

Emilia Leibel At Her Polish Friends' Home During Pesach Festivities



I have these friends, not Jews, they're called Wasilewski, and this picture was taken during Pesach in 1990 in their apartment in Cracow. They asked me to light the candles. The man in glasses is called Spira. He died a few years ago. I cannot remember who the other people on this picture are. The Wasilewskis are not on it.

Wojtek [Wasilewski] is a young man, younger than me, younger even than my daughter. He's a sculptor and his wife's a painter. Artists. And a few times they organized get-togethers at Jewish festivals. And they asked me to light the candles, the Friday ones, at their house. They live on the way to Nowa Huta. We're very close. We've known each other for about 20 years now. No, there aren't many older Jews in Cracow. And if there are, I'm not in touch with them. After the war I went to the synagogue a few times, for anniversaries, but not many times. I'm always a member of the community organization, just because. Of course. I get my matzah every year.

Yes, I must say I keep in touch with the children from the children's home. Paulina, who lives in Brussels, is always calling me - she phoned me a few days ago. I even have a photograph of her grandson. I went to stay with her a few times. The other one, her sister Dora, lives in Paris, and I went to stay with her too. Just now I got a card from one of the girls in the children's home for Jewish New Year. And best wishes. It's very nice that the children remember me and come to visit me.

I was a member of the Polish Teaching Union for years and years. I never went on any vacations or anything. And then, when they started demanding money for subscriptions and I was sick, every 50 zloty counted, I stopped being a member. It's 6 years I haven't been out of the house now. I have my pension, but I have 2 carers - a day nurse and a night nurse. Private. My pension wouldn't cover that - my friends pay.