Leonid Karlinsky

This is me, Leonid Karlinsky, photographed in Leningrad in 1950, before my departure to Kamchatka. In 1948 I was admitted to the Infantry School in Leningrad. There was a Komsomol unit meeting and I attended. The secretary saw a correction of my name that I had made on my Komsomol membership card, and accused me of trying to conceal my nationality. In the summer of 1953 during my service in Kamchatka, I submitted my documents to the Leningrad Academy of the Rear and Transport Services. I was to take the exams in Khabarovsk. While taking the entrance exams, I felt to the full what it was like to be a Jew in the Soviet Union. My friend Yulik Mondrus, a Jew, and I had received gold medals for scholastic excellence and should have been officially released from having to take the entrance exams, but we were forced to take all of the exams anyway. Yulik 'failed' the exam in physics. I passed all of mine, but the examiners reminded me of

all my faults, bringing up the correction of my name on my Komsomol membership card and the fight I had gotten myself into in Leningrad. They also brought up the fact that my grandmother had been held under the occupation. They didn't care that this blind, elderly woman had been shot by the Germans. Their only interest lay in trying to find out whether she had done any harm to the Soviet powers that be, or whether she had cooperated with the Germans. It so happened that at this time there was an announcement on the radio about the rehabilitation of the Jewish doctors from the Kremlin hospital who had been unjustly accused of an alleged conspiracy aimed at the murder of Stalin and other Soviet leaders. After this announcement the attitude of the authorities towards me changed, and I was admitted to the Academy. In 1957 while studying at the Academy, I became a member of the Communist Party. Party membership was necessary for any young man who wished to have a career in the Soviet army.