

Mico Alvo During His First Trip To Paris



This is a photo from my first trip to Paris. I first went there in 1950 on a trip organized by a travel agency. I was alone, I knew nobody. It was my first trip after the war. I went to enjoy myself. I was quite young then.

Everyone used to go to London, Paris and Italy. I went in the winter because this was the time with the least business for our trade. In the winter, our work had a low season, as all the construction sites would stop for a while due to the weather and the farmers didn't have much work either.

I thought that I too should go for a trip, alone. I went for Danny's wedding in Tel Aviv and from there instead of coming back to Thessaloniki, I went to Paris.

As I had studied in a French high school and I knew many things about it, I really liked Paris. Because everything that I saw there, reminded me of where I had read about it, this book, the other.

All these reminded me of my years as a child. And we had a lot of fun. You would go out in the night and it would be crazy.

In Paris I found Kazes. He was an old school friend of mine. He was a French citizen, had lost all his family in the war, and he didn't come back to Thessaloniki. He had some uncles there, who sent him to the university and he had become an architect.

He was married with a girl from Thessaloniki, who was in Paris accidentally. He knew her from school too. She was at the Lycee girl's school. I knew where he lived and we used to write to each other.

Suddenly, on Sunday morning I go around and knock on the door and when he opened and saw me, he nearly fainted. Kazes was a sickly person when we were at school.

How he survived in the concentration camps, is unimaginable. We hanged out together in Paris. I had another acquaintance, a friend of Daisy's who showed me around and took me to the museums. I stayed in Paris for 10 days.

On my way back I passed by Italy, where a friend of mine was in Milan. I stayed there for another two to three days. His name was Tazartes. He too was an old school friend of mine. He and his brother were both Italian citizens.

They used to go to the Italian school, but when Mussolini passed his anti-Jew laws, they also came at the Lycee. His brother left for the Middle East with the Greek battalion. During the occupation he hid himself in Athens, in a house somewhere in Kolonaki.

After the war and before leaving for Italy, Tazartes worked in our shop for a little while. But he didn't like it here after a while. He went to Italy in a firm that someone from Thessaloniki owned, a big firm, and he did really well.