

The Grunsteins At Seder Dinner



This was at Pesach, on Seder night. Back then there were a lot of people on Seder nights. The first person on the right is my sister-in-law, the third wife of Marton, next to him is me, then the fourth lady with glasses is my step-mother. On the left side are Bozsi Huszar, Jozsef Grunstein, my husband, and the person who is standing is my brother-in-law, Marton Grunstein. He used to say: 'When people greet me, I return the greeting, yet I know it wasn't for me, but for my little brother, Jozsef', for they resembled a lot.

I don't know what education Marton had; however, he worked at the food-supply administration as a bookkeeper. He established a family here, in Marosvasarhely - I don't know the name of his first wife -, and he had a daughter. They were deported from Marosvasarhely, his daughter was four years old. My brother-in-law was a very miserly person. My husband, when he came here to work [before the war], didn't stay at them, just ate at them, and he told me his brother had taken the money for the meals. His second wife was Piri Grunstein, nee Rosenfeld; she was the little sister of my mother. They had a son, he's called Andras. My brother-in-law divorced her, thus in 1958 my aunt and the boy, who was eight years old then, emigrated to Israel, and there she changed her name into Peled. When we visited them in 1969, her son was in the army. I don't remember where he lived and what he did for a living. Both my husband and I loved very much this aunt of mine. I don't know what the name of my brother-in-law's third wife was; she wasn't Jewish, and my brother-in-law divorced my aunt because of her. Marton died in Marosvasarhely in 1992.

On high days it was me who organized the festive dinner. On Yom Kippur, when fasting was over, they made grilled meat for dinner, and I baked the cake, three or four hundred hamantashen, which is the specialty of Purim. I baked them at home, for the most part alone; I baked a few days earlier, because it had crumbly dough, so it got soften. It has to be cut out in circle, then folded in triangle.

For Seder night I prepared dinner from thirty or thirty-five kilograms of meat, sixty kilos of potatoes and thirty kilos of beet. I presented the list of what I needed at the community, and they bought the things. They gave eggs, oil and meat as well. I had to buy the rest, but it was well organized.

There was a Hungarian family, who for each Pesach brought us thirty kilos of beet for pickles, but I had bought the horse-radish in advance. The entire preparations started one week before the high day, because the horse-radish and the beet had to mix well. I put on the flowers and the decoration on the last day to make it fresh. We were cooking khremzlakh for two hours, but it was the last thing to prepare, because it had to be fresh.

While my husband was alive, I prepared dinner for each Seder night. I organized the last dinner in 2001 - I was doing this for thirty years. There were a hundred and thirty persons at the last dinner I organized. They always used to say there wouldn't be many people. 'Don't spend much money, don't buy much stuff.' Nevertheless I always bought the quantity that was needed, because I already knew; luckily I did it well, because at the end there was nothing left for the staff. I had assistance, but not much; I did by myself what was the most important part of it, because I wanted it to be as it had to be. We worked a few days in advance, then on the last day I was up and working for sixteen hours. When Seder was over, men made order in the room, women did the dishes, made order in the kitchen, and we came home at midnight. During the night I always had cramp in my legs. My poor husband, when I had cramp, I cried, so he brought spirit and did a massage for me.