

Naum Balan And His Fellow Student



This is me standing and my fellow student sitting on a section of a wall. We were removing the remains of a house ruined by a bomb. The photo was taken in Odessa in 1949. After finishing school in 1946 I entered the Electrotechnical Faculty of Odessa Communications College. I lived in a hostel and received a stipend, but this wasn't enough for a living and my parents supported me. Students also worked as loaders in the harbor to earn some money for a living. 1946-47 were hard years. We tried to get up late in the morning so that we could have lunch at 12, because we usually didn't have any breakfast. We were given food coupons for a hot lunch at the canteen. After classes we bought a half-liter jar of corn flour at the market to make mamaliga [corn flour pudding] with shmaltz [melted pork fat] in the evening. We lived on the second floor and there were dancing parties on the first floor in the evening. We managed to drop by there to dance a little while mamaliga was being cooked. We didn't care about nationality at that time. There were no conflicts or anti-Semitism whatsoever in the college.