

## Avram Cojocariu



This is my father, Avram Cojocariu. He looks pretty good in this photograph.

After the war father developed a sclerosis as well, he became soft-minded. He had a case of hernia for about 30 years, and was afraid to undergo surgery. We lived together, how could I not know his situation... He was very fond of Iasi, for that's where he did his military service and where he lived, so he went there once, to see some old acquaintances. And he was struck by a sudden seizure, he lay down in the street, just like that, for he couldn't bear the pain, that's how bad it was. And people saw that, they called an ambulance, and they took him to the hospital. When he woke up in the hospital, he said: "No, I will not undergo surgery!" For all his life he was afraid of the knife. But the doctor said: "No, now that you are here, we must perform surgery." And he might have lifted a block of wood, something heavy, when he returned home, and his operation opened up. He liked to work - as Christians do, not as Jews do: he did everything around the house, he didn't have someone else do these things, he didn't pay someone else, he did these things himself. There was a very good Jewish surgeon here, in Dorohoi, and it was he who operated him the second time. The third time it was the same. But he told him on the last occasion: "I can't guarantee anything anymore." He told him straight to his face. And his last years were very tormented. He started smoking when he was 12 - he told us. And he still smoked while he was ill. But this is what happened! A particularly nasty growth appeared on his esophagus, a tumor, for he had seizures during the night on many occasions, he choked, he couldn't breathe, and we rushed to the hospital at 1, 2, 3 o'clock in the night in order to commit him. There was a hospital right on our street, near our parental home. I know that he carried on like that for 4 years. And he wasn't allowed to eat anything, for the food didn't reach his stomach, it stopped in his chest area. He died at 73, in 1971.

When father fell ill and was so lost and neglectful, people said: "Oh my, what a handsome boy he was in his day, look what has become of him!" He became oblivious of himself. The years passed

by, he was alone. And he told us what a ladies' man he was in his day - he wouldn't miss any ball whatsoever. But we, did we ever go to a ball in our life? We never went to balls. He went to parties for us as well. We tended the house, mostly. As the room where we lived gave onto the street, we could see the Jews taking a stroll and talk and discuss. For the people living in the city used to stroll beyond the city limits, towards the train station, they walked to the train station, they were out for a walk - that was what they called a stroll out of the city. I used to say: "Look, they are out for a walk! We are going to bed now, we are in our bed, and people are out for a walk." That's how our life was, that's how it went.