

Harun Bozo

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Istanbul

Turkey

Interviewers: Rose and Alberto Modiano

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Harun Bozo is a 77-year-old mature and affectionate man. After having been in the haberdashery business and the import of industrial machines, he now deals in electronics. He and his second wife, Cigdem Sara, had their civil marriage in 1978 and their religious marriage in 2005.

Harun Bozo, his wife Sara, their daughter Feride and their dog Lily live on the second floor of the Emlak Palas Apartment in Tesvikiye, Abdi Ipekci Street. The house has furniture dating from the middle of the 20th century. Harun Bozo is fine health-wise. He goes to work every day. On Fridays he leaves work early and prepares for Shabat [Sabbath]. He likes reading newspapers, magazines and books. He also likes to travel. He devotes a lot of time to his present family and also to his sons from his first marriage. I interviewed Harun Bozo with my wife, Rose. We visited him five times in all and spent three hours every time. During our visits, whenever we asked him if he was tired and would like to stop, he would tell us, 'If you are not tired, I can go on for hours.' It was obvious that Harun Bozo loved sharing his life story with us.



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History of Urfa

Urfa's name in history was 'Ur' or 'Urelke.' When Alexander the Great conquered Ur, he named it Ruha. This is also the place where Abraham was born. Abraham was slung over the castle of Urfa and at that moment the trees became fish and the flames became water and legend says there appeared the sacred 'fish lake.' Some say they wanted to burn Abraham because he believed in God, others say because he fell in love with his daughter. They even call Urfa by another name: 'Anzelha.' In Arabic 'An' means 'eye' or 'stream' and 'Zelha' is the name of the girl. [According to one of the local folk tales about Urfa in the times before Alexander the Great, Abraham came to the city and was bound by Nimrod between the two columns that still stand on the citadel. He slung the patriarch from the citadel into the valley, but he was saved miraculously. The pool sacred to Abraham was erected at that place and fish that inhabit it are sacred. (The sacred pool was erected under the Muslim rule.) The legend complements the account in Gen. 11:20 ff. Incidentally, fish

was the sacred animal of the Syrian goddess worshipped some 50 miles away in Hierapolis (Bambyce), on the West bank of the Euphrates. The legend is probably of Christian origin, since when Christianity became dominant in Urfa, a reckoning of years from Abraham replaced the old way of reckoning from the beginning of the Seleucid era in 312 BC.] According to what my father told me, my ancestors came from Iraq and settled in Harran [town in Urfa province, Turkey, near the Syrian border] about 500 years ago. There used to be very few Jewish families in Urfa originally, all others came from other places; some from Aleppo [today Halab, Syria], some from Siverek [another town in Urfa province], and some from Diyarbakir [city in Eastern Anatolia]. However, the three or four big [rich and famous] families came from [the territory of today's] Iraq, like the families Nasir, Hidir, Mugrabi, Atiye and Urfali. The families Antel, Elfiye, Binler, Dayan, Milhem and Misri came from Aleppo. The families Sahud, Ilia Hidir, Rabbi Azur and Murdoh came from Siverek. They say that in the 1800s there was a population of a thousand Jews in Urfa. In the years I lived in Urfa there were 200 Jewish families in the city. The Jews of Urfa were very loyal to their religion. They were very careful with the kasherut [kashrut] rules. On Saturdays, they wouldn't open their shops. No one would smoke on a Saturday, or ride in a car and as everyone knew everyone else, more care was taken in order not to provoke any gossip.

Family background

You can find our family name Bozo from Urfa in Latin America: Argentina and Brazil; and in New York as well. Everyone knows us as Bozo. However, when the Surname Law [1](#) was passed in Turkey in 1928, they wrote Boz instead of Bozo on our identity cards. [A lot of mistakes were made on the part of the scribes who wrote the identity cards in those days.] Nevertheless, in the synagogues and everywhere else we are known as Bozo. Members of our family have spread all over the world.

My maternal grandmother was called Salha Acem and my maternal grandfather was called Reful Acem. I don't have any other information on them.

My father's father, Yakup Akkus Bozo, was born in Urfa and he spoke only Arabic. My father's mother, Gerez Bozo - I don't remember her maiden name - was born in Aleppo. She was a very religious housewife. She also spoke Arabic.

My paternal great-grandfather was in the haberdashery business. My grandfather, who continued the business, must have been quite well-off as he was also the gabay [gabbai] of the synagogue. One had to be rich in order to be a gabay. The gabay had to give economical support to needy people and to the synagogue. My father, who was as hardworking as my grandfather, inherited the business from him, but before that he and his father worked together. They used to go to villages to sell their wares.

My grandfather was an honest and straightforward man. He wouldn't tolerate any unfairness. Once, my father told me, when he - my father - was a child, they were coming back from visiting some neighbors. In those times, they used to carry lanterns when they went visiting at night-time so they could see in the dark. On their way back to their own house, they noticed that some robbers had broken into their neighbor's house. My grandfather picked up a stick and started shouting, 'How dare you go into my neighbor's house?' The robbers, four or five of them, said to him, 'Don't get involved in this. We will finish our business and be on our way, don't interfere!' My grandfather shouted, 'How can I not get involved?' and he attacked them with his stick. He wounded them but got injured himself as well and was hospitalized for four or five months. However, he succeeded in

preventing the robbers from robbing his neighbor's house. He was a kind and self-sacrificing man who was liked by everyone. He was also very religious; he was both the gabay of the synagogue and the president of the community.

The house where my grandfather lived and where my father spent his childhood and youth was left to my father by his father. My father had two brothers and two sisters. My father's brothers were Reful Bozo and Yusuf Bozo and his sisters were Sara Bozo and Rahel Bozo. His sisters were from his father's first marriage. All three brothers got married, and they all lived in this same house. It was a very big family. Everyone had a lot of children. Reful Bozo had four children: Yakup Bozo [m], Shlomo Bozo [m], Mihail Bozo [m] and Dalya Bozo [f]. Yusuf Bozo had four children, too: Alber Bozo [m], Leon Bozo [m], David Bozo [m] and Lili Bozo [f].

Growing up in Urfa

My father had a big stone house, built in the Askeriye district of Urfa in 1922. That house was very beautiful. There was no special architecture in Urfa at that time. The house was made of smooth white stones. It had a big terrace, a garden of 150 square meters, and it had the best view a house could have in Urfa. There were six rooms, a kitchen and a mikve [mikveh] inside the house. The toilet was outside. There was a well next to the mikve. They used to fill the mikve with water from this well. We had beautiful furniture, antique armchairs and chairs. These were not made in Urfa, and my father had them brought from Aleppo. Then, when we moved to Istanbul in 1950, we brought them with us.

There was no tap water in our house in Urfa. There was a well. We used this water to do the cleaning and scrubbing. We didn't drink the water from the well in my time. There used to be a stream near our house called 'Karapinar' [Black Stream]. We used to go and get water from that stream and drink that water. Tap water came to Urfa in 1945, and they started drinking that water then.

There was no electricity. We had gas lamps. We used braziers for heating. We had pretty, decorative braziers in our homes. Sometimes we used to get electricity for one or two hours but that was very rare. There was only one cinema in Urfa and that didn't work properly either [because of lack of electricity].

We had a big garden next to our house. There were mulberry trees in that garden. My uncle [in-law], Musa Misri, was very interested in flowers and gardening. There were maybe 100 different kinds of flowers in our garden. He had turned the garden into a beautiful flower garden. There were two rooms on each side of the house. There was a stone garden-like yard in the middle. We had a table there. As it was very hot in the summer, we used to have our meals there. We also used to sleep on the roof during the summer nights. We used to put up bamboo curtains around the beds so that the neighbors couldn't see us.

We had another house on the other side of Urfa. We used to raise chickens and pigeons there. We also used to raise the baby gazelles the villagers caught and brought us as presents. My father had horses and we used to raise horses, too. My father also traded in sheep wool. When the sheep were sheared, we used to put the wool in the stock room of this other house. We also had a granary and then my father used to sell all these [wool, wheat etc.] little by little.

There was a man and a woman to help in the house. The woman wasn't Jewish, she was Muslim. A Jewish boy used to help my father with his affairs. He came in the morning and he'd go out with my father to do the daily shopping for the house. My mother would prepare the meals and the boy would come at noon to take my father's lunch to his workplace in a lunch box. The woman would come and help with the cleaning of the house. Most importantly, she used to do the washing up. In those times, women in Urfa used to wash the dishes with ashes. She would take the washing up to the meadow and bring it back when it was finished. We didn't buy bread because my father was very religious. We had to make kosher bread ourselves, so bread was prepared at home. My mother would prepare the bread, then she would give it to this woman, who would take it to the baker and stand by until it was baked, and then bring it home.

My father, Ezra Azur Bozo, was born in Urfa in 1876. He spoke Arabic, Turkish and Hebrew. Arabic was his first language. He was a very religious, very honest and very straightforward person. There wasn't one person in Urfa who didn't know my father. Azur Bozo was a legend in Urfa. His was a big name like Vehbi Koc in Istanbul. [Koc, Vehbi (1901-1996): the greatest industrialist in Turkey, founder and owner of Koc Holding, one of the oldest companies of Istanbul's most important group of companies dealing with many diverse industries, from the automotive to the electronic.] He was very hardworking and very bright, so he had become very rich. He would start work at 6 in the morning and work until late at night.

He was in the haberdashery business. He used to go round the villages to sell his wares. He also did agriculture and raised sheep. At one time he had a partner and we used to sell horses to the military. My father was involved in a lot of different businesses. He did a lot of sheep buying and selling. Sometimes he would go to Erzurum [city in Eastern Turkey] and buy the special purple-brown sheep that were raised there and come back and sell them in Urfa. I remember that at one time there was a special sheep tax called Ashar Tax [2](#) in Turkey. The officials came and counted the sheep. They asked to whom the sheep belonged. Actually, half of the sheep of Urfa belonged to my father! Then they sent word to my father to prepare his tax. Then they came to ask for the money and my father very honestly paid all the tax.

There were no schools in Urfa during my father's childhood. My father went to the Talmud Tora. He learned Hebrew there. He could read the Tora very well. He also knew old Turkish and would write all his letters in this old script. [Before the language reform, Turkish used to be written in Arabic script.]

My father wasn't a very talkative person. He was a serious man. He was also very intelligent. He didn't chatter with people and he didn't interfere in others' businesses. He led a calm and comfortable life. He wasn't too humorous. I've never heard a bad word spoken about him.

My father led a very simple life. You know, the first prayers in the morning are quite early. He would get up much earlier and go to the synagogue at 4:30 in the morning. They would have sessions on religion before the prayers. They would read religious texts and discuss them. My father always joined these sessions. After the sessions, there would be the morning prayers. From there he would come home, have his breakfast and go to work.

On some days, my father would leave work early and go to the coffee-house, meet his friends there, play backgammon with them or just have chats. The coffee-house was near the Jewish district, and sometimes I would also go there and watch them play backgammon. Backgammon

was a very important part of the entertainment in our household. My father, may his soul rest in peace, loved the game.

My father would never go out without a hat. He would never go around the house without a kipa either. He didn't have a beard. In old times, I remember him having a very small moustache. He always wore a tie and jacket but didn't care for luxuries or fashion. He wore simple clothes and no jewelry. He bought my mother some nice diamonds and rings though.

My mother, Feride Bozo, was my father's second wife. She was born in Aleppo in 1884. Her maiden name was Acem [which means 'Persian' in Turkish]. She had also had a Judaic, religious education. She spoke Arabic and was a housewife. My mother was a very calm, docile and quiet woman. She would never shout. She made life in Urfa very sweet for us. She raised our elder sisters, too. My mother cooked wonderful meals. That was life for women in Urfa. She and my sisters would cook and clean all day long. My mother spent all her time doing the housework. She very rarely went out. Our women didn't go out unless it was necessary. They used to treat minorities badly in Urfa. They used to throw stones and swear at Jews. That's why the women had no life outside their homes. They spent all their lives inside their homes.

We used to speak Arabic in my home. Half of the population of Urfa was Kurdish and half was Arab. Most civil servants would speak Turkish, but the people would speak Arabic or Kurdish. My mother didn't know Turkish. We still speak Arabic within our family. However, I would like to point out that the Arabic we spoke was different from the Arabic the villagers spoke. Ours was a much more refined and cultured Arabic. We learned this more educated version of Arabic at home.

My mother would dress very neatly. It wasn't easy to raise seven to eight children. After she married them off, visits to the respective families started, and then came the grandchildren and more visits. She would spend all her time with the family. We had a very nice 'neighborly life' in Urfa. We spent our free time visiting our neighbors or being visited by them. It was a sweet life.

In my father's youth, Jews did not do military service [see Military Substitution Tax] [3](#).

I don't have a lot of information about how my mother and father met. At that time, my father lived in Urfa and my mother in Aleppo. My father had had great difficulty in getting divorced from the first wife he took from Aleppo; they had set very severe conditions. During that time, my [maternal] uncle Reful Acem had helped my father a lot and had told him, 'After your divorce, I will give you my sister.' That he did, and they got married in Aleppo. Then my father brought my mother to Urfa from Aleppo. I think it was the year 1907. My mother's arrival in Urfa was a great event. All Urfa was out in the streets or at the windows. There were no trains then of course. He brought her in a carriage. People watched the arrival of my mother from the roofs of their houses, too. My mother was short, fair-skinned with dark eyes and brows. She was a beautiful woman. She was beautiful even when she was old. In those years, in 1907, there were no civil marriages yet. There were only religious marriages in the synagogue. Civil marriages started later [see Reforms in the Turkish Republic] [4](#).

My father didn't study with Latin letters. He studied at the Talmud Tora, which meant he always read religious books. He had lots of books in Hebrew. We brought some of them when we moved to Istanbul. His friends and relatives knew his special interest in religious books and would send or bring him books from Israel [then Palestine] or from other countries. When he died, we gave all of

them to the Sisli [Beth-Israel] Synagogue [5](#).

There were no newspapers that were published in Urfa in those times.

Urfa was a small place, so its people were very religious. Jews didn't like to go out too much. They socialized amongst themselves. There was great respect and attachment for the elders. There was no one who didn't go to the synagogue on a Saturday. Nobody ate trefa [treyf]. No milk products would be cooked in pots and pans where meat was cooked. The whole kitchen would be cleaned up a month before Pesah [Pesach]. According to the Jews of Urfa, it is not forbidden to eat rice on Pesah. However, the Sephardim [see Sephardi Jewry] [6](#) don't eat rice in case something had slipped into the sacks of rice. That's why actually we clean the rice many times over. And for us, it isn't forbidden or a sin to eat it. However, the cooked rice has to be eaten up and not kept for the next day. There was no matsa [matzah] for Pesah in Urfa. We always made matsa at home like we did with our bread. This was to be sure about the ingredients in both the matsa and the bread. We prepared the dough and then went and waited at the baker's for it to bake and then we would bring it back. That's how we had both our matsa and our bread made. In the 1940s we washed our own wheat, then we would rent a mill and make the wheat into flour and then we would distribute that flour to the Jewish families in Urfa, who would then make their own matsa.

The other day I had a discussion about why we don't mix meat and milk with our present Hahambashi [Chief Rabbi] Rav Izak Haleva. I had asked my father this same question once and he had explained it to me in the following way, 'If you look at people's hands in Urfa, you will see that some people's skins are soft like cotton while others' are blotchy. The skin of people who mix meat and milk in their diet is blotchy and spotty.'

This week I watched a TV documentary about a 66-year-old man who looks extremely healthy and young. He said, 'Besides exercising every morning, I don't mix meat and milk in my diet because mixing the two is bad for one's health. Jews don't mix meat and milk and solid fats in their diet. I have remained young because I have taken good care to apply this to my diet!'

On Fridays my father would come home from work really early. He would wash, then put on his newest and cleanest clothes. We would all then go to the synagogue for Shabat. There would be a lot of different dishes on our return from the synagogue. A lot of importance was given to this meal. There would be prayers and the kidush [Kiddush] at home. On Saturday morning we would go to the synagogue without breaking our fast. After the kidush, there would be the seuda [breakfast] and that's when we ate.

The religious holidays were very joyful at home. At Purim, everyone would go visit everyone else. A special dessert called 'mahmur' would be made. Mahmur is made from flour and semola, then stuffed with chestnuts, pistachios and cinnamon. After baking this in the oven, you put powdered sugar on it. This is a special dessert of Urfa. There would also be cookies, and then another kind of dessert made by mixing almonds with pistachios and sugar. On Pesah, we would keep the matsa inside special cloths and eat it during the whole festival. In our house, we used the same kitchenware for Purim and Pesah. Even then they would be washed very carefully in a big cauldron where water would be boiled for this special kitchenware. My aunt's children would also come to our house and we would say the 'beraha.' We would be at least 15-20 people. I notice people reading the Agada [Hagaddah] nowadays; it is read very fast and finished really quickly. Our father, however, would take care to explain everything to us in detail. While reading the Agada, we would

first read the text in Hebrew and then we would also read the translation in Arabic so we could understand what the text said. This was special to us. Now this tradition has disappeared. My father could understand all the prayers he read, we couldn't.

On Shavuot we had other special foods. We had a dessert that was made with honey, specially for Shavuot. This dessert is the same as the Turkish 'sutlach' [a dessert made with milk, sugar, vanilla and rice], but honey is used instead of sugar. On Sukot [Sukkot] we built a suka [sukkah] in our house. The columns of the suka were there until the day we left Urfa. For Rosh Hashana [Rosh Hashanah] the same foods that are made in Istanbul were made in Urfa as well. The only difference was an additional dessert made of the long marrow. It is the jam version of the pumpkin dessert that we know. I've never seen this here [in Istanbul]; however, my sister continued this Urfa tradition here in Istanbul.

'Kubbe' was a special 'ichli kofte,' which was a Jewish dish blended with Arab culture. Kubbe was the long, narrow type of meatball special to the Jews. Normally Kubbe is made from bulgur [boiled and pounded wheat]. It can also be made from rice and pounded red meat and you add boiled water and tomato sauce. This you do not find in the Turkish cuisine. My sisters used to make this. My elder sister still does. It's really very difficult to make. The new generations don't know how to cook these dishes. The Urfa cuisine is slowly disappearing. It is during the holidays that all the family gets impatient to eat everything that my elder sister cooks in the old way. For example there is another dish called 'kaburga' [rib], which we love and which is very, very hard to make. You get lamb meat and stuff it with almonds, pine nuts and rice. After you stuff the meat you sew it up and close it off. Then you bake it in the oven with black pepper. You can serve it with potatoes or broad beans. My elder sister makes it once with potatoes and once with broad beans. These dishes are only cooked on special days every year. They are made on special occasions. The Arab stuffed vegetables are something else. When my elder sister makes stuffed squash [stuffed with meat] she adds tomato sauce and garlic to it and cooks them with dried apricots. The apricots kind of get soft and the meal has a slightly sour taste.

My father wasn't a member of any political or cultural organization. To tell the truth, the Jews couldn't be involved in things like that. The Jews in Urfa were not as comfortable as the Jews in Istanbul. They didn't feel comfortable wandering in the city. My father was very religious. The synagogue and the synagogue's administration were his whole occupation. There were a couple of rich families in Urfa. My father and the Anter family could be counted as these rich families. Other families were not very well off, so my father perforce had to finance a lot of things.

All the entertainment in Urfa was visiting other families. My father was very well-liked in the family as well. Jewish families were friends amongst themselves. They were reluctant to become friends with the Muslim families. Most of our Jewish neighbors have immigrated to Halep [Aleppo], New York, Argentina and in greater numbers to Israel. When I go to Israel, I meet many of them there. After the Urfa Events [Z](#) our poorer neighbors all left and went to Israel. Today I meet their grandchildren when I go to Or Yehuda [Tel Aviv].

The streets in Urfa were very narrow. The houses were built next to one another. When everyone slept on the roof, the neighbors would chat with each other. The roads were built with white stones. I sometimes went to my aunts' houses jumping from one roof to the other!

The population of Urfa was between 30,000 and 40,000. There were 200 Jewish families among these. The Jews lived in the ghetto-like, closed Jewish quarter of the city. The richer families lived outside Urfa. However 98 percent of the Jewish families lived in the Jewish quarter.

There was a big synagogue, with its winter and summer sections separated. It also had a midrash, where we had our Talmud Tora and learned our Tora. I don't remember if there was a mikve inside the synagogue, but I do remember that there was a mikve and a bath in every house. We also had a hamam in our quarter. On certain days, we would always go to the hamam. My mother generally wasn't a very energetic person but my father's sister, my aunt Sara was a very capable woman. She would gather all of us and we would all go to the hamam. Women used to be afraid to go alone because they would be stoned if they went out into the streets alone. My aunt lived in the house right next to us on her own. The house had been left to her by her deceased husband. She was a very respected person in Urfa. Even the Muslims would come to kiss her hand. She had been widowed when I was born.

As to the occupations of the Jews in Urfa: those who were better off dealt in haberdashery. As to other occupations, I can give you the example of the Antels, one of the leading families in Urfa. They were the representatives of Mobil Oil in Urfa. The poor Jews of Urfa were mostly peddlers. They would load their horses with things like cloth etc. and would go to the villages to sell their wares.

The French occupied Urfa in 1919 [see Ottoman Empire in World War I] [8](#). Then the Turks fought the French and threw them out of Urfa. [in 1922]. 11th April is Urfa's Independence Day. We used to have wonderful celebrations on that day. I remember very well because I had become a boy scout on one of those days. I even had a photo of me as a boy scout but unfortunately I lost that photo.

In Urfa, we used to work till noon on Fridays, and there was no work at all on Saturdays. Unless there was something very special going on, my father would go to work on Sundays. We didn't have the habit of closing our workplaces on Sundays.

There were no open markets in Urfa like there are here in Istanbul. We had a marketplace, and the boy who worked for my father would accompany him to the marketplace for the weekly shopping. They used to get the necessary vegetables from the marketplace. Behind the marketplace there were butchers who sold kosher meat. My father shopped from them. He was very careful about where he got his meat from.

The Turks would treat us badly in Urfa. Sometimes we were scared to even go out into the streets. They would swear at us because we were Jews and they would throw stones at the girls. I got beaten up many times as I was going to school. However, even though rarely, there were times when we went into partnership with non-Jewish families. There were two sorts of families in Urfa, the Kurds and the Arabs. We usually did business with the Arabs. The Arab villagers were very nice people. When these people came to the city they used to stay at our house. We used to cook for them. They would eat and then they would purchase goods from my father. These Arabs were poor but good people. The city people, on the other hand, always looked down on the Jews. They regarded us as flies and this hurt our pride really badly.

My father also had a neighbor called Hasan Demirkol. When I was seven or eight years old, he was probably 50-60 years old. He was supposedly my father's best friend. One day on the street, he took a stone in his hand and came at me crying, 'Jew.' After many years, when this man came to Istanbul, he did some shopping at my father's store as if nothing had happened. I cannot forget the bad personality of this man. One day in Istanbul, this man came to our shop and started shouting at us. I told him, 'Hey, this is not Urfa, so you'd better be careful.'

As to the other minorities; there were no Greeks in Urfa. The Armenians, after the massacres of 1907 and 1913, escaped to Halep [Aleppo] and there wasn't even one Armenian left in Urfa. Then there were only about 100 Jewish families left as a minority group. There was fighting between the Armenians and the Turks in Urfa. It was war between them. The Jews took the side of the Turks. Nobody could go out. They would go on rooftops and fire bullets around and kill people. Then the Kurdish agas [chief of clan] came and they were forced to flee to Halep [Aleppo]. When I was born in 1928, there were no Armenians left in Urfa.

My father had two brothers, Reful and Yusuf, and two sisters, Sara and Rahel. My mother had four brothers, Israil, Hayim, Abraham and Selim, and two sisters, Sara and Mari. My father's brothers all worked with my father. Then they left for Aleppo when they were very young and opened their own businesses. My father stayed in Urfa. My mother's brothers went to Argentina. They lived there and they died there. At that time Jews who left Aleppo went either to Brazil or to Argentina. My uncles chose Argentina. Their children are quite well off. My elder brother even did some business in Argentina and became partners with one of the daughters-in-law.

My siblings: Our eldest, Yakup, was born in 1908. He did his military service in Urfa. He was very religious. When he went up to the teva [tevah], they said the Hohma [a special prayer for rabbis] for him. He was religious at the level of a rabbi. He came to Istanbul in 1940. He married my sister-in-law, Alegra Bozo. They had three daughters and one son: Azur Bozo [son], Feride Bozo, Fifi Bozo and Rozet Bozo [daughters]. His eldest, Azur Bozo, was born in Urfa. My sister-in-law was in Istanbul but they came to Urfa for the birth. Yakup died in 2003.

Yakup was an authority in religious matters. He knew everything as much as the Hahambashi. He used to preach at the Buyukada Synagogue in the summers. There was a Talmud Tora in Urfa. Even in the years when he went to school, my brother would get up early in the morning, go to the Talmud Tora first, and then go to school. They used to teach the prayers, then the Perashot and then the rest of the knowledge. We had a tradition in our city. We used to go to the synagogue at 4 or 5 in the morning and all the rabbis and the wise men came, too. My brother was as fascinated by all this as my father. They would sit down and read the Torah. The grandfather of the Hayamo family, who were killed, was a great rabbi. They used to sit under his leadership in the mornings and talk. My brother said he learned everything from these talks. There were a lot of other wise men. They didn't only read, but they did interpretations as well. I didn't get to learn from these people unfortunately. I knew them of course, but I didn't continue with my lessons. That's why I don't have as much religious knowledge. However, I give things deep thought and what I know I know well. After my brother Yakup died, Rav Benveniste [a member of the Beth-Din of the Turkish Jewish community] spoke about him during one of the prayers. He talked about him as if he were an ordained rabbi - that was the level they considered him to be at.

Iliya Hidir was a skinny man. He was a reserved man; he never wore suits but would go around in a 'kusak' [large belt wrapped around the waist]. He was quite well off, knew business well and was a very rational man. He was also a rabbi but he didn't do it professionally. He was very knowledgeable in religious matters. He gave lessons in religion and everyone would gather around him. We had a rabbi called Moshe Atiye, who came to Istanbul afterwards. Moshe Atiye, my father, Davut Hidir and his brother, shochet Azur, studied religion at the synagogue in the mornings. The younger generation would gather around them to learn from them. They would read a text and then discuss the interpretation. They learned how to do what, when and how. That's how they learned about religion. Reading the Agada at Pesah usually took one hour in Urfa, but it would take two to three hours in our house because my father - may his soul rest in peace - would sit and teach us all. We would read the Agada in Hebrew and then read its translation into Arabic, so we could understand what it was saying. Sometimes, we would sit till morning interpreting certain parts of the text.

My [eldest] sister, Adel Bozo, was born in Urfa in 1914. She married my uncle's son in Aleppo. Adel and her husband went to Israel after they got married. My brother-in-law is dead. My sister is 90 today. There is a very big Bozo family in Israel. If you say 'Boz' in Israel, no-one will understand because everybody knows us as Bozo. My sister has three sons and two daughters: Rafi, Moshe and Ezra are her sons; and Miryam and Frida are her daughters.

[My second sister] Cemile Bozo was born in Urfa in 1917. She married Mirsi Aytun. She has five daughters and a son. That's a big family, too. Her son is Rahmi; and her daughters are: Hatun, Feride, Lidya, Adel and Rashel.

[My brother] Musa Bozo was born in 1919, when the French occupied Urfa. He came to Istanbul with my elder brother Yakup in 1940. He married a Sephardic girl, Ester Salis. She is the only Sephardic member of the family. My brothers founded a firm here. They were quite well off. My father had sent them here, so one branch of the family could be in Istanbul. Musa Bozo gained a very good reputation in business circles. He died in 2004. He had a son and a daughter. His son is Ezra, and his daughter is Feride. Feride, who is now widowed, lives in Israel.

[My third sister] Salha Bozo was born in Urfa in 1922. She was married to my brother-in-law, Saya Mizrahi. She lost her husband when she was very young in 1956. One of her sons, Ezra Bozo Mizrahi, lives in Israel. He is one of the rich and renowned families in Israel. Salha died in 1996. Ezra's wedding took place in September 2004. They invited me to the wedding and when Ezra said, 'You are like a father to me,' I had to go of course.

My sister Leyla Bozo was born in Urfa in 1924. She married one of my uncle's sons, Alber Bozo. So her surname remained Bozo. She lives in Israel. She has six children: Rafi [m], Shlomo [m], Ezra [m], Yosi [m], Frida [f] and Adine [f].

[My youngest sister] Sara Bozo was born in Urfa in 1926. She met her husband, Murat Siton, in Israel and got engaged there but they came here to get married in Istanbul and then they left for Israel. She has two daughters, Freide and Deniz, and one son, Eli.

We are eight siblings. There are eight boys in the family carrying my father's name Ezra and eight girls with the name of Feride.

I was born on 20th June 1928 in Urfa. I went to the Talmud Tora until I was seven or eight years old and learned Hebrew there. I could read the Perasha very well. There were no kindergartens in Urfa. As my father wasn't interested in things concerning education, a friend of his, who was working with him, enrolled me in school in 1934. If it hadn't been for him I wouldn't have been able to go to school. There was the Turan elementary school in Urfa. I studied there till the fourth grade.

I was very interested in horses and horse riding when I was young. There were no cars in my time. My father would ride to the villages to do his business. I was very much interested in horses when I was eight to ten years old. So much so that, when my family came to Istanbul in 1940 to marry my brother Musa Boz, I didn't come to the wedding because I didn't want to stop riding. I rode donkeys till I was twelve. When I was twelve, they bought me a horse and I started riding horses. When I became an officer during my military service in 1950 at the Izmir Mounted Forces, my superior officer asked me if I could ride well. I told him I could ride very well. So I was given a very special horse. Not everyone could ride that horse. But I could of course, and that became my horse. All my childhood was spent on horseback. It was my only hobby in Urfa. We also had gazelles and lambs; but I liked to feed pigeons most. We flew them over the tops of the roofs.

I remember very well my first day at school. The headmaster, Mr. Ihsan, had a whistle in his hand. The whistle was linked to a thick chain. Something happened and he hit me on the head with that chain. As my hair was short, you could see the big wound on my head. That is a very unpleasant memory I have of those days. There was another Jew in first grade apart from me and he couldn't speak Turkish very well. Even though Arabic was spoken in our homes, we used to speak Turkish among friends. However, as I was a more outgoing boy, my Turkish was better than the others'.

After I finished the fourth grade at the Turan school, they enrolled me in the Vatan school for the fifth grade. It must have been the [academic] year 1940-41. Then I went to secondary school in Urfa, which I finished in 1943. I had to go on with my education, but there was no lycee in Urfa. I came to Istanbul in 1943 because I wanted to study at Robert College [9](#), but I was too late for the exams. Others who had come from Urfa had gone to study at this school. My brother enrolled me in the St. Benoit Lycee [French Catholic high school]. Then I started living with my brother. I graduated in 1948-49. My family was in Urfa. I used to go there and visit until 1945- 46. However, after the Urfa Events, I didn't go there again. As I was the youngest, my mother was very attached to me and she would worry herself sick every time I came to Urfa. She didn't want me to go, so after 1946 I never went to Urfa again.

I used to like mathematics very much and I was very good at it. However, after I came to Istanbul I became very interested in literature. As I knew Arabic and French I could follow the literature classes very easily.

There wasn't any class or teacher that I hated. There was one teacher, I remember, her name was Halide Edip Zorlutuna. She used to talk against Jews a lot, this I remember. When she did that, a classmate of mine told her, 'There is a Jew here, please do not talk like that.' And she was quiet after that.

There were no private lessons in Urfa. However, when I first came to Istanbul and started studying at the St. Benoit Lycee, the classes were quite difficult and I had a hard time at first. I took some math lessons. But later on, it was OK. I was a hardworking and good student.

I read a lot. We had a very good relationship with my literature teacher at school. He had even made me librarian. Unfortunately one day, they stole all my books from the library. I had to replace the stolen books with my own. I was mostly influenced by Turkish Literature. My literature teacher was Zahir Guvenli. He used to write on art and aesthetics. He was a very strict teacher. There were 21 students in my class. We studied Ottoman literature.

In summertime in Urfa, we mostly went to Balikligol [Lake of the Sacred Fish]. I learned how to swim in that lake. Balikligol was considered to be a sacred place and so swimming in the lake was later on forbidden. [Abraham, it is said, was born near there in a cave. After smashing King Nimrod's statues (in the name of anti-idolatry) he was thrown from the mountain into a fire. But the fire turned to water and the burning wood to fish, symbolized today by the idyllic Balikligol (pools of sacred carp) at the Rizvaniye Mosque.] Not knowing this, one day I went to Urfa and went to the lake to fish. My friend warned me at the last minute. 'They'll kill you, if they find you fishing here,' he said. Duly frightened, I even threw the fish I had already caught back into the lake.

I didn't have any Jewish friends in my class. My best friend was a Turk, Kemal Kayacan. He was very religious. Much later, he became the Urfa representative for the Milli Selamet Party [Islamist fundamentalist political party, dissolved in 1980] and was Necmettin Erbakan's [10](#) number one man. We were close friends in school. In 1967 I had some business in Urfa. When I went there, Kemal didn't let me stay at a hotel; he took my bag and said I absolutely had to stay at his house. He showed me marvelous hospitality. He dealt with all my business in Urfa. Coincidentally, when his father got ill, my mother was ill as well, and we both stayed at the same hospital. He was religious, but he was a wonderful man. I learned that he died two years ago.

I like Turkish Classical Music very much. I'm a very good listener, but I've never played anything. I'm interested but have no [musical] talent.

There were no sports, political or cultural activities in Urfa. There wasn't even football in Urfa. We used to go and watch the football teams that came from the military.

We used to spend all Saturday morning at the synagogue. At noon, we had lunch, and in the afternoon, we went to the synagogue again. The whole day was spent in the synagogue.

There was no tradition of going on holiday in Urfa. I only went on holiday twice; one was in 1932 or 1933. My mother had rheumatism, so we went to Cermikli, near Urfa, a spa whose waters were said to be healing. We went there with my sisters and brothers, quite a big group. We stayed for 15 days. Also, in 1936, we went to Syria. My older sister was going to get engaged to my uncle's son. In 1937, when my sister got married, I stayed in Aleppo for five months. From there I went to Adana [on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey] and from there I returned to Urfa.

I remember the first time I got into a car. There used to be an old turbeh [tomb of a holy Muslim] in Urfa. People used to go and visit this turbeh. It could have belonged to the Jews, but I'm not sure. My mother was ill and people believed that if one visited this turbeh, all diseases would be healed. At that time there was a famous singer in Urfa by the name of Cemil Cankat. He also worked as a driver. My father hired his private car and he took us to that turbeh. I think it was 1938.

The first time I got on a train was the day I finished elementary school and came to Istanbul. There were no trains in Urfa. You had to go from Urfa to Akcakale and then get on the train. I changed

trains in Adana and arrived in Istanbul. The journey took around three days. When I was studying in Istanbul I always came and went in the same way.

When we were kids and were studying at state schools, we didn't go to school at Kipur [Yom Kippur]. While I was doing my military service at Gelibolu [Galippoli, on the European side of the Dardanelles] in 1949, they didn't let us go on leave at Kipur. We were eight to ten Jews in the regiment and we ran away. We joined the small Jewish community in the Gelibolu synagogue and said our prayers. When we got back, they were going to punish us. The lieutenant threatened us, but in the end we weren't punished.

I remember my bar-mitzva [bar mitzvah] very well. I learned everything I had to learn for the big day from my family. However, bar-mitzvas are not celebrated with too much pomp in Urfa; not like in Istanbul. There was a meal given at home. My father bought me a new suit. We had had a new tallet [tallit] brought from Istanbul. That is all. I don't remember getting a special present.

I liked Pesah best of all. Pesah at our house was better than a wedding. My aunt Rahel came with her children for dinner. All the kids would read the prayers all together. It was very crowded and it was a lot of fun.

The Urfa Events

The Urfa Events occurred in 1947, the year I was in Istanbul. There used to be a Jew from Siverek called Hayim Sorkaya Hayamo Haymun. He was a haberdasher too. His eldest son, Hayim Haymun, was a ne'er-do-well, who spent his family's money. He left his home in 1944. He became a disciple of Sheik Muhammed [Urfa's highest ranking religious Muslim] and wanted to convert to Islam. He took the name of Ahmet Kemal. The people in Urfa didn't like this situation because they were very religious and were ill disposed towards converts. This boy's family wasn't very well off and they say, they [the Muslim population] tempted him by offering him money. Anyway, after a while this boy went to Ankara to do his military service. During his military service he fell in love with a Jewish girl. The boy's parents went to Ankara to see him. The girl accepted to marry him on condition that he reconvert to Judaism. He agreed and told his family the good news. His parents went back to Urfa very happy and spread the news. The Muslim people of Urfa got very angry when they heard this news. In the fall of 1946, Hayim Ahmet Kemal came to Urfa on leave. His sheik tried to brainwash him into not reconverting to Judaism. Hayim was indecisive and went back to Ankara. Hayim's wish to reconvert caused great open hatred for the Jews and especially the Sorkaya family.

On the night of 30th December 1947, the rabbi of Urfa, Azur, Rabbi Yusuf Kohen and Isak Hayim gathered to recite the kadish [Kaddish] for the soul of Sorkaya's father-in-law. After dinner, the rabbis left. There was a maid working in that house, called El Medeh. There was a terrible rainstorm that night. After the household had gone to bed, El Medeh opened the door to unidentified murderers and became the cause of the murder of the whole family. El Medeh disappeared after this crime. The seven members of the Sorkaya family, Isak Hayim Sorkaya, his wife Mazal, his sons Yosef, Yaakov, his daughters Rashel and Ester and his mother-in-law Semha were all stabbed to death. Then the murderers went out into the street and started shouting, 'The Jews killed the Jews.'

The police took in all the Jewish men for questioning. My father, who was 68, had gone to other villages on business at that time. However, the murderers accused him and Yusuf Kohen [65](#) of killing the Sorkaya family while staying at their house. So when my father got back from the

villages, they caught him. My father, Ezra Azur Bozo, Nesim Binler, the shochet Davut Hidir, the rabbi Azur and Yosef Hamus were all caught and tortured with the bastinado for days and nights. [Bastinado: originally a Spanish word, referring to a form of torture which consists of beating the soles of the offender's bare feet with a hard object, like a cane or rod. The word can also refer to the device used to inflict torture.] My father didn't accept the accusations. He was so terribly beaten up that he couldn't stand on his feet. When they took him to hospital, he was bleeding all over, and when he got better they threw him into jail again. Our family applied to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but they didn't answer. We wrote the President letters but there was no answer from there either. We even went to the American Consulate. My father couldn't wear any shoes because his feet were bleeding all the time. [During interrogations his feet were beaten. It is an old method of torture, practiced in the Ottoman Empire.] My poor father - may his soul rest in peace - told us that they would cover their heads with sackcloth and then start the bastinado on his feet shouting, 'Confess, confess!' My father would say, 'What shall I confess? Why should I confess to something I did not do?' My father couldn't hurt a fly. They transferred him to Malatya [a city in Southeastern Anatolia] for the trial. We sent him lawyers. After these events, the Muslims of Urfa started boycotting the Jews in Urfa. They wouldn't do business with them, they wouldn't pay their debts to them and nobody would sell them anything. However, during the trial, with the good lawyers and pressure from everywhere, the officials realized they would look really bad, and they decided in favor of my father and he was released.

My father came to Istanbul as soon as he was released. He had already had a terrible blow economically during the Wealth Tax [11](#). The highest taxes had applied to my father and his friends. He had lost most of his money during the Wealth Tax. Also, after these events, most of the people who owed him money didn't pay their debts. So that was another blow. My brother had sent a lot of goods to Istanbul. When these goods were returned to Urfa, they were stolen and looted, so the family lost nearly everything. My brother had also sold goods to the murdered Sorkaya family and of course, they couldn't cash those debts either. In 1949 we sold everything we owned. It wasn't possible to live in Urfa any more. A lot of families moved to Istanbul. Those who were not well off went to Israel. It is true that those were very bad times for us. It is because of these events that there wasn't even one Jewish family left after these events. The last Jew to leave Urfa in 1951 was Nesim Binler. He was the father of my best friend from Urfa, Murat Binler, who is married to Ayten Taragano. Well, Nesim Binler gave the governor of Urfa the keys to the synagogue and asked that it be well looked after. But it wasn't, and today others have occupied it. I don't know who these people are, but I'm sure that if we applied to the officials we could get our synagogue back.

My father came to Istanbul in 1950. He lived at Sen [Happy] Apartment, No. 102, Abide-i Hurriyet Street in Sisli. He would go to the Sisli Synagogue early every morning. He would finish his prayers there, then, after breakfast, he would go to work with me. In the afternoons, he would go to the Corapci Han [building of sock-sellers] Synagogue at 4, and would say his prayers there and then he would return home.

He died in Istanbul in 1976. My mother died in Istanbul in 1968. Both my mother and father are buried in the Ulus Jewish cemetery.

The only Jew left in Urfa was Azur Acmi. He lived in the village left to him by his father. As he had nowhere else to go, he lived there for many years and died there. As I had already left Urfa when he died, I don't know the exact date of his death. However, I did talk to the man who bought the

village from him and asked him how they had buried him. He told me, 'We covered him in a shroud, we threw earth on him and we buried him with our own prayers and our ways [Muslim].' There was nothing else to be done. He was the last Jew of Urfa.

I was in Urfa during the first years of World War II. Only we had a radio in the Jewish quarter of Urfa. The radio broadcast news of the world. The whole neighborhood would come to our house to listen to the news. Everyone wanted to know if the Germans were coming and if we were going to go to war. When I came to Istanbul in 1943, and the Germans had arrived at the borders of Greece and Bulgaria we got really scared. At that time some people who weren't from Urfa came to Urfa to be safe. There was no sugar, no bread. You could only get those things with a certificate. In those years, Kuledibi [district around the Galata Tower in Istanbul] was the Jewish neighborhood. When I looked out the window at night, I saw the city was really dark. All the windows were covered with black paper. Even though we were students, we were given bread certificates, too. My family was glued to the radio. We listened to a reporter called Nurettin Aslan on the radio. He used to report the war news. We felt terrible when we heard about what was happening to the Jews. We didn't have any family members who died in the Holocaust. I've never met any survivors. I've heard about the Struma ship [12](#) of course, but I don't know any details.

I can never forget the years we were so affected by the Wealth Tax. I had never known my father to cry before that. That day, I saw him cry. My brothers were in Istanbul at the time and I was in Urfa. My father was taxed around 50,000 liras, which was a big fortune. My brothers, Yakup and Musa wrote to my father and the 70-year-old man started to cry. My brothers were a big help and they supported him. They said, 'Our money is your money.' My father paid the highest Wealth Tax in Urfa. No one was sent to Askale from Urfa.

During the 20 military reserve classes [13](#) period, my brothers tried very hard to circumvent it, but then they went to Balikesir and did their third military service. They paid some money and didn't work hard. They would stay for a week and then come back.

After I finished the St. Benoit Lycee, I went to do my military service. My preparation regiment was in Bolayir, Gelibolu. We had a 60-day period of preparation. We used to go out on market leave on Saturdays and Sundays. At that time there was a Jewish community in Gelibolu and they had provided me with a 'home' paper, with which I was able to prove that I had a home to go to when on leave. My older brother had a partner called Eskenazi. They had a client in Gelibolu called Kandiyoti. I got my 'home' paper from them. So, on weekends, when I went out on leave I stayed either at a hotel or with the Kandiyotis. On Saturdays I went to the synagogue at Gelibolu.

After my 60 days were over, I was sent to Ankara in 1949. I went to the officer's school in Ankara. We had relatives in Ankara and I was able to get the same kind of 'home' paper there too. I could go on leave on Saturdays. The best and most famous place in Ankara was the Karpic Restaurant, near Ulus. Even ministers frequented that place. I used to go there with my officer friends. I had a Jewish roommate, Alber Mesulam, and we were very good friends. I used to go to Karpic with him. There were others at this officer's school I was friends with. Mario Kohen for example, he is the dentist, Davut Kohen's father. Anyway, I finished this officer's school, actually with a lot of difficulty. It was harder than St. Benoit even! However, I did it and became an officer. At this school there was a captain who liked Jews and treated them very well. He knew I was Jewish. At that time, after school was finished, we had to draw lots to see where we would be serving. When it was my

turn, I was really lucky. I drew the Izmir Polygon Regiment. I served there for six months. I had a very comfortable and nice time there.

Most of the Jews of Izmir lived in Karatas [district]. I made friends there. I think in those years there were around 3,000 Jews in Izmir and they had a social club at a place called Goztepe. There were social gatherings and meetings there and I would attend. They organized tours to Cesme [a seaside summer resort town an hour's drive from Izmir]. There is a synagogue in Karatas. I used to go to the synagogue there on Saturdays. When my father started his business in Istanbul in 1950, I was so happy in Izmir that I didn't want to go back to Istanbul. I wanted to live in Izmir.

After I finished my military service and came back to Istanbul, I started my business life with my father and our partner, Lazar Adut, in 1950. We were in the haberdashery business. The economic situation in the country had not been great until 1950, but then things started to get better and businesses were thriving. We started to make money and slowly we prospered. We got a good reputation in the market. In 1953, my brothers Yakup and Musa Boz, a friend of ours, Sabetay Siva, and I bought the apartment we still live in, in Nisantasi [district on the European side of Istanbul], as partners. At the time I had been living with my father.

During the Citizen, speak Turkish policy [14](#) I was in Istanbul. In the years 1949-1950, while I was doing my military service, one day I was to go to Izmir. A friend of mine had come to see me off. We were speaking Arabic and not Turkish. An officer of higher rank approached me and said, 'Officer, why don't you speak Turkish?' In those times, most of the Jews didn't speak Turkish well. In my own family, everyone except my mother spoke Turkish.

In the summer we used to go to Buyukada [the biggest of the Princes' Islands in the Sea of Marmara, near Istanbul]. One day, as I was walking towards the most elite club of the island, the Anatolian Club [a social club where entrance is by membership], I saw a beautiful lady sitting in the garden of the Akasya Hotel [Accacia Hotel, on the main street of Buyukada, overlooking the sea]. I was 26-27 at the time and I liked the lady very much. Her name was Eva Ibrahimzade. Her mother was of Georgian origin and her father was from Iran. Well, it appears that they also had me in mind for their daughter. My brother Musa Bozo's son was studying at a college in Brighton, England. It was a Jewish school. Eva had a brother, Ceki Ibrahimzade. This Ceki told my brother, when he was in England to see his son, that he had a sister and wanted to marry her off. My brother was very insistent that I meet this lady. So I formally met Eva at a ball at Pera Palas, one of the oldest hotels in Beyoglu. I had bought a Buick in 1953, and the day after the ball, I took Eva for a drive in my car.

Eva was born in Istanbul in 1937. She knew Turkish. She didn't finish secondary school. I got engaged to Eva in 1957, and I married her in 1958. We got married at the Neve Shalom Synagogue [15](#). Then that night we had a party at the Hilton Hotel [the best and only five-star hotel in Istanbul at the time].

In 1960, my first son, Ezra Rubi Bozo, and in 1965, my second son, Aslan Bozo, was born. My first wife liked to gamble a lot: we had a group of friends with whom we played cards. We also went dancing sometimes. However, I didn't get along with my wife very well. Our life started to change parallel to our economic situation. There were fights all the time at home. My business wasn't doing so well either. We got divorced in a traumatic way in 1968. It was a very difficult and problematic divorce. When troubles come, they come in thousands, as they say, and shortly after my divorce I had a traffic accident. I had to pay a lot of money to the other party. I was therefore penniless

when I got my divorce in 1968. Meanwhile, I had been living in a rented apartment in Topagaci since I had gotten married. I had bought a house in Tesvikiye, Abdi Ipekci Boulevard in 1960, but I had left that house to my parents when I had gotten married. In 1968, after my divorce I moved out of the house in Topagaci and moved back to my house in Tesvikiye. My economic situation was really terrible at that time. That is when I started to understand what life was about. It is when one is left without money that one starts to look at life in another way. I was terribly depressed and terribly alone. However, I decided to work very hard for a comeback. I worked really hard from 1968 to 1972. I went everywhere in Anatolia in those four and a half years. I was selling industrial machines and I made a lot of money. However, I made certain mistakes again and I didn't invest my money in goods or real estate. So when the rate of inflation increased sky high, my fortune went down to zero but real estate always won.

My second wife, Cigdem Sara Bozo, was born in Istanbul in 1957. We met in 1976. She was working at a bank called 'Demirbank' [Iron Bank]. She was looking after my import business at the currency exchange service of the bank. We got married in 1978. We had a child a bit late and my wife was very sad about that. She got pregnant in 1982. I can never forget that day. She had had a test done. I was coming home with the doctor's report in my hand. My wife was at the window waiting for me. When I waved the paper, she understood that it was good news. She wanted to have a child really badly. The same year we had a beautiful daughter. We named her Feride. My wife continued working until she retired in 2000. I didn't want her to quit work when we got married. It would have been a mistake if I had made her quit work.

In summer I used to go to Buyukada and stay at the Anatolian Club, of which I had been a member since 1952. All my friends were there, too. Cigdem Sara, however, didn't want to go to Buyukada in the summers. So in 1982, the year Feride was born, we bought an apartment in Yesilkoy [a seaside resort in the Sea of Marmara, Istanbul]. We went to Yesilkoy for the summer holidays for eleven years until Feride finished elementary school. Then, after 1993, for ten summers we went to the Sumer Palace Hotel in Buyukada, which belonged to the organization called 'Turk Turing' [Editor's note: Founded in 1923 as 'Turkish Touring and Automobile Company.' Under the leadership of Celik Gulersoy, it became an organization dedicated to beautifying and restoring the old sites of Istanbul.] Then we bought a dog and the owner of the hotel didn't accept us with the dog. So we bought our summer house from the building contractor of Buyukada, Altin Bey. This was in 2002. We bought the house next to the Vatican Embassy. Our house has a pool. My wife always stays at that house during the summer. My daughter used to like the island, but now she doesn't want to go there any more. Our weekends were marvelous. Life was great on the island.

Ezra Rubi was born on 25th February 1960. Aslan was born on 25th February 1965. On the same day with five years difference. They used to love playing games when they were little. When I got divorced from my first wife, they were very young. My older sister and I would get the kids and take them on picnics. On Sundays, we would take them to the matinees at the cinema. We used to see two, three films every week. The boys were more interested in football and basketball. I had never been to a basketball match in my life, but with the boys I started to follow every match. We knew every player's name. I support Fenerbahce, but my sons are Galatasaray fans [Fenerbahce and Galatasaray are the most famous football teams in Turkey]. Once Rubi hurt his foot while playing football. I remember that day being very crowded because there was a football match between Turkey and Germany. I remember carrying Rubi on my back. My sons studied in England.

Aslan had a nervous breakdown and this has been going on for the last 20-25 years. My first wife, their mother, was treating them very harshly. The two boys started to live together on their own.

We had my elder son's brit milla [brit milah] at the Guzelbahce Hospital. The brits were done in hospitals at that time. My first wife's very large family came. We ordered everything from a baker. Everything arrived. Also, our Arab dessert called 'mamul' was made. Mamul is made from semola with pine nuts and almonds. We also have an almond sherbet called 'Shabuloz.' In Arabic 'Loz' means almond. The almonds are crushed and the oil extracted. You add water to this oil and drink it. When I visited my relatives in Milan they gave me almond sherbet to drink. This is really a very special, very nice drink. We serve it especially at weddings. Well, that was how my son's brit milla was celebrated. My second son's brit milla was celebrated in the same vein.

Both my sons studied at a Jewish school in England. It was a religious school, and they were taught religion, too. My sons preferred to study in England because they wanted to learn English well. What is more, going to study in England was fashionable at the time. Rubi went to England in 1969, and Aslan went after elementary school, when he was twelve, in 1977. It was a hard, disciplined school. If the boys didn't wear a kipa, they would be beaten up. Aslan then went to study for a year in the USA. He couldn't live alone, however, and he returned after a year. He was a very good student. When he came back, he was admitted to the Management Department of Bogazici University [16](#) but he quit in his last year. He had had his nervous breakdown by then.

My sons were educated according to Jewish traditions in their school in England. When the time came for my second son's bar-mitzva, we preferred to celebrate it in England rather than in Istanbul.

After I got divorced from my first wife, I picked up my kids on Friday afternoons and we spent two and half days together. I even took them to Club Med [French holiday resort, official name 'Club Mediterranee'] once. Rubi used to play table tennis very well. He even won a prize for first place in a tournament once.

The greatest misfortune in my life was the accident that my elder son Rubi had in 1994. He had a terrible time as a result of brain damage and we are still having a very hard time. My other son Aslan is in a depression. I took Rubi to Israel many times for medical treatment. We took him to a big hospital named Levinstein [Israel's major center for neuro- rehabilitation. They work principally with neurologically impaired patients]. At first they didn't want to accept us [perhaps, because they did not have an appointment]. But then my nephew phoned one of the most important professors at the university there and then they accepted us. But unfortunately they couldn't do anything for him. We are hoping he will get better one day. He hasn't regained consciousness yet. The doctor told me, 'A human being can use only 10 percent of his brain. Maybe one day, if a vein in your son's brain is de-blocked then he may regain consciousness.' We haven't lost hope that God will make everything all right.

My daughter Feride, from my second wife, was born on 10th July 1982 at the Guzelbahce Hospital in Istanbul. My daughter studied at the 'Isik Lycee' [private high school founded in 1934] from kindergarten till she finished the lycee. Then fortune continued to smile upon her and she was admitted to the German Language Teaching Department of Marmara University [17](#). She is in her last year now.

When I lived in Urfa I went to the synagogue every day, every Saturday and every holiday. However, when I came to Istanbul in 1943 and was away from home and family, I grew out of my Jewish traditions and my religion during my school years. I also had some difficult times during my first marriage. Then some time ago, I had a long talk with our Hahambashi Haleva and I made him a promise. He told me that my family was a very religious family and wanted to know why I didn't come to the synagogue. I wasn't feeling right about this either, so I promised him to go to the synagogue regularly. So now, every Friday night and on Saturdays and during the holidays I go to the synagogue with my wife and daughter. I've also decided to go during the week if I have the time to do so.

We continued with the same seder nights here in Istanbul, too. In Istanbul, we were about 30 for dinner with my older sister and two older brothers and their families and kids.

When I got divorced in 1968, I didn't know how to cook at all. My sister cooked beautifully. She would come and cook for me and that is how I learned how to cook. I watched her cook for me. There is one dish we love. It's called 'Cederra.' It's a mixture of rice and lentils. You boil the lentils and as they're cooking you add the rice. After it's cooked, you add two onions in very thin slices with its oil. Even though my daughter was born and grew up in Istanbul she loves Arab food. Of course, I can't make the complicated dishes.

Normally we all of us here, our relatives, my sisters, my nephew, the Antel family and the Binler family, all gather to eat Arab food. My brother, Musa Boz, may he rest in peace, loved to eat. Once, on the eve of Pesah, he got really sick to his stomach and we had to take him to hospital. The only thing he could think of the next day was what we would eat for Pesah. Then the next day, he asked eagerly, 'Harun, what did you have for dinner?', and I told him, 'Ribs, special meatballs, all Arab dishes.' He said, 'Oh, what a pity, I missed all that wonderful food. Go and bring me some food from the cafeteria now!!!'

Whenever there is a death in our family, we recite the kadish and the men don't shave their beards for a month.

I'm not a member of any of the Jewish institutions or social clubs. I wanted to join, but just when I felt it was the right time for me, my sons got ill and I had to take care of them.

My first wife's brother, Ceki Ibrahimzade, had a partner called Koyuncular. They belonged to the Shabbatai Tzvi [Donme] [18](#). After I became a member of the Anatolian Club in Buyukada in 1952, I met a lot of these Selanikli [Salonican] Donmes. I was even on quite intimate terms with some of them. They had a very closed community and married among themselves. My brother told me once that during the period when Ribi Saban was Hahambashi, they wouldn't open their shops on Kipur. [Rav Rafael David Saban (1953-1960): the first Chief Rabbi that was officially recognized by the government of the Turkish Republic in this quality by a special law that was passed for this. His predecessors held the office as 'locum tenens' and as 'head of the Beth-Din.']

I don't use either Internet or email. My partner works with the computers and when I need something done, I get my secretary to do it for me.

I had a very nice group of friends till I got married. In our time, we didn't have any Turkish friends. Jojo Bati's brother, Selim Bati, was married to my niece. Jojo Bati was my best friend and we came

to Istanbul from Urfa together. He left to go to the USA. Another friend from Urfa, Moiz Moseri immigrated to Israel and has died. Murat Binler has been my friend since Urfa. Armando Gatenyo was my childhood friend. We lived in the same street. Niso Behar and Leon Menase were my other friends. We were a handful of guys. I lost them all after I got married. I couldn't have many friends while I was married. Even with my second marriage it didn't work out, so I saw the guys separately. My second wife was very young of course. We didn't see many people during the winter. In the summer I would see my friends at the port in Buyukada. Now, on Buyukada I have very sweet neighbors and we see each other.

In the 1950s we went out with Jewish girls but with the new generation, things have changed. They don't care about the religion of their friends. They don't differentiate between Jewish and Muslim. The attitudes towards the Jews have changed too, there is no beating, stoning or swearing now.

When I lived in Taksim [a main square on the European side of Istanbul], there were Jews everywhere. Our greatest luxury was to go to the Hilton Hotel for dinner and dancing. Later on, we started to go to night clubs. We also went to have lunch or dinner once a week at Abdullah [one of the most famous and prestigious restaurants in Istanbul, founded in 1888]. On Saturday nights, we went to Konak Cinema [in Harbiye, very near Nisantasi]. There would be gala nights at the Konak Cinema, and people would even wear tuxedos for these gala nights. We also liked to go to the theater. I like Yildiz Kenter [a famous theater actress and professor of drama at the Istanbul Conservatory, also owner of the private Kenterler Theater] very much.

My first wife had relatives in England. So we traveled there. With my second wife, I traveled to France, saw other places in Europe and then went to Israel. I visited all my relatives and sisters in Israel. I travel for business as well, to the USA, Malaysia, Thailand, everywhere really. For business I travel with my partner.

I was on Buyukada on 6th -7th September 1955 [19](#). Even those friends whom I loved very much stoned our house. These were friends we had been together with at the Anatolian Club day and night. Nothing happened to our house but it was stoned. The next day we went to Karakoy to work. Everywhere was a terrible mess. All the shops had been looted, there were bales of cloth thrown out into the streets. There used to be a fabric shop next to the Zulfaris Synagogue [20](#) in Karakoy. The street was covered with fabrics. We had to walk over them. Some Jewish shops in Beyoglu had been damaged as well.

I didn't vote until 1945. In 1946 there was great excitement for the Democratic Party and Adnan Menderes [21](#). So I voted for them in 1946 and in 1950. After that I voted for the Justice Party [22](#). Then in recent years things changed. The spirit of the Democrats changed. So I voted for Ecevit [Republican People's Party] [23](#) and then for the People's Party. But the latter failed terribly. I like Mustafa Sarigul [mayor of Sisli, from the People's Party].

I was in Yesilkoy during the 1986 Neve Shalom massacre [see 1986 Terrorist Attack on the Neve Shalom Synagogue [24](#). A Jewish neighbor of mine told me about it. Then I turned on the TV and learned everything from the news.

I was at my sons' when the 2003 Bombing [of the Istanbul synagogues] [25](#) happened. The roads were closed on my return. The buses weren't working. When I came to Osmanbey, I asked the people in the street and they told me, 'the synagogue has been bombed.' I spent the rest of the

day in front of the TV. At first I couldn't even react, but the Muslim boy who works for me got very angry because they had bombed a place of prayer.

Most of my family immigrated to Israel. My two uncles, Reful and Yusuf Bozo, their children, Yakup and Moshe Bozo, my aunt's daughters, my three sisters, Adel, Salha and Leyla and their children all lived in Israel, and those who are still alive continue to do so.

I never thought of immigration. My roots are here and after my divorce, if I had left, I wouldn't have been able to take my sons with me. What's more, my business was good and I had a good life.

I go to Israel quite often. Six years ago, there was no terror and I greatly admired the place. Israelis know how to live. They don't spend tons of money for a night dress. Everyone likes to travel and they are simple people. One day I asked my niece - she is 66 - how they could let their children have so much freedom. She said, 'Look, these are very independent people. My daughter has studied well. Her boyfriend is studying at university. They know how to choose partners. We don't interfere with their lives. They are very much aware of what they are doing.' In Israel it does not do for a woman not to work.

It was a great honor for me when the state of Israel was founded. Every year they celebrate it on 14th April. [Editor's note: The independence of Israel was declared on Iyar 5, which was 14th May 1948. The annual celebration of the Independence Day (Yom Hatzmaut) ever since takes place on Iyar 5, which falls on a different day every year.] I was there on that day one year. Everyone was happy. Even in Turkey a lot of things changed after 1948. Nobody says, 'Cowardly Jews' any more. The Six-Day-War [26](#) in 1967 proved a lot of things. The concept of the cowardly Jew ended then. The cliché types of 'Salamon' and 'Mishon,' which were once typical cartoons, became history. There was a great change. [Salamon and Mishon: Anti-Semitic cartoon figures in Turkey. They are characterized by the traditional depiction of anti-Semitic imagery: they bear certain facial features and are unable to speak proper Turkish.]

I consider life to be very difficult. If you are too sensitive you suffer a lot. You would like to do everything perfectly but you can't. Most people don't care about life, it doesn't affect them. Unfortunately I'm sensitive and I don't want anyone to be hurt. That's why I've had difficulties in life. I've transmitted my philosophy of life to my children: to be very honest, to be hardworking and, most important of all, to have confidence in oneself. Self-confidence is 99 percent of success. The kids sometimes tease me, telling me: be honest, be correct and have confidence in yourself. I like working. My wife Sara thinks as I do and says the kids should continue to do what they see from us.

Glossary

[1](#) Surname Law

Passed on 21st June 1934, in the early years of the Turkish Republic, requiring every citizen to acquire a surname. Up to then the Muslims, contrary to the Jews and Christians, were mostly called by their father's name beside their own.

[2](#) Ashar Tax

The Agricultural Products Law was passed in 1942 in order to tax the wealth in the countryside.

Large commercial landowners were its target. It was seen as a return to tithe, which had been abolished in 1925. It failed to draw excess profits from large farmers and fell relatively heavily on small subsistence farmers.

3 Military substitution tax

The traditional Ottoman poll tax (jizya), levied on non-Muslim subjects (dhimmi) for exemption from military service, was replaced in 1855 by a universal military substitution tax (bedel-i askeriye), levied on everybody, regardless of religious community (millet), not wanting to serve in the military. Although the opportunity was given to non-Muslims to join the military, they usually stayed out by paying the tax; the traditional Muslim military authorities (askeri) were not anxious drafting them anyway. This tax was abolished as late as 1910 and non-Muslims were finally conscripted into the armed forces along with Muslims.

4 Reforms in the Turkish Republic

After the establishment of the Turkish Republic (29th October 1923) Kemal Ataturk and the new Turkish government engaged themselves in great modernization efforts. Fundamental political, social, legal, educational and cultural reforms were introduced in the 1920s and 30s in order to bring Turkish society closer to the West and shape the republican polity. Ataturk had abolished the Sultanate earlier (1922); in 1924 he did so with the Caliphate (religious leadership). He closed down the dervish lodges, the turbes (tombs of worshipped holy people) and forbade the wearing of traditional religious costumes outside ceremonies. According to the Hat Law the traditional Ottoman fes was outlawed; surnames were introduced and the traditional nicknames were outlawed too. International measurement (metric system) as well as the Gregorian calendar was introduced alongside female suffrage. The republic was created as a secular state; religion and state were divided: the Shariah (Islamic law) courts were abolished and a new secular court was introduced. A new educational law was created; the institutes of Turkish History Foundation and Language Research Foundation were opened as well as the University of Istanbul. In order to foster literacy the old Arabic scrip was replaced with Latin letters.

5 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.

6 Sephardi Jewry

Jews of Spanish and Portuguese origin. Their ancestors settled down in North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, South America, Italy and the Netherlands after they had been driven out from the Iberian peninsula at the end of the 15th century. About 250,000 Jews left Spain and Portugal on this occasion. A distant group among Sephardi refugees were the Crypto-Jews (Marranos), who converted to Christianity under the pressure of the Inquisition but at the first occasion reassumed their Jewish identity. Sephardi preserved their community identity; they speak Ladino language in their communities up until today. The Jewish nation is formed by two main groups: the Ashkenazi and the Sephardi group which differ in habits, liturgy their relation toward Kabala, pronunciation as well in their philosophy.

7 Urfa Events

The Urfa Events broke out in 1947 after a young Jewish convert to Islam wanted to reconvert to Judaism. Muslim fanatics murdered seven members of his family and anti-Jewish riots broke out in the town. Fellow Jews were accused of the murder and tried at court but finally released. (Source: 'Devlet'in Yahudileri ve "Oteki" Yahudiler' [The Government's Jews and the 'Other' Jews], Iletisim Yayinlari, Istanbul, 2004)

8 The Ottoman Empire in World War I

The Ottoman Empire entered the war on the side of the Central Powers in October 1914, as they were the ones fighting the traditional Ottoman enemy: the Russian Empire. During the winter of 1914-15 the Ottomans launched an ill prepared campaign in the Caucasus against Russia with the hope to be able to turn the local Turkish-speaking Russian subjects (Azerbaijan) to their sides. Instead the Russian counter-offensive drove the Ottomans back behind the borders and Russia occupied North Eastern Anatolia. In the spring of 1915 the Entente was to occupy the straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles) and ensure the passage of supply to the Russian Black Sea ports. British troops landed in Gallipoli (Dardanelles) but were not able to expand their beachheads against the army of Mustafa Kemal Pasha (later Kemal Ataturk); they evacuated in February 1916. Although the Ottomans were able to resist the British in Mesopotamia (Iraq) in 1915, they finally took Baghdad in 1917 and drove the Ottomans out of the entire province. Although the Russians made further advance in Eastern Anatolia they left the war after the October Revolution and according to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918) the Ottomans were able to regain Eastern Anatolia. Due to the Arab Revolt supported by the British as well as the direct British military intervention the Ottomans lost both Palestine and Syria; Mustafa Kemal was able only to withdraw his forces intact to Anatolia. Sultan Mohammed VI (1818-22) was forced to sign an armistice with the Entente (October 1918) and as a result British and French battle ships reached the port of Istanbul. The Sultan finally signed the Peace Treaty in Sevres in August 1920, according to which the Arab and Kurdish provinces and Armenia were lost as well as the whole of European Turkey with Istanbul, and the Aegean littoral was to be given to Greece.

9 Robert College

The oldest and most prestigious English language school in Istanbul since the mid-19th century providing education to the elite of Turkey as well as other countries in the region. Robert College was born in 1863 in the village of Bebek by the Bosphorus, when Christopher Robert approached Cyrus Hamlin with his desires and found a receptive audience. Hamlin, an American schoolmaster, had been running a school, a bakery and a laundry in Bebek at the time. Robert was a wealthy American industrialist desiring to establish in Turkey a modern university along American lines with instruction in English. These two men, an educator and a philanthropist, successfully collaborated to found Robert College. Until 1971, it included two campuses: the actual Robert College exclusively for boys and the American College for Girls. In 1971, the American College for Girls and the Robert College boys school united and co-education started under the name of Robert College at the previous American College for Girls campus. At the same time the Turkish government took over the boys' campus, which became Bogazici University (Bosphorus University). Robert College and today's Bogazici University were and still are the best schools in Turkey. Through the years,

these schools have had graduates occupying top positions in Turkey's business, political, academic and art sectors.

10 Erbakan, Necmettin (1926)

Islamic politician and Prime Minister of Turkey (1996-97). Since the proclamation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 (secular state) he was the first leader openly adhering to Islam. Born in Sinop, and a professor of Physics, he lived in Germany for many years. He was the founder of the Welfare party, growing in popularity in the 1990s and the leader of Islamic protests in the 1980s. As a Prime Minister he strengthened Turkey's ties to the Muslim world, yet kept the country's European orientation intact. At home he introduced a number of popular measures, gave support to the poorest and raised the wages of civil servants. His party was outlawed in 1997 by the military and forces fearing Islamization and the escalation of the Kurdish question. (Lexicorient: <http://i-cias.com/>)

11 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.

12 Struma ship

In December 1941 the ship took on board some 750 Jews - which was more than seven times its normal passengers' capacity - to take them to Haifa, then Palestine. As none of the passengers had British permits to enter the country, the ship stopped in Istanbul, Turkey, in order for them to get immigration certificates to Palestine but the Turkish authorities did not allow the passengers to disembark. They were given food and medicine by the Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish community of Istanbul. As the vessel was not seaworthy, it could not leave either. However, in February 1942 the Turks towed the Struma to the Black Sea without water, food or fuel on board. The ship sank the same night and there was only one survivor. In 1978, a Soviet naval history disclosed that a Soviet submarine had sunk the Struma.

13 The 20 military classes

In May 1941 non-Muslims aged 26-45 were called to military service. Some of them had just come back from their military service but were told to report for duty again. Great chaos occurred, as the Turkish officials took men from the streets and from their jobs and sent them to military camps. They were used in road building for a year and disbanded in July 1942.

14 Citizen, speak Turkish policy

In the 1930s-1940s, the rise of Turkish nationalism affected the Jewish community as well. The

Salonican Jew Moise Cohen (1883-1961), who had been in close contact with the young Turks in his home town in the years preceding the restoration of the Constitution, took the old Turkish name Tekinalp. He led a campaign among his fellow Jews to encourage them to speak only Turkish to integrate them fully into Turkish life, declaring that 'Turkey is your home, so you should speak Turkish.' In the major culture however, the policy of 'Citizen, speak Turkish' was seen as pressure put on minorities to speak Turkish in public places. There was a lot of criticism and verbal attacks and jeers on those who did not comply with this social rule.

15 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.

16 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.

17 Marmara University

founded in 1883 under the name of 'Hamidiye College of Higher Commercial Education' in the Cagaloglu neighborhood in Istanbul. At the time, it was the only leading higher education institute for studies in economics and commerce. In 1923 the institute was located in the Rectorate Building in Sultanahmet (historic old city). From 1923 to 1959, it was called 'Higher Education School of Economics and Commerce'. In 1959 its name was changed to 'Academy of Economics and Commercial Sciences'. Finally, in 1982, the name was changed to 'Marmara University'. Currently, it comprises 14 faculties, 9 schools, 11 institutes and 28 research centers.

18 Donme

Crypto Jews in Turkey. They are the descendants of those Jews who, following the example of Shabbatai Tzvi (leader of the major false messianic movement in the 17th century), converted to Islam. They never integrated fully into the Muslim society though and preserved various distinctions: they married between each other, performed services in distinct mosques and buried their dead in separate cemeteries. Up until the Greek annexation of Southern Macedonia (1912, First Balkan War) they lived in Salonika and were relocated to Ottoman territory (mainly to Istanbul) with most of the rest of the Muslim population later.

19 Events of 6th-7th September 1955

Pogrom against the ethnic Greeks in Istanbul. It broke out after the rumour that Ataturk's house in Salonika (Greece) was being bombarded. As most of the Greek houses and businesses had been registered by the authorities earlier it was easy to carry out the pogrom. The Greek (and other non-Muslim communities) were hit severely: 3 people were killed, 30 were wounded, also 1004 houses,

4348 shops, 27 pharmacies and laboratories, 21 factories, 110 restaurants and cafes, 73 churches, 26 schools, 5 sports clubs and 2 cemeteries were destroyed; 200 Greek women were raped. A great wave of immigration occurred after these events and Istanbul was cleansed of its Greek population.

20 Zulfaris Synagogue/Museum of Turkish Jews

This synagogue, recorded in the Chief Rabbinate archives as Kal Kadosh Galata, is commonly known as Zulfaris Synagogue. The word is derived from the former name of the street in which it is located: Zulf-u arus, which means Bride's Long Lock. Today the street is called Perchemli Sokak which means Fringe Street. There is evidence that this synagogue preexisted in 1671, when Haim Kamhi was Chief Rabbi, as the foundations date from the early 15th century Genovese period. However, the actual building was re-erected over its original foundation, presumably in the early 19th century. In the 1890s, repair work was carried out with the financial assistance of the Camondo family and in 1904 restoration work was conducted by the Jewish community of Galata, presided over by Jak Bey de Leon. (Source: www.muze500.com)

21 Menderes, Adnan (1899-1961)

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, lead by General Cemal Gursel. He was put on trial on the charge of violating the constitution and was executed. (Source: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/>)

22 Justice Party

Established in 1961, it was one of the two major parties prior to the September 1980 coup, led by Suleyman Demirel. Following its dissolution by the National Security Council, many of its members subsequently joined the ANAP (Motherland Party) or the DYP (True Path Party).

23 Republican People's Party

Founded in the 1920s and led by Kemal Ataturk until his death in 1938, then by Ismet Inonu. Headed by Bülent Ecevit in the 1970s, it was one of the major parties prior to the 1980 coup. A majority of its deputies ultimately regrouped in the left-of-center SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party); others joined the DSP (Democratic Left Party). The party was reactivated by Deniz Baykal in 1992. In 1995 the SHP dissolved itself, and many members joined the CHP.

24 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.

25 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.

26 Six-Day-War

The first strikes of the Six-Day-War happened on 5th June 1967 by the Israeli Air Force. The entire war only lasted 132 hours and 30 minutes. The fighting on the Egyptian side only lasted four days, while fighting on the Jordanian side lasted three. Despite the short length of the war, this was one of the most dramatic and devastating wars ever fought between Israel and all of the Arab nations. This war resulted in a depression that lasted for many years after it ended. The Six-Day-War increased tension between the Arab nations and the Western World because of the change in mentalities and political orientations of the Arab nations.