Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms of 1881–1882

Anti-Jewish pogroms rocked the Russian Empire in 1881–2, plunging both the Jewish community and the imperial authorities into crisis. Focusing on a wide range of responses to the pogroms, this book offers the most comprehensive, balanced, and complex study of the crisis to date. It presents a nuanced account of the diversity of Jewish political reactions and introduces a wealth of new sources covering Russian and other non-Jewish reactions to these events. Seeking to answer the question of what caused the pogroms' outbreak and spread, the book provides a fuller picture of how officials at every level responded to the national emergency and irrevocably lays to rest the myth that the authorities instigated or tolerated the pogroms. This is essential reading not only for Russian and Jewish historians but also for those interested in the study of ethnic violence more generally.

JOHN DOYLE KLIER (1944–2007) was the Sidney and Elizabeth Corob Professor of Modern Jewish History in the Hebrew and Jewish Studies Department at University College London. His earlier books, *Russia Gathers Her Jews* (1985) and *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question* (Cambridge, 1995), are standard works in modern Russian-Jewish history, along with *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (coeditor, Cambridge, 1992).

Frontispiece "Chase a fly out of the door, and it returns through the window. Save us, Lord, from hunger, plagues, floods, fire, and the invasion of foreign tribes" (*Evreiskii vopros v kartinakh*, 1884).

"IVAN: What trouble these Jews are! You haven't finished building a hut and a fence, setting up a garden and a patch, you look around, and these Jews sneak in and grow heavy like bugs, and neither yourself nor your kids have anywhere to stay. Now, will you leave the hut!

GERSHKO (from behind): Hello, Ivan, how do you do?

IVAN: What do you want here? Get away! I have enough work without you!

GERSHKO: But we do so well in your house; and we won't interfere with your work, we just set up our small shops, bring in our family, we will lend you money – whereas you will have a walk and a drink, as the working man needs strengthening; with us, you don't even need money . . . you just bring a small measure of oats and a quarter of wheat, we will accept all."

Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms of 1881–1882

John Doyle Klier

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press,
New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521895484

First published 2011

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Klier, John.
Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms of 1881–1882 / John Doyle Klier.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978-0-521-89548-4 (hardback)
1. Jews – Persecutions – Russia. 2. Pogroms – Russia.
3. Jews – Russia – Social conditions – 19th century. 4. Russia – Ethnic
relations. I. Title.
DS134.84K55 2011
305.892′404709034–dc22 2010031215

ISBN 978-0-521-89548-4 Hardback

Contents

Editors' preface

John Doyle Klier died on 23 September 2007. At the age of only sixty-two, he was at the height of his powers as a scholar. This book was the last major project that John completed. Our task has been far from onerous. At the time of his death, John had completed the manuscript for this book and responded to the readers' reports. We undertook the revisions he proposed, especially those regarding the reorganization of the material. While the first part sets the stage, the second focuses predominantly on non-Jewish and the third predominantly on Jewish responses to the pogroms. The manuscript has obviously been copy-edited, but we have barely changed the actual text. We are grateful to the colleagues who helped us with queries that arose along the way.

The selection of the illustrations has ultimately been ours. In some cases it was quite clear from the manuscript which illustrations John had in mind; in others we have chosen from John's files the images that seemed most suitable. Presumably he would have wanted to comment on the nature and provenance of these illustrations, something we are in no position to do in his place.[1]

Clearly, John did not have the chance to step back and take one last careful look at the revised version as it now stands. He would doubtless have wanted to make further changes at this stage to round off the book in its final form.

As an appendix to this book, the reader will find a chronological list of anti-Jewish violence and related developments in Imperial Russia in the years 1881–2 that John was able to document on the basis of his archival research. By no means all of the cited material has been used for this book. Based on John's notebooks we have been able to link each entry in the list directly to an archival reference, which makes this a valuable resource for further research in the field of Russian Jewish history. The map on

[1] Cf. John D. Klier, "Iskusstvo i pogromy. Khudozhestvennoe otobrazhenie antievreiskogo nasiliia v imperskoi Rossii (1871–1903 gody)," in O. V. Budnitskii, *et al.*, eds., *Russko-evreiskaia kultura* (Moscow, 2006), 437–52.

pp. xxii–xxiv records all those sites of anti-Jewish violence mentioned in this list for the period between 15 April and 10 May 1881 whose location could be clearly identified. We are grateful to Cath D'Alton (UCL) for the realization of Map 2 and thank Tim Aspden who produced Map 1 on p. xxi for John's previous book, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, 1996). Finally our thanks go to all the colleagues at Cambridge University Press who have helped bring this project to fruition.

John wanted to dedicate this book to "three scholars who have done much to direct and inspire me as a scholar of Russia and Russian Jewish history," Ralph T. Fisher, Hans Rogger, and Jonathan Frankel. Under the circumstances it would have seemed strange to simply dedicate the book to these three colleagues in the usual way, and we have instead decided to use this opportunity to do so on John's behalf.

From 1960 to 1987, Ralph T. Fisher was the director of the Russian and East European Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where John took his doctorate in 1975. John felt deeply indebted to Fisher for accepting him on the program and for nurturing his achievements. Fisher's personal generosity of spirit and energy made the center a home and a springboard for John and many other graduates of the program.

John regarded Hans Rogger as an inspirational pioneer in Russian Jewish history. He frequently acknowledged the role that Rogger had played in inspiring scholarly debate beyond the conspiracy theory approach to Russian Jewish history in general and the pogroms in particular. John concluded his obituary for Rogger on a personal note, explaining that,

> To embark upon research on the history of Russian Jewry in the 1970s, as I did, meant, inevitably, becoming a "revisionist"... Any young scholar, therefore, was "working without a net," making hypotheses that seemed to go against a century-old scholarly consensus. The appearance of Rogger's articles and his demand for a re-examination of assumptions and beliefs were of enormous psychological encouragement and support.[2]

For scholars of Jewish history in Eastern Europe, the academic year 2007–8 was unusually bleak: having begun with John's death it ended with the death of Jonathan Frankel on 7 May 2008. Their longstanding professional relationship was characterized by warm collegiality, mutual appreciation, and friendship. John greatly admired and respected Frankel's work and, in response to the readers' reports for this book,

[2] John D. Klier, "Hans Rogger, 1923–2002," *East European Jewish Affairs*, 32, 1 (2002), 152.

John wrote that he considered "Frankel's to be the definitive description of the rise of the so-called New Jewish Politics."

LARS FISCHER
FRANÇOIS GUESNET
HELEN KLIER

Figures

Maps

Foreword

The anti-Jewish riots, or pogroms, which broke out in the Russian Empire in mid-April 1881, are seen as a decisive moment in modern Jewish history. Devout Jewish contemporaries found an analogy in the "southern storms" invoked by the prophet Isaiah. The more secular were quick to label them "a sharp turning point in the historical life of the Jewish people."[1] Many of the responses engendered within the Russian Jewish community, such as greater national self-awareness and skepticism toward liberal panaceas of emancipation, were already present in Jewish society in embryo. The events of 1881–2 speeded up their gestation. The result was the rapid development of a modern, international Jewish politics.

Yet it must be understood that the pogroms represented a crisis for the Russian Empire as well. For the better part of two years rioting was endemic across a wide swath of a strategic region of the empire. Major cities, such as Kiev and Elisavetgrad, fell under mob control. The countryside was unsettled by pogroms and rumors of pogroms. The urban proletariat and the rural peasantry, the two groups feared most by the security-minded government, threatened to slip from state control. The ability of the imperial authorities to maintain stability, law, and order was called into question. Matters were in no way improved when the authorities had to rely on deadly force in order to reclaim control of the streets, and found themselves cast in the uncomfortable guise of protectors of an unpopular minority. Control was wrested from the rioters, the *pogromshchiki*, only through stationing large contingents of troops throughout the troubled areas, thus undermining the army's effectiveness in the defense of the realm. The pogroms threatened to have a ruinous impact on the national economy.

[1] *Rassvet* (20:16/V/1882).

The pogroms also exacted a price in foreign relations. The frontiers with Austria-Hungary and Germany were compromised by the uncontrolled flight of thousands of Jewish refugees across the border. Russia became the target of protest campaigns and was threatened with diplomatic intervention. Negotiations for a strategic foreign loan collapsed, and the value of Russian bonds plummeted on international stock exchanges.

The pogroms also called into question a century of social engineering designed to resolve the so-called Jewish Question in Russia. Critics declared that established policies had signally failed in their goal of integrating the Jews into imperial Russian society. Faced with a national emergency, Russian lawmakers were forced to act rapidly to develop new policies, in a way that was the antithesis of the Russian bureaucracy's customarily cautious approach to change.

Contemporary research has dispelled the myth that Russian officials were responsible for instigating, permitting, or approving the pogroms. But if instigation is ruled out, another question looms: What was the cause of the outbreak and spread of the pogroms? This study seeks to answer that question, in particular by making use of the substantial information provided by the opening of archives in Eastern Europe in the post-Soviet period. This documentation provides a fuller picture of how officials at every level responded to the pogroms, not just during their initial outbreak in 1881, but also upon their reappearance in 1882.

There is a particular need to integrate the history of the Russian pogroms into the emergent study of ethnic and nationalist conflict and collective violence. As two leading specialists define the task, "we should seek to identify, analyse, and explain the heterogeneous processes and mechanisms involved in generating the varied instances of what we all too casually lump together . . . as 'ethnic violence.' This can be accomplished only through a research strategy firmly committed to disaggregation in both data collection and theory building."[2] An enhanced study of the pogroms has a special role to play in this regard. Researchers of ethnic conflict and collective violence have tended to exclude the case of pogroms,[3] or to view them as a subcategory.[4] When attention is directed to pogroms for comparative purposes, examples are drawn almost entirely from the twentieth century, and these events are then read back into the earlier period of 1881–2.[5]

[2] Rogers Brubaker and David D. Laitin, "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), 447.
[3] *Ibid.*, 429.
[4] Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001), 20.
[5] See, for example, Paul R. Brass, ed., *Riots and Pogroms* (Basingstoke, 1996), in which the Odessa pogrom of 1905 is treated as an archetype for comparative purposes, 1–55.

This study seeks to redress this imbalance. As Donald L. Horowitz defines the general task, "if there is ever to be a single, coherent theory of collective violence, it will be created after there are a substantial body of theory and some reliable findings about the specific varieties of collective violence: about revolutions, about terrorism, about coups, about riots. That day has still not arrived, and the fact that it has not arrived argues for a strategy of proceeding from the bottom up, rather than from the top down."[6] From the theoretical perspective, therefore, this study has a double task. The first is to provide an accurate picture, at the micro-level, of the diverse incidents that comprised the pogroms of 1881–2. It will follow Heinz-Dietrich Löwe's call for "detailed studies of individual pogroms at different times and in different places."[7] Once this objective has been achieved, the second is to use the recent scholarly literature devoted to ethnic conflict and collective violence to gain deeper perspectives into the pogrom phenomenon.

This study builds on contemporary scholarship devoted to the crisis of 1881–2. The starting point is Hans Rogger's classic critique of the widely presumed "pogrom policy" in the Russian Empire. Rogger's lead was followed by I. Michael Aronson, who provided a definitive rejection of the myth that the pogroms of 1881 were organized, instigated, and spread by officials of the imperial government or by "dark forces" close to them. One of the tasks of the present study is to explore how this widely accepted legend came about, and why it has endured so persistently in the secondary literature.

Jonathan Frankel's magisterial *Prophecy and Politics* provides the classic study of Jewish responses to the pogroms, especially the emergence of a so-called New Jewish Politics, expressed variously in proto-Zionism or a specifically Jewish brand of socialism. These innovations contained an explicit rejection of the "old politics" conducted by the established Jewish communal leadership. The new, self-proclaimed leaders legitimized their claims and activities by emphasizing what they decried as the incompetence and failure of the old leadership. The present work offers a more balanced view of the activities of the "elite secular Jewish leadership," clustered around the group I call the "Gintsburg Circle." This study is thus in dialogue with Frankel's work, as indicated by the title of Chapter 10, "Politics without prophecy," a study of events stripped of their mythical character.

[6] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 41–2.
[7] Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, "Pogroms in Russia: Explanations, Comparisons, Suggestions," *Jewish Social Studies*, 11, 1 (2004), 23.

This study records other responses, such as the rise of reformist religious movements, which have been dismissed as unimportant by scholars, yet which attracted a good deal of attention at the time. The study will also explore the attitude of Russian officials to the gamut of Jewish activities, such as emigration or internal reform. This narrative is absent from the scholarly literature, which has tacitly assumed that the state opposed *any* Jewish initiatives.

It is an underlying assumption of this book that the status of Jews in the Russian Empire was fated to change with or without the crisis of 1881–2. For example, in 1880 officials within the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) were questioning the efficacy of the Pale of Settlement, even as the conservative press was launching a campaign to limit the admission of Jews to state schools. The pogroms ensured that debates concerning the Jews were accelerated, while the development of new policies took place in an atmosphere of emergency and crisis.

Acknowledgements

If thanks were given to all those who assisted this study, there would be no one left to review it. I do wish to thank those who have read one or more of its many drafts, especially Jonathan Frankel, who has been a friendly critic throughout. Much of the manuscript's final draft was completed while I was a Fellow of the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. I particularly appreciate the criticisms and suggestions of Moshe Rosman, Marcos Silber, Gerald Surh, and François Guesnet. I wish especially to thank Viktor Efimovich Kel'ner, my good friend and colleague, for his invaluable bibliographical assistance. For technical and bibliographical help I would like to acknowledge Dmitrii Eliashevich, Victoria Khiterer, Anatolii Khaesh, Aleksandr Lokshin, Kati Vörös, and Tsila Ratner. I am especially grateful to all the librarians and archivists who have assisted me at the institutions cited in the bibliography.

Support for my research has been provided by the British Academy, the US National Endowment for the Humanities, the Dean's Fund, the Graduate Research Fund, and the Institute of Jewish Studies at University College London, and the University of London Central Research Fund.

Note on dates and transliteration

All Russian dates are according to the Julian calendar (Old Style, OS), twelve days behind the Gregorian calendar (New Style, NS) in the nineteenth century. All western dates are New Style, while Polish dates are double-numbered, as was the practice in the Kingdom of Poland.

In transliterating from Russian, I follow the Library of Congress system. I have generally retained hard and soft signs in the footnotes, but have omitted them in the main text for familiar or oft-used names. Thus: Ignatiev (not Ignat'ev), Drenteln (not Drentel'n), Bilbasov (not Bil'basov); for place names, Kharkov (not Khar'kov), Vilna (not Vil'na), Orel (not Orel'). I employ modern Russian orthography.

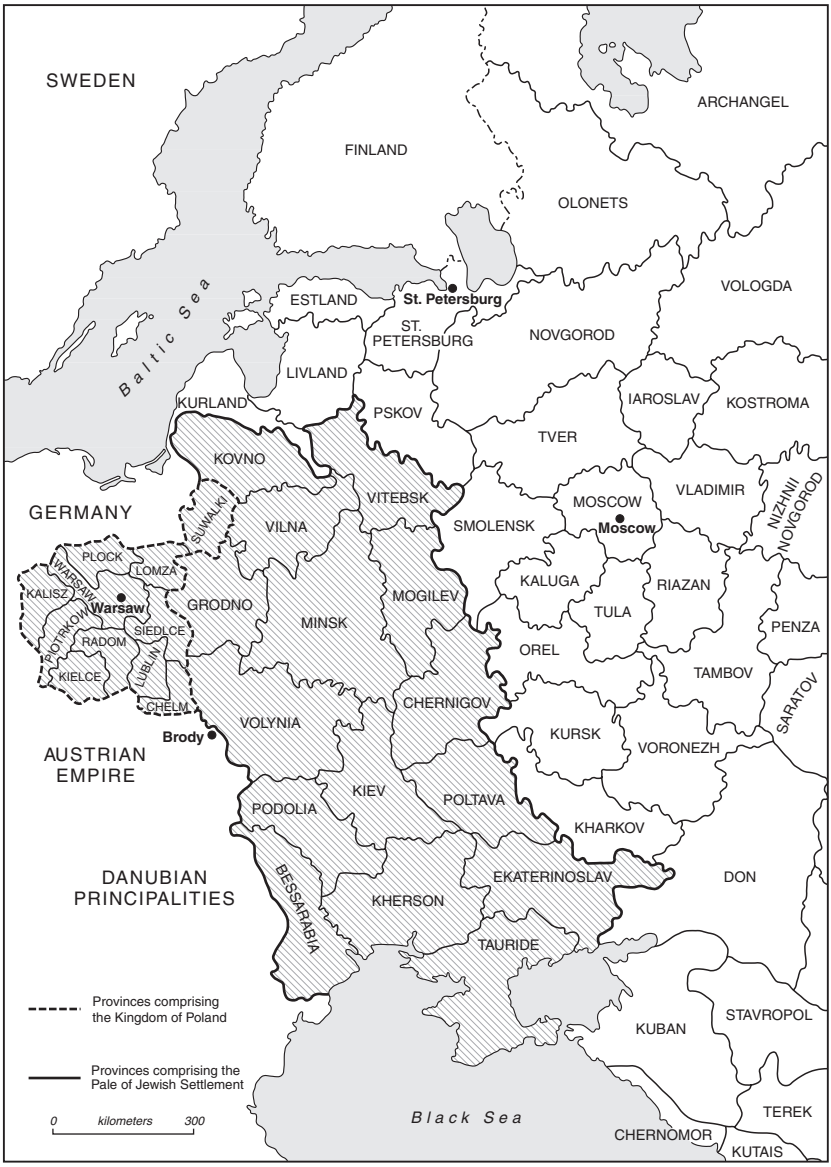
Yiddish transliteration follows the system employed by YIVO; Hebrew the system of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. In both cases, diacritical marks and silent letters are omitted.

Foreign terms are generally italicized, at least in the first instance. Commonly used terms (and acronyms) unlikely to be familiar to all readers are found in the glossary.

I have used the letter R in front of sums to designate Russian rubles.

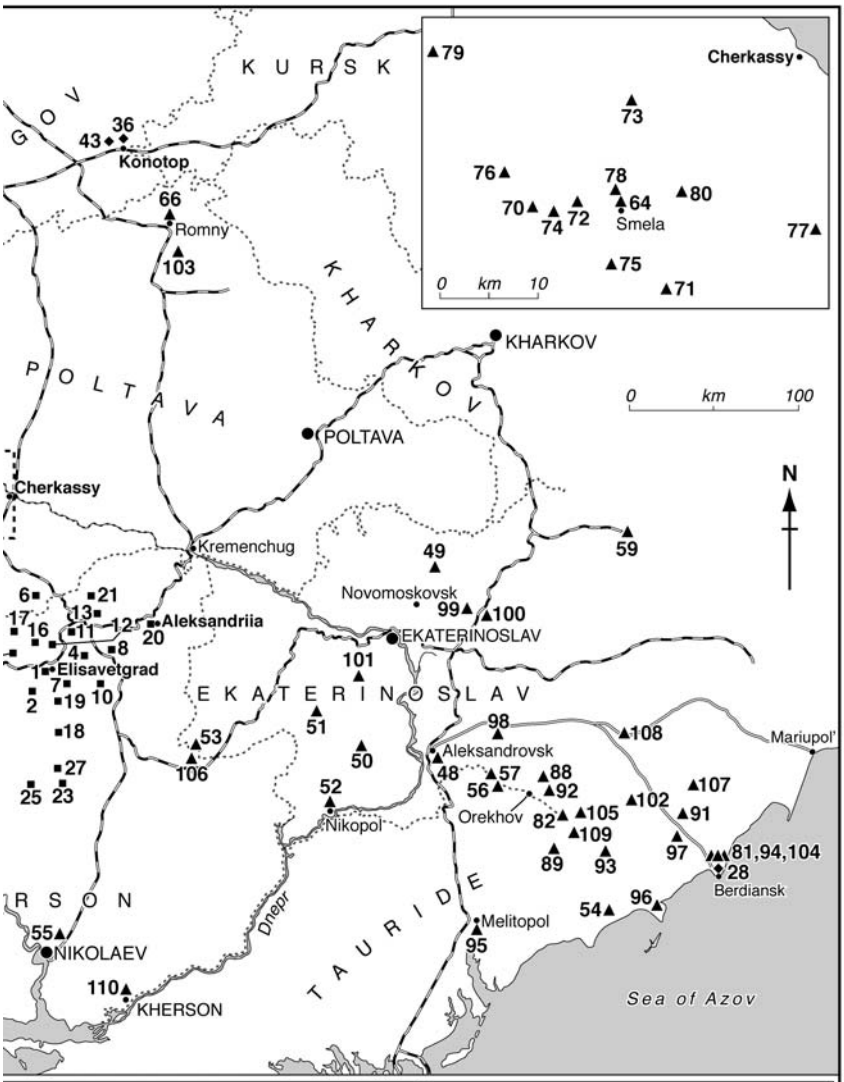
Acronyms

AIU	Alliance Israélite Universelle
AVPRI	Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi imperii
GARF	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi federatsii
GUDP	Chief Administration for Press Affairs
HEAS	Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society
IAGM	Istoricheskii arkhiv goroda Moskvy
IRJQ	John D. Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, 1996)
IuRRS	Southern Russian Workers Union
JC	*Jewish Chronicle*
JNL	Jewish National Library
JP	Justice of the Peace
K-A	G. Ia. Krasnyi-Admoni, ed., *Materialy dlia istorii antievreiskikh pogromov v Rossii*, vol. II, *Vos'midesiatye gody (15 aprelia 1881 g.–29 fevralia 1882 g.)* Moscow and Petrograd, 1923
LVIA	Lietuvos Valstybes Istorijos Archyvas
MHC	Mansion House Committee
MID	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MVD	Ministry of Internal Affairs
NKhV	*Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda*
OPE	Society for the Spread of Enlightenment Among the Jews of Russia
ORT	Society for the Spread of Productive Work Among the Jews
PD	*Parliamentary Debates*
RERC	Russian Emigrant Relief Committee
RGIA	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv
RJC	Russo-Jewish Committee
RNB	Rossiiskaia natsional'naia biblioteka
RVIA	Rossiiskii voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv
SPb	St. Petersburg
TsDIAK	Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi istorichnyi arkhiv Ukraïny



1 Areas reserved for Jewish residence within the Russian Empire in 1855 (Pale of Settlement)

2 Sites of anti-Jewish violence, 15 April to 10 May 1881



11 Subbottsy [Subottsi], 17.4.
12 Vysokie Bueraki [Vysoki Bairaky], 17.4.
13 Znamenka [Znamianka], 17.4.
14 Gol'ta [Hol'ta], 17.4.
15 Gruzskoe [Hruz'ke], 17.4.
16 Lelekovka [Lelekivka], 17.4.
17 Poklitarovka, 17.4.
18 Sasovka [Sasivka], 17.4.
19 Gubovka [Hubivka], 18.4.
20 Aleksandriia [Oleksandriia], 19.4.
21 Plosskoe [Ploske], 19.4.
22 Kishinev [Chisinau], 20.4.
23 Miroliubovka [Myroliubivka], 20.4.
24 Romanovka [Romanivka], 21.4.
25 Antonopol [Antonopil], 21.4.
26 Kamenovodka [Kamiatuvatka], 21.4.
27 Vitiazevka [Vytiazivka], 21.4.

Riots/pogroms in Tsarist Russia, **25–30 April 1881,**
place name followed by day and month, number indicating location on map

◆ towns where riots/pogroms occured [ ] different place name today

28 Berdiansk [Berdians'k], 25.4.
29 Anan'ev [Anan'iv], 26.4.
30 Berezovka [Berezivka], 26.4.
31 Gandrabury [Handrabury], 26.4. + *27–28.4.
32 Bernardovka [Chyzhove], 26-27.4.
33 Demidovo [Demydove], 26-27.4.
34 Kiev, 26.4.
35 Brovary, 27.4.
36 Konotop, 27.4.
37 Gandrabury [Handrabury], 27.4.
38 Fasovka/Fasova [Fasivochka], 27.4.
39 Makarov [Makariv], 27.4.
40 Fastov (station) [Fastiv], 27.4.
41 Kanev [Kaniv], 27.4.
42 Zhmerinka (station) [Zhmerynka], 27.4.
43 Konotop, 27–28.4.
44 Vasil'kov [Vasyl'kiv], 27–28.4.
45 Peregonovka [Perehonivka], 29.4.
46 Vasil'evo [Vasyliv], 29.4.
47 Liudvinovka [Liudvynivka], 30.4.

* plus four villages: Zavadovka, Sirorinka, Strukovo, Tefrulovo, 27–28.4.

Riots/pogroms in Tsarist Russia, **1–10 May 1881,**
place name followed by day and month, number indicating location on map

▲ towns where riots/pogroms occured [ ] different place name today

48 Aleksandrovsk, 1.5.
49 Andreevka [Andriivka], 1.5.
50 Grigor'evka [Hryhorovka], 1.5.
51 Natal'evka [Natal'yevka], 1.5.
52 Nikopol, 1.5.
53 Petrovsk [Petrovskoye], 1.5.
54 Manuilovka [Manuilivka], 1.5.
55 Nikolaev [Nikolayev], 1.5.
56 Orekhov [Orikhiv], 1–4.5.
57 Kamyshevka [Komyshuvakha], 3.5.
58 Voznesensk, 3.5.
59 Lozova [Lozova], 3–5.5.
60 Ivanovka [Ivanivka], 3–10.5.
61 Maiaki [Mayaki], 3.5.
62 Odessa, 3.5.
63 Varvarovka, 3–10.5.
64 Smela [Smila], 3.5.
65 Kovalevka [Kovalivka], 3.5.
66 Romny, 3.5.
67 Volochisk (station) [Volochys'k], 3–5.5.
68 Fridrikhovka, 3–4.5.
69 Shpaier, 4.5.
70 Balakleia [Balaklija], 4.5.
71 Berezniaki [Bereznjaky], 4.5.
72 Budki [Budky], 4.5.
73 Dubievka [Dubiivka], 4.5.
74 Konstantinovka [Konstantynivka], 4.5.
75 Malaia Smelianka [Mala Smiljanka], 4.5.
76 Malo-Starosel' [Male Starosilja], 4.5.
77 Pleskachevka [Pleskacivka], 4.5.
78 Pleskal'ko [Ploskel], 4.5.
79 Starosel'e [Starosilja], 4.5.
80 Zalevki [Zalevky], 4.5.
81 villages near Berdiansk, 4.5.
82 Malye Tokmachi [Mala Tokmacka], 4.5. + *4.5.
83 Golokhvasta [Golokhavasty], 4.5.
84 Kopachevka, 4.5.
85 Nemirovets [Nemirovka], 4.5.
86 Poliana [Polyana], 4.5.
87 Volchkovets [Vockivc'i], 4.5.
88 Imenie Vasinovka [Vasynivka], 4–5.5.
89 Konskie Razdory [Rozdory], 4–5.5.
90 Volochisk (station), 4–5.5.
91 Gaigula [Gaichul], 5.5.
92 Preobrazhenka, 5.5.
93 Voskresensk [Voskresenivka], 5.5.
94 villages near Berdiansk, 5.5.
95 villages near Melitopol, 5.5.
96 Alekseeva [Oleksiivka], 6.5.
97 Belomanka [Bil'manka], 6.5.
98 Blagoveshchensk, 6.5.
99 Mezherich (col), 6.5.
100 Novoselovka, 6.5.
101 Sofievka, 6.5.
102 Tsarekonstantinovka [Kostjantynivka], 6.5.
103 Bobrik, 6.5.
104 villages near Berdiansk, 6.5.
105 Imenie Belogor'e [Bilohiria], 6.5.
106 Trudoliubovka, 6–7.5.
107 Sladkovodnyi, 7.5.
108 Pokrovskoe, 8.5.
109 Verbovo [Berbovo], 8.5.
110 Kherson, 10.5.

* plus nearby villages: Orekhov, Volost, 4.5.