

Susanna Sirota With Her Husband Lev Markelov And Friend Semyon



Here you can see three radio operators at the radio station in Sviatoshino. From left to right: my husband Lev Markelov, me and our friend Semyon. This photo was taken in Kiev on 11th May 1945. On this day Lev and I registered our marriage in the registry office and were photographed.

During World War II, I was a radio operator of the highest category. In 1942 I was taken to a partisan school. In summer 1943 young guys came to our school. One of them was Lev Markelov, two years younger than I, born in Nizhni Novgorod in 1925. He was Russian. He told me later that he didn't know the word 'Jew' before he met me. When they said 'zhyd' [kike] he thought that it was about a greedy and evil person, but he never associated it with national origin. Lev was very talented and in no time he grasped the specifics of our profession. He had sensitive hands and excelled in transmissions. We became friends.

Later, when the front was moving to the west and partisans also moved farther and they couldn't be heard in Moscow, our center moved to Kiev in November 1944. When we arrived there was still smoke emerging from ashes. Lev was appointed manager of the radio station. Our facility was in Sviatoshino. We received a room at this radio station, but for some reason Lev had to give his overcoat for this. There were three of us living in this room: Lev, I and our friend Semyon. It wasn't too bad since one of us was always on duty at work.

Markelov was promoted promptly. I was in the rank of lieutenant at the beginning and he had no rank, but then he was promoted to a captain. I liked him and then I thought that I was to get married some time anyway. I was 21 and he was 19. I knew from my mother's letter that Kolia was gone and I also knew that I would never meet anyone like Kolia again. Our radio station arranged a great wedding party for me and Lev. We got trophy food products and trophy cognac left by the Germans.

I wrote my parents that I got married. They thought Lev was a Jew – for some reason the name of Lev was considered to be a Jewish name – and were very happy for me and I didn't give them any details. Nationality didn't matter to me. We had an official civil registration on 11th May 1945 after Victory Day. I remember that happy day of 9th May 1945. It was a bright sunny day and lilac bushes were in blossom. We were feeling happy and then we saw that there was a registry office where we were having a walk and we went in there and had our marriage registered. He kept his last name and I kept mine.