

A Testament of a Jewish Woman from Kowel, Poland

During the months of August and September 1942, thousands of Jews were herded into the synagogue in the town of Kowel, Poland where they were imprisoned until their execution. In their fear and desperation, many of them wrote on the walls of the synagogue using whatever they could – unsharpened pencils, pens and even their own fingernails. Last testaments, letters and declarations were written in Hebrew, Yiddish and Polish. Below is one of the inscriptions that were found.

The Germans murdered 18,000 Jews in Kowel.

“Reuven Atlas, know that your wife Gina and your son Imush perished here. Our child wept bitterly. He did not want to die. Go to war and avenge the blood of your wife and your only son. We are dying although we did no wrong. Gina Atlas”.

Source: Safira Rapoport (Ed.), *Yesterdays and then Tomorrows*, Yad Vashem 2002, p. 183 (in the Hebrew edition).