

Lasar Blekhshtein's Wife



This photograph was taken in 1930s and I do not know where. It shows my wife Gede. She was very beautiful. Here she is about 20.

At first I worked at LENENERGO [the power company of St. Petersburg]. Graduates had to complete a mandatory 2-year job assignment issued by the college from which they graduated.

But I graduated with honors, therefore I was allowed to get employment at my discretion in any town or organization. I chose LENENERGO.

They had got no service of measurements, and I started working at the department of automatic equipment.

My future wife came there to work, too. Her name was Gede Israelevna Kaplun. At that time she was 26 years old (she was a year younger than me: born in 1912). Her parents had got 3 daughters: Ida, the youngest (she is still alive), my Gede, and Ella, the eldest (she has already died).

It was a Jewish family, they arrived in Petersburg from somewhere, I do not remember the place. I did not know their father (he died earlier), but I was acquainted with their mother.

She had a great deal of personality, was independent and strict. And she brought up her daughters in her own spirit. She was not religious. Their family was of average culture.

My wife, for example, was not widely-read. But she was a clear head, a good expert and she was equal to the tasks of mother and wife.

We got acquainted in 1938. She graduated from the Electrotechnical College and was an electrical engineer. She understood that I was an indecisive boy-friend.

So one fine evening I heard a doorbell. It was about midnight, and I usually went to bed early. I had a room at the communal apartment and my neighbor opened the door for her. She understood that I was that sort of idiots whom it was better not to talk to much, she came in, undressed and got to my bed.

Our loving relations lasted 66 years, we lived in harmony. Only one misfortune: she passed away before me (several years ago); though women usually live longer than men.

When we got married, my wife was already going to give birth to our first child. LENENERGO gave us a room (5.5 square meters). Can you imagine that I managed to place there a sofa, a large desk, a wardrobe, and 2 armchairs. I visited a furniture store 3 times to measure the pieces of furniture. All my neighbors came to our place to look what I managed to do!

I sent my wife to her sister Ida. She and her husband were geologists and at that time worked on construction of some power station (I do not remember what power station).

My wife was very clever and active, while her sister, on the contrary, was not so active. So Gede moved her sister and her family to Tashkent [nowadays it is the capital of Uzbekistan; and during the Great Patriotic War it was a place of evacuation].

There she managed to find job of a teacher at the technical school and got a room somehow. [Technical school in the USSR and a number of other countries was a special educational institution preparing specialists of middle level for various industrial and agricultural institutions, transport, communication, etc.]

In Tashkent my wife gave birth to our second son. It happened in 1943. We called him Simon. Why Simon? Why not Solomon (in honor of my brother)? You see, we were not sure that my brother was alive.

Therefore we wanted to call our baby not Solomon (in case my brother was alive), but we wished the name to sound similar. That was why we called our son Simon. Since that time we called my brother Monya and my son Sima.

We returned to Leningrad after the end of the war and in 1946 our third son Boris was born. My wife refused to have abortions. It was in her character. Therefore everybody around us (including our director and the chief engineer) had got one child, and we had got three of them.

They considered us to be crazy. I did not dare to insist: I would have never forgiven myself any tragic mischance with my wife during abortion. And she loved our children very much and devoted her life to them.

My wife died in 2004. We lived 66 years together with her.