

Peter Reisz's Parents Imre And Olga Reisz



This is a photo of my parents, Imre and Olga Reisz. taken in Budapest in 1960. At that time I wasn't living with them any more. My father, Imre Reisz, was born in 1888 in Budapest. He was a man skilled with his hands. He graduated from high school and would have liked to study more, but he couldn't because of the Numerus Clausus. Since he didn't have work here in Budapest, and he wasn't allowed to study, he went to Paris, or perhaps Lyons, and worked in a silk-factory there, drawing Hungarian motifs which were incorporated into necktie designs. He was abroad between about 1925-30. Then he came home, married my mother, and because he couldn't find work, they went to Holland. My father was a zincographer, and the printers' trade union was very powerful, so he was able to get a job in Rotterdam through the union. My parents returned home before I was born, and my father found a job here. The Printers' Trade Union was part of the Social Democratic Party. My father was the member of some board, if I remember correctly, in the Social Democratic Party. That's why, when the Germans came into Budapest in 1944, they came to our flat right away for my father. But he wasn't at home, as he had already escaped from forced labor, and was in hiding. He obtained false papers, and hid here in Pest. The Social Democrats helped him. There was a shoemaker, a fellow with leftist sympathies, who supported him. After the War he continued his zincographic work. My mother, Olga Breiner, was born in 1907 in Obuda. Until the war, she didn't work outside the home. As she tells it, there was an intensive cultural life in Obuda. A group of young Jews would go there for balls, to socialize and get to know each other. My uncle, my mother, and my aunt all went. My mom and dad read Thomas Mann, Zsigmond Moricz, Jokai, and the European classics. When I was at school, my mom had more time to read. My father, when he was at home with mom in the morning, had time to read, too. After the war there was a Joint Kitchen on Zichy Street where the Jewish school was located. My mother started working there, and when that was closed, she went to work for the Wholesale Fabric Corporation where she became an administrator. My mother, my aunt, my grandmother, my parents and I all ended up in a yellow-star house. My mother, together with my aunt, was driven out of the yellow-star house to the brick works in Obuda. From there they walked to the Austrian-Hungarian border. At the border, a Christian priest told them that anyone waiting for a Schutzpass should stand aside. They stood to one side, and were brought back to Budapest by train, ending up in a yellow-star house, from

where they were liberated.