

# Lina Franko

Lina Franko

Istanbul

Turkey

Date of Interview: August 2004

Interviewer: Feride Petilon

I started speaking to Lina Franko, on a hot August morning, in Burgazada. She didn't need to hurry, but she wanted to meet her friends in the afternoon. It wouldn't be that bad if she had time for swimming in between. Lina Franko is still full of life, in spite of the 20 years she has spent alone. She has become the favorite of both her family and friends, with the positive outlook she has. Both problems and happiness can be shared with Lina. The aim is to ease the problems while increasing happiness. When we had lunch together, she said "it's not appropriate for the young ones to pay the bills, when they are with their elders", and thus I was treated. The tape was recording, but I guess she told me most of it over the phone, as she remembered and remembered. I guess she had become pretty occupied with telling me her life's documentary.



[My family background](#)

[Growing up](#)

[My husband Isak](#)

[Family life](#)

[Recipes](#)

[Glossary](#)

## My family background

My paternal grandmother's father, Haskiya Hatem, was undersecretary to a chief rabbi who had been awarded a medal by the sultan. The sultan used to reward those who proved themselves useful to him with a medal. The chief rabbi and his advisors ran the community. These advisors were called undersecretaries. I don't remember anything much more.

My father's side of the family was from Istanbul. My father's father, Salamon Baruh, used to work at a glassware shop in Beyoglu [a fashionable district in Istanbul with the street named Pera running in the middle of it] named "Karako". "Istiklal Caddesi" [this very fashionable street that ran from Taksim Square till Tunel was then called "Pera"], the trade center of Istanbul, where foreign firms

and shops selling foreign goods were located, was the busiest street of the city. During those days, working at a big shop brought with it an organized life. Being in charge of a warehouse or working as a cashier at a big shop was regarded as a respected career and was enough to support the family. Not everyone needed to become a merchant. Salamon Baruh, by taking advantage of the privilege granted to non-muslims had not performed his military service. <sup>1</sup> Salamon Baruh, had two more sisters, named Rebeka and Lea. Rebeka married Hayim Musabak, and they never had any children. On the other hand, Lea married the son of a very wealthy family, named Bohoraci Ravuna.

My paternal grandmother, Rashel Baruh (née Hatem), was from Daghamam. Daghamam, was in the hilly part of Kuzguncuk. [a neighborhood on the Anatolian side. It is across Ortakoy, which is on the European side. Both of the neighborhoods lie along the Bosphorus]. The Jewish people living in Daghamam either moved to Haydarpasha [an important neighborhood of Istanbul. All the trains that go to Anatolia, depart from this central train station, located in the neighborhood.] or to Ortakoy, due to the fire which broke out in the neighborhood. According to the reports of the time, this fire, which broke out in the 1915's, was a big disaster. The firebrigade was not able to arrive in time, and thus the wooden houses were burnt down like dominoes, thus leaving many families homeless. According to my grandmother; when everybody was trying to save something in panic, a woman was trying to save her iron. Who knows, the reaction of her husband to an unironed shirt, may have crossed her mind!

Rashel Baruh had two brothers, named Rafael Hatem and Albert Hatem, and two sisters, named Sara Aruete and Recina Kordovero. Sara Aruete died during a cholera epidemic.

Recina Kordovero, on the other hand, emigrated to Buenos Aires with her husband. After World War I <sup>2</sup>, the Ottoman Empire of the time was regarded as a "sick man". [Editor's note: The Ottoman Empire was called 'The sick man of Europe' much earlier, in the second half of the 19th Century. Due to Anglo-French efforts the great power status of the Empire was maintained up until WWI, although most of its European territories had already been lost to various countries (Russia, Austria-Hungary, Serbia, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, etc.) prior to WWI. Hence the name.] The economy had collapsed, while the fall of the empire was about to be declared. Planning a future under these circumstances, in this country, had become a dream for some people. Under these conditions several families emigrated to many parts of the world. The continent of America became the main center of this emigration. The ties with the ones who emigrated to America were broken off in a short period of time.

Rashel Baruh was a well-respected and liked lady in spite of her minimal education. She had finished primary school, in the Jewish Primary School in Uskudar. There was hardly a person who didn't know Rashel Baruh in Ortakoy. She helped everyone. I remember her listening to many people's problems patiently. Besides, she was the first to volunteer for duties which could be regarded as "mitzva" [mitzvah], like washing the dead or looking after sick people. She had an effective role in my life, too. They had asked me whom I would like to take with me to the hospital, for my first child's delivery. I had said that I'd like to have my grandmother with me, of course. The one to hold my hand should be my grandmother. My mother could wait for the news at home.

Salamon Baruh, my father's father, the husband of my grandmother Rashel Baruh, was a well-respected man. He also used to work at the Karako Shop, in Beyoglu. His father-in-law had

probably employed him. But Salamon Baruh died of a sudden heart attack at a young age. He couldn't see any of his children's weddings. For this reason, my grandmother would only dress in dark colors. She didn't wear a scarf or a "yemeni" [a turkish scarf with embroidered borders], and would comb her hair into a bun, which was called a "kurulika". Rashel Baruh died in 1963. She stayed at the Or-Ahayim Hospital [3](#) for a year before she died. She had broken her hipbone and that was a common enough thing to happen to old people in those days. I went to the hospital two or three times a week from the day she was hospitalized till the day she died. Sometimes, when I want to remember my mother, my grandmother comes to my mind, and this makes me get angry at myself.

One of the family members whom I remember well is my grandmother's late sister, Rebeka Musabak's husband, Hayimachi Musabak. Hayimachi had refused to live with his own family and had chosen to live with his wife's family for many years. We followed the Kasherut [kashrut] and the Shabat [shabbath] rules strictly in my childhood's home in Ortakoy. I guess this made him take this decision. The religious rules were followed in the Hatem and Baruh families, and Judeo-Spanish was spoken as the mother-tongue. My grandmother's late sister's husband would wear a "kipa", and put on his "tefillin" every morning, and sometimes put on an "entari". ["entari" is the turkish word for "robe". These robes, worn by men, were long shirts reaching the knees. This was an Ottoman tradition.] We lived to the full but without haste, in love and peace in this house of my childhood in Ortakoy. I guess this atmosphere, which we had at home, accounted for the real reason behind this gentleman's choice.

Rashel Baruh had four children. Belina Baruh died at the age of five from uremia. I was named after her.

My grandmother's elder daughter Anet married Albert Uziyel. The Uziyel family, immigrated to Israel in 1935. The Uziyels had a liberal family outlook. They were conservative but not especially religious. Festivals were celebrated, and Shabat was respected. They went to Israel during its foundation years and faced many difficulties there. Albert Uziyel even opened up a kiosk but unfortunately, he couldn't run it for a long time. Anet supported the family by taking on sewing work at home for a while. Anet Uziyel had three daughters named Sheli, Beki, Lili. Beki and Lili still live in Israel, while Sheli lives in Austria. My cousin Sheli had a stamp collection which belonged to her husband. This collection consisted of the stamps which had been attached to letters written by soldiers to their families during the war. My cousin, Beki made her first marriage to a gentleman she met in Israel. She sent her grandmother their wedding picture. This was a very traditional mode of behavior. But the gentleman she married had problems which created a lot of problems in the marriage. (I suppose he had sexual problems). My cousin divorced that man. Her maternal grandmother, Rashel Baruh, who is my paternal grandmother, cut the groom out of the wedding picture, when she heard the news. Beki, made her second marriage to a gentleman named Mishel Saul and found happiness. Beki and Mishel had two children named Edna and Beni. Beni worked as a manager at one of the branches of Bank Hapoalim in Israel. He had a son and a daughter. He got divorced after having been married for 28 years. On the other hand, Edna has an extraordinary life story. She didn't get married till the age of 38. She became pregnant from her boyfriend at 38. Her boyfriend was against her giving birth to the baby. Edna thought that this was her last chance and though the boyfriend rejected the child, she gave birth to him. Today this boy, named Mishel is a 19-year-old young man, and though his father is still alive, he doesn't know him. And the father

doesn't want to see him either.

Rashel Baruh's middle son, Rafael Baruh, used to live in Ortakoy, and was educated in Bene Berit [Bnai Brith] [Jewish Lycee] [4](#). He met Viktorya Hodara in Ortakoy, and got married again in Ortakoy. Salti Franko, a businessman living in Ankara, offered a job for Rafael Baruh, at his textile shop. In this way, Rafael Baruh and Viktorya Baruh, moved to Ankara. I used to spend most of my summer holidays in Ankara, when I was a teenager. The life in Ortakoy, was like a village life for me. Everybody knew each other, and lived together like siblings whether they were Greek, Turkish, or Jewish. On the other hand, you could smell the city life in Ankara. Aunt Viktorya was such a lady, who dressed up in a very stylish manner, and who never removed her corset. Even the gatherings held in Ankara, were not like the ones in Ortakoy. There was much more protocol in Ankara. There was even a secret competition between my mother, and aunt Viktorya. I guess the difference between the husbands' income levels, was the cause of this competition. My father worked at a bank, while his brother was among the prominent merchants of Ankara. Rafael-Viktorya Baruh had their first son in 1931. They named him Selim after Rafael Baruh's father's name, Salamon Baruh. And they had their second son whom they named Erol in 1937. Erol finished Saint Joseph [French catholic high school], while Selim finished Robert College [5](#), both in Istanbul. In 1956, the government declared that merchants' accounts would be more stringently monitored. Rafael Baruh, and his family, sensing this coming pressure on his business, emigrated to Paris, in the year of 1958. Selim and Erol completed their higher education in Paris. Erol became an electronics engineer, while Selim became a decorator. Erol married a French lady, named Nicole, and had a son named David. After getting divorced, he made his second marriage with a designer named Eti. Selim had two sons from his first marriage. After getting a divorce from his first wife, he had a long secret relation with a lady whom he met while decorating her house. He married her after a while and settled down. Everyone married a Jewish spouse in the Baruh family up till now. Rafael and Viktorya died in Paris. My cousins, Erol and Selim, still reside in Paris.

When it comes to my mother's side, I know that they are from Edirne. My mother's father David Mitrani, had a very humorous and a cheerful nature. He made his living from his winery. Judeo-Spanish was also the mother tongue of this family who were not very religious. My mother, Fortune Baruh, came from Edirne at the age of three. She didn't tell me anything about her life in Edirne. The most important thing I know about this family who are of Thracian origin, is that they were highly cultured. At the same time, the Mitrani family was famous for their humorous nature. Even my cousin Josef Sarfati (the son of my mother's sister Virjini Sarfati), was invited over to friends' gatherings on Saturday evenings, just to entertain them. His wife, Rozet Sarfati, was not very happy about this situation at all.

My mother's mother Simbul was also a housewife and of Edirne origin. I don't have much information about the grandmother. Simbul Mitrani's sibling married someone, bearing the surname Seni, and became a teacher at a primary school.

My father Josef Baruh's name was Yasef Mishon Baruh. [in his documents] He was born in 1902, and died in 1982. He belonged to a part in the society of the time, which could have been regarded as being intellectual. He was educated in Saint Joseph. [A French catholic high school] My father worked at an Italian bank called Banco di Roma [Bank of Rome], and didn't do any other work in his life. Josef Baruh would go to work carrying a walking stick, and wearing a derby on his head, and "getr" on his socks. [In Turkish this is an ornamental chain worn on the upper part of the socks]. My

mother did not like him carrying the walking stick at all. She said that this made him look old. Josef Baruh paid and served in the military for a shorter period of time. He worked as a cleaner at a Military Hospital during his military service. I remember my father as a literary man with a beautiful handwriting. There was also a book named “Bareme” [classification system], which my father had written. He had written this book which consisted of mathematical charts providing more convenient methods for the conversion of foreign currencies. He stayed awake late at night in order to complete the book. By the time the book was published, people had begun to use calculating machines, and did not find the book as helpful as expected. He was terribly disappointed that his efforts had been in vain. His sensitive nature couldn’t handle this, he got sick, and was diagnosed with the Parkinson disease in 1945. In those years, the Parkinson disease wasn’t that known. There was no treatment for the disease, and nothing to stop it from spreading. I felt very sad when this diagnosis was made. It was very painful for me to think of such a well-spoken man with such beautiful handwriting, as my father losing his abilities. He would prepare all the billboards that hung on the walls in my class during the “Domestic Goods Week” [Entertaining events were prepared at schools to encourage the students to use Turkish products, and to prevent them from fancying European goods. Children were thought to eat fruits grown in Turkey.] In this way, I had become popular amongst my teachers. My father regularly read a lot of books. He used to put his initials on every book he read to prevent them from being read for the second time. The newspapers of the time, like Journal D’Orient [6](#) and Stamboul [7](#) were delivered till Ortakoy, just for my father and his few friends.

When he retired from the Banco di Roma, my father was given a medal, depicting Romulus and Remus, symbols of Rome. Only, my husband went to that ceremony. Neither the wives nor the daughters were invited to such ceremonies at that time. The women did not take part in the social life fully yet. They didn’t participate in business relations either. I have kept the medal for years and have given it to my son now for it to be passed on to future generations. My son placed it in a nice corner at his house. My father went to my husband’s office for long years after he retired. He took care of the correspondence work in my husband’s office. And my husband benefited from my father’s banking and foreign language knowledge. My father regularly took his lunch box with him. He never ate outside. Eating outside would be an unnecessary expense and also harm the stomach. When the meals were prepared the amount of food needed for the lunch boxes the next day was taken into consideration. Very rarely, when food was not available, then he would eat a rice pudding from the sweet shop

My mother Fortune Baruh (née Mitrani) had five siblings. Virjini Mitrani married Moiz Sarfati and had two children named Zelda and Josef.

Klara Mitrani married Moiz Habib, and had two children, named Viktor and Edit.

The two brothers, Salamon and Moris Mitrani immigrated to America. Establishing their future abroad in order to earn more money was a prevailing thought during those days. Actually it is always said “to America”, but one of the brothers first went to Cuba and then to Mexico. They never came back to Istanbul. In this sense, my mother was separated from her siblings at a very young age and never saw them again. Their father went to America only once to see his sons. We learned from the news seldom received that they were also married and had children. From time to time small presents came from these siblings. We were informed when Salamon and Moris died. My mother went to the synagogue and did kriaah for her brothers whom she never remembered, and

mourned for seven days [shivah, in Ladino siete] by dressing in black [contrary to the Muslim and the Ashkenazi tradition the Ottoman and Turkish Sephardim wear black for morning] . Their children, on the other hand, came to Istanbul and found us, in other words their cousins. Though the siblings hadn't been in contact, the cousins met each other.

My mother Fortune Mazalto Baruh, was educated in Istanbul after finishing primary school in Edirne. She received her diploma, from Alliance Israelite Universelle [8](#), called "Grand Brevet" [the big diploma]. My father had a colleague named Monsieur Seni, at the bank. Monsiuer Seni thought my father Josef Baruh and my mother Fortune Mitrani would be well-suited for each other. My mother got married and settled down in Ortakoy, when the families consented to this marriage. My mother never flirted with my father. My mother felt very happy when my daughter had a son, and dedicated herself to him. She would express her love by saying " I didn't know what love meant until I fell in love with Meyir (the name of my daughter's son).

The wedding took place in the synagogue in Ortakoy one Friday during the spring months of the year 1928. (my mother never knew the exact date, she would only say that the weather was warm). There was a special excitement about weddings on Fridays. Everything had to be finished before the Shabat [shabbath], and they had to be home on Friday evening. We didn't have any photographs taken after the wedding, in order not to violate the Shabat. That is why my mother doesn't have a picture of herself with her wedding gown on. According to what my mother says, they went to a hotel in Yenikoy to spend their honeymoon. They rented one room for themselves, and one room for my grandmother. My mother has never forgotten this event and she still hasn't forgiven her mother-in-law for it. How funny it seems today, a mother-in-law going on the honeymoon with the newly-wed couple.

Actually, my mother spent very nice days in Ortakoy. But she was a woman who was never quite satisfied with her own circumstances. I guess she was a little bit ambitious, while my father was a very calm man in return. Though my mother always says, that her mother-in-law had ordered her to work, I always remember my grandmother doing the work. My mother was a very affectionate person, but she showed her affection only to the ones whom she loved. She was cold towards the others. She didn't like being friends with everyone. Those she loved, she loved with all her heart, and wouldn't hesitate to make any sacrifices for them. She was never able to get over my father being diagnosed with the Parkinson disease, and said that this disease affected her life very much. She was very skilled at cooking. But she wasn't open to innovations. For this reason, in a good menu, there had to be "borekas" [Sephardic pastry filled with different kinds of fillings, either sweet or salty, like cheese, eggplants, potatoes or walnuts], not crepe. But in return she was very open-minded. She had both welcomed my son's and my daughter's flirts very nicely and provided them with comfort at home so that they would come and go without any hesitation. She said that she did this in the name of getting to know them better. But she couldn't keep herself from asking each time "de quelle famille il/ elle est" meaning "which family is she/he from". She liked getting dressed very much. She dyed her hair till six months before her death. She always had her manicure and pedicure done. She died in the year of 1992.

## Growing up

I was born in a neighborhood of Istanbul, called Ortakoy in 1929. I wasn't named after my paternal grandmother as was the tradition, but was named after my father's sister who had died at a very

young age. [In the Sephardic tradition, the first girl born in the family is named after her father's mother, the first boy after his father's father, the second girl after her mother's mother, and the second boy after her mother's father] I'm the only daughter of this family. When I asked my mother about why I didn't have any siblings, she used to reply: "la situation ke ofre la Banco di Roma no permetiya de azer otra kreyatura" meaning "the financial rewards which Banco di Roma offered did not permit us to have another child". In the beginning I accepted this answer, but later on as I thought of even poorer families who had more children but who never starved and even went onto higher education, I decided that my mother was a little bit unfair. I even found my mother more unfair when I saw that my life style wasn't even close to being poor. My father, from time to time, received some bonus or shopping tickets from the bank. He brought home food which was called delicacy with these tickets. Some examples of the delicacy are: Likorinos, lakerda [salted fish varieties], Gruyere [yellow French cheese] and Roquefort cheese, kalamata olives, and canned sardines. But within the years, I sometimes thought "I'm lucky to have no siblings, taking care of this mother and father is my duty."

The house I grew up in is the same house my mother came to as a bride in Ortakoy. It was three-storeyed, and we always had electricity and running water. This house and the three other similar ones, were bought by selling a very valuable diamond bracelet of Rasel Baruh. While the Baruh family lived in one of them, in the three others lived some Muslim tenants. The relations with these neighbors were very good. But once when one of these neighbors said: "Of all the Jews I like you the best", I felt uneasy. I took this to mean that "if he liked us more, he must like the others less". From then on, I felt little bit heart-broken towards those neighbors.

I had a childhood full of quite nice memories. We would gather in the gardens, and play games. At night girls and boys, Muslim or not, would gather and play hide-and-seek with a piece of wood. We would spin a big piece of wood in the middle, and try to hide ourselves till it stopped spinning, then the "it" [the one to close his eyes] would open his eyes, and start searching for us. Throughout Ramadan [Muslim month of fasting] we would gather around the mosque and sing all together during Iftar [the end of Ramadan], when all the lights were on. These songs were children songs at first, then became the popular songs of the time.

During the summer months, my mother would take me to the place of today's Ciragan Palace to swim. She couldn't swim, but I learned how to swim in the Bosphorus.

Not every household had radios in those times. Our neighbors had one in their house, and we would listen to the "children's hour" on Saturday mornings over at their house.

I was a well-liked student in the 29th Primary School in Ortakoy. One of my teachers who liked me very much wanted to call me by her own name, Yıldız. The name "Kemal" was given to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk [9](#) also by his teacher. My teacher must have been inspired by this event. My father didn't favor this situation much, but for a while I was called Yıldız at school. My teacher would invite me to her house and treat me as if I was her own daughter. My father wasn't very happy about this intimacy. He would politely turn down my teacher's offers to have me over at her summer house. I often took part in the plays at school, and was found to be succesful. Today, if they ask me what I would like to be if I could be born again I would say "an announcer". This is probably due to my memories from my school years. My Muslim friends' mothers used wear a black scarf first when I was in the primary school. Later on, they started using colored ones. And most of them uncovered

their heads as a result of the Ataturk reforms. [10](#) For this reason, I have a big love for Ataturk and secularity.

Ataturk's death holds a special place in my memories. That morning, on the 10th of November in 1938, we saw the teachers running all of a sudden. They gathered us in the garden. The eyes of the teachers were swollen from crying. First, they told us to take out our white collars and then they sent us home. A mourning atmosphere was also prevailing at home. I remember all the students having been taken to Dolmabahce Palace [Ataturk's residence at the time], and everybody crying. I also remember memorizing Ataturk poems. We were all crying as we passed in front of his body.

During our childhood, respect and love in our relations with our neighbors was important. We would all dine together under the pergola in the gardens during the summer months.

During my childhood, a washerwoman [a woman to do the washing only at a time when there were no washing machines] came to our house regularly. The name of this woman was Simbul, and she was Jewish. I have two memories related to this issue. I was the only daughter of the family who didn't eat much food. My father would find and bring home the best of everything. The washerwoman had a daughter with red cheeks. My mother asked her enviously what she gave her daughter to eat. She replied that she dipped bread into the coffee grounds which she had drunk before and gave this to her in the morning, and she shared with her daughter the food she was given at the houses where she worked. In this way, they felt very sad, because I was very thin, though they were all paying very much attention to me.

This woman also worked at the community affairs. My grandmother was a very understanding woman. One day, while the woman was washing the laundry, news came that a corpse had to be washed. The woman left her work and started to prepare to go. As she was about to leave, my grandmother asked her whether she would also wash her nicely when she died. The washing maid said: "Si, a si biva la madam, de alma i de korason" meaning of "course madam, I'll do it with all my heart."

My father wasn't religious. He would only go to the synagogue during the festivals and would not especially chant morning or Shabat prayers. The religious one was my grandmother Rashel Baruh. The festival she liked most was Pesah. Loksa was taken out during the Pesah Festival. I was asked to prepare the sugar, the salt, and the meat. The meat mills came out and all this was a very hard job. (These were hand grinders. The sugar and salt came as blocks, while meat came in large pieces. We crushed the salt and the sugar separately with knives. And we minced the meat. This process was done during Pesah time so that the salt, sugar and meat would be kosher). Anyways, I used to spend all my time with my mother and grandmother. Besides, I also believed that this was the way to be, as if there was no other way to be. We would knit and do embroidery together, and often welcome guests. Our house was located at a corner, which made everyone drop by. We had guests almost everyday. The guests who came in the afternoons would play card games with the family members. "Pastra", a kind of "Pishti", "Kunkam", and "7.5" were among the card games which were played. There used to be three jars at home filled with 3 different types of cookies: cheese, vanilla, and blackpepper. When they were finished, my grandmother would make new ones. I still have this tradition going on at my home. When my daughter was young, her friends who came to visit would go after the jars and eat the cookies which my mother had made as "ke se

tope" [a term in Ladino meaning "to have something at home to offer/ to eat"] I was glad to see the children happy. My friends like the blackpepper cookies, which I make quite often.

The sweaters which we knitted one winter were quite liked, and then we received orders from our neighbors. The three of us got together and completed the orders. And of course, we were paid in return. My mother was not happy about taking money and she distributed all of it to the poor. At that time, knitting for money wasn't acceptable behavior.

Our Turkish bath sessions were another story. We went to the "hamam" [turkish bath] once a month, for sure. But we never carried the hamam bag ourselves. The hamam bag was sent to the hamam the day before and was brought home by the "tellaks", [bath attendants] afterwards. I have a memory related to this issue. One day, they took my cousin Erol, who had come from Ankara, to the hamam. My cousin looked at the hamam with eyes full of surprise and said: "How big my grandmother's bathroom is!"

We would go out into the garden from the ground floor of the house we lived in. My father, Josef Baruh took care of the soil, and planted flowers and vegetables. My father used to hoe the soil in order to receive better output, with the climate changing every season. He had to use mattock and shovel during his military service in the 20 military reserve classes [11](#). I can't forget the words he said during the night he was called drafted, which were "I don't want to see this night end". My father did his military service in a district of Balıkesir, named Sındırgı. Sındırgı is surrounded with mountains, and a dry, land climate prevails there. I wanted to give him a hug when he came back after eight months, but I wasn't allowed. First, he had to take off all of his clothes, and go to the hamam, because he had got infested with lice in that place he was doing his military service.

Speaking of the garden, I can also say that my friends also used to come to spend time in this small garden. We would water the pots and feel happy as shoots appeared through the soil. On the other hand, my daughter has two memories in relation to this. When my daughter got married, we wanted a flower called the "bride flower" for her, which was a special aromatic kind of flower. My father had found the name of the flowers immediately. He said: "ce sont de tubereuses" meaning "they are tuberose". Indeed, the tuberose wasn't the kind of flower that was known very much, but my father had known it at once. Our second memory is related to my father's death. My father died in the middle of winter, and flowers appeared on one of the plants in the garden, which hadn't flowered for two years!

I remember the bread given out by ration, during World War II. The ration was a document given out by the headman during World War II. Due to scarcity, main items like sugar, salt, bread, oil, and rice were given in amounts allocated to each family. And getting these items was only possible by showing the documents, called ration. We used up all our coupons. I was always the one to get into line to receive our share, because my grandmother was too old, and my mother a little too proud to line up. We used to save the bread which we got during Pesah, too. We would place it out on the balcony, because keeping it at home wasn't the right thing to do. We were afraid that we wouldn't be able to find bread afterwards, so we saved it in as religious a way as we could. I also remember that some of the very poor families would sell their rations or goods in the blackmarket to earn some money.

My family didn't travel much. We would go to the cinema once a week, and visit my mother's sisters, who lived in Tunel, once every 15 days. [a popular neighborhood in which the Jews lived]

The way back home from Tunel was like a journey, during those days. Because my father liked walking very much, we would walk the distance between Tunel and Taksim [a central neighborhood], and Taksim and Dolmabahce [a neighborhood along the European side of the Bosphorus], and reach Ortakoy, by tram or bus. The distance between Tunel and Taksim, was the region where the most glamorous shops, the best restaurants, the passeggiways, and the cinemas were located. The most luxurious goods were sold at the shops in these passeggiways. Most of the shop owners were Levantines.<sup>12</sup> The ladies would definitely go around wearing a hat in this region called Pera. We wore special hats when we went to the cinemas. We used them as accessories, not for keeping our heads warm. One of the most famous restaurants of Pera was “Regence”, which was run by Russian ladies. The most famous dish of the restaurant was Borscht. The women who did the service would carry on with their own traditions by wearing long, and embroidered dresses. The most famous “patisseries” [bakery] of Pera, were the “Markiz” and “Lebon”. Also, the “Inci patisserie”, was famous for its “profiterol”. As Dolmabahce was situated by the sea it was a pleasure to walk down the slope from Taksim to Dolmabahce and enjoy the sea view.

During the summer days, I would go on a ferry with my mother from Ortakoy. The ferries were the most important means of transportation, which were in use between the two sides of the Bosphorus. We would go to Bebek [a neighborhood on the European side, near Ortakoy] to meet my father, who would be coming home from work. Sometimes we ate a sandwich in the tea garden, and sometimes fish at the fish restaurant. It always gave me pain to witness my father’s movements getting restricted after he was diagnosed with the Parkinson disease.

I first rode in a taxi on a rainy day and told this to my friends immediately the following day. Rain meant mud during those days, because the roads were in quite a poor condition. At that time we couldn’t imagine the asphalt roads of the later years. Some of the house fronts are being cobbled today in order to give them a nostalgic look. Getting on a train was a totally different story. It seemed like a very long journey, when we got on the road to go to Yakacik. [a neighborhood on the hilly parts of the Asian side]. We would first go from Ortakoy to Besiktas [a neighborhood on the European side], than from Besiktas to Uskudar [a neighborhood on the Asian side in Istanbul], and than from Uskudar to Haydarpasha. There, we would get on the train, heading to Kartal [a suburb on the Asian side], and finally reach Yakacik. We would go to Yakacik to spend the weekend. Yakacik was famous for its tea gardens, fresh air, and spring water. People would go there with big jars, fill them with spring water, and take them to their homes. Swings were already set up in these vast green fields by the time we reached there, and whistles made of ceramic, called “kantariko” were sold. I would buy from these ceramic whistles every time we went there, and break it the following day. Yakacik’s paper kebab was famous. Paper Kebab is a kind of dish where the food, basically meat, is cooked either in greaseproof paper or in terracotta pots. Small pieces of meat and various vegetables, made up this kebab. There was also a sanatorium which we preferred to stay away from. The sanatorium was a hospital in which patients with tuberculosis were treated. It was thought, because tuberculosis was an infectious disease, germs would be found near the hospital. Sterilization was far from today’s standards. In the following years, as the roads were constructed we started going to Yakacik in the mornings and returning home in the evenings. We would take stuffed peppers, meat balls, and boreks [pastry filled with either cheese or ground meat] from home to the picnics. We would divide the work to be done among the friends. Everybody would cook something, and large tables were laden and set. “Raki keyfi” was the name given to eating and having nice conversations at these laden tables. [Turkish term meaning

relaxing meal with raki and mezes that usually goes on for hours.]

## **My husband Franko**

Who is my husband, in other words, Isak Franko? How did we meet, get married and live? Isak Franko, was born in Kırklareli in 1919. [Thrace, European Turkey] His mother, Franka Franko wasn't a well-educated lady. She could even have been considered as semi-literate. Though she herself claimed to know how to read and write, I never remember her reading a newspaper. His father, Yomtov Franko, on the other hand was engaged in the leather trade. They were a family who had been affected by the events which took place in 1934 in Thrace. Jewish families' houses and work places were looted during these Thrace events [13](#). They moved to Istanbul overnight leaving all of their possessions behind. The Jews, who had come to Istanbul the night the Thrace events took place were either placed at a hotel by the community, or they stayed over at their relatives' homes. They went back to Kırklareli to close up their homes and work places after the events had cooled down. But of course, they experienced great financial loss during these times.

My husband Isak Franko had two siblings. Roza was born in the year of 1922. She was very fond of reading. She started going to English High School for Girls [14](#), after coming from Kırklareli. Her mother Franka Franko would turn off the light in her bedroom at night and say "Ogretmena te vas azer, kualo es" meaning "are you going to become a teacher or what?". She was a very bright girl. Her first marriage was to Shapat Ozcakır at the age of 18, and had two children, Fifi and Baruh. Fifi lives in Istanbul, while Baruh "Otzkin" in Israel. The surname "Ozcakır" became modified to Otzkin to conform with the rules of grammar and pronunciation in Israel. Fifi Ozcakır, my husband's niece reached marriageable age 8 years after losing her father, Shapat Ozcakır from kidney failure in 1955. The responsibility for "Tallet" [In Sephardi tradition chuppah is actually a tallit held at each corner by one of the four parents of the bride and the groom over their heads.] was given to my husband, who was the eldest sibling. And I went to one of the most famous dressmakers of the time and had an embroidered brocade dress made. This dressmaker was our neighbor, and was the mother of Filiz Akın, who was one of the most famous actresses of the time. Six months before the wedding, someone also wanted to marry to Fifi's mother, my husband's sister. Bohor Alev was a well-liked merchant. I entered the synagogue on my son's arm, Fifi on my husband's, and Roza, on her new husband's. Roza's husband wasn't present at the tallet ceremony, but joined us later on for the congratulations. Roza was married to Bohor Alev for 36 years, and my niece always felt guilty for not having given the responsibility for the tallet to Bohor Alev. He was engaged in the stationary business. He brought packages of notebooks to my daughter, when he came to us the first time for dinner. My daughter was very young then, and felt very happy to get so many notebooks.

My husband's brother, Hayim Franko was a reckless young man. He was late to his military class one day during his last year at the Austrian High School [an Austrian missionary school subsidized by the Austrian government]. When his teacher asked him to salute, he refused. His teacher told him, that he would register his behavior into his records. Hayim Franko later on started studying medicine after graduating from high school. Later on, he decided to use his right to serve in the military as an officer, and therefore postponed his education. This right was given to high school graduates only. But his military teacher had done what he told him and marked his childish behavior in his records. Hayim Franko had to serve as a soldier, which was longer in his military service. In this way, he failed to complete his medical studies, and went into business with his elder

brother and father. Later on he married Viktuar Abeni. Their first child, Frida died from leukemia at the age of 6, and said farewell to life in a short period of time. We learned about her disease after a continuous sore throat which wouldn't heal. It was a kind of cancer which spread very fast, and the little girl died within a period like 11 months. My sister-in-law, Viktuar Franko, never pronounced her daughter's name again throughout her life. She only went to the cemetery with me once a year. She would cry that day there and would carry her sadness only in her heart the other 364 days. There is still a porcelain trinket of a girl over Viktuar Franko's bed. One must know my sister-in-law very well to interpret this. If she wants definitely to indicate a date or an event, then she would say "el anyo del malor" meaning the "year of the disaster". The couple, Hayim and Viktuar, later on had two sons named Tovi and Cuda.

My husband, Isak Franko, started his business life by doing the work he took over from his father. Isak Franko acted in an amateur theatre group which he and his friends had formed at the age of 18, on Heybeliada [one of the islands in the Marmara Sea, which are called The Princess Islands.] I was 8 years old then and would sing songs during the intervals, or between acts to enable the actors to change their costumes. After seeing each other for the first time, my husband always joked saying "I picked you up the first time I saw you, but waited for you to grow up". Only, after 8 years from this first meeting, Heskiya Hatem and Soli Hatem, [my husband's friends and at the same time distant relatives of my grandmother from her father's side] introduced us to each other again. We came together one New Year's Eve and went to the cinema the following day. Isak Franko announced his intention of marrying me through our common friends. When my family told me that there was someone who wanted to marry me, I said if it was Isak Franko, then I would agree. The news spread out fast in Ortakoy. Isak Franko came to us with his mother and brought us a box of candies. The permission for my marriage was given in the month of June of the year 1947. During those days the man's family would bring candies in a silver bowl to the girl's family when they went to visit them for the first time for the engagement. This was the custom, then. The size of the silver bowl, its hallmark and ornamentation and its karats (800 or 900 for silver) would indicate the refinement and wealth of the family who had brought it. That day they didn't bring me a silver bowl. They brought us a box of candies from an ordinary pastry shop. I joked about this ironically for many years. Later on, I bought a lot of silverware for my house. I felt happy with the box of candies because his mother was unfashionable, and uneducated, and there was no one to show her the way to behave. I feel angry today when I see the young girls and boys who want everything complete from the first day. I try to explain that things earned slowly give much more pleasure.

I remember a very happy atmosphere when it comes to my wedding memories. We got married at the Zulfaris Synagogue, which is used as a museum today, [15](#) on the 6th of June in 1948. This synagogue had a positive feature for the wedding ceremonies. It was regarded as good luck for the brides to climb up the stairs till they reached the tevah. There is a staircase with 15-20 steps at the entrance of the Zulfaris Synagogue. All the girls who were single at that moment, my cousins, my friends from the neighborhood, all wrote their names on the soles of my shoes. [There was a belief that to write one's name on the sole of a bride's shoe would cause a single girl to get married] My friends refreshed my make-up. (In those times there were no professional make-up people to come and make up the bride and her family like there is today.) Actually, they were watching me with a little bit of envy. Though I was the youngest one among the cousins I was the one who got married the earliest. I was 18 years old. I had rented both my wedding dress and the veil, but I had had my

veil made according to my taste. Our wedding was quite a modest ceremony, but all of our crowded family members, and all of Ortakoy was there. After all the bride was from Ortakoy. My bridal veil got ripped by a cat the day following the wedding. Consequently, we had to buy it. We went to Yalova [a city near Istanbul, which is famous for its spas] for our honeymoon. We shared the first house we rented with my mother-in-law. But I would always go to my mother's house, which was in Ortakoy. My husband would also feel happier there. So he would escape from his mother's authority and ignorance a little bit. My brother-in-law, Hayim, was faced with the same problem of finding a house for rent when he got married. We started living in the same house with my sister-in-law, Viktuar. We got along like sisters. We would play bezique, after having finished our household chores. Our most favorite dish, was a kind of salted fish called "liparidas" then. My sister-in-law would go out to buy liparidas, while I would stay at home. Then we would eat them. One day we must have eaten too much, because we both got urticaria. My sister-in-law, who had a more allergic constitution, couldn't stop itching for a long time. We both didn't eat liparidas again. My mother-in-law, on the other hand, died in September 1952.

My mother and father did not want to live in Ortakoy anymore. Ortakoy had started to become an outmoded neighborhood. The rich families had started moving to Sisli, and Nisantas. The year was 1953. My mother and father sold the three houses which they owned. The shares of the siblings who lived in Paris and Israel were sent to them, because the house actually belonged to my grandmother. My husband proposed to rent a house in Nisantas with my mother and father. Everybody was pleased with this situation. Living in a single house would actually be more economical. My mother helped me with the raising of my children. My mother and I would put the money needed for the kitchen expenses in a purse. Everybody who bought something for the house would get his allowance from my mother. My mother was in charge of this purse, from which all the expenses were paid. My husband wouldn't take extra money for the things he bought for the house, since we had children, and the old people did not eat so much. He would bring fruit home everynight from the street fruitsellers. He sometimes brought home ,kasher' cheese, which was sold by the merchants coming from Anatolia. [,Kasher' meaning Kosher, it refers to a specific brand of yellow cheese, produced by the Sephardim and was popular among both Jews and non-Jews.] My mother would immediately make borekas [Sephardic pastry filled with different kinds of fillings, either sweet or salty, like cheese, eggplants, potatoes or walnuts] and boyos [Sephardic pastry made of flour, oil and cheese] from that "kasher" cheese. My father on the other hand, would also sometimes want to buy things from the stallholders, but would usually get cheated because he was sick. And my mother would get angry at my father. I was very upset by these scenes. It was obvious that my father's intention was good.

I would go to Beyoglu with my mother to buy the glassware we needed at home when some money was left in the purse from which our monthly expenses were paid. We especially couldn't resist the crystal items. We would also go into the cloth shops to buy cloth to be made up by our dressmaker Diamante, who came to our house each season for a whole day of sewing. The day our dressmaker came was almost like a party day. Our neighbors would also come and help, and we would prepare special menus for that day. If the dressmaker was skilled enough, she would even sew more than the number of dresses she first promised. My mother would always keep extra material for a skirt at hand. "Diamante me vas a kuzir i una fustika"[Ladino for "Diamante, you will sew me sew one more skirt, OK?"] "Si madam Fortune, si me ayudash un poko, deke no" ["Of course madam Fortune, why not if you help me a little bit"]. We would understand that the dressmaker needed

little bit help from these conversations. We had neighbors who were like siblings. They would come to help. We felt more close to our neighbors than our siblings.

The couple, Yair and Mari Mizrahi, had only one child, whose name was Lina Mizrahi. She was the young Lina, and I was the older one when we talked among ourselves. The Mizrahi family was a quiet family. We, on the other hand, were crowded. Young Lina would always come over to our house. She would also get my father to do her homework as I did during my childhood years. We would dine together during the Jewish festivals, and go out together during the Muslim festivals. My husband first invited the Mizrahi family out when he bought his car. Owning a car was a privilege then. The ones who bought a car would invite the family members out one by one. There was also an excitement in our family when Lina Mizrahi got married. After all, we were from the same apartment. Lina Mizrahi married a lawyer, named Salamon Kaneti. Yair and Mari Mizrahi, who were left alone in the house, came over to us right after the day she got married. They started crying and said “ No teniya un bokado para darle, ke la enbiyi de kaza ?” [“Why did we have to send her away? Didn’t we have a piece of bread to feed her with?” ] We calmed them down with a smile. Salamon Kaneti, who was a calm, quiet man later progressed in his career very much. He first became an associate professor and then a professor. Mari Mizrahi who was very proud of her son-in-law, would start her sentences by saying “mi yerno el avokato” [“my son-in-law the lawyer”] or “mi yerno el profesor” [“my son-in-law the professor”]. My mother and I would always smile very much at these comments because she didn’t have any other son-in-laws. Her only son-in-law was a lawyer and a professor. When Lina and I meet, we still hug each other lovingly.

Our house was not that hot, because it was heated with a stove. We had to keep an eye on the stove. We would only use the big living room when we had guests, and sit in the smaller living room otherwise. Once I told to my son to keep an eye on the stove, because we were expecting guests. He put a lot of wood into the stove. When we arrived home, we saw that we were lucky not to have had a fire. We had great difficulty in putting out the stove. My husband took the ashes out. The house became both cold and dirty. This was extra work for us. In the following years, we moved into a flat with central heating in Nishantash.

My husband’s family, was affected by the Wealth Tax [16](#), as much as they were affected by the 1934 events. Yomtov Franko, my father-in-law, paid his Wealth Tax with a lot of hardships. After the financial blow during the Thrace events, he experienced another financial blow. He paid a fortune in order not to go to Askale. [a small town in the north-east of Turkey, where the forced labor camps were for people who did not/could not pay the wealth tax] On the other hand, my father had the advantage of working at a bank, and so he got away with a much lower Wealth Tax. The bank undertook to pay the amount for which he was liable.

My husband and I made our first trip to Israel in 1955, because going to Israel was my husband’s greatest dream. We spent very nice days with my cousin Beki there. That trip was like an adaptation of Ortakoy life in Israel to me. My cousin Beki went on with her knitting. But this time it was really to support the family budget. Beki would usually make borekas and cakes at home, because the pastry business wasn’t that advanced during those years in Israel, and she also wanted to earn some extra money. Her husband Mishel and my husband got along very well. They introduced us to their friends. We witnessed for the first time how the soil was made fertile.

My husband went into business with his father in the leather trade. They would buy leather from Anatolia and sell it. My mother would say “it smells bad, but it makes money” about this business. Later on my husband and his brother started to export leather abroad. Merchants used to come often from abroad. But for some reason, not my husband but his brother would take care of these guests. My husband was engaged in the leather export business for long years. Our life was changed by some news we read in the newspaper one morning. I can’t remember the exact date of this event, but it must have been around 1970’s. A quota had been placed on the leather export. This time, he and his brother founded a tannery, that is a leather factory. My husband didn’t like the factory business that much. He would often have disputes with his brother. For some reason, they had different ideas about business. We, the two sister-in-laws were careful not to get involved in these disputes. In-laws don’t usually see eye to eye, so they say, but we are still closer than two sisters.

We made our first trip to Europe both for business and pleasure. We went till Marseilles by ship. My husband had some business to attend to in Toulouse, so I stayed over at my cousins in Paris. Upon my husband’s return from Toulouse, my cousins didn’t let us leave and we stayed over at their house. My husband wanted to take a bath immediately when he came over to my cousins. My cousin’s wife, who had a very good sense of humor said: “comment tu veux te laver? Il n’ya que les gens sales qui se lavent. Les gens propres ne se lavent pas!” [French for “What? You want to take a bath? Only dirty people take baths, not clean ones!”.] I always remember this joke. Later on we did many trips with my husband together. In the past, we used to return with a lot of suitcases which were filled with all the things we had bought. In those times, import items were very scarce in Turkey. Even a little thing we bought from Europe was very important. Nevertheless, when it came to shopping, my husband and I wouldn’t get along. I liked to buy presents both for myself and for my mother, for my children, and for my friends. He didn’t agree.

My summer memories are colored mostly by the days spent in Caddebostan [a neighborhood on the Asian side]. Caddebostan was full of two storeyed houses, convenient to buy because they were offered by the bank at a reduced credit rate. Each house had a very big garden. There were fruit trees in these gardens. We would make jam from the fruit of these trees. In one of our summer houses, there were 8 different kinds of plum trees. Our landlords would divide the trees among the tenants. Mulberries were sold to the mulberry sellers. If there were two trees from the same kind, then one would belong to the landlord, and the other to the tenants. We knew about these trees and didn’t touch them. We would gather walnuts when we were about to return to our winter houses. The hands of the those who peeled the walnuts without a glove would get all black. During those days it was still possible to swim in the Marmara Sea. My husband would rent a boat for me seasonally, so that we didn’t have to line up each time we wanted to go swimming. There used to be long queues in front of the boat renters on the weekends. We didn’t have to wait in line because we had our own boat. The ones in line would scream and yell while we felt like as if we owned a big yacht. On the other hand, we would eat ice cream on Bagdat Street on hot summer nights. Each night we would go over to a friend’s house and entertain ourselves by telling jokes. If we stayed home one night, my father would ask “Isako esta hazino u keyfsiz?” [“Is Isak sick or not feeling well?”] During those days my father’s sickness had advanced quite much. He couldn’t take his wife around, and expected me to take my mother out. My husband wouldn’t say anything about my mother joining us.

The events of September the 6th and the 7th [17](#) suddenly shadowed these nice memories. We heard noises that night but didn't pay much attention. My husband was shocked when he went to work the next morning and saw what had been done. At the time, we were living in Tukenmez Yuva, in Caddebostan. Everywhere was looted. The refrigerators in the houses were lying in the streets. All the consumer goods had been thrown out onto the streets. They claimed that this was done by a few looters. The government said that they couldn't stop these looters. I think being unable to stop them was also a failure. According to the rumors, this was done against the Greeks, and they say that even some Greek girls were raped. For them the term "non-muslim" meant, Jew, Armenian or Greek. The headman in Burgazada prevented the looters who came in barges from stepping onto the island and was able to protect the citizens living there. The damage both in Beyoglu and Buyukada was big. Our landlords kept us in their houses till morning. They tried to calm us down by saying "as long as we are here, they can't harm you". Of course, there were also some robberies, and a big financial damage occurred.

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.

The slogan, "Citizen speak Turkish", [18](#) is a positive event on my mind. I don't find it right, when people born in one country, and having equal rights with all the other citizens don't speak the language of that country. My mother spoke almost no Turkish. She never made an effort to speak or learn the language either. According to her there was no need to be proficient in Turkish in order

to shop from the street sellers. She would sing lullabies to her children in Ladino. Television hadn't been invented yet, and all her friends spoke either French or Ladino. I, on the other hand believe in speaking the language of a country in order to belong there. Our children started speaking better Turkish. According to me this helped them to establish better relations and to present themselves better.

We heard the news about the World War II first on the radio and then from the newspapers. Actually, if we are to tell the truth, we learned about the terrible events in 1944, when the war was over. Maybe because we didn't want to believe what was happening, we couldn't see everything clearly. I start shaking when this brutality comes to my mind. I couldn't come to myself for a long time after seeing the Holocaust Museum in Yad Vashem [19](#).

As for the Struma, [20](#) I had thought the Struma event would end in a different way, and Turkish hospitality would save the ship.

I don't have much information about the Salonikans [donme] [21](#). As far as I know, they are either anti-semitic, or very "croyant" [religious]. And they hide themselves, in other words they do not expose themselves. It is said that the Tesvikiye Mosque [a mosque in the neighborhood of Nisantasi] belongs to these donmes, but there isn't any proof or sign of this. In the same way, the Sisli Terakki High School, [a high school in Nisantasi] and Isik High School [another high school in Nisantasi] are said to belong to the Salonikans. But again, there is no document or sign showing that this is so.

On the other hand, the Karaites [22](#), are no different for me. I have Karaite friends, and yet I don't see any difference between us. It is as if my friend is telling about my own religion when she speaks. My friend's daughter got married in Israel. (the Bet-Din here didn't allow a Karaite to marry a Jew here) but I know marrying a Karaite is forbidden. I even remember that there is a saying that "if you want to marry a Karaite, first make him an Armenian, then marry him".

Politics wasn't a subject in which either the Baruh or the Franko family showed an interest. We didn't favor a particular party either. But both my family and my husband's family were supporters of Ataturk. And we were raised with his reforms and principles. We also taught this to our children. I'm not happy with the situation today where the leading party is a conservative one. I didn't sleep till the morning the night the results of the last elections were announced. My son said: "We don't worry about this so much. What is happening to you?". Some bad experiences which we witnessed in the past have made us pessimists.

## **Family life**

My husband and I had two children. Our son is Tovi Franko and our daughter is Feride Petilon (née Franko). Tovi was born in 1950 and Feride in 1957. We followed the Jewish traditions throughout our lives. My husband would always feel proud to say that he was Jewish wherever he was. On the other hand, our son's circumcision ceremony was quite a modest one. Lemonade, biscuits, and as was the fashion of the time, in a small bag, candied almonds and pastry, and a piece of sponge cake was offered to the guests. My son's bar mitzvah ceremony was done on a Saturday morning in the Caddebostan Synagogue [synagogue on the Asian side of Istanbul], and later on a cocktail was given in the Suadiye Hotel [a hotel on the Asian shores of Istanbul]. The synagogue was

crowded. I had bought a blue suit from Paris for this occasion, and my shoes and hat were white. It was August and very hot. We had guests coming from Burgazada. I had prepared lunch for them at my house, so that they didn't have to go and come back from the island. I had a tablecloth which I had embroidered for the Bar mitzvah, but I was afraid to use it in case it got dirty. I then placed it in my daughter's bottom drawer. In those days, the tefillin ceremony wasn't ostentatious. My husband and our son went on a Thursday morning, two days before the Bar mitzvah ceremony, and had the tefillin ceremony and came back home. Then we gave out candies. That was it. Tovi Franko grew up according to the Jewish traditions. He even became the president of Amikal, which was one of the popular Jewish youth clubs of the time. Tovi started his business life with his father, and like most other young men didn't like working with his father very much. He founded his own business after a short period of time. Nevertheless, he couldn't part from the family business, which was the leather trade. He exported ready-made leather. His father helped him with the supply of raw materials. My husband was a well-respected personality in Kazlıcesme. [the center of leather trade in old times in Istanbul. Later on all the leather factories and tanneries were moved to Tuzla, a suburb of Istanbul.] His nickname was "corbaci" [soup maker] meant a non-muslim boss, and his every word was attended.

While I was pregnant to my daughter, we experienced a big panic. I had German measles during my pregnancy. This illness is totally harmless in children. But in pregnant women it is the cause of a handicapped child. Blindness or the lack of an organ is an example of this. My doctor said that my baby was four months old and had completed all of her development when I got the illness. We believed him. We were very nervous after the birth. We went through a lot of distress till my daughter reached the age of one, and only then did we understand that all of her reflexes were healthy. We would always shake a rattle at her to see if she could hear or not. We would hold colorful objects in our hands and check to see if she could follow them or not. Actually, it was a risk which we shouldn't have taken. Thank God though, my daughter started walking early, and was very succesful at school.

My daughter Feride Petilon entered the university exams two times, after finishing St. Benoit French School for Girls [French Catholic high school]. On her first try she gained a place in the French literature department of Istanbul University. [23](#) During those years, there was a lot of terrorism between the left and right in universities [24](#). She didn't want to go on under those circumstances. As a very good student, she didn't think French literature was a worthy subject for her. In her second try she gained a place in Business Studies. She was now married and living on the Asian side, and she was unable to complete her studies when she had a baby. She didn't have an orderly working life. From time to time she did some private tutoring, and made costume jewelry. She also worked for Assis. Prof. Sami Gulgoz at Koc University [25](#) on one of his experiments in psychology. The experiment was researching the relationship of memory and language. They used people who spoke Ladino and turkish in this experiment and their speech patterns were later scientifically analyzed. She made interviews and wrote articles for the Shalom newspaper [26](#). She participated in the Goztepe Cultural Association [Jewish youth club on the Asian side] at a managerial level.

I don't see myself as a liberal. I like going to the synagogue. I'm moved when I attend the ceremonies and the festivals in the synagogue. I reach for God during each opening of Ehal. I don't approve of going to the synagogue with revealing clothing. I don't like getting into long

conversations when I go to the synagogue, either.

My granddaughter Meyzi has an important part in my life. We are far beyond being a grandmother and a grandchild; we are like mother and daughter, with my daughter's daughter Meyzi. She was born in 1979. Her father hadn't done his military service yet when she was born. She and her mother lived at our house during her father's military service. This may be the reason for our close relation. I got very excited during her wedding. Meyzi grew up like my daughter.

They wanted me present in the cortege when my son's son was getting married. I was moved very much. These weddings which took place at the Neve Salom synagogue [27](#), are exciting moments of my life.

I first heard about the 1986 Neve Salom massacre [28](#) from my daughter. My daughter's face had gone deathly pale when she came home. I thought something had happened to her father. I felt very sad when I heard the news. We were invited to a wedding the following day. They couldn't postpone the wedding [it's bad luck to postpone a wedding in the Sephardi tradition], so this wedding which started with such a dreadful event continued in the same way and ended in divorce.

I heard the news of the 2003 bombings [29](#) from my son. My son went to the Sisli Synagogue [30](#) immediately because some of our relatives were at the scene of the explosion. He called me and informed about the Neve Salom bombing immediately which had taken place simultaneously.

I am now living alone. I have 5 grandchildren and a very young great-grandchild. The second great-grandchild is on the way already. I have always tried to look at life from a positive point of view. I have tried to follow my traditions like my husband and father, and be modern like my grandmother and my mother. I think only in this way can I take my place among the young people.

## Recipes

Boyikos de pimyenta (biscuits with blackpepper)

Ingredients:

- 1 coffee cup of oil
- 1 coffee cup of water
- 1 coffee cup of melted margarine
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon of blackpepper
- 1 teaspoon of cinnamon
- 3 tablespoons of sugar
- as much flour as it takes to make a soft dough

How to prepare:

Oil, water, and the melted margarin is mixed together. Then, the other ingredients are added in order to this mixture. Flour is added finally, to make a dough. The dough is rolled thinly and cooked in the oven. Bonne appetit.

Biscuit:

Ingredients

1 coffee cup of oil  
1 coffee cup of melted margarine  
1 package of vanilla  
3 tablespoons of sugar  
1 egg  
1 teaspoon of lemon juice  
1 teaspoon of milk  
1 teaspoon of baking powder  
as much flour as it takes to make a soft dough

How to prepare:

Oil, and melted margarine is mixed with vanilla, sugar, egg, lemon juice, and milk. Flour is added last, and the dough is rolled out thinly. Jam could be added on the top, if wanted, and cooked in the oven. Bonne appetit.

Boyikos with kasher [yellow cheese]

Ingredients

1 coffee cup of oil  
1 coffee cup of melted margarine  
1 coffee cup of water  
1 glass of water old kasher [yellow cheese]  
a pinch of salt  
as much flour as it takes to make a soft dough

How to prepare:

Oil, margarine, and water are mixed together, and flour is added to make a dough. Kasher [yellow cheese] is also added, and the dough is rolled out. Cooked in the oven. Bonne appetit.

## Glossary

### **1 Military substitution tax**

The traditional Ottoman poll tax (jizya), levied on the non-Muslim subjects (dhimmi) for exemption from military service, was replaced in 1855 by a universal military substitution tax (bedel-i askeriye), levied on everybody, regardless of religious community (millet), not wanting to serve in the military. Although the opportunity was given to the non-Muslims to take part in the military typically they stayed out by paying the tax; the traditional Muslim military authorities (askeri) were not anxious drafting them anyway. This tax was abolished as late as 1910 and the non-Muslims were finally conscripted into the armed forces along with the Muslims.

### **2 The Ottoman Empire in World War I**

The Ottoman Empire entered the war on the side of the Central Powers in October 1914, as they

were the ones fighting the traditional Ottoman enemy: the Russian Empire. During the winter of 1914-15 the Ottomans launched an ill prepared campaign in the Caucasus against Russia with the hope to be able to turn the local Turkish-speaking Russian subjects (Azerbaijan) to their sides. Instead the Russian counter-offensive drove the Ottomans back behind the borders and Russia occupied North Eastern Anatolia. The local Armenians received the fellow Christian Russians as liberators and many of them assisted them in their efforts against the Ottomans. Assuming an Armenian conspiracy during the winter of 1915 two million Armenians were deported to the war zone; local Turks and Kurds massacred Armenian villages as well as refugees along the road. Victims of the Armenian genocide are estimated to be between 600 thousand and one million. The survivors fled either to Syria or behind the Russian lines. In the spring of 1915 the Entente was to occupy the straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles) and ensure the passage of supply to the Russian Black Sea ports. British troops landed in Gallipoli (Dardanelles) but were not able to expand their beachheads against the army of Mustafa Kemal Pasha (later Kemal Ataturk); they evacuated in February 1916. Although the Ottomans were able to resist the British in Mesopotamia (Iraq) in 1915, they finally took Baghdad in 1917 and drove the Ottomans out of the entire province. Although the Russians made further advance in Eastern Anatolia they left the war after the October Revolution and according to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918) the Ottomans were able to regain Eastern Anatolia. Due to the Arab Revolt supported by the British as well as the direct British military intervention the Ottomans lost both Palestine and Syria; Mustafa Kemal was able only to withdraw his forces intact to Anatolia. Sultan Mohammed VI (1818-22) was forced to sign an armistice with the Entente (October 1918) and as a result British and French battle ships reached the port of Istanbul. The Sultan finally signed the Peace Treaty in Sevres in August 1920, according to which the Arab and Kurdish provinces and Armenia were lost as well as the whole of European Turkey with Istanbul, and the Aegean littoral was to be given to Greece.

### **3 Or Ahayim Hospital**

Istanbul Jewish hospital, established in 1898 with the decree of Sultan Abdulhamit II and the help of idealistic doctors and philanthropists. As a result of various fundraising activities the initially small clinic was enlarged in 1900. Today, the hospital is still active serving both Jewish and non-Jewish patients with the latest technologies and qualified staff.

### **4 The Jewish Lycée**

In the 1920s/1930s, the Jewish community supported the Beyoglu Jewish Lycée opened by the Bnai Brith in 1911 and taken over by Ashkenazi leader David Marcus in 1915 to replace the Alliance schools which had been closed by the French government because of the war. Turkish was the language of instruction. Hebrew studies were de-emphasized as a result of the 1932 law which forbade religious instruction in all Turkish schools. The Beyoglu Jewish Lycée, which was located in Sishane near the Galata Tower is now located in its new location in Ulus and has taken the name "Ulus Ozel Musevi Lisesi", meaning "Private Ulus Jewish Lycée".

### **5 Robert College**

It was founded in 1863 by American educators. Until 1971, there were two campuses, one for boys (with the name of Robert College) and one for girls (with the name of American College for Girls). In 1971, the Arnavutkoy girls campus started co-education under the name of Robert College. On

the same date, the boys campus became Bogazici University (Bosphorus University), an English-medium state university. Robert College and today's Bogazici University were and still are the best schools in Turkey, having students from the top 1% of the student population. Through the years, these schools have had graduates in the top positions in Turkey's business, political, academic and art sectors.

## **6 Journal d'Orient**

The main newspaper of the French-speaking Sephardi Jews in Turkey, it was published between 1917 and 1971 by Albert Karasu, his wife Angele Loreley and Jean de Peyrat. It consisted of four pages of daily news. The paper ceased publication on 25th August 1971, when Albert Karasu retired.

## **7 Stamboul**

a newspaper that was published in Istanbul from 1875 to 1964. This newspaper was published in French.

## **8 Alliance Israelite Universelle**

founded in 1860 in Paris, this was the main organization that provided Ottoman and Balkan Jewry with western style modern education. The alliance schools were organized in a network with their Central Committee in Paris. The teaching body was usually the alumni trained in France. The schools emphasized modern sciences and history in their curriculum; nevertheless Hebrew and religion were also taught. Generally students were left ignorant of the Turkish language and the history and culture of the Ottoman Empire and as a result the new generation of Ottoman Jews was more familiar with France and the west in general than with their surrounding society. In the Balkans the first school was opened in Greece (Volos) in 1865, then in the Ottoman Empire in Adrianople in 1867, Shumla (Shumen) in 1870, and in Istanbul, Smyrna (Izmir), and Salonika in the 1870s. In Bulgaria numerous schools were also established; after 1891 those that had adopted the teaching of the Bulgarian language were recognized by the state. The modernist Jewish elite and intelligentsia of the late nineteenth century Ottoman Empire was known for having graduated from alliance schools; they were closely attached to the Young Turk circles, and after 1908 three of them (Carasso, Farraggi, and Masliah) were members of the new Ottoman Chamber of Deputies.

## **9 Ataturk, Kemal (1881-1938)**

Great Turkish statesman, the founder of modern Turkey. Mustafa Kemal was born in Salonika; he adapted the name Ataturk (father of the Turks) when he introduced surnames in Turkey. He joined the liberal Young Turk movement, aiming at turning the Ottoman Empire into a modern Turkish nation state and also participated in the Young Turk Revolt (1908). He fought in the Second Balkan War (1913) and World War I. After the Ottoman capitulation to the Entente, Mustafa Kemal Pasha organized the Turkish Nationalist Party (1919) and set up a new government in Ankara to rival Sultan Mohammed VI, who had been forced to sign the treaty of Sevres (1920), according to which Turkey would lose the Arab and Kurdish provinces, Armenia, and the whole of European Turkey with Istanbul and the Aegean littoral to Greece. He was able to regain much of the lost provinces and expelled the Greeks from Anatolia. He abolished the Sultanate and attained international

recognition for the Turkish Republic at the Lausanne Treaty (1923). Under his presidency Turkey became a constitutional state (1924), universal male suffrage was introduced, state and church were divided and he also introduced the Latin script.

## **10 Reforms in the Turkish Republic**

After the establishment of the Turkish Republic (29th October 1923) Kemal Atatürk and the new Turkish government engaged themselves in great modernization efforts. Fundamental political, social, legal, educational and cultural reforms were introduced in the 1920s and 30s in order to bring Turkish society closer to the West and shape the republican polity. Atatürk had abolished the Sultanate earlier (1922); in 1924 he did so with the Caliphate (religious leadership). He closed down the dervish lodges, the türbes (tombs of worshipped holy people) and forbade the wearing of traditional religious costumes outside ceremonies. According to the Hat Law the traditional Ottoman *fez* was outlawed; surnames were introduced and the traditional nicknames were outlawed too. International measurement (metric system) as well as the Gregorian calendar was introduced alongside female suffrage. The republic was created as a secular state; religion and state were divided: the Shariah (Islamic law) courts were abolished and a new secular court was introduced. A new educational law was created; the institutes of Turkish History Foundation and Language Research Foundation were opened as well as the University of Istanbul. In order to foster literacy the old Arabic script was replaced with Latin letters.

**11** The 20 military reserve classes: In May 1941 non-Muslims aged 26-45 were called to military service. Some of them had just come back from their military service but were told to report for duty again. Great chaos occurred, as the Turkish officials took men from the streets and from their jobs and sent them to military camps. This was done in case the non-Muslims allied themselves with the enemies in case Turkey entered the war. They were used in road building for a year and disbanded in July 1942.

## **12 Levantines**

Levant in its original sense means the the Eastern Mediterranean, the lands east of Italy (orient). In a broader sense it refers to the non-Catholic or Protestant East, including Northern Africa, the Middle East, Anatolia and the Balkans. Initially the Levantines were the Western inhabitants (Venetian, Genoese, French, etc., mainly the descendants of the crusaders and traders) of the Byzantine Empire up to the Ottoman conquest (1453). They played a very important role as middlemen in the Ottoman trade to the West. The term took up a pejorative meaning after the British took control of Palestine and Transjordan after WWI, referring to the local population of European origin having adapted to the local ways and customs as opposed to the European colonists. The Levantines lived mainly in the Ottoman maritime cities (Salonica, Istanbul, Smyrna, etc.) and besides European trade they were increasingly engaged in diplomacy after the Tanzimat reforms (1839-1876), being familiar with the European ways and languages (especially French, the *lingua franca* of the time). As a result they gained immense power and had strong impact in the Ottoman culture. They were considered the forerunners of 'Western culture' and spread the modern way of life in the Empire.

### **13 The Thrace Events**

In 1934, after the rise of the Nazi party in Germany, a lot of antisemitism occurred in Turkey. With World War II at the door, the Turkish government wanted to secure the lands at its borders of Thrace, which for the most part were populated by Jews. Non-muslims were considered dangerous in times of war. The rightist press did a lot of antisemitic propaganda, which led to riots and looting and rape of Jews in the Thrace area. This caused most of the Jewish population in the Thrace area to leave, mostly with none of their belongings, to Istanbul and later on to Palestine.

14 English High School for Girls: It was established by Lady Redcliffe, the wife of the British Ambassador, in 1849 on Bursa Street, Beyoglu, Istanbul. In 1979 Great Britain stopped subsidizing the school and the Turkish government took it over; it was renamed English Secondary. In 1980 new classes were introduced and it was renamed again and called Beyoglu Anatolian High School.

15 Zulfaris Synagogue/ The Museum of Turkish Jews: [www.muze500.com](http://www.muze500.com) : This synagogue, recorded in the Chief Rabbinate archives as Kal Kadosh Galata, is commonly known as Zulfaris Synagogue. The word is derived from the former name of the street in which it is located: Zulf-ur, which means Bride's Long Lock. Today the street is called Perchemli Sokak which means Fringe Street. There is evidence that this synagogue preexisted in 1671, when Haim Kamhi was Chief Rabbi, as the foundations date from the early 15th century Genovese period. However, the actual building was re-erected over its original foundation, presumably in the early 19th century. In the 1890's, repair work was carried out with the financial assistance of the Camondo family and in 1904 restoration work was conducted by the Jewish community of Galata, presided over by Jak Bey de Leon.

16 Wealth Tax: Introduced in December 1942 by the Grand National Assembly in a desperate effort to resolve depressed economic conditions caused by wartime mobilization measures against a possible German influx to Turkey via the occupied Greece. It was administered in such a way to bear most heavily on urban merchants, many of who were Christians and Jews. Those who lacked the financial liquidity had to sell everything or declare bankruptcy and even work on government projects in order to pay their debts, in the process losing most or all of their properties. Those unable to pay were subjected to deportation to labor camps until their obligations were paid off.

### **17 The 6th - 7th September 1955 events**

The basic policy of the first years of the Turkish Republic was to "turkify" all its citizens, demanding that they have a common history, culture and language. The government knew that this was not easy to do with the non-muslim citizens. With the events in 1915 with the Armenians, and the population exchange (Greeks with Turks) in 1924, there were barely any non-muslims left in Anatolia. The government then turned its eye towards Istanbul, which hosted a large number of non-muslims, especially Greeks. In the minority report written by the government, it was suggested that Istanbul be cleansed of all Greeks. The catalyst in realizing this aim came with the problems that arose in Cyprus. When on 6th September, Istanbul awoke to the news in the papers about Ataturk's house being bombed in Salonica. This came as the spark that lit the rioting, looting and rape that followed. It was later realized that most Greek houses and businesses had been marked beforehand. Of course, other non-muslims got their share of the looting and destruction, too in the general frenzy. All in all the result was: 3 people dead; 30 wounded; 1004 houses, 4348

shops, 27 pharmacies and laboratories, 21 factories, 110 restaurants and cafés, 73 churches, 26 schools, 5 sports clubs and 2 cemeteries were destroyed; 200 Greek women were raped. A great wave of immigration occurred after these events and Istanbul was cleansed of its Greek population.

### **18 Citizen, speak Turkish policy**

In the years 1930's - 1940's, the rise of Turkish nationalism affected the Jewish community as well. The Salonican Jew Moise Cohen (1883-1961), who had been in close touch with the Young Turks in his home town in the years preceding the restoration of the Constitution, took the old Turkish name Tekinalp and led a campaign among his fellow Jews to encourage them to speak only Turkish to integrate them fully into Turkish life declaring that "Turkey is your home, so you should speak Turkish". In the major culture however, the policy of "citizen, speak Turkish" was seen as pressure put on minorities to speak Turkish in public places. There was a lot of criticism and verbal attacks and jeers on those who did not comply with this social rule.

### **19 Yad Vashem**

This museum, founded in 1953 in Jerusalem, honors both Holocaust martyrs and 'the Righteous Among the Nations', non-Jewish rescuers who have been recognized for their 'compassion, courage and morality'.

### **20 Struma ship**

In December 1941 the ship took on board some 750 Jews - which was more than seven times its normal passengers' capacity - to take them to Haifa, then Palestine. As none of the passengers had British permits to enter the country, the ship stopped in Istanbul, Turkey, in order for them to get immigration certificates to Palestine but the Turkish authorities did not allow the passengers to disembark. They were given food and medicine by the Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish community of Istanbul. As the vessel was not seaworthy, it could not leave either. However, in February 1942 the Turks towed the Struma to the Black Sea without water, food or fuel on board. The ship sank the same night and there was only one survivor. In 1978, a Soviet naval history disclosed that a Soviet submarine had sunk the Struma.

### **21 Donme**

Crypto Jews in Turkey. They are the descendants of those Jews who, following the example of Shabbatai Tzvi (leader of the major false messianic movement in the 17th century), converted to Islam. They never integrated fully into the Muslim society though and preserved various distinctions: they married between each other, performed services in distinct mosques and buried their dead in separate cemeteries. Up until the Greek annexation of Southern Macedonia (1912, First Balkan War) they lived in Salonika and were relocated to Ottoman territory (mainly to Istanbul) with most of the rest of the Muslim population later.

**22** Karaite: Jewish schismatic sect, founded in Persia in the 8th century. Karaites reject the Oral Law, the Talmud, and accept only the Torah, but have developed their own commentaries. In Russia the Karaites initially enjoyed the same rights and suffered from the same oppression as

Jews, however, after the 18th century they were given the right to purchase land. During the Nazi occupation they were not persecuted, as they were not considered a part of the Jewish community. In the Ottoman Empire, Karaites had settled in Haskoy early in the Ottoman period. Following the Russian conquest of the Crimean peninsula in the late 19th century and the flight of many Karaite residents to Istanbul, Haskoy became the undisputed center of Karaism in the Balkan region. The Karaite Jews of Haskoy streamed to the newer neighborhoods just like the Rabbinical Jews did. The equability reigning between Karaite and Rabbinical Jews of Haskoy during their lifetime is not violated at death. The local cemetery serves both congregations, a smaller plot being designated for the dwindling Karaite community.

**23** Istanbul University: Founded in 1453 modernised by Kemal Ataturk in 1933. It has sixteen faculties on five campuses, the main campus being in Beyazit. It has a teaching staff of 2,000 professors and associates and 4,000 assistants and younger staff, and 60,000 undergraduate and 8,000 postgraduate students. Its graduates form the main source of academic staff for the Turkish university system, as well as providing a very large number of Turkish bureaucrats, professionals, and business people.

**24** Terror at Turkish universities: In the period of 1975-1980 extreme tension arose between the so-called leftist and rightist fraction of the student body. The fight was about whether or not to make the Turkish Republic a religious Islamic state (leftist position) or preserve the secular nature (rightist position). There were further fights within the leftist fraction too, between the communists and socialists. University education turned into chaos already in 1975: instruction almost stopped, and many students were scared to attend classes, as there were a great number of murders. The only university that was able to continue with instruction was Bosphorus University, mainly because all of its student body was basically leftist. It took five years for the government to finally pacify the situation by a military coup in 1980.

## **25 Koc University**

A private university, founded in 1993 by the Koc family, one of the two wealthiest families in Turkey, Koç University started its education 1993, with 233 students and 35 faculty members in two Colleges (College of Arts and Sciences, College of Administrative Sciences) and one graduate school (Graduate School of Business). Today, the University has 4 colleges (with addition of College of Engineering and Law School), one School of Health Sciences and three graduate schools (with addition of Graduate School of Sciences and Engineering and Graduate School of Social Sciences).

**26** Salom : Istanbul Jewish weekly newspaper founded by late Avram Leyon in 1948. During Avram Leyon's ownership, the paper was entirely in Ladino. Upon the demise of its founder in 1985, the newspaper passed into the hands of the Jewish community owned company, Gozlem Gazetecilik. It then started to be published in Turkish with one or two pages in Ladino. It is distributed to 4000 subscribers.

## **27 Neve Salom Synagogue**

Situated on the street leading to the Galata Tower, it is the largest synagogue of Istanbul. Although the present building was erected only in 1952, a synagogue bearing the same name had been standing there already in the 15th century. Neve Salom means oasis of peace.

## **28 The 1986 terrorist attack at the Neve-Shalom synagogue**

In September, 1986, Arab terrorists staged a terrorist attack with guns and grenades on worshippers in the synagogue, killing 23. The Turkish government and people were outraged by the attack. The damage was repaired, except for several bullet holes in a seat-back, left as a reminder.

**29** The 15 November 2003 synagogue bombings: On November 15, 2003, two suicide terrorist attacks occurred nearly simultaneously at the Sisli and Neve-Shalom synagogues in Istanbul. The terrorists came driving vans loaded with explosives and detonated the bombs in front of the synagogues. It was a Saturday morning and the synagogues were full for the services. Due to the strong security measures that had been taken, there were no casualties inside the synagogues. However, there were 26 dead, of whom 5 were Jews, of the people in the street at that hour and terrible material damage. The terrorists belonged to a branch of El Kaide in Turkey.

## **30 Sisli Beth-Israel Synagogue**

Istanbul synagogue, founded in the 1920s by restoring the garage of a thread factory. It was rebuilt and enlarged in 1952.