

Zenta Kanevskaya And Her Classmates



This photograph was taken in 1941 in Leningrad.

It shows pupils of our evening school on the day we finished it.

Here I'd like to tell you why I had to study at an evening school and what happened after I finished it.

By 1937 some sort of vacuum started forming around us and in 1938 my father got arrested.

When Daddy got imprisoned, it became clear to us that Mom alone wasn't able to support three children. So, first of all I changed my school for an evening one.

Red-haired Vanya Vassilyev was one of my classmates.

He worked as a cook at a mechanized canteen. It was he who helped me get my first job. I was hired as an assistant to an accountant at their accounts department.

The head of the department was very nice.

Her younger sister also worked there, and we made friends.

I had to go round to the canteen sections, collecting different documents.

And in each section employees wanted to give me something to eat: a roll, curdled milk, an ice-cream.

I felt embarrassed, but I understood that everyone wished me well.

After that I worked at the Krasny Oktyabr factory. It was a well known enterprise manufacturing pianos. I worked there as an accountant.

Later I worked in a technical school, which prepared projectionists.

There I got acquainted with very interesting people.

You see, I was a young girl, everything was amazing to me, and people who played some part in the film industry seemed to me the real people of art.

I left that job, when I entered the 10th grade, aiming to become well prepared and enter a college.

At that time I never came across any manifestations of anti-Semitism. Probably I was very lucky with the people around me and places I worked at.

As is well known, before the war there were no anti-Semitic witch-hunts, conducted by state authorities, and I never faced the so-called 'everyday' anti-Semitism.

I finished school with good marks and entered the 1st Medical College.

It was in 1941. But I didn't study there for long.

Before the beginning of the academic year my sister and I were sent to dig trenches.