

THE IDENTIFICATION OF CZAR NICHOLAS II THE LAST CZAR OF IMPERIAL RUSSIA

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Nicholas II

1868 born
1894 (26 yo) assumed the throne
"charming, but hopelessly indecisive"
1903-1916 Rasputin family advisor
1899 Hague Peace Conference I
1904-05 Russo-Japanese War
1906 Created elected Duma
1907 Hague Peace conference II
1914 involved in WWI

Background

Centuries of repressive government.
1825 revolt lost, but impetus for further revolts.
1905 revolt squelched by Nicholas II .
March 1917, Kerensky takes power.
(March 14, Nicholas II abdicates)
October 1917, Lenin's Bolsheviks take over.

Ekaterinburg

Katherine's City
Siberian town in the Urals
Later known as Sverdlovsk
Military build up during WWII
1960 Gary Powers flew U-2 over
1979 Site of Anthrax release

The Hostages

Ural Soviets, in possession of the family,
--- wanted to execute the family.

Leon Trotsky, Red Commissar for War,
--- wanted a public trial and humiliation.

Lenin,
--- wanted to use the family as pawns.

The Hostage as Pawns

Treaty of Brest-Litovsk achieved peace by handing over 1/3 of European Russia and Western Ukraine. Most Russian people saw it as a betrayal. Nicholas might sign or endorse the Treaty.

The Empress was a German Princess and Kaiser Wilhelm's First cousin. The German Ambassador expressed concern for her safety.

The Execution Decision

Sverdlov, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee, convinced Lenin that the family should be executed.

- By July, civil war and foreign intervention and the Czech-White Army was nearing Ekaterinburg.
- July 6th the German Ambassador was assassinated.
- July 12, word was sent to the Urals that the family was of no more use.

The Ural Soviet immediately voted to execute the Czar.

Yakov Yurovsky was to carry out the order and destroy all evidence.

The Execution Decision

"Ilych [Lenin] believed that we shouldn't leave the Whites a live banner to rally around, especially under the present difficult circumstances...the decision was not only expedient but necessary. The severity of this summary justice showed the world that we would continue to fight on mercilessly, stopping at nothing. The execution of the Tsar's family was needed not only to frighten, horrify and dishearten the enemy, but also in order to shake up their own ranks to show that there was no turning back, that ahead lay either complete victory or complete ruin...This Lenin sensed well."

Trotsky

The Execution

At midnight, July 16-17, 1918, after 78 days imprisonment in the Impatiev House, Yakov Yurovsky arrived and told Dr. Botkin to have the family dressed so they could be moved to the basement for safety as the Whites were drawing near.

1. Nicholas Romanov (50)
2. Alexandra Romanov (46)
3. Alexis Romanov (13)
4. Olga Romanov (22)
5. Tatiana Romanov (21)
6. Marie Romanov (19)
7. Anastasia Romanov (17)
8. Dr. Botkin, the family physician (54)
9. Trupp, Nicholas' valet (61)
10. Demidova, Alexandra's maid (40)
11. Kharitonov, the cook (48)

Execution squad of 12, led by Yakov Yurovsky.

"In view of the fact that your relatives are continuing their attack on Soviet Russia, the Ural Executive Committee has decided to execute you."

The Czar shot first, point blank, in the head.

The Czarina died quickly.

Olga was shot in the head.

Botkin, Trupp, Kharitonov fell quickly.

Marie and Anastasia crouched with arms over their heads. Bullets bounced off the dresses, but they were eventually killed.

Alexis clutched father; kicked away and shot twice in the ear.

Demidova was bayoneted.

Destruction of Evidence

Within 20 minutes, the bodies were checked for pulses and loaded on a truck.

When moved, one daughter cried out and was immediately bayoneted and bludgeoned with rifle butts.

On the Koptyaki road, the execution squad was met by a party of 25 factory workers to assist in the disposal of the corpses.

On the day prior, a local Bolshevik leader, Peter Ermakov, had arranged for the help of the local workers and had chosen the burial site--north of Ekaterinburg, in the Four Brothers, (an area of swamps, peat bogs, and abandoned mines, including "Ganin's pit").

At sunrise (6 am), the procession reached the Four Brothers. The bodies were laid out on the grass and undressed. Valuables were collected (including 18 pounds of diamonds). The faces were crushed. Two fires were set. Gasoline and sulfuric acid were poured onto the bodies. The bodies were thrown down into a nameless, small, but deep pit (30') with water at the bottom. Then, several grenades dropped.

Kremlin Cover-up

July 18th, Sverdlov announced to the Presidium that Nicholas had been shot, but Alexandra and her children were in reliable hands.

July 20th, Pravda and Isvestia reported that the Czar Nicholas had been shot, but made no mention of the fate of the rest of the family.

Later government announcements stated that the family had been moved to a place of greater safety.

Karl Radek, Bolshevik Foreign Commissariat, suggested a possible exchange of the Imperial family for prisoners from Germany.

The Aftermath

8 days after the execution, Ekaterinburg fell to the White Army. The Impatiev House had been vacated. Numerous belongings of the Romanovs were found. The cellar had traces of blood and the walls were pocked by gunshots and bayonets. An immediate search for the family was unsuccessful.

Sokolov Investigation

Six months after the execution (Jan 1919), ADM Kolchak, Supreme Ruler of the White Army in Siberia, ordered an investigation to be headed by a 36 year-old legal investigator Nicholas Sokolov.

At the Four Brothers site, he found ruts, horse tracks, and 2 sites of fire. Ganin's pit and a smaller but deeper pit were drained. The Czar's and Czarevich's buckles, emerald cross, Ulm cross, Botkin's glasses and dentures, a decomposed spaniel, one finger, and charred bone fragments were found in the deeper pit. Evidence of explosives use was noted in the pit. He also discovered that 2 barrels of gasoline and 1 barrel of sulfuric acid had been purchased by the party.

As the Red Army recaptured the town, Sokolov fled to Europe with the physical evidence.

1924, *Judicial Enquiry into the Assassination of the Russian Imperial Family*

He claimed the bodies had been chopped, soaked in acid and burned completely to ashes. He died shortly after the publication, at age 42.

Bykov Report

After 8 yrs of denial, Stalin's government authorized their version by Pavel M. Bykov:

1926, *The Last Days of Tsardom*.

Largely a plagiarism of Sokolov's report. Admitted the Imperial family was dead.

"Much has been said about the absence of corpses. But...the remains of the corpses, after being burned, were taken quite far away from the mines and buried in a swampy place, in an area where the volunteers and investigators did not excavate. There the corpses remained and by now have rotted."

Remains had survived the fires

Remains had been buried

Buried quite far away

In a swampy place

In a place not excavated by investigators

Halliburton Report

In the years after the execution, Peter Ermakov often bragged while drinking Vodka, that he, not Yurovsky, shot the Czar. In 1935, a NY journalist Richard Halliburton interviewed Ermakov, supposedly dying of throat cancer. In his "deathbed confession," he admitted that Yurovsky shot the Czar. He also stated that the bodies were consumed in fire and that he personally pitched the ashes into the air. Ermakov died 17 years later.

Summers and Mangold Report

Anthony Summers and Tom Mangold, BBC television journalists published:

1976, *The File on the Tsar*

They disputed Sokolov's conclusion that more than a half ton of flesh and bones could be totally destroyed. Their experts, Dr. Francis Camps and Dr. Edward Rich, opined that neither the fire nor the sulfuric acid would destroy the bodies and that some of the 350 teeth should have been found. The book also alluded to a citing in Perm that Sokolov had dismissed.

Destruction of the Impatiev House

In 1977, Yuri Andropov convinced President Leonid Brezhnev that the Impatiev House had become a meeting place for monarchists.

Boris Yeltsin, the first Secretary of the Sverdlovsk Region, was ordered to destroy the Impatiev House. It was bulldozed on July 27, 1977.

The Find

In 1976--just before the destruction, Geli Ryabov, a filmmaker, traveled from Moscow to Sverlovsk. He visited the Impatiev House and was moved. He sought out the local expert on the subject on the Romanov execution, Alexander Advonin, and they met a year later. Together, they conspired to secretly find the remains, if any.

In Sokolov's report, there is a picture of a bridge of railroad ties over a muddy spot in the Koptyaki road. On July 19th, two days after the executions, at 4:30 a.m., a truck had become stuck in the mud and railroad ties had been brought in. By 9:00 a.m. they were back in Ekaterinburg, ½ hour away.

In 1978, Alexander Advonin and a friend, Michael Kachurov, set in search of the bridge placed 50 years before.

Using a pipe corkscrew to take core samples, they found the 6.5 x10' wooden structure 16 inches under the surface in the Porosyonk [Pig's] Meadow.

Meanwhile, Geli Ryabov contacted Yurovsky's son, who turned over a copy of his father's report; the original was buried in the secret files of the Central Archive. It described that the bodies had been moved when the first burial had not remained secret. A pit was dug when their truck got stuck. The bodies were buried and planks covered the site, 12 mi. north of Ekaterinburg.

May 30, 1979, the site was excavated in secret. Three human skulls were removed.

Advonin kept 1 skull and Ryabov kept 2 skulls, but they were unable to do anything with them and so in 1980 they were reburied at the site in a wooden box.

They swore not to talk about this until circumstances changed.

Brezhnev, Adropov, Chernenko passed and Gorbachev came to power in 1985 with policies of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (reform).

Ryabov attempted to contact Gorbachev and the story leaked out resulting in an interview with the Moscow News (April 1989) and then worldwide media attention. In 1991, Boris Yeltsin authorized a "scientific" exhumation.

Exhumation

July 11, 1991 (11 yrs after the Advonin find), the site was excavated by Advonin, Dr. Ludmilla Koryakova, Professor of Archeology at the Ural State University, 2 police colonels, 2 police investigators, 2 forensic experts, 2 epidemiologists,

the town procurator, his secretary, and 2 policemen armed with submachine guns.

1. Nicholas Romanov
2. Alexandra Romanov
3. Olga Romanov
4. Tatiana Romanov
5. Marie Romanov
6. Anastasia Romanov
7. Alexis Romanov
8. Dr. Botkin, the family physician
9. Trupp, Nicholas' valet
10. Demidova, Alexandra's maid
11. Kharitonov, the cook

Identification

Dr. Vladislav Plaksin, the Chief Medical Examiner of the Russian Ministry of Health, was asked to validate the bones.

He sent Sergei Abramov, the leading Soviet forensic anthropologist, to Ekaterinburg.

950 bones and bone fragments were assembled into 9 bodies. Then photosuperimposition was performed.

The czarovich and a daughter were missing.

February 1992, U.S. Secretary of State James A Baker, III, traveled through the splintered former Soviet Union and visited Ekaterinburg, the excavation site, and the Romanov remains. Governor Rossel requested assistance and Baker replied that he would see what he could do. An AFIP-FBI team was assembled. Ekaterinburg authorities opted for a private team of Maples, Baden, Levine, Oakes, and Claire-King.

	age/sex	Abramov	Maples
Nicholas	(50M)	#4	#4
Alexandra	(46F)	#7	#7
Alexis	(13F)	absent	absent
Olga	(22F)	#3	#3
Tatiana	(21F)	#5	#6
Marie	(19F)	absent	#5
Anastasia	(17F)	#6	absent
Dr. Botkin	(54M)	#2	#2
Trupp	(61M)	#9	#9
Demidova	(40F)	#1	#1
Kharitonov	(48M)	#8	#8

Abramov v. Maples

Abramov: anthropology, reconstruction, photosuperimposition
Alexis and Marie are missing

Maples: anthropology, dental
Alexis and Anastasia are missing
faulted Abramov's facial reconstruction
rendered superimposition meaningful
faulted Abramov's superimposition

Identification

Ekaterinburg Conference, July 1992, Pavel Ivanov announced that Dr. Plaksin had requested that he investigate the possibility of DNA identification. He would take bone samples to Peter Gill at the Home Office of the British Forensic Science Service.

DNA Testing

Identification of the Remains of the Romanov Family by DNA Analysis
Gill, Ivanov, Kimpton, Piercy, Benson, Tully, Evett, Hagelberg, Sullivan
Nature Genetics 6:130-135, 1994

STR/Amelogenin analysis:

Parents and 3 female offspring
4 unrelated individuals (3M, 1F)

MtDNA:

matched Alexandra to Prince Philip
matched Nicholas to 2 relatives
---except C/T at L16169
98.5% likelihood ratio

Repeated by Erika Hagelberg (Cambridge)

Investigator Soloviev

Aug 1993, the Office of the Prosecutor General took charge of the investigation. Soloviev declared it a murder investigation.

< 99% certainty was not enough for a criminal investigation

Criticism

Bill Maples claimed bone improper source

Expert Commission of Russians Abroad claimed it was a KGB hoax

Distrust of the British

King George V, Nicholas' first cousin, initially welcomed asylum to the Romanovs when they were taken into custody by Kerensky. However, fearing the unpopularity of the former Tsar in Britain would tarnish the Crown, he reversed himself and refused their entry—thereby dooming the family and resulted in deep resentment and suspicion of the British in Russia.

DNA Testing

99:1 considering male remains and distant relatives, excluding heteroplasmy
4,000:1 considering male remains and brother, Georgij
396,000:1 considering all male mtDNA evidence
305:1 considering female remains to relatives
30,200:1 considering all remains without heteroplasmy
121,000,000:1 considering all mtDNA evidence

Heteroplasmy Detection

Routine Sequencing	30%
DGGE	5%
PNA	5%

Moscow v. Ekaterinburg

Discoverers:	Ryabov	Advonin
Politician:	Yeltsin	Rossel
Investigators:	Platskin/ Abramov	Volkov
Prosecutor:	Soloviev	
Burial site:	St Peter & St Paul	Cathedral on Spilled Blood

Czar Burial

July 17, 1998

Remains are buried in the St Peter & St Paul Cathedral of the Russian Orthodox Church in St. Petersburg

Doubts Persist

Just three days before the scheduled burial, Russian patriarch Alexy II went on national television to launch a virulent attack on the authenticity of the

remains...The patriarch said the area where the bones were found was often used for mass executions during the civil war. The church wanted the bones to be buried in a symbolic tomb until the last doubts about their identity can be removed.

In Toronto, Olga Kulikovsky-Romanov, the widow of one of the Czar's nephews, was one of the Romanov relatives who stayed away from the funeral. She, too, disputes the authenticity of the remains. "They couldn't even prove anything with O.J. Simpson's DNA, and here are bones that have been dug up after 80 years, and they think they can prove it's the same family."

Church Rift

The debate over the authenticity of the bones may be little more than a wish by the Orthodox church in Russia not to offend the Russian Orthodox church abroad. The church in exile was founded by clerics and members who fled Russia during the civil war. It canonized Czar Nicholas and his family in a ceremony in New York in 1981. The church abroad considers the bones sacred relics, which means they could not be placed in the Romanov family tomb. The church abroad has made canonization of the Romanovs a precondition for reunification of the church, which would boost the Russian Orthodox Church's position within Russia and among other branches of Orthodoxy.

Russia's last czar, Nicholas II, canonized by Orthodox Church

Tuesday, August 15, 2000

MOSCOW—Ending a decades-long debate and two years after a ceremonial burial in his former imperial capital, St. Petersburg, the Russian Orthodox Church on Monday canonized Russia's last czar, Nicholas II, saying the haughty and cruel ruler died as a martyr to faith when he was executed 82 years ago.

Although Nicholas was reviled by many, he and his family deserved sainthood for their "meekness during imprisonment and poise and acceptance of their martyr's death," according to a church statement.

The Archbishops Council, the church's highest body, also canonized Nicholas' wife, Alexandra, and the couple's four daughters and one son, all of whom were killed by a Bolshevik firing squad.

Impostors

The mysterious disappearance of the family

Absence of bodies

Intentional soviet disinformation

Claims of a Romanov fortune in a foreign bank

Col Michael Goloniewski, NY, NY
Eugenia Smith, Newport, RI
Dozens of other claimants . . .

Anna Anderson Manahan

Feb 17, 1920 (19 mos after the executions) a young woman jumped 20' from a bridge in the Landwehr Canal in Berlin. She was rescued by a policeman and taken to a hospital. She had no identification of any kind and refused to answer questions. She was transferred to a mental hospital and only after months did she begin to talk.

A Russian speaking German nurse noted that she spoke "like a native Russian." Looking through a magazine on the Imperial family, she asked a nurse if she noted a resemblance to Anastasia. When the nurse agreed, she declared that she was the Grand Duchess Anastasia. She moved to Berlin and regaled visitors with her tale.

Alexander & Sergei Tschaikovsky noted that she was unconscious but alive and carried her home. With their family they fled Bucharest, Rumania. She discovered she was pregnant and Alexander confessed to the rape. The child, born out of wedlock, was turned over to an orphanage, but they later married. Tschaikovsky died in a street fight. She walked back to Berlin to Princess Irene's palace, but in despair threw herself into the canal.

No Tschaikovsky was a party to the execution, no Tschaikovsky family lived in Ekaterinburg in 1918 and no Tschaikovsky's were found in Budapest in the 1920's.

Notable that she did not visit Queen Marie of Rumania, a 2nd cousin, whom Anastasia had only a few years earlier.

From 1922 on, a series of relatives came to meet "Mrs. Tschaikovsky," but with conflicting opinions.

1927 report of Franziska Schankowska
1928 changed name to Anna Anderson
1938 court ruling—claim unproven
1968 moved to U.S. married John Manahan
1984 died of pneumonia

FSS -- pathology specimen
AFIP -- pathology specimen
Penn State -- hair from a diary

- not Hessian line
- matched Schanzkowska line