

Ida Limonova's First Husband Natan Shafir With His Friends



My first husband Natan Shafir, his friend Lev Achkasov and his friend's wife Polia Bazilevich. The photo was made in Kiev on 1st May 1938 during the walk after the festive demonstrations. After finishing trade school I went to study at the Rabfak. At the Rabfak I was involved with editorial work for the children's newspapers, Na zminu. There were quite a few young Jewish men among the staff, including senior secretary Natan Shafir, my future husband. In 1934 the government decided to move the capital from Kharkov to Kiev. Our editorial office moved to Kiev as well and so did I. In

1935 Natan Shafir and I got married. We had a civil ceremony at the registry office and our colleagues gave us with a big bouquet of peonies. Natan Shafir was born to a wealthy Jewish family in the village of Novo-Poltavka near Nikolayev in 1910. His father, Aron Shafir, owned a mill and his mother, Basia Shafir, was a housewife. In May 1936 our son Yuri was born. I hired a babysitter and continued to work. We lived in a small one-bedroom apartment, but later we received a two-bedroom apartment in a big house. Employees of the newspapers Soviet Ukraine, Communist, Youth of Ukraine and the Stalin's Generation lived in this building. There were quite a few Jewish families living there. In 1937 Natan and I were fired and expelled from the Komsomol. We were accused that we drove from Kharkov with Gregory Furman (the head of the school department at the Komsomol Central Committee), who had been executed by that time after having been declared an enemy of the people, and that we were hiding the fact of his anti-Soviet activities. Actually it wasn't Furman who we drove with, but someone called Belinskiy, but we lost our jobs anyway and had nothing to live on. We sent Yuri to my parents in Kharkov. We were selling clothes to survive. We sold my coat and Natan's leather jacket and trousers. The horror of the situation was that we were ready to give up our lives for the Soviet power, but were accused and persecuted in return. It was morally hard for us. We believed everything that happened to us was a terrible mistake and didn't lose faith in the communist ideas. Every morning when we woke up, the janitor of the house, Kolomiets, told us which of our neighbors had been arrested. In 1938 the Central Committee of the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] decided to alleviate charges against people and we took an effort to resume our membership in the Komsomol. I submitted my request to the regional Komsomol committee. There was a commission that was to review my situation. They requested a letter of confirmation signed by Belinskiy to be submitted to them and promised to have my request reviewed at their meeting. But on the day of their meeting I got to know that Belinskiy had been arrested. So my case was left at that. Natan and I resumed or membership in the Komsomol and got our jobs back only at the end of 1938. We took Yuri home.