

Marcu Grimberg And The Finkel Family



The one on the left in this photograph is my father, his name was Marcu Grimberg, he is holding my daughter, Carola Finkel, the one on the right is my husband, Mikel Finkel; I, Berta Finkel, am the one next to him, and the child on the bicycle is my son, Gustav Finkel. This photograph was taken just before my father left to Israel.

My father's name was Marcu Grimberg, but at the shul he was called Mortha [his Jewish name was Mortha, Mortkhe]. I don't know in what year he was born, but he was around 5 years older than my mother [he was probably born around 1895]. He belonged to the 1916 contingent, but I no longer remember how old he was at that time. My father had no formal education. And he actually had other brothers as well, but I don't know if any of them went to school.

My father raised sheep. He had no other job besides that. But he didn't keep the sheep at home, there wasn't enough room, he kept them somewhere else. We also raised white cattle, and my father also had a horse, which he rode to Botosani. He also had a cart, some sort of hackney carriage, as they say, with only one horse, and he came by cart every week to Botosani and the neighboring villages - he was familiar with all the surroundings, all the villages -, and he bought skins. For my father was trading in skins. There were all sorts of skins back then. There were also karakul skins, with finer, nicer, woollier fleece. My father sold the skins there, in Sulita. All sorts of merchants came there, from Baia Mare, Falticeni, from everywhere, from Ardeal [Transylvania] as well. Christians came as well, they bought merchandise and returned home by train.

Afterwards, my parents' condition depreciated, they were broke, and we had to move to a village, to Hlipiceni. [Hlipiceni is located 57 km south-east of Botosani, and 22 km south-east of Sulita, respectively.] And we had our share of misfortunes... many of them, so to speak. We had a sort of a grocer's shop, a small shop where we sold a bit of everything. Just like in the countryside: you sold this, you sold that. And my father was a butcher, he slaughtered cattle there, in Hlipiceni. He had a partnership with one of his older brothers' brother-in-law, David Grimberg, who lived there, in Hlipiceni. The name of that in-law was Srul Rotstein, and he too had a grocer's shop, he too sold this and that in addition to being my father's partner at the butcher's shop. He bought the cattle, and my father slaughtered them. There was an army stationed at Halta Rauseni, and it consisted of vagrants - that's how they called those soldiers. [Rauseni is located 5 km south-east of Hlipiceni, and 63 km south-east of Botosani, respectively.] And someone came every week, someone with a higher rank, who was captain or colonel, I'm not sure, and he bought meat for those vagrants.

We lived in Hlipiceni for less than 2 years. There weren't too many Jews living there anymore, only Christians. There was another family, but eventually they too left. And as the village was inhabited by Christians, and they knew we were Jewish, people started mocking us. We lived at a Lipovan's, and we had a large gate, which I had to close in the evening. And they came and smeared the gate - forgive my saying this - with faeces, with excrement - to use such a word. When he saw something like this happened, my father told my mother: 'We're moving back to Sulita, for we can't live here.' We dropped everything and returned to Sulita. In 1938-1939 we returned to Sulita. In Sulita, my father continued his trade as a butcher. He slaughtered the animals at the slaughterhouse, and sold the meat at the butcher's shop. We had a store there, where the house was located as well, my father had a chopping block and an axe, and all the necessary equipment.

Then the war broke out, and from Sulita we came here, to Botosani. Meanwhile, my father was sent to Tiraspol, for he had declared he was a furrier by trade. And those who knew a trade had to go to Tiraspol. I don't know what he did there, I think they gave him other jobs. Did my father know the furrier's trade? My grandfather knew the furrier's trade, may God forgive him, but my father didn't. But he left there as a handicraftsman. He wasn't the only one, several Jews from Botosani were taken to Tiraspol. My father stayed there for 3 or 4 years.

I don't even remember how the war ended. It was over... We stayed on in Botosani for a while, and in 1949 or 1950 - I don't even remember when - we left to Sulita again. In Sulita, my father continued the butcher's trade, he sold meat, just as he did before the war. We found the house destroyed, the doors and everything we left there had been removed. We rebuilt it. We had to earn money, this and that, so that we managed to rebuild the house the way it was. And what good

came of it? Now my parents' house is demolished, in a ruin. The house is no more. When father left to Israel, he sold everything.

Together with my mother, my father submitted a request to go to Israel; my mother died in the meantime, in January 1973, and my father left to Israel by himself, he stayed at my sister's, and he died in 1981.