

Gyula And Lenke Spiegler



This is a picture of my parents, Gyula and Lenke Spiegler (nee Markus). The photo was taken in Budapest in 1912. My father barely spoke Hungarian. At the engagement he kissed my mother, who smacked his face. He said - because he couldn't speak Hungarian properly - 'I wish I had never got this smacking'. My parents spoke Hungarian with us, children, but they spoke Yiddish to one another, moreover, they corresponded in it as well. My mum's mother tongue was Hungarian, but

she spoke Yiddish. In those days Jews used to speak mostly Yiddish. So they spoke this distortion of German, [that is Yiddish] moreover, they corresponded in it, too. My father was an ironmonger, but he was also a wood- and coal dealer; I know that because it was written in my birth certificate. And when my father was taken to World War I, we already had a crockery shop. My mother ran it well during the war, while my father was on the battlefield. She bought a load of vessels and she only had to pay the advance, she even paid the tip because one couldn't find merchandise at that time. And then we said that I would take care of it - I was a little child, about four years old. My father was on the battlefield for four years, in World War I, he was on the Russian battlefield in Siberia. He deserted from there and suddenly he was at home. We lived in the same house, but in a bigger apartment because we had grown up. I was happy, as my father took me here and there, to markets and all. My father looked after the shop when he came home, and then the family grew financially, and we became quite well off, too. My parents were tired people because they ran a shop; they went to work at 7am and worked until the evening, 6pm. Later, in 1927-28, my father opened an enameling factory in order that his daughters should have dowries. At that time there was deflation as well, the crisis of overproduction, and my father wasn't a cartel member. And then the enameling factory ruined my father because the cartel ruined him. They had a contract with a big company; it was called Hutter and Stran, where they made the enamel in stoves. And they cancelled the order and there was no work, but the day and night workers had to be paid regardless. At that time the factory had been running for about six years, but it went broke. It cost us the crockery shop. It cost us our house. They auctioned off everything we had.