

# Manin Rudich

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Brasov

Romania

Interviewer: Andreea Laptas

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Mr. Rudich is a 71-year-old man, but he looks much younger than his age. He is in good shape, wears glasses and dresses rather well. He lives in a two- bedroom apartment in a house; the place is spacious, with nice furniture, and very sunny. He doesn't have problems communicating, he is a very talkative person, and very hospitable. He keeps repeating the phrase 'You understand me?', as though he wants to make himself absolutely understood. He talks with a lot of pathos about his life, and sometimes it is hard to interrupt him. He is especially passionate about the Holocaust period, but when he remembers it, he doesn't seem to be in pain. It is like the child he was back then has survived and retells the story, as if it had been some kind of childhood adventure.

I never knew my paternal grandparents, I only know that they died when my father was very young and still in school, about 15 years old, sometime in the 1910s. My father had a younger brother, Samuel Rudich, who was some sort of shopkeeper, I think. He was married and had a son, Izu Rudich. He died in Transnistria [1](#).

My maternal grandparents also died before I was born, in the 1920s. My maternal grandfather, Mose Weiselberg, had run the shop my parents inherited later. I remember I saw photos of him and my grandmother Weiselberg; I don't remember her first or maiden name. He had a long white beard and she wore a kerchief, but they weren't dressed traditionally. My mother had ten siblings, two sisters and eight brothers, but I didn't know them all. I know one brother was married and went to Peru. However, he was married and they had three sons here in Cuciurul Mare, all about my age. When their mother died, he came back for them and took them with him, in 1939. They became diamond polishers. Another brother left for the USA, married there, and had two children, a son and a daughter. They wrote a bit right after the war, but after a while we lost contact. Both his children studied medicine, and the boy became a military doctor. One of my mother's sisters, Cecilia - we called her Tili - was married and had two children, Leopold, whom we always called Poldi, and another boy we used to call Ficicu. Her husband left for the USA, and was on the Struma ship [2](#). Cecilia was shot in front of her house along with her son Ficicu, and one of her brothers, Bubi Weiselberg, in 1941. Bubi was the youngest of my mother's brothers and sisters. Her other sister, Roza, was married to Iosif Glaubach and had two children, Izu Glaubach and Clara Beraru, nee Glaubach.

My father, Iacob Rudich, was born in Cernauti in 1900. He spoke Yiddish, Romanian and German, and also some Ukrainian. When he was young he had worked as a clerk for a lumber station, and he had to come and work in Cuciurul Mare. He used to come to the shop my maternal grandparents kept, and that's how he met my mother, Gusta Rudich, nee Weiselberg. She was born in Cernauti in 1907 and spoke Yiddish, Romanian and German. They married in the synagogue, but I don't know exactly when. My father started to run the shop, along with my mother. He wasn't fanatical as far

as religion was concerned, but every morning he put on his tefillin and tallit and prayed, and he went to the synagogue every Saturday. My mother was rather religious: she lit candles every Friday evening; on Sabbath the shop was closed and all the family went to the synagogue. All food was kosher and she kept separate pots for dairy and for meat products.

My father had been in the Romanian army during World War I. He told us he had traveled a lot, he had been in Czechoslovakia and in Italy, where people used to eat cats. But he didn't talk much about the war; they weren't things for a child to hear, I assume.

My elder sister, Rozalia Adler, nee Rudich, was born in 1927 and I was born in Cuciurul Mare in 1932. We had a good financial situation; I don't remember ever being in need of food or clothes. We lived in a house with two bedrooms, a large living room and a kitchen. I slept with my parents in one room, and my sister slept alone in the smaller room. The shop was in the house as well, in a separate large room: it had two big windows and a door for the customers to enter. It was a big, big room with a counter and all sorts of merchandise on shelves, and it had a cellar as well, for wine because there were no refrigerators back then. We entered the house through the courtyard, which was rather big. We had no running water or electricity, but we had oil lamps and a fountain in the courtyard. There were some nut trees and plum trees in the yard as well. A Christian woman came with her husband to take care of the garden: they delved, sowed and hoed. They didn't live in the same house with us, they just came and went. We also bred poultry, ducks and hens. I don't think my parents often went to the market, since we had what we needed in the garden, but they went to different warehouses to buy merchandise for the shop. They had a shopping list with them all the time.

They used to go to Cernauti with the cart, and I accompanied them two or three times. I remember one of those times, when my parents took me and my sister to Cernauti to eat out in a restaurant because it was kosher. The restaurant was somewhere in the basement of a building, and we ate there. But we never ate out unless the food was kosher. My parents were very generous to us, kids: whenever they went to Cernauti to buy merchandise they bought something sweet for us, the kids. They never came home empty-handed! As far as I know, my parents never went away on a holiday.

We didn't keep books in the house, except for religious ones, but I think my parents read newspapers because they knew what was going on in the world. They never advised my sister or me what to read, but they took us to cheder. Back then, both boys and girls went to cheder; it was normal. There was an old Jew, who was our neighbor and gave cheder classes in his house.

On Sabbath we didn't cook, and during the winter a woman came and lit the fire. My mother cooked challah on the day before, on Friday evening. The shop was closed, nobody in the family worked, but otherwise it was a regular day. We, kids, had to go to school on Saturday, we couldn't skip classes. I studied with my father very rarely.

On the high holidays we went to the synagogue with our parents, we listened to the prayer, came home, ate, rested, and in the evening we went back to the synagogue. As a kid, I loved all holidays because I didn't have to go to school. We could play in the synagogue's courtyard; we were too small and my parents didn't force us to listen to all the prayers, they let us out to play and came to check on us from time to time.

On Purim my mother used to send us to friends and family members with shelakhmones. We tried to disguise ourselves by dressing like a peasant, or in an even funnier way. I remember me and my sister went to an aunt in disguise, and the dog recognized us and jumped onto us; we were so annoyed that the dog gave us away. My aunt said that she hadn't recognized us, but of course she had, she just said so to cheer us up. On Chanukkah my parents always gave us Chanukkah gelt, and we lit the chanukkiyah at home. I did it when I got older, and my father said the blessing.

On Pesach we, the children, received gifts like new sandals or new boots. But my parents gave us small gifts all the time, like sweets, candy, or some chocolate. My father said the kiddush, the prayer, and we ate. On seder I asked the mah nishtanah and I also looked for the afikoman. But we kept it simple, compared to what I have seen others do nowadays: I saw Jews from Israel who were visiting Brasov with beards, payes and tallit coming to the prayer and then dancing and singing in the street... you don't see this here in the community of Brasov. And we never built a sukkah on Sukkot; we weren't religious to that extent.

My family got along well with the neighbors, most of whom were Christians. The Jews lived a bit further from where our house was. I don't think they were close friends with their neighbors, but they had good relations, and my father gave them merchandise on credit. Relatives often came to visit, and we also visited them. I remember my mother's sister, Roza, who moved to Radauti after the war and had two children, Izu, a boy of my age, and Clara, a daughter younger than me. They lived in a different neighborhood and went to a different school, but on Saturdays my parents told us to stay home because Izu and Clara would come, or they sent us over to their house. There was also the chief of the railway station, a Romanian, who visited us a lot. He used to call me a Bolshevik, I don't know why. My mother didn't know what that was either, only later, when the Russians came, she said, 'I haven't known till now what a Bolshevik is. Now I know!' On Christian holidays, my father always sent packages with gifts to the mayor, the prefect, the chief of the police. All Jews did that, not just my father. But they, the Christians, respected our holidays as well. We were closed on Saturdays, we had a special approval from the city hall, I think. We were open on Sundays though. They used to greet and wish us happy holidays. The world was more civilized then, and Cernauti had been under Austro-Hungarian rule for a long time. It was a different education.

I didn't go to kindergarten when I was little; my mother took care of me. I also had my sister to play with, and I was mostly in the garden, playing with the dog or with the chickens. I never actually studied with my father, although he explained a lot of things to us; but it was mainly my mother who told us stories about Esther and the exodus from Egypt. For us, as kids, it was a miracle how Moses managed to part the waters with just a stick.

I went to the regular state school when I was seven; it was compulsory to go. I got along well with my classmates. We would meet on the way to school - all the boys from my neighborhood - because someone had a gander and let it loose. We were afraid of it because it pinched. I had no problems in school, but I remember the teacher slapped me with the ruler over my palm one time - I don't remember why, but I probably deserved it. My sister was also in school, in a higher grade, and she studied Orthodox Christian religion with Gica Petrescu. [Gica Petrescu is a well-known Romanian singer.] We got along very well, me and my sister; she helped me with my homework until we were deported. I didn't like mathematics then, and I didn't like it later, in high school, either. I was more fond of literature. My cousin Izu had a problem in school. The teacher pulled him

by the side whiskers and said, 'You Jew, I will thrash you so badly you won't know your own name anymore!' My uncle was very upset, and he went to speak with the principal, and the teacher was sent away. He was a rather influential person, my uncle; he had a restaurant and many good relations.

I made friends with everybody in school, Jew or not. We, the boys, would play football in a clearing with a stocking we filled with rags. I don't remember the names of my friends back then; it was a long time ago.

When I was in the first class in school the teacher took us to Cernauti, to the railway station: King Carol [3](#) and his son, King Michael [4](#), were coming. We were dressed as watchmen [see Strajer] [5](#); it was compulsory. I was right near the red carpet, and we were singing 'Long Live the King', which was the national anthem back then. I stopped singing at one point, and the teacher pulled me by the side whiskers: 'Sing!', she said. Michael was also in a watchman's uniform. He was older than us, and he stuck his tongue out at us. After that they got into a carriage and drove away.

Once, in the late 1930s, when I was already in school, I went to see a movie with my parents in Cernauti. I was so scared, I cried all the time! We were sitting in the front of the theater, and I had the impression that all the carts and horses on the screen were really coming into the room.

Cernauti was a beautiful town, and there were a lot of Jews. I don't know how many, but there were two beautiful synagogues. In Cuciurul Mare, where we lived, there were also two, but not as big as the ones in Cernauti, where one was for those who were well-off, and one for the poor Jews. There was a shochet and a chazzan in Cuciurul Mare, and we had a cheder, but we had no rabbi and no mikveh. An old Jew was teaching at cheder. I remember he had a stick he used on us sometimes. I went to the mikveh in Cernauti once or twice, and I remember going there with my father, and sitting on benches. We had to pour water on ourselves, and use some small branches with leaves on them for our backs.

I remember my father went to see the rabbi in Cernauti. He needed advice because a Christian had opened a store across the street, and our business was going worse because most Christians would go shop there. And the rabbi told my father, 'Go home and be patient. He will mess up his business himself with his problems.' And so it was: he started drinking and in the end the shop was closed down.

All the Jews in Cuciurul Mare met in the synagogue on Saturdays and on the high holidays. They lived everywhere in the city, and many were watchmakers, jewelers, barbers or tailors; they had easy jobs. I remember the father of a friend of mine who was a tinsmith. His son, my friend Walter Beno, lives in Australia now and we still keep in touch.

Before World War II started, there were many Jews brought to our town from Transylvania; this was back in 1939 or 1940. One could feel the war approaching, and there were all these Jews who had to dig up trenches. They were forced laborers, brought by the Romanian authorities I think. They lived in some barracks, but they could say their morning prayers, and I remember some of them paid not to be forced to work on Saturdays. Some of them, not all, wanted to eat kosher food, and they ate in our house and paid us for it. My mother couldn't understand a word they said: they spoke mainly Hungarian, but some spoke Yiddish as well, so they understood each other.

I remember the flight of the Poles; there were many who came our way, to Cernauti or Cuciurul Mare. Some of them even settled here. There was a Polish family with two children who rented a house near ours. I don't remember their names, but I remember that he was a handicraftsman. It was easy to make contact with them: Polish people spoke German very well, and so did I; and children always relate very easily to other children, even if they don't know the language. I learnt a few Polish words from them, like 'pan polski' [mister Pole], and some others I can't remember right now. In our house, my parents were discussing the invasion of Poland [6](#), or the arson of the temple in Germany [Editor's note: the interviewee is probably referring to the Berlin Great Synagogue being in flames on Kristallnacht]. They said it was bad news, that they killed Jews. But I, a child, didn't fully understand the threat of those events.

My parents weren't politically involved, but they went to vote when there were elections. I remember that before election days, my father told my mother that they would have to get up very early the next day, so that they could vote before the brawlers appeared. They were back before we, kids, were up. They never had problems with voting, as far as I know, but I remember they used to say - they probably exaggerated for us, kids - that when you went into the booth to vote, someone was looking over the booth wall and marked your coat with chalk if you didn't vote for the National Peasants' Party [7](#). Their supporters were usually causing rows, and my parents said that if you had that mark they would hit you on your way out.

When I was in the third class of elementary school, the Russians came to Cuciurul Mare. I still remember the day I first saw them, in the summer of 1940. They came during the night, and took over our courtyard with their carts and horses. There was this silly hearsay, especially among kids, that Russians had a horn on their foreheads. And my mother came to wake me up and told me, 'You know, it's not true Russians have horns. Don't be frightened, they are in our courtyard!' But I was frightened. Then I went to the window and saw they were normal people. The story with the horn was because of the fur caps the Russian soldiers wore in winter.

They took over Bukovina, Bessarabia [8](#) and Cernauti. They immediately imposed Russian in schools, so half of that year I studied in Russian. I can't say it didn't help later: when we were deported, I could already read in Russian. A lot of people, like the mayor and other functionaries, ran away with carts, with what they could take along, and I remember the mayor came to our house and asked my parents to store a trunk for him, until he came back. The trunk was closed, and we didn't look what was inside. He came back in 1941, before we were deported, and took it back. He opened the lock, and I saw there were papers, files, and stamps. He said everything was alright and thanked my father.

Our family wasn't affected by the anti-Jewish laws in Romania [9](#), and neither was the shop. I think that, if it hadn't been for the Russian occupation in 1940, we would have never been deported. Some young men, like my cousin Leopold, welcomed the Russians, and wore red buttons on his coat; he thought Russians were a marvel. And when the Russians retreated, some of the older boys, like my cousin, who was ten years older than me, left with them. And everything was perceived as if we, the Jews, had brought the Russians, and that's why the Romanian authorities deported us.

In 1941, I remember it was afternoon, a neighbor came to us hastily and said that the German troops that entered the village, had shot my aunt Cecilia, her son Ficicu and my uncle Bubi, and

told us to hide in his house. We did so. We ran out of our house with our clothes on and nothing else. After a while he came inside as well and told us that our Christian neighbors had started robbing our house. One took our counterpane, one other things... And this neighbor, who came to us - I don't remember his name - had a house with a garden, and we heard that they were shooting other Jews as well, so we, the whole family, hid there, in the garden, under some berry bushes, and we slept there, on some blankets, all night.

In the morning we heard that all Jews were asked to come to the city hall, to have their names taken down, and the Romanian authorities promised that nothing would happen to them on the way. So we went to the city hall, and in the courtyard there were already lots of people: you had to go to a clerk, who put your name down on a list. We all had to sleep in the courtyard, on the ground, till the next morning. Then another official came and said, 'Whoever wants to abandon their religion and become a Christian, let them come inside, and they will be released at once and will be free to go wherever they please!' There was one family - they had a son - who accepted immediately. My parents knew them, and I remember they were cursing them.

The rest of us had to fall into line and march all the way to Transnistria. We had no time to take anything with us. It was the end of June or the beginning of July, but it was already getting cold. At night we slept in the field, no matter where we were, and in the morning, when we woke up, they were counting the dead: one, two, three... We were escorted by Romanian gendarmes; some of them let us bury the Jewish deportees who had died during the night and say a prayer, others just buried them quickly and rushed us on. There were people and people, even among them. I remember once or twice, when there was cold rain, the gendarme said, 'Just so that you won't say we're accursed people...' and they let us sleep in the barn of some peasants, on straw. It was terrible and crowded, but it was better than outside. We got one slice of bread all day, and that was it; we only stopped for water at fountains. We walked for almost three months, it was already fall, September, when we reached Snitkov. [Snitkov was a small camp in Transnistria.] Many Jews were left behind in Mohilev-Podolsk [10](#), but we were taken to Snitkov. We had reached Snitkov only a few days before they brought that family as well; the one that had abandoned Judaism.

Snitkov was a ghetto. And it happened in the fall of 1941, that one morning I got out underneath the barbed wire and went to beg in town. I was on the outskirts of Snitkov, and I went to a house. It belonged to a Ukrainian woman, and I asked her for something to eat. She asked me to come in. I was afraid at first, but then I did. She warmed a mug of milk and gave me a slice of bread, and then I started crying and I couldn't stop. And she comforted me. She wrapped some bread and some cheese in a newspaper. I spoke Ukrainian because I was from Cernauti. And she told me to be careful not to be caught and asked me to come back. Her name was Irina Petrovna, and her husband was at the front - a huge Russian, she showed me photos of him. She had a small boy, three years old I think he was. I went back to my parents, who were scared because they didn't know where I had been, and gave them the food. It was a true joy for them; in the ghetto we only got to eat a piece of pea-flour mush, the size of half a brick, and that was all our food for one day. The food was very bad.

I told my parents I would go back to that woman because she asked me to, but they said, 'No'. They feared I would be caught. But I went anyway. The winter was drawing close, so she took a padded coat that belonged to her husband and cut its sleeves, and gave it to me, along with a pair of big rubber boots, and some food. And again she told me to return. I went back only one time



after that because in the winter of 1941 I fell ill with typhoid fever. It was a very hard winter, I remember the sacrifices my parents made for me: they didn't eat so that I could have something to eat. My mother was crying because she couldn't help me more. I wasn't afraid of dying, I had seen death one too many times and I knew it didn't hurt, people mostly died silently. But I was lucky, my days weren't over yet.

In the meantime Irina had found out my name, came to the ghetto, bribed the sentry and showed him what she brought into the ghetto. She came weekly, and she brought milk, food; it was unbelievable. Other Ukrainians were very mean, especially to Jews. Thanks to her, I recovered and when spring came, I went back to her. She offered me some work - to graze her cow - and I accepted. Many people went out of the ghetto to work. There was a list at the entrance and on that list there was also my name, a nine-year-old child! I went to graze cows with some six or seven Ukrainian boys, and Irina asked them not to say anything about me if a patrol should come along. Indeed, we became friends. We met a patrol once, and they shouted, 'Deutsch? Deutsch?' [German, German?] But we all shrugged our shoulders. Then they said, 'Partisan?' - there was a forest nearby where they thought partisans were hiding. But we didn't say a word, and they left saying, 'Ach, Scheisse!' [Oh, shit].

The colonel of the military unit in Snitkov - Lange was his name - asked which one of us spoke German and Ukrainian. My father knew Ukrainian and he had also studied German in school, so he became a translator for the colonel, and my mother was a cleaning woman for the offices because she was considered trustworthy with her husband working as a translator. It was better than what the others had, at least we got some extra bread there. The others had to go to work; there were a lot of bombed houses and they had to clean and gather materials.

One night, when the colonel was away, the SS-officers gathered all the Jews and took them to a place, where a common grave had already been dug. They started selecting us - the old and the very young were to be shot, and the young and strong were to be sent to work. I was sent to the children's row, to the ones to be shot, and my sister was sent to the other. And I say, it was a miracle, you could find kind humans among the Germans as well, because the colonel [Lange] had meanwhile come back and talked to the SS-officer. He said that he needed a translator, that it was impossible to manage without my father, and that he needed his children as well because they were sent to gather information about the partisans, and so on. I didn't hear him word for word, I was too far away, but my father told me later. I just saw my father waving at me and calling me to join them; in the row of people who were going to live. So the colonel took us all back.

On the way back, we heard tractors, but only later we understood why, somebody told us: those tractors, usually used to plough, were let to run in order to cover the noise of the shots and to hide the mass grave. In the whole ghetto, the only Jews left were us. The colonel took us to live in a house, and after three days he came and talked to my mother and father. He said, 'I will not be able to protect you much longer. We will leave with the front and I cannot guarantee that you'll make it.' And he went on, 'Are you Romanian citizens?' My father said we were. 'Then I will take you over to the Romanian side.' The ghetto was split in two parts, and the colonel took us to Copăigrod, to the Romanian side. [Copaigrod was a ghetto in Transnistria.] He talked to the Romanian commander, who, as you can imagine, was scared of a German officer, who ordered, 'These people will get a house, and I will come to check on them. If something happens or if they aren't happy, I will send you to the front.' And my father was the one to translate all this to the

Romanian officer, who was shaking! But he did what he was ordered to do. The colonel didn't do us much good, although he wanted to. The Romanians put us in the ghetto, where indeed, we had a nice house, but all the other Jews were afraid of us; they thought we were spies.

I remember we were also in a place called Shargorod [11](#), but only briefly; it might have been that place where they dug the common grave, I'm not sure.

We were on the Romanian side, in the spring of 1944 - it was April, I think - when a Russian armored car with the red star on it appeared, and a big fat Russian woman looked out through the cock-pit and shouted, 'Comrades, liberation!'. Some among us said we should open the gate of the ghetto and get rid of the barbed wire. Others were afraid; they said you never know what would happen. And the armored car left, and for three days nobody, neither the Germans nor the Russians, came. Everybody in the ghetto stayed behind the barbed wire and was afraid to go out. All the sentries were gone and the men who usually went out of the ghetto for work didn't go anymore: you never knew whom you would meet. They were afraid of getting shot.

I left the ghetto with a cousin of mine, to gather firewood, somewhere near some bombed houses, and some Romanian soldiers caught us and beat us both. I took the most of the beating. They threw us to the ground, my cousin over me, and they beat us with the belt, and it had an iron buckle. My cousin was twisting and turning, and the buckle hit me almost most of the time. It was some beating, I can tell you! After a while they let us go. I couldn't sit up for a few days.

The Ukrainian woman who had helped me, Irina, came to the gates of the ghetto and told us to stay still because the Soviet army was drawing near; it was just a few kilometers away. The first to arrive were the Cossacks [12](#) on horseback; lots of them. They dismounted, and their commander ordered to remove the barbed wire, and people braced up and came out. Then trucks started coming, and my father went up to them and talked to the people, and we rode with the front. It was the first time I was in a car. I remember it was very weird for me to see the bow of the car moving before we actually did. They fed us as well. I said goodbye to Irina. She gave me a loaf of bread for the road. I wrote to her when we got home, but I never received an answer.

When we came back to Cuciurul Mare in 1944, we just found wasteland: our house had been demolished. But we had a surprise: the school's principal, Cimbru, had saved from our house the only thing he could and brought it to my father. It was the book into which my father had written all his debtors; the people he had given merchandise on credit. And shortly afterwards a neighbor came and told my father he owed him money from before the deportation. He gave my father rubles - Cernauti and Cuciurul Mare were already Russian territories by then. My father told this neighbor who else owed him money, and word spread around. People came and brought the money they owed. They knew we were poor now; and we had been very well respected in Cuciurul Mare before the war.

I was twelve years old when I came back from Transnistria, and I studied two more years in Russian, because Cuciurul Mare was under Russian rule by then. In these two years we spent in Cuciurul Mare, my father was a supervisor in a food warehouse; he distributed food to different shops. My mother had suffered from frostbite, especially on her legs. She was a housewife.

We were still in Cuciurul Mare, I remember I was 14, and it was the first and only time when my father slapped me. He caught me smoking corn silk rolled up in paper with some other boys. I took



a few puffs and got sick, when my father appeared out of nowhere. And I have smoked for more than 36 years of my life, but I have never smoked in front of my parents. Even though they knew I smoked because when I was in the army they sent me packages with cigarettes in them as well. I remember later, when we were in Brasov, I was smoking in the street with some friends of mine when we met my father. I hid my cigarette in my left hand, and it was burning me, but I didn't say a thing. I shook hands and talked for a while with him and his friends.

We stayed in Cuciurul Mare until March 1946, when the Russian authorities announced that everybody who had been deported and was a Romanian citizen could emigrate to Romania. Almost everybody left; at least us, who had been deported, knew what Ukraine was like, and we realized that Cuciurul Mare would become the same thing.

I was already here, in Brasov, when the state of Israel was born. We went to our synagogue, to the Neolog [13](#) one: everybody was in the courtyard; there were so many people singing and celebrating! We also went to the Orthodox synagogue because some of my friends' parents were Orthodox: there was also dancing, but there were two separate ring dances; one for women and one for men. And they served beer and nuts, I don't know why, probably somebody had a stock kept away somewhere and took it out to celebrate. Over at the Neolog synagogue, we had cookies and sweets. The women had prepared them beforehand, they probably knew of the birth of Israel before. And we celebrated far into the night. Later, I was upset to hear about the wars in Israel. Luckily, I didn't have any relatives in Israel back then; that would have been worse.

I never thought of emigrating, I considered it was too difficult, and so did the rest of the family. When we got to Brasov, some of our acquaintances from there left for Israel, but they had to stay in Cyprus first for a probation period and then pass the border to Israel illegally. We had a family council, and my father said, 'We already started from scratch after the camp [in Transnistria], I don't think I have the strength to start all over again.' So he worked as a shift supervisor in a food shop. He worked there from 1946 until he retired in 1960.

When we moved to Brasov, I was 14 years old and I hadn't had my bar mitzvah. There were three or four other boys, from all over the country, in the same situation, some older than me, and we got Rabbi Deutsch's approval to have our bar mitzvah in the synagogue, all at once, because we had been deported. We had our bar mitzvah in the Neolog synagogue.

There was a Jewish teacher, who had been deported to Transnistria as well, and he moved to Brasov, too; that's where we met. He tutored me, along with others, for the seven grades examination that you needed back then to pass to start high school. I studied with him in his house for two and a half years, and then I took my seven grade graduation diploma here, in Brasov. It was easier in high school, there wasn't so much to catch up with once I got there. I made friends easily and with everybody. One of our favorite hobbies was to collect the little keys in the Nivea boxes; when we found one, we fought for it. For I don't remember how many thousand keys you got a football - which we got - and for tens of thousands you got a bike, but I don't know if anybody got that one. If you only had a few keys, you would get a soap or a toothpaste. The prizes were handed over at the gate of the factory here, in Brasov.

I went camping with colleagues of mine when I was in the last year of high school, in the 10th grade, to Slanic Moldova, and to Costinesti. [Slanic Moldova is a spa in Moldova and Costinesti a Romanian resort at the Black Sea.] We were there with some of our teachers. Back then Costinesti

was more of a village, and we slept in rented rooms; six boys in one room because we didn't want to be separated. We slept on the floor, only on straw and sheets, and cooked ourselves in the courtyard, but it was very nice.

We had sports classes in high school, but I also played football in the team of the Jewish community here, in Brasov. The team's name was Hacua, and I and other boys, like Gut, a friend of mine, were playing in the junior team; I was 17 then, I think. The team may have belonged to a Jewish organization, but I don't know for sure. There was also a senior team that was playing some championships, but it was too long ago for me to remember exactly.

After high school I started working at Carpatex textile factory. That was in 1951 and I worked there until I retired in 1990. I had no problems at work for being Jewish. There was another Jew working there, Weinberg, the technical director. When we had to attend meetings, he was the one to make the report on the nationalities present. He always used to say, '80% Romanians, 10% Hungarians, 8% Saxons and 2% others.' The two per cent others were actually the two of us, him and me, and he always giggled and gave me a nudge when he said that.

I joined the Communist Party because I didn't have a choice, although I had no political convictions. The director of the factory summoned me one day, and told me that Staicu, a colleague of mine, was retiring. I knew it already, I worked in the same department with him. And he told me I was to be made chief of the department. I said, 'Thank you', and he said, 'Now run over to Deliu - Deliu was the Communist Party secretary - to join the Party!' When I went to Deliu, he already had my file ready with two recommendations; all I had to do was sign. I didn't get upset back then, the salary was better and I was chief of department.

I was even decorated by Ceausescu [14](#) himself. I received a citation for the medal of work from him. In 1973 the factory celebrated its 150th anniversary and some top ranking workers were decorated. Ceausescu came to Brasov, to Casa Armatei [House of the Army, a building which belongs to the Ministry of the Armed Forces], somebody called out our names and we had to step forward and say, 'I serve the Socialist Republic of Romania! Good luck, comrade!', and afterwards we shook hands with comrade Ceausescu. I should have said, 'It is for this [decoration] that I serve the Republic.' - it would have been closer to the truth. It was December, I remember, and I was in mourning over my father, who had died that year, but they didn't let me wear a black tie, I had to wear another one. I buried my father in the Jewish cemetery here in Brasov, with Rabbi Deutsch present, and I recited the Kaddish at the cemetery. I also recited it in the synagogue the following year, whenever I had time to go.

Of course we had to march on 1st May and on 23rd August [15](#). We also did public work: we had to dig and build new roads, like Calea Bucurestilor [one of Brasov's main streets], where back then there was no street, just a small railway with a train that went to Sacele. We also worked on the road that now leads to Poiana Brasov, and at the Drama Theater in Brasov. [Poiana Brasov is Romania's premier ski resort located 12 km from Brasov.] Each factory from Brasov had its specific tasks to carry out: to gather leaves, dig, clean.

I remember, one time Ceausescu was about to come and visit the factory, and an activist, Rujan, said, 'Where is comrade Ceusescu's painting?' I was in charge of all the flags. We had a painting of him [Ceasusescu] but not one of Mrs. Ceausescu. He told me she was a weaver, too - although I had never heard she was one before. So in 24 hours we managed to get a painting of her as well.

After the Romanian Revolution of 1989 [16](#), I met this activist again. He had been a journalist for Drum Nou [New Road was a Romanian communist newspaper in Brasov], and I asked him about the story with the painting. And he said, 'The hell with it! Of course she was no weaver, but that was my job, I was paid for that!'

In the communist period I lived in a rented room in a house, so I didn't suffer so much from the heat restrictions. The room was warm, although the gas supply we used for heating didn't have enough pressure and sometimes the electricity went out, and we had to use a candle. The queues for food were terribly long; we had food stamps for milk and bread, but again I managed. Textiles were something you couldn't find back then, and there were a lot of people who needed a good fabric for a wedding, or something like that. I knew all the ladies at Universal [Brasov's largest universal store], so I gave them textiles and they gave me meat, salami, so it wasn't so bad for me personally. You could get extra gasoline, a lot of things; you just had to have the right merchandise; the black market was flourishing and you could make extra money.

I went to the synagogue during communism, but only on the high holidays, and if a high holiday was on Sunday. On Saturdays we had to work. I didn't observe the kashrut; after the deportation I ate anything.

I used to listen to Radio Free Europe [17](#) constantly when I was at home, in the evening; I was interested in all their broadcasts, all they said that was going on in Romania we didn't know.

My sister Rozalia worked in a knitwear factory, after she finished high school. She married in 1955, I think. I remember I was in the army and I had to go on furlough. Her husband was Alter Adler, a Jew as well. He had been deported to Auschwitz, and he was the only one of his family who survived. He was a tailor and worked at a cooperative. They were married in the synagogue here, by Rabbi Deutsch. They had a son, Iosif Adler.

Iosif studied English and French in Bucharest. He graduated first in his class and because of that he could choose the town he wanted to work in. He had a teacher, Farcas, who was also a Jew, and was from Beius. And Farcas told Iosif that if he went there to work, he could stay with his parents and didn't have to pay anything. Iosif and his future wife, Mihaela Csiszar, had been colleagues in Bucharest, but because she didn't graduate among the first, she was assigned to Dambovită. They were separated for two years. After two years, the professor's parents left for Israel, and Iosif didn't want to stay in Beius anymore. So I helped him with a job here, at Timpuri Noi [famous Romanian leather goods factory], as a painter: he had studied arts in high school. He had to write slogans, or make templates for street names. And Mihaela came here as well; she worked in a coop farm. They married soon after that, and in 1986, I think, they left for Israel.

My sister and her husband left for Israel as well, in 1990, because their first grandson was born, and they couldn't stay away. They live in Rishon le Zion, and Iosif is an English teacher there. Iosif and Mihaela have two children, Jonathan, who was born in 1989, and Karina, who was born in 1992. We keep in touch. My sister calls us often, it's not so expensive for her. We also write letters when we have news. She sends me photos as well. As far as I know, my sister didn't have problems with the letters she received from Iosif from Israel during the communist era, but they weren't about politics or anything like that.

I had a small problem during communism with a cousin of mine, Izu Glaubach, who lived in Israel. His mother, Roza, had been my mother's sister. He came to visit, and he was allowed to stay with my mother, but not with me because I wasn't a first degree relative. I went to the militia with him and registered him, and said that he would live with my mother. In fact, he intended to stay over at my place from the very first night. And so he did for one night, the first one. The next morning, the Securitate [18](#) officer in charge of the factory, a friend of mine, called and asked me why I caused him trouble. It was because my cousin had slept at my place and not at my mother's. 'How do you know?', I asked him. 'We know everything', he said. I told him he came over to visit and we talked and it got late, so he stayed. He told me my cousin wasn't allowed to stay with me, and asked me to give him in writing a deposition of everything we had talked about. We hadn't talked politics, just things you would discuss with a relative you haven't seen in years. But he didn't stay over at my place afterwards; it was safer that way.

Just before the revolution broke out, in September 1989, I went on a trip to Chisinau, to visit my cousin there. This cousin, Leopold Weiselberg, was the one who left with the Russian army when they retreated. After he left, we were interested to keep in touch with him; we wrote letters, but got no answer. His mother, Cecilia, had been shot in front of her house when the Germans came, and his father had died, too: he had been on the Struma ship. Anyway, after several unanswered letters, my father wrote to the Soviet Red Cross, and they replied that there was no person by the name of Weiselberg in the Soviet Union. So we had no news of him until 1987, when the workers from Steagu revolted [see 1987 Workers Revolt of Brasov] [19](#). In that year we had guests from Russia, from Cernauti. They were a young Jewish couple, husband and wife, and their parents had emigrated to Israel. They wanted to meet their parents, but they couldn't go to Israel, and the parents couldn't come to Russia. So they all came to Romania. The parents stayed at a hotel, and the couple over at my sister's. When I was taking their parents to the train station, we started talking about relatives, and I told the man about this cousin of mine. And he said, 'We were in the army together, I will give you his address!' I couldn't imagine this happening; after 40 years!

Leopold lived in Dubosar, near Nister, and then he moved to Chisinau. That's where I went to visit him. I took a vacation and I stayed in Chisinau for a month. I was there when the Berlin wall fell, on 7th November. I saw the parade in Moscow on TV, and Gorbachev [20](#) talking to the people. But there was no parade in Chisinau: there were men, children and women sitting on the highway, who didn't allow the Russian army to march. The people from Chisinau said to the Russian army that they were Romanians. I was afraid, especially because Leopold was proudly wearing his jacket with all the Soviet decorations from the war. He had a limp as a result of a wound.

Life was better in Chisinau: I remember we went into a coffee shop to have some coffee. We were standing at one of those tables without chairs, and we were talking. A waitress near us was eavesdropping, I noticed. And she went to whisper something to another waitress, packed something in a napkin and came to me. She asked me in a low voice, 'Are you from Romania?' I answered I was. 'Then take this!' It was a lump of sugar. Back in Romania it was a real problem: we had food stamps for sugar, for bread. I was very touched by the solidarity there. People heard us talking Romanian in the street and they just followed us. There were some gypsies in a parking lot, who heard us talking in Romanian, told us they had relatives in Bucharest and asked us if we knew them; of course we didn't. When I drove back to Romania and had to stop at the border, the car's trunk was full with bread, roast turkey etc; all from my cousin. The custom officer said, 'Don't let

the doctor here see it, he will confiscate everything from you!' There was a doctor assigned at the customs office. The officer was a nice man, he let me pass. When I came back I gave my sister half of everything I had got.

Right before the revolution started, I was about to move. The house I lived in - a rented place - was to be demolished. All the houses on that street had long gardens, and they demolished everything to build a block of flats. A woman from ICRA [local institution that administrated the state's housing facilities and made repartitions for the apartments] and a militiaman came to tell me that I had been assigned a one-bedroom apartment in a far away neighborhood of Brasov, Triaj. I went to see my future apartment, but the block wasn't even finished. And when I came back from Chisinau, I found out that a Jewish acquaintance of ours, Schemweter, had died. He lived in an apartment with two rooms, in a house that belonged to the Jewish community. I went to the community's president, Mr. Roth, and asked him to give me that place. He did, and ever since then I've paid the community rent for this place. I renovated it, which was quite costly, and moved in after the revolution. The room where I have the kitchen now wasn't mine at first, it was the community's health unit. Mr. Roth agreed to give it to me if I took care of the necessary renovations for the new one, in a different location. I did, I still knew a lot of people who were willing to help me with the work for the house.

The revolution started on 20th December, and I was at home, I think. I heard voices in the street, and I went out to see what was going on. It was the workers from ICA Ghimbav [Romanian aeronautics construction factory], with slogans like 'The army is with us!', or 'Away with Ceausescu!'. The revolution had already started in Timisoara on the 16th, and some party officials came to the factory and told us that there were only vandals, who broke windows and stole from shops, and they would be caught and punished. But we already knew what was going on, we had heard it on [Radio] Free Europe.

Then the phone rang. It was a colleague from work, who was on duty at the gate that day; she was crying, she was scared because all the workers from Steagu and Tractorul [Brasov's largest factories] were at the gates, and all the workers from the textiles department at the factory wanted to come out and join them. I advised her to call the managers, but she told me none of them was to be found. And I told her, 'Margareta, rather than get in trouble, open the gates!' She told me that the two militiamen guarding the factory had run away and were hiding somewhere in the plant. After I hung up, I called the technical manager, the one who was a Jew, and asked him where he had been. He told me he had been at home, but he was afraid to answer the phone.

Beginning with 21st December nobody worked in the factory. I went there and left the car in the factory's courtyard because it was dangerous to drive. There were army filters all over the town; they stopped you, ravaged your tapestry looking for guns, probably. One man got shot because he didn't want to stop. Across the street from my house, there was a military unit. If you were over 18, or 20, I don't remember exactly, and if you had your ID with you, they gave you a gun and 10 cartridges. People wonder today who was shooting in 1989? We were! There were drunk people with guns in the street, firing into the air or somewhere else. When I was coming home, I also heard gunfire from machineguns, I think they came from somewhere near Tampa. [Tampa is a hill in the very heart of Brasov.]



I never left the Communist Party, they left me! After 1989 things changed for me. I retired at the age of 56, according to the decree issued in 1990 - during communism I would have retired at 62. Immediately after that the Jewish community called me and asked me to be a cashier. I accepted; I didn't want to turn down Mr. Roth after he had been so nice to me with the apartment and all, and moreover, I had something to do. As a cashier I worked from 11am until 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when lunch was served at the community's canteen, and then I went home. But after that Mr. Roth asked me to be the canteen administrator, and I had some more work to do. The salary is small of course, but the money is useful for me, and I also eat for free. So now I supervise the activities of the cook, and the supplies. I work from 8am until 2 o'clock in the afternoon, but when we get meat delivered from Bucharest, I work longer hours. The meat is specially prepared by the hakham there, and it is sent in a sealed car. There are no more shochetim or hakhamim in Brasov. The hakham in Bucharest is also a rabbi, he is called Eliezer Glanz. There are two more hakhamim, one in Moldova, called Bruckmeier, and one in Cluj [Napoca]. But Brasov is closer to Bucharest, so we bring the meat from there.

I create the menus, along with the cook. We cannot be very diverse with veal only, but we try: we cook stews, schnitzels, steaks. There are about 30 persons eating at the community's canteen, mainly elderly people. Other kosher food, like eggs, we get by special orders from the farms near Brasov. On Pesach we don't have bread, we only eat matzah, and for dessert some sort of cake made up of matzah flour and stewed fruit. On Purim we bake hamantashen and shelakhmones. The canteen is closed on Saturdays and Sundays, so we give out food for two days on Fridays.

The community helps me with my medicine because I have worked for them for more than ten years. I can buy medicine worth 350,000 lei, but the ones I need cost more than one million. However, I'm lucky that I can get some of them for free, according to law 118, because I was deported. I also receive funds from Germany, a pension of 125 Euro every month, because I was deported.

I keep in touch with my sister's family, of course, but I also have some cousins and friends abroad. I have a friend in Australia, as I mentioned before, Beno Walter, who calls me rather often. I met him after the camp [in Transnistria] here, in Brasov. He left for Australia during communism, in the 1960s. He inherited something there from a relative. I don't know exactly how it happened, but the whole family left; they didn't have trouble getting out of the country. Probably somebody from Australia paid something for them.

You know there was this popular joke about Israel and communism, it goes like that: Ceausescu calls a meeting; he wants to know how he could get more foreign currency. And his economic adviser answers, 'The trucks bring in that much foreign currency, the tractors that much foreign currency, and Israel that many dollars because they pay for every Jew we let go!' And Ceausescu said, 'We will breed Jews!'

I also keep in touch with Armand Beraru - we call him Puiu. He was married to Clara Glaubach, my cousin. He is a photographer. Clara died of cancer, her brother, Izu Glaubach, was electrocuted while working, and Izu's wife also died of cancer. It was like a curse, they all died within a year and a half. Izu's daughter is married and has three children. Clara also had a boy and a girl; both are married now and have children. I also have a Jewish friend, Alexandru Horia, who had been a conductor with the musical theater here in Brasov, and lives in Israel now.



I have been to Israel on two occasions: once in 1972, when I was invited by my cousin Izu. He was a truck driver, he worked in the construction business, and I traveled with him in the truck. We got up at 4 in the morning, and came back at 11, before noon. The heat was unbearable. But I saw Jerusalem, the Red Sea; I slept on the beach. I was only there for a month because I couldn't take a longer vacation. The things that most impressed me were the life style, the shops, the freedom. Back then in Romania everything was low-standard. The second time I was in Israel was in 1998 or 99, when I went with my wife, but we weren't married back then. So she needed an invitation from my sister's family; I didn't need one anymore, like I did before the revolution, because I was a relative.

I married my wife, Dorina Draghici, in 2000, after we had been together for 25 years. We don't have children. We met in the plant in 1978. She was working in the textiles section, and I was her boss. There were over 200 women, but she was my favorite! We married in February. We were standing by the stove one day, and she said to me, 'Don't you think we should get married?' And I said, 'Who do you think will want to marry us?!' We married in the city hall. She isn't Jewish, but we still celebrate both Jewish and Christian holidays; we have never had problems with that. She comes to me for seder, we have a Christmas tree in the house and celebrate Christmas with her family; we share everything.

I have no problems with accepting my Jewish identity, I never hid, and I never hid it. Except the deportation, I never experienced any kind of anti- Semitism, I have always had good friends and colleagues who weren't Jewish.

## Glossary

### **1 Transnistria**

Area situated between the Bug and Dniester rivers and the Black Sea. The term is derived from the Romanian name for the Dniester (Nistru) 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 Bukovina 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.

### **2 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.

### **3 King Carol II (1893-1953)**

King of Romania from 1930 to 1940. During his reign he tried to influence the course of Romanian political life, first through the manipulation of the rival Peasants' Party, the National Liberal Party and anti-Semitic factions. In 1938 King Carol established a royal dictatorship. He suspended the Constitution of 1923 and introduced a new constitution that concentrated all legislative and executive powers in his hands, gave him total control over the judicial system and the press, and introduced a one-party system. A contest between the king and the fascist Iron Guard ensued, with assassinations and massacres on both sides. Under Soviet and Hungarian pressure, Carol had to surrender parts of Romania to foreign rule in 1940 (Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR, the Cadrilater to Bulgaria and Northern Transylvania to Hungary). He was abdicated in favor of his son, Michael, and he fled abroad. He died in Portugal.

### **4 King Michael (b**

1921): Son of King Carol II, King of Romania from 1927- 1930 under regency and from 1940-1947. When Carol II abdicated in 1940 Michael became king again but he only had a formal role in state affairs during Antonescu's dictatorial regime, which he overthrew in 1944. Michael turned Romania against fascist Germany and concluded an armistice with the Allied Powers. King Michael opposed the "sovietization" of Romania after World War II. When a communist regime was established in Romania in 1947, he was overthrown and exiled, and he was stripped from his Romanian citizenship a year later. Since the collapse of the communist rule in Romania in 1989, he has visited the country several times and his citizenship was restored in 1997.

### **5 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.

### **6 Invasion of Poland**

The German attack of Poland on 1st September 1939 is widely considered the date in the West for the start of World War II. After having gained both Austria and Czechoslovakia, Hitler was confident that he could acquire Poland without having to fight Britain and France. (To eliminate the possibility of the Soviet Union fighting if Poland were attacked, Hitler made a pact with the Soviet Union, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.) On the morning of 1st September 1939, German troops entered Poland. The German air attack hit so quickly that most of Poland's air force was destroyed while still on the ground. To hinder Polish mobilization, the Germans bombed bridges and roads. Groups of marching soldiers were machine- gunned from the air, and they also aimed at civilians. On 1st September,

the beginning of the attack, Great Britain and France sent Hitler an ultimatum - withdraw German forces from Poland or Great Britain and France would go to war against Germany. On 3rd September, with Germany's forces penetrating deeper into Poland, Great Britain and France both declared war on Germany.

## **7 National Peasants' Party**

Political party created in 1926 by the fusion of the National Party of Transylvania and the Peasants' Party. It was in power, with some interruptions, from 1928 and 1933. It was a moderately conservative and staunchly pro-Monarchy party. Its doctrine was essentially based on the enlightenment of peasantry, and on the reform of education in villages, where teachers were to become economic and social guides. Its purpose was to give the peasantry a class conscience. The National Peasants' Party governed Romania for a short period of time, between 1928- 1931 and 1932-1933.

## **8 Bessarabia**

Historical area between the Prut and Dnestr rivers, in the southern part of Odessa region. Bessarabia was part of Russia until the Revolution of 1917. In 1918 it declared itself an independent republic, and later it united with Romania. The Treaty of Paris (1920) recognized the union but the Soviet Union never accepted this. In 1940 Romania was forced to cede Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR. The two provinces had almost 4 million inhabitants, mostly Romanians. Although Romania reoccupied part of the territory during World War II the Romanian peace treaty of 1947 confirmed their belonging to the Soviet Union. Today it is part of Moldavia.

## **9 Anti-Jewish laws in Romania**

The first anti-Jewish laws were introduced in 1938 by the Goga-Cuza government, named by King Charles II after the elections of December 1937, although the Iron Guard and the National - Peasant Party had won majority. Then further anti Jewish laws followed in August 1940, in the period between 1941/1944, under the Antonescu regime this had been widened. By a disposition given on 21st June 1941 by Ion Antonescu, leader of the Romanian state between 1940-1944, all Jews between of the age of 18-40, who lived in villages had to be evacuated and concentrated in the capital town of each county. Jews from the region between the Siret and Prut rivers were transported by wagons even further than 300 km from their residence, to the lager of Targu Jiu, Slobozia, Craiova etc. where they lived and died in misery. More than 40,000 Jews were moved. On the basis of the laws introduced, all rural Jewish property, as well as houses owned by Jews in the city, were confiscated by the state, as part of the "Romanisation campaign". Other laws forbade marriages between Jews and Romanians from August 1940, forbade all Jews to have Romanian names, own rural properties, be public employees, lawyers, editors or janitors in public institutions, have a career in the army, own liquor stores, etc. Jewish employees of commercial and industrial enterprises were fired, Jewish doctors could no longer practice and Jews could not own chemist's shops. Jewish students were forbidden to study in Romanian schools.

## **10 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 Bukovina, 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.

### **11 Shargorod**

A town in the 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.

### **12 Cossack**

A member of a people of southern European Russia and adjacent parts of Asia, noted as cavalymen especially during tsarist times.

### **13 Neolog Jewry**

Following a Congress in 1868/69 in Budapest, where the Jewish community was supposed to discuss several issues on which the opinion of the traditionalists and the modernizers differed and which aimed at uniting Hungarian Jews, Hungarian Jewry was officially split into to (later three) communities, which all built up their own national community network. The Neologs were the modernizers, who opposed the Orthodox on various questions. The third group, the sop-called Status Quo Ante advocated that the Jewish community was maintained the same as before the 1868/69 Congress.

### **14 Ceausescu, Nicolae (1918-1989)**

Communist head of Romania between 1965 and 1989. He followed a policy of nationalism and non-intervention into the internal affairs of other countries. The internal political, economic and social situation was marked by the cult of his personality, as well as by terror, institutionalized by the Securitate, the Romanian political police. The Ceausescu regime was marked by disastrous economic schemes and became increasingly repressive and corrupt. There were frequent food shortages, lack of electricity and heating, which made everyday life unbearable. In December 1989 a popular uprising, joined by the army, led to the arrest and execution of both Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, who had been deputy Prime Minister since 1980.

### **15 23 August 1944**

On that day the Romanian Army switched sides and changed its World War II alliances, which resulted in the state of war against the German Third Reich. The Royal head of the Romanian state,

King Michael I, arrested the head of government, Marshal Ion Antonescu, who was unwilling to accept an unconditional surrender to the Allies.

## **16 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.

## **17 Radio Free Europe**

Radio station launched in 1949 at the instigation of the US government with headquarters in West Germany. The radio broadcast uncensored news and features, produced by Central and Eastern European émigrés, from Munich to countries of the Soviet block. The radio station was jammed behind the Iron Curtain, team members were constantly harassed and several people were killed in terrorist attacks by the KGB. Radio Free Europe played a role in supporting dissident groups, inner resistance and will of freedom in the Eastern and Central European communist countries and thus it contributed to the downfall of the totalitarian regimes of the Soviet block. The headquarters of the radio have been in Prague since 1994.

## **18 Securitate (in Romanian**

DGSP - Directia generala a Securitatii Poporului): General Board of the People's Security. Its structure was established in 1948 with direct participation of Soviet advisors named by the NKVD. The primary purpose was to 'defend all democratic accomplishments and to ensure the security of the Romanian Popular Republic against plots of both domestic and foreign enemies'. Its leader was Pantelimon Bondarenko, later known as Gheorghe Pintilie, a former NKVD agent. It carried out the arrests, physical torture and brutal imprisonment of people who became undesirable for the leaders of the Romanian Communist Party, and also kept the life of ordinary civilians under strict observation.

## **19 1987 Workers Revolt of Brasov**

The revolt took place on 15th November 1987 in Brasov, an important industrial center of Romania. The cause of the revolt was the catastrophic social and economic situation in Romania, generated by the communist system, which had become worse in the mid-1980s. 47,000 workers from the two main factories in Brasov marched to the Romanian Communist Party headquarters, ransacked the place and discovered what an opulent life the servants of the regime had led. The crowd gathering in front of the building destroyed the symbols of the totalitarian regime but, contrary to official reports, they did not vandalize the place.

## **20 Gorbachev, Mikhail (1931- )**

Soviet political leader. Gorbachev joined the Communist Party in 1952 and gradually moved up in

the party hierarchy. In 1970 he was elected to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, where he remained until 1990. In 1980 he joined the politburo, and in 1985 he was appointed general secretary of the party. In 1986 he embarked on a comprehensive program of political, economic, and social liberalization under the slogans of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring). The government released political prisoners, allowed increased emigration, attacked corruption, and encouraged the critical reexamination of Soviet history. The Congress of People's Deputies, founded in 1989, voted to end the Communist Party's control over the government and elected Gorbachev executive president. Gorbachev dissolved the Communist Party and granted the Baltic states independence. Following the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States in 1991, he resigned as president. Since 1992, Gorbachev has headed international organizations.