

Hava Orentlikher



This is my maternal grandmother Hava Orentlikher. This photo was taken in Paris in 1937. My grandmother went to visit her son Philip Orentlikher. My grandmother was born in Bessarabia, in Kishinev, in 1878. She had many brothers and sisters, but I only knew two of them: sister Sura-Feiga and brother Srul Brick. I don't know how my grandparents met. I think they took things closer to heart in their time. When my grandfather perished, my grandmother lost her hair and forgot how to read and write: she suffered so much. She already had a son and was pregnant again. The tsarist government paid her a pension of three rubles. After Sura-Feiga died, she entered into a marriage of convenience with Zilberman, who worked at the slaughter house Beit-ha-Shkhita on Popovskaya Street, present-day Tsyrelson Lane; this building no longer exists. This is what my mother told me, I don't know any details about this marriage. All I know is that my grandmother

didn't change her surname. Zilberman helped my grandmother to get a job as a cashier in the slaughter house. She lived in a two-bedroom apartment in the slaughter house which the community gave her. My mother's older brother Haim was born in 1897. At the age of 17 Haim moved to Palestine. He secretly took a train to Constanza and from there took a boat to Palestine where the British drafted him into the army. He was to fight against strikers, but he couldn't fight against his own people and from there he escaped to France. He married Fira, a Jewish girl, who had come from Odessa. He changed his name to Philip. In 1928 his son Serge, who was a few months younger than me, was born. I've never seen any of them, but I remember that in 1937 my grandmother Hava visited Philip in Paris: there was a world exhibition there at the time. I was nine years old and remember this well.