

Visit Of Jan We In Warsaw



This is my family. This is my son's visit to Warsaw. This picture was taken in 2000. Jan came with his wife, Beata and my grandson, Mateusz to my apartment. His in-laws were there too. I'm sitting in the center.

My son, Jan, was born in 1958. He went to elementary school in Ochota, and then to the Gottwald High School, because early on he had an interest in mathematics. He studied mathematics and now he is a mathematician at the University of Arizona, USA. He left Poland with his wife and child in 1985, at the time of the political upheavals here. He went there to do his doctorate. Once he'd done it he stayed there. His wife, Beata, is a painter. Their son, Mateusz, is 22 and he's studying psychology. My son is half-Jewish; he's not Jewish, so there's a difference. Fortunately he doesn't have any complexes, because he didn't experience all that horror. He doesn't have the baggage that I have. Unlike me he wasn't an over-sensitive child. But he understands Jewish issues one hundred percent.

After 1989 I didn't try to contact any Jewish organizations. I don't belong to the 'Children of the Holocaust'. Although through someone I do have some contact with them. I even thought about going on the trips they organize once, but I decided not to. I'm not attracted to that circle. And certainly not to religion. But with age, in one's old age, that contact is perhaps a little closer than when one is young. That's a general thing, that's just how it is.

I suspect that the prospects for Jewish life in Poland are remote, because there are very few people. There's the 'Children of the Holocaust' association, they stick together, and there are individual activists - Warszawski, Krajewski. It even surprises me somewhat that they are so religious. It's an old religion; it's all so old-fashioned to me. If one wants to emphasize one's Judaism one can go to Israel and you don't have to be religious at all. Just the opposite - you can be a rebel. But if you are in that country, Israel, it makes some sense. But here in Poland - no, there's no point being Jewish. It repels me; I have no affinity with the religion, the traditions.

In spite of my age I still work part-time at the Institute of Psychology and Neurology in Warsaw. I meet friends, and do sports. Yesterday I played tennis, though I didn't learn as a child, so I don't

play very well. I ski. This winter I went to the Alps. I also canoe. I see my son once a year. He said recently that I should go visit them twice a year, because I'm too old now for us only to see each other once a year.