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Skeletons in the Soviet Closet: The Last Tsar and his Family in the Early Soviet Era, 1918-1937

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Russia's Last Tsar and his Family in the Early Soviet Era, 1918-1937

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CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

1894 - Nicholas II becomes Tsar at the age of 26.

1904-1905 - Russo-Japanese War; Russia suffers a humiliating defeat.

January 1905 - Peasant workers march to the Winter Palace to present the Tsar with a petition for basic civil liberties, only to be perceived as a threat and shot down by the Russian Imperial Guard. The event, which became known as "Bloody Sunday," led to riots and strikes that characterized 1905 as a mini-Revolution of sorts.

December 16-17, 1916 - Grigori Rasputin, the *starets* who was said to have held healing powers to calm the Tsarevich Alexei's hemophilic episodes, is murdered by members of the Romanov family in the Yusopov Palace in St. Petersburg.

February 1917 - February Revolution.

March 15, 1917 - Nicholas II abdicates.

March 21, 1917 - Nicholas and his family become prisoners in their home at Tsarskoye Selo.

August 19, 1917 – The Romanovs are moved from Tsarskoye Selo to Tobolsk for further captivity.

October 1917 – The Bolsheviks overthrow the Provisional Government in the October Revolution; Russian Civil War begins; Bolshevik "de-Romanovization" begins.

March 3, 1918 - Lenin signs the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany, thereby ending Russia's involvement in World War I.

April 30, 1918 - Romanovs moved from Tobolsk to Ekaterinburg into the Ipatiev House.

July 17-18, 1918 - Nicholas, his wife Alexandra, their five children, and their four companions are executed in Ekaterinburg

July 25, 1918 - The White Army captures Ekaterinburg from the Red Army.

January 1919 - Nikolai Sokolov begins his investigation into the death of the Romanovs on behalf of the White Army.

March 19, 1921 - The Bolshevik government institutes the New Economic Policy (NEP) in response to the fragile status of the economy in the wake of the Russian Civil War.

April 3, 1922 - Joseph Stalin becomes the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

October 1922 - Russian Civil War declared over with the creation of NEP.

January 21, 1924 - Lenin dies.

1927- The Ipatiev House formally becomes a branch of the Ural Revolution Museum.

1938 - The Ipatiev House becomes the Anti-Religion Museum.

September 1, 1939 - World War II begins.

July 1977 - The Ipatiev House is demolished in order to prevent those from traveling to the site for purposes relating to Nicholas II and his family.

November 1, 1981 - Nicholas, Alexandra, their children and the four others who were killed along with them in July 1918 are canonized as new martyrs in the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

July 17, 1998 – The remains Nicholas and his family (except for the missing two members) are buried in the St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in St. Petersburg 80 years to the day that they were killed.

August 20, 2000 - The Moscow Patriarchate canonizes the last Romanov family as passion bearers.

2001 - The Ural Mining and Metallurgical Company helps fund the Russian Orthodox Church to build the Monastery of Holy Imperial Passion-Bearers on the site where the Romanov bodies were buried.

August 23, 2007 – Russian archaeologists in Ekaterinburg find two additional bodies of members belonging to the Romanov family.

April 30, 2008 - DNA testing confirms that the two bodies found in 2007 are those of the Tsarevich Alexei and one of his sisters.

INTRODUCTION

The Road to Revolution and the Romanov Executions

On the night of July 17th, 1918, the last Tsar of Russia, Nicholas II, and his family were shot and killed in the basement of the Ipatiev House. The Ipatiev House, otherwise known as the "House of Special Purpose" to the execution squad, was located almost 1,400 miles away from the then-capital of Imperial Russia, and from where, after 23 years of rule, Nicholas II was overthrown in the February Revolution of 1917. Their bodies were dismembered, doused in sulfuric acid and burned in an attempt to conceal the Bolsheviks' act. Carelessly buried in a field in the Koptiaki village just outside of Ekaterinburg, Nicholas and his wife Alexandra, their five children: Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia, and Alexei, and their four companions were left to rot and disappear from the Russian narrative in the makeshift graves of Siberian mud and dirt. In the course of just a few years, the royal family of Russia went from some of the most powerful people in the world to discarded bones and ash.

Not everyone forgot about Nicholas II and his family after their murders. As exemplified in the words of Gleb Botkin, the son of Nicholas II's doctor Eugene Botkin who was also killed in Ekaterinburg with the family: "the past was gone, gone for ever; and I was living a new life in a new world, and not for a moment did I suspect that not all of the past was actually dead."[1] When the Romanov's remains were first discovered in the 1970s, those who found the bodies did not come forth with their discoveries until Gorbachev's reforms *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) during the mid-late 1980s. Moreover, on July 18, 1998, eighty years to the day that the Romanovs were killed, then president Boris Yeltsin addressed the citizens of the Russian Federation in a speech that condemned the killing of the last Romanovs. He

1 Gleb Botkin, *The Real Romanovs, as Revealed by the Late Czar's Physician and His Son* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1931), 247.

affirmed, “we all bear responsibility for the historical memory of the nation;” “those who committed this crime are as guilty as are those who approved of it for decades. We are all guilty.”[2] Furthermore, a few years later in 2000 the Russian Orthodox Church canonized Nicholas and his family as martyrs.

These are only a few examples that prove how Romanov-sympathizers have maintained interest in the Romanovs decades after they stopped ruling a sixth of the globe. What is so significant about Nicholas II and his family to the populations who lived under the early Soviet regime? What does the Romanov memory and its place (or lack there of) in Soviet society say about the communist regime in Revolutionary Russia and in the Soviet Union? I am determined to find out why and how devoted individuals kept the memory of Nicholas II and his family alive under the Bolshevik regime and its successors. Nicholas II and the last Romanovs hold a special place in Russian history, and I want to figure out how and why this has occurred over such a significant time frame.

Throughout this thesis, I propose the following argument: the Bolsheviks’ original disorganization regarding the Romanov murders led to increased faith in and devotion to the royal family by certain émigré groups. The Bolsheviks’ lack of clarification concerning the murders and their efforts to rid post-Revolutionary Russian society of any symbolism related to the Romanov dynasty generated space for certain groups of Romanov-sympathizers to create their own interpretations and to propagate their own depictions of Nicholas II and his family that were in contrast to the Bolsheviks’ portrayals of the Romanovs.

This thesis is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter places the Russian Revolution into the context of a larger historical phenomenon. The bulk of the first chapter

2 Boris Yeltsin, "Address by Yeltsin: 'We Are All Guilty,'" *New York Times,* 18 July 1998, accessed April 21, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/1998/07/18/world/address-by-yeltsin-we-are-all-guilty.html.

compares the Bolshevik Revolution to the French Revolution (as well as to a few other cases) in order to emphasize that the Russian Revolution is only one example of many revolutions and political transitions in history, and the way in which the Bolsheviks came to power has similar components as that of other revolutionary groups. The second chapter delineates and analyzes methods by which the Bolsheviks, once they came to power, controlled the discussion of Nicholas II and the Romanov dynasty. Insight into the Bolsheviks' manipulation of various physical symbols that held significance under the Romanovs, such as street names, monuments and buildings, is at the heart of my discussion about how the Bolsheviks dismantled and marginalized discussion of Nicholas II, his family and the rest of the Romanov monarchy throughout society. And finally, the third chapter narrows in on the Russian monarchist newspaper *Vozrozhdenie* from Paris, France, and its depictions of Nicholas II and his family from 1925 to 1937 in order to illuminate the alternate interpretations of the royal family that juxtaposed the Bolsheviks' depictions. An investigation into *Vozrozhdenie*'s headlines and image selection, with a specific look at bias, reveals that the monarchist newspaper increasingly expressed interest in and sympathy for the murdered Romanovs the longer *Vozrozhdenie* was in publication and the more time passed after Nicholas and his family were murdered.

I chose the time frame of 1918 to 1937 because 1918 was the year the Tsar and his family were murdered, and 1937 was the year that *Vozrozhdenie* apparently published some of its last images of the Tsar and his family on the newspaper's front page. In the few years leading up to 1940, *Vozrozhdenie* also scaled back the number of issues it published every week.

Altogether, these three chapters outline a mere glance into what became of the last Romanovs symbolically after they were murdered. I argue that the Bolsheviks' position regarding how to depict or discuss the Romanovs in society was inconsistent and contradictory.

The Bolsheviks' did not communicate a clear position that the new government and indirectly, its subjects, should have taken vis-à-vis the murdered Romanovs. As a result, some individuals may have remained interested in the royal family in a way that might not have otherwise occurred had the Bolsheviks taken a firmer stance on the Romanovs murders from the very beginning. The Bolsheviks' decision to deliberately confuse the masses by not admitting that the entire royal family was dead may have bred opportunities for devotees to believe in their survival, and to cultivate the Romanovs as figureheads worthy of spiritual reverence.

Against the larger backdrop of the characteristic trends and themes of revolutions, insight into how the Bolshevik government dealt with the Romanov legacy can be used to make conclusions about successive regime changes and political transitions in general. A study of how the Romanovs were treated in death can help historians better understand how Bolshevik ideologies were received among certain factions of the Russian population. The story of how the Bolsheviks murdered Nicholas II and his family, and how they continued to treat the Romanovs after the fact in official and unofficial government policies, is a story in part of how the Bolsheviks came to and stayed in power. In other words, if there remained a strong interest in the Romanovs throughout the Revolution and the years after the Romanov murders, what does that say about the Bolshevik regime and their tactics? About what it takes to complete a revolution in general? These are some of the questions I strive to answer throughout my thesis.

Background

For the purposes of this honors thesis, a detailed background description of the events leading up to the Russian Revolution and the fate of the Romanovs will be contrite. It is most important to comprehend how and why revolutionists mobilized against their Tsar in order to

fully grasp one of the main questions of my honors thesis: how did the memory of Nicholas II and his family persist under the Bolshevik and later Soviet regime?

The story of Nicholas II and the last Romanov family is an extensive one, and it continues long after their executions in 1918. The Russian Revolution of 1917, which saw the downfall of the Romanov monarchy that had until that point ruled Russia for 304 years, is one of the most important events in human history. The Russian Revolution saw small groups of varying political affiliations overthrow their Tsar and the institution he stood for. The Russian Revolution can be seen as two separate revolutions: the February Revolution, which witnessed Nicholas II's abdication and the instillation of the Provisional Government, and the October Revolution, which saw the Bolshevik party overthrow the Provisional Government. Vladimir Lenin, the head of the Bolshevik Party and vanguard of the October Revolution, stands out as a symbol of Communist Russia in general.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 was a watershed moment in world history. The events of 1917 marked the abrupt end of 304 years of Russian monarchic rule, and it set Russia on the uncertain communist path, which was to last for 74 years until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Many aspects of Imperial Russia and the culture that belonged to millions of ethnic Russians before the Revolution were uprooted and replaced by an entirely different dogma. One of these pillars of the pre-Revolutionary culture was role of the last Tsar and his family, who were destroyed physically and almost symbolically from discussion in society throughout the existence of the Soviet Union.

In the Russian Orthodox Church, the Tsar was seen as a figure above the people and a step below God. In a population comprised of mostly religious peasants, faith in the Tsar, although waning by 1917, was still prevalent in the population. This support from the peasant

masses was overshadowed by a smaller, although significant, portion of revolutionists who, full of resentment, frustration and impatience eventually pressured the Tsar to abdicate in March of 1917.

The Tsar's abdication was preceded by numerous events that badly damaged the Tsar's legitimacy and prestige. Some of these major events include the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), Bloody Sunday, several failed Duma (the Russian parliament) tenures, World War I and the family's controversial relationship with the mythical figure Grigori Rasputin. After the February Revolution, Nicholas and his family were put under house arrest and hidden away from the events sweeping throughout the empire. In most historical scholarship and textbooks, the focus is thus drawn to the 1917 Revolution and Civil War, as opposed to what happened to the Romanovs.

It was not simply one event that inspired revolutionists to overthrow the monarchy. Instead, it was a culmination of events over the span of a few decades that ultimately made some individuals reconsider the Tsar's place as their ruler. Under Nicholas II's reign in particular, the first major event to stain his reputation and draw attention to the faults of the monarchy was the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05. What was originally assumed to be a quick, easy victory turned into a devastating and humiliating loss for the Russians. Those who were affected by the war were left frustrated and disheartened, and the defeat in Japan brought many grievances of the Tsarist institution into light.

The Russo-Japanese war led to what is known as "Bloody Sunday," the second crucial event that contributed to discouraged citizens' disillusionment with the Tsar. The disorder was sparked on January 22, 1905, when a group of working class individuals marched to the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg to present the Tsar with a petition for basic civil liberties such as limited

working hours, increased wages, and medical care. Tsar Nicholas II never saw these demands, however, for before the workers could reach the palace they were perceived as a threat and shot down by Imperial troops. Hundreds were killed and wounded as they attempted to notify the Tsar of their inability "to speak, to think, to assemble, to discuss [their] needs, or to take measures to improve [their] conditions."[3] As a result, violent uprisings and widespread strikes characterized the year 1905 as turbulent and full of disorder in Russia, and Nicholas II eventually earned the epithet "Nicholas the Bloody." Up until Bloody Sunday, most peasants in Russia still maintained faith in their Tsar. After Bloody Sunday, the notion of the Tsar as their father and savior was shattered for many of the Tsar's subjects.

Nicholas II's reign was tainted with increasingly more scandals and widely regarded political mistakes. World War I was a catastrophe, but Russia in particular suffered horrifically in terms of losses. More specifically, compared to the French who lost around 6.2 million people, and the Germans who lost roughly 7.1 million, the Russians had an estimate of 9.2 million casualties over the course of the first 3 years from 1914-17.[4]

And finally, Nicholas and Alexandra's relationship to the mysterious *starets* (spiritual advisor) Grigori Rasputin only further alienated St. Petersburg residents (and those who participated in the societal rumor mill) from their Tsar. Rasputin was believed to have held healing powers that were used to stop the Tsarevich Alexei, who suffered from the genetic disease hemophilia, from bleeding during traumatic episodes. Nicholas and Alexandra kept their son and only heir's illness from the general population, so consequentially, those outside the intimate Romanov circle were unaware as to why Rasputin, a filthy, lewd and notoriously

[3] George Gapon and Ivan Vasimov, "Russian Workers Appeal to the Tsar (1905)," accessed April 21, 2015. http://teacher.sduhsd.net/tpsocialsciences/world_history/russsian_rev/gapon.htm.
4 "WWI Casualty and Death Tables," U.S. Department of Justice, *PBS*, accessed March 9, 2015. http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath_pop.html.

unpleasant peasant from Siberia, was permitted behind the doors of the Winter Palace and the Imperial residences in Tsarskoye Selo.

As mentioned at the beginning of this introductory chapter, the overwhelming wave of discontent that lead to the overthrow of Nicholas II was a product of multiple factors. Many may argue that the Revolution in Russia began gaining momentum even before Nicholas ascended to the throne in 1894. It is crucial to remember that Nicholas II and his family were the symbol of a system that had been losing legitimacy and sway amongst its own citizens for decades, and Nicholas was the tsar at a difficult time. It is possible that many of the grudges and grievances that pro-Revolution individuals held over the years manifested themselves against Nicholas and his family, regardless of whether or not Nicholas personally brought them about.

After Nicholas abdicated and the provisional government took control, Nicholas and his family were taken under house arrest in their home at Tsarskoye Selo in St. Petersburg. Five months later, authorities moved the Romanovs to the Siberian town of Tobolsk for a year before the Bolsheviks took them to their final destination, the Ipatiev House in Ekaterinburg. During the Romanovs' time as prisoners in Ekaterinburg, a year had past since the February Revolution of 1917. Since then, the October Revolution had taken place, and the Bolsheviks were trying to keep control of a population that had divided itself into several factions that broke out into a Civil War against one another. During the time of the Romanov imprisonment, Ekaterinburg was under Red Army (Bolshevik) control. However, in the days leading up to July 17th, the Red Army was becoming increasingly more distressed at the encroaching White Army's position. Unsure of what to do with the royal family who had immense value to various political groups both in Russia and abroad, the Ural Regional Soviet (the local government in the

Ural region) issued an order to execute the entire family and their four companions on the night of July 17, 1918.

For the next 74 years, the Bolsheviks and their Soviet successors attempted to restructure their new empire and how citizens understood Russian history. There was a shift in dominating ideologies when the Bolsheviks came to power, and this change included the marginalization of the Romanovs in discussion and in significance. It is here, in this gap of historical scholarship, that I intend to uncover how the memory of Nicholas II and his family was kept alive and/or stifled through an in-depth analysis of the different strategies that characterize revolutions throughout history, Bolshevik methods to marginalize the Romanovs' symbolism in society and finally, the Russian émigré monarchist newspaper *Vozrozhdenie*'s responses to the Romanov murders. Through the Bolsheviks' heavy implementation of censorship and other techniques characteristic to communist regimes, the passive citizenry was forced to think about their history in a completely different way. Thus, I am curious to reveal not only how the Bolsheviks dealt with the lingering memories of Russia's last Tsar in the context of historical revolutionary trends, but also how a Russian monarchist organ responded to and depicted the Romanov murders and the Bolshevik policies concerning the monarchy after 1918.

To begin this undertaking, I now turn to a discussion of revolutions and political transitions. Contextualizing the Bolshevik Revolution among other examples throughout history sheds light on the Bolsheviks' goals and the challenges they faced while they were enacting regime change. This upcoming chapter is fundamental to my larger argument, for the Bolsheviks' approaches towards the royal family— that is, their misinformation on the matter, ultimately generated the conditions under which Romanov-sympathizers could express interest in the Romanovs with a fervent religiosity in a way that may not have occurred had the Bolsheviks

announced the truth behind the murders outright. In other words, the Bolsheviks' deliberate mishandling of the Romanov executions and the subsequent announcements allowed interested groups the opportunities to create their own readings of the events and of the key characters involved.

CHAPTER ONE

What Happens After a Revolution? 1917 Russia in the Broader Context of Historical Revolutions and Regime Change Patterns and Themes

Revolutions are inspirational and hopeful events. They often signify change for the better, as typically the ruling, unsatisfactory government's power and authority are taken and placed into the hands of the revolutionists. Revolutions tend to mark a drastic shift in political structure, cultural norms and dominant ideologies. The demands of a revolution can propose such new and different ideas for a society that revolutionists usually have multiple challenges to overcome. What exactly happens after the incumbent leader or government is deposed? What follows the revolution? Revolutionists have to engage in regime change strategies, and the obstacles they face are not always easy to overcome.

The goal of this chapter is to put the Russian Revolution and the political transition that followed it (I assert that the transition ended when the Red Army emerged victorious from the Civil War in 1922) into a greater historical context. In order to envision the Romanovs' role in the Bolshevik Revolution, it is imperative to discuss first common patterns and themes among revolutions and regime changes. Doing so will contextualize and perhaps justify (or not) the circumstances under which the Bolsheviks decided to execute the Tsar and his family, and to devise policies regarding the Romanov monarchy during and after the Revolution.

Firstly, it is important to define a few crucial terms. A regime change is the replacement of one form of rule with another, particularly through political or military means. Those who design and actualize a revolution typically hope to bring about a new form of government, hence, regime change. Revolutions often aim to enact regime change, but not all regime changes include revolution. The people who are governed are responsible for revolutions, but the people who are

governed do not necessarily always actualize regime change. Sometimes regime changes occur after a state collapses or through foreign power intervention.

Revolutions are not necessary generated by a single group of like-minded individuals with the same political preferences and similar economic or social backgrounds. Thus, I will use the term "revolutionist" or "architect of the revolution" to refer to the specific individuals who play an active role in the creation and prioritization of the Revolution's goals, the planning of key events throughout the revolution (meetings, speeches, coups, etc.) and who assume high-ranking or influential positions in the government after the political transition. Of no less significance is how I define the people who are affected by the revolution. Individuals who live through a revolution and its aftermath, like revolutionists, are not necessarily one homogeneous group with identical characteristics or inclinations. In order to distinguish the revolutionists from the people who live through a revolution, and to further clarify that they do not make up a single group by referring to them as "the people," I will use the phrase "passive citizenry" instead.

Each revolution is indeed unique, and the Russian Revolution of 1917 is no exception. However, revolutions and regime changes share certain patterns and characteristics, and in this regard many of them are not exceptional in terms of how a revolution occurs, how a revolution is spread, and how a successive regime change is carried out after the revolution.

The October Revolution of 1917 occurred when the Bolshevik party overthrew the provisional government that came to power after Nicholas II abdicated the throne in March 1917. The main aim of this thesis is to uncover how the Bolsheviks depicted the Romanovs after their murders, how the Bolsheviks imagined Nicholas II and the last Romanov family in the narrative of the Revolution, and how Russians abroad responded to the Bolsheviks' depictions. What was the Romanovs' place in the Russian Revolution according to Bolshevik ideology? What

significance did they hold for the new regime, and how did the Bolsheviks present said significance (or lack thereof)? The Bolsheviks attempted to eradicate all traces of loyalty to and interest in the Romanov monarchy in their new communist society after the Tsar and his family were executed in 1918. This was only one of many challenges that the Bolsheviks took on when they overthrew the existing order and carried out regime change.

The October Revolution is one of many revolutions and regime changes. The Bolsheviks' methods (both intentional and non-intentional) during and after the Revolution are some of the same revolutionist methods that were responsible for the French Revolution of 1789, the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, Cambodia after the 1970 coup and the regime change that took place in Iraq after Saddam Hussein's execution in 2006. There are indeed numerous examples of revolutions that do not share many characteristics with the Bolshevik Revolution, but for the purposes of this thesis, a few case studies have been selected to illuminate the Bolshevik Revolution's relation to others in history. More specifically, cases have been selected to show how unforeseen consequences can occur during revolutions and political transitions. Revolutions strive to replace the current regime with another one, but the process does not always unfold according to plan. Removing one system and instilling a different one can easily lead to violence and misused political aggression, as examples from the rest of this chapter will illustrate.

It is necessary to look at what forces were in place when the Bolsheviks enacted the Revolution so it will be easier to analyze later how and why they portrayed the last Romanov family in their communist society. Examining broader revolutionary trends also serves to highlight the patterns that occur amongst the populations affected by a revolution. How did Russians abroad respond to the Romanovs murders? How did they react to the Bolsheviks' interpretation of the Romanovs vis-à-vis the Revolution? In order to answer such questions, the

rest of this chapter will delineate and explain four major trends of a few cases to contextualize the Bolshevik Revolution among other revolutionary movements throughout history. In identifying the main tactics that revolutionists rely on, how the Bolsheviks portrayed and marginalized the Romanovs in Russia post-1918 will make more sense, and it is to these methods I now turn.

Differences in Revolutionary Goals

In designing and actualizing revolutions, their masterminds may disagree on the original goals and outcomes as the process unfolds. A revolution becomes a revolution in part as a result of a drastic change in government or society. But how much of a change is necessary? How much of a change is desired? Some people behind a revolution may hope for a complete break with the past, while others may wish to maintain some former institutions and political structures.

In 2003, the American architects of the regime change in Iraq encountered changing goals and priorities throughout the process. The original goals of the American-lead political transition in Iraq "were primarily about change: the removal of Saddam's regime and its replacement with one less prone to violent adventurism, domestic repression and the development of weapons of mass destruction."[5] The American military's goals for Iraq may not have been as extreme or revolutionary as the Bolsheviks' aims, but the problems that Americans policy makers encountered while trying to change politics in Iraq underscore how difficult it is to actualize a daunting plan without encountering dissent or the need to reevaluate the original objectives at one point or another.

5 Toby Dodge, *Iraq's Future: The Aftermath of Regime Change* (London: Routledge for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005), 25.

Like the Bolsheviks, the architects of regime change in Iraq began to come across issues when "the almost complete collapse of the existing institutions of the state in the aftermath of victory gave rise to the more sustained problem of rebuilding all the structures of government throughout the country."[6] Not only did the architects of regime change have to imagine how to bring about said change, but also it was necessary to envision how those in power were going to pick up the pieces after the political transition. Eventually, Iraqis wanted more of a say in how to rule themselves.[7] After Saddam Hussein was ousted, "by July 2003, this new space for political action had given rise to at least 140 different interest groups and political parties. In addition, 170 daily, weekly and monthly publications had sprung up, giving a platform to the diversity of views that could now be openly expressed."[8] As a result, Iraqis advocated for more responsibility in the state-building process, but the United States had not then considered who exactly should take responsibility or how such (an) Iraqi(s) would be chosen to begin with.[9] All in all, there are unexpected developments when a government is overturned and revolutionists or foreign interventionists attempt to alter the political system. This process, the challenges that the American architects faced, and the unexpected consequences are all factors that can be found in the other two major examples of this chapter: the French and Russian Revolutions.

Strategies Based in Violence and Terror

One trademark of revolutions and regime changes is the use of violence and terror. As other examples from history have shown, what can follow a people's revolution are political

6 Dodge, *Iraq's Future*, 25.
7 Dodge, *Iraq's Future*, 26.
8 Dodge, *Iraq's Future,* 25-26.
9 Dodge, *Iraq's Future*, 26.

authorities or leaders who rely on strategies based in fear and intimidation in order to maintain control over the masses.

Brief stints of anarchic behavior are types of fear tactics that plagued Iraq after Saddam Hussein's removal from power and during the United States' involvement in Iraq in 2003. Toby Dodge, author of *Iraq's Future: The Aftermath of Regime Change,* writes about the security vacuum concept, which "stresses that establishing law and order within the first six to 12 weeks of any occupation is crucial for the credibility and legitimacy of the occupiers."[10] Unlike the Bolshevik Revolution, a foreign power oversaw Iraq's political transition, but it nevertheless contained some of the same issues that come with replacing one regime with another. After the transition, law and order in Iraq did not last long, for after Saddam Hussein's ousting the country descended into "three weeks of uncontrollable looting and violence."[11] When the United States failed to control the situation, those faithful to the old regime targeted American troops and subjected them to "launch hit-and-run attacks, with increasing frequency and skill."[12] In the Iraqi case, the violence came from those who wished to push back against regime change, which was the opposite reaction from the Bolshevik Revolution, but the notion of violence after a political shift is consistent with this main theme. The violence occurred during the vulnerable time after an incumbent ruler is removed and the new regime is still consolidating its power.

To take a more extreme example, in Cambodia the March 18, 1970 coup that removed Prince Norodom Sihanouk from power generated instability in the government to such an extent that it eventually paved the way for the Khmer Rouge communist regime to take control of the country. The initial regime change that disposed the head of state sparked civil war and later

10 Dodge, *Iraq's Future*, 9.
11 Dodge, *Iraq's Future*, 9.
12 Dodge, *Iraq's Future*, 10.

allowed the Khmer Rouge to come to power, which committed genocide against Cambodians from 1975-79 and killing up to an estimated 3 million people.

Lastly, like the Bolsheviks after Nicholas II's abdication and the provisional government's brief stint in power, certain characteristics of terror defined the French Revolution. While the Bolshevik secret police made its infamous reputation known throughout Russia, similar political methods that involved violence and systematic executions plagued the French masses. The violence of the French Revolution began "in July 1789, with the original explosion of popular violence in Paris and the *grande peur* in the countryside, and it continued through the prison massacres of September 1792."[13] The fear continued four years into the French Revolution when Maximilian Robespierre lead France into what is known as the "Reign of Terror." From 1793-94, thousands who were branded as enemies of the revolution were executed by guillotine.

Moreover, the French Revolution saw deposed monarch Louis XVI executed in a way that is comparable to Nicholas II's murder. As will be elaborated upon in the next chapter, Lenin found the murders of Nicholas II and his family necessary in order to send a message to both revolutionists and the passive citizenry that the old regime was over, that there would be no living symbol to rally around in the case of a monarchist uprising, and that the Bolshevik regime was to be taken seriously. Maximilian Robespierre expressed a parallel reasoning regarding the execution of Louis XVI, for

> it was as risky to allow the 'dethroned king to rove around the Republic, or even to keep him in captivity' as it was to "absolve" him, thereby exposing the champions and soldiers of liberty "to the vengeance of depots and aristocrats." Robespierre concluded, "regretfully," that "Louis XVI needed to die so that the *patrie* should be able to live." Although he claimed not to "breathe personal vengeance," Robespierre called for retribution in the form of "the tyrant's death, which

13 Arno J. Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2000), 101.

would serve to cement both liberty and civil peace." For such a judgment to "benefit the future" it would, however, have to "assume the solemnity of a public vengeance. [14]

Both regimes attempted to ensure that there would be one less way of returning to life before the revolution by killing the ex-monarchs. Interestingly, both Nicholas II and Louis XVI were removed from the throne considerably before their executions. Authorities also both considered Nicholas II and Louis XVI for trials before they decided in favor of execution. A trial was held for Saddam Hussein as well, but he still met a similar fate to that of Nicholas II and Louis XVI, as he was hanged on December 30, 2006. What is more, Iraq is a unique case because the country has its own history of royal family assassinations. Comparable to the Bolsheviks and the French revolutionists, Iraqis executed King Faisal II and many members of his family (of the Hashemite monarchy) in the July 14 Revolution of 1958.

Targeting of Old Elites and Officials

Targeting and murdering members of the bourgeoisie and those who held high ranking positions during the old regime characterized the French and Bolshevik Revolutions. Early on in the French Revolution, "the Queen, the Comte d'Artois, and the Marquis de Favras were among the first and foremost diehards;" while "in Russia [it was] senior army officers the courtiers of the last Romanov, and the Union of the Russian People."[15] In France, shortly after the storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, crowds "seized the Marquis de Launay, the governor of the Bastille, as well as Jacques de Flesselles, the capital's chief magistrate. With raging passion the crowd paraded these hapless but not entirely innocent old-regime officials through the streets, beating and stabbing them, until they were finally decapitated and their severed heads fixed and exhibited on top of pitchforks. A week later, on July 22, L.-B.-F. Bertier de Sauvigny, the

14 Mayer, *The Furies,* 186.
15 Mayer, *The Furies,* 48.

intendant of Paris, and Joseph-François de Foullon de Doué his father-in-law, suffered a similar fate."[16]

In May 1858 Alexis de Tocqueville found a pamphlet at the National Library in Paris that the lower classes wrote titled, "The Hunt for Stinking, Ferocious Beasts," that "asks that the queen, the princes of the blood, and a large number of men and women of the court or who hold public office, named individually, that this one's head be cut off, that one be strangled, this one sent to a convent for ex-whores, another be hung or strangled... almost always death or the galleys."[17] In Russia, during the first few days after the February Revolution that forced Nicholas II's abdication, sailors in Kronstadt and Helsingfors in Petrograd killed officers of the Black Sea Fleet.[18] The initial chaos following the French and Russian Revolutions saw outbursts of violence against old officials and authorities. These two examples underscore the idea that much of the violence in the French and Russian Revolutions came from the lower classes and not simply the leading figures of the revolutions. It is noteworthy to point out that this was another challenge the revolutionists had to overcome during the revolution and regime change processes– – reigning in the participants of the revolution who may have their own motives and bloodthirsty desires of their own. The revolutionists may have sanctioned the systematic targeting and executing of old officials, but maintaining that violence and keeping it contained before it spiraled out of control was another challenge.

The Iraq case illuminates the ongoing difficulties that arise after the old elites are removed in a political transition. It was the time that it took to decrease the old elites' power and replace them with elites that were favorable to United States foreign policy that gave rise to

16 Mayer, *The Furies,* 85.
17 Alexis De Tocqueville, *The Old Régime and the Revolution, Volume II: Notes on the French Revolution and Napoleon,* trans. Alan S. Kahan, ed. François Furet and Françoise Mélino (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 136.
18 Mayer, *The Furies,* 86.

problems. For the United States as a mediator in Iraq's regime change, American policy makers recognized, like the Bolsheviks and the French revolutionists, that the power of the old elites (the Ba'athists) under Saddam Hussein needed to be diminished.[19] The old elites needed to be removed to make way for the new elites, but the Iraqi population's demand for "the speedy restoration of order and government services" was great; "the political decision to pursue de-Ba'athification and expel many former administrators from the civil service delayed the technocratic goal of restoring services."[20] The French Revolution led to extreme instability throughout the country. The Russian Revolution led to Civil War. The United States' involvement in Iraq after Saddam Hussein has lead to a horrendous conflict that arguably has no end in sight. Many of the issues that arose in the Russian, French and Iraqi examples stem from the difficulties that arise with the old elites. In France and Russia, a bulk of the answer was execution. But even after the old elites are removed, as the Iraq example illustrates, there are many challenges to be overcome such as maintaining efficiency and establishing order to prevent a descent into anarchy or war.

Reverting Back to Strategies of the Old Regime

The values and goals of a revolution tend be contrary to those of the old regime, but sometimes the new regime in place reverts back to the old regime's ways for the sake of security and control. One of the most important examples of reverting back to strategies of the old regime—that of the use of violence and terror— has already been touched on, but it nevertheless requires brief emphasis one again. In the words of De Tocqueville after he read of the violence pervading France, "all this is nothing but a more horrible imitation of the tortures about the old

19 Dodge, *Iraq's Future*, 31.
20 Dodge, *Iraq's Future*, 32.

regime, and nothing shows better the influence of punishments on mores."[21] De Tocqueville draws a clear connection between the old and new regime's tactics. He also appears to imply that the revolutionists acted that way as a result of the old regime's methods. While it may be too far of a stretch to infer that De Tocqueville was hinting at a vicious cycle of violence as punishment between the old and new regimes, he does seem to draw attention to the idea that revolutionists get their inspiration from somewhere, and that somewhere could naturally be the regime that they are accustomed to, and the regime they intend to change.

Reverting back to strategies characteristic to the old regime was prevalent in the Young Turk Revolution, for to the Committee on Union and Progress (CUP), "ensuring the survival of the empire in the face of internal and external predators, they felt, necessitated and therefore justified strong measures, including the restriction of fundamental liberties."[22] At the beginning, the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 witnessed the removal of the "Hamidian regime under the banner of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and Justice.'"[23] Unfortunately, the Revolution's goals to normalize the freedom of the press and civil liberties in general were hardly accomplished.[24] The Young Turk Revolution example contains a combination of two themes: differences in revolutionary goals and reverting back to strategies of the old regime. It seems likely given the cited information above that the revolutionists did not intend to discard attempts to secure certain freedoms and civil liberties. That was a pillar of the revolutionists' platform of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and Justice," and that the freedoms and civil liberties were not addressed suggests that there was a point in the process of regime change in which the revolutionists differed on how to accomplish (if at all) the original goals of the revolution. Because the

21 De Tocqueville, *The Old Regime*, 138.
22 M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 153.
23 Hanioğlu, *A Brief History*, 150.
24 Hanioğlu, *A Brief History*, 150.

revolutionists failed to secure the desired freedoms and civil liberties, there was a regression in societal progress back to the ways of the Hamidian regime.

How does this inform our discussion on Nicholas II and his family? Examining the regime change in Iraq, as well as the French Revolution, contribute to answering the broader question of how the Bolsheviks and the passive citizenry felt about the last Romanovs because it pinpoints where the Bolsheviks stood in terms of other similar political circumstances in history. This chapter outlines the Bolshevik Revolution and the policies throughout the political transition from autocracy to communism so that we can better understand how and why the Bolsheviks treated the Romanovs after their murders. The Bolsheviks had many reasons to act towards the Romanovs the way they did. By looking at other examples of revolutions and regime changes, we will see that there are challenges that revolutionists encounter, and that revolutionists react to them in similar ways.

The Russian Case

Now that a discussion about some of the defining characteristics of revolutions and regime changes have been outlined and assessed, we can now turn to the Bolshevik case in detail.

In terms of the first outlined theme—differences in revolutionary goals—for the Bolsheviks who attempted to rid Russian society of most physical reminders of the Romanov monarchy (deRomanovization), there was an understanding that the Bolsheviks were not going to have any ties to the old regime in that regard. However, as is discussed in the following chapter, not all elements in society related to Imperial Russia were systematically removed or destroyed. Some monuments and artistic works were permitted in society. What were the

policies that allowed some aspects of the culture under the Romanovs to persist while the rest were eradicated? Furthermore, after Lenin died in 1924, Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky fought about the Soviet Union's projected ideological course. They fought openly on multiple fronts, and so the main idea to keep in mind is that some of the central figures behind the revolution argued about to what degree past institutions and cultural aspects should be maintained after the revolution. This idea can be applied to the Bolshevik stance towards the Romanovs. How much of the Romanovs' physical and symbolic legacy should be allowed in society, if any at all?

The second theme—strategies based in violence and terror—was a salient component of the Bolsheviks' time in power. For example, Vladimir Lenin created the Cheka after the Bolsheviks came to power to instill fear in the population and thus elicit compliance and obedience. The Cheka was a secret police organization that terrorized Russians by targeting individuals who challenged the new regime. Gleb Botkin had the following to say about the Cheka: "no sooner had the bolshevist Cheka been organized, than it issued lists of people condemned to death without trial, with orders to all and sundry to apprehend and arrest the people named on the list."[25] The Cheka carried out wide spread executions and labeled people who did not ally themselves with the Bolshevik regime as enemies of the people. By creating a state-sanctioned organization whose purpose was to specifically intimidate the masses and rid the Party of opposition, Lenin was able to spread the message that the new regime would not sympathize with those who did not pledge allegiance, thereby giving Russians a strong reason not to side with an opposition party.

In regards to targeting old officials, the Bolsheviks' most obvious link to our third theme was the execution of Nicholas II and his family. To further make their point after executing the

25 Botkin, *The Real Romanovs*, 241.

Tsar and his family, the Bolsheviks also executed Nicholas and Alexandra's relatives. On the same night that Nicholas and his family were killed, the Ural Regional Soviet murdered Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna, Alexandra's sister, and five other members of the family who were being kept prisoner in the Siberian town Alapayevsk.[26]

The hunt for any remaining Romanovs did not stop at Nicholas and Alexandra's close relatives either. Shortly after the Bolsheviks ousted the provisional government, Petrograd newspapers featured decrees calling for all Romanovs to report to the Cheka.[27] Once the Romanovs reported themselves, they were made to swear they would not leave Petrograd; however, the Romanovs who did come forth to the authorities were eventually sent away.[28] If the Bolsheviks felt threatened by the thought of Russians rallying around Nicholas and his immediate family enough to execute them, the Bolsheviks must have felt similarly to all extended members of the family who bore the name Romanov.

While life under the tsars may have been difficult for most Russians, the quality of life during and after the 1917 Revolution was not void of its own flaws. In many ways violence defined the Revolution, and it drove factions of Russians to wage war against each other. Before a revolution occurs, hope for a better way of life usually drives revolutionists to fight against the status quo. However, revolutions in reality do not always amount to their expectations in theory, and thus a revolution may be disappointing to the revolutionists who believed in its initial cause and driving ideologies. The Russian Revolution may have left some Russians disillusioned, for Bolshevik authorities felt required by pressing threats and circumstances (World War I, Civil War, famine, etc.) not to pursue some of the Revolution's goals for the sake of security, and

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[26] Greg King and Penny Wilson, *The Resurrection of the Romanovs: Anastasia, Anna Anderson, and the World's Greatest Royal Mystery (*Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 67.
[27] John Curtis Perry and Konstantin Pleshakov, *The Flight of the Romanovs: A Family Saga* (New York, NY: Basic, 1999), 207.
[28] Perry and Pleshkanov, *The Flight of the Romanovs,* 207.

thereby reverted back to some strategies of the old regime (our fourth theme). Like the revolutions and regime changes previously mentioned in this chapter, Russia after the Revolution was plagued with civil war, economic troubles, famine and an uncertain political future. Consequentially, some of the values Russians hoped the Revolution would introduce were sacrificed in order for the Bolsheviks to maintain control over the masses.

Therefore, when it came to reverting back to strategies of the old regime, the Bolsheviks undoubtedly used strategies that could be found in tsarist policies (albeit to prevent a descent into political and economic chaos). One of the most important sacrifices the Bolsheviks made in order to keep the economy from further ruin during the Civil War was Lenin's New Economic Policy of 1921. As the successor policy to War Communism (enacted in response to the Civil War from 1918 to the creation of NEP, War Communism comprised a series of measures that included the nationalization of state industries, agricultural requisitions, state oversight of foreign trade, illegality of private businesses, etc.), NEP essentially called for limited capitalism. NEP revoked grain requisitions, introduced consumer goods, and abolished "the state monopoly of small- and medium scale manufacture, retail trade and services"... "while keeping heavy industry, banking and foreign trade in the hands of the state."[29] NEP's capitalistic characteristics were intrinsically at odds with Marxist theory, and therefore, it was a policy that worked against the initial aims of the Revolution.

In the social realm, the new regime limited freedoms of expression. Heavy censorship under the tsars was one of the leading grievances of the 1905 revolts, but despite the change in leadership in 1917, censorship remained an important instrument to manipulate and monitor the masses. As early as on October 27, 1917 the Council of People's Commissars issued the "Decree

[29] Geoffrey Hosking, *The First Socialist Society: A History of the Soviet Union from Within* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1985), 119.

on the Press," which recognized that "in the trying critical period of the revolution and the days that immediately followed it the Provisional Revolutionary Committee was compelled to take a number of measures against the counter-revolutionary press of different shades."[30] The reference to "the counter-revolutionary press of different shades" is vague and subject to multiple interpretations. Given the revolutionary leaders' disorganization at the time, it makes sense that the language is purposefully left open. It widened opportunities for the Soviet authorities to reevaluate the law or the government's actions to protect the regime's reputation and legitimacy in the future. This strategy is advantageous to those in power after a revolution or regime change as the authorities may be less cohesive, or they may not be following a specific blueprint per se to lead them to the next state of desired political development.

There should be no misunderstanding that all regime changes have negative outcomes. Revolutions and regime changes are necessary at times for the sake of protecting or advancing the civil liberties. I selected the cases above with the intent to emphasize the confusion and political oppression that can occur after a drastic change in power takes place because the backlash from the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviks' portrayal of the Romanov family are some of the main topics of this thesis. Engaging in a comparative analysis of revolutions and regime changes, albeit briefly, shines light on the notion that the Bolshevik Revolution and the events that followed it share characteristics with the regime changes before and after it in history. What the Bolsheviks accomplished, and the struggles they faced after 1917, were not new advances in history but modified patterns and responses that are common among several revolutions in different nations and at varying points in history. In general, there are commonalities and trends among these revolutions and regime changes, and they contain shared

30 Mervyn Matthews, *Soviet Government; a Selection of Official Documents on Internal Policies* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1974), 18.

themes that enlighten historians' and political scientists' larger understandings of the forces that drive change overall.

Reasons for Reevaluation of the Revolution & Nostalgia among Russians

Revolutions do not always manifest themselves the way they were intended. At times sacrifices have to be made, and goals have to be readjusted. Some leaders take advantage of their power and act in their own self-interests instead of giving power back to the citizenry. Revolutions and regime changes generate room for possibilities, but they can also do the opposite and fail to accomplish any of the aims that they sought out to attain in the first place.

It is natural to suppose, then, with the tumultuous upheaval surrounding 1917 for Russians to look back to life before the Revolution with a sense of loss and regret. With drastic changes, as Svetlana Boym points out, people experience feelings of nostalgia for a life long gone. Linking more traits from the Bolshevik Revolution and others in history, Boym asserts how populations that experience regime change may exhibit feelings of a rejection of sorts, for "outbreaks of nostalgia often follow revolutions; the French Revolution of 1789, the Russian Revolution and recent 'velvet' revolutions in Eastern Europe were accompanied by political and cultural manifestations of longing."[31] To prove Boym's point, when Alexis de Tocqueville read through the July 14 pamphlets he recalled how "it is easy to see here a base of tender feelings left by the traditions of the monarchy (however a base already very eroded, there was little support left), combined with that passion which suddenly turns parties towards love for the men who agree with their momentary views and interests."[32] De Tocqueville may have alluded to the weakening support for the monarchy, but he notes that it nevertheless lingered among the

31 Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia (*New York: Basic Books, 2001), xvi.
32 De Tocqueville, *The Old Regime,* 137.

French. The leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution appeared to have considered the threat of such nostalgia and of such lingering affections, for they engaged in de-Romanovizing society that is discussed in the second chapter. The fear of Russians longing for the Russia under tsars like Nicholas II appeared to have been a significant concern for those in power who attempted to convert the passive citizenry to a new ideology. Unsurprisingly, "especially in the first years after the revolution, [nostalgia] was not merely a bad word but a counterrevolutionary provocation. The word *nostalgia* was obviously absent from the revolutionary lexicon. Nostalgia would be a dangerous 'atavism' of bourgeois decadence that had no place in the new world. Early revolutionary ideology is future-oriented, utopian and telelogical."[33] Because the Revolution was so drastic and violent, Russians may have looked to the old regime with a new perspective. Now that the Bolsheviks were in charge, the tsars may not have appeared as cruel in comparison anymore (so to speak).

This was one of the challenges, and the one I shine light on throughout this thesis, that the Bolsheviks encountered after the Revolution was a *fait accompli* and they sought to create their own new political and social structures. By making such a strong break with the past, the Bolsheviks inadvertently shocked some Russians into retreating away from the new, harsh and unfamiliar, and into reconsidering the past political structure—the familiar, albeit terrible for some, old regime. How the Bolsheviks dismantled the society and the government they inherited, and how they thrust their ideologies onto the passive citizenry is the topic of the following chapter. The second chapter focuses on the Bolsheviks during regime change, and in particular, the strategies and approaches they used to marginalize and discredit the Romanov monarchy. The Bolshevik regime change tactics regarding Nicholas II and the Romanovs will play a

33 Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 59.

significant role in not only their image as the new authority, but in Russians' perceptions of both the ousted monarchy and the new regime in the first few decade of Bolshevik and Soviet rule.

Overall, what these revolutions and regime changes have in common was their impact not only in the countries in which the events took place, but also their effect throughout the globe as well. As drastic as the French and Russian Revolutions were within France and Russia, they made significant impressions on the rest of the world. Citizens of nations everywhere recognized their right to the new standards that came out of both Revolutions. The French Revolution's commitment to "liberté, égalité, fraternité" has been embraced for hundreds of years, and it remains the motto of the French Republic. The Russian Revolution generated the first longstanding society in which the communist experiment unfolded, and it set the stage for the major events of the twentieth century such as World War II, the Cold War and the revolutions throughout Eastern Europe. The regime change in Iraq is significant to international audiences as the world's dominating western powers face threats (and poses them as well) from groups in a part of the world that asserts a contrasting ideology to that of the United States. The failed regime change in Iraq illuminates the ongoing pertinence of studying revolutions and regime changes. What we see in Iraq—the struggle for power and legitimacy, civil war, ethnic conflict, etc.—are themes that have played out before in history, and it will be important moving forward as politicians in the West and throughout the Middle East devise strategies to combat similar problems that the Bolsheviks and French revolutionists faced hundreds of years ago. In sum, revolutions and regime changes generate shock waves that can be felt across borders and time frames.

CHAPTER TWO

Bolshevik Policies Concerning Nicholas II and his Family During and Following the Revolution and Regime Change

How the Bolsheviks depicted the Romanovs after death in policies and in propaganda as a part of the Revolution is almost as inconsistent as the way they maintained control over the masses in the first few years of their political control. The Bolsheviks and the Soviet government that began to take shape after the 1917 Revolution and subsequent Civil War did not have a uniform policy regarding the murder of Nicholas II and his family, nor did the leaders necessarily agree on how to announce the royal family's murder to the public. It was unclear how the new regime was to eliminate the Romanovs' memory or incorporate the royal family into its revolutionary narrative. Official reports, interviews, published biographies, autobiographies and newspaper articles show signs of deep miscommunication among the authorities on how to tell the story of what happened in Ekaterinburg on July 17th, 1918, thereby leaving holes for the memory of the old regime to linger. These ambiguities shed light on the Bolsheviks' disorganization and their changing priorities in the initial years during and after the Revolution, which ultimately laid the foundation on which groups of Romanov-sympathizers could generate a discourse about the royal family in a way that challenged Bolshevik interpretations of the Romanovs. The mishandling of the Romanov executions and the rumors that followed about the Romanovs' fate bred a confusion by which the Bolsheviks and later Soviet government would be haunted until virtually July 18, 1998, eighty years to the day that the Romanovs were killed, and the day they were finally interred in the Peter and Paul Cathedral in St. Petersburg.

The Bolsheviks did not simply murder members of the Romanov family during and after the Revolution as a strategy rooted in fear and violence. The Bolsheviks attempted to generate a new society, and that task required a selective destruction or silencing of certain aspects of society that defined Russia before the Revolution. What became of Nicholas II and his family, both physically and symbolically, are only a microcosm of this phenomenon. They remained pertinent to the larger discussion of Russian history throughout the Soviet Union's existence because there was a newfound discourse on the last royal family after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. It is important to investigate how they were treated in official government policies in order to grasp the conditions under which the last Romanov family was remembered and how the Bolsheviks were able to consolidate regime change. Examinations of these policies show how the Bolsheviks saw Nicholas II and his family's role in the Revolution. Moreover, it is difficult to consider how Romanov-sympathizers preserved the memory of Nicholas II and his family without first investigating what was socially acceptable or legally possible at the time. The purpose of this first chapter is to outline how the Bolsheviks treated the Romanovs and symbols of the monarchy during and after the Revolution. In addition, this chapter details all the ways in which it was conceivable or even encouraged to perpetuate or silence the Romanovs' memories in early Soviet Russia.

In the end, I come to the following conclusions: as a short-term goal, the decision to murder the Romanovs and to announce only Nicholas II's execution while deliberately keeping the possibility of his wife and children's survival open served to confuse the Bolsheviks' enemies. The Bolsheviks did not admit to the murders of the entire family because the they recognized that many Russian peasants still revered their Tsar, and to announce that the entire

royal family had been killed carried the risk that the masses would not pledge their allegiance to the Bolsheviks.

Why did the Bolsheviks not announce the murder of the entire Romanov family? Why did they not incorporate the Romanov murders into a larger rhetoric about the evils of the monarchy and of capitalism in general? If they had admitted that they executed Nicholas, Alexandra and their children, the Bolsheviks could have created an argument as to why their executions were necessary. They could have crafted and articulated all the reasons why their murders were justified. That justification, in turn, could have helped rally the passive citizenry to their side. The Bolsheviks could have silenced the discussion of the Romanovs early on after 1918, for those who followed the stories of the Romanov murders would not have speculated that one or more members of the family (heirs to the throne) survived.

Yet the revolutionists did not do so. The decision to opt instead for selective discussion and lies in order to confuse the masses benefited the Bolsheviks in the short term. It was helpful because opponents of the Bolsheviks were in part concentrating their efforts on a Romanov rescue mission while the Bolsheviks could better organize themselves and use that momentum against their enemies.

Lenin's well thought out decision not to announce the murders in their entirety backfired on the Bolsheviks in the long run, however, because not admitting that the Romanovs were all dead generated opportunities for monarchists to hope that maybe an heir survived and that the Romanovs were not completely out of the political picture. By choosing not to discuss the Romanovs and instead engage in deRomanovization activities, the Bolsheviks allowed for their subjects to maintain the image of the Romanovs that they held before the Revolution, for better

or for worse.[34] The Bolsheviks did not attempt to convince the masses that the Romanovs deserved to be murdered, nor did they insist on portraying the Romanovs in an overwhelmingly negative manner (aside from removing physical symbols of their presence from society). The Bolsheviks' main strategy regarding the Romanovs was not to talk about them, and in consequence, some conceptions of the royal family were in all likelihood left intact and untainted in coming years as the Bolsheviks secured power. It is important to keep in mind that the Bolsheviks had limitations to what they could and could not propagandize.

While the Bolshevik government eventually admitted that they killed the entire family and Russians abroad acknowledged this, many Russians long after 1918 continued to discuss the Romanovs and the investigation into their murders. The challenges the Bolsheviks faced to their legitimacy as a result of the botched executions in the Ipatiev House are a fraction of the obstacles various revolutionary bodies face after a political transition takes place. How the Bolsheviks reacted to and recovered from their act influenced how Romanov-sympathizers viewed the royal family (one could argue that from the Bolsheviks' perspective it was a kind of backfire).

The Romanov Murders: Immediate Aftermath and Bolshevik Cover Ups

To start from the beginning, when the Romanovs were still prisoners, there was a disagreement amongst the layers of communist authority over what to do with the family. This conflict is just one of the first examples of how the people in command expressed signs of disorganization early on concerning the Romanovs. The overarching questions to keep in mind can be framed as follows: what significance did the Tsar and his family have to the Revolution?

[34] I borrow the term "DeRomanovization" from Richard Stites's book, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford UP, 1989).

How would putting Nicholas II on trial or executing the whole family influence the Revolution? What would the Romanov executions mean to the population?

Robert K. Massie asserts that the Ural Soviet had always had execution in mind for the Romanovs, but that the leadership in Moscow was still playing with Trotsky's idea of putting Nicholas on trial.[35] Some rumors in the Siberian city Perm contradicted these ideas though, for they claimed that Nicholas' wife and daughters had been seen alive there.[36] Regardless, it was not long before the decision of what to do with Nicholas and his family would become almost necessary to the Bolsheviks, for "Civil war and foreign investment had begun to challenge Bolshevism's feeble grip on Russia... it was the rapidly mounting threat of this advancing [White] army which forced the Bolsheviks to abandon their thoughts of a show trial of the former Tsar and make other plans for Nicholas and his family."[37] When the authorities found out that it was only a matter of days before the White Army would capture Ekaterinburg, "the Ural Soviet decided to shoot the entire family as soon as possible and to destroy all evidence of the act."[38]

There were a few other reasons why the Bolsheviks found disposing the Romanovs more advantageous than keeping them alive. Wendy Slater, author of *The Many Deaths of Nicholas II: Relics, Remains and the Romanovs,* speculates on the motives behind the murders by telling the tale of the Romanov executions from the perspective of an imagined member of the execution squad, but one who could have been any one of the actual members. Channeling one of them, she describes how "there were all kinds of monarchist sympathizers hanging around the city"[39]...

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[35] Robert K. Massie, *Nicholas and Alexandra* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 514.
[36] Anthony Summers and Tom Mangold, *The File on the Tsar* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 321.
[37] Massie, *Nicholas and Alexandra,* 514-15.
[38] Massie, *Nicholas and Alexandra,* 515.
[39] Wendy Slater, *The Many Deaths of Tsar Nicholas II: Relics, Remains and the Romanovs* (London: Routledge, 2007), 3.

"we had to keep [the royal family] secure. The Whites would have made any one of them into a figurehead. Even one of their corpses would have been a holy relic. Even part of a corpse."[40] Early on in the Civil War, several soldiers fighting for the White Army were both anti-Bolshevik and anti-Monarchists, but there were nevertheless clandestine monarchists who served for the White Army.[41] Slater emphasizes the manpower required to keep the Romanovs prisoner during the time of civil war; "while the prisoners remained alive, three hundred men were deployed to guard them when they should have been serving in Red Units at the Front. With the Romanovs dead, those men were free to fight."[42] During such a crisis, the Romanovs were simply more of a burden than they were a trading token or any other form of bargaining value.

The decision to shoot the royal family was consolidated when news of the mounting White army threat reached Bolshevik authorities. The nature of their decision-making implies that the Bolsheviks felt substantial fear of losing the city. The location and time of the murder itself, in the basement of the Ipatiev House (which was cramped for all 11 victims and their corresponding executioners), reflects Bolshevik impatience and frantic reaction. The Romanovs were shot in a small room, which underscores the Bolsheviks' lack of planning or foresight. The Bolsheviks acted out of desperation, and all other options were no longer given any thought. The Bolsheviks appeared ill prepared to dispose of the Romanovs, and they were without a plan for what to do after the act.

[40] Slater, *The Many Deaths,* 4.
[41] Guy Richards, *The Hunt for the Czar* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), xvi.
[42] Slater, *The Many Deaths,* 4.

Fig. 1. *File:Ipatiev House – Cellar room.jpg.* Available from: Wikimedia Commons, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ipatiev_House_-_Cellar_room.jpg

The lack of planning for shooting the Romanov prisoners and the executions' furtive secrecy provided the Bolsheviks with the flexibility to depict what happened to Nicholas and his family in almost any way they wanted after the murders were complete. The Bolsheviks may not have had a plan of what to do with the Romanovs after the executions, but they were free to make up the ending to the last Romanov family's story because there were only a few individuals who could discredit their claims.

Because the murder was decided and carried through with such short notice, in the middle of the night under a veil of concealment, Russians were unaware of what actually happened. They and the other Bolshevik authorities who were not directly involved had no time to prepare themselves for the their former monarch's execution. Trotsky speculates in his diary that even those of high ranks in the party likely disapproved of the murders.[43] Since Nicholas was never put on trial, the Bolsheviks did not give the passive citizenry any way to process all

[43] Leon Trotsky, *Trotsky's Diary in Exile 1935* trans. Elena Zarudnaya (Cambridge, MA: HUP 1958), 81.

the reasons why the Bolsheviks wanted to kill Nicholas, of all his faults and all his crimes; the Bolsheviks could not convince them of their reasoning without a public trial. As Sergei Markov, a soldier during the Revolution, remembers upon hearing announcements of Nicholas' death: "not a word about the reason for the unprecedented murder, not the slightest attempt at justification!"[44] All Russians knew was that something happened but not exactly what, as the Bolsheviks gave no publicized reason for whatever they did to the royal family.

As a result of the Bolsheviks' hasty decision and the unclear circumstances under which the murders took place, namely, exactly how many members of the royal family were actually killed, the Russian rumor mill churned up story after story regarding the Romanovs' fate, which may or may not have muddled the Bolsheviks' original aims to portray the Tsar and his family under a certain light after they were executed. Instead, because stories of the Romanov murders were contradictory and sometimes covered up, it paved the way for interested groups to use their imagination and spread tall tales. The Bolsheviks' decision to execute the Romanovs in secret opened the doors for ambiguous portrayals of the family. There was not one story about what happened to Nicholas and his family, and therefore, there were several facets through which different depictions of the family could form, including those of martyrs.

Miscommunications and Changing Stories on the Romanov Murders

The Bolsheviks continued to lack consistency when making or referencing any public announcements concerning Nicholas's death and that of his son and family. Interestingly, the Bolsheviks confessed only to Nicholas's death; "the Empress and Alexei, it was said, had been sent away from Ekaterinburg, while there was no mention of the grand duchesses."[45] Some of

[44] Sergei Markov, *How We Tried to Save the Tsarista* (London & New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1929), 260.
[45] King and Wilson, *The Resurrection of the Romanovs*, 67.

the reports affirmed that the heir, Alexei, had also been killed with his father, but that Alexandra and the four daughters were alive.[46] Yet, a consulate officer at the German Legation at Moscow told Sergei Markov that Nicholas and his family had be transported to Perm on July 17, 1918.[47]

These announcements were nevertheless unreliable and delayed at times. For some reason, it "took two days for the report of the death of the Tsar to make the headlines in the Soviet newspaper *Izvestiya.*"[48] Every time new information was revealed about what happened to any or all of the former royal family and made public, it seems that the newest stories had evolved into something different from what had previously been claimed: "it would appear that the Bolsheviks did not yet know what version of the Romanovs' deaths they wanted to propagate to the world."[49] After reading a description of the Romanov executions abroad in the newspaper *Poslednie Novosti*, Trotsky expressed that even he was unsure of which parts of the content were correct and which were fabricated. He went on to mention that he had never really been interested in learning about the nature of Nicholas and his family's deaths, nor could he understand why others would find such a subject captivating.[50] Gleb Botkin illuminates the more complex layers of the story:

> In spite of this [July 1918] declaration [which "was countersigned by president of the Soviet executive committee"], the same Soviet government announced, September, 1919, that it had had nothing to do with the murder of the Emperor, but that the whole Royal Family had been murdered by social revolutionists with the purpose of embarrassing the Soviet government. Not only did the Soviets make such an announcement, but they actually arrested and tried a number of social-revolutionists, and executed five of them as the allegedly proved murderers of the Royal Family... Finally, a few years later, the Soviets published a book wherein they describe the execution of the Royal Family, almost exactly as it is described in Sokoloff's investigation, and fully acknowledging the fact that the whole Royal Family had been murdered not by any social - revolutionists, but by the Jew, Yourovsky, their own Commissar, under orders from Moscow.[51]

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[46] Summers and Mangold, *The File on the Tsar,* 318.
[47] Markov, *How We Tried to Save the Tsarista,* 264.
[48] Shay McNeal, *The Plots to Rescue the Tsar* (London: Century, 2001), 138.
[49] McNeal, *The Plots to Rescue,* 139.
[50] Trotsky, *Trotsky's Diary in Exile 1935,* 81-82.
51 Botkin, *The Real Romanovs,* 235-36.

Perhaps the Bolsheviks did not know what stories they could afford to promote given their less than stable grasp on the political situation. Even if they did know which versions of the story they could disseminate, as a result of their inconsistent reports and announcements of the executions, the Bolsheviks failed to clarify exactly what the execution meant. The Bolsheviks did not overtly state how the Romanov executions fit into the overarching Revolutionary plan, and much was left open to interpretation.

But why would the Bolsheviks wish to keep the memory of the former Tsar and his family alive? If they wanted discussion about the Romanovs silenced, why did they not confirm in a public statement that all were killed? Excerpts from Trotsky's diary underscore that the murder of the Romanovs was fueled by highly political aims. In an April 1935 entry, almost 20 years after the Romanov executions, Trotsky explains that the execution orders were given by Lenin "in order to frighten, horrify, and dishearten the enemy, but also in order to shake up our own ranks, to show them that there was no turning back, that lay ahead either complete victory or complete ruin."[52] Trotsky's point here is convincing. The Bolsheviks were quick to incorporate fear into their governing tactics; the Cheka, for example, was the secret security force called in to execute the Romanovs and that which eventually evolved into the infamous KGB (now FSB).[53]

At a time when the Bolsheviks were unsure of how they were going to keep control of the masses and win a civil war, there were some advantages to releasing pieces of information about the Romanov executions to the public. Whether or not the Bolsheviks were aware of these advantages as they were happening is less clear. In any case, for one, stories of the executions were bloody, and therefore included some of fear tactics' main components. Secondly, the fact

[52] Trotsky, *Trotsky's Diary in Exile 1935,* 81.
[53] Massie, *Nicholas and Alexandra,* 516.

that the Bolsheviks executed the former Tsar (that at least the Tsar was killed was much more clear to the public)— the head of the monarchy that had ruled Russia for 304 years — goes to show how little the Bolsheviks were intimidated by the symbolic power that was Nicholas II (even though the act was very much out of desperation). In many ways, those who were responsible for killing Nicholas and his family were confident that the former Tsar meant little to the new regime. It is striking that Nicholas II, one of the most powerful figures in the former Russian empire, meant significantly less to the Bolsheviks. If the Bolsheviks who executed the Romanovs were not afraid, or at least held little respect for the one person who was revered by the peasant population and who, in the Russian Orthodox Church, held a holy position, then what or who were the Bolsheviks afraid of? Who or what commanded their respect?

Robert K. Massie puts forth another theory as to why Lenin decided to announce only Nicholas' death. Had the Bolsheviks reported that they murdered the entire family, "in monarchist circles there immediately would have arisen the question of a new tsar."[54] As Trotsky suggested, Lenin did not want monarchists to rally behind any potential successor to the throne. Therefore, "he allowed everyone to wonder who was alive and who was dead... Lenin operated on two fronts: he killed all the members of the Royal Family and many other Romanovs, but he also dangled the idea that some of the immediate family remained alive."[55] Lenin's reasoning may have been ingenious in the short-term, but the next chapter will show that it may not have been so effective in the long-term because Romanov-sympathizers remained interested in the fate of the Romanov family.

The Bolsheviks did not change their testimony on the fate of the Romanovs until the 1920s; "it was meant not only to confuse the White Army but also to protect the reputation of the

54 Robert K. Massie, *The Romanovs: The Final Chapter* (New York: Random House, 1995), 132.
55 Massie, *The Romanovs,* 132.

Soviet regime."[56] Despite Lenin's well thought out orders to execute the Romanovs, he acknowledged how the bloodbath involving the Tsar's wife and his children would be interpreted abroad.[57] There was an explicit message behind the orders, as the July 20, 1918 *Izvestiya* article from Moscow reinforces: "... By this act of revolutionary punishment, Soviet Russia has given a solemn warning to all its foes who dream of restoring the former Tsardom, or who even dare to attack us."[58] It was only until the Soviet government became more powerful and chances of a monarchist or oppositional force were slim that "the Communists felt free to announce what they actually had done."[59]

The Hunt for Remaining Romanovs

In some cases, the Bolsheviks extended these efforts outside of Russia. Many of Nicholas' relatives who survived the Revolution were able to do so by fleeing the country. Nicholas' mother, Maria Feodorovna (1847-1928), and his sister Olga Alexandrovna (1882-1960), were able to make their way to Copenhagen, Denmark. Neither returned to Russia permanently, but they did not live without some fear of the Soviet government. Maria Feodorovna, who until her dying day refused outright to believe that her son and grandchildren were murdered, was particularly unreserved about voicing her opinions about Russia.[60] According to Olga, "we lived in constant fear of her being kidnapped by the Reds."[61] This fear was legitimate, for Olga recalls in an interview with Ian Vorres that around 1925 the Soviet government claimed that the Russian Church in Copenhagen was technically its territory because

[56] King and Wilson, *The Resurrection of the Romanovs,* 67-68.
[57] King and Wilson, *The Resurrection of the Romanovs,* 68.
[58] McNeal, *The Plots to Rescue the Tsar*, 139.
59 Massie, *The Romanovs,* 132.
60 Ian Vorres, *The Last Grand-Duchess* (London: Finedawn Publishers [Psaropoulos] third ed., 1985), 172.
[61] Vorres, *The Last Grand-Duchess,* 172.

the building was on the imperial embassy's ground, and so they could conduct affairs as they saw fit all the way in Denmark.[62] Once the Danish government acknowledged the Soviets' claim, the Soviets annexed the church to their consulate, leaving those Russians living in Copenhagen without their church until Maria Feodorovna fought the case in a high court and won, enabling the church to be reopened.[63]

The Bolshevik efforts to extend their reach and spread their agenda against the Romanovs and the monarchy went far beyond the borders of the former Russian empire. The fact that the Bolsheviks sought out relatives of the Tsar in countries as far away from Russia as Denmark illustrates the degree to which the Soviets were willing to make a point. The old regime was over, there would be no way of reverting back to the old regime, and the Soviets were not going to leave any trace of the monarchy alive, especially if their symbolic legacy would rally those against the Bolshevik cause.

That the Bolsheviks sought out any reminders of the old regime outside of Russia suggests that the government was suspicious of foreign opposition. The fear was perhaps that if Romanovs abroad were able to gather support from foreign governments for all the wrongs the Soviets committed against those with Romanov surnames, those governments abroad could have possibly possessed the power to bar the Bolshevik government from pursuing their national interests, be it economically through trade or through military intervention.

White Army Investigation

Meanwhile, the mystery of the Romanov murders did not immediately disappear into whatever stories the Bolsheviks claimed to be true. The Bolsheviks were not the only group that

[62] Vorres, *The Last Grand-Duchess,* 172.
[63] Vorres, *The Last Grand-Duchess,* 172.

was influencing how the Romanovs would be seen in as a part of the Revolution. A key player in interpreting the Romanov's role in the Revolution was the White Army. After driving the Red Army out of Ekaterinburg by July 25, 1918, eight days after Bolsheviks murdered Nicholas and his family, the White Army began an investigation into the disappearances and/or murders of the Romanovs. The Bolsheviks resented the White Army's investigation, which exposed Bolsheviks' insecurities about the murders. Within the White Army there were many groups on the case, such as a commission of men from the St. Petersburg Military Academy and the White Army Criminal Investigation Division, as well as other investigators. However, the one investigator who provided the story believed true for most of the twentieth century was Nikolai Sokolov.[64]

Sokolov, who Summers and Mangold describe as an extreme monarchist, was appointed the third investigator to the case on February 7, 1919—nearly six months after the Romanov executions.[65] Sokolov inherited a case that had been pursued by two other investigators before him, Alexander Nametkin and Judge Ivan Sergeyev, who both came to several different, and ultimately false, conclusions about the fate of the Romanovs. Nametkin, the first investigator, initially began to look into the case shortly after the White Army took control of Ekaterinburg. Despite the Red Army's defeat, Nametkin was still very weary in his detective work, and for a good reason. The Red Army attempted to retake Ekaterinburg after the investigation began, and they even prowled the forests around the town for a while afterwards.[66] Eventually Nametkin's fears were confirmed, "for he became the first of many to die violently during the Romanov enquiry."[67] Similarly, Valery Jordansky "is said to have been caught and

[64] Summers and Mangold, *The File on the Tsar,* 57.
[65] Summers and Mangold, *The File on the Tsar,* 101.
[66] Summers and Mangold, *The File on the Tsar,* 70.
[67] Summers and Mangold, *The File on the Tsar,* 70.

killed by the Bolsheviks for his part in the Romanov investigation."[68] When questioning peasant witnesses for his investigation, Sokolov found out that shortly after the Romanov murders Red Army soldiers told the individuals who were walking around the hidden burial site of the imperial remains that a bomb-throwing practice session was apparently going to take place, and that they should leave at once.[69] In this instance, the Red Army soldiers lied in order to keep those away from where they buried the Romanovs. In other instances, Red Army soldiers threatened peasants more aggressively to stay clear from where evidence would later show the Bolsheviks burned and buried the Romanovs.[70]

Those who pursued the Romanovs' case (as well as those who stumbled upon the Romanov burial site unintentionally) were threatened, hunted and/or killed—much like those of the extended Romanov family themselves. The Bolsheviks' efforts to seek out those who could expose them for their crimes underlines how conscious the Bolsheviks were about their image. The Bolsheviks clearly did not want the Romanov remains to be found, nor any one story about the Romanov murders to be confirmed. Yet, as cited earlier in this thesis, Trotsky illuminated the authorities' motivation behind executing the Romanovs: destroying them in such a manner made a point to those who were hopeful for any return to the old regime. With this logic, why would the Bolsheviks express anxiety about being exposed? If the first two investigators before Sokolov were following leads and possessed evidence that could have guided others to the truth—that is, the physical graves of Nicholas and the ten others executed that night —why did they have to be silenced? Along these lines, Pierre Gilliard asks, "why did these men take so much trouble to efface all traces of their deed? Why, since they professed to be acting as the

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[68] Summers and Mangold, *The File on the Tsar*, 91.
[69] Sokolov and O'Conor, *The Sokolov Investigation of the Alleged Murder of the Russian Imperial Family: a Translation of Sections of Nicholas A. Sokolov's The Murder of the Imperial Family. Translation and Commentary by John F. O'Conor* (New York, NY: Robert Speller & Sons, Publishers, Inc., 1971), 165.
[70] Sokolov and O'Conor, *The Sokolov Investigation...,* 163-64.

servants of justice, did they hide like criminals? And from whom were they hiding?"[71] According to Trotsky's statements, confirming the Romanov murders and exposing the physical evidence would have only further emphasized the strength and severity with which the Bolsheviks controlled their constituents. Instead, the Bolsheviks added another layer of suspicion and conspicuous activity to their agenda by trying to cover up the investigations. Arguably this contributed to the Bolsheviks' image as being guilty of murder. And if the Bolsheviks were acting guilty of a crime and afraid of being exposed, then that means the Bolsheviks lacked confidence in their control and image. The Bolsheviks did not confirm one story about the fate of the Romanovs or admit as a collective that they killed Nicholas and his family because they were unsure that doing so would not offend the people enough to side against the Bolsheviks during such a crucial time of political uncertainty.

Fig. 2. Nikolai Sokolov, *File:Bridge on Koptyaki Road photographed by Sokolov.jpg.* Available from: Wikimedia Commons,

71 Pierre Gilliard, *Thirteen Years at the Russian Court (A Personal Record of the Last Years and Death of the Czar Nicholas II. and His Family)* trans. Frederic Appleby Holt (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1921), 290.

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bridge_on_Koptyaki_Road_photographed_by_Sokolov.jpg

Nevertheless, like the Bolsheviks, the White Army soon found certain advantages to writing their own end to the Romanov story, regardless of whether their suspicions and allegations were confirmed. By the end of 1918, the fate of the Romanovs was still unclear; there was equal evidence for both execution and escape.[72] And then, abruptly, the White government in Omsk (a city in southwestern Siberia) began to spread extravagant tales about the Romanovs being slaughtered at the hands of the Bolsheviks.[73] The White Army's reasoning was infused with political, strategic aims, for "as propaganda, this served the double purpose of exposing the Bolsheviks as vicious murderers of helpless women and children, and at the same time elevating the Romanovs to the status of martyrs."[74]

The White Army used Nicholas II in death as a kind of weapon against the Red Army. As previously mentioned, many in the White Army were not in favor of reinstating the Romanov dynasty. Despite this fact, the White Army perpetuated the story of Nicholas II through the chaos of the Civil War. Regardless of who Nicholas was as Tsar before the Revolution, his execution and that of his family symbolized Bolshevik brutality. Who Nicholas and his family were and what they represented in the unfolding events began to take on new meanings to the Russians who survived the Revolution. The White Army took advantage of the ambiguity the Bolsheviks left when they decided hurriedly to execute and dispose of the Romanovs, which generated more Romanov stories to keep the royal family's memory pertinent to the unfolding events in Russia.

[72] Summers and Mangold, *The File on the Tsar,* 93.
[73] Summers and Mangold, *The File on the Tsar,* 97-98.
[74] Summers and Mangold, *The File on the Tsar,* 97-98.

De-Romanovization: Destroying Physical Reminders of Nicholas II and the Monarchy

While the Bolsheviks may have hesitated to announce the murders of Nicholas II and his family, there is less doubt that they worked hard to eliminate anything related to Imperial Russia and the Tsar during the first few years after the Revolution in their efforts to build communism. Unlike its predecessor, the Provisional Government (which imprudently overlooked the significance behind continuing to use the same buildings, symbols and structures in place under the Romanovs for their own regime), the Bolsheviks took an active role in riding any hint of Nicholas II in all facets of politics and society.[75] The task at hand was not easy by any means, nor one that required little time in efforts. Richard Stites, author of *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution,* shines light on the many challenges the Bolsheviks undertook during and after the Revolution in their quest to transform Russian society: "the making of a revolutionary culture and way of life required clearing away old forms (iconoclasm) and fashioning new myths, rituals, and moral norms through revolutionary festival and atheist 'godbuilding;' a surge to establish social justice through equality; and the compulsion to transform Russian work habits and revise Russian notions of time, space, motion and order with the goal of introducing the Revolution to the culture of the machine."[76] Needless to say, the Bolsheviks had a large job to do, and they needed to think critically about what defined the society they inherited before they could impose their own agenda successfully.

The Bolsheviks went about dismantling symbols of the old monarchic regime in both organized and unsanctioned undertakings. The Bolsheviks were removing the Romanovs from their Russia in a very literal sense. The Bolsheviks diminished the Romanovs' presence,

[75] Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 65.
[76] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 61.

symbolically and physically from Bolshevik territories. What remained after they systematically removed symbols of Nicholas II and what he stood for were astounding; "the Revolution and Civil War, said the ["commission for artistic preservation, headed by the noted art historian Igor Grabar and working closely with the Bolshevik government"], had brought 'manor houses reduced to dust, slashed paintings, demolished statues, gutted palaces, and cathedrals destroyed by shells.'"[77] Stites goes on to explain that some of the activity that engendered these acts were consequences of fighting, but that most of it was purposeful vandalism.[78] The Bolsheviks eliminated any symbol that those who sympathized with Nicholas II and his family could potentially hold onto by destroying any physical reminders of the Romanov monarchy left out in the open. Without religious icons of the Tsar and the heir to pray to, without the double headed eagle sign hanging on buildings on Nevsky Prospekt, without hearing "God Save the Tsar" sung at national events, and without seeing the name Nicholas II show up in newspapers like *Pravda* or *Izvestia* regularly anymore, chances of the people thinking about their Tsar and his family decreased significantly, if anything just by the nature of their absence.

More specifically, "the objects of the iconoclastic assault were icons (pictorial and plastic images), indexes (names), symbols (indirect representations of abstract values), and buildings that were both symbols and 'practical targets.'"[79] As in 1905 when riots eventually forced the Tsar to deliver the October Manifesto and create the Duma, public portraits of the Tsar were vandalized and removed during the February Revolution.[80] Additionally, "in Petrograd, a commission of art experts and officials appointed by the government decided to eliminate all Romanov statues except for the Bronze Horseman… as were the great figures of Nicholas in St.

[77] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams,* 63.
[78] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams,* 63-64.
[79] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams,* 65.
[80] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams,* 65.

Isaac's Square and Catherine II on present day Lomonosov Square."[81] During the in-between time before monuments and other symbols could be eliminated or taken down, they were covered for public celebrations.[82]

Fig. 3. *Trashed* in "The Bolshevik October Revolution." Available from: Time, http://content.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1681193_1481212,00.html

Buildings and Palaces and Imperial Residences

The Bolsheviks had to transform various buildings, palaces and other physical, institutional structures that were connected with the Romanov monarchy in order to leave no trace of the royal family behind. Tsarskoye Selo, or "Tsar's Village," was where Nicholas and Alexandra quietly raised their children in the suburbs of St. Petersburg when they were not residing in the Winter Palace on the Neva. After Nicholas and his family were put under house arrest in Tsarskoye Selo and eventually moved to Tobolsk in August 1917, Tsarskoye Selo was

[81] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 66.
[82] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 66.

renamed Detskoye Selo, or "Children's Village."[83] Detskoye Selo was eventually turned into the museum of historical life and art, which was overseen by the Detskoye Selo Palace-Museum administration until 1928 when the administration expanded to include the Palace-Museum Pavlovsk block.[84] Many of the valuables inside the palaces of Tsarskoye Selo were arrogated, and some of the items were sold abroad in the late 1920s by the All-Union Antiquarian Company.[85] Rather than make Tsarskoye Selo another headquarters for the Bolsheviks, the architects of the revolution avoided placing any political influence there so as to disassociate the palaces from any source of power. They also made finding any personal belongings of Nicholas and his family virtually impossible by exporting them from the country. In doing so, they removed the possibilities for anyone to come looking for a Romanov fortune or treasure later on. It was almost as if there was no physical proof or reminders for the Soviet citizenry that Nicholas and his family even existed.

Because the White Army quickly assumed control over the Ipatiev House after the executions, the Ipatiev House was not immediately cleansed of its Romanov associations. When the White Army captured Ekaterinburg on July 25, 1918, White Army investigators on the Romanov case occupied the Ipatiev House.[86] In 1927, after the Bolsheviks had retaken Ekaterinburg, the Ipatiev House was converted into a museum specifically dedicated to the Revolution and the Romanov murders in honor of the 10th anniversary of the Revolution.[87] For a

[83] ArcheoBiblioBase: Archives in Russia: H-227," *ArcheoBiblioBase: Archives in Russia,* last modified December 15, 2009, accessed February 11, 2015. http://www.iisg.nl/abb/rep/H-227.tab2.php.
[84] "ArcheoBiblioBase: Archives in Russia: H-227."
[85] "ArcheoBiblioBase: Archives in Russia: H-227."
[86] "Ipatiev House - Romanov Memorial - After 1918," *Ipatiev House - Romanov Memorial - After 1918*, accessed February 11, 2015. http://www.romanov-memorial.com/after_1918.htm.
[87] "Ipatiev House - Romanov Memorial - After 1918."

time, tourists could even venture down to the cellar in which Nicholas and his family were shot and bayoneted.[88] The museum was closed in 1932.

Overall, the Bolsheviks were careful to scour any Romanov affiliation from the preexisting buildings, palaces and other physical establishments after they came to power. In effect, they were literally replacing one power structure with another by moving in or allocating the old building with a new purpose that was somehow related to the Bolshevik mission. They did so in such a way that left finding a trace of the old regime, with the exception of perhaps the exterior architecture of the physical building itself, difficult to find. On the one hand, the Bolsheviks continued to use buildings that were created under the Romanovs (albeit with a different purpose) and thus inherited an architectural style intrinsic to the old regime. On the other hand, it would have been risky if the Bolsheviks ransacked palaces and left them deserted, for it would have provided a haven for anyone who was interested in the revival of or sympathy with the Romanov monarchy. Destroying the structures altogether in a packed city like St. Petersburg would have also bordered on impracticality.

Art, Romanov Treasures & the Persistence of Communist Taste

Despite the Bolsheviks' efforts to rid Russian society of anything related to the old regime, "Lenin's love and respect for literature led him to oppose any form of artistic censorship."[89] Lenin acknowledged at an All Russian Congress of the Youth Communist League on October 2, 1920 that, "we shall be unable to solve this problem unless we clearly realize that only a precise knowledge and transformation of the culture… will enable us to create a

[88] "Ipatiev House - Romanov Memorial - After 1918."
[89] Annette T. Rubinstein, "Lenin on Language, Literature, and Censorship," *Science and Society,* Lenin: Evaluation, Critique, Renewal (1995): 373.

proletarian culture."[90] We can derive from this statement that Lenin did not believe that disregarding all past culture was entirely necessary in order to build communism. Lenin was partially open to preserving elements that defined culture under Nicholas II and his predecessors. There was room under Lenin for both individual members of Russian communities and those in the communist ranks to talk of the last Romanov family, to spread rumors, and to possess music, books, or other emblems of Imperial Russian culture without the likelihood of exile or execution if caught.

When the Bolsheviks came to power and won the Civil War, they sold Imperial Russian valuables to the West: "the sales, mostly during the 1920s and early 1930s, were meant to undermine the *ancien regime's* cultural legitimacy and raise much needed cash to refinance the state and support infrastructure and industrial improvements."[91] Through the mid-1920s, "the Soviets sold jewels and precious metals in a process of 'realization into currency.' At first they destroyed items and melted down metals, but the Soviets quickly moved from ideological iconoclasm to a pragmatic approach of selling pieces to the West."[92]

The Bolsheviks experimented with the final destinations of many Romanov assets. The regime not only made a statement to its constituents, but also to their onlookers abroad by banishing Romanov symbols outside the country until the mid-1920s. Selling Romanov jewels and other prized possessions to the West indicates that the Romanovs, or at least what they stood for, continued to hold value in foreign markets. Although the Soviet government continued its efforts of de-Romanovization, the West's participation in the trade of Romanov jewels, art, books and other historical artifacts early on under the Bolshevik regime potentially served as a

[90] Rubinstein, "Lenin on Language, Literature, and Censorship," 374.
[91] David J. Gary, April 21, 2015 (10:10 am), "The Dispersal of Libraries in Soviet Russia in the 1920s-1930s," *Function Follows Forme,* February 20, 2013, http://davidjgary.com/2013/02/20/the-dispersal-of-libraries-in-soviet-russia-in-the-1920s-1930s/.
[92] Gary, "The Dispersal of Libraries..."

reminder to the regime that not everybody in the world wished to destroy the Romanovs' memory or their cultural or political presence forever. The Romanovs' legacy of desired material objects for the West were still sought after and perceived as full of worth. This reassurance of interest in the royal family may have pushed the Bolsheviks in their quest to rid their new communist society of anything that could potentially remind the population of the Romanovs.

To make matters more complicated, the Roosevelt-Litvinov Agreements of 1933-34 between the United States and the Soviet Union put into formal writing American acknowledgment of "the claims of the Soviet government to money and property in this country that clearly had belonged to the Imperial Russian Government rather than to Nicholas or to any of the Romanovs personally."[93] In doing so, the United States, an influential international player, condoned what the Soviets claimed was theirs. The U.S. thus encouraged the Soviets to continue to stifle the persistence of Romanov memory. What is more, the Roosevelt-Litvinov Agreements increased the legal complexities for Romanov relatives and descendants when it came to pursuing family inheritances.

Nomenclature of Streets, Villages, Cities and Capitals

Official names were another medium through which the Bolsheviks and Soviet government could purge Romanov influence and implant their agenda. Street names, such as "Millionaya Street, adjacent to the Winter Palace and the locus of royalty, now took on the name of the terrorist who had tried in 1880 to blow up the palace and the royal family."[94] Changing an element as seemingly minuscule as a street name, over time, is bound to catch on with the

[93] Richards, *The Hunt for the Czar*, 29.
[94] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 66.

younger generations who had no previous understanding of what those places connoted before the changes.

Predictably, this strategy was easily extended to entire cities, towns and villages throughout the changing Russian-Soviet empire in the years after 1917. The most obvious example was changing the name of the capital under the Tsars, St. Petersburg (which Nicholas II had renamed to Petrograd during World War I in response to its German-sounding name), to Leningrad on January 26, 1924— five days after Lenin's death. To underscore the point even further, the Bolsheviks moved the capital from St. Petersburg to Moscow— a much less artificial, imitative Russian city— "for security reasons and as an expression of the clean break with the [tsarist] regime."[95] The change of government and power mirrored a simultaneous transformation of the former Imperial Russian empire's previously understood geographic layout and corresponding political connotations.

To return to this strategy on a smaller scale, the summer imperial residences in Tsarskoye Selo, or "Tsar's Village," was renamed, *Detskoye Selo,* or "Children's Village." After the Revolution, Tsarskoye Selo had been turned into temporary housing facilities for homeless children.[96] Ekaterinburg, the Siberian city in which Nicholas and his family were murdered, was renamed Sverdlovsk in honor of Soviet Russia's first titular Head of State I. M. Sverdlov, who died as early as 1919.[97] In sum, Russia after the Revolution altered its geographic names more so than anywhere else in world.[98]

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[95] Olga Gritsai and Herman van der Wutsen, "Moscow and St. Petersburg, a sequence of capitals, a tale of two cities," *GeoJournal* (2000): 39.
[96] G. R. F. Bursa, "Political Changes of Names of Soviet Towns," *The Slavonic and East European Review* (1985): 163.
[97] Bursa, "Political Changes of Names of Soviet Towns," 168.
[98] Bursa, "Political Changes of Names of Soviet Towns," 161.

Reassessing Individual Names

Russians also reconsidered the meaning of individual names. Russian names and titles were complicated, and they played an arguably much more significant role in Russian society than in most Western cultures. Changes to Russian names and titles were powerful, and "although more commonly associated with the Soviet state, the dissolution of monarchist titles and names after February anticipated the onomastic revolutions of the Bolsheviks... [Furthermore,] at the session of the Petrograd Duma on March 8th it was suggested that places named after 'Nicholas' and 'Alexander' should 'be given a new name associated with the great days of freedom.'" [99] The *Nicholas II,* a supply ship, was forgotten and renamed *Comrade,* and even the name Nikolai, which had been quite popular before the Revolution, became disfavored in 1917.[100] In fact, both the names Alexander and Nicholas, in reference to the last two Tsars, left a bad taste in Communist mouths.[101] On November 11, 1917 the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars approved Article I of the Decree on the Abolition of Classes and Civil Ranks, which stated that "all the classes of society existing up to now in Russia, and all division of citizens, all class distinctions and privileges, class organizations and institutions and also civil grades are abolished."[102] In addition, "the old deferential forms 'Your Honour', 'Your Excellency', etc. were abolished in the military by Order No. 1."[103]

Yet, the Bolsheviks displayed inconsistency in their renaming strategies. While they were adamant about reconsidering elements of their new society related to the names Nicholas or

[99] Orlando Figes and B. I. Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917* (New Haven, CT: YUP, 1999), 57.
[100] Figes and Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution, 58*-59.
[101] Bursa, "Political Changes of Names of Soviet Towns," 164.
[102] Matthews, *Soviet Government*, 20.
[103] Figes and Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution,* 60.

Alexander, for example, the authorities were more relaxed when it came to names of those who lived under the Tsarist regime and who perhaps shed a more positive light on the history the Bolsheviks inherited. While Nicholas and Alexander may have been taboo names, the names Peter and Paul were spared by the future communist governments.[104] As Stalin would do in the 1930s by reintroducing glorious figures from Russian history like Alexander Nevsky, Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible as his esteemed predecessors, the early Soviet government engaged in a game of selective approbation and/or veneration.[105]

We can now better comprehend the Bolsheviks' ambiguous reactions to the executions of Nicholas and his family. To determine whether or not the Romanov murders were worthy of praise and admiration or disgrace and cowardice was a somewhat murky endeavor among the communist authorities (although, as mentioned earlier in this thesis, Lenin thought it best not to glorify the Romanovs' end but instead to maintain that execution was necessary). After all, if the Bolsheviks were generally following a policy of destruction and abolition towards anything related to the Romanovs, then why should those who partook in the Romanov captivity and/or execution in Tsarskoye Selo, Tobolsk or in the Ipatiev House in Ekaterinburg have had to hide their actions? Was their execution not in line with party rule?

In general, when there are initiatives to taint something as seemingly ordinary and lacking political bias like a name or surname, societal divides and political allegiances form and are consolidated. If a mother wanted to name her son Nikolai or Alexander, the regime would find her more suspicious of disloyalty, which could result in some form of her shaming or targeting for exile or execution. There was yet one more aspect of society that helped define what kind of Russian— what kind of Soviet citizen— an individual should have been at that time

[104] Bursa, "Political Changes of Names of Soviet Towns," 164.
[105] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia,* 60.

by giving certain names a negative connotation. Measures to corrupt a person's name makes up just one example of the many ways in which Bolsheviks forced Russians to rethink how they perceived Nicholas II and the Romanovs, and such measures closed the opportunities for interested groups to express any interest or sympathy for the old regime.

Nicholas II in Post-Revolution Education and Schools

De-Romanovization had an important role in the school systems. By nature, educational institutions are places for socialization. In a person's formative years, schools, teachers, classmates and the content of school textbooks and lessons hold invaluable meaning, enough to impact how he or she views the world as an adult. Therefore, it is no surprise that the Bolshevik regime recognized this power and reacted by cleansing Romanov influence in schools. Just as Nicholas II's image was found on the streets and in newspapers before the Revolution, portraits of the Tsar hung in schools. Thus, as the Bolsheviks continued their endeavor to build communism, "the Ministry of Education ordered that pictures of the Tsar and his heir should be taken from all schools."[106]

The communist ideologies that drove the Bolshevik party replaced the significance of the Tsar's portraits. As Charles D. Cary summarizes, "it is axiomatic in Soviet pedagogical literature that instruction in all schools subjects—and particularly in history, geography, and social science—can and should inculcate in young people a Marxist-Leninist belief system."[107] To the nascent communist government, cutting off other modes of thought and education in order to consolidate their control over the population and convincing students of their political and societal affinities was imperative. After a few years of education infused with Marxist-Leninist

[106] Figes and Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution,* 54.
[107] Charles D. Cary, "Patterns of Emphasis upon Marxist-Leninist Ideology: A Computer Content Analysis of Soviet School History, Geography, and Social Science Textbooks," *Comparative Education Review* (1976): 12.

values, children and the generations after them would have a very different interpretation of Nicholas II and his role in the Russian Revolution. How Russians remembered and understood Nicholas and his family was internalized on various levels and in several different ways in the years during and after the Revolution until those who were alive under Nicholas II eventually all died.

Celebrations and Remembering the Revolution

Indoctrinating the masses in communist ideology and the government's political agendas would not be complete without sanctioned, public celebrations to commemorate the 1917 Revolution. In honoring the communists' accomplishments and progress on certain anniversaries, the government invariably had to retell the Tsar's narrative. Katerina Clark proposes the following about the purpose of these celebrations: "the first revolutionary mass spectacles were meant to function as crucibles for transforming consciousness among the illiterate masses, to help break down the gulf between actors and audience, between cultural professionals and the masses. It was believed that if the masses participated in a ritual reenactment of revolution, they might experience a revolution of their very psyches."[108]

A reenactment of the storming of the Winter Palace took place on November 8, 1920 in Palace Square, and it served as a medium through which the Bolsheviks attempted to retell, and in a sense, reshape, how history took place. In reality, the October Revolution was not the grandiose, dramatic event that director Sergei Eisenstein portrayed in his 1928 film, *October: Ten Days that Shook the World.* Yet the government was able to reenact how the Bolsheviks came to power through these reenactments, and thus press their claims of legitimacy. While these mass spectacles spotlighted the Bolsheviks, the public celebrations continued to remind the

[108] Katerina Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1995), 243.

masses of the story of 1917, which inherently included Nicholas II's narrative, thereby keeping his memory alive by default.

In certain cases the Romanov topic was permitted in Soviet society through sanctioned films. Esfir Shub, a Soviet filmmaker, was asked to make the 1927 documentary, *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty,* for the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution. The documentary is a montage of real footage from the days of the last Romanovs, with cuts from every few clips to written commentary on the screen. There is no dialogue or script, and there is no synced sound. Because the documentary is comprised of film clips that predated the Revolution, there is a lack of the characteristic Soviet propaganda or influence. However, since she was appointed to do the film for the government, naturally Shub arranged these film clips in order to illuminate the inherent flaws of Tsarist rule such as "the juxtapositions of the upper classes at leisure with the carnage on the front lines [of World War I]..."[109] The main point to be taken away from these mass spectacles, public reenactments and early Soviet films is that the Romanovs continued to be incorporated into the Bolsheviks and later Soviets' narrative. While the Bolsheviks painted Nicholas and his family in different lights and changed their position towards them over the initial years of their political control, the Romanovs' memory was nevertheless maintained in the larger story of how the Bolsheviks rose to power. In short, they were not completely shunned from social discourse in the early years of the Soviet regime. And this discursive pressure preserved their memories to a certain extent.

[109] "The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty (Esfir Shub, 1927)," Kinoglaz Online, accessed April 21, 2015. http://kinoglazonline.weebly.com/fall-of-the-romanov-dynasty-esfir-shub-1927.html.

Hints of the Defiance

In the end, despite the Bolsheviks' ad-hoc attempts to destroy the Romanovs in death and in memory, and despite their efforts to recast Nicholas and his family as the villains in the larger narrative of the 1917 October Revolution, the image of the last Tsar and what he and his family meant to Russians continued to occupy a space in the Russian national narrative throughout the early years of the Soviet empire. There were individuals who tried to preserve some relics, both physical and spiritual, relating to Nicholas, Alexandra and their five children, which suggests that the Bolsheviks were not entirely successful in destroying the memory of the Tsar forever from Russian culture. For example, after the February Revolution, "officers were sometimes arrested for retaining royal signs, for breaches of the new symbolic etiquette, and for calling the red banners 'rags' and 'babushka's underwear.'"[110] Additionally, "in Ekaterinoslav, officials quietly removed the tsar's portraits two weeks after the fall of the monarchy and hid them in the attics of their buildings."[111] And again, in the exact same town, "cases of 'renewed' icons —old icons that seemed to glow again in the radiance of an apparition appeared during the stressful years of the Civil War and famine and were taken by peasant believers as signs of hope and salvation. When the Bolsheviks uncovered a renewed icon industry in Ekaterinoslav where gold foil was used to make the renewed effect, the icon-makers were shot."[112]

Why did these people attempt to preserve the memory of the tsar in a time of upheaval and confusion? Either they still revered the tsar and those depicted in icons, or they thought the icons, which are still clear symbols of Imperial Russian culture, might be worth money someday in the future. If the former, then these people who perhaps believed that one-day these tsarist portraits may be worth a fortune did not buy into the Bolshevik/communist ideology of

[110] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams,* 67.
[111] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams,* 65.
[112] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams,* 108.

inequality and the evils of capitalism. The main point to take away from these facts is this: there were segments of the population who disagreed with Bolshevik aims to make a break with the past. Certain people wanted to hold onto pieces of their pre-Revolution lives even if doing so meant defying those in power, and since the Bolsheviks were cruel in their punishments of those who disobeyed, Romanov-sympathizers who tried to protect pieces of the old regime were sometimes risking their lives.

Along similar lines, in response to the government's removal of the tsar's portraits, "occasionally the military and civil leadership attempted to prohibit the destruction or removal of these portraits. This could lead to bitter struggles with the crowds, which, in turn, became the focus of a broader conflict over power."[113] Fighting in defense of Nicholas II and what he stood for became a means by which those not in the Bolshevik or other communist parties could defy the changing political tides. The tsar stood for the old regime, and regardless of the level of an opposition group or an individual's devotion to Nicholas II and the Romanov monarchy, Tsardom was a preformed side with a set value system to which any anti-Bolshevik could cling. The anti-Bolsheviks already had a long-standing symbol through which they could rally support against the new communist regime.

Conclusion

The Bolsheviks responded in two oppositional ways towards Nicholas II and his family in the first decade after their deaths. It was unclear early on after the Bolsheviks took power how they wanted to frame the role of the Tsar and his family in the Revolution's narrative. The Bolsheviks' initial approach to the Romanov executions was chaotic and haphazard. Portrayals of Nicholas II and his family were muddled with rumors of escape from Ekaterinburg and reports

[113] Figes and Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution,* 54.

that only the Tsar was executed. The second approach was one of strategic elimination. Bolsheviks removed, destroyed or banished anything related to the Romanov monarchy from the new Soviet empire's borders. All in all, how the early Soviet government presented the last Romanov family was inconsistent and contradictory. The Bolsheviks were reluctant to come clean about the murders in the basement of the Ipatiev House, but they were careful to execute all the members of the extended Romanov family and to eradicate any symbol of the Imperial Russian monarchy from Soviet society. What is more, out of these ambiguities arose opportunities for the memory of Nicholas and his family to be preserved (or at least to be not forgotten). It is important to examine how the Bolsheviks treated the last Romanov family after death in order to create a more comprehensive picture of how the Soviet government came to and stayed in power. The Bolshevik policies towards Nicholas II and his family are examples of how the Bolsheviks came to power, and studying these policies can help historians better understand how and why the Bolsheviks may have chosen other policies towards nation-building and maintaining political dominance as a whole.

Despite the Bolsheviks' efficiency in eradicating their new Soviet society of any symbols related to the Romanov monarchy, they were not able to prohibit Romanov-sympathizers from remaining faithful to or interested in the last Tsar and his family. There were still signs from the first decade after the murders in Ekaterinburg to suggest that the Bolsheviks were not completely successful at convincing the passive citizenry to embrace their political transition by uprooting loyalty and devotion to the Romanov family.

CHAPTER THREE

Traces of Loyalty to Nicholas II Outside of Russia: Russian Émigrés and *Vozrozhdenie*

Romanov-sympathizers' continued interest in Nicholas II and his family after their murders is evidenced in articles and images from the Russian émigré newspaper *Vozrozhdenie*. The newspaper, whose name translates to "Renaissance," was based in Paris, France from 1925-40. *Vozrozhdenie* was known to have had strong monarchist undertones, which contrasted the other popular liberal newspapers that circulated throughout the Russian émigré literary world around that time. Selected articles from *Vozrozhdenie* allow historians to see how Russian émigrés perceived the last Tsar and his family starting six years after the executions. Because of its nostalgic, right wing tendencies, *Vozrozhdenie* cast Nicholas II and his family as benevolent characters from pre-Revolutionary Russia, in complete contrast to the Bolsheviks' typical depictions. The newspaper's Romanov sympathies can be seen in its choice of images and article headlines. This source also reveals how Russian émigrés depicted the Bolsheviks as criminal perpetrators of an evil act. Analysis of headlines and images from *Vozrozhdenie* illuminates the ongoing and increased importance of Nicholas II and his family amongst Russian émigrés years after their murders. The Bolsheviks' hasty and disorganized execution of the royal family added a level of confusion and mystery surrounding the act, which, in turn, fueled discussion and even mysticism about the royal family after their murders, and which sparked the topic of their martyrdom.

Vozrozhdenie's biased image and headline selection in favor of Nicholas II push back against the Bolsheviks' de-Romanovization tactics. *Vozrozhdenie*'s editors and readers reacted to the Romanov executions in a different way than members of the Bolshevik party did. The

Bolsheviks reacted to the unfolding Revolution and the Romanov murders firstly by confusing the situation and then attempting to marginalize the Romanovs' significance to the new regime. Russian émigrés who read *Vozrozhdenie*, on the other hand, appear to have reacted to the Romanov executions and the Bolshevik regime with grief and hostility. In a sense, the Russian émigrés who read *Vozrozhdenie* attempted to re-depict the Romanovs in a positive light while the opposite was occurring in their homeland. It is clear that the Bolsheviks did not have unanimous support for their portrayals of the Romanovs within all Russian communities.

Whether or not Russian émigrés believed that members of the last Romanov family were dead or alive, and despite the Bolsheviks' thorough engagement in deRomanovization back within the new Soviet borders, the Romanovs were still a topic of discussion in the émigré circles, and they were figureheads around which those belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church could assemble in solidarity. How did Russian émigrés express their opinions about the new communist regime? About the Romanovs in general? The less strict laws on the press and on expression outside of the Soviet territories allowed Russians to express their devotion to or sympathy for Nicholas II and his family abroad much more freely than they could in Russia after the Revolution. *Vozrozhdenie* is only one example of the larger Russian émigré literary press. As Boris Lanin summarizes, "if literary life in Russia was characterized by creeping censorship and the closure of privately owned publishing houses during the 1920, then the picture in emigration was different. In Europe, China, and the United States many new publishing outlets, newspapers, and journals emerged. One hundred and thirty Russian newspapers were published in 1920, the next year 250, and in 1922 more than 350."[114]

[114] Boris Lanin, "Experiment and Emigration: Russian Literature, 1917–1953," in *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature*, Neil Cornwell (London: Routledge, 2001), 185.

It is clear that Russians had an active literary presence abroad. Given that the Russian émigré population experienced a type of cultural trauma after the Revolution and Civil War, the topics of these newspapers probably expressed an array of different opinions regarding the old and new regime rather than those of one uniform voice. Thus, it is important to remember that while *Vozrozhdenie* is the focus of this chapter, there were other opinions amongst émigrés concerning the last Romanov family. The articles from *Vozrozhdenie* will be spotlighted more intensely for the purposes of this thesis to emphasize the backlash that occurred during and following Bolshevik regime change as it pertained to their interpretation of the last Romanov family.

In comparison with the rest of the Russian literary world abroad, the "moderate, conservative, monarchist organ" *Vozrozhdenie* paled in comparison to *Poslednie Novosti* ("The Latest News") when it came to popularity amongst Russian émigrés, for *Poslednie Novosti* was "the most outstanding, respected, and widely read newspaper in Russia Abroad."[115] The newspapers and journals that leaned far right were never as successful as those with more leftist undertones, despite the notion that most "average" Russian émigrés identified themselves as traditional monarchists.[116] Interestingly, according to Gleb Botkin, "it became the fashion to parade as monarchists. Every second Russian whom [he] met, told [him] some fantastic tale of how he had tried to rescue the Royal Family from Tobolsk or Ekaterinburg—."[117] In any case, Russian émigrés were comprised of multiple political factions, and the expression of the monarchist preference was not as prevalent as one would assume.

[115] Marc Raeff, *Russia Abroad: A Cultural History of the Russian Emigration, 1919-1939* (New York: Oxford UP, 1990), 82.
[116] Raeff, *Russia Abroad*, 82.
[117] Botkin, *The Real Romanovs*, 246.

Despite *Vozrozhdenie*'s lesser popularity amongst the other Russian émigré newspapers, it was nevertheless in publication for fifteen years, which is not insignificant. Additionally, the fact that the newspaper was based in Paris —one of the most popular Russian émigré locations— gives credence to its legitimacy as representing a portion of Russian émigrés who sympathized with the monarchy. It is noteworthy that *Vozrozhdenie* did not focus solely on the Romanovs or the days of yore to fill its pages. Sections of the newspaper also included "Latest News," "Exchange," "Chess," "Letters to the Editor," "Chronicle" and "Advertisements." Thus, *Vozrozhdenie* served the purpose of an average newspaper in terms of providing a space for businesses and émigrés to feature advertisements or opinions, as well as keeping up to date with current events both in and outside the Soviet Union, for politics and society in the Soviet Union were undergoing drastic changes throughout *Vozrozhdenie's* publication tenure. *As Vozrozhdenie* was not simply a newspaper about the murdered Tsar and his family, it included articles and announcements about these events. To better comprehend Russian émigré sentiments towards the last Romanovs and those responsible for their murders, it would be beneficial to take a glimpse into what was unfolding in the Soviet Union at that time.

As we know, Lenin died in 1924. His successor, although unclear until the late 1920s, emerged in the figure of Joseph Stalin. The majority of Russian and Soviet history students (at least those educated in the West) understand Stalin to have been a brutal politician who sent millions of Russians to their deaths until his own death in 1953. What cannot be denied, however, were Stalin's domestic policies that catapulted the Soviet Union to eventually become one of the world's leading super powers.

So what exactly was happening in Russia while Russian émigrés read about Nicholas II's murder in Paris in *Vozrozhdenie*'s columns? By 1925, the Soviet Union officially adopted the

"Socialism in One Country" policy, which asserted that in order to expand communist ideology, it was imperative that it be first developed and fostered in the Soviet Union. What that meant for Russian émigrés was most likely the consolidation (if it had not been accepted at that point) that Russia, then the Soviet Union, was communist and that there were little chances that Russia would return back to its pre-Revolutionary status as an autocratic, capitalist society.

By the time that *Vozrozhdenie* came into being in Paris in 1925, Russia's political environment was already undergoing massive changes since the Revolution. Some scholars debate whether or not the path that unraveled was the natural course of Bolshevism, or if it was a different, distinct path for Russia entirely given Lenin's original aims. Those who argue in favor of the "straight line" concept between Bolshevik policies and those under Stalin point to "the most historic and murderous acts of Stalinism between 1929 and 1939, from forcible wholesale collectivization to the execution and brutal incarceration of tens of millions of people" as originating "from the political—that is, the ideological, programmatic, and organizational—nature of original Bolshevism."[118] Robert Conquest, author of *The Great Terror*, argues that while it was not inevitable that the Great Terror of 1936-38 would be the natural progression from Bolshevism, it could not have happened without the "extraordinarily idiosyncratic background of Bolshevik rule..."[119] Andrei Walicki puts forth that while "totalitarianism was not a necessary consequence of Marxism," "Marxist totalitarianism was the *predictable* outcome of a Marxist-inspired revolutionary communist movement."[120] In sum, "while most Western theorists of Soviet 'totalitarianism' saw Stalin's upheaval of 1929-33 as a turning point, they interpreted it

[118] Stephen F. Cohen, "Bolshevism and Stalinism," in *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, the American Council of Learned Societies. Planning Group on Comparative Communist Studies (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 7.
[119] Robert Connquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (New York, NY: Oxford UP, 1990), 3.
[120] Andrei Walicki, "Marxism and the Leap to the Kingon of Freedom," (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press (1995): 497-98, in *The Stalinist Era*, Philip Boobbyer (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007).

not as a discontinuity but as a continuation, culmination, or 'breakthrough' in an already ongoing process of creeping 'totalitarianism.'"[121]

Not everyone agrees with this direct connection, however, and some scholars believe the opposite. In the 1960s, "Revisionist" historians "began to argue that Leninism, for all its violence, did not necessarily lead to Stalinism."[122] One of the reasons that "Revisionist" historians may have taken this position could be that "Lenin introduced sharply contrasting policies at different times... War Communism and NEP represented two approaches to building a socialist society... The fact that Lenin was associated with both these approaches was very convenient for later Soviet leaders, who could legitimize either their extreme or moderate policies by claiming them to be truly Leninist."[123] Therefore, we have two main camps of scholars who differ on the interpretations of Stalin's policies vis-à-vis those of Bolshevism and Lenin.

Nevertheless, these drastic changes in the Soviet Union, it is easy to assume, shifted many Russians' focuses and priorities. Where Romanov-sympathizers may have had more time and energy to discuss Nicholas II and what happened to Imperial Russia in the early 1920s before Lenin's death, when Stalin came to power and began initiating his ambitiously successful, albeit horrific policies, his subjects may not have been able to think about the last Tsar with the same intensity or interest as they had in years past. The unfolding events in the Soviet Union transformed the country so much that perhaps Russian émigrés who were not directly affected felt more nostalgic and a stronger, more spiritual impulse to maintain interest in the Russia before 1917 in response. This nostalgia manifested itself in public requiems for the Tsar and his family, as evidenced by the numerous headlines about these events.

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[121] Cohen, "Bolshevism and Stalinism," 8.
[122] Philip Boobbyer, *The Stalin Era* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), 7.
[123] Boobbyer, *The Stalinist Era*, 13.

In fact, many of the articles about the last Tsar and his family were published on the days of or surrounding the anniversary of their murders. The articles were usually announcements for memorial services that were held in churches. Occasionally there were a few articles with new information or opinions on the murders in Ekaterinburg, or an announcement that something had been named in the honor of Nicholas II or a Romanov, but the announcements and reports about the memorial services were more common.

The Church's Ties to the Monarchy

The memorial services for Nicholas II and his family were held in churches, which draws attention to the connection between persistent faith in the monarchy and the monarchy's ties to the Russian Orthodox Church. One can correlate interest in Nicholas II and his family with Russian émigrés' continued affiliation with the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Bolsheviks targeted Russians who sympathized with the old regime as well as the Russian Orthodox Church. Not surprisingly given the marginalized role of religion in Marxist theory, Bolsheviks limited the Russian Orthodox Church's power in the early years after the Revolution. On January 20, 1918, only a few months after the October Revolution, the Council of the People's Commissars issued the "Decree on the Freedom of Conscience, and of Church and Religious Societies," whose points included that "nobody is entitled to refuse to perform his duties as a citizen on the basis of his religious belief."[124] Those "duties are as a citizen," like the Decree on the Press mentioned in the second chapter, are not specified. Lastly, "the property of all church and religious associations existing in Russia is pronounced the property of the

[124] Matthews, *Soviet Government*, 33-34.

People," i.e. the state.[125] Thus, in this decree the government made the majority of religious activities criminal.

It is worth noting that the Church was not unwaveringly loyal to Nicholas II and the Romanovs. Even though signs of support for the Tsar and his family existed, the Church did not heavily involve itself in preserving the Romanovs as autocrats when the Tsar's grip on power began to show signs of weakening in 1917. The Russian Orthodox Church, William Fletcher argues, made no remarkable efforts to save the monarchy as it was crumbling, nor did the Church try to reverse the events that followed when Nicholas II abdicated.[126] The Church's allegiance to the monarchy was not entirely consistent or strong. Nicholas II and his family had not been executed until over a year after the Tsar's abdication, however, and the murders of the last Romanov family appeared more significant to the émigré press and the Church than the abdication of the throne (or it was at least discussed more).

Now that the Church's position vis-à-vis the royal family has been clarified, we can now turn to the Church's efforts to fight against the new regime and the Bolshevik's imprisonment and murders of the royal family. Given the Tsar and his family's role in the Russian Orthodox Church (as autocratic rulers, the Tsars were believed to have been placed in power by god in the divine right tradition, and "the orthodox *narod* was inclined to associate God and the tsar… For God and the tsar shared many attributes—might, justice, and remoteness"), much of continued loyalty to the royal family during the early Soviet era was directly correlated with the persistence of the Russian Orthodox Church. [127] Despite the repression of the Church, there are several noted incidents of the Church's representatives acting out in defiance against the new regime and in solidarity with the murdered Romanov family and their supporters (i.e. in this case the émigrés).

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[125] Matthews, *Soviet Government*, 33.
[126] William Fletcher, *The Russian Orthodox Church Underground (*London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 16.
[127] Daniel Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), 12.

Since Marxism is intrinsically opposed to religion, it comes as no surprise that those belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church would align themselves with the political factions in favor of a system that preserved religion in society. The White Army and the monarchists were examples of such political factions: "particularly in disputed areas, a great number of religious organizations sprang up in support of the White armies and participated in an exceedingly fierce struggle against the Soviet regime."[128] Additionally, "many of the leaders of the Church gained a great deal of fame... for their participation in the Union of Russian People (commonly called the Black Hundred), an exceedingly reactionary body dedicated to the preservation of the *status quo*."[129] The Church was clearly motivated to align itself with political parties that might undermine the Bolshevik regime. Whether or not the Church or a specific religious organization in question rallied behind the executed Tsar and the royal family, the Church had its own agenda—its very survival—as motivation to counter the Bolshevik Party's grip on power.

Church leaders expressed support for the Romanovs even while they were still alive and as Russia was leaving the Great War. Before Nicholas II and his family were murdered, "the Patriarch issued communion bread to the imprisoned Tsar and held requiems following his execution, and denounced in fiery terms the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany."[130] Similarly, "the archbishop of Ekaterinburg, for example, organized a pro-tsarist demonstration after the execution of the royal family there in July 1918, and he formally celebrated Admiral Kolchak's entry into the city in February 1919."[131]

In targeting and executing the Tsar, the Bolsheviks gave its opposition yet more ammunition. The murder of the Romanovs in all likelihood acted as propaganda to attract

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[128] William Fletcher, *The Russian Orthodox Church Underground*, 25.
[129] William Fletcher, *The Russian Orthodox Church Underground*, 17.
[130] William Fletcher, *The Russian Orthodox Church Underground*, 22.
[131] William B. Husband, "Soviet Atheism and Russian Orthodox Strategies of Resistance, 1917- 1932," *The Journal of Modern History* (1998), 80.

Russians who wanted the Tsar out of power or to pay for his crimes, but it also had the opposite effect. Executing the former Tsar and his family may have sated Russians who looked to communism for Russia's prosperous future, but the act created more enemies. In this case, the author of *The Russian Orthodox Church Underground, 1917-1970* William Fletcher wrote of the Patriarch's gestures to the Tsar before and after the Tsar's murder in the same sentence as a reference to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk that signaled Russia's exit from World War I. To Fletcher, the Patriarch's transactions with the Tsar and his rejection of Russia's treaty with the Germans appear to have been political statements with comparable weight against the Bolshevik regime. The Russian Orthodox Church, while obviously first and foremost a religious organization, played a significant role in keeping the memory of Nicholas II and his family alive and challenging the legitimacy of the Bolsheviks. The Church also created a haven for émigrés because both groups shared a similar experience during the Revolution. Thus, Russian Orthodoxy abroad was a force that most likely acted in solidarity with the Russian émigrés who remained faithful to the last Tsar. It is important to keep the relationships among the Church, Russian émigrés and the Romanov family in mind as analysis of the *Vozrozhdenie* articles develops.

Patterns and Themes

Over the years of *Vozrozhdenie's* existence, representations of the last Romanovs become more sympathetic. Depictions of the Tsar and his family grew more numerous and celebratory. It is clear that *Vozrozhdenie's* editors portrayed Nicholas II and his family as honorable and holding significant status to the Russian émigré population. By the end of the newspaper's publication, Nicholas and his family were being referred to as martyrs—a title that had

apparently not been immediately given to the murdered Tsar and his family when *Vozrozhdenie* began printing. Note that the Russian Orthodox Church only officially canonized Nicholas II and his family as new martyrs in 1981 by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and then as Royal Passion-Bearers in 2000 by the Moscow Patriarchate. The language of *Vozrozhdenie*, then, was in this regard much further ahead of its time.

Vozrozhdenie's bias towards the monarchy can be seen through its descriptive headlines that also frame the family's murderers to be the perpetrators of an evil deed. Descriptions of the murders in Ekaterinburg suggest a clear assignment of blame to the Bolsheviks. However, these sentiments are more easily seen in the later years of *Vozrozhdenie*'s publication lifetime. In its first few years, the newspaper's articles that contained references to Nicholas II and his family around the anniversary of their murders included mostly announcements of the memorial services. The headline, "Memorial Service for Nicholas II" or similar variations of that ("Memorial Service to Nicholas II and his Family, Killed in August") occurred on multiple occasions (Gleb Botkin noted that "abroad those requiems became a regular social function.")[132] On the tenth anniversary of the murders in July 1928, *Vozrozhdenie* featured several articles that included an announcement of a memorial service, in addition to a few other headlines with hints of its right-leaning inclination. For example, on July 17, 1928 the main article's ominous title read: "Fate of the Imperials." Nineteen-twenty nine and 1931 included more announcements of memorial services.

The headlines became more provocative in 1932, as the main Romanov-related headline for the July 16 issue was "Anniversary of the Ekaterinburg Atrocities." In that same issue on the

[132] Botkin, *The Real Romanovs*, 246.
Note: translations of the headlines were made by the author, Liv Chap. All *Vozrozhdenie* headlines can be found at Princeton Univeristy Library's Historic Newspapers collection online at http://historicperiodicals.princeton.edu/historic/cgi-bin/historic?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=vozrozhdenie&e=-------en-20--1--txt-IN-----.

fifth page was a headline titled, “Holiday for the Nicholas II Lycée.” This issue distinguished a clear good vs. evil Nicholas II duality. According to *Vozrozhdenie,* the events that took place in Ekaterinburg were horrific, almost evil (the root of the last Russian word in the headline, “злодей,” comes from the Russian word for “villain”), but a high school in the name of Nicholas II was certainly positive. A holiday in the name of Nicholas II is a clear indication that he was regarded as worthy of such a commemoration. The next day’s issue featured a similar article heading: “Anniversary of the Murders of the Tsarist Family” on July 17, 1932. Along similar lines, on the front page of the July 16, 1933 issue the first article was titled “Russia’s Tragedy” (on the next page there is an announcement for a memorial service). The next day on July 17, 1933, comparable to the headline from a year ago, the article was titled “Ekaterinburg Atrocity.”

Nineteen thirty-four signified a shift in language when it included a headline from July 16, 1934 titled, “The 16th Anniversary of the Martyred Royal Tsarist Family.” The shift in language is a reference to the inclusion of the title “martyr.” Not only were Nicholas II and his family victims of an “evil” act, but they were then characterized as those who suffered and were killed in the name of a specific cause. The next two days featured articles announcing the memorial service, and a report of its attendance and the events during said service. July 16, 1935 mentioned a memorial service, the following day an article titled, “Terrifying Responsibility,” and the day after that an article that discussed the memorial service. On July 18, 1936 an article titled “Meeting of Zealots to Nicholas II’s Memory” can be found, and on July 16, 1937 there was another article titled “Anniversary of the Ekaterinburg Atrocity.”

While these headlines were selected from a range of a few days over the course of twelve years, certain patterns and trends are nonetheless clear. As previously mentioned, headlines about the Tsar picked up after the tenth anniversary of the murders in 1928. The language used to

characterize Nicholas II and the last Romanovs seems to have become more emotive the longer time passed after their murders. It is as if the longing to remember the Romanovs became stronger with time, and correspondingly, stronger as the Soviet Union took shape and became more threatening. The *Vozrozhdenie* headlines also grow more confident over the years, as they made leaps from memorial service announcements and noting the anniversary of the Romanov murders to describing what happened in Ekaterinburg as "Russia's Tragedy," for example. The pictures that *Vozrozhdenie* included also bear witness to mounting interest in the Romanovs, for images of the Tsar and his family seem to have appeared more frequently the more time passed after they were killed. The Tsar's murder was not only a tragedy to the monarchist sympathizers who managed to escape Russia; instead, it was a tragedy for all of Russia—the Russia that, during *Vozrozhdenie*'s publication lifetime, was rapidly becoming something else entirely.

In this changing Russia—the Soviet Union—some Bolsheviks no longer held such high-ranking positions as they did during the Revolution. The Soviet Union under Stalin became characterized by drastic measures and fear when Stalin began eliminating members of the Communist Party in what became known as the Great Purge (1936-40). The Great Purge has its roots in the murder of Sergei Kirov, the former leader of the Leningrad Party and a politician whose popularity Stalin considered a serious threat to his own position in the Party. In response to Kirov's assassination, on December 1, 1934 Stalin's government "introduced a law which gave the government legal sanction to eliminate its enemies at will."[133] The Great Purge was intended to rid opposition to Stalin from the Party, and it manifested itself in the investigations, torture, exiles and/or executions of government officials, party members and kulaks. One crucial component of the Great Purge was the Moscow Show Trials, which saw the trials of many old Bolsheviks who played key roles in the Party before, during and after the 1917 Revolution. Old

[133] Boobbyer, *The Stalin Era,* 65.

Bolsheviks confessed to crimes of treason against Stalin, but there are many reasons to believe that these Bolsheviks were forced to do so, for torture and other psychological intimidation methods were common occurrences during the 1930s to coax confessions. Robert Connquest sheds light on why the show trials were so significant, for "confession is the logical thing to go for when the accused are not guilt and there is no genuine evidence."[134] All in all, between 1934 and 1939, 110 out of the 134 members of the party Central Committee elected at the 17th Party Congress were arrested.[135] Around the time that *Vozrozhdenie* scaled back the number of issues published in Paris, the Great Purges reached a peak in the Soviet Union during which "official figures suggest that 680,000 people were executed for political reasons in 1937-38, although the true figure may be some hundreds of thousands higher."[136]

Thus, towards the end of *Vozrozhdenie*'s tenure, Stalin was persecuting thousands of Russians in the Soviet Union on suspicion that they were disloyal to him and the party. Soviet society was pervaded with a distinct paranoia and fear, and it is clear that Russian émigrés probably enjoyed a much more stable, less threatening existence outside of the Soviet Union. Moreover, many of the more prominent Bolsheviks from the Revolution became targets themselves. They were no longer immune to persecution. The country that Russian émigrés knew before the Revolution was growing more distant and becoming more of a memory due to what was unfolding in the Soviet Union, and it is possible that during the 1930s, Russian émigrés may have never felt so far away and removed from their homeland given how much the Soviet Union changed since the first waves of emigration after the Revolution.

[134] Connquest, *The Great Terror*, 130.
[135] Boobbyer, *The Stalin Era,* 73.
[136] Boobbyer, *The Stalin Era*, 73.

Romanov Depictions

Throughout *Vozrozhdenie*'s existence, images of last Romanov family and corresponding articles on their murders could be found on the front pages of the newspaper. Articles about the Romanovs that were featured on the front pages were sometimes embellished with photographs of Nicholas, his wife and their children from the years leading up to the Revolution. The photographs that *Vozrozhdenie* included on their pages, which can be found in rows of postcards on shelves found in Dom Knigi on Nevsky Prospekt in St. Petersburg to this day (to be discussed further in the conclusion), contrast the crude and almost demonic cartoons depicting the Tsar and Tsarina in the years leading up to the Revolution and beyond (such as the image below).

File:Rasputin listovka.jpg. Available from: Wikimedia Commons, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rasputin_listovka.jpg

This cartoon depicts the Tsar, the Tsarina and Grigori Rasputin. Nicholas and Alexandra appear to be Rasputin's puppets. Their over-exaggerated physical features give them the air of ignorance, naiveté, and weakness. Rasputin is mischievous, conniving, and he is shown above manipulating the Tsar and Tsarina with ease.

Negative depictions of the royal family continued throughout the early Soviet era even after Lenin's death. One popular medium through which the Soviets portrayed the Romanovs through a highly derogatory, politicized, lens was film. As mentioned briefly in the previous chapters, Esfir Shrub and Sergei Eisenstein made films that deliberately served as propaganda for the Soviet government. In particular, Eisenstein's 1928 film *October* cast the Romanovs in a light that starkly contrasts the images of the Romanovs that can be found in *Vozrozhdenie* issues. For instance, the opening scenes of *October* start with workers throwing ropes around a statue of Nicholas II's father, Alexander III; "as the ropes tighten, Eisenstein suddenly shows the statue unencumbered and tumbling down of its own accord. The state's self-propelled downfall indicates the Marxist dialectic at the center of the Russian Revolution: spontaneous class action brought it about, but the regime collapsed from internal weakness as well."[137] Unsurprisingly, the Romanovs were depicted as symbols of oppression in Russia. The monarchy was an obstacle to the people's progress, and they are seen in Eisenstein's film as the clear enemies of the Revolution. There was no pride to be found in the autocracy, and Russians did not appear to fight this assumption throughout *October*.

Eisenstein's critical depictions of the royal family are also closely tied to the director's criticisms of religion. Towards the end of the film, "when the Bolsheviks invade the tsarina's bedroom, they find a host of sentimental icons portraying the allegiance of religion and the state, including Christ blessing the royal family. At the same time, the invaders discover crates of

[137] David Bordwell, *The Cinema of Eisenstein* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 81.

medals ('Is this what we fought for?'), which they overturn in disgust."[138] The malevolence of the Tsar and his family are connected to their ties to religion. Because the Soviets were inherently against religion, this comes as no surprise.

Whereas Nicholas II was portrayed in an unfavorable manner in part because of his religiosity, the royal family was cast in a very positive light in *Vozrozhdenie* precisely because of their affiliation with religion. Quite often when Nicholas II and his family were written about or featured on the pages of *Vozrozhdenie*, there was a religious component in accompaniment. Nicholas II and his family were often mentioned because of a memorial service that was to take place in a church. Their description as martyrs also speaks to the link between the tsar and religion for *Vozrozhdenie*'s editors and readership. Unlike trends in the new Soviet Union, for Russian émigrés, interest in the monarchy and the Tsar were closely related to interest in religion and the persistence of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Cartoons like the one of Rasputin, Nicholas and Alexandra, and the described scenes from Eisenstein's film contrast sharply against the images that *Vozrozhdenie* included on its front pages. In *Vozrozhdenie* the selected photographs and portraits of Nicholas II and his family from the days before the Revolution served the purpose a monarchist would have sought—that is, to argue that the slain members of the royal family were benevolent and undeserving of such a fate. The cartoon of Rasputin and the royal couple, on the other hand, suggests that the Tsar and Tsarina almost deserved of whatever happened to them because they were foolish enough to play right into Rasputin's trap. Yet, that pictures of Nicholas II and his family could still be found on the front pages of *Vozrozhdenie* in 1934 testifies to the persistence of Russian émigrés' interest in the Romanovs.

[138] Bordwell, *The Cinema of Eisenstein*, 94.

It appears that the first of the anniversaries to feature pictures of Nicholas II and his family on the front page was on 1928, ten years after the murders. From 1928 until the last July issue of *Vozrozhdenie* in 1937, there were only six front pages featuring the last Romanov family. Thus, *Vozrozhdenie* did not consistently feature the Tsar and his family on the front pages of the days marking their anniversary. But for the most part, the Romanovs were not uncommon to the newspaper's front pages around July 16th and 17th every year.

Below are the six front pages of *Vozrozhdenie* that exemplify the tendencies described above. The first image is the front page from 1928. The images after that span from 1932-37. The front pages often featured not only images of the Tsar, but also those of his wife and their children. The pictures were all from the days before the revolution, and they depicted young, healthy people. The Tsar was usually pictured in a military uniform, which suggests the accentuation of his role as a military man—one who represented Imperial Russia and who exhibited strong nationalism and pride for his country. His daughters were pictured in uniform as well, which gave them a similar appearance as that of their father while in uniform. Their image as patriotic, royal martyrs is further exemplified by the selected image of the Tsarina on the third front page. There she is pictured wearing a veil of sorts, perhaps the one that was a part of her uniform she wore as a nurse during World War I when she turned part of Tsarskoye Selo into an infirmary. Either way, she appeared saintly in this picture, which is a far cry from the descriptions of Alexandra during the First World War (her German background sparked rumors that she was an enemy during the war, that she was a German spy, or that she was conspiring with Rasputin to bring about Russia's defeat). Interestingly, most of the clothing in which the last Romanov family were pictured appeared to be white. Perhaps it is a coincidence, but given the monarchist undertones of *Vozrozhdenie*, chances are that these images were carefully

selected to preserve the innocence and benevolence of the Tsar and his family in death. It is noteworthy that these front pages are all from the anniversaries of their murders, which perhaps gave the editors of *Vozrozhdenie* more incentive to cast them in the most encouraging, if not forgiving, of lights.


ВОЗРОЖДЕНІЕ
Vozrojdenie — La Renaissance
Финансовые затрудненія
Убійство туркестанскаго губернатора
Назадъ къ нэпу
Послѣднія извѣстія

Fig. 5. *Vozhrozhdenie, Volume 4, Number 1141, 17 July 1928*," Princeton University Library, Princeton Historic Newspapers collection, http://diglib4.princeton.edu/historic/cgi-bin/historic?a=d&d=vozrozhdenie19280717-01.2.2&e=-------en-20--1--txt-txIN-------#

Fig. 6. "*Vozrozhdenie, Volume 8, Number 2601, 16 July 1932*," Princeton University Library, Princeton Historic Newspapers collection, http://diglib4.princeton.edu/historic/cgi-bin/historic?a=d&d=vozrozhdenie19320716-01&e=-------en-20--1--txt-txIN-------

Fig. 7. Fig. 7. "*Vozrozhdenie, Volume 9, Number 2966, 16 July 1933*," Princeton University Library, Princeton Historic Newspapers collection, http://diglib4.princeton.edu/historic/cgi-bin/historic?a=d&d=vozrozhdenie19330716-01&e=-------en-20--1--txt-txIN-------

Fig. 8. "*Vozrozhdenie, Volume 10, Number 3330, 16 July 1934*," Princeton University Library, Princeton Historic Newspapers collection, http://diglib4.princeton.edu/historic/cgi-bin/historic?a=d&d=vozrozhdenie19340716-01&e=-------en-20--1--txt-txIN-------

Fig. 9. "*Vozrozhdenie, Volume 11, Number 3696, 17 July 1935*," Princeton University Library, Princeton Historic Newspapers collection, http://diglib4.princeton.edu/historic/cgi-bin/historic?a=d&d=vozrozhdenie19350717-01&e=-------en-20--1--txt-txIN-------

Fig. 10. "*Vozrozhdenie, Volume 13, Number 4087, 16 July 1937*," Princeton University Library, Princeton Historic Newspapers collection, http://diglib4.princeton.edu/historic/cgi-bin/historic?a=d&d=vozrozhdenie19370716-01&e=-------en-20--1--txt-txIN-------

The first, third and fifth images all featured the same photo of a portrait of Nicholas II. The artist of the portrait is Valentin Serov, a famous Russian painter. By choosing that specific image to depict the Tsar, the editors of *Vozrozhdenie* made reference to another important character born from Imperial Russian culture: Valentin Serov. One could go as far as to say that, on a deeper level, the choice to include Serov's portrait of Nicholas II emphasized two major cornerstones of pre-Revolutionary Russia: the Tsar and Imperial Russian art. Both were no longer what they once were, and they, in turn, instantaneously recalled a different time period. Russian émigrés' interest in the last Tsar and his family was correlated with their nostalgia for the old regime. As discussed in the first chapter, Russians' nostalgia for life before the Revolution was natural once it became clear that the new regime would rule with violence and aggression as one of its defining strategies. Remembering the life and times under Nicholas II

inherently brought back memories of other aspects of Russian Imperial culture. Continued interest in the Romanovs and the desire to keep their memory alive might have been a method to keep the memory of Russian Imperial culture as a whole significant to Russians who, at the time, were undergoing a severe and drastic imposition of different cultural values. They were very much being forced to accept a new definition of what it meant to be "Russian."

It is clear that *Vozrozhdenie* gave the last Romanovs more attention in the later years during its publication. Why did *Vozrozhdenie* feature images and content of the family members killed in Ekaterinburg in the later years of the newspaper's existence as opposed to its beginning? Why did the Romanovs appear to grow in popularity over time rather than when their murders were more recent and fresh in the minds of Russian émigrés? There are a few possibilities. First, not all Russian émigrés were so quick to accept the idea that the Tsar and his family had been murdered in 1918. For some monarchists outside of Russia, the discussion surrounding Nicholas II and his family was not over in July 1918 when rumors began to spread that perhaps one or more members of the Romanov family had been murdered. According to Paul Bulygin, who worked closely with Nikolai Sokolov, the investigator's findings were practically rejected by the monarchists abroad. They viewed Sokolov as the bearer of bad news and scorned him within their circle.[139] Some monarchists were adamant that the Tsar was still alive; "people spoke of hints which Gilliard [the former French tutor to Nicholas and Alexandra's children] was supposed to have uttered, and begged Sokolov to say just one word, 'yes,' to make them happy."[140] Maria Feodorovna, Nicholas II's mother, shared for the rest of her life the idea that her son and grandchildren survived somehow.[141] To make matters worse for

[139] Paul Bulygin, and Alexander Kerensky, *The Murder of the Romanovs: The Authentic Account: Including the Road to the Tragedy* (New York: Robert M. McBride, 1935), 272.
[140] Bulygin and Kerensky, *The Murder of the Romanovs*, 272.
[141] Ian Vorres, *The Last Grand-Duchess,* 162 & 171.

Sokolov, some even suspected him of killing the Romanovs himself.[142] The monarchists that Bulygin referred to appear to completely deny that the Tsar had been killed, but the events of 1917 overall. Considering Sokolov a suspect in the Romanov murders made the monarchists appear defensive and almost confused. As a consequence of the monarchists' adamant position against Sokolov's findings and their disbelief concerning the fate of the Romanovs, they may have undermined Sokolov's investigation. Their lack of cooperation may have done so to the extent that perhaps Sokolov could have received more support and more recognition at the time for his investigation had the monarchists not been so opposed to the truth (or what was the closest interpretation of the truth at the time). If Sokolov had more people to rally behind his investigation and his claims, then perhaps the story of Nicholas II and his family would have been put to rest in the early decades of the 20th century.

Therefore, given Bulygin's information about the monarchists' incredulity surrounding the Romanov murders, the topic of the Tsar and his family may not have been featured in *Vozrozhdenie* until long after the murders took place when Russian émigrés began to accept the fact that the Tsar and his entire family were perhaps killed after all. From a business point of view, it would have been risky to publish articles in a monarchist newspaper about the confirmed executions and martyrdom of the Tsar and his family when the majority of the targeted audience was yet not convinced (or ready to accept) that the Tsar and his family had indeed been executed. The fact that there was less discussion about the Romanovs in the earlier years of *Vozrozhdenie*'s publication history gives claim to the general idea that Russians were genuinely unsure of what happened to Nicholas II and his family. The lack of clarity surrounding the fate of the Tsar stemmed from the original miscommunication and confusion amongst Bolshevik authorities on how to disseminate the news that they had carried out the deed. The Bolshevik's disagreement

[142] Bulygin and Kerensky, *The Murder of the Romanovs*, 273.

about what exactly to announce (who from the family was killed, who was perhaps saved) in July 1918 created a window of opportunity for hope and rumors that at least some of the members of the last Romanov family had survived. As a result, the consolidation of revolution and regime change was perhaps delayed because Russians' attention was still concentrated on the Russia that existed before the Revolution, and that which in a sense the Tsar and his family embodied.

Conclusion

It is hard to deny the presence of Russian émigrés' interest in Nicholas II and his family. Some institutions, such as the Russian Orthodox Church, did try to play a political role when it came to undermining the Bolshevik regime, but the Bolshevik efforts to marginalize the church made it hard to discern any outward allegiance to the monarchy throughout the Bolshevik regime change efforts. It is much easier to see hints of loyalty to Nicholas II and his family, or at least partial sympathy concerning their murders, when the spotlight is removed from Russia and placed on Russian diasporas such as Paris where the censorship, both on speech and religion, was not as strict as it was in Russia under the Bolsheviks.

While the few selected newspaper articles from *Vozrozhdenie* do not give us an all-encompassing picture of monarchist sentiment abroad or even just in Paris, they do provide us with a sample of the ways in which select groups pushed back against the changing political system in their native country. The *Vozrozhdenie* articles from the days surrounding the Ekaterinburg murders illuminate the changing perceptions of Nicholas II and his family over the years, and it is clear that the Romanovs become increasingly regarded as more innocent, martyr-worthy and seemingly symbolic of the good that was destroyed by the Bolsheviks. The

newspaper and its monarchist leadership persistently strove to keep the Romanovs' memory alive through requiems, articles and attempts to depict them as martyrs. Even though this support existed outside of the developing Soviet Union's borders, it nevertheless underscores the challenges the Bolsheviks faced to their legitimacy as they continued their efforts to consolidate regime change at home.

CONCLUSION

"We Are All Guilty": Acknowledgement, Forgiveness and Learning from the Past

"We are all guilty." Boris Yeltsin, then president of the Russian Federation, declared those words on the eightieth anniversary of the Romanov murders on July 18, 1998. Yeltsin, who himself hailed from the Sverdlovsk (previously Ekaterinburg) region, gave a speech that condemned the murders at the burial ceremony of the last Tsar and his family members (the bodies of Alexei and one of his sisters was still missing in 1998) in the Peter and Paul Cathedral in St. Petersburg. The president blamed not only those that shot the Romanovs in the Ipatiev House, but also everyone else who condoned the act in the years after the murders. Yeltsin's speech discussed the Romanovs in a way that had never been done before in the country, by a head of state, in the eighty years since Nicholas II and his family were killed. Yeltsin spoke on behalf of all Russian citizens about their collective guilt as a nation. He described the fate of the Romanovs with sympathy and regret, which begs the question: why?

Despite the numerous examples of Russians who remained devoted to the Tsar after his murder that are elaborated upon throughout this thesis, the Romanov monarchy was an unpopular institution by 1917. Terrorist acts against prominent figures who were associated with the monarchy afflicted the last three Tsars' reigns, and the carnage of World War I was one of the final straws to push revolutionists to overthrow the Tsar and the old order. Examining all the ways in which the Romanov monarchy was anachronistic by the time the Russian Revolution took place would be the topic of another honors thesis entirely, so it will suffice to say here and now that a significant portion of the tsar's subjects were unhappy with the political environment by the time that Nicholas II became Tsar in 1894. It would not be unreasonable to assume that many disliked their Tsar enough to concur that he not only needed to vacate the top position of

power in the country, but also that he and his family (at least his wife Alexandra) needed to be brought to justice for their refusal to bring Russia into the twentieth century according to western, progressive standards, and their neglect of the peasants and their needs. In a few words, by 1917 an important percentage of the population resented Nicholas II and the monarchic traditional from which he ruled Russia.

So how, then, did individuals dislike Nicholas II and the Romanov monarchy enough in 1917 to change their opinion of him 80 years after his murder? In Yeltsin's speech, the president did not blame the last Tsar for any of the crimes that he was accused of committing during the Revolution (in fact, he did not even bring them up). Not once did Yeltsin speak ill of the last Romanov family. He did give the speech at their burial ceremony, which, one would argue, would be an inappropriate time and place to criticize the Romanovs, but he also could not have taken such a stern position against the Soviet government and those who were responsible for the Romanov executions and its approval for years.

Yeltsin's language was emotive and thoughtful throughout his speech. He referred to the murders as a "slaying," for instance, and he described the Romanovs as "innocent victims." The president spoke for all citizens of the Russian Federation, as he used the pronoun "we" throughout his speech. The speech revisited the past in order to generate a path for the future; "we must end the century, which has been an age of blood and violence in Russia, with repentance and peace, regardless of political views, ethnic or religious belongings."[143] The speech marked the physical burying of the Romanov remains, but it also symbolized the metaphoric turning of pages of another chapter in Russian history; "the burial of the remains of Ekaterinburg is, first of all, an act of human justice. It's a symbol of unity of the nation, an

[143] Yeltsin, "We Are All Guilty."

atonement of common guilt."[144] In sum, the president had this to ask his constituents: "we must say the truth: the Ekaterinburg massacre has become one of the most shameful episodes in our history."[145]

It is clear from Yeltsin's speech that the last Romanovs may have been forgotten, or that discussion about them was silenced throughout most of the 20th century in the Soviet Union, but that their significance to Russian and Soviet history did not wane in that time. One could argue that it has grown since then. There was a chance that the Romanov remains could have been left underneath the ground in Ekaterinburg after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Perceptions of the Romanovs as enemies of Leninism or as representative of the capitalist evils that plagued Russia before 1917 could have remained intact during Yeltsin's presidency and beyond. Enough time had passed that the Romanovs are most likely not applicable to contemporary political matters. Yet, something happened during the 80 years since the Romanov murders that allowed President Yeltsin to make such a confident and opinionated speech about what took place in the Ipatiev House on July 17-18, 1918. It was with these two contrasting feelings towards the Romanovs: the mindset in which Lenin ordered the Romanov executions on the one hand, and the sentiments that shone so strongly through Yeltsin's speech on the other hand, that interested me when I first started out with this thesis. How did portrayals of Nicholas II and his family change after their murders? Why do present-day Russians appear to be more sympathetic and forgiving of the Romanovs, when the family was overthrown and executed during the Revolutionary period? Were feelings towards the last Romanov family actually that negative in 1918 after their murders?

[144] Yeltsin, "We Are All Guilty."
[145] Yeltsin, "We Are All Guilty."

In order to come to my final conclusions, I first had to research what the government was telling Russians to believe about the Romanovs after they were murdered, which involved a thorough analysis of the Bolsheviks' deRomanovization efforts. I found that the Bolshevik government appeared to make multiple mistakes after they came to power and executed the Romanovs. Their goal was to eliminate their new Soviet society of most elements from Imperial Russia. When it came to Nicholas II and his family specifically, the Bolsheviks made a few wrong turns that ultimately generated several reasons and opportunities for Romanov-sympathizers to cling to their Tsarist loyalties.

The Bolsheviks' execution of the Romanovs was a decision that was made under the pressure of an imminent White Army attack on Ekaterinburg. Nicholas was never put on trial, and thus the passive citizenry never knew exactly why the Bolsheviks felt justified to murder the last Tsar and his family. According to Trotsky's diary, Lenin felt that the deed was necessary in order to send a message to Russians and to members of the Bolshevik party that there was no turning back after the Revolution (see chapter II). However, these messages were unclear to the masses. Rumors circulated that not all members of the Romanov family were murdered in Ekaterinburg; any announcements at all mainly confirmed only Nicholas' execution. This was a mistake by the Bolsheviks because their dishonesty about the murders spread rumors that ultimately led Russians to believe that some members of the royal family survived. Ironically, one of the main reasons the Bolsheviks executed the Romanovs in the first place was supposedly to convey the message that there would be no figureheads to rally around in the case that an opposition would form against the Bolsheviks among the passive citizenry or any other political factions at the time. The Bolsheviks also attempted to silence any discussion about the Romanovs and the old regime in the early years after they shot Nicholas and his family. So, on

the one hand the Bolsheviks came clean about executing the Tsar. On the other hand, they did not admit to killing Alexandra and the children right away, which spread rumors that in turn fueled more discussion about the monarchy throughout the Bolsheviks' early years in power.

The Bolsheviks attempted to eliminate essentially all discourse about the Romanovs through systematically removing any component of society that symbolized or represented Imperial Russia. On the onset this was a seemingly effective strategy. Upon further analysis, however, the Bolsheviks' cover up of the Romanov murders and their lack of formal address on the matter backfired on their attempts to rid Russian society post-1918 of any interest in the Romanovs. By killing members of the immediate and extended Romanov family and those who investigated the murder, and by removing all traces of Romanov culture from post-Revolutionary Russian society, the Bolsheviks never formally confronted their part in the Romanov murders early on.

Instead, they tried to bury their crime and leave it to time to blur the facts into oblivion. Consequentially, interested groups were left with questions about the Romanovs that they were forced to hold onto and not express out of fear that persecution would follow. It is possible that the Bolsheviks' strong stance against the discussion of the Romanovs in society worked to keep individuals from adopting new depictions or opinions of the Romanovs as the Bolsheviks worked to transition Russia from one political system to another. The Bolsheviks could have spoke openly about the Ekaterinburg murders and created an entirely separate rhetoric about how the Romanov executions were essential to the Revolution. The Bolsheviks could have taken the opportunity to educate their constituents about why they did it as propaganda. They could have embraced their act, but instead, they neglected to announce the murders in their entirety. In doing so, the Bolsheviks might have generated space for Romanov-sympathizers to hang onto the

depictions and opinions that they held for the royal family before the Bolsheviks came to power. By prohibiting discussion about the Romanovs and engaging in what contemporary terms would be called transitional justice, the Bolsheviks may have frozen interested groups' perceptions of and loyalties to the royal family that had the chance to grow and develop the longer time passed without any answers or justification concerning the Romanov murders from the Bolshevik party.

Throughout the rest of the Soviet Union's existence, and beyond the scope of this honors thesis, Romanov-sympathizers continued to push back against the Soviet government's strict policy against the Romanovs. In response, the Soviet government continued to commit some of the Bolshevik policies that had been outlined during the early years after the Revolution when the Bolsheviks deRomanovizied society. That is, the Soviet government continued to quell any interest in the Romanovs through many different means. In order to conclude my thesis and underline the events of 1918-1937 in Russia as it pertains to Nicholas II and his family, it is important to glimpse briefly at how this story extends into the rest of the Soviet Union's history with a few examples.

This thesis strives to answer the first section of a larger project. That more extensive undertaking is to uncover how perceptions of Nicholas II and his family became more positive throughout the Soviet Union's history. My thesis aims to reveal Russian and Bolshevik sentiments towards the Romanov family in the first two decades after Nicholas II and his family were murdered, so as to comprehend how Romanov-sympathizers continued to express devotion to the last Tsar and his family throughout the Soviet Union's existence and after the collapse of the Soviet Union into the present day. The following events from Soviet history beyond my thesis' time frame convince us that the initial mistakes that the Bolsheviks made concerning the Romanov executions and their deRomanovization efforts after that generated catalysts for

interested groups to push back against the Bolshevik policies towards the Romanovs instead of accepting their murders as another bloody moment in Russian history that needed not be analyzed and discussed further.

DeRomanovization efforts continued long into the Soviet Union's existence. For instance, unsurprisingly, Nikolai Sokolov's book on the investigation into the Romanov murders was banned in the Soviet Union.[146] Decades later, KGB Chairman Yuri Andropov persuaded President Leonid Brezhnev that the Ipatiev House, whose official purposes changed multiple times in the years following the Romanov executions, was becoming a destination for Russians to pay tribute to the last Tsar and his family.[147] Ironically enough, thereafter the Kremlin ordered Boris Yeltsin to demolish the Ipatiev House in July 1977. And finally, when amateur detectives Alexander Avdonin and Geli Ryabov uncovered nine bodies in 1979 using information from Sokolov's investigation and a copy of Yakov Yurovsky's (the head executioner) report to the Soviet government on the executions, they kept the extraordinary discovery to themselves until Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* reforms took effect in 1989 out of fear of what would happen to them.[148]

Yeltsin's speech 80 years after the Romanov executions underlines the political, historical and social repercussions of the Bolshevik decisions concerning the Romanovs that lacked a well thought out plan. Even though the Bolsheviks acted in similar way as those who carried out other revolutions and regime changes throughout history, the Bolsheviks' responses to the Romanovs reveals how disorganized and improvisational they were. They may have faced similar challenges to those who carried out the French Revolution centuries earlier, but the Bolsheviks responded without carefully analyzing all the alternatives and the repercussions of

[146] Massie, *The Romanovs*, 26.
[147] Massie, *The Romanovs*, 24.
[148] Massie, *The Romanovs*, 30 & 35.

said alternatives to their decision-making. As a result, Russian and Soviet citizens continued to show interest in the Romanovs long after their murders because of the government's lack of closure on the matter.

The history and significance of the Romanovs persisted to some well in to the politics of the Soviet Union. In many ways, little has changed. Putin's Russia attempts to redefine its borders and reclaim a prestige that was once associated with the Soviet Union before the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Certain chapters of Russia's history play an important role in enhancing Russia's status today. To the Bolsheviks, they had little reason to commemorate the Romanovs after they came to power in 1918. They were in part focused on an ideological mission, and maintaining the Romanovs' history as apart of their own was antithetical to their goals. They chose what pieces from Russian history to highlight and which to cover up in order to promote their cause. Russia today acts in a comparable manner.

The Russia under Vladimir Putin is a country that constantly strives to assert its dominance and political might. Russia's annexation of the Crimea in the spring of 2014 emphasizes Russia's interest in the type of expansion that was a common political tactic in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—a sharp contrast to contemporary times when intergovernmental and supranational institutions strive to govern and enforce activity and law throughout the international arena. Instead of ignoring the fate of the Romanovs, Putin's Russia incorporates the story of Nicholas II and his family into discussion in a more open, accepting manner. Bookstores in St. Petersburg contain books and souvenirs of everything Romanov-related. On February 18, 2014, a special exhibit opened in St. Petersburg (first put on display in Moscow) on the Romanovs to commemorate the 400 years since Michael Romanov first came to

power in 1613. In the exhibit, titled: The Romanovs: My Story, the section on Nicholas II featured a special piece on his murder and particularly, Lenin's role in the Revolution.

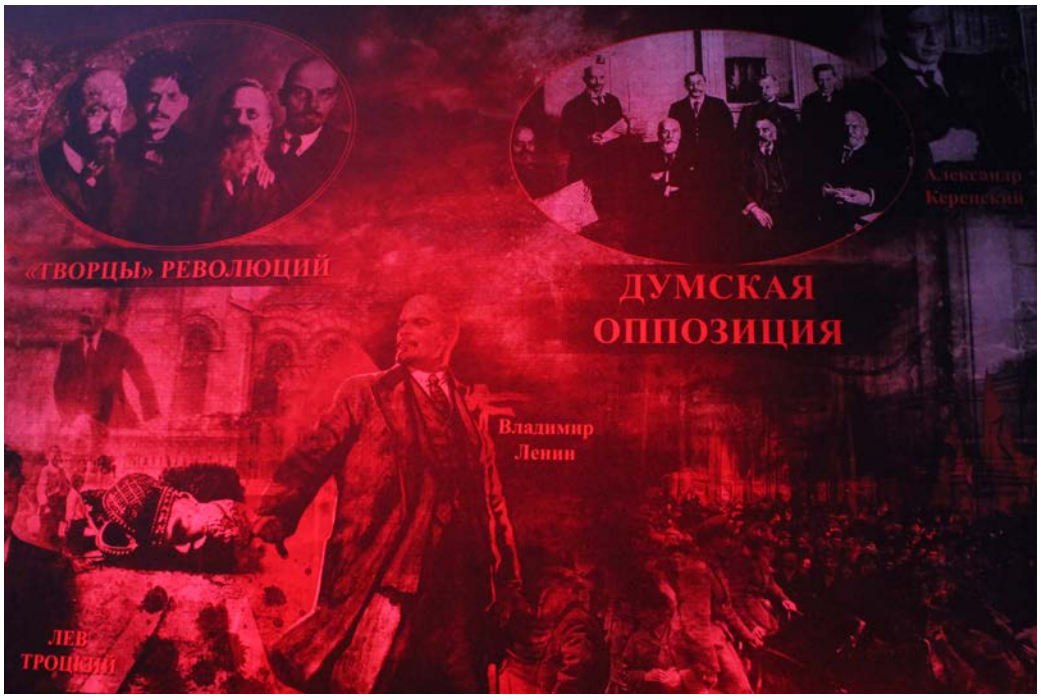

Fig. 11. Liv Chap, The Romanovs: My Story, Lenekspo, Bolshoy V.O. pr., 103, St. Petersburg, Russia. February 18, 2014.

In the picture above, Lenin is depicted with bright red colors. To the left of Lenin appears to be the head of a destroyed statue. Given the crown, it would appear that the head belonged to a statue of a Tsar, perhaps Alexander III. To assemble a projection that included both Lenin and a destroyed statue of a Tsar draws a clear link between the Bolsheviks and their deRomanovization efforts. This projected image was juxtaposed against a slideshow of the Romanov children on the opposing wall, whose images were imposed on an image of the basement in the Ipatiev House after the night of July 17, 1918. Some pictures of the slideshow can be seen below.

Fig. 12. Liv Chap, The Romanovs: My Story, Lenekspo, Bolshoy V.O. pr., 103, St. Petersburg, Russia. February 18, 2014.

Fig. 13. Liv Chap, The Romanovs: My Story, Lenekspo, Bolshoy V.O. pr., 103, St. Petersburg, Russia. February 18, 2014.

It is clear that the Romanov children are portrayed in an innocent fashion; the photographs that are imposed onto images of the basement are those of calm portraits. When looking at the projected slides, one is forced to picture Nicholas and Alexandra's children in the basement, whose damaged walls are marked with bayonet strokes and bullet holes. The images of the Romanov children are pictures that strike a resemblance to the ones selected for *Vozrozhdenie*'s front pages. The depictions of the Romanov children are cast in a certain light. One could even categorize them as propaganda. And yet, this propaganda could have gone in the opposite direction, so to speak. The projected images could have been the images of Nicholas II or his wife instead. They could have chosen images like the ones Esfir Shub chose for her pro-Soviet film, *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*. But they did not, and it is astounding that the current political regime—one that emphasizes the glorious episodes from its past—maintains such a different position towards the Romanovs than some of the most famous people and political geniuses of the Revolution did in 1918.

We can infer from the way the Romanovs were depicted in the 2014 exhibit that the story of Nicholas II and his family, their violent executions included, has been well incorporated into contemporary narratives of Russia's past. It took most of the twentieth century for such an acceptance to occur, but the nature of the struggle to either discuss or conceal what happened to the Romanovs and their place in Russia's history has, in all likelihood, contributed to their fame as it is today. If the Bolsheviks had never murdered the Romanovs the way they did, then perhaps Nicholas, Alexandra and their five children would otherwise not hold such a unique place in Russians' understanding of their history.

It is important to study how regimes interpret the histories they inherit and furthermore, the reactions and responses to said interpretations by the population in question because it helps

historians and politicians understand how governments come to power and legitimize themselves. Undertaking such research about how the last Romanovs were treated in death gives insight into the discrepancies in values between the government and the people during regime change. It emphasizes how difficult it is for crimes of such a national significance to be forgotten, and for governments to escape without any criticism or future repercussions. What the Bolsheviks did to Nicholas and his family in 1918 was eventually confronted and condemned, albeit eighty years later. The aims of this thesis put forth that history is not simply a field that glances into the past. Instead, it shows how history repeats itself, how it affects the present, how seemingly minor actions can turn into monstrous problems in the future, and how history tends to loop around to the present. The events concerning the last Tsar in 1918 are mere examples of the challenges to the visionaries of revolutions and government transitions that occur throughout history in all places and times throughout the globe.

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