

Tania Megrain With Her Friends



This is my sister Tania Megrain (in the center) with her friends Esther Fishman and Fira Yagolnitzer. This photo was taken in Bolgrad in 1925. It was taken before Tania's departure for Palestine.

My sister Tuba, whom we called Tania, was born in 1907 in Cimislia. In 1924 Tania finished a gymnasium in Bolgrad and moved to our brother Aviezer in Palestine. She had an unhappy love affair in Palestine: her fiancé moved to America and my sister came to Vladimirets in 1930. She was very beautiful and wore different clothes from what women in Vladimirets wore: they had an open neck and short sleeves. 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.

On some holiday a rebbe from Rovno visited Vladimirets. This was a great event: people got together at the synagogue and brought food with them: I think it was cholent. The rebbe gave out this food with his hands, and people grabbed it from him to receive his blessing. One day Tania also went to the synagogue. My father, a respectable Jew in the town, told us later, 'Everything grew dark in my eyes! All of a sudden I saw my daughter wearing a sleeveless dress standing almost beside the rebbe.' Tania got so absorbed and eager to miss no details that she had quite forgotten that women weren't supposed to be with men at the synagogue and had to have their arms covered down to their elbows.

A year later Tania moved to France, where her friends from Bolgrad studied: Esther Fishman and Fira Yagolnizer. They had corresponded. In Paris she entered the Chemical Faculty of the University, where she communicated with French Communists and met her future husband. It was also an interesting story. Her friend Esther fell in love with Paul-Christian Megrain, but didn't dare to tell him about her feelings. My sister went to tell him the story. This matchmaking ended in Christian's proposal to Tania. She became his wife around 1932. Tania didn't tell our parents that her husband was French for quite a while. She only called him Paul in her letters, and our parents thought he was a French Jew. We were a patriarchal family, and my parents didn't approve of this marriage, of course.