

Reports and reviews

Milena LENDEROVÁ, et al., *Ženy s kufříkem a nadějí. Porodní báby a asistentky v českých zemích od poloviny 19. do poloviny 20. století*, Praha 2019, 488 pp. ISBN 978-80-246-4475-2.

The team of authors headed by the historian Milena Lenderová presents its third literary enterprise, following on from the previous publications *She Safely Gave Birth to a Girl... Birth Journals of Four Midwives from the 19th Century* (2017) and *Midwife? Assistant? Birth Journals from 1898–1954* (2018), thereby concluding the three-year project: *Midwives: the Professionalisation, Institutionalisation and Performance of the First Female Qualified Occupation over the Course of Two Centuries, 1804–1948*, which was supported by the Czech Science Foundation. The culmination of this three-year academic work is an estimable achievement.

The publication *Women with a Briefcase and Hope* is divided into six main thematic areas, which present detailed information to the reader about the development of the profession of midwifery from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century. The first part is devoted to the legislation and institutionalisation in the period from the Theresian reforms up to the establishment of the imperial-royal school of midwifery. In this section, Milena Lenderová and Martina Halířová focus not only on the legislative framework throughout the course of the entire observed period, but also present the system of education of midwives within the broader context. The following chapter,

written by Hana Stoklasová and Zuzana Pavelková Čevelová, entitled *Midwives and the Church*, concentrates on issues of Christening, emergency Christening in the case that the infant's life is in danger, and the interaction between the midwife and the cleric. The relationship between doctors and midwives is outlined by Vladan Hanulík, who draws attention not only to the pitfalls of obstetric and post-natal care during that period, but also accentuates the transformation of the relationship between midwives or assistants and doctors.

In my view, the core section of this publication is Milena Lenderová's attempt to present a collective portrait based on an extensive study of the turning points in the lives of the midwives in question, and an analysis of the preserved journals they kept. An interesting feature is the analysis of the economic and family background of these women, on the basis of which there is no other option than to conclude that the profession of midwifery was in the great majority of cases a calling, and far from a lucrative career. In addition, in the online version the authors of the monograph have provided access to their database, containing basic details about the lives and records of the education of the midwives in question (see <URL:<http://uhv.upce.cz/data/File/>

Porodni_baby/porodni-baby-1850--1950.pdf>), which is a further interesting source of information for readers.

With regard to the fact that a midwife was more than merely a person who assisted the mother in childbirth, the team of authors have not neglected to focus also on the practices that were often requested by pregnant women (and their partners) in situations when the child was unwanted. The chapter by Martina Halířová and Jana Stráníková therefore deals with backstreet abortionists, quacks and frauds. These women are studied not only with reference to their transgressions of the then valid legal norms, but are also presented as helpers in the case of unwanted conception. However, the decriminalisation of abortion remained a long way away, and by providing their “help” the women involved found themselves beyond the limits of the law.

The road to self-confidence and recognition within the social order then figuratively concludes the path from midwife to obstetric assistant and from here to the profession of nurse. In the examples of the functioning of associations, international congresses and the publication of professional periodicals, Milena Lenderová presents this progressive professionalisation and institutionalisation, the beginnings of which are outlined in the introductory chapters of this publication.

The final section, in the view of the authors is the *Essential Concluding Chapter*, which is a valuable contribution introducing the theme of midwives in overseas historiography, drawing attention to the

insufficient attention this subject has received in the Czech lands. The catalogue of sources and methodical consideration in the conclusion complete this almost 500 page monograph, dealing with a hitherto neglected theme. Readers who prefer the conventional schema of academic publications will perhaps be disappointed by the absence of a “classical” final summation. Additionally, overseas scholars may feel the lack of a more comprehensive foreign language summary, in which they could familiarise themselves in greater detail with the presented results of the team of authors.

The extensive range of sources enabled the authors to utilise the full potential of the theme and trace all the important aspects of the selected subject matter. Their theoretical anchoring is exhaustive in many respects, and will undoubtedly be of benefit not only for those with an interest in history. From raw demographic and on first impression only statistical data they have succeeded in reconstructing individual personal and professional milestones, which they then presented in a qualitatively conceived analysis. On the basis of their research, we have access to the fates of women who in the overwhelming majority of cases merited greater recognition than they received from the society of the day. A pleasant addition to the work is the illustrations and photographs from the time, which frequently explode contemporary myths concerning the form of the midwife and birth in domestic conditions.

Although the figure of the midwife was viewed as a part of a community, who was present at the biological and social birth of a person, the actual route from neighbourly help to the position of professional obstetric assistant was long and arduous. The collective of authors has genuinely succeeded in capturing this exceptional genesis

in the full breadth of the subject. The publication *Women with a Briefcase and Hope* indisputably ranks among the essential works relating to the history of women, the history of healthcare and the professionalisation of society.

Šárka Nekvapil Jirásková

Šárka Caitlín RÁBOVÁ, *Kulturní reflexe tuberkulózy v Českých zemích 1800–1945*, Praha 2018, 245 pp. ISBN 978-0-200-774-0.

The book of Šárka Caitlín Rábová brings a very innovative and comprehensive view of the illness of tuberculosis, which was until today addressed in Czech historiography very marginally. In her work tuberculosis represents an imaginary phenomenon, which concerned the whole society. The analysis involves new, non-traditional sources, such as theater plays, which the author chooses for the description of popularization of scientific knowledge.

In 2018, the diploma thesis was already awarded by the Academia Award, specifically in the Student Competition category of the Academia Publishing House. Because the author placed first, she was given the right to publish a work in the form of a scientific monograph. The work was also awarded the Zdeněk Horský Prize in 2017, for the best master's, rigorous and doctoral thesis on the history of science, technology, and education from 2016–2017.

The first chapter *Historical development of scientific knowledge about tuberculosis* introduces the development of scientific

discoveries, methods of treatment, and fading of the former causes and origins of the disease using medical journals and periodicals. Particular attention is paid to the discovery of the bacillus by Robert Koch, the problem of diagnosing the disease, and frequent confusion for other lung diseases, as well as the later development and use of tuberculin. There are also introduced the basic principles of practiced hygienic – dietetic treatment, including preventive measures.

The following chapter develops the penetration of scientific knowledge in the Czech environment. A very detailed authors' presentation of all the medical considerations about the properties of the bacillus, the possibilities of destruction, and the most endangered professions where the infection was likely to occur. It also deals with the links between tuberculosis and alcoholism and, in particular, the belief that education is the most important mean of struggle and the focus of its attention on the future generation in particular. The popularization discourse

and education is represented mainly by the activity of Masaryk Tuberculosis League and dispensaries. Author explains the apathy of society towards education and public lectures. Attention is also paid to specific measures and procedures in the process of company sanitation.

The third chapter deals with the reflection of tuberculosis in Czech literature. Here the author presents very interesting and fundamental findings. In particular, there are differences between Czech and foreign literature, in which, the tuberculosis is seen as the ideal of a romantic individual, the disease of bohemians, intellectuals, and artists. They are then characterized by a thin, rickety figure, bulging eyes, and a sad look on their faces. On the contrary, in the Czech lands, the disease represents low social origin, poverty, and dirt. Here, the author illustrates the stereotype of a person suffering from tuberculosis from the perspective of the majority of society. The next part analyzes Jiří Wolker's poems, which represent the feelings of a person afflicted with tuberculosis and his stay in the sanatorium, followed by analyses of two theater plays intended as educational tool not only for children but also for their parents.

The next chapter is called Tuberculosis and the class question. It deals with care designed especially for the poor class associated with tuberculosis. Author describes the activity of dispensaries, their workers coming to the homes of families affected by diseases, but also their medical and diagnostic background. Furthermore, the

emergence and development of the Masaryk League against tuberculosis is described, as well as its activity in the form of publishing manuals, organizing lectures, or publishing periodicals. The issue of treatment financing, which was very demanding, is also explained very clearly. In the second part of the chapter, attention is paid to the activities of health workers who came to the homes of the sick, who decided to treat their homes in limited financial possibilities. Here, the author compares the Czech environment and practice in the United States very well.

The fifth chapter then completes the picture of the phenomenon of tuberculosis through the description of the everyday life of patients in sanatoriums. The first example is the case of Jiří Wolker, which is described thanks to the analysis of his correspondence with his family. Another is the case of František Smetana and his impressions. Both gentlemen have a sanatorium experience. The third case is reconstructed based on the book of Thomas Mann, which bears the description of the Magical Hill. However, Thomas Mann was not affected by the disease, but his experience with tuberculosis is obtained through his sick wife, who was also treated in the sanatorium. The author reveals the inner feelings and impressions of the patients, their daily woes.

The last sixth chapter illustrates the picture of everyday life by completing the Hamza Children's Sanatorium in Luže. Everyday life in sanatoriums is presented; the course of the normal day from morning to sleep, including diet, medical examinations,

and methods used for therapy, as well as leisure activities.

The book of Šárka Caitlín Rábová is an original view of the issue and a very successful attempt to portray tuberculosis not only as a disease that posed a threat to society as a whole but the world and culture around it. The diversity of the primary source base can be described as fascinating. Not only has the author successfully dealt with the literature, scientific journal, she also deals with ego-documents, especially correspondence and memoirs.

Most of all, I appreciate the work with fiction literature, namely fairy tales, theatrical plays, and poems. The author uses the paraphrases and quotations from particular works for a purpose – to represent the meanings and ideas of individual works. This chapter can be considered the most interesting and beneficial. At the same time,

I would like to welcome a deeper analysis of the meaning of the individual stories (p. 81, 84), their purpose, and the reasons for which the author created them, as the author performs in theater plays. Why has the author placed particular emphasis here on creating a construct of a person suffering from tuberculosis? The note should only be a suggestion for a possible reflection in the future, certainly not a reproach. Last but not least, the book adds to its qualities the ease with which the author writes. Her interpretation style is very readable, engaging. In particular, because the author does not use professional terms or foreign language, which does not detract from the scientific work. Šárka Caitlín Rábová has created a truly exceptional and admirable monograph that is very difficult to criticize.

Barbora Rambousková

Václav GRUBHOFFER, *Zdánlivá smrt: Noční můra osvícenské Evropy*, Polička 2018, 318 pp, ISBN 978-80-906-8323-5.

Václav Grubhoffer studied Cultural History and Italian language at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, and in 2013 was awarded the title of Doctor of Philosophy in the subject of Czech History. As an academic he focuses on the lifestyle of the aristocracy of the 18th – 20th century, the history of the House of Schwarzenberg, and the cultural history of death and medicine.

In 2013 he published his dissertation entitled *Beneath the Veil of Death*, for which

he won the prestigious Zdeněk Horský Prize, which is awarded every year for the best qualification thesis in the field of science, technology and education. The work in question deals primarily with the theme of illness, death and the funeral customs of the House of Schwarzenberg between the years of 1732 and 1914. In this work, Václav Grubhoffer encountered the interesting phenomenon of “seeming death” and the immense fear of being buried alive that continued to plague society in the 19th

century, which became the central theme of his subsequent book *Seeming Death*. For a long period in history, the Four Last Things of Man were exclusively a religious and spiritual matter; it was the task of the priest to visit the bed of the dying patient and give the last rites. Václav Grubhoffer follows on from the hypothesis of Roy Porter, who maintains that the doctor became part of the process of dying in the 18th century, when the issue of the body, its ailing and dying came to the centre of attention of Enlightenment society, based on the principles of rationality and scientific knowledge. However, in reality it transpired that it was precisely the endeavour to avert the possibility of seeming death that stoked fears of the spectre of premature burial among the ranks of the lay public.

In the introduction to the book, the author deals with the question of when the body is actually dead, or when the moment of death occurs. Current medicine enables us to determine the time of death relatively precisely, but in the early Modern Era society had to rely upon subjective diagnostic methods which often failed, and the live burial of the seemingly dead was therefore not an isolated phenomenon. The death of a person was most often verified by tickling the nostrils with a feather, straw, wool, or by placing a candle or mirror on the nose of the deceased, although other methods also appeared such as shaking, beating the chest or pouring various fluids down the patient's throat. The aim was to identify any movement, and for this reason a vessel containing water was sometimes placed on

the chest. More "modern" techniques of verification included pricking the palms or soles of the feet with a needle, incisions into the shoulder blades, shanks or arms. The paradigm of the time viewed death as a long-term process which needed to be sufficiently verified, and not a mere moment in which the soul became separated from the physical body.

Fears of premature burial on the part of medical professionals culminated in an effort to establish some form of system of measures intended to prevent the occurrence of such incidents. A whole range of eminent doctors made statements on the theme of seeming death, including the court doctor of Empress Maria Theresa, Gerhard van Swieten, or the founder of the Vienna School of Medicine and pioneer of the teaching of medicine at the patient's bedside, Anton de Häen. However, it was Johan Peter Frank who became the true pioneer of the medicalisation of death, when in 1788 he produced his work *A Complete System of Medical Policy*, in which he identified the supervision of burial as one of the chief goals of medical policy. Already in the year 1755 a waiting period of 48 hours had been stipulated as necessary before the burial of the deceased, and subsequently houses of the dead or charnel houses were established for the eventuality that patients regained consciousness. Every death had to be confirmed by a coroner, in which this post was most often held by a physician. This official determined whether death had occurred naturally or by violence, and in the case of seeming death had to perform

resuscitation techniques. Therefore, according to Grubhoffer, at the end of the 18th century two persons had to be present at the bedside of the patient – a doctor, who described the pathology and pronounced the patient dead, and a physician, who officially confirmed the death. During the course of the 19th century, the roles of doctor and physician were then combined in the figure of the doctor of medicine.¹

The construction of the first wooden charnel houses was ordered as early as in 1771. At that time, however, the regulation was motivated by fear of bodily vapours, which according to the miasma theory of the day could spread dangerous diseases. In reality, the building of charnel houses on a mass scale did not take place until several years later, and for this reason the author is of the opinion that their spread was initiated rather out of fear of premature burial than poisonous vapours. With regard to the fact that charnel houses were intended to serve as a prevention against seeming death, their form was also adapted to this purpose: each charnel house was to be equipped with heating, and bars had to be placed on the windows to protect the dead from thieves. An ingenious measure was the “alarm” device, which was most often composed of a string attached to a bell, the other end of which was held in the hand of the deceased. The dead had to be laid out in open coffins with their faces uncovered and their limbs

placed freely, so that they could leave without problems in the case that they awoke.

The author did not confine his study only to the academic construct of seeming death, and asked the no less important question as to how this phenomenon was viewed by the lay public. He decided to seek the answer in the pages of the literary writing of the time, which we can view to a certain extent as a reflection of the collective memory, or as the case may be a stereotyping of the phenomenon under investigation. In doing so the author succeeded in establishing a clear distinction between the narratives of the 18th and 19th centuries. In the 18th century the issue of seeming death was linked exclusively with the fairer sex. We can search for the roots of this female dominance in the medical science of the time, which attributed incomplete death primarily to hysteria. Women were considered to be predisposed to this condition by their sexual organs and menstrual cycle, which influenced them not only physically, but above all psychologically. The literary construction distinguishes between several types of female seeming death: the woman buried by her husband, who is subsequently rescued from the grave by her lover; the revived woman who is considered a mere phantom by her husband; and the woman who awakens when a thief tries to rob her. During the course of the 19th century the original narrative of the female victim begins to change, and is replaced by a male hero who suddenly awakens but is unable to move, and describes his sensory and auditory perceptions, which in fact

1 Václav GRUBHOFFER, *Zdánlivá smrt. Noční můra osvěcenské Evropy*, Polička 2018, p. 132.

relate to the preparation or course of his own funeral. The narration of these tales is newly converted into this form.²

In the conclusion of the book, the author deals with the beginnings of first aid, which in the case of seeming death represented an important watershed: people no longer had to wait passively to see whether the deceased reawakened, but were expected to provide active help in reviving the patient. A leading figure in the field of first aid in the Czech lands was Adalbert Vincenz Zarda, who established the first emergency rescue institute of its time, not only in the Czech lands but in the whole of Central Europe. The provision of first aid now became a civic obligation, which indeed in selected cases was motivated by a financial remuneration of 25 guildens. All of these measures contributed to the gradual marginalisation of seeming death, and with it also the fear of premature burial. Whereas previously people had stated in their last will and testaments that they did not wish to be dissected, and wished to prolong the time before their burial or have their death verified e.g. by means of scarification, in the second half of the 19th century this nightmare of the Enlightenment

age gradually began to disappear, and the funeral became a “mere” rite of passage.

In his work, Václav Grubhoffer decided to focus on the theme of seeming death, which had not previously been reflected upon in Czech historiography. His took as his methodological starting point traditional works from the field of the history of death by the French historians Michel Vovelle³ and Philipp Ariès.⁴ I consider his use of works of Italian provenance, which are lesser known to Czech historians and readers, to represent a valuable contribution. Grubhoffer has demonstrated that a quality academic work may be founded also upon a study of less traditional source documents such as creative literature and fiction. The finesse and originality of their processing represents a challenge for further historians focusing on the field of the cultural and social history of the body and medicine. The author’s stylistic and narrative skills furthermore make this book accessible to a broader readership, and contribute to the popularisation of contemporary historiographical themes and trends.

Šárka Caitlín Rábová

2 Edgar Allan POE, *The Premature Burial and other stories*, Prague 1970; from the Czech environment e.g. ANONYMUS, *Pohřbený nedo-mřelec*, *Vlastenecký zvěstovatel* 24, 1822, pp. 191–192; Karel SABINA, *Hrobník*, Praha 1918; Jan NERUDA, *Doktor Kazisvět*, in: *Povídky malostranské*, Praha 1878; Ignát HERRMANN, *O třech nebožtících a jiné historky nedělní*, Praha 1931.

3 Michel VOVELLE, *La Morte et l'Occident. De 1300 à nos jours*, Paris 1983.

4 Philippe ARIÈS, *L'homme devant la mort*, Paris 1977.

Filip HERZA, *Imaginace jinakosti: Pražské přehlídky lidských kuriozit v 19. a 20. století*, Praha 2020, 256 pp. ISBN: 978-80-7649-001-7.

Drawing on curiosity about science, particularly evolution, and interest in exotic cultures as exploration of the world increased, the historical freak show was a public ritual based on spectacle and collective looking. To enhance public curiosity and interest, freak shows used elaborate promotion schemes and a number of presentation strategies that crafted the freak's public identity through imagery and symbols. According to Foucault's classification, we could designate the freak show as a "heterotopia of deviation" in which individuals are found whose behavior deviates from the cultural norm. They are used to mirror the socially conventional norms and establish a world for a constant gaze and differentiation. In recent years, the growing field of studies called for the implementation of this approach within the field of Czech historiography.

In his innovative analysis, Filip Herza presents a critical interpretation of one of the key problems, reflecting the particular interesting theme of body history. The notion of monstrosity, which was in the past used in the context of freak shows for the construction of normativity, has so far attracted only marginal attention in the context of Czech historiography (Lucie Storchová and Kateřina Kolařová are honorable exceptions). For Herza, monstrosity, freakshow and otherness were a tool used for establishing physiological and cultural boundaries, forming the ideological concept of idealized

bourgeoise corporality of a modernizing society.

Methodologically Herza follows the concept of discursive analysis. The semiotic interpretation of different texts is logically focused primarily on an extensive search within the periodicals and discursively constitutive elements of culture from the field of scientific and popular medicine, social hygiene, eugenics, and pedagogy. In his interpretative approach author declares affiliation to the poststructuralist conception of gender identities, culturally oriented disability studies, and the concept of intersectionality. Following the systematization of research on the human body, arising from cultural anthropology (N. Scheper Hughes - M. M. Lock), the author takes into account in his interpretative actions especially the issues of constitution and legitimacy of the so-called political and symbolic body.

The author's narrative strategy uses the process of the narrative from the characteristics of broader thought concepts of the collective body of the Czech nation, both in the sense of the imaginary collective body and the projection of national identities into individual bodies. At the same time, the author considers the modernist emphasis on the normative nature of the discursive corpus of texts, reflecting and establishing the concept of a healthy and strong body, as a key starting point for the successful

expansion of national goals of the Czech ethnic group in a broader period.

According to the author's interpretation, the normative corporeality developed mainly in negatively conceptualized notions, derived from the relations to physiological abnormalities. Although, as Filip Herza demonstrates, a positively defined concept of the "Czech body" was also introduced within the activities of anthropometric experiments. In the last third of the 19th century, scientific constructs of bodies became a source of expanding interest in the phenomenon of representations of human abnormalities, or different human races. Finally, in the period of interwar Czechoslovakia, and partly even before the First World War, the phenomenon of representation of otherness was so widespread that semiotic signs of difference were used in debates over the specifics of national nature and gendered identities. The author uses the different examples of creation normative concept of the Czech collective body in contrast towards "wild" and "deviated" bodies, representing the other cultures a "species". Freak shows were in this sense used as a system that maintains hierarchies of cultural power that were later embodied in minds, bodies, and the discursive corpus of Czech national ideology.

Filip Herza's text is extremely rich in ideas and innovative in the diversity of the presented conclusions. Already in the very introduction, in which the author summarizes the diversity of views on the notions of the freak show, he demonstrates his ability

to abstract key ideas from the presented works and comprehensively classify them into a logically arranged system that does not reflect only the chronology of research, as is sometimes customary, but rather systematically provides for the reader a unique insight into the vast field of current approaches to body history, disability studies, post-colonial historiography and gender studies. By all means, we can also consider Filip Herza's approach to the interpretation of visual sources to be a positive asset of the monograph. The iconological analysis was in the past constantly overlooked in the Czech historiographical tradition and especially the issue of monstrosity/normativity requires vast interpretation of sources, which the author sufficiently provides.

Each chapter could in the future establish an inspiration for the further development of debates reflecting the constitution of modern forms of corporeality and their influence on contemporary society. The text brings within an exceptional shift in historiographical research in many dimensions. It constitutes a new perspective on the formation of nationality and modern forms of identities, based on the performances of individual and collective forms of corporeality, constitution, and performance of gender and semiotic signs, which later defined broader cultural values. Filip Herza introduced a unique text full of inspirational thoughts.

Vladan Hanulík

Irina ASTASHKEVICH, *Gendered Violence: Jewish Women in the Pogroms of 1917 to 1921*, Boston, Academic Studies Press 2018, 147 s., ISBN 978-1-61811-999-5.

Irina Astashkevich is a visiting researcher at the Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry at Brandeis University, Massachusetts, which specialises in modern European Jewish history. There, she also defended her dissertation entitled *Pogroms in Ukraine 1917–1920: An Alternative Universe*. Her professional experience includes working in archives in Russia, Lithuania and the USA, and in Jewish philanthropic organizations. In the peer-reviewed book, the author draws not only on a lot of archival records but also on published primary sources and secondary literature.

The book is part of the editorial collection *Jews of Russia & Eastern Europe and Their Legacy*¹ where studies regarding the Russian or more precisely Eastern European issues of the Jewish minority are published. The

scope of topics of this editorial collection is really wide. There are not only contributions to Jewish history, literature, philosophy, and cultural anthropology but also music and fine arts.

Researchers have addressed the issue of pogroms in Ukraine during the Russian Civil War in a large number of professional studies.² However, Irina Astashkevich defines herself against current historiography. So far, according to her conclusions, it has lacked crucial elements. The pogroms in Ukraine in 1917–1921 have been either included in the historiography of the pogrom waves of 1881–1882, the Kishinev pogrom of 1903, or perceived as the background of the Russian Civil War and the First World War. She states that, in their studies, scientists have never taken into consideration gender-based violence and, above all, rape as a separate research topic. The reviewed book is the first to endeavour to assess the traumatic impact of gender-based violence and, in particular, rape on Jewish women and men. The author's research is based on the studies of the pogroms that took place in

1 For example, Gennady ESTRAIKH, *Transatlantic Russian Jewishness: Ideological Voyages of the Yiddish Daily Forverts in the First Half of the Twentieth Century*, Boston 2020; Kiril FEFERMAN "If we had wings we would fly to you": *A Soviet Jewish Family Faces Destruction, 1941–42*, Boston 2020; Luba JURGENSON, *Where There Is Danger*, Boston 2019; Michael BEIZER – Alice NAKHIMOVSKY (eds.), *Daughter of the Shtetl: The Memoirs of Doba-Mera Medvedeva*, Boston 2019; Maxim D. SHRAYER (ed.), *Voices of Jewish-Russian Literature: An Anthology*, Boston 2018; Vladimir KHAZAN, "A Double Burden, a Double Cross": *Andrei Sobol as a Russian-Jewish Writer*, Boston 2017; Maxim D. SHRAYER, *With or Without You: The Prospect for Jews in Today's Russia*, Boston 2017.

2 For example, John KLIER – Shlomo LAMBROZA, *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, Cambridge 1992; Jonathan L. DEKEL-CHEN (ed.), *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History*, Bloomington 2011; Henry ABRAMSON, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917–1920*, Cambridge 1999.

the territory of today's Ukraine. The vast majority of the sources from which the author derives come from the archival collection of Elias Tcherikower (1881–1943)³ who witnessed pogroms and, together with his collaborators, gathered, mainly in the form of interviews with victims, evidence about them. The records are located at the YIVO Institute of Jewish Research in New York.

The monograph consists of six main chapters, a thank you chapter, an introduction, and a conclusion. In the introduction, the author states that more than a thousand pogroms, which occurred in about five hundred localities and, in total, claimed tens or even hundreds of thousands of Jewish victims, constitute genocide. This proposition is certainly crucial as it gives the research into pogroms in Ukraine a new dimension, i.e. the form of the study of genocidal practices. It attributes to the pogroms of the Russian Civil War that occurred in the territory of today's Ukraine an infamous primacy: for the first time in the 20th century, the practices of genocidal rape were used.

Astashkevich aims to provide information about the strategic use of rape during the pogroms that happened in Ukraine during the Russian Civil War and about the effects of mass rape on Russian Jewry during the 20th and 21st centuries. For this purpose, she examines the narratives of the survived

victims which she subjects to a thorough analysis. In the book, rape is approached as a universal weapon of genocide, the aim of which is to cause social death. The author identifies with the philosopher Claudia Card,⁴ who argues that the goal of bringing social death not only to the individual but to the whole community is a crucial part of genocide. According to their conclusions, the purpose of genocide is to cause social death to both physically murdered and survived victims.

In the book, mass rape is considered to be, during the genocide, a key weapon aimed against the Jews in Ukraine. The rape took place in public in order to cause the greatest possible social and psychological traumas. Thus, the author takes into account not only the physical suffering that the act of rape represents but also humiliation and the feeling of shame. As part of her research, Astashkevich distinguishes between two genocidal waves of pogroms – in the first and second half of 1919. Whereas Petliura's army is to blame for the first wave, General Denikin's White Army has the second wave on its conscience. While the anti-Jewish violence of the first half of 1919 broke out throughout Ukraine, the pogroms of the second half of 1919, backed by the White Army, occurred in eastern and central Ukraine. The author finds the pogroms committed by the White Army to be more brutal with a higher number of victims.

3 YIVO Archive, Elias Tcherikower Archive 1903–1963, RG 80–89 (Mk 470).

4 Claudia CARD, *Genocide and Social Death*, *Hypatia* 18, 2003, no. 1, pp. 63–79.

The use of theoretical concepts is essential for the author's research. For Astashkevich, the application of the concept of "strategic rape", authored by Susan Brownmiller⁵, is pivotal. Brownmiller considers mass rape to be a purposefully and strategically involved war weapon. Beverly Allen's⁶ theory of "genocidal rape" is important to Astashkevich as well. She uses Edward P. Thompson's⁷ concept of "moral economics", followed by William W. Hagen's⁸ research, too. For the purpose of analysis, she also exploits many other theoretical concepts the authors of which are not only historians.⁹

As the name suggests, the first chapter, *Chaos in Ukraine: Defining the Context of Anti-Jewish Violence*, is devoted to an insight into the confused situation which prevailed in Ukraine from the beginning of World War I until the proclamation of the Ukrainian

Soviet Socialist Republic. At this point, the author focuses on Jewish policy and the high expectations of the Jewish community associated with the proclamation of the independent Ukrainian People's Republic. For the Ukrainian Jews, independence meant an unprecedented easing of restrictions. By means of the Ministry of Jewish Affairs, the Jews were represented in the government. The year 1918 seemed to have been a victorious moment for the Jews; but, retrospectively, we can only state that it was a prelude to the indescribable suffering of the Jewish population in Ukraine. As early as the first half of the following year brought a wave of brutal violence.

The second chapter *Carnival of Violence: Development of the Pogrom Script* tells of the year 1919 when violence against the Jews became a common practice and proceeded according to a fixed scenario. The atmosphere of a carnival played a key role in the committed violence. It not only turned the Jews into victims without dignity but also rid the perpetrators of moral restraints. According to the author, the loss of any scruples accompanies an intimate genocide – the genocide perpetrated by people close to the victims.¹⁰

Astashkevich observes a change in the nature of pogroms. She perceives pogroms from the period 1917–1918 as the initial phase of genocidal violence. The aim of the pogroms of 1917–1918 was primarily to

5 Susan BROWNMILLER, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*, New York 1975.

6 Beverly ALLEN, *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia*, Minneapolis 1996.

7 Edward P. THOMPSON, *The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century*, *Past & Present* 50, 1971, no. 1, pp. 76–136.

8 Cf. William W. HAGEN, *Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1914–1920*, New York 2018; William W. HAGEN, *The Moral Economy of Popular Violence: The Pogrom in L'wow, November 1918*, in: Robert Blobaum (ed.), *Anti-Semitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland*, Ithaca 2005, pp. 124–157.

9 For example, Michel FOUCAULT, *Dohlížet a trestat: kniha o zrodu vězení*, Praha 2000. Laura MULVEY, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, New York 1989. Marita STURKEN – Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, Oxford 2003.

10 Cf. Jeffrey S. KOPSTEIN and Jason WITTENBERG, *Intimate Violence: Anti-Jewish Pogroms on the Eve of the Holocaust*, Ithaca 2018.

loot Jewish property. Compared to 1919, the number of victims was low and gender-based violence was rather marginal. The author points out that the nature of the pogroms resembled the acts of violence which occurred in 1881–1883. The initial phase of the violence was interrupted by the establishment of a German protectorate, and until the directorate's period, civil unrest was suppressed militarily. The situation changed rapidly when German and Austro-Hungarian troops were withdrawn. The acts of violence of the first half of 1919 had no limits. The author describes the theatrical or even carnival mood accompanying the violence.¹¹ The pogroms took place according to a ritualised scenario, the purpose of which, according to the author, was to dehumanise the victims. Using the example of the events in the village of Rossava, the public humiliation and torture of Jewish men, who were, among other things, forced to eat soil, are described. The purpose of doing so was to deprive men of respect and thus undermine the hierarchy of society and its traditional organization. As a result, the gender structure was also shattered, namely by the de-masculinisation of the male population.

A comparison of the pogroms performed by Petliura's soldiers and the White Guard makes part of the chapter. The pogroms carried out by both Petliura's and Denikin's armies included looting, murdering, public rape, demonstrative torture, and humiliation

of the Jews; the only difference was that the White Guard pogroms were even more brutal and claimed more casualties.

The third chapter called *The Perfect Weapon: Mass Rape as Public Spectacle* clarifies the goals of violence and rape during the Russian Civil War in Ukraine. The aim of the pogroms was "not only" to liquidate the Jewish part of the population physically, but also to undermine the essence of Jewish existence and destroy values sacred to the Jews. The author states that although rape was part of anti-Jewish violence throughout history, it did not form a significant part of the pogroms between 1917 and 1918. However, the year 1919 brought a high increase in rape practised during pogroms.

The trauma, experienced not only by raped women but also by men who were forced to watch the rape, did not allow them to speak. Although it is very difficult to express the exact number of raped women, there is no doubt that rape became a common part of pogroms in Ukraine. The main purpose of the genocidal rape was to demonstrate the superiority of rapists and to dishonour both Jewish women and men. This ignominy is passed down from generation to generation and therefore, it has fatal consequences.

In the fourth chapter, named *Inventing Vengeance: Who and Why Punished the Jews*, the author explains the motivations of rapists. The purpose of rape is to demonstrate dominance.¹² By making rape in public, not

11 Cf. footnote n. 8.

12 Cf. Claudia CARD, *Rape as a Weapon of War*, *Hypatia* 11, 1996, no. 4, pp. 5–18.

only was expressed the dominance over the raped victims but also over those who looked on. It is necessary to mention the author's argument that it is just public nature that turns rape into a genocidal practice, as it causes trauma to the whole community.

Mass rape took place according to the same scenario. However, the message communicated during this violent act was different. The perpetrators of violence in the first half of the year were local soldiers of Petliura's army and associated local armed groups. The structure of Petliura's army consisted of former soldiers, men without a clear professional orientation, and landless people who had in common only that they were on the road all the time. This diverse group of uprooted people lacked a common goal and conviction. It was the rape of Jewish women that was the cementing element. It served as a means of creating a common identity. According to Astashkevich, the fact that Petliura's soldiers considered themselves Cossacks was not enough to create a common identity. They gained a shared identity through raping.¹³ While Petliura's army tried to make its identity by the rape, the Whites used this practice to strengthen their already existing identity. The rape of Jewish women also became a form of revenge for the failures experienced by the White Guard.

Subsequently, the author turns to the question, how the attitude of the Jews to

the Petliurians and the Whites differed. The Jews perceived the former as thieves and criminals who aroused fear in them, but not respect. They were often neighbours, so the Jews knew them. Whereas the latter, in the eyes of the Jewish population, embodied the authority of the monarchy, which brought them much suffering, but also, at least, some certainty, order, and the rule of a firm hand. Some scope is devoted to the White Guard's perception of the Jews, too. The author states that the Whites considered all the Jews, without exception, to be the Bolsheviks, the embodiment of hostility; which implies that brutality and rape were fundamentally influenced by the tendency to mix the Jews with the Bolsheviks. Anti-Semitism became the most important cementing element of the White Guard.

While in the previous chapter the author revealed the motivations of the perpetrators of the pogroms, the fifth chapter *Describing the Indescribable: Narratives of Gendered Violence* deals with the question of how brutality and violence affected the lives of the survived Ukrainian Jews and what their reaction was. Raped Jewish women suffered physically both during the rape itself and later, in consequence of their injuries or the epidemic spread of venereal diseases. However, it is also indisputable that Jewish women, as well as men, suffered devastating psychological trauma. As mentioned above, men were forced to watch the rape, which brought them bad traumatic memories. In this chapter, the author evaluates the impact of rape on the Jewish community. So as to

13 Cf. Louis du TOIT, *Philosophical Investigation of Rape: The Making and Unmaking of the Feminine Self*, New York 2009.

understand the traumatic experience, she analyses the narratives of the survivors. Public genocidal rape was not only intended to deprive women of their honour, but also to humiliate and degrade men unable to protect their women, and thus, to cause their de-masculinisation. Therefore, Astashkevich perceives rape as an attack on fundamental gender norms.

The sixth chapter, “*Wretched Victims of Another Kind*”: *Making Sense of Rape Trauma*, discusses the influence of modernity and secular education on Jewish women and men. Astashkevich describes how secularisation, characterised by its emphasis on individualism, multiplied the psychological suffering of raped women and on-looking men. For many raped women, as well as others that were forced to watch rape, the rape was worse than death. As the author argues, death meant the end of suffering, rape was just the beginning. Many women, but also men, could not bear their trauma and committed suicide. The author supports her statement with particular examples.

Finally, let us approach the summary and evaluation. In the book, the author answers the questions – for what reasons the rape of Jewish women became an integral part of pogroms, and why the rape took place in the presence of a whole group of perpetrators. She explains why awareness of mass rape has disappeared from the collective memory. In the monograph, the pogroms in Ukraine are perceived as part of genocide. By the author, mass rape is conceived as a strategic weapon, the purpose of which is to cause to the Jewish

or any other community social death and as much suffering as possible. According to Astashkevich, by its nature, psychological torments, associated with humiliation and disgrace, are both transregional and trans-generational. They travel together with the survivors and they are passed down from generation to generation. The impacts of mass rape are, therefore, absolutely devastating not only for contemporaries but also for the next generations, who are, unknowingly, affected by the trauma. According to the author, public rape had a symbolic character. It was not made for sexual intercourse as such. The purpose was to demonstrate unlimited power in public.

The contribution that the author brings by her book is indisputable. The monograph provides a valuable theoretical basis for historians involved in the research of gender-based violence in general, not only regarding the Jews. The peer-reviewed book is necessary to be compared to the recently published work *Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1914–1920*¹⁴ by the historian William W. Hagen. Both books are distinguished by analytical depth and emphasis on interdisciplinarity. For both authors, the symbolism and socio-cultural significance of violence are pivotal. Both authors perceive violence as a means of establishing socio-culturally prescribed relationships. Through their works, both authors try to understand the concept of violence. In her research, unlike Hagen, Astashkevich emphasizes the

14 William W. HAGEN, *Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1914–1920*, New York 2018.

gender nature of violence. Both studies significantly deepen our knowledge of a hitherto neglected topic – which was, in historiography, overshadowed by the interest in the Holocaust – the brutal violence against

the Jews that occurred immediately after the First World War.

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