

Nikolai Schluck



The Crash of Russia

18+

Nikolai Schluck

The Crash of Russia

«АВТОР»

2026

Schluck N.

The Crash of Russia / N. Schluck — «АВТОР», 2026

A historical novel, fiction about how and for what reasons Tsarist Russia collapsed in 1917. It is dedicated to the entire Romanov family and the arrival of the White Tsar in the 21-st century. "The Crash of Russia" is an action—packed historical fiction novel that describes in detail the reign of the last Emperor Nicholas II and all the main reasons that led the prosperous empire to collapse in 1917. The novel reads easily and in one go. All the scenes described in the novel took place and somehow led to the collapse dynasty. In particular, it describes the true role of Grigory Rasputin and his relationship with the Royal Family, and reveals all the details of the elder's murder. It also describes the 1905 revolution, the February and October revolutions, the time of the Provisional Government, in detail the murder of members of the Royal Family, as well as those forces who sponsored and ordered the 3 revolutions and the murder of the Royal Family. It describes how Lenin, Trotsky.

© Schluck N., 2026

© АВТОР, 2026

Содержание

The author of the novel: Nikolai Nikolaevich Schluck.	5
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	59

The Crash of Russia

The author of the novel: Nikolai Nikolaevich Schluck.

The annotation.

A historical novel, fiction about how and for what reasons Tsarist Russia collapsed in 1917. It is dedicated to the entire Romanov family and the arrival of the White Tsar in the 21-st century.

The Crash of Russia is an action—packed historical fiction novel that describes in detail the reign of the last Emperor Nicholas II and all the main reasons that led the prosperous empire to collapse in 1917. The novel reads easily and in one go. All the scenes described in the novel took place and somehow led to the collapse of the Romanov dynasty. In particular, it describes the true role of Grigory Rasputin and his relationship with the Royal Family, and reveals all the details of the elder's murder. It also describes the 1905 revolution, the February and October revolutions, the time of the Provisional Government, in detail the murder of members of the Royal Family, as well as those forces who sponsored and ordered the 3 revolutions and the murder of the Royal Family. It describes how Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin came to power. As well as the murder of Yesenin and others. The prophecies of monk Abel, Seraphim of Sarov, about the end of the dynasty in 1917, the assassination of the tsar in 1918, the war in 1941, and the arrival of White Tsar in the 21st century in Russia are cited

Chapter 1. Coronation and Celebrations.

On a warm May day, May 14, 1896, the coronation of Emperor Nicholas II Alexandrovich and his wife Empress Alexandra Fedorovna took place in the Assumption Cathedral in Moscow. During the ceremony, the diamond chain supporting the Order of St. Andrew the First-Called suddenly broke and fell to the floor, which the king's relatives understood as a bad omen, meaning that the dynasty would end. Nicholas Alexandrovich and Alexandra Fedorovna arrived by train from St. Petersburg the day before, May 6, the birthday of Nicholas II. The ceremony was led by Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and member of the Holy Synod Palladius. At the end of the liturgy, the emperor and empress were anointed as kings and received Holy Communion at the altar. The saint and member of the Holy Synod, John of Kronstadt, took part in the service of the liturgy, among others. French journalist Camille Cerf made a documentary film. Meanwhile, in St. Petersburg, on May 14, a liturgy was held in all Orthodox churches and a prayer of thanks was served. In Moscow, the royal couple settled in the Petrovsky Palace, and celebrated their birthday there, and on May 7, the emperor received the Emir of Bukhara, Muhammad Alim Khan, and his heir, as well as the Khan of Khiva, Muhammad Rahim Khan II. On May 8, Nicholas Alexandrovich's mother, Maria Fedorovna, arrived and that same evening, outside the palace, a choir of 1,200 people performed a serenade for the imperial couple. On May 9, the ceremonial entry into Moscow took place. First there was a police escort with a platoon of gendarmes, then an imperial convoy, then a string of crews of high-ranking officials, followed by horse guards, a personal imperial convoy, a hundred Life Cossacks, His Majesty's regiment, and so on. According to established tradition, a few days after the coronation, folk festivals and a fair on Khodynka Field were scheduled with the distribution of numerous gifts and attractions. The people's memory preserves the wonderful festivities in honor of the coronation of Alexander III and Alexander II.

People began to gather on the evening of May 17, although the festivities were scheduled for 10 am on May 18. The Emperor promised royal gifts for all who came in the form of a package with sausage, cod, large gingerbread, raisins, prunes, candies, nuts and a commemorative coronation mug with the coat of arms and initials N.A. Free distribution of vodka, mead and beer was promised. In

Moscow, someone spread a rumor that merchants could distribute gifts among their own, and people who wanted to receive a personalized mug first (which was not present during the festivities in honor of Alexander III earlier), gathered in crowds in advance, since people wanted to be the first to receive it in the morning mug and gifts. Many lay directly on the ground and lit fires.

Several thousand people gathered on Khodynka Field, twice as many as there were during the festivities in honor of the coronation of Alexander III earlier. And already at night, the artel workers began to give out bundles of gifts to their friends. People noticed this and began to threaten the artel workers. The people did not want to wait for the morning and climbed into the windows of the tents, and the artel workers began to give gifts to everyone, then the crowd jumped up at six in the morning after shouting “give away,” all as one, and rushed forward with such swiftness, as if an earthquake had occurred. The back rows pressed on those in front who fell were trampled, they fell to the ground, they ran over the people lying on the field as if over stones. The disaster lasted 15 minutes. Benches, wooden tents, stalls, stages and booths were built along the perimeter of the field. On the left side of the St. Petersburg highway, at a right angle to it, the Khodynka Field was crossed by a deep ravine 60 meters wide. The tents where people rushed to get gifts stood on the edge of the ravine, 15 meters from the ravine. When everyone ran for food, the tents began to overturn, people crushed each other to death, following the wild feeling of the brutal crowd, people, being under the pressure of those running from behind, began to push each other into the ravine. A mountain of corpses formed at the bottom of the ravine. Crushed bodies lay in the first layer, a second layer on top, then dead bodies stood on top, crushed so that they did not have time to fall. But from above came a fourth row of half-dead and half-dead ones, and on the field someone was swearing with choice obscenities, a dying woman was reading the Lord’s Prayer aloud, being pressed into the top row, which rose above the ravine.

At the same time, in the center of the Khodynka Field, many people fell into an old, lightly filled-up well, which was covered with boards sprinkled with earth on top. There were 1,800 police nearby who were unable to control the crowd. The crowd knocked them off their feet and rushed forward, overturning the tents. The merchants in them began to throw bags of gifts at the people running in order to somehow fight off the impending avalanche. Among this entire crowd was a journalist from the newspaper “Russkie Vedomosti” Vladimir Gilyarovsky, who came to the field in the evening, and when everyone ran, the crowd of him she picked it up and carried it along with her. The journalist arrived at this field to report for the newspaper. As a result, miraculously surviving, he was crushed by the crowd when the crowd first pulled him forward to the artel workers’ booths, but after that the people ran back, as Cossacks galloped on horses and began to disperse the people. When the Sun rose, crows flew to the fresh corpses, of which there were more than a thousand, the wounded were moaning nearby, some women were scalped without hair, because during the stampede they had been pulled by their braids. Nearby, people broke barrels of beer and honey and greedily scooped from there and drank from their palms. Gilyarovsky fell on a stone near the ravine, many corpses lay on the ground nearby, and at that moment it was all over. It was stuffy and thirsty.

The journalist picked the herbs and began to chew them – it quenched his thirst. Gilyarovsky took a snuff box from his back pocket, took a sniff of tobacco, and his strength returned. He got up, left the crowd and found a cab near the field and drove to his home on Stolesnikov Lane, buying three oranges on the way. He crushed one of them and wiped his face with it to freshen up. At home, the journalist took a bath, slept, put on a tailcoat and went to the newspaper office, but he saw many trucks and carts transporting corpses from Khodynka, realized the scale of the tragedy, went to inspect Khodynka again, and saw that the ditch was the epicenter of the tragedy, it was all clogged with pipes, which after so many hours were still being taken out.

The Emperor was not immediately informed about what had happened, but only at 10:30 in the morning before Vannovsky’s report, but he decided not to cancel the planned celebrations. At

the same time, Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, who was governor general of Moscow, learned about the tragedy. Sergei Alexandrovich told the emperor that, despite what had happened, he had to go to all the planned celebrations, including the ball at the French ambassador Montebello, to which the emperor at first wanted to object, being in a dejected state with a pale face, but the prince told the king: "That's it what happened pleased God, the people were sacrificed for the sake of the new emperor, and by a natural coincidence, it means it pleased the Lord". To this Nicholas Alexandrovich replied "that everything is God's will, but it is necessary to compensate the families of the victims from personal funds, bury the dead, conduct an investigation, find out if there is any malicious intent or mistakes on the part of the police and organizers, and someone will be needed remove from their positions, but the main thing is not to offend foreign guests who came from abroad, to carry out everything according to the planned ritual and accepted ceremonies." During this conversation (of the emperor and his uncle, Prince Sergei Alexandrovich), a messenger arrived from the French ambassador with a proposal to cancel the ball, scheduled for 2 o'clock in the afternoon, or postpone it to another day, due to the tragedy that had occurred. To this proposal, Nicholas II replied: "Tell the ambassador that we will attend the ball, let everything go according to plan." Count Palen, marshal of the sacred coronation ceremony, also came to the reception to the tsar, who also wanted to dissuade the emperor from attending the ball and dinner with the French ambassador, to which the emperor replied, "that the French were carefully preparing for the ball, and it would be indecent for us not to come to the ball." After which the emperor went, as if nothing had happened, to have breakfast with the empress.

After breakfast, at about one o'clock in the afternoon, Nicholas Alexandrovich and Alexandra Fedorovna went to Khodynka. Fun began on the field upon their arrival. The field was huge – on one side there was fun, and on the other side, at the same time, corpses were being removed.

A huge crowd surrounded the stage, on which the musicians played "Glory" all the time. The tsar did not pay attention to the fact that under many of the stages lay corpses covered with a tarpaulin, legs were sticking out from under the tarpaulin, and musicians stood on top of the stage (the corpses did not have time to be brought out before the arrival of the royal couple). Nicholas II, with a pale face, looked at the musicians with a glassy gaze, and, turning his gaze to the Empress, told her: "Everything is like in the Englishman's horoscope – I live in the center of tragedies and disasters, without the ability to prevent them, I can't look at it," he turned around and ordered the carriage to arrive. The royal couple went to a ball with the French ambassador.

At the ball, the king danced with the wife of the French ambassador Montebello, and the ambassador danced with the empress. After the ball everyone went to dinner. The ambassador expressed deep condolences to the tsar in connection with the consequences of the stampede on the Khodynka field. To which the king replied to the ambassador: "Prince Edward of Wales sent me a letter from London with my horoscope, compiled by the English astrologer Louis Hamon, which says that we have the evil fate of often being in the center of bloody events without the ability to prevent them, and now I see that it's starting to come true. The blind Japanese seer Terakuto told us the same thing." Gustave Louis Lannes de Montebello responded to Nicholas II: "I recommend that you, Your Highness, meet with Messrs. Nizier and Papus from the Martinist lodge, they can give you spiritual protection and help you avoid further disasters." "Thank you, we need to invite them to Russia," the tsar answered briefly.

The next day, the royal couple went with Maria Fedorovna (the emperor's mother) to visit the wounded in hospitals and clinics. We drove all day. All the wounded were consoled. In one hospital, the following incident occurred: a seriously wounded peasant was lying on a bed, with broken arms and right leg, who said to Maria Fedorovna: "I humbly ask you to forgive me that this happened to me, I didn't want to upset the holiday of the imperial couple and you with my fractures, it's my fault – With". In response, Maria Fedorovna only sighed heavily.

In the evening of the same day, after visiting hospitals, the imperial couple returned to the Kremlin Palace, where they had moved from the Petrovsky Palace, where they lived before the coronation in Moscow. The tsar retired to his office, sat down in a chair, took out a box with a cigarette case with Turkish cigarettes and nervously smoked cigarettes one after another, re-reading his horoscope and the cover letter from the Prince of Wales many times. The horoscope spoke about the evil fate that haunts the emperor, about the so-called mystical large square, inside of which there is a large cross – a symbol that the emperor will have a tragic fate and little can be changed; rather, one can accept such a fate, only trying to reduce the force of the blows of fate.

The Prince of Wales asked Louis Hamon, better known under the pseudonym Cairo, to make this horoscope without saying the name of the person for whom he ordered the horoscope, so in the natal chart of Nikolai Alexandrovich the astrologer wrote this: "Whoever this person is, his date of birth shows that during his life he would often have to deal with the horrors of war and bloodshed; that he would do everything in his power to prevent it, but that his destiny was so deeply connected with such things that his name would be linked with the bloodiest and most accursed wars that were ever known, and that, in the end, he will lose everything he loved most." And in the accompanying letter written by the prince, it was said in particular that his other court adviser and numerologist-kabbalist propose to make the coronation of the emperor on May 14, 1896 and mass holiday celebrations for the people in honor of the coronation on May 16, 1896, since these days are special divine kabbalistic dates. The tsar thought that the tragedy that had happened was pleasing to God and Providence, that he himself had given instructions, according to a letter from Prince Edward of Wales, to hold festive festivities on May 16... And he thought about how he now needed to compensate the wounded and the families of the dead with money. And the tsar did not have a single thought about punishing grand duke Sergei Alexandrovich, who was the governor-general of Moscow and was responsible for organizing the celebrations, since the authority of a relative was unshakable for Nicholas II. Meanwhile, people nicknamed the hated governor-general Prince Khodinsky. And that same evening, the tsar wrote a letter to Paris to the martinist, about whom the ambassador had spoken the day before, Mr. Nizier Anthelme Philippe, with an invitation to come to Russia with Mr. Papus (Gerard Anacleto Vincent Encausse).

The next day, the tsar ordered the police to begin an investigation into the causes of the stampede on Khodynka Field, which caused the death of 1,389 people and injured more than 1,500 people, and also ordered the dead to be buried after the funeral service, compensation to be given to their relatives, benefits to the wounded and disabled, and lifelong benefits for many. pensions. The newspapers published lists of those who were entitled to financial assistance. The full benefit was 1,000 rubles, and the partial benefits amounted to 750, 700, 500, 350 and 250 rubles. In addition, annual pensions of 24, 40 and 60 rubles were assigned, as well as annual benefits "issued in return for funeral expenses." The tsar paid for all this from his own funds and spent a total of 80,000 rubles, and also sent 1,000 bottles of Madeira on his behalf to hospitals for the wounded.

On May 17, 1896, at the Imperial Bolshoi Theater there was the ballet Pearl by Ricardo Drigo, which was watched by the Emperor, Empress Maria Fedorovna, dignitaries, guests and residents of Moscow. The script initially did not have a role for Nicholas II's favorite ballerina Matilda Kshesinskaya from the Mariinsky Theater, since she was considered persona non grata, and all roles were distributed among the ballerinas of Moscow theaters. The director of the imperial theaters was aware of the love relationship between Nikolai Alexandrovich and Matilda Kshesinskaya, so in order not to upset Alexandra Fedorovna, he first did not allow the prima ballerina Kshesinskaya to perform in the play. Having learned about this, Matilda complained to the Tsar's uncle, Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich, and the Prince reported Matilda's desire to perform in the Zhemchuzhina ballet to Nicholas II. When Nikolai Alexandrovich arrived in Moscow, he managed to meet with the director of the imperial theaters, Ivan Vsevolozhsky, and said that Matilda should be given a role. Therefore, at the last moment, a new role was added to Matilda – a role that did not exist before,

the role of the yellow Pearl. As Matilda herself wrote in her diary: “I was happy because I knew that Nicky had done this for me personally. At the performance, the emperor sits in the royal box, with the emperor’s mother nearby. Alexandra Feodorovna enjoys watching the first 15 minutes of the ballet. And suddenly, unexpectedly for her, they see the hated ballerina Matilda appear on stage. Alexandra Feodorovna shuddered and turned her gaze to Nikolai. Nikolai Alexandrovich took his eyes off the ballerina, blushed and looked into his wife’s eyes, after which he lowered his gaze to the floor for a moment, and then began to watch the ballerina’s performance again. The Empress bit her lip and also began to watch the performance of the brilliant ballerina. During the intermission, Maria Fedorovna told her son, taking him aside, that she should not have been allowed here. Not only Alix is here, but also all the relatives, foreign princes, princesses, nobles, now there will be conversations. To which Nikolai did not answer anything and simply shrugged, turned around and went to the buffet to take Alix’s arm. In the evening, all of Moscow was talking about how brilliantly Kshesinskaya danced and how the tsar could approve it. She also spoke about the numerous victims of the Khodynka tragedy; they recalled that this did not happen under Alexander III; only 32 people died in the stampede. They talked about the poor organization of the festivities on Khodynka of Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, that he did not take into account how many people could come for gifts and they dubbed him Prince Khodynsky. They remembered his passion for the hussars of the Preobrazhensky Regiment, and in connection with this they told him a vulgar joke. “Moscow has stood on seven hills until now, but now it must stand on one hillock” (in French, “hillock” is a gay man). This anecdote was told to Vladimir Gilyarovsky by Count Vladimir Lamsdorf (and wrote it down in his diary), and Vladimir Gilyarovsky retold the anecdote to the editor of the newspaper “Russkie Vedomosti” about the prince, also saying that “this “bugre” is unlikely to answer to the people for the poor organization of events, for example, because there were few exits from the field, and when people wanted to leave the field during a crush, there were not enough exits and people fell, being knocked down by the crowd.” On the morning of May 19, an issue of Petersburg Gazette was published with a detailed description of the tragedy. Around 12 noon, police began traveling around Moscow to confiscate newspapers from sale so as not to make public the details of the bloody events, but it was too late, half of the circulation had already been bought by Muscovites and all of Moscow was talking about it. Metropolitan Sergius (before taking the rank – Nikolai Lyapidevsky) called the events on Khodynka “a great sin” and he held funeral services for the victims, after which he decided to talk about it with the tsar.

After the ballet, the imperial couple left for the Kremlin Palace, where they lived in their own half in the personal apartments of the royal family. They dined in silence, as Alix was still angry with Nicky over Matilda's participation in the ballet. They ate dinner in the family refectory. Pies, pasties with lamb, Finnish trout, veal, cold beef aspic, roast chicken, artichokes, a hot dish of rabbit legs in Madeira sauce, sweets, ice cream, strawberries, and a creamy strawberry dessert were served on the table. Alix didn't touch the pasties, which Nicky ate with pleasure, or the veal, or the roast chicken, but she happily ate everything else. Then they served Madeira Sercial and Madeira Terrantesh, as well as red port Livadia. Their Highnesses drank a glass of each wine, but the Empress refused Livadia and asked to bring her the Massandra wine “Lacrima Christi” (translated from German as “Tears of Christ”) and drank two glasses of wine. After dinner, Alix went to take a bath, and Nikolai continued to smoke cigarettes with turkish tobacco for a long time. At about eleven at night he also took a bath, and at half past twelve at night he entered the queen's bedroom, where they passionately made peace.

On May 26, in Moscow, the tsar made a quick visit to the Armory Chamber. In the lower halls of the Armory, the Japanese Prince Fushimi presented Nicholas 2 on behalf of the Satsuma Emperor

Chapter 2. Saint Petersburg.

The next day after breakfast, the king was sitting in his office with Alix. Nikolai smoked a cigarette with Egyptian tobacco through his mouthpiece and talked with his wife. He said in English:

– “My beloved Alix, I often have bad dreams about our future, and I often wake up from this and remember the words of the Japanese seer who told us in Japan that we will all die a violent death and our fate is sealed. And the same thing in the horoscope "The astrologer Hamon, predicted for us. We will go to London and talk with him incognito, let him explain how to avoid all this."

“But he didn’t know for whom he wrote this horoscope,” answered the queen. Our relative only told him the date and time of birth, without telling him your name,” Alix continued. Nicky took another drag, and, blowing out smoke, continued: Montebello recommends that we contact the members of the secret society of the Cohens of Martinez de Pasqually – Messrs. Philippe Nizier and Papus. He knows them personally and they are magicians and occultists. We will invite them to Russia.

“Yes, perhaps we’ll do that,” answered Niki Alix. And the queen handed Nicholas a sheet of paper and moved the inkwell and pen towards him.

They were sitting at the table. The tsar pulled out the rest of the cigarette from his cigarette holder,

I shook the ashes into the ashtray and put out the cigarette butt. Then he took a piece of paper and began to fluently write a letter in French. The letter began with the following words: “We, the Tsar and Autocrat of Russia, Nikolai Alexandrovich Romanov – Holstein – Gottorp, having heard a lot about your order from Ambassador Montebello, we invite you, Mr. Nizier Anthelme-Philippe and your friend Mr. Papus, to advise you to come to us in St. Petersburg and advise us about our destiny.” A month later, the king received an answer to his letter from Mr. Nizier. The letter said that this year, unfortunately, it is not possible to come to Russia, but in the future both Nizier Anthelme Philippe and Mr. Papus definitely want to come. At this time, the imperial couple lived in the Alexander Palace in the suburbs of St. Petersburg in Tsarskoe Selo.

On one summer day in 1896, Count Minister of Finance Sergei Yulievich Witte came to receive the emperor. The tsar received him in the Alexander Palace after breakfast. At this time, Alexandra Fedorovna went out for a walk, accompanied by her maid of honor, to the park, to walk along the Lama Ponds, and the tsar was sitting in his office and, as usual, smoking cigarettes. Sergey Yulievich came into office to the tsar after the chamberlain’s report that the Minister of Finance, Mr. Witte, had come to the reception.

“Good morning, Your Majesty,” said the minister, entering the office and

bowled slightly. “Hello, sit down,” the emperor answered briefly. The count sat down opposite the king in a chair and began to report: “The goal

my visit, Your Majesty, to obtain your consent to the introduction of a single gold standard in Russia. We should have this much in our treasury

money in gold, more precisely, we should have so much gold

stock, how much paper money is printed. That is, this is what needs to be done so that anyone can exchange banknotes for gold coins at any given moment,” said Witte.

– “Great idea, this will strengthen the ruble and we will not have inflation,

I approve, we will introduce an appropriate decree on this matter,” the tsar answered and extinguished the half-smoked cigarette.

“I would like also to go to the American states to establish trade relations with the Americans in new areas; not only do they buy grain, flaxseed and sunflower oil from us. I think in New York we can discuss the revision of the agreements on oil and Baku kerosene in our favor, since the 1895 agreement according to which Russia has 25% of the sales market, and the Americans have 75% of the sales market, is clearly unprofitable for us,” Witte continued. Nikolai Alexandrovich took a drag on the third cigarette with Turkish tobacco that he smoked during the conversation, blew out the smoke and said: “We are thinking of calling the American ambassador and discussing everything here first, but it is premature to go to America,” the tsar answered.

"I understand you, Your Majesty, I have no more questions, sir, let me take my leave," said Witte. The king nodded his head, and the minister stood up and left.

Nicholas's thoughts were about something else: he was thinking about when Alix would give him an heir, a boy, and not another girl, and he was also thinking about how he could delicately get rid of Matilda Kshesinskaya, who, through the Grand Duke, persistently passed notes with pleas for a date.

After thinking a little, the king took a pen and inkwell and wrote a short note to Matilda in French: Come to Catherine Park tomorrow at noon at hall on the island, where you get by ferry. Niki.

The king folded the note, called the valet and ordered it to be carried in secret

Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich with words to convey to Matilda.

The next day at a quarter to noon, the Tsar left the Alexander Palace and walked towards the Golden Gate through the Alexander Park, walked across the Great Chinese Bridge, entered the Golden Gate and then diagonally walked through the courtyard and exited the Zubov Gate into his own garden, walked to the Ramp and further along Ramp Alley to the Granite Terrace, went down to the Tsarskoye Selo statue and went out to the Big Pond, where the ferry was already waiting.

The king boarded the ferry. The ferry walked on a cable, the servant stood and turned the winch so that the ferry went to the island. Matilda was already waiting on the island. As soon as the ferry reached the island, Nikolai ran out to meet the ballerina, who stepped towards him, rushed to her beloved, they hugged each other, then there was a long kiss.

Finally, the king freed himself and said to Matilda: "Darling, we need to part, Alix if she finds out about our meeting, there will be a scandal, we

We cannot meet either secretly or openly."

– "I love you, why are you saying such things!" – Matilda exclaimed.

I was sick with mumps in Moscow, after the performance I immediately fell ill, but I only thought about you Niki.

"Let's go into the house," Matilda continued. Hand in hand, Nicky and Matilda entered the Hall on the island. Nicky sat down in a chair and began to smoke cigarettes, taking them out of his cigarette case. As usual, Nikolai smoked cigarettes one after another. Matilda also took a cigarette from Niki and lit a cigarette. She sat down opposite him at the table.

"We have a desire to have a strong family with Alix and give birth to an heir, since she gave birth to only a daughter, now we cannot give Alix any reason to be jealous," Nikolai said.

Matilda responded resentfully: "Or perhaps you've forgotten that I lost my child to you in 1893, when the horses bolted and I flipped over in the sleigh? And now I don't believe we'll have another chance together; I've barely recovered from the loss." "How can you tell me this?"

"Here's a present for you," Nicky said, and pulled out a gold ring with a 24-carat diamond from his shirt pocket and handed it to Matilda.

"O-la-la," Matilda said languidly, took the ring in her hands and began to twirl it in her hands, admiring it, after which she put the ring on her ring finger. The Tsar stood up, went to the table, and opened a bottle of Veuve Clicquot champagne. There were also grapes, sliced pineapples, French chocolate, marzipan candies and strawberries on the table.

"Thank you dear, what a beautiful stone on the ring," said Matilda. Nicky poured champagne into glasses, they clinked glasses,

"To you, my pearl," Nikolai said and they drank. You will dance in all performances, but don't ask for dates anymore, don't write to me, please, I'm afraid that Alix will find out about the notes," Nikolai said.

"But I ask you, at least sometimes I tolerate this Frau of yours. I ask you to meet again!" Matilda exclaimed.

"I can't give society and my mother a reason, not to mention Alix, to suspect something, so my answer is no," said Nikolai.

It's time for us to leave, the minister is waiting for us, the king told Matilda, just to leave quickly. Nikolai stood up and left without looking back. Matilda ran behind, the king stopped at the ferry, and the ferryman waited all this time. Nikolai turned to Matilda and said,

"First we will leave on the ferry, and then the ferryman will return for you, we should not be seen together." And he passionately hugged and kissed the ballerina. She responded with a passionate kiss, hugged Nikolai, then let go after a minute. The king boarded the ferry and set sail. Then Nikolai took a different route: through the Cameron Gallery to the Zubovsky building, then to the palace in the Amber Room. There the king sat and smoked a pipe and thought about his wife, what to do with her so that she would not guess. The Tsar ordered coffee from the Amber Cabinet, drank the coffee and then went to the Alexander Palace. And Matilda set sail on another ferry.

Chapter 3. Europe.

The Emperor decided to go to London to meet with the astrologer Hamon incognito. In August 1896, Nikolai and Alexandra went on official visits to Europe. In September they were in England and Scotland and lived in Buckingham Palace with Queen Victoria (Alix's grandmother), as well as in Balmoral Castle.

One of these days; On September 22, Nikolai went to see an astrologer alone, without even taking security with him. He was driven by the royal coachman to a street in London, where Count Louis Hamon, known as the numerologist Kairo (from the Greek for "hand"), was receiving visitors. The Tsar looked like an English gentleman in a top hat and suit. The servant reported to Kairo that a certain gentleman wanted to be received incognito. Nikolai paid 5 sovereigns to the servant and entered. He took out the horoscope compiled earlier by Hamon from his pocket and handed it to the astrologer. Hamon recognized the horoscope he had compiled earlier.

Nikolai asked the astrologer to justify what he had written.

"On what grounds did you make these predictions earlier? It says here that whoever this man may be, his date of birth, numbers and other data show that during his life he will have to deal with the danger of the horrors of war and bloodshed, that his name will be sealed with two of the bloodiest wars, that in the end of the second war he will lose everything; that he is loved most of all, his family will be slaughtered and he himself will be violently killed."

Hamon looked at the horoscope again and in detail explained why he thought so, told Nikolai about the fatal meanings.

Nikolai listened in silence, at the end he said "Thank you" and left the astrologer. The coachman was waiting for him near the house.

Next, Nicholas discussed the horoscope with Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace.

Years passed, and Nikolai kept thinking about Hamon's horoscope. The king discussed this with his wife. And they came to the conclusion that Russia should become a peacemaker throughout the world, call on all countries to unite around itself and hold a peace conference.

The imperial couple then went on their honeymoon to France. On October 5, 1896, Emperor Nicholas II and his wife disembarked from the deck of the yacht Polar Star in the port of Cherbourg and headed to Paris on a special train. An elegant pavilion was erected at the train station in the French capital "especially for the occasion." Vice-President of the French Chamber of Deputies Raymond Poincaré called this visit the "honeymoon" of Franco-Russian relations. All the movements of the imperial couple were recorded by meticulous reporters and artists.

The visit of the Russian emperor to Paris pursued several goals at once. First of all, the emperor planned to strengthen the Russian-French alliance that had arisen under Alexander III. He also came to France to attend the laying of the foundation of a bridge across the Seine, which was named in

honor of his father, Emperor Alexander III. On October 23, we left Portsmouth on a yacht at 7 a.m. and went at low speed to the English squadron, which was waiting on the Isle of Wight. The Tsar was walking on deck during this time. The wind blew stronger and stronger, and the waves became larger as we moved away from the shore. But the weather was clear. The English ships held their positions remarkably well; they were going at 13 knots. The pitching increased, and the battleships took wave after wave. At 11 a.m., we met the French squadron; the English turned back quickly with a salute, and the French took their places. After this, the Emperor went to bed. Poor Alix was completely seasick, and so was her daughter. At 2 a.m., we entered the inner port of Cherbourg, and the Shtandart and the entire squadron stood in the roadstead according to their disposition. We went ashore and were met by President Felix Faure. After the performances we returned to the yacht and transferred to the patrol ship "Elan", where we went round all the ships and visited the flagship, the battleship "Nospe". Here we watched the parade of all the naval teams brought together. The wind was blowing hard. We returned to the "Polar Star" at 5 o'clock on the president's boat. We drank tea at home, as we were quite hungry. At 6.30 the tsar went to dinner at Fora in the naval arsenal. While smoking, he talked with the admirals and generals. Having returned to the "Polar Star" and said goodbye to the officers and crew, Alix and I boarded the tsar's train right there on the pier and at 8.30 in the evening we set off. It rained during the night. And on the morning of September 24 we woke up to wonderful weather. At 9 o'clock Nicholas and Alexandra arrived in Versailles and there transferred to the presidential train. By 10 o'clock they arrived in Paris. The guard of honor from the Garde Republique, all the ministers, our additional retinue and many acquaintances were met in a tent arranged for this purpose. One of the ministers handed the Tsar a letter from Mr. Papus Enclos, in which he wished Nicholas II "to immortalize his empire by complete unity with Providence." Nicholas II and Alexandra Fedorovna, through the Russian ambassador A. P. Morenheim, conveyed their gratitude to Papus. The three of us set off in a 4-seater landau with Faure, with a large escort of cuirassiers. There were troops along the entire route. I can only compare the meeting of the people of Paris with the departure to Moscow, it was so heartfelt and touching! The Tsar and Tsarina were accommodated excellently in the Russian embassy. They found their daughter there. They had breakfast together. Having received Madame Faure and her daughter, we went in the same parade to the Orthodox church, where a prayer service was held. Then Alix returned home, and the Tsar went to visit the President. He introduced me to the entire top administration, the Senate and the deputies. Speaking at an official dinner at the French President Faure's on September 24, Nicholas II even used the language of the Martinists, referring to Paris as "the source of great light." The Tsar was home at 5 o'clock and after tea he received diplomats and Ganoteau, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. At 7 o'clock we went with him to a large dinner at the Elysee Palace. Faure and Nicholas II both read their toasts. At 10 o'clock the Emperor, Empress and President Faure went to a gala performance at the Grand Opera. From there they returned home after half past twelve. The trip around France continued for several more days, the Tsar visited many sights, including the Louvre and left France satisfied with the visit.

In 1899, the first Peace Conference was held in The Hague, where Russian representatives called on all countries of the world to resolve all political issues through peaceful negotiations, not to show aggression, and to reduce the arms race.

Nicholas II did not want to be, as the horoscope says, "at the center of bloody events and two big wars," so Russia at the conference called on all countries to resolve all issues diplomatically. The Dutch government supported Russia and sent an invitation to 20 European countries and 6 non-European powers. Holland itself adhered to neutrality. The conference took place on the birthday of Nicholas II and began with the Russian Emperor awarding the Order of St. Catherine to Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, which was recognition of her role in organizing the peace conference. The conference took place in the Forest Palace. The conference was chaired by the representative of Russia, Baron E. E. Steel. Each country was given one vote, with the exception of Bulgaria, as Turkey was against granting a vote to Bulgaria. Although the conference did not achieve its main

goal of stopping the arms race, it played an important role in the development of humanitarian law and the use of arbitration and mediation in international affairs. Signed conventions on the peaceful resolution of international conflicts; about the laws and customs of land war; on the use of sea force to the '64 convention; signed a declaration banning the throwing of projectiles from balloons for a period of five years; about the non-use of projectiles with asphyxiating gases; about not using bullets that easily unfold in the body. Unfortunately, many countries subsequently ignored these agreements. The conference in The Hague stimulated the development of pacifist movements in Russia and around the world. For the first time in the world, Russia expressed the idea that any conflicts can be resolved peacefully through negotiations.

Chapter 4. The Abel's letter.

On one March day in 1901, at breakfast, the emperor said to his wife: "Do you remember, dear, how the late father, may he rest in heaven, the day before he died, told us once again about the letter of monk Abel Vasiliev, which Maria Feodorovna (wife of Paul I) put it in a casket and sealed the casket in March 1801, recalling Paul's wish to open this casket and read the letter of the monk Abel to the emperor who will rule in Russia in a hundred years? "Yes, I remember," Alix answered. Nikolai Alexandrovich finished his cup of coffee and continued: "We should go to Gatchina tomorrow and read this letter, since a hundred years have passed." "That would be good, otherwise I'm also very curious about what they prophesied for us. Pavel believed the monk Abel and had conversations with him, although he imprisoned him, so we are going to Gatchina tomorrow." The Tsar said to Oberkammerfrau Maria Goeringer, who was having breakfast with them: "Order that tomorrow morning after breakfast a carriage is brought to the entrance to the Alexander Palace, we will go to Gatchina."

On the morning of March 12, after breakfast, Nikolai and Alexandra got into the carriage, which was accompanied by one guard carriage and several Cossacks on horseback. We left at half past twelve in the afternoon. All the way, the reigning persons chatted about the weather, about the recent ball that took place in the Catherine Palace, and were in a good mood. Already approaching Gatchina, the tsar, smiling mysteriously, said to his wife: "Abel first predicted the empress would have a 40-year reign, but she reigned for 34.5 years, then he predicted a fierce death for Pavel in the Mikhailovsky Castle, which is what happened to him, he predicted that Moscow would be captured enemy and burned in 1812, the riot of 25, the assassination of Alexander II by bombers, after which he told Paul about our future – about the 20th century, which he wrote down in a notebook and gave to Paul I, who put the notebook in a sealed envelope, inscribing "Open to Our Descendant in the hundredth anniversary of my death." So now it's Our turn to find out the prophecy of the seer."

Will our kingdom be long, like Catherine's, or short, like Paul's? But the Japanese seer Terakuto in 1891 and later Hamon also predicted for us the collapse of the monarchy in 1917, and we will only live until 1918... but what did Abel prophesy to us? "We'll find out soon." "You and I are like bargaining chips in the hands of a seer, but everything is God's Will," Alix answered. And finally, the carriage arrived at the Gatchina Palace. The couple got out of the carriage, entered the palace and immediately, without undressing, entered the hall where the secret casket with the letter was kept. In a small hall among the suites of halls of the palace, Nicholas II and Alexandra Feodorovna stopped in front of a pedestal on which stood a rather large patterned casket with intricate decorations, locked and sealed. A thick, red, silk cord was stretched around the casket on four posts on rings, blocking access to the casket. The valet came up and gave the key to the emperor. The Tsar unfastened the blocking red cord, walked up and opened the casket, took out an envelope with an inscription in the hand of Paul I, broke the seal on the envelope, took out a letter from the envelope and began to read to himself, then turned pale in the middle of the letter, finished reading it with difficulty and handed it to Alix, she She read it, turned pale and cried out: "Oh, Lord, let this cup pass from us! Rebellion,

the collapse of the monarchy, holy Rus' under the yoke of the Jews... Martyr's death, like once the Son of God... betrayal by his people... two terrible wars..." – "Give water to the empress!" – the king shouted. The valet brought a glass of water, Alix drank it in one gulp, her hands trembled, and she almost dropped the glass. The king took the letter with him and immediately left the palace, holding the queen by the arm. We got into the carriage; the horses were not yet unharnessed. We drove back in silence the entire way.

Chapter 5. Germany 1901.

Meanwhile, in Munich, starting from the end of 1900, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, with money received from Alexander Lvovich Gelfand (pseudonym Parvus), printed the Iskra newspaper in his apartment, having equipped an underground printing house there. Parvus was a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany and lived in Munich, but had also visited Russia before. In London, he established relationships with all famous revolutionaries, including Leon Trotsky (Bronstein), Lev Deitch, Plekhanov, Martov and others. Parvus was the literary agent of Maxim Gorky and received fees from the production of Gorky's play "At the Lower Depths" in German theaters, Parvus kept 20% of the profits for himself, sent 25% to the writer, gave the remaining 55% to Ulyanov in the party treasury of the RSDLP, and with this money they printed the first issue of the Iskra newspaper on December 24, 1900, which was brought to Russia through ports in Latvia. The Iskra newspaper united the fragmented revolutionary movement in Russia based on Marxism. An illegal newspaper distribution center was created in Pskov in 1901. Since 1900, the Swiss group "Emancipation of Labor", with its leader Georgiy Valentinovich Plekhanov, has joined in the activities of publishing the newspaper in Munich. Vladimir Ulyanov rented an apartment in the center of Munich and printed a newspaper with a circulation of 8,000 copies using money from the party treasury, and Vladimir's trip from Russia to Germany was paid for by his mother, Maria Alexandrovna Ulyanova, who gave her son money in Podolsk, and then made him bank transfers. On April 1, 1901, Vladimir Ilyich met his wife Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya and her mother at the station. They got out of the first class carriage. - "Hello Nadenka!" said Vladimir, standing on the platform, Nadezhda got off the train with a suitcase in her hand, handed the suitcase to her husband, he took the suitcase, put it on the platform, and Nadya went down, saying in response: "Hello!" Behind her, the carriage driver came down from behind with two more suitcases in his hands, then Lenin's mother-in-law, Elizaveta Vasilievna, got out of the carriage. The mother-in-law said: "Hello Vladimir!" He replied: "Hello Elizaveta Vasilievna!" And more arriving passengers were descending: a German woman of about forty with freckles on her cheeks, her daughter with a suitcase (they were met by her husband), who was standing on the platform next to Vladimir - there were many people greeting them on the platform. A porter came up, took Nadezhda and her mother's things on a cart, and the couple left the station, accompanied by a porter who was carrying the suitcases on a cart. They hired a cab driver, loaded the suitcases, Vladimir gave a tip to the porter and off we went. What's the address?" asked the driver, a German about thirty years old. "Kaiserstrasse, 46," answered Vladimir, dressed in a black raincoat and a three-piece gray suit, with a cap made of gray fabric on his head. The cab driver drove off, and Vladimir put his hand on Nadezhda's shoulder, hugging her neck. Elizaveta Vasilyevna was silent the whole way. She was wearing a brown coat. The following conversation ensued:

"Are you tired on the road?" - he asked his wife. -Yes, I'm a little tired, as soon as I arrive, I want to change my dress right away, it's wrinkled on the road," Nadezhda said. She was dressed in a fox fur coat, and under the fur coat there is a blue dress, on the head there is a hat, on the feet there are brown leather boots. It was warm outside; + 10 C, the sun was shining. We arrived fifteen minutes to the station. They released the cabman, Vladimir gave him several coins. At the house they were met by the owner of the house who rented the apartment to Vladimir - a local Social Democrat, who was also the owner of a pub in the same building - Georg Ritmeyer, a fat bearded German. Vladimir introduced his wife to Georgy, they said hello and Georgy immediately invited them to drink beer at his expense, he, like them, was a Social Democrat and they had something to talk about over a glass

of beer, Therefore, having put her things down, Nadezhda took off her fur coat, which was hot in Munich, put on a new pink dress, and immediately went out with her husband and the owner of the house to the first floor of the house where the beer hall was located. We sat with beer and beer snacks for two hours. The conversation went like this: - "Well, how are things in Russia?" - Vladimir asked Nadezhda. "The newspaper is spreading well and circulation needs to be increased in the south and north," Nadya answered. "Tomorrow I will introduce you to the right people at Parvus's apartment," Vladimir continued. "He will also help us spread the Spark?" asked Nadezhda. - "What are you talking about?" - asked Georgiy, who did not understand anything, in German. "We're talking about going to Parvus's apartment tomorrow," Vladimir answered him in German. And he added in Russian for Nadezhda: "Yes, Alexander Gelfand is our benefactor - he pays all expenses." Then Vladimir said: "I came up with a new pseudonym for myself - Lenin," then repeated the same in German for Georgy. - "Which Lena do you mean"? - Nadya asked jealously. "No, it's a beautiful name," Vladimir answered and took out his passport and handed it to his wife to look at. "I am now Iordano K. Iordanova, and for the neighbors Mr. Meyer, but for my comrades I will simply be Lenin," said Vladimir Ilyich and took the passport from the hands of his surprised wife. He then took out another passport from another inside pocket of his jacket. - And take this passport for yourself, you are now Maritsa Jordanova. On the walls of the restaurant where they sat, and on the beer circles the initials "N.V." were written everywhere. - short for the name of the restaurant "Hofbrauhaus". - "People's Will", translated from German. We drank a couple more glasses of beer and went our separate ways, Lenin thanked the owner of the restaurant for the good beer. The next day, Vladimir and Nadezhda arrived at Parvus's apartment. They were met by the owner of the apartment - a tall, large man, two heads taller than Lenin. They shook hands with each other. Parvus greeted Lenin's wife. Then everyone entered the living room. Maximus Ernst was sitting on the sofa in the living room.

Lenin introduced him to his wife as a Social Democrat and the owner of the printing house where Iskra was published. Ernst asked: "What are your thoughts on publishing the first issue of Zarya magazine?" - Parvus replied: "You Vladimir, it seems you had an interesting article for publishing me in Stuttgart." "Call me Lenin now," Vladimir answered and continued asking: - "You better tell me where the money is for the latest productions of the play "At the Lower Depths"? "I'll give it back later," Parvus answered quietly. "Help yourself to coffee and cake." - continued Parvus. In the living room there was a table covered with coffee cups and saucers, a coffee pot and cakes. Everyone sat down at the table and ate. They talked about Rosa Luxemburg, Parvus called her "the fiery lady of the revolution." Krupskaya told her husband: "We need to find another apartment, which we rent in an apartment on Kaiserstrasse is too modest. "Go to Siegfriedstrasse 14 tomorrow - a good apartment is ready for you there," said Parvus. After that, Vladimir and Nadezhda left home after visiting Parvus for an hour. And the next day they moved to a new apartment.

Vladimir answered: You better tell me where the money is for the last performances of the play "At the Lower Depths"? "I'll give it back later," Parvus answered quietly. "I'll treat you to coffee and cake," Parvus continued. In the living room there was a table covered with coffee cups, saucers, a coffee pot and cakes. Everyone sat down at the table and ate. They talked about Rosa Luxemburg, Parvus called her the Fiery Lady of the Revolution. Krupskaya told her husband: - "We need to find another apartment, which we are renting on Kaiserstrasse is too modest." - "Go tomorrow to Siegfriedstrasse 14, there is a good apartment for "I'm ready for you," said Parvus. After that, Vladimir and Nadezhda went home, spending an hour visiting Parvus. And the next day we moved to a new address, into an apartment paid for in advance by Parvus. The new apartment was well furnished. After they brought their things into the apartment, they sat down to drink tea and while drinking tea, Vladimir said to his wife: - "You will work with me on the Iskra newspaper. There is little in Munich comrades. Most live in Switzerland and England." "Okay, I agree," Nadezhda answered. "And tomorrow we need to go to Stuttgart, I made an agreement with one of the printing houses, they will print my book "What to do?" and we need to discuss what will be published for the

Zarya newspaper. “Why do we print in Stuttgart?” asked Nadezhda? “They have a Cyrillic font in their printing house. We will transport everything to Russia via Prague. By regular mail to the address of verified persons, in packages of various formats and colors. This is what Plekhanov advised to do back in 1895 in Switzerland. Then, at the congress, the revolutionaries decided to publish both “Iskra” and the magazine “Zarya” in Germany,” Lenin answered. - “Where did Pavruz get the money for our apartment in Munich?” - Nadezhda asked her husband. - “He paid for both the publication of the newspapers and the apartment from the party treasury - the money comes from the production of Maxim Gorky’s play “At the Lower Depths” in Germany and with the money of Savva Morozov, he donates large sums of money for the publication of “Iskra” and “Dawn.” Alexander Erasov also gave me money in Syzran when I was there. He is the richest man in Syzran. Erasov is not an underground worker, we call him Monk. Now he regularly donates money to the party treasury. August Bebel advised publishing Iskra in Munich, since we are here are not exposed and the police are not interested in us,” Lenin continued. “But why did you write to me to look for you in Prague?” asked Nadezhda. “This is a conspiracy, I meant Munich,” answered Lenin.

I received letters from you about the Czech, about how good you were in Prague, how you communicated with the Czechs. So many lies! I was looking for you in Prague and only there I found out that you were in Germany. You can’t do this to a wife who came from exile! – Krupskaya continued dissatisfied. - August Bebel and Plekhanov told me in Geneva that I should live and publish «Iskra» in one country, and pretend to everyone that I was in another country and was publishing there. And at the meeting they suggested that I live in Germany, specifically in Munich, so as not to attract the attention of the police in this calm city. And at the same time pretend that I am in Prague. First I came to Zurich and then moved to Munich. I’m editing «Iskra», together with Potresov and Martov, and Plekhanov insisted on publishing the thick magazine «Zarya» in order to write long theoretical articles there. “Yes, you’re still that adventurer,” Nadezhda retorted. “In Russia, everyone thinks that Iskra is published in Prague or Stuttgart,” Krupskaya continued. “I even wrote letters to my mother and sisters that I was in Paris, so that they would believe it, and if the police intercepted the letters, we would completely misinform them,” Lenin concluded. This ended the conversation between the spouses, and they went for a walk around the city, visiting numerous pubs. In some of them, Lenin, communicating with the Germans, called himself Meyer, and in others - Mr. Jordan. Well, the next day, Pavel Borisovich Axelrod, a social democrat and member of the Marxist group “Emancipation of Labor,” came to visit Lenin in the morning. Together with Lenin, he edited the next issue of Iskra. He went into Lenin’s room, said: “Good morning, comrades!”, shook Vladimir’s hand and nodded his head to Nadezhda. Lenin replied: “Hello! What, do you want to edit something again in the next issue?” “Yes,” answered Pavel. “I’ll bring tea,” Krupskaya said and left the room. Lenin sat in the room at the table, and Askerold stood next to him, and dictated the text: “Comrades, we must unite.”...At that moment Krupskaya entered with tea. “Just knock the sugar with a hammer, otherwise we don’t have time,” Lenin said to his wife. And Nadya put a tray with tea, a sugar bowl and a hammer on the table and began to break large pieces of refined sugar into small pieces. And then everyone sat down to drink tea.

Chapter 6. Nikolai II` TRIP in France.

In early October 1901, the Tsar and his wife traveled to France. On September 17, the yacht "Standart" with the royal couple moored at Dunkirk, where the Russian delegation was personally met by members of the French government, headed by President Emile Loubet. After the ceremonial meeting, all those present went to the city of Compiègne, located 71 km northeast of Paris.

The royal couple traveled by train from Dunkirk to Compiègne, 250 km, in the carriages of the former Emperor Napoleon III. The carriages were old, but richly decorated and furnished with gilded

furniture. But the compartments themselves were small and cramped. The train shook and swayed the entire way, and Alexandra Fedorovna became seasick. By evening, the train arrived in Compiegne.

Nicholas and Alexandra were accommodated in the Chateau de Compiegne, which outwardly resembled a palace, but not all the halls had sewerage and running water. The Tsar was met in the castle by the Grand Duchesses of Montenegro - Milica Nikolaevna and Stana Nikolaevna, and the representative of the France, General, Minister of Foreign Affairs Theophile Delnassé.

After the welcoming phrases, the royal couple dined with the Grand Duchesses. They dined in the knights' hall. Chicken Marengo, Brie, Parmesan, Roquefort cheeses with baguette were served on the ceremonial table. Also on the table were boiled eggs (poached), omelet, leg of lamb, cutlets, beef fillet, fried potatoes with lamb breast, chicken wings, beans in herring, olives, pears, apples, grapes, waffles with cream, sweets, coffee and Bordeaux, Perrier-Jouet champagne and Nicholas II's favorite port wine - white port Lagrima. The table itself was 20 meters long, designed for many people, but six dined at the table. Above the table hung crystal chandeliers, brightly illuminating the hall, decorated with exquisite tapestries.

In addition to the royal couple and princesses, the head of the royal chancellery, Alexander Mosolov, and Theophile Delnassé were sitting at the table. The conversation was about a military alliance between Russia and France.

Foreign Minister Delnassé rose from the table, raised his glass and said a toast: "Let's drink to the military alliance of two powers - France and Russia! If there is a war with Germany, our countries will smash the German machine."

"A good toast," answered Nicholas II, raised his glass of Bordeaux wine, clinked glasses with Theophile, and all those present drank. After this, Princess Militsa Nikolaevna said to Nicholas in French: "Your cousin George told us that Your Majesty wanted to invite the magician Nizier Philippe to Russia for consultations with Your Majesty on spiritual matters. We have invited him to the castle and all this time he has been waiting for an audience in the next room."

"What, Monsieur Nizier is here, and we did not invite him to the table?!" Nicholas said irritably. The servant standing next to the Tsar immediately turned around and followed Philippe Nizier. A few minutes later the doors of the hall opened, a servant entered and loudly announced:

- Monsieur Nizier Anthelme Philippe, who has arrived from Lyon, - and stepped aside.

A black-moustached man of about fifty, of unremarkable appearance, entered the hall, bowed towards the emperor and said: "Good day, Your Majesty and all present!"

- Good day, Monsieur Nizier, you are welcome to the table - Alexandra Fedorovna answered for everyone. A butler servant approached Nizier, moved a chair, and Philippe sat down next to Princess Stana Nikolaevna.

Stana Nikolaevna said: "Monsieur Nizier, a healer, magician and Martinist, sees the future, and knows how to heal. We heard about you from Ambassador Montebello," said the tsar. "We invite you and Monsieur Papus to Russia."

-But first, let's talk tete-a-tete after dinner," said the Tsar, looking at Philippe. -"We will certainly talk," Nizier replied.

After dinner, which lasted another half hour, the Tsar went to smoke in his study, decorated with walnut wood, and invited Nizier to come with him. Nicholas took cigarettes filled with Turkish tobacco and matches from a gold cigarette case, struck a match and took a drag, sitting on a leather chair at a walnut table. Philip sat opposite and listened attentively.

"We are worried about the evil fate that was predicted by the Japanese soothsayer, the hermit Terakuto, who said that a martyr's death awaits us, and great sorrows await Russia. The same thing is told to us in the horoscope drawn up by Hamon, and I read the same thing in a letter from the monk Abel, this letter was written a hundred years ago."

- "What interests us most is whether we can avoid fatal events like those that already happened on Khodynka Field, and how to avoid two bloody wars, as the astrologer Hamon predicted," said the emperor.

Dr. Nizier replied to this: "Some events are predetermined from above and cannot be avoided, but the consequences of other events of a different scale, simpler, can be mitigated - they can be avoided. I am a medium and can call upon the souls of the dead and ask them. In our Martinist lodge, the Kabbalist Papus also does this."

- "Could you and Papus be our protection from evil fate?" asked Nicholas II, finishing his cigarette and putting it out in the ashtray.

- "Undoubtedly yes, especially since we are already helping the Montenegrin princesses," answered Nizier. "I can also provide you and your family with medical assistance if needed," continued Dr. Nizier.

- "We will wait for you in St. Petersburg," answered the Tsar and lit another cigarette.

- "I don't know what George is planning, but London has always been a rival of both Russia and France. We are concerned about why George not only sent us this horoscope, but wrote to us that the special date for the coronation celebration should be May 18, 1896. We did so, and on the appointed day there was a stampede on Khodynka Field, in which 1,379 people died and as many were wounded and injured," said the Tsar.

- "I will answer this way, Hamon's horoscope, in my opinion, is an attempt to warn Your Majesty about an evil fate, but as for the second question, we should ask the Kabbalist Papus, he interprets such events better than anyone in the lodge," answered Nizier.

- "We are also concerned about whether the empress will have a male heir while pregnant?" asked the Tsar.

- Yes, certainly, but I will have to talk to her, - the doctor answered.

- "And it is harmful for Your Majesty to smoke so much. We will come this year or next," answered Nizier.

- "Then I will not keep you any longer, we will meet in Russia," said the emperor.

- "Allow me to take my leave, good-bye," answered the doctor, stood up, bowed slightly and left.

- "Good bye," answered the Tsar.

Chapter 7. Nikolai II, Nizier Philippe & Papus.

In Russia, meanwhile, the emperor in 1901 met personally with the magician and Martinist Nizier Anthelm Philippe, to whom he had previously written a letter on the advice of the French ambassador, immediately after Khodynka. Mason, magician, alchemist Papus came to St. Petersburg together with Nizier Philippe, who, being a healer of souls, also took on predictions. Papus and Philip were settled in the Alexander Palace in Tsarskoe Selo. At the end of January, the first meeting of the emperor with Nizier took place. The Tsar sat in the Maple Living Room, decorated in Art Nouveau style, and smoked cigarettes with Turkish tobacco. Stucco ornaments with intricately curved branches of flowering plants framed the door and window openings. In the holly, behind molded tree trunks, electrical wiring was hidden. There was a polar bear skin on the living room floor.

Philippe Nizier entered, a plump man of medium height, with a thick, stiff moustache. He was dressed simply, in a clean, but not formal black suit. Around the magnetizer's neck hung a small triangular bag of black silk, probably a kind of amulet. He bowed and greeted in a soft, enchanting voice in French with a southern accent:

- "Good day, Your Imperial Majesty, Doctor Nizier Philippe has arrived at your service!" - "Good day, doctor!" - the emperor answered in French.

- "We are glad to receive you in Russia, after everything that happened in France," the Tsar continued.

- "I am glad to serve Your Majesty! We discussed with Monsieur Papus the questions you asked me in France about the fate of Russia and the dynasty, discussed Hamon's horoscope.

- "My brother in the lodge, Mr. Papus, proposes to call upon the spirit of your father, the late Emperor Alexander III, to ask him what can be done to prevent the evil fate predicted by Hamon. The astrologer Hamon is not a member of our Martinist brotherhood, and perhaps, at the request of your cousin, he predicted your future in a horoscope in too dark tones, which may be advantageous to Great Britain, but this is already politics," Nizier concluded.

Chapter 8. Rasputin (born Rasputin).

In 1902, in Siberia, in the Tobolsk province, in the village of Pokrovskoye, a peasant named Grishka Rasputin was working in the field in the spring and heard church singing behind him. His daughter Matryona, who was nearby, and other peasants did not hear this singing and did not see what Grigory saw. He saw, turning around at the sound of singing, that ten meters away from him, the Holy Mother of God appeared in radiance, not touching the ground and singing a psalm. This vision lasted no more than a minute. The Mother of God blessed Grigory Rasputin. Amazed by what had happened, Grigory returned to the house and sent for the devout peasant Dmitry Pechorkin, Grigory's uncle.

Having discussed everything in detail, the two of them went to the elder of the Verkhoturysk Monastery, Makarii, the spiritual father of Grigory Efimovich. The elder, having listened, said, placing his hand on Gregory's head: "God has chosen you for a great feat. In order to strengthen your spiritual strength, you need to go to Athos and pray to the Mother of God."

Returning home, Gregory and Dmitry decided to go together as pilgrims to Athos. The preparations were short and soon the two friends with knapsacks on their shoulders and staffs in their hands set off on a long journey. Gregory's wife, Praskovya Feodorovna, cried, saying goodbye to her husband. Almost all the villagers went out into the street to see them off.

They walked for half a year, spending the night in monasteries. They ate the alms of good people. Arriving at Athos, they became novices. They worked, prayed at services and wanted to become monks. But one day Gregory saw the sin of Sodom. Grigory went for a walk in the forest near the Athos monastery and saw two monks in cassocks, who, having lowered their trousers to their knees, were copulating, lying on top of each other under the trees.

- "Accursed! How dare you!" - Rasputin shouted at them, spat at them and ran away.

Grigory lost his desire to become a monk, and he decided to share with his friend what he had seen. But then he changed his mind, so as not to lead his friend astray. For himself, he decided to leave the Athos monastery, since he realized that it was even more difficult to restrain sins in a monastery than in the world. Dmitry took monastic vows, and Grigory went to St. Petersburg.

Chapter 9. Sarov Hermitage.

In 1903, the imperial couple went to the Tambov province, to Sarov, to the monastery for men, on the occasion of the canonization of Seraphim of Sarov to the rank of saints. During the event, the Tsar visited the Divine Hermitage on June 20, 1903. The Tsar knew that Mother Maria kept a letter given to her by N.A. Molotov, a servant of Seraphim of Sarov. The letter was written by the saint for the emperor who would be the fourth of the emperors to visit Sarov. The saint sealed this letter with "soft bread" and handed it to Nikolai Alexandrovich Molotov with the words: "You will not live to see it, but your wife will live to see it, when the entire royal family arrives in Diveyevo and the Tsar comes to her. Let her give him the letter."

The Tsar and his wife met Abbess Maria in the cell of the Diveyevo Monastery, crossed themselves, took the letter in their hands and opened the envelope. The Tsar read it to himself, turned pale and gave it to the Empress to read. She read it, jumped to her feet and ran out into the courtyard, followed by the Tsar. And then the holy fool Pasha of Sarov approached:

- "God's beloved Tsar, do not cry and do not grieve in vain," she said. - "Everything is predetermined from above - the fate of Russia, the God-anointed Tsar, his family.

Reverend Seraphim predicted all the trials for Your Majesty in advance in this letter, so that the Tsar would have enough courage and fortitude to endure it all steadfastly to the end."

- This is not true, I do not believe you! - Alexandra Fedorovna screamed, almost fainting.

The imperial couple left Sarov darker than a cloud. But Saint Seraphim of Sarov was canonized at the request of the Tsar and was one of the most revered saints by the Emperor throughout his life.

The Tsar said to his wife: "Be brave, a crown of thorns awaits us at the end of our reign."

Chapter 10. Botkin and Badmaev.

Empress Alexandra Feodorovna sometimes had headaches, especially if Her Highness was nervous. After a trip to the Diveyevo Monastery, her head ached for a week. Arriving in St. Petersburg at the end of July after this trip, she turned to Professor of Medicine Botkin, who acted as the family doctor in the royal family.

The meeting with the doctor took place in the Alexander Palace in Tsarskoye Selo. The Empress was sitting in the Maple Drawing Room. Dr. Botkin came up, bowed and said:

- "Hello, Your Highness, how is your health?"

- "I have had a headache for a week, I have difficulty falling asleep, I have nightmares at night. I dream that I was shot by soldiers who rebelled against the Tsar. I wake up in a cold sweat, Nicky asks what happened. I tell him the dream, this whole nightmare. He always answers: everything is God's will and goes to pray. I also prayed for hours to Seraphim of Sarov, St. Nicholas, the Mother of God, and then in the morning I can hardly fall asleep. In the morning I can hardly get up, all broken down," the empress said in a quiet, sad voice.

- "I have all the necessary sedatives, antidepressants with me," said Botkin and opened the bag he had brought.

- "Drink this medicine at night, like a mixture, wash down 2 teaspoons with water before going to bed," the professor continued.

- "And what should I take in the morning? I feel very bad in the morning," said Alexandra Feodorovna.

- "Let me examine you. I need to see what your pupils are like," the doctor answered and came up close to the empress. He looked into her eyes

She began to blink. And the professor said

- "Relax and don't blink your eyes, please."

The queen continued to sit in the chair. She stopped blinking her eyes, and the doctor leaned over her, looking her straight in the eyes said:

- "The pupil size is normal, but the eyes are red. The eyeball is inflamed, and I see a red vessel in the left eye. I recommend that you put these drops in your eyes. Let me do it now and once more at night."

After that, the doctor took out drops in a glass bottle, a pipette, and put them in first the left eye, then the right.

- "Well, stop thinking about these nightmares. It can't be that soldiers would go against the Tsar Father and Mother Tsarina. Let me give you one injection of morphine now, as a sedative, but we will not give you injections often, so that addiction does not occur. "In extreme cases, one more time, if the nightmares repeat themselves in dreams, but I think Your Highness will feel better now," said the doctor, took a syringe from a bag standing on the table, filled the syringe with morphine and injected the empress into a vein in her right arm.

- "Oh, yes, I feel better already, and my head doesn't hurt," exclaimed the empress a minute after the injection.

- "Well, thank God," answered the professor. - Now allow me to take my leave, - he said, bowed, took the bag in his hand and left, saying

- "Goodbye, Your Highness."

The empress replied:

- "Thank you, good-bye, come and see us in a week, Evgeny Sergeyevich."

And Botkin left the living room.

At dinner, the empress had an excellent appetite, she told her husband about Dr. Botkin's visit. Nikolai, having listened, said

- "We think that the effect of morphine may be temporary. And immediately Nikolai and Alexandra went to the house of Pyotr Badmaev in St. Petersburg on Poklonnaya Hill. First, they traveled by carriage to the Imperial Railway Station in Fyodorovsky Gorodok village (the Tsar had his own separate railway line, connected to the main line). Then they boarded the Tsar's train and traveled to Vitebsk Station, disembarking at the Imperial Pavilion. The accompanying Cossacks and Life Guards of the Preobrazhensky Regiment also traveled with the Tsar and his wife, leaving their horses, carriage, and orderly at the entrance to the Imperial Station in St. Petersburg. Since the orderly had called in advance from the Alexander Palace to the security service in St. Petersburg, they drove in the carriage to the station. About 50 minutes later they arrived at Badmaev's house consisting of: an escort carriage, a tsar's carriage, and 4 Cossacks on horseback. The tsar's couple entered the house. Pyotr Badmaev met them. He bowed and greeted.

- "Hello, Your Majesty and Your Highness," said Peter.

- "Hello, Peter Alexandrovich," answered the Tsar.

- "Hello," said the Tsarina. And she continued: "We want you to see us, I have had a headache for a long time, a whole week."

- "Let's go to the office," answered Badmaev Peter.

First, the doctor did a pulse diagnosis of the Tsarina. Then he examined the pupils of the eyes, then asked to show the tongue, after which Peter Badmaev said:

- "Here are medicinal Tibetan herbs, they must be brewed in a water bath for 10 minutes so that they boil. And pour 3 tablespoons into a glass of water, and then drink in the morning, afternoon and evening before meals. The herbs are bitter, they can be washed down with water, but cannot be mixed with alcohol. Drink this for 5-6 days and you will feel perfect. Your nerves will calm down and you will sleep well."

- "Thank you," said Alexandra.

- "Come visit us in Tsarskoe Selo, goodbye," said the queen.

- "See you soon," said the king.

- "Farewell," answered Peter and bowed at the same time.

They got into the carriage and went back to Tsarskoe Selo.

All prescribed medicines and drops must be used, but let's go now to the Buddhist temple to Dr. Badmaev, he has such wonderful herbs and Tibetan tinctures. Montenegrin princesses recommend them."

- "Let's go," the empress answered briefly and told the footman to tell the coachman and the guards that we were leaving for the Datsan.

A carriage and a carriage of the accompanying guards with several Cossacks who were to ride on horseback in front of the carriage were immediately brought. And Nikolai and Alexandra immediately went to the Gunzochoini Datsan. First they rode in a carriage to the Tsarskoye Selo station. Then they transferred to the royal train and went to the Vitebsk station. The accompanying Cossacks and the Preobrazhensky Life Guards also went with the royal couple, leaving the horses, carriage and orderly at the Station Square. The royal train was already being met at the Vitebsk Station. Since the orderly had called the security service in St. Petersburg from the Alexander Palace in advance, they drove the carriage to the station. About 50 minutes later, they arrived at the Datsan as follows: an escort carriage, a royal carriage, and 4 Cossacks on horseback. The royal couple entered the Buddhist temple. On the threshold, they took off their shoes (the king took off his boots, and the queen her shoes), and put on soft woolen slippers. Opposite the altar with a statue of Buddha, Pyotr

Alexandrovich Badmaev sat in a half-lotus position, next to him sat his brother Emchi, the Lama, in a lotus position, and they read the mantra of Green Tara. Seeing Nikolai and Alexandra approaching them, the Buryats stood up and bowed.

- "Hello, Your Majesty and Your Highness," said Peter.

- "Hello and welcome," said his brother.

- "Hello, gentlemen," answered the Tsar.

- "Hello," said the Tsarina. And she continued: "We want you to receive us, I have had a headache for a long time, for a whole week."

- "Let's go to the offices on the third floor of the temple. We will receive you there," answered Badmaev Peter.

First, both brothers did a pulse diagnosis. Peter Badmayev did of the queen, and his brother measured the pulse of the king at the same time, who they also decided to examine. Then they examined the pupils of the eyes, then asked to show the tongue, after which Peter Badmayev said:

- "Here are some medicinal Tibetan herbs, they need to be brewed in a water bath for 10 minutes so that they boil. And pour 3 tablespoons into a glass of water, and then drink in the morning, afternoon and evening before meals. The herbs are bitter, they can be washed down with water, but cannot be mixed with alcohol. Drink this for 5-6 days and you will feel perfect. Your nerves will calm down, and you will sleep well."

- "Thank you," said the king.

- "Come visit us in Tsarskoe Selo, goodbye," said the queen.

- "See you soon," said the king.

- "Farewell," answered Peter and bowed at the same time as his brother.

Nikolai and Alexandra left the office, then went to the altar and stood for a while, looking at the statue of Buddha, and left the datsan.

They got into the carriage and drove back to Tsarskoe Selo.

Chapter 11. Tsarskoe Selo.

A few days after taking everything prescribed by the doctors, Alexandra felt better, and she walked for hours with her maid of honor Anna Vyubova in the parks of Tsarskoe Selo, accompanied by two Life Guards of the Preobrazhensky Regiment who guarded her.

One sunny August day during a walk, the Tsarina said to Anna:

- "Please call the holy fool Matryona Bosonozhka to the palace, we haven't seen her for a long time."

The next day, Matryona Bosonozhka arrived: a village woman came barefoot in a village dress. The Tsarina talked with her on the Cameron Gallery, first they walked through the Hanging Garden opposite the gallery.

- "It's beautiful here," said Matryona.

- "Let's sit on the veranda in the gallery," answered the Tsarina. And they sat down inside in the gallery under glass on portable summer wicker chairs.

- "Tell me, Matryona, will I have an heir?" asked Alexandra.

- "Yes, it will not be soon, but it will be," answered the fortune teller.

At that moment, Nikolai Alexandrovich, who had heard Matryona's answer, approached.

- "And not soon - when?" he asked.

- "Well, maybe in a couple of years. "You need to pray a lot to the Mother of God. I will pray for you and ask for you," answered Bosonogka.

- "We thank you," answered the tsar.

- "Thank God," answered Matryona and stood up.

- "If there are no more questions for me, then may I go?" asked Matryona.

- "Go with God," answered the tsarina. The barefoot woman stood up and left.

The orderly came up and reported that Minister Witte was asking to come in. -Ask him in, - said the Tsar.

Minister Sergei Witte came up. He reported for twenty minutes on how the reforms were going. The Tsar and Tsarina listened. Nicholas smoked four cigarettes during the minister's report, and after listening to the minister, he said: "You are doing everything right, continue in the same spirit." The minister handed the Tsar the documents to sign. The Tsar signed them sitting at a table in the gallery, and Witte left, bowing.

The next morning, the aide-de-camp approached the Tsar and reported that John of Kronstadt had arrived. Nicholas received him at the palace. The following conversation took place. John reported to the Tsar:

- "Count Leo Tolstoy is stirring up the people with his ideas, writing in his works that the Apostle Paul is from Satan, not from God. He writes that a wife should not answer to her husband, as it is said in the Scriptures, but should, like a man, directly answer to God for her deeds. And he also writes that one should not pay taxes to the treasury. What was incorrectly said in the Scriptures, that to God what is God's, and to Caesar what is Caesar's, and what is true is only to God what is God's," said John.

- "And what else can we do with him, we have already excommunicated him from the Orthodox Church in 1901!" the Tsar exclaimed.

- "And it is not enough for him that he was excommunicated for rejecting the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus, for not believing in the afterlife, and not honoring the sacraments of the Church, he has also encroached on the treasury," John replied.

- "So be it, but now tell me, why did you not recommend Mitka Kolyaba to us?", - the tsar asked Ivan.

- "He is not from the Holy Spirit, but it is your will with whom to communicate. If there are no more questions, then allow me to take my leave," said Ivan.

- "Go," - answered the tsar, and Ivan stood up.

- "Goodbye," - said the elder.

The tsar called his orderly and asked him to go for Mitka Kolyaba. Mitka was brought in 2 hours later, who arrived with Prince Obolensky, who was visiting him. Kolyaba was disabled from birth, limped, had poor hearing, spoke with difficulty, and was an epileptic.

Prince Obolensky told the tsar that Mitka had predicted the birth of a son for the prince. The son was born, and Mitka stayed with the prince together with his assistant Elpidifor, who interpreted Kolyaba's incomprehensible words.

The tsar received Prince Obolensky, Mitka and Elpidifor together with the tsarina in the Alexander Palace in his study. After the greetings, the tsarina asked Mitya:

- "Will I soon give birth to a son?"

Mitya mumbled something under his breath, and then he had an epileptic seizure. He began to roll on the floor, foam came out of his nose and mouth, to which Obolensky said that this happens to him and he does not need help, and

Elpidifor began to jump around Mitya, who was rolling on the floor, trying to understand what he wanted to say, and, having understood, said:

- "The child will be dead or sick, that is God's will!"

The tsarina turned pale. The tsar crossed himself and stood up, and left. The queen followed him. And they went, without saying goodbye, to pray in the Resurrection Church of the Catherine Palace. They prayed for half an hour, and left the church and the tsar saw: a soldier in an unbuttoned soldier's greatcoat wanted to approach the tsar, but at the entrance to the church the guards grabbed him by the arms and asked him how he dared to go to the tsar.

The tsar approached and asked the soldier who was being held by the arms:

- "Who are you and what did you want?"

- "I am a man of God, a former soldier, Vasily Tkachenko, I am coming to you, the tsar-father, by the will of God to tell you that the prayer has been heard, and the heir will be born in 2 years," the soldier said.

The queen, who approached, almost fainted. The tsar caught her in his arms. She staggered, but came to her senses.

- "This is wonderful! Let the soldier go, let him come to the palace to dine with us, God himself sent you to us!" - the empress said enthusiastically.

The guards let the soldier go, and he went to the Alexander Palace together with the royal couple, adding on the way:

- "I hear the voice of God in my head. The voice said, go to the tsar and tsarina and tell them that a son will be born in two years."

- "You will live at the palace, you will be assigned a room for servants, but first dine with us," the tsarina answered.

And the royal family, including daughters Olga, Tatyana, Maria and little Anastasia (who dined with the governess) dined at the same table with blessed Vasily Tkachenko.

At the end of September 1903, the royal family moved to live in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, and Vasily Tkachenko was recalled from the palace by the security service.

Chapter 12. Love Triangle.

In St. Petersburg, in Palkin's restaurant, on one of the rainy days in early October 1903, Grand Duke Andrei Vladimirovich, dressed in the uniform of a lieutenant of the Guards Horse Artillery Brigade, and prima ballerina of the Mariinsky Theater Matilda Kshesinskaya dined. The dinner was held in the Fireplace Room. On the table was exquisite Russian cuisine: jellied carp, soup with stuffed goose, breaded beef, fried hazel grouse and sturgeon caviar. The drinks on the table were Russian vodka in a decanter and French champagne "Veuve Clicquot".

Matilda said: "Our son is often ill. Two weeks ago, the flu passed, and today he is coughing again. The doctor examined him this morning, perhaps he has a cold again."

- "Does he have a fever?" - Andrei asked Matilda.

- "The temperature is 37 degrees, the doctor prescribed all the mixtures and medicines," Matilda answered.

- "Let's drink to Vova's health!" - said the prince and poured champagne into Matilda's glass, and then vodka into his own. They clinked glasses and drank. Andrei asked Matilda: "Is our son a good wet nurse?"

- "Yes, a village woman, she has a lot of milk!" Matilda answered. At that moment, Grand Duke Sergei Mikhailovich entered the hall, dressed in the uniform of a major general of artillery. Prince Andrei got up from the table and shook hands.

- "Hello! - Hello!" - they said to each other. Matilda, without getting up from the table, said: "Greetings to the one who came in!" - "Will you have a drink with us?" - Andrey asked Sergey.

- "Certainly," Sergey answered.

And they sat in the restaurant for another hour, after which Prince Andrey said: "Allow me to take my leave" and said goodbye.

And Matilda and Prince Sergey dined for another half hour and went home to the prince, where Matilda's son from Andrey, adopted by Prince Sergey, was waiting for them.

Already at home, Prince Sergey said to Matilda at night, when they were in the bedroom:

"Don't have dinner with Andrey anymore and forget about Nikolay, please."

- "As you say," Matilda answered Sergey.

Chapter 13. Rasputin in Kazan.

In 1903, Rasputin, who was wandering on foot throughout Russia, stopping for the night in monasteries and praying there, came to Kazan to visit his acquaintance, the merchant widow Bashmakova. They met in the Sedmiozernaya Bogoroditskaya Hermitage. Bashmakova introduced

Rasputin to the abbot of the hermitage, Archimandrite Gavriil Zyryanov. The archimandrite blessed the wanderer and settled him in the monastery hospice, where pilgrims stayed.

One January day in 1904, Grigory prayed for several hours in the church, standing at the Sedmiozernaya Icon. He stood exactly like a taut string, his face turned to The icon, then quickly crossed himself and bowed, then fell to his knees and kissed the icon. Having finished the prayer, Grigory crossed himself as he left the church and met with the elder Gabriel.

- "Hello, Grisha!" said the elder. - "Hello, Gabriel!" answered Rasputin.

- "Come in an hour for tea," continued the abbot.

- "I will definitely come," answered Rasputin and, bowing, left.

An hour later, at tea in Gabriel's house, they met at four o'clock in the afternoon at a table set with a samovar with a boot, with bagels, buns, and pies. In addition to them, there were students of the theological academy who had come to Gabriel for a blessing.

After taking a sip of tea from a saucer and eating some sugar cubes, Rasputin said to the elder: - "Bless me for St. Petersburg, I want to collect money there for the construction of a new church in my village of Pokrovskoye."

Elder Gabriel's face changed, he turned pale, his pupils narrowed as soon as he heard this.

Grigory, seeing this, was dumbfounded and said: - "Do you think that I will perish in Petersburg, that I will become corrupt? And what about God?! And God?!"

- "Trust in God, but do not be lazy yourself," the elder said in response to Grigory. The students sitting nearby shook their heads in surprise and one of them said: - "Well, well - he reads minds?!" - they thought.

A few days later, Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna came to the Semiozernaya Hermitage, and Gabriel introduced her to the elder, saying that there was a devout wanderer from the Tobolsk province, who had walked to Kazan on foot, who wanted to go to Petersburg and collect money there for the construction of a church in his village.

- "And how did he become a wanderer?" - the Grand Duchess asked Gabriel at another tea party, where they were alone.

- "He was a peasant, then a coachman in his province and gave a lift to Hieromonk Feofan, and Feofan said: "Go and save yourself!" But then Grigory also worked in the field, and he had a vision of the Mother of God, who told him to go to the Athos monastery. After which he left the village and went first to the Verkhnetursky monastery, then to other monasteries across Russia and reached Athos. He went by steamer to Jerusalem to the places of the Lord - that's what he told me."

- "Yes, he is a man of God, we will support him in Petersburg," said the Grand Duchess, after which Gabriel ordered the servant to call Rasputin into the house and he came in half an hour, and the Grand Duchess meanwhile drank tea with Gabriel. Rasputin entered the living room where they were drinking. He was 35 years old at the time. He was a thin, tall man with a long beard and a piercing gaze, dressed in a Russian shirt and boots.

- "Hello, Grigory, we have heard about you and your desire to come to St. Petersburg," said Elizabeth Feodorovna.

- "Hello, madam," answered Grigory.

- "This is Her Highness the Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna," said Gabriel.

- "I am glad to meet you, Princess," answered Grigory.

- "Come to the table, please," continued Gabriel. Rasputin sat down next to the elder opposite the Grand Duchess. He began to drink tea.

- "When you arrive in St. Petersburg. "Contact me or Feofan," said Elizabeth Feodorovna.

- "Are you talking about the monk who encouraged me to wander?" asked Rasputin.

- "Yes, he is in St. Petersburg with the Emperor."

- "The ways of the Lord are inscrutable," said Grigory. They drank some more tea and went home. The next day, Grigory went to St. Petersburg, having received a blessing from Bishop

Chrysanthus Shchetkovsky, vicar of the Kazan diocese. The bishop gave a letter of recommendation for Rasputin to St. Petersburg to Bishop Sergius, rector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy.

Chapter 14. St. Petersburg, Winter Palace.

The royal family spent the winter of 1903-1904, as usual, in the Winter Palace in the capital. One December day, when there was frost and a snowstorm, the tsar woke up at seven in the morning and decided to go out into the yard and chop wood instead of doing his exercises. Alix was still asleep when the tsar got up, put on his uniform and left the bedroom. - "What are your orders, Your Imperial Majesty?" - asked the valet standing at the bedroom door. - "Good morning! Set breakfast in the drawing room at 7:30, and in the meantime I will walk unaccompanied into the yard," said the emperor. - "Yes, Your Imperial Majesty," answered the valet, and the tsar walked along the corridors of the palace, went down the grand staircase. The sentries standing at the top of the stairs saluted, after which the Tsar said: - "Bring me an axe, I want to stretch my muscles in the cold, chop some wood." One of the sentries ran to the utility rooms of the palace and brought both the axe and some logs. And Nikolai stood all this time in front of the door on the first floor of the palace. - "Take all this out into the yard and put it there," the Tsar said to the sentry. The Tsar stood for a while longer, waiting for the sentry who had gone into the yard to return. The sentry returned and said: - "Everything is done. The weather is cold, minus 15 degrees. Would you like to dress warmer, Your Majesty?" The Tsar ordered a fur coat to be brought. The wardrobe master immediately brought it to him. Nikolai threw on a fox fur coat, did not button it up, and went out into the yard. The wardrobe master obligingly opened the doors of the Main Gate for him. The yard was lightly covered with snow, as it had already been cleared at 6 a.m. It was still dark. The logs with an axe lay in the inner yard, in the center of the yard. The Tsar slowly approached, took off his fur coat and threw it next to the logs. Then, despite the blizzard and the cold, he took off his overcoat, shirt and vest, and put it all on the fur coat. Stripped to the waist, he took an axe in his hands and began chopping wood no worse than a simple peasant. With one or two blows, the logs flew into pieces. Meanwhile, a woman from the lower class was walking along the Palace Square and, out of curiosity, looked through the Main Gate from the side of the square into the inner courtyard of the palace. The guards of the Life Guards, standing in front of the entrance to the courtyard, allowed her to approach, but immediately said to her: - "You are not allowed to stand here, if you were not invited, go away from the palace," said the guard of the Life Guards, guarding the courtyard. - "And the Tsar, as a simple peasant, in the cold, why is he chopping wood?!" she exclaimed. - "Go away then, if you are not invited," the guard barked and the woman immediately walked away. By this moment, only about 2-3 minutes had passed, all the logs were chopped and the Tsar threw down the axe, got dressed and returned to the palace frozen, hot and contented. He said to the valet: - "Make a fire in the living room fireplace with this wood." And he went to the toilet to wash himself. In the afternoon, already in the capital, at the Hay Market and in the Apraksin Dvor, all the merchants and merchant wives were telling how the tsar himself chopped wood for the fireplace in the cold. - "Well, tsar, what a surprise," - the merchant's wife said to her neighbor, a merchant in the Apraksin Dvor. In mid-December 1903, Vice-Admiral of the Fleet Makarov arrived at the Winter Palace with a report. The following conversation took place between the emperor and the Tsar. - "Stepan Osipovich, hello! What have you come for?" - the tsar began. - "Good day, Your Imperial Majesty! I ask that you allocate more ships to the Pacific Fleet than we currently have. Perhaps Japan will attack us. They have interests in Korea and Port Arthur is also interesting to them, and our squadron is not sufficiently staffed. I propose to recall the ships from the Baltic to Port Arthur," the vice-admiral replied. "Where did you get this information? And we will throw our hats at Japan, Minister of Internal Affairs Plehve told us, if it tries to attack," the emperor replied. "I command the ships of the Kronstadt port here on the Baltic, and recently spoke with a friend of mine who returned from Japan, who was there on his trade business and learned that the Japanese want to attack Russia, take Manchuria and land in Korea in the near future, a Japanese general blabbed about this to my merchant friend in a restaurant, so I came to Your Imperial Majesty

with a report and ask you to significantly increase the size of the Pacific Fleet," the vice-admiral reported.

- "Yes, the Japanese will not dare to attack us, I do not believe that they will attack, and if our intelligence does not report new information to us, everything will remain as is for now," the Tsar replied. - "Well, then that's all for me. Allow me to take my leave," Makarov said, took his leave and left. - "Goodbye," Nicholas II told him. On January 23, 1904, the Emperor received a letter from Vice-Admiral Makarov, in which Makarov once again informed the Tsar that a Japanese attack would inevitably occur in the coming days and hours. The Admiral wrote that Russia had weak anti-torpedo defense. The Tsar read this letter and remembered Hamon's prediction that there would be two difficult, bloody wars that would lead to the death of the empire at the end of the second war. Perhaps this first war will now be with the Japanese, but with whom will the second one be: with the English or with the Germans? - the Tsar thought frantically, smoking cigarette after cigarette. Alix came up and asked in English: - "What are you thinking about, Niki?" - "I think there will soon be a war with the Japanese? Makarov, it seems, is right," the Tsar answered. - "But we are a powerful empire, we will defeat them!" - Alix exclaimed. - "Undoubtedly, no matter what the cost," Nikolai answered. In January 1904, the Japanese could at any moment attack Russia in the Far East, enter Manchuria and land in Korea. At the end of January, the Emperor read the plans for conducting a campaign against Japan, drawn up by A. N. Kuropatkin, E. I. Alekseev and the Main Naval Staff. But none of the plans were approved by the Tsar. Kuropatkin, Minister of War, member of the State Council) accused the actual privy councilor Vyacheslav Konstantinovich von Plehve of assisting in unleashing the war, to which he replied: "In order to hold back the revolution, we need a small victorious war. We will not accept Japan's offer to leave Korea, and Manchuria is already ours." The Emperor did not respond to the Emperor of Japan's offer, transmitted through the Japanese ambassador, to renounce Korea, after which on January 24 Japan announced the severance of diplomatic relations with Russia.

Chapter 15. The Russian-Japanese War. The Plehve murder. The appearance of a trade union.

On January 27, 1904, the Japanese fleet attacked the Russian squadron in the outer harbor of Port Arthur, which ensured an unhindered landing of the Japanese in Korea. Having not received sufficient resistance, the Japanese landed on the Kwantung Peninsula in May and blocked the railway connection between Port Arthur and Russia.

Meanwhile, Grigory Rasputin, who came to the capital in December 1903, met with Archpriest John of Kronstadt in Kronstadt.

(Sergiev), the former confessor of Alexander III and an active member of the Synod, and received his blessing to stay in St. Petersburg. John of Kronstadt even called Gregory a "man of God."

At the Alexander Nevsky Lavra, Rasputin met with Feofan, who was then the confessor of the imperial family, and Bishop Hermogenes. Feofan settled Gregory in the rector's wing at the Academy. Later, Rasputin gained many admirers and admirers, and they rented him furnished rooms at 11 Karavannaya Street. Father Feofan told about the pilgrim Gregory to the daughters of the Montenegrin King Nicholas I, Milica Petrovich-Negosh (Princess Milica Nikolaevna, wife of Grand Duke Peter Nikolaevich) and her sister, Princess of Montenegro, Duchess of Leuchtenberg and Grand Duchess Stana, wife of Duke George Maximilianovich of Leuchtenberg.

In the second half of March 1904, there was talk at headquarters about strengthening our naval forces. Real measures were taken after the death

Vice Admiral Makarov on the sunken battleship Petropavlovsk. In early August, the siege of Port Arthur began.

On July 15, 1904, Vyacheslav Konstantinovich von Plehve, Minister of the Interior, was assassinated. When his carriage reached the square of the Warsaw railway Station, the socialist-revolutionary militant Sozonov threw a bomb. The Minister was on his way to report to His Imperial

Majesty on the activities of former Finance Minister Sergei Yulievich Witte, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers.

The next day, at the Alexander Palace in Tsarskoye Selo, the tsar met with Nikolai Valerianovich Muravyov, Minister of Justice and Prosecutor General Muravyov, and Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev, lawyer and Privy Councilor. The tsar was sitting in an armchair in the Maple Living Room and smoking cigarettes. Pobedonostsev reported to the emperor for ten minutes that the murdered Minister Plehve had collected all the evidence that Minister Witte had ties to the revolutionary movement and received money from American bankers for the fact that Witte had previously introduced the gold standard of the ruble, beneficial to the Anglo-American system, and most importantly, introduced and is introducing laws in Russia that play into the hands of the revolutionary movement laws that contribute to the collapse of the economy and autocracy. After listening to Pobedonostsev's report, the tsar said: "We have lost a friend and an irreplaceable minister in Plehve. Strictly, the Lord visits us with his anger, but we cannot believe that Minister Witte, who is devoted to us, is connected with the revolutionary movement and takes money from American bankers. If there is no evidence, then we will not talk about it." The Minister of Justice replied: "The three of us had previously met: me, Konstantin Petrovich and the late Plehve. Plehve told us that his office had collected all the evidence of Witte's guilt. And yesterday, Plehve was supposed to provide a folder with evidence, but he was killed. I propose to Your Imperial Majesty that Witte be removed from office."

"Since there's no proof, we can't decide that. This is just a suggestion that Plehve might have evidence against Witte. You don't have the folder in your hands, so please don't bring it up again," the emperor replied.

- "Who do you propose to appoint to the post of Minister of Internal Affairs now"? – the king asked the audience. At that moment, the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna entered the living room, who heard her son's question, and she said from the doorway: "We believe that Pyotr Dmitrievich Svyatopolk–Mirsky should be appointed. He was an assistant to the Minister of the Interior and commander of the Imperial Corps of Gendarmes, and he also proved himself well as the governor-general in Vilna, the local nobility is satisfied with them," she said.

"If no one objects, we will sign the Decree on the appointment," said the tsar.

"We agree," said Pobedonostsev.

"So be it. If there are no more questions, we will end the meeting," said the king. Pobedonostsev and Muravyov bowed to Nicholas II and his mother and left.

Meanwhile, Priest Georgy Gapon gathered factory workers around him in the first trade union in Russia, which was legally registered back in 1903. After the resignation of the first chairman of the Zubatov meeting, he became the head of the society. In February 1904, the Minister of the Interior approved the organization's charter, and on April 24, 1904, the first meeting of Russian factory workers in St. Petersburg was held, which aimed to improve the lives of workers. The meeting was held at the Vyborg Department Tea Club in St. Petersburg.

In the autumn, in the theater of military operations, it was decided to create the 2nd Pacific Squadron from the remaining Baltic and unfinished warships under the leadership of Vice Admiral Zinovy Petrovich Rozhdestvensky.

On October 2, 1904, the 2nd Pacific Squadron sailed from Libava, which was published in all the newspapers. People were discussing this everywhere in St. Petersburg. Rasputin, having learned this, prophetically told his flock: - "I feel it in my heart - it will drown!"

On December 20, 1904, the Russian garrison of Port Arthur surrendered to the Japanese.

Chapter 16. The Prince Alexei.

The birth of an heir was predicted earlier by the fool Daria Osipova. She suffered from epilepsy. Her seizures were often perceived as a trance, into which Osipova plunged in order to prophesy. In her village, Daria became famous for having the ability to heal. Although the healer Daria frightened

Alexandra Feodorovna with her behavior and seizures, she was kept in the palace. One day in January 1904, Daria fell to the floor in the Winter Palace and rolled on the floor in a fit, foaming at the mouth and shouting: "a son will be born to the queen." Alexandra Fyodorovna and Nikolai Alexandrovich were nearby at that moment and watched Daria's seizure. When Daria regained consciousness, the tsar helped her to her feet and asked: "That's right-will we have an heir?" Daria replied, "Yes, my Lord, this year." "Thank God, at last!" the queen exclaimed.

In the evening, Nikolai and Alexandra had a pleasant dinner, drank Madeira and Champagne, and went to bed satisfied. At night, the king woke up in a cold sweat and got out of bed. Alix opened her eyes and asked: "What happened?" – I saw in a dream a woman in a red dress with a red rosary with a silver cross in her hands. She came and said that whoever was born "would answer for everyone, and we would all be killed for her son."...

"But who is this?" asked the queen. This is the wife of False Dmitry, Marina Mnishek. My father told me about her, because he believed that his children should know the history of their kind, no matter how tragic and terrible it might be. In 1608, the first tsar of our dynasty, Mikhail Romanov, ordered, on the advice of the boyars, the execution of the three-year-old "Ivan Vorenka", the son of False Dmitry II from the Polish Maria Mnishek, crowned as the Russian tsarina, so that there would be no trouble later. The boyars demanded a painful death for the child, but my ancestor decided to show "mercy" - to replace the painful execution of the boy with a quick one - hanging. It was winter in Moscow, and it was very cold. The boy was tricked away from his mother and led to the Serpukhov Gate in Moscow in his shirt sleeves. He asked, "Where are you taking me? No one stood up for the boy. He was hanged, but the thick noose was poorly tied (it could not tighten on the child's thin neck), and instead of a quick death, the boy died in the cold for several hours. An unhappy mother, dressed in a red dress, was forced to watch her son's execution. She watched in silence, gritting her teeth. And then she cursed the Romanov family to the last knee and called for blood to fall on the heads of the Romanov children, saying in Polish with Russian words: "As an innocent son died, so all your sons will die... and there will be no rest for your family until the last of your sons falls where the first rose – under the shadow of the holy Hypatia." A few months later, Mnishek died of death in the Kolomna Tower in Moscow, she was strangled. Before she died, she gave her maid a strange object—a red rosary with a silver cross."

Alix replied, "How awful, it looks like a sacrifice—the execution of a baby. Why wasn't he exiled to a monastery? Nothing can be changed now. Your ancestor marked his rise to power with innocent blood... will our son be the last prince?"- "It seems Abel was right." ..Exhaling, Nikolai said. "We will not survive 18 years," the king continued, got up and went to pray.

The birth of the long-awaited heir in. The birth of the long-awaited heir in Peterhof on July 30, 1904, did not bring relief to the reigning sovereign. The attending physician of the Romanov family, Botkin, discovered that Tsarevich Alexei was bleeding, which began spontaneously from the navel 6 weeks after birth. The bleeding could not be stopped for two days, although the dressing was done continuously and the prince could die from blood loss. Mitya Kozelsky, a fool who had previously lived with monks from the Optina monastery of the Desert, was summoned to the tsar and first prayed for the tsarevich, muttering something under his breath (his speech was always unintelligible, it was guttural sounds with grunts and screams, which were translated into Russian by Elpidifor accompanying him), and then Mitya Kolyaba had an epileptic fit, he began to roll on the floor, without affecting the condition of the prince in any way, and Kananykin Elpidifora, who came with him, took him by the arms.... Then Alexandra Feodorovna called the fool Daria Osipova, who came barefoot to the palace in an old dress., she knelt in front of the icon of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, which hung in the corner of the room where the prince was, and after getting soaked for half an hour, she also fell into an epileptic fit, which horrified the empress, and the tsar sent for Dr. Badmaev, but he came and said that he had no way to stop the blood, but he would healing baths made from Tibetan herbs and as soon as the blood stops, the baby will benefit from it. Finally, Botkin managed to stop the bleeding,

which he made an entry in the journal. Later, Gleb Botkin held a consultation with Dr. Karl Gottlieb Rauchfuss and Professor Sergey Fedorov. All three came to the conclusion that there was a suspicion of a royal disease – hemophilia, but they did not make a precise diagnosis, they discussed the prince's blood clotting and the inability to make a dressing due to the soft tissue. On September 8, 1904, the emperor wrote the following in his diary: "Alix and I were very concerned about little Alexei's bleeding, which continued intermittently until the evening." A year and a half later, it was found that the child had hemophilia, which is manifested by increased bleeding on certain days, which Botkin recorded: these days coincided with the dates of the previous Romanov deaths. For example, blood flowed spontaneously on the day of the death of Emperor Pavel Petrovich on February 11-12, on the day of the assassination of Alexander III on March 13, on the day of the death of Tsarevich Alexei Petrovich on June 26, and then on June 28 – this is the day of the death of Peter III and Nicholas II's brother George, and especially strongly the blood flowed on July 3 on the day of death Marina Mnishek's son Vorenka. The tsarevich's life was under threat every second. The news of an incurable illness about the dream of the only heir made his father finally believe in the evil fate that hung over his family. Daria Osipova and Mitya Kozelsky were removed from the yard, as they could not help the child in any way. Badmaev's herbs helped – they relieved the condition after bleeding. One day in the autumn of 1905, the Montenegrin Princesses Milica (wife of Grand Duke Peter Nikolaevich) and Stan (wife of His Serene Highness Prince George Maximilianovich) invited the tsarina to meet with Elder Grigory Rasputin, whom they had previously met on a pilgrimage in Kiev. Rasputin was called a "man of God" by John of Kronstadt himself and blessed him. There was a conversation in Peterhof between Princess Milica and the Empress over a cup of tea. "Do you remember, dear Alix," said the Grand Duchess, "what Dr. Philip told you before he left? He predicted that God will send you and Nicky a new friend who will be your support! Trust me, Alix! He's going to be the friend Philip was talking about! He will save Russia for Nika and cure your son! God sent him to you!" – "Let him come and help, it's God's will!" - replied Alix. The next day, November 1, 1905, Nicholas II wrote in his diary: "I was very busy all morning. We had breakfast: book. Orlov and Resin. I went for a walk. At 4 o'clock we went to Sergievka. We had tea with the Militia and Stana. We met a man of God, Gregory from the Tobolsk province. I went to bed in the evening, studied a lot, and spent the evening with Alix." The heir, Tsarevich Alexei, once again fell ill, bleeding in the navel area opened by itself and the doctors could not do anything, and then the Montenegrin Princess Milica, the wife of Grand Duke Peter Nikolaevich, offered to call the elder, who had a reputation as a healer. Rasputin arrived in a cart pulled by a bay mare. He entered the room, bowed to the waist to the tsar and the tsarina, saying to the tsar: "Hello Imperial Majesty," to which the tsar did not answer anything, but only nodded his head. Rasputin first approached the sick heir and looked at him, then knelt in the corner near the icon and prayed for half an hour, then got up and went to the child, crossed him three times and Alexei stopped bleeding. After that, the tsar, the tsarina and the elder drank tea. Rasputin spoke after his healing about how he had previously made pilgrimages to Mount Athos and Palestine. Rasputin said that "a serious illness was given to the tsarevich for the sins of the Romanov family, and that it cannot be cured, but it is possible to control the tsarevich's condition and that one must pray a lot for his health." After the child began to recover, Empress Alexandra Feodorovna came to believe in the supernatural abilities of the Tobolsk elder.

Chapter 17. Rasputin's meeting with the tsar.

One day in the autumn of 1905, the Montenegrin Princesses Milica (wife of Grand Duke Peter Nikolaevich) and Stan (wife of His Serene Highness Prince George Maximilianovich) invited the tsarina to meet with Elder Grigory Rasputin, whom they had previously met on a pilgrimage in Kiev. There was a conversation in Peterhof between Princess Milica and the Empress over a cup of tea. "Do you remember, dear Alix," said the Grand Duchess, "what Dr. Philip told you before he left? He predicted that God will send you and Nicky a new friend who will be your support! Trust me, Alix!

He's going to be the friend Philip was talking about! He will save Russia for Nika and cure your son! God sent him to you!" – "Let him come and help, it's God's will!" - replied Alix.

The meeting of Nicholas II with Rasputin took place later, on November 1, 1905, in Sergievka. Rasputin had tea there with Montenegrin princesses Milica and Stana. And there the tsar and tsarina met with Grigory Rasputin. The heir, Tsarevich Alexei, once again fell ill, bleeding in the navel area opened by itself, and the doctors could not do anything, and then the Montenegrin Princess Milica, wife of Grand Duke Peter Nikolaevich, offered to call the elder, who had a reputation as a healer. Rasputin arrived in a cart pulled by a bay mare. He entered the room, bowed to the waist to the tsar and the tsarina, saying to the tsar: "Hello Imperial Majesty," to which the tsar did not answer anything, but only nodded his head. Rasputin first approached the sick heir and looked at him, then knelt in the corner near the icon and prayed for half an hour, then got up and went to the child, crossed him three times and Alexei stopped bleeding. After that, the tsar, the tsarina and the elder drank tea. Rasputin spoke after his healing about how he had previously made pilgrimages to Mount Athos and Palestine. Rasputin said that "a serious illness was given to the tsarevich for the sins of the Romanov family, and that it cannot be cured, but it is possible to control the tsarevich's condition and that one must pray a lot for his health." After the child began to recover, Empress Alexandra Feodorovna came to believe in the supernatural abilities of the Tobolsk elder. Rasputin talked about how he had previously made pilgrimages to Mount Athos and Palestine. Rasputin told the Empress that the serious illness was given to the tsarevich for the sins of the Romanov family and that it could not be cured, but the tsarevich's condition could be controlled and that much prayer was needed for his health. The tsarina asked the elder to become her spiritual mentor, and he agreed, becoming also the spiritual mentor of the Empress's friend and maid of honor, Anna Vyubova. It was taken into account that Alexandra Feofan's confessor recommended Gregory as a pious man and the opinion of John of Kronstadt, who called Rasputin "a man of God." Rasputin talked about how he had previously made pilgrimages to Mount Athos and Palestine.

The next day, November 1, 1905, Nicholas II wrote in his diary: "I was very busy all morning. We had breakfast: book. Orlov and Resin. I went for a walk. At 4 o'clock we went to Sergievka. We had tea with the Militia and Stana. We met a man of God, Gregory from the Tobolsk province. I went to bed in the evening, studied a lot, and spent the evening with Alix."

Chapter 18. U.G.L.E. (United Grand Lodge of England).

Meanwhile, in London, the King of Great Britain and Ireland Edward VII, concurrently the head of the Masonic lodge – 33 degrees Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England (United Grand Lodge of England) convened a meeting of the Lodge, which was attended only by masters and apprentices (without students). After all the appropriate ceremonies and rituals were carried out, the Grand Master invited everyone to the table. He sat at the table next to the Grand Master, the assistant of the Grand Master – a cabbalist-numerologist, and on the other side of him sat the Grand Secretary of the UGLE. Besides them, there were 10 more Freemasons at this table - masters of lodges that are part of the UGLE structure - provincial Grand Lodges, including the head of the Naval Intelligence Department (NIP), Captain of the Naval Service Sir George Mansfield Smith-Cumming, responsible for foreign intelligence, naval mobilization and war plans, among other things, and who was the Master of the 32nd degree of the UGLE lodge.

- "We have gathered here to discuss our plans regarding Russia and Japan," Edward VII began his speech. - It is not enough for us that we did not allow Russia to buy new ships in Latin America, thereby weakening the Russians. Which led to their defeat in the 2nd Pacific campaign and decided the outcome of the war. We need to arrange a revolution in Russia, achieve the collapse of this empire that is hindering us, so that Russia not only does not have its own territories in the Far East, but so that it also falls apart in the European part and in the Caucasus. "All means are good for this, except a direct war with Russia. What proposals do you have?" the King of England finished his speech.

The Great Master replied: - "I propose increasing the financing of the left forces - Russian revolutionaries, Socialist Revolutionaries and liberals through the banking houses of Wall Street, Swiss banks and German banks. Let them prepare the population of Russia for a rebellion."

- "I support, but we still need to talk to our loyal military men from the General Staff in Japan and to the French brothers from the "Grand Orient of France". The lodge of the "Grand Orient of France" will order the lodge subordinate to them in Russia to organize a rebellion," added the head of Naval Intelligence Sir George Mansfield Smith-Cumming.

- "I agree," Edward replied.

- "Allow me to report the general scenario of the development of events, according to astrological calculations and cabalistic dates," continued the assistant of the Great Master, the Master and at the same time the king's privy counselor.

- "We are listening to you, we are still under the impression of how you created a traceless poison for Alexander III, which was on a gift for the Tsar from Queen Elizabeth.

And special thanks for calculating the date of the celebration after the coronation of Nicholas II, which was at Khodynka, the number of deaths exceeded 666, the reputation of the Tsar was undermined from the beginning of his reign. It is a pity that he was not killed at all before the coronation by Ivan Rasputin's group, if we had interacted with them, they would have succeeded. Now we need to make a rebellion in Russia and for Japan to put pressure on the other side, and then the monarchy will fall. We are listening to you."

- "I calculated the Cabalistic date when many times more people should die than at Khodynka. This will be a ritual sacrifice to Baphomet, if it is done on January 9, 1905, and if it succeeds, then on this day the Russian Tsar must die at the hands of revolutionaries. This will be the highest sacrifice. And if not the collapse, then the beginning of the collapse of the Russian Empire. In this situation, the Japanese fleet will land in St. Petersburg without much resistance," the king's adviser finished his speech.

- "In that case, we must begin in Russia with the organization of trade unions so that they can organize a revolution by the date we need," said the Great Master.

- "But we must take into account that according to the horoscope of Brother Hamon, unfortunately, who is not present here, Russia must be shaken by two wars and three revolutions, after which only the monarchy will collapse in 1917, and then the dynasty will be interrupted in 1918. According to Hamon's horoscopes, the first revolution follows in 1905, but two more will follow in 1917. So everything is going gradually, as predetermined from above, and the main thing is that the Tsar is aware of Hamon's horoscope, and therefore will not resist much. That is so, but we should ask Brother Papus from the lodge "Order of the Supreme Unknowns" to visit Russia again and confirm Hamon's horoscope, so that the Tsar will definitely not take any measures, understanding all events as predetermined." - "I agree, so is it!" - said Edward VII.

The Grand Secretary of the UGLE said: - "We must give the appropriate instructions to our people in Russia through the lodge "Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia". Namely: let the ambassador meet with Princess Stana of Montenegro in St. Petersburg and tell her to tell the empress that the tsar should not prevent the businessman Emmanuel Nobel from buying up oil wells in Azerbaijan; let her say that he is her friend in spiritual interests and is a member of a secret society, and the policy pursued by Russia - to achieve a state monopoly on oil - interferes with his business. And let her also gain the trust of Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich and Prince Felix Yusupov the Younger. At the right moment, they will help us." - "Yes, we need to achieve control over oil in Baku through Nobel's brother, we have already invested in his business in Baku, he bought up wells, and the income from the sale of oil goes to us. In the event of a revolution, Russia will lose Azerbaijan and we must not allow Russia to have a monopoly on the state's oil now," said the Great Master.

- "We received intelligence from an agent in Warsaw, A.N. Grim, about the state of the troops and weapons, which the lieutenant colonel managed to pass on to Austro-Hungarian intelligence before his arrest. Our brother in intelligence from Austria-Hungary passed all the information to us, and we then passed it on to the Japanese through the Japanese ambassador. But we need to recruit new agents among the military in Russia, for which we need to allocate new funds," said the head of the Naval Intelligence Department.

- "You will receive all the funds tomorrow. And he wrote out a bill for 400,000 pounds. "We must make sure that the Tsar is killed during a riot, or overthrown in the form of a palace coup; with the abdication of Nicholas II in favor of Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, we will be able to control him, we have a dossier on him," replied King Edward VII. The next day, Sir George Mansfield Smith-Cumming, by order of the King, received the necessary sum from the London bank "N M Rothschild & Sons" for a secret operation in Russia, the purpose of which was the Revolution, after which he sent a courier on a steamer with the money to Russia to the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, the actual privy councilor Sergei Yulievich Witte, a secret agent who had long been working for Great Britain and America. And Sir George Mansfield Smith-Cumming himself left for Paris for negotiations with the Masonic brothers. A week later, the courier met Witte at his mansion in St. Petersburg on the Petrograd side, on Kamennostrovsky Prospekt. The meeting took place a few days before the New Year of 1905. Witte was drinking coffee and eclairs in the living room with his wife Matilda after dinner, while logs were crackling in the fireplace. A servant entered and reported: "Your Excellency, an Englishman has arrived from London and demands to be received immediately in the name of the king." - "Ask for him," the count answered. The servant left the living room and invited the Englishman. The courier entered, bowed slightly and said in English: "In the name of the British Crown, I have been ordered to give you an envelope from His Majesty. The envelope contains a letter from Edward VII and a check made out to you by Sir George Mansfield Smith-Cumming." - "Thank you, sit down, would you like some coffee, with cream or without?" Witte answered the courier in English. "Hello," said Matilda. "With cream, thank you," said the courier in English and sat down at the table. A servant came up to the table and poured coffee with cream into a cup for the guest. "We need to talk privately with the guest after coffee," said Witte to his wife. "Okay," said Matilda, finished her coffee, got up from the table and left the room with the servant. "How are things in London?" asked Witte in English, opening the envelope. "There was a meeting with the king in London and I was told to tell you that decisive action is expected of you, details in the letter. You can cash the check at the bank and spend part of the money on bribing the people named in the letter, and the rest of the money is yours," answered the courier. Witte took the check, saw the amount written out in his name - two hundred thousand pounds sterling, turned pale, read the letter, which said that he "needs to meet with the leader of the trade unions Gapon and convince him to bring all the workers to the tsar for negotiations on January 9, hand the tsar a petition with the demands of the labor movement and go peacefully with icons to convince the emperor that he is not in any danger, so that the tsar will come to negotiations and begin to talk to the workers personally. And after these events, regardless of the result, Witte must demand and promote the introduction of a constitutional monarchy in Russia, so that there is a new legislative body in which all parties and estates will be represented, a body that will pass all laws without the will and participation of the emperor. And Witte must promote the forces that want to overthrow the tsar from the throne." "Tell Sir George Mansfield Smith-Cumming that everything will be done," said Sergei Witte, finishing his coffee. The Englishman stood up and said: "I'll pass on everything, allow me to take my leave," and left.

The next morning, Witte opened the safe, which contained more than a million rubles, British pounds sterling and gold bars, took 200,000 rubles from it, put them in a bag, and went to Georgy Gapon. Gapon was not at home, the servant said that he should be looked for in the apartment building on the corner of Nevsky and Vladimirsky Prospects. Then Witte took a cab to the apartment building.

He entered and asked the doorman where Gapon was resting, the doorman led the minister into one of the halls on the first floor.

Gapon was sitting in a cassock on a sofa in the arms of two prostitutes, one of them was sitting on the side hugging him, and the other was on the priest's lap and drinking vodka from a glass with him as brothers. On the table stood a half-drunk decanter, snacks and a gramophone with a record playing. They were listening to Feodor Schalyapin. - "Hello Georgy," said the minister. - "Hello minister, how are you, your honor," answered the priest. - "You've settled in here not badly, I came here with one errand, we need to talk face to face," answered Witte. - "Girls, scram, come in an hour," said the priest, thrust a chervonets into each of their hands, they stood up, said "we'll come in an hour to continue" and left. - "I won't ask for your blessing, but we are paying you 200,000 rubles, they asked me to tell you from England that we need to stir up the workers to revolt on January 9, bring all the workers to the tsar for negotiations, hand the tsar a petition with the demands of the workers' movement and go peacefully with icons to convince the emperor that he is not in any danger, so that the tsar will come to the negotiations and start talking to the workers personally. Write a petition with demands on behalf of the trade union, set out everything the workers want, and when the tsar comes out to speak, let it be at the Palace on Palace Square, tell the tsar that the people demand the introduction of a constitution and abdication of the throne. And assign yourself the role of prime minister in the future cabinet," said the minister. "God be with you, the tsar will refuse such a thing, it is useless to demand it," answered Gapon. "And we do not care what he answers and what he wants in general, we are paying you for bringing at least a hundred thousand workers to the square and luring the tsar to negotiations, and what happens next is none of your business. If the tsar recognizes you as the new minister, it is better for you, if he does not, it does not matter," answered Witte and opened his bag, took out 200,000 rubles and put them on the table. "Okay, we will do everything, sir," answered the priest. - "Allow me to take my leave," said the minister and left. Meanwhile, Japanese intelligence, represented by its operative Colonel Akashi, began to look for ways to contact Russian oppositionists. From the very beginning of the war, Akashi met with the Finnish nationalist K. Zilliacus, and in March 1904, with Polish radicals. Akashi agreed with the Finns and Poles on cooperation and financing of their revolutionary activities. In 1904, Japanese intelligence established contact with Lenin and Plekhanov in Switzerland. Lenin showed keen interest in the Japanese proposals and received a large sum from them. On January 4, 1905, the Bolsheviks published the first issue of their newspaper "Forward" in Geneva with Japanese money and illegally imported it into Russia. In the autumn of 1904, Akashi financed a general opposition conference in Paris, which adopted a resolution on the overthrow of the autocracy. Minister Witte secretly met with Maximilian Ilyich Schweitzer (the leader of the Socialist Revolutionaries) in St. Petersburg in a safe house in October and gave him 50,000 rubles for the Socialist Revolutionaries to demand a constitution through their people at the congress of zemstvos, and also to bring militants under the guise of "self-defense units" to a demonstration planned for January 9 with the goal of killing the tsar when he came to negotiate with Gapon. The congress of zemstvos, which met in St. Petersburg from November 19 to 21, 1904, demanded the adoption of a constitution. Those who demanded a constitution were for the Socialist Revolutionaries, and the leader of the St. Petersburg Socialist Revolutionaries was paid by the traitor minister Witte. Japanese intelligence also transferred significant amounts of money for the militants' participation in the demonstration on January 9; the money was received by the Socialist Revolutionary leaders Gershuni, Asef, and Gots. Some of the funds also came from international Jewish organizations in New York. Under pressure from Japanese intelligence and large American capital, Azeff and Savinkov prepared an assassination attempt on the Minister of Justice Muravyov, Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, and Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich in 1904. No peaceful demonstrations were planned. Work was underway to deliver large quantities of weapons to Russia via Sweden and Finland. The Japanese intelligence officer Colonel Akashi actively joined this task. The Japanese General Staff did everything in its power to hurry

the revolutionaries. The former military attaché in St. Petersburg, who moved to Stockholm after the war began and headed the Japanese spy network in Western Europe, Colonel Matoire Akashi was in contact with Lenin and Plekhanov, who were in exile, in July 1904 through the terrorist Vera Zasulich. At his meetings with the haters of Russia, the Japanese spy insisted on organizing armed rebel detachments of up to 100,000 fighters. The revolutionaries received 750,000 yen through Akashi and his people to buy weapons. The agents of the Japanese resident did not lose out either. Thus, just one of them, Georgy Dekanozov, received 125,000 francs for travel expenses alone. One of Akashi's main agents was the Finnish revolutionary Connie Zilliacus. It was through him that Japanese money was distributed among the revolutionary parties. Among his papers, discovered by Russian intelligence, a document was found listing the amount of weapons transferred to the revolutionary parties.

Chapter 19. On the eve of the 1905 revolution.

Meanwhile, in St. Petersburg, a conflict broke out between workers' circles at the Putilov Plant, the largest enterprise in St. Petersburg. The foreman of the carriage shop from the Mutual Aid Society circle fired four workers, members of the Assembly. In response, the management of the Assembly threatened to declare a strike and make it general. The workers presented their demands to the plant management in a resolution - they demanded that the fired workers be rehired, and that working conditions and pay be improved. Putilov rejected the demands. His refusal set in motion a chain of events: on January 3, 1905, the Putilov Plant went on strike, and four more enterprises went on strike in the following two days. On January 5, it became clear to the workers that the plant management would not make concessions. Priest Georgy Gapon wrote a letter to the Emperor, in which he asked the tsar to convene a Constituent Assembly, which would include representatives of all classes and all estates, from the poorest peasants and workers to capitalists - factory owners, nobles and aristocracy. The main argument in the letter was that the ministers governing Russia and the factory owners do not take into account the rights and opinions of ordinary people. The letter also listed the following demands point by point: I. Measures against the ignorance and lack of rights of the Russian people. 1. Freedom and inviolability of the person, freedom of speech, press, freedom of assembly, Freedom of conscience in matters of religion. 2. General and compulsory public education at state expense. 3. Responsibility of ministers to the people and guarantees of legality of government. 4. Equality before the law for all without exception. 5. Immediate return of all those who suffered for their beliefs. II. Measures against the poverty of the people. 1. Abolition of indirect taxes and their replacement with direct progressive and income Tax. 2. Abolition of forced payments, cheap credit and gradual transfer of land to the people. III. Measures against the oppression of capital over labor. 1. Labor protection by law. 2. Freedom of consumer-productive and professional labor unions. 3. Eight-hour working day and regulation of overtime work. 4. Freedom of labor struggle against capital. 5. Participation of workers' representatives in the development of a bill on state insurance of workers. 6. Normal wages. The letter ended with the words: - "And if you do not command, if you do not respond to our prayer, we will die here, on this square in front of your palace. We have nowhere else to go and no reason to! We have only two paths: either to freedom and happiness, or to the grave. Indicate, Sovereign, which of them, we will follow it unquestioningly, even if it is the path to death. Let our life be a sacrifice for suffering Russia! We do not regret this sacrifice. We willingly make it!"

On January 5, Finance Minister Vladimir Kokontsev studied the workers' demands and described them in a report to the emperor as "illegal and unfeasible." On January 6-7, the Assembly began collecting signatures for a petition to the tsar from factories and plants. Georgy Gapon gave a speech at meetings of the organization in all districts of the capital. On the day of Epiphany, January 6, the Emperor with a brilliant retinue, preceded by the clergy and the metropolitan, left the Winter Palace and went to the gazebo built on the Neva, where the blessing of the waters took place. The solemn service began, and the usual gun salute was given from the Peter and Paul Fortress. During the salute, large grapeshot bullets unexpectedly fell - both on the pavilion and on the facade of the Winter

Palace. About 5 bullets were counted in the gazebo, one of which fell very close to the Emperor. Neither the Emperor nor anyone else from the retinue flinched... Only just before leaving did I and several other people from the retinue pick up one bullet from the pavilion floor. The religious procession returned to the Winter Palace, and, passing by the Nicholas Hall, we saw several broken window panes. One of the officials of the Petersburg district approached the Tsar and explained that a forgotten grapeshot shell had been found in the barrel of one of the guns. The Tsar silently walked on. The Tsar, without showing it, after a planned reception of foreign diplomats, left with his family for Tsarskoye Selo on January 6. However, despite this, the Petersburg Committee of the RSDLP spread information that the Tsar himself was calling the people to him so that they (the people) would help the Tsar in the fight against the "lords and gentry who do not allow the country to be governed", so the workers prepared for this day thoroughly. For them, it was a holiday. Many were going to take their children with them, and in addition, the "procession" promised to be led by a priest, who, by tradition, has always been revered in Russian society. On Friday, January 7, 382 enterprises went on strike. That same day, all the printing houses joined the strike - newspapers stopped coming out.

On January 8, 456 enterprises stopped — almost 113,000 workers were already on strike.

Chapter 20. Bloody Sunday.

By the evening of January 8, their number was about 150,000 people. For the first time, a strike engulfed the huge industrial center of the empire. All these crowds took part in the procession the next day. In order to give the demonstration a "popular" character, Gapon's henchmen ran into churches and forcibly pulled out church banners. A priest was needed at the head of the procession so that "revolutionary blood would be spilled," as the Socialist Revolutionaries said. On the eve of the workers' procession, on the evening of January 8, the Minister of Internal Affairs Pyotr Svyatopolk-Mirsky convened a meeting. Based on its results, the authorities came to two decisions: to arrest priest Georgy Gapon; not to allow the workers onto Palace Square and to set up outposts along the procession's route. The government authorized the troops to use force, although everyone believed that it would not come to that. In fact, power in the capital passed to the military. The police were unable to carry out the order. They found the priest in a working-class district and did not detain him in order to avoid a clash. Morning, January 9. The people take their places in the procession. The procession, the character of which was revolutionary from the very beginning. Gapon constantly shouted from the crowd: "If we are refused, then we no longer have a Tsar." Later, in an interview with the newspapers, he described his actions as follows: "I thought it would be good to give the whole demonstration a religious character. The procession moved to the powerful singing of "Save, O Lord, Your people," and when it came to the words "To our Emperor Nikolai Alexandrovich," the representatives of the socialist parties invariably replaced them with the words "save Georgy Apollonovich," while others repeated "death or freedom." The procession was a solid mass, and when the procession moved, the police not only did not hinder us, but walked with us without their hats..." Among all the others in the crowd, the journalist Alexander Matyushensky stood out, who had previously drafted the ill-fated petition to the Tsar together with Gapon. The journalist pushed women and children into the massacre in order to more reliably achieve his goal. And he thought this way: "the destruction of adult men will be forgiven, but women, mothers with babies at their breasts - never! So, let them go, I thought to myself, let them perish and with them perish the only symbol that has shackled Russia with the shackles of slavery, torment and groans." Each column of workers had its own representative of the revolutionary organization (there were 11 in total). The militant organization of the Socialist Revolutionaries prepared weapons. Representatives of the RSDLP prepared agitators and standard-bearers. With each agitator there was a defender (in fact, an armed bandit). Among the delegation of workers there were to be armed militants.

If the Tsar had come out to the people, he would have been simply killed. The first meeting of workers with the troops took place at 12 o'clock in the afternoon near the Narva Gate. 3,000 workers were moving along the Peterhof Highway to the Triumphal Gate, carrying banners and portraits of

the Tsar. They were met by police officers who tried to persuade them not to go to the city center, as they could create a dangerous situation. But all the admonitions did not lead to any result. Then a more powerful squadron of the Horse Grenadier Regiment took up the matter, but at that moment Lieutenant Zholtkevich was seriously wounded by a shot from the crowd, and the local police officer was killed. The crowd began to disperse, shots from it were heard more and more often. The platoon non-commissioned officer was struck in the head with a cross. The first victims were not workers, but soldiers. Major General Samghin reported: "At about 1 o'clock in the afternoon, the crowd on the 4th Line, having increased significantly in number, began to set up barbed wire, build barricades and throw out red flags. The companies moved forward. During the movement of the companies, bricks and stones were thrown from house No. 35 along the 4th Line, as well as from the house under construction opposite it, and shots were fired. On Maly Prospekt, the crowd rallied and began to shoot. Then one half-company of the 89th Belomorsky Infantry Regiment fired 3 volleys. During these actions, one student was arrested for addressing the soldiers with a defiant speech, and a loaded revolver was found on him. During the actions of the troops on Vasilievsky Island, the troops detained 163 people for robbery and armed resistance." The Emperor's standard was hung on the Winter Palace so that the lower ranks of the police and the Cossacks would think that they were guarding the Tsar, but the Tsar had long been safe in the Alexander Palace in Tsarskoye Selo, which only the highest ranks of the police and military knew about. The location of the Emperor was a state secret, since the Tsar was afraid of militants, social democrats and social revolutionaries. Columns, including revolutionary terrorists, went out to Palace Square. If the Emperor had gone out to meet them... he would have received a bullet. Then - the capture of the Winter Palace and the establishment of anarchy in the country, and this despite the fact that there was a war with Japan. But the police and Cossacks dispersed everyone. After the dispersal of the procession at the Narvskaya Zastava, the priest Gapon was led away from the square by a group of workers and the Socialist Revolutionary P. M. Rutenberg. In the courtyard, they cut his hair and dressed him in civilian clothes, and then hid him in Maxim Gorky's apartment.

According to eyewitnesses, Gapon was shocked by the shooting of the demonstration. He sat, staring at one point, nervously clenching his fist and repeating: "I swear... I swear..." Having come to his senses, he asked for paper and wrote a message to the workers. The message said: "Comrade Russian workers! We no longer have a tsar. A river of blood has flowed between him and the Russian people today. It is time for Russian workers to begin the struggle for people's freedom without him. I bless you for today. Tomorrow I will be among you," and he left for abroad. On "Bloody Sunday," as it was later called by the people, slightly less than 1,000 people were killed and up to 2,000 were wounded.

The Emperor immediately responded to the events in St. Petersburg. Ministers Svyatopolk-Mirsky and Muravyov were dismissed. Trepov was appointed the new governor-general, who calmed the capital that same day. Upon arrival from Tsarskoye Selo on January 19, the emperor met with a deputation of St. Petersburg workers. He addressed the working delegation with the following speech: "The deplorable events with the sad but inevitable consequences of the troubles occurred because you allowed yourself to be misled and deceived by traitors and enemies of our Motherland. I know that the life of a worker is not easy. A lot needs to be improved and streamlined."

After that, he returned to Tsarskoye Selo, and since then he has never spent the night in the Winter Palace, fearing militants and revolutionaries who would find it easier to kill him in the center of St. Petersburg than in Tsarskoye Selo, Pavlovsk, Peterhof or Gatchina, where the tsar now preferred to live. The tsar gave the people the right to freedom of assembly and mutual assistance, the opportunity to organize leisure and self-education. Libraries and free lecture halls were organized at the offices of the "Assembly". The leadership of the "Assembly" successfully defended the rights of its members, canceled illegal fines and dismissal decisions. And the tsar categorically rejected the

introduction of the constitution, but introduced the First State Duma in 1905, having the right to veto the laws it passed, and the tsar had the right to dissolve the State Duma in cases of its disobedience.

Chapter 21. The murder of Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich.

In early January 1905, His Imperial Highness Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, popularly known as Prince Khodynsky, a member of the State Council, resigned as Governor-General of Moscow, but remained at the head of the district's troops, becoming Commander-in-chief of the Moscow Military District. To do this, the prince traveled to Tsarskoye Selo, met with the emperor, who appointed him Commander-in-Chief of Moscow, and received from Nicholas a breast portrait of Alexander III, which he has worn on his chest ever since.

And he returned to Moscow. He lived in Moscow with his wife, Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna. On February 3, they had dinner together at home and talked. There was Tsarevich champagne on the table, Fireman's cutlets with baked potatoes, horseradish piglet, sturgeon caviar with pancakes, ice cream, chocolate, grapes and sweets. There was a samovar with tea in the center of the table. Sergei told his wife worriedly: "There is a revolutionary committee in St. Petersburg, Vladimir Filipov, the Head of the St. Petersburg Detective Police, told me about this. He said that riots were brewing in both capitals, and there could be a revolution. And so it happened on January 9, and it was with difficulty suppressed by the police and the military. But we must expect a continuation of the riot in Moscow." - "It's good that you are no longer the governor-general, you will no longer have to be responsible for the situation in Moscow," said his wife. Let's drink champagne to the Emperor, Sergei proposed a toast. The servant serving at the table opened a bottle, poured champagne into their glasses and moved aside, standing at a distance. They raised their glasses, clinked them together, and took a sip. The wife told her husband: "Everyone has their own children, but we don't have our own and we won't have any, your nephews are wonderful children whom we are raising, but I didn't give birth to them. I'm going to die an old maid without knowing what the joys of love and motherhood are.... I went to the church of the Ordination of the Sacrament in the afternoon, I prayed for your soul."

"Thank you for praying for me. You have made a vow of chastity to God, so follow it," the prince replied to the princess. - "In Kazan, I talked with Elder Grigory Rasputin. He blessed me. He wanted to raise money for the construction of a church in his village in the Tobolsk province and went to St. Petersburg for this. As soon as I meet him, I'm thinking of donating 200 rubles to him, I'll do it as soon as I go to St. Petersburg and ask him to pray for you to leave your sin," she continued. "Let's not talk about it," Sergei said, finishing his glass of champagne. Elizabeth also finished her champagne and had a bite of grapes. Then they had dinner in silence, at the end of the dinner they drank tea, wished each other good night, and went to bed each in their own rooms, they always slept separately from each other. Before going to bed, the princess prayed for a long time at the icon of the Kazan Mother of God, which hung in her bedroom in the corner. The next day, on February 4, at about 3 p.m., the Grand Duke drove off in a carriage from the Nicholas Palace in the Kremlin; upon approaching the Nikolskaya Tower, he was torn apart by an "infernal car" thrown by a member of the "Militant Organization of the Socialist Revolutionary Party" Ivan Kalyaev, who was detained by the police on the spot. (two days before, on February 2, Ivan refused to throw a bomb at the carriage, seeing that his wife and young nephews were sitting next to the Grand Duke); he died immediately, the coachman was fatally wounded, the carriage was blown apart. The Grand Duke's body was dismembered by the explosion. The wounded driver, Andrey Rudinkin, was taken to the Yauz hospital, where he died shortly afterwards. Elizabeth was informed of her husband's death by a policeman and fainted when he told her this. The Grand Duke was buried with great honors, and a memorial service was held on February 10, 1905, in the Alekseevskaya Church of the Chudov Monastery. His remains were soon interred in a shrine built under the Alekseevskaya Church. His remains were soon interred in a shrine built under the Alekseevskaya Church. On February 7, Grand Duchess Elizabeth visited her husband's murderer, terrorist Kalyaev, in prison and forgave him on her

husband's behalf. "She, who is forgiving by nature, felt the need to say a word of comfort to Kalyaev, who had so inhumanely taken her husband and friend away from her." After learning that Kalyaev was a believer, she presented him with the Gospel and a small icon, calling him to repentance. She even asked the emperor to pardon the murderer. "On April 23, at noon, a prosecutor appeared in Kalyaev's cell and told Ivan Kalyaev that his execution was scheduled for 2 o'clock. Not a single muscle twitched on the convict's face. The prosecutor submitted to him for signature a petition for pardon addressed to Nicholas II. Kalyaev resolutely refused this and asked to be given tea and food. The prosecutor left, but re-entered 8 times and begged Kalyaev to sign the petition in the "highest name." The convict categorically refused each time. "He asked the confessor who came to him to leave, saying that he had his own religion, an internal one, that his conscience was calm, that he was convinced that he had done nothing wrong. Kalyaev came out of the cell so calmly, with such confidence, as if he were going for a walk. The authorities of the Schlisselburg fortress have never seen such iron calm, in which, however, many victims have already died. Ivan Kalyaev was executed by hanging.

After her husband's murder, Elizabeth Feodorovna left the secular life and founded the Martha and Mary Monastery, but she did not become a nun herself, but did a lot of charity work. The tsar attended the funeral service in Moscow and then went back to St. Petersburg. The murder of Grand Duke Sergei shocked conservative monarchical circles of society, but among revolutionaries and opposition intellectuals, the news was greeted with satisfaction, as evidenced by a cynical joke of the time: "Finally, the Grand Duke had to think about it!" "Blood causes blood,— wrote the French newspaper *Gil Belge*».

Chapter 22. The spiritual seance of Doctor Papus.

Nicholas II thought a lot about what his late father would do in his place. On all sides, the emperor was demanded to introduce a constitution in Russia, a parliament with deputies - the State Duma, freedom of assembly and concessions for workers, but there were also sensible voices of supporters of absolute monarchy. Nikolai Alexandrovich often dreamed of his father, who did not say anything in his dreams, but looked his son straight in the eyes and was silent, as if afraid to say something. And Nikolai remembered that Papus and Nizier Philip were successfully engaged in spiritualism, and the tsar decided to summon the spirit of Alexander III and invited the magician Papus to come to Russia once more. In October 1905, Mason Mage Papus arrived in St. Petersburg, Moscow was terrorized by the uprising, and some mysterious organization announced a general railway strike. The magician was immediately invited to Tsarskoye Tselo. After a brief conversation with the tsar and tsarina, the next day he held a solemn ceremony to summon the spirits of the deceased in the Alexander Palace in the emperor's office. The electric light was turned off and candles were lit. It was half past eleven at night. Apart from the tsar and the tsarina, there was only one person present at this secret liturgy: the emperor's young adjutant, Captain Mandrygka, who later became a major general and governor of Tiflis. There was a Ouija board on the table. Nikolai, Alexandra Feodorovna and Papus put their hands on a triangular pointer called a tablet. The tablet is lying on the board itself, on which the words "yes" and "no" are written in the upper corners, the letters of the alphabet are in the center, and the phrase "Goodbye" is at the bottom. By the intense concentration of his will, by the amazing exaltation of his fluid dynamism, Papus succeeded in evoking the spirit of the most pious Tsar Alexander III; the unmistakable signs testified to the presence of an invisible shadow. Despite the horror that gripped his heart, Nicholas II asked his father whether he should or should not fight the liberal trends that threatened to captivate Russia. The spirit responded by moving the tablet across the board, which the magician interpreted as follows: "that Nicholas should suppress all revolutionary actions," then the table shook, and the spirit of Alexander III entered Papus and the magician said in Alexander III's voice: "You must, by all means, suppress the incipient revolution; but it will still be revived, and it will be all the stronger, the more severe the repression must be now. Whatever happens, cheer up, my son. Don't stop fighting." After that, the spirit of Emperor Alexander III left the spiritualist's body and the table stopped shaking. The astonished tsar and tsarina were still

puzzling over this ominous prediction when Papus declared that his mental strength gave him the opportunity to prevent the predicted catastrophe, but that his spell would cease as soon as he himself disappeared "from the physical plane." Then he solemnly performed the incantation ritual. The Tsar thanked the Teacher (as he called him) for the session, and then adjutant Mandrygka turned on the light in the office. The conversation continued on the topic of Christianity in general, the advent of the last times, the coming of the Antichrist and the ideas of Martinism. The teacher proposed to establish a Martinist lodge in Russia, and the tsar replied that he would think about it. Then we drank port wine with snacks and went our separate ways.

Chapter 23. The end of the war.

And the Russian squadron under the command of Vice-Admiral Rozhdestvensky was destroyed in the area of Tsushima Island in the Korean Strait on May 15, 1905.

Russia lost the war and concluded the unfavorable Portsmouth Peace Treaty on August 23, 1905 in the city of Portsmouth in the North American States. According to the Treaty, the treaty between Russia and China, which provided for a military alliance of Russia and China against Japan, was terminated, as well as the termination of the Russo-Chinese Convention of 1898 on the lease of the Liaodong Peninsula, including Port Arthur, and the payment of a large compensation to Japan (the Tsar did not fulfill the last point, later calling it impudence on the part of Japan).

Rasputin horrified everyone with his prediction of the death of the 2nd Russian squadron, and the impressionable Montenegrin princesses Militsa and Stana, who had already met Rasputin in Kyiv on a pilgrimage to the courtyard of the Mikhailovsky Monastery, when they arrived at the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, saw in him even then a man with a spiritual gift.

Now in Petersburg, the princesses invited Rasputin to dinner at their Znamenka estate near Peterhof. There was dinner and conversations on spiritual topics.

They talked about Rasputin's prediction, the princesses remembered Master Philippe and drank to his repose, they recently learned of his recent death on August 5, drank a lot of French wines, which Rasputin refused. Rasputin said to the princesses:

- "Let's drink vodka for the repose of Philip" and he drank it together with the princesses. He drank two decanters of vodka, and then some Crimean port wine - Grigory drank all of this, and the ladies drank two bottles of Bordeaux, refusing vodka.

The next day they arrived at the Sergeyevka estate, located nearby, and continued to communicate there.

The submarine "Yersh" was stationed near the Lower Palace of Peterhof, where the royal family lived in 1905. Nicholas II himself wrote about this submarine in his diary on October 11, 1905: We visited the submarine "Yersh," which has been stationed in front of our windows for the past five months. The sea was like a mirror. After tea, I received Bulygin. In the evening, I took Alix to Sonya Orbeliani's house and returned home. I spent the evening reading. A week later, two fast German destroyers approached Peterhof. Nicholas II noted in his diary: "The naval agent Gintze arrived with two German destroyers from Memel, carrying the embassy's mail." The Tsar received the destroyer commanders at the Peterhof Palace. During the dinner, His Majesty asked them, "Will the Kaiser be able to receive us if we are forced to flee a possible revolution?" "Undoubtedly, the German side will provide you and your family with a warm welcome and support," the destroyer commander replied. "We can take our submarine to Tallinn, where you will meet us."

Chapter 24. Threads of conspiracy. Grand Duchesses Stanitsa and Militsa.

Two days later, Grand Duchess Stanitsa and Grand Duchess Militsa escorted Rasputin from the Sergeyevka estate after a long dinner, having received his blessing and donated money to him for the construction of a church in his native village of Pokrovskoe. After which an Englishman, sent by British intelligence, came to their estate under the guise of a business visit. A servant reported to Militsa and Stanitsa when they were sitting in the living room: "A gentleman has come from the King of Great Britain, Sir Michael Gere." "Invite him," Militsa answered. A man of medium

height, dressed in the latest fashion, entered and, bowing slightly to the ladies, began a conversation in English: "Hello, Your Excellencies, I am sent by His Majesty." "Sit down, what will you drink?" asked Stanitsa (the conversation continued in English). – "Scotch whiskey," the Englishman answered and sat down on the sofa opposite the coffee table. The princesses were sitting opposite him on chairs. "Bring whiskey," Stanitsa said to the servant who had been standing in the doorway all this time. The servant went for whiskey and returned with a bottle of "Old Highland" and a shot glass. Then he put the bottle on the table and poured whiskey into the shot glass and left. Sir Gere took a sip of whiskey and began: "There was a meeting in the lodge at which it was decided that YOU should somehow convince (without reference to England) the Empress that the Tsar should not prevent the businessman Emmanuel Nobel from buying up oil wells in Azerbaijan; let her say that he is her friend in spiritual interests and is a member of a secret society, and that the policy pursued by Russia – to achieve a state monopoly on oil – interferes with his business. And you also need to gain the trust of Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich (the time will come and he will replace Nikolai), you need to make friends with Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, also with Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich and you need to meet with Prince Felix Yusupov Jr. and give him a letter from his friend from college at Oxford University, Samuel Hoare. Having said this, he pulled out an envelope sealed with wax and handed it to Stanitsa. She took the envelope and asked: "And what if Nikolai is soon toppled from the throne and there will be Mikhail?" - "We are working on this and a lot depends on you, but do not tell Mikhail anything about his role right away, just gain his trust and tell him that the king will be glad to meet him in London unofficially for a confidential conversation this year," the Englishman finished his speech, finishing his glass of whiskey. - "Okay, we are at His Majesty's service, tell him that we will do everything," said Stanitsa. Sir Richard stood up, saying, "I will convey everything, allow me to take my leave," and left.

Chapter 25. Lenin and Gapon.

After the Bloody Sunday, Father Gapon initially left the capital, and soon crossed the border to Switzerland. In February, Gapon arrived in Geneva, where he took part in an inter-party conference and even temporarily joined the Socialist Revolutionary Party. The Geneva "inter-party conference" took place in April 1905. Representatives of 11 revolutionary parties of Russia gathered there. The Bolsheviks did not participate in this conference; they held their "III Congress of the RSDLP(b)" in London. After the II Congress of the "RSDLP", Ulyanov-Lenin ceased his activity in the Central Organ of the newspaper "Iskra", and left it, since he could no longer freely dispose of the party's publishing fund. Gapon was elected chairman of the conference, and Nikolai Annensky, who was still an Socialist Revolutionary, was elected secretary. Lenin created his own faction of supporters in the "RSDLP" back in 1904. Meanwhile, in Russia, on March 10, 1905, the Governing Synod, on the recommendation of Metropolitan Anthony (Vadkovsky) on March 4, defrocked Georgy Gapon and expelled him from the clergy. Gapon became a secular person. In Geneva, Gapon met Lenin. The meeting took place "tete-a-tete" in a cafe. Lenin was noticeably nervous. There was Bavarian beer in mugs on the table, Lenin drank a mug with Gapon to their acquaintance and they became friends, and Gapon "lent" him "money for the revolution." Gapon always had money and gave it out "on credit" in bundles, without counting, at the first request. Georgy Gapon personally led the life of an ascetic. Ulyanov-Lenin, in a conversation with Georgy Gapon, warmly supported the idea of unification and promised Gapon to return the "borrowed" money in the near future and to speak out with the "idea of unification" at the upcoming congress of the "RSDLP". Following the meeting, Ulyanov-Lenin wrote an article "On a Combat Agreement for an Uprising", in which he cited the text of Gapon's "letter-appeal" and expressed support for him. Speaking at a meeting of 24 of his supporters and friends in the spring of 1905 in London, which was later renamed the III Congress of the "RSDLP", Bolsheviks, Lenin characterized Gapon as "a man who is unconditionally devoted to the revolution, proactive and intelligent, although, unfortunately, without a consistent revolutionary worldview", caring too much about the lives of the workers. 21 people from those who arrived were declared delegates

from various Russian committees of the "RSDLP", and Ulyanov-Lenin was "registered" as a delegate with a mandate from the Odessa Committee. The Geneva "inter-party conference" took place in April 1905. Representatives of 11 revolutionary parties of Russia came to it. The Bolsheviks did not participate in this conference, they gathered their "III Congress of the RSDLP(b)" in London. Georgy Gapon was elected chairman of the "Conference", and Nikolai Annensky, a former Socialist Revolutionary, was elected secretary.

Despite the absence of the Bolshevik Social Democrats at the Conference, it yielded valuable practical results. As a result of the Conference, two declarations were adopted, which proclaimed the common goals of the assembled parties: an "armed uprising," the convocation of a "Constituent Assembly," the proclamation of a "Democratic Republic," and the "Socialization of the Land." At the Conference, an agreement was reached to create a "United Combat Committee," which was to lead the preparations for the uprising. In addition to Gapon himself, the committee included Breshko-Breshkovskaya and Prince Khilkov. The purpose of the "Combat Committee" was to increase the moral strength of the revolution, create faith in the unity of revolutionary forces, and facilitate "combat agreements" between parties within Russia. Before that, on the initiative of Ulyanov-Lenin, in 1904, the All-Russian Bolshevik Party Center, the "Bureau of Majority Committees" (BKB), was created to convene the III Congress of the "RSDLP" of the Bolsheviks. This was announced for the legal cover of the activities of the "Combat Center", which began to prepare for the implementation of "expropriations", "ex", as Ulyanov-Lenin called robberies and armed attacks on state banks and money depositories. Other currents of revolutionaries, socialist revolutionaries, "SRs" and anarchists, who preferred to rob manufacturers, merchants, shopkeepers, did not climb into the state treasury, were also engaged in obtaining money, robberies, for party activities and the life of "professional" revolutionaries.

Chapter 26. Traitors and informers (secret employees of the Secret Police).

Meanwhile, Japanese military intelligence sponsored the transportation of weapons for Russian revolutionaries on the steamship John Grafton. On August 26, 1905, the steamship John Grafton, carrying weapons for the Socialist Revolutionaries, purchased by the international group of Connie Zilliacus, Akashi Motojiri and priest Georgy Gapon, who wanted the House of Romanov to die soon, ran aground on a rocky shoal 22 kilometers from the Finnish island. The crew was unable to transport the weapons to the island and blew up the ship. The militant organization of the Socialist Revolutionaries was led by the Okhranka (Russian Secret Police Service) gent provocateur Yevno Azef, who received a huge reward from the Okhranka for the fact that the steamship would not reach Russia and would sink. Yevno gave part of the reward to the captain of the ship, and he ran it aground.

In April 1906, the IV Congress of the RSDLP in Stockholm rejected "expropriations" as a form of obtaining money and resolved: "... not to seize the capital of the State Bank, the treasury and other government institutions." Lenin did not agree with the resolution. And in May, by a majority vote, the ban on "expropriations" was adopted. One of the active militants was Joseph Dzhugashvili, acting under the pseudonym Koba, a former seminarian expelled from the seminary along with Anastas Mikoyan. Koba organized successful raids on banks in order to replenish the party coffers.

After being arrested in 1906, Joseph was recruited by the head of the Tiflis Gendarmerie Department and agreed to cooperate with the Okhrana as an agent of the Koba police. He provided valuable intelligence about his comrades, leading to arrests and the sentencing of some of them to hard labor in Siberia. Later, in 1908, Koba provided information to the head of the Baku Security Department, and then, upon his arrival in St. Petersburg, he became an agent of the St. Petersburg Security Department with a high salary, allowing him to live comfortably in the capital.

Isidor Ramishvili, a Menshevik, was the secretary of the Batumi Committee of the RSDLP. In 1903, he publicly accused Joseph Dzhugashvili of being a secret agent of the Okhrana (the Tsarist secret police), but he was unable to prove it. In 1905, Joseph returned to Batumi from Stockholm, where he had attended the first conference of the RSDLP alongside Lenin.

Ramishvili, who was a former member of the first State Duma from the Kutaisi province, met with Dzhugashvili in an outdoor cafe. They had a conversation over a glass of Kindzmarauli wine:

"You can't blame me for anything after Stockholm, where you were and saw that Lenin and all the comrades consider me the best in the Caucasus," Joseph said to Isidor in Georgian, sipping his wine.

"I saw you in 1903 at the Kutaisi Gendarmerie Department, where you shook hands with the police chief as if he were your friend," Ramishvili replied.

They broke you there!"

"That's a lie, I stood my ground despite all the torture and hardship. I didn't shake hands with the police chief, you're lying. He interrogated me," Jukashvili replied sharply.

"It was me who was interrogated in 1903, but I didn't tell them anything, just like you were expelled from the Tiflis Theological Seminary. For your involvement with your friend Anastas Mikoyan. "You should be expelled from the party and tried for treason, Judas!" exclaimed Isidore.

"You're a gossip and a fool, no one will listen to you," said Joseph, throwing a glass of wine in Isidore's face, and then stood up and left. Isidore shouted after him, "Secret agent!".

Koba was also involved in expropriations, looting money for the party coffers for the needs of the RSDLP. He organized a robbery (in the language of the RSDLP members, "expropriation" or ex), committed on June 13, 1907, on Tbilisi's Erivan Square, which went down in history as one of the most daring and major crimes of the early twentieth century. The attackers, who killed three people who were accompanying the armored car and injured 50 others, escaped with 250,000 rubles. Max (Meer) Wallach (Litvinov), Joseph Stalin, and Simon Ter-Petrosyan (Kamo), a resident of Tbilisi, were tasked by Vladimir Lenin, who was in Berlin at the time, with preparing the robbery. The bombs were made by Leonid Krasin, the future People's Commissar for Foreign Trade of the USSR.

The robbers had accomplices in the Tiflis branch of the State Bank, who informed them about the time and place of the collectors' passage, as well as the amount of money they were carrying. Kamo provided practical guidance in place of Koba. Together with him, Tbilisi criminals Eliso Lomidze, Datiko Chiabrishvili, Bochua Kupriashvili, Stepko Intskirveli, Vano Kalandadze, as well as ladies – Anneta Sulakvelidze and Patia Goldava, took part in the attack on the collectors. These same names were mentioned in the memoirs of Kamo's widow, Sofia Medvedeva-Ter-Petrosyan. The girls tracked the route of the *инкассаторов'* phaeton, warned their accomplices, and helped them escape in the labyrinthine streets of Tbilisi after the attack. The "expropriators" threw several bombs (according to various sources, eight, as stated by the guard Zhilyayev during the interrogation) at the phaeton. Revolvers were also used in the attack. Kamo, dressed in an officer's uniform, caught up with the horses that had carried the phaeton after the first explosion and, using a revolver, seized two bags of money, after which the attackers fled, and none of them were detained. Koba was an informant for the Tsarist secret police and was supposed to inform the police department about the planned attack. However, he did not do so, as he had taken most of the stolen money for himself, and little reached the party's coffers. During the robbery, Koba stood in the doorway of the house, smoking and observing the bloody scene as one of the organizers. The revolutionaries managed to transfer some of the stolen funds abroad, specifically to Paris and Munich, where they attempted to exchange them for local currency. The French and German police arrested several couriers carrying large amounts of money, and these arrests were quickly linked to the "ex" incident in Tiflis. In the autumn of the same year, 1907, Ter-Petrosyan was arrested in Berlin, and the local police found weapons, explosives, and revolutionary literature in his apartment. He feigned insanity in the Moabit prison and was extradited to Russia. Three years later, he escaped from a psychiatric hospital in Tiflis and managed to cross the border. In Paris, he met with Lenin. Upon his return to Russia, he attempted to organize another party "ex" on the Korjok Highway, but the attack failed and most of the gang members fled.

Kamo was arrested again and sentenced to hanging for each of the four crimes he was accused of. However, the militant was granted an amnesty on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty, and his death sentence was commuted to 20 years of hard labor.

Chapter 27. Mr. Parvus.

Alexander Parvus met Leon Trotsky (Bronstein) in January 1905 and handed over the money he had received from the German government to increase the circulation of "Iskra" and "Russkaya Gazeta".

The meeting took place in Munich, in Parvus's house. Parvus's house was furnished with expensive furniture. The walls were covered with impressionist paintings by Oscar Claude Monet, Edouard Manet and other famous artists. Nothing reminded one of the house of a "fighter against imperialism", rather this house looked like an aristocrat's mansion.

- "Hello, Lyova," Parvus said to Trotsky when he entered his house.

- "Hello, Israel Lazarevich," Trotsky replied and extended his hand, which Parvus shook firmly.

- "Come into the living room to have dinner," the host of the house continued. The table was already set with German sausages, Bavarian beer, pork stew with potatoes and vegetables. Parvus first poured himself some beer, then his friend, and said a toast: "Let's drink to the world revolution!"

"Let's drink," Trotsky replied. They drank beer, ate, and then another toast from Trotsky. "To the overthrow of autocracy in Russia!" Trotsky said and clinked glasses with Parvus, after which they both drank and began to discuss business.

- "Kaiser Wilhelm and the German Foreign Ministry are interested in weakening Russia and have allocated funds for the revolution in Russia and for the collapse of the ruble, which will contribute to this. We must both go to St. Petersburg and create a Council of Workers' Deputies there, which will take power into its own hands after January 9 and support the participants of January 9 and their family members. We also need to increase the circulation of the Iskra and Russkaya Gazeta newspapers.

- "I no longer collaborate with Iskra, Lenin decides everything there," said Trotsky, "but I write articles in Russkaya Gazeta and can place your program there."

- "We will decide about Lenin and Iskra later, and in "Russkaya Gazeta" we will need to print an economic manifesto. And we will need another new newspaper, in which we will also pay for a large print run," answered Parvus.

- "We need to unite both parts of the RSDLP, we have a common cause of revolution. We need a revolution first in Russia with the coming to power of the RSDLP, and then throughout the world," continued Trotsky.

- "We need to finally agree with you on the economic manifesto now, namely: we need to print in large print runs that the tsarist government is spending all its money on the army and navy, and at the same time lost the Russo-Japanese War. It also spends money to support industrialists, bankers and aristocrats, and the interests of the people are not taken into account. The country has bad roads, few new roads are being built, few new schools are being opened, and the ruble exchange rate in these conditions will fall in the near future. Therefore, we can call on the people to take all their savings

from the banks, demand payment in gold money or gold, and not take paper money. This in turn will weaken the banking sector and the banks will have to look for where to get money abroad at interest, and Germany will demand payment on all loans and credits. Russian banks have credit obligations to German banks, and I can assure you that there will be inflation in Russia and possibly chaos," Parvus concluded his speech.

- "I fully support," Trotsky replied. - "We are going to Petersburg, and how much money did the Kaiser allocate to us?" Lev Davidovich asked.

- "I have here bills of exchange for the Sibirsky Bank for the required amount, written out in marks. They will exchange it for rubles, and I will give it to you in rubles, in Petersburg."

"Excellent," Trotsky replied, got up from the table and said: "If everything is decided, I will go make false passports to enter Russia," and, shaking hands with Parvus, left.

"Goodbye, friend," Parvus said to Trotsky as he left the house and shook his hand.

The next day, Parvus went to meet Lenin in Geneva.

In Geneva, the meeting took place in an apartment rented by Lenin. Parvus outlined a scheme according to which the revolution could not take place without financing from Germany. Lenin agreed, squinted and asked: - "Will you be able to give Trotsky enough money in Petersburg to continue the cause of the revolution after the unsuccessful uprising of January 9?"

- "Yes, enough. I will go to Petersburg myself on a false passport and give Trotsky and the Socialist Revolutionary militants 800 thousand rubles. The Kaiser allocated it for the cause of the revolution, I have bills with me for the Siberian Bank. And from you, I want you to increase the circulation of Iskra and continue your agitation there. Take 30 thousand German marks, and you can spend some of it on your expenses," answered Parvus, and took a wad of bills from his bag and put them on the table in front of Lenin.

"Thank you, I will not write a receipt," answered Lenin.

There was a samovar and cups of tea with saucers on the table. Sandwiches with cheese and ham lay on a plate. The comrades drank tea with sandwiches. Parvus stood up, shook Lenin's hand, and said:

- "Goodbye, Comrade Lenin."

- "Goodbye," answered Lenin, and Parvus left.

In October 1905, with the beginning of the All-Russian strike, Parvus arrived in St. Petersburg. Together with Trotsky, Parvus created the St. Petersburg Council of Workers' Deputies and headed the Executive Committee. Then Alexander Parvus brought money not only to Trotsky, but also to the editor of the "Russian newspaper", which continued agitation and printed articles that, according to Germany's plans, influenced the collapse of the ruble exchange rate. Together with the Mensheviks and Trotsky, he organized the printing of the newspaper "Beginning". Parvus spoke at strikes, at factories and was popular. Parvus paid workers for every day they missed work. Each worker received more money from the party funds than if he had gone to work, and additionally for participating in demonstrations. The worker who shouted slogans at the demonstration received the most. The

militants separately received their money and weapons, which they used against the police during the demonstration. Parvus's finest hour was the publication of his "Financial Manifesto", which dealt with corruption in the government, its insolvency and false balance sheets. On behalf of the Workers' Council, Parvus declared that "the Russian people will not pay the debts on all those loans that the tsarist government concluded when it was clearly and openly waging war on its own people."

After which Parvus was arrested and spent some time in the Peter and Paul Fortress, paying for expensive suits and silk ties for himself from there. K. Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg came to visit him. Trotsky was also arrested.

At the trial in the autumn of 1906, he was tried along with other members of the Executive Committee. Trotsky received a life sentence with settlement in Siberia with the deprivation of all rights, and Parvus only three years with serving in the Turukhansk region. But both Parvus and Trotsky escaped on their way to exile, after which Parvus spent a long time in Europe and did not return to Russia.

Chapter 28. The Sveaborg Uprising.

In the summer of 1906, the garrison of the Sveaborg naval fortress near Helsinki, dissatisfied with their financial situation and the commandant's "tightening of the screws," rebelled. The rebels fought government troops with the support of the Finnish Red Guards for three days. "The city at that time presented an unprecedented spectacle. Rarely a Finnish citizen was sitting at home. Everyone poured out into the streets. The workers were especially excited. They were called to a general strike. Proclamations calling for a strike were pasted on the walls and poles," which were hung around the city by the Bolshevik activist Meer Trilisser and his comrades. The revolutionary unrest affected not only the capital of the Grand Duchy of Finland. The garrison of Sveaborg, a fortress located near Helsingfors, also revolted. The sailors fought government troops for several days, but were defeated. The Sveaborg fortress was founded in the 18th century by the Swedes, who owned the territory of Finland at the time. The fortification on the coast of the Gulf of Finland, near the port of Helsingfors, was advanced for its time.

It was built in the hope of a successful defense against Russia, with which the Scandinavians fought three times throughout the 18th century. In 1808, during the next and last Russo-Swedish War, the fortress passed to the Russians and became Russia's defensive base in the Baltic. The fortress, together with Finland, came into the possession of St. Petersburg. Sveaborg became an important link in the defense system of the capital of the empire from the sea. In October 1905, a political strike began in Helsinki. Red Guard units led by the Social Democrat Johan Kock began to appear on the streets. They actively interacted with Russian revolutionaries, carried out sabotage, blew up railways, and participated in clashes with the police. Largely due to their activities, Finland, which had been suffering from forced Russification for several years, received some political concessions. In October 1905, discontent spread to the Sveaborg garrison. Some lower ranks, whose term of service was coming to an end, expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that they were not allowed to go home. In addition, there were complaints about the quality of food and uniforms. The commandant of Sveaborg, Nestor Kaigorodov, managed to calm the conflict by persuasion, promising to fulfill (under some pressure from other officers) the material demands of his subordinates. However, the officer's initiative was not duly appreciated in St. Petersburg. The commandant was removed from his post, an investigative commission was sent to the fortress, which decided to punish some officers. A new commander, Vladimir Laiming, was appointed to Sveaborg, who strengthened control over the mood of the garrison. This control most often consisted of frequent searches, which, of course, could not lead to the soldiers' calm. The Bolsheviks knew about the events taking place in Sveaborg. One of the officers, a Socialist Revolutionary captain who had joined the Socialist Revolutionary Party from the camp of Lenin's supporters, distributed the newspaper "Bulletin of the Barracks" among

the soldiers, which he himself edited. In addition to him, the agitation of the lower ranks was carried out by second lieutenants Arkady Yemelyanov and Yevgeny Kokhansky, who had been transferred to Sveaborg in the summer of 1905. The gendarmes were well aware of what was happening: "In Helsingfors, almost daily Russian-Finnish rallies of a revolutionary nature are held.

Social democratic agitation is successful not only among the lower ranks, but also among the officers." The Bolsheviks began to develop a plan for an uprising in July 1906. The revolutionaries formed a military and combat center that united both Russian and Finnish Social Democrats. Its representative in Sveaborg was the already mentioned Meer Trilisser. According to the revolutionaries' plan, the uprising in the fortress was only part of a general uprising in the navy. The agitation fell on fertile ground. The harsh measures introduced by Commandant Laiming, coupled with the increasing material problems, were already exhausting the patience of the ordinary soldiers of the garrison. Particular indignation was caused by the cancellation of the payment of so-called "wine" money, which the lower ranks often spent not on alcoholic beverages, but on new boots. On July 15, news reached the Sveaborg garrison about the beginning of the uprising in Kronstadt. The sailors' uprising near St. Petersburg did indeed take place, but it took place several days later and was not very large-scale. In light of this news, the Sveaborg commandant gave the order to lay minefields near the fortress. The miners not only refused to comply with the order, but also put forward demands: an improvement in their financial situation, the resumption of the payment of "wine money", and a solution to the problems with ammunition. The commandant refused to comply with them. Arrests began. The events took place on one of the islands on which the fortress was located - Lagerny. News of the conflict between the commandant and the miners reached the artillerymen living nearby. The situation escalated. However, the local committee, realizing that it was still too early for a uprising, proposed limiting themselves to demands only and not resorting to forceful actions. But the revolutionary impulse could not be stopped. He was actively supported by rumors, the sources of which are still unknown. The soldiers were fully confident that ships of the Baltic Fleet would come to their aid and go over to the side of the rebels. In addition, rumors spread that the commandant was going to disarm the artillerymen, fearing an armed uprising. Under these circumstances, the soldiers decided to launch a preemptive strike and free the miners. The Bolshevik Committee had no choice but to support the uprising.

The artillerymen who approached the barracks on the evening of July 17 to free the prisoners were stopped by the garrison soldiers loyal to the commandant with rifle fire. The rebels then moved to the neighboring Mikhailovsky Island. The soldiers serving there arrested the officers and joined the rioters. They ended up with artillery guns. Revolutionary demonstrations also took place on three other islands. The commandant's office did not expect such a turn of events. The situation was saved by the fact that there were enough forces left on the government's side - mainly security companies. Their number was 2 thousand people. There were the same number of rebels. On July 18, Commandant Laiming announced that the fortress was being put under siege. The rebels were able to cut off communication between Sveaborg and the mainland. The next day, one hundred and fifty Finnish Red Guards arrived to help their brothers in arms. There was intense artillery fire between the two parts of the fortress, which led to great destruction. Despite the initial success, the fate of the uprising was sealed. On the evening of July 19, ships of the Baltic Fleet approached the fortress: the cruiser Bogatyr and the battleships Slava and Tsarevich. The mutineers thought that the sailors were coming to their aid and believed their own fantasies even more when the ships signaled that they supported the uprising. But this was disinformation. Immediately after the naval uprising began, the ship commanders arrested the revolutionary-minded crew members. The unblocking of Sveaborg by the fleet led to the transfer of government troops to the islands that remained under the control of the commandant. The rebels had no hope of success. Under these circumstances, the revolutionary committee decided to cease resistance. On July 20, white flags were hung on the islands occupied by the mutineers. After the capitulation, about 1,000 people were arrested. Sergei Zion and

several hundred other participants in the uprising managed to escape. The rest were brought to trial. Yemelyanov, Kokhansky and 26 other active leaders of the rebellion were sentenced to death. The rest were sent to prison and hard labor. The Finnish Red Guard formations were disbanded by order of the Finnish Senate.

Chapter 29. Witte and the Tsar.

Minister Sergei Yulyevich Witte convinced the Tsar to make a decision that was, as it later turned out, fatal for the country and the monarchy: to create the first State Duma as the highest legislative body making all decisions. In this, Witte was supported by the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, General D.F. Trepov, whom the Tsar considered the only servant he could completely rely on. And the reason why the Tsar did this was that Russia, which had lost the war with Japan, Russia, shaken by political parties, Russia, which had experienced the revolution of January 9, had a crisis of power, and the Tsar had a choice: either to suppress all movements in society with a harsh hand (which was not in his spirit), or to go the way of reforms; and the tsar chose the second, listening to his entourage, fearing to be misunderstood. At the same time, the tsar wanted to see representatives of all classes in the State Duma, including peasants, and hoped that this would weaken the revolutionary movement. At the same time, the tsar was categorically against the introduction of a constitution, finding a compromise in the introduction of the Duma. And Russia was becoming a "Duma monarchy", since all laws had to be adopted in the Duma, and the tsar had the right of veto and the right to dissolve the Duma. In these conditions, the tsar wanted to see "his man" in the Duma, and having heard about Pyotr Stolypin as a wise figure in his post as governor of Saratov and in his previous positions. At the same time, the tsar did not approve the project of the Duma of the Minister of Internal Affairs Bulygin Alexander Grigorievich, whom he sent into retirement. Bulygin proposed the Duma as a legislative advisory body.

6 августа 1905, The Tsar issued a manifesto on October 17, 1905, which spoke of the introduction of a legislative Duma, after which he appointed Pavel Nikolaevich Durnovo as Minister of Internal Affairs, whom he dismissed for using police agents for personal purposes in April 1905. And under these conditions, the Tsar summoned Stolypin from Saratov in the spring of 1906 and offered him the post of Minister of Internal Affairs, which Stolypin refused, and only agreed to by order of the Emperor.

Nicholas II told Pyotr Arkadyevich that he would also work in the Duma to represent the interests of the government there.

On March 26, 1906, elections for deputies to the First State Duma began. On May 10, 1906, the First State Duma began its work, consisting of 499 deputies, of which 176 were Cadets actively opposing all government proposals.

In particular, the government proposed to allocate 50 million rubles to the starving people in Russia, but the Cadets, and other deputies who agreed with them, rejected the government's proposal, which came from the Tsar's principle of "rejecting all government proposals, even those with charitable goals," and cut the amount to 15 million rubles. Apart from this law, the Duma did not adopt anything specific.

But the Cadets demanded the introduction of an agrarian reform, according to which land is transferred free of charge to the ownership of the peasants in accordance with the land law, not only from landowners, but also at the expense of church and state lands.

The "Trudoviks", as the most radically minded Cadets called themselves, demanded the introduction of a "labor norm" on land, and everything above the norm to be taken from the landowners and distributed to the peasants. Stolypin offered the deputies more realistic options for land reform. The deputies did not agree, and no compromise was reached between the government and the proposals of the deputies, and the tsar dissolved the First State Duma after 72 days of its work on July 9, 1906.

Being pleased with Stolypin's activities as Minister of Internal Affairs, the tsar appointed Stolypin Chairman of the Council of Ministers while retaining the post of Minister of Internal Affairs on July 8, 1906.

Pyotr Arkadyevich lived with his family in St. Petersburg, on Aptekarsky Island. He proposed to introduce military field courts in Russia to combat terrorism and the revolutionary movement. In Russia, every week someone was killed by the Cadets and Socialist Revolutionaries. Not only aristocrats died, but also representatives of the authorities, governors, and there were several attempts on Stolypin himself, but he miraculously escaped each time.

Military field courts had the right to judge and execute without a lengthy investigation, and consisted of only a chairman and four members of the court from among the line officers appointed by the head of the garrison by order of the governor-general or commander-in-chief. The sentence was passed no later than 48 hours and was carried out within 24 hours by order of the head of the garrison.

These courts were introduced in 82 provinces out of 87, and worked successfully until April 20, 1907. The courts tried terrorists in a simplified manner. In addition to terrorists, they tried those accused of murder or robbery of officials. A total of 683 terrorists were executed during the period this law was in effect.

Leo Tolstoy, Leonid Andreyev, Alexander Blok condemned Stolypin for bloodthirstiness and radicalism, ignoring the thousands of victims of terrorists. Military courts did not always sentence to death. Many of the guilty were sent to hard labor. In 1906, the German government sponsored a huge intelligence network throughout Russia. The Kaiser was preparing for a future war with Russia. In all the ministries there were German agents - people paid by German intelligence and voluntarily collaborating without payment with German intelligence for ideological reasons. German intelligence had its people not only in the ministries, but in all the factories, plants, noble assemblies, and even in many markets. A simple merchant could be an agent carrying out delicate assignments, such as monitoring the number of troops in a given city, the type of weapons, etc. Neither Minister Stolypin nor the Tsar knew anything about this. They also did not know that the Socialist Revolutionary and Constitutional Democratic parties were supported by money coming into Russia from Germany, Japan, and partly from Jewish bankers from England and the North American States. Russia did not have its own agent network in Germany or any other country. The Tsar held unsuccessful negotiations with Wilhelm II in 1907, as a follow-up to the Björkö Treaty of 1905. In 1908, when a crisis arose in the Balkans due to the fact that Austria-Hungary demanded that Russia recognize the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or abandon it, which meant an attack by Austria-Hungary on Serbia. Stolypin, who headed the Russian government at that time, said: - "To unleash a war means to develop the forces of revolution." And Emperor Nicholas II agreed to fulfill the demands of the Germans, which called off the war in 1908. Stolypin also successfully carried out an agrarian reform in Russia, making a mass resettlement of peasants: they traveled together with large cattle in Stolypin carriages to Siberia, with the distribution of land to them there as property; introduced the possibility of peasants receiving loans from banks for a period of 49 years at the lowest possible interest rate, which made it possible for peasants to buy land from landowners, introduced judicial reform and educational reform, the introduction of free primary education for children aged 8-12, industrial reform and the labor issue: rules for hiring workers, insurance against illnesses and accidents, working hours of 10 hours a day, the activities of trade unions, a ban on the distribution of proclamations.

The Union of the Russian People was created in 1905 as an instrument of struggle against the revolutionary movement, which was led by Jews. Stolypin did not approve of the actions of the Council of United Noble Societies, which indirectly directed the actions of the Union of the Russian People. Stolypin repeatedly proposed to the tsar to give the Jews the same rights as all subjects of

Russia, but the tsar rejected such bills each time. But at the same time, Stolypin supported the law of June 1, 1910, which, in particular, stated that Jews were not allowed to participate in elections.

Later, when the tsar approved the Second State Duma, Stolypin argued in the Duma with deputy Purishkevich on the Jewish question.

The monarchist Vladimir Mitrofanovich Purishkevich was an anti-Semite and proposed extreme measures against Jewry, and Stolypin condemned Purishkevich for this. Stolypin in his youth lived in lands where there were strong Jewish communities and knew the life of the Jewish people. He believed that it was wrong to persecute the entire Jewish people just because there were many Jews among the revolutionaries.

At the beginning of 1907, the tsar established the Second State Duma. On June 3, 1907, the tsar dissolved the Second State Duma, since it proposed laws (like the First State Duma) against autocracy. The role of the Social Democrats was strong in the Second Duma.

Then the tsar established the Third State Duma, which began working on November 1, 1907. Stolypin also took part in its work. The new electoral system had been approved the day before, and the Duma included 148 Black Hundreds, 148 Octobrists (almost all of them were members of Russian Masonic lodges subordinate to Paris and London), 54 Cadets, 28 Progressives, 26 bourgeois, 19 Social Democrats, and all Masons and Trudoviks.

The Duma considered more than 2,500

Pyotr Stolypin became an unpopular figure both at the top of Russian society (for his firm course as an economic manager) and at the bottom, where he was vilified in every possible way by the revolutionary movement. There were assassination attempts on Stolypin by revolutionaries. In particular, his daughter was injured by a bomb explosion during an assassination attempt on Stolypin. She could hardly walk, as her legs were damaged, but she was able to walk after a long period of treatment. Stolypin's son was also wounded, but he quickly recovered. This happened in August 1906 in St. Petersburg in Stolypin's house on Aptekarsky Island.

Chapter 30. The idea of abdication.

In 1906, the Emperor, believing in his predetermined tragic fate, predicted by many seers, including the astrologer Hamon, seeing that the prediction about the "first war" made by Hamon had already come true, seeing the events of 1905 as the first attempt to overthrow him from the throne, seeing many deaths, wanted to abdicate the throne, introduce the patriarchate and become patriarch.

Grigory Rasputin learned about this from the Tsar in the Alexander Palace. Grigory was in the Palace in the summer of 1906 and saved Tsarevich Alexei. The Tsarevich could have died from loss of blood. He was riding a bicycle and fell off it. Bleeding began, which the surgeon Botkin, who was doing the bandaging, could not stop, but the blood still flowed from under the bandage of the Tsarevich, since the Tsarevich was sick with the "Tsar's disease", and the blood did not clot.

Rasputin read a folk conspiracy over the wound: - "Saint George rides on a horse, and you, blood, do not drip" three times, then he crossed the wound on his hand, previously bandaged by Botkin, from under the bandage the blood still flowed, and after Rasputin made the sign of the cross over the wound, the blood stopped.

The Tsar thanked the elder for a long time, gave him money and sat with him, talking in the Maple Living Room.

His Majesty said: - "We have decided to leave the throne, abdicate the throne and become a patriarch, since we do not want to accept the difficult fate predicted by Hamon, predicted by Abel, predicted by Seraphim."

- "Don't you dare, you were chosen by the Lord to reign, so bear your cross to the end! For each one has his own cross, don't abandon us, don't abandon your throne! Reign humbly and accept the will of God," Rasputin shouted at the Tsar. The Tsar shuddered, for he had not expected such a thing. Never before had Grigory shouted at the Tsar, it was unacceptable, but this was the first time,

a special case. The Tsar said: - "I will ask the confessor Feofan," after which the Tsar stood up and went out looking at his feet.

Rasputin fell to his knees and began to pray for the Tsar to remain on the throne and prayed for an hour.

The Tsar, meanwhile, went to the Alexander Nevsky Lavra, where his spiritual father Feofan of Poltava was at that time. There the Tsar went into the cell where Feofan was praying at that time. Feofan stopped praying, rose from his knees and bowed to the Tsar.

- "Hello, Feofan! We have decided to abdicate the throne, the burden has become heavy. I want to become patriarch and revive the patriarchate, and I will abdicate in favor of my son under the regency of Alexandra Feodorovna and Mikhail Alexandrovich," the tsar began the conversation.

- "Don't do this, Your Majesty. You are destined to rule to the end, the people love you, it is God's will for your rule and God will not abandon you. And thoughts of abdication are weakness, and weakness is unacceptable and contradicts the laws of governing the empire," Feofan said.

- "Well, if you think so, and Gregory said so, then I will not abdicate," the tsar answered.

"Thank God," Theophan answered and crossed himself, blessing the Tsar. "Let's go have some tea," the confessor continued, and they left the cell and went to the dining room to have some tea.

Chapter 31. 1908.

John of Kronstadt was seriously ill and practically did not leave Kronstadt since 1906. Meanwhile, the Stavropol St. Nicholas Naval Cathedral was being built in Kronstadt, for the construction of which John donated a large sum of money and published an appeal in the newspaper calling for joining the fundraising. In September 1902, the construction of the cathedral began, which was preceded by a prayer service performed by Archpriest John of Kronstadt in the presence of Vice Admiral S. O. Makarov. At the base of the cathedral, the builders concreted John of Kronstadt's pickaxe, which he brought to a prayer service in 1902 on the day construction began.

Holy Father John of Kronstadt had the gift of prophetic visions about the fate of Russia, and shortly before his death in 1908, Holy Father John had a vision of the times to come.:

"I looked and saw: the royal palace, and all around there were animals of different breeds and different sizes, reptiles, dragons, hissing, roaring and climbing into the palace. And they were already climbing onto the throne of Nicholas II, the anointed of God... suddenly the throne shook, and the crown fell and rolled. The animals roared, fought, and crushed the Anointed One. They tore it up and trampled on it like demons in hell, and everything disappeared." This prophecy of John of Kronstadt was reported to Nicholas II, which added to the sorrow in his heart, as he remembered the rest of the prophecies, starting with Abel's letter.

In October 1908, at the Alexander Palace in the Maple Drawing Room, His Imperial Majesty's State Secretary, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Minister of the Interior Stolypin Pyotr Arkadyevich made a report to Nicholas II. In October 1908, Austria-Hungary announced the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This caused an international crisis that threatened to escalate into a major European war during the first weeks of 1909. In his report, Stolypin categorically opposed direct confrontation with Germany and Austria-Hungary, saying that "to start a war is to unleash the forces of revolution." Emperor Nicholas II listened to the report, and said in response to the minister: "We will agree to fulfill the demands of the Germans, and we will not attack Germany because of Bosnia and Herzegovina, since this can unleash the forces of revolution. Although I already wanted to declare war on the Kaiser, but you changed my mind." Stolypin then asked a new question with great hesitation in his voice: "Is Your Majesty familiar with the name of Grigory Rasputin?" The tsar became noticeably wary, but then calmly replied: "Yes. The Empress told me that she had met him several times at Vyrubova's. According to her, he is a very interesting person; a wanderer who has traveled a lot to holy places, knows the Holy Scriptures well, and is generally a man of holy life.

"Has Your Majesty seen him?" asked Stolypin.

The king replied dryly:

– "No."

"I'm sorry, Your Majesty," Stolypin replied, "but I've been informed otherwise."

"Who reported this other thing?" the king asked.

–General Gerasimov,– Stolypin replied.

Stolypin was lying a little bit here. He knew nothing about the tsar's meetings with Rasputin, and therefore, in order to understand whether these meetings had taken place at all, he came up with the idea of referring to General Gerasimov, who had not actually reported anything about this to Stolypin. And catching some hesitation and uncertainty in the tsar's voice, he realized that the tsar had undoubtedly met Rasputin personally.

The minister's trick really worked. After some hesitation, the tsar looked down and said with an apologetic smile:

"Well, if that's what General Gerasimov reported, then I won't dispute it. Indeed, the empress persuaded me to meet Rasputin, and I saw him twice (Nikolai was lying, he saw Rasputin much more often. But why are you interested in this? After all, this is my personal matter, which has nothing to do with politics. Can't my wife and I have our own personal acquaintances? Can't we meet with everyone who interests us?" Stolypin, touched by the tsar's helplessness, presented to him his thoughts that the ruler of Russia could not even do what he wanted in his personal life. He towers over the whole country, and all the people look at him. Nothing unclean should come into contact with his person. And meetings with Rasputin are precisely contact with such an impure person, and Stolypin frankly informed the tsar of all the data collected by the Ministry of Internal Affairs about Rasputin (a report arrived from Siberia, from which it was clear that Rasputin was for an immoral lifestyle, for involving girls and women in debauchery, for theft and for all sorts of others He served various sentences for crimes more than once and eventually had to flee his native village. And in St. Petersburg, Grigory Rasputin led a depraved lifestyle. Rasputin was secretly monitored by police agents installed by Stolypin, and agents repeatedly recorded that Rasputin took street women from Nevsky Prospekt and spent nights with them in suspicious dens. Some of these women were also interviewed. They gave their "guest" very unflattering reviews, painting him as a dirty and rude libertine).

This story made a great impression on the tsar. He asked Stolypin several times whether the details he provided had been accurately verified. Finally, convinced that Stolypin was painting him the image of a depraved man and recommending that he be removed from court, as an association with Rasputin could discredit the royal family in the eyes of the people, the tsar replied: "We cannot remove Grigory Rasputin from the court, a lot depends on him, and we do not want to discuss what exactly with anyone, so I will ask you to drop all charges against Rasputin, and never return to this topic again, especially since it may upset Alexandra Feodorovna," the tsar said.

Police agents, who were controlled by the head of the St. Petersburg Security department, Colonel A.V. Gerasimov, on Stolypin's orders, continued to constantly monitor Rasputin. At the end of 1908, Rasputin left for his homeland in the village of Pokrovskoye, Tyumen district, Tobolsk province, Tobolsk province for several months. An old-timer from the village of Pokrovskoye, Anna Fedorovna Ivanova, recalled how Grigory Efimovich gave money to the poor for a wedding. One peasant asked Grigory Rasputin for 50 rubles, he gave him 100, but asked what he would do with the extra money. According to Anna Fedorovna, Elder Grigory built a house for Mikhail Grigoryevich Podchivalov (a peasant with many children) with his own money. He bought a horse or a cow for others, gave the children money for school and medicine. Rasputin constantly donated from 100 to 500 rubles for public needs, the construction of public buildings, and the renovation of the volost government, which was located next to his house. With the money of Elder Gregory, a school was built in the village of Pokrovsky, and he was elected its honorary trustee. There are many other cases of completely selfless help to fellow villagers from Elder Grigory Yefimovich Rasputin-Novy (Novy) (as he began to be called since 1906, he asked to be called that, since Tsarevich Alexei first saw Rasputin in the palace, called him a New person later, in a conversation with his parents, and formally

permission to use the new surname was given by Emperor Nicholas II), which was recorded in the metric book in the village of Pokrovskoye.

And the selflessness of Elder Gregory is simply amazing. In 1909, Grigory Yefimovich achieved the return of the "rich fish lake Bolshoe" to his fellow villagers. Previously, this lake was owned by the peasant community of the village of Pokrovskoye. However, after the land management was carried out, it went to the treasury. The Pokrovsky peasants, led by the former pilot Timofey Kuzmich Zubov, went to the provincial center, to Tobolsk to the governor, but achieved nothing. Then the elder Gregory, taking advantage of the opportunity of the passage of the Governor of Tobolsk through Pokrovskoye, himself went to the house where he was resting. He soon returned with a petition signed by the governor to transfer the lake to the village of Pokrovskoye. Grigory Yefimovich conveyed this petition to the peasants with the words: "Here's a paper for you to own the lake. It has been returned to the ownership of the village." One of the residents of the village of Pokrovsky, according to her grandmother, Izosimova Anna Garmanovna, told how Rasputin helped their family. Izosimova raised three daughters and a son alone, and her husband served in the tsarist army. There were not enough funds to send the children to learn to read and write, because the school needed clothes and shoes befitting an educational institution. Elder Gregory, having learned about this, wrote a note to the merchant's shop, asking to give out leather for sewing shoes for all children and gave the necessary amount of money for this. But a modest peasant woman, when asked by a shopkeeper how much leather she needed, asked to measure only for one "cherki" (peasant shoes), although Grigory Yefimovich paid for leather for several pairs of shoes for all children. Soon, having met a woman, Grigory Efimovich found out from her how it was, went to the store and forced the shopkeeper to give out the missing amount of leather. Anna Garmanovna's grandmother referred to Grigory Rasputin-Novy as a "kind man", saying that he treated people with respect, that he addressed people by their first name and patronymic. And in conclusion, Anna Garmanovna says that "all the old people, the same age as my grandmother, remember Grigory Yefimovich with gratitude." Every time Grigory came to Pokrovka, it was a holiday for the children. It was the same this time. He treated the children to lollipops and gingerbread. He didn't give us money in our hands – he wrote a note to the shopkeeper asking him to let someone have a dress or boots, and then he paid for everything with him. He started a conversation with the children: "How are you? Do you have everything, do you have boots, shirts, a dress?" I found out that two guys didn't have shoes and one didn't have a shirt, so I wrote a note to the shopkeeper. With this note, the kids fly to the shopkeeper, and he picks up the right thing. And then Rasputin paid for everything. Grigory Yefimovich donated a lot for the needs of the Church of the Intercession. He deposited 5,000 rubles. for the construction of a new chapel of the Church of the Intercession. The money was donated by the Tsar and the Tsarina, but gratitude from the rector, Father Peter Ostroumov, and the churchwarden, Vasily Svistunov, was expressed to Grigory Yefimovich for "a particularly zealous attitude to the Sloboda church." Then this case was reflected in the Tyumen newspaper Tobol. After spending several months in his homeland, Rasputin returned to St. Petersburg in early 1909 with his two daughters, Matryona and Varvara.

Chapter 32. Jacob Shiffa's struggle with the Russian Empire.

Emperor Meiji (Mutsuhito) awarded the American banker Jacob Schiff (Jacob Henry) the Order of the Sacred Treasure in 1905 and later the Order of the Rising Sun in 1907 for using his authority and influence in the American banking and financial sector to block Russia's access to foreign loans in the United States, participating in the financing of the Japanese government during the Russo-Japanese War, and proposing foreign policy initiatives that could have worsened American-Russian relations. In the United States, he worked as a manager at Kuhn, Loeb & Co., and before that, in his native Germany, he received an excellent religious and secular education, having been born into a rabbinical family. Jacob's father worked as a broker at the Rothschild bank in Frankfurt am Main. Jacob Schiff achieved control of the Bavarian Illuminati's lion's share of the country's financial capital in the North American states. Jakob Schiff, a Freemason of the Bavarian Illuminati,

waged a personal war against Russia that lasted from the 1890s until 1917... which intensified over the years and developed into an all-consuming passion, the roots of which lay far deeper... The banker persistently compared the plight of Jews in Russia to the biblical story of the Jewish exodus from Egypt, and he undoubtedly saw himself as a new Moses... and it was precisely to his crusade against Russia that Schiff owed his rise to heights previously unseen by a Jewish leader." The plight of Russian Jews had already attracted Schiff's attention during the pogroms of 1881. By the early 20th century, Schiff had added something entirely new to the arsenal of tools developed by the American Jewish community in the struggle for Jewish rights abroad as early as the mid-19th century, such as shaping public opinion and pressuring the American government: attempts to isolate Russia diplomatically, particularly through international financial pressure. In 1890, during a visit by a Russian warship to New York Harbor, Schiff organized a boycott campaign by the city's Jewish community. In the early 1890s, Schiff briefly helped finance the publication of the monthly magazine *Free Russia*, the organ of the Society of American Friends of Russian Freedom, which, among other things, secretly distributed "moderate allowances" to members of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. During this time, Schiff became close with the writer, journalist, and traveler George Kennan, who publicly spoke out in America against the harsh conditions of political prisoners in Siberian exile, which were damaging the monarchy's reputation. During the Russo-Japanese War, he published a series of articles from the theater of operations and, as he later admitted, engaged in anti-monarchist propaganda among Russian prisoners of war in Japan. From 1904 to 1910, he published a number of works on the socio-economic problems of the Russian Empire. Undoubtedly, the connection between Schiff and Kennan placed a more general goal on the agenda than simply improving the situation of Russian Jews—the overthrow of the Romanov dynasty. Schiff was primarily concerned with Jewish capital in the Russian Empire, including his interest in the redistribution of the Azerbaijani oil market. But why not combine this task with the broader strategic goal of democratizing Russia?

In early February 1904, Schiff invited Jewish public figures to his home and announced: "In the next 72 hours, war will begin between Japan and Russia. I have been asked to provide loans to the Japanese government. I want to hear your opinion on how such actions might affect the situation of our co-religionists in Russia." Apparently, a positive decision was made at the meeting, and Schiff was pleased that damage had been inflicted on the Russian regime. With the outbreak of war, the American syndicate controlled by Schiff, consisting of his banking house, Kuhn, Loeb & Co., the National and Commercial Bank, not only issued two Anglo-American loans for the Japanese government totaling approximately \$110 million (half of this amount was placed by the Schiff syndicate), thereby playing a significant role in financing Japan and ensuring its victory in the war, but also actively and successfully prevented the placement of Russian loans on the American market, thereby deterring other American banks from lending to the Russian government. At a meeting of American bankers held at the same time, Schiff delivered a dramatic speech urging his colleagues to boycott Russian loans, in which, among other things, he revealed that he had drawn up a will prohibiting his banking house from lending to "anti-Semitic Russia" even after his death. Schiff also financed George Kennan's project to distribute revolutionary literature in Russian prisoner-of-war camps in Japan. The project was well-disguised, and nothing was known about it until March 1917, when Kennan himself publicly revealed it to journalists. According to Kennan, "tons of revolutionary literature" were brought into the camps, from which 50,000 "ardent revolutionaries" returned to Russia. The Russian government, suffering damage from Schiff's actions, attempted to win him over to its side or, at least, neutralize him. Minister of Internal Affairs V.K. Plehve invited Schiff to Russia. Schiff set two conditions: 1) he must receive an official invitation from the minister; 2) Russian visa laws must be amended; Schiff, a Jew, must enter Russia on a general basis, not with a special permit. Schiff viewed the change in visa laws as the first step toward equal rights for Russian Jews. While the

letters were being exchanged, a successful assassination attempt was made on Plehve. Schiff called Plehve's murder "God's punishment," but in reality, it was a contract killing paid for by Schiff.

Chapter 33. Strelna.

In September 1910, the Emperor resided in the Constantine Palace alone. Matilda Kshesinskaya spent the entire autumn of 1910 and the winter of 1911 mostly at her dacha in Strelna, rarely appearing in the capital. In 1911, Nicholas II was at the Constantine Palace in Strelna with the Empress. Matilda Kshesinskaya was also there at her dacha. Matilda Kshesinskaya's dacha and the Imperial Constantine Palace in Strelna were adjacent, separated only by a small canal. The dacha in Strelna had previously been given to Matilda Kshesinskaya by Grand Duke Sergei Mikhailovich, who lived nearby at the Mikhailovka family estate and had been an admirer of the ballerina since the age of 22. The Tsar could not meet Matilda openly, although he longed to do so. The Tsar informed her through Grand Duke Sergei Mikhailovich that on a certain day and hour he would ride horseback with the Empress past her dacha in Strelna. Nicholas asked Matilda to be in the garden at that time. The ballerina chose a bench that was impossible to miss from the road. On the appointed day and hour, Nicholas II and the Empress passed Kshesinskaya's dacha and saw it. Matilda chose a bench that was impossible to miss from the road. On the appointed day and hour, Nicky rode with the Empress past my dacha and, of course, saw me perfectly. They walked leisurely, and I bowed low to them, which was graciously accepted. The ballerina bowed low to them, which was graciously accepted. Alix turned pale as soon as she saw the ballerina, but said nothing. The following week, Matilda Kshesinskaya left for the estate of her friend Sima Astafieva's relatives in the Staritsky district of Tver province. The estate belonged to the Sevenard nobles, and it was then that the paths of two families, the Kshesinskys and the Sevenards, first crossed. Her brother, I.F. Kshesinsky, who had recently left his position as a teacher at the theater school, also lived there with his young wife. They spent the entire summer and fall of 1911 at the Sevenard estate, returning to St. Petersburg only in November with their daughter, Tselina, whose birth certificates list her as October, although the newlyweds were seen with the small child for almost the entire summer. By July 1911, she had returned to the capital, where she appeared at virtually every public event. The apogee of her stormy activity was her triumphant performance in the "Russian Seasons" in London in October-November 1911, when Vaslav Nijinsky himself, partner of Mathilde Kschessinskaya, created a scene of jealousy towards S. P. Diaghilev and tore his suit in anger, since the Londoners received his partner more enthusiastically than him.

Chapter 34. Ritual Murder.

March 1911 In Kyiv, Jews killed a boy, Andrei Yushchinsky. The police were of the opinion that it was a ritual murder by Jews. Pyotr Stolypin did not believe this. He ordered a thorough investigation and a report on the results. It was only known for sure that the boy was killed by the clerk of the Kyiv brick factory, Menachem Mendel Beilis, who was arrested. Before that, the body of 12-year-old Andrei Yushchinsky was found in the Kiev suburbs in the village of Lukyanovka. The Black Hundreds accused Beilis in all the newspapers of sacrificing an innocent boy to Jehovah and demanded a trial. The investigation did not have any special evidence and Beilis was kept under arrest.

Stolypin said at a Duma session that he "does not believe in ritual murder," which caused the indignation of deputy Purishkevich and other monarchists. Meanwhile, an assassination attempt on Stolypin himself was being prepared. Later, the jury acquitted Beilis for "lack of evidence proving his guilt, and he was later released from the courtroom," although the ritual murder of 12-year-old Andrey Yushchinsky was recognized as having been committed by unidentified perpetrators in order to use his blood for the preparation of matzo, a traditional Jewish bread. The prosecution relied almost exclusively on the testimony of a witness, Zhenya Chekhovskaya, who, according to the defense attorneys, had been pressured by the police and agitators from the Union of the Russian People.

Chapter 35. Mr. Bogrov.

Mordko Gershkovich, better known as Dmitry Bogrov, wanted to become famous all his short life by doing something out of the ordinary. On the one hand, there was a thirst for heroism in his soul, and on the other hand, he suffered from bouts of severe depression, from which he did not know how to get out. These were either drinking parties with friends - students at the University of Munich, where he studied to be a lawyer, or plans for a revolution in Russia, the assassination of the emperor or high-ranking officials, which were born in the head of the young man after studying the works of the famous anarchists Kropotkin and Stirner.

In a desire for revolutionary struggle, Dmitry returned to his native Kyiv in 1906. In Kyiv, Dmitry became a member of the circle of anarchist communists. In 1907, Bogrov was disappointed with his activities among the anarchists. He wanted to be promoted to a leadership position, but his comrades considered him incapable of much. So Bogrov decided to take revenge on his comrades - he became a sexot - a secret employee of the tsarist secret police. Bogrov was given two pseudonyms: Alensky and Kapustyansky.

In 1908, the police destroyed the anarchist group "Burevestnik" of Naum Tysh and German Sandomirsky. The members of the group were sent to hard labor.

At that time, Bogrov lived in his father's house on Bibikovsky Boulevard in Kyiv, and the feeling of "his meaningless life" overtook him once again with renewed vigor, and he wrote in a letter to a friend: "I have become a desperate neurasthenic. In general, I am pretty tired of everything and want to do something extravagant." And so, finally, Bogrov decides to liquidate Stolypin as the minister who gave Russia a chance to change society through reforms without revolution and anarchy. And, from Dmitry Grigorievich's point of view, the person responsible for all the Jewish pogroms in Russia, since Stolypin was the Minister of Internal Affairs.

In St. Petersburg, where Bogrov arrived, at a meeting of the anarchist circle in 1910, Bogrov declares to Yegor Lazarev, having come to this meeting under the pretext of having an order to deliver letters to Lazarev, brought by some lady from Paris.

- "I am doing this with all the greater pleasure because I needed to see you. Even more than that, I actually came to St. Petersburg to see you."

- "So what exactly do you want to do, young man?" Lazarev asks, lighting a cigarette.

- "I have decided to commit a terrorist act and kill Minister Stolypin. You think this is a joke or madness on my part, but what I said is neither a joke nor madness, but a deliberate task that I have decided to carry out at all costs."

- "And why Stolypin and not the Tsar?" Lazarev asked Bogrov.

- "Because the murder of the Tsar will not change anything, the heir by regency will reign, but the murder of such an active reactionary Stolypin will stop all reforms, and the revolution will certainly happen and the monarchy will be overthrown," Bogrov answered without thinking.

- «And what exactly motivates you, a brilliant lawyer, intelligent, well-read, to take on such a radical initiative and responsible role, without fear of the consequences for yourself?!» Lazarev immediately exclaimed.

- «I have come to the conclusion that in Russian conditions a systematic revolutionary struggle against the central ruling figures is the only expedient one. In Russia, the regime is personified in the ruling figures, who are strong because they remain unknown and inaccessible. What is your answer to my proposal, which, after much reflection, I decided to believe you? I see that your mood is paternal, not businesslike. You want to set me on the right path, so that I can diligently engage in my legal practice, and, among other things, all kinds of cultural activities, reading and writing revolutionary brochures, etc. Meanwhile, you sometimes actively speak out against such atrocities, and in such cases it is the "scapegoats" who are disappointed. The main culprits remain unpunished. It is the duty of the socialist parties and the intelligentsia in general to point out to the masses the real culprits. You know that the powerful leader of the wild reaction that is now underway is Stolypin. I come to you and say that I have decided to eliminate him, and you advise me to engage in cultural and educational

activities instead. I explain this only by the fact that you are not prepared for a thoughtful answer. Therefore, I ask you to think over my proposal and then allow me to come to you another time," Bogrov finished his fiery speech. - "We consider the elimination of the Tsar a more important task than his minister, and it is not for you, young whippersnapper, to lecture us. You can never come back again," Lazarev responded irritably. The rest of those present supported Lazarev. There were cries of "Go away with your ideas," "Stop throwing a rally here." And the misunderstood Dmitry stood up and left, slamming the door.

As he walked down the stairs he muttered: - "I haven't given you up enough to the police, you'll remember me yet."

Some time passed. Bogrov did not show up at the anarchist meetings, and they, in turn, suspected him of having connections with the secret police. But the main thing for Dmitry was to carry out his plan at any cost, and thereby not only become a famous terrorist who would finally manage to kill Stolypin, who had already been the subject of 11 assassination attempts by that time, but also justify himself to his comrades that he was not an informer for the secret police. And he was an informer, because he enjoyed giving up his superiors in the party line, who did not value him at all.

Two weeks later, Bogrov visited Lazarev again with his proposal and referred to the fact that his connections in the service in the committee under the Ministry of Trade and Industry would help him get closer to Stolypin, but he was decisively refused once again. Bogrov did not abandon his goals and entered into communication with the head of the St. Petersburg security department, von Kotten. After which von Kotten did not particularly believe him, since he did not receive any special information from Bogrov. And then Bogrov went to Kyiv, and from there to Nice to improve his poor health.

After returning from Nice, in early February 1911, Bogrov did not participate in the meetings of revolutionaries in Kyiv, and none of the socialists and anarchists put any pressure on him.

On February 19, anarchist Pyotr Lyatkovsky was released from Kyiv prison after the event of punishment in the case in which he was brought in together with G. Sandomirsky and others in 1907. Lyatkovsky came to Bogrov's apartment at his invitation. They sat at the table, smoked cigarettes one after another, drank vodka.

And then Dmitry said: - "Somehow it turns out that some comrades suspect me of working for the secret police."

- "How can they accuse you of betrayal?!" Lyatkovsky asked in bewilderment. - "After all, you have everything, you are the son of a millionaire. You have no reason to work for the secret police for money, you are an ideological person," he continued.

- "I worked with comrades from the magazine "Byloye" and learned a lot from them there, so for some reason I have to rehabilitate myself in the eyes of Lazarev and others? So how can I do this? Only by killing Nikolai?"

- "So which of the revolutionaries does not dream of killing Nikolai," Lyatkovsky interrupted Bogrov.

- "No," Bogrov continued, "Nikolai is nonsense, Nikolai is a toy in Stolypin's hands. After all, I am a Jew, and by killing Nikolai I will cause an unprecedented Jewish pogrom. It is better to kill Stolypin. Thanks to his policy, the revolution was strangled and reaction set in."

- "You can't be so naive as to think that you can get through the crowd of all kinds of guards to both Nikolai and Stolypin. After all, this is beyond the power of one person, and therefore it is necessary to counter this guard - your own organization of militants, and that I am personally ready to take part in this organization, as well as find steadfast, determined comrades for this purpose," Lyatkovsky objected to Bogrov.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «Литрес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на Литрес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.