

## *To Kill a Jew*

*“There is a hunted animal,  
there is a crazy hunter,  
a conqueror, a liar, a fool,  
a victim, a screamer, a dealer,  
and a fox and a boor and a pimp.  
And a creep and a reptile and a lousy actor,  
and beaten and conquered and kicked  
and the body, flesh and wounds  
and a long, hopeless road  
And nowhere can I find a MAN!”<sup>1</sup>*

*“On Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> July 1946, a crowd of Kielce residents, with the participation of Militia personnel and soldiers, massacred Jews, who had survived the Holocaust and who were living in the building at ul. Planty 7/9. The spark, which initiated the outbreak of violence, was a rumour about the ritual murder of Christian children.*

*“The sequence of events, leading up to the Kielce pogrom, began with the disappearance of eight-year-old Henryk Błaszczuk. His father, Walenty Błaszczuk, reported his son, as missing, to the police station.*

*“Meantime, the boy, without his parents’ knowledge, was staying with a family in the countryside. When, on the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup> July, he returned home, fearing punishment, he said that, for three days, he had been imprisoned, by Jews, in a basement from where he had managed to escape.*

*“The boy was clearly referring to the popular myth about the kidnapping of Christian children ‘for matzah’ (and the modernised version, which circulated after the War, about using their blood for transfusions in order to strengthen exhausted Jews).*

*“On the morning of 4<sup>th</sup> July, Walenty Błaszczuk and his son went to the police station in order to make an appropriate report. Along the way, Henio ‘recognised’ the building, where he had allegedly been held. More than one hundred Jewish survivors lived at ul. Planty 7/9. It also held the premises of the Jewish Committee and the ‘kibbutz’ – but there were no basements.*

*“A Civil Militia (MO) patrol was sent to that address. Along the way, the Militia personnel were saying that they were going to look for murdered Polish children. They were joined by Kielce residents, as the news of ritual murder spread, like a fire storm,*

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<sup>1</sup> W. Szlengel, *Szukam Człowieka* (excerpt); Władysław Szlengel (1912-1943) – Polish-Jewish poet, author of cabaret scripts and songs, journalist, stage actor. In 1940-1943, he lived in the Warsaw ghetto, where he continued his writing and artistic activity. Thanks to the poems which he wrote at the time, he was known as the “Ghetto Poet”. Even before the War, he perfectly conveyed, in his works, the atmosphere of chaos and impending disaster. He sensed the destruction of the existing values, his work being characterised with extreme pessimism.

*around the city. As the news passed from mouth to mouth, the number of murdered children grew to a dozen or so.*

*"A hostile crowd began gathering at the front of the Jewish house. The catalyst for the pogrom was the behaviour of the uniformed services. The Militia personnel began 'searching for murdered children', which seemed to confirm societal ideas about ritual murder.*

*"A psychosis began to grow within the crowd, with shouts of 'Death to the Jews!' and 'Beat them for our children!', with stones flying towards the building on ul. Planty. Soldiers were sent to the location. Instead of controlling the situation, they mixed in with the civilians and joined into the pogrom. When the military entered the building in search of weapons (for self-defence, the Jews legally owned several pistols), shots rang out from the inside.*

*"There was a rumour that the Jews had killed a Polish lieutenant. In reality, the soldiers had fired, killing, among others, the Jewish Committee Chairman, Dr. Seweryn Kahane. There were also robberies. The soldiers and militia personnel, who shared the prevailing mood, dragged the Jews outside and handed them over to the crowd. Several people were thrown out of the windows and from the second-floor balcony.*

*"The victims were beaten with [metal] railings, iron rods and rifle butts. Some of the victims had gunshot and bayonet wounds. The few officials, who stood in defence for the Jews, were met with the hysterical mob's aggression as 'Jewish henchmen'.*

*"Meanwhile, the rumour about the ritual murder had reached the Kielce 'Ludwik' Glassworks. Under the slogan of 'You work here and they're murdering your children there', several hundred workers, armed with metal tools, rushed to ul. Planty. Their arrival began the second and bloodiest phase of the pogrom. The violence was ended in the afternoon by the intervention of another, better-led army unit, who evacuated the Jews to a safe place.*

*"Anti-Jewish aggression also spread onto the streets of Kielce. There were several murders and assaults within Jewish apartments. A hostile mob gathered outside the hospital, where the wounded had been taken. Under the influence of the news spreading about ritual murder, there were also attacks on and murders of Jews on trains, which were on lines which passed through Kielce.*

*"During the pogrom, at least forty Jews were killed, as well as two Poles who had stood in their defence. Circa forty people had been injured. The consequence of the Kielce pogrom was an outbreak of panic amongst Polish Jews and a wave of emigration consisting of circa 100,000 people.*

*"The Kielce pogrom was an embarrassment for the local authorities, who had reacted inefficiently and chaotically as events had developed. With a loud echo, it also resonated abroad. On 8<sup>th</sup> July, a funeral parade was held for the victims, with the*

*participation of representatives of the authorities, Jewish committees, the army, communal organisations, as well as city residents.*

*"A day later, the first trial of the perpetrators began, in which nine, randomly selected people were summarily sentenced to death. In subsequent trials, several dozen more pogrom participants were sentenced to terms of imprisonment.*

*"The authorities accused the anti-communist underground of organising the pogrom. In turn, the opposition and pro-independence underground saw that, behind the scenes, it was a communist authorities' provocation, which was intended to divert attention away from the falsified result of the referendum held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1946.*

*"Among the conspiracy theories, surrounding the Kielce pogrom, was one that accused the Zionists of causing it in order to hasten the emigration of Jews from Poland. However, the investigation carried out by the prosecutor of the time, and research carried out by historians, have not provided any evidence of anyone's provocation."*<sup>2</sup>

This long citation comes from material posted onto the website of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews – an institution dedicated to showing the centuries-old co-existence of Poles and Jews in Poland. Its aim is to break stereotypes, provide facts and to build bridges of understanding between Poles and Jews. When reading this text, devoid of commentary, packed with facts which are supposed to reflect the chronology of the events, despite the fact that more than seventy years have passed since them, you can involuntarily feel the blood in your mouth and the fear.<sup>3</sup>

Seventy years ago, the fear was even greater and the threat very real. The Kielce pogrom<sup>4</sup> paralysed, with fear, the Jewish community in Poland. That impression was reinforced by the fact that this was not an isolated case. It had been preceded by other anti-Jewish excesses, such as Jews being killed on the routes along which they were returning from the camps – the "railway operations". These murders and beatings were carried out by individuals and small groups. Sometimes, it was the manifestation of political activity<sup>5</sup>, sometimes it was simple banditry.<sup>6</sup>

However, there were other incidents involving mobs, such as the pogroms in Rzeszów and in Kraków.<sup>7</sup> Even though the Jews had suffered through so much during the War and, during the

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.polin.pl/pl/rocznica-pogromu-zydow-w-kielcach> (accessed: 2nd June 2020).

<sup>3</sup> As well as shame (authors' note).

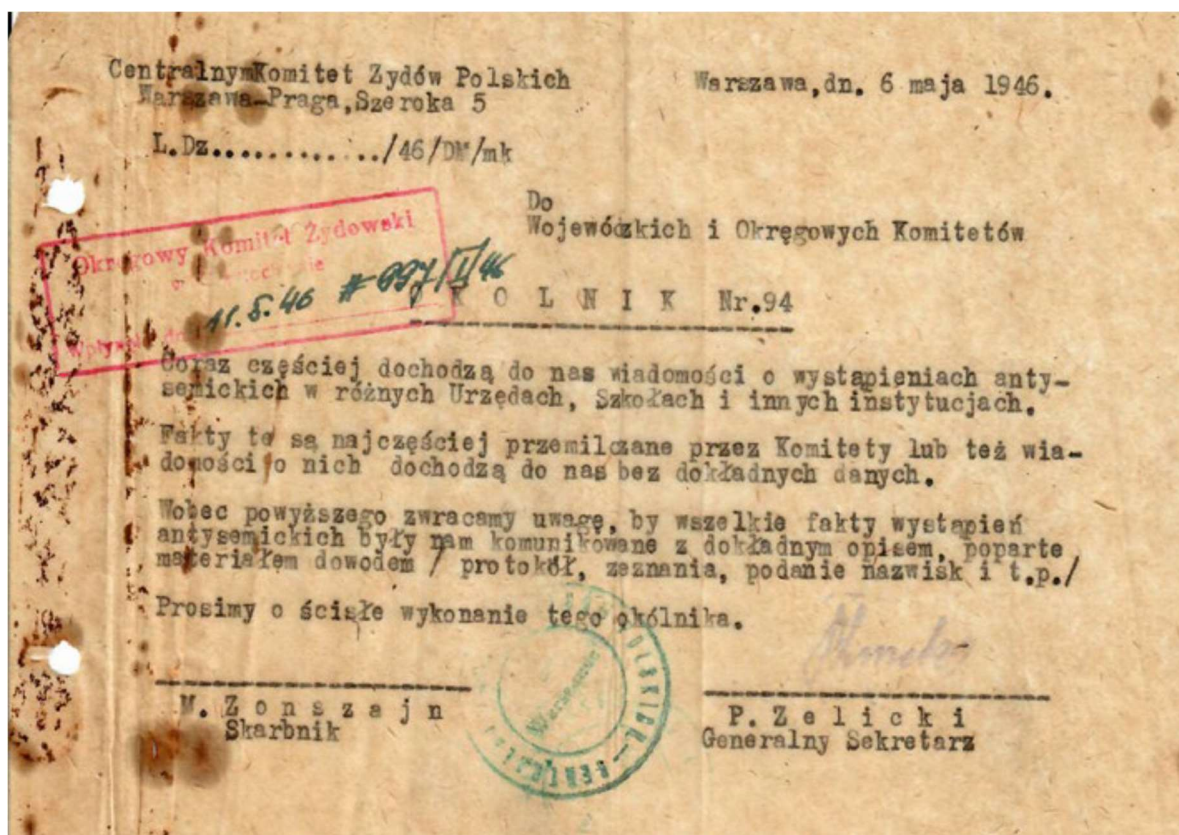
<sup>4</sup> For more on this topic, see: S. Meducki (ed.), Z. Wrona (ed.), *Antyżydowskie wydarzenia kieleckie 4 lipca 1946 roku. Dokumenty i materiały*, vol. 1-2, Kielce 1992-1994; B. Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946*, Warsaw 1992; Ł. Kamiński (ed.), J. Żaryn (ed.), *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, Warsaw 2006; M. Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga. Polska 1944–1947. Ludowa reakcja na kryzys*, Kraków 2012; J. Żyndul, *Kłamstwo krwi. Legenda mordu rytualnego na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, Warsaw 2011; J. Żaryn, *Kościół a władza w Polsce (1945-1950)*, Warsaw 1997.

<sup>5</sup> The main accusations were directed at right-wing partisans, anti-communists originating from the Home Army (AK) and the National Armed Forces (Narodowy Sił Zbrojny. For more see: A. Żbikowski, *Morderstwa popełniane na Żydach w pierwszych latach po wojnie*, [in:] M. Adamczyk-Garbowska (ed.), F. Tych (ed.), *Następstwa...*, op. cit., pp. 71-93; A. Grabski, A. Rykała, *Żydzi...*, op. cit., p. 403.

<sup>6</sup> For more, see A. Żbikowski, *Morderstwa...*, op. cit., pp. 71-93.

<sup>7</sup> Pogrom in Rzeszów – 12<sup>th</sup> June 1945, pogrom in Kraków – 11<sup>th</sup> August 1945. For more, see: A. Żbikowski, *Morderstwa...*, op. cit., pp. 71-93; A. Grabski, A. Rykała, *Żydzi...*, op. cit., pp. 403-405. See also: A. Cała, H. Datner-Śpiewak, *Dzieje Żydów w Polsce 1944–1968. Teksty źródłowe*, Warsaw 1997.

occupation, many Poles had risked death helping them<sup>8</sup>, after the War, old resentments revived in Polish society.



CKŻP circular, dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 1946, addressed to Jews, calling for the reporting of information about antisemitism.

Source: TSKŻ Częstochowa Archive

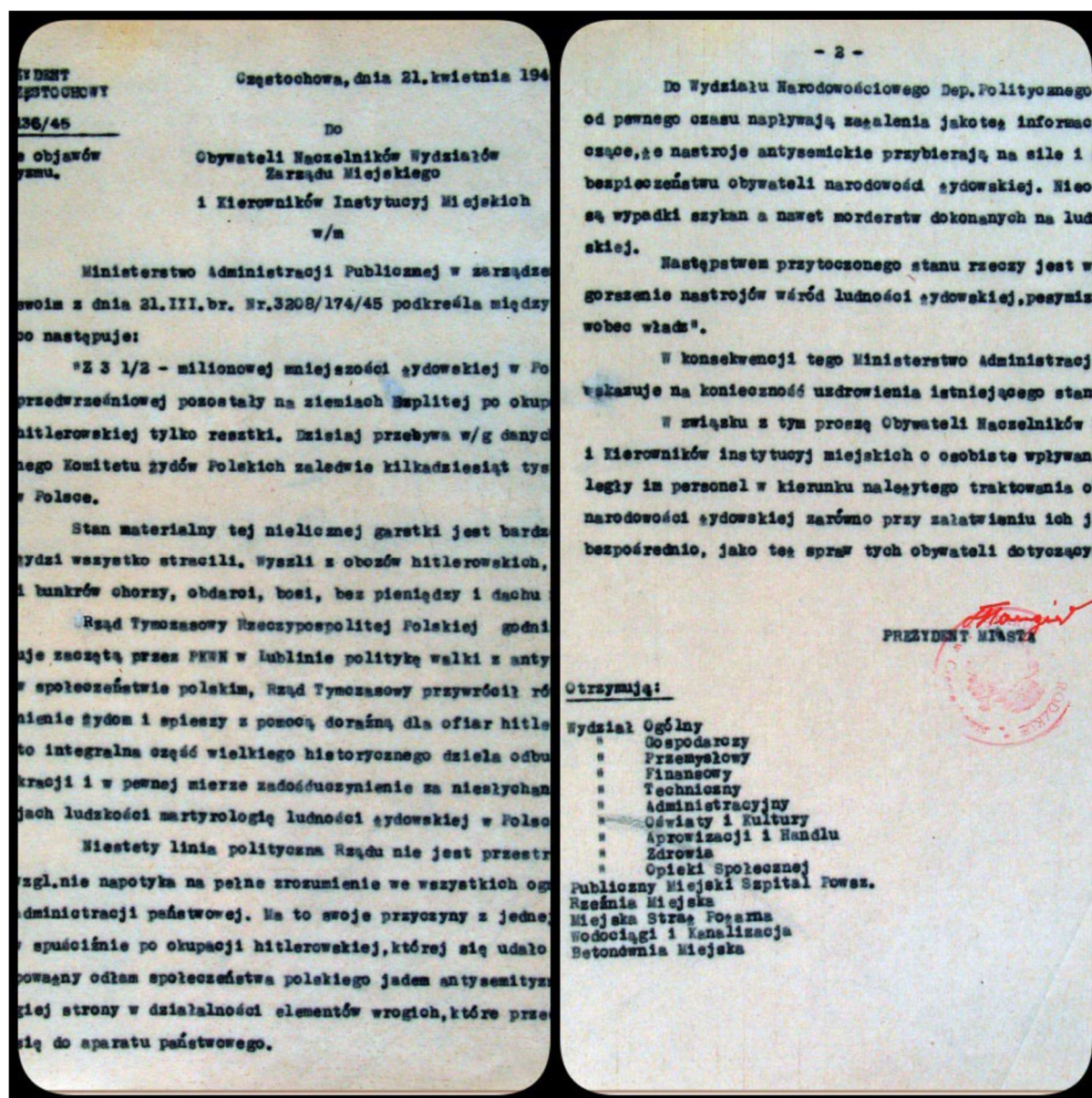
There were various reasons for this phenomenon. Firstly, the return of the Jews caused a feeling of discomfort amongst those who had taken over their property. Among the Polish population, who were mainly poor and struggling with the difficulties of a post-War reality, there was a widespread view that the authorities were favouring the Jews – and it did so because the authorities, themselves, were actually Jews.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> In Yad Vashem's Garden of the Righteous, several thousand olive trees grow in memory of the people who helped Jews during World War II. Each of them bears a plaque with the name of the Righteous and his/her country of origin. Among the trees, there are commemorative plaques with the names of all those honoured – more than 28,000 people from more than fifty countries. Since 1996, due to a lack of space in the Garden, no more trees have been planted there. For more, see: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/o-sprawiedliwych/instytut--yad-vashem/ogrod-sprawiedliwych-wsrod-narodow-swiata> (accessed: 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020). On 1st January 2019, of the people honoured with the title, 6,992 are from Poland – the most of any country. For more, see: [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polscy\\_Sprawiedliwi\\_w%C5%9Br%C3%B3d\\_Narod%C3%B3w\\_%C5%9Awiata](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polscy_Sprawiedliwi_w%C5%9Br%C3%B3d_Narod%C3%B3w_%C5%9Awiata) (accessed: 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020).

<sup>9</sup> The emerging stereotype of “żydokomuna” [“Jewish communism”] placed Jews in an unfavourable light of being agents and informers of the new authority, as well as being its prominent activists, both at the central and more local level – in party structures, the security apparatus, the army and the militia. This was, of course, partly true. Jews, returning with the army from the Soviet Union, held many positions and actively participated in political life, in accordance with their beliefs. In the attacks, during the “railway operations”, in which they were dragged off the trains and were killed only because they were Jews, the victims were usually ordinary people, who were returning to their hometowns. They were killed because they were trying to regain their own property or for no reason at all. For more, see: A. Żbikowski, *Morderstwa...*, op. cit., pp. 84-92.



The stereotype, of using the blood of Christian children for the making of "matzah", has been present in Polish society for centuries. The ignorance and fanaticism of simple people is a powder keg. All it takes, to explode, is a spark.



An internal document, dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 1945, from the Częstochowa Mayor, about the need to fight antisemitism and the need to improve the service provided by the Municipal Administration.

Source: Częstochowa State Archive Collection

Kielce lies close to Częstochowa. On several occasions, more Jews lived within its city limits than in Kielce. The moods in both cities were similar. Tensions were rising. Both the central and local authorities were well aware of the anti-Jewish attitude within Polish society. Evidence of this is a letter from the Mayor of Częstochowa, dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 1945<sup>10</sup>, to departmental heads and managers of municipal institutions. In it, the Mayor reminds them that, in accordance with guidelines from the Ministry of Public Administration and the policy of the Provisional Government, initiated by the PKWN, antisemitism should be combatted.

<sup>10</sup> Presented as a graphic in this publication.

It should be fought against because the few Jews, who had survived, no longer trusted the authorities. This was the result of the harassment and murders which had been perpetrated upon the Jewish population. Therefore, the mood within the Jewish population had deteriorated significantly and pessimism had crept in.

During the first months following the end of the occupation, robberies, beatings and even assassinations, albeit a few, took place in Częstochowa.<sup>11</sup> Preserved archival documents – reports from the Municipal Information and Propaganda Office – show that Częstochowa Jews were sent letters containing death threats<sup>12</sup>, although they, themselves, tried not to reveal such occurrences to the authorities. Antisemitic sentiments and attitudes had become evident during rallies organised prior to the June 1946 referendum.<sup>13</sup>

Fearing similar events as to what occurred in Kielce, preventative measures were taken. The mayor of the city held consultations, with the security services and with city representatives, in order to coordinate pacification activities.

In this entire situation, the attitude and actions of the Bishop of Częstochowa, Dr. Teodor Kubina, cannot be over-estimated.<sup>14</sup> He was informed of the unfriendly attitude, within the city, towards the Jewish population and of the incidents of persecution. So, he was aware of the social mood and the threat. In this situation, he did not hesitate to take whatever action was required in order to prevent the possible escalation of events. He acted with the full force of his authority. He must have considered the threat to be quite serious, since he decided to act together with the city authorities, whose ideology was alien to him.<sup>15</sup>

In order to contain the emotions and excitability of the population and in fear of a pogrom in Częstochowa, on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1946, *“Głos Narodu”* published a proclamation, directed at the general public, signed by representatives of the authorities and by Bishop T. Kubina.<sup>16</sup> Among other things, the proclamation stated:

*“The crime of mass murder of Polish citizens, of Jewish nationality, was committed in Kielce. The thirty-two<sup>17</sup> Jews and two Poles, who were murdered, had survived the hell of the German occupation, watched the death and torture of their loved ones, had*

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<sup>11</sup> D. Jarosz, *Częstochowa...*, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>12</sup> Among others, this is mentioned by Anna Goldman. For more, see” A. Goldman, *Wywiad*, [in:] J. Mizgalski (ed.), J. Sielski (ed.), *Żydzi...*, op. cit., p. 415.

<sup>13</sup> D. Jarosz, *Częstochowa...*, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>14</sup> 14 Teodor Kubina (16<sup>th</sup> April 1880 – 13<sup>th</sup> February 1951) – Polish Roman Catholic bishop, the first Bishop of Częstochowa (in the years 1926 -1951). He founded a seminary and the *“Niedziela”* [“Sunday”] weekly. In July 1946, in response to the Kielce pogrom, he was one of the few, within the church hierarchy, to openly and “absolutely” condemn the murder.

<sup>15</sup> He was often reproached for his working together with the communist authorities and the Church authorities resented him for it. The Polish primate, Cardinal August Hlond, criticised the Ordinary of “one of the dioceses” for far-reaching cooperation with the state authorities in issuing public proclamations, the content of which was not always consistent with the Church’s teaching. For more, see: J. Związek, *Odezwy biskupa częstochowskiego dra Teodora Kubiny po pogromie kieleckim*, [in:] J. Mizgalski (ed.), *Żydzi Częstochowianie: współistnienie, Holocaust, pamięć*, Częstochowa 2004, p. 225; Z. Wrona, *Kościół wobec pogromu Żydów w Kielcach w 1946 r.*, [in:] L. Kaczanowski (ed.), A. Massalski (ed.), D. Olszewski (ed.), J. Szczepański (ed.), *Pamiętnik Świętokrzyski. Studia z dziejów kultury chrześcijańskiej*, Kielce 1991, p. 299; J. Związek, *Życie i działalność biskupa Teodora Kubiny (1880–1951)*, [in:] Z. Kapała (ed.), *“Rocznik Świętochłowski”* 1999, Vol. 1, pp. 7–31.

<sup>16</sup> For more, see: *“Głos Narodu”*, dated 9<sup>th</sup> July 1946.

<sup>17</sup> Information about the additional victims came later.

their human dignity trampled upon and they had avoided death at the hands of the occupier, not without the help of the Polish Christian community. The moral and actual perpetrators of the murder violated the Christian commandment to love one's neighbour and the overall Polish principle of 'not to kill'. Nothing – absolutely nothing – justifies the Kielce crime, which deserves the wrath of God and of man. [It is a crime], the background to which can be sought in criminal fanaticism and in unjustifiable ignorance".<sup>18</sup>

## Do ogółu społeczeństwa m. Częstochowy

W Kielcach dokonano zbrodni masowego mordu na osobach obywateli polskich narodowości żydowskiej.

Zamordowano trzydziestu dwóch Żydów i dwóch Polaków, którzy przeżyli piekło okupacji niemieckiej, patrzyli na śmierć i męczeństwo swoich najbliższych i sami uniknęli śmierci z rąk okupanta nie bez pomocy polskiego społeczeństwa chrześcijańskiego.

Moralni i faktyczni sprawcy dokonanego mordu podeptali godność człowieka oraz dopuścili się strasznego w swej formie pogwałcenia chrześcijańskiego przykazania, miłości bliźniego i ogólnoludzkiej zasady – „nie zabijaj”.

Nie, absolutnie nie nie usprawiedliwia zasługująca na gniew Boga i ludzi zbrodni kieleckiej, której tła i przyczyny poszukiwać należy w zbrodniczym fanatyzmie i nieusprawiedliwionej ciemnocie.

Fanatyzm jednych, posługujący się dla celów zbrodni kłamliwymi pojęciami zmierzłego średniowiecza, obcymi wierzeniom społeczności chrześcijańskiej i zasadom zgodnego współżycia wszystkich współobywateli kraju bez różnicy narodowości i wyznania, ukuli zbrodnię i wyzykali ciemnotę innych dla dokonania tej zbrodni.

I jedni i drudzy winni być bezwzględnie i bez jakichkolwiek zastrzeżeń potępieni jako zbrodniarze w rozumieniu wszelkich praw boskich i ludzkich.

Pozostawiając pierwszych osądowi wymiaru sprawiedliwości, ubolewamy nad drugim, że dali się sprowokować do zbrodni, która zaniżyła nasze współżycie wewnętrzne w kraju i zniszczyła dobre imię Polaka zagranicą.

Zbrodnia kielecka została bezapelacyjnie potępiona przez wszystkich, którzy mają serce bijące tętnem miłości bliźniego, przywiązaniem do niewzruszonych wierzeń i obyczajów naszych ojców i dziadów oraz uczciwością uczuć czysto ludzkich.

Mimo to mieliśmy możność stwierdzić, że i u nas, w Częstochowie znaleźli się tacy, na szczęście nieliczni, którzy, podobnie jak w Kielcach, usiłują uczynić wszystko, ażeby ciemnotę ulic i domów pełną do zbrodni, jaką ogłądały z przerażeniem Kielce.

W związku z tym, jako przedstawiciele społeczeństwa częstochowskiego, mający do tego społeczeństwa zaufanie i wierzący niezłomnie w jego świadomość ludzką i wyznawane przezeń zasady chrześcijańskie i moralne, oświadczamy i apelujemy:

Wszelkie twierdzenia o istnieniu mordów rytualnych są kłamstwem. Nikt ze społeczności chrześcijańskiej ani w Kielcach, ani w Częstochowie lub gdzie indziej w Polsce nie został skrzywdzony przez Żydów dla celów religijnych i rytualnych.

Nie jest nam znany ani jeden wypadek porwania dziecka chrześcijańskiego przez Żydów.

Wszystkie szerszone w tej materii wiadomości i wersje są wymysłem świadomych zbrodniarzy lub nieświadomych ludzi obalamujących i zmieniających do wywołania zbrodni.

Zbrodniarze i obalamownicy zasługują na sąd sprawiedliwy albo rozumiałą litość, nigdy zaś na to, ażeby znaleźli posłuch u społeczeństwa.

Dlatego też apelujemy do wszystkich bez wyjątku obywateli miasta i powiatu Częstochowy, do ludzi dobrej woli w szczególności, by nie dawali posłuchu zbrodniczym wersjom i pogłoskom, wersje te i pogłoski sprawdzali u źródła, prostowali je wśród najbliższego środowiska oraz przeciwstawiali wszystkim siłom możliwościom wywołania jakichkolwiek ekscesów przeciwko ludności żydowskiej.

Wierzymy, że oświadczone obywatelko i przywiązane do zasad moralności chrześcijańskiej społeczeństwo Częstochowy nie da posłuchu zbrodniczym podstępom i nie spłami się podniesieniem ręki na współobywatelko dlatego tylko, że jest ono innego wyznania i innej narodowości.

† Teodor Kubina, Biskup,  
Starosta Grodzki dr. T. J. Wolański,  
Starosta Powiatowy J. Kalmierczak,  
Przes Miejskiej Rady Narodowej K. Zajda,  
Przes Powiatowej Rady Narodowej S. Rękas

“Głos Narodu” No. 159, dated 9<sup>th</sup> July 1946

## Do ogółu społeczeństwa m. Częstochowy i powiatu częstochowskiego

Dokonany w Kielcach mord na osobach kilkudziesięciu Żydów jest w swej istocie zbrodnią tak potworną, że przeraża ona wszystkich uczciwie myślących ludzi.

Fanatyzm i ciemnota zostały sprowokowane do tej zbrodni przez czynniki, które dla swych celów politycznych, godzących w najżywniejsze interesy Państwa i Narodu, chcą wytworzyć w kraju stan ciągłego wrzenia, ekscesów i walk bratobójczych.

Mord kielecki nie jest pierwszym dziełem ludzi, których sumienia obciążone są łańcuchem zbrodni, popełnionych na współobywateli. Stanowi on już ukoronowanie tych zbrodni i dopełnia miarę cierpliwości całego społeczeństwa.

Dlatego Naród Polski czując się odpowiedzialnym za losy kraju, stoi na gruncie poszanowania godności człowieka oraz jego praw do życia. Naród nie chciał nigdy i nie chce mordów współobywateli, nie może więc pozostać obojętny wobec zbrodni dokonanej w Kielcach.

Przeciwnie, powinien on z całą stanowczością i bezwzględnością potępić winnych dokonania zbrodni kieleckiej oraz równie stanowczo i bezwzględnie potępić tych wszystkich, stwarzających w Polsce taką atmosferę, której następstwem jest ta zbrodnia i mogą być zbrodnie dalsze.

Ogół społeczeństwa musi dzisiaj już wyraźnie powiedzieć, że dalszych zbrodni i walk bratobójczych nie chce, że obec mu są intencje i cele tych nieodpowiedzialnych czynników politycznych, które stwarzają podatny grunt dla mordów, ekscesów i zamieszek w kraju. Czynnikiem tym przeciwstawia wszystkie rozporządzalne siły dla obrony ludu wewnętrznego w państwie, dla obrony życia współobywateli i rozpoczętego dzieła odbudowy Ojczyzny.

W tym rozumieniu my, przedstawiciele wszystkich warstw ludności miasta Częstochowy i powiatu częstochowskiego, podnosząc z uznaniem fakt wydania odeszły przez Najwyższego Dostojeństwa kościelnego naszej diecezji i przedstawicieli władz, wzywamy społeczeństwo Częstochowy i powiatu częstochowskiego już nie tylko do napełnienia moralnych i faktycznych sprawców zbrodni kieleckiej, lecz do przeciwstawienia się wszystkim rozporządzalnymi środkami próbom wywołania u nas jakichkolwiek zamieszek i ekscesów.

Wzywamy społeczeństwo do przeciwdziałania poczynaniom tych, których niecnym celem działania politycznego jest prowokowanie obalamowań i nieświadomych do zbrodni i wytworzenia kłamstw, które mogą zbrodnię sprowokować lub do niej doprowadzić.

Częstochowa, dnia 8 lipca 1946 roku.

Ks. dr. Teodor Kubina, Biskup i Ordynariusz Diecezji Częstochowskiej  
Ks. A. Jętowny,  
Ks. dr. Antoni Marchewka, redaktor tygodnika katolickiego „Niedziela”  
Dr. Władysław Jaroń  
Franciszek Rachwał, dyrektor Oddziału Banku Handlowego,  
Zbigniew Kosłowski, wiceprokurator,  
Mar. Leon Lembke  
Maksymilian Kanus, przedstawiciel „Społem”,  
W. Iwanicki, wiceprokurator,  
Jan Gruszczyński, adwokat,  
Władysław Bielobradek, adwokat,  
Józef Zepiński,  
L. Zychliński, Prezes Sądu Okręgowego,  
A. Keller, Wiceprezes Sądu Okręgowego,  
J. Wileziński,  
S. Włazniński, Wiceprezes Sądu Okręgowego,  
Dr. T. E. Borkowski,  
Fr. Jankowski, Prezes Stowarzyszenia Kupców Polskich,  
J. Neyman, dyrektor Komunalnej Kasy Oszczędności,  
M. Idzikowski, adwokat,  
Zygmunt Kik, dyrektor Spółdzielni Rolniczo-Handlowej,  
Kazimierz Piatek, kierownik S. S. „Jedność”,  
Mgr. Adam Wysocki.

“Głos Narodu” No. 160, dated 10<sup>th</sup> July 1946

Further in the response, we can read:

All claims, about the existence of ritual murders, are lies. No one from the Christian community, either in Kielce, Częstochowa or anywhere else in Poland, has been harmed by Jews for religious and ritual purposes ...”.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> D. Jarosz, Częstochowa..., op. cit., pp. 36, 38–40; “Głos Narodu” No. 159, dated 9<sup>th</sup> July 1946.

<sup>19</sup> “Głos Narodu” No. 159, dated 9<sup>th</sup> July 1946.

Similar in tone to that issued by the authorities, an appeal "To the general public of Częstochowa and the Częstochowa District" was published in "Głos Narodu". It was signed by representatives of the legal profession, the judiciary and the Prosecutor's Office, representatives of the co-operative movement, as well as by Bishop Dr. Teodor Kubina and Rev. Dr., Antoni Marchewka, editor of the Catholic weekly, "Niedziela".

It was a call:

*"to not only condemn the moral and actual perpetrators of the Kielce crime, but to also oppose, with all available means, attempts to cause any riots and excesses in our country."*<sup>20</sup>

The fear of a pogrom was not unfounded. Tragedy hung in the balance. There were individual antisemitic excesses in the city<sup>21</sup> and a spark would have been enough to activate a "Kielce mechanism". Reasonable actions by the authorities and Bishop Kubina's decisive attitude had cooled down these emotions and, perhaps, even saved lives. They also prevented riots against the Jewish population, which was also confirmed by representatives of the local authorities. Such a role was also attributed to Bishop Kubina in research studies on the subject.<sup>22</sup> The Jews, themselves, saw it in a similar way.<sup>23</sup>

The waves of anti-Jewish excesses, which took place in 1945-1947, beginning with the pogroms in Kraków and Kielce, cast a long shadow over the opinion of Poland in the West and brought about disastrous consequences. The entire Polish society was unjustly slandered. From that time on, Poles were identified with antisemites and their aid to Jews, given during the occupation, was willingly forgotten. However, above all, for many years, the processes weighed heavily upon Polish-Jewish relations.

There is also no doubt that the anti-Jewish events of 1945-1947 significantly reduced the Jews' sense of security and contributed to their emigration from our country, including from Częstochowa. The determination, with which decisions were made about leaving, was often astonishing, as evidenced in the case of the parents of Lea Sigiel-Wolinetz, who describes it in this manner:

*"They lived in Częstochowa until the pogrom in Kielce. In 1946, they were considering where and how to leave Poland. They had no family in other parts of Europe. They travelled from border to border, through Italy, Czechoslovakia, Austria and finally reached Germany. They travelled under various conditions – on board a ship, in wagons together with sheep. My mother was pregnant. Affected by all the unpleasant events that had happened to them, my mother miscarried. I would have had a brother."*<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The appeal "To general public of Częstochowa and Częstochowa District", "Głos Narodu" No. 160 dated 10<sup>th</sup> July 1946.

<sup>21</sup> D. Jarosz, *Częstochowa...*, op. cit., pp. 36, 38–40; "Głos Narodu" No. 159, dated 9<sup>th</sup> July 1946.

<sup>22</sup> 22 S. Meducki (ed.), Z. Wrona (ed.), *Antyżydowskie wydarzenia kieleckie 4 lipca 1946 roku. Dokumenty i materiały*, vol. 2, Kielce 1994, p. 7; J. Związek, *Życie i działalność...*, op. cit., pp. 7–31.

<sup>23</sup> For more, see: F. Karay, *W cieniu...*, op. cit., pp. 299–300.

<sup>24</sup> Sigiel-Wolinetz, *Wywiad*, [in:] J. Mizgalski (ed.), J. Sielski (ed.), *Żydzi...*, op. cit. p. 385



Between 1944 and 1946, circa 160,000 Jews, native inhabitants of Poland, legally or illegally returned to their homeland from the territories of the Soviet Union.<sup>25</sup> Also, Jews, from the German camps, were returning from the West. The number of Jews living in Poland, after the Holocaust, peaked at the beginning of July 1946.

According to the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, at that time, 243,926 people had registered with Jewish committees.<sup>26</sup>

Considering the continuous process of emigration and the fact that some people had registered multiple times, it can be assumed that there were circa 210,000 Jews actually residing in Poland at that time.<sup>27</sup> Between July 1946 and February 1947, circa 92,000 Jews left Poland. At the beginning of March 1947, the number stabilised at 124,000.<sup>28</sup> The vast majority of Jews (circa 90%), who had left Poland, did so illegally<sup>29</sup>, but with the tacit consent of the authorities.

The basis for this apparent contradiction is aptly explained, in his memoirs, by Arye Edelst:

*"In the first period after the War, the Polish government did not make it difficult for Polish Jews to leave for Palestine. This was related to the political line of the Soviet Union at that time, which saw the Zionist movement as a resistance movement against British imperialism.*

*"The difficulty was that the English mandate authorities in Palestine did not issue visas to Palestine. This situation resulted in illegal immigration to Palestine and illegal emigration from Poland – that meant, smuggling across the Polish border (to Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania) and further, to Palestine."*<sup>30</sup>

The effects of the "Kielce Pogrom" and of other antisemitic excesses, which took place at that time, turned out to be devastating to the ideal of rebuilding long-term Jewish life in Poland and the moral damage of these bestial murders has not disappeared to this day.

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<sup>25</sup> A. Grabski, A. Rykała, *Żydzi...*, op. cit., p.393.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>27</sup> For more, see: ibidem.

<sup>28</sup> For more, see: ibidem, pp. 393–394.

<sup>29</sup> Trips were organised by, the already-mentioned, organisation - *Bricha* (Hebr. escape).

<sup>30</sup> A. Edelst, *Wspomnienia...*, op. cit., p. 208. On the one hand, this policy, in line with Soviet policy (thus, as well as Polish) was conducted in relation to the national liberation movement in Palestine. On the other hand, it was forced by the impossibility of the legal passage of Jews to Palestine (blocked by Great Britain, which exercised its colonial power in this area and the existence of barriers on the part of Western countries, which is why, for many months, they remained in transit camps in Austria, Germany and Italy. For more, see: A. Grabski, A. Rykała, *Żydzi...*, op. cit., pp. 394–395. One of the countries, which readily accepted Jews, was Australia: *"powojnie do Australii przyjeżdżali ocaleni z holocaustu z całej Europy [...] Większość państw świata zamknęła drzwi dla ocalonych z holocaustu lub nakładała ścisłe limity imigracji. Australia natomiast, zachęcała europejskich imigrantów do przyjazdu [...] z Europy, która dla nich wywoływała tylko bolesne i gorzkie wspomnienia"*; A. Rajcher, *Powojenna emigracja i tożsamość – australijskie doświadczenie*, [in:] J. Mizgalski (ed.), J. Sielski (ed.), *Żydzi...*, op. cit., pp. 360–361.