

Bela Goldstein



This here is my father, Bela Goldstein, when he was young, in the 1930s. The photo was taken in Sibiu, and he obviously dressed up, but I don't know if it was a special occasion. My father was born in Sibiu in 1906. His mother tongue was Hungarian and he graduated from high school. At first he had a tobacco shop in a rented house, and he took care of it alone, until he got married to my mother, Paraschiva Goldsmann, in 1929. My father had a good friend before he got married, and

this friend of his left for Vienna and opened a bicycle workshop there. And because the business was going well, he asked my father to join him there. My father was already engaged to my mother at that time, but he did go. He returned after a year and married my mother. They married in the synagogue in 1929, with a rabbi, and they had a ketubbah. Then they left for Vienna together. I was born in Vienna in 1932 and I stayed there until I was three years old. My father was an associate with that friend of his in the bicycle business - I don't remember his name - and they stayed there for a few years. But they eventually went bankrupt, and thank God, my parents returned to Romania because the war started a few years after they had left Vienna and Austria was occupied by Germany. When we came back from Vienna, we came to Sibiu, and my father returned to his shop. The shop wasn't in the same house where we lived, it was in the center of Sibiu, in a rented house: it had one room and a little storage room in the back. My parents served the customers; they had no employees. They sold cigarettes, stamps, cigars, pipes, and tobacco in small carton boxes. We had a library in the house; my mother read a lot of fiction. My father, on the other hand, was very fond of lexicons and difficult philosophy books. Every night, before he went to bed, there was a pile of books on his bedside table, and I always teased him about it. I asked him, 'Do you want to read all of them tonight?' He always answered, 'No, but I will read something from each of them'. They both read in German, and we had religious books as well, the Siddur in Hebrew with Romanian or German translations, and the Haggadah for Pesach. My parents also read newspapers, like Universul; that's the one I remember. My father wasn't involved in any political party, but I know he had social-democratic convictions, not communist ones.