

## Cousins



You can see all the girl cousins in this photograph. It was taken in Bursa, and these are all the cousins on my mother's side. On the stairs. Just across our house. The house of the Abravanel's.

My mother was also the daughter of a family with a lot of children like my father. My mother Mari Sages' last name before she was married was Abravanel. Mari Sages was an educated woman. She was a teacher. When she came to Bursa as a bride, the siblings of her husband were not married yet. They started living all together.

The older daughter Rashel Saporta was already a widow when I knew her. She did not have children.

Another sister, Henriette Konfino lived in Romania. What took her away from Turkey was marriage cords. But the longing for the country was an unbearable longing for Henriette. She burned with the desire to come to Turkey. When her older brother fulfilled her wish, it probably was too late already because Henriette was too sick to even know that she had come to Turkey. And she closed her eyes here for the last time. She did not have children.

Lucy Abravanel married David Abravanel. The fact that Lucy and David had the same last name was not a coincidence, it was an indication of an interfamily marriage. Lucy and David were

cousins. Even though their first child Arman Abravanel was a healthy child, the second child Neli was deaf and mute. Lucy Abravanel left her spouse in Istanbul and went to Israel with her daughter Neli. She provided a special education for her daughter in Israel and she learned sign language. Neli married there. Neli's first child was also born normal and learned how to talk from grandmother Lucy. Unfortunately the second child was also deaf-mute and the grandchild did not learn how to talk because the grandmother was not alive.

Ester Molho used to live in Salonika. They were a family affected by the horrors of Second World War. Her son who was a bank manager and her husband were deported. No one heard from them again just like no one heard from the 6 million Jews...

Another sibling was Anjel Karako. She was married to Isak Karako. Their daughter Ester Chakartash and her husband lost their life in a traffic accident. Ester's daughter Gila married a prince in France. I think this prince was Jewish because the maternal grandmother Anjel Karako went to Paris to hold the thallis over her grandchild. Everything really started like a fairy tale. But just as everything that shines is not gold, this reality was also true for Gila. Gila stayed married for only 6 months. The prince was not a good man. Maybe he was a fake prince, it was rumored that "no era ombre ansina diziyen" (he was not a man, this saying is used for homosexuals). Gila suffered a great depression and paid for this marriage by sinking into darkness. Gila had therapy in La Paix (one of the Mental Hospitals in Istanbul) and in other places after returning to Istanbul. She is currently hospitalized in Balikli Greek Hospital (one of the mental hospitals of Istanbul). Ester's son Isak on the other hand left the country. No one heard from him again.

Jak Abravanel was the oldest of the brothers. He searched his luck in Argentina. None of his siblings saw Jak except in photographs. Even if some pictures were received from the communications with his sons, the siblings were never able to reunite.

Another one of the older brothers, Isak Abravanel was married to Viktoriya Levi. He had four daughters named Flor Benzonana, Eliza Elver, Sol Bener and Coya Kohen. Coya Kohen and her husband took their daughter-in-law to France to prepare her dowry. The plane that crashed on the return trip was the end of this story. They all lost their lives together. (Coya Kohen's son had stayed in Istanbul. The mother and father of the bride never lost their touch with the son-in-law throughout their lives. This young man even married and had children. The mother and father of the girl who died remained as part of this family).

Ida- David Tashman are another sister and brother-in-law of my mother. David Tashman was a Russian refugee. He was a true Russian aristocrat. He had studied dentistry in Russia and practiced this profession for a long time. Later he ran away from the mismanagement of Russia and the pogroms and came to Istanbul. Rumor had it that David Tashman had a son named Boris that he left back in Russia. His wife had died but this child never came to Istanbul. There was no communication between father and son. After David Tashman came to Istanbul, he worked with another dentist since he did not have the right to open a clinic. He was a very well-mannered and dignified man. He provided very well for my aunt. They celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. He died at the age of 80. He loved me a lot too. Only, you should never play cards with him. Because he always wanted to win. This is a joke I remember about David Tashman.

Ida's child died while still in her womb because of the cord that was wrapped around its neck. She did not have a child again.