

Aron Anjel 5 Years Old



My mother Ester Levi Bivas and father Avram Albert Angel were appointed as directors to the newly founded Jewish orphanage (Orphelinat) in Ortaköy in 1921 and started residing in the flat that was reserved for them. I spent my childhood years in Ortaköy too. I am 5 years old in this photograph. One of my childhood memories is about the time we lived in the orphanage. The year is 1924 (July 21st, 1924, Monday), I am 8 years old and was attending the Jewish highschool. We were returning to Ortaköy with my mother in the trolley. At the time the number 23 trolley would go to Ortaköy, number 22 to Bebek. The first train on the trolley which was red was for first class, the ones behind attached, the second and third trains which were green were second class. Just as we had passed Besiktas and come a little before the door of Çiragan Sarayı (palace), they said "There is a fire, we cannot go further" and stopped the trolley and evacuated the passengers. My mother asked: "Where is the fire?" The answer: "Don't worry, it is only the orphanage burning!" Just think about the state of my mother and myself. The orphanage was completely burned down, but the kids were spared. Noone was too concerned with the land. We had the deed, but however it happened, huge buildings were built there, we moved to the Armenian mansion after the fire. This place was called "el orfelinato de los rusos" in Spanish, meaning the Russian orphanage. Because the Jews that emigrated from Russia during the 1917 revolution took refuge in Turkey. They were accepted by the Sultan and their residence was this building. When the first orphanage in Ortaköy was burned down, part of this building was allotted to the orphanage. This wooden building burned down two years later. The orphanage then moved to a third building that was bought in Yildiz.