

Cousins



This is a picture taken in Bursa with Ester Cakartas in our youth. Ester was one of my best friends during my teenage years.

One of my mother's sisters 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 thalis 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.

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.