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Sexual Violence during Pogroms:  
The Civil War in Ukraine as a Laboratory for Anti-  
Jewish Violence (1917–22)

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This article explores sexual violence, particularly rape, perpetrated against Jewish women after the collapse of the Russian Empire, during the 1917 revolutions, and subsequent armed conflicts. The article focuses on Ukraine but also presents some examples from Belarus. Based on original documents produced by Jewish aid committees and Soviet administrations and focused in part on other situations of sexual violence in twentieth-century history, it seeks to provide accurate estimates of this phenomenon. It examines the general pattern of sexual violence during pogroms but also specific moments of radicalization. By emphasizing the massive scale and systematic practice of rape by anti-Bolshevik armies, especially by the White armies, it seeks to demonstrate how, above and beyond its extreme level of violence, this period was also a seminal moment for anti-Semitism and violence against minorities. The rise of a new kind of anti-Semitism, centered on the Judeo-Bolshevik myth, propelled anti-Jewish violence toward the end goal of a persecutory campaign that threatened the entire Jewish population, especially women. To reconstruct the process of violent radicalization, the article focuses specifically on how the circulation of rumors and the functioning of the modern propaganda apparatus shaped the perception of civilian populations and paved the way for mass sexual violence. In this regard, the White armies clearly distinguished themselves from other armed forces that operated during the Civil War in Ukraine (UNR troops, Polish troops, otaman-led groups) by the scale and radicalism of their anti-Jewish discourse aimed at women. Finally, the article pinpoints the various consequences for victims of sexual violence and for the Jewish population in general: increased mortality, venereal disease, trauma, and collective helplessness.

**Keywords:** sexual violence, pogroms, rapes, anti-Jewish violence, Ukraine, civil war.

The multilayered wars and revolutionary and armed conflicts that followed the 1917 revolutions in the former Russian Empire have traditionally been interpreted as a deadly opposition between armies pursuing contradictory political projects: revolution, counter-revolution, or national independence<sup>1</sup>. In Ukraine and Belarus, the struggle for power was fought between four principle contenders: the “Reds,” supporters of the Soviet republic and the Bolsheviks; the “Whites,” anti-Bolshevik armies and Russian nationalists; the Ukrainian People’s Republic (UNR), supporters of an independent Ukraine; and the Polish army, which fought for the newly independent Poland. A fifth force, the so-called “Greens,” which were bands of peasant insurgents led by warlords (*otamany*), sapped the strength of all the others behind the front lines. The confrontations among these different actors led to a series of entangled military, political, and social conflicts that overlapped and mutually aggravated each other. In other words, as the Russian Empire collapsed and newly emerged state and parastate entities failed to seize power, Ukraine and the western borderlands of the former Russian Empire turned into a place where, in Jonathan Smele’s words, “a kaleidoscopic amalgam of wars” was waged.<sup>2</sup>

In this “amalgam of wars,” as attested by the strong presence of Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian national political movements, the question of nationality played a key role during the revolutionary and wartime years, even for the Bolsheviks and their allies<sup>3</sup> Ethnicity—“nationalities” in the Russian imperial and Soviet contexts—served not only as a platform for political mobilization, but also as a category of population management.<sup>4</sup> Nationality policies proved to be particularly catastrophic for Jews. The mass deportations organized by the tsarist army during the war paved the way for a new wave of pogroms that occurred mainly in Ukraine in 1919–20. As Eric Lohr and Oleg Budnitskii convincingly show, the population politics that were in play during the First World War represented a decisive turn in pogrom history and led to the emergence of a “war pogrom.”<sup>5</sup> Unlike the prewar

<sup>1</sup> The author would like to express his gratitude to Oksana Dudko and the reviewers for their insights and comments.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan D. Smele, “The Civil Wars,” in *A Companion to the Russian Revolution*, ed. Daniel Orlovsky (New York: Wiley Blackwell, 2020), 357–68, here 357). For more detailed discussion, see Jonathan D. Smele, *The ‘Russian’ Civil Wars: Ten Years That Shook the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> The decisive role played by national policies and nationalist movements has been outlined by recent historiography. For an overview of new trends in scholarship and the debates surrounding them, see Eric Lohr, Vera Tolz, et al., eds., *The Empire and Nationalism at War* (Bloomington: Slavica, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Amir Weiner, ed., *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Eric Lohr, “1915 and the War Pogrom Paradigm in the Russian Empire,” in *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History*, ed. Jonathan Dekel-Chen, David Gaunt, et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 41–51; Oleg Budnitskii, “Shots in the Back: On the Origin of the Anti-Jewish Pogroms of 1918–1921,” in *Jews in the East European Borderlands: Essays in Honor of John D. Klier*, ed. Eugene M. Avrutin and Harriet Murav (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012), 187–201.

pogroms, which were carried out by poorly armed urban crowds in Chişinău or Odesa in 1903–5, during the world war and civil war pogroms, armed soldiers or ex-servicemen took part in anti-Jewish violence with increasing brutality. The first instance of anti-Jewish violence took place on Ukrainian territory as early as February 1917, when soldiers re-used a military “war pogrom” practice that was forged around 1915, during the First World War.<sup>6</sup> As the Russian imperial army disbanded, there was an outbreak of anti-Jewish violence in Ukraine in the fall of 1917, which resulted in around sixty pogroms.<sup>7</sup> Although they were overshadowed by the hundreds of pogroms that took place in 1919–20, the 1917 pogroms reveal that anti-Jewish violence was unleashed much earlier than is traditionally discussed in the historiography. Violence against civilians began as early as February 1917 and, in a continuum of violence, did not cease until 1922.<sup>8</sup>

All armies, but predominantly anti-Bolshevik forces, were involved in the direct persecution of one million Jews in Ukraine and 350,000 Jews in Belarus; in other words, half of the Jewish population inhabiting these regions. The unprecedented scale of violence—looting, beatings, mass killings, population displacements and, as will be analyzed below, sexual violence—brought death as well as material and social deprivation to the Jewish population. Between 1917 and 1922, with a peak reached between 1919 and early 1920, 125,000 Jews were killed; 500,000 fled from war and violence; and 200,000 children were registered as orphans.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, as this article will show, Jewish women became the victims of widespread sexual violence, which came to the fore in 1919–20.

Nevertheless, despite the magnitude of sexual violence perpetrated during the pogroms, its circumstances and consequences have not been accorded a high level of scholarly attention. Pogroms and sexual violence, in particular, have been underplayed in both research on war and revolution in Ukraine and the historiography

<sup>6</sup> “Report on Gussiatin, Podolsk Gubernia,” Archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, New York Bureau 1921–1932, 4/30/4/496.

<sup>7</sup> YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, Tcherikower Archives (RG.80–89, now YIVO, TA), 13288–89, Summary list of pogroms perpetrated between September and December 1917; “Report on the pogroms in Ovrush,” State Archive of Kyiv Oblast (Derzhavnyi arkhiv Kyivs’koï oblasti, hereafter cited as DAKO), f. R-3050, op.1, spr. 225, ark.1 (now DAKO R-3050/1/225/1).

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Gilley, “Untangling the Ukrainian Revolution,” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 17, no. 3 (2017): 326–38; Georgiy Kasianov, “Ukraine between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Dominance,” in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917–1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik et al. (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 76–131.

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed discussion about the different estimates, see Elissa Bemporad and Thomas Chopard, “The Pogroms of the Russian Civil War at 100: New Trends, New Sources,” *Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History* 15 (2019): v–xx. For a long time, historians relied on estimates produced in the 1920s by Jewish émigrés, which were based on a limited number of materials. Numbers were revalued upward in light of newly available documents from the various Jewish aid committees and Soviet administrations.

of the Russian revolutions and the Civil War. Moreover, since 1945 pogroms have tended to remain in the shadow of the Holocaust, or the experience and stakes of the Holocaust are projected onto previous periods.<sup>10</sup> However, the history and memory of pogroms were often used during the interwar period to discredit former anti-Bolsheviks, but scholars focused mostly on the question of political responsibility. As a result, the debate over the pogroms centered on the level of culpability of the different anti-Bolshevik leaders, specifically on Symon Petliura, the head of the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic.<sup>11</sup> Focusing on the responsibility of political leaders and general estimates of casualties, scholars tend to overlook the various types and practices of violence, which were the hallmark of victims' experiences.<sup>12</sup>

By focusing on Jewish women and sexual violence, the present article thus seeks to take a broader look at the perpetration and effects of anti-Jewish violence on the ground. As pogroms cannot be reduced to direct killings, the article explores various patterns of sexual humiliation and abuse of Jewish women of different ages. Whereas sexual violence—namely, rape—represented a significant method of brutality directed against female civilians and Jewish women in particular, scholars have begun only recently to address this issue and focus on victims, their traumatic experiences, and their perception of events.<sup>13</sup> In 1975 Susan Brownmiller, in her ground-breaking book *Against Our Will*, was among the first to emphasize that rape, in general, and wartime rape, in particular, are not driven by biological urges but by the goal of achieving domination over women. Brownmiller thus presents sexual violence as a key aspect of the “conquest” of a contested territory and of domination over an enemy population.<sup>14</sup> Building on this seminal work, several studies have suggested that the perpetrators of wartime rapes not only seek to express domination over individual women, but also to humiliate families and entire

<sup>10</sup> Oleg Budnitskii, “Jews, Pogroms and the White Movement: A Historiographical Critique,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 2, no. 4 (2001): 1–23. Despite the growing trend of research on pogroms, the topic remains downplayed in the general narrative of the relations between Jews and non-Jews in Ukraine. For a recent synthesis, see Igor' Shchupak, *Evrei v Ukraine: Voprosy istorii i religii s drevneishikh vremen do Kholokosta* (Dnipropetrovsk: Tkuma, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917–1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); Serhy Yekelchuk, “Bands of Nation Builders? Insurgency and Ideology in the Ukrainian Civil War,” in *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War*, ed. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 52–71.

<sup>12</sup> In his search for a compromise after decades of political anathemas and hagiographic works, Henry Abramson drastically narrows his analysis to one episode of anti-Jewish violence: the Proskuriv pogrom of February 1919 (Abramson, *Prayer for the Government*, 109–40. Oleg Budnitskii, too, devotes only a small portion of his book to the pogroms).

<sup>13</sup> Gur Alroey, “Sexual Violence, Rape, and Pogroms, 1903–1920,” *Jewish Culture and History* 18, no. 3 (2017): 313–30; Irina Astashkevich, *Gendered Violence: Jewish Women in the Pogroms of 1917 to 1921* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018).

<sup>14</sup> Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993).

communities.<sup>15</sup> In recent years scholarly interest in questions of gender-based violence has also been engendered by the heated scholarly, legal, and public debates on sexual violence, unleashed during and after civil wars in various parts of the world in the 1990s. For example, the mass rape of women in Bosnia, which took place during the wars in the former Yugoslavia after 1991, raised the discussions of sexual and gender-based violence in wars and armed conflicts to a new level. These debates have encouraged scholars from various fields and time periods to focus attention on mass violence against civilians, specifically sexual violence, during previous armed conflicts and wars.<sup>16</sup>

Regarding sources, historians face a number of obstacles. The difficulties of addressing the experience and the scale of sexual violence are well known: the absence of self-reporting, silence, euphemism, underestimation, etc.<sup>17</sup> Testifying to this uncertainty, during the Kyiv pogrom of October 1919 the local aid committee estimated that there were sixty rape victims, whereas an American journalist-witness used official sources to arrive at the figure of a hundred and fifty.<sup>18</sup> Any numbers that may be gleaned from sources offer mere clues. Nevertheless, from a reading of the descriptions of anti-Jewish violence committed during the Civil War, we may reasonably conclude that sexual violence was omnipresent, alongside looting, beatings, and murders. For instance, the pogrom in Kivshovata (Kyiv region), one of the first large-scale pogroms, illuminates these dynamics:

All night long, they [the pogromists] went from house to house, beating, raping and plundering without pity. [...] in the house were gathered the inhabitants of the same street. The plunderers broke the door, started to beat the unfortunate Jews and to rape women.<sup>19</sup>

The pogrom, perpetrated by a local insurgent named Fedir Hrebenko and his men, began in June 1918, at the very beginning of the pogrom era, which reached its peak in 1919 and early 1920, and it is representative of the militarized violence that was already established as a pattern of action manifested in looting and physical and sexual abuse.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Claudia Card, "Rape as a Weapon of War," *Hypatia* 11, no. 4 (1996): 5–18.

<sup>16</sup> Alexandra Stiglmayer, ed., *The War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Véronique Nahoum-Grappe, "La purification ethnique et les viols systématiques: Ex-Yougoslavie, 1991–1995," *Clio, Histoire, femmes et sociétés* 1, no. 5 (1997).

<sup>17</sup> Sarah L. Cook, Christine A. Gidycz, Mary P. Koss, and Megan Murphy, "Emerging Issues in the Measurement of Rape Victimization," *Violence Against Women* 17, no. 2 (2011): 201–18.

<sup>18</sup> Federation of Ukrainian Jews, *The Ukraine Terror and the Jewish Peril* (London: Federation of Ukrainian Jews, 1921), 13; Rex Wade, *Documents of Soviet History*, vol. 1, *The Triumph of Bolshevism, 1917–1919* (Gulf Breeze, Fla.: Academic International Press, 1991), 405.

<sup>19</sup> Lidiia Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov: Pogromy na Ukraine, v Belorussii i evropeiskoi chasti Rossii v period Grazhdanskoï voiny, 1918–1922 gg.; Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow, ROSSPEN, 2006), 439.

<sup>20</sup> For a global survey of the pogrom period, see Nahum Gergel, "The Pogroms in the Ukraine in 1918–21," *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science* VI (1951): 237–52; Oleg Budnitskii, *Russian Jews between the Reds and the Whites, 1917–1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

Despite the fact that the issue of rape during pogroms commonly haunts the sources, there are still many obstacles that prevent scholars from gaining a nuanced understanding of the subject matter. The subject of sexual violence is rarely raised by the victims themselves; in testimonies, rape usually happens to someone else, preferably someone anonymous, although often a neighbor or an acquaintance. Moreover, rape is addressed as a collective problem—an assault on Jewish women in general—rarely as an individual, traumatic experience. As a victim in Kyiv pointed out, the mere evocation of sexual violence was highly problematic for spectators and even more so for victims: “Outrages [perpetrated against women] are usually difficult to bring to light, because a natural sense of shame prevents victims from pushing their case.”<sup>21</sup> Sometimes a victim gives a precise account of the rapes that she witnessed without ever bringing herself to describe the violence she herself had suffered, although a source hints that she had indeed been assaulted.<sup>22</sup>

Rapes are mentioned more often in summary lists on pogroms, where the presentation of numbers serves to sidestep the sufferings of victims, which are given scant mention in narrative reports about specific pogroms. For example, in a report on the pogrom that took place in Zamikhiv, Podillia, in 1920, the names of the killed and wounded are listed on three pages, whereas rape victims and survivors fill only the last three lines, without any mention of their names: “26 women, including one of 75 years and one of 50 years, were raped. This report does not give names, for reasons which are readily understandable.”<sup>23</sup> A similar pattern of rape accounts that do not contain any precise descriptions and victims’ personal information can be found in other reports. For instance, a summary report on several locations in the Poltava region describes violence against women as follows: “Cases of assaults of women have emerged. The population claims that rapes are widespread, but we cannot register them, as victims do not file a complaint.”<sup>24</sup> This pattern of not disclosing victims’ names and details of rape makes it difficult to arrive at a nuanced picture of gender-based violence in Ukraine, even though instances of sexual violence were widely reported. The phenomenon of underreporting, however, is not specific to rape survivors and victims of pogroms; a similar pattern of underreporting is still omnipresent today.<sup>25</sup>

As (indirect) testimonies and especially the recapitulative documents produced by aid committees show, sexual violence emerges consistently in sources in the form of euphemisms and other strategies aimed at obscuring a brutal

<sup>21</sup> YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, Tcherikower Archives (RG 80-81; now: YIVO, TA), 19121, Testimony on anti-Jewish excesses in Kyiv, September 1919.

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., YIVO, TA, 19349, Testimony of a victim of the Kyiv pogrom, October 1919.

<sup>23</sup> YIVO, TA, 18472–74, Testimony on pogrom and excesses perpetrated by White Armies in Zamikhiv, Podillia.

<sup>24</sup> YIVO, TA, 15373.

<sup>25</sup> In Western countries today, barely ten percent of rape victims file a complaint to the authorities. For detailed discussion, see Georges Vigarello, *Histoire du viol du XVIe au XXe siècle*, (Paris: Seuil, 2000).

reality.<sup>26</sup> Most narrative reports intentionally shrouded specific details of rapes and sexual violence, providing dry lists of numbers that allowed women to maintain their anonymity. However, committee reports provide some statistical data that help researchers to gain at least a partial understanding of the scale of this phenomenon. For instance, in the two lists related to the Kyiv region and East-Bank Ukraine, during 210 pogroms, 73 incidents of rape were reported (35 percent).<sup>27</sup> Around twelve hundred pogroms took place in Ukraine during the Civil War period.<sup>28</sup> If we take the proportion of rapes in the Kyiv region as a basis and extrapolate from it, sexual violence occurred during more than four hundred pogroms. Thus, sexual violence, far from being marginal, constituted an integral part of the pogroms and the explosion of anti-Semitism that spanned the entire Civil War period from 1917 onwards. It also shows that soldiers of all armed forces—from the Red Army to the White armies, Ukrainian or Polish armies and peasant insurrectionists—engaged in varying degrees in sexual violence against Jewish women.

Sexual violence during pogroms after 1917 resulted from the complex relationship both between gender and nationality and between civilians and the military.<sup>29</sup> Victims suffered as women and as Jews, and they were targeted as both. Highlighting the intersectional dimension of sexual violence allows for a more precise understanding of the level of brutality that marked the civil wars on Ukrainian and Belarusian territories after 1917. Thus, taking these various dimensions of sexual violence into consideration, I argue that the Civil War in Ukraine was also a war conducted against an unarmed civilian population. In other words, an explicit strategy for targeting civilian populations as a means of war was used to maximize the chances for victory.<sup>30</sup> From this perspective, an inquiry into sexual

<sup>26</sup> This documentation is scattered over several archives: DAKO, f. R-3050; Kyiv Aid Committee to Help Victims of Pogroms. The archives of the Ukrainian Aid Committee to Help Victims of Pogroms, along with many other documents, are held at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (New York), in the Tcherikower Archives (RG.80-89 – now YIVO, TA). Some documents were published in Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*. Former members of aid committees also published some documents in the wake of these events. For two of these publications used here, see Elias Heifetz, *The Slaughter of the Jews in the Ukraine in 1919* (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1921); Sergei Gusev-Orenburgskii, *Bagrovaia kniga: Pogromy 1919–20 gg. na Ukraine* (Harbin: DEKOPO, 1922).

<sup>27</sup> DAKO R-3050/1/234/2–4, DAKO R-3050/1/447/50–54.

<sup>28</sup> According to different estimates by the Jewish section of the People's Commissariat for Nationalities and by Jewish scholars in emigration. See Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 816; Gergel, "Pogroms in the Ukraine," 238.

<sup>29</sup> For suggested approaches to intersectionality, see Emily Gioielli, "Abnormal Times: Intersectionality and Anti-Jewish Violence in Hungary and Poland, 1918–1922," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, ed. François Guesnet, Howard Lupovitch, and Antony Polonsky 31 (2019), 313–28; Elissa Bemporad and Joyce W. Warren, eds., *Women and Genocide: Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).

<sup>30</sup> For this characterization of the period, see Vladimir Brovkin, *Behind the Front Lines of the Civil War: Political Parties and Social Movements in Russia, 1918–1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Thomas Chopard, *Le Martyre de Kiev, 1919: l'Ukraine en révolution entre terreur soviétique, nationalisme et antisémitisme* (Paris: Vendémiaire, 2015).



violence also stimulates a re-evaluation of the Civil War period, anti-Semitism, and the patterns of violence that developed within it. This article seeks to demonstrate that war, revolution, and the crystallization of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth, far from belonging to a hypothetical “traditional anti-Semitism,” marked a turning point in that they raised anti-Semitism to a new level, thereby widening the range of its potential victims.

This article aims to investigate this turning point by examining and precisely describing the general pattern of rape during the pogroms and how it was perpetrated. It will then shift the focus to certain trends in this mass-scale sexual violence by emphasizing how the rape of Jewish women turned into a specific weapon. At the same time, it will highlight the different factors of the progressive radicalization of sexual violence that was perpetrated by the White armies and other, limited, fighting groups by focusing on its political dimension and analyzing how rumors surrounding the Judeo-Bolshevik myth acquired a specific form when it was focused on women. Finally, it will investigate the consequences of these rapes—higher mortality among rape victims, sexually transmitted diseases, etc.—and how this practice was part of a radicalization of the war against unarmed civilians waged by pogromists.

### I. Sexual violence during the pogroms

Various forms of sexual violence were not uncommon in the former Russian Empire during the wartime period between 1914 and 1921, that is, during the First World War and subsequent conflicts. Although sexual violence against women became a large-scale phenomenon reached in the twentieth century, Marianna Muravyeva has pointed out that across a *longue durée* of juridical consideration, the Russian army explicitly addressed the matter of sexual violence—with punishments stipulated by military law—as early as the seventeenth century, while Western armies first addressed the issue only in the late nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup> We should take the precocity of the Russian military authorities as an indication that we ought to look beyond the enhanced awareness of our time and the relatively recent proliferation in legislation aimed against sexual violence to recognize the latter as a longstanding feature of warfare in Europe and most likely elsewhere.

During the First World War women were victims of the latitude granted to men in uniform on the front and behind the front lines, and sexual violence increased considerably with the mobilization of armies through mass conscription. On the Western Front, in France and Belgium, countless rapes followed the German invasion of 1914. Sexual violence was perpetrated on the bodies of female enemies with the goal of subjugating a radical otherness.<sup>32</sup> The Eastern Front was

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<sup>31</sup> Marianna G. Muravyeva, “Categorising Rape in the Military Law of Modern Russia,” in *Rape in Wartime*, ed. Raphaële Branche and Fabrice Virgili (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 17–33.

<sup>32</sup> Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *L'enfant de l'ennemi, 1914–1918: Viol, avortement, infanticide pendant la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Aubier, 1995); Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

less binary with respect to the relations between rapists and victims. For example, Russian soldiers assaulted not only women from enemy states but also young women who were subjects of the Russian Empire. Committees helping war victims reported an increase in sexual violence against Jewish and non-Jewish women from 1914 onwards.<sup>33</sup> This phenomenon did not stop with the 1917 revolutions. Civilians were subjected to sexual pressure from soldiers, prostitution was widespread, and forced sexual intercourse with women was a regular occurrence.<sup>34</sup> As Siobhán Hearne and Aleksandr Astashov point out, the collapse of the traditional economy forced impoverished women to engage in occasional prostitution in order to benefit from soldiers' supplies, and the phenomenon only worsened during the subsequent Civil War.<sup>35</sup> In his 1920 diary Isaac Babel, the Jewish writer from Odesa, treated the question of sexual violence with unusual candor. Framing it against the background of the sexual misery of Red soldiers, he describes how the brutality of military occupation blurred the lines between sexuality, prostitution, and sexual violence.<sup>36</sup> The presence of disinhibiting substances (like alcohol) and the weakening of discipline during the chaotic campaign against the Polish army were undoubtedly the catalysts of sexual crimes committed indiscriminately against random victims, usually under cover of night.<sup>37</sup> Babel sums up in one sentence the daily life of his fellow soldiers: "All soldiers—velvet caps, rape, toupees, battles, revolution and syphilis."<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> See, in particular, the testimony of the coordinator for the Aid Committee for Jewish Victims of War on the South-Eastern Front (i.e., Galicia and Western Ukraine) in Solomon Ansky, *The Enemy at his Pleasure: A Journey through the Jewish Pale of Settlement during World War I* (New York: Metropolitan/Owl Book, 2004), 169, 277.

<sup>34</sup> Frances Bernstein, "Visions of Sexual Health and Illness in Revolutionary Russia," in *Sex, Sin and Suffering. Venereal Disease and European Society since 1870*, ed. Roger Davidson and Lesley A. Hall (London: Routledge, 2001), 93–119.

<sup>35</sup> Siobhán Hearne, "Sex on the Front: Prostitution and Venereal Disease in Russia's First World War," *Revolutionary Russia* 30, no. 1 (2017): 102–22; Aleksandr Astashov, "Seksual'nyi opyt russkogo soldata na Pervoi mirovoi e ego posledstviia dlia voiny i mira," *Voenno-istoricheskaiia antropologia: Ezhegodnik* (2005–2006): 370; Dan Healey, "Love and Death: Transforming Sexualities in Russia, 1914–22," in *Russian Culture in War and Revolution, 1914–22*, bk. 2, *Political Culture, Identities, Mentalities, and Memory*, ed. Murray Frame, Boris Kolonitskii, et al. (Bloomington: Slavica, 2014), 151–78. For an example of this kind of situation in Babel's diary, see Isaak Babel', "Dnevnik 1920 goda," in *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 2, *Konarmii, Stat'i iz "Krasnogo Kavalerista": Dnevnik 1920 goda: Plany i nabroski* (Moscow: Vremia, 2005), 242–44.

<sup>36</sup> Babel', "Dnevnik 1920 goda," 225–26, 255–59, 261–62, 267, 294, and elsewhere.

<sup>37</sup> In a testimony written long after the war, a Jewish woman recalled how she managed to avoid being raped after she plied Red Army soldiers with alcohol to the point of stupefaction. See the memorial book of the town of Stavysheche, *Stavisht*, ed. Aharon Weissman (New York: The Stavisht Society, 1961), 174.

<sup>38</sup> Babel', "Dnevnik 1920 goda," 267. Despite Soviet sexual liberation, it is noteworthy that Babel's depictions of Civil War sexuality were cut from the final version of *Red Cavalry*, while chapters were nevertheless dedicated to the nurse and encounters with civilians.

Addressing the issue of sexual violence during wars, Brownmiller calls it “a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear.”<sup>39</sup> Even though such an indiscriminate pattern of sexual violence can partly describe the wartime sexual violence previously outlined, it is inadequate to characterize how, in the case of pogroms, sexual violence took on a specific form. Brownmiller argues persuasively that we cannot describe wartime sexual violence accurately in terms of individual isolated acts, but must address the wider social and political contexts.<sup>40</sup> Subsequent researchers, however, have distanced themselves from her approach, stressing that, during contemporary armed conflicts and genocides, rape is intentionally committed against specific populations, with rape and sexual violence being used as a “weapon of war.”<sup>41</sup> In other words, when political and social contexts engulf ethnic conflicts, the patterns of sexual violence vary. This analytical framework not only helps to illustrate contemporary armed conflicts, but may also be used retrospectively to consider how sexual violence was used as a tool against Jews in Ukraine. Indeed, on many occasions, Jewish women were assaulted after having been separated from their Christian neighbors at gunpoint. Women in general were not targeted—Jewish women were—the scope of victims thus explicitly narrowed.<sup>42</sup> Pogroms revolve around pillaging, and the systematic plundering of Jewish populations was followed regularly by beatings and murders.<sup>43</sup> On 25 August 1919 one victim from Boryspil thus described the action of the Whites:

Over a period of four days, there were forty occurrences of rape, from a fifty-year-old woman to a fourteen-year-old young girl. Women were tortured by ten to twelve soldiers and are now barely alive. [...] Soldiers had various demands: a girl, clothing, money, taking everything and beating again.<sup>44</sup>

As the last sentence shows, in the pogrom economy, women were treated as objects, and rape was used as a tool to “dispossess” Jewish men of their women, along with other belongings. In some cases, pogromists resorted to rape explicitly as a substitute for plunder when too little wealth was found. When a father was unable to fulfill a pogromist’s demands, the latter “reminded him of the money required, and threatened to rape [his] twenty-year-old daughter.”<sup>45</sup> In another case,

<sup>39</sup> Brownmiller, *Against Our Will*, 15.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Miranda Allison, “Wartime Sexual Violence: Women’s Human Rights and Questions of Masculinity,” *Review of International Studies* 33, no. 1 (January 2007): 75–90.

<sup>42</sup> YIVO, TA, 19341, Testimony of a victim of the Kyiv pogrom, October 1919; Miliakova. *Kniga pogromov*, 160.

<sup>43</sup> David Engel, “What’s in a Pogrom? European Jews in the Age of Violence,” in *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History*, ed. Jonathan Dekel-Chen, David Gaunt, et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 19–37; Lohr, “1915,” 41–51.

<sup>44</sup> DAKO R-3050/1/230/4ob.

<sup>45</sup> Gusev-Orenburgskii, *Bagrovaia kniga*, 78.

when a captain and fifteen pogromists obtained too little money from their Kyivan victims, "they took the young woman to the attic and wounded another Jew."<sup>46</sup> Hence, rape served the same purpose as killings during pogroms, namely, it was a way to punish the Jewish community when pogromists' expectations and demands were unfulfilled.

Rapes and killings were also used as a form of retaliation for the Jews' real or imagined resistance. Viewed in these terms, sexual violence places the blame for rape on Jewish women, creating a situation in which they "deserved" to be punished for their behavior and alleged resistance. For example, during the October 1919 pogrom a woman was thrown from the window of her Kyiv apartment because she fought back when White soldiers attempted to rape her.<sup>47</sup> Similar situations occurred near Kyiv during a pogrom perpetrated by soldiers of the Ukrainian People's Republic: "In one house, there were three girls: aged twelve, sixteen, and eighteen years old. Because she resisted, the sixteen-year-old was killed. The others were raped."<sup>48</sup> Moreover, anyone trying to intervene was also beaten or killed. During the above-mentioned October 1919 pogrom perpetrated by the Whites in Kyiv, a father who tried to protect his daughter was shot dead on the spot.<sup>49</sup> In a similar fashion, during a White pogrom that took place in the summer of 1919 in Kharkiv, a husband was slaughtered after he tried to save his wife:

During that night, a group of officers from the Savage Division, a White division recruited among the Caucasian mountain tribes, forced their way into the lawyer's apartment [the witness's neighbor]. They demanded drinks and food. The maid served. Having finished the drinks, they demanded to have a bath prepared. The maid prepared a bath. Then they demanded that the young lady of the house went with them to the bathroom and "help" them take the bath. [...] When the young woman refused indignantly, they dragged her into the bathroom and started to rip off her clothes. When in response to the woman's cries the husband rushed into the bathroom, the Caucasians killed him with their daggers, in cold blood, as if they butchered a cow. Then they gang-raped the young woman and later slaughtered her as well.<sup>50</sup>

As these examples show, resistance only fueled the pogromists' desire to humiliate their victims, and often resulted in retaliatory murder.

Collective resistance was similarly crushed, and the ensuing repression was even more brutal. In Kivshovata, in June 1918, for example,

<sup>46</sup> YIVO, TA, 19099-19100, Testimony of a victim of the Kyiv pogrom, October 1919.

<sup>47</sup> *Bulletin du Comité des Délégations Juives auprès de la Conférence de la Paix*, no. 9 (1919) (victims 65 and 72).

<sup>48</sup> Gusev-Orenburgskii, *Bagrovaia kniga*, 200.

<sup>49</sup> *Bulletin du Comité des Délégations Juives*,

<sup>50</sup> Samuil Khasin, *A Wedding in Darkness: One Life in the Twilight of Russian Jewish History* (New York: Writers Club Press, 2003), 61.

Facing violence, young people started to resist, which made thing worse. An unbearable struggle started. Bandits placed a machine gun in front of the houses and opened fire. This fight ended with many casualties and wounded among the poor Jews.<sup>51</sup>

Consequently, rape served a purpose, its brutality exemplifying the extreme asymmetrical relationships between troops, mostly composed of non-Jewish, young, armed men, and the unarmed, Jewish civilian population. Furthermore, sexual violence committed by armed men over unarmed women strengthened and deepened this asymmetry even further. Mass sexual violence thus targeted the most intimate sphere, ravaging bodies and souls. Rape was also accompanied by attacks on every aspect of femininity in a radical profaning of the intimacy of the body, especially by cutting off or setting hair on fire.<sup>52</sup> Pogromists specifically targeted the “Jewishness” of female bodies. Every physical mark of Jewishness, of “otherness,” such as traditional clothing, was torn off and profaned by pogromists. For example, Polish soldiers became specialists at cutting off the beards of Jews whom they encountered, effacing in one fell swoop a symbol of otherness, despised piety, and masculinity<sup>53</sup>; a practice which highlights that, while soldiers’ displays of masculinity certainly focused on Jewish women, they could also affect Jewish men.

As examples of sexual violence during the pogroms reveal, unlike rape committed during wartime, pogrom rapes were no longer confined to individual sexuality. They were a form of collective persecution that was also accompanied by looting, beatings, threats, and killings. Soldiers took on in turn a multiplicity of roles—rapist, spectator, watchman, bystander—following a rough division of labor. In December 1919 a Jewish doctor in Smila (Kyiv region) described the actions of pogromists in her house, which fit this pattern of collective violence. While their officers waited, White soldiers started to threaten and rob the inhabitants: “A terrible plunder followed.” “Cossacks<sup>54</sup> took three girls who tried hard to defend themselves.” One escaped, while the other two were locked in the office. A soldier guarded the door, waiting for his turn; “the girls’ rape continued. One of the remaining girls, a student, was raped by five Cossacks. The sixth took her from the office to the kitchen but abandoned her there, and she ran. The other, a fifteen-year-old high school student, was raped by three thugs.”<sup>55</sup> As this example demonstrates, pogrom rapes were neither concealed nor expressive of mere personal drive. On

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<sup>51</sup> Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 439.

<sup>52</sup> Gusev-Orenburgskii, *Bagrovaia kniga*, 194.

<sup>53</sup> Many examples are listed in various issues of the *Bulletin du Comité des Délégations Juives auprès de la Conférence de la Paix*. See also William W. Hagen, *Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1914–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>54</sup> In a contemporary report, these “Cossacks” were described as soldiers of a special division of Cossack infantry led by General Khasov and Kuban Cossacks. See Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 328.

<sup>55</sup> Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 332. For another similar situation during the Fastiv pogrom, see YIVO, TA, 18904.

the contrary, they constituted a clearly manifested, integral element of anti-Jewish violence, perpetrated with the knowledge or even under the supervision of field officers. They were carried out by small groups of men, sometimes by groups of fifteen to twenty soldiers in a collective demonstration of strength that sought to reduce women to complete helplessness.<sup>56</sup>

Rapes, conducted publicly and visible to other members of the Jewish community, created collective helplessness and humiliation in Jews. Indeed, women were not the only targets of sexual violence. For example, family members were forced to watch the rapes perpetrated in front of them, as in Bila Tserkva, where "[t]he three Raikhman daughters were raped in front of their parents. In total, this happened to around a hundred women from the ages of twelve to sixty. An underage girl was raped by eight to ten men."<sup>57</sup> In Kyiv a fifteen-year-old girl was raped "before the eyes of her parents, brother and sister."<sup>58</sup> Girls were raped in front of their parents, wives in front of their husbands, women in general in front of their relatives, in their homes and, in some cases, right on the street. Women were allotted the role of sacrificial victims within a broader persecution that encompassed the entire Jewish population.

This quest for a public display of sexual violence in front of an "audience" is another key difference that distinguishes its practice from that of wartime rape, to which Babel attests. In testimonies depicting the latter, Jewish men are notably absent. As Babel's writings show, they could have been present, chased away by soldiers, or in hiding because of the fear of forced conscription. In any case, their presence or absence was not a matter of interest to the perpetrators.<sup>59</sup> On the contrary, pogrom violence and humiliation were meant to be committed publicly and suffered by victims publicly. In keeping with this quasi-imperative, women were randomly raped on the street in front of everyone. For example, during a pogrom in Uman, Red Army soldiers "in the street, in daylight, with many armed men around, stripped men and women of all their clothes and raped them, almost on the street, in front of bystanders helpless to do anything."<sup>60</sup> In Rosava, pogromists ordered the populace to gather in the town square, where they raped a young girl, then threw her back into the cheering crowd.<sup>61</sup> On 27 February 1919 retreating UNR soldiers entered Kornip. After combing through the forest where the local Jewish population was hiding, they discovered their location but waited until they returned to town before subjecting their captives to violence.<sup>62</sup> The soldiers'

<sup>56</sup> For a pattern already emphasized by the early historian of pogroms, see Iosif Shekhtman, *Pogromy Dobrovol'cheskoi armii na Ukraine* (Berlin: Ostjudisches Historisches Archiv, 1932), 321–23. For specific examples explicitly mentioning the large number of rapists, see DAKO R-3050/1/230/4ob; YIVO, TA, 18233-18240, 19099–100.

<sup>57</sup> Gusev-Orenburgskii, *Bagrovaia kniga*, 192.

<sup>58</sup> YIVO, TA, 19341.

<sup>59</sup> Babel', "Dnevnik 1920 goda," 225–26, 255–59, 261–62, 267, 294, and elsewhere.

<sup>60</sup> Gusev-Orenburgskii, *Bagrovaia kniga*, 92.

<sup>61</sup> YIVO, TA, 18766–780.

<sup>62</sup> *Bulletin du Comité des Délégations Juives auprès de la Conférence de la Paix*, no. 4 (15 August 1919) and no. 5 (29 August 1919).

behavior emphasizes the fact that the public dimension of anti-Jewish violence was crucial. In some extreme cases, the sexual satisfaction of rapists is absent. For example, soldiers forced husbands to have sex with their wives or abandoned their victims before they finished with them.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, the age, appearance, and condition of victims were of no importance; on the contrary, pogromists targeted the broadest spectrum of Jewish women, while wartime rapes usually targeted young women. For instance, the case of the Cherkasy rape shows that women of various ages, including the elderly and children, were raped:

There were many rapes (nearly three hundred victims): neither little girls nor elderly women were spared. Older women of fifty and girls of ten were raped. Thus, the only daughter of an acquaintance, who was only eleven years old, was raped in front of her father.<sup>64</sup>

Similarly, ill, bedridden, and wounded women were assaulted while their homes were plundered.<sup>65</sup>

The radical distinction between “typical” wartime rapes, as depicted in the historiography and appearing frequently in Babel’s diary, for example, and pogrom rapes cannot be stressed enough. Pogrom rapes were perpetrated collectively in broad daylight and were a conscious part of anti-Jewish persecution at work, a public message to the entire Jewish population that it was to remain submissive and pose no threat. Therefore, the goal of achieving domination over women through rape, as Brownmiller emphasizes, is clear, but the collective and public dimensions of pogrom rapes introduce a difference not just in degree but also in nature.

## **II. Political masculinity**

The practice of sexual violence was widespread during pogroms, and the ubiquitous threat of rape formed part of the all-out persecution of the Jewish population in the former Russian Empire during the Civil War period. Now that we have identified rape as an integral aspect of pogrom violence, we can turn to an analysis of sexual assaults by focusing on their distinctive features and local variations. It is generally true of anti-Jewish violence that there is no convincing proof that perpetrators had explicit orders to rape women, which distinguishes it from the practice of mass violence in Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia. Patterns of violence during pogroms were the expression of a more inchoate collective pressure, and they exhibited specific local patterns.

### **1) Systematic rape during pogroms as a weapon of destruction**

Some army groups were notorious for committing mass rape during the pogroms. As Nahum Shtif, an early Jewish historian of pogroms, points out, “Mass rapes of Jewish women are the most striking aspect of the Volunteer Army. [...]”

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<sup>63</sup> Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 354.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>65</sup> Nokhem Shtif, *Pogromy na Ukraine (Period dobrovol'cheskoi armii)* (Berlin: Wostok, 1922), 26-28.

this crime has become the mainstay of pogroms alongside plundering.”<sup>66</sup> White troops committed so many rapes in southern Ukraine that even Christian neighbors complained to the military authorities that “dozens of young innocent women, even girls, were being raped, often in front of their parents, by soldiers and even officers.”<sup>67</sup> In his early study of pogroms perpetrated by the Whites, the Jewish historian Iosif Shekhtman echoes Shtif’s argument, emphasizing that mass sexual assault was a “specific feature” of White pogroms.<sup>68</sup> He provides a long list of examples from across Ukraine. More importantly, he demonstrates how mass sexual assault was committed over a short period of time and that victims ranged from girls as young as twelve to women aged seventy-five. Sexual violence was no longer merely a pervasive threat; rather, it was a weapon that was used systematically by some pogromists armies against the entire Jewish population of Ukraine.

While Shtif and Shekhtman insisted that mass rapes were the preserve of the White (or Volunteer) armies, other documents that have come to light reveal that other fighting groups, although smaller, adopted the same practice. Some unidentified units, labeled “Petliurists” by the victims, engaged in widespread rape of the Jewish population of Podillia during the retreat westward in March 1919 and during the offensive against Kyiv in September 1919.<sup>69</sup> A doctor, drafted by Ukrainian troops in Podillia, testified that “[Ukrainian] Cossacks raped every day.”<sup>70</sup> In a similar fashion, the peasant insurgent leader Otaman Sokolovsky and his men gained notoriety by raping thousands of Jewish women in 1919 in the Kyiv region: five hundred in Borshchahivka (April), a hundred in Kornyn (May), four hundred in Volodarka (July), and two hundred in Novofastiv (August).<sup>71</sup> Other insurgents, under the command of another otaman, Volynets, were portrayed in the same way by a witness from Zhabokrych: “Bandits came to the factory and raped almost every woman. More than two hundred people were killed.”<sup>72</sup>

It is true, however, that the Whites were distinguished from other armies and armed groups by their placing rape at the core of their campaign of anti-Jewish violence in Ukraine during the Civil War. While in other armies the perpetration of systemic rape—the use of mass sexual assault as a permanent weapon, was limited to specific military units consisting of a few hundred or thousand men, it was a widespread practice in the White armies, whose ranks reached more than 250,000 soldiers by the end of 1919.<sup>73</sup> For these units, the purpose was not just to rape women indiscriminately, but to rape as many women as possible. Jewish

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>67</sup> Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 237–38.

<sup>68</sup> Shekhtman, *Pogromy*, 116–24. His study, like the present article, is based mostly on the same documentation from various aid committees.

<sup>69</sup> DAKO R-3050/1/231/32-34, Summary reports on anti-Jewish pogroms in Podillia region.

<sup>70</sup> Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 283.

<sup>71</sup> DAKO R-3050/1/447/50-54, Summary list of anti-Jewish pogroms in Kyiv region.

<sup>72</sup> Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 275; for a similar example in Kiblych, see DAKO R-3050/1/231/34, Summary report on pogroms in Podillia.

<sup>73</sup> Peter Kenez, *Red Advance, White Defeat: Civil War in South Russia, 1919–1920* (Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing, 2004).



women were not only potential victims of sexual violence but were actively targeted. In Novi Kovna (southern Ukraine), for example, the Whites committed acts of sexual violence on a mass scale:

Out of a hundred Jewish women, ninety were raped. Beatings, humiliations, outrages, and plundering knew no bounds in this [agricultural] colony. In Novo-Vitebsk, three versts from Novi Kovna, almost every Jewish woman was raped and, even worse, they raped mothers in front of daughters, and daughters in front of mothers, in the same room.<sup>74</sup>

In some cases, the shift from plundering to sexual violence and rape was emphasized by victims themselves. In Borzna, after a series of pogroms that were dominated by the roar of plunder, a victim recalled that when White units, known as “the blue cuirassiers” and “the hussars of death,” entered the town and started a pogrom, the “screams of women” rang out in the streets. In other words, looting and murder were overshadowed by sexual violence.<sup>75</sup>

The staggering amount of rape cases may be explained by the rise of new forms of anti-Semitism, which acquired radical features after 1917 by entangling past accusations with new ones. Like many times before, Jews were portrayed as speculators who lived at the expense of peasants and mobilized soldiers. They were also portrayed as military, economic, and political enemies who could readily shoot soldiers in the back—an accusation that spread far and wide during the Great War—and betray the “national” cause. The main grievance, however, was the accusation that Jews had created and promoted Bolshevism, a political movement aimed at enslaving the peasantry by means of the *kommuna*.<sup>76</sup> These accusations were at the core of a new variety of anti-Semitism in Europe based on the Judeo-Bolshevik myth that managed to combine them all.<sup>77</sup> This canard not only crystallized into a powerful narrative adapted for mobilization, but also transformed an entire nationality into an enemy that embodied universal violence.

## 2) Politicization of women's bodies

Within the context of the growing proliferation of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth, rape had nothing to do with soldiers' sexual needs; rather, it was a weapon that was used to mobilize soldiers and force the Jewish population into submission.

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<sup>74</sup> Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 215.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 286.

<sup>76</sup> Budnitskii, *Russian Jews*; Peter Kenez, “Pogroms and White Ideology in the Russian Civil War,” in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 293–313; Christopher Gilley, “Beat the Jews, Save... Ukraine: Antisemitic Violence and the Ukrainian State-Building Projects of 1918–1920,” *Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History*, no. 15 (2019): 111–38.

<sup>77</sup> Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2018).

As Claudia Card writes, "If there is one set of fundamental functions of rape, civilian or martial, it is to display, communicate, and produce or maintain *dominance*."<sup>78</sup> Because the entire Jewish populace was viewed as a threat, women were targeted alongside men as potential enemies. This logic of a perceived collective threat also explains the public dimension of rape. It opened up another front in the fight against an enemy: an attack on women, without whom this enemy would cease to exist. Its practice was informed by the rationale of collective national guilt.

How did sexual violence increase so rapidly during the Civil War, and how did women and the sexual violence that was committed by some anti-Bolshevik armies come to play such an important role in the war against civilians? Why did it spread among all White troops while remaining limited to some specific units in other fighting groups? In an article on the practices of rape in recent civil wars, Dara Kay Cohen emphasizes that "armed groups use wartime rape as a socialization tool"; "rape... enables groups with forcibly recruited fighters to create bonds of loyalty and esteem from initial circumstances of fear and mistrust."<sup>79</sup> In other words, sexual violence should be understood principally in terms of the intergroup dynamic and recruitment logic.<sup>80</sup> This model, however, cannot explain why those armed groups that "specialized" in systematic mass sexual assault in Ukraine were by no means the most weakly integrated. The Sokolovsky bands, in particular, which raped thousands of women in the Kyiv region in the summer of 1919, were volunteer insurgents engaged in an anti-Bolshevik uprising who had been strongly integrated prior to that year.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, if we look closely at White soldier-perpetrators of mass rape in late 1919, strongly cohesive groups before the pogroms began, such as Cossacks or Chechens, were common perpetrators. Nor should we forget that the practice of mass rape was widespread while the White troops were disaggregated. Bonding via sexual violence perpetrated collectively may have slowed down the disaggregation of anti-Bolshevik armies, but it is unlikely that this was a sufficient element. External and political factors were also involved in pushing toward the radicalization and systematization of sexual violence. As shown in the examples above, Jewish women were intentionally targeted. Mass sexual assault was thus not a random demonstration of brutality; rather, it was a vehicle for articulating masculinity, politics, and war.

Political focus on women became critical when rumors surrounding the alleged "socialization of women" under the Soviet regime escalated in southern Ukraine in 1919. Anti-Bolshevik propaganda circulars and leaflets, produced by supporters

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<sup>78</sup> Card, "Rape as a Weapon of War," 7.

<sup>79</sup> Dara Kay Cohen, "Explaining Rape during Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980–2009)," *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 3 (2013), 461–77, here 461.

<sup>80</sup> Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>81</sup> Thomas Chopard, "The Ataman Years: Politics, Civil War and Peasant Insurrections in Ukraine," 20&21: *Revue d'histoire* 141, no. 1 (2019): 55–68.

of the White armies, circulated the notion that the Soviet authorities were forcing women between the ages of sixteen and twenty into brothels for “use” by Red Army soldiers or pushing them into forced labor. This alleged decree, which also promised ten virgins for every Red commander, was supposedly discovered in Ekaterinodar, in southern Russia, the unofficial capital of the White movement; today it has been recognized as a fake.<sup>82</sup> The actual project of the “socialization of women,” presented in *Izvestia* on 20 April 1918, was quite different. It guaranteed “to all girls before 18, the complete inviolability of their person.” The decree severely condemned rape and any insult and harassment of minors, aiming for a radical break with the former legal corpus, official politics, and unequal practices.<sup>83</sup>

However, the rumors about Reds’ sexual violence did not appear out of thin air; they were fed by reports of rapes committed en masse by Red Army troops in Ukraine and Russia, far from the scrutiny of their officers, during the previous months of the Civil War.<sup>84</sup> Reports of rapes committed by Red Army troops were recycled by White intelligence and propaganda, which increased when the White armies entered the territory of Ukraine in 1919.<sup>85</sup>

Through successive waves of hyperbole, White armies portrayed, through their daily and weekly propagandistic “information bulletins,”<sup>86</sup> unsanctioned, isolated cases of rape committed by Red Army troops as the direct manifestation of Bolshevik political will. On White propaganda posters and postcards as well as in the press, the multiple representations of Russia as a woman subjected to Bolshevik violence and sexual assault are another example of Judeo-Bolshevik mythology

<sup>82</sup> The White circular that was the source of the rumors is reproduced in Iurii Fel’shtinskii, ed., *Krasnyi Terror v gody Grazhdanskoi voiny; Po materialam Osoboi sledstvennoi komissii po rassledovaniiu zlodeianii bol’shevikov* (Moscow: Terra, 2004), 120–22. For contemporary echoes of the rumor, see *Bulletin of the Russian Liberation Committee*, no. 25 (1919), 11; August R. Nilostonski, *Der Bluttausch des Bolschewismus* (Lorch: Karl Rohm, [1924?]).

<sup>83</sup> Wendy Goldman, *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917–1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>84</sup> Many examples were submitted to the anti-Bolshevik press or published by humanitarian workers in the field during the second Red offensive against Ukraine and southern Russia that began in December 1918. See the *Bulletin of the Russian Liberation Committee*, no. 13 (16 May 1919); *La Cause Commune*, no. 42 (14 April 1919); *Données sur la terreur en Russie présentées par le comité central de l’ancienne organisation de la Croix Rouge russe au Comité international de la Croix Rouge à Genève* (Paris, 1922), 24. Besides circulating rumors, the so-called Commission to Investigate Bolshevik Atrocities also investigated actual cases. See Fel’shtinskii, *Krasnyi Terror*, 245, 256, 273.

<sup>85</sup> Christopher Lazarski, “White Propaganda Efforts in the South during the Russian Civil War, 1918–19 (The Alekseev-Denikin Period),” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 70, no. 4 (1992): 688–707.

<sup>86</sup> More generally on the White armies’ propaganda apparatus, see Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia’s Continuum of Crisis, 1914–1921* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 222–31; Lazarski, “White Propaganda Efforts”; Kenez, *Red Advance*, 71–78.

that circulated among the Whites in Ukraine.<sup>87</sup> It also shows that White soldiers did not consider the Civil War only as a struggle for political supremacy; they perceived it as a threat to the very existence of family stability and traditions.<sup>88</sup> The allegation that the alleged "socialization of women" was systematically accompanied by the practice of forcing bourgeois women to perform degrading tasks (typically, cleaning barracks or bathrooms) ratcheted up fears of total social upheaval.

The increased popularity of the myth of Judeo-Bolshevism among the Whites turned out to be fatal for Jewish men and women. Since Jews were presented as the instigators and main supporters of Bolshevism, they were also portrayed as being responsible for the mass enslavement of women, which, in their view, was part of the Bolshevik "socialization of women" campaign.<sup>89</sup> Systematic rape by Whites was therefore considered retaliation for the Soviets' alleged ill-treatment of women and as a way of restoring the disrupted social order. For the White forces, restoring political order also meant eradicating women's emancipation, which they regarded as a threat to the very existence of the Russian nation, and restoring male domination. As a result, Reds and Jews were portrayed as political enemies as well as a biological threat.<sup>90</sup>

In their turn, Ukrainian or Polish independentist movements, as well as the UNR and the Polish government, did not inherit or build a propaganda apparatus as powerful as the Whites. They also differed ideologically from the Whites, who were the most conservative political force during the Civil War and the force that reacted most radically to any social innovations regarding women. Nevertheless, Ukrainian and Polish nationalists also exploited some aspects of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth.<sup>91</sup> However, they cast their actions as a war for national liberation, and, unlike White propaganda, in their respective presses and proclamations they put forward the notion that the danger was to the nation as a collective, rather than to individuals.<sup>92</sup> For example, according to a Ukrainian newspaper close to the

<sup>87</sup> Anna N. Eremeeva, "Woman and Violence in Artistic Discourse of the Russian Revolution and Civil War (1917–1922)," *Gender & History* 16, no. 3 (2004): 726–43; Tobie Mathew, "'Wish You Were (Not) Here': Anti-Bolshevik Postcards of the Russian Civil War, 1918–21," *Revolutionary Russia* 23, no. 2 (2010): 183–216.

<sup>88</sup> Leonid Heretz, "The Psychology of the White Movement," in *The Bolsheviks in Russian Society*, ed. Vladimir N. Brovkin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 105–21.

<sup>89</sup> Fel'shtinskii, *Krasnyi Terror*, 120–22.

<sup>90</sup> Kenez, "Pogroms and White Ideology," 304.

<sup>91</sup> Gilley, "Beat the Jews"; Christopher Gilley, "Beyond Petliura: The Ukrainian National Movement and the 1919 Pogroms," *East European Jewish Affairs* 47, no. 1 (2017): 45–50; Joanna Beata Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* (Lincoln: Nebr.: University Press, 2006).

<sup>92</sup> See, e.g., the communiqué published by Symon Petliura on 4 July 1919 deploring "the women raped and the children killed" by "the communists and the Bolsheviks." On this issue, see also the proclamations of the Minister for Jewish Affairs of the Ukrainian People's Republic, *Documents sur les pogromes en Ukraine et l'assassinat de Simon Petlura à Paris (1917–1921–1926)* (Paris: Librairie du Trident, 1927), 69, 46.

UNR delegation in Paris, where it was printed, the “Ukrainian Credo,” allegedly recited by new recruits to the Army of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, proclaimed:

Do not take wives among foreigners, because your children would then become your enemies and our Ukraine’s enemies. Do not support the enemies of the Ukrainian people, because you would increase their strength and prepare your fatherland’s loss.<sup>93</sup>

Although the Judeo-Bolshevik canard permeated both the Ukrainian and Polish national movements, in the Ukrainian case, the proclamations issued by Petliura and other UNR leaders condemning the pogroms may have served as a deterrent factor that prevented mass sexual assault. These well-known proclamations against pogroms, however, never addressed the issue of mass rapes directly. Rather, they were opposed to anti-Jewish violence in general by projecting a military ethos for Ukrainian independence fighters, for whom “Glory resides in fighting an armed enemy, whoever he is, not in waging war against women and children and the elderly,”<sup>94</sup> in contrast to the behavior of mass rapists in uniform. Did these proclamations help completely to prevent the mass rape of Jewish women? Clearly not, but they may have prevented sexual violence from becoming as systematic and pervasive as in the White armies.

The casting of the Civil War as a war between national groups fueled in some military groups, especially local peasant insurgents, the idea that Jews did not have any right to live alongside their pogromist neighbors, which notion resulted in all-out violence against Jewish neighbors. These highly symbolic displays of violence with a strong sexual connotation, although rare, served as a performative enactment of Jewish infertility. Jewish women as symbols of motherhood were profaned, emphasizing the brutal rejection of the Jews’ right to procreate and, by extension, to continue living as a neighbor community. In this context, sexual violence was two-pronged: a physical violation of women’s bodies and the symbolic rape of the community as a whole. In July 1919 a whole family was slaughtered in Obodin (Podillia region): “The woman was found with her breasts cut off; a baby of six months had its throat cut.”<sup>95</sup> Survivors in Stepantsi and Trypillia recalled peasant insurgents cutting off Jewish women’s breasts or slicing pregnant women’s bellies.<sup>96</sup> In doing so, any promise of a future Jewish life was publicly challenged. Acts of sexual violence of this ferocity, although uncommon, were symbolically designed to realize the end goal of the enforced expulsion or dispersion of the Jewish population from the countryside.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> “Un credo ukrainien,” *France et Ukraine*, no. 12 (26 March 1920).

<sup>94</sup> Order no. 259 from the military headquarters of the Army of the UNR, 13 April 1919, *Documents sur les pogroms*, 49.

<sup>95</sup> Heifetz, *Slaughter of the Jews*, 392.

<sup>96</sup> DAKO R-3050/1/53/15-16ob, Reports on pogroms in Stepantsi; Bernard Lecache, *Quand Israël meurt...: Au pays des pogromes* (Paris: Editions du Progrès Civique, 1927), 160–61.

<sup>97</sup> For more on this minor radical trend in anti-Jewish violence during the Civil War period, see Thomas Chopard, “Ukrainian Neighbors: Pogroms and Extermination in Ukraine, 1919–1920,” *Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History*, no. 15 (August 2019): 139–67.

### III. Mortality

How deadly was sexual violence and what consequences did it have on the victims? While providing extensive estimates on casualties and material damage, general overviews of the pogroms in Ukraine produced by aid committees or the Jewish section of the People's Commissariat for Nationalities usually do not tackle the issue of sexual violence against Jewish women.<sup>98</sup> Despite the shortcomings of the documentation, a close reading of the regional summary reports, mentioned earlier, supports the conclusion that rape was as common as murder during the pogroms in Ukraine.<sup>99</sup> We have already established that approximately a hundred thousand victims died as a direct result of the pogroms.<sup>100</sup> By extrapolation and taking into account the usual underreporting of sexual violence, we can arrive at a high estimate of a hundred thousand rapes; in other words, one in twelve Jewish women may have been the victim of sexual violence. This ratio provides us with a number of victims comparable to that of the German occupation of Soviet territories, starting in 1941, and a number that is slightly below the estimated number of German women who were raped during the Red Army advance in 1945.<sup>101</sup>

The logic of submission to which the Jewish population was subjected and which directed the actions of pogromists and rapists was not merely symbolic in nature. As we have seen, many victims were killed on the spot trying to protect their physical integrity. Sexual violence dramatically increased the risk of death, and for many women, rapes were sometimes so physically violent that they led to the victim's death. In Katerynoslav (Dnipro), for example, a young schoolgirl, "thrown in a basement, bled to death during her rape."<sup>102</sup> Brief commentaries that accompany lists of victims sometimes make reference to injuries caused by sexual violence.<sup>103</sup> The fact that sexual violence is often accompanied by murder leads to the former being eclipsed by the latter. After the pogroms ended, the number of

<sup>98</sup> For different overviews and estimates produced by the Jewish section of the People's Commissariat for Nationalities and based on various aid committee reports, see Miliakova, *Kniga progromov*, 816–19.

<sup>99</sup> DAKO R-3050/1/234/2-4, Summary list of pogroms in East-Bank Ukraine; DAKO R-3050/1/213/29-37, Summary reports about pogroms in Podillia; DAKO R-3050/1/447/50-54, Summary list pertaining to the Kyiv region. Unfortunately, I was unable to find similar materials for the Volyn and Odesa regions, although those regions represented less than twenty percent of the pogroms.

<sup>100</sup> Bemporad and Chopard, "Pogroms of the Russian Civil War," xiv–xv.

<sup>101</sup> For a detailed overview of the different patterns of sexual violence during the Second World War, see Jeffrey Burds, "Sexual Violence in Europe in World War II, 1939–1945," *Politics and Society* 37, no. 1 (2009): 35–74. On specific topics, see Wendy Jo Gertjeanssen, "Victims, Heroes, Survivors: Sexual Violence on the Eastern Front during World War II" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2004); Norman M. Naimark, "The Russians and the Germans: Rape during the War and Post-Soviet Memories," in *Rape in Wartime*, 201–19.

<sup>102</sup> Gusev-Orenburgskii, *Bagrovaia kniga*, 170.

<sup>103</sup> See, e.g., the victims of the Proskuriv pogrom, the second deadliest of the Civil War (appr. 1,600 victims): Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 70–84.

victims was tallied without taking into account any medical reports, and a victim's condition was usually not described. The report on the Felshtyn (Hvardiiske) pogrom, which claimed the lives of 600 victims out of a population of 1,900 Jews and was carried out by the Third Haidamaka Regiment and other units of the UNR army in February 1919, is an exception, and underscores the blurred logic of violence: "Many women died after they were raped. A great number of survivors were also raped. Twelve unfortunates were hospitalized because they were victims of rape."<sup>104</sup>

The many effects of sexual assault on health were also disastrous. Sexually transmitted diseases were widespread among victims: "Many assaulted women became gravely ill, psychologically and physically. Many contracted venereal disease," testified an agricultural colonist in southern Ukraine.<sup>105</sup> All armies in the campaign carried infections that were sexually transmitted. In his diary Babel notes with disappointment: "The truth is that all soldiers suffer from syphilis."<sup>106</sup> In Smila, of the fifty women of all ages who were treated by a female doctor, "we found twenty-five cases of gonorrhea, six cases of white canker, and eight cases of syphilis."<sup>107</sup> Many infections—usually treatable during peacetime—proved dangerous or fatal owing to a lack of medical staff and supplies. In 1921 Soviet People's Commissariats still believed that the seventy-five thousands victims of rapes committed during the pogroms were contagious.<sup>108</sup>

In Smila, twenty women were found to be pregnant, and doctors had to perform emergency abortions. Sanitary conditions were so bad, however, that any medical procedure was risky:

Doctors help to perform them [abortions]. Unfortunately, some victims were sent to the doctor too late, others had an abortion at home with the means at hand or through healers, etc. In the latter case, there were fatalities.<sup>109</sup>

The few doctors who treated victims reported that, because of venereal disease and mostly because of unwanted pregnancies and abortions, there was a ten-percent mortality rate among rape victims.<sup>110</sup> Once again, if the number of Jewish victims of sexual violence is estimated at one hundred thousand, we may therefore estimate that approximately ten thousand Jewish women died as a result of the mass rapes that took place during the Civil War in Ukraine.

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 215.

<sup>106</sup> Babel', "Dnevnik 1920 goda," 267.

<sup>107</sup> Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 343.

<sup>108</sup> YIVO, Frank Rosenblatt Papers, Box 1, Folder 23, Report on the Medico-Sanitary Conditions in RSFSR, 15 July 1920–7 March 1921.

<sup>109</sup> Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 355.

<sup>110</sup> See, e.g., reports from doctors in Smila and Cherkasy in Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 328–30, 342–43, 353–56.

The experience was also psychologically traumatic<sup>111</sup> Through a veil of rhetorical precautions and euphemisms, and more generally because of the inadequacy of words to describe these ordeals, reports written by aid committees attempted to describe the impact of mass sexual violence on Jewish women. In Kyiv, for example, two women were forced to walk behind some pogromists in October 1919. The body of the first was found in the street the next day. The other had been abandoned half-dead but managed to return "pale, face scratched ... older, her back arched ... sinisterly silent, with downcast eyes and a dull look, faded."<sup>112</sup> A doctor noted that "in many cases, victims are in a condition of deep nervous collapse, wanting to end their days."<sup>113</sup> In a few cases, victims killed themselves to avoid humiliation.<sup>114</sup> Shame permeates every testimony, and witnesses mention victims asking in vain to be executed on the spot.<sup>115</sup> A pogrom victim—a man—tried to describe the violence of the pogrom, which included the rape of his daughter. After beating and extorting his family, "two of them [pogromists] dragged my only daughter into a room, holding her and closing her mouth before raping her." The testimony comes to an abrupt halt here. A member of the Committee for the Aid of Pogrom Victims then adds: "It was very difficult for the witness to talk about the event, I could not get any more information."<sup>116</sup> Even when they survived, many victims never managed to overcome their trauma. The observations of medical personnel on the scene suggest the prevalence of somatization, a phenomenon only recently addressed by modern medicine.<sup>117</sup> The trauma that afflicted victims clearly persisted for a long time after the event:

A girl, a worker at that candy factory, was orally raped. During this, the monsters shouted at her: 'Don't shout, *zhid*. We will kill you.' Her mouth is now maimed. After the rape, the girl suffered for a long time from horrific vomiting. The mere memory of the rape causes vomiting and a general affliction.<sup>118</sup>

Feelings of humiliation affected the entire Jewish population, both men and women. The tendency to avoid detail in their descriptions of rape, as evidenced by the reports compiled by aid committees, highlights the fact that the shame felt

<sup>111</sup> This aspect is emphasized in Astashkevich, *Gendered Violence*.

<sup>112</sup> Gusev-Orenburgskii, *Bagrovaia kniga*, 225–26.

<sup>113</sup> Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 342–43.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 329, 343; for another example, in Kremenichuk, see YIVO, TA, 18574.

<sup>115</sup> Among others, see the folder dedicated to rape victims of the Kyiv pogrom in October 1919 in the Tcherikower Archives, YIVO, TA, 19341–353.

<sup>116</sup> YIVO, TA, 19351.

<sup>117</sup> These disorders are the physical manifestation of psychological symptoms linked to brutal trauma. Medical personnel observed this phenomenon during the First World War, in cases of post-traumatic stress caused by war violence, especially shelling (hence called "shell shock"). This explanation was first used in the context of sexual violence traumas only in the 1970s.

<sup>118</sup> Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 355–56.



by victims was suffered not just personally but collectively. However, no women appear to have been rejected by their humiliated husbands or fathers—a phenomenon that is unfortunately not uncommon in other contexts.<sup>119</sup>

Widespread silence cloaked the violence against women. In December 1920, in Mazyr County, Belarus, where aid committees were aware that approximately a thousand women had been raped,<sup>120</sup> only fifteen women declared themselves victims.<sup>121</sup> This customary silence also had serious consequences for their health and that of others. A veil of secrecy often surrounded sexually transmitted diseases. As a result, they were frequently transmitted to the families of victims, thus increasing the general mortality rate—as doctors discovered during their tours to combat the typhus epidemic.<sup>122</sup>

The example of Mazyr highlights how, despite the diverse configurations that political struggles assumed during this period, extreme cases of sexual violence can be traced across the whole former Jewish Pale of Settlement. The present article has focused mainly on Ukraine, where anti-Jewish persecution was the most violent. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that as early as 1918, mass sexual assault contributed to raising the level of violence directed against civilian populations in other regions, such as Belarus, which were not major battlefields of the Civil War and where military warfare was usually conducted at a lower level of intensity (that is, compared to Ukraine).<sup>123</sup> In this perspective, Ukraine served as a laboratory for anti-Jewish violence and forms of brutality against civilians in general, which spread throughout the entire territory of Ukraine and beyond, including Belarus in late 1920. Similarly, when the White offensive, which started from Ukraine, the end point being Moscow, reached Russia's Tambov region in mid-1919, White soldiers carried out pogroms with the same degree of brutality as that observed in Ukraine, and they engaged in the practice of sexual violence, despite the very limited presence of Jews in the area.<sup>124</sup>

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Thousands of Jewish women were victims of sexual violence during the Civil War years, and thousands most likely died either during the violence or later from its effects. The diverse aspects of sexual violence after 1917 were not a by-product of misogyny or universal patriarchal gender relations, on the one hand, and of a hypothetical cultural anti-Semitism, on the other. This article has argued that specific patterns and singularities of anti-Jewish and sexual violence

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<sup>119</sup> Ruth Seifert, "War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis," in *Mass Rape: The War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, ed. Alexandra Stiglmayer (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 54–72.

<sup>120</sup> A later report states that 1,648 women were raped there. See DAKO R-3050/1/217/11.

<sup>121</sup> Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 633.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>123</sup> Ewan Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008), 345–61.

<sup>124</sup> Miliakova, *Kniga pogromov*, 787–89.

were an integral part of the political conflicts unleashed in Ukraine. Therefore, sexual violence emerges as a political discourse likely to be analyzed retrospectively. Rape became an important element of the wave of anti-Jewish persecution that exploded across the region from 1917 onwards—persecution that was not limited to mass looting or killing. Following the militarization of pogroms, pogrom rapes were a novelty of the period, distinguished from other instances of sexual violence committed during these years in terms of pattern, radicalization, and range of victims. Most armies exported this pattern of violence over vast expanses, thus highlighting the transition across which the preoccupation of all sides involved in the Civil War shifted from victory on the battlefield to the subjugation of civilian populations. Mass sexual assault targeting Jewish women specifically was used as a political tool and had an impact on the national hierarchy in the former Pale of Settlement. In addition, the antecedent radicalization of the Civil War and the war against civilians, in particular, resulting from rumors that were circulated about the “socialization of women” and the diffusion of suspicions relating to Judeo-Bolshevism among the troops and the populace, should not be overlooked. Neither should we consider such rumors to be symptomatic of the process of demodernization that began after 1917; on the contrary, they depended on the mobilization of an array of propaganda tools forged during the First World War, used on this occasion to stigmatize not the foreign enemy but the enemy within. Rumors were locally rooted. They involved detailed discourses substantiated by cases portrayed as representative, and they adopted a perspective that fell halfway between a synthetic overview and an assemblage of unconnected anecdotes. They supplied material for propaganda leaflets, newspapers, and internal circulars and became the main mobilizing tool of the anti-Bolshevik armies. The end product was a deeply radicalized, anti-Jewish prejudice. The key role of this political agitation is highlighted by the fact that the army with the most effective propaganda apparatus—the Whites—was also the army in whose ranks sexual violence was most radicalized and widespread. In contrast, the Polish and Ukrainian armies, for logistical and political reasons, hindered the rapid proliferation of mass sexual assault within their ranks.

Deeper questioning of the nature of sexual violence guides us toward a better understanding of the innovations that accompanied the crystallization of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth and the chain of responsibility behind the diffusion of the myth triggering the widespread, post-revolutionary campaigns of anti-Semitism and modern military pogroms. The incidence of rape increased in all armies after 1917 and were part of a massive persecution without a central initiative; nevertheless, when voices of authority, especially within the higher ranks of the White military and organs of propaganda, added their voices to intensify widespread anti-Semitism and the fear of Judeo-Bolshevism, sexual violence increased dramatically. By circulating rumors about the “socialization of women,” White propaganda participated in a process whereby a political conflict was transformed into a war between nationalities and a war against the Jewish minority. This concept of a political and national war harmful to the whole society foreshadowed a new era of violence in Eastern Europe.

Pogromist armies, following the logic of universal violence that spared neither women nor children, targeted all Jews without exception. The Judeo-Bolshevism canard was, from the beginning, perceived in terms of mass politics and led likewise to mass violence. Through this prism, Jews and Bolsheviks and Bolsheviks as Jews were not perceived as a small, politically organized fraction but as a national minority seeking to spread its domination over the entire population. The wars and revolution between 1914 and the early 1920s constituted a turning point in the history of anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe in that it fostered an environment of radicalization among political parties and armies which perceived Jews as a political, social, and national threat. Within this environment, anti-Jewish persecution was aimed at undermining Jewish life in the territories ravaged by civil war.

## Томаш ШОПАР

### Сексуальне насильство під час погромів: Громадянська війна в Україні як лабораторія антиєврейського насильства (1917–22)

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Ця стаття досліджує сексуальне насильство, зокрема зґвалтування, що його вчинено проти єврейських жінок після падіння Російської імперії, під час революцій 1917 р. і подальших збройних конфліктів. Стаття зосереджується на Україні, але також наводить низку прикладів з Білорусі. Частково вона розглядає інші ситуації сексуального насильства в історії ХХ століття, і отже, на підставі оригінальних документів, що їх уклали єврейські комітети допомоги й радянські адміністрації, намагається надати точні оцінки поширення цього явища. Досліджується загальний візерунок сексуального насильства під час погромів, але також і конкретні моменти радикалізації. Наголошуючи на масовості й системності практики гвалтувань з боку антибільшовицьких армій, особливо білих, автор намагається показати, як на додаток до надзвичайних рівнів жорстокості, цей період був визначальним моментом і для антисемітизму, і для насильства проти меншин. Постановка нового кшталту антисемітизму, що своїм осердям мав юдео-більшовицький міт, роздмухувало антиєврейське насильство до кінцевої

мети – кампанії переслідувань, що загрожувала всьому єврейському населенню, особливо жінкам. Щоб реконструювати процес радикалізації у насильство, автор статті розглядає конкретно те, як поширення чуток і функціонування сучасного пропагандистського апарату вплинуло на сприйняття груп громадянського населення і протурувало шлях для масового сексуального насильства. З такого погляду армії білих явно відзначилися серед інших збройних сил, які оперували під час Громадянської війни в Україні (війська УНР, польські війська, отаманські угруповання) як масштабом, так і радикальністю антиєврейського дискурсу, спрямованого проти жінок. Нарешті, у статті сконцентровано увагу на різноманітні наслідків для жертв сексуального насильства і єврейського населення загалом: підвищена смертність, венеричні хвороби, травма й колективна безпорадність.

**Ключові слова:** сексуальне насильство, погроми, зґвалтування, антиєврейське насильство, Україна, громадянська війна.

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