

Victoria And Sami (Samuil) Almalekh



This is me (Victoria Almalekh) and my son Sami on the beach in Drouzhba resort. On the back of the picture there is an inscription in pencil: 'Many kisses from Sami [who is] four months and ten days old Vitka' (this is my nickname in Vidin). There is no stamp of a photo studio. The picture was taken in 1956.

I got married on 29th April [1955] and on 1st February [1956] I gave birth to my son Sami – Samuil Yosif Almalekh. My husband Yosif Samuil Almalekh was born in Varna in 1923. He was a marine officer – chief commander in politics (CCP). In December of 1955 he suffered the Geneva dismissal – the first dismissal in the army after 9th September 1944 [The day of the communist takeover in Bulgaria. In September 1944 the Soviet Union declared war on Bulgaria. On 9th September 1944 the Fatherland Front, a broad left-wing coalition, deposed the government.]. He was out of work and got hired as a manager of two of the hotels in the Drouzhba resort. He worked there for two years and a half.

On 31st November 1957 I started working in the Workers' Hospital in Varna, where I retired in 1986. For my forty-year length of service I have never been subject to any anti-Semitic feelings. When Sami reached the age of six months my sister also came to Varna after graduating in chemistry. She started work in the factory in Devnya. At first she was on probation, but they liked her a lot and hired her on a permanent contract. She was accommodated in a hostel in Devnya. She used to visit us often in Varna. When she decided she spontaneously jumped on the train – we would have some meals, she would see the child, we would talk and then she would go back to Devnya. Later she hired an attic room here in Varna. There was a common wash-room with a common lavatory. There was no bathroom. When Sami turned six the winter was very bad. We were afraid how our parents were going to live through it. My sister sheltered them in that small room. So that's how three people used to live in those poor conditions for three years until my sister got a house from the factory. The house in Vidin had been left empty for two years until they decided they could no longer live there. They sold it in 1962 and in 1963 they settled down in

Varna. My mother died in 1977 and my father – in 1979. They were buried according to the seven-day Jewish ritual, despite the fact there was not a rabbi.