

Alexander Kann



This is my father Alexander Kann at Pirita beach, Tallinn, in 1950.

When we came back to Tallinn my father became a legal advisor at the large Tallinn radio plant Volta, then he was hired by the Ministry of Commerce as an assistant to the minister in legal issues.

Father was very circumspect and did not trust the Soviet regime. He wanted to guard me from possible trouble as the Soviet regime struggled against religion. I was a convinced pioneer and later a Komsomol member. I was very active, living like anybody else. Now I cannot delete that part of my life saying that it had never happened to me. This is the way it was. Father probably did not want me to prevaricate and we did not discuss Jewish traditions at home. In general, we did not speak much.

Father was loyal to the Jewry and its traditions. He helped anyone, Jews in particular. If there was a sorrow in any Jewish family, everybody knew that Alexander Kann would be in café Chario collecting money from the Jews for assistance. People came and gave as much as they could. Father always remembered if some of the well-off people did not bring money. He did not forgive

such people. He was an amazing man: kind, decent and polite. Nobody can say a bad word about him. He was a man of principle. No matter how soft he might have been, when someone was dishonest, he stopped greeting the person. I remember he said in such cases: 'I am not taking my hat off to that person.'

Of course, my father understood what was in store for the family during the Soviet regime. He never discussed it with me. I do not think he even talked to my mom about it. I recall, after the war my father would stay by the window at nighttime and look out for a long time. I remember how worried he was when he heard the sound of a car engine at nighttime and his feeling of relief when the car left. Probably, he expected that he could be arrested any time. If somebody from the NKVD had known who the Kann family really was, they would have exiled us, but we got away.