

Sufferings of the Romanoffs Under the Reds

Statement by Grand Duke Alexander

Former Grand Duke Alexander Michaelovich, an uncle of the late Czar, was ef of the Russian Aviation Service, and fought for thirty-two months at the front. er the first revolution he retired to the Crimea with others of the Romanoff fam- and when the Lenine-Trotzky revolution followed he was in constant danger of cution. In January, 1919, he escaped to Paris, and spent many weeks in vain at- pts to get the Allies to give military assistance to Russia. To a representative of Paris Matin he said:

HAVE just learned some horrifying news. It was telegraphed from Hel-singfors to The London Times, and ublished by the Matin. Four Grand kes assassinated in the Petrograd sons! This murder makes sixteen Ro-noffs victims of the Bolsheviki. Just ently they killed the Grand Duchess ge, sister-in-law of the unfortunate peror. Among the four Grand Dukes

who have now been put to death in prison are, I fear, two of my brothers. * * * My brother George never meddled with politics. Separated by the war in 1914 from his wife and two daughters, left in London, he had only one wish—to see them again. As to Nicholas, he was well known to Paris; a learned historian, friend to many French academicians, a member of the Institute, a great admirer

of France. To whom was he obnoxious? The four Grand Dukes were seven months in cells, fed three times a week, brutalized every day.

But let us leave these horrors. I would not speak of myself did I not think it was imperative to say what I have seen in our tortured Russia. After the abdication of the Czar I and my relatives, who were in the army, took the oath to support the temporary Government, and during some weeks we were permitted to live and attend to our duties. In March, 1917, we were deprived of our rank, and had to leave our posts. Some of us decided



GRAND DUKE
ALEXANDER

it was not necessary to remain in Petrograd. I, for my part, went to an estate I had in the Crimea. It is a country house named Aitodor, on the sea-coast about five miles from Yalta. My wife, the Grand Duchess Xenia, and all our children went with me. Also the Grand Duke Nicholas, the former Commander in Chief. Afterward the dowager Empress, mother of the Czar, a great friend of France, joined us.

The first days were peaceful. The Grand Duke Nicholas lived in a small villa not far from mine, and we were comparatively unmolested, when, one fine night, two months after our arrival, 300 sailors and soldiers, sent from Sebastopol, broke into my house at 5:30 in the morning. They entered the bedroom of the dowager Empress, who was asleep, but they did not give her or my wife time to dress. As for me, I was dragged off by the soldiers, pistols in hand, and was shut up in my office and kept there for six hours. The house was searched. Naturally, nothing was discovered, for we had all acted in perfect good faith, and neither I nor any of my relatives had ever wished to engage in any conspiracy that could only serve to aggravate the disorder in our unhappy country.

But to return to our life in the Crimea.

The Bolsheviki seized the Government in November, 1917. Anarchy, which is their sole idea of administration, spread gradually to the Crimea. There was a Soviet at Yalta, and this Soviet appointed a Red Guard to watch us. We no longer had the right to occupy our own houses, and were forced to live all together in one house at Dulter with the Grand Duke Nicholas. Our life became wretched and our food scanty, for we were without money. We could not go a step without meeting sailors and soldiers, who overwhelmed us with curses.

The month of April, 1918, was the worst of all. Here I recall the kindness of a man who was really sent us by Providence. The Bolshevik who commanded our guard was not a real Bolshevik. He was a revolutionist, opposed to the massacres. He served in the Aviation Corps during the war, and I had known him before. He was our guardian angel. Every time the Soviet of Yalta sent the inspecting officers this good man, but pseudo Bolshevik, treated us with such revolting severity as to gain the confidence of his superiors. When I saw him alone he talked frankly, and he tried to soften our lot. The simplest way was to satisfy the Soviet of Yalta by persuading them that, at the proper time, he himself would do all the killing.

In April matters came to a climax. We had organized a sort of defense, for any night might bring the final tragedy, and each automobile that came might carry our assassins. We decided to protect ourselves. In a small house in the garden, reserved for the Bolshevik guard, we found some arms. We left them there, for had they been discovered with us we were lost. Four of us were chosen to go at the first alarm and get these arms. We planned some barricades. We were all former army officers, and our leader was once a Commander in Chief. We slept with our clothes on. Not all of us, however. I ought to say that the dowager Empress went to bed regularly every night and slept well. "My children," she said, "if we must die it makes little difference whether we die fully dressed or not. I have a feeling we shall all escape." My wife and my daughter Irene, wife of Prince Yossouppoff, also

kept up their spirits. As for me, I thought our end was certain. I knew from our faithful Bolshevik that on May 1 the Soviet of Yalta intended to celebrate "Labor Day" by the massacre of 2,500 citizens. Useless to add that we would be among the first. The evening before, on April 30, the Germans arrived, not to rescue us, but because it was their plan to seize the Crimea. The Soviet of Yalta ran away.

I pass over this part of the time, for the dowager Empress could not reconcile herself to being saved by Germans. She did her best to show we had never been in danger. Up to Nov. 17 the enemy occupied our country. Then they left, and my children, who were in the garden, came running to me with shouts of joy; it was the allied fleet we had waited for so long. Nearly a year before there had been a rumor that the Allies were at Constantinople. An immense hope took possession of us. Now that our allies were victorious, those by whose sides our army had fought with such courage and devotion, and for so many months; now that the French and the English were there Russia was saved.

I am not in Paris to go into politics, but

to give the facts. Yet let me say France has peremptory reasons for rescuing Russia. The first reason is that a Russia united and powerful and an ally is indispensable if France wishes to keep her position in the world. The second reason is that France has \$4,000,000,000 loaned to Russia, and her small and numerous investors cannot afford to lose. The third reason is that you ought to take out of the hands of the Russian tyrants those who have been your friends to the last minute. You owe this to them, and it is in your power.

If you do not intervene now you may be certain that Germany will, when ready. Beware of Germany. This people now at your mercy conceals a hatred that will show itself later on in Russia. It is for your own safety to hold out a friendly hand to Russia, now almost sinking into the blood and slime of anarchy. Peter the Great said: "A step backward is a step toward destruction." They talk of a League of Nations, of a union of all the peoples for peace. It is to be seen if these nations have not already committed suicide by neglecting so long the Russian situation, which threatens to disrupt the whole of civilization.