

The First Birthday Of Eshua Almalech's Daughter Zelma Almalech



This is the first birthday of Zelma, my daughter (the little child). The picture was taken in 1951 in Sofia. Her grandmother Luna Almalech is holding her (from left). Luna is the second wife of Zelma's grandfather Aron Almalech. He is next to her on the photo. To his left is Nedyalka, my wife. I am the first from right, next to me is my wife's mother, Marinka. I married Nedyalka Nikolova, nee Dineva, in 1948. She was born in 1928 in Stara Zagora. She is Bulgarian. Her parents are from Stara Zagora too. Our families knew each other; they had even done shopping in our shop sometimes. Her mother Marinka and my mother Zelma had been classmates as children. But I got acquainted to Nedyalka in the end of 1944 when she came to study in Sofia. We were inseparable after that and later we married. Our daughter Zelma Eshua Almalech was born in 1950 and our son Mony Eshua Almalech - in 1954. My father Aron Almalech was always an ardent Zionist. He was the chief secretary of the Mapai. [Before it became an Israeli party, Mapai was a Jewish social democratic party. It was represented in international bodies such as the Socialist International, for example.] He accompanied Ben Gurion when he came to Bulgaria for the first time in the middle of the 1940s. When the Israel state was founded in 1948, my father received an invitation by the Israeli government to become a 'sheliach', that is, the chairman of the Sochnut in Bulgaria. One of the first diplomats, Ben Zur, ambassador in Vienna and responsible for the whole of Eastern Europe, came to Bulgaria to hand him the invitation. My father exercised this duty until he left for Israel in 1954. My father was a distinguished social democrat, and as early as 1946 in Stara Zagora he was invited to run for MP from this party. But then came the heated division between the parties, which formed the coalition Fatherland Front against the fascist government. After the 9 September victory the communists started following closely the Soviet and pro-Stalinist policy, while their other allies did not agree with it and formed an opposition, which my father joined. He did not manage to become an MP because many social democrats were sent to the communist jails. He was also sent to jail for a couple of days because he had spoken against the dictatorship in

Stara Zagora. But I was able to have him released with the help of some friends of mine and of my friend Mony Dekalo. I took him to Sofia where he worked for the Jewish organization and no longer took part in politics. My father's second wife, Luna Almalech, lived in Sofia with us until 1954. Then my parents left for Israel and lived in Tel Aviv until my father died in 1977. Luna settled in an old people's home in Rishon Letzion near Tel Aviv where she died in 1981. When the first Bulgarian Jews started leaving for Israel, my father was most eager, he even organized groups. All my relatives and friends started leaving. I was already working as a journalist and I liked my job very much. I knew that I could not work as a journalist in Israel because I did not know the language and I was not sure if I could learn it well enough to be able to write articles in it as well as I can write in Bulgarian. This was the main reason, but I was also deeply attached to the Bulgarian nation - after 9 September 1944 the attitude towards Jews was wonderful. I also love Bulgarian nature. Unlike my father I joined the left wing of the social democratic party, which united with the communists. I became a member of the Communist Party. I married a Bulgarian woman. So, I decided not to leave for Israel, but I believe that everybody has the right to make his or her own choice where to live. I have always kept in touch with (my relatives) - through letters, visits. I went to Israel for the first time in 1957. I have visited them many times since then. We even sent our daughter Zelma, when she was 8 years old, to her grandparents and my sister Roza for the whole summer in 1958. In 1960 my wife and my son also spent the summer with them. Roza, her husband, Izidor Natan and their son Amnon, left for Israel in 1948. They lived in Ramle together with her husband's parents. In 1970 they moved to Tel Aviv. Her husband died in 1971. She still lives in Tel Aviv.