

Isaac Serman



This is me after demobilization. I put civilian clothes on, which I had not done for a while, so I felt a little awkward. The picture was taken in Tallinn in 1948.

After World War II I stayed in the Estonian corps. Officers got assignments via the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Party. I was sent to Tartu. I served in the headquarters of the 7th division. There was a time when the commander came and I was asked to hold the speech. They liked my report and I was told that I would be sent to Moscow to study. I did not have military education. I only finished compulsory school. I was waiting for the assignment for studies, but it was not coming. Then the deputy political officer of the regiment, Gorohover, was a Jew. He talked to me and said that I had to be demobilized as there was no place for Jews in the Soviet army. I understood that I was right and in 1947 I was demobilized.

I was willing to get education. I did not have any certificate from school. When I left Rakvere, I did not take anything with me, but I was incredibly lucky. In 1941 I submitted the documents to Tartu University and there was a copy of my school certificate and a photograph in the archive of the university. It was very important for me as this way I was able to enter Tartu University. I wanted to enter the History Department.

By that time I had found a job in Tartu, in the editing department of the paper 'Edasi', 'Go ahead.' It was the first paper issued in Estonia. There was no journalism department at the university and the history department was the closest to my work. One of my entrance exams was Russian language. It was hard for me as I did not know it. Russian was not taught in the Estonian school. All of us spoke Estonian in the Estonian corps. I started studying Russian in order to prepare for the exam.

When I wrote my first dictation, there were seven or eight mistakes in each line, but still I studied and passed the exams successfully. I worked and studied at the same time. The work was difficult in itself, and I had to combine it with studies and family, but I was young and ambitious.