

## Cousins



A photograph taken with my cousin Eliza Elver.

One of my mother's older brothers, Isak Abravanel was married to Viktorya 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).

When I became a young woman, around the 1940's, it was the period when antisemitism was prevalent in Bursa. They called us "Chifut" (Jew). When we returned home from school we would walk without looking around. All of us (my cousin Ester Charktash, myself and the other Jewish girls) were attractive girls. That is why we were very scared of being approached or made improper advances to. "Citizen, speak Turkish" was one of the most important events of our time. There was a fine of 5 units of money for people who did not speak Turkish.