

Postscript: The Assassination of Stolypin

On September 18, 1911, in a period of growing industrial unrest, Stolypin was shot in the Kiev Opera House by a revolutionary called Bogrov. He died several days later.

This account of Stolypin's assassination was taken from the web.

Stolypin took his seat in the first row of the orchestra. Overlooking the stage and the orchestra was the Tsar's box where the monarch sat with two of his four daughters, the grandduchesses Olga and Tatiana. During the second intermission, Stolypin stood up next to his seat with his back to the stage. A young man in evening clothes, Bogrov, walked solemnly down the aisle to stand next to Stolypin who gave him a puzzled look.

Bogrov calmly reached beneath his cape and pulled out a Browning revolver. Just as calmly he aimed this at the Prime Minister and, at almost point blank range, fired two shots, the bullets striking Stolypin in the chest and sending him crashing to the thickly carpeted floor.

Bogrov was punched and kicked as two guards officers dragged him up the aisle. One man reached out and slammed his fist into the assassin's face, knocking out his two front teeth. In the lobby, a large throng surrounded him, trying to lynch him from a chandelier. Police guards rushed forward and saved the assassin, dragging him into a small room off the lobby. Here he sat bleeding from his wounds but laughing maniacally. He had totally fooled and surprised his police bosses.

"I've done my job," Bogrov sneered. "I have found the assassin!" He spread out his arms, then slowly brought his right hand close to his chest and poked it with his finger. He was then beaten unconscious before being dragged out a side door and taken to the police station where he was to await a trial that took place a short time later. Bogrov had no defence, proclaiming that he had struck down an oppressor in the name of the revolution. He was convicted and hanged. By then, Stolypin was dead. He lingered for five days, then died and was honoured by the Tsar.

Nicholas II was with Peter Stolypin when he was assassinated at the Kiev Opera House on 18th September, 1911.

During the second interval we had just left the box, as it was so hot, when we heard two sounds as if something had been dropped. I thought an opera glass might have fallen on somebody's head and ran back into the box to look. To the right I saw a group of officers and other people. They seemed to be dragging someone along. Women were shrieking and, directly in front of me in the stalls, Stolypin was standing. He slowly turned his face towards me and with his left hand made the sign of the Cross in the air. Only then did I notice he was very pale and that his right hand and uniform were bloodstained. He slowly sank into his chair and began to unbutton his tunic. People were trying to lynch the assassin. I am sorry to say the police rescued him from the crowd and took him to an isolated room for his first examination.

General Polivanov, diary entry on the death of Peter Stolypin (19th September, 1911)

What a distressing feeling! Not to speak of the loss for Russia, I feel a personal bereavement. I was under the charm of this man. I delighted in him, I was proud to think that he was satisfied with my work. When I said goodbye to him on 6th September after the Cabinet meeting, as usual I tried to catch his eye. He stood by his chair, tall and upright, and his fine face looked healthy and tanned. It was on the 9th September that for the last time I heard his manly voice on the telephone.

Optional Task: Produce a news report of this event. Include an introduction by the anchorman, and interviews and tributes from some of the key people involved. Focus on what problems Stolypin solved etc.