Antisemitism and the Russian Revolution

When the Bolsheviks came to power in 1917, they announced the overthrow of a world scarred by exploitation and domination. In the very moment of revolution, these sentiments were put to the test as antisemitic pogroms swept the former Pale of Settlement. The pogroms posed fundamental questions of the Bolshevik project, revealing the depth of antisemitism within sections of the working class, peasantry and Red Army. Antisemitism and the Russian Revolution offers the first book-length analysis of the Bolshevik response to antisemitism. Contrary to existing understandings, it reveals this campaign to have been led not by the Party leadership, as is often assumed, but by a loosely connected group of radicals who mobilized around a Jewish political subjectivity. By examining pogroms committed by the Red Army, Brendan McGeever also uncovers the explosive overlap between revolutionary politics and antisemitism, and the capacity for class to become racialized in a moment of crisis.

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## Contents

*List of Figures*  
*Acknowledgements*  
*A Note on Translation*  
*Terms and Abbreviations*  

### Introduction  
1 1917: Antisemitism in the Moment of Revolution  
2 ‘Red Pogroms’: Spring 1918  
3 The Soviet Response to Antisemitism, 1918  
4 Antisemitism and Revolutionary Politics: the Red Army in Ukraine, 1919  
5 The Soviet Response to Antisemitism in Ukraine, February–May 1919  
6 Jewish Communists and the Soviet Response to Antisemitism, May–December 1919  
7 Reinscribing Antisemitism? The Bolshevik Approach to the ‘Jewish Question’  

Epilogue: In the Shadow of Pogroms  
Conclusions: Anti-Racist Praxis in the Russian Revolution  

*Bibliography*  
*Index*
Figures

1 Zvi Fridliand, around 1917  
2 David Davidovich (L’vovich), early 1920s  
3 First Conference of Jewish Communist Sections and Jewish Commissariats, Moscow, 23 October 1918  
4 Poster produced by the Jewish Social Committee for the Relief of Victims of Pogroms (Evobshchestkom) for an exhibition on pogroms in Moscow in 1923. The caption at the top of the image, given in both Russian and Yiddish, reads: ‘A breakdown of Jewish pogroms according to their organizers’. The poster was subsequently published in 1926 in Z. S. Ostrovskii, Evreiskie pogromy 1918–1921 gg., 75  
5 Leningradskii, S. Kto i za chto ustrail pogromy nad evreiami [Who Organised the Pogroms against the Jews and for What Reason?] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Krasnaia Nov', 1924)  
6 Jewish Red Army Unit, 1918. Banner reads: ‘1st Red Army Unit of the Jewish Social-Democratic Workers’ Party Poalei Zion’  
7 Moishe Rafes, 1917  
8 David Lipets and David Davidovich (L’vovich) at the Stockholm Peace Conference, June 1917  
9 David Lipets, March 1927  
10 Second Conference of Jewish Sections of the Communist Party, June 1919  
11 Presidium of the Second Conference of Jewish Sections of the Communist Party  
12 Abram Kheifets, around 1917
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A Note on Translation

I have followed the Library of Congress system for Russian transliteration, except where the more familiar form is otherwise (for example, I use Trotsky, not Trotskii). For cities and provinces, I generally use the typical or most common usage in the primary sources and secondary literature, which in most cases is Russian. However, for towns and cities in Ukraine, I have transliterated from the Ukrainian spelling (Kyiv, not Kiev; Zhytomyr, not Zhitomir). In one or two cases, the more commonly known Russian transliteration has been followed (Grigor’ev, not Hryhor’iev).
# Terms and Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheka</td>
<td>Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comintern</td>
<td>Communist International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td><em>delo</em>, a file within a fond (archival term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evkom</td>
<td>Jewish Commissariat of the People’s Commissariat of Nationalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evobshchestkom</td>
<td>Jewish Social Committee for the Relief of Victims of Pogroms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evsektsiia</td>
<td>Jewish Sections of the Russian Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td><em>fond</em>, document collection (archival term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gubernia</td>
<td>province, large administrative-territorial unit of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(pl. gubernii)</td>
<td>Russian empire/Soviet republics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ispolkom</td>
<td>‘Executive Committee’ – a local organ of Soviet government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kulak</td>
<td>Soviet term for ‘wealthy peasant’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.</td>
<td><em>list</em>, page (archival term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narkomnats</td>
<td>People’s Commissariat for the Affairs of the Nationalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oblast’</td>
<td>large region, or district, an administrative-territorial unit in the Soviet republics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>op.</td>
<td><em>opis</em> or inventory (archival term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revkom</td>
<td>Revolutionary Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RKP(b)</td>
<td>Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sovnarkom</td>
<td>Soviet of People’s Commissars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTsIK</td>
<td>All-Russian Central Executive Committee (of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic)</td>
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