In the shtetl of Rakitino,\(^1\) the second pogrom broke out on August 14, 1919, after the leaders of local peasants, who perpetrated the previous pogrom in February, invited the Cossacks, posted at the railway station, to help with the pogrom. A group of Cossacks had joined enthusiastically, and the pogrom started immediately and lasted for over two weeks. A young Jewish girl named Povolotskaia was stripped naked in the central street and raped by a group of Cossacks right there despite her desperate pleas. Three sisters from the Reikhman family were brutally raped in front of their parents’ eyes. Khava Ochakovskaia, fifty, was killed while she tried to protect her three daughters, aged twelve to nineteen, who were taken consecutively to the railway station and repeatedly raped there by groups of Cossack soldiers.\(^2\) In total, about a hundred Jewish women aged from twelve to sixty were raped by groups of eight to ten Cossacks.

Cossacks, stationed at the railway terminal outside the shtetl, had come deliberately to rape, extort, and torture. The rapists always acted in a group, usually of eight to ten men, who raped one victim after another. There is evidence of groups of other sizes as well, but this particular number appears more often than any other. In the large town of Cherkassy, where the pogrom had been perpetrated by different armed forces—the insurgent soldiers under

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\(^1\) Tcherikower, following the report of the Committee to Aid Pogrom Survivors of the Russian Division of the Red Cross, gives the name of the shtetl as “Rakitino”; however, it appears that the established name is Rakitno, or Rokytno. This shtetl was located in the vicinity of the regional center and railway junction Belaya Tserkov, south of Kiev, in close proximity to Rossava, Boguslav, Skvira, and other places already discussed.

\(^2\) YIVO Archive, file 209, 18762–64.
the command of ataman Grigoriev—the Red Cross inspector Tsifranovich reported that the male Jewish population aged sixteen and over had been killed almost completely, with their bodies mutilated so horribly that it had been almost impossible to recognize them, since their arms and legs were cut off. The report goes on: “The rapes were of a horrible character. The victim was tortured by eight–ten people consecutively, and they gathered the Jews to make them watch the barbaric atrocity (The rapes were not registered).”

Group participation of pogromschiki in the mass rape of Jewish women was an essential factor, which had a very specific primary function—to communicate a message. The first and the most straightforward message of rape is the message of domination, of absolute power and superiority. Violent pogrom rituals communicate the very same message by symbolically restoring the “correct” hierarchy of the society, but the act of rape, and particularly mass rape, has a much more powerful impact. Rape is a violent crime that “derives from a system of dominance and subjugation” and maintains this system on a larger scale. Claudia Card takes this concept further with regard to wartime rape: “If there is one set of functions of rape, civilian or martial, it is to display, communicate and produce or maintain dominance.” The message of wartime rape has two major targets: the victim and the audience receiving the message.

Women who suffered rape clearly were the primary victims of the pogrom rapes: their bodies were forcefully penetrated, violated, tortured, and mutilated; and they had their integrity ruined publicly, may have been impregnated against their will, and may have been infected with sexually transmitted diseases. All Jews of pogrom communities who observed rape directly, or were otherwise exposed to rape, became victims of rape as well. The Jewish community became the primary audience of rape, but there was another audience: the group of rapists who perpetrated the rape together. Each single act of group rape communicated two quite different messages at the same time: one directed at the victims, and another directed internally.

According to philosopher Louise du Toit, gang rape often conforms to the model of rape as a performance, a theater that requires an audience, but at the same time “cements the truth of rapist’s world,” promoting bonding and camaraderie. This is particularly true for the two waves of rape that swamped the

3 Ibid., file 191, 16558 on reverse.
4 Hagen, “The Moral Economy of Ethnic Violence.”
5 Allen, Rape Warfare, 39.
6 Card, “Rape as a Weapon of War,” 7.
7 Du Toit, A Philosophical Investigation of Rape, 93.
shtetls in Ukraine in 1919. The mass rapes during the first and second halves of 1919 followed generally the same scenario, but communicated a distinctly different internal message to various groups of assailants. The perpetrators of the mass rape of Jewish women in the first half of 1919 were soldiers of the Ukrainian National Army, various gangs, and even Bolshevik troops, who ultimately belonged to a group of people that can be defined by one word—“locals.” The White Army and the Cossacks, who perpetrated mass rape in the second half of 1919, were by and large not natives of Ukraine and their objectives were radically different. In the context of mass gender violence, rape communication as a driving force of violence and part of the identity structure of pogrom perpetrators will be revisited later in the book. Red Army rape perpetrators fell either into the same category as soldiers of the UNA or military gangs, who indeed switched their allegiances with ease, or they were Cossacks, who had previously served in the White Army. The lack of unique identity vis-à-vis anti-Jewish violence among Red Army soldiers was also sustained by the politics of internationalism conducted by the Red Army command, which led to politics of pogrom prevention and persecution of the offenders, so no specific Bolshevik pogromschiki profile could be formed or singled out.

UKRAINIAN ARMY SOLDIERS AND BANDITS

On July 10, 1919, Braude, the representative of the Aid Department of the Russian Red Cross, reported on the situation in the pogrom-stricken shtetls in the region to the south of Kiev around the important railway junction in the town of Uman. Various gangs and Petliura’s army regiments perpetrated pogroms in Uman and shtetls like Lodyzhenka, Golovanievsk, Dubovo, etc. Braude, who visited the region during the short break of relative calm provided by the advance of the Red Army, assessed the situation thus: “Around the towns and shtetls [there are] bandit packs, insurgents, groups, mobs, or simply peasants with pitchforks and scythes, with various slogans, with all sorts of demands, or without all these ‘gauze curtains’;—all of them beat, torture,—mutilate Jews. There are many dozens of chieftains. Almost all of them have nicknames borrowed from the folk tales or pulp fiction.”

8. Here meaning “pretense.”
9. Here the term means anything from humiliation to, most probably, rape.
10. Miljakova, Kniga Pogromov, 204–5.

This is, in fact, a very precise evaluation of the chaos that engulfed Ukraine in 1919, and Braude’s
description is valid for the whole of Ukraine in 1919. Most of the other inspectors and witnesses tried to comprehend the rampant anti-Jewish violence through political analysis on the micro-level, and inevitably became drawn into arguments about whether Jews were or were not Bolsheviks, missing the larger picture altogether. Braude, however, recognized that political slogans served to camouflage the real objective of harming the Jews, and that perpetrators of the pogroms in the first half of 1919 were a chaotic mixture of all sorts of armed men, a patchwork of various regiments and platoons with no coherent plans or goals. Braude was also very keen to notice that despite the chaotic appearance these people shared some common characteristics: for one, they were in desperate search of a name, or rather identity. Moshe Rekis survived Grigoriev’s pogroms in the Cherkassy-Smela-Elisavetgrad area in May 1919, and provided a detailed account of his experience. Rekis indeed searched for political rationalization, but, in sync with Braude, he defined Petliura’s soldiers as “demoralized . . . Ukrainian village ‘Cossack[s]’” and “prostitutes of the Civil War,” recognizing their false identity and vague allegiance.

Petliura’s army, just like the various military gangs (bandas), was composed of locals. “Local” is the key adjective in this case: they were native to the land, and long-term neighbors of the Jews they were now attacking. This circumstance implies a certain pattern to the relationship of the Jews and pogromschiki in the first half of 1919. On one hand, Jews generally did not recognize the Ukrainian National Army (UNA), unanimously referred to as Petliura’s army, and the bandas as legitimate representatives of power. In the eyes of the Jewish communities the new Ukrainian army and the military gangs, although they constituted a real threat and, indeed, a mortal danger, did not represent valid authority that consequently would have enjoyed real respect and trust (in a positive rather than negative sense). In other words, Jews did not know what to expect from the new power and, what is more, did not believe the new power to be viable or capable of imposing any solid, long-term order. On the other hand, the people who joined the UNA, the gangs, or even the Bolshevik army, had been uprooted and were no longer peasants connected to their land, although a lot of Ukrainian soldiers were of peasant ancestry. By the beginning of 1919, the bulk of the Ukrainian army and gangs consisted of former soldiers, or people without a particular profession or landholdings, who shared at the moment of a pogrom a common characteristic—they were constantly on the go.

11 YIVO Archive, file 183, 15936.
This group of people was perceived by Jews as thugs. In the eyes of their victims, Petliura’s pogroms were pogroms of criminal elements. These were people whom Jews might have known personally, or were similar to people they knew. As a result, Jews feared the Ukrainian *pogromschiki*, but did not respect them. The fact that the majority of pogrom perpetrators were either neighbors of their victims, or recognized as similar to the same, adds yet another dimension to the common portrait of the *pogromschiki* of the first half of 1919 that set the first wave of pogroms apart from the second. The UNA soldiers as well as various bandits and the new Bolshevik recruits were all native to Ukraine. The land they were roaming was their own, not a foreign land they did not care for. This influenced the course of the pogroms as well as made a tremendous difference in the way both the *pogromschiki* and local non-Jewish neighbors approached Jewish property during the pogroms: as much as the *pogromschiki* did not care about Jewish lives, they did care about their property and the local settlements in general.

The self-identity of Petliura’s army appears to be problematic. The UNA soldiers were not Cossacks although they called themselves by that name most of the time and insisted that others do so. The real Cossacks lived in closed, militarized communities that maintained themselves in the Russian Empire mainly in the regions of Don, Kuban, and Caucasus. Cossacks provided excellent military service to the Russian tsars—they formed elite regiments and, unlike regular soldiers, were very loyal to the tsars, who relied on the Cossacks to suppress uprisings and revolts. The Cossacks were active on the front lines during wars as well, and their fighting prowess justified for the Tsarist government the existence of the anachronism of a privileged military estate in the twentieth century. The real Don and Kuban Cossacks, and some from other regions, did take part in the Civil War in Ukraine and perpetrated pogroms. However, they joined the Volunteer Army of General Denikin, not that of Petliura.

The real Cossacks would certainly not have called themselves “Ukrainians.” Their identity lay elsewhere, and it was a very strong identity, so powerful that for the rest of the world, and for Ukrainians themselves, it became a symbol of Ukrainian identity and has remained an emblem of Ukrainian national and cultural identity until today. The image of the Cossack was extremely charismatic and appealing, not least because it included the concept of liberty—*kazatskaya volnitsa*, which Ukraine and Ukrainians had lost. After ages of Ukrainian existence as part of the Russian Empire under the official name “Lesser Russia” (*Malorossiya*), the image of the strong, independent, and militant Cossack appealed both to the Ukrainians and to the outside world as a
more attractive and desirable vision of Ukrainians in their own free country. In
the wake of social revolution, the young Ukrainian state was searching for sym-

bols of national identity to organize and unite a people that had lived without
an independent statehood for centuries. In 1917 the civic militia had adopted
the name Free Cossacks. By 1918 and even more so in early 1919, the new
Ukrainian troops began calling themselves Cossacks and making use of other
specific Cossack terms and names. This provided the military with the appro-
priate terms in the Ukrainian language that otherwise they would have had to
borrow from other languages, and it also boosted the national self-conscious-
ness and patriotic feelings of the army. Insurgents, as the UNA soldiers were
most commonly called, utilized the rank of “ataman” for a leader of any mili-
tary detachment or gang, and named some detachments kurens, after Cossack
tradition. The most infamous was Kuren Smerti (The Clan of Death), under
the command of Ataman Palienko, one of the generals close to Petliura, which
perpetrated the pogrom in Berdichev in January of 1919\(^ {12} \) and in many Jewish
settlements after that.

These self-proclaimed Cossacks were not a homogenous group of people,
but former peasants, former soldiers, and all sorts of workers and professionals
who had chosen to pledge their allegiance to the Ukrainian army, subordinate
to the Directory and Petliura personally, or to one of the numerous military
units (bandas), which roved the countryside. These self-labeled Cossacks, often
referred to in the pogrom narratives as “insurgents” or “bandits,” did not usu-
ally share strong allegiances or convictions, and swiftly changed their acquired
identity. In fact, the people who fought in the Red Army hardly differed from
the “New Cossacks,” except the Red Army accepted Jewish recruits in the name
of internationalism. During the Civil War, soldiers changed sides freely, as did
some of the atamans, like the infamous Grigoriev.

Grigoriev started his short career as an officer in the Tsarist army, than
served independent Ukraine, after that pledged his allegiance to Hetman
Skoropadsky, subsequently joined the Red Army, but soon betrayed the union,
and finally assembled his own huge army and fought the Reds in the Cherkassy
region, where his army perpetrated vicious pogroms. After Grigoriev had been
defeated by the Bolsheviks, the majority of his army, numbering up to fifteen
thousand soldiers, rejoined the Bolsheviks, while Grigoriev himself escaped to
the headquarters of another infamous ataman—Makhno. Later in the summer
of 1919, Grigoriev was murdered on Makhno’s orders, as they failed to find

\(^ {12} \) Ibid., file 161, 13772.
common cause. Changing sides became a commonly employed tactic by various Petliura regiments and armed gangs, who would join the Red Army instead of fighting it. A witness of the pogroms in shtetl Volodarka near Skvira concludes his story: “Former pogrom perpetrators signed up with the Red Army—and thus protected themselves from the upcoming punishment.”

Rekis believed that Ukrainian soldiers, bandits, and peasants, who changed sides so readily, were the reason why the Red Army had not rescued Ukrainian Jews from the pogroms. Rekis observed that whenever Grigoriev’s soldiers felt threatened and defected to Bolshevik side, they were received “in a celebratory and pompous manner.” Detachments of the Red Army perpetrated a number of pogroms throughout the Civil War in Ukraine; however, the Bolsheviks did follow through on the denunciation of anti-Jewish violence, punishing at least some pogrom perpetrators and instigators.

In 1919 there were few choices available to men in Ukraine, which was overwhelmed by chaos, war, and poverty. The first was to join the Bolsheviks, whose ideas in general appealed to the impoverished uprooted population, but lacked any immediate reward, and restrained anti-Jewish violence by accepting Jews and prosecuting pogrom instigators. Another option available to Ukrainian men was to join the Ukrainian National Army that, in theory, was fighting a patriotic war and provided a rather vague form of Cossack identity in return. The third choice was to join one of the militant gangs or bandas that were loosely associated with Petliura’s army or cause but generally were gangs of armed men fighting under the command of a chieftain. Peasant unrest in the country, which was devastated by wars and revolutions, and the large amount of weaponry and particularly firearms accumulated by the local population amid the anarchy in the countryside created a window of opportunity for various individuals to organize militarized gangs of their own and become “atamans” themselves. The atamans would often be active in their native villages and regions, and terrorize and rob the Jewish population, with whom they were previously neighbors.

This extremely diverse group of uprooted men with vague goals and perspectives was in dire need of a common locus. The mass rape of Jewish women provided much needed bonding and camaraderie, and also served to establish an identity, or rather to simulate an identity, across age gaps and different

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13 Miljakova, Kniga Pogromov, 206.
14 YIVO Archive, file 183, 15935 reverse.
Gendered Violence

backgrounds. The *pogromschiki* of the first wave of the Petliura’s pogroms adopted a simulacrum of Cossack identity to fill a void, but truly established it through the mass rape of Jewish women. By brutally raping Jewish women in public, the new Ukrainian Cossacks defined themselves as a powerful authority, united by common action, and proved their dominance and importance to the Jewish population, who had previously dismissed their former neighbors as thugs and bandits.

The reinforcement of the acquired joint identity during the pogrom often unfolded as an ostentatious theatrical performance, complete with stage props and costumes. Makhno and his anarchist army spent only twelve days in shtetl Kazatin at the end of summer 1919; during this time Makhno’s soldiers killed and tortured many Jews, and brutally raped at least forty Jewish women. Amid the chaos and devastation of the pogrom, Makhno also ordered the Jewish population to provide raspberry jam and silk lining for his coat. Clearly, by demanding luxury items and fancy food from the robbed and impoverished Jews, who often were left even without their underwear and deprived of the last scraps of flour to bake bread, the atamans sought to establish their superior rank and privileges. In the same context, the rape of Jewish women was often played out as an imitation of symbolic service and entertainment: in shtetl Gornostaipol, atamans Laznyuk and Struk perpetrated pogroms from January through May 1919. The latter ordered the Jews to prepare him and his gang a feast to be served by thirty Jewish girls, all of whom were raped. Performance of rape as service and entertainment, provided by serfs to their masters, aimed to redefine the relationship between Jews and their neighbors in terms of dominance and hierarchy. Besides Makhno and Struk, many atamans utilized the very same combination of luxury and carnivalesque rape and torture: for example, atamans Angel and Kozyr-Zyrka were particularly known for such sadistic practices. Kozyr-Zyrka was described as wearing rich silk garments and demanding young Jewish girls for his pleasure as well as for the pleasure of his comrades, while torturing Jewish men for entertainment.

Braude, who inspected many shtetls after the pogroms, interviewed the “lucky refugees” who had escaped from shtetl Ladyzhenka during the last pogrom in July 1919. An unnamed gang had entered Ladyzhenka and orchestrated the pogrom show: in the synagogue they gathered thirty remaining Jews, mostly the elderly, the sick, and the women, who had survived previous

15 Ibid., file 170, 14598–601.
16 Ibid., file 177, 15294–327.
pogroms. The Jews, locked in the synagogue, had been stripped nearly naked and denied medical help and food. Often soldiers would drag the Jews into the square one after another and force them to dance or crawl naked, or perform other humiliating acts for the entertainment of soldiers and peasants. Later, Braude interviewed two Jewish girls who had been among those locked in synagogue. Both had been repeatedly raped, their faces horribly mutilated—one of the girls had her nose cut off—and both had contracted venereal diseases, which Braude called “dirty disease.” That was the end of the Jewish community in Ladyzhenka, which at the beginning of 1919 had 1,400 members, and by July 1919 those few who had survived the ordeal of the last pogrom left the town. Braude makes another observation that proves how effective the tactic of mass rape and torture was: he writes that the “success” of the pogroms against the backdrop of constant violence encouraged further bandit activity. “A village boy scratches his head and comes to a decision [to organize a gang], then simply yawns, tempts eight to ten shepherd boys, with sweets almost, they grab some clubs—and here comes the gang. And the Jews, their faces contorted with obsequiousness and grief, kiss their dusty pants and pay them the tribute (this is a fact proved by the witness protocol).” This remarkable evidence both reveals the despair of the narrator and uncovers the mechanics of the relationship among the pogrom perpetrators. Braude disclaims that gang members or soldiers formed any long-term relationships or strong bonds, and describes the connection between them as something insubstantial, circumstantial, and temporary. The joint performance of anti-Jewish violence, and particularly the participation in gang rape of Jewish women, became the unifying force that held the members of a gang or regiment together.

Gang rape is particularly important in the context of genocidal rape, as a “prevalent form of military sexual assault” that “is valued for building soldier’s morale,” writes Bergoffen, who concludes that “comrades in arms are now comrades in rape.” Gang rape bonds its perpetrators on many levels, and not only a positive identity is forged as a result. The gang members and soldiers of Petliura’s army, as well as those Red Army regiments that perpetrated pogroms, built their positive identity by mass rape of Jewish women, and also used rape to secure their internal bonds. Every rapist is symbolically connected to his

17 Miljakova, *Kniga Pogromov*, 204–6.
18 YIVO Archive, file 174, 14991–5000.
19 Meaning, some uneducated teenagers.
20 Miljakova, *Kniga Pogromov*, 204.
21 Bergoffen, *Contesting the Politics of Genocidal Rape*, 42.
group through participating in the initialization ritual of joint rape, when every participant observes and is being observed by his comrades. At the same time, group rape unleashed further rape and torture on a larger scale, as joint participation in rape loosened the moral boundaries of the assailants and diffused personal responsibility.

A number of accounts illustrate with great precision how gang rape unravels during a pogrom. For instance, in May 1919 the Grigoriev gang perpetrated a pogrom in Elisavetgrad, a large town south of Cherkassy between Uman and Kremenchug. The soldiers broke into smaller groups and went from courtyard to courtyard, meticulously searching for Jewish families. Fanny Gitel, aged twelve, witnessed as all the Jewish families in their courtyard were brutally robbed, raped, tortured, and killed.22 In the nearby courtyard another (not named) Jewish family was standing silent as ordered while the soldiers robbed and looted their apartment. Then the soldiers started to threaten Jewish men and women, and were obviously priming themselves for further action. The situation was very tense, as the Jews stood in fear of horrible torture and violence, and pogrom perpetrators, temporarily united by joint action, paused in anticipation of anything that would trigger and unleash their wrath. One of the girls could not stay silent and broke out in cries of fear. The bandits immediately grabbed her and took her to the next room, where they raped and tortured her in turns, making her father stand next to her and watch. The moment of the start of the gang rape is crucial to the group of assailants that are not well connected or confident in their actions. Such groups often lack the impulse and energy to propel their actions, but every step of the rape powers every following step, spinning the rape frenzy out of control and freeing the actors from any moral inhibitions. The grabbing and dragging of the victim served as the prelude to the theater of rape, or, if the action unfolded in the public space, rapists often stripped their victims naked in the street.

In Elisavetgrad, where the pogrom became exceedingly vicious in May 1919, more and more sadistic rituals were added to the mass rape, as the pogrom violence gained momentum and the energy of the assailants drove the level of violence to previously unwitnessed extremes. Sixteen-year-old Donya

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22 Fanny’s non-Jewish neighbors jointly robbed them and plundered their apartment, but the very same neighbors favored Fanny and her family and hid them in the cellar. Grigoriev soldiers murdered all other Jews in the courtyard. Fanny’s neighbors, who were so kind to the girl’s family, kept the bodies of the murdered Jews and produced them to the pogromschiki as a proof that all “their” Jews have been murdered already and thus saved Fanny’s life. YIVO Archive, file 168, 14346–97.
Kogan was raped by the gang of Grigoriev’s soldiers in front of her brother, and then she was terribly mutilated. Denying her a quick death, the rapists instead threw her into a cellar, where she died slowly of blood loss. All over town Jewish women were brutally gang raped, their breasts cut off, and their abdomens ripped open.

Horrific scenes, like the ones that occurred during the pogroms in Elisavetgrad, became a fact of life by the summer of 1919. The retreating Ukrainian army and numerous atamans raped the Jewish female population to promote and demonstrate their superiority to their former neighbors, and to build strong bonds and camaraderie inside their groups. Amid the chaos and terror, the advance of the White Army in August 1919 promised some relief for Jewish communities, who hoped for the restoration of law and order. All those hopes were shattered, as the new wave of pogroms proved to be more brutal than ever, and mass rape of Jewish women surged even further.

**THE WHITE OFFICERS**

The Whites, like the Ukrainian soldiers and bandits, gang raped Jewish women publicly, and did so with exceeding brutality and visceral hatred. Even contemporary observers recognized that the Cossacks and officers had raped their victims in the manner that would inflict the most suffering, both physical and emotional. Schechtman, who published a volume on the pogroms of the Volunteer Army as part of Tcherikower’s series in 1932, wrote that “this trait of *purposeful humiliation* characterizes the rape by the Volunteer Army.” Like the soldiers of the Ukrainian army and the bandits, the Whites used the same anti-Jewish rhetoric, branding the Jews as Bolsheviks responsible for the fall of the Russian Empire, and also sought to penalize Jews as well, but did so in retaliation, and with a greater degree of emotional involvement.

Smela (Smila), a large town immediately to the west of Cherkassy and north of Elisavetgrad, had been home to a thriving Jewish community since the seventeenth century; before the Civil War, seven and a half thousand Jews constituted half of Smela’s population. In May 1919 Grigoriev’s soldiers turned the pogrom in Smela into a bloodbath, raped an indeterminate but very large number of Jewish women, and left the town in a state of total devastation. In August 1919 Denikin’s army perpetrated a violent pogrom as they advanced to

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23 YIVO Archive, file 168, 14346–97.
24 Schechtman, Gergel’, and Cherikover, *Pogromy Dobrovolskoi*. 
Moscow and repeated it during their retreat in November–December 1919. Rekis, a survivor of the May pogrom, collected evidence about Volunteer Army pogroms in the same area and interviewed survivors. A story narrated by Rabbi Men of Smela is emblematic of the Volunteer Army pogroms. According to Rabbi Men, on August 5, 1919, the Bolsheviks left Smela and the city expected Denikin’s vanguard to arrive soon thereafter. A special interim guard committee prepared to greet the new power and inquire about their “wishes and demands,” because the anticipation of Denikin’s army’s arrival had aroused expectations among both the Jews and the non-Jewish population. When the Cossack “Wolf Division” under the command of General Shkuro appeared in Smela on the night of August 7, the Cossacks were enraged to see Jews in the city guard, and immediately started a pogrom. Rabbi Men and the delegation of the most educated and wealthy Jews went out to parley with Major General Markevich, the head of Shkuro’s headquarters. After the delegation waited for a very long time, the general granted them an audience, but received Jewish representatives with a lot of resentment and refused to stop the pogrom. General Markevich explained his decision thus: “How can I forget that a Jewish Commissar in Rostov killed my mother and my sister? My soldiers are embittered against Communists, and all the Communists are Jewish. We can’t allow a Jewish kingdom in Russia.” When Rabbi Men argued that young Jewish girls had nothing to do with politics, the general replied: “The first four or five days my boys need to unwind. There is nothing to be done about that, my Cossacks are good fighters but also good looters. If you just killed Trotsky all that would end.”

At last, General Markevich promised to send sentries to the Jewish hospital, where thirty-five Jewish girls were hiding. The pogrom, however, did not stop, but simply became less violent when the Wolf Division finally left the town. The Whites left behind a guard unit of local people who were familiar to the Jewish community, as they had originally belonged to the Grigoriev banda that committed the horrible pogroms in May. The command of the guard consisted of three local landlords who busied themselves with extorting money from the local Jewish population, while the members of the guard would periodically raid Jewish homes. In November 1919, Colonel Romanov

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25 YIVO Archive, file 209, 18795–812 on reverse.
26 Miljakova, Kniga Pogromov, 333–34.
27 Russian town.
28 Miljakova, Kniga Pogromov, 334.
29 Ibid.
of Denikin’s army led the elite Preobrazhensky regiment into Smela. Romanov was surprised that a Jewish delegation did not greet him. He sent emissaries the following morning to Rabbi Men’s house to inquire about the absence of greeting from a Jewish delegation headed by the rabbi. The Jews had managed to collect twenty-five thousand rubles as a welcoming bribe and hurried to greet the colonel. Romanov accepted the bribe and announced that Jews had always sabotaged the White Army and that his regiment would take revenge with a ferocious pogrom. After this opening threat, Romanov requested more donations of linens, sugar, and oil from the Jewish community and said that he would restrain his soldiers. The “slow” pogrom did not stop, but after the Preobrazhensky regiment left and the Drozdovsky cavalry regiment entered Smela, the pogrom resumed with a new force, and the officers participated in it even more actively than the soldiers. Again the pattern repeated itself: Rabbi Men, representing the Jews, and the Russian Orthodox town representative went to Colonel Prihodko, the commander of the Drozdovsky regiment, and offered him a bribe of hundred and twenty thousand rubles to stop the pogrom, and offered to have the whole population of Smela go outside to greet him, if he liked, if only he would do something to stop the pogrom, but to no avail. Drozdov’s regiment left the city on December 17. When leaving, the commanders of the regiment warned the Jews that the officers and soldiers had been good to them, and that the next coming regiments would “show their true face”—and it would be horrible for the Jews. And indeed this is what happened. The Chechen regiments (i.e., of Cossacks from the Caucasus, the same as the Wolf regiment of General Shkuro), which were known to be the most ruthless and merciless to Jews, entered the city and began murdering the Jews (twenty-seven killed in the first hours) and raping Jewish women and girls on a massive scale. The dead bodies of the Jews were mutilated and left lying in the streets. The number of wounded was enormous, and more victims proceeded to die because of wounds, typhoid, venereal diseases, and trauma. A significant body of evidence depicting all aspects of anti-Jewish violence was collected after the Smela pogroms.

Vengeance and retribution—those were the two driving forces behind the pogroms, clearly articulated by various White Army officers. The Volunteer Army adopted as a way of justifying the anti-Jewish violence a very similar anti-Bolshevik/anti-Jewish line of reasoning, but its origin was different from that of the Ukrainian army, because the Volunteer Army operated on an entirely different basis. Former Tsarist generals and officers were mostly foreign to Ukraine, its society, and culture. Professionally trained officers, many
of noble lineage, had rarely come in contact with Jews, or even the common civilian population, in the course of their lives. The officers spoke Russian, but it was a refined Russian, and very different from the language of the majority of the Ukrainian population. Denikin and his command declared the restoration of the Russian Empire as it had existed before the Revolutions of 1917 to be their primary goal. In this framework, an independent Ukraine did not exist, and was just one of the provinces of the empire; there was nothing to establish, no contacts or ties to maintain. Thus, the Volunteer Army leadership and the population of the south of the former Russian Empire remained hostile and alien to each other, and, at the same time, the relationship between the Cossacks and the White movement was far from ideal: the Cossacks and the Whites were at best fellow travelers and never truly shared the same goals and ideology. The White Army’s encounter with Jews on the territory of Ukraine lasted for only about half a year, from midsummer 1919 until the beginning of 1920, and happened twice in this short period: during the advance of the White Army and during its retreat. The territories occupied by the Whites were heavily settled with Jews, and many Jewish settlements had already suffered from the pogroms in previous periods.

Peter Kenez argued that antisemitism became an obsession for the Volunteer Army. The absolute majority of the officers, church leaders, political figures, and Denikin personally were vigorous and fervent antisemites; and only the necessity to cooperate with foreign powers made Denikin issue an official denunciation of the pogroms. The Special Department of Propaganda of the White Army produced a wide range of materials, including a falsified “documentary,” all aimed to prove the old canard that all Jews were Bolsheviks and thus enemies of Russia. General Denikin, whose memoirs were heavily edited later in France to camouflage his antisemitic views in the aftermath of Petliura’s assassination and the trial of his killer, had denounced the White Army participation in pogroms and adduced a series of self-contradictory arguments to marginalize the issue of pogroms, and blame them, among other reasons, on “animal instincts” of some army men. However, he leaves the following remark: “If the troops only had some reasons to suspect that the higher authority would look on the pogroms with approval, the destiny of the Jews of South Russia would have been much more tragic.” In light of the horrible atrocities

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30 Kenez, “Pogroms and White Ideology,” 301.
31 YIVO Archive, file 211, 19202.
32 Anton Ivanovich Denikine, Ocherki Russkoy Smuty, vol. 3 (Moscow: Ajris, 2006), 536.
committed by the Volunteer Army, this statement sounds cruelly derisive, betraying a lack of conviction of the White Army command toward the denunciation of the pogroms.

In the absence of any positive ideology, antisemitism became the only ideology, almost an idée fixe for the White movement. Officers of the Russian army grew disillusioned by the Russian monarchy after the inglorious defeats in the Russo-Japanese War, the losses in the First World War, the growing civil unrest, and the deteriorating economy. On the other hand, the Bolshevik Revolution had robbed Russian officers, a lot of whom were of noble descent, of their possessions, homes, futures, and their civilization. A lot of Russian soldiers joined the Red Army, and the officers were left to fight Bolshevism with the army that had more command hierarchy than fighting power. The two key problems of the White Army were the lack of soldiers and the lack of positive goals. The White Army maintained decorum and proclaimed the restoration of the Russian Empire as its objective, but there were no viable plans or long-term goals. There was a void inside the White ideology that led to the development of a negative concept of life—the retaliation for everything that was lost. The punishment of Jews, equated with the Bolsheviks, became the single clear and, more important, feasible objective of the Volunteer Army. This philosophy led to the degradation of the officers of the White Army, and of the army in general, rapidly losing their very thin veneer of humanity and civilization. The rage and despair of the stateless Volunteer Army, on a scene already overwhelmed with violence against an unprotected minority that was perceived as the enemy, turned the formerly polished, educated, and civilized officers into sadists who found amusement in gruesome torture.

These mutations were shocking and frightening, especially for those victims who witnessed both sides of a person and who saw the moment of transformation. Dr. Sara Margolin, who lived in Cherkassy, a large town near Smela, described her interaction with two officers during the pogrom. The two officers who entered her house made at first a very good impression—one had a very intelligent face, and Margolin compared him to Russian writer Chernyshevsky; the other one had a “shaved face” like an actor. The officers ordered her to bring them tea, and then engaged in a conversation with the Russian girls, who rented rooms at Margolin’s, and with the lady of the house. Margolin, a highly educated woman herself, admitted that the conversation was very lively and that one of the

33 Kenez, “Pogroms and White Ideology,” 308–11.
34 YIVO Archive, file 209, 18795–812; Miljakova, Kniga Pogromov, 330–33.
officers discussed the situation in Soviet Russia and how he was fighting against the Commissars (who were all Jews) and the “fat Jewish profiteers,” but declared Margolin’s property to be under his personal protection.\textsuperscript{35} The two officers, courteous in the beginning, grew more impatient as the tea did not immediately appear. Tea was served with bread rusk, the only provision Margolin had. One of the officers drank his cup and gave an order to the Cossack soldiers who accompanied him. The house of Dr. Margolin was full of sick people—both relatives and strangers—because she was a doctor and treated people at home. On the officer’s order, several soldiers took her sick brother-in-law out of bed and made him dance a Russian dance, spurring him on by hitting him with whips. Cossacks and the officers began pillaging the rooms, grabbing anything of value that they could carry, taking things from people sick with typhoid, and beating whoever was in the house. In one of the rooms, they found several girls, and two of them were brutally raped by a large group of Cossacks. Officers actually encouraged more soldiers to come in and participate in the pogrom and rape. Margolin described a sudden transformation of two people whom she at first even considered to have looked intelligent into totally different beings. “We saw only the faces of savages around us, livid, sweaty from the tea they had just drunk, blazing with hatred towards us. This is the first time in my life I had to observe such hatred towards people, such loathing and cruelty towards Jews, as is difficult to imagine even towards the filthiest animals.”\textsuperscript{36}

Transformation of the well-bred and cultured individual into a wild beast similarly astonished another witness from Smela, a local anonymous homeowner, who hosted White officers in his home and reported his experience with bitter sarcasm: “Those three [officers] who stayed permanently, who lived permanently, and permanently loved, loved not just me but my tea, my sugar, my breakfast, my dinner, my supper; they loved my clean linens and everything that was left after the first arrival of Denikin’s soldiers, let their memory be damned.”\textsuperscript{37} The narrator described the officer as “young, handsome, tall, with an intelligent and sophisticated face,”\textsuperscript{38} who raised his heavy fist on him as a way of greeting. The stark contradiction between the appearance of the officer and projected expectations of his behavior stupefied the homeowner, who returned to this frightening transformation several times in the course of his short narrative: “Frequently we conducted long conversations, and often

\textsuperscript{35} Miljakova, \textit{Kniga Pogromov}, 331.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 331–32.
\textsuperscript{37} YIVO Archive, file 209, 18795–812.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
discussed various subjects, and particularly those that interested us the most. The assaults and robberies. They were afraid that maybe this would stop soon and they would not be able to ship home everything they looted; I was afraid that, conversely, it would last longer and I would not live long enough to witness their demise. All my tenants were of the intelligentsia. They were people of blue blood, thin fingers, and exquisite, pristine faces.”

The language of the two very different witnesses is very similar in the way they juxtapose the savage actions of the officers with their assumed image of well-bred, cultured, and refined men. The notion of intelligentsia in the Russian Empire and later in the Soviet Union is a way of describing people who share cultural and educational identity that nevertheless cannot be simply defined by level of education, origin, or profession. This elaborate identity was readily recognized by the majority of the population of the country and implied certain expectations for their conduct. Jewish witnesses had naturally assumed that the officers, noble, refined, and educated as they were, would fit in with the intelligentsia identity and behave accordingly. As the Jews did not previously anticipate that their neighbors turned atamans would wield real power in the first half of 1919, so they did not expect vulgar and cruel brutality from the White officers in the second half of 1919. But neither had Jews expected a favorable treatment from the White officers, as suggested by their previous encounters, the latest of which happened during the First World War.

White officers perpetrated pogroms against Jews in retaliation and vengeance, but also in frustration and despair. Unlike Petliura’s soldiers and various gang members, who vied to establish their identity, Volunteer Army officers conformed to a powerful preexisting identity, and sought to reinforce it through genocidal violence, specifically through genocidal rape. The paradox of the White–Jewish encounters during the Civil War was that both sides possessed a strong image and concept of their antagonist, but those assumptions were dramatically incorrect. For Whites the Jews, zealously branded as Bolsheviks, became an embodiment of the ultimate enemy, responsible for all misfortunes and losses. From the Jewish perspective, the Volunteer Army carried the halo of the monarchial authority of the Russian Empire that evoked a long history of oppression, but also of order and firm power.

The Russian monarchy victimized and oppressed Jews but, with the memory of previous “royal alliance” still fresh in their minds, the Ukrainian Jewry expected the Volunteer Army to restore the Tsarist regime and establish

39 Ibid.
order and peace. Jews did not expect any favors from Denikin’s command; they just wanted the pogroms to stop. Ukrainian Jewry, as was discussed in the previous chapter, employed known scripts and tactics in dealing with the White Army as representatives of Russian tsars. Rabbi Men and his fellow community leaders did not know any other way to negotiate with the officers except to greet them in the most servile manner and offer bribes and gifts, while the officers had nobody to represent but themselves, and had no constructive plan to act on. The second paradox of the White–Jewish encounter was that despite this false identity, Denikin’s army continued to act as emissaries of the Russian Empire and employed imperial tactics in dealing with Jews—because they had no alternative and had never been exposed to alternate modes of communication with the Jewish community.

The Volunteer Army officers expressed retribution for their misfortunes and the loss of their “civilization” through the public punishment of Jews. The progression of the brutal retaliation compromised the cultural identities of the officers, who devolved into wild, vicious savages in front of their victims. The Jews were frightened and astonished by this transformation of the officers; however, the actions of the Cossacks did not fail Jewish expectations.

THE COSSACKS

The Volunteer Army lacked not only positive goals but soldiers as well. Most soldiers of the Russian army joined either the Red Army or the Ukrainian National Army, and the White movement commanders sought alliance with Cossacks. As a result, according to Kenez, “the great majority of the fighting men were Cossacks, who fought for their own purposes.” Cossacks lived in organized military communities, or hosts, that had enjoyed a variety of privileges under Tsarist rule, such as independent government and administration. Leaders of the Volunteer Army, after long and complicated negotiations, managed to strike an alliance with Cossacks, who agreed to join the Volunteer Army in Ukraine and became its major fighting force. The Cossack support of the Volunteer Army was always conditional, and the Cossacks tried to maintain their independence under the Whites.

Cossacks became the major perpetrators of genocidal violence, and they carried it out vigorously. The roots of Cossacks’ traditionally violent antisemitism remain obscured since Cossacks historically did not encounter Jews. Peter

40 Kenez, “Pogroms and White Ideology,” 297.
Kenez agrees with Richard Pipes that the “Jewish question” was not essential for the Cossacks.\textsuperscript{41} Looting was an important incentive for the Cossacks to participate in pogroms, and Pipes believes that it was the only one, but that does not explain the deliberate massacres, mass rapes, and torture of Jews, which still has to be thoroughly researched.\textsuperscript{42}

Indeed, the immediate and very powerful motivation for the Cossacks to join with the White Army were the pogroms themselves. Cossacks looked forward to the pogroms as a source of enrichment. Kenez calls looting and plundering a “driving force” behind the Cossacks’ participation in the campaign, and on occasion women came from the Cossack home communities to participate in the distribution of the acquired wealth and take it home in carts. Cossacks sometimes sent their loot home by the railcar, as reported by the Jewish witness Iliya Dvorkin in the town of Kremenchug, a port town on the Dnieper River downstream from Cherkassy.\textsuperscript{43} In July 1919 in Rovnopol, a Jewish agricultural colony in southern Ukraine in close proximity to Cossack lands, the Cossacks drove out all the cattle and horses and took all the hens and chickens; they took even the last four pounds of flour in a paper wrap from a widow with four children, and took all the paper, books, and quills from the local teacher. The Cossacks told the local Jews, who were trying to hide their daughters in the fields to protect them from rape, that they were taking the horses, because “you don’t need the horses to harvest the crops since we are going to slaughter all of you anyway.”\textsuperscript{44} Plundering and looting were not consistently discouraged by the Volunteer Army command, which could not organize a regular supply of food and ammunition and could not support the fighting men. Aside from the practical reasons for allowing if not legitimizing the plunder of Jewish (and on rare occasion, non-Jewish) homes, the officers lacked the power over the Cossacks to stop them. Like Petliura, who rode the wave of anti-Jewish violence, unable, if not unwilling, to stop the pogroms, the Volunteer Army command (that had a rationale to favor the pogroms) would not have been able to stop them, even if they tried.

Cossacks, like White officers, had a similar motive to fight against the Bolsheviks, because they had lost their special privileges as a result of the Revolution, and the Bolshevik policies against Cossacks were very...
straightforward: they announced their intention to dissolve the Cossack armies and abolish Cossack privileges and land ownership, and suppressed as counter-revolutionary any attempts to preserve the original units. Cossacks, known as excellent horsemen and soldiers, had served Russian tsars directly, maintained their status for ages, and resented Bolshevik attempts to reduce their freedoms. Cossack military communities were located for many centuries on the territory then known as the “wild field”—the steppes that stretched from the Northern Caucasus and South Urals through southern Russian and southern Ukrainian lands to the lower reaches of the Dnieper. After the October Revolution, Cossack leadership faced a deep crisis as some commanders had allied themselves with Bolsheviks, while others declared independence. As the result of intense negotiations, three Cossack armies from the Terek Host in Caucasus, from the Don River Host, and from the Kuban Host had allied themselves with the Volunteer Army. The Cossacks definitely shared the conviction that all Jews were Bolsheviks, but the Cossacks were not as unanimous and fervent foes of Bolshevism as the Whites were.

Cossacks did not experience identity crises the way Ukrainian nationalists or Whites did. The remarkably strong self-identity of the Cossacks was a stable characteristic of these military groups. The popular image of a Cossack proved extremely attractive to their “non-Cossack” Ukrainian neighbors and very recognizable to others on the territory of the former Russian Empire and beyond its borders, and remains ever present in contemporary culture across the world. Cossacks presented the image of freedom, and what is more important, the freedom of a common person—a rare commodity in the Russian Empire. The image of Cossacks as masters of the land, and ruthless but jovial fighters, is rooted deeply in Russian and Ukrainian folklore, songs, and literary works of famous writers, such as Gogol, Tolstoy, and Sholokhov.45 However, the popular image does not reflect all of the complexity of the Cossack identity, and significantly simplifies the picture. Although technically all the structures of Cossack life had been destroyed under the Soviets, the Cossacks maintained their identity in the Kuban, Don, Terek, and some other hosts throughout the Soviet years. On some occasions, Cossacks started riots and fomented disturbances even during the postwar Soviet period. During the Second World War, the Cossacks fought both on the side of the Soviet Union and on the side of the Third Reich under the command of some of the Cossack generals like the

45 E. M. Beletskaia, Kazachestvo v Narodnom Tvorchestve i v Russkoi Literature XIX veka: Monografii (Tver: Zolotai bukva, 2004); Leila Gadzhieva, “Mir Kazachestva v Izobrazhenii N. V. Gogolya, L. N. Tolstogo, M. A. Sholokhova” (Moscow: Moscow State University of Humanities, 2007).
infamous Krasnov and Shkuro, perpetrators of the most horrible pogroms, who emigrated to Europe after the Bolshevik victory. Some of the White officers joined Hitler as well. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cossack communities reorganized themselves and regained some of their privileges.

Bolsheviks wanted to win the Cossacks over from the very beginning of the Civil War, but it was not until the end of 1919, when the First Cavalry Army under the command of Semyon Budyonny prevailed over the Cossack regiments of the White Army that Cossacks began to change sides. Initially only a marginal number of poor Cossacks joined Budyonny, but as the Civil War went on, more Cossacks changed sides, but did not change their basic convictions. The Red Army command after 1919 had to deal with the growing controversy: on the one hand, the ongoing war on the Polish front and the continued resistance of the White Army and the bandits forced the Bolsheviks to recruit vigorously among enemy soldiers, while on the other, the number of pogroms perpetrated by the Red Army surged in 1920, when more and more former Ukrainian soldiers and bandits joined in, and increased even further as Cossacks began to defect to the Bolshevik side. The Cossacks who perpetrated pogroms all over Ukraine after 1919, as described by Babel, 46 most probably had perpetrated a number of pogroms while being a part of the Volunteer Army, and did not alter their practices. In May 1920, for example, a Red Army detachment terrorized Korsun—a significant shtetl in the Cherkassy region—for an entire week, and the Red Army pogrom followed the same script, complete with the public mass rape of Jewish women, just as they previously suffered at the hands of the Ukrainian army and the White Army. 47 However, the Bolsheviks proceeded to enforce an anti-pogrom policy, and did investigate and prosecute at least some pogrom instigators and perpetrators, as was done by the Revolutionary Military Council (Revvoensovet) of the First Cavalry Army after the pogroms in Priluki (Pryluky) and Vakhnovka, where the council decided to disband and reorganize some of the detachments that had perpetrated the pogroms. 48

Cossack identity was not based on their ethnicity but on their community. The Cossacks were not an ethnically homogeneous group of people, and they did not identify with either Russians or Ukrainians. Different Cossack hosts maintained different uniforms and a particular appearance, which clearly

46 Isaac Babel, Carol J. Avins, and Harry Taylor Willetts, 1920 Diary (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).
47 Miljakova, Kniga Pogromov, 358–62.
48 Ibid., 424–26.
distinguished the Cossacks from the “insurgents and bandits” who tried to imitate them. Because of their distinctive appearance and dress, it was easier for witnesses to identify Terek Cossacks, infamous among the Ukrainian Jews for especially brutal pogroms. Ukrainian Jews called them “Chechens,” because the latter were known as treacherous and merciless foes, reflecting the popular image of Chechen fighters, and because Terek Cossacks looked very much like members of other Caucasus nations. The Terek Cossacks, the White Army, and other Cossacks borrowed much of the traditional costume of Caucasus militants since Russia had been almost constantly engaged in a war in the Caucasus in the nineteenth century. Especially outstanding was the distinct Circassian coat—a long outer garment fitted at the waist with special small pockets to hold bullets. The Cossacks also borrowed the papakha—a tall fur hat—from their Circassian neighbors. Many White officers began to wear this hat too. The distinct appearance and garments made the Terek Cossacks and also their neighbors the Kuban Cossacks highly recognizable and universally dreaded by the Jewish population, and especially so the Wolf Division under the command of General Shkuro that perpetrated the most vicious pogroms. Shkuro’s career had advanced rapidly during the First World War, when he suggested organizing a special regiment of the most ruthless Cossacks, originally from the Kuban Host, to raid the enemy rear and disrupt communications and logistics, attacking the enemy from the back wherever possible. In less than four years, Shkuro had been promoted from the lowest rank to general, and his Wolf Division recruited the most wild and bloodthirsty Cossacks from different hosts. Shkuro reinforced this image by designing a special emblem, a wolf’s head on a black background, and by attaching a wolf’s tail onto his soldiers’ high fur hats. It was this alternating image of a Cossack as a ferocious fighter and a sadistic torturer that had become lodged deeply in Jewish popular culture.

In East European popular culture, the terms “Cossack” and “pogrom” are forever connected, as well as Cossacks being associated with the rape of Jewish women, and it is reasonable to assume, based on the pogrom evidence, that Cossacks also harbored a traditionally negative image of Jews as greedy and cunning enemies of Christian people. Jews and Cossacks had a very definite negative image of one another, even though most Cossack hosts had no prior systematic contact with the Jews: Terek and Kuban Cossacks that perpetrated the most horrible atrocities against Jews had no interaction with Jews at all. Until the First World War, when Cossacks serving in the Russian army participated in the expulsion of Jews from the front line, there was just one negative but extremely notable encounter between Jews and Cossacks. In 1648, Cossacks from the Zaporozhsky Host, led by Hetman Khmelnytsky, massacred
Ukrainian Jewry. Since then the Jewish community feared the Cossack as a violent enemy. Antisemitism was not crucial to Cossack identity as a bonding tool, but Cossacks proved nevertheless to be ardent antisi-

tically tortured Jews during pogroms, and in particular raped Jewish women in groups “for the show.”

The most disturbing conclusion that results from the study of pogrom evi-
dence is that for Cossacks, and for the officers as well, violent mass rape and tor-
ture of the Jews became a source of satisfaction and entertainment, which had nothing to do with sexual intercourse as such, but everything with the public celebration of power that is free of restrictions. Rabbi Men of Smela quoted a White general who referred to the popular concept also expressed by many others that Cossacks for several days (from three to five) were entitled to plunder and ravage a captured town. This was the observed rite whenever Cossacks entered small shtetls or larger towns, like nearby Korsun (a large railway junction) and Yablonevo (a small place of no industrial significance). Several days of “deserved” pogrom included not only looting, but actions described by Russian word gulyat’, meaning to carouse, to have fun, to enjoy oneself, to entertain oneself wildly. Pogroms, and particularly rape and torture, became the Cossacks’ visceral entertainment, a way of emotional release. Officers and Cossacks were not shy about the fact that they enjoyed pogroms, and articulated it openly. For example, a student of a girl gymnasium, A. Teitelbaum, quotes the White officer who participated in the pogrom of their apartment in Kiev, abused them, and bragged about his pogrom experience: “I am an intel-

ligent person [he belonged to the intelligentsia], but when I see Jewish blood I feel moral satisfaction. It’s nothing to kill a person [by shooting]; the true pleasure is to stab them.”

The continuous cycle of violent pogroms in shtetls demonstrates how the offenders became carried away in their search of the satisfaction of violent punishment of the Jews. Before August 1919, the Jewish community of Korsun was considered “lucky,” because Jews there got away with just bribes and other forms of extortion. Korsun even had a rather successful and well-armed self-defense unit. During the August advance of the White Army, the Cossacks paused

49 Shaul Stampfer, “What Actually Happened to the Jews of Ukraine in 1648?,” Jewish History 17, no. 2 (2003).
50 According to the witness, that is how Cossacks raped young girls. YIVO Archive, file 209, 18747–48.
51 Ibid., file 207, 18536–58.
52 Ibid., file 210, 19058.
53 Miljakova, Kniga Pogromov, 310.
to “have fun” for three days, which included “hundreds”\textsuperscript{54} of rapes and about twenty murders. The publicly exposed rapes were particularly humiliating: among the raped were two seventy-year-old women, one dying young girl in agony, and apparently a few new mothers. Another witness confirms the estimates and adds that “Chechens” were the worst—they murdered “in a wink.”\textsuperscript{55} The local population joined in with the plundering enthusiastically, following in the Cossacks’ footsteps, and removed even roofs from some houses. The Jewish community of Korsun could barely recover before the White Army retreated in December 1919, and the endless platoons and regiments passed through the shtetl that was dangerously close to the railway station. The Cossacks’ and officers’ entertainment became even worse. One woman lost her teenage son, and her sixteen-year-old daughter was brutally raped, became pregnant, and had to have an illegal abortion.\textsuperscript{56} The daughter of the wealthy merchant Pokras, while she was lying in bed in fever with pneumonia, was viciously raped by several groups several times and strangled to death. Assailants continued to torture and rape her dead body. Fifteen-year-old Sigalov had to watch her parents slashed with sabers, and then she was raped many times in front of her dying parents, and only after that her parents were murdered, while she was left to suffer.\textsuperscript{57} About two hundred Jewish women were locked in the local brewery on the riverbank and raped continuously. Some young women escaped by jumping into the river.

The Korsun pogroms, typical of the White Army pogroms, clearly demonstrate that officers and Cossacks were emotionally involved in the humiliation of and violence against Jews. Gang rape of Jewish women became a demonstrative sadistic show in which assailants participated as both perpetrators and the audience. Mass rape of Jewish women combined with elaborate torture provoked in the pogrom perpetrators an ever-growing hunger for greater punishment, because the one that Jews had survived was never enough. Pogromschiki constantly searched for ways to escalate the humiliation and disgrace they inflicted, aiming to surpass previous acts of violence. There were no more moral inhibitions, no restraints, no limitations: terrible acts of violence gyrated out of proportion, provoked by acts of violence already committed, and created a self-propelling vicious cycle. This vortex of violence enveloped the Jewish community of Ukraine and damaged its life often beyond repair.

\textsuperscript{54} YIVO Archive, file 207, 18538.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., file 207, 18539.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., file 207, 18545.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., file 207, 18547–49.