

Vasile Grunea



This photo was taken at my father's grave in the cemetery on the hill in Jerusalem in 1995. My father, Emanuel Gruber, died in 1989. My mother, Erzsebet Gruber, died in 1998. They are buried next to one another. I don't like to go to the cemetery and I don't participate in funerals usually, I go only if my close friends are being buried. But every year I usually put a pebble on the tomb of my grandfather, Lajos Sporn, and my uncle, Zsigmond Sporn, here in Kolozsvár. As soon as it became possible to emigrate after the war, my father and mother emigrated to Israel in 1950. My father was 58 years old then. When my father made aliyah, he was already fluent in Hebrew [Ivrit], so he didn't need to take ulpan classes. He adored Hebrew [Ivrit], and he constantly perfected himself. When he arrived there, he bought a tape recorder from his first economies and he recorded everybody who spoke a nice Hebrew and he listened to their pronunciation on tape. His dictionary was always at hand. Sometimes he was listening to something on the radio and if he didn't understand a word, he would jump up and look it up in the dictionary. For a long time he worked as a clerk at a big construction company, the Solel Boneh in Haifa. My mother also liked it in Israel. When my parents, my sister and her family and other friends put down their names on the list for emigration, I didn't. I was the black sheep of the family; I stayed here for family and other reasons. I went to Israel for the first time in 1970 and I saw my father for the first time since he had emigrated. All in all I went to see them at least ten times, I think, and I usually stayed for a month or two. My wife has never been because the 'custom' back then was that one member of the family always had to stay behind to guarantee [that the family would not emigrate, since a family wouldn't stay abroad without one of its members.] They always invited her, too, but she said, 'You should go to see your parents, it's more important for you.' They didn't invite us to stay for good, they only mentioned it when I was there and they were very diplomatic even then. It was especially during my first two visits that my mother tried to show me the whole country, so that I could see what was there with my own eyes, she didn't try to convince me, but she wanted to show me the reality. And she told me frankly that my wife, being a teacher of Romanian language and literature and having no other profession, would experience great difficulties in Israel in economic terms, but

only in such terms.