

The wave of anti-Jewish pogroms that swept through countries with varied wartime pasts, including Altai Krai, Ukraine, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland in 1945-1946 is one of the least studied phenomena in postwar Eastern European history. The violence occurred in regions where military operations had recently come to an end and German forces had been driven out by the Red Army. Astonishingly, the violence was directed at society's weakest – Jews, decimated in the Holocaust, now returning home from hiding, concentration camps or the Soviet Union. The goal of the project set out here is to explain the social background of these events by using biographical investigation methodology.

This microhistorical project focuses on one of three urban pogroms that took place in post-Holocaust Poland in 1945-1946. So called the Krakow pogrom was a 12-hour riot which took place on August 11, 1945 in two Krakow neighborhoods: Kazimierz and Kleparz. It began with rumors spread by newspaper sellers and others, that there was a child's corpse at the Kupa Synagogue. As a result, a mob stormed the temple and destroyed it, burning holy books. Jews were attacked on the streets of Krakow and in marketplaces, including the so-called Tandeta. The communist Civic Militia (Milicja Obywatelska), whose members joined in the pogrom, initially took an ambivalent and then a hostile attitude to the Jews. The Polish Army, fighting alongside the Red Army, also played an unequivocal role. Contradictory orders were issued, often targeting those being attacked. Because the forces of law and order had been compromised, the trials of the perpetrators were kept secret, which in turn gave rise to rumors that the pogrom had been staged by the NKVD.