

Biography of Barbara Makuch

Barbara Makuch, born in Russia in 1917, grew up in Warsaw, in a Catholic family. She graduated from an agricultural school in Vilna. She wanted to continue her education in Warsaw but this became impossible due to the German invasion of Poland. In the chaotic days that followed, her father was shot dead by a German soldier in broad daylight.

Barbara, her mother and her sister moved to Barbara's aunt's home in Sandomierz. Barbara soon found work teaching at an agricultural boarding school for boys in Tarnobrzeg and her mother moved in with her. From 1942 onwards Barbara helped several Jews: she sheltered six-year-old Malka for about six months, telling neighbors that the child was her cousin; she helped several other Jews as well.

Barbara became a courier for *Zegota*, an underground Polish resistance organisation, carrying false documents and delivering money to Jews in hiding. Coming back on the train from Warsaw to Lvov, the Germans searched Barbara's bags and found *Zegota* documents. She was taken to a jail in Lublin, where she was tortured for a month, and then sent to a prison in Lvov. In late 1943, Barbara was sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp in Germany. In May 1945, while on a death march across Germany, she was liberated by the Americans.

After the war, Barbara returned to Poland and was reunited with her mother and sisters. She became life-long friends with little Malka and her mother, who later moved to Canada. They invited Barbara to join them. It was here that Barbara met her husband and they settled in Montreal in 1959. In 1979 Barbara was designated "Righteous Among the Nations" by Yad Vashem. She died in 2003.