

Iancu Segal As Teacher At The Jewish School In Stefanesti



I don't know anyone in this picture except for my husband, Iancu Segal – near the door, the second from left among the teachers. Look how young he was! This picture was taken at the Jewish school in Stefanesti, where my husband taught. I don't know how long he worked there, but it must have been a number of years, right after he graduated from high school. Afterwards he moved to Iasi and went to the Faculty of Mathematics.

My husband, Iancu Segal, was older than me. But it didn't matter. I thought of him as being younger than me. He was born in Stefanesti, which is also located in the county of Botosani. His parents were no longer living at the time when I met him. My husband had a very hard childhood. His mother, poor soul, died when he was around 10. She died when she gave birth to his brother, Ichil. And his father remarried, he had 2 more children, both of whom died in Israel.

My husband came from a family of merchants. But he showed intellectual interests, and in the beginning, I think right after he graduated from high school, before going to the university, he worked as a teacher at the Jewish school in Stefanesti. I don't know for how long exactly, but he worked as a teacher for quite a few years. Then he attended the Faculty of Mathematics in Iasi. And his father's financial means were rather limited, but he had wealthy relatives in Iasi, and he lived with his relatives, he too struggled, poor soul. His father's condition, in return for supporting him financially during his studies, was that he should attend the yeshivah at the same time as well. That's what he told me, I didn't know him at the time. He blackmailed him, for his father was a very religious person. And so, poor soul, he went to the yeshivah. He attended the yeshivah in Chisinau. He studied for 2 years at the yeshivah, but not for 2 full years, attendance wasn't continuous. He studied Mathematics in Iasi, and during the summer he used to go to the yeshivah in Chisinau. But it was good for him. His knowledge was much greater than mine.

After he started earning some money, my husband supported his father and his father's family, for his father was old by then. He, poor thing, spent everything he earned on the family. Even if, at some point in time, he left Stefanesti as his stepmother treated him very badly, he still sent her money even afterwards. They were looking for a school principal at the school of the cloth factory in Buhusi – it was a very famous factory –, he applied for that position and passed an examination, as they did in those days, and he left, he couldn't put up with it anymore. But he still looked after his father, and after his brother and sister from his father's second marriage. His father had been a merchant in his youth. His mother is buried in Stefanesti, his father died here, in Botosani. They too had been evacuated to Botosani. But my husband no longer lived in Stefanesti at that time, he was living in Buhusi.

But he wanted to become a lawyer, and after World War II he also attended the Faculty of Law in Iasi, but under the optional attendance system. He practiced as a lawyer, but only for a very brief period of time, until he saw they dictated him what to say, how to plea; he refused to do so, and he took refuge in the educational system. Back then, they dictated what plea you should make. Every word of it, nothing was tried justly. Which is to say it depended on what the [Communist] party wanted to do: who should be convicted, who shouldn't be convicted. And he was allowed to plea only to that effect, to observe the indications given by the party. And he was a very just person, he couldn't take it. And at a certain point, given the fact that he had a degree in mathematics, without saying why he did so, he renounced his law practice and started working in the educational system, and that's where he worked until his death. Poor soul, he got bone-cancer in 1986, and he was gone. It was all so sudden. We even went to Bucharest for a medical examination. "No, nothing will help. Nothing will help."