

## Grigoriy Kagan And His Sister Yulia



Russian children in Russian schools and Ukrainian children in Ukrainian schools. He refused to admit me to the 1st grade. Mama asked him whether it was possible for me to go to the 2nd grade. Since the order was issued in 1928 it did not refer to pupils of the 2nd grade. I was given an entrance test: the teacher of mathematic wrote a problem on the blackboard during a break at school and I resolved it instantly. I was admitted to the 2nd grade. My classmates were one year older than me. They were born in 1919. However, I was the best pupil in my class. I was one of the first to become a pioneer in my class, though I was the youngest. I was elected chairman of the pioneer unit in my class and then chairman of the pupils' committee at school. There were few other Jewish children in my class. There was no anti-Semitism. There was no national segregation in my school.

I had many chores at home. My father got up very early. He had his horses harnessed before 5 o'clock in the morning to go to work. He hauled beer, sweets, sugar and he did the loading himself to save his earnings. He returned home by 5 p.m. and was exhausted after a day's work. Mama and I were waiting for him at the gate. I opened the gate and unharnessed the horses. Mama had a bucket of water for my father to wash himself. I was to feed the horses, give them oats or hay, give them water and clean them an hour and a half later. I was to take care of the horses. Occasionally I took the horses to a vet. I rode one horse and led another holding it by the bridle. I had to stand in line to the vet and these visits might last a day or so. I always smelled of horses. Once Pyotr Shebiakin, with whom I shared my desk in my class, said that I smelled of horse manure. I hit him. The teacher asked what the matter was and when I explained she told Pyotr to go out of the classroom and told me that I was right. I can still remember this.