

Zina Minevich With Her Friend Geta



My friend Geta and I as first year students in Institute of Light Industry, the photo was made in Kiev in 1953.

At 14 I went to the dressmaking trade school because students got hot meals and a stipend of 75 rubles. We also got food packages for weekends. I rented a room and I had to pay 100 rubles per month. I gave my landlady my stipend and sewed for her or her relatives for the remaining 25 rubles. Some of my schoolmates were girls from the country. They shared the food they got from home with me. My mother returned to Kiev in 1949 and lived in the hairdresser's where she worked. We didn't get our apartment back. A big family was living there. They told the authorities that we had gone to the Babiy Yar to obtain permission to move into our apartment.

I studied at the trade school to get a profession and in the evening school to complete my secondary education. I finished this evening school with a gold medal in 1951. In 1951 - 1952 I worked as a dressmaker in a shop in Kiev. In 1952 I tried to enter the Institute of Light Industry. This was the first time I faced anti-Semitism, although I didn't quite understand what it was about. I didn't have to take any exams, because I had a gold medal. They told me at the Institute that I failed to pass the competition of medallists. This was not true. All medallists were admitted without exams. I submitted my documents to the Institute of Food Industry and got the same response. There was an Institute of Silicates left where there was a shortage of students. I entered it in 1952. In 1953 this Institute became a Faculty of Kiev Polytechnic Institute. In this way I became a student of one of the most prestigious institutes in Kiev.

I graduated the Institute in 1957. My profession was Mechanical engineer. I got a job assignment at the brick factory in Daugeliay, Lithuania. I worked there for a year.