

Arkadi Yurkovetski With His Cousin Rosa



I and my cousin Rosa (her Jewish name is Reizl), my father brother Unchl's daughter. This photo was taken in Tomashpol in 1948.

In 1944, after liberated from the ghetto I went to the 6th grade of a Ukrainian school. 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'.

My father, his brothers and sisters were religious. They were religious through their whole life. My father's brother Unchl was a tinsmith and his wife was a housewife. They had five daughters: the oldest one's name was Rosa, the next one was Lubov - her Jewish name was Liebe. As for the others, I don't remember their names. In 1937 my father's older brother Unchl died. He was buried at the Jewish cemetery in Tomashpol according to Jewish traditions. His wife Surka [short for Surah] and their older single daughters kept living in grandfather's house in Tomashpol. Uncle Unchl's three younger daughters were married and lived with their families in Moscow.

In 1950 I went to serve in the army. I was sent to an 'initial military training unit' in Chernovtsy. Since I had secondary education and beautiful handwriting I was taken to serve in staff service of a division where I served 3.5 years. There were 8 clerks and I was the only Jew among them. We stayed in a room at the headquarters. I never faced anti-Semitism during my service. I got along well with my fellow comrades. I had awards for excellent performance and studies. I was allowed to leave the unit after 18:00 hours. Twice a year on I was allowed a 10-day leave: on 1st May [Labor Day] and 7th November. My parents were very happy about it.

My mother died in April 1953. My mother was 51 years old. I went home. I cried bitterly feeling. She was buried according to the Jewish tradition near her father's grave. My father recited the Kaddish over my mother's grave. I stayed at home few days before I went back to my military unit. In 1954 I

demobilized from the army.