

## Eshua Almalech's Family At The Batak Lake



My family on a holiday at the Batak lake in the Rhodope Mountains in Bulgaria in 1961. The boy is Mony Almalech, my son, next to him is my wife Nedyalka. I am next to her and next to me is my daughter Zelma.

I married Nedyalka Nikolova 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 wife has a degree in history. We are both journalists. When we learned about the process against the Jewish doctors in the Soviet Union from the newspapers, my father had not left for Bulgaria yet. My wife Nedyalka and he thought that this was some kind of provocation by the Stalinist regime. I admit I was in two minds. 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, 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.

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. 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.

Every summer and sometimes in winter we were together. Usually we spent our vacations at the seaside, but in the year the photo was taken we were at the mountains. When our children grew up they started spending their holidays with their friends. Later we spent the vacations with our grandchildren, Zelma's children David and Irina.