

# Arkadi Yurkovetski With His Brother Igor Yurkovetski



I (sitting on the right) and my younger brother Igor Yurkovetski. This photo was taken in Tomashpol in 1938.

I was born in 1929. My younger brother Igor was born in 1935. We were both circumcised in accordance with Jewish traditions on the 8th day after we were born. We only spoke Yiddish at home. Yiddish is my mother tongue. I said my first words in this language. My parents were religious and were raising my brother and I religious. We were rather poor. I remember that our father bought 200 grams of sugar candy and they lasted for about a week. I envied other children that had a bicycle, but of course, I couldn't even mention my desire to have one to my parents.

I went to Ukrainian lower secondary school in 1937. I spoke fluent Ukrainian. There were many Jewish children at school and in my class. There was no national segregation. There was no anti-Semitism in Tomashpol. I had Jewish and Ukrainian friends. I still correspond with many of them. Many live abroad and some passed away. I liked mathematics and geography, but I was a success with other subjects as well. I became a Young Octobrist in first grade. We were grouped in 'stars' - 5 pupils in each group. My group was responsible for watering flowers in the schoolyard. In the 4th grade I became a pioneer. There was no ceremony. Our class tutor told those who wanted to become pioneers to raise their hands. Then they selected those that were more successful with their studies. I was one of those. During an interval on the next day we had red neckties tied and that was all. I didn't have any pioneer chores. We read books about heroic pioneers and wanted to be like them.