	Geograf. 9-11.		Matem.	Matem.
	Ed. fizic.	Fizica	Romina	Manual	Rusa	Geograf.
	Artoria	Rusa	Calig. 12-13		Zolog.	Ed. Fiz.
	Desen	Zolog.	Trabiera		Romina	Desen.
	Col. sport		Col. coral	Atelie		

I finished 6 grades in Suceava, having already Russian for two years and French for one. This is the weekly schedule:

In addition to the regular school program, I attended the art school; I learned to play the accordion.

School was strict. Every student had to comply to the rules printed in the "Carnet de Elev"; the "carnet" had to be presented to every teacher after a student had

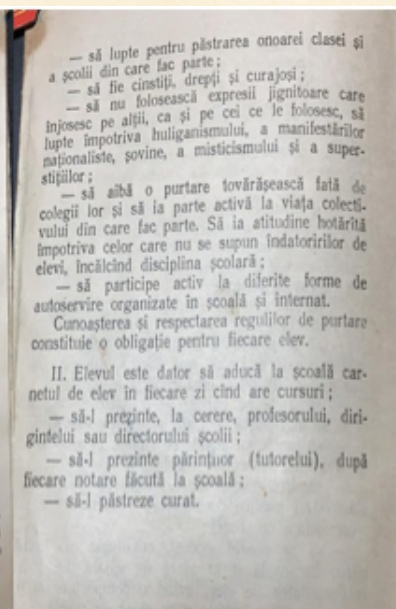
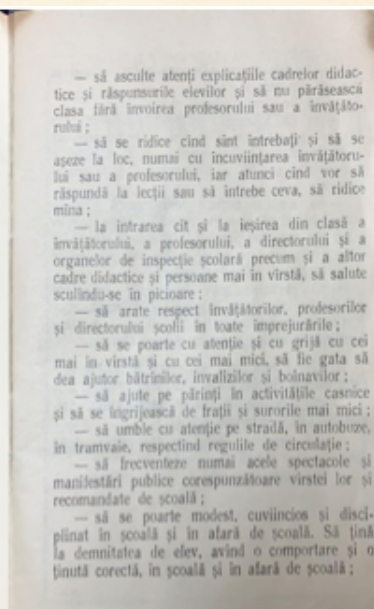
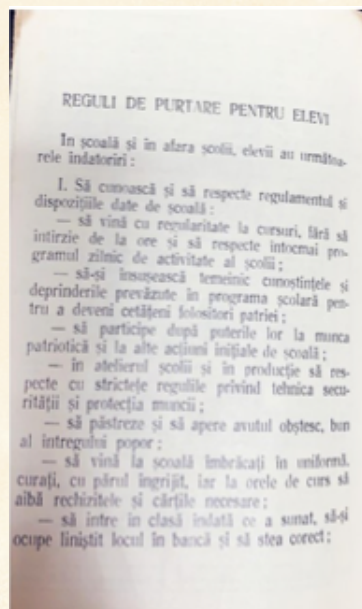
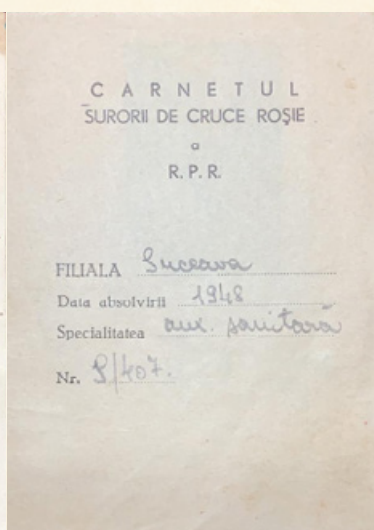




been tested. The teacher would write the mark.

To give the reader a jest, here is a translation of some of the rules:

- to honor the rules at school and outside school
- to stand up when the teacher would address the student or ask question.
- to help parents and brothers at home.
- to attend only the approved shows in town
- to fight for the honor of his class and school.
- to present the CARNET to teachers and then to the parents at home.



About 9-10 Jewish children were in my class. I remember having Yiddish class where we all learned the Aleph/Beit. During recess, I was called more than once “Jidan Imputit” (“dirty Jew”). In 3rd grade I was made a “pioneer” only to be humiliated in front of the class the very next day when my red scarf was pulled off my neck because my parents were registered to immigrate to Israel.

Data	Obiectul	Nota obținută	Semnătura profesorului	Semnătura părintelui
Trimestru III				
14/11	istorie	9	[Signature]	
15/11	mat	9	[Signature]	
20/11	istorie	10		
21/11	mat	10	[Signature]	
	Romina	9	[Signature]	
	L. rusa	10	[Signature]	
	Utrific	10	[Signature]	
	Zoologia	10	[Signature]	
Observații cu privire la cunoștințele				

Data	Obiectul	Nota obținută	Semnătura profesorului	Semnătura părintelui
Ext	Romina	10		
13/11	Fizic	10	[Signature]	
17/11	Geografie	10	[Signature]	
	mat	10	[Signature]	
20/11	L. francez	10	[Signature]	
21/11	L. rusa	10	[Signature]	
23/11	Desen	9	[Signature]	
Ext	Geografie	10		
4/12	Romina	10	[Signature]	
4/12	Zoologia			
Observații cu privire la cunoștințele				

I am amazed how many subjects we learned in the 6 grade and how often we were tested orally in front of the blackboard : History, Math, Physics, Zoology, Geography, Drawing, Languages: Romanian, Russian, French.

I also remember my mother taking Hebrew lessons in preparation for our intended departure for Israel.

Beginning of August 1963, we were informed that we received our exit visa and had to leave the country in three weeks. The most painful part for me was that my non Jewish friends stopped acknowledging me and did not even come to say goodbye.

In 1899, 80% of the Romanian peasant were unable to read and write. Spiru Haret, a math teacher and an inspector, was the great reformer of the education system. The results were outstanding. In the first part of the 20th century the high schools and the universities in Romania were on a high level and well regarded in Europe. But in 1948 Romania's leader, Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, eradicated the old system. In its place Romania installed the Soviet education system. The Russian language was mandatory starting from the 4th grade till graduation. The system had to educate the "new man" - the Soviets war heroes or the stahanovisti set the example. The latter were the workers who sacrificed everything to exceed the production plan. Education was strict, exigent, firm and rigid, but equalitarian. Books were cheap. Peasant kids, whose parents were analphabets, learned in the same class with children from educated families. They were required to reach the same standards of achievements, and they did. Discipline was a cardinal factor, starting with the uniform and the hair tied in a white ribbon, ending in limiting the hours we were allowed to be outside in the evenings.





Suceava

Riry Schwartz

My name is Riry. I was born in Cluj in 1951 but as soon as my mother graduated medical school, which was in the same month, we moved to Suceava.

My mother grew up in Campulung in a wealthy family. They were deported to Shargorod, Transnistria in 1941. Upon return the family established their home in Suceava.

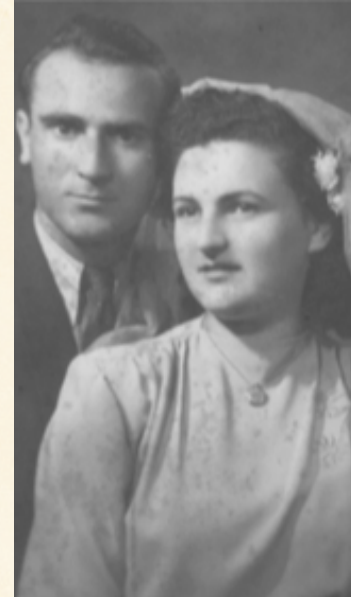


Standing left: Mr. Efraim Weisbuch, X, prof. Rohrich, my mom, Lily's mom.
Teacher sitting, Surkis (the second from the left) Clara Zlocewer, last.



Upon arrival from Shargorod mom attended the Suceava Jewish high school, completed the education she missed while being deported, and passed the matriculation exams.

My father Lazar Schwartz met my mom Paula (Perry) Behr at the medical school in Iasi, they fall in love and got married.



From the left. Standing: Poldi Kern, grandpa, father. Sitting Marghit, mom's sister, Bitty her daughter, Rami her son, grandma, mom and I.

In the picture my mother's family and the new generation, born after the war in Suceava.



My cousins and I

I was an only child, very much loved and adored.
Renee was my friend since childhood (second on the right).
I have very few memories of the 10 years I spent there.



With mom, Paula (Perry) Schwartz.



However, the home we lived in is extremely memorable and somehow upsetting to talk about. You came into the home through a gate. When you open the gate you could see a room immediately to the right (our bathroom), a staircase going to the second floor and a staircase going into the cellar.

The apartment was on the second floor. Two rooms: the first was the kitchen, the laundry room, the dining room and my and our housekeeper's bedroom.



With father, Lazar Schwartz,



The second was my parents' bedroom, the living room and our "walk in closet". My parents' window faced the main street of Suceava. I spent many hours looking out of that window. I was looking for my parents to come home, for the few friends I could play with or any other event of interest.

The most memorable room is the room downstairs: OUR BATHROOM. How it froze in the winter and how I had to carry hot water buckets to it from the stove in the kitchen to defrost the



toilets. That was done before and after each use. The tub, if used, I can't remember, but for sure never in the winter and for laundry only.

Ah, and the cellar. That was my fun playground. At age five I was already allowed to escort the Horse and Buggy carriage with our winter wood and our potatoes, onions and apples, and place them in their appropriate places. Were the rats there too? Who knows? I only went in during daytime.

I remember an incident at school. It must have happened in third grade. That day I took special care with my uniform. My white blouse was ironed and so was my skirt. Today you became a "PIONEER".

All the students in my class lined up. We were so excited. The principal (I think) went from student to student, placed a small red scarf around the neck, and knotted it for each one. Now they joined what you would call the Communist Youth Movement. My turn finally came and he just went past me. When he was all done he said to me: "You are Jewish and your parents enlisted to go to Israel. You can never become a Pioneer!" I ran home crying.

This was the age of Communism. This was the age of anti-Semitism. The Communists were not as bad as the Nazi's but they came very close.



Living in Suceava was not difficult for our family. We were so much better off than a lot of others. My parents, both doctors, did house calls and payment was always made in chickens and eggs and potatoes and sometimes fresh tomatoes. I remember though one chicken was enough for our family of four for one week.

My memories of food shortages and the luxury of an orange or a stick of gum sent from Israel is lasting. I remember splitting one orange into four pieces so each of my parents and my nanny could have a piece. The rind was immediately added to the rings of two or three other oranges to make marmalade.

As to the gum, I chewed for hours and saved the piece into a container for another day.



Suceava in the early 1950s had a lot of entertainment venues. I especially remember going to the theater with my parents.

The electrical wires were all over the stage and I had to touch them. Of course I got shocked immediately. No harm done (a few brain cells fried) but a good point made: DON'T TOUCH.

At age ten, we left Romania for Israel. Many wonderful and exciting experiences were to follow.





My Story

Romy Rohrlich

My family members have been exiled during the Holocaust from Suceava to Transnistria, Ghetto Shargorod, in the Ukraine. The ghetto in Shargorod is an example of how such survival came about. In October 1941, the Jews of Suceava, Bukovina, were deported to Ataki on the Dniester River where the conditions were dreadful. The Judenräte were involved in survival, not resistance, and thus they were able to save so many members of the community. Their horrible stories from this ordeal must remain a legacy for generations to come. My uncle, Dr. Artziu Herman, would inject the men with milk shots, which would raise their temperature to about 103 degrees Fahrenheit, to prevent them from being drafted to the military, or send to concentration camps. Dr. Herman never made it back home since, after months of treating typhus patients, he succumbed to the disease and died. His wife, Trudy, passed away two days later.

My mother was cooking for a group of Russian troops, and the entire family shared the leftovers. While in Transnistria, she became very sick and never recovered from her illness although she had several surgeries. I will never forget train trips to Bucharest in the company of Mausi and Torry, two of my father students, who were such wonderful chaperones. They took me to see my mother at her many stays in the hospital in Bucharest. I remember jumping off my mother's bed when the surgeon came in, grabbing a flower and handing it to him with a hug. I remember asking him to please make my Mom a healthy mother again. He promised me to do so, however, it never happened. My mother was in the hospital again three months after we arrived to Israel. She never recovered from the tragedy of the Holocaust. If her own tragedy was not enough, she could never forget a starving ten years old boy, who was encouraged by a German officer to pick up an apple from a tree, and then was shot while stepping down.

My entire family, to include, my aunt Antonia (Tina) and her husband Joseph (Yossi) Landman, Regina and her son Mario Becker, and my uncle Martin Fishler (Mushuku), returned to Suceava after walking thousands of kilometers, surviving from food handouts. My uncle Mushuku had all nails removed since his toes froze on the trip. Back in Suceava, my father with some others, including Prof. Rimmer, Clara Surkis, the Vigdor sisters, and other non-Jewish professors, opened a Matriculation College for twelve graders who were not allowed by the Romanian authorities to graduate prior to the exile to Transnistria. Two years later, the school was closed by the Communist Party, and our house, where I was born, was confiscated as well.



My father, being an ardent Jew, but with no knowledge of Hebrew, was writing articles and poems for a Jewish Newspaper in Bucharest. The Communist regime was not overjoyed, but he continued this activity for several years. My father was not only a beloved teacher and an efficient assistant principal at Stefan cel Mare High School, but was also a lecturer at the Military University of Suceava. When he was ordered to join the Communist Party or else, he realized that it's time to leave Romania. Thanks to my father's relationships at the right places, we were out of Romania eight to nine month later.

As to me, my life in Suceava was very pleasant. I had a great time in school, had the best girlfriends and did not care much about boys.



My sister Jana, mom and I



Mom, dad, and I

Maybe I was too young at that time, but I made up for it in Israel. Here is a picture taken before I went to a party.

I don't remember anti-Semitism on a personal level. The Sturzas, Dragoshani, and other non-Jewish families, were among my parents' best friends. I do remember their wonderful homes and their parties at the Christmas Holidays. I recall my father's students arriving at our house in sleighs and horses very drunk. I also remember all the beautiful costume parties in school, the trips I took with my father and his students to Poiana Brasov, Constanta, the Black Sea cruise, and more.

When I was eleven or twelve, Marcel Baker, our neighbor, a painting artist, asked me to pose for a portrait. I felt I had no choice but to pose. Many years later in 1979, I posed again for a portrait. This time, the artist was my daughter, who was almost nine years old. She got a first price award for "Drawing Your Mother" for a Mother's Day contest





Dad and mom on the left, my sister Jana, uncle Mushuku, and my aunt Regina sitting next to mom.

held by all five elementary schools in Blacksburg Virginia. Unfortunately, somehow, the portrait was lost.

For the last forty-two years, we live in the U.S., in Northern Virginia, fifteen miles from the White House in Washington DC..





Childhood

Ruthi Glickman

My mom, Shana Wolf was born in Burdujeni in 1916. She was the youngest of seven children. Her family's financial situation was very good, since her father (my maternal grandfather) owned a shoes and boots workshop; almost all local inhabitants were his employees. My mom was about to marry my father – Haim Glickman from Balaceana - five years her senior, but the outbreak of war put an end to their plans of marriage.

Mom was deported with her family to Lucinetz, Transnistria; my father and his family ended up in Moghilev. My maternal grandmother died and was buried on the way to the camps.

Lucinetz was an enclosed barbed wire camp. Its inhabitants were forbidden to exit it without permission. The deportees were housed and shared accommodations in cowsheds and in deserted houses. The death rate in Lucinetz was among the highest in Transnistria, so I was told.

A few years ago, during a trip to Transnistria, I visited Lucinetz, a charming little town today; some houses which once belonged to local Jews could still be seen. After the war, Ukrainian authorities sealed these houses and no one has lived there since. Of course, I couldn't find the pigpens where Jewish families were housed. I could only imagine the life in the camp, my mother helping with the upbringing of her niece, her parents' anxiety when they sent their children to buy something to eat, the stressful waiting for their return.

As I have already mentioned my grandfather was a well-off man before the war. During the short time they had before the forced deportation, my grandmother sewed banknotes under the coats' lining. This saved them from starvation.

Today, there aren't any Jews left in Lucinetz, but their memory is alive, nevertheless. A local old woman, who offered us some cherries, remembered that Jews had to wash their hands and say a prayer before tasting the ripe fruit. The fact that this Ukrainian woman who once lived in close proximity to the Jewish deportees learned the Jewish custom which she never forgot, is heartbreaking. Powerful emotions overwhelmed me while listening to her account.

At the end of the war my parents got married in Suceava. We lived on Stefan Voda Street.

In Suceava we had one room apartment and a kitchen. Under the house there was a basement; in winter we used to keep potatoes in the cellar. Sometimes I was asked to bring some potatoes. The cellar scared me, especially because of the rats.

I was born after a very difficult birth, that endangered the lives of mom and child. Therefore,





My parents and I

mom swore that her next delivery will happen in the presence of a doctor (not only a midwife). The moment he saw me, father was the happiest man alive; after Transnistria, he couldn't imagine the luxury of bringing a new generation into this world.

When I was an infant, my mom's sister-in-law, Tzili, Beno Budic's aunt, used to babysit me. On one of these occasions, she pierced my ears so I could wear earrings, when the

time comes. Many years later, when I already was in Israel, I inherited a pair of earrings.

Once a week my mom would take me to the women's ritual bath (*mikveh*). She had to sneak me inside. There, mom would clean me thoroughly.

My father was the breadwinner in our family. He worked at COMCAR – the department in charge with the supervision of livestock raised by the villagers. Part of his job was to travel to the nearby villages and inspect the herd, to make sure no animals were sold on the black market. He was dedicated and worked hard but he didn't work on Sabbath. My dad had a cart and a beautiful red mare. Alongside our house, there was a stable, which housed the mare and the cow, that gave us kosher milk. I used to bring a black tin cup into the shed and get some fresh warm tasty white liquid while my dad would milk the cow. In winter, when the snow would build up high, my dad used to be the first to walk on it, “opening” a path from our house to the stable, to feed the mare and the cow.

My father's work was strenuous, even dangerous at times. In winter the task became especially challenging. The sled took the place of the cart. He would travel until late at night in cold weather, on a snow and ice covered land, wolves roaming around, among not always friendly villagers.

Dad used to pray at Sadigura synagogue.

In the morning, mom prepared for me a rich chocolate drink which I didn't like, because of the fat on top. In contrast, I loved to go to the nearest bakery and buy a fresh, fragrant bun.

At the back of our house, there was a small market. Before my brother was born, my cousin and I used to go frequently and buy the delicious pickled apples from the Lipovaner women.

My mom was a great housewife and a wonderful cook. Here are a few of the dishes she used to cook for us; even today their taste and smell are alive in my heart. I think that other families

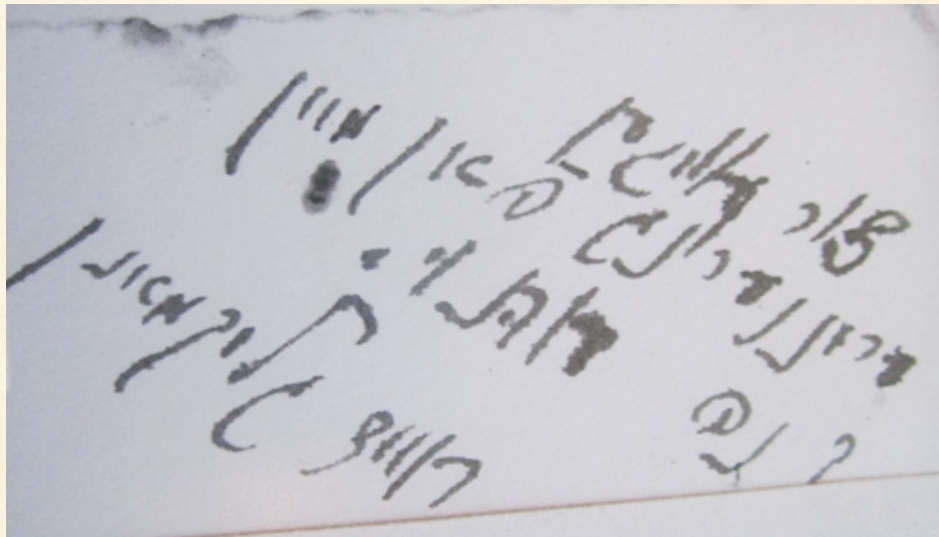




My brother Moshe and I

loved them too. Esigfleish, malai, zuckerlecach, kigel, toci, mamaliga, grieven, sultz, pitzie, carp fish. For the Sabbath, my mom was always baking chala. My aunt in Burdujeni had a special room where she smoked meat, thus, we ate kosher pastrami. I was 5 years old when my brother Moshe was born. This time, my father did as mom asked and called a doctor to be present at her home birth.

My father was only 39 years old when he became seriously ill with pancreatic cancer. On the days when he felt a little better, my aunt Sarah Schechter used to invite him to enjoy her garden in Burdujeni. At Passover dad started being extremely ill. On the month of Tamuz he passed away.



This is a reminder of my father's handwriting and signature.

I participated at my father's funeral. A black scarf was tied around my head and at the age of 8, I recited Kaddish by his grave. A minor whose father died, says Kaddish even though he is not yet a bar mitzva. It is for this purpose that Kaddish Yatom was instituted. For the entire mourning year I went to the synagogue and did my duty.

On the day of the funeral, the stress and the upheaval were so powerful that everybody forgot my 3-year-old brother. The little child remained sitting on the threshold and waited for us to return from the cemetery.



My mom wasn't able to overcome the loss, she got deeply depressed. Grief was so powerful that she wasn't able to get out of bed for a whole year. A stripe of her hair turned white. My aunt, Sarah Schechter, took my little brother to Burdujeni and he grew up at her house for three years. At weekends, Moshe was brought home. After a year, my mom understood that she had to provide for us and started to work at Mr. Schmeterling's thread factory in Suceava.



Moshe, mom and I

I remember the long lonely waiting hours I spent every day until mom returned home, to the cold house. The loneliness was extremely difficult to endure. I didn't go to any extra-curricular activity, I just waited quietly for my mom's return from work.





Ruth's Story

Ruth Hübner

My parents

My parents met and got married in Czernowitz. They came from religious families and I remember seeing pictures of my grandfather with a long beard and my grandmother with a head cover.



My maternal grandparents Leib and Rivka, Sally - my mom's sister in law, Lily and my mom.



Mom, grandma and my mom's youngest brother Butziu.



1948, my maternal family on their last visit in Suceava, from right: Rivka, Butziu, mother holding me one yr. old, Gusta, mother's sister, and Meir her husband



I grew up with no extended family – uncles, aunts or grandparents. That’s why I used to call adults around me “*oncle*” and “*tante*” – probably a mix of polite regard and a hope to create a surrogate family around me. It was a social safety net that was common to families that lost their loved ones in the holocaust or were disconnected from those that lived abroad. I was lucky to be surrounded by loving people.

My father spoke little about his family.



My father, his two brothers and my parental grandparents



Grandfather Leib (- 1943) headstone at Czernowitz graveyard.



My father's extended family in the village of Igesti



Occasionally my father mentioned names and events, which helped me, get a glimpse of life in his village, Igesti. His mother, Grandma Rivka, was a small woman that ran her household of 8 boys with her rolling pin always at the ready to herd them to follow their daily chores. The sons worked with grandpa and took care of the animals. Grandpa ran the flourmill. He would deal



My father, second from the left, in uniform at "Graniceri" unit

with the neighboring farmers who brought their grain to be ground. It was a farm like one imagines a windmill, chickens, cows and bulls, a carriage, a field of wheat and a neighboring forest. The farm was all that was left behind when most of the family was slaughtered in July 1941. *"The sun rose, the thorn tree bloomed, and the butcher slaughtered"*. "Cartea Neagra" (the "Black Book" short account confirms the crime committed in 1941).

The Brender family (my mother's side) was also a traditional and lived in Czernowitz. After the war they moved to Romania and immigrated to Israel in 1948. Before she married, my mom was a classic tomboy – she rode motorcycles and horses, skated on ice and participated in group bicycle trips. She often got in trouble when she was late to Shabbat dinners.







My mom was an extraordinary woman: she rode a horse as well as a motorcycle, she swam, hiked, skated and she took many pictures with her own camera, a very rare possession in the pre-war days.



I would like the readers to appreciate the good life my mom experienced before the war. I suppose that this was the kind of life middle class Jews in Czernowitz enjoyed.



Mom met dad in a group of local hikers.



Father and a group of friends at the Suceava fortress CETATE.



Father with rucksack



They used to reminisce about Czernowitz – the beauty of “Little Vienna”, the cafes, the local atmosphere, the western culture and the walks in Herren Gasse dressed in their best clothes.



Mom and dad got married in 1940.



After the war, my parents decided to move to Romania out of fear that the Russians, who occupied Czernowitz, would never let them immigrate to Israel. Little did they know that communism would take over Romania too and they would be stuck there for 11 years before they would finally succeed in immigrating to Israel.



They applied for a Propusk and traveled to Suceava, with nothing more than some clothes, a few photos that my mom was able to smuggle, and two 200-year old Passover bowls which decorate my table to this day.



I was born to hardship and wanting.

I slept in the same bed with my mother, as well as my father, who was suffering at the time from ulcers. There was no money for food due to the huge inflation and economic distress. My mom barely secured half a kilogram of semolina and had to share it between me and my dad. When she got sick, I was breast fed by Mrs. Robinson, whose daughter, Jana, later became my good friend.



She unraveled an old sweater and knitted me a new coat, hat, comforter and gloves. When we took a stroll outside with my new clothes, an acquaintance warned her that it's dangerous to dress me up so nicely – beware the evil eye.

Nevertheless, we had a warm home.

My mom transformed boxes to closets and crocheted tablecloths that adorned every table in the house. That made our living space lux.

Friends in Suceava

My parents were surrounded by friends in Suceava. Their closest friends were the Leinburd and Horowitz families, and they were inseparable – my extended Romanian family.

My father and Jacob Leinburd worked in the cooperative and Freddy held a key position in the bank. We, the kids, used to play under the card table together – I was the mom, Poldi was the dad, and Denise was our daughter. Our home under the table was full of goodies – our parents kept passing us delicacies



On the left, a picture from Vatra Dornei, with friend. Robinson, Dankner and Leinburd families.



and fine baked goods throughout our stay under the table. One day, we decided to move and our parents' card table suddenly sprung four legs and started moving towards the kitchen, to the astonishment of the card players.

I also loved playing soccer with Poldi and his friends. But even

more so appreciated watching the game with the guys on Sunday because then we'd get a bundle of sunflower seeds in a newspaper that was rolled-up in a shape of a cone.



From the right: I, Poldi's mother Betty with baby Sonny in her hands, Wilma holding Jenny, her daughter. Next to her Denise and Poldi. Kneeling is Dadi, Wilma's son



My father's TRIO: Fredi Horowitz, my father and Jacob Leinburd, at soccer game at the Suceava stadium



We would spend every weekend together – at home or having picnics in nature. They were a fun bunch.

My mom was a great cook and baker. She was forced to use the simplest of ingredients – those that were available at the time, but somehow, everything she made was a delicacy. Reproducing it, though, was nearly impossible. Her recipe book contained instructions like “Take 6 eggs, a cup and as much flour as needed. Add sugar to taste” (Mom – how much is needed? How many spoons for taste?), and so on and so forth. When she became tired of my questions, she would say “mitche mich nicht” (don’t torture me), so I ended up just sitting by her side and taking scrupulous notes of every move she made.

She put her heart and soul into the cooking and baking. Much later, my kids would say that her Schnitzels were the best in the world.

For Purim, my mom made mocha cream-filled Buchterl. We were never allowed to touch the baked goods before our guests arrived, and my mom made sure to hide them from me. That day, I searched every nook and cranny and found one inviting portion. I quickly retrieved it, and, disregarding my mother’s warning, I took a bite. What I bit into was a bundle of feathers hidden within the filling. It was a joke my mom played on the guests, and I was the first to enjoy it.

A year later, she made Humentaschen, and arranged them neatly in a shiny white chamber pot. The guests responded with “fe, das esse ich nicht”

Denise mentioned that on one occasion, my mother also served them with a beautifully adorned chocolate cake (I can only assume it was for my father’s birthday on Shavuot). When they cut it after he blew out the candles, they were surprised to find out that under the chocolate topping was a tasty Malai (a Romanian dish of cornmeal and ricotta cheese), perfect for that holiday. On one occasion, her dad came into my mom’s kitchen, put on an apron and a toque blanche on his head and said: Fani, how can I help? and they cooked together (which was very unusual for men to do at that time).

On Yom Kippur we would all go to the synagogue wearing our best clothing. I would play downstairs with the other children, and when our parents came down we used to go to Denise’s house and break the fast with my mother’s sweet lekach.

I loved seeing them all laugh together, support each other through hard times, and share a mutual respect. I also remember their curses: “der Teufel soll sie holen” (may the devil take him), “so ein Smarcaci”, “a Kapure auf ihm“, and so on. They never told me who their subject was.

This was my family in Suceava, but it broke up when we left for Israel.



Our home in Suceava

We lived in a detached house with a yard.

We shared a large bedroom, and had a spacious kitchen with a large stove, upon which my father would climb to warm up when he returned from work. The toilets were in the terrace outside – a seat above an open channel that slowly streamed down with the local treasures.



My father was employed at Rabinovici shop in Czernowitz (the picture below was taken during the Romanian occupation of the city- the shop was advertised in the Romanian language).



Later my father worked in a shop where farmers exchanged their wares for

cloth. On a long table in the store there was a measuring tape that he used to measure the cloth, which he then cut with scissors that were always in his pocket. One day, when he used the toilet,



they fell into the sewer. I remember how frightened he was – the scissors were government property and he would be accountable. Without thinking twice, my pedantic father had to sort through the refuse until he finally found it.

One of the steps between the porch and yard was missing its vertical support beam, and this space turned into a home for the chickens we raised in the yard, where they lay their eggs. My father used a sifter and heating lamp to create a comfortable incubating space. When the chicks hatched, their tweets brought us much excitement and joy.

One day, my father saw a gypsy roaming around in our yard. He approached her and, with a frown, demanded she raise her skirt. I couldn't believe his odd request but was surprised to see



that when she eventually did what he asked, underneath her skirts she was hiding two of my young chicks - my dad knew what he was doing. Oh, she was also not wearing any underwear.

Yom Kippur eve brought new threats to my little chicks. We would exercise the “*Tarnegol Kaparot*” tradition (swinging of a live chicken above your head) and I always feared that my mother would use one on my chickens for this purpose. A day before Yom Kippur, I shooed them away, herding them into the local cemetery, Turnu Rosu. Only after I saw my mom bring a new chicken from the market, which was then the victim of this odd tradition, was it safe to bring my chicks back home.

It wasn't just chicks that got saved. I also collected sick cats, which my mom would find hiding under the bed cover every morning. They had orthopedic problems or eye infections. My father, who was raised on a farm, shared my love for animals and even helped me take care of birds that fell out of their nest. That wish to heal was imprinted in me from a young age, and it was reinforced when I received my first syringe set from Dr. Perry Schwartz – a real, multi-use one. I had to disinfect it and boil it every time before using it.

Thus, my internship in medicine began. The first victims were my dolls. Later, I convinced Jonny Niedermayer, a good friend that lived across from me, to be my next victim. Unfortunately, unlike my dolls, he complained too much about being stabbed, and thus, my internship in the practice of medicine ended.

My Childhood

I was an only child but was lucky to have an adopted sister, my soulmate and good friend, Illica



My TRIO: Poldi, Illica and I



Schiffer. She was the daughter of my parents' friends Fritz and Adolf from Czernowitz. They lived in Bucharest and we, the girls, spent all our school breaks together. We celebrated Passover in Suceava and spent summer vacations in Bucharest or at the Black Sea. I always looked forward to these get togethers.

When Ilica and her mom would visit, I had a great co-conspirator for my mischief. We climbed trees, played in our yard, and took long sunbaths in our huge tin tub. I found that tin tub again 50 years later when I came to visit my old house, hiding in the attic.

When I was 6 years old, I decided to throw a big birthday party. Illy and I went from house to house that day and extended invitations to all our neighbors. We planned to have a show that included gymnastics, ballet, theater and storytelling.

The party was planned for five o'clock and we set out to arrange the seats in the yard. When my mom asked me what I was doing I told her about the party that I planned for that same day and that I had invited all the neighbors. Shocked, and knowing there was no way she would be able to cancel the event in time, she rushed to prepare her best pastries.

Forty guests arrived bearing presents and dressed in their best clothes (ausgeputzt). Some ladies even went the extra mile and wore nice hats - they were officially invited to a show by the Hubner family! Even the priest, Breteanu, my beloved friend who had an amazing garden in his backyard, brought me fresh strawberries, which he had handpicked and placed in a beautiful little basket.

We had a great time and our guests enjoyed the food that my mom had prepared (on short notice). The applause and the presents were a great reward for the wonderful party. I say we had a great time, but I am not really sure my mom did.



I always had a surprise up my sleeve and my mother knew it. Unfortunately, it only got worse with age.

Two years prior, when I was just 4 years old, she came to the yard where I was playing with Jonny and asked him where I was. He replied nonchalantly that I went to my dad in town to get a new doll (dressed in a bathrobe and slippers).



At home I had a lot of opportunities to try out my best ideas. My mom would go to the market almost every day would stand in line for hours. She would ask our neighbor to keep an eye on me from time to time and see how I was doing. The door was locked and at these times, intercoms or other surveillance devices were not available.

One of these times, I was terribly bored and wanted to play outside. Jumping out the window seemed like a great idea, and since we lived on the first floor, about 10 meters above the ground, I grabbed a stool and threw it out to the yard planning to jump and land safely upon it. Just then, I heard the key turning. My mom had come back just as I was about to jump out the window and crash to the ground.

The punishments were always harsh, but there is one that I will never forget: I loved reading books, especially Alexander Dumas', which I would read and reread into the night, even after curfew, with the aid of a pocket flashlight, under the blanket. The Count of Monte Christo was my favorite. Eventually, the movie came to town, in two parts. I loved the first part and looked forward to seeing the second one that was to arrive some weeks later. To this day I can't remember what exactly I did wrong, but my mother decided to punish me by not allowing me to see the second part of the movie. I was mortified. There was only one movie theater in town, and there would be no rerun - no way to watch it again, ever! It was a cruel punishment. I was devastated and all my friends begged my mom to give in, but she did not budge. I never got to watch the end of that movie.

I have watched every production of Monte Christo ever since, but it never felt the same, and of course was never followed by yummy Wagner's pastry.

My love for books, though, was everlasting, and would share it later with my own children and grandkids. It was satisfied even further when I was sick. My mom would bring me books and sit by me for hours, reading. She would sing "*Hans der Klein ging allein*", and my favorite poem "*Wer reitet so schpat durch Nacht und Wind, Es ist der Konig mit seinem Kind.*"

I also remember listening to stories on the radio. I even tried to help a group of unhappy children in one of them by offering them a glass of milk, but when I walked behind the radio to find them, all I found was a number of red hot lamps.

With the same innocence I once asked my mom if I could have a sibling. She advised that I put sugar on the window pane in order to feed the coming stork. I was terribly disappointed to find out that ants had eaten the sugar and I remained an only child. Interestingly, this story contributed to my decision to become a sex therapist.

Ilica enjoyed my bad influence and her mother would promise to wash her mouth with soap when



she cursed the way I taught her. Nevertheless, we met frequently. My trips to Bucharest were a treat - I travelled alone on the train since I was 8 years old and thus, felt very mature. The trip was always an adventure and the 8 hours passed quickly. One time, I fell asleep and woke up with my head resting on my neighbor's shoulder. He was dressed in full peasant attire, on his way to sell his wares.

In Bucharest we had amazing experiences: we watched ballets, attended theaters, took walks in the park, and met with friends and family. Illica's mom, Fritzi, would stock up on dozens of cans of peas and carrots, that I adored. There was no mischief around Fritzi. I called her The commandant. My mom and Fritzi kept in touch and corresponded by mail every week. She also corresponded with her family in Israel.

One time, a very weird letter reached the family in Israel. It mentioned butter, onions, chicken and eggs. My family worked hard to decode the meaning behind the letter, assuming we were in trouble and that my father was probably in jail. Did the number of items on the list translate to the length of the sentencing? They were terribly worried. Fritzi, on the other hand, received a letter that thanked her for the beautiful patent leather shoes that I received for my birthday.

They only managed to calm down when my mom realized that she has sent to Israel the letter that was addressed to Bucharest. There were frequent food shortages in Bucharest, and my mother would send poultry, eggs and other products that we had plenty of, since we got a weekly supply from the local farmers. She would always accompany that shipment with a letter to Fritzi detailing the items that she had sent. The wires had crossed.

There was a shortage of clothes, shoes and luxury products. Denise told me that she used to receive a tablet of chocolate every month when Fredi got his salary. She cut it into tiny pieces and made sure it would last until the next salary came, and with it the next allocation of chocolate. As for clothes, when she was 5 years old, she got a winter coat that was double her size. It never quite fit her, but it kept her warm in the cold winter for years. As to pants and mittens, like my own mother, her mom also unraveled an old sweater and told her that my mom, Fani, would knit her all she needed.

I dreamed of shiny patent shoes and my family sent me a pair from Israel. I waited impatiently. The shoes arrived at last and I opened the box wearing my most beautiful lace socks. I sat on the floor and put on the right shoe. It fit perfectly. When I tried the other, I immediately noticed that something was wrong. I had received two right foot shoes. I was terribly upset and my mom promised to take care of it. She consulted the shoemaker, who was an expert at a time where shoes were scarce and had to be used as long as possible or be fitted again for the next recipient in line,



sibling or friend, who fixed it for me.

Upon Ilica's next visit, we went for a walk, dressed in our red new knitted dresses that Fritzzy had made for us, with ribbons in our hair and new shoes on my feet. We climbed up a fence in order to sit down on it, and my shoe fell straight into a hole underneath. My dad had to fish it out with a stick with a hook. When they became too small, Ilica was very happy to wear them for a while. Poldi and I were inseparable. We knew each other since we were infants. He was one year older and we were together in kintergarden and would visit each other to play in the afternoons, where we would spend time in beautiful backyard, where we climbed trees and picked fresh fruits. In the fall, we picked green nuts from his huge tree or from Sonia's Dickman's garden. We went back to school with brown stains on our fingers, and it took forever to get them off.

We also played hide and seek in the graveyard, and would wander around, inventing and telling frightening stories, especially on our way home at dusk, with mysterious shadows over the old stones. Once we took white sheets, put them on, and used them to scare each other and some people that were passing by, who almost believed that we were ghosts.

We played soccer with his friends and I was proud to be the only girl in his group. I was also the youngest which meant that I was a part of the order group. Once he asked me to come with him visit his friend who lived on the same street and I was thrilled to play with them.

But when our host opened the door he was not happy to see me there. He told Poldi that he wanted no girls to play with them. I was about to leave the yard when Poldi told him that I am his friend too and that I will stay. Poldi's dog started growling, making it clear that this was serious. I stayed and had a great time. The girl stuff came up a few times later but he always made sure that none of his friends would annoy or make fun of me.

At that time, I wished I was a boy too. I felt that if I were, I would have the freedom to always play soccer when I wanted to.

Fate intervened and I had my chance. My hair was fair, straight and thin. It was nearly impossible for me to have a pony tail, a lock on the top of my head (Chinese style) or any pig tails since every rubber band would slide down, and my mom was forced to try to curl my hair with a special hot iron. It looked great for a few minutes and then my hair will go straight again. Eventually, she came up with an idea: shave my head in order to let it grow stronger.

Gesagt getan. She shaved my head and I walked around, bald as Samson. I must have been 5 or 6 years old and I figure today that this kind of Russian remedy must be devastating to a girl, but at the time it energized me. Thrilled, I immediately put on my shorts and went out to play with the team. The change was so drastic that neighbors asked my mom where her daughter disappeared.





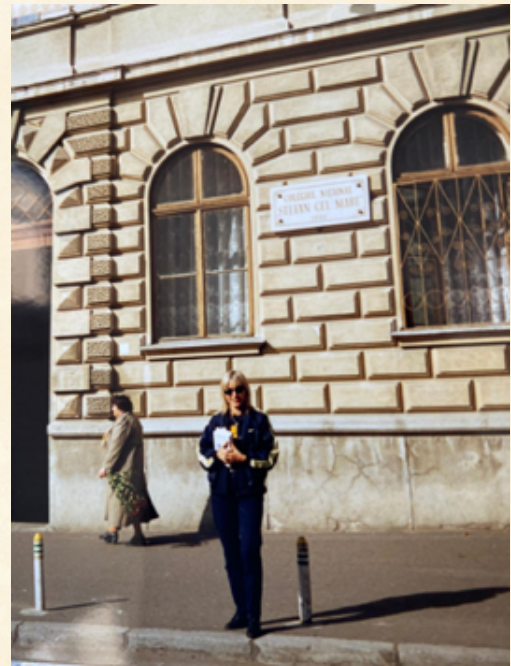
She told them that she had sent me off to Israel and brought her nephew over, instead. I loved that story.

Zamca was also a great place to play. We would climb walls and eat sandwiches from a picnic basket. We would wander off and inspect every corner and ditch with great curiosity, looking for insects, birds and other small animals. We would

run home covered with cuts and bruises, have my mom treat them with iodine, and run back to the battle field.

I loved playing outside. Usually, after school, Poldi would wait patiently for me in the our backyard, ball in hand, ready to venture out. But he'd had to wait for me as my mom wouldn't let me out before my homework was done. "*Duty first, then pleasure*", she taught me early on – that, and priorities. I would do my homework on pins and needles, ready to escape my little jail cell, while my mother stood in the doorway, waiting patiently for me to finish it. Nobody was allowed to disturb me during this time. She taught me the value of self-soothing, self-restraint and trained me to love studying to this day. Years later I went to "Stefan cel Mare" School.

My mom succeeded to take the following documents with us to Israel: the first document is the Diploma for outstanding academic achievements and good behavior. The second is a certified summary of my grades during the first four school years I completed in Suceava. It is



In front of my old school "Stefan cel Mare".



Situatia matricola
a elevii *Heubner Rutley* in prima parte clasei elementare

OBIECTELE	Clasa I Anul scolar 19...-19...	Clasa II Anul scolar 19...-19...	Clasa III Anul scolar 19...-19...	Clasa IV Anul scolar 19...-19...	Examenul de absolvire pentru clasa...
Arta	5	5	5	10	10
Matematica	5	5	5	10	10
Geografie	5	5	5	10	10
Limba romana	5	5	5	10	10
Limba maghiara	5	5	5	10	10
Limba rusa	5	5	5	10	10
Desen	5	5	5	10	10
Muzica	5	5	5	10	10
Caligrafie	5	5	5	10	10
Educatia fizica	5	5	5	10	10
Portava	5	5	5	10	10
Programe	87	72	87	96	
P. Lidij	5	5	5	10	10

Directorul școlii: *V. Hal*
Institutor: *Jucator*



worth noticing that the highest grade during the three first years was 5 (Russian influence). In fourth grade it changed, 10 was the top grade.

At that time, playdates were not pre-scheduled or coordinated. We would just swing by friends' homes knock on their door. The parents took advantage of it, and we also became messengers – bearing invitations for tea gathering or a Remi game. This meant our homes were always prepared for guests – we would have something to serve - a cup of tea or a glass of soda water with a teaspoon of sherbet or jam, or freshly baked cookies and cake. Sometimes, it meant offering or a full lunch when our guest would stay over.

We all cared for each other. When we got into trouble with our parents, we were always well received in each other's homes. We would talk about the fights, cool off and get advice from friends' parents. Normally, they would explain why our parents were right or mediate and soften the verdict if needed. I felt loved and cared for even though I had no grandparents.



I remember fondly the school trips. Even on those occasions, the children wear the red tie of the "pionieri".

Languages and Stories

My dad had a special gift for languages and speaking them helped him survive when he was forced to flee to Bohemia in 1914, and then again every time Bukovina changed hands.

He did not believe in money, which came and went, or in real estate, which was easily taken away, as his parents' farm was. He believed only in honesty and in studying, especially languages. *"Be a mensch and speak as many languages as you can. Get the best education possible. This will keep you well and alive everywhere you have or choose to go"*.

This strong belief in the importance of the study of languages made him send me to learn German and French with a German couple - Frau und Herr Hamburg.

They taught me languages, manners and Hoch Deutsch.

Mr. Hamburg would ask for my coat each time I arrived and helped me put it on me before I would leave, and always pull out a chair for me for sitting down. He treated me like a real lady. Mrs. Hamburg always served tea and cake with great ceremony.

Once, she served a special cake made of honey, peanuts and cacao, rolled in a form of salami and cut into round servings. I told her that my mom made the same cake but that hers is extremely hard and can be cut only with an axe. My compliment was accepted with a smile and a gentle reminder not to criticize my mother's efforts. I was supposed to thank her for what she did and appreciate it. Studying German in this household was challenging. When I first started, I was sure that my German was good and that I was an expert on Heine, Schiller, Goethe and all the stories of the Grimm brothers. I soon found out that what I thought we spoke at home was in fact a mixture of Austrian, German and Yiddish that had totally different grammar. It was easier to understand since sentences were shorter and subjects always followed verbs. Words like *Schmetten*, *Karfiol* and *Vischniac* did not belong to Hoch Deutch, or in the Hamburg's household. They used words like *Sahne*, *Blumenkohl*, *Kirsch Schnapps*. Their German was different – words and sentences became extra long, and the negative "nicht" somehow found itself at the end of them.

I loved studying with Mr. and Mrs. Hamburg. There was something magical there - their white hair, the respect they shared with each other, their vast knowledge and their appreciation of my efforts and curiosity. I drank in every word they uttered. They were teachers for life, in stark contrast to my piano teacher who would only resort to strike me on the fingers with a thin stick whenever I made a mistake.



1958

One evening, in December of 1958, we heard a knock on our door. My dad turned off the lights immediately, and opened the door carefully. The man who came in spoke softly. Mom and dad looked at and hugged each other. The guest left immediately and I stood there puzzled, scared and alone, trying to understand what just happened.

My parents hugged me and said that they received great news - were going to the beautiful land of Israel to rejoin our family. They also said that we had to leave in a day or two and that I was not allowed to tell anyone about our departure or say goodbye to any of my friends.

I did not understand what was going on - why would be happy in the dark? why was I not allowed to share this piece of wonderful news with my friends or say goodbye? Everything happened so fast and within the next 24 hours we packed our whole life in a big wooden crate that was waiting for years in our living room.

We could only bring up to 70kg of our belongings with us. It was winter time, so we all turned ourselves into walking suitcases - adorning layers of underwear, sweaters and coats in order to bring more clothes than we could ship. My father even managed to recruit to this little smuggling project a young man who was willing to help. I remember him walking around like he was a huge onion.



This 300 year old bowl is the only item which survived the incredible journey from Czernowitz to Suceava to Israel. Every year, at the Seder, this bowl adorns our festive Pessach table, in the spirit of the ancient HAGGADAH commandment **"tell your son"**.

We left for the train station Itcani in a carriage. On our way, I saw Poldi standing at the window. I waived my hand to say goodbye, as I was not allowed see or meet him before we left. I wasn't



The "Voyage Certificate" to leave Romania. Passports were never issued for the immigrating Jews, just one-way ticket - it was exactly what my parents wanted



allowed to part properly from Poldi, my older brother, my best friend or from his smiling, sweet baby brother Sorel. I did not know whether I would ever see them again.

My dad wore a troubled look on his face during the whole trip. I had assumed that he would be happy, as he said, but he was not. He chain-smoked the whole way. At the border, the worried look was replaced by a strange one – his hands and voice were shaking when he showed our passports to the border patrol. My dad was always strong and confident. How could he be scared? Later I found out that we had to leave in such a rush, and that he was so nervous because there was an arrest warrant against him.

The train crossed the border and my dad took me in his arms and whispered in my ear: *“It’s over. Nothing here was real, everything was make-believe. Our real life starts now. We are going to a new country. You will be happy there”*. But dad, I thought, what do you mean it wasn’t real - I was happy, I had a great life! What’s going to happen now?

My beloved father who always wanted the best for me broke the bubble that he created and kept around me for 11 years. The bubble that kept me safe, detached from the life of fear under the communist rule. For me those years were a real and wonderful childhood. For him, it was an extremely long transition period on the way from Russia to Israel.

And so, unaware, all my childhood memories were erased and a void was created in order to adjust happily to the new country and to the promised garden of Eden.

In Athens, we boarded a flight to Ben Gurion airport. I was excited to see the Acropolis, home of the gods, and I had a good feeling about this heaven that my father kept promising. So as not to arrive empty handed, my father traded his loden coat for oranges for the family. When we landed, we were greeted by the whole family who was waiting for us at the airport. My cousin, the officer, was among those waiting for us, dressed in uniform. With the backdrop of the Israeli flag, the tears came.

Only then, in Israel, did the fog start lifting on the days of the war, and my parents started sharing their stories about their families, their survival, their loss.

Years of the war

Czernowitz changed hands a few times during the war. The Romanians came and left, the Russians took over after their accord with Germany in 1940. They loved watches, night gowns and combinaizons wearing them as if they were evening dresses. The Romanians took over again after Germany attacked Russia, and after the Germans were finally defeated, the Russians returned again. My mom used to say that they would look out and check what flag would be raised that day to know what language should be spoken, what the laws of the day were, and what subjects were not allowed to be discussed.



During that time, the Jews stayed faithful to the German language and culture, but they were no longer citizens, no longer equal. They no longer belonged. They were now foreigners in their own home, now ruled by Romania.

There was much rejoice when the Romanians first retreated, and one of the village boys even spat on the Rumanian flag, but the retreating general promised he would have his revenge. Upon their return, between July the 3rd and 5th of 1941, aided by the Einsatz gruppen and the Ukrainians, they assembled 400 Jews from the local villages and sent them to the tiny jail where they were left for days with no food nor water. Then they were shot through the peepholes and their bodies were thrown into mass graves. The earth that covered them moved for 3 days. Amongst them were my grandparents Joseph and Rivka and their 4 sons.

Recently, I found the following account in the Black Book (CARTEA NEAGRA) by M.Carp. On page 30 of the second volume there is a short entry : "*La Igești – Suceava au fost omrați de soldati si tarani M.Hibner cu sotia, si fiul si Iosub Hibner cu 4 copii*" which means "M.Hibner, wife and son and Iosub Hibner with 4 children were murdered by soldiers and peasants at Igești –Suceava on July 1940". Few words that tell about a world shattered into pieces for the one and single reason: being a Jew.

3-5 iulie 1940
 Crime similare s-au înfăptuit pe tot drumul de retragere a trupelor.
 — La Comănești-Suceava Frații Zisman au fost aruncați din tren și împușcați. Rabinul Leib Schächter cu 2 fii, au fost întâi chinuți și apoi omorâți la marginea satului. Soția rabinului a fost împușcată în timp ce făcea rugăciunea. Sloime Merdler a fost omorât cu o lovitură de baionetă în ceafă.
 — La Crăiniceni (jud. Rădăuți) au fost împușcați frații Aizie și Burăh Wasserman, de către o grupă de 8 soldați, conduși de un plutonier de infanterie.
 — La Adâncata, au fost omorâți Mendel Weinstein, Maratiev și Strul Feigenbaum.
 — La Găureni-Suceava, a fost împușcat moșierul Moise Rudich.
 — La Liuzii Humorului (jud. Suceava) a fost omorât Natan Somer.
 — La Igești-Suceava au fost omorâți de soldați și țărani: M. Hibner cu soția și fiul și Iosub Hibner cu 4 copii.
 Nenumărate asasinat s-au făptuit toată luna iulie, în trenuri, cu deosebire pe parcursurile Moldovei. Călători evrei, dar mai ales soldați, evrei, au fost împușcați iar cadavrele lăsate în câmp. Foarte mulți au fost aruncați din tren în timpul mersului. Unii din ei au murit în chinuri, alții au rămas infirmi.

Their other two sons, Michl and Falick, perished in Transnistria. My father and his brother Bubi were the sole survivors. The farm and the flock were taken by the neighbors.

On October 11, the Jewish people of Czernowitz were told to assemble in a small part of the town or face the death penalty. Those who did not live there had to pack their belongings, get ready for a trip to the unknown and leave the keys of their apartments to their landlords. They were moved into a ghetto that should have been able to support a population of 10,000, but was now home to 50,000 people. My mother's family lived there, and they opened their doors widely to friends in need. They put lots of nails on the walls to hang people's backpacks. People were sleeping everywhere – in houses, staircases and corridors. My parents slept together in a room with 25 other people, like sardines in a tin box, head to toe.



I always wondered how they managed to survive, waiting their turn to the bathroom in the freezing cold, finding food with the imposed curfew and the yellow star branding them like calves, while avoiding the attention of soldiers who would randomly grab Jews from the street and ship them to Transnistria, the slaughter house. I imagined my mother walking down the street, shopping for food, hiding in doorways – doing everything to avoid getting caught and being sent away, and managing somehow to visit my sick Grandfather in the hospital. Once, when she went out for food, she intuitively hid the yellow star of David, and bumped into a troop of German officers riding on horses. Seeing the young lady, they stopping politely and let her cross the street, her heart pounding in fear. Had she not hid the star, her destiny would have probably been different. The stench and the filth in the overcrowded ghetto grew as the water supply dwindled. Carriages filled with corpses of those plagued with typhoid left the ghetto daily. My mother also contracted the disease and her family did all they could to take care of her at home as being hospitalized was a certain death sentence. My mother told me that while she was sick, they would make up her pale face every morning, dress her skeletal body with multiple layers, and present her like a manikin in a show window to fool those would collect the sick.

There were scheduled transports to Transnistria and people learned how to avoid them by bribing the Romanian guards, but the unscheduled ambushes helped fill up the quotas. On one occasion, my uncle found a good friend standing caught, like a stray dog, in line to the transport. He signaled him to back away, with disregard to his own risk at doing so, while staying hidden in a nearby doorway. His friend slowly moved back while my uncle slid a precious watch unto a guard's hand to have him look away. They then ran back to my uncle's home in the Ghetto. He was saved.

My mom worked in the switchboard at the post office with the approval of Popovich, the mayor of Czernowitz, a righteous man who helped save many Jews during the war. She and her friends would collect any morsel of information that arrived with letters, packages, and rumors. They spread those to everyone and were able to keep friends, families and extended families in contact. Especially important were times when they discovered the location of an acquaintance and tried to help them in any way they could – send money, watches and any other valuables to help pay ransom and save lives. Unsurprisingly, everyone knew each other when they eventually met again in Israel.

Later, when the approvals to work in the post office were withdrawn, my mom worked as knitter for Antonescu's family. Her beautifully knitted sweaters kept her and her family safe. Random lucky choices kept her and her family alive.



The Garden of Eden

When we first landed in Israel, we went to live with my uncle and aunt in Jabaliya Yaffa. The promised land looked weird, sounded strange and was far from being anything like what I had imagined to be Eden.

The guttural language sounded loud and incomprehensible, different from any language I knew, and the music was terrible. Barefoot children ran around in the streets and I felt that I had landed in a gypsy compound. Vendors shouted and advertised their merchandise; people were eating in the streets and my father started wondering if there would ever be a proper home for our family. The Arab children slept on cold stone stairs in the entrance to our building and I could only assume they were really homeless.

Later, I would understand how smart they were. The stairway was an amazing place to hide from the scorching heat. Also, it felt wonderful to run on the cool floor without sandals or socks. I also loved eating falafel in the street. In no time at all, I had become a gypsy myself.

The children in the yard were very friendly and we used to play together, even though we shared no common language. We just used gestures mixed with our own spoken tongue - "*Fangerl was catch*" and "*enzap*" became hands up. "*Der Keiser schickt Soldaten aus*" was imported from the past straight to our yard.

My first encounter with school was devastating. I understood nothing except for math. I was used to be an A student and now I couldn't participate - I didn't even understand the questions asked. I had to learn the first chapter of Psalms by heart. My whole body protested as I did not understand a word. It was all Chinese to me. That chapter is still etched in my brain and I can to date recite it word for word.

The only good experience I had in school at that time was playing the new games I learned during recess in the schoolyard, including "*Hamor chadash*" and the "*bridge of gold*".

Romania in Israel

The strong connection with people from Czernowitz lasted for years after the war. When my parents happened upon someone from there, they immediately debriefed them – who were their parents? Which street did they live on? Where did they work? Did they possibly know a brother, a sister, a cousin of... In minutes, a web of information was bestowed upon them with news from home – those who lived, died, and got married, and what everyone was doing.

My parents were never nosey, but once the Czernowitz "app" was activated, they immediately inquired about relatives. Their social network was small but strong, and they longed to get any piece of information about it. In Israel, my dad longed for that connection and even used to ask



“Why isn’t there a Suceava street here, in Tel Aviv?”

For my mom, it was a continuance of her work - seeking relatives at the post office during the war. They kept me safe in Suceava and gave me a happy childhood. I was playful and rebellious and fearless, really because I didn’t understand how hard life was for them, and when I rejected my mothers’ cooking, I had no idea how hard it was for her to get food. Parents are always divided in their opinions on how to protect their children while preparing them for the world out there. There are those who expose the ugly parts of life to them early on. There are those who build a bubble around them, with a hope that the incubation period within the protective shell would give them strength to deal with the outer world. My parents chose the bubble, and I lived a nationalistic, fearless life under it. Like many other children in my generation, I mourned Stalin. When my father found it, he smiled. My mother elbowed him to keep it quiet.

Regardless of all the hardships, my parents never complained. They didn’t expect or feel that they deserved a savior. They did all they could, by themselves, in what was clearly an insane period in their lives. My father told me that life deals you a hand of cards. You can’t control what you’re dealt, but you can control how you play them. They did the best they could with theirs, walking with their head raised high. During times of hardship, my grandma used to wear a safe key on her neck to show that she had plenty. I think my mother learned how to deal with hardship from her.

And so, they believed that the past was in their heads, but the future was in their hands and acted accordingly.

Obviously, the bubble burst on the way to Hungary and to Israel. Years later, I identified clues and hits of the totalitarian regime. When I watched the movie “The Life of Others” it triggered memories and words that I heard at home too like *”Verwantzt”*, “The walls have ears”, etc.

I learned much from my parents, about the value of life, the importance of making difficult decisions and playing your hand as best you can, to be responsible for my own path in life, and to take everything with a grain of salt and be thankful for what I have. I thank them for what they have done for me and for my family. They were there for us with endless love and commitment.

What I miss

- The smell of the lilies and the beauty of spring flowers – toporasi, ghioceci, lacrimioare
- Collecting fresh nuts from the trees
- Hiking on paths covered in chestnut tree leaves during the autumn
- Holiday with the family in Mamaia and Eforie
- Dipping in the Suceava river with friends
- Hikes in Predeal
- Picnics in Cetate



- Riding a horse sleigh while their bells rang” Sanie cu zurgalai”
- The wide open spaces and playing in the snow
- The flavor of fresh cucumbers from our garden
- The taste of bread and butter, without fear of cholesterol
- My mom’s pickles on the shelf in the basement
- The scent of dust in the attic and all the treasures hiding there
- The milk and cheese that Ileana used to bring in her basket from the village
- The warmth of a just laid egg

And when I think of all those, I can’t but thank my parents that brought me here. I’d take the crazy Israelies over living abroad any day and am happy to enjoy the European spring as a tourist as often as I can.



2015, with old friends, at the first reunion of SUCEAVA Children group.
From the left: Senta, Poldi, I, Berty, Tzili, Gitta, Gerty. In the back on the left Rami and Lica,
In the back lancu between Tzili and Gitta

Identity

One day, I was playing with some kids downstairs when suddenly, one of them called me a “*Romanian thief*”. I didn’t understand. Was he talking about me?

When I was in Romania, I did everything to belong. I worked hard to become a Pionier in the scout, and wear the red scarf. Still, I was called a Jidan and told to get the hell out of, like all the other Jews. Here, in Israel, we were supposed to all be the same – Jewish,



proud Israelis. I did all I could to be an Israeli. But apparently, I still did not fully belong – I was still foreign.

The memories of Czernowitz, the capital of Bukovina, Vienna of the Austro-Hungarian Empire – they came with us to Israel. My parents remembered the good times they lived through there, the melting pot – a celebration of ethnicity. Practising Judaism without fear, as citizens with equal rights. Connected with the west through the German language and culture belonging to a modern and international society. That dream life that shattered when reality hit in the early 20th century. But the longing to that period and the feeling of wholeness was left within them. That nostalgia was passed to the next generation who grew up on the stories about the period, the language and culture.

When I first visited Austria, I told my husband that I felt like I landed back home. While I never physically lived through the Small Vienna experience, it was passed on to me and had been with me my whole life through stories shared by my parents and their friends, the food we ate (Cremeschnitte, Kaiserschmarrn, Apfel Strudel, Dobos, Nusstorte), and the language we spoke at home. The views, scents, music, flavors and language I found in Austria so familiar. This same feeling hits me every time we return to it.

Unfortunately, that city was also where my parents experienced horrible antisemitism, where they wore their yellow star, were held in a Ghetto, were persecuted, and lost most of their family. During nostalgic moments I told my mother that we should visit Czernowitz in the Ukraine. Surprisingly, she said: *“Why would I go there? Everything I loved is gone”*. They had left Europe behind. They had been through the war and through communism, through persecution and loss. They had nothing left to go back to.

When I came to Israel, I brought with me a broken identity – I had to detach from my childhood memories and the Romanian language, and adopt the Israeli culture, songs, traditions and values – and I even got married to a Sabra. Today, I have a feeling of having a clearly defined identity – a proud Israeli. This feeling was especially strong when I walked through the labor camps in Poland – I had a country, I had a home, I had a nationality and a flag. And we survived.

That kid had naively pointed out to me that missing part of my identity. Only much later, and gradually, the fog lifted up on that beautiful, happy childhood memories and the parts that I left behind returned. Meeting again with friends from Suceava also helped reconnect with that childhood part of me that was severed when my dad spoke to me on the train on the way to Israel. I feel like it was a long journey, but I have finally managed to bring that child back home to Israel with me.



Today, I feel whole.

On a root-trip to Suceava, I visited my former school, "Stefan cel Mare". I left the place as a child, I returned as a grown up, confident, fully aware of who I am. The flags behind me are Romanian, but my reconciled heart, embracing all the memories, beats at an Israeli-Jewish pace.





My Family, my Childhood

Saul Grinberg

When I started thinking about my childhood, a faint stream of events evolved gradually into a strong current of touching memories.

I was born in Burdujeni on the outskirts of Suceava. Most Jews in Burdujeni were craftsmen, tailors, shoemakers or merchants who resourcefully managed to support their families. They raised their children according to the Jewish tradition.

In retrospect, I realize how blessed I was belonging to a warm, caring family.



My sister Estherica and I

to careful planning. My mother, and my grandfather ran the house. Two permanent housemaids lived to operate this well-oiled machine (household). The young help was from Solca village because they were found to be appropriately qualified in terms of Bucovina home education.

I grew up in a "mansion" that my grandfather and father have expanded in time on the land of the original house, which had been looted and partially demolished during deportation. Originally, there was a four-room house. Later, more rooms were added. A large well-equipped kitchen and a summer kitchen complemented the household. Plenty of trees grew behind the house, almost an orchard.



Hens and ducks peacefully wandered about and pecked grains in the vast yard; at Passover they were joined by a lamb. They all found their way to our plates according to a beautiful woman, with an iron fist – the gospodarie brought only from





Enjoying the winter time.

Since my mother wanted a bathroom in the house, an unheard luxury in those days, they started digging a hole in the yard to search for water. They had to dig deeper than it was initially planned because the underground water stream couldn't be easily reached. In the end, the deep hole in our yard turned into our own private water-well, since there was no suitable pump available to transport the water from the ground into the bathroom tub. To understand how precious a private well was at the time, I should be mentioning that on the street there was only one public well for the entire Jewish community.

Every now and then, the yard was bustling because... laundry day arrived. A fire was set in the yard, a huge container full of water was placed above the fire, the laundry was immersed into boiling soapy water, vigorously stirred and rubbed until cleaned. Once rubbed and cleansed, the bedding was starched and hung to dry. When it was time for ironing, two women were brought in: the launderer ironed only the bedding, and a shirt dressmaker ironed the small and delicate items. Other special events took place on pre-established occasions: in autumn, jams (*dulceata*) were prepared from all kind of fruits and, of course, plum-povidel (jam). To prepare it, the plums were cleaned, well washed, stoned and grounded with the help of a special manual appliance. Every two years, my grandfather Betzalel bought a special pot (*ceaun*) from the gypsies, who lived on the outskirts of the town. This large deep pot was used for cooking the plum mash for hours on the burner until it turned into thick and fragrant jam. The *ceaun* was highly essential to the process since the jam wouldn't stick to the side walls or singe.

Labels on the jars marked the kind of sweet treasure contents. The jam jars were carefully stored on shelves in the *bashca*, the upper floor of the basement (*pivnita*). Alongside there were also the pickled preserve jars. We pickled at home nearly everything: red peppers, apples, cucumbers, tomatoes, and watermelon.



The lower floor of the same basement was used to store various types of apples and potatoes on a bedding of soft sand.

To make the winter provisions perfect, we also stored nuts, garlic and onions and kept them in the boidem (attic). The meat smoking room was under the roof of the house as well. After the kosher slaughter, meat chunks were smoked into delicious kosher pastrami. My grandfather mastered this art as well as many other useful skills.

My grandfather's family originated from Galicia. When they arrived in Romania, they dwelled for a few years in the Cotnari region of Romania, which is famous for the grapes and the special wine processed in their wineries.

Therefore, wine was dear to grandpa's heart. He mastered the art of kosher wine production for our household needs. He never lost sight of the community needs – the comunitate (the society of the Jews in town, and most of the time he held the top position; therefore he produced kosher wine for the Jewish community as well.

Boxes with Cotnari grapes arrived at our door every year. Grandfather prepared a delicate and tasty wine from them. As well, he produced wine for the Jewish community in huge bottles from local grapes.

My father loved making wine from macesse, a type of aromatic rosehip.

We had everything we needed. We lived a peaceful and happy life until my father was incarcerated.



From the left: grandfather, mom, I and dad



Mother, a beautiful woman, came from Chisinau to marry father. In the late 1930s, the region started to change hands frequently between Romania and the Soviet Union. Pogroms started occurring, especially against Jews. Mother told me that when she came to meet father for the first time, she saw with her own eyes how Jews were thrown out from a traveling train. My mother had 5 brothers. Her family owned a textile store in the center of town on Alexandrovski Street. My mother's entire extended family didn't survive the Holocaust. Upon the invasion of the German forces during Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, the Jewish population was exterminated.

My mother was an educated woman, a graduate of Chisinau high school. She spoke Russian just as well as she spoke Romanian. Her familiarity with the Russian language and the ways of the farmers allowed her to save her new family, as one of our acquaintances, Avramel, told in his story about life in Transnistria. In addition to theoretical studies, my mother mastered artistic sewing. She excelled in it. The skill served her well in Transnistria. She crafted dolls by hand and sold them to local inhabitants for a few basic food products that were barely sufficient to keep the family going.

When our family was deported, my mother was pregnant. In Lucinetz, she gave birth to a baby boy. At that time, my father was drafted into the Romanian army and was stationed in Targu Jiu. My mother and many members of our family got sick with typhoid fever. When temperature broke down and they regained consciousness, the little baby was gone. The

other family, who shared the room with ours, told them that the baby had died. To this day, we don't have any piece of information about my brother. I have to mention that, right after his birth, he was given the name David and was circumcised with the assistance of my grandfather.

My father was frequently incarcerated in Romania before and after the communist regime came to power. Once, he served time with Rabbi Rosen. My mother used to visit father and bring him food. On one of these occasions, she introduced Moshe Rosen to his future wife, Amalia from Burdujeni.

Later on, my mother was a good friend of Liuba Kishinevski, whose husband, Josef Kishinevski,



was an important personality in the communist party during Ana Pauker's government. On one occasion mother took me to Govora (a Romanian resort) to meet her friend Liuba, who was staying at one of the special guest houses designed for party members only.

My father was sentenced to death by the Romanian judiciary system. Mrs. Atudosiei (my physics teacher) was married to the prosecutor in my father's trial. After reading the sentence, the teacher came to me and begged for my forgiveness in her name and in her husband's name, stating that the outcome of the trial was concocted at the highest levels of the communist apparatus. Therefore, the prosecutor followed his superiors' orders.

Subsequently, the death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

Between junior high and high school, there was an admittance exam. The Jewish students were closely scrutinized and passing the exam wasn't an easy task. When I was tested orally, I remembered a paper I wrote about Vasile Alecsandri's works (a Romanian poet). Therefore, I answered very well. Mrs. Vigder, the head of the admittance committee in Burdujeni, knew my situation (that my father was imprisoned).



After the examination was over, even before the results were made public, she looked for me and told me: "*Te-am primit!*" ("You have been accepted!"). I was extremely happy and eternally grateful to Mrs. Vigder.





My Grandfather - Betzalel Grinberg

Saul Grinberg

The place: Burdujeni, a suburb of Suceava.

The time: the early 60s on Yom Kippur at the Great Synagogue, The Temple, in Burdujeni.

Standing in front of the Teiva, my grandfather, Batzalel Grinberg is praying Kol Nidrei with a radiant face, dressed in white and wrapped in his tallith, on his head the cantor's white cap (mitznefet). According to tradition, on Yom Kippur the fate of every human being is being sealed.

My grandfather, a handsome Jew, head of the Jewish Community, shaliah tzibbur, carries his community members' heartfelt prayers to The Almighty and begs to accept his sincere repentance; he prays that He, who seals destinies in the Book of Life, will grant everyone a healthy, happy New Year.

I am 12 years old and I am standing in the corner before stepping into the prayer hall. I watch my grandfather with pride and everlasting love. Every day, he is my own grandfather, but today, he is the messenger of the entire community, the one who leads worship. His wonderful serene tenor voice tugs my heartstrings and those of all the Jews in the synagogue. The great hall, packed with praying people, is enshrouded in sheer silence. I am listening to the ancient tune and to the words of the prayer "Kol Nidrei ve asrei ve shvuei ve haramei...".

Steadily and calmly, my grandfather recites wholeheartedly, the powerful words "Hear, oh Israel, The Lord is Our G-d, the Lord is One. Blessed be the name of His kingdom for ever and ever". The beauty of his voice, the intonation moves the people, brings tears to everyone's eyes. He recites "Myom HaKipurim shavar ad Yom HaKipurim ze ad Yom HaKipurim haba aleinu letova". And, thus, with faith in the Holy One, blessed be He, my grandfather tries



to untangle the vows and prepare the public for the long series of prayers for the Holy Day. At Neilah prayer, at the end of the Holy Day, the Ark stays open for the entire service, signifying the Gates of Heaven, which are still widely open until the verdict is finalized .

The Neilah service ends with the shofar blows and the ancient Jewish wish "*Next Year in Jerusalem*".

I feel fortunate to have had such a man in my life. As a child and teenager, he was both grandfather and father to me, since his son, my father, was imprisoned for many years. I met my father for short periods at different prisons all over Romania.

Grandfather was a special person not only to me. As it turned out, the members of the community considered him to be a special, interesting, educated and, especially, astute person, able to cope with the most difficult situations.



My grandparents

As a young man, 12 years before I was born, this extraordinary man crossed the Atlantic and, after a grueling journey, reached the US. The readers of these lines are used to travelling to faraway lands. However, this was not the case during the 1930's. Very few people, if any, left their native town to go to the capital city, Bucharest. A trip to the United States was considered a journey "in space". I can only imagine what my grandfather had to go through on this journey which demanded strength and patience and which took a month to complete.

First, he took the train from Burdujeni to Bucharest and from there to Constantza, the port-town on the shores of the Black Sea. Then, he boarded a ship to New York, where he, again, took the train.

The destination was at one time Denver, Colorado, another time – Akron, Ohio. The intended aim was to be the main cantor during the Days of Awe. His prayers and singing were usually accompanied by a choir.

In fulfilling his mission he was successfully aided not only by his faith and his talent, but also by his special traits, among which there was a perfect understanding of the human soul and of other people's needs.

On the 26th September, 1935, an American newspaper announced excitedly the arrival of the cantor Batzalel Grinberg from Romania to act as shaliah tzibbur. My grandfather had made this journey many times during the years that preceded WWII. I suppose that he thought numerous times about the possibility of moving to the United States. However, the temptation was overpowered by the longing for the "little paradise" he created in Burdujeni.

My grandfather and his family were deported to Transnistria in 1941.



THE AKRON TIMES-STAR
 OF AUGUST
 N PREACHERS
 ROM VACATIONS

ing Cities Fill Pulpits
 Make Arrangements
 Pastors Here

CHURCH PAPER
 GIVES WARNING

'Akron Disciple' Published
 In Interest Of High Street
 Church Of Christ

'The Akron Disciple' published
 in the interest of High Street
 Church of Christ, the Rev. George
 W. Morgan, pastor, announced
 warning in this week's publication
 'discipline' in which, who cannot
 be retained. The paper is, people
 are being warned that, danger is
 being the nearer proximity to

READY FOR CELEBRATION OF HASHONAH, JEWISH NEW YEAR

Cantor Greenberg, organist, and boys choir ready to celebrate Jewish New Year at Akron Jewish Center.

Akron Jews are getting ready to
 celebrate one of the important of
 Jewish observance, the New Year of
 Rosh Hashanah. The celebration
 will take place from 12 o'clock to 10
 and will mark the beginning of the year

services for the United Orthodox
 congregation at Akron Jewish Cen-
 ter. Services will begin in the
 synagogue on Sept. 18.
 Cantor Greenberg, organist,
 and boys choir will be available to
 conduct the service in the eve.

CHRIST IS SUBJECT
 OF LESSON-SERMON

Gospel Spread
 By Persecution

NAZARENE CHURCH
 HAS HOMECOMING

מדי חגיגות יום א' שנת ה'תש"ח אמן

Cantor Greenberg and his Choir

Services for High Holidays
 at the United Modern Orthodox Congregation
 AKRON JEWISH CENTER 750 BALCH STREET

SEPTEMBER 17, 18th, & 26th



Dragă Soră
 Îți trimit spre curiozitate
 această fotografie să
 arăți la toate familiile
 situația în care am ajuns
 și să le rog să mă
 ajute foarte repede. Dragă

Here is a note that survived Holocaust, it states "Dear sister, I send you my picture, show it to all members of our family, look what happened to us, please help us as quickly as possible".

Would you think that it is the same person?





My Sisters

Senta Grill

Friday at noon is a magical time. No matter the season, the sun shines softly, sending golden glints through the window towards the room, transforming the familiar space into a surrealistic island of tranquility, pleasantness and charm.

During these hours, I have always felt how Fridays prepare me, my family and our apartment for receiving the getting near Sabbath.

In this idyllic serenity, after finishing the house chores, washing the dishes and cleaning and organizing the house, I get into my bed and cry. I cry a lot every Friday afternoon, a kind of permanent ritual. Sometimes I fall asleep crying. The thought of my two sisters whom I never met keeps coming to me over and over again. I cry for them since their fate isn't clear to me, I cry for myself because I remained an only child and I didn't get to know them, I cry bitterly for my father who didn't know anything about what happened to them, mourning them in silence his entire life. I know their names: Roza and Ana. Two beautiful names. I pronounce them and feel their sweetness on my lips.



I was born in Suceava after the war. Here are my parents and I.

I was sure I am an only child to my parents.

In our house in Suceava I was never told about my father's family before the Holocaust. I always felt that there was something I was shielded from, but I couldn't understand what it was.

Before the war my father lived in Stroznitz, a town near Cernowitz, Bucovina, where he had a family. When the Jews were deported to Transnistria, he, his wife and their two daughters, Roza and Ana, were thrown into the unknown. His wife, the girls' mother, died immediately after they were deported.

My father refused to talk about the hell he had been through. I know that, at a certain point, being afraid of the persecution, he sent the girls, 11-year-old Roza and 8-year-old Ana, to the orphanage in Moghilev. At the end of the war, he was told that all the children at the orphanage died. He





The pretty woman standing in the middle was my father's first wife. My father by her side on the right. The young girl wearing a dark coat is one of my sisters.

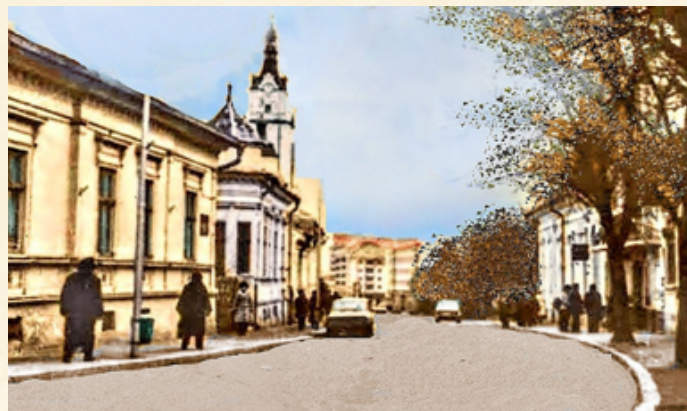
himself was drafted into the Red Army.

My sisters' fate remained enshrouded in mystery.

After the war people tried to build a new life.



Mom and dad



The house we lived in,
on Stefan cel Mare str. opposite the town cinema hall.





Our neighbor's daughter Collette Itzig with the white cat in her lap, I kneel down.



From the left: Gitta Weitmann, Senta, Gita Ostfeld.



In the yard

When I was 16, a neighbor from Suceava told me: "You look so much like your sister Roza!" I was stunned. I knew I was an only child. What was she talking about ?!! At this moment, my mother, who married my father after the war, agreed for the first time to tell me and to confirm the fact that before the war my father had another family and, as part of it, he had two daughters. Searching for Roza and Ana took me from reverie to reality and back, oscillating between hope and desperation, switching permanently between extremes, feeling more disappointment and a sense of missed opportunity. Why am I not able to discover what happened to them? The thought that



I have lost the race, that the narrative of their lives will remain indeterminate is concealed deep in my heart and raises its head, every time I find a moment of peace in my daily life.

I examined and embraced every piece of information. I approached Jewish organizations, Yad Vashem, The Red Cross, but all was in vain. My daughter and my son who grew in the shadow of the searches identified with me and always helped. Once my daughter Carmel found a cousin of my father's, other time I found a woman who was sure that, as a child in the same orphanage in Moghilev, she knew my sisters. According to her, one of them died and the other survived. What happened to her? Nobody knows.

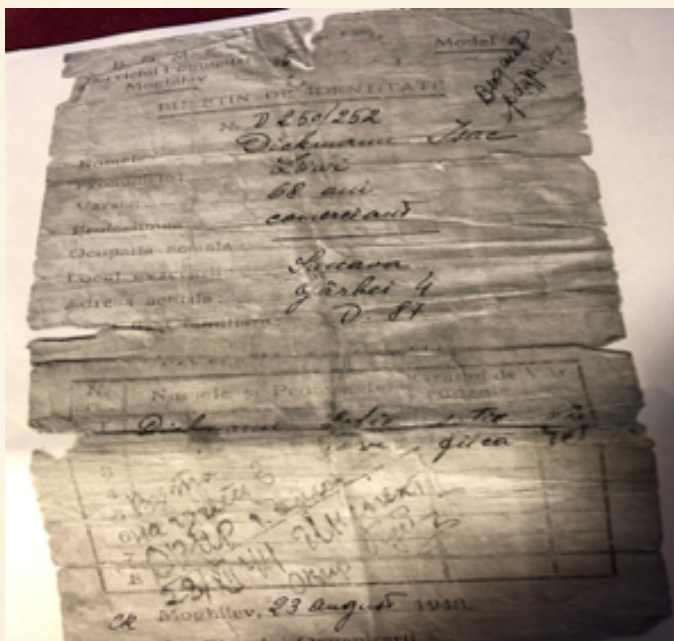
Is it possible that two human beings vanished without a trace? My heart refused to believe even if my head said "That's enough!"

The little that I know today, thanks to my son, Dor, comes from the opening and publishing of the Moghilev archives.

Years of searching and connecting every piece of information I obtained led to:

- Ana and Roza lived during the war in the Moghilev orphanage, strengthened each other and, apparently, died of hunger. One of the women who survived and knew Roza and Ana told me that till the bitter end they sang the songs our father taught them.
- Only in 2018, when the archives were opened in the Ukraine, my son, Dor, found an unequivocal written account that closes the sad chain of events. My dear sisters died in the orphanage and were buried in a mass grave.

I am still thinking a lot about them, but I took comfort that, finally, I know what happened to them and that they found solace in one another in their most strenuous days.



My mother's father Mr. Dickman





My Story

Sheni Schechter

My parents, Bertha and Zemvel got married in 1940 in Radauti, Bukovina.

My mom was born in Cacica, my father in Milisauti, two villages in Suceava County. They settled in Gura Humora. In 1941 they were deported to Transnistria along with their families. I was born in 1944 in Moghilev on Poltavaska street. The Russian occupied Moghilev when I was 9 days old. They forced my dad to join the Red Army. He came back only in 1946. In the meantime mom joined her family and returned home to Gura Humora. We settled in Suceava only after father joined us in 1946.



The last building, before the school building, is the place we lived.
Foto Dimitrie Balint.

Lotty Scherzer and Liuba Hoffer lived in neighboring apartments. Later, Pia and her family joined and lived next to us in the same yard.



from the left: Pia, I, ...



My mother got sick with endocarditis – an inflammation of the heart. Her situation was critical. We had luck. My mother's sisters who lived in the US sent penicillin which saved mom's life.

My father worked at the Alimentara along with Beni Budic's father. I attended kindergarten and later the Girl's School (the building you see in the far end of the picture).

Our apartment had a joined wall with my first class room. From my window I could see the kids playing in the yard even when I couldn't attend school because I was sick.



With friends at parties and at school
From the right: Meir Hubner (Perry's son), Gerty Wasserman.
standing on the right: Sasha Lechner, late Esterica Grinberg,
Liuba Höffer, Jenitza from Bucharest, Shanny Shechter, Relu
and Gitta Fairstein.
Shoshana Fischler and little Claris's daughter



From the left: D-na Surkis, Liuba Hoffer, Anisoara Delnea, Gaby Damaschin, Shoshana Fischler.
Sitting: Sheny Schechter, x, Gitta Rosenthal





Here I am with my school friends

I am the fourth from the right. In the picture, next to me, Estherica Grinberg with her long braids, Relu Faienstein, Gitta Rosenthal.

Other girls in my class were Liuba Hoffer, Shoshana Fishler and the guys: Nelu Eidinger, Sasha Lechner.

In 1957 Liuba's mom and my mom went to Bucharest in

order to submit documents for departure to Israel. At that time it was impossible to ask for visa at the Suceava police station. Liuba and her family got almost immediate approval while we waited until 1965 to leave Romania.



During winter time with my friends Gerty Wassermann and Gerty Weitmann



From the left: Pia, her father Burshi, I, her mother Medi

We left for Israel on August 23, which was Romania's Independence Day.





My Story

Shuki Lakner-Moscovici

My name is Shuki Moscovici Lakner. Lakner was the name of my father, Moscovici is the name of my step-father.

I was born in Suceava on August 28, 1938.

In 1941 my mother, father and I (3 years old), were deported to Transnistria along with the entire Suceava Jewish community.

First, we were packed into cattle wagons. The first train stop was Ataky next to the Dniester River. A few families hired a cart and horse. Our modest luggage and the children sat on the cart, the parents and the grownups marched, pushing the cart, helping the tired horse on the way to the Dniester River bank. The bridge over the river was bombarded therefore the crossing was done by improvised floats made of some loosely strapped wooden



This is my family

planks. It terrified the exhausted deportees, who never experienced something similar before. Since people were not used to this kind of transport, some slipped, fell and drowned in the cold waters. Finally, we reached the other bank. We were in Moghilev, Ukraine. Romanian soldiers forced us to march; whoever couldn't keep pace was shot on the spot.

The ordeal I was forced to witness is beyond anyone's imagination. Each morning two men pushed a two-wheel cart full of skeleton corpses. Many were innocent victims of cruelty and of the harsh living conditions.

My family was sent to Shargorod along with many other Suceava Jews. My father, who was ill at the time, was taken to forced labor. He was beaten to death; he was brought back home dead and frozen. After some more weeks in Shargorod, my mom's uncle fetched us and we moved to Moghilev to join our relatives. My mom found a place for us to live. It was a room which was already shared by three families; we were the fourth. Therefore, we got the worst place in the room – near the door. Each time the door opened a freezing gust of wind would rush into the room over us. Covered in the few rags we still had, we did the best we could to protect ourselves.



One day, mother went to the market to sell father's suit and get some food for us. At that time, mother had not yet married Mr. Moscovici— who lived with his family in the same room as we. Mom was late and I was so terribly hungry that I started crying. The daughter of Mr. Moscovici, older than me, was bullying me, saying: "Don't cry, your mother won't come back. The Germans caught her. "SHE IS GOING TO DIE". She went on and on and I cried my eyes out.

Hunger was overwhelming. The Moscovici baked bread to sell. Before baking, the dough was weighed on the scale. Desperately, I scratched the dough left on the braces of the scale. Sucking the fingers covered in dough got me terrible stomach aches. To relieve myself I ran outside, thinking I got diarrhea. Forcing hard and in vain, had a terrible effect: a part of my digestive tract broke out. The pain was excruciating and I couldn't stop crying and wailing.

Finally, mother returned home. She calmed me gently, warmed her palms in hot water and then, smoothly, little by little, pushed my guts back inside.

Do you know why they didn't send us to Auschwitz? not that they didn't intend to. There was a shortage of means of transport. They needed trains and trucks, to send food and ammunition to the front – that was the reason.

In Moghilev we lived near the train station. The Russians, as well as the Germans, were constantly looking for railroads to bomb. Under the house we lived in was a large basement with wooden pillars. As the place was partly flooded the wood rot, which produced a terrible stench in the place: a stench of odor and terror, as the basement was also a shelter during the bombardments. A neighbor's family came to hide as well. After a while, the father of the family stood up and declared the place was not secure. He was worried the wood could catch fire if a bomb hit the house and as such was concerned for the safety of his wife and two daughters. Before leaving, he asked my mother if she would join them. Mother replied that she would rather stay put, whatever happens. The man took his family and started running to the opposite side of the road towards a solid school building. A bomb caught the family in the middle of the street and killed all four.

In Moghilev there was a working foundry "Turnatoria" which casted grenades.

By that time, my mother got married to Moscovici by a local rabbi. I still have the "*ketubah*" as it was hand written in Moghilev.

Many Jews from Suceava, living in Moghilev, were sent to forced labor, deep into Russian territory, Estonia, White Russia for a period of two and a half years. Their task was to repair the runways primarily damaged by bombings. My stepfather was taken as well. We didn't get any news from



him for a very long time. Therefore, my mother had to provide for three children; a very difficult situation in those conditions.

The Queen of Romania requested the return of the Jewish orphans from Transnistria to Romania. I was an orphan kid. Mother always said I am as precious as her eyesight and that having come so far, she would never consider parting. My stepsister and brother insisted and pressed to give me up. Occasionally we got some maize or potato peals.

One day, mother took a bucket and went to get some water from the nearest fountain. I went with her. Nearby stood a Romanian soldier with a young Ukrainian. In the desire to show off, he lowered the rifle and hit my mom many times with terrible blows, leaving her swollen and crying. A Jew heard her wails. It was Mr. Weiss. He asked what happened. She told him, a soldier beat her to death. Then, the man asked where we live. My mom told him "Poltavska street". He went on and asked whether she has something for me to eat. Instead of replying, my mom wept softly. Then, Mr. Weiss said "send the boy every day and I will give him two slices of bread". I remember clearly sitting on a trunk of a downed tree waiting for hours to get the bread. When I finally got the bread, I took it home. Mother would cut it into small cubes. At night when I was weeping out of hunger mother would feed me a cube. This is how we survived !.

After the war, on the way home, we stopped in Briceni for several months because the border with Romania was closed. In Briceni I ended up going to school.

One day, mother was arrested, being suspected of illegal trade. Four soldiers, fully armed, took mom and us, the children, to the police station. An officer from the NKVD interrogated her in Russian. I was the translator because I had already learned Russian from the children I played with. After a long interrogation and despite the threats and accusations, mom kept saying she is innocent and had no knowledge of illegal dealers. Mother's cousins, who lived near the market, had all kind of businesses but mother didn't divulge their names or dealings. In the end before releasing mom, the officer said in Yiddish "*I am a Jew as well*". It was obvious he understood mother's words and mine, but he never interfered or corrected me.

How did we survive? We bought sunflower seeds, part we grinded into oil other kernels were fried and salted. On Thursday market day, we would sell it in a newspaper cornet. Fried "*sonchiks*" we called it.

One winter day, I accepted one of my mother's cousin's invitation and I joined the ride on his cart. I was not aware of the fact that his merchandise, all kind of groceries, was hidden under a wooden plank. Above it he would offer a ride to a lot of small children. The ride went on until it was almost



dark. Realizing that it was late, I got off the cart and headed home. I was sure mother was worried. The piles of snow on both sides of the road were high, I could see just straight ahead. I was lost. Then, I decided to go toward the direction I heard shouting. I was sure it was my mother. Being afraid she would punish me and hit me I went into my aunt's house. The beating and blows I got from her I will never forget. Screaming and hitting she kept asking: "*why didn't you tell us where you went, why didn't you tell with whom*"?.

Finally, the border opened and we went back to Suceava. Our apartment at Mr. David Winter's house on Ion Creanga Street was available but Mr. Winter refused to let us in. He welcomed my mother and me but he didn't want the two older kids on account that they were never his tenants. He claimed that they will be noisy and he wanted to avoid noise at all cost. At first we underwent a "sit-down strike"; we sat on a blanket on the grass and waited for Mr. Winter to change his decision.

Understanding that the situation is not going to change we were happy to get a room at our family's house. A large room, once used to be a kitchen, now it could be used as our room. We decided to clean it. Everyone did his bit.

Then we covered the broken windows with bedsheets and slept on the floor.

Suddenly, my mom saw our beautiful walnut furniture on a cart ready to be sent to someone who had just bought it. My mother told the man that those were her furniture and if he is unwilling to return it, she would report him.

My stepfather returned from the war. He got a job as a butcher in Vatra Dornei, therefore moving once again. We rented a flat in a house that was once owned by a Jewish family. Now it belonged to a Christian whose name was Ion Satula. Before the war, he was a loyalist of the Legionari (Iron Guard fascist party). He had a car on which he pasted the logo "Death to Jews".

In 1974, I went back to Romania for a visit. I wanted very much to meet Ion Satula, to have my revenge. I planned to invite him to my hotel, offer him drinks, as he was a drunk, and tell him: "*look at your situation- no more car with logo "Death to Jews", and look at me*". But Satula had died so I could meet only his wife and I asked her if she remembers me. As I was a kid at the time she wasn't able to recognize me. I stomped my feet several times on the floor –and then she remembered! "*You are the child from upstairs*"!.





My Story

Shie Rosenbaum

I am the eldest son of Essia and Avraham Rosenbaum.

I was born during my mother's journey to Suceava after WWII in 1945. Labor started when she was on the train. My mother was taken off the train in Ungheni, because of the intensifying pains. There is no doubt that wars bring disasters. Nevertheless, people cling to glimmers of hope even in the most difficult times. For my dad and mom love blossomed in those dark days; my father a



My family: mom, dad my brother and I

native of Suceava met my mother in Shargorod, Ukraine, when he was deported to Transnistria. My father had three brother. Two of his brothers and his father disappeared during the war. My father's sister Yetti died giving birth in Transnistria to her baby daughter. The baby died as well during childbirth.

Shargorod was a small town in the Ukraine; before the war, it was mostly populated by Jews. My mother's last name was Progranichniy ("border guard"). My grandmother was a seamstress, my grandfather was a furrier. They had three children: Essia the eldest (my mother), Arkady (Avrom), Semen (Sholem). At the outbreak of the war in June 1941, the Jews of the Ukraine suffered greatly, most of them were murdered by the Germans.



Grandpa was drafted into the Red Army. It is not clear in which battle he was killed. To this day the family does not know where he was buried.

Mother and grandmother were left alone in Shargorod, which in the meantime became a camp. The police expropriated their possession under beatings and threats.

Mother and grandmother were sent to perform hard labor tasks; cops kept hitting and speeding them to keep up a fast pace of work. Arkady studied Law. He was appointed to the position of military prosecutor. He fought in the Red Army. After being wounded in one of the battles, his injury was badly treated. Part of his hand was incorrectly adjusted to the body, therefore it remained stuck to his body. Shulem, the other brother, was sent to Trihati, the forced labor camp on the Dniester. There he met my future dad. Shulem survived the camp. After the war he worked as a driver's teacher in Czernowitz on Kabilenskia street, the main street in the city.

Upon his return from Trihati, father met my mom and they got married. This is how in 1945 on the train-ride to Suceava, I was about to be born.

At the end of the war, Arkady, the Major, returned to Shargorod as prosecutor. He helped my grandmother to recover part of the stolen property.

About a year after the end of the war, my parents tried to cross the border illegally and leave



My mother's Ukrainian friends

Romania. As they waited for the right moment, hidden next to the Hungarian border, I (at the time a little baby) began to cry. The guards at the border discovered us, put dad in custody for a few days. Eventually, we returned to Suceava.

We lived next to Sfintu Dumitru Church. My mother was an excellent cook and baker. Our home was always open to friends of my parents and their children. My mother's friends were always welcome. In Suceava they were called "the Russian women". Jenny Weidenfeld, Dorly's mother, was like a sister to my mother. Fanny Eidinger, a Murafa native, Nelu's mother, was her kindred spirit. Nelu is my friend. All these Ukrainian women who married men from Suceava kept in close warm relationship. Fira Goldshmidt, Havale Salzman, Sheindale Gitter, Haika Stahl, Hannah Zandberg, Raya Bogen, Clara Grossman, all friends of my mother.



Prior to deportation, my father worked for Mr. Fuchs, a wholesale food retailer. Dad worked for him even after he came back home in 1945, but when the place was closed, dad turned to Mr. Distelfeld and began trading in foreign currency and gold. It was a very risky line of work, but also a highly profitable one. The trade of foreign currency was strictly prohibited; long jail sentences were imposed on those who dared to defy the law. Evidently, in those years the financial situation of my family improved greatly. Mom got two maids to help her in the household.

Mom and I visited grandma in the 50s-60s several times. My maternal grandma was still living in Shargorod, Ukraine. She was able to rebuild and live a fulfilling life. Since I lost a lot of school hours, I needed help. Gita Rosenthal, a very good student in my class, and a good soul was the one who handed me the missing material upon my return. This is how I completed what I had lost.

I was a quiet, well behaved boy but I was involved in pranks with my friends.

With Nelu and Adi Hecht I played soccer countless times. Gerty used to watch and cheer to encourage us. Hannah Kurtz reminds me today that I used to harass her.

During one of the school breaks Mendel Moskovitz and I hid under the stage on which the teacher's table and chair were placed. Our history teacher, Mr. Butnaru, an older pleasant-mannered man, entered the classroom. He sat down in his usual place. We both, hidden under the stage, moved it until it began to sway. The worried teacher turned to the students and said "Get out quickly, an earthquake is happening".



Nelu and Cuta, my friends. I am standing behind them

In my parental grandma's yard in Burdujeni, grew fine trees: a pear tree and a tall walnut tree. I used to climb the trees and pick the fruit. Once, dad was looking for me but couldn't see me hiding among the branches. Out of fear, I fell from the tree. I used to hide the picked fruits inside my shirt. Wgen I picked green nuts my chest went purple from the iodine secretion of the fresh nuts.





Suceava, a Provincial Town.

Tamara Hirshhorn

My family origins go back to Austria and Poland. My grandmother, Ana Lauer Rechtshendler, was a native of Poland and my father's relatives were Austrian. My mother and father were born in Romania. My grandmother Chane was widowed during WW I, raised alone three small children – my mother, Rita Lauer's father, Pini, and Leib. Leib, the first born, Saly, his wife, and Ady, their son, died of hunger, cold and illness on the way to Transnistria. My grandmother lived with us after the war and we all loved her immensely. She mourned her beloved son's death all her life. We lived on Armeneasca Street in a house with a big and beautiful garden; fruit trees, lilac bushes and flowers adorned the place.

My childhood was quite lonely.

I didn't have any brothers or sisters, only a few friends – Haiutza Schmelzer, Betty Merdler, Etty and Betica Goldenberg, and my cousin, Rita. However, not all of them studied with me at the same school (Stefan cel Mare high-school) nor did they live next to me. My dear friends Viky and her sisters, Daniela and



At kindergarten play



In front of my house

Suzy, lived in Falticeni. My friend at school was Iosale Fuhrman, who was seen smoking while riding a cow (being religious his family had a cow for kashrut purposes) and, consequently, was expelled from school for three days. Now he is an important rabbi in Jerusalem. Other friends of mine were Lacramioara Fartais, with whom I am still best friends, Paul Gheorghiu, with whom I prepared notes to cheat at math tests, and Rodica Varhov. At her house I saw for the first time T.V. broadcast, including international programs OTI. I could go on talking about Corina (Brindusa) Costiuc, Florin Cojocar, Mihai Murarescu. In my class there were also, Didi Copelovich, Berta Goldstein, Ani Zaidler.

I used to spend the long summer Sundays on Zamca, reading books in the middle of "tremurici"



fields (a plant that would wave gently in the breeze). From the place I used to sit I could see Zamca Monastery's ruins and, at a distance, the village Scheia with its river and the white peasant houses. For me, this was a romantic, sweet and sour period in my life...

We were young and, as a result, sometimes we would behave foolishly. We would skip math lessons and hide in my garden. One dark winter night, Paul, Iosele, Lacramioara and I were in my house. Snow covered everything. Iosele went home to bring something and, upon his return, he didn't see the glass door in the hall. He walked straight through it, bumping his head. We had to take him to the Crucea Rosie (Red Cross). In spite of being an "*enfant terrible*", Iosele was intelligent, kind but restless.

My parents, like many other families, didn't have an easy life in Romania. They worked hard and suffered from the war consequences. When I reached adulthood, I realized that my future isn't in Romania. Without my parent's knowledge, in secret, I applied for immigration to Israel. I concealed the information from my parents knowing that Israel would be a difficult place for them – they didn't have money, or family and they didn't speak Hebrew. One of my father's acquaintances, who was working at the police station called and told him that I want to leave the country. My poor father, surprised and scared, came home and told my mother. An odyssey started... My mother didn't want to leave for Israel. I tried to calm them down and told them that first I would leave alone, to experience the new place. Only then I would spare no effort to bring them too. It was a real Greek tragedy!

My father couldn't even consider to let me go alone; he decided that we would leave together. It was an excruciating year. First, I had to leave behind everything dear to me – my beautiful garden, my beloved dog, the place I grew up in. Then, my father lost his work, the way Romanian authorities dealt with all Jews who wanted to immigrate to Israel.

The departure day had finally come and we left to the train station with the few things we were allowed to carry, still being afraid that something bad could happen. Nobody was at the train station. By the train there were two people waving at us – Lacramioara and her mother. A farewell parting like the one seen only in the movies!

When we reached Bucharest, at the airport, another surprise! My dear Vicky and her family were also leaving Romania for Italy. She didn't know we were leaving and we didn't know about them. It was absolutely forbidden to communicate.

Finally, we arrived in the Holy Land. For me it was freedom, for my parents – another very challenging step.





My dad, mom and I at the "maabara" in Israel.

The nine years spent in Israel passed quite fast between studies and work. I got married and after 4 years we left for Mexico. Now my two boys took my place in Israel. And this is how 44 years have passed. My parents lived near us in Mexico, for the last nine years of their lives, they had a beautiful apartment, close to us, they got to know their grandchildren, they went to a Jewish club where they met and talked in Yiddish and, at least, my father was happy. My father died in 1988 and my mom – three years later, in 1991.





Childhood Memories - Suceava 1946-1959

Tony Silber

When I was asked to put in writing my memories from my native town Suceava it seemed odd to me. After all, I immigrated to Israel at an early age, 13. All these years I haven't had any connection with Romania and I don't have any family or close friends there. However, the first 12 years of a person's life leave an imprint in memory. I am still speaking Romanian and German and I am still emotional when I hear a Romanian romance song. I have very few memories from my parents' house, but I will try to describe some honouring my parents' memory and for my children's sake.

I was born in Suceava in January 1946 to Fani (Fantzia) Silber (nee Fallenbaum) and Gabriel Silber.

My paternal grandparents, Rachel and Alter Silber, came from Galicia, Poland to the Czernowitz area.



My dad was born in a place (a village or a small town) called Kucerul Mare. The family moved later to Suceava, where they earned their living in a glassware shop. I didn't know them. My grandfather is buried in Suceava, my

grandmother immigrated to New York with one of her sons immediately after the war before I was born or soon after it.





The Silber brothers: Feivel, Motel, Sol, Iosel, Shloime, and my father, Gavril



My mom was born in Suceava, 1912, to Meir Fallenbaum and Tony Blazenstein. My grandpa was born in a small village Balaceana in the region of Suceava. My grandma was born in Gura Humor. They were married in Suceava where they lived.

My mom became an orphan at the age of 6, when her mom died of the Spanish flu. Meir, her father, remarried Feiga Schaechner.

She raised my mom as well as her two sons from Meir – Bibi (Yehoshua Fallenbaum) and David (Dudel Fallenbaum).

My mom always told me that there was no differential treatment between her and the boys. Grandma Feiga brought her up as if she had been her own daughter. Feiga immigrated to Israel following her son Bibi, Joshua Etzion, in 1950, when I was still a little girl. My uncle Bibi emigrated to Israel in 1947 with Beitar youth movement.

Grandma Feiga was grandma Rachel Silber's sister, that's how my father met my mother, so they were cousins without blood connection.



My mom





Picture on the right: my mother's half brother, David (Dudel), Gita my cousin, Mina his wife and her mother.
On the other picture Bibi (Yehoshua Fallenbaum), the other half brother and his bride Shela Schweitzer .

After the wedding, my parents opened a glassware store.

War broke out and my parents were deported to Transnistria, in 1941. My mom was in Murafa with her parents-in-law and her brother Bibi. Dudel, her bigger brother was sent to a labour



camp. My father was separated from mom, being sent to a labour camp (maybe to Trihati, as I remember the name being mentioned in our house). I don't know any details since my father never talked about that period of his life and I never asked. As I was told, my father was nearly killed in a forced labour camp. I read Aharon Appelfeld's book "מכרות הקרח" (*The Ice Quarries*) where he describes what happened to the Jews who were sent to labour camps in this region. This was the first time I understood what my father really had been through. I read and cried.

In Murafa, my mom, her husband's parents, grandma Feiga and my mom's younger brother, Bibi, were sent to live in a small, dilapidated place which was part of a local Jewish family house. The conditions were extremely difficult and there was a terrible lack of food. Mom said she sold her new bedclothes she brought along and, so, she could buy some food. I also remember that she said they had to eat potato peels.

How did my parents get to Transnistria? Did they travel by cart, did they walk in convoy? What did they suffer on their way? We never talked about it. Both my parents returned after the war exhausted and sick. My dad suffered from liver disease and my mother from renal tuberculosis, because of which she underwent nephrectomy in Suceava. Mom returned to their Suceava home





With my parents in Slanic Moldova

before my dad. When my dad returned from the the work camp, standing at the entrance of the house, mother barely recognized her own husband. He was thin, dressed in torn clothes and full of lice.

The memory of that time was always alive in our house, but I, as a child, wasn't aware of the situation, my parents doing their best to offer me a regular, happy childhood.

However, today I understand that that terrible period had an impact on our family life.

After the war my father worked in Suceava as a glass cutter for a government-held cooperative. While he was in the work camp, dad met a Russian man who taught him how to make kaleidoscopes for children. My mom also helped. She fixed little colourful pieces of glass in our own kitchen, putting them into carton rolls my dad made. As much as I know,

my parents were at that time the only ones in Romania who

made those toys. My father was called "Silber-golden hands" because of his skillful ingenuity. He used a diamond cutter to cut and engrave on glass showcases different models and more...

Where did my father get a diamond cutter? My dad had a brother called Shloime Silber, who left Romania before the war for France. He survived the war due to his fine command of the German language and his Arian looks. He worked as a translator for the Germans. After war, he used to send us small packages with candies. Among the candies, he hid from time to time a diamond cutter.

My parents were observant Jews. My father was a Zionist. He wanted to immigrate to Israel immediately after the war, but the authorities didn't allow them. The approval came only in 1959. My dad was very happy, but my mom found it more difficult to deal with the change.

I was left with many unanswered questions about my family's life before and during the war. Unfortunately, when they were alive I didn't ask and today there is no one left to ask.

What I remember from my childhood in Romania?

I grew up in a Jewish home under a communist regime in an atmosphere of permanent fear. We lived on Petru Rares Street next to the Securitate in an apartment comprised of a kitchen, a big bedroom (which also served as living room), a passage towards a corridor and a small room, which functioned as my father's workroom.

The authorities decided that this was an apartment too big for our small family, so, to put an end



to this “extravagance”, they allocated the small room to two elderly people. I have no idea how they succeeded to live there. There wasn’t any lack of food in my childhood. I recall the peasant woman who used to bring butter, cream and other dairy products from the village. As a child, I especially loved cherries, corn and watermelon I would abundantly eat at the beginning of their season.

Since we ran a kosher kitchen, my dad raised early in the morning to buy kosher meat (I have no idea where from). We had a basement where we would store potatoes, sour kraut, pickles. My dad used to prepare wine (I remember big bottles with wine). However, wine was only drunk Friday nights during Kiddush. My mom was a very good cook and the Austrian cuisine rather than the Romanian one influenced her style. For example, I don’t remember my mom cooking vine leaves and sour “*ciorba*”, but I do remember sweet and sour stuffed cabbage and “*pirogen*” stuffed with sweet cheese or cherries, during their season. There were also blintzes (*clatite*) with sweet cheese filling. My mom used to make tasty cakes and I especially recollect the one with three layers of brown chocolate, yellow and white frosting. She stopped doing this cake in Israel and I hadn’t thought of asking for the recipe. In the past, while visiting Austria and Germany I encountered dishes familiar from home and I was really excited.



A number of unpleasant incidents (pointing to anti-semitism) remained with me: When I was in the fourth grade, the teacher called my mom and asked her to speak to me at home in Romanian and not in German so I would be able to write compositions in Romanian using a higher, richer language.

When I was in the sixth grade, while I and other children were on our way to school a teacher (I think her name was dna. Slevoaca) came towards us. Since our eyes didn’t meet, I didn’t greet her. I want to underline the fact that she had never before been my teacher. At my first meeting between mom and my home-teacher, Mrs. Nikitovich, the latter told my mom that I had to be more careful as, who knows, Mrs. Slevoaca could be my teacher in the future and she might make my life difficult, which really happened. In the seventh grade she taught me history and she “made my life a living hell”. Every lesson she would tell me to stand up and asked me questions and I was absolutely terrified of her.

I went through a horrible experience in the fifth or the sixth grade. It was winter. My parents and I were standing on the main street with our backs turned towards an alley. Suddenly, I felt a stabbing



in the back. I turned and I saw a number of teens running away. I was lucky since I was dressed with a tick fur coat. My parents took me immediately to professor Rohrlich's house, which was the closest to the place we stood. There they checked my back and they saw I had a scratch. I think I recognized among the teens one I knew from school. Interesting is the fact that my parents didn't complain either to school or to the police. This was the atmosphere during the communist years. I recall school as an impressive building where discipline was strict and requirements from students were high.

Children weren't allowed to certain movies till they were 16. However, when the movie "*The Lady of the Camellias*", after Alexandre Dumas' book, ran at the local cinema, I went to watch it with a friend. They allowed us to enter, but we were so afraid that we might be seen that we got out before the end of the movie.

I might have been 5 years old when a friend of my mom's, an elderly man, came with his grandson and took me on a trip to Zamca, an area outside the town with medieval fortification ruins. While walking around, I rolled down the hill and stopped in an undergrowth full of thorns and cow feces. Interesting enough, my cousin Lily recalls there was a group of children, among them she and Rosemerica Rohrlich, but I remember only the little boy and the festive dress I was wearing. As a result, I was really hurt.

Another memory ingrained in my mind was when my mother organized a wedding for a couple from Falticeni. It seems that one of them was a relative and maybe they didn't have the necessary means to organize the wedding by themselves. Mom cooked the food, baked the cakes, and prepared our living room for the guests to come after the chuppa took place at the synagogue.

On another occasion, my neighbor Frederica Shauer took me to a play in Yiddish, or it may have been in Romanian. Lia Koenig was in the leading role. I will never forget her face with black hair held on each side of the head with hairpins.

My dad didn't work on Shabbat. On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, I used to go with my parents to the synagogue "Hevre Gach". I loved the atmosphere at the synagogue. We, the children, would play in the yard. My mom and I would return home at noon on Yom Kippur and she would serve me challa with meatballs and pickled cucumber (until today I love it), food that doesn't need to be heated.

I don't miss these bits of life, the more or less happy moments. I'm happy we immigrated to Israel. I believe that our place is here. However, undoubtedly, the first years of my life in Suceava molded and influenced the way I am. As Shaul Tchernichovsky, the poet, said in his poem:

"Man is but the imprint of his native landscape..." ("האדם אינו אלא תבנית נוף מולדתו")

For me it seems right!





My Family

Uzi Kimmel

Like many others in our group, I have little knowledge about the history of my family before and during the WWII. The surviving photos tell the story.

My father's family

My father, Yechiel Kimmel came to Bukovina from Tomaszow, Poland. According to the commemorative book of the Tomaszow community, about 6,000 Jews lived there in 1931. As early as the 17th century, after being granted the rights of free trade, Jews settled in Tomaszow. Their main occupations were weaving, carpentry, selling of spirits, cattle trade. Between 1648 and 1649, Chmelnysky's soldiers almost wiped out the Jewish community during the pogroms. In the 19th century, Tomaszow was the cradle of Hassidic scholars. Important rabbis operated in Tomaszow. In 1846, the Russian authorities banned Jews from settling in the area because of its proximity to the Austrian border. In the summer of 1915, the Austrians conquered Tomaszow and appointed a Jew as mayor (Joshua Fischlson).

In any case, I found in Holon cemetery a memorial dedicated to the Tomaszow Jewish community. To the best of my knowledge, at some point, when Dad was very young, his family moved from Tomaszow to Bukovina. Dad grew up and was educated in Suceava.

My father had three brothers and three sisters. One of the brothers immigrated to Canada before the war.

My mother's family

My mother, Esther Ehrlich, was born in Ilisesti, near Suceava. She had four brothers and two sisters. An older sister perished in Auschwitz with her husband and their three children.

My parents were deported to Transnistria along with all the other Suceava Jewish families. Their first born child, my brother, Otto, died in Transnistria.



My maternal grandmother, Schnarch



Oficiul matricolar evreesc Gura-Humorului.
 Nr. 672/19-
Certificat de căsătorie
 Extras din registrul căsătoriilor Gura Humorului Tom. III. Nr. 91

M I R E L I			C I D E S I			CĂSĂTORIEI				Facilitate proprie cu arătarea domniei.		OBSERVAȚIUNI	
Nr. cartei	Numele și prenumele local nașterii, ocupația domiliului, numărul casei familiei, ocupația și denumirea părinților	Vârsta Anul Luna Zilnic	Starea Nobil Văduv	Nume și prenume local nașterii, ocupația, denumirea domiciliului și numele casei părinților	Vârsta Anul Luna Zilnic	Starea Nobil Văduv	Zona	Luna	Anul	Locul	funcția-marul care a celebrat căsătoria		marilor și a ocupațiilor lor
	Abraham Itzhak născut în orașul Ilisesti fiu în vârstă de 38 ani de Abraham Itzhak și Sara Itzhak.	38		Sali Schnarch născută în orașul Ilisesti în 1885 fiică a lui Noah și Rebeka Shnarch-Wolf.	37		Ilisesti	1922		Gura Humorului	Mendel Bahad		Articulat în 17.11.19 Sprijinit în 1922 Articulat de nouă și nouă de la naștere și marit de la naștere. 20.11.1922 1922 (1922) (1922) (1922) și total de nouă și nouă apoi articulari total 1922 1.11.1922.

Adeverea că prezentul certificat corespunde înlocuial cu înscrisurile respective din registrul matricolar
 Gura-Humorului, la 30 August 1922
 Conducătorul oficiului matricolar evreesc.

This is the marriage certificate of my grandmother

The groom: Avraham Itzhak from Arbore, born in 1884, merchant in Ilisesti. Son of Elias Erlich.
The bride: Sally Schnarch born in 1885 in Ilisesti, Noah and Rebeka Shnarch-Wolf's daughter.
Married in 1922 in Gura Humorului. Rabbi Mendel Bahad officiated the ceremony.

Pictures that survived through the years



With my friends, from the left: I, Johnny Glickman and Lica Olarasu



My grandmother





My mother's family



My parents



In winter time, as a toddler

Tomaszow memorial book
http://tomashov.org.il/books/tomashov_memorial_book_hebrew.pdf





My Story

Zwi Fuhrer

My name is Zwi Fuhrer, son of Shlomo and Chaya Fuhrer blessed be their memory. My sister's mother, Yety Blay, died in Transnistria.

When I was born my parents named me Zwi as they dreamt of Aliya to Israel, therefore I got an appropriate Hebrew name, in remembrance of my grandfather Hersh who died in Transnistria. However, we got permission to immigrate to Israel only 16 years later. The local Romanian people pronounced my name with difficulty. They used to utter it the way it was spelled.

I remember my childhood in Suceava for the better, and later with a lot of friends, all Jewish.



Here is a family picture. I am in my mom's arms.



in the open space next to my house,



at the kindergarten



Every day I would go and play at the house of one of my friend: Harry Fleischer, Arni Merdler, Jacky Gotlieb, Tuli Tzigelnik, Moshe Herzberg and many more.

One of the games we absolutely loved to play was cutki - a football game in which bigger coins



Moshe, Zwi, Arni



Beno, Zwi, Arni, Moshe Rachmuth

symbolized players and a smaller one was the ball. The players were moved with the help of a comb. We also loved to play chess and backgammon. When the weather permitted, we played football in Harry Feller's yard. In summer, we would go to the Suceava River, which was surrounded by rich greenery and tall reeds. I remember turning the reeds into torches by dipping their heads in kerosene and lighting them up.

I used to spend part of my time with my uncle Osias Greler, who was married to Clara, my father's sister. He was a sick man. As such, he spent a lot of time at home. We would play Rummy card game. I was five years old when the routine started. In those days I found it difficult to hold 14 cards in my hand. I loved playing with him. My mom wasn't too happy about these meetings as



she was afraid they would turn me into a gambler ...

Resie Schauer is a distant relative of mine. Ever since I remember, we were friends, and we still are. Our parents were good friends as well. They met regularly.

When I was three years old, I was sent to learn to pray at the Sonnenschein's. First it was Mrs. Sonnenschein who taught me and later on her husband. I remember I used to argue with them regarding the length of the text I had to read and, if they wouldn't agree, I would get up and leave. My second Hebrew teacher was Wijnitzer, but the last was the renowned Mr. Arthur Shapira. After arriving in Israel, I heard that Mr. Shapira had made Aliya as well. Without too much information regarding his whereabouts, I boarded a bus and I found him completely by chance. He was selling lottery tickets at a stand in Bizaron.

I grew up in a religious family. My father, Shlomo Fuhrer, was gabay at the Beit Hamidrash synagogue, located opposite to the Great Synagogue. Praying with us were also the Gotliebs, Herzberg, Olarasu, Wagner, Idel Fuhrer, Kimmel and many more. After the destructions of the Great Synagogue and the Beit Hamidrash, we started praying at the Wijnitz hassidut Synagogue. My father continued to serve as a gabay. I helped my dad in this activity.

I remember loving my teachers, my schoolmates and the studies at school. The Jewish students were the best in class. I used to like going to Casa Pionierilor where I was most interested in the butterfly and insect collections. As a result, I would catch and dry insects by myself. My other love was archeology. After the war, my aunt lived very close to an archeological site – Curtea Domneasca. My grandfather lived there as well. I used to dig for hours and, indeed, my efforts were fruitful. One day I found an old rusty scythe. I handed it to the museum, which exhibited it with my name written underneath, as an honest finder.

I loved taking part in plays. I clearly remember the one named “Lica Lenevica in Tara Lenesilor” in which I had the main role.

My friends and I grew up in families of Holocaust survivors. Most of the families had one single child. Of course, there were exceptions: my colleagues Paulica Davidovici and Iancu Manas had several siblings.

The Holocaust influenced our lives in a number of ways. Parents considered a “chubby” child to be a healthy one. I remember my parents taking me to strolls to Cetate and to Zamca and feeding me bread and butter. We had to finish all the food on the plate because food must not be thrown away!

For our parents, studies were of the utmost importance and I believe that this was a direct consequence of the fact that during the war professionals had higher chances of survival than unprofessional people.



Schooling was essential during the communist era. Once again, money and properties could disappear in a second but the outcome of education gave you a better start in life.

MINISTERUL ÎNȘĂȘĂRII ȘI ÎNSUȘĂRII
FOAIE MATRICOLĂ

LEI 3 LEI

PROIE NR. 2

Rădonul
Regiunea

SUCEAVA

MATRICOLA NR. 265
ANUL ȘCOLAR 1962 - 1963
VOLUMUL II
CLASA IX C

NUMELE
PRENUMELE
FIULULUI
DE PROFESIE
ȘI A
DE PROFESIE
NĂSCUT - LA
IN LOCALITATEA
RAIONUL
REGIUNEA

FÜHRER
ZYV
SOLOMON
FĂCĂTOR DE
MĂCĂL
CĂȘĂCĂ
1947.08.1
(anul, luna, ziua)
SUCEAVA

A fost înscris în clasa IX
în ziua luna Septembrie anul 1962
pe baza procesului nr. 100
eliberat de școala

SITUAȚIA ȘCOLARĂ
în luna
în septembrie

Director
Secretar

OBIECTELE	Nota anuală	Medie	Clasament
Limba și literatura română	9,33	-	-
Limba și literatura *)	-	-	-
Limba rusă	9,00	-	-
Limbă engl. (franc. sau german.)	9,66	-	-
Limba latină	8,66	-	-
Istorie	8,66	-	-
Educația cetățenească	-	-	-
Economie politică	-	-	-
Socialism științific	-	-	-
Psihologia și Logica	-	-	-
Matematica	9,00	-	-
Notiuni de contabilitate	-	-	-
Astronomie	-	-	-
Fizică	9,66	-	-
Chimie	8,66	-	-
Științele naturale	9,00	-	-
Geografia	9,00	-	-
Învățare practică în producția	-	-	-
Sistemele meșteșurilor, cu aplicații practice	9,33	-	-
Agricultura sau cunoștințe elementare despre producția industrială	-	-	-
Tehnologia	-	-	-
Activități practice (lucrări în teren și metal, lucru de mână și gospodăria)	-	-	-
A. L. A.	-	-	-
Desene	9,00	-	-
Calligrafia	-	-	-
Muzică	10,00	-	-
Educația fizică	8,66	-	-
Portarea	10,00	-	-

OBSERVAȚII:
Mutat la școala din localitatea raionul regiunea
Eliberat Copia matricolă nr. 800 pentru (nume) clasa, la data de 6. XI. 1963
Director Secretar

Here is a copy of my grades in high school in 1962

Daily life

In Suceava we ate organic food with no chemicals, no additives and the meat had no antibiotics. For our mothers, to get hold on food was a daily chore. I remember the big black round loaf of bread I used to buy from Lily's grandfather, chala for the Shabat from the Shloim family, regular bread from Mira's mother, milk from Yosale Fuhrman's parents, cakes from Wagner confectioner's and later from the main street confectioner shop. Fruit and vegetables were sold at



the market. Peasants would bring their fresh products every day. My dad inspected and supervised the weighing process. We ate only kosher meat bought from a shop in the market, on the opposite side of Lily and Resie's house. Sometimes I was sent to do the shopping and I did this willingly. The permission to immigrate to Israel gave rise to contradictory emotions. We were happy and sad, at the same time, for every person who was approved to leave Romania. I remember when my family and I were informed about getting the visa to immigrate to Israel. I ran to tell Moshe Herzberg. His mom was so very touched that she even cried.



Arni, Micky, Zwi, Ithak standing, Iosele and Tuli Tzigelnik

In Israel, I learned to appreciate the high level of studies in Suceava, especially in the field of exact sciences. I was accepted in the tenth grade at the Kiryat Haim high-school. After two years I graduated, passing all matriculation exams.

I remember I had always dreamt to become a physician. However, in Israel, it wasn't possible. One medical school only functioned at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. One had to get an average of 100 at the matriculation exams to be accepted. Whoever came from a family of physicians received additional points. Therefore, I turned to my second love – chemistry. I studied at the Technion in Haifa Chemical Engineering. I continued studying for Master's degree in Environmental Engineering, the field in which I worked for 40 years.

In 1975 I married Zwia, daughter of Ludwig and Augusta Peltz. Like myself, Zwia was born in Suceava but immigrated to Israel when she was 8 years old. I didn't meet Zwia during my stay in Suceava, but I met her years later in Israel. We set up our family in Haifa.





Part of Zwia Peltz Fuhrer's novel

Zwia Peltz Fuhrer

They used children's nicknames for each other- Boobe, Moishle, Lalee,- but they spoke of those things children never touch upon and you never did want to listen in. I, quite the opposite of you, listened intently, frightened but curious. I amassed hour upon hour of eavesdropping. And today when I am beset with a question, when I try to really understand, there is no one left to ask.

They would drink tea, nibbling at mother's cakes, recalling other delicacies- potato peels, abandoned apple cores, dry crusts of bread.

Moshele reveled in boasting of his rescue exploits, recounting how he had outsmarted the Russians, hidden from the Germans, and cheated the Rumanians. He was the chatty one among the siblings, and the youngest.

Mother would counter, recalling how they spoiled him, buying him the horses he loved, the best clothes, and in general generating countless expenditures. But the moment Moshele began retelling the story of how he found Grandma Rachel in Siberia and how he managed to bring her home again, everyone would listen in complete silence, struck with awe and admiration.

A short time before the outbreak of the war, when Moshele learned that his parents had been gathered in the village square, he walked into the square, offering himself in their stead, but they merely added him to their list of deportees. They journeyed to Siberia in cattle cars without food or water and there they were separated. Grandpa perished and to this day no one knows exactly where or when. He has no grave - just a small memorial plaque attached to mother's tombstone mentioning his name, **Hersh Reichman**. Though Uncle Moshe managed to find Grandma and get her out of Siberia, he continued to wander and hide until he fell deathly ill and some old Rumanian gentile took him into her home, made a place for him in her one room and fed him whatever she could until he regained his strength.

Everyone was busy eating and drinking, everyone except Aunt Liza, Moshele's wife, who didn't touch the refreshments and continued to knit obsessively throughout these family get-togethers. Aunt Liza would donate the countless small colorful sweaters and their matching caps and booties to WIZO. Once she invited us to a bazaar where all her knitting was displayed along the length of a long table.



of all things, they began to talk about their brother Mordecai, how they might have saved him, how he froze to death in some hiding place with his wife and his small daughter and I saw that you were signaling me to step outside just as mother heaved a sigh of bottomless regret, "If only I had sent Yankeleh to him with a few potatoes!"

As soon as you heard the name Yankeleh, you stepped back, settling yourself next to me, for talk of Yankeleh always got your attention. Then, I thought that both of us hated him but today I believe it was simply envy. Yankeleh was their hero. They repeated admiringly in endless detail his exemplary qualities, admiration which stood out all the more because it was lacking when they spoke about you and as for me, I certainly felt myself lacking. Yankeleh was then just about your age today, when they were thrown out of their homes and pushed into Transnistria along with the rest of Bukovina's Jews.

This word **Transnistria** for many years was for me something harsh and tangled like a rope whose knot I was incapable of loosening. "Transnistria"- they repeated the word endlessly and I didn't know if this was the name of a place or a camp and truth be told, I didn't ask. Only many years afterwards did I realize the simple meaning is a region beyond the Dniester River.

Mother loved to talk about Yankeleh, to describe him ardently. "At the beginning of the transfer, he would still wear his smart clothes- don't you remember his green woolen slacks, those with the checkered suspenders and the shirt that went with it and the brown hat with the small feather? He looked liked a small hunter or some young aristocrat with his bright eyes and his golden hair. But later when we no longer had the strength to carry anything and the freezing temperatures dropped even further and the road stretched out longer, we dressed Yankeleh in all his clothes, one on top of the other and suddenly he looked like he had some meat on him," she recalled in amazement.

"He was sure we were all setting out on some grand tour and was delighted that he wouldn't have to be going to school. You remember how he always strapped on his red backpack, a rucksack, "father added. "Well, that backpack saved us. It held Flugar cigarettes that the peasants smoked and we traded them for a cup of tea or a slice of bread."

Your mother reminisced excitedly about how Yankeleh once brought them a bag stuffed with apple peels, "Some woman must have been preparing compote but she didn't know how to peel apples properly and her peels were thick and juicy and we chewed them very slowly so we'd get every drop of juice," she explained, leaning her head to one side and working her jaw exaggeratedly as if chewing. Then I noticed that your little tank had begun to discharge like crazy in every direction imaginable, firing at Max's hat, at Aunt Liza's knitting, into the empty tea cups, but no one else seemed to pay attention. They were all immersed in the dark crater they called Transnistria and it was as if they had forgotten us completely. They spoke of the



winter of '41 when a plague of typhus broke out and immediately at the outset dispensed with Yankeleh's father and a short while afterwards his mother collapsed along one of the muddy roads and how impossible it was to pick her up and so the Rumanian guards put a brutal end to her with their clubs. And that's the way Yankeleh the orphan joined them.

"If I had a son, I would wish for him to be just like Yankeleh," sighed Moishele and automatically all eyes turned to Aunt Liza who didn't take her eyes off her knitting but the veins in her cheeks reddened. Mother hurried to change the subject, volunteering, "My friend's son works for a newspaper, he was shocked to hear how few children actually survived and he promised an article sometime this year about the children of Transnistria and he might even work Yankeleh's personal story into the article," she added.

Every year as Holocaust Day approached, their hopes- their expectations- that finally they would show a short documentary on TV or someone on the radio would speak or that an article would appear in the newspapers- something about what had happened to the Jews of Bukovina. They so much wanted the world to take note of what had happened to them there but each year disappointment struck them again. If they had been alive, they would have been rewarded during their very last years with three short films on the subject, one dealt with Czernowitz. They called their beloved city "The little Vienna" and Aharon Applefeld', a writer from there, mentions it. Today I read his books trembling, excited to find the names of places they had mentioned, Rathausstrasse, Herengasse, his characters walk along the same streets they had passed through. He describes the Carpathian Mountains that mother loved so, goes to great length depicting the mighty current of the Prut River and somehow he seems to fill the gaping chasm, within me. It even happened that one of his main characters sat in a restaurant they had mentioned. **I await each new book in the hope of finding some answer, of understanding a little bit more, thirsty for the smallest scrap of information, for ironically now when I am ready and want to hear, to ask- there is no one to turn to.**

Mother said that Yankelch was the true hero of Transnistria because the men had been afraid to venture out of the hideout, fearing they would be discovered and sent to a labor camp but Yankeleh managed to steal about like a shadow, always returning with something. "Oi, if only I had sent him to Mordecai, Mordecai might be sitting here with us in this very room," she sighed in mourning once again.

Father laid a consoling hand on her shoulder trying to comfort her, "It wouldn't have made any difference. They were weak from the typhus, whatever remained of their strength drained by hunger and the cold. They never had a chance lying along the frozen wall." But Mother was adamant that had she sent Yankeleh, Mordecai would be alive today.

And all the while I thought how Holocaust Day was drawing near and how I would stand during



the sirens with my eyes shut tight, with my fists tensed at my sides, repeating "Never again... never again...", and imagining Yankeleh standing opposite me against a dark background, his body thin and sinewy, a yellow Magan David folded like a flower on his worn out pajamas as he bellows, "Play death's tune more sweetly, the tune of the German artist's death." And Yankeleh appears so real, so clear, so familiar, to me as if I had known him all my life and not only heard about him from family tales.

Suddenly I was conscious of a strange odor as if something were burning. I didn't budge from my spot for I was tense with expectation as the second part of Mordecai's story was about to unfold, how they tried to bury him, and his wife and his baby daughter in the frozen soil of Transnistria and the smell grew more pungent and seemed so much like roasted flesh. Father too became aware of the smell and he got up from his place, exclaiming, "Something's burning!" as he turned into the kitchen. Mother, quite in contrast, was engulfed in her story, "The wall was frozen and Mordecai lay there, completely blue, holding his wife's hand and she her daughter's, the three of them in death's clutches. That's the way we found them." and her story ended with a funereal moan.

All of a sudden I took note of the smoke emanating from Aunt Liza's hand bag. She herself hadn't noticed since she was so focused on the tiny sky blue sock she had been knitting and undoing, and knitting and undoing again, and then I saw you get to your feet ever so slowly, move towards the door planning to escape when your mother who had discerned what trouble you had created, blocked the doorway and when you tried to make your way out, slapped you sharply.

If I could have played for them, he wouldn't have died," I heard him say to Mother one night. Who? I wanted to ask, who wouldn't have died? And it occurred to me that they were talking about the big brother I once had, but I didn't open my mouth to ask. Over the last few years, when you are the only left to me, and I have somehow managed to muster the courage to ask all the questions, you have insisted that I know enough and even more than enough and have suggested that I read more history books. But I am not at all interested in the world's history, what draws me is personal history, theirs.

Recently they have made me repeated visits at night. When you get here I will tell you the latest dream I had where Max approaches me and his blue eyes this time were only pleading, "I am starving, Chavale, I am so so hungry." And his large face, always so rosy and full, had shrunk, and he appeared as a panic stricken child. Max and I are on two opposite sides of a large yard, something like a peasant's yard with chickens bustling, cackling, running under foot. Every time I try to cross the yard and take a few steps toward him, the chickens don't let me advance. They raise an enormous ruckus, their feathers flying through the air, their commotion forcing



me to stand absolutely still. Above, above the yard, your mother moved about, beautiful like she had been in the photos taken in her youth, just like my mother's descriptions of her honey colored hair, her emerald eyes sparkling. She smiled down at me as she had when she was alive, but her feet never touched the ground.

"Max!", I shouted at him, "Max," trying to shout over the cackle, trying to understand why your mother's feet were floating and she resembled nothing less than a Chagall painting.

"Bella is dead and you are asking such stupid questions!" Max shouted back impatiently, so unlike him, and suddenly the yard emptied and only a lone rooster was left lying on the ground. As I approach him, I see his neck has been slit, and blood is streaming from the slash and his face is human.

I woke up in terror but had no one to share the dream with.

I could never understand how, after everything my mother had gone through, she could continue loving the German language. She would scold me roundly if I were to mix some Yiddish into my German. My mother loved poetry, and she was proud of the Jewish poet Paul Celan who had been born in her home town, Chernowitz and wrote his poetry in the same language with which they slaughtered her parents. But mother, in defiance or in denial, would often quote from the poetry of the German Romantics, remembering their birthdays and details from their private lives. She taught me to recite the poems of Rilke, Heine, and Goethe.

And when the family would assemble at our house she would ask me to stand on a small chair and I would recite Rilke's poem.

Sometimes I recited other poems. I didn't understand the poems but I thrilled at their rhythm and at the attention showered upon me. In time, I was discovered as having a special talent for learning poems by heart and remembering them over long stretches of time. So it came to be that at many family gathering I would recite poems being repaid with exclamations of wonder and applause.

"Ein Wunder Kind" - " a true wonder child" Uncle Max would say, his blue eyes sparkling with vibrancy and his hand running through his rough hair. Moishe burst out enthusiastically, "Chavale wird eine berühmte schauspielerin sein" "Chavale is going to be a famous, well known actress!" crushing me in an enthusiastic embrace.

A record of the tenor Joseph Schmidt, who was a close relation, was frequently heard in our house. He was born in a small village in Bukovina and later lived for a while in Chernowitz. As they listened to the song Ein Lied Geht Um Die Welt (A Song that Goes Around the World), our



mothers broke into song along with the record:

A song that goes around the world/ A song beloved by all/ The tune reaches the stars/ Everyone is listening/ The song sings of love/ The songs sings of fidelity.

But by the end of the first verse, their voices died away, and your mother told the story of how her uncle discovered Joseph Schmidt's talent, and how when the professionals heard his extraordinarily powerful voice, a voice like Caruso's, he immediately was rewarded with roles in operas and musical films and he became famous throughout Europe.

She described how he was careful to always wrap a scarf around his neck to protect the voice cords within, and how he would stand on stools during his performances to make up for his height. Father claimed that Schmidt's religious singing, rooted in the Bible, was the heart and soul of his talent. When he led the congregation in prayer, his voice echoed the pain and suffering of the Jewish people in full.

As the record ended, a deep silence fell over us and the adults sighed. And then the conversation turned to how he had managed to escape the Nazis and the Romanians in time, somehow reaching Switzerland but there the Swiss refused to accept him and he was imprisoned in a refugee camp. It didn't take long before he came down with pneumonia and died at the age of 42.

Aunt Liza had been in Auschwitz and you said you were certain that the Nazis had performed medical experiments on her and for that reason she had no children.

I recalled the time you convinced me to swim out with you into the deep sea, far beyond the rafts. That particular afternoon the sea was stormy and even at the HOF HASHAKET Beach the lifeguards had put up a black flag. An enormous wave pushed me under and suddenly everything around me began to swirl and bubble and a tremendous arm dragged me down. I felt that I was swallowing water, choking, and all the while that indomitable arm pulling me ever deeper. Panic overcame me and a last thought pounded through my mind I 'm drowning, I'm drowning! Never to get out of here alive! And just during those seconds I thought about them, that they would never be able to withstand the shock after everything they had gone through. Never disappoint them, never sadden them, never worry them... Then, I managed to straighten myself and pushing my head out of the water met you, face to face, my eyes blinking madly into your panic stricken expression.

I was too exhausted to talk, my eyes stung, my throat burned, my chest ached and again I began to cough. You looked worried and bent over to peer into my face making sure I wouldn't pass out on the way. When we finally reached the house I wanted to shower and sink into my own bed



but through the window of the hall with its shutter open halfway we saw them sitting around the table. In the dim light they looked like frozen shadows holding eternal cups of tea and listening to Mother who held up a newspaper and read out loud in German. Perhaps it was her tone in reading or perhaps the words themselves that made us stop still in front of the window.

Schwarze Milch der FRuhe wir trinken sie abends/ wir trinken sie mittags und morgens wir trinken sie nachts.

When Mother finished, a silence held sway until Father broke in to say that now there was a translation into Hebrew. Taking the newspaper from her hands, he read:

"The black milk of dawn we drink at evening
We drink it at noon and morning, drink it at night
We drink and drink...

* Translated by S. Sandbank

Since Father read in a louder voice and in Hebrew the words sounded hypnotic, striking fear into us. It was only years later that by some fluke I heard the poem with its mystical words again and learned that it was " The Fugue of Death", Paul Celan's famous poem, and he the Jewish poet from our hometown Czernowitz. His entire family had perished in the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust and later on depression took hold of him and he put an end to his own life in Paris.

Once I discovered that it was Paul Celan who wrote the poem I began to read every bit that was ever written about him, investigating each new piece of information which fell into my hands. I was overcome with emotion when I realized that the day when I almost drowned was the anniversary of his death . That was the reason Mother had read the piece then. His mother, it turned out, like mine, was a zealous devotee of the German romantics and shared with her a passion for Rilke, the poet mother would so often read.

Even today, sometimes at night without the slightest warning, the poem's lyrics appear on my lips like some kind of mantra that one has to repeat, as if they were some basic fundamental experience of mine and they recite themselves at a given set rhythm that I have no control over.

"Black milk of dawn, we drink you at night,
We drink you at noon Death is a master from Germany
Death is a master from Germany with blue eyes
He shoots you with leaden bullets and his aim is true."

When I think about it today, it seems to me that my mother didn't really fear death. That same day when she convinced them to buy their burying plots together as she stood on the hill next to the empty row and faced the sea, she appeared packed and ready. The expression in her eyes



was clear and calm. I wouldn't have been surprised if she had pulled out her tattered overused edition of Rilke's poems and had started to recite a few lines from his poem, "Solemn Hour ",

He who now weeps somewhere in the world,

He weeps with no reason in this world,

He wails for me



photo P.Leinburd





Suceava








I tour the hiding city
Among memory's cells wandering
Like sand slipping from its memory
Of the child who dreamt that her story
Would have a happy end.

Suceava of my childhood was an eternal green
And its smell like the lilac's fragrance
And the pure white harebells in spring-time
And violets, lots of hidden violets
Like the fragrance of Mama's perfume.

I'll not drive on the motorways
Not look for new malls
I'll seek the green grove
The river, the yard and the house
The corn fields in which I hid
With sudden fear.



Amintiri

Cuprins			
	Numele	Adresa	Pagina
	Adolf Copelovici		
	Any Katz		
	Beno Budic		
	Betty Merdler	beti4455@bezeqint.net 054-527668	
	Dorly Weidenfeld	zdorly@gmail.com	
	Eugen Weitmann	alexweitmann@yahoo.com 054-9933891	
	Tamara Hirshhorn	tamaralevinson@gmail.com	



Tăcerea

Zvia Pelz Fuhrer

*Eram o generație născută în tăcerea de după
și tăcerea a rămas
invadând camera, în locul fraților,
rămânând în salon în locul rudelor.
Și chiar și în bucătărie, dar mama nu o alunga cu cuțitul,
cu ciocanul de lemn, cu care bătea vinetele,
cu pumnul cu care bătea aluatul.*

*Am fost o generație ce căuta neamuri
fără de bunici și bunice,
cei mai mulți dintre noi, copii singuri la părinți.
Și tăcerea se lipea de noi ca frații vitregi
cu zero decibeli în griul dureros.*

*Am fost o generație care se furișa la filme
în casele vecinilor, cele pline de copii
la familia Askar
unde bunica frigea
ceva ca chifteluțele brune mirositoare.*

*Am fost o generație care fugea de tăcere
și nimeni nu a înțeles.*

Traducere: Menachem M. Falek



Suceava

Zvia Pelz Fuhrer

*Eu caut orașul ascuns
Printre celulele memoriei, rătăcind
Ca nisipul evitând memoria sa
De fetiță ce a visat că povestea ei
Va păstra un sfârșit bun.*

*Suceava copilăriei mele a fost un verde nesfârșit
Cu miros parfumat de liliac
Și clopoței albi în primăvară
Și violete, multe violete ascunse
Ca mireasma parfumului mamei.*

*Nu voi călători pe autostrăzi
Nu voi căuta mall-uri noi
Voi căuta păduricea verde
Râul, curtea și casa
Câmpurile de porumb în care m-am ascuns
Dintr-o frică bruscă.*

*Voi coborî spre râul Suceava care se înfășură în jurul păpurișului
Clătinat, arborii trimit brațe verzi să intre în apa limpede
Și cât a încercat tata să mă învețe
Să plutesc pe apă.*

*Voi urca spre păduricea mirositoare și densă
Acolo, în umbra arborilor, au început toate poveștile
Acolo eram doar tu și eu, mamă,
Toată ești a mea ca să-ți deapăn poveștile fraților Grimm
Până voi termina toată mâncarea până la ultima firimitură.*





O ultimă amintire din Suceava

Adolf Copelovici

Pe la sfârșitul anului școlar 1961-1962, eu eram în clasa a9a, mi s-a propus să devin UTMist... Cum desigur știți era considerat ca un mare "cuve"...care nu se refuză!

Mi s-a explicat că decizia este fiindcă sunt elev bun, că de partea lui tata erau cam săraci deci proletari și deci "beseder", dar o mare hindere au trebuit să o depășească, căci din partea lui mama erau bogăți, și deci dușmanii poporului!

In fine, o cermonie mare de sfârșit de an școlar, toată școala reunită și se chema unul după altul cei noi nominați la UTM. Aplauze!!!Laude comunismului...și tot ghiveciul!

Tare mi-a fost neplăcut. Eu știam că demersurile ca să plecăm România erau aproape terminat, dar nu aveam voie să spun un cuvânt. Pe de altă parte, trista comedie a comunismului nu o mai suportam de mult!

Vara începuse și plecarea noastră se apropia... Și UTMul a aflat despre plecare...au devenit furioși! Am fost convocat într-o sală mare unde era organizat ca la un tribunal: Culpabilul (bineînțeles eu, înainte de judecată), Secretarul de la UTM (Procuror și Judecător) și doua profesoare: Doamna, pardon, tovarășa Nicolaeva (profesoara de rusă) și tovarășa Răuț (profesoara de engleză).

Secretarul a început să latre, spunând minciunile obișnuite ale comuniștilor! Asta nu-mi păsa și nici nu ascultam...dar de o dată s-a luat de tatăl meu: că tata este un hoț, un mincinos și așa mai departe! Asta n-am putut accepta. Am uitat prudența față de acești șerpi veninoși. Am început să strig mai tare ca el, că tata este un om cumsecade și că secretarul nu avea voie să vorbească așa de tata.

La acest meoment ambele profesoare s-au ridicat. Nicolaeva s-a dus la Secretar și l-a convins să plece. Amândouă au venit după aceea înspre mine ca să mă calmeze. Aceste profesoare mă cunoșteau și mă apreciau. Au spus că să rețin numai amintirile frumoase și că îmi doresc succes în Franța.

După câțiva ani am avut ocazia să constat că comuniștii francezi sînt aceiași scârbă, cu aceleași minciuni.





Amintiri din copilarie

Any Katz

Dragii mei,

Iata citeva cuvinte de la mine, pentru ca vreau sa ramina amintire din copilaria mea. Micile mele amintiri incep cu strada Stefanita Voda, unde eu, ca copil mic, mergeam cu mama la Sipot. Acesta era un piriu repede cu apa curata, unde femeile se adunau saptaminal sa-si povesteasca pasurile. Cu bunica mergeam la haham si acolo am inteles ca sint evreica. Acasa parintii mi-au explicat ca mai sint o multime de oameni evrei si ca este o mindrie sa fii evreu, ca evreii sint saritori la nevoie si foarte buni la suflet. In templul mare plin, la sarbatori, noi copii eram dati afara, pentru a nu profana rugaciunile. Toti copii aveau aceiasi soarta ca mine.

Spre dreapta la sfirsitul strazii principale, in fata bisericii sfintul Dumitru, se aflau d-l Mayer si fiul lui, care aveau trasuri cu cai si sanii cu cai pentru iarna.

Impreuna cu tatal meu, iarna pe gerul mare, luam sania cu cai, imbracati in suba si plecam la Burdujeni si Itcani si inapoi, pe un drum feeric, inzapezit ca din legend in sunetul zurgalailor, ca intr-un vis.

Pe strada Karl Marx, la liceul Stefan cel Mare, unde am invatat, se afla mos Ursul, care ani de zile suna clopotol de intrare si iesire din clase si a carui amintire o port in suflet pina astazi. La ora 12 venea Mos Ursul cu covrigi pe care-I cumparam cind aveam banuti primiti de la bunica. Daca ramineau rest, dadeam la cersetorul din coltul strazii, care avea nevoie de banuti mai mult decit eu de un covrig.

De pe strada Dragos Voda se putea merge inspre Zamca. Acolo mergeam cu mama pentru aerul bun si pentru floricele. Acel aer bun, care facea pofta de mincare il simt pina astazi. Vreau sa amintesc florile liliacului in care cautam noroace si care aveau un miros minunat.

Serbetul, facut de mamele noastre din petale de trandafiri sau nuci verzi, avea un gust special.

Am cunoscut pe parintii copiilor din Suceava si-mi amintesc cu drag de ei. Multi erau meseriasi care lucrau din greu. Era o lume foarte bogata de suflete, de intilniri, de povesti, de mici birfe si intrigi si eu am un omagiu pentru toti. Spre seara se adunau pe strada mare multi tineri care se plimbau si se bucurau unii de altii. Erau timpuri simple si bune.

Aceste amintiri se afla mereu in sufletul meu si al vostru.





Vara

Beni Budic

La noi la Suceava, se făcea vară pe nesimțite. Către sfârșit de mai, mirosurile liliacului se amestecau deja cu cele ale salcânilor, teii începeau să-și manifeste prezența, mama aducea de la piață, pe lângă mănunchiurile de ceapă verde și ridichioare, buchete de lăcrămioare sau de narcise, le aranja în vază de sticlă ce-o punea apoi pe fețișoara de masă ce acoperea plita de mult rece, cum avea să rămână până-n toamnă. Iar când șanțurile nu prea adânci de pe strada Cetății se umpleau cu flori de mușetel, sau cum le spuneam noi, romaniță, știam că, gata, a început vara. Alte semne clare erau că treceam definitiv la pantalonași scurți și chiar la șpilhozen, iar ghetuțele sau pantofii "jumătate" erau înlocuiți cu sandale. Deschise-deschise dar tot cu ciorapi....

La Burdujeni era clar că a venit vara când în curtea lui Tina și Mehel găseam deja câțiva porumbi mai copti, potriviti a fi fripti pe flacăra aragazului din bucătăria lui Baba și tot acolo alegeam vreun bostan mai măricel pe care îl goleam de conținut, tăiam cu dibăcie ochi, nas și o gură plină de dinți ca de ferăstrău, în creștet treceam o sfoară și tot ansamblul devenea "felinar" luminat din interior cu un muc de lumânare cerșit de la Zeida. Seara ieșeam cu el la plimbare prin târg, cu alte cete de băieți, care cu felinare, care vânători de cărbuși adunați, ca proștii, cu sutele pe sub felinarele străzii.

Poate vara la care mă readuc cele mai dragi amintiri a fost aceea când, după operația și convalescența mamei și un "exil" de o iarnă la Burdujeni, de-a lungul aproape întregii mele clasa întâia, ne-am întors cu toții acasă. După cele câteva luni când ne-am înghesuit la bunici, locuința noastră de pe strada Cetății î-mi părea mare, spațioasă, plină de aer și de lumina începutului de vară. Senzația de ceva nou, de libertate, de speranță, mi-o dădea și faptul că chiar din primele zile la Suceava am fost eliberat de povara de ghips ce dusesem pe piciorul meu drept timp de vreo 5 săptămâni. Piciorul l-am fracturat în ajun de 1 Mai, iar povestea am expus-o în "La Burdujeni", unul din textele mele. Când la spital mi-au tăiat cu bisturiul și foarfecile crusta de bandaje de tifon îmbibate în ghips uscat, ca un fel de carapace, care acum se fărâmița sub tăișul metalului, și mi-au scos piciorul la lumina zilei eram ca beat de fericire. Dar a trecut puțin până am înțeles că încă nu pot s-o iau la fugă, nici măcar să încalț sandaia pe piciorul umflat, și că libertatea de dobândește treptat. A fost nevoie de câteva zile de convalescență când încă mergeam șontâc – șontâc și mama î-mi făcea la picior băi calde de tărâțe, ca „să se întărească osul". Dar vara aceluia an – era în 1954 – prima mea vacanță de școlar, era doar pe începute și abia aveau să



urmeze zile minunate.

Verile copilăriei începeau deci de pe atunci cu un amestec de simțăminte de bucurie, de eliberare, de speranțe. Apoi veneau, în sfârșit, vacanțele mult visate, apropierea de ceva nedeslușit dar așteptat ca aducător de promisiuni, de fericire. Pe când eram încă la grădiniță, părinții, în tovărășie cu familia Hubner tocmeau la început de vară, un căruțaș care aducea și descărca într-un colț al curții, aproape de gardul înalt al bisericii, o căruță cu nisip. În zile însorite, pe lângă lada cu nisip era pusă o balie cu apă ce se încălzea la soare și colțul de curte devenea o simulație a ștrandului, iar eu și Meiy, băiețelul ceva mai mic decât mine, al lui Piri și Izu Hubner, în chiloți (de baie ?) și echipați cu lopățele și căldărușe, ne bălăceam și ne jucam în diminețile de iulie. Între lada cu nisip și "pompa" de apă fuseseră săpate cu lopata și semănate (în tovărășie cu vecinii) 3-4 straturi de roșii, ridichioare sau ceapă verde care prin iulie începeau deja să dea roade.



Stinga: Etty Scherzer, Lily Weintraub, X
Sezind: Uzi Kimmel, Mihai Driscu, Mara
Bodinger, Avi Shapira

Câțiva ani mai târziu aveam să mergem, în grup, câțiva băieți și câteva fete, la "ștrand", la Apa Sucevei, coborând voioși pe drumul către Burdujeni încărcăți cu ceva pături de întins peste prundiș și eventual pachețele cu sandvișuri și fructe. Înainte de a ajunge la pod o luam la stânga pe o potecă ce se lărgea uneori devenind drum de căruțe, și după 2-3 sute de metri ajungeam într-o parte mai largă a luncii, pe unde apa venea mai domoală dar și mai adâncă. Au fost doi sau trei ani când primăria chiar amenajase acolo un fel de "ștrand", adică un șir de cabine de scândură ce serveau de vestiare și un podeț îngust, tot din scânduri ce ducea peste prundiș, până la partea mai adâncă a apei. Dar n-a trecut mult până "ștrandul" de scânduri a fost delăsărit și s-a distrus. Oricum, noi ne bucuram din plin de orele de libertate și aventuri din luncă. În loc de vestiare, ne descurcam perfect printre tușișuri. Fetele expuneau costume de baie ce deveneau, din an în an, mai interesante. Pentru băieți, moda acelor ani era un slip super simplu, dintr-o pânză albă, cam grosolană, pe care îl legam cu 2-3 șnurulețe peste coapsa stângă.

Aproape inevitabil, primele zile de plajă ale fiecărei veri se terminau pentru aproape toți cu insolamție și usturături. Dar astea treceau repede. Uneori, cei mai îndrăzneți se aventurau explorând lunca până spre podul de fier de la Ițcani, dar de obicei ne bălăceam prin valurile încete și nu prea adânci de pe lângă mal. Mai în larg apa chiar se adâncea dar făcea și vârtejuri destul de periculoase. Pe lângă mal am învățat eu pe atunci, de unul singur, să înot, mai întâi





Stinga: Pia Klein, Carla Wax, Lotty Scherzer

cu palmele pe fundul nămolos și apoi, cu încetul, înot de-a adevăratelea, care m-a eliberat de simțământul de inferioritate față de Pia, singura dintre fete ce știa să înoate.

Tot așa, î-mi permiteam de pe atunci să traversez înot Suceava, împreună cu alți băieți, și să "ancorăm" pe malul opus, spre Burdujeni. Când se apropia toamna și se înteteau ploile, dar mai ales după ce-a început construcția combinatului industrial din luncă și albia Sucevei s-a umplut de gropi și vârteje, au fost cazuri de băieți prea curajoși (nu, nu din cercul nostru) ce-au plătit cu viața.

Dar nu coboram la scăldat chiar zilnic. Când nu aveam altele de făcut, întindeam pe iarba din curte, la umbra salcâmului de lângă gardul bisericii, vreo pătură moale și ore în șir citeam tolănit acolo cărți de aventuri, iar când oboseam citind, cu fața spre cer, număram norii ce treceau printre crengile și frunzișul salcâmului...

Când eram prin clasele mai mici, cu toții "pionieri" cu cravate roșii, funcționa în orele dimineților de vacanță "Tabăra de curte". În curtea cea mare dinspre Strada Domnească a vechii clădiri a școlii noastre – Medie Nr.2 - (azi colegiul de artă C. Porumbescu) se organiza zilnic un careu, în jurul catargului pe care era ridicat cu mare ceremonie și răpăit de tobă, drapelul unității. Ce făceam în orele următoare nu prea țin eu minte.

Probabil băieții băteau mingea și fetele erau și ele ocupate cu de a lor. Timpul trecea repede. Către prânz activitatea se încheia, avea loc ceremonia coborârii drapelului și cu toții ne întorceam acasă.



In curtea școlii: Gaitan, Iuliana, X,X,X, Paulica asezate: X, Gitta, mingea, Lily, X,X



Scoala



Deja mai mari, la liceu, se pare că distracția ultimativă a zilelor de vară se petrecea către seară și ținea câteva ore bune, chiar după ce se întuneca de tot. Era poate semnul cel mai explicit că vara e în toi. Cum se întâmpla în zeci și zeci de orașe mai mari sau mai mici decât Suceava, în orele dinaintea apusului centrul orașului se transforma în promenadă. Îndeosebi grupuri de tineri, ca noi sau mai în vârstă, dar și perechi tinere, mame cu câte un copil sau chiar mici familii, înțesau centrul, de la începutul lui Ștefan cel Mare și până pe la tribunal, sau chiar mai sus, la policlinica nouă.

Plimbăreții ocupau ambele trotuare și chiar bună parte din lățimea străzii. Oricum, la acele ore, rar trecea pe acolo vreo mașină. Noi cinci, Mara, Mira, Betti, Mihai și eu ne începeam promenada uneori de acasă de la Mara ori poate după vreun film de după amiază la Tineretului, uneori eram în formație completă iar uneori doar 2-3 dintre noi.

În orice caz, îmbrăcați "civil", în haine pe cât posibil moderne, spre deosebire de uniformele școlare cam grosolane (fuste în culori pastel, foarte înfoiate, cu jupon, pantaloni lungi și cât se putea de strâmți), băteam centrul în sus și în jos de cine știe câte ori, de la Alimentara la tribunal și înapoi. Rar ne refugiam pe vreo bancă din fața parcului, iar subiectele de discuție nu se terminau niciodată. De obicei fetele plecau primele iar Mihai și eu mai găseam câte ceva de discutat.

Cam la capătul traseului de promenadă, ceva mai sus de cinematograful, fusese construită în acei ani o altă atracție a verilor sucevene - Grădina de Vară. Era o incintă destul de mare, aranjată în formă de amfiteatru, ce servea în serile calde și senine ca cinematograful în aer liber.

Exista și o adevărată scenă, așa că în Grădina de Vară aveau loc din când în când diverse concerte și spectacole muzicale. Tot spațiul era înconjurat de un zid destul de estetic, iar clădirea de intrare fusese proiectată în stil pur stalinist, și silueta intrării parcă era o copie la scală



Strada Ștefan cel mare
(foto: Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru)



Cinematograful Tineretului
foto: Suceava Periferiilor Album)



Teatru de vara (foto: Suceava Periferiilor Album)



redușă a Casei Scânteii. Amfiteatrul putea cuprinde cred multe sute de spectatori și deci puteau fi susținute acolo chiar concerte cu audiență mare. La un astfel de concert î-mi amintesc să fi fost de față într-o seară de iulie sau august 1962. În acele zile am dormit câteva nopți la Burdujeni, cu vărul meu Iani. Părinții lui erau plecați la băi și lăsaseră casa în paza noastră. Tocmai în acele zile a ajuns în turneu, la noi, la Suceava, mitologica formație muzicală "Los Paraguayos", la noi, dintre toate orașele lumii mari. Bineînțeles că a fost moarte de om la cozile de bilete. O astfel de ocazie se ivește pe meleagurile noastre o dată în viață. Nu mai știu cum am obținut și noi bilete. În seara reprezentației am ajuns din Burdujeni într-un autobus ticsit cu zeci de tineri, că era de mirare cum nu ne-am sufocat în așa înghesuială. Din cauza îmbulzelii și aglomerației spectacolul a început cu întârziere mare. Dar le-am uitat pe toate când băieții cu ponchouri și ghitare s-au pus pe cântat. A fost minunat, dar s-a terminat repede. De mare entuziasm cred că nimeni din public n-a luat în seamă norii ce se adunaseră și au ascuns stelele. Doar când au început să cadă pe noi picături grele de ploaie, am înțeles ce se întâmplă. Spectacolul a mai continuat câteva minute – artiștii erau cumva apărați de ploaie sub acoperișul scenei. Dar picăturile enorme au ajuns la becurile înfierbântate ale reflectoarelor care au început să plesnească cu zgomot mare unul după altul. Din acel moment a început adevărată debandadă. Ploaia se întetise de-a binelea. "Los Paraguayos" au dispărut în culise iar noi, publicul, am luat-o la fugă care unde o găsi un colțisor uscat. N-am mai găsit autobus. La Burdujeni am ajuns cu un camion deschis și uzi până la piele, după miezul nopții.

Au fost câteva vacanțe încununare de călătorii mai lungi sau mai scurte. De două ori au fost astea excursii prin țară, de la casa pionerilor sau de la școală, în tovărășia multor colegi, colege și profesori bine cunoscuți, excursii făcute într-un vagon de tren transformat în dormitor pe roate. De vreo două ori am fost în tabere de vară, cu profil de convalescență, la Cluj și la Dorna Cândreni. De câteva ori am petrecut vacanțe de vară de vis la Galați, la tanti Anuța și nenea Zissu. Toate astea, deși nu legate direct de Suceava, merită a fi descrise în mod deosebit.

Dar slăbiciunea mea pentru gări și pentru trenuri, la Suceava am primit-o, sau mai bine zis la Burdujeni. Aproape în fiecare an veneau din București, pentru o vizită la rude dar și o escală la Burdujeni, Dița și Leonaș. Botoșăneni de baștină, veri ai mamei și a lui tanti Freida, Dița era medic pediatru, iar soțul ei, arhitect. An de an ajungeau pe la noi în cadrul unei excursii de concediu, ce făceau cu trenul, pe rute "circuit". Veșnic aveau cu ei "Mersul trenurilor" sau cum îl botezase Dița, Biblia turistului. De atunci am visat și eu să fiu turist C.F.R. – deci cumpăram anual Mersul Trenurilor (5 lei la Agenția C.F.R. din centru) și mă pricepeam de minune să mă descurc prin nenumăratele orare a nenumărate trenuri, cu legături și conexiuni, toate tipărite de-a latul pe sutele de pagini ale cărții.

Una din primele mele călătorii cu trenul am făcut-o în acea vacanță fericită, de care am mai



pomenit, când ne-am întors acasă după operația mamei. Încă nu aveam mersul trenurilor și încă nu visam la călătorii "circuit", dar însuși gândul la gări, trenuri și locomotive î-mi dădea deja o stare de emoții intense încât mă luau de-a dreptul dureri de burtă. În urma operației mama rămăsese cu un șchiopătat destul de evident la piciorul stâng și se ajuta la mers cu un baston. Era și foarte slăbită și ca ușurare a tuturor acestor neazuri i s-a recomandat să facă băi de nămol și de "acid", masaje etc. – tratamente care se făceau cel mai bine la Vatra Dornei. Deci tata a obținut la sindicat bilete și prin august am plecat toți trei către marea aventură, la munte. Călătoria s-a făcut bineînțeles cu trenul. Nu știi de ce am plecat cu un tren de seară, care a părăsit gara deja pe întuneric. Eu eram încă de dimineața cu crampe și nu-mi găseam locul. Printre micile mele pregătiri personale o intuiție inexplicabilă m-a făcut să înfund într-un buzunar o cutiuță cu câteva bețe de chibrit, un cap de lumânare și Dumnezeu știe de ce, un capăt de sfoară adunat ca un mosorel. Urcatul mamei și al bagajelor în vagon a fost o operație destul de complicată, și numai bine ne-am văzut cu toate pe platformă că trenul s-a și pus în mișcare. Atunci am realizat toți trei că vagonul era cufundat în întuneric. Am ajuns orbecăind la un compartiment unde erau locuri libere, tata a vrut să verifice dacă sunt locurile noastre, dar lumina a refuzat să se aprindă: pur și simplu vagonul nu era conexat la curent electric. Și în acel moment am avut eu picătura mea de glorie. Am scos cutiuța din fundul buzunarului, am aprins mica lumânare și compartimentul ni s-a înfățișat în toată splendoarea sa. Era cel cu locurile noastre rezervate și era complet gol. Tata a adus valizele de pe coridor, le-a urcat în plase și toți trei ne-am instalat pe banchete. Probabil am adormit repede în țacănitul ritmic al roților și în întunericul în care era cufundat tot vagonul.

La Vatra Dornei am ajuns cred spre miezul nopții și o trăsură ne-a dus, drum de vreo 10 minute, la pavilionul unde am fost cazați. De dimineață m-am trezit într-o altă lume. Camera noastră făcea parte dintr-un fel de anexă a clădirii pavilionului, și era cam mică. Cele două paturi, un șifonier și masa o umpleau cu totul. Totul era liniștit și cufundat într-o răcoare ce n-am cunoscut la Suceava. Mama a fiert lapte (care nu știi de unde l-a obținut) pe o spirtieră și pentru micul dejun a făcut cafea cu lapte și pâine cu unt. Apoi am ieșit spre centrul verde al orașelului. Era încă răcoare dar vânzătorii de suveniruri de vilegiatură expuneau deja fluierașe, bastoane de munte, pălăriuțe și poșete mici de plută, ocarine smălțuite și câte și mai multe. Apăruseră și sătencele cu coșulețe de zmeură sau afine, fragi și mure, toate sclipind sub picăturile de rouă. Noi am trecut pe lângă pod și am continuat spre pavilionul de băi aflat cam la 200 metri de acolo, chiar vizavi de gară, ce se afla de cealaltă parte a Bistriței. Acolo, atât mama cât și tata și-au început programul de tratament ce avea să se desfășoare în următoarele două săptămâni zilnic, timp de 2-3 ceasuri. În acest timp eu cutreieram coridoarele luminoase și lungi ale pavilionului, intram uneori și în vreo sală de tratament, dar îndeosebi î-mi plăcea să ies la pod și să privesc, lipit de parapet, spre



plutele ce mai treceau în acei ani în jos, pe apele repezi ale Bistriței. Într-una din zile tata m-a luat să asist la tratamentul său și l-am văzut cufundat în cada cu nămol și apoi învelit în cearceafuri, după care s-a spălat la duș s-a odihnit și a continuat la cada cu "acid". Cu mama am fost la o ședință de masaj: mama era instalată pe o masa de tratament și un maseur orb, cu ochelari negri și vorbă domoală îi explica exact ce face.

După tratament și până la ora prânzului ne plimbam prin minunatul parc natural ce se întindea din spatele cazinoului și până sus la "trambulina" de ski. O data sau de două ori am ajuns chiar sus-sus, la trambulină iar mama a rămas pe o bancă lângă izvor. Pe brazi se vedeau cățărându-se veverițe. Împreună cu noi se aflau în stațiune, cazați chiar în clădirea de lângă noi, Monel, vărul mamei, medic la Iași, cu soția și băiețelul lor Liviu, ceva mai mic decât mine. Nu cred că ei făceau vreun tratament, veniseră la munte la odihnă așa că după băile părinților eram mai tot timpul împreună. Prânzul și cina erau servite vilegiaturiștilor în sălile și pe terasa frumoasei clădiri a cazinoului, transformată în restaurant-cantină. Bineînțeles eram împreună cu verii din Iași. Eu și Liviu eram trimiși să umplem carafe cu apă minerală de la izvorul din turnulețul cu foișor, aflat în parc, chiar jos lângă scările ce urcau spre cazinou. Apa izvorului era rece, puțin acidulată și bună la gust. Astfel treceau pe nesimțite zilele lui August. Într-una din seri Tuța și Monel au serbat ziua căsătoriei și toți șase am făcut în camera lor spațioasă ditamai cheful, cu șampanie "Zarea", iar în ultima duminică au venit în vizită Baba, bunica ce nu cred că în viața ei a ieșit din Burdujeni de mai mult de 4-5 ori și unchiul Gustav, fratele tatei, venit tocmai de la Fălticeni. Din acea zi ne-a rămas amintire o fotografie făcută pe o alee a parcului iar în fundal emblema stațiunii: clădirea cu turnulețul a izvorului. Când l-am mai întâlnit după vreo 50 de ani la New York, Liviu avea întreg tabloul înregistrat de memoria unui copil de 3-4 ani.

Câteva zile mai târziu ne-am întors la Suceava. Plouase și pe la Dorna, dar la Suceava a fost adevărat potop. Apa Sucevei ieșise din albie și inundase bătrânul pod de lemn. Trăsura a traversat încet-încet, cu roțile scufundate până la osie. Orașul ne-a primit mohorât, umed și friguros. Am înțeles că vara s-a terminat.





Difuzorul

Beni Budic

Locuiam la Suceava de aproape doi ani, când într-o după amiază de vară, o echipă de tehnicieni trebuiau pe lângă stâlpul din fața curții noastre, pe strada Cetății. Unul din ei și-a fixat la bocanci niște cârlige de fier, cu zimți metalici ascuțiți și s-a cățărat cu dexteritate până în vârful stâlpului. De acolo au tras niște fire până la zidul casei și le-au fixat sus, sub streșină. Au continuat cu firul electric, mai întâi spre locuința familiei Chibici, iar după vreo jumătate de ceas au ajuns și la noi. Firul l-au introdus printr-un orificiu făcut în lemnul pervazului, sus lângă oberlihtul ferestrei ce dădea spre curte, apoi au fixat mai jos, pe pervaz, un fel de priză de contact. Din acest punct, lucrul a continuat în interior. Au întins firul de-a lungul părții de jos a peretelui și l-au trecut, prin geamul ce dădea spre camera din mijlocul locuinței, până la măsuta din colț, lângă sobă.



Măsuta din lemn negru cu încrustări, sprijinită pe trei picioare subțiri, cam șubrede, servea doar ca decorație. Era acoperită cu o fețișoară de masă albă, croșetată, pe care odihnea o vază cu flori din hârtie creponată. Dar în acea zi, vaza a fost luată de acolo, iar locul de cinste pe mäsută l-a primit de atunci o lădiță cu laturi din lemn vopsite roșu, cu partea din față tapisată cu o țesătură bej-lucios și cu un buton negru în colțul de jos, pe stânga. Spatele lădiței era acoperit de un carton gros, cu perforații, iar printr-un orificiu al acestuia, firul electric adus cu atâta trudă tocmai de la stâlpul din stradă pătrundea undeva în măruntaiele cutiei fermecate. Așa a intrat în viața noastră Difuzorul, iar din acel moment și familia noastră era conectată la rețeaua orășenească de radioficare...



Beni

Pe la începutul anilor 50, regimul „socialist” instaurat definitiv, a găsit (probabil după model sovietic) o modalitate simplă de a adânci penetrația propagandei ideologice. Bună parte din populație nu avea aparate de radio. Cele care se găseau în magazine erau de producție locală, cu doar unde medii și lungi. Numai puținii norocoși ce aveau aparate de radio străine, sau aparate mai vechi, dinainte de război, ce recepționau și unde scurte, puteau încerca să audă emisiunile în limba română, de la Europa Liberă sau Vocea Americii. La noi acasă nu era aparat de radio. Îmi amintesc cum, vreo 10 ani mai târziu, deja



băieți mari, ne strângeam în camera din mijloc a locuinței mătușii mele, tanti Freida, la Burdujeni, și cu obloane baricadate și uși bine închise, chinuiam butoanele radioului, doar-doar să reușim a distinge câteva propoziții coerente din emisiunile groaznic bruiate ale lui Kol Israel...

Dar atunci, în anii '50, propagandă sau nu, Difuzorul a reprezentat pentru mine și cu siguranță pentru mulți alții, copii sau adulți, o fereastră deschisă către „lumea mare”, de dincolo de limitele orașelului nostru. Firele trase de la stâlpul din stradă până la măsuta de lângă sobă aduceau în mod miraculos până chiar în camera mea, un întreg univers de sunete. Sistemul consta într-o rețea ce lega studioul și aparatura stației de radioficare locală de aproape toate casele orașului. Peste un timp, rețeaua avea să ajungă la Burdujeni, la Ițcani și în satele din împrejurimi.

În casa bunicilor difuzorul a fost montat pe perete, deasupra divanului unde dormea „zeida” (bunicul), iar în locuința unchilor, la tanti Freida, a fost plasat în bucătărie, principalul spațiu de întâlnire a familiei, tot la căpătâiul unui divan, în care dormea Iani, vărul meu, iar la sfârșit de săptămână, când veneam și eu la Burdujeni, dormeam acolo înghesuiți, amândoi. Difuzoarele la Burdujeni erau de un model mai nou, ceva mai mici, negre, iar țesătura din față era mai puțin elegantă. În loc de buton aveau o mică tijă ce servea la controlul volumului.

Programele transmise erau cele de la Radio România, începeau la 5 dimineața și continuau până la miezul nopții. Câțiva ani mai târziu Radio România avea să devină Radio București și după încă ceva timp acesta avea să emită simultan pe Programul 1 și Programul 2. Redactorii de la centrul de radioficare al orașului decideau (probabil conform directivelor de la organele de partid...) când și ce program să difuzeze pe rețea de-a lungul zilei. În plus, zilnic, la ora 7 seara, era transmisă „Emisiunea locală” realizată în studioul din apropierea parcului.

Difuzorul a devenit o prezență permanentă a casei. Funcționa ore în șir, de-a lungul zilei iar fluxul neconținut al sunetelor sale forma un fel de fundal al tuturor activităților familiei. Înainte de toate era reperul după care se potriveau ceasurile: „Aici București. Ora exactă. La al cincilea semnal va fi ora...*****. A fost ora... ”. Astfel am început să sesizez cât de inexact băteau ora pendulele aflate în reparație dincolo de perete, în atelierul de ceasornicărie al vecinului Chibici.

Erau apoi nenumăratele programe de muzică. Multă, multă muzică populară pe care pe atunci nu prea știam cum să o gust. Dar nume celebre ca Maria Tănase, Dorina Drăghici sau Maria Lătărețu mi-au persistat în memorie până în anii maturi, când am reușit să înțeleg, să apreciez



Freida, Iani, Beni, mama



și chiar să prezint călătorilor mei importanța a tot ce e creație populară. Erau de asemenea, programele de muzică clasică - simfonică, de cameră, etc.- care nu prea erau gustate de părinți și nici eu nu știam atunci cum să le înghit. În schimb ariile de operă și mai ales cele de operetă se bucurau de multă apreciere. Dar erau îndeosebi programele de muzică „ușoară” cu șlagărele acelor ani, și mai ales erau romanțele („cântece de inimă albastră”) ce topeau inimile celor maturi...Și era veșnicul, nemuritorul (pe atunci) Gică Petrescu,



Beni al doilea din dreapta

vedeta a cinci generații. Iar pentru a dovedi că difuzorului îi datorez totuși primele elemente de educație muzicală, trebuie să amintesc diminețile de duminică, ce începeau, pe la ora 9, cu Concursul Muzical unde câștigau cei ce recunoșteau cele mai multe fragmente clasice.

Emisiunile conțineau destul de multe programe pentru copii și tineret. În fiecare seară, la ora 8 fără 10, o voce vioaie de fetiță saluta: „Bună seara, copii!” Urma o mică poveste sau basm după care, 10 minute mai târziu, aceeași fetiță, de data asta cu o voce pe adormite, ne ura ”Noapte bună, copii!” În după amiezile de sâmbătă se transmitea o emisiune concurs pentru pionieri și tineret, „Drumeții veseli”, care imita emisiunea similară pentru adulți, „Cine știe câștigă”, iar duminica dimineața, după concursul muzical, urma „Teatru radiofonic pentru copii și tineret”.

Însă adevăratul Teatru radiofonic sau „Teatru la microfon” era transmis seara, de vreo două ori pe săptămână. De-a lungul anilor am urmărit cu pasiune emisiunea ce mi-a devenit o adevărată hrană sufletească. Ascultam vrăjit, cu coatele sprijinite pe măsuta șubredă, ce se cam legăna uneori, a difuzorului. În serile de iarnă, eram cuprins și de parfumul îmbătător al cojilor de portocale puse la uscat într-o tăviță, între sobă și perete. Dacă întâlnirile cu teatrul adevărat, de obicei la Dom Polski, erau relativ rare, grație difuzorului am avut parte din plin de Caragiale și Goldoni, Molière și Cehov, Delavrancea și Gorki și alții, mulți - mulți alții pe care mi i-au oferit Giugaru, Birlic, Angelescu, Calboreanu, Lucia-Sturza Bulandra, toate numele celebre ale scenei românești din acei ani. Da, și nu poate fi omis marele, inegalabilul (și pe atunci, relativ tânărul) Radu Beligan. La sfârșitul emisiunilor de teatru din serile de duminică, Beligan prezenta „Poșta teatrului la microfon”. Scurta emisiune, radia de umorul și ironia maestrului și era presărată cu multe anecdote și pățanii „din culise”. Atunci am aflat eu pentru prima dată că „Dacă vrea Domnul, și sabia pușcă”. Ani mai târziu, aveam să mai întâlnesc replica asta, în versiunea ei



ebraică („Dacă vrea Domnul, și mătura împrușcă”) și am înțeles că voința Domnului e aceeași peste tot și cine trebuie să împrușce, împrușcă până la urmă, indiferent cu ce...

Duminicile, pe la ora prânzului, când eram cu toții în jurul mesei din bucătărie la tanti Freida, la Burdujeni, cam o dată cu prăjiturile desertului, difuzorul ne oferea „Emisiunea de satiră si umor”. Așa am cunoscut atunci marile nume ale comediei și revistei, actori care - deși limitați la jugul realismului socialist (asta am înțeles-o doar cu ani mai târziu) -, reușeau totuși să continue o tradiție măreață. Erau Stroe și Mircea Crișan, Tomazian („Sal'tare taică, și noroc!..”), Horia Șerbănescu și Radu Zaharescu și bineînțeles alții, cu sclipitoare cuplete și calambururi, care ne făceau să ne tăvălim de răs....

Aveam vreo 12-13 ani când am avut ocazia să văd, din interior, studioul stației de radioficare. De vreo câțiva ani deja, luam lecții de vioară la profesorul Zavulovici. Mare virtuoz nu a ieșit din mine dar de bine de rău ajunseseam să pot executa în mod acceptabil câteva piese mai de Doamne-ajută. Cum am mai pomenit, zilnic la ora 7 seara, era transmisă „Emisiunea Locală”. În afara reportajelor ce reflectau succesele sucevenilor în toate domeniile și – chipurile! - elanul cu care contribuiau zi de zi, în fabrici, în uzine, pe câmpii ca și în școli, la construirea socialismului, erau în emisiune și momente culturale, unele dedicate tinerelor talente ale urbei noastre. Așa se face, că datorită probabil recomandării unei instructoare de pionieri ce mă cunoștea, am fost invitat să contribui la o astfel de emisiune. Centrul de radioficare era amplasat la etaj, într-o clădire frumoasă, din anii habsburgici ai Sucevei, ce servea cred drept Casă de cultură (la parter, în câteva săli, se organizau expoziții de artă). Eram 2 elevi, unul de la „Ștefan cel Mare” si eu, invitați, cu viorile noastre, să participăm la emisiune. Înregistrarea s-a făcut la orele de după amiază, chiar în ziua emisiunii. Studioul consista dintr-o cameră nu prea mare, căptușită de jur împrejur, inclusiv tavanul, cu niște foi mari de placaj cu multe - multe perforații, sub care se afla probabil un izolant acustic. În mijloc era o masă, 3-4 scaune, niște pupitre si un microfon impozant, iar pe peretele din față era o fereastră ce dădea spre camera tehnică, înțesată cu tot felul de aparate. Pe o masă în centrul camerei de regie, lângă un pupitru de comenzi, trona magnetofonul iar în spatele acestuia se aflau tehnicianul și redactorul emisiunii. La comanda primită din camera de alături printr-un difuzor ce se afla deasupra geamului, am început să execut „Serenada” lui Schubert, piesa mea de rezistență. Emoția mă gătuia și se pare că sunetele produse nu erau mai mult de un jalnic scârțâit. N-au trecut nici 2 minute din cele vreo 3 cât dura cântecul, până m-am poticnit. Difuzorul de sus, pe perete, mi-a ordonat s-o iau de la început... Abia la a treia înregistrare rezultatul a fost considerat satisfăcător și eu, ușurat, dar și roșu de emoție și rușine, am pus vioara în cutie. O anumită consolare am găsit în faptul că și celălalt violonist a pățit-o la fel...Seara, familia s-a delectat cu muzica, (tot cam scârțâită, chiar la a



treia încercare) pe când eu aş fi preferat să uit toată aventura. Oricum, m-am produs la Difuzor, fusesem prezentat de crainic, pentru câteva ore am fost faimos în Suceava...

Actualitatea, ideologică ori politică, locală, națională sau internațională, ne provenea de asemenea prin emisiuni auzite la difuzor. De câteva ori pe zi erau „Buletine de știri”, iar la 10 seara se transmitea un „Radiojurnal”. Bineînțeles, la fel ca în presa tipărită, totul era formulat, redactat și filtrat prin rețeaua deasă de control a autorităților. Dar chiar așa, aveam totuși o fereastră deschisă spre lume. Îmi amintesc cum pe la început de Martie 1953 am fost martor al zilelor de doliu general atunci când Stalin, „Soarele popoarelor” și-a dat (în sfârșit) obștescul sfârșit. Difuzorul acasă, ca și toate megafoanele presărate pe stâlpi în centrul orașului, au transmis zile în șir muzică funebă și discursuri interminabile despre marele conducător... Și la fel, dar în împrejurări sărbătorești de 1 Mai sau 23 August, difuzoarele și megafoanele trâmbițau marșuri solemne sau vesele și relatări ale crainicilor, pe viu, de la marea demonstrație a oamenilor muncii...

Se spune (și de fapt e lucru verificat) că anumite momente dramatice, ne rămân întipărite în amintire pentru totdeauna. Fiecare din noi știe exact unde se afla și ce făcea când a aflat ceva dramatic, de exemplu prima aterizare a omului pe lună. Iar un eveniment de amploarea emoțională a asasinatului lui Kennedy a marcat memoria comună a generațiilor adulte pentru decade. În seara de vineri, 22 noiembrie 1963, așteptam citind ca difuzorul, ce funcționa ca de obicei pe fundal, să transmită „Radiojurnalul” de ora 10. Deși știrea despre cele petrecute cam cu o oră înainte la Dallas se afla deja cu siguranță în redacții, radio București si-a continuat programul obișnuit până la începerea jurnalului. Dar chiar cu întârziere, știrea m-a înlemnit și m-a lăsat cu o senzație de neliniște, de nesiguranță pentru viitor (aveam 17 ani) care mi-e încă vie în toate fibrele sufletului.

Peste exact cinci luni, într-o sâmbătă seara de sfârșit de aprilie, am părăsit Suceava pentru totdeauna. Locuința de pe Cetății nr. 6, în așteptarea noilor locatari, fusese deja golită de mobile. Doar în camera din mijloc, fosta mea cameră, lângă sobă, pe aceeași măsuță șubredă cu trei picioare, rămăsese credinciosul prieten ce mi-a însoțit și îmbogățit anii copilăriei și ai adolescenței, bătrânul nostru Difuzor. Fie-i memoria binecuvântată!



The loudspeaker





Delicii sucevene

Beni Budic

Să tot fi avut vreo cinci ani, când într-o dimineață însorită de început de vară, mama m-a luat la iarmarocul ce se formase în curtea și în împrejurimile bisericii Sfântul Ioan cel Nou. Cu anii, aveam să învăț că hramul ținut la Suceava pe 24 iunie aducea în oraș mii de săteni din împrejurimi ca și mulțime de credincioși de pe alte meleaguri ce se adunau să ia parte la procesiune, la slujbe și la toată animația ce cuprindea orașul. În curtea mănăstirii și pe străzile din apropiere forfoteau vânzători ambulanți de multe și mărunte, care cu o tarabă improvizată, care cu un preș și bocceluțe întinse pe jos, care pășind printre oameni, cu o tăblie atârnată de umeri pe care își expunea marfa. Cumpărătorii erau de tot felul și de toate vârstele, țărani și orășeni, băbuțe și fete mândre, moșnegi, flăcăi, băieți și copii. Gospodinele, mama printre ele, căutau și cumpăneau mosorele de ață, șervețele brodate, mari și mici, ce împodobeau bucătăriile cu imagini idilice și naive din viața de familie, broboade colorate, ștergare de in, linguri de lemn, și cine știe câte altele, multe, colorate, ispititoare...De la înălțimea celor 5 ani ai mei nu știu dacă le-am văzut atunci chiar pe toate sau poate le-am completat cu imagini mai târzii sau cu povestiri ale altora dar ce-mi amintesc cu certitudine sunt jucăriile și dulciurile - primele mele delicii sucevene.

Printre toate cele vândute la târgul din jurul mănăstirii, ispitele și capcanele pentru copiii de toate vârstele erau sub forma a felurite acadele și bomboane colorate, dulci și lipicioase. Acadelele, ca niște bețișoare răsucite, alb cu roșu, erau marea atracție deoarece le puteam linge și expune ca un fel de țigări. La drept vorbind, gustul era departe de "deliciu", ca un fel de făină dulce din care rămâneau până la urmă doar degete și obraji lipicioși. Bomboanele erau sub forma unor cocoșei roșii, pe o codiță de lemn, sticloși și bineînțeles, dulci. Da, și era și halvița ce-mi încliea gura de la prima mușcătură. Reveneam acasă fericit, cu vreo jucărie, sau chiar mai mult de una, ce avea să mă însoțească peste vară. Printre minunățiile expuse de ambulanți, era versiunea anilor 50 al "yo-io"ului modern: o mingiucă din rumeguș ambalată în câteva straturi de hârtie creponată, înfășurată bine-bine cu legături de ață și atârnată de un fir elastic. Și mai erau "ochelari de soare" croiți din carton, cu lentile de celofan verde, sau roșu, sau galben. Iar peste toate era "oceanul" - un caleidoscop primitiv din carton, 3 fâșii lunguiețe de oglindă și o mână de cioburi de sticlă de felurite culori. Chiar primitiv, imaginile stelare, multicolore și de o simetrie perfectă mă vrăjeau timp de săptămâni, până ce "oceanul" se dezlipea, se desfăcea și-și dezvăluia secretele.



Cam tot în aceeași perioadă, o altă sursă de delectare era ciocolata, articol destul de greu de obținut pe atunci dar care la noi ajungea regulat grație relațiilor lui tata la "Alimentara". O primeam chipurile ca premiu pentru somnul de după amiază, în zilele când mai renunțam la "Pogonici", predecesorul "Luminiței" (publicații educative pentru copii, în spiritul realismului socialist). Mama venea cu un pahar cu lapte și cam vreo treime de baton de ciocolată "Urs de Dorna" întunecată la culoare și nu grozav de gustoasă, dar totuși, ciocolată. Tabletele maromaro erau împachetate într-un ambalaj exterior din hârtie roșie (sau tot maro?) pe care era imprimat un urs imens, apoi tableta era acoperită de o foiță fină de staniol, sub care se dezvăluia același ditamai ursul, imprimat în basorelief pe toată lungimea tabletei. O zi primeam capul și picioarele anterioare, a doua zi corpul și a treia zi restul tabletei...

Câțiva ani mai târziu, locul ursului l-au luat "puișorii" pe care îi cumpăram deja singur cu 50 de bani la vreun chioșc sau la raionul de dulciuri de la "Alimentara". Era un gen de fondantă cu ciocolată și nuga, învelită într-o hârtiuță cu capetele răsucite, pe care era imprimat un puișor mic și galben. Și era gustos-gustos...

Când ieșeam mulțumit de la vreun examen (eram deja prin clasa VII-a), treceam pe la tata la magazin să-i povestesc, iar el mă cinstea cu vreo 2-3 lei cu care intram la cofetăria aflată ceva mai jos, de cealaltă parte a lui Ștefan cel Mare și mă regalam cu vreo amandină, negresă, ecler sau doboș - și un suc. Fără doar și poate, prăjiturile, chiar preparate la laboratorul TAPL, erau gustoase dar nici de departe nu le egalau pe cele ce gustasem cu câțiva ani în urmă într-o cofetărie particulară ce mai supraviețuise la Fălticeni, unde plecam uneori cu tata, în vizită la un unchi. Și tot de domeniul aproape exclusiv al cofetăriei era, la lunile de vară, înghețata ce se servea într-o cupă cu picior, de vanilie, de ciocolată sau asortată. Înghețată la cornet cumpăram vara la vreo tonetă din cele puține ce apăreau în centru, între cofetărie și grădina publică, sau la Burdujeni, la cofetăria lui Natan (de fapt fostă a lui Natan și devenită local de stat, iar Natan devenit din proprietar, salariat). Tot la capitolul înghețată îmi amintesc cum într-o duminică, a venit la noi Herman, prieten al tatei și coleg de "Alimentara", care deținea secretul preparării înghețatei. A adus cu el gheață și două lighenașe din metal, de mărimi diferite. În cel mai mare a pus gheața fărâmițată. În cel mai mic a amestecat produsele necesare învârtindu-l neconținut peste gheață. După vreun ceas de muncă grea, s-a produs o cană mare, plină de înghețată delicioasă pe care a trebuit s-o consumăm în aceeași zi, cât a mai ținut gheața...Într-una din zile, acasă la Herman, am fost martor și la secretul fabricării cornetelor de înghețată, pe care le făcea dintr-o cremă foarte diluată de aluat ce-o turna într-o matriță specială de metal, cu multe orificii, ca un fagure, încinsă pe aragaz. Cornetele rebut, ca și prisosul de aluat din jur, erau ale copiilor... O a doua ocazie când am mâncat acasă înghețată, la discreție, a fost în ziua când am fost operat de amigdale la



clinica din casa doctorului Siminel.

Tot în deliciale de vară se încadrau ”băuturile răcoritoare”. La sifonăriile din centru se pregăteau sticle cam de un sfert de litru, cu sifon și sirop de zmeură, sau brad, închise bine cu un dop-patent, din porțelan căptușit cu un inel de cauciuc. Dar atracția specială în acest domeniu era toneta de răcoritoare, plasată în lunile de vară în centru, la un colț de stradă pe lângă cofetărie. Alături de calupurile mari cu înghețată, toneta expunea cu mândrie 2-3 coloane cilindrice din sticlă, fiecare conținând un sirop de altă culoare: roșu, de zmeură, verde - de brad, gălbui - de lămâie... Vânzătorul scurgea prin robinete mici siropul în pahare spălate cam sumar și adăoga sifon dintr-un vas pântecos de aramă, care odihnea pe un așternut de gheață, lângă calupurile cu înghețată.

Erau în Suceava copilăriei mele și delicii mai prozaice, nu neapărat de domeniul dulciurilor. Cine dintre noi nu s-a delectat în vreo seară de primăvară, cu o felie de pâine neagră, cu unt, caș proaspăt și pe lângă ele un fir de usturoi verde ? Și cine putea rămâne indiferent în fața unei farfurioare de fragi cu smântână și puțin zahăr ? Uneori înnoptam la Burdujeni, la bunici. (În iarna când mama a fost la spital, la București, am petrecut acolo aproape tot anul școlar de clasa I). În serile de joi, bunica frământa o covată de aluat pentru colacii de Shabat. Aluatul, acoperit cu un ștergar, rămânea să dospească peste noapte. Dis-de-diminează bunica croia aluatul și pregătea în câteva tăvițe pâinile albe festive: 2 tăvi cu pâini împletite, un colac înalt, rotund, tot împletit și 2 pâini alcătuite fiecare din câte 3 bile rotunde de aluat. Apoi ungea pâinile cu ou bătut și presăra mac din belșug. Tăvile, stivuite în două coșuri de papură, le ducea zeida (bunicul) la brutăria surorilor Riegler de unde le aducea înapoi, către ora prânzului, cu pâinile albe de Shabat, proaspăt coapte, cu miros îmbătător. Dar încă în zori, pe când se ocupa cu aluatul, bunica pregătise o lipie din puțin aluat și o pusese la copt în ”rulă” - cuptorașul de tinichea, zidit chiar între cărămizile sobei din cameră. Când ne trezeam, vărul meu și eu, lipia mirositoare, cu câteva rânduri de mici perforații făcute cu o furculiță era deja gata, unsă cu untură de găscă, caldă și gustoasă de se topea în gură....

În categoria deliciilor sucevene de proveniență bucovineană, existau câteva porții tradiționale, cel puțin în bucătăriile evreiești, dar nu numai. Cu bună parte din acestea eram familiar încă de mic copil, de acasă sau din casa bunicilor ori a lui tanti Freida, la Burdujeni. Până în ziua de azi a rămas neelucidată întrebarea: ”Cine erau cele mai tradițional bucovinene, gospodinele din Suceava sau burdujenencele din Regat ”? Dar oricare ar fi răspunsul, mâncărurile pregătite la casa Wagner, instituție suceveană get beget bucovineană, probabil le întreceau pe toate. Adevărata faimă a casei Wagner se trăgea încă dinainte de război dar și în anii așa-numiți ai „construcției socialismului” fostul restaurant funcționa ca o mică pensiune, ce servea prânzul



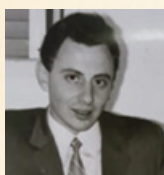
unui cerc restrâns de obișnuiți ai casei, majoritatea celibatari sau văduvi. Bineînțeles că erau și clienți ocazionali, care veneau perechi, sau vreo familie cu un copil ce doreau să se răsfete și să mai rsimtă gusturile și mirosurile de pe alte vremuri...Mica pensiune se constituia din 5-6 mese plasate în camera ce dădea la stradă a familiei Wagner, pe Stefan cel Mare, vizavi de "Cinematograful Tineretului". Pe câte îmi amintesc, mica sală de mese era cu totul lipsită de ornamente. Domnul Wagner, un om înalt, slab, între două vârste (mai mult apropiat de a doua...) era de fapt, ca și tata și mulți prieteni ai lui, gestionar la Alimentara. Gătitul era opera soției sale iar amândoi serveau și de chelneri. La prânz, magazinele erau închise așa că domnul Wagner putea ajuta în orele de vârf ale pensiunii. În vacanța de vară de după moartea mamei (absolvisem clasa a III-a), îmi petreceam unele dimineți cu vreo carte pe o bancă din grădina publică. La prânz, la închiderea magazinelor, tata mă lua din parc să luăm prânzul "la Wagner". Se serveau porții tradiționale, cu gust de bucătărie de casă. Dar ce gust!!! Sub mâinile doamnei Wagner, cele mai prozaice supe cu tăiței, sau friptura - "Braten" - de pasăre sau de vită, și mai presus de toate știțelul vienez de vițel - Karmenadel - cu pireu de cartofi și castraveți murați de casă deveneau adevărate creații culinare. Și după toate astea, mai presus de toate, urma lovitura de teatru a desertului: "Eisbombe". Nu era înghețată, nu era casată, nu era profiterol - dar era, simultan, toate acestea împreună, și mult mai mult decât suma lor. Deci nu e de mirare că gusturile și aromele ce-mi răscoleau simțurile în acea mică odaie-restaurant de pe Stefan cel Mare au rămas

Dacă am ajuns la capitolul prăjiturilor sau torturilor fine, nu am nici o îndoială că vreun maestru-cofetar vienez ar fi putut egala vreun coleg cernăuțean și că nici unul din aceștia nu s-ar fi putut măsura cu balabustele sucevene sau cu cele din Burdujeni, care chiar dacă nu știau o buche de germană erau specialiste neîntrecute în preparatul celor două torturi ce reprezentau culmea culmilor, apogeul creației culinare în domeniu. E vorba de visurile dulci ale copilăriei noastre, îmbinări de gusturi rafinate de smântână, de vanilie, de nuci măcinate, de praf de zahăr, de foițe fine - fine de aluat păzite ca lumina ochilor când se rumeneau în cuptor și mai ales apoi, nu cumva să se fărâmițeze. Cremșnit ca la Suceava n-am găsit nici la Bled, nici la Budapesta și nici la Viena. Iar „Şmetn Torte” - tortul de smântână bucovinean nu l-au cunoscut nici unul din celelalte popoare ale imperiului Habsburgic. În ultimul timp se zvonește că pe la Haifa sunt încă vreo câteva fete sucevene care mai produc aceste minuni...

Despre bunătațile ce le pregăteau mamele și bunicele noastre pentru Shabat, nenumăratele feluri de prăjituri uscate sau cu creme de tot felul ce se preparau la sărbătoarea de "purim", despre checurile cu miere al sărbătorilor de toamnă, despre toate acestea și încă multe altele, se poate scrie un tratat. Poate cândva...



Ultima mea perioadă la Suceava, licean deja, prin '63-'64, a fost marcată de noi semne de progres pe plan culinar ale urbei noastre. Încă în vară apăruseră în centru vânzători de înghețată la pachetel, foarte asemănătoare cu înghețata pe băț pe care o văzusem la București. Dar din păcate, pachetelul sucevean era fără băț așa că înghețata ni se cam topea printre degete....Apoi, lângă stația de autobuz, vizavi de Sfântul Dumitru s-a deschis o plăcintărie. Plăcintele cu brânză sau cu carne, tăiate de vânzător cu un mic toporaș și servite într-o foiță de pergament erau un fel de ambasadori ai balcanismului în inima Sucevei din ce în ce mai puțin bucovineană. Iar pe Karl Marx se deschisese o gogoșărie cu mașină automată ce arunca covrigei de aluat în cazanul cu ulei încins. Vânzătorul pescuia apoi gogoășele cu un fel de frigăruie de metal, le depunea pe tejghea, presăra zahăr pudră și oferea gogoășa caldă în schimbul unui leu. Gogoășa nu era Eisbombe, dar era caldă, dulce și destul de gustoasă. Și era un fel de pregătire ce ar fi trebuit să mă deprindă cu gusturile levantine ce mă așteptau.



Casa Bodinger

Beni Budic

Clădirea cu etaj, aflată la intersecția lui Ștefan cel Mare cu străduța ce ducea spre Piața Birjelor (nume ce l-am găsit menționat într-un plan vechi al orașului) avea, se poate spune, o poziție strategică. Se afla chiar la începutul centrului, cam de unde porneau promenadele noastre în serile de vară. Era la doi pași de intrarea în curtea școlii (fostul Liceu de fete), era vizavi de magazinul central Alimentara, era aproape de parc, și - cel mai important - era pe traseul zilnic al multor suceveni din cam toate părțile orașului. La parter, spre Ștefan cel Mare (așa se numea strada prin anii 60 deja, după ce fusese Strada Ferdinand și apoi Republicii), se afla farmacia centrală, una din cele două ale orașului, iar după colț, pe străduța îngustă și veșnic umbrită, funcționa una din cele două sifonării din oraș. Puțin după sifonărie era gardul curții de-a lungul căreia, sus la etaj, se întindea un cerdac de lemn șubred. Cerdacul ducea spre aripa clădirii unde, în „anii buni” ai Bucovinei habsburgice, erau camerele servitorilor. În dreapta curții se deschidea scara ce ducea la etaj, către locuința familiei Bodinger.

În locuința asta am intrat de nenumărate ori, începând din anii copilăriei, venind acolo din când în când cu mama, cu tanti Freida și cu Iani, să ni se coase costume noi, de sărbători, și până în anii de liceu, când ajungeam acolo aproape zilnic, cu grupul de prieteni și prietene ale Marei. Casa Bodinger devenise atunci o adevărată bază a grupului, eram primiți cu brațele deschise, ne simțeam în largul nostru și petreceam acolo ore în șir.



Ușile duble, cu oblon la exterior și cu geamuri la cele ce dădeau spre locuință, duceau către bucătăria imensă. Chiar de pe atunci gătitul se făcea deja pe aragaz, iar soba mare, boierească și cu plita din fontă grea era aprinsă doar la ocazii speciale. În primii ani îmi amintesc că într-un colț al bucătăriei se afla și o masă de laborator unde Adi, pe-atunci licean, se ocupa cu cine știe ce experiențe de chimie. Adi și Mara erau cei doi copii ai familiei. A mai fost un frățior între ei, născut în Transnistria, dar acesta nu a supraviețuit deportării. Mara, ca toți cei din promoția noastră, era născută după război, după reîntoarcerea familiei la Suceava. Adi era cam cu vreo 10 ani mai în vârstă.

Din bucătărie, o ușă cu canaturi și geamuri de sticlă ducea spre camera următoare, la fel de mare ca prima, cameră ce servea de salon și dormitor al părinților. Principalele piese de mobilier erau două paturi/canapea gen „studio”, foarte la modă pe atunci, un șifonier de dimensiuni impresionante și măsuța de toaletă. În camera asta, în fața oglinzii mari a toaletei, aveau loc ședințele de probă ale clientelor. A treia cameră era la fel de mare ca primele două, dar spre deosebire de ele era mult mai luminoasă. Două geamuri mari și ușa ce dădea spre balcon inundau camera cu lumina ce intra dinspre stradă. Aici funcționa atelierul ce adusese faima casei Bodinger, recunoscută de ani drept cea mai elegantă și stilată croitorie de damă și îndeosebi de copii, a orașului. Doamna Bodinger, în acei ani deja o femeie între două vârste, era de statură mijlocie, cu ten mai mult întunecat și păr negru, ondulat, ce începuse a încărungi. Foarte activă, dirija, într-o limbă română cam sumară, o echipă de fete ucenice care forfoteau ca niște furnici harnice printre mașinile de cusut din cameră. Probabil că aproape toate erau venite de prin satele din jurul orașului, să învețe meserie de la o maestră de prim rang care le primea doar pe cele mai talentate. Fetele erau găzduite acolo cu casă și masă, iar din câte am aflat mai târziu, când venea vremea să părăsească ucenicia, ieșeau din casa Bodinger cu un cuțăr plin de zestre.

Din atelier, o ușă fără geam dădea spre dreapta, către camera Marei, unde în anii de liceu ne întâlneam cu toții de câteva ori pe săptămână. Camera era de fapt a lui Adi, dar el era mai mult la Iași, la facultate. Și această cameră avea acces la balcon, iar ușa și geamul ce dădeau spre exterior, către Ștefan cel Mare, o umpleau de lumină.

Dar centrul de activitate, cel ce transformase locuința familiei în Casa Bodinger, era atelierul de croitorie. Aici ajungea anual aproape orice copil „de casă bună” din oraș, să i se coase hăinuțe noi. Modelele, din câte îmi amintesc eu, erau de inspirație germană/austriacă, pe scurt, bucovineană. Pentru băieți erau două modele clasice: costumaș de marinar și costumaș vânătoresc. Marinarii purtau pantalonași bleumarin (lungi sau scurți, pentru orice sezon...) cu manșetă și o bluză de aceeași culoare, fără nasturi, care se îmbrăca „peste cap”. Dar piesa de



forță a costumașului era gulerul mare, marinăresc, ce se răsfrângea pe umeri și la spate. Pe piept, același guler se termina cu o cravată scurtă, marinărească. Atât gulerul, cât și cravata erau ornate cu margini de panglică albă. Pentru fete, costumul era bazat pe aceleași principii, doar că pantalonașii erau înlocuiți cu o fustiță plisată. Costumul vânătorec consta din pantaloni (scurți sau lungi) de culoare verde, cu bretele tiroleze. Partea superioară consta dintr-o hăinuță de culoare gri, cu guler mic verde și revere rotunjite, tivite cu fâșie subțire de saten. Hăinuța avea și un buzunăraș pe care era aplicată o frunză de stejar din postav tivită cu un ornament alb. Iar toată această minunăție era încoronată cu o pălărioară verde în care era înfiptă o pană mândră de cocoș. Bineînțeles că vânătorul nu pornea la drum fără pușcă...

In afara acestor câteva exemple, de sub mâinile doamnei Bodinger și a ucenicilor sale ieșeau nenumărate modele de rochițe, rochii elegante sau de zi, sacouri și pardesiuri, costume „taior” și cine știe câte alte creații. Chiar dacă inspirația provenea din vreun jurnal de modă, imaginația, creativitatea, talentul, perfecționismul și simțul estetic al doamnei Bodinger o transformau de fapt într-o artistă a profesiei, demnă de marile capitale europene, dar naufragiată la Suceava, spre fericirea clientelei locale...

Povestea noastră începe de fapt cu câțiva zeci de ani în urma celor relatate mai sus și la vreo 200 de km la apus de Suceava. Prundu Bârgăului era deja la începutul secolului trecut o comună destul de mare în județul Bistrița-Năsăud. Așezarea se afla „pe-o gură de rai”, într-o vale la poalele munților Bârgăului, unde în zilele senine se puteau vedea culmile munților Rodnei și în apropierea căreia își începe cursul Bistrița Ardeleană. La vreo 20 de km spre apus se afla târgul Bistrița și la vreo 80 de km spre răsărit, calea ferată construită de austrieci în anii războiului, ducea la Vatra Dornei și de-acolo spre orașele Bucovinei. Familia Marian-Eger era una din multele familii de evrei din localitate, iar comunitatea evreiască din Prundu Bârgăului era una din sutele de comunități evreiești din satele, orașelele și orașele Transilvaniei. Tatăl era probabil om învățat, purta haine negre tradiționale și concetățenii i se adresau cu titlul de „rabi”, chiar dacă nu absolvise vreun seminar rabinic. Familia era oarecum înstărită și posedau chiar o bucată de pădure. După obiceiul vremii, membrii familiei - ca majoritatea coreligionarilor lor - erau evrei ortodocși, ce respectau toate prescripțiile învățăturilor sfinte. Dar lucrurile aveau să se schimbe. Roza era al treilea din cei șapte copii ai familiei. Se pare că încă din anii copilăriei dovedea aplicație pentru croitorie. Fapt este că deja pe la 11 ani, într-o zi când părinții erau plecați, a hotărât că unul din frățiorii mai mici are urgentă nevoie de pantaloni noi. A găsit așadar o rochie mai potrivită a mamei, din care a croit și cusut o pereche minunată de pantaloni pentru frățior. Rezultatul a fost de înalt nivel și talentul fetei a fost recunoscut incontestabil, iar rochia



sacrificată i-a fost iertată. Așa se face că după ce a mai crescut puțin, tânăra Roza a fost trimisă la Sighet, unde a intrat ucenică la o croitoreasă vestită. Când s-a reîntors după câțiva ani era deja croitoreasă cu destulă experiență și mai cu seamă, cu mult talent și simț estetic. În scurt timp si-a format o clientelă și avea de lucru până peste cap. Ca să le dovedească pe toate, a fost prima fată (evreică!) din localitate care cutreiera satul cu bicicleta, ducând probele pe la cliente. Timpul zbura și Roza trecuse deja de 20 de ani, dar cufundată neconținut în lucru (care cu siguranță o captiva, chiar fără legătură cu câștigul frumos ce-l aducea familiei) nici nu se gândea la măritiș. Frații mai mari plecaseră deja de acasă. Unul dintre ei, Israel, a fugit de la „yeshiva” (școala superioară religioasă) din Satu Mare, și-a tăiat perciunii și a ajuns la Budapesta unde a aderat la cercuri comuniste. Probabil că asta i-a salvat viața. În anii războiului a fost deținut într-un lagăr de comuniști, pe când evreii Ungariei au fost transportați în lagărele de exterminare din Polonia, de unde aproape nimeni nu a revenit. În lagăr, Israel - Istvan Marian l-a cunoscut pe Ianoș Kadar, viitor conducător al Ungariei și avea, după ani, să intre în nomenclatura Ungariei comuniste. O perioadă avea să fie chiar ambasador al Ungariei la București.

Mama, slăbită de multele nașteri, era o femeie suferindă. Pentru a facilita tratamentele la medici vestiți din Cernăuți, tatăl a decis ca familia să se mute la Suceava, mai aproape de capitala Bucovinei. Și așa se face că pe la începutul anilor '30, familia Marian-Eger se găsește stabilită într-o casă de pe strada Mirăușilor, colț cu Luca Arbore.

La Suceava, oraș mare, clientela Rozei a crescut considerabil. Și aici, lucra din zori și până în noapte și alerga pe la cliente și furnizori călare pe credincioasa ei bicicletă. Si tot aici, la pompa de apă de la colțul străzii Mirăușilor, „la izvor”, avea să-l întâlnească pe Emanuel Bodinger.

Familia Bodinger locuia acolo de ani de zile într-o casă aflată chiar vizavi de cea a familiei Marian. Tatăl murise încă din timpul războiului, în 1915, pe când avea doar 35 de ani și lăsase grija celor nouă copii - o fată și opt băieți - pe umerii soției. Ca să facă față situației, văduva Reizel Bodinger a acceptat orice muncă. Ani de zile, în prima parte a săptămânii, casa și curtea deveneau spălătorie de rufe unde roboteau mama și parte din copii. Joia și vinerea activitatea trecea la bucătărie, unde se pregăteau bunătățile de Shabat pentru clienții înstăriți, ce învățaseră să aprecieze talentele culinare ale vrednicei femei. Vineri, spre orele prânzului, oalele și borcanele cu supă, cu răcitură de crap, cu țimes dulce de morcovi cu stafide, sau tăvile de Kugel de fidea și ulcioare pline ochi cu compot de prune uscate, erau încărcate în căruță, acoperite bine cu pături de postav subțire, curat, și duse de văduvă pe la casele clienților ei. Pe măsură ce treceau anii, copiii părăseau casa. Prima a fost Fanny, ce a plecat la Cernăuți la școala de surori medicale. După absolvire, Fanny avea să revină la Suceava unde s-a căsătorit, devenind „doamna Nossig”.



Zeci de ani a fost legendara moașă a copiilor suceveni și nu mai puțin, una din figurile dominante ale peisajului uman al orașului. Alți doi frați au ajuns la Iași, un frate s-a stabilit la Cernăuți și un altul a ajuns până în Polonia. Emanuel era mezinul familiei și încă din copilărie a fost cel ce i-a scos mamei mulți peri albi... Cam mic de statură, cu păr cârlionțat, tot timpul în mișcare, devenise un rebel chiar de la o vârstă fragedă. Pe la 13 ani a urcat, fără bilet și fără știrea cuiva din familie, într-un tren ce l-a dus la București și de-acolo spre Constanța. A reușit chiar să se îmbarce clandestin pe un vapor și visa să cutureiere mările, departe de toți cei pe care voia să se răzbune. Dar, cumva, visurile s-au spulberat iar călătorul clandestin a fost expedit la adresa pe care a indicat-o: cea a fraților săi de la Iași. Aceștia l-au adus înapoi acasă, la Suceava, unde mama, ca toate mamele, l-a iertat. Când a întâlnit-o pe Roza avea deja vreo 23-24 de ani și învățase meseria de „zugrav artistic” pe care o practica, se pare, cu destul succes. Roza era cu vreo trei ani mai în vârstă și tinerii s-au plăcut de la prima privire. Singurul căruia nu prea i-a plăcut partida a fost tatăl Rozei. Dar n-a avut încotro. Roza amenința că dacă nu o mărită cu Emanuel, devine sionistă și pleacă în Palestina. Chiar s-a alăturat unei tabere sioniste „de pregătire” iar acolo, la Rădăuți, a făcut o congestie pulmonară care aproape că a costat-o viața. Cel ce a contribuit mai mult ca oricare altul la însănătoșirea Rozei a fost Emanuel... Și, după această vindecare miraculoasă, tatăl a acceptat căsătoria lor.

Roza și Emanuel Bodinger s-au căsătorit pe 24 martie 1936. Tânăra pereche s-a stabilit într-o locuință de două camere închiriată de la familia Strominger. Locuința se afla cam la capătul străzii Armașului (denumită și „Ulița Evreiască”, devenită apoi „Karl Marx”). Acolo, se poate spune, a luat ființă „Casa Bodinger” - croitorie de damă și copii, de înaltă calitate ce avea să-și facă renumele și faima în oraș pentru următorii 30 de ani. Adi s-a născut exact la nouă luni după nunta părinților, pe 24 decembrie 1936. Au urmat câțiva ani de prosperitate pentru tânăra familie, îndeosebi datorită activității atelierului de croitorie ce se mărea tot timpul. Roza a început să ia la lucru fete din împrejurimi, ca să facă față comenzilor. Adi creștea în belșug, răsfățat de mamă și de ucenicele din atelier. Toate ar fi părut bune, dar în oraș, în țară, începuseră a bate vânturi îngrijorătoare. Iar în octombrie 1941, dintr-o dată, se părea că viața s-a terminat. În decurs de două-trei zile, toți evreii Sucevei - și mica familie Bodinger printre ei - au fost izgoniți din casele lor, urcați în trenuri de vite și duși, cu puținele boccele care li s-au îngăduit, peste Prut, la Ataki, pe malul Nistrului. Fluviul l-au traversat noaptea, pe plute în care soldații i-au îngrămădit cu brutalitate. Mulți si-au găsit moartea în acea noapte, în apele aproape înghețate ale Nistrului. Bodingerii au fost printre cei norocoși, ce-au ajuns înfricoșați, înghețați, disperați - dar în viață, la Mogilev.

Astfel a început oroarea de aproape trei ani a Transnistriei, cu frigul necruțător, cu foamea cruntă,



prezentă veșnic, cu tifosul ce secera oamenii. De la Mogilev, în iarna groaznică a lui 41/42, au ajuns la Șargorod, unde au găsit un fel de adăpost într-o pivniță a unor localnici, spațiu pe care l-au împărțit cu încă vreo 30 de persoane din ambele familii. Ei trei au supraviețuit, dar nu și pruncul pe care Roza îl purta în pântec când au fost izgoniți din Suceava. Si nu au supraviețuit nici majoritatea membrilor celor două familii, a Rozei și a lui Emanuel. După război, dintre cei apropiați ai acestuia rămăseseră doar sora, Fanny Nossig, și Iosef, unul din cei doi frați de la Iași. Celălalt fusese printre miile de evrei, victime ale pogromului din iunie 1941. Părinții și un frate tânăr al Rozei s-au pierdut și ei în Transnistria.

În vara lui 1944 Emanuel, Roza și fiul lor s-au reîntors la Suceava. Războiul schimbase orașul, schimbase oamenii. Apoi s-a schimbat și regimul. Tot ce lăsaseră în urmă dispăruse. Viața trebuia luată de la început. În primii câțiva ani au locuit într-un apartament minuscul, unul din cele aproape 30 dintr-o fostă fabrică de textile. Era o clădire de două etaje și o curte interioară mare, nu departe de biserica Armenească. Locuințele erau înșirate de-a lungul celor două etaje cu cerdac deschis, ca niște chilii ale unei mănăstiri. Iar în această clădire, pe care Adi o numea „cazarmă”, și-au găsit adăpost multe familii reîntoarse din Transnistria. Și familia Nossig a locuit acolo. Tot în „cazarmă” a reînceput, încetul cu încetul, activitatea atelierului de croitorie și tot acolo avea să se nască, după vreo doi ani, Mara. Primii ani după război au fost ani grei de



secetă, de lipsuri, de tulburări politice. Spre începutul anilor '50, însă, lucrurile au început să se normalizeze oarecum. Comenzile în atelier au reînceput să curgă. Se născuse generația de după război pe care părinții erau gata s-o răsfețe cu orice preț, așa că mașinile de cusut lucrau din plin.

Emanuel, care încă înainte de război era atras de ideologia comunistă, s-a înscris în partid. Carnetul roșu i-a deschis drumul către un serviciu destul de bun. A devenit director la Trustul local de energie - adică era responsabil cu aprovizionarea cu lemne de încălzit a orașului. (Situția asta avea să dureze doar câțiva ani. Când în 1958 a depus cerere de emigrare cu familia în Israel, Emanuel a fost nevoit să renunțe la carnetul roșu, la serviciul comod și a fost coborât la „muncă de jos”). Prin 1951 s-a ivit posibilitatea ca familia să se mute în locuința spațioasă de pe Ștefan cel Mare. Mutatul l-a costat pe Adi pierderea colecției de cactuși, care au înghețat toți. Dar avea să câștige o cameră minunată, cu acces la balcon și vedere la stradă, ce mai târziu, în anii lui de facultate, avea să devină a Marei.

În acei ani se poate spune că s-a consolidat faima „Casei Bodinger”, care a devenit o adevărată instituție suceveană. Croitorie de copii, croitorie stilată de damă, ca și specializarea în trusouri de zestre, inclusiv colecții de lenjerie de pat (foarte cerute de familiile ce se pregăteau de plecare în Israel), toate acestea au dus la angajarea în mica întreprindere a 12-13 ucenice și cusătorese. Ca atare, Roza Bodinger a fost declarată de autorități „burgheză înstărită”. Dar se pare că datorită clientelei alese, printre care soțiile multor șefi din toate organele și de toate rangurile, „Casa Bodinger” a putut să-și continue nestingherită activitatea. Și cine știe dacă nu cumva tot vreuna din acele clientele, ce nu vroia să-și piardă croitoreasa neîntrecută, va fi intervenit pentru a întârzia cu câțiva ani aprobarea oficială a plecării familiei Bodinger în Israel...

Pe Mara am cunoscut-o în clasa a IVa, când s-a trecut la învățământul mixt. Pe atunci era deja prietenă cu aproape toate fetele sucevene de vârsta ei, care ajungeau alături de mamele lor la vestitul atelier de croitorie. Prietenia dintre noi s-a legat mai mult în anii de liceu, când s-a format grupul nostru care, parțial, a rezistat până acum. Eram cinci: trei fete (Mara, Mira și Betti) și doi băieți (Mihai Drișcu și eu). Doamna Bodinger, deși veșnic ocupată, ne primea cu brațele deschise. Cu timpul deveniserăm de-a dreptul obișnuși ai casei și petreceam acolo ore în șir, în discuții și jocuri nevinovate. Cu excepția lui Mihai, prietenul meu cel mai apropiat, care din 1989 - când a fost omorât într-un inexplicabil „accident de circulație” - odihnește în pământul Sucevei, toți ne aflăm deja de mai bine de jumătate de veac în Israel.

Acum 2-3 ani, Mara mi-a dăruit o reproducere a unui tablou pe care-l pictase recent, pornind de la o fotografie luată din balconul de pe Ștefan cel Mare 15. Revăd în el, ca atunci, când ne



înghesuiam toți pe balconul cam șubred, clădirile Alimentarei centrale, magazinul de textile, chioșcul de ziare, magazinul Sport-Foto-Muzică din capătul străzii și însăși strada, cu o mașină singuratică. Parfum sucevean al tinereții. Fiori de amintiri...

Când s-a reîntors de la facultate, Adi era deja logodit cu Țili (Ina), pe care o cunoscuse la Iași. Era o fată subțirică, firavă, cu trăsături frumoase și cu o față de liceană. Terminase Facultatea de Litere și fusese repartizată ca profesoară de română la Suceava. Deși mai în vârstă decât noi cu câțiva ani, putea fi luată cu ușurință ca membră a grupului nostru. Și într-adevăr, nu o dată, Țili, ce locuia în casă, participa în mod activ la întâlnirile noastre.

Țili și Adi s-au căsătorit în seara de 31 decembrie 1962. Nunta - revelion s-a făcut chiar în cele trei camere mari ale "Casei Bodinger". Printre invitați, majoritatea prieteni ai mirilor, erau cele mai frumoase tinere din oraș, și eram și noi, prietenii Marei. Pentru mine, la 16 ani, elev într-a X-a, era de fapt primul adevărat revelion. Când am fost invitat la dans de Mauzi Kerner, soția unui prieten al lui Adi și una din frumusețile orașului, m-am topit cu totul, mai ales când ea mi-a adresat câteva laude... Pe la 3 sau 4 dimineața am ieșit pe strada înzăpezită a centrului. Chiar dacă auzeam clar scârțâitul zăpezii sub tălpile subțiri ale pantofilor, parcă pluteam. Și nu, nu exagerasem de loc cu băutura. Atunci nu eram conștient că mă aflu, în spațiu și în timp, pe o culme a trăirilor mele în universul sucevean. Un fel de galaxie cu nucleul la Casa Bodinger.

Revelionul 62/63 a fost ultimul în vechea casă de pe Stefan cel Mare 15. În acel an, când eu aveam să petrec „ultima vară la Suceava”, o parte din centrul habsburgic al orașului a fost demolată. Familia Bodinger s-au mutat într-o locuință mai modernă, dar mult mai mică, lângă sinagoga „Gah”. În mod firesc, activitatea croitoriei s-a micșorat. În acea nouă Casă Bodinger s-a mutat și sediul micului nostru grup. Acolo am sărbătorit între noi, cei câțiva prieteni, revelionul 63/64.

Peste câteva luni eu aveam să plec.

În vară, când mai toți erau prinși cu bacalaureatul și admiterile, știu că cei patru prieteni ai mei se întâlneau la Mara și citeau scrisorile mele din Israel. În anul următor, familia Bodinger a primit în sfârșit aprobarea de plecare. În noua ei țară, Roza Bodinger avea să practice meseria care a consacrat-o încă mulți ani, dar ceea ce a fost „Casa Bodinger” a rămas doar în amintirile noastre



Beni and Mara



sucevene. Talentata croitoreasă a murit la 95 de ani, în 2002, lucidă, înconjurată de familie, la 13 ani după dispariția lui Emanuel. Adi ne-a părăsit acum câteva luni. Memoriei lor vreau să dedic acest text pe care îl consider și o expresie a prieteniei de o viață cu Mara și a respectului pe care-l port lui Țili - Ina, singurele ce mai poartă în suflet amintiri din „Casa Bodinger”.



Între lampa cu gaz și baia de shvitz

Beni Budic

Suceava noastră a avut norocul de a fi al doilea oraș ca mărime și importanță al provinciei austriece care a fost Bucovina până acum un secol. Ca atare, a fost printre primele orașe electrificate ale României și a avut parte de rețele de aprovizionare cu apă și canalizare. Vechea uzină electrică a fost data în folosință prin 1908 și, în scurt timp, străzile din centrul orașului au fost iluminate electric. În 1912 a început să funcționeze „uzina de apă” ce filtra și pompa apa râului Suceava către turnul de apă de pe dealul Zamca, de unde apa cobora prin țevi către oraș. Cronicarii orașului atribuie meritele acestor realizări lui Franz Des Loges, care a fost primarul Sucevei aproape un sfert de veac, până la 1914. Dar, așa cum e în viață, timpul nemilos le schimbă și le macină pe toate.

In Suceava copilăriei mele, prin anii `50, ambele clădiri - cea a uzinei electrice și cea a uzinei de apă - străjuiau încă intrările de nord și de sud spre oraș, ambele clădiri în stilul industrial de la începutul veacului trecut, cu o hală centrală mare, pentru pompe și motoare, cu geamuri mari de sticlă, inundând interiorul cu lumină și cu intrări enorme, aproape pe întreaga înălțime a fațadelor. Pe lângă clădirea uzinei aveam să trec adeseori în drum spre leagănele instalate la pădurice. Dar pe atunci deja, vechile motoare ce trebuiau să asigure alimentarea cu electricitate a orașului, erau deja uzate, obosite și aveau, se pare, nevoie de multe pauze de odihnă...Iar aceste pauze erau traduse în limbaj tehnic-oficial: „pană de curent”.

Nu e sucevean al acelor ani care să nu-și amintească de serile lungi de iarnă, când „penele” se țineau lanț, iar becurile - și așa destul de chioare - intrau deodată într-un pâlpâit prevestitor de rele, până se stingeau cu totul. Nu știu de ce, dar problemele se iveau de obicei iarna. Serile târzii de vară mi le amintesc (oare chiar așa o fi fost ?) mai pline de lumina becurilor ce licăreau voioase în acele luni ale vacanței. Dar iarna, iarna cu noaptea ce cădea pe la 4-5 după amiază, era anotimpul întunericului. Au fost ierni când uzina electrică ieșea din funcțiune timp de săptămâni și chiar luni de zile. Lipsă de piese de schimb? Așa că eram nevoiți să trăim, ca în secolul XIX, la lumina lămpilor cu petrol.



În jurul acestora se formase un adevărat ritual de îngrijire și întreținere. Lampa de petrol „simplă” era de fapt un gen de recipient din sticlă, un mic rezervor transparent, ca un borcan, ce se umplea cu prețiosul și cam mirositorul combustibil cunoscut mai ales sub denumirea populară de „gaz” sau chiar „gaz de ars”. Centrul rezervorului era gătit, ca o talie feminină, pe care era bine strânsă o fâșie de tablă, pe care era montată o tijă dintr-un fir solid de sârmă, modelat în așa fel încât ca să suporte greutatea întregii instalații, când lampa era atârnată de vreun cui bătut în perete. Pe această tijă era uneori montată o oglindă rotundă, strânsă în ramă de metal, al cărei rost era să reflecte și să concentreze lumina lămpii. Oricum, tija din sârmă servea și pentru a ține lampa dacă trebuia mutată din loc în loc. Gura mai îngustă din partea superioară a vasului pântecos era prevăzută cu un ghivent pe care se înșuruba mecanismul fitilului. O!! calitatea acestui mecanism, calitatea fitilului de bumbac și nu mai puțin, gradul de puritate al petrolului, erau seria de parametri ce determinau soarta lămpii și a proprietarilor săi: va lumina, sau va afuma și umple camera cu miros de petrol ars. Sau, cu alte cuvinte, „va arde gazul de pomană”. Fitilul de bumbac alb, lat de 2-3 cm., a cărui coadă era scufundată în petrolul din rezervor, era controlat de un buton ce ne permitea să stabilim cât de înaltă va fi flăcăriua. În plus, trebuia, cu mare grijă, să fie tăiată cu foarfeca acea porțiune a fitilului ce era deja arsă și înnegrită. Operațiunea era foarte importantă și trebuia mână sigură, de chirurg, pentru ca fitilul să rămână absolut drept..

Dar principala, cea mai importantă etapă în procedeul zilnic de întreținere, era curățatul abajurului, „sticla de lampă”. Aceasta era de fapt elementul cel mai important, cel mai sensibil, ce amintea forma unei viori, sau mai curând a unei perfecte siluete feminine. Partea de jos se potrivea și intra perfect în marginea, ca o buză răsfrântă, a mecanismului metalic ce ținea fitilul. Urma partea mai groasă, mai voluptoasă, care închidea în centrul său flăcăriua luminoasă a fitilului. Iar partea superioară, zveltă și alungită ca un grațios gât de lebedă, se deschidea către lumea exterioară. Pe acolo urcau spre înălțimi, în cazurile fericite, curenți de aer cald, chiar fierbinte, sau eventual fumul, după ce spoise cu funingine neagră interiorul sticlei de lampă. Trebuie menționat că acest abajur era foarte fragil, dintr-o sticlă subțire-subțire. Era suficientă cea mai ușoară lovitură, sau vreo picătură de apă rătăcită pe sticla încinsă, că imediat „crăpa”, sau chiar se spărgea în cioburi. Pe scurt, a curăța interiorul sticlei afumate cu foi vechi de ziar, fără a-i dăuna, cerea o îndemânare și o atenție deosebite. Dar într-un fel sau altul, către orele după amiezii, cele două sau trei lămpi din casă erau pregătite pentru încă o seară de „pană de curent”.

În unele case văzusem și lămpi de iluminat cu petrol mai elegante, al căror rezervor era dintr-o sticlă lăptoasă, ca un fel de porțelan, fiind plasat pe un suport zvelt, din același material. Lampa



de acest gen putea fi dusă ținând-o de acel picior-suport prelungit. În rest, se pare că și acele lămpi mai boierești sufereau de aceleași probleme ca și lămpile noastre simple. Prin filme de epocă, mai văzuserăm cum erau luminate locuințele burghezilor mai înstăriți, prin secolul XIX, cu ditamai lampa de petrol, cu abajur mare, atârnată de plafon deasupra meselor de sufragerie. Dar în Suceava copilăriei mele n-am mai întâlnit ceva similar. La urma urmelor, eram deja jumătate de veac după electrificarea orașului și inventarea penelor de curent...

Lampa cu petrol și abajur de sticlă, mai mult sau mai puțin afumat, care dădea o lumină gălbuie, cu prezență cam minoră, era cel mult soluția luminării interioarelor casnice. Dar pentru localuri publice, cum erau magazinele, cofetăriile sau restaurantele, unde spațiul era considerabil mai mare, sărmanul obiect era cu totul neputincios. Aici intervenea o invenție mai modernă: lămpile de benzină cu presiune, „Petromax”. Mai mare decât sora sa de uz casnic, confecționat dintr-un metal nichelat strălucitor „Petromax”-ul putea fi atârnat de mânerul în semicerc în vreun loc mai înalt. În interiorul geamului cilindric din centrul lămpii se afla un fel de bec, dintr-o țesătură de sită metalică. Picăturile microscopice de benzină amestecată cu aer, ce izbucneau sub presiune din rezervorul lămpii, ardeau în interiorul aceluși bec, sita devenea incandescentă și lampa împrăștia de jur împrejur o lumină albă, puternică, aproape orbitoare. Oricât de eficace ar fi fost iluminatul cu această invenție, ea inspira, pe lângă admirație, și un fel de respect al fricii. Nu oricine putea să se ocupe de ele și circulau povești cu Petromax-uri care ar fi explodat pe undeva...

Cum pomenisem mai sus, străzile Sucevei au fost iluminate încă de la început de veac, de pe timpurile lui Franz Des Loges. Pe la mijlocul anilor '50, lămpi electrice mari, cu abajur de sticlă lăptoasă și cu un fel de pălărie de metal emailat, erau atârinate de mijlocul unor cabluri întinse între clădirile de pe cele două laturi ale unor străzi. În amintirile mele, străzile centrului erau luminate suficient pentru a ne plimba pe acolo seara, cu o senzație de siguranță. Asta în anii de mai fragedă copilărie, când încă nu căutam locuri mai discret luminate... Pe la începutul anilor '60 au început să apară firme de magazine sau restaurante, cu litere imense modelate din tuburi de sticlă cu neon, ce adăugau străzilor din centru o nuanță în plus de lumină albastră sau roșie. Și tot cam în acei ani, în cadrul pregătirilor dintr-un ajun de 1 Mai, când se mai repara pavajul și se zugrăveau fațadele, au fost plantați de-a lungul străzii principale stâlpi metalici înalți, de culoarea bronzului, ce purtau lămpi de neon elegante și moderne, împrăștiind deasupra străzii o lumină albăstruie, puternică.

Dar dacă revenim la anii penelor de curent, când orașul era cufundat în beznă de obicei în serile lungi de iarnă, îmi amintesc și de lanternele de buzunar și lipsa cronică de baterii în magazine. În iarna '55-'56, pe când eram în clasa a III-a, ne aflam în cursul anului de doliu de după moartea



mamei. *Obligația îndoliaților, îndeosebi a orfanilor, este ca în de cursul celor 11 luni de doliu să spună cu voce tare, în cadrul celor 3 rugăciuni zilnice la sinagogă, rugăciunea tradițională de kadish. Tata m-a scutit de efortul de a mă trezi cu noaptea în cap la rugăciunea din zori, care se ținea pe la 6 dimineața, pentru a permite credincioșilor să ajungă mai apoi la timp, la locurile de muncă. În tot acel an, tata si-a asumat obligația de a mă înlocui dimineața la kadish (conform cerințelor religioase, el, ca văduv, nu avea această obligație). Eu îmi îndeplineam datoria în cadrul celor două rugăciuni, Minha și Maariv, ce se țineau spre seară și după căderea întunericului. Așadar, zilnic mă prezentam la ora potrivită la sinagoga „Wijnitz”, pe Strada Sinagogilor, chiar vizavi de Templul cel mare. La plecare trebuia să orbescă printre nămeți sau băltoace, pe străduțele cufundate în beznă. Pe acest considerent am fost echipat cu o lanternă simplă, dreptunghiulară, din bachelită, ce răspândea, chiar în momentele sale de glorie, doar un cerc modest de lumină. Depart de recordurile visatelor lanterne vânătoarești, ce răspândeau lumina până la vreo sută de metri și cu care se mândreau băieții mari, la derdeluș, pe strada Mirăușilor. Dar și așa, lanterna mea nu funcționa regulat, din lipsă cronică de baterii. Cele dreptunghiulare „Tesla” - procurate de bunicul, cu protecție, la prăvălia lui Haim Meirovici, din Burdujeni - aveau viață scurtă. Când vedeam că li se apropie sfârșitul, le prelungeam agonia ținându-le peste noapte, după sobă. Astfel, mai storceam din ele câteva picături de energie, pe care-o verificam apropiind de limbă cele două lamele de contact. Dacă pișca serios, mai erau ceva speranțe...*

Spre deosebire de rețeaua de electricitate, apa ajungea la casele noastre, în acei ani ai primului deceniu de „construire a socialismului”, în mod oarecum regulat. De fapt e doar un fel de a înfățișa lucrurile. Spre deosebire de Suceava din anii lui Franz Des Loges, apa curentă era disponibilă doar cam o oră pe zi. Deci fiecare gospodărie trebuia să-și facă o provizie pentru cel puțin 24 de ore. Doar în puține dintre apartamentele ce avuseseră instalație de apă curentă în bucătărie sau chiar cameră de baie, apa ajungea la robinetele din interior, uscate timp de mulți ani. Apa potabilă era disponibilă la pompele de pe la colțuri de stradă sau, cum am avut noi norocul, chiar în curte, aproape de ușa noastră. De fapt nu era pompă, ci doar o cișmea mare din fontă, cu robinet, care umplea destul de repede o căldare, golită apoi în butoiul de tablă zincată, cu capac, din colțul bucătăriei. Căldare după căldare, butoiul se umplea cu o rezervă bună de apă, pentru câteva zile. Așa că, în zilele de iarnă când se mai întâmpla ca sursa de apă să înghețe (deși fusese bine-bine învelită cu o mantie călduroasă de paie), aveam apă suficientă până când specialiști improvizați dezghețau cișmeaua, turnând peste ea cazane de uncrop. Oricum însă, „penele de apă” țineau în cel mai rău caz doar câteva zile...



Noi, orășenii, eram norocoși, cu apă curentă (bine, doar oră pe zi...) lângă ușă. Dar la bunici, la Burdujeni, pe unde administrația austriacă nu ajunsese, aprovizionarea cu apă era ca în anii lui Ștefan cel Mare, de la fântâna din colțul uliții. Lichidul răcoros chiar și în arșița verii era la dispoziție 24 de ore pe zi, rece și gustos, dar două căldări cărate o sută sau două de metri trăgeau greu și trebuia să te oprești de câteva ori până acasă. Să nu mai vorbim de ghețușul lunecos ce se forma iarna împrejurul fântânii, de la apa ce se scurgea când goleam ciutura în căldare. Îmi amintesc cum, revenit la Burdujeni după aproape zece ani de la instalarea în Israel, am ținut ca primul drum să-l fac cu vărul meu cel mic, trimis să aducă pentru musafiri o căldare cu apă rece, proaspătă, pentru dulceața de cireșe amare...Nostalgie dulce-amară, ca și dulceața cu gust de paradis.

În afara proviziei de apă potabilă, fie de la rețea fie de la fântână, pe lângă fiecare burlan ce scurgea apa de pe acoperișuri, erau amplasate butoaie mari, în care se aduna apa de ploaie pentru spălat rufe și - nu mai puțin important -, pentru spălatul părului lucios și lung al doamnelor. Apa de ploaie era moale, deci fără minerale, și reacționa mult mai bine cu săpunurile de proastă calitate ce se găseau atunci prin magazine. În unele locuințe din oraș existau foste camere de baie, în care se mai aflau pe ici, pe colo, căzi mari de metal emailat, mai toate îngălbenite, folosite mai mult ca bazin de colectare...Pentru toaleta zilnică, fiecă locuință avea un lavoar, piesă de mobilă specială, pe care se afla, într-un orificiu special, ligheanul, iar lângă el cana mare, din porțelan sau simplă, de metal emailat. Lavoarul era amplasat, cel puțin la noi, în apropierea butoiului cu apă. Sub lighean, pe un raft de jos, se afla una din căldări, iar pe un răftuleț de deasupra ligheanului odihneau în bună înțelegere săpuniera, pasta de dinți Odol sau Clorodont și paharul cu periute de dinți. Iarna, când apa din butoi era rece ca gheața, foloseam la toaleta de dimineață apă caldă din ceainic, amestecată cu cea din butoi.

Pentru baia săptămânală existau câteva variante posibile. Cea mai simplă și rapidă era o spălătură cam superficială, până la brâu, peste ligheanul cu apă caldă plasat pe un scaun. Apoi urma spălatul picioarelor, în același lighean, pus pe podea. Asta se făcea în cazuri mai speciale, de mare grabă. Pentru o baie mai serioasă, unii foloseau balia de rufe, dar noi aveam o cădiță din tablă zincată cu un fel de spătar mai înalt în care putea să șadă chiar destul de comod, un adult. Baia săptămânală se făcea de obicei vineri, în cinstea sărbătorii Shabatului, după ce toate pregătirile se terminaseră, casa era curată-lună iar bucatele și prăjiturile umpleau casa de mirosuri îmbătătoare. De regulă, cazanul cu apă încălzită pe plită (mai târziu pe aragaz) era suficient pentru toată familia. Și să nu uităm vechiul săpun Cheia, cam grosolan dar eficient. După vreo câțiva ani i-au luat locul săpunuri „de toaletă”, nu întotdeauna mai bune...



Însă baia săptămânală ultimativă era la Baia Comunală. Această veche clădire a orașului s-a aflat până prin anii '60, în spatele parcului, cam vizavi de mănăstirea Sf. Ioan. Era din aceeași perioadă cu uzina electrică și uzina de apă. Acolo aveam baie de aburi, shvitz, după obiceiurile moștenite de la turci dar îmbunătățite la noi în Moldova în perioada habsburgică. Până am împlinit vreo 11-12 ani, tata mă lua cu el la shvitz în fiecare vineri pe la prânz: era una din zilele de baie rezervată bărbaților. Înarmați cu cearșafuri mari, cu care aveam să ne ștergem și cu săpun (Cheia, bineînțeles), intram prin holul unde se vindeau biletele (și sticle de bere rece pentru cei interesați) în vestiar, o sală destul de mare, cu geamuri boltite, imense dar cu sticlă semi opacă, prin care intra doar lumina. Era mobilat cu bănci de lemn lungi, cu spătar curbat, vopsite alb iar de-a lungul pereților erau dulăpașe de asemeni albe, pentru haine. Pe bănci ședeau, înveliți în cearceafuri, grupuri mici de bărbați deja înfierbântați de baia de aburi, care se răcoreau cu ceva bere. În una din aripile vestiarului se deschidea o porțiune unde se aflau câteva cabine de odihnă, cu pat, ce puteau fi închiriate cu o plată suplimentară. Uneori, când mergeam la shvitz, tata lua o cabină pentru noi doi.

Din vestiar, goi pușcă, treceam spre sala centrală a băii, înarmați fiecare cu câte o cofă de lemn, cu mâner prelungit. Cofița asta avea să ne fie de mare folos în camera de aburi. În sala cea mare se aflau, de-a lungul unuia din pereți, un șir lung de dușuri. În centru se întindeau două șiruri de bănci scunde din lemn iar de-a lungul celui alt perete lung se înșirau câteva paturi de masaj, îmbrăcate în faianță gălbuie. Acolo își desfășurau activitatea doi băieși, nu prea tineri, îmbrăcați sumar, doar cu un gen de șalvari de baie. Unul din ei era o namilă de om, înalt, lat în umeri și cu un pântec proeminent. Celălalt era mai scund, negricios și sfrijit, dar amândoi aveau mâini de oțel.

Dom' Budic, va pun pe lista de masaj? întreba cel pântecos.

Negreșit, răspundea tata. Ne vedem în vestiar la ieșire, am pregătit deja banii.

Până să ne vină rândul, ne învârteam prin sală, de la un duș la altul, ne săpuneam bine, ne clăteam, iar dacă așteptarea era mai lungă, tata mă lua la o primă incursiune în camera de aburi. Aici se afla de fapt nucleul, atracția centrală a schvitz-ului. Cum întredeschideam ușa grea, etanșă, răbufnea îndată un suflu fierbinte de aburi. Camera, nu prea mare, era întotdeauna plină de o ceață mai mult sau mai puțin groasă, de aburi. Pe peretele din stânga ușii, în mijloc, se afla gura cuptorului de piatră încinsă, închisă cu o mică ușă de fier. Iar pe dreapta, pe toată lățimea încăperii, urca un rând de 5-6 scări înalte, ca niște tribune de stadion. „Tribunele” erau de obicei pline cu bărbați goi, fiecare cu cofa sa cu apă rece, în care își mai scufunda fața când fierbințeala aburilor devenea greu de suportat. Profesioniștii veneau echipați și cu o măturică



din rămurele de dud, cu care se flagelau ușurel, „pentru activarea circulației”. Toți erau veseli, bine dispuși, și glumele (multe cam pipărate) se țineau lanț. Când temperatura camerei cobora și aburii deveneau mai străvezii, se găsea câte un viteaz, iar de nu, era chemat băieșul cel sfrijit, să reîncălzească odaia. Treaba asta se făcea cam așa: se deschidea larg ușa cuptorului de piatră și toți cei ce țineau să-și apere pielea luau o distanță respectabilă. Viteazul, lipit cu spatele de perete, chiar lângă gura cuptorului, golea, cu o singură mișcare viguroasă, o cofă plină cu apă în cuptor. Pe loc, răbufnea de acolo un adevărat jet de aburi fierbinți care urcau repede spre plafonul camerei și-i făcea pe curajoșii de pe băncile de sus să-și pună capetele în cofele cu apă rece sau chiar să le verse peste ei. Operația era repetată de 5-6 ori, până aburii fierbinți umpleau întreaga încăpere și nu se vedea om cu om nici de la jumate de metru... Vitejii rămâneau la posturi, dar cei mai slabi de înger (inclusiv copiii ca mine) fugeau să se mai răcorească pe-afară.

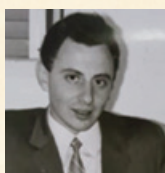
Apoi ajungeam la masaj, pe mâinile unuia din băieși, pe când celălalt se ocupa de tata. Operațiunea pornea cu o săpuneală zdravănă a întregului corp, după care mâinile de oțel începeau a-mi frământa tot corpul, de sus în jos și de jos în sus, așa cum frământa baba, bunica mea maternă, aluatul în covată, în serile de joi. La un moment dat o palmă pe fund mă invita să mă răstorn de pe burtă pe spate, și totul continua până nu-mi rămânea nici un oscior la locul unde fusese înainte. Treaba asta dura cam un sfert de oră, după care mai urma o serie de dușuri și eventual o a doua ședință la camera de aburi. Până la urmă ajungeam la vestiare cu o senzație de nou-născut, fericit, demontat și extenuat. Eu urma să mă întorc acasă, la odihnă. Dar tata urma să se întoarcă la magazin și să-l redeschidă la 4 după-amiază. De unde avea puteri ?

Pe la începutul anilor '60 vechea clădire a băii comunale a fost demolată, iar pe locul ei s-a construit clădirea școlii de meserii. Prin clasa IX-a și a X-a, am învățat și noi în acest local până avea să fie ridicată noua clădire a liceului „Petru Rareș”. Eu mai crescusem și nu mai mergeam cu tata la baia de aburi.

O baie comunală nouă a fost ridicată în cealaltă parte a orașului, nu departe de liceul de băieți și era echipată cu un motor ce producea tot timpul aburi. Nu mai era cuptor de piatră încinsă și nici voinici care să golească în el cofele cu apă. În centrul sălii mari era chiar un bazin căptușit cu faianță. Adevărul e că farmecul băii de shvitz se cam estompase în ochii mei. După ce într-o vineri s-a nimerit să mă găsesc în vestiarul cam neaerisit împreună cu o companie de soldați ce-și desfăceau obielele, am ajuns la concluzia că a venit vremea pentru o schimbare. În cei vreo doi ani ce-au urmat, baia săptămânală o făceam fie la cabină de duș (3 lei), fie chiar, dacă mă răsfaceam, la o cadă (5 lei).

Dar amintirile mă readuc mereu la camera fierbinte a vechii băi comunale a copilăriei.





Filme, filme, filme...

Beni Budic

În toată perioada copilăriei și tinereții, cinematograful a fost pentru noi, generația celor născuți după război, ca și bineînțeles, pentru părinții noștri ce erau pe atunci încă oameni tineri, principalul mijloc de divertisment și în același timp singura fereastră prin care întrevedeam parte din cele ce se petreceau în „lumea mare”, dincolo de limitele orașelului nostru.

Încă în anii mei preșcolari, părinții, care nu aveau în grija cui să mă lase, mă luau cu ei nu o dată la cinematograful, așa cum procedau cam toți tinerii părinți suceveni. Deseori, cum pentru copii nu se plătea bilet, vedeam filmul așezat pe genunchii lui tata. Chiar dacă nu înțelegeam mare lucru, eram, indiferent de film, captivat de cele ce se petreceau pe ecran. Plonjam cu toate simțurile într-o altă realitate. Dar uneori trebuia să mă rup din lumea virtuală de dincolo de ecran și să pun nenumărate întrebări. „Tată, ce fac ei acolo, ce-i asta ?” (Era cred la filmul Insula misterioasă, prin '51 sau '52). „E telegraf, cu alfabetul morse, așa vorbesc ei din peșteră cu submarinul.” Eu am urmărit apoi înfricoșat tot restul filmului așteptând să văd cum se citește cele scrise în alfabetul morții...., De ce-a intrat (Edmond Dantes - viitorul Conte de Monte Cristo) cu cuțitul în sac ? - Îndată ai să vezi”. Și am văzut și chiar am înțeles de ce. La seria II-a, o săptămână mai târziu, toate aveau să se clarifice. Îmi amintesc de un film rusesc, în care un mic nobil scăpătat se lupta cu realitatea pentru a salva aparențele, pentru a reuși să-și mărite fetele onorabil, pe când familia era nevoită să se hrănească uneori cu fiertură de coji de cartofi. Nu știu titlul filmului, dar mi-a rămas întipărită în memorie scena balului, când sârmanul tată, „vedea” (pe fundal, imaginea fetelor prinse în iureșul valsului), un mănunchi de bancnote ce se spulberau, dispărând una după alta în neant. „Tată, ce-i asta ? Unde dispar banii ?” Tata nu mi-a răspuns direct, dar a exclamat cu admirație: „Extraordinar!! Cum se filmează așa ceva ?!”.

În acei ani, cu părinții, vedeam filmele fie la „Tineretului”, fie, după anotimp și vreme, la o grădină de vară ce se afla chiar în spatele sălii de cinematograful. Multă vreme, „Cinematograful Tineretului” a fost singurul din oraș, sanctuarul la care veneam toți cu smerenie dar mai ales cu mari așteptări de emoții și aventuri. Fațada nu prea mare a clădirii dădea spre Ștefan cel Mare, nu departe de grădina publică, și era înghesuită între clădirea bibliotecii și cea a unui restaurant. Câțiva ani mai târziu, puțin mai sus, pe un teren în aceeași parte a străzii, avea să fie construită și grădina de vară modernă, gen amfiteatru, unde aveau loc afară de filme, tot felul de spectacole și concerte.



La „Tineretului” se putea intra prin două uși cu geamuri mari de sticlă, amplasate simetric pe laturile fațadei. Între uși se afla un panou mare unde se schimbau regulat fotografii cu imagini din filmele ce rulau, iar pe laturile ușilor erau două panouri mai mici cu afișele filmelor viitoare. Mai sus, peste un mic acoperiș era amplasat un panou mare, pictat loco, ce imita afișele oficiale ale filmului curent, cu imagini în culori cam stridente ale artiștilor și numele filmului în caractere imense, ca la București pe Magheru. Afișe ale filmului erau expuse și în diverse alte locuri, prin oraș. Eu treceam aproape zilnic pe lângă unul amplasat puțin după agenția Rozenberg, aproape de colțul unde începea centrul și imaginile lui Michelle Morgan, Iurie Darie sau Fernandel mă puneau imediat la curent ce film rulează la „Tineretului”.

Ușile mari din exterior duceau către un vestibul destul de modest. Pe stânga era ghișeul de bilete. Un bilet la „Tineretului” costa 1 leu și 75 de bani. Ieftin de tot, dar la nevoie exista, după cum vom vedea, cale și mai ieftină de a intra la film. Tot pe stânga, după ce urcai o treaptă, se afla și ghișeul bufetului. Sub tavan, de-a lungul pereților erau atârinate, în rame cu sticlă, portrete ale artiștilor de cinema celebrii. Erau acolo Birlic și Simone Signoret, Gina Patrichi și Gérard Philippe, Alexandru Giugaru, Jean Gabin, Alida Valli, Vittorio De Sica și încă mulți alții. Dacă nu mă înșel, pe dreapta vestibulului era ușa spre scara ce ducea sus, la micul balcon - galerie unde nu cred să fi urcat vreodată și la cabina de proiecție.

În sală intram printr-o ușă largă, cu câteva canaturi, dintre care doar cel din dreapta era folosit. Acolo stătea de veghe controlorul de bilete, un om binevoitor, între două vârste, foarte vigilent nu cumva să se strecoare cineva fără bilet. Totuși, eram o grupă destul de mare de apropiați sau cunoscuți care aveam acces discret în sală, după stingerea luminilor, contra 1 leu numerar. Iar dacă se întâmpla cumva să-mi lipsească leul, nu era nici o problemă. Intram la film „pe datorie”, iar domnul controlor trecea a doua zi pe la magazin, la tata, pentru reglarea contului. Între ușa de intrare și sală era, la un interval destul de mic, o perdea vișinie groasă, care era deschisă pe când luminile erau aprinse. Întârziatii sau cei fără bilete, care intram deja pe întuneric, trebuiam să ne strecurăm printre aripile perdelei, să nu pătrundă înăuntru lumina din hol.

Sala era dreptunghiulară, lungă și îngustă, cu două corpuri, fiecare de vreo 20 de rânduri de bănci fixate în podea. Scaunele pliante, din placaj gros, erau vopsite maro închis și necapitonate. Băncile erau grupate de o parte și de alta a intervalului central, destul de larg. De asemeni, pe lângă pereți erau intervale de trecere mai înguste, așa că nu era greu să ajungi la vreun loc liber, chiar dacă sala era deja cufundată în întuneric și începuse „jurnalul”. Aproape tot peretele din față era ocupat de ecran. Porțiunile înguste de perete rămase pe laturile ecranului erau acoperite



de lozinci. Îmi amintesc de o lozincă ce declara: „Cinematograful - cel mai important mijloc de propagare a ideologiei comuniste în masele largi ale poporului!” Eu, noi, prietenii și colegii, întreaga noastră generație ne-am supus cu bucurie acestui „mijloc de propagare”. Ceea ce am absorbit nu ținea însă neapărat de domeniul ideologic...

Din primii ani de școală, ajungeam deja singur, sau cu vreun copil vecin ori prieten, la matineurile de duminica dimineața când rulau filme de desene animate, majoritatea rusești. Am fost fermecați de poveștile cu Căluțul cocoșat sau de cele cu rusalce și pitici harnici din muntele de chilimbar. Apoi, pe la 9-10 ani am intrat deja în orbita regulată a celor două filme ce rulau săptămânal la „Tineretului”. Nu pe toate le țin minte, nici n-ar fi posibil. (Dacă aș cumula filmele văzute în ultimii mei 9-10 ani la Suceava cred că acestea ar depăși o mie. În anii de liceu, când se deschisese deja cinemascopul „Modern” și deci vedeam vreo 4 pe săptămână, îmi notam în agendă filmele văzute și ajungeam - de necrezut! - la 170-180 de filme pe an.). Imposibil să le memorez pe toate, dar multe, foarte multe mi-au rămas, cel puțin parțial, întipărite în memorie. Am avut parte să vedem o mulțime de filme rusești (sovietice), filme chinezești și vietnameze (!), și chiar un film albanez, despre eroul lor național, Skandenberg. Au fost și filme din Cehoslovacia și Ungaria, iar cele germane, produse la Defa-Berlin erau foarte bine cotate. Însă cele mai apreciate erau cele italiene și mai ales cele franțuzești. Și bineînțeles, erau filmele noastre, de la „Studioul București”.

Prin '54 - '55 am văzut la „Tineretului” spectacolul combinat din două filme de metraj mediu: *Desfășurarea*, și *Ilie face sport*. Primul, despre minunile colectivizării, era departe de a fi interesant. Dar *Ilie*?! - de dragul lui am petrecut o întreagă după amiază la 3 spectacole consecutive (simplu - n-am ieșit din sală până pe la 8 seara!). *Ilie* era o comedie, între noi fie vorba, cam naivă, ca mai toate începuturile cinematografului românesc. Dar la vederea lui *Mircea Crișan*, *Puiu Călinescu*, *Horia Căciulescu* și a tuturor isprăvilor acestora, ne tăvăleam de râs. Râdeam copilărește, cu lacrimi, în neștire. Habar n-aveam atunci că e filmul de debut al lui *Andrei Călărașu*, alias *Bernard Gropper*, supraviețuitor al unuia din trenurile morții de la Iași, în Iunie 1941. În următorii câțiva ani, până la plecarea sa spre Israel, ne-a mai dăruit câteva filme (*Vultur 101*, *Portretul unui necunoscut*) dar cele ce ne-au marcat cel mai mult adolescența au fost *Alo?* Ați greșit numărul! și câțiva ani mai târziu, *Vacanță la mare*. Ambele erau filme tinerești, în culori minunate de vară, din viața „fericită” și plină de elan a studenților/muncitorilor/inginerilor bucureșteni, care erau preocupați de muzică, de iubiri pure, întâlniri la *Herăstrău*, vacanțe la munte sau la mare și construirea socialismului. O! toate lucrurile astea la care noi provincialii puteam doar visa. Si nu ne rămânea să facem altceva decât să fredonăm șlagărul compus de



eroul întruchipat de minunatul Iurie Darie în Alo? Ați greșit numărul!: „Pe unda clapelor, Mi-e dorul călător, La tine, dragostea mea...” In acest film a debutat și regretata Stela Popescu, dar fără îndoială filmul l-a consacrat pe Iurie Darie ca idol al tuturor fetelor (și apoi, al fetelor mai împlinite...) pentru următoarele câteva decenii. El a fost probabil junele prim ultimativ al filmului românesc. Am citit undeva că în 2007 a venit la Tel Aviv pentru a-l onora pe Călărașu la cea de a 85-a sa aniversare, sărbătorită la cinematecă. S-a rulat Vacanță la mare... Iar dacă e vorba de Iurie Darie, încă atunci, prin anii '50-'60, aproape nu era film românesc fără el. O listă parțială a celor văzute de generația mea: Post restant, Dragoste la zero grade, Nepoții Gornistului, Alarmă în munți, Băieții noștri și câte altele....

Și tot printre filmele românești de neuitat ai acelor ani erau ecranizări ale pieselor și schițelor lui Caragiale. Cine îl poate uita pe Birlic chefuind cu amicii la Carul cu Bere, sau balansând, agățat pe candelabrul din marea sală a clădirii CEC, și apoi rătăcind pierdut pe străzile Bucureștiului și mormăind neconținut: „Și viceversa, și viceversa”? Au mai fost Telegrama, O noapte furtunoasă, O scrisoare pierdută, D' ale carnavalului cu Alexandru Giugaru, Marcel Anghelescu, Radu Beligan, Ion Lucian și alții, mulți și talentați alții...Iar printre filmele românești de atunci nu pot să nu menționez omulețul lui Gopo, simbol în desen animat al lui homo sapiens...Nu știu câți din colegii sau colegele mele au gustat aceste scurte filme, dar mie - care sub influența lui Mihai Drișcu, începusem să citesc cronică cinematografică din Contemporanul - mi-au plăcut mult. Mai târziu, deja la noul „Cinemascope Modern”, aveam să văd și primul lung-metraj al lui Gopo S-a furat o bombă, bineînțeles, cu Iurie Darie.

Dar încă la bunul și bătrânul „Tineretului”, am avut parte să vedem filmele cu cel ce era în acei ani, până la moartea sa prea timpurie, junele prim Nr. 1 al întregii Europe, Gérard Philippe. Acolo am defilat la Marile manevre, am luptat alături de Fanfan la Tulipe, le-am visat pe Frumuselele nopții, l-am plâns pe Julien Sorel din Roșu și Negru și am tremurat de emoție la Frumusețea Diavolului. Pe lângă Gérard Philippe, eram fermecați de surâsul trist al lui Michelle Morgan, de frumusețea Ginei Lollobrigida, de Danielle Darieux...Iar după cele franceze nu pot să nu-mi amintesc de filmele italiene, în mare parte comedii (Divorț italian, Căsătorie în stil italian și multe altele, cu Mastroianni, Sofia Loren, Stefania Sandrelli, De Sica, Alberto Sordi, Eduardo de Filippo cu filmele lui napolitane) dar și altele serioase, ba chiar triste (pe-atunci habar nu aveam că văd filme neorealiste, ce vor marca istoria cinematografiei): Miracol la Milano, Hoții de biciclete, Umberto D, Roma oraș deschis, Stromboli, filme ce „demascau exploatarea maselor și dezumanizarea individului în sistemul capitalist”. Dar ce filme erau!!! De cele englezești am pomenit? N-au fost multe și de obicei erau filme serioase, „grele” (Richard al III-lea, Drumul spre înalta societate).



Apoi, au fost filmele muzicale, care pe lângă însăși plăcerea vizionării, ne lăseau fredonând cântece de neuitat (chiar dacă filmele nu erau întotdeauna capodopere ale genului). Cine i-a putut uita pe Vico Toriani („Bona sera signorina, bona sera”...) în Serenada Străzii, sau pe Cântărețul mexican (Luis Mariano), sau pe Mario Lanza în Serenada, în Prințul student ? A fost de asemeni și filmul vest german Un cântec străbate lumea, despre tenorul „nostru”, evreu din Bucovina - Joseph Schmidt. Și au fost filmele spaniole cu halucinant de frumoasa Sarita Montiel și vocea ei adâncă, de catifea (Vânzătoarea de violete, Carmen de la Ronda). Mai târziu, cred că deja la Cinemascop, am văzut-o pe minunata Silvia Popovici, în Darclée, film românesc deosebit, atât pe planul muzical (operă!) cât și în ce privește scenele autentice, minuțios filmate în mari orașe europene și în săli de operă reale. Cam tot pe atunci au ajuns pe ecranele lumii, inclusiv la Suceava, filmele (cu multe cântece și dansuri indiene) ale lui Raj Kapoor: Vagabondul (seria I-a, seria II-a) și Articolul 420.

„Cinemascopul” a fost construit și inaugurat prin '60 sau '61. Era deja o clădire modernă, plasată lângă liceul „Ștefan cel Mare” într-un spațiu deschis, la unghiul străzilor Mihai Eminescu și Dragoș Vodă. Spre deosebire de „Tineretului”, noul cinematograful arăta la exterior ca multe alte clădiri publice ale mult-cântatei „ere socialiste”, amintind puțin stilul arhitectonic stalinist. Intrarea, spre care urcau câteva scări largi, era acoperită cu un gen de peron și împreună cu cele două vitrine mari, de afișaj, ce o încadrau, se întindea pe toată lățimea fațadei. Din holul mare și luminos, printr-o ușă largă, două perdele și câteva scări, se ajungea chiar în centrul sălii cinematografului. Sala era deja proporționată mai modern, pe lățime, iar rândurile de scaune (capitonate cu polivinil!!) erau aranjate în pantă ușoară. În general toată sala era cumva gen aulă universitară așa că privirile tuturor coborau nestingherite în jos, spre ecran. Si ce ecran!! de lățime dublă față de cel de la „Tineretului”. Croit după tehnologia vremii, exact pe măsura marilor spectacole. Un bilet la „Cinemascop” costa 2,25 lei, dar merita fiecă bănuț. Chiar filmele în formatul vechi văzute aici, parcă erau mai strălucitoare... Și câte am văzut! Vă amintiți de Ulise, sau de Vikingii, (Kirk Douglas, Tony Curtis..). Cavalerii Teutoni era o superproducție poloneză, dar Război și Pace ne-a venit din America, cu Audrey Hepburn, Mel Ferrer și Henry Fonda. Acolo l-am văzut pe bătrânul Alexander Nevsky, film sovietic de la sfârșitul anilor '30, dar totuși spectaculos. Da, și la Austerlitz ne-am luptat (regia Abel Gance, cu Jean Marais, Claudia Cardinale, Elvira Popesco, De Sica...). Iar dacă vorbim de superproducții în cinemascop, exemplul ultimativ (și rar de tot) a fost americanul muzical 7 Neveste pentru 7 Frați. Dar cel puțin în ochii mei apogeul cinematografic al acelor ani a fost filmul Mizerabilii, cu Jean Gabin, (inegalabil!!) cu Bourvil în rolul lui Thénardier și Bernard Blier ca Javert. Ani de zile am fost convins că era cel mai bun film pe care-l văzusem vreodată...



În acei ani, frecventarea filmelor de către elevi era strict controlată de autoritățile școlare. Și orele de vizionare erau limitate. Ultimul spectacol, ce începea la ora 20, era interzis. Ca și prezența pe stradă a vreunui elev sau elevă, neînsoțit de părinți, după acea oră a serii... Filme prea îndrăznețe oricum nu ajungeau în România socialistă dar chiar cele aprobate de cenzură nu erau toate aprobate de consiliul pedagogic. Nu cumva adolescenții și adolescentele în uniforme școlare din stofă aspră și cu capete fierbinți, să cadă în vreo ispită. La școala noastră, bătrâna secretară trecea șchiopătând, cu registrul, din clasă în clasă. Profesoara prezentă ne citea ultimul decret al direcțiunii, apoi semna în registru. Filmul „Cutare” e interzis pentru elevi. Chiar dacă sunt deja într-a XI-a!!! Profesorii și profesoarele primeau probabil sarcina să vadă filmul în zile și ore diferite astfel că pe la orice reprezentație era prezent cineva din ei. Și vai de păcătoșii care erau prinși în sală! Dacă cineva era și recidivist, risca să fie eliminat!! Dar existau soluții...Cea clasică era să părăsim sala pe furiș, înainte de a se aprinde luminile. Asta însemna să ghicim dacă filmul s-a sfârșit sau mai sunt vreo două minute..Era riscant. Sau pierdeai sfârșitul sau te vâna vreun ochi de profesor...Trebuie să recunosc ca uneori, din lașitate am renunțat la un film sau altul. De obicei, însă, reușeam să ies din sală neobservat. Sau poate au fost unele cazuri când vreo profesoară s-a făcut că nu mă vede ? Posibil. Eram oricum, considerat „element bun”. Fapt este că n-am fost pedepsit niciodată pentru păcatele mele cinematografice. O dată, sunt aproape sigur că m-a văzut Doamna Pavel. Era la „Cinemascop” iar filmul a fost O viață, adaptare după Maupassant, cu Christian Marquand, Maria Shell. Da, erau în film scenele destul de piperate în care Marquand, stăpânul brutal și bătăran al casei o seduce pe servitoare (Antoanella Lualdi). Probabil nu mi-am putut dezlipi ochii de pe ecran, deși eram deja lângă ieșire, și s-au aprins luminile în sală. Dar Doamna Pavel m-a iertat. Sau poate chiar nu m-a văzut ?

Ultimul film la Suceava l-am văzut într-o seară primăvăratecă de aprilie. În seara următoare aveam să părăsim Suceava pentru întotdeauna. Era vineri seara și în noua mea condiție de elev, mi-am permis să merg la „Cinemascop” la ultima reprezentație, de la 8 la 10 seara!!! Am văzut un film românesc, Un surâs în plină vară. Nu mare grozăvie, încă una din comediile ce slăveau minunile colectivizării. Dar în rolul principal era un artist tânăr, extrem de talentat și simpatic, pe care-l vedeam pentru prima dată. S-a numit Sebastian Papaiani.

După vreo trei săptămâni, ne aflam deja în Israel. Locuiam temporar, întreaga familie, la un unchi, în orașul unde locuiesc și azi, de mai bine de 50 de ani. În iureșul evenimentelor și al grijilor ce ne-au preocupat înainte de plecare și apoi aici, într-o realitate nouă, într-o limbă încă necunoscută, unul din lucrurile ce mă îngrijorau cel mai mult erau filmele. Ebraica era încă departe de mine. Nici engleză nu învățasem. Noi am făcut patru ani de franceză, întâi cu Doamna



Riemer și în ultimele clase cu Doamna Lazăr. Cele mai multe filme erau americane, subtitrate după cum credeam, în ebraică. Încă nu îndrăznisem măcar să încerc a merge la cinema. Ce va fi? Cum voi trece lunile, poate anii, până voi învăța limba? Cum se poate trăi, Dumnezeuule, fără filme?

Într-o după amiază mi-am luat inima în dinți. Treceam pe lângă unul din cinematografele din oraș unde după afișe, rula Lumea Circului (cu John Wayne, Claudia Cardinale, Rita Hayworth). Filmul începuse și controlorul ședea plictisit pe un scaun lângă ușa sălii, lăsată deschisă, pentru aerisire. Într-o ebraică stâlcită, amestecată cu idiș, l-am rugat să-mi dea voie să trag cu ochiul 2-3 minute, iar dacă voi decide că mă pot măsura cu traducerea, ies imediat și cumpăr bilet. Era om de treabă și se pare că a înțeles imediat că sunt „nou în țară”. Mi-a făcut semn să intru. Nu-i nevoie de bilet....

Și am intrat. Și am descoperit că în Israelul lui 1964, toate filmele vorbite în engleză erau subtitrate bineînțeles în ebraică, dar și ÎN FRANCEZĂ (spre a ajuta zecile de mii de imigranți marocani veniți pe atunci). Și am descoperit că franceza pe care habar n-aveam că o știu, era suficientă ca să pot citi repede traducerea și da! - chiar să o înțeleg. Și astfel s-a făcut că - grație profesoarelor mele de franceză, binecuvântată fie-le memoria! - am fost în stare să continui aproape fără întrerupere, șirul neconținut de filme ce mi-au marcat viața.



photo Richard Haidu. Sala cinematografului "Modern". din Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru





Sinagogile mele

Beni Budic

Acum vreo 15 ani au apărut aici, în Israel, două volume (în ebraică) ale unei cărți comemorative intitulată Cartea evreilor suceveni. Aceasta cuprindea o comoară de informații atât istorice cât și personale, îndeosebi despre figuri ale evreimii sucevene din perioada interbelică. În introducere, semnată de domnul Simha Weisbuch, unul din redactori, am citit că printre alte instituții ale comunității evreiești, au funcționat în Suceava înaintea celui de-al doilea război mondial, zece sinagogi. În anii copilăriei noastre, generația celor născuți după război, mai existau, prin anii '50, doar șase sinagogi: Sinagoga mare – sau Templul; sinagoga Beth Midraș, aflată în aceeași incintă cu Templul; sinagoga Wijnitz, chiar vizavi de primele două; sinagoga Sadigura; Sinagoga creditorilor, și - singura ce a supraviețuit erei comuniste și există până acum - sinagoga Gah .

Din punct de vedere al identității religioase a populației evreiești, Bucovina, ca și tot teritoriul Moldovei istorice, ca și regiunea Maramureșului, erau deja, de pe la sfârșitul secolului XVIII, parte din cercul de influență al hasidismului, doctrină religioasă cu anumite tendințe mistice, dominantă în majoritatea comunităților evreiești din estul Europei. Acolo se formaseră în unele orașele „curți” de rabini hasidici, în jurul cărora se grupau adevărate partide de discipoli, ce nu făceau vreun pas important în viață fără sfatul sau consimțământul rabinului, recunoscut ca absolută autoritate spirituală. Dacă s-ar putea defini în doar câteva cuvinte, probabil că noțiunea-cheie, caracteristică hasidismului ar fi simplitatea, îndeosebi în tot ce privește cultul religios și tot ce e legat de acesta, inclusiv stilul arhitectonic al sinagogilor. De fapt, e greu să vorbești despre un stil precis. În universul hasidic sinagogile erau multe, mici, modeste și în multe cazuri se contopeau cu clădirile târgului. În ce privește evreimea suceveană a acelor vremuri, cred că nu greșesc dacă o caracterizăm ca aparținând, în mod aproape exclusiv, curentului hasidic. Cu siguranță, în generațiile interbelice, în perioada mai modernă, și cu atât mai mult în anii comunismului, credința religioasă a multora pierduse din intensitate, dar chiar în aceste condiții, mai toți rămăseseră credincioși cel puțin tradiției. Sinagogile Sucevei se conformau, aproape toate, acestor principii iar însuși numele unora (Wijnitz, Sadigura) denotau apartenența la hasidism.

Făceau excepție, în plan arhitectonic, Templul, sinagoga Beth Midrash , sinagoga Gah și Sinagoga mare din Burdujeni, Die Groisse Șil . Acestea fuseseră în mod evident construite cu scopul de a servi ca sinagogi, iar aspectul lor exterior exprima acest lucru de la prima privire. În interiorul Templului cred că am fost de cel mult două sau trei ori, iar amintirile pe care le păstrez sunt



foarte sumare. În orice caz, complet diferit de micile sinagogi hasidice, interiorul era compus dintr-o incintă mare, înaltă și majestoasă, luminată de geamuri imense, de înălțimea a aproape două etaje. Băncile și pupitrele enoriașilor erau aranjate, paralel și toate duceau spre răsărit, spre Aron Hakodesh - chivotul. În centrul incintei domnea Bima-ua, podiumul impozant pe care se oficia citirea în sulurile sfinte. Locul de rugăciune rezervat femeilor se afla la etaj, pe o galerie deschisă ce se întindea pe laturile de sud, de vest și de nord ale incintei centrale. Nu-mi amintesc alte amănunte dar cu siguranță chivotul era o piesă impozantă, din lemn sculptat iar plafonul și pereții erau împodobiiți cu picturi – peisaje ale țării sfinte și emblemele celor 12 triburi. Presupun că Templul a fost construit conform modei arhitectonice a sinagogilor din Europa centrală în a doua jumătate a secolului XIX. Mărimea și măreția clădirii erau dovada existenței în Suceava a unei comunități evreiești numeroasă și înstărită.

Am avut de câteva ori și ocazia de a vedea interiorul sinagogii Sadigura. Prin anii copilăriei a trebuit să învăț, ca mai toți băieții evrei, tainele limbii ebraice. De fapt învățam doar a citi, fără să înțelegem mai nimic, textele din sidur – cartea de rugăciuni. Timp de vreo doi ani am fost învățăcel la Domnul Zonnenshein (urma să fiu transferat apoi la învățătorul Wijnițer, un om sever și mărunțel, cu barbișon, ce avea să mă introducă puțin și în studiul Humaș – ului, Pentateuhul). Învățătorul Zonnenshein era un om înalt și bun la fire. El și soția sa erau pe post de învățători ale primelor buchii ebraice pentru mulți băieți și fete, chiar preșcolari. Lecțiile, individuale, aveau loc în locuința perechii Zonnenshein ce era alipită sinagogii Sadigura chiar în fața pieței, iar domnul Zonnenshein îndeplinea și funcția de intendent al sinagogii. Uneori, când vinerea se făcea curățenie în locuința învățătorilor, lecția avea loc în sinagogă. Clădirea acestui locaș se deosebea doar puțin de casele ce-o înconjurau, iar interiorul, conform vagilor mele amintiri, era modest și simplu ca și cel al sinagogii Croitorilor pe care am avut parte să o cunosc mai îndeaproape.

Când ne-am mutat la Suceava în 1950, tata s-a alăturat comunității enoriașilor acestei sinagogi Die Schneiderișe Șil - ce se afla pe la începutul străzii Petru Rareș, la doar câțiva pași de casa noastră. Mai târziu, pe la începutul anilor '60, clădirea a fost demolată iar terenul a devenit parte din cel pe care s-a construit atunci noua clădire a școlii unde învățam – Școala Medie Nr. 2. Probabil că la începuturile sale, sinagoga fusese construită de breasla croitorilor, dar în anii când eu am cunoscut-o doar câțiva dintre enoriași erau croitori de meserie. Pe atunci sinagoga era activă zilnic pentru rugăciunea din zori (Shahrit), dar mai ales în zilele de Shabat și îndeosebi de sărbători, se umplea de credincioși (mai mult sau mai puțin ...) ce ajungeau chiar din cartiere mai îndepărtate. Îmi amintesc, în zilele sărbătorilor de toamnă, îndeosebi de Yom Kipur, ziua sfântă a iertării păcatelor, cum siluete de tineri, cei ce nu reușiseră să-și ia zi de concediu, se



furișau în sinagogă îmbrăcați cu halatul de lucru ce-l scoteau discret lângă intrare, se înfășurau în șalul de rugăciune (Talit) și se alăturau celorlalți măcar pentru vreun ceas.

Sinagoga croitorilor fusese construită probabil pe la începutul veacului, iar din exterior nu se deosebea cu nimic de casele vecine. Era o clădire simplă, fără etaj, cu acoperiș de tablă. Pe dreapta, o porțiță ducea într-o curte lungă și îngustă de unde se intra în camera de rugăciune a femeilor, alipită de incinta principală și aflată, conform terenului, la vreun metru sau doi mai sus. Intrarea se făcea direct de pe trotuar, printr-o ușă dublă, cu obloane. Când sinagoga era deschisă, unul din cele două obloane era întotdeauna tras spre stradă. A doua ușă, cu geam de sticlă, se deschidea spre interior. Coborai două trepte joase și te aflai înăuntru. Pe stânga, lângă perete era o măsuță îngustă pe care se afla o tavă lunguiață, plină cu nisip în care ardeau zeci de lumânări. În dreapta ușii de intrare era o sobă mare de teracotă. În sâmbetele friguroase de iarnă era angajat un om pentru a îngriji de foc și de lumânări. Contrar așteptărilor, partea ce dădea spre răsărit, unde se afla chivotul, era pe latura din dreapta, cea lată, a încăperii dreptunghiulare. Tot pe acea latură erau două sau trei ferestre.

Chivotul, - Aron Hakodesh- era o piesă destul de simplă de forma unui dulap mare din lemn cu elemente sculptate. În partea superioară se afla lăcașul sulurilor sfinte – Torah – ce reprezentau adevărata comoară a sinagogii, elementul ce transformă o simplă clădire în locaș sfânt de rugăciune și studiu. În sinagoga noastră erau vreo 5-6 integre, demne de a citi din ele în cursul rugăciunilor, și încă 2-3 ce din diverse motive nu erau destul de pure pentru acest scop. Toate erau păstrate în chivotul acoperit cu o perdea de catifea brodată. Partea de jos a chivotului servea în sinagoga noastră de pupitru al cantorului ce oficia rugăciunea. Enoriașii ședeau pe bănci, de cele două părți ale meselor lungi, aranjate de-a lungul pereților. Încă un rând de bănci fuseseră puse în centrul camerei, de o parte și alta a mesei înalte, cu tăblia puțin înclinată, pe care se depuneau sulurile sfinte și unde se citea din ele, din Torah. Această masă simplă, acoperită cu catifea, ținea locul a ce ar fi trebuit să fie Bima, podiumul, în sinagogile mai mari. La noi, dimensiunile modeste ale incintei nu permiteau asta. În zilele sărbătorii Torei, Simhat Torah, ce încheie ciclul sărbătorilor de toamnă, toate mobilele din jurul acestei mese erau îndepărtate, iar aceasta devenea axa în jurul căreia se efectua un fel de dans al enoriașilor, ce strângeau la piept sulurile sfinte și o înconjurau cântând și dansând. În acea zi, toți, mici și mari sunt oarecum egali și astfel mă văd și pe mine, copil, cu o Torah mai mică în brațe, efectuând ocolul – hakafot - și roșind până în vârful urechilor la urările celor ce formau cercul împrejur : „Să ajungi sănătos la anul !” Odată făcută și această treabă eram liber să mă ocup, împreună cu ceilalți copii, de sacii cu nuci prăjite, pregătiți de familia Herman, la bucătăria și brutăria lor din apropiere.



Pe latura de nord a încăperii, la vreun metru mai sus de nivelul mesei lungi, se afla un șir de ferestre mari, parțial acoperire pe cealaltă parte cu perdelețe albe din tifon. Ferestrele comunicau spre camera de rugăciune a femeilor iar de sărbători, când femeile veneau la sinagogă, erau deschise larg, să se audă bine rugăciunea cantorului și în aripa femeilor. La sinagoga noastră, camera femeilor era mai spațioasă și mai luminoasă decât era obișnuit iar ferestrele mari creau o comunicare sonoră deplină cu sala principală.

În acei ani, „cantorul casei” la sinagoga croitorilor era domnul Țighelnic, tatăl prietenului meu de joacă Tully. Din nefericire, Tully ne-a părăsit acum câțiva ani, primul cred, din promoția noastră. Uneori, chiar în zile de sărbători, se întâmpla ca și tata să officieze anumite rugăciuni pe post de cantor. Deși nu era „profesionist”, tata avea voce caldă și plăcută și cunoștea perfect textele, melodiile și intonațiile tradiționale ale rugăciunilor (care pe meleagurile noastre erau conforme ritualului hasidic).

Nu-mi amintesc bine dacă plafonul (destul de jos) al sinagogii sau pereții, să fi fost împodobiți cu vreo imagine pictată. Probabil că pe pereți existau ceva peisaje naive ale târâmurilor biblice. Dar ceea ce-mi amintesc bine e mulțimea de globuri de iluminat, atârinate de plafon aproape unul lângă altul. De fapt numărul globurilor era mult mai mare decât ar fi fost necesar pentru luminatul sinagogei. Toate fuseseră donate de familii în memoria celor decedați. Pe fiecare din globurile mate, lăptoase, era înscris cu negru, în română, dar și cu litere ebraice, numele și data decesului. Mai eram copil, când la mulțimea de globuri de pe plafonul sinagogii croitorilor s-a adăugat și cel cu numele mamei. De atunci, spre deosebire de majoritatea copiilor și tinerilor, rămâneam în sinagogă în timpul rugăciunii Izkor. Această rugăciune e, după ritul așkenaz, rostită în șoaptă de patru ori pe an, în anumite zile de sărbătoare, de oricine a pierdut vreunul din părinți. Toți cei care au ambii părinți în viață trebuie să părăsească sinagoga pentru cele 10-15 minute cât durează rugăciunea. În aceste zile, de Izkor, se obișnuiește și a aprinde lumânări de pomenire ce ard 24 de ore. Eram doar unul din doi-trei copii ce nu ieșeam și rămâneam martori la gravitatea simțămintelor celor din jurul nostru și la hohote înăbușite de plâns ce veneau dinspre aripa femeilor. Durerea și zbuciumul sufletesc le înțeleg acum bine, mai ales considerând faptul că pe atunci ne aflam la doar câțiva ani după nenorocirea evreimii sucevene, și a celei din întreaga Bucovina, izgonită în Transnistria, unde au rămas cu zecile de mii, morți din toate familiile. La sfârșitul rugăciunii personale de Izkor, cantorul revenea cu glas puternic și emoționant la una sau două rugăciuni pe aceeași temă, ce din nou aduceau în mulți ochi lacrimi, iar la sfârșit dădea citire lungii liste de enoriași și enoriașe ai sinagogii, decedați de-a lungul ultimelor decenii. Lista pe care o citea domnul Țighelnic cu glas tare, era monotonă, lungă, aranjată cronologic și pentru a fi sincer, puțin obositoare pentru un copil de nouă ani. Spre sfârșitul listei era menționat



și numele mamei mele, Clara.

După cum am mai pomenit, în copilărie, prezența mea la sinagogă era legată îndeosebi de sărbători, când îmbrăcat cu haine și pantofi noi (care, of ! mă strângeau și mă rodeau) îi însoțeam, ca toți tovarășii mei de joacă, pe părinți. În zilele sărbătorilor de toamnă rugăciunile se prelungeau pe decursul a multe ore. Mamele și bunicile aduceau pentru copii câte ceva de îmbucac, de obicei felii cu gust de neuitat din tradiționalul „chec cu miere” – honiglekeh. Pe noi, copiii, mult mai mult decât rugăciunile, ne atrăgea întâlnirea cu prieteni de joacă, mulți din cartiere mai îndepărtate, cu care nu prea ne vedeam în zile obișnuite. Curtea și împrejurimile sinagogii erau în stăpânirea noastră. Când mai crescuserăm puțin, obișnuiam, grupe de băieți, să ieșim la întâlniri cu alții ca noi, cutreerând pe la sinagogi din apropiere, îndeosebi în zona Templului, unde se adunau băieții de la alte două-trei sinagogi și era veselie mare. În câteva din aceste ocazii am intrat chiar în Templu și am ascultat parte din predica de sărbători a rabinului orașului. Atunci am putut oarecum să cunosc interiorul acestui lăcaș.

În anul ce-a urmat după moartea mamei, prezența mea pe la sinagogi a devenit aproape zilnică. Aveam datoria, ca fiu, să rostesc de-a lungul anului de doliu, cu glas tare, la fiecare din cele 3 rugăciuni zilnice, textul (scurt) al rugăciunii kadiș a orfanilor. Chiar pe atunci, pe la mijlocul anilor '50, numărul celor ce participau la rugăciunile de zi cu zi era deja redus, astfel că enoriașii de la sinagoga croitorilor și cei de la Wijnitz s-au unit : rugăciunea din zori - Șahrit - se ținea la prima, iar rugăciunile mai scurte de după amiază (Minha) și de seară (Maariv) se țineau la interval de 15-20 de minute înainte și după ora apusului, la cealaltă sinagogă. Tata, odihnească-se în pace, a luat asupra sa obligația kadiș –ului din zori și m-a scutit pe mine, copil de 9 ani, să mă prezint la sinagogă la 6 dimineața, iarna ca și vara. Eu am mers (mai mult sau mai puțin) în fiecare seară la rugăciunile cealalte la Wijnitz și astfel am avut ocazia să cunosc mai îndeaproape această sinagogă.

Am mai pomenit că Wijnitz se afla chiar vizavi de Templu și de Beth Midraș , pe o străduță suceveană care înainte de război se numea Strada Sinagogilor, nu departe de piața birjelor. În iarna aceluia an 55/56, ca și de altfel în mulți alți ani, uzina electrică a orașului nu prea funcționa, așa că imediat după apus, străzile Sucevei se cufundau în beznă. Pentru a-mi ușura orbecăitul pe străduțele desfundate, am fost echipat cu o lanternă simplă, de bachelită. Departe de visul la lanternele „vânătoarești”, cum aveau băieții mari, dar totuși, ceva. Păcat doar că bateriile se terminau tare repede și erau foarte greu de găsit prin magazine, chiar cu protecțiile pe care le aveam ...

Oricum, în acel an mă prezentam aproape în fiecare seară la sinagoga Wijnitz, aflată într-o clădire modestă, complet lipsită de vreun ornament sau simbol arhitectural, cu totul diferită de cele două



sinagogi mai impozante, aflate de cealaltă parte a străzii. Intrarea era prin curte, de unde câteva scări de lemn duceau spre un mic cerdac și de acolo într-un pridvor din care se deschideau două uși : pe dreapta spre incinta mai mare de rugăciune, iar spre stânga către cămăruța rezervată femeilor, ce se afla aici la același singur nivel al sinagogii. Camera cea mare era orientată, ca și la „sinagoga croitorilor”, astfel încât chivotul modest era plasat pe mijlocul unuia din pereții lungi ai încăperii, ce dădea spre răsărit. Credincioșii ședeau pe bănci de lemn, de o parte și alta a meselor lungi aranjate de-a lungul pereților. Un șir de mese și bănci se afla în centrul camerei, de ambele părți ale mesei înclinată, înalte, pe care se citea Tora-ua.

Între Minha și Maariv era de obicei o pauză de vreo 20 de minute. În acest timp, și chiar apoi, după Maariv, câțiva dintre cei prezenți se adunau în jurul unei mese din colțul sinagogei, la o lecție de Mișna sau de Talmud. În serile de iarnă, pe o altă masă, în apropiere, se aflau la dispoziția celor ce studiau, pahare groase de sticlă, un ceainic mic cu esență de ceai. Pe soba rotundă de tuci, instalată lângă soba mare din cărămizi, fierbea un ceainic cu apă. Eu, cel mic, mă țineam de o parte și n-aș putea afirma că aș fi înțeles ceva, deși fiecare propoziție era tradusă în idiș, din care mai știam câteva cuvinte. În acele seri la Wijnitz am avut ocazia să-l cunosc atunci (deși cuvântul e prea mare) pe domnul Avigdor Nussbauh, cel ce de obicei coordona lecția. Era un om deja vârstnic, cu barbișon alb, scurt, ce făcea parte din cercul restrâns al evreilor învățați ai orașului. Mult mai târziu aveam să aflu că fusese și unul din liderii mișcării sioniste la Suceava, în anii când aceasta mai fusese legală. Și tot acolo l-am întâlnit pe Avram-Haim Ghelber, și el printre erudiți, deși poate nu chiar de talia lui Nussbauh. Era un om înalt, slab, și el cu un barbișon mic și cărunt, cu o pereche de ochi albaștrii pe care nu puteai să nu-i remarci de la prima privire, și un veșnic zâmbet vesel în colțul gurii. În acei ani, deși nu mai era tânăr, își câștiga existența ca geamgiu. Tot orașul îl știa și la nevoie se apela la el. Pe atunci nu-mi imaginam că peste vreo doi ani, tata se va recăsători cu Ruti, fica lui, iar Avram-Haim Ghelber avea să-mi devină oarecum, bunic. Din nefericire, doar pentru scurt timp, căci s-a stins destul de tânăr, numai vreun an mai târziu.

Câțiva ani mai târziu, când am împlinit 13 ani și deci am ajuns la Bar Mitzva – ceremonialul de confirmare a maturității la băieți - Sinagoga croitorilor era deja programată pentru demolare. Am mai apucat totuși ca acolo, la lăcașul de cult sucevean ales de tata, să particip la rugăciunea de Șahrit, din zori, după ce îmbrăcasem cu multe eforturi și cu ajutorul tatei, pe frunte și pe brațul stâng, în dreptul inimii, Tefilin - filacteriile rituale. Pentru a fi cu mine în acest moment important au venit dis-de-dimineată, din Burdujeni, cu trăsura, zeida, nenea Burțu și cei doi veri ai mei. A fost probabil un eveniment emoționant, mai ales pentru copilandrul ce se încurca printre curelușele de piele, lungi și înguste ale filacteriilor și nu e greu de imaginat ușurarea simțită



când rugăciunea s-a terminat, iar enoriașii, ce se grăbeau să ajungă pe la locurile de muncă, au fost cinstiți cu rachiu și cu felii de lekah, după care ne-au felicitat pe toți membrii familiei. Dacă nu mă înșel, era ultima dată când am mai fost în Sinagoga croitorilor. În sâmbăta ce a urmat, deja „matur” pe plan ritual, am participat cu tata, la rugăciunea festivă de Șabat la sinagoga Wijnitz. Conform datinii, am fost chemat pentru prima dată în viață, la cititul din Tora. După care mi s-a dat onoarea de a intona oarecum melodic, după un canon bine stabilit, acel capitol din cărțile profeților – Aftara - ce era asociat cu pericopa săptămânii. Treabă destul de serioasă, pentru care m-a pregătit de-a lungul a câteva săptămâni domnul Artur Șapira, la care luam pe atunci lecții de ebraică. La sfârșitul rugăciuni din acea sâmbătă dimineață, tot în cinstea Bar Mitzvei mele, toți cei prezenți au fost cinstiți cu rachiu, sau lichior și cu felii mari, tăiate în formă rombică, de țukerlekah un pandișpan gălbui-auriu, cu gust de paradis, ce era rezervat pentru evenimente speciale. De asemenea, au fost pregătite pachețele din această prăjitură, învelite în hârtie de șervețele creponate, pentru soțiile și familiile enoriașilor. Astfel s-a încheiat trecerea mea în maturitate, cel puțin pe plan ritual.

Mai târziu, după demolarea Sinagogii croitorilor, al cărei teren a devenit parte din cel pe care s-a construit școala noastră, pe strada Petru Rareș, mergeam în zilele de Izkor, cu tata, la Wijnitz. Era pentru tata o ocazie de a schimba cu Artur Șapira câteva propoziții în ebraica ce și-o mai amintea din cele învățate în tinerețe.

Probabil, însă, cele mai vii, mai colorate amintiri ale mele, încă din primii ani ai copilăriei, sunt cele legate de sinagoga mare – Die Groise Šil – din Burdujeni, târgușorul unde am văzut lumina zilei, unde am locuit cu părinții în primii patru ani ai mei și unde aveam să revin adesea, la bunici, și în anii ce-au urmat. Înainte de a deveni cartier al orașului Suceava, Burdujeni a fost, înainte de război, un ștetl ce număra mai bine de 1000 de evrei și avea vreo 6 sinagogi. În anii amintirilor mele mai rămăseseră trei. O sinagogă era chiar în centru, iar celelalte două se aflau pe un fel de fost campus al câtorva sinagogi, nu departe de centru dar oarecum într-un loc izolat, unde nu erau alte case, pe drumul ce ducea pe de o parte spre piață și pe de alta, spre cimitirul evreiesc. Încă pe când eram copil mic, târgul începuse a se goli de evrei, în anii când au început valurile de emigrație spre Israel. Una din acele sinagogi a fost pe atunci închisă și a rămas doar „sinagoga mare”, unde copil, ajungeam uneori, cu zeida, bunicul meu matern. Mai târziu, frumoasa clădire de altădată a rămas ani de zile abandonată, devenind o ruină, o rană deschisă în ochii puținilor trecători pe-acolo, până s-a fărâmițat cu totul și a fost demolată. În ultimii ani am avut ocazia să vizitez de mai multe ori, cu grupuri de turiști, Sinagoga Mare din Botoșani. În trecut nu o văzusem niciodată, iar acum, după ce fusese renovată cu vreun deceniu în urmă, m-a uimit și impresionat asemănarea cu ceea ce fusese cândva Die Groise Šil a noastră, din Burdujeni. Probabil ambele



clădiri au fost construite în aceeași perioadă (cam în jurul anului 1840) și chiar dacă nu de același arhitect, totuși de arhitecți din aceeași școală.

Die Groise Șil din Burdujeni era o clădire dreptunghiulară, de dimensiuni impresionante. Se înălța la nivelul a două etaje, peste care domnea un acoperiș de șindrilă ce cobora simetric spre laturile clădirii. Acoperișul era foarte înclinat iar, după moda central și est-europeană, cam la mijlocul înălțimii sale era curmat de un fel de streășină, sub care inclinarea devenea și mai accentuată. Sub un astfel de acoperiș trebuie să se fi aflat un pod imens, unde cine știe, poate să fi dormit cândva un uriaș de lut, frate al Golemului din Praga. Nu știu, căci niciodată n-am fost în pod și nici n-am auzit pe careva din băieți să pomenească așa ceva. Mai toate geamurile clădirii erau la nivelul etajului al doilea, sub acoperiș. Cele ce dădeau spre sala mare de rugăciune erau mai mari, menite a umple sinagoga cu lumina zilei. Pe peretele de apus se afla, la etajul superior, la nivelul aripii femeilor, un cerdac deschis, mărginit de câteva coloane simple, care dădeau clădirii o alură de soliditate clasică. Intrarea era pe partea de sud a clădirii. În colțul sud-vest, o ușă de lemn se deschidea către scările de lemn (deja șubrede în acei ani) ce duceau spre cerdac și intrarea în camera de rugăciune a femeilor, unde mamele și bunicile ne așteptau cu prăjituri și bunătați. Intrarea principală era puțin mai spre dreapta, aproape de acea a femeilor. Era o ușă mare, dublă, din lemn, cu pridvor mic, spre care duceau câteva scări de piatră mărginite cu mici parapete de zid. Ușa ducea într-un hol cam întunecos, din care se deschideau 2-3 uși. Cea din față ducea către Știbl, cămăruța unde se țineau rugăciunile de zi cu zi, când participanții erau puțini, și mai ales iarna, când încălzitul sălii mari ar fi fost prea costisitor. Ușa din dreapta, mai mare, cu două canaturi, ducea în sala mare a sinagogii, spre care coborau 2-3 scări.

Spre această încăpere pătrată, vastă, înaltă, plină de lumină m-au purtat amintirile când am intrat, acum câțiva ani, în sinagoga mare din Botoșani. În ochii copilului ce fusesem, acest interior trebuie să fi fost ca al templului lui Solomon. Plafonul îndepărtat, plin de picturi, trimitea către noi, cei de jos, mulțime de brațe de candelabre. De jur împrejurul pereților, sub geamurile înalte, se întindeau picturi murale (cam naive) cu peisaje idilice ale țării sfinte și cu emblemele celor 12 triburi (orice figură umană e interzisă – prin una din cele zece porunci !). În centrul peretelui de răsărit, ridicat pe un postament spre care duceau câteva trepte, domnea Chivotul, o piesă de mobilă sculptată, de mai mult de 2 metri înălțime, acoperită cu perdea grea de catifea, brodată cu litere de aur. În partea de sus, peste leiș sculptați în lemn, se înălța vulturul bicefal, motiv sculptural prezent pe chivotele multor sinagogi de prin părțile noastre.

Rândurile de bănci ale enoriașilor, cu excepția celor de lângă peretele de est, rezervate celor mai de cinste, erau paralele, orientate bineînțeles spre răsărit. În locul meselor, fiecare avea un fel de



măsuță-pupitru personală, ce putea fi mișcată, cu un mic dulăpaș și tăblia ușor înclinată. Centrul încăperii era dominat de Bima, spre care urcau, la sud și nord, două rânduri de scări, străjuite de aceeași balustradă, iar sus se afla bineînțeles masa mare, cu tăblia înclinată unde se depuneau spre citire, sulurile Torei.

Tabloul de amintiri despre sinagoga mare din Burdujeni, ar fi incomplet dacă nu aș pomeni pe cantorul legendar, Țalic Grinberg, figură impozantă și respectabilă, cu palmares de cantor prin străinătăți în anii interbelici. Deja atunci era om în vârstă. Prezența sa falnică - îmbrăcat în Kitel, halatul alb de rugăciune, cu boneta hexagonală de cantor, având un ciucure scurt - și vocea care urca la înălțimile templului, până sus, la ferestrele femeilor, mi-au rămas gravate în amintire.

La sinagoga Gah nu cred să fi intrat vreodată, în anii mei suceveni. Pe la începutul anilor '70, când am revenit la Suceava, turist, după aproape zece ani de la plecare, la Burdujeni nu mai funcționa nici o sinagogă. Erau zilele sărbătorilor de toamnă, iar când a trebuit să spunem rugăciunea de Izkor, am plecat la Suceava, cu zeida la Gah, singura ce mai funcționa. Mulți m-au recunoscut și imediat oaspetele venit din Israel o fost onorat cu cititul acelei Aftara a zilei de sărbătoare în care ne aflam. La drept vorbind, m-au cam trecut sudorile - avusesem acest examen doar de două ori în viață : la Bar Mitzva și în sâmbăta ce a precedat ziua nunții noastre. Cumva trebuia să ies cămașă curată : nu se putea să-l fac de rușine pe zeida, mândru nevoie mare de mine, iar apoi, chiar eu trebuia să-mi apăr renumele de israelian! Am adunat, așadar, toate cunoștințele mele de ebraică și am citit lungul text fără greșeli, improvizând simultan un ritm și o melodie ce s-ar fi potrivit cu sarcina. Totul a trecut cu bine. Cei ce mă înconjurau, inclusiv zeida, nu cunoșteau textul mai bine ca mine... Oricum, de atunci mă pot lăuda că am primi Maftir (rolul celui onorat a citi Aftara) la sinagoga suceveană Gah.



Gah synagogue. Photo P.Leinburd





Mihai

Beni Budic

Pe Mihai Drișcu l-am întâlnit pentru prima dată în ziua când am ajuns amândoi, oarecum străini față de noua noastră ambianță, în una din cele două clase a IV-a, la Școala Medie Nr.2, fostul „Liceu de fete”. Era în toamna lui 1956, anul când s-a trecut la învățământul mixt, adevărată revoluție în sistemul de învățământ românesc. Eu am ajuns acolo după trei ani cam cenușii la „Ștefan cel Mare”, cunoscut și ca „Liceul de băieți”. Noua mea școală era la doar o aruncătură de băț de casa noastră de pe strada Cetății. Familia Drișcu se mutase în acea vară de la Rădăuți la



Suceava și locuiau în centru, la doi pași de intrarea în curtea din spate a școlii. Așa că amândoi am fost înscriși, după adrese, la aceeași școală unde aveam să ne petrecem împreună următorii vreo opt ani. Anii prieteniei noastre. Din acel an școlar nu prea mi-au rămas multe amintiri. Deși ne descoperiserăm deja trăsături și preocupări comune, se pare că în afara orelor, eu și Mihai ne întâlneam la început destul de rar. În primele luni ale anului școlar,

probabil din lipsă de spațiu în clădirea destul de mică a fostului liceu „Doamna Maria”, clasa noastră a învățat după amiaza, în schimbul 2. Programul începea la ora 14.00 după ce diminețile le petrecuserăm puțin cu lecțiile, mai mult cu joaca iar după masa de prânz înghițită la rezezală când ne prezentam la școală eram deja buni de somn. Clasa noastră

era la parter, imediat pe stânga holului de intrare al clădirii. Era o încăpere spațioasă, cu geamuri mari ce dădeau spre stradă și umpleau clasa de lumină. Pentru a intra, imediat după ușa înaltă, trebuia să coborâm o treaptă de lemn. Catedra era amplasată pe un mic podium din scânduri aflat pe dreapta, lângă peretele opus ușii de intrare și bineînțeles domina de la înălțimea sa, întreaga



clasă. Tabla neagră era lângă catedră, plasată în centrul peretelui. Erau 3 sau chiar 4 rânduri de bănci. Nu sunt absolut sigur dar probabil că deja atunci Mihai și eu am împărțit aceeași bancă. Și treaba asta a continuat de-a lungul anilor de școală până într-a X-a, când Mihai a trecut la „umană”. Dirigintele și profesoarele pe care le-am avut de-a lungul anilor ne-au permis întotdeauna să ședem împreună. Nu pălăvrăgeam și nu deranjam mai niciodată. Ne înțelegeam aproape fără cuvinte, doar dintr-o aluzie și câteva priviri. Dar astea aveau să ne caracterizeze mai mult în anii următori și îndeosebi în clasele de liceu.

Am în fața ochilor o fotografie făcută chiar în clasă, pe la sfârșitul aceluia an școlar. Suntem o grupă de pionieri, 3 băieți și 4 fete, toți cu cravatele roșii la gât, cu steagul unității, plasați în fața clasei. Parte din fundal e ocupat de tablă, a doua jumătate, pe dreapta pozei, în contrast clar, peretele alb iar deasupra portretul tovarășului Chivu Stoica sub lozinca „Trăiască Republica Populară Romîna! ”. O compoziție probabil bine studiată de fotograf. Și pe noi ne-a aranjat cu aceeași măiestrie a compoziției, cei mai înalți, Betti și Lică, mai în spate. În rândul din față, încadrați de trei fete, suntem noi doi, Mihai și eu, cu drapelul pe care îl ținem cu dârzenie. Fetele sunt, evident, mai înalte decât noi și fără discuție, mai frumoșele. Mai ales Didina Chirică, de pe atunci considerată cea mai frumoasă din clasă, cu o fundă albă, cochetă, în buclele castanii. Cu toții purtăm pantaloni scurți sau fustițe de culoare închisă (probabil bleumarin, poza, de epocă, e bineînțeles în alb-negru), bluze albe, primăvăratice, cu mânecută scurtă, sandale și șosete sau ciorapi trei sferturi de culoare albă.

Mihai și eu, în mod clar cei mai mărunți ca statură (dar evident, amândoi de aceeași înălțime, până într-atât că manșetele pantalonașilor noștri scurți parcă fuseseră trase cu rigla) ne evidențiem totuși între toți, poate datorită faptului că suntem cei cărora li s-a încredințat drapelul. Eu cu breton tuns scurt, reglementar, țin drapelul cu dreapta, ascunsă sub falduri și-l sprijin cu mâna stângă. În poziție rigidă de drepti privesc fără a clipi către fotograf și către viitorul luminos... Lângă mine, deja împreună și nu numai datorită staturii, Mihai, cu părul lui negru, cam rebel, într-o poziție clasică de contrapposto, cu piciorul stâng ceva mai avansat, puțin îndoit din genunchi, iar colțurile cravatei lui roșii par că strică simetria pozei. E greu de distins în poză privirea lui Mihai. Dar eu știu ce gândea: „Mă conformez eu acum, ca toți proștii ăștia, dar mai vedem noi...” Adevăratele dimensiuni ale nonconformismului său, Mihai aveau să le dezvăluie cu vreo două decenii mai târziu, în anii care au precedat ciudatul, neverosimilul „accident” ce l-a ucis în aprilie 1989.

Pe-atunci însă, când eram doar într-a IV-a, și într-o anumită măsură și în anii următori ai ciclului mediu, eu mai petreceam bună parte din orele libere cu gașca băieților (Jacky Gotlieb, Tully



Țighele, Micky Kerner, Zwi Furer) în tot felul de jocuri care cu timpul s-au concentrat la partide și chiar adevărate turnire de șah și table. Mihai nu făcea parte din acel cerc. Timpul petrecut cu el era îndeosebi la școală, mai rar în orele libere, duminica sau în zilele de vacanță. Dar cu încetul, fără să pot spune exact când, am început a fi aproape veșnic împreună.

La școală ne-am adaptat rapid noii realități. Coexistența în aceeași clasă cu fetele făcea viața mult mai interesantă, iar pe măsură ce treceau anii, a devenit absolut naturală. În recreații, mai tot timpul împreună, noi doi eram un fel de centru de atracție. „Spiritele” și calambururile noastre, ca un ping-pong de replici, se pare că ne distrau colegile care, cu toată modestia trebuie să o spun, roiau împrejur. Mihai, niciodată, pe câte știam eu, nu a căzut în plasa vreunei legături romantice. Dar cine știe ?..

În acei ani, uniforme școlare, obligatorii, erau departe de a fi atrăgătoare. Fetele purtau rochii pepit cu pătrățele alb-negru mărunte, încrețite pe talie și terminate cu un guleraș alb strâns în jurul gâtului. Să nu se vadă nimic! Peste rochie venea un gen de șorț negru, ce contrasta la culoare cu rochia. Părul le era strâns cu panglică albă, iar pe picioare purtau ciorapi cenușii, grosolani, din bumbac mercerizat. Mihai nu putea suferi nici de departe lipsa de grație a uniformei fetelor și nu pregeta s-o spună direct, în stilul său „sare și piper”:

Ăștia-s ciorapi de călugărițe și de fete bătrâne!

Nici uniforme noastre, ale băieților nu erau vreo culme a creațiilor de confecție. Ne îmbrăcaseră pe toți la costum, pantaloni lungi și haină la un rând de nasturi, cu revere și gulera mic, dintr-o stofă bleumarin grosolană, aspră la atingere. Probabil ar fi trebuit să purtăm sub haină cămașă albă, dar de fapt fiecare, purtam ce aveam. Stofa ieftină a costumului făcea ca în scurt timp pantalonii să prindă luciu pe la genunchi (și prin alte părți), iar haina era veșnic roasă pe la coate. Bineînțeles, cu toții, băieți și fete, aveam cusută pe mâneca stângă emblema școlii cu număr de matriculă. Când am ajuns în clasele superioare, singura libertate pe care o puteam lua față de uniformă era să îngustăm la vreun croitor, după cerințele modei, pantalonii, despre care Mihai zicea că erau de o lățime „demnă de marinarii din flota sovietică” ... Deci era doar natural, ca - o dată programul terminat - să scăpăm de uniformă și să redevenim civili pentru restul zilei. Iar pentru Mihai și pentru mine, ”restul zilei” a devenit treptat o prelungire a aceluia împreună de la școală, doar în haine mai comode și în libertate absolută.

Nu știu să spun exact, dar cred că era printr-a VI-a, când am început să-mi petrec mai toate după amiezile în locuința lui Mihai și familiei sale. Chiar dacă mergeam la cinema (și ce mai mergeam!) seara mea se încheia la ei. Familia Drișcu ocupa o locuință modestă, chiar în centrul orașului. Se putea intra de pe Ștefan cel Mare, urcând câteva trepte către un pasaj boltit, ce



ducea la locuințele de la parter și la scara mare ce urca pe dreapta, spre primul și singurul etaj al clădirii. Se putea ajunge la ei și prin spate, dinspre curtea școlii, trecând printr-o curte nu prea mare din care se deschidea și intrarea către crama subterană, instituție binecunoscută în acei ani amatorilor de must, de vin, de bere și de alte bunătăți...

După un timp devenisem om de-al casei. Ușa de intrare dădea într-o cameră mică, lungă și îngustă, de fapt un gen de hol/bucătărie ce era folosit doar în lunile mai calde. Iarna, aragazul era mutat în sufragerie. În acea cameră era și o mică masă de lucru a lui Mihai, lângă care am dus noi multe discuții. Aproape cu siguranță, în fund erau un divan și o etajeră cu rafturi ticsite cu cărți și ziare. Din acel hol, spre stânga se deschidea camera cea mai spațioasă a locuinței. Camera asta servea de sufragerie dar și ca dormitor al celor doi frați Drișcu. Mobilierul consta din două divane, o masă ce umplea tot centrul camerei, pe stânga lângă ușa ce ducea în dormitorul părinților era un dulap cu vitrină și rafturi, a cărei parte superioară, până spre plafon, era ocupată de cărți, iar în colțul opus, lângă ușa de intrare, era o sobă înaltă. În dormitorul părinților (servea probabil și ca „salon” pentru musafiri) nu cred să fi intrat vreodată, dar prin ușa cu geamuri se întvedea și acolo un șifonier larg, cu vitrină și oglindă și cu rafturile ticsite de cărți, până în tavan. Acasă și pentru familie, Mihai era Dănuț, iar fratele său mai mic, Petru, era Titi.

Titi era cu șase ani mai mic decât noi (pe Mihai și pe mine ne despărțeau doar 20 de zile), deci în acea perioadă să fi avut vreo șapte-opt ani. De pe atunci era un puști vioi și de o curiozitate veșnică și insașiabilă. Mihai zicea că frate-său era ca o fântână de întrebări: oricâte ciuturi ai scoate din ea, veșnic se umple înapoi. De pe atunci își luase fratele ca model și se străduia să-i meargă pe urme, mai ales cu obiceiul de a citi neconținut. În vara lui 1974, când cu Ana, soția mea, am revenit ca turiști în România, i-am întâlnit pe amândoi în București. Titi era pe atunci student. De la prima privire era evident efortul de a semăna cu Mihai. De fapt, Titi era mai înalt, mai zvelt, decât Mihai dar adoptase aceeași tunsură, aceeași barbă, același trenți scurt, la modă, aceleași intonații, același umor tăios. Din nefericire, a fost ultima dată când l-am văzut. Când - în 1984 - l-am reîntâlnit pe Mihai la București, Titi nu mai era cu el. Revenise de câțiva ani ca sociolog, la Suceava, unde a reușit să se afirme ca intelectual de valoare, ca ziarist, să publice. Întemeiasă o familie, i s-a născut un fiu, Lucian. Apoi Titi a părăsit aceste meleaguri ale vieții mult, mult prea devreme. Știu eu, poate că și în acest act a ales să fie asemenea fratelui său.

Cu siguranță, pasiunea - aș zice eu aproape obsesivă - a celor doi băieți ai familiei Drișcu pentru citit, pentru artă, pentru estetică, a încolțit în casa părintească. Tatăl, Grigore Drișcu, care le-a insuflat băieților setea nepotolită de carte, era un om de statură potrivită, rotofei, cu nas ascuțit și



chelie lucioasă și, mai ales, veșnic cu un zâmbet sau cel puțin o umbră de zâmbet și o zicală ironică pe buze. Grișa, cum îl numeau toți (inclusiv băieții lui), era jurist și lucra ca jurisconsult într-o instituție din oraș. Nu o dată am fost martor la sosirea lui de la servicii, cu servieta burdușită din care începea să scoată ziare și reviste pe care ni le împărțea. Când eram într-a VIII-a, inițiasem noi (ideea mea, realizare comună, iar toată grafica era a lui Mihai) o gazetă de perete satirică ce-am numit-o Claxonul. Cred că o reînnoiam cam o dată pe lună, iar materialele le publicam dactilografiate (cu două degete, sau chiar unul singur). Asta era posibil datorită bunului Grișa, care ne aducea, timp de câteva zile, o mașină de scris împrumutată la birou, pe care o căra zilnic, dus și întors, pe lângă servieta cu presa...

Mama lui Dănuț și Titi, Elena Drișcu, era o femeie mai mult scundă, cu părul negru, tenul întunecat, sprâncene dese și trăsături frumoase. Chiar dacă nu trecuse prin universități ca Grișa, făcea tot ce putea ca să înlesnească băieților orice preocupări intelectuale. Știu eu ? Poate de asta a încurajat și prietenia noastră ? Oricum, eram primit în casa lor cu evidentă naturaleză, bunăvoință și căldură. Nu-mi amintesc ca Mihai să fi avut vreun alt prieten apropiat ca mine. Singurul pe care îl întâlneam din când în când la familia Drișcu era Doru Boca, vărul dinspre mamă al lui Mihai, ce era ceva mai mare decât noi, un băiat citit și deștept.

Mihai era, ca mine, scund de statură. Dar aici se termina asemănarea fizică între noi. Încă din anii copilăriei se arăta mai robust, mai lat în umeri, emana energie și chiar putere fizică (un strâns de mână al lui Mihai îl țineai bine minte...). Încă de pe atunci era preocupat să-și călească corpul, să se elibereze cumva de limitele acestuia. Nu o dată mi-a spus că ar vrea să poată să se îmbrace la fel, vară sau iarnă, iar corpul să se adapteze schimbărilor de climă. În anumite măsură chiar încerca s-o facă în pofida protestelor și implorărilor mamei sale. Grișa însă, era de partea lui... Oricum, niciodată Mihai n-a purtat vreo căciulă, chiar în zilele de ger. Cel mult, bascul său bleumarin. Probabil în mod voit, fața sa emana o anumită duritate.

Am în fața ochilor o fotografie mică, gen pașaport, făcută probabil pe la începutul studenției. Pe verso stă scris „cu multe mulțumiri pentru mama-mare, Dănuț”. Figură serioasă, mai serioasă decât în realitate, fața lui Mihai conturează un dreptunghi aproape perfect. Pomeții obrajilor proeminenți, nasul drept și în totală simetrie, gura strânsă, bărbia avansată. Ochii cam ascunși de veșnicii ochelari cu ramă groasă, puțin rotunjită, în estetic contrast cu unghiurile drepte, dominante, ale feței. Păr negru, pieptănat probabil cu mare efort spre stânga pentru a-i stăpâni răzmerița cel puțin până după poză. Și o pereche de favoriți lungi, până sub urechi, care mie îmi sunt străini, nu-i avea încă în anii noștii la Suceava.



Am aflat dintr-un text al bunului său prieten din anii bucureșteni, Gheorghe Vida, că Mihai citea o carte pe zi. Nu știu dacă în anii de școală ajungea chiar la asemenea performanțe, dar fapt este că absorbea cantități inimaginabile de cărți, ziare și reviste de tot felul. Nici măcar nu mai încercam să mă măsoar cu el după ce o perioadă îmi pusesem norma de a citi 100 de pagini zilnic, normă la care am renunțat repede. Probabil totuși că dacă azi, după zeci de ani în care am comunicat în ivrit, mă pot exprima satisfăcător în limba română, datorez acest lucru în bună măsură lui Mihai și aspirației mele de a nu fi mai prejos decât el. Preferințele de lectură le aveam oarecum diferite. Eu tindeam mai mult spre aventură, romantism, tehnică sau literatură SF. Mihai prefera texte de documentare, deși erau mai greu de digerat, istorie, chiar filosofie, dar îndeosebi estetică și artă. Artă și din nou artă. Amândoi înghițeam tot ce puteam găsi despre cinematografie și pe acest subiect aveam veșnice discuții și polemici în jurul nenumăratelor filme pe care le vedeam. Eu nu reușeam, ca Mihai, să depistez toate punctele slabe ale vreunui film, pe când el era un critic cu o vedere adâncă și limba ascuțită, fără pic de milă...Amândoi cumpăram și citeam Contemporanul, Mihai mai cumpăra Gazeta Literară, iar eu Tribuna, săptămânalul clujean și le schimbam între



noi. Mihai le citea cred, integral dar eu, eu nu dovedeam decât să le răsfoiesc pentru că mai erau Lumea, Flacăra, Magazin, Colecția de povestiri SF, plus gazete cotidiene pe care le mai răsfoiam superficial, dar citeam rubricile interesante. Și bineînțeles, concomitent, am bătut toate drumurile și potecile marilor clasici, editați și reeditați neconținut în acei ani, cu prefețe lungi și docte, impregnate de omniprezenta ideologie a vremii. Imi amintesc cum Adi, fratele mai mare al Marei, ne sfătuia de la înălțimea maturității sale (să tot fi avut 23-24 de ani):

Citiți acum tot ce se poate. Mai târziu nu veți avea timp de asta...

Și noi ne-am conformat. Mihai și-a exprimat la un moment dat încrederea în valoarea celor învățate



prin lectură, povestindu-ne un episod despre George Călinescu, citit de el în Contemporanul. Călinescu fusese inclus ca membru de frunte într-o delegație culturală ce urma să plece în Republica Populară Chineză. Timp de trei luni înaintea plecării „s-a închis” în biblioteca Academiei și a citit tot ce se putea găsi despre China. Când delegația a ajuns acolo și au început discuțiile cu gazdele, „Călinescu i-a pus în fund pe chinezi cu câte știa!” De la Mihai vorbire.... după alți ani, bunul său prieten Gheorghe Vida povestea că, întrebat unde-și va petrece concediul, Mihai răspunsese:

Am să fac plajă la biblioteca Academiei!

Revenind la primii ani de liceu, îmi amintesc că atunci s-a format grupul nostru, al „celor cinci”: Mara (Bodingher), Mira (Seidler), Betty (Merdler), Mihai și eu. Întâlnirile, aproape zilnice, aveau loc la Mara, în „Casa Bodingher”, acolo ne petreceam aproape toate orele libere. La familia Drișcu ajungeam mai rar. În acei ani Mihai începuse să urmeze un curs seral de pictură la Școala populară de artă din oraș. Talentul său pentru artele grafice era de pe atunci evident.

De câte ori ni se tăia suflarea de admirație când Mihai, cu un cărbune sau creion în mână, însuflețea din câteva mișcări ale brațului, coala din blocul de desen! Peste ani, aveam să descriu acea perioadă într-o scrisoare pe care, paradoxal am găsit-o citată într-un roman publicat în 2010, în care Mihai și oarecum și eu ne-am găsit printre eroi: „Pe Mihai l-am admirat și apreciat de la început. Deși am încercat și eu, pe ici pe colo, să scriu, eram conștient deja de superioritatea sa intelectuală, de felul lui deosebit de a vedea lucrurile, de puterea sa de a le analiza și interpreta. La drept vorbind, el a fost pentru mine un model pe care am încercat să-l imit și, în același timp cel ce m-a citit primul și m-a criticat fără milă. Am învățat de la el enorm de mult. Diferențele între noi n-au produs niciodată invidie sau ceva similar. În toți acei câțiva ani fericiți armonia dintre noi a fost desăvârșită. Niciodată - nici o singură dată în opt ani - n-am avut vreo dispută pe plan personal.”

Fără îndoială, cantitățile de texte citite, bogăția de cuvinte și idei ce ne-au umplut sufletele, ne-au adus cu timpul la o anumită capacitate de a ne exprima cu naturalețe și ușurință. Iar în ce-l privea pe Mihai, el și avea multe de spus, idei importante, originale, serioase, documentate, argumentate. Eu, în schimb, abordam subiecte mai ușuratece, mai fanteziste, mai romantice poate dar învățasem să le expun într-un stil ce antrena imediat cititorul. La un sfârșit de trimestru, în clasa IX-a, când ne-a adus tezele corectate, profesorul Eichorn (ne preda istoria și ne era și diriginte) a spus că dacă ne-ar putea contopi, pe mine cu stilul meu înflăcărat și pe Mihai cu știința lui, ar ieși din noi un scriitor minunat.

Prin decembrie 1961, în vacanța de iarnă a clasei a IX-a, am citit Jurnalul lui Andrei Hudici de Felix Aderca. Pe atunci habar n-aveam că autorul era deja scriitor consacrat și apreciat încă



din perioada interbelică, nu știam că era evreu și că în afara aceluia roman pentru copii și tineret crease o operă literară amplă, necunoscută cititorilor tineri de după război. Sub impresia acestei cărți, am hotărât că trebuie să scriu un jurnal. Și astfel am început de fapt, a scrie. Jurnalul, cu pauze de uneori luni de zile, m-a însoțit până în primăvara lui 1964, când am plecat spre Israel. Nimeni, nici Mihai, nici fetele, nu știau că există și nu citiseră nici un rând din el. Câteva luni mai târziu, Colecția de povestiri SF - ale cărei broșuri le citeam cu sfințenie - a proclamat un concurs de povestiri SF pentru tinerii cititori. Fără a gândi mult, m-am pus pe treabă și l-am antrenat în proiect și pe Mihai. După luni de scris și dactilografiat (pe Mihai l-a ajutat Grișa, eu am apelat, contra plată, la un maestru dactilograf de profesie) am produs fiecare câte o povestire de câteva zeci de pagini. A mea a fost plină de aventuri, inclusiv o mică poveste de dragoste, și am intitulat-o Al doilea sfârșit al Atlantidei. Povestirea lui Mihai, al cărei titlu, din păcate, l-am uitat, avea un subiect social-psihologic și se baza pe o idee despre care tot ce-mi amintesc e că o găseam de-a dreptul strălucită. Amândoi am trimis manuscrisele dactilografiate la București, la redacție, iar după câteva luni în care mi-am ros unghiile (Mihai, cel puțin exterior, își păstra obișnuitul său calm, punctat de bancuri cinice) am ajuns la concluzia că în acel stadiu, aventura literară a luat sfârșit. Singurii cititori ai povestirilor noastre am rămas doar noi doi și fetele...

Apoi a venit a X-a, când Mihai a trecut pentru următorii doi ani, cu Mara, Betty, și un întreg cârd de fete, la clasa de „umană”. Mira și cu mine am rămas la „reală”. Dar, bineînțeles, continuam a fi împreună mai tot timpul. Spre sfârșitul aceluia an am trăit cu toții aventura numită Drum bun, Scumpul Nostru Astronaut, spectacolul SF montat de școala noastră. Mihai a interpretat cu talentul ce-l caracteriza în tot ce făcea, personajul profesorului „bun” și bineînțeles a avut în seamă (ajutat de Mara) realizarea a tot ce era desenat sau pictat în decoruri. Următorul an, cel al clasei a XI-a, a trecut ca un vis, iar în aprilie 1964, eu mi-am părăsit prietenii. Venise și rândul familiei noastre să plece în Israel. În ultima mea sâmbătă la Suceava, pe la orele prânzului, am mers la familia Drișcu să-mi iau rămas bun de la Mihai și ai săi. Lui Mihai i-am încredințat câteva caiete cu „manuscrisele” mele. Nu aveam voie să luăm cu noi nici un fel de material scris. Cu timpul, aveam să le uit cu totul și nici în cele două-trei întâlniri avute după ani, cu Mihai, nu mi-am amintit să-l întreb ce s-a întâmplat cu ele.

În primele luni după plecarea mea, „clubul” de la Mara și-a continuat activitatea deși cu toții erau prinși în grijile bacalaureatului. Timp de câteva luni am corespondat. Iată ce-mi scria Mihai prin iunie 1964 ca răspuns primei mele scrisori: „Ce am făcut ? Întâi am citit din jurnalul tău. Citez din însemnările mele de la acea dată: e peste tot în postură de micro-Romeo (fata are babacii catâri). Poezia cu ochii (aia cu litere de tipar) e prea puțin personală. M-a emoționat spovedania despre amintirea mamei. Te-ai supăra dacă - peste ani - aș fura unele idei de-ale

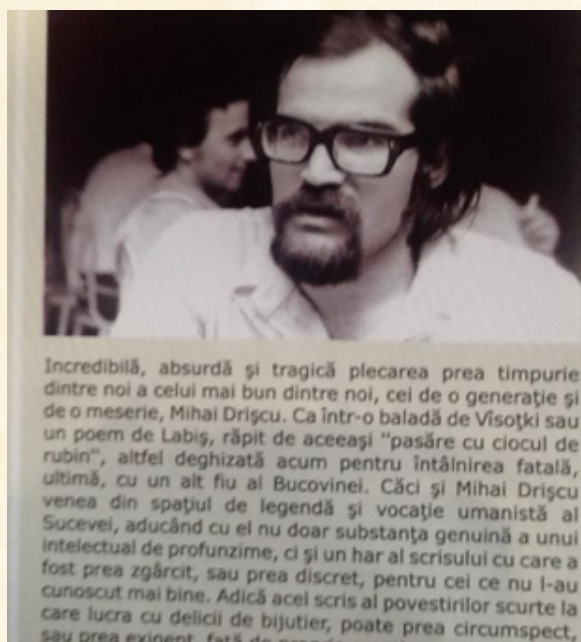


tale pentru o serie de portrete literare ? respectiv adolescentul care între două lansări de rachete lansează un oftat către țăriile cerului și ochii ingrateri.”

Apoi, în aceeași scrisoare povestește despre olimpiada de literatură română din acel an, când a luat locul I pe țară: „Înainte să plec la concurs îi spun în flegmă lui taică-meu: Grișa, să știi că vin cu un aparat de fotografiat. Zexe! zice el. Punem pariu. Dacă vin cu el nu te bărbierești un an. Bine! și râde. La București cald; eu în uniforma din tergal de urzici înnebuneam. De nebun ce am fost am ajuns primul pe țară (tema ”viața satului nou în literatura actuală”).”

În acea vară pe Mihai l-au mai așteptat câteva încercări. La admitere, la Arte, ar fi vrut să intre la Scenografie, dar până la urmă s-a înscris la Istoria și Teoria artelor, de unde s-a dezvoltat viitoarea sa carieră, cea a unuia din cei mai proeminenți critici de artă ai României în deceniile care au urmat. O dată trecute peripețiile admiterii și familiarizării adolescentului sucevean cu viața de student în București, iată cum descria Mihai în noiembrie 1964 începuturile studenției: „O duc mai ceva ca-n Texas, mai ales că aici nu se împușcă decât la bălci. Bursa e bursă, căminul e cămin, masa-i masă, mă îngraș și m-am apucat de haltere, seminarii nu avem, vreo 20 de ore pe săptămână, sâmbăta liber, abia la vară 4 examene, filme, 3 biblioteci foarte garnisite în limbi străine, companie selectă (Fata mi-a spus deja că i-aș place și mai mult cu barbă..). Am unii profesori tobă de carte (Schileru, care făcea cronică cinematografică la Gaz. lit., la istorie unul Ionescu care știe toate cancanurile istoriei și își pigmentează cursul cu anecdote... și în sfârșit franceza are mare căutare la noi, nu numai în domeniul picturii. Îi descoperim pe Camus, Malraux. La cursuri am multă bibliografie în limbi străine, în special lucrări franțuzești. ”

În anii următori, cumva, purtați toți de valurile vieții, legăturile s-au rărit, iar apoi aproape au dispărut. Fetele grupului nostru au ajuns și ele, toate, în Israel. Pe Mihai l-am mai întâlnit, cum mai pomenisem, la București, în 1973 și 1974. Întâlniri scurte în care n-am reușit să ne spunem mai nimic din poveștile nenumărate pe care am fi vrut să ni le spunem. Pentru ultima oară l-am întâlnit în 1984, tot la București. Singurul local unde am găsit loc să discutăm era barul hotelului nostru, Union. Mihai a condus discuția, ocolind nostalgiile amintirilor. Nu era în firea lui. A vorbit mult despre ceea făcea și nu mai puțin despre ceea ce „nu-l lăsau să facă” sau să scrie. Eram,

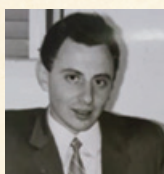


cred, singurii consumatori în bar, dar cine știe câte urechi ne pândeau! Pentru acei ani de groază ai României, Mihai își permitea o libertate de a vorbi care pe mine, turist cu pașaport străin, mă făcea să mă foiesc neliniștit în scaun. Întâlnirea s-a încheiat cu bine. La plecarea lui Mihai din barul de la Union, ne-am luat rămas bun. Pentru totdeauna. Peste nici cinci ani avea să fie răpus în acel „accident” stupid și încă departe de a fi elucidat.

Totuși, nici iureșul existenței, nici rutina vieții de zi cu zi și nici atâta amar de ani nu mi-au putut șterge ceea ce mi-au sădit în suflet acei opt ani fericiți de prietenie a doi copii, deveniți apoi adolescenți, doi tineri, în Suceava anilor 60.

Acum câțiva ani, printr-un concurs de împrejurări de necrezut, demn de o povestire SF, și posibil doar acum, în epoca internetului, ne-am reîntâlnit, Mihai Drișcu și eu, într-un univers de dincolo de oglindă, de Oglinda cu Memorie. Și mi-am regăsit jurnalul, de care uitasem, hotărând că cel mai potrivit loc de a-l păstra e printre documentele lui Mihai, aflate la Biblioteca Bucovinei „I. G. Sbiera”. Cine știe, poate ideea lansată în glumă de profesorul Eichorn acum aproape 60 de ani, de a ne contopi spiritual, s-a materializat în acest fel...

Tot în acel iureș de întâmplări de necrezut am cunoscut-o atunci pe doamna Gabriela Drișcu, cea care a fost soția lui Titi și cumnata lui Mihai. Gabi, care de atunci ne-a devenit prietenă, este cea care – după ce Grișa, Mihai, Titi și Elena au trecut în veșnicie - menține vie flăcăriua memoriei lor. Și tot Gabi este cea care, prin familia sa - fiul, Lucian, Paul și Dani, nepoții - continuă lanțul existenței „Drișcanilor”. Lui Gabi și băieților ei le dedic, cu afecțiune, aceste pagini inspirate de memoria prietenului meu, Mihai.



Ultima vară la Suceava

Beni Budic

Suceava acelor ani era un orășel destul de mic. Nu știi dacă număra mai mult de 20.000 de locuitori, dintre care mulți locuiau în case fără etaj, înconjurată de curți mai mari sau mai mici unde, cu cât te îndepărtați de centru, se puteau zări vara câteva straturi cu flori dar și răsaduri de roșii, ridichi sau ceapă verde. Aceia dintre suceveni ce locuiau în centru sau în jurul centrului, orășeni get-beget, ocupau foste locuințe habsburgice, cam toate la primul și singurul etaj, deasupra magazinelor de la parter. Fostele apartamente ale burghezimii bucovinene din „anii buni” fuseseră împărțite fiecare în 2-3 modeste locuințe muncitorești. Chiar cei ce au avut șansa ca în locuința lor să fi fost inclusă camera de baie a apartamentului original nu aveau apă curentă



mai mult de o oră pe zi, iar cada folosea de obicei ca rezervor. Aproape toate aceste clădiri erau într-o stare deplorabilă, cu pereții exteriori scorojiți, cu scări șubrede și balcoane care abia de se mai țineau. În scurt timp, majoritatea aveau să fie demolate iar centrul orașului avea să-și schimbe înfățișarea. Mai erau pe ici-colo, tot în zona centrală, câteva vile ridicate în perioada interbelică, în stilul „internațional”; în anii copilăriei mele, acestea își mai păstrau frumusețea, chiar dacă fuseseră și ele împărțite în 2-3 locuințe.

Perimetrul familiar mie al orașului se întindea cam de la Cetate (chiar locuiam pe Strada Cetății, dar la capătul dinspre oraș, la nr. 6), trecea spre străzile centrului, unde locuiau mulți dintre prietenii mei, apoi trecea prin acele străzi unde se desfășurau promenadele serilor de vară și se cam termina în zona liceului „Ștefan cel Mare”. De asemeni, îmi erau bine cunoscute străzile ce duceau spre apa Sucevei și către Burdujeni. Mai rar mă aventuram însă către Turnul Roșu, sau mai departe, la Zamca. Acea parte din nord vestul orașului îmi era aproape necunoscută. S-a făcut însă ca în vara lui 1963, ultima mea vacanță la Suceava, să am ocazia de a cutreiera aproape zilnic, timp de câteva săptămâni, prin acea zonă.

Vacanța venise după animația și emoțiile legate de reprezentarea, prin luna mai, a piesei Drum bun, scumpul nostru astronaut!, pe care am descris-o într-o relatare anterioară. Fără a exagera, munca de câteva luni pentru pregătirea spectacolului mi-a consumat multe energii, chiar pentru un adolescent de 16 ani. După spectacol, deși plin de satisfacție, simțeam un fel de senzație de gol. Tot ceea ce-mi umpluse existența în lunile anterioare a dispărut dintr-o dată. Nu aveam nici un fel de idei cum sau unde îmi voi petrece lunile verii. Galațiul încetase să fie posibilitatea preferată, cum fusese de atâtea ori în anii trecuți, după ce tanti Anuța și nene Zissu emigraseră în Israel. Rămânea rutina, de altfel destul de plăcută, dar totuși monotonă, a lecturilor prelungite în noapte, a sculatului târziu, întâlnirile cu grupul de prieteni la Mara, eventuale incursiuni la apa Sucevei (da, cam în urmă cu doi ani reușisem în sfârșit, singur, sa învăț să înot!!), plimbările prin oraș și interminabilele discuții cu Mihai Drișcu și cu fetele (Mira, Mara și Betty). Și mai intrase în discuție un plan al bunicilor de a face la sfârșit de august un voiaj de o săptămână la București, la rude, iar eu urma sa-i însoțesc. Minunată perspectivă pentru un tânăr care de fapt nu cunoștea Bucureștiul decât superficial, după câteva scurte vizite în copilărie. Dar până la sfârșit de august mai erau vreo două luni bune... Tocmai atunci l-am întâlnit pe Mihăiță Rusu, unul din cei mai simpatici colegi de clasă. De statură mijlocie, cu o coamă de păr negru, frumos, cu ochi inteligenți și un veșnic zâmbet ștrengar, Mihăiță, era apreciat și iubit de toți pentru istețimea și jovialitatea sa, chiar dacă nu era printre cei mai buni elevi. Mi-a povestit că lucrează la DSAPC (pentru cei neinițiați: Direcția de Sistematizare Arhitectură și Proiectare a Construcțiilor) ca ajutor al unei



domnișoare inginer, care face niște măsurători de cadastru în cartierele de la periferia orașului. Din vorbele lui reieșea că lucrul e floare la ureche, șefa e simpatică, și chiar salariul e mișto... Păcat doar că perioada de angajare a elevilor e limitată la trei sau patru săptămâni, iar el urma în câteva zile să-și termine serviciul, așa că dacă mă interesează, să fug repede la DSAPC să nu mi-o ia careva înainte...Ceea ce am făcut chiar în dimineața următoare, când m-am prezentat cu buletinul la sediul întreprinderii. Dacă îmi amintesc bine, acesta se afla în apropiere de cinematograful „Tineretului”, într-o clădire vastă, cu o curte interioară în care se intra printr-o boltă mare, pe sub care putea trece cu ușurință un camion.

Și așa se face că din dimineața zilei de luni a următoarei săptămâni am devenit salariat temporar la DSAPC Suceava. Pe Betty, domnișoara inginer, am întâlnit-o chiar în curtea întreprinderii lângă o căruță cu cal, în care un lucrător încărca echipamentul. Acesta era compus în primul rând din teodolitul „Zeiss”, ambalat într-o cutie de metal cilindrică, cu capacul bombat, înzestrată cu o curelușă ce folosea de mâner. Cea ce am înțeles de la bun început era că teodolitul trebuia păzit ca ochii din cap, să nu primească, ferească sfântul, vreo lovitură. Apoi urma trepiedul de lemn al teodolitului, într-o husă dintr-o țesătură foarte rezistentă, ca foaia de cort, care în plus, era întărită cu piele la partea superioară, protejând mecanismul înșurubat în aparat. Urma stadia, o riglă lungă de vreo doi metri jumătate, marcată centimetric cu semne și cifre în roșu și negru, compusă din două jumătăți și ambalată într-o husă jerpelită. La sfârșit au fost încărcăți vreo trei piloni de lemn, cam de un metru jumătate, vopsiți în benzi alb-roșu. După asta, omul cu căruța a mai trântit înăuntru câțiva țăruiși de fier și un ditamai ciocan, pe care doar el era în stare să-l mânuiască și apoi a sărit pe capră. Betty si-a pus pe umăr o geantă mare, ditamai sacul, în care se aflau pălăria, o păturică, caietul de notare a măsurătorilor, ruleta, un sandwich, câteva fructe și încă o adevărată comoară despre care voi vorbi mai încolo. A urcat sprintenă în căruță, lângă vizitiul nostru și m-a îndemnat să urc și eu în spate, printre piesele de echipament. Nu prea comod, dar noroc că drumul n-a fost lung. Căruța ne-a lăsat lângă o casă de gospodari, pe o străduță din zona Zamca, aproape de capătul orașului. Acolo Betty a schimbat ceva vorbe cu stăpâna locului și în câteva minute parte din echipament a fost plasat în magazia din curte. Căruțașul nostru a pornit doar cu ciocanul și țăruișii de fier, să-i bată în pământ în locuri știute doar de el și de domnișoara inginer, după care nu l-am mai văzut mai bine de-o săptămână.

Betty mi-a arătat cum se montează teodolitul pe trepied apoi și l-a pus pe umăr, băiețește. Mie mi-a dat să car stadia, bețele alb-roșu și sacoșa ei voluminoasă și am pornit. După cel mult vreo sută de pași, am ajuns la un loc umbrat, unde, între gardul unei curți și șanțul năpădit de iarba și flori de mușețel, lângă un loc însemnat cu cretă roșie pe gard, a găsit - bătut bine în pământ



- capul unui țăruș de fier, ca acelea aduse în căruță. Acolo am instalat noi teodolitul și Betty l-a calibrat cu firul cu plumb, exact deasupra țărușului ce marca punctul de pornire al unui nou set de măsurători.

Betty Abramovici împlinise la începutul acelei veri 29 de ani și era deja cineva ce-și cunoștea bine valoarea. Era de statură mijlocie, puțin (numai puțin!) plinuță, o față rotundă și determinată, nasul oarecum ascuțit - toate încoronate de o frumusețe de bucle blonde și de o pereche de ochi ca albastrul cerului. Aveam să aflu că la Suceava ajunsese cu serviciul, că era încă celibatară, că familia (părinții și o soră mai tânără, chiar de vârsta mea) locuia la Fălticeni, unde ea se născuse și crescuse. Studiile la facultatea de geodezie, pe la începutul anilor '50, i-au cerut multe sacrificii, dar voința ei de fier a ajutat-o să răzbată și să devină domnișoara Inginer, cum visase tatăl ei.

Am început lucrul și, așa cum spusese Mihăiță, nu era deloc greu. Mai ales că înainte de toate, Betty a scos din sacoșa ei „comoara”: un radio tranzistor portabil Tesla, ultimul răcnet al tehnologiei socialiste cehe. Aparatele de acest gen deveniseră pe atunci un adevărat simbol al modernismului și nu era tânăr să nu fi visat la o astfel de bijuterie. Eu unul nici să visez nu îndrăzneam... Radioul era cam de măsura unei cărți voluminoase, din material plastic de o culoare deschisă și avea un mâner de metal, pliabil, căptușit tot cu plastic. Pe partea de sus, pe dreapta, era un disc transparent, cu marcații, ce servea la căutat frecvența dorită. Betty a găsit repede un post ce transmitea muzică ușoară și a pus radioul pe păturica întinsă pe iarbă, lângă trepedul teodolitului. Din acel moment, munca a devenit o adevărată plăcere...

După ce am scos stadia din husă și am montat cele două jumătăți, aceasta ajunsese de lungimea unei prăjini. Întâi, cu bețele alb-roșu într-o mână și cu capătul ruletei în cealaltă, marcam, fie cu bățul, fie cu vreo piatră și cretă roșie, punctele de măsurat așa cum mi le indica Betty. Apoi, eu reveneam cu stadia în fiecare punct iar Betty, cu teodolitul, citea prin lunetă valorile și le nota imediat în caiet. Astfel am continuat, fără prea multă grabă, un ceas sau un ceas și jumătate, după care Betty a declarat că a sosit ora pauzei. S-a așezat pe păturică și m-a invitat să șed și eu. A scos din geanta-sacoșă niște fructe, m-a cinstit și pe mine și a inițiat o discuție scurtă: de unde sunt părinții, cum o duc cu școala, ce mă pasionează și alte câteva subiecte pe care le-am tratat destul de rapid și superficial. Toate pe fundalul muzical al radioului Tesla. La fel s-a întâmplat și la următoarea pauză, către prânz, când ne-am mâncat sandvișurile. Ziua de muncă s-a terminat la scurt timp după asta. Am strâns echipamentul, l-am dus în magazia familiei unde am poposit dimineața, ba am fost cinstiți cu apă rece și am luat-o pe jos spre oraș. Nu era mai mult de ora



14 când ne-am despărțit în centru și am stabilit să ne întâlnim a doua zi, pe la 8.30, în fața casei unde rămăsese echipamentul. Astfel a luat sfârșit prima zi de lucru din cariera mea. Viitorul se arăta promițător...

Zilele următoare au trecut foarte asemănător. Vremea frumoasă ne-a permis să colindăm cu măsurătorile geodezice străduțele acelei margini de oraș, ca și străzile ce duceau într-acolo dinspre centru, locuri care până atunci îmi fuseseră aproape necunoscute. O dată sau de două ori am mai trecut pe la întreprindere, în centru, să luăm sau să schimbăm diverse lucruri din echipamentul necesar. Căruța ne ducea spre vreo gospodărie nouă, mai apropiată de zona măsurătorilor, ce avansau zi de zi spre alte străduțe. Discuțiile cu Betty erau mai frecvente și mai prietenești, dar domnișoara inginer știa cum să păstreze distanța de rigoare față de subalternul licean, așa că gama subiectelor abordate a rămas cam redusă. Munca era destul de ușoară și mai ales interesantă, într-o companie plăcută, promitându-mi și un câștig frumos în perspectiva visatului voiaj la București. Și nu mai puțin important: după amiezile și serile eram liber să le petrec cu prietenii, ca de obicei. Fără îndoială, chiar dacă nu mai exista perspectiva Galațiului, era o vară minunată.

Într-una din zile, pe când ne mâncam sandvișurile, Betty îmi povesti că sora ei mai mică, liceană ca și mine, absolventă de clasa a X-a la Fălticeni, se află la ea, venită pentru două-trei zile de vacanță la Suceava, „orașul mare”. Oricât o fi fost Suceava de mare, față de Fălticeni acelor ani, posibilitățile de distracție erau destul de reduse, așa că Betty m-a întrebat dacă aș fi de acord s-o întâlnesc pe sora ei într-o după amiază și să ne plimbăm prin oraș. Bineînțeles că am acceptat fără nici o rezervă, deși aveam impresia că atât Betty cât și, probabil, sora ei, nu aveau mari iluzii în ce privește potențialul distractiv al întâlnirii cu un muncitor-elev.

Pe Rica am întâlnit-o în orele mai târzii ale după-amiezii, la intrarea în grădina publică. Semăna mult cu sora ei: aceiași ochi, același păr, dar statura mai zveltă, fața și privirea îi dădeau o alură de siguranță de sine mai accentuată. De la prima privire, chiar dacă nu era regina promoției, părea simpatică și ceea ce era cel mai important: părea a fi fată deșteaptă. Cred că purta pantaloni „pescar”, ce-i ajungeau puțin peste genunchi, și care erau atunci foarte în vogă, o bluză de culoare deschisă iar pe braț ținea o jachețică subțire. La început ne-am plimbat puțin prin centru și nu prea știi ce subiecte am abordat. Probabil n-a trecut mult timp până am înțeles amândoi că avem preocupări și preferințe comune, că citim cam aceleași articole în Contemporanul, că am văzut cam aceleași filme și piese de teatru. Eu i-am relatat pe larg cum am reprezentat spectacolul Drum bun, scumpul nostru astronaut! iar Rica mi-a povestit despre pasiunea ei pentru teatru și cum s-a făcut că încă în clasa a IX-a a jucat rolul feminin principal din Năpasta lui Caragiale



pusă în scenă (cam curioasă alegere...) de profesoara lor de română. Am mai discutat despre piesele lui George Bernard Shaw, pe care din întâmplare le citiserăm amândoi recent și despre altele multe. După ce parcurseserăm centrul de vreo două ori, am pornit-o spre pădurice. Pe drum, cam pe lângă mănăstirea Sfântul Ioan, câțiva zurbagii ne-au depășit și au ațâțat niște albine ce roiau pe acolo. Când una din albine a înțepat-o pe Rica la braț, au fugit răsând. Dar în pofida incidentului, Rica s-a comportat cu mult sânge rece. Si-a șters locul cu o batistă udă, și – cu toate că era roșie la față de durere - nu a scos nici un țipăt, nici o vorbă și după doar câteva minute a ținut să continuăm plimbarea și discuția. Ne-am despărțit ceva mai târziu, când începea să se întunece, tot pe lângă parc. A doua zi Rica s-a întors acasă, la Fălticeni. De atunci n-am mai întâlnit-o vreodată.

Cred că plimbarea cu Rica s-a petrecut într-o după amiază de sâmbătă. Când m-am prezentat luni dimineața la lucru, Betty s-a uitat lung la mine și mi-a spus cât de plăcut surprinsă a fost când sora ei i-a povestit cum, contrar tuturor așteptărilor, însoțitorul trimis s-a dovedit a fi un partener de discuție „de nivel”...Nu gândea că la Suceava sunt liceeni ce citesc Contemporanul... Trebuie să recunosc că cele auzite de la Betty mi-au dat multă satisfacție. I-am mulțumit fără să mai pomenesc că și eu am fost impresionat de faptul că la Fălticeni erau fete de nivel intelectual ridicat. Apoi ne-am continuat măsurătorile printre casele de pe Zamca. Era ultima mea săptămână de lucru. Iani, vărul meu, avea să-mi ia locul în echipă, chiar dacă abia absolvise clasa a VIII-a. Măsurătorile în zona Zamca se terminaseră, iar Betty a preluat un teren nou, pe dealul din Burdujeni.

Zilele de vară ce-au mai rămas s-au scurs repede. Ultima săptămână a lui august am petrecut-o la București, cu bunicii. Eram aproape cu totul liber să cutreier orașul după voia mea, la prima mea întâlnire mai serioasă cu Bucureștiul, visul tuturor provincialilor. A fost minunat. Bineînțeles că banii câștigați la DSAPC s-au dovedit de mare folos. La Suceava am revenit în zile ploioase de început de septembrie. Școala era în mutare, în sfârșit, în clădirea nouă ce fusese ridicată pe strada Petru Rareș. Parte din elevi am fost mobilizați la descărcat băncilor, aduse din clădirea unde școala fusese plasată temporar în anul anterior. Apoi am început clasa a XI-a. Nu știam pe atunci că nu o voi absolvi la Suceava. În aprilie, în toiul vacanței de primăvară (erau și zilele de Pesah - Paștele nostru, al evreilor) am fost anunțați de autorități că ne-a fost aprobată, după șase ani de așteptare, plecarea spre Israel. Două săptămâni mai târziu, într-o seară de sâmbătă, am părăsit Suceava. Au trecut de atunci 53 de ani. De la zilele de muncă la măsurători și întâlnirea cu Rica, sunt deja 54 de ani! Pe Betty și pe Rica le-am cam uitat, de-a lungul anilor, după cum se pare că nici dânsle n-au păstrat vie vreo amintire din zilele acelei veri a lui 1963.

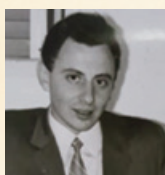
Acum vreo trei luni o cunoștință mi-a recomandat o carte lansată recent. E vorba de un volum de



amintiri, scrise într-o manieră ce combină realul cu visul, nostalgia cu durerea, despre viața unei adolescente și a familiei sale în Fălticeni anilor '60. Cartea e scrisă în ebraică și se numește Republicii 65, adresa din micul oraș a familiei Abramovici. Din cele câteva rânduri de pe coperta a IV-a, am înțeles că autoarea a mai publicat un roman și o carte pentru copii. De asemeni e activă de mulți ani, ca dramaturg, regizoare și actriță în cercuri dramatice din orașul unde locuiește, în nordul țării. Se numește Rika Ram.

După ce am citit primele pagini nu m-am putut abține să nu răsfoiesc, cu nerăbdare, către capitolele dedicate anilor de liceu ai autoarei. Spre dezamăgirea mea, n-am găsit nici o aluzie la zilele de vară ale lui '63. A doua zi am reușit să vorbesc cu Rika la telefon, iar peste alte câteva zile, cu Betty. Nu, nici una, nici alta nu-și amintesc de adolescentul purtător de teodolit și pasionat de teatru, dar aprobă absolut toate amănuntele povestirii.

Probabil că a fost odată, că de n-ar fi fost, nu aș fi avut ce povesti...



Suceva am părăsit-o într-o sâmbătă seară

Beni Budic

În trenul de noapte ce ne ducea spre București începeam să realizez că fiecă kilometru parcurs mă îndepărta, mă rupea pentru todeauna de târâmurile copilăriei. Oare știam în acele ore că voi mai reveni - cu gândul, cu visul - de nenumarate ori spre orașul de pe deal și spre Burdujeniul bunicilor, dincolo de lunca Sucevei? Și că, după zeci de ani, voi mai avea parte să aprind o lumânare pe mormântul mamei, în cimitirul evreiesc, pe delușorul de după pădurice? Luminile peroanelor de gară se depănau sfâșiind întunericul, însoțite de gemetele frânelor de tren: Dolhasca, Pașcani, Roman, Bacău...Gândurile însă mă aduceu mereu la peronul minunatei gări a Burdujeniului, pe locurile unde am avut parte în adolescență de momente, emoții și simțiri ce s-au înrădăcinat în mine pentru todeauna

La Burdujeni m-am născut și acolo am petrecut primii mei patru ani care mi-au lăsat doar frânturi de amintiri. Dar aveam să revin mereu în târgulețul unde rămăseseră bunicii și familia iubitei mele mătușe, Freida, sora mai tânără a mamei, cea care m-a însoțit, de departe ca și de aproape, cu grija și dragostea sa pînă când s-a stins acum trei ani aici, în Israel.

La Suceava ne-am mutat în 1950. Tata obținuse un serviciu la „Alimentara” și reușise să obțină și o locuință (cu chirie) pe strada Cetății nr. 6. Era a treia casă pe dreapta străzii așternute cu prundiș ce cobora, destul de abrupt, spre Cacăina și spre cărarea ce ducea apoi în sus, spre ruinele Cetății de Scaun. Casa fusese probabil proprietatea unei familii de evrei înstăriți, dar în



acei ani era deja împărțită în patru locuințe unde trăiau câteva familii. La început am ocupat locuința din dreapta casei, genul de trei camere-vagon. În locuința alăturată, paralelă dar plasată în mijlocul casei, deci mai bine apărată de frig și de umezeală, trăia familia Kavon: părinții, două fete și un fiu care erau deja maturi. Aveau o căruță cu cal adăpostită în grajdul din fundul curții. Când, după un timp nu prea lung (cred că mai puțin de un an), familia Kavon a plecat în Israel, grajdul avea să devină magazie de lemne. Pe una din laturile magaziei, incluse în clădirea de zid, erau cele două cabine de toaleta ale casei. Noi ne-am mutat într-o noapte în locuința lor, unde am trăit următorii 13-14 ani, până la plecare. Fosta noastră locuință a fost ocupată mai târziu de familia Chibici: Stefan Chibici, ceasornicar și mecanic de rar talent, invalid, cu ambele picioare paralizate, soția sa și Armin, fiul ei (germani de origine), care era ceva mai mare decât mine.

De-a lungul anilor m-au însoțit, auzite prin peretele comun, sunetele orare ale ceasurilor cu pendulă din atelierul de ceasornicărie aflat în camera ce dădea spre stradă. Masa de lucru era lipită de una din cele două ferestre și când treceam prin fața casei nu puteam să nu-l văd prin geam pe Dl. Chibici, cu lupa de ceasornicar la ochi, înarmat cu „pințeta” și alte scule minuscule, aplecat asupra vreunui mecanism de ceas. Dl. Chibici cânta la acordeon și la pianină, era pescar amator iar figura sa prietenoasă mi-a marcat copilăria. Fără îndoială a fost o apariție cunoscută a Sucevei acelor ani, când trecea cu scaunul său pe roțile prin oraș. La început, căruciorul îl activa manual, cu brațele sale viguroase. După un timp s-a adăugat un motorăș iar după alți câțiva ani căruciorul l-a înlocuit cu o adevărată motocicletă pe 3 roți cu comenzile adaptate la mâini, care avea în spate și o banchetă, destul de largă pentru a ne transporta uneori pe Armin și pe mine. Câteodată plecam cu ei la pescuit, pe malul Sucevei. Scaunul pe roțile l-a păstrat și-l folosea când mergea la cinema. Ca și acum îl văd, în fața casei, sau în curtea din spate, demontând, reparând, reglând și remontând motorul motocicletei, când toate piesele erau defășurate pe o pătură iar Chibici, pe vine, se deplasa mișcându-și picioarele paralizate cu ajutorul mâinilor sale puternice. În tot acest procedeu, ce dura ore, era asistat și ajutat de Armin. Eu priveam fermecat cum o colecție de piese de metal redevine un motor ce până la urmă pornește și lucrează sforăind armonios și umplând curtea cu mirosul benzinei arse. Când am împlinit 13 ani mi s-a dat în folosință Doxa moștenită de la mama. Nu era un ceas solid, ci unul fin și elegant, iar în câteva rânduri a suferit avarii provocate de jocurile mele. De fiecare dată, Dl. Chibici m-a scos din nenorocire. Doxa mamei nu o mai port de zeci de ani, dar când dau de ea în sertar și-i întorc arcul, mai funcționează.

Locuința noastră avea două camere și bucatărie. Camera ce dădea spre stradă folosea de salon și dormitor al părinților. Era mobilată cu un pat studio, un șifonier și o masă pătrată, masivă. Camera mea era la mijloc, cea mai călduroasă, însă luminată doar de ușile și ferestrele cu geam



ce dădeau spre prima cameră și spre bucătărie. Iarna, când bucătăria nu era încălzită, camera asta ne folosea și de sufragerie. Bucătăria era dominată de o sobă de gătit cu plită din fontă și un cuptor alăturat, dar de gătit se gătea deja pe aragaz, iar focul în soba-cuptor se aprindea mai rar, vinerile, ziua gătitului și coptului sau în zilele de spălat rufe. Ușa bucătăriei, cu oblon, ducea, printr-un mic cerdac, spre curte. Era o curte mare, ce de fapt înconjura trei laturi ale casei. Lângă scările acoperite ce duceau spre pod se ridica un salcâm înalt care primăvara se acoperea de flori albe și dulci, umplând curtea cu parfum. Puțin mai sus, era gardul înalt ce acoperea cu totul vederea spre livada de meri ce înconjura biserica Sf. Ioan. Din cerdac puteam întrezări turla bisericii și diminețele de duminică erau pline de sunetele clopotelor. Merele acrișore din curtea bisericii erau o atracție, dar gardul era înalt și doar în spatele magaziei de lemne puteam ajunge la câteva crengi...Pe latura dinspre biserică a curții, erau semănate spre vară 2-3 straturi de ceapă sau de roșii. Tot acolo, lângă gardul casei vecine, se afla și o magazioară care în trecutul casei servise proprietarilor drept Suka - acea colibă ce semnifică săptămâna sărbătorii biblice de toamnă (Festivalul Colibi, Sărbătoarea Corturilor, sau a „Tabernacolelor”). Acoperișul de tablă putea fi ridicat și înlocuit pentru zilele sărbătorii cu unul temporar, improvizat din crengi înfrunzite. Dar toate astea le-am învățat mai târziu. În vremea mea, magazioara folosea familiei Chibici de cămară. În spate era și un mic șopron îngrădit unde în lunile toamnei îngrășau porcul. Apoi, de Ignat, câteva zile înainte de Crăciun, sacrificarea porcului și întreaga ceremonie condusă de măcelarul angajat, cu cazanele de apă clocotită și focul aprins pe lângă animalul sacrificat era un spectacol fascinant la care am fost martor de câteva ori.

Atracția principală a curții din spate era însă pompa. Pompa de apă - de fapt o cișmea mare de fier - care asigura aprovizionarea locatarilor cu apă și care funcționa doar o oră sau două pe zi. Pompa era chiar lângă ușa bucătăriei noastre deci, spre deosebire de vecini, aveam de făcut doar câțiva pași cu gălețile pline, pînă la butoiul cu capac, din tablă zincată, unde erau acumulați mereu câțiva zeci de litri de apă. (În bucătărie, chiar lângă butoi trona lavoarul, cu lighean emailat și o cană cu mâner mare, aproape cât o oală, pentru scosul apei din butoi). Aprovizionarea cu apă devenea însă o adevărată aventură când adeseori, iarna, pompa îngheța, deși fusese bine învelită și căptușită cu paie. Dezghețarea pompei era un proces complicat: se vărsau nenumărate oale cu apă clocotită și nu întodeauna reușea... Atunci, când în butoiul din bucătărie se întrededa deja fundul, soluția era de a ajunge cu gălețile la doamna Haimovici, în casa alăturată de la nr. 4, care (raritate în acei ani!) aveau robinet chiar în casă. Sau de a parcurge vreo sută-două de metri pîna la o altă pompă în josul străzii...

A doua latură a curții se întindea de la magazia de lemne pînă la stradă, de-a lungul locuințelor unde stăteau familiile Hibner și Shiber. Era de fapt o aripă cu o bucătărie și 3 camere ce fusese



împărțită în 2 apartamente. Apartamentul Hibnerilor avea lângă bucătărie și o cameră de baie cu toaletă interioară. Aveau chiar și robinet în bucătărie, dar în afara toaletei, apă curgătoare nu era, așa că și ei se aprovizionau de la pompă. În cele două apartamente trăiau cele două perechi cu câte un copil mic - un băiețel și o fetiță. Izu Hibner era un bărbat dolofan, cu păr șaten ondulat, tânăr și arătos, la curent cu cele mai moderne tehnologii ale epocii: era fotograf amator și chiar developa singur acasă filme și poze. Era gestionarul magazinului de Sport-Foto-Muzică din centru. Soția sa, Piri, femeie frumoasă, cu părul negru, tuns scurt, era transilvăneancă. Pe atunci nu știam că numărul tatuat pe unul din brațele ei dovedea că tânăra Piri era printre puținii supraviețuitori de la Auschwitz. Băiețelul lor, Meir, era cu 3-4 ani mai mic decât mine. În unele veri, părinții noștri aduceau, în tovărășie, o căruță cu nisip și ne amenajau în curte un spațiu de joacă. În una din ierni, când zăpada a ajuns la streșine, ieșeam din casă prin adevărate tunele croite în nămeți. În aripa curții ce trecea pe la intrarea Hibnerilor, se bătătorise o potecă de trecere care probabil se formase la mai bine de un metru deasupra terenului. Spre primăvară, când poteca se mai muiase, mi-l amintesc pe Izu Hibner cum s-a scufundat într-o zi până la brâu în zăpadă, pe când se îndrepta spre ieșirea din curte. Pe la sfârșitul anilor 50, familiile Hibner și Shiber aveau să plece în Israel, iar în locul lor au venit locatari noi.

În primii ani, acea latură a curții era foarte largă și cuprindea o porțiune de teren ce mai târziu a fost despărțită cu gard de curtea noastră și plantată cu porumb. Dar pînă la această schimbare aveam la dispoziție un spațiu vast, acoperit cu iarbă și dominat într-o parte de un nuc falnic. Afară de recolta de nuci, pomul ne oferea umbră și loc unde să întindem în după-amiezele de vară, o pătură. Tot acolo era locul preferat unde era invitat domnul Pânzaru să fotografieze copiii. Dovadă - o poză a mea, pe la vreo cinci ani, cu breton și costum marinier, mîndru de noua tricicletă. Foto Pânzaru era o adevărată instituție suceveană. Avea studioul nu departe de noi, pe strada Luca Arbore, iar în centru domnea Foto Colbert.

A treia aripă a curții era cea mai mică și despărțea fațada cu cele trei uși, de stradă. Strada Cetății era îngustă, nu avea trotuare și nici pavată nu era. Era abruptă și marginită de două șanțuri nu prea adânci, invadate vara de urzici și de flori de mușețel. Nu țin minte să fi trecut cândva vreo mașină și nici căruțe nu treceau decât rareori. Iarna, devenea un derdeluș ideal, ceva mai scurt decât cel de pe strada Mirăușilor, dar nu mai puțin excitant. Vara, vedeam cum treceau mărșăluind și cântînd companii de ostași de la cazarmă, în drum spre sau de la poligonul de tir din spatele Cetății.

Mama mă lua în după-amiezile de vară la plimbare în oraș. De la noi pînă în Ștefan cel Mare, unde începea centrul, era cale destul de scurtă. Urcam spre strada Curții Domnesti, numită atunci Stalin, și apoi treceam pe lînga centrul de panificație. În față staționa câteodata o căruță



ce semăna a dric, din care pâinile mari, calde încă, negre și rotunde, erau duse în prăvălie. Apoi, vânzătoarea în halat alb, foarte scundă de statură, avea să le vânda printr-un mic geam, celor care formaseră deja o coadă pe trotuar. Când am ajuns ceva mai măricel eram trimis uneori și eu să cumpăr cu 2 lei o jumătate de pâine neagră. În drum spre casă ronțăiam din coaja caldă și mirositoare. După câteva ore, însă, pâinea se întărea și devenea acrișoară, cu totul negustoasă. Apoi treceam prin fața liceului de fete (pe care-l voi mai aminti), peste drum de biserica Sf. Dumitru și ajungeam la Agenția Rozenberg. De fapt, un magazin de ziare și reviste, expuse în vitrină și pe obloanele deschise ale intrării. Acolo aveam să cumpăr câțiva ani mai târziu broșurile colecției de povestiri științifico-fantastice, Contemporanul, Almanahurile ce apăreau în preajma anului nou și multe altele. În spatele tejghelei cu galantarul de țigări era o masă de birou cu două mașini de scris, la care fete tinere învățau dactilografia și unul din puținele telefoane din Suceava de atunci. Inima agenției erau însă lozurile, biletele de loto și îndeosebi buletinele de pronosport.

În după-amiezile și serile de duminică, agenția și trotuarul din fața ei erau înțesate de oameni ce așteptau să vină prin telefon rezultatele meciurilor, comentau cu înflăcărare detaliile aflate și evaluau tot timpul numărul de rezultate exacte de pe buletinele de pronosport. Comentariile aveau să continue în diminețile de luni, la frizeria de după colț, unde echipa de frizeri, cu Sportul Popular în mână, analiza împreună cu clienții cele petrecute pe stadioane. Asupra acestui imperiu cultural-sportiv domnea cu jovialitate Dl. Rozenberg, bărbat energic, scund și rotofei, specialist în toate activitățile magazinului-agenție, ajutat de soția sa. Câțiva ani mai târziu a fost arestat și condamnat pentru lipsă în gestiune, iar agenția a dispărut din peisajul sucevean.

După ce depășeam agenția, treceam prin fața panoului cu afișele de cinematograf și o luam la stânga, spre centru. Chiar la colț se afla magazinul „Alimentara” unde a lucrat tata la început. Avea să lucreze apoi mai mulți ani la magazinul central, care era ceva mai jos, vizavi și avea câteva încăperi - raioane de coloniale, dulciuri, pâine, băuturi, brânzeturi și salamuri.. Era cea mai mare alimentară din oraș și ocupa un întreg colț al străzii. Îmi amintesc că într-o seară, cred că era iarnă, un incendiu mare a distrus partea laterală a clădirii. În jurul zonei incendiului se adunase o multime de lume. Pe mine m-au luat imediat acasă, dar încă multe ore se putea vedea din curtea noastră înspre centru, cerul înroșit de flăcări.

După ce treceam prin fața frizeriei, nu departe de colț, mama intra cu mine în magazinul de parfumerie al doamnei Herrer, cu care se împrietenise. Pe când stăteau de vorbă, eu, îmbătat de mirosurile micului magazin, mă minunam de sticlele mari de pe tejghea, din care doamna Herrer vărsa uleiul de nucă sau apa de colonie cu atenție, printr-o pâlnioară minusculă, întâi într-o eprubetă marcată pe cantități și apoi în sticlulele clientelor. În vitrine și pe pereții magazinului erau reclame cu NIVEA. Doamna Herrer se pare că mă îndrăgea. O dată chiar a ținut să ne



fotografiem împreună, eu pe la patru-cinci ani, în spielhozen, și dânsa aplecată puțin, cu mâinile pe umerii mei, în fața magazinului. Dori, fiul ei, era cu câțiva ani mai mare decât mine. Când aveam vreo opt ani, m-au luat o dată, Dori și tovarășii lui de joacă, la poligonul de tir al militarilor, dincolo de Cetate. După ce soldații plecaseră, se puteau aduna gloanțele de plumb pe care apoi acasă, sub ochii mei, le topea pe aragaz, în capacul unei cutii de cremă de ghetete și obținea astfel un disc din plumb, neașteptat de greu pentru dimensiunile lui.

Vizavi de parfumerie se deschidea un pasaj îngust care ducea printr-un labirint de intrări, spre piața de unt, ce se întindea în spatele clădirii alimentare centrale. Prin acel pasaj treceam și spre scările ce duceau la locuința doctorului Rauch, medicul de casă al familiei noastre, unde mergeam uneori. Dar în majoritatea cazurilor, la nevoie, Dr. Rauch venea să ne consulte acasă, cu geanta pântecoasă în care se aflau stetoscopul, seringă de sticlă în cutie nichelată și alte utensile medicale.

Dacă îmi continuam drumul pe aceeași parte a străzii, după parfumerie, ajungeam imediat la colț cu o străduță ce spre stânga, ducea în spatele Școlii de fete. În clădirea imediat următoare spre centru era farmacia unde lucra și vecina noastră, Dna Shiber, iar pe străduță era la parter una din cele două sifonării ale orașului. În sifonarie funcționa o mașină mare de umplut sticlele groase cu sifon, care ocupa o cameră întregă, cu roți, curele de transmisie, baloane cu bioxid de carbon și tot felul de manete și robinete. Sifonarul pune sticla de sifon întoarsă într-o cușcă din plasă de metal și o umplea sub ochii mei plini de admirație. Adevărată minune tehnologică! După sifonarie era intrarea spre scara ce ducea la etaj, spre locuința familiei Bodinger, a cărei cameră mai mare era dedicată salonului de croitorie pentru copii, o altă instituție suceveană. Cred că nu era în oraș vreun copil de familie bună care să nu fi trecut pe acolo pentru că mama să-i aleagă una din creațiile doamnei Bodinger, adevărată artistă în domeniu. Sub mână sa lucrau 2-3 ucenice, iar costumașele marinar, vânător sau alte diverse modele de rochițe, paltonașe, etc. etc. erau considerate de primă calitate, veritabile opere de haute couture. Copil, ajungeam uneori acolo cu mama, cu tante Freida și cu Iani, verișorul meu mai mic, veniți special de la Burdujeni, pentru a ne coase haine noi. Peste câțiva ani buni, când eram deja la liceu, aveam să intru adesea în aceeași casă, unde în camera Marei, fiica Bodingerilor, ne întâlneam regulat cinci prieteni: trei fete și doi băieți, cu toții colegi de școală.

În zile de vară, plimbarea continua înspre grădina publică, prin aleea de castani bătrâni ce mărginea parcul către stradă. Pe partea opusă a străzii se afla casa telefoanelor, unde câteodată, după ore de așteptare, părinții reușeau să obțină legătura interurbană și să vorbească 3 minute cu rudele din Galați sau din București. Alături era sediul CEC - ului și magazinul Librăria Noastră cu două vitrine pline de comori. Mai sus, se înălța falnică minunata clădire a primăriei (pe atunci,



Sfatul Popular și sediul Regiunii de Partid) dominată de turnul cu ceas și foișor - adevărată bijuterie arhitecturală. În parc, cam vizavi de primărie, și puțin ascunsă printre copacii parcului, se afla biserica romano-catolică, și ea cu turn și ceas, cu fațada amintind de un templu grec. Ceva mai sus era un bazin rotund, cu arteziană iar alături, pe un soclu, bustul lui Ciprian Porumbescu. Mai departe, după un drum scurt prin parc ajungeam la Cinematograful „Tineretului”. Aici avea să fie pentru grupul nostru de prieteni, în anii de liceu, un adevărat sanctuar. La „Tineretului” și la mai modernul „Cinemascop” deschis chiar în acei ani, lângă Liceul „Ștefan cel Mare”, ne prezentam cu sfințenie de patru ori pe săptămână și am vizionat sute de filme, marea majoritate rusești dar și chinezești, franceze, italiene, germane (DEFA) și arareori chiar americane. Destul de rar, unele filme erau declarate de direcțiunea scolii interzise. Secretara trecea cu anunțul din clasă în clasă citindu-l cu gravitate. Dar și în acele cazuri, reușeam să nu scap aproape nici un film - intram și ieseam din sală pe întuneric...La „Tineretului” mă luau cu ei, uneori, parinții în anii de copilărie. Pe atunci am văzut (în două serii!) Contele de Monte Cristo...Tot cu părinții ajungeam câteodată și la teatru, în mitica sală Dom Polski din spatele parcului.

Ceva mai sus de „Tineretului” era și grădinița unde am petrecut doi ani. În grupa mică am avut-o ca educatoare pe Dna Otilia. Una din activitățile ce mi s-au întipărit în amintire era să decupăm o figură desenată pe un cartonaș, folosind un ac mare, cu un capăt ca o perlă, și înțepînd în cartonaș găurele dese-dese de-a lungul conturului desenat. Câțiva ani mai târziu pe acel loc avea să fie construită Grădina de Vară pentru reprezentații în aer liber.

Strada mai ducea în sus - spre tribunal, Policlinică, parcul Arini (din care mai târziu porneam, cu pionerii, în defilările de 1 Mai sau 23 August), spre stadionul orașului și spre spital - dar de obicei pe lângă cinematograful făceam calea întoarsă, îl întâlneam pe tata la închiderea magazinului și mergeam împreună spre casă.

Duminica plecam toți trei, cu trăsura, la Burdujeni, la bunici. Trăsurile cu doi cai erau pe atunci cam singura modalitate de transport în zona urbană, iar la Suceava erau destul de multe, parte din ele conduse de birjari-proprietari evrei. Staționau în față la Sf. Dumitru, între strada Petru Rareș și începutul lui Ștefan cel Mare. Tot acolo avea să fie peste câțiva ani stația autobuzelor de Ițcani și Burdujeni care împreună cu taxiurile Pobeda, au dus treptat la dispariția birjelor de pe străzile orașului. Trăsurile erau înalte și aveau două banchete - una capitonată și una mică, pliantă. O capotă pliată înspre partea din spate, putea la nevoie să-i apere pe pasageri de ploaie. Dar cea mai înaltă - și neadăpostită - era capra birjarului. Când se întâmpla să călătorim cu vreun birjar cunoscut, pe vreme frumoasă, eram lăsat să urc pe capră, alături de el și puteam să scrutez peisajul de la înălțime. Caii o luau ușor la trap în jos, înspre drumul Ițcanilor, apoi birjarul o lua la dreapta pe drumul în pantă spre podul șubred, din lemn, ce traversa apa Sucevei.



Apropiindu-ne de pod, drumul nepavat pe atunci, devenea mai lin. Puțin înainte de a ajunge la pod, puteam să văd pe dreapta castelul de apă, un fel de mică uzină, cu ferestre înalte, de unde apa râului, filtrată, era pompată spre turnul de apă de pe Zamca. Trecerea podului dura doar 2-3 minute, dar în unii ani, după perioade de ploi intense, când Suceava venea mai mare și mai furioasă, podul devenea impracticabil. Atunci traversarea se făcea fie pe un podeț improvizat, cu mare atenție, fie prin Ițcani, sau când apele se mai retrăgeau, dar podul încă era în reparație, se trecea chiar prin apă, la un vad mai depărtat de pod. Cei doi cai nu prea erau încântați să intre în apă, dar câteva lovituri de bici îi convingeau... Doar câțiva ani mai târziu, s-a construit un pod de beton, semn al schimbărilor ce aveau să transforme lunca Sucevei într-o mare și poluantă zonă industrială.

Dar pe-atunci, peisajul era încă pastoral. Drumul mărginit de copaci ducea spre bariera căii ferate, unde cantonierul, învârtind manivela, cobora sau ridica rampa. Când așteptam să treacă vreun tren, puteam întrezări de la înălțimea caprei liniile de tren ce se multiplicau spre stânga și clădirea de cărămidă roșie a gării Burdujeni. Apoi drumul urca în pantă lină. Vedeam, tot în stînga, coșul înalt de pe clădirea abatorului, treceam pe la fabrica de marmeladă și, după scurtă distanță, eram deja lângă Școala Primară, apoi treceam prin fața primăriei și a dispensarului medical. Ne aflam pe Strada Întâia, care fusese, mai ales în partea de început, strada negustorilor micului târguleț unde trăiau, între războaie, mai bine de o mie de evrei, cam jumătate din întreaga populație. Pe acea stradă sa afla, puțin mai sus, singura casă cu etaj din Burdujeni. Aproape toate casele, gen vagon, erau lipite una de alta, iar la stradă dădeau prăvăliile. Pe strada a doua și pe a treia locuiau cândva cei mai puțin înstăriți - croitori, cizmari și alți meseriași. Dar în anii copilăriei mele această orânduire mai era doar parțial valabilă. Pe trotuar, femei așezate pe scaune scoase lângă prag stăteau la taifas în tihna de duminică și examinau, curioase, trecătorii. Apoi treceam prin fața casei în care m-am născut și după vreo două sute de metri ajungeam la casa bunicilor, care se afla mai sus, unde se termina târgul și începea satul. Burdujeniul avea să fie pentru mine de-a lungul următorilor vreo zece ani, un adevărat mic paradis. Acolo am urmat aproape întregul an școlar al clasei I, când mama a fost internată și operată la București, iar apoi a petrecut lunile de convalescență în casa bunicilor. Mama era cu vreo trei ani mai în vîrstă decât sora ei, Freida. Probabil că cei doi ani și jumătate petrecuți împreună în iadul din Transnitria au legat între cele două adolescente o prietenie și o abnegație reciprocă, rare între surori. După moartea mamei, eu aveam să devin obiectul acestor sentimente, iar casa mătușii mele, aflată tot sus, spre începutul satului, avea să devină pentru mine un al doilea cămin. Acolo, la Burdujeni, copil, apoi adolescent, mi-am petrecut aproape toate duminicile, am legat prietenii, am petrecut zile și seri fermecate, învăluit de grijă și de dragoste.

De sărbătorile religioase mergeam cu părinții la sinagogă. Îndeosebi în sărbătorile de toamnă



cînd se perindă, în decurs de vreo 3 săptămâni, câteva din cele mai importante sărbători ale anului. Tata se alăturase comunității de enoriași de la „Sinagoga croitorilor” ce se afla cam la începutul străzii Petru Rareș. Era o sinagogă destul de modestă. Nu se putea compara cu sinagoga mare din Burdujeni, construită în prima jumătate a secolului XIX, unde mergeam uneori cu bunicul și care mi-a lăsat o amintire impresionantă. În ultimii ani, cînd cu grupe de turiști israelieni am vizitat de cîteva ori sinagoga cea mare (azi, singura) din Botoșani, construită cam în aceeași perioadă și în același stil, dar acum renovată, am redescoperit amintirile acelei sinagogi din Burdujeni, care la fel cu cele din Suceava, nu mai există. În Suceava copilăriei mele erau vreo șase sinagogi, iar în zilele de sărbătoare noi, copiii, bucurându-ne mai ales de anturajul de joacă, mult mai interesant decît rugăciunile pe care nu prea le înțelegeam, mergeam uneori să vizităm și grupele de copii ce se zbenguiau pe lângă alte sinagogi, cu toții îmbrăcați ca și noi, în haine noi, de sărbătoare. Țin în minte cum în ziua cea sfântă a iertării păcatelor, Yom Kipur, cînd toți enoriașii se rugau evlavioși, postind 24 de ore, se furișau în sinagogă pentru o oră sau două, îmbrăcați în halatele de lucru, unii dintre cei care nu reușiseră să obțină zi liberă de la serviciu. Majoritatea evreilor suceveni nu mai erau ortodocși, dar mai mult decît credința, tradiția era înrădăcinată chiar în cei ce se considerau deja moderni. În Suceava, al doilea oraș ca mărime al Bucovinei, trăiau în perioada interbelică aproape 4000 de evrei, cam a cincea parte din populație. Toți, pînă la unul, au fost deportați în Octombrie 1941 în Transnistria, ca și evreii din Burdujeni, din sate, din Dorohoi. De fapt, toți evreii Bucovinei, aproape două sute de mii de suflete, au fost izgoniți din casele lor. Mai puțin de jumătate au supraviețuit prigonirilor, frigului, mizeriei, foametei, bolilor. Celor reveniți la Suceava li s-au adăugat după război și alții, din partea nordică a Bucovinei, care a fost anexată Uniunii Sovietice. De asemenea, Suceava a atras pe mulți dintre locuitorii orașelor și satelor din împrejurimi, regăteni de origine, printre care și mulți evrei. Astfel, Suceava anilor copilăriei mele era încă un oraș cu prezență evreiască destul de pronunțată. Bună parte din profesorii de școală, din medici, farmaciști, juriști, meseriași de tot felul sau lucrători în comerțul de stat erau evrei. Astfel, am crescut printre mulți coreligionari care erau prietenii și cunoscuții familiei, vecini, colegi și colege de școală evrei, dar și mulți alții, creștini. Copil și apoi adolescent percepeam această realitate ca pe ceva absolut natural. Nu-mi pot aminti de vreo situație din acei ani, cînd să mă fi simțit diferit sau să fi fost afectat de originea mea etnică, cu excepția faptului că noi, evreii, așteptam aproape toți aprobarea plecării spre Israel. Presupuneam în subconștient că acest moment va veni, dar viața mea își continua cursul pe valurile line ale acelor ani de tinerețe, de formare, la Suceava și care au fost, probabil, printre cei mai fericiți ani ai mei. Până pe la mijlocul anilor șaiszeci, treptat, marea majoritate a sucevenilor evrei au emigrat în Israel. În clasele de liceu, la fiecare cîteva luni ne părăsea vreun coleg de clasă. În ultimul an, clasa a XI-a, rămăseserăm doar trei, iar după plecarea mea în primăvară, cu vreo două luni înainte de



bacalaureat, au rămas doar Mira Zeidler și Emanuel Menczel. Și dâșii aveau să ajungă aici după un an sau doi.

Clasa I primară am început-o la „Ștefan cel Mare”, acolo aveam să fac și următoarele două clase, sub mîna domnului Crudu, om cărunț și cu aspect blajin, dar care știa să ne țină din scurt și să mă readucă la realitate cu un bobârnac razant peste părul tuns scurt, când visam, sau mă pierdeam citind pe la sfîrșitul cărții de citire, unde erau culese povestiri mai atractive decît cele ce se petreceau în clasă. Dar după scurt timp, doar cîteva săptămîni de la începerea anului, acasă au început să se petreacă lucruri neliniștitoare. Părinții au devenit gravi și erau evident îngrijorați de ceva. Vizitele mamei la Dr. Rauch, apoi și la alți medici, s-au înmulțit, tante Freida apărea des pe la noi, iar discuțiile se desfășurau chiar cu lacrimi în ochi. Apoi mi s-a explicat că mama e bolnavă și va trebui să plece la București pentru mai mult timp, tata o va însoți iar eu voi fi în casa bunicilor pînă la reînsănătoșirea mamei. Clasa întâi am continuat-o deci la școla primară din Burdujeni. Mamei i se descoperise o tumoare la cap și trebuia să fie operată. În ajunul operației, deja în toiul iernii, mama a ținut neapărat să mă vadă și am fost luat pentru vreo 2-3 zile la București, unde am vizitat-o la spital. Apoi am revenit la școală, unde se pare că eram elev destul de bun. Spre primăvară mama a venit și ea la Burdujeni, unde și-a continuat convalescența. Eram bucuros de reîntoarcerea ei, chiar dacă mă stînjenea să văd părul ei roșcat, frumos, tuns acum scurt, băiețește ca și faptul că la mers distingeam un șchiopătat vizibil și mama se folosea de un baston. Dar se părea că lucrurile merg spre bine. Primul meu an școlar l-am absolvit cu succes la Burdujeni, apoi ne-am întors acasă la Suceava. În treburile gospodăriei o ajuta Maria, o fată tânără, energică și aratoasă, cu inimă de aur. Am îndrăgit-o de-a lungul celor vreo trei ani cât a locuit cu noi. Vara lui 1954, prima mea vacanță, cu miros de lăcrămioare și narcise, a fost pentru mine o vară fericită.

În august, am fost cu părinții la băi, la Vatra Dornei, unde am întîlnit rudele din Iași și chiar bunica a fost cîteva zile cu noi. Pentru mine, era o aventură minunată.

Dar lucrurile aveau să se schimbe cam peste un an. După ce am absolvit clasa a doua, boala mamei a revenit, din nou a fost operată la București (eu am fost în acea vară la Galați, la unchiul mamei, unde aveam să mai petrec vacanțe de vis), iar spre sfîrșitul verii, mama, deja într-o stare intratabilă, a fost readusă acasă, la Suceava. A murit într-o dimineață de sîmbăta, pe 2 Septembrie și a fost înmormîntată a doua zi. Avea doar 33 de ani. Tristul cortegiu plecat din fața casei noastre, a trecut încet, prin spatele liceului de fete, apoi pe o străduță ce ducea prin spatele parcului, către strada ce coboară pe la mănăstirea Sf. Ioan, pe la uzina electrică, și urcînd pe lîngă pădurice a ajuns la cimitirul evreiesc, unde mama odihnește de atunci. Cînd am început



clasa a treia eram orfan.

Tata s-a recăsătorit după doi ani. Apoi s-au născut cei doi frațiori ai mei. Avi, cel mai mare din ei, mai avea să urmeze aproape un an la o grădiniță aflată lângă biserica armenească. Dar nu avea decât vreo 5 ani când am plecat din Suceava.

În toamna lui 1956 am trecut, în cadrul reformei de introducere a educației mixte, la „Școala Medie Nr 2”. Acolo, în clădirea veche a fostului liceu de fete, aveam să urmez clasele IV - VIII. Apoi, în ultimii ani, am învățat o perioadă într-o aripă a clădirii, atunci nouă, a școlii de meserii, pînă când liceul nostru s-a mutat definitiv în noul său local, pe stada Petru Rareș, o clădire luminoasă, cu podele de parchet, pentru păstrarea cărora ni se cerea, în zile ploioase, să ne scimbăm încălțăminte la intrare. În clasa a IV-a am avut-o ca învățătoare pe Dna Zavulovici, soția profesorului meu de vioară. În acei ani localul școlii era deja neîncăpător și au fost perioade când învățam după amiază, de la ora două și pînă seara. Școala a fost pentru mine cam în toți anii, un loc unde ajungeam cu bucurie și o sursă de multe satisfacții. Când eram deja în ciclul mediu, directoarea școlii a fost Dna Frieda Wiegder. Peste câțiva ani, avea să fie destituită deoarece permisesse uneia din profesoare să continue lucrul la școală, deși era înscrisă pentru emigrare în Israel. Mie, acest lucru avea să-mi dea oportunitatea fericită de a o cunoaște îndeaproape, căci Dna Wiegder, devenită una din profesoare, mi-a fost dirigintă în clasele X-XI și ne-a predat fizica și chimia. Era o personalitate impozantă, carismatică. Aparent severă și neiertătoare, era o femeie sensibilă, plină de empatie, după cum aveam să descopăr și în afara orelor de clasă. Ca profesoară reușea să facă adevărate minuni, iar lecțiile explicate de ea le înțelegea pînă și ultimul nefericit corijent. Fără îndoială, a fost una din cele mai cunoscute, apreciate și stimate figuri din Suceava. Știu că încă mulți ani după pensionare, chiar când era deja nonagenară, a continuat să pregătească pentru admitere la universitate generații după generații de elevi suceveni. Cât despre alții dintre profesorii din anii de liceu, îmi amintesc cu afecțiune și nostalgie de Dna Cristea, Dna Soroceanu, Dna Macioapă, Dna Pavel, Dl. Lazurcă, Dna Riemer, Dl. Eichorn, Dna Mustăță și alții cărora le cer iertare dacă i-am omis.

Trecerea, cu începutul clasei a IV-a, la noua școală, a fost probabil un moment crucial. Aveam să mă întălnesc cu noua realitate - colege, a căror prezență în clasă schimba cu totul atmosfera. Dar mai mult decât asta, în clasa a IV-a am întâlnit un nou coleg de clasă, pe Mihai Drișcu. De atunci și pînă la plecarea mea din Suceava am fost aproape nedespărțiți. Timpul a dovedit că prietenia noastră sorbea din niște izvoare comune. Niciodată nu ne-am plictisit unul în prezența celuilalt. După orele de program ne întâlneam în locuința modestă a familiei Drișcu, pe Ștefan cel Mare (dar se putea intra și prin spate, prin curtea deschisă unde era intrarea la crama subterană). Cu



timpul, devenisem om de casă la Elena și Grișa Drișcu și cei doi băieți: Dănuț (Mihai) și frățiorul său, Titi. De cele mai multe ori însă (e vorba deja de anii de liceu), întâlnirile se produceau în cinci: noi doi și trei fete - Mara Bodinger, gazda, Mira Seidler și Betty Merdler. Pe Mihai l-am admirat și apreciat de la început. Eram conștient deja atunci de superioritatea sa intelectuală, de felul lui deosebit de a vedea lucrurile, de adevărata sa erudiție, deja atunci, ca adolescent, de puterea sa de a analiza și interpreta cele văzute sau citite. La drept vorbind, el a fost pentru mine un model pe care am încercat să-l imit. Nu în domeniul plastic, în care dânsul excela de pe atunci și pentru care eram conștient că eu nu am nici un talent, dar în toate celelalte activități intelectuale ale noastre. În toți acei câțiva ani fericiți armonia dintre noi a fost desăvârșită. Niciodată - nici o singură dată în opt ani - n-am avut vreo dispută pe plan personal.

Au fost ani frumoși, când viitorul părea că ne promite totul. Și a fost farmecul deosebit al orașului nostru. Apoi, a urmat plecarea mea. Lui Mihai i-am încredințat caietele cu cele scrise de mine în acei ani, deoarece ne era interzis să luăm cu noi orice fel de informație scrisă. Peste ani, mai ales după moartea tragică și încă neelucidată a lui Mihai, le credeam pierdute, dar aveam să le regălesc în împrejurări cu totul paradoxale. Mara, Mira și Betty, au ajuns apoi și ele în Israel. Mihai a plecat spre soarta sa, la București, unde ajuns, „era deja un om format, care scria extraordinar și gândea mult mai bine decât mulți din București”, după cum avea să scrie unul din prietenii săi de acolo, Gheorghe Vida. A studiat la Arte Plastice, a creat, a scris și publicat, îndeosebi în domeniul criticii de artă și ani de zile a fost redactorul revistei Arta, pînă la absurdul sau probabil înscenatul „accident” ce i-a curmat zilele la mai puțin de 43 de ani.

Acceleratul de noapte își continua goana, gâfăind și șuierînd. Adjud, Mărășești, Focșani... Gîndurile îmi zburau și înainte, la cele ce mă așteptau, la aventura mării călătorii peste mări și țări pe care o începusem, spre un necunoscut plin de promisiuni, care unui tînar de 17 ani îi provoca în mod firesc emoții și excitații. Dar reveneam mereu la ceea ce lăsasem în urmă. Înainte cu vreo trei săptămâni scriam în jurnal următoarele rînduri: „Ca în preajma oricărei călătorii, pregătirile de drum încep. De data aceasta însă e ceva cu totul deosebit. Mă pregătesc sufletește să mă rup definitiv de lumea copilăriei mele și părerile de rău sunt inerente. De altfel e firesc să fie așa. E imposibil ca sufletul meu să nu poarte pecetea acestor locuri unde am deschis ochii. Oare să-mi pară rău după orașul acesta pe care îl cunosc de cînd mă știu și pe mine!?... Eu unul s-ar părea că în sinea mea nu mă simt sucevean. Nu sunt de loc familiarizat cu protipendada bucovineană – acum risipită – a orașului. Cunoștințele mele se reduc la un cerc destul de restrîns și sunt mult mai mulți (așa cred eu) cei care mă cunosc pe mine fără ca eu să-i știu. Suceava. Nu înseamnă prea mult pentru mine. Totuși... Risc să devin sentimental, dar n-am ce face. În mine zace un romantic întîrziat – așa cum Drișcu a remarcat pe bună dreptate. Dealurile acestea, pe care



le văd de câte ori plec la Burdujeni, cu clopotnițele lor, cu liniștea verde care le apasă vara, când livezile de pe Zamca sunt înfrunzite, îmi provoacă de fiecare dată un fel de nostalgie a cărei cauză nu o deslușesc, dar care există. Mai ales acum, când știu că le văd ultima oară”.

Într-una din serile acelor zile, înainte de plecare, am găsit o cale cam excentrică de a mă despărți de Suceava. Centrul orașului era deja complet schimbat față de cel al copilăriei, clădiri nenumărate fuseseră demolate și înlocuite cu blocuri, magazinele erau deja altele, se croise deja strada Ana Ipătescu iar în noua piață ce fusese deschisă, se afla încă în construcție blocul turn, primul bloc cu 10 etaje din oraș. De fapt, chiar în acele luni, centrul orașului era, cum scriam în jurnal, ca sub asediu, plin de tranșee. Era o seară de început de aprilie, câteva zile înainte de plecare. Tata trebuise să ajungă pentru o zi la București pentru a obține niște acte. Eu îl condusesem la gară, la Ițcani. La întoarcere, am coborât din autobuz chiar la intrarea bisericii de lângă casă, Sf. Ioan. Apoi aveam să notez în jurnal: „Îl conduc pe tata și la întoarcere îmi vin niște idei trăsnite. În biserică e întuneric și n-aș vrea să stingheresc cine știe ce cuplu fericit. Ocolesc totuși. Doar nu mi-e frică? ? Ași! Ca dovadă, peste 10 minute sunt pe terasa blocului turn, după cinci etaje urcate cu ascensorul și alte cinci pe scări într-o beznă semiabsolută. Ora 23. Într-adevăr, romantic. E cam vînt. Aproape că am terminat chibriturile. În sfîrșit! Trebuie să fiu atent: pe jos e o rețea de oțel. Probabil că la vară va fi aici o cofetărie sau ceva în genul ăsta. Trebuie să merg cu băgare de seamă și ca să fiu sincer, cam tremur. În cabina motorului de la lift e lumină și m-ar putea auzi cineva. Orice explicație ar fi de prisos. Priveliștea e sub așteptări. Departe e întuneric.”

Începea să se lumineze. Lăsasem deja în urmă peronul gării Buzău și trenul alerga spre Ploiești.

În dimineața de ieri, ultima zi la Suceava, m-am dus să mă despart de școală. Sâmbăta aveam ora de dirigenție. În pauză am intrat în clasa de umană, la Mihai și la fete (era singurul băiat din clasă). Apoi m-am dus în clasa noastră și m-am așezat pe fostul meu loc. Băieții, Mihăiță Rusu, Florin Solonaru, Puiu Urian, Bărbulescu, m-au înconjurat cu bătaie pe umăr. Am participat la întreaga oră fără să-mi dau seama atunci în ce situație delicată am pus-o pe Dna Wiegder, diriginta noastră. Dar cu înțelepciunea sa, a găsit formula prin care să-mi facă o despărțire călduroasă, fără a încălca linia partidului. Pe la orele prânzului am fost la familia Drișcu. Lui Mihai i-am lăsat caietele mele.

După masă am plecat pentru ultima oară la Burdujeni. Tante Freida avea să vină în urma noastră la București, dar de toți ceilalți m-am despărțit acolo. În casa bunicilor, am trecut o oră cu multe noduri ridicîndu-mi-se în gât. Am intrat și la vecinii bunicilor. La Burdujeni, în acea seară primăvărată, am lăsat în urma mea ochi înlăcrămați.

Se făcuse deja dimineața și trenul se apropia de București. Două săptămâni mai târziu, aveam să



mă găsesc pe alte meleaguri, într-o altă realitate, departe de Suceava copilăriei și adolescenței mele. Aveam, peste ani, să mai revin, dar numai ca vizitator.

Suceava am părăsit-o, de fapt, în acea sâmbătă. Dar pe mine, Suceava nu m-a părăsit niciodată.



*Beni, Iancu, Iani
(foto: Suceava Periferiilor Album)*

*Mulumim d-nei prof. Elena Branduse Steiciuc
care a editat povestirile lui Beni.*





Copilarie

Betty Merdler

Ma numesc Betty Wagner (Merdler de acasa) si m-am nascut in Suceava. Parintii mei, Josephine si Beno Merdler, au fost si ei suceveni get beget (cu toate ca mama pina la casatorie a trait in Cernauti, unde s=a si nascut).Apropos de acest nume –Josephine-mama povestea ca atunci cind s-a nascut tatal ei a apelat la primaria orasului pentru a da nume fetitei. El a cerut Perale, dar functionarul – un om de pe timpul lui Franz Joseph – a spus : Nein, es passt nicht..Josephine ist viel besser, si asa a ramas Josephine in acte si Perale in realitate.

Tatal me era un barbat frumos,cu uchi albastri si cu o inima de aur.Avea un talent deosebit da a povesti si puteam sa-l ascult ore intregi. Povestea desprea tineretea lui si termina cu razboiul care a zdruncinat viata lor si a evreilor din lume.Cine avea nevoie sa scrie o scrisoare venea la tata. Ii placea jocul de sah in mod deosebit si era client permanent la cofetaria Wagner, unde se intilneau toti jucatorii de sah pina la orele tirzii ale noptii.

Mama era o femeie culta, vorbind citeva limbi straine.Avea placere de a ma invata poezii dar mie iimi placeau mai mult papusile.Avea 2 ani de facultata la Pharmacologie, la universitatea din Cernauti, studiile fiind intrerupte de moartea tatalui ei.

Eu m-am nascut in 1946, dupa intoarcerea lor din lagar.Fiind singurul lor copil, am fost rea si rasfatata. Daca cineva indraznea sa nu se joace cu mine, primea o bataie sa ma tie minte. La gradinuta nu mi-a prea placut, dar n-am avut incotro. Gradinuta era in curtea unei biserici. WC nu era, in schimb era un paravan si o galeata mare in care copiii isi faceau nevoile. Era cu mine in baiat cu numele de Garibaldi si avea a pasiune speciala pentru coditele mele, pe care le tragea zilnic. Era mare Garibaldi si nu prea indrazneam sa ma bat cu el, riscul fiind prea dureros. Dar cind a devenit imposibil, l-am trinitit in galeata cu “nevoi” unde a facut o baie buna si bine parfumata. Cum s-a uscat nu mai stiu, dara de razbunat s-a razbunat pe mine tocmai cind inoisesem un palton . M-a pindit linga biserica si m-a inpins intro groapa cu noroi. Paltonul a avut o soarta tragica, dar problema mea era mama. Dorli, prietena mea cea buna, a fugit repede la mama, povestindu-i de razboiul declansat la gradinuta si de soarta trista al paltonului cel nou, care numai nou nu mai era. Cind am ajuns acasa, am fost luate in “primire” dar mail “moale”, Dorli reusind sa amortizeze lovitura.

Cit despre Dorli, ea a primit o bicicleta nou nouta si eu ca prietena, an avut onoarea s-o incerc. Adevarul e ca n-am urcat pe biciclete nicicind si la primul tur un pereta sugubat a intrat direct in bicicleta mea, adica a lui Dorli. Peretele nu a prea suferit , dar bicicleta !!



Evreii din Suceava erau convinsi ca copiii lor trebuie sa invete sa cante la un instrument. Era obligatoriu si ca urmare mama m-a inrolat la pian, fara consimtamintul meu. Profesoara de pian canta la pian pentru mine, explica despre muzica clasica si eu ma dadeam in scaunul leagan de linga pian. Avea si o colectie grozava de papusi cu care imi dadea voie sa ma joc. N-am prea inteles ce nevoie avea ea de papusi la varsta ei, si nu cred ca avea copii, era domnisoara.

Atmosfera era placuta pentru mine si pentru domnisoara profesoara, amindoua nu faceam efort prea mare. Cind mama a venit sa vada, adica sa auda, cum am inaintat cu pianul, a interrupt imediat "simfonia" si a cautat alt proiect, cara bineinteles nu a fost aprobat de mine. Oricum drept de vot nu aveam, asa ca ce hotara mama se facea. Mama a angajat un "rebale" care trebuia sa ma invete limba ebraica. Era cam batrinel, nu vedea si nici nu auzea prea bine. Lectia incepea, el adormea si eu sub masa ma jucam cu papusile mele, fara sa le oblig sa invete ebraica. N-a durat mult pina mama a descoperit si la expediat repejor pe "rebale" la alti copii, mai silitori.

In legatura cu jucariile, dupa razboi nu se prea puteau gasi. Tata fiind la Bucuresti, a reusit sa cumpere o toba. Am fost foarte multumita, mai ales ca toba asta scula si mortii din somn. Multumirea mea a fost scurta. Proprietarii casei in care locuiam, D-nul si D-na Hilsenrad, amindoi de pe timpul lui Pazvantoglu Chioru, s-au prezentat la mama cu un ultimatum : sau se preda toba sau se termina contractual de inchiriere al casei. Erau doi oameni impresionanti: el lung si teapan ca o prajina, cu baston in mina, ea mica si lata, ca o radacina. Toba a fost confiscata si asa cariera mea scurta de tobosar s-a terminat inainte de a incepe. Dar cum tata era un om inventiv, a inteles marea mea problema si a comandat la un templar un carucior mic, in care incapeau 2 copii. Toti copii din vecini s-au strins sa vada acest carucior si eu il "inchiriam" cu placere. Chiria se platea simplu: ei trebuia sa ma traga pe mine cu fiecare copil care se urca in carucior. Era destul de cinstit, ambele parti castigau. Dar si cariera de "prorietar" sa terminat repede.

Caruciorul fiind din lemn, piata din fata curtii unde circula caruciorul fiind pavate cu pietre, galagia era de neconceput si vecinii mi-au interrupt si placerea aceasta.

In schimb am inceput sa merg la cinematograful. Mama era pasionata de filme, si cum alta solutie nu avea, ma lua cu ea. Fara "Urs de Dorna" (ciocolata din acele timpuri) nu mergeam – asa ca ursul rezolva problema rapid. La cinema stateam in prima banca cu toti copiii care veneau. Terminam socolata, faceam putina galagie si cam pe la mijlocul filmului mergeam la mama si ii spunem "genug gesehn". Nimic nu ajuta, trebuia sa se ridice si a plecam. Nici unul din filmele vizionate cu mine nu le-a vazut pana la sfirsit. O alta placere de care imi amintesc erau sarbatorile de toamna, cind se mergea la sinagoga. Copiii din toata imprejurimea veneau cu parintii si ramaneau in curtea sinagogii sa se joace. Ne imparteam in grupa si joaca era de fapt bataie intre grupe. Galagia scotea rabinul din sinagoga sa ne linisteasca, dar nu era de folos. In momentul cind intra



inapoi pe usa, galagia era mai mare si continua pina se termina rugaciunea si mergeam acasa. Odata cu virsta, placerile sa schimbau. Am fost invitata la un revelion, la o fetita pe care a chema Rica. La ora 12 noaptea fix, s-a stins lumina si mama ei a intrat in camera cu o lumanare. Daca ar fi intrat cu citeva minute mai tirziu, poate ca Valeriana ar fi fost mai efectiva.

In general, eram copii buni, ne adunam in curtea casei mele si vorbeam despre tot felul de lucruri, dar ne preocupa in mod special barza si copii. Cred ca nici unul din noi nu stia exact cum se naste copilul dar intrebarile noastre erau corecte : de unde ia barza copilul care seamana cu noi si nu cu barza, cum poate barza sa duca in cioc asa o greutate ce se intimpla daca cade etc etc. Cuvintul sex nu exista pentru noi, eram grozav de naivi. Comparativ cu copii de azi eram pur si simplu prosti. Educatie sexuala nu exista si nu se vorbea despre sex, era rusinos.

Cu timpul am inaintat si noi si am inceput sa intelegem. Barza a iesit la pensie si noi ne-am maturizat. Am inceput sa mergem la intilniri, sa jucam jocuri de societate si asa mai departe. La liceu am format impreuna cu Mara Bodinger, Beno Budic si Driscu Mihai, o grupa de prieteni buni. Mergeam zilnic la cinema, ne intilneam la Mara acasa, ascultam BBC la radio si discutiile noastre continuau pina noapte tirziu cind tatal Marei ne trimitea acasa.

Cu aceasta ocazie, as vrea sa-l amintesc pe Driscu, care era un baiat de neconceput. Super destept, talentat (picta grozav), inteligent, cult, cultura lui generala fiind colosala. La virsta lui, eu cred ca era pur si simplu un geniu.

Soarta lui a fost cumplita, rominii avind grija sa-l lichideze.

Avea o problema de vedere si cu un ochi nu prea vedea. Pute sa vina la scoala cu un ciorap in dungii si celalat cu patratele. In vacanta de vara mergeam la plaja, la apa Sucevei. De inotat nu stiam sa inot decit pe uscat, dar totusi era placut. In una din zile am coborat la plaja cu Mara si cu Driscu. Beno era déjà in Israel. Driscu isi dezbracase pantalonii, ochelarii de vedere fiind in buzunarul pantalonului, pe care la atirnat intr-un copac linga noi. Erau la plaja Sucevei si vaci care voiau sa faca plaja in anturajul nostru. O vaca dolofana a trecut pe linga copacul cu pantalonii, i-a luat si a inceput sa fuga. Driscu, cu ochelari nu vedea prea bine, fara ochelari era pierdut. Si asa a inceput o fuga nebuna dupa vaca dolofana. Driscu fugea la stinga, vaca la dreapta, dar nu renunta la pantalonii. Dupa citeva minute bune vaca plictisita a aruncat pantalonii si nici macar nu sa scuzat de zarva creata. Totul s-a terminat cu bine cind ochelarii au fost gasiti intacti.

La liceu am avut o profesoara de muzica poreclita Muzicuta. Si mai era in oras si un cizmar pe a carui firma scria: "Tip top la Ianovici Ilie". Cind Muzicuta dadea tonul pentru Internationala noi cintam in loc de "sculati voi oropsiti as vietii" tip top la Ianovici Ilie. Muzicuta auzea ca ceva nu e in ordine, dar de unde venea problema nu sa prins.



Sint multe lucruri de care imi amintesc, dar in citeva pagini nu se pot rezuma 19 ani de Rominia. In 1965 am venit in Israel si am inceput sa traiesc cu adevarat. Cind ma gindesc la viata grea din Rominia, ma mira ca mai sint oameni care au sentimente pentru Rominia si pentru romini. Lipseau alimente, pentru orice se statea la coada si cind iti venea rindul se termina si marfa. Mama mergea la 5 dimineata la intrarea in oras sa prinda tarani care veneau la piata si sa cumpere la ei o gaina sau alte produse. Politia orasului avea o grija speciala pentru evrei. Nu retin anul in care s-a intimplat, dar intruna din zile au lansat o campanie impotriva evreilor care posedau aur, monede de aur sau dolari. Nu era marfa furata, dar era interzisa. Au fost arestati sute de evrei si condamnati la ani grei de inchisoare. Parte mare din ei au fost trimisi la lucru la canalul Dunarii, de unde nimeni nu se mai intorcea.

Parintii mei povesteau ca in timpul razboiului rominii s-au purtat cu evreii mai rau ca nemtii. Lucrul negru al nemtilor il faceau rominii si erau foarte bucurosi sa omoare si sa injoseasca evreii. Bineinteles ca averile evreiesti au fost confiscate fara sa fie restituite dupa razboi.

Pe scurt, mie nu mi-e dor nu de Rominia si nici de romini. Ei nu sint astazi mai buni decit au fost, poate ca antisemitismul lor fiind mai camuflat. Sa nu uitam ca un presedinteal Rominii, Ion Iliescu, a declarat ca evreii romini

nu au trecut nici un fel de “shua” care de fapt n-a existat pentru ei. Si daca Iliesu era cu ani in urma – sa nu uitam presedintele Rominii de azi care este un antisemitist si se exprima deschis in orice ocazie.

Cert este ca evreii romini au o memorie foarte scurta si nu vor sa-si aduca aminte de ceea ce a fost. Se pleaca an dupa an in Rominia ca si cum nu ar exista alt loc in lume unde se pot cheltui dolarii. Dar asta e parerea mea si nu mai mult.

Romini obisnuiau sa cinte “trezestete romine” eu cred ca nici noua nu ne-ar strica “trezestete evreu romin”.

Ma uit in oglinda si ma gindesc ca am 72 de ani. Au trecut anii ca o valiza prin gara – cind – cum? Asta este.

Maine merg sa-mi cumpar o oglinda noua, in care am sa arat poate mai bine si mai tinara.

Salut voios de pioner (veteran) – mai tine-ti minte?





Amintiri din copilărie

Betty Merdler

Pentru că tot vorbeam despre talentul tatalui meu de a povesti, a-și vrea sa vă dau un exemplu de poveste care a ramas în memoria mea în toți acești ani. Tatal meu a avut 5 frați, cu diferențe de vîrsta foarte mica între ei. Toți erau baieti frumoși și le plăcea să se distreze, să meargă la cafenele si restaurante în centrul orașului, precum și să iasă cu fete frumoase. Casa lor se afla la intrarea în oraș dinspre Botosani, așa ca aveau de parcurs un drum lung din centru pîna acasa. Fiecare avea prietenii lui și nu se întorceau acasă împreuna. Drumul lor trecea pe o stradă lată, pe marginea careia era o alee pentru pietoni a carei margine era aliniata cu copaci. Intr-o seară friguroasa de iarna, cu temperatura sub 20 de grade, pe cind venea spre casă, tata a observat in mijlocul strazii o femeie imbracata intr-un costum negru si cu tocuri inalte. Era curios, dar nu l-a preocupat treaba si si-a continuat drumul spre casa. Scena asta s-a repetat de citeva ori pana cind tata s-a gindit sa opreasca femeia si sa o intrebe ce face in plin ger, imbracata asa cum era, la o ora atit de tirzie in noapte. S-a uitat spre ea, iar femeia, care ridicase si ea capul, s-a uitat la rindul ei la tata. In acel moment, tata a simtit ca i s-au taiat picioarele si l-a prins o frica de moarte. Spunea ca privirea femeii era ca o sageata si a simtit cum i-a inghetat single in vine. S-a intors si cu toate puterile a fugit inapoi in oras. Prietenii sai erau inca acolo. Dupa ce tata le-a povestit intimplarea, acestia au hotarat sa ia o trasura si sa caute femeia. Nu mai era nici semn de ea. Cind a povestit fratilor spaima pe care a tras-o, cu totii au spus ca si ei au vazut femeia si ca trebuie invatata minte sa nu mai sperie oamenii. Au hotarat sa iasa toti 5 noaptea tirziu si sa o astepte. Tatal lor auzind galagie, ora fiind inaintata, a venit sa vada despre ce era vorba. Dupa ce a ascultat povestea, bunicul a spus ca este “necuratul” si a interzis baietilor sa faca ceva. Avea multe povestiri de acest gen, nu puteam sa adorm de frica, dar nu renuntam. Explicatie nu am pentru cele povestite, dar tata nu era un fantazioner si nu era plauzibil ca 5 oameni sa povesteasca ceva identic.

Si mama a avut partea ei de intimplari curioase. Dupa lagar in Transnistria, mama a plecat la Suceava, in timp ce tata a fost inrolat de Armata Rosie. Trecuse un an, dar tata nu s-a intors. Fiind in oras la cumparaturi, o tiganca s-a apropiat de ea si i-a spus : vad ca esti trista tare, dar nu fi necajita, du-te acasa si ai sa intilnesti omul iubit. Mama i-a platit fara sa dea importanta celor spuse. Ce poate sa stie o tiganca ? A ajuns acasa si pe pragul casei sedea tata. Cum a ghicit tiganca nu stiu, dar asa s-a intimplat.



Linga casa noastra se afla o bodega. Printe oamenii care frecventau acest loc era si profesorul Lazar, un om deosebit, o adevarata enciclopedie. Era profesorul meu de latina, fost director de scoala la un liceu din Botosani si transferat la Suceava din cauza betiei. Sotia lui era profesoara mea de franceza. Ma durea inima sa-l vad pe acest om beat turta, pierdut complet, abia tinindu-se pe picioare. Tot timpul ma gindeam daca a doua zi o sa-l mai vad la scoala.

Betivii veneau in curtea noastra sa-si faca nevoile. Copii din curte au luat initiative sa-i invete minte si eu am fost prima care s-a oferit. Am vazut un betivan care se clatina in curte, linga un perete, am luat un pahar cu apa rece si, din spate, i l-am turnat pe gat. Probabil ca apa era extrem de rece sau poate ca el nu era chiar asa de beat, cert este ca s-a trezit omul si a luat-o la fuga dupa mine. De frica sa nu puna mina pe mine, m-am ascuns in pod la Ety si Bety Goldenberg. Urcind atitea scari s-a obosit betivanul si mormaind ca o sa puna el mina pe mine, a plecat inapoi la sa-si termine bautura.

La scoala primara am avut o prietena buna si foarte frumoasa. Era cea mai frumoasa fetita din clasa. O chema Didina Chirica. Locuia pe strada care ducea la Cetate intr-o casa noua cu o livada de pomi fructiferi.

Nu stiu de ce dar mi-au ramas in memorie mirosurile casei in perioada de Craciun si de Anul Nou. Era ca un parfum, vanilie, coptura si un brad mare pe care il decoram cu totii. La fel si de Paste – se facea un cozonac de brinza cu stafide si se pictau oua. Eram foarte apropiate si ma simteam bine in compania acestei familii.

La liceu ne-am despartit si nu mai stiu ce sa intimplat cu ea.

La liceu au fost multe intimplari nostime. Profesorul de stiinte economice avea un nas tare lung si noi radeam spunind ca daca trece la un colt de strada apare intai nasul si dupa aceea apare si el. La botanica aveam un professor batrin. Fiecare din noi stia cind va fi scos la tabla. El scoatea in fiecare lectie trei elevi sa fie examinati la table si o facea in ordine alfabetica. Si nu era nici o surpriza la el. Il numeam “tanchist” pentru ca vara si iarna purta o pereche de bocanci inalti, din timpul razboiului.

Aveam si doua profesoare “misto” - D-na Pavel la matematica si D-na Mustata la limba rusa. Erau tinere si frumoase, bobocii (adica flacaii din clasa) erau ca vrajiti la lectiile lor. Daca erau intrebati de subiectul lectiei nu prea stiau, dar cum fusese imbracata profesoara stiau bine.

La limba romina am avut a profesoara foarte severa – D-na Obada. La sfirsitul anului scolar avea loc o serbare. Ea a decis ca eu voi prezenta programul, pentru ca aveam “o dictie buna” (asa spunea). Cu o zi inainte de serbare Mara a primit o pereche de pantofi noi, foarte frumoși, pe care mi i-a imprumutat pentru eveniment.



Am inceput programul, totul a fost perfect, pana la un moment dat cind pantofii au inceput sa ma stringa in asa masura incit nu mai vedeam clar. Cum textul il stiam pe de rost, i-am dat drumul repede asteptind cu nerabdare sa pot arunca acesti pantofi atat de frumosi si neprietenosi. D-na Obada m-a felicitat pentru prezentare si mi-a spus ca si-a dat seama ca textul era asa de scurt. N-am vrut s-o corectez

In pauza, ieseam in curtea liceului sa ne relaxam. Eram un grup de fete si printre ele era una careia i-au cazut chilotii in timp ce vorbeam deoarece guma lor s-a rupt. Fara nici un fel de emotii, fata si-a scos chiloti si i-a bagat in buzunar. Daca citeste aceste rinduri poate ca o sa-si aminteasca si ea de chilotii buclucasi.

As vrea acum sa ma opresc pentru ca asa pot continua povestile pina maine, asa ca va spun la revedere si sa fiti sanatosi. Cread ca la virsta noastra e singurul lucru de care avem nevoie cu adevarat....





Despartire de Scheia

Dorly Weidenfeld

Numele satului imi era cunoscut, dar nu am tinut minte cum ajungeam acolo, sau care a fost semnificatia lui pentru mine.

Inainte cu cateva zile , Tamara mi-a trimis amintirile ei din Suceava unde a scris :

"Vedeam ruinele mănăstirii de pe Zamca și în zare se întrezărea satulețul Șcheia, cu râul și casele albe a le țărănilor."

Si...mi-am amintit...

A fost o Duminica , cateva zile inainte de plecarea mea in Israel, cand Iancu mi-a propus sa plecăm într-o excursie cu bicicletele la Scheia, pentru toata ziua. Propunerea lui Iancu provinea din cauze speciale si diferite. Femeia de serviciu care lucra la familia Manash ,nascuta in Scheia, a povestit ca in acea duminica, un concurs de cai si calareti, va lua loc in sat, si se vor acorda premii speciale. Iancu a adaugat ca drumul spre Scheia tocmai se pavase, si de aceea o excursie cu biciclete pe asfaltul nou va fii ceva cu totul special !!

Inima m-a atras la peripetiile lui Iancu, dar de data asta am tinut minte ce s-ar putea intampla : puteam gresi pe drum, sau puteam intarzi la intoarcere, si era si frica de pedepsele parintilor. Cu inima grea am refuzat propunerii. Iancu a plecat singur la Scheia.

In Israel, dupa ani de zile am scris in Jurnal, cat de rau imi pare ca nu am plecat la Scheia, ca am pierdut o peripetie de neuitat si o amintire exclusiva, mai ales ca am stiut ca n-o sa-l mai vad pe Iancu, dupa parasirea Sucevei. Daca plecam cu el asi fi avut posibilitatea sa ne luam ramas bun, unul de altul si m-as fi putut despartii, spunand Adio prietenului meu cel mai bun..

Mi-am luat ramas bun de Suceava , dar pe Iancu l-am intalnit doar 50 de ani mai tarziu.

Scheia nu am vazut-o si probabil nu voi avea ocazia s-o mai vad.

Se poate ca am pierdut un vis ?? Nu stiu ..

Dorly





Pentru Niky (Norman Manea)

Eugen Weitmann

Acum cîtva timp, vorbind la telefon, în contextul ultimei cărți citite de mine, "Atrium", am amintit faptul că un eveniment/șoc care mi-a marcat toată viața a avut loc în anii 1966-1969. Acest eveniment este de o similaritate uluitoare cu cele petrecute în filmul "Th Lives of Others" al lui Florian Henckel von Dörmersmarck din 2006 premiat și lăudat.

Pe scurt, într-o "minunată" dimineată din primăvara lui 1966, eu avînd 18 ani neîmpliniți și fiind în drum spre liceul "Ștefan cel Mare" (locuiam pe strada Vasile Alecsandri no. 9), doi "tovarăși" în civil au intrat în casă cerînd mamei și femeii din casă, ca și mie, să-i întovărășesc pentru a da niște declarații în legătură cu "munca ilicită" a croitorului Iancovici Ihil ce locuia cu chirie în casa noastră. Tata plecase deja la spital. Desigur că am părăsit casa cu toții spre birourile securității care atunci erau pe strada Petru Rareș; mama și eu, fiecare în altă cameră, neștiind unde sînt ceilalți.



Mama și eu

Am fost anchetat de la ora opt pînă la trei după amiază, punîndu-mi-se o întrebare mai idioată ca cealaltă (de exemplu dacă aud noaptea mașina de cusut a croitorului, cine intră, cine iese etc.) Nu numai eu, naivul de 17.5ani, chiar și femeia de casă - o femeie simplă de la țară - a realizat că totul e cusut cu ață albă.

Nu am fost violentat fizic, dar psihic, da: "Că dacă nu spun adevărul părinții vor face pușcărie, voi avea de suferit, nu voi putea să intru la facultate etc." La sfîrșit anchetatorii (căci s-au schimbat) au urlat la mine: "Ai scris aici numai minciuni, ai să vezi tu ce pățești!" M-au eliberat, reîntîlnindu-mă acasă cu mama și cu femeia de casă.

În cursul dimineții - asta am aflat-o ulterior, o doamnă ce primea pachete din Israel pentru a le vinde și astfel pentru a se întreține (paremi-se d-na Reisman) venind la mama a fost întâmpinată la porțiță de un "tovarăș" în civil care i-a zis că mama e plecată.



Dorind să pregătească un prânz târziu, pentru a pune tacîmurile pe masă, mama a ridicat fața de masă, dar sertarul se transferase pe partea cealaltă a mesei, desigur din cauza rotirii globului pamîntesc. Totul e clar!

Dupa o zi tata a primit un telefon anonym; o voce de bărbat îi zicea: "D-le doctor, nu vorbiți in casă ce nu trebuie să vorbiți". Afît. Prin extensie, nici părinții, nici eu nu am vorbit nici în casă, nici în grădina noastră, nici pe stradă, nici nicăieri "nimic ce nu trebuie vorbit", pînă in 1973 cînd am venit în Israel.

Acești 7 ani m-au făcut să vorbesc in viață mai puțin decît trebuie, să mă autocenzurez, spre nemulțumirea celor dragi mie - părinți, soție, copii.

Prin extensie, nici părinții, nici eu nu am vorbit nici în casă, nici în grădina noastră, nici pe stradă, nici nicăieri "nimic ce nu trebuie vorbit", pînă in 1973 cînd am venit în Israel.

Acești 7 ani m-au făcut să vorbesc in viață mai puțin decît trebuie, să mă autocenzurez, spre nemulțumirea celor dragi mie - părinți, soție, copii.

Tata a aflat chiar de la sursă că misterioasa voce de la telefon a fost a maiorului "C" care era responsabil cu "ascultările". Căci fără să știe despre cine este vorba, tata l-a ajutat vorbind cu profesorul Riemer și alții pentru a-i da bacalaureatul mai repede (la fără frecvență) și în alte privințe pe soția maiorului "C" care era asistentă la Spitalul Suceava.

Acum cîtiva ani, fiind la Suceava, l-am căutat și l-am găsit pe maiorul "C" pensionar bonom și am făcut legătura cu tata prin telefonul mobil, tata i-a mulțumit din suflet pentru extrem de nobilul gest; d-l "C" punîndu-și in pericol nu numai slujba, poziția, dar chiar și libertatea. Discuțînd despre evenimentul din 1966, "C" imi zice: " "Păi au lucrat ca niște ciubote, microfonul era in receptorul telefonului"

Eu nu am putut face mai mult decît să-i las un plic.

După cum vezi dragă Nicky, nici acum, după aproape jumătate de secol nu îndraznesc decît să-l numesc "C" pe binefăcătorul nostru (nu știu dacă mai este în viață).

Dacă găsești de cuviință, intr-una din viitoarele tale cărți poți insera ceva din această istorioară adevărată.

Mi-ar face mare plăcere să te văd și dacă vei veni în Israel vei putea sta la mine oricît dorești.

Îți mulțumesc,

CU toată căldura și admirația ție și celor dragi ție,



Eugen Weitmann
Israel





Tatal meu

Eugen Weitmann

As dori sa inserez in cartea „Suceava Children” cateva randuri legate de evolutia sentimentelor si conceptiilor unui om in anii zbuciumati intr-o tara din Europa de est, Romania, din anii `30 pina la sfarsitul secolului trecut. Este vorba de tatal meu, Dr. Adolf Weitmann.

S-a nascut intr-o familie de parinti traditionali in imperiul austro-ungar la Bosanci – Suceava atunci cind a izbucnit primul razboi mondial, in 1914. Bunicul, inrolat in armata imperiului, lupta pe atunci in nordul Italiei unde a fost si ranit, primind o medalie. Primii ani de „studiu” au fost la „heder” cu un „melamed” care, dupa spusele fratelui tatei, avea obiceiuri ciudate: se juca cu „obiectul” de facut pipi al baieteilor. Astazi ar fi intrat imediat la puscarie!

Trecem repede peste cealalte clase si ajungem la liceu. Daca vorbim de Suceava, desigur „Stefan cel Mare”, directorul fiind V. Burduhos. Se pare ca tanarul A. Weitmann se tinea mai mult de fotbal decat de carte. Pe de alta parte, in Romania interbelica, caci din 1918 Suceava e in Romania Mare, nu era la moda mare tandrete fata de evrei. La meciurile de fotbal se striga jucatorilor evrei: „Jidane, iufla, tartan, hep, hep” (HEP: abreviere la „Hierosolyma Est Perdita”). Vazand ca la „Stefan cel Mare” sansele de a lua bacalaureatul sunt minime, se transfera la Tecuci, la care liceu profesa si un unchi de al doilea, Dr. Kluger. Mai hais, mai cea, se ia si bacalaureatul.

Desi era multa treaba acasa, cu moara, casele, padurea de la Plavalari, pe tata l-a atras mai mult medicina. Astfel in 1933 se inscrie la Facultatea de Medicina la Iasi. Paralel cu studiile, studentii evrei se „bucurau” de umiliri, injurii si chiar batai, ca sa nu mai vorbim si de „numerus clausus”. Reclamand in urma unei batai la prefectura de politie din Iasi, naivul student Weitmann a fost intrebat de jandarm: „Dar pe dumneavoastra cum va cheama?” desi tata nu prea arata a eschimos, jandarmul voia sa fie sigur.

Asadar, se face transfer la Facultatea de Medicina din Modena, Italia. Gaseste gazda la baba Tenca, pe strada Due Stelle. Gazda ii fura din mancare si din lemnele de incalzit. Stiind ca e cu frica lui Dumnezeu, tata ii scrie in italiana: „Cine fura lemne Dumnezeu il pedepseste!” „Chi ruba legno, Dio punisce”, si a avut efect. Desi nu vazuse in viata ei un evreu, doamna Tenca obisnuia sa zica: „Zgarcit ca un evreu”. Deci erau relatii „amicale” intre gazda si chirias. Intorcandu-se intr-un an acasa cu trenul prin Viena, singurul lucru pe care-l tine minte din Viena este ca il strangeau pantofii (erau cu un numar mai mici). Totusi era vesel la Modena: la festivalul studentilor, se mergea pe strazi cu macheta unui penis gigantic – ehei, studentii astia! Desigur, asta creea invidie la baieti si sperante la studente. La examene, cand tata vorbea, desigur in italiana,



profesorii isi scuipau in san si se cruceau (desigur de groaza). Si totusi, fiindca Mussolini era mai „de treaba” decat Antonescu, in 1939 termina facultatea. Trebuie de spus si de accentuat ca in perioada studentiei, si chiar anterior, era comandantul celulei Beitar din sudul Bucovinei, fiind activ si ocupandu-se cu aderarea de noi membri. La Cernauti se intalneste cu Zeev Jabotinsky, a carui carisma il impresioneaza. La una din conferinte, Jabotinsky zice: „Evrei, fugiti din Europa, se apropie un dezastru”. Clarviziunea lui Jabotinsky l-a marcat pe tata pentru totdeauna.

In 1939, dupa terminarea facultatii, incearca sa-si gaseasca un post de medic in judetul Suceava. Oriunde, toate portile erau inchise. Atunci isi deschide cabinet particular ca medic cu experienta practica nula. Lumea desigur se imbulzea la usa tatei!!! Dar suferinta a fost scurta. Pe 9.10.1941 a venit „salvarea” – deportarea in Transnistria, la Sargorod. Aici a fost cosmarul de 1000 de zile si 1000 de nopti (si aici nu era vorba de saga: „1001 de nopti”). Bunicul a murit de tifos exantematic, tata s-a aflat in situatia cu pistolul maiorului de jandarmi Botoroaga la tampla. Bunica a scapat de acest calvar: si-a dat suflul in 1938 de cancer mamar extins, cand tata a dus-o pe brate la o clinica la Viena si cu toate sumele exorbitante platite nimic nu a ajutat, ea fiind inmormantata la cimitirul evreiesc din Suceava. Desigur, bunicul nu are mormant la Sargorod sau macar o piatra cu o inscriptie. Tata, fratele, surorile se despaduceau de citeva ori pe zi, avand paduchi chiar si in sprancene. Odata, fiind luat la pietruit drumuri, un sucevean ii zice: „Dumneavoastra, domnule doctor, chiar la pietruit drumuri?!” Sora cea mare a tatei s-a logodit si, dintr-un motiv oarecare, seful jandarmeriei locale a hotarat sa-l trimita pe proaspatul logodnic peste Bug, pe teritoriul ocupat de germani, ceea ce insemna moarte sigura. Interventia si rugamintile tatei pe langa seful jandarmeriei au avut rezultat. Cumnatul i-a pastrat recunostinta tatei pana la moarte. Desigur, despre Transnistria se pot scrie mii de pagini. Ne vom opri totusi aici. La inceputul verii lui 1945, cu mintea intreaga, sanatos la trup, desi avusese tifos exantematic, dar fiind tanar l-a suportat mai usor, a venit eliberarea si intoarcerea acasa. Dar casa era complet golita. In afara de asta, in momentul deportarii, bunicului i se ceruse sa predea cheile morii Weitmann, sa renunte in scris la padurea de la Plavalari si la toate celelalte bunuri, dupa legile rasiste in vigoare. Colac peste pupaza, in vara lui 1945, tata intalnindu-se cu un fost coleg de facultate din Iasi, acesta l-a salutat ceremonios, intrebandu-l: „N-ai crapat, jidane?” Oricum, la 11.6.1948, a fost nationalizarea mijloacelor de productie si fratii Weitmann au ramas cu ce aveau pe ei. Este stiut ca in primii ani de democratie populara evreii erau la moda si tata a fost numit directorul Spitalului Unificat Suceava in 1949. In aceeasi perioada, cu tot entuziasmul celor salvati din abisul Transnistriei, dar si cu naivitatea unuia care credea in lozinca franceza: „Libertate, Egalitate, Fraternitate” a noii oranduirii, a primit o delegatie de stanga din S.U.A. pentru un eventual ajutor dat spitalului si sistemului sanitar al Sucevei. Este in plus sa zicem ca acest regim a refuzat cu dispret un ajutor



din partea celui mai mare stat imperialist. Dupa cum se zice: „Si raios si cu coada in sus!” In paranteza fie spus, majoritatea membrilor delegatiei erau evrei, discutiile purtandu-se in limba idis (pe atunci tata nu vorbea engleza).

Atasamentul fata de noua oranduire a fost de asa natura incat, ca exemplu, in anul 1952, cind s-a ridicat corpul de cladiri destinat noii maternitati din cadrul spitalului, si ramanand in lipsa de fonduri, tata a vrut sa aduca bani de acasa pentru a putea termina proiectul. Noroc ca mama, fiinta practica si, oricum, mai putin naiva decit tata, a pus „veto”. Desigur ca la demonstratiile de 1 Mai, 23 August, 7 Noiembrie (da, 7 Noiembrie) tata era in frunte in halat alb (nu si pe 7 noiembrie cand halatul era sub palton, caci era rece la Suceava) cu tablourile lui Gheorghiu-Dej, Ana Pauker (la inceput) si altii. Fiind in frunte, nu putea "sa o stearga", trebuia sa dea exemplu. La una din aceste demonstratii, tata aude un membru al corpului medical ce tine portretul Anei Pauker adresandu-i-se unui coleg: „Daca ma mai enervezi mult, iti dau una in cap cu jidauca asta!”.

Referitor la personajele de mai sus, circula in spital o anecdota legata de portretele de pe coridor, cand seful organizatiei de baza de partid ii zice omului de serviciu: „Da jos tabloul porcului ala”, omul de serviciu intreaba: „Care dintre ei?”

Fiind directorul spitalului, avea la dispozitie sareta cu un cal condusa de tovarasul Gheorghe. Eu, avand scoala cateva luni in corpul din parcul orasului, am fost luat „tramp” pana la scoala cu sareta. Intr-o buna zi, invatatoarea, d-na Sumanaru ii zice mamei, mai in gluma, mai in serios, ca ea vine pe jos, pe cind eu...Si atunci mi s-a terminat distractia, eu fiind foarte revoltat pentru scaderea drastica a nivelului de trai!

Imi amintesc de bunatatea si generozitatea tatei cand, la casatoria surorii mai mici, a facut cadou noului cumnat unicul lucru de pret pe care-l avea – ceasul de la mana lui.

Entuziasmul pentru noua oranduire a scazut treptat si repejor. „Lamurirea” a inceput cu si in paralel cu procesele staliniste ale medicilor evrei in U.R.S.S., impuscarea liderilor comunisti evrei din tarile lagarului socialist, inabusirea revolutiei ungare in 1956-1957, apoi ordinul de inchidere a cabinetelor particulare in 1959, scoaterea tatei din functia de director de spital (fiind fiu de exploatator burghezo-mosieresc), spre marea bucurie a mamei, desi tata a primit aceasta ca o mare lovitura. Si atunci, in 1959, s-a hotarat si parintii au depus actele pentru plecare in Israel. Si s-a asteptat, si s-a asteptat, caci domnul Jacober din Londra, la care s-a ajuns prin intermediari, nu se grabea. Si s-au primit „negative” dupa „negative” desi banii de rascumparare fusesera depusi si desi „business is business”, o parte nu si-a onorat datoria. Trebuie de explicat ca omul de afaceri evreu britanic Jacober rascumpara evrei romani, desigur contra plata.

In acelasi timp, tata a fost scos si din functia de sef al sectiei de oncologie, care pe atunci, ca



dotare si calificare medicala, era a patra in tara (dupa capitala, Iasi si Cluj). A fost retrogradat si profesional, nu numai administrativ, de la medic primar la medic de medicina generala. Aceasta a fost initiativa personala a directorului spitalului, un coreligionar. Dupa cativa ani plini de sentimente de injosire profesionala, tata a cerut si a fost primit in audienta la prim vicesecretarul de partid al judetului, insarcinat cu probleme medicale, domnul Dumitru.

Datorita acestuia, tata a reprimis functia de sef de sectie si gradul de medic primar. Dupa cum se vede, nimeni nu e profet printre cei de un neam cu el, ci printre straini!

In paralel, este de remarcat episodul din perioada 1966-1973, cand am trait cu prezenta reala, circa 2 ani, si apoi stresul in continuare cu microfoanele securitatii in casa. Acest episod a fost descris anterior.

In primavara lui 1973 am depus cu totii din nou actele pentru plecare in Israel si cererea a fost aprobata caci tovarasul Ceausescu a primit 5000 de dolari pentru tata si alte 3000 de dolari pentru mama si pentru mine. Sa nu uitam este vorba de hartiuta verde din 1973! Posibil ca plecarea a fost realizata si datorita unei interventii a unei personalitati celebre.

Ne-am stabilit initial la Nazareth Illit, tata primind postul de sef al clinicii din Kfar Cana (localitatea unde, dupa traditie, Isus, fiind la o nunta, a transformat apa in vin – depinde cat vin s-a baut anterior!). Interesant este faptul ca un bun evreu din estul Europei, cu limba materna idis, a invatat si a vorbit araba cu pacientii si cu personalul medical. Printre altele, as dori sa mentionez faptul ca tata a fost invitat de Marc Chagall la inaugurarea vitrajelor din cladirea Knesset-ului la Ierusalim. Desigur, o mare onoare.

La 7 iulie 1887 la Liazna de langa Vitebsk in Bielorusia tarista in familia Chagalov se naste baietelul Moishe. Familia sarmana are multi copii. Un an mai tarziu in 1888 se nastea in oraselul Zaleszczyki din vestul Poloniei o fetita frumoasa, oachesa si cu ochi negri – Golde, fiica lui Berish si Perl Schmetterling. Intamplarea a facut ca in primii ani ai sec. XX cei doi tineri sa se intalneasca si sa se cunoasca. Moishe a invatat la „heder” apoi la scoala ruseasca in special tehnica desenului. In 1907 pleaca la St. Petersburg unde studiaza cu Leon Bakst iar apoi in 1910 pleaca la Paris si devine un "oarecare" Mark Chagall. In 1922 dupa o scurta perioada revolutionara paraseste definitiv Rusia Sovietica si se stabileste in Franta.

Intre timp Golde Schmetterling cu familia se stabilesc la Bosanci in Imperiul Austro-Ungar, il intalneste pe Sussie-Kissiel Weitmann se plac si se casatoresc pe 12.12.1909. Dupa 5 ani pe 8.11.1914 se naste al doilea lor fiu, Adolf. Bunicul era atunci pe front in nordul Italiei in armata imperiala. Dupa cum am mai scris, bunica Golde s-a prapadit in 1938 dupa o cumplita lupta cu cancerul. In anii Romaniei comuniste nu s-a vorbit acasa de episodul Mark Chagall. In 1969, deci



31 de ani de la moartea bunicii parintii au depus cerere si au primit aprobarea de a vizita Israelul ca turisti, lasand-ul pe iubitul lor fiu in Romania ca zalog. Parintii dorind cu orice pret sa faca „alyia” au cautat orice legatura posibila care ar fi putut fi de folos.

Tata si-a amintit de episodul Mark Chagall si in primavara anului 1969 i-a scris la St. Paul de Vence, in sudul Frantei. Si nu numai ca a primit raspuns dar Mark Chagall l-a anuntat pe tata ca in toamna va fi la Ierusalim pentru inaugurarea vitrajelor din cladirea Knessetului. Intr-adevar, pe cand parintii erau in vizita in Israel, s-au intalnit cu Chagall la Ierusalim, in cladirea Knessetului. Au vorbit in special in idis, dar si in franceza, si se pare ca maestrul Chagall a pus o vorba buna nu stiu exact cui dar familia Weitmann a primit ulterior aprobarea de reintregire a familiei in Israel, ceea ce nu s-a putut prin omul britanic de afaceri Iacober. Intreaga familie ii purtam un adanc respect si o adanca recunostinta celui care a fost Mark Chagall. El s-a stins din viata la 98 de ani pe 28.3.1985 la St. Paul de Vence.

In 1986, parintii s-au mutat la Tel-Aviv, urmandu-si "odorul" de fecior. Tata a lucrat pina la 80 de ani, deci pina in 1994. Cu toata modestia, trebuie spus ca tata avea o memorie prodigioasa, lucru care se reflecta si in „Cartea evreilor din Suceava”, o buna parte din carte fiind scrisa de el. La 19.9,2005, ora 7:03, s-a petrecut pentru familia Weitmann ceva cumplit. Facand, ca in fiecare dimineata, marsul obisnuit de 40 de minute si fiind intr-o stare fizica si mentala exceptionala pentru cei 91 de ani, a fost strivit pe trecerea de pietoni din Kikar Hamedina de un camion condus de un sofer din Taibe. Ultimele palpairi ale acestei inimi generoase au fost la spitalul Ichilov, cateva minute inainte ca eu sa ajung acolo. Cind am stat „Shiva” si spuneam ca „tata s-a dus cu zile” mi se raspundea: „s-a dus cu multi ani in fata”. Probabil ca era adevarat.

Adesea as vrea sa ma sfatuiesc cu el, ii duc dorul si il iubesc si acum. Dupa cum spunea cineva: „e foarte usor sa-l iubesti pe Adolf”.

Eugen Weitmann,

Tel-Aviv

Decembrie 2019





Suceava, orașel de provincie.

Tamara Hirshhorn

Originea mea se divizează între Austria și Polonia. Bunica mea, Ana Lauer Rechtshendler, era originară din Polonia și familia tatălui meu era austriacă.

Mama și tata au fost născuți în România. Bunicuța mea Chane, a rămas văduvă după întâiul război mondial, cu trei copilași mici, mama mea, tatăl lui Rita Lauer, Pini și Leibul, trei copii iubiți. Leibul, fiul major, Saly, soția lui și Ady băiețelul lor iubit, de 6 ani, au murit lângă Transnistria, de foame, frig și boală. Bunicuța mea la plîns toată viața.

Bunica mea a locuit cu noi toți după război și am iubit o nespus.

Noi am locuit pe strada Armenească, o casă cu o grădină mare și frumoasă, cu pomi de fructe, liliaci și flori.

Copilaria mea a fost cam singuratică, nu am avut frați, doar câțiva prieteni. Dar nu toți studiau cu mine, Hasiuța Schmelzer, Bety

Merdler, Ety și Betica Goldenberg, vara mea, Rita, dar ele nu locuiau aproape și nu studiau în Liceul Ștefan cel Mare, Viky și surorile ei, Daniela și Suzy prietene dragi, locuiau în Fălticeni.

De la școală, prietenii mei au fost Iosale Furman, (pe care l-au denunțat ca a fumat călărind pe o vacă, ei aveau o vacă căci erau oameni religioși și a fost expulzat pe 3 zile.). Acum e un Rabin important în Ierusalem. Lăcrămioara Fărtăiș cu care am rămas prietenă toată viața, pînă în ziua de azi, Paul Ghiorghiu cu care făceam acordeoane pentru tezele de matematică, și Rodica Varhov, unde am văzut pentru prima oară televiziune programele internaționale OTI.

Aș mai putea enumera pe Corina (Brîndușa) Costiuc Florin Cojocar, Mihai Murărescu. Cu mine în clasă au mai fost Didi Copelovich, Berta Goldschtein, Ani Zaidler.

Duminicile lungi de vară le petreceam pe Zamca, citind cărți, înconjurați de câmpuri de Tremurici (o plană, care cu briza vîntului, făcea valuri).

Vedeam ruinele mănăstirii de pe Zamca și în zare se întrezărea satulețul Șcheia, cu rîul și casele albe a le țărănilor.

A fost o epocă ceva melancolică, dulce- acrișoară.....

Eram tineri și mai făceam trăznăile noastre... Ne ușcheam de la clasa de matematică și ne ascundeam în grădina mea. Într-o noapte de iarnă întunecoasă, acoperită de zăpadă, eram în casa mea Paul, Iosele, Lăcrămioara și eu. Iosele s-a dus la casa lui să aducă ceva și cînd s-a întors, nu a văzut poarta cu geam din coridor, și și-a spart capul...că am trebuit să-l ducem la



Crucea Roșie.

Cu toate obrăznicile lui a fost un copil foarte inteligent, neliniștit și bun.

Părinții mei, cași multe alte famili nu au avut o viață ușoară în România. Au muncit mult și au suferit consecințele războiului....

Cînd am ajuns la maturitate mi-am dat seama că viitorul meu nu e în România. M-am dus, pe ascuns, la miliție să mă înscriu singură pentru plecarea în Israel. Părintii mei nu știau, eu am fost conștientă că pentru ei va fi foarte greu acolo, fără familie, fără bani și fără limbă.....

Un cunoscut de- al tatălui meu de la miliție l-a chemat și i-a dezvăluit că eu vreau să plec din țară. Tatăl meu, săracul, surprins

și speriat, vine acasă și î-i spune mamei.....Și aici incepe Odisea...

Mama Nu vrea să plece , eu î-i liniștesc că voi pleca eu întîi să văd cum e acolo și după aceea î-i aduc și pe ei.... A fos o Tragedie Greacă....

Tata a hotărît că eu nu plec singură și s-au înscris și ei. A fost un an greu pîna ce am primit pașaportul. Tata a pierdut locul de muncă

și pentru mine a fost o ruptură de locuri cunoscute și apreciate ca grădina mea de care am fost foarte atașată, de Pufi cățelușul meu drag, de strada Armenească,.....

Ziua plecării s-a apropiat și am plecat la gară cu cele cîteva lucruri ce ne dădeau voie sa luăm si cu frica să nu ne facă probleme....

Și în gară nu era nimeni, nici un suflet.... Lîngă tren erau două persoane ce ne faceau adios cu mîna, Lăcrămioara și mama ei....

O despărțire de cinema.....

Cînd am ajuns la București în airoport, ce surpriză !!!!! Draga mea Viky și familia ei plecau cu noi la Italia...Ea n-a știut că eu m-am înscris

și eu nu am știut că ei s-au înscis. Era interzis de divulgat...

Și așa am ajuns la Țara Sfîntă... Pentru mine - libertatea - pentru parinți - altă etapă destul de grea la început....

Cei 9 ani în Israel au trecut repede între studiu și lucru. M-am căsătorit și după 4 ani am plecat în Mexico....Am doi baiieți care, acum, au

luat locul meu în Israel....Și așa au trecut44 de ani...

Părinții au locuit lîngă noi ultimii 9 ani din viața lor, au avut un apartament frumos , lîngă noi, au cunoscut nepoții, au avut un Club Evreiesc

cu doamne ce vorbeau idiș si cel puțin dragul meu tata a fost fericit...

Tata a murit în 1988 și mama 1991 trei ani mai tîrziu.

Și istoria se repetează.... copii mei locuiesc în Israel...



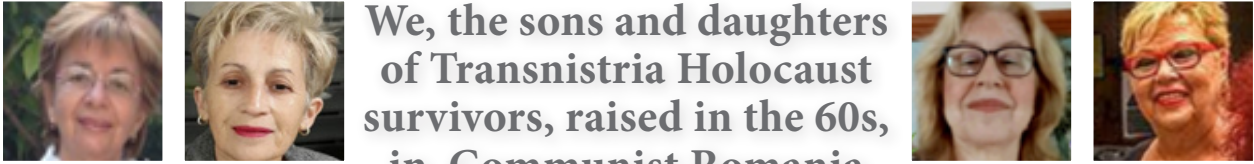


Once upon a Time in Suceava - Bukovina



Lily Pauker
producer

2



We, the sons and daughters
of Transnistria Holocaust
survivors, raised in the 60s,
in Communist Romania
are the authors of
**Once upon a Time in
Suceava-Bukovina**

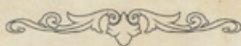


Imobile de pe Strada Curtea Domnească (1960)
Dwellings on Curtea Domnească Street (1960)



Suceava Periferiilor
- Pierdută, uitată, necunoscută

Album



Editura Karl A. Romstorfer
Suceava - 2013

**Once upon a Time in
Suceava - Bukovina**

Volume 2




















Casa Hopmeier, Strada Armenească, Nr. 13, în anii '30
Hopmeier House, Armenian Street, No. 13 during the 30's

Photo: Mihai Aurelian Caruntu "Suceava Periferiilor - Album"

Content				
	Authors	Address		Page
	Introduction		1	11
	Memories		1	67
	"The Silence"		1	69
	Adolf Copelovici		1	70
	Any Katz		1	72
	Alina Itianu	alina.budin@gmail.com	1	74
	Beate Herman	beatriceherman@hotmail.com 054-4606509	1	81
	Beno Budic		1	88
	Betty Merdler	beti4455@bezeqint.net 054-527668	1	170
	Bibi Ruhm		1	179
	Coca Rachmuth	hava@bresler-law.com 052-2542991	1	187
	Cuta Avram	esterav123@gmail.com 052-2361944	1	192
	Dani Ramer		1	195
	Denise Horowitz	severin@inter.net.il	1	210
	Dory Hörer	dory461@gmail.com 050-7445397	1	213
	Dorly Weidenfeld	zdorly@gmail.com	1	218
	Paul Leinburd	paul@crowncap.com	1	249
	Harry Bolner		1	288
	Emanuel Menczel	emma47@netvision.net.il	1	301
	Eugen Weitmann	alexWeitmann@yahoo.com 054-9933891	1	303



Content				
	Authors	Address	Volume	Page
	Gerty Wassermann	gerti@012.net.il 052-8371928	1	314
	Gitta Weitmann	gitta@c21earll.com 1(626)2331638	1	316
	Haiuta Schmeltzer	ivory591@zahav.net.il 054-4633883	1	321
	Harold Einav	harold.eynav@gmail.com	1	326
Volume 2				
	Harry Fleischer		2	9
	Iancu Manash	ymanas@zahav.net.il	2	12
	Iuliana Herscovici	itapal2@gmail.com 050-4947937	2	19
	Itzhak Shapira	Prof. Itzhak Shapira, MD Deputy Director General & Director of Rehabilitation Hospital, Tel Aviv Sourasky (Ichilov) Medical Center Mobile: (+972)524262626 email: shapira@lvmc.gov.il	2	23
	Jacky Gotlieb		2	27
	Jana Rohrllich	arielzoar@gmail.com	2	32
	Karin Mandler		2	35
	Karol Abramovici		2	38
	Lica Olarasu	zeevlmo@gmail.com	2	44
	Lily Weintraub	lilypauker@gmail.com 054-4911021	2	53
	Ludwig Peltz		2	83
	Lotty Schertzer		2	86
	Mara Bodinger		2	88
	Marghit Friedman	dentalma@walla.co.il dentalmarg@gmail.com	2	97

Content				
	Authors	Address	Volume	Page
	Mausi Konig		2	102
	Mendel Brecher	mendelbrecher@yahoo.com 050-7706509	2	105
	Mira Seidler		2	108
	Moshe Herzberg		2	114
	Nelu Eidinger	fire_el@netvision.net.il	2	123
	Paulica Davidovici	paulah2004@gmail.com 054-8009071	2	125
	Pia Klein	pgreer777@gmail.com 1(619)8955545	2	137
	Reizale Shauer	skahana6@gmail.com	2	144
	Relu Faienstein	fire_el@netvision.net.il	2	149
	Renee Schwerberg		2	167
	Riry Schwartz	riry68@gmail.com 1(917) 8411918	2	173
	Romy Rohrllich	rshenhar@yahoo.com 1-(703)861-4633	2	178
	Ruthy Glickman			181
	Ruthy Hubner	ruth@golanhome.com	2	185
	Saul Grinberg	perlagrinberg1@gmail.com 052-3661228 / 04-8386812	2	213
	Senta Grill	senta6@walla.com 054-4808077	2	221
	Sheni Schechter	steinmerm@gmail.com	2	225



Content				
	Authors	Address	Volume	Page
	Shuki Lakner Moscovici		2	228
	Shie Rosenblum	simar12@walla.com 052-8390335	2	232
	Tamara Hirshhorn	tamaralevinson@gmail.com	2	235
	Tony Silber	tonydori@hotmail.com	2	238
	Uzi Kimmel	kimuz411@walla.co.il	2	244
	Zwi Fuhrer	zfuhrer@gmail.com	2	247
	Zwia Peltz	zfuhrer@gmail.com	2	252
	AMINTIRI		2	261



Memories



Gospodărie tradițională (Strada 6 Noiembrie, 1960)
Traditional dwelling (November 6th Street, 1960)

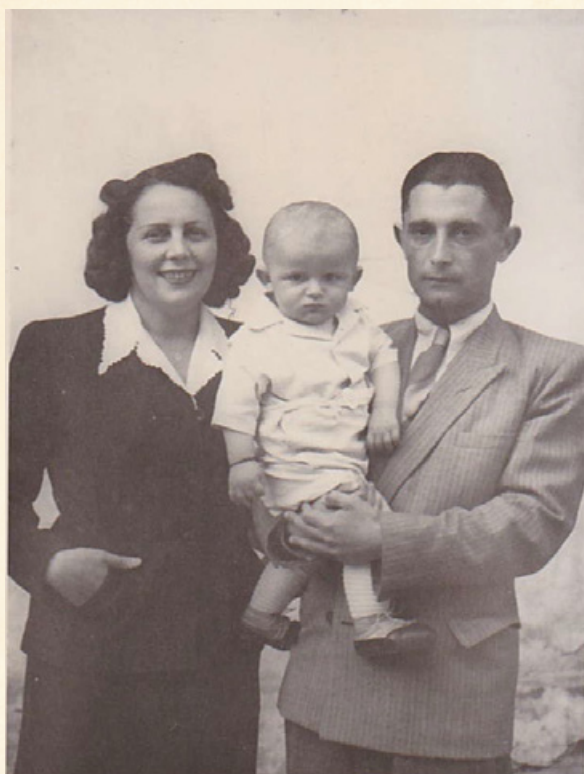
Photo: Mihai Aurelian Caruntu "Suceava Periferiilor - Album"



Harry Fleischer

Written by Dorly Weidenfeld

Harry was and is one of my best friends.



Mrs. and Dr. Fleischer with Harry



Father and son

Harry and his family live in Canada and it will be extremely difficult for me to go to Toronto to interview him for the book. Until Harry writes his memories by himself or comes to Israel for a visit, I took it upon myself to write three stories that remind me of him.

First Story about Harry: a family house.

It was pretty daring in those times for children in Suceava to “build” a family household of two wives and a husband. When I found Lia five years ago, she told me that somehow she remembers a play house built by kids, a place she used to visit and have fun. It didn’t dawn on me immediately. After a while, Pia cleared the haze by sending me a picture where two girls and a boy stand in front of a “house” made of rags. The two girls were Pia and I – the wives, Harry was the husband.



The blanket house walls hung on ropes. The “house” was “built” in my yard. Inside there were a kitchen, a table and chairs, a lot of kitchenware and a bed to rest on. Many of the neighborhood children came to visit, drank tea and played with the hosts. The owners were three kids: the husband – Harry Fleischer, and his two wives – Pia and Dorly. Harry, you can’t beat this success at 12. When I asked Harry, years later, if



he remembers the adventure he answered negative, he didn’t, but “a picture is worth more than a thousand words”. Harry, I confess, you were a wonderful husband to your two wives.

Second Story about Harry

One hot summer evening, Harry, Iancu and I got together. We decided to take advantage of the quiet evening hours to have some wild fun. One of us had in the pocket a packet of cigarettes. Without any fear and worry, each one of us lit a cigarette with a gleam of mischief in the eyes. Feeling important, we wandered the streets till we reached Gitta’s house, where we stopped for a few moments. Suddenly, the window facing the street opened and Gitta’s mother appeared. Our heart missed a beat! We were sure that Ruti, Gitta’s mother, saw us and comprehended what we were doing. Seized by fear and terror, we ran for our lives, away from the danger. Our self-confidence melted in seconds and we didn’t feel like having fun anymore.

We returned worried. I didn’t sleep a wink all night, thinking that in the morning I would have to be held accountable by my parents. A few days passed in panic and regret, but the feared call didn’t come. After a while, I understood I was in the clear. However, to this day I am not sure if Ruti noticed us and spared Harry, Iancu and me the trouble of being punished or maybe she didn’t recognize us in the dark.

Third Story about Harry

Lia Avram, Harry Fleischer and I were classmates in Suceava.

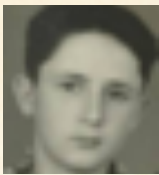
Harry was one of my best friends. Sometimes I also used to play with Lia. The three of us lived around the same place (*near Piata de unt*) and were part of a larger group of children who grew up and used to play in the same neighborhood. I remember playing cops and robbers, riding bikes and so on.



At the end of 1958, my parents, as well as Lia's and Harry's were given the permission to immigrate to Israel. The common destiny inspired the three with a feeling of kinship and comradeship. At a certain moment we stopped going to school and we used to wake up every morning and wander around the town. We told all those who were ready to listen that we were Three Palestinian Representatives (*Trei Delegati din Palestina*) who arrived in Suceava for a limited period of time and that we were bound soon to return to the place we had come from.

During our roaming we met our beloved homeroom teacher, Olga Strambu, who lovingly and with tears in her eyes said goodbye to us. She kissed and hugged us, wishing us success. I remember that I was vexed by not being able to part with Alex Stefanescu and that for many years afterwards, while living in Israel, I planned to write him a goodbye letter. I even remembered the address – 1 Dimitrie Dan Street. However, the years passed by and eventually I had never written the letter. The “representatives” bade Suceava goodbye with mixed feelings. On the one hand, we were enthusiastic facing the “new tomorrow” in a new country, actually our ancestors' country. On the other hand, we were sad to part from our native country and town, and from our many Jewish friends, not knowing when or if we were going to meet again. We also left behind Christian friends, with whom we were sure we wouldn't meet again. Nevertheless, as you all know, destiny wanted the other way around, and we all met eventually in 2016.





Iancu Manash and his Brothers

Written by Dorly Weidenfeld

Iancu was my classmate and “my best friend” in Suceava. He lived next to “*Piata de Unt*”, not far from my house. We spent most of the days together; we were partners in many adventures and secrets.

I met Iancu and his brother Beni in order to write this narrative on his behalf. Their parents, Iosi and Ghizela, were born in Burdujeni, and so was Iancu. After the family moved to Suceava, his two younger brothers, Beni and Dorel, were born.

During the war, each of his parents with their respective families, were deported to the Lucinetz ghetto, in Transnistria. They got married after the war.

His mother, Ghizela, was one of six siblings. They were craftsmen who barely made a living.

On October 9, 1941, a messenger walked the streets. While beating a drum he announced that all Jewish families are going to be deported on the same day and on the next.

Each family was permitted to take a backpack or a suitcase with clothes and personal items. Rich people hid money and valuables in their garments. These were traded later for different services or for food. Ghizela Tzenker’s family didn’t have any valuables. They were hardworking professional tailors and shoemakers. When they reached Lucinetz, they struggled to survive. The two sisters Haike and Ghizela were seamstresses. Their brother, Iosika, was a good tradesman (many years later, after the war, he immigrated to Israel, and became a successful tradesman in Tel-Aviv). Iosika took huge risks sneaking out of the ghetto, associating himself with the local Ukrainian villagers. The locals used to buy clothes at the flea market (*talcioc*). The girls would adjust the clothes according to the necessary size and the boys would fix shoes. The villagers paid with food – potatoes, bread, and milk. This is how they managed to survive. All the children in the family survived except the youngest daughter, Etti. In January 1942 when Etti was 20 years old, she went out. Two drunk police officers tried to catch her. Not being able to do so, they shot and killed her and stole the coat she was wearing. Families that were united survived. On the other hand, rich people who lacked surviving skills, didn’t make it sometimes, especially when money ran out. Betty, Ghizela’s sister, remembers the heartbreaking incident before leaving home. On the day they were deported to Transnistria, everybody was sad and afraid, but Etti, the youngest sister (who was later killed) could vividly feel what the deportation meant. She hugged one of the walls



and cried saying she was sure she wouldn't see the house again. Indeed, she didn't survive. That day, before deportation, was Etti's last time at home.

Iancu's paternal grandfather was Yaakov Manash (Menashe). He imported fur and animal skin and exported wheat. He was a generous, wealthy man. He would regularly donate money to brides in need, for a decent dowry. The secret "Gmilut Hassadim", is the bestowal of loving kindness. Consideration toward one's fellow man was for Iancu's grandfather the cornerstone of all Jewish social virtues. Iancu's grandmother was an important woman, the "pillar" of the family, their permanent adviser. The couple worked hard and played hard. The couple was known as skilled dancers, which distinguished themselves at family parties.

The Manash family – Iancu's grandfather and grandmother and their three sons (Burech – Baruch Max, and Iosele – Iancu's father) - was deported to Transnistria. They arrived at the Lucinetz ghetto. Some of the family members were sent to forced labor, which included road paving. In spite of being strictly prohibited to leave the camp, Iancu's father sneaked out to search for food. At times he used to work for local Ukrainians.

Iancu's grandfather, Yaakov Manash, died of typhoid fever in 1943. His grandmother died of stroke the previous year out of stress thinking that Iosele, Iancu's father, was caught during one of his ghetto flights.

At the end of the war, Iosele procured a horse and cart to get his family back to Romania. When they arrived in Burdujeni, the house was empty, robbed of its content. They got help from the local police officers to find the stolen furniture. Iosele, 35, and Ghizela got married in Burdujeni.

As Mr. Manash had a professional high school education, it was not difficult to secure a job as a clerk at the Alimentara; competent workers were needed. He was appointed head of logistics, running all the warehouses. Alimentara served goods to the entire county.

Iosele knew how to make his own way among the party members and among those in charge of him, in spite of not being a communist. He became famous all around the region and brought a lot of respect to his family.

In 1949 the family moved to Suceava. Iancu's dad started working at MAT, the Administration for Alcohol and Cigarettes, in a management position. The warehouses were on Curtea Domneasca Street.

Iancu, the eldest child, was born in Burdujeni, his younger brothers, Beni and Doron (Dorel) were born in Suceava.





The three siblings were and still are different in nature, but love connects them all. As a child, Iancu was considered a very naughty boy. During those days, he was less interested in school since the world around him was much more interesting and attractive: the fort at the outskirts of town (cetate), the bike, the boys' group and their games. In the class, there were about 12 Jewish kids and Iancu was the exact antithesis of the usual Jewish child. People would often admonish him by saying "a Jewish kid doesn't behave like that", "this doesn't suit a Jewish child". Excelling in studies was very important to most Jewish kids. However, a maximum grade didn't mean a thing to Iancu. At the time, this attitude surprised me, but, in spite of everything, I didn't give up my friendship with him. Apparently, it was exactly Iancu's mysteriousness and the differences between us, which enchanted me.

While I was still in Suceava, Iancu was a good friend with Dutzu Gaitan, Marcus Solomon and, of course, through me, he befriended Harry Fleischer.

It was obvious that Jewish children didn't take part in pranks and that was why Iancu's joining the Romanian boys group was just a matter of time.

The next story happened after I left Suceava. Julei, one of the Romanian classmates, who was considered to be a serious "criminal", called Iancu "dirty Jew". To Julei's great surprise, Iancu



attacked him and hit him with all his strength. It was winter time; the blood flowed and colored the snow in red. Iancu was sure that Julei would retaliate the next day. In light of the possible future threat, he amassed stones and sticks – indispensable equipment necessary for what was to come. However, nothing came! This time it was Iancu’s turn to be surprised. Not only didn’t Julei retaliate, but from that day on, Iancu became his friend and a member of Julei’s notorious group of Christian boys. Moreover, Iancu and Julei shared a desk at the back of the class. The moment Iancu got bored and the teacher was busy, he would jump out of the window to find something more interesting to do while Julei was covering for him.

It can be assumed that Iancu’s determined nature was inherited from his mother. She was a great woman and an excellent mother, but didn’t give up easily. One freezing winter, as retribution for a number of mischievous deeds, one of the neighbors emptied a bucket of cold water on Iancu. The consequence was that Iancu got sick with pneumonia, a very serious disease at the time, which caused much concern. His mother planned carefully her reckoning with the neighbor, filling some buckets with cold water. When the woman was in the yard, she emptied on her the buckets one after another. Understandable, a commotion started in the yard, but Iancu’s mother had the last say. His aunt tried many times to explain Iancu why he shouldn’t use the approach “an eye for an eye”, but to act according to the Jewish custom and not to respond. She used to say “*Capul plecat sabia nu-l taie*”. Despite the fact that, at the time, Iancu didn’t know the continuation of the saying “*dar nici soarele nu-l vede*”, he absolutely didn’t agree with her. He loved the wide spaces, the sun and justice and, as such, fiercely opposed the submission approach.

In 1961, the family got the much awaited visa to leave for Israel. Iancu thought to himself “if everybody in Israel behaves submissively and does not demand justice, I don’t belong there” and he meant it. He felt an acute opposition to his parents’ decision. While they were waiting in Bucharest awaiting the flight, Iancu decided to run away from the hotel, to carry on in Romania. Iancu was 14 years old at the time. He didn’t know the capital at all, but he heard about Cismigiu Park. There he fled. In the meantime, the parents got a frightening message from their relatives. The police was in pursuit of Mr. Manash. Therefore, they should speed up their departure. The entire family was ready to depart, but Iancu was missing. One of his uncles found him after searching and brought him to his parents. You can only imagine what they went through, searching for the missing son.

Another story of opposition is the story of the red tie. According to what Iancu has told me lately, he was asked to play on the accordion a song that glorified the communist authorities and the party, during a “*pionieri*” roll call. He was very good at playing the accordion. Many times before, he had been asked to play at ceremonies and performances. At that specific event, the twelve-year-



old Iancu refused firmly to play that song. In consequence, he was publicly dispossessed of the right to wear the red tie. Since the authorities didn't consider it to be a satisfactory punishment, the shocking event and the designated penalty along with the culprit's name was mentioned on the radio. On this occasion, the name of a Jewish person was heard on the local broadcast news program. According to Iancu's account, Jewish names were never mentioned on radio news before. At the Romanian Border Customs, the officers "surprised" the Manash family. They confiscated Beni's violin. Iancu's accordion had already been sold in Suceava. They ordered Mrs. Manash to get off the train. They wanted to detain her, claiming she was wearing two blouses, one above the other. Following a heated discussion and a substantial bribe Mr. Manash paid surreptitiously, the family succeeded to leave Romania in its entirety.

Iancu never involved his brothers in his mischievous deeds, and, as such, Beni and Doron grew up exemplary sons, disciplined and straight A students. Beni and Dorel (Doron) used to have fun in customary ways.

Here are some photos of the Manash family.

In the cold and snowy Suceava winter, wearing appropriate warm clothes (fur-lined coat, wool scarf and hat that covered their ears, gloves and boots), they would surf on snow all the way to the fort (cetate). The sharp slope made the sled slide fast, had it been controlled by a skilled child. The exhilaration and the pleasure were massive provided the sled wouldn't turn over and send the riders in the ditch at the side of the road. Snowball fights provided multiple moments of enjoyment to the participants and, occasionally, a sharp pain when the snowball hit them in their faces.



Manash family



Manash family

One of the winter events was the custom of "colinda" in which children were passing from house to house, chanting traditional Christmas songs, accompanied by the deep and strange sound of the



“*buhai*” – a primitive instrument made of a box covered by stretched skin. When the wet fingers pulled the horse tail hairs coming out of the box, a deep and peculiar sound could be heard, to the enchantment of the listeners. The house occupants would offer the children sweets or money. Beni and his good friend, the town’s head of the Securitate’s son, were going together to sing the songs of the “*colinda*”. Every time they got to a house, a line of officers was protecting them from behind. At that time, Beni didn’t understand how they got such a warm welcome and generous sums of money.



“buhai, (Wikipedia)”

During the 50s, the Romanian authorities understood that they could force Jews to part with their savings. These honest, hardworking people saved money for a “rainy day”. From experience, they learned that a few gold coins, a diamond stone or foreign currency could be of much help and, sometimes, even seal one’s family fate for better or for worse. That’s why nearly every regular person purchased the illegal merchandise and kept it hidden at home and sometimes at the cemetery, concealed in the headstone.

Yours truly, Dorly Weidenfeld, who is writing these lines, immigrated to Israel in the winter of 1958 and a few months later the Manash family received the happy news as well – the visa was approved. I was glad; not before long I would see my friend, Iancu, in Israel once more. His family started making the usual preparations for the journey. Just before the day they were supposed to leave Romania, Iancu’s father was arrested, tortured at the local police headquarters. The authorities demanded the gold. Eventually, the pain was too much to endure. Father led them to the hiding place and turned the savings in. As a result, he was arrested. I read the news in Iancu’s letter. I felt deeply sad for his family’s suffering. Suddenly, he had to mature. His mother was left alone at home concerned with two heavy missions. She had to take care of the legal aid on her husband’s behalf (Mr. Manash was still in the penitentiary). She also had to find a way to provide for her family. At the end of long debates at the courthouse, Mr. Manash was sentenced for two years in prison. At home, his wife started sewing bedware and Iancu started to assemble carton boxes for the local thread factory. He took his job very seriously. He, the first-born, was contributing to the family struggle for subsistence.

In those years I continued corresponding with Iancu and Dutu (Vladimir) Gaitan, who is nowadays a well-known actor in Romania. In 1961, I received the last letter from Suceava. Iancu let me know that he and his family were at last on their way to Israel. He expressed his hope that once

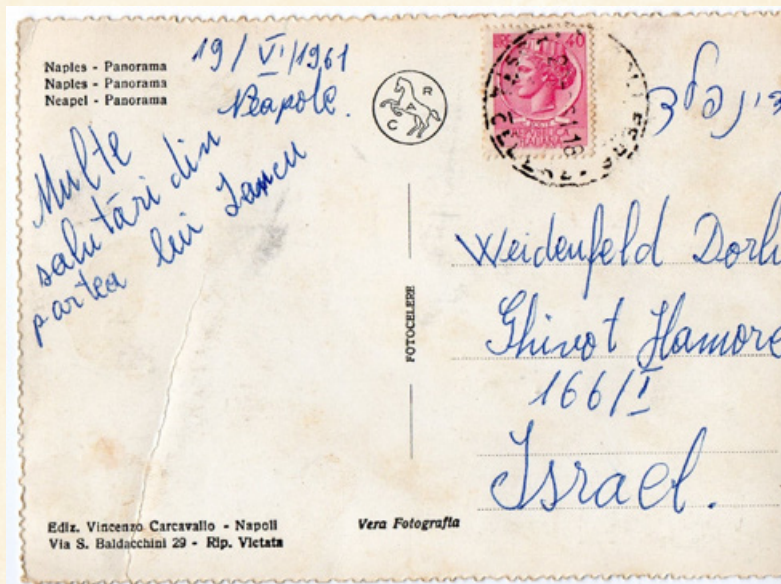




in Israel, our friendship would keep going on. On the way, he sent me a wonderful postcard from Naples.

Our friendship has survived for more than 50 years.

Undoubtedly, Iancu is even today the special one in our group. He is still the one full of enterprise, creativity, energy and determination. I feel that his development is a natural continuation of the same nonconformist, daring child he once was.





My Story

Written by Dorly Weidenfeld

My name is Dorly Weidenfeld, Iuliana's childhood friend, and I am writing part of her memories. Iuliana's life is full of achievements and accomplishments; she is too modest to write appreciative words about herself, in spite of deserving them.

I remember Iuliana as a very serious, neat, fair-haired blue-eyed girl. Her mother would skillfully weave in her braids starched white ribbons to decorate her beautiful face.

Iuliana arrived in Suceava from Falticeni. Since she was 4 years old, she lived in a big building near the Butter Market (*Piata de unt*). The building had a few floors. Along the open terrace which surrounded the entire floor there were apartment doors. The Herscovici family's apartment was small and unassuming - one undersized, neat room and a kitchen. Many other children lived in the same building – Mario Wasserman (Gitta's cousin), Palatnic family (Dr. Izu Palatnic junior became later Iuliana's husband) Stefan and Mihai Pinzaru; apartment after apartment. On the other side of the road lived Paulica, Iancu, Tzili, Carla, Harry Fleischer, Betty Merdler, Lia Avram, Betina Sheinfeld, Etti and Betty Goldenberg and yours truly, Dorly Weidenfeld – we were all friends.

Mr. Herscovici, Iuliana's father, was her mother's second husband. He was a polite, modest, quiet and intelligent man 20 years older than Mrs. Herscovici. He met his wife through a matchmaker. Iuliana's mother's first husband was shot only 8 days after their wedding, during the notorious Iasi Pogrom. Despite the fact that Iuliana's father was head of department (*Sef de Planificari and Contabil Sef*) money was scarce in their house.

Iuliana was an exceptional student from the first grade until she graduated the Chemical Engineering Faculty in Iasi. Moreover, during the junior high and high school years, Iuliana gave private lessons in mathematics, thus helping financially her family.

During the first four school years, her parents lived a modest, but happy life. Iuliana used to come to my house permanently, to play with my dolls, with the doll-houses and other games. We loved children's plays such as *Alunelu hai la joc*, *Presedinte vrem ostasi*, *Moara*, *Rata si cei trei boboci*. Of course, we played hide and seek, tag and jumping the rope.

Iuliana's mother cared for her daughter's education and monitored her progress in school. She was involved in everything that was going on at school and was pleased with her daughter's accomplishments. At the end of each school year, Iuliana received First Prize (*Premiul Intii*) for excellency in studies and good behaviour.



When she was in the forth grade, all of a sudden, Mr. Herscovici had a stroke and passed away. This was a shock for us children, but for Iuliana and her mother this wasn't only a tragedy blow, but a financial one as well. The main breadwinner in the family was gone and his family's subsistence was indeterminate. I can't imagine how they managed, but I'm sure that they had to deal with scarcity, privation and paucity.

Iuliana continued to be a straight A student and to regularly receive certificates of excellence. I was sure that after the tragedy she experienced, Iuliana would want to study medicine. However, at the very sight of blood, she fainted, so she decided to study Chemical Engineering in Iasi. The very story of how Iuliana got to the entrance exam in Iasi is so extraordinary that it deserves to be told.

As I mentioned before, there was no money at home. The train ticket wasn't cheap, she also had to stay in Iasi overnight to finish the exams. Getting the necessary money worried her more than the difficulty of the exam. Mrs. Herscovici managed somehow to get 50 lei, which was enough to cover her expenses, but left no money for food.

Her maternal uncles lived in Iasi, but they refused to help her, not even letting her stay for one night in their house during the exams. Iuliana absolutely aced the entrance exams and, as a result, she was granted a scholarship. During her studies she lived in the student dormitories and knew how to use wisely the means she had in short supply.

In Suceava, Iuliana's mother lived with the grandmother. For a woman, the only way of earning a living was to rent a room. The occupants weren't always good people, sometimes even being drunks. Mrs. Herscovici couldn't be picky as this was nearly her only means of subsistence.

I, who was raised in comfortable conditions, regard Iuliana with much appreciation. She struggled with personal and financial hardships but she never let anyone know that they had a difficult life. Her clothes were always clean, starched, ironed, with a pleasant smell, sometimes looking even better than other girls in our class.

I haven't seen Iuliana for many years. She stayed in Romania for family reasons. However, when the connection was restored, I felt the



Iuliana is in the front row, the girl in the middle.



friend to whom I have always looked up to has come back to me. She still has the modesty, honesty and the internal and external beauty I have always seen in her.



Geography lesson with doamna profesora Silvia Miclescu
 From the left: Lia, Paulica, Iuliana, Ileana Marceanu, Ruthy Glickman, Gitta, Tzili, Rusu, Lucica Rusnac, Moshe, Stefan Panzaru, Dorly, Harry Fleischer. In the back: next to the teacher stands Lily.



Iuliana standing first on the right, Paulica at the end. Sitting from the left: Gitta and Lily. Jumping into the picture Dutu Gaitan





In front of the school building with colleagues: Iuliana with white cap in the middle. Tall in the back Dutu Gaitan.
On the left: Moshele Knealing.



At Ica's birthday
The boys standing (from the left) Arni Merdler, X, Meir Lazarovici, Moshele Herzberg, Avi Shapira, Saul Grinberg.
The girls (from the left) X, Agnita Rimer, Ica Zloczever, Iuliana, Shulamit. Behind Ica and Iuliana smiles Eugen Weitmann.





My Story

Itzhak Shapira

On August 19, 1964, which also happens to be my birthday, I reached Haifa Port on a ship named Moledet (Fatherland). In Romania, I was registered as Isaac Schapira, and on the ship itself, I told the clerk who processed me that my name was Itzhak Shapira, and that my last name was written Shapira, and no other way. I was thereby disconnected from my entire childhood.

I was born in Suceava, where I spent my entire childhood. My longest trip was to Falticeni for visits to Esther, my beloved grandmother on my mother's side and my two cousins there, Poli and Silviu, and their families. I traveled once to a village near Timisoara, where my uncle on my father's side, Ioşu, was the village doctor. Actually, you could say that my entire childhood was in small space – our two-room apartment (with no running water and an outhouse in the yard on the other side of the road), my grandfather's house, the churchyards, schools, and the fortress (Cetatea), where we went to play and dream about other worlds.

I was the only child of my mother, şeli, from the Beer family, which originally came from Falticeni, and my father, Udi, a native of Suceava. During WWII, my mother's family was deported to Dorohoi and to Suceava until September 1944. When they returned, her parents and their six children, they found their home burned down, and grabbed an empty house. My father was in Transnistria during the war, and I regret to this day that I did not have the patience to listen to his stories about hunger, distress and the troubles that they went through. Maybe I did not listen because I did not believe at the time that such things could happen. I was an only child, and I received a lot of love and pampering. My father was later sent to a labor camp in the Delta for forbidden activity, and my mother used to take a circuitous route to visit him every few months to bring him food, and especially cigarettes, which he traded for food that enabled him to survive there. My father later got cancer, and was hospitalized for a long time in Bucharest, where he died. My mother stayed constantly at his side with limitless devotion. Three months after my father's death, the Romanian government allowed us to immigrate to Israel, about ten years after we "registered." Several years after that, my grandmother and my mother had my father's body brought to Israel for burial.

That is why I spent most of my childhood in the home of my grandmother and grandfather, Elza and Artur Schapira. They lived in a large house with a big yard, not far from our apartment. They



took care of me and made sure I had everything I needed. They spoke Yiddish with each other, and in time, I also became fluent in the language. My grandfather was a very learned scholar in Halacha (Jewish law). His father, Itzhak, whom I am named after, was a rabbi and familiar with the Kabbala, but he believed that a public servant should not be a burden on the public, and made his living as a shochet (ritual kosher slaughterer). My grandfather learned a lot from him about Halacha – Mishna and Gemara – and of course had an amazing command of Hebrew and Aramaic.

His handwriting in Hebrew was also stunning. He of course tried to teach me Hebrew, and also German (which he spoke much better than Romanian), but at the time, it seemed ridiculous and unnecessary to me. I enjoyed seeing how he taught children for their bar mitzva, and especially his lesson in Gemara in the synagogue after prayers, when complicated texts in Aramaic were made to seem simple, logical, and understandable (in Yiddish, of course), even for a small boy. Many people came to consult him about Halacha. Even though he was a brilliant scholar, he behaved modestly, and dressed like everyone else in the town, and his rulings were mainly on the human aspect of questions. I remember a case of a new shochet in town who treated his wife in a way my grandfather considered “unfit” (he beat her). My grandfather was called to deal with the matter, and ruled that the man should leave his home and the town. That is what happened and how he dealt with violence in the family. Next to his house lived the Budic and Hibner families, with whom my parents had a deeply affectionate and daily friendship. Ruti Budic and Clara, another neighbor, were my mother’s best friends. Moshe Budic worked at the Alimentra supermarket, where he handled non-kosher food, probably including pork products. He went to my grandfather to discuss the question of whether he could serve as the cantor on Yom Kippur and other holidays, because he was afraid that he was unfit for the role. In his inimitable way, my grandfather put him at his ease, telling him that a livelihood was a livelihood, and did not keep him from leading the prayers., as long as he observed the commandments of Halacha and was a God-fearing person. What is interesting is that when my grandfather immigrated to Israel, the Vizhnitzer Rebbe, whom my father taught in heder (Jewish elementary school) sent goodwill messengers to my grandfather to recruit him as a supporter.

As a child, life in Suceava was good. There was plenty of food and space for games, and I had friends. On the other hand, the regime at the time was oppressive. We had to wait on endless lines for everything because of the austerity imposed by the Ceaușescu regime. My father used to move the radio dial to an approved local station after listening to a foreign station, on which they told the truth about what was happening in the Communist bloc, the US, and so forth, just in case a search was conducted, because it was forbidden to listen to foreign radio stations. He was careful



not to travel to a soccer game with a cart, so that he wouldn't be asked where he got the money for luxuries. They bought me a nice bicycle, which we stored in my grandfather's storeroom. Actually, I never rode it, out of fear that the neighbors would inform the authorities that my father had money for such things. The local newspaper consisted mostly of speeches by the leaders at some conference or other.

As I said, my connection with Suceava and Romania was severed when I immigrated to Israel. After about 30 years, I visited Bucharest on a work trip, and the local authorities fell all over themselves to do things for me, including taking me to Suceava with an escort convoy to visit my home town. I recognized the sites of my childhood by the churches and the schools, but I could find nothing else. After a few hours, I asked to leave, and didn't even have the mental strength to visit the fortress where much of my childhood was spent. Years later, before my eldest son went into the army, I took my children on a tour of my home town, and a few years after that, I traveled with my extended family and showed them the town of my childhood, the streets on which I walked, and the places where I played. My cousin Hava, whom we called Coca when she was a girl, was (with her parents Surica and Meir, and her brother Moshe) our neighbor in Suceava, and we were very friendly with them. A while ago, she notified me that Beno Budic had died, and said that my mother was a good friend of his stepmother, Ruti. I knew Beno and his family, of course, and I was sorry that he died. Hava also sent me some of his stories, and I was surprised at the richness of his writing in Romanian, most of which I have lost, his high literary level, and his memory for details from our distant past. Reading his stories, I revisited my childhood scenes, and I was surprised to discover that he also used to "enjoy" the apples in the yard of the church at the entrance to his home and that of the home of my grandfather. He also stood in line for bread at the hunchbacked merchant, and he also paid the ticket seller a bribe in order to see each movie innumerable times.

Together with the nostalgia, it is impossible to forget that the Jews of Suceava were deported to death camps in Transnistria operated by Romania. The final solution of the Romanians was to leave the Jews to their fate, without food, clothing, or other essential items, in freezing cold Ukraine. This was even before the Nazis settled the matter at the Wannsee Conference. It is impossible to forget the cruel Communist regime, the constant fear, and life under various restrictions there. Beno Budic summarized the story of his immigration to Israel by writing, "I left Suceava on the Sabbath, but Suceava has never left me." As far as I'm concerned, I left Suceava, and it has left me, at least in my daily life. In my opinion, had we remained there, we who grew up there could not have developed and achieved what we did.



As a side note, over the years, I had the opportunity to work on various projects with Shaiké Dan. Shaiké was parachuted into Romania in 1944 in order to assist British and American pilots who had to bail out in Romania. Among other things, he was among the founders of the Nativ organization, which brought Jews out of Eastern Europe. He told me quite a bit about how he got Jews out of Romania by passing bags of cash to people in the government there. We will not wish to recall how many dollars each “head” (of ours) was worth, including the 70 kilos of cloths and pans they allowed us to take with us to our new lives.



From the left: Arni Merdler, Micki Korner, Zwi Fuhrer, Iosele Fuhrman, Tuli Tzigelnik. In the back: Itzhak Shapira





My Story

Jacky Gotlieb

I am the eldest son of Hania Rozner from Radauți and Michael Gotlieb from Stroiești. My mother was deported to Lucinetz, Transnistria. Later on, she met her sister there who was deported from Suceava. Eventually, after the war, her sister's husband would introduce her to my father.

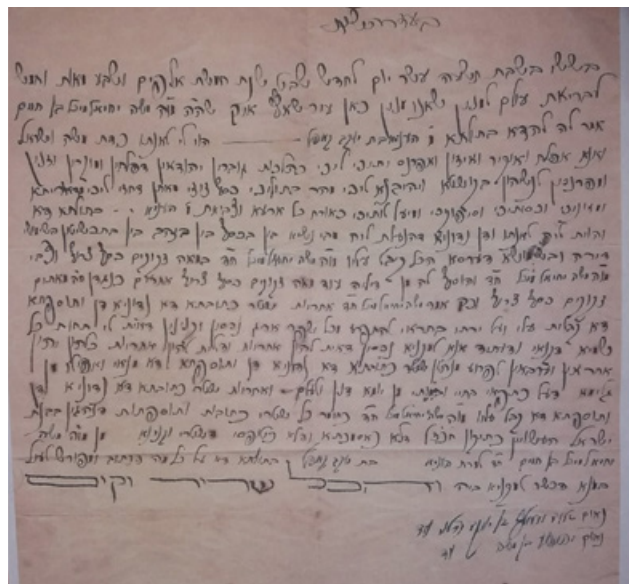
My father had three sisters and two brothers. They got separated during the deportation. My father fled from place to place until he reached Odessa. On the way, every now and then, he was caught and compelled to do forced labor, in road construction or laying train tracks.

In recent years I tried to trace my father's escape route. Although there are documents proving that he was at Koločovska, everything he remembered didn't match the German records and that was the reason he wasn't entitled to compensations.

One of my father's sisters died in Transnistria, but the other siblings survived and returned together with their mother.

In 1943, my mother started working as a nurse in the Russian army hospital.

In February 1945 my parents got married in Suceava and I was born in 1946.



This is my mother's KTUBA

Doctor Hoch was the obstetrician and he worked together with Mara's aunt, Mrs. Nossig. Our family doctor was Dr. Weitmann. In Transnistria my mom got sick with typhoid fever.

Despite the gravity of the illness, she survived. In Suceava, during the summer of 1957, my mom got sick with encephalitis which caused paralysis to the left side of her body. One of our cousins, who lived in Cluj, recommended Professor Prag from the Neurology Department at the City University Hospital. We took his advice and mom was hospitalized under his care. When she returned home we carried out the doctor's instructions regarding treatment and medication. My dad's sister took diligent care of mom at our house. A neurologist who was living across the street from the cinema suggested a Swiss drug which, of course, couldn't be found in Romania. My father



succeeded in acquiring the medicine with the help of our neighbors' daughter, who was working at the Foreign Affairs Ministry. It proved to be of great help. I remember perfectly the package, a small metal box; in it there were pills – like a small box with diamonds. A year later, we went to Felix Baths – a resort in Romania. We spent the entire month of August at Felix; we stayed at a local family. A routine was established. My aunt would accompany mom every day to treatment and return with her at noon (mom was afraid to return by herself). One day, my aunt came back earlier and told us that she would go later to bring mother back. Suddenly, I saw my mom returning all by herself, with no help at all. Mom returned to Suceava on her feet and healthy, as healthy as a Transnistria survivor could be, and, in 2019, on the 19th of April, she celebrated 100 years birthday!!!



Father, mother, I am standing, my younger brother sits in the middle

In Suceava we lived at 28 Karl Marx Street, in the same neighborhood with Carla Wax, Harry Fleischer and Moshe Herzberg. I went to Mrs. Jescu's kindergarten. My classmates at Stefan cel Mare school were Naomi Haiimovich, Beno Budic, Iosele Fuhrman, Dutu Keren, Miki Kerner, Poldi Leinburd.

After the third grade I was transferred with some of the boys to Liceul de fete which became Scoala Mixta no. 2. I remember the uniform – trousers, a jacket slightly opened near the collar so the tie could be visible. When children were nine



On my knee, the third from the left



years old, they could join the “pionieri” and put around the neck the red scarf and the badge (insignia) on the jacket.

From my school days I have few memories. (I am the second from the right, on the next bench sits Emanuel Menczel).



My brother and I



Emanuel Menczel second in the first row. I sit in the adjacent bench

One memory is connected to the roll call, which took place in the schoolyard. I was standing in the last row, when, suddenly, I passed out. Before I fell down my teacher, Mr. Crudu caught me in his hands. To this day I have no idea why caused it. Another memory, this time a painful one, is connected to Pia. A group of children were talking, among them were Pia and I. I made a comment and Pia gave me a kick in the backside with her pointed shoe, a very painful hit.

At a certain time, we studied at school in shifts – the older kids studied in the afternoon.

Students had to carry out “volunteer” work and it was my class turn to pick corn from a relatively remote field, after Areni. Black clouds were building up in the sky and it was obvious that a storm



was about to begin. The instructor, who in the past presented me with the “pionier” tie, was joining us. As the storm was going to hit any minute, everybody started running. The instructor took me in his arms and carried me while running all the way to the nearest refuge. Heavy rain and hail hit us. My best friends were Tuli Tzigelnik, Emmanuel Menczel, Harry Fleischer, Miki Kerner, Zwi Fhurer, Arni Merdler. We played football together wherever there was an empty lot - near Tuli’s house next to the Securitate camp, or in Arni’s yard, or in the schoolyard.



From the left standing: I, Emanuel Menczel, Zwi Fuhrer,
kneeling first on the left and Moshe Herzberg, Alex
Stefanescu next to him



Micky Korner, Zwi Fuhrer, Yosele Fuhrman, and I

On the May 1, 1959 we played football. I was fighting for the ball against Tuli when I twisted my leg and my knee popped out of place. The pain was excruciating. As it was a holiday and no telephones were around, no one could help me. Among the boys was the son of Suceava’s chief of Securitate (șeful de Securitate). He ran home and told his father. It didn’t take long for the ambulance from Carta to come and they took me to the Suceava hospital. Because of the holiday the entrance to the main street was blocked and the ambulance was forced to make a detour on Marașești Street which wasn’t paved. The ride was bumpy, as the streets were full of broken stones. Every time the ambulance drove over stones it caused unbearable pain! All this hopping made my pain even stronger, but eventually it was my salvation. When I reached the hospital, I understood that the doctor on duty was an otolaryngologist and not an orthopedist. He wanted to put my leg in a cast and I was afraid; I worried since the doctor wasn’t a specialist. While all the preparations were being done, my knee got back to its place, apparently as a result of the hopping



on the way. I returned home on foot – quite a distance. All around my knee the skin was black and blue. However, since then, it popped out a few more times.

I studied Hebrew with Sonnensein sometimes at his house, other times at the synagogue. Later on, Efraim Weisbuch took his place.

As a means of stopping the Christian kids to go to church on Christmas, a dance night was organized at school and all students were invited. Attendance was mandatory and everybody had to come dressed in school uniform. The entire teacher faculty was present. Oh, joy?! I remember getting drunk at this party.

One day my mom was told that I was punished at school and that I had to write a great number of times a certain sentence (as was the custom in those days). She got extremely angry because I hadn't told her. I ran to our neighbors' house to escape punishment.

At first, I studied the piano, but on my way to the piano teacher I had to pass some houses with dogs in the yard. As a dog bit my mom, I got scared and refused to keep on going to the lessons. As a result, I started playing the violin with Buki Gropper. I was accepted in the school orchestra led by Doamna Şindilaru, whose nickname was "*muzicuța*" ("the harmonica")



From the left: Beate Herman with the violin, Gitta Segal at the piano, X, the brothers Stefan and Mihai Panzaru with violins, Iancu Manas, Rita Lauer, X playing the accordion, X, Beni Budic, I and Rosemery Rohrich with violins. Behind me Tully Zigelnik. At the door Mrs. Sindilaru, named "*muzicuța*"

My father used to read to me Shalom Aleichem's stories. My mother would speak to me in German and I would answer in Yiddish or Romanian.

Once a year I, my brother and my mom would go on vacation to visit distant relatives in Campulung or Vatra Dornei.

In November 1963 we were permitted to immigrate to Israel.





My Suceava Story

Jana (Ariela) Rohulich

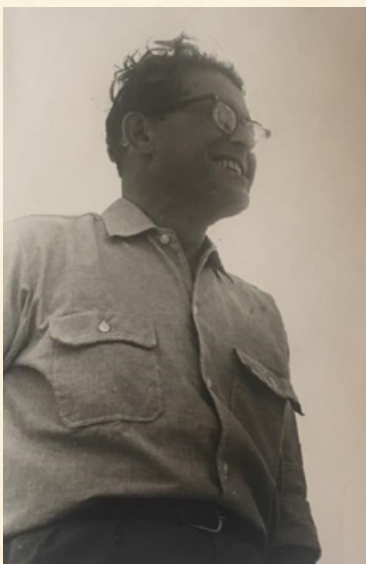
I lived only a few years in Suceava. When I heard about the project, I decided to write about my father, professor Rohulich, Siegfried, Siggy, the teacher, Ziv... my father!!!! The task isn't easy. Although many years have passed since he left us, he is still very much alive in my heart. Writing about my dad takes me back and, suddenly, the feeling is as though he were alive, closer than ever. We are two sisters: Romy and I.



In our family there was a clear division between my sister, Romy – she “belonged” to mother and her relatives, whereas I – to my father.

However, we understood that our parents loved us, girls, equally and provided for each one's needs, and yet, I have always felt that I held a special place in my dad's heart, maybe because of my difficult birth. I was born prematurely by an extremely sick mother. I was told that, the night I was born, my

father didn't move from my crib, keeping an eye on me so I wouldn't die. He sat rocking me all night long...I have no idea if this is a true story or a family myth. Either way, the connection between us was forged forever.



My father taught French and Latin at the local Suceava girls' high-school. Being a teacher at heart, he was dedicated to teaching and education, none of his students could ever forget him. Teaching was not a vocation for him, but a mission, a way of life. As a result, the students really appreciated and valued his unique approach to the younger generation. When I visited Suceava with my sister and her classmates, I got to hear more stories about professor Rohulich's glorious days as a teacher, as an educator and about the mark he left in his students' hearts. He devoted himself to his students.



Sometimes, my mom would get angry and say that he invested more in his students than in his family. I don't remember ever being emotionally neglected by my father. Actually, the other way around is true. I remember us reading together stories and going on long excursions on our town's streets. I was a little girl, but the moments spent with my father, are still alive; they were reawakened especially when I visited my native town. All of a sudden, I felt as though I was sitting again on his shoulders on the way uphill to the fortress (Cetate) on the wide forest paths... and again lying in the tall grass at Zamca, near the church. We used to watch the scenery taken place over us. Furthermore, I remember swimming together in the Suceava River, not being afraid of the thick reeds or of the deep waters. I always felt safe and shielded in my dad's hugging arms. I was a very young girl and his presence beside me contributed a great deal in shaping my future life. When we left Romania and immigrated to Israel father built a new household for us providing a safe existence for our family. He worked in every job that was offered in order to earn a living. My mother was a housewife and took care of our food, both physical and spiritual. My dad was a father figure worth to be admired; a combination of guidance, comfort, attentiveness, besides constant love and support. Walking together along life's path, dad instilled in me the love of teaching which ultimately turned into my life objective.

I didn't choose to teach languages, as he did. Actually, my sister followed this venue. I developed into a professional teacher and a fine educator nearly as good as my dad.

In Israel, being much appreciated, father was sent to France for the enhancement of the French language. Beforehand, he got a Hebrew name, as people used to get during those days in our young country. It happened during Hanukkah when a party was organized in my dad's honor. He was given an impressive Hanukkiah engraved with the words: "For our teacher who enlightens us with his light" and the name he received, Ziv (spark and brightness in Hebrew), befitted both the holiday and the man... In Israel, as in Romania, during all the years in which he served as principal, as a French teacher and as educator, the love and the honor bestowed upon him were numerous. He was sympathetic to his students' problems, invested time and effort and loved his job. For me, my dad continues to be a pillar I can lean on, a loyal companion through all the twists and turns in my life, easing my pain.



My father and I at my wedding



When my dad became a proud grandfather, first for my sister's children and later for mine, there wasn't a soul more loving and devoted than him. He was repaid with endless love.

When mother, his beloved wife for 51 years, died...his condition started to worsen. My love and devotion didn't help. Gradually, the man full of vigor and enthusiasm faded. Only the old man full of sadness and nostalgia remained. I hope that I had succeeded in relieving his final years of pain and give back a little for all the love he bestowed upon me.

My father has long been gone and I miss his smile and his assurance that everything will be all right. Rest in peace, dear father, our Siggyle who spread his light in the world.



Photo: Paul Leinburd





My Story

Karin Mandler

My name is Karin (Mandler) Gottfried.

In 1946, after WWII, my parents, Sigi and Fritzi Mandler, came to Suceava from Czernowitz, Bukovina. The first to arrive was my mother with her family. At the end of the war, being afraid of the Russian communist regime, they fled Czernowitz which was occupied by the Russians. They stayed with my cousin Mira Seidler's family in Suceava. For about five years, My mother had no news from my father. He was forcefully drafted into the Red Army. At that time, they were already married. Returning to Czernowitz after the war father found out that my mother was already in Suceava. The border between Romania and Russia was closed and nobody was allowed to cross it. My father got back only after a Suceava man was paid to sneak him illegally across the border. My mother collected money from rich friends and family members and paid for father's return a large sum of money.

I was born two years later, in 1949, at my cousin Mira's house.





My younger sister was born in 1954.
Here we are in the park

My mom decided to give birth to me and to my sister at home as, during those years, the sanitary conditions at the Suceava hospital were extremely poor. The midwife, Mrs. Nossik.

I have many pleasant memories from Suceava. Among them, I remember fondly the snow in winter and the beautiful ice formations on our house windows, The trips to the little forest outside the city called “*padurice*”, picnics on the Zamca hill, the walks from school to the fortress – cetate, were my favorites.

Once, while I was spending time on the Suceava riverbank, I lost my golden ring in the water. I loved going to Yiddish plays at Dom Polski theater hall. I took piano lessons with Miss Tiron and ballet lessons as well.

When I was 4 years old, Anna Schaefer’s grandfather, Dr. Strominger, who was my parents’ friend, came for a visit with his German shepherd dog. The dog entered the room holding a big bag in his mouth. The dog put the bag near me. When I opened it, I found a little black kitten. I was greatly surprised and happy, as I loved cats very much.

As children, Mario Wasserman and I were very close friends, our parents were good friends as well. One evening we went with our mothers to the park. The moon was big and beautiful and we decided to throw stones at the moon. One stone hit Mario on his head. He was injured and our mothers were extremely worried. I went to Scoala Mixta nr. 2.

My school was in the Volksgarten Park. I remember that, at a “*pionieri*” ceremony, out of five students who were supposed to receive the red tie, four were Jews.

Even as a little girl, I knew my parents were living in a lot of stress because of the communist regime and its strict laws. It wasn’t allowed to leave the country as desired. My parents went to



Mario Wassermann and I



Bucharest almost every year to submit documents to get a visa for Israel. The years went by and nothing happened. In September 1958, a secret police high-ranking officer came to our house. When my mother saw him, she started trembling with fear. However, he came to hand her our passports. This made her so happy that she even kissed him. He told her that we were allowed to tell the big news to others only a few days before departure. So we withheld the news from our family and friends.

The day of our departure arrived, and our family and friends came to say goodbye. The Suceava railway station was outside the town, in Itcani. To get there we needed a vehicle. My parents decided to take a carriage with horses, a "*fiker*", very common at that time.

While we were making our way slowly through the town some Jewish friends opened their windows and waved to us goodbye. The carriage continued its way slowly, when, suddenly, a bus carrying all my parents' friends passed us by. They also waved to us. Later on, two taxis in which there were members of our family passed us. Finally, our carriage reached the railway station and there we saw family members and all our friends waiting for us. We parted with everybody with hugs, kisses and tears, boarded the train to Bucharest and left Suceava to fulfill our dream of building a new life in Israel.





A Field Day at the Suceava River Grassland

Karol Abramovici

I was a student at Stefan cel Mare High School in Suceava. In those days, I was still excited about my new status as a student in this prestigious and famously laborious school, with strictly controlled discipline and serious teachers. I was a good student but a naughty one too. I spent my free time with my older cousin Karol the Great, two years my senior, who attended Liceul de Fete High school. This school was a more relaxed school regarding discipline.

More than once, I heard Karol's friends talking about days of fun they had instead of school days. I was curious to know how they managed to skip class, and still managed to keep up with what their studies and homework. Nonetheless, I considered them heroes, older and wiser, worthy to be role models.

It started during the morning bus-ride to school from Itcani to Suceava. It was a beautiful sunny day. The bus slowed down because of the bumpy road. Sitting at the window-seat I overheard the big guys chatter: "such a nice day, isn't it a pity to spend it at school?". An alternative was considered instantly: "a fun day at the Suceava River Grassland". They went on to planning the details: where exactly would it be better to bathe, how large was the food stock they had, and more. I envied their dauntless planning, but I felt like a coward. I wanted to join them but I was also worried I would get in trouble.

Suddenly, like a lightening the decision hit me: I also wanted to join the adventure.

I whispered in a low voice: "I want to join in". A lively discussion quickly ensued: pros and cons regarding me joining the group were brought up and debated. The arguments against me joining the big boys were that I was still a rookie, a novice, I might reveal the activity to my parents in some way or another. After pleading my case and considering my contribution to the food stock: two fine sandwiches and two apples, I got the green light, but only after I took an oath not to reveal a word to anyone. We reached the final stop on our route. Our group of 5 boys started to go back from the town to the Suceava Grassland by the River, between Burdujeni and Itcani.

I remember getting off the bus and turning left towards the river instead turning right to school. A flash of conscience struck me but I was gone very quickly, especially after seeing the contempt and superiority stares on my friends' faces. It was a really fun day. We bathed, ate, told jokes. At the appointed time, we started walking home towards Itcani, along the railroad tracks. While walking



back I was briefed on what to tell my parents when I get home, how not to raise suspicions and how to keep the secret.

My mother had the habit to ask me questions about my school day. She usually asked how it was, did I get any grades, was I tested orally by the blackboard.

Father, may he rest in peace, was never involved in school affairs. He worked hard at the Itcani Crasma – his business at the Itcani alehouse. When I got home, my mom started the usual drill of questions, for which I was fully prepared. Nevertheless, I sensed something unusual in her voice and in her facial expressions. Suddenly, while reciting the answers the way I was instructed by my friends, my mom retorted: “so how come father came to school to pick you up and was told you didn’t show up? He planned to go with you to apply for an ID certificate”. I felt the sky falling on me. Never before had dad gone to my school. Mom would always come to the parent-teacher meetings, or when my parents were summoned to discuss my mischievous behavior.

The situation deteriorated quickly. It didn’t take long my mom to learn the truth: where I was, what I did, and with whom. The situation worsened when my friends’ parents got involved. Those who initially objected me joining the party felt they were right: “we told you not to allow him to join us”.

It took me a lot of time to redeem my good name.

In spite of the conundrum, I don’t remember feeling sorry for my actions. Thinking about it, there is nothing sweeter than the taste of sin.



Photo: Paul Leinburd





Christmas Blessing Wishes

Karol Abramovici

Christmas time had always been for us, Suceava and Itcani children, a time of thrill and excitement. On the eve of New Year, December 31st, which was by far the most important evening of the year children would visit the neighbors and wish them a happy new year in the traditional Romanian way.

We waited for this event all year. The preparations started a few weeks earlier and was organized like a military operation: we planned, rehearsed, performed, gave each other feedback and drew conclusions to perfect the act.

Jewish and Christian kids between the ages of 12-14 operated in teams of 4-5 each. Each of us had a role: There was the head of the group, a kid was responsible for ringing the bells (clopotei), a kid responsible of the money people donated, a kid who recited and sang the traditional song called “*uratura*” (blessing), and finally a kid who had to build and operate the Buhai.

The song went like this:

*Aho, aho, copii și frați,
Stați puțin și nu mânați
Și cuvântul mi-ascultați:*

*Am plecat să colindăm
Pe la case să urăm,
Plugușorul românesc
Obiceiul strămoșesc.*

*Vă urăm cum se cuvine
Pentru anul care vine
Holde mari
Cu bobul des
Și pe creste
Și pe șes!*

*Ahoy, ahoy, children and brothers,
Wait a little, don't drive passed
Listen to me please:*

*We went caroling
Blessing houses,
According to the Ancestral custom
The “Romanian Plow”*

*For the upcoming year
On the ridges and on the plains
We wish you abundant crops
Rich in grains.*



*Câte mere în livezi
Atâtea vite-n cirezi;
Câtă apă în izvoare*

*Cattle heads as many as apples in the orchards,
Milk as much as water in the springs.
Wealth for home and country*

Să ne fie-ndestulată

Cheer on, guys!

Casa toată!

And shout! All of you!

Țara toată!

C'mon C'mon!

Ia mai mânați, măi flăcăi!

Și strigați cu toții, măi!

Hai, hai!

The Buhai accompanied the song and emphasized its meaning.

A few words about the Buhai. This makeshift musical instrument consists of two main parts: a large can or tin or a small barrel open on one side and a 0.5 cm diameter hole in the middle of the other side, from which dangled a braid made of horsehair. The tin part was easily obtained from any grocery store. The problem was obtaining the horsetail hair to make the typical sound of the Buhai. My story is about how I managed to build the Buhai on time.

My family and I lived in Itkani next to the train station. Opposite the exit, horse-drawn carriages were stationed in order to service the passengers who wished to travel to Suceava. December was always a very cold month. Most passengers preferred to take the bus or a taxi (which operated, but in very small numbers). Consequently, the coachmen would sit idly for hours, often falling asleep in their fur coats. The carriage station was my destination for getting this coveted essential item. The horsetail is the ID and the pride of the horse. The coachman would groom it, comb it with a special comb. I tried several times to buy a few horsehairs but each time I was categorically denied. The coachmen were well aware that the Christmas season was a perilous time regarding the integrity of their horses' tail hair. They did whatever they could to protect the animals. Among other measures, the coachmen made a mutual assistance pact to prevent such theft.

Stealing horsehair was a bold endeavor requiring careful planning and execution. I had the knowhow: buggies' schedule, coachman's characteristics. It was important to know whether the coachman was able to chase me in case he caught me. On D-Day, the operation started under the cover of darkness. Equipped with a pair of scissors I skulked beside the carriages while the coachmen were napping. I approached a horse from the opposite side to the sidewalk, grabbed a handful of hair and cut. The cutting was the critical moment of the operation: the coachman could wake up, the horse could kick or make protest sounds that would alarm the coachmen. If



the operation was successful, I would continue to walk nonchalantly as if nothing had happened, serene but careful not to attract attention from the surrounding coachmen or people passing by on the opposite side walk.

Nevertheless, the operation has not always gone according to plan; people walked down the street, or the coachman didn't fall asleep. It meant that I had to repeat the procedure the next evening. As you may have already guessed, I was determined to complete the task successfully and on time. I couldn't let my team down. I had to be ready for the upcoming rehearsals. Otherwise, what would I tell my friends?

I would like to point out that I would never cut the whole amount of hair from one single horse; by doing so I might damage its beauty and pride. Moreover, the horse's owner would be terribly upset (there were Jewish coachmen as well), or even get a heart attack.

I used to repeat the operation several times to ensure that the outcome would be a three-way win situation: for the horse, the coachman and myself.

In hindsight I am wondering: was this the sort of conduct you would expect from a nice 12 year old Jewish boy who played the violin?



Itceni Church – photo Nicu Idol page





Good Intention, Poor Results

Karol Abramovici

I would like to mention, right from the start, that I was an excellent student, but a naughty kid. At the end of each school year I was awarded one of three certificates of excellence, but with a caveat. It was stated: “this certificate is awarded for outstanding academic achievements...”, but the end of the sentence: “...and good behavior” would be scratched out.

The incident I am going to tell you about happened when I was a student in the 7th grade in Ițcani elementary school. One time, after I had behaved mischievously in the class, the teacher asked me to leave the room. It wasn't the first time I was punished in this manner, so I took it in a stride. When I stepped outside, I met two other kids in the schoolyard who were punished similarly. Right next to our school stood a beautiful Catholic church, which was decorated with multi-colored stained-glass windows. The parishioners were extremely proud of their church and the fine artisanship that adorned the church uniquely. The two kids in question were busy throwing stones at the windows, competing whose stone gets closer to the church.

Since I had been training throwing stones at the Suceava River pasture for some time, I became quite a skillful stone-thrower. Feeling apt and proud about my skill, I quickly joined the boys and started coaching them, showing them how to throw stones properly. It was a matter of holding the hand at specific right angle, applying the amount of energy suitable to ensure the right trajectory to the target.

My demonstration resulted in hitting the target successfully in two out of three throws. Their results were far less good. We summed up the activity agreeing that more practice under my guidance was necessary in order to improve their skill.

Luckily, the school bell rang; otherwise, we would have continued the act. The commotion started the next day. Complaints were raised by church officials, the local police started an investigation, and the school administration became involved. The inquiry ended very quickly. It turned out that both boys praised my ability to throw stones before the entire school. Positive result indeed. The inquiry report stated: “Jew breaks church windows”.

From my perspective, I was simply helping my friends improve their physical fitness and their stone-throwing skills. Case summary: My dad (may he rest in peace), paid a large sum of money to repair the windows, to calm the clamor and to change the report title into: “children's mischief”. I am still pondering over the question: If damaging a synagogue by Christians is considered anti-Semitic, what is it called when Jews damages a church?





My Story

Lica Olarasu

Philosophers who contemplate the meaning of happiness believe that living in the past doesn't offer much to it and being preoccupied with the future might lead the way towards doubts and worries and, therefore, doesn't instill a feeling of well-being. As a result, the search for happiness points in the direction of the present – here and now.

I was asked to write my memories; I chose not to do it in a chronological order, but according to the imprints they left in my heart. That is why I will start with the day I had to part with my mother.

My mother

I will never forget the terrible day at the geriatric department of the Sharon Hospital in Petach Tikva. Suffering from an abundance of illnesses and undergoing dialysis, my mom had been already hospitalized. For six weeks they tried to treat the accursed illness – kidney failure. In addition, she suffered from a number of other illnesses, which is better not to elaborate on. Every day after work, I would go to visit her, to keep her company and to assist in any way I could. I felt she was fading away, that I was losing her gradually. Every evening the professor used to make his rounds. He used to greet us and, in terse language, he explained to us that my mom's condition was unchanged. He would then lower his voice and whisper that he did not expect any change.

On that bitter day, the professor's visit started as usual. However, this time his examination took longer and, unlike, the usual routine, he asked me to accompany him to his office. My heart started to beat faster. I wondered if the uncontrollable worries, I was feeling portended by something awful he was going to inform me about. "We reached a point in which we have to make some difficult decisions. The gangrene on your mother's legs has started to spread. Both her legs must be amputated."

I was dumfounded by the doctor's verdict; I asked for time to think and consult. "There is no time", said the professor. "If we don't proceed with the amputation immediately, everything will be over next morning. I am here for you. Of course, we won't do anything without your consent." "All the same" was my reply, "I have to think about it", I left trembling and went into the hallway. I was thinking of my beautiful, generous mother who brought me into this world; her life was full of struggles to provide for us.



Having to choose between amputation and losing her altogether, backed me into a corner. Despite the fact that I hadn't smoked for 17 years, I bought a packet of cigarettes and went to the smoking area. I had never felt so lonely before in my life; I was the one who had to choose between two horrendous options. Somehow, it didn't seem fair to me to involve my son and my wife in this dilemma. How could I burden them with the responsibility for the impossible question; should I add to mom's horrible suffering or should I come to terms with the end? I tried to find the logic of it. Adding suffering without having a prospect of hope didn't seem fair to my mother. I went back to the professor and told him in a broken voice that I didn't agree. The professor looked at me sympathetically. Suddenly I understood that I was left with a few precious hours to spend with my mother. Reality kicked in. I took mom's hand into mine and our eyes met. She beckoned to get near and kissed me on my forehead.



My beautiful mom

I understood she knew I was saying goodbye. I kept holding her hand and my thoughts took me back to Suceava, to our house, to the horses in the yard, to my childhood friends - Iziu, Johnny, Hermica, Maricica, Radu Spataru, Marcel Gitter and others.

At dawn, a man I didn't know came to me and gave me his business card. "I make headstones", he told me. "If you want you can use my services". I realized that "Hevra Kadisha" works like a Swiss clock. Everything ended.

Three days later I was standing next to my mother's grave. On my mom's headstone was engraved according to my desire:

"שמע קול בכי עליך כלו עיני בדמעות באהבה עטפתיני עליך נפשי בערגה תמיד. בנך"
*"Hear my weeping voice, my eyes full of tears; I wrap you with my love,
 my everlasting longing for you. Your son"*.



My family's Story

It is customary to think that one of the characteristics of a Jewish family is migration. My family was one of “wandering Jews” as well. My mother was born in Roman, and, following her father (my grandfather), Yaakov Helman, bless his soul, she moved to Falticeni and after that to Suceava. My grandfather was, among other things, a cantor, one of the first to establish, after the war the synagogue Chevre Gah in Suceava. He's name is still on a plaque in the synagogue.



My maternal grandfather,
Yaakov Helman

Suceava wasn't the last stop in my mother's itinerary. When I immigrated to Israel, I took my mom and dad with me. My father was born in Ciumuleasa (I believe that you have never heard of such a place). His parents, his four brothers, and a sister were born and lived in the village. Later, the entire family moved to Lespezi, then to Dolhasca, Falticeni, ultimately reaching Suceava. During WW II they were deported to Transnistria.



These are my paternal grandparents, Olarasu, with their sons and daughter. Another son is missing from the photo since he immigrated to Palestine before the war

When they returned, my paternal grandmother got very sick. She passed away on 28.8.1944. I remember this date since she died on the day I was born (not the year I was born). That's why every year on my birthday there was also a memorial service for my grandmother.

”גם אם אגרש הזכר, המראה האיום הנורא - הוא חוזר ודבק ומתעתע, שבעתיים מפחיד עיד אימה. הוא חוזר ודבק וקודח, וקשה, נוראה התמונה. למרות שחלף, כמו איננו, המראה, מעשה משכבר, הוא קרוב, הוא נוגע, הנה הוא וגם מלבבי ניגר. לכן על הכל מסתכלת, בלי שמחה, בלי אושר, בקור. רק עלבון בי, שנאה מתסכלת. ואין על דרכי עוד אור, לכן מסביב יש רק עלטה.”



Our house was close to the Electrical Company, to the big Flour Mill and up the road to the famous little forest (Paduricea). I remember that in the forest there was a fountain, which served as a reference point. From there the road split into a fork – one leading to the Jewish cemetery, the other one to the Christian cemetery. A little further, away there was Stefan cel Mare's fortress (Cetatea). The road also led to a number of villages: Ipotesti, Bosanci and Lisaura. One could say that our house was situated at the town's periphery, but in reality we were closer to the center.

My father and his brother were wheat merchants. My mother was my father's right hand. Once a week they would drive the horse-carriage to the market in Dolhasca. My father overlooked the communist régime orders; people weren't supposed to be

merchants. After being followed, he was arrested, convicted and sentenced to many years in prison. He served his sentence in Poarta Alba, near Constanta (a port town at the Black Sea).

As it usually happens in life, something goes wrong and it has an impact on your entire life. As a supplemental source of income, my father bought gold (Napoleon coins, rings, watches) to give his family a chance to survive in times of trouble.

My father confided in mother about the hiding place, the site where his "bank" was buried. It was at Michel (Haiim), my mother's brother, headstone, in the Jewish cemetery.

What did the loyal sister do? She told her brother Haiim the big secret.

Haiim was a gold merchant, and thus followed, arrested and tortured to divulge the place he had hidden the valuables. Believing that father had less gold than he did, he decided to snitch on his brother-in-law's hiding place, hoping that this would reduce the jail time he was



My mother and father got married on October 28, 1945 and started a family on 32 Pushkin street in Suceava



Haiim, my mother's brother



Michel, my mother's brother





My maternal grandparents and Haiim

supposed to serve. It turned out that he was wrong twice my father had much more gold than he did, he destitute and harmed his sister. He was sentenced to more years in jail than he would have if he had announced the authorities of his possession. So, my father was in jail, my uncle was in jail and my mother worked from six o'clock early morning until ten at night, in a bakery in the park opposite the main town's library.

The moment Haiim, her son, my mother's brother, was arrested, my grandmother, who was blind, was left alone at home.

She was the only grandmother I knew and I loved her dearly, in spite of not being my mother's real mom (therefore, not my real



My most beloved grandma

grandmother). Facing the gravity of the situation, my mother had no choice, but to ask me to take care of my grandmother, every day from 4 p.m. to the next day at 8 o'clock a.m., when I had to go to school. Accordingly, I had to sleep at her house. I was 12 at the time. This was my life for a year. It had a deep impact on my soul. My grandmother had Austrian roots and under her supervision, I read for the first time Heine's poems, Goethe. She hired for me a violin teacher named Dimitriu (I think he was also Bumtiu Spivak's violin teacher).

The government amnestied all those involved in gold transactions (late 50s). My mom's brother came back and declared that there was no future for him in Romania and that he wanted to immigrate to Israel. For this reason, he needed all the money (gold) he possessed. However, he would give back what he had taken from us, if the circumstances got favorable. The moral is, if you reveal your secret, don't be surprised if you are left with nothing.

When I returned home from my grandmother, my mother decided I was mature enough (12 years old) to travel by myself to Poarta Alba to bring my father food packages and to see how he was doing. I would not wish any teenager of 12 to travel alone by train at night from Suceava to Poarta Alba, for 12 hours. Even today, when I am "a little" older, I'm not able to travel at night by train.



“כי כל מי שיש לו, נתון יינתן לו ושפע יהיה לו, אך מי שאין לו, גם מה שיש לו יילקח ממנו” (מתי, כ"ה, 29).

It means:

“but he that has not, from him shall be taken even that which he has” (Matthew, 22, 25).

I was born on August 28, 1946 in Suceava. Eight days after that my parents brought someone to mark me for life. Despite it, I know from reliable sources, that later in life nobody complained or was not happy about it.

Every person has a name and, according to tradition, it has to be decided on the eighth day. However, the process through which I got my name proved not to be that easy. For example, according to his identity card, my father's name was Strul Herscu. Nevertheless, on my identity card, my father printed the name Herman, but, when I was called up to the Torah reading in the synagogue, my father was called Zwi Israel. Pretty confusing. The story of my name is no less complex. It seems that on the eighth day of my birth there were some negotiations going on between members of my family regarding my name. My paternal grandfather proposed Wolf, after his brother, while my maternal grandmother asked to name me after her son – Michel. My mom decided my name would be Lica. That's why, whenever my family got together for holidays or at the synagogue, some of my relatives called me Velvale (Wolf), my grandmother called me Shelu (that actually is Michel) and my parents called me Lica. What's more, since I arrived in Israel, I have been called Zeev (which actually means Wolf). Because of the multiple names I bear, an attention problem has developed.

August 28 is not only my birthday and the commemoration of my grandmother's death, but has a historical meaning. On this day, in the year 70 AD, the Romans, led by Titus, destroyed the Second Temple in Jerusalem, marking the end of the Jewish state. In memory of this event, I used to go to the Western Wall in Jerusalem to pray for my loved ones and, at the same time, I make the victory sign as a symbol of our being here, in our country, and for the fact that we are ready to sacrifice our life in order to defend it.

Childhood

When I was about three years old, my grandfather passed away. When I returned from the funeral, one of our neighbors played a practical joke on me: “*You know*” he said, “*your grandfather doesn't have a chamber pot to urinate in*”. I didn't say a word to anyone. I took my chamber pot and I walked for about 2 kilometers to bring it to my grandfather's grave. I returned home 4 hours later, and I found out that everyone was worried because of me. I couldn't understand. My mother took me aside and,



“Marine suit” was in fashion. My mom made sure I got one, with a cap



without too many explanations, spanked me. I started crying and I told her: “*What have I done wrong? After all, I did bring grandfather my chamber pot so he can use it*”.

After attending school, in the afternoons, I used to play different games with my friends, studied Torah with Sonenstein or read books and poems. But, most of all I liked to take care of our horses and feed them. Our transport company used horse-carts to deliver and trade goods.

Holidays:

On Jewish holidays, I used to sit at the synagogue all day long. For me Pesach was special. On the eve of the holiday the traditional ceremony started: switching all kitchenware and searching the house for chametz. Before the Seder night the search for chametz crumbs, as I see it, is like the story in which someone locked themselves in a room and doesn't know he has the key: I understood that our sages forced us to look into our souls. Holding a small-lit candle (which symbolizes our soul) we were passing from room to room in search for chametz. We looked along the walls (which symbolize our heart), in the corners. I considered searching for chametz as the very heart of Pesach tradition, our freedom celebration. The purpose of searching for the *chametz* is to find the key to our soul, to our freedom.

Another Pessach tradition engraved in my memory is to get everything kosher mehadrin. In Suceava, there was doubt regarding the kashrut of the water we were receiving; therefore, my father made wine from the oranges we got from Israel. During the eight days of the holiday, we drank only orange wine made from Israeli fruit. I remember that when I was 8 or 9 years old, during the Chol Hamoed, in the morning, I drank orange wine and went to school drunk. When I reached Clara Wagner's small wine shop (bodegă) I fell and started bleeding. I still have scars from that event.

My Bar Mitzvah Celebration:

I was 13 years old when my father was in prison. The burden of preparing me for my bar mitzvah fell on my uncles. They made a face-saving gesture taking me to the synagogue and staying with me for about 15 minutes. When we got out, they told me that I was a “real man”. The ridiculous celebration felt like a slap on my face, a frustrating missed opportunity.

33 years passed and my son reached the bar mitzvah age. The deep scar left in my heart by the so-called “bar mitzvah celebrations” made me organize an impressive festivity for my son. I rented the banquet hall at “Diplomat” Hotel in Tel-Aviv; I invited all the workers at the factory that I managed at the time to celebrate with us.



Next year, my grandson, Idan, will reach the mitvah age. In honor of this event, I suggested to my son to organize a similar celebration in Tel Aviv. His reaction surprised me. *“Father”, he said, “I don’t remember anything from my bar mitzvah. In addition, Tel-Aviv doesn’t seem to me an impressive place at all. For Idan’s bar mitzvah I am organizing a trip to the United States, during which he will go to NBA games. This will be a trip he will never forget.” I was speechless; every generation has its quirks! The conclusion – if you don’t know anything about children’s parties, don’t guess what they may wish!*

A 50-Year-Old Friendship:

When I was 17, I passed by the post office in Suceava. On the other side of the park, I met a beautiful girl; we studied at the same school. I saw her many times. Without thinking twice, I asked her to be my girlfriend. We are celebrating now 55 years together. It can be said, without a doubt, that our intuition was right. I am happy and she has declared many times that she is happy too. We didn’t get anything from anyone. We have three grandchildren who brighten up our lives and wrap us with their love. It is well known that everybody claims he has the most beautiful, the most successful and the best grandchildren; so do we. We are definitely happy.

Photos of Dorina's family. Dorina is my dear wife.



Dorina’s grandparents, the Leibovici



Dorina's parents, the Leibovici



Dorina’s maternal grandparents



Here is what my granddaughter wrote on my birthday:

“To our beloved grandfather,

Thank you for always taking care of us. Sometimes when we go to the mall you would like to buy the whole store and this is a little too much. But, we know that your intentions are good. Thank you for loving us no matter our moods – when we are angry, sad or happy. Based on your vast life experience, you are always the one who puts things in the right perspective.

As you always say, life is like a travelling train. Along the way people get on and some get off. In my opinion, people who get on the train are successful people, happy with their lives. We wish you never get off the train; we wish you keep on travelling because you really deserve to stay on this train.

We would like to wish you good health. As you say, some things aren't up to us. I, personally, won't forget the night in the emergency room. I and Rony kept complaining but you calmed us down. Thanks to you, we survived that night. I can definitely tell you that if mom and dad had been there, things would have looked different – not necessarily for the better.

We wish that you and grandmother would always stay on the love train. Keep on buying grandma beautiful and expensive gifts and keep on being an amazing husband.

*So, grandpa, happy birthday! We love you to the end of the world,
Your children and grandchildren.”*

Do you still remember Matthew's prophecy “he that has not, from him shall be taken even that which he has”. It turns out that even if you didn't get a well-enough start in life you can still succeed and get the utmost love possible from your wife and grandchildren. Isn't it amazing! Life is worth living when the family you created surrounds you.





Recollections from a Place where the Lilac Blooms and Fear Rules

Lily Weintraub

Introduction

In a city not known to many, in Eastern Europe, there are still streets and houses. However, our own houses have long been destroyed in an attempt to wipe out the memory of the Jews who were born, resided and lived in them. Our neighbors' and relatives' faces are hard to remember today. Most of them can be found in the Jewish cemetery located on the outskirts of the city. There they rest in peace and quiet, among tall trees, being good neighbors and trying to hold onto past memories for those who occasionally drop by.

When the time comes, the images of the people who are writing this book will also fade from the memory of generations to come. To this end, this mosaic of tales attempts to capture the fragrance of the past, the taste of life abroad, the spirit of that period: our childhood in a communist city, the memory of our parents who had lost their youth in Transnistria. As our parents had requested before, we would like to ask the readers: "Remember us!".

The beginning

My mother, 21 years old, two years after returning home from Transnistria, was about to give birth on a Thursday in June in our apartment only after calling the midwife herself. The obstetrician was Dr. Lang. I was in a hurry to emerge into the world, so my speedy birth left a positive impression in everyone's memory. Mother was looking for a name to commemorate her grandmother Leah. In consultation with father and the doctor they decided to call me Lily.

Father went to the Chevre Gach Synagogue to bless my birth and call me by name.

Later, when grandfather Itzik Weintraub wanted to tease me, he used to call me, jokingly, "Leah" or "Leah'le" – both names I disliked, but I knew what he meant and joined his laughter.

I have my mother's face, and as Nurit Zarchi, the Israeli poet wrote in her poem "The Face", she also got her face from her mother. My grandmother from Suceava gave me her face through my mom. Such a long journey! That's how she passes it onto her grandchildren in Israel, then



to the great grandchildren. In my family those who are born receive a gift – the face of grandma from Suceava.

In those days we lived in a single-room apartment rented from Domnisoara Drapel.

Because my mother couldn't produce enough breast milk to feed me, I was hungry and cried at nights. Father used to drag the heavy pram down the long staircase and walk me through the empty streets, until I finally fell asleep. Soon they started feeding me solid foods. I have never liked porridges, not even as a baby. My mother was a great cook, and I had a good appetite....

I was blessed for being loved by many people who made me happy, and I don't only refer to my family, but also to my neighbors. Doamna Gusta Strominger, who lived on the ground floor, used to play with me, tell me stories and teach me long poems in German, which I recited by heart. Others used to pinch my chubby cheeks, calling me fondly "tuterl, tuterl". I liked it less, but even as a baby I understood it was an act of affections. Ghenia, who worked with father in the textile shop downtown used to hug me, sit me down on the counter (*pe tejghea*) and encourage me to stand on my feet, saying "*copacel, copacel*", namely "stand upright like a small tree".

Thinking about my childhood in this manner, by piecing together past events from shards of memories and faded images, is like putting a huge puzzle back together. In a way it's like reliving my life.

The roots

My mother's family lived in Suceava for many years.



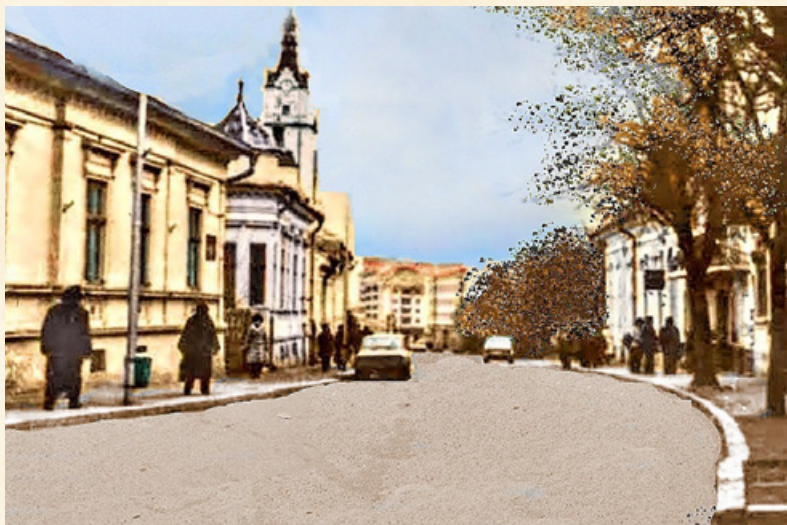
This is a postcard from 1898, a time when my great grandfather, Moses Itzig, lived in town. The records of Suceava's "yellow pages" equivalent from 1909, state in German: *Itzig Moses Bäcker, Langegasse 40* (Langegasse – the long street - was renamed in later years to Petru Rares str.).

My great-grandfather Moses had three sons and a daughter: Moritz, Leon, Adolf and Anna. My grandfather's two brothers studied in Vienna. Leon became a dentist. Adolf became a pharmacist. Anna, their sister, went to Bucharest and married Sami Schneberg. All the Itzigs and their families were deported to Transnistria.



My mother and her parents, Moritz and Amalia Itzig.

On October 9, 1941 a drummer announced the deportation order. On the eve of the deportation, my grandma, Amalia, was sick in bed. Therefore, my grandfather and my fifteen-year-old mom packed a few things, harnessed the horse, which was usually used for delivering bread by cart to the neighboring villages, laid her sick mother on the cart, and went together to the Wagners' home. Mom held the harness and in walked beside the cart, at an even pace, not to attract too much attention. It was forbidden to change your address, since the Jewish town population was deported according to the order of streets pre-announced in the deportation decree. Mother succeeded to lead the cart from Petru Rares Street to the main street, Stefan cel Mare, the residence of my grandmother's sisters. Despite her fear of animals, mom managed to get there and unite the families. Amalia Itzig, Clara Wagner, Berta Hacker, their brother Emanuel Wagner and eat-grandma were deported together with their respective families.



They took part in the second transport, on October 10, Clara

The main street in Suceava. On the left in the white house lived the Wagners. Opposite their house was the Cinema (Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru)



and Max Wagner's son, Marcel Wagner, who was paralyzed, was among the deportees. They took comfort in the fact they were together. The decision to keep the family together proved to be a wise one. The chances of survival were higher when the extended family was present, offering help or even moral support. Marcel, great grandmother and Marcel's portable toilet were carried to Burdujeni's train station on a cart. The other family members walked on foot.

Before leaving home, mother went to her friend, the priest's daughter, in order to give her the candlesticks, the silver cutlery and some valuables for safekeeping. When the family came back from Transnistria, these items were never returned. The priest claimed they were lost, although my mother saw them when she came to visit.

The Itzig, Wagner and Hacker families were deported to Shargorod, crossing the Dniester River in Ataki. So were all my grandfather Itzig's siblings and their respective families. The chairperson of the Jewish Committee from Suceava, the lawyer Dr. Meir Teich was instrumental in keeping things orderly in Shargorod. As far as I know Dr. Teich had one son, Gideon. He was ill even before the deportation. At Shargorod he died. His mother, Mrs. Teich committed suicide. They were buried together in the same grave.

M. Carp reported in his famous "CARTEA NEAGRA" – "The Black Book" about the following incident that occurred in Shargorod in 1942 (a year after the deportation).



Ana Teich (2/17/1890-8/15/1943) and Gideon Alexander Teich (2/27/1923-8/15/1943), Shargorod (photo Beit Lochamei Haghetoot)

5 octombrie 1942
 Maiorul Orășeanu, comandantul Legiunii de jandarmi Moghilău vine la Șargorod, pentru a anunța personal pe conducătorii ghetoului, că a ordonat evacuarea la Peciora, a unui număr de 3 000 evrei din raion și anume câte o mie din ghetourile: Șargorod, Djurin și Murafa. După lungi tratative, maiorul a consimțit să revoce ordinul după ce a primit prețul convenit: o piatră de briliant de un carat și jumătate.

12 octombrie 1942
 La Moghilău începe evacuarea a 3 000 evrei în lagărul Peciora. Generalul Iliescu, inspectorul Jandarmeriei Transnistria, recomandă să fie trimiși cei săraci, întrucât — după părerea sa — oricum sunt sortiți pieirii, iar lagărul Peciora este special creat în acest scop.
 Comitetul Evreiesc intervine pe lângă Legiunea de jandarmi ca deportarea să se facă în loturi de câte 500 oameni.
 Cunoscând faima lagărului despre care se știe în toată Transnistria că este "lagărul morții", după cum indică de altfel și o tăbliță atârnată la poarta de intrare, populația ghetoului, caută cu orice chip să scape de evacuare. Fie că stau ascunși în beciuri sau hrube, fie că fug, în vreme de ploaie pe câmp, adăpostindu-se în porumbiște, șanțuri etc., evreii sunt



October 5, 1942

Major Oraseanu, Moghilev's gendarme commander, came in person to Shargorod and announced that 3000 Jews have to be deported to Pechora camp. Shargorod, Djurin, Murafa Jewish committees were asked to perfect lists of 1000 people from each camp for deportation. Long negotiations took place in Shargorod. Finally, Dr. Teich was able to strike a deal: 1.5 karate diamond was handed to the Major and he withdrew the claim.

I can imagine what kind of skills Dr. Teich employed to seal the deal.

October 12, 1945

Moghilev starts to deport 3000 Jews to Pechora. General Iliescu Transnistria gendarme commander suggests that the weak, the poor, should be included. Their fate is sealed anyway, he says. The infamous Pechora camp was well known. An inscription on its fence, as in reality, announced - "Death Camp". Moghilev Jews ran to escape the terrible fate; they hid in the fields even at rain time, in ditches and in cellars.

Although he was considered a controversial figure among the people of our town, nowadays I can appreciate Dr. Teich's contribution. He initiated various projects to help the deportees: he improved the sanitary condition in the lager, installed a public kitchen to feed orphans. On the other hand, he also sent men to forced labor work according to the authorities' orders. He bribed the Romanian gendarmes that ran the place as well as the Russian partisans, and so it happened that during the freeing of Shargorod by the Red Army, the Russian soldiers and partisans did not harm the Jewish refugees. The partisans testified on Teich's behalf at his trials in Romania and Israel. Teich was prosecuted but never convicted.

In Shargorod my mother became ill with typhoid fever and arthritis, as a side effect. The diseases caused her heart problems, which worsened over the years. Her physicians' advice was to avoid having children. That is why I was an only child. The stress, the diseases, the worries, all contributed to her death at a relatively young age. What happened in Shargorod is obscure to me. One thing is sure: the memory of famine, disease and danger never faded from my mother's memory. When she saw me with a blanket over my shoulders, she would always say: "*it's just like the children in Transnistria*". Whenever I would leave food on my plate, she would say: "*This food could have helped a child live for several days more in Transnistria. You must finish all the food on your plate.*"

It is interesting to learn how my parental grandparents, the Weintraubs, reacted when the family was deported. When walking away, my grandmother kept looking back at the house they left.



Being a veteran-soldier of WWI (drafted into the Austro-Hungarian Army) grandfather Weintraub, who knew intimately what war meant, comforted Malca, his wife, by saying “*Maly, we are now three on the road, let’s pray we come back three*”. Practical and clever! The essence of life.

As their only grandchild, I feel blessed when I realize that my family “went for a trip abroad” only once during their lifetime – when they were deported to Transnistria. Every time I get on a plane to travel abroad, I remember those who did not have the freedom of buying a plane ticket to a destination of their choice. My grandparents were born and died in Bukovina, oppressed by the rules of totalitarian regimes.

Could the reader of this account understand the lives of a generation of Jewish young people, who endured the tyranny of the Romanian Legionaries, the atrocities during the Holocaust, and the frightening terror under the communist regime? Such was our parents’ reality.

Family

Today I understand that I am the only representative of my family, the only one born after the war.

My parents themselves were only children to their parents. My maternal grandmother Amalia had two sisters and a brother: Clara, Berta and Emanuel.

Aunt Clara, or “Tante Clara” as we called her, married uncle Max Wagner, or “Onkel Max”.

They owned the famous Wagner Patisserie (Conditorie).



Clara Wagner



Max Wagner in officer uniform during WWI

Their only child, Marcel, fell ill with polio. His parents never spared efforts to ameliorate his condition. He was operated in Vienna, but the doctors mistakenly worsened his condition. Clara and Max never had more children. Marcel never married.

Aunt Berta married Siegmund Hacker, who secured a position as a clerk at Suceava Municipality due to his famous handwriting. They had no children either.



My grandma's brother, Bobby Emanuel Wagner, stayed single and passed away several years after my birth.

For my father's parents I was the only grandchild as well.

I assume our apartment on Petru Rares street was chosen for its proximity to my maternal grandparent's house, who needed care and household assistance. I cannot remember my grandma healthy. After Transnistria she suffered from kidney dysfunction. Mother cared for her devotedly every day, almost all day long. Every morning my mother and I would walk from our apartment to grandma's house. Mother would cook the meals, entertain grandma, administering the prescribed medications. Even my father would take lunch at grandma's house and rest a bit during the midday closing time of Textile – the store he managed.

My grandfather's bakery was part of house, which was a one story building. It was inherited from my great grandfather Moses Itzig, who was a baker himself. Moritz and Amalia Itzig, my grandparents, lived in the front rooms, the bakery was in the back.



Moritz and Amalia Itzig in front of their shop on Petru Rares str.
photo taken before deportation

Dr. Rauch used to pay daily visits to Amalia, trying to ameliorate grandma's condition. He used to go through a routine of checking Amalia's pulse, her blood pressure, encouraging and consulting her, listening to her and to my mother, administering injections or prescribing medicaments.

The empty tubes, boxes and bottles were my prized possessions. I was two and a half years old when the "tachterl" ("shachterl" - German for boxes, which I couldn't pronounce) fascinated me. I was happy with each one and kept them like a treasure. Later I used them to enrich my makeshift "pharmacy" with new acquisitions, which supposedly could cure all kinds of diseases. Toys were scarce in the late 1950's. The little flacons, boxes and tubes were my toys. My teddy bear, made from the striped plain cloth, was my humble, obedient patient. Occasionally it received shots from my improvised syringe, made of a piece of wood pierced at both ends: one canal held



a sewing needle, the other carried a nail as the syringe piston. He got cuddled in my arms after treatment.

I received my first and only doll at the age of five, only after I behaved exemplarily while staying at home with my grandparents, when my parents went to Bucharest to watch the events of The Students' and Youth Festival. My father wanted to meet the Israeli delegation. My parents' hearts were filled with pride when they watched the beautiful Israeli youths dancing the Hora. They just did not understand why the Israelis were dancing barefoot. At any rate, they brought me Blonda, which in fact had chatain hair (which is closer to brown than to blonde), but since I had always wanted to be blonde myself, at least my doll could be one, at least by name.



My paternal great
grandfather Nathan
Weintraub

Leah Weintraub, my paternal great grandmother, was, what is called today, a single mother. Nathan Weintraub, her husband, died at a young age (my father was named Nathan in his grandfather's memory). Their widow mother raised grandpa Weintraub and his younger brother Leib.

Leah provided for her family by selling alcohol to peasants in Ilisesti, a village 11 miles from Suceava. I assume she inherited the alcohol tavern, *crasma*, from her husband, after his death. She carried a loaded pistol under the counter to protect herself in case she would be attacked. Thank God, it never happened.

In 1914, WWI started and Leib was called to join Frantz Josef's army. My grandfather made sure that his name was registered instead of his younger brother. This is how Itzhak Weintraub from Ilisesti ended up in Italy, fighting for the Kaiser. A long deep scar on his forehead kept remembering the shrapnel that wounded him during the war.

Early life

Petru Rares street was the market street even before WWII. Nowadays tourists visit markets all over the world, considering it exotic and entertaining. In the 1950's, a market was considered an inferior place. However, I remember the street as vibrant, colorful and full of activity. Mother, who spent most of the time at my grandma's house, would take me with her, and I would take Blonda and my teddy-bear with me. My pharmacy stood proudly awaiting my arrival at grandma's.





Photo Caruntu: Album Suceava Periferiilor

“My world” was spread between my grandpa’s house to the Securitate camp and Tuly Tzigelnic’s house, along Petru Rares street.

In the picture, my grandparent’s house is the first at the right. In the 1950’s, the entrance to the house and bakery was no longer from the street but through a gate in the wooden fence. Next door lived Romy Rorhlich and her sister Jana, then Lica Manash, Reizela Shauer, Tuti Silber (Tony) – my cousin, and Tuly Tzigelnic. We played together in the street (traffic was almost non-existent), on the sidewalk, and in the tiny garden before the military camp, where a huge chestnut tree would cover our activities with its generous shade. During winter, we rode the slide down from the top of the same small hill (next to camp). I was the youngest but almost the tallest in the bunch. In the early 1950’s, permanent stalls were built in the market, which had roofs and floors installed. While the construction took place, planks were laid as support for the future floors. We used to



Photo Caruntu: Album Suceava Periferiilor



jump over those planks, racing and skipping over them, playing hide and seek, cops and robbers, and jumping rope.

Below is the market from two points of view.

When the new market opened, an abundance of the farmers' products were on display for sale: yellowish butter and white cheese wrapped nicely in fresh green leaves, eggs in small straw woven baskets, seasonal fruit and vegetables freshly collected the same morning.

Bucharest had much less food. Once a year, Pauli, my mother's favorite cousin from Bucharest, came to Suceava and left by train equipped with many bags of dried and preserved foods: bags of nuts, apples, potatoes, jars of handmade gem and pickles.

On the other side of the market stood Mr. Shauer's chemical cleaning laundry business. Slightly to the corner stood the *Sodawasser Fabric* (German for soda-water factory) where my grandfather Itzik Weintraub worked.

Next door was Perry (Paula) and Lazar Schwartz's apartment. Perry was my mother's best friend. After returning from Shargorod, they studied together for their matriculation exams. My mother was then introduced to my father. He took both girls to Botosani by cart for the tests. Some months later, he married mother. Perry went to medical school in Iasi, met Lazar and married him. Melamed



Old soda water glass bottles once used at my grandpa' Sodawasser Fabric

Sonnenshein's heder stood on the other side of the market. He was often seen when he stepped into the market place looking for his pupils, wearing a black kapota and holding a small stick in his hand.

I always knew that I am a Jew, that I have to follow "our tribe's" rules, and that I have to be even more polite and well behaved than ordinary kids. I learned to read Hebrew but I also hurried to greet a neighbor or an acquaintance with the German "küß die hand" along with a short knickserl (curtsy).

The Regime

Two major elements come to mind: the joys of childhood, and the constant fear from the authorities.

No specific explanation was needed in order to sense the atmosphere of fear casted by the Communist Regime. It penetrated the hearts without a whisper. Even a small child felt it. I have learned without being told overtly that free speech is not part of our civil rights in Suceava. When an innocent neighbor asked me, only to start conversation: "What have



you eaten today?” I replied immediately: “I forgot”, being afraid something bad might happen to my parents if the meal would be considered too rich.

When all my friends from Petru Rares Street, being older than I was, went to kindergarten, I was left to play alone at home. Therefore, at the age of three I begged mother to send me to kindergarten as well. It was unusual, because in those days kids started kindergarten at the age of four.

However, mother persuaded Doamna Jescu, the teacher, and I was admitted. Kindergarten was fun. We learned songs, played and were happy. We even learned to read time on an analog clock. However, the day Stalin died is still deeply ingrained in my memory. I remember well the feeling of joy that filled my heart when Doamna Jescu announced that Stalin had died. I can still see myself as a kid, sitting on a small chair in a circle with my other kindergarten friends during assembly time. I was so happy, so incredibly happy, but I did not dare move a muscle, not to mention the fact that I couldn't share my feelings with my Jewish friends, not during assembly or after it was over.

At night, my parents listened to broadcasts of “Europa Libera”, “Vocea Americii”, in Romanian, ND “Kol Israel Lagola” in Yiddish or Romanian. This was one way to get the real news in the countries that banned freedom of information. Finding the channel was not easy since it had to be adjusted each time, because the Romanian government kept jamming the broadcasting frequency. It was only done in silence, at night, as it was imperative not to awaken any of our neighbors, who could potentially report us to the authorities.

I have come to understand that a knock on the door in the middle of the night was a bad omen. I have noticed that my father had asked my mother not to go on Main Street wearing her beautiful champagne colored velour coat, which suited her magnificently, especially when she put on a scarf and her white crochet gloves. The sight of her might attract unwanted attention. My father was afraid that the regime guardians would wonder: “*How can Nathan Weintraub afford to dress his wife like that?*”. Therefore, the moths got the better from the coat, while my mother never enjoyed it. The moth holes left in the coat were evidence that the fabric was probably of high quality. The lavender fragrance from the dried “*levantzica*” bouquet in the wardrobe, did not prevent them from eating the coat.

I lived almost 16 years in Romania, but I remember that general elections took place just once. I was still in kindergarten when my mother took me to the polls. I clearly remember our entrance into the big building in the center of town; I think the polls took place at the courthouse. My mom whispered: “*we are going into the booth to vote* (ridiculously, the communist party was the only one “in the race”) – *keep very quiet*, she said. “*There are blank notes as well, but I am afraid there*



is surveillance on the premises and they will find out if I put a blank note into the envelope". Thus, the communist party won the election by 98% - over whom?

Under the communist regime, each child learned, without even being taught, that deceit and telling lies were crucial to surviving. In Suceava, a rumor started: you could be admitted to a girls' camp by the Black Sea if you suffered from rheumatism. THE Black Sea! Who in Suceava could afford to spend a month's vacation by the sea? It was a dream. When an opportunity presented itself, you just had to suffer from chronic rheumatism.

Some 15 girls aged 8-16 came forward to convince their family physicians that they were eligible to travel to the Black Sea to receive the treatment. I was the youngest person going, but neither I nor the others were really ill. Under the communist regime, you grew up fast and learned at a young age how to adapt. Being 8 years old, I did not know exactly what to say when interviewed by the doctor, but I knew I had to be ill if I wanted to go to the sea. Therefore, I invented a story about being sick since birth, making the rheumatic pain an inseparable part of my life. Little did I know that pretending to be so ill would send me and all the others to Techirgiol (a lake next to the sea), where I was to be covered in the lake's famous black smelly mud, instead of sunbathing freely at the seashore resort in Eforie, as I imagined.



from the left, Maria, Lily, the camp nurse, Tory Brilliant, Vera Gaitan.

Heritage

Many times I asked myself how could those who survived the camps and carried a baggage of pain, tolerate the daily challenges under the communist regime, and still be such good parents.



Today I understand the tremendous gift I received – a family that surrounded me with endless love. What a meaningful gift for life!

Fortunately, I had a very smart and clever mother. I felt everybody's love and especially my mother's. She knew very well how to raise me on the one hand, but also how to avoid from spoiling me on the other hand. How could a 20-year-old woman, who spent her youth in Shargorod, manage to be so level-headed and insightful is beyond my understanding. Unfortunately, many questions remain unanswered, because when I came to the age when I wanted to know more about my parents' past, they have already passed away. My father was 49 and my mother was 56 when they died in Israel.

One can surmise that the principles acquired at home before deportation, what is referred to in Romanian as: *cei sapte ani de acasa* – “the seven home years” (first years of life crucial to the formation of one's adult personality) were the cornerstone of my mom's preparation for parenthood. I was raised in the light of my family's words of wisdom. They are still close to my heart and I am always aware of them. My maternal grandmother Amalia Itzig (Wagner) used to say: “*always look up*”, meaning that one should always try to take example from those who are smarter and more successful than you. My parental grandfather Itzik Weintraub used to say: “*foolishness that succeeds is still foolishness*”, meaning that when doing things, you better to them right, even if you succeeded doing them the wrong way, otherwise you would repeat your mistakes, which won't get you far.

Grandma Malca Weintraub (Fallenbaum) used to bless my father with: “*May you be liked by people*”, and “*may you wear-out these new shoes in good health*”. When I was young, these proverbs often puzzled me. It took me years to understand the wisdom behind her words.

My mother said that a person should be honest and good “*to God and mankind*”.

My father used to say “*dai un ban dar stai in fata*” (literally: “pay a coin and sit in the front”), meaning it is worth to make an effort and spend more in order to get the better outcome or place. My children never got to meet their grandfathers; they knew their grandmothers for a short period of time; they have learned the family's words of wisdom from me, some of the proverbs even in their original Romanian language.

I inherited my diligence from my father, although my mother nurtured it as well.

“*Cine se scoala de dimineata, departe ajunge*” would my mother say. It is similar to the English proverb: “the early bird gets the worm”. I do believe that I have lived my life according to my family's values. Therefore, working, having a job and making myself useful are crucial to me.





Our balcony was the first from the left. Reizale Shauer's balcony was the next. Photo Caruntu: Album Suceava Periferiilor

As soon as I reached the age of four, when my mother used to get up “*cu noaptea-n cap*” (very early in the morning) in order to stand in the endless ques for buying food, I stayed at home, behind a locked door. On sunny days I used to get the pillows out into our little balcony. After fluffing them, I used to chat with Reizale Shauer, my next-door neighbor whose balcony was adjacent to ours. After returning the pillows and blankets, I made the bed. On top of the blankets I used to spread the big embroidered cover, with the long soft silk tassels on either side.

Then I would return to the balcony and watch the urban scenery of the market below: the commotion, the changing colors of the market products with each season, the smells, the buyer - vendor interaction. Beyond the market square was Reizale's parents' and uncles' laundromat, the Shauer Laundromat. Mrs. Tony Shauer, Reizale's aunt, used to cross the square at noon and go up to her apartment (the building next to ours) carrying on a hanger on which hung a clean, starched and ironed tailored dress, for her daughter Frederica Shauer, a very pretty young maiden.

To make myself useful, at the age of seven, I have already learned how to fill customers' bottles with *bors* for ciorba. *Bors* is a liquid ingredient used to make traditional sour ciorba soup. The





Here are the 4 kids who lived in the building. From right: Rodica Ureche, Yudit Spiegel, Jacky Rotstein and I. The picture was taken at the church iron fence next to the entrance to our yard.



Our apartment, the second from the left on the second floor My school (opposite our apartment) The tower and the church in the back.

Photo Caruntu: Album Suceava Periferiilor



My school (opposite our apartment)



liquid is an extract of fermented wheat. Grandpa Moritz Itzig, the baker, would prepare the bors from bran - *tarata* – a byproduct of the flour sifting process.

When I was nine, we moved to an apartment located across from the girl's school, as tenants of Mrs. Rosa Rotshtein, the seamstress. Roza Rotstein and Mr. Heinrich Spiegel were the owners. There were 2 entrances for each owner. They lived on the ground floor, the tenants, we and the Ureche family, lived on the first floor. The building was adjacent to Sfintu Dumitru church and to the very tall, Lapusneanu Tower Bell, which was seen from most parts of the city.

We only had about a couple of hours of running water a day. However, the water pressure was too low to reach our apartment on the second floor. My job was to fill the barrel in our kitchen, by carrying buckets of water from the cellar. By the way, Rosa Rothstein's summer kitchen was located in the basement. Next to the kitchen was the bathroom, which was tiny and had space for only a large white enamel-coated bathtub. At least once a week, we washed thoroughly in the pre-heated water in the bathroom. When I was in sixth grade, I started tutoring children, and got paid for my work. These little chores gave me a lot of satisfaction as well as self-confidence and a feeling of capability and belonging. To this day I acknowledge "the right to work" as a top value.

The 1950's

On the entrance door of my grandfather's bakery was a little bell that rang every time a client would enter. A big brick oven inhabited the relatively small room. It was a wood oven. Grandpa used to get up very early and prepare the dough in a wooden pail. The risen balls of dough were put in the hot oven. These would turn into the wonderful smelling loaves of bread, a scent so intoxicating and so distinctive it filled the house and the street nearby. Every day grandpa would bake round loaves, but on Fridays he prepared braided challah breads as well. On rare occasions, he would bake pretzels with coarse salt sprinkled on top, which I considered to be a special delicacy. Grandpa used to keep cats as a natural pest control. They knew how to handle rodents that craved the flour. I loved the tabby cat Nushka very much. She loved to sleep on the oven in the bakery in the winter, but never forgot to patrol and kill the pests.

Grandfather used to tell me stories and taught me to draw houses with facades on which the windows carried moldings in the Viennese style.

Every day Annrl would come to clean the bakery. But whenever the childless, pious Christian spinster heard mourning prayers coming from the street and smelled the incense the priest had spread lavishly, she would cross herself several times, then cast her apron, brush and broom aside, and step outside to join the funeral procession.



Before Passover each year, grandpa would sell all the “*hametz*” to the rabbi. The rabbi used to ask him: “*Can you manage financially during the Passover week?*”. The rabbi cared more for a person’s welfare than for keeping the “*mitzvas*”.

Before the war, grandpa had a horse and a cart. The coachman would load the bread and distribute the loaves to costumers in the surrounding villages. On his way back he would get drunk and fall asleep, but the horse knew the way back, and would bring him and the money bag safely home. After a several talks in which he promised to stop drinking wine, everyone understood that they



Grandpa Itzik, father and I The tower and the church in the back.

must ask the priest for help. At church, in the presence of the priest, the coachman swore not to drink wine again. He kept his oath. He stopped drinking wine but continued getting drunk by consuming large quantities of beer.

As mentioned earlier, next to grandpa’s house lived together the Rohrlich, Fishler and Landman families. That was the home of Romy and Jana Rohrlich. Tante Tina managed the household. Her husband Yossi Landman was a quiet man.

The word in town was that he was a math genius. I remember Tante Tina feeding Jana, who was a very picky eater. She tried to vary the menu creatively. For example, she peeled pumpkin seeds and put them on a buttered bread trying to tempt Jana to eat it.

Their father, Sigi Rohrlich, the French teacher, was my mother’s teacher at the Jewish school



after the war, when my mother and Perry Behr (later Dr. Perry Schwartz) studied for their matriculation exams.

Professor Rohrlich was a genuinely nice man, with a good disposition, always smiling. He loved children in general and his pupils in particular. On school vacations, he participated in Jana’s feeding efforts. In an attempt to increase her appetite, he planned trips in which Romy, Jana, and even my cousin Tuti and



I would participate. We went to Zamca or Cetate hoping that the fresh air would increase the little girl's appetite.

Professor Rohrlich staged many plays at school, which he also used to direct. In the summer of 1958 Professor Rohrlich and other teachers (including doamna Almazova) were assigned to lead a students' trip which ended with a cruise on the Danube. Even though the pupils were boys and girls in the 9th and 10th grades, he decided to take his daughter Romy along, and suggested I joined them as her companion, since we were close at age. Until this day, I am grateful for his suggestion. The trip was very interesting, not only for the places we visited, but also for the opportunity for a 10 year old girl like me, to watch and listen to the older girls' conversations about nail polish, fashion and hairstyling. While slowly sailing through the Danube's delta, Romy sang songs for the crowd on board the deck. She was a huge success. Romy was a beautiful



From the left: Efraim Weisbuch with hat, x,x, prof. Sigi Rohrlich with glasses, Perry and mom.
Sitting: x, prof. Surkis. At the end of the row, sitting, Clara Zloczever (Ica's mother).

girl, an excellent pupil with a wonderful singing voice. Next to the Rohrlich family, lived the Krulikovskis. Burshrl Krulikovski grew in his back-yard chickens, geese and pigs. All the animals walked freely from the yard into their flat and back. Although he loved the pig and spoke to him in a sweet voice, on Christmas the pig was butchered and smoked. I still remember the delicious flavor of the zigeunerbraten.



My Father

My father, Nathan Weintraub, was a very handsome man. He oversaw the staff that worked in Textile store in town. Father loved fabrics.

He could identify, by touch alone, any kind of fabric: percal, organza, tafta, crepe de chine, stamba or gabardine. His greatest love was reserved for English wool cloth, which was very rare in Suceava in those days. When he spoke of it, his eyes gleamed with endless appreciation for those who wove the fabric. Every lady in town consulted father about what kind of fabric to buy for a specific purpose, or how to design the outfit. He had an excellent taste. In addition, he had a talent for designing window displays. Father would prepare a sketch beforehand and chose the appropriate fabrics. Later, in Israel, he took part in the interior design of the ship “Shalom”.

Father grew up in Ilisesti, a village near Suceava. Grandpa Weintraub sent him to the “*heder*”, where he learned Hebrew. He knew by heart “*The song of the Sea*” and “*Deborah’s song*” – both from the Bible. This is why he knew Hebrew fairly well when we came to Israel. In those days, the government approved only those with an academic degree to study Hebrew in Ulpan, so his previous knowledge turned out to be a blessing.

Mother read Hebrew very well – as most of the Jews in the diaspora knew to read the prayers from the “*Siddur*”, the Jewish prayer book. With her talent for languages, mother learned Hebrew very quickly and also mastered Hebrew writing without any spelling mistakes.

In Ilisesti, in addition to Hebrew, father learned to play the violin and the clarinet. He played well. He never owned any of those instruments, but



My father



The Textile store on the left. Photo Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru



whenever he could get his hands on one, he would play for us at home. My father was a Zionist. While Suceava was covered in snow, my father would dream about “*Eretz Isruel*” (the Ashkenazi sound), covered in golden sunrays. He carried logs of wood from the “*holtzkamer*” (German name for the shed we kept the wood) to feed the oven into the only heated room, as we couldn’t afford to heat the whole apartment. His gaze betrayed his longing to our homeland the minute he spotted the one Jaffa orange my grandfather bought for us on the black market.

As I said, father was a Zionist. He longed to make Aliya (to immigrate



My father praying



to Israel). Before the war, he wanted to immigrate to Palestine, but grandma Malca (Maly) could not bear parting from her only beloved son. Little did she know that father would end up in the forced labor camp Trihati to build a bridge over the Bug River for the Germans and under their supervision. At a certain point, my father escaped with some other men. I never found out how. Much later, after reading accounts of similar events, I understood that there were several ways of escaping; but the unfortunate who failed, were doomed to an immediate death sentence.

He worked at *OCL Produse Industriale* with many Jewish and non-Jewish employees. He was well- liked, and his skills were greatly appreciated.

The logic of communist commerce management: a few months ago, I had a conversation with Burshi Klein, Pia’s father, who lives in California. He has still a remarkable memory. I asked him how did he ordered the missing merchandise for the shops he managed. My



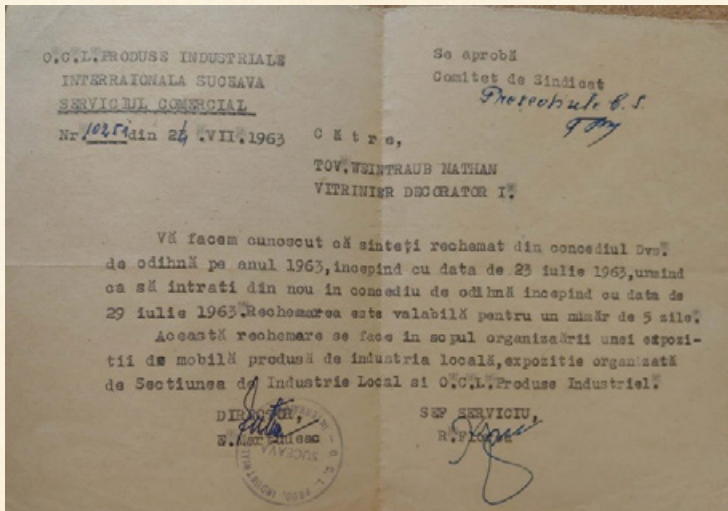


1955 - Third prize at a window dressing competition on the country level, went to Weintraub Nathan.



1957 - Diplome to praise my father's work before and during the Youth Festival in Suceava.

question amused him. Burshi, the manager of the complex OCL-Produse Industriale, told me that he would accept whatever merchandise was produced in one of the Romanian plants and sent to him, regardless of the season or importance. This is how the economy worked. For example, his stores would sell winter gloves, sent by the Romanian plants in the middle of summer, and people would buy them in spite of the hot season, thinking that in winter the store would be out of gloves. My father was the responsible employee of the textile store. The loudspeaker at the state-owned shop would always broadcast music. When Maria Tanase sang a Doina or a Romance, in her incredible deep, throaty voice, my father would ask all the customers and employees to quiet down and listen.



On July 24 father had to cut short the summer vacation by 5 days in order to organize a furniture exposition in Suceava. On September 1963 we got the visa and left Romania

Since he had no specific profession, he would tell me over and over: learn a profession, be independent in life. A profession is like a “bratară de aur”, “a golden bracelet” for a person. I tried to fulfill my dad’s wish, though I changed professions three times during my life.

Pauli

Pauli was my mother’s cousin, Ana (Itzig) Schneberg’s daughter. Tante Ana and Uncle Sami immigrated to Israel

after the war, while Pauli, their only daughter, waited until the 1960's to get a visa and be reunited with her parents.

Pauli and her husband Felix lived in Bucharest. Pauli had her two daughters only after arriving in Israel, so to me she seemed more like an older sister, despite our 20 years difference. She was small, slim, coquette, full of energy and always in a good mood. In a word - YOUNG. I always admired her dark blonde curls and her polished long nails. Pauli worked at a foreign publisher's company store. Sometimes she would bring me illustrated French books like "Roudoudou les belles images". Pauli would tell me the stories behind the great operas, the lyrics of some of the arias and about famous opera singers.

We didn't have a record player at home, just the difuzor (the loudspeaker that the authorities provided), but even on this device they would occasionally play arias from operas and operettas. Pauli told me about the big ballet performances, like Swan Lake and Giselle, and about Irinel Liciu, the gracious Romanian prima-ballerina.

In the 50s the world was running in an analog pace. The Romanian government was reluctant to present a true picture of the life in the West. Therefore, it is hard for me to tell how I came to know that Vienna Opera celebrated New Year by holding the famous Opera Ball. I could imagine the young debutants dressed in long white gowns waltzing at a 3/4 Strauss waltzes tempo. But, Strauss music was ours



Ana and Sami Schneberg



too. After passing the admittance exams to Junior High, father bought 2 round trip tickets for him and for me. For a month, we toured Romania by train and foot. We were walking at the Radetzky March tempo, humming, clapping and stomping according to the famous March tune.

Once a year mom and I would visit Pauli and Felix in Bucharest, eat ice cream at Capsha and profiteroles and Coupe-Jacque at Nestor, two very elegant, old fashioned pastry/ice cream shops. The places were opulently furnished in the



old baroque style with sparkling chandeliers hanging from the ceiling, velvet upholstery, pre-war European atmosphere and old-style delicacies, never to be met in other places. Once Pauli was able to get opera tickets for us. I was dazzled by the fancy ladies in evening gowns, the jewelry they wore and the magnificent opera hall.

Once a year Pauli would come for a vacation to Suceava. On her way back, she would carry copious amounts of food and supplies for the wintertime, as they were scarce in Bucharest: Sacks full of potatoes and apples, jars of preserves and pickles and a couple of my grandfather's wholegrain bread loaves.

In 1958, after the comprehensive exams at the end of 4th grade (before entering the next education level) Pauli took me on a two-week vacation to Sinaia. We visited the Peleş Castle, went hiking, including the daily walk to the canteen at Furnica (which was on the top of Furnica



Pauli and I at the Peleş Castle

mountain, 2000 meters above sea level) for meals. In those days you couldn't get meals wherever you wanted. You needed a pre-paid meal card, which was difficult to obtain. We were quite lucky as Felix, who worked at the Athene Palace Hotel, was able to secure it for us.

Mourning customs in Suceava

I don't remember grandma Amalia healthy. Although she died at a relatively young age, the disease made her look old and frail. She would usually sit on the edge of the sofa in her living room, wearing a flannel dress and a sweater. Neighbors and friends used to visit and have a chat. She used to wear her braided auburn hair covered under a scarf. Our routine schedule revolved around Oma. Mutti, my mom, would come every morning to her parents' house to take care of grandma and cook the meals. At dinnertime, we all ate together: my grandparents, my parents and myself. Since she suffered from kidney failure, there was always talk about the albumin levels, which made me draw the conclusion that this element endangered Oma's health.

At the time, I was a student in the first grade, attending the same school my mother and grandmother attended before me; the school was located opposite the Sfintu Dumitru Church. One autumn evening, Dad informed me I am going to sleep over at Tutty's that night. That was highly unusual, but I was happy since I liked Tutty and her family. Aunty Fanzia, uncle Gavril and Tutty made me



welcome. I went to bed without asking any questions. I got up very early the next morning. The sky looked eerie. The sun had not yet fully risen but among the clouds, there were ominous spots of light. Later father came to greet me. Contrary to his custom, he was unshaved, and I asked why. Father smiled without uttering a word.

When school was finished, I decided to walk home alone. I walked slowly along Sfintu Dumitru Church's high iron fence. Suddenly, an old, deeply bent woman, assisted by a walking cane, approached me. I recalled that some time ago mother told me that she was Madame, Oma's French teacher. Madame turned to me and said: "you are Amalia's granddaughter, yes? I am very sorry that she passed away". Then she walked away.



Standing from the left to right: Felix, Pauli, mom and dad. Sitting from the left to right: grandpa Moritz Itzig, I, grandma Amalia (just 56 years old, a few months before her death).

My heart sank. I hurried to my grandparents' house. I opened the large wooden gate at the garden's fence. As soon as I entered I saw Mother. She seemed transformed. I was deeply distressed by her appearance. She was dressed in black from head to toe: a black kerchief on her head, black dress, black socks, and black shoes. On top of the dress a black apron was tied around mom's waist. I later learned that the apron would be burned at the end of the mourning year. Mom hugged me



tightly. I did not resist in spite of being terribly afraid of the closeness to the black clothes. I did not say a word, not then and not later. I knew how close mom was to her mother and how much she loved her. The house was in mourning. All the mirrors were covered and men came to pray during the Shiva days. Mourning in Suceava lasted a full year. The mourners were clad in black. Joy of any kind was banned, including laughter. The radio was turned off, so no music could be heard, no cinema, no gatherings of happy nature. Men said Kaddish twice a day. The head stone was erected only when the mourning year was over.

School

My school years bear pleasant memories for me. Somehow, I remember being with my mother in Bucharest at Pauli's, when the scholastic year started. I used to walk from the market street to my school carrying a nice little brown leather bag I bought in Bucharest to be used as a *ghiozdan* (a school-bag), in which I put in some notebooks and a pencil case. Before the war, the school was called Scoala Doamna Maria. It was my mother's school too. When I entered the schoolyard, a girl came running towards me and hugged me. She took my hand and led me to our classroom. I did not know her, but her kindness and her vivaciousness won my heart over then, as it does today. Her name was Dorly. Gitta Weitmann was my best friend since kindergarten. Now we were a group of three friends. Our names were the last names listed in the ABC student list: Weidenfeld Dorly, Weintraub Lily, Weitmann Gitta. The most important skill I learned at school was reading. I remember seeing Rutica Hubner, a tiny blond beautiful girl, reading a storybook on our first school day. I was full of admiration for the girl. Eventually I learned to read too. My mother, who liked reading, introduced me to authors I never heard before: Erich Maria Remark, Leon Feuchtwanger and others. Some of their works were clandestinely available in Suceava, and I read them.

I had many Romanian friends: Lucica Rusnacu, Ileana Marceanu.

When I started second grade, my parents moved to the flat across the school. We rented the flat from Mrs. Rosa Rotstein, the widowed seamstress. The strategic location of our flat became a meeting place for all the Jewish children in class on "Yom Kippur", when we didn't go to school. We used to watch the class learn from across the street, enjoying our free day.

In the 50s polio epidemic spread rapidly. My parents were extremely worried – Marcel, the only son of my aunt and uncle was paralyzed after polio in the 30s. I remember the restrictions imposed and the hygienic treatment of vegetables and fruit before eating.

One day, my father came home early. A young, Romanian, tall lady doctor came with him. She administered an injection in my stomach – it was Salk's vaccine, my father bought clandestine, paying handsomely for it.



The location of the school across the street proved to be very useful in the many occasions when I forgot my training outfit at home, or forgot to get it back home from school. My mother used to say: “it’s a good thing that your head is attached to your shoulders, otherwise you would lose it too”. As soon as they announced on Difuzor (the government-issued radio) that Yuri Gagarin made it to space, I ran to my class, in which the students were still studying, and announced “*un om in spatiu*”, “*a man in space*”.

The friendships I forged at a young age proved to be lifelong relationships. It is interesting to know that during elementary school, there were times when we studied in shifts, starting classes in the afternoon. School was over at 6 pm or later. I would do my homework after dinner, many times at kerosene lamp light, because electricity shortages were often in Suceava.

In the first classes, we used to write with pencils; ink was forbidden until the handwriting got automatic.

There were calligraphy classes to teach us proper handwriting: “*subtire-gros*” which means “thin-thick” strokes. When the time came to write with ink, my mom got an inkwell from her friend’s son, who was already at the university. I used to hold the inkwell rapped into a yarn net which had to be hold in my hands, to and from school. You can imagine that my fingers were covered in ink many times. Then the ink stylo pen appeared, Dr. Mury Itianu, my mother’s cousin, presented me with a fabulous, expensive gift, a Montblanc ink stylo. My happiness was short lived; the pen was stolen from my school desk, never to be found.

Israel

In the 1950’s a small window of opportunity to immigrate to Israel opened for Romanian Jews. Most Suceava Jews applied. Very few Very few got immediately the permission to immigrate. The border closed for 7-8 years, until Romania realized that Jews can be “traded” for goods or money. The word “Israel” was never openly spoken by Suceava Jews, but rather whispered or



The 3 Wei names at the end of the student list: Weidenfeld, Weintraub, Weitmann.



photo Cozmin
Suceava Museum



referred to covertly. We exchanged letters with relatives, friends and former neighbors, who got lucky and made Aliya. Security could open letters, read and punish people if they decided the content was inappropriate. Therefore, it was customary to use codes when touching on sensitive content. “*Is Ilana (code name for Lily) going to visit her aunt?*”, was a frequent question. It meant “*did you get the documents to leave Romania?*”.

Jews from Suceava would travel to the Israeli Embassy in Bucharest to check whether their documents had been already signed. The travel document had to be signed by the embassies of those countries, which had permitted (signed) transit to the document bearer. Solidarity in those days meant to make inquires at the Israeli Embassy



Doamna Aza (Azaduhi)
Mandalian-Tarnovietzki

about the fate of neighbors and relatives’ documents. People would return to Suceava and bring the news: “*your papers passed the embassy*”, meaning they had been signed. The happy recipient could start preparing for the journey.

Mother went once to the Israeli Embassy in Bucharest. It was obvious that the cameras surrounding the building registered her presence. When the audience finally started, the Israeli representative turned on the tap,



The family passport photo in the 50s



The document on the left was annulled since it had to be used until Feb.2, 1963. The document on the right proves that since validation date expired, it had to be sent once more to the Italian, Hungarian and Israeli embassies, to set a new validation date.



the noisy water stream covered his voice, and then he turned on the radio on a high volume. Only then, mom and the Israeli representative started talking.

Our papers were processed in 1962 but were never delivered to us. As a result, the time window passed and the immigration certificate “certificat de calatorie” was annulled. The process of approval had to start from the beginning. One year later, in September 1963, our papers were approved and delivered. We could finally leave for Israel.

Meanwhile, mother and her good friends, Edith Ramer, Mela Glickmann and Aza Mandalian used to drink Turkish coffee in the afternoons. Doamna Aza, the Armenian priest’s daughter, would perform the ritual of reading their fortunes by swirling the coffee cup and turning it upside down. The leftover, thick mud-like coffee grains clinging to the sides of the cup, left various patterns and shapes. These images were then “read” by the self-proclaimed fortune teller. Every afternoon in our apartment, Doamna Aza would predict that her three Jewish friends will have a long journey ahead of them – to Israel of course. Even though the audience was accustomed to the “show” they would all willingly participate and enjoy that moment of hope.

The 1960s

In those days, the movies started with a short news-journal telling people about the great achievements of the communist regime and some foreign affair news. Israel was in the Romanian news just twice to my recollection: in 1956 when Sinai Operation begun, and in 1961 when Eichmann was on trial in Jerusalem. We went to those movie-news-journals all week long just to catch some news about Israel. Watching the tanned burly Jewish soldiers marching on the silver screen, before our eyes, was extremely emotional to us.

We were captivated by the prosecutor’s speech at the Eichmann’s trial. In the shielded glass booth at “Beit Ha’am” in Jerusalem, Gideon Hausner delivered one of the most iconic speeches in the history of the Jewish people and the state of Israel:

“When I stand before you here, Judges of Israel, to lead the Prosecution of Adolf Eichmann, I am not standing alone. With me are six million accusers. However, they cannot rise to their feet and point an accusing finger towards him who sits in the glass booth and cry: “I accuse.”

In that moment, every Jew, young and old, identified himself with the prosecutor. For he was not speaking on behalf of the victims alone, but also on behalf of all of us, all human beings on this planet. Gideon Hausner's voice was the voice of justice as he spoke against the man sitting in the glass booth, representing the pure evil of the Nazi regime



Epilogue

My childhood is long gone.

My parents are gone.

However, their memories are still alive. My memory does not conjure their faces alone, or my Suceava acquaintances', but also the wooden floors in our apartment, the red geraniums on the windowsill, the white handmade lace curtains, the bright white starched bed linen, the taste of the plump red cherries and the exquisite fragrance of the lilac flowers in old Suceava...





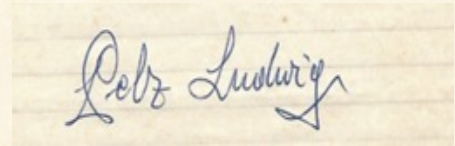
My Story

Ludwig Peltz

Zwia Peltz Fuhrer, a writer and poet in her own right and the only daughter of Mr. Ludwig Peltz, found a rare document in her father's belongings. It is a first-hand account, written in a curriculum vitae style that discloses the events in Mr. Peltz's life between 1925-1946.

Zwia's father's account describes the facts and dates in fine handwriting. The German language used in the document is factual and accurate, but the text also reveals a world of feelings and desires. The restrained style of this young, talented man who wished to fulfill his academic ambitions, rightfully nourished by his abilities, knowledge and good education, collocates with the hostile anti-Semitic surroundings, which even threatens his very existence.

He writes: *"I was born on September 2nd 1902 in Suceava, Romania, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. I graduated from "Stefan der Grosse" high school and successfully passed the German matriculation exams"*.



Meet Mr. Peltz's face and signature



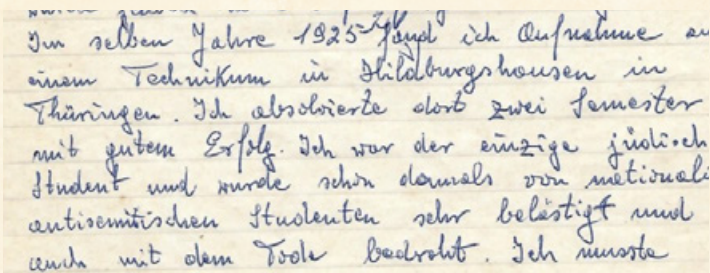
Ludwig and his sister at home in Suceava

Subsequently, he had academic aspirations. In 1921 few students graduated from high school and even fewer successfully completed the matriculation exams in the German language. Ludwig's first step towards an academic career was the University of Czernowitz, where he studied chemistry from 1921 until 1922.

Family constraints forced Ludwig to quit University and join the family business.

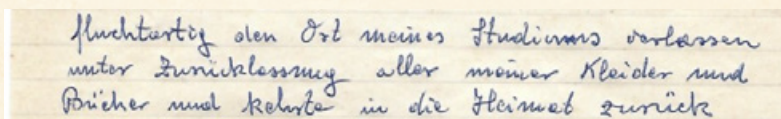


“From 1922 to 1925 in Czernowitz I worked for “Export Getreide”, a company owned by my father”. His father died at the age of 45. Shortly thereafter he quit his job and renewed his academic aspirations. He travelled to Berlin hoping to be admitted at the University of Berlin-Charlottenburg. There were no vacant places, so he applied at the engineering school in Hildburghausen Thuringen, where he successfully completed two semesters of engineering studies.



Im selben Jahre 1925 ging ich Aufnahme an einem Technikum in Hildburghausen in Thüringen. Ich absolvierte dort zwei Semester mit gutem Erfolg. Ich war der einzige jüdische Student und wurde schon damals von national antisemitischen Studenten sehr belästigt und auch mit dem Tode bedroht. Ich musste

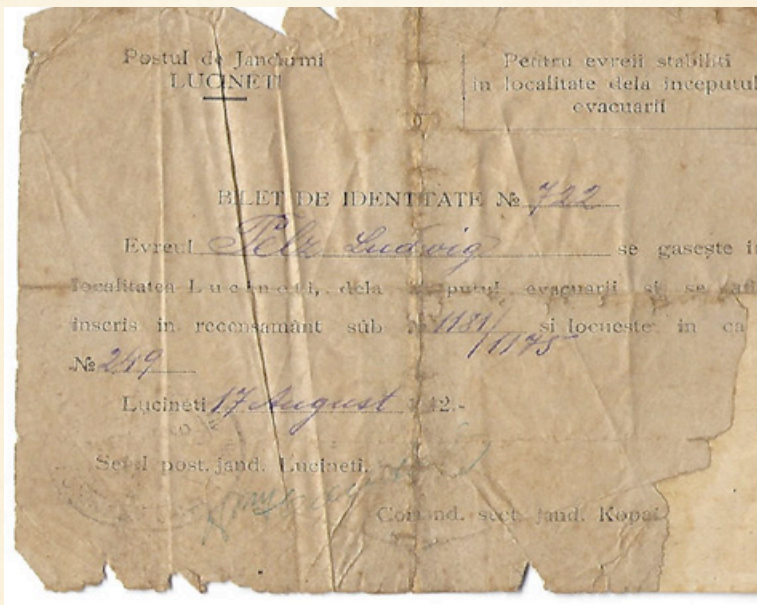
Being the only Jewish student in class, he suffered severe anti-Semitic persecutions until his life was put in real danger. At this



fluchtartig den Ort meines Studiums verlassen unter Zurücklassung aller meiner Kleider und Bücher und kehrte in die Heimat zurück

point Ludwig had to run for his life, leaving behind his clothes, his books, and his possessions.

He returned home to Suceava. However, despite personal loss and anti-Semitic aggressions, Ludwig Peltz did not give up in his dream. He started working at a bank in the Department of Foreign Relations. His knowledge of languages, among other skills, was a valuable asset. However, the scientific realm attracted the young man. He travelled to Czechoslovakia and in 1933 he enrolled in the *Bruno Deutche Technische Hochschule* and studied there for a year. Later,



he started running a private company. In 1939 he was sent to the forced labor camp Soroca, in Bessarabia. In 1941 he and his family were deported to Transnistria.

After the camp’s liberation, the Russians forced him to work for them. He was injured and tired when he returned home to Suceava in 1946. I was stunned to read Zvia’s father account. His willpower, courage to pursue his dreams and relentless struggle in a brutal racist world left me



speechless. With Zwia's consent, I attach two of her father's paintings, proof of his talent and ability to express his feelings in form and color.



Some of Mr. Peltz's paintings



Father and daughter

(written by Lily Pauker)





My Story

Lotty Scherzer

My name is Lotty Glassman. I was born in Suceava Romania and my maiden name was Scherzer. I live in USA for 43 years. I came to visit Pia, my childhood best friend, met my husband and we are married for 43 years. When thinking about my birth place, my brain is assaulted with lots of memories, good and bad. I remember our elementary school teacher very stern, caring a ruler to beat us if we were not prepared for school. We feared her and we learned.



First row on the right: I, Romy, Etty. Next to the teacher, sitting on the right, Mira with her wonderful long braided hair.

We lived in one bedroom apartment: mom, dad, my sister and I. The toilet was a hole in the earth in a woodshed. All the neighbors shared the facility. One time a huge rat crossed my legs and I almost fell into the hole. The window faced our schoolyard; it took a second to be in school. Pia lived in the same courtyard across the church. I remember ones Pia got sick with the mumps. Being my best friend, I would stand outside her door every day after school and teach her the stuff



we learned at school that day; entertain her. My mom, who was a great cook, would bring food for Pia (mumps was very contagious).

I loved spending time in Pia's place; I liked to watch her mom, Medi, getting ready to go out. I remember the sad day when our Temple was set on fire. We were so young and so scared. I had a crush on Adi Rosenberg who was Tzili'Curelaru neighbor. He still does not know about it. I remember my mom always bringing me the most beautiful flowers blooming in May, my birthday month. Every Sunday she would go to the open market. Everything was cooked fresh every day. I remember our Main Street where everybody was strolling up and down on Sundays. I remember our old movie theater where as school students we were not allowed to watch all the movies and certainly not after 8pm. As I'm writing, all those old hidden memories are surfing up. I remember May 1 the Labor Day. We had to take part at the city parade, rain or shine, wearing our communist uniform. I hated it but my dad forced me to go even when I was sick. Suceava was a very small town, everybody knew everything about everybody and I hated it, but I'll always have enough fond memories. I'll never forget my friends and my teachers.

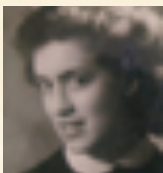


With Pia at the Carnival



With Pia and Carla in the Suceava River





Mara's Story - The Bodinger House

Written by Beni Budic

The one-storey building, situated on the corner of Ștefan cel Mare Street with the narrow lane leading to Hackney Cab Square (this is the name I found in an old map of the town) was strategically placed. It was right in the town centre, close to where our evening walks began in summertime. It was at a stone's throw from the school (the former Girls' Highschool), opposite the central grocery store (Alimentara), and close to the park; but, most importantly, it was at the center of the town's hustle and bustle. On the ground floor, towards Ștefan cel Mare Street (renamed in the 1960s, from the former Ferdinand and previous Republicii Street), was the main pharmacy, one of the two in town. Around the corner, on the narrow little street, which was always in shade, was one of the two soda fountain shops in town. A little further was a house with a front yard surrounded by a fence. On the first floor, the house had a long, rickety, wooden balcony, which led to the wing where, in the "golden years" of Habsburg Bukovina, the servants' quarters used to be. On the right of the building there was the stairway leading to the first floor, where the Bodinger family lived. I had visited their apartment on many different occasions since childhood. I used to go there from time to time, with my mother, with Aunt Freida and with Iani, to have new holiday suits made for us. During the high school years, I was there almost every day, with Mara's group of friends. By then Bodinger House had become the "headquarters" of our gang. We were welcomed with open arms and we felt at home, spending hours on end.

The double doors with exterior shutters and windowpanes opened onto a large kitchen. There was a gas cooker (quite the rage at the time), while the big, manorial stove, with the heavy cast-iron hob, was lit only on special occasions. I remember that, in the early years, in one corner of the kitchen was a laboratory table where Adi, then a high school student, would get busy with all sorts of Chemistry experiments. Adi and Mara were the Bodingers' children. There had been another child between them, born in Transnistria, but he did not survive the deportation. Mara, like all of our generation, was born after the war, when the family returned to Suceava. Adi was about ten years older.

From the kitchen, a double-winged French door led to the next room, just as big as the first. That was the parents' bedroom, which was also used as a living room. The main pieces of furniture were two sofa beds, the "studio" type, very fashionable back then, an impressively large wardrobe and a dressing table. Here, in front of the big mirror, the clients would try on their clothes. The



third room was just as large as the others were, but, unlike them, it was a lot brighter. Light from the street flooded the room through the two wide windows and the French door leading to the balcony. This was the dressmaker's shop, which made Bodinger House famous, known for years as the town's most elegant and stylish couture destination for women and, most of all, for children. Mrs. Bodinger was already a middle-aged woman, not too tall, with a dark complexion and wavy black hair which was starting to turn grey, when I first met her. She was very energetic, giving snappy orders and instructions in broken Romanian to a team of hardworking apprentices who busied themselves like industrious ants around the sewing machines. Most of them came from the nearby villages, and wanted to learn the trade from a first-class seamstress who took on only the best. The girls had board and lodgings at the Bodingers and, as I found out later, when their apprenticeship was over, they left with a trousse.

From the workshop, a wooden door led to the right side of the house, to Mara's room, where we would all meet several times a week during our high school years. It was actually Adi's room, but he was at university in Iasi during most of that time. That room also opened onto the balcony, and like the French door and window, it overlooked Ștefan cel Mare Street that filled it with light. The center of life at the Bodinger residence was defined by the tailor shop. Every year, almost every child "of good stock" in town came there to have new clothes made to order. As far as I can remember, the patterns were in a German/Austrian style – or the style of Bukovina, in short. The boys' clothes came in two classic patterns: a dark blue sailor's suit and a hunter's suit. The sailors wore navy blue trousers (long or short, depending on the season) with cuffs and a shirt of the same colour, buttonless, which you pulled over. But the main attraction of the suit was the large sailor's collar falling over the back and shoulders. In front, the collar ended in a short sailor's tie. Both collar and tie were trimmed with white ribbons. For little girls, the suit followed the same lines, only the trousers were replaced by a pleated skirt. The hunter's suit was a pair of green trousers (long or short) with Tyrolese shoulder straps. There was also a grey jacket with a small green collar and round lapels, hemmed with a thin satin tape. The jacket also had a pocket adorned with a felt oak leaf, hemmed with white trimming. This gorgeous costume was crowned with a little green hat with a bonny blackcock feather. It goes without saying that the hunter also had his rifle at hand ...

Apart from these clothes, there were also countless little dresses, evening gowns, casual clothes, coats and topcoats, tailor-made suits and so many other beautiful creations, all sewn by the busy hands of Mrs. Bodinger and her apprentices. Mrs. Bodinger may have got her inspiration from some fashion magazine or another; still, her imagination, creativity, talent, perfectionism, as well



as her aesthetic sense turned her into a top-class artist, worthy of the great European capitals. But she landed in Suceava, to the joy and fortune of her local clientele.

In fact, our story started several decades before and 200 kilometers west of Suceava, in the village of Prundu Bârgăului. At the beginning of the 20th century, Prundu Bârgăului was already a fairly large place in Bistrița-Năsăud county. The village was “on the slopes of heaven, in a valley at the foot of the Bârgăului Mountains, close to the springs of the Bistrița Aurie. On clear days one could see the peaks of the Rodnei Mountains in the distance. 20 kilometers to the west lay the small town of Bistrița, while 80 kilometers to the east was the railway towards Vatra Dornei and the other towns in Bukovina. The Austrians had built the railway during the war. The Marian-Egers were among the many Jewish families in the village, and the Jewish community in Prundu Bârgăului was one of the hundreds of such communities in each village, town and city of Transylvania. The family was quite well off and they even owned part of the forest. Her patriarch was probably a learned man; he used to wear traditional black clothes and the villagers called him “rabbi”, although he hadn’t graduated from the seminary. As was the custom in those days, most Jewish people, including the Marian-Egers, were practicing Orthodox Jews, respecting all the holy teachings. But things were about to change. Roza was the third of the family’s seven children. Apparently, even during her childhood she had shown a talent for sewing. What is certain is that one day, when she was only 11, while her parents were away; she decided that one of her younger brothers urgently needed a new pair of trousers. She found one of her mother’s dresses which she thought was the perfect thing, and sewed a great pair of trousers for her little brother. The result was extraordinary and the girl’s talent was quickly acknowledged. She was forgiven for the sacrificed dress. That is why, a few years later, teenage Roza was sent to Sighet, where she entered the apprenticeship of a well-known dressmaker. When she got back several years later, she was already a talented, fairly experienced seamstress herself, with a refined aesthetic sense. Soon enough, a lot of ladies became her clients and her hands were full. What was more, she was the first (Jewish!) girl to ride a bike all over the village to her clients for fittings. Time passed and Roza was already in her twenties, but, as she was so engrossed in her work which she certainly found engaging (although her work has provided her family pretty nice income), she never thought of getting married. Her elder brothers had already left home. One of them, Israel, had run away from the “yeshiva” (the religious school) in Satu Mare, cut off his sideburns, and joined the communist circles in Budapest.

This probably saved his life. During the war, he was detained in a communist camp, whereas the other Hungarian Jews were sent to the extermination camps in Poland, from where almost no one returned. In the concentration camp, Israel-Istvan Marian met Ianos Kadar, the future president



of Hungary. This helped him become, years later, a recognized name in communist Hungary. He even became Hungary's ambassador to Bucharest for a while.

The mother, weakened by the many births, was always ill. So their father decided to move the family to Suceava, closer to the capital of Bukovina, Cernovitz, where she could be treated by the famous doctors there. So, in the early 1930's, the Marian-Egers settled in a house on Mirăuților Street, on the corner with Luca Arbore Street.

Roza had more and more work to do in Suceava, which was a large town, and hence had more demand for tailoring. Just as before, she worked from dawn till dusk, riding her trusty bike to clients and suppliers. Then she met Emanuel Bodinger at the water pump on the corner of Mirăuților Street, "at the spring."

The Bodingers had lived there for years, in a house exactly opposite that of the Marian family. The father had died during the war, in 1915, when he was only 35 years old, leaving his nine children – one girl and eight boys – in his wife's care. In order to make ends meet, the widow Reizel Bodinger accepted any job offered to her. For years, during the first part of the week, the house and the yard turned into a laundry, with both mother and some of the children toiling. On Thursdays and Fridays, the activity was moved to the kitchen, where the Shabbat food was being prepared for the well-off clients, who had come to appreciate the culinary talents of the worthy woman. Each Friday, around noon, the pots and jars filled with soup, jellied fish with sweet carrot with raisins times, or the plates of Kugel with noodles and the jugs filled to the brim with prune sauce were all loaded in the cart, carefully covered with a piece of clean thin cloth and taken by the widow to her customers. As the years passed, the children left home one by one. The first was Fanny, who went to a nursing school in Cernovitz. After graduating, Fanny returned to Suceava, where she married and became Mrs. Nossik. For decades she was the legendary midwife to the babies of Suceava, being also one of the most prominent fixtures in town. Two other brothers moved to Iasi, one settled in Cernovitz and yet another got as far as Poland. Emanuel was the youngest and since the beginning he caused his mother's hair to turn grey... Rather short and curly-haired, constantly in motion, he had become a rebel even from an early age. When he was about 13, he boarded a train without a ticket, without any money, and without a word to anyone, and went to Bucharest and then to Constanta. He even managed to sneak aboard a ship, dreaming of sailing the seas, far away from the people he wanted to take revenge on. Somehow, his dreams were shattered and the stowaway was sent to the address he gave: his brothers' home in Iasi. They brought him back home, to Suceava, where his mother forgave him, as most mothers usually do. When he met Roza, he was already about 23 or 24 and had an apprenticeship as a skilled house painter, a job that, apparently, made him quite successful. Roza was about three years older but



they took to each other when they first met. The only one who did not think it was a good match was Roza's father. He had no choice, though. Roza threatened that, if he did not agree for her to marry Emanuel, she would become a Zionist and run away to Palestine. She even joined a Zionist "training camp" in Radauti, where she developed pneumonia, which nearly cost her her life. The person who had a hand more than anyone else in Roza's return to good health was Emanuel... And, after this miraculous recovery, her father agreed to the marriage.

Roza and Emanuel Bodinger were married on the 24th of March 1936. The young couple rented two rooms in a house at the Stromingers. The house was near the end of Armaşului Street (also named "The Jewish Lane", before it became "Karl Marx"). Bodinger House – the well-known couture shop for ladies and children – had thus been born. It became a well-known destination in Suceava for the next 30 years.

Adi was born exactly nine months after his parents' wedding, on 24 December 1936. The young family enjoyed several years of prosperity, especially due to the activity in the tailor shop, which increased with each day. Roza started to hire girls from the surrounding area, so that she could complete all the orders. Adi was growing up in comfort, spoiled by his mother and the workshop apprentices. Things seemed to be going well, but the wind boding grave change started to blow all over the country. In addition, in October 1941, the good life seemed to come to an abrupt end. During a period of three days, all the Jews in Suceava –the Bodingers among them - were thrown out of their homes, made to board cattle trains and taken, with the few ragbags they were allowed, over the Prut River to Ataki, on the banks of the Nistru River. They crossed the river at night, on rafts on which the soldiers callously crammed them. Many died that terrible night, drowned in the freezing waters of the river. The Bodingers were among the lucky few to reach Mogilev, frightened, frozen despairing – but alive.

That was how the horror of Transnistria started, and it lasted almost three years, with its biting cold, constant bitter hunger and the typhoid fever, which cut many lives short before their time. In the terrible winter of '41-'42, they left Mogilev for Şargorod, where they found shelter in the basement of some peasants, a place they shared with about 30 other members of both families. The three of them survived, but the child Roza was pregnant with, did not. Neither did most of the other members of Emanuel's and Roza's families. After the war, out of Emanuel's relatives only the sister, Fanny Nossik and Iosef, one of the brothers from Iasi survived. His other brother was one of the thousands of Jews who feel victims in the pogrom of June 1941. Roza's parents and one of her younger brothers also lost their lives in Transnistria.

Emanuel, Roza and their son returned to Suceava in the summer of 1944. The war had left its ugly mark on the town, changing it and the people for the worse. Then the regime changed as well.



Everything they had left behind was gone. They had to start life all over again.

During the first few years after their return, they lived in a tiny apartment, one of the 30 in a former



Emanuel and Roza, 1936

textile factory.

It was a two-story building with a large inner yard, not far from the Armenian Church. The apartments were lined on either side of a long corridor, on the two floors, each with an open balcony, like some monastery cells. Many families back from Transnistria found a home in this building, which Adi called “the bunkhouse”.

The Nossiks lived there as well. Little by little, Roza started her business again in “the bunkhouse”. Mara was to be born about two years later. The first years after the war were hard – there was a draught, there were shortages, there was political unrest. At the beginning of the ‘50s, however, things started to become more or less normal. The orders for clothes flooded the shop again. It was the post-war baby boom and the parents were ready to spoil their children at all cost, so the sewing machines were buzzing day and night.

Emanuel, who even before the war was drawn to the communist ideology, joined the party. The red member card cleared the path to a much better job. He became the manager of the local energy trust – meaning he was responsible with supplying wood for the heating of the town. Yet, this situation was to last only for a few years. In 1958, when he applied for emigration with his family to Israel, Emanuel had to resign the comfortable job, being demoted to a “low-ranking position”) he was also excluded from the communist party. Around 1951, the family was able to move in the



Mrs. Bodinger, Adi and Mara, 1949



large dwelling place on Ștefan cel Mare Street. The move cost Adi his cacti collection, as they all froze. However, a wonderful room made up for the loss, a large room with a balcony and view to the street. Later it became Mara's room, during his university years.

The Bodinger House of Couture grew in popularity during those years, becoming one of the town's trusted institutions. Clothes for the children, haute couture for the ladies, as well as trousseaux for the brides, and sets of bed linen (in great demand by the families about to leave for Israel), all this made Roza take on 12 or 13 apprentices and dressmakers. As a result, Roza Bodinger was declared a "wealthy upper-class" by the authorities. But, apparently due to the select clientele which included the wives of many high-placed members of the communist party, Bodinger House was allowed to continue its activity unhindered. And, who knows, maybe one such client, who did not want to lose a first-class dressmaker, intervened to delay by several years the official approval for the departure of the Bodingers to Israel...

I first met Mara when we were in 4th grade, after the establishment of primary school gender integration. By then, she was already friends with almost all the girls in Suceava, who came with their mothers to the famous dressmaker. Our friendship grew especially during the high school years, when our became larger; many of us are still close friends even today.

There were five of us: three girls (Mara, Mira and Betti) and two boys (Mihai Drișcu and myself). Mrs. Bodinger welcomed us warmly though she was busy all the time. In time, we became a regular presence in the house and would spend long hours in Mara's room, chatting or playing childish games. Except for Mihai, my closest friend, who has lain to rest in the grave in Suceava since 1989 when he was killed in a strange and unexplained "car accident", the rest of us have been in Israel for more than half a century.



Mara on the balcony of their home overseeing the main Suceava street, 1962

About two or three years ago, Mara gave me a reproduction of a painting she had done recently

from a photograph taken on the balcony of number 15, Ștefan cel Mare Street. I see in it the central grocery store (Alimentara), the textile shop, the newsagents', the Sport-Foto-Muzică shop at the



end of the street, and no hint of car traffic. We used to see all this from the far end of the balcony, which was barely large enough to hold all of us cramped together. Suceava's scent of our youth, which makes my soul vibrate at the fond memories...

When he came back from college, Adi was already engaged to Țili (Ina), whom he had met in Iasi. She was a slender, delicate girl, with fine features and she looked like she was still in high school. She had just graduated from college, where she studied languages. She was assigned to the position of Romanian teacher, in Suceava. It was easy for her to join our group, even though she was older than us by a few years. Indeed, Țili took part in our talks and games on more than one occasion, as she lived in the house.

Țili and Adi got married in 1962, on New Year's Eve. The wedding, combined with the celebrations for the coming of the New Year, was held in the spacious rooms of the Bodingers' residence. Most of the guests were friends of the bride and groom, the most beautiful young girls in town, and our own group, Mara's friends. It was actually the first true New Year's Eve party for me – I was 16 and in the 10th grade. When Mauzi Kerner, who was a beauty and the wife of one of Adi's friends, invited me to dance, I melted completely, especially when she complimented me several times on being a good dancer ... At around 3 or 4 in the morning we went out on the snowy street of the town centre. I felt as if I was floating, in spite of the sound of the snow crunching under the thin soles of my shoes. And no, I didn't have one drink too many. I was not aware then that, in time and space, I was at the peak of my existence in the universe of Suceava. It was a sort of galaxy, with Bodinger House as its core.

The New Year's Eve '62-63 was the last one I spent in the old house at number 15, Ștefan cel Mare Street. That same year, "my last summer in Suceava," a part of the Habsburg centre of the town was demolished. The Bodingers moved into a modern house, much smaller, near the "Gah" Synagogue. It is understood that the tailor shop had to downsize a lot, too. The headquarters of our small group moved to that new Bodinger House. There, we celebrated the New Year's Eve '63-64. I was to leave in a few months. That summer, when almost everyone was caught up in their exams – the baccalaureate or the entrance exams -, I knew that my four friends would meet at Mara's to read my letters from Israel. The following year, the Bodingers finally got their immigration papers. For many years in her new country, Israel, Roza Brodinger continued to practise the trade which had made her famous. But what had once been "Bodinger House", that special refuge for me and my friends, remains only in our memories of Suceava. The talented seamstress died in 2002, 95 years of age, of sound mind, 13 years after Emanuel was gone. All her family was at her deathbed. Adi left us several months ago. It is to their memory that I wish to dedicate this story, which I consider a token of my lifelong friendship with Mara and as a sign of the respect I hold for Țili - Ina, the only ones left to carry in their souls the recollections from "Bodinger House".



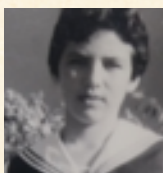


Beni and Mara still young at heart, 2016



Beni and Mara teenagers, 1963





Marghit's Story

Margalit Friedman Erel

When I was in my twenties, during a conversation with my aunt, she said: “well, you know, it is because of the event”. I had no idea what she was talking about. She was amazed at the fact I had no clue about the tragic incident in my mom’s life. Quietly she uttered that the case was the shot to death of my mother’s fiancé in Suceava.

More than thirty years later, during my mother’s shivaa, Bella Schechter, one of my mom’s friends, heard us talking about the murder. She said strictly that we shouldn’t talk about it. I wondered what could be the reason not to discuss something that occurred almost 60 years ago. Life was hectic and I didn’t find the opportunity to ask Bella about it while she was still alive.

My mother chose not to tell her story in the “Shotzer” book, a fact I regret deeply. In order to make some ‘Tikun’ I decided to share my family’s story here.

My mother, Sally Gelber(t) was born in 1926(or1925) in Darmanesti in Suceava county. Within six years, the Gelbers had four children. My grandmother’s name was Rivka Haas (Hess) and my grandfather’s name was Avrum-Haim Gelber. Their four children were: Zisel (Cohen), Sally (Friedmann), Ruthie (Budic), Israel-Schulziu (Gal).

I was told that my grandfather Avrum-Haim Gelber was a handsome, redhead man, an accomplished painter, hot-tempered. He used to be a cantor because of his excellent voice.

Grandma was one of the eleven Hass children. Her respectable family belonged to the Wiesnitz Hassidim, a fact that had a big influence on their lives in Romania, and afterwards in Israel, until our days.

As mentioned before, the Gelbers lived in Darmanesti. Part of the extended family lived in Suceava. The children attended elementary school in the village. My mother and her older sister were sent to high-school in Suceava and lived there in a hired relative’s apartment. On vacations, they returned home to the village, which was about an hour and a half away, by carriage. As I understand this arrangement stopped when Jewish students were collectively forbidden from attending public schools in August 1940.

First, Jews were exiled from their home villages to country towns, Suceava in their case. The Gelberts rented a residential dwelling unit at Dr. Weitmann’s house. Years later, my mother was Dr. Reghina Roytman’s patient, Dr. Adolf Weitmann’s granddaughter.



Their world came apart on Sabbath evening (Friday) October 10th, 1941, during Sukkot.

On their way to be deported to an unknown destination, my grandmother Rivka, a deeply devout woman, stopped the carriage on a curb on the way, and lit Sabbath candles. Israel, the youngest family child, who was 10-11 years old became very excited about riding the train and couldn't understand why the others didn't share his enthusiasm.

As mother wouldn't add any other information, I fill in the gaps by relying on our relative's testimony – Moshe (Mishu) Gelbert from Kfar Saba who told us that: “All Suceava's Jews were assembled in the Great Synagogue courtyard. From this place they were driven to the Burdujeni's train station, some 5 km away. The order was to hand over the keys to their homes to officials at the station and surrender all valuables to the local bank or town authorities. People were loaded on cattle trains, condensed and starved. It took 24 hours for the train to get to the Russian border. Many died immediately because of the terrible travel conditions. The whole Jewish population of Suceava was deported, regardless of their age, health, or mental state. We arrived at Ataki border station on the banks of the Dniester River. We were housed in the demolished synagogue. On the walls we saw inscriptions like “Here Jews were murdered”, and “you, who passes through this place, say Kaddish in our memory”.”

For me, it was too painful to hear their experiences during the Holocaust and my mom didn't share much.

I was aware only briefly about the existence of Moghilev, Murafa, Shargorod. I heard about endless bodies, frost, shoes made of ropes and fierce hunger.

In Transnistria, families stuck together: Rivka's brothers, the Hasses and her sisters's families - Peltz, Sand and Mechloviz. Wassermann and Karp families, grandfather's Avrum Haim sisters – Taube and Dina. Children of all ages, from toddlers to adolescents – all helped each other and their families to survive.

The fact that most of my family returned from Transnistria and immigrated to Israel, made me believe for many years that the Holocaust in Bucovina wasn't of major consequence to our people. Compared to my friends of Polish or German descent, my family was an almost normal one, happy family blessed with grandparents, uncles and cousins. As years passed by I understood, or at least tried to, that what had happened during the years 1941-1944 in Transnistria was traumatic and awful to them, to us, the second generation, and to our children (the third generation).

In March 1944, the families returned to Suceava, first to Dr. Weitmann's house and then to an apartment of their own. My grandparents' house was a central gathering place for the family and their friends. I learned that women would use their oven to bake there food, Chalot and Chulent.



Many people, including Mishu and Malusha Gelbert, told us how significant that place was for the family post-war, and how delicious my grandmother's cooking and baking was. (Kichalach, Fluden. Laikech and Buchtalach)

Bnei Akiva was the largest Zionist youth movement in the city. They even established a "kibbutz" which trained and prepared the youth for Alia to Israel. Years later, my mother, we, her children and grandchildren made a choir singing proudly Bnei Akiva's anthem together.

My mother and Ben Zion (Baruch's son) Schechter fell in love. He was a scholar. The wedding to come caused the families much joy and excitement. I imagine that starting a new family after the sufferings they lived through was an enormous source of pride and happiness.

One Saturday night, grandpa Avrum-Haim and Ben-Zion were playing Chess at home. Grandma Rivka, my mother and her sisters were at home, when a shot was fired from the street into the room through the open window and killed Ben Zion.

I can't imagine the overwhelming heartbreak and devastation my mother felt.

My mother's eldest sister Zisel, married Moishe Cohen in 1946 and moved to Maramuresh, Transylvania. Their children Rachel and Benzi were born in Romania, and their youngest son, Reuven, was born in Israel.

Benzi Cohen, 24 years old, was killed during the Yom Kippur War in the Golan Heights. He left Leah, his wife, Chen, his infant daughter and Aviad-Ben Zion who was born after his death.

My mother's youngest brother Israel, came to Israel with 'Aliyat Hanoar'. He became an officer in the Israeli Air Force and was involved in bringing the Hawk missiles from the USA to Israel.

My mother, Sally and her most beloved sister Ruthie stayed home in Suceava with their parents. I have no idea about what had happened during those years and how they got by.

However, I do know that on March 1951, in the neighbor's house in Suceava, a precious baby boy was born. My mother "Die sheine" (the beautiful) was invited to the Brith. This baby was conceived after 13 years of marriage of the Hershcovitz couple: Israel (Strul) and Miriam (Mirza Gutman). The sweet baby, Hanoch Reuven, is my husband. We changed the family name from Hershcovitz to Erel, a Hebrew name.

Erica Steiner, my mother's good friend, lives in Minneapolis, and she told me about my parents wonderful meeting at her home and how they fell in love. My father, Marcus Mordechai Friedman from Radauti, married my mother in 1/1953.

I have no information about my father's whereabouts during WWII

I know he lost in Transnistria his mother Mina (which I was named after), his sister Sophie-Coca Dechner, who was only almost 30 years old, and her 5 years old son, Herbert, who died out of sorrow after the loss of his mother.

My father never shared his grief with us.



After their marriage, my parents moved to Radauti. Both worked at the post office. I was born in October 1953. In June 1957 my brother Willie (Zeev) was born. A couple of months later mother was summoned to Suceava, because of her father's health deterioration. The family was worried that grandpa Avrum-Haim would not recover since the messengers to the Wiznitzer Rabbi were told to return home, without getting a 'Bruche' – a promise to get better. After her husband's death (in 1958) grandma Rivka immigrated to Israel and lived in Petach Tikva with her son Israel.



Israel got later married to Bruria (Zimerman) and had 2 children, Sandy & Rivka. In the spring of 1959 we got permission to leave Romania as well. After a short stay in Gedera we established a home in Kiryat Motzkin. My Sabra sister Irit was born in April 1961. In Suceava, my aunt Ruthie married Moshe Budic, a widower with an 11 years old son, Beni. Their sons, Avi and Relu (Israel), were born in Suceava. In 1964, with two toddlers and a teenage boy they were finally permitted to immigrate to Israel, to Kfar Avraham, Petach Tikva, where they lived for almost 50 years. During the years we made planes to enjoy a tour to Suceava with Beni's guidance, who was an expert and shared many of his memories in this book. Somehow it didn't happen and unfortunately



in January 2020 Beni suddenly passed away. He is much missed and may his memory be forever blessed.

My parents are no longer with us. My father passed away in 1995 and my mother accomplished 50 years in Israel and died in 2009.

Over the years, the roots of my family in Suceava became increasingly intriguing. On the eve of Rosh Hashana, last year (2019) the descendants of the Haas family have reunited for a special Sabbath. Twenty five families from the Haas clan attended this exceptional event and many other families contributed their memories and knowledge. We remembered the family history, before and after Transnistria, the devotion to the Wisnitzer Hassidim, the Zionism, the love of tradition and the Thora.

Hanoch and I have three daughters: Einat is married to Yossi Mann and they are parents to Amit (Miriam) and Beery (Benjamin), Reut is married to Elad Segal, and they are parents to Ori, Yuval and Ariel, and Shira is married to Elazar Gur, and they are parents to Stav (Sarah) and Ophir (Avraham). The more the better!

Willie, my brother, is married to Mia (Kozma), and they are parents to Dana and Ran.

Irit, my youngest sister, is married to Ghershon Koren, and they are parents to three children: Adi who is married to Ido Walk and they are parents to Yarden; Itamar who is married to Abigail (Goldman), and Shir-Tehila, the youngest grandchild of our beloved parents Sally and Marcus Friedmann, may their memory live on forever.





Mausi's story

Danille Koenig Korner

I, Danielle Konig, was born in Czernowitz, Bucovina, on March 28 1941, the only child to my parents Any and Otto. My mother tongue was German.

World War II had devastating effects on countries and nations but civilian casualties were no less common or painful. The war has disrupted my family's life, affecting me but mostly my mother for years to come. Mother did her best to shelter me, not to allow her pain to shatter my world. House, personal belongings can be provided after losing them during wartime, but was it possible in the 50s to provide remedy for loss, anguish, emotional and psychological injuries?

My mother, Any Konig was a true lady-fighter. She would not allow her grief to be seen or her difficult life to be witnessed by friends or relatives. She always put on a brave face, worked very hard and did everything possible to provide me with a happy childhood.

I think that she believed that whatever misfortune came her way, her duty was to cope and transform it into something of value. For her, I was the reason for her brave persistent struggle.

In the 40s raising me in the Czernowitz ghetto, providing what little food was available, represented a daily battle. Father disappeared from my life, being drafted into the Red Army, only to reappear 17 years later and even then for only a week.

Many were hurt by the war, but today, 7 decades later, I can't help thinking how difficult it was for me as a child to be raised fatherless, not knowing whether he is alive somewhere or dead. I think that for my mother it was a living hell. She never rebuilt her life; the deep sadness was locked inside while the daily duties took precedence.

In 1945 my mother and I joined her family in Suceava. I fondly remember Mrs. Isolis' kindergarten. I was popular among my peers; many were my friends.

To my big surprise, I was the one chosen to play the leading character in "Alba ca Zapada" – "Snow White" kindergarten play.

At the time, we lived in a beautiful house, which belonged to Mr. Polack; but the comfortable life was short-lived.

Under the watchful eye of the authorities, the apartment was divided and a new family shared the place with us. Later we moved to str. Republicii in a one-room apartment.

My mother worked hard at ICRM.



My mom



We had little money, at times the situation worsened; I can remember that one afternoon I wanted to eat an apple. We had none. My mother and my grandmother tried to comfort me, but they couldn't afford to buy the fruit. Even now, seven decades later, remembering the incident, I still feel pain and sorrow for the little girl who cried herself to sleep not getting an apple.

I grew up and went to school. I was a very good student.

My father got lost during WWII, his regiment was decimated. He was looking for us but the Soviet regime would not allow either contact or repatriation. 15 years after his disappearance he was finally able to contact us. My mother and I went to Astrakhan, crossed the beautiful Volga Delta, glad to meet him. The reunion



From the right Dory Hörer, I, my future husband and Sandu Ramer.
All three boys graduated Medical School

lasted a week. My father wasn't allowed to join us. I was able to see him one more time after my mother's death.

Years passed by, I went to college in Bucharest to continue my studies. My mother died when I was only 20. I was left alone in this world.

As the Americans say: "every cloud has a silver lining". Losing my mother was a terrible shock; I felt that dark clouds would block my sun forever.

Luckily, I got moral and emotional support from my peers. Although I had many friends and suitors, I loved Sasha. I married Dr. Sacha Korner. Eventually, we left for the USA where we built our lives and raised our children.

Human sacrifices during WWII were horrendous. At the request of the editor, I have briefly told my story, a story of a courageous mother and a girl, both robbed by dictatorships of their respective husband and father, denied the future



Mausi, Mira in the middle





they could have lived had the war not interrupted the normal course of life. We were among the numerous war casualties.

Zwi Hoch and Dory Hörer kneeling, Mausl and Torry behind them. The picture was taken in Dr. Hoch's garden. Stefan cel Mare High School is seen in the back.



photo P.Leinburd





The Brecher Family

Mendel Brecher

My father, Friedrich Brecher, was born in 1920 in Cernowitz. The family used to live in Bilergasse. My grandfather, Max Meir, was a furniture painter. My father studied at the Jewish school in the German language. After being trained and certified as a butcher, he started to work at the Cernowitz slaughterhouse. In 1939 the Russians occupied North Bucovina up the Siret River. Thus, Cernowitz became part of the conquered territory. The Russians moved the slaughterhouse and its employees, my father among them, farther East into Russia. The German advancement was fast and they caught the transport. Being Jewish, father was sent first to Moghilev, then to Shargorod in Transnistria.

My mother was born in Hertza, a border town between Romania and Basarabia. After the Russians conquered Basarabia, in 1939, the Romanians deported the Jews to Shargorod.

When war ended, my father was sent to Iasi against his will, but his parents ended up in Dorohoi. Later father was reunited with his parents in Dorohoi. My father met my mom there; in spite of the fact that she was only 16, they got married.



I was born nine months later, in 1947.

My parents moved to Burdujeni in 1949. Father worked at the local slaughterhouse. At the same time, my parents, my uncles and my grandparents asked for a visa to immigrate to Israel.

In 1950, all my family members, except my parents and I, were allowed to immigrate. We had no choice but to stay put in Romania for more than a decade. Romanian authorities disrupted families, separated parents from sons and daughters without hope to ever be reunited. I grew up without grandparents, uncles and



Here is the family picture from the papers submitted for immigration



aunts, missing my relatives. We got permission to finally immigrate to Israel only in 1964.

In 1951, when I was four years old, we met the Schechter family in Suceava. At the time, the Schechters, who were extremely religious, lived in Suceava on 7 Ilie Pintilie Street. They owned a very big house; therefore, they were concerned that the authorities would force them to share the place with a Christian family. For that reason, they asked my dad to move in with them. This is why we moved to Suceava.

My father started working at the only butcher's shop in town, "*Hala de carne*". My mom worked as a secretary at Institutul de Constructii. For me the Schechter family fulfilled the role of grandparents. They taught me Yiddish, placed me in the Heder and helped me prepare for the Bar Mitzvah. Around the huge Schechter house was a big yard, a fountain, a cowshed, horses and a cart.



In the garden with the Schechter family. My father is standing on the left, mom is sitting.

The garden-grown corn and potatoes were superior in texture and flavor to those sold in grocery shops.

Since the family was extremely orthodox, they used to produce at home their entire food – bread (including challah), cheese and butter, as well as soap. The slaughter was, of course, kosher mehadrin.

Every Friday I was taken to the Mikve to get a thorough wash and on Saturday morning I went to the Synagogue to pray.

I spent the elementary school years at



Mom working in the yard



Mom and I in the yard dressed for Shabbath



Scoala Mixta nr. 2. The Yiddish lessons with Mrs. Clara Neuman are still fresh in my memory. I studied at Stefan Cel Mare high school until 1964, when we immigrated to Israel. Marcel Gitter and I were the only Jewish kids in my class. His aunt, Mrs. Surkis, the Latin teacher, used to help us a lot.

I had a happy childhood. I was an only child and, as such, my parents invested a lot in my upbringing.



Mom on the left, Mrs. Sandberg and Marghit, her daughter, during a vacation in V.Dornei



I learned to play the accordion.



Mr. Shapira was Zwi's melamed. Actually, we all studied with him for our Bar Mitzva.

Nevertheless, I had many Romanian friends as well.

In the 1960, the Shapira family and our family moved into the new block-apartment building in the center of the town





Mira's Story

by Lily Pauker

Every friendship is dear to me but the friendship with Mira is a special one. I have no recollection about when or how I met this beautiful intelligent girl, but our friendship and my admiration for her are more than half-century-old.

An observant eye could have guessed from an early age that Mira would be successful in every aspect of her professional life.

Mira was strong-headed all her life.



This was the building Mira lived in. The front room was her mother's bread shop "PIINE".

Saly Seidler, Mira's mother, wanted Mira to join Doamna Jescu's kindergarten class, but the old lady refused under the pretext that she teaches only elder kids (which wasn't always true). In retaliation, Mira held her ground, being adamant when she was asked to join *"The Four Seasons"* iconic kindergarten play in the leading role. When she finally got older and joined Doamna Jescu's class she accepted the part and played it extremely well.



Mira in the middle



Mira has never failed at school or on stage.

At the end of school year in Suceava it was customary to put on stage a two-hour play. When I was in the 6th grade the school teachers worked on a script based on the poems of Mihai Eminescu, the famous national poet. The older students played the different characters, but some six graders were chosen to dance in the last scene of the well-known poem LUCEAFARUL. I was in the lead. We trained daily knowing that the last scene may influence the audience's overall opinion. Doamna professor Martha Schmeterling suggested Verdi's music for the dance. We speak about the Gipsy Chorus from the opera Il Trovatore as the score for this particular dance. It ended with me meeting the prince, played by Mihai Pinzaru.

The pianist who usually played Il Trovatore Gypsies Chorus Music couldn't always attend our training sessions. On these occasions, Rodica Mihalcea, a talented girl from a senior class, played the music on the piano. Rodica was an excellent student, a fine pianist. Doamna Bencu, Adriana Bencu's mother, was sewing for us special dresses. It was an A cut tight dress, in different bright colors. My dress was yellow. An outstanding lenient instruction was given: we were advised to polish our nails in "jungle red" color, so our hand and fingers would stand out during the movement. In those days, nail polish was considered decadent and utterly inappropriate for pupils. Normally you would be severely punished for wearing nail polish. How could we pass such an extraordinary occasion!

In vain had I dreamed, prepared, and trained. The excitement was gone the minute my very ill maternal grandfather died a week before the show. It was obvious that I could not step on stage while my family was grieving.

We were living opposite the school. The sports teacher, who took care of the dance performances, Doamna Stefanescu, came to see me at home. I was devastated, she was desperate. An important item was lost because of my absence. I came up with the idea that Mira should take my place. The performance was saved – Mira danced beautifully, in my yellow dress, ending the dance with a gracious smile while extending her hand to the prince and looking into his eyes.

Doamna profesoara Stefanescu was forever grateful, never forgetting Mira's performance.



Lily and Mira at school



Mira knew a family in Suceava who was willing to lend books, forbidden by the Romanian authorities. During a winter's cold afternoon, we went to meet the family. They were childless. They lent us "*Gone with the Wind*", "*East of Eden*" and other books. It was a delight.

Mira was an exceptional talented student. Many times she suffered persecutions just because she was outstanding.

At the entrance exam at the Junior High, they failed her in spite of her correct answers. If light had stricken me I would have felt a lesser blow than at the time the news reached me. Mira failed the entrance exam?! For heavens' sake? What is she going to do? What is going to happen to me the next year when my turn to take the exam will arrive? It was obvious, Mira didn't fail, she was punished by the head of the local education department for being Jewish and excellent. Mr. Bernstein, a Jewish official was the initiator of this kind of punishment towards the students whose families applied to immigrate to Israel.

I don't know what Mira felt. All I know is that in order to take care of her wonderful long hair she cut the thick, rich, long braids and went for a month to a trip around Romania. Today I know that the hairdresser asked for Mira's mother's presence and approval in order to cut her unique braids. Upon her return, she took the exam again and entered Junior High with excellence.

Time went by. Mira got first prize for Romanian Literature. Her classroom teacher Mr. Einhorn, handed her the prize, but, instead of praising Mira, he found the appropriate occasion to scold the Romanian girl, who got lesser achievements, although it was about the Romanian girl's native language.

The time for the final matriculation exams arrived. As expected, Mira was wonderful in the written exams as in the oral ones.

Some weeks after the finals, Mira's mother met Doamna professor Vigder, the former school director, then Mira's classroom teacher. During the exam sessions, she headed the examination committee in a neighboring town. Mrs Vigder told Saly Seidler that Mira passed all the exams with straight As, her name being eligible to be written in The Gold Book of Achievement. Why didn't that happen? One of Mira's teachers asked the physics-examining teacher to change Mira's oral achievement from A to B. The local teacher's reason was: the previous student listed in the Golden Book of Achievement was



more than 10 years ago, also a Jew, Hadassah Susmann . Since than nobody was eligible. It would not be appropriate to have two consecutive Jewish names mentioned in The Gold Book of Achievement, WOULD IT?



Professor Frieda Vigder who didn't stop teaching even in Transnistria

Have I mentioned that Mira played the piano?

In spite of all the dark forces, Mira has succeeded in every endeavor. I am proud to be her friend.



Mira is the third from the right





Mira's Mother

by Lily Pauker

Mira's mother, Sally Rübner, was a fearless woman. Not many Jewish women of her time swam, rode a bike or drove the horse-cart to Ilishehsti, a village near Suceava, to sell the bread her father had baked.

She started to work early in life, first as an apprentice at Doamna Rotkopf's workshop; she learned to sew women's underwear. After the war, a tiny room in the family house served as a bread selling shop. These were the times when bread was baked in large industrial ovens, only to be distributed later in shops similar to Sally's shop. A process called "panificatie".

Sally had two brothers: Isiu, two years her senior, and Haskel, six years younger than Mira's mother, whom she fondly raised.

The family was deported from Suceava on October 9 1941. This was the first deportation day, and the most painful of all, not only because people had only 4-5 hours to gather their belongings but also because nobody knew the reaction of the authorities towards the deportees. Many Jewish families gave up their valuables, as ordered, out of fear for being shot on the spot if not doing so (the regulations were very clear on this subject). Their experience at the Burdujeni train station was extremely enlightening for the transports to come, in the next two days. It was obvious that the Romanian gendarmes were not thorough when checking for forbidden items: dollars, jewels, and diamond stones, golden French coins called "*cocosei*" (because a rooster, the symbol of France, is called in Romanian *cocos*). Moreover, the understanding that Romanians could be easily bribed helped at times to hold on their belongings. At times, the soldiers or gendarmes who watched the deported Jews, took the bribe but stole and "confiscated" whatever they liked.

Paula Bernthal's muff was ripped off and taken by a Romanian soldier. Paula was a successful pharmacist, trained in Prague and Mira's mother's cousin. In the muff, Paula had hidden cyanide pills for the entire family – she had understood perfectly what was to come. The pills were meant to be their last resort, when everything else had failed.

As all the other Suceava Jews, Sally's family crossed the Dniester River at Ataki. Upon arriving in Moghilev they were housed in an open stable. One of the brothers looked for a better "accommodation". He encouraged the family to march to Shargorod. The winter of 1942 was later known as an exceptionally cold one. Sally mentioned later that the snow was so high it reached one's waist. Grandfather Ruebner and grandfather Seidler died during the winter of 42. The earth was frozen, therefore digging a grave was extremely difficult.



In Shargorod, Dr. Meir Teich, the chief of Suceava community, took charge of the deportees first to ease the living conditions as best as it could be done, and secondly, second to keep order and to be an intermediary between the deportees and the Romanian authorities. Hygiene was a high priority on his list. Therefore, he appointed people to draw water from the well; in doing so he prevented water contamination by using personal buckets.

Numele <i>Rübler</i>	Mutatii _____
Pronumele <i>Sali</i>	data _____
Locul nasterii _____	_____ casa № _____
Data „ <i>25 ani</i>	_____
Evacuat din <i>Suceava</i>	_____
starea civila _____	_____
Profesiunea <i>croitorie</i>	_____
K. A. _____	_____
K. I. _____	_____
K. P. _____	_____
Comandă sect. jand. _____	_____

VIZAT 15.1.1944

Sally was the woman who carried two buckets full of water to people's houses. She was paid with food: a potato, some oil or flour.

Isiu was sent to Trihati as was Carl Seidler.

Mother and her younger brother got typhoid fever, and were sent to a hospital. As part of the treatment their heads were shaved.

Carl met Sally one day standing in a queue. He switched places with her. As it happened, Sally got the bread while he got Sally but not the bread. He got her heart and this was enough for a long and happy married life.

<p><i>11.1.1944</i> <i>10041</i></p> <p>25.1.1944 VIZAT SECT. POST. JAND. SARGOROD</p> <p><i>Boia</i></p>	<p>Colonia Exceasca Sargorod Bir. Populatiei</p> <p>BULETIN № <i>740</i></p> <p>D <i>Rübler Sali</i></p> <p>Casa № <i>336 Sub</i></p> <p>șeful coloniei <i>Teich</i></p>
---	--

Sally's identity card in Shargorod now at Yad Veshem





Suceava Memories

Moshe Herzberg

General

I was born on July 29, 1947, the fourth generation of the Herzberg family in Suceava. Having belonged to a middle-class family before the war, my fate was predetermined by the socialist régime. As a result, I was socially isolated, fact which affected me severely. I understood my situation when nobody ever entered my house.

My Paternal Lineage

My great-grandfather Mendel Herzberg arrived in Suceava in the 19th century. Apparently, he got his surname at the municipality as the Austrians, who governed the region at the time, wanted to prove that there was a German population in this area. Another way to explain our family name might involve our Polish origin, presumably an honorable name. My family, like all old families in town, was religious, but influenced by the Austrian administration and the German culture as well. For example:

- During WWI, my father's brothers-in-law were Austrian officers and his own brother fought on the Austrian side. Afterwards he settled in Paris.
- My grandfather's sister immigrated to Canada. After WWI, her son, Fitch, was Canada's general prosecutor as well as chairman of the local Zionist movement.

My Maternal Lineage

Both my maternal great grandparents came from Poland as part of "cost and quarter" matchmaking. This meant that the bridegroom would continue his studies at the yeshiva over a period of five years, after which he would dedicate himself to supporting his family.

One of my great grandfathers didn't agree to leave the yeshiva and was a honored religious figure in Falticeni. Because of my great grandfather's zeal towards learning at the yeshiva, his sons couldn't stand the poverty they lived in. They hitchhiked their way across Europe, reaching the United States. Consequently, my great-grandfather suffered a heart attack and died. Two of his grandsons were submarine commanders during WWII.



Another branch of family on my mother's side of the family worked in business trading and became rich. After leaving Romania they were among the founders of a settlement in Yehuda Mountains in the Jerusalem surroundings.

My grandparents:



Moses and Hanzie Herzberg



Nachum and Otilie Litman

My Parents:

General

Both my parents were very intelligent and extremely skillful people able to survive any hardship.

My mother

My mom came to Suceava during the population transfer carried out by the Romanians from the kingdom to more distant regions.

My Dad

Here are some important facts from my dad's life which points to the complexity in which Jewish life materialized in Suceava. My dad always refused to disclose information, but I deduced it little by little.

- My father was born in 1909 in Suceava. He was well-educated at an Austrian school. He studied German, Latin and ancient Greek among other subjects. He aspired to study mechanical engineering in Cernowitz,



but his father convinced him to stay and continue managing the family tavern. He was the one who enlarged the family business to a considerable size. My dad served in the Romanian army in the “Vinatorii de Munte” unit. When the Jews were deported from Bucovina, he was in the middle of military maneuvers. Apparently, as a result of unit pride or out of a private initiative, dad was accompanied by 12 volunteers on his way home. During the journey, the Romanian nationalists attacked them and a knife fight started. My father refused to share more information with me. After returning home, he and his family were deported to Transnistria.

- A well-known fact is that the Romanians were in charge guarding the Jewish population in Transnistria. The guards couldn't overpower my father who each night would sneak out from the ghetto to provide people with food. Sometimes he would hand out everything he had and he himself remained hungry as he wasn't able to see people being deprived. The Romanian guards were annoyed by my father, therefore a group of about 40 Romanian guards decided to kill him. My dad discovered the scheme, laying on the floor he prayed the confession prayer, which is usually recited before death. When the guards saw him on the floor they, believing he was planning a trap, got scared and ran away.
- After liberation, dad volunteered with the Red Army and took part in different battles. It was customary that veterans (soldiers who survived combat units) were moved at the back. My father reached Moscow. At first, the Russians refused to let him return home. Nevertheless, he indirectly succeeded in getting home in 1946.
- In the same year, my parents got married and I saw the light of day in 1947.



My Cousin, Fredy:

At the end of 1947, my cousin, Fredy Eydinger, one of the leaders of Aliya Bet from Romania, came to my dad and asked him to join the last train he succeeded organizing before the borders were about to close. Father refused, as he was afraid I would not survive the hardships of the way. The authorities caught him, arrested him as an illegal Aliya leader and was imprisoned for a year.



Our Family House:

Our house had 12 rooms with an inside closed, paved yard. Three big basements serviced the tavern, as they were equipped with a network of pipes through which wine and beer were distributed. Upon my dad's return from Russia, he was licensed to reopen the tavern. However, the communists hardened their policy regarding the economy. The tavern was closed once again. The state took over nearly all our rooms and forced us to live in a one- room "apartment" with a common kitchen for our use, my grandmother's and my dad's sister's family.



School:

General:

The school system included elementary school (first to fourth grade), junior high-school (fifth to seventh grade) and high-school (eighth to eleventh grade). During the elementary school I was a very happy child.

Junior High-School:

The Beginning of My Formation as a Student:

When I was in the fifth grade, the math teacher, who was my dad's friend, noticed that instead of learning I was watching a huge tree in the yard and the birds on its branches. He started testing me every day and little by little I learned how to study efficiently. As a result, I acquired a systematic learning method, which was essential.

The Persecutions:

Good friends of my family revealed the painful truth: my social origin could not provide me with academic studies unless I got an average of 100% in the junior school final exams in and at in the high-school entrance exams. I chose to ignore everything, be indifferent and not fight for my grades.



On the right, at the technology workshop





On the right, in the third row, Zwi and I

The Attack in the Yard

One day I went to the yard and, suddenly, in one of the corners I was attacked by one of the non-Jewish students threatening me with a dagger. I started fighting back and, at a certain point, some classmates came running, overpowered the attacker, took his dagger and beat the heck out of him. One of them, whom I would call “A”, told me that at home he was asked to keep me safe as a sign of respect for my family, not adding anything else.

High-school:

Math, Physics and Chemistry Competition: Every year competitions in mathematics, physics and chemistry took place. I participated each year on all three subjects. I won first prize at the municipal level.

However, each time I reached the county level, the monitor, who was one of the math teachers, would inform me that I had to participate, but no one was going to check my exam.

The Enrollment of High-School Students for Agricultural Work:

As the land wasn't private property any longer, the peasants didn't make any effort to save the agricultural production. One autumn, as it happened, there was a very rainy season and there wasn't enough time to pick up all the potatoes from the field. The authorities decided that all high-school students had to work one day in the fields to gather potatoes. That same day was Simchat Torah and, as a result, the Jewish children didn't come to do the volunteer work. The teacher was angry with me.



Parting with my Classmates before Immigrating to Israel:

I immigrated to Israel after the tenth grade. The boys in my class were certain I was immigrating to the US. I told them I was leaving for Israel. At this point, the guys decided they didn't want me to go as I had good grades and they wanted me to stay and strengthen Romania. After I refused, A. (the student who saved me from the attack in the schoolyard) declared, "I wish we could also rule our country!"

The Synagogue:

General:

My parents' synagogue was "Beit Hamidrash" which belonged to rabbi Moscovitz, from the Hassidim movement. Later on the rabbi's son was the head of the religious courts in Haifa. A few years ago, while walking around Beit Shemesh, I saw a small sign on which was written that the synagogue belonged to "Hassidut Shotz". I immediately checked and it turned out that one of the Moscovitz family who returned from Canada wanted to establish again "Hassidut Shotz" community.

The Structure of the Synagogue:

The Synagogue consisted of two big rectangular rooms: one for men and another one for women. The only connection between the two rooms were a series of narrow windows five meters high through which women could hear the cantor and the reading of the Torah. There wasn't any possibility of an eye connection between the two rooms.

The synagogue had a ground floor apartment for Gabay use. He was a cantor, a devout man and sifrei Torah writer. Adjacent to the synagogue was a garden area and a cowshed which was the synagogue property for Gabay's use.

Submmiting Documents for Immigration to Israel:

When I was 7 years old, on Yom Kippur after the prayer Kol Nidrei, the honorable rabbi Moskovitz got on the stage and announced that the following day the prayer would start very early in the morning in darkness. The next day, after the Musaf prayer, the rabbi told the congregation that the Romanian authorities offered the possibility to hand in the documents needed for immigration to Israel. This was valid for one day only, on Yom Kippur. The rabbi also said he was going to hand in his request and who else wanted to join him was more than welcome.

Another memory imprinted in my mind was that of a long row of Jewish people waiting to enter the police office and on the side people with short sticks. They were hitting those standing in line and trying to draw them out while the Jews resisted. Later on, I understood that these were communist Jews who opposed the immigration to Israel. The following day after registering for



immigration to Israel, my father was fired from his job and was forbidden to get any other one instead. The Romanian authorities closed down the tavern.

The Relationship Between my Family and the Population:

General:

My family had a good name among the Christian population. They were honest merchants and especially respected people.

Meeting a Peasant's Grandson:

One day I accompanied my grandmother Hentzi Herzberg during her daily stroll. Every person we met approached her, kissed her hand and asked for her advice in nearly every possible matter. All of a sudden, a big cart harnessed by huge horses stopped near us. A young man dressed in national costume with daggers hanging from his brău got off his cart. He approached us, got on his knee, kissed her hand and didn't get up until grandma told him to. The youth told that his grandfather on his dying bed confessed that my grandmother saved his life. Therefore, he beseeched his grandsons to honor her even at the price of their own lives.

My Paternal Grandmother's Funeral:

Grandma Henzie's funeral was an impressive event which is still imprinted in my memory. About the time of the funeral the market shut down, the peasants from villages around Suceava came in town and offices closed. A few Jews marched ahead the funeral procession. An interminable line of Romanian people plodded along the main street. The sidewalks were loaded with people. When the procession reached the cemetery the Jews alone entered. The hills around overlooking the Jewish graveyard were full of people granting my grandmother their last respects.

Yidish, Hebrew and Jewish Studies:

General:

My father's sister, Zofi, was very determined about Hebrew and Jewish studies.

Jewish Studies

Here are a few observations:

- Before 1958's Aliya there were many teachers, who demanded memorization. However, this was never my



My paternal grandmother's headstone at the Suceava Jewish Cemetery



strongest side. When I was about four one of the teachers forbade me to ask questions, to make comparisons. He demanded total submission – “learn the Yiddish translation and stop asking so many questions!” Afterwards, he hit me on my hands and he locked me as punishment in a timber storage room. Despite this, I couldn’t succeed with any other teacher.

- There was one nice custom. At the end of a newborn’s first week of life, all those studying at the heider would go to pay a visit. They would read “Shma Israel”. Afterwards, everyone would get a piece of cake.
- My salvation came from rabbi Weisbuch. I took Hebrew lessons.
- In addition, we reviewed a great part of the Torah books, but it had been too late since it was a short time before immigrating to Israel.
-



Yidish Studies:

As part of the régime’s efforts to reconcile with the Jewish population, we studied Yidish for an hour a week in the first and second grade. However, our lessons stopped the moment the teacher immigrated to Israel.

Hebrew Studies:

There were many Hebrew teachers in town, but I didn’t get along with any of them. However, rabbi Weisbuch taught me in a very organized and systematic way. He really enjoyed teaching me and, sometimes, he was so enthusiastic that we continued studying for three or four hours. My dad wanted to pay him for all the time he invested, but he refused to accept money.

Childhood:

Below I will present some funny stories from my childhood:

- My mom was an avid reader. That’s why, my mother used to place me in front of her and read to me especially Romanian translations from French authors. She would read me for a long time, sometimes our sessions extending from morning to late in the evening. She managed to find a children’s book by the Romanian author Ion Creanga. She used to read to me for hours. I was so immersed in my mom’s readings that I would always imagine palaces, houses, imaginary creatures, feeling extremely happy. During these sessions I kept quiet, as words weren’t necessary.
- In front of my house there were a number of craftsmen – a shoemaker, a tailor and a tinsmith. I believe that when I was two and a half years old I crossed the road and settled in at their shops. They gave me to do different jobs and taught me the secrets of their trades. All these without talking. I was happy.



- At that time, children would go to the kindergarten from the age of five. When I was about three, I used to play with one of the neighbours' children who was going every morning to the kindergarten. One day I joined him and after that I continued to go to the kindergarten and there I learned how to speak. In my eyes, the huge number of wooden cubes in different forms was the most attractive activity. I could go haywire with my imagination.



From the left: Moshele, Gita Ostfeld, X, Gitta Weitmann, Doamna Jescu, the kindergarten teacher, Ruthy Hubner, X, Erica Shapira, Tzili Abram. Behind Gitta, Lily Weintraub. Behind Ruthy Hedi Salpeter. Sitting second on the right Zwi Fuhrer. All the kids mentioned above are Jewish children.





Childhood Memories

Nelu Eidinger

My name is Nelu Eidinger I was born in January 1945 in Murafa, Transnistria to my father David Eidinger, born in Suceava, and to my mother Fany Goldring born in Russia. They met after father was deported to Transnistria along with all Suceava Jews.

Childhood memories

It was warm and cozy at home, all the lights were on, not usual at our house.

On the table there were refreshments and homemade wine which we used all year round and not just on Passover. There were also deserts. The “Russian” woman played cards; laughter, jokes and a bit of gossip merged into the conversation. But when they started singing there was sadness and a lot of tears. Russian

was incomprehensible to me, I couldn’t understand a word except for a song that its lyrics were a mixture of Russian and Yiddish. This particular song told about an orphan child who tried to persuade passers to buy his papirosen (cigarettes) for a few pennies to buy food.

The women sang and cried.

I couldn’t understand: singing is joy, singing is good mood, dancing to music and singing is what happy people do. Why were my mother and her Russian friends so sad?

Four, five years passed by. At the age of 9, I already understood Russian. In time, I guessed more about their sufferings, about what happened there. The constant



My family



My mother’s Russian friends. From the left Jenny Weidenfeld, Essia Rosenblum, Scheindale Gitter, Fira Goldschmidt, Ita Stahl, Hava Zaltzman



uncertainty regarding the next day was terrifying: would there be something to eat, would it be possible to get a bit warm. In those times, nobody thought about the future. The challenge was to pass the day, to stay alive, to survive.

At home, my parents never talked about Transnistria. The memories surfaced only at gatherings of the “Russian” women, who married Suceava men and settled in Suceava, building in town their families.

During these encounters, I was preoccupied with the sadness at home. Only later did I realize the reason for the meetings held at my home. Dad worked at the grocery store, mom started to work later at the ALIMENTARA.

Shortages of the most basic necessities were the order of the day. People were queuing up for hours for almost every commodity. It stands to reason that the closer circle got the daily or weekly “bargains” easier than the others. Therefore, the meetings were held at our home. I was happy when I could be out the day they met.

Children want to be happy. Then and now, they don’t need a lot of reasons to rejoice.



The different ethnic groups in Bucovina 1902: Hutsui, Hungarian, Romi, Lipovan, Jew, Pole, Shwab Romanians, Russian.
color: Nicu Idol





What is in a Name?

Paulica Davidovici

My name is Paulica. This is the name my close family and my friends from Suceava call me by. Actually nobody, except them, knows me by that name. Even on the Matriculation and University diplomas, my name is Paula David. This is the reason why, when somebody calls me Paulica, it sounds like a caress.... The sound of this name, Paulica, takes me back to my childhood, to my parents, to my eldest sister, Clarisse, to Dora, my second sister, all of whom aren't with me anymore.

However, not everything is so gloomy in my life, my childhood friends call me by this name. So, please, my dear friends continue to call me Paulica... I like the sound of it!!!

pregnancy. She went to Bucharest (a 10 hours distance by train from Suceava) to consult a famous gynecologist. He told her that ending the pregnancy could endanger her life. As a result, here I am the fourth daughter! I was born on October 29, 1947, when my mother was 41 years old and my father was 43. At that time my eldest sister, Clarisse, was 15 years old, Dora, was 12, and Miriam was eight. The fact that my sisters are much older than I am affected my life.



1949 family passport picture: mom holding me on her lap, Clarisse, Dora, father and Miriam



My Family

My parents' names were Ghittale and Iosef Meir.



My mother



My father drafted into the Romanian Army



Ghittale and Iosef Meir on their wedding, 1931



1931 when life was good. Mother, her brother Itzik and her sister Adela, with my father

My father went daily (no matter the weather) to the morning prayers at the synagogue Gah, where he met members of the Jewish community.

After the prayers, they used to discuss the latest political events broadcast on the clandestine radio channel "Free Europe", transmitted from West Germany in Romanian. So, if someone wanted to know what was really going on in the world, they would listen to it. When my father came home from the synagogue, at about 7 a.m., my mother would always ask the same question in Yiddish: "Yosel, vus hertzeh?" and my father's answer was always the same: "Ghittel, sez im irtze hashem zan ghit!" I woke up every morning with these words.



My mother was born in Piatra Neamt. It was, and still is, a beautiful town in Moldova. My grandmother, Miriam, had a son, Itzik, and two daughters - Adela and Ghizela (Ghittale), who was the youngest. Itzik was my mother's twin brother. He died when he was about 14. I was told that one of the Romanian neighbors convinced him to swallow mercury they extracted from a broken thermometer. He was told that the stuff would make him strong and handsome. Actually, what happened was that he died two days later, being poisoned.

My mother family was Swartz (or Negru, as they changed it later). It was a large family. They had many shops in town, selling carpets, furs, designer hats for ladies, etc.

However, my mother's close family didn't live in luxury. Actually her father, Levy, was killed during the First World War, while serving in the Romanian Army.

It is interesting to mention that during World War I, Jews, didn't have any citizenship. They weren't considered Romanian citizens and, therefore, they didn't have any civil rights ... except to serve in the army and ...die.

Between Adela and my mother was a difference of 15 years... My grandmother's family helped Adela to open a shop. Adela married Pinhas, but she had a very unhappy marriage. Pinhas (Pincu, as we called him) was a drunkard and a cheating husband. They lived in Iasi and had three sons and a daughter. Adela was a beautiful woman. Once, after the birth of her third son, she left the house with her children and came to live with her mother in Piatra Neamt. Divorce wasn't an option in those days. Later, in 1937, they moved to Calarasi, in the southern part of Romania. There, with the help of a Jewish family, my aunt opened a store. She managed the store alone and it became very successful. Pincu continued to behave as usual, but my aunt didn't care anymore. Her main concern was to be able to provide a good education for her children. They became wealthy. During World War II, when my father was taken to a forced labor camp and my mother couldn't feed her three daughters, her mother-in-law and Adela helped by sending food packages. This is how my family survived.

At the beginning of her marriage, my mother was quite unhappy as she had to leave her parental family and move to a small village, without electricity, where only a few Jewish families lived. However, Clarisse was born, and later Dora and Miriam. When my mother was pregnant with Miriam, her mother died in Piatra Neamt. My father didn't want to upset mom, therefore she was told about her mother's death only after Miriam's birth.

My family did very well between 1933 – 1940. They had a big store in the village with many customers from the neighborhood. A good relationship was established between the local villagers and my parents, respecting each other. Then the anti-semitic propaganda reached. The mayor of the village warned my father many times advising him to hide because of the growing acts of anti-Semitic violence. Unfortunately, one night the whole family had to flee suddenly, leaving all



their belongings behind, because they found themselves in a life-threatening situation. They went to live in Falticeni, a small town with many Jewish families. Not long after that, my father was taken to a forced labor camp. He spent two years in the camp. My mother was alone with three daughters and with her mother-in-law. How was she able to provide food? She started to sew sacks for the army. Clarisse and my grandmother, Sara, helped as well. Their hands were full of bleeding bruises because of the sack rough cloth. My mother got a few coins, just enough to buy a loaf of bread.

Jews were allowed to buy bread only at 5 o'clock in the morning and for a short period of time. In order not to miss out buying bread for her family, my mother would go at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, hiding in a basement she found near the place where bread was sold. When they started selling it, she was among the first in the queue.

Once she was apprehended with other Jews. They were forced to walk in line to the nearest forced labor camp. While walking on the main street of the town, people were watching them helplessly. Suddenly, my sister, Miriam, saw mother and ran to her, crying: "Mommy, Mommy!" She was a beautiful little girl with blond curls and blue eyes. Suddenly, something amazing happened: the armed guard was impressed and released my mother.

My father succeeded in escaping from the camp, which was a few hundred kilometers east from where we lived. Later I was told that Aunt Adela who tried desperately to help her sister, using her influence and money, managed to reach one of the guards in the camp, bribed him with a large sum of money; he turned a blind eye and let my father escape.

My father had to hide during day light and walk during the night. He ate what he found on the ground. This is how he wandered for a few months; when he finally reached our house, my mother was unable to recognize him. He was a living skeleton, full of fleas and lice, dressed in rags. Unfortunately, his sufferings weren't over. He had to hide in the cellar because they could have arrested him again and this time send him to prison or even kill him as a fugitive.

At the end of 1943, the situation of the Jews aggravated in Falticeni. Now Falticeni belonged to Romania, while Suceava belonged to Bucovina. My parents understood that they had to flee again. My father made a sort of wooden cart in which they put a few belongings, my old grandmother, who was unable to walk, and occasionally Miriam, who was three years old.

They didn't have horses, so my parents pulled the cart for about 20 kilometers. When they arrived in Suceava they found a ghost town. The streets and the houses were empty. The entire Jewish community had been taken to camps in Transnistria.

My parents chose a house suitable for the family. It seemed appropriate for their needs. They wanted to open a store, which could provide what was needed for the family. One day, while cleaning the house, my mother found an old wooden box. When she opened it, she saw there gold



coins, rings and other valuables. She understood that it belonged to the Jewish family who lived there but was deported to Transnistria. She closed the box, hid it and didn't touch it. At the end of the war, the Jews of Suceava started coming back. Among them, the Shibber family who owned the very same house. The Shibber and we lived for a few months together in perfect harmony, until my parents moved to a house not far from the market. Naturally, the Shibbers got back the wooden box and friendship was forged.

After the war, many orphans returned to Suceava. My mother used to take them in, sometimes for days, sometimes for weeks, until some arrangements were made: either they found somebody from their family or they were put in orphanages. There wasn't much room in our house and sometimes either my sisters or the poor orphans slept on the floor. However, my mother always found a way to feed everybody....

My Grandmother Sara's Alyia

Between 1950-1952, there was a massive immigration to Israel. The Jewish population wasn't aware of why the communist regime suddenly allowed people to immigrate to Israel, our young Jewish state. My family also wanted to make aliyah. They provided all the necessary documents. After a few weeks, a much awaited permit was received. However, it was only meant for Sara David, my grandmother. She was the only one who was allowed to immigrate to Israel.

My father went to get advice from a rabbi, to ask him what he should do. He had a terrible dilemma: how could he, the only son, send his mother to Israel alone? The rabbi gave my father many examples of families who either sent their elderly parents first and joined them later with their children or did the opposite, first the younger generation left and the elderly followed later. He said that it was only a matter of a week or two until all the family would be reunited in Israel. As a result, my parents agreed that my grandmother leave for Israel with half of the things we were supposed to take with us.



Sara David my grandmother



They were sure that it was a matter of days or one week at most until they would join her. She left and we waited for our viza to leave. The house was empty because my parents sold everything, expecting to leave soon. Unfortunately, the allyiah was suddenly stopped. We were no longer permitted to leave Romania. My grandmother was in Israel, alone. Communication was difficult in those days, so we didn't know anything about her.

Our life under the strict communist regime wasn't easy.... Miriam underwent a traumatic experience when, in front of the entire school, was accused that she was the daughter of a "chiabur" (a landlord)...and they took her "cravata rosie" (the red tie), the pupils' symbol of belonging to the communist party. Being dispossessed of the red tie was a great shame, meaning that your family belonged to the enemy, anti-revolutionary, anti-communist forces. Not wearing it made you automatically, an outsider. The irony was that at that time my parents could hardly provide for us the basic necessities, such as food and clothes.

The years passed by and, in 1957, we got a very short note from Israel about my grandmother's death which had taken place a few weeks before. My father sat "shiva" and we cried a lot. About 7 years later, my sister, Dora, made allyiah with her husband Pinhas (Puiu) and their young daughter Zehava. My brother in law, Puiu, started searching for our grandmother's grave. The task was extremely difficult: how could one find the grave of a woman called Sara David in Israel. It was such a common name! After a long search, he finally found it in the Pardes Hana cemetery. He also found out what happened to her during her stay (about 5 years); she had been waiting for her son and family to join her. It was a tragic. Without knowing Hebrew, old and alone, she was put in a home for the elderly in Pardes Hana. She waited until her last breath for her son and didn't sell any of the things she came with, keeping them and hoping that one day she would see him again. In her honor, every year on the month of Elul, we visit her grave. In her memory, we tell her story to the next generation which is always present with us.

Memories of my Childhood in Suceava

When I think about my childhood in Suceava, I go back in time almost 60 years. I hark back to the images, voices, colors, smells of a different world as if a curtain raises and you can see a different era.

My parents' house on Karl Marx Street was part of a complex of many flats arranged in the same way, like compartments in a train. The front room used to be a shop; the one next to it was small and served as a storeroom. The following one was the room the family lived and then another one, which was the kitchen. One quarter of the kitchen was taken by the "soba". During the cold months, it had many functions. We got warm at its fire and my mother was cooking on it. It also had a very good oven where my mother used to bake every Friday the challah bread for Shabbat.



Their smell filled the whole house and it let us know that we were in the middle of preparations for Shabbat. I must add that our “soba” served also as the traditional heating plate for Shabbat. If the fire was extinguished, my parents would ask a Romanian to rekindle it. The kitchen was the only room that had a big double window and a door. Outside the door there was a small 1-square-meter porch where we kept a big wooden barrel with water. We watched the barrel closely so it would always be full because it provided all the water necessary for our family.

Our flat had two ways out: one, at the front, where the shops were, and another which opened to the yard. In the shop mother sold all kinds of sweets: candies, chocolate, biscuits, wafers, even chocolate cakes. Her store was called DELICIA. We also sold soda water with various fruit juices. Whenever there were many customers my mother would call me for help. My father also worked hard running a mini-market. My sisters had already married, left the house and went to live in Iasi and Falticeni. When my mother was sick, I remember that I used to come from school and immediately open the store until late in the evening. Then I did my homework.

My mother worked very hard, but never complained. She lifted big metal containers of soda water to put them in even bigger ones in which, there were blocks of ice, in order to cool the soda water. In addition, all kinds of biscuits were stored in big wooden containers of 20 – 30 kilos and she arranged them in the storeroom. Work never ended. I remember that she prepared soup on a gas primus while working in the shop. When she had to add some vegetables or some salt, she would leave the customers and run to the kitchen to see what happened with her soup.

She has always been an example for me.

My Childhood Friends:

As I mentioned before, the stores were in front of our flat and on the opposite side was the yard. All our neighbors, with the exception of one very nice family, were Jewish. It happened that all their children were about my age and, of course, they were my best friends. Let’s start with Tzilica. She was a real beauty with blond curly hair and brown eyes, Simone Signoret style (when she was young). I spent a lot of time at her house. She had two younger sisters and I loved the youngest, Sophie, very much.

On the floor above us was living the Ribner family. Dina, a mother of three, two girls and a boy, was pretty with black long hair, brown eyes and a lot of energy. Her husband worked in a bakery. He was a quiet man and I don’t remember ever talking with him.

The next yard was called “curtea mare” (the big yard), and it was really big. On the floor above, lived my friend Carla. We were all admiring her beautiful dresses, she wore gracefully. Downstairs lived the Shoenfeld family. They didn’t have any children and Mrs. Shoenfeld was crippled as a result of an injury from Transnistria.



The only non-Jewish family had a son who was our friend. His parents were very nice people. The Manash family lived on the first floor. They had three sons: Iancu, Benny and Dorel. Iancu was my classmate. He was very intelligent, but didn't invest a lot of effort in his studies... Moreover, he preferred spending time with his best friends, among them Vladimir Gaitan who is now one of the best actors in Romania. If Iancu's father wanted to know something about his son, he used to ask me. Iancu owes me a lot as I lied many times about where he was during school hours.

Here is a picture taken at school in 1965. I am the second from the right standing next to the wall.



Iancu's mother, Ghizela, was a gentle woman. I remember her sitting at her sewing machine, wearing glasses and making bedclothes, which were special. They were artistically embroidered with the monograms of her clients. All the Jews from Suceava possessed a few of these bedclothes and I am sure that there are houses here in Israel where they still can be found.

In the late 1950's, the communist authorities found a new source of income - Jewish property. My parents weren't worried because their possessions were very limited... Two of my sisters got married - Clarisse in 1957 and Dora in 1958. As a result my parents owed a lot of money to our neighbors from whom they borrowed it. In order to return it, understandable, my parents were struggling day by day to make ends meet.

One day, Ghizela, Iancu's mother brought in our humble house a lot of valuables, such as jewels, fur coats and money. Iancu's mother knew that it was only a matter of hours until the police would



come and confiscate, incarcerating her husband. everything from them. She was right. Not only did the police come, but they also took Iancu's father. He was in prison for a few years. He and many other Jews were sentenced to forced labour in the South of Romania.

During the years when her husband was in prison, Iancu's mother worked hard at her sewing machine. They had a maid, Leonora. She was part of the family, raised the boys and loved them as if they were her own children. I remember her; she wasn't tall, nor young, nor pretty but she was talking about the boys, especially, Dorel, the youngest. In return, she was very much loved by the children. When Mr. Manash came home from prison, they succeeded to make allyiah. They left in 1961. After their departure, Leonora was wandering the streets of Suceava, crying and holding one of Dorel's shoes. It was such a sad view...

Next to "curtea mare", there was another one, where only Jewish families lived. I had many friends there. To name only a few: Lia Avram (Tzilica's cousin), Bettina Shoenfeld, Betty Merdler, Harry Fleischer, the sisters Etty and Betty Goldenberg. My best friend during those years was Bettina Shoenfeld. She was a very a smart girl with black hair and black eyes. I met her two years ago. She is one of the scientists at the Weizman Institute in Rehovot. When she immigrated to Israel, I missed her very much. Bettica was also my friend. I used to spend a lot of time at her house especially during the time her father was, like many Jews, in prison.

Both yards ended into a big square, which was previously called "Piata de Unt" (the Butter Market). We would frequently meet other friends and have fun: Dorly Weidenfeld, Iuliana Hershkowitz, Ghitta Weitman and her cousin, etc.

At the end of 50's and the beginning of the 60's, the communist government "let my people go". Then, we didn't know why, but now we know. Israel and The American "Joint" simply bought us. They paid large amounts of money ranging from \$3000 to \$6000 per person. The younger a person and the more educated the more expensive he was.

As it's easily understood, at school, our class had almost only Jewish pupils. During the Jewish holidays, the class was almost empty. However, suddenly, the situation changed. When I was in the sixth grade, my friends started to leave. Their families immigrated to Israel. In two years there were only a few Jewish pupils. I was very sad, I cried because I missed my friends terribly. The saddest period was when, a few weeks before leaving, my friends' families were trying to sell their belongings and their houses emptied little by little. I was trying to spend as much time as possible with my friends as these were our last moment together. It was so sad... Once they left, they simply vanished. I didn't expect to have any communication with them. We were at the beginning of the 60's, there were no cell phones, no Internet...

Since their departure, I haven't heard anything about my childhood friends. I came to Israel on



February 19th, 1974, soon after the end of the YOM KIPPUR war. I was married and had a little baby. Since the beginning, we lived in Netanya because my parents and my sister Dora lived there. My parents helped us a lot with our son, while we were struggling to make a living in the new country. Sometimes I was wondering where my old friends might be.

Then, about four years ago, I got a surprising telephone call from Dorly. She succeeded to find Iuliana Hershkowitz who gave her my number.

Dear Dorly and our beloved Lilly decided to make their mission to reach as many old Suceava friends as possible: all those who were born in 1947. And they succeeded! On August 1 2015, we all met for the first time after so many years. People came from all over Israel but also from different countries in the world - from Italy, Canada, the United States, Germany, South Africa and Mexico.

The following summer we went on a trip to Suceava. I also wish to mention the fact that all of us had in Suceava many dear non-Jewish friends with whom we were very close. We grew up together and we were very fond of each other as children and, later, as adolescents. I didn't feel any difference. We simply loved each other. When we visited Romania, my old best friends joined us. I was so surprised when Ileana Marcianu came to meet me. She lives in Bucharest, her daughter is a psychiatrist in Sweden. She came especially to meet us. Isn't it amazing ???

Nowadays we are happy to meet and talk to each other whenever possible.

I wish we would continue being best friends as years pass by, in good health and always feeling pleased and overjoyed in each other's company.

AMEN !!!!!



Paulica, second from right





Suceava Picture-Story

Pia Klein

I was born in Suceava, Bukovina, Romania to my mother Medea Sommer and my father Burshi Klein.

As it happened in many Jewish families, I was also an only child. The pictures I carry with me speak about a happy childhood, about taking part in all sorts of activities, engaging in recreation enjoyments, having fun and amusing myself with friends and schoolmates.



From an early age, I got ballet-lessons. Even today, dancing is always my favorite activity. The 7 girls at the bar is a picture taken by a local journalist and published in the local paper, but the entire group was photographed, as seen in the pictures bellow.



First on the right Ica, X, Dorly. Second on the left Gitta, Pia next to her. Kneeling on the right Agnita and Karin.



Pia, in the middle





From the left: X, Lily, Gitta, Pia, Karin. Third from right Dorly, the only girl wearing a wrist watch (highly unusual for children in those days).



Pia, first on the left

The next pictures were taken in kindergarten and elementary school





Father, Jenny Weidenfeld, Mother, Dorly and I



Dorly and I

Once a year the school held a Carnival celebration. My mom went in to much trouble to assemble a costume by collecting different pieces of clothes and accessories to fit Madame Pompadour or the Grand Visier in the story about Little Muck.



In the winter, we wore hats, gloves and big coats, almost identical.



Under the communist regime one kind of winter coats was sold. Here are my classroom friends: from right Romy, Mira, Mara, I, Lotty, Ety, Gitta Segal.

I grew up feeling loved by my friends, Dorly, Betty, Lotty, Cuta, Carla.



In the summer, we went to the Suceava River to swim.



My mom and dad had also fun, especially on holidays



From the left: my paternal uncle and his wife, X, my mom and dad

Wishing to familiarize the generations to come with the way we were, I opted to present a photo-story. Those days are gone, but they are still fresh in my memory.

People often say ‘**A picture is worth a thousand words.**’ I believe the **original** quote was actually, ‘**A picture is worth ten thousand words**’ as stated by Fred R. Barnard, of Printers’ Ink, 10 March 1927. Indeed, the pictures are extremely effective. Abstract thoughts and myriad of details are presented to the viewer at a glance. Each reader is given the chance to scan and focus on the items he is interested. I hope that my kind of presentation will capture the imagination of those who browse through the book to get a glimpse of how we were.





My Cinderella Story

Pia Klein Greer

My name is Pia Klein Greer. I was born in Suceava Romania on June 1946. This is my Suceava story.

My parents, Burshy and Medy Klein, met in Shargorod, in the Jewish Transnistria ghetto. They were married there. When the war ended, my parents returned to Romania, and settled in Suceava. My father became a member of the Communist Party and was in charge of a big company as a CEO.

I was an only child.

Suceava was a very small town. Everybody knew everybody, a small place where it was very hard to keep secrets.



Mom and Max Glickman
the violin player



I had lots of friends - Lotty, Dorly (my mother and Dorly's mother were best friends) Mira, Etty, Mara, Carla, Cica, Beno, Martiu, and many more.

I did not like school and I wasn't a very good student. I got in trouble a lot of times like not having the correct uniform...the white collar on my uniform was missing... my hair was not in braids... my grades were failing. I was picked on a lot by the teachers. My mother was very often called into the principal's office. What I didn't know at the time was that I had a learning disability called dyslexia. Today this is not a problem since it can be treated.

Summer vacations were the best. No school, no uniforms, no curfew. For three months in the summer we were free from being hounded by the teachers. We went to the river to swim; picnic'd and came home late.

We went to the movies, to Padurice, and to Zamca. Some of us were lucky to be accepted to attend summer camp held in different Romanian cities.

I didn't really know the burden of communism. The only thing my parents drilled into me was not to talk to anybody, including family, about any personal happenings in our family life. It wasn't safe. We couldn't be sure who listened to our conversations, it wasn't safe and reported to the police. We could get in trouble, be arrested, lose our jobs or have our possessions taken and end up in jail. That was scary! Fear was how the communist party ruled the country.



Max Glickman at my birthday party. I sit on Max's lap





My life changed dramatically when I turned 15.

The Romanian government contracted companies from all over Europe – England, Germany, France and Italy - to build a paper factory in Suceava (Burdujeni.) The foreign engineers were housed in an apartment building next to one my parents and I lived in.

Everyday, going to school, visiting my friends, going to the center of town, I had to pass the building where the foreigners lived. The Suceava police informed all the citizens not to have any contact with the foreigners or we could be charged as conspirators.

One of the English engineers, Eric Greer, noticed me and tried to speak to me in broken Romanian. I was flattered but also very scared to engage in any kind of conversation because the consequences of any interaction between locals and foreigners was well known. A conspirator could be arrested, lose his job, or get kicked out of school.

I told my parents what was happening. At first, they were very worried. Eric kept insisting to speak to me and gave me a little note written in his poor Romanian. He could not understand all the restrictions put on us by the Communist Party. After some time my parents realized that Eric was in love with their daughter and they allowed me to meet him secretly. Our date was held inconspicuously in the monk's monastery, not far from our apartment complex.

We would have Eric over for dinner at our apartment late at night. I would turn off the electricity at the main electrical panel in the building so he could come to our apartment in the dark. When he left I would turn the electricity back on. I remember neighbors complaining that at least once a week we had the electricity going off and coming back on again.

Eric proposed marriage to me when I was in tenth grade. I accepted but told him I must finish high school first. For the next couple years Eric worked on multiple contracts in different towns around Romania. Eventually, my parents and I moved from Suceava to Galati, where Eric was working, so I could be near him. To get married with a foreign citizen meant to get a special permission directly from the government, not easy to obtain in those days.

After two years waiting for permission to get married, we were finally married at the City Hall in Galati.

Eric and I left Romania in March 1966. My parents left Romania six months later and emigrated to New York.

This is where my Cinderella story ends.





My Story

Reizale-Soshana Schauer

My name is Resie, the daughter of Isidor and Clara Schauer. I have three half-brothers: Fredi (Efraim) and Rolfi (Rafi) from my mother's first marriage, and Henri from my father's first marriage.

I was named Resie, in the memory of my grandmother's memory, who died in Transnistria in terrible circumstances. Upon arrival in Israel, in 1962, I was given the name Shoshana. The sound seemed strange to me and I didn't understand the meaning. Even to this day, there are people who call me Resie and others who call me Shoshana.

After the war, my mother returned to her house in Czernowitz, but her house was taken. At the beginning of the war her husband, being a soldier at the time, was killed. The war atrocities and her personal loss were horrendous. She returned from Transnistria as a widow caring for her two small children, Fredi and Rolfi. After the war, she was introduced to my father, who was divorced and had a boy, Henri. They started a new family in Suceava.

I was born in 1948



I as a toddler



Mom, dad, I and Rolfi





Rolfi and I at different ages

My father, who was an electrician, went on working at the family business together with his cousin Nathan (who was also his ex-brother-in-law). They owned a chemical laundry near the market. This was the only private laundry in town; my father was adamant to be part of a cooperative.

The authorities bullied my father in order to make him accept entering the cooperative, but he absolutely refused.



My mom and I

Unfortunately, I have many childhood memories regarding my mom being ill. My mother's illness worsened when my brother Fredi left Romania in 1947 for Israel. He joined a boarding school of war orphans. His group was delayed in Holland for an year before arriving to Kfar Glickson in Israel. We were promised that we would follow, but immigration from Romania had been stopped. Mother kept saying that she felt

extremely guilty about Fredi growing up far from her.

Since I was 9, I took some household responsibilities upon myself, including cooking for our family. My mom was hospitalized in Cluj and Iasi; my father accompanied her. Our relatives, Nathan and Tony Schauer and my brother Rolfi took care of me. My father officially adopted Rolfi and raised him lovingly. My mother's sister, Frida Blei (Zamler) who arrived in Israel earlier, was happy to have fourteen-year-old Fredi. Fredi grew up with her family in Haifa. Later he served



in the Navy. On the eve of the Sinai Operation Fredi left for the United States to join our mom's sister and brothers, who lived in the States for many years. He travelled to the US through Cuba, where he waited for two years until he received the entrance visa. In spite of all the hardships and wanderings, Fredi excelled in his studies and got high academic degrees. He taught political sciences and architecture at the University of Chicago.

The influences of the Transnistria Holocaust marked my parents and my brothers for life. Our parents and our relatives used to talk all the time about the ordeal they were subjected to. We, the children, would beg them to stop. My mom used to talk ceaselessly about her sister's husband. He worked in a kitchen. Fortunately, he managed to bring some food home for the children. These Holocaust stories were especially difficult for my brother Rolfi. He said repeatedly that he didn't remember nor did he want to hear about what had happened. In spite of the terrible cold weather my brother Fredi was one of the kids who sold cigarettes in the street; he lacked proper shoes or clothing. Many years after, he told me that he frequently suffered from hunger; to chase the thought away, he went outside to play.

During the Holocaust, mother, Frieda and her husband Herscu saved the seven-year-old Perla Fuhrer whose mother Yeti (Herscu Blei's sister) died in Transnistria and whose father, Shlomo Fuhrer, (Zwi's father) was drafted in the army. Coming back from the war, Shlomo was sure his daughter perished. When he discovered that she was alive he said: „It seems that Messiah is on his way!”

Chaia and Shlomo Fuhrer married in Suceava after the war; they had a baby boy - Zwi. Back in Suceava, Shlomo and Chaia raised Perla with much love and care as a sister to Zwi. Although not related, our families have always been in close relationship.

In Transnistria, mom worked for a little food, as a cleaner for a Jewish family who cooperated with the Germans.

She would hide whatever she received and keep it for her children. When her employers discovered what she was doing, they gave her half of what they had given before, to prevent her from taking food home. Occasionally, Frieda worked for a peasant and got a little milk for baby Rolfi. The employers insistent she come to work even when she became ill with typhoid fever.

My father was in Moghilev with his son Henri, who was seven at the time. Fortunately for my father, he was needed as an electrician at the power station and this is how their lives were spared. He and Henri lived in a small room near the bridge. When the bridge was bombed, the room burned while little Henri was alone inside. My father could barely save him from the fire.





From the moment Fredi left Suceava, my parents had tried to immigrate to Israel. They submitted endless documents and papers asking to be reunited with their family in Israel. This was the picture submitted to the authorities to get the visa (1950). My parents, I a toddler and Rolfi

The visa was always denied. In 1962, bribery worked and we received the much-awaited permission to immigrate.

My father taught me the Hebrew alphabet from a prayer book. He knew Ashkenazi Hebrew very well from the time he was a child and learned at the „heder”.

Regarding my studies, I remember Lily Weintraub for the better. She was our closest neighbor



Photo Caruntu: Album Suceava Periferiilor

(one wall separated our apartments). Lily was a beautiful and intelligent girl who, from an early age, had the will and skill to teach. She was a year my senior.

From her balcony, first from the left in this picture, she used to pass me everything she learned in the first grade. I lived in the apartment which balcony can be seen next to hers, on the right of



the picture. Therefore, in the first grade I was bored; consequently I used to disturb others from learning. The teacher, Mrs. Sumanaru, found a solution. She seated me in the first row, very close to her table so I wouldn't bother anyone. Her wool scarf was placed near me and, out of boredom, without intention, I took hold of a thread from it and pulled...and pulled...till most of the scarf unraveled. Mrs. Sumanaru was left without her scarf... You can imagine how extremely angry she was.

I had a few friends, all of them Jewish, among them Betina Sheinfeld. We used to play together, especially in our houses.

Not far from our house lived Zwi Fuhrer and his family. As I mentioned before, our parents were very good friends. On my way back from the kindergarten, I used to stop at their house. My parents didn't know where I was disappearing until they understood that this was a "daily stop" on my way home. Zwi's mother would pamper us with delicacies – potato fritters, whole wheat bread (made by Lily's grandfather) smeared in goose fat and garlic. She had always rose-petals homemade jam and a concentrate for a sweet drink. I called Zwi's mother "aunty" despite the fact that we weren't really connected. The boys played football in Harry Feller's yard and I liked to watch them. I loved it more than playing with dolls.

I loved to read; I had subscriptions at three town libraries. Mostly, I enjoyed the Russian authors' and Eminescu's poems.

When I was 9 years old, my brother Rolfi and I were sent to Mr. Salo Klar to learn how to play the accordion. My parents had to "fight" with me to practice, but Rolfy loved to play, although he preferred to do it without notes.

We arrived in Israel on the board of "*Flaminia*", a very old ship. Through connections, we got a tzrif in the Kiriath Motzkin "maabara". Later we moved to Ramot Remez in Haifa. I studied at Ort boarding school – "*Hapoel Hamizrahi*" in Bnei Brak (Aliyat Hanoar). Afterwards, I went to the army and served in the Northern Command. Moshe Herzberg served with me. I was asked to join the reserve forces as well. I went on studying Building Engineering, and I worked in this profession for 47 years in I.D.C. and the Electrical Company.





Relu and Adriana

Relu (Eliezer) Faienstein

Adriana (a pseudonym) – her real name is still engraved in my memory and my heart. She appeared in my life when I was quite young. I used to call her “Tzumpi” (scumpa), a nickname derived from the Romanian word for “precious”. She was a foreign languages teacher in one of the high schools in town. Adriana had a breathtaking, slender, firm body, sunrise-golden hair that cascaded down over her shoulders, deep blue eyes you could dive into and sensual full lips that tasted unforgettably sweet. She was about 20-21 years old and I was nearly 17. She was a woman at the beginning of her maturity just about to discover her wonderful womanhood, and I was a hot-blooded adolescent.

In the beginning of the 1960’s we had to move into the new block of flats built on Mihai Viteazul street, because the Lazarov family house, in which we had been living until then, was meant to be transformed into a prayer house. Our apartment windows faced Gitta's house (my wife for the last 50 years). In the yard next to the huge nut tree, I used to play numerous times with Gitta and Shoshana Fishler.

The apartment we received had two small rooms, which were part of a three-bedroom apartment. The entrance was through a 2x2 meter hallway in which there were two doors leading into two small apartments: the one on the left belonging to us and the one on the right belonging to our new neighbors. It was a one-bedroom apartment suitable for a young couple. We shared one common bathroom. These were typical communist housing options in a typical communist block of flats in a communist city.

In the one-bedroom apartment lived a married young man whose wife was a student at the Gorki Institute in Bucharest. She studied languages - French and Russian.

It did not take long for me to get acquainted with the couple and to befriend them. He was a nice, polite young man, not exactly the communist type. His biggest dream was to leave Romania for Germany, in order to join his relatives. He used to get (nobody knew how) magazines from Italy (Nostre Donne). During the first months I had not seen his wife once. However, I could often hear strange noises, moans and sighs indicating a lot of “suffering” coming from their apartment, each time his female colleagues visited him to “deliberate”, “promote projects” or to simply “study” together. My curiosity overcame my good manners and I asked him once about the intense occurrences in his apartment. His cryptic answer was: *“wait until you’re grown up and mature and*



you'll understand". He did not add an explanation. The wisdom of his words became clear to me many years later.

Months passed by when we were informed that Adriana, our neighbor's wife, graduated and got a job as a language teacher at a high school in Suceava (not the one I attended). And one day, Adriana appeared in all her splendor...Wowwww! What a beauty! Immediately afterwards her husband resumed his engineering studies in Iasi, which meant he was often away from home. He was immersed in his studies, attending lectures, handing in assignments, etc.

And so, life went on. Adriana was quite enthusiastic about her new job, enjoying every minute of teaching at the high school. She used to talk a lot about her experiences and her progress at work. Only later was I able to understand the extent of her success; how talented and good she was (and I don't only refer to her teaching skills...). And he? He kept on working, coming home and returning to Iasi, to study. The relationship between the young couple and myself grew closer. Even my parents had good neighborly and friendly relations with them.

I was 17 and in my senior year in high school, rather busy preparing for the matriculation exam. It was a winter day. I was home, suffering from a terrible tooth ache, but studying nonetheless. Adriana came back from school and, as usual, came by to say hello. She had a big compassionate heart; she felt sorry for the suffering teenager. Then, I heard: *"do you think a kiss will make you feel better?"* Till I pulled myself together and comprehended what was going on, her red, sensual, delicious lips stuck to mine in a long kiss. Pain? What pain? Who was still thinking about pain? It was so wonderful! At that moment, our special love affair started – a fiery passion, a total bliss that lasted until I left Suceava for Israel.

Her husband continued his studies, which forced him to be away from home frequently. Our relationship developed and progressed as a result of such propitious conditions. We didn't even try to conceal it. We walked through town hand in hand, going to Zamca, Cetate and Padurice, actually everywhere. We went to the cinema (not to the movies, but to the cinema...) and there, in the darkness... well you all can probably guess what was going on. Sometimes, her mother, who lived out of town, came to visit. We would take her along on our walks and to the cinema. We didn't hide ourselves. How careless of us. Who cared?! We were young, we had fun, we were happy and elated. We looked forward to being together as much as possible and whenever possible...and it was possible!

After graduation from high school, I went to Bucharest. During that year, we met only when I returned home for holidays. Once Adriana came to Bucharest. Her desire drove her to come. For two days we tore the city up and had a blast.



When I returned from Bucharest at the end of that year, I matured and was quite experienced, being exposed to the big city's "depraved" way of life.

On the first morning after my return, I was wandering about the town when I happened to pass near the Pruncu house. A pioneer camp took place on the premises. And guess who was there with the children? - Adriana! She was standing in the yard, looking ravishing in a skintight white garment perfectly fitting her slim, tanned body (she had just returned from the Black Sea) and her naughty blue eyes. Maybe it wasn't by chance that I passed there? I stopped to say hello and she told me that she was going to finish work around noon and that she would come to my place later. There she was! She entered my apartment like a white angel descending from heaven. Where were the wings and the aura? She looked like a seraphic being, a divine creature. She dropped the white costume. The white lingerie was glowing on her tanned skin as she stood next to me; and when that also came off the tanning lines on her exquisite body were exposed in all their splendor. The heavenly artist had created nature's masterpiece filled with beauty and passion. We held each other in an exhilarating embrace as we danced the dance of fire; just as flames unite and grow into a powerful unison so were our bodies united into one, burning with intense passion, fireworks, volcanic eruption...heavenly beatitude ...a supreme moment...profound delight...and then, silence. There were no words, only rapid, deep breaths. In that moment I experienced and understood the legend of "paradise".

Our passionate romance lasted the entire summer. I decided to take the entrance exams at the Polytechnic Institute in Iasi, so I had to be in Iasi for three weeks. Adriana came to Iasi twice during the exams period. We clung together because it was extremely difficult to be apart from each other.

Then, my family got the green light to immigrate to Israel. the preparations for the journey started. Adriana and I were still together all the time. My tactful and extremely discreet parents told me that I might be spending too much time at her apartment whenever her husband was missing and that I had to be more careful. But I went on spending time with her, taking advantage of every minute we still had.

Time flew quickly as October came by. We had to leave, not before handing our apartment to the authorities. As a result, we had to stay for a few days with our family in Falticeni, which was also an opportunity to say good-bye. When we got back we didn't have where to stay for five days. It was decided: my parents would stay at Sasha Lechner's family and I - at Traian's (pseudonym) and Adriana's. In the evening of our return from Falticeni, before we went to sleep, Traian informed me, with great regret, that we must say goodbye earlier than expected, because he had to leave



for Iasi. Early in the morning, he went on his way and I and Adriana went on “ours” - a delightful five-day journey, filled with passion, as if life would come to an end after these five days. The thought of our imminent separation was tough. We stayed indoors. Adriana didn't go to school (she got a sick leave – passion and desire sometimes are an incurable “disease” indeed). We didn't eat and we only parted for a few hours each day when I joined my parents to say goodbye to our acquaintances in town. Then we were together again, living the primal paradise story and later on experiencing our own personal paradise lost.

Then the time came. We had to leave for Bucharest, and I had to tell Adriane goodbye forever. The pain was excruciating. She ran after me in her pajamas to give me another hug, and another last kiss...how agonizing. My heart and soul were torn apart. It was a tremendous pain. Life is so unfair!

When I got to Sasha's to join my parents and was about to climb into the taxi, Adriana appeared in her pajamas, exactly as she was when we parted only a few minutes before, with a coat thrown over. When she ran after me, the door to her apartment slammed and she couldn't get in, so she borrowed a coat from a neighbor and came for one last hug, one last kiss. I got into the taxi, still smelling her perfume, feeling the heat of her body and the taste of her red, sensual lips.

We lost touch. At one point, I heard that she and Traian succeeded leaving Romania for Germany. However, I never found out if that was indeed the case. While I was living in Europe at the beginning of the 1970's, every time I visited Germany, I tried to find them in the telephone directory, but all my efforts were in vain.

There's a story connected to the account above. Adriana taught some of my friends (today they belong to Suceava Children group). One day when she was lying in my bed in my apartment, someone knocked on the door. I opened. To my big surprise, two of my Jewish friends came in asking if “Tovarasa Profesoara” lived there. They wanted to talk to her on some pressing matter. I was embarrassed and didn't know what to do. Then I heard Adriana's voice from my room: “let them come in”. They went in, while she was lying nonchalantly half-naked in my bed.

The girls entered the room and one of them started to apologize. It turned out that there was an incident at school. One of the girls talked back to the teacher. The student was thrown out of the classroom and an account of the incident was written in her personal record. “Please, forgive me” pleaded the girl. “I don't want to hear ... you were insolent” retorted Adriana. The scene went on for a few minutes without Adriana changing her posture.

I was bewitched by the surreal scene. How captivating was Adriana when she got angry, blushing (was it out of anger or as a result of the hugging before the girls' arrival?!). She was so beautiful



with her bright blue eyes. In the end she said she would think it over.

While I was walking the girls out, one of them said: *“I see you have a really good relationship with her, maybe you can put in a good word for me”*. As much as I can remember, the record was erased. The things we do for friends...

I would like to remind you that in order to protect their privacy all the characters’ names have been changed. Nevertheless, their real names are forever engraved in my mind and in my heart. Did all this really happen, or maybe these are the wet dreams of an old man fantasizing about of his adolescent years? I know it was.



Relu and friends, Relu is first on the right





My Parents

Relu (Eliezer) Faierstein

It would be an “an unfinished symphony” if I attempted to write my memories without talking about my origin, my parents or my teachers.

I was born on a cold winter day in January 1945 to my parents Dora (nee Lazarovich) and Gershon Feuerstein. My father kept for many years the calendar pages with the exact date and time of my birth (3rd Shevat 5705 at exactly 5:55). I was named Lazăr.

At the circumcision ceremony I was formally given the Hebrew name Eliezer Ben Gershon.

Some Biblical figures called Eliezer emerged to mind: Eliezer, our ancestor, Avraam’s servant, aka Damascus Eliezer, is a Biblical character whose name is mentioned in the Bible just once, when he is sent to find a bride for Yitzhak, Avraam’s son. He could also be the son of Moshe and Tzipora, who was born after Moshe’s return to Egypt. Another Biblical character called Eliezer was present at King Ahaziah Ben Ahab, as a prophet and continued his sacred mission during Judea King Yehoshafat Ben Asa’s reign.

Historical events in Romania influenced and changed my father’s family name. In the beginning, the name was Feuerstein, with emphasis on German origin. In the ‘30s, under nationalist Romanian regime (Goga-Cuza) the spelling of the name was changed into regular Romanian orthography, and so it lasted to the present.

I looked up the origin of the name Feuerstein. At Beit Hatfutsot some possibilities were offered to me. In the early German translations of the Bible „Amud Haesh” (The Fire Pillar) it was translated into „Feuerstein”. After the Trianon Treaty (in 1920), which finalized WWI, a border was drawn between Romania, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. The Northern Romanian border was the Southern Polish border. The Ukraine came in between the two countries only after WWII. At the common border between the four countries (named Carpatho-Russia, Carpatho-Ruthenia, Zakarpattia, Trans-Carpathia), there is a mountain chain (perhaps the Tatra mountains) and the name of one of the tops in German is Feuerstein (it may have been a volcano?!).

However, the explanation that most fits the method of name adoption by the Eastern European Jews is the one which names a person according to a profession he practiced, in my case, a person who sold or put in flint stones in flintlock firearms or a topographical name for someone who lived next to a quarry of flint stone.



I must point out that I have always been a “phenomenon”. First, surprisingly, I was born only after “three” months of pregnancy: my parents got married in October 1944 and I was born in January 1945?! A very extraordinary pregnancy! I haven’t found any explanation for this phenomenon!!!! Second, I was born through a breech birth, which occurs rarely (1 in every 25 births). There is an advantage to a breech birth: you can find out the sex of the baby before seeing his face...I emerged into the world presenting the part of my body that showed my attitude towards it. Everything would have passed smoothly unless I hadn’t been stuck and stopped sliding out. It was decided that forceps were needed and, therefore, breech birth was joined by forceps birth. Blue marks from the forceps stayed imprinted on my behind for a few weeks as a reminder of the way I was born. However, not even the forceps helped me get out. When the midwife noticed that my little body started turning blue, she understood that something went extremely wrong. Actually, what happened was that, besides breech and forceps birth, the umbilical cord was wrapped around my neck. Thus, the meaning of having a noose put around your neck was made clear to me even before I was born!!! As soon as the midwife understood the situation, she removed the umbilical cord enabling me to come out smoothly, screaming of pain and joy until my oxygen depleted lungs filled up with air. What a relief!

The icing on the cake was the coincidence that the joy of my birth occurred at the same time as the joy of the Romanian holiday, celebrating the union of the Romanian Principalities. Since I heard and felt the exhilarating preparations taking place around me, I was looking forward to my birth milah celebration (maybe we could dance there "Hora Unirii"). I really wanted to enter into the Covenant of Abraham our father, and feel Jewish. Everything started nicely. They gave me wine, wine is good, much better than my mom’s milk, which by the way was too abundant... maybe it could be thinned with wine instead of water?! Wow, my little head felt dizzy, my first intoxication...till nearly losing my consciousness... First, like in a dream, I felt a pleasant touch at a certain private place at the inferior part of my body where the mohel’s fingers touched the birth “target” till...”Hey, just a moment! It hurts, it’s not pleasant any more...why such violence? Till now it was pleasant... I have expected a day with wine and sex... why do you behave like this?

It hurts!!!! Really hurts!!!” I felt the pain deep in my brain...sharp...burning...an unforgettable experience till this day, not to mention the loss of length. Years later, when I grew up and matured, they tried to convince me that “the length isn’t important” ...revenge of the stupid “...What are you doing to me?! What now? Ahhh, the mitzvah of metzitzah...really? I’m hurting and bleeding and this is what you feel like doing now???” Fatigue and wine made me throw in the towel and fell asleep, victim to my first “getting high” experience!





My parents were wonderful, loving, pampering, my best friends all my life, supportive and encouraging. I had never called them “mother” and “father”. We had nicknames for each other speaking eye to eye, like they say today, my father was “Tuky”, my mom was “Duda” and I was Lutu, derived from my name Lazar – Lazarelu-Relu-Relutu-Lutu. Many years have passed since they went to a better place (at least this is what they say) ...and I still miss them very much!

My great grandfather, Leon Feurestein, left Lemberg in Galicia (Lemberg in German, Lwow in Polish and Lviv in Ukrainian) and settled in Falticeni, Romania. Yes... yes... I am a Galician! At the time my grandfather was only 6 years old. My father was born in Romania in an observant religious family. My grandpa Iona, who had a beard, peyos and wore a black bowler hat, and my grandma Toyva (Iona in Yiddish) ran a tavern and inn in Falticeni.

They had 4 children (two boys and two girls). The youngest girl passed away when she was only two years old. The other sister grew up as a kosher Jewish girl destined to become a woman and mother in a Jewish traditional family. My father’s elder brother left the family home, “abandoning” it in a certain way. However, he remained a good, warm and loyal Jewish man knowledgeable in Hebrew and in Jewish religion. He travelled to France, returned before the war and became a lawyer. He was connected to Suceava as, during the first years after the war, he was a prosecutor (procuror) and was engaged in catching the Romanian legionaries, hiding in town. He took part in some operations and told me how they caught them, especially the case in which one of the Iron Guard (Garda de Fier) heads was apprehended after hiding in Zamca tower.

My grandfather destined my father for greatness, being the youngest, after his sister’s death. He sent him to study Torah at the “heider” wishing he could become a rabbi. However, my dad rebelled, ran away, absolutely refusing to continue this kind of education. This prompted his father to confine him in their storage unit in the yard. Without grandpa’s knowledge, grandma would bring him food and water to make it easier for him. Eventually, he succeeded in convincing his



father, therefore he was sent to a regular school. My grandmother died when I was one and a half years old and my grandpa when I was 7. By the way, my grandma was part of the Rohrlich family from Bucovina. Although it happened when I was at a very tender age, I remember her funeral extremely well. The room in which her body laid on the floor covered in white, the lit candles next to her head. The funeral remained well imprinted in my mind. I have very few memories of her or her family.

During the war, my father was taken by Antonescu's army, together with many other Jewish people from Falticeni, to a forced labor camp in Calfa, Basarabia, where he worked at the stone quarries.

My mother came from a wealthier family, they led a better life. Lazarovich brothers, my grandfather's siblings, owned in Falticeni storage facilities for wood and alcohol. My grandpa owned a restaurant and a hotel and he passed away at the age of 48, before I was born, and my grandma in 1949. I remember her very well because of her kind heart and her love for me. I knew my maternal grandfather's family, but, because they lived in Bucharest, our relationship was precarious. On the other hand, I was well acquainted with my grandmother's family. Her brothers were social-democrats, ideologically close to the communists. They spent in Jilava, the most notorious prison during the reign of the Romanian King, most of their young lives. After the communists came to power, they studied and advanced, being appointed to the Romanian communist Parliament. The youngest, who was an engineer, was appointed to the position of minister of heavy industry (ministrul industriei grele) during the 60's and the eldest, who was a journalist, historian and writer, held the position of president of the Academy of History and head of the Journalist Association. I remember them well from the time I studied in Bucharest in 1962. At the eldest brother's house cultural and brainstorming sessions were held, during which Romanian intellectuals, most of them Jews, took part. I participated in these Sunday mornings sessions. Between eating a piece of herring and another of salami sidelong shots of "tuica" and vodka together with Cotnari wine, matters of the utmost importance were discussed. For example, there I heard for the first time that "anti-Semitism doesn't exist in Romania! Anti-Semitism is just a Jewish complex!" Maybe there is some truth to it, but of course only partially; anti-Semitism exists, plain and simple! I also heard stories about prominent Jewish communists who were caught by the Gestapo following reports by non-Jewish party members only because they were Jews... but in Romania anti-Semitism didn't exist?!

My mom became an orphan when she was only 16. My dad was 9 years older; he taught her private lessons in French and...who knows in what else?! After all, I am the result of all these studies! Mom brought me up by herself without the help of a nanny. She started to work only



during the 50s, after we submitted the application to immigrate to Israel, as my father was sacked from all his positions in the communist apparatus. During that time, she was the only breadwinner in the family. She worked for the C.R.R., the governmental bureau responsible for gathering the wheat from peasants. When we arrived in Israel, she went on working hard. My father studied in the ulpan and I was in the kibbutz but she, again, was the main breadwinner. A really exceptional woman.

How did my father become a “communist”?

Before the war, like all Jewish adolescents, dad joined the Zionist youth movements, which operated in Falticeni. In the beginning, he was a member of the “Hashomer Hatzair” movement. He and his colleagues were trained to settle in Israel. Later, he entered the apprenticeship to become a barber in a kibbutz. The activity was denounced to the Siguranta (King’s secret police) which searched his house. The informant stated that there are “communist books” in the house. Truth be told, “Hashomer Hatzair” educated young people in the socialist ideology and even gave him to read books about the history of the workers’ movement. Dad was taken to the Siguranta headquarters. Due to his young age, and perhaps my grandma’s pleas, he was let go, but on his personal file the Siguranta noted that he was suspected to be a “communist”.

At the beginning of 1944, the Red Army entered Falticeni and set up their headquarters in a villa on the outskirts of town. They started looking for someone who knew how to draw beautifully. My dad was known as someone who was able to perform the task. After all, he was the one who usually prepared the posters at the local cinema. (By the way, I wasn’t very good at drawing, to say the least, but had the loveliest drawing notebooks in school...my father used to draw them for me.) Dad was singled out due to his skill. The Russians, who had at their disposal the Siguranta’s files, were very happy to see that he was labelled as a “communist”. The Soviet soldiers came, covered his eyes and took him to the Red Army headquarters. There, over a period of two or three weeks, he worked to update the war maps of the Russian army front. When he finished his work, he was brought home, in a horse carriage, once more with his eyes covered. The carriage was full of potatoes, canned food and more. In addition, they wrote in his personal file that he assisted the Red Army in their war effort.

Many of my father’s friends chose the path of communism and integrated into the party apparatus in Bucharest. My father was sent to Botosani to manage the state properties, Bunurile Statului, a company which gathers all the properties of landowners (boieri), wealthy people (chiaburi) and of the Romanian legionnaires, for the people's benefit. I was born in Botosani during that time in Vila Ipateanu on 34 or maybe it was 26 Eminescu Street. It was a beautiful, sumptuous house, owned



by a lawyer who, no one knows why, fled with the arrival of the communists. Not long after that, my dad was appointed Secretary of the local council – Prefectura (Sfatul Popular Judetean) in Suceava. Later on, he became one of the five vice-presidents of the council as well as a member of the communist party. At that time, my mom and I (at the age of 2) got to Suceava. In spite of his job, my dad was still a good Jewish man, possessing a special kind of honesty, a naïve idealist. The Jewish people in Suceava treated him suspiciously. “Er ist nicht Unseriger”, being labelled as a communist, saying “he is not one of us” (he came from the “regat”). In time, I believe they changed their minds and knew how to appreciate him the way he deserved. There are a number of stories regarding the process of reconciliation between my father and the Jewish community in Suceava. For example, the great synagogue was in need of renovations after the war and they turned to my father. He passed on the request to the heads of the party. The secretary of the party told my father: “Gersh (this is how they called him, my dad’s name was Gershon), these are you Jews (or, in “friendly” language, “astia sint jidanii tai”), take care of them”... and indeed the renovation was done. Another story was about a Jewish man who, in the heat of business, took a wagon full of beans to the Black Sea to sell abroad, in spite of it being intended to feed the Red Army. The Red Army beans??? Who was the man who dared to carry out this betrayal??? The Jewish people from Suceava turned to my dad for help. My dad met the local commander of the Red Army and the problem was solved. My father was offered many presents afterwards, but he never ever took any of them – he turned down money, different objects and various valuables. There are many more stories about him.

Very “important” people (part of them Jews) visited us at home or we visited them at their house. Do you still remember which part of my body was first exposed when I entered into this world through breech birth?! The same part sat on the knees of “important people” (at least they were thought of being important) in Suceava of those times: the chief of Militia Gabor, the infamous Colonel Popik from the Securitate, an elegant officer with ironed spic and span uniform, wearing permanently dark glasses. (It was rumored that if he had turned his gaze unprotected by glasses towards someone he hated, that man would have disappeared instantly.) Another “important person’s” knee I sat upon was that of the Soviet comrade “polkovnik” (colonel), the commander of the Soviet garrison in Suceava - a short, chubby, funny man who let me play with his many shiny “coins” attached with colorful strap to his chest. Later I understood, that those were medals of valor he had received for taking part in battles, even in the battle for Berlin. There were also Turcanu and Munteanu, the former chairpersons of the Prefectura and the latter - the party secretary or maybe the other way around, forgive me for not remembering quite precisely after so many years. We also had a



car (a black Ford) with a chauffeur - Mitica; my dad had also a jeep (Jeep Willis) which served him on his rides to the villages. Life was pretty good...but everything ended one day, in 1950, when my parents decided to ask permission to immigrate to Israel. My dad was expelled from all his positions...! (from a high rooftop to a deep pit).

However, he had never regretted anything... like always, an incorrigible idealistic optimist. He didn't have a job for two years. He stayed at home. He and I spent a lot of quality time together. We would cook together and would wait for mom to return from work.

After two years of unemployment, he was given a temporary job as a daily worker at Combustibil, the wood storage facility in town. A few years later, he received a permanent position in Alimentara (till this day I have no idea what a "merceolog" is, but he held this good office job until we immigrated to Israel).

Like all the other olyim who arrived in Israel then, following Hebrew studies at the ulpan, dad declared he was a "buchhalter" – bookkeeper. While at the ulpan, he passed some courses in bookkeeping and, thus, he worked at the bank until his retirement.

Mom worked until retirement at the candy factory in Haifa Bay "Hashahar HaOle" (who doesn't know the chocolate spread "hashahar"?!!).

My dad passed away in 1993 and my mom – in 2008. Both of them are buried in Krayot, near Haifa. I really miss them!

We Applied to Make Alyia:

It was 1950 and I was 4-5 years old. It was evening. My parents and I were sitting around our table after diner – a regular evening at our house. At the time, we were living in the Lazarov family's building, at the end of the Stefan Voda Street, near the animal market (Obor) in Suceava.

Suddenly, mom asked me if I remember the time when dad took a course in Bucharest and wasn't at home for a few months. Of course, I remembered!!! How could I forget?! After all he returned with lots of toys and even brought me a scooter, things which were really difficult to procure during those times in Romania. Among them was also a dwarf that could roll down a slope, as well as many other things. Of course, I remembered! My dad, who was a high-ranking personality in the local communist apparatus, was sent to advanced studies to Bucharest, a three-month course at the Internal Affairs Ministry. All that time he wasn't allowed to return home and that's why his absence was long...nevertheless, how many toys I received when he returned?! He sent all his books and his luggage by post and filled his suitcases with toys...

The discussion went on: it might be that dad would once more have to go for a long time but upon his return he would again bring many beautiful toys and maybe a football and a bike as well. It



was also possible that for a number of days mom would also have to join him and she would be absent, too, but not for long. If I agreed, I should know that there (my dad got on a chair and opened the lid of the kitchen lamp) were a few gold coins. Later on, I found out that they were called “cocosei”, French gold coins and the symbol of the French republic was still the cock) and hazerleh, gold Russian rubles from the tzars’ period. I wasn’t supposed to tell anyone, except my uncle Misu (my father’s elder brother who was a lawyer in Falticeni).

During that period my father held an important position in the regional hierarchy. He was a secretary and afterwards one of the five vice presidents of the regional council (Prefectura – Sfatul Popular Judetean) and, obviously, he was a member of the communist party. He was about to be appointed head of the propaganda division in the Defense Ministry with the rank of colonel and we were supposed to move to Bucharest. Fortunately, my mom was extremely realistic, as opposed to my father who was naïve. She reminded him he was Jewish and, in her opinion, nothing good awaited the Jewish people going up the communist “ladder”. The higher their position, the more difficult and painful their downfall would be! How right she was!

The rumor regarding the possibility that the Romanian Jewish people would be permitted to immigrate to Israel turned to be an official announcement at a very important moment for my family. We feared the consequences this decision would have on a high-class Jew in the communist structure, especially, the vindictiveness of the authorities under those circumstances. Bearing these in mind, my parents decided to prepare me for the worst in case my father would be arrested and my mom would also be taken for inquiries to elucidate the “Zionist plot concocted by Zionist agents”. Actually, it was about the possibility of my dad missing from home for a long time. They decided that the next day my mom would go to the militia station and hand in the forms asking for the permission to leave Romania. Obviously, I didn’t know anything about it.

The next morning, a regular day, my parents went to work and the rest was known to me only from my parents’ stories.

My mom went to the police and handed in the Cererea de plecare and afterwards went to my father’s office to inform him that it was done. Militia was on the Strada Mare, the main street, a few tens or maybe hundreds of meters further from my father’s cabinet opposite the clinic. My father’s office was in the building of the Prefectura, which today, I believe, is a museum, only a few minutes away. When she reached the office, she was told my dad was already at a party meeting, the meeting during which he was dismissed from the communist party and stripped of all his other positions. For me it was terrible, as I also had to part with Mitica, the chauffeur, together with the black Ford and the Willy’s jeep, the American Army remnant. The main argument against my dad was that, if a Jewish person at his status wasn’t afraid and dared to take such a drastic step,



it would be a bad example for other Jews in town who might still be hesitant but would still like to immigrate to Israel.

It was a long period, of about two and a half years, in which my dad stayed at home without work. True, he was unemployed, but, at least, he wasn't missing from home. Although I didn't get my toys, I got to spend a lot of quality time with him.

What about the fate of the napoleons (cocosei) and the hazerleh? Since money was very scarce throughout that time, my mom being the only one permitted to work, the gold pieces were sold to a Jew who exchanged it for Romanian currency. Nevertheless, in 1952, in Romania, a currency reform (revalorizarea leului romanesc) took place because the currency had lost its value. At the bank, the monetary exchange was limited to a certain sum. My parents went to the one who bought the gold pieces and paid for it in old Romanian currency, which now was useless. The man was considerate or he just felt sorry, therefore he gave my parents three kilos of butter...?!! as compensation for their loss. Thus, we didn't miss the butter on our bread!!!!

The delay in receiving permission for Aliya went on for 13 more years. In 1953, the party decided to partly acquit my father's "sins". He was allowed to work as a temporary worker, only to be approved as a steady worker later on.

In summer 1958 my dad was called again to the authorities..."Look Gersh, you are one of us, you have always been...people make mistakes sometimes...years have passed by...maybe time has come to return to us..."

I was 13 years old and I remember my parents' worries and dilemma. What would happen if he had turned down such a "generous offer"?! I, in my heart, thought that the opportunity would return for my father to bring me toys and maybe Mitica, the chauffeur, would come back with the Ford and the jeep...Just joking.

In that same summer, the authorities permitted the Jews once more to apply for immigration to Israel. For the authorities this change of heart had no consequence, but for our people it created illusions as well as disappointments?! The new policy lasted for only a few days and my parents didn't succeed to renew their application in time.

I remember the end of Yom Kippur 1958. We got out of the great synagogue together with other people who prayed and finished fasting and were on their way home for the meal. Capitanul Marici was waiting at the gate. Marici, a former apprentice to a Jewish shoemaker spoke Yiddish perfectly, addressed the Jewish crowd "אידן גוט כסימעת גוט יאר...גוט ניס... מארגן ווידער וועט קענען צו ימיגרירן צו ישראל" - "immigration to Israel will take place". The next day, my parents hurried to seize the moment.



.Thus, even his “friends” at the party understood that my father was irremediably lost to them. We waited another 5 years (in total 13 years) and only in 1963 we received permission to leave Romania. Interesting was that on my father’s Certificat de calatorie there were visas to travel to Israel through Turkey from 1953, but we left only in 1963, through Italy. This means that we had got the visa to leave paradise in 1953, but it was never delivered to us. Was it at the police station or at the local communist party?!! The fact is we were detained for 13 years.

We reached Israel at Haifa port on November 8, 1963, on a hamsin day. We stood on board the ship Pegasus and watched the green and beautiful Carmel. We were all festively dressed, the men in suits and ties, after all we reached the holy promised land. While we were on board, we heard calls from the platform of the port: “Feuerstein... Feuerstein...” We looked at the people on the quay and recognized someone waving at us and calling our name and who, obviously, was from Suceava...the tinsmith Rhum. He ran and brought another Jewish man, also from Suceava, Gerty’s uncle, Donio Distelfeld. “ Are people from Suceava even here, in Israel,?” I thought to myself. Of course there are. There were also, the Nachgeher family, Gerty’s grandparents, and her aunt Marion who hosted us for a few weeks until the time we got an olim apartment in Kiryat Shmuel. The first to meet on the street were Gitta’s uncle, Iosele Weitman (Haiutza’s stepfather) and, later on, Rozica, Haiutza’s mother.

Many years ago, my parents hoped that I would start elementary school in Israel, but, as it happened, I arrived in Israel only after matriculation. The most significant thing was that my dad didn’t go away from home, not to study and not for any other reason. This is my aliya story.

I am a UTM or maybe UTC member:

In summer 1962, I successfully finished maturity exams and, while all the other schoolmates applied to different universities, I and a few more like me, refrained from doing it. With my parents’ help and following advice from “knowledgeable” people, it was decided that I will travel to Bucharest. There, far away from home, the terrible sin of being a Jewish person who asked to immigrate to Israel would hopefully be forgotten and, perhaps, the stigma of being “registered” (inscris pentru plecare) would be erased. So, I and my friend Nelu left for Bucharest. We registered at the Sanitary Technical School on Pitar Mosi Street, a splendid “institution” next to the well-known Gorki Institute. It was meant for those who wouldn’t be accepted at universities...Jewish people who asked to immigrate to Israel, unreliable elements, disloyal to the régime and unwanted by universities (*elemente nesanatoase si nedorite*). In certain unofficial, but questionable circles in Bucharest, this school was known under the “sumptuous” name of The Institute for thieves, Jews and hookers - *Institutul de pungasi, jidani si curve* (I beg the pardon of those with sensitive



ears). The syllabus was great: three mornings a week practical work at a factory for electronic medical instruments and on other days in the afternoon frontal lessons in class. For our work at the factory we received monthly pay, but we had to save it on a C.E.C. as, in case of discontinuation of studies, when we would have to return the savings. After all, we came with a specific purpose in mind, leaving the school was an undeniable possibility.

Well, Nelu and I came to conquer the beautiful and big Bucharest. We settled ourselves “in gazda” at Horowitz family, a Jewish family made up of mom, dad, a teenage daughter, Rela, and a young boy, Toli. The family used to live in two rooms out of a five-room apartment with common kitchen and bathroom. In one room, there lived the slender and friendly Greek Stefi, who spent many hours in our room since we had a television set. In the other two rooms lived Stefi’s mother and, respectively, Stefi’s ex-husband. Mr. Horowitz was working in Focsani, far from home, and would return only at weekends. That was why the entire Horowitz family lived actually in one room. When Mr. Horowitz would return home, we would be asked to let Toli sleep in our room. I don’t remember where Rela would sleep on those occasions. That was how we lived for a year while we were studying and enjoying everything that the capital city had to offer. I had a full cultural life. I had an opera subscription on Sunday mornings, a cinema subscription at Aro (Republica) or, maybe, at Scala, I would listen to symphonic concerts in the orchestra hall of the Radio/Televiziune, go to the theatre, exhibitions and museums, but also to the bars and night clubs of communist Bucharest. I hadn’t neglected my studies. I studied French with the widow of the Romanian King’s ambassador to France, an interesting lady who taught me to love Paris (whoever dreamt then that this could really happen, that a day would come and we would visit the French capital?!). With her I read in French Molière (le voleur!! le voleur!!! Le voleur!! For the diction), as well as Balzac and other classics. This was an unforgettable experience which I remember till this day! We also had Mathematics and Physics private lessons with famous professors from the Bucharest University, as, after all, at the end of the school year we would go to Iasi to pass our entrance exams at the Politechnic University... This was our routine in Bucharest.

One day I met at the technical school a petite, gentle, graceful, nice and pleasant girl named Mariana (a pseudonym, her real name remaining inscribed only in my memory). She had dark hair, light skin and blue eyes. Actually, she was the one who started talking to me in the school’s corridor. We became friends and went out together a few times. After a short time we even got closer, no longer in a platonic phase. At that stage, I didn’t know that Mariana was an “appreciated and important” member of the school communist committee (*comitetul UTM pe scoala*) as we found ourselves in certain circumstances that weren’t about ideology, religion etc. These subjects



didn't really concern us. We were only 17-18 years old. It was pure fun, feeling good together. One afternoon, while we were spending time together in bed in her apartment, completely oblivious of the communist morals and totally immersed in faulty bourgeois pleasures, exploiting shamelessly our passion, I imagine that my "skills" stirred and impressed "comrade" Mariana too much. As we were resting pleasantly, having a perfect quiet moment after losing our senses, I heard her as if in a dream: "You have to join the UTM!" ... Just a moment, where does this come from??? What's happened??? I knew I was "good" (!) but not that good to gain me the appreciation of the party?! That was exactly what I was missing!! They would start prying and poking into my life and in "*originea mea nesanatoasa*" and would find that I am a Jewish person who asked to immigrate to Israel!!! What am I going to do? The following morning after parting with Mariana, I called my father and told him the whole story. My dad, with his characteristic calm, answered me: "Son, you made your bed, now sleep in it!" I knew (this is how they taught me) that it was possible to get in trouble with girls in many ways, but this kind of complication, with the communist ideology?! It was worse than pregnancy... On our next date, Mariana "said and done" (*spus si facut*) brought me forms and convinced me (by sweet and passionate persuasion) to fill them up. Who could say no to her... this is how it was among "comrades" (*tovarasi*), everything was done without delay... "volens nolens bibi"

A few weeks later, I was a full member with a red card to Mariana's complete satisfaction who, now, could enjoy entirely and safely her "kosher" UTM boyfriend, without ideological barriers. The ideological pressure put an end to the romantic relationship!

Did the red card help me when I had to pass the entrance exams at the Politechnic University in Iasi? No! Except having fun with Mariana on the way to receiving the red card... and the very pleasant and special means of persuasion she put on me... no! May I add the "difficult and tiring" way, full of "sweat", "efforts" and "energy" on the path of fulfilling "communism"... but it was extremely delectable and... *Multumesc tovarasi!* (Thank you comrades).

Despite the fact that my matriculation grades put me on the third place on the list of applicants, I wasn't accepted. We, the Jews, were sure and convinced that we could always cheat the non-Jews. But they were smart. Before the results were released, the Internal Affairs Ministry sent the Politechnical University's vice-dean, upon his personal request, a list of all the Jewish youngsters who took the exam. It was meant to check the truth at the source. The truth was that before taking the exams, my family and I actually got the approval to immigrate to Israel. However, we postponed our departure for a few weeks to allow me to take the exam and learn the outcome. Had I been accepted we would have given up the idea of immigrating. They did me a favour and



I reached Israel...This wasn't what I believed then...I learned the Biblical term: "waste energy for nothing!" Those who know the real meaning of this sentence are invited to understand me correctly!

What was the fate of the red card? I left it with my good friend Nelu. When he arrived in Israel, about six months later, he told me that they left Romania by train. When the train stopped at the border and the police officers got in to check the passengers, he threw the red cards under the train. We both would have liked to see the faces of those who found it later on the railway tracks...or maybe they didn't find them at all...One thing I haven't understood till this day. Why was the card red...after all, no blood was spilled on my way to UTM membership.

But, my true love has been and always will be, Gitta, my wife.



Gitta and mother - Relu and mother





My Story

Renee Schwerberg

I was born in Suceava on Oct 29th, 1950. I do not remember the exact address of my birthplace but I was told it was very close to the park in the center of town, the one who was the main attraction for the residents.

Our next address was 39 Karl Marx Str. We had a large apartment on the second floor, off a catwalk, facing an interior courtyard.

At one point, both my paternal grandmother and my maternal great grandmother lived with us in a three-room apartment. My younger brother, Marius, my parents Beatrice (Titi) and Herbert, grandmother and great grandmother constituted our family.

Our apartment had a tiled “soba “, wood heated fireplace that provided us with some comfort during the cold winter months. We heated our blankets against the tiles just before wrapping ourselves in them so we can fall asleep. I still remember my toes and my fingers always being ice cold most of the winter.

We had a toilet with a pull chain that was frozen during the winter months and needed to be flushed with buckets of hot water. Mother would carry up the buckets of water from the thread factory which was located in the courtyard. Watching its operation kept us amused for many hours.

My mother Beatrice (Titi) was born in Czernowitz in 1923 and was raised mainly by her grandmother since her mother, Regina Robinsohn, was sickly. Her father, Moritz, was a bank accountant and my mother always said they were very educated people. During WWII my mother's education was interrupted while the family was living in the Jewish ghetto. Distant relatives to my father introduced my mother, then 19, to my father; because he could help save her life. My father, Herbert Schwerberg, had a work permit from the Antonescu's regime, which allowed him not to be deported by the Nazis. By marrying him in 1942 she was able to escape her parents' fate, of being deported to a concentration camp. My father was working as an apprentice to a Romanian dentist and that is where he learned his lifelong skill of dental technician. With this skill he supported our family in Romania and then in the US. My dad was born in Cacica, Romania. His family, which owned a lumber factory, was apparently quite large, because he had a lot of cousins all over Romania. My dad had 3 brothers, all Zionists, who left for Palestine.

Being Jewish was something I was always aware of in Suceava. I knew we were different and that there was really no future for us. My great grandmother, from Czernowitz, who lived with



us, was very religious. She ate only kosher meat, which necessitated buying one more chicken, just for her, that I had to take to the "Shochet" for kosher slaughter. Then, my mother plucked and salted the chicken going through the whole ritual of kosher-making the meat. I also remember taking my great grandmother to the synagogue on Shabbat. Women and men sat separately. At the temple on Simchat Torah I danced along with other kids holding a flag with an apple on top of it. By being a dental technician, dad got a position in the Suceava Polyclinic as a dentist. They called him "Domnu doctor". Sunday he went to Cacica, "la tara", to service the farmers for their dental needs and he was paid in chickens, eggs, butter.



My father, sitting second from the right, in the dental clinic in Suceava.

The jobs were directed by the communist party. My mother had learned nursing skills in the Czernowitz ghetto while working in the hospital.

After she had me she stopped working. Life was difficult - shopping, cooking, cleaning and all the other household chores, which took all day. When it became available, almost every food



purchase required getting and standing for hours in a long queue. Bread lines, oil lines where you came with your own bottle, sugar lines where you needed a newspaper to make a cone to hold the sugar were part of a housewife daily chore. If you had an ice chest, you picked up a block of ice, which was half melted by



the time you reached home. And of course, you had to go to the farmers market to pick up a chicken for the family, for the week.

We did not own a refrigerator until 1956 when my mother brought one from Russia. I think we were the only family in Suceava who owned a refrigerator.

I remember going shopping for shoes and had to squeeze my feet into a smaller size because that's all they had. When my parents bought me a coat, it was the same model everyone my size wore. One fabric, one style for all.

On the other hand, I enjoyed the seasons, which were more distinctive than now. Spring was a time of knee-high socks and flowers.



With Riry and Bitty in the spring

Many of my fun times were spent on a trip to the "padurice" picking flowers (ghiocei, branduse) with one of my girlfriends. March was for "martisoare". May was the big communist parade.

In Suceava, the only mode of transportation was walking. You walked to work, to school, to the market, and to meet friends. People were strolling along the Main Street (strada Mare, strada Stefan cel Mare) "plimbare" and whisper about politics.





Occasionally we went on trips: mom, dad and I next to Palatul Peles



I studied music



From the left: I, mom, Perry holding her hand on Riry's shoulder

Mother and Perry, Riry's mom were good friends and so were we. We used to spend time together in town or in the country.

ORAR
ZILELE

Orele	luni	marți	miercuri	joi	vineri	sâmbătă
	Matem.	Matem.	Muzică 8-9	Isi.	Fizică	Română
	Francez.	Română	Geografie 9-11		Matem.	Matem.
	Ed. fizic.	Fizică	Română manual	Rusă	Geografie	
	Artistică	Rusă	Calig. 12-13	Zoologie	Ed. Fiz.	
	Desen	Zoologie	Trabucera		Română	Desen.
	Col. sport		Col. coral	Atletic		

I finished 6 grades in Suceava, having already Russian for two years and French for one. This is the weekly schedule:

In addition to the regular school program, I attended the art school; I learned to play the accordion. School was strict. Every student had to comply to the rules printed in the "Carnet de Elev"; the "carnet" had to be presented to every teacher after a student had

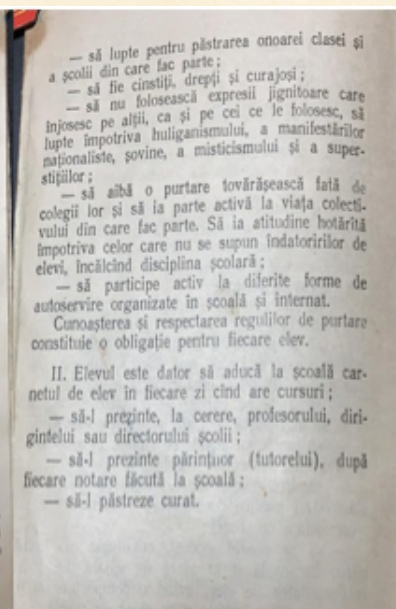
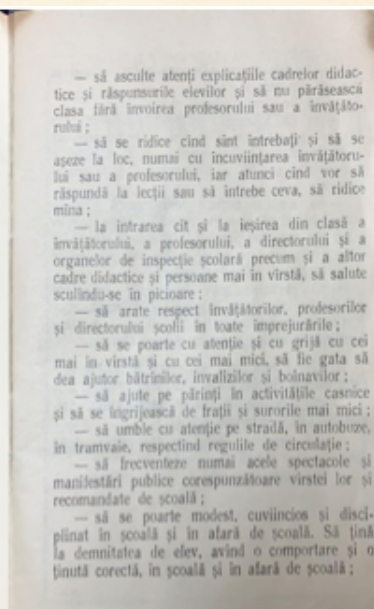
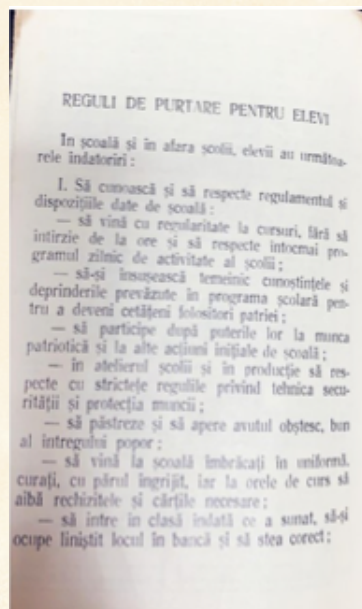
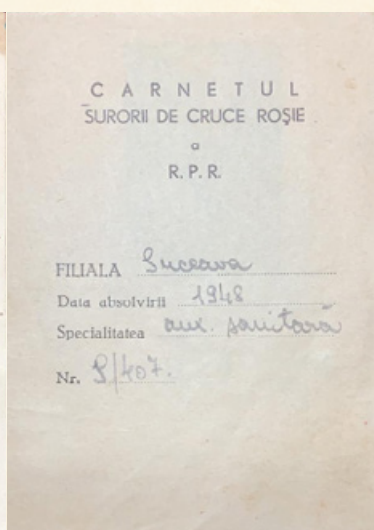




been tested. The teacher would write the mark.

To give the reader a jest, here is a translation of some of the rules:

- to honor the rules at school and outside school
- to stand up when the teacher would address the student or ask question.
- to help parents and brothers at home.
- to attend only the approved shows in town
- to fight for the honor of his class and school.
- to present the CARNET to teachers and then to the parents at home.



About 9-10 Jewish children were in my class. I remember having Yiddish class where we all learned the Aleph/Beit. During recess, I was called more than once “Jidan Imputit” (“dirty Jew”). In 3rd grade I was made a “pioneer” only to be humiliated in front of the class the very next day when my red scarf was pulled off my neck because my parents were registered to immigrate to Israel.

Data	Obiectul	Nota obținută	Semnătura profesorului	Semnătura părintelui
Trimestru III				
14/11	istorie	9	[Signature]	
15/11	mat	9	[Signature]	
20/11	istorie	10		
21/11	mat	10	[Signature]	
	Romina	9	[Signature]	
	L. rusa	10	[Signature]	
	Utilizic	10	[Signature]	
	Zoologia	10	[Signature]	
Observații cu privire la cunoștințele				

Data	Obiectul	Nota obținută	Semnătura profesorului	Semnătura părintelui
Ext	Romina	10		
13/11	Fizic	10	[Signature]	
17/11	Geografie	10	[Signature]	
	mat	10	[Signature]	
20/11	L. francez.	10	[Signature]	
21/11	L. rusa	10	[Signature]	
23/11	Desen	9	[Signature]	
Ext	Geografie	10		
4/12	Romina	10	[Signature]	
4/12	Zoologia			
Observații cu privire la cunoștințele				

I am amazed how many subjects we learned in the 6 grade and how often we were tested orally in front of the blackboard : History, Math, Physics, Zoology, Geography, Drawing, Languages: Romanian, Russian, French.

I also remember my mother taking Hebrew lessons in preparation for our intended departure for Israel.

Beginning of August 1963, we were informed that we received our exit visa and had to leave the country in three weeks. The most painful part for me was that my non Jewish friends stopped acknowledging me and did not even come to say goodbye.

In 1899, 80% of the Romanian peasant were unable to read and write. Spiru Haret, a math teacher and an inspector, was the great reformer of the education system. The results were outstanding. In the first part of the 20th century the high schools and the universities in Romania were on a high level and well regarded in Europe. But in 1948 Romania's leader, Gheorghe Ghoeghiu Dej, eradicated the old system. In its place Romania installed the Soviet education system. The Russian language was mandatory starting from the 4th grade till graduation. The system had to educate the "new man" - the Soviets war heroes or the stahanovisti set the example. The latter were the workers who sacrificed everything to exceed the production plan. Education was strict, exigent, firm and rigid, but equalitarian. Books were cheap. Peasant kids, whose parents were analphabets, learned in the same class with children from educated families. They were required to reach the same standards of achievements, and they did. Discipline was a cardinal factor, starting with the uniform and the hair tied in a white ribbon, ending in limiting the hours we were allowed to be outside in the evenings.





Suceava

Riry Schwartz

My name is Riry. I was born in Cluj in 1951 but as soon as my mother graduated medical school, which was in the same month, we moved to Suceava.

My mother grew up in Campulung in a wealthy family. They were deported to Shargorod, Transnistria in 1941. Upon return the family established their home in Suceava.

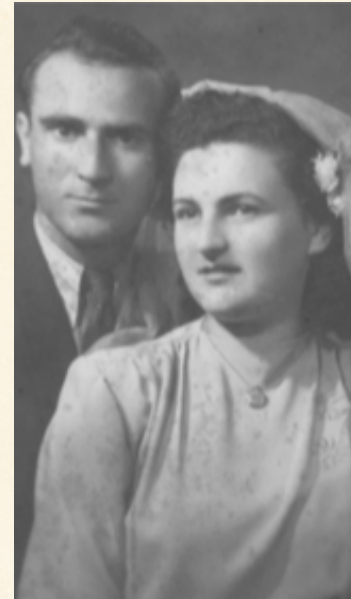


Standing left: Mr. Efraim Weisbuch, X, prof. Rohrich, my mom, Lily's mom.
Teacher sitting, Surkis (the second from the left) Clara Zlocewer, last.



Upon arrival from Shargorod mom attended the Suceava Jewish high school, completed the education she missed while being deported, and passed the matriculation exams.

My father Lazar Schwartz met my mom Paula (Perry) Behr at the medical school in Iasi, they fall in love and got married.



From the left. Standing: Poldi Kern, grandpa, father. Sitting Marghit, mom's sister, Bitty her daughter, Rami her son, grandma, mom and I.

In the picture my mother's family and the new generation, born after the war in Suceava.



My cousins and I

I was an only child, very much loved and adored.
Renee was my friend since childhood (second on the right).
I have very few memories of the 10 years I spent there.



With mom, Paula (Perry) Schwartz.



However, the home we lived in is extremely memorable and somehow upsetting to talk about. You came into the home through a gate. When you open the gate you could see a room immediately to the right (our bathroom), a staircase going to the second floor and a staircase going into the cellar.

The apartment was on the second floor. Two rooms: the first was the kitchen, the laundry room, the dining room and my and our housekeeper's bedroom.



With father, Lazar Schwartz,



The second was my parents' bedroom, the living room and our "walk in closet". My parents' window faced the main street of Suceava. I spent many hours looking out of that window. I was looking for my parents to come home, for the few friends I could play with or any other event of interest.

The most memorable room is the room downstairs: OUR BATHROOM. How it froze in the winter and how I had to carry hot water buckets to it from the stove in the kitchen to defrost the



toilets. That was done before and after each use. The tub, if used, I can't remember, but for sure never in the winter and for laundry only.

Ah, and the cellar. That was my fun playground. At age five I was already allowed to escort the Horse and Buggy carriage with our winter wood and our potatoes, onions and apples, and place them in their appropriate places. Were the rats there too? Who knows? I only went in during daytime.

I remember an incident at school. It must have happened in third grade. That day I took special care with my uniform. My white blouse was ironed and so was my skirt. Today you became a "PIONEER".

All the students in my class lined up. We were so excited. The principal (I think) went from student to student, placed a small red scarf around the neck, and knotted it for each one. Now they joined what you would call the Communist Youth Movement. My turn finally came and he just went past me. When he was all done he said to me: "You are Jewish and your parents enlisted to go to Israel. You can never become a Pioneer!" I ran home crying.

This was the age of Communism. This was the age of anti-Semitism. The Communists were not as bad as the Nazi's but they came very close.



Living in Suceava was not difficult for our family. We were so much better off than a lot of others. My parents, both doctors, did house calls and payment was always made in chickens and eggs and potatoes and sometimes fresh tomatoes. I remember though one chicken was enough for our family of four for one week.

My memories of food shortages and the luxury of an orange or a stick of gum sent from Israel is lasting. I remember splitting one orange into four pieces so each of my parents and my nanny could have a piece. The rind was immediately added to the rings of two or three other oranges to make marmalade.

As to the gum, I chewed for hours and saved the piece into a container for another day.



Suceava in the early 1950s had a lot of entertainment venues. I especially remember going to the theater with my parents.

The electrical wires were all over the stage and I had to touch them. Of course I got shocked immediately. No harm done (a few brain cells fried) but a good point made: DON'T TOUCH.

At age ten, we left Romania for Israel. Many wonderful and exciting experiences were to follow.





My Story

Romy Rohrlich

My family members have been exiled during the Holocaust from Suceava to Transnistria, Ghetto Shargorod, in the Ukraine. The ghetto in Shargorod is an example of how such survival came about. In October 1941, the Jews of Suceava, Bukovina, were deported to Ataki on the Dniester River where the conditions were dreadful. The Judenräte were involved in survival, not resistance, and thus they were able to save so many members of the community. Their horrible stories from this ordeal must remain a legacy for generations to come. My uncle, Dr. Artziu Herman, would inject the men with milk shots, which would raise their temperature to about 103 degrees Fahrenheit, to prevent them from being drafted to the military, or send to concentration camps. Dr. Herman never made it back home since, after months of treating typhus patients, he succumbed to the disease and died. His wife, Trudy, passed away two days later.

My mother was cooking for a group of Russian troops, and the entire family shared the leftovers. While in Transnistria, she became very sick and never recovered from her illness although she had several surgeries. I will never forget train trips to Bucharest in the company of Mausi and Torry, two of my father students, who were such wonderful chaperones. They took me to see my mother at her many stays in the hospital in Bucharest. I remember jumping off my mother's bed when the surgeon came in, grabbing a flower and handing it to him with a hug. I remember asking him to please make my Mom a healthy mother again. He promised me to do so, however, it never happened. My mother was in the hospital again three months after we arrived to Israel. She never recovered from the tragedy of the Holocaust. If her own tragedy was not enough, she could never forget a starving ten years old boy, who was encouraged by a German officer to pick up an apple from a tree, and then was shot while stepping down.

My entire family, to include, my aunt Antonia (Tina) and her husband Joseph (Yossi) Landman, Regina and her son Mario Becker, and my uncle Martin Fishler (Mushuku), returned to Suceava after walking thousands of kilometers, surviving from food handouts. My uncle Mushuku had all nails removed since his toes froze on the trip. Back in Suceava, my father with some others, including Prof. Rimmer, Clara Surkis, the Vigdor sisters, and other non-Jewish professors, opened a Matriculation College for twelve graders who were not allowed by the Romanian authorities to graduate prior to the exile to Transnistria. Two years later, the school was closed by the Communist Party, and our house, where I was born, was confiscated as well.



My father, being an ardent Jew, but with no knowledge of Hebrew, was writing articles and poems for a Jewish Newspaper in Bucharest. The Communist regime was not overjoyed, but he continued this activity for several years. My father was not only a beloved teacher and an efficient assistant principal at Stefan cel Mare High School, but was also a lecturer at the Military University of Suceava. When he was ordered to join the Communist Party or else, he realized that it's time to leave Romania. Thanks to my father's relationships at the right places, we were out of Romania eight to nine month later.

As to me, my life in Suceava was very pleasant. I had a great time in school, had the best girlfriends and did not care much about boys.



My sister Jana, mom and I



Mom, dad, and I

Maybe I was too young at that time, but I made up for it in Israel. Here is a picture taken before I went to a party.

I don't remember anti-Semitism on a personal level. The Sturzas, Dragoshani, and other non-Jewish families, were among my parents' best friends. I do remember their wonderful homes and their parties at the Christmas Holidays. I recall my father's students arriving at our house in sleighs and horses very drunk. I also remember all the beautiful costume parties in school, the trips I took with my father and his students to Poiana Brasov, Constanta, the Black Sea cruise, and more.

When I was eleven or twelve, Marcel Baker, our neighbor, a painting artist, asked me to pose for a portrait. I felt I had no choice but to pose. Many years later in 1979, I posed again for a portrait. This time, the artist was my daughter, who was almost nine years old. She got a first price award for "Drawing Your Mother" for a Mother's Day contest





Dad and mom on the left, my sister Jana, uncle Mushuku, and my aunt Regina sitting next to mom.

held by all five elementary schools in Blacksburg Virginia. Unfortunately, somehow, the portrait was lost.

For the last forty-two years, we live in the U.S., in Northern Virginia, fifteen miles from the White House in Washington DC..





Childhood

Ruthi Glickman

My mom, Shana Wolf was born in Burdujeni in 1916. She was the youngest of seven children. Her family's financial situation was very good, since her father (my maternal grandfather) owned a shoes and boots workshop; almost all local inhabitants were his employees. My mom was about to marry my father – Haim Glickman from Balaceana - five years her senior, but the outbreak of war put an end to their plans of marriage.

Mom was deported with her family to Lucinetz, Transnistria; my father and his family ended up in Moghilev. My maternal grandmother died and was buried on the way to the camps.

Lucinetz was an enclosed barbed wire camp. Its inhabitants were forbidden to exit it without permission. The deportees were housed and shared accommodations in cowsheds and in deserted houses. The death rate in Lucinetz was among the highest in Transnistria, so I was told.

A few years ago, during a trip to Transnistria, I visited Lucinetz, a charming little town today; some houses which once belonged to local Jews could still be seen. After the war, Ukrainian authorities sealed these houses and no one has lived there since. Of course, I couldn't find the pigpens where Jewish families were housed. I could only imagine the life in the camp, my mother helping with the upbringing of her niece, her parents' anxiety when they sent their children to buy something to eat, the stressful waiting for their return.

As I have already mentioned my grandfather was a well-off man before the war. During the short time they had before the forced deportation, my grandmother sewed banknotes under the coats' lining. This saved them from starvation.

Today, there aren't any Jews left in Lucinetz, but their memory is alive, nevertheless. A local old woman, who offered us some cherries, remembered that Jews had to wash their hands and say a prayer before tasting the ripe fruit. The fact that this Ukrainian woman who once lived in close proximity to the Jewish deportees learned the Jewish custom which she never forgot, is heartbreaking. Powerful emotions overwhelmed me while listening to her account.

At the end of the war my parents got married in Suceava. We lived on Stefan Voda Street.

In Suceava we had one room apartment and a kitchen. Under the house there was a basement; in winter we used to keep potatoes in the cellar. Sometimes I was asked to bring some potatoes. The cellar scared me, especially because of the rats.

I was born after a very difficult birth, that endangered the lives of mom and child. Therefore,





My parents and I

mom swore that her next delivery will happen in the presence of a doctor (not only a midwife). The moment he saw me, father was the happiest man alive; after Transnistria, he couldn't imagine the luxury of bringing a new generation into this world.

When I was an infant, my mom's sister-in-law, Tzili, Beno Budic's aunt, used to babysit me. On one of these occasions, she pierced my ears so I could wear earrings, when the

time comes. Many years later, when I already was in Israel, I inherited a pair of earrings.

Once a week my mom would take me to the women's ritual bath (*mikveh*). She had to sneak me inside. There, mom would clean me thoroughly.

My father was the breadwinner in our family. He worked at COMCAR – the department in charge with the supervision of livestock raised by the villagers. Part of his job was to travel to the nearby villages and inspect the herd, to make sure no animals were sold on the black market. He was dedicated and worked hard but he didn't work on Sabbath. My dad had a cart and a beautiful red mare. Alongside our house, there was a stable, which housed the mare and the cow, that gave us kosher milk. I used to bring a black tin cup into the shed and get some fresh warm tasty white liquid while my dad would milk the cow. In winter, when the snow would build up high, my dad used to be the first to walk on it, “opening” a path from our house to the stable, to feed the mare and the cow.

My father's work was strenuous, even dangerous at times. In winter the task became especially challenging. The sled took the place of the cart. He would travel until late at night in cold weather, on a snow and ice covered land, wolves roaming around, among not always friendly villagers.

Dad used to pray at Sadigura synagogue.

In the morning, mom prepared for me a rich chocolate drink which I didn't like, because of the fat on top. In contrast, I loved to go to the nearest bakery and buy a fresh, fragrant bun.

At the back of our house, there was a small market. Before my brother was born, my cousin and I used to go frequently and buy the delicious pickled apples from the Lipovaner women.

My mom was a great housewife and a wonderful cook. Here are a few of the dishes she used to cook for us; even today their taste and smell are alive in my heart. I think that other families

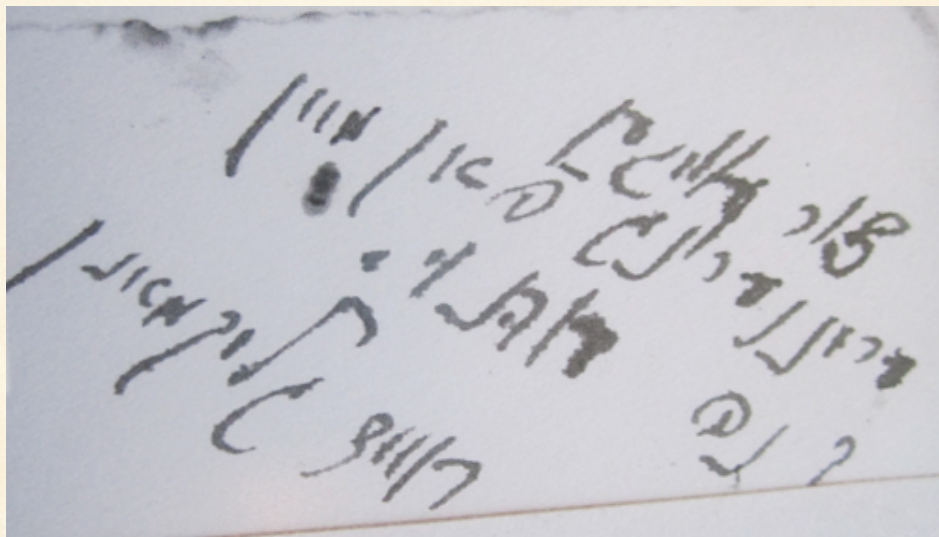




My brother Moshe and I

loved them too. Esigfleish, malai, zuckerlecach, kigel, toci, mamaliga, grieven, sultz, pitzie, carp fish. For the Sabbath, my mom was always baking chala. My aunt in Burdujeni had a special room where she smoked meat, thus, we ate kosher pastrami. I was 5 years old when my brother Moshe was born. This time, my father did as mom asked and called a doctor to be present at her home birth.

My father was only 39 years old when he became seriously ill with pancreatic cancer. On the days when he felt a little better, my aunt Sarah Schechter used to invite him to enjoy her garden in Burdujeni. At Passover dad started being extremely ill. On the month of Tamuz he passed away.



This is a reminder of my father's handwriting and signature.

I participated at my father's funeral. A black scarf was tied around my head and at the age of 8, I recited Kaddish by his grave. A minor whose father died, says Kaddish even though he is not yet a bar mitzva. It is for this purpose that Kaddish Yatom was instituted. For the entire mourning year I went to the synagogue and did my duty.

On the day of the funeral, the stress and the upheaval were so powerful that everybody forgot my 3-year-old brother. The little child remained sitting on the threshold and waited for us to return from the cemetery.



My mom wasn't able to overcome the loss, she got deeply depressed. Grief was so powerful that she wasn't able to get out of bed for a whole year. A stripe of her hair turned white. My aunt, Sarah Schechter, took my little brother to Burdujeni and he grew up at her house for three years. At weekends, Moshe was brought home. After a year, my mom understood that she had to provide for us and started to work at Mr. Schmeterling's thread factory in Suceava.



Moshe, mom and I

I remember the long lonely waiting hours I spent every day until mom returned home, to the cold house. The loneliness was extremely difficult to endure. I didn't go to any extra-curricular activity, I just waited quietly for my mom's return from work.





Ruth's Story

Ruth Hübner

My parents

My parents met and got married in Czernowitz. They came from religious families and I remember seeing pictures of my grandfather with a long beard and my grandmother with a head cover.



My maternal grandparents Leib and Rivka, Sally - my mom's sister in law, Lily and my mom.



Mom, grandma and my mom's youngest brother Butziu.



1948, my maternal family on their last visit in Suceava, from right: Rivka, Butziu, mother holding me one yr. old, Gusta, mother's sister, and Meir her husband



I grew up with no extended family – uncles, aunts or grandparents. That’s why I used to call adults around me “*oncle*” and “*tante*” – probably a mix of polite regard and a hope to create a surrogate family around me. It was a social safety net that was common to families that lost their loved ones in the holocaust or were disconnected from those that lived abroad. I was lucky to be surrounded by loving people.

My father spoke little about his family.



My father, his two brothers and my parental grandparents



Grandfather Leib (- 1943) headstone at Czernowitz graveyard.



My father's extended family in the village of Igesti



Occasionally my father mentioned names and events, which helped me, get a glimpse of life in his village, Igesti. His mother, Grandma Rivka, was a small woman that ran her household of 8 boys with her rolling pin always at the ready to herd them to follow their daily chores. The sons worked with grandpa and took care of the animals. Grandpa ran the flourmill. He would deal



My father, second from the left, in uniform at "Graniceri" unit

with the neighboring farmers who brought their grain to be ground. It was a farm like one imagines a windmill, chickens, cows and bulls, a carriage, a field of wheat and a neighboring forest. The farm was all that was left behind when most of the family was slaughtered in July 1941. *"The sun rose, the thorn tree bloomed, and the butcher slaughtered"*. "Cartea Neagra" (the "Black Book" short account confirms the crime committed in 1941).

The Brender family (my mother's side) was also a traditional and lived in Czernowitz. After the war they moved to Romania and immigrated to Israel in 1948. Before she married, my mom was a classic tomboy – she rode motorcycles and horses, skated on ice and participated in group bicycle trips. She often got in trouble when she was late to Shabbat dinners.







My mom was an extraordinary woman: she rode a horse as well as a motorcycle, she swam, hiked, skated and she took many pictures with her own camera, a very rare possession in the pre-war days.



I would like the readers to appreciate the good life my mom experienced before the war. I suppose that this was the kind of life middle class Jews in Czernowitz enjoyed.



Mom met dad in a group of local hikers.



Father and a group of friends at the Suceava fortress CETATE.



Father with rucksack



They used to reminisce about Czernowitz – the beauty of “Little Vienna”, the cafes, the local atmosphere, the western culture and the walks in Herren Gasse dressed in their best clothes.



Mom and dad got married in 1940.



After the war, my parents decided to move to Romania out of fear that the Russians, who occupied Czernowitz, would never let them immigrate to Israel. Little did they know that communism would take over Romania too and they would be stuck there for 11 years before they would finally succeed in immigrating to Israel.



They applied for a Propusk and traveled to Suceava, with nothing more than some clothes, a few photos that my mom was able to smuggle, and two 200-year old Passover bowls which decorate my table to this day.



I was born to hardship and wanting.

I slept in the same bed with my mother, as well as my father, who was suffering at the time from ulcers. There was no money for food due to the huge inflation and economic distress. My mom barely secured half a kilogram of semolina and had to share it between me and my dad. When she got sick, I was breast fed by Mrs. Robinson, whose daughter, Jana, later became my good friend.



She unraveled an old sweater and knitted me a new coat, hat, comforter and gloves. When we took a stroll outside with my new clothes, an acquaintance warned her that it's dangerous to dress me up so nicely – beware the evil eye.

Nevertheless, we had a warm home.

My mom transformed boxes to closets and crocheted tablecloths that adorned every table in the house. That made our living space lux.

Friends in Suceava

My parents were surrounded by friends in Suceava. Their closest friends were the Leinburd and Horowitz families, and they were inseparable – my extended Romanian family.

My father and Jacob Leinburd worked in the cooperative and Freddy held a key position in the bank. We, the kids, used to play under the card table together – I was the mom, Poldi was the dad, and Denise was our daughter. Our home under the table was full of goodies – our parents kept passing us delicacies



On the left, a picture from Vatra Dornei, with friend. Robinson, Dankner and Leinburd families.



and fine baked goods throughout our stay under the table. One day, we decided to move and our parents' card table suddenly sprung four legs and started moving towards the kitchen, to the astonishment of the card players.

I also loved playing soccer with Poldi and his friends. But even

more so appreciated watching the game with the guys on Sunday because then we'd get a bundle of sunflower seeds in a newspaper that was rolled-up in a shape of a cone.



From the right: I, Poldi's mother Betty with baby Sonny in her hands, Wilma holding Jenny, her daughter. Next to her Denise and Poldi. Kneeling is Dadi, Wilma's son



My father's TRIO: Fredi Horowitz, my father and Jacob Leinburd, at soccer game at the Suceava stadium



We would spend every weekend together – at home or having picnics in nature. They were a fun bunch.

My mom was a great cook and baker. She was forced to use the simplest of ingredients – those that were available at the time, but somehow, everything she made was a delicacy. Reproducing it, though, was nearly impossible. Her recipe book contained instructions like “Take 6 eggs, a cup and as much flour as needed. Add sugar to taste” (Mom – how much is needed? How many spoons for taste?), and so on and so forth. When she became tired of my questions, she would say “mitche mich nicht” (don’t torture me), so I ended up just sitting by her side and taking scrupulous notes of every move she made.

She put her heart and soul into the cooking and baking. Much later, my kids would say that her Schnitzels were the best in the world.

For Purim, my mom made mocha cream-filled Buchterl. We were never allowed to touch the baked goods before our guests arrived, and my mom made sure to hide them from me. That day, I searched every nook and cranny and found one inviting portion. I quickly retrieved it, and, disregarding my mother’s warning, I took a bite. What I bit into was a bundle of feathers hidden within the filling. It was a joke my mom played on the guests, and I was the first to enjoy it.

A year later, she made Humentaschen, and arranged them neatly in a shiny white chamber pot. The guests responded with “fe, das esse ich nicht”

Denise mentioned that on one occasion, my mother also served them with a beautifully adorned chocolate cake (I can only assume it was for my father’s birthday on Shavuot). When they cut it after he blew out the candles, they were surprised to find out that under the chocolate topping was a tasty Malai (a Romanian dish of cornmeal and ricotta cheese), perfect for that holiday. On one occasion, her dad came into my mom’s kitchen, put on an apron and a toque blanche on his head and said: Fani, how can I help? and they cooked together (which was very unusual for men to do at that time).

On Yom Kippur we would all go to the synagogue wearing our best clothing. I would play downstairs with the other children, and when our parents came down we used to go to Denise’s house and break the fast with my mother’s sweet lekach.

I loved seeing them all laugh together, support each other through hard times, and share a mutual respect. I also remember their curses: “der Teufel soll sie holen” (may the devil take him), “so ein Smarcaci”, “a Kapure auf ihm“, and so on. They never told me who their subject was.

This was my family in Suceava, but it broke up when we left for Israel.



Our home in Suceava

We lived in a detached house with a yard.

We shared a large bedroom, and had a spacious kitchen with a large stove, upon which my father would climb to warm up when he returned from work. The toilets were in the terrace outside – a seat above an open channel that slowly streamed down with the local treasures.



My father was employed at Rabinovici shop in Czernowitz (the picture below was taken during the Romanian occupation of the city- the shop was advertised in the Romanian language).



Later my father worked in a shop where farmers exchanged their wares for

cloth. On a long table in the store there was a measuring tape that he used to measure the cloth, which he then cut with scissors that were always in his pocket. One day, when he used the toilet,



they fell into the sewer. I remember how frightened he was – the scissors were government property and he would be accountable. Without thinking twice, my pedantic father had to sort through the refuse until he finally found it.

One of the steps between the porch and yard was missing its vertical support beam, and this space turned into a home for the chickens we raised in the yard, where they lay their eggs. My father used a sifter and heating lamp to create a comfortable incubating space. When the chicks hatched, their tweets brought us much excitement and joy.

One day, my father saw a gypsy roaming around in our yard. He approached her and, with a frown, demanded she raise her skirt. I couldn't believe his odd request but was surprised to see



that when she eventually did what he asked, underneath her skirts she was hiding two of my young chicks - my dad knew what he was doing. Oh, she was also not wearing any underwear.

Yom Kippur eve brought new threats to my little chicks. We would exercise the “*Tarnegol Kaparot*” tradition (swinging of a live chicken above your head) and I always feared that my mother would use one on my chickens for this purpose. A day before Yom Kippur, I shooed them away, herding them into the local cemetery, Turnu Rosu. Only after I saw my mom bring a new chicken from the market, which was then the victim of this odd tradition, was it safe to bring my chicks back home.

It wasn't just chicks that got saved. I also collected sick cats, which my mom would find hiding under the bed cover every morning. They had orthopedic problems or eye infections. My father, who was raised on a farm, shared my love for animals and even helped me take care of birds that fell out of their nest. That wish to heal was imprinted in me from a young age, and it was reinforced when I received my first syringe set from Dr. Perry Schwartz – a real, multi-use one. I had to disinfect it and boil it every time before using it.

Thus, my internship in medicine began. The first victims were my dolls. Later, I convinced Jonny Niedermayer, a good friend that lived across from me, to be my next victim. Unfortunately, unlike my dolls, he complained too much about being stabbed, and thus, my internship in the practice of medicine ended.

My Childhood

I was an only child but was lucky to have an adopted sister, my soulmate and good friend, Illica



My TRIO: Poldi, Illica and I



Schiffer. She was the daughter of my parents' friends Fritz and Adolf from Czernowitz. They lived in Bucharest and we, the girls, spent all our school breaks together. We celebrated Passover in Suceava and spent summer vacations in Bucharest or at the Black Sea. I always looked forward to these get togethers.

When Ilica and her mom would visit, I had a great co-conspirator for my mischief. We climbed trees, played in our yard, and took long sunbaths in our huge tin tub. I found that tin tub again 50 years later when I came to visit my old house, hiding in the attic.

When I was 6 years old, I decided to throw a big birthday party. Illy and I went from house to house that day and extended invitations to all our neighbors. We planned to have a show that included gymnastics, ballet, theater and storytelling.

The party was planned for five o'clock and we set out to arrange the seats in the yard. When my mom asked me what I was doing I told her about the party that I planned for that same day and that I had invited all the neighbors. Shocked, and knowing there was no way she would be able to cancel the event in time, she rushed to prepare her best pastries.

Forty guests arrived bearing presents and dressed in their best clothes (ausgeputzt). Some ladies even went the extra mile and wore nice hats - they were officially invited to a show by the Hubner family! Even the priest, Breteanu, my beloved friend who had an amazing garden in his back yard, brought me fresh strawberries, which he had handpicked and placed in a beautiful little basket.

We had a great time and our guests enjoyed the food that my mom had prepared (on short notice). The applause and the presents were a great reward for the wonderful party. I say we had a great time, but I am not really sure my mom did.



I always had a surprise up my sleeve and my mother knew it. Unfortunately, it only got worse with age.

Two years prior, when I was just 4 years old, she came to the yard where I was playing with Jonny and asked him where I was. He replied nonchalantly that I went to my dad in town to get a new doll (dressed in a bathrobe and slippers).



At home I had a lot of opportunities to try out my best ideas. My mom would go to the market almost every day would stand in line for hours. She would ask our neighbor to keep an eye on me from time to time and see how I was doing. The door was locked and at these times, intercoms or other surveillance devices were not available.

One of these times, I was terribly bored and wanted to play outside. Jumping out the window seemed like a great idea, and since we lived on the first floor, about 10 meters above the ground, I grabbed a stool and threw it out to the yard planning to jump and land safely upon it. Just then, I heard the key turning. My mom had come back just as I was about to jump out the window and crash to the ground.

The punishments were always harsh, but there is one that I will never forget: I loved reading books, especially Alexander Dumas', which I would read and reread into the night, even after curfew, with the aid of a pocket flashlight, under the blanket. The Count of Monte Christo was my favorite. Eventually, the movie came to town, in two parts. I loved the first part and looked forward to seeing the second one that was to arrive some weeks later. To this day I can't remember what exactly I did wrong, but my mother decided to punish me by not allowing me to see the second part of the movie. I was mortified. There was only one movie theater in town, and there would be no rerun - no way to watch it again, ever! It was a cruel punishment. I was devastated and all my friends begged my mom to give in, but she did not budge. I never got to watch the end of that movie.

I have watched every production of Monte Christo ever since, but it never felt the same, and of course was never followed by yummy Wagner's pastry.

My love for books, though, was everlasting, and would share it later with my own children and grandkids. It was satisfied even further when I was sick. My mom would bring me books and sit by me for hours, reading. She would sing "*Hans der Klein ging allein*", and my favorite poem "*Wer reitet so schpat durch Nacht und Wind, Es ist der Konig mit seinem Kind.*"

I also remember listening to stories on the radio. I even tried to help a group of unhappy children in one of them by offering them a glass of milk, but when I walked behind the radio to find them, all I found was a number of red hot lamps.

With the same innocence I once asked my mom if I could have a sibling. She advised that I put sugar on the window pane in order to feed the coming stork. I was terribly disappointed to find out that ants had eaten the sugar and I remained an only child. Interestingly, this story contributed to my decision to become a sex therapist.

Ilica enjoyed my bad influence and her mother would promise to wash her mouth with soap when



she cursed the way I taught her. Nevertheless, we met frequently. My trips to Bucharest were a treat - I travelled alone on the train since I was 8 years old and thus, felt very mature. The trip was always an adventure and the 8 hours passed quickly. One time, I fell asleep and woke up with my head resting on my neighbor's shoulder. He was dressed in full peasant attire, on his way to sell his wares.

In Bucharest we had amazing experiences: we watched ballets, attended theaters, took walks in the park, and met with friends and family. Illica's mom, Fritzi, would stock up on dozens of cans of peas and carrots, that I adored. There was no mischief around Fritzi. I called her The commandant. My mom and Fritzi kept in touch and corresponded by mail every week. She also corresponded with her family in Israel.

One time, a very weird letter reached the family in Israel. It mentioned butter, onions, chicken and eggs. My family worked hard to decode the meaning behind the letter, assuming we were in trouble and that my father was probably in jail. Did the number of items on the list translate to the length of the sentencing? They were terribly worried. Fritzi, on the other hand, received a letter that thanked her for the beautiful patent leather shoes that I received for my birthday.

They only managed to calm down when my mom realized that she has sent to Israel the letter that was addressed to Bucharest. There were frequent food shortages in Bucharest, and my mother would send poultry, eggs and other products that we had plenty of, since we got a weekly supply from the local farmers. She would always accompany that shipment with a letter to Fritzi detailing the items that she had sent. The wires had crossed.

There was a shortage of clothes, shoes and luxury products. Denise told me that she used to receive a tablet of chocolate every month when Fredi got his salary. She cut it into tiny pieces and made sure it would last until the next salary came, and with it the next allocation of chocolate. As for clothes, when she was 5 years old, she got a winter coat that was double her size. It never quite fit her, but it kept her warm in the cold winter for years. As to pants and mittens, like my own mother, her mom also unraveled an old sweater and told her that my mom, Fani, would knit her all she needed.

I dreamed of shiny patent shoes and my family sent me a pair from Israel. I waited impatiently. The shoes arrived at last and I opened the box wearing my most beautiful lace socks. I sat on the floor and put on the right shoe. It fit perfectly. When I tried the other, I immediately noticed that something was wrong. I had received two right foot shoes. I was terribly upset and my mom promised to take care of it. She consulted the shoemaker, who was an expert at a time where shoes were scarce and had to be used as long as possible or be fitted again for the next recipient in line,



sibling or friend, who fixed it for me.

Upon Ilica's next visit, we went for a walk, dressed in our red new knitted dresses that Fritzzy had made for us, with ribbons in our hair and new shoes on my feet. We climbed up a fence in order to sit down on it, and my shoe fell straight into a hole underneath. My dad had to fish it out with a stick with a hook. When they became too small, Ilica was very happy to wear them for a while. Poldi and I were inseparable. We knew each other since we were infants. He was one year older and we were together in kintergarden and would visit each other to play in the afternoons, where we would spend time in beautiful backyard, where we climbed trees and picked fresh fruits. In the fall, we picked green nuts from his huge tree or from Sonia's Dickman's garden. We went back to school with brown stains on our fingers, and it took forever to get them off.

We also played hide and seek in the graveyard, and would wander around, inventing and telling frightening stories, especially on our way home at dusk, with mysterious shadows over the old stones. Once we took white sheets, put them on, and used them to scare each other and some people that were passing by, who almost believed that we were ghosts.

We played soccer with his friends and I was proud to be the only girl in his group. I was also the youngest which meant that I was a part of the order group. Once he asked me to come with him visit his friend who lived on the same street and I was thrilled to play with them.

But when our host opened the door he was not happy to see me there. He told Poldi that he wanted no girls to play with them. I was about to leave the yard when Poldi told him that I am his friend too and that I will stay. Poldi's dog started growling, making it clear that this was serious. I stayed and had a great time. The girl stuff came up a few times later but he always made sure that none of his friends would annoy or make fun of me.

At that time, I wished I was a boy too. I felt that if I were, I would have the freedom to always play soccer when I wanted to.

Fate intervened and I had my chance. My hair was fair, straight and thin. It was nearly impossible for me to have a pony tail, a lock on the top of my head (Chinese style) or any pig tails since every rubber band would slide down, and my mom was forced to try to curl my hair with a special hot iron. It looked great for a few minutes and then my hair will go straight again. Eventually, she came up with an idea: shave my head in order to let it grow stronger.

Gesagt getan. She shaved my head and I walked around, bald as Samson. I must have been 5 or 6 years old and I figure today that this kind of Russian remedy must be devastating to a girl, but at the time it energized me. Thrilled, I immediately put on my shorts and went out to play with the team. The change was so drastic that neighbors asked my mom where her daughter disappeared.





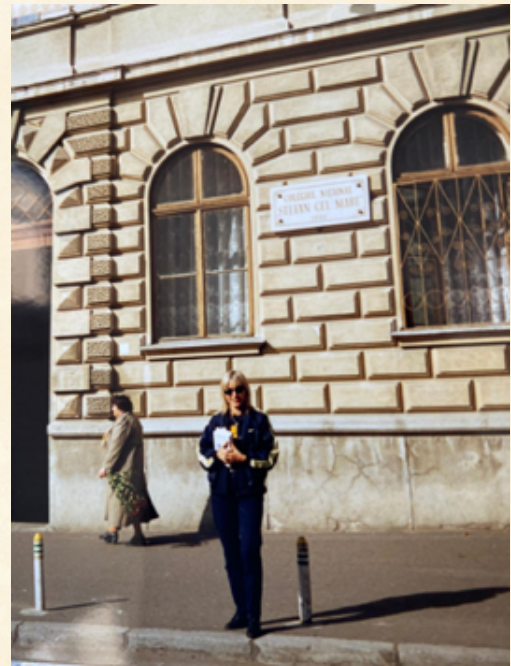
She told them that she had sent me off to Israel and brought her nephew over, instead. I loved that story.

Zamca was also a great place to play. We would climb walls and eat sandwiches from a picnic basket. We would wander off and inspect every corner and ditch with great curiosity, looking for insects, birds and other small animals. We would

run home covered with cuts and bruises, have my mom treat them with iodine, and run back to the battle field.

I loved playing outside. Usually, after school, Poldi would wait patiently for me in the our backyard, ball in hand, ready to venture out. But he'd had to wait for me as my mom wouldn't let me out before my homework was done. *"Duty first, then pleasure"*, she taught me early on – that, and priorities. I would do my homework on pins and needles, ready to escape my little jail cell, while my mother stood in the doorway, waiting patiently for me to finish it. Nobody was allowed to disturb me during this time. She taught me the value of self-soothing, self-restraint and trained me to love studying to this day. Years later I went to "Stefan cel Mare" School.

My mom succeeded to take the following documents with us to Israel: the first document is the Diploma for outstanding academic achievements and good behavior. The second is a certified summary of my grades during the first four school years I completed in Suceava. It is



In front of my old school "Stefan cel Mare".



I remember fondly the school trips. Even on those occasions, the children wear the red tie of the "pionieri".

Languages and Stories

My dad had a special gift for languages and speaking them helped him survive when he was forced to flee to Bohemia in 1914, and then again every time Bukovina changed hands.

He did not believe in money, which came and went, or in real estate, which was easily taken away, as his parents' farm was. He believed only in honesty and in studying, especially languages. *"Be a mensch and speak as many languages as you can. Get the best education possible. This will keep you well and alive everywhere you have or choose to go"*.

This strong belief in the importance of the study of languages made him send me to learn German and French with a German couple - Frau und Herr Hamburg.

They taught me languages, manners and Hoch Deutsch.

Mr. Hamburg would ask for my coat each time I arrived and helped me put it on me before I would leave, and always pull out a chair for me for sitting down. He treated me like a real lady. Mrs. Hamburg always served tea and cake with great ceremony.

Once, she served a special cake made of honey, peanuts and cacao, rolled in a form of salami and cut into round servings. I told her that my mom made the same cake but that hers is extremely hard and can be cut only with an axe. My compliment was accepted with a smile and a gentle reminder not to criticize my mother's efforts. I was supposed to thank her for what she did and appreciate it. Studying German in this household was challenging. When I first started, I was sure that my German was good and that I was an expert on Heine, Schiller, Goethe and all the stories of the Grimm brothers. I soon found out that what I thought we spoke at home was in fact a mixture of Austrian, German and Yiddish that had totally different grammar. It was easier to understand since sentences were shorter and subjects always followed verbs. Words like *Schmetten*, *Karfiol* and *Vischniac* did not belong to Hoch Deutch, or in the Hamburg's household. They used words like *Sahne*, *Blumenkohl*, *Kirsch Schnapps*. Their German was different – words and sentences became extra long, and the negative "nicht" somehow found itself at the end of them.

I loved studying with Mr. and Mrs. Hamburg. There was something magical there - their white hair, the respect they shared with each other, their vast knowledge and their appreciation of my efforts and curiosity. I drank in every word they uttered. They were teachers for life, in stark contrast to my piano teacher who would only resort to strike me on the fingers with a thin stick whenever I made a mistake.



1958

One evening, in December of 1958, we heard a knock on our door. My dad turned off the lights immediately, and opened the door carefully. The man who came in spoke softly. Mom and dad looked at and hugged each other. The guest left immediately and I stood there puzzled, scared and alone, trying to understand what just happened.

My parents hugged me and said that they received great news - were going to the beautiful land of Israel to rejoin our family. They also said that we had to leave in a day or two and that I was not allowed to tell anyone about our departure or say goodbye to any of my friends.

I did not understand what was going on - why would be happy in the dark? why was I not allowed to share this piece of wonderful news with my friends or say goodbye? Everything happened so fast and within the next 24 hours we packed our whole life in a big wooden crate that was waiting for years in our living room.

We could only bring up to 70kg of our belongings with us. It was winter time, so we all turned ourselves into walking suitcases - adorning layers of underwear, sweaters and coats in order to bring more clothes than we could ship. My father even managed to recruit to this little smuggling project a young man who was willing to help. I remember him walking around like he was a huge onion.



This 300 year old bowl is the only item which survived the incredible journey from Czernowitz to Suceava to Israel. Every year, at the Seder, this bowl adorns our festive Pessach table, in the spirit of the ancient HAGGADAH commandment "*tell your son*".

We left for the train station Itcani in a carriage. On our way, I saw Poldi standing at the window. I waived my hand to say goodbye, as I was not allowed see or meet him before we left. I wasn't



The "Voyage Certificate" to leave Romania. Passports were never issued for the immigrating Jews, just one-way ticket - it was exactly what my parents wanted



allowed to part properly from Poldi, my older brother, my best friend or from his smiling, sweet baby brother Sorel. I did not know whether I would ever see them again.

My dad wore a troubled look on his face during the whole trip. I had assumed that he would be happy, as he said, but he was not. He chain-smoked the whole way. At the border, the worried look was replaced by a strange one – his hands and voice were shaking when he showed our passports to the border patrol. My dad was always strong and confident. How could he be scared? Later I found out that we had to leave in such a rush, and that he was so nervous because there was an arrest warrant against him.

The train crossed the border and my dad took me in his arms and whispered in my ear: *“It’s over. Nothing here was real, everything was make-believe. Our real life starts now. We are going to a new country. You will be happy there”*. But dad, I thought, what do you mean it wasn’t real - I was happy, I had a great life! What’s going to happen now?

My beloved father who always wanted the best for me broke the bubble that he created and kept around me for 11 years. The bubble that kept me safe, detached from the life of fear under the communist rule. For me those years were a real and wonderful childhood. For him, it was an extremely long transition period on the way from Russia to Israel.

And so, unaware, all my childhood memories were erased and a void was created in order to adjust happily to the new country and to the promised garden of Eden.

In Athens, we boarded a flight to Ben Gurion airport. I was excited to see the Acropolis, home of the gods, and I had a good feeling about this heaven that my father kept promising. So as not to arrive empty handed, my father traded his loden coat for oranges for the family. When we landed, we were greeted by the whole family who was waiting for us at the airport. My cousin, the officer, was among those waiting for us, dressed in uniform. With the backdrop of the Israeli flag, the tears came.

Only then, in Israel, did the fog start lifting on the days of the war, and my parents started sharing their stories about their families, their survival, their loss.

Years of the war

Czernowitz changed hands a few times during the war. The Romanians came and left, the Russians took over after their accord with Germany in 1940. They loved watches, night gowns and combinaizons wearing them as if they were evening dresses. The Romanians took over again after Germany attacked Russia, and after the Germans were finally defeated, the Russians returned again. My mom used to say that they would look out and check what flag would be raised that day to know what language should be spoken, what the laws of the day were, and what subjects were not allowed to be discussed.



During that time, the Jews stayed faithful to the German language and culture, but they were no longer citizens, no longer equal. They no longer belonged. They were now foreigners in their own home, now ruled by Romania.

There was much rejoice when the Romanians first retreated, and one of the village boys even spat on the Rumanian flag, but the retreating general promised he would have his revenge. Upon their return, between July the 3rd and 5th of 1941, aided by the Einsatz gruppen and the Ukrainians, they assembled 400 Jews from the local villages and sent them to the tiny jail where they were left for days with no food nor water. Then they were shot through the peepholes and their bodies were thrown into mass graves. The earth that covered them moved for 3 days. Amongst them were my grandparents Joseph and Rivka and their 4 sons.

Recently, I found the following account in the Black Book (CARTEA NEAGRA) by M.Carp. On page 30 of the second volume there is a short entry : "*La Igești – Suceava au fost omrați de soldati si tarani M.Hibner cu sotia, si fiul si Iosub Hibner cu 4 copii*" which means "M.Hibner, wife and son and Iosub Hibner with 4 children were murdered by soldiers and peasants at Igești –Suceava on July 1940". Few words that tell about a world shattered into pieces for the one and single reason: being a Jew.

3-5 iulie 1940
 Crime similare s-au înfăptuit pe tot drumul de retragere a trupelor.
 — La Comănești-Suceava Frații Zisman au fost aruncați din tren și împușcați. Rabinul Leib Schächter cu 2 fii, au fost întâi chinuți și apoi omorâți la marginea satului. Soția rabinului a fost împușcată în timp ce făcea rugăciunea. Sloime Merdler a fost omorât cu o lovitură de baionetă în ceafă.
 — La Crăiniceni (jud. Rădăuți) au fost împușcați frații Aizie și Burăh Wasserman, de către o grupă de 8 soldați, conduși de un plutonier de infanterie.
 — La Adâncata, au fost omorâți Mendel Weinstein, Maratiev și Strul Feigenbaum.
 — La Găureni-Suceava, a fost împușcat moșierul Moise Rudich.
 — La Liuzii Humorului (jud. Suceava) a fost omorât Natan Somer.
 — La Igești-Suceava au fost omorâți de soldați și țărani: M. Hibner cu soția și fiul și Iosub Hibner cu 4 copii.
 Nenumărate asasinat s-au făptuit toată luna iulie, în trenuri, cu deosebire pe parcursurile Moldovei. Călători evrei, dar mai ales soldați, evrei, au fost împușcați iar cadavrele lăsate în câmp. Foarte mulți au fost aruncați din tren în timpul mersului. Unii din ei au murit în chinuri, alții au rămas infirmi.

Their other two sons, Michl and Falick, perished in Transnistria. My father and his brother Bubi were the sole survivors. The farm and the flock were taken by the neighbors.

On October 11, the Jewish people of Czernowitz were told to assemble in a small part of the town or face the death penalty. Those who did not live there had to pack their belongings, get ready for a trip to the unknown and leave the keys of their apartments to their landlords. They were moved into a ghetto that should have been able to support a population of 10,000, but was now home to 50,000 people. My mother's family lived there, and they opened their doors widely to friends in need. They put lots of nails on the walls to hang people's backpacks. People were sleeping everywhere – in houses, staircases and corridors. My parents slept together in a room with 25 other people, like sardines in a tin box, head to toe.



I always wondered how they managed to survive, waiting their turn to the bathroom in the freezing cold, finding food with the imposed curfew and the yellow star branding them like calves, while avoiding the attention of soldiers who would randomly grab Jews from the street and ship them to Transnistria, the slaughter house. I imagined my mother walking down the street, shopping for food, hiding in doorways – doing everything to avoid getting caught and being sent away, and managing somehow to visit my sick Grandfather in the hospital. Once, when she went out for food, she intuitively hid the yellow star of David, and bumped into a troop of German officers riding on horses. Seeing the young lady, they stopping politely and let her cross the street, her heart pounding in fear. Had she not hid the star, her destiny would have probably been different. The stench and the filth in the overcrowded ghetto grew as the water supply dwindled. Carriages filled with corpses of those plagued with typhoid left the ghetto daily. My mother also contracted the disease and her family did all they could to take care of her at home as being hospitalized was a certain death sentence. My mother told me that while she was sick, they would make up her pale face every morning, dress her skeletal body with multiple layers, and present her like a manikin in a show window to fool those would collect the sick.

There were scheduled transports to Transnistria and people learned how to avoid them by bribing the Romanian guards, but the unscheduled ambushes helped fill up the quotas. On one occasion, my uncle found a good friend standing caught, like a stray dog, in line to the transport. He signaled him to back away, with disregard to his own risk at doing so, while staying hidden in a nearby doorway. His friend slowly moved back while my uncle slid a precious watch unto a guard's hand to have him look away. They then ran back to my uncle's home in the Ghetto. He was saved.

My mom worked in the switchboard at the post office with the approval of Popovich, the mayor of Czernowitz, a righteous man who helped save many Jews during the war. She and her friends would collect any morsel of information that arrived with letters, packages, and rumors. They spread those to everyone and were able to keep friends, families and extended families in contact. Especially important were times when they discovered the location of an acquaintance and tried to help them in any way they could – send money, watches and any other valuables to help pay ransom and save lives. Unsurprisingly, everyone knew each other when they eventually met again in Israel.

Later, when the approvals to work in the post office were withdrawn, my mom worked as knitter for Antonescu's family. Her beautifully knitted sweaters kept her and her family safe. Random lucky choices kept her and her family alive.



The Garden of Eden

When we first landed in Israel, we went to live with my uncle and aunt in Jabaliya Yaffa. The promised land looked weird, sounded strange and was far from being anything like what I had imagined to be Eden.

The guttural language sounded loud and incomprehensible, different from any language I knew, and the music was terrible. Barefoot children ran around in the streets and I felt that I had landed in a gypsy compound. Vendors shouted and advertised their merchandise; people were eating in the streets and my father started wondering if there would ever be a proper home for our family. The Arab children slept on cold stone stairs in the entrance to our building and I could only assume they were really homeless.

Later, I would understand how smart they were. The stairway was an amazing place to hide from the scorching heat. Also, it felt wonderful to run on the cool floor without sandals or socks. I also loved eating falafel in the street. In no time at all, I had become a gypsy myself.

The children in the yard were very friendly and we used to play together, even though we shared no common language. We just used gestures mixed with our own spoken tongue - "*Fangerl* was "*catch*" and "*enzap*" became hands up. "*Der Keiser schickt Soldaten aus*" was imported from the past straight to our yard.

My first encounter with school was devastating. I understood nothing except for math. I was used to be an A student and now I couldn't participate - I didn't even understand the questions asked. I had to learn the first chapter of Psalms by heart. My whole body protested as I did not understand a word. It was all Chinese to me. That chapter is still etched in my brain and I can to date recite it word for word.

The only good experience I had in school at that time was playing the new games I learned during recess in the schoolyard, including "*Hamor chadash*" and the "*bridge of gold*".

Romania in Israel

The strong connection with people from Czernowitz lasted for years after the war. When my parents happened upon someone from there, they immediately debriefed them – who were their parents? Which street did they live on? Where did they work? Did they possibly know a brother, a sister, a cousin of... In minutes, a web of information was bestowed upon them with news from home – those who lived, died, and got married, and what everyone was doing.

My parents were never nosey, but once the Czernowitz "app" was activated, they immediately inquired about relatives. Their social network was small but strong, and they longed to get any piece of information about it. In Israel, my dad longed for that connection and even used to ask



“Why isn’t there a Suceava street here, in Tel Aviv?”

For my mom, it was a continuance of her work - seeking relatives at the post office during the war. They kept me safe in Suceava and gave me a happy childhood. I was playful and rebellious and fearless, really because I didn’t understand how hard life was for them, and when I rejected my mothers’ cooking, I had no idea how hard it was for her to get food. Parents are always divided in their opinions on how to protect their children while preparing them for the world out there. There are those who expose the ugly parts of life to them early on. There are those who build a bubble around them, with a hope that the incubation period within the protective shell would give them strength to deal with the outer world. My parents chose the bubble, and I lived a nationalistic, fearless life under it. Like many other children in my generation, I mourned Stalin. When my father found it, he smiled. My mother elbowed him to keep it quiet.

Regardless of all the hardships, my parents never complained. They didn’t expect or feel that they deserved a savior. They did all they could, by themselves, in what was clearly an insane period in their lives. My father told me that life deals you a hand of cards. You can’t control what you’re dealt, but you can control how you play them. They did the best they could with theirs, walking with their head raised high. During times of hardship, my grandma used to wear a safe key on her neck to show that she had plenty. I think my mother learned how to deal with hardship from her.

And so, they believed that the past was in their heads, but the future was in their hands and acted accordingly.

Obviously, the bubble burst on the way to Hungary and to Israel. Years later, I identified clues and hits of the totalitarian regime. When I watched the movie “The Life of Others” it triggered memories and words that I heard at home too like *”Verwantzt”*, “The walls have ears”, etc.

I learned much from my parents, about the value of life, the importance of making difficult decisions and playing your hand as best you can, to be responsible for my own path in life, and to take everything with a grain of salt and be thankful for what I have. I thank them for what they have done for me and for my family. They were there for us with endless love and commitment.

What I miss

- The smell of the lilies and the beauty of spring flowers – toporasi, ghioceci, lacrimioare
- Collecting fresh nuts from the trees
- Hiking on paths covered in chestnut tree leaves during the autumn
- Holiday with the family in Mamaia and Eforie
- Dipping in the Suceava river with friends
- Hikes in Predeal
- Picnics in Cetate



- Riding a horse sleigh while their bells rang” Sanie cu zurgalai”
- The wide open spaces and playing in the snow
- The flavor of fresh cucumbers from our garden
- The taste of bread and butter, without fear of cholesterol
- My mom’s pickles on the shelf in the basement
- The scent of dust in the attic and all the treasures hiding there
- The milk and cheese that Ileana used to bring in her basket from the village
- The warmth of a just laid egg

And when I think of all those, I can’t but thank my parents that brought me here. I’d take the crazy Israelis over living abroad any day and am happy to enjoy the European spring as a tourist as often as I can.



2015, with old friends, at the first reunion of SUCEAVA Children group.
From the left: Senta, Poldi, I, Berty, Tzili, Gitta, Gerty. In the back on the left Rami and Lica,
In the back lancu between Tzili and Gitta

Identity

One day, I was playing with some kids downstairs when suddenly, one of them called me a “*Romanian thief*”. I didn’t understand. Was he talking about me?

When I was in Romania, I did everything to belong. I worked hard to become a Pionier in the scout, and wear the red scarf. Still, I was called a Jidan and told to get the hell out of, like all the other Jews. Here, in Israel, we were supposed to all be the same – Jewish,



proud Israelis. I did all I could to be an Israeli. But apparently, I still did not fully belong – I was still foreign.

The memories of Czernowitz, the capital of Bukovina, Vienna of the Austro-Hungarian Empire – they came with us to Israel. My parents remembered the good times they lived through there, the melting pot – a celebration of ethnicity. Practising Judaism without fear, as citizens with equal rights. Connected with the west through the German language and culture belonging to a modern and international society. That dream life that shattered when reality hit in the early 20th century. But the longing to that period and the feeling of wholeness was left within them. That nostalgia was passed to the next generation who grew up on the stories about the period, the language and culture.

When I first visited Austria, I told my husband that I felt like I landed back home. While I never physically lived through the Small Vienna experience, it was passed on to me and had been with me my whole life through stories shared by my parents and their friends, the food we ate (Cremeschnitte, Keiserschmarrn, Apfel Strudel, Dobos, Nusstorte), and the language we spoke at home. The views, scents, music, flavors and language I found in Austria so familiar. This same feeling hits me every time we return to it.

Unfortunately, that city was also where my parents experienced horrible antisemitism, where they wore their yellow star, were held in a Ghetto, were persecuted, and lost most of their family. During nostalgic moments I told my mother that we should visit Czernowitz in the Ukraine. Surprisingly, she said: *“Why would I go there? Everything I loved is gone”*. They had left Europe behind. They had been through the war and through communism, through persecution and loss. They had nothing left to go back to.

When I came to Israel, I brought with me a broken identity – I had to detach from my childhood memories and the Romanian language, and adopt the Israeli culture, songs, traditions and values – and I even got married to a Sabra. Today, I have a feeling of having a clearly defined identity – a proud Israeli. This feeling was especially strong when I walked through the labor camps in Poland – I had a country, I had a home, I had a nationality and a flag. And we survived.

That kid had naively pointed out to me that missing part of my identity. Only much later, and gradually, the fog lifted up on that beautiful, happy childhood memories and the parts that I left behind returned. Meeting again with friends from Suceava also helped reconnect with that childhood part of me that was severed when my dad spoke to me on the train on the way to Israel. I feel like it was a long journey, but I have finally managed to bring that child back home to Israel with me.



Today, I feel whole.

On a root-trip to Suceava, I visited my former school, "Stefan cel Mare". I left the place as a child, I returned as a grown up, confident, fully aware of who I am. The flags behind me are Romanian, but my reconciled heart, embracing all the memories, beats at an Israeli-Jewish pace.





My Family, my Childhood

Saul Grinberg

When I started thinking about my childhood, a faint stream of events evolved gradually into a strong current of touching memories.

I was born in Burdujeni on the outskirts of Suceava. Most Jews in Burdujeni were craftsmen, tailors, shoemakers or merchants who resourcefully managed to support their families. They raised their children according to the Jewish tradition.

In retrospect, I realize how blessed I was belonging to a warm, caring family.



My sister Estherica and I

to careful planning. My mother, and my grandfather ran the house. Two permanent housemaids lived to operate this well-oiled machine (household). The young help was from Solca village because they were found to be appropriately qualified in terms of Bucovina home education.

I grew up in a "mansion" that my grandfather and father have expanded in time on the land of the original house, which had been looted and partially demolished during deportation. Originally, there was a four-room house. Later, more rooms were added. A large well-equipped kitchen and a summer kitchen complemented the household. Plenty of trees grew behind the house, almost an orchard.



Hens and ducks peacefully wandered about and pecked grains in the vast yard; at Passover they were joined by a lamb. They all found their way to our plates according to a beautiful woman, with an iron fist – the gospodarie brought only from





Enjoying the winter time.

Since my mother wanted a bathroom in the house, an unheard luxury in those days, they started digging a hole in the yard to search for water. They had to dig deeper than it was initially planned because the underground water stream couldn't be easily reached. In the end, the deep hole in our yard turned into our own private water-well, since there was no suitable pump available to transport the water from the ground into the bathroom tub. To understand how precious a private well was at the time, I should be mentioning that on the street there was only one public well for the entire Jewish community.

Every now and then, the yard was bustling because... laundry day arrived. A fire was set in the yard, a huge container full of water was placed above the fire, the laundry was immersed into boiling soapy water, vigorously stirred and rubbed until cleaned. Once rubbed and cleansed, the bedding was starched and hung to dry. When it was time for ironing, two women were brought in: the launderer ironed only the bedding, and a shirt dressmaker ironed the small and delicate items. Other special events took place on pre-established occasions: in autumn, jams (*dulceata*) were prepared from all kind of fruits and, of course, plum-povidel (jam). To prepare it, the plums were cleaned, well washed, stoned and grounded with the help of a special manual appliance. Every two years, my grandfather Betzalel bought a special pot (*ceaun*) from the gypsies, who lived on the outskirts of the town. This large deep pot was used for cooking the plum mash for hours on the burner until it turned into thick and fragrant jam. The *ceaun* was highly essential to the process since the jam wouldn't stick to the side walls or singe.

Labels on the jars marked the kind of sweet treasure contents. The jam jars were carefully stored on shelves in the *bashca*, the upper floor of the basement (*pivnita*). Alongside there were also the pickled preserve jars. We pickled at home nearly everything: red peppers, apples, cucumbers, tomatoes, and watermelon.



The lower floor of the same basement was used to store various types of apples and potatoes on a bedding of soft sand.

To make the winter provisions perfect, we also stored nuts, garlic and onions and kept them in the boidem (attic). The meat smoking room was under the roof of the house as well. After the kosher slaughter, meat chunks were smoked into delicious kosher pastrami. My grandfather mastered this art as well as many other useful skills.

My grandfather's family originated from Galicia. When they arrived in Romania, they dwelled for a few years in the Cotnari region of Romania, which is famous for the grapes and the special wine processed in their wineries.

Therefore, wine was dear to grandpa's heart. He mastered the art of kosher wine production for our household needs. He never lost sight of the community needs – the comunitate (the society of the Jews in town, and most of the time he held the top position; therefore he produced kosher wine for the Jewish community as well.

Boxes with Cotnari grapes arrived at our door every year. Grandfather prepared a delicate and tasty wine from them. As well, he produced wine for the Jewish community in huge bottles from local grapes.

My father loved making wine from macesse, a type of aromatic rosehip.

We had everything we needed. We lived a peaceful and happy life until my father was incarcerated.



From the left: grandfather, mom, I and dad



Mother, a beautiful woman, came from Chisinau to marry father. In the late 1930s, the region started to change hands frequently between Romania and the Soviet Union. Pogroms started occurring, especially against Jews. Mother told me that when she came to meet father for the first time, she saw with her own eyes how Jews were thrown out from a traveling train. My mother had 5 brothers. Her family owned a textile store in the center of town on Alexandrovski Street. My mother's entire extended family didn't survive the Holocaust. Upon the invasion of the German forces during Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, the Jewish population was exterminated.

My mother was an educated woman, a graduate of Chisinau high school. She spoke Russian just as well as she spoke Romanian. Her familiarity with the Russian language and the ways of the farmers allowed her to save her new family, as one of our acquaintances, Avramel, told in his story about life in Transnistria. In addition to theoretical studies, my mother mastered artistic sewing. She excelled in it. The skill served her well in Transnistria. She crafted dolls by hand and sold them to local inhabitants for a few basic food products that were barely sufficient to keep the family going.

When our family was deported, my mother was pregnant. In Lucinetz, she gave birth to a baby boy. At that time, my father was drafted into the Romanian army and was stationed in Targu Jiu. My mother and many members of our family got sick with typhoid fever. When temperature broke down and they regained consciousness, the little baby was gone. The

other family, who shared the room with ours, told them that the baby had died. To this day, we don't have any piece of information about my brother. I have to mention that, right after his birth, he was given the name David and was circumcised with the assistance of my grandfather.

My father was frequently incarcerated in Romania before and after the communist regime came to power. Once, he served time with Rabbi Rosen. My mother used to visit father and bring him food. On one of these occasions, she introduced Moshe Rosen to his future wife, Amalia from Burdujeni.

Later on, my mother was a good friend of Liuba Kishinevski, whose husband, Josef Kishinevski,



was an important personality in the communist party during Ana Pauker's government. On one occasion mother took me to Govora (a Romanian resort) to meet her friend Liuba, who was staying at one of the special guest houses designed for party members only.

My father was sentenced to death by the Romanian judiciary system. Mrs. Atudosiei (my physics teacher) was married to the prosecutor in my father's trial. After reading the sentence, the teacher came to me and begged for my forgiveness in her name and in her husband's name, stating that the outcome of the trial was concocted at the highest levels of the communist apparatus. Therefore, the prosecutor followed his superiors' orders.

Subsequently, the death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

Between junior high and high school, there was an admittance exam. The Jewish students were closely scrutinized and passing the exam wasn't an easy task. When I was tested orally, I remembered a paper I wrote about Vasile Alecsandri's works (a Romanian poet). Therefore, I answered very well. Mrs. Vigder, the head of the admittance committee in Burdujeni, knew my situation (that my father was imprisoned).



After the examination was over, even before the results were made public, she looked for me and told me: "*Te-am primit!*" ("You have been accepted!"). I was extremely happy and eternally grateful to Mrs. Vigder.





My Grandfather - Betzalel Grinberg

Saul Grinberg

The place: Burdujeni, a suburb of Suceava.

The time: the early 60s on Yom Kippur at the Great Synagogue, The Temple, in Burdujeni.

Standing in front of the Teiva, my grandfather, Batzalel Grinberg is praying Kol Nidrei with a radiant face, dressed in white and wrapped in his tallith, on his head the cantor's white cap (mitznefet). According to tradition, on Yom Kippur the fate of every human being is being sealed.

My grandfather, a handsome Jew, head of the Jewish Community, shaliah tzibbur, carries his community members' heartfelt prayers to The Almighty and begs to accept his sincere repentance; he prays that He, who seals destinies in the Book of Life, will grant everyone a healthy, happy New Year.

I am 12 years old and I am standing in the corner before stepping into the prayer hall. I watch my grandfather with pride and everlasting love. Every day, he is my own grandfather, but today, he is the messenger of the entire community, the one who leads worship. His wonderful serene tenor voice tugs my heartstrings and those of all the Jews in the synagogue. The great hall, packed with praying people, is enshrouded in sheer silence. I am listening to the ancient tune and to the words of the prayer "Kol Nidrei ve asrei ve shvuei ve haramei...".

Steadily and calmly, my grandfather recites wholeheartedly, the powerful words "Hear, oh Israel, The Lord is Our G-d, the Lord is One. Blessed be the name of His kingdom for ever and ever". The beauty of his voice, the intonation moves the people, brings tears to everyone's eyes. He recites "Myom HaKipurim shavar ad Yom HaKipurim ze ad Yom HaKipurim haba aleinu letova". And, thus, with faith in the Holy One, blessed be He, my grandfather tries



to untangle the vows and prepare the public for the long series of prayers for the Holy Day. At Neilah prayer, at the end of the Holy Day, the Ark stays open for the entire service, signifying the Gates of Heaven, which are still widely open until the verdict is finalized .

The Neilah service ends with the shofar blows and the ancient Jewish wish "*Next Year in Jerusalem*".

I feel fortunate to have had such a man in my life. As a child and teenager, he was both grandfather and father to me, since his son, my father, was imprisoned for many years. I met my father for short periods at different prisons all over Romania.

Grandfather was a special person not only to me. As it turned out, the members of the community considered him to be a special, interesting, educated and, especially, astute person, able to cope with the most difficult situations.



My grandparents

As a young man, 12 years before I was born, this extraordinary man crossed the Atlantic and, after a grueling journey, reached the US. The readers of these lines are used to travelling to faraway lands. However, this was not the case during the 1930's. Very few people, if any, left their native town to go to the capital city, Bucharest. A trip to the United States was considered a journey "in space". I can only imagine what my grandfather had to go through on this journey which demanded strength and patience and which took a month to complete.

First, he took the train from Burdujeni to Bucharest and from there to Constantza, the port-town on the shores of the Black Sea. Then, he boarded a ship to New York, where he, again, took the train.

The destination was at one time Denver, Colorado, another time – Akron, Ohio. The intended aim was to be the main cantor during the Days of Awe. His prayers and singing were usually accompanied by a choir.

In fulfilling his mission he was successfully aided not only by his faith and his talent, but also by his special traits, among which there was a perfect understanding of the human soul and of other people's needs.

On the 26th September, 1935, an American newspaper announced excitedly the arrival of the cantor Batzalel Grinberg from Romania to act as shaliah tzibbur. My grandfather had made this journey many times during the years that preceded WWII. I suppose that he thought numerous times about the possibility of moving to the United States. However, the temptation was overpowered by the longing for the "little paradise" he created in Burdujeni.

My grandfather and his family were deported to Transnistria in 1941.



THE AKRON TIMES-STAR
 READY FOR CELEBRATION OF HASHONAH, JEWISH NEW YEAR

**OF AUGUST
 N PREACHERS
 ROM VACATIONS**

ing Cities Fill Pulpits
 Make Arrangements
 Pastors Here

Many Akron pastors and other
 ministers have returned and
 are now making arrangements to
 resume their duties here in the
 coming week.

**CHURCH PAPER
 GIVES WARNING**

"Akron Disciple" Published
 in Interest of High Street
 Church of Christ

"The Akron Disciple" published
 in the interest of High Street
 Church of Christ, the Rev. George
 W. Morgan, pastor, announces
 warning to the work's prohibition
 "disciple" in which will cause
 to be removed. The paper is
 not being published, but
 making the matter generally
 known.

**'CHRIST' IS SUBJECT
 OF LESSON-SERMON**

**Gospel Spread
 By Persecution**

**NAZARENE CHURCH
 HAS HOMECOMING**



מדי חגיגות יום א' שנת ה'תרפ"א



Cantor Greenberg and his Choir

Services for High Holidays
 at the United Modern Orthodox Congregation
 AKRON JEWISH CENTER 750 BALCH STREET

SEPTEMBER 17, 18th, & 26th



Dragă Soră
 Îți trimit spre curiozitate
 această fotografie să
 arăți la toate familiile
 situația în care am ajuns
 și să le rog să mă
 ajute foarte repede. Dragă

Here is a note that survived Holocaust, it states "Dear sister, I send you my picture, show it to all members of our family, look what happened to us, please help us as quickly as possible".

Would you think that it is the same person?





My Sisters

Senta Grill

Friday at noon is a magical time. No matter the season, the sun shines softly, sending golden glints through the window towards the room, transforming the familiar space into a surrealistic island of tranquility, pleasantness and charm.

During these hours, I have always felt how Fridays prepare me, my family and our apartment for receiving the getting near Sabbath.

In this idyllic serenity, after finishing the house chores, washing the dishes and cleaning and organizing the house, I get into my bed and cry. I cry a lot every Friday afternoon, a kind of permanent ritual. Sometimes I fall asleep crying. The thought of my two sisters whom I never met keeps coming to me over and over again. I cry for them since their fate isn't clear to me, I cry for myself because I remained an only child and I didn't get to know them, I cry bitterly for my father who didn't know anything about what happened to them, mourning them in silence his entire life. I know their names: Roza and Ana. Two beautiful names. I pronounce them and feel their sweetness on my lips.



I was born in Suceava after the war. Here are my parents and I.

I was sure I am an only child to my parents.

In our house in Suceava I was never told about my father's family before the Holocaust. I always felt that there was something I was shielded from, but I couldn't understand what it was.

Before the war my father lived in Stroznitz, a town near Cernowitz, Bucovina, where he had a family. When the Jews were deported to Transnistria, he, his wife and their two daughters, Roza and Ana, were thrown into the unknown. His wife, the girls' mother, died immediately after they were deported.

My father refused to talk about the hell he had been through. I know that, at a certain point, being afraid of the persecution, he sent the girls, 11-year-old Roza and 8-year-old Ana, to the orphanage in Moghilev. At the end of the war, he was told that all the children at the orphanage died. He



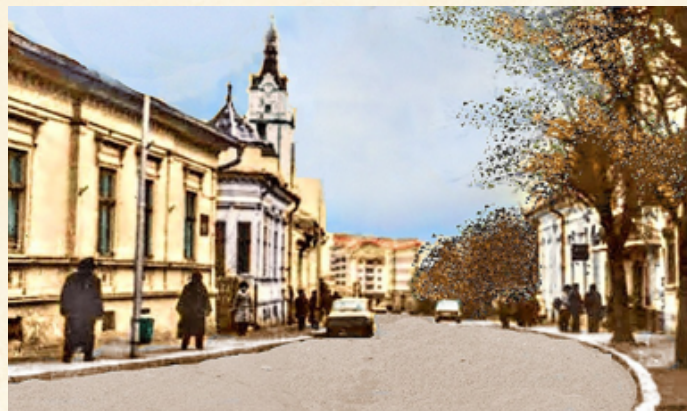


The pretty woman standing in the middle was my father's first wife. My father by her side on the right. The young girl wearing a dark coat is one of my sisters.

himself was drafted into the Red Army.
My sisters' fate remained enshrouded in mystery.
After the war people tried to build a new life.



Mom and dad



The house we lived in,
on Stefan cel Mare str. opposite the town cinema hall.





Our neighbor's daughter Collette Itzig with the white cat in her lap, I kneel down.



From the left: Gitta Weitmann, Senta, Gita Ostfeld.



In the yard

When I was 16, a neighbor from Suceava told me: "You look so much like your sister Roza!" I was stunned. I knew I was an only child. What was she talking about ?!! At this moment, my mother, who married my father after the war, agreed for the first time to tell me and to confirm the fact that before the war my father had another family and, as part of it, he had two daughters. Searching for Roza and Ana took me from reverie to reality and back, oscillating between hope and desperation, switching permanently between extremes, feeling more disappointment and a sense of missed opportunity. Why am I not able to discover what happened to them? The thought that



I have lost the race, that the narrative of their lives will remain indeterminate is concealed deep in my heart and raises its head, every time I find a moment of peace in my daily life.

I examined and embraced every piece of information. I approached Jewish organizations, Yad Vashem, The Red Cross, but all was in vain. My daughter and my son who grew in the shadow of the searches identified with me and always helped. Once my daughter Carmel found a cousin of my father's, other time I found a woman who was sure that, as a child in the same orphanage in Moghilev, she knew my sisters. According to her, one of them died and the other survived. What happened to her? Nobody knows.

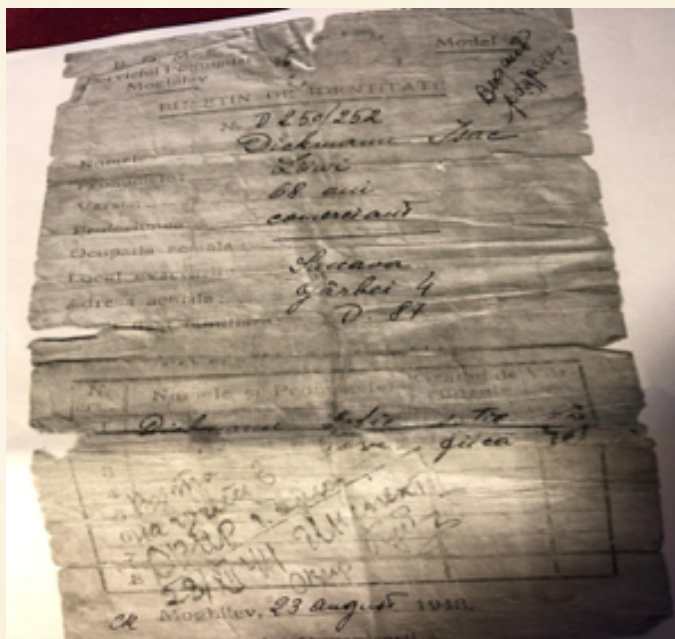
Is it possible that two human beings vanished without a trace? My heart refused to believe even if my head said "That's enough!"

The little that I know today, thanks to my son, Dor, comes from the opening and publishing of the Moghilev archives.

Years of searching and connecting every piece of information I obtained led to:

- Ana and Roza lived during the war in the Moghilev orphanage, strengthened each other and, apparently, died of hunger. One of the women who survived and knew Roza and Ana told me that till the bitter end they sang the songs our father taught them.
- Only in 2018, when the archives were opened in the Ukraine, my son, Dor, found an unequivocal written account that closes the sad chain of events. My dear sisters died in the orphanage and were buried in a mass grave.

I am still thinking a lot about them, but I took comfort that, finally, I know what happened to them and that they found solace in one another in their most strenuous days.



My mother's father Mr. Dickman





My Story

Sheni Schechter

My parents, Bertha and Zemvel got married in 1940 in Radauti, Bukovina.

My mom was born in Cacica, my father in Milisauti, two villages in Suceava County. They settled in Gura Humora. In 1941 they were deported to Transnistria along with their families. I was born in 1944 in Moghilev on Poltavaska street. The Russian occupied Moghilev when I was 9 days old. They forced my dad to join the Red Army. He came back only in 1946. In the meantime mom joined her family and returned home to Gura Humora. We settled in Suceava only after father joined us in 1946.



The last building, before the school building, is the place we lived.
Foto Dimitrie Balint.

Lotty Scherzer and Liuba Hoffer lived in neighboring apartments. Later, Pia and her family joined and lived next to us in the same yard.



from the left: Pia, I, ...



My mother got sick with endocarditis – an inflammation of the heart. Her situation was critical. We had luck. My mother's sisters who lived in the US sent penicillin which saved mom's life.

My father worked at the Alimentara along with Beni Budic's father. I attended kindergarten and later the Girl's School (the building you see in the far end of the picture).

Our apartment had a joined wall with my first class room. From my window I could see the kids playing in the yard even when I couldn't attend school because I was sick.



With friends at parties and at school
From the right: Meir Hubner (Perry's son), Gerty Wasserman.
standing on the right: Sasha Lechner, late Esterica Grinberg,
Liuba Höffer, Jenitza from Bucharest, Shanny Shechter, Relu
and Gitta Fairstein.
Shoshana Fischler and little Claris's daughter



From the left: D-na Surkis, Liuba Hoffer, Anisoara Delnea, Gaby Damaschin, Shoshana Fischler.
Sitting: Sheny Schechter, x, Gitta Rosenthal





Here I am with my school friends

I am the fourth from the right. In the picture, next to me, Estherica Grinberg with her long braids, Relu Faienstein, Gitta Rosenthal.

Other girls in my class were Liuba Hoffer, Shoshana Fishler and the guys: Nelu Eidinger, Sasha Lechner.

In 1957 Liuba's mom and my mom went to Bucharest in

order to submit documents for departure to Israel. At that time it was impossible to ask for visa at the Suceava police station. Liuba and her family got almost immediate approval while we waited until 1965 to leave Romania.



During winter time with my friends Gerty Wassermann and Gerty Weitmann



From the left: Pia, her father Burshi, I, her mother Medi

We left for Israel on August 23, which was Romania's Independence Day.





My Story

Shuki Lakner-Moscovici

My name is Shuki Moscovici Lakner. Lakner was the name of my father, Moscovici is the name of my step-father.

I was born in Suceava on August 28, 1938.

In 1941 my mother, father and I (3 years old), were deported to Transnistria along with the entire Suceava Jewish community.

First, we were packed into cattle wagons. The first train stop was Ataky next to the Dniester River. A few families hired a cart and horse. Our modest luggage and the children sat on the cart, the parents and the grownups marched, pushing the cart, helping the tired horse on the way to the Dniester River bank. The bridge over the river was bombarded therefore the crossing was done by improvised floats made of some loosely strapped wooden



This is my family

planks. It terrified the exhausted deportees, who never experienced something similar before. Since people were not used to this kind of transport, some slipped, fell and drowned in the cold waters. Finally, we reached the other bank. We were in Moghilev, Ukraine. Romanian soldiers forced us to march; whoever couldn't keep pace was shot on the spot.

The ordeal I was forced to witness is beyond anyone's imagination. Each morning two men pushed a two-wheel cart full of skeleton corpses. Many were innocent victims of cruelty and of the harsh living conditions.

My family was sent to Shargorod along with many other Suceava Jews. My father, who was ill at the time, was taken to forced labor. He was beaten to death; he was brought back home dead and frozen. After some more weeks in Shargorod, my mom's uncle fetched us and we moved to Moghilev to join our relatives. My mom found a place for us to live. It was a room which was already shared by three families; we were the fourth. Therefore, we got the worst place in the room – near the door. Each time the door opened a freezing gust of wind would rush into the room over us. Covered in the few rags we still had, we did the best we could to protect ourselves.



One day, mother went to the market to sell father's suit and get some food for us. At that time, mother had not yet married Mr. Moscovici— who lived with his family in the same room as we. Mom was late and I was so terribly hungry that I started crying. The daughter of Mr. Moscovici, older than me, was bullying me, saying: "Don't cry, your mother won't come back. The Germans caught her. "SHE IS GOING TO DIE". She went on and on and I cried my eyes out.

Hunger was overwhelming. The Moscovici baked bread to sell. Before baking, the dough was weighed on the scale. Desperately, I scratched the dough left on the braces of the scale. Sucking the fingers covered in dough got me terrible stomach aches. To relieve myself I ran outside, thinking I got diarrhea. Forcing hard and in vain, had a terrible effect: a part of my digestive tract broke out. The pain was excruciating and I couldn't stop crying and wailing.

Finally, mother returned home. She calmed me gently, warmed her palms in hot water and then, smoothly, little by little, pushed my guts back inside.

Do you know why they didn't send us to Auschwitz? not that they didn't intend to. There was a shortage of means of transport. They needed trains and trucks, to send food and ammunition to the front – that was the reason.

In Moghilev we lived near the train station. The Russians, as well as the Germans, were constantly looking for railroads to bomb. Under the house we lived in was a large basement with wooden pillars. As the place was partly flooded the wood rot, which produced a terrible stench in the place: a stench of odor and terror, as the basement was also a shelter during the bombardments. A neighbor's family came to hide as well. After a while, the father of the family stood up and declared the place was not secure. He was worried the wood could catch fire if a bomb hit the house and as such was concerned for the safety of his wife and two daughters. Before leaving, he asked my mother if she would join them. Mother replied that she would rather stay put, whatever happens. The man took his family and started running to the opposite side of the road towards a solid school building. A bomb caught the family in the middle of the street and killed all four.

In Moghilev there was a working foundry "Turnatoria" which casted grenades.

By that time, my mother got married to Moscovici by a local rabbi. I still have the "*ketubah*" as it was hand written in Moghilev.

Many Jews from Suceava, living in Moghilev, were sent to forced labor, deep into Russian territory, Estonia, White Russia for a period of two and a half years. Their task was to repair the runways primarily damaged by bombings. My stepfather was taken as well. We didn't get any news from



him for a very long time. Therefore, my mother had to provide for three children; a very difficult situation in those conditions.

The Queen of Romania requested the return of the Jewish orphans from Transnistria to Romania. I was an orphan kid. Mother always said I am as precious as her eyesight and that having come so far, she would never consider parting. My stepsister and brother insisted and pressed to give me up. Occasionally we got some maize or potato peals.

One day, mother took a bucket and went to get some water from the nearest fountain. I went with her. Nearby stood a Romanian soldier with a young Ukrainian. In the desire to show off, he lowered the rifle and hit my mom many times with terrible blows, leaving her swollen and crying. A Jew heard her wails. It was Mr. Weiss. He asked what happened. She told him, a soldier beat her to death. Then, the man asked where we live. My mom told him "Poltavska street". He went on and asked whether she has something for me to eat. Instead of replying, my mom wept softly. Then, Mr. Weiss said "send the boy every day and I will give him two slices of bread". I remember clearly sitting on a trunk of a downed tree waiting for hours to get the bread. When I finally got the bread, I took it home. Mother would cut it into small cubes. At night when I was weeping out of hunger mother would feed me a cube. This is how we survived !.

After the war, on the way home, we stopped in Briceni for several months because the border with Romania was closed. In Briceni I ended up going to school.

One day, mother was arrested, being suspected of illegal trade. Four soldiers, fully armed, took mom and us, the children, to the police station. An officer from the NKVD interrogated her in Russian. I was the translator because I had already learned Russian from the children I played with. After a long interrogation and despite the threats and accusations, mom kept saying she is innocent and had no knowledge of illegal dealers. Mother's cousins, who lived near the market, had all kind of businesses but mother didn't divulge their names or dealings. In the end before releasing mom, the officer said in Yiddish "*I am a Jew as well*". It was obvious he understood mother's words and mine, but he never interfered or corrected me.

How did we survive? We bought sunflower seeds, part we grinded into oil other kernels were fried and salted. On Thursday market day, we would sell it in a newspaper cornet. Fried "*sonchiks*" we called it.

One winter day, I accepted one of my mother's cousin's invitation and I joined the ride on his cart. I was not aware of the fact that his merchandise, all kind of groceries, was hidden under a wooden plank. Above it he would offer a ride to a lot of small children. The ride went on until it was almost



dark. Realizing that it was late, I got off the cart and headed home. I was sure mother was worried. The piles of snow on both sides of the road were high, I could see just straight ahead. I was lost. Then, I decided to go toward the direction I heard shouting. I was sure it was my mother. Being afraid she would punish me and hit me I went into my aunt's house. The beating and blows I got from her I will never forget. Screaming and hitting she kept asking: "*why didn't you tell us where you went, why didn't you tell with whom*"?.

Finally, the border opened and we went back to Suceava. Our apartment at Mr. David Winter's house on Ion Creanga Street was available but Mr. Winter refused to let us in. He welcomed my mother and me but he didn't want the two older kids on account that they were never his tenants. He claimed that they will be noisy and he wanted to avoid noise at all cost. At first we underwent a "sit-down strike"; we sat on a blanket on the grass and waited for Mr. Winter to change his decision.

Understanding that the situation is not going to change we were happy to get a room at our family's house. A large room, once used to be a kitchen, now it could be used as our room. We decided to clean it. Everyone did his bit.

Then we covered the broken windows with bedsheets and slept on the floor.

Suddenly, my mom saw our beautiful walnut furniture on a cart ready to be sent to someone who had just bought it. My mother told the man that those were her furniture and if he is unwilling to return it, she would report him.

My stepfather returned from the war. He got a job as a butcher in Vatra Dornei, therefore moving once again. We rented a flat in a house that was once owned by a Jewish family. Now it belonged to a Christian whose name was Ion Satula. Before the war, he was a loyalist of the Legionari (Iron Guard fascist party). He had a car on which he pasted the logo "Death to Jews".

In 1974, I went back to Romania for a visit. I wanted very much to meet Ion Satula, to have my revenge. I planned to invite him to my hotel, offer him drinks, as he was a drunk, and tell him: "*look at your situation- no more car with logo "Death to Jews", and look at me*". But Satula had died so I could meet only his wife and I asked her if she remembers me. As I was a kid at the time she wasn't able to recognize me. I stomped my feet several times on the floor –and then she remembered! "*You are the child from upstairs*"!.





My Story

Shie Rosenbaum

I am the eldest son of Essia and Avraham Rosenbaum.

I was born during my mother's journey to Suceava after WWII in 1945. Labor started when she was on the train. My mother was taken off the train in Ungheni, because of the intensifying pains. There is no doubt that wars bring disasters. Nevertheless, people cling to glimmers of hope even in the most difficult times. For my dad and mom love blossomed in those dark days; my father a



My family: mom, dad my brother and I

native of Suceava met my mother in Shargorod, Ukraine, when he was deported to Transnistria. My father had three brother. Two of his brothers and his father disappeared during the war. My father's sister Yetti died giving birth in Transnistria to her baby daughter. The baby died as well during childbirth.

Shargorod was a small town in the Ukraine; before the war, it was mostly populated by Jews. My mother's last name was Progranichniy ("border guard"). My grandmother was a seamstress, my grandfather was a furrier. They had three children: Essia the eldest (my mother), Arkady (Avrom), Semen (Sholem). At the outbreak of the war in June 1941, the Jews of the Ukraine suffered greatly, most of them were murdered by the Germans.



Grandpa was drafted into the Red Army. It is not clear in which battle he was killed. To this day the family does not know where he was buried.

Mother and grandmother were left alone in Shargorod, which in the meantime became a camp. The police expropriated their possession under beatings and threats.

Mother and grandmother were sent to perform hard labor tasks; cops kept hitting and speeding them to keep up a fast pace of work. Arkady studied Law. He was appointed to the position of military prosecutor. He fought in the Red Army. After being wounded in one of the battles, his injury was badly treated. Part of his hand was incorrectly adjusted to the body, therefore it remained stuck to his body. Shulem, the other brother, was sent to Trihati, the forced labor camp on the Dniester. There he met my future dad. Shulem survived the camp. After the war he worked as a driver's teacher in Czernowitz on Kabilenskia street, the main street in the city.

Upon his return from Trihati, father met my mom and they got married. This is how in 1945 on the train-ride to Suceava, I was about to be born.

At the end of the war, Arkady, the Major, returned to Shargorod as prosecutor. He helped my grandmother to recover part of the stolen property.

About a year after the end of the war, my parents tried to cross the border illegally and leave



My mother's Ukrainian friends

Romania. As they waited for the right moment, hidden next to the Hungarian border, I (at the time a little baby) began to cry. The guards at the border discovered us, put dad in custody for a few days. Eventually, we returned to Suceava.

We lived next to Sfintu Dumitru Church. My mother was an excellent cook and baker. Our home was always open to friends of my parents and their children. My mother's friends were always welcome. In Suceava they were called "the Russian women". Jenny Weidenfeld, Dorly's mother, was like a sister to my mother. Fanny Eidinger, a Murafa native, Nelu's mother, was her kindred spirit. Nelu is my friend. All these Ukrainian women who married men from Suceava kept in close warm relationship. Fira Goldshmidt, Havale Salzman, Sheindale Gitter, Haika Stahl, Hannah Zandberg, Raya Bogen, Clara Grossman, all friends of my mother.



Prior to deportation, my father worked for Mr. Fuchs, a wholesale food retailer. Dad worked for him even after he came back home in 1945, but when the place was closed, dad turned to Mr. Distelfeld and began trading in foreign currency and gold. It was a very risky line of work, but also a highly profitable one. The trade of foreign currency was strictly prohibited; long jail sentences were imposed on those who dared to defy the law. Evidently, in those years the financial situation of my family improved greatly. Mom got two maids to help her in the household.

Mom and I visited grandma in the 50s-60s several times. My maternal grandma was still living in Shargorod, Ukraine. She was able to rebuild and live a fulfilling life. Since I lost a lot of school hours, I needed help. Gita Rosenthal, a very good student in my class, and a good soul was the one who handed me the missing material upon my return. This is how I completed what I had lost.

I was a quiet, well behaved boy but I was involved in pranks with my friends.

With Nelu and Adi Hecht I played soccer countless times. Gerty used to watch and cheer to encourage us. Hannah Kurtz reminds me today that I used to harass her.

During one of the school breaks Mendel Moskovitz and I hid under the stage on which the teacher's table and chair were placed. Our history teacher, Mr. Butnaru, an older pleasant-mannered man, entered the classroom. He sat down in his usual place. We both, hidden under the stage, moved it until it began to sway. The worried teacher turned to the students and said "Get out quickly, an earthquake is happening".



Nelu and Cuta, my friends. I am standing behind them

In my parental grandma's yard in Burdujeni, grew fine trees: a pear tree and a tall walnut tree. I used to climb the trees and pick the fruit. Once, dad was looking for me but couldn't see me hiding among the branches. Out of fear, I fell from the tree. I used to hide the picked fruits inside my shirt. Wgen I picked green nuts my chest went purple from the iodine secretion of the fresh nuts.





Suceava, a Provincial Town.

Tamara Hirshhorn

My family origins go back to Austria and Poland. My grandmother, Ana Lauer Rechtshendler, was a native of Poland and my father's relatives were Austrian. My mother and father were born in Romania. My grandmother Chane was widowed during WW I, raised alone three small children – my mother, Rita Lauer's father, Pini, and Leibu. Leibu, the first born, Saly, his wife, and Ady, their son, died of hunger, cold and illness on the way to Transnistria. My grandmother lived with us after the war and we all loved her immensely. She mourned her beloved son's death all her life. We lived on Armeneasca Street in a house with a big and beautiful garden; fruit trees, lilac bushes and flowers adorned the place.

My childhood was quite lonely.

I didn't have any brothers or sisters, only a few friends – Haiutza Schmelzer, Betty Merdler, Etty and Betica Goldenberg, and my cousin, Rita. However, not all of them studied with me at the same school (Stefan cel Mare high-school) nor did they live next to me. My dear friends Viky and her sisters, Daniela and



At kindergarten play



In front of my house

Suzy, lived in Falticeni. My friend at school was Iosale Fuhrman, who was seen smoking while riding a cow (being religious his family had a cow for kashrut purposes) and, consequently, was expelled from school for three days. Now he is an important rabbi in Jerusalem. Other friends of mine were Lacramioara Fartais, with whom I am still best friends, Paul Gheorghiu, with whom I prepared notes to cheat at math tests, and Rodica Varhov. At her house I saw for the first time T.V. broadcast, including international programs OTI. I could go on talking about Corina (Brindusa) Costiuc, Florin Cojocar, Mihai Murarescu. In my class there were also, Didi Copelovich, Berta Goldstein, Ani Zaidler.

I used to spend the long summer Sundays on Zamca, reading books in the middle of "tremurici"



fields (a plant that would wave gently in the breeze). From the place I used to sit I could see Zamca Monastery's ruins and, at a distance, the village Scheia with its river and the white peasant houses. For me, this was a romantic, sweet and sour period in my life...

We were young and, as a result, sometimes we would behave foolishly. We would skip math lessons and hide in my garden. One dark winter night, Paul, Iosele, Lacramioara and I were in my house. Snow covered everything. Iosele went home to bring something and, upon his return, he didn't see the glass door in the hall. He walked straight through it, bumping his head. We had to take him to the Crucea Rosie (Red Cross). In spite of being an "*enfant terrible*", Iosele was intelligent, kind but restless.

My parents, like many other families, didn't have an easy life in Romania. They worked hard and suffered from the war consequences. When I reached adulthood, I realized that my future isn't in Romania. Without my parent's knowledge, in secret, I applied for immigration to Israel. I concealed the information from my parents knowing that Israel would be a difficult place for them – they didn't have money, or family and they didn't speak Hebrew. One of my father's acquaintances, who was working at the police station called and told him that I want to leave the country. My poor father, surprised and scared, came home and told my mother. An odyssey started... My mother didn't want to leave for Israel. I tried to calm them down and told them that first I would leave alone, to experience the new place. Only then I would spare no effort to bring them too. It was a real Greek tragedy!

My father couldn't even consider to let me go alone; he decided that we would leave together. It was an excruciating year. First, I had to leave behind everything dear to me – my beautiful garden, my beloved dog, the place I grew up in. Then, my father lost his work, the way Romanian authorities dealt with all Jews who wanted to immigrate to Israel.

The departure day had finally come and we left to the train station with the few things we were allowed to carry, still being afraid that something bad could happen. Nobody was at the train station. By the train there were two people waving at us – Lacramioara and her mother. A farewell parting like the one seen only in the movies!

When we reached Bucharest, at the airport, another surprise! My dear Vicky and her family were also leaving Romania for Italy. She didn't know we were leaving and we didn't know about them. It was absolutely forbidden to communicate.

Finally, we arrived in the Holy Land. For me it was freedom, for my parents – another very challenging step.





My dad, mom and I at the "maabara" in Israel.

The nine years spent in Israel passed quite fast between studies and work. I got married and after 4 years we left for Mexico. Now my two boys took my place in Israel. And this is how 44 years have passed. My parents lived near us in Mexico, for the last nine years of their lives, they had a beautiful apartment, close to us, they got to know their grandchildren, they went to a Jewish club where they met and talked in Yiddish and, at least, my father was happy. My father died in 1988 and my mom – three years later, in 1991.





Childhood Memories - Suceava 1946-1959

Tony Silber

When I was asked to put in writing my memories from my native town Suceava it seemed odd to me. After all, I immigrated to Israel at an early age, 13. All these years I haven't had any connection with Romania and I don't have any family or close friends there. However, the first 12 years of a person's life leave an imprint in memory. I am still speaking Romanian and German and I am still emotional when I hear a Romanian romance song. I have very few memories from my parents' house, but I will try to describe some honouring my parents' memory and for my children's sake.

I was born in Suceava in January 1946 to Fani (Fantzia) Silber (nee Fallenbaum) and Gabriel Silber.

My paternal grandparents, Rachel and Alter Silber, came from Galicia, Poland to the Czernowitz area.



My dad was born in a place (a village or a small town) called Kucerul Mare. The family moved later to Suceava, where they earned their living in a glassware shop. I didn't know them. My grandfather is buried in Suceava, my

grandmother immigrated to New York with one of her sons immediately after the war before I was born or soon after it.





The Silber brothers: Feivel, Motel, Sol, Iosel, Shloime, and my father, Gavril



My mom was born in Suceava, 1912, to Meir Fallenbaum and Tony Blazenstein. My grandpa was born in a small village Balaceana in the region of Suceava. My grandma was born in Gura Humor. They were married in Suceava where they lived.

My mom became an orphan at the age of 6, when her mom died of the Spanish flu. Meir, her father, remarried Feiga Schaechner.

She raised my mom as well as her two sons from Meir – Bibi (Yehoshua Fallenbaum) and David (Dudel Fallenbaum).

My mom always told me that there was no differential treatment between her and the boys. Grandma Feiga brought her up as if she had been her own daughter. Feiga immigrated to Israel following her son Bibi, Joshua Etzion, in 1950, when I was still a little girl. My uncle Bibi emigrated to Israel in 1947 with Beitar youth movement.

Grandma Feiga was grandma Rachel Silber's sister, that's how my father met my mother, so they were cousins without blood connection.



My mom





Picture on the right: my mother's half brother, David (Dudel), Gita my cousin, Mina his wife and her mother.
On the other picture Bibi (Yehoshua Fallenbaum), the other half brother and his bride Shela Schweitzer .

After the wedding, my parents opened a glassware store.

War broke out and my parents were deported to Transnistria, in 1941. My mom was in Murafa with her parents-in-law and her brother Bibi. Dudel, her bigger brother was sent to a labour



camp. My father was separated from mom, being sent to a labour camp (maybe to Trihati, as I remember the name being mentioned in our house). I don't know any details since my father never talked about that period of his life and I never asked. As I was told, my father was nearly killed in a forced labour camp. I read Aharon Appelfeld's book "מכרות הקרח" (*The Ice Quarries*) where he describes what happened to the Jews who were sent to labour camps in this region. This was the first time I understood what my father really had been through. I read and cried.

In Murafa, my mom, her husband's parents, grandma Feiga and my mom's younger brother, Bibi, were sent to live in a small, dilapidated place which was part of a local Jewish family house. The conditions were extremely difficult and there was a terrible lack of food. Mom said she sold her new bedclothes she brought along and, so, she could buy some food. I also remember that she said they had to eat potato peels.

How did my parents get to Transnistria? Did they travel by cart, did they walk in convoy? What did they suffer on their way? We never talked about it. Both my parents returned after the war exhausted and sick. My dad suffered from liver disease and my mother from renal tuberculosis, because of which she underwent nephrectomy in Suceava. Mom returned to their Suceava home





With my parents in Slanic Moldova

before my dad. When my dad returned from the the work camp, standing at the entrance of the house, mother barely recognized her own husband. He was thin, dressed in torn clothes and full of lice.

The memory of that time was always alive in our house, but I, as a child, wasn't aware of the situation, my parents doing their best to offer me a regular, happy childhood.

However, today I understand that that terrible period had an impact on our family life.

After the war my father worked in Suceava as a glass cutter for a government-held cooperative. While he was in the work camp, dad met a Russian man who taught him how to make kaleidoscopes for children. My mom also helped. She fixed little colourful pieces of glass in our own kitchen, putting them into carton rolls my dad made. As much as I know,

my parents were at that time the only ones in Romania who

made those toys. My father was called "Silber-golden hands" because of his skillful ingenuity. He used a diamond cutter to cut and engrave on glass showcases different models and more...

Where did my father get a diamond cutter? My dad had a brother called Shloime Silber, who left Romania before the war for France. He survived the war due to his fine command of the German language and his Arian looks. He worked as a translator for the Germans. After war, he used to send us small packages with candies. Among the candies, he hid from time to time a diamond cutter.

My parents were observant Jews. My father was a Zionist. He wanted to immigrate to Israel immediately after the war, but the authorities didn't allow them. The approval came only in 1959. My dad was very happy, but my mom found it more difficult to deal with the change.

I was left with many unanswered questions about my family's life before and during the war. Unfortunately, when they were alive I didn't ask and today there is no one left to ask.

What I remember from my childhood in Romania?

I grew up in a Jewish home under a communist regime in an atmosphere of permanent fear. We lived on Petru Rares Street next to the Securitate in an apartment comprised of a kitchen, a big bedroom (which also served as living room), a passage towards a corridor and a small room, which functioned as my father's workroom.

The authorities decided that this was an apartment too big for our small family, so, to put an end



to this “extravagance”, they allocated the small room to two elderly people. I have no idea how they succeeded to live there. There wasn’t any lack of food in my childhood. I recall the peasant woman who used to bring butter, cream and other dairy products from the village. As a child, I especially loved cherries, corn and watermelon I would abundantly eat at the beginning of their season.

Since we ran a kosher kitchen, my dad raised early in the morning to buy kosher meat (I have no idea where from). We had a basement where we would store potatoes, sour kraut, pickles. My dad used to prepare wine (I remember big bottles with wine). However, wine was only drunk Friday nights during Kiddush. My mom was a very good cook and the Austrian cuisine rather than the Romanian one influenced her style. For example, I don’t remember my mom cooking vine leaves and sour “*ciorba*”, but I do remember sweet and sour stuffed cabbage and “*pirogen*” stuffed with sweet cheese or cherries, during their season. There were also blintzes (*clatite*) with sweet cheese filling. My mom used to make tasty cakes and I especially recollect the one with three layers of brown chocolate, yellow and white frosting. She stopped doing this cake in Israel and I hadn’t thought of asking for the recipe. In the past, while visiting Austria and Germany I encountered dishes familiar from home and I was really excited.



A number of unpleasant incidents (pointing to anti-semitism) remained with me: When I was in the fourth grade, the teacher called my mom and asked her to speak to me at home in Romanian and not in German so I would be able to write compositions in Romanian using a higher, richer language.

When I was in the sixth grade, while I and other children were on our way to school a teacher (I think her name was dna. Slevoaca) came towards us. Since our eyes didn’t meet, I didn’t greet her. I want to underline the fact that she had never before been my teacher. At my first meeting between mom and my home-teacher, Mrs. Nikitovich, the latter told my mom that I had to be more careful as, who knows, Mrs. Slevoaca could be my teacher in the future and she might make my life difficult, which really happened. In the seventh grade she taught me history and she “made my life a living hell”. Every lesson she would tell me to stand up and asked me questions and I was absolutely terrified of her.

I went through a horrible experience in the fifth or the sixth grade. It was winter. My parents and I were standing on the main street with our backs turned towards an alley. Suddenly, I felt a stabbing



in the back. I turned and I saw a number of teens running away. I was lucky since I was dressed with a tick fur coat. My parents took me immediately to professor Rohrlich's house, which was the closest to the place we stood. There they checked my back and they saw I had a scratch. I think I recognized among the teens one I knew from school. Interesting is the fact that my parents didn't complain either to school or to the police. This was the atmosphere during the communist years. I recall school as an impressive building where discipline was strict and requirements from students were high.

Children weren't allowed to certain movies till they were 16. However, when the movie *"The Lady of the Camellias"*, after Alexandre Dumas' book, ran at the local cinema, I went to watch it with a friend. They allowed us to enter, but we were so afraid that we might be seen that we got out before the end of the movie.

I might have been 5 years old when a friend of my mom's, an elderly man, came with his grandson and took me on a trip to Zamca, an area outside the town with medieval fortification ruins. While walking around, I rolled down the hill and stopped in an undergrowth full of thorns and cow feces. Interesting enough, my cousin Lily recalls there was a group of children, among them she and Rosemerica Rohrlich, but I remember only the little boy and the festive dress I was wearing. As a result, I was really hurt.

Another memory ingrained in my mind was when my mother organized a wedding for a couple from Falticeni. It seems that one of them was a relative and maybe they didn't have the necessary means to organize the wedding by themselves. Mom cooked the food, baked the cakes, and prepared our living room for the guests to come after the chuppa took place at the synagogue.

On another occasion, my neighbor Frederica Shauer took me to a play in Yiddish, or it may have been in Romanian. Lia Koenig was in the leading role. I will never forget her face with black hair held on each side of the head with hairpins.

My dad didn't work on Shabbat. On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, I used to go with my parents to the synagogue "Hevre Gach". I loved the atmosphere at the synagogue. We, the children, would play in the yard. My mom and I would return home at noon on Yom Kippur and she would serve me challa with meatballs and pickled cucumber (until today I love it), food that doesn't need to be heated.

I don't miss these bits of life, the more or less happy moments. I'm happy we immigrated to Israel. I believe that our place is here. However, undoubtedly, the first years of my life in Suceava molded and influenced the way I am. As Shaul Tchernichovsky, the poet, said in his poem:

"Man is but the imprint of his native landscape..." ("האדם אינו אלא תבנית נוף מולדתו")

For me it seems right!





My Family

Uzi Kimmel

Like many others in our group, I have little knowledge about the history of my family before and during the WWII. The surviving photos tell the story.

My father's family

My father, Yechiel Kimmel came to Bukovina from Tomaszow, Poland. According to the commemorative book of the Tomaszow community, about 6,000 Jews lived there in 1931. As early as the 17th century, after being granted the rights of free trade, Jews settled in Tomaszow. Their main occupations were weaving, carpentry, selling of spirits, cattle trade. Between 1648 and 1649, Chmelnysky's soldiers almost wiped out the Jewish community during the pogroms. In the 19th century, Tomaszow was the cradle of Hassidic scholars. Important rabbis operated in Tomaszow. In 1846, the Russian authorities banned Jews from settling in the area because of its proximity to the Austrian border. In the summer of 1915, the Austrians conquered Tomaszow and appointed a Jew as mayor (Joshua Fischlson).

In any case, I found in Holon cemetery a memorial dedicated to the Tomaszow Jewish community. To the best of my knowledge, at some point, when Dad was very young, his family moved from Tomaszow to Bukovina. Dad grew up and was educated in Suceava.

My father had three brothers and three sisters. One of the brothers immigrated to Canada before the war.

My mother's family

My mother, Esther Ehrlich, was born in Ilisesti, near Suceava. She had four brothers and two sisters. An older sister perished in Auschwitz with her husband and their three children.

My parents were deported to Transnistria along with all the other Suceava Jewish families. Their first born child, my brother, Otto, died in Transnistria.



My maternal grandmother, Schnarch



Oficiul matricolar evreesc Gura-Humorului.
 Nr. 672/19-
Certificat de căsătorie
 Extras din registrul căsătoriilor *Gura Humorului Tom. III* fila 91

M I R E L I			C I D E S I			CĂSĂTORIEI				Facilitate proprie cu arătarea domniei.		OBSERVAȚIUNI	
Nr. cartei	Numele și prenumele tuturor părților, ocupațiile dominile, numărul casei familiei, ocupațiile și denumirea părinților	Vârsta Anul Luna Zilnic	Starea Nobil Văduv	Nume și prenume locului nașterii, numele sursărilor, denumirea și numărul casei părinților	Vârsta Anul Luna Zilnic	Starea Nobil Văduv	Zona	Luna	Anul	Locul	funcția-marul care a celebrat căsătoria		marilor și a ocupațiilor lor
	<i>Abraham Itzhak născut în orașul Ilisesti fiu în vârstă de 38 ani de tatăl său Eliah Erlich și al mamei Rebeca Shnarch- Wolf din orașul Ilisesti.</i>			<i>Sali Schnarch născ. și domiciliată în Ilisesti fiica părinților Noah și Rebeca Shnarch- Wolf din Ilisesti.</i>							<i>Abraham Bahad Rabiu Gura Humorului</i>	<i>Avraam Itzhak născ. în Ilisesti fiu în vârstă de 38 ani de tatăl său Eliah Erlich și al mamei Rebeca Shnarch- Wolf din orașul Ilisesti.</i>	

Adeveresc că prezentul certificat corespunde întru totul cu înscrisurile din registrul matricolar
 Gura-Humorului, la *30 August* 19*22*
 Conducătorul oficiului matricolar evreesc.

This is the marriage certificate of my grandmother

The groom: Avraham Itzhak from Arbore, born in 1884, merchant in Ilisesti. Son of Elias Erlich.
The bride: Sally Schnarch born in 1885 in Ilisesti, Noah and Rebeca Shnarch-Wolf's daughter.
Married in 1922 in Gura Humorului. Rabbi Mendel Bahad officiated the ceremony.

Pictures that survived through the years



With my friends, from the left: I, Johnny Glickman and Lica Olarasu



My grandmother





My mother's family



My parents



In winter time, as a toddler

Tomaszow memorial book

http://tomashov.org.il/books/tomashov_memorial_book_hebrew.pdf





My Story

Zwi Fuhrer

My name is Zwi Fuhrer, son of Shlomo and Chaya Fuhrer blessed be their memory. My sister's mother, Yety Blay, died in Transnistria.

When I was born my parents named me Zwi as they dreamt of Aliya to Israel, therefore I got an appropriate Hebrew name, in remembrance of my grandfather Hersh who died in Transnistria. However, we got permission to immigrate to Israel only 16 years later. The local Romanian people pronounced my name with difficulty. They used to utter it the way it was spelled.

I remember my childhood in Suceava for the better, and later with a lot of friends, all Jewish.



Here is a family picture. I am in my mom's arms.



in the open space next to my house,



at the kindergarten



Every day I would go and play at the house of one of my friend: Harry Fleischer, Arni Merdler, Jacky Gotlieb, Tuli Tzigelnik, Moshe Herzberg and many more.

One of the games we absolutely loved to play was cutki - a football game in which bigger coins



Moshe, Zwi, Arni



Beno, Zwi, Arni, Moshe Rachmuth

symbolized players and a smaller one was the ball. The players were moved with the help of a comb. We also loved to play chess and backgammon. When the weather permitted, we played football in Harry Feller's yard. In summer, we would go to the Suceava River, which was surrounded by rich greenery and tall reeds. I remember turning the reeds into torches by dipping their heads in kerosene and lighting them up.

I used to spend part of my time with my uncle Osias Greler, who was married to Clara, my father's sister. He was a sick man. As such, he spent a lot of time at home. We would play Rummy card game. I was five years old when the routine started. In those days I found it difficult to hold 14 cards in my hand. I loved playing with him. My mom wasn't too happy about these meetings as



she was afraid they would turn me into a gambler ...

Resie Schauer is a distant relative of mine. Ever since I remember, we were friends, and we still are. Our parents were good friends as well. They met regularly.

When I was three years old, I was sent to learn to pray at the Sonnenschein's. First it was Mrs. Sonnenschein who taught me and later on her husband. I remember I used to argue with them regarding the length of the text I had to read and, if they wouldn't agree, I would get up and leave. My second Hebrew teacher was Wijnitzer, but the last was the renowned Mr. Arthur Shapira. After arriving in Israel, I heard that Mr. Shapira had made Aliya as well. Without too much information regarding his whereabouts, I boarded a bus and I found him completely by chance. He was selling lottery tickets at a stand in Bizaron.

I grew up in a religious family. My father, Shlomo Fuhrer, was gabay at the Beit Hamidrash synagogue, located opposite to the Great Synagogue. Praying with us were also the Gotliebs, Herzberg, Olarasu, Wagner, Idel Fuhrer, Kimmel and many more. After the destructions of the Great Synagogue and the Beit Hamidrash, we started praying at the Wijnitz hassidut Synagogue. My father continued to serve as a gabay. I helped my dad in this activity.

I remember loving my teachers, my schoolmates and the studies at school. The Jewish students were the best in class. I used to like going to Casa Pionierilor where I was most interested in the butterfly and insect collections. As a result, I would catch and dry insects by myself. My other love was archeology. After the war, my aunt lived very close to an archeological site – Curtea Domneasca. My grandfather lived there as well. I used to dig for hours and, indeed, my efforts were fruitful. One day I found an old rusty scythe. I handed it to the museum, which exhibited it with my name written underneath, as an honest finder.

I loved taking part in plays. I clearly remember the one named “Lica Lenevica in Tara Lenesilor” in which I had the main role.

My friends and I grew up in families of Holocaust survivors. Most of the families had one single child. Of course, there were exceptions: my colleagues Paulica Davidovici and Iancu Manas had several siblings.

The Holocaust influenced our lives in a number of ways. Parents considered a “chubby” child to be a healthy one. I remember my parents taking me to strolls to Cetate and to Zamca and feeding me bread and butter. We had to finish all the food on the plate because food must not be thrown away!

For our parents, studies were of the utmost importance and I believe that this was a direct consequence of the fact that during the war professionals had higher chances of survival than unprofessional people.



Schooling was essential during the communist era. Once again, money and properties could disappear in a second but the outcome of education gave you a better start in life.

MINISTERUL ÎNȘĂȚĂRII ȘI ÎNSUȘIRII
FOAIE MATRICOLĂ

LEI 3 LEI

PROIE NR. 2

Războiul

Regiunea

SUCEAVA

MATRICOLA NR. 265

Anul școlar 1962 - 1963

Volumul II

Clasa IX C

NUMELE

Numele FÄHRER

prenumele ZVY

fiul lui SOLOMON

de profesie ÎNȘĂCĂTOR

și a MALCU

de profesie CASALCĂ

născut - la 1947 în. 1

(anul, luna, ziua)

In localitatea

raionul SUCEAVA

regiunea

A fost înscris în clasa IX

in ziua luna Septembrie anul 1962

pe baza procesului nr. 100

eliberat de școala

SITUAȚIA ȘCOLARĂ

in luna promovat

in septembrie

Director

Secretar

OBIECTELE	Nota anuală	Media anuală	Media generală
Limba și literatura română	9,33	-	-
Limba și literatura *)	-	-	-
Limba rusă	9,00	-	-
Limbă engl. (franc. sau german.)	9,66	-	-
Limba latină	8,66	-	-
Istorie	8,66	-	-
Educația cetățenească	-	-	-
Economie politică	-	-	-
Socialism științific	-	-	-
Psihologia și Logica	-	-	-
Matematica	9,00	-	-
Științele exacte	-	-	-
Astronomie	-	-	-
Fizică	9,66	-	-
Chimie	8,66	-	-
Științele naturale	9,00	-	-
Geografia	9,00	-	-
Învățare practică în producția	-	-	-
Sistemele meșteriilor, cu aplicații practice	9,33	-	-
Agricultura sau cunoștințele elementare despre producția industrială	-	-	-
Tehnologia	-	-	-
Activități practice (lucrări în țărâni și metel, lucrări de mână și gospodăria)	-	-	-
A. L. A.	-	-	-
Desene	9,00	-	-
Calligrafia	-	-	-
Muzică	10,00	-	-
Educația fizică	8,66	-	-
Dantura	10,00	-	-

*) Se ține seama și literatura maternă la școlile cu limbă maternă și la raioanele în care se vorbește limba maternă.

OBSERVAȚII:

Mutat la școala din localitatea raionul regiunea

Eliberat Copia matricolă nr. 800 pentru (nume) clasa, la data de 6. XI. 1963

Director

Secretar

Here is a copy of my grades in high school in 1962

Daily life

In Suceava we ate organic food with no chemicals, no additives and the meat had no antibiotics. For our mothers, to get hold on food was a daily chore. I remember the big black round loaf of bread I used to buy from Lily's grandfather, chala for the Shabat from the Shloim family, regular bread from Mira's mother, milk from Yosale Fuhrman's parents, cakes from Wagner confectioner's and later from the main street confectioner shop. Fruit and vegetables were sold at



the market. Peasants would bring their fresh products every day. My dad inspected and supervised the weighing process. We ate only kosher meat bought from a shop in the market, on the opposite side of Lily and Resie's house. Sometimes I was sent to do the shopping and I did this willingly. The permission to immigrate to Israel gave rise to contradictory emotions. We were happy and sad, at the same time, for every person who was approved to leave Romania. I remember when my family and I were informed about getting the visa to immigrate to Israel. I ran to tell Moshe Herzberg. His mom was so very touched that she even cried.



Arni, Micky, Zwi, Ithak standing, Iosele and Tuli Tzigelnik

In Israel, I learned to appreciate the high level of studies in Suceava, especially in the field of exact sciences. I was accepted in the tenth grade at the Kiryat Haim high-school. After two years I graduated, passing all matriculation exams.

I remember I had always dreamt to become a physician. However, in Israel, it wasn't possible. One medical school only functioned at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. One had to get an average of 100 at the matriculation exams to be accepted. Whoever came from a family of physicians received additional points. Therefore, I turned to my second love – chemistry. I studied at the Technion in Haifa Chemical Engineering. I continued studying for Master's degree in Environmental Engineering, the field in which I worked for 40 years.

In 1975 I married Zwia, daughter of Ludwig and Augusta Peltz. Like myself, Zwia was born in Suceava but immigrated to Israel when she was 8 years old. I didn't meet Zwia during my stay in Suceava, but I met her years later in Israel. We set up our family in Haifa.





Part of Zwia Peltz Fuhrer's novel

Zwia Peltz Fuhrer

They used children's nicknames for each other- Boobe, Moishle, Lalee,- but they spoke of those things children never touch upon and you never did want to listen in. I, quite the opposite of you, listened intently, frightened but curious. I amassed hour upon hour of eavesdropping. And today when I am beset with a question, when I try to really understand, there is no one left to ask.

They would drink tea, nibbling at mother's cakes, recalling other delicacies- potato peels, abandoned apple cores, dry crusts of bread.

Moshele reveled in boasting of his rescue exploits, recounting how he had outsmarted the Russians, hidden from the Germans, and cheated the Rumanians. He was the chatty one among the siblings, and the youngest.

Mother would counter, recalling how they spoiled him, buying him the horses he loved, the best clothes, and in general generating countless expenditures. But the moment Moshele began retelling the story of how he found Grandma Rachel in Siberia and how he managed to bring her home again, everyone would listen in complete silence, struck with awe and admiration.

A short time before the outbreak of the war, when Moshele learned that his parents had been gathered in the village square, he walked into the square, offering himself in their stead, but they merely added him to their list of deportees. They journeyed to Siberia in cattle cars without food or water and there they were separated. Grandpa perished and to this day no one knows exactly where or when. He has no grave - just a small memorial plaque attached to mother's tombstone mentioning his name, **Hersh Reichman**. Though Uncle Moshe managed to find Grandma and get her out of Siberia, he continued to wander and hide until he fell deathly ill and some old Rumanian gentile took him into her home, made a place for him in her one room and fed him whatever she could until he regained his strength.

Everyone was busy eating and drinking, everyone except Aunt Liza, Moshele's wife, who didn't touch the refreshments and continued to knit obsessively throughout these family get-togethers. Aunt Liza would donate the countless small colorful sweaters and their matching caps and booties to WIZO. Once she invited us to a bazaar where all her knitting was displayed along the length of a long table.



of all things, they began to talk about their brother Mordecai, how they might have saved him, how he froze to death in some hiding place with his wife and his small daughter and I saw that you were signaling me to step outside just as mother heaved a sigh of bottomless regret, "If only I had sent Yankeleh to him with a few potatoes!"

As soon as you heard the name Yankeleh, you stepped back, settling yourself next to me, for talk of Yankeleh always got your attention. Then, I thought that both of us hated him but today I believe it was simply envy. Yankeleh was their hero. They repeated admiringly in endless detail his exemplary qualities, admiration which stood out all the more because it was lacking when they spoke about you and as for me, I certainly felt myself lacking. Yankeleh was then just about your age today, when they were thrown out of their homes and pushed into Transnistria along with the rest of Bukovina's Jews.

This word **Transnistria** for many years was for me something harsh and tangled like a rope whose knot I was incapable of loosening. "Transnistria"- they repeated the word endlessly and I didn't know if this was the name of a place or a camp and truth be told, I didn't ask. Only many years afterwards did I realize the simple meaning is a region beyond the Dniester River.

Mother loved to talk about Yankeleh, to describe him ardently. "At the beginning of the transfer, he would still wear his smart clothes- don't you remember his green woolen slacks, those with the checkered suspenders and the shirt that went with it and the brown hat with the small feather? He looked liked a small hunter or some young aristocrat with his bright eyes and his golden hair. But later when we no longer had the strength to carry anything and the freezing temperatures dropped even further and the road stretched out longer, we dressed Yankeleh in all his clothes, one on top of the other and suddenly he looked like he had some meat on him," she recalled in amazement.

"He was sure we were all setting out on some grand tour and was delighted that he wouldn't have to be going to school. You remember how he always strapped on his red backpack, a rucksack, "father added. "Well, that backpack saved us. It held Flugar cigarettes that the peasants smoked and we traded them for a cup of tea or a slice of bread."

Your mother reminisced excitedly about how Yankeleh once brought them a bag stuffed with apple peels, "Some woman must have been preparing compote but she didn't know how to peel apples properly and her peels were thick and juicy and we chewed them very slowly so we'd get every drop of juice," she explained, leaning her head to one side and working her jaw exaggeratedly as if chewing. Then I noticed that your little tank had begun to discharge like crazy in every direction imaginable, firing at Max's hat, at Aunt Liza's knitting, into the empty tea cups, but no one else seemed to pay attention. They were all immersed in the dark crater they called Transnistria and it was as if they had forgotten us completely. They spoke of the



winter of '41 when a plague of typhus broke out and immediately at the outset dispensed with Yankeleh's father and a short while afterwards his mother collapsed along one of the muddy roads and how impossible it was to pick her up and so the Rumanian guards put a brutal end to her with their clubs. And that's the way Yankeleh the orphan joined them.

"If I had a son, I would wish for him to be just like Yankeleh," sighed Moishele and automatically all eyes turned to Aunt Liza who didn't take her eyes off her knitting but the veins in her cheeks reddened. Mother hurried to change the subject, volunteering, "My friend's son works for a newspaper, he was shocked to hear how few children actually survived and he promised an article sometime this year about the children of Transnistria and he might even work Yankeleh's personal story into the article," she added.

Every year as Holocaust Day approached, their hopes- their expectations- that finally they would show a short documentary on TV or someone on the radio would speak or that an article would appear in the newspapers- something about what had happened to the Jews of Bukovina. They so much wanted the world to take note of what had happened to them there but each year disappointment struck them again. If they had been alive, they would have been rewarded during their very last years with three short films on the subject, one dealt with Czernowitz. They called their beloved city "The little Vienna" and Aharon Applefeld', a writer from there, mentions it. Today I read his books trembling, excited to find the names of places they had mentioned, Rathausstrasse, Herengasse, his characters walk along the same streets they had passed through. He describes the Carpathian Mountains that mother loved so, goes to great length depicting the mighty current of the Prut River and somehow he seems to fill the gaping chasm, within me. It even happened that one of his main characters sat in a restaurant they had mentioned. **I await each new book in the hope of finding some answer, of understanding a little bit more, thirsty for the smallest scrap of information, for ironically now when I am ready and want to hear, to ask- there is no one to turn to.**

Mother said that Yankelch was the true hero of Transnistria because the men had been afraid to venture out of the hideout, fearing they would be discovered and sent to a labor camp but Yankeleh managed to steal about like a shadow, always returning with something. "Oi, if only I had sent him to Mordecai, Mordecai might be sitting here with us in this very room," she sighed in mourning once again.

Father laid a consoling hand on her shoulder trying to comfort her, "It wouldn't have made any difference. They were weak from the typhus, whatever remained of their strength drained by hunger and the cold. They never had a chance lying along the frozen wall." But Mother was adamant that had she sent Yankeleh, Mordecai would be alive today.

And all the while I thought how Holocaust Day was drawing near and how I would stand during



the sirens with my eyes shut tight, with my fists tensed at my sides, repeating "Never again... never again...", and imagining Yankeleh standing opposite me against a dark background, his body thin and sinewy, a yellow Magan David folded like a flower on his worn out pajamas as he bellows, "Play death's tune more sweetly, the tune of the German artist's death." And Yankeleh appears so real, so clear, so familiar, to me as if I had known him all my life and not only heard about him from family tales.

Suddenly I was conscious of a strange odor as if something were burning. I didn't budge from my spot for I was tense with expectation as the second part of Mordecai's story was about to unfold, how they tried to bury him, and his wife and his baby daughter in the frozen soil of Transnistria and the smell grew more pungent and seemed so much like roasted flesh. Father too became aware of the smell and he got up from his place, exclaiming, "Something's burning!" as he turned into the kitchen. Mother, quite in contrast, was engulfed in her story, "The wall was frozen and Mordecai lay there, completely blue, holding his wife's hand and she her daughter's, the three of them in death's clutches. That's the way we found them." and her story ended with a funereal moan.

All of a sudden I took note of the smoke emanating from Aunt Liza's hand bag. She herself hadn't noticed since she was so focused on the tiny sky blue sock she had been knitting and undoing, and knitting and undoing again, and then I saw you get to your feet ever so slowly, move towards the door planning to escape when your mother who had discerned what trouble you had created, blocked the doorway and when you tried to make your way out, slapped you sharply.

If I could have played for them, he wouldn't have died," I heard him say to Mother one night. Who? I wanted to ask, who wouldn't have died? And it occurred to me that they were talking about the big brother I once had, but I didn't open my mouth to ask. Over the last few years, when you are the only left to me, and I have somehow managed to muster the courage to ask all the questions, you have insisted that I know enough and even more than enough and have suggested that I read more history books. But I am not at all interested in the world's history, what draws me is personal history, theirs.

Recently they have made me repeated visits at night. When you get here I will tell you the latest dream I had where Max approaches me and his blue eyes this time were only pleading, "I am starving, Chavale, I am so so hungry." And his large face, always so rosy and full, had shrunk, and he appeared as a panic stricken child. Max and I are on two opposite sides of a large yard, something like a peasant's yard with chickens bustling, cackling, running under foot. Every time I try to cross the yard and take a few steps toward him, the chickens don't let me advance. They raise an enormous ruckus, their feathers flying through the air, their commotion forcing



me to stand absolutely still. Above, above the yard, your mother moved about, beautiful like she had been in the photos taken in her youth, just like my mother's descriptions of her honey colored hair, her emerald eyes sparkling. She smiled down at me as she had when she was alive, but her feet never touched the ground.

"Max!", I shouted at him, "Max," trying to shout over the cackle, trying to understand why your mother's feet were floating and she resembled nothing less than a Chagall painting.

"Bella is dead and you are asking such stupid questions!" Max shouted back impatiently, so unlike him, and suddenly the yard emptied and only a lone rooster was left lying on the ground. As I approach him, I see his neck has been slit, and blood is streaming from the slash and his face is human.

I woke up in terror but had no one to share the dream with.

I could never understand how, after everything my mother had gone through, she could continue loving the German language. She would scold me roundly if I were to mix some Yiddish into my German. My mother loved poetry, and she was proud of the Jewish poet Paul Celan who had been born in her home town, Chernowitz and wrote his poetry in the same language with which they slaughtered her parents. But mother, in defiance or in denial, would often quote from the poetry of the German Romantics, remembering their birthdays and details from their private lives. She taught me to recite the poems of Rilke, Heine, and Goethe.

And when the family would assemble at our house she would ask me to stand on a small chair and I would recite Rilke's poem.

Sometimes I recited other poems. I didn't understand the poems but I thrilled at their rhythm and at the attention showered upon me. In time, I was discovered as having a special talent for learning poems by heart and remembering them over long stretches of time. So it came to be that at many family gathering I would recite poems being repaid with exclamations of wonder and applause.

"Ein Wunder Kind" - " a true wonder child" Uncle Max would say, his blue eyes sparkling with vibrancy and his hand running through his rough hair. Moishe burst out enthusiastically, "Chavale wird eine berühmte schauspielerin sein" "Chavale is going to be a famous, well known actress!" crushing me in an enthusiastic embrace.

A record of the tenor Joseph Schmidt, who was a close relation, was frequently heard in our house. He was born in a small village in Bukovina and later lived for a while in Chernowitz. As they listened to the song Ein Lied Geht Um Die Welt (A Song that Goes Around the World), our



mothers broke into song along with the record:

A song that goes around the world/ A song beloved by all/ The tune reaches the stars/ Everyone is listening/ The song sings of love/ The songs sings of fidelity.

But by the end of the first verse, their voices died away, and your mother told the story of how her uncle discovered Joseph Schmidt's talent, and how when the professionals heard his extraordinarily powerful voice, a voice like Caruso's, he immediately was rewarded with roles in operas and musical films and he became famous throughout Europe.

She described how he was careful to always wrap a scarf around his neck to protect the voice cords within, and how he would stand on stools during his performances to make up for his height. Father claimed that Schmidt's religious singing, rooted in the Bible, was the heart and soul of his talent. When he led the congregation in prayer, his voice echoed the pain and suffering of the Jewish people in full.

As the record ended, a deep silence fell over us and the adults sighed. And then the conversation turned to how he had managed to escape the Nazis and the Romanians in time, somehow reaching Switzerland but there the Swiss refused to accept him and he was imprisoned in a refugee camp. It didn't take long before he came down with pneumonia and died at the age of 42.

Aunt Liza had been in Auschwitz and you said you were certain that the Nazis had performed medical experiments on her and for that reason she had no children.

I recalled the time you convinced me to swim out with you into the deep sea, far beyond the rafts. That particular afternoon the sea was stormy and even at the HOF HASHAKET Beach the lifeguards had put up a black flag. An enormous wave pushed me under and suddenly everything around me began to swirl and bubble and a tremendous arm dragged me down. I felt that I was swallowing water, choking, and all the while that indomitable arm pulling me ever deeper. Panic overcame me and a last thought pounded through my mind I 'm drowning, I'm drowning! Never to get out of here alive! And just during those seconds I thought about them, that they would never be able to withstand the shock after everything they had gone through. Never disappoint them, never sadden them, never worry them... Then, I managed to straighten myself and pushing my head out of the water met you, face to face, my eyes blinking madly into your panic stricken expression.

I was too exhausted to talk, my eyes stung, my throat burned, my chest ached and again I began to cough. You looked worried and bent over to peer into my face making sure I wouldn't pass out on the way. When we finally reached the house I wanted to shower and sink into my own bed



but through the window of the hall with its shutter open halfway we saw them sitting around the table. In the dim light they looked like frozen shadows holding eternal cups of tea and listening to Mother who held up a newspaper and read out loud in German. Perhaps it was her tone in reading or perhaps the words themselves that made us stop still in front of the window.

Schwarze Milch der FRuhe wir trinken sie abends/ wir trinken sie mittags und morgens wir trinken sie nachts.

When Mother finished, a silence held sway until Father broke in to say that now there was a translation into Hebrew. Taking the newspaper from her hands, he read:

"The black milk of dawn we drink at evening
We drink it at noon and morning, drink it at night
We drink and drink...

* Translated by S. Sandbank

Since Father read in a louder voice and in Hebrew the words sounded hypnotic, striking fear into us. It was only years later that by some fluke I heard the poem with its mystical words again and learned that it was " The Fugue of Death", Paul Celan's famous poem, and he the Jewish poet from our hometown Czernowitz. His entire family had perished in the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust and later on depression took hold of him and he put an end to his own life in Paris.

Once I discovered that it was Paul Celan who wrote the poem I began to read every bit that was ever written about him, investigating each new piece of information which fell into my hands. I was overcome with emotion when I realized that the day when I almost drowned was the anniversary of his death . That was the reason Mother had read the piece then. His mother, it turned out, like mine, was a zealous devotee of the German romantics and shared with her a passion for Rilke, the poet mother would so often read.

Even today, sometimes at night without the slightest warning, the poem's lyrics appear on my lips like some kind of mantra that one has to repeat, as if they were some basic fundamental experience of mine and they recite themselves at a given set rhythm that I have no control over.

"Black milk of dawn, we drink you at night,
We drink you at noon Death is a master from Germany
Death is a master from Germany with blue eyes
He shoots you with leaden bullets and his aim is true."

When I think about it today, it seems to me that my mother didn't really fear death. That same day when she convinced them to buy their burying plots together as she stood on the hill next to the empty row and faced the sea, she appeared packed and ready. The expression in her eyes



was clear and calm. I wouldn't have been surprised if she had pulled out her tattered overused edition of Rilke's poems and had started to recite a few lines from his poem, "Solemn Hour ",

He who now weeps somewhere in the world,
He weeps with no reason in this world,
He wails for me



photo P.Leinburd





Suceava








I tour the hiding city
Among memory's cells wandering
Like sand slipping from its memory
Of the child who dreamt that her story
Would have a happy end.

Suceava of my childhood was an eternal green
And its smell like the lilac's fragrance
And the pure white harebells in spring-time
And violets, lots of hidden violets
Like the fragrance of Mama's perfume.

I'll not drive on the motorways
Not look for new malls
I'll seek the green grove
The river, the yard and the house
The corn fields in which I hid
With sudden fear.



Amintiri

Cuprins			
	Numele	Adresa	Pagina
	Adolf Copelovici		
	Any Katz		
	Beno Budic		
	Betty Merdler	beti4455@bezeqint.net 054-527668	
	Dorly Weidenfeld	zdorly@gmail.com	
	Eugen Weitmann	alexweitmann@yahoo.com 054-9933891	
	Tamara Hirshhorn	tamaralevinson@gmail.com	



Tăcerea

Zvia Pelz Fuhrer

*Eram o generație născută în tăcerea de după
și tăcerea a rămas
invadând camera, în locul fraților,
rămânând în salon în locul rudelor.
Și chiar și în bucătărie, dar mama nu o alunga cu cuțitul,
cu ciocanul de lemn, cu care bătea vinetele,
cu pumnul cu care bătea aluatul.*

*Am fost o generație ce căuta neamuri
fără de bunici și bunice,
cei mai mulți dintre noi, copii singuri la părinți.
Și tăcerea se lipea de noi ca frații vitregi
cu zero decibeli în griul dureros.*

*Am fost o generație care se furișa la filme
în casele vecinilor, cele pline de copii
la familia Askar
unde bunica frigea
ceva ca chifteluțele brune mirositoare.*

*Am fost o generație care fugea de tăcere
și nimeni nu a înțeles.*

Traducere: Menachem M. Falek



Suceava

Zvia Pelz Fuhrer

*Eu caut orașul ascuns
Printre celulele memoriei, rătăcind
Ca nisipul evitând memoria sa
De fetiță ce a visat că povestea ei
Va păstra un sfârșit bun.*

*Suceava copilăriei mele a fost un verde nesfârșit
Cu miros parfumat de liliac
Și clopoței albi în primăvară
Și violete, multe violete ascunse
Ca mireasma parfumului mamei.*

*Nu voi călători pe autostrăzi
Nu voi căuta mall-uri noi
Voi căuta păduricea verde
Râul, curtea și casa
Câmpurile de porumb în care m-am ascuns
Dintr-o frică bruscă.*

*Voi coborî spre râul Suceava care se înfășură în jurul păpurișului
Clătinat, arborii trimit brațe verzi să intre în apa limpede
Și cât a încercat tata să mă învețe
Să plutesc pe apă.*

*Voi urca spre păduricea mirositoare și densă
Acolo, în umbra arborilor, au început toate poveștile
Acolo eram doar tu și eu, mamă,
Toată ești a mea ca să-ți deapăn poveștile fraților Grimm
Până voi termina toată mâncarea până la ultima firimitură.*





O ultimă amintire din Suceava

Adolf Copelovici

Pe la sfârșitul anului școlar 1961-1962, eu eram în clasa a9a, mi s-a propus să devin UTMist... Cum desigur știți era considerat ca un mare "cuve"...care nu se refuză!

Mi s-a explicat că decizia este fiindcă sunt elev bun, că de partea lui tata erau cam săraci deci proletari și deci "beseder", dar o mare hindere au trebuit să o depășească, căci din partea lui mama erau bogăți, și deci dușmanii poporului!

In fine, o cermonie mare de sfârșit de an școlar, toată școala reunită și se chema unul după altul cei noi nominați la UTM. Aplauze!!!Laude comunismului...și tot ghiveciul!

Tare mi-a fost neplăcut. Eu știam că demersurile ca să plecăm România erau aproape terminat, dar nu aveam voie să spun un cuvânt. Pe de altă parte, trista comedie a comunismului nu o mai suportam de mult!

Vara începuse și plecarea noastră se apropia... Și UTMul a aflat despre plecare...au devenit furioși! Am fost convocat într-o sală mare unde era organizat ca la un tribunal: Culpabilul (bineînțeles eu, înainte de judecată), Secretarul de la UTM (Procuror și Judecător) și doua profesoare: Doamna, pardon, tovarășa Nicolaeva (profesoara de rusă) și tovarășa Răuț (profesoara de engleză).

Secretarul a început să latre, spunând minciunile obișnuite ale comuniștilor! Asta nu-mi păsa și nici nu ascultam...dar de o dată s-a luat de tatăl meu: că tata este un hoț, un mincinos și așa mai departe! Asta n-am putut accepta. Am uitat prudența față de acești șerpi veninoși. Am început să strig mai tare ca el, că tata este un om cumsecade și că secretarul nu avea voie să vorbească așa de tata.

La acest meoment ambele profesoare s-au ridicat. Nicolaeva s-a dus la Secretar și l-a convins să plece. Amândouă au venit după aceea înspre mine ca să mă calmeze. Aceste profesoare mă cunoșteau și mă apreciau. Au spus că să rețin numai amintirile frumoase și că îmi doresc succes în Franța.

După câțiva ani am avut ocazia să constat că comuniștii francezi sînt aceiași scârbă, cu aceleași minciuni.





Amintiri din copilarie

Any Katz

Dragii mei,

Iata citeva cuvinte de la mine, pentru ca vreau sa ramina amintire din copilaria mea. Micile mele amintiri incep cu strada Stefanita Voda, unde eu, ca copil mic, mergeam cu mama la Sipot. Acesta era un piriu repede cu apa curata, unde femeile se adunau saptaminal sa-si povesteasca pasurile. Cu bunica mergeam la haham si acolo am inteles ca sint evreica. Acasa parintii mi-au explicat ca mai sint o multime de oameni evrei si ca este o mindrie sa fii evreu, ca evreii sint saritori la nevoie si foarte buni la suflet. In templul mare plin, la sarbatori, noi copii eram dati afara, pentru a nu profana rugaciunile. Toti copii aveau aceiasi soarta ca mine.

Spre dreapta la sfirsitul strazii principale, in fata bisericii sfintul Dumitru, se aflau d-l Mayer si fiul lui, care aveau trasuri cu cai si sanii cu cai pentru iarna.

Impreuna cu tatal meu, iarna pe gerul mare, luam sania cu cai, imbracati in suba si plecam la Burdujeni si Itcani si inapoi, pe un drum feeric, inzapezit ca din legend in sunetul zurgalailor, ca intr-un vis.

Pe strada Karl Marx, la liceul Stefan cel Mare, unde am invatat, se afla mos Ursul, care ani de zile suna clopotol de intrare si iesire din clase si a carui amintire o port in suflet pina astazi. La ora 12 venea Mos Ursul cu covrigi pe care-I cumparam cind aveam banuti primiti de la bunica. Daca ramineau rest, dadeam la cersetorul din coltul strazii, care avea nevoie de banuti mai mult decit eu de un covrig.

De pe strada Dragos Voda se putea merge inspre Zamca. Acolo mergeam cu mama pentru aerul bun si pentru floricele. Acel aer bun, care facea pofta de mincare il simt pina astazi. Vreau sa amintesc florile liliacului in care cautam noroace si care aveau un miros minunat.

Serbetul, facut de mamele noastre din petale de trandafiri sau nuci verzi, avea un gust special.

Am cunoscut pe parintii copiilor din Suceava si-mi amintesc cu drag de ei. Multi erau meseriasi care lucrau din greu. Era o lume foarte bogata de suflete, de intilniri, de povesti, de mici birfe si intrigi si eu am un omagiu pentru toti. Spre seara se adunau pe strada mare multi tineri care se plimbau si se bucurau unii de altii. Erau timpuri simple si bune.

Aceste amintiri se afla mereu in sufletul meu si al vostru.





Vara

Beni Budic

La noi la Suceava, se făcea vară pe nesimțite. Către sfârșit de mai, mirosurile liliacului se amestecau deja cu cele ale salcânilor, teii începeau să-și manifeste prezența, mama aducea de la piață, pe lângă mănunchiurile de ceapă verde și ridichioare, buchete de lăcrămioare sau de narcise, le aranja în vază de sticlă ce-o punea apoi pe fețișoara de masă ce acoperea plita de mult rece, cum avea să rămână până-n toamnă. Iar când șanțurile nu prea adânci de pe strada Cetății se umpleau cu flori de mușetel, sau cum le spuneam noi, romaniță, știam că, gata, a început vara. Alte semne clare erau că treceam definitiv la pantalonași scurți și chiar la șpilhozen, iar ghetuțele sau pantofii "jumătate" erau înlocuiți cu sandale. Deschise-deschise dar tot cu ciorapi....

La Burdujeni era clar că a venit vara când în curtea lui Tina și Mehel găseam deja câțiva porumbi mai copti, potriviti a fi fripti pe flacăra aragazului din bucătăria lui Baba și tot acolo alegeam vreun bostan mai măricel pe care îl goleam de conținut, tăiam cu dibăcie ochi, nas și o gură plină de dinți ca de ferăstrău, în creștet treceam o sfoară și tot ansamblul devenea "felinar" luminat din interior cu un muc de lumânare cerșit de la Zeida. Seara ieșeam cu el la plimbare prin târg, cu alte cete de băieți, care cu felinare, care vânători de cărăbuși adunați, ca proștii, cu sutele pe sub felinarele străzii.

Poate vara la care mă readuc cele mai dragi amintiri a fost aceea când, după operația și convalescența mamei și un "exil" de o iarnă la Burdujeni, de-a lungul aproape întregii mele clasa întâia, ne-am întors cu toții acasă. După cele câteva luni când ne-am înghesuit la bunici, locuința noastră de pe strada Cetății î-mi părea mare, spațioasă, plină de aer și de lumina începutului de vară. Senzația de ceva nou, de libertate, de speranță, mi-o dădea și faptul că chiar din primele zile la Suceava am fost eliberat de povara de ghips ce dusesem pe piciorul meu drept timp de vreo 5 săptămâni. Piciorul l-am fracturat în ajun de 1 Mai, iar povestea am expus-o în "La Burdujeni", unul din textele mele. Când la spital mi-au tăiat cu bisturiul și foarfecile crusta de bandaje de tifon îmbibate în ghips uscat, ca un fel de carapace, care acum se fărâmița sub tăișul metalului, și mi-au scos piciorul la lumina zilei eram ca beat de fericire. Dar a trecut puțin până am înțeles că încă nu pot s-o iau la fugă, nici măcar să încalț sandaia pe piciorul umflat, și că libertatea de dobândește treptat. A fost nevoie de câteva zile de convalescență când încă mergeam șontâc – șontâc și mama î-mi făcea la picior băi calde de tărâțe, ca „să se întărească osul". Dar vara acelu an – era în 1954 – prima mea vacanță de școlar, era doar pe începute și abia aveau să



urmeze zile minunate.

Verile copilăriei începeau deci de pe atunci cu un amestec de simțăminte de bucurie, de eliberare, de speranțe. Apoi veneau, în sfârșit, vacanțele mult visate, apropierea de ceva nedeslușit dar așteptat ca aducător de promisiuni, de fericire. Pe când eram încă la grădiniță, părinții, în tovărășie cu familia Hubner tocmeau la început de vară, un căruțaș care aducea și descărca într-un colț al curții, aproape de gardul înalt al bisericii, o căruță cu nisip. În zile însorite, pe lângă lada cu nisip era pusă o balie cu apă ce se încălzea la soare și colțul de curte devenea o simulație a țăstrandului, iar eu și Meiy, băiețelul ceva mai mic decât mine, al lui Piri și Izu Hubner, în chiloți (de baie ?) și echipați cu lopățele și căldărușe, ne bălăceam și ne jucam în diminețile de iulie. Între lada cu nisip și "pompa" de apă fuseseră săpate cu lopata și semănate (în tovărășie cu vecinii) 3-4 straturi de roșii, ridichioare sau ceapă verde care prin iulie începeau deja să dea roade.



Stinga: Etty Scherzer, Lily Weintraub, X
Sezind: Uzi Kimmel, Mihai Driscu, Mara
Bodinger, Avi Shapira

Câțiva ani mai târziu aveam să mergem, în grup, câțiva băieți și câteva fete, la "ștrand", la Apa Sucevei, coborând voioși pe drumul către Burdujeni încărcăți cu ceva pături de întins peste prundiș și eventual pachețele cu sandvișuri și fructe. Înainte de a ajunge la pod o luam la stânga pe o potecă ce se lărgea uneori devenind drum de căruțe, și după 2-3 sute de metri ajungeam într-o parte mai largă a luncii, pe unde apa venea mai domoală dar și mai adâncă. Au fost doi sau trei ani când primăria chiar amenajase acolo un fel de "ștrand", adică un șir de cabine de scândură ce serveau de vestiare și un podeț îngust, tot din scânduri ce ducea peste prundiș, până la partea mai adâncă a apei. Dar n-a trecut mult până "ștrandul" de scânduri a fost delăsă și s-a distrus. Oricum, noi ne bucuram din plin de orele de libertate și aventuri din luncă. În loc de vestiare, ne descurcam perfect printre tușișuri. Fetele expuneau costume de baie ce deveneau, din an în an, mai interesante. Pentru băieți, moda acelor ani era un slip super simplu, dintr-o pânză albă, cam grosolană, pe care îl legam cu 2-3 șnurulețe peste coapsa stângă.

Aproape inevitabil, primele zile de plajă ale fiecărei veri se terminau pentru aproape toți cu insolăție și usturăți. Dar astea treceau repede. Uneori, cei mai îndrăzneți se aventurau explorând lunca până spre podul de fier de la Ițcani, dar de obicei ne bălăceam prin valurile încete și nu prea adânci de pe lângă mal. Mai în larg apa chiar se adâncea dar făcea și vârtejuri destul de periculoase. Pe lângă mal am învățat eu pe atunci, de unul singur, să înot, mai întâi





Stinga: Pia Klein, Carla Wax, Lotty Scherzer

cu palmele pe fundul nămolos și apoi, cu încetul, înot de-a adevăratelea, care m-a eliberat de simțământul de inferioritate față de Pia, singura dintre fete ce știa să înoate.

Tot așa, î-mi permiteam de pe atunci să traversez înot Suceava, împreună cu alți băieți, și să "ancorăm" pe malul opus, spre Burdujeni. Când se apropia toamna și se înteteau ploile, dar mai ales după ce-a început construcția combinatului industrial din luncă și albia Sucevei s-a umplut de gropi și vârteje, au fost cazuri de băieți prea curajoși (nu, nu din cercul nostru) ce-au plătit cu viața.

Dar nu coboram la scăldat chiar zilnic. Când nu aveam altele de făcut, întindeam pe iarba din curte, la umbra salcâmului de lângă gardul bisericii, vreo pătură moale și ore în șir citeam tolănit acolo cărți de aventuri, iar când oboseam citind, cu fața spre cer, număram norii ce treceau printre crengile și frunzișul salcâmului...

Când eram prin clasele mai mici, cu toții "pionieri" cu cravate roșii, funcționa în orele dimineților de vacanță "Tabăra de curte". În curtea cea mare dinspre Strada Domnească a vechii clădiri a școlii noastre – Medie Nr.2 - (azi colegiul de artă C. Porumbescu) se organiza zilnic un careu, în jurul catargului pe care era ridicat cu mare ceremonie și răpăit de tobă, drapelul unității. Ce făceam în orele următoare nu prea țin eu minte.

Probabil băieții băteau mingea și fetele erau și ele ocupate cu de a lor. Timpul trecea repede. Către prânz activitatea se încheia, avea loc ceremonia coborârii drapelului și cu toții ne întorceam acasă.



In curtea școlii: Gaitan, Iuliana, X,X,X, Paulica asezate: X, Gitta, mingea, Lily, X,X



Scoala



Deja mai mari, la liceu, se pare că distracția ultimativă a zilelor de vară se petrecea către seară și ținea câteva ore bune, chiar după ce se întuneca de tot. Era poate semnul cel mai explicit că vara e în toi. Cum se întâmpla în zeci și zeci de orașe mai mari sau mai mici decât Suceava, în orele dinaintea apusului centrul orașului se transforma în promenadă. Îndeosebi grupuri de tineri, ca noi sau mai în vârstă, dar și perechi tinere, mame cu câte un copil sau chiar mici familii, înțesau centrul, de la începutul lui Ștefan cel Mare și până pe la tribunal, sau chiar mai sus, la policlinica nouă.

Plimbăreții ocupau ambele trotuare și chiar bună parte din lățimea străzii. Oricum, la acele ore, rar trecea pe acolo vreo mașină. Noi cinci, Mara, Mira, Betti, Mihai și eu ne începeam promenada uneori de acasă de la Mara ori poate după vreun film de după amiază la Tineretului, uneori eram în formație completă iar uneori doar 2-3 dintre noi.

În orice caz, îmbrăcați "civil", în haine pe cât posibil moderne, spre deosebire de uniforme școlare cam grosolane (fuste în culori pastel, foarte înfoiate, cu jupon, pantaloni lungi și cât se putea de strâmți), băteam centrul în sus și în jos de cine știe câte ori, de la Alimentara la tribunal și înapoi. Rar ne refugiam pe vreo bancă din fața parcului, iar subiectele de discuție nu se terminau niciodată. De obicei fetele plecau primele iar Mihai și eu mai găseam câte ceva de discutat.

Cam la capătul traseului de promenadă, ceva mai sus de cinematograful, fusese construită în acei ani o altă atracție a verilor sucevene - Grădina de Vară. Era o incintă destul de mare, aranjată în formă de amfiteatru, ce servea în serile calde și senine ca cinematograful în aer liber.

Exista și o adevărată scenă, așa că în Grădina de Vară aveau loc din când în când diverse concerte și spectacole muzicale. Tot spațiul era înconjurat de un zid destul de estetic, iar clădirea de intrare fusese proiectată în stil pur stalinist, și silueta intrării parcă era o copie la scală



Strada Ștefan cel mare
(foto: Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru)



Cinematograful Tineretului
foto: Suceava Periferiilor Album)



Teatru de vara (foto: Suceava Periferiilor Album)



redușă a Casei Scânteii. Amfiteatrul putea cuprinde cred multe sute de spectatori și deci puteau fi susținute acolo chiar concerte cu audiență mare. La un astfel de concert î-mi amintesc să fi fost de față într-o seară de iulie sau august 1962. În acele zile am dormit câteva nopți la Burdujeni, cu vărul meu Iani. Părinții lui erau plecați la băi și lăsaseră casa în paza noastră. Tocmai în acele zile a ajuns în turneu, la noi, la Suceava, mitologica formație muzicală "Los Paraguayos", la noi, dintre toate orașele lumii mari. Bineînțeles că a fost moarte de om la cozile de bilete. O astfel de ocazie se ivește pe meleagurile noastre o dată în viață. Nu mai știu cum am obținut și noi bilete. În seara reprezentației am ajuns din Burdujeni într-un autobus ticsit cu zeci de tineri, că era de mirare cum nu ne-am sufocat în așa înghesuială. Din cauza îmbulzelii și aglomerației spectacolul a început cu întârziere mare. Dar le-am uitat pe toate când băieții cu ponchouri și ghitare s-au pus pe cântat. A fost minunat, dar s-a terminat repede. De mare entuziasm cred că nimeni din public n-a luat în seamă norii ce se adunaseră și au ascuns stelele. Doar când au început să cadă pe noi picături grele de ploaie, am înțeles ce se întâmplă. Spectacolul a mai continuat câteva minute – artiștii erau cumva apărați de ploaie sub acoperișul scenei. Dar picăturile enorme au ajuns la becurile înfierbântate ale reflectoarelor care au început să plesnească cu zgomot mare unul după altul. Din acel moment a început adevărată debandadă. Ploaia se întetise de-a binelea. "Los Paraguayos" au dispărut în culise iar noi, publicul, am luat-o la fugă care unde o găsi un colțisor uscat. N-am mai găsit autobus. La Burdujeni am ajuns cu un camion deschis și uzi până la piele, după miezul nopții.

Au fost câteva vacanțe încununare de călătorii mai lungi sau mai scurte. De două ori au fost astea excursii prin țară, de la casa pionerilor sau de la școală, în tovărășia multor colegi, colege și profesori bine cunoscuți, excursii făcute într-un vagon de tren transformat în dormitor pe roate. De vreo două ori am fost în tabere de vară, cu profil de convalescență, la Cluj și la Dorna Cândreni. De câteva ori am petrecut vacanțe de vară de vis la Galați, la tanti Anuța și nenea Zissu. Toate astea, deși nu legate direct de Suceava, merită a fi descrise în mod deosebit.

Dar slăbiciunea mea pentru gări și pentru trenuri, la Suceava am primit-o, sau mai bine zis la Burdujeni. Aproape în fiecare an veneau din București, pentru o vizită la rude dar și o escală la Burdujeni, Dița și Leonaș. Botoșăneni de baștină, veri ai mamei și a lui tanti Freida, Dița era medic pediatru, iar soțul ei, arhitect. An de an ajungeau pe la noi în cadrul unei excursii de concediu, ce făceau cu trenul, pe rute "circuit". Veșnic aveau cu ei "Mersul trenurilor" sau cum îl botezase Dița, Biblia turistului. De atunci am visat și eu să fiu turist C.F.R – deci cumpăram anual Mersul Trenurilor (5 lei la Agenția C.F.R. din centru) și mă pricepeam de minune să mă descurc prin nenumăratele orare a nenumărate trenuri, cu legături și conexiuni, toate tipărite de-a latul pe sutele de pagini ale cărții.

Una din primele mele călătorii cu trenul am făcut-o în acea vacanță fericită, de care am mai



pomenit, când ne-am întors acasă după operația mamei. Încă nu aveam mersul trenurilor și încă nu visam la călătorii "circuit", dar însuși gândul la gări, trenuri și locomotive î-mi dădea deja o stare de emoții intense încât mă luau de-a dreptul dureri de burtă. În urma operației mama rămăsese cu un șchiopătat destul de evident la piciorul stâng și se ajuta la mers cu un baston. Era și foarte slăbită și ca ușurare a tuturor acestor neazuri i s-a recomandat să facă băi de nămol și de "acid", masaj etc. – tratamente care se făceau cel mai bine la Vatra Dornei. Deci tata a obținut la sindicat bilete și prin august am plecat toți trei către marea aventură, la munte. Călătoria s-a făcut bineînțeles cu trenul. Nu știu de ce am plecat cu un tren de seară, care a părăsit gara deja pe întuneric. Eu eram încă de dimineața cu crampe și nu-mi găseam locul. Printre micile mele pregătiri personale o intuiție inexplicabilă m-a făcut să îmfund într-un buzunar o cutiuță cu câteva bețe de chibrit, un cap de lumânare și Dumnezeu știe de ce, un capăt de sfoară adunat ca un mosorel. Urcatul mamei și al bagajelor în vagon a fost o operație destul de complicată, și numai bine ne-am văzut cu toate pe platformă că trenul s-a și pus în mișcare. Atunci am realizat toți trei că vagonul era cufundat în întuneric. Am ajuns orbecăind la un compartiment unde erau locuri libere, tata a vrut să verifice dacă sunt locurile noastre, dar lumina a refuzat să se aprindă: pur și simplu vagonul nu era conexat la curent electric. Și în acel moment am avut eu picătura mea de glorie. Am scos cutiuța din fundul buzunarului, am aprins mica lumânare și compartimentul ni s-a înfățișat în toată splendoarea sa. Era cel cu locurile noastre rezervate și era complet gol. Tata a adus valizele de pe coridor, le-a urcat în plase și toți trei ne-am instalat pe banchete. Probabil am adormit repede în țacănitul ritmic al roților și în întunericul în care era cufundat tot vagonul.

La Vatra Dornei am ajuns cred spre miezul nopții și o trăsură ne-a dus, drum de vreo 10 minute, la pavilionul unde am fost cazați. De dimineață m-am trezit într-o altă lume. Camera noastră făcea parte dintr-un fel de anexă a clădirii pavilionului, și era cam mică. Cele două paturi, un șifonier și masa o umpleau cu totul. Totul era liniștit și cufundat într-o răcoare ce n-am cunoscut la Suceava. Mama a fiert lapte (care nu știu de unde l-a obținut) pe o spirtieră și pentru micul dejun a făcut cafea cu lapte și pâine cu unt. Apoi am ieșit spre centrul verde al orașelului. Era încă răcoare dar vânzătorii de suveniruri de vilegiatură expuneau deja fluierașe, bastoane de munte, pălăriuțe și poșete mici de plută, ocarine smălțuite și câte și mai multe. Apăruseră și sătencele cu coșulețe de zmeură sau afine, fragi și mure, toate sclipind sub picăturile de rouă. Noi am trecut pe lângă pod și am continuat spre pavilionul de băi aflat cam la 200 metri de acolo, chiar vizavi de gară, ce se afla de cealaltă parte a Bistriței. Acolo, atât mama cât și tata și-au început programul de tratament ce avea să se desfășoare în următoarele două săptămâni zilnic, timp de 2-3 ceasuri. În acest timp eu cutreieram coridoarele luminoase și lungi ale pavilionului, intram uneori și în vreo sală de tratament, dar îndeosebi î-mi plăcea să ies la pod și să privesc, lipit de parapet, spre



plutele ce mai treceau în acei ani în jos, pe apele repezi ale Bistriței. Într-una din zile tata m-a luat să asist la tratamentul său și l-am văzut cufundat în cada cu nămol și apoi învelit în cearceafuri, după care s-a spălat la duș s-a odihnit și a continuat la cada cu "acid". Cu mama am fost la o ședință de masaj: mama era instalată pe o masa de tratament și un maseur orb, cu ochelari negri și vorbă domoală îi explica exact ce face.

După tratament și până la ora prânzului ne plimbam prin minunatul parc natural ce se întindea din spatele cazinoului și până sus la "trambulina" de ski. O data sau de două ori am ajuns chiar sus-sus, la trambulină iar mama a rămas pe o bancă lângă izvor. Pe brazi se vedeau cățărându-se veverițe. Împreună cu noi se aflau în stațiune, cazați chiar în clădirea de lângă noi, Monel, vărul mamei, medic la Iași, cu soția și băiețelul lor Liviu, ceva mai mic decât mine. Nu cred că ei făceau vreun tratament, veniseră la munte la odihnă așa că după băile părinților eram mai tot timpul împreună. Prânzul și cina erau servite vilegiaturiștilor în sălile și pe terasa frumoasei clădiri a cazinoului, transformată în restaurant-cantină. Bineînțeles eram împreună cu verii din Iași. Eu și Liviu eram trimiși să umplem carafe cu apă minerală de la izvorul din turnulețul cu foișor, aflat în parc, chiar jos lângă scările ce urcau spre cazinou. Apa izvorului era rece, puțin acidulată și bună la gust. Astfel treceau pe nesimțite zilele lui August. Într-una din seri Tuța și Monel au serbat ziua căsătoriei și toți șase am făcut în camera lor spațioasă ditamai cheful, cu șampanie "Zarea", iar în ultima duminică au venit în vizită Baba, bunica ce nu cred că în viața ei a ieșit din Burdujeni de mai mult de 4-5 ori și unchiul Gustav, fratele tatei, venit tocmai de la Fălticeni. Din acea zi ne-a rămas amintire o fotografie făcută pe o alee a parcului iar în fundal emblema stațiunii: clădirea cu turnulețul a izvorului. Când l-am mai întâlnit după vreo 50 de ani la New York, Liviu avea întreg tabloul înregistrat de memoria unui copil de 3-4 ani.

Câteva zile mai târziu ne-am întors la Suceava. Plouase și pe la Dorna, dar la Suceava a fost adevărat potop. Apa Sucevei ieșise din albie și inundase bătrânul pod de lemn. Trăsura a traversat încet-încet, cu roțile scufundate până la osie. Orașul ne-a primit mohorât, umed și friguros. Am înțeles că vara s-a terminat.





Difuzorul

Beni Budic

Locuiam la Suceava de aproape doi ani, când într-o după amiază de vară, o echipă de tehnicieni trebuiau pe lângă stâlpul din fața curții noastre, pe strada Cetății. Unul din ei și-a fixat la bocanci niște cârlige de fier, cu zimți metalici ascuțiți și s-a cățarat cu dexteritate până în vârful stâlpului. De acolo au tras niște fire până la zidul casei și le-au fixat sus, sub streșină. Au continuat cu firul electric, mai întâi spre locuința familiei Chibici, iar după vreo jumătate de ceas au ajuns și la noi. Firul l-au introdus printr-un orificiu făcut în lemnul pervazului, sus lângă oberlihtul ferestrei ce dădea spre curte, apoi au fixat mai jos, pe pervaz, un fel de priză de contact. Din acest punct, lucrul a continuat în interior. Au întins firul de-a lungul părții de jos a peretelui și l-au trecut, prin geamul ce dădea spre camera din mijlocul locuinței, până la măsuta din colț, lângă sobă.



Măsuta din lemn negru cu încrustări, sprijinită pe trei picioare subțiri, cam șubrede, servea doar ca decorație. Era acoperită cu o fețișoară de masă albă, croșetată, pe care odihnea o vază cu flori din hârtie creponată. Dar în acea zi, vaza a fost luată de acolo, iar locul de cinste pe măsută l-a primit de atunci o lădiță cu laturi din lemn vopsite roșu, cu partea din față tapisată cu o țesătură bej-lucios și cu un buton negru în colțul de jos, pe stânga. Spatele lădiței era acoperit de un carton gros, cu perforații, iar printr-un orificiu al acestuia, firul electric adus cu atâta trudă tocmai de la stâlpul din stradă pătrundea undeva în măruntaiele cutiei fermecate. Așa a intrat în viața noastră Difuzorul, iar din acel moment și familia noastră era conectată la rețeaua orășenească de radioficare...



Beni

Pe la începutul anilor 50, regimul „socialist” instaurat definitiv, a găsit (probabil după model sovietic) o modalitate simplă de a adânci penetrația propagandei ideologice. Bună parte din populație nu avea aparate de radio. Cele care se găseau în magazine erau de producție locală, cu doar unde medii și lungi. Numai puținii norocoși ce aveau aparate de radio străine, sau aparate mai vechi, dinainte de război, ce recepționau și unde scurte, puteau încerca să audă emisiunile în limba română, de la Europa Liberă sau Vocea Americii. La noi acasă nu era aparat de radio. Îmi amintesc cum, vreo 10 ani mai târziu, deja



băieți mari, ne strângeam în camera din mijloc a locuinței mătușii mele, tanti Freida, la Burdujeni, și cu obloane baricadate și uși bine închise, chinuiam butoanele radioului, doar-doar să reușim a distinge câteva propoziții coerente din emisiunile groaznic bruiate ale lui Kol Israel...

Dar atunci, în anii '50, propagandă sau nu, Difuzorul a reprezentat pentru mine și cu siguranță pentru mulți alții, copii sau adulți, o fereastră deschisă către „lumea mare”, de dincolo de limitele orașelului nostru. Firele trase de la stâlpul din stradă până la măsuta de lângă sobă aduceau în mod miraculos până chiar în camera mea, un întreg univers de sunete. Sistemul consta într-o rețea ce lega studioul și aparatura stației de radioficare locală de aproape toate casele orașului. Peste un timp, rețeaua avea să ajungă la Burdujeni, la Ițcani și în satele din împrejurimi.

În casa bunicilor difuzorul a fost montat pe perete, deasupra divanului unde dormea „zeida” (bunicul), iar în locuința unchilor, la tanti Freida, a fost plasat în bucătărie, principalul spațiu de întâlnire a familiei, tot la căpătâiul unui divan, în care dormea Iani, vărul meu, iar la sfârșit de săptămână, când veneam și eu la Burdujeni, dormeam acolo înghesuiți, amândoi. Difuzoarele la Burdujeni erau de un model mai nou, ceva mai mici, negre, iar țesătura din față era mai puțin elegantă. În loc de buton aveau o mică tijă ce servea la controlul volumului.

Programele transmise erau cele de la Radio România, începeau la 5 dimineața și continuau până la miezul nopții. Câțiva ani mai târziu Radio România avea să devină Radio București și după încă ceva timp acesta avea să emită simultan pe Programul 1 și Programul 2. Redactorii de la centrul de radioficare al orașului decideau (probabil conform directivelor de la organele de partid...) când și ce program să difuzeze pe rețea de-a lungul zilei. În plus, zilnic, la ora 7 seara, era transmisă „Emisiunea locală” realizată în studioul din apropierea parcului.

Difuzorul a devenit o prezență permanentă a casei. Funcționa ore în șir, de-a lungul zilei iar fluxul neconținut al sunetelor sale forma un fel de fundal al tuturor activităților familiei. Înainte de toate era reperul după care se potriveau ceasurile: „Aici București. Ora exactă. La al cincilea semnal va fi ora...*****. A fost ora... ”. Astfel am început să sesizez cât de inexact băteau ora pendulele aflate în reparație dincolo de perete, în atelierul de ceasornicărie al vecinului Chibici.

Erau apoi nenumăratele programe de muzică. Multă, multă muzică populară pe care pe atunci nu prea știam cum să o gust. Dar nume celebre ca Maria Tănase, Dorina Drăghici sau Maria Lătărețu mi-au persistat în memorie până în anii maturi, când am reușit să înțeleg, să apreciez



Freida, Iani, Beni, mama



și chiar să prezint călătorilor mei importanța a tot ce e creație populară. Erau de asemenea, programele de muzică clasică - simfonică, de cameră, etc.- care nu prea erau gustate de părinți și nici eu nu știam atunci cum să le înghit. În schimb ariile de operă și mai ales cele de operetă se bucurau de multă apreciere. Dar erau îndeosebi programele de muzică „ușoară” cu șlagărele acelor ani, și mai ales erau romanțele („cântece de inimă albastră”) ce topeau inimile celor maturi...Și era veșnicul, nemuritorul (pe atunci) Gică Petrescu,



Beni al doilea din dreapta

vedeta a cinci generații. Iar pentru a dovedi că difuzorului îi datorez totuși primele elemente de educație muzicală, trebuie să amintesc diminețile de duminică, ce începeau, pe la ora 9, cu Concursul Muzical unde câștigau cei ce recunoșteau cele mai multe fragmente clasice.

Emisiunile conțineau destul de multe programe pentru copii și tineret. În fiecare seară, la ora 8 fără 10, o voce vioaie de fetiță saluta: „Bună seara, copii!” Urma o mică poveste sau basm după care, 10 minute mai târziu, aceeași fetiță, de data asta cu o voce pe adormite, ne ura ”Noapte bună, copii!” În după amiezile de sâmbătă se transmitea o emisiune concurs pentru pionieri și tineret, „Drumeții veseli”, care imita emisiunea similară pentru adulți, „Cine știe câștigă”, iar duminica dimineața, după concursul muzical, urma „Teatru radiofonic pentru copii și tineret”.

Însă adevăratul Teatru radiofonic sau „Teatru la microfon” era transmis seara, de vreo două ori pe săptămână. De-a lungul anilor am urmărit cu pasiune emisiunea ce mi-a devenit o adevărată hrană sufletească. Ascultam vrăjit, cu coatele sprijinite pe măsuta șubredă, ce se cam legăna uneori, a difuzorului. În serile de iarnă, eram cuprins și de parfumul îmbătător al cojilor de portocale puse la uscat într-o tăviță, între sobă și perete. Dacă întâlnirile cu teatrul adevărat, de obicei la Dom Polski, erau relativ rare, grație difuzorului am avut parte din plin de Caragiale și Goldoni, Molière și Cehov, Delavrancea și Gorki și alții, mulți - mulți alții pe care mi i-au oferit Giugaru, Birlic, Angelescu, Calboreanu, Lucia-Sturza Bulandra, toate numele celebre ale scenei românești din acei ani. Da, și nu poate fi omis marele, inegalabilul (și pe atunci, relativ tânărul) Radu Beligan. La sfârșitul emisiunilor de teatru din serile de duminică, Beligan prezenta „Poșta teatrului la microfon”. Scurta emisiune, radia de umorul și ironia maestrului și era presărată cu multe anecdote și pățanii „din culise”. Atunci am aflat eu pentru prima dată că „Dacă vrea Domnul, și sabia pușcă”. Ani mai târziu, aveam să mai întâlnesc replica asta, în versiunea ei



ebraică („Dacă vrea Domnul, și mătura împușcă”) și am înțeles că voința Domnului e aceeași peste tot și cine trebuie să împuște, împușcă până la urmă, indiferent cu ce...

Duminicile, pe la ora prânzului, când eram cu toții în jurul mesei din bucătărie la tanti Freida, la Burdujeni, cam o dată cu prăjiturile desertului, difuzorul ne oferea „Emisiunea de satiră si umor”. Așa am cunoscut atunci marile nume ale comediei și revistei, actori care - deși limitați la jugul realismului socialist (asta am înțeles-o doar cu ani mai târziu) -, reușeau totuși să continue o tradiție măreață. Erau Stroe și Mircea Crișan, Tomazian („Sal'tare taică, și noroc!..”), Horia Șerbănescu și Radu Zaharescu și bineînțeles alții, cu sclipitoare cuplete și calambururi, care ne făceau să ne tăvălim de răs....

Aveam vreo 12-13 ani când am avut ocazia să văd, din interior, studioul stației de radioficare. De vreo câțiva ani deja, luam lecții de vioară la profesorul Zavulovici. Mare virtuoz nu a ieșit din mine dar de bine de rău ajunseseam să pot executa în mod acceptabil câteva piese mai de Doamne-ajută. Cum am mai pomenit, zilnic la ora 7 seara, era transmisă „Emisiunea Locală”. În afara reportajelor ce reflectau succesele sucevenilor în toate domeniile și – chipurile! - elanul cu care contribuiau zi de zi, în fabrici, în uzine, pe câmpii ca și în școli, la construirea socialismului, erau în emisiune și momente culturale, unele dedicate tinerelor talente ale urbei noastre. Așa se face, că datorită probabil recomandării unei instructoare de pionieri ce mă cunoștea, am fost invitat să contribui la o astfel de emisiune. Centrul de radioficare era amplasat la etaj, într-o clădire frumoasă, din anii habsburgici ai Sucevei, ce servea cred drept Casă de cultură (la parter, în câteva săli, se organizau expoziții de artă). Eram 2 elevi, unul de la „Ștefan cel Mare” și eu, invitați, cu viorile noastre, să participăm la emisiune. Înregistrarea s-a făcut la orele de după amiază, chiar în ziua emisiunii. Studioul consista dintr-o cameră nu prea mare, căptușită de jur împrejur, inclusiv tavanul, cu niște foi mari de placaj cu multe - multe perforații, sub care se afla probabil un izolant acustic. În mijloc era o masă, 3-4 scaune, niște pupitre și un microfon impozant, iar pe peretele din față era o fereastră ce dădea spre camera tehnică, înțesată cu tot felul de aparate. Pe o masă în centrul camerei de regie, lângă un pupitru de comenzi, trona magnetofonul iar în spatele acestuia se aflau tehnicianul și redactorul emisiunii. La comanda primită din camera de alături printr-un difuzor ce se afla deasupra geamului, am început să execut „Serenada” lui Schubert, piesa mea de rezistență. Emoția mă gătuia și se pare că sunetele produse nu erau mai mult de un jalnic scârțâit. N-au trecut nici 2 minute din cele vreo 3 cât dura cântecul, până m-am poticnit. Difuzorul de sus, pe perete, mi-a ordonat s-o iau de la început... Abia la a treia înregistrare rezultatul a fost considerat satisfăcător și eu, ușurat, dar și roșu de emoție și rușine, am pus vioara în cutie. O anumită consolare am găsit în faptul că și celălalt violonist a pățit-o la fel...Seara, familia s-a delectat cu muzica, (tot cam scârțâită, chiar la a



treia încercare) pe când eu aş fi preferat să uit toată aventura. Oricum, m-am produs la Difuzor, fusesem prezentat de crainic, pentru câteva ore am fost faimos în Suceava...

Actualitatea, ideologică ori politică, locală, națională sau internațională, ne provenea de asemenea prin emisiuni auzite la difuzor. De câteva ori pe zi erau „Buletine de știri”, iar la 10 seara se transmitea un „Radiojurnal”. Bineînțeles, la fel ca în presa tipărită, totul era formulat, redactat și filtrat prin rețeaua deasă de control a autorităților. Dar chiar așa, aveam totuși o fereastră deschisă spre lume. Îmi amintesc cum pe la început de Martie 1953 am fost martor al zilelor de doliu general atunci când Stalin, „Soarele popoarelor” și-a dat (în sfârșit) obștescul sfârșit. Difuzorul acasă, ca și toate megafoanele presărate pe stâlpi în centrul orașului, au transmis zile în șir muzică funeabră și discursuri interminabile despre marele conducător... Și la fel, dar în împrejurări sărbătorești de 1 Mai sau 23 August, difuzoarele și megafoanele trâmbețau marșuri solemne sau vesele și relatări ale crainicilor, pe viu, de la marea demonstrație a oamenilor muncii...

Se spune (și de fapt e lucru verificat) că anumite momente dramatice, ne rămân întipărite în amintire pentru totdeauna. Fiecare din noi știe exact unde se afla și ce făcea când a aflat ceva dramatic, de exemplu prima aterizare a omului pe lună. Iar un eveniment de amploarea emoțională a asasinatului lui Kennedy a marcat memoria comună a generațiilor adulte pentru decade. În seara de vineri, 22 noiembrie 1963, așteptam citind ca difuzorul, ce funcționa ca de obicei pe fundal, să transmită „Radiojurnalul” de ora 10. Deși știrea despre cele petrecute cam cu o oră înainte la Dallas se afla deja cu siguranță în redacții, radio București si-a continuat programul obișnuit până la începerea jurnalului. Dar chiar cu întârziere, știrea m-a înlemnit și m-a lăsat cu o senzație de neliniște, de nesiguranță pentru viitor (aveam 17 ani) care mi-e încă vie în toate fibrele sufletului.

Peste exact cinci luni, într-o sâmbătă seara de sfârșit de aprilie, am părăsit Suceava pentru totdeauna. Locuința de pe Cetății nr. 6, în așteptarea noilor locatari, fusese deja golită de mobile. Doar în camera din mijloc, fosta mea cameră, lângă sobă, pe aceeași măsuță șubredă cu trei picioare, rămăsese credinciosul prieten ce mi-a însoțit și îmbogățit anii copilăriei și ai adolescenței, bătrânul nostru Difuzor. Fie-i memoria binecuvântată!



The loudspeaker





Delicii sucevene

Beni Budic

Să tot fi avut vreo cinci ani, când într-o dimineață însorită de început de vară, mama m-a luat la iarmarocul ce se formase în curtea și în împrejurimile bisericii Sfântul Ioan cel Nou. Cu anii, aveam să învăț că hramul ținut la Suceava pe 24 iunie aducea în oraș mii de săteni din împrejurimi ca și mulțime de credincioși de pe alte meleaguri ce se adunau să ia parte la procesiune, la slujbe și la toată animația ce cuprindea orașul. În curtea mănăstirii și pe străzile din apropiere forfoteau vânzători ambulanți de multe și mărunte, care cu o tarabă improvizată, care cu un preș și bocceluțe întinse pe jos, care pășind printre oameni, cu o tăblie atârnată de umeri pe care își expunea marfa. Cumpărătorii erau de tot felul și de toate vârstele, țărani și orășeni, băbuțe și fete mândre, moșnegi, flăcăi, băieți și copii. Gospodinele, mama printre ele, căutau și cumpăneau mosorele de ață, șervețele brodate, mari și mici, ce împodobeau bucătăriile cu imagini idilice și naive din viața de familie, broboade colorate, ștergare de in, linguri de lemn, și cine știe câte altele, multe, colorate, ispititoare...De la înălțimea celor 5 ani ai mei nu știu dacă le-am văzut atunci chiar pe toate sau poate le-am completat cu imagini mai târzii sau cu povestiri ale altora dar ce-mi amintesc cu certitudine sunt jucăriile și dulciurile - primele mele delicii sucevene.

Printre toate cele vândute la târgul din jurul mănăstirii, ispitele și capcanele pentru copiii de toate vârstele erau sub forma a felurite acadele și bomboane colorate, dulci și lipicioase. Acadelele, ca niște bețișoare răsucite, alb cu roșu, erau marea atracție deoarece le puteam linge și expune ca un fel de țigări. La drept vorbind, gustul era departe de "deliciu", ca un fel de făină dulce din care rămâneau până la urmă doar degete și obraji lipicioși. Bomboanele erau sub forma unor cocoșei roșii, pe o codiță de lemn, sticloși și bineînțeles, dulci. Da, și era și halvița ce-mi încliea gura de la prima mușcătură. Reveneam acasă fericit, cu vreo jucărie, sau chiar mai mult de una, ce avea să mă însoțească peste vară. Printre minunățiile expuse de ambulanți, era versiunea anilor 50 al "yo-io"ului modern: o mingiucă din rumeguș ambalată în câteva straturi de hârtie creponată, înfășurată bine-bine cu legături de ață și atârnată de un fir elastic. Și mai erau "ochelari de soare" croiți din carton, cu lentile de celofan verde, sau roșu, sau galben. Iar peste toate era "oceanul" - un caleidoscop primitiv din carton, 3 fâșii lunguiețe de oglindă și o mână de cioburi de sticlă de felurite culori. Chiar primitiv, imaginile stelare, multicolore și de o simetrie perfectă mă vrăjeau timp de săptămâni, până ce "oceanul" se dezlipea, se desfăcea și-și dezvăluia secretele.



Cam tot în aceeași perioadă, o altă sursă de delectare era ciocolata, articol destul de greu de obținut pe atunci dar care la noi ajungea regulat grație relațiilor lui tata la "Alimentara". O primeam chipurile ca premiu pentru somnul de după amiază, în zilele când mai renunțam la "Pogonici", predecesorul "Luminiței" (publicații educative pentru copii, în spiritul realismului socialist). Mama venea cu un pahar cu lapte și cam vreo treime de baton de ciocolată "Urs de Dorna" întunecată la culoare și nu grozav de gustoasă, dar totuși, ciocolată. Tabletele maro-erou erau împachetate într-un ambalaj exterior din hârtie roșie (sau tot maro?) pe care era imprimat un urs imens, apoi tableta era acoperită de o foiță fină de staniol, sub care se dezvăluia același ditamai ursul, imprimat în basorelief pe toată lungimea tabletei. O zi primeam capul și picioarele anterioare, a doua zi corpul și a treia zi restul tabletei...

Câțiva ani mai târziu, locul ursului l-au luat "puișorii" pe care îi cumpăram deja singur cu 50 de bani la vreun chioșc sau la raionul de dulciuri de la "Alimentara". Era un gen de fondantă cu ciocolată și nuga, învelită într-o hârtiuță cu capetele răsucite, pe care era imprimat un puișor mic și galben. Și era gustos-gustos...

Când ieșeam mulțumit de la vreun examen (eram deja prin clasa VII-a), treceam pe la tata la magazin să-i povestesc, iar el mă cinstea cu vreo 2-3 lei cu care intram la cofetăria aflată ceva mai jos, de cealaltă parte a lui Ștefan cel Mare și mă regalam cu vreo amandină, negresă, ecler sau doboș - și un suc. Fără doar și poate, prăjiturile, chiar preparate la laboratorul TAPL, erau gustoase dar nici de departe nu le egalau pe cele ce gustasem cu câțiva ani în urmă într-o cofetărie particulară ce mai supraviețuise la Fălticeni, unde plecam uneori cu tata, în vizită la un unchi. Și tot de domeniul aproape exclusiv al cofetăriei era, la lunile de vară, înghețata ce se servea într-o cupă cu picior, de vanilie, de ciocolată sau asortată. Înghețată la cornet cumpăram vara la vreo tonetă din cele puține ce apăreau în centru, între cofetărie și grădina publică, sau la Burdujeni, la cofetăria lui Natan (de fapt fostă a lui Natan și devenită local de stat, iar Natan devenit din proprietar, salariat). Tot la capitolul înghețată îmi amintesc cum într-o duminică, a venit la noi Herman, prieten al tatei și coleg de "Alimentara", care deținea secretul preparării înghețatei. A adus cu el gheață și două lighenașe din metal, de mărimi diferite. În cel mai mare a pus gheața fărâmițată. În cel mai mic a amestecat produsele necesare învârtindu-l neconținut peste gheață. După vreun ceas de muncă grea, s-a produs o cană mare, plină de înghețată delicioasă pe care a trebuit s-o consumăm în aceeași zi, cât a mai ținut gheața...Într-una din zile, acasă la Herman, am fost martor și la secretul fabricării cornetelor de înghețată, pe care le făcea dintr-o cremă foarte diluată de aluat ce-o turna într-o matriță specială de metal, cu multe orificii, ca un fagure, încinsă pe aragaz. Cornetele rebut, ca și prisosul de aluat din jur, erau ale copiilor... O a doua ocazie când am mâncat acasă înghețată, la discreție, a fost în ziua când am fost operat de amigdale la



clinica din casa doctorului Siminel.

Tot în deliciale de vară se încadrau ”băuturile răcoritoare”. La sifonăriile din centru se pregăteau sticle cam de un sfert de litru, cu sifon și sirop de zmeură, sau brad, închise bine cu un dop-patent, din porțelan căptușit cu un inel de cauciuc. Dar atracția specială în acest domeniu era toneta de răcoritoare, plasată în lunile de vară în centru, la un colț de stradă pe lângă cofetărie. Alături de calupurile mari cu înghețată, toneta expunea cu mândrie 2-3 coloane cilindrice din sticlă, fiecare conținând un sirop de altă culoare: roșu, de zmeură, verde - de brad, gălbui - de lămâie... Vanzătorul scurgea prin robinete mici siropul în pahare spălate cam sumar și adăoga sifon dintr-un vas pântecos de aramă, care odihnea pe un așternut de gheață, lângă calupurile cu înghețată.

Erau în Suceava copilăriei mele și delicii mai prozaice, nu neapărat de domeniul dulciurilor. Cine dintre noi nu s-a delectat în vreo seară de primăvară, cu o felie de pâine neagră, cu unt, caș proaspăt și pe lângă ele un fir de usturoi verde ? Și cine putea rămâne indiferent în fața unei farfurioare de fragi cu smântână și puțin zahăr ? Uneori înnoptam la Burdujeni, la bunici. (În iarna când mama a fost la spital, la București, am petrecut acolo aproape tot anul școlar de clasa I). În serile de joi, bunica frământa o covată de aluat pentru colacii de Shabat. Aluatul, acoperit cu un ștergar, rămânea să dospească peste noapte. Dis-de-diminează bunica croia aluatul și pregătea în câteva tăvițe pâinile albe festive: 2 tăvi cu pâini împletite, un colac înalt, rotund, tot împletit și 2 pâini alcătuite fiecare din câte 3 bile rotunde de aluat. Apoi ungea pâinile cu ou bătut și presăra mac din belșug. Tăvile, stivuite în două coșuri de papură, le ducea zeida (bunicul) la brutăria surorilor Riegler de unde le aducea înapoi, către ora prânzului, cu pâinile albe de Shabat, proaspăt coapte, cu miros îmbătător. Dar încă în zori, pe când se ocupa cu aluatul, bunica pregătise o lipie din puțin aluat și o pusese la copt în ”rulă” - cuptorașul de tinichea, zidit chiar între cărămizile sobei din cameră. Când ne trezeam, vărul meu și eu, lipia mirositoare, cu câteva rânduri de mici perforații făcute cu o furculiță era deja gata, unsă cu untură de găscă, caldă și gustoasă de se topea în gură....

În categoria deliciilor sucevene de proveniență bucovineană, existau câteva porții tradiționale, cel puțin în bucătăriile evreiești, dar nu numai. Cu bună parte din acestea eram familiar încă de mic copil, de acasă sau din casa bunicilor ori a lui tanti Freida, la Burdujeni. Până în ziua de azi a rămas neelucidată întrebarea: ”Cine erau cele mai tradițional bucovinene, gospodinele din Suceava sau burdujenencele din Regat ”? Dar oricare ar fi răspunsul, mâncărurile pregătite la casa Wagner, instituție suceveană get beget bucovineană, probabil le întreceau pe toate. Adevărata faimă a casei Wagner se trăgea încă dinainte de război dar și în anii așa-numiți ai „construcției socialismului” fostul restaurant funcționa ca o mică pensiune, ce servea prânzul



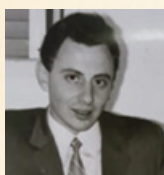
unui cerc restrâns de obișnuiți ai casei, majoritatea celibatari sau văduvi. Bineînțeles că erau și clienți ocazionali, care veneau perechi, sau vreo familie cu un copil ce doreau să se răsfete și să mai rsimtă gusturile și mirosurile de pe alte vremuri...Mica pensiune se constituia din 5-6 mese plasate în camera ce dădea la stradă a familiei Wagner, pe Stefan cel Mare, vizavi de "Cinematograful Tineretului". Pe câte îmi amintesc, mica sală de mese era cu totul lipsită de ornamente. Domnul Wagner, un om înalt, slab, între două vârste (mai mult apropiat de a doua...) era de fapt, ca și tata și mulți prieteni ai lui, gestionar la Alimentara. Gătitul era opera soției sale iar amândoi serveau și de chelneri. La prânz, magazinele erau închise așa că domnul Wagner putea ajuta în orele de vârf ale pensiunii. În vacanța de vară de după moartea mamei (absolvisem clasa a III-a), îmi petreceam unele dimineți cu vreo carte pe o bancă din grădina publică. La prânz, la închiderea magazinelor, tata mă lua din parc să luăm prânzul "la Wagner". Se serveau porții tradiționale, cu gust de bucătărie de casă. Dar ce gust!!! Sub mâinile doamnei Wagner, cele mai prozaice supe cu tăiței, sau friptura - "Braten" - de pasăre sau de vită, și mai presus de toate știțelul vienez de vițel - Karmenadel - cu pireu de cartofi și castraveți murați de casă deveneau adevărate creații culinare. Și după toate astea, mai presus de toate, urma lovitura de teatru a desertului: "Eisbombe". Nu era înghețată, nu era casată, nu era profiterol - dar era, simultan, toate acestea împreună, și mult mai mult decât suma lor. Deci nu e de mirare că gusturile și aromele ce-mi răscoleau simțurile în acea mică odaie-restaurant de pe Stefan cel Mare au rămas

Dacă am ajuns la capitolul prăjiturilor sau torturilor fine, nu am nici o îndoială că vreun maestru-cofetar vienez ar fi putut egala vreun coleg cernăuțean și că nici unul din aceștia nu s-ar fi putut măsura cu balabustele sucevene sau cu cele din Burdujeni, care chiar dacă nu știau o buche de germană erau specialiste neîntrecute în preparatul celor două torturi ce reprezentau culmea culmilor, apogeul creației culinare în domeniu. E vorba de visurile dulci ale copilăriei noastre, îmbinări de gusturi rafinate de smântână, de vanilie, de nuci măcinate, de praf de zahăr, de foițe fine - fine de aluat păzite ca lumina ochilor când se rumeneau în cuptor și mai ales apoi, nu cumva să se fărâmițeze. Cremșnit ca la Suceava n-am găsit nici la Bled, nici la Budapesta și nici la Viena. Iar „Şmetn Torte” - tortul de smântână bucovinean nu l-au cunoscut nici unul din celelalte popoare ale imperiului Habsburgic. În ultimul timp se zvonește că pe la Haifa sunt încă vreo câteva fete sucevene care mai produc aceste minuni...

Despre bunătațile ce le pregăteau mamele și bunicele noastre pentru Shabat, nenumăratele feluri de prăjituri uscate sau cu creme de tot felul ce se preparau la sărbătoarea de "purim", despre checurile cu miere al sărbătorilor de toamnă, despre toate acestea și încă multe altele, se poate scrie un tratat. Poate cândva...



Ultima mea perioadă la Suceava, licean deja, prin '63-'64, a fost marcată de noi semne de progres pe plan culinar ale urbei noastre. Încă în vară apăruseră în centru vânzători de înghețată la pachetel, foarte asemănătoare cu înghețata pe băț pe care o văzusem la București. Dar din păcate, pachetelul sucevean era fără băț așa că înghețata ni se cam topea printre degete....Apoi, lângă stația de autobuz, vizavi de Sfântul Dumitru s-a deschis o plăcintărie. Plăcintele cu brânză sau cu carne, tăiate de vânzător cu un mic toporaș și servite într-o foiță de pergament erau un fel de ambasadori ai balcanismului în inima Sucevei din ce în ce mai puțin bucovineană. Iar pe Karl Marx se deschisese o gogoșărie cu mașină automată ce arunca covrigei de aluat în cazanul cu ulei încins. Vânzătorul pescuia apoi gogoășele cu un fel de frigăruie de metal, le depunea pe tejghea, presăra zahăr pudră și oferea gogoșa caldă în schimbul unui leu. Gogoșa nu era Eisbombe, dar era caldă, dulce și destul de gustoasă. Și era un fel de pregătire ce ar fi trebuit să mă deprindă cu gusturile levantine ce mă așteptau.



Casa Bodinger

Beni Budic

Clădirea cu etaj, aflată la intersecția lui Ștefan cel Mare cu străduța ce ducea spre Piața Birjelor (nume ce l-am găsit menționat într-un plan vechi al orașului) avea, se poate spune, o poziție strategică. Se afla chiar la începutul centrului, cam de unde porneau promenadele noastre în serile de vară. Era la doi pași de intrarea în curtea școlii (fostul Liceu de fete), era vizavi de magazinul central Alimentara, era aproape de parc, și - cel mai important - era pe traseul zilnic al multor suceveni din cam toate părțile orașului. La parter, spre Ștefan cel Mare (așa se numea strada prin anii 60 deja, după ce fusese Strada Ferdinand și apoi Republicii), se afla farmacia centrală, una din cele două ale orașului, iar după colț, pe străduța îngustă și veșnic umbrită, funcționa una din cele două sifonării din oraș. Puțin după sifonărie era gardul curții de-a lungul căreia, sus la etaj, se întindea un cerdac de lemn șubred. Cerdacul ducea spre aripa clădirii unde, în „anii buni” ai Bucovinei habsburgice, erau camerele servitorilor. În dreapta curții se deschidea scara ce ducea la etaj, către locuința familiei Bodinger.

În locuința asta am intrat de nenumărate ori, începând din anii copilăriei, venind acolo din când în când cu mama, cu tanti Freida și cu Iani, să ni se coase costume noi, de sărbători, și până în anii de liceu, când ajungeam acolo aproape zilnic, cu grupul de prieteni și prietene ale Marei. Casa Bodinger devenise atunci o adevărată bază a grupului, eram primiți cu brațele deschise, ne simțeam în largul nostru și petreceam acolo ore în șir.



Ușile duble, cu oblon la exterior și cu geamuri la cele ce dădeau spre locuință, duceau către bucătăria imensă. Chiar de pe atunci gătitul se făcea deja pe aragaz, iar soba mare, boierească și cu plita din fontă grea era aprinsă doar la ocazii speciale. În primii ani îmi amintesc că într-un colț al bucătăriei se afla și o masă de laborator unde Adi, pe-atunci licean, se ocupa cu cine știe ce experiențe de chimie. Adi și Mara erau cei doi copii ai familiei. A mai fost un frățior între ei, născut în Transnistria, dar acesta nu a supraviețuit deportării. Mara, ca toți cei din promoția noastră, era născută după război, după reîntoarcerea familiei la Suceava. Adi era cam cu vreo 10 ani mai în vârstă.

Din bucătărie, o ușă cu canaturi și geamuri de sticlă ducea spre camera următoare, la fel de mare ca prima, cameră ce servea de salon și dormitor al părinților. Principalele piese de mobilier erau două paturi/canapea gen „studio”, foarte la modă pe atunci, un șifonier de dimensiuni impresionante și măsuța de toaletă. În camera asta, în fața oglinzii mari a toaletei, aveau loc ședințele de probă ale clientelor. A treia cameră era la fel de mare ca primele două, dar spre deosebire de ele era mult mai luminoasă. Două geamuri mari și ușa ce dădea spre balcon inundau camera cu lumina ce intra dinspre stradă. Aici funcționa atelierul ce adusese faima casei Bodinger, recunoscută de ani drept cea mai elegantă și stilată croitorie de damă și îndeosebi de copii, a orașului. Doamna Bodinger, în acei ani deja o femeie între două vârste, era de statură mijlocie, cu ten mai mult întunecat și păr negru, ondulat, ce începuse a încărungi. Foarte activă, dirija, într-o limbă română cam sumară, o echipă de fete ucenice care forfoteau ca niște furnici harnice printre mașinile de cusut din cameră. Probabil că aproape toate erau venite de prin satele din jurul orașului, să învețe meserie de la o maestră de prim rang care le primea doar pe cele mai talentate. Fetele erau găzduite acolo cu casă și masă, iar din câte am aflat mai târziu, când venea vremea să părăsească ucenicia, ieșeau din casa Bodinger cu un cuțăr plin de zestre.

Din atelier, o ușă fără geam dădea spre dreapta, către camera Marei, unde în anii de liceu ne întâlneam cu toții de câteva ori pe săptămână. Camera era de fapt a lui Adi, dar el era mai mult la Iași, la facultate. Și această cameră avea acces la balcon, iar ușa și geamul ce dădeau spre exterior, către Ștefan cel Mare, o umpleau de lumină.

Dar centrul de activitate, cel ce transformase locuința familiei în Casa Bodinger, era atelierul de croitorie. Aici ajungea anual aproape orice copil „de casă bună” din oraș, să i se coase hăinuțe noi. Modelele, din câte îmi amintesc eu, erau de inspirație germană/austriacă, pe scurt, bucovineană. Pentru băieți erau două modele clasice: costumaș de marinar și costumaș vânătoresc. Marinarii purtau pantalonași bleumarin (lungi sau scurți, pentru orice sezon...) cu manșetă și o bluză de aceeași culoare, fără nasturi, care se îmbrăca „peste cap”. Dar piesa de



forță a costumașului era gulerul mare, marinăresc, ce se răsfrângea pe umeri și la spate. Pe piept, același guler se termina cu o cravată scurtă, marinărească. Atât gulerul, cât și cravata erau ornate cu margini de panglică albă. Pentru fete, costumul era bazat pe aceleași principii, doar că pantalonașii erau înlocuiți cu o fustiță plisată. Costumul vânătorec consta din pantaloni (scurți sau lungi) de culoare verde, cu bretele tiroleze. Partea superioară consta dintr-o hăinuță de culoare gri, cu guler mic verde și revere rotunjite, tivite cu fâșie subțire de saten. Hăinuța avea și un buzunăraș pe care era aplicată o frunză de stejar din postav tivită cu un ornament alb. Iar toată această minunăție era încoronată cu o pălărioară verde în care era înfiptă o pană mândră de cocoș. Bineînțeles că vânătorul nu pornea la drum fără pușcă...

In afara acestor câteva exemple, de sub mâinile doamnei Bodinger și a ucenicilor sale ieșeau nenumărate modele de rochițe, rochii elegante sau de zi, sacouri și pardesiuri, costume „taior” și cine știe câte alte creații. Chiar dacă inspirația provenea din vreun jurnal de modă, imaginația, creativitatea, talentul, perfecționismul și simțul estetic al doamnei Bodinger o transformau de fapt într-o artistă a profesiei, demnă de marile capitale europene, dar naufragiată la Suceava, spre fericirea clientelei locale...

Povestea noastră începe de fapt cu câțiva zeci de ani în urma celor relatate mai sus și la vreo 200 de km la apus de Suceava. Prundu Bârgăului era deja la începutul secolului trecut o comună destul de mare în județul Bistrița-Năsăud. Așezarea se afla „pe-o gură de rai”, într-o vale la poalele munților Bârgăului, unde în zilele senine se puteau vedea culmile munților Rodnei și în apropierea căreia își începe cursul Bistrița Ardeleană. La vreo 20 de km spre apus se afla târgul Bistrița și la vreo 80 de km spre răsărit, calea ferată construită de austrieci în anii războiului, ducea la Vatra Dornei și de-acolo spre orașele Bucovinei. Familia Marian-Eger era una din multele familii de evrei din localitate, iar comunitatea evreiască din Prundu Bârgăului era una din sutele de comunități evreiești din satele, orașelele și orașele Transilvaniei. Tatăl era probabil om învățat, purta haine negre tradiționale și concetățenii i se adresau cu titlul de „rabi”, chiar dacă nu absolvise vreun seminar rabinic. Familia era oarecum înstărită și posedau chiar o bucată de pădure. După obiceiul vremii, membrii familiei - ca majoritatea coreligionarilor lor - erau evrei ortodocși, ce respectau toate prescripțiile învățăturilor sfinte. Dar lucrurile aveau să se schimbe. Roza era al treilea din cei șapte copii ai familiei. Se pare că încă din anii copilăriei dovedea aplicație pentru croitorie. Fapt este că deja pe la 11 ani, într-o zi când părinții erau plecați, a hotărât că unul din frățiorii mai mici are urgentă nevoie de pantaloni noi. A găsit așadar o rochie mai potrivită a mamei, din care a croit și cusut o pereche minunată de pantaloni pentru frățior. Rezultatul a fost de înalt nivel și talentul fetei a fost recunoscut incontestabil, iar rochia



sacrificată i-a fost iertată. Așa se face că după ce a mai crescut puțin, tânăra Roza a fost trimisă la Sighet, unde a intrat ucenică la o croitoreasă vestită. Când s-a reîntors după câțiva ani era deja croitoreasă cu destulă experiență și mai cu seamă, cu mult talent și simț estetic. În scurt timp si-a format o clientelă și avea de lucru până peste cap. Ca să le dovedească pe toate, a fost prima fată (evreică!) din localitate care cutreiera satul cu bicicleta, ducând probele pe la cliente. Timpul zbura și Roza trecuse deja de 20 de ani, dar cufundată neconținut în lucru (care cu siguranță o captiva, chiar fără legătură cu câștigul frumos ce-l aducea familiei) nici nu se gândea la măritiș. Frații mai mari plecaseră deja de acasă. Unul dintre ei, Israel, a fugit de la „yeshiva” (școala superioară religioasă) din Satu Mare, și-a tăiat perciunii și a ajuns la Budapesta unde a aderat la cercuri comuniste. Probabil că asta i-a salvat viața. În anii războiului a fost deținut într-un lagăr de comuniști, pe când evreii Ungariei au fost transportați în lagărele de exterminare din Polonia, de unde aproape nimeni nu a revenit. În lagăr, Israel - Istvan Marian l-a cunoscut pe Ianoș Kadar, viitor conducător al Ungariei și avea, după ani, să intre în nomenclatura Ungariei comuniste. O perioadă avea să fie chiar ambasador al Ungariei la București.

Mama, slăbită de multele nașteri, era o femeie suferindă. Pentru a facilita tratamentele la medici vestiți din Cernăuți, tatăl a decis ca familia să se mute la Suceava, mai aproape de capitala Bucovinei. Și așa se face că pe la începutul anilor '30, familia Marian-Eger se găsește stabilită într-o casă de pe strada Mirăuților, colț cu Luca Arbore.

La Suceava, oraș mare, clientela Rozei a crescut considerabil. Și aici, lucra din zori și până în noapte și alerga pe la cliente și furnizori călare pe credincioasa ei bicicletă. Si tot aici, la pompa de apă de la colțul străzii Mirăuților, „la izvor”, avea să-l întâlnească pe Emanuel Bodinger.

Familia Bodinger locuia acolo de ani de zile într-o casă aflată chiar vizavi de cea a familiei Marian. Tatăl murise încă din timpul războiului, în 1915, pe când avea doar 35 de ani și lăsase grija celor nouă copii - o fată și opt băieți - pe umerii soției. Ca să facă față situației, văduva Reizel Bodinger a acceptat orice muncă. Ani de zile, în prima parte a săptămânii, casa și curtea deveneau spălătorie de rufe unde roboteau mama și parte din copii. Joia și vinerea activitatea trecea la bucătărie, unde se pregăteau bunătățile de Shabat pentru clienții înstăriți, ce învățaseră să aprecieze talentele culinare ale vrednicei femei. Vineri, spre orele prânzului, oalele și borcanele cu supă, cu răcitură de crap, cu țimes dulce de morcovi cu stafide, sau tăvile de Kugel de fidea și ulcioare pline ochi cu compot de prune uscate, erau încărcate în căruță, acoperite bine cu pături de postav subțire, curat, și duse de văduvă pe la casele clienților ei. Pe măsură ce treceau anii, copiii părăseau casa. Prima a fost Fanny, ce a plecat la Cernăuți la școala de surori medicale. După absolvire, Fanny avea să revină la Suceava unde s-a căsătorit, devenind „doamna Nossig”.



Zeci de ani a fost legendara moașă a copiilor suceveni și nu mai puțin, una din figurile dominante ale peisajului uman al orașului. Alți doi frați au ajuns la Iași, un frate s-a stabilit la Cernăuți și un altul a ajuns până în Polonia. Emanuel era mezinul familiei și încă din copilărie a fost cel ce i-a scos mamei mulți peri albi... Cam mic de statură, cu păr cârlionțat, tot timpul în mișcare, devenise un rebel chiar de la o vârstă fragedă. Pe la 13 ani a urcat, fără bilet și fără știrea cuiva din familie, într-un tren ce l-a dus la București și de-acolo spre Constanța. A reușit chiar să se îmbarce clandestin pe un vapor și visa să cutreiere mările, departe de toți cei pe care voia să se răzbune. Dar, cumva, visurile s-au spulberat iar călătorul clandestin a fost expedit la adresa pe care a indicat-o: cea a fraților săi de la Iași. Aceștia l-au adus înapoi acasă, la Suceava, unde mama, ca toate mamele, l-a iertat. Când a întâlnit-o pe Roza avea deja vreo 23-24 de ani și învățase meseria de „zugrav artistic” pe care o practica, se pare, cu destul succes. Roza era cu vreo trei ani mai în vârstă și tinerii s-au plăcut de la prima privire. Singurul căruia nu prea i-a plăcut partida a fost tatăl Rozei. Dar n-a avut încotro. Roza amenința că dacă nu o mărită cu Emanuel, devine sionistă și pleacă în Palestina. Chiar s-a alăturat unei tabere sioniste „de pregătire” iar acolo, la Rădăuți, a făcut o congestie pulmonară care aproape că a costat-o viața. Cel ce a contribuit mai mult ca oricare altul la însănătoșirea Rozei a fost Emanuel... Și, după această vindecare miraculoasă, tatăl a acceptat căsătoria lor.

Roza și Emanuel Bodinger s-au căsătorit pe 24 martie 1936. Tânăra pereche s-a stabilit într-o locuință de două camere închiriată de la familia Strominger. Locuința se afla cam la capătul străzii Armașului (denumită și „Ulița Evreiască”, devenită apoi „Karl Marx”). Acolo, se poate spune, a luat ființă „Casa Bodinger” - croitorie de damă și copii, de înaltă calitate ce avea să-și facă renumele și faima în oraș pentru următorii 30 de ani. Adi s-a născut exact la nouă luni după nunta părinților, pe 24 decembrie 1936. Au urmat câțiva ani de prosperitate pentru tânăra familie, îndeosebi datorită activității atelierului de croitorie ce se mărea tot timpul. Roza a început să ia la lucru fete din împrejurimi, ca să facă față comenzilor. Adi creștea în belșug, răsfățat de mamă și de ucenicele din atelier. Toate ar fi părut bune, dar în oraș, în țară, începuseră a bate vânturi îngrijorătoare. Iar în octombrie 1941, dintr-o dată, se părea că viața s-a terminat. În decurs de două-trei zile, toți evreii Sucevei - și mica familie Bodinger printre ei - au fost izgoniți din casele lor, urcați în trenuri de vite și duși, cu puținele boccele care li s-au îngăduit, peste Prut, la Ataki, pe malul Nistrului. Fluviul l-au traversat noaptea, pe plute în care soldații i-au îngrămădit cu brutalitate. Mulți si-au găsit moartea în acea noapte, în apele aproape înghețate ale Nistrului. Bodingerii au fost printre cei norocoși, ce-au ajuns înfricoșați, înghețați, disperați - dar în viață, la Mogilev.

Astfel a început oroarea de aproape trei ani a Transnistriei, cu frigul necruțător, cu foamea cruntă,



prezentă veșnic, cu tifosul ce secera oamenii. De la Mogilev, în iarna groaznică a lui 41/42, au ajuns la Șargorod, unde au găsit un fel de adăpost într-o pivniță a unor localnici, spațiu pe care l-au împărțit cu încă vreo 30 de persoane din ambele familii. Ei trei au supraviețuit, dar nu și pruncul pe care Roza îl purta în pântec când au fost izgoniți din Suceava. Si nu au supraviețuit nici majoritatea membrilor celor două familii, a Rozei și a lui Emanuel. După război, dintre cei apropiați ai acestuia rămăseseră doar sora, Fanny Nossig, și Iosef, unul din cei doi frați de la Iași. Celălalt fusese printre miile de evrei, victime ale pogromului din iunie 1941. Părinții și un frate tânăr al Rozei s-au pierdut și ei în Transnistria.

În vara lui 1944 Emanuel, Roza și fiul lor s-au reîntors la Suceava. Războiul schimbase orașul, schimbase oamenii. Apoi s-a schimbat și regimul. Tot ce lăsaseră în urmă dispăruse. Viața trebuia luată de la început. În primii câțiva ani au locuit într-un apartament minuscul, unul din cele aproape 30 dintr-o fostă fabrică de textile. Era o clădire de două etaje și o curte interioară mare, nu departe de biserica Armenească. Locuințele erau înșirate de-a lungul celor două etaje cu cerdac deschis, ca niște chilii ale unei mănăstiri. Iar în această clădire, pe care Adi o numea „cazarmă”, și-au găsit adăpost multe familii reîntoarse din Transnistria. Și familia Nossig a locuit acolo. Tot în „cazarmă” a reînceput, încetul cu încetul, activitatea atelierului de croitorie și tot acolo avea să se nască, după vreo doi ani, Mara. Primii ani după război au fost ani grei de



secetă, de lipsuri, de tulburări politice. Spre începutul anilor '50, însă, lucrurile au început să se normalizeze oarecum. Comenzile în atelier au reînceput să curgă. Se născuse generația de după război pe care părinții erau gata s-o răsfețe cu orice preț, așa că mașinile de cusut lucrau din plin.

Emanuel, care încă înainte de război era atras de ideologia comunistă, s-a înscris în partid. Carnetul roșu i-a deschis drumul către un serviciu destul de bun. A devenit director la Trustul local de energie - adică era responsabil cu aprovizionarea cu lemne de încălzit a orașului. (Situția asta avea să dureze doar câțiva ani. Când în 1958 a depus cerere de emigrare cu familia în Israel, Emanuel a fost nevoit să renunțe la carnetul roșu, la serviciul comod și a fost coborât la „muncă de jos”). Prin 1951 s-a ivit posibilitatea ca familia să se mute în locuința spațioasă de pe Ștefan cel Mare. Mutatul l-a costat pe Adi pierderea colecției de cactuși, care au înghețat toți. Dar avea să câștige o cameră minunată, cu acces la balcon și vedere la stradă, ce mai târziu, în anii lui de facultate, avea să devină a Marei.

În acei ani se poate spune că s-a consolidat faima „Casei Bodinger”, care a devenit o adevărată instituție suceveană. Croitorie de copii, croitorie stilată de damă, ca și specializarea în trusouri de zestre, inclusiv colecții de lenjerie de pat (foarte cerute de familiile ce se pregăteau de plecare în Israel), toate acestea au dus la angajarea în mica întreprindere a 12-13 ucenice și cusătorese. Ca atare, Roza Bodinger a fost declarată de autorități „burgheză înstărită”. Dar se pare că datorită clientelei alese, printre care soțiile multor șefi din toate organele și de toate rangurile, „Casa Bodinger” a putut să-și continue nestingherită activitatea. Și cine știe dacă nu cumva tot vreuna din acele clientele, ce nu vroia să-și piardă croitoreasa neîntrecută, va fi intervenit pentru a întârzia cu câțiva ani aprobarea oficială a plecării familiei Bodinger în Israel...

Pe Mara am cunoscut-o în clasa a IVa, când s-a trecut la învățământul mixt. Pe atunci era deja prietenă cu aproape toate fetele sucevene de vârsta ei, care ajungeau alături de mamele lor la vestitul atelier de croitorie. Prietenia dintre noi s-a legat mai mult în anii de liceu, când s-a format grupul nostru care, parțial, a rezistat până acum. Eram cinci: trei fete (Mara, Mira și Betti) și doi băieți (Mihai Drișcu și eu). Doamna Bodinger, deși veșnic ocupată, ne primea cu brațele deschise. Cu timpul deveniserăm de-a dreptul obișnuiți ai casei și petreceam acolo ore în șir, în discuții și jocuri nevinovate. Cu excepția lui Mihai, prietenul meu cel mai apropiat, care din 1989 - când a fost omorât într-un inexplicabil „accident de circulație” - odihnește în pământul Sucevei, toți ne aflăm deja de mai bine de jumătate de veac în Israel.

Acum 2-3 ani, Mara mi-a dăruit o reproducere a unui tablou pe care-l pictase recent, pornind de la o fotografie luată din balconul de pe Ștefan cel Mare 15. Revăd în el, ca atunci, când ne



înghesuiau toți pe balconul cam șubred, clădirile Alimentarei centrale, magazinul de textile, chioșcul de ziare, magazinul Sport-Foto-Muzică din capătul străzii și însăși strada, cu o mașină singuratică. Parfum sucevean al tinereții. Fiori de amintiri...

Când s-a reîntors de la facultate, Adi era deja logodit cu Țili (Ina), pe care o cunoscuse la Iași. Era o fată subțirică, firavă, cu trăsături frumoase și cu o față de liceană. Terminase Facultatea de Litere și fusese repartizată ca profesoară de română la Suceava. Deși mai în vârstă decât noi cu câțiva ani, putea fi luată cu ușurință ca membră a grupului nostru. Și într-adevăr, nu o dată, Țili, ce locuia în casă, participa în mod activ la întâlnirile noastre.

Țili și Adi s-au căsătorit în seara de 31 decembrie 1962. Nunta - revelion s-a făcut chiar în cele trei camere mari ale "Casei Bodinger". Printre invitați, majoritatea prieteni ai mirilor, erau cele mai frumoase tinere din oraș, și eram și noi, prietenii Marei. Pentru mine, la 16 ani, elev într-a X-a, era de fapt primul adevărat revelion. Când am fost invitat la dans de Mauzi Kerner, soția unui prieten al lui Adi și una din frumusețile orașului, m-am topit cu totul, mai ales când ea mi-a adresat câteva laude... Pe la 3 sau 4 dimineața am ieșit pe strada înzăpezită a centrului. Chiar dacă auzeam clar scârțâitul zăpezii sub tălpile subțiri ale pantofilor, parcă pluteam. Și nu, nu exagerasem de loc cu băutura. Atunci nu eram conștient că mă aflu, în spațiu și în timp, pe o culme a trăirilor mele în universul sucevean. Un fel de galaxie cu nucleul la Casa Bodinger.

Revelionul 62/63 a fost ultimul în vechea casă de pe Stefan cel Mare 15. În acel an, când eu aveam să petrec „ultima vară la Suceava”, o parte din centrul habsburgic al orașului a fost demolată. Familia Bodinger s-au mutat într-o locuință mai modernă, dar mult mai mică, lângă sinagoga „Gah”. În mod firesc, activitatea croitoriei s-a micșorat. În acea nouă Casă Bodinger s-a mutat și sediul micului nostru grup. Acolo am sărbătorit între noi, cei câțiva prieteni, revelionul 63/64.

Peste câteva luni eu aveam să plec.

În vară, când mai toți erau prinși cu bacalaureatul și admiterile, știu că cei patru prieteni ai mei se întâlneau la Mara și citeau scrisorile mele din Israel. În anul următor, familia Bodinger a primit în sfârșit aprobarea de plecare. În noua ei țară, Roza Bodinger avea să practice meseria care a consacrat-o încă mulți ani, dar ceea ce a fost „Casa Bodinger” a rămas doar în amintirile noastre



Beni and Mara



sucevene. Talentata croitoreasă a murit la 95 de ani, în 2002, lucidă, înconjurată de familie, la 13 ani după dispariția lui Emanuel. Adi ne-a părăsit acum câteva luni. Memoriei lor vreau să dedic acest text pe care îl consider și o expresie a prieteniei de o viață cu Mara și a respectului pe care-l port lui Țili - Ina, singurele ce mai poartă în suflet amintiri din „Casa Bodinger”.



Între lampa cu gaz și baia de shvitz

Beni Budic

Suceava noastră a avut norocul de a fi al doilea oraș ca mărime și importanță al provinciei austriece care a fost Bucovina până acum un secol. Ca atare, a fost printre primele orașe electrificate ale României și a avut parte de rețele de aprovizionare cu apă și canalizare. Vechea uzină electrică a fost data în folosință prin 1908 și, în scurt timp, străzile din centrul orașului au fost iluminate electric. În 1912 a început să funcționeze „uzina de apă” ce filtra și pompa apa râului Suceava către turnul de apă de pe dealul Zamca, de unde apa cobora prin țevi către oraș. Cronicarii orașului atribuie meritele acestor realizări lui Franz Des Loges, care a fost primarul Sucevei aproape un sfert de veac, până la 1914. Dar, așa cum e în viață, timpul nemilos le schimbă și le macină pe toate.

In Suceava copilăriei mele, prin anii `50, ambele clădiri - cea a uzinei electrice și cea a uzinei de apă - străjuiau încă intrările de nord și de sud spre oraș, ambele clădiri în stilul industrial de la începutul veacului trecut, cu o hală centrală mare, pentru pompe și motoare, cu geamuri mari de sticlă, inundând interiorul cu lumină și cu intrări enorme, aproape pe întreaga înălțime a fațadelor. Pe lângă clădirea uzinei aveam să trec adeseori în drum spre leagănele instalate la pădurice. Dar pe atunci deja, vechile motoare ce trebuiau să asigure alimentarea cu electricitate a orașului, erau deja uzate, obosite și aveau, se pare, nevoie de multe pauze de odihnă...Iar aceste pauze erau traduse în limbaj tehnic-oficial: „pană de curent”.

Nu e sucevean al acelor ani care să nu-și amintească de serile lungi de iarnă, când „penele” se țineau lanț, iar becurile - și așa destul de chioare - intrau deodată într-un pâlpâit prevestitor de rele, până se stingeau cu totul. Nu știu de ce, dar problemele se iveau de obicei iarna. Serile târzii de vară mi le amintesc (oare chiar așa o fi fost ?) mai pline de lumina becurilor ce licăreau voioase în acele luni ale vacanței. Dar iarna, iarna cu noaptea ce cădea pe la 4-5 după amiază, era anotimpul întunericului. Au fost ierni când uzina electrică ieșea din funcțiune timp de săptămâni și chiar luni de zile. Lipsă de piese de schimb? Așa că eram nevoiți să trăim, ca în secolul XIX, la lumina lămpilor cu petrol.



În jurul acestora se formase un adevărat ritual de îngrijire și întreținere. Lampa de petrol „simplă” era de fapt un gen de recipient din sticlă, un mic rezervor transparent, ca un borcan, ce se umplea cu prețiosul și cam mirositorul combustibil cunoscut mai ales sub denumirea populară de „gaz” sau chiar „gaz de ars”. Centrul rezervorului era gătit, ca o talie feminină, pe care era bine strânsă o fâșie de tablă, pe care era montată o tijă dintr-un fir solid de sârmă, modelat în așa fel încât ca să suporte greutatea întregii instalații, când lampa era atârnată de vreun cui bătut în perete. Pe această tijă era uneori montată o oglindă rotundă, strânsă în ramă de metal, al cărei rost era să reflecte și să concentreze lumina lămpii. Oricum, tija din sârmă servea și pentru a ține lampa dacă trebuia mutată din loc în loc. Gura mai îngustă din partea superioară a vasului pântecos era prevăzută cu un ghivent pe care se înșuruba mecanismul fitilului. O!! calitatea acestui mecanism, calitatea fitilului de bumbac și nu mai puțin, gradul de puritate al petrolului, erau seria de parametri ce determinau soarta lămpii și a proprietarilor săi: va lumina, sau va afuma și umple camera cu miros de petrol ars. Sau, cu alte cuvinte, „va arde gazul de pomană”. Fitilul de bumbac alb, lat de 2-3 cm., a cărui coadă era scufundată în petrolul din rezervor, era controlat de un buton ce ne permitea să stabilim cât de înaltă va fi flăcăriua. În plus, trebuia, cu mare grijă, să fie tăiată cu foarfeca acea porțiune a fitilului ce era deja arsă și înnegrită. Operațiunea era foarte importantă și trebuia mână sigură, de chirurg, pentru ca fitilul să rămână absolut drept..

Dar principala, cea mai importantă etapă în procedeul zilnic de întreținere, era curățatul abajurului, „sticla de lampă”. Aceasta era de fapt elementul cel mai important, cel mai sensibil, ce amintea forma unei viori, sau mai curând a unei perfecte siluete feminine. Partea de jos se potrivea și intra perfect în marginea, ca o buză răsfrântă, a mecanismului metalic ce ținea fitilul. Urma partea mai groasă, mai voluptoasă, care închidea în centrul său flăcăriua luminoasă a fitilului. Iar partea superioară, zveltă și alungită ca un grațios gât de lebedă, se deschidea către lumea exterioară. Pe acolo urcau spre înălțimi, în cazurile fericite, curenți de aer cald, chiar fierbinte, sau eventual fumul, după ce spoise cu funingine neagră interiorul sticlei de lampă. Trebuie menționat că acest abajur era foarte fragil, dintr-o sticlă subțire-subțire. Era suficientă cea mai ușoară lovitură, sau vreo picătură de apă rătăcită pe sticla încinsă, că imediat „crăpa”, sau chiar se spărgea în cioburi. Pe scurt, a curăța interiorul sticlei afumate cu foi vechi de ziar, fără a-i dăuna, cerea o îndemânare și o atenție deosebite. Dar într-un fel sau altul, către orele după amiezii, cele două sau trei lămpi din casă erau pregătite pentru încă o seară de „pană de curent”.

În unele case văzusem și lămpi de iluminat cu petrol mai elegante, al căror rezervor era dintr-o sticlă lăptoasă, ca un fel de porțelan, fiind plasat pe un suport zvelt, din același material. Lampa



de acest gen putea fi dusă ținând-o de acel picior-suport prelungit. În rest, se pare că și acele lămpi mai boierești sufereau de aceleași probleme ca și lămpile noastre simple. Prin filme de epocă, mai văzuserăm cum erau luminate locuințele burghezilor mai înstăriți, prin secolul XIX, cu ditamai lampa de petrol, cu abajur mare, atârnată de plafon deasupra meselor de sufragerie. Dar în Suceava copilăriei mele n-am mai întâlnit ceva similar. La urma urmelor, eram deja jumătate de veac după electrificarea orașului și inventarea penelor de curent...

Lampa cu petrol și abajur de sticlă, mai mult sau mai puțin afumat, care dădea o lumină gălbuie, cu prezență cam minoră, era cel mult soluția luminării interioarelor casnice. Dar pentru localuri publice, cum erau magazinele, cofetăriile sau restaurantele, unde spațiul era considerabil mai mare, sărmanul obiect era cu totul neputincios. Aici intervenea o invenție mai modernă: lămpile de benzină cu presiune, „Petromax”. Mai mare decât sora sa de uz casnic, confecționat dintr-un metal nichelat strălucitor „Petromax”-ul putea fi atârnat de mânerul în semicerc în vreun loc mai înalt. În interiorul geamului cilindric din centrul lămpii se afla un fel de bec, dintr-o țesătură de sită metalică. Picăturile microscopice de benzină amestecată cu aer, ce izbucneau sub presiune din rezervorul lămpii, ardeau în interiorul aceluși bec, sita devenea incandescentă și lampa împrăștia de jur împrejur o lumină albă, puternică, aproape orbitoare. Oricât de eficace ar fi fost iluminatul cu această invenție, ea inspira, pe lângă admirație, și un fel de respect al fricii. Nu oricine putea să se ocupe de ele și circulau povești cu Petromax-uri care ar fi explodat pe undeva...

Cum pomenisem mai sus, străzile Sucevei au fost iluminate încă de la început de veac, de pe timpurile lui Franz Des Loges. Pe la mijlocul anilor '50, lămpi electrice mari, cu abajur de sticlă lăptoasă și cu un fel de pălărie de metal emailat, erau atârinate de mijlocul unor cabluri întinse între clădirile de pe cele două laturi ale unor străzi. În amintirile mele, străzile centrului erau luminate suficient pentru a ne plimba pe acolo seara, cu o senzație de siguranță. Asta în anii de mai fragedă copilărie, când încă nu căutam locuri mai discret luminate... Pe la începutul anilor '60 au început să apară firme de magazine sau restaurante, cu litere imense modelate din tuburi de sticlă cu neon, ce adăugau străzilor din centru o nuanță în plus de lumină albastră sau roșie. Și tot cam în acei ani, în cadrul pregătirilor dintr-un ajun de 1 Mai, când se mai repara pavajul și se zugrăveau fațadele, au fost plantați de-a lungul străzii principale stâlpi metalici înalți, de culoarea bronzului, ce purtau lămpi de neon elegante și moderne, împrăștiind deasupra străzii o lumină albăstruie, puternică.

Dar dacă revenim la anii penelor de curent, când orașul era cufundat în beznă de obicei în serile lungi de iarnă, îmi amintesc și de lanternele de buzunar și lipsa cronică de baterii în magazine. În iarna '55-'56, pe când eram în clasa a III-a, ne aflam în cursul anului de doliu de după moartea



mamei. *Obligația îndoliaților, îndeosebi a orfanilor, este ca în de cursul celor 11 luni de doliu să spună cu voce tare, în cadrul celor 3 rugăciuni zilnice la sinagogă, rugăciunea tradițională de kadish. Tata m-a scutit de efortul de a mă trezi cu noaptea în cap la rugăciunea din zori, care se ținea pe la 6 dimineața, pentru a permite credincioșilor să ajungă mai apoi la timp, la locurile de muncă. În tot acel an, tata si-a asumat obligația de a mă înlocui dimineața la kadish (conform cerințelor religioase, el, ca văduv, nu avea această obligație). Eu îmi îndeplineam datoria în cadrul celor două rugăciuni, Minha și Maariv, ce se țineau spre seară și după căderea întunericului. Așadar, zilnic mă prezentam la ora potrivită la sinagoga „Wijnitz”, pe Strada Sinagogilor, chiar vizavi de Templul cel mare. La plecare trebuia să orbecăiesc printre nămeți sau băltoace, pe străduțele cufundate în beznă. Pe acest considerent am fost echipat cu o lanternă simplă, dreptunghiulară, din bachelită, ce răspândea, chiar în momentele sale de glorie, doar un cerc modest de lumină. Departe de recordurile visatelor lanterne vânătoarești, ce răspândeau lumina până la vreo sută de metri și cu care se mândreau băieții mari, la derdeluș, pe strada Mirăușilor. Dar și așa, lanterna mea nu funcționa regulat, din lipsă cronică de baterii. Cele dreptunghiulare „Tesla” - procurate de bunicul, cu protecție, la prăvălia lui Haim Meirovici, din Burdujeni - aveau viață scurtă. Când vedeam că li se apropie sfârșitul, le prelungeam agonia ținându-le peste noapte, după sobă. Astfel, mai storceam din ele câteva picături de energie, pe care-o verificam apropiind de limbă cele două lamele de contact. Dacă pișca serios, mai erau ceva speranțe...*

Spre deosebire de rețeaua de electricitate, apa ajungea la casele noastre, în acei ani ai primului deceniu de „construire a socialismului”, în mod oarecum regulat. De fapt e doar un fel de a înfățișa lucrurile. Spre deosebire de Suceava din anii lui Franz Des Loges, apa curentă era disponibilă doar cam o oră pe zi. Deci fiecare gospodărie trebuia să-și facă o provizie pentru cel puțin 24 de ore. Doar în puține dintre apartamentele ce avuseseră instalație de apă curentă în bucătărie sau chiar cameră de baie, apa ajungea la robinetele din interior, uscate timp de mulți ani. Apa potabilă era disponibilă la pompele de pe la colțuri de stradă sau, cum am avut noi norocul, chiar în curte, aproape de ușa noastră. De fapt nu era pompă, ci doar o cișmea mare din fontă, cu robinet, care umplea destul de repede o căldare, golită apoi în butoiul de tablă zincată, cu capac, din colțul bucătăriei. Căldare după căldare, butoiul se umplea cu o rezervă bună de apă, pentru câteva zile. Așa că, în zilele de iarnă când se mai întâmpla ca sursa de apă să înghețe (deși fusese bine-bine învelită cu o mantie călduroasă de paie), aveam apă suficientă până când specialiști improvizați dezghețau cișmeaua, turnând peste ea cazane de uncrop. Oricum însă, „penele de apă” țineau în cel mai rău caz doar câteva zile...



Noi, orășenii, eram norocoși, cu apă curentă (bine, doar oră pe zi...) lângă ușă. Dar la bunici, la Burdujeni, pe unde administrația austriacă nu ajunsese, aprovizionarea cu apă era ca în anii lui Ștefan cel Mare, de la fântâna din colțul uliții. Lichidul răcoros chiar și în arșița verii era la dispoziție 24 de ore pe zi, rece și gustos, dar două căldări cărate o sută sau două de metri trăgeau greu și trebuia să te oprești de câteva ori până acasă. Să nu mai vorbim de ghețușul lunecos ce se forma iarna împrejurul fântânii, de la apa ce se scurgea când goleam ciutura în căldare. Îmi amintesc cum, revenit la Burdujeni după aproape zece ani de la instalarea în Israel, am ținut ca primul drum să-l fac cu vărul meu cel mic, trimis să aducă pentru musafiri o căldare cu apă rece, proaspătă, pentru dulceața de cireșe amare...Nostalgie dulce-amară, ca și dulceața cu gust de paradis.

În afara proviziei de apă potabilă, fie de la rețea fie de la fântână, pe lângă fiecare burlan ce scurgea apa de pe acoperișuri, erau amplasate butoaie mari, în care se aduna apa de ploaie pentru spălat rufe și - nu mai puțin important -, pentru spălatul părului lucios și lung al doamnelor. Apa de ploaie era moale, deci fără minerale, și reacționa mult mai bine cu săpunurile de proastă calitate ce se găseau atunci prin magazine. În unele locuințe din oraș existau foste camere de baie, în care se mai aflau pe ici, pe colo, căzi mari de metal emailat, mai toate îngălbenite, folosite mai mult ca bazin de colectare...Pentru toaleta zilnică, fiecă locuință avea un lavoar, piesă de mobilă specială, pe care se afla, într-un orificiu special, ligheanul, iar lângă el cana mare, din porțelan sau simplă, de metal emailat. Lavoarul era amplasat, cel puțin la noi, în apropierea butoiului cu apă. Sub lighean, pe un raft de jos, se afla una din căldări, iar pe un răftuleț de deasupra ligheanului odihneau în bună înțelegere săpuniera, pasta de dinți Odol sau Clorodont și paharul cu periute de dinți. Iarna, când apa din butoi era rece ca gheața, foloseam la toaleta de dimineață apă caldă din ceainic, amestecată cu cea din butoi.

Pentru baia săptămânală existau câteva variante posibile. Cea mai simplă și rapidă era o spălătură cam superficială, până la brâu, peste ligheanul cu apă caldă plasat pe un scaun. Apoi urma spălatul picioarelor, în același lighean, pus pe podea. Asta se făcea în cazuri mai speciale, de mare grabă. Pentru o baie mai serioasă, unii foloseau balia de rufe, dar noi aveam o cădiță din tablă zincată cu un fel de spătar mai înalt în care putea să șadă chiar destul de comod, un adult. Baia săptămânală se făcea de obicei vineri, în cinstea sărbătorii Shabatului, după ce toate pregătirile se terminaseră, casa era curată-lună iar bucatele și prăjiturile umpleau casa de mirosuri îmbătătoare. De regulă, cazanul cu apă încălzită pe plită (mai târziu pe aragaz) era suficient pentru toată familia. Și să nu uităm vechiul săpun Cheia, cam grosolan dar eficient. După vreo câțiva ani i-au luat locul săpunuri „de toaletă”, nu întotdeauna mai bune...



Însă baia săptămânală ultimativă era la Baia Comunală. Această veche clădire a orașului s-a aflat până prin anii '60, în spatele parcului, cam vizavi de mănăstirea Sf. Ioan. Era din aceeași perioadă cu uzina electrică și uzina de apă. Acolo aveam baie de aburi, shvitz, după obiceiurile moștenite de la turci dar îmbunătățite la noi în Moldova în perioada habsburgică. Până am împlinit vreo 11-12 ani, tata mă lua cu el la shvitz în fiecare vineri pe la prânz: era una din zilele de baie rezervată bărbaților. Înarmați cu cearșafuri mari, cu care aveam să ne ștergem și cu săpun (Cheia, bineînțeles), intram prin holul unde se vindeau biletele (și sticle de bere rece pentru cei interesați) în vestiar, o sală destul de mare, cu geamuri boltite, imense dar cu sticlă semi opacă, prin care intra doar lumina. Era mobilat cu bănci de lemn lungi, cu spătar curbat, vopsite alb iar de-a lungul pereților erau dulăpașe de asemeni albe, pentru haine. Pe bănci ședeau, înveliți în cearceafuri, grupuri mici de bărbați deja înfierbântați de baia de aburi, care se răcoreau cu ceva bere. În una din aripile vestiarului se deschidea o porțiune unde se aflau câteva cabine de odihnă, cu pat, ce puteau fi închiriate cu o plată suplimentară. Uneori, când mergeam la shvitz, tata lua o cabină pentru noi doi.

Din vestiar, goi pușcă, treceam spre sala centrală a băii, înarmați fiecare cu câte o cofă de lemn, cu mâner prelungit. Cofița asta avea să ne fie de mare folos în camera de aburi. În sala cea mare se aflau, de-a lungul unuia din pereți, un șir lung de dușuri. În centru se întindeau două șiruri de bănci scunde din lemn iar de-a lungul celuilalt perete lung se înșirau câteva paturi de masaj, îmbrăcate în faianță gălbuie. Acolo își desfășurau activitatea doi băieși, nu prea tineri, îmbrăcați sumar, doar cu un gen de șalvari de baie. Unul din ei era o namilă de om, înalt, lat în umeri și cu un pântec proeminent. Celălalt era mai scund, negricios și sfrijit, dar amândoi aveau mâini de oțel.

Dom' Budic, va pun pe lista de masaj? întreba cel pântecos.

Negreșit, răspundea tata. Ne vedem în vestiar la ieșire, am pregătit deja banii.

Până să ne vină rândul, ne învârteam prin sală, de la un duș la altul, ne săpuneam bine, ne clăteam, iar dacă așteptarea era mai lungă, tata mă lua la o primă incursiune în camera de aburi. Aici se afla de fapt nucleul, atracția centrală a schvitz-ului. Cum întredeschideam ușa grea, etanșă, răbufnea îndată un suflu fierbinte de aburi. Camera, nu prea mare, era întotdeauna plină de o ceață mai mult sau mai puțin groasă, de aburi. Pe peretele din stânga ușii, în mijloc, se afla gura cuptorului de piatră încinsă, închisă cu o mică ușă de fier. Iar pe dreapta, pe toată lățimea încăperii, urca un rând de 5-6 scări înalte, ca niște tribune de stadion. „Tribunele” erau de obicei pline cu bărbați goi, fiecare cu cofa sa cu apă rece, în care își mai scufunda fața când fierbințeala aburilor devenea greu de suportat. Profesioniștii veneau echipați și cu o măturică



din rămurele de dud, cu care se flagelau ușurel, „pentru activarea circulației”. Toți erau veseli, bine dispuși, și glumele (multe cam pipărate) se țineau lanț. Când temperatura camerei cobora și aburii deveneau mai străvezii, se găsea câte un viteaz, iar de nu, era chemat băieșul cel sfrijit, să reîncălzească odaia. Treaba asta se făcea cam așa: se deschidea larg ușa cuptorului de piatră și toți cei ce țineau să-și apere pielea luau o distanță respectabilă. Viteazul, lipit cu spatele de perete, chiar lângă gura cuptorului, golea, cu o singură mișcare viguroasă, o cofă plină cu apă în cuptor. Pe loc, răbufnea de acolo un adevărat jet de aburi fierbinți care urcau repede spre plafonul camerei și-i făcea pe curajoșii de pe băncile de sus să-și pună capetele în cofele cu apă rece sau chiar să le verse peste ei. Operația era repetată de 5-6 ori, până aburii fierbinți umpleau întreaga încăpere și nu se vedea om cu om nici de la jumate de metru... Vitejii rămâneau la posturi, dar cei mai slabi de înger (inclusiv copiii ca mine) fugeau să se mai răcorească pe-afară.

Apoi ajungeam la masaj, pe mâinile unuia din băieși, pe când celălalt se ocupa de tata. Operațiunea pornea cu o săpuneală zdravănă a întregului corp, după care mâinile de oțel începeau a-mi frământa tot corpul, de sus în jos și de jos în sus, așa cum frământa baba, bunica mea maternă, aluatul în covată, în serile de joi. La un moment dat o palmă pe fund mă invita să mă răstorn de pe burtă pe spate, și totul continua până nu-mi rămânea nici un oscior la locul unde fusese înainte. Treaba asta dura cam un sfert de oră, după care mai urma o serie de dușuri și eventual o a doua ședință la camera de aburi. Până la urmă ajungeam la vestiare cu o senzație de nou-născut, fericit, demontat și extenuat. Eu urma să mă întorc acasă, la odihnă. Dar tata urma să se întoarcă la magazin și să-l redeschidă la 4 după-amiază. De unde avea puteri ?

Pe la începutul anilor '60 vechea clădire a băii comunale a fost demolată, iar pe locul ei s-a construit clădirea școlii de meserii. Prin clasa IX-a și a X-a, am învățat și noi în acest local până avea să fie ridicată noua clădire a liceului „Petru Rareș”. Eu mai crescusem și nu mai mergeam cu tata la baia de aburi.

O baie comunală nouă a fost ridicată în cealaltă parte a orașului, nu departe de liceul de băieți și era echipată cu un motor ce producea tot timpul aburi. Nu mai era cuptor de piatră încinsă și nici voinici care să golească în el cofele cu apă. În centrul sălii mari era chiar un bazin căptușit cu faianță. Adevărul e că farmecul băii de shvitz se cam estompase în ochii mei. După ce într-o vineri s-a nimerit să mă găsesc în vestiarul cam neaerisit împreună cu o companie de soldați ce-și desfăceau obielele, am ajuns la concluzia că a venit vremea pentru o schimbare. În cei vreo doi ani ce-au urmat, baia săptămânală o făceam fie la cabină de duș (3 lei), fie chiar, dacă mă răsfațam, la o cadă (5 lei).

Dar amintirile mă readuc mereu la camera fierbinte a vechii băi comunale a copilăriei.





Filme, filme, filme...

Beni Budic

În toată perioada copilăriei și tinereții, cinematograful a fost pentru noi, generația celor născuți după război, ca și bineînțeles, pentru părinții noștri ce erau pe atunci încă oameni tineri, principalul mijloc de divertisment și în același timp singura fereastră prin care întvedeam parte din cele ce se petreceau în „lumea mare”, dincolo de limitele orașelului nostru.

Încă în anii mei preșcolari, părinții, care nu aveau în grija cui să mă lase, mă luau cu ei nu o dată la cinematograful, așa cum procedau cam toți tinerii părinți suceveni. Deseori, cum pentru copii nu se plătea bilet, vedeam filmul așezat pe genunchii lui tata. Chiar dacă nu înțelegeam mare lucru, eram, indiferent de film, captivat de cele ce se petreceau pe ecran. Plonjam cu toate simțurile într-o altă realitate. Dar uneori trebuia să mă rup din lumea virtuală de dincolo de ecran și să pun nenumărate întrebări. „Tată, ce fac ei acolo, ce-i asta ?” (Era cred la filmul Insula misterioasă, prin '51 sau '52). „E telegraf, cu alfabetul morse, așa vorbesc ei din peșteră cu submarinul.” Eu am urmărit apoi înfricoșat tot restul filmului așteptând să văd cum se citește în alfabetul morții...., De ce-a intrat (Edmond Dantes - viitorul Conte de Monte Cristo) cu cuțitul în sac ? - Îndată ai să vezi”. Și am văzut și chiar am înțeles de ce. La seria II-a, o săptămână mai târziu, toate aveau să se clarifice. Îmi amintesc de un film rusesc, în care un mic nobil scăpătat se lupta cu realitatea pentru a salva aparențele, pentru a reuși să-și mărite fetele onorabil, pe când familia era nevoită să se hrănească uneori cu fiertură de coji de cartofi. Nu știu titlul filmului, dar mi-a rămas întipărită în memorie scena balului, când sârmanul tată, „vedea” (pe fundal, imaginea fetelor prinse în iureșul valsului), un mănunchi de bancnote ce se spulberau, dispărând una după alta în neant. „Tată, ce-i asta ? Unde dispar banii ?” Tata nu mi-a răspuns direct, dar a exclamat cu admirație: „Extraordinar!! Cum se filmează așa ceva ?!”.

În acei ani, cu părinții, vedeam filmele fie la „Tineretului”, fie, după anotimp și vreme, la o grădină de vară ce se afla chiar în spatele sălii de cinematograful. Multă vreme, „Cinematograful Tineretului” a fost singurul din oraș, sanctuarul la care veneam toți cu smerenie dar mai ales cu mari așteptări de emoții și aventuri. Fațada nu prea mare a clădirii dădea spre Ștefan cel Mare, nu departe de grădina publică, și era înghesuită între clădirea bibliotecii și cea a unui restaurant. Câțiva ani mai târziu, puțin mai sus, pe un teren în aceeași parte a străzii, avea să fie construită și grădina de vară modernă, gen amfiteatru, unde aveau loc afară de filme, tot felul de spectacole și concerte.



La „Tineretului” se putea intra prin două uși cu geamuri mari de sticlă, amplasate simetric pe laturile fațadei. Între uși se afla un panou mare unde se schimbau regulat fotografii cu imagini din filmele ce rulau, iar pe laturile ușilor erau două panouri mai mici cu afișele filmelor viitoare. Mai sus, peste un mic acoperiș era amplasat un panou mare, pictat loco, ce imita afișele oficiale ale filmului curent, cu imagini în culori cam stridente ale artiștilor și numele filmului în caractere imense, ca la București pe Magheru. Afișe ale filmului erau expuse și în diverse alte locuri, prin oraș. Eu treceam aproape zilnic pe lângă unul amplasat puțin după agenția Rozenberg, aproape de colțul unde începea centrul și imaginile lui Michelle Morgan, Iurie Darie sau Fernandel mă puneau imediat la curent ce film rulează la „Tineretului”.

Ușile mari din exterior duceau către un vestibul destul de modest. Pe stânga era ghișeul de bilete. Un bilet la „Tineretului” costa 1 leu și 75 de bani. Ieftin de tot, dar la nevoie exista, după cum vom vedea, cale și mai ieftină de a intra la film. Tot pe stânga, după ce urcai o treaptă, se afla și ghișeul bufetului. Sub tavan, de-a lungul pereților erau atârdate, în rame cu sticlă, portrete ale artiștilor de cinema celebrii. Erau acolo Birlic și Simone Signoret, Gina Patrichi și Gérard Philippe, Alexandru Giugaru, Jean Gabin, Alida Valli, Vittorio De Sica și încă mulți alții. Dacă nu mă înșel, pe dreapta vestibulului era ușa spre scara ce ducea sus, la micul balcon - galerie unde nu cred să fi urcat vreodată și la cabina de proiecție.

În sală intram printr-o ușă largă, cu câteva canaturi, dintre care doar cel din dreapta era folosit. Acolo stătea de veghe controlorul de bilete, un om binevoitor, între două vârste, foarte vigilent nu cumva să se strecoare cineva fără bilet. Totuși, eram o grupă destul de mare de apropiați sau cunoscuți care aveam acces discret în sală, după stingerea luminilor, contra 1 leu numerar. Iar dacă se întâmpla cumva să-mi lipsească leul, nu era nici o problemă. Intram la film „pe datorie”, iar domnul controlor trecea a doua zi pe la magazin, la tata, pentru reglarea contului. Între ușa de intrare și sală era, la un interval destul de mic, o perdea vișinie groasă, care era deschisă pe când luminile erau aprinse. Întârziatii sau cei fără bilete, care intram deja pe întuneric, trebuiam să ne strecurăm printre aripile perdelei, să nu pătrundă înăuntru lumina din hol.

Sala era dreptunghiulară, lungă și îngustă, cu două corpuri, fiecare de vreo 20 de rânduri de bănci fixate în podea. Scaunele pliante, din placaj gros, erau vopsite maro închis și necapitonate. Băncile erau grupate de o parte și de alta a intervalului central, destul de larg. De asemeni, pe lângă pereți erau intervale de trecere mai înguste, așa că nu era greu să ajungi la vreun loc liber, chiar dacă sala era deja cufundată în întuneric și începuse „jurnalul”. Aproape tot peretele din față era ocupat de ecran. Porțiunile înguste de perete rămase pe laturile ecranului erau acoperite



de lozinci. Îmi amintesc de o lozincă ce declara: „Cinematograful - cel mai important mijloc de propagare a ideologiei comuniste în masele largi ale poporului!” Eu, noi, prietenii și colegii, întreaga noastră generație ne-am supus cu bucurie acestui „mijloc de propagare”. Ceea ce am absorbit nu ținea însă neapărat de domeniul ideologic...

Din primii ani de școală, ajungeam deja singur, sau cu vreun copil vecin ori prieten, la matineurile de duminica dimineața când rulau filme de desene animate, majoritatea rusești. Am fost fermecați de poveștile cu Căluțul cocoșat sau de cele cu rusalce și pitici harnici din muntele de chilimbar. Apoi, pe la 9-10 ani am intrat deja în orbita regulată a celor două filme ce rulau săptămânal la „Tineretului”. Nu pe toate le țin minte, nici n-ar fi posibil. (Dacă aș cumula filmele văzute în ultimii mei 9-10 ani la Suceava cred că acestea ar depăși o mie. În anii de liceu, când se deschisese deja cinemascopul „Modern” și deci vedeam vreo 4 pe săptămână, îmi notam în agendă filmele văzute și ajungeam - de necrezut! - la 170-180 de filme pe an.). Imposibil să le memorez pe toate, dar multe, foarte multe mi-au rămas, cel puțin parțial, întipărite în memorie. Am avut parte să vedem o mulțime de filme rusești (sovietice), filme chinezești și vietnameze (!), și chiar un film albanez, despre eroul lor național, Skandenberg. Au fost și filme din Cehoslovacia și Ungaria, iar cele germane, produse la Defa-Berlin erau foarte bine cotate. Însă cele mai apreciate erau cele italiene și mai ales cele franțuzești. Și bineînțeles, erau filmele noastre, de la „Studioul București”.

Prin '54 - '55 am văzut la „Tineretului” spectacolul combinat din două filme de metraj mediu: *Desfășurarea*, și *Ilie face sport*. Primul, despre minunile colectivizării, era departe de a fi interesant. Dar *Ilie*?! - de dragul lui am petrecut o întreagă după amiază la 3 spectacole consecutive (simplu - n-am ieșit din sală până pe la 8 seara!). *Ilie* era o comedie, între noi fie vorba, cam naivă, ca mai toate începuturile cinematografului românesc. Dar la vederea lui *Mircea Crișan*, *Puiu Călinescu*, *Horia Căciulescu* și a tuturor isprăvilor acestora, ne tăvăleam de râs. Râdeam copilărește, cu lacrimi, în neștire. Habar n-aveam atunci că e filmul de debut al lui *Andrei Călărașu*, alias *Bernard Gropper*, supraviețuitor al unuia din trenurile morții de la Iași, în Iunie 1941. În următorii câțiva ani, până la plecarea sa spre Israel, ne-a mai dăruit câteva filme (*Vultur 101*, *Portretul unui necunoscut*) dar cele ce ne-au marcat cel mai mult adolescența au fost *Alo?* Ați greșit numărul! și câțiva ani mai târziu, *Vacanță la mare*. Ambele erau filme tinerești, în culori minunate de vară, din viața „fericită” și plină de elan a studenților/muncitorilor/inginerilor bucureșteni, care erau preocupați de muzică, de iubiri pure, întâlniri la Herăstrău, vacanțe la munte sau la mare și construirea socialismului. O! toate lucrurile astea la care noi provincialii puteam doar visa. Si nu ne rămânea să facem altceva decât să fredonăm șlagărul compus de



eroul întruchipat de minunatul Iurie Darie în Alo? Ați greșit numărul!: „Pe unda clapelor, Mi-e dorul călător, La tine, dragostea mea...” In acest film a debutat și regretata Stela Popescu, dar fără îndoială filmul l-a consacrat pe Iurie Darie ca idol al tuturor fetelor (și apoi, al fetelor mai împlinite...) pentru următoarele câteva decenii. El a fost probabil junele prim ultimativ al filmului românesc. Am citit undeva că în 2007 a venit la Tel Aviv pentru a-l onora pe Călărașu la cea de a 85-a sa aniversare, sărbătorită la cinematecă. S-a rulat Vacanță la mare... Iar dacă e vorba de Iurie Darie, încă atunci, prin anii '50-'60, aproape nu era film românesc fără el. O listă parțială a celor văzute de generația mea: Post restant, Dragoste la zero grade, Nepoții Gornistului, Alarmă în munți, Băieții noștri și câte altele....

Și tot printre filmele românești de neuitat ai acelor ani erau ecranizări ale pieselor și schițelor lui Caragiale. Cine îl poate uita pe Birlic chefuind cu amicii la Carul cu Bere, sau balansând, agățat pe candelabrul din marea sală a clădirii CEC, și apoi rătăcind pierdut pe străzile Bucureștiului și mormăind neconținut: „Și viceversa, și viceversa”? Au mai fost Telegrama, O noapte furtunoasă, O scrisoare pierdută, D' ale carnavalului cu Alexandru Giugaru, Marcel Anghelescu, Radu Beligan, Ion Lucian și alții, mulți și talentați alții...Iar printre filmele românești de atunci nu pot să nu menționez omulețul lui Gopo, simbol în desen animat al lui homo sapiens...Nu știu câți din colegii sau colegele mele au gustat aceste scurte filme, dar mie - care sub influența lui Mihai Drișcu, începusem să citesc cronică cinematografică din Contemporanul - mi-au plăcut mult. Mai târziu, deja la noul „Cinemascope Modern”, aveam să văd și primul lung-metraj al lui Gopo S-a furat o bombă, bineînțeles, cu Iurie Darie.

Dar încă la bunul și bătrânul „Tineretului”, am avut parte să vedem filmele cu cel ce era în acei ani, până la moartea sa prea timpurie, junele prim Nr. 1 al întregii Europe, Gérard Philippe. Acolo am defilat la Marile manevre, am luptat alături de Fanfan la Tulipe, le-am visat pe Frumuselele nopții, l-am plâns pe Julien Sorel din Roșu și Negru și am tremurat de emoție la Frumusețea Diavolului. Pe lângă Gérard Philippe, eram fermecați de surâsul trist al lui Michelle Morgan, de frumusețea Ginei Lollobrigida, de Danielle Darieux...Iar după cele franceze nu pot să nu-mi amintesc de filmele italiene, în mare parte comedii (Divorț italian, Căsătorie în stil italian și multe altele, cu Mastroianni, Sofia Loren, Stefania Sandrelli, De Sica, Alberto Sordi, Eduardo de Filippo cu filmele lui napolitane) dar și altele serioase, ba chiar triste (pe-atunci habar nu aveam că văd filme neorealiste, ce vor marca istoria cinematografiei): Miracol la Milano, Hoții de biciclete, Umberto D, Roma oraș deschis, Stromboli, filme ce „demascau exploatarea maselor și dezumanizarea individului în sistemul capitalist”. Dar ce filme erau!!! De cele englezești am pomenit? N-au fost multe și de obicei erau filme serioase, „grele” (Richard al III-lea, Drumul spre înalta societate).



Apoi, au fost filmele muzicale, care pe lângă însăși plăcerea vizionării, ne lăseau fredonând cântece de neuitat (chiar dacă filmele nu erau întotdeauna capodopere ale genului). Cine i-a putut uita pe Vico Toriani („Bona sera signorina, bona sera”...) în Serenada Străzii, sau pe Cântărețul mexican (Luis Mariano), sau pe Mario Lanza în Serenada, în Prințul student ? A fost de asemeni și filmul vest german Un cântec străbate lumea, despre tenorul „nostru”, evreu din Bucovina - Joseph Schmidt. Și au fost filmele spaniole cu halucinant de frumoasa Sarita Montiel și vocea ei adâncă, de catifea (Vânzătoarea de violete, Carmen de la Ronda). Mai târziu, cred că deja la Cinemascop, am văzut-o pe minunata Silvia Popovici, în Darclée, film românesc deosebit, atât pe planul muzical (operă!) cât și în ce privește scenele autentice, minuțios filmate în mari orașe europene și în săli de operă reale. Cam tot pe atunci au ajuns pe ecranele lumii, inclusiv la Suceava, filmele (cu multe cântece și dansuri indiene) ale lui Raj Kapoor: Vagabondul (seria I-a, seria II-a) și Articolul 420.

„Cinemascopul” a fost construit și inaugurat prin '60 sau '61. Era deja o clădire modernă, plasată lângă liceul „Ștefan cel Mare” într-un spațiu deschis, la unghiul străzilor Mihai Eminescu și Dragoș Vodă. Spre deosebire de „Tineretului”, noul cinematograful arăta la exterior ca multe alte clădiri publice ale mult-cântatei „ere socialiste”, amintind puțin stilul arhitectonic stalinist. Intrarea, spre care urcau câteva scări largi, era acoperită cu un gen de peron și împreună cu cele două vitrine mari, de afișaj, ce o încadrau, se întindea pe toată lățimea fațadei. Din holul mare și luminos, printr-o ușă largă, două perdele și câteva scări, se ajungea chiar în centrul sălii cinematografului. Sala era deja proporționată mai modern, pe lățime, iar rândurile de scaune (capitonate cu polivinil!!) erau aranjate în pantă ușoară. În general toată sala era cumva gen aulă universitară așa că privirile tuturor coborau nestingherite în jos, spre ecran. Si ce ecran!! de lățime dublă față de cel de la „Tineretului”. Croit după tehnologia vremii, exact pe măsura marilor spectacole. Un bilet la „Cinemascop” costa 2,25 lei, dar merita fiecă bănuț. Chiar filmele în formatul vechi văzute aici, parcă erau mai strălucitoare... Și câte am văzut! Vă amintiți de Ulise, sau de Vikingii, (Kirk Douglas, Tony Curtis..). Cavalerii Teutoni era o superproducție poloneză, dar Război și Pace ne-a venit din America, cu Audrey Hepburn, Mel Ferrer și Henry Fonda. Acolo l-am văzut pe bătrânul Alexander Nevsky, film sovietic de la sfârșitul anilor '30, dar totuși spectaculos. Da, și la Austerlitz ne-am luptat (regia Abel Gance, cu Jean Marais, Claudia Cardinale, Elvira Popesco, De Sica...). Iar dacă vorbim de superproducții în cinemascop, exemplul ultimativ (și rar de tot) a fost americanul muzical 7 Neveste pentru 7 Frați. Dar cel puțin în ochii mei apogeul cinematografic al acelor ani a fost filmul Mizerabilii, cu Jean Gabin, (inegalabil!!) cu Bourvil în rolul lui Thénardier și Bernard Blier ca Javert. Ani de zile am fost convins că era cel mai bun film pe care-l văzusem vreodată...



În acei ani, frecventarea filmelor de către elevi era strict controlată de autoritățile școlare. Și orele de vizionare erau limitate. Ultimul spectacol, ce începea la ora 20, era interzis. Ca și prezența pe stradă a vreunui elev sau elevă, neînsoțit de părinți, după acea oră a serii... Filme prea îndrăznețe oricum nu ajungeau în România socialistă dar chiar cele aprobate de cenzură nu erau toate aprobate de consiliul pedagogic. Nu cumva adolescenții și adolescentele în uniforme școlare din stofă aspră și cu capete fierbinți, să cadă în vreo ispită. La școala noastră, bătrâna secretară trecea șchiopătând, cu registrul, din clasă în clasă. Profesoara prezentă ne citea ultimul decret al direcțiunii, apoi semna în registru. Filmul „Cutare” e interzis pentru elevi. Chiar dacă sunt deja într-a XI-a!!! Profesorii și profesoarele primeau probabil sarcina să vadă filmul în zile și ore diferite astfel că pe la orice reprezentație era prezent cineva din ei. Și vai de păcătoșii care erau prinși în sală! Dacă cineva era și recidivist, risca să fie eliminat!! Dar existau soluții...Cea clasică era să părăsim sala pe furiș, înainte de a se aprinde luminile. Asta însemna să ghicim dacă filmul s-a sfârșit sau mai sunt vreo două minute..Era riscant. Sau pierdeai sfârșitul sau te vâna vreun ochi de profesor...Trebuie să recunosc ca uneori, din lașitate am renunțat la un film sau altul. De obicei, însă, reușeam să ies din sală neobservat. Sau poate au fost unele cazuri când vreo profesoară s-a făcut că nu mă vede ? Posibil. Eram oricum, considerat „element bun”. Fapt este că n-am fost pedepsit niciodată pentru păcatele mele cinematografice. O dată, sunt aproape sigur că m-a văzut Doamna Pavel. Era la „Cinemascop” iar filmul a fost O viață, adaptare după Maupassant, cu Christian Marquand, Maria Shell. Da, erau în film scenele destul de piperate în care Marquand, stăpânul brutal și bătăran al casei o seduce pe servitoare (Antoanella Lualdi). Probabil nu mi-am putut dezlipi ochii de pe ecran, deși eram deja lângă ieșire, și s-au aprins luminile în sală. Dar Doamna Pavel m-a iertat. Sau poate chiar nu m-a văzut ?

Ultimul film la Suceava l-am văzut într-o seară primăvăratecă de aprilie. În seara următoare aveam să părăsim Suceava pentru întotdeauna. Era vineri seara și în noua mea condiție de elev, mi-am permis să merg la „Cinemascop” la ultima reprezentație, de la 8 la 10 seara!!! Am văzut un film românesc, Un surâs în plină vară. Nu mare grozăvie, încă una din comedii ce slăveau minunile colectivizării. Dar în rolul principal era un artist tânăr, extrem de talentat și simpatic, pe care-l vedeam pentru prima dată. S-a numit Sebastian Papaiani.

După vreo trei săptămâni, ne aflam deja în Israel. Locuiam temporar, întreaga familie, la un unchi, în orașul unde locuiesc și azi, de mai bine de 50 de ani. În iureșul evenimentelor și al grijilor ce ne-au preocupat înainte de plecare și apoi aici, într-o realitate nouă, într-o limbă încă necunoscută, unul din lucrurile ce mă îngrijorau cel mai mult erau filmele. Ebraica era încă departe de mine. Nici engleză nu învățasem. Noi am făcut patru ani de franceză, întâi cu Doamna



Riemer și în ultimele clase cu Doamna Lazăr. Cele mai multe filme erau americane, subtitrate după cum credeam, în ebraică. Încă nu îndrăznisem măcar să încerc a merge la cinema. Ce va fi? Cum voi trece lunile, poate anii, până voi învăța limba? Cum se poate trăi, Dumnezeuule, fără filme?

Într-o după amiază mi-am luat inima în dinți. Treceam pe lângă unul din cinematografele din oraș unde după afișe, rula Lumea Circului (cu John Wayne, Claudia Cardinale, Rita Hayworth). Filmul începuse și controlorul ședea plictisit pe un scaun lângă ușa sălii, lăsată deschisă, pentru aerisire. Într-o ebraică stâlcită, amestecată cu idiș, l-am rugat să-mi dea voie să trag cu ochiul 2-3 minute, iar dacă voi decide că mă pot măsura cu traducerea, ies imediat și cumpăr bilet. Era om de treabă și se pare că a înțeles imediat că sunt „nou în țară”. Mi-a făcut semn să intru. Nu-i nevoie de bilet....

Și am intrat. Și am descoperit că în Israelul lui 1964, toate filmele vorbite în engleză erau subtitrate bineînțeles în ebraică, dar și ÎN FRANCEZĂ (spre a ajuta zecile de mii de imigranți marocani veniți pe atunci). Și am descoperit că franceza pe care habar n-aveam că o știu, era suficientă ca să pot citi repede traducerea și da! - chiar să o înțeleg. Și astfel s-a făcut că - grație profesoarelor mele de franceză, binecuvântată fie-le memoria! - am fost în stare să continui aproape fără întrerupere, șirul neconținut de filme ce mi-au marcat viața.



photo Richard Haidu. Sala cinematografului "Modern". din Suceava leaganul sufletului nostru





Sinagogile mele

Beni Budic

Acum vreo 15 ani au apărut aici, în Israel, două volume (în ebraică) ale unei cărți comemorative intitulată Cartea evreilor suceveni. Aceasta cuprindea o comoară de informații atât istorice cât și personale, îndeosebi despre figuri ale evreimii sucevene din perioada interbelică. În introducere, semnată de domnul Simha Weisbuch, unul din redactori, am citit că printre alte instituții ale comunității evreiești, au funcționat în Suceava înaintea celui de-al doilea război mondial, zece sinagogi. În anii copilăriei noastre, generația celor născuți după război, mai existau, prin anii '50, doar șase sinagogi: Sinagoga mare – sau Templul; sinagoga Beth Midraș, aflată în aceeași incintă cu Templul; sinagoga Wijnitz, chiar vizavi de primele două; sinagoga Sadigura; Sinagoga creditorilor, și - singura ce a supraviețuit erei comuniste și există până acum - sinagoga Gah .

Din punct de vedere al identității religioase a populației evreiești, Bucovina, ca și tot teritoriul Moldovei istorice, ca și regiunea Maramureșului, erau deja, de pe la sfârșitul secolului XVIII, parte din cercul de influență al hasidismului, doctrină religioasă cu anumite tendințe mistice, dominantă în majoritatea comunităților evreiești din estul Europei. Acolo se formaseră în unele orașele „curți” de rabini hasidici, în jurul cărora se grupau adevărate partide de discipoli, ce nu făceau vreun pas important în viață fără sfatul sau consimțământul rabinului, recunoscut ca absolută autoritate spirituală. Dacă s-ar putea defini în doar câteva cuvinte, probabil că noțiunea-cheie, caracteristică hasidismului ar fi simplitatea, îndeosebi în tot ce privește cultul religios și tot ce e legat de acesta, inclusiv stilul arhitectonic al sinagogilor. De fapt, e greu să vorbești despre un stil precis. În universul hasidic sinagogile erau multe, mici, modeste și în multe cazuri se contopeau cu clădirile târgului. În ce privește evreimea suceveană a acelor vremuri, cred că nu greșesc dacă o caracterizăm ca aparținând, în mod aproape exclusiv, curentului hasidic. Cu siguranță, în generațiile interbelice, în perioada mai modernă, și cu atât mai mult în anii comunismului, credința religioasă a multora pierduse din intensitate, dar chiar în aceste condiții, mai toți rămăseseră credincioși cel puțin tradiției. Sinagogile Sucevei se conformau, aproape toate, acestor principii iar însuși numele unora (Wijnitz, Sadigura) denotau apartenența la hasidism.

Făceau excepție, în plan arhitectonic, Templul, sinagoga Beth Midrash , sinagoga Gah și Sinagoga mare din Burdujeni, Die Groisse Șil . Acestea fuseseră în mod evident construite cu scopul de a servi ca sinagogi, iar aspectul lor exterior exprima acest lucru de la prima privire. În interiorul Templului cred că am fost de cel mult două sau trei ori, iar amintirile pe care le păstrez sunt



foarte sumare. În orice caz, complet diferit de micile sinagogi hasidice, interiorul era compus dintr-o incintă mare, înaltă și majestoasă, luminată de geamuri imense, de înălțimea a aproape două etaje. Băncile și pupitrele enoriașilor erau aranjate, paralel și toate duceau spre răsărit, spre Aron Hakodesh - chivotul. În centrul incintei domnea Bima-ua, podiumul impozant pe care se oficia citirea în sulurile sfinte. Locul de rugăciune rezervat femeilor se afla la etaj, pe o galerie deschisă ce se întindea pe laturile de sud, de vest și de nord ale incintei centrale. Nu-mi amintesc alte amănunte dar cu siguranță chivotul era o piesă impozantă, din lemn sculptat iar plafonul și pereții erau împodobiiți cu picturi – peisaje ale țării sfinte și emblemele celor 12 triburi. Presupun că Templul a fost construit conform modei arhitectonice a sinagogilor din Europa centrală în a doua jumătate a secolului XIX. Mărimea și măreția clădirii erau dovada existenței în Suceava a unei comunități evreiești numeroasă și înstărită.

Am avut de câteva ori și ocazia de a vedea interiorul sinagogii Sadigura. Prin anii copilăriei a trebuit să învăț, ca mai toți băieții evrei, tainele limbii ebraice. De fapt învățam doar a citi, fără să înțelegem mai nimic, textele din sidur – cartea de rugăciuni. Timp de vreo doi ani am fost învățăcel la Domnul Zonnenshein (urma să fiu transferat apoi la învățătorul Wijnițer, un om sever și mărunțel, cu barbișon, ce avea să mă introducă puțin și în studiul Humaș – ului, Pentateuhul). Învățătorul Zonnenshein era un om înalt și bun la fire. El și soția sa erau pe post de învățători ale primelor buchii ebraice pentru mulți băieți și fete, chiar preșcolari. Lecțiile, individuale, aveau loc în locuința perechii Zonnenshein ce era alipită sinagogii Sadigura chiar în fața pieței, iar domnul Zonnenshein îndeplina și funcția de intendent al sinagogii. Uneori, când vinerea se făcea curățenie în locuința învățătorilor, lecția avea loc în sinagogă. Clădirea acestui locaș se deosebea doar puțin de casele ce-o înconjurau, iar interiorul, conform vagilor mele amintiri, era modest și simplu ca și cel al sinagogii Croitorilor pe care am avut parte să o cunosc mai îndeaproape.

Când ne-am mutat la Suceava în 1950, tata s-a alăturat comunității enoriașilor acestei sinagogi Die Schneiderișe Șil - ce se afla pe la începutul străzii Petru Rareș, la doar câțiva pași de casa noastră. Mai târziu, pe la începutul anilor '60, clădirea a fost demolată iar terenul a devenit parte din cel pe care s-a construit atunci noua clădire a școlii unde învățam – Școala Medie Nr. 2. Probabil că la începuturile sale, sinagoga fusese construită de breasla croitorilor, dar în anii când eu am cunoscut-o doar câțiva dintre enoriași erau croitori de meserie. Pe atunci sinagoga era activă zilnic pentru rugăciunea din zori (Shahrit), dar mai ales în zilele de Shabat și îndeosebi de sărbători, se umplea de credincioși (mai mult sau mai puțin ...) ce ajungeau chiar din cartiere mai îndepărtate. Îmi amintesc, în zilele sărbătorilor de toamnă, îndeosebi de Yom Kipur, ziua sfântă a iertării păcatelor, cum siluete de tineri, cei ce nu reușiseră să-și ia zi de concediu, se



furișau în sinagogă îmbrăcați cu halatul de lucru ce-l scoteau discret lângă intrare, se înfășurau în șalul de rugăciune (Talit) și se alăturau celorlalți măcar pentru vreun ceas.

Sinagoga croitorilor fusese construită probabil pe la începutul veacului, iar din exterior nu se deosebea cu nimic de casele vecine. Era o clădire simplă, fără etaj, cu acoperiș de tablă. Pe dreapta, o porțiță ducea într-o curte lungă și îngustă de unde se intra în camera de rugăciune a femeilor, alipită de incinta principală și aflată, conform terenului, la vreun metru sau doi mai sus. Intrarea se făcea direct de pe trotuar, printr-o ușă dublă, cu obloane. Când sinagoga era deschisă, unul din cele două obloane era întotdeauna tras spre stradă. A doua ușă, cu geam de sticlă, se deschidea spre interior. Coborai două trepte joase și te aflai înăuntru. Pe stânga, lângă perete era o măsuță îngustă pe care se afla o tavă lunguiață, plină cu nisip în care ardeau zeci de lumânări. În dreapta ușii de intrare era o sobă mare de teracotă. În sâmbetele friguroase de iarnă era angajat un om pentru a îngriji de foc și de lumânări. Contrar așteptărilor, partea ce dădea spre răsărit, unde se afla chivotul, era pe latura din dreapta, cea lată, a încăperii dreptunghiulare. Tot pe acea latură erau două sau trei ferestre.

Chivotul, - Aron Hakodesh- era o piesă destul de simplă de forma unui dulap mare din lemn cu elemente sculptate. În partea superioară se afla lăcașul sulurilor sfinte – Torah – ce reprezentau adevărata comoară a sinagogii, elementul ce transformă o simplă clădire în locaș sfânt de rugăciune și studiu. În sinagoga noastră erau vreo 5-6 integre, demne de a citi din ele în cursul rugăciunilor, și încă 2-3 ce din diverse motive nu erau destul de pure pentru acest scop. Toate erau păstrate în chivotul acoperit cu o perdea de catifea brodată. Partea de jos a chivotului servea în sinagoga noastră de pupitru al cantorului ce oficia rugăciunea. Enoriașii ședeau pe bănci, de cele două părți ale meselor lungi, aranjate de-a lungul pereților. Încă un rând de bănci fuseseră puse în centrul camerei, de o parte și alta a mesei înalte, cu tăblia puțin înclinată, pe care se depuneau sulurile sfinte și unde se citea din ele, din Torah. Această masă simplă, acoperită cu catifea, ținea locul a ce ar fi trebuit să fie Bima, podiumul, în sinagogile mai mari. La noi, dimensiunile modeste ale incintei nu permiteau asta. În zilele sărbătorii Torei, Simhat Torah, ce încheie ciclul sărbătorilor de toamnă, toate mobilele din jurul acestei mese erau îndepărtate, iar aceasta devenea axa în jurul căreia se efectua un fel de dans al enoriașilor, ce strângeau la piept sulurile sfinte și o înconjurau cântând și dansând. În acea zi, toți, mici și mari sunt oarecum egali și astfel mă văd și pe mine, copil, cu o Torah mai mică în brațe, efectuând ocolul – hakafot - și roșind până în vârful urechilor la urările celor ce formau cercul împrejur : „Să ajungi sănătos la anul !” Odată făcută și această treabă eram liber să mă ocup, împreună cu ceilalți copii, de sacii cu nuci prăjite, pregătiți de familia Herman, la bucătăria și brutăria lor din apropiere.



Pe latura de nord a încăperii, la vreun metru mai sus de nivelul mesei lungi, se afla un șir de ferestre mari, parțial acoperire pe cealaltă parte cu perdelețe albe din tifon. Ferestrele comunicau spre camera de rugăciune a femeilor iar de sărbători, când femeile veneau la sinagogă, erau deschise larg, să se audă bine rugăciunea cantorului și în aripa femeilor. La sinagoga noastră, camera femeilor era mai spațioasă și mai luminoasă decât era obișnuit iar ferestrele mari creau o comunicare sonoră deplină cu sala principală.

În acei ani, „cantorul casei” la sinagoga croitorilor era domnul Țighelnic, tatăl prietenului meu de joacă Tully. Din nefericire, Tully ne-a părăsit acum câțiva ani, primul cred, din promoția noastră. Uneori, chiar în zile de sărbători, se întâmpla ca și tata să officieze anumite rugăciuni pe post de cantor. Deși nu era „profesionist”, tata avea voce caldă și plăcută și cunoștea perfect textele, melodiile și intonațiile tradiționale ale rugăciunilor (care pe meleagurile noastre erau conforme ritualului hasidic).

Nu-mi amintesc bine dacă plafonul (destul de jos) al sinagogii sau pereții, să fi fost împodobiți cu vreo imagine pictată. Probabil că pe pereți existau ceva peisaje naive ale târâmurilor biblice. Dar ceea ce-mi amintesc bine e mulțimea de globuri de iluminat, atârinate de plafon aproape unul lângă altul. De fapt numărul globurilor era mult mai mare decât ar fi fost necesar pentru luminatul sinagogei. Toate fuseseră donate de familii în memoria celor decedați. Pe fiecare din globurile mate, lăptoase, era înscris cu negru, în română, dar și cu litere ebraice, numele și data decesului. Mai eram copil, când la mulțimea de globuri de pe plafonul sinagogii croitorilor s-a adăugat și cel cu numele mamei. De atunci, spre deosebire de majoritatea copiilor și tinerilor, rămâneam în sinagogă în timpul rugăciunii Izkor. Această rugăciune e, după ritul așkenaz, rostită în șoaptă de patru ori pe an, în anumite zile de sărbătoare, de oricine a pierdut vreunul din părinți. Toți cei care au ambii părinți în viață trebuie să părăsească sinagoga pentru cele 10-15 minute cât durează rugăciunea. În aceste zile, de Izkor, se obișnuiește și a aprinde lumânări de pomenire ce ard 24 de ore. Eram doar unul din doi-trei copii ce nu ieșeam și rămâneam martori la gravitatea simțămintelor celor din jurul nostru și la hohote înăbușite de plâns ce veneau dinspre aripa femeilor. Durerea și zbuciumul sufletesc le înțeleg acum bine, mai ales considerând faptul că pe atunci ne aflam la doar câțiva ani după nenorocirea evreimii sucevene, și a celei din întreaga Bucovina, izgonită în Transnistria, unde au rămas cu zecile de mii, morți din toate familiile. La sfârșitul rugăciunii personale de Izkor, cantorul revenea cu glas puternic și emoționant la una sau două rugăciuni pe aceeași temă, ce din nou aduceau în mulți ochi lacrimi, iar la sfârșit dădea citire lungii liste de enoriași și enoriașe ai sinagogii, decedați de-a lungul ultimelor decenii. Lista pe care o citea domnul Țighelnic cu glas tare, era monotona, lungă, aranjată cronologic și pentru a fi sincer, puțin obositoare pentru un copil de nouă ani. Spre sfârșitul listei era menționat



și numele mamei mele, Clara.

După cum am mai pomenit, în copilărie, prezența mea la sinagogă era legată îndeosebi de sărbători, când îmbrăcat cu haine și pantofi noi (care, of ! mă strângeau și mă rodeau) îi însoțeam, ca toți tovarășii mei de joacă, pe părinți. În zilele sărbătorilor de toamnă rugăciunile se prelungeau pe decursul a multe ore. Mamele și bunicile aduceau pentru copii câte ceva de îmbucac, de obicei felii cu gust de neuitat din tradiționalul „chec cu miere” – honiglekeh. Pe noi, copiii, mult mai mult decât rugăciunile, ne atrăgea întâlnirea cu prieteni de joacă, mulți din cartiere mai îndepărtate, cu care nu prea ne vedeam în zile obișnuite. Curtea și împrejurimile sinagogii erau în stăpânirea noastră. Când mai crescuserăm puțin, obișnuiam, grupe de băieți, să ieșim la întâlniri cu alții ca noi, cutreerând pe la sinagogi din apropiere, îndeosebi în zona Templului, unde se adunau băieții de la alte două-trei sinagogi și era veselie mare. În câteva din aceste ocazii am intrat chiar în Templu și am ascultat parte din predica de sărbători a rabinului orașului. Atunci am putut oarecum să cunosc interiorul acestui lăcaș.

În anul ce-a urmat după moartea mamei, prezența mea pe la sinagogi a devenit aproape zilnică. Aveam datoria, ca fiu, să rostesc de-a lungul anului de doliu, cu glas tare, la fiecare din cele 3 rugăciuni zilnice, textul (scurt) al rugăciunii kadiș a orfanilor. Chiar pe atunci, pe la mijlocul anilor '50, numărul celor ce participau la rugăciunile de zi cu zi era deja redus, astfel că enoriașii de la sinagoga croitorilor și cei de la Wijnitz s-au unit : rugăciunea din zori - Șahrit - se ținea la prima, iar rugăciunile mai scurte de după amiază (Minha) și de seară (Maariv) se țineau la interval de 15-20 de minute înainte și după ora apusului, la cealaltă sinagogă. Tata, odihnească-se în pace, a luat asupra sa obligația kadiș –ului din zori și m-a scutit pe mine, copil de 9 ani, să mă prezint la sinagogă la 6 dimineața, iarna ca și vara. Eu am mers (mai mult sau mai puțin) în fiecare seară la rugăciunile celelalte la Wijnitz și astfel am avut ocazia să cunosc mai îndeaproape această sinagogă.

Am mai pomenit că Wijnitz se afla chiar vizavi de Templu și de Beth Midraș , pe o străduță suceveană care înainte de război se numea Strada Sinagogilor, nu departe de piața birjelor. În iarna aceluia an 55/56, ca și de altfel în mulți alți ani, uzina electrică a orașului nu prea funcționa, așa că imediat după apus, străzile Sucevei se cufundau în beznă. Pentru a-mi ușura orbecăitul pe străduțele desfundate, am fost echipat cu o lanternă simplă, de bachelită. Departe de visul la lanternele „vânătoarești”, cum aveau băieții mari, dar totuși, ceva. Păcat doar că bateriile se terminau tare repede și erau foarte greu de găsit prin magazine, chiar cu protecțiile pe care le aveam ...

Oricum, în acel an mă prezentam aproape în fiecare seară la sinagoga Wijnitz, aflată într-o clădire modestă, complet lipsită de vreun ornament sau simbol arhitectural, cu totul diferită de cele două



sinagogi mai impozante, aflate de cealaltă parte a străzii. Intrarea era prin curte, de unde câteva scări de lemn duceau spre un mic cerdac și de acolo într-un pridvor din care se deschideau două uși : pe dreapta spre incinta mai mare de rugăciune, iar spre stânga către cămăruța rezervată femeilor, ce se afla aici la același singur nivel al sinagogii. Camera cea mare era orientată, ca și la „sinagoga croitorilor”, astfel încât chivotul modest era plasat pe mijlocul unuia din pereții lungi ai încăperii, ce dădea spre răsărit. Credincioșii ședeau pe bănci de lemn, de o parte și alta a meselor lungi aranjate de-a lungul pereților. Un șir de mese și bănci se afla în centrul camerei, de ambele părți ale mesei înclinată, înalte, pe care se citea Tora-ua.

Între Minha și Maariv era de obicei o pauză de vreo 20 de minute. În acest timp, și chiar apoi, după Maariv, câțiva dintre cei prezenți se adunau în jurul unei mese din colțul sinagogei, la o lecție de Mișna sau de Talmud. În serile de iarnă, pe o altă masă, în apropiere, se aflau la dispoziția celor ce studiau, pahare groase de sticlă, un ceainic mic cu esență de ceai. Pe soba rotundă de tuci, instalată lângă soba mare din cărămizi, fierbea un ceainic cu apă. Eu, cel mic, mă țineam de o parte și n-aș putea afirma că aș fi înțeles ceva, deși fiecare propoziție era tradusă în idiș, din care mai știam câteva cuvinte. În acele seri la Wijnitz am avut ocazia să-l cunosc atunci (deși cuvântul e prea mare) pe domnul Avigdor Nussbauh, cel ce de obicei coordona lecția. Era un om deja vârstnic, cu barbișon alb, scurt, ce făcea parte din cercul restrâns al evreilor învățați ai orașului. Mult mai târziu aveam să aflu că fusese și unul din liderii mișcării sioniste la Suceava, în anii când aceasta mai fusese legală. Și tot acolo l-am întâlnit pe Avram-Haim Ghelber, și el printre erudiți, deși poate nu chiar de talia lui Nussbauh. Era un om înalt, slab, și el cu un barbișon mic și cărunt, cu o pereche de ochi albaștrii pe care nu puteai să nu-i remarci de la prima privire, și un veșnic zâmbet vesel în colțul gurii. În acei ani, deși nu mai era tânăr, își câștiga existența ca geamgiu. Tot orașul îl știa și la nevoie se apela la el. Pe atunci nu-mi imaginam că peste vreo doi ani, tata se va recăsători cu Ruti, fica lui, iar Avram-Haim Ghelber avea să-mi devină oarecum, bunic. Din nefericire, doar pentru scurt timp, căci s-a stins destul de tânăr, numai vreun an mai târziu.

Câțiva ani mai târziu, când am împlinit 13 ani și deci am ajuns la Bar Mitzva – ceremonialul de confirmare a maturității la băieți - Sinagoga croitorilor era deja programată pentru demolare. Am mai apucat totuși ca acolo, la lăcașul de cult sucevean ales de tata, să particip la rugăciunea de Șahrit, din zori, după ce îmbrăcasem cu multe eforturi și cu ajutorul tatei, pe frunte și pe brațul stâng, în dreptul inimii, Tefilin - filacteriile rituale. Pentru a fi cu mine în acest moment important au venit dis-de-dimineată, din Burdujeni, cu trăsura, zeida, nenea Burțu și cei doi veri ai mei. A fost probabil un eveniment emoționant, mai ales pentru copilandrul ce se încurca printre curelușele de piele, lungi și înguste ale filacteriilor și nu e greu de imaginat ușurarea simțită



când rugăciunea s-a terminat, iar enoriașii, ce se grăbeau să ajungă pe la locurile de muncă, au fost cinstiți cu rachiu și cu felii de lekah, după care ne-au felicitat pe toți membrii familiei. Dacă nu mă înșel, era ultima dată când am mai fost în Sinagoga croitorilor. În sâmbăta ce a urmat, deja „matur” pe plan ritual, am participat cu tata, la rugăciunea festivă de Șabat la sinagoga Wijnitz. Conform datinii, am fost chemat pentru prima dată în viață, la cititul din Tora. După care mi s-a dat onoarea de a intona oarecum melodic, după un canon bine stabilit, acel capitol din cărțile profeților – Aftara - ce era asociat cu pericopa săptămânii. Treabă destul de serioasă, pentru care m-a pregătit de-a lungul a câteva săptămâni domnul Artur Șapira, la care luam pe atunci lecții de ebraică. La sfârșitul rugăciuni din acea sâmbătă dimineață, tot în cinstea Bar Mitzvei mele, toți cei prezenți au fost cinstiți cu rachiu, sau lichior și cu felii mari, tăiate în formă rombică, de țukerlekah un pandișpan gălbui-auriu, cu gust de paradis, ce era rezervat pentru evenimente speciale. De asemenea, au fost pregătite pachețele din această prăjitură, învelite în hârtie de șervețele creponate, pentru soțiile și familiile enoriașilor. Astfel s-a încheiat trecerea mea în maturitate, cel puțin pe plan ritual.

Mai târziu, după demolarea Sinagogii croitorilor, al cărei teren a devenit parte din cel pe care s-a construit școala noastră, pe strada Petru Rareș, mergeam în zilele de Izkor, cu tata, la Wijnitz. Era pentru tata o ocazie de a schimba cu Artur Șapira câteva propoziții în ebraica ce și-o mai amintea din cele învățate în tinerețe.

Probabil, însă, cele mai vii, mai colorate amintiri ale mele, încă din primii ani ai copilăriei, sunt cele legate de sinagoga mare – Die Groise Šil – din Burdujeni, târgușorul unde am văzut lumina zilei, unde am locuit cu părinții în primii patru ani ai mei și unde aveam să revin adesea, la bunici, și în anii ce-au urmat. Înainte de a deveni cartier al orașului Suceava, Burdujeni a fost, înainte de război, un ștetl ce număra mai bine de 1000 de evrei și avea vreo 6 sinagogi. În anii amintirilor mele mai rămăseseră trei. O sinagogă era chiar în centru, iar celelalte două se aflau pe un fel de fost campus al câtorva sinagogi, nu departe de centru dar oarecum într-un loc izolat, unde nu erau alte case, pe drumul ce ducea pe de o parte spre piață și pe de alta, spre cimitirul evreiesc. Încă pe când eram copil mic, târgul începuse a se goli de evrei, în anii când au început valurile de emigrație spre Israel. Una din acele sinagogi a fost pe atunci închisă și a rămas doar „sinagoga mare”, unde copil, ajungeam uneori, cu zeida, bunicul meu matern. Mai târziu, frumoasa clădire de altădată a rămas ani de zile abandonată, devenind o ruină, o rană deschisă în ochii puținilor trecători pe-acolo, până s-a fărâmițat cu totul și a fost demolată. În ultimii ani am avut ocazia să vizitez de mai multe ori, cu grupuri de turiști, Sinagoga Mare din Botoșani. În trecut nu o văzusem niciodată, iar acum, după ce fusese renovată cu vreun deceniu în urmă, m-a uimit și impresionat asemănarea cu ceea ce fusese cândva Die Groise Šil a noastră, din Burdujeni. Probabil ambele



clădiri au fost construite în aceeași perioadă (cam în jurul anului 1840) și chiar dacă nu de același arhitect, totuși de arhitecți din aceeași școală.

Die Groise Șil din Burdujeni era o clădire dreptunghiulară, de dimensiuni impresionante. Se înălța la nivelul a două etaje, peste care domnea un acoperiș de șindrilă ce cobora simetric spre laturile clădirii. Acoperișul era foarte înclinat iar, după moda central și est-europeană, cam la mijlocul înălțimii sale era curmat de un fel de streășină, sub care inclinarea devenea și mai accentuată. Sub un astfel de acoperiș trebuie să se fi aflat un pod imens, unde cine știe, poate să fi dormit cândva un uriaș de lut, frate al Golemului din Praga. Nu știu, căci niciodată n-am fost în pod și nici n-am auzit pe careva din băieți să pomenească așa ceva. Mai toate geamurile clădirii erau la nivelul etajului al doilea, sub acoperiș. Cele ce dădeau spre sala mare de rugăciune erau mai mari, menite a umple sinagoga cu lumina zilei. Pe peretele de apus se afla, la etajul superior, la nivelul aripii femeilor, un cerdac deschis, mărginit de câteva coloane simple, care dădeau clădirii o alură de soliditate clasică. Intrarea era pe partea de sud a clădirii. În colțul sud-vest, o ușă de lemn se deschidea către scările de lemn (deja șubrede în acei ani) ce duceau spre cerdac și intrarea în camera de rugăciune a femeilor, unde mamele și bunicile ne așteptau cu prăjituri și bunătați. Intrarea principală era puțin mai spre dreapta, aproape de acea a femeilor. Era o ușă mare, dublă, din lemn, cu pridvor mic, spre care duceau câteva scări de piatră mărginite cu mici parapete de zid. Ușa ducea într-un hol cam întunecos, din care se deschideau 2-3 uși. Cea din față ducea către Știbl, cămăruța unde se țineau rugăciunile de zi cu zi, când participanții erau puțini, și mai ales iarna, când încălzitul sălii mari ar fi fost prea costisitor. Ușa din dreapta, mai mare, cu două canaturi, ducea în sala mare a sinagogii, spre care coborau 2-3 scări.

Spre această încăpere pătrată, vastă, înaltă, plină de lumină m-au purtat amintirile când am intrat, acum câțiva ani, în sinagoga mare din Botoșani. În ochii copilului ce fusesem, acest interior trebuie să fi fost ca al templului lui Solomon. Plafonul îndepărtat, plin de picturi, trimitea către noi, cei de jos, mulțime de brațe de candelabre. De jur împrejurul pereților, sub geamurile înalte, se întindeau picturi murale (cam naive) cu peisaje idilice ale țării sfinte și cu emblemele celor 12 triburi (orice figură umană e interzisă – prin una din cele zece porunci !). În centrul peretelui de răsărit, ridicat pe un postament spre care duceau câteva trepte, domnea Chivotul , o piesă de mobilă sculptată, de mai mult de 2 metri înălțime, acoperită cu perdea grea de catifea, brodată cu litere de aur. În partea de sus, peste leiș sculptați în lemn, se înălța vulturul bicefal, motiv sculptural prezent pe chivotele multor sinagogi de prin părțile noastre.

Rândurile de bănci ale enoriașilor, cu excepția celor de lângă peretele de est, rezervate celor mai de cinste, erau paralele, orientate bineînțeles spre răsărit. În locul meselor, fiecare avea un fel de



măsuță-pupitru personală, ce putea fi mișcată, cu un mic dulăpaș și tăblia ușor înclinată. Centrul încăperii era dominat de Bima, spre care urcau, la sud și nord, două rânduri de scări, străjuite de aceeași balustradă, iar sus se afla bineînțeles masa mare, cu tăblia înclinată unde se depuneau spre citire, sulurile Torei.

Tabloul de amintiri despre sinagoga mare din Burdujeni, ar fi incomplet dacă nu aș pomeni pe cantorul legendar, Țalic Grinberg, figură impozantă și respectabilă, cu palmares de cantor prin străinătăți în anii interbelici. Deja atunci era om în vârstă. Prezența sa falnică - îmbrăcat în Kitel, halatul alb de rugăciune, cu boneta hexagonală de cantor, având un ciucure scurt - și vocea care urca la înălțimile templului, până sus, la ferestrele femeilor, mi-au rămas gravate în amintire.

La sinagoga Gah nu cred să fi intrat vreodată, în anii mei suceveni. Pe la începutul anilor '70, când am revenit la Suceava, turist, după aproape zece ani de la plecare, la Burdujeni nu mai funcționa nici o sinagogă. Erau zilele sărbătorilor de toamnă, iar când a trebuit să spunem rugăciunea de Izkor, am plecat la Suceava, cu zeida la Gah, singura ce mai funcționa. Mulți m-au recunoscut și imediat oaspetele venit din Israel o fost onorat cu cititul acelei Aftara a zilei de sărbătoare în care ne aflam. La drept vorbind, m-au cam trecut sudorile - avusesem acest examen doar de două ori în viață : la Bar Mitzva și în sâmbăta ce a precedat ziua nunții noastre. Cumva trebuia să ies cămașă curată : nu se putea să-l fac de rușine pe zeida, mândru nevoie mare de mine, iar apoi, chiar eu trebuia să-mi apăr renumele de israelian! Am adunat, așadar, toate cunoștințele mele de ebraică și am citit lungul text fără greșeli, improvizând simultan un ritm și o melodie ce s-ar fi potrivit cu sarcina. Totul a trecut cu bine. Cei ce mă înconjurau, inclusiv zeida, nu cunoșteau textul mai bine ca mine... Oricum, de atunci mă pot lăuda că am primi Maftir (rolul celui onorat a citi Aftara) la sinagoga suceveană Gah.



Gah synagogue. Photo P.Leinburd





Mihai

Beni Budic

Pe Mihai Drișcu l-am întâlnit pentru prima dată în ziua când am ajuns amândoi, oarecum străini față de noua noastră ambianță, în una din cele două clase a IV-a, la Școala Medie Nr.2, fostul „Liceu de fete”. Era în toamna lui 1956, anul când s-a trecut la învățământul mixt, adevărată revoluție în sistemul de învățământ românesc. Eu am ajuns acolo după trei ani cam cenușii la „Ștefan cel Mare”, cunoscut și ca „Liceul de băieți”. Noua mea școală era la doar o aruncătură de băț de casa noastră de pe strada Cetății. Familia Drișcu se mutase în acea vară de la Rădăuți la



Suceava și locuiau în centru, la doi pași de intrarea în curtea din spate a școlii. Așa că amândoi am fost înscriși, după adrese, la aceeași școală unde aveam să ne petrecem împreună următorii vreo opt ani. Anii prieteniei noastre. Din acel an școlar nu prea mi-au rămas multe amintiri. Deși ne descoperiserăm deja trăsături și preocupări comune, se pare că în afara orelor, eu și Mihai ne întâlneam la început destul de rar. În primele luni ale anului școlar,

probabil din lipsă de spațiu în clădirea destul de mică a fostului liceu „Doamna Maria”, clasa noastră a învățat după amiaza, în schimbul 2. Programul începea la ora 14.00 după ce diminețile le petrecuserăm puțin cu lecțiile, mai mult cu joaca iar după masa de prânz înghițită la rezezeală când ne prezentam la școală eram deja buni de somn. Clasa noastră

era la parter, imediat pe stânga holului de intrare al clădirii. Era o încăpere spațioasă, cu geamuri mari ce dădeau spre stradă și umpleau clasa de lumină. Pentru a intra, imediat după ușa înaltă, trebuia să coborâm o treaptă de lemn. Catedra era amplasată pe un mic podium din scânduri aflat pe dreapta, lângă peretele opus ușii de intrare și bineînțeles domina de la înălțimea sa, întreaga



clasă. Tabla neagră era lângă catedră, plasată în centrul peretelui. Erau 3 sau chiar 4 rânduri de bănci. Nu sunt absolut sigur dar probabil că deja atunci Mihai și eu am împărțit aceeași bancă. Și treaba asta a continuat de-a lungul anilor de școală până într-a X-a, când Mihai a trecut la „umană”. Dirigintele și profesoarele pe care le-am avut de-a lungul anilor ne-au permis întotdeauna să ședem împreună. Nu pălăvrăgeam și nu deranjam mai niciodată. Ne înțelegeam aproape fără cuvinte, doar dintr-o aluzie și câteva priviri. Dar astea aveau să ne caracterizeze mai mult în anii următori și îndeosebi în clasele de liceu.

Am în fața ochilor o fotografie făcută chiar în clasă, pe la sfârșitul aceluia an școlar. Suntem o grupă de pionieri, 3 băieți și 4 fete, toți cu cravatele roșii la gât, cu steagul unității, plasați în fața clasei. Parte din fundal e ocupat de tablă, a doua jumătate, pe dreapta pozei, în contrast clar, peretele alb iar deasupra portretul tovarășului Chivu Stoica sub lozinca „Trăiască Republica Populară Romîna! ”. O compoziție probabil bine studiată de fotograf. Și pe noi ne-a aranjat cu aceeași măiestrie a compoziției, cei mai înalți, Betti și Lică, mai în spate. În rândul din față, încadrați de trei fete, suntem noi doi, Mihai și eu, cu drapelul pe care îl ținem cu dârzenie. Fetele sunt, evident, mai înalte decât noi și fără discuție, mai frumoșele. Mai ales Didina Chirică, de pe atunci considerată cea mai frumoasă din clasă, cu o fundă albă, cochetă, în bucelele castanii. Cu toții purtăm pantaloni scurți sau fustițe de culoare închisă (probabil bleumarin, poza, de epocă, e bineînțeles în alb-negru), bluze albe, primăvăratice, cu mânecuță scurtă, sandale și șosete sau ciorapi trei sferturi de culoare albă.

Mihai și eu, în mod clar cei mai mărunți ca statură (dar evident, amândoi de aceeași înălțime, până într-atât că manșetele pantalonașilor noștri scurți parcă fuseseră trase cu rigla) ne evidențiem totuși între toți, poate datorită faptului că suntem cei cărora li s-a încredințat drapelul. Eu cu breton tuns scurt, reglementar, țin drapelul cu dreapta, ascunsă sub falduri și-l sprijin cu mâna stângă. În poziție rigidă de drepti privesc fără a clipi către fotograf și către viitorul luminos... Lângă mine, deja împreună și nu numai datorită staturii, Mihai, cu părul lui negru, cam rebel, într-o poziție clasică de contrapposto, cu piciorul stâng ceva mai avansat, puțin îndoit din genunchi, iar colțurile cravatei lui roșii par că strică simetria pozei. E greu de distins în poză privirea lui Mihai. Dar eu știu ce gândea: „Mă conformez eu acum, ca toți proștii ăștia, dar mai vedem noi...” Adevăratele dimensiuni ale nonconformismului său, Mihai aveau să le dezvăluie cu vreo două decenii mai târziu, în anii care au precedat ciudatul, neverosimilul „accident” ce l-a ucis în aprilie 1989.

Pe-atunci însă, când eram doar într-a IV-a, și într-o anumită măsură și în anii următori ai ciclului mediu, eu mai petreceam bună parte din orele libere cu gașca băieților (Jacky Gotlieb, Tully



Țihelnic, Micky Kerner, Zwi Furer) în tot felul de jocuri care cu timpul s-au concentrat la partide și chiar adevărate turnire de șah și table. Mihai nu făcea parte din acel cerc. Timpul petrecut cu el era îndeosebi la școală, mai rar în orele libere, duminica sau în zilele de vacanță. Dar cu încetul, fără să pot spune exact când, am început a fi aproape veșnic împreună.

La școală ne-am adaptat rapid noii realități. Coexistența în aceeași clasă cu fetele făcea viața mult mai interesantă, iar pe măsură ce treceau anii, a devenit absolut naturală. În recreații, mai tot timpul împreună, noi doi eram un fel de centru de atracție. „Spiritele” și calambururile noastre, ca un ping-pong de replici, se pare că ne distrau colegile care, cu toată modestia trebuie să o spun, roiau împrejur. Mihai, niciodată, pe câte știam eu, nu a căzut în plasa vreunei legături romantice. Dar cine știe ?..

În acei ani, uniforme școlare, obligatorii, erau departe de a fi atrăgătoare. Fetele purtau rochii pepit cu pătrățele alb-negru mărunte, încrețite pe talie și terminate cu un guleraș alb strâns în jurul gâtului. Să nu se vadă nimic! Peste rochie venea un gen de șorț negru, ce contrasta la culoare cu rochia. Părul le era strâns cu panglică albă, iar pe picioare purtau ciorapi cenușii, grosolani, din bumbac mercerizat. Mihai nu putea suferi nici de departe lipsa de grație a uniformei fetelor și nu pregeta s-o spună direct, în stilul său „sare și piper”:

Ăștia-s ciorapi de călugărițe și de fete bătrâne!

Nici uniformele noastre, ale băieților nu erau vreo culme a creațiilor de confecție. Ne îmbrăcaseră pe toți la costum, pantaloni lungi și haină la un rând de nasturi, cu revere și gulcer mic, dintr-o stofă bleumarin grosolană, aspră la atingere. Probabil ar fi trebuit să purtăm sub haină cămașă albă, dar de fapt fiecare, purtam ce aveam. Stofa ieftină a costumului făcea ca în scurt timp pantalonii să prindă luciu pe la genunchi (și prin alte părți), iar haina era veșnic roasă pe la coate. Bineînțeles, cu toții, băieți și fete, aveam cusută pe mâneca stângă emblema școlii cu număr de matriculă. Când am ajuns în clasele superioare, singura libertate pe care o puteam lua față de uniformă era să îngustăm la vreun croitor, după cerințele modei, pantalonii, despre care Mihai zicea că erau de o lățime „demnă de marinarii din flota sovietică” ... Deci era doar natural, ca - o dată programul terminat - să scăpăm de uniformă și să redevenim civili pentru restul zilei. Iar pentru Mihai și pentru mine, ”restul zilei” a devenit treptat o prelungire a aceluia împreună de la școală, doar în haine mai comode și în libertate absolută.

Nu știu să spun exact, dar cred că era printr-a VI-a, când am început să-mi petrec mai toate după amiezile în locuința lui Mihai și familiei sale. Chiar dacă mergeam la cinema (și ce mai mergeam!) seara mea se încheia la ei. Familia Drișcu ocupa o locuință modestă, chiar în centrul orașului. Se putea intra de pe Ștefan cel Mare, urcând câteva trepte către un pasaj boltit, ce



ducea la locuințele de la parter și la scara mare ce urca pe dreapta, spre primul și singurul etaj al clădirii. Se putea ajunge la ei și prin spate, dinspre curtea școlii, trecând printr-o curte nu prea mare din care se deschidea și intrarea către crama subterană, instituție binecunoscută în acei ani amatorilor de must, de vin, de bere și de alte bunătăți...

După un timp devenisem om de-al casei. Ușa de intrare dădea într-o cameră mică, lungă și îngustă, de fapt un gen de hol/bucătărie ce era folosit doar în lunile mai calde. Iarna, aragazul era mutat în sufragerie. În acea cameră era și o mică masă de lucru a lui Mihai, lângă care am dus noi multe discuții. Aproape cu siguranță, în fund erau un divan și o etajeră cu rafturi ticsite cu cărți și ziare. Din acel hol, spre stânga se deschidea camera cea mai spațioasă a locuinței. Camera asta servea de sufragerie dar și ca dormitor al celor doi frați Drișcu. Mobilierul consta din două divane, o masă ce umplea tot centrul camerei, pe stânga lângă ușa ce ducea în dormitorul părinților era un dulap cu vitrină și rafturi, a cărei parte superioară, până spre plafon, era ocupată de cărți, iar în colțul opus, lângă ușa de intrare, era o sobă înaltă. În dormitorul părinților (servea probabil și ca „salon” pentru musafiri) nu cred să fi intrat vreodată, dar prin ușa cu geamuri se întvedea și acolo un șifonier larg, cu vitrină și oglindă și cu rafturile ticsite de cărți, până în tavan. Acasă și pentru familie, Mihai era Dănuț, iar fratele său mai mic, Petru, era Titi.

Titi era cu șase ani mai mic decât noi (pe Mihai și pe mine ne despărțeau doar 20 de zile), deci în acea perioadă să fi avut vreo șapte-opt ani. De pe atunci era un puști vioi și de o curiozitate veșnică și insașiabilă. Mihai zicea că frate-său era ca o fântână de întrebări: oricâte ciuturi ai scoate din ea, veșnic se umple înapoi. De pe atunci își luase fratele ca model și se străduia să-i meargă pe urme, mai ales cu obiceiul de a citi neconținut. În vara lui 1974, când cu Ana, soția mea, am revenit ca turiști în România, i-am întâlnit pe amândoi în București. Titi era pe atunci student. De la prima privire era evident efortul de a semăna cu Mihai. De fapt, Titi era mai înalt, mai zvelt, decât Mihai dar adoptase aceeași tunsură, aceeași barbă, același trenți scurt, la modă, aceleași intonații, același umor tăios. Din nefericire, a fost ultima dată când l-am văzut. Când - în 1984 - l-am reîntâlnit pe Mihai la București, Titi nu mai era cu el. Revenise de câțiva ani ca sociolog, la Suceava, unde a reușit să se afirme ca intelectual de valoare, ca ziarist, să publice. Întemeiasă o familie, i s-a născut un fiu, Lucian. Apoi Titi a părăsit aceste meleaguri ale vieții mult, mult prea devreme. Știu eu, poate că și în acest act a ales să fie asemenea fratelui său.

Cu siguranță, pasiunea - aș zice eu aproape obsesivă - a celor doi băieți ai familiei Drișcu pentru citit, pentru artă, pentru estetică, a încolțit în casa părintească. Tatăl, Grigore Drișcu, care le-a insuflat băieților setea nepotolită de carte, era un om de statură potrivită, rotofei, cu nas ascuțit și



chelie lucioasă și, mai ales, veșnic cu un zâmbet sau cel puțin o umbră de zâmbet și o zicală ironică pe buze. Grișa, cum îl numeau toți (inclusiv băieții lui), era jurist și lucra ca juriconsult într-o instituție din oraș. Nu o dată am fost martor la sosirea lui de la servicii, cu servieta burdușită din care începea să scoată ziare și reviste pe care ni le împărțea. Când eram într-a VIII-a, inițiasem noi (ideea mea, realizare comună, iar toată grafica era a lui Mihai) o gazetă de perete satirică ce-am numit-o Claxonul. Cred că o reînnoiam cam o dată pe lună, iar materialele le publicam dactilografiate (cu două degete, sau chiar unul singur). Asta era posibil datorită bunului Grișa, care ne aducea, timp de câteva zile, o mașină de scris împrumutată la birou, pe care o căra zilnic, dus și întors, pe lângă servieta cu presa...

Mama lui Dănuț și Titi, Elena Drișcu, era o femeie mai mult scundă, cu părul negru, tenul întunecat, sprâncene dese și trăsături frumoase. Chiar dacă nu trecuse prin universități ca Grișa, făcea tot ce putea ca să înlesnească băieților orice preocupări intelectuale. Știu eu ? Poate de asta a încurajat și prietenia noastră ? Oricum, eram primit în casa lor cu evidentă naturaleză, bunăvoință și căldură. Nu-mi amintesc ca Mihai să fi avut vreun alt prieten apropiat ca mine. Singurul pe care îl întâlneam din când în când la familia Drișcu era Doru Boca, vărul dinspre mamă al lui Mihai, ce era ceva mai mare decât noi, un băiat citit și deștept.

Mihai era, ca mine, scund de statură. Dar aici se termina asemănarea fizică între noi. Încă din anii copilăriei se arăta mai robust, mai lat în umeri, emana energie și chiar putere fizică (un strâns de mână al lui Mihai îl țineai bine minte...). Încă de pe atunci era preocupat să-și călească corpul, să se elibereze cumva de limitele acestuia. Nu o dată mi-a spus că ar vrea să poată să se îmbrace la fel, vară sau iarnă, iar corpul să se adapteze schimbărilor de climă. În anumite măsură chiar încerca s-o facă în pofida protestelor și implorărilor mamei sale. Grișa însă, era de partea lui... Oricum, niciodată Mihai n-a purtat vreo căciulă, chiar în zilele de ger. Cel mult, bascul său bleumarin. Probabil în mod voit, fața sa emana o anumită duritate.

Am în fața ochilor o fotografie mică, gen pașaport, făcută probabil pe la începutul studenției. Pe verso stă scris „cu multe mulțumiri pentru mama-mare, Dănuț”. Figură serioasă, mai serioasă decât în realitate, fața lui Mihai conturează un dreptunghi aproape perfect. Pomeții obrajilor proeminenți, nasul drept și în totală simetrie, gura strânsă, bărbia avansată. Ochii cam ascunși de veșnicii ochelari cu ramă groasă, puțin rotunjită, în estetic contrast cu unghiurile drepte, dominante, ale feței. Păr negru, pieptănat probabil cu mare efort spre stânga pentru a-i stăpâni răzmerița cel puțin până după poză. Și o pereche de favoriți lungi, până sub urechi, care mie îmi sunt străini, nu-i avea încă în anii noștii la Suceava.



Am aflat dintr-un text al bunului său prieten din anii bucureșteni, Gheorghe Vida, că Mihai citea o carte pe zi. Nu știu dacă în anii de școală ajungea chiar la asemenea performanțe, dar fapt este că absorbea cantități inimaginabile de cărți, ziare și reviste de tot felul. Nici măcar nu mai încercam să mă măsoar cu el după ce o perioadă îmi pusesem norma de a citi 100 de pagini zilnic, normă la care am renunțat repede. Probabil totuși că dacă azi, după zeci de ani în care am comunicat în ivrit, mă pot exprima satisfăcător în limba română, datorz acest lucru în bună măsură lui Mihai și aspirației mele de a nu fi mai prejos decât el. Preferințele de lectură le aveam oarecum diferite. Eu tindeam mai mult spre aventură, romantism, tehnică sau literatură SF. Mihai prefera texte de documentare, deși erau mai greu de digerat, istorie, chiar filosofie, dar îndeosebi estetică și artă. Artă și din nou artă. Amândoi înghițeam tot ce puteam găsi despre cinematografie și pe acest subiect aveam veșnice discuții și polemici în jurul nenumăratelor filme pe care le vedeam. Eu nu reușeam, ca Mihai, să depistez toate punctele slabe ale vreunui film, pe când el era un critic cu o vedere adâncă și limba ascuțită, fără pic de milă...Amândoi cumpăram și citeam Contemporanul, Mihai mai cumpăra Gazeta Literară, iar eu Tribuna, săptămânalul clujean și le schimbam între



noi. Mihai le citea cred, integral dar eu, eu nu dovedeam decât să le răsfoiesc pentru că mai erau Lumea, Flacăra, Magazin, Colecția de povestiri SF, plus gazete cotidiene pe care le mai răsfoiam superficial, dar citeam rubricile interesante. Și bineînțeles, concomitent, am bătut toate drumurile și potecile marilor clasici, editați și reeditați neconținut în acei ani, cu prefețe lungi și docte, impregnate de omniprezenta ideologie a vremii. Imi amintesc cum Adi, fratele mai mare al Marei, ne sfătuia de la înălțimea maturității sale (să tot fi avut 23-24 de ani):

Citiți acum tot ce se poate. Mai târziu nu veți avea timp de asta...

Și noi ne-am conformat. Mihai și-a exprimat la un moment dat încrederea în valoarea celor învățate



prin lectură, povestindu-ne un episod despre George Călinescu, citit de el în Contemporanul. Călinescu fusese inclus ca membru de frunte într-o delegație culturală ce urma să plece în Republica Populară Chineză. Timp de trei luni înaintea plecării „s-a închis” în biblioteca Academiei și a citit tot ce se putea găsi despre China. Când delegația a ajuns acolo și au început discuțiile cu gazdele, „Călinescu i-a pus în fund pe chinezi cu câte știa!” De la Mihai vorbire.... după alți ani, bunul său prieten Gheorghe Vida povestea că, întrebat unde-și va petrece concediul, Mihai răspunsese:

Am să fac plajă la biblioteca Academiei!

Revenind la primii ani de liceu, îmi amintesc că atunci s-a format grupul nostru, al „celor cinci”: Mara (Bodingher), Mira (Seidler), Betty (Merdler), Mihai și eu. Întâlnirile, aproape zilnice, aveau loc la Mara, în „Casa Bodingher”, acolo ne petreceam aproape toate orele libere. La familia Drișcu ajungeam mai rar. În acei ani Mihai începuse să urmeze un curs seral de pictură la Școala populară de artă din oraș. Talentul său pentru artele grafice era de pe atunci evident.

De câte ori ni se tăia suflarea de admirație când Mihai, cu un cărbune sau creion în mână, însuflețea din câteva mișcări ale brațului, coala din blocul de desen! Peste ani, aveam să descriu acea perioadă într-o scrisoare pe care, paradoxal am găsit-o citată într-un roman publicat în 2010, în care Mihai și oarecum și eu ne-am găsit printre eroi: „Pe Mihai l-am admirat și apreciat de la început. Deși am încercat și eu, pe ici pe colo, să scriu, eram conștient deja de superioritatea sa intelectuală, de felul lui deosebit de a vedea lucrurile, de puterea sa de a le analiza și interpreta. La drept vorbind, el a fost pentru mine un model pe care am încercat să-l imit și, în același timp cel ce m-a citit primul și m-a criticat fără milă. Am învățat de la el enorm de mult. Diferențele între noi n-au produs niciodată invidie sau ceva similar. În toți acei câțiva ani fericiți armonia dintre noi a fost desăvârșită. Niciodată - nici o singură dată în opt ani - n-am avut vreo dispută pe plan personal.”

Fără îndoială, cantitățile de texte citite, bogăția de cuvinte și idei ce ne-au umplut sufletele, ne-au adus cu timpul la o anumită capacitate de a ne exprima cu naturalețe și ușurință. Iar în ce-l privea pe Mihai, el și avea multe de spus, idei importante, originale, serioase, documentate, argumentate. Eu, în schimb, abordam subiecte mai ușuratece, mai fanteziste, mai romantice poate dar învățasem să le expun într-un stil ce antrena imediat cititorul. La un sfârșit de trimestru, în clasa IX-a, când ne-a adus tezele corectate, profesorul Eichorn (ne preda istoria și ne era și diriginte) a spus că dacă ne-ar putea contopi, pe mine cu stilul meu înflăcărat și pe Mihai cu știința lui, ar ieși din noi un scriitor minunat.

Prin decembrie 1961, în vacanța de iarnă a clasei a IX-a, am citit Jurnalul lui Andrei Hudici de Felix Aderca. Pe atunci habar n-aveam că autorul era deja scriitor consacrat și apreciat încă



din perioada interbelică, nu știam că era evreu și că în afara aceluia roman pentru copii și tineret crease o operă literară amplă, necunoscută cititorilor tineri de după război. Sub impresia acestei cărți, am hotărât că trebuie să scriu un jurnal. Și astfel am început de fapt, a scrie. Jurnalul, cu pauze de uneori luni de zile, m-a însoțit până în primăvara lui 1964, când am plecat spre Israel. Nimeni, nici Mihai, nici fetele, nu știau că există și nu citiseră nici un rând din el. Câteva luni mai târziu, Colecția de povestiri SF - ale cărei broșuri le citeam cu sfințenie - a proclamat un concurs de povestiri SF pentru tinerii cititori. Fără a gândi mult, m-am pus pe treabă și l-am antrenat în proiect și pe Mihai. După luni de scris și dactilografiat (pe Mihai l-a ajutat Grișa, eu am apelat, contra plată, la un maestru dactilograf de profesie) am produs fiecare câte o povestire de câteva zeci de pagini. A mea a fost plină de aventuri, inclusiv o mică poveste de dragoste, și am intitulat-o Al doilea sfârșit al Atlantidei. Povestirea lui Mihai, al cărei titlu, din păcate, l-am uitat, avea un subiect social-psihologic și se baza pe o idee despre care tot ce-mi amintesc e că o găseam de-a dreptul strălucită. Amândoi am trimis manuscrisele dactilografiate la București, la redacție, iar după câteva luni în care mi-am ros unghiile (Mihai, cel puțin exterior, își păstra obișnuitul său calm, punctat de bancuri cinice) am ajuns la concluzia că în acel stadiu, aventura literară a luat sfârșit. Singurii cititori ai povestirilor noastre am rămas doar noi doi și fetele...

Apoi a venit a X-a, când Mihai a trecut pentru următorii doi ani, cu Mara, Betty, și un întreg cârd de fete, la clasa de „umană”. Mira și cu mine am rămas la „reală”. Dar, bineînțeles, continuam a fi împreună mai tot timpul. Spre sfârșitul aceluia an am trăit cu toții aventura numită Drum bun, Scumpul Nostru Astronaut, spectacolul SF montat de școala noastră. Mihai a interpretat cu talentul ce-l caracteriza în tot ce făcea, personajul profesorului „bun” și bineînțeles a avut în seamă (ajutat de Mara) realizarea a tot ce era desenat sau pictat în decoruri. Următorul an, cel al clasei a XI-a, a trecut ca un vis, iar în aprilie 1964, eu mi-am părăsit prietenii. Venise și rândul familiei noastre să plece în Israel. În ultima mea sâmbătă la Suceava, pe la orele prânzului, am mers la familia Drișcu să-mi iau rămas bun de la Mihai și ai săi. Lui Mihai i-am încredințat câteva caiete cu „manuscrisele” mele. Nu aveam voie să luăm cu noi nici un fel de material scris. Cu timpul, aveam să le uit cu totul și nici în cele două-trei întâlniri avute după ani, cu Mihai, nu mi-am amintit să-l întreb ce s-a întâmplat cu ele.

În primele luni după plecarea mea, „clubul” de la Mara și-a continuat activitatea deși cu toții erau prinși în grijile bacalaureatului. Timp de câteva luni am corespondat. Iată ce-mi scria Mihai prin iunie 1964 ca răspuns primei mele scrisori: „Ce am făcut ? Întâi am citit din jurnalul tău. Citez din însemnările mele de la acea dată: e peste tot în postură de micro-Romeo (fata are babacii catâri). Poezia cu ochii (aia cu litere de tipar) e prea puțin personală. M-a emoționat spovedania despre amintirea mamei. Te-ai supăra dacă - peste ani - aș fura unele idei de-ale

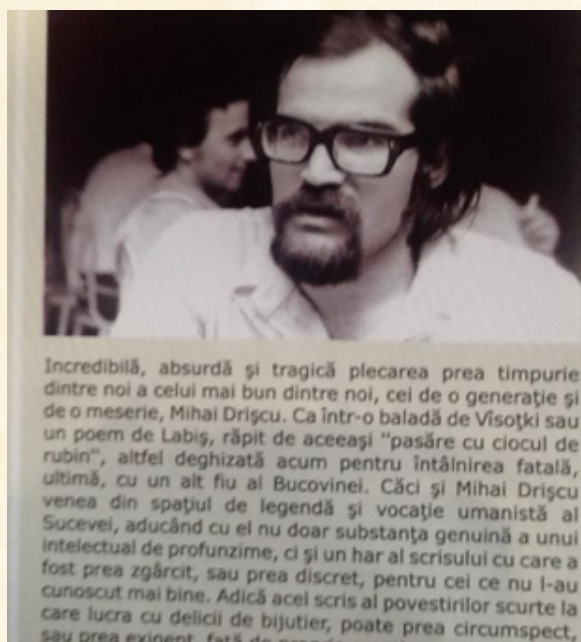


tale pentru o serie de portrete literare ? respectiv adolescentul care între două lansări de rachete lansează un oftat către țăriile cerului și ochii ingrateri.”

Apoi, în aceeași scrisoare povestește despre olimpiada de literatură română din acel an, când a luat locul I pe țară: „Înainte să plec la concurs îi spun în flegmă lui taică-meu: Grișa, să știi că vin cu un aparat de fotografiat. Zexe! zice el. Punem pariu. Dacă vin cu el nu te bărbierești un an. Bine! și râde. La București cald; eu în uniforma din tergal de urzici înnebuneam. De nebun ce am fost am ajuns primul pe țară (tema ”viața satului nou în literatura actuală”).”

În acea vară pe Mihai l-au mai așteptat câteva încercări. La admitere, la Arte, ar fi vrut să intre la Scenografie, dar până la urmă s-a înscris la Istoria și Teoria artelor, de unde s-a dezvoltat viitoarea sa carieră, cea a unuia din cei mai proeminenți critici de artă ai României în deceniile care au urmat. O dată trecute peripețiile admiterii și familiarizării adolescentului sucevean cu viața de student în București, iată cum descria Mihai în noiembrie 1964 începuturile studenției: „O duc mai ceva ca-n Texas, mai ales că aici nu se împușcă decât la bălci. Bursa e bursă, căminul e cămin, masa-i masă, mă îngraș și m-am apucat de haltere, seminarii nu avem, vreo 20 de ore pe săptămână, sâmbăta liber, abia la vară 4 examene, filme, 3 biblioteci foarte garnisite în limbi străine, companie selectă (Fata mi-a spus deja că i-aș place și mai mult cu barbă..). Am unii profesori tobă de carte (Schileru, care făcea cronică cinematografică la Gaz. lit., la istorie unul Ionescu care știe toate cancanurile istoriei și își pigmentează cursul cu anecdote... și în sfârșit franceza are mare căutare la noi, nu numai în domeniul picturii. Îi descoperim pe Camus, Malraux. La cursuri am multă bibliografie în limbi străine, în special lucrări franțuzești. ”

În anii următori, cumva, purtați toți de valurile vieții, legăturile s-au rărit, iar apoi aproape au dispărut. Fetele grupului nostru au ajuns și ele, toate, în Israel. Pe Mihai l-am mai întâlnit, cum mai pomenisem, la București, în 1973 și 1974. Întâlniri scurte în care n-am reușit să ne spunem mai nimic din poveștile nenumărate pe care am fi vrut să ni le spunem. Pentru ultima oară l-am întâlnit în 1984, tot la București. Singurul local unde am găsit loc să discutăm era barul hotelului nostru, Union. Mihai a condus discuția, ocolind nostalgiile amintirilor. Nu era în firea lui. A vorbit mult despre ceea făcea și nu mai puțin despre ceea ce „nu-l lăsau să facă” sau să scrie. Eram,

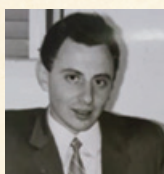


cred, singurii consumatori în bar, dar cine știe câte urechi ne pândeau! Pentru acei ani de groază ai României, Mihai își permitea o libertate de a vorbi care pe mine, turist cu pașaport străin, mă făcea să mă foiesc neliniștit în scaun. Întâlnirea s-a încheiat cu bine. La plecarea lui Mihai din barul de la Union, ne-am luat rămas bun. Pentru totdeauna. Peste nici cinci ani avea să fie răpus în acel „accident” stupid și încă departe de a fi elucidat.

Totuși, nici iureșul existenței, nici rutina vieții de zi cu zi și nici atâta amar de ani nu mi-au putut șterge ceea ce mi-au sădit în suflet acei opt ani fericiți de prietenie a doi copii, deveniți apoi adolescenți, doi tineri, în Suceava anilor 60.

Acum câțiva ani, printr-un concurs de împrejurări de necrezut, demn de o povestire SF, și posibil doar acum, în epoca internetului, ne-am reîntâlnit, Mihai Drișcu și eu, într-un univers de dincolo de oglindă, de Oglinda cu Memorie. Și mi-am regăsit jurnalul, de care uitasem, hotărând că cel mai potrivit loc de a-l păstra e printre documentele lui Mihai, aflate la Biblioteca Bucovinei „I. G. Sbiera”. Cine știe, poate ideea lansată în glumă de profesorul Eichorn acum aproape 60 de ani, de a ne contopi spiritual, s-a materializat în acest fel...

Tot în acel iureș de întâmplări de necrezut am cunoscut-o atunci pe doamna Gabriela Drișcu, cea care a fost soția lui Titi și cumnata lui Mihai. Gabi, care de atunci ne-a devenit prietenă, este cea care – după ce Grișa, Mihai, Titi și Elena au trecut în veșnicie - menține vie flăcăriua memoriei lor. Și tot Gabi este cea care, prin familia sa - fiul, Lucian, Paul și Dani, nepoții - continuă lanțul existenței „Drișcanilor”. Lui Gabi și băieților ei le dedic, cu afecțiune, aceste pagini inspirate de memoria prietenului meu, Mihai.



Ultima vară la Suceava

Beni Budic

Suceava acelor ani era un orășel destul de mic. Nu știi dacă număra mai mult de 20.000 de locuitori, dintre care mulți locuiau în case fără etaj, înconjurată de curți mai mari sau mai mici unde, cu cât te îndepărtați de centru, se puteau zări vara câteva straturi cu flori dar și răsaduri de roșii, ridichi sau ceapă verde. Aceia dintre suceveni ce locuiau în centru sau în jurul centrului, orășeni get-beget, ocupau foste locuințe habsburgice, cam toate la primul și singurul etaj, deasupra magazinelor de la parter. Fostele apartamente ale burghezimii bucovinene din „anii buni” fuseseră împărțite fiecare în 2-3 modeste locuințe muncitorești. Chiar cei ce au avut șansa ca în locuința lor să fi fost inclusă camera de baie a apartamentului original nu aveau apă curentă



mai mult de o oră pe zi, iar cada folosea de obicei ca rezervor. Aproape toate aceste clădiri erau într-o stare deplorabilă, cu pereții exteriori scorojiți, cu scări șubrede și balcoane care abia de se mai țineau. În scurt timp, majoritatea aveau să fie demolate iar centrul orașului avea să-și schimbe înfățișarea. Mai erau pe ici-colo, tot în zona centrală, câteva vile ridicate în perioada interbelică, în stilul „internațional”; în anii copilăriei mele, acestea își mai păstrau frumusețea, chiar dacă fuseseră și ele împărțite în 2-3 locuințe.

Perimetrul familiar mie al orașului se întindea cam de la Cetate (chiar locuiam pe Strada Cetății, dar la capătul dinspre oraș, la nr. 6), trecea spre străzile centrului, unde locuiau mulți dintre prietenii mei, apoi trecea prin acele străzi unde se desfășurau promenadele serilor de vară și se cam termina în zona liceului „Ștefan cel Mare”. De asemeni, îmi erau bine cunoscute străzile ce duceau spre apa Sucevei și către Burdujeni. Mai rar mă aventuram însă către Turnul Roșu, sau mai departe, la Zamca. Acea parte din nord vestul orașului îmi era aproape necunoscută. S-a făcut însă ca în vara lui 1963, ultima mea vacanță la Suceava, să am ocazia de a cutreiera aproape zilnic, timp de câteva săptămâni, prin acea zonă.

Vacanța venise după animația și emoțiile legate de reprezentarea, prin luna mai, a piesei Drum bun, scumpul nostru astronaut!, pe care am descris-o într-o relatare anterioară. Fără a exagera, munca de câteva luni pentru pregătirea spectacolului mi-a consumat multe energii, chiar pentru un adolescent de 16 ani. După spectacol, deși plin de satisfacție, simțeam un fel de senzație de gol. Tot ceea ce-mi umpluse existența în lunile anterioare a dispărut dintr-o dată. Nu aveam nici un fel de idei cum sau unde îmi voi petrece lunile verii. Galațiul încetase să fie posibilitatea preferată, cum fusese de atâtea ori în anii trecuți, după ce tanti Anuța și nene Zissu emigraseră în Israel. Rămânea rutina, de altfel destul de plăcută, dar totuși monotonă, a lecturilor prelungite în noapte, a sculatului târziu, întâlnirile cu grupul de prieteni la Mara, eventuale incursiuni la apa Sucevei (da, cam în urmă cu doi ani reușisem în sfârșit, singur, sa învăț să înot!!), plimbările prin oraș și interminabilele discuții cu Mihai Drișcu și cu fetele (Mira, Mara și Betty). Și mai intrase în discuție un plan al bunicilor de a face la sfârșit de august un voiaj de o săptămână la București, la rude, iar eu urma sa-i însoțesc. Minunată perspectivă pentru un tânăr care de fapt nu cunoștea Bucureștiul decât superficial, după câteva scurte vizite în copilărie. Dar până la sfârșit de august mai erau vreo două luni bune... Tocmai atunci l-am întâlnit pe Mihăiță Rusu, unul din cei mai simpatici colegi de clasă. De statură mijlocie, cu o coamă de păr negru, frumos, cu ochi inteligenți și un veșnic zâmbet ștrengar, Mihăiță, era apreciat și iubit de toți pentru istețimea și jovialitatea sa, chiar dacă nu era printre cei mai buni elevi. Mi-a povestit că lucrează la DSAPC (pentru cei neinițiați: Direcția de Sistematizare Arhitectură și Proiectare a Construcțiilor) ca ajutor al unei



domnișoare inginer, care face niște măsurători de cadastru în cartierele de la periferia orașului. Din vorbele lui reieșea că lucrul e floare la ureche, șefa e simpatică, și chiar salariul e mișto... Păcat doar că perioada de angajare a elevilor e limitată la trei sau patru săptămâni, iar el urma în câteva zile să-și termine serviciul, așa că dacă mă interesează, să fug repede la DSAPC să nu mi-o ia careva înainte...Ceea ce am făcut chiar în dimineața următoare, când m-am prezentat cu buletinul la sediul întreprinderii. Dacă îmi amintesc bine, acesta se afla în apropiere de cinematograful „Tineretului”, într-o clădire vastă, cu o curte interioară în care se intra printr-o boltă mare, pe sub care putea trece cu ușurință un camion.

Și așa se face că din dimineața zilei de luni a următoarei săptămâni am devenit salariat temporar la DSAPC Suceava. Pe Betty, domnișoara inginer, am întâlnit-o chiar în curtea întreprinderii lângă o căruță cu cal, în care un lucrător încărca echipamentul. Acesta era compus în primul rând din teodolitul „Zeiss”, ambalat într-o cutie de metal cilindrică, cu capacul bombat, înzestrată cu o curelușă ce folosea de mâner. Cea ce am înțeles de la bun început era că teodolitul trebuia păzit ca ochii din cap, să nu primească, ferească sfântul, vreo lovitură. Apoi urma trepiedul de lemn al teodolitului, într-o husă dintr-o țesătură foarte rezistentă, ca foaia de cort, care în plus, era întărită cu piele la partea superioară, protejând mecanismul înșurubat în aparat. Urma stadia, o riglă lungă de vreo doi metri jumătate, marcată centimetric cu semne și cifre în roșu și negru, compusă din două jumătăți și ambalată într-o husă jerpelită. La sfârșit au fost încărcăți vreo trei piloni de lemn, cam de un metru jumătate, vopsiți în benzi alb-roșu. După asta, omul cu căruța a mai trântit înăuntru câțiva țăruiși de fier și un ditamai ciocan, pe care doar el era în stare să-l mânuiască și apoi a sărit pe capră. Betty si-a pus pe umăr o geantă mare, ditamai sacul, în care se aflau pălăria, o păturică, caietul de notare a măsurătorilor, ruleta, un sandwich, câteva fructe și încă o adevărată comoară despre care voi vorbi mai încolo. A urcat sprintenă în căruță, lângă vizitiul nostru și m-a îndemnat să urc și eu în spate, printre piesele de echipament. Nu prea comod, dar noroc că drumul n-a fost lung. Căruța ne-a lăsat lângă o casă de gospodari, pe o străduță din zona Zamca, aproape de capătul orașului. Acolo Betty a schimbat ceva vorbe cu stăpâna locului și în câteva minute parte din echipament a fost plasat în magazia din curte. Căruțașul nostru a pornit doar cu ciocanul și țăruișii de fier, să-i bată în pământ în locuri știute doar de el și de domnișoara inginer, după care nu l-am mai văzut mai bine de-o săptămână.

Betty mi-a arătat cum se montează teodolitul pe trepied apoi și l-a pus pe umăr, băiețește. Mie mi-a dat să car stadia, bețele alb-roșu și sacoșa ei voluminoasă și am pornit. După cel mult vreo sută de pași, am ajuns la un loc umbrat, unde, între gardul unei curți și șanțul năpădit de iarbă și flori de mușețel, lângă un loc însemnat cu cretă roșie pe gard, a găsit - bătut bine în pământ



- capul unui țăruș de fier, ca acelea aduse în căruță. Acolo am instalat noi teodolitul și Betty l-a calibrat cu firul cu plumb, exact deasupra țărușului ce marca punctul de pornire al unui nou set de măsurători.

Betty Abramovici împlinise la începutul acelei veri 29 de ani și era deja cineva ce-și cunoștea bine valoarea. Era de statură mijlocie, puțin (numai puțin!) plinuță, o față rotundă și determinată, nasul oarecum ascuțit - toate încoronate de o frumusețe de bucle blonde și de o pereche de ochi ca albastrul cerului. Aveam să aflu că la Suceava ajunsese cu serviciul, că era încă celibatară, că familia (părinții și o soră mai tânără, chiar de vârsta mea) locuia la Fălticeni, unde ea se născuse și crescuse. Studiile la facultatea de geodezie, pe la începutul anilor '50, i-au cerut multe sacrificii, dar voința ei de fier a ajutat-o să răzbată și să devină domnișoara Inginer, cum visase tatăl ei.

Am început lucrul și, așa cum spusese Mihăiță, nu era deloc greu. Mai ales că înainte de toate, Betty a scos din sacoșa ei „comoara”: un radio tranzistor portabil Tesla, ultimul răcnet al tehnologiei socialiste cehe. Aparatele de acest gen deveniseră pe atunci un adevărat simbol al modernismului și nu era tânăr să nu fi visat la o astfel de bijuterie. Eu unul nici să visez nu îndrăzneam... Radioul era cam de măsura unei cărți voluminoase, din material plastic de o culoare deschisă și avea un mâner de metal, pliabil, căptușit tot cu plastic. Pe partea de sus, pe dreapta, era un disc transparent, cu marcații, ce servea la căutat frecvența dorită. Betty a găsit repede un post ce transmitea muzică ușoară și a pus radioul pe păturica întinsă pe iarbă, lângă trepedul teodolitului. Din acel moment, munca a devenit o adevărată plăcere...

După ce am scos stadia din husă și am montat cele două jumătăți, aceasta ajunsese de lungimea unei prăjini. Întâi, cu bețele alb-roșu într-o mână și cu capătul ruletei în cealaltă, marcam, fie cu bățul, fie cu vreo piatră și cretă roșie, punctele de măsurat așa cum mi le indica Betty. Apoi, eu reveneam cu stadia în fiecare punct iar Betty, cu teodolitul, citea prin lunetă valorile și le nota imediat în caiet. Astfel am continuat, fără prea multă grabă, un ceas sau un ceas și jumătate, după care Betty a declarat că a sosit ora pauzei. S-a așezat pe păturică și m-a invitat să șed și eu. A scos din geanta-sacoșă niște fructe, m-a cinstit și pe mine și a inițiat o discuție scurtă: de unde sunt părinții, cum o duc cu școala, ce mă pasionează și alte câteva subiecte pe care le-am tratat destul de rapid și superficial. Toate pe fundalul muzical al radioului Tesla. La fel s-a întâmplat și la următoarea pauză, către prânz, când ne-am mâncat sandvișurile. Ziua de muncă s-a terminat la scurt timp după asta. Am strâns echipamentul, l-am dus în magazia familiei unde am poposit dimineața, ba am fost cinstiți cu apă rece și am luat-o pe jos spre oraș. Nu era mai mult de ora



14 când ne-am despărțit în centru și am stabilit să ne întâlnim a doua zi, pe la 8.30, în fața casei unde rămăsese echipamentul. Astfel a luat sfârșit prima zi de lucru din cariera mea. Viitorul se arăta promițător...

Zilele următoare au trecut foarte asemănător. Vremea frumoasă ne-a permis să colindăm cu măsurătorile geodezice străduțele acelei margini de oraș, ca și străzile ce duceau într-acolo dinspre centru, locuri care până atunci îmi fuseseră aproape necunoscute. O dată sau de două ori am mai trecut pe la întreprindere, în centru, să luăm sau să schimbăm diverse lucruri din echipamentul necesar. Căruța ne ducea spre vreo gospodărie nouă, mai apropiată de zona măsurătorilor, ce avansau zi de zi spre alte străduțe. Discuțiile cu Betty erau mai frecvente și mai prietenești, dar domnișoara inginer știa cum să păstreze distanța de rigoare față de subalternul licean, așa că gama subiectelor abordate a rămas cam redusă. Munca era destul de ușoară și mai ales interesantă, într-o companie plăcută, promitându-mi și un câștig frumos în perspectiva visatului voiaj la București. Și nu mai puțin important: după amiezile și serile eram liber să le petrec cu prietenii, ca de obicei. Fără îndoială, chiar dacă nu mai exista perspectiva Galațiului, era o vară minunată.

Într-una din zile, pe când ne mâncam sandvișurile, Betty îmi povesti că sora ei mai mică, liceană ca și mine, absolventă de clasa a X-a la Fălticeni, se află la ea, venită pentru două-trei zile de vacanță la Suceava, „orașul mare”. Oricât o fi fost Suceava de mare, față de Fălticeni acelor ani, posibilitățile de distracție erau destul de reduse, așa că Betty m-a întrebat dacă aș fi de acord s-o întâlnesc pe sora ei într-o după amiază și să ne plimbăm prin oraș. Bineînțeles că am acceptat fără nici o rezervă, deși aveam impresia că atât Betty cât și, probabil, sora ei, nu aveau mari iluzii în ce privește potențialul distractiv al întâlnirii cu un muncitor-elev.

Pe Rica am întâlnit-o în orele mai târzii ale după-amiezii, la intrarea în grădina publică. Semăna mult cu sora ei: aceiași ochi, același păr, dar statura mai zveltă, fața și privirea îi dădeau o alură de siguranță de sine mai accentuată. De la prima privire, chiar dacă nu era regina promoției, părea simpatică și ceea ce era cel mai important: părea a fi fată deșteaptă. Cred că purta pantaloni „pescar”, ce-i ajungeau puțin peste genunchi, și care erau atunci foarte în vogă, o bluză de culoare deschisă iar pe braț ținea o jachețică subțire. La început ne-am plimbat puțin prin centru și nu prea știi ce subiecte am abordat. Probabil n-a trecut mult timp până am înțeles amândoi că avem preocupări și preferințe comune, că citim cam aceleași articole în Contemporanul, că am văzut cam aceleași filme și piese de teatru. Eu i-am relatat pe larg cum am reprezentat spectacolul Drum bun, scumpul nostru astronaut! iar Rica mi-a povestit despre pasiunea ei pentru teatru și cum s-a făcut că încă în clasa a IX-a a jucat rolul feminin principal din Năpasta lui Caragiale



pusă în scenă (cam curioasă alegere...) de profesoara lor de română. Am mai discutat despre piesele lui George Bernard Shaw, pe care din întâmplare le citiserăm amândoi recent și despre altele multe. După ce parcurseserăm centrul de vreo două ori, am pornit-o spre pădurice. Pe drum, cam pe lângă mănăstirea Sfântul Ioan, câțiva zurbagii ne-au depășit și au ațâțat niște albine ce roiau pe acolo. Când una din albine a înțepat-o pe Rica la braț, au fugit răsând. Dar în pofida incidentului, Rica s-a comportat cu mult sânge rece. Si-a șters locul cu o batistă udă, și – cu toate că era roșie la față de durere - nu a scos nici un țipăt, nici o vorbă și după doar câteva minute a ținut să continuăm plimbarea și discuția. Ne-am despărțit ceva mai târziu, când începea să se întunece, tot pe lângă parc. A doua zi Rica s-a întors acasă, la Fălticeni. De atunci n-am mai întâlnit-o vreodată.

Cred că plimbarea cu Rica s-a petrecut într-o după amiază de sâmbătă. Când m-am prezentat luni dimineața la lucru, Betty s-a uitat lung la mine și mi-a spus cât de plăcut surprinsă a fost când sora ei i-a povestit cum, contrar tuturor așteptărilor, însoțitorul trimis s-a dovedit a fi un partener de discuție „de nivel”...Nu gândea că la Suceava sunt liceeni ce citesc Contemporanul... Trebuie să recunosc că cele auzite de la Betty mi-au dat multă satisfacție. I-am mulțumit fără să mai pomenesc că și eu am fost impresionat de faptul că la Fălticeni erau fete de nivel intelectual ridicat. Apoi ne-am continuat măsurătorile printre casele de pe Zamca. Era ultima mea săptămână de lucru. Iani, vărul meu, avea să-mi ia locul în echipă, chiar dacă abia absolvise clasa a VIII-a. Măsurătorile în zona Zamca se terminaseră, iar Betty a preluat un teren nou, pe dealul din Burdujeni.

Zilele de vară ce-au mai rămas s-au scurs repede. Ultima săptămână a lui august am petrecut-o la București, cu bunicii. Eram aproape cu totul liber să cutreier orașul după voia mea, la prima mea întâlnire mai serioasă cu Bucureștiul, visul tuturor provincialilor. A fost minunat. Bineînțeles că banii câștigați la DSAPC s-au dovedit de mare folos. La Suceava am revenit în zile ploioase de început de septembrie. Școala era în mutare, în sfârșit, în clădirea nouă ce fusese ridicată pe strada Petru Rareș. Parte din elevi am fost mobilizați la descărcat băncilor, aduse din clădirea unde școala fusese plasată temporar în anul anterior. Apoi am început clasa a XI-a. Nu știam pe atunci că nu o voi absolvi la Suceava. În aprilie, în toiul vacanței de primăvară (erau și zilele de Pesah - Paștele nostru, al evreilor) am fost anunțați de autorități că ne-a fost aprobată, după șase ani de așteptare, plecarea spre Israel. Două săptămâni mai târziu, într-o seară de sâmbătă, am părăsit Suceava. Au trecut de atunci 53 de ani. De la zilele de muncă la măsurători și întâlnirea cu Rica, sunt deja 54 de ani! Pe Betty și pe Rica le-am cam uitat, de-a lungul anilor, după cum se pare că nici dânsle n-au păstrat vie vreo amintire din zilele acelei veri a lui 1963.

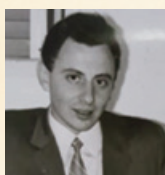
Acum vreo trei luni o cunoștință mi-a recomandat o carte lansată recent. E vorba de un volum de



amintiri, scrise într-o manieră ce combină realul cu visul, nostalgia cu durerea, despre viața unei adolescente și a familiei sale în Fălticeni anilor '60. Cartea e scrisă în ebraică și se numește Republicii 65, adresa din micul oraș a familiei Abramovici. Din cele câteva rânduri de pe coperta a IV-a, am înțeles că autoarea a mai publicat un roman și o carte pentru copii. De asemeni e activă de mulți ani, ca dramaturg, regizoare și actriță în cercuri dramatice din orașul unde locuiește, în nordul țării. Se numește Rika Ram.

După ce am citit primele pagini nu m-am putut abține să nu răsfoiesc, cu nerăbdare, către capitolele dedicate anilor de liceu ai autoarei. Spre dezamăgirea mea, n-am găsit nici o aluzie la zilele de vară ale lui '63. A doua zi am reușit să vorbesc cu Rika la telefon, iar peste alte câteva zile, cu Betty. Nu, nici una, nici alta nu-și amintesc de adolescentul purtător de teodolit și pasionat de teatru, dar aprobă absolut toate amănuntele povestirii.

Probabil că a fost odată, că de n-ar fi fost, nu aș fi avut ce povesti...



Suceva am părăsit-o într-o sâmbătă seară

Beni Budic

În trenul de noapte ce ne ducea spre București începeam să realizez că fiecă kilometru parcurs mă îndepărta, mă rupea pentru todeauna de târâmurile copilăriei. Oare știam în acele ore că voi mai reveni - cu gândul, cu visul - de nenumarate ori spre orașul de pe deal și spre Burdujeniul bunicilor, dincolo de lunca Sucevei? Și că, după zeci de ani, voi mai avea parte să aprind o lumânare pe mormântul mamei, în cimitirul evreiesc, pe delușorul de după pădurice? Luminile peroanelor de gară se depăneau sfâșiind întunericul, însoțite de gemetele frânelor de tren: Dolhasca, Pașcani, Roman, Bacău...Gândurile însă mă aduceu mereu la peronul minunatei gări a Burdujeniului, pe locurile unde am avut parte în adolescență de momente, emoții și simțiri ce s-au înrădăcinat în mine pentru todeauna

La Burdujeni m-am născut și acolo am petrecut primii mei patru ani care mi-au lăsat doar frânturi de amintiri. Dar aveam să revin mereu în târgulețul unde rămăseseră buncii și familia iubitei mele mătușe, Freida, sora mai tânără a mamei, cea care m-a însoțit, de departe ca și de aproape, cu grija și dragostea sa pînă când s-a stins acum trei ani aici, în Israel.

La Suceava ne-am mutat în 1950. Tata obținuse un serviciu la „Alimentara” și reușise să obțină și o locuință (cu chirie) pe strada Cetății nr. 6. Era a treia casă pe dreapta străzii așternute cu prundiș ce cobora, destul de abrupt, spre Cacăina și spre cărarea ce ducea apoi în sus, spre ruinele Cetății de Scaun. Casa fusese probabil proprietatea unei familii de evrei înstăriți, dar în



acei ani era deja împărțită în patru locuințe unde trăiau câteva familii. La început am ocupat locuința din dreapta casei, genul de trei camere-vagon. În locuința alăturată, paralelă dar plasată în mijlocul casei, deci mai bine apărată de frig și de umezeală, trăia familia Kavon: părinții, două fete și un fiu care erau deja maturi. Aveau o căruță cu cal adăpostită în grajdul din fundul curții. Când, după un timp nu prea lung (cred că mai puțin de un an), familia Kavon a plecat în Israel, grajdul avea să devină magazie de lemne. Pe una din laturile magaziei, incluse în clădirea de zid, erau cele două cabine de toaleta ale casei. Noi ne-am mutat într-o noapte în locuința lor, unde am trăit următorii 13-14 ani, până la plecare. Fosta noastră locuință a fost ocupată mai târziu de familia Chibici: Stefan Chibici, ceasornicar și mecanic de rar talent, invalid, cu ambele picioare paralizate, soția sa și Armin, fiul ei (germani de origine), care era ceva mai mare decât mine.

De-a lungul anilor m-au însoțit, auzite prin peretele comun, sunetele orare ale ceasurilor cu pendulă din atelierul de ceasornicărie aflat în camera ce dădea spre stradă. Masa de lucru era lipită de una din cele două ferestre și când treceam prin fața casei nu puteam să nu-l văd prin geam pe Dl. Chibici, cu lupa de ceasornicar la ochi, înarmat cu „pințeta” și alte scule minuscule, aplecat asupra vreunui mecanism de ceas. Dl. Chibici cânta la acordeon și la pianină, era pescar amator iar figura sa prietenoasă mi-a marcat copilăria. Fără îndoială a fost o apariție cunoscută a Sucevei acelor ani, când trecea cu scaunul său pe roțile prin oraș. La început, căruciorul îl activa manual, cu brațele sale viguroase. După un timp s-a adăugat un motorăș iar după alți câțiva ani căruciorul l-a înlocuit cu o adevărată motocicletă pe 3 roți cu comenzile adaptate la mâini, care avea în spate și o banchetă, destul de largă pentru a ne transporta uneori pe Armin și pe mine. Câteodată plecam cu ei la pescuit, pe malul Sucevei. Scaunul pe roțile l-a păstrat și-l folosea când mergea la cinema. Ca și acum îl văd, în fața casei, sau în curtea din spate, demontând, reparând, reglând și remontând motorul motocicletei, când toate piesele erau defășurate pe o pătură iar Chibici, pe vine, se deplasa mișcându-și picioarele paralizate cu ajutorul mâinilor sale puternice. În tot acest procedeu, ce dura ore, era asistat și ajutat de Armin. Eu priveam fermecat cum o colecție de piese de metal redevine un motor ce până la urmă pornește și lucrează sforăind armonios și umplând curtea cu mirosul benzinei arse. Când am împlinit 13 ani mi s-a dat în folosință Doxa moștenită de la mama. Nu era un ceas solid, ci unul fin și elegant, iar în câteva rânduri a suferit avarii provocate de jocurile mele. De fiecare dată, Dl. Chibici m-a scos din nenorocire. Doxa mamei nu o mai port de zeci de ani, dar când dau de ea în sertar și-i întorc arcul, mai funcționează.

Locuința noastră avea două camere și bucatărie. Camera ce dădea spre stradă folosea de salon și dormitor al părinților. Era mobilată cu un pat studio, un șifonier și o masă pătrată, masivă. Camera mea era la mijloc, cea mai călduroasă, însă luminată doar de ușile și ferestrele cu geam



ce dădeau spre prima cameră și spre bucătărie. Iarna, când bucătăria nu era încălzită, camera asta ne folosea și de sufragerie. Bucătăria era dominată de o sobă de gătit cu plită din fontă și un cuptor alăturat, dar de gătit se gătea deja pe aragaz, iar focul în soba-cuptor se aprindea mai rar, vinerile, ziua gătitului și coptului sau în zilele de spălat rufe. Ușa bucătăriei, cu oblon, ducea, printr-un mic cerdac, spre curte. Era o curte mare, ce de fapt înconjura trei laturi ale casei. Lângă scările acoperite ce duceau spre pod se ridica un salcâm înalt care primăvara se acoperea de flori albe și dulci, umplând curtea cu parfum. Puțin mai sus, era gardul înalt ce acoperea cu totul vederea spre livada de meri ce înconjura biserica Sf. Ioan. Din cerdac puteam întrezări turla bisericii și diminețele de duminică erau pline de sunetele clopotelor. Merele acrișore din curtea bisericii erau o atracție, dar gardul era înalt și doar în spatele magaziei de lemne puteam ajunge la câteva crengi...Pe latura dinspre biserică a curții, erau semănate spre vară 2-3 straturi de ceapă sau de roșii. Tot acolo, lângă gardul casei vecine, se afla și o magazioară care în trecutul casei servise proprietarilor drept Suka - acea colibă ce semnifică săptămâna sărbătorii biblice de toamnă (Festivalul Colibi, Sărbătoarea Corturilor, sau a „Tabernacolelor”). Acoperișul de tablă putea fi ridicat și înlocuit pentru zilele sărbătorii cu unul temporar, improvizat din crengi înfrunzite. Dar toate astea le-am învățat mai târziu. În vremea mea, magazioara folosea familiei Chibici de cămară. În spate era și un mic șopron îngrădit unde în lunile toamnei îngrășau porcul. Apoi, de Ignat, câteva zile înainte de Crăciun, sacrificarea porcului și întreaga ceremonie condusă de măcelarul angajat, cu cazanele de apă clocotită și focul aprins pe lângă animalul sacrificat era un spectacol fascinant la care am fost martor de câteva ori.

Atracția principală a curții din spate era însă pompa. Pompa de apă - de fapt o cișmea mare de fier - care asigura aprovizionarea locatarilor cu apă și care funcționa doar o oră sau două pe zi. Pompa era chiar lângă ușa bucătăriei noastre deci, spre deosebire de vecini, aveam de făcut doar câțiva pași cu gălețile pline, pînă la butoiul cu capac, din tablă zincată, unde erau acumulați mereu câțiva zeci de litri de apă. (În bucătărie, chiar lângă butoi trona lavoarul, cu lighean emailat și o cană cu mâner mare, aproape cât o oală, pentru scosul apei din butoi). Aprovizionarea cu apă devenea însă o adevărată aventură când adeseori, iarna, pompa îngheța, deși fusese bine învelită și căptușită cu paie. Dezghețarea pompei era un proces complicat: se vărsau nenumărate oale cu apă clocotită și nu întodeauna reușea... Atunci, când în butoiul din bucătărie se întrededa deja fundul, soluția era de a ajunge cu gălețile la doamna Haimovici, în casa alăturată de la nr. 4, care (raritate în acei ani!) aveau robinet chiar în casă. Sau de a parcurge vreo sută-două de metri pîna la o altă pompă în josul străzii...

A doua latură a curții se întindea de la magazia de lemne pînă la stradă, de-a lungul locuințelor unde stăteau familiile Hibner și Shiber. Era de fapt o aripă cu o bucătărie și 3 camere ce fusese



împărțită în 2 apartamente. Apartamentul Hibnerilor avea lângă bucătărie și o cameră de baie cu toaletă interioară. Aveau chiar și robinet în bucătărie, dar în afara toaletei, apă curgătoare nu era, așa că și ei se aprovizionau de la pompă. În cele două apartamente trăiau cele două perechi cu câte un copil mic - un băiețel și o fetiță. Izu Hibner era un bărbat dolofan, cu păr șaten ondulat, tânăr și arătos, la curent cu cele mai moderne tehnologii ale epocii: era fotograf amator și chiar developa singur acasă filme și poze. Era gestionarul magazinului de Sport-Foto-Muzică din centru. Soția sa, Piri, femeie frumoasă, cu părul negru, tuns scurt, era transilvăneancă. Pe atunci nu știam că numărul tatuat pe unul din brațele ei dovedea că tânăra Piri era printre puținii supraviețuitori de la Auschwitz. Băiețelul lor, Meir, era cu 3-4 ani mai mic decât mine. În unele veri, părinții noștri aduceau, în tovărășie, o căruță cu nisip și ne amenajau în curte un spațiu de joacă. În una din ierni, când zăpada a ajuns la streșine, ieșeam din casă prin adevărate tunele croite în nămeți. În aripa curții ce trecea pe la intrarea Hibnerilor, se bătătorise o potecă de trecere care probabil se formase la mai bine de un metru deasupra terenului. Spre primăvară, când poteca se mai muiase, mi-l amintesc pe Izu Hibner cum s-a scufundat într-o zi până la brâu în zăpadă, pe când se îndrepta spre ieșirea din curte. Pe la sfârșitul anilor 50, familiile Hibner și Shiber aveau să plece în Israel, iar în locul lor au venit locatari noi.

În primii ani, acea latură a curții era foarte largă și cuprindea o porțiune de teren ce mai târziu a fost despărțită cu gard de curtea noastră și plantată cu porumb. Dar pînă la această schimbare aveam la dispoziție un spațiu vast, acoperit cu iarbă și dominat într-o parte de un nuc falnic. Afară de recolta de nuci, pomul ne oferea umbră și loc unde să întindem în după-amiezele de vară, o pătură. Tot acolo era locul preferat unde era invitat domnul Pânzaru să fotografieze copiii. Dovadă - o poză a mea, pe la vreo cinci ani, cu breton și costum marinier, mîndru de noua tricicletă. Foto Pânzaru era o adevărată instituție suceveană. Avea studioul nu departe de noi, pe strada Luca Arbore, iar în centru domnea Foto Colbert.

A treia aripă a curții era cea mai mică și despărțea fațada cu cele trei uși, de stradă. Strada Cetății era îngustă, nu avea trotuare și nici pavată nu era. Era abruptă și marginită de două șanțuri nu prea adânci, invadate vara de urzici și de flori de mușețel. Nu țin minte să fi trecut cândva vreo mașină și nici căruțe nu treceau decât rareori. Iarna, devenea un derdeluș ideal, ceva mai scurt decât cel de pe strada Mirăușilor, dar nu mai puțin excitant. Vara, vedeam cum treceau mărșăluind și cântînd companii de ostași de la cazarmă, în drum spre sau de la poligonul de tir din spatele Cetății.

Mama mă lua în după-amiezile de vară la plimbare în oraș. De la noi pînă în Ștefan cel Mare, unde începea centrul, era cale destul de scurtă. Urcam spre strada Curții Domnesti, numită atunci Stalin, și apoi treceam pe lînga centrul de panificație. În față staționa câteodata o căruță



ce semăna a dric, din care pâinile mari, calde încă, negre și rotunde, erau duse în prăvălie. Apoi, vânzătoarea în halat alb, foarte scundă de statură, avea să le vânda printr-un mic geam, celor care formaseră deja o coadă pe trotuar. Când am ajuns ceva mai măricel eram trimis uneori și eu să cumpăr cu 2 lei o jumătate de pâine neagră. În drum spre casă ronțăiam din coaja caldă și mirositoare. După câteva ore, însă, pâinea se întărea și devenea acrișoară, cu totul negustoasă. Apoi treceam prin fața liceului de fete (pe care-l voi mai aminti), peste drum de biserica Sf. Dumitru și ajungeam la Agenția Rozenberg. De fapt, un magazin de ziare și reviste, expuse în vitrină și pe obloanele deschise ale intrării. Acolo aveam să cumpăr câțiva ani mai târziu broșurile colecției de povestiri științifico-fantastice, Contemporanul, Almanahurile ce apăreau în preajma anului nou și multe altele. În spatele tejghelei cu galantarul de țigări era o masă de birou cu două mașini de scris, la care fete tinere învățau dactilografia și unul din puținele telefoane din Suceava de atunci. Inima agenției erau însă lozurile, biletele de loto și îndeosebi buletinele de pronosport.

În după-amiezile și serile de duminică, agenția și trotuarul din fața ei erau înțesate de oameni ce așteptau să vină prin telefon rezultatele meciurilor, comentau cu înflăcărare detaliile aflate și evaluau tot timpul numărul de rezultate exacte de pe buletinele de pronosport. Comentariile aveau să continue în diminețile de luni, la frizeria de după colț, unde echipa de frizeri, cu Sportul Popular în mână, analiza împreună cu clienții cele petrecute pe stadioane. Asupra acestui imperiu cultural-sportiv domnea cu jovialitate Dl. Rozenberg, bărbat energic, scund și rotofei, specialist în toate activitățile magazinului-agenție, ajutat de soția sa. Câțiva ani mai târziu a fost arestat și condamnat pentru lipsă în gestiune, iar agenția a dispărut din peisajul sucevean.

După ce depășeam agenția, treceam prin fața panoului cu afișele de cinematograf și o luam la stânga, spre centru. Chiar la colț se afla magazinul „Alimentara” unde a lucrat tata la început. Avea să lucreze apoi mai mulți ani la magazinul central, care era ceva mai jos, vizavi și avea câteva încăperi - raioane de coloniale, dulciuri, pâine, băuturi, brânzeturi și salamuri.. Era cea mai mare alimentară din oraș și ocupa un întreg colț al străzii. Îmi amintesc că într-o seară, cred că era iarnă, un incendiu mare a distrus partea laterală a clădirii. În jurul zonei incendiului se adunase o multime de lume. Pe mine m-au luat imediat acasă, dar încă multe ore se putea vedea din curtea noastră înspre centru, cerul înroșit de flăcări.

După ce treceam prin fața frizeriei, nu departe de colț, mama intra cu mine în magazinul de parfumerie al doamnei Herrer, cu care se împrietenise. Pe când stăteau de vorbă, eu, îmbătat de mirosurile micului magazin, mă minunam de sticlele mari de pe tejghea, din care doamna Herrer vărsa uleiul de nucă sau apa de colonie cu atenție, printr-o pâlnioară minusculă, întâi într-o eprubetă marcată pe cantități și apoi în sticlulele clientelor. În vitrine și pe pereții magazinului erau reclame cu NIVEA. Doamna Herrer se pare că mă îndrăgea. O dată chiar a ținut să ne



fotografiem împreună, eu pe la patru-cinci ani, în spielhozen, și dânsa aplecată puțin, cu mâinile pe umerii mei, în fața magazinului. Dori, fiul ei, era cu câțiva ani mai mare decât mine. Când aveam vreo opt ani, m-au luat o dată, Dori și tovarășii lui de joacă, la poligonul de tir al militarilor, dincolo de Cetate. După ce soldații plecaseră, se puteau aduna gloanțele de plumb pe care apoi acasă, sub ochii mei, le topea pe aragaz, în capacul unei cutii de cremă de ghețe și obținea astfel un disc din plumb, neașteptat de greu pentru dimensiunile lui.

Vizavi de parfumerie se deschidea un pasaj îngust care ducea printr-un labirint de intrări, spre piața de unt, ce se întindea în spatele clădirii alimentare centrale. Prin acel pasaj treceam și spre scările ce duceau la locuința doctorului Rauch, medicul de casă al familiei noastre, unde mergeam uneori. Dar în majoritatea cazurilor, la nevoie, Dr. Rauch venea să ne consulte acasă, cu geanta pântecoasă în care se aflau stetoscopul, seringă de sticlă în cutie nichelată și alte utensile medicale.

Dacă îmi continuam drumul pe aceeași parte a străzii, după parfumerie, ajungeam imediat la colț cu o străduță ce spre stânga, ducea în spatele Școlii de fete. În clădirea imediat următoare spre centru era farmacia unde lucra și vecina noastră, Dna Shiber, iar pe străduță era la parter una din cele două sifonării ale orașului. În sifonărie funcționa o mașină mare de umplut sticlele groase cu sifon, care ocupa o cameră întregă, cu roți, curele de transmisie, baloane cu bioxid de carbon și tot felul de manete și robinete. Sifonarul pune sticla de sifon întoarsă într-o cușcă din plasă de metal și o umplea sub ochii mei plini de admirație. Adevărată minune tehnologică! După sifonărie era intrarea spre scara ce ducea la etaj, spre locuința familiei Bodinger, a cărei cameră mai mare era dedicată salonului de croitorie pentru copii, o altă instituție suceveană. Cred că nu era în oraș vreun copil de familie bună care să nu fi trecut pe acolo pentru că mama să-i aleagă una din creațiile doamnei Bodinger, adevărată artistă în domeniu. Sub mână sa lucrau 2-3 ucenice, iar costumașele marinar, vânător sau alte diverse modele de rochițe, paltonașe, etc. etc. erau considerate de primă calitate, veritabile opere de haute couture. Copil, ajungeam uneori acolo cu mama, cu tante Freida și cu Iani, verișorul meu mai mic, veniți special de la Burdujeni, pentru a ne coase haine noi. Peste câțiva ani buni, când eram deja la liceu, aveam să intru adesea în aceeași casă, unde în camera Marei, fiica Bodingerilor, ne întâlneam regulat cinci prieteni: trei fete și doi băieți, cu toții colegi de școală.

În zile de vară, plimbarea continua înspre grădina publică, prin aleea de castani bătrâni ce mărginea parcul către stradă. Pe partea opusă a străzii se afla casa telefoanelor, unde câteodată, după ore de așteptare, părinții reușeau să obțină legătura interurbană și să vorbească 3 minute cu rudele din Galați sau din București. Alături era sediul CEC - ului și magazinul Librăria Noastră cu două vitrine pline de comori. Mai sus, se înălța falnică minunata clădire a primăriei (pe atunci,



Sfatul Popular și sediul Regiunii de Partid) dominată de turnul cu ceas și foișor - adevărată bijuterie arhitecturală. În parc, cam vizavi de primărie, și puțin ascunsă printre copacii parcului, se afla biserica romano-catolică, și ea cu turn și ceas, cu fațada amintind de un templu grec. Ceva mai sus era un bazin rotund, cu arteziană iar alături, pe un soclu, bustul lui Ciprian Porumbescu. Mai departe, după un drum scurt prin parc ajungeam la Cinematograful „Tineretului”. Aici avea să fie pentru grupul nostru de prieteni, în anii de liceu, un adevărat sanctuar. La „Tineretului” și la mai modernul „Cinemascop” deschis chiar în acei ani, lângă Liceul „Ștefan cel Mare”, ne prezentam cu sfințenie de patru ori pe săptămână și am vizionat sute de filme, marea majoritate rusești dar și chinezești, franceze, italiene, germane (DEFA) și arareori chiar americane. Destul de rar, unele filme erau declarate de direcțiunea scolii interzise. Secretara trecea cu anunțul din clasă în clasă citindu-l cu gravitate. Dar și în acele cazuri, reușeam să nu scap aproape nici un film - intram și ieseam din sală pe întuneric...La „Tineretului” mă luau cu ei, uneori, parinții în anii de copilărie. Pe atunci am văzut (în două serii!) Contele de Monte Cristo...Tot cu părinții ajungeam câteodată și la teatru, în mitica sală Dom Polski din spatele parcului.

Ceva mai sus de „Tineretului” era și grădinița unde am petrecut doi ani. În grupa mică am avut-o ca educatoare pe Dna Otilia. Una din activitățile ce mi s-au întipărit în amintire era să decupăm o figură desenată pe un cartonaș, folosind un ac mare, cu un capăt ca o perlă, și înțepînd în cartonaș găurele dese-dese de-a lungul conturului desenat. Câțiva ani mai târziu pe acel loc avea să fie construită Grădina de Vară pentru reprezentații în aer liber.

Strada mai ducea în sus - spre tribunal, Policlinică, parcul Arini (din care mai târziu porneam, cu pionerii, în defilările de 1 Mai sau 23 August), spre stadionul orașului și spre spital - dar de obicei pe lângă cinematograful făceam calea întoarsă, îl întâlneam pe tata la închiderea magazinului și mergeam împreună spre casă.

Duminica plecam toți trei, cu trăsura, la Burdujeni, la bunici. Trăsurile cu doi cai erau pe atunci cam singura modalitate de transport în zona urbană, iar la Suceava erau destul de multe, parte din ele conduse de birjari-proprietari evrei. Staționau în față la Sf. Dumitru, între strada Petru Rareș și începutul lui Ștefan cel Mare. Tot acolo avea să fie peste câțiva ani stația autobuzelor de Ițcani și Burdujeni care împreună cu taxiurile Pobeda, au dus treptat la dispariția birjelor de pe străzile orașului. Trăsurile erau înalte și aveau două banchete - una capitonată și una mică, pliantă. O capotă pliată înspre partea din spate, putea la nevoie să-i apere pe pasageri de ploaie. Dar cea mai înaltă - și neadăpostită - era capra birjarului. Când se întâmpla să călătorim cu vreun birjar cunoscut, pe vreme frumoasă, eram lăsat să urc pe capră, alături de el și puteam să scrutez peisajul de la înălțime. Caii o luau ușor la trap în jos, înspre drumul Ițcanilor, apoi birjarul o lua la dreapta pe drumul în pantă spre podul șubred, din lemn, ce traversa apa Sucevei.



Apropiindu-ne de pod, drumul nepavat pe atunci, devenea mai lin. Puțin înainte de a ajunge la pod, puteam să văd pe dreapta castelul de apă, un fel de mică uzină, cu ferestre înalte, de unde apa râului, filtrată, era pompată spre turnul de apă de pe Zamca. Trecerea podului dura doar 2-3 minute, dar în unii ani, după perioade de ploi intense, când Suceava venea mai mare și mai furioasă, podul devenea impracticabil. Atunci traversarea se făcea fie pe un podeț improvizat, cu mare atenție, fie prin Ițcani, sau când apele se mai retrăgeau, dar podul încă era în reparație, se trecea chiar prin apă, la un vad mai depărtat de pod. Cei doi cai nu prea erau încântați să intre în apă, dar câteva lovituri de bici îi convingeau... Doar câțiva ani mai târziu, s-a construit un pod de beton, semn al schimbărilor ce aveau să transforme lunca Sucevei într-o mare și poluantă zonă industrială.

Dar pe-atunci, peisajul era încă pastoral. Drumul mărginit de copaci ducea spre bariera căii ferate, unde cantonierul, învârtind manivela, cobora sau ridica rampa. Când așteptam să treacă vreun tren, puteam întrezări de la înălțimea caprei liniile de tren ce se multiplicau spre stânga și clădirea de cărămidă roșie a gării Burdujeni. Apoi drumul urca în pantă lină. Vedeam, tot în stînga, coșul înalt de pe clădirea abatorului, treceam pe la fabrica de marmeladă și, după scurtă distanță, eram deja lângă Școala Primară, apoi treceam prin fața primăriei și a dispensarului medical. Ne aflam pe Strada Întâia, care fusese, mai ales în partea de început, strada negustorilor micului târguleț unde trăiau, între războaie, mai bine de o mie de evrei, cam jumătate din întreaga populație. Pe acea stradă sa afla, puțin mai sus, singura casă cu etaj din Burdujeni. Aproape toate casele, gen vagon, erau lipite una de alta, iar la stradă dădeau prăvăliile. Pe strada a doua și pe a treia locuiau cândva cei mai puțin înstăriți - croitori, cizmari și alți meseriași. Dar în anii copilăriei mele această orânduire mai era doar parțial valabilă. Pe trotuar, femei așezate pe scaune scoase lângă prag stăteau la taifas în tihna de duminică și examinau, curioase, trecătorii. Apoi treceam prin fața casei în care m-am născut și după vreo două sute de metri ajungeam la casa bunicilor, care se afla mai sus, unde se termina târgul și începea satul. Burdujeniul avea să fie pentru mine de-a lungul următorilor vreo zece ani, un adevărat mic paradis. Acolo am urmat aproape întregul an școlar al clasei I, când mama a fost internată și operată la București, iar apoi a petrecut lunile de convalescență în casa bunicilor. Mama era cu vreo trei ani mai în vîrstă decât sora ei, Freida. Probabil că cei doi ani și jumătate petrecuți împreună în iadul din Transnitria au legat între cele două adolescente o prietenie și o abnegație reciprocă, rare între surori. După moartea mamei, eu aveam să devin obiectul acestor sentimente, iar casa mătușii mele, aflată tot sus, spre începutul satului, avea să devină pentru mine un al doilea cămin. Acolo, la Burdujeni, copil, apoi adolescent, mi-am petrecut aproape toate duminicile, am legat prietenii, am petrecut zile și seri fermecate, învăluit de grijă și de dragoste.

De sărbătorile religioase mergeam cu părinții la sinagogă. Îndeosebi în sărbătorile de toamnă



cînd se perindă, în decurs de vreo 3 săptămâni, câteva din cele mai importante sărbători ale anului. Tata se alăturase comunității de enoriași de la „Sinagoga croitorilor” ce se afla cam la începutul străzii Petru Rareș. Era o sinagogă destul de modestă. Nu se putea compara cu sinagoga mare din Burdujeni, construită în prima jumătate a secolului XIX, unde mergeam uneori cu bunicul și care mi-a lăsat o amintire impresionantă. În ultimii ani, cînd cu grupe de turiști israelieni am vizitat de cîteva ori sinagoga cea mare (azi, singura) din Botoșani, construită cam în aceeași perioadă și în același stil, dar acum renovată, am redescoperit amintirile acelei sinagogi din Burdujeni, care la fel cu cele din Suceava, nu mai există. În Suceava copilăriei mele erau vreo șase sinagogi, iar în zilele de sărbătoare noi, copiii, bucurându-ne mai ales de anturajul de joacă, mult mai interesant decît rugăciunile pe care nu prea le înțelegeam, mergeam uneori să vizităm și grupele de copii ce se zbenguiau pe lângă alte sinagogi, cu toții îmbrăcați ca și noi, în haine noi, de sărbătoare. Țin minte cum în ziua cea sfântă a iertării păcatelor, Yom Kipur, cînd toți enoriașii se rugau evlavioși, postind 24 de ore, se furișau în sinagogă pentru o oră sau două, îmbrăcați în halatele de lucru, unii dintre cei care nu reușiseră să obțină zi liberă de la serviciu. Majoritatea evreilor suceveni nu mai erau ortodocși, dar mai mult decît credința, tradiția era înrădăcinată chiar în cei ce se considerau deja moderni. În Suceava, al doilea oraș ca mărime al Bucovinei, trăiau în perioada interbelică aproape 4000 de evrei, cam a cincea parte din populație. Toți, pînă la unul, au fost deportați în Octombrie 1941 în Transnistria, ca și evreii din Burdujeni, din sate, din Dorohoi. De fapt, toți evreii Bucovinei, aproape două sute de mii de suflete, au fost izgoniți din casele lor. Mai puțin de jumătate au supraviețuit prigonirilor, frigului, mizeriei, foametei, bolilor. Celor reveniți la Suceava li s-au adăugat după război și alții, din partea nordică a Bucovinei, care a fost anexată Uniunii Sovietice. De asemenea, Suceava a atras pe mulți dintre locuitorii orașelor și satelor din împrejurimi, regățeni de origine, printre care și mulți evrei. Astfel, Suceava anilor copilăriei mele era încă un oraș cu prezență evreiască destul de pronunțată. Bună parte din profesorii de școală, din medici, farmaciști, juriști, meseriași de tot felul sau lucrători în comerțul de stat erau evrei. Astfel, am crescut printre mulți coreligionari care erau prietenii și cunoscuții familiei, vecini, colegi și colege de școală evrei, dar și mulți alții, creștini. Copil și apoi adolescent percepeam această realitate ca pe ceva absolut natural. Nu-mi pot aminti de vreo situație din acei ani, cînd să mă fi simțit diferit sau să fi fost afectat de originea mea etnică, cu excepția faptului că noi, evreii, așteptam aproape toți aprobarea plecării spre Israel. Presupuneam în subconștient că acest moment va veni, dar viața mea își continua cursul pe valurile line ale acelor ani de tinerețe, de formare, la Suceava și care au fost, probabil, printre cei mai fericiți ani ai mei. Până pe la mijlocul anilor șaiszeci, treptat, marea majoritate a sucevenilor evrei au emigrat în Israel. În clasele de liceu, la fiecare cîteva luni ne părăsea vreun coleg de clasă. În ultimul an, clasa a XI-a, rămăseserăm doar trei, iar după plecarea mea în primăvară, cu vreo două luni înainte de



bacalaureat, au rămas doar Mira Zeidler și Emanuel Menczel. Și dâșii aveau să ajungă aici după un an sau doi.

Clasa I primară am început-o la „Ștefan cel Mare”, acolo aveam să fac și următoarele două clase, sub mîna domnului Crudu, om cărunț și cu aspect blajin, dar care știa să ne țină din scurt și să mă readucă la realitate cu un bobârnac razant peste părul tuns scurt, când visam, sau mă pierdeam citind pe la sfîrșitul cărții de citire, unde erau culese povestiri mai atractive decît cele ce se petreceau în clasă. Dar după scurt timp, doar cîteva săptămîni de la începerea anului, acasă au început să se petreacă lucruri neliniștitoare. Părinții au devenit gravi și erau evident îngrijorați de ceva. Vizitele mamei la Dr. Rauch, apoi și la alți medici, s-au înmulțit, tante Freida apărea des pe la noi, iar discuțiile se desfășurau chiar cu lacrimi în ochi. Apoi mi s-a explicat că mama e bolnavă și va trebui să plece la București pentru mai mult timp, tata o va însoți iar eu voi fi în casa bunicilor pînă la reînsănătoșirea mamei. Clasa întâi am continuat-o deci la școla primară din Burdujeni. Mamei i se descoperise o tumoare la cap și trebuia să fie operată. În ajunul operației, deja în toiul iernii, mama a ținut neapărat să mă vadă și am fost luat pentru vreo 2-3 zile la București, unde am vizitat-o la spital. Apoi am revenit la școală, unde se pare că eram elev destul de bun. Spre primăvară mama a venit și ea la Burdujeni, unde și-a continuat convalescența. Eram bucuros de reîntoarcerea ei, chiar dacă mă stînjenea să văd părul ei roșcat, frumos, tuns acum scurt, băiețește ca și faptul că la mers distingeam un șchiopătat vizibil și mama se folosea de un baston. Dar se părea că lucrurile merg spre bine. Primul meu an școlar l-am absolvit cu succes la Burdujeni, apoi ne-am întors acasă la Suceava. În treburile gospodăriei o ajuta Maria, o fată tânără, energică și aratoasă, cu inimă de aur. Am îndrăgit-o de-a lungul celor vreo trei ani cât a locuit cu noi. Vara lui 1954, prima mea vacanță, cu miros de lăcrămioare și narcise, a fost pentru mine o vară fericită.

În august, am fost cu părinții la băi, la Vatra Dornei, unde am întîlnit rudele din Iași și chiar bunica a fost cîteva zile cu noi. Pentru mine, era o aventură minunată.

Dar lucrurile aveau să se schimbe cam peste un an. După ce am absolvit clasa a doua, boala mamei a revenit, din nou a fost operată la București (eu am fost în acea vară la Galați, la unchiul mamei, unde aveam să mai petrec vacanțe de vis), iar spre sfîrșitul verii, mama, deja într-o stare intratabilă, a fost readusă acasă, la Suceava. A murit într-o dimineață de sîmbăta, pe 2 Septembrie și a fost înmormîntată a doua zi. Avea doar 33 de ani. Tristul cortegiu plecat din fața casei noastre, a trecut încet, prin spatele liceului de fete, apoi pe o străduță ce ducea prin spatele parcului, către strada ce coboară pe la mănăstirea Sf. Ioan, pe la uzina electrică, și urcînd pe lîngă pădurice a ajuns la cimitirul evreiesc, unde mama odihnește de atunci. Cînd am început



clasa a treia eram orfan.

Tata s-a recăsătorit după doi ani. Apoi s-au născut cei doi frațiori ai mei. Avi, cel mai mare din ei, mai avea să urmeze aproape un an la o grădiniță aflată lângă biserica armenească. Dar nu avea decât vreo 5 ani când am plecat din Suceava.

În toamna lui 1956 am trecut, în cadrul reformei de introducere a educației mixte, la „Școala Medie Nr 2”. Acolo, în clădirea veche a fostului liceu de fete, aveam să urmez clasele IV - VIII. Apoi, în ultimii ani, am învățat o perioadă într-o aripă a clădirii, atunci nouă, a școlii de meserii, pînă când liceul nostru s-a mutat definitiv în noul său local, pe stada Petru Rareș, o clădire luminoasă, cu podele de parchet, pentru păstrarea cărora ni se cerea, în zile ploioase, să ne scimbăm încălțăminte la intrare. În clasa a IV-a am avut-o ca învățătoare pe Dna Zavulovici, soția profesorului meu de vioară. În acei ani localul școlii era deja neîncăpător și au fost perioade când învățam după amiază, de la ora două și pînă seara. Școala a fost pentru mine cam în toți anii, un loc unde ajungeam cu bucurie și o sursă de multe satisfacții. Când eram deja în ciclul mediu, directoarea școlii a fost Dna Frieda Wiegder. Peste câțiva ani, avea să fie destituită deoarece permisesse uneia din profesoare să continue lucrul la școală, deși era înscrisă pentru emigrare în Israel. Mie, acest lucru avea să-mi dea oportunitatea fericită de a o cunoaște îndeaproape, căci Dna Wiegder, devenită una din profesoare, mi-a fost dirigintă în clasele X-XI și ne-a predat fizica și chimia. Era o personalitate impozantă, carismatică. Aparent severă și neiertătoare, era o femeie sensibilă, plină de empatie, după cum aveam să descopăr și în afara orelor de clasă. Ca profesoară reușea să facă adevărate minuni, iar lecțiile explicate de ea le înțelegea pînă și ultimul nefericit corijent. Fără îndoială, a fost una din cele mai cunoscute, apreciate și stimate figuri din Suceava. Știu că încă mulți ani după pensionare, chiar când era deja nonagenară, a continuat să pregătească pentru admitere la universitate generații după generații de elevi suceveni. Cât despre alții dintre profesorii din anii de liceu, îmi amintesc cu afecțiune și nostalgie de Dna Cristea, Dna Soroceanu, Dna Macioapă, Dna Pavel, Dl. Lazurcă, Dna Riemer, Dl. Eichorn, Dna Mustăță și alții cărora le cer iertare dacă i-am omis.

Trecerea, cu începutul clasei a IV-a, la noua școală, a fost probabil un moment crucial. Aveam să mă întîlnesc cu noua realitate - colege, a căror prezență în clasă schimba cu totul atmosfera. Dar mai mult decât asta, în clasa a IV-a am întîlnit un nou coleg de clasă, pe Mihai Drișcu. De atunci și pînă la plecarea mea din Suceava am fost aproape nedespărțiți. Timpul a dovedit că prietenia noastră sorbea din niște izvoare comune. Niciodată nu ne-am plictisit unul în prezența celuilalt. După orele de program ne întîlneam în locuința modestă a familiei Drișcu, pe Ștefan cel Mare (dar se putea intra și prin spate, prin curtea deschisă unde era intrarea la crama subterană). Cu



timpul, devenisem om de casă la Elena și Grișa Drișcu și cei doi băieți: Dănuț (Mihai) și frățiorul său, Titi. De cele mai multe ori însă (e vorba deja de anii de liceu), întâlnirile se produceau în cinci: noi doi și trei fete - Mara Bodinger, gazda, Mira Seidler și Betty Merdler. Pe Mihai l-am admirat și apreciat de la început. Eram conștient deja atunci de superioritatea sa intelectuală, de felul lui deosebit de a vedea lucrurile, de adevărata sa erudiție, deja atunci, ca adolescent, de puterea sa de a analiza și interpreta cele văzute sau citite. La drept vorbind, el a fost pentru mine un model pe care am încercat să-l imit. Nu în domeniul plastic, în care dânsul excela de pe atunci și pentru care eram conștient că eu nu am nici un talent, dar în toate celelalte activități intelectuale ale noastre. În toți acei câțiva ani fericiți armonia dintre noi a fost desăvârșită. Niciodată - nici o singură dată în opt ani - n-am avut vreo dispută pe plan personal.

Au fost ani frumoși, când viitorul părea că ne promite totul. Și a fost farmecul deosebit al orașului nostru. Apoi, a urmat plecarea mea. Lui Mihai i-am încredințat caietele cu cele scrise de mine în acei ani, deoarece ne era interzis să luăm cu noi orice fel de informație scrisă. Peste ani, mai ales după moartea tragică și încă neelucidată a lui Mihai, le credeam pierdute, dar aveam să le regălesc în împrejurări cu totul paradoxale. Mara, Mira și Betty, au ajuns apoi și ele în Israel. Mihai a plecat spre soarta sa, la București, unde ajuns, „era deja un om format, care scria extraordinar și gândea mult mai bine decât mulți din București”, după cum avea să scrie unul din prietenii săi de acolo, Gheorghe Vida. A studiat la Arte Plastice, a creat, a scris și publicat, îndeosebi în domeniul criticii de artă și ani de zile a fost redactorul revistei Arta, pînă la absurdul sau probabil înscenatul „accident” ce i-a curmat zilele la mai puțin de 43 de ani.

Acceleratul de noapte își continua goana, gâfăind și șuierînd. Adjud, Mărășești, Focșani... Gîndurile îmi zburau și înainte, la cele ce mă așteptau, la aventura mării călătorii peste mări și țări pe care o începusem, spre un necunoscut plin de promisiuni, care unui tînar de 17 ani îi provoca în mod firesc emoții și excitații. Dar reveneam mereu la ceea ce lăsasem în urmă. Înainte cu vreo trei săptămîni scriam în jurnal următoarele rînduri: „Ca în preajma oricărei călătorii, pregătirile de drum încep. De data aceasta însă e ceva cu totul deosebit. Mă pregătesc sufletește să mă rup definitiv de lumea copilăriei mele și părerile de rău sunt inerente. De altfel e firesc să fie așa. E imposibil ca sufletul meu să nu poarte pecetea acestor locuri unde am deschis ochii. Oare să-mi pară rău după orașul acesta pe care îl cunosc de cînd mă știu și pe mine!?... Eu unul s-ar părea că în sinea mea nu mă simt sucevean. Nu sunt de loc familiarizat cu protipendada bucovineană – acum risipită – a orașului. Cunoștințele mele se reduc la un cerc destul de restrîns și sunt mult mai mulți (așa cred eu) cei care mă cunosc pe mine fără ca eu să-i știu. Suceava. Nu înseamnă prea mult pentru mine. Totuși... Risc să devin sentimental, dar n-am ce face. În mine zace un romantic întîrziat – așa cum Drișcu a remarcat pe bună dreptate. Dealurile acestea, pe care



le văd de câte ori plec la Burdujeni, cu clopotnițele lor, cu liniștea verde care le apasă vara, când livezile de pe Zamca sunt înfrunzite, îmi provoacă de fiecare dată un fel de nostalgie a cărei cauză nu o deslușesc, dar care există. Mai ales acum, când știu că le văd ultima oară”.

Într-una din serile acelor zile, înainte de plecare, am găsit o cale cam excentrică de a mă despărți de Suceava. Centrul orașului era deja complet schimbat față de cel al copilăriei, clădiri nenumărate fuseseră demolate și înlocuite cu blocuri, magazinele erau deja altele, se croise deja strada Ana Ipătescu iar în noua piață ce fusese deschisă, se afla încă în construcție blocul turn, primul bloc cu 10 etaje din oraș. De fapt, chiar în acele luni, centrul orașului era, cum scriam în jurnal, ca sub asediu, plin de tranșee. Era o seară de început de aprilie, câteva zile înainte de plecare. Tata trebuise să ajungă pentru o zi la București pentru a obține niște acte. Eu îl condusesem la gară, la Ițcani. La întoarcere, am coborât din autobuz chiar la intrarea bisericii de lângă casă, Sf. Ioan. Apoi aveam să notez în jurnal: „Îl conduc pe tata și la întoarcere îmi vin niște idei trăsnite. În biserică e întuneric și n-aș vrea să stingheresc cine știe ce cuplu fericit. Ocolesc totuși. Doar nu mi-e frică? ? Ași! Ca dovadă, peste 10 minute sunt pe terasa blocului turn, după cinci etaje urcate cu ascensorul și alte cinci pe scări într-o beznă semiabsolută. Ora 23. Într-adevăr, romantic. E cam vînt. Aproape că am terminat chibriturile. În sfîrșit! Trebuie să fiu atent: pe jos e o rețea de oțel. Probabil că la vară va fi aici o cofetărie sau ceva în genul ăsta. Trebuie să merg cu băgare de seamă și ca să fiu sincer, cam tremur. În cabina motorului de la lift e lumină și m-ar putea auzi cineva. Orice explicație ar fi de prisos. Priveliștea e sub așteptări. Departe e întuneric.”

Începea să se lumineze. Lăsasem deja în urmă peronul gării Buzău și trenul alerga spre Ploiești.

În dimineața de ieri, ultima zi la Suceava, m-am dus să mă despart de școală. Sâmbăta aveam ora de dirigenție. În pauză am intrat în clasa de umană, la Mihai și la fete (era singurul băiat din clasă). Apoi m-am dus în clasa noastră și m-am așezat pe fostul meu loc. Băieții, Mihăiță Rusu, Florin Solonaru, Puiu Urian, Bărbulescu, m-au înconjurat cu bătaie pe umăr. Am participat la întreaga oră fără să-mi dau seama atunci în ce situație delicată am pus-o pe Dna Wiegder, diriginta noastră. Dar cu înțelepciunea sa, a găsit formula prin care să-mi facă o despărțire călduroasă, fără a încălca linia partidului. Pe la orele prânzului am fost la familia Drișcu. Lui Mihai i-am lăsat caietele mele.

După masă am plecat pentru ultima oară la Burdujeni. Tante Freida avea să vină în urma noastră la București, dar de toți ceilalți m-am despărțit acolo. În casa bunicilor, am trecut o oră cu multe noduri ridicîndu-mi-se în gât. Am intrat și la vecinii bunicilor. La Burdujeni, în acea seară primăvărată, am lăsat în urma mea ochi înlăcrămați.

Se făcuse deja dimineața și trenul se apropia de București. Două săptămâni mai târziu, aveam să



mă găsesc pe alte meleaguri, într-o altă realitate, departe de Suceava copilăriei și adolescenței mele. Aveam, peste ani, să mai revin, dar numai ca vizitator.

Suceava am părăsit-o, de fapt, în acea sâmbătă. Dar pe mine, Suceava nu m-a părăsit niciodată.



*Beni, Iancu, Iani
(foto: Suceava Periferiilor Album)*

*Mulumim d-nei prof. Elena Branduse Steiciuc
care a editat povestirile lui Beni.*





Copilarie

Betty Merdler

Ma numesc Betty Wagner (Merdler de acasa) si m-am nascut in Suceava. Parintii mei, Josephine si Beno Merdler, au fost si ei suceveni get beget (cu toate ca mama pina la casatorie a trait in Cernauti, unde s=a si nascut).Apropos de acest nume –Josephine-mama povestea ca atunci cind s-a nascut tatal ei a apelat la primaria orasului pentru a da nume fetitei. El a cerut Perale, dar functionarul – un om de pe timpul lui Franz Joseph – a spus : Nein, es passt nicht..Josephine ist viel besser, si asa a ramas Josephine in acte si Perale in realitate.

Tatal me era un barbat frumos,cu uchi albastri si cu o inima de aur.Avea un talent deosebit da a povesti si puteam sa-l ascult ore intregi. Povestea desprea tineretea lui si termina cu razboiul care a zdruncinat viata lor si a evreilor din lume.Cine avea nevoie sa scrie o scrisoare venea la tata. Ii placea jocul de sah in mod deosebit si era client permanent la cofetaria Wagner, unde se intilneau toti jucatorii de sah pina la orele tirzii ale noptii.

Mama era o femeie culta, vorbind citeva limbi straine.Avea placere de a ma invata poezii dar mie iimi placeau mai mult papusile.Avea 2 ani de facultata la Pharmacologie, la universitatea din Cernauti, studiile fiind intrerupte de moartea tatalui ei.

Eu m-am nascut in 1946, dupa intoarcerea lor din lagar.Fiind singurul lor copil, am fost rea si rasfatata. Daca cineva indraznea sa nu se joace cu mine, primea o bataie sa ma tie minte. La gradinuta nu mi-a prea placut, dar n-am avut incotro. Gradinuta era in curtea unei biserici. WC nu era, in schimb era un paravan si o galeata mare in care copiii isi faceau nevoile. Era cu mine in baiat cu numele de Garibaldi si avea a pasiune speciala pentru coditele mele, pe care le tragea zilnic. Era mare Garibaldi si nu prea indrazneam sa ma bat cu el, riscul fiind prea dureros. Dar cind a devenit imposibil, l-am trinitit in galeata cu “nevoi” unde a facut o baie buna si bine parfumata. Cum s-a uscat nu mai stiu, dara de razbunat s-a razbunat pe mine tocmai cind inoisesem un palton . M-a pindit linga biserica si m-a inpins intro groapa cu noroi. Paltonul a avut o soarta tragica, dar problema mea era mama. Dorli, prietena mea cea buna, a fugit repede la mama, povestindu-i de razboiul declansat la gradinuta si de soarta trista al paltonului cel nou, care numai nou nu mai era. Cind am ajuns acasa, am fost luate in “primire” dar mail “moale”, Dorli reusind sa amortizeze lovitura.

Cit despre Dorli, ea a primit o bicicleta nou nouta si eu ca prietena, an avut onoarea s-o incerc. Adevarul e ca n-am urcat pe biciclete nicicind si la primul tur un pereta sugubat a intrat direct in bicicleta mea, adica a lui Dorli. Peretele nu a prea suferit , dar bicicleta !!



Evreii din Suceava erau convinsi ca copiii lor trebuie sa invete sa cinte la un instrument. Era obligatoriu si ca urmare mama m-a inrolat la pian, fara consimtamintul meu. Profesoara de pian canta la pian pentru mine, explica despre muzica clasica si eu ma dadeam in scaunul leagan de linga pian. Avea si o colectie grozava de papusi cu care imi dadea voie sa ma joc. N-am prea inteles ce nevoie avea ea de papusi la varsta ei, si nu cred ca avea copii, era domnisoara.

Atmosfera era placuta pentru mine si pentru domnisoara profesoara, amindoua nu faceam efort prea mare. Cind mama a venit sa vada, adica sa auda, cum am inaintat cu pianul, a interrupt imediat “simfonia” si a cautat alt proiect, cara bineinteles nu a fost aprobat de mine. Oricum drept de vot nu aveam, asa ca ce hotara mama se facea. Mama a angajat un “rebale” care trebuia sa ma invete limba ebraica. Era cam batrinel, nu vedea si nici nu auzea prea bine. Lectia incepea, el adormea si eu sub masa ma jucam cu papusile mele, fara sa le oblig sa invete ebraica. N-a durat mult pina mama a descoperit si la expediat repejor pe “rebale” la alti copii, mai silitori.

In legatura cu jucariile, dupa razboi nu se prea puteau gasi. Tata fiind la Bucuresti, a reusit sa cumpere o toba. Am fost foarte multumita, mai ales ca toba asta scula si mortii din somn. Multumirea mea a fost scurta. Proprietarii casei in care locuiam, D-nul si D-na Hilsenrad, amindoi de pe timpul lui Pazvantoglu Chioru, s-au prezentat la mama cu un ultimatum : sau se preda toba sau se termina contractual de inchiriere al casei. Erau doi oameni impresionanti: el lung si teapan ca o prajina, cu baston in mina, ea mica si lata, ca o radacina. Toba a fost confiscata si asa cariera mea scurta de tobosar s-a terminat inainte de a incepe. Dar cum tata era un om inventiv, a inteles marea mea problema si a comandat la un templar un carucior mic, in care incapeau 2 copii. Toti copii din vecini s-au strins sa vada acest carucior si eu il “inchiriam” cu placere. Chiria se platea simplu: ei trebuia sa ma traga pe mine cu fiecare copil care se urca in carucior. Era destul de cinstit, ambele parti castigau. Dar si cariera de “prorietar” sa terminat repede.

Caruciorul fiind din lemn, piata din fata curtii unde circula caruciorul fiind pavate cu pietre, galagia era de neconceput si vecinii mi-au interrupt si placerea aceasta.

In schimb am inceput sa merg la cinematograful. Mama era pasionata de filme, si cum alta solutie nu avea, ma lua cu ea. Fara “Urs de Dorna” (ciocolata din acele timpuri) nu mergeam – asa ca ursul rezolva problema rapid. La cinema stateam in prima banca cu toti copiii care veneau. Terminam socolata, faceam putina galagie si cam pe la mijlocul filmului mergeam la mama si ii spunem “genug gesehen”. Nimic nu ajuta, trebuia sa se ridice si a plecam. Nici unul din filmele vizionate cu mine nu le-a vazut pana la sfirsit. O alta placere de care imi amintest erau sarbatorile de toamna, cind se mergea la sinagoga. Copiii din toata imprejurimea veneau cu parintii si ramaneau in curtea sinagogii sa se joace. Ne imparteam in grupa si joaca era de fapt bataie intre grupe. Galagia scotea rabinul din sinagoga sa ne linisteasca, dar nu era de folos. In momentul cind intra



inapoi pe usa, galagia era mai mare si continua pina se termina rugaciunea si mergeam acasa. Odata cu virsta, placerile sa schimbau. Am fost invitata la un revelion, la o fetita pe care a chema Rica. La ora 12 noaptea fix, s-a stins lumina si mama ei a intrat in camera cu o lumanare. Daca ar fi intrat cu citeva minute mai tirziu, poate ca Valeriana ar fi fost mai efectiva.

In general, eram copii buni, ne adunam in curtea casei mele si vorbeam despre tot felul de lucruri, dar ne preocupa in mod special barza si copii. Cred ca nici unul din noi nu stia exact cum se naste copilul dar intrebarile noastre erau corecte : de unde ia barza copilul care seamana cu noi si nu cu barza, cum poate barza sa duca in cioc asa o greutate ce se intimpla daca cade etc etc. Cuvintul sex nu exista pentru noi, eram grozav de naivi. Comparativ cu copii de azi eram pur si simplu prosti. Educatie sexuala nu exista si nu se vorbea despre sex, era rusinos.

Cu timpul am inaintat si noi si am inceput sa intelegem. Barza a iesit la pensie si noi ne-am maturizat. Am inceput sa mergem la intilniri, sa jucam jocuri de societate si asa mai departe. La liceu am format impreuna cu Mara Bodinger, Beno Budic si Driscu Mihai, o grupa de prieteni buni. Mergeam zilnic la cinema, ne intilneam la Mara acasa, ascultam BBC la radio si discutiile noastre continuau pina noapte tirziu cind tatal Marei ne trimitea acasa.

Cu aceasta ocazie, as vrea sa-l amintesc pe Driscu, care era un baiat de neconceput. Super destept, talentat (picta grozav), inteligent, cult, cultura lui generala fiind colosala. La virsta lui, eu cred ca era pur si simplu un geniu.

Soarta lui a fost cumplita, rominii avind grija sa-l lichideze.

Avea o problema de vedere si cu un ochi nu prea vedea. Pute sa vina la scoala cu un ciorap in dungii si celalalt cu patratele. In vacanta de vara mergeam la plaja, la apa Sucevei. De inotat nu stiam sa inot decit pe uscat, dar totusi era placut. In una din zile am coborat la plaja cu Mara si cu Driscu. Beno era déjà in Israel. Driscu isi dezbracase pantalonii, ochelarii de vedere fiind in buzunarul pantalonului, pe care la atirnat intr-un copac linga noi. Erau la plaja Sucevei si vaci care voiau sa faca plaja in anturajul nostru. O vaca dolofana a trecut pe linga copacul cu pantalonii, i-a luat si a inceput sa fuga. Driscu, cu ochelari nu vedea prea bine, fara ochelari era pierdut. Si asa a inceput o fuga nebuna dupa vaca dolofana. Driscu fugea la stinga, vaca la dreapta, dar nu renunta la pantalonii. Dupa citeva minute bune vaca plictisita a aruncat pantalonii si nici macar nu sa scuzat de zarva creata. Totul s-a terminat cu bine cind ochelarii au fost gasiti intacti.

La liceu am avut o profesoara de muzica poreclita Muzicuta. Si mai era in oras si un cizmar pe a carui firma scria: "Tip top la Ianovici Ilie". Cind Muzicuta dadea tonul pentru Internationala noi cintam in loc de "sculati voi oropsiti as vietii" tip top la Ianovici Ilie. Muzicuta auzea ca ceva nu e in ordine, dar de unde venea problema nu sa prins.



Sint multe lucruri de care imi amintesc, dar in citeva pagini nu se pot rezuma 19 ani de Rominia. In 1965 am venit in Israel si am inceput sa traiesc cu adevarat. Cind ma gindesc la viata grea din Rominia, ma mira ca mai sint oameni care au sentimente pentru Rominia si pentru romini. Lipseau alimente, pentru orice se statea la coada si cind iti venea rindul se termina si marfa. Mama mergea la 5 dimineata la intrarea in oras sa prinda tarani care veneau la piata si sa cumpere la ei o gaina sau alte produse. Politia orasului avea o grija speciala pentru evrei. Nu retin anul in care s-a intimplat, dar intruna din zile au lansat o campanie impotriva evreilor care posedau aur, monede de aur sau dolari. Nu era marfa furata, dar era interzisa. Au fost arestati sute de evrei si condamnati la ani grei de inchisoare. Parte mare din ei au fost trimisi la lucru la canalul Dunarii, de unde nimeni nu se mai intorcea.

Parintii mei povesteau ca in timpul razboiului rominii s-au purtat cu evreii mai rau ca nemtii. Lucrul negru al nemtilor il faceau rominii si erau foarte bucurosi sa omoare si sa injoseasca evreii. Bineinteles ca averile evreiesti au fost confiscate fara sa fie restituite dupa razboi.

Pe scurt, mie nu mi-e dor nu de Rominia si nici de romini. Ei nu sint astazi mai buni decit au fost, poate ca antisemitismul lor fiind mai camuflat. Sa nu uitam ca un presedinteal Rominieii, Ion Iliescu, a declarat ca evreii romini

nu au trecut nici un fel de “shua” care de fapt n-a existat pentru ei. Si daca Iliesu era cu ani in urma – sa nu uitam presedintele Rominieii de azi care este un antisemitist si se exprima deschis in orice ocazie.

Cert este ca evreii romini au o memorie foarte scurta si nu vor sa-si aduca aminte de ceea ce a fost. Se pleaca an dupa an in Rominia ca si cum nu ar exista alt loc in lume unde se pot cheltui dolarii. Dar asta e parerea mea si nu mai mult.

Romini obisnuiau sa cinte “trezestete romine” eu cred ca nici noua nu ne-ar strica “trezestete evreu romin”.

Ma uit in oglinda si ma gindesc ca am 72 de ani. Au trecut anii ca o valiza prin gara – cind – cum? Asta este.

Maine merg sa-mi cumpar o oglinda noua, in care am sa arat poate mai bine si mai tinara.

Salut voios de pioner (veteran) – mai tine-ti minte?





Amintiri din copilărie

Betty Merdler

Pentru că tot vorbeam despre talentul tatalui meu de a povesti, a-și vrea sa vă dau un exemplu de poveste care a ramas în memoria mea în toți acești ani. Tatal meu a avut 5 frați, cu diferențe de vîrsta foarte mica între ei. Toți erau baieti frumoși și le plăcea să se distreze, să meargă la cafenele si restaurante în centrul orașului, precum și să iasă cu fete frumoase. Casa lor se afla la intrarea în oraș dinspre Botosani, așa ca aveau de parcurs un drum lung din centru pîna acasa. Fiecare avea prietenii lui și nu se întorceau acasă împreuna. Drumul lor trecea pe o stradă lată, pe marginea careia era o alee pentru pietoni a carei margine era aliniata cu copaci. Intr-o seară friguroasa de iarna, cu temperatura sub 20 de grade, pe cind venea spre casă, tata a observat in mijlocul strazii o femeie imbracata intr-un costum negru si cu tocuri inalte. Era curios, dar nu l-a preocupat treaba si si-a continuat drumul spre casa. Scena asta s-a repetat de citeva ori pana cind tata s-a gindit sa opreasca femeia si sa o intrebe ce face in plin ger, imbracata asa cum era, la o ora atit de tirzie in noapte. S-a uitat spre ea, iar femeia, care ridicase si ea capul, s-a uitat la rindul ei la tata. In acel moment, tata a simtit ca i s-au taiat picioarele si l-a prins o frica de moarte. Spunea ca privirea femeii era ca o sageata si a simtit cum i-a inghetat single in vine. S-a intors si cu toate puterile a fugit inapoi in oras. Prietenii sai erau inca acolo. Dupa ce tata le-a povestit intimplarea, acestia au hotarat sa ia o trasura si sa caute femeia. Nu mai era nici semn de ea. Cind a povestit fratilor spaima pe care a tras-o, cu totii au spus ca si ei au vazut femeia si ca trebuie invatata minte sa nu mai sperie oamenii. Au hotarat sa iasa toti 5 noaptea tirziu si sa o astepte. Tatal lor auzind galagie, ora fiind inaintata, a venit sa vada despre ce era vorba. Dupa ce a ascultat povestea, bunicul a spus ca este “necuratul” si a interzis baietilor sa faca ceva. Avea multe povestiri de acest gen, nu puteam sa adorm de frica, dar nu renuntam. Explicatie nu am pentru cele povestite, dar tata nu era un fantazioner si nu era plauzibil ca 5 oameni sa povesteasca ceva identic.

Si mama a avut partea ei de intimplari curioase. Dupa lagar in Transnistria, mama a plecat la Suceava, in timp ce tata a fost inrolat de Armata Rosie. Trecuse un an, dar tata nu s-a intors. Fiind in oras la cumparaturi, o tiganca s-a apropiat de ea si i-a spus : vad ca esti trista tare, dar nu fi necajita, du-te acasa si ai sa intilnesti omul iubit. Mama i-a platit fara sa dea importanta celor spuse. Ce poate sa stie o tiganca ? A ajuns acasa si pe pragul casei sedea tata. Cum a ghicit tiganca nu stiu, dar asa s-a intimplat.



Linga casa noastra se afla o bodega. Printe oamenii care frecventau acest loc era si profesorul Lazar, un om deosebit, o adevarata enciclopedie. Era profesorul meu de latina, fost director de scoala la un liceu din Botosani si transferat la Suceava din cauza betiei. Sotia lui era profesoara mea de franceza. Ma durea inima sa-l vad pe acest om beat turta, pierdut complet, abia tinindu-se pe picioare. Tot timpul ma gindeam daca a doua zi o sa-l mai vad la scoala.

Betivii veneau in curtea noastra sa-si faca nevoile. Copii din curte au luat initiative sa-i invete minte si eu am fost prima care s-a oferit. Am vazut un betivan care se clatina in curte, linga un perete, am luat un pahar cu apa rece si, din spate, i l-am turnat pe gat. Probabil ca apa era extrem de rece sau poate ca el nu era chiar asa de beat, cert este ca s-a trezit omul si a luat-o la fuga dupa mine. De frica sa nu puna mina pe mine, m-am ascuns in pod la Ety si Bety Goldenberg. Urcind atitea scari s-a obosit betivanul si mormaind ca o sa puna el mina pe mine, a plecat inapoi la sa-si termine bautura.

La scoala primara am avut o prietena buna si foarte frumoasa. Era cea mai frumoasa fetita din clasa. O chema Didina Chirica. Locuia pe strada care ducea la Cetate intr-o casa noua cu o livada de pomi fructiferi.

Nu stiu de ce dar mi-au ramas in memorie mirosurile casei in perioada de Craciun si de Anul Nou. Era ca un parfum, vanilie, coptura si un brad mare pe care il decoram cu totii. La fel si de Paste – se facea un cozonac de brinza cu stafide si se pictau oua. Eram foarte apropiate si ma simteam bine in compania acestei familii.

La liceu ne-am despartit si nu mai stiu ce sa intimplat cu ea.

La liceu au fost multe intimplari nostime. Profesorul de stiinte economice avea un nas tare lung si noi radeam spunind ca daca trece la un colt de strada apare intai nasul si dupa aceea apare si el. La botanica aveam un professor batrin. Fiecare din noi stia cind va fi scos la tabla. El scoatea in fiecare lectie trei elevi sa fie examinati la table si o facea in ordine alfabetica. Si nu era nici o surpriza la el. Il numeam “tanchist” pentru ca vara si iarna purta o pereche de bocanci inalti, din timpul razboiului.

Aveam si doua profesoare “misto” - D-na Pavel la matematica si D-na Mustata la limba rusa. Erau tinere si frumoase, bobocii (adica flacaii din clasa) erau ca vrajiti la lectiile lor. Daca erau intrebati de subiectul lectiei nu prea stiau, dar cum fusese imbracata profesoara stiau bine.

La limba romina am avut a profesoara foarte severa – D-na Obada. La sfirsitul anului scolar avea loc o serbare. Ea a decis ca eu voi prezenta programul, pentru ca aveam “o dictie buna” (asa spunea). Cu o zi inainte de serbare Mara a primit o pereche de pantofi noi, foarte frumosi, pe care mi i-a imprumutat pentru eveniment.



Am inceput programul, totul a fost perfect, pana la un moment dat cind pantofii au inceput sa ma stringa in asa masura incit nu mai vedeam clar. Cum textul il stiam pe de rost, i-am dat drumul repede asteptind cu nerabdare sa pot arunca acesti pantofi atat de frumoși și neprietenoși. D-na Obada m-a felicitat pentru prezentare și mi-a spus ca și-a dat seama ca textul era așa de scurt. N-am vrut s-o corectez

In pauza, ieșeam in curtea liceului sa ne relaxam. Eram un grup de fete și printre ele era una careia i-au cazut chilotii in timp ce vorbeam deoarece guma lor s-a rupt. Fara nici un fel de emotii, fata și-a scos chiloti și i-a bagat in buzunar. Daca citeste aceste rinduri poate ca o sa-si aminteasca și ea de chilotii buclucasi.

As vrea acum sa ma opresc pentru ca așa pot continua povestile pina maine, așa ca va spun la revedere și sa fiti sanatosi. Cread ca la virsta noastră e singurul lucru de care avem nevoie cu adevarat....





Despartire de Scheia

Dorly Weidenfeld

Numele satului imi era cunoscut, dar nu am tinut minte cum ajungeam acolo, sau care a fost semnificatia lui pentru mine.

Inainte cu cateva zile , Tamara mi-a trimis amintirile ei din Suceava unde a scris :

"Vedeam ruinele mănăstirii de pe Zamca și în zare se întrezărea satulețul Șcheia, cu râul și casele albe a le țărănilor."

Si...mi-am amintit...

A fost o Duminica , cateva zile inainte de plecarea mea in Israel, cand Iancu mi-a propus sa plecăm într-o excursie cu bicicletele la Scheia, pentru toata ziua. Propunerea lui Iancu provinea din cauze speciale si diferite. Femeia de serviciu care lucra la familia Manash ,nascuta in Scheia, a povestit ca in acea duminica, un concurs de cai si calareti, va lua loc in sat, si se vor acorda premii speciale. Iancu a adaugat ca drumul spre Scheia tocmai se pavase, si de aceea o excursie cu biciclete pe asfaltul nou va fii ceva cu totul special !!

Inima m-a atras la peripetiile lui Iancu, dar de data asta am tinut minte ce s-ar putea intampla : puteam gresi pe drum, sau puteam intarzi la intoarcere, si era si frica de pedepsele parintilor. Cu inima grea am refuzat propunerii. Iancu a plecat singur la Scheia.

In Israel, dupa ani de zile am scris in Jurnal, cat de rau imi pare ca nu am plecat la Scheia, ca am pierdut o peripetie de neuitat si o amintire exclusiva, mai ales ca am stiut ca n-o sa-l mai vad pe Iancu, dupa parasirea Sucevei. Daca plecam cu el asi fi avut posibilitatea sa ne luam ramas bun, unul de altul si m-as fi putut despartii, spunand Adio prietenului meu cel mai bun..

Mi-am luat ramas bun de Suceava , dar pe Iancu l-am intalnit doar 50 de ani mai tarziu.

Scheia nu am vazut-o si probabil nu voi avea ocazia s-o mai vad.

Se poate ca am pierdut un vis ?? Nu stiu ..

Dorly





Pentru Niky (Norman Manea)

Eugen Weitmann

Acum cîtva timp, vorbind la telefon, în contextul ultimei cărți citite de mine, "Atrium", am amintit faptul că un eveniment/șoc care mi-a marcat toată viața a avut loc în anii 1966-1969. Acest eveniment este de o similaritate uluitoare cu cele petrecute în filmul "Th Lives of Others" al lui Florian Henckel von Dörmersmarck din 2006 premiat și lăudat.

Pe scurt, într-o "minunată" dimineată din primăvara lui 1966, eu avînd 18 ani neîmpliniți și fiind în drum spre liceul "Ștefan cel Mare" (locuiam pe strada Vasile Alecsandri no. 9), doi "tovarăși" în civil au intrat în casă cerînd mamei și femeii din casă, ca și mie, să-i întovărășesc pentru a da niște declarații în legătură cu "munca ilicită" a croitorului Iancovici Ihil ce locuia cu chirie în casa noastră. Tata plecase deja la spital. Desigur că am părăsit casa cu toții spre birourile securității care atunci erau pe strada Petru Rareș; mama și eu, fiecare în altă cameră, neștiind unde sînt ceilalți.



Mama și eu

Am fost anchetat de la ora opt pînă la trei după amiază, punîndu-mi-se o întrebare mai idioată ca cealaltă (de exemplu dacă aud noaptea mașina de cusut a croitorului, cine intră, cine iese etc.) Nu numai eu, naivul de 17.5ani, chiar și femeia de casă - o femeie simplă de la țară - a realizat că totul e cusut cu ață albă.

Nu am fost violentat fizic, dar psihic, da: "Că dacă nu spun adevărul părinții vor face pușcărie, voi avea de suferit, nu voi putea să intru la facultate etc." La sfîrșit anchetatorii (căci s-au schimbat) au urlat la mine: "Ai scris aici numai minciuni, ai să vezi tu ce pățești!" M-au eliberat, reîntîlnindu-mă acasă cu mama și cu femeia de casă.

În cursul dimineții - asta am aflat-o ulterior, o doamnă ce primea pachete din Israel pentru a le vinde și astfel pentru a se întreține (paremi-se d-na Reisman) venind la mama a fost întâmpinată la porțiță de un "tovarăș" în civil care i-a zis că mama e plecată.



Dorind să pregătească un prânz târziu, pentru a pune tacîmurile pe masă, mama a ridicat fața de masă, dar sertarul se transferase pe partea cealaltă a mesei, desigur din cauza rotirii globului pamîntesc. Totul e clar!

Dupa o zi tata a primit un telefon anonym; o voce de bărbat îi zicea: "D-le doctor, nu vorbiți in casă ce nu trebuie să vorbiți". Afît. Prin extensie, nici părinții, nici eu nu am vorbit nici în casă, nici în grădina noastră, nici pe stradă, nici nicăieri "nimic ce nu trebuie vorbit", pînă in 1973 cînd am venit în Israel.

Acești 7 ani m-au făcut să vorbesc in viață mai puțin decît trebuie, să mă autocenzurez, spre nemulțumirea celor dragi mie - părinți, soție, copii.

Prin extensie, nici părinții, nici eu nu am vorbit nici în casă, nici în grădina noastră, nici pe stradă, nici nicăieri "nimic ce nu trebuie vorbit", pînă in 1973 cînd am venit în Israel.

Acești 7 ani m-au făcut să vorbesc in viață mai puțin decît trebuie, să mă autocenzurez, spre nemulțumirea celor dragi mie - părinți, soție, copii.

Tata a aflat chiar de la sursă că misterioasa voce de la telefon a fost a maiorului "C" care era responsabil cu "ascultările". Căci fără să știe despre cine este vorba, tata l-a ajutat vorbind cu profesorul Riemer și alții pentru a-i da bacalaureatul mai repede (la fără frecvență) și în alte privințe pe soția maiorului "C" care era asistentă la Spitalul Suceava.

Acum cîtiva ani, fiind la Suceava, l-am căutat și l-am găsit pe maiorul "C" pensionar bonom și am făcut legătura cu tata prin telefonul mobil, tata i-a mulțumit din suflet pentru extrem de nobilul gest; d-l "C" punîndu-și in pericol nu numai slujba, poziția, dar chiar și libertatea. Discuțînd despre evenimentul din 1966, "C" imi zice: " "Păi au lucrat ca niște ciubote, microfonul era in receptorul telefonului"

Eu nu am putut face mai mult decît să-i las un plic.

După cum vezi dragă Nicky, nici acum, după aproape jumătate de secol nu îndraznesc decît să-l numesc "C" pe binefăcătorul nostru (nu știu dacă mai este în viață).

Dacă găsești de cuviință, intr-una din viitoarele tale cărți poți insera ceva din această istorioară adevărată.

Mi-ar face mare plăcere să te văd și dacă vei veni în Israel vei putea sta la mine oricît dorești.

Îți mulțumesc,

CU toată căldura și admirația ție și celor dragi ție,



Eugen Weitmann
Israel





Tatal meu

Eugen Weitmann

As dori sa inserez in cartea „Suceava Children” cateva randuri legate de evolutia sentimentelor si conceptiilor unui om in anii zbuciumati intr-o tara din Europa de est, Romania, din anii `30 pina la sfarsitul secolului trecut. Este vorba de tatal meu, Dr. Adolf Weitmann.

S-a nascut intr-o familie de parinti traditionali in imperiul austro-ungar la Bosanci – Suceava atunci cind a izbucnit primul razboi mondial, in 1914. Bunicul, inrolat in armata imperiului, lupta pe atunci in nordul Italiei unde a fost si ranit, primind o medalie. Primii ani de „studiu” au fost la „heder” cu un „melamed” care, dupa spusele fratelui tatei, avea obiceiuri ciudate: se juca cu „obiectul” de facut pipi al baieteilor. Astazi ar fi intrat imediat la puscarie!

Trecem repede peste celelalte clase si ajungem la liceu. Daca vorbim de Suceava, desigur „Stefan cel Mare”, directorul fiind V. Burduhos. Se pare ca tanarul A. Weitmann se tinea mai mult de fotbal decat de carte. Pe de alta parte, in Romania interbelica, caci din 1918 Suceava e in Romania Mare, nu era la moda mare tandrete fata de evrei. La meciurile de fotbal se striga jucatorilor evrei: „Jidane, iufla, tartan, hep, hep” (HEP: abreviere la „Hierosolyma Est Perdita”). Vazand ca la „Stefan cel Mare” sansele de a lua bacalaureatul sunt minime, se transfera la Tecuci, la care liceu profesa si un unchi de al doilea, Dr. Kluger. Mai hais, mai cea, se ia si bacalaureatul.

Desi era multa treaba acasa, cu moara, casele, padurea de la Plavalari, pe tata l-a atras mai mult medicina. Astfel in 1933 se inscrie la Facultatea de Medicina la Iasi. Paralel cu studiile, studentii evrei se „bucurau” de umiliri, injurii si chiar batai, ca sa nu mai vorbim si de „numerus clausus”. Reclamand in urma unei batai la prefectura de politie din Iasi, naivul student Weitmann a fost intrebat de jandarm: „Dar pe dumneavoastra cum va cheama?” desi tata nu prea arata a eschimos, jandarmul voia sa fie sigur.

Asadar, se face transfer la Facultatea de Medicina din Modena, Italia. Gaseste gazda la baba Tenca, pe strada Due Stelle. Gazda ii fura din mancare si din lemnele de incalzit. Stiind ca e cu frica lui Dumnezeu, tata ii scrie in italiana: „Cine fura lemne Dumnezeu il pedepseste!” „Chi ruba legno, Dio punisce”, si a avut efect. Desi nu vazuse in viata ei un evreu, doamna Tenca obisnuia sa zica: „Zgarcit ca un evreu”. Deci erau relatii „amicale” intre gazda si chirias. Intorcandu-se intr-un an acasa cu trenul prin Viena, singurul lucru pe care-l tine minte din Viena este ca il strangeau pantofii (erau cu un numar mai mici). Totusi era vesel la Modena: la festivalul studentilor, se mergea pe strazi cu macheta unui penis gigantic – ehei, studentii astia! Desigur, asta creea invidie la baieti si sperante la studente. La examene, cand tata vorbea, desigur in italiana,



profesorii isi scuipau in san si se cruceau (desigur de groaza). Si totusi, fiindca Mussolini era mai „de treaba” decat Antonescu, in 1939 termina facultatea. Trebuie de spus si de accentuat ca in perioada studentiei, si chiar anterior, era comandantul celulei Beitar din sudul Bucovinei, fiind activ si ocupandu-se cu aderarea de noi membri. La Cernauti se intalneste cu Zeev Jabotinsky, a carui carisma il impresioneaza. La una din conferinte, Jabotinsky zice: „Evrei, fugiti din Europa, se apropie un dezastru”. Clarviziunea lui Jabotinsky l-a marcat pe tata pentru totdeauna.

In 1939, dupa terminarea facultatii, incearca sa-si gaseasca un post de medic in judetul Suceava. Oriunde, toate portile erau inchise. Atunci isi deschide cabinet particular ca medic cu experienta practica nula. Lumea desigur se imbulzea la usa tatei!!! Dar suferinta a fost scurta. Pe 9.10.1941 a venit „salvarea” – deportarea in Transnistria, la Sargorod. Aici a fost cosmarul de 1000 de zile si 1000 de nopti (si aici nu era vorba de saga: „1001 de nopti”). Bunicul a murit de tifos exantematic, tata s-a aflat in situatia cu pistolul maiorului de jandarmi Botoroaga la tampla. Bunica a scapat de acest calvar: si-a dat suflul in 1938 de cancer mamar extins, cand tata a dus-o pe brate la o clinica la Viena si cu toate sumele exorbitante platite nimic nu a ajutat, ea fiind inmormantata la cimitirul evreiesc din Suceava. Desigur, bunicul nu are mormant la Sargorod sau macar o piatra cu o inscriptie. Tata, fratele, surorile se despaduceau de citeva ori pe zi, avand paduchi chiar si in sprancene. Odata, fiind luat la pietruit drumuri, un sucevean ii zice: „Dumneavoastra, domnule doctor, chiar la pietruit drumuri?!” Sora cea mare a tatei s-a logodit si, dintr-un motiv oarecare, seful jandarmeriei locale a hotarat sa-l trimita pe proaspatul logodnic peste Bug, pe teritoriul ocupat de germani, ceea ce insemna moarte sigura. Interventia si rugamintile tatei pe langa seful jandarmeriei au avut rezultat. Cumnatul i-a pastrat recunostinta tatei pana la moarte. Desigur, despre Transnistria se pot scrie mii de pagini. Ne vom opri totusi aici. La inceputul verii lui 1945, cu mintea intreaga, sanatos la trup, desi avusese tifos exantematic, dar fiind tanar l-a suportat mai usor, a venit eliberarea si intoarcerea acasa. Dar casa era complet golita. In afara de asta, in momentul deportarii, bunicului i se ceruse sa predea cheile morii Weitmann, sa renunte in scris la padurea de la Plavalari si la toate celelalte bunuri, dupa legile rasiste in vigoare. Colac peste pupaza, in vara lui 1945, tata intalnindu-se cu un fost coleg de facultate din Iasi, acesta l-a salutat ceremonios, intrebandu-l: „N-ai crapat, jidane?” Oricum, la 11.6.1948, a fost nationalizarea mijloacelor de productie si fratii Weitmann au ramas cu ce aveau pe ei. Este stiut ca in primii ani de democratie populara evreii erau la moda si tata a fost numit directorul Spitalului Unificat Suceava in 1949. In aceeasi perioada, cu tot entuziasmul celor salvati din abisul Transnistriei, dar si cu naivitatea unuia care credea in lozinca franceza: „Libertate, Egalitate, Fraternitate” a noii oranduiiri, a primit o delegatie de stanga din S.U.A. pentru un eventual ajutor dat spitalului si sistemului sanitar al Sucevei. Este in plus sa zicem ca acest regim a refuzat cu dispret un ajutor



din partea celui mai mare stat imperialist. Dupa cum se zice: „Si raios si cu coada in sus!” In paranteza fie spus, majoritatea membrilor delegatiei erau evrei, discutiile purtandu-se in limba idis (pe atunci tata nu vorbea engleza).

Atasamentul fata de noua oranduire a fost de asa natura incat, ca exemplu, in anul 1952, cind s-a ridicat corpul de cladiri destinat noii maternitati din cadrul spitalului, si ramanand in lipsa de fonduri, tata a vrut sa aduca bani de acasa pentru a putea termina proiectul. Noroc ca mama, fiinta practica si, oricum, mai putin naiva decit tata, a pus „veto”. Desigur ca la demonstratiile de 1 Mai, 23 August, 7 Noiembrie (da, 7 Noiembrie) tata era in frunte in halat alb (nu si pe 7 noiembrie cand halatul era sub palton, caci era rece la Suceava) cu tablourile lui Gheorghiu-Dej, Ana Pauker (la inceput) si altii. Fiind in frunte, nu putea "sa o stearga", trebuia sa dea exemplu. La una din aceste demonstratii, tata aude un membru al corpului medical ce tine portretul Anei Pauker adresandu-i-se unui coleg: „Daca ma mai enervezi mult, iti dau una in cap cu jidauca asta!”.

Referitor la personajele de mai sus, circula in spital o anecdota legata de portretele de pe coridor, cand seful organizatiei de baza de partid ii zice omului de serviciu: „Da jos tabloul porcului ala”, omul de serviciu intreaba: „Care dintre ei?”

Fiind directorul spitalului, avea la dispozitie sareta cu un cal condusa de tovarasul Gheorghe. Eu, avand scoala cateva luni in corpul din parcul orasului, am fost luat „tramp” pana la scoala cu sareta. Intr-o buna zi, invatatoarea, d-na Sumanaru ii zice mamei, mai in gluma, mai in serios, ca ea vine pe jos, pe cind eu...Si atunci mi s-a terminat distractia, eu fiind foarte revoltat pentru scaderea drastica a nivelului de trai!

Imi amintesc de bunatatea si generozitatea tatei cand, la casatoria surorii mai mici, a facut cadou noului cumnat unicul lucru de pret pe care-l avea – ceasul de la mana lui.

Entuziasmul pentru noua oranduire a scazut treptat si repejor. „Lamurirea” a inceput cu si in paralel cu procesele staliniste ale medicilor evrei in U.R.S.S., impuscarea liderilor comunisti evrei din tarile lagarului socialist, inabusirea revolutiei ungare in 1956-1957, apoi ordinul de inchidere a cabinetelor particulare in 1959, scoaterea tatei din functia de director de spital (fiind fiu de exploatator burghezo-mosieresc), spre marea bucurie a mamei, desi tata a primit aceasta ca o mare lovitura. Si atunci, in 1959, s-a hotarat si parintii au depus actele pentru plecare in Israel. Si s-a asteptat, si s-a asteptat, caci domnul Jacober din Londra, la care s-a ajuns prin intermediari, nu se grabea. Si s-au primit „negative” dupa „negative” desi banii de rascumparare fusesera depusi si desi „business is business”, o parte nu si-a onorat datoria. Trebuie de explicat ca omul de afaceri evreu britanic Jacober rascumpara evrei romani, desigur contra plata.

In acelasi timp, tata a fost scos si din functia de sef al sectiei de oncologie, care pe atunci, ca



dotare si calificare medicala, era a patra in tara (dupa capitala, Iasi si Cluj). A fost retrogradat si profesional, nu numai administrativ, de la medic primar la medic de medicina generala. Aceasta a fost initiativa personala a directorului spitalului, un coreligionar. Dupa cativa ani plini de sentimente de injosire profesionala, tata a cerut si a fost primit in audienta la prim vicesecretarul de partid al judetului, insarcinat cu probleme medicale, domnul Dumitru.

Datorita acestuia, tata a reprimis functia de sef de sectie si gradul de medic primar. Dupa cum se vede, nimeni nu e profet printre cei de un neam cu el, ci printre straini!

In paralel, este de remarcat episodul din perioada 1966-1973, cand am trait cu prezenta reala, circa 2 ani, si apoi stresul in continuare cu microfoanele securitatii in casa. Acest episod a fost descris anterior.

In primavara lui 1973 am depus cu totii din nou actele pentru plecare in Israel si cererea a fost aprobata caci tovarasul Ceausescu a primit 5000 de dolari pentru tata si alte 3000 de dolari pentru mama si pentru mine. Sa nu uitam este vorba de hartiuta verde din 1973! Posibil ca plecarea a fost realizata si datorita unei interventii a unei personalitati celebre.

Ne-am stabilit initial la Nazareth Illit, tata primind postul de sef al clinicii din Kfar Cana (localitatea unde, dupa traditie, Isus, fiind la o nunta, a transformat apa in vin – depinde cat vin s-a baut anterior!). Interesant este faptul ca un bun evreu din estul Europei, cu limba materna idis, a invatat si a vorbit araba cu pacientii si cu personalul medical. Printre altele, as dori sa mentionez faptul ca tata a fost invitat de Marc Chagall la inaugurarea vitrajelor din cladirea Knesset-ului la Ierusalim. Desigur, o mare onoare.

La 7 iulie 1887 la Liazna de langa Vitebsk in Bielorusia tarista in familia Chagalov se naste baietelul Moishe. Familia sarmana are multi copii. Un an mai tarziu in 1888 se nastea in oraselul Zaleszczyki din vestul Poloniei o fetita frumoasa, oachesa si cu ochi negri – Golde, fiica lui Berish si Perl Schmetterling. Intamplarea a facut ca in primii ani ai sec. XX cei doi tineri sa se intalneasca si sa se cunoasca. Moishe a invatat la „heder” apoi la scoala ruseasca in special tehnica desenului. In 1907 pleaca la St. Petersburg unde studiaza cu Leon Bakst iar apoi in 1910 pleaca la Paris si devine un "oarecare" Mark Chagall. In 1922 dupa o scurta perioada revolutionara paraseste definitiv Rusia Sovietica si se stabileste in Franta.

Intre timp Golde Schmetterling cu familia se stabilesc la Bosanci in Imperiul Austro-Ungar, il intalneste pe Sussie-Kissiel Weitmann se plac si se casatoresc pe 12.12.1909. Dupa 5 ani pe 8.11.1914 se naste al doilea lor fiu, Adolf. Bunicul era atunci pe front in nordul Italiei in armata imperiala. Dupa cum am mai scris, bunica Golde s-a prapadit in 1938 dupa o cumplita lupta cu cancerul. In anii Romaniei comuniste nu s-a vorbit acasa de episodul Mark Chagall. In 1969, deci



31 de ani de la moartea bunicii parintii au depus cerere si au primit aprobarea de a vizita Israelul ca turisti, lasand-ul pe iubitul lor fiu in Romania ca zalog. Parintii dorind cu orice pret sa faca „alyia” au cautat orice legatura posibila care ar fi putut fi de folos.

Tata si-a amintit de episodul Mark Chagall si in primavara anului 1969 i-a scris la St. Paul de Vence, in sudul Frantei. Si nu numai ca a primit raspuns dar Mark Chagall l-a anuntat pe tata ca in toamna va fi la Ierusalim pentru inaugurarea vitrajelor din cladirea Knessetului. Intr-adevar, pe cand parintii erau in vizita in Israel, s-au intalnit cu Chagall la Ierusalim, in cladirea Knessetului. Au vorbit in special in idis, dar si in franceza, si se pare ca maestrul Chagall a pus o vorba buna nu stiu exact cui dar familia Weitmann a primit ulterior aprobarea de reintregire a familiei in Israel, ceea ce nu s-a putut prin omul britanic de afaceri Iacober. Intreaga familie ii purtam un adanc respect si o adanca recunostinta celui care a fost Mark Chagall. El s-a stins din viata la 98 de ani pe 28.3.1985 la St. Paul de Vence.

In 1986, parintii s-au mutat la Tel-Aviv, urmandu-si "odorul" de fecior. Tata a lucrat pina la 80 de ani, deci pina in 1994. Cu toata modestia, trebuie spus ca tata avea o memorie prodigioasa, lucru care se reflecta si in „Cartea evreilor din Suceava”, o buna parte din carte fiind scrisa de el. La 19.9,2005, ora 7:03, s-a petrecut pentru familia Weitmann ceva cumplit. Facand, ca in fiecare dimineata, marsul obisnuit de 40 de minute si fiind intr-o stare fizica si mentala exceptionala pentru cei 91 de ani, a fost strivit pe trecerea de pietoni din Kikar Hamedina de un camion condus de un sofer din Taibe. Ultimele palpairi ale acestei inimi generoase au fost la spitalul Ichilov, cateva minute inainte ca eu sa ajung acolo. Cind am stat „Shiva” si spuneam ca „tata s-a dus cu zile” mi se raspundea: „s-a dus cu multi ani in fata”. Probabil ca era adevarat.

Adesea as vrea sa ma sfatuiesc cu el, ii duc dorul si il iubesc si acum. Dupa cum spunea cineva: „e foarte usor sa-l iubesti pe Adolf”.

Eugen Weitmann,

Tel-Aviv

Decembrie 2019





Suceava, orașel de provincie.

Tamara Hirshhorn

Originea mea se divizează între Austria și Polonia. Bunica mea, Ana Lauer Rechtshendler, era originară din Polonia și familia tatălui meu era austriacă.

Mama și tata au fost născuți în România. Bunicuța mea Chane, a rămas văduvă după întâiul război mondial, cu trei copilași mici, mama mea, tatăl lui Rita Lauer, Pini și Leib, trei copii iubiți. Leib, fiul major, Saly, soția lui și Ady băiețelul lor iubit, de 6 ani, au murit lângă Transnistria, de foame, frig și boală. Bunicuța mea la plîns toată viața.

Bunica mea a locuit cu noi toți după război și am iubit o nesp.

Noi am locuit pe strada Armenească, o casă cu o grădină mare și frumoasă, cu pomi de fructe, liliaci și flori.

Copilaria mea a fost cam singuratică, nu am avut frați, doar câțiva prieteni. Dar nu toți studiau cu mine, Hasiuța Schmelzer, Bety

Merdler, Ety și Betica Goldenberg, vara mea, Rita, dar ele nu locuiau aproape și nu studiau în Liceul Ștefan cel Mare, Viky și surorile ei, Daniela și Suzy prietene dragi, locuiau în Fălticeni.

De la școală, prietenii mei au fost Iosale Furman, (pe care l-au denunțat ca a fumat călărind pe o vacă, ei aveau o vacă căci erau oameni religioși și a fost expulzat pe 3 zile.). Acum e un Rabin important în Ierusalem. Lăcrămioara Fărtăiș cu care am rămas prietenă toată viața, pînă în ziua de azi, Paul Ghiorghiu cu care făceam acordeoane pentru tezele de matematică, și Rodica Varhov, unde am văzut pentru prima oară televiziune programele internaționale OTI.

Aș mai putea enumera pe Corina (Brîndușa) Costiuc Florin Cojocar, Mihai Murărescu. Cu mine în clasă au mai fost Didi Copelovich, Berta Goldschtein, Ani Zaidler.

Duminicile lungi de vară le petreceam pe Zamca, citind cărți, înconjurate de câmpuri de Tremurici (o plană, care cu briza vîntului, făcea valuri).

Vedeam ruinele mănăstirii de pe Zamca și în zare se întrezărea satulețul Șcheia, cu rîul și casele albe a le țărănilor.

A fost o epocă ceva melancolică , dulce- acrișoară.....

Eram tineri și mai făceam trăznăile noastre... Ne ușcheam de la clasa de matematică și ne ascundeam în grădina mea. Într-o noapte de iarnă întunecoasă, acoperită de zăpadă, eram în casa mea Paul , Iosele, Lăcrămioara și eu. Iosele s-a dus la casa lui să aducă ceva și cînd s-a întors, nu a văzut poarta cu geam din coridor, și și-a spart capul...că am trebuit să-l ducem la



Crucea Roșie.

Cu toate obrăznicile lui a fost un copil foarte inteligent, neliniștit și bun.

Părinții mei, cași multe alte famili nu au avut o viață ușoară în România. Au muncit mult și au suferit consecințele războiului....

Cînd am ajuns la maturitate mi-am dat seama că viitorul meu nu e în România. M-am dus, pe ascuns, la miliție să mă înscriu singură pentru plecarea în Israel. Părintii mei nu știau, eu am fost conștientă că pentru ei va fi foarte greu acolo, fără familie, fără bani și fără limbă.....

Un cunoscut de- al tatălui meu de la miliție l-a chemat și i-a dezvăluit că eu vreau să plec din țară. Tatăl meu, săracul, surprins

și speriat, vine acasă și î-i spune mamei.....Și aici incepe Odisea...

Mama Nu vrea să plece , eu î-i liniștesc că voi pleca eu întîi să văd cum e acolo și după aceea î-i aduc și pe ei.... A fos o Tragedie Greacă....

Tata a hotărît că eu nu plec singură și s-au înscris și ei. A fost un an greu pîna ce am primit pașaportul. Tata a pierdut locul de muncă

și pentru mine a fost o ruptură de locuri cunoscute și apreciate ca grădina mea de care am fost foarte atașată, de Pufi cățelușul meu drag, de strada Armenească,.....

Ziua plecării s-a apropiat și am plecat la gară cu cele cîteva lucruri ce ne dădeau voie sa luăm si cu frica să nu ne facă probleme....

Și în gară nu era nimeni, nici un suflet.... Lîngă tren erau două persoane ce ne faceau adios cu mîna, Lăcrămioara și mama ei....

O despărțire de cinema.....

Cînd am ajuns la București în airoport, ce surpriză !!!!! Draga mea Viky și familia ei plecau cu noi la Italia...Ea n-a știut că eu m-am înscris

și eu nu am știut că ei s-au înscis. Era interzis de divulgat...

Și așa am ajuns la Țara Sfîntă... Pentru mine - libertatea - pentru parinți - altă etapă destul de grea la început....

Cei 9 ani în Israel au trecut repede între studiu și lucru. M-am căsătorit și după 4 ani am plecat în Mexico....Am doi baieti care, acum, au

luat locul meu în Israel....Și așa au trecut44 de ani...

Părinții au locuit lîngă noi ultimii 9 ani din viața lor, au avut un apartament frumos , lîngă noi, au cunoscut nepoții, au avut un Club Evreiesc

cu doamne ce vorbeau idiș si cel puțin dragul meu tata a fost fericit...

Tata a murit în 1988 și mama 1991 trei ani mai tîrziu.

Și istoria se repetează.... copii mei locuiesc în Israel...



