

Jindrich Krauskopf



I don't know when this picture was taken, but it was in Prague at my grandfather's factory. This is how my grandfather looked every day from 5:30 in the morning to 5:00 in the afternoon.

My grandfather on my mother's side was named Jindrich Krauskopf and was born in the year 1872 in Otice, near Klatovy. I don't know what level of education he achieved, but I know for certain that he didn't go to university. He lived with my grandmother in Prague, in the beginning on Vodickova Street. In those days they began from zero, they sewed caps and jackets and other things for

newborns and gradually worked their way up, until my grandfather opened a cap and hat factory in Vysehrad in Prague. The company had an English name, ERKA CAP. ERKA was a trademark that came from the initials of grandfather's son Rudolf Krauskopf. The factory sewed on a large scale; we had many sales representatives that traveled throughout the whole country. The factory itself had around 200 employees. I remember that we even had the honor to sew caps for President Masaryk.

The shipping department was in the factory courtyard, while production was on the first and second floors, which were large, long halls, with two rows of machines. In the center were troughs where the seamstresses put their finished products. I remember that while they were working, the seamstresses had their feet on pedals that looked like footrests. The women lived mostly outside of Prague and commuted to work. The workshops had huge iron stoves, which had to be stoked on winter mornings. I recall how my grandfather insisted that when the women arrived at work, each of them had two hot bricks wrapped in cloth on their pedal. More than twenty years ago it happened to me that some woman stopped me on the street and said, 'You're a Krauskopf? You know, I'll never forget your grandfather, because he was the best boss that I ever had in my life.'

I think that my grandfather tended towards the Social Democrats, but I don't know if he was a member of some political party. He had a big hobby, which was his car, a Skoda Tatra. I recall that he had some special hood put on it. He would get up at seven in the morning and go to work. At eight thirty he would eat a soft-boiled egg and a biscuit with butter for breakfast. It was exactly on the half hour, and particularly soft-boiled as he liked to have it. At twelve he ate lunch and returned to the factory. He spent the whole day there, dressed in a work cloak and hat. At six was supper, for which he always changed into a suit, even though the two of us ate alone. In the evening he then read the papers or some book, listened to the radio and rested. My grandfather was a man with whom I knew that every Thursday this would be for dinner, and every Saturday that. Everything simply had to be exact and on time, otherwise it would annoy him terribly.