

Arkadi Yurkovetski With His Classmates



I (on the right) and my Jewish classmates. This photo was taken in Tomashpol in 1944.

In June 1941 I finished the 4th grade. On Sunday 22 June 1941 our mother came home from the market rather worried. She said that Germany attacked the USSR without declaring a war and that German planes were already bombing Kiev.

In March 1944 Soviet troops began their victorious march. Farmers brought us news. Then German retreating troops marched across Tomashpol. On 16 March 1944 Soviet troops entered Tomashpol. All Jews came into streets. They were happy about liberation. Of 5 thousand Jews that were in the ghetto at the beginning of the war only about a thousand survived. We kept staying in our house.

I went to the 6th grade of a Ukrainian school. My brother went to the 1st one. There was no anti-Semitism in those years. There couldn't be any demonstrated by people that were helping us in the ghetto. I joined Komsomol in the 8th form. I cannot say that I was eager to become a Komsomol member, but everybody was admitted and so was I. After finishing the 8th grade I had to support the family. I became my father's apprentice and in half year I began to work by myself. I also attended an evening higher secondary school. I finished the 10th grade with only two 'good' marks. The rest of them in my certificate were 'excellent'.