

Anatoli Kraemer



That's me on my first day at school, 1st September 1932. The photo was taken in Tartu.

I entered the Estonian lyceum in 1932. It was a famous lyceum in Estonia named after its founder Hugo Treffner. During the Soviet regime the lyceum was turned into an ordinary compulsory school, but it was restored in 1991 when Estonia became independent. Now it is considered to be one of the best lyceums in Estonia. There were quite a few Jewish children there. Jews have always

been positively treated in Estonia. We never felt anti-Semitism. There were classes in the lyceum on Jewish holidays, but Jewish students were exempt from them.

When I was a lyceum student, I joined the children's Zionist organization Betar. Most of my friends were enrolled there. At that time we were not interested in the political aspect of the organization, we just enjoyed being there. We played all kind of games, went in for sport. We had meetings, where we were told about the history of Israel, life of the modern Palestine. I was very energetic, liked bossing around and soon I became the group leader of Betar.