

Anatoli Kraemer With His Cousins Margalit And Alexander



Here you can see me with my cousins, the children of Mother's sister Rebecca. From left to right: I, my cousin Margalit and my cousin Alexander. The photograph was taken in Tartu in 1935.

Aunt Rebecca graduated from university. She became a dentist, but she did not work after graduation. When she studied at the university, she met a Jew called Semyon Kremer and married him upon graduation. Semyon was a gynecologist. Rebecca gave birth to two children. Her elder son Alexander was born in 1921 and three years older than me, and her daughter Margalit was born in 1931.

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.