

## Yakov Driz's Jewish School



Third grade, Jewish school in Tomashpol. The school flag is in the background of this photo. I am the youngest, born in 1927, the 6th in the second row at the bottom. In the center - Director Goltz. Beside him is our class tutor Lisa Lebed. In 1934, when I was seven, I started going to the Jewish school. Children were supposed to start school at eight, but I was eager to study. My cousin Manya decided to help me. Manya was older than I, and she studied at the school. She took me to the director and said that my mother had typhoid and had asked her to accept me into the first grade. Of course, this was a lie, but Manya told me to keep silent about it. Manya said that I was already eight years old, but that we couldn't bring my birth certificate as it was under my mother's pillow. The director didn't want to see my birth certificate after she heard that my mother had typhoid. So I was allowed to go to the school. I was the youngest in my class, but I did well in all subjects. All subjects were taught in Yiddish. We even read the books of Russian writers translated into Yiddish. However, we didn't study subjects related to Jewish tradition or history. Our curriculum included subjects typical of any other Soviet school. Our school was the best in the neighborhood. Teachers paid much attention to our involvement in after class activities. We had three orchestras, a choir that had Jewish and Ukrainian songs in its repertoire, and a theatrical studio. We had a club, where we had concerts and performances. There were two Ukrainian schools in Tomashpol - secondary and primary. Schoolchildren from these schools often came to our club. There was no national segregation.