

July 9th, 1946

My dear Gedaliah!

I returned from Kielce at ten last night. I could not close my eyes all night. What a horrible tragedy. I am standing at the great, long open grave, with five inhabitants of Kielce at my side—three women, a man, and a boy around 8 or 10 years old. Their eyes are dried out from nonstop crying at the beginning of the funeral. They are depleted, and stand there, powerless. But when the dead begin being taken down off the wagons, all five break out in a frightful weeping. It is simply heart-rending. I bite my lips almost to the point of drawing blood, but I cannot hold it in and tears pour out without stopping.

40 Jews buried in one common grave in Kielce. They were murdered in a manner that was beyond cold blooded. Rumors are going around that the murderers' plans were made in London. And we in America, what are the American people doing to at least help reveal the murderous hand to the world? What are we doing to make the Bors have to run away from the country? These are questions I was not able to ask myself yesterday in Kielce. The pain was too great. The heart-rending crying of the forty or fifty Kielce Jews who were trailing the forty wagons of the dead. There is no way to express what it was like in words. At that moment I was ruled by one desire: To see the murders hanged in the main square in Kielce as quickly as possible, and then carted around to every square in every city in Poland.

Only now as I am writing to you my dear Gedaliah,
only now do I ask myself the question, "What will we do? How will the

progressive forces in America react to this?" I want to hope that we will be able to move the country to outrage.

To be sure, there was a bit of compensation. Ten thousand Kielce work(ers) marched with red flags in the funeral march. And they stayed nearby for at the long, open, common grave two hours ^ and listened to the government representatives' sharply-worded speeches against the horrible murderous pogrom. They even listened patiently to a Yiddish speech by Dr. Berman, which was a very good one, and he himself immediately translated the speech into Polish. But then, too, the good feelings were destroyed at the thought; who knows how many of the murderers were here in order to conceal themselves from punishment.

Yes, the air in Poland is poisoned with anti-Semitism.
The old Polish government sowed, and Hitlerism harvested, and
annihilated three million Jews. Then, too, it left a legacy such
that it will take years until one may be free of it.

The current Polish government, which is a government of the people and for
the people, unfortunately has not, it seems to me, not fought hard enough against this terrible
serpent. It is my impression that Kielce will mark a disjuncture. I hope
it will be that way. I know that this is not the fault
of the government, because the Mikolajczyks did not allow it. But I
have a feeling that in this respect the situation will change Apparently we needed to sacrifice
forty new martyrs in Kielce in order to
bring a change.

In the meantime, it hurts a lot. I would be able to ease the pain if I hear good news from the city
in this respect.

You know Gedaliah I have still not heard one word from N.Y.
Since I sailed away. Telegrams arrive [here]. Send me telegraphic reports
from time to time about everything. Heart-felt greetings to everyone. Greetings to your family.
Yours, Rubin Saltzman

[Translator's note]

Bor = Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski, a.k.a. General Bor. Member of the Polish underground
who headed the Polish Home Army (AK) Warsaw uprising against the Nazis from
August through September 1944. He became Prime Minister of the Second Polish
Government-in-Exile in London after World War II.

Mikolajczyk = Stanisław Mikolajczyk. Former member of the First Government-in-Exile,
he returned to Poland after World War II and was Deputy Prime Minister of Poland (in a
coalition government) at the time of this letter.