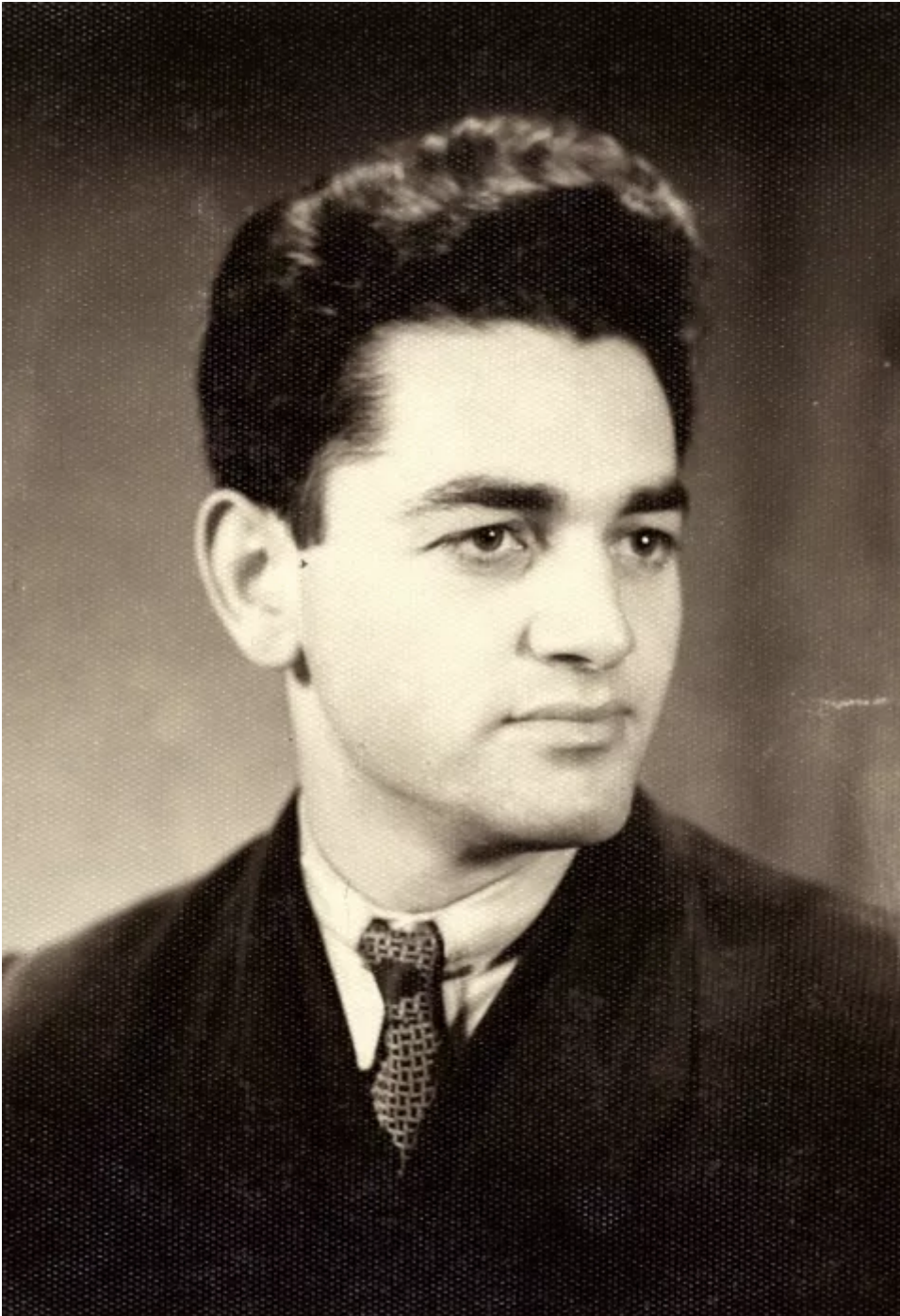


Emanuel Elbinger While At University



This is me as a student of the Academy of Mining and Metallurgy in Cracow. This photo might have been taken for my student ID in the 1950s, but I'm not sure.

I went to university, the Academy of Mining and Metallurgy. I dreamed of studying physics, but I didn't want to be a teacher, and that's the realistic outlook for a physics grad. So I went to the electrical engineering department, studied electrics, because I wanted to do something related to physics. That was quite a tough department - they used to say that people who didn't get into electrical engineering passed for other departments with flying colors. I was a full-time student.

When I was a student we had military studies too. Under communism this country was a bit militarized, because we were always about to fight a war with America. AGH was a technical university, so we had artillery. During the vacation they used to take us out to the training ground, to Deba Rozalin, or to the training grounds in the Reclaimed Territories. There were whole towns empty there, and we had artillery training grounds in them, and did shooting. I usually operated the radio. While a student I graduated from the Institute of Artillery in Torun, I spent about three months there. Yes, everyone from my years went. Before you got your officer rank, you had to graduate from that school. And then they would give us the stars, see. I'm a lieutenant. After that, when I'd graduated, they were always calling me up on exercises, for a month at a time. They tried to persuade me to stay in the army. I couldn't, because I had my father sick. I had him to look after. Once they even tried to make me, to force me. I said no. So they said: 'Court-martial.' I said: 'OK. When there's a war,' I said, 'I'll go and defend my homeland, but at the moment, while there's not a war, I'm not leaving my sick father.'

At university I was a member of the Social and Cultural Society of Polish Jews. It was at Długa 38 at first, and then on Ślawkowska Street. The Chairman of the SCSJP was Wiener [Maurycy, 1906-1990], a university law grad. He was a prewar attorney, silver-tongued, talked like an attorney. And after the war, every Jewish adult looked on young people with this kind of... friendship, that there were any children, any young people left. At that time there were still a lot of Jews in Poland. When there was a SCSJP rally in Warsaw, Wiener asked me to go to Warsaw and represent the youth section, because he wanted to show that there were still some young people. I agreed, and I went.