

## Visit Of A Friend At The Workplace



We formed "Vitali Alkabes and Partners Unincorporated Company" using partly the capital my father had, the 10,000liras that my father-in-law gave as dowry and 30,000 liras which was the investment of our distant relative Rafael Aluf in 1945 in Mahmutpasa Manastir Han [A neighborhood on the European side where a lot of wholesale commerce takes place], we worked till 1965 buying fabrics wholesale. This photograph was taken during the visit of Leon who was a family and personal friend (I can't remember the last name).

On May 27th, 1960, there was a coup. The prime minister of the time, Adnan Menderes, foreign minister Fatih Zorlu and others were hung after a long period of interrogation and judgements. When the political situation was so precarious, the economy also started suffering.

Our customers started missing their payments. We were paying the vouchers that we had signed. We received a voucher every hour. We had a credit of 30 thousand liras in Ziraat Bankas?. Even though I had been married for 15 years, I had never asked for money from my father-in-law, but unfortunately I was in such a bind that I had to ask him:

- "My dear father, do you have money? Can you lend me some?".

- " I have 20 thousand liras, it is yours" he replied.

Even though we took 15 thousand liras from my older brother Albert, we could not get a handle on our debts, the vouchers kept coming. We sold our merchandise at half price, finally we paid all our debts %100. We did not want to settle with the creditors and unfortunately went bankrupt. We closed the store on December 31st, 1965. My father died Febr. 29th, 1966. We interned him next to my mother in Hasköy.

Of course life went on and I had to continue working and earning money, I had a family. For a year I worked as a middleman. That is to say, I would provide a client with goods, in return I got a commission from the merchant where I bought the goods. One day, "Marcello Ajas", who was a

fabric merchant said to me:

- "the son of Fiçicioglu (owner of the store, someone I knew very well, a ready-made clothing merchant who I sold quite a bit of merchandise), is going to the military, they need someone reliable, if you want apply, at least you will have a salary".

As soon as I learned I went and said:

- "Good day Halil Bey (Mr. Halil), how are you? I heard you are looking for someone, if it is convenient, I would like to apply".

- "Wonderful, as you know my son is leaving for the military, there are 25 people working in the company. I won't be able to handle it alone. You know the business very well, you could help me a lot. How much salary do you want?"

- "Truly, I would be very happy if I got 500 liras a week". That was good money at the time, a kilo of meat cost 8 liras. I worked for 6 years with these conditions.

Later I was employed by the company "Bahar Meftrusat" for a salary of 42 thousand liras. I worked there as a sales manager for 10 years and retired. This store also has an interesting story. At the time the brothers Max and Michel Suraski, who were British Jews, had a fabric company. These gentlemen had opened a branch in Istanbul, this store was a 4-story business. During the rush of the Wealth Tax, they gave their merchandise (the merchandise in the store) to the nightguard Hüseyin Gürpınar, by paying him to take it to a warehouse in Sultanhamam in the late hours of the night and hide it there. Later, they sold this merchandise and smuggled the money to England. They were able to return home without incurring any damage. One of these brothers was married to a lady from Istanbul, he had Wolf and two other sons whose name I can't recall. When Wolf became an adolescent he went to Israel and unfortunately died in a heartwrenching traffic accident. The other sons stayed in England. Unfortunately I don't have more information about this family.