

Lev Galper



This is me when I was in the 8th grade.

At that time I was interested in photography and took pictures myself: I used to set a long exposure on my camera and then run to the picture site to be in time for the shot.

The photo was taken in Volchansk in 1935.

In 1927 my parents sent me to a general education school. When I finished the 7th grade our school was closed and turned into a museum. Probably, there were not enough children in

Volchansk to fill all the three schools.

All the students from our school were transferred to the ten-year school. In the 8th grade I joined the Komsomol. The attitude towards me in the new school was good; they even elected me chairman of the school Komsomol committee. It meant a lot in Volchansk at that time.

At the new school I was also an excellent student. I had a lot of spare time and my mother insisted that I should study German.

A teacher lived next door, she was a German, and she gave me lessons at her home. She mainly taught me communicative skills and correct pronunciation and didn't pay much attention to grammar.

During my school studies, I took up military training like many boys did at the time. There were many paramilitary circles. At first I joined the glider school and tried to fly. But nothing came out of it: when we were through with the theory and were about to start flying, the glider broke.

Naturally, I attended the shooting circle. Every boy was eager to shoot real rifles; besides we were given special badges for good shooting. Certainly, we didn't hope to participate in real battles: we were brought up with the idea of our army being the strongest and invincible; we thought that no one would dare to attack us.

We didn't doubt it. Besides, Volchansk was an unusual town, it was a garrison town. It was not big, but there always were some troops deployed: a cavalry regiment, or an infantry regiment, or an air force corps.

We loved our army, perhaps it was in the boys' blood. At that time conscription was looked upon in a different way than it is now: it was a matter of pride, we couldn't wait to be enlisted.