

## Israel Shlifer At A School



I am at a school in Mariupol, first row, second on the right. This photo was taken in 1932.

My father finished the University in 1920s and became a financial officer within the Ministry of Industry. He often traveled on job assignments to other towns and then My parents traveled to many towns: Dnepropetrovsk, Dneprodzerzhinsk and Kharkov where my father held official posts, when they had to travel to another town they left me with my grandparents. In 1932 my father got a job assignment to Mariupol and took me with him. From then on I lived with my parents. We often moved from one town to another and I changed schools. My first school in Kiev was Russian, then I went to a Ukrainian school in Rzhishchev and then I lost count of them. We lived in Ukrainian and Russian towns. One of them was Magnitogorsk in Siberia. I enjoyed my studies and liked all subjects. In 1937 we moved to Kiev for good.

I became a pioneer and joined Komsomol at school, but I didn't feel like taking part in any public activities. I didn't make friends at school. When my father received an apartment in Saksaganskogo Street I made friends with my neighbors and we were lifetime friends. At that time I got fond of poetry. My friends were intelligent boys. I learned a lot from them. At first I felt like a 'black sheep' with them since I came from a smaller town and my friends were more knowledgeable than I in many areas, but gradually I caught up with them. I became interested in literature and poetry. We were fond of forbidden poets for the most part. At that time all poets, but Mayakovsky, Yesenin, Gumilev, Mandelshtam, - were forbidden. We got copies of poems that we read and learned by heart. Somehow the Komsomol organization of my school got to know that we read forbidden poets. Probably one of us reported to them. My friends were called to the leaders where NKVD representatives were present. Fortunately, I didn't have to go there. They asked the boys where they got copies, but my friends answered that they just heard these poets and remembered them. The officers probably didn't believe them, but they left them.