

Picture With Coworkers In The Factory



This picture was taken in 1952, with the friends I worked with in Istanbul Çakmakçılar Amerikan Han. The place I worked was the Akel factory. We were about 40 workers. Here I was around 17 years old and I was the manager in the factory. I started working in this factory around 9 or 10. I was a hardworker. When I first started I was wrapping rubber, when I finished my work, I continued with the machines. In the old times there were machines called Swiss machines, they would wrap ribbons and lace. With time I took over 6 machines. I would do packing and take care of the machines at the same time, and when a customer came, I would take notes, such as this came, that came, an order came etc. The boss saw the way I worked and used to say “this girl does the work of 3 people”. They raised my salary consequently, I don’t remember how much I got but my rank was higher and I left there as a bride. In the photograph, the one on the right is Fortüne, I don’t remember her last name, I am in the center, next to me a girl named Inez. They were my coworkers in the factory. Afterwards we never had a chance to see each other. I think both of them went to Israel. I could only attend third grade in primary school. That year my mother was very sick and one of my brothers was a soldier. I had lost my father at a young age. My mother was very ill, her legs became paralyzed, she wasn't able to walk, I think her legs became immobilized from fear and she was unable to walk. That is why I stopped going to school after 3rd grade so I could take care of my mother. I started working at 9 years of age, I started caring for my mother at 9 years of age. There was a pantyhose factory in Kasimpasha belonging to some Druzes, I started working there. First I started working in the weaving, I would attach labels. Then I would make straps for bras. We paid the rent with the money I earned. One of my brothers was a soldier, the other had just returned and did not have a job. I had a bad childhood, I could not get an education. Whereas I was a hardworking student, in third grade, after I quit school, a committee from the school came to my home to ask that I return. To ask why you are not sending your daughter to school. They saw my mom's situation, my mother was sick. I couldn't go. In the meantime there was a government law stating that it was mandatory to finish elementary school. Because of this they would permit me to leave work at 3 o'clock and I would go to night school after that. I finished elementary school this way. I got my certificate. Then I continued working.