

Notes on **The Mixed Multitude Jacob Frank and the Frankists**  
**Maciejko**  
**Chapter IV Blood Libel**

The most famous event associated with Frankism is probably Jacob Frank's and his followers' accusation of child sacrifice against Jews in September 1759 in the Lwvov disputation. The Lwvov disputation was a public debate between Jacob Frank and his followers on one side, who were Jews who had mass converted to Roman Catholicism and denounced the Talmud as evil and Satanic and as promoting child sacrifice, and the Talmudic Jewish Rabbis on the other side.

The allegation that Jews ritually sacrificed children were first made in the twelfth/thirteenth centuries Anno Domini in Western Europe.

It is believed William Norwich is the first documented alleged victim of Jewish ritual child sacrifice. He died in 1144, and Jews were accused of his murder. They were accused of ritually torturing and murdering him in a deliberate parody of the passion and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Magic use of blood was not part of the original accusations. Jews were only accused of mocking the passion and crucifixion of Jesus Christ by ritually torturing and murdering children in imitation of his death, they were not accused of using blood.

This changed in the High Middle Ages. The alleged victims were prepubescent children, who disappeared around Easter.

Their bodies were discovered in rivers or forests.

Wounds inflicted by needles or daggers were discovered in the autopsies. The corpse.

The corpse would be bloodless but would bleed if a Jew came near it, if the Jew were the murderer.

The crime was linked to the Eucharist in Christian mythology.

Christians developed an occult mythology that Jews committed the crime because of a magical need for Christian blood.

The accusations reached their climax in the fifteenth century, and the accusations tended to follow this archetype.

The stereotype began to change though. In the sixteenth century the victims began to often include adults and women, the link to the Eucharist ceased in the trials and the belief in the magic significance of blood declined or ended. The occult and religious elements in the accusations declining correlated to a decline of trials.

Scholars believe the decline in the occult elements in the stories is a result of the Reformation which resulted in a decline in superstitious beliefs.

While the trials declined in frequency, the belief in the blood libel persisted. The child sacrifice allegation against Jews stopped being a focus of court systems and instead became a focus of mythological belief in the general population. It was written about in history books instead of in court rooms by the 18th century Anno Domini in Germany and Western Europe.

The claim Jews practiced ritual human sacrifice did not arrive in Poland until the late 15th century. The first documented Polish trial of a Jew for ritual human sacrifice took place in Rawa Mazowiecka in 1547.

There were not lots of accusations of ritual human sacrifice against Jews in Poland until the late 17th/early 18th centuries.

Blood libels rose in number in Eastern Europe while declining in Western Europe. There were very few blood sacrifice allegations in Poland when the allegations reached their climax in Germany, but in the 18th century, when human sacrifice trials against Jews had virtually ended in Germany and other Western countries, they radically increased in Poland-Lithuania, the Bohemian Crown Lands and Hungary.

Polish books about the human sacrifice allegations against Jews used English, French and German trials and viewed the prosecutions as certainly correct and quoted historical literature on the topic.

76 books were published about the human sacrifice allegations against Jews before 1800. There were hundreds of other reports on the matter.

In 1750-1770 there was a great increase in blood libel literature. It was greater than the amount of all previously published German material. Many of the books about this became best sellers.

Prior to the eighteenth century there was no link, or at least no strong link, between people accusing Jews of ritual human sacrifice and Christian theological opposition to Judaism. Those who accused Jews of ritual human sacrifice almost never focused on attacking Jewish religious belief, and Christian opponents of the Jewish religion almost never focused on the human sacrifice allegation against Jews, and some even condemned it.

For example Pope Gregory IX banned the Talmud after the 1240 Paris Disputation, but issued a papal statement condemning the blood libel as false. Many Christians theologians who attacked Jewish religion and ritual denied the blood sacrifice allegation.

Before Jacob Frank and Jan Serafinowicz there was no strong link between the accusation that Jews practiced ritual human sacrifice and opposition to the Talmud or to the Jewish religion. Serafinowicz and Frank are the people who created that link.