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Three major waves of anti-Jewish rioting swept southern Russia and Russian Poland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this book, distinguished scholars of Russian Jewish history explore the origins and nature of these pogroms, which were among the most extensive outbreaks of antisemitic violence before the Holocaust.

Using new approaches to the study of Russian history, the contributors examine each wave of violence in turn. They look at the role of violence in Russian society; the prejudices, stereotypes, and psychology of both the educated society and the rural masses; the work of the tsarist regime, especially the police and the army as agents of order and control; and the impact of the pogroms on the sense of Jewish identity and security in the Empire. In his conclusion, Hans Rogger reflects upon pogroms in Russia and then broadens the study by comparing these riots with both pogroms in Western and Central Europe and outbreaks of anti-Negro violence within the United States during the same period.

Pogroms: anti-Jewish violence in modern Russian history is the first comprehensive study of the pogroms in tsarist and revolutionary Russia. It brings together important new research and challenges many of the misconceptions which have continued to characterize the secondary literature on the pogroms. Moreover, this volume appears at a time when inter-ethnic violence and, in particular, anti-Jewish threats have reappeared in the Soviet Union and this recent violence has striking analogies to the events described here. This book will therefore be of interest to students and specialists of Russian, Jewish, and Polish history as well as of the history of mass movements, modern antisemitism, and ethnic group relations.

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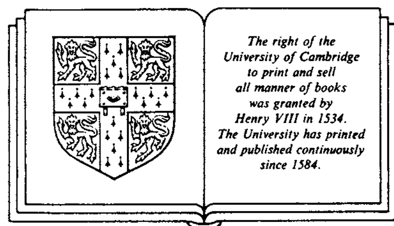

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1 European Russia in 1881, showing the provinces of the Kingdom of Poland and the Pale of Jewish Settlement

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Preface

In 1984 Professor Shlomo Lambroza conceived the idea of a conference panel and a collaborative publication devoted to anti-Jewish violence in late tsarist and revolutionary Russia. At the time, the project was apparently of academic interest only. The participants were aware that a number of myths and legends surrounded the Russian pogroms of 1881–2, 1903–6 and 1919–21. Almost without exception secondary sources argued that the tsarist authorities actively planned, encouraged or at least welcomed pogroms, in an effort to make the Jews the scapegoats for revolutionary violence, or to channel anti-tsarist protest in a less harmful direction. These claims persist, despite the existence of published scholarship, now over sixty years old, based on primary sources, which effectively refutes these myths.

At the same time, the participants were reluctant to restrict their efforts to the reassertion of old truths. A number of new approaches for the study of modern Russian history lend themselves extremely well to the examination of pogroms. These approaches include the study of violence in Russian society, a better understanding of the prejudices, stereotypes, and psychology of both educated society and the rural masses, and a richer understanding of the tsarist empire as a multi-ethnic entity. Institutional history offers us a more sophisticated understanding of the workings of the tsarist regime, especially the police and the army as agents of order and control. Recent studies offer a better understanding of the workings of the Jewish community in Russia, and the impact of the pogroms on the sense of Jewish identity and security in the Empire. The contributors took as their mandate the incorporation of this research into their work, in the hope of offering a new, integrated view of the pogrom phenomenon.

Ironically, this volume appears at a moment when inter-ethnic

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violence in general, and anti-Jewish threats in particular, have reappeared in the Soviet Union. This violence has striking analogies to the events described in this volume. In the Caucasus, two terrible pogroms were perpetrated against Armenians, in Sumgait on 29 February 1988 and in Baku on 13 January 1990. These events raised questions which will be familiar to the reader of this volume: what was the complicity of officials, on the local and national level, in the outbreak of these pogroms? Why had a modern state's police and armed forces, some of them stationed in close proximity to the riots, been unable or unwilling to control murder and rapine directed against its own citizens?

The relaxation of official controls has also brought unofficial antisemitic movements into the open. Antisemitic rhetoric which harks back to the period covered by this book has appeared in the ideology of extremist political groups like Pamiat, and in the writings of prominent conservative Russian nationalists. In early 1990, a wave of rumors swept the major cities of the USSR, predicting the outbreak of an antisemitic pogrom on 5 May of that year. In the event, the pogrom did not appear, but the rumors prompted a resurgence of Soviet Jewish emigration, paralleling past responses of the Jewish community in Russia to violence against it. Unwittingly, the essays in this volume have acquired a sharpened contemporary relevance.

All dates in this volume pertaining to the Russian Empire are according to the Julian Calendar (Old Style), in use before the Bolshevik Revolution. Dates relating to the Kingdom of Poland include the date according to the Gregorian Calendar (New Style). The Julian Calendar was twelve days behind the Gregorian Calendar in the nineteenth century, and thirteen days behind in the twentieth century.

Names are given in their most familiar forms (i.e., Alexander and Ignatiev rather than Aleksandr and Ignat′ev). Soft and hard signs are omitted in the text, but included in the bibliographical apparatus. Transliteration follows a modified Library of Congress system, with a few exceptions for personal names, primarily those of German origin.

The maps were designed and executed by Tim Aspden of the Department of Geography at University College London. The assistance of the Faculty of Arts at University College is deeply appreciated.

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Glossary

The following terms refer to the definitions as used specifically in the text and are not meant to be comprehensive.

artel	a worker or artisan cooperative
ataman	elected Cossack leader; also used to signify leaders of anarchist groups during the Russian Civil War
besporiadki	disorders; official designation for pogroms in tsarist period
boevie otriady	Jewish self-defense squads organized to defend against violence during pogroms
bosiaki	"the barefoot brigade"; vagrants who roamed the countryside in search of work or food especially during times of economic hardship
Bund, the	the General Jewish Workers Party in Russia and Poland (*Der algemeyner yidisher arbeter bund in rusland un poyln*); the Jewish social democratic party founded in 1897
buntartsvo	literally: rebelliousness – term used to express populist faith in the revolutionary potential of the peasantry
Chernyi Peredel	Black Repartition – a revolutionary party founded in 1879 after the breakup of Zemlia i Volia which followed the basic ideas of agrarian Populism
Duma	the legislative body or parliament created after the Revolution of 1905
eruv	a demarcated area of the Jewish quarter of a town or city, set aside for religious reasons
folks-oystand	popular uprising

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guberniia	a province of tsarist Russia
halakha	Jewish religious law
Haskalah	the Jewish enlightenment movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries
heder	a private Jewish primary school for the teaching of the Bible and Jewish tradition
hetman	see ataman
Hibbat Zion	literally: Lovers of Zion – first centralized proto-Zionist organization committed to the goal of resettling Jews in Palestine (1884)
intelligent[*y*]	members of the intelligentsia – usually applied to liberals in opposition to the tsarist regime
Kadets	members of the Constitutional Democrat Party, a liberal political party founded in 1905
kahal	(Heb., *kehillah*) – Jewish community organization responsible for religious, social, fiscal, and at times judicial functions. *Kahals* in Poland had significant authority over Jewish life. Their powers were continually diminished after the Polish partitions and they were abolished under Nicholas I.
kulak	literally: fist. Term used to identify the wealthier segment of the peasant class. They owned large tracts of land and often employed the poorer peasants
maskil(*im*)	an adherent of the ideas of the Jewish enlightenment (*Haskalah*)
matzoh	unleavened bread eaten by Jews during Passover
meshchantsvo	the judicial estate of townspeople, comprising artisans and petty bourgeoisie; the members of this estate were the *meshchane*
musar	talks by headmasters in *yeshivot* that stressed personal ethics and piety within the structure of *halakha*
muzhik[*y*]	Russian peasant
nagaika	a Cossack whip
narod	literally: people – specifically used to refer to members of the lower classes, i.e. the workers and peasants

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Narodnaia Volia	The People's Will – a terrorist revolutionary party formed in 1879 after the breakup of Zemlia i Volia; its adherents were responsible for the murder of Alexander II in 1881. Members were known as *Narodovoltsy*
narodniki	literally, men of the people; radical Populists
Okhrana	the Russian political police created in 1880
pan[y]	member of Polish nobility, land-owning gentry
Poale-Zion	literally: Workers of Zion – a socialist workers Zionist party (1905)
pogromshchik(i)	one who participates or actively instigates an anti-Jewish riot (pogrom)
shtetl(ekh)	a small town or hamlet in Eastern Europe and Russia
sliianie	literally: merging – the concept of acculturating the Jewish population with the native Christian population
soslovie (ia)	estates or social classes as established by Russian law. Russia had five judicial estates: nobility, clergy, peasants, merchants and towns-people.
szlachta	the middling Polish gentry
Talmud	the comprehensive holy book of Jewish laws and traditions.
ukaz[y]	an official decree of the tsarist government
verst	a measure of distance equalling 0·6 miles or 1·06 kilometers
yeshiva (ot)	A school for the advanced study of the Talmud
Zemlia i Volia	Land and Liberty – early Russian Populist revolutionary party, founded in 1876
zemtsvo [a]	elected institutions of local self-government, created in 1864
zhid[y]	in Russian, a Jew: the word had acquired pejorative connotations by the nineteenth century and was replaced in polite conversation by the term *evrei*.

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