

Busia Makalets And Her Family



This is my family. This photo was taken in Vladimirets in 1930. It was taken on the occasion of my sister Tania visiting Vladimirets. 1st row from left to right: I, my mother Esther Volok, my father Litman Volok. 2nd row from left to right: my brother Mikhail Volok, my sister Tania Megrain, my brother David Volok. I have a rather displeased look since I didn't want to get a haircut or put on a fancy dress to be photographed. My mother was quite displeased with my conduct, too.

In 1925 our family moved from Bessarabia to Vladimirets in Poland and stayed with grandmother Golda-Leya. My father owned a private cheder in Vladimirets, where he taught Hebrew, the Tannakh and everything there was to teach. My father also prepared boys for their bar mitzvah. According to Jewish rules boys become men at the age of 13, when they wear tefillin and read a section from the Torah at the synagogue. My father didn't go to the synagogue every day, but he fasted on Yom Kippur, went to the synagogue on holidays and strictly observed traditions. I remember his words: 'Traditions have kept us as a nation. Traditions are most important.'

I went to school in Vladimirets. I attended a Polish school in the morning and after lunch I attended my father's classes in Hebrew. I picked up Polish soon and I knew Hebrew since I was born. I remember that my Polish school allowed me a day off on Saturday. Basically, the Poles were rather anti-Semitic, but I didn't feel it. We didn't have the Polish citizenship and my brothers Mikhail and David served in the Romanian army since Bessarabians were Romanian citizens. Later they studied in the Teacher's Training College in Rovno. In Vladimirets I joined the Zionist organization for young people, Hashomer Hatzair. We were dreaming of communism in Israel. So go to Israel and build communism there! Besides my preoccupation with Zionist ideas, I went out with boys and liked

singing Jewish songs. I learned all Jewish songs I know in Vladimirets.

In 1930 my sister Tania visited Vladimirets from Palestine. She was very beautiful and wore different clothes from what women in Vladimirets wore: they had an open neck and short sleeves. She had an unhappy love affair in Palestine: her fiancé moved to America and my sister came to Vladimirets. She didn't take any interest in young people from Vladimirets, for a whole year she grieved after her young man. However, she took an interest in the Jewish life in Vladimirets.