

Picnic



We used to go on picnics with our friends every opportunity we got on the weekends. In this photo you can see my wife Suzan with our very good friends Rejin and Eliya Behar.

Rejin Behar and her husband the lawyer Eliya Behar were both our neighbors and also our very good friends. We shared a lot of things with them. We raised our children together, we went on trips together etc... Once I remember, we went to Switzerland with Eliya and Rejin. Rejin's brother Isak Menase was lived there. We stayed at a hotel and eliya and Rejin stayed at their brother's house. During the day, we were together all the time, sightseeing and having fun. They were very very hospitable people, they did not let us spend even one dime. I am very sorry to say that Rejin died a month ago [beginning of summer 2004]. She was buried here in Istanbul.

My neighbor and friend, the lawyer Eli Behar, is actually from Thrace. In 1933, there was a rumor spread about the Jews, claiming that they were cooperating with the enemy. [19 see Thrace Events] Because of these slanders, a lot of anti-semitic movements took place. As a result the Jews sold their possesions for nothing and either emigrated to Istanbul or somewhere else. Eli is one of these families. He completed his education in Edirne, became a career man there, and came to Istanbul. He was the lawyer of the first firm named Niyego, which I worked at. This was the way we met.

My wife, Suzan, is from Istanbul. She was born and raised in Kuzguncuk [a district in the Asian side of Istanbul]. My wife's English was very good, because she was a graduate of the British School in Istanbul (English High School for Girls) . Besides this, her French was also very good. Like I said, we were working at the same firm. We met and went out together. Her mother didn't want me, because of my low income, when we decided to get married. Nevertheless, against everything, we got married in the synagogue in Kuzguncuk, in May 1935. (not the one that is in use today, there was another one on the upper part of Kuzguncuk. I forgot its name.)

At those times, the weddings were not celebrated like today's ostentatious weddings. In the afternoon, as the whole family we went to the Novotni Garden, across Union Francaise in Tepebasi. We ate our dinner, and sat outside, as the season was favorable. It was very nice. We all returned home together, and went to work the next morning.

After we got married, we rented a flat from the apartment named "Belvu" [from the French "belle vue" meaning "nice view"] on Bankalar Street. These flats were so large that we rented it together with David Eskenazi and his wife, very close friends of ours who hadn't had any children and who loved ours as their own. They had two rooms, and we had two rooms and a living room. We shared the kitchen and the bathroom. As a result of this solution we found, paying the rent was not that hard.

After we got married, Suzan always gave her family what she earned. Her family came to live with us when her father got sick. Later on, when the financial situation of Moiz, Suzan's elder brother, improved, he took care of his parents. When my father-in-law died, my mother-in-law started living with us. Later on in 1957, she went to Israel with her younger son, Moiz, and died there in 1967.

Unfortunately my wife Suzan got very sick, and though we did everything to save her, we couldn't. She died in 1988, and was buried in Arnavutkoy. [The sephardic cemetery in Ulus was always called Arnavutkoy]. I miss her so much that, I go to visit her very often, and talk to her from heart to heart.