

The Front Facade Of The Store



This photograph is the front facade of Lazarro Franko, one of the important stores of the time in Galatasaray where my wife's father worked [on the European side, where Rue de Pera is, the street with the trendiest stores where people dress in their best].

My father-in-law, Moiz Uriyel Adoni, was born in 1895. I don't know which school he studied at but he is a primary school graduate. He learned French by practising. My father-in-law was someone I respected a lot. He was very knowledgeable on some subjects as well as being pleasant and cordial.

The home-furnishings store opened in Beyoglu [on the European side, where Rue de Pera is located, the place where the trendiest stores are located and where the most fashionable people shop] by a family who had emigrated from Italy to Istanbul, Lazaro Franko (name of store and name of family are the same), was a company that continued from father to son. My father-in-law started working with the third generation of this family as an apprentice at a very young age. As the years passed, his boss grew to like him. He made him a partner in his store with %10 since my father-in-law's knowledge of the business and his customer relations were very good. There were three partners in the store (I don't remember the names).

My father-in-law would go to Ankara [the capital of Turkey, where all the political events happen] to get measurements for the upholstering and curtains of Çankaya Köşkü [the villa where the president resides, even now], would bring samples from the store and ask Atatürk:

"Here you go, my pasha, whichever fabric you prefer, that is what we will use for the upholstery". They were pretty close with the pasha. My father-in-law would always personally attend the business he had with the government, he did not trust anyone.

Let me tell you an incident demonstrating how humble Atatürk {Gl.4] was. One day when my father-in-law was measuring the upholstery for the sofas, Atatürk said:

- "It would be better if we carried this sofa to the other room".

My father-in-law responds:

- "Certainly, my pasha, let me call one of the staff".

- "What am I here for, if you hold it from one end, we'll do it together" he said.

Lazarro Franko's grandchildren were capitalists, my father-in-law was the one in charge of the whole operation in the company. He was known and trusted by everyone in the commerce industry in both Ankara and Istanbul as well as the banks.

The lower floor of the store was the warehouse and a bathroom, the top floor was where home-furnishing samples were displayed. At midday, they would close for an hour. Usually the other two partners would go home for lunch. My father-in-law would bring his lunch from home and eat there since he lived in Kadıköy. Because he was the oldest person in the store, he was always in possession of all the keys, including the safe. One day, during lunch break, when my father-in-law went downstairs to wash his hands, he was murdered by a person who was both nightguard and salesclerk in the store, at the age of 83 (in 1978) using a tie. The partners, unaware of the incident, found the doors unlocked when they returned. There was no nightguard nor my father-in-law around. "Moiz, Moiz where are you?" they called out and when there was no response, started looking for him. Of course the scene in the lower floor was horrible and the guilty party had run away, they called the police.

Later, of course, the accused was captured and interrogated. At the interrogation he said:

- "I killed Mr. Moiz because I thought there was 1500 dolars in the safe". "I did not do this murder alone, I called my cousin to the store and we spent the night there. In the morning when he showed up, my cousin hid downstairs, I did my daily chores as usual. We had planned it all. At lunch time when Uncle Moiz went downstairs to wash his hands, my cousin was going to strangle him, take the keys and open the safe, and we would run away. Everything went according to plan. However, we found 1,500 Turkish liras, not 1,500 dollars". The court sentenced them to 18 years in jail. There were two pardons in time and they got out in 10 years.