

Lev Dubinski's Wife Elena Shepenkova With Her Co-Students



My wife, Elena Shepenkova (on the right) and her rabfak co-students (names unknown). It was taken as memorial in Kiev, 1934.

In 1934 I went to work as an electrician at the cashier manufacture plant and went to study in the evening department of Rabfak to complete my secondary education. I met Elena Shepenkova, a Russian girl, at the rabfak. Elena lost her mother at the age of 3 and was raised by her father Iosif Shepenkov. Maria told me later that my mother wasn't quite happy that I was seeing a Russian girl, but she did not mentioned it to me. She only said at the beginning 'She is an orphan. If you are not serious about it - just leave her alone'. I was serious about her.

After finishing the Rabfak school, Elena entered the Faculty of Chemical Equipment Manufacture at the Industrial College. We got married in 1939 and lived with my parents. They partitioned half of their room for us. A year after Elena finished the College and got a job assignment to Tuapse in the Caucasus [in Russia]. I was assigned to a military training in College that extended my studies in College for half a year. We wrote a letter to the plant in Tuapse where she was to be employed requesting them to release her due to her 'condition'. [Editor's note: she was probably pregnant] They gave us their consent and Elena received a 'free' diploma.

I finished College in March 1941 and got a diploma of power engineer. I went to work as an engineer to the power plant in Kiev regenerator rubber plant in Darnitsa on the left bank of the Dnieper. On 18th May 1941, a month before the Great Patriotic War our older daughter Irina was born.