

Iosif Blumenfeld



This is Iosif Blumenfeld, sham husband of Anna Galyorkina, cousin of my mother.

Iosif was a famous social democrat. Documents about his life and activity are now kept in the Museum of History in the Peter & Paul's Fortress in St.Petersburg.

He was born in Odessa in the family of a rabbi. He was a prominent revolutionary, Plekhanov's follower, and had to hide, as he was persecuted for using false documents; he used various names.

He was the organizer and typesetter of underground printing-houses of the RSDRP [Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party], a delegate to the First RSDRP Congress, the organizer of the printing-house where the "Iskra" newspaper was printed.

Anna was the revolutionary Chicherin's fiancée before she met him. She married Blumenfeld fictitiously in order to get a dowry from the Galyorkin family, which was used later on to set up the Iskra printing-house.

She took the printing equipment from Russia abroad. The wedding took place in Paris in the 1900s.

They remained friends with Iosif Solomonovich until the end of their lives, but they never lived as husband and wife. Our family preserved a warm relationship with Iosif Blumenfeld, especially father's brother Grigory, with whom they were party comrades; my father and he also assisted each other.

Iosif married another woman in 1924 and in 1925. When Iosif Blumenfeld was fired, he gave him a job as accountant at the cooperative. Boris Smelnitsky, the violinist, was employed as a guard by father. Mother was indignant,

"Boris is playing chess again with Isaac in his office, and who is going to be responsible if something is lost? If it were your personal workshop you wouldn't have tolerated that, but it is not so. If he's the guard, he has to guard". Mother recalled that conversation later.