

Busia Makalets And Her Family



This is my family. This photo was taken in Bolgrad in 1935. Sitting: my mother Esther Volok, my father Litman Volok. Standing, from left to right: I, my brother David Volok, my sister Tania Megrain, my brother Mikhail Volok. This photo was taken on the occasion of my sister Tania visiting from Paris.

In the 1930s our family decided to go back to Bolgrad in Bessarabia. We rented an apartment. My father went to teach in the Tarbut in Bolgrad. I didn't know a word in Russian or Romanian. The first word that I learned in Romanian was viata - life. I was full of life and shouted: 'Viata!' and threw myself into the snow till I fell ill with pleurisy. All doctors in Bolgrad were taking care of me: Mademoiselle Volok, Mr. Volok's daughter, who was a teacher. They didn't charge me for respect for my father. I continued to study in a secondary school in Bolgrad since I didn't know Romanian to go to a gymnasium. Of course, the boys and girls of my age were excited about my coming to Bolgrad: a very tall girl that can sing well and has an unusual biography. I made many friends. I joined organization for young people the Gordonia.

My father guessed about my creative aspirations. He understood me and I enjoyed spending time with him, while my mother was a common Jewish woman. She took care of the household and always wanted me to become a good housewife. When she was cleaning and took all the pillows outside, I would take a book lying on top of the pillows and started reading. Can you imagine my mother's response to this? I also liked standing before an open window singing. My mother could interrupt me: 'Busia, go wash the dishes!' This got on my nerves and I thought she didn't understand me. I feel so sorry, when I think about it now.