



Photographer: JACK KLUMPE

Family and friends gather around the Passover seder table of Alan and Louise Wolfe in Amberley Village. In front are Bella and Alex from Lvov in the Soviet Union. Their daughter, Alina, 8, is next to Alex. Next to Bella, left, are Lisa Sperling, Michelle Wolfe, Alan and Louise Wolfe, Meredith Wolfe, Mark Sperling and son Jonathan, Hortense Wolfe, and Vera Sperling.

For emigres, a special seder

By Laurie Petrie
Post Staff Reporter

Alan Wolfe slipped a fourth piece of matzo under the special cloth. Usually, only three pieces of the unleavened "bread of affliction" are hidden. But this night was different, not only because it was Passover seder, but because the Wolfes had guests for whom the matzo was a taste of freedom.

"This is the bread of affliction our forefathers ate in Egypt," Wolfe said to the 15 gathered at the table. "But the fourth piece is the matzo of hope. When we observe this feast of freedom, we know that the Soviet Jews are not free... Their crime is the desire to live as Jews with Jews in a free land... We vow that, once they are free, we will help them rebuild their lives. We will not rest. No Jew is free until all Jews are free."

The three pieces of matzo signify three tribes of Israel:

The Wolfes' special guests Monday night are from the Russian town of Lvov near the Polish border. Bella and Alex and their eight-year-old daughter, Alina, remember that Alex's grandfather celebrated Passover in Russia, but his was the last generation to do so.

BELLA, ALEX AND Alina, who asked that their last name not be printed lest the government "make a hard life" for Alex's younger brother still in Russia, came to Cincinnati a year ago. They celebrated their first seder then at the Jewish Community Center. They were grateful to be free, but it was confusing to feast among strangers.

Of all Jewish holidays, Passover is the most important to share with family and friends. And the seder, with its lively songs, traditions and plentiful food, is a night for children. Monday, Bella, Alex and Alina could at last be Jewish among Jews.

"How can I say it? It is like being born," Alex said. "This is all new to me, but I want my daughter to know about freedom, about religion and school."

FREEDOM HAS NOT come without sacrifice. Alex was fired from his job in Russia shortly after applying for an exit visa. He had saved money to live on in anticipation of losing his job, but bureaucratic delays and harassment continued for a year before the family could leave.

With the help of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society they were united with relatives in Cincinnati. Once here, Jewish Family Services helped them find a home and jobs and a school for Alina.