

Ranana Malkhanova With Her Classmates In The Orphanage



This is a picture of me in the orphanage with the group of classmates in 1947 in Vilnius. I'm the one with the pointer. I don't remember the names of the others in the photo. After the war my mother found a job as a cashier in a canteen. After some months, my mother was stricken with tuberculosis. She was in the hospital and as if ill luck would have it I got sick as well. I had either jaundice or dysentery. It was strange that during our wandering days in the war time, we didn't even catch a cold. Our organisms must have had a protective mechanism in the days of ordeal. My mother's state was very bad. I was sent to an orphanage. It was called Jewish as there were a lot of Jewish children, who had lost their parents. Here I joined the Komsomol and became the leader for junior schoolchildren: pioneers. I enjoyed studying and absorbed the information like a sponge. I had a thirst for knowledge during my meanderings and I liked to take care of the pioneers, teaching them verses and songs, playing games, helping them with studies. I was fed pretty well. It was warm and cozy. The teachers treated me very well. They sympathized with the orphans. I had spent a whole year at the orphanage while my mother had stayed in the hospital. When she was discharged, I went back home. I kept on studying right after I went back. I had straight 'fives' and was a very active Komsomol member. I was constantly busy, either organizing a tour or attending the theater, editing the paper, having classes with those who were lacking behind, etc. When I started the tenth grade, I found out that I was one of the candidates for a gold medal.