

## Efim Pisarenko's Older Brother Misha Pisarenko And His School Friend



This is a picture of my older brother Misha Pisarenko (on the right) and his school friend. The photo was taken in Gomel in 1941. In 1933 Hitler came to power in Germany. My father saw Germans during World War I and thought they were civilized people. My mother was afraid of Germans nonetheless. She was sure that if there was a war they would castrate Jewish boys. My father laughed at her. Nobody considered the possibility of a war with Germany, even after Germans occupied Poland. Nobody had any premonition of the war. Life was beginning to improve. In 1941 my older brother Misha and Broha finished the 10th grade at a Jewish school and were thinking of continuing their studies. My father had only studied at cheder and was very happy that his children would get a higher education. Everybody had great expectations of the future. I was a very vivid

boy and interfered with Misha and Broha when they prepared for their exams. In May 1941 Mama sent me and my older sister Lisa to Aunt Musia in Moldavia. Her husband and daughter lived in the town of Bershad. This was a Jewish town. At least 80% of the population was Jewish. I was three and a half years old, Lisa was 16. At the beginning of the war my father was summoned to the front. Misha finished secondary school and submitted his documents to the Medical Academy in Leningrad. He went to the front instead and perished there. He was a tankman and had a platoon under his command. Almost all his classmates perished, none of the boys returned from the front. Almost all girls from the class, in which Misha and Broha studied, also perished.