



Third Meeting – Sh. *née* Granek

I have called her Sh. [ש], choosing to conceal her full name due to the reasons which will be subsequently explained.

Sh. listened to the conversation I had with Yaron Enosh on the radio. She turned to the programme's producers, giving her telephone number, and implored, by all means of entreaty, that I be given her details as soon as possible. She was obviously eager to make contact. Like me, she was longing to gather information. Many things about her family's past had remained a mystery.

Sh.'s telephone call, like many other calls that I received, awakened in me hopes that I was about to breach the barrier of silence. My hopes, however, were dashed. Not only were the mysteries not solved, but new ones emerged and the curtain of fog became even denser.

Sh. and I had a brief, animated conversation on the telephone, which resulted in our agreeing to meet at her home in the Krayot¹. I also took Rachel Geshuri to the meeting, in hopes that she would be able to assist us with the vast quantity of information she had amassed on the members of the Krzepice community, and particularly regarding the identification and sorting of those residents of the town with the surname Granek - although a common surname does not necessarily imply a family connection.

Sh. spoke with us candidly. She told us that her father, whose name I also prefer to conceal, had learned the trade of tailoring - like the majority of the Krzepice Jews, who were engaged in the liberal professions [viz. self-employed], such as tailors, cobblers, and mechanics. [During the War], Sh.'s father fled to Russia, where he worked, by stipulation of the Russian Army, as a cobbler. In due course, he returned to his occupation as a tailor.

With the end of the War, her father returned to his hometown of Krzepice, in the hope of finding family members. Upon discovering that no one had survived, he decided to leave. His decision was exacerbated by the humiliating treatment he received from Polish antisemites, which had left him with no other choice.

After having married, he and his wife moved, together with many of the Holocaust survivors, to the DP camps, where they stayed until emigrating to Israel. They settled in the Krayot, where he continued working as a tailor.

Sh.'s father distanced himself from his friends, the Krzepice *landsleit*. He did not attend the gatherings of Krzepice *landsleit*, nor did he take part in their joyous occasions or even the memorial services. Only a few people knew him. Besides these details, Sh. knew very little about her father. She was expecting to receive some information from us with which to fill the gaps.

After a short break for lunch, Sh. turned to us with great frankness and told us, "Following my mother's death, we found her personal diary, which was written in a clear hand and in fluent

¹ [TN: The Krayot are a cluster of four small cities and one neighbourhood founded in the 1930's on the outskirts of the city of Haifa, Israel, in the Haifa Bay area.]

language". The diary astonished Sh. and her sister. Not only did it not shed any light on her mother's life and her past during the Holocaust, but to the contrary – the diary made the mystery even greater when, in reading it, the sisters found out that their mother, all her life, had not told them the truth about herself and her history. She had presented a different persona to them – one that she had adopted. Her past remained veiled in mist. From the diary, the sisters gleaned that their mother had had a different name.

She had, in fact, been born in Białystok and not in Krzepice or a nearby town at all, as they had thought. To the diary was attached a photo featuring their mother with two of her friends. Sh. could not identify them.

Sh. and her sister approached the Committee of Białystok Jews in the hope of finding additional information about their mother and, when their hopes were shattered, Sh. turned to me and asked me to help her solve the mystery. However I, too, was unable to help her.

This is apparently one more instance – one of many – in which Holocaust survivors not only chose to remain silent, but even tried to hide from their families the horrific suffering they had experienced - sometimes even to the extent of falsifying the facts and using a fake identity. In the diary, which she had written, their mother was trying to reveal to her daughters the whole truth about herself, but the truth was only discovered after her demise and this has left numerous unanswered questions. What a pity.

