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THE BONES OF CONTENTION

*Olga Nikolaievna Kulikovskiy-Romanoff on the
Alleged Remains of the Russian Royal Family*



In this issue, we return to our interview with Olga Nikolaievna Kulikovskiy-Romanoff, the daughter-in-law of Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna Romanoff, who speaks about the fall of Russian communism, the principle of monarchy, and her continuing efforts to prove that the remains buried in St. Petersburg in 1998 are not those of Tsar Nicholas II and his family.

ROAD TO EMMAUS: Your husband, Tihon Nikolaievich, was, of course, the son of Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna, nephew of Tsar Nicholas II and the grandson of Alexander III. Was he surprised at *perestroika* and *glasnost*, at the opening up of Russia?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: I wouldn't say that he was surprised. We were hoping it would come some day; we had hoped for seventy years.

During World War II, when Hitler moved into Russia, we felt deeply for the Russians, because on the one hand, the country was invaded; on the other, we hoped it would be Russia's salvation, the downfall of communism.



Olga Nikolaievna
Kulikovskiy-Romanoff
and Tihon Nikolaievich

I remember my father saying of Hitler's invasion, "It's the devil, but even that too we will handle later, the thing now is to bring down communism." That feeling was widespread among Russian émigrés in Europe, whom Hitler enlisted with the promise to overthrow communism in Russia. Many of them were simple men, ex-soldiers of the White Army, and didn't think of what Hitler's victory would mean except in those terms. This put Olga Alexandrovna in a terrible situation. Although she and her family were on the Allied side and her sons were even imprisoned by the Germans, she couldn't turn her back on the Russian émigrés who had joined Hitler, the sons and grandsons of those who had remained loyal to the monarchy and her own family, and who now wanted to free Russia.

You see, in the late thirties there were still many Russian army officers and exiles in Europe, whose existence was a threat to the Soviets. If the émigrés could have united and received western help, they might have marched

on Soviet Russia, so the Bolshevik policy was not to allow them to unite, but to keep them separated in Greece, Yugoslavia, France, here and there. In the decades following the Russian revolution, the Soviet government sent agents to France to murder and kidnap White Army officers. They also offered to make Nicholas' cousin, Kyril, the new "tsar," if he would work under the Soviet regime, but their plan didn't materialize. We lived through those times; we knew what the politics were and what was happening around us. People looking back now don't know the whole story, but this is why many of these émigrés hoped to destroy communism first in Russia, and then to rid the country of the Germans.

RTE: Did Tihon ever believe that Russia would have another tsar, as some of the Russian elders prophesied?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: To answer that, one has to understand the last thousand years of Russian history, and the first thing about Russian history is that it is Orthodox. Orthodoxy is the backbone of Russia. When Prince Vladimir chose Orthodoxy in 988 as the most fitting religion for the people, it was for a reason: he chose what was the most appealing — the ceremony, the warmth... let's face it, Orthodox traditions are warm and rich. I say this not only because I was born Orthodox, although that may be an influence, but because I feel it.

For example, a few years ago I attended the Protestant funeral of an Estonian friend. To me, the ritual of burial was so poor and cold: they sang a few songs, the minister said something brief, and the coffin was taken away. It was like she was being torn away from us and there wasn't time to grieve. Now, our Orthodox prayers just rip the soul out of you. When you hear "With the saints give rest...", you can't not cry, you just drop to your knees and you weep. It gives you the possibility of grieving deeply at that moment, and then you don't get crazy later on. There is a reason for everything in Orthodoxy.

For me, Orthodoxy is the most expressive religion. Often, when I see other Christian denominations, I think how nice and orderly, how disciplined everyone is, even in worship, but, my God, you don't have that cry of your soul. Here in Russia, when you have to crowd up to the altar to receive Holy Communion with all the *babushkis* pushing to get in first, you may feel very uncomfortable, but nevertheless, you stand in front of the icons and see people around you weeping and your soul cries out with them. You know it is something extraordinary. This is why the Russians love Orthodoxy so much.

RTE: Tihon Nikolaievich felt that the monarchy would return because it is bound up with Orthodoxy and the souls of the people?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Definitely he did, even if it is not a Romanoff. It doesn't have to be a Romanoff, but it has to be a person who cares, who will be the father of the country and the defender of the faith. Russia is now like a fatherless child. You can have a mother, that is fine, but what about the father? And this fatherly image, the one who stands between God and the people, is a little like the priesthood. You don't believe in the priest as a man, but you believe that he stands as a witness before God. When you go to confess, you don't care about the priest himself, you are talking to God at that moment. The priest stands there to absolve you in God's name. It is the same with the tsar. The tsar is the anointed representative of God. The tsar is above the law, but in a good sense. Not that he is acting above the law, but he has the power to give mercy. Even if you are sentenced to death, if you petition the tsar and he reviews the case, he can remand your sentence. You see, that power is important.

RTE: This is the first time I've heard monarchy spoken of as the ability of the tsar to be above the law so that he can give mercy, as God gives mercy.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: That is how Tihon and I both understood monarchy. It is not, "I'm the tsar and I can do whatever I please." There is law, there is obligation. As I said before, first comes duty and then privileges — as a member of the royal family, you couldn't even always marry whom you wanted. So, it is a very hard job. Now, when so many years have passed, you see how many things have been blamed on the tsars, but I think that the position is like a lightning rod to God. Did you know that an anointed tsar is the only layman who has the right to walk through the royal doors and take Holy Communion like the clergy?¹

RTE: Yes, and from what I understand of Byzantium, the patriarchs had jurisdiction over the church, and the emperors didn't presume to make dogmatic statements, but they did sometimes overrule appointments or present their own candidates. Likewise, the bishops often spoke out against the emperors' actions if they were not Christian. The tsar couldn't usurp the patriarch's position, but he was a check on the bishops, as they were on him.

¹ On the day of the tsar's anointing, he goes into the altar and receives Holy Communion with the clergy, rather than with the other lay-people in church.

At his coronation, a Byzantine Emperor vowed to defend the faith, and his own salvation depended on how he carried out that vow. That was the ideal. Of course, human nature being what it is, there were many attempts to upset that balance.

I remember that Tsar Nicholas II insisted on the canonization of St. Seraphim of Sarov in 1903, and later of St. John of Tobolsk, when for various reasons these canonizations weren't happening through the synod of bishops. Also, during World War I, when the synod outlawed Christmas trees because the custom was of German origin, Empress Alexandra stepped in and annulled the ruling because she said it was absurd to take an innocent pleasure away from the soldiers and children.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Yes, you see that really had nothing to do with the Church. Why not decorate a tree? There is nothing unchristian about it. There are times when the tsar has to exercise his position as the highest authority.

RTE: But when you speak of the tsar as the highest authority, as being above the law, how exactly do you see his position in regards to the church on earth?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Of course, there were times in Russian history, like during the reign of Ivan IV, when the church and the boyars wanted to take over, and Tsar Ivan said, "Enough is enough." You see, the tsar's duty is to be above everyone. He doesn't take sides, he is above both parties. He is trying to make peace with everyone. You may know that when the first census was taken in Russia, Tsar Nicholas wrote down in the space for "occupation," "*Xozain Ruskoy Zemli*" ("Householder of the Russian land"). This is a monarch's duty. If you don't have a boss in the kitchen, the cook is going to take a little of this, a little of that, the maid sits in the corner and sleeps, the cat eats the cream, but when the boss is there everything is all right. It is the same for a country. You see, now that we don't have a tsar here in Russia, everyone wants to be president, but what is going on in the country?

RTE: Relative chaos.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Yes, so you see, the tsar is the one who unites everyone, all of the political parties, and he is above all this. Not because he is an autocrat, but because of the authority given to him by God. He has to be the peacemaker, the one who evens things out — he has the power to veto decisions that he believes are not correct.

RTE: That, of course, is the ideal, but how would Grand Duchess Olga, or Tihon Nikolaievich, or yourself, answer the great difficulty for people in democratic countries: that the position of a king gives one unlimited power. We don't usually think of kingly mercy, but of how many kings have ruined their country and people with their own ambition and selfishness.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: If someone is ambitious and wants to ruin the country, it makes no difference whether he is an autocrat, a dictator, or a constitutional leader. If he wants to be bad, he can be bad anyway.

RTE: This is true, but at least with a constitutional leader, in America for instance, if it was obvious to everyone that there was something unsavory going on, he would be out of office, either immediately or at the end of his term.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: I'll tell you one thing. Democracy is costly and it is just as susceptible as any other form of government to influences that are not necessarily "the will of the people."

Democracy is costly and it is just as susceptible as any other form of government to influences that are not necessarily "the will of the people."

RTE: Can you give examples?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Take what happens on election years in the United States. During the election of 2000, everyone fought amongst themselves, even families. How much money was spent on campaigns, on fancy dinners, on barbecues, on recounting the votes? So, then you had a president amidst great controversy, but every new

incumbent has to work off these millions and millions of dollars spent on his political campaign. Everyone has to be satisfied; the people who pushed him into office have to be shown gratitude, which means jobs, ambassadorships, beneficial trade agreements, favoritism, etc. Not only that, but he also has to provide for himself for the future. In many small newly democratized countries we hear of presidents leaving office with large off-shore bank accounts, or having franchised themselves through business contacts while they are in office. I'm sorry, but isn't that a form of corruption? Then in four years it is repeated all over again.

A monarch, on the other hand, would be interested in the good of the country, in keeping the money inside the borders and in having a stable and

prosperous economy to pass on to his son.

My idea is that democracy can't work now. The idea of democracy was good three thousand years ago in Greece where it originated. Usually, if you invent something, you have a good reason for inventing it.

RTE: Why do you think it worked then and it won't work now?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Because then the city-state was only 500 or a thousand, or even 5,000 people. You knew everyone around you. You knew if someone was a womanizer, or a crook; you knew if you could trust them. It was a big family. Today, when you are in charge of a company, you know exactly what your vice-president is doing, what the book-keeper is doing, what the secretaries are doing, but you cannot know what is happening at the other end of the country. You can have a governor who is the biggest crook in the world and you have to favor him because he is from the same party, not because he is good or bad. In ancient Athens, you had a senate with fifty people, but you knew those fifty people, you knew their mothers and fathers, you knew everything about them. You weren't in Washington, D.C., wondering what was going on in Sacramento.

I am very opposed to how the media is programmed to present events, and I think that often the "voice of the people" is simply us repeating back what we've been fed.

RTE: But neither would a tsar know what is happening on the other side of Russia.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Yes. That is true. But that is why he had appointed governors, not elected ones. They had to be loyal to him; they were answerable to him.

RTE: So, when democracies accuse autocrats of abusive power, you would say there is abuse of power everywhere. Many people would say that in democracies it is more easily seen and stopped.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Well let's look at that. I think a lot of it depends on what you are being fed. I think that one of the ways democracies are controlled is through the media. I am very opposed to how the media is programmed to present events, and I think that often the "voice of the people" is simply us

repeating back what we've been fed. Look at how our attitudes have changed over the past fifty years. Much of it coincides with the influence of television. Little by little, people have accepted clever and seemingly rational arguments to dismantle age-old prohibitions. Look at the widespread acceptance of abortion, of genetic engineering. When Hitler's scientists began experimenting with genetics, we shuddered and called it a crime against humanity. Now we are doing it ourselves.

On the international front, let's look at the bombing of Serbia by NATO. Was that fair or right? That was done by western democracies, and was absolutely undemocratic, inhuman behavior. They "had to" bomb the country and bring in rebels. Why did they bomb Belgrade, why did they bomb bridges, why on earth did they bomb a bus with civilians? They said that these were "strays," but with all the technology that they claim, where they can pinpoint targets to a few meters, why do they have "strays"? Both the American and the British media presented the Serbs as villains, but no one looked into history. What does Kosovo mean to the Serbs? Who were the Albanians there?

Then the war with Iraq. All the while the U.S. politicians were saying, "We are not against the people of Iraq, we are against the leader of Iraq." Why then, if they were only against him, didn't they take him out and shoot him, instead of putting an embargo on medicine for ten years? Come on.

Again, why in any dispute between the Israelis and the Arabs, why are we convinced that the Israelis are somehow right, even when it is obvious they are wrong. Look at what they have done to the native Palestinians and Lebanese. The United Nations made several resolutions that still have not been carried out. They are put on a back burner when the ruling goes against the Israelis.

And as far as the bombing of Afghanistan, did any of us who "have a voice" feel that we were perfectly informed of all of the reasons underlying Western policy? Did we feel that we knew the whole truth?

These are just a few examples that representative government is not always fair or just or democratic. They say the devil is the devil, not because he is smart, but because he is old, and I have seen quite a lot in my 75 years.

RTE: Would you go so far as to say that monarchy is the best form of government?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: I believe that what is good for one country is not necessarily good for another. For example, the affluent countries are still trying to instill democracy (and during the Soviet era, communism) in places like

Ethiopia or Somalia, developing countries that have their own traditions and way of life, based on village elders, tribal leaders, etc.

RTE: Ethiopia had a monarchy for centuries.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Yes, and my point is that over the past twenty years we have attempted to establish representative governments in many of these nations, but I don't think we can dictate that other people should adopt our standards.

The United States was formed, at least in part, by people who went there after being rejected by their own societies. They formed something that in their opinion was better, but it doesn't follow that this is necessarily better for others. Although something has been achieved, this doesn't mean that everyone has to follow their example. Some European leaders want Europe as a counterweight to America. They want the EEC to become the United States of Europe. I'm sorry, but this is not possible. You are talking here about distinctly separate cultures that have hundreds and even thousands of years of different traditions and religion behind them. The United States is only two hundred years old. Let the Americans live as they like, but their system is not necessarily the best for everyone.

As a Russian who knows my country's own history and tradition, I think that monarchy is the best choice for Russia because with monarchy you have a marriage between church and state. There are duties for the right hand and duties for the left hand, but together it forms one body. In Russian history they were an integrated whole, a "popular" monarchy, and I believe that those two elements working together today can revive Russia.

I've lived in Canada for many years, and I remember a time when democracy was not yet so developed, when the British queen was the head of the commonwealth and symbolically, at least, of the government. There was a veneration and respect that was paid to her and her office, and through her to the country itself. For example, men would not enter a room with their hats on in the presence of a portrait of the queen. This was part of the courtesy, of the etiquette, and everyone understood it... You see, each land has its own history, its achievements, its ideas. Why should someone else come in and dictate to it?

RTE: I remember that during World War I in a conversation with his British military attaché, Gen. Hanbury-Williams, Tsar Nicholas remarked that the

United States and Russia were so different that they could not be compared. He felt there had to be an emperor for Russia because of Russia's huge ethnic diversity with over a hundred different languages and the differing customs and deep religious feelings of the people. He said then that he was for decentralizing power, but only when the country became better educated.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: You know, in the Old Testament it says somewhere that there are no two stars alike. There is no real equality in nature. You can turn the world upside down and never find two things that are completely equal. You will not even find equality in the sense of "*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.*" This motto is absurd because it has been taken out of context. Your real liberty is the free will that God gave you to choose what you will be, what kind of a person you will be in whatever circumstances you find yourself in. As for brotherhood, I have never seen real brotherhood, either under communism or in the French republic. Whether we are under a monarchy or a republic we are going to have unfairness because we are all human, and unfortunately, fallen.



Tsar Nicholas II and his family.

RTE: What are your feelings about the 2000 canonization of the Russian royal family as passion-bearers?²

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: The canonization of the royal family was a success in every way, because the Russians needed to realize that murder had been done, that injustice really did happen. The canonization was an act of popular repentance, because we, the Russian people, were all guilty for not protecting our tsar.

RTE: But you weren't born yet.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: It doesn't matter.

RTE: Then how would you explain this guilt?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: The Old Testament says that sin is to the seventh generation and it passes to the generations yet unborn, so we all are guilty. We

² Tsar Nicholas II and his family were canonized in 2000 as passion-bearers. Passion-bearers were often anointed monarchs or heirs to the throne, assassinated for political reasons. Because they had taken an oath to stand before God for their people, they were honored as having died in God's service, under His anointing. This designation does not extend to those rulers who showed by despotic or cruel behavior that they were unworthy of both the anointing and the title of Christian. The term "passion-bearer" has a two-fold meaning: the person has both shared in the passion of Christ by being unjustly murdered, and has borne the malicious passion of his murderer.

didn't stand up for the tsar. We didn't say, "What is happening, what are you doing? Stop!", as we would if we saw someone breaking into a house. We are all guilty of killing the tsar, his wife, and those innocent young people.

RTE: On the other hand, your own father was an officer in the White Army. He would have given his life for the tsar. So, although in your view the sin rebounds on the Russian people, there were also many Russians who died for their country defending the monarchy.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Yes, of course, and now that is up to God to determine, but we all have to work to make the royal family understood. I've spent my retirement years talking to metropolitans, to government authorities, to schools, churches and soldiers about the royal family, giving out icons, trying to make people see what really happened. Through their canonization as passion-bearers, we are asking for the family's forgiveness. "Please forgive us, that we broke our oaths of allegiance, allowed them to kill you and then neglected your memory." This repentance of the people, many priests say, will be the beginning of the spiritual rebirth of the country.

Let's go back to my analogy in the first part of the interview about the beehive. Each hive has its own queen, its nourishing servants, the army, and the working class, and each is absolutely essential to the running of the hive. No one has to teach them how to act, how to be, and who is to be whom. It is God who instructs them. There is no democracy, no right or wrong party; it is simply the institution. Normally, when a second queen is born, the hive will separate and part of it will go to another place, but if this doesn't happen, the army has to defend the old queen. If they cannot, she will be killed and there will be a revolution in the hive. But there always has to be a queen. In Russia they couldn't protect their ruler and the hive began to die.

RTE: That's an interesting analogy. To change the subject slightly, a lot of material has come out on the royal family and unfortunately, much of it seems speculative or sensational. What do you think of Robert Massie's book, *Nicholas and Alexandra*? It is widely-read and often the only general account that is easily available to English-speakers.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: It was very sad for Tihon and me to see the royal family become a sellable object and to read the unfounded speculations that were published by people trying to make money on grief and tragedy. I can



Empress Alexandra Feodorovna



Tsar Nicholas II

at least understand the first Massie book, *Nicholas and Alexandra*, in which he wrote about the royal family, and particularly about Alexis' hemophilia, because his own son was a hemophiliac.

RTE: As sympathetic as one might feel towards Massie's own experience, he seems to have used the royal family's situation as a way to direct attention to the condition, and intentionally or not, Alexis' illness became the center of his narrative.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: I think that his wife, Suzanne, had much more sensitivity to Russia. As a woman and a mother she had a better sense of what was going on, and her book, *The Firebird*, was somehow more authentic. You know, the

You cannot get to the heart of Russian history through analysis. Like monarchy itself, it is a state of mind, a way of being. It is not simply politics.

Russians can hardly understand Russia, and an Englishman or American, never. There were, however, many good accounts of the family by people who knew them.³

Also, if you grow up in Orthodoxy, this sensitivity is a part of your life, but if you come to it later, as a convert or particularly as an academic, you have a tendency to discuss, analyze, and dissect. You cannot get to the heart of Russian history through

analysis. Like monarchy itself, it is a state of mind, a way of being. It is not simply politics. I feel that Massie couldn't comprehend that and I find many things in his work that reflect his misunderstanding.

RTE: For me, one disappointing moment is his characterization of the royal family's early confessor, Fr. Alexis Vasiliev, a respected and experienced St. Petersburg priest. Massie depicts him, "shouting his prayers in a cracked voice" and "wearing a long black robe with wide sleeves, a black beard that stretched to his waist, a five-inch cross dangling from his neck, he gave the impression that a great black raven had settled down at the table of the Tsar."⁴

I feel quite certain that Fr. Alexis did not give the impression of a "great black raven" to the people at the table, or "shout" his prayers. In fact from

³ Some of these first-hand sources include the memoirs of Pierre Gilliard, Baroness Sophie Buxhoeveden, Anna Vyroubova, Sidney Gibbs, and Lily Dehn, who were tutors, ladies-in-waiting, and family friends. Of special interest is the semi-autobiographical life of Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna: *The Last Grand Duchess* by Ian Vorres.

⁴ Massie, Robert, *Nicholas and Alexandra*, Indigo; London, 1996, p. 120.

the tsar's diary, where he recorded his daily schedule and who he met, including dinner guests, one can see that Fr. Alexis rarely attended family meals; he did not even live in the palace. Massie, however, leaves you with the impression that he presided over the daily dinner table, and by association, over the family and the tsar. He turns a typically bearded Russian priest, dressed in appropriate clerical dress, with a priest's cross and perhaps an unfortunate voice, into an eccentric and dark ("raven") figure. This kind of writing caricatures the family and the people around them, encouraging us to see them as helpless, pitiful, laughable, and even sinister. I could cite more examples.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Yes, this is something that is very difficult for a non-Orthodox Westerner to understand. If you don't believe in holy relics, if you don't believe in prayers for the dead, if you don't believe in monasticism or in the possibility of there being people who have really come close to God and have some measure of grace, you will never understand Russia. For Massie and others like him, this is all impossible. He is a historian criticizing in his own way. He and others have also characterized Rasputin as a "mad monk," which was not correct. He was never a monk. Tihon and I always thought of Rasputin rather kindly. He was not "ruling" the country as the Bolsheviks loved to claim and as people in the West later believed. He was simply the one who prayed and seemed to stop the bleeding of the hemophiliac tsarevitch. You can understand Alexandra. Any mother would have given anything for that.

I have many more problems with Massie's second book, which purports to prove that the remains buried in St. Petersburg in 1998 are those of Tsar Nicholas and his family.

RTE: Since you've brought up this very interesting subject, may we go on?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Yes.

RTE: For our readers who may not know, there has been great controversy in Russia and abroad over skeletons that were supposedly found in the forest near Ekaterinburg in the late 1970's, and claimed to be those of Tsar Nicholas II, his family, and several of their servants. Until that time, their remains were believed to have been burnt at the nearby Four Brothers Mine and almost completely destroyed. Although these Ekaterinburg skeletons were reburied in 1998 as the Romanoff remains in the Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral in St. Petersburg (the burial place of the Romanoff tsars since the

time of Peter the Great), neither the Moscow Patriarchate nor the Russian Church Abroad recognizes them as authentic.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Earlier, Massie had met my husband Tihon, and after his book, *The Romanovs: The Last Chapter*, about the alleged finding of the relics of Tsar Nicholas II and his family and servants near Ekaterinburg, was released, I personally called Massie to tell him that he had misquoted Tihon's words. Our statements had been distorted, and false ideas added to what we had said. For example, Tihon had written to Pavel Ivanov, the Russian DNA analyst who was acting on behalf of those who had found the remains: "I will not give any of my blood or hair for the DNA examinations to *private individuals* for their personal investigations. When an investigatory commission will be formed of government and church representatives together, then my blood will be available in the blood bank." Tihon made this point because at the time there was no investigative committee, only these individuals who had decided on their own to exhume the bones and do the analysis.

RTE: When did you first learn of the exhumation?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: In 1989, when they announced to the Italian and Soviet press that these were the remains of the royal family. This was before any analysis had taken place. In other words, they were putting their hopes into other people's heads. Is it any wonder that Tihon wanted nothing to do with them?

RTE: How were your answers to Pavel Ivanov distorted?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: When Massie writes in his book that Tihon did not want to give his blood for the DNA test "for political reasons," this expression is not Tihon's, but that of Pavel Ivanov, or Massie himself. Massie also states that when Ivanov wrote Tihon, he received no reply. This is false. He received an immediate reply to the fax that came on November 4, 1992. This was the answer that I quoted above. In fact, we had received a fax earlier in August from Vadim Lapuhin, the vice-president of the Society for Russian Nobility, urgently requesting a sample of Tihon's blood or hair. (Perhaps he was making this request for Ivanov; I don't know.) Tihon replied by fax that he was very pleased that someone was investigating the murder of the tsar and his family, but until the investigation was done by an officially appointed Russian church-state commission, he would not give a sample.

According to Massie, Tihon also told Ivanov that he believed "this whole

bones business is a hoax." That also is untrue. Tihon did not say this. That idea was first published in a January 24, 1993 article in *The British Sunday Express*, when two British reporters brought it up as a possibility. In the same paragraph, Ivanov recalls that Tihon said, "How can you, a Russian man, be working in England, which was so cruel to the tsar and to the Russian monarchy? ...For political reasons, I will never give you a sample of my blood or hair or anything." This is completely untrue. Tihon never said anything about England or their treatment of the royal family. This is a fabrication and distortion of Tihon's words.

Finally, Ivanov is quoted as saying, "At that time it was critical...He was the closest relative. I spent a lot of my own money talking with him and his wife by telephone, assuring them that I was not a KGB agent. And they replied, 'Then probably the only reason for your investigation is to prove that Tihon Nicholaevich is not of royal blood.'"⁵ This is an absolute lie. *Neither Tihon nor I ever said that, nor did we ever talk to Ivanov on the telephone.* Our only contact with him was through written faxes, of which I have the originals. I don't know where the transmission went wrong between Tihon, Ivanov and Massie, but when I called Massie and told him that he had misquoted us, his tone became very rude and he didn't want to talk about it. With such blatant distortion of our words, how can one put credence in Massie and Ivanov's claims about the remains?

RTE: He must have known he was wrong. I couldn't help but notice that on the inside cover of the book he is described as a master story-teller. Can you tell us now why you believe the remains are not those of Tsar Nicholas II and his family?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Yes. First, we know that the exhumation of the remains was done many years prior to the "revelation." The discovery of the site is claimed by Alexander Avdonin of Ekaterinburg and Geli Ryabov of Moscow, who opened the grave in May 1979, closed it (by their own admission taking the skulls), and then finally reopened it again in the eighties. Avdonin was a geologist of sorts, and Ryabov, a film-maker and writer of detective thrillers, as well as a KGB employee working under the supervision of Sholokhov, the Minister of Internal Affairs. I believe that Ryabov received the command to work on this from Sholokhov.

⁵ Massie, Robert, *At the Frontiers of Knowledge, The Romanovs: The Last Chapter*, p. 93, Random House, NY, 1995.



RTE: Why would that be a problem? Because he worked for the KGB when he opened the grave?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: No. Ryabov claims that after a 1976 visit to the Ipatiev House he felt that he “must get involved with the story,” but when they first found the remains they could not make it public because it was still the time of the Soviet regime...

RTE: And your objection to that?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: The objection is that you don’t open a grave as simply as that. I believe that the grave was either planted, or they used it as a diversion to distract people from something they didn’t want known. For instance, once a thief pulled a bracelet off of my arm on the street, but first he stepped on my foot and I was in so much pain that I didn’t notice that he’d wrenched the bracelet off.

RTE: What do you think they were trying to distract people from? That the remains were buried elsewhere?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: No, they were not buried elsewhere, they were destroyed, but they didn’t want to confess that they had been so cruel as to destroy the bones. They wanted to say, “Here they are, we weren’t so bad. Yes, we killed them, but it was a political act, and here are the remains.”

Also, do you know their story? Two men supposedly go to a certain place in the woods — with thousands and thousands of miles of unmarked forest around them, mind you, and they didn’t even take instruments, they took a

The Royal Family in Captivity (left to right, top to bottom):

Tobolsk, where the royal family and servants were held captive in 1917.

Ipatiev House, Ekaterinburg, where the royal family was killed on July 17, 1918.

Interior of Ipatiev House.

Grand Duchess Tatiana carrying a load of garden soil with Countess Hendrikoff, lady-in-waiting. Tsar Nicholas holding shovel.

Tsar Nicholas cutting firewood with Pierre Gilliard, the Swiss tutor to the children.

Grand Duchess Olga with Tsarevitch Alexis on a sled.

Ekaterinburg, where traces of remains of the murdered Tsar, his family and servants were found in 1918-1919. (Photo from Gibbes Collection, Luton Hoo)

Box containing miscellaneous possessions and remains of the imperial family, given for safekeeping to Sydney Gibbes and Miles Lampson in Siberia, January 1920 by General Dieterichs. (Photo from Gibbes Collection, Luton Hoo)

water pipe. They dig here, there, mark a few points on the site, plunge the pipe in and they find the tsar's bones. Can you imagine?

RTE: They say that they first identified the site from a 1918 photo of a wooden bridge by Nicholas Sokolov, the first White Russian investigator. Massie also claims that the son of Yakov Yurovsky, who was the executioner in charge of killing the family, gave Geli Ryabov a copy of the report that his father had written for the Soviet government, identifying the spot.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Yes, but the report in the archives that was assumed to be the original turned out to be unauthentic.

RTE: How did that come out?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Professor Yury A. Buranov, a historian and Russian expert in old documents and handwriting, and who, from 1991 to 1995, was the head of the Department of Research and Publication at the Russian Central Archives in Moscow (now the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Modern Historical Documents), verifies that the note was not original. First of all, Yurovsky was almost illiterate. He couldn't write well and certainly couldn't spell as the note was written. Buranov was able to prove that the handwriting was not Yurovsky's, it was that of Mikhail Pokrovsky, the Soviet historian who had written the note, which was supposed to be a record of Yurovsky's words. It was written very normally, not in poor language.

Secondly, in Ekaterinburg, why did these people form and register a foundation with the idea of privatizing the remains and many kilometers of land around the grave? What is this? Disneyland? It was registered one day as a foundation, and the next day they "announced" they had found the bones. Even the word that they used as the name for their foundation, *Obretenye*, means the discovery and uncovering of sacred relics. How clever of them to have used that! This was the time in which land and businesses were being privatized in Russia (transferred from state to private ownership), and they simply came in and tried to privatize this plot of land and everything on it, including the remains.

When I met Avdonin, who "found" the grave with Ryabov, I asked, "If it was true that these were the Romanoff remains, what about the next of kin? How would you like it if I went and opened the grave of your mother and privatized her?" He said, "I wouldn't care." I said, "Well, I do care, and so does my husband. This was his uncle, his aunt, and their family."

RTE: What about the results of the DNA analyses that supposedly proved that these were the Romanoff remains?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: The DNA analyses of the bones did not follow proper legal procedure for a test of this nature. Pavel Ivanov, the Russian DNA analyst of the Englehardt Molecular Biology Institute of Moscow, who did the initial DNA tests, was biased in favor of the remains being those of the Romanoffs. In any legal proceeding you have the prosecution and the defense, and in these kinds of laboratory findings you always have representatives of both sides present to verify the results. In the O. J. Simpson case, how many DNA analyses did you have? You had many of them, and several experts discussing the results. Again, a few years ago in the case of the woman who claimed to be the illegitimate daughter of Yves Montand, the French actor, they had ten DNA analyses done. And this was only the illegitimate daughter of an actor. Here we are talking about the tsar of all Russia, and you have only one specialist in DNA analysis and no one to oppose him? We are accepting his word alone?

The first DNA test was done in England by Ivanov, who you remember had approached Tihon about a blood sample, and an Englishman, Peter Gill, the head of biological services at Britain's Forensic Science Service laboratory at Aldermaston. Pavel Ivanov says that he made the analysis in Aldermaston and that Gill's signature is on the document, but Sergei Belayev, who is the consulting archaeologist to the patriarch of Moscow, stated during the investigatory commission meeting (which included representatives of the church and state, and which I also attended) that he had seen the original lab report and that it had been signed *only* by Ivanov. Gill did not sign it. This may have been an oversight, but in such an important matter it seems to me to be a careless one.

In fact, in a recent talk I had with Professor Belayev, he told me that although Ivanov was reluctant to show him the original lab reports from Aldermaston and the Maryland military lab where he did the second test,



Russian commission for the investigation of Ekaterinburg remains, Olga Nikolaevna on left.

they were finally produced. Ivanov would not allow him to make a photocopy, so Belayev hand-copied the information and in both cases, Ivanov was the only signer on the lab reports. There were no other witnesses. Professor Belayev had hoped that the DNA tests would be done on the skulls, but, in fact, neither test was done on the skulls. In both cases it was done on one piece of the femur bone from skeleton #4, which they claim is the father of three of the other skeletons. But why test only one bone, if there were nine skeletons and many skulls? We know he brought many more samples with him to Britain.

My point is that Ivanov did several DNA tests, in Russia, in Aldermaston, and in Maryland, but we don't really know what remains he did the tests on. There was no record of proper legal procedure to verify that these were the bones from the Ekaterinburg grave.

This seems unprofessional to me. Although I am neither a scientist nor an academic, I have documents and witnesses to back up every statement I make, and I've even published a volume detailing the history of the investigation and my objections, so that anyone who is interested can examine the documents.

When Ivanov first arrived in Britain (and there are published photographs of this), he got off the plane with a blue sport bag slung over his shoulder containing several kilograms of the Ekaterinburg remains. At this point he was supposedly representing the Russian Academy of Sciences and the state medical coroner, but no government appointed investigatory commission was yet involved. He was still working as a private individual. At this time he was also calling himself "Professor," when, in fact he was only the equivalent of a doctoral candidate.

Later, he was photographed with Gill, one of them with a photo of Tsar Nicholas, the other of Tsarina Alexandra, and both suggestively holding up transparent plastic baggies with four or five pieces of bone. I have a copy of this picture at home from the Russian magazine, *Ekho Planeti*.

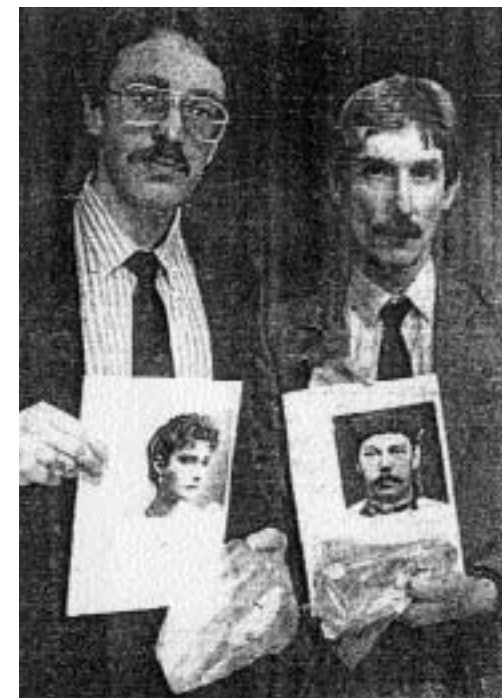
RTE: Plastic bags? They carried the remains, which according to them were the Romanoff relics, in plastic bags?!

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: That's right. You know, like soup bones when you buy them at the market. Then they had themselves photographed, holding them like trophies. Where were their scientific ethics, their sense of propriety? Another question I have is how Ivanov as a private individual, got through Russian and British customs with human remains? Who authorized it and why?

Now, here is another point: when Ivanov went to Maryland to do yet another test in a military laboratory, he also took the bones of Grand Duke George, Tsar Nicholas' younger brother who had died before the revolution and is buried in Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral in St. Petersburg. Now, how do we know what he took to compare with George's remains? Did he take the bones from Ekaterinburg to compare to the grand duke's, or did he take another bone of George's and claim it was the Ekaterinburg remains? Again, there is no published evidence of proper procedure being followed to verify the results in a court of law. Also, when they opened Grand Duke George's tomb, there was no legal protocol followed; none of the relatives were informed. We simply don't know what happened there.

The results of this Maryland test were reported to me by the Chief Medical Coroner of the Russian Ministry of Health, V.O. Plaksin, who wrote to request a sample of Tihon's blood. In Maryland, they were matching the Ekaterinburg sample to Xenia Sfiris, a great-granddaughter of Tsar Nicholas' sister, Xenia. In his letter to me on February 1, 1993, Plaksin states, "we have received brilliant results with which we are approaching the positive identification of the remains of Empress Alexandra Feodorovna and the grand-duchesses... Unfortunately, the genetic distance to Nicholas II is quite great, four generations, which makes the interpretation difficult." The next morning a story appeared in the Maryland paper with Ivanov claiming that the DNA positively matched.

Even stranger, the original Maryland lab report that Ivanov showed Belayev documents that only a femur bone sample from skeleton #4 was used, again, supposedly the father, not the mother, of the three other skeletons. They have never done any DNA analysis of Empress Alexandra's sup-



Pavel Ivanov and Peter Gill displaying supposed relics of the royal family in plastic bags.

PHOTO: EKHO PLANETI

posed remains, which must mean that the “brilliant results” are from some unspecified anthropological test, not a DNA analysis.

As I briefly mentioned above, after Tihon’s death, the “Commission for the Examination of Questions Relating to the Investigation and Burial of Emperor Nicholas II and His Family” was formed in Russia on October 22, 1993, and included a number of people who didn’t have anything directly to do with the royal family: the mayor of St. Petersburg, representatives of the archives, of the libraries. There were no Romanoffs on the commission. Only at my insistence that the church be invited to participate was Metropolitan Juvenaly appointed by the Moscow Patriarchate. They even put Edvard Radzinsky in, who wrote that terribly theatrical and imprecise book on Tsar Nicholas II that was translated into English as *The Last Tsar*.

RTE: Wait a moment! Why did they call it the “Commission for the Investigation and Burial of Emperor Nicholas II and his Family,” if they had not yet determined that the remains were authentic? They were investigating the identity of the Ekaterinburg skeletons.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: That’s one of the questions of the century.

So, after Tihon’s death, I didn’t want to hand over his blood to Pavel Ivanov because, based on our earlier conversations and his questionable methods of testing, I didn’t trust him. It took me two years of searching through Russia, Europe, and America to find a known analyst who I felt was reliable and disinterested enough to do the analysis properly. I found this expert in Evgeny Regaev, who was one of the initiators of DNA testing in Russia. He had begun working on DNA analysis much earlier than Pavel Ivanov and he taught at Moscow State University. At the time I was looking for an analyst, he was a visiting professor at the University of Toronto doing research on Alzheimer’s Disease. I wrote to the university for advice on getting a professional DNA analysis and they recommended that he do the testing. The examination was done with fully verifiable legal procedure at the university lab before witnesses. Further, I did not authorize Regaev to disclose any information about the test results without my permission in writing. So, when the time came to present the results of Tihon’s DNA test to the commission, I went to Russia in person with Regaev on September 20, 1995.

RTE: How did you get the tsar’s relics and the Ekaterinburg remains to compare with Tihon’s blood?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: I didn’t. I was only requested to give the *written results* of Tihon’s DNA blood analysis. Once that was in black and white, any specialist could have done the comparison of the lab results. I simply presented the written analysis to the commission — it was up to them to compare the analysis of the alleged Ekaterinburg remains with that of a close Romanoff relative (remember Tihon’s mother was the tsar’s sister. Their DNA would have been identical.) You see, I was not approached to do the comparison, I was only asked to give the written analysis of Tihon’s blood, and it didn’t match the DNA test of the Ekaterinburg remains; it was one figure off, and lacking even one figure means that it is not a match.

Ivanov immediately protested, “That was not official. Who is Regaev? I was supposed to do the analysis.” I said, “Well, I’m sorry. Regaev has done well-known international work. I haven’t read of your work in international scientific journals.”

When Ivanov realized that Tihon’s DNA test did not match that of the Ekaterinburg remains, he said, “Well, that was a mutation.”

RTE: In one generation the blood had mutated so completely that it no longer matched! It must have been your Canadian climate.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Yes, and besides the seeming absurdity of Ivanov’s claim, you cannot present experimental work in court as evidence. You can only offer proven fact. The word mutation (or heteroplasmy) in the context of DNA testing was first used by Ivanov himself. It was simply his personal theory.

RTE: And in the face of this the Commission still decided that the remains were those of the Romanoffs and their servants?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Yes, from the very beginning the Commission was trying to prove the authenticity of the remains. Their decision was ratified by the Russian Procurator General’s office, which was not in a position to determine, “Yes these are the Romanoff bones,” as they did. A judicial court should have done so. However, on the basis of this, official death certificates for the Romanoffs were issued in St. Petersburg.

Since the Commission’s decision, Professor Tatsuo Nagai, of Kitasato University in Kanagawa, Japan, who had earlier worked with Professor Vyacheslav Popov in the Department of Forensic Medicine in St. Petersburg, knew of the case because Popov had had contact with Avdonin

and Ryabov. Professor Nagai contacted me and asked if he could do an independent DNA analysis of Tihon's blood. He came to Canada in February 2001 to pick up the sample and we followed all the necessary procedures to get a verifiable result that could be used as court evidence: releases, affidavits from the blood bank that this was indeed Tihon's blood, packing the blood in dry ice, taking pictures, etc. He went back to Japan and ran the analysis, again with proper laboratory and legal procedures, and again, there was not a match between Tihon's DNA and that of the alleged Ekaterinburg remains. He made his results publicly known at conferences of DNA scientists in Europe, Australia, and Japan.

RTE: How did Professor Nagai obtain the results from Ivanov's DNA test to compare them to Tihon's results?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: From a scientific journal where Ivanov finally published his results. That's another weak link. Although Ivanov did the first test in 1993, the results were not published in any scientific journal until several years later. Why the long wait for such a newsworthy and important test? All we had until that time were newspaper stories and interviews with Ivanov affirming that the DNA matched.

RTE: That does seem weak, but didn't Ivanov also test the blood of Prince Philip of England and claim he had a match with the remains?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Yes, but you must remember that Prince Philip is far more removed in the blood line than Tihon. Tihon is a nephew of the tsar. Prince Philip is five times removed and the link gets weaker the further the connection. There were also questions about Prince Philip's blood and, interestingly, the results were never published, so again we only have Ivanov's word for it. But when people heard that Prince Philip's blood had been analyzed, they just assumed the results were positive.

Another very interesting fact is that Ivanov went to Japan, to a museum, and obtained a piece of the bandage from 1891 when Tsar Nicholas visited Japan as crown prince and was attacked with a sword by a Japanese samurai. His cousin deflected the blow, so he was only wounded in the head, but the bloody bandage and the sword were kept in a local museum. So, Ivanov took a piece of the bandage to do a DNA analysis on. Later, he claimed that the sample was too small to test. There is a photograph, however, of him cutting

the piece off and it is obvious that it is about two centimeters wide and ten centimeters long. The museum verified that he took a fairly long and wide piece, it was a large bandage. Besides, if he was a professional scientist used to doing DNA testing, why would he have taken too small of a sample?

RTE: How large of a piece do you need to do a DNA test with?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: I believe approximately one to two square centimeters. He destroyed the sample and refused to release the results of his test, saying that the piece was not large enough.

RTE: I remember from Massie's narrative that Ivanov also claimed that the bandage had been handled by too many people, that there was dust on it, and that although there was a lot of blood, it was impossible to tell how much of it was Nicholas' own — but if this was the cloth that stopped the flow of blood from his head, surely it was his. From the eyewitness accounts of the attack on the emperor there has never been any suggestion that anyone else was bleeding. As you say, it makes you wonder why he did not see these things as a problem before he took the sample.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: I have since written to the emperor of Japan requesting authority to give Professor Nagai another small piece of the bandage. The test will be done in Japan, at a Japanese lab with witnesses. I am still waiting for a response.

Another point that I keep bringing up is that there are living relatives of the servants of the tsar who were buried with the family. Why don't they do an analysis of them? Everyone is emphasizing the tsar and marching under the imperial banner. They want to drag in Prince Philip, but no one talks about Botkin, the doctor, or the cook and the butler. There are direct relatives of Botkin and the butler, whose remains are supposed to be among those "found" at Ekaterinburg. Why don't they check them? You see, no one wants "Mr. Smith's" analysis, but only to test the tsar and Prince Philip! It's a game.

RTE: What do you think the motive is?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: I think that those pushing the recognition of the Ekaterinburg remains as being those of the royal family hope to be known in the world arena, and possibly to have a share in the Romanoff riches that allegedly still exist outside of Russia. Some people say they have documents

about the whereabouts of hidden assets, but I don't believe it. If private wealth belonging to the tsar's family had remained abroad, then Grand Duchess Olga certainly wouldn't have ended her life in such humble conditions.

RTE: What do the other Romanoffs, those who are second and third cousins of Tsar Nicholas, think about the St. Petersburg burial?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: The other Romanoffs don't seem to care. Prince Nicholas Romanoff, who is the head of the family, says: "Well, what happened, happened, and now we have to turn the page of history." In fact, he attended the internment of the remains in St. Petersburg, and then met with Massie and called a press conference in which he didn't show his best side. As a result of this conference the Romanoffs were ridiculed in the press.

RTE: That's unfortunate.

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: If you will allow me, there is one other thing that I believe is extremely important to say. The murder of the tsar and his family was not only political retribution; it had greater causes. The fact is that the head of the Russian government was the tsar. He was like the head of the family, and if you cut off the head you destroy the entire family. The



First liturgy served over ruins of Ipatiev House, July, 1993.

destruction of Russia was a political act that I believe involved both internal and external influences. After the Japanese War, Russia was getting up on its feet. World War I further weakened the economy, but nevertheless, in 1913-14 Russia was exporting sugar and wheat throughout the world. Industrialization was going forward very rapidly and was a threat to the other industrializing nations. In Britain, France, and Germany taxes were 13%, 15%, 20%; Russia had only 3% taxes. Tsar Nicholas had formed the League of Nations in the Hague. So, you see, it was all a threat and if Russia had gone on unchecked, it would have become what America is today. In Russia the revolution was an economic-industrial fight, a commercial fight, a political fight, a religious fight. It was everything altogether. The West was

not against beheading the country by actively or tacitly encouraging the revolution. This is a matter of history.

In regards to the mystical aspect of the tsar's death — he and his family were killed, then thrown into a shaft and their bodies then taken out and burnt — it was a holocaust. "Holocaust" means to burn completely. It is not a new word; it is a very old one. In the Old Testament, King Saul was thrown into lye and burned to death, and God said, "Don't touch my anointed one."

RTE: Yes, and that is why the Russian royal family is so fascinating; the significance of their deaths goes beyond the political tragedy. Since your marriage to Tihon Nikolaievich, you have tried to honor them in a very practical way. Can we talk now about the work of your foundation? How did you begin?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: Well, we were enjoying our quiet married life and Tihon was doing a lot of corresponding. This was the first period of open contact with Russia in the late eighties and early nineties, and Tihon had already done several radio broadcasts for the Canadian BBC which were transmitted into Russia. The thirtieth anniversary of Olga Alexandrovna's death was in 1990, and a Canadian man who had known her called me to ask if we were going to do anything to commemorate her? I said, "Definitely, we will." We had a *pannikhida* (requiem service) and then a meal afterwards. There were about a hundred people there, and during the meal, he asked again, "Well, are you going to do anything more?" That question inspired Tihon and me to begin the foundation dedicated to the memory of Olga Alexandrovna — first, as a way to keep in touch with all those Russians who wanted to know more about the royal family, and later as a channel to send medical and hospital supplies to Russia.

By the end of 1990, the political and economic situation in Russia had dramatically worsened. We realized that Russian citizens needed urgent help, particularly the elderly, invalids, disabled, and sick and orphaned children, so we began the first branch of the "Russian Relief Program" with the help of friends. It was registered as a charitable organization in Toronto, Canada, and in St. Petersburg and Moscow, Russia, and is completely run by volunteers, myself included. In ten years of existence we have sent 29 maritime forty-foot containers to Russia, weighing 620 tons and worth about three million U.S. dollars.

RTE: That's impressive, particularly because distribution is so difficult in Russia. Have these donations gone mostly to groups in Moscow and St.

Petersburg, or have you reached farther afield?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: We've helped about seventy-five organizations, some of them on a continuing basis, and have assisted groups in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Ekaterinburg and Tobolsk, the regions of Kostroma, Samara, Don and Kuban. In the Russian North we were able to help the inhabitants of Valaam and Solovki islands, who suffered critical food shortages over the winters of 1998 and 1999.



Church of Royal Martyrs near Four Brothers Mine, Ekaterinburg.

Since the foundation began over a decade ago, I have traveled to Russia for three months every year to attend annual fund meetings and to verify distribution. I also cultivate new contacts so that I can keep up-to-date on the needs of hospitals and orphanages and confirm that the Canadian donations reach their intended destinations. I know first-hand what is happening with these donations.

RTE: How can we help?

OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: We need financial contributions from everyone, and material supplies from Canadian hospitals and corporations. The funds we receive go mostly toward transportation expenses: forwarding donated medical equipment, medicine, clothing and purchased foods from Canada

to the needy in hospitals, orphanages and old-age homes in Russia. We are extremely grateful for every bit of help we receive.

That the foundation was founded in honor of Tihon's mother, Olga Alexandrovna, is very important to me. It is the only meaningful tribute we felt we could pay to a selfless, unassuming, and hard-working woman, whose entire life as a member of the royal family, and as a nurse and mother, was concerned with the welfare of others.



Procession at Church of Royal Martyrs.

In 2001, we arranged a major exhibit of her watercolor paintings in Washington, D.C. and the same exhibit is now on display in Moscow to help raise money for the foundation. As a young grand duchess, she also organized exhibitions of her work to raise money for charity, and I am sure that she would be the first to offer them now for the relief of the Russian people.

RTE: What you have accomplished with the help of a few volunteers is very impressive. In marrying Tihon Nikolaievich the course of your life obviously changed. Besides the personal dimension of your marriage, how do you feel that your connection with the Romanoff family has affected you?


OLGA NIKOLAIEVNA: It has added more responsibility. There were many things I had to do, and other things that I could no longer do, simply

because I was Tihon's wife. For example, I am not a nun, but I almost lead a nun's life. I have to be absolutely vigilant about everything I say and do because I am so much in the public eye. I don't presume to represent the entire Romanoff family, but I do represent Tihon's family, the Kulikovsky-Romanoffs and I do it as well as I can.

People sometimes accuse me of using the Romanoff name, but legally I am Kulikovsky-Romanoff. That was Tihon's name on his passport and on our marriage certificate. Kulikovsky by his father, Romanoff by his mother. In my personal affairs I use Kulikovsky. I don't pretend to be a Romanoff; Tihon was. But as his wife, I adopted his name. He was still the nephew of the tsar whether he wanted to be or not, and I am carrying on that tradition for him, for my mother-in-law, and for their family.

I also am very happy that they are finally building a church in Ekaterinburg over the Ipatiev House where the royal family was murdered, and that it will be for commemoration, not for tourism. People will be able to come there and pray.

Besides giving a more objective view of the Romanoffs by talking about Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna, I am trying to stop the lies about the identification of the Ekaterinburg remains. This is a very serious responsibility because I speak on behalf of Tihon, as he delegated me to. Of course, I have many people behind me: scientists, clergy, historians, who support me in this and give me the courage to stand up, but I have to use my voice. ✚



H.I.H. Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna Memorial Fund

Over the past decade our donations of medical supplies to Russia have included 400 hospital beds with mattresses (many with night tables and over-bed tables), 6 tons of intravenous fluid, over \$200,000 (U.S.) of medication, over \$500,000 (U.S.) of medical supplies (catheters, disposable syringes, medical gloves, dressings, etc.), 64 wheelchairs, 3 minibuses (vans) for transporting patients in wheelchairs, 4 operating tables, 2 dental x-ray units, 19 dialysis machines (artificial kidneys) (this has a particularly deep significance to us because Grand Duchess Olga's father, Tsar Alexander III, died of kidney failure.), 1 "Reverse Osmosis" machine (a water purification system for hemodialysis), 7 hydraulic lifts for very sick patients, 1 urological unit, and hundreds of commodes, bed pans, crutches, etc.

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