

Lev Galper With His Co-Students



This is a picture of freshmen at the Kharkov Textile Institute. We were photographed at the beginning of the academic year. I am the first from the left in the 2nd row.

In the middle of the 1st row is Stepan Fomenko; he was the oldest of us and was elected chairman of the students' committee. On my right is Galina Grudinskaya; after the war she became Fomenko's wife.

The photo was taken in Kharkov in 1938.

When I was still at school, the Volchansk Komsomol leader called me to the regional Komsomol committee and told me that young people were being recruited to the air force and the regional Komsomol committee had decided to send me to air-force courses. Of course, I agreed immediately.

Right after finishing school I went to Kharkov. I went together with five other young men from our area. We came to the Culture Center of the Kharkov machine-building factory where the medical board was working. All the doctors examined us and I was told that my anthropometry parameters didn't meet the requirements.

I didn't weigh enough, and my weight deficiency was considerable. I was told that they would give me a recommendation for the military technical air-force school. I went home and started waiting for the invitation, but a month later I got a letter where they refused to admit me.

Entrance examinations in higher educational institutions were already under way, and I had to enter at least somewhere, so I went back to Kharkov. I tried to enter the military economics academy. I passed all the first exams; there were two days left before the last one, an exam in chemistry.

I decided to go home for these two days and didn't have enough time to get ready for it. I got only 'satisfactory' in chemistry and I didn't have enough scores to enter the academy. I took my documents away from there.

In the street I saw a notice about admission to the Textile Institute. They took me considering the results of the exams I had passed at the academy. Thus, quite by chance, I became a textile-worker. I was given a place in the dormitory and on 1st September 1938 I started my studies.

There were quite a number of Jewish students in my group and at the institute. Others were very well disposed towards us. I studied well, studies were easy for me. I was considered a good student.