

Apr 20th, 12:45 PM - 2:00 AM

Rasputin and the Fragmentation of Imperial Russia

Jessie Radcliffe
St. Mary's Academy

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: <http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/younghistorians>

 Part of the [European History Commons](#), [Political History Commons](#), and the [Slavic Languages and Societies Commons](#)

Radcliffe, Jessie, "Rasputin and the Fragmentation of Imperial Russia" (2017). *Young Historians Conference*. 14.
<http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/younghistorians/2017/oralpres/14>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Young Historians Conference by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. For more information, please contact pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

RASPUTIN AND THE THE FRAGMENTATION OF IMPERIAL RUSSIA

Jessie Radcliffe
PSU Challenge – History of Modern Europe
March 12, 2017

In February of 1917 Russia's Romanov Dynasty came to bloody end.¹ Plagued by social and political unrest the last Tsar, Nicholas II, lost control of his empire and he and his family lost their lives.² The revolt did not happen overnight. Years of increasing discontentment and alienation led to the Russian Revolution of 1917. Attempts on the part of Nicholas II and the Tsarina, Alexandra, to appease the populace were limited and ineffective. By the end, the Imperial Family was disconnected from Russia's people and had lost their trust. They also lost the trust of many important members of the Russian government and Russian Orthodox Church. This was in great part due to the family's association with the infamous Gregory Rasputin. When Rasputin arrived on the political scene, Russia was already divided and dealing with the aftermath of the Revolution of 1905 and the October Manifesto.³ Years of rumors and scandals surrounding Rasputin and retaliation against those who opposed him further polarized the church, the government and the people of Russia. The increased polarization and the tremendous damage done to the reputation and the credibility of the Imperial Family primed the country for the Revolution of 1917.

The unrest and division within the Russian government that eventually led to the dissolution of 1917 was greatly aggravated just weeks before the appearance of Rasputin in November of 1905.⁴ Following repeated defeats in the Russo-Japanese War, many Russians turned inwards and began to take issue with the Russian government. This led to protests and demands for a legislative body and other structural changes to the government. The St. Petersburg Workers' march on the Winter Palace was a notable example of the growing

¹ Mark Steinberg and Vladimir Khrustalev, "The Fall of the Romanovs: Political Dreams and Personal Struggles in the Time of Revolution," *Washington Post*, accessed November 13, 2016, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/books/chap1/fall.htm>.

² Candace, Fleming, *The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion and the Fall of Imperial Russia* (New York: Schwartz and Wade Books, 2014), 239.

³ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 85.

discontentment that the Tsars tried to keep under control. This confrontation was later dubbed “Bloody Sunday” and further antagonized the people of Russia. The nonviolent marchers brought forth a petition of changes to present their king, but they were met with gun fire. News of the violent suppression of the marchers spread quickly; protests and strikes followed closely behind. People all over Russia; workers, students, members of the military, peasants and others became involved in the social movement for change. The workers created the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies which organized demonstrations and negotiated with employers and the police. Public resentment grew to a fever pitch with a strike in the capital of St. Petersburg. With other cities experiencing similar situations the country was at a stand-still. By this time the government had just managed to end the Russo-Japanese War. The Tsar realized he needed to act, and fast, before the country completely fell apart.⁵ Nicholas II’s proclamation of the October Manifesto on October 17, 1905 was an attempt by the Imperial Family to appease the dissatisfied and disenfranchised to prevent an all out rebellion. The October Manifesto “guaranteed” the Russian people the right to freedom of speech and proposed a legislative body called the Duma.

While many Russians were seeking political and social change, there were others who believed their jobs were threatened by social reform. In early October of 1905, a month prior to the arrival of Rasputin, the Black Hundred was formed. Its members were small shopkeepers, casual laborers, peasants and whoever else the movement could persuade to join their cause. The Black Hundred saw it as their duty to, “stamp out anyone they believed threatened the autocracy”.⁶ They also gained Nicholas’ approval, despite the violent agenda they promoted. On the day the October Manifesto was released, a crowd of people in Moscow were exercising their newly received right of freedom of speech by protesting the imprisonment of political prisoners.

⁵ Raymond A. Esthus, "Nicholas II and the Russo-Japanese War," *The Russian Review* 40, no. 4 (1981): 399.

⁶ Fleming, 68.

To their surprise, the doors of the jail opened and the political prisoners were released. The Black Hundred broke through the crowd, wounding and wreaking havoc on those assembled. The Russian people saw this as a major contradiction to the Manifesto and Nicholas' support of this group solidified the idea that the Manifesto had not brought as much tangible change as they had hoped. The violence of the Black Hundred continued and *pogroms*,⁷ occurred all over the country.⁸ While the Black Hundred's actions were mostly concentrated on Jewish Russians, their violent devotion to the autocracy reminded Russians of the progress not yet made and added fuel to prerevolutionary sentiments. The festering of these feelings led to the formation of the Social Democrats which was a reform group fighting against the Tsars. Within the Social Democrats there were the Bolsheviks led by Lenin (also known as Vladimir Uljanov) and the Mensheviks. Lenin believed alterations to the Tsarist regime needed to occur as soon as possible, while the more moderate Mensheviks wanted to wait until a vast majority of the workers were ready to take action. This divide weakened the movement but also reflected the larger division within Russian society.

The establishment of the Duma fell short of the promises made in the October Manifesto. By the spring of 1906, Nicholas had significantly diluted the power of the Duma even before it met for the first time. He gave himself absolute veto power over any legislation and the power to dissolve the Duma at his discretion. Nicholas also controlled foreign policy, the police, the military and the day-to-day operations of the government, leaving little in the hands of the Duma. The first Duma was made up of people from all classes, high and low, as well as all thirty-four provinces. Nicholas soon saw this Duma as an irritant and after seventy-two days,

⁷ Coming from the Russian word meaning "to wreak havoc"

⁸ Fleming, 69.

their legislative careers came to an end.⁹ Nicholas had no intention of allowing a second election but the Prime Minister, Stolypin, convinced him otherwise. This Duma also proved too much for Nicholas to control and it was dissolved. When the third election came around, Nicholas made alterations to the voting system that made it nearly impossible for peasants and lay persons to be elected. The Tsar altered the system so that landowners could elect a deputy with 230 votes, while in comparison, the peasants needed 125,000.¹⁰ This created a Duma made up of mainly aristocratic elites who held beliefs more similar to their Tsar.¹¹ Even with the constraints he imposed on the Duma, Nicholas resented it and the threat it posed to his power. However, he recognized the importance of appearing to follow through on his word and allowed the reformed aristocratic Duma to continue. This was the stage on which Rasputin arrived. Russia was torn by violence and resentment over broken promises. The aspirations of the people for a more representative government had been stymied. Russia was struggling to stay united and Rasputin's controversial nature served to further antagonize the empire and tear at the seams of Russian society.

The Russian Orthodox Church and Russian government were at the core of Russian society. While the responses of the church and state to Rasputin will be analyzed separately, it is important to note that there was a considerable amount of overlap between the two. This overlap was established in Russia at least as early as the 17th century. The painting "Tree of the Moscovite State" painted by Simeon Ushakov (1668)¹² reflects a physical connection between these two parts of Russian society. Figure A depicts a tree with the first Prince and first

⁹ Fleming, 81-82.

¹⁰ Ibid. 84.

¹¹ Fleming, 84.

¹² Daniel, Waugh, "Simeon Ushakov's Icon of the 'Tree of the Muscovite State'", *University of Washington*, <http://faculty.washington.edu/dwaugh/rus/art/tree.html>. See Figure A in appendix.

Archbishop of Russia (left to right) working together to care for it. The left branch depicts Muscovite Metropolitans and Tsars, while the right branch is a series of monastic saints.¹³ This painting demonstrates how closely related the church and the state were and the idea that they grew and worked together. Many of the religious offices people held also had a political significance. For example, the Synod¹⁴ not only played a role in the religious sphere, but the political one as well. The Procurator of the Synod exercised power on a larger scale, engaging in judicial and non-secular matters.¹⁵ At the same time, the Tsars could control the actions of the church through the Synod. Due to this intertwined relationship between church and state, the effect that Rasputin had on each of these branches was amplified. When conflict arose in one branch, it was known and felt in the other.

Rasputin, a mystic who began life as a peasant, created extraordinary levels of conflict within the Russian government. As the third President of the Duma, Rodzianko, stated in his memoir, “the highest officials in the State were themselves divided in two hostile camps - pro- and anti- Rasputinites”.¹⁶ The conflict arose from Rasputin’s close relationship with and influence on the Imperial Family. The Tsars were completely captivated by Rasputin. He was originally called before the Tsars to try to heal their son, Alexei, who had hemophilia. The Imperial Family had exercised every other option, traditional and non-traditional, and was extremely desperate. When they heard about this holy man with healing powers, they jumped at the opportunity to bring him to the palace.¹⁷ His ministrations brought relief to Alexei on that

¹³ Waugh, Icon of the ‘Tree of the Muscovite State’”.

¹⁴ Council by which the Church of Russia is governed.

¹⁵ “Procurator”. *Catholic Online*. Accessed December 9, 2016, <http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=9662>

¹⁶ Rodzianko, Mikhail. *The Reign of Rasputin: An Empire’s Collapse*. (Florida: Academic International Press, 1973), 12.

¹⁷ Fleming, 85-86.

and following occasions.¹⁸ It was this success that continued to get him invited back to the palace. The more he “proved” his abilities, the closer the Tsars got to Rasputin. One account in the summer of 1912 demonstrates just how reliant the Tsars became on Rasputin. Rasputin had received many letters from the Imperial Family. This was a fact Rasputin held very dear and he was not discreet in showing off his connection to the crown. When his indiscretion was brought to Nicholas’ and Alexandra’s attention they cast Rasputin aside. However in the summer of 1912, Alexei had an accident that left him bed ridden and in extreme pain. The family explored every avenue of medicine to stop or minimize the pain. The situation became very bleak and the Tsars feared the loss of their male heir. Alexandra however, refused to give up. She sent a telegram to Rasputin and begged him to attend to Alexei. Following Rasputin’s arrival, Alexei’s bleeding ceased. No one understood how this could have happened. Alexandra however took it as a reason to reinstate Rasputin in the family’s good graces. After this episode, “Rasputin understood perfectly his strengthened hold over the royal family. Time and again, he warned the empress, ‘[the boy] will live only as long as I am alive’”.¹⁹ With the family’s dependency on Rasputin and his emotional blackmail, it became impossible to deny Rasputin’s hold over the rulers. Alexandra and Nicholas feared for the future of the family legacy and the country itself. Rasputin came to embody the means by which their son would survive to take the throne and ensure the continuation of Imperial Russia. To the family he also appeared to be a direct connection to God. Regardless of the accusations and rumors that were spread, the Tsars came quickly to the mystic’s defense. His ability to “cure” their son was reason enough to repudiate

¹⁸ There are many different accounts in where Rasputin is told to have relieved Alexei of his symptoms. Whether these were a series of coincidences or there was merit to what he was doing is still a topic of debate.

¹⁹ Fleming, 112.

any accusations. According to Nicholas, as he stated in a diary entry, Rasputin truly was, “a man of God”.²⁰

The Tsars were not the only political figures who voiced favorable opinions of Rasputin. Among those who supported Rasputin publicly were General Voeikoff and Boris Vladimirovich Sturmer.²¹ Sturmer served as the prime minister of Russia until 1916.²² Being on the side of the Tsars increased their power and safety in their positions. They also earned the resentment of those who were anti-Rasputin. However, those who were a part of the government and supported the Imperial connection to Rasputin had little to worry about as long as Nicholas kept his grip on power.

While some in government supported Rasputin and his relationship with the Tsars, there were also those with dissenting views. One of the most prominent was the third president of the Duma, Mikhail Rodzianko. In his memoir, *The Reign of Rasputin: An Empire's Collapse*, Rodzianko discusses in great detail the effect that Rasputin's presence had on the empire and its fall. In his eyes, “[t]he Rasputinites, led together with the parties of the Extreme Right, laid the foundations of the Russian Revolution, for they estranged the Emperor from his people and allowed a shadow to be cast on the lustre of the Crown”.²³ Throughout the memoir, Rodzianko not only condemned those who supported Rasputin but also those who remained neutral. He had a deep respect for the Romanovs and saw himself as trying to save the family and the empire from ruin. Rodzianko believed that if the State united itself against the corruption and influence of Rasputin, they could convince the Tsars of the danger lurking in their most trusted advisor.

²⁰ Fleming, 85.

²¹ Rodzianko, 12.

²² “Russian People Win Victory in Fall of Premier,” *New York Times* (New York City, New York), Nov. 25, 1916.

²³ Rodzianko, 13.

He saw the neutrals as apathetically standing witness to the crumbling of their government.²⁴

General V. N Dediulin is another political figure who voiced his distaste of Rasputin. Rasputin was dogged by rumors of his sexual appetites and other sordid affairs that were more than enough to be cause for concern. In Rodzianko's memoir he recounts the story of Dediulin's desire to avoid meeting the acquaintance of the holy man. According to this account, Nicholas asked Dediulin why he continued to resist or avoid any encounter with Rasputin. Dediulin is then said to have replied, "[t]hat [he] disliked him intensely, that he had more than a tarnished reputation, and that it pain[ed] [him] as a loyal subject to see this rascal so close to the sacred person of [his] Sovereign".²⁵ Not only were high ranking officials' abhorrence of Rasputin personal, but it was also because they feared the influence he had over the empire as a whole.

Even though Rodzianko and Dediulin were in support of the Imperial rule, resentment and anxiety formed because of the Tsars' dismissal of their warnings about Rasputin and their perception that their ruler was no longer the one in charge. Increasingly, members of the Duma began to see their rulers as under the thumb of someone who was nothing more than a libertine and a peasant and feared the crown would never be in full control again.²⁶ The continual conflict between the pro- and anti- Rasputin sides distracted and weakened the government overall. Tensions rose as time passed, and in 1916 the Duma's frustration reached an all-time high. Vladimir Purishkevich, a man who had been consistently loyal to the Tsars, had a violent outburst in regards to the Tsars and their association with Rasputin.²⁷ He is reported to have had said, "[i]f you are truly loyal to Russia, then on your feet. Have the courage to tell the Tsar... an

²⁴Rodzianko, 12.

²⁵ Rodzianko, 11.

²⁶ Ibid., 21.

²⁷ Fleming 150.

obscure [*starets*]²⁸ shall govern Russia no longer”.²⁹ Soon to follow was the formation of a plan to kill Rasputin. The members of the Duma became so infuriated and fed up with Rasputin and his perceived power over the imperial family that they saw murder as the only way to put an end to the relationship.³⁰ Their voices had been ignored and now they were going to act. They wanted to change the future of Russia and protect the crown, but the damage had already been done. Nearly two months later, the monarchs would fall and the country would be consumed by revolution. Rasputin polarized and alienated the Duma and distracted it from acting as a unified force against the stirring revolution.

Rasputin also caused ripples of anxiety and resentment throughout the church. At the heart of most of the church members’ worry was the two-faced nature of Rasputin. On one hand, Rasputin seemed as if he was a reformed and deeply religious man. The monk, Sergi Trufanov’s book, (more commonly referred to as Illiodor) provides an account of Rasputin’s conversion story told to him by Rasputin. In his younger years Rasputin had struggled with drinking too much and frequent sexual activity. He then reportedly began to reform and went on a pilgrimage. Following this pilgrimage he was visited by Saint Simeon of Verchoturje in a dream who told him to “wander and save the people”.³¹ Rasputin heeded the Saint’s request and began travelling, becoming acquainted with many influential religious figures. His name started to become known around the country.³² His story of redemption and conversion was hard for many to ignore because redemption stories are highly regarded in most faiths. However, Rasputin’s redemption

²⁸ Associated with the Eastern Orthodox Church; a spiritual adviser who is not necessarily a priest, but turned to by monks or laypersons for advice. This is a term used frequently in association with Rasputin.

²⁹ Fleming, 151.

³⁰ Rodzianko, 21.

³¹ Sergi, Trufanov, *The Mad Monk of Russia: Illiodor*. (New York: The Century Co., 1918), 108.

³² Trufenov, 108-109.

story was challenged by stories of affairs and of his involvement in *khlysty* ships.³³ In his memoir, Rodzianko discusses how the rumors of Rasputin's sexual liaisons became so common and frequent that "[p]eople began to say openly that so and so had been seduced by Rasputin [...] that secret orgies and promiscuous immortality were practiced in certain flats".³⁴ People all over Russia were discussing Rasputin and the supposed places and persons he had sex in and with. He became a household name not only because of his connection with the Tsars, but also because of what people speculated happened behind closed doors.³⁵ Accusations of this nature were also supported by the observations of Illiodor. When Illiodor was travelling with Rasputin he noticed the odd way in which Rasputin interacted with women. As they went around the country, "[i]n general, as [he] observed, Gregory prayed nowhere, neither at Saratoff nor at Tsaritzin nor at any monastery where we stopped. He was constantly on the run, running after women and girls and 'lecturing' them".³⁶ Illiodor recounts one night when he was presented with women at his bedside by Rasputin. He suspected that Rasputin had tried to prevent him from divulging his secrets with the promise of sex.³⁷ Regardless of whether or not these stories were truth or rumor, the general perception was that Rasputin was indeed involved in frequent non-conventional sexual acts and it tainted the public's view of him and the public's perception of the Tsars as well.

The conflict between the view of Rasputin as a holy man and the view of him as a libertine came to a head within the church in the disagreement over whether Rasputin ought to be

³³ Khlysty was a religious sect with practices that were believed to be of a sexual and erotic nature. Each community was considered a "ship" with a "helmsman" in charge.

³⁴ Rodzianko, 8.

³⁵ There were comments made in sources (Fleming and Rodzianko mainly) alluding to pamphlets or other articles regarding Rasputin and his actions. Unfortunately a lot of what I found was all in Russian and I am unable to translate it at this time. It could also have been these articles, etc. were lost to time or maybe due to the Russian government itself.

³⁶ Trufenov, 125-126.

³⁷ Trufenov, 119.

allowed to become a part of the priesthood. According to one of Rodzianko's sources, the High Procurator Sabler (a known supporter of Rasputin) had suggested that Rasputin would be a good candidate for the priesthood. The Synod then proceeded to deny Rasputin the ability to become an official church member. Sabler was furious. Sabler tried all he could do to get Rasputin approved but he was only met with more resistance from people like Bishop Hermogen.³⁸ Following this conflict Hermogen delivered a speech condemning the actions and lifestyle of the *stars*. This had not been the first time Hermogen had spoken out against Rasputin. Shortly before Sabler's suggestion of admitting Rasputin to the priesthood, Hermogen had been recorded having said, "[y]ou disgrace [the Imperial family] by your presence, while by your behavior and conversation you cast a slur on the name of the Empress, whose sacred person you dare to touch with your unclean hands".³⁹ Hermogen's repudiation of Rasputin attracted the attention of the Imperial Family. By an Imperial *ukase*⁴⁰ he was stripped of his membership to the Synod and ordered immediately to his diocese.⁴¹ Even this did not put an end to Hermogen's warnings in regards to Rasputin. Only when he had been exiled and fallen extremely ill did Hermogen slip quietly into the shadows.

Hermogen's experience was not an anomaly. Other church members were also excommunicated or dishonored for publicly expressing anti-Rasputin sentiments. Rodzianko tells of a conversation he had with Tsar Nicholas following the incident with Hermogen in which he confronted the Tsar about the pattern of retaliation against church members who spoke out against Rasputin. Rodzianko said that the banishment of Hermogen had been "an infringement

³⁸ Rodzianko, 17.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴⁰ An edict from the Russian government. In context, an edict coming from Nicholas II and Alexandra.

⁴¹ Rodzianko, 19.

on the canons of the church”.⁴² He then went on to discuss other specific cases of retaliation. Illiodor was initially a supporter of Rasputin but as time passed, he began to become suspicious of him and his actions.⁴³ Illiodor’s eventual hatred and contempt for Rasputin led to his exile and denial of a trial.⁴⁴ Rodzianko went on to mention Bishop Feofan and Anthony of Tobolsk who were transferred to different locations or removed from their office because they had spoken out against Rasputin. Rodzianko asked Nicholas, “[h]ow [could] Orthodox Christians stand by in silence, when Orthodoxy [was] being defiled and destroyed by the pernicious activities of this rogue?”⁴⁵ Rodzianko’s frustration over the unjust treatment of these religious figures illuminates the bitterness that developed towards the Tsars and their connection to Rasputin. Rodzianko clearly saw Rasputin’s toxic influence permeate the government and the church as well.

In an effort to maintain control, Nicholas silenced those who spoke out against one of his most trusted advisors. This served not only to alienate those who opposed him, but those who supported him as well. The church and the state, two pillars that worked closely together to ensure the function of the empire, both suffered from internal divisions and were at war with each other. No matter what side one supported, there was anger not only at the opposing side but at the rulers as well. It was this anger and polarization that would pave the way for the Revolution of 1917. Members of the government and church were discontented and distracted. Russia was restless for change on all levels of society. This created fertile ground for those preparing to mount a full fledged resistance against the crown.

The Romanov’s association with Rasputin also helped fuel public hostility and discontent with the Imperial Family. The Russian government tried to monitor what was published and

⁴² Rodzianko, 42.

⁴³ Trufenov, 132.

⁴⁴ Rodzianko, 42.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 43. In this context “the rogue” was referring to Rasputin.

distributed to its people. This included a Censorship Committee that policed the things being printed and fined those who disobeyed.⁴⁶ As Rasputin became better known and closely associated with the Tsars, the public became more and more restless. Much of the public had the same fears of Rasputin's influence over their rulers as did the church, the Duma and the aristocracy. By 1916 stories circulated that Russia was under the full control of Rasputin and many believed such stories.⁴⁷ As tensions grew, people became less worried about the Censorship Committee and the penalties it imposed. There were many stories of publications printing articles about the impact and exploits of Rasputin and then willingly paying the fines.⁴⁸ Even though laws were in place that prevented criticism of the Tsars and the government, newspapers like the *Siberian Trade Gazette* boldly called Rasputin a "half-educated peasant".⁴⁹ Not only did the Censorship Committee have to keep an eye on the established papers, but the circulation of informal pamphlets as well. A particularly famous one depicts Rasputin as a puppet master controlling two puppets who were clearly intended to be Nicholas and Alexandra.⁵⁰ The confiscation of these stories only led to an increase in circulation and served to further fuel the peoples' anger. This anger had been steadily building for almost a decade. For a brief moment after the October Manifesto in 1905, people had hope for a better future for Russia. Broken promises, bloody conflicts, poverty and alienation from the Tsars lay waste to that hope. People were disillusioned and suffering and could not understand why this seemingly random peasant appeared as if he ran the country.⁵¹ Rasputin was the last straw for the Russian people. The *sarets'* media coverage blew up in the fall of 1916; it was not long after that Rasputin was

⁴⁶ Edvard Radzinsky, *The Rasputin File*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), 167.

⁴⁷ Fleming, 150.

⁴⁸ Radzinsky, 167.

⁴⁹ Fleming, 150.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 150. See Figure B in appendix.

⁵¹ Fleming, 150.

murdered. The people saw this as a positive omen, one less physical reminder of the failings on part of their rulers. A few months later, the revolution would ensue. Rasputin's toxic presence had further exacerbated the public and set the country further down the path to revolution and the murder of the Romanovs.

Russia's involvement in World War I (WWI) had a profoundly negative effect on the country and caused suffering, but it was not the cause of the fall of Imperial Russia. The country was falling apart prior to WWI. Russia's instability can be traced back to the Revolution of 1905. Nicholas' rule was threatened by peoples' resentment at that time and he used the October Manifesto as a way to placate the people. Even though he went back on the things that he promised, he gave the people enough to dilute their anger temporarily. Resentment and anger built in the following years and further divided the country, which was reflected in dysfunction and failure on the battlefield. Nicholas saw the war as a way to bring glory to his line and prosperity back to Russia. The way he thought best to approach this was by being on the front lines himself.⁵² While he was away, a power vacuum was created which Rasputin happily filled. He continued to perpetuate the rumors of his influence over the Tsars even in the midst of the war.⁵³ No matter where one looked, Rasputin left his mark. The Russians were hungry and dying while their ruler blundered out on the front lines and an extremely controversial man appeared to be holding the reins of power. It is fair to say that the war aggravated issues that were already present in Russian society before its onset.⁵⁴ With a growing wedge between the Tsar and the Russian people due to Rasputin there was nothing Nicholas could do to placate the Russian

⁵² Charles F. Horne, ed., *The Great Events of the Great War*, Volume 3 (New York: National Alumni, 1923), 320-322.

⁵³ Worsley, Lucy. *Empire of the Tsars: "The Road to Revolution"*. Netflix. Directed by Sebastian Barfield. 2015; London: BBC, 2016. Video.

⁵⁴ Fleming, 150.

people again. The emotions and frustration that led to the Revolution of 1905, led to the revolution that occurred twelve years later.

While Rasputin was not the sole cause for the Revolution of 1917, the division he fomented weakened the already shaky foundations of Russia. Rasputin impacted every facet of Russian life. The church, the state and the Russian people developed greater resentment towards the Tsar and fear for the future of Russia because of him. Nicholas and Alexandra chose to protect Rasputin while also trying to maintain their power. It was impossible to do both. By disregarding countless warnings about this man, the Tsars confirmed fears that they had been caught in Rasputin's web. The Imperial Family's continued support of Rasputin and their acts of retaliation against those that opposed him alienated the Tsar and Tsarina from the people and the leaders of the church and state. Having lost the respect and trust of most Russians, it became inevitable that the Tsars would fall, dragged down by the weight of Rasputin and the frustrations of the Russian people. The impact of Rasputin on the fate of Russia's royal family illustrates the significance that one individual can have on the course of history. Rasputin may have believed himself a healer but he tore apart a nation.

Appendix



Figure A: Ushakov, Simeon. *The Tree of the Moscovite State*". Painting. Moscow:1668. From The State Tretyakov Gallery.



Figure B: Fleming, Candace. *Rasputin the Puppet Master*. Political Cartoon. Moscow. From the State Archives of the Russian Federation.

Bibliography

- Bhattacharyya, Richita. "Occults and Mystics: Rise of Bolshevism and the Downfall of Rasputin." *News Histories*, April 2012, <http://newhistories.group.shef.ac.uk/wordpress/wordpress/occults-and-mystics-rise-of-bolshevism-and-the-downfall-of-rasputin/>
- Edge, Simon. "Rasputin: The unsavory Russian peasant who had unexplainable 'healing powers'" *Express*. Accessed November 13, 2016, <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/461439/Rasputin-The-unsavoury-Russian-peasant-who-had-unexplainable-healing-powers>
- Esthus, Raymond A. "Nicholas II and the Russo-Japanese War." *The Russian Review* 40, no. 4 (1981): 396-411.
- Fleming, Candace. *Rasputin the Puppet Master*. Political cartoon. Moscow. From the State Archives of the Russian Federation.
- Fleming, Candace. *The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion & Fall of Imperial Russia*. New York: Schwartz & Wade Books, 2014.
- Horne, Charles F., Ed. *The Great Events of the Great War*, Volume 3. New York: National Alumni, 1923. 320-322.
- Mark Steinberg and Vladimir Khrustalev. "The Fall of the Romanovs: Political Dreams and Personal Struggles in the Time of Revolution," *Washington Post*. Accessed November 13, 2016, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/books/chap1/fall.htm>
- "Procurator". *Catholic Online*. Accessed December 9, 2016, <http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=9662>
- Radzinsky, Edvard. *The Rasputin File*. Translated by Judson Rosengrant. New York: Anchor Books, 2000.
- Rodzianko, Mikhail. *The Reign of Rasputin: An Empire's Collapse*. Translated by Catherine Zvegintzoff. Florida: Academic International Press, 1973.
- "Russian People Win Victory in Fall of Premier." *New York Times* (New York City, New York), Nov. 25, 1916.
- Trufanov, Sergi. *The Mad Monk of Russia: Iliodor*. New York: The Century Co., 1918.

Ushakov, Simeon. *The Tree of the Moscovite State*". Painting. Moscow: 1668. From The State Tretyakov Gallery. http://www.tretyakovgallery.ru/en/collection/_show/image/_id/2610 (accessed December 11, 2016).

Voglsinger, Tarnee. "How World War I Significantly Attributed to the Fall of the Romanov Dynasty", accessed November 13, 2016, [http://www.academia.edu/7435716/How World War 1 significantly contributed to the fall of the Romanov Dynasty](http://www.academia.edu/7435716/How_World_War_1_significantly_contributed_to_the_fall_of_the_Romanov_Dynasty)

Waugh, Daniel C. "Simeon Ushakov's Icon of 'the Moscovite State'", accessed December 6, 2016, <http://faculty.washington.edu/dwaugh/rus/art/tree.html>.

Worsley, Lucy. *Empire of the Tsars: "The Road to Revolution"*, Netflix, directed by Sebastian Barfield, (2015; London: BBC, 2016.), video.