

Is She Royal, Crazy, or An Astonishing Fraud?



The Czarina's Famous \$1,500,000 Pearl Necklace, Part of the Glittering Treasure Which Disappeared When the Royal Family Was Slain.

WAS she imposter, lunatic or royal princess—"the girl with the orange hat" who slipped into the White House one fine September morning and told the President of the United States she was the daughter of the dead Czar and heiress to the Russian throne?

A desperate adventuress seeking to dupe the world with the most amazing fraud history has ever known? A crazed nobody unbalanced by too much dreaming of kings and queens and war? Or the beautiful Princess Anastasia herself—miraculously escaped from the slaughter trap of the Reds to implore sanctuary in democratic America?

The whole truth may never be told, but there has just been published in Paris a remarkable book which partly lifts the veil from the mystery and stamps it the most amazing romance of international intrigue of which the twentieth century has any record.

Under the title, "The Mystery of the Romanoffs—A Survivor?" the authors, Charles and Henry Omessa, present what purports to be an authentic account of the flight from Russia of the Princess Anastasia, her voyage to San Francisco on the steamer "Vulture," her American wanderings and her audience with President Wilson, Bolshevik attempts to assassinate her, finally her elopement with a young American.

At first glance the tale seems only sheer imagination. But one statement after another—for example, her interview with President Wilson on September 29, 1920—has been so confirmed upon investigation that European diplomats are seriously aroused. They are grilling the Omessa brothers for the source of their information. They want to know whether "the girl with the orange hat" was princess or pretender. And, if princess, where is she now—a secret exile, or murdered by Bolshevik agents?

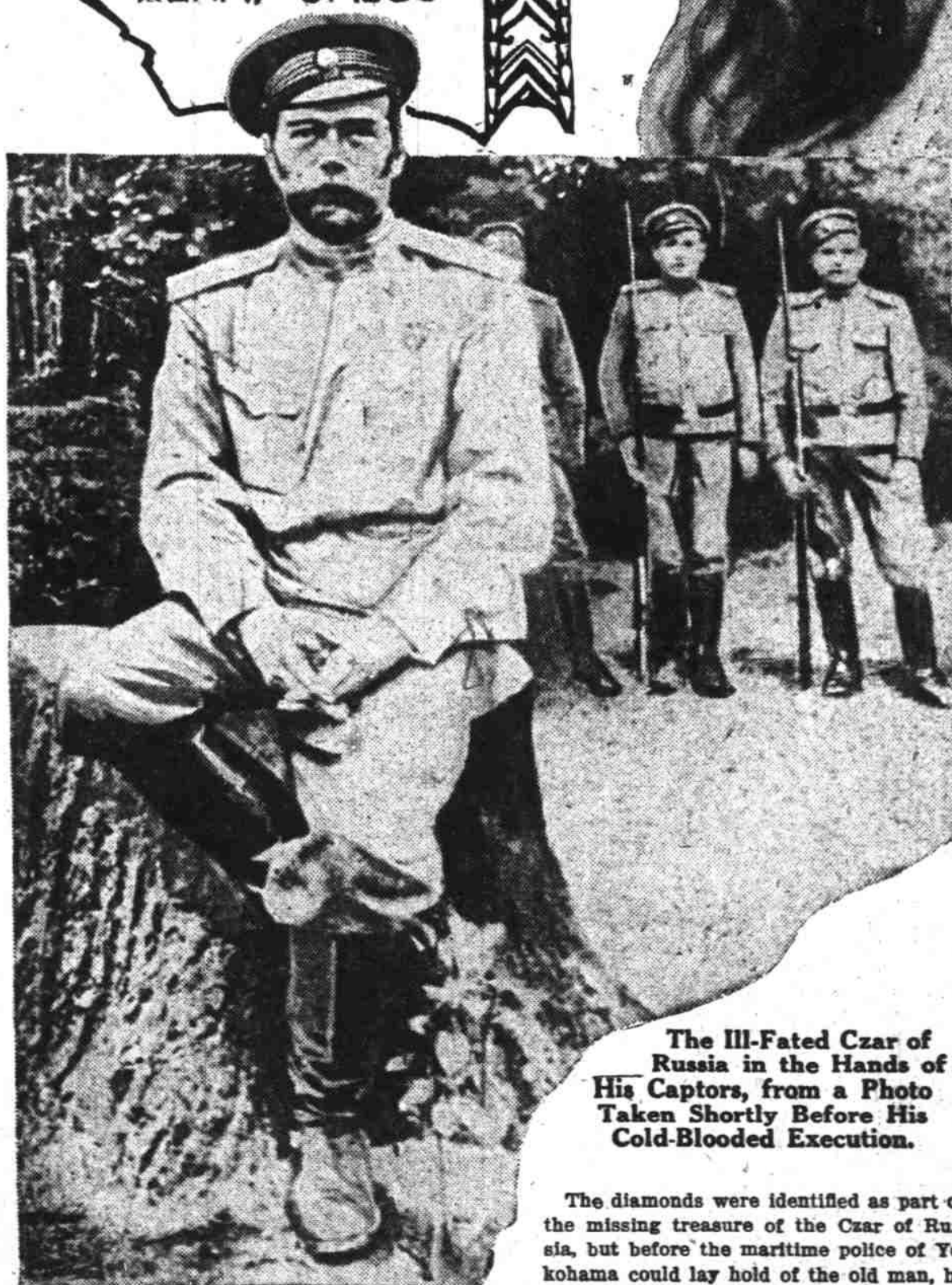
The affair of Anastasia finds only one historic parallel as sensational—that of "the lost dauphin of France," the little son of Louis Sixteenth whose fate was never known after the Revolution. There is a striking similarity between the two cases, both hinging on the inability of the authorities to prove the "corpus delicti."

Louis was in the Bastille when his father and Marie Antoinette went to the guillotine. Was he murdered by his jailers? Or did he escape to America, where a youth claiming to be the Dauphin bobbed up in Louisiana several years later? The world never knew. Some branded the "Louisiana dauphin" a pretender, some a half-wit; a few, believed him, for no corpse

The Very Strange Story of an Attempt to Have the White House Recognize a Beautiful Foreigner as the Last of the Romanoffs, Heiress to Russia's Throne



Front Cover of "The Mystery of the Romanoffs—A Survivor?" Which Has Caused Consternation in Diplomatic Circles



The Ill-Fated Czar of Russia, in the Hands of His Captors, from a Photo Taken Shortly Before His Cold-Blooded Execution.

The diamonds were identified as part of the missing treasure of the Czar of Russia, but before the maritime police of Yokohama could lay hold of the old man, he had sailed on the American steamship "Vulture," accompanied by a beautiful girl whom he called Marie Berditchev.

The scene shifts to San Francisco. The "Vulture" has made port and Boris Berditchev and Marie Berditchev have settled down in a boarding house at "127 Hayward street." Devout Catholics, they appeared regularly at the Russian Orthodox church

Princess Anastasia, the Only Member of the Czar's Family Whose Death Was Never Proven and Who, It Is Now Declared, Is Alive and in France.

in San Francisco, where Boris Berditchev made two donations of \$100 each. (The books of the church show this statement in the Omessa narrative to be true.)

At the church Marie Berditchev made an acquaintance—a young Russian: They walked home together. Giving her a peculiar look, he suddenly dropped this question into the desultory conversation:

"Do you like San Francisco better than Ekaterinburg?"

A few days later Boris Berditchev and Marie Berditchev vanished from the Hayward street boarding house. The birds warned that they were tracked, flew away—to be heard of next in New York at "an address on Forty-sixth street."

Marie Berditchev, an accomplished linguist, secured work as foreign correspondent in a Wall Street banking house. She returned home one night to tragedy. A few hours before Boris Berditchev was picked up unconscious on the street and taken to a hospital, where he died. Apoplexy was given as the cause, but from a disreputable old character, Pat O'Keen, Marie Berditchev learned a different story.

"I had been in liquor," Pat O'Keen told her, "and I was sleeping it off in a bit of an alley. Voices woke me. There was your old man at the corner, talking to a youngish man. He was well dressed and across his right cheek was a long red scar. Suddenly the young man grabbed your father by the throat and gurgled until his mouth popped open. I saw him drop a whitish little pellet on the old man's tongue and make him swallow it. Then he ran, with your father staggering after him."

The red hand of the Bolsheviks had

struck at Marie Berditchev. It was to strike again. There came to her one day a woman, Mrs. Simpson, rich, flashy, handsome, the wife of "William Thomas Simpson, war profiteer." Marie Berditchev and Mrs. Simpson became friends. Another in Mrs. Simpson's little circle was "Colonel Figner" (named by Marie Berditchev's biographers as "General Hartig, who had figured in many a dirty deal in Europe.")

They kidnapped Marie Berditchev, chloroformed her and clapped her into a dingy warehouse in lower New York. But rescue followed swiftly. Four policemen, led by "George Philip Bowd," handsome young American, beat down the doors, snatched Marie Berditchev from peril, and whisked her away to the country haven of "Madison," where she found safety and love in the arms of young Bowd.

Another fabled attempt at assassination, marriage to Mr. Dowd, the visit to President Wilson, another visit to Holland and the ex-kaiser, and a trip to Paris, conclude "The Mystery of the Romanoffs—A Survivor?" The final paragraph is a statement that Mr. and Mrs. Bowd are to leave shortly for a big foreign city, and Marie's signed authorization for the publication of her adventures.

That, in brief, is the amazing narrative with which the Omessa brothers have started the diplomatic circles of Europe. Much of it, obviously, is mere romantic fiction. But there is no doubt that by "Marie Berditchev" in reality was meant the Princess Anastasia, and the crumbs of truth sprinkled so plentifully through chapter after chapter have made the most skeptical turn to the Omessa brothers with a dawning wonder in their eyes.

Russian peasant, giving his name as Boris Berditchev, had sold to the Chinese firm of Fo Tchang & Company, of Tsao Tsai, two blazing diamonds of sixty-five carats each for the small sum of 67,000 yen, and also had offered for sale a necklace of matchless pearls worth a fortune.

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