

Orhan Orgun



My son Orhan Orgun with our hunting-dog Gümüs, in Polonezköy. The photo was taken in 1977. By the year 1971, we had saved up enough money to buy an apartment. But we had always lived in nice houses by the sea, with gardens, and could not envisage being squeezed in a town apartment. We looked at the choices a little away from the city in order to afford a house with a garden. We were lucky to buy a farm in Polonezköy for the price of an apartment in town. We then started a poultry farm. Our intention was to stop working in business, as soon as the farm would support us because, by that time, Günel had had enough of city life in general and business life, in particular. The children, who were two and four when we moved to Polonezköy, later attended the village elementary school, which consisted of a single room where all 5 grades were taught by a single teacher. We had a very good life there. We owned cows, a few sheep, ducks, cats and dogs, and some 6000 chicken. Four families worked for us. We made a living by selling eggs. There we lived a life completely different and removed from Jewish culture. We lived after all in a Catholic village populated by people of Polish origin. But my children have always been aware of my being Jewish, from what I told them and from visiting my parents' home frequently. They went to synagogue with me for weddings. After attending the wedding of one of my cousins, my daughter who was four, was so impressed that she said she wanted to become a bride when she grew up, thinking that it was a profession. Also, I usually cooked, and still do, Sephardic dishes like gratinated spinach and squash. As for circumcision, my son was circumcised at the age of eight, by a medical specialist. We lived all year long in Polonezköy, summer and winter, for ten years. After elementary school, my children attended for one year a secondary school called Kültür Lisesi. I stayed with them in Yesilyurt, at my parents', and Günel stayed in Polonezköy, where I went with the children to spend the weekends. At the end of that year, the Kültür Lisesi was closed down. Then, the children went to boarding school, at the Esenis Lisesi, for three years. However, we would have had to move to town, when the time came to attend university. So, we decided to get an apartment in town and bought one in Cengelköy, before they finished the lycée. Eventually they both succeeded in being accepted to the Bogazici University. It's then that we sold the chickens, and stopped the poultry farming.