

Margit Schorr

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Suceava

Romania

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Interviewer: Molnar Ildiko

Mrs Schorr is a small woman living alone in her flat with her two budgies. She is in a good physical condition, likes to go out and take walks in the nearby park. She loves the sunshine. She also likes cooking and baking; I was treated with "dulceata" (very sweet jelly jam) and with cookies during our sessions. Her relatives visit her regularly; they take good care of her. She lives a quiet, neat and bright life.

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My family history

My paternal grandfather's surname was Ashkenazi, I don't know his name or his date of birth, he came from the region of Odessa, fled one of the Russian pogroms. He settled down in Focșani and became a jeweler, where he owned a jewelry shop. Later on he moved to Suceava and owned the jewelry shop where my father would work as well. My grandparents were religious; everybody was religious at that time. He died before the First World War somewhere in the 1910s. My father did not really talk [about him].

My grandmother Ashkenazi Margit, whose maiden name and date of birth I don't know, was a very quiet and reserved woman. I did not know either one of my grandparents but was named after my grandmother. My mother got to know her as her mother-in-law for a short while, my grandmother died in the 1920s. What I remember is that I used to have very thick hair and my mother always told me, that I inherited my grandmother's hair, she had thick hair as well and always had to cut it because it was too heavy. I don't have any other memories of her. A few years ago, I discovered my grandmother's grave by chance; she is buried in the cemetery of Suceava. The guard there is a young man, I kept asking him and he searched until he found the grave, it's not even in the back of the cemetery, for our cemetery ... you can hardly walk through it, it is in such a terrible state... there is no one left to keep it, there are no more Jews.

My grandparents had three sons: my father, Karl Ashkenazi born 1873 in Focșani, after which they moved to Suceava. My father had two brothers whose names and dates of birth I don't know, they both emigrated to America. After we came back from Transnistria, in 1945, one looked for us through the Red Cross, he sent us a photo and a food package because he had heard about our state of being, afterwards we lost contact. I don't know anything about the other one; we never met. They lived there, we lived here in Suceava, and we never got in touch. That is all my father

told me, very vague.

My father went to a normal school, or high school, I don't know and learnt the handicraft of jeweler from my grandfather. He was an educated man, an autodidact, who read a lot. How many times did I wake up in the night – he had lost his first wife and son and was stressed about and couldn't sleep at nighttime. Whenever I woke up in the night, I would find him reading. He had been through all the libraries in Suceava and read and read ... He read in German for we spoke German at home.

My father's first wife was a Jewish woman, her name was Berta Ungarisch, as I remember, and she was from Suceava. I don't know how my father met his first wife, but it was a love match. They had a son, I don't remember his name but *[if he have been alive]* he would have been my half-brother, he died of meningitis at the age of 12. Berta died soon afterwards of heart problems. My father did not really talk about these events. She was buried next to my grandmother in the cemetery of Suceava.

My mother's maiden name was Jetty Rosa Kinsbruner, who was left all alone after her mother died so my uncle, Hans Kinsbruner, her brother who lived in Gura Humorului, intervened and arranged the meeting between my father and my mother. I think a shadchan *[matchmaker]* arranged their meeting.

My father was a widower; my mother was an old maid as they used to say at that time, she was 30 or 31 years old. I don't know how long it took my father to remarry after the death of his first wife. They married around 1918, both being serious people who had been hit by fate. My parents had a religious wedding ceremony. If they had a written ketubah? I never saw it because we were deported and lost everything.

My maternal grandfather was **Moïșe Kinsbruner**, I don't know where he was born but it had to be somewhere in the 1840s. My grandmother, **Sosie Kinsbuner** nee Rubel, was born in the 1850s but I don't know where. My grandparents had seven children: **Salo Kinsbruner**, born in the 1870s, **Hans Kinsbruner** born in the 1870s, **Liebe Kinsbruner** born in the 1880s, **Dora Kinsbruner** born in the 1880s, **Puiké Kinsbruner** born in the 1890s, my mother **Rosa Kinsbruner** born in 1887 in Șcheia-Suceava and **Fany Kinsbruner** born in the 1890s.

Grandparents Kinsbruner lived on the countryside, in different villages and here in Șcheia, very close to Suceava. My grandfather worked for a landowner and I think he brew țuică *[brandy]* or some other drink for a living. At one point my grandfather refused to clink glasses with the landowner and the landowner fired him. I don't know anything about that landowner, this story is the only thing I ever heard, that the landowner got mad because a Jew wouldn't clink glasses with a Christian. So when my grandfather fell out with the landowner, my grandmother and the seven children moved to Cernăuți where they opened an inn run by my grandmother. Maybe my grandfather was still alive at that time, I don't know.

Grandmother Sosie was a troubled woman who had to run the inn by herself, I don't know if she had any help, she had seven children and when she came home tired after work, loaded with packages they would all wait hungry for her. And then she would say: „One moment, one moment, set the table” but she wouldn't even start to cook. They would set the table and wait. They had enough food, they were wellfed, I don't think they ever went hungry.

My grandfather was a very religious man yet I don't know if he wore a mantle and a kippah, I never saw a photograph of him because religious Jews do not get their picture taken. I don't know how many days a week he would fast. At the age of 50 something, he was so weakend through all that fasting that my grandmother ran to the rabbi and told him: „Rabbi, what can I do with my Moise? He will die. He is fasting ...” So the rabbi sent him home and said : Go home and eat. You are responsible for your children.” He still died in the 1900s at the age of 50 something. I know that my mother used to reprimand me many time because I am not religious by saying: „ You are the granddaughter of Moise Kinsbruner who died of hunger because of all his fasting ...”

My grandmother was religious as well, I know that she covered her head with a shawl or a wig. Grandmother Sosie died young in the 1918s, she was somewhere in her 60s. My mother was the sacrificed one. All her siblings were married and spread throughout the world so my mother took care of her dying mother. I don't remember if they still owned the inn at that time or if they liquidated it when my grandmother got sick.

Salo Kinsbruner lived in Vienna. He married a Viennaise probably before World War I and was the first of the siblings to leave. I never met him. He died young because of war wounds and was buried alive, that is what I heard. Salo had two children, a son or a daughter and if they still live they should be in America. We never were in touch with Salo who lived in Vienna but his daughter, whom I think already died in America, visited us once.

The second brother was **Hans Kinsbruner**, he lived in Gura Humorului and I don't know anything about his wife. They had a very sweet daughter, Dora. She was deported in the same period as us. They came back from Transnistria and on their way home the borders closed and they got stuck in a place I don't remember. The girl went out to gather wood for the winter, to keep warm and a beam fell on her and killed her on the spot. They went back to Gura Humorului without their girl where they had a shop with clothing material and linen. And slowly, as time passed, one after the other died. I visited them every summer, I used to spend my vacations in Gura Humorului. It is very beautiful there and there were many Jews, many of them religious, those people with sideburns. Hans wasn't religious in his youth but after the death of his girl he turned into an ultra-religious person. He would sit and rock himself all day and his sisters would even make fun of him because he would shake and fast and keep the holidays too much.

My mother's older sister lived in Czernovitz. Her name was **Liebe Kinsbruner**, married **Scholl**, we were deported together to Transnistria and even shared a room in Sharogod. She had a daughter named Rachel. After they came back from deportation, they moved to Israel. She died in Israel.

Another sister was called **Dora Kinsbruner**, married **Stern**. They lived in Rădăuți where uncle Stern ran a fish shop, he sold fish. They had a son named Max Stern. My daughter-in-law was befriended with Max, they grew up together, they used to be neighbors in Rădăuți. They emigrated during that period when most of the Jews left, around the years 1950-60 [1](#). Max died in Israel, he left behind a son but I have no idea where he is.

Puiké Kinsbruner lived in Czernovitz as well. I don't know her real name, everybody used to call her Puiké, she later married a **Kahan**. Her husband was an architect, they had two sons. One of them died in Suceava, his wife came to Suceava as well and remarried. His daughter is still alive though, she is somewhere, picking strawberries I think, but he died. His older brother was an architect as well and died in America, he had a daughter. They used to live in Czernovitz but then

his wife died and he went to America where his daughter already lived.

The other sister who lived in Czernovitz was **Fany Kinsbruner**, married **Brill** who was the youngest of the sisters. My uncle was a photographer, his name was Iacob Brill and they lived in Czernovitz. Iacob and Salo Brill were two brothers, both photographers, who started out working together but by the time I was a child they weren't together anymore, both of them had an own studio in a different part of Czernovitz. I did not know Salo too well, he moved to the Russian Street, „Russische Strasse“, which I discovered when I was in Czernovitz with my sons last year. The studio of my uncle Iacob Brill was on the Water Street, „Wasser Gasse“ it was called in German. Afterwards, when the Romanians came, the street was renamed Ferdinand Road, it was wellknown in town, I spent a lot of time there. My aunt Fany had no children of her own, she consider me to be her child. The studio was beautiful, at the entrance there was a show case advertising photo's, then you entered into a large room with an interior stair case which led to the studio it self. I remember that the stair case was built out of wood and it was squeaky, and I, being little, descended and fell and rolled all the way down. Everybody was terribly scared but I was alright. My uncle would receive his clients downstairs and then he would take them upstairs to photograph them, downstairs was also the living space of my aunt and uncle. Iacob Brill was shot by the Romanians or the Germans, I forgot, and I don't remember if it was an accident or if it happened on purpose. Fany was deported as well but she ended up at the other side of the Bug River, where the Germans were, and she died there in 1942-43. She died young, she wasn't even 50 years old. When we were still deported, in Transnistria, we received a card written by her during her deportation. She said she was fine, that she had to clean the bathrooms in a German military hospital. We never heard anything from her again, she probably died of typhus or she was killed.

My mother's siblings weren't very religious, they would observe the holidays nicely but wouldn't exaggerate. All the cousins and aunts kept very much in touch and during vacations they would come visit us in Suceava or we would „frequently“ go to Czernovitz, once a month, once every two months. When I would visit aunt Tiny, I would take the bus Suceava – Czernovitz, and we would go to Czernovitz through Siret, it would take an hour and a half, maybe two hours.

Jewish life in Cernovitz was nearly identical to Jewish life in Suceava. They were a bit more pretentious, would go to cafe's or to a restaurant maybe. They maybe were more elegant, their city was bigger. But otherwise it was the same. Holidays were the same and the rich market in Czernovitz, their market was very abundant. People from Czernovitz were more snobbish and at my aunt's house You would eat, there was so much food you would get sick. I had a fat uncle, Kahan, he loved to eat and my aunt weighed more than 80 kilograms.

Last year I was in Czernovitz with my sons. One of Karl's neighbors has a big shop in Czernovitz and he guided us around and lodged us at a hotel in the center of the city. We walked around and I tried to discover the places where I spent my childhood. If we would've stayed another day, I would've found more, now time was too short and too many had changed. We did not go to the street where my aunt lived, but I know where it is; we did see the National Theatre and the house where my other aunt used to live. It was very emiotional to see those places again, the places where I spent part of my childhood. Not many things had changed. I had forgotten many things and had to try hard to remember them. Czernovitz' atmosphere has changed though. There are no more elegant people standing in front of the café's and everybody speaks Russian. They don't even want to speak Romanian or maybe they forgot. While we were walking along the National Theatre,

we saw a beautiful house and some companies, we opened a door and entered a Jewish center. There was a long table, set, and the old people and the younger ones were sitting and eating, they were celebrating the evening of Rosh HaShana. And when we entered and introduced ourselves as Jews and Romanian, they told us to sit down and served us dinner as well. It was hard to understand each other because they don't speak Romanian but luckily I know Yiddish. Next to me sat an old lady and we started to talk with each other – I told her that I had been deported to Sharogod, that I had spent their almost three years – „ Ah, Mrs., I am from Sharogod a well!“. And we remember common acquaintances and talked a long time, my son took a picture of us and I sent them a copy as well, I asked for their address. I would've liked to go there again, to talk again with that lady, to remember those years in Sharogod. I did not get the chance but it is an extraordinary thing, that while walking through Czernowitz you accidentally find a Jewish Community on the evening of Rosh HaShana. Afterwards my son wanted to see the synagogue in Czernovitz, I didn't know where it was and we didn't speak their language, so we walked and walked for two or three hours, up a hill down a hill – Czernovitz is full of hills. When we finally found the synagogue it was closed, for it was Saturday. We took some pictures in front of the synagogue and that was that.

The family would gather there in Czernovitz. One of the cousins would play the piano and sing happy songs, the aunts would sing, only my mother would be the sad one. They would sing in German, that was the spoken language here, maybe even in Hebrew, I don't remember. They were all kind of songs, not only traditional ones, but also happy ones, jazz. I remember that the three aunts Fany, Puik and Liebe and I don't know how many cousins would meet and it would be such a merry gathering. Those from Czernovitz lived beautifully and joyfully. They lived beautifully and died horribly.

My mother, **Jetty Roza Ashkenazi** nee **Kinsbruner**, was born 1887 in Șcheia, which was next to Suceava. She went to elementary school and spoke Yiddish and German. My mother was very modest. I had a sister named **Suzi Ashkenazi**, born 1919 in Suceava, named after my grandmother Sosie and then I was born 1923, also in Suceava. My sister died of diphtheria in 1924; she was only four years old. She is buried here in Suceava. When my sister died, Fany – my mother's sister from Czernovitz- came and took me with her so my parents could grieve. I stayed a whole year with Fany. When they took me back, I didn't want to go to my mother, I didn't recognize her.

Growing up

Karl Ashkenazi's store was the name of my father's jewelry store, named after him. It was in the middle of the center and behind the shop was our house. It was a rental house. The shop was little, you had to climb three stairs, enter the shop and in a corner would be his table, he sat and worked there all the time, with a loupe, he was almost blind at the end. He worked alone; he did not have any help. Also in the shop was a counter with all kind of jewels, it disappeared after we were deported. My father would import jewels and watches from Czernovitz and sell them. Behind his shop was our house, which consisted of two rooms and a kitchen. We had cold water, I think also during the night; if you wanted to take bath the water had to be heated, we had a round tub. We did have electric light and our heating system was an oven functioning on wood. We would buy wood in the autumn, a farmer would bring us a wagonload of wood, then we would hire someone to chop and arrange the wood; you would warm up so well at a fireplace!

When you exited the house at the back, you would enter into a large courtyard with wood chips on the ground; there was another shop in that house, a big grocery store and wine store, there were wine barrels and the merchandise was unloaded there, for example olives. It smelled of olives and I would walk around, looking for a little bit of grass, I missed the green. The courtyard was closed in by houses and in one of the house, which was a bit more behind the others, lived to sisters named Plesciug, probably Ukrainians, who owned a photography studio. They lived in a little, dark house. As a child I would enter everywhere, I would play in the courtyard and walk everywhere, I could be found in every house, everybody knew me and everybody played with me.

My mother would go to the market if she needed anything. Farmers from the countryside came to market and brought chicken. Suceava had good markets and all the stores were owned by Jews and my mother would buy from them. My father's jewelry store was there as was his workshop. We always had a maid. My mother spent a lot of time with my father in the store; she would help him so she couldn't get everything done in the house. That is why we always had a maid who would clean, help with the groceries and probably took care of me as well. Apparently, my parents could afford it because as far as I remember, we always had a maid.

I was well dressed as well, my mother knew how to sew and she made me some beautiful dresses. She made most of my dresses but every once in a while she would take me to a tailor for a coat or a dress. At that time most clothes were sewn, not bought. You would buy the fabrics in town and go to the tailor who would make it for you.

There were three or four cars in town during the inter-war period belonging to some rich people from Suceava; there were carriages as well. Most of the carriages belonged to Jews and when you had to go to the train station, you would hire a carriage. I remember one of the owners, his name was Tedica, I think; he has died. They would come to pick you up from home, you would take seat in the carriage with your luggage and then you would go: trample, trample... go to the train station.

There were at least four or five synagogues in Suceava before the war [*Editor's note: by 1939 there were 12 functioning synagogues in Suceava*], there were many rabbis and shochets [*ritual butchers*] in town. There was the Grand Synagogue to which my mother went and where she had her own place, then there was the Tailor's Synagogue, I don't remember the other ones. The Grand Synagogue was downtown, in the old part of the city when you come from the train station, which was where the Jewish quarters were. That synagogue does not exist anymore; it was demolished. The synagogue that still stands is the Gah synagogue. The shochet that I knew wasn't next to the rabbi's house, no it was further away, closer to the house where I was born and spent my childhood; there was a Jewish center there as well.

I knew rabbi Moscovici very well; I used to go to their house because his daughter Miriam was my friend. The rabbi's house was on the road, when you entered Suceava from the direction of Ițcani. Their house was like all the other old houses in Suceava, little with only a ground level. I don't remember how it looked from the inside, nowadays the house doesn't exist anymore. I don't remember if the rabbi's wife was still alive at that time, I have no memories regarding her. Miriam I remember well though, we met at Hebrew school. It is interesting because I have a photograph from that time but don't remember a thing from my time at Hebrew school. I had a teacher, I learnt the alphabet and know how to read but how I learned ...? Years after the war I met Miriam in Gura Humorului. She had married a rabbi, I think rabbi Frankel. It was summertime and she had come to

recover a bit. Poor Miriam, she was troubled, she said to me: „I can't do it anymore..." because every year she gave birth to a child, it is a mitzvah for them to have many children. She wasn't in Suceava anymore after the war, I don't know if she still is alive, if she is in the country or in Israel, she was a bit younger than me ... She had a brother and this brother would ride a bike and all the people, especially the more religious ones would say: „What does it mean that the rabbi's son rides a bike through town? It means that he isn't too rabbinical [*meaning he doesn't keep the Law's commandments*].” Moscovici was wellknown in Suceava and he was respected by everyone, I don't know though if he was orthodox.

I don't know how many Jews lived in Suceava before the war, but percentage wise it could have been half of the city's population, maybe 40.000 – I'm not sure. A part of the Jews were the intellectuals, lawyers, medics etc. A big part consisted of the artisans and the merchants who were in the center of the city, they were the middle class, and then there were the poor of Suceava, who lived on Nesermete, that was the road which went down from the citadel, a downwards road and there they sat: coachmen, women plucking feathers, little artisans. My father was a jeweler; he was a craftsman in his profession and a merchant, having a shop in the center of Suceava. According to me there were three categories of people: the intellectuals, the merchants and the third category might have contained a few merchants and the poor.

I don't know if there existed a form of help for these poor Jews, maybe the Hevra Kadisha, those who buried the poor, helped them. I know that money for the poor was collected into those money boxes, I saw them at Keren Kayemet Lelsrael [K.K.L.] but not at our home. I visited an exposition in Israel, which showed moneyboxes from all over the world.

My mother was religious, my father wasn't. They made some sort of agreement when they married: “You keep your traditions as you want, I will do as I want.” They got along very well. My father did not go to the synagogue on holidays but he knew all the Jewish laws and on his deathbed I heard him pray all of a sudden. He once had a disagreement with someone from the Community and from that moment on he did not go to the synagogue anymore. But, for example, if there was something of which he thought that it might be beneficial for me, for example the swinging of the kappara he would do it because it was for his child.

My mother went to the synagogue on the Holy days not on Saturdays when women don't really go. I am not sure if she ever went to the ritual bath, maybe she went to the city one. I've heard that there used to be a mikveh when you entered Suceava from Ițcani. I don't know if my mother ever went, maybe when she got married to my father. My father wasn't the kind of person who would force her to go but maybe the community wanted her to go so they could give her the blessing. My mother used to fast, she bought matzos, kept kosher, I knew of all the holidays, she went to the shochter when something needed to be cut, she wouldn't let a christian slaughter the animals, she did not mix dairy with meat products, but I don't remember if she washed the dishes together or not. We had a mezuzah at the door but I don't know anything more than that.

My mother kept the Shabbat. My father ate a lot, you know that all diabetics eat a lot. My mother prepared Jewish food and fried fish and all. We probably had Challah as well, it's some sort of bread, but we didn't make any special preparations. I don't remember, I think it was in Israel, that somebody explained to me that the Shabbat is a holiday bigger than any other. It is the biggest celebration of the Jews. My mother did not cook “sholet” [*a traditional Shabbat dish*] but she told

me that my grandmother would make it. She had a special dish made out of clay that had to be in the oven for a night, on coal, to keep warm and make the sholet. And last year, my grandson Herbert came and wanted to make sholet. He went to the market by himself because I told him: "Leave me alone, I don't know how to make sholet" so I went to the market by himself and came back with carrots, beans ... He turned my whole kitchen upside down. I told him: "You know what, go to your aunt – Karl's wife – and make the sholet at her place." But she doesn't know how to prepare it either. So he made a mixture of sholet. He had heard about it in Israel, he wanted to make it here, that's how the crazy idea came to his mind. He made sholet and that was the first time I ate it. He taught me how to cook it but I haven't tried any new recipes since then. I simplified them because I diet.

My mother had special dishes for **Passover** in the loft. They would be taken down for Passover and then my mother and I went to a bakery where they made matzos and sometimes I helped. The matzos were put in some oval baskets and covered with a clean cloth and then you could take them home. Every corner of the house had to be cleaned ... I liked the holiday atmosphere, you felt as if you were preparing for something. Passover was without bread but otherwise with the regular food: fried fish, meat, and Jewish food. My mother would cook Jewish food but not for all the seven [*eight*] days of Passover.

For Passover my parents would send me to friends so I could see how the Seder rituals had to be kept. Every year I visited a different family friend. For a while I went to our neighbor, he was a lawyer and his daughter died in Israel. Another time I went to other friends, I don't remember but I went every year. I remember that matzos were stolen, younger children than me would do that and the boys would do the Manishtanah questions. I remember that you had to open the door so the prophet Elijah could enter. And in that moment when the door was opened the cat would strategically enter. We were so entertained ... only small things, details, stay in your mind. And afterwards the Seder food, I remember everything you have to do then.

At **Yom Kippur** my mother and I went to the synagogue and my father would stay at the opened door to hear the Khol Nidre, he wouldn't enter the synagogue. He did not fast for Yom Kippur, because he was sick, he had diabetes. I only remember him as a sick man. I don't know if there are any exceptions in religion because of illness, I couldn't say. I did not research those things; they are too personal.

At **Purim** I was afraid of the masks. I had a room all for myself in which I would hide, covering my head with pillows so I wouldn't have to see the masks. For me Purim was a torture, I was terrified of the masks. And my parents would tell me about how Purim in Suceava was when they were young. People would hire carriages because the masked ones would go from one acquaintance to another and they would share sweets, sing and dance; they would tell me about Purim and the merriness on the streets but I did not live during those times. I lived in those times when the masks would go from house to house for treats. When I was little Purim was celebrated as they once did: the dressed up [masked] Jews would come home, my mother would bake, pastries with honey and nuts but for me it was horrible, I didn't know where to hide. My mother baked very tasty things, they would buy fruits, and we had everything we needed. I don't remember **Hanukkah**; I don't think we ever lit the candles. Now I have the candles but I don't think we did at that time.

My father was a very social man. Our home was always opened to friends, especially my father's younger friends because he would say: "I am old, why shouldn't I have young people around me?" They would come, gather round the table, talk politics and my mother would serve. We had an open, receiving house. My mother was of a closed nature, she wasn't merry but she received everybody warmly.

My father loved nature very much and on Saturdays he would close the store and we would go into the wilderness where it was green and beautiful. We would take food with us, my father would walk in front of us carrying his walking stick on his shoulder, my mother would limp after him and then I would be the last and sometimes the first; those were our Saturdays and Sundays. In the evenings we would be home, the walks were short. When I was bigger, I would go to the beach of the river Suceava with my friends.

My parents never went away for vacations, they couldn't close the store, they were tied to it. Every once in a while they would go to Gura Humorului and then they were happy. During the summer we would all meet there. My aunt from Gura Humorului had siblings all over the country and they would all meet there: the ones from Czernovitz, us from Suceava – our aunt had to deal with us all. All the relatives would sojourn in the country. They had a big house, my aunt's mother lived upstairs and she owned the house, which had many rooms.

My teacher in primary school was Mrs. Buduhos who loved us all equally and who sent me a photograph of the third grade when I returned from Transnistria. I was a dreamy child, rather spoiled but not in the annoying kind of way, I was happy. I would sing all day long, felt sheltered, had dolls and played with them until I was 12, I had a thousand and one friends. Only once I got a horrible beating, which I'll never forget again. I did not like to wake up in the mornings. My mother dressed me while I slept, pulled me for I had to go to school. And I didn't react. Afterwards she took me out of bed, put me on my feet and pushed me out of the door, because the school was next door. And when I heard the school bell ring I would run half asleep to school. And one day my father had enough. And he gave me a good beating, which I'll never forget: "Or you wake up properly or you get it!" And he gave me a good beating. That was the only time.

If you walked out of the house, passed through the courtyard, you arrived at some kind of roundabout; one way went to the high school to which I belonged and on the other side lived my two friends Ruth and Melany – who later on changed her name to Monica -, and that is where I spent my childhood. We were three girls who grew up in the same neighborhood, we went together to school, we went together to Transnistria, we were together all the time. Ruth died last year in Israel, in a moshav, I visited her a few times and Melany lived in Bucharest, she married a Christian. We kept in touch for while and afterwards we lost contact; she didn't write, I didn't write. We saw each other a few times, she was in Bucharest at the beginning afterwards I don't know where she was, we didn't even speak on the phone afterwards so I didn't know anything about her. But last week [*august 2006*] a young woman came and introduced herself as Corina Hoancă and said: „I am Monica's daughter and I came to see the places where my mother grew up and I would like to hear some of your memories regarding her.” I showed her photos of her mother, the photo from school and I told her many things about Melany. I showed her the places where she used to live, where our high school was, I took her to the synagogue. During our childhood, the city looked completely different. Some of the old quarters stayed more or less the same but most have changed. I walked with Corina and I was hard for me to rebuild the places where her mother lived

eventhough it was in my neighborhood, near to the high school. But the interesting part is that I told her to come to my place and tell me about her mother, about how she was doing. „ My mother died three or four months ago.” It felt as if she had hit me with something on my head because even though we hadn’t seen each other for a while, I always knew that Melany was in Bucharest.

„Lady Mary’s High School” was the name of the high school I went too, I still have the basque with the initials of lady Mary. When I was 12-13 I became a “străjeriță” [2](#), we had to wear the grey or blue uniform, I don’t remember, and a tie. And I would take part in the activities of the strejarie, I would march, sing, we never went to camp, all the activities took place here, I actually went only for four years to that high school. War came, I couldn’t go to school anymore, the strajeria was dissolved, another regime took over. We were kicked out of school in 1939. Jews did not have the right to go to high school. I don’t know on what grounds [*probably because of the numerus clausus in Romania*][3](#) but I couldn’t go to school anymore so everybody had to try and find a way to complete their studies. Those of us who could afford it went to Czernovitz and studied there. I went there as well, lived with my aunt Tiny and went to some courses for a year. It was a private school run two ladies, probably retired teachers, who gathered a number of girls and taught them general culture and languages.

I didn’t feel any anti-Semitic manifestations before the war, just when the war started to draw closer. In primary school there was a teacher who would say a few anti-Semitic things as well as two girls who didn’t want to have anything to do with us. But most of them behaved very nicely until the very last moment. There was a girl, she still lives in Suceava, who would take our arm, walk with us through the city, to show people how they had to behave. There were others who didn’t want to have anything to do with us. But they were only two or so. The rest behaved properly.

I never suffered any harm from my colleagues or my professor. Contrary, the mayor’s assistant from Suceava who was a cuzist [4](#) and was known as a Jew-eater, was a professor but I forgot his name. And when the Germans came to the city, he went from house to house to find rooms for the officers. And when he arrived at our house, of course my parents were frightened and looked at me, he came with a Romanian officer I think, and said: “We can’t put anyone here, there is a young girl living here ...” and he left.

During the War

I wasn’t aware of the beginning of the war until it really broke out and the Polish fled to our regions, because Hitler had entered their country. Everybody went outside to serve them. They were dressed in furs; the rich had fled Poland by taking their own cars and crossing the borders. And everybody walked by to serve them with drinks and other things and I know that some of hem said: “You are Jews, we don’t take from Jews”. And then we said that there actually were coward Jews after all, that we shouldn’t serve them.

My father was a social democrat but in the end he abandoned politics just as he had abandoned his religiosity, something had displeased him and he stopped doing politics. I don’t remember if he ever discussed those things in front of me, I was too dreamy as a child. We did not have a radio. My parents would go somewhere else to catch up with the news. At that times they were broadcasting those programs with Hitler barking through the radio, with commentaries, typical war broadcasting. My father liked the newspapers, with politics, spoke with friends and discussed the news and he

felt that a catastrophe was coming closer. They didn't discuss possible solutions or what to do and how to react. Maybe not even my parents could anticipate the tragedy that was waiting for us.

Throughout all my childhood, I knew that my father was sick and his health slowly started to deteriorate, his kidneys started to play up. He died slowly, working until the very last moment. He was sitting, couldn't breathe anymore and made a pair of wedding rings for this man who wasn't a guard but a legionnaire of some kind, a man who had hanged many Jews in Bucharest, he was a Jew-eater. He was the husband-to-be of one of my school colleagues, who was a very nice girl, and he wanted a pair of rings so he could marry that girl. And my father, already dying, told him that he wasn't able to do it. The guy hit the table with his walking stick and said: "Either you make me the rings or I can't guarantee the outcome". So my father made the rings, it was his last job. He made the rings, gave them, went to sleep and never woke up again. This happened in February 1941, my father was 68 years old.

After my father died, my mother continued to run the store as best as she could but she would only sell things. The workshop was closed down for my father had been the only one who worked there. Before our deportation, a couple of guys came and asked for a watch and a ring in order to 'guard' our house, they all left with something. We had crystals, silverware and we knew that it was in vain but we wanted our peace and gave them the things so they would leave us alone. This happened after the deportation had been announced. We were deported in October.

One day we were announced that we had to pack our bags and then they sent us in three shifts over the Bug, over the Dniester [5](#). It was very primitive back then, a drummer would walk on the streets and that is how all the news and commands were transmitted to the people. He would walk, beat his drum, gather people around him and say what he had to say. Maybe there even was a written statement, I don't remember. Those were the days of utter chaos and I just don't remember.

We were in the third transport, we had two or three days to prepare ourselves, I don't remember exactly how many but it was too short. Those who left before us had been less lucky; I know that people told us that we, transport number three, were the lucky ones. I don't remember what happened to those from the first two transports. None of them is still alive, maybe Mrs. Victor, an old teacher, still is. She was there and she remembers, but now she isn't able to discuss those time, neither does she want to be reminded of them.

We didn't know where we were going. Maybe others knew. But I was young, 18 years old, maybe for me it was also somehow a sort of adventure, but I didn't know a thing. I know that my mother gathered what she could carry and when our time came, we hired a carriage with a friend, put our entire luggage in the carriage, sat on top of them and went to the train station. And in the train station the cattle trains were waiting, cattle wagons and in one of them were we and our fellow citizens; maybe some of them were in different wagons, I don't know but they locked us up and we traveled towards the Dniester.

Romanian soldiers guarded us. They didn't do anything to us, nobody beat us, and nobody pushed or shoved us. The worst thing was the humiliation. Here *[at home]* I lived a normal and civilized life, as you would, I was a merchant's daughter, a jeweler's daughter; there we were humiliated all the time. They put us in cattle wagons, they took us out of our homes and before we crossed the Dniester they would touch us and search for jewelry. They didn't shoot or hurt anyone, at least I

didn't see it happening, the shootings and beatings followed later.

We sat down in the wagon and as I remember there was a toilet, our friends and other acquaintances were in the same wagon as us and everybody was mourning the things they left at home. But we traveled towards the unknown; we didn't know where we were going. We arrived at Otaci, which is still on our side, on the Romanian side of the Dniester, and there they transferred us into boats so we could cross the Dniester and arrive in the Ukrainian part. On one side was Otaci and on the other side Moghilău [6](#). I think that there had been inundations in Moghilău because the houses were half-destroyed and that is where they lodged us, at a local woman's house and I don't know how long we stayed there.

Many young ones were caught and sent to the other side of the Bug, where my aunt died as well. I managed to escape and hired a carriage with some friends ... And here all of a sudden my memories disappear, I don't know anything anymore. All I know is that we crossed a field and arrived into a community named Murafa, a poor place with small houses and we entered a house where a widow and her little child lived. My mother and I stayed there for a while. Afterwards a friend, who was in Shargorod, sent a carriage to pick us up.

He found us a place to live in a Jewish house, in the Jewish quarter of Shargorod [7](#). „Hagiaica” master was a furrier and had two or three sons and a daughter who died of typhus. Two of the boys were soldiers and the boy with a disability was at home and we became friends. He could sing beautifully and we became really good friends, I heard he died. My mother and I shared a big room, our masters behaved nice towards us. Afterwards all the refugees from Czernowitz came and lived with us in that room: my mother's oldest sister Liebe Scholl, uncle Polak and cousin Rachel. They emigrated to Israel after they returned from the deportations. And then my aunt died in some home in Israel. My aunt and cousin slept on a table, my mother and I on a narrow bed of iron. Then typhus appeared. Rachel got typhus. My mother got typhus as well and I had to stay with her in one bed. There was a hospital as well and my cousin Rachel was sent to it. Our doctors from Suceava, we had doctors, were there as well but I don't know if they got paid for their services.

A family from Câmpulung Moldovenesc had to walk through our room as well, family Schiber. Five people lived in a small room and we stayed in the front room and they had to walk through our room all the time. A mother and her husband, daughter and son and the doctor whom the Mrs. Schiber would marry after the war when she came back from Transnistria where her husband died. She lived in Suceava and died last year. Mrs. Schiber's son was quite the businessman and brought them all kind of things into that room. He recently died in Israel, I mean he died in Vienna and was transported back to Israel, I was in Israel at that time. Another family lived with Hagiaca in their kitchen. They had an old stove, inside of which was a pot of clay in which they cooked. The mother and the cousin cooked our food separately. They were very retarded. They would tell us full of pride that they had curtains in front of the window. We had to admire their curtains because they were oh so proper. They were partly indeed proper and partly we had to admire them because it was in their interest, we were a connection to the rulers [*romanian occupiers*].

Our hosts were Jewish as well, they spoke Russian and Yiddish. I could communicate in Yiddish with them. They were somehow happy that we were there because we were able to talk to the Romanian soldiers, there were Romanians there, and they felt somewhat protected through our presence. They were happy that we were in their house or they just tolerated us because we were

a connection to the Romanian occupiers. But we did not have any connections to the Romanian soldiers, we rarely saw them. They were under Romanian occupation and there was a, I don't know how he was called, a prefect called deputy. He was a brutal man but he left us more or less alone because of certain reasons.

We survived and the interesting thing is that I was 18 years old and was rather well-built because I ate jacket potatoes all the time. They were so tasty, ah they tasted so good, we didn't have anything else. We would cook them with their skin, bake them, put them in salt and eat them and the Hagiaica baked very good bread which we ate. That region is a very rich region with very good markets, all that you would want, they are Ukraine's granary. Most of ours died by the time we arrived and stayed in Shargorod.

The things we had taken with us we used to survive: pillow cases, I don't know, all that we could carry we sold to the Ukrainians. Afterwards a cousin and her mother from Czernovitz came and stayed with us, the old woman was a seamstress and she would sew all the time. I don't know who borrowed a sewing machine, one of those that turn around, and she would stay and sew and then sell the things. And after a year or maybe a year and a half, our family from Czernovitz found a trustworthy person and sent us some things... We survived because we were lucky enough to be placed into a house with an oven and we weren't cold and kept selling the things we had taken from home and so the first winter passed and it was a nightmare, it was horrible. And afterwards we just kept living.

There were Jewish labour camps in Dorohoi and the Jews were taken out of the camps and sent to Transnistria [to *Sharogod*]. They arrived barefoot and full with lice, they brought typhus with them and they put them in an empty synagogue, it was winter, minus 20 degrees Celsius and the next morning one by one all the bodies were taken out and I saw that. I didn't know what the people kept putting into those carriages and all of a sudden I realised that they had to be bodies...

Sharogod was a wretched town without toilets. You had to go outside, to a filthy pond, we had buckets and we would empty them into the pond. There was no water in the house but there were some primitive wells, just some holes in the ground, from which we would take the water. The locals taught me how to take water out of the well, to throw the bucket in and pull the water up, to carry it up the hill because we lived on a hill. Once during the winter it was icy and I carried two buckets of water and just when I had arrived on top of the hill, I fell and all the water fell on me. We carried the water and in time we made ourselves a sort of oven on which we could heat our food. A human gets used to things, he adapts to whatever comes on his path.

There was on the market [a currency used for business], we could buy things but I don't remember if it was a special currency, Ruble or Lei. I was lucky that at my age of 18 years old, I did not completely realize the tragedy of our situation. It was very tragic indeed. To be taken out of your house, to be left with absolutely nothing, whoever wanted could exterminate you. In Sharogod the leaders were more tolerant. My daughter-in-law comes from Rădăuți, she was born there but she was in a different place, Giurin I think.

We would go out of the house, walk around, befriend the Ukrainian youth, with would speak Yiddish with them, they were Ukrainian Jews. It was there that I learnt a handful of Russian. I couldn't really learn that language. It is a difficult language. But we were friends and we would meet every evening and talk...

None of us from Bucovina were sent to work across the Bug. We had to pick tobacco leaves. They gathered us and then they took us to work where a lawyer from Suceava supervised us. There was a lot of youth and we would pick tobacco leaves. Mister deputy didn't like something and we had to stay in line and in front of us he slapped the lawyer a few times. And we, youngsters, just watched. Afterwards I got sick of tobacco intoxication as a result of the leave picking and I was sick for a few days. I didn't go often, maybe once or twice.

We stayed in Sharogod until May 1944. In May 1944 Sharogod was liberated, the Germans retreated, I watched them retreat, watched them how they ran as lunatics. We were surrounded by hills and I saw the partisans descent those hills. The Germans were still in town and the partisans were already descending. We hid somewhere in cellar under the ground and stayed there. We heard the Ukrainians pass by, they were the ones that left with the Germans because they felt guilty or were connected to the Germans and oh, the savages went with them. We heard them trample through the house; they didn't find us so they left. We exited the cellar and the partisans came, we cheered for them because they were our salvation because if those Germans and Ukrainians had stayed for a few more ours they would have exterminated us. And afterwards, we hired a carriage and went home. We arrived in Czernovitz and stayed for a week or two with one of my aunts, after two weeks we left them as well and went home, again in a hired carriage with some friends.

After the War

We came back in May 1944, two years and seven months after the deportation but we did not find a single thing. We had locked the door when we left home but of course there was nothing left when we returned, they had emptied the house. I found a pile of papers, thrown outside, and in that pile I found my French study book, it was half torn. There had been a fire at our home. When we returned we didn't stay in the same house, we lived with some friends.

I am not sure if my mother reopened the jewelry store but she wasn't capable, she wasn't a merchant. We did not keep the store after we came back.

I went back to school. Mrs. Lovi, a teacher, had opened a Jewish high school here in Suceava. I entered 10th grade and I skipped two grades because I had already done four years of high school and I wanted to write my final exams, I wanted to go to medical school. I don't remember how many students and how many classes there were. One of Mrs. Lovi's sisters was a judge, she taught Logic and Argumentation; then there was professor Rimmer, from Fălticeni, he taught mathematics. The others I don't remember. I don't even know where that school used to be. That's the way that period of time went by and even though I don't remember, it was very hard for me. Mathematics and Physics weren't my cup of tea and so, when my husband came and proposed, I accepted very quickly so I could marry and did not have to become a doctor as I had wanted. That is how studying and schooling ended for me.

My husband's name is **Julius Martin Schorr**, born 1906 in Suceava. His father was also from Suceva but his step-father named Schafer was the one who actually raised him because his biological father died in Iasi when Julius was six. His step-father was a respected man in Suceava, he was a lawyer. His mother was from Suceava as well, she and her sisters died of typhus on a table in Transnistria. She was a gorgeuos woman. My husband had two brothers: **Schorr Siegfried** who was an economist and died with his wife Gerda, also Jewish, in Struma [8](#). The other brother

was **Schorr Herbert**, a doctor, who lived in France and died 1978 in Paris, he had a daughter named Nicole.

My husband lived with his parents and after his father [stepfather] died, he continued living with his mother. They had a house in the center of Suceava, it was opposite to the Court, on the other side of the road. They had a beautiful house with a big garden which doesn't exist anymore. Apartment buildings have been built on that spot.

My husband was a handsome man, admired by the women from Suceava and because he was a bachelor until he was 38, I know he had a few girlfriends before he met me. He was a quiet, peaceful and serious man who professed the law. Before the war he had been a lawyer for a short time and after the war, when he came back, he was a civil servant.

My husband had been deported to Transnistria as well but we didn't meet there. We met here, after we came back. I remember that he used to sit on a chair in some store and he would sell things. We were acquainted but he wasn't part of my social circle, he was 17 years older than me. I was childish, had other friends, he was a man with life experience. We met at a wedding after our return and he decided that we should get married. He like me, I liked him, we both had been to Transnistria and that shared experience united us. He spoke with my mother and then we got married.

We married during spring 1945 in Suceava. We had a religious wedding but there wasn't a ceremony because only my mother and me were left. I know that a rabbi appeared at our civil wedding but I don't know if he was from Suceava or not. My husband wasn't religious but he respected absolutely everything that had to be done, out of respect for my mother. We were married at home, we had a chuppah from the Community. As a widow my mother wasn't allowed to stand under the chuppah. There were some acquaintances, not even friends, at the place where we lived but they could not have been more than six. He had nobody left so nobody came from his side. His mother and aunts had died, he was the only one who had returned from Transnistria. He was alone and as poor as I was. He had nobody left. I was poor, he was poor, we had absolutely nothing. But my mother made me a pink dress, I don't know how she got the fabric, we borrowed the veil and that was it.

There is a big house in the center which belonged to one of my husband's uncles, and he had room. After we married, we moved into that house and we stayed there until we moved to Câmpulung Moldovenesc. We got some furniture from the abandoned goods because many of those who had fled, died and didn't return and they gave us a table and a chair, it was easier to collect than to buy furniture. My oldest son, Karl Berthold Schorr was born in 1945 and Siegfried, the younger one in 1949, both were born in Suceava. My husband started to work as a civil servant and I started to raise the boys, first one then both and that is how life went by.

We moved to the district's capital Câmpulung Moldovenesc in 1952 [9](#). As a civil servant my husband had been transferred and he took me, our boys and my mother with him. He went back, when he was transferred back to Suceava. I stayed six years in Câmpulung with the boys because I had fallen in love with the mountains and the forests. My mother would take care of her grandsons, would take care of the house and I would climb the mountains. My mother only died in 1960 when we had already returned to Suceava. We all moved back to Suceava in 1957.

We lived in a deputy's house in Câmpulung Moldovenesc, my husband somehow got the house and that's where we lived. The house's owners weren't in Câmpulung Moldovenesc, I don't know where they were. We lived on the first stock, another family lived on the ground floor and we had to pay rent and all those other things [bills and expenses]. There used to be many jews im Câmpulung Moldovenesc but all of them left or died ... there is no one left. There used to be a synagogue as well. We had many friends and acquaintances there.

I had spoken German with my parents, I spoke German with my husband as well. He spoke a beautiful and pure German, I have many books that used to be his family's. Now I have started to forget my German because I am surrounded only by Romanians. This used to be Austria and the older generation of Romanians all spoke German, the younger ones can't.

My husband was a passionate hunter, he had a weapon and a permit, he had also an eagle which he kept for hunting and before the war he would often go hunting. During our marriage he hunted every weekend as long as he was still healthy enough and he would bring home hares, once a wild boar and all kind of fowls. I raised the children, he went hunting. When the boys grew up they accompanied him everywhere, they went hunting and fishing. Every summer we would take a vacation and because we loved nature, we would go to Câmpulung, to Vatra Dornei, we would take long walks.

My husband was a civil servant at the prefect's office, than at the Secretary of State and afterwards at the State's Arbitration where he worked until his pension when he was 62 years old. He never had any problems regarding his nationality, on contrary, he was a respected man, regarded as a sort of activist. Under the communist regime we lived as everybody did. We didn't have any problems because my husband was a social democrat and all the social democrats were automatically merged into the communist party. My husband was a communist and he entered me into the communist youth union [UTC]. They would have basic organisational meetings which I rarely attended because it did not interest me. If I went, I went for my husband so he could keep his chair.

I don't know if the news of the formation of the Israeli state in 1948 preoccupied me. People started to mass-emigrate in the 1950s. One day I went into town and saw a mass of people in the center and there I heard, that those were the people that had gathered to leave, many people left at that time. I was very happy that we never spoke about leaving. My husband never though about leaving, he was also very ill. The truth is that a week or two before he died, he told me: "Just so you know, if both our boys will leave, we will leave as well". But nobody wanted to leave. Until that moment we hadn't even thought of it. My son Siegfried was the first who came home with this issue but only after my husband died.

My oldest son, **Karl Berthold Schorr**, was born 1945 in Suceava. He went to primary and high school here. He studied at the Faculty of Law in Iasi and worked for a while at the State's Arbitration when my husband retired. When that institution was dissolved, he started working as an independent lawyer, which he still does. Karl is a hardworking man, just like his father was, when you have a job you fully dedicate yourself to it, he did so while he worked at the Arbitration but also at any other job; he knew that he to do it properly. His relationship with the Community is more of an emotional nature. He goes to the Community, they know him there but he doesn't keep the holidays as strictly as you are supposed to. Neither do we. Karl never though about making

Aliyah.

Karl's wife is Jewish and originally from Rădăuți, where her parents used to live. She spoke German at home. She worked as a mechanical engineer at the Cooperation here in Suceva. They did not have an arranged marriage. Karl had a group of friends through which he met his wife. We never said that his wife had to be Jewish. If he would've met a Christian girl and had insisted, we wouldn't have stopped him and it wouldn't have been a tragedy. But we also wished, as did he I think, that he would marry a Jewish girl. My sons never had these issues, maybe my grandchildren do. They were married in 1974, their civil marriage being in Suceava and their religious ceremony and the party took place in Rădăuți. Robert, their oldest boy, was born after nine months in 1975 and is now in Bucharest and has a job at an advertisement company, at the subscription's office of the newspaper Capitalul, he has an apartment in Bucharest as well. The other boy's name is Edgar and he is in Suceava, he is two years younger than Robert. Both of them studied at the Faculty of Law.

My youngest son, **Siegfried Schorr**, was born 1949 in Suceava. He went to primary and high school here after which he studied at the Polightchnical Institute in Iasi, he is an engineer. He met his wife through some acquaintances, someone from Bacău was interested in our family and got in touch with us, we agreed and that is what they call an arranged shadah. They met in Iasi, liked each other and got engaged. For a while he would visit her every weekend. Siegfried's wife, nee **Herta Fischer**, is Jewish, born in Roman in a family of religious Jews, her parents weren't too overly religious but were good Jews who kept the holidays in good tradition. Their religious ceremony took place in Bacău, I think the rabbi was from there. Anyway, they had a religious ceremony with all the customary rituals, exactly how it should be. Herta is a good, hard-working girl, an engineer and worked, I think, at the hydrotechnical instalations, she studied mechanics. At the beginning Siegfried and his wife didn't speak about leaving but after my husband's death and when their friends and acquaintances started to leave en masse, they wanted to leave as well. It was also during that hard time when you had to stand in a queue for peace of salami, life was hard so he decided to leave. All of a sudden. My husband died 1984, they left 1988. It was before the revolution, I don't know if they had any difficulties obtaining their pasports because they lived in Bacău. My children lived in Rehovot, where they live now as well, just in a different house. At the beginning it was very difficult, it took them two years to find permanent jobs. After many interviews and courses, Herta obtained a job at the Ministry of Finances. Now it would be all perfect, if things were peaceful there.

They have two sons: Sasha-Luis and Herbert who was named after father's brother from France. Sasha is wonderful, he is a golden boy. To study medicine at daytime and work at the airport during nighttime is not easy. Sasha's wife studied together with him in Bucharest and is a medic as well, now she studies again so she can profess in Israel. Herbert studied law at a private university and is looking now for a lawyer's office where he can work or do an internship. In the meantime he keeps having problems with the army. The drafted him, sent him home, drafted and sent him home again and now [situation with Libanon] I am convinced that they will draft him again, if it hasn't already happened. Both of them had hard army careers, Herbert is a trained parachutist. He is the devil embodied, he jumps with the parachute, dives into the oceans, he goes wherever he finds danger. They integrated well and especially the young ones became 100% Israeli. Herbert has a girlfriend there, who originally came from Morocco. They have a melting pot of languages and nations there, it is a very interesting country which I love a lot. Maybe I am influenced by the fact

that my children, grandchildren and friends are there although there aren't too many left, one by one dies.

Siegfried and his family live a more Jewish life than we do here, especially since they are in Israel, they keep the holidays, there they don't work on Fridays and Saturdays, my daughter-in-law lights the candles, they don't eat bread for Passover and do the traditional Seder ceremony. They lit candles for Hanukkah and the younger one, Herberrrt, would say the prayer during which you light the first candle. I was there for Purim and the boys were masked, the holiday when you eat fruit, my son bought a lot of fruits, I ate Hamantashen there, they do exactly everything because they live in a Jewish environment in Israel. Here they didn't really have a place where they would see those things.

My children know things about Judaism from me, not from my husband. There was a rabbi at the bris of the boys. Both of them went to Talmud Tora for two or three years. Their teacher was the head of the Community for a while and he was very pro-active and gathered the Jewish youth: he taught Talmud Tora, there was a choir, there were more Jews back then, a lot more who could come to the Community. He was transferred to Bucharest afterwards and I think that he still works at the Federation nowadays, he became a representative there. The Talmud Tora kept losing children and at one point there were only two or three left.

I taught the boys all I know about Judaism. I don't know if it is enough. Herberts knows more, he comes and teaches me now, he fasts and observes the holidays because they live in Israel. The children here, they know that they are Jewish. That is important as well, to know and to feel that you are Jewish ... if you keep tradition or if you go to the synagogue is a lot less important. To feel that you are a Jew, to feel that the things that happen in Israel hurt you as well, to feel that it wounds you terribly when somebody denies the Holocaust. Sometimes I want to throw my television out of the window when a historian appears and says that everything is a lie, that things did not happen like that. I was marked by Transnistria, I can't watch a movie with Nazi camps in them. I can't stand to hear them talk at their round tables about all those theories that the Jews want eternal sympathy... Those are the things that hurt me. And that is what it means to feel Jewish, my son feels Jewish just as I do. My grandchildren feel it a lot less, they are from a different generation. The young ones can't understand or grasp those things...impossible. I told them a few things about the deportations. But they used to live with their grandmother, they were already big boys and their grandmother told them, anyway, they have always known and still know now that they are Jews.

Every summer my husband and I would go to Câmpulung, to Vatra Dornei for a vacation. We loved nature and would take long walks. I was for four weeks in Germany in 1986, I visited a friend in Munich and I have been four times in Israel. I felt extraordinarily well in Israel, I felt home among all those Jews but it was just as nice to go home again. At first my husband was still alive, but he never was to Israel, he was sick all the time.

In 1976 I was there for the first time, I visited friends for six months and everytime I stayed three, four weeks at my friend Ruth in Jerusalem who isn't alive anymore. I had another friend who was from Iasi and went to Israel, she taught at university in Jerusalem and I visited her every time for two or three weeks. She is mentally unstable and weak now that her husband died, she has none left to talk too. The second time I was in Israel was in 1989, after the revolution [10](#), actually during

the revolution. Siegfried and Sasha came to pick me up, they arrived at th bored and they weren't allowed to enter the country. The borders had closed, the revolution had started. So I arrived a few days before them in Israel and I have visited three more times since then. I visited all the beautiful places in Israel. I was at the Western Wall in the old city of Jerusalem, I was at the Dead Sea as well. The last time when I was in Israel my son took me to a place with a scale model of Israel. It is a beautiful peace of art, with little figurines and it represent all of Israel, the buildings from the country and the economical situation of the country. I was never afraid in Israel. I would walk in the evenings to my children, but now, unfortunately, the situation is different. But here, the last time, I am afraid. There are more and more thieves now who come and rob you.

I never thought about moving to Israel because I have children here. If both of them would have moved, I would have gone but I wouldn't like to stay there too long. I am too old to learn new things, there comes a moment when you have to settle down and stay in your place, why should I pack and go? I feel very good here because I am with Jews, with my children and although my son offers me all what is best and beautiful there, I know I have to go home when my visum expires because eventhough I am there, I am here in my soul.

Siegfried used to write me loads and loads of letters. A few months ago, when I came back from Israel, I destroyed them all for there is no point in keeping them. Now that the world is modernising he keeps in touch with Karl via e-mail who prints them and gives them to me. And twice a month he calls me. And now that there are battles, misunderstandings, wars if I may say so, Siegfried calls me more often, he takes care of me.

My daughters-in-law are very nice to me, which I especially felt when I was sick and in the hospital in Fundeni, Bucharest. They are good girls. The young one, Herta, came from Israel and spoke to the professors and Edgar, my grandson, drove me to and from the hospital.

My son Karl has a beautiful little cottage and garden in Mitoc Dragomir, district Suceava, we nicknamed it his 'estate'. We would go often, many times during the summer but now they don't have time anymore. My grandson Edgar is very busy and he doesn't have the time to take me there. This summer I was there only once. We never go all together, everyone goes alone. My grandson and his friends, my son and daughter-in-law with their friends and sometimes they bring me along. We stay there for a few hours and than we go back home.

The demolishing that took place during Ceausescu's rule didn't affect me, to the contrary, every new building interested me. Nowadays, when I walk through Suceava, I try to remember how it used to be. If you are alive and see that a new quarter is being built, you forget how the old one looked. But there used to be small houses, the center was paved with riverstones, there were two or three cars in Suceava. It was a little provincial town, quiet, where we walked the main road up and down, girls separated from the boys. This was before Transnistria. Everything changed after Transnistria and then, under Ceausescu, all kind of apartment buildings were built.

When the regime changed in 1989, I felt relieved. I could talk agan about what I wanted, I did not have to watch out. We lived under pressure. You lived under the impression that you couldn't breathe in peace and I waited for that big happiness, which still hasn't come. I have to say that we achieved some progress: shops are full, there is a circle of people with a lot of money, the rich people, which doesn't disturb me, it is well. I would have liked for things to be different but I don't regret them. I never cared about politics, that's why I have no idea what is going on. I watch tv,

Antena 3, and listen to all those people talk about politics and parties but it enters one ear and leaves through the other. To be honest, it never interested me.

Every three months I get money from Germany, because I was deported; it isn't a lot but it certainly helps me. I get one million and two hundred lei from the Romanian state and together with my pension, I manage just fine. I don't have to ask my children for help. I'm not very pretentious. I don't need fancy toiletry, the things that I have, my daughter-in-law sent them from Israel.

During the last years the number of members at the Community in Suceava was reduced to 80, most of them are not even Jewish. And all the time somebody dies. Before the revolution, during the holidays, it was a struggle for the Community to find daily ten men for the minyan. Now they manage maybe once a week even during the holidays. The old ones can't anymore, the young ones have to work as they are not yet retired. My children don't go as well.

I used to go to the Community every once in a while to be surrounded by Jews. During a meeting we decided to start a sort of group, a group for us women where we could meet and discuss, we even chose a person who would be responsible for the club but nothing happened, there is no one left to those things with: Mrs Victor, Mrs. Feller, Mrs. Wister. So there are no activities. The community used to organise the Seder, it was rather pleasant. They would bring the food from the Jewish canteens in Dorohoi or Bacau. The president of the Community has been here for only two or three months, the one before him is old, 90 years. Sometimes rabbi Rosen and other deputies from the Federation would come and then some Jews would gather.

I light candles at the Jahrzeit of my husband and my parents, I actually received electrical candles from Israel. I will put them in a socket and keep them on for 24 hours, I don't light real candles anymore. It was the tradition that at a Jahrzeit you would give cake and brandy to the Community but I never did and I don't think anyone still does nowadays. Unfortunately, I can only rarely go to the cemetery, maybe twice or three times a year, because it is far away and very solitary. So I have to go with my son or whenever Siegfried visits we go together. I take the candles with me and light them at the graves of my parents and my daughter-in-law's parents who are buried there as well and I light candles at the graves of all those who were close to me or my friends. I pray daily, I take the calendar and read in Romanian, I don't know something else, and I say our Hebrew prayers not the ritual ones in Yiddish and I pray to the One up there and tell him what I want. Every evening I say „Lord, take care of my children ...” and I enumerate them all so that he won't forget their names.

As long as it is summer, I am like, how shall I put it, those flowers who vegetate during the winter, you don't have to give them water, they fall, dry up but stay in a bulb and when springtime comes, they blossom again. That is how I am during the summer. I am human in the summer, I can go out in the evening, gossip with my neighbors, walk around, take very long walks. When the autumn and the winter come with their rain, then the tragedy starts. I can't stand it to stay in the house, I have to go out but I can't; either it's too cold or it's too slippery or I don't know what and that is the greatest punishment for me. It's horrible to be locked up in your house all the time. During the remaining time, what can I say, I read a lot, I read extremely much especially in German and Romanian. Now I can't read anymore, I can't concentrate, my thoughts fly everywhere... and these eyes don't help me anymore, I have cataracts and other things in them and I don't read much

anymore. Even the television started to annoy me during the last period but still, every evening I watch TV. During the day I am busy. Although I am alone, I have to go the market or cook or clean. Twice a year I hire a lady to help me clean for the rest I do everything by myself. That is my schedule. I don't have friends, except for the neighbors and the acquaintances who are Christian but nice, but I have no more real friends left.

Glossary:

1 Mass emigration from Romania after World War II

After World War II the number of Jewish people emigrating from Romania to Israel was much higher than in earlier periods. This was urged not only by the establishment in 1948 of Israel, and thus by the embodiment of an own state, but also by the general disillusionment caused by the attitude of the receiving country and nation during World War II. Between 1919 and 1948 a number of 41,000 Jews from Romania left for Israel, while between May 1948 (the establishment of Israel) and 1995 this number increased to 272,300. The emigration flow was significantly influenced after 1948 by the current attitude of the communist regime towards the aliyah issue, and by its diplomatic relations with Israel. The main emigration flows were between 1948-1951 (116,500 persons), 1958-1966 (106,200 persons) and 1969-1974 (17,800 persons).

2 Strajer (Watchmen), Strajeria (Watchmen Guard)

Proto-fascist mass-organization founded by King Carol II with the aim of bringing up the youth in the spirit of serving and obedience, and of nationalist ideas of grandeur.

3 Numerus clausus in Romania

In 1934 a law was passed, according to which 80 % of the employees in any firm had to be Romanians by ethnic origin. This established a numerus clausus in private firms, although it did not only concerned Jews but also Hungarians and other Romanian citizens of non-Romanian ethnic origin. In 1935 the Christian Lawyers' Association was founded with the aim of revoking the licenses of Jewish lawyers who were already members of the bar and did not accept new registrations. The creation of this association gave an impetus to anti-Semitic professional associations all over Romania. At universities the academic authorities supported the numerus clausus program, introducing entrance examinations, and by 1935/36 this led to a considerable decrease in the number of Jewish students. The leading Romanian banks began to reject requests for credits from Jewish banks and industrial and commercial firms, and Jewish enterprises were burdened with heavy taxes. Many Jewish merchants and industrialists had to sell their firms at a loss when they became unprofitable under these oppressive measures.

4 Cuzist

Member of the Romanian fascist organization named after Alexandru C. Cuza, one of the most fervent fascist leaders in Romania, known for his ruthless chauvinism and anti-Semitism. Cuza founded the National Christian Defense League, the LANC (Liga Apararii National Crestine), in 1923. The paramilitary troops of the league, called lancierii, wore blue uniforms. The organization published a newspaper entitled Apararea Nationala. In 1935 the LANC merged with the National

Agrarian Party, and turned into the National Christian Party, which had a pronounced anti-Semitic program.

5 Transnistria

Area situated between the Bug and Dniester rivers and the Black Sea. The term is derived from the Romanian name for the Dniester (Dniester) and was coined after the occupation of the area by German and Romanian troops in World War II. After its occupation Transnistria became a place for deported Romanian Jews. Systematic deportations began in September 1941. In the course of the next two months, all surviving Jews of Bessarabia and Bucovina and a small part of the Jewish population of Old Romania were dispatched across the Dniester. This first wave of deportations reached almost 120,000 by mid-November 1941 when it was halted by Ion Antonescu, the Romanian dictator, upon intervention of the Council of Romanian Jewish Communities. Deportations resumed at the beginning of the summer of 1942, affecting close to 5,000 Jews. A third series of deportations from Old Romania took place in July 1942, affecting Jews who had evaded forced labor decrees, as well as their families, communist sympathizers and Bessarabian Jews who had been in Old Romania and Transylvania during the Soviet occupation. The most feared Transnistrian camps were Vapniarka, Ribnita, Berezovka, Tulcin and Iampol. Most of the Jews deported to camps in Transnistria died between 1941-1943 because of horrible living conditions, diseases and lack of food.

6 Mohilev-Podolsk

A town in Ukraine (Mohyliv-Podilsky), located on the Dniester river. It is one of the major crossing points from Bessarabia (today the Moldovan Republic) to the Ukraine. After Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, the allied German and Romanian armies occupied Bessarabia and Bucovina, previously Soviet territories. In August 1941 the Romanians began to send Jewish deportees over the Dniester river to Transnistria, which was then under German occupation. More than 50,000 Jews marched through the town, approximately 15,000 were able to stay there. The others were deported to camps established in many towns of Transnistria.

7 Shargorod

A town in Ukraine, also known as Sharigrad. During World War II Jews from Romania were deported to various towns in Transnistria, which was then under German occupation. Large-scale deportations began in August 1941, after Romania and Germany occupied the previously Soviet territories of Bessarabia (today the Moldovan Republic) and Bukovina. Jews from the newly occupied Romanian lands (Bessarabia and Bukovina), as well as from Romania were sent over the Dniester river to Transnistria. The severe living conditions, the harsh winter and a typhus epidemic contributed to the large number of deaths in the camps established in many towns of Transnistria.

8 Struma ship

In December 1941 the ship took on board some 750 Jews – which was more than seven times its normal passengers' capacity – to take them to Haifa, then Palestine. As none of the passengers had British permits to enter the country, the ship stopped in Istanbul, Turkey, in order for them to get immigration certificates to Palestine but the Turkish authorities did not allow the passengers to

disembark. They were given food and medicine by the Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish community of Istanbul. As the vessel was not seaworthy, it could not leave either. However, in February 1942 the Turks towed the Struma to the Black Sea without water, food or fuel on board. The ship sank the same night and there was only one survivor. In 1978, a Soviet naval history disclosed that a Soviet submarine had sunk the Struma.

9 Territorial reorganization in 1952

The new constitution adopted in 1952 declared Romania a country, which started to build up communism. The old administrative system was abolished, and the new one followed the Soviet pattern: the administrative partition of the country consisted of 18 regions ('regiune'), each of them subdivided into so-called 'raions'. In the same year the so-called Hungarian Autonomous Region was founded, a third of which was made up by the Hungarian inhabitants living in Romania. The administrative center of this region was Targu Mures/Marosvasarhely, and it was subdivided into ten 'raions': Csik, Erdoszentgyorgy, Gyergyoszentmiklos, Kezdivasarhely, Marosheviz, Marosvasarhely, Regen, Sepsiszentgyorgy, Szekelyudvarhely.

10 Romanian Revolution of 1989

In December 1989, a revolt in Romania deposed the communist dictator Ceausescu. Anti-government violence started in Timisoara and spread to other cities. When army units joined the uprising, Ceausescu fled, but he was captured and executed on 25th December along with his wife. A provisional government was established, with Ion Iliescu, a former Communist Party official, as president. In the elections of May 1990 Iliescu won the presidency and his party, the Democratic National Salvation Front, obtained an overwhelming majority in the legislature.