

Polina Levina With Her Husband Vassili Miach And Their Colleagues



Teachers of a school in Kherson where I started working upon graduation from college. This photo was taken in Kherson in October 1939 after my husband and I got married. I, Polina Levina, and my husband Vassili Miach are on the right, in the 3rd row.

In 1938 I finished my college and stayed to work in Kherson. I got a job assignment as teacher of physics and mathematics in a Ukrainian lower secondary school. I received 'allowances' – some money to last until the first salary. I got a room at the teacher's hostel at school. Teachers and schoolchildren were friendly with me. I began my career on 1st September. I also was a tutor in the 6th grade. There were both Ukrainian and Jewish children at school and children of other nationalities.

I met my future husband Vassili Miach at school. He was a teacher of history. He finished Odessa Pedagogical College one year earlier than I and got a job assignment to this school. Vassili was born into a common family of workers in Krivoy Rog in 1914. His father, Andrei Miach, was a turner at a plant. His mother, Anna Miach, was a housewife. Vassili had a younger sister called Lubov, born in 1918. She got married in 1940 and went to Siberia with her husband. There was a big construction there.

Vassili was Ukrainian, but it was no problem with my family or me. We never segregated people by their nationality. We got married on 1st October 1938, a month and a half after we met. We had a civil ceremony at the registry office and a small wedding dinner with our families and colleagues from school. Vassili's parents treated me like their daughter from the very beginning.

In July 1939 our daughter Valeria was born. When she turned three months old my husband took us to his parents in Krivoy Rog. My father-in-law wanted us to live with them. He said he would give us a part of their garden and build a house for us. I dreamed about having a house of our own and having more children with my husband.

I had two months of maternity leave and my mother-in-law convinced me that she would look after my daughter so that I could go to work. I went to work as a teacher of physics in a Ukrainian school and my husband got a job there, too. He was a teacher of history.

Before World War II, teachers were released from the army, but then Voroshylov issued an order to cancel all privileges and make all men subject to army service. On 29th November 1939 he was recruited to a tank unit and I never saw him again. He was sent to fight in the Finnish War. When his service term was coming to an end, the Great Patriotic War began and Vassili went to the front. He perished near Moscow in 1942.