

## Isak And Lina Franko With Friends



My husband and I had a group of friends, and we used to call ourselves “the Coco Club”. This photo was one New Year’s eve, the beginning of the year 1948. I wasn’t married yet. We were still engaged. I am standing at the back on the left, holding onto my fiancée’s shoulders. So, that New Year, we gathered in a house for the party. We all wore very different kind of clothes. The man on the right of my husband (fiancée then), is Zeko Negrin, one of his best friends. Zeko later went and settled in London. The man on my husband’s left is Isak Fis. He died very recently. As far as I can remember the girl on my right is Neli Baruh and the girl next to her is Beki Naon. It’s been such a long time that I cannot remember the names of anybody else.

We had a really wonderful time at the party. The Coco Club continued for some time. We used to enjoy ourselves much more at the preparation periods of these kinds of parties. We decorated the house, we prepared the fancy clothes and when the time came for the real party, we were tired from the preparations and it was all an anti-climax. I remember at this party I was a huge success. I was the youngest among them.

Cinemas and theatres were a big part of our social life. We would buy season tickets for the cinema, as this was the fashion then. On Saturday nights, some singers would sometimes take the stage before the film started. I remember some singers who are very famous today taking the stage at the Konak Cinema before the film started for PR reasons. Ilham Gencer and Ajda Pekkan are examples of such singers. [Ilham Gencer was a famous pop musician and Ajda Pekkan was a celebrated diva] Felt hats, leather gloves, and coats sewn by the best dressmakers had become outmoded and members of the Jewish community had started following the day’s fashion step by step. Especially wearing the clothes bought from the journeys abroad to the cinema evenings had become a symbol of wealth and the jet set. The tables prepared at the friends’ gatherings played an important role. In these gatherings, which were described as “fikso” [meaning, “a fixed day or night”], besides playing cards, many viscera, fried and sweet dishes were prepared which are out of favor today. Such big tables are not prepared any more, because we all have cholesterol or high

blood pressure. In other words, we have gotten old.

I did not work. My house, family relations, neighbors, and "fikso"s, like many other women of my age, played an important role in my social life. [fikso is a day when people gather to socialize with each other. The most important thing was that these gatherings were held on the same day, and people came and went at a fixed time.] On the 22nd of December in 1989, I had just come back home from a fikso, and was waiting for my husband to come from work. The door rang. I said: "yaa hoo", I'm coming. It was not my husband but my son. I immediately asked : "Your father ?". He said: "At the hospital". I said: "Take me over there at once". He replied: "Tomorrow morning". Then I screamed: "He is dead". I had understood that there was to be no tomorrow. He had died suddenly in his beloved factory while taking a nap which he frequently took on his couch. From time to time, I wish that he had become sick first so that I could have looked after him. Then I stop this line of thought immediately. God takes his beloved ones without making them suffer. My husband was a very well-liked person. My friends never left me alone after his death. Nothing was same any more, but life went on.