

Estera Migdalska Among The Polish Children Repatriated From The USSR



This is a photo of Polish children, who were repatriated in 1948 from Russia. This photo was published in *Życie Warszawy* and probably in *Głos Ludu* as well, to make it easier for the families to identify their children. In 1947 Uncle then starts efforts to bring me back, I also start efforts to be repatriated. But repatriation has officially ended. Efforts for me to be able to repatriate continue for a year, until 1947. In late 1947, an official letter arrives for the Proskurov education department to escort me to a gathering point near Moscow where the remaining formalities will be completed. That gathering point is a children's home, there isn't much to eat, but there are children, orphans of some high-ranking officers, there's a school, there are music classes. We are a group of perhaps 15 kids. From small children to three older girls roughly of my age, and one more older girl from Białystok. If I'm not mistaken, at least six of us were of Jewish origin. There were two sisters, there was a girl with whom we became close friends, there was a girl from a Polish children's home that was returning to Poland, and, at some station, when the train was standing still, the other kids threw her out off the train because she was Jewish. She fell under a passing train and lost her fingers. The teachers didn't react at all. Her name was Złata, I think. She had been left in a hospital, and now she was returning with our group. I don't think she had anyone. There were all kinds of kids. Kids who had been in the camps, who had gotten lost in flight, had been in prison, or kids who had been alone so they tried to survive and in many cases broke the law. Finally they'd gathered the whole group, completed all the formalities, it took some three months, and in February we returned to Poland, to Warsaw. Upon arrival, we were loaded onto trucks and taken somewhere to Świdry, there was some kind of a children's home there. I think they must have set it up during that time - there wasn't anybody there except us, it was empty. They put us there and in the morning they started letting know the families.