

Smyrna on my Mind

IN MEMORIAM MID-SEPTEMBER 1922

Thank you for being here this evening of 28 September 2022;
the centennial year of the Great Fire of Smyrna!

I am grateful to the *Hellenic Centre* and the *Levantine Heritage Foundation* for hosting
and publicising this event

We shall now have a brief look at:

- ❑ The Turkish Peninsula previously known as *Anatolia in Asia Minor*.
- ❑ The rebuilding of the western Anatolian city of Izmir, previously known as *Smyrna/Smyrne*.
- ❑ Excerpts of a few passages from the book, which would illustrate how *Smyrna* shaped mine, and my father's childhoods.

This 238 page book could become useful material for social historians and satisfy the curious.

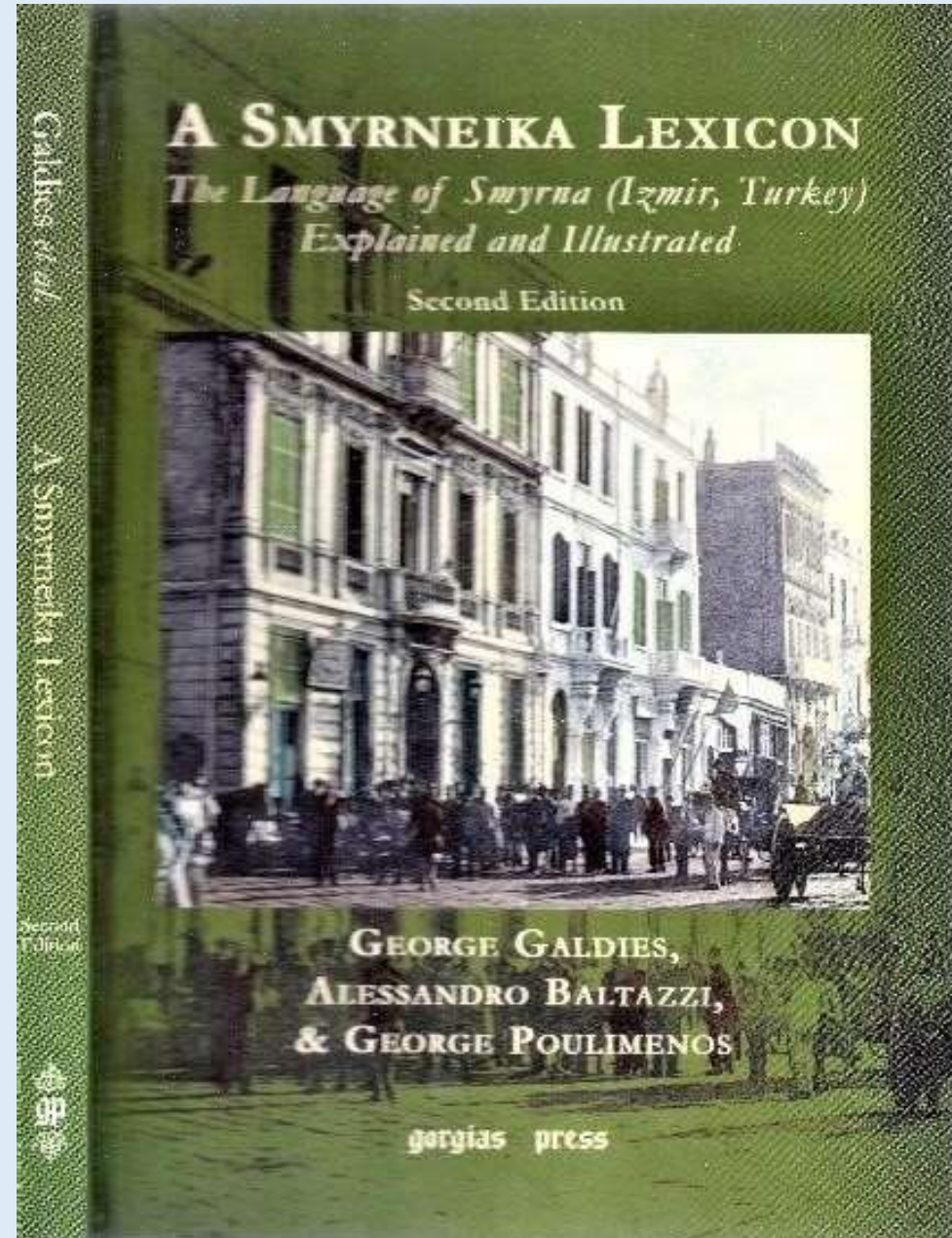
Hopefully it might also help maintain our Smyrnaean memories alive.

“A Smyrneika Lexicon” revisited

In 2010; through email exchanges and numerous telephone calls with my two co-writers George Poulimenos in Athens and Alex Baltazzi, RIP in Izmir, we achieved the publication of a vocabulary of Smyrna/Izmir idiom which we entitled “**A Smyrneika Lexicon**”©

Whilst revisiting this lexicon recently, I had the idea to use the same alphabetical order for recounting my childhood recollections of people, events, and places of Smyrna/Izmir that were to continue having an influence on my later life.

following are some names, words, and events that have stuck in my mind and 'saiki' or psyche, ever since that ‘Smyrnaean Childhood’ of mine.





Smyrna on my Mind



A gr
a Fra
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Titular
acolyte
of Karsiy

Decimated by fire in 1922, and purged of its Greek and Armenian inhabitants, cosmopolitan Smyrna was regenerated by the new Turkish state and renamed:
İzmir'



PUNTA: Luigi Storani's map of 1836.

ter. Below is another photo taken by my father of a group of Levantines having a picnic in the grass amongst the ruins of the former quarter of Skinadika in Punta.



Smyrna on my Mind

But why this book cover?



Smyrna on my Mind : The story of two childhoods

This striking image is of a keepsake carpet that invokes and synthesizes our memories of multi-ethnic, multi-confessional childhoods. This runner was laid in our “avli”, or entrance hall, during the winter months. The motifs and colours within are symbols rooted in ancient history. Full text on back cover.

For me, the blood-red runner in my cover pictures symbolizes both the dynamism of Turkey’s Aegean region, and also the blood spilled through the millennia of struggle between inhabitants and invaders of *Asia Minor*. Yet, each influx brought their own culture and skills which were to enrich the region where so many Levantines thrived!



A quick window into The Ottoman Empire

After the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks their empire had flourished to an extent that they had become the new Eastern power replacing Byzantium: *the Eastern Roman Empire*.

Meanwhile, [in] the Mediterranean too, was seeing the rise of Italian maritime republics that had already become the main trading forces ever since the 13th century crusades.

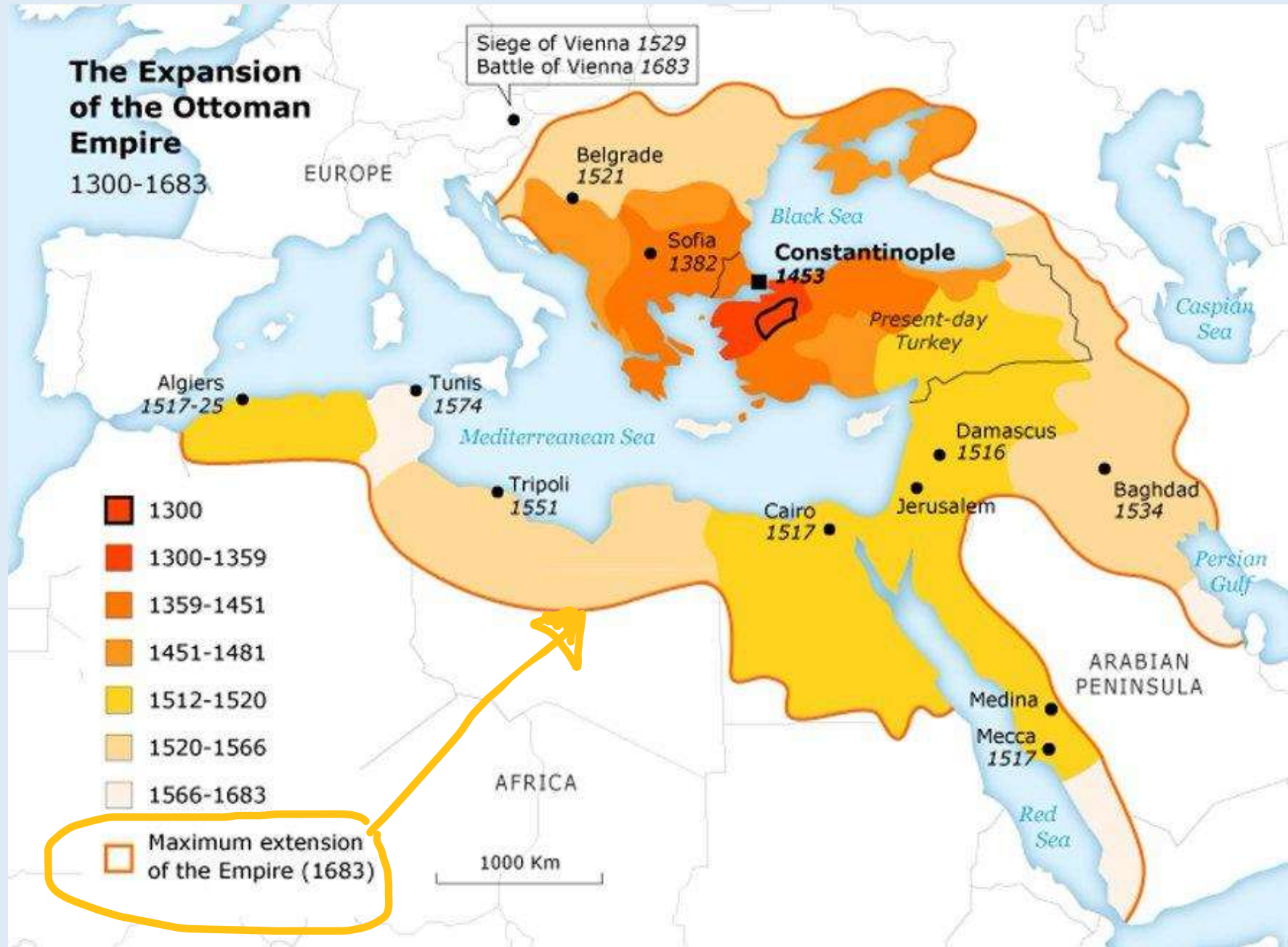
By the 16th century, the Ottomans, sensing the obvious benefits, signed trading treaties: "CAPITULATIONS" with an ever increasing number of European powers thus granting them concessions to establish themselves, and prosper whilst their own Ottoman Empire was gradually fraying at the seams.

Rijks Museum: The arrival of the Dutch Consul in Smyrna which had become the major export hub of Asia Minor.



The Expansion of the Ottoman Empire

1300-1683



Ottoman Capitulations

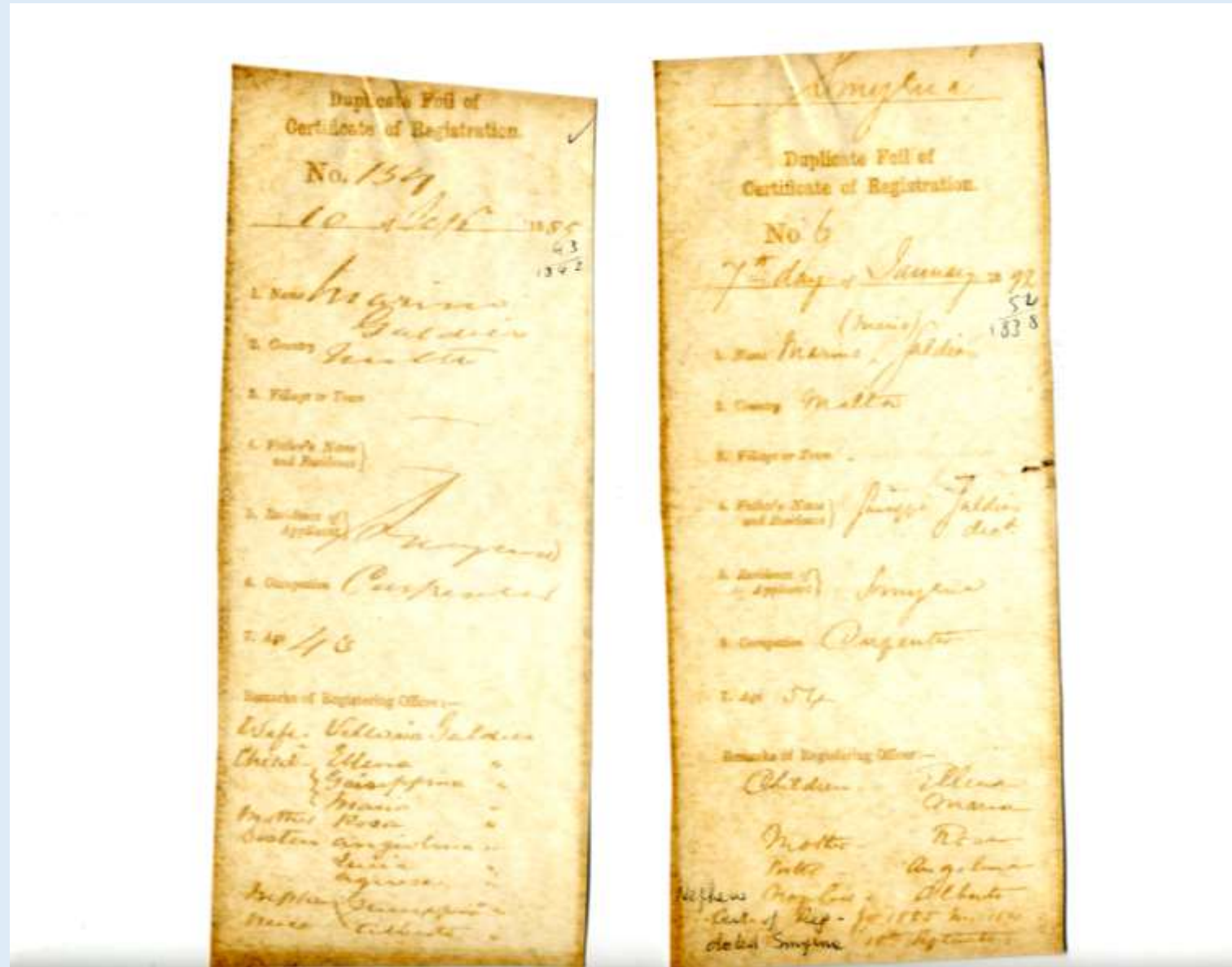
The arrival of European traders opened the floodgate to the settlement of numerous immigrants from these foreign powers, in search of jobs and a new life.

These included citizens of colonies of the newly emerged and fast growing empires such as the British Empire and its newly acquired territories of Malta, the Ionian Islands, and Cyprus.

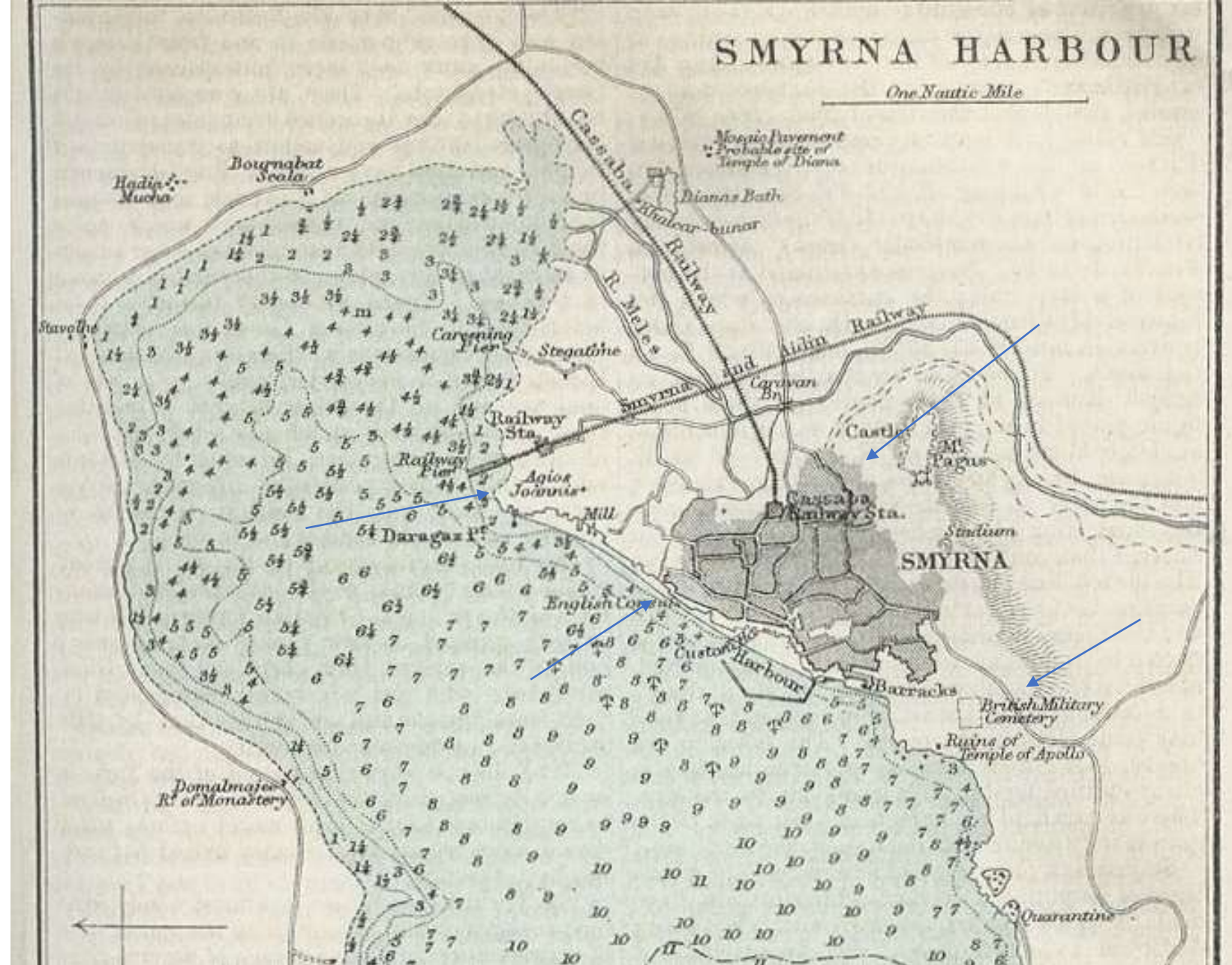
The history of my own family in Smyrna dates back to those days when Malta had been seriously wounded by the Napoleonic incursions, until saved by the Royal Navy.

My Maltese ancestors took advantage of the British presence in Turkey under the Capitulations, and moved to Smyrna.

Example: 1885 British consular registration of Marino Galdies, a carpenter.



1882 Maritime
Map by
Edward Weller



[Here start some alphabetical accounts:]

Under “A” for *Alsancak* formerly “The Punta” / “La Pointe” (pages 18 – 20)

The city of Smyrna can date its history to the 1450s BC, but for our purpose we’ll look briefly back to the 15th Century AD, when by then, to my knowledge, the town had survived several earthquakes, incursions by the Huns, as well as the internecine fights between several Turkish tribes that had invaded Asia Minor. (The tribe or “Beylik” of Osman/Othman triumphed as the overall lord).

By that time, the city was under the firm control of the Sultan Mehmet II, known as ‘The Conqueror’. The population, broadly belonging to the central Asian tribe of Turks who had hitherto amassed around the citadel, now spread down the hill towards the sea.

At the same time the local non-Turkish traders and immigrants were expanding their activities with Jews and the Greeks and the Armenians. These I consider were remnant autochthon inhabitants since Antiquity, and all of whom had survived the various onslaughts from Huns and Mongols. And earthquakes!

By the 19th century, the city was prospering and its European quarters grew ever more towards the Northern shores of its bay, towards the promontory aptly named as “PUNTA”: “The Point”.



The protagonists of my early upbringing!

Sunday lunch in Smyrna (Izmir) c. 1949.

left to right: My father Peter Polycarp Galdies, my brother Paul Winston, Grandma Eleni Galdies (née Gatopoulo-Bogavich), little me just visible under my mother Mary (née Aicolina), her brother Uncle Anthony Aicolina, step Grandma Alexandra Aicolina (née Fenech), and Grandpa 'Georgie' Aicolina.

My paternal grandfather Paul's portrait on the wall.

"In the course of this tale, we inevitably stumble across some results from my tentative research far into our family history. It also emerges that in the face of strife and desolation; we prevail. "



under letter 'B' page 34:
Our nationality explained

- **"B" for "British Subject by Birth"**. Most, if not the totality of Levantine British subjects of Smyrna/Izmir, both of British and of Maltese Islands descent, were *British Subjects by Birth*. (That is until the introduction of a new British Nationality Act in the 1970s.)
- These loyal **British Subjects by Birth** derived their nationality by virtue of one or both of their **parents, or ancestors** going back to several generations, had **been born in a British territory**. In our own case **in Smyrna, it was the territories of Malta and/or Cyprus, and of course those of the islands of Great Britain and Ireland**.
- So far as the Turkish authorities were concerned, these people were **British citizens** and **were obliged to carry a foreigner's residence permit**, which was renewable every 2 years, I think. Under the new Republic, **for all intents and purposes, one was a foreigner in their own city!**

What factors did shape our early childhoods?

My father Peter Polycarp

Pages 83 to 118:

- The 1920s: fleeing from Smyrna to Malta and the Return to Smyrna

Pages 170 to 175:

- Born into what was a truly cosmopolitan city and family and hard work values
- Born into the Multi-confessional Christian religion
- Awareness of Islamic and Jewish communities
- Love of the land and Sense of history
- Sense of roots & identity. British patriot.
- Diversity of schooling and education

Pages 166 to 177:

- Experienced two major military wars, Occupation, and war of independence

Pages 199 to 233:

- The abolition of Capitulations
- Treaty of Lausanne

Myself George

Pages 9 to 14:

- Born into what was still a cosmopolitan city and family and hard work values
- Benefitted from multi-confessional Christian religion
- Awareness of Islamic and Jewish communities
- Love of the land
- Sense of history
- Sense of roots & identity. British patriot.

Pages 14 to 66:

- The rebirth of our city
- End of major (military) wars
- Discovering a career

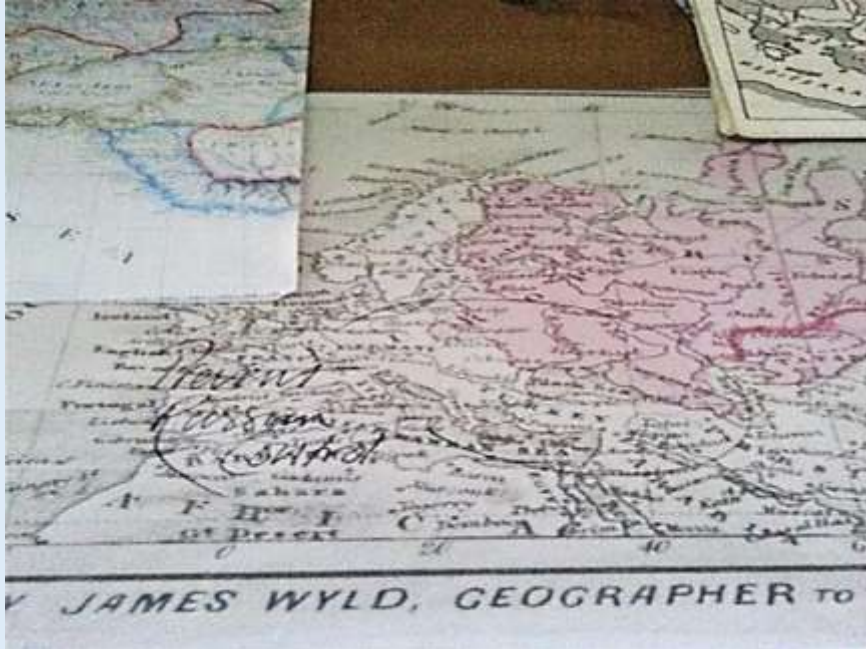
Pages 67 to 81:

- My schooling

Page 131:

- The devastation still prevailing
- The dawn of the 'Cold War'
- The final demise of Capitulations

Pages 171 – 182: SMYRNA and WW1



Victorian map of Europe on Prime Minister Disraeli's desk in Hughenden with the annotation: "Prevent Russian Control" circled on it. This was at a time when Ottoman Turkey presented "the Eastern Question". So, after the Balkan Wars came World War One. Same Old!

David Woodward quoted Eady having written of Turkey, after the war was over: "The whole country desired peace, and their leaders would have accepted almost any terms had we been able to assure them on Constantinople. They knew that signing away the city would also mean signing their own death warrants, all feared for their lives if they gave the Germans an excuse to raise the rabble on them."

"S" for *SEFERBEYLIK*: from Turkish Seferbeylik: mobilisation, 'state of war' and martial law rule.

Turkey's entry into World War One is mainly known to us by the appalling debacle of British Empire forces in the Dardanelles. But this victory of the Young Turks signalled the doom of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1966 I'd read in the June 9th edition of "The Listener" [BBC Radio publication] an interesting review of a talk by David Woodward entitled 'Searching for peace, 1914-1918'. In this he describes how in his view, Britain got itself into war with the Ottoman Empire. As I understood it, there could have been an agreement between the two parties, since it seems that the Turks were open to accept the four million Pounds of the day from the British, should the British also give a firm guarantee that once the Anglo-Prussian war was over, that Constantinople would remain Turkish.

The negotiators on behalf of Great Britain were Frederick Edwin Whittall: a leading Smyrna Levantine family member and an acquaintance of his Mr Griffin Eady; a British railway engineer turned semi diplomat. Both these gentlemen were encouraging London to proceed on that basis, but it was not to be. London would not risk that Russia should get control of Constantinople when Germany is defeated. The rest is history, as the saying goes.

Smyrna during WW1

"What I remember of the war 1914/18"

[by Peter P Galdies [my own father] pages 173 to 180] he says:

- *"I remember when my father like all the other British Subjects was taken by the Ottomans as a hostage of war. Together with my mother [i.e.: my own grandmother Eleni] and three sisters, we were left to a life without a bread winner, in a rented house, solely relying on the small savings my father had, and on the assistance from relatives and my maternal grandfather, who did not request any further rent for the house we were occupying at that time. "*
- *"During the time my father was an internee, we had much difficulty to find provisions, especially bread. I must have been five, I remember one day very early in the morning my mother left baby Béro with her two sisters Mary and Lisa, covered me with some woollen blanket, and carried me from bakery to bakery in search of bread. "*
- *"I did not forget it till now and shall not forget as long as I live, [the] crowds outside the bakeries. "*

- *"Whilst my father was a hostage, it was time for me to attend school. But there were no foreign schools open. The allied [Powers'] ones were closed down and the teachers expelled. Almost all of the [fees-based] foreign schools [remaining] had religious instructors and management. "*
- *"In the meantime, whilst waiting to find a proper school to register, we would every fortnight visit my father at his place of internment. It was not always possible to call at the same place because the authorities were changing the location and transferring the hostage according to information from their intelligence for the next allied air raid. "*
- *"The first morning of the first day at a Greek [Orthodox] school: this was the worst thing that could have happened in my judgement of that age and circumstances. The class was crowded with children of different ages, some a lot bigger and older. "*

[Then came the End of WW1 (Armistice – Mudros treaty 1918 – May 1920)]

- *"That day we were awakened by crowds in the streets with some running towards the seafront, whilst others with shouts of joy coming from here and there, each telling different stories and comments. It did not take too long to understand that an allied warship had entered the harbour, and this meant that the hostilities were off and an armistice was signed. "*

[effectively under Mudros, Turkish Ottoman regions were allocated to the victorious. Britain and France were to rule Constantinople and The Levant, Greece had a sway of the Aegean]

[this victory was to be short-lived. The nationalist Turkish Army of Kemal Ataturk was already mooting his revolution and war of independence.]

“My father’s death” (by Peter P Galdies)

- *“I was almost seven years old when I lost my father. He was born in 1871. He was the second son of the family of two brothers and two sisters, the elder son was named Joseph and the elder sister was Carmen. Then was my father Paul and his sister Mary the youngest of all. “*
- *“My mother was left a widow at the age of 41 (born 1878), with four young children without any mentionable economies [savings: he was obviously thinking in French writing this bit] due to the long war and any kind of revenue.”*
- *“she knew that she could not expect much from her father, because she had married my father who was a Catholic, without his blessing and beyond his agreement. “*

- [He continues:] *“Her sisters and brothers were far more agreeable and gentler with her, so were all my father’s relatives, they did all they could to be of assistance but in spite of their good will my mother thought that it was she who should take the initiative, thus with all this into her mind and now that she had all these idle days available, she started to mend our clothes and also to look for what could be salvaged from my father’s suits and shirts which would be used for me later on.”*

[Here follows a narrative of how their father’s fishing barque was lost amongst dozens of others in a melee that took place on the waterfront. And with more narratives of 2 years of occupation by the Greek Army... And a visitor from Malta with whom grandfather Paolo was to go into business. Then follows a description of the Cousinery park being turned into a Greek Army camp, and my father and his friends watching them carrying out their military drills.

Growing up, he had resumed working part time in his maternal uncle’s cobbler’s shop, and given the task of buying raw material from the *Fasula and Megales Tavernes* district. Every Wednesday he was invited to have lunch with his Greek aunts Dimitria and Irini.]

Smyrna and the Greek Forces of occupation

“Occupation” of Smyrna by the Greeks by Peter P Galdies (my father):

- “It was springtime, [on] a fine warm morning my father took me to the sea-front near the long stringing jetty of the Ottoman Aydin Railway line [Alsancak station]: we were [expecting] to see the arrival and landing of the Greek troops coming to occupy Smyrna and the suburbs. Soon we saw three large steamships directing towards the jetty, the ships were full of militaries, soldiers were everywhere the masts were completely covered by soldiers and there were thousands of them all over the ships. “
- “Almost the whole town must have been gathered along the sea front, from the end of the quay and towards the harbour at the centre of the city, here the first contingent would land and organise. “

- I remember very well within a few months the [Greek] army begun to integrate local non-Muslims “Rayas” (without nationality) in[into] the national Greek army. At first, they started in small numbers then as things were getting more serious with the Turkish resistance (guerrillas) outlaws, more men from the local residents were called [conscripted].
- Among these recruits a large number from the Armenians, Jews, and even local Greeks, who were stateless, left the country and emigrated to the United States, France, Australia etc., for the sole reason: not to serve in the occupation army and be sent to the front line.
- It is right to say that life was much better now than during the war but not as good as it used to be prior to the war when I remember my mother used to tell us: “those were the good times”.

Pages 87 to 119 Smyrna to Malta and the return by Peter Galdies

Excerpt from “Malta Women, History, Books and Places” by Susanna Hoe below:

“On 15 September, the overcrowded hospital ship Maine entered Grand Harbour carrying 407 refugees from Smyrna, among whom were 81 of Maltese origin.

Another Maine passenger was eight-year-old Mary Aicolina (Aquilina) (1915-2005), travelling with her father, Giorgio, and two older brothers; her mother Crete-born Anastasia Kalopedi, had died in Smyrna some time after her birth. Mary’s son George Galdies later became British vice-consul in Turkey...”

- *At the beginning of the month of August 1922, one morning we saw soldiers with Red Cross badges carrying stretchers with wounded militaries from the Military hospital to the ships berthing at the big railway jetty at the Point (now called Alsancak and actually being main landing and customs place of Smyrna).*
- *my sisters Mary and Elisabeth busy making British and Italian flags, the neighbours begged to have because they were afraid to show they were Greeks,, everybody was like an automaton, not knowing what to do, all these masses of women and children, refugees from Anatolia,*
- *My sisters Mary and Elisabeth were busy fixing the Union Jack on a bamboo cane mast over the front door,*
- *My mother had gathered all the official papers, passports, birth certificates etc., etc. all these and a little money, she placed in a tin box and bound it round her waistband,*
- *All along the quays (sea front) thousands and thousands of people had gathered, with their valuables and whatever they could have saved and able to carry. There was nowhere else to go; that was the last part of land, in front was the sea, and behind the immense land of Anatolia- which land they would never have seen again, such was the destiny of this unfortunate people who for centuries had struggled, mingled with various creeds and nationalities, lived next to each other, intermarried had freedom of religion and custom, but because some political mistakes by unworthy politicians of the Allied Nations jealous of each other, abandoned this rich land with historic monuments and its Christian inhabitants to the mercy of the Asian invading powers thus oblige millions of innocent Greek and Armenian people be either killed or drowned in the sea of beautiful Smyrna Gulf.*

The British Consulate, Smyrna pre-1922



oil painting of the Catastrophe as displayed at Benaki museum, Athens is by the Smyrna Levantine painter Ovide Curtovich

Smyrna to Malta to Smyrna, continued

- *The rowing boat was one from the cargo ship "Bavaria" anchored in the middle of the gulf not very far from the embankment, this ship was unloading coal at the storage building when it was ordered to stop unloading and be ready to receive the British evacuees.*
- *Smoke and ashes started to fall on the decks of the ships. The cries and shouts of help coming from the shore and reaching the ears of the women on board mingled to make us cry; people now started jumping into the sea trying to swim for safety towards the various ships anchoring in the bay. There were now more people in the sea than ashore, many floating drowned. The ship had lifted anchor and was now moving slowly far from the town towards the exit of the Gulf.*

My father's description of the evacuation continues in the book with:

- *Their sea journey to Malta on the Coal Ship Bavaria*
- *Arrival and quarantine in the Lazaretto of Malta*
- *Life as war refugees in Fort Ricasoli*
- *Schooling and First Holy Communion*
- *Swimming and football*
- *Letters from Smyrna start arriving and news of the destruction of their homes*
- *more schooling, news of payments of fire indemnity*
- *The return to Smyrna. "request the family of George Aicolina if they would accept my sister Elisabeth to travel with them to Turkey. it was agreed they should leave Malta in a month's time for Turkey.*

[Little did my father know at that time, that George Aicolina's daughter Mary was to become his wife one day in the future! He then describes their voyage 'home', and discovering the ruined remains of their city.]

- *"dropping of anchors from the "Theodosia" made us realize we were now in the anchorage area for disembarkation, and had to prepare ourselves to face the masters of the country and to a large extent, of our [own] future destiny. "*



p.134 George: *Smyrna*
in ruins

“K” for Kamena, or more precisely “Ta Kamena”: the waste land which resulted following the Fire of Smyrna. This 1930s photo was taken by my father on the ruin of what was left of the Greek Orthodox church of St. John Baptist. The campanile of the Holy Rosary Catholic parish church can be seen in the background. The row of houses is the line where the Fire stopped. Also seen are the remaining scattered rubble of the ruins.

As stated elsewhere, many of those returning evacuees had no homes to return to. The city was experiencing an acute shortage of housing from the mid-twenties to mid-thirties. The above photo when enlarged [below] reveals some of the temporary “barankes” or shacks they were allowed to be put up by the new authorities who for the most part did not recognise pre-1922 title-deeds. My father, his widowed mother and three sisters were in that category. On my mother’s side, her father was lucky in that although their house had succumbed to the fire, their plot was on the very first row of houses, mainly owned by Italian nationals, that had survived the fire. And he was therefore eventually allowed to rebuild on his original plot, and also to purchase the plot across and rebuild his grocery business.



Peter Polycarp Galdies' return to Smyrna in Autumn 1924 amongst much '*Zorlikia*' (hardship):

- In the pages 199 to 230 my father Peter Polycarp Galdies describes their return voyage from Malta, the lack of adequate housing in Smyrna, attending Italian religious schools, and looking for menial work in order to contribute to housekeeping, still at a tender early teens.
- He ends his accounts in the early 1930s, by then having secured a promising career, a new passion for gun sports, and a gun dog named Norma whilst also courting and marrying my mother!
- WW2 was soon to arrive, as did my brother Paul Winston.

My schooling (by George Galdies) pages 71 to 85

- Following my 'graduation' from the Sisters' kindergarten and preparatory class, the time had come for me to attend primary education proper, at the "Frères" since the only other option was the Italian Ivrea Sisters' school which was mainly Italian-speaking, and at this stage I was not familiar with that language.
- In contrast to the rest of my family, I had no great desire to go to a proper school, and this lack of enthusiasm turned into panic when I was told that by the end of Summer and before school started, I would have to have my first haircut. My beautiful long curls were much admired by the grown-ups; the prospect of losing them did not enthrall me.
- Nevertheless, to the barber I was taken!



1952 (?) Photo of me sitting on the wheel arch our first car: a Topolino by FIAT on my first day at "Classe d' Asile": the nursery classes at the 'French Nuns'. Notice my abundant curls and pinafore top!
(Topolino, i.e., Mickey Mouse was the first FIAT 500).

Izmir and The Cold War

- It has to be remembered that the 50s, 60s and 70s went through events that shaped and are still shaping our world today. Old empires were seeing their former colonies gain independence, and the new empires of communism gaining momentum whilst the USA was engaged in war in South-East Asia. The relatively new and possibly still frail Turkish republic which had newly joined the NATO alliance was once again occupying an important role, if not even being a key actor, in the world theatre.
- Our (Western) countries were vying for Turkey's attention. Turkey's inhabitants were rich, but their gold was kept, literally, under the mattress! These hitherto semi-tribal and peasant instincts were inhibiting investment. Usury was still a religious taboo. There was a general fear of the country splitting into groups of national socialists versus others keen to opening up to foreign investors.

- The International Fair of Izmir [pages 69,70: and more under letter "F" for "Foire"]

There were 'national days' when each country's ambassador would come from Ankara, the capital, to host a reception which afforded once again the opportunity of showing off the ultimate best of their hospitality.

At times there were foreign Ministers for Trade, and we even had the visit of US Vice-President Lyndon Johnson. I clearly remember seeing him waving to the crowds from the open top of a NATO vehicle. I must confess I was not impressed by the man; although still a child, I thought his wry smile did not inspire confidence.

I happened to be in the American pavilion that day, and was able to see LBJ close up. A few years later I learnt about the US Democratic party and what it stood for, and their fights to gain power.

Smyrna and its market gardens: some extracts.

- When watermelons were in season, a vast market would take place amongst the waste-grounds (Kamena). I am sorry to say this particular field was where, or in proximity to, the Greek Orthodox church of St John the Baptist had been standing until the 1922 catastrophe.
- This enormous church was termed “St John of the Cherry Orchard”, as there were indeed orchards and vegetable plots in the area called in French “Les Jardins de Smyrne” to the East, and the “Skinadika” i.e., the ‘rope makers’ quarter to the West, towards the sea.
- Before the Fire, my paternal grandfather’s cottage and small holding was South-East of it, very near the ‘Cousinery Gardens’ i.e. Les Jardins de Smyrne, where the Greek Army had their training camp during Occupation.
- Pages 149 about Mandarins, 154: olives!

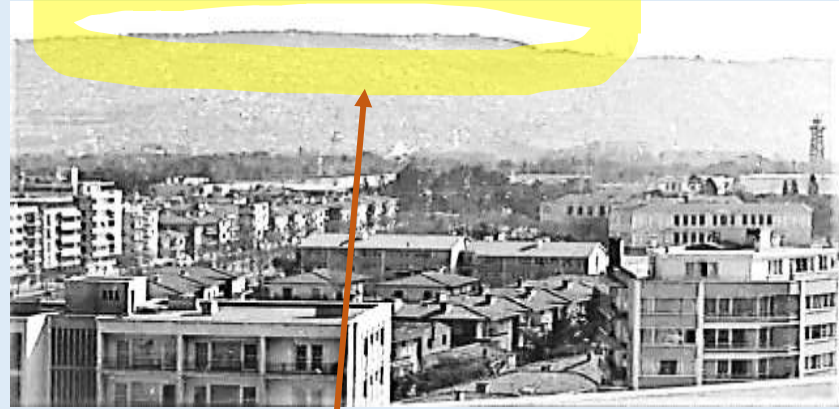


« *Les Jardins de Smyrne* », 1926, par Jean LURÇAT (1892-1966).
In 1923 he went to Spain; in 1924 he went to North Africa, the Sahara, Greece and Asia Minor” [Turkey].

“A” for *Apartamento*, (and *apartamenta* in its plural form): apartment building(s). (the 1950s to 1970s)

- One day we saw diggers arrive and fill our field of vision which up to now had been uninterrupted, and before you knew it, foundations will be cut into the empty fields we called “*ta kamena*”: the burned-down ruins of pre-1922 Smyrna. New boulevards were being laid, and named after recent past heroes of the Republic.
- the new neighbourhoods were homes for the emerging Turkish middle class much of which was made up of professionals and civil servants whose families had been uprooted from the Balkans and Crete, and add to this a sprinkling of Thessalonian Jews who, fleeing the Nazi occupation of Greece, went to Turkey, a few having previously converted to Islam.

There were polite exchanges as well as good business relations between the Christian European-Levantines, and the newly arrived Moslem Turkish communities. However inter-faith marriages were very rare, especially for a Turkish girl to marry a man outside her Moslem faith.



The thin tower in the far right of the photo is the parachute tower built on the grounds of the 'Kultur Park'. The Mount Pagus castle in the background dominates the city.

The photo above shows the uninterrupted view of Mt Pagus which we had from our home until high rise apartments started being built as per photo below.



The above picture, taken from my bedroom in 1962, shows yet another new building under construction onto what used to be open space thus causing our former views of Mount Pagus, to become just a memory.

These buildings were built within close proximity of my paternal grandfather's Paolo's plot. At the same time, they were also facing my maternal grandfather Georgie's house and grocery shop. These high-rise flats became for me symbols of a new nation built on the sad ruins of the past.

Page 60 letter “D”: Spring-water from **Afyon**; the city of ‘liberation’

“D” for **DROUBA**: a hand-operated water pump.

When lead pipes were made illegal, the pumps were removed. Mains water was used for washing, but the family opted for our table water to be purchased in glass bottles from the Turkish Green Crescent Society: owners of this excellent natural sparkling water from the springs of **Afyonkarahisar**; a town on the Aegean hinterland plateau which had marked the east boundary of Greek army occupation during the Great War. [Turkish Green Crescent or ‘*Yeşil Ay*’ society was founded to combat addictions to alcohol.]

As a child I could hear the adults recount the many atrocities and massacres that had been committed by both sides during this conflict. From 26 August 1922 on to the days of 9th September of that year those Greek soldiers and Ottoman nationals (i.e., indigenous Orthodox Greeks) who had escaped the carnage found themselves driven towards the Aegean Sea where they found the city of Smyrna on fire. The scenes are narrated in many accounts, a particular poignant history is recounted in “**paradise-lost---smyrna-1922**” by **Giles Milton**.

My early learning-“My mother tongue” – extracts:

- ‘received language’ in the home was typically: Smyrneika Greek which we Franco-Levantines called “Romeika” which in its Latin written form was termed: “Fragochiotika i.e. (Frankish of the Greek Island of Chios). In our ‘*Smyrneika Lexicon*’ book, we explain that “Romios” is a derivation of Roméos: a citizen of the Eastern Roman Empire, i.e., a Byzantine. These spoke “Romeika”, which in turn was subdivided into Smyneika: Smyrna Greek, and “Politika”: Constantinople Greek.
- In my own childhood as an ethnic Greco-Latin-Levantine, Smyrneika was generally spoken in the home (mainly in the kitchen), French in the lounge and at school, and English would appear in nursery rhymes and bedtime stories. [French also between us in public as Greek was frowned by the authorities; the memory of Greek occupation had to be erased!]
- Playtime in the yard or in the empty streets of the 1950s yielded an additional good dose of Italian and American-English from friends and neighbours. Turkish was of course the national language.

Our Farm: learning Turkish, and a love for nature.

The preceding paragraphs reveal the extent of my acquaintance to some Anatolian culture in my early years. During this childhood in Izmir, there had been little opportunity of contact with immediate neighbours to properly practice Turkish (most of them being Greek-speaking Turkish Cretans of an advancing age), nor with Turkish schoolfriends as most of them lived far from our house.

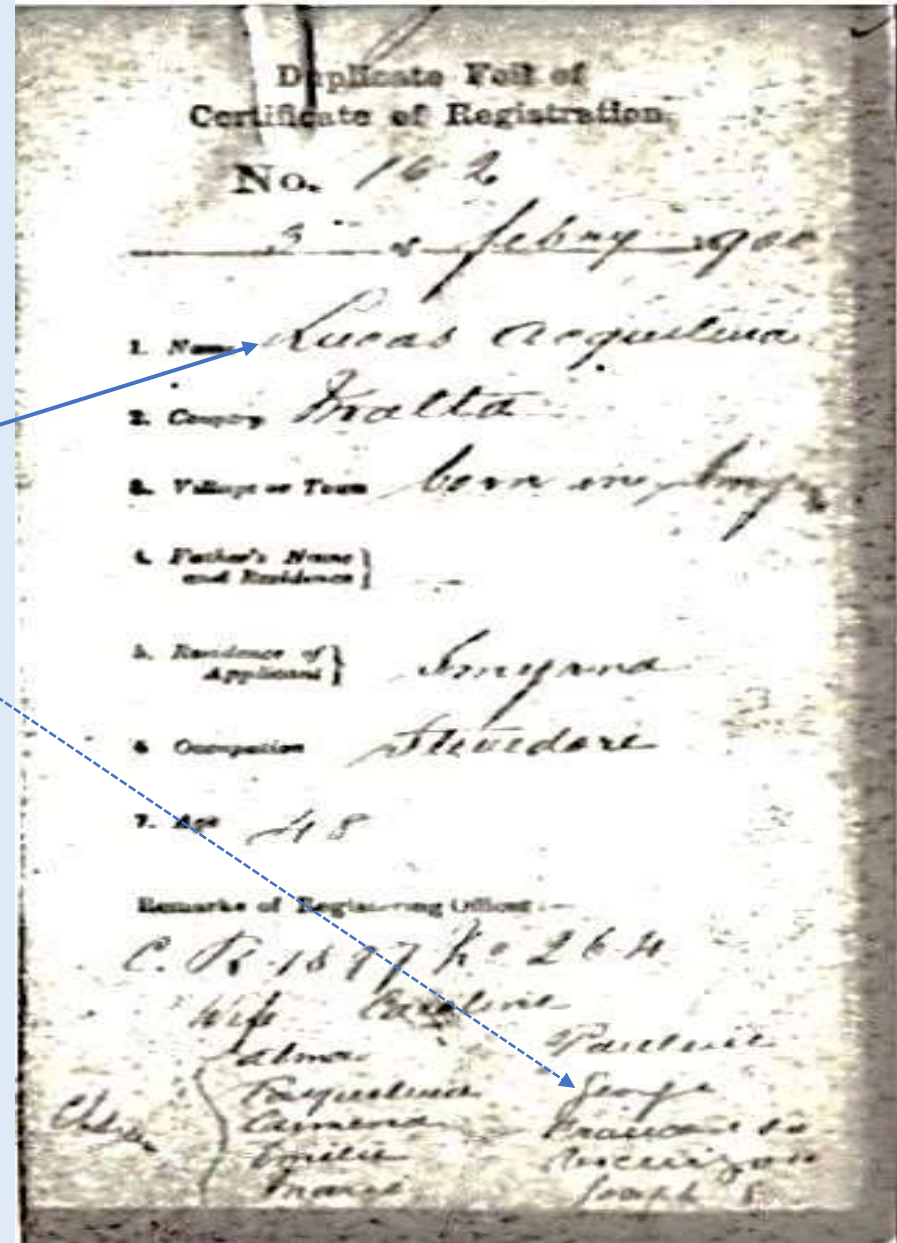
...my exposure to Turkish language and culture was enriched by our family trips to the interior and further afield to Istanbul. Visits to Istanbul were particularly memorable as they involved my paternal grand-mother Eleni coming with us. For her, visiting the Agia Sophia Basilica was a true pilgrimage: a core manifestation of her faith. She used to call Anatolia and the Levant 'Agia Homata' i.e., "The Holy Soils (Earth)". Atatürk's modern version: 'Kutsal Topraklar'



"A" for Aicolina: my maternal family name

from grandfather George Aicolina who was of Maltese-British descent. As this 1900 consular registration foil below left shows, my grandfather George Aicolina (Acquilina) was the seventh child of Lucas Acquilina (Aicolina): a Maltese stevedore who was born in Smyrna in 1852.

All British Subjects were registered with the British Consulate so as to be located in case of strife necessitating eventual evacuation. Births, deaths, and marriages were registered separately.



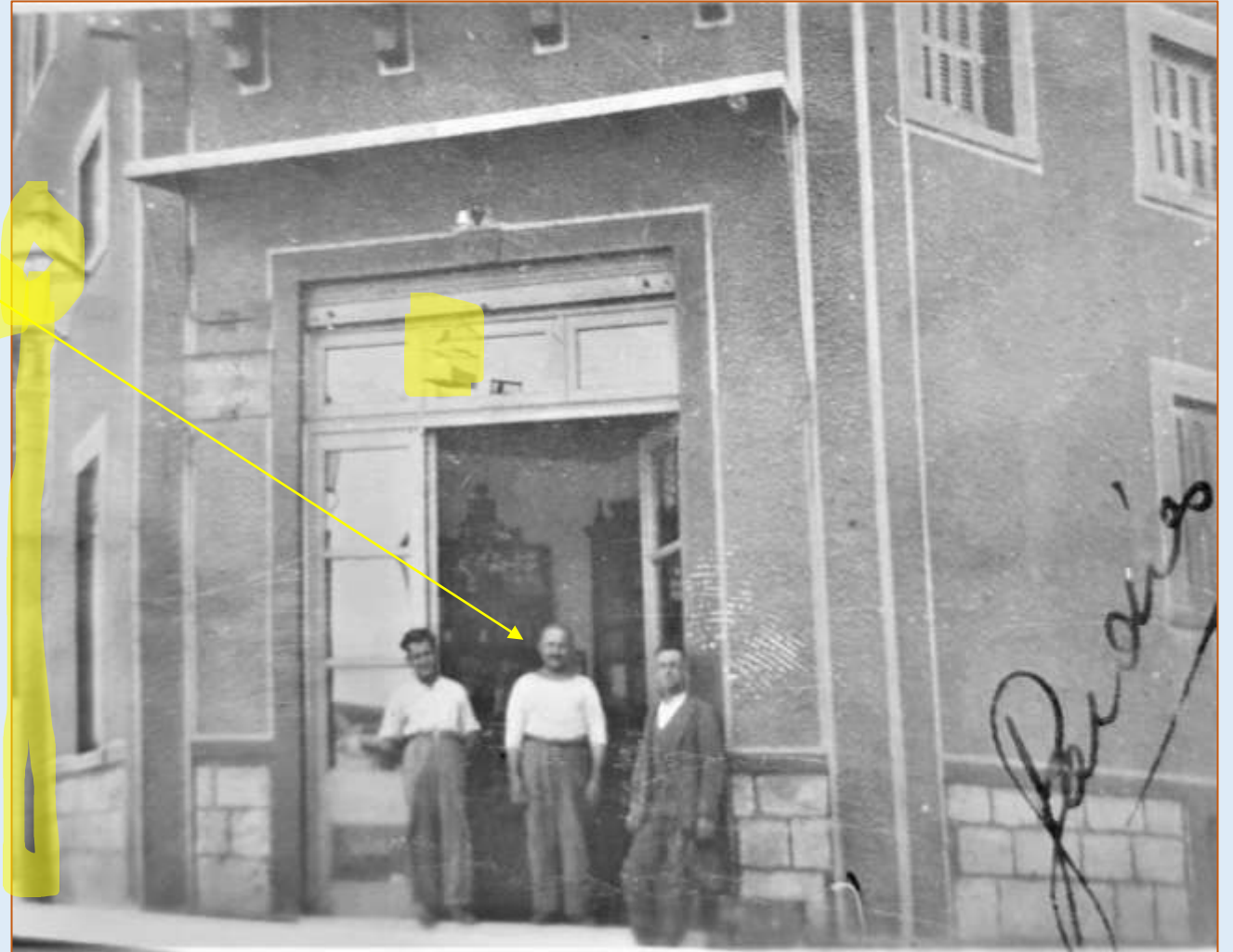
George (Georgie) Aicolina

My maternal grandfather the grocer flanked with uncle Anthony to his right, and step-cousin Fenech to his left.

Notice the gaslight left of photo, and nightingale cage hanging above the door!

I have now discovered that the Aicolina name appears in various forms in the following annals of Malta.

“This creates a third option which would pre-date the above two, and supports the theory that the **Haiculinas** would have arrived to Malta from Spain, as with scores of other Catalan/Aragonese immigrants and soldiers, to repel the invading Ottoman forces. “



“C” for Caldés:

.This is for sure the original Catalan surname of the paternal side of my family.

It is understood to have derived from the water springs of Malavella.

. I tracked and listed our surname to various entries into Catalan and Aragonese Spanish archive materials dating as far back as the 12th Century.

. A chapter on the *Palau Caldes* of Barcelona, and an earlier ‘Caldes home’: the *Castell de Caldes*

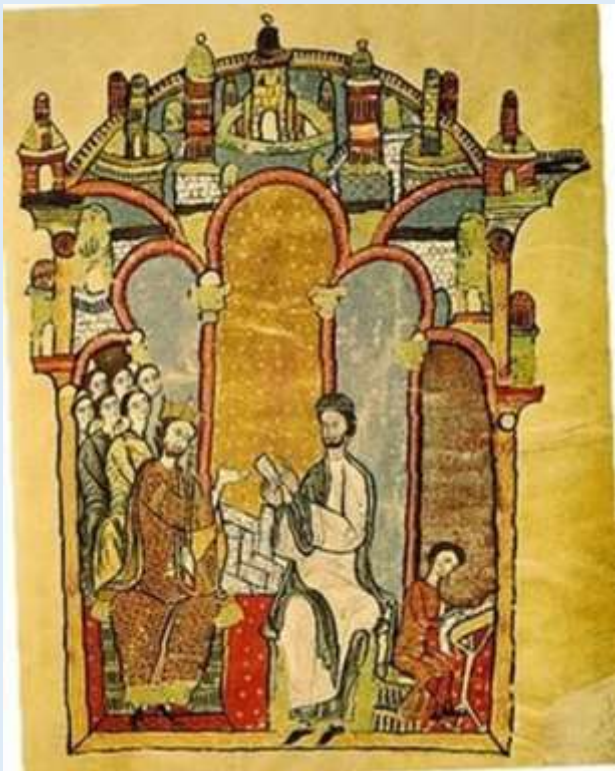


Photo shows the Ottoman-British railway's Punta Station, which was later called *Alsancak Gari*.

The waste land on the north-eastern side of this station was eventually cleared, and a football stadium, home of the Altay team, had now replaced what had been an important Greek Orthodox cemetery. Part of this land had previously been donated by the Greek Orthodox Church authorities of Smyrna, towards the construction of the Panionios Stadiou (Pan-Ionian Stadium) circa 1910.

I was told recently the Altay Stadium had to be demolished as a result of an earthquake, and that during the land clearing operations, a number of marble tomb and headstone fragments had been unearthed.



These photos are of our house after we'd moved out in 1965, when it became the British Consulate



2 photos bottom: views of 19th century side streets in Punta/Alsancak surviving to the 1970s. Notice the emerging high-rise replacing the sea-front mansions (below).



“A” for Avli: this was the **hall of the original Levantine houses**: The room that would also **act as the dance floor** for the innumerable **parties**, especially during pre-Lenten **Carnival** time. Historically, the **Carnival of Smyrna was renowned** around the French-speaking Mediterranean for being equal to the ones of Marseilles and Nice. This was a season which adults as well as children would look forward to with trepidation.

In this 1950s photo, facing us from left to right: my brother Paul, Stanley Clarke, distant cousin Joseph “Pino” Dragonetti, Rinaldo (Rino) Ragusin, and me, knelling.



Giraud house in **Bornova** (left) is where I went for my private **English classes** with Mr 'Eddo' **Edwards**, MBE, British Consul. Bornova is where also lived my good friend and mentor, and ultimately as British Consul-General: my boss; Richard Eddie **Wilkinson**, C.B.E. (right of slide)

[pages 35 ton37]



“B” for *Boudja* : “The Other” prime suburb (selections)

- A fair description of Boudja would be the one made by Francis Peter Werry who on Monday 28th June 1803, came to see his parents for the first time since they'd left him and his 2 brothers at school in England in 1793, when his father Francis, a friend of Admiral Lord Nelson, was appointed as British Consul in Smyrna.
- Eventually Francis Werry was to be the last British Consul to be appointed and funded by the British Levant Company ever since its existence from 1611. (In 1825 consular officers were employed, appointed, and sent from Britain by the British Government were to be called *Her Britannic Majesty's Consuls*. Consular officers recruited from amongst the local British community were known as **British Pro-Consul, Vice-Consul, or Consul.**) Francis Werry's vault can still be seen at the former Anglican Church in Buca.

A chapter on afternoon teas at the Missirs in Boudja, and Livio Missir: a Levantine EU Commissioner in Brussels. [pages 39 to 45]



Photo below was taken in mid 1950s by my father at the Missir house. Left to right Remo Missir and his mother ... (née Issaverdens), my mother, Mme Antoinette Missir (née Scagliarini), her daughter Lea Missir, my brother Paul Winston. Peppo Casagrande and eldest Missir daughter Alfea squatting, and me in front of the granny.

“C” for Çesme and Ilica. This was the summer resort par excellence of those Smyrniotes who could afford it.



This photo of the beach was taken by my father in the 1930s. This is the beach where I learnt to swim in the early 1950s! Beautiful recollections retold. [pages 52 to 54]



1950s (?) Photo of cousins Hélène and George Aicolina together with Aunty Anna, and me standing on the left of photo.

“C” for **Consolo**. This was one of the few patisseries to re-open in Punta/Alsancak after the Fire.

- Playing **truant from school, Vittorio Consolo** had chosen to learn his trade working in the kitchens of the ‘Hotel de la Ville’, he **was a nephew of the Fragiacom** family. In **1936 Vittorio Consolo** married my father’s middle sister **Maria/Aunt Marie**.
- At the onset of WWI, **Aunt Marie and her siblings: Elizabeth (Lisa), my father (Peter), and the youngest Liberata (Béro), had lost their father Paolo Galdies** to (suspected) cholera contracted whilst he was captive in the internment camp for British Subjects in the confines of the citadel on Mount Pagus/Kadife Kale.



Here follows a chapter on the Consolo cousins.

Photo of my Mother, my *Grand'ma Eleni*, *Aunt Maria*, and my *Consolo cousins: Eleni* (Elenitza) and *Mafalda* (probably named after Queen Mafalda of Savoy).



“O Englezopapas”: the Anglican priest. We lived only 3 or 4 houses away from the Anglican vicarage

- vicarage house was now occupied by the *Reggie (?)English* family but we had little contact with their children. Mr English was an expatriate tobacco leaf buyer, and after a few years they were replaced by the *Jolly* family. Mrs Rose Jolly was my very close friend Renato Sponza’s aunty Rose. They had two daughters: Daisy and Maggie.
- Grateful to Maggie and my cousin Hélène for helping me learn to ride on their girls’ bikes, since I was too small to manage a cross bar!
- Some fifty or so years later, during an official dinner in Izmir, Maggie was the first to recognise me and hug me as a long- lost friend with the same joy and vitality as she might have done so many years ago.
- As I understand, Maggie is the half-sister of our childhood friend Lucien Arkas. Despite his father’s forced expulsion during the 1950s Cyprus troubles when he was still relatively young, Lucien had become a prominent Izmir businessman, an award-winning wine producer, and owner of a shipping company, and as I understand it; the original private investor of the Alsancak container terminal.

The **Tius** according to Guido D'Isidoro

- [pages 62 to 66]
- Verbatim transcripts of charming emails I had exchanged with Guido on his relatives: the Tius, the Fragiacomos, and his great uncle Norbert D'Isidoro and grand 'dad Fritz during the 1922 events.
- Also in his pen interesting recollections about life in the Kordelio suburb.

“E” for Ephesus

- St John the Devine and the house of Virgin Mary.
- My sojourns with the Catholic monks in the hills above Ephesus.
- Pilgrimages : a group in an 18 August 1951 pilgrimage organised by the French Sisters



“E” for “*Erhete!*”: Gr: “It’s coming!”

- This is a word that has stuck in my mind ever since I was 16. It was uttered several times by my step-maternal grandmother Alexandra on her deathbed. A long sufferer with angina, she had contracted pneumonia and Dr Ali Kursad declared there was not much hope for a recovery.
- Father Giuglio, our Parish Priest administered her the Last Rights. Very weak, but fully conscious, she thanked and blessed us for all our kindness during her life with us. After our recitation of the Rosary, she assured us that she was not afraid of death and with a smile declared “Erhete” Smyrna-Greek for ‘it/he/she is coming’. Maybe she meant the moment is coming. She repeated this a few times, until it became a mere whisper. And then she expired.
- Ever since, I have not feared death, even though I faced it several times, even having succumbed once to the point of no return. On each occasion I told God that His Will be done, and if he judged that I could still be of some use to Him, to please spare me, at least for the time being!

“F” for *La Foire/“FUAR”*: The International Fair of Izmir.
Important to me, and *Snippets of my early career choices.*

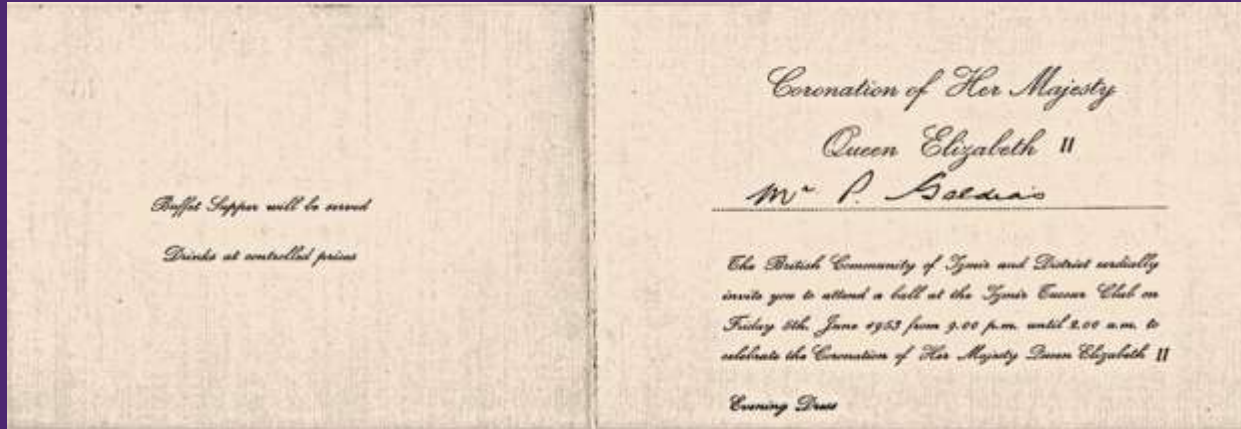
- “Countries tried to surpass each other with impressive national pavilions, most of them permanently hired since the Fair was an annual event.”
- “a nice annual earner for me in my teens!”
- “In the meanwhile, the USA and the USSR were fighting in a cold war where, from our point of view Turkey had to remain a key partner of the West.”
- “That was the year I decided I wanted John Hyde’s job [Press Consul]. Soon after, Eddie Wilkinson invited me for an interview following which, we were to await the visit of HM Diplomatic Inspector for a final interview.”

This was to mark the start of my life as a young adult.

Page 238 ...my father's writings end here, and so do mine. I shall endeavour to collect facts and dates as to his career at the Aliotti company, and how from there he was recruited by the Shell oil company. However, as importantly for me and my brother, the event of the arrival of dog Norma in the Galdies household, as recounted above, fails into insignificance when my father started courting for the attentions of **Mary Aicolina** who eventually became his wife, and, **our mother** !...



Humbly remembering Her Late Majesty



Pages 198 to 201: ... I distinctly remember the celebrations on the occasion of the **Coronation of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II** on 5th June 1953. Here are the invitation cards to my parents. This “celebratory ball” was organised by the British Community.



... and Many years later: photos of **HM Queen Elizabeth II** accompanied by **Hon British Consul Peter Galdies MVO (my father)** who presented the British community of Izmir to Her Majesty during her visit there in 1971.