



THE SECRETS OF THE KREMLIN

FROM RASPUTIN TO VLADIMIR PUTIN

WEBSITE

www.oliviercourteaux.com

Click on **Courses and conferences**

Click on **Life Institute**

Password to access the PowerPoint presentations: **lifeinstitute**

Follow me on Facebook (Olivier Courteaux Historian)

COURSE OUTLINE

- Rasputin must be killed
- From the October Revolution to the “House of Special Purpose”
- Hitler-Stalin: the stunning non-aggression Pact of 1939
- Katyn: the cover-up of the century
- The two deaths of Stalin
- The “Farewell Affair”
- The final putsch (1991)
- Where does Vladimir Putin come from?



Russia is a riddle wrapped in a
mystery inside an enigma.

— *Winston Churchill* —

AZ QUOTES

The October Revolution of 1917

The Bolsheviks in power

The promise: a world
without social classes

A better future for humanity

The reality: a century of lies,
mysteries, *fake news* &
secrets





March 1918

Moscow & the Kremlin: the centre of political power once again

A break from Peter the Great's
ambition to westernize Russia

St. Petersburg (Petrograd) no longer Russia's capital



The Kremlin

The “heart” of Russia

A closed, secret & mysterious
space from where nothing
must filter

A **mythical** place





Celebrating imperial
historical figures

1933-1935: the rise of Hitler

Germany as a renewed threat

Positive images of Russian
princes who fought against
the German enemy



Ivan the Terrible

Alexander Nevsky

The defender of Russia
against the **Teutonic knights**
(13th century)





The Kremlin: a closed space from 1918 on...

2 000 people (Communist Party leadership and those who served them)

Privileged and **separated from the outside world**

Revolutionary ideals vs. a hierarchy



Russian civil war

Health control to protect the Kremlin and its occupants from epidemics



16th century Kremlin

Russian court centered
around the Czar

1920s & 1930s: the Kremlin
centered around Lenin and
Stalin





How did the Communist regime justify privileges & hierarchy?

A reality **dissimulated**

1924-1925: a wave of suicides amongst young revolutionaries – Better quality of life justified for the country's leadership

What changed with the death of Stalin? (1953)

Nothing!

The Kremlin open to the
public

The leaders' private lives: a
secret

Rumors & hearsay...



The post-Soviet Union's “new czars”

Boris Yeltsin dubbed “Czar Boris”

Extravagant, unpredictable,
authoritarian...

A model incarnated by many
czars (Ivan the Terrible)



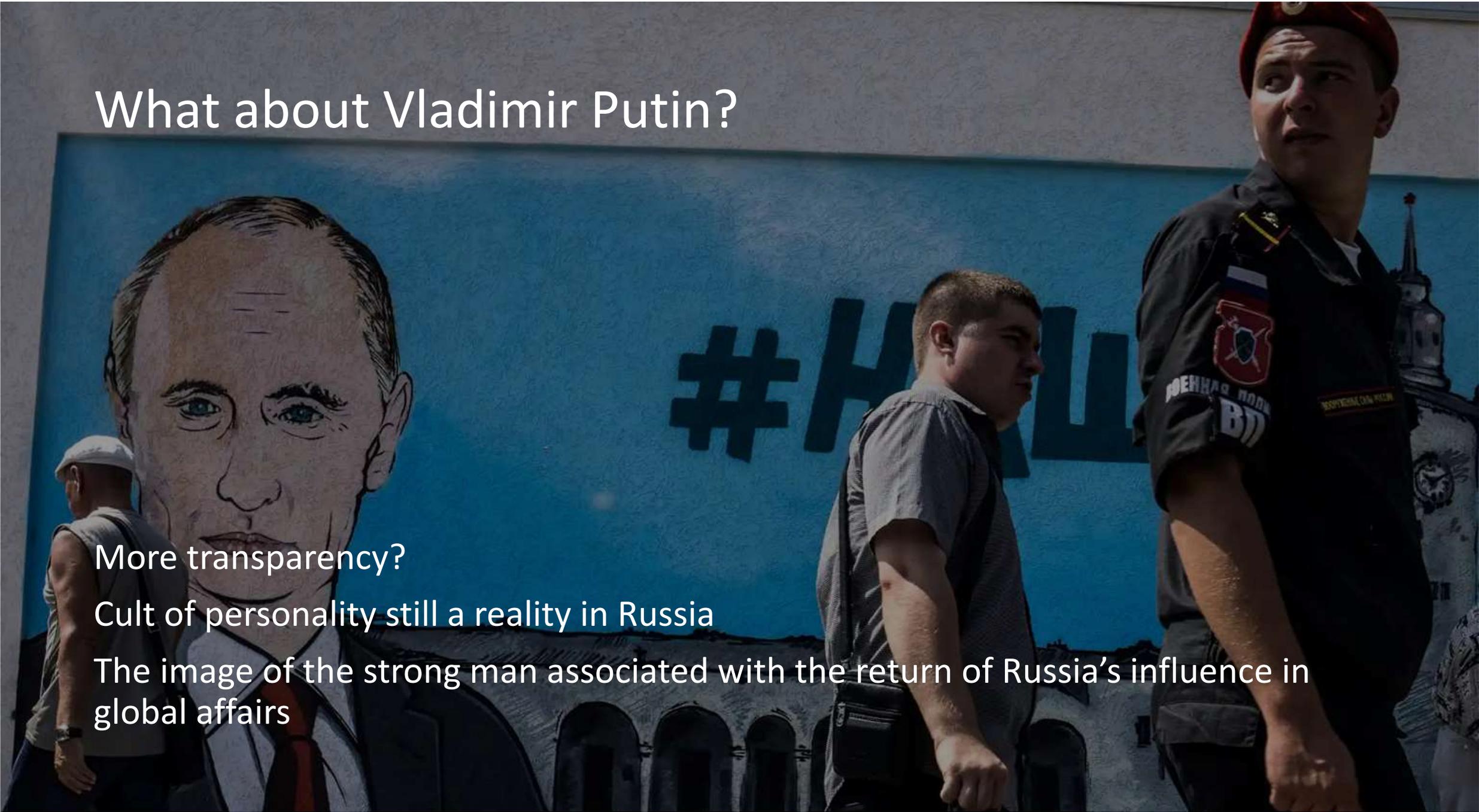
Boris Yeltsin

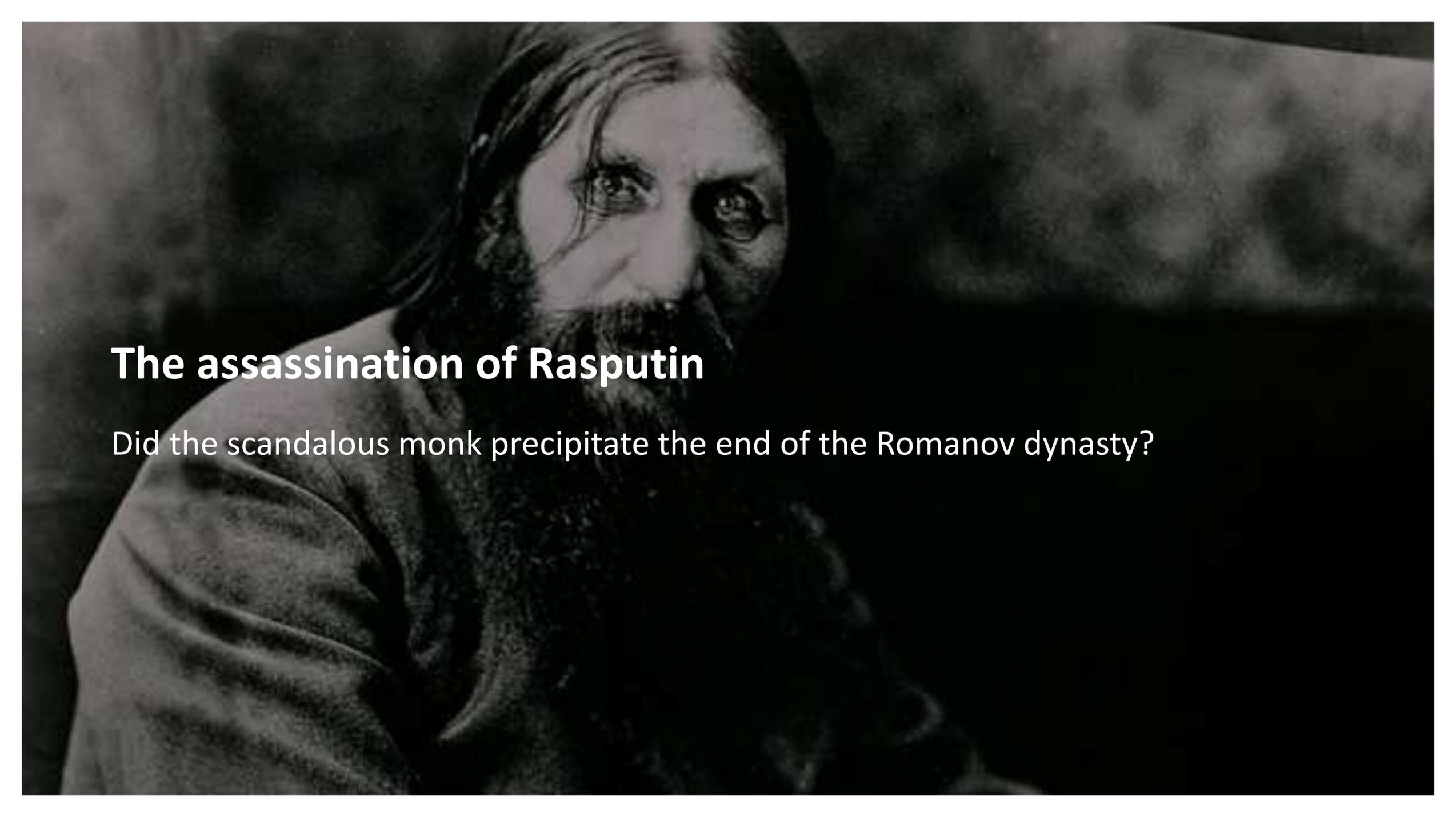
What about Vladimir Putin?

More transparency?

Cult of personality still a reality in Russia

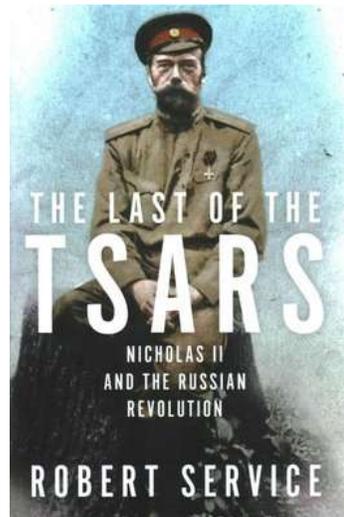
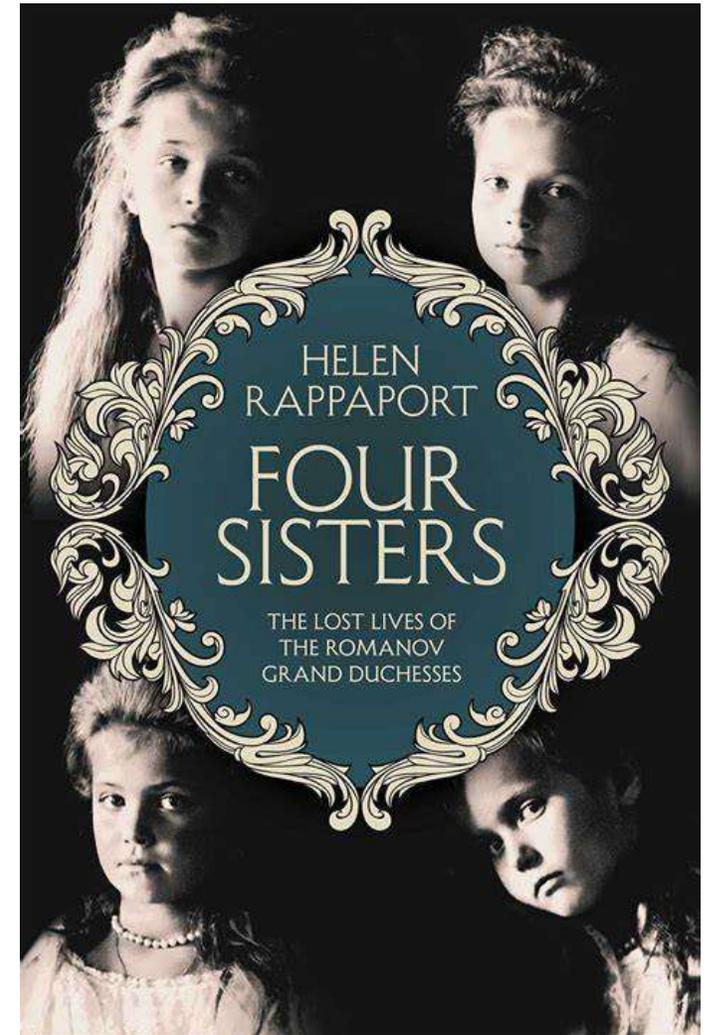
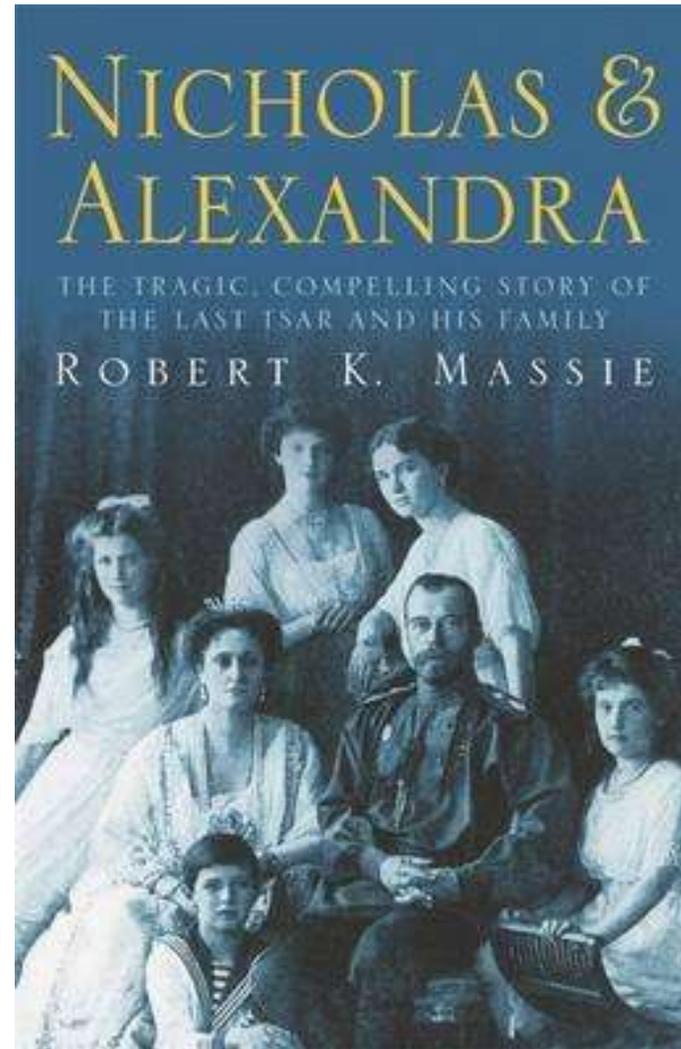
The image of the strong man associated with the return of Russia's influence in global affairs



A black and white, close-up portrait of a man with long, dark hair and a full, dark beard. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious, intense expression. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows on his face, particularly under his eyes and on the right side of his face. He is wearing a dark, textured garment, possibly a coat or a heavy sweater.

The assassination of Rasputin

Did the scandalous monk precipitate the end of the Romanov dynasty?



RASPUTIN

PICADOR

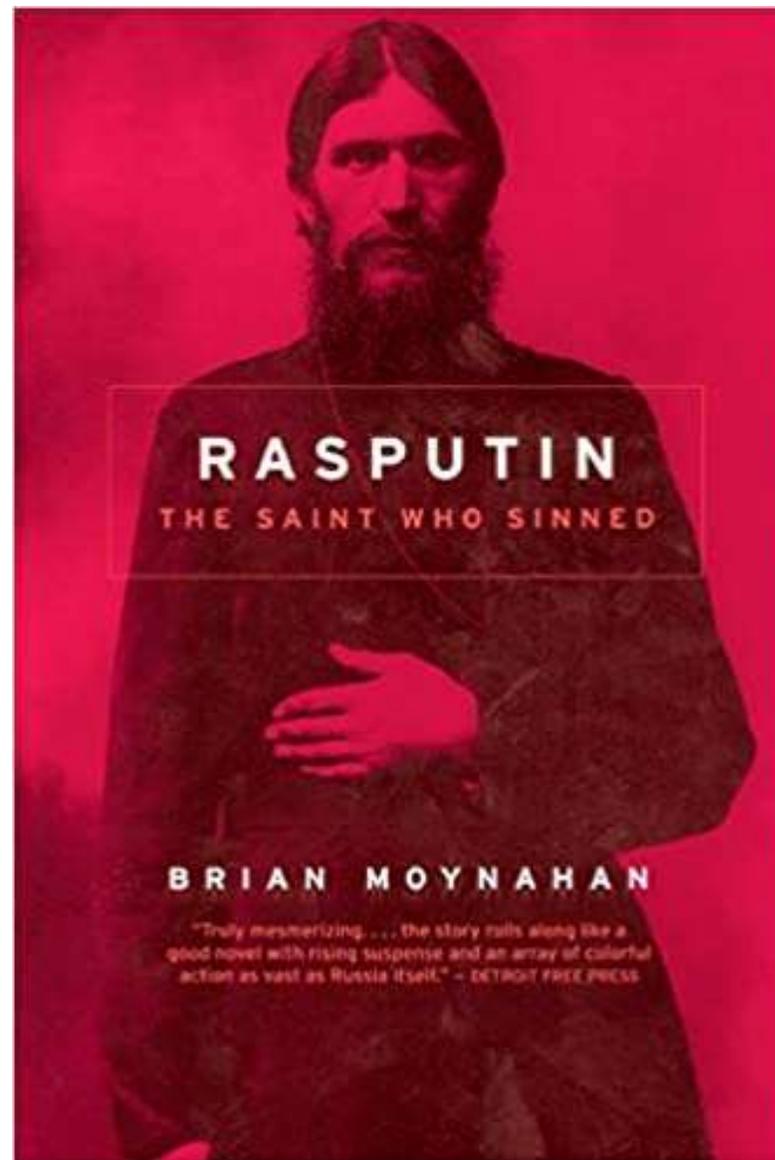
FAITH, POWER, AND
THE TWILIGHT
OF THE ROMANOVS

AUTHOR OF *FORMER PEOPLE*

DOUGLAS SMITH

"This brilliantly written, meticulously researched account of the life of Rasputin is the best, most complete and accurate I have ever read."

—ROBERT K. MASSIE, author of *Catherine the Great*



RASPUTIN
THE SAINT WHO SINNED

BRIAN MOYNAHAN

"Truly mesmerizing... the story rolls along like a good novel with rising suspense and an array of colorful action as vast as Russia itself." —DETROIT FREE PRESS



Grigori Yefimovich Rasputin

Born in a small village (**Pokrovskoye**)
in the Ural Mountains

10 January 1869: St. Grigori's Day

Peasant parents – Illiterate

Unruly youth (petty thefts & drinking)

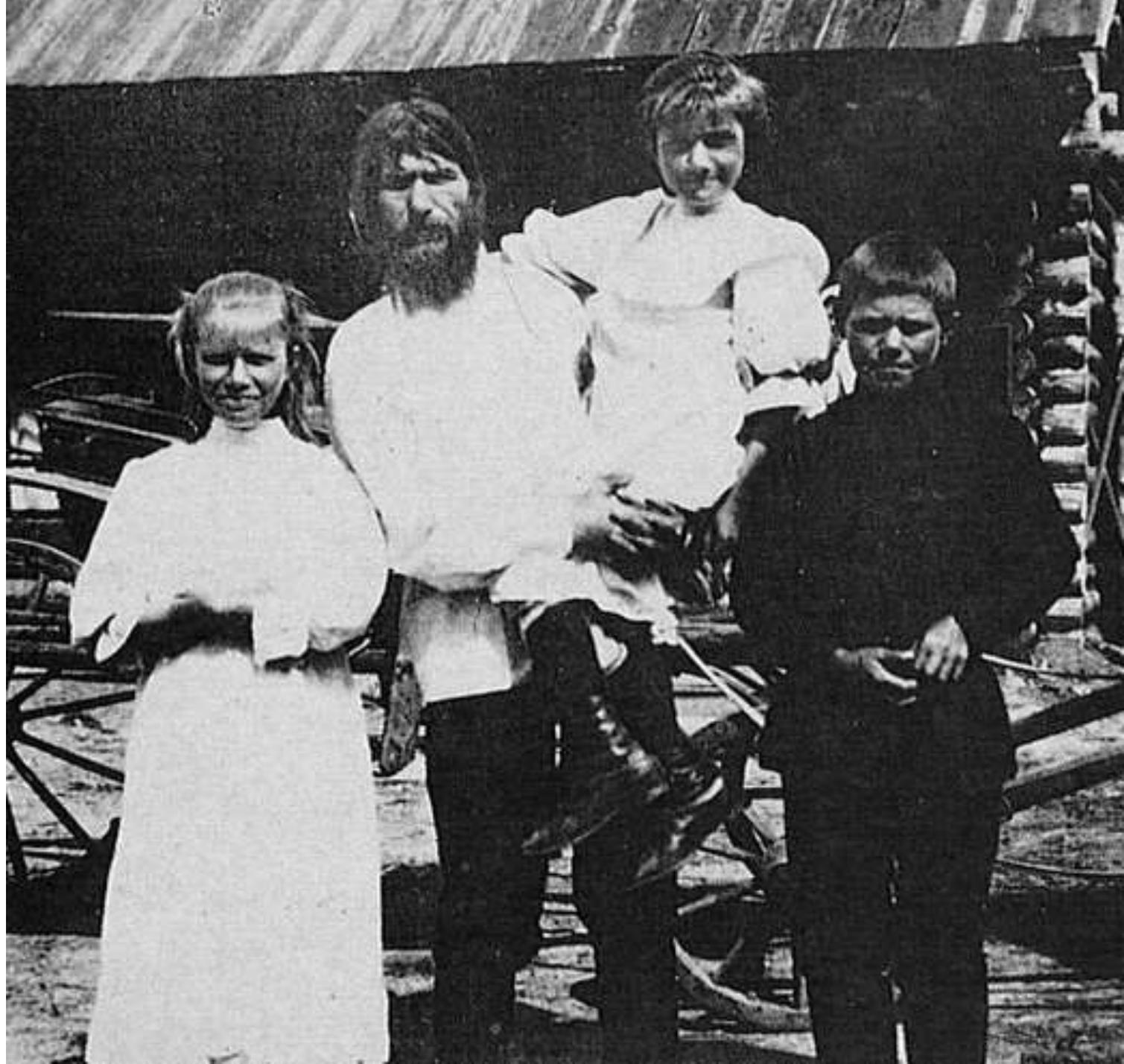
A predestined last name

Rasputa: “immoral individual, a good-for-nothing”

Hypnotic glance: a strange figure

Alcoholic from his teens

Marriage in 1897



By Sergei Prokudin-Gorskii - This image is available from the United States Library of Congress, Public Domain



1897: religious conversion
Becoming a *strannik* (wandering pilgrim)





Mid-19th century: renewed ancient religious practices

Solitary preachers on the roads of Russia

The spread of **sects** and cults

Disliked by the official Orthodox Church



1903: Rasputin (“Father Grigori”) in St. Petersburg

A letter of recommendation to the rector of the St. Petersburg seminary

The **purpose of his visit**: to collect funds to build a church in his village (a lie!)



Early prophecies

Russia's defeat against Japan
(1905)



Grand-Duchess Milica

Wife of Grand-Duke Pierre
(Nicolas II's cousin)

Milica: close to Empress
Alexandra





A happy family life

A comfortable life in the country
(**Alexander Palace** – Tsarskoe Selo)

Nicolas II: a devoted husband &
father

Devout



Nicolas II – **Autocracy** to remain at
the core of the Russian political
system

Reforms: *“foolish daydreams”*

Urgent modernization of Russia
Unequal prosperity



The peasants: the “soul” of Russia

Nicolas II: Russia to thrive thanks to its
peasantry, its deep faith



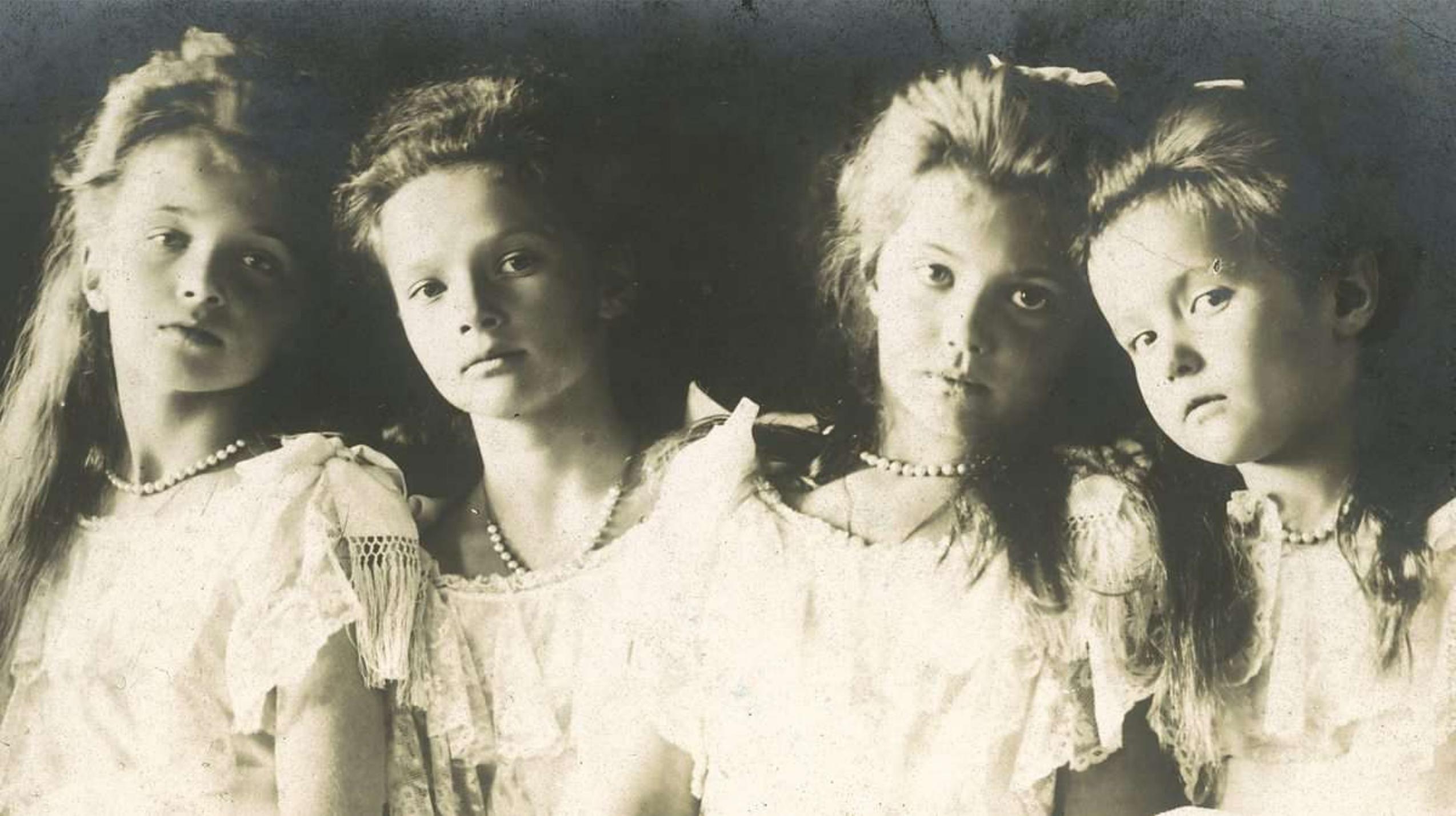
Nicolas & Alexandra's obsession: a male heir

1895-1901: 4 daughters (Olga,
Tatiana, Maria & Anastasia)

Olga as Nicolas II's successor? Past
history of Russian empresses

Nicolas' conservatism: dynastic law
established by Paul I to be upheld





Alexandra's growing mysticism

Alexandra turned to clairvoyants, faith-healers
(charlatans)



Monsieur Philippe

Rumors surrounding
Alexandra's alleged mental
instability



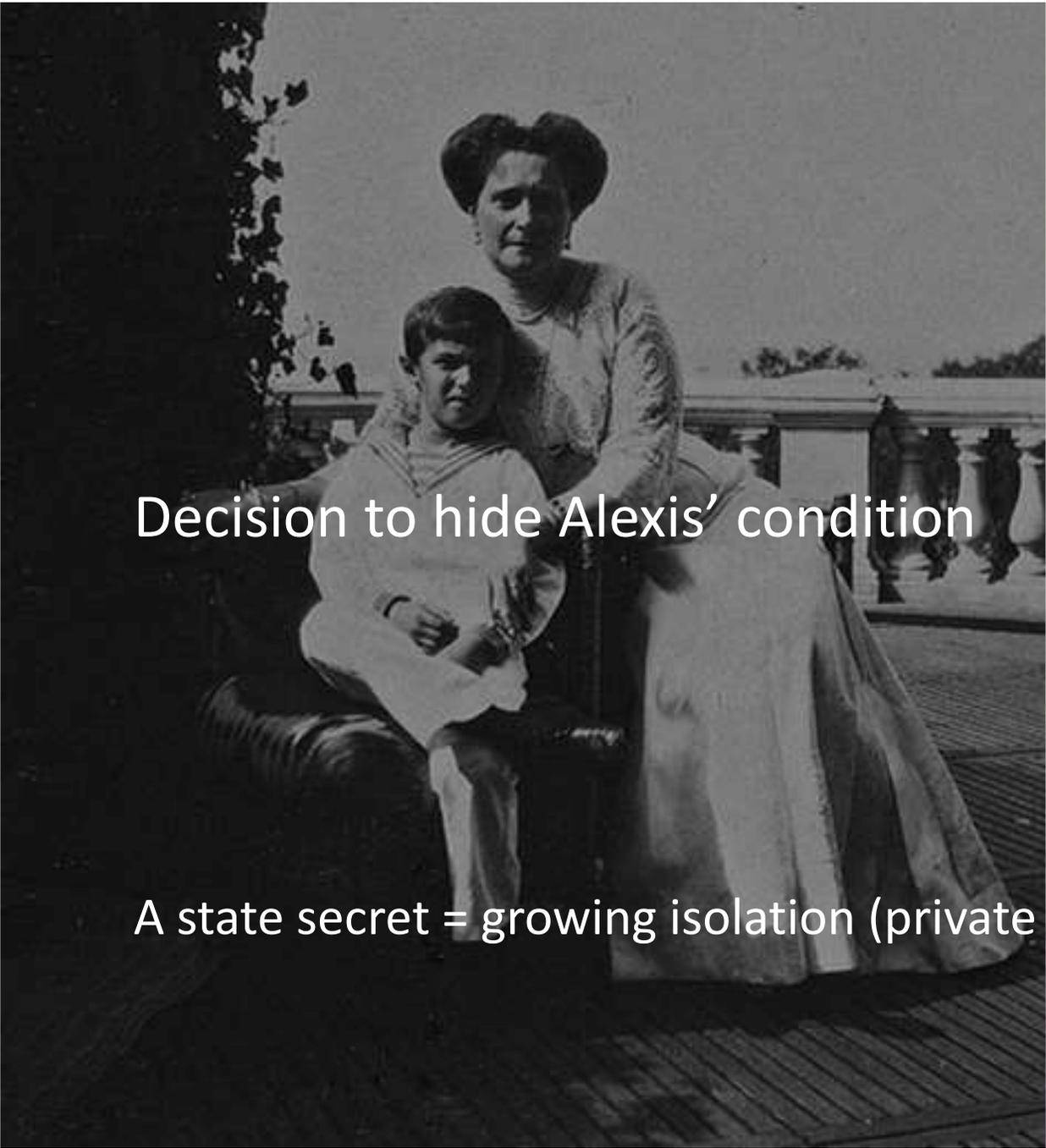


30 July 1904: the
birth of Alexis

8 September: Alexis
diagnosed with hemophilia

Alexandra inherited the
disease from her grand-
mother (Queen Victoria)





Decision to hide Alexis' condition

A state secret = growing isolation (private sphere)

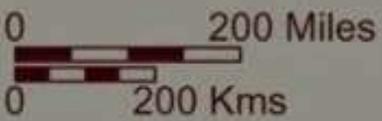






The Russian defeat against Japan: a tremendous shock

The fall of Port Arthur



- Extent of Russian control before the War
- Japanese territory before the War
- Article II (Demand I) Japanese control of Korea recognized by Russia
- Article III (Demand II) Russian frontier defined by the Treaty
- Article V (Demand VI) Russian frontier defined by the Treaty



The Revolution of 1905

A period of violence & uncertainty

Strikes

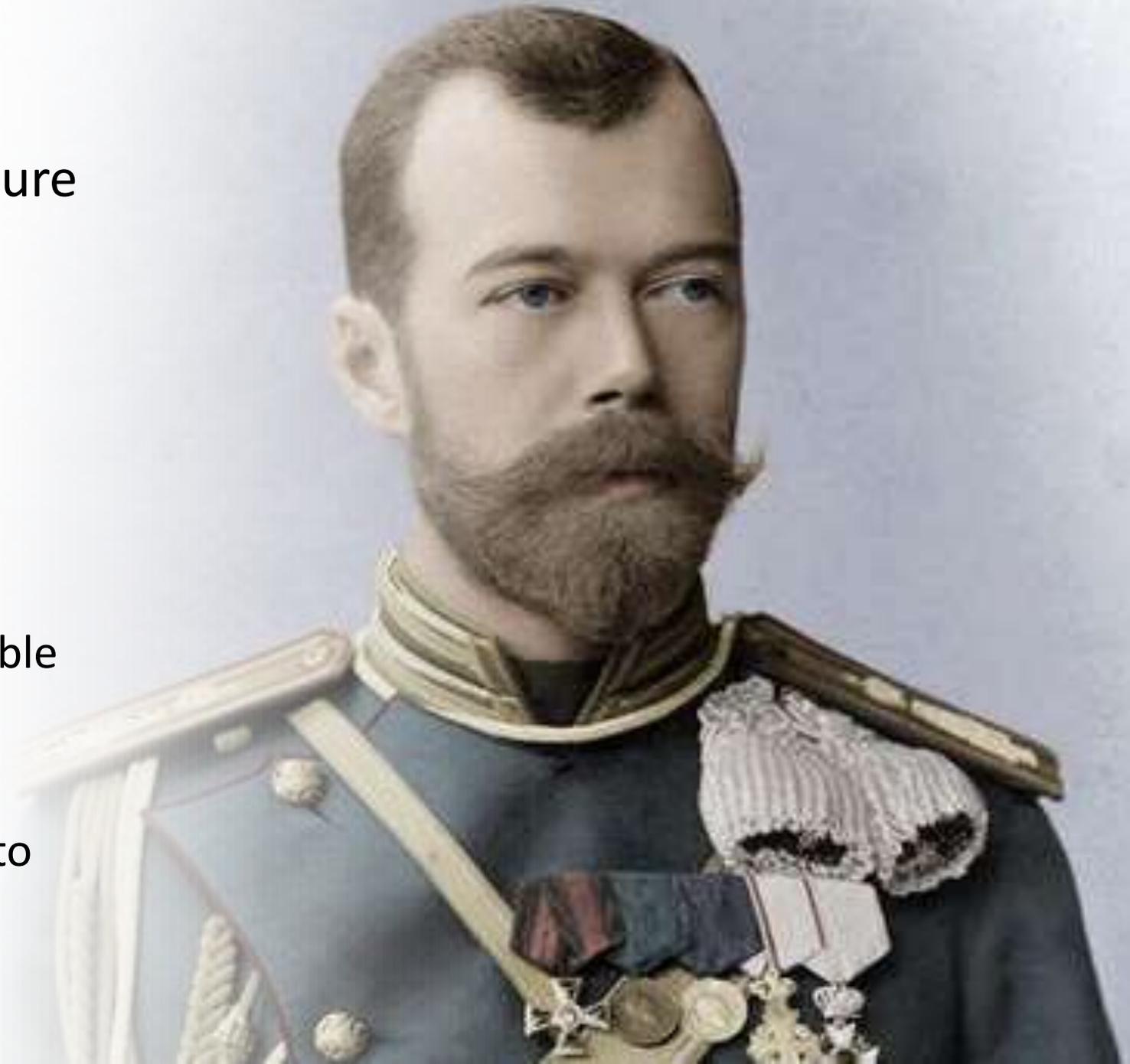
The first Soviets

Nicolas II under pressure

Alexandra: a tormented
mother

Autocracy: the only possible
system for Russia

Nicolas unable to say no to
his wife





27 April 1906: the inauguration of the first
Duma

Rasputin introduced to the imperial couple (November 1905)

A « *messenger of God* », a healer (through hypnosis & common sense!) – 1907: aspirin discarded

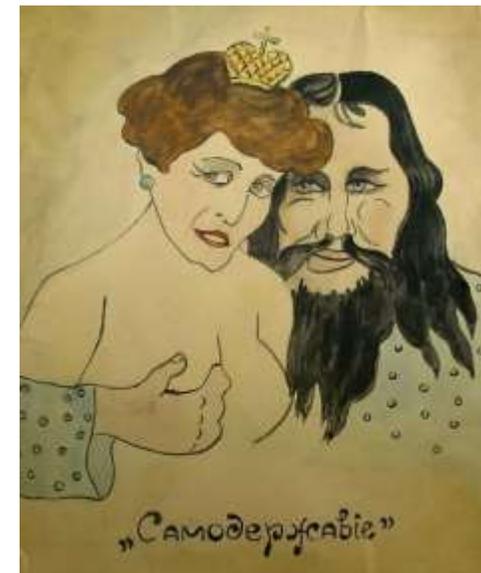
Growing presence at the Alexander Palace

A life of scandals and debauchery in St. Petersburg (surveillance by the secret police)
“He is hated because we love him” (Alexandra)



Rumors: the imperial family
discredited

Nicolas II perceived as a puppet in the
hands of his wife & Rasputin





Growing criticism

Rasputin systematically defended by
Alexandra

Many of his detractors exiled

Piotr Stolypin: a reformer

His **objective**: to fight the revolutionaries while **reforming** Russia

An ambitious **agrarian reform** aimed at helping peasants acquire land

Rasputin deemed a threat



1911: the assassination of Stolypin – The triumph of Rasputin



The Duma

Rasputin must be exiled

Rasputin away in October
1912



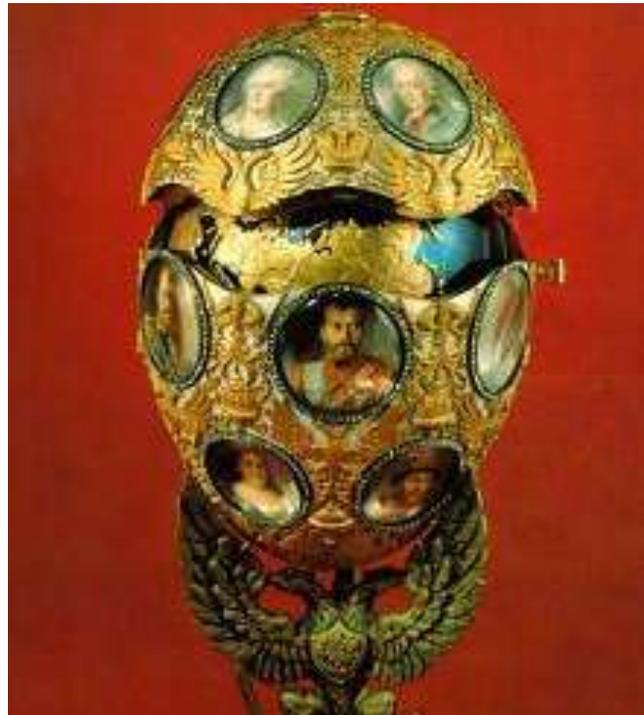
Imperial hunting lodge (Spala, Poland)

Tsarevich gravely ill

Telegram from Rasputin to Alexandra: *“God has seen your tears and heard your prayers. Do not grieve. The Little One will not die. Do not allow the doctors to bother him too much.”*



The Romanov
Tercentenary (1913):
the illusion of a Russia
reconciled with the
Romanov dynasty





1914

A new ultra-conservative prime minister: Ivan Goremykin

His appointment approved by Rasputin (*"Our Friend"*)



Livadia: a laid-back atmosphere



A family happy to be together



A stress-free Czarina Alexandra (the constant strain of caring for her hemophiliac son)



Annual summer cruise in the Gulf of Finland



28 June 1914: the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie in Sarajevo



Nicolas & Alexandra not unduly alarmed



The Franco-Russian alliance



French President Raymond
Poincaré in Russia to
strengthen the Franco-Russian
alliance (20-23 July)





What will happen in the Balkans?

23 July: a military parade (60 000 men) to impress the French President

The *Russian steam roller* gave comfort to Poincaré

Partial mobilization to pressure Austria-Hungary?



Weather Forecast:
Cloudy Tonight and
Wednesday

The Washington Times

HOME
EDITION

NUMBER 8011

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY EVENING, JULY 28, 1914.

PRICE ONE CENT.

AUSTRIA HAS CHOSEN WAR

TYPICAL SERVIAN SOLDIERS AND THEIR ANTIQUATED EQUIPMENT



MEDIATION REJECTED, EXCEPT TO PREVENT SPREAD OF CONFLICT

Occupation of Belgrade Unofficially Reported—Servians Said to Have Withdrawn Without Contest—English Told Events Have Gone Too Far to Permit Turning Back.

LONDON, July 28—Austria today formally declared war against Serbia, according to Vienna dispatches received here.

It is understood that Belgrade has already been occupied by the Austrians.

This announcement of war quickly followed the

On the left is shown a detachment of Serbian soldiers in action. These men were seen fighting in the Balkan area and have demonstrated their courage and strength.

On the right is shown a group of Serbian officers during an exercise held near the position, as a preview in view of the battle being against Austrians. Serbia's army has not been seen with certain equipment in such long exercises.

Nicolas II: Russia must
not abandon Serbia



Does “Father Grigori”
approve war?

A telegram to Rasputin
(back to his village)

No response
(assassination attempt)





29 July: Nicolas ordered his armies along the Austrian border **to mobilize**

Are You One
of the "Crown-ed"
Kings?

See Page 3

Evening Despatch

SPECIAL
Sunday Edition.

FREE INSURANCE AGAINST ALL FATAL ACCIDENTS.

BIRMINGHAM SUNDAY, 2 AUGUST, 1914.

8 PAGES, ONE HALFPENNY.

GERMANY DECLARES WAR ON RUSSIA.

Firing Reported To-day on
the Frontier.

ULTIMATUM TO FRANCE.

Time Said to be Extended
Until To-morrow.

MOBILISATION ALL ROUND.

Italy Intimates that She Will
Remain Neutral.

CONFERENCES" PROCEEDING

with the utmost equality for strength
before the world, who have industry and
wealth, and who have the resources and
power to make the world of Germany their
work.

It is quite natural that, faced with
the prospect of a campaign in our very
doors, we should give expression to the
feeling that dominates us today and cry
"Viva la France!"

KAISER'S SPEECH.

A telegram from Berlin received at
Paris states that yesterday a crowd of
10,000 persons assembled before the
Imperial Palace and listened again and
again.

Shortly after six o'clock the Emperor
William appeared on the balcony, and the
enthusiasm of the crowd increased.

In a tone which rang out boldly the
German Emperor said:

This is a dark hour for Germany.
The world is being forced into her
hands. If, at the last hour, our oppor-
tunity do not see eye to eye with us I
hope, with God's help, we shall succeed
if that when all is over we can thank
it with honour.

War would demand of us enormous
sacrifices in property and life, but we
shall show what a White it is to pro-
vide Germany. And now I leave you
to God. Pray to Him to help our
gallant army.

The Emperor has been crowned for

DUBLIN FUSILIERS ON GUARD.



TERRITORIALS OFF TO CAMP.

Bishop of Birmingham
Interviewed.

Lord Cairnes' Maritime, C.B., Chief
Commissioner for the 2nd and 4th Divisions
of the Territorial Force, stated in the
"Despatch" today that there had been
no alteration in the orders already issued
for camp training, and the Territorial
units would proceed direct for their
camps as arranged.

What would happen if any of the
units were unable to proceed, he asked, "I
am sure nothing further."

"We live in a warlike time, as you
know, and we will see, I may say, we
will see, and play the game." A gen-
eral's staff passed through the streets
of the city, the Territorial
units were ordered by the com-
manding officer, Lord Cairnes, Maritime, C.B.

It was a fitting speech by Birmingham's
Chief Bishop to the troops who had
been ordered to see that they were
ready to march behind him out of the
city to the front for the first time
since they were in the city, when the last
of the Territorial Force of 1914.

The Bishop of Birmingham (Dr. Samuel
Walker) at the beginning of the war
was the man of the emergency
effort, and although only the Bishop of
the city he had the day after the
war, the Bishop of Birmingham
stated on occasion in the "Despatch"
representative of the Territorial Force.

Patriotic fervor (at least in the main cities)
St. Petersburg renamed Petrograd

« At that moment, the czar was really the autocrat, the military, political and religious director of his people, the absolute master of their bodies and soul »

Maurice Paléologue, French ambassador to Russia







A telegram from Rasputin

*"[...] a menacing cloud is
over Russia, lots of sorrow
and grief and there is no
lightening to be seen. A sea
of tears immeasurable..."*

Back to Petrograd in August

Nicolas II away

Grand Duke Nicolas (the czar's uncle) commander-in-chief

A living legend: the incarnation of courage and prestige

Popular among the troops

Rasputin: a traitor to Russia



Summer 1915: Nicolas takes command of the armies

A double mistake:

1. Nicolas is neither strategist nor tactician: to bear the responsibility of future defeats
2. Headquarters 700km away from St. Petersburg: political power left to Alexandra (and Rasputin)



1915

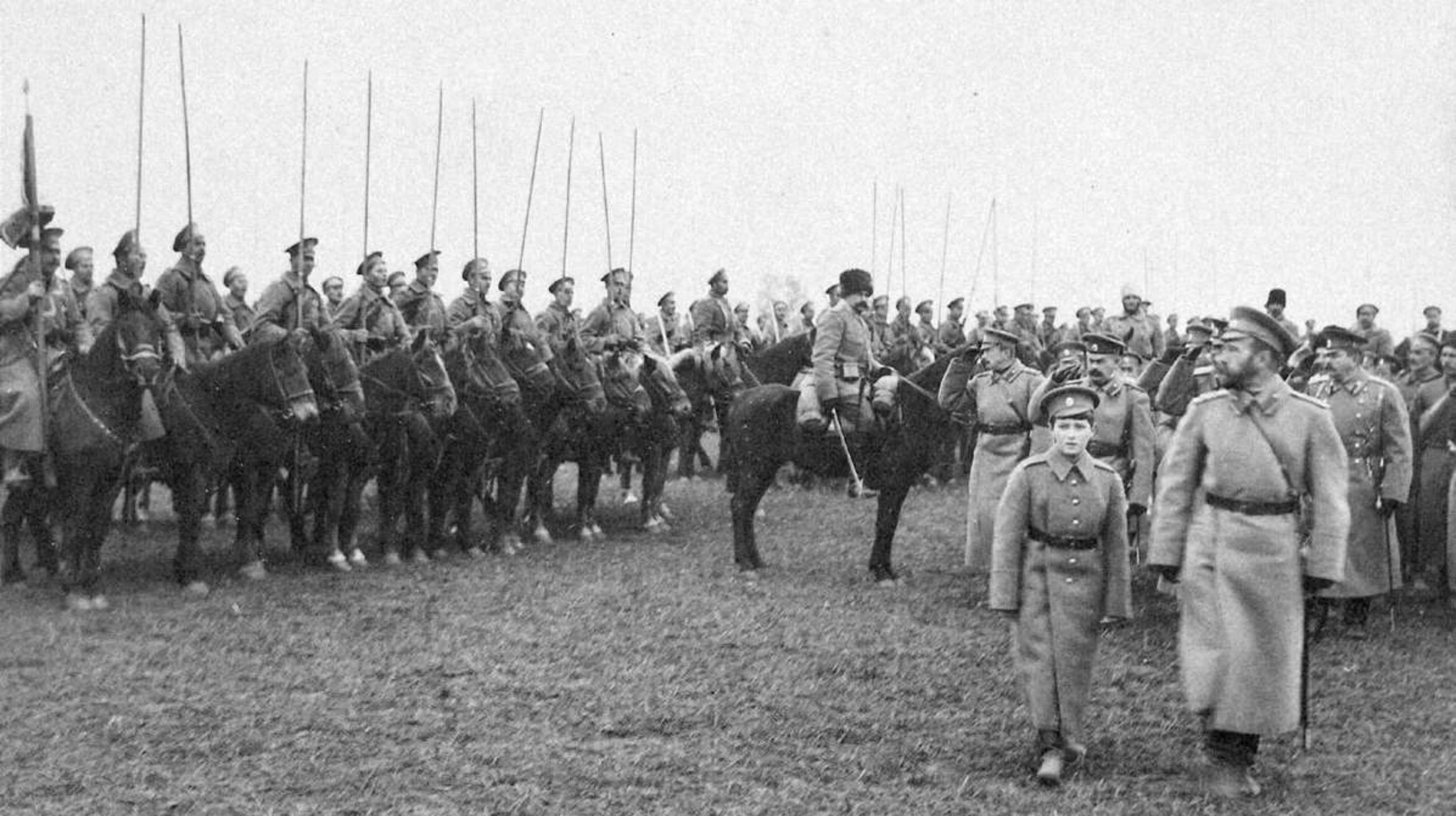
A string of military defeats,
massive exodus (23 million
Russians on the roads)

The search for scapegoats:
Rasputin & Alexandra

Rasputin's meddling in
politics

The Czar manipulated?







1916

Rasputin behind the appointment
of a new primer minister

Authoritarian, corrupt and German
name

Alexandra accused of favoring a
German victory

Boris Sturmer



Rasputin must be
eliminated

Multiple projects to
assassinate Rasputin since
1912

Growing concern amongst
members of the imperial
family





Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich



Prince Felix Yusupov

The conspirators: why kill Rasputin?

No liberals or democrats: right-wing monarchists

To restore the legitimacy of the Russian
monarchy & saving it from collapse

The plot: to invite Rasputin to the Yusupov
Palace









Alexandra devastated by
the news

Sanctions against Prince Yusupov
& Grand Duke Dmitri (exiled in
Persia)



Ongoing rumors

The myth of the “unkillable”
Rasputin

The autopsy: Rasputin did
not die of cyanide poisoning
or of being shot

Cause of death: drowning?



Burial at Tsarskoye Selo

Alexandra & two of her
daughters in attendance



February 1917: Rasputin's body
exhumed and burned

The Bolsheviks: Rasputin as a
symbol of imperial decadence &
Nicolas II's poor leadership

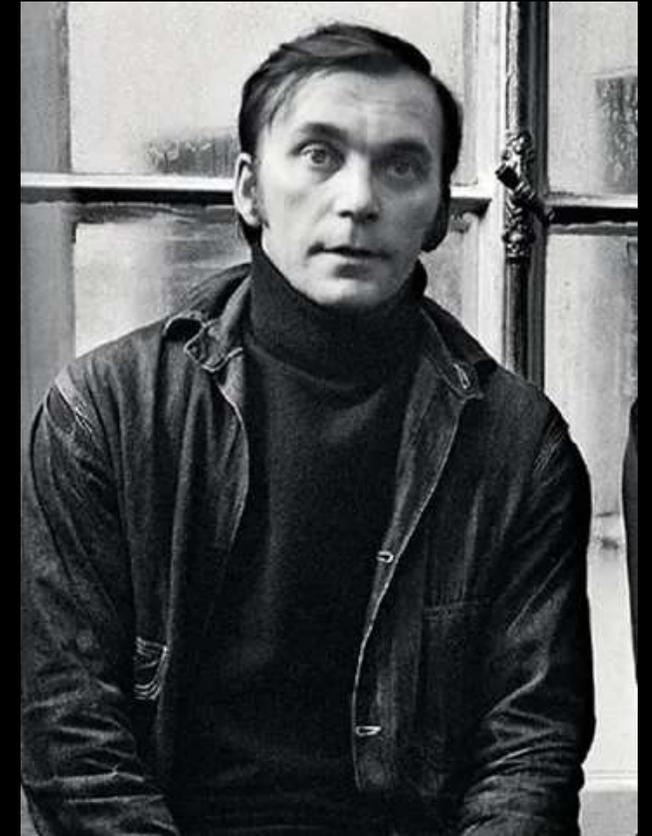
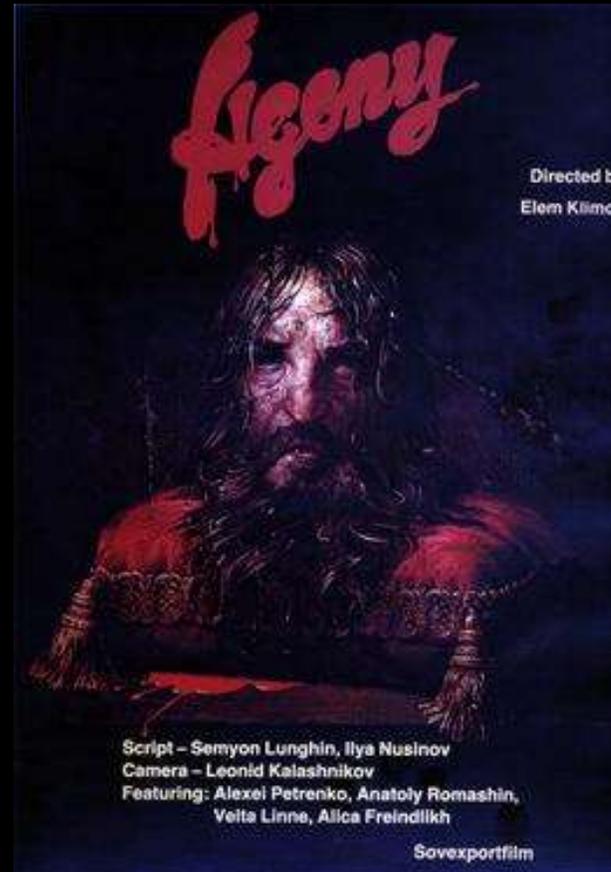


Rasputin ignored by
Soviet authorities

Agony: nuanced depiction
of Nicolas II & Rasputin

Scenario submitted in
1966

Multiple rewrites but film
forbidden until 1985



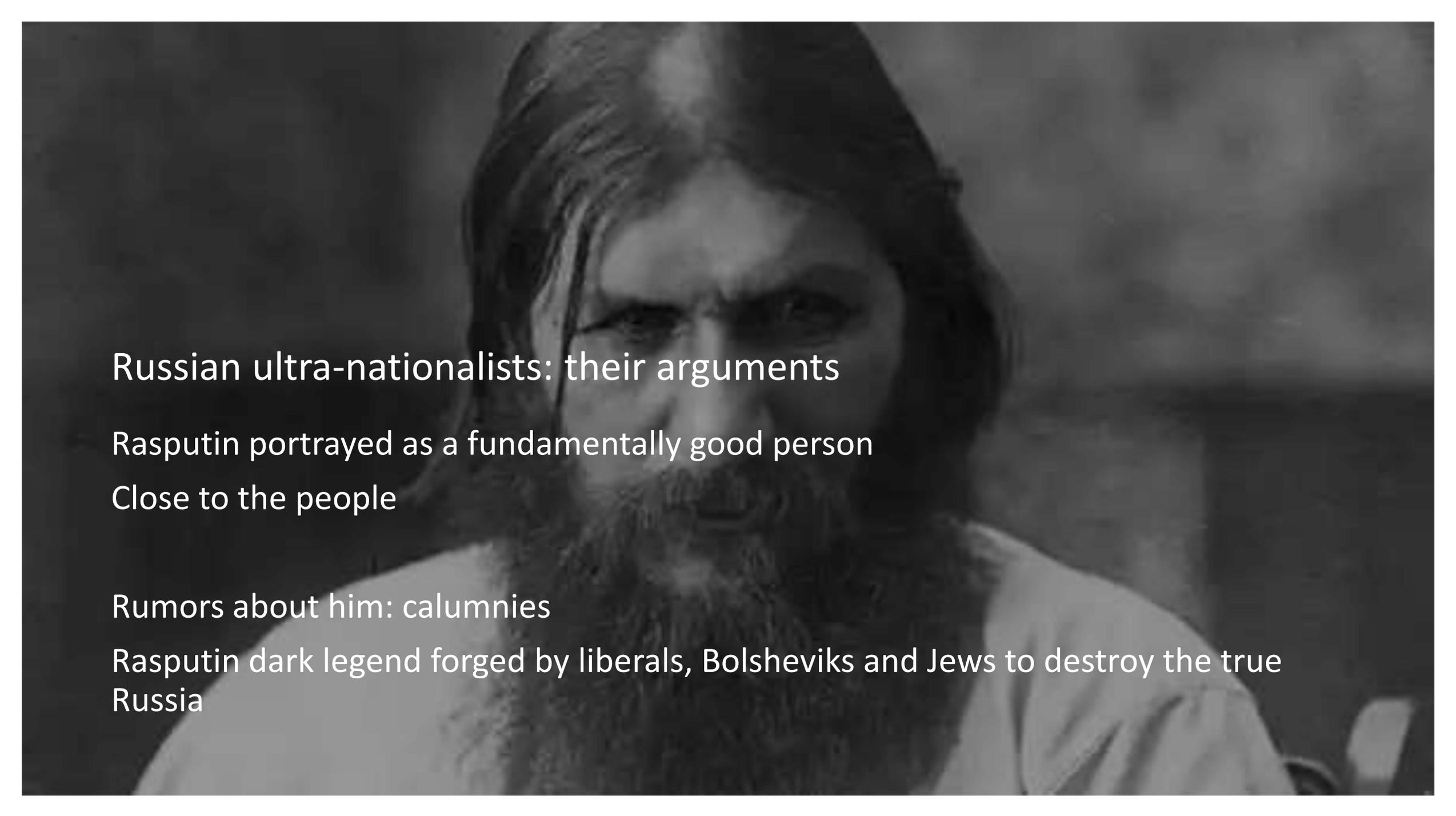


Renewed popularity for the Romanovs since 1991

Numerous publications

Rasputin as a central figure: a supranatural figure (astrology)

The far-right political movements: rehabilitation of Rasputin



Russian ultra-nationalists: their arguments

Rasputin portrayed as a fundamentally good person

Close to the people

Rumors about him: calumnies

Rasputin dark legend forged by liberals, Bolsheviks and Jews to destroy the true Russia



Russian historians hesitant to study Rasputin

Fear to be associated with the far-right – nationalist campaign of rehabilitation

Rasputin: a controversial figure to this day