

Laszlo And Janos Gottlieb



This is me and my father. I was very little, some three years old. The photo was taken in Nagybanya.

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.

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

They moved to Nagybanya 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 was born in 1929 in Nagybanya. From the age of three I lived at my paternal grandparents.

My grandparents lived in a village somewhere near Nagybanya for a while, I was with them there too, then in Nagybanya.

But when I was five years old, my father took me with him, he rented a quite nice apartment, in a nice part, let's say, of Nagybanya, in a villa.

The owner was a woman from Kolozsvár, a widow, her family name was Herczeg.

The rent was quite high, but it was in the outskirts, the air was fine there.

My father always feared that I got tuberculosis or something like that.

This was when I was five. We had somebody who did the housekeeping; my father had a good salary, in those times this didn't mean a problem.

Later it was my step-mother who did the housekeeping. Well, it wasn't her who actually worked, but she gave out the tasks for everybody.

It wasn't her who did the cooking, we had a cook. This wasn't a problem.

My father was a self-educated man. And he knew many things. He learnt to speak English well, he learnt mineralogy.

He made two nice collections of minerals, one for him, and one for the owners of the Phonix Factory.

These were scientific collections, for it was written there everything, the name of the mineral, where and when it was found and so on.

Concerning minerals the thing is that when the miners advance in the stulm, and find a quarry of minerals, they sometimes find a piece of mineral which is beautiful in the middle.

They take out those stones and steal them. This is the truth. Nobody looked after them, they weren't bothered - this was their extra source of income.

Sometimes I went with my father in the homes of miners, they had minerals, he negotiated with them, and he bought the quartzes there, he didn't actually go to the mine for them.

It was also the miners who informed him about the place and date of the finding, and my father noted instantly these details. That's how he made his quartz collection.

My father was an extremely intelligent and kind man, people loved him a lot.

The workers up to the director - everybody liked him. Just to tell you one thing:

I was already living here, in Iasi, so a long time after the war, when the university of Iasi organized an excursion for the students to Nagybanya, and they wanted to visit the Phonix Factory.

I was in the group as well - I was already a teacher -, and I went to the Phonix Factory to discuss with them, after all my father was an employee there.

The workers' leader used to be a worker back then. When he found out I was the son of Laszlo Gottlieb, all the doors were open at once.

They loved him so much. Everybody loved him.