Darius Staliūnas, *Enemies for a Day: Antisemitism and Anti-Jewish Violence in Lithuania under the Tsars* (Budapest-New York: CEU Press, 2015), pp. 296.

by Marina Mogilner

Darius Staliūnas's book stands apart from most studies dealing with pogrom violence and its discursive representations, even though its subtitle contains references to "antisemitism and anti-Jewish Violence." *Enemies for a Day* raises the question of why in one particular part of the Russian Empire, which the author somewhat problematically calls "Lithuania" and includes in it the imperial provinces of Vilna/Vilnius, Kovno, and Suvalki,[1] Jewish pogroms were rare (no more than ten pogroms during the long nineteenth century) and the "pogrom paradigm" failed to become a universal scenario inevitably leading to the outbreak of anti-Jewish violence. The influence of John Klier, who did much to de-familiarize the pogrom and reframe it as a *problem* of mass violence, is felt throughout the book. It is evident not just in the number of works of the late historian cited by Staliūnas, but in the very logic of his analysis, which seems to be inspired by Klier's line: "To determine what pogroms were, it is essential to consider what they were not."[2]

Staliūnas begins with defining the pogrom, borrowing his definition from Werner Bergmann: "A one-sided and non-governmental form of social control, as 'self-help by a group' that occurs when no remedy from the state against the threat which another ethnic group poses can be expected... The participants in a pogrom... act against the group as a whole." To this Staliūnas adds the dimensions of time and space: a pogrom is supposed to last at least a few hours, have at least a few dozen participants, and occur in a place of mass congregation (6). He consistently applies this definition to differentiate pogroms from casual violence and confrontation. However, it is not this abstract and somewhat mechanical exercise that makes the book a necessary read for all those interested in interethnic and interconfessional dynamics and anti-Jewish violence in

[1] The definition of "Lithuania" in relation to the tsarist period may seem retrospectively nationalizing, as there was no Lithuania at the time. Staliūnas writes about provinces where Lithuanians formed a sizable part or a slight majority (up to 52 percent) of the local population (except for Vilna). At the same time, he admits that an ethnolinguistic criterion is far from self-evident due to the unstable and porous borders of Lithuanian identity that were only beginning to form in the nineteenth century and the key role played by confessional identities and alliances in regional politics. In the three selected "Lithuanian" provinces, Catholics made up more than half of the population, while Russian Orthodoxy prevailed in the rest.

[2] John Klier, *Russians, Jews and the Pogroms of 1881–1882* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2011), 59.

"Lithuania." The real value of Staliūnas's book is its anthropology of the imperial situation, in which ethnic violence was an important factor.

In Staliūnas's "Lithuania," Jewishness, Polishness, or Lithuanian identification appear to be conditioned by multiple factors, ranging from economic to confessional to political. The region's inhabitants could perceive the political regime as the mob's sponsor (for Jews could not expect a "remedy from the state"), but at other times, as an ally of Jews against local Catholics. The dynamics on the ground often contradicted the official policies of administrators, who usually wanted to prevent pogroms, which locals interpreted as a betrayal of popular interests. Modern mass party politics became a hostage to competing principles of socialists' ideological universalism and popular (or elite) nationalism. At the same time, discourses rarely reflected or adequately represented the actions of the non-discursive majority of the Lithuanian-speaking population of villages and small market towns. Nevertheless, by the early twentieth century, each group had learned to manipulate the power of discourses to their advantage.

Thus, Staliūnas shows that pogroms or their absence cannot be explained from any single perspective associated with fixed identities (solely Jewish or purely Lithuanian) and in simple binaries such as the "antisemitic state vs. Jews," "Christians vs. Jews," "Lithuanians vs. Jews," or the generic "perpetrators vs. victims." Instead, we are offered a complex model embedded in the imperial situation of multiple actors whose identities, group alliances, and choices evolved from one concrete situation to another, and were conditioned by various factors.

Therefore, only "microanalysis… in a specific place and time" (10–11) can reveal how and why habitual tensions and conflicts escalated (or did not escalate) to violence; how and why a specific encounter of concrete individuals, Jews and Gentiles, evolved (or did not evolve) into aggression against Jews as a group; how hatred or distrust turned (or did not turn) into violence. In the end, Staliūnas establishes structural regularities behind the specific cases and contexts that he analyses, but to present his findings as a coherent explanation of why there were so few pogroms in Lithuania, he resorts to a comparative perspective. This is a truly pan-imperial comparison in which the situation in the Lithuanian lands is compared to other imperial borderlands such as the Belarusian provinces (Grodno, Minsk, Vitebsk, and Mogilev) or Galicia in Austro-Hungary. Moreover, Staliūnas adds a non-territorial comparable by discussing physical clashes between Lithuanians and Poles in Catholic churches over the language of supplementary church services. His multidimensional comparison shows how a specific configuration of the imperial situation—a combination of often

structurally incompatible factors (apples and oranges growing on the same tree of some hybrid breed)—produces different dynamics of group conflicts.

The first five chapters of the book cover the anthropology of local conflicts as well as their discursive and political reality in minute detail. While the narrative may seem somewhat slow and even repetitive, the last, sixth chapter, "Comparative Perspective," moves along quickly and is intellectually the most exciting. It sets a challenging benchmark for future scholarship that will be hard to reach. Staliūnas demonstrates a most impressive command of international historiographies, multilingualism (he engages primary sources in at least five different languages), and a deep knowledge of multiple archives in several countries. Moreover, his analysis is based on a profound understanding of the multidimensional reality of imperial societies and the logics of their *modi operandi*.

Empire as a composite and entangled space functions in the book as a context-setting category, a specific medium for the circulation of information and experiences. Thus, Staliūnas identifies news of pogroms that happened in other parts of the empire among the reasons for the rise of Judeophobic sentiment in Lithuanian lands. However, the effect of such news inversely correlated with a region's degree of economic and social integration (see the comparison of "Lithuania" to the southern regions of Belarus, which bordered on Ukrainian Kiev and Chernigov provinces and accommodated more economic migrants). Among other factors that reduced the intensity of anti-Jewish violence in "Lithuania" were tensions between the higher echelons of imperial authorities in the region and the lower strata of officials and civil servants embedded in their local societies. Religious Judeophobia was always present in the Lithuanian countryside; however, as the book shows, it required the reinforcement of other factors to fuel modern pogroms. Economic transition at the turn of the century, when some Christians attempted to enter traditional Jewish commercial niches, contributed to the rise of mutual animosity and competition. However, general economic development or rather the underdevelopment of the Lithuanian lands (compared to other regions with Jewish populations) halted the influence of economic competition that in other settings would have generated deadly national confrontations. In "Lithuania," there were no swiftly growing industrial towns swelled by an uprooted migrant workforce. Staliūnas also shows that the influence of modern nationalisms, Lithuanian in particular, on the rise of collective violence was minimal. The local imperial situation encouraged a search for collective allies, as there were always more than two competing ethno-confessional groups, equally alienated from Russian officialdom. The competition with Poles and Russians sometimes encouraged Lithuanians to find

allies in Jews (as during elections to the imperial Dumas). Staliūnas points to a similar dynamic in Eastern Galicia, where there were also very few pogroms and where Ruthenians identified Poles rather than Jews as their principal adversary.

These structural arrangements are contextualized in the book in the thick description of specific circumstances of particular conflicts. Staliūnas characterizes most of them as small-town violence or "shtetl-type pogroms," which were rooted in domestic disagreements and long histories of neighborly relations. As a rule, it was not possible for these conflicts to continue for several days because villagers gathered for a religious festivity or on market day had to go home to resume their daily business. Local Jews well understood the "rules of the game" and rarely politicized it, including in the form of armed self-defense, while their neighbors were more interested in re-establishing ethnic, confessional, and economic hierarchy ("to put Jews in their place") rather than in a genocidal solution.

Staliūnas's answer to the question of why there were so few pogroms in "Lithuania" is as complex as was the society that he studies, which is the best confirmation of the author's historical and analytical accuracy.

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