

Janina Wiener With Her Husband Maurycy Visiting Family In Jerusalem



This is a picture of me and my husband Maurycy Wiener. I think it was taken in the 1980s, as my husband died in 1990. It was taken in his cousin Irena Gal's orange grove in the Gethsemane quarter of Jerusalem. You can see her house in the background.

I can't say how many times I have been to Israel. It isn't that often, but I simply never counted. I remember the first time, because it was the first time. It was 1957. Israel is a very beautiful country. But for me, it was above all a family trip. I wanted to meet my husband's relatives. My husband's brother, Juliusz, was a lawyer and public notary there.

Each compatriot society in Israel holds a *hazkara* [Heb.: commemoration] on the day of the destruction of the given community. It is a different date for each community. And while in Jerusalem I read in a Polish-language newspaper published there, that the Lwow *hazkara* was to be held the next day in Tel Aviv. I went, and when I entered the room, I suddenly heard exclamations: 'It's Janka!', 'It's Janka!' And I met my friends.

My husband's two paternal uncles were still alive. Those uncles were living on state pensions, and they were very well-off people who had fled Germany before Hitler, or already under Hitler, at the beginning, and settled in Palestine long, long before the war. I don't remember what their names were. They left large families, those uncles. One of my husband's cousins, for instance, Aaron Wiener, is one of the few water management experts in the world. He designed the whole water management system in Israel.

And look, a blessing in disguise [as a girl Mrs Wiener attended Hebrew classes at the Tarbut, which she hated at the time]. When I'm in Israel these days, when I arrive in Israel, after a few days I can understand what people say to me. I mean, I understand bits and pieces, but I'm not completely dumbstruck. I can still write my name in Hebrew today.

If I go to Israel, I go there chiefly for family reasons, because very many of my husband's relatives live there. And, of course, curiosity also, but I already visited all the interesting places when it was possible to do so. When it was still safe to do so. Otherwise, as far as the East is concerned, I want to visit neither the Middle East, nor the Far East, nor Africa. The only place I can go to is the Canary Islands, where I have been going for many years. Barring Israel and the Canaries, I took my last big trip in 1989. A year before my husband's death we took a cruise through the Mediterranean Sea. In December 1990, my husband died suddenly.