

# Aron Anjel

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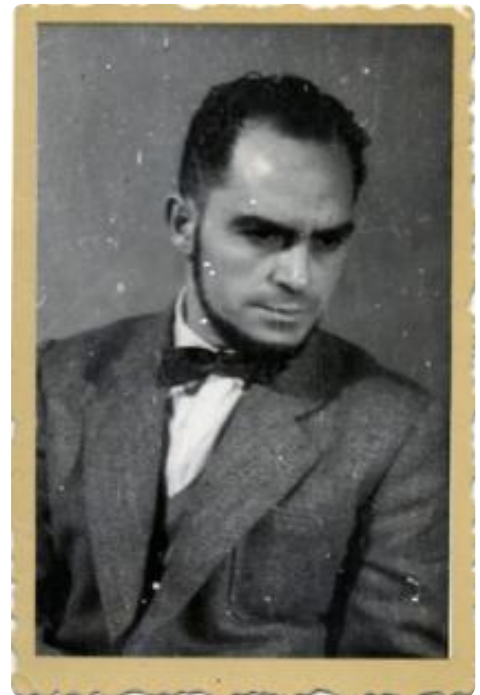
Istanbul

Turkey

Date of Interview Febr/August 2006

Interviewer Naim Guleryuz

Aron Anjel, who is Turkey's first city planner, is an affable 90-year-old young man. With his never-absent bowtie and a smile on his face, he is a person ready to find solutions to the leadership problems faced by his community, his nation or mankind in general. With his active childhood and youth, the fortunate coincidences that have shaped his life, and his colorful personality, he is an example of success. The sports sessions that he unfailingly continues daily, the lifestyle he maintains in Buyukada during the long summer that extends from spring till fall, getting up every morning with the excitement of starting a new day and going to his office regularly to solve professional issues, sharing his experiences and proposals with the new generation



through the lectures he gives, these are the absolute musts of his life.

When I summarized the main parts of the topic on the telephone, he immediately answered positively with his usual pleasant demeanor and expressed he was ready to help. Our meetings always took place in Tesvikiye, on the top floor of the apartment he talks about in his memories, Ihlamur Palas Apartmani, in the office that he has set up and which he now shares with his son Albert. In the spacious office overlooking the Bosphorus and the hills of Camlica with a broad horizon, in the company of the tea-cups and cakes he offered, Aron Anjel looked as if he was re-living the periods of his life where he preserved the sweet and sometimes bitter memories while we delved into the yellowed photographs during our conversations that lasted for four sessions. In the meantime, we had countless telephone conversations to clear up some details. When the first stages of our meetings was over, we were faced with an unexpected event. His beloved wife who he had been married to for 56 years, passed away suddenly, while they were getting ready to go out to lunch on a Sunday. Despite the immeasurable trauma and great sorrow, he did not falter from continuing our conversations, answering our questions, providing some of the names or dates that he was not sure of, by calling France or the U.S.A. when necessary, and working on the subject with the discipline and sensitivity of an architect. He opened his files, displayed his photographs... he provided the opportunity to examine all of them. The memories and the topics bridged themselves to each other... His valuable professional experiences and accumulations are important enough for his colleagues and the society as a whole... I am eternally grateful for the values he shared with me and consequently with all of you.

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## **My family background**

I do not know the root of the last name Anjel. But you can find this last name in different countries, for example Italy, Greece or Bulgaria. I tease the people asking my last name in English by saying “Angel, but without wings”.

Since I did not have the opportunity to meet my father and mother’s grandparents, unfortunately I do not have the slightest information about them.

My father’s father, Aron Anjel, who I was named after, was born in Salonica in 1863. The family came to Istanbul in 1898 all together. Two of his eleven children, whose names I cannot recall, died at an early age. In 1914, during World War I, they settled in Switzerland with his wife Gracia, and of the nine children who were alive, his daughters Rachel and Elisa (Alice), and his sons Michel, Samuel, Salamon and the youngest David. My father Albert and my aunt Luna stayed in Istanbul. I was not born yet. I learned from my father that my grandfather slipped in the bathroom and died from the blow he received to his head in 1924, I was 8 years old then. I do not know if my grandfather had siblings. But I have two memories, even if they are indirect, about him:

In 1952, when I was the head of the Istanbul Municipality City Planning Office, one day I met Cemil Topuzlu who was an honorary member and the old Istanbul Sehremeni [1](#), who had come to a meeting of the development commission [The job of Sehremeni: 1912-1919]. He was 84 years old then. When he heard my name, he asked “In the past, I had a beloved friend who carried the same name and last name. Do you know him?” He was delighted to hear I was the grandson. He talked about my grandfather who was a very good and loyal friend, who was also a musician, about them playing and composing music together, that they continually went to the palace to play Ottoman music and classical Turkish music together with his wife who was the daughter of a sultan.

Here is a second memory: in 1998, we decided to renovate a building we owned that was very close to Galata Kulesi [This stone tower, The Galata Tower, that was built by Genovians in 1348 is still functional]. In the meantime, one of the professors from the Faculty of Architecture, Cevat Ender put a bid on the attic floor with the view of the Bosphorus. On one of the days following the sale, the professor showed me a list, showing item per item, the names, addresses and professions of the people who had lived around Galata Kulesi in 1909. I found the listing of both my grandfather and my father on a street very close to our building. Their addresses were written along with their names and professions. The profession of my grandfather was revealed to be a musician. When I learned this I remembered my musician grandson Uzay Heparı who became famous at a young age and who perished in a terrible motorcycle accident [2](#).

Her name was Gracia, her maiden name Arditti. After leaving for Switzerland in 1914 with my grandfather and some of her children, she came to Istanbul once in 1930. However, I was on a trip and did not have the opportunity to see her, I did not meet her. The only thing I know is that she died in Switzerland.

His name was Moshe Levy. Because he died before my mother got married, I did not get to meet him and do not know much about him. However, I had heard from my mother that he was interested in antiques and had acquired the job of dealing in these.

I was 1.5 years old when my mother's mother Bea Levy Bivas died in 1918 from an influenza epidemic. Consequently I did not get to know her. Avramo Bivas, who was the father of my mother's maternal grandfather had come to Istanbul from Italy in the 1860's. This event has a historical short story, let me elaborate. The Sultan Abdulaziz [1830-1876. The first Ottoman sultan to visit Europe] was invited to Italy by the Italian king Viktor Emanuel II in the 1860's. One night, he wakes up with a horrible tooth pain in the palace he is being hosted. The king, having been appraised of the situation, immediately calls for his personal dentist Avramo Bivas who resides close to the palace. The dentist Bivas relieves the Sultan of his pain with his intervention. After visiting different cities in Italy, when the Sultan returns to Rome, he again seeks care with the dentist Bivas a couple of times to feel better. On the day of return, when King Viktor Emanuel, seeing off the Sultan, says: "I was very happy with your visit. If there is anything you saw or liked, I am ready to offer it to you from the heart", the Sultan has only one answer: "Your dentist". One month later, Avramo Bivas and his whole family are already in Istanbul, they are already settled in a magnificent villa that has been assigned to them close to the palace. The Bivas family who was part of the Sephardic Jews who had left Spain in 1492 when the Spanish rulers Ferdinand and Isabella decreed the imperial edict, was on Ottoman soil that was chosen by the ones who came before them, three and a half centuries after emigrating to Italy. The name Bivas stayed as a symbol in the family. When the girls got married, they kept the last name Bivas to carry on their father's fame, and inscribed it in the public registration ledgers along with their husband's last name and used it.

My father Albert Avram Anjel was born in 1881 in Salonica. He came to Istanbul with his family in 1889 and settled in Haydarpasa. He started his education in the Galata Jewish primary school and continued in Galatasaray Lisesi (highschool) [3](#) and obtained his baccalaureate from this school. He passed the test given by Duyun-u umumiye Idaresi, a government agency in the Ottoman empire, and started working as an assistant to the principal in the French department. The principal was continually making grammatical mistakes in French in the letters he wrote. When my father couldn't restrain himself and warned him one day, the principal had him transferred to another department the following day. My father, since he did not like to work as a subordinate, resigned and founded a school with instructions in Turkish, French and German. I do not remember if the school had a name, he was known everywhere as "Professeur Anjel". The graduates of this place were appointed to either the Senate or the directors' board of various institutions.

In the meantime he tutored the daughter of Sultan Resat. As a coincidence, when Sultan Resat died the week I was born, they wanted to name me Resat, but my father preferred naming me after his

father.

In the 50th year of his teaching career, he was given the honor of “Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Palmes Académiques” by France for his contributions to the French culture.

My father’s mother tongue was Turkish. He did not have the opportunity to go to the military because non-Muslims were not yet accepted in the military at that time.

My father who was slightly tall had a moustache smaller than medium. When he died at the age of 77, his moustache was still black as ever. The middle part of his hair had thinned out a bit, the sides were curly.

We had, in one word, a respect and esteem-based “father-son” relationship. During his entire life he never said a negative word to me. We were a perfect father-son symbol. He was always involved in my life. When I was going to France in 1937, my mother had died in 1932, he personally took care of everything concerning me.

We were not a religious family but we observed our traditions. My father would go to the synagogue on Saturdays, I would accompany him on some days. But we celebrated all the religious holidays as a family.

They were eleven siblings, him being the eldest and all were born in Istanbul except for my father and his sister named Luna. Two of them died at a young age. Two sisters and five brothers emigrated to Switzerland in 1914 with their father and mother. As far as I can remember, their names were: my aunts Rachel, Elisa (Alice), my uncles Michel, Samuel, Isaac, Salamon and David. Isaac later went to Canada. Michel’s daughter Gracia is currently 84 years old and lives in New York.

Isaac went from Switzerland to London, and from there to Canada and married an Ashkenazi lady named Sary. My uncle Isaac and his wife came to Istanbul a few times. Their son, my namesake, Henry, studied engineering in England and married a British girl. Henry who got his masters in engineering came to Istanbul at one time, he was on the directors’ board of a Canadian firm. He stayed about a week and suddenly went back. We did not see him again. Afterwards, we learned that he went to Japan for a job, married a Japanese girl there and had two children. A while ago, when my son Albert was searching for the name Aron Henry Anjel on the internet, he tracked his cousin in Japan. They established contact with my sister in Istanbul, Gracia, through the internet. Only, Henry has forgotten everything in his past because of an illness he went through. Currently he is a professor in Japan and his memory is completely wiped of his recollections, and fresh. We are sending each other messages to visit but let’s see... who knows if we will meet, G-d knows...

The other sister of my father who stayed in Istanbul, Luna, married Leon Salom, and settled in Israel in 1932 with the family. An interesting memory I have with them: I had gone to Paris in 1957. From there I went directly to Israel, to Tel Aviv. It was my first visit. They took me around the city etc., then they took me to Tante Luna’s house. I asked where Oncle Leon was. “Don’t ask, forget about him” they said. When I insisted, they told me he was sick, he was lying in bed alone in a room, that he did not recognize anyone, and that they took care of his needs and his feeding.

When I insisted on seeing him, they explained that they could not let me enter that room, that no matter how much they cleaned it, it smelled and so on. When I pressed on, "I will not go without seeing Leon when I have come all the way here", they took me to the room. When Tante Luna said "Leon, look who came", my uncle opened his eyes, looked at me and suddenly said "Avram's (my father) son!" and everyone was dumbfounded.

My father was first married to an Ashkenazi piano player. Her name: Fortune Grunberg. He had a daughter named Gracia with her, my half-sister, she died in 1918 from influenza at the age of 9. I was only 2 years old then, I did not get to know her.

After the death of the aforementioned Ashkenazi lady in August of 1909, (I do not know where she is buried), my father married my mother Ester Levy Bivas in 1911. The tallit (prayer shawl) that is draped over the heads of the bride and groom in the synagogue as a religious tradition was covered by their family friend Dr. David Markus. Dr. Markus in a way was the Grand Rabbi of the Ashkenazim and the principal of the Jewish high school. Let me add this, every time Ataturk [4](#) came to Istanbul, he would seek Dr Markus to converse with him for an hour or two. My mother took little Gracia under her wing, she loved her as if it were her daughter. Gracia died at age 9 and was buried in Haydarpasa Mezarligi (cemetery). My father wrote a poem on the tombstone. Afterwards they gave her name to my sister who was born in 1919 and who is still alive.

Following my mother's death in 1932, my father remarried a cousin of my mother named Ojeni (Eugenie) in 1933. I do not know the maiden name of this lady. Because I was against this marriage, I ran away to my aunts' house in Haydarpasa. My relationship with my mother was different, we were never apart. I was 15 when my mother died. She would first run her decisions by me. She missed her younger brother Nesim a lot. She had told me that she had decided to go to France to see him. But it wasn't meant to be, we lost her suddenly. And my mother dies, another woman comes home. In this mindset I could not expect my father remarrying and took refuge with my aunts who lived in Haydarpasa, where one was the principal of and the other a math teacher in the Haydarpasa Jewish primary school. After staying there for a long time, I finished high school. And entered engineering school. When you grow up, you take account of your mistakes better. Then you get to think, how is my father supposed to live alone? I apologized to my father and again continued with a life full of love.

My father fell and hit his head in Buyuk Hendek Caddesi (street) where Knesset Israel synagogue was on October 14th, 1958 and passed on at the age of 77 at the Primary Care Hospital where he was taken. He was still teaching at the time.

My father is buried in Ulus (Arnavutkoy) cemetery. His grave was at the front row of the main street in the cemetery, both him and my mother. Then they came, they added a row in front, now I have to step on other graves to pass and jump over. It is a shame. They still bury this way. I provided a 30-acre cemetery in Kilyos from Istanbul Buyuksehir Belediyesi (Istanbul mayor's office) for the Jewish community. When the Ahis [a religious sect] declined the place separated for them, they

added it to us. I prepared such a project. I had it fenced all around by the city. I prepared the project in such a way that all the graves are pointed to Jerusalem. The year is 1992. Unfortunately they did not bury a single person there till now. They are resisting because it is far.

My mother Esther Levy Bivas was born in 1885 in Balat. From what my aunts told me she was always the top student in her class, and finished primary school, junior high and high school as valedictorian. My mother, who was known to be the most beautiful girl in Balat was of Italian descent.

My mother first started to work with the famous industrialist and merchant of the time Lazaro Franco, who was of Italian descent. In 1919, through the help of this same person, she was transferred from Salonica to Istanbul Bakirkoy [a neighborhood close to the Istanbul Ataturk airport. Previous name: Makrikoy] and was appointed as principal to Ittihad ve Terakki Lisesi (highschool) (Union et Progres) which provided education in French just like Galatasaray Sultanisi, and we moved in to a special flat that was designated for us in the school.

Within less than two years, in 1921, when my father and mother were appointed gentleman and lady directors of the newly opened Jewish orphanage (Orphelinat) in Ortakoy [a neighborhood on the shores of the Bosphorus Rumeli], this time we moved to a flat that was designated for us in the orphanage and stayed there till 1928.

My mother died in 1932 at a very young age. When she was returning from an acquaintance's house in Tunel, she fell and hit her head while trying to get away from dogs that were attacking her in the street and lost her battle in the Or Ahayim hospital that she was taken to three days later. I heard the news of her death from our family friend and the principal of the Jewish high school where I was attending, Dr. David Markus, who called me into his office removing me from class and delivering the news personally.

My mother was involved in my classes. She would have heart-to-heart talks with me. When she took a decision, she would tell me first. For a while, she missed her younger brother, Nesim a lot. She said she was going to go to France to see him, but she couldn't, we lost her suddenly...

I know that my mother was part of 9 siblings, that four died when they were young, and that five were left. Their names: Estreya, Eugenie (Ceni), my mother Ester, Simantov and Nisim.

My mother's younger brother Simantov, was the manager of the famous Salty-Franko stores. He is buried in Haydarpasa cemetery. His wife, an Italian Jew, was named Colomba and she is buried in the Italian cemetery in Sisli.



Her sister Estreya was the principal of Haydarpasa Jewish school, and her younger sister Eugenie was a teacher in the same school. Neither one of them married. Usually, the people who work with children do not get married. It seems to me like their longing for children is satisfied. They were both beautiful but they did not get married. Estreya was diagnosed with cancer, she died on July 21st, 1962. Eugenie moved in with another friend. She also died in the 1970's. Both my aunts are buried in the Haydarpasa Acibadem Mezarligi(cemetery).

My mother's younger brother Nisim had left for Paris when he was 20 years old. Nesim was a self-learner, he raised himself, and became an author in Paris. He was a vegetarian and represented France in the European Vegetarian Organisation. He was the special envoy of the president of The World Vegetarian Organisation Jinarajadazo who lived in India.

Every year, when he gave his speech in the general assembly, the audience would tear his shirt to pieces and keep a piece of it as a fetish. Nisim Levy Bivas who was born in 1900, died due to a brain tumor in 1945, despite all the efforts of my older sister who was his physician.

My older sister Bella was born in 1912 in Istanbul Haydarpasa. In 1930 she graduated from The Jewish High School [5](#) and after studying for one year in the Istanbul Medical School, was enrolled in the Lausanne Medical School. She obtained the specialty of cardiology from the Paris Medical school after graduation. She became an academic in the famous Cardiac specialty hospital, Hopital Brousset, was honored with the distinction of Legion d'Honneur. Bella who spoke French, English and Spanish as well as Turkish and who was a university professor, married Paul Latscha and had three daughters. She died in 1980 after a sudden cardiac infarction.

One of her daughters, Marie-Therese became a cardiac specialist like her mom. She is married to Bernard Guillaneuf and lives in Paris.

Another daughter, Beatrice also studied medicine and specialized in kidney diseases and became a researcher, she represented France in various international lectures for years. Dr. Beatrice Latscha-Descamps who lives in Paris, was honored with the Legion d'Honneur medal by the president of France because of her contributions to medical research. In this way, mother and daughter, they both earned the Legion d'Honneur.

My sister's third daughter Muriel is a graduate of the Paris University Economy Faculty and has been the head of the Charles de Gaulle airport's economic department. She is married to Francois Signorino and also lives in Paris.

My second older sister Mireille (Meri) was born in 1914. After finishing Haydarpasa Jewish high school's junior high department, she continued in the American Constantinople College (American Girls' High School) and was married in the Zulfaris Synagogue to Robert Guzelbahar in 1933, she had two daughters. Ezel who we call Dolly, and Emel who we call Pupu. Both of them are graduates of the American College like their mother.

Ezel (Dolly)'s husband's name is Morill Cole. He is an attorney in New York. His father David Cole has a 30-member law firm and was a legal consultant to President Nixon. We lost Ezel Dolly Cole in 2000 suddenly because of breast cancer. She was so vivacious yet she died within 1-2 months. When she died she was 65 years old. She was the mother of two, one girl and one boy.

Her other daughter, Emel Pupu, married a doctor, Paul Glicsman in New York. Her husband died, she continues her life in New York. Currently she is the mother of three daughters.

Mireille's husband Robert Guzelbahar died in New York in 1965. Mireille later married Axel Axelrad in 1968 and currently lives in New York..

My sister Gracia was born in 1919 in Istanbul Haydarpasa. They gave her the name of my father's daughter from his first wife who died at the age of 9. She is a graduate of the Jewish High School in 1930 and Burgerschule (German High School) in 1937. She lived in Paris for a long time and in Milan in Italy. In 1939 she married Hayim Salmona, and in addition to Turkish, speaks Spanish, French, German and Italian, Gracia has a son named Guner Freddy and a daughter named Jessie. Jessie lives in Istanbul with her mother. Freddy is married with a Jewish girl in Italy, he had two children. He separated from his wife and came to Turkey. His children stayed in Italy. He is now married to a Muslim lady. His new wife can be an example to all, she is a very good wife.

## **Growing up**

I was born on June 6th, 1916 on the Asian side of Istanbul, in the Yeldegirmeni neighborhood that was between Haydarpasa and Kadikoy, in the famous Valpreda apartment of the time, on the second or third floor [An apartment built in 1909 at the corner of Duz Sokak (street) and Akif Bey Sokak (street) by the famous architect Valpreda who also built Haydarpasa Gar (train station). According to a rumor, it was built with stones leftover from the construction of Haydarpasa Gari, and yet another rumor was that it probably was built with stones obtained from the stone mines behind Kinaliada [The island among the Princess islands that is closest to Istanbul port, it used to be known as Proti]]. My father was late in obtaining my identification card, therefore on my ID card and consequently on official papers my birthday shows as August 1st. But the year is the same: 1916. I am the third child in a four sibling family and the only son. I was given the name Aron which is my paternal grandfather's name according to traditions and Henri was also added because of the effect of French culture. The family of my maternal grandmother gave me the nickname Nino because they are of Italian descent and called me like that. I started to use the name Aron only in 1934 after enrolling in the Engineering Faculty.

We would go to Moda [a neighborhood in Istanbul on the Anatolian side] in summers. There was a coffeehouse behind Saint Joseph French high school [French Catholic school founded in 1864 by the Freres des Ecoles Chretiennes, it still continues educating with a French curriculum] somewhere near the sea, the owner was a Frenchman named Mr. Jean. We were good friends. The lower part of



the coffeehouse was open, it was a public beach. We would swim in the sea from there. Sometimes we would go in from Moda, swim all the way to Kalamis and return. The sea then was really the sea.

One of my childhood memories is about the time we lived in the orphanage. The year is 1924 (July 21st, 1924, Monday), I am 8 years old and was attending the Jewish high school. We were returning to Ortakoy with my mother in the trolley. At the time the number 23 trolley would go to Ortakoy, number 22 to Bebek. The first train on the trolley which was red was for first class, the ones behind attached, the second and third trains which were green were second class. Just as we had passed Besiktas and come a little before the door of Ciragan Sarayi (palace), they said "There is a fire, we cannot go further" and stopped the trolley and evacuated the passengers. My mother asked: "Where is the fire?" The answer: "Don't worry, it is only the orphanage burning!" Just think about the state of my mother and myself. The orphanage was completely burned down, but the kids were spared. No one was too concerned with the land. We had the deed, but however it happened, huge buildings were built there, we moved to the Armenian mansion after the fire. This place was called "el orfelinato de los rusos" in Spanish, meaning the Russian orphanage. Because the Jews that emigrated from Russia during the 1917 revolution took refuge in Turkey. They were accepted by the Sultan and their residence was this building. When the first orphanage in Ortakoy was burned down, part of this building was allotted to the orphanage. This wooden building burned down two years later. The orphanage then moved to a third building that was bought in Yildiz. The building that was later rented out to Liba Laboratories, but there are two buildings there, one is the one that was bought, the second one is bigger and built by the Jewish community. From what I have heard it was sold not very long ago. How can that be? ... If you want find a buyer for Liba yourselves, they said. Can a person sell his own child? Apparently it is dangerous because of terrorism. A community cannot live on money alone, it has to have an identity. I think that to sell a building a community owns is to obliterate its identity. This building has to exist. The building belonged to the daughter of the Sultan. My father enabled them to buy it cheap because he tutored. They bought it for 9500 gold coins then. You could see the whole Bosphorus from there. When Ataturk first came to Istanbul, I think with the Savarona, [this yacht/boat that was bought in 1938 from an American woman was repaired in Hamburg and given to the presidency. After Ataturk's death, it did not sail until July of 1951 when it was transferred to the Navy following World War II. It was used as an educational boat and when in 1989 it was decided to scrap it, it was rented by Kahraman Sadikoglu for 49 years. The yacht that was renovated now sails on the open seas], all the students and teachers gathered in the garden of this building overlooking the Bosphorus and watched our president arrive to Istanbul for the first time with these credentials.

When my father started teaching in the Istanbul University Foreign Languages Department as a French, German and Turkish teacher in 1929, we left Ortakoy and moved into our building in Beyoglu [Pera]Tunel Meydani (plaza), Nerki Sokagi (street). This building with 4 internal stairs was a four-story mansion where the banker of Sultan Abdulhamid II [6](#), Mavrogordato, had lived for years. While construction was going on to convert the building to apartments, we lived in Lemay apartment across the old Russian embassy on Istiklal Caddesi (street) [the previous names: Caddesi Kebir, Grande Rue de Pera] for approximately two years. Now this Lemay apartment is demolished, in its place is a bank, I think Sekerbank, currently. Lemay is the name of a French national. Male or female, I don't know. It was a nice flat. The teachers of my older sister from the

Jewish high school, when I was 13 and she was 17, would come to this house to have tea. There was our French teacher Mr Montangerant among them. He had an ugly face but he was equally unbelievably pleasant. There was a ledge in the living room overlooking the street, you had to go up two steps to it. I liked it a lot. I made a variation resembling this on a few projects in my professional life, I put the piano etc. there. And there is one more thing I do not forget. I had found a bicycle on the roof deck, I would ride it in circles. Unforgettable stuff...

I had my bar-mitzvah at the Keneset Synagogue which was known as Kal de Apollon, while we lived in Lemay apartment [This synagogue was opened in 1923 by renting the building that was used as Apollon movie theater and converting it to a synagogue in 1923, it was closed in 1982]. As far as I can remember, I had given a short sermon after the prayers on Saturday. My family's bar-mitzvah gift to me was a desk/workstation. I still keep it at home dismantled.

While we were in Lemay, the house on Nerkis sokak(street) was converted to an apartment and we moved in when construction was over.

My father died in 1958. I moved to Cimenzar apartment in Sakayik sokak(street) in Nisantasi [one of the trendiest residential centers of Istanbul] in 1959, and to Polat apartment that I built on Valikonagi Caddesi(street) again in Nisantasi in 1965. Because I allotted different flats of this apartment to my family now we live under the same roof as my married children but in autonomous flats close to each other.

We also have a trunk left from my mother's mother, we still keep it. From what they used to relate, my mother's grandfather's father, the dentist Dr. Bivas kept the gold coins given to him by Sultan Abdulaziz in this trunk. However, in the following years, his son Simantov squandered this money gambling. We were left with not the riches but the trunk as a souvenir.

Our mother tongues were French because my mother and father were French teachers, our traditional language Spanish, Italian because of my mother's family, and naturally Turkish, in our family.

I had a very active education period. I started primary school in Ortakoy Jewish primary school. A year later I was enrolled in the elementary school of the Jewish high school that was founded by Dr. David Markus [1870-1944] who was the principal and who my mother knew well and I got my elementary school diploma in June of 1926. I continued my education in middle school for seven years again in the Jewish high school. But the last year I also attended Galatasaray Lisesi (highschool) [founded by Sultan II.Bayezid in 1481 and still continues in the field of education successfully] and obtained my highschool diploma from the Jewish highschool and my baccalaureate from Galatasaray in 1932. I passed the entrance exam and enrolled in the Engineering Faculty and graduated in 1937.

I wanted to study architecture. We decided that I should go to France to be with my older sister Bella who was a physician. The famous and positive coincidences of my life started at this stage of

my life. One day I came across Mr. Louat, a Frenchman who was my geography teacher in high school in front of the door of Galatasaray Lisesi (high school) and told him about my decision. "What a nice coincidence! I met the world-famous city planner Prof. Henri Prost, who was invited by Ataturk to prepare Istanbul's development plan, at the French embassy at an event honoring him a few days ago. If you want I can introduce you to him" he said. I gladly accepted his offer. The next day we met and went to his house on Lamartine street in Taksim [a modern and busy neighborhood of the city]. Prost [7](#) asked me about my goals, listened to me and advised me to contact and choose from four Architectural faculties in Paris whose names, addresses and telephone numbers he found from the yellow pages and wrote for me on a piece of paper. I sent the list to my older sister Bella who was a professor in the Paris Medical school. A week later she informed me that she talked with her professor friends and chose the best faculty and that she was waiting for me. I took off for Paris via Marseille at the end of the summer in 1937 on the ship Lamartine. On the opening day of Ecole Spéciale d'Architecture (The Special Architecture School), the garden was very crowded and noisy. A person who I later learned was assistant principal, Mr. Poulet shouted "Quiet please, the principal is coming." Who do you think the president that came was? Prof. Henri Prost! A week after classes started, Mr. Poulet told me the president was calling me. I immediately went to him. Prof. Prost expressed me he looked over my papers, that the physics, chemistry and math classes that I had taken in Istanbul Engineering faculty were the curriculum of the first two years in Paris, and if I wanted I could take the tests and I would be exempt from the first two years' classes if I were successful in passing them. I immediately accepted and took the tests on the given dates, was successful and gained two years. A few days later, Prof. Prost called me again, seated me saying "Please sit down, our meeting can take a while" and asked if I wanted to study Urbanisme (Urban Studies). I said "Mr. President, in my family the love of education is infinite. But the classes in the faculty start at 8.30 in the morning, we eat in the cafeteria at lunch and leave at 5.30 in the evening. How can I study in a university 20 km.s away?" "Look" he said, "here I am your president, there the principal teacher. There are fifteen minutes between classes. Both schools have a subway station in front of them and it takes approximately 8 minutes. You can continue in both departments as if you are on the same campus. I can rearrange the program accordingly. What do you think? I immediately accepted and enrolled in the University of Paris, Institut d'Urbanisme (Urban Institute), Sorbonne. I moved like a robot and finished both faculties together under the fire of World War II and got my diplomas in 1940 two days apart.

## **During the War**

I was lucky after I took the tests. In what sense... Hitler was 1,5 km.s away from Paris. The Urban Institute, that is to say Institut d'Urbanisme was in Sorbonne and was very full. This class was given in France for the first time in the world. It was filled with people who came from surrounding countries. They separated us into two A-K and L-Z. The second group was going to take the test 15 days later. I was in the first group of A as Aron Anjel. I took the test. The date is June 8th, 1940 Saturday. I took it, I was lucky there too. The jury consisted of 8 professors. I had prepared a thesis 3 months ago, each professor asks me a question. In the meantime there are those whose thesis is not accepted in 10-12 years. For example, the mayor of Saigon sat next to me in class. I really took advantage of him, he had great books. There are two things, I will never forget: Among the professors was Prof. Lavedan who had been in the position of ambassador in Istanbul before. He

asked me information about foundations. Coincidentally my father had sent me a book published in Istanbul thinking I might be interested, I had read it like a novel. I gave him the answers he sought. He was satisfied.

Other than the last test there was also an oral exam. The name of our dean was Mr. Oulid. He was of Arabic descent, it seemed, but he was Jewish. I didn't know. When I went to the synagogue on Yom Kippur [the day of atonement, the day of fasting], he was sitting on the bimah [the prayer pulpit in the synagogue, Sephardim call it Teva]. Then I understood. He taught municipality classes then. There were 12 legal rules about this subject, and he asks me about those! The weather was hot, he was sitting in front of the window and the sun was on him. I have to explain 12 rules one by one. I started to answer. "Premierement (= First of all)" - "oui (= yes)" "deuxiement (= second of all)" - "oui (= yes)"... I noticed that his eyes were drooping, he dozed off, so I took a break after explaining the sixth, remembered the last one and said in a loud voice "et douziement (= and twelfth of all)", he woke up and said "ca suffit (= enough)" and terminated the exam positively for me.

In this way I obtained my diploma from "Universite de Paris, Facultés de Droit et des Lettres Institut d'Urbanisme" (University of Paris, Faculty of Rules and Regulations, the Urban Institute) on June 8th, 1940 Saturday, and my diploma from "Ecole Spéciale d'Architecture de Paris" (The Special Architecture School of Paris) as salutatorian on June 10th, 1940 Monday. Within two days of each other!... I still cannot believe it when I think about it. Let me also add this, I had prepared a three meter square scale model with my thesis. The year is 1940. It hung in the large living room of Sorbonne till 1957. When I went to Paris on Prost's invitation at the end of 1957, it had been taken down a month before. I encountered a large, "white" stain in its place.

Even though Paris was designated as Ville Ouverte (Open City), it was constantly bombarded by the Germans.. When the sirens sounded everyone took refuge in the nearest subway. Once I had a T-ruler in my hand, when everyone squeezed into the subway, it broke into two because the roof was low. You cannot forget such things. When we came out, we say that a bomb had fallen close to the subway. A building had collapsed all the way from top to bottom, you should see bedrooms, living room and furniture. And on the very top floor a bird was singing in its cage.

In the meantime there is a phone call to the house. Our ambassador Behic Erkin called and invited all the Turkish students. We were about 100 students, from different faculties, there was only me from mine, we got together. He said: "The Germans are very close to Paris, they are getting closer and closer. In this morning's newspaper I read that Turkey declared war on Germany in big print. Did you also read it?" he asked. "It is hard to investigate this. Hitler's army is 1.5 - 2 km.s away from Paris.. If they get here, they can round you up, send you to camps. I will send you in groups of 12 with my limousine that holds 12 people to 40-50 km south of Paris. I will give you other opportunities, money etc., you will see". The next day we met at 6.00 in the morning as if we were going strolling or shopping for bread, cheese etc. The limousine came, twelve people among us are pulled as if with a magnet, they jump in and go. These I think were the sons of higher level people. We wait for the limousine to return. The ambassador also waits. It did not come back the whole

day. The next day I put 20 small cans of sardines in my bag. We wait and we wait and we decide amongst ourselves that we will walk there. There are no vehicles or gasoline. We took off.. It was June 14th. We left in the morning. The same day Hitler entered Paris in the evening. The Stukas (German attack planes) are bombing everywhere on the roads regardless if civilian or soldier so France will surrender quickly. All of a sudden you see the one next to you, boom, goes down. The walk took 22 days. Everyone dispersed. I was left with a friend from law school. When we were in the middle of the walk, we learned that France surrendered. We were close to Bordeaux. We learned later that the fact that we declared war on Germany was made up to boost the morale of the French army that was experiencing a crushing defeat, but we were already on the road. Finally we reached Bordeaux and settled there. I remember sleeping on primitive plow some nights, one night a piece of iron pricked me in the neck even, I woke up not knowing what is happening. I was the only Jew among the Turkish students.

We stayed in Bordeaux for a while, then we went to Perigeux that was not under siege, I stayed there for 2 months. We stayed at the Paviyon Louis Mie. One-story additional sheds were constructed for the refugees. After staying there for two months like this, the train going to Paris and Alsace took off for the first time. There were a lot of Alsacians in Perigeux. Alsace was a city on the border between France and Germany. It had changed hands numerous times, the residents of this city were considered citizens of whichever nation conquered them. At the time it was under German rule. Because the Germans lost a lot of soldiers, they thought of a train going to Alsace via Paris to add the Alsacians who had emigrated to Perigeux to their army. They wanted them to return to their city so the Germans can take them into the army.

I had left my diplomas and my papers in Paris. I decided to go back and pick them up. I went despite everyone's warning "I wouldn't advise you to". Zone non-occupée (The area that wasn't occupied) ended at the station Charleroi. Everyone was taken down from the train and asked for identification. The Jews were separated to one side. There were about 100 people in front of me when the British planes arrived, sirens sounded, they put all of us on the train. After going for 2-3 kms we learned that the Charleroi station where we were a short while ago was demolished entirely. We entered Paris.

The husband of my older sister who was French was a soldier. She herself had gone to a suburb of Bordeaux, about 40 kms away, on the seashore, to a town called Arcachon with her two daughters, aged 4 and 2. When I was in Bordeaux, one day I went there, found them and we had spent one day together.

The last name of the doorman in the 16-flat apartment that belonged to my sister at Rue Tellier No.1, where I lived in Paris, was Labesse, we called her Madame Labesse. The flat at the entrance to the apartment was allotted to the doorman. When my older sister got married, they rented the flat on the fourth floor that we lived in. They had been living in this flat for four years before I came to Paris. This lady who was called a "Concierge" had known our family for seven years, but did not know our roots. At the time the doormen of Paris had the right to give identification cards, residential papers, documents to enter and leave the apartment etc. That is why, the Germans gave Madame Labesse a 50-question document and asked her to determine the Jewish families in

the apartment. When she brought me food every evening according to our agreement, she would chat with me. When she showed these documents, first I was suspicious. But right away when she insulted the Germans saying: “Regardez Mr. Anjel ce que les boches m’ont fourré sous la main” (Look Mr. Anjel, what the bastard Germans jammed into my hands) I breathed easy, the next sentence: “Comme si moi je permettrai jamais a un Youpin d’habiter sous mon toit” (As if I would allow a Jew to live under my roof...) put me at ease, because I understood that she had no information about the roots of myself or my older sister.

Meanwhile a friend said “Do you want to see how they gather the Jews?”. We were in “16e arrondissement” (16th neighborhood) which was a trendy area. They were gathering them at the place called Parc de Princes. Trucks would come, they would separate men from women, old from young. Then more trucks would come, take the separated groups away.

One day I had dropped my identification card somewhere. I don’t know how the Germans managed it, but they found my address. They invited me to the police station and returned my card. My identification card had Jewish written on it, but because it was Turkish and because they were not used to religion being stated on an ID card, they did not understand what it was. That was a coincidence.

The name of the Turkish ambassador in Paris was Cevdet Dulger. Cevdet Bey was chief ambassador in Paris between 1939-1942. With his organisation, the Turkish students in Paris were sent to Istanbul by train in groups of ten without encountering any difficulties. We had a good relationship with the ambassador. In the list presented to the Germans he wrote my name as Harun instead of Aron. When I was being sent back to Turkey, he put a letter in my hand and cautioned me “you will bring it to Ankara”. He did not trust others. On my return, I delivered it to Ankara, I did not learn the content. Both he and our Grand Ambassador Behic Erkin made history as symbols of humanity. [Detailed information about our diplomats can be obtained at [www.muze500.com](http://www.muze500.com)]. The Turkish students in Paris were being sent to Turkey in groups of ten according to the agreements that took place. After Paris we stayed in Switzerland for a month. Because we suffered so much on the roads, they let us stay in the best hotel in Geneva for free. The government paid the cost of the hotels and trains, everything. Two among us became ministers later on. In the meantime, there were Mehmet Ali Aybar and Cahit Sitki Taranci. Cahit Sitki became a poet, Mehmet Ali Aybar later formed a party, The Party of Workers.

## **After the War**

When I returned to Istanbul, I attended Fine Arts Academy and got my diploma for masters in architecture in 1942. In 1945 I studied Byzantology in the Archeology Ph.d department of Istanbul Literature Faculty. Because Lutfi Kirdar convinced me that it was absolutely necessary to do this doctorate to devise the Istanbul Development and Building Plan, I completed this doctorate when I was at the start of the Development Plan.



Ataturk had invited Henri Prost in 1934. He was planning the routes around Paris then, he had sent a message that he could not come before he finished. In the meantime professors like Lambert, Agache etc. came to Istanbul, and volunteered to do the Development Plan without payment. They prepared drawings but none of them were approved. Because everyone knew that Ataturk was waiting for Prost. Prost came to Istanbul in 1936 when he finished his job in Paris. But I have to confess that when Prost and I later took on the job, we took advantage of these people's ideas.

Let me explain why Ataturk insisted on Prost. Prost planned and established countless cities, he was responsible for the development of close to thirty cities in North Africa. Generally in the cities he built, he would leave the old one and establish a new one very close by. Convenient for them and convenient for their new life style. He founded Rabat for example, from the ground up... Rabat now is the capital of Morocco. He stayed there for about 12 years, in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. He developed Algeria's main large port. He conveyed a very interesting experience to me when he was telling me about his life in Rabat. The king makes a request to him, "I am getting older, you made the project of Rabat, if you could only do the buildings of the center plaza" and so on, because he was designing the projects, he was both drawing the buildings and doing the application. "I want to see the buildings you drew for the official buildings at the center plaza" and so on.. And they decided, he draws the projects for the buildings and the facades in detail, they build the facades, but it is empty in the back. In this way a beautiful plaza is shaped and the king gets his wish. The back parts were filled later.

The characteristic of Prost is that he has previously worked in Muslim countries, that is to say in important countries like Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia and that he has accomplished a city plan in accordance with the history and traditions of these countries. Ataturk chose him among many world-famous city planners for this reason. Prost was expressing that the mosques represented the city's silhouette and was preparing the whole plan with this fact in mind. When the Botanical Institute below Suleymaniye camii (mosque) was 5 stories, he cut off the top three floors. He passed a law for this. According to this law you could expropriate not only lands but also stories. He put a limit on three stories and 4.50 ms at the 40th elevation for buildings inside the city walls. In this way he saved Istanbul's silhouette.

When I returned to Istanbul, the first thing I did was go to the home of Henri Prost to thank him for the kindness he showed me in Paris. He expressed that he followed my work closely and that he was happy with my accomplishments and when he asked "Would you work with me?", you can imagine my delight. Immediately, we started working on Yalova Development Plan. Bursa plan followed this. We were working in the office of Prost who could not return to Paris because of the war and because France was under occupation. One day he asked me: "I met with the mayor and head of the municipality of Istanbul. I talked about you with praise and suggested that you work with me in the position of Istanbul Municipality City Consultant. He accepted. What would you say? I said "I work with you anyways, and this is a big compliment and honor for me." I started working officially on the Istanbul Development Plan with Prost with great pleasure. I worked with Prost for 16 years this way. In the meantime the Office of Technical Development was established in the Municipality and I obtained the honor of becoming the first city planner of Turkey. Everyone who

worked in the office were architects and I was the only city planning expert. When the contract of Prost expired in 1952, the agreement was not renewed with the difference of one vote by the Istanbul Municipality Council that was formed by the newly elected Democracy Party. I was assigned as the Head Consultant for the Development Plan Bureau instead of Henri Prost with the suggestion of the mayor and head of the municipality Dr. Lutfu Kirdar [8](#).

In the development plan for Beyoglu there was no area for greenery. The whole section that started from Taksim through Harbiye, Nisantas, Tesvikiye and all the way to the border of the sea was filled with small, ordinary buildings. It was decided to expropriate this area which was called Park No. 2 on the plan since the time of Lutfi Kirdar and we worked on this for 11-12 years... but at least we acquired a park to breathe in, in the middle of a district like Beyoglu. In the meantime Lutfi Kirdar had left, in his place a new head of municipality who was a doctor, Fahrettin Kerim Gokay [9](#) was elected. He was both mayor and head of the municipality like Lutfi Kirdar. He calls me one time and says: "Mr. Anjel, there is a delegation coming from the U.S. to build a hotel, the undersecretary informed me, we need to provide a space for them." I replied "Tell me when they are coming, I will do the preparations accordingly."

Of course Istanbul is a big city and when something like this is asked without specifying a neighborhood, I prepared a rough draft for a few places. I called them on the phone and said: here, and there and so on"... One day I receive a call that says "They want it around Nisantas" At the end of the conversation he says: "They came last year, there is a park that you and Prost built, they want a place in that park". I told him: "Look, we prepared the Development Plan for Istanbul here. We brought out a green area in a legal way, according to the Development Plan of Istanbul and we struggled hard for this, we managed to accomplish this even though the world was at war for long years. There cannot be a hotel in this green area. And this is an ordinary hotel. And this is a place designated for the public. Therefore I cannot give permission for this place." I receive another call: "They came last year and designated the area, they even brought a preliminary project"... "I wish you had told me before. I would not have worked this hard. The result is the same: there cannot be construction on the green area this way" I said. "They are coming tomorrow, please attend the meeting". Because after Henri Prost left, they had selected me in his place when Lutfu Kirdar was head of the municipality. On account of deciding for this place, and because I worked as the first city planner of Turkey, and the Monuments Committee wasn't basically established yet, but I was using some of the rights of the Monuments Committee. "I will not say OK for such a place, let's look for another area, we can definitely find a place in Istanbul. I cannot give permission to put a building in a green area where we worked so hard in the middle of a war." "Why don't you think about it tonight, and let me know the result tomorrow... because we will meet them at 2.00 (on a Thursday)" he said. I thought about it all night without sleeping and formed my final decision. He himself had said to me: "Look, I can agree with you as head of the municipality, but I am connected to Ankara since I am mayor and I have to abide by their wishes". I said: "I am an expert on city planning, my work is about city planning. That is my job and in this way I am not connected to anyone. I cannot permit this". Following this I brought him a resignation letter the next day. He took and read the letter. I had put this sentence at the very end: "I feel ashamed of working in an institution where personal benefits are preferred" and I signed it. He said to me: "My professor, you are putting all of us under accusations, at least take this sentence out".

I said: "Sir, I do not lick the spit I have put out" and I opened the door and left. But for 6 months he sent me my monthly paycheck. And I returned it on the same day as soon as it was sent. I had cut off my connections with the municipality completely... he still did not want to let go of me. 6 months later, the Democratic Party was established then, and there was also the CHP (Republic of People's Party)... A young member from CHP gives a petition "Even though city planning expert Aron Anjel has given his resignation 6 months ago, why did you not accept this signature (resignation) until now" and he said at the meeting, the assembly met once every 3 months, "I am not aware of this". In the meantime the father of Tansu Ciller [10](#) was in charge of the development division and was aware of all of this. He was a member of CHP (Republic of People Party) but he had crossed over to DP (Democratic Party). He got up and said: "Honorable leader, his open signature(resignation) is on your desk, on top of your desk pad". He said "Go, get it". Necati Ciller got up, took it and brought it right away and in this way it was signed, accepted. My involvement had been cut off long before anyways.

After I left, in 1953, I established the Bureau of City-Planning, Architecture and Construction in our apartment in Tunel Nergis sokak (street). I moved my office to Istiklal Caddesi (street) in 1959. In the meantime I bought the land on top of the three stories in Ihlamur Palas apartment which was on Sakayik Sokak (street), next to my previous residence Cimenzar apartment, that is to say I bought the rights to expand on the existing construction according to the new laws of the land, and I added three stories and in 1975 moved my office to the very top floor. In 1992, I arranged the balcony of the top floor and settled in my office overlooking the Bosphorus. I currently continue there.

After Prost left, we corresponded once almost every week, every fortnight. I would tell him about everything happening in Istanbul. He related to me every important thing that was happening in Paris. At one time he wrote: "You have not come to Paris for a long time. We would be so happy with your visit to Paris". In the meantime, quite coincidentally my niece Marie Therese who was studying medicine in Paris was in Istanbul and she was returning. I had not seen my older sister for a long time. I decided to go to Paris both to see my older sister and to meet with the professor. It was the year 1957. It is one of my memories. Prost was then president of the Grand Monuments Council in France. The second day we were in Paris he invited me to a meeting of the council. There was an important issue on the itinerary of the meeting. A new building project that was proposed by an 8-member architecture group at the fantastic gardens of the terrific Unesco building and it was an honor for me to be invited to such an important meeting. When the meeting started in the large living room of Unesco, on one side where the 9 members of the council and the president Henri Prost, on the other a large scale model of the project and the architects that were proposing it. The moderator first gave the right to talk to the architects. And they explained why there was the need for such a building with great conviction. We returned to the livingroom after going out to the garden and investigating on the spot, to decide. After councilmembers stated their views one by one, the moderator gave the forum to president Prost. Prost gave a short answer: "I will let my esteemed colleague Aron Anjel take the stand". I lived the shock of finding myself intervening unexpectedly in a high-level meeting where I had attended as a guest, but I gathered my senses and said: "In this gorgeous garden, no matter how beautiful this terrific building, it still would not be appropriate" and I stated my opinion with these words: "Si cette batisse existait je

l'aurai détruite" (If this building existed, I would have demolished it). This was Prost's answer: "Je suis tout à fait d'accord avec l'idée de Mr Anjel" (I am completely in accordance with Mr. Anjel's idea) and the project was rejected.

Another memory. In the time of Adnan Menderes [11](#), a board of architects was established to start new projects among the projects done by Prost. But there wasn't a single city-planner among them. As a result, Adnan Menderes, meeting with the Development director of the time, decided to invite Prost for a month to get some ideas, for the fundamental issues concerning city-planning that were being undertaken in Istanbul. And inviting me, they said: "If you could get Prost to accept this invitation, we would be very happy". In this way I got to meet Adnan Menderes too. Because we were continually corresponding with Prost, I mentioned this invitation, he did not offend me, he accepted. When Prost came to Istanbul, he had consultations with Adnan Menderes about both Ankara and Bursa and Istanbul over city-planning and in this way delivered his ideas to Adnan Menderes with a report. Now here I have a memory. I had contacts with Adnan Menderes while coming from Ankara to Istanbul a few times by phone during this time. One day when we were passing in front of the Palace of Municipality in Sarachanebasi, I showed the palace and stopped the car. Next to Fatih camii(mosque), on one side the Palace of Municipality, on the other the mosque, I said while showing them: "This Palace of Municipality that you see has been constructed on about 8 floors including two basement floors and according to the decisions taken concerning buildings inside city walls, when buildings over elevations of 40 are not permitted to have more than three stories, this building has been constructed with three more floors. This characteristic affects both Fatih Camii and Sehzadebasi Camii in terms of silhouette". He paused, thought, took my hand in both of his, and said "Mr. Anjel, I promise you, this is a new construction, in 2-3 years I will have the extra floors demolished... The year was 1959... Two years later we lost him.

In the meantime I attended a lot of conferences, symposiums, lectures, I received diplomas and declarations. For example this is what is written on this declaration: "Presented to the honorable Aron Anjel at the 22nd conference celebrating 100 years of city planning on this world city-planning day, for workshop participation, session leadership, debater and his valuable contributions with our thanks. TMMO City-Planning Room Nov. 5-7, 1998 DSI Conference Room Ankara". They had invited me to this conference. A lady arrives at noon, I later learn that she is the head of the City-Planning Department of the ministry. She says: "The ministry has an exhibition, we want to show this exhibition to you". "I am here as the head of a department, everyone is asking questions, I cannot leave" I said. She replied: "We learned that you do not eat lunch, that is why we will take you and show you the exhibition". "If it is at lunchtime, with pleasure". That lady was the head of the Development and Planning Department. We left, and went there. She had an assistant, another lady. We walked around. I saw that they took me to a big project, an older project. "What do you think of this?" I looked, "Not bad, it is pretty close to my ideas, because I can see that that there are separated arrangements everywhere, greenery and so on..." I said. They took me towards the end of the project... that is why they have taken me there... I looked: Drawn by Aron Anjel...

In reality Bagdat Caddesi (street) in Kadikoy was 10,5 ms. I wanted the new buildings to be constructed to be 10 ms back from the road on both the left and right sides. We took this 10 ms,

added it to the road and it became a 30m wide road on the Bagdat caddesi of today... The year is around 1949-50. It is the period before the Democratic Party. Then you see, where ever you look, it is greenery. This is what I say: A city without greenery is a sick city. I give examples in my speeches. I devised a plan where I envisioned all the area between Haydarpasa and Bostanci as a separated arrangement expect for the existing arrangement and it has been applied in exactly the same way till today. But I regret to tell you this: generally when every building needs to be pulled back 3, 4 or 5 ms depending on the borders of the neighboring buildings, you can see that on the application these distances are 1, sometimes 1.5 ms less. Bagdat Caddesi is also part of this plan. Other than this, in general, the plan for regulating the city's development consists of three parts: One of them is the historical peninsula encompassing the cities of Eminonu and Fatih, meaning inside city walls. The second part: The area encompassing the cities of Beyoglu, Sisli, Besiktas, and Sariyer. The third one is on the other side, the last area encompassing from Üsküdar to Beykoz, from Kadikoy to Kartal and the Princess Islands. Now, among these, the famous one, the one you think about first when you say Prost is Talimhane, even if it isn't only Talimhane, Taksim Inonu [12](#) Gezisi, the location of the old barracks, which became a stadium later on, Gumussuyu caddesi (street), the arrangements of Harbiye, Osmanbey and Macka, Sishane Yokusu (hill), Ataturk Bulvari (boulevard), the arrangements of the Eminonu, Aksaray and Beyazit plazas, are all things we have planned. Some of these were planned and executed, some of them unfortunately stayed in the project phase, they were not approved of.

For example, there are pictures and plans where you see all the details of a subway in 1943, the proposal to place Istiklal caddesi (street) one street behind, crossing the Bosphorus with an underground tunnel, the proposal to turn the shore road between Eminonu and Yesilkoy into a pedestrian-only green corridor, the houses of Levent are all proposals that were planned but that stayed on paper. I did Yesilyurt. Bagdat Caddesi.. but two-story buildings, because I dug and dug underneath. At 12,5 m I hit water. What it was, there is a big lake underground there. And it is sweet water, exceptionally sweet. I have a villa there. The laundry you do with that water is the best laundry. It can even be drinkable... Now all this plumbing and so on has been placed, all of them became septic tanks. It was permitted to build basements without keeping this underground lake in consideration in Yesilyurt. A second basement was built underneath, the foundation was 5 ms away from the water. In addition, other than the ground floor, four stories, and in some places five stories were permitted. During the last earthquake (Aug. 17th, 1999 Kocaeli earthquake) most of the buildings were damaged. It is imperative to take up this matter urgently with the underground lake and earthquake factors in mind, and to specify the number of floors.

I did my military service for three years between June 1st 1945 and May 30th 1948. Six months was in Akhisar [a town in Anatolia], six months in Iskenderun [A city close to the Syrian border on the Mediterranean coast in Turkey. Previous name Alexandrette], one year in Ankara at the Defense Ministry, and one year was spent in Istanbul.

The war that the French declared in 1939, and the British right following them against Hitler, wasn't an ordinary war. It's name says it all, it is called World War II. It was a matter of an instant for us to enter the war. Consequently we had to be on edge constantly. Our population wasn't that

much. They started calling some of the ones who did their military service in the 1940's as reserves. And considering every possible outcome, military service was extended to three years. At that time, all non-Muslims, except medical doctors were enrolled as soldiers into the army. I was also taken as soldier despite so many diplomas. They put me in the Building Department in the General Staff. I was in civilian clothes at work to avoid the contrast with officers of higher rank. A few months before my military service ended, the permission for non-Muslims who graduated university to become officers was put into effect. I gave a petition to the Pasha that I was assigned to in the General Staff to be able to use this right. He rejected my petition saying, you are fine here, your military service ends in a few months anyways. After that I worked under General Nuri Yamut Pasha in Istanbul, in the 1st Military Headquarters. In this way I was in every barrack in Istanbul.

I speak and write in French, English, Spanish and Greek in addition to Turkish.

I am a member of T.M.M.O (Chamber of Turkish Architects and Engineers), City-Planning Office, the Turkish-French Cultural Organisation and Italian Culture Organisation. I try and share my knowledge and experiences with others by the Institut Francais des Etudes Anatoliennes (The French Institute of Anatolian Studies), Observatoire Urbain d'Istanbul (The Urban Observatory of Istanbul), the Organisation for Preservation of Historical Turkish houses where I am a member and by the conferences I give in various places and by the discussion groups I attend, by my articles titled L'Empire Ottoman (The Ottoman Empire), La République Turque et La France (The Turkish Republic and France), and the Italian Architects in Istanbul in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

In the Development Plan that we prepared with Henri Prost I had prepared the first project for the Sports and Exhibition Palace in Macka Parki that was Park no. 1 in the plan. In this building that was named Lutfi Kirdar, many years later when we organised a big exhibition with his son Guner Kirdar, more than a thousand guests attended including past mayors and heads of municipality. I took the stand with Guner Bey's insistence and gave a speech lasting over an hour, talking about all the projects and applications we worked on livening up the exhibition and finished up with these words: "Henri Prost, the world-famous French city-planner who was invited to Istanbul by Ataturk to prepare the development plan for Istanbul, the honorable acting mayor and head of municipality Lutfi Kirdar and myself, worked hand in hand for twelve years to turn Istanbul into a paradise. Afterwards, the leaders of Istanbul, whether it be the Mayor or the Head of the Municipality, together, turned this beautiful, unique city into hell. The meeting ended with the applause that lasted for minutes. No sound came out of the mayors or heads of municipality from the past that were present in the room.

I was invited to a conference last month. 7 professors. They all talked for 3 hours and then the chairman of the conference, Professor Erder, asked me if I wanted to speak after the coffee break, Of course, I said. As you know, at this stage, a girl and a boy student walk amongst the audience with a microphone in hand to extend it to people who want to speak. I, on the other hand, was invited by the professor to the podium where he was sitting. I spoke for exactly 40 minutes. But during this time, this is how I spoke: "I would like to apologize, what I am going to say are my ideas



that might seem contrary to Istanbul or the University. But I cannot refrain from telling them. City-planning is a law, without law you cannot have a Development Plan. The Development Plan of the city is like the constitution of a government. Laws follow up. Zoning comes after the development plan. Every zone is a law. You specify industrial areas, residential areas, commercial areas etc. You do not allow activity outside of these borders. It is forbidden to incorporate components of another area in a zone. First you determine what each zone is going to be appropriated for, that is to say you determine the identity of the zone. The plan is drawn up according to these facts. Before anything it is imperative to do the zoning with the development plan, that is how it is done in the United States, in France or Japan. Highrises in Istanbul? When you enter Istanbul that has existed for 2500 years, there is Gulhane Park on one side and the palace... and on the other side Haydarpasha is being used as an ordinary port, the cranes have lined up their mouths like wild animals... you cannot enter Istanbul like this. Consequently this is my point of view... Before anything Istanbul's Development Plan has to be redone. In this plan you have to give an identity to Haydarpasha. Afterwards, depending on the identity, you can have as many project proposals as you wish. In one word, you cannot just make haphazard building plans without a development plan. I reiterate: Can you pass laws without a constitution? You have to study law first in universities for city-planning."

I was honored by many plaques because of my professional activities. For example, in 1971 I was given "30th year in the professional world" by the Turkish Architects Organisation, in 1992 "50th year in the profession" by the Chamber of Architects. In 1999 I was honored by a Gratitude Plaque from the Fatih Rotary club, in 2002 a thank you plaque from the Chamber of City-Planners thanking me "for my contributions to the development of the chamber and the formation of a professional group in city-planning, theoretical and practical operations in city and town-formations". Among the many plaques and awards I received, I also have a title of privilege from the Chamber of Spanish Architects.

I have been trying to be useful to the community of which I am a part for long years, as a member of the Neve Shalom Synagogue [13](#) Foundation and Turkish Grand Rabbinate Law and Development Commission, as long as my health permits, I intend to keep working. I was honored in April of 1995 by the Board of Directors of Neve Shalom Foundation with a thank you and honor plaque.

I have served as the technical consultant of Neve Shalom Foundation Board of Directors from 1952 to 1992 voluntarily. I have overseen the restoration of all of the synagogues in Istanbul including the Ashkenazi and the Italian synagogues. At the beginning of 1986, it was decided to renovate Neve Shalom Synagogue. During months-long construction, the whole room was renovated including the walls, decorations, the columns, the marbles of the bimah and the doors, the dome, windows, air conditioning and heating. The flooring of the main sanctuary was covered completely with marble. The only thing left was the placement of the seating rows. It was a Friday and the next day, Saturday was the opening. I came for a last check-up and saw that the marbles that replaced the mosaic flooring were not mopped, they were full of stains. The opening ceremony could not take place in this situation. I called the Grand Rabbinate and the Board of Directors of Neve Shalom and I told them it was not possible to do the opening and proposed postponing it to a

week later. It was accepted. I made the people who were inside the synagogue aware of the situation. But the next day, Saturday, even though the synagogue was closed, a group of close to twenty people including some tourists who entered without permission was formed. In the meantime, two foreign terrorists, unaware that the opening was postponed, entered the building and murdered the daveners spraying them with guns and exploding bombs. Thank G-d the opening ceremony was postponed. This was a holy coincidence, but despite that, unfortunately we lost twenty-three of our co-religionists [14](#).

As far as the funeral was concerned; Neve Shalom was in ruins. The ribs of the terrorist were stuck to the dome. The iron inside the columns was out in the open. The surrounding area around the bimah and the room adjacent to it that belonged to the rabbis was completely burned down. Part of the balcony on the mezzanine that belonged to women had collapsed. While the building was in this state, the Board of Directors, city and municipality officials, and our Grand Rabbi David Asseo gathered to plan the funeral of the dead in the directors' building. Since the internment was going to be at the Ashkenazi cemetery, it was thought that the religious ceremony should take place there too. I took the stand and said that it would be more appropriate to hold this ceremony in the Neve Shalom Synagogue. I asked permission to investigate the final condition of the synagogue so we could come to a decision. I had investigated the place the day before. But I thought it was appropriate to look it over again to come to a final decision. I investigated the surroundings again and without any hesitation, I told them that I would take all the necessary precautions to be able to hold the funeral ceremony in Neve Shalom in two days. It was agreed upon. And I can proudly state that to hold such a ceremony at the place of the incident versus holding it in the cemetery was a tremendous example of a representation.

Let me also add this, at the entrance to the Ashkenazi cemetery, the right row from the entrance was starting to be allotted to Sephardic Jews gradually. The Ashkenazim appropriated the left side for themselves, because their population is low in numbers, the entrance to the cemetery was empty then. As you can see today, our veterans are interned there according to a project that I hastily drew.

I can say this with one word: G-d has protected us at the first and second bombings of Neve Shalom synagogue and the bombing of the Sisli synagogue 15-16].

After the first bombing of Neve Shalom, the construction and the iron we used to renovate the front doors were so strong that the effect of the second bomb was defused at the entrance. At the Sisli synagogue, as you know, the main synagogue and the entrance open up to the upper road. The building, of which I drew the project and oversaw construction, faces a second street on the lower side. There was davening in the main synagogue at the time of the bombing. Thank G-d, the terrorists were not aware of this arrangement. The building I built is basically the one that is appropriated for cultural meetings. The main rooms are not used for praying except for important holidays. Consequently, only the synagogue portion is used on Saturdays for davening. In this way, there was no loss of life inside.

No one can deny that a holy power has always protected us from the unbelievable dangers that we have encountered. Yes, so many governments, so many empires have turned to ashes, but we managed to stay standing.

Let's come to the Wealth Tax affair [17](#). They imposed a tax on my father. The prime minister Sukru Saracoglu was my father's student. My father went all the way to Ankara and met with him. Saracoglu said "my teacher, my teacher" but did not provide any help. Whereas my father was a professor of three languages. Even though he did not have a great wealth, they came to take our furniture. Before they took them, they had stored all our belongings, including a gramophone, in a room with a fireplace that looked to the front in the flat that we lived. My sister was sick and wanted to listen to music. I would go out on the ledge, where there were approximately two or three steps to the place where the gramophone was, move while holding on tight and we would use the gramophone. You cannot forget these things. The tax was gradually paid off, I do not remember how many liras it was, I had just returned from Paris in 1942. They imposed a tax on my spouse's family too. He was a merchant of electrical installation, they took quite an amount of merchandise in place of money.

I welcomed the formation of the Israeli nation ecstatically. I, for one thing, am very attached to history from a historical point of view. So much that when I was in highschool there were the last world history exams. The history teacher liked me so much that look what happened. I, for one had memorized the books in such a manner that when I was talking about them, in my mind I was turning the pages... and my teacher when he was teasing about me to others, that is how he described me. I took the baccalaureate test in Galatasaray. I had an oral test rather than a written one for history. Our teacher was not in the panel that day. They awarded me 4.5 instead of 5. The next day my teacher turned everything upside down, "he is my best student, the one who knows history best. How dare you give him a 4.5", he said and changed my grade to 5. Coincidentally I valued history a lot in my lifetime. After that, as you know, I studied archeology, Byzantology. I say it everywhere, city-planning is not only about the statistical survey of the stuff we see on top of the earth, no one should do a project without knowing what is under the ground especially in historical cities. I have a great example in my hand now. In Israel, a device has been invented where it can take the photographs of things 30-40 ms under the ground. A very very helpful and interesting phenomenon.

We met with my wife Eleni Langada, we called her Milena, in 1945, in Arnavutkoy [A district on the shores of Rumeli by the Bosphorus] at a gathering of friends. She had studied in Sainte Pulchérie'de [French all-girl junior high founded by the Filles de la Charité nuns in 1846. Today it has been converted to a coeducational high school] which was in Taksim. She was interested in the French book I held in my hand, our friendship that started on this pretext developed and we were married on February 3rd, 1950 at the Beyoglu Evlendirme Dairesi(Public Wedding Office). Our wedding witnesses were Prof. Henri Prost and the famous attorney Resat Saffet Atabinen who was a graduate of the Paris Sorbonne University, and the head clerk at the Lausanne agreements. All of my colleagues at the municipality of Istanbul where I worked honored our civil marriage with their presence. At the time the mayor and head of municipality was Dr Lutfi Kirdar.

My wife, being of Greek descent, was born on May 24th, 1924 in Bebek [A neighborhood on the shores of Rumeli on the Bosphorus]. Her father who was a merchant of electrical installation, was named Nikola, her mother Aleksandra, and she was the only child of the family since her sibling Francois had died at a very young age. She lived in Arnavutkoy, in Beyoglu and Nisantasi. I lost my wife, who had been involved in the leadership and public matters of the community, suddenly on April 23rd 2006. She had gone to Taksiyarhis church on Sunday morning for Easter service. We had decided to meet at lunch time, after the service to go eat together. An unexpected telephone call delivered the sad news. It seems she felt bad in the church, they sat her down on a chair and called a doctor, but she left for eternity before the doctor could make it. We said our final goodbyes to her on April 26th, Wednesday after the religious services in the same church. You can appreciate how hard and difficult it is for me to lose my life partner with whom I spent more than a half century in a happy partnership under these conditions. But I think this is how it always happens in our family, the family members, if I may use the expression, die "while still alive".

There was no reaction from our families to our belonging to different religions. On my side even, while I was still hesitating whether to get married or not, how strange was it that it was Tante Eugenie who encouraged me. She said "This girl loves you, she is a good girl" and directed me towards taking a decision and within two weeks it was done and finished. Everyone continued with their religion and their beliefs. All three of our children are married to Muslims. We did not have any problems since we embraced all religions. I hope no one is offended but what is important in this world are feelings and humanity. G-d is a force who oversees all the planets and stars in the universe, the movements of all creatures. But the result is that, it is a formidable force whose origins are not known... That is what I believe, it is a force we do not know, we cannot know... There was such an atmosphere, I will talk about it at a conference. As a result of a big coincidence we lived these 3 religions together and still do. Marrying someone from another religion is only possible with a strong love... it is not a necessity or occupation, it can only be done with love. What did this love accomplish? At the time this life starts, and I have lost one member, that is to say I have lost my wife, I felt the same thing... We celebrated all the holidays as a family together and we celebrated without any difference. Whatever holiday comes upon us, we would gather right away and we still do. We made all three of our beliefs the possession of our family. I wish from G-d that our celebrating these three religions all together with conviction serves as an example.

I have three children, one boy and two girls.

My older daughter Ester Ethel was born on October 26th, 1950 in Beyoglu. She finished her education in Sisli Terakki lisesi (highschool) and Notre Dame de Sion and married Yayla Heparı who was both a musician and civil engineer. Her son Uzay who was a famous musician died in a motorcycle accident at a very young age. When Uzay died, his wife was pregnant. My great-grandson who was born five months after the accident finished fifth grade in elementary school this year and moved on to sixth grade. He is inclined towards music like his dad, takes piano lessons and attends the conservatory. In winter he lives in Nisantasi, and in summer in Bozcaada

[on the Aegean sea, formerly known as Tenedos island].

My second daughter Brigitte was born on January 10th, 1956 in Beyoglu. After finishing Sisli Terakki Lisesi (high school), she graduated from the Interior Architectural Department of Mimar Sinan University. She works at the workplace they started with her husband Engin Yaman who is an architect as well as teaching interior decorating for long years. They live in Nisantasi in winter and in Buyukada (largest and fourth island on the Princess islands). Their son Cem also graduated from Mimar Sinan University. He left to serve his national service for twelve months while preparing for a masters in architecture. He prepared 24 projects during this time, and complete with a declaration of thanks from the army. He is planning on completing his masters in Architecture.

My son Albert Fransua Simon Nejat was born on April 17th, 1959 in Nisantasi. His real name is Albert which is my father's name. The names of my uncle Simantov who died a week before his birth and the name of my wife's younger brother Francois who died at a very young age have been added. There is no reason for Nejat. He finished Sisli Terakki Lisesi and graduated from Istanbul Technical University, Electrical Engineering Department. He is carrying out his profession in the office he founded named Bati Muhendislik(Western Engineering). His wife Tuna Alp is a graduate of Bosphorus University<sup>18</sup>. They met while working at Koc Bank and currently she organizes technical seminars about Bank Services and Management in various cities around the nation. They live in Nisantasi in winter and in Buyukada in summer, and they have a son who was born on January 18th, 1995. On his identification card the name is Roni Alp Anjel. He took the names Alp which is his mother's father's name and Aron, meaning Roni that is his father's father's name. Currently he moved on to sixth grade in elementary school.

I have been trying to be useful to the community of which I am a part for long years, as a member of the Neve Shalom Synagogue Foundation and Turkish Grand Rabbinate Law and Development Commission, as long as my health permits, I intend to keep working and sharing my knowledge and my experiences with anyone willing to listen to me.

## Glossary

<sup>1</sup> Sehremeni: in 1854, the municipality duties of Istanbul were transferred from the kadhis to the newly formed Sehremaneti. Sehremeni is the person in charge of this organization that provides the security and the clean-up of the city, in a way, it is equivalent to the mayor's job of today (1868-1958).

## <sup>2</sup> Uzay Heparı

was born in 1968. He graduated from Saint Benoit high school and enrolled in the Technical University of Istanbul. He continued in the conservatory and became a well-known and loved piano player, he worked on musical projects together with Sezen Aksu. He shone in the only movie he directed "Gece, Melek ve Bizim Cocuklar" (The Night, The Anjel and Our Children). He married

Zeynep Tunuslu in 1993 and had a son named Kanat. 6 months after getting married, he was fatally injured while he was riding on his motorcycle as a result of a car crash on May 20th, 1994, was in a coma for 11 days in Yesilkoy International Hospital and died on May 31st, 1994. The prime minister today, Recep Tayyip Erdogan who was the mayor of the city of Istanbul then, had come to the hospital to visit him. His funeral was attended by thousands of his fans

### **3 Galatasaray Lycée**

The school that was founded by Sultan II. Bayezid in 1481. For the first time in Turkey, it started education in Turkish and French in the western concept at the highschool level on Sept. 1st, 1868 under the name Galatasaray Mekteb-i Sultanisi (Lycée Impériale). In 1877 the name was changed to Darulfunun-u Sultani, and after the republic was changed again to Galatasaray Lisesi (Galatasaray high school), and the school continues in the education process successfully.

### **4 Ataturk, Mustafa 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.

5 The Jewish Lycée: this school was founded in 1914 by Dr Markus as a primary school in Istanbul Yemenici sokak (street), in 1915 it was converted by the Istanbul B'nai Brith lodge and the efforts of Jozef Niego and Dr Markus into a highschool named Midrasa Yavne. It moved in sequence to Ali Hoca Sokak (Professor Ali street), Drogmanat (Tercuman) Sokak (Translator street), Kumbaraci Yokusu (Piggybank Hill) and Sishane Mektep Sokak (Shishane School street) -where the German highschool named Goldsmith was previously located- and later took on the name Ozel Beyoglu Musevi Lisesi (The Private Beyoglu Jewish High school) and in 1994 moved to Ulus, its name was changed to Ozel Ulus Musevi Lisesi (The Private Ulus Jewish High school) in 1998.

### **6 Sultan Abdulhamid II (1842-1918)**

Conservative ruler (1876-1909) of the late 19th century, saving the Empire, once more, from collapse. He accepted the First Ottoman Constitution in 1876 but suspended it in 1878 and introduced authoritarian rule after the Berlin Congress when - due to European Great Power interference - many of his European possessions were lost to the newly independent Balkan states (Serbia, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria). After losing Tunisia to the French (1881) and Egypt to the



British (1882), he turned towards Germany as an ally and signed a concession for the construction of the Istanbul-Baghdad railway (1899). During his reign the University of Istanbul was established (1900) and a nation-wide network of elementary, secondary and military schools was created. The Empire went through immense modernization: a railway and telegraph system was developed and new industries were created. Despite the continuous effort of the Zionists he wouldn't allow Jewish settlements in the Holy Land, neither would he give it to the British. Sultan Abdulhamid II was abdicated by the Young Turk Revolution in 1909 reestablishing the Constitution and expelling him to Salonika.

## **7 Henri Prost**

(1874-1959). A French architect and city-planner. Prost who came to Istanbul in 1936 was preparing Istanbul's development plan in 1937. His development plan and the principles he proposed were published in 1938 by the mayor's office of Istanbul under the heading "Istanbul ve Beyoglu Cihetleri Nazim Planini izah eden Rapor"(The Report Explaining the Development Plan of Istanbul and Beyoglu Quarters). The plan was applied till 1950, afterwards it was continually changed and forgotten about.

## **8 Dr**

Lutfi Kirdar: was born in Kerkuk in 1887. Medical doctor. Became mayor and head of municipality for Istanbul in 1938. He was assigned as grand ambassador to Stockholm in 1949 and the same year was elected representative of Manisa from CHP(Republic of People Party) for 1949-1950. Lutfi Kirdar was elected Istanbul representative for DP(Democratic Party) during 1954-57, he died in Istanbul on Febr. 17th, 1961

## **9 Fahrettin Kerim Gokay**

was born in 1900 in Eskisehir. Medical Doctor. He took on the position of mayor and head of municipality for Istanbul between Oct 24th, 1949 and Nov26th, 1957. He was grand ambassador for Bern between 1957-1960. He was elected representative for Istanbul in 1961 from YTP(The New Turkey Party), became Minister of Health in 1963. He died in Istanbul on July 22nd, 1987.

## **10 Tansu Ciller**

was born in Istanbul in 1946. Became an Economy Professor in 1983, was elected representative for Istanbul in 1991. Ciller, who was elected Leader for the Right Path Party in 1993 and became Turkey's first female prime minister. She was prime minister for three terms and foreign affairs minister for one term. At the elections of Nov. 3rd, 2002, she did not garner the minimum necessary votes and removed herself from politics.

## **11 Menderes, Adnan (1899-1961)**

was born in 1899 in Aydin. Was elected representative for Aydin in 1931. In 1945 he resigned from CHP(Republic of People Party) and formed the Democratic Party in 1946 with Refik Koraltan, Fuat Koprulu and Celal Bayar. Came to power with the elections of May 14th, 1950 and continued as prime minister until the revolution of May 27th, 1960. He was declared guilty in the trials at

Yassıada courts and was executed by hanging on Sept. 17th, 1961. Turkish prime minister and martyr. He became one of the leaders of the new Democratic Party, the only opposition party in Turkey in 1945, and prime minister after the elections in 1950. He was re-elected in 1954 and 1957 and deposed in 1960 by a military coup, led by General Cemal Gürsel. He was put on trial on the charge of violating the constitution and was executed. (Source: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/>)

[12](#) Inonu, İsmet (1884-1973): Turkish statesman and politician, the second president of the Turkish Republic. İsmet İnönü played a great role in the victory of the Turkish armies during the Turkish War of Independence. He was also the politician who signed the Lausanne Treaty in 1923, thereby ensuring the territorial integrity of the country as well as the revision of the previous Treaty of Sevres (1920). He also served Turkey as prime minister various times. He was the 'all-time president' of the CHP Republican People's Party. İsmet İnönü was elected president on 11th November 1938, one day after Atatürk's death. He was successful in keeping Turkey out of World War.

[13](#) Neve Shalom Synagogue: Situated near 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 as early as the 15th century. This synagogue that was built by Architect Elyo Ventura and Architect Bernard Motola in the district of Sishane, on Büyük Hendek Caddesi (Large Ditch Road), on the upper floor of the old First Coeducational Jewish School was officially opened on March 25th, 1951 with a magnificent ceremony. As a result of Architect Anjel's work, the front door of the synagogue was moved from the side street to the front. The synagogue that was attacked by terrorists in 1986 and 2004 twice is currently in use.

[14](#) 1986 Terrorist Attack on the Neve-Shalom Synagogue: In September 1986, Islamist terrorists carried out a terrorist attack with guns and grenades on worshippers in the Neve-Shalom 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.

[15](#) 2003 Bombing of the Istanbul Synagogues: On 15th November 2003 two suicide terrorist attacks occurred nearly simultaneously at the Sisli and Neve-Shalom synagogues. The terrorists drove vans loaded with explosives and detonated the bombs in front of the synagogues. It was 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, however, 26 pedestrians on the street were killed; five of them were Jewish. The material loss was also terrible. The terrorists belonged to the Turkish branch of Al Qaida.

[16](#) Sisli Beth-Israel Synagogue: Istanbul synagogue, founded in the 1920s after restoring the premises of the garage of a thread factory. It was rebuilt and extended in 1952.

[17](#) 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.

18 Bogazici University: Successor of Robert College, the old (founded in 1863) and prestigious American school in Istanbul. With the consent of the administration of Robert College it was founded jointly with the Turkish state in 1971. Since then the University has expanded both physically and academically and today it is growing in popularity.