

Central Committee of Polish Jews
Regional Jewish Committee
Ostrow, 30, Koscielna str.
At present in Warsaw (no address).

Warsaw, July 20th, 1946

To:
Mr. William Bein, Director,
American Joint Distribution Committee,
18, Chocimska str.,
Warsaw.

Dear Sir,

Being the President of the Regional Jewish Committee in Ostrowiec I consider it my duty to express you my deepest gratitude for enabling your staff member Mrs. Elizabeth Stifter to assist us in those most terrible days we had to witness.

During the period from July 4th till July 12th the 150 Jews of Ostrowiec were in danger of a massacre. Those ghastly proceedings began already on July 4th, the day of the Kielce pogrom. It was rumoured that Jews were beating up Poles (two Polish women had quarrelled in the market). Afterwards a rumour was spread by several agitators in the streets that two children were missing. Shouts were heard: "Death to Jewish barbarians!". Polish women were purposely sent to the Committee to "cry" and beg for giving them back the missing children.

Representatives of authorities ~~clothed~~ in uniforms not only tolerated but even assisted the proceedings; for instance a lieutenant of the Security Service told his fellow-citizens of 8 killed children allegedly found in Kielce and other 4 children being sought for. This "authoritative" message passed from mouth to mouth, and the 150 Jews of Ostrowiec instinctively (not nervously or hysterically) anticipated the danger.

The Christians of the town entirely separated from the Jews (details in our records). Polish merchants, successors to Jewish properties, already on July 4th refused to sell goods to "Jewish killers".

At this frightful moment we looked out for help and rescue. As it was of no use to ask the local authorities for protection, we decided to alarm Warsaw.

We knew Mrs. Stifter by her indefatigable work in behalf of the Ostrowiec Jews after their liberation when they, being exhausted, broken, homeless, - had no shelter to stay in (their houses and apartments are occupied by Poles till to day). We therefore resolved to appeal to her for rescue "Hosana". An honourable place in this action keeps Dr. B. Mandell.

The telephone number 882-19 will remain for us a symbol of life. Already on Saturday, July 6th, an additional army detachment arrived, the sword hanging above our heads was stopped. The biblical "Watecar hamagejfa".

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We did not alarm by S.O.S signals which is an international emergency alarm, but by "Hosana", which is a Jewish symbol of help, and according to Jewish tradition "Hosana Raba" every one will get his life legitimation.

Definite help we received through the Chief Board of "Ichud" in Lodz who sent motor-cars to Ostrowiec and brought the poorest population to Lodz on July 12th.

150 rescued Ostrowiec Jews (out of 16.000 former Jewish inhabitants) will always keep in their memory the telephone number 882-19, as a symbol of help and Mrs. Stifter's saving action.

Bekavod.

Signed: (-)A. Friedental,
President of the Committee
in Ostrowiec.