

## Dan Mizrahy



This is me, Dan Mizrahy, shortly after my return to Romania. The photograph was taken in Bucharest in 1946, in the house where we lived for a short period of time, at 14 Dr. Felix Street, on the second floor.

During the World War II, I lived in Palestine, away from my family. For all those years, I kept thinking of Romania as my home. I had no idea what went on back home. My parents' letters were affectionate, but vague. At only 19 years old and lacking basic political training and culture, I put my feelings first, not my reason...

On 21st November 1945, I returned to Romania. I lived the moment I had awaited and dreamt of for four years and eight months. I embraced my parents who were waiting for me on the quay. In Bucharest, at the station, there was Mira, together with several uncles and aunts. I wasn't returning 'home,' but to 14 Dr. Felix Street, where my parents had been living for about two years. Our house, requisitioned by the National Romanianization Commission in 1941, still served as the headquarters of the 8th Precinct police station. When the house at 14 Dr. Felix Street was bombed in 1944, my parents took refuge at the place of my mother's older sister, Mina Solomon. I had come back to Bucharest, but not home. I was a guest and, to be frank, I didn't mind that situation one bit at the time. The guest of my own parents. For days in a row, people kept coming over, mostly to see me: our relatives, most of whom were still in the country - my father's sisters and my mother's sisters with their husbands and children, my cousins -, my parents' friends, and, most of all, people whose relatives were in Palestine and who came to me to collect letters from the loved ones. All I can remember is that I had to thoroughly schedule - by the day and by the hour - all those who called to announce their visit.

From a social point of view - or, to be more accurate, from an 'economical' one - the situation in Romania looked totally different from the one I had kept in my memories. I had left a prosperous society and I regained an impoverished one. The limousines and carriages driven by cabmen dressed in velvet had been replaced by army trucks packed with Russians with 'balalaikas'; the fancy ladies who used to go out for a walk on the beautiful avenues downtown had been replaced by war invalids with crutches who sold 'Nationale' or 'Marasesti' cigarettes with yellow paper and stinking tobacco. The buses were gone. As for the overcrowded streetcars, I avoided them for months. I didn't go out often and, when I did, I walked, because I abhorred the law of the fist that seemed to govern that means of transportation. I had bought a bag of lemons in Haifa, planning to give them to my closest ones instead of presents. My folks, more practical than I was, realized the potential of the 'treasure' I had brought and began to sell them to various acquaintances in the apartment house. A lemon bought me a taxi ride. At first, I could afford that. After the lemons were finished, I walked.

From a social point of view - or, to be more accurate, from an 'economical' one - the situation in Romania looked totally different from the one I had kept in my memories. I had left a prosperous society and I regained an impoverished one. The limousines and carriages driven by cabmen dressed in velvet had been replaced by army trucks packed with Russians with 'balalaikas' [nickname given to the Russian machine-guns, which resembled that instrument]; the fancy ladies who used to go out for a walk on the beautiful avenues downtown had been replaced by war invalids with crutches who sold 'Nationale' or 'Marasesti' cigarettes with yellow paper and stinking tobacco. The buses were gone. As for the overcrowded streetcars, I avoided them for months. I didn't go out often and, when I did, I walked, because I abhorred the law of the fist that seemed to govern that means of transportation. I had bought a bag of lemons in Haifa, planning to give them to my closest ones instead of presents. My folks, more practical than I was, realized the potential of the 'treasure' I had brought and began to sell them to various acquaintances in the apartment house. A lemon bought me a taxi ride. At first, I could afford that. After the lemons were over, I walked.