

Tobijas Jafetas And His Friends



This is me with my co-student friends. I am on the right, and beside me are my Lithuanian friends Piatras, Vitas, Petrikas. The photo was taken in 1951 in Vilnius.

In fall 1945 fall I went to the 2nd grade of gymnasium. After the war Lithuania maintained its prewar educational system: a four-year elementary school and eight-year gymnasium course. I didn't feel quite comfortable, being overage. In summer I studied individually and passed exams for the 3rd grade, and then I could go to the 4th grade. I also took the course for the 7th and 8th grade at university. I was good at studying. I also joined the Komsomol, and in 1949 I finished school and obtained a very good certificate.

I successfully passed my entrance exams to the Chemical Faculty. However, Buchas, the rector of Vilnius University, who came from Kaunas and knew my father very well, said that sons from bourgeois families were not to study at the university, and I was not admitted there. My cousin Anna's friend helped me. She was married to the pro-rector of the Teachers' Training College, and I was admitted to the Faculty of Physics and Mathematic. I studied well. I was well-loved at home. Aunt Masha's family treated me like their son. I wasn't an active Komsomol member, but I liked amateur performance clubs. I was involved in the amateur theater performances and sang in the folk choir. This choir toured all over Lithuania on plain trucks. I had many Lithuanian friends and never felt an outcast like I did in the ghetto. When in the early 1950s all newspapers trumpeted about cosmopolitan Jews, this anti-Semitic campaign also affected me. I was excluded from the Komsomol, not for being Jewish, but for having a bourgeois origin. I was a success with my studies and finished the college with the highest grades. I wanted to attend post-graduate studies, but I wasn't admitted there, without any explanation. I was told I was to work off whatever money the state had spent on my education.