

Hana Rayzberg With Her Teacher And Schoolmates



These are my pre-war schoolmates in Ludza, those, who survived the war. We were photographed at the start of the academic year - on 1st September 1949. The director of the school is sitting in the center. There were no Jewish schoolmates among those, who returned to Riga after the war. I'm the 3rd from the right in the 1st row.

My student life cannot be called easy. The dormitory was a shabby wooden house with no running water or toilet. There was an Orthodox church across the street from the dormitory, and we used their toilet. We fetched water in buckets. It was impossible to live on the stipend. Mama could not afford to send me money. After classes I worked part-time as a typist in the Institute of Astronomy. I worked till midnight and left the typed pieces with the guard. I typed in Latvian. I also typed minutes and sheets for a shop. I slept little and ate little, but I studied very well and could also afford to support Mama. There were Russian and Latvian students in the dormitory, but I never faced any anti-Semitism. I got along well with all of them.

I finished my school with honors and before getting a job assignment I was offered to go to the Leningrad College of Light industry. This was a very tempting offer, but I was reluctant to leave Mama alone for so long. I wanted to stay in Riga. I got a job assignment at the sewing factory. I worked as a shift forewoman in the sewing shop. I also received a small room - eight square meters - in an attic with no heating, gas or water. The front door of the room led to the staircase. There was a wood stoked stove in the kitchen. However, this was at least some lodging. I convinced Mama to move in with me. Mama had poor sight. The staircase was very steep, and she had to make a strong effort to climb it, but we were happy to be together. We accepted life as it was.