

Berta Pando At The Catholic Nursery School



Here I am at the Catholic nursery school. I am in the second row, the second one from left to right. Usually two of us would sleep in one bed but this time, because of the photo, they let each one of us lie in a separate bed. The year was 1941. The second teacher from right to left, whose name I can't remember, warned my parents to take me from there and never take me there again, that we weren't treated well there. There is neither a stamp of a photo studio, nor any other inscription on the back of the photo.

The period of the Holocaust coincided with my years at the nursery and primary schools. Almost all Jewish children attended one and the same nursery. It was mixed and there were children of Turkish, Jewish, Armenian origin.

When the Holocaust started we, the Jewish children, somehow got isolated. Most probably that was done by the other children under the influence of their parents. I recall a child called me 'chifutka' [a derogatory word for Jew]. I remember that may be because of that incident the teacher made a parents' meeting and said that the Jewish children are no longer allowed to attend the nursery. We were expelled because of being Jews. There were about ten of us. And our parents were really worried. Then, one summer, they decided to take us to a Catholic nursery but we were turned out of there too. I also recall that Tsar Boris III died at that time. And the other thing I can't forget is that all day long the nuns would teach us how to pray.