

Laszlo Gottlieb Before Deportation



This is my father, Laszlo Gottlieb. It is one of the last photos of my father; it was taken by a lady photographer in Nagybanya, I forgot her name, though I knew her.

My father was called Laszlo Gottlieb, he was called Laci within the family.

His Romanian name in the Romanian era - after 1920 - was Vasile. He was born in 1897 in Maramarossziget.

After my father finished high school, he got to Budapest. He studied for one year there, at the Technical University.

World War I broke out, therefore he interrupted his studies, and he was enrolled directly into the Military Academy, because he was a university student.

He was an under-lieutenant, then a lieutenant. He fought during the entire World War I, he was on the Italian front line, then on the Russian front line as well, on both front lines; he had four decorations, one of them was the Iron Cross.

I will tell you why this was important: he considered himself to be a real Hungarian person. I'm telling you this now, because I was with him in the concentration camp.

They destroyed him in his spirit. Considering what a great Hungarian he considered himself, what decorations he was given from the Hungarian army, the k. u. k. army, after all this to be taken to a concentration camp, this was too much for him.

So he broke down mainly mentally. That's why I've told you all this.

After World War I he didn't pursue his studies anymore, he got back to Maramarossziget, he hid for a short period, when Bela Kun failed, because he was leftist.

He ceased to be a leftist quite shortly, so he didn't become an extreme leftist.

Later he got to realize what all this was about, but this happened in subsequent years.

I know about him that he was member to the Galileo Circle, which was in fact a leftist circle. The Galileo Circle was established in Budapest.

I think it worked through the university, perhaps within the technical university.

At the time of the Bela Kun revolution of 1919 he was an officer, and he joined the revolution as an officer.

I know this for sure. And when Bela Kun fell, my father went home to his mother, who lived in Szigetkamars, near Maramarossziget, and he didn't leave the house in daytime for many months.

He was afraid of being searched for, of getting arrested. Especially that he joined the revolution as an officer, this was a significant detail.

All this happened when his uncle, Lajos Gottlieb got a heart attack, for he was so grieved about the fact that he was downgraded.

In 1919 my father went back to Maramarossziget, he fell in love with my mother, and married her.

They moved to Nagybanja together in 1926 or in 1927, because there were better possibilities of employment.

My father became one of the main clerks of the famous Phonix Factory, which was mainly a sulfuric acid factory. He worked there until World War II, until deportation.

I've already mentioned that my father was disappointed in the left wing. Why this? He read a lot.

He listened to the radio a lot. He spoke a very good English - unfortunately I don't speak English so well -, and he listened to the BBC a lot.

And sooner or later - before others did - he found out what Stalin was doing in the Soviet Union.

From the BBC, from other sources. Well, television didn't exist yet, this was in the 1930s.

I don't know exactly what was what he knew, because he was afraid to talk about this with me - I was still a child, I wasn't even ten years old.

However, I could see he was disappointed, though he flirted with the left wing.

For example there were people visiting us, who were leftists, and they were arrested as underground communists; my father withdrew with them, they were talking, but without me.

As far as I know, my father didn't take part in the International Red Aid, but he supported the leftist movement. But in secret.