

Shlima Goldstein With Her Friend Raya Falkman



This is me with my friend Raya Falkman. This photo was taken in Ramenskoye in 1945 after we met incidentally after the war. After the war, Yelena Ivanovna, who became my second mother and helped hide me during the war, helped the girls to go to work and sent me to a children's home in the village of Konstantinovka, Kurgan district, Krasnodar Krai. In 1946 all girls between 14 and 16 years were sent to various vocational schools. I was sent to the cotton spinning factory in the town of Balashikha near Moscow. I studied in a vocational school and was also an apprentice at the factory. After finishing the vocational school I became a worker at the factory. Students were provided with food and uniforms. I lived in the dormitory where I shared a room with nine other girls. We got along well and helped and supported each other. At the age of 16, I already worked eight to twelve hours like an adult worker. We ate potatoes, bread and macaroni. We only had meat on big holidays, but I was no longer starving. I had forgotten my native Jewish language [Yiddish] by then. I could only speak Russian. One of our friends went to visit her friend, a student of another vocational school in the town of Ramenskoye. She met a girl from Romania, who asked her about me. This was Raya Falkman, my friend from the Kishinev orphanage. I went to see Raya. We were so happy to have found one another. Raya and I spent a weekend together talking about our wanderings during the Great Patriotic War. Raya and I lost each other during the battle near Armavir. Raya and other girls from the orphanage were taken to a ghetto. The only thing that saddened our reunion was that due to the transportation problem I went back to Balashikha too late and didn't go to work the next day. At this time one could be taken to prison for such failure, but the foreman of the shop where I worked, Khadzimurat, a man from the Caucasus, told me off for my absence at work and sent me to work at the most hazardous site - in the painting shop. There was yarn and fluff flying around and also, there was the smell of paint. Many workers had tuberculosis as a result. I thought this was all the punishment for my absence. A week later Raya came to see me again. She had received a letter from her friends in Kishinev. They wrote that my mother was looking for me. Raya gave me my mother's address in Kishinev. It's hard to describe the overwhelming joy I felt. So, God had heard me and had mercy on me. My dear ones were alive.