



Eighth Meeting – Cesia (Cypora) Granek

Cesia (Cypora) and her husband Menachem were my parents' close friends, yet I did not remember having met them in my youth. I found Cesia through talks I had with Holocaust survivors. It was the Krzepice *landsleit* who referred me to her.

One day, my wife and I travelled to meet Cesia at her home in Ramat Gan. This was after her husband Menachem had passed away. Already, at the beginning of our conversation, Cesia proudly told us about the special relationship which she had had with my father Majer. She stressed that it had not been just an acquaintance, but a true friendship.

When Cesia told us about herself, Zahava and I were left dumbfounded. A wise and ambitious woman, with extraordinary capabilities, was revealed before us. However, the events of the War and her underground activities had prevented her from studying, acquiring an education and advancing professionally.

Cesia was born in Sosnowiec in 1923. After the War, she married Menachem [Mendel] Granek, the son of Cwi [Hersz] Granek, a native of Krzepice. Before their marriage, Menachem told her about his good friend Majer Chaskelewicz. He described to her a very close friendship, despite the age gap between them.

During the War, Cesia was active in the Zionist underground in Sosnowiec, under the command of Józek Kożuch, who was a friend of her future husband Menachem. When Menachem Granek came, together with his family, to Sosnowiec, Józek recruited him into the underground.

Menachem was put in charge of haulage. He had gained a great deal of experience in driving and transporting goods, from the time he had served as a driver in his father's business. The members of the underground made sure that Menachem was "planted" into the Jewish Police, so that he would have access to confidential information and would be able to report to his underground members on directives and instructions issued against Jews and others.

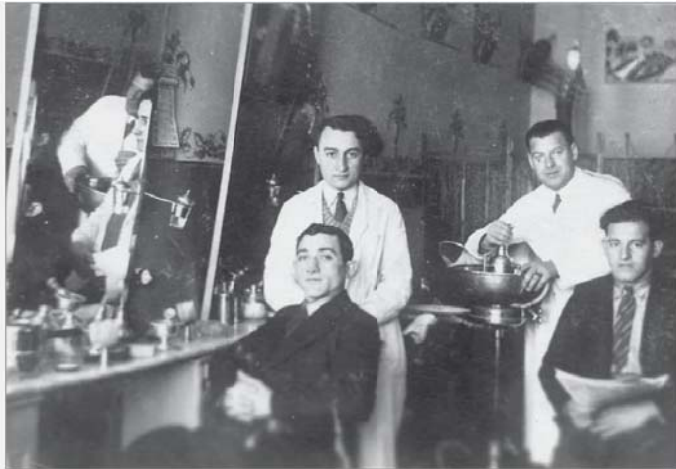
Menachem and his friends acted fiercely, while risking their lives. The Germans searched for them and tried to capture them at all costs. Towards the liquidation of the ghetto in 1943, and after much effort, the Germans managed to capture the group's commander, Józek Kożuch. They executed him.

When it became clear that the ghetto was about to be liquidated, Cesia was instructed to find alternative hiding places, which would be used by the Jews who would secretly leave the Sosnowiec ghetto, thus preventing them from being sent to the extermination camps.

Cesia recounted, "Menachem, as an activist in the underground, was sent to an area that was under German control. The underground tried to infiltrate this part of Sosnowiec, in order to harm the Germans and their morale. As for myself, I lived under the assumed identity of a Polish Christian woman.

"Our joint activity in the underground strengthened the connection between Menachem and me. Love blossomed and we married in 1945, immediately after the War. Your father Majer attended our

wedding. Upon leaving the wedding ceremony, he encountered a group of Russians and was severely beaten due to being Jewish. He was robbed, and most of his clothes were taken from him. Antisemitism was soaring.”



At the barbershop my father opened in Munich. My father is standing on the right and Sandler on the left

“We settled in Bytom, near Katowice”, Cesia continued telling her story, “along with your father and mother, who had been married shortly before. We did not worry about material issues, nor did we formulate a position regarding the future. Your father, on the other hand, was a very realistic person. He realised that our place was not in Poland, and that we must leave Europe. He set up a very successful barbershop and employed a man named Sandler, who hails from Krzepice and is a Holocaust survivor, too.”

“Your father was a good and well-to-do man”, Cesia noted. “He helped many Jews. While in Sosnowiec, immediately after his release, your father met two orphaned girls who had survived. Both were daughters of

well-known families in Krzepice. He adopted them and aided them extensively. I know that one of them was sent to France, and one was transferred, together with many other survivors, to the DP camps in Germany. We were also transferred to the DP camps near Munich and, there too, your father opened a successful salon.”

Following my father’s death, the ties with Cesia and Menachem weakened - which is why I did not know them as a child. Luckily, through my conversations with the Holocaust survivors, I had the opportunity of meeting this remarkable woman.

