

Estera Wechsler And Stefania Rubinger



This is a photo from Govora from 1915. This is my mother, Estera Wechsler (nee Letzler) with my sister, Stefania Wechsler, who was her first child. My mother was born in 1888, in Ploiesti. She attended a boarding school and spoke German and French. Naturally, she had also learnt Yiddish at home. All she told me about her childhood was that she used to be a good student and that her teachers thought highly of her, especially because of her skills in painting and drawing. Unfortunately, or maybe fortunately - who could tell? -, my mother married a tradesman from Bucharest and moved with him. She interrupted her studies. She would have liked to go to the Arts Academy [in Bucharest], and her teachers had encouraged her about going to college. My grandparents had had a religious, bigot upbringing. Religious Jews believe that girls should get married at an early age, and, if possible, to a rabbi - which is considered to be all that a young girl could wish for. This was my mother's fate. My parents had three children: Stefania, Sebastian and me, Aristide Wechsler. Stefania Rubinger [nee Wechsler], my sister, was born in 1914, in Bucharest. Her story is hard to tell. She was married when World War II came. Her husband, Rubinger, was a painter. He was a man of an extraordinary beauty, tall, robust, highly cultivated and talented. My sister may have gone to the boarding school, but her husband had an artistic culture. His works are now in Israel, Germany and Romania. They were relatively poor, but they married for love. They lived in Bucharest until the 1970's, when they emigrated to Germany. It was a time when Germany accepted German-speaking immigrants of German descent. He had been born in Cernauti and spoke German; my sister spoke German too. She received a pension in Germany. Her husband received a large pension, because he had worked a lot and his activity was taken into consideration. They settled in the town of Dusseldorf and stayed there. My sister now lives there by herself, as my brother-in-law died two years ago [in 2002]. He was run over by a car on a pedestrian crossing, at the age of 92. My sister is about 90 now. The two of them have two extraordinary children: Irina Rubinger and Adrian Rubinger. Irina is the elder child; she was born during World War II. Adrian was born later - he is now about 52 or 53. They both grew up in Bucharest. They currently live in Paris.