

## How did the Russians treat Romanians during the war

My family comes from a small Transylvanian village called Borod. This village was part of Hungary during the Second World War. My grandparents say that the Hungarian regime was bad, but the way Russians treated villagers after Romania turned against Germany and allied with the Soviet Union, was far worse. My grandma used to say that she there was nothing more terrible and dangerous than being a young girl during the times Russian troops were roaming the Hungarian Transylvania. The girls would put soot on their faces to make themselves as ugly as possible so that the Russian soldiers wouldn't approach them.

In my village also circulates a story about the Russian's arrival in our area of living. It is said that when they came, they brought with them a nun which they had forcedly taken away from a Moldavian monastery. And the soldiers took her with them everywhere they went. One of the Russians, their chief, was believed to have feelings for her.

One day, the soldiers were drinking at the village's tavern... the nun was sitting scared in one corner of the room. The woman who used to own the tavern gets closer to the nun and begins talking to her. The poor girl begins to feel more comfortable and tells her how she ended up in this situation.

After thinking about what she just heard, the pub owner says to the nun: "I can help you get out of this unfortunate and ugly situation but only if you marry my neighbor. He is not a handsome man, but he is a good and kind person". "That doesn't matter", says the nun. "He can be the most hideous man, I only want to solve my problems and get rid of this filthy Russian man."

The hostess begins her plan of helping the girl. She gives the Russian to drink and hides the nun in the basement telling her that she mustn't leave. Said and done. The Russians leave the tavern taking their drunken chief with them. Three days pass and the owner of the pub still doesn't let the nun come out of the basement, and well she does because in that afternoon came the Russian head of the troops, looking for the girl. He begins questioning the hostess and fighting with her. Each in their mother tongue... The woman tries explaining through signs that the girl left with them and she doesn't know anything. Finally, the Russian leaves... a week passes by and the girl is still in the basement. Afterwards, the woman lets her out of her tavern's basement, gives her fresh and clean clothes and presents her to the neighbor she was ought to marry. The two got married and started a family in Borod.

Another story I know is from a neighbor whose father fought in the war. She told me "my father was taken in the army even if he had small children at home. We remained home and were raised only by our mother. My older siblings used to think they would never have the chance to see father again". But two years after the war had ended, a man with dirty clothes and long hair and beard appeared at our gate. My mother sent us children inside the house saying that she didn't know who he was, nor what he wanted. We were sitting at the window watching our mother crying and hugging the mysterious man. And then, we all went out and realized it was father! After he cleaned himself,

shaved, and ate something, he began telling us why he got home two years after the war had ended. He was taken prisoner in Russia. He said that he was forced to dig grooves where the dead soldiers were placed and then cover them with dirt. Him and the other prisoners were waiting for the day their turn to be buried would come. He said there were many fellow Romanians. We ate raw cabbage and molded bread. One day he saw their boss yelling and calling the prisoners. He thought their death had come (his group was formed of about 12 people) ... and the Russian told them to leave and not look back because he would shoot them if they did. They were surprised and thought they would get shot the moment they leave. They took a step, they made ten steps, waiting to be pierced by the bullet, nothing happened and they wouldn't dare to look back... nothing made sense. They didn't even know that the war had ended. After they kept walking and realized no one will shoot them, they started running. The men arrived in a village where they climbed on top of a freight train, and sat there until it was close to Romania. Only when they saw familiar places, they jumped... they started walking until they reached another village where they asked for food. And this way they kept travelling until they got home."

These are two stories that impressed me as a child and I think should be known by more people.