

Julianna Kann



That's me after my graduation from the Tallinn Teachers' Training Institute. The picture was taken in Tallinn in 1960.

When I finished school I was eager to go to Leningrad to enter university, the English language department. The teaching at Tallinn Teachers' Training Institute was in Estonian, but I had studied at a Russian school. It seemed to me that I would not be able to study in Estonian after the Russian school. Father could not understand why I was leaving Tallinn. He had a different mentality as he was raised in a family where everybody was fluent in several languages. He could not perceive why

I should care which language the studies were in. He was flatly against my departure, but I left anyway.

I wanted to have an adult, post-school, independent life. It seemed to me I could achieve everything by myself. I have been like that all my life. I always thought that I could do everything I wanted and always achieved what I wanted. Nobody ever helped me in anything. I did all by myself with blood, sweat and tears. I worked very hard. I think this is the way it should be.

I stayed with Aunt Raisa, my grandfather's brother's wife, in Leningrad. My English skills were really pretty good and I got a good mark in English at the entrance exam, which was not enough for admission. I do not know what the reason was for that – my nationality or lack of skill. Judging by my father's reaction he knew that I would not be able to pass exams in Leningrad and expected such an outcome. As soon as I told him about my decision to go to Leningrad, he did not bring up the subject to me as if he did not care. He must have been on the qui vive because when I came back from the exam he told me to go home right away and do what he says.

Father met me at the train station, took my suitcase and told me to go to Tallinn Teachers' Training Institute immediately with my examination card from Leningrad. I was supposed to take the exam in Estonian. I was asked to write a dictation in Estonian and then the next day – an oral Estonian exam. The rest of the exams were carried over from Leningrad examination card. First I was as enrolled as an external student, and in a week I became a full-time student.

Right upon graduation, I started teaching English in the evening school. The compulsory and evening school was in one building. It was located on the outskirts of Tallinn, which was the workers' district. I loved my school very much. Gradually I started teaching both in the evening and compulsory school. Then I was transferred to compulsory school. I worked there for 31 years. I liked my job. There was a very good team. I always got along with the students.