

Eshua Almalech's Mother Zelma Almalech As A Young Lady



This is my mother - Zelma Almalech. The photo was taken in 1916 when she was 20 years old. She wrote on the back of the picture: A keepsake of the war in 1916, February 10th. My mother was born in Stara Zagora and graduated the junior high school in her hometown. It is interesting to note that she was in the same class with Marina, the mother of my wife Nedyalka, and they were friends from childhood. But my mother did not get to know my wife because she died while I was still in college. She was a very nice and beautiful woman. She was a housewife and took very good care of us. She was also deeply attached to the families of her sisters and their children. Everybody, our

neighbors, Bulgarians, Jews or Turks (many Turks lived in Stara Zagora then) loved her. She dressed very elegantly and paid a lot of attention to her appearance. I was very naughty as a child and I remember that when I used to go out on a walk with her, dressed in my new clothes, I would spoil them playing outside in the very first minutes. Then she would start to laugh and quickly changed my clothes. My parents respected the Jewish religion and, most of all, the Jewish nation. But we had an atheistic upbringing. [The duality of not being religious yet observing the religious traditions is typical of the whole Bulgarian population regardless of their ethnicity.] I was a member of the Hashomer Hatzair, a leftist Zionist organization, since my childhood. My father was a distinguished social democrat ever since his youth and read lots of scholarly work and political literature, mostly Plehanov and Kautsky, but he admired most the French Jean Jaures. Yet, my father was a Jew before all and observed the traditions. But he was not a believer. My mother Zelma Almalech was more religious in that she observed very strictly all religious rules. She never ate pork and the rare times the family went to a restaurant, she never ate, because the food was not kosher. At home she insisted most on observing the traditions for each holiday.