

Iulius And Estera Wechsler



The photo was taken in Bucharest, in the 1970s. This are my parents, Iulius and Estera Wechsler. They met through a matchmaker and get married in 1912. My parents had three children: Stefania, Sebastian and me, Aristide Wechsler. My father, Haim Maier Wechsler, was born in Namoloasa, in 1883. He changed his name to Iulius Wechsler before 1910. My brother and sister were born before the war [Ed. note: 1916 was the year Romania entered World War I.]. My father came to Bucharest around 1900. His parents were dead, so a part of what he earned from the small businesses he did was destined for the support of his sisters, Blimette and Betti Wechsler. Estera Wechsler [nee Letzler], 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, who was more educated than her suitor (she had attended a boarding school, spoke foreign languages, had painting skills etc.), accepted to marry the man because of his material situation. Being a very beautiful woman, all her children were beautiful, except me. She agreed to this match with my father knowing that they both thought they would make a happy married couple. And so they did. My mother died in 1982. My parents are buried at the Giurgiului [Jewish] cemetery. We had a cantor at the funeral, not a rabbi. I recite the Kaddish at every commemoration. I cherish the memory of my parents, who looked after me. We go to the cemetery from time to time. The street we lived on, Legislator St., no longer exists. It was located in the area where the Victoria Socialismului Ave. was built. [Ed. note: Currently known as Unirii Ave. On Ceausescu's order, a portion of 4.5 kilometers from the historical center of the city was destroyed in order to obtain a monumental perspective on the House of People, the second largest building in the world, after the Pentagon. Ironically, this avenue now shelters the headquarters of many capitalist banks and companies.] It was where Ducești Ave. crossed Vacaresti Ave. There is nothing left of it now. It was bulldozed and something else was built in its place. The [systematic] demolition took place in 1985-1986, long after my father had died (in the 1970's). My mother lived there until the 1977 earthquake, and then she moved with me. The place where we lived [20

Nicolae Golescu St.] was partially damaged by the earthquake. Ceausescu was on the site and weaved his hand. No one knew what exactly he had meant, so they only demolished the three floors that were above us, leaving us, at the first floor, with no roof. The rain couldn't be stopped, so we had to move to a student hostel. Then they gave us an apartment in Drumul Taberei - we could see the field and the grazing sheep from our window. Finally, they added a roof to the old place, and we were free to move back on Nicolae Golescu St. This is what we did. Eventually, we managed to exchange the place for the one we live in now, in the center of the city. This happened during the Communist period.