

Demis Komninos



This is a picture of Demis (Demitrios) Komninos, the first husband of my cousin Daisy. He was about five or six years older than Daisy. I do not think he was born before 1910.

Daisy got married to Demis when I did my Bar Mitzvah, around 1935-1936. Komninos' family was regarded as very aristocratic here.

His elder sister had married Hatzigiannakis who was a deputy for Venizelos. Hatzigiannakis had the flour-mills and was a refugee. I think the Komninos family came from Eastern Thrace and not from Asia Minor.

Demis worked at the Hatzigiannakis mills. Because his brother in law owned it, he had given him a job to work there. He was a good man, and had good manners. But he was a bit of a spender, quite a spender in fact. He had this great idea that he came from a great family.

Komninos went frequently at the lawn tennis club. That was at Vasilissis Olgas and 25th Martiou Street. All the wealthy people of Thessaloniki used to go there. I don't know how, my aunt went there as well and they met.

They started meeting up and going for walks. At those times, the couples would go to Nea Elvetia, outside the city and to Meteora near the city walls. They fell in love to each other and got married.

Daisy and Demis run off together and got married at the Vlatadon Monastery. A priest married them there. He had to baptise her beforehand to get them married. She was thus baptised and she kept it. Until today she is still a Christian.

This was probably one of the first mixed marriages. The papers wrote about it then. 'Makedonia' newspaper wrote an article against the Jews. Daisy and Demis argued with the family and grandfather disinherited her.

He told her that he didn't want her again in the house, and that she should never come back again, which was a really bad thing, as things like that didn't use to happen. Among the Jews of Thessaloniki, Saltiel was highly esteemed.

They were a well known family here, and people would say "the daughter of Saltiel went with the others?" It was a big scandal.

At the beginning the mother of Demis didn't want her either. But Daisy could manage anything. Very quickly, only six months after, she was the most beloved.

And slowly, first my aunt Lily brought her back to the family, then my mother, then my father, and then the other sister Ida.

In the end, I remember bringing her back to the family and she kneeling in front of grandfather and apologising to him. She re-established relations with the family around two or three years after her wedding.