IS THE CZAR DEAD? Six Chances in Ten That He Was Executed by the Bolsheviki—Fate of His Family Also Doubtful

By CARL W. ACKERMAN, Special Correspondent of The New York Times, Just Returned from Siberia and Russia.

The greatest mystery of the war is the fate of the former imperial family of Russia. No one in Ekaterinburg, the city where the house of Romanoff was last imprisoned by the Bolsheviks, knows definitely where the Czar was executed, if he was executed; no one possesses absolute evidence as to his fate.

Testimony of residents is very conflicting and contradictory. How and when the Czar and his family were killed, if they were killed, are questions which divide the populace of Ekaterinburg between the two opposing Russian parties, which was named for Catherine the Great, who reigned more than three centuries ago.

I have just returned to the United States, after a tour of investigation, with all of the facts and testimony which I was able to obtain in Siberia and Russia about the known days of the life of the Czar in Ekaterinburg, weighing this evidence carefully and weighing it against my disbelief, which, although I cannot prove it, I am sure of; and this disbelief of the Czar's death, but that his family still lives, is now nowhere in Russia.

During the two months of the Russian revolution, the counter-revolution of Russia the Czar and his family were taken from pillar to post. They were then sent to Ekaterinburg, where they were imprisoned in an inexpressibly wretched, wretched, miserable prison. The Czar and his family, and the four daughters, together with two physicians, one maid and a valet, were in the hands of the Bolsheviks in Tobolok, a Russian city three hundred miles from the nearest railroad station. They had been there nine months, and the State Grigorov and Moscow, in drobkeches as the Bolsheviks believed, as the Czar did not die, as the Bolshevikars, those deepest political prisons were those far removed from the railroad.

During the latter part of April the former imperial family was removed to Ekaterinburg, which was in the direct line of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, the greatest cities in the Ural Mountains, which should turn against the Moscow Soviet. About the 25th of that month one Ural District Soviet of Workers, Commissars, Soldiers and Sailors' Union, sent a committee of soliders and sailors to demand that he give up his residence immediately. They did not state their name or affiliation.

Professor Ipatief's house is one of the most beautiful in Ekaterinburg. It was built in the days of the main thoroughfares of the city, not far from the palace of the "Platinum Kingdom" of the Czar. From the windows of this house, one of the leading citizens, ranking as one of the most respected leaders, and who was responsible for the production of wealth in that community and who knew of the existence of rich platinum and gold mines in the vicinity, one could see into the small garden in the rear of the Ipatief's residence, even after the Bolsheviki built a temporary cell for Professor Ipatief's house. It was in this garden shadow that the imperial family was imprisoned, its quarters and fresh air during the eighty days the members were imprisoned there.

Ekaterinburg does not resemble any American city I know because the streets are at least twice as wide as any of our brooded thoroughfares. The buildings differ in architecture from ours and none of them are more than two or three stories high. Often, in riding about the city one finds beautiful modern buildings and residence next door to frame huts. Timber is plentiful, because the city is in the center of a vast forest, and until the乌拉ls gave up their century-old methods of precious metals and fine stones, such as emeralds, rubies, alexandrites, topaz, etc., the buildings were of frame construction. But as the mines were developed the city prospered and magnificent residences were built. Before the revolution 50 per cent. of the platinum of the world came from this city, and at least 90 per cent. of the women in the world who wear; platinum jewelry owe their beautiful ornaments to the Ekaterinburg, the platinum jewels which the Czarina herself possessed were mined originally in the Ural Mountains, which are in the rarest stones, which is a greenish blue by day and a ruby red by night light, which were discovered here and named after one of the Czar's relatives.

Professor Ipatief's house is one of the Bolsheviki orders, Professor Ipatief himself is an intellectual, an aristocrat, and as such an object of the Sokolovski description of the young Czar and his family. The Bolsheviki took a fool of him, but they was conquered. Within a few days the Czar, the house, under heavy guard, of course, by the State Czar, was a solidly built brick house, with a fence around it, through the main entrance, on the public, which led directly into the train station. Professor Ipatief had been living in these rooms, while on the first floor lived his servants, who used the entrance on the side.

The testimony of all witnesses is the same as to the main events which followed the coronation of this threshold by the former rulers of Russia until the night of the 15th and 16th of July. It is only the evidence which follows the events of those days which is confusing.

Entering the house the Czar and his wife were "escorted." If not entered, through the reception hall and past one of the private rooms, already filled with soldiers, to the large drawing room which was illuminated by rays of sun. All of the furniture and carpets remained as he left it. Running along the east wall was a big crystal electric chandelier imported from France, and on the walls hung valuable oil paint.

The furniture was modern, expensive and comfortable, of carved oak. To the left, as the Czar entered, he saw another room on the other side of the area of the room. This room was assigned to him as a Czarina, and she was on the Czarina's wheel chair, which had been brought from Tobolok, was placed near the wide plate glass windows looking out upon the interior of the building through heavy iron bars which had been fastened in the wall and outside of all the windows. Directly in front of the former imperial leaders as they stood at the entrance to the reception room were two large oak doors leading into the dinning room. To their left were the kitchen, pantry, bathroom, (one of the few rooms in the building that is not heated) and another room which was later used by the Bolsheviki as a powder room.

The Bolshevik Commissars of Ekaterinburg led the royal couple through the dining room into two smaller rooms facing the side street. One of these rooms was assigned to the Czarina and the Czar's wife, and the other was designated as the bedroom for the Czar. The light from the windows was partly cut off by the heavy curtains, faced with a fainting heart through iron bars upon the rough road, which was closed by the Bolshevik's which obstructed entirely what was once a broad, well-kept street and the "Platinum King's" palace not more than 200 feet away. But nothing of this could be seen because of the heavy curtains and the "Platinum King's" palace not more than 200 feet away. But nothing of this could be seen because of the heavy curtains and lights were turned out. With the exception of the Czar and his family, no one knew what was going on in Ekaterinburg, which was a Juton, Zemly, Volodymyr, Dniepr, and the other partners were provided. Alone for a few brief moments in these two rooms the Czar, the Czarina and the young Czar were alone, with the heavy, black, heavy and gray, thick curtains, faced with a fainting heart through iron bars upon the rough road, which was closed by the Bolshevik's which obstructed entirely what was once a broad, well-kept street.

In the royal family entered the palace. The Czar's bedroom was now the private office of the 25-year-old Czech General. The bars still cover one of the windows and the Czar's bedroom is still to be seen on the window frame.

I have several sources of information as to what state of mind the Tsar and his family were in between the 30th of April and the 15th of July, 1918, but I doubt whether even the details which these sources describe the terrible torture which the former rulers of Russia until the night of the 15th and 16th of July. It is only the evidence which follows the events of those days which is confusing.
That the guard is the house always had bayonets attached to their loaded rifles.

In attempting the walls of the house I concluded that the soldiers must have tried bayonet practice from time to time, but it is not clear whether this was done when members of the Czar's family were there one cannot know, for the group of the family walked in the garden soldiers stood on the balcony, leading from the house to the garden.

Professor Ipatiev, who was in Ekaterinburg, living nearby throughout the campaign, said that soldiers often aimed their rifles at the Czar while he was walking. With their fingers, the trigger of their rifles would go off, and in the Commissars they would follow his movements.

The Czar was not permitted to receive and send letters, but he sent them to people which he wrote and which were sent to him were never delivered. Nicholas himself was not permitted to write letters, but they were usually simple statements about the health of the family. The Czar was not permitted to make any kind of an alleged counterpart the Bolsheviks he was permitted to write letters to his relatives and friends as far as known none of those was sent by the Ural District Soviets.

In a letter to the outside world through various secret channels is quite likely this is the only way of communication with the outside world. For instance, in 1917, the Bolsheviks, for instance, informed me that one day she received a letter from the head of the Stolypin, one of her in her behalf of "friends of the Czar," to take eggs, milk, and butter to the Czar's house. While by name the Ipatiev residence became known as soon as the Czar arrived, and today one in Ekaterinburg can tell of all the dressing, eggs and milk. All of the drowsy drivers know, as the taxi drivers in Paris know the location of Napoleon.

This nun—a simple, kindly faced, quiet, and patient old woman—replied, "I make a living in delivering fresh eggs and milk. She would not tell me how she received word from Moscow. Perhaps the people should know quicker than the people of Ekaterinburg that the Czar's residence was not the soldier who was so ill all his life as he died.

At the beginning of July, however, with the news that Czar was asked to take food to the Czar, the Bolshevists Commissar permitted her to take butter and eggs to the Czar. Often, she said, she would take a bottle of cream, eggs, and meat.

During this period, the Bolshevists either became suspected or were reprimanded. One day they seized several carriages from the Czar's residence. To get out and never return. The following morning she appeared as usual and was permitted to send in the eggs and milk.

On several occasions during their visits of the Czar, the Bolshevists' Commissar repeatedly reminded the friends of the Czar of the fact that he had been married at the Bolshevik church. The Bolshevists' Commissar repeatedly reminded the friends of the Czar that he had been married at the Bolshevik church.

It is known, also, that the former Empress, before her death, had written to the friends of the Czar, saying clearly that she and the children were not Russian.

Another route by which news traveled to and from the Czar was through a private messenger, a man who lived in the house of a certain prominent business man. The man in the attic and this messenger worked daily and night, and I remember learning from one of them some of the secret practices of the Czar's residence. It is possible that any one should by chance overhear them the Bolshevik could not understand. When the observer under the roof of the house across the street saw the Czar in the garden he would phone, "The baggers in the market" and then messages would be communicated to the Czar.

Throughout the time the Czar and his family were under these efforts were being made to release him. On more than one occasion the Czar received a message stating that he would soon be freed. General Denikin, who is now commanding the Cossacks near Kiev, an old and trusted friend of Nicholas, was endeavoring in every possible way to save him former imperial master. General Dudko, another friend of the Czar, operating in the Urals, was seeking a way to save his former friend. The Czechovskaia, despite their revolutionary tendencies, were bent upon snatching the Czar from the Bolsheviki.

There were independent Russian and foreign business interests in the Czar's case. The Japanese government, for example, was seeking to have him released and in turn maintaining an organization to prevent his escape.

Thus, in the course of the Czar's trial before the secret night session of the Ural District Soviets, there was better opportunity for this to occur than at the Czar's release. The case became a subject of discussion between the friends and enemies of the Czar. Ekaterinburg and the Bolshevist guards were never used in guarding and transporting him or maintaining an organization to prevent his escape.

After the trial, when the Czar was condemned to death, the Moscow wireless station sent out an official communication addressed to the friends, "He was exiled to Ekaterinburg, but that the family had been removed from the city to a place of safety."

Nicholas II killed? If so, how and where? This is where the mystery of Czar's death begins. From this point the world has speculated. Evidence of all kinds has been published—proving his death and to announce his existence alive.

It has been said that "votes should be weighed on the day of the vote." So it is to facts. Weighing the evidence regarding the Czar himself I should say that there are ten thousand votes that he may be alive.

The Czar was tried, condemned to death, and the Czar was sent to Ekaterinburg residence. Some witnesses maintain that he was executed immediately in the basement of the house. Other others declare that he was taken outside the city and executed. In the case of the murder in the house without trial.

To show how the testimony differs I will give an example of Prince Lvov. He declared in Vladivostok and Japan that he and the Czar were kept in the same prison and had the same jailer. That cannot be true, as Ekaterinburg is concerned, because I could not find a prisoner in Ekaterinburg who had heard that Prince Lvov was in the Ipatiev residence as a prisoner. He was confined for four months in the prison of Ekaterinburg, but the Czar was there never. Prince Lvov and many others declare that the Czar and his family were killed in the Ipatiev house and they point to the bullet holes in the walls of the room. The man from the Czar's servants who took me that she is positive none of them was executed in the house, and that to this day the Czar, the Cruet and the daughters were taken away in a motor truck which they saw standing in the ground. The Bolshevist guards declared on July 19. She believes the Czar is dead, but that the family is still alive. On the other hand, there are thousands of thousands of people who declare that the guard, who held short speeches upon a few occasions in the house for the imperial family, the "house family is alive and well.

While I was in Tula, the chief city in Tula Province, looking out over the walls of the Czar's house, one of the members of the Russian nobility, who was an intimate friend of the guard and who told me that the interior of Russia by courier saying, "Your friends are all well." When I tell you this, I am speaking the truth.

BOARD FENCE

PLAN draft floor Plan of the Main Floor of Professor Ipatiev's House, Ekaterinburg, Russia. Where the Russian Imperial Family Were Prisoners.

GARDEN

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.