

Klara And Dezideriu Stern



This is a photo taken in Targu Mures, some time in the 1940s after World War II, of my mother's sister, Klara Stern, nee Iszakovics, and her husband, Dezideriu Stern.

Klara was born in 1909 in Targu Secuiesc, and she lived in Odorheiu Secuiesc with her parents before the war started. During World War II, in 1943 I think, my maternal grandparents and Aunt Klara were deported to Auschwitz. [Editor's note: The deportations in Transylvania took place in April-May of 1944.] My grandmother was gassed in 1944, and only grandfather came back after the war. As there was no news back then about the camps, everybody thought Klara was dead too, and my mother was simply struck with grief and her nerves were shattered. Her doctor recommended that she should be taken somewhere to rest; so, my father sent us with mother to Intorsura Buzaului, to stay for a few weeks at a peasants' house. Meanwhile, my father returned to Bucharest.

One day, in July, somebody knocked at the door. When my father opened, it was a short young woman, around 22, all skin and bones, bold, with a kerchief over her head. She was wearing army boots size 44, although, as we later found out, her tiny feet were size 35, and a long black men's overcoat in that July heat, tied with a rope around the waist. My father asked her, 'Who are you looking for?' And only then the woman spoke: 'Carol!'. It was only by her voice that my father recognized his sister-in-law, Klara.

She was lucky to make it because she was young and strong and fit to work, so the Germans had sent her to an armament factory, somewhere nearby the concentration camp, where she had to assemble bombs. She came home when the camp was liberated. My father brought her to Brasov, to my paternal grandfather's, but first told her that her sister wasn't well, and asked her to eat, rest for a few days, and borrow a dress from her sister's wardrobe. Then he would take her to see her sister. Father phoned mother and told her that on Saturday he would come with guests, but he

didn't want to say who it was, so that my mother wouldn't be more troubled than she already was. He said it would be a surprise. Then Saturday came, and we were at the train station, the train arrived and my father was taking off some suitcases, but there was no sign of the guest. My mother was curious, and eventually my father announced: 'The guest is your sister!'

Klara recovered quickly, she was young, and soon she started working something in Brasov. Then she married a Jew from Targu Mures, named Dezideriu Stern, who was a watchmaker, and had two children, Carmen and Erwin Stern, when she was still here. She left for Israel in 1962. There she worked as a seamstress in small workshops, I believe it was tailoring. Now she is retired, but she is still alive.