

With My Fiancee



In this photo Suzan Akkoen, who is going to be my wife later on, and I are engaged. This photo was taken by the famous photographer of the time, Fuat Uskunay. He was Suzan's neighbor in Kuzguncuk [a district in the Asian side of Istanbul] and this photo was taken at Suzan's house in Kuzguncuk. You can see Suzan on the left and me on the right.

My wife, Suzan, is from Istanbul. She was born and raised in Kuzguncuk. My wife's English was very good, because she was a graduate of the British School in Istanbul (English High School for Girls). Besides this, her French was also very good. Like I said, we were working at the same firm. We met and went out together. Her mother didn't want me, because of my low income, when we decided to get married. Nevertheless, against everything, we got married in the synagogue in Kuzguncuk, in May 1935. (not the one that is in use today, there was another one on the upper part of Kuzguncuk. I forgot its name.)

At those times, the weddings were not celebrated like today's ostentatious weddings. In the afternoon, as the whole family we went to the Novotni Garden, across Union Francaise in Tepebasi. We ate our dinner, and sat outside, as the season was favorable. It was very nice. We all returned home together, and went to work the next morning.

After we got married, we rented a flat from the apartment named "Belvu" [from the French "belle vue" meaning "nice view"] on Bankalar Street. These flats were so large that we rented it together with David Eskenazi and his wife, very close friends of ours who hadn't had any children and who loved ours as their own. They had two rooms, and we had two rooms and a living room. We shared the kitchen and the bathroom. As a result of this solution we found, paying the rent was not that

hard.

After we got married, Suzan always gave her family what she earned. Her family came to live with us when her father got sick. Later on, when the financial situation of Moiz, Suzan's elder brother, improved, he took care of his parents. When my father-in-law died, my mother-in-law started living with us. Later on in 1957, she went to Israel with her younger son, Moiz, and died there in 1967.

Unfortunately my wife Suzan got very sick, and though we did everything to save her, we couldn't. She died in 1988, and was buried in Arnavutkoy. [The sephardic cemetery in Ulus was always called Arnavutkoy]. I miss her so much that, I go to visit her very often, and talk to her from heart to heart.