

Eshua Almalech's Family After His First Trip To Israel



This is my family in Sofia, in 1957. 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.

My children grew up in a democratic atmosphere at home. In the old passports issued to all Bulgarian citizens when they become 16 years old, there was a column 'nationality'. When they were old enough to be issued passports, they both wrote 'Jew' in it.

After the Israeli - Arab war in 1967 and the events in Czechoslovakia, my wife Nedyalka was fired from Sofia radio, where she worked as a journalist, because as they told her, she was married to a Jew and had a Jewish family name. During that time the director of the National Radio was the Jew Albert Cohen, a distinguished journalist and writer. He was also fired.

Although my wife Nedyalka is a Bulgarian, after she spent a couple of years with my stepmother Luna, she learned the Jewish cuisine. Later when we lived with her parents, they also got to like our cuisine. Both the Jewish and the Christian holidays have been observed in our family. The communist regime forbade the listening of foreign radio stations such as BBC, Deutsche Welle, Free Europe, the Voice of America. But my wife and I were journalists and we listened to them. In 1956 after the events in Hungary [the first uprising against Soviet rule in the communist block], I started having doubts about socialism, all the more when most of Stalin's atrocities became public.

But in 1968 after the Soviet armies occupied Prague, I just could not accept it despite my left orientation.