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*WSTĘP DO STUDIÓW NAD WYJAŚNIENIEM PRZYCZYŃ
I PRZEBIEGU MORDERSTWA NA ŻYDACH W KIELCACH
DNIA 4 LIPCA 1946 ROKU** BY KRZYSZTOF KĄKOLEWSKI

The years 2006–2008 saw the publication of *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego* (On the Kielce Pogrom) in two volumes by the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN).¹ At that time, they were rather widely considered a summation of the state of research into the pogrom of Jews in Kielce on 4 July 1946. Over a decade later, successive publications came out that made a significant contribution to the state of research and had a major impact on the debate about the pogrom. Among them were the two-volume study *Pod klątwą. Społeczny portret pogromu kieleckiego* (Under a Curse: a Social Portrait of the Kielce Pogrom), (Warsaw, 2018) by Joanna Tokarska-Bakir and the fourth volume of *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku* (Pogroms of Jews in the Polish Lands in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), (Warsaw, 2019), entitled *Holokaust i powojnie (1939–1946)* (The Holocaust and the Post-War Years [1939–1946]), edited

* The Lifeless Cemetery: Introduction to the Study of the Causes and Course of the Massacre of Jews in Kielce on 4 July 1946.

¹ *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, ed. by Ł. Kamiński and J. Żaryn (Warsaw, 2006); *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 2, ed. by L. Bukowski, A. Jankowski, and J. Żaryn (Warsaw, 2008).

by August Grabski. The latter publication included many articles on the Kielce pogrom or selected issues related to it, which analysed various interpretations of the atrocity² and gave new research proposals, relying on theories taken from related fields of study.³ Two articles by Bożena Szaynok deserve a special mention and can be considered a successive summation of the research into the pogrom of Jews in Kielce.⁴ Summing up her discussion, she wrote: “We have [...] to remember that the Kielce tragedy cannot be explained by a single scenario.”⁵ Possible further research directions and re-interpretations of some events which occurred during the pogrom were also given in several articles by the author of the present review.⁶

The review of major publications of interest to us here may end with the 2021 book by Julian Kwiek.⁷ It is a compendium, so to speak, of knowledge (including relevant literature) on anti-Jewish violence in Poland in 1944–1947.

After the war, Polish-Jewish relations were very complicated and, as such, cannot be characterised by a single selected conception. Many aspects of these relations arouse strong emotions and fierce polemics while overshadowing legitimate arguments and findings, following from research. Tracing the course of events in Kielce on 4 July 1946 and determining the responsibility of particular persons for them

² Ł. Krzyżanowski and M. Zaremba, “Bić ich za nasze dzieci!” Panika moralna i przemoc zbiorowa wobec Żydów w Polsce w latach 1945–1946,” in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, vol. 4: *Holokaust i powojnie (1939–1946)*, ed. by A. Grabski (Warsaw, 2019), pp. 489–510.

³ J. Tokarska-Bakir, “Pogrom jako akt kontroli społecznej. Springfield 1908 – Polska 1945–1946,” in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich*, pp. 467–487.

⁴ B. Szaynok, “Nowe ustalenia badawcze dotyczące pogromu w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946 r.,” in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich*, pp. 215–235; *ead.*, “Polska historiografia po 1989 r. na temat pogromów i powojennej przemocy wobec Żydów w latach 1944–1947,” in *ibid.*, pp. 511–526.

⁵ Szaynok, “Nowe ustalenia badawcze,” p. 235. See also *ead.*, *Polska historiografia*, p. 519, fn. 39: “It is worth making it clear in this context that the thesis about a provocation by the authorities does not rule out the adoption of anti-Semitism as another factor sparking the Kielce tragedy.”

⁶ R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, “Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946 r. Możliwości badawcze,” *Arcana* 132 (2016), pp. 105–124. It pointed out new research findings which made certain IPN investigation findings obsolete. They were known from the 2004 decision to discontinue investigation, published in volume two of *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*. See also R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, “Między tezą, hipotezą a fikcją literacką – opowieść o pogromie Żydów w Kielcach. Recenzja książki Joanny Tokarskiej-Bakir, ‘Pod klątwą. Społeczny portret pogromu kieleckiego,’ Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca, (Warszawa 2018), vol. 1, vol. 2: Dokumenty,” *Polish-Jewish Studies* 1 (2020), pp. 315–384; *id.*, “Stawiając pytania, zbliżamy się do prawdy. Wokół bezradności badawczej nad pogromem Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946 r.,” in *Relacje polsko-żydowskie w XX wieku. Badania – kontrowersje – perspektywy*, ed. by T. Domański and E. Majcher-Ociesa (Kielce–Warsaw, 2021), pp. 303–340.

⁷ J. Kwiek, *Nie chcemy Żydów u siebie. Przejawy wrogości wobec Żydów w latach 1944–1947* (Warsaw, 2021).

(including clearly identifying all perpetrators) are very difficult because of the credibility problem with sources and the mutually exclusive information they provide (some sources come from political trials). The followers of various interpretation theories often do not agree on the facts and definitions of situations themselves. Another significant difficulty is the need to cope continually with the myths and stereotypes that have grown up about the pogrom of Jews in Kielce. Furthermore, a situation is hardly acceptable when a researcher restricts his or her field of vision to one indisputable theory. It is thus worth reiterating the research truism that in an interpretation process, it is only natural that competing, alternative, main and subsidiary hypotheses clash.

In the public sphere, now and then, voices are heard, referring to the theses (hypotheses) put forward in Krzysztof Kąkolewski's book *Umarły cmentarz. Wstęp do studiów nad wyjaśnieniem przyczyn i przebiegu morderstwa na Żydach w Kielcach dnia 4 lipca 1946 roku*, Warsaw 2008 (first edition 1996). Those who study the Kielce pogrom of Jews are well familiar with Kąkolewski's work and the beliefs and opinions it offers have been shared by many. This is one of the reasons why this book was judged by other researchers studying Polish-Jewish relations after 1945. Several of these judgements are worth quoting.

Ryszard Gryz (2000), on the state of research into the attitude of the Catholic Church to the events in Kielce, found "the major shortcoming [of Krzysztof Kąkolewski's work] to be the absence of references. Hence, interesting or even sensational claims lack any source support. Besides, there are many mistakes and inaccuracies in it."⁸

Bożena Szaynok, in her article "Spory o pogrom kielecki" (The Polemic Over the Kielce Pogrom), included in the first volume of *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*,⁹ was very critical of Krzysztof Kąkolewski's book,¹⁰ by saying that it belonged to the group of "several publications whose authors unambiguously opted for

⁸ R. Gryz, "Stanowisko Kościoła katolickiego wobec pogromu Żydów w Kielcach. Stan badań," *Nasza Przeszłość*, 93 (2000), p. 426. Gryz maintains that also Fr. Jan Śledzianowski in *Pytania nad pogromem kieleckim* (Kielce, 1998) pointed out the shortcomings of Kąkolewski's work.

⁹ B. Szaynok, "Spory o pogrom kielecki," in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, pp. 111–129.

¹⁰ K. Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz. Wstęp do studiów nad wyjaśnieniem przyczyn i przebiegu morderstwa na Żydach w Kielcach dnia 4 lipca 1946 roku* (Warsaw, 1996). The second edition of this book came out in 2008.

the thesis about provocation, ignoring or marginalising the problem of anti-Semitism.” She further said that “the authors who deny or play down the role of anti-Semitism in the Kielce pogrom frequently refer to current events” and that “a point of departure for denying anti-Jewish sentiments and attitudes in post-war Poland is accusations of anti-Semitism currently levelled against the Poles.”¹¹ In Szaynok’s opinion, Krzysztof Kąkolewski held that the key “to understand the pogrom is a provocation by Soviet and Polish secret services” and “tried to prove this thesis by quoting information from anonymous sources,” which leaves the reader “completely unable to verify it.” Moreover, she faulted Kąkolewski for “frequently reconstructing particular events on the strength of a single relation” at the same time ignoring the sources “according to which a provocation alone does not suffice to explain anti-Jewish sentiments and actions in Kielce.” According to Kąkolewski, moreover, anti-Semitism is replaced with “Communist anti-Semitism”. Summing up her critical review, the researcher of Polish-Jewish relations stressed:

The authors who believe that the Kielce pogrom was prepared and carried out by Polish and Soviet secret services do not tackle the problem of the responsibility of some Kielce residents for these murders. In other words, they argue no Pole living in Kielce participated in the massacre – during the pogrom they formed a passive mass, separated from the crime scene by a militia and army cordon. The same authors do not believe there was any problem of anti-Semitism in Poland after the war, including Kielce at the time of the pogrom. What does exist, however, is the problem of using false accusations of anti-Semitism against the Poles for some advantage by various circles around the world. Viewing the pogrom only as a provocation is a simplification as much as describing it solely in terms of anti-Semitism.¹²

In a successive article, already mentioned above, concerning new research findings in the study of the pogrom, she wrote:

¹¹ Szaynok, “Spory o pogrom kielecki,” p. 121.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 123–125.

It so happens that an interpretation of a provocation follows from the analysis of “extra-Kielce” events, for instance, in the book *Umarły cmentarz* [The Lifeless Cemetery] by Krzysztof Kąkolewski. He writes that “the pogrom date was set for the day when the Katyn trial started in Nuremberg.” An attempt to tie “Katyn” to “Kielce”, serving Soviet purposes, is a good example of building an interpretation ignoring sources, but answering the question *cui prodest*.¹³

In the first volume of *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, in the selection of documents from the investigation into the Kielce pogrom conducted from the mid-1990s on (edited by Jacek Żurek), there is the *Transcript of the interview of witness Krzysztof Kąkolewski* (Warsaw, 27 November 1995).¹⁴ Its fragment reads:

I believe that the pogrom was not as much a provocation as a militia-military operation staged as one. I presume that Władysław Sobczyński was its director, who was head of the Voivodeship Security Office in Kielce at that time. He gave an order to capture civilians in the streets of Kielce of whom some were tried by a military court and sentenced to death in several cases in spite of the fact that none of these persons was guilty of the death of any victims in Planty Street. To be precise, I do not wish to accuse Sobczyński because I do not have any evidence. All my public statements so far on the causes of the pogrom have been based on pieces of circumstantial evidence that complement one another. To the question of the public prosecutor, if the witness had any documents bearing out his opinion that the Kielce pogrom had been a militia-military operation staged as a provocation, the witness replied that he did not – despite the efforts he made in both Poland and Russia.¹⁵

Krzysztof Kąkolewski’s book is based on records from the Central Archives of Modern Records (the author lists several dozen archival units from two groups), Central Archives of the Ministry of Home Affairs (seven archival units), Central Military Archives (three archival units), Polish Underground Movement Study

¹³ *Ead.*, “Nowe ustalenia badawcze,” p. 229.

¹⁴ *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, pp. 322–324.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

Trust (*Studium Polski Podziemnej*) (one file), Jewish Historical Institute (transcripts of Central Committee of Jews) and the private archives of Jan Wrzeszcz. He also used academic studies and press articles. Due to limitations in access to documents, which were still a major obstacle in the 1990s, the archival search may raise serious doubts as to its direction. What poses a greater problem, however, is the use of the relations of “anonymous informers” by the author of *Umarły cmentarz*. In many cases their accounts are vitally important.

Krzysztof Kąkolewski’s book is not a scholarly study strictly speaking; its narrative resembles rather an elaborate historical reportage (it consists of sixty-one sketches) that has been enhanced by some elements of a scholarly apparatus.

Not rejecting beforehand any of the hypotheses (or rather research proposals) advanced by the author of *Umarły cmentarz*, one can hardly not agree with charges levelled by Bożena Szaynok or Ryszard Gryz, concerning the sources the book is based on and the absence of an appropriate scholarly apparatus (absence of references to the most important issues). To illustrate how serious the problem is, it is worthwhile to present some of the many such instances (quotations come from the second edition of *Umarły cmentarz* in 2008):

– The massacre was purposefully complicated already by its planners and perpetrators and later by those who especially obscured its course, by special propaganda units assigned to spread disinformation on the subject – that is why we are facing particularly complicated coincidences. Some are carefully planned accidents, while others follow naturally from the provoked course of events.¹⁶

– Meanwhile, the members [...] of the Communist Party wearing military and police uniforms, and plainclothes ones, were the murderers, and the Polish Workers’ Party incited the massacre and organised a group of its members who were ordered to kill innocent Jews.¹⁷

¹⁶ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

– Fire consumed the valuable historical part of the archives and records of wartime trials and others that took place shortly after the war. Approximately, until fifty-something, fourth.¹⁸

– If we add that one of the witnesses, who are mentioned above, active in the pogrom propaganda sphere, was a member of the National Armed Forces (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne*, NSZ) during the war and left Poland with the NSZ Świętokrzyska Brigade under the care of the German armed forces and later returned to Poland, and not only was not imprisoned and convicted of membership in a hostile organisation and collaboration with the Germans, but instead moved around freely and even, in his own words, took part in the pogrom as its passive witness.¹⁹ [...] In my opinion, he was being prepared to suit the “NSZ version”. This is so because, as my research shows, the security forces supervised and directed by the Russians – advisers stationed in Kielce and a special pogrom instructor, Mikhail Alexandr Dyomin²⁰, who had arrived from Moscow – did not plan in advance who to blame for the pogrom.²¹

– Colonel, later General Grzegorz Korczyński, who supervised the course of the pogrom on behalf of the Warsaw authorities [...].²²

– One of the informers, let us call him Informer 8, who insisted that his identity be kept absolutely secret because he did not have any protection like other true or presumed witnesses and feared not only – as he said – “the revenge of Jews”, but also that a resumed investigation might count him among potential criminals because of my interlocutors he was the only one who admitted being close to the

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁹ Here, it is worth mentioning that the unidentified figure of “Cpt Janek” appears in sources (see R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, “Pogrom w Kielcach – podziemie w roli oskarżonego,” in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, pp. 47–49).

²⁰ In the matter of Dyomin see, for instance, R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, “Między tezą, hipotezą a fikcją literacką,” p. 328.

²¹ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 29.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 67. For Grzegorz Korczyński in the context of the Kielce pogrom see R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, “Pogrom w Kielcach – podziemie w roli oskarżonego,” pp. 43–45, 69; R. Kuśnierz, “Pogrom kielecki na łamach prasy w Polsce,” in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 2 (Warsaw, 2008), p. 158.

“Jewish House” [...] Informer 8 painted the picture that brought some order to an apparently absurd and incoherent scenario created by Communist and post-Communist historians. [...] At certain intervals, four, or rather, six men drag a wounded Jew and hand him over to an ORMÓ squad [*Ochotnicza Rezerwa Milicji Obywatelskiej* – Citizens’ Militia Volunteer Reserves] of the Polish Workers’ Party (PPR) that came from a factory. These six men never say a word, do not provoke or incite to kill the Jews, but merely carry out their criminal work mechanically, as it were. They are like a conveyor between the building interior and a kind of yard or square where they operate. These people, these four or six men, alternately disappear and re-emerge with new victims. They shuttle back and forth irregularly, sometimes between their successive appearances more time passes. However, each time these are the same men who behave in an exactly the same way. Informer 8 remembered the culminating moment, so to speak, of the pogrom. In the door leading to the staircase, a soldier appeared and shouted: “Lieutenant Wacek is dead!” According to other data, immediately before the pogrom, information was spread in the army and the Internal Security Corps (*Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego*, KBW), in parallel to that spread by militiamen and plainclothes operatives, about children being killed for matzo in the Jewish House. Interestingly, this information sounds identical as the soldier’s cry: “Jews killed Lieutenant Wacek.” Was this cry a provocation?²³ It may never be possible to find out because in the fight with the Jews, at least two or perhaps even four officers were killed of those who had stormed the building. Who were these individuals? [...] I have identified one of these criminals by name. [...] Trying to establish the composition of the group of civilians operating in Planty Street, besides “people camping out in the woods”, of whom Informer 4 spoke, and what one of the then Kielce dignitaries confirmed in a conversation before his death, we have found the trace of criminal convicts brought from the Radom prison [...].²⁴

– It may be presumed that secret plainclothes combat groups, mobilised for the referendum that preceded the pogrom by only a few days, could have participated

²³ R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, “Stawiając pytania,” pp. 320–321.

²⁴ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, pp. 75–77.

in the pogrom. In a report, one can read that every Polish Army regiment had such groups – thus, the 4th Infantry Regiment and the units of the 2nd Division, stationed in Kielce, had to have them. Their uniformed colleagues operated openly in the pogrom so it is hardly imaginable that secret squads were not used; perhaps even the whole plan rested on them.²⁵

– As many as three names of people connected to the new regime could be identified, who mixed with the crowd. They wore British battledress, as did 2nd Corps soldiers. We can provide these names on request because these people cannot be charged with any crime. Where did they stand or mix with onlookers? Mostly along Sienkiewicza Street. They played a double role: with their uniforms, they asserted the participation of “Anders forces” and observed onlookers. It is from the onlookers that a group of persons was formed of whom, in turn, future defendants were to be chosen. For apart from the occupation-background criterion, people to be later accused of murdering innocent men of Jewish blood were chosen from the onlookers, carefully leaving alone all those who were too close to the scene. [...] The “Andersites” included the son of a high-ranking Kielce UB dignitary, a teenager – although there was no such term at that time – most likely sent there by his father, the second Andersite was a prison guard from the UB prison in Kielce. [...] The third Andersite we have identified was a lieutenant from the Kielce Security Office who probably operated in tandem with a woman unknown in Kielce, who mixed with the crowd of onlookers along Sienkiewicza Street and kept asking them, for instance, how they voted in the referendum.²⁶

– The late Stanisława H[anusz], who on the orders of Freedom and Independence (*Wolność i Niezawisłość*, WiN)²⁷ was among those who investigated the causes, course and consequences of the pogrom, told me in September 1946 and reaffirmed it later on several occasions in the 1970s and 1980s that with

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 83–84.

²⁷ For organisational structures and operations of post-AK (Home Army) WiN in the Kielce Voivodeship, see R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Podziemie poakowskie na Kielecczyźnie w latach 1945–1948* (Cracow, 2002), pp. 123–310.

a group of investigators she made the following findings: (1) workers, members of the Polish Workers' Party and ORMÓ, from the SHL Factory²⁸ left the factory, instigated by the mendacious rumour they heard at an official mass meeting from a former NSZ member and at that time a UB informer. He had been ordered by the Voivodeship Public Security Office to tell the workers about the shedding of the blood of Christian children in a house on Planty Street. (2) The house was invaded by armed officers of various services. The Jews were armed and defended themselves; in the struggle several Jews were killed as well as two UB officers. (3) One of the public prosecutors who had been assigned to assist at the autopsy of the murdered Jews committed suicide at the sight of their massacred bodies. However, it is possible that during the autopsy or when drafting its report an argument broke out as to the mortal wounds suffered by the Jews. Almost all were shot dead or stabbed with bayonets, which the prosecutor found. Ultimately, the adopted version held that the massacre had been perpetrated by ordinary Kielce residents, while the prosecutor lost his life. He may have been killed or he may have killed himself in protest against falsifying the report.²⁹

– Those who organised the pogrom were keen to have some more time – the time of the pogrom or a day or two more – for deciding whom to accuse of instigating the pogrom. Perhaps they wanted to consult with Moscow, with the person who decided that it was necessary to stage a pogrom [...]. [...] It may be hypothesised that the event staged by secret services carried so much weight and ranked so high that the decision in this matter Stalin reserved for himself.³⁰

– Characteristic behaviour was shown by an informer, let's call him Informer 4. He gave a sensational testimony, but later took back the crucial part of it.³¹

²⁸ Suchedniów Steel Mill "Ludwików" in Kielce.

²⁹ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 88.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 91

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

– According to my Informer 4, the same liquidation group in plainclothes murdered Jews and later waited in tents in the woods for the next group of people to shoot.³²

– Informer 8. [...]. His father, an outstanding, in the Communist sense, activist of the Polish Communist Party (KPP), Polish Workers' Party (PPR) and Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) and perhaps of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)(WKPB) played a role in the Kielce pogrom, which has not been revealed to this day. If he had told his son everything he knew, we would know everything. I contacted Informer 8 twice through a third party [...]. Like his sister, who was employed by the UB, he was an intelligence and counterintelligence officer for many years. [...] He tells me what his father told him in one of very few conversations about the functions he had: "In this matter, neither my father, nor any Pole in the authorities had anything to say. A Soviet adviser came and took charge of everything. His father, as Informer 8 says, told him that the pogrom was organised and carried out by army officers (NKVD) of clearly Jewish descent, whom he did not know earlier – they were total strangers to him – in Kielce they were unknown, too. Furthermore, they did not stay in Kielce, but camped out next to an army barracks in the woods (most likely in Bukówka), after 'accomplishing their mission' they left Kielce."³³

– Some sources and testimonies say that it was Grynbaum³⁴ who, having entered the part of the building occupied by non-Communist Jews, put up a defence there that the first shots – according to this version – were fired by the Jewish side, on Grynbaum's orders. Allegedly, it was then that one of the officers who stormed the building was killed. This supposedly angered the army-militia forces so much that they murdered so many people. In the light of these claims,

³² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

³⁴ Lt Albert Grynbaum (Grinbaum) is meant, deputy head of the County Security Office in Kielce. For more on the role of this officer see *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, pp. 70–71, 238, 309, 355, 386, 449, and vol. 2, pp. 110, 112, 117, 122, 455, 464, 467; *Aparat bezpieczeństwa w Polsce. Kadra kierownicza*, vol. 1: 1944–1956, ed. by K. Szwagrzyk (Warsaw, 2005), p. 211. His rank is sometimes given as warrant officer.

Grynbaum would be one of the agents provocateurs, but he did not operate jointly with them, but was given, so to speak, a separate and very important task, having no contact or connection with groups attacking the Jewish House. According to this version, as others commanded army units and security forces, Grynbaum, an experienced Communist and a UB officer, went to the “Jewish” side whose actions (firing shots) were necessary for the pogrom to proceed as they made the forces besieging the Jewish House attack it.³⁵

– Sobczyński, Kuźnicki and Gwiazdowicz³⁶ were all acquitted and released [...]. However, Wiktor Kuźnicki was careless enough to say that what happened in Kielce was an “absolute provocation”. What exactly and to whom he said this is unclear. UB officers raided his home and took him in an unknown direction. In vain did the wife of the former high-rank militiaman look for him in prisons. It was after this second imprisonment that he came back, being a physical and mental wreck. Suffice it to say that he was jailed together with AK and WiN soldiers and treated the same. It was then, possibly anticipating that he would not live long, that he started telling his cellmates the same that brought about his second arrest, namely that the Kielce events were an “absolute provocation”. Not all would listen to him because, in spite of the fact that he appeared frank, open and determined, my informer, let’s call him BSB, preferred not to ask him any questions.³⁷

– For the attacking KBW soldiers the Jewish House was yet another building they were ordered to pacify. The unit going to Planty Street down Sienkiewicza Street from the east – mind you – in perfect order and accurately, as in exercises, manoeuvres or during war games, raked the Jewish House with machine-gun

³⁵ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 151.

³⁶ For the case of Maj Władysław Sobczyński (Head of the Voivodeship Public Security Office in Kielce), Lt Col. Wiktor Kuźnicki (Voivodeship Chief of Citizens’ Militia in Kielce) and Maj Kazimierz Gwiazdowicz (Voivodeship Deputy Chief of Citizens’ Militia in Kielce), see *Antyżydowskie wydarzenia kieleckie 4 lipca 1946 r. Dokumenty i materiały. Akta procesów uczestników wydarzeń oraz funkcjonariuszy Milicji Obywatelskiej i Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, vol. 1, ed. by S. Meducki and Z. Wrona (Kielce, 1992), pp. 356–392; B. Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946 r.* (Warsaw, 1992), pp. 91–92.

³⁷ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, pp. 155–156.

fire in unison – marching in step – in a manner thoroughly practised in previous pacifications.³⁸

– A separate question concerns Soviet pacification forces stationed in the centre and outskirts of the city. According to pogrom observers, standing across the Silnica River, the group of four or six plainclothes men who dragged out wounded civilians and handed them over to the “mob” – a true or presumed SHL squad – going back and forth, acted as a conveyor and did not say a word. They acted as if they had been dumb. Hence, my informers, who wished that their names be kept secret, began to suspect that they were foreigners – Russians.³⁹

– The cruel murderers of Jews, numerous groups of local officers and others who came down from Warsaw and across Poland to Kielce, were divided roughly into three sections: (1) executive – murderers, (2) operative groups active among onlookers and passersby whose task was to pick out people who could be conveniently charged and tried, and (3) separate investigative-prosecution-judicial groups. All were militarised, with the first two resorting to torture, acting towards one goal but in various configurations, under various commanders but subordinated to one man – Alexandr Mikhailovich Dyomin [...]. The fourth section – assigned different tasks – was the one that first went into action on the patrol, mentioned earlier, numbering up to fourteen men, whose task was to call and gather a crowd of onlookers (who were later called the mob) and give scope for activity to Section 2, who selected people to be arrested and tried from amongst the onlookers.⁴⁰

– Three different sections of officers and PPR activists, possibly ignorant of one another, performed the task the effects of which were to bring the USSR unimaginable advantages. This was more than a mere provocation. This was such a shaping of events so that they would appear to have been provoked and

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 170. For information on the NKVD unit stationed in Kielce at that time, see Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, “Stawiając pytania,” p. 319.

⁴⁰ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, pp. 186–187.

that the right number of people who “let themselves be provoked” would be found and captured.⁴¹

It appears that the above long quotations from Krzysztof Kąkolewski’s publication show clearly why it is necessary to distance oneself from unambiguous claims by the author of *Umarły cmentarz*. His research technique problems are more pronounced when Krzysztof Kąkolewski analyses other issues in his book, referring to the specific pages of selected publications.⁴² Furthermore, a few of his other findings call for comment because they are either imprecise or erroneous (sometimes they are a result of ignorance of the relevant literature) or undocumented. For instance, the case of a fire at the archives of the Kielce Voivodeship Office of Home Affairs is very mysterious and intriguing indeed, but it is not true, as Krzysztof Kąkolewski maintained, that the fire consumed the files of “war trials and ones that took place right after it.”⁴³ To learn about the extent of the damage, it is enough to read the publication by the archivists of the Kielce IPN Delegation.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the fact that Krzysztof Kąkolewski considered Stefan Skwarek’s book *Na wysuniętych posterunkach* (On Advanced Positions: Struggle for People’s Power in the Kielce Region)⁴⁵ “an exceedingly accurate and competent history of the security organs in the Kielce Voivodeship” is a major misunderstanding.⁴⁶ The negative judgement of this publication follows not only from the interpretations of events, judgements and generalisations (in line with the then policies of the Communist authorities) it contains, but also from source falsification and the rejection of generally accepted research practice.⁴⁷ Moreover,

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 11–14, 26, 34–35, 69, 71, 80–81, 94, 119, 122, 140–142, 149, 155, 158–159, 206. At other issues, the author does not give the numbers of pages he refers to: pp. 38, 41, 44, 57–58, 70, 78, 136–137, 197, 209, 215.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴⁴ *Inwentarz zespołu archiwalnego Wojskowego Sądu Rejonowego w Kielcach [1918] 1946–1954 [2013]*, introd. by M. Jedynak and R. Piwko, ed. by I. Czyżyk, M. Jedynak, R. Piwko, Ł. Kasza, K. Polit, and M. Zawisza (Kielce–Cracow, 2014).

⁴⁵ K. Skwarek, *Na wysuniętych posterunkach. W walce o władzę ludową na Kielecczyźnie (1944–1954)* (Warsaw, 1977).

⁴⁶ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 17.

⁴⁷ Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Podziemie poakowskie*, pp. 13, 207. See also “Nieznany dokument do dziejów ‘Pogromu kieleckiego’”, ed. by R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Zeszyty Historyczne WiN-u 4* (1993), pp. 126–129.

the problem with this publication involves also the credibility of investigation and trial records⁴⁸ – a matter raised already by many historians,⁴⁹ including ones studying the recent history of the Kielce region.⁵⁰

The superficial knowledge of the state of research made Kąkolewski write, when introducing Antoni Heda “Szary”, the commander of a group of post-AK units which broke into the Kielce prison in the night of 4–5 August 1945, that he was “a legendary ZWZ [Union of Armed Struggle, *Związek Walki Zbrojnej*], AK and WiN commander in the Kielce region.”⁵¹ In truth, Antoni Heda, soon after the prison break-up, left the Kielce voivodeship and had no ties to regional WiN structures⁵² and thus could not be a “commander of [...] WiN”.⁵³ There is no credible evidence either that as a result of the Kielce prison break-up “700 political prisoners, mostly AK-men and WiN-men” were freed.⁵⁴ Nor can it be said that Zygmunt Szewczyk was the “head of intelligence and counter-intelligence sections in the WiN Association”.⁵⁵ Referring to Stefan Skwarek’s book, Kąkolewski wrote that the group of Sec. Lt. Antoni Sobol “Dołęga” was defeated on 10 August 1946.⁵⁶ In reality, it continued to operate for a few more months and came out of hiding only in November 1946.⁵⁷ It is not true either that no investigations were conducted into the deaths of Jews in the Kielce voivodeship after 1945.⁵⁸

⁴⁸ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 25.

⁴⁹ See *Wokół teczek bezpieki. Zagadnienia metodologiczno-źródłoznawcze*, ed. by F. Musiał (Cracow, 2015).

⁵⁰ R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, “Protokół przesłuchania jako źródło historyczne,” *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 1 (2003), pp. 199–207; *id.*, “Działalność prowokacyjna urzędów bezpieczeństwa w woj. kieleckim i ich manipulacje przebiegiem i wynikami śledztw w świetle materiałów Wojskowego Sądu Rejonowego w Kielcach,” in “Zwyczajny” resort. *Studia o aparacie bezpieczeństwa 1944–1956*, ed. by K. Krajewski and T. Łabuszewski (Warsaw, 2005), pp. 461–481.

⁵¹ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, s. 46.

⁵² Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Podziemie poakowskie*, pp. 123–310.

⁵³ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 46. Similar phrases can be found on pp. 122–123, 187.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46. See M. Sołtysiak and R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Rozbicie więzienia w Kielcach w nocy z 4 na 5 sierpnia 1945 r.* (Kielce, 2009), pp. 10–16.

⁵⁵ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 47. See *W sieci. Powojenne polskie siatki wywiadowcze (AK, NIE, DSZ, WIN, PSZ) w latach 1944–1955*, ed. by M. Bechta (Warsaw, 2016).

⁵⁶ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 153.

⁵⁷ Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Podziemie poakowskie*, p. 267.

⁵⁸ Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 60. See R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, “Podziemie antykomunistyczne wobec Żydów po 1945 r. – wstęp do problematyki (na przykładzie województwa kieleckiego),” in *Z przeszłości Żydów polskich. Polityka – gospodarka – kultura – społeczeństwo*, ed. by J. Wijaczka and G. Miernik (Cracow, 2005) pp. 249–277.

Despite so many critical remarks concerning above all research methodology and source interpretation skills, the book by Krzysztof Kąkolewski is worth studying and making an attempt to verify certain claims based on statements by anonymous informers. Any discussion of the theses (hypotheses) formulated by Kąkolewski will only make sense when the sources (reports by “informers”, transcripts of conversations) are made available on the basis of which these hypotheses were formulated. It appears that making available the sources obtained from “anonymous informers” would supplement knowledge on the operation of security organs in 1946 (and not only).⁵⁹ An anthropological approach, in turn, could not only bring interesting results concerning relations inside the Kielce Security Office but also ensure a broader scope for the critical assessment of documents produced by its staff. Describing the network of mutual informal ties and scrutinising the actual decision-making process – in the context of the astonishing helplessness of people nominally in power in the structures of the Kielce security forces on 4 July 1946 – could explain a lot in the matter of overt and covert direction mechanisms during the pogrom of Jews in Kielce.⁶⁰

Furthermore, introducing new source materials to the academic discourse would help show research directions that could contribute to the verification, specification or supplementation of our knowledge of the events that took place in Kielce on 4 July 1946.

⁵⁹ At times, the impression is created that these “anonymous informers” have some unique knowledge and – using a combination of truths, half-truths and fiction – intentionally mislead the author of *Umarły cmentarz*.

⁶⁰ The need to avail oneself of the output of Soviet studies seems obvious. See M. Zakrzewski, “Ontologia bezpieki – organa bezpieczeństwa w perspektywie leninowskiej teorii politycznej. Zarys zagadnienia,” in *W stronę antropologii “bezpieki.” Nieklasyczna refleksja nad aparatem bezpieczeństwa w Polsce Ludowej*, ed. by J. Syrnyk, A. Klarman, M. Mazur, and E. Kłosek (Wrocław, 2014), pp. 51–59.